

WE HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THEM; THEY LIVE WITH THEIR OWN KIND

SIBERIAN ESTONIANS' REPRESENTATIONS OF THE NEIGHBOURING TURKIC PEOPLES

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Abstract: This article explores the representations of Estonians, an ethnic group inhabiting West Siberian villages today, of their neighbouring Turkic peoples. I discuss the way that Siberian Estonians describe the representatives of these peoples and their contacts with the latter. The analysis is based on the interviews conducted within folklore collection fieldwork, in which a common question posed by the researcher was: What do you think/know about or what contacts have you had with the representatives of Turkic peoples? Siberian Estonians' representations of the neighbouring Turkic peoples are analysed as a creative process based on tradition and expressed by means of various folklore genres, whereas the meanings and interpretations are connected with the social and sociocultural environment. As the article is concerned with the lore of West Siberian Estonians only, it discusses the ethnic groups inhabiting this particular area – the Kazakhs and the Tatars.¹

Keywords: cultural context, ethnic “other”, fieldwork, group identity, Kazakhs, post-Soviet time, Siberia, Siberian Estonians, Tatars

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this article I explore the level of everyday life, the way that people coexist day by day, how they distinguish themselves and other ethnic groups. The object of the research is based on an analysis of folklore texts. These materials show how the Estonians who live in Siberian villages describe and see the representatives of Turkic peoples.

Folklore can be used to delineate social and ethnic identity within a group. At the same time, group lore is not something that is clearly definable or ever-present. Relying on Richard Bauman's (1971: 35) concept of 'social base', Dorothy Noyes explicates the role of folklore in the social communication of individuals and groups:

People were connected to folklore not through the abstract linkage of group to tradition but through empirically traceable instances of performance. To be sure, folklore often thematised communal identity, but rather than expressing a pre-existent identity among insiders, it more often constructed one, aggressively, or humorously, at social boundaries. (Noyes 2012: 14)

Identity can be expressed through stereotypes, folklore texts of different genres, daily events, and narratives heard from other people or from the media. Members of a community share the identity, as well as narratives, motifs, stereotypes and prejudices, all of which strengthen this identity. Community identity becomes an arithmetic total of individual identities (Bauman 1971: 32, 37).

Folklore texts acquire their contents, form and meaning in a specific communication situation and historical-social context. The same stereotypes and motifs may be known among different nations and groups, but the way they are used in a specific context gives us information about the individuals and the group. In folklore studies, this phenomenon is known as recontextualisation: a work of folklore acquires a different meaning in a new situation (Bauman & Briggs 1990: 72–78). In the framework of the current approach, the texts are placed in a wider sociocultural and political context. Rapid social changes have influenced the lives of today's narrators.

The concept of the Other is increasingly popular in nationalism and ethnicity literature, which usually proposes the existence of one significant Other for any national Self, and this Other is usually threatening and negative (Petersoo 2007: 117). The ethnic Other is related to national identity. The Other, and the imagining of otherness, constitutes an important and integral part of national identity formation. Ethnic and national identities are constantly transforming, and are continually being renewed, reinterpreted and renegotiated according to changing circumstances and interests. As Edward Said notes: "Each age and society recreates its Others" (cited in Petersoo 2007: 118).

The boundaries between "us" and "them" are often maintained through basic oppositions. Opposing Us (the Self), and Them (the Others) means choosing a criterion that allows the humanity to be divided into two groups: one that embodies the norm and whose identity is valued, and the other that is defined by its faults, devalued and susceptible to discrimination.

In folklore the ethnic Other is created in many ways. In jokes, the primary mechanism is the creation of a strategic opposition between "good" and "bad", and everything that falls under that division (Laineste 2008: 25). Folk beliefs about exotic foreigners are historically established by using the following contrasts: supernatural versus natural; chthonic or underground versus above-the-ground, *Urvoik* or autochthons versus moderns, pagans versus Christians,

nature versus culture (cited in Kalmre 2013: 67). Very important oppositions in all cultures are purity and dirtiness.

The folklore of Siberian Estonians presents several stereotypes and prejudices about the Turkic peoples. Folklore helps to establish and shape stereotypes, and provides one of the principal sources for the articulation and communication of stereotypes. The lore of different peoples is based on ethnic (national) stereotypes (Dundes 1996: 22–24). Although each stereotype contains a grain of truth, in most cases they reflect generalisations, the aim of which is to disparage the target group exposed to ridicule. For example, in ethnic humour the features inherent in a nation are discarded and habitual debasing characteristics are assigned to various (minority) groups (Draitser 1998: 17–21).

The contact hypothesis suggested by Gordon Allport argues that people are prejudiced against the unfamiliar. Closer contacts between people promote mutual understanding, as people get to know each other better (Allport 1958: 250–267).

The target group of my research is rural population and the way that people living in villages see one another. It is also necessary to describe the macro-level, that of the activity and ideology of the state and local authorities, as this shapes and exerts influence on inter-group attitudes and values, especially under the totalitarian system, as it was in the Soviet Union (Kuutma & Seljamaa & Västriik 2012: 50–52).

MATERIAL COLLECTION

Fieldwork in Estonian settlements in Western Siberia was carried out by folklore researchers of the Estonian Folklore Archives² in 1993–2004. During the collecting expeditions, which lasted for about a month at a time, 2 to 4 members of the fieldwork team visited different villages, which were usually situated close to each other (Korb 2007: 153–156; www.folklore.ee/estonka/).

The methods of data collection were interviews and conversations, as well as participant observation, and, depending on the situation, these were combined. Communication with the villagers was carried out on a variety of topics, without focusing on any of them particularly. Data were frequently collected by means of interviews, which were combined with a variety of other methods. Some interviews were conducted during meals, and resembled friendly conversations rather than formal interviews. It has to be remembered that in Siberian villages collectors found themselves in an unfamiliar environment: they were literally in the role of guests, and were expected to share news about life in Estonia (Korb



Figure 1. Folklorist Astrid Tuisk interviews Taresa Menskaya. Nikolaevka village, Novosibirsk Oblast. Photograph by Andres Korjus 1999. ERA Foto 16380.

2004: 102–104). I call the villagers whom we met and interviewed conversation partners and narrators, to further emphasise the cooperation aspect and partnership within the fieldwork.

The topics of our conversations varied considerably, ranging from various folklore genres – songs, tales, accounts of religion and tradition – to daily life, literature in the Estonian language, etc. If the conversation happened to reveal the narrator’s favourite subject, it was discussed at more length.³ In the article I use sound recordings, their transcriptions, and recorded texts, also taking into consideration their context.

One of the topics that was discussed touched upon the surrounding ethnic groups, their traditions and customs, and the Estonians’ contacts with them. The topic often emerged naturally, without leading questions from the part of the collectors. Anu Korb (2007: 63–66) argues that in a multicultural environment, the emergence of a specific topic is to be expected, and describes a specific situation to give an example.

COLONISATION OF SIBERIA

Siberia is a geographical region extending from the Urals in the east to the Pacific Ocean, and from the Arctic Ocean to Kazakhstan, Mongolia and China. In the course of time, the political and administrative borders of Siberia have undergone several changes. Siberia has a long and colourful history. In view of the current topic and especially considering the relationship between the Russians and the Tatars, special mention must be made of the Golden Horde, a Mongol Khanate in the 13th–15th centuries, the Siberian Khanate, which was established in the 15th century and occupied by the Russian Empire in the late 16th century, as well as the Russian colonisation and the resulting incorporation of Siberian territories into Russia. After the so-called Great Migration in the 19th and early 20th centuries, Siberian indigenous peoples were banished to the remote areas; they were either charged with taxes or exterminated, and the policy of Christianisation and Russification was carried out (Slezkine 1993: 15–27; Kappeler 2001: 189–190; Jürgenson 2008: 119). Due to the process of colonisation and settlement, Siberia became an integral part of Russia, which was inhabited overwhelmingly by Russians (Goryushkin 1991: 155). After colonisation, the relative importance of Siberian indigenous peoples decreased considerably.

3.8 million people, largely from the European part of the former Tsarist Russia, migrated to Siberia and the Far East between 1861 and 1914 (*ibid.*: 140). Estonians were among the many peoples who settled down in Siberia and established villages, some of which still exist with a population that has stayed there for many generations.

At the end of the 19th century, the largest group of non-Slav population in Western Siberia was constituted by the representatives of different Turkic (in the then approach Tatar) peoples. Their total number by the census of 1897 amounted to 152,558 people, including Bukhara and Tobolsk Tatars and Tatar peasants (Korovushkin 2009: 55).

Siberian Tatars and Kazakhs regard themselves as indigenous; yet, the migrants also claim their right to the land in Siberia. Even today the contradiction between the indigenes and migrants caused by the right to land is a significant impact factor in the inter-nations relationship. Researchers have also been interested in this topic.

SIBERIAN ESTONIANS

The Estonians in Siberia, on whose narratives my article is based, have inhabited Siberian villages already for several generations. In 1926, 29,890 Estonians lived there (Perepis 1926; Korovushkin 2008: 101). According to the population census of 2010, about 7000 Estonians resided in Siberia, whereas a sizeable part lived in the cities (Perepis 2010). The oldest West-Siberian villages with the greatest number of Estonians are the ones to which those convicted of crimes were deported (Ryzhkovo, Staryi Revel) (Must 2012: 305–361, 348–353). Later on, a large number of voluntary immigrants settled down in both of these villages, as well as established some new ones. These villages are scattered all over Western Siberia, in places also several villages near one another, like in the Omi settlement or Tara region (Nigol 1918: 40–54; Kulu 1997: 84–104; Korovushkin 2008: 148–165). Side by side with the villages inhabited by Estonians, there are also the ones established by immigrants of other nationalities – Russians, Latvians, Poles, Byelorussians, Ukrainians, Chuvash – as well as Tatar and Kazakh settlements. Initially, different nations and ethnic groups in Siberia resided in different villages or parts of villages. Nowadays the communities are clearly multi-cultural and multi-ethnic.

Year	Number of Estonians in Omsk Oblast
1926	6773
1939	7005
1959	6053
1970	5160
1979	4544
1989	4069
2002	3025
2010	2082

Table 1. Changes in the number of Estonians in Omsk Oblast, 1926–2010
(Kulu 1997: 154; Perepis 2002; Perepis 2010).

The majority of the elderly Estonians, who used to live in the villages at the time when the interviews were carried out, regard themselves as Siberian Estonians (Jürgenson 2002: 272–273). Ilia Lotkin (1996: 97) argues that the

Figure 2. *The older generation values traditions. Olga Ojaperv sitting behind a spinning wheel. Nikolaevka village, Novosibirsk Oblast. Photograph by Astrid Tuisk 1999. ERA Foto 16376.*



language barrier between different nations was liquidated by the 1960s. The overall incursion of the Russian language started in the 1930s, when the Estonian language was ousted from public life by retaliatory measures imposed by the state. Mass bilingualism under the conditions of diglossia started to take root (Viikberg 2010: 541). So a hybrid identity evolved: people could simultaneously identify themselves in many ways, for example, as residents of Siberia, Russian citizens, etc. (Jürgenson 2002: 259–269; Korb 2010: 27–28).

Estonians are Lutherans by their confession. Today people's attitude towards religion is different: elderly people still regard themselves as Lutherans. Others, although they regard themselves as believers, think that it is irrelevant what their concrete belief is. They go to the Orthodox Church and keep icons at home. There are also some people who are atheists (Viikberg 2010: 527).

The material that is analysed in this article was collected from elderly Estonians who live in these villages and still speak Estonian. The opinions of younger Estonians and those who live in urban areas have been left out. Expeditions to the Estonian villages in Western Siberia took place in the years 1993–2004; the respondents were people whose birth year was from 1910 to 1940 and the collected material consists of 60 interviews. For the sake of fluency, I hereafter refer to my narrators as Siberian Estonians, although, as was mentioned above, the opinions under consideration do not involve those of all Siberian Estonians.

TURKIC PEOPLES IN WEST-SIBERIAN STEPPE AND FOREST-STEPPE AREAS

Siberian Tatars

Siberian Tatars are not a uniform consolidated nation. The Tatars inhabiting Siberia can roughly be divided into three groups: local, so-called Siberian (Tyumen, Tobolsk, Tara, Barabinsk, etc.) Tatars, early migrants, and more recent resettlers (Ishakov 2001a: 23–25). The more recent resettlers are, for instance, Volga-Ural Tatars, whose migration to Siberia gained impetus at the end of the 19th century. So, local and immigrated Tatars have finally merged, although initially new immigrants settled down either in separate villages or parts of villages (Valeev & Tomilov 1996: 35–37, 78). The descendants of the Tatars who migrated to Siberia from the other side of the Urals regard their ancestors as Russian Tatars, whereas locals consider themselves indigenous Siberian Tatars (Korusenko 1999: 40). People were mainly engaged in stock raising, but also agriculture, hunting and fishing (Halikov 2001: 162–174). Tatars are Muslims (Sunrites), and there are mosques in the villages of Siberian Tatars.

The Kazakhs

The Kazakhs (until 1924 the Kazakhs were mistakenly called the Kirgiz in Russia (Kappeler 2001: 186)) were one of the most numerous ethnic groups of West-Siberian Turkic peoples. According to the census of 1897, their number in Tomsk and Tobolsk districts amounted to 32,357 (Korovushkin 2009: 56). Similar to the Tatars, the Kazakhs are also Muslims.

The single most important factor in the Kazakhs' history was the nomadic lifestyle. The Kazakhs had a pasture-based economy that involved seasonal

migration: in the summers they moved to the northern edge of the steppe (southern Siberia and the southern Urals), and in the cold winters to the more southern areas. Their most important possession was herds of horses, sheep, goats and, more rarely, cattle, and in the south also camels (Kappeler 2001: 185–186).

As was the case also with other nomads, the settlement of pasturelands by migrated arable farmers from the European part of Russia became a decisive destabilising factor for the Kazakhs. It caused considerable changes in the Kazakhs' social structure and, in the 19th century, made part of them settle down permanently. The majority of the Kazakhs still pursued their traditional way of life and this provoked conflicts between the immigrants and the local Kazakhs; for example, the 1916 uprising. In the 1930s, repressive power measures were implemented by the state to finally establish coerced residency of the Kazakhs (ibid.: 189–190).

ATTITUDE OF THE RUSSIAN TSARIST GOVERNMENT AND SOVIET AUTHORITIES TOWARDS SIBERIAN ETHNIC MINORITY GROUPS

In the 19th-century Russia, ethnic groups, including those in Siberia, were regarded as *inozemtsy* (people of a different land), or as *inorodtsy* (people of a different birth), and sometimes also as *inovertsy* (people of a different faith) (Grant 1993: 230). Yuri Slezkine maintains: “It was now their overall cultural distinctiveness – or rather, the growing perception of their ‘backwardness’ – that made people alien” (cited in Grant 1993: 230).

Estonians, and especially those who live in Russia, have also been regarded as *inorodtsy*. At some point in time, this term was taken into use to designate all the people in the Russian Empire who were not of Russian origin (Kappeler 2001: 171). Similar to other minority groups, they have been forced to abandon their rights to having newspapers and schools in their mother tongue, have been subjected to repressions, etc. Estonians and also other Finno-Ugric peoples have been called by a nickname *chukhontsy* or *chukhna*, which has a slightly pejorative connotation (Must 2012: 322).

The same topic was also followed by the Soviet authorities, who continued talking about Siberian indigenous peoples and other small nations in general as “being underdeveloped”, as well as about their “primitive social” formation. This policy was aimed at shaping a new unified Soviet nation (Grant 1993: 227–228; Diment & Slezkine 1993: 5; Kappeler 2001: 190). In the years of

economic depression, 1968–1979, Soviet authorities were characterised by an especially passionate xenophobia (Draitser 1998: 19).

The Soviet nationality policy has been described as ambivalent:

The Soviet government pursued a dual course toward its minorities, enacting assimilationist policies at the same time as it maintained and even strengthened the ethnic institutions that were established in the 1920s⁴. The slogan “national in form, but socialist in content” symbolises this dual approach. [...] Officially, Russian was labelled as the language of interethnic communication, but speaking Russian became an essential element of participating in Soviet society. (Gorenburg 2006: 273–274)

As Estonian linguists have argued, for an ethnic minority group, the mother tongue is a functional language of a non-official status, used only at home. National culture was allowed to be “presented” only by folkloric groups at concerts. In towns, outside of villages, and in multi-ethnic schools, the use of the mother tongue was rather condemned than favoured (Viikberg 2010: 528–529, 541). Also, Gorenburg holds that, as regards the ethnic and linguistic identity of ethnic minority groups, the Soviet Russification policy was successful, “especially among younger cohorts who had grown up in a Russian linguistic environment and were much more likely than their elders to claim Russian as their native language or to change their ethnic identity to Russian” (Gorenburg 2006: 299).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, minority groups in Russia have once again started to identify themselves. Ergo-Hart Västriik, for example, has discussed the reidentification of the Votic identity in villages (Kuutma & Seljamaa & Västriik 2012: 64–68). Several national and cultural societies have been established, and people are trying to find their roots; for instance, the Tatars restore their mosques and teach their children to speak and write Arabic (Ishakov 2001b: 520–522). However, the state favours the minority groups’ cultural activities rather than their political self-determination.

ETHNONYMS

Similar to other migrants, Estonians in Siberia do not use loan ethnonyms, such as *tatarlane* (a Tatar), *kirgis* (a Kirgiz) and *kasak / kasakas* (a Kazakh), to signify the corresponding ethnic groups. Both *kirgis* and *tatarlane* are rather used as common names marking different Turkic peoples inhabiting Siberia and Central Asia (e.g., the Kalmyks). The semantic field of the Estonian ethnonyms *kirgis* and *kasakas* is partly overlapping, with both names designating

the ethnic group of Kazakhs (Korovushkin 2009: 56; Kappeler 2001: 186). This is mainly because until 1924 the Kirgiz and the Kazakhs were mistaken for a single ethnic group in Russia. The ethnonym *kasakas* is used only by the Estonians of the Tsvetnopolye village, which is located in the immediate vicinity of Kazakhstan. The semantic field of the ethnonym *kirgis* is considerably broader and more ambiguous. In the folklore of Siberian Estonians (and in this article) the word *kirgis* denotes mainly the Kazakhs, or is used as a generic name for different Turkic peoples. The Kirgiz as an ethnic group are not discussed in the current article.

ANALYSIS OF THE MATERIAL

Turkic peoples occur in Estonian children's cautionary tales as well as in nicknames, mocking verses and historical narratives. Also, they are mentioned in connection with mixed marriages and the population of the villages becoming multi-ethnic. Often enough they simply describe a diverse way of life and different customs.

Different Turkic peoples occupy an important place in Siberian Estonians' conceptions of the Other. Among the Other, Siberian Estonians often include Russians and Gypsies. People live in the same villages and communicate closely with their neighbours – Lutheran Germans, Latvians and Finns – while in folklore and as representatives of foreigners the latter occur less frequently than the Turkic peoples. On rare occasions the Chuvash, Komi, Khanty and other Siberian indigenous and immigrant peoples are mentioned.

In folklore texts both negative and positive features are pointed out; yet, differences rather than similarities are described. The scale of attitudes is comprehensive, ranging from positive descriptions (a good people) to neutral, and even to fear and loathing. Positive attitude is revealed in some descriptions that explain strange behavioural features, different than those of Estonians. These texts could rather be called neutral, because they do not tend to depict a positive, even romanticised child of nature, as occurred, for example, in the treatments of Siberian indigenous peoples in the 19th century (Diment & Slezkine 1993: 4). However, in connection with language skills, it has been mentioned that knowledge of several languages (including Kazakh) is instrumental.

Historical narrative

Estonian folklore is not related to the earlier history of Siberia (with the exception of its settlement history).

According to West-Siberian Estonians, they came to an “empty place”. Aivar Jürgenson calls it a pseudo-historical myth, which ignores the former history of the settlements and is therefore not politically correct (Jürgenson 2011: 145). However, there is actually no controversy between these two versions, one of them claiming that other people lived there formerly, and the other stating that people came to an empty place. “Emptiness” is to be construed in a wider sense with regard to one’s own culture, not merely concerning the cultivated land and built houses. The history of the area begins with the creation of the area’s own culture: “The history of a settlement is frequently just the history of the settlement itself” (Jürgenson 2011: 145). The ‘Us’-group is depicted as giving content to the empty land, whereas the Others destroy the created structure.

Nor does the following example pose a question about who has the right to live in this particular place:

All the lands here were empty and barren. Here lived those from Kazakhstan, or, those Kirgiz. They had ‘volju’ [were arbitrary, powerful], they had large studs and herds of sheep. They would not go away. Now, wherever you look (not any more, all the holes are closed now), there is again a Kirgiz well, again a waterhole. [---] But they just wouldn’t leave; eventually they were driven away, their semlaks (sod huts) or whatever they had there were demolished and then the land was given away.

ERA, CD 413 (26) < Rozentel village, Novosibirsk Oblast < woman, born about 1925 (1999).

Stories about the foreign people who resided on the village sites before the arrival of migrants originate from a common local source. This example originates in a so-called ‘Kerzhak’ settlement of Russian Old-Believers in Novosibirsk Oblast: “There were some non-Russians here, but we, Russians, came, took charge of them and drove them out” (Baituganov 1998: 71). Today Estonians maintain that they came to Siberia only to “get land and freedom”; yet, in their attitudes towards the neighbouring peoples they take the same position as the other immigrants. This kind of attitude and the official colonial policy created a favourable ground for mutual misunderstanding between different peoples.

Narratives about everyday happenings, different habits and customs

The narratives mainly speak about **everyday happenings, as well as different habits and customs**. The stories are based on real contacts with a person/people of a different nation, with whom meetings have taken place, although sometimes very briefly. These texts describe encounters at fairs, or how the Tatars and the Kirgiz/Kazakhs came to villages to buy and sell sheep, salt and other goods, or how they just passed through.

- *But here in these steppes the Kazakhs once lived.*
 - *For some reason or other, they always passed through this village (Tsvetnopolye) on their camels.*
 - *They sold this white clay and...*
 - *Brought salt and... They had such big leather sacks with salt with them, tied on camels' backs, on either side. There is this salt washing place in Kazakhstan, and they drew salt from there and traded it.*
- ERA, CD 2 (26) < Tsvetnopolye village, Omsk Oblast < village women (1997).

One of the traditional activities of the Kazakhs was merchant transport from European Russia to Central Asia; for example, they bred camels to transport salt through Siberia and the Urals. The Kazakhs, as well as other peoples, also traded horses.

Turkic peoples, like the Kirgiz and the Kazakhs, appear in **children's cautionary tales**. Scaring children with someone of a foreign nation is highly customary. In the Estonian tradition, scaring children with Gypsies and peddlers who went from one village to another and were often of foreign origin was a common practice. The travelling lifestyle, the sudden appearance of caravans, which came from and left for a distant unknown place, and the big sacks carried around generated various superstitions and children's cautionary tales about strangers, about the Others. The cautioning formulae are quite typical: A Kirgiz will come and take you away.

In the folklore of Siberian Estonians, the Kirgiz and the Kazakhs have not replaced Gypsies, but they appear side by side:

- Villagers were very afraid of the Gypsies and the Kirgiz. They told [the children]: "Go to sleep, or the Gypsies will come!"*
- EFA I 35, 18 (5) < Rusko-Semenovka village, Novosibirsk Oblast < man, born in 1927 (1998).

A **mocking verse** recited to the Kirgiz and the Kazakhs exemplifies the creativity of Estonians. The verse seems to be based on a borrowed text, which has been adapted or translated into the Estonian language. The words have been chosen to match the rhythm and form an end-rhyme.

Kirgis, kirgis, kilmandaa,

Sõitis kireva lehmaga!

[Kirgiz, Kirgiz, *kilmandah,*

Rode a dappled cow!]

ERA, CD 280 (25) < Nikolaevka village, Novosibirsk Oblast < woman, born in 1917 (1999).

*When we were children, the Kazakhs rode here on horseback. And we sang:
Kasak, kasak, kilmandaa,*

Viska sitta silmaga!

[Kasakh, Kasakh, *kilmandah,*

Shovel shit with your eye!]

And ran back indoors, closed the latch so that the Kazakh wouldn't catch us.

ERA, CD 14 (23) < Tsvetnopolye village, Omsk Oblast < woman, born in 1939 (1997).

Mocking verses and cautionary tales are specified in the form and they reveal a group-centred point of view. We cannot state with certainty that Estonians' attitude was patronising, as could be assumed by the sayings, children's cautionary tales and historical narratives.

The boundaries are maintained by means of basic oppositions. The lifestyle fostered by the Turkic peoples, for example the Kazakhs, their living in yurts and engaging in nomadic herding, was clearly different from the sedentary life of villagers and prepared the ground for the emergence of various stereotypes, such as the opposition of the savage/civilised nation. The Kazakhs and other ethnic groups were forced to lead a sedentary life and settle in villages after the establishment of the Soviet regime. This way the stereotype of the savage/civilised nation was also strengthened by the governing rule that disapproved of the nomadic herding life.

In general terms, Estonians in Siberia perceive the neighbouring Turkic peoples negatively as strangers, even though the negative perception is not identified with hostility. However, foreigners are often laughed at or ridiculed and given nicknames.

Universal mocking could indicate serious hostility; yet, it could also be created as a means of entertainment and for making fun of somebody. Although some of them are fairly sharp (“shovel shit with your eye”), they are not very common among Estonians. In contrast, the Russians have plenty of folklore sayings, nicknames and proverbs associated with the Tatars (Draitser 1998: 115–116; Dal 1957).

As already mentioned, Estonian folklore is not related to the earlier history of Siberia. Contrary to Estonian folklore, in Russian folklore Turkic peoples have deep roots and a historical background. Therefore sayings, nicknames, and children’s cautionary tales occur sporadically and they do not feature such a deep significance as in Russian folklore.

STEREOTYPES

Conceptions of the Turkic peoples are based on several **specific stereotypes**. Stereotypes and prejudices are connected with horses: selling horses, riding horses, and eating horse meat. The most frequently occurring theme in the stories of Estonians in Siberia is eating habits. Religion has been an important factor shaping different culinary traditions, and, naturally, plays an important role in the differentiation between “us” and “them”. The traditional Islamic dogmas of the Sunni Muslims (Kazakhs, Tatars, and others) prescribe strict culinary restrictions, such as banning pork and alcohol, and preference for horse meat and lamb products. The tradition is no longer strictly followed in Siberia, but in Tatar families ethnic foods are still prepared according to traditional recipes (Valeev & Tomilov 1996: 106). The Kazakh ethnic cuisine also includes camel milk products, such as kumiss⁵.

The Tatars don't have such a table, or a bed, they sleep on polots (bunk beds). And sit with their feet under the butt, that's why their legs are crooked. And they didn't eat pork. They brought along horse meat, horse sausages to Maali's place. They had no minced meat, only these big pieces.
EFA I 18, 37 (1) < Lileika village, Omsk Oblast < village women (1996).

Apart from the lifestyle, stereotypes were also associated with physical appearance: crooked legs, slit eyes, dark skin, and the more general stereotype of dirt and bad odour.

Representatives of a foreign group are **traditionally depicted** as filthy, unkempt, and smelling badly (Douglas 2002 [1966]: x-xii, 2–7). These stereotypes occur in Verkhonii (Upper) Suètuk Estonians in Krasnoyarsk Krai, who live side

by side with the Khakas and the Tuva (Tuisk 1999: 89–91). For example, there is a story about a Tuva girl who had never been to sauna:

– *Ruosi of Tihu told me, they were in Tuva and, you see, the Tuva had never been to sauna. Said that a young girl, Mannu of Mõistiku, was there and the Estonians of our village were and lived there. And well, once they had taken her to the sauna by force, the 17-year-old said, pulled her by force, many of them, and took her to the sauna and heartily whisked her and bathed her... And the next Saturday she came herself... [Laughter]*

– *Who was that?*

– *A Tuva girl.*

– *But before that she didn't know [the sauna], smelled like a horse.*

RKM, Mgn. II 4371 (22) < Verkhonii Suetuk village, Krasnoyarsk Krai < people of Verkhonii Suetuk village (1992).

Real life contacts, closer relations between different ethnic groups, and getting to know one another refute the stereotypes and change ethnic attitudes towards the Turkic peoples. The following is a narrator's response to the researcher's question about what people thought of the Tatars. As the narrator speaks quite adeptly about the Tatars' washing habits, we could presume that she has had some first-hand experience in it. It is good to remember that the story was recorded in Nikolaevka village in the northern part of Novosibirsk Oblast, now populated by the local Baraba and other Siberian Tatars.

There are many Tatars here, the Tatars were and lived even here, in our village. The Tatars did nothing bad, they held on to their faith. Ate horse meat and... You see, when he went to the outhouse, he took along a towel and a water jug and all. Was holding the jug, this iron jug all the time. Had it ready, water inside, so as soon as he had to go, he took the jug along. So he washed himself over there and. But the Estonians, or the Russians, did not have such a custom.

ERA, CD 280 (25) < Nikolaevka village, Novosibirsk Oblast < woman, born in 1917 (1999).

Although this narration is not presented in a negative key, the narrator regards the different custom of another nation so remarkable that it is worth mentioning.

In general terms, Estonians in Siberia perceive the neighbouring Turkic peoples negatively as strangers, even though the negative perception is not identified with hostility. Instead, foreigners are often laughed at or ridiculed. Thus the term 'adversary' seems more appropriate in this case than 'negative stranger'. An ethnic group constructs an antagonist to whom they oppose them-

selves. Although descriptions of another nation have not always been presented in a negative key, they still speak about a foreign people different than us.

For Estonians in Siberia the Turkic peoples occupy an important place in conceptions about the Others and thus they have been labelled with several specific and general stereotypes. The more frequently recurring themes in the narratives of Siberian Estonians are the eating habits, the religious practices, and the lifestyle of the other ethnic groups. Quite widely practiced is the cautionary formula told to misbehaving children – “A Kirgiz will come and take you away!” – and the alleged practice of the Kirgiz to kidnap children (which will be discussed below).

One's own ethnic identity is built up on the opposition to another nation. For the Estonians in Siberia, the folklore and perceptions about different Turkic peoples are important for self-identification and categorisation of the neighbouring ethnic groups. It also helps the Estonians to formulate one of the main questions, the master narrative, of their history: Who are we on this Siberian land? This is one of the ways to talk about history and identity.

INCREASING INTERGROUP CONTACTS

Certain texts manifest outright hostility and fear. It is shown in people's attitudes and opinions, which, however, are not in correlation with one another. People's opinions can be transformed, for example, on the basis of education. However, Allport maintains that the best way to change people's attitudes is through personal contacts (Allport 1958: 250–267). Yet, he also claims that increasing intergroup contacts may reinforce negative prejudices.

Explicit dislike for the Turkic peoples can be expressed in connection with mixed marriages and multi-ethnic villages. In these contexts the names ‘Kazakh’ and ‘Tatar’ are used as generic names for another, foreign nation, rather than to denote a member of a concrete ethnic group:

– Orava village used to be a real Estonian village, yet now it abounds with the Kirgiz and the Kazakhs.

EFA I 19, 90 (3) < Novyi Revel village, Omsk Oblast < woman, born in 1916 (1999).

– I agree to everything, but not have a Kazakh in my home [as a son-in-law]!

EFA I 20, 15 (4) < Tsvetnopolye village, Omsk Oblast < women, born in 1937 and 1939 (1997).

– They have wrecked the Estonian village, the Tatars and the Setus are coming in.

EFA I 18, 126 (17) < Mikhailovka village, Omsk Oblast < woman, born in 1920 (1996)⁶.

It is true that in the course of time the settlement pattern of Siberia, as well as the closeness of intergroup contacts, has undergone changes; for example, as concerns different nations residing in different villages or parts of villages. In connection with the establishment of kolkhozes in the 1930s, both farmsteads and villages were concentrated in the central settlements of kolkhozes. The 1960s witnessed the launch of a campaign to expand collective farms and abolish small, so-called ‘unpromising’ villages in Western Siberia. People moved to larger, ‘prospective’ settlements, which, as a result of migration, developed a multi-ethnic population (Lotkin 1996: 35–65). These processes concerned the villages of both the Tatars and Estonians, as well as the Kazakhs’ settlements.

By today the proportion of Estonians has decreased in practically all the Estonian villages in Western Siberia, exceeding 60% only in small villages in the periphery.

In 1927, 488 people lived in Orava village (Korovushkin 2008: 151); by 1989, the number had decreased to 154, 70% of them being Estonians⁷, 18% Russians and 10% Germans. Most probably, it is the number of Russians that has increased in the village, not that of the Kirgiz and the Kazakhs.

Tsvetnopolye⁸, which was an Estonian-German village, was merged with a Kazakh settlement; the Kazakhs have also moved to Ryzhkovo village. Yet, according to statistical data, in the late 20th century the Kazakhs did not constitute the majority in any former Estonian village (ibid.: 191–193). Although some Kazakhs and a few Tatars have moved to Estonian villages, the majority of newcomers of other nations in the villages are Russians.

The situation with marriages is the same. Already beginning in the 1940s, West-Siberian Estonians married people of other nations (mainly Russians) rather than their own compatriots (Lotkin 1996: 134–137; 168–172).

Today, villages and families of single ethnicity are largely a thing of the past. Increasingly closer cross-national communication and multi-ethnic villages have become a reality. The current older generation is socially active and political changes have been rapid.

Folklorist Eda Kalmre has studied rumours about sausage factories, which were told in Tartu after the Second World War. When the Soviet rule was established in Estonia, there was much violence related to the state of war and repressions. The social structure of the population changed radically: new people, predominantly immigrants, occupied the position of power. All the fears associated with lack of food became mingled, and, as fear of a foreign people is

related to their eating habits, sausage made of horse meat was unacceptable and unappetising for Estonians also at that time (Kalmre 2013: 81–84). This urban legend expressed the community's attitude towards an alien culture, but also testified to the fact that “malevolent savage Others may take control and impose their savage ways on everyone” (Kalmre 2013: 94–95).

The mixing of different fears and dread of strangers can also be detected in the current narratives of the Turkic peoples. The older generation often has the task of embedding social norms about what kind of behaviour is appropriate and what is disapproved. In addition to the disappearance of own language and culture, the informants have found it problematic to accept and adapt to the foreign culture. In contrast to one's own group, a stranger (intruder) is a threat to the stability and existence of the group.

INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS WITH TURKIC PEOPLES

More idiosyncratic traits are added to the descriptions when people talk about their personal contacts with the members of the said ethnic group. These are memorates that describe personal experiences and emotions, including fear.

The folklore materials of West-Siberian Estonians present a range of examples in which close but cursory contacts with another nation have caused apprehension.

Several women (for example, from the villages of Staryi Revel, Rozental and Orava) claimed to have been seriously afraid of the Kirgiz. Often the fear is reflected in the stories from their childhood or youth.

– But have the Kirgiz been here as well?

– There used to be an awful lot of Kirgiz after the war. They ate, abducted children and ate them. And when Mom left for work, I was afraid. Usually there were no curtains or anything covering the windows, so we hid behind the oven and under the bed and wherever. Then they banged at the doors and sometimes were behind the windows and, you know, smashed doors and. We feared these Kirgiz, there were so many of them and they were hungry. Went to all the houses in the village for anything they could lay their hands on.

ERA, CD 414 (11) < Rozental village, Novosibirsk Oblast < woman, born in 1935 (1999).

The next narrator worked as a cook at a kolkhoz with multi-ethnic population.

– But then didn't want [to marry] a person of another nationality [---]

– No, I am terribly afraid of the Kirgiz, oh, oh, oh, oh.

– *We had here in our field camp, I was there in 1947, I was at the field camp, I was the cook there. And then this Kirgiz wanted to snatch me, wanted to abduct me, one of these boys. I am going to take you with me, going to take you away and that's it.*

We often went there [to the Kirgiz]. "Dochka, ty kumys khochesh?" [Darling, would you like some kumiss?] I answered: "Net, net, net, net" [No, no, no, no]. This drink made of mare's milk. You know this kumiss, don't you?

– *Yes, I've heard about it, yes.*

– *But I've actually seen it. They say that there are worms on the bottom. Fie! Fie, I am scared! [Laughter] I am so terribly scared. I said: "No". ERA, CD 7 (27) < Staryi Revel village, Omsk Oblast < woman, born in 1924 (1997).*

Fear and a distrustful attitude towards the Kirgiz might be caused by various factors.

In Estonian folklore Central Asian and other nomadic peoples – the Kirgiz, the Bashkirs, the Tatars – occur in the legends about looters and dog-faced creatures.⁹ The texts frequently mention that they plunder, abduct and eat humans (women, children) and feed on horse meat.

The general conceptions of the Kirgiz and the Tatars were also known across Europe. These conceptions and names have merged with other religious images and form new variants in different languages; for example, the word *tatar* has been associated with the reminiscences of the wars waged against different Asian and Turkic peoples.

The Turkic peoples and Russians have a set of beliefs and legends about both the Kirgiz and the Tatars. In these, the Kirgiz in Siberia, for example, sometimes act as thieves, but they are interested in kidnapping mostly women and children rather than stealing a fortune. In Russian historical songs and *bylinas* that have been recorded in Siberia, someone held captive by the Tatars often laments about the miserable fate (Byliny 1939: 86–87, 148–149). This belief is still valid today, which is also confirmed by another Russian narrator. According to the storyteller, there was a woman in their village whose mother had been kidnapped and whose descendants were half-blood.

The Kirgiz used to be impudent. Rushed (galloped) here on their horses, grabbed the girl and took off. They have good horses, they cannot be caught. Far into the steppes? You can't get to them. (Fedorova 1984: 90)

Legends about the Kirgiz who used to live on their lands are known also among the Turkish-speaking peoples in Tuva, Khakassia, the Altai Mountains, Yakutia, Buryatia and elsewhere. In the legends of the latter, the Kirgiz are depicted as a mighty, powerful nation, which in a way reflects the historical truth (Moldobaev 1993: 293).

In Russian folklore the Kirgiz have become a semi-mythological nation and sometimes this name involves several Turkic peoples. Alexander Panchenko, who has analysed sacrifice, cannibalism and killing of children in the Russian national religious movements of the 18th and 19th centuries, emphasises that these topics have had a complex and variegated history in the cultural tradition of both Russia and the whole Europe. Among other things, public consciousness uses these topics to interpret the 'alien' and 'unfamiliar' social order: often the strangers, i.e., people from another society, are presented as cannibals (Panchenko 2004: 34).

Panchenko holds that the description of an "alien" social group is constructed by the 'inversion' principle: the latter is often referred to as a system with transformed norms and therefore, in comparison to the interpreters' "own" culture, is regarded as a taboo. Material for the construction of such a reverse image is drawn from the cultural forms that give rise to an unusual feeling of anxiety and uncertainty. So the contacts of the society not only with another society, but also with another confession, so-called alien religion, are highly significant. In a way, it is like an adaptation mechanism to another culture and another nation (ibid.).

In the material under discussion, it also seems to be significant that images of kidnapping and eating of children have been attributed to the groups of another confession (Muslims), who were called *inovertsy* (people of a different faith) in Tsarist Russia. Also, different eating habits that have been highlighted in the descriptions of the Turkic peoples, are related to religious beliefs and cultural norms. On the one hand, alien groups are attributed behaviour regarded as a taboo or abnormal in one's own culture (kidnapping and eating children, taking people away), while on the other hand, alien religious beliefs are described as wrong (different eating habits).

A woman born in 1926 mentioned that she was terrified of the Kirgiz in her childhood. According to her, there were quite many Kazakhs or Kirgiz living in her home village, Zolotaya Niva, and Estonians had become a minority in the village formerly predominantly populated by Estonians (Kulu 1997: 207–209, 218). She considers it necessary to add that, judging by her personal experience, the Kirgiz are a fine nation.

– But the Kirgiz are Kirgiz, I'm terrified of them. A Kirgiz once came here on horseback, I was trembling so much and was so afraid that, oh god, the Kirgiz wouldn't put me on the horse.

ERA, CD 499 (24) < Zolotaya Niva village, Omsk Oblast < woman, born in 1926 (2000).

– But they, people here, are like Gypsies. They are very nice, not thieves, not ubistva ['killers']. He would never touch another person, if you socialise with a Kirgiz, he is your best friend.

ERA, CD 499 (26) < Zolotaya Niva village, Omsk Oblast < woman, born in 1926 (2000).

The views based on religious beliefs can be transmitted only when the other nation is not sufficiently known. When an unknown nation becomes more familiar and their behaviour is understood and becomes commonplace, these conceptions (for instance, eating children) phase out. An important factor in the perceptions about a nation is their relationship with narrators, i.e., the boundaries of distance. We may say that in reality the Turkic peoples are not well known and therefore different conceptions may exist.

Aivar Jürgenson maintains that this might be a case of political correctness: in the Soviet society it was a taboo to talk about international relations negatively (Jürgenson 2002: 22). What a person really thinks is not clear: the negative and positive opinions occur side by side. However, it is plausible that for contemporary Estonians the corresponding image of the Kirgiz and Tatars **may be** contradictory: on the one hand, they are distant and unfamiliar people who are feared, and on the other, the ones with whom one lives side by side every day. Social and political changes have been rapid during the lifetime of the older generation. The conception of these peoples is clearly changing. Similarly, the way how Turkic peoples, as one's neighbouring peoples in general, were perceived by the parents and grandparents of today's older generation, as well as by Estonian expatriates, was also different.

CONCLUSION

Similarly to other ethnic groups and nations, the Estonians in Siberia have an ethnocentric worldview: this means that everything divergent from their culture is viewed as negative. For example, Estonians definitely view the indigenous Turkic peoples in Siberia in a negative light. For Estonians in Siberia the Turkic peoples occupy an important place in the conceptions about the Others

and thus they have been labelled with several specific and general stereotypes. Although descriptions of another nation have not always been presented in a negative key, they still speak about a foreign people different than us. Explicit dislike for the Turkic peoples is expressed in the case of mixed marriages and multi-ethnic villages, although these peoples do not have such a role in the real assimilation process.

Oppositions are related to the nomadic lifestyle and a different faith, but also different appearance. The more frequently recurring themes in the narratives of Siberian Estonians are the eating habits, the religious practices, and the lifestyle of the other ethnic groups. Quite widely practiced is the cautionary formula told to misbehaving children: "A Kirgiz will come and take you away!" When discussing Estonian folklore about the Turkic peoples, of primary importance is cultural opposition, accompanied by religious opposition, rather than ethnic antagonism (one nation or another). People are vulnerable to the immersion of strangers, members of an alien group, into their villages and families. 'Strangers' in this case can be seen in perspective – they invade our territory and endanger the way of life and identity of the "Us"-group.

The aforementioned image of an "alien" is supported by the official institutional viewpoint. In the nationality policy of both Tsarist and Soviet Russia, minority groups were seen as being of secondary importance and "alien", and their rights to their own culture and identity were not recognised.

In reality, of course, there were no negative relationships between the ethnic groups and between individuals. Also, generally contacts were quite rare and became more frequent only as late as in the 1930s, when the establishment of collective farms brought a multiethnic population to the villages. Today, both Estonians and the Turkic peoples are endangered by assimilation. Ethnicity is not as important as previously, but this may vary by different persons and generations.

Social and political changes have been rapid during the lifetime of the older generation. Today elderly Estonians may have controversial attitudes towards the *kirgised* (the Kirgiz) and *tatarlased* (the Tatars): on the one hand, they are regarded as a menacing, distant and unfamiliar ethnic group, while on the other, they are people living side by side with Estonians day by day. As a woman from Ryzhkovo village said in 2000: "We have nothing to do with them; they live with their own kind."

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NOTES

- ¹ In the east, for example, in the Minusinsk Hollow in the southern part of Krasnoyarsk Krai, Estonians live side by side with the Khakas and the Tuva; in the Far East, with the Koreans and the Chinese.
- ² The Estonian Folklore Archives (established in 1927) are the central folklore archives in Estonia and are affiliated with the Estonian Literary Museum. The fieldworks discussed in this article have been initiated by Anu Korb, folklorist at the Estonian Folklore Archives, whereas I have taken part in collecting on eight different occasions. The collected materials are also held in the same archives.
- ³ Folklore collecting situation has been studied by Risto Järv (2000), who has analysed collecting situations of folk tales in Orava village.
- ⁴ The 1920s have been regarded as the “golden age” of nationality policy in the Soviet Union. Similar to other minority groups, Siberian Estonians also had their Estonian-language schools, newspapers and religious life. The influence of this era is considered as one of the factors causing the strong ethnic identity of Siberian Estonians today.
- ⁵ A beverage of mare’s fermented milk.
- ⁶ The percentage of Estonians in Mikhailovka is 49%. In some Estonian villages in Siberia, Russians are called Setus.
- ⁷ According to Ilia Lotkin, the percentage of Estonians in Orava village is 40% (Lotkin 1996: 49).
- ⁸ In 1996, the population of Tsvetnopolye village included 103 Kazakhs, 104 Estonians, 386 Russians, and 1263 Germans (in all 20 different nations) (Korovushkin 2008: 192; Jürgenson 1998: 137; Korb 2007: 26).
- ⁹ Human races different from the Caucasian race have often been regarded as dog-faced creatures, and they are notably aggressive towards baptised people with fair skin (Hiemäe 1998: 59). In addition to the name ‘the Turks’, the warriors plundering the land during the Russian-Livonian, Russian-Turkish and the Great Northern War were also called *paskiirid* or *paskirid* (the Baskirs) and *kirgesed* (the Kirgiz). However, today this tradition has faded away in Estonia.

ARCHIVAL SOURCES

- ERA, CD – Estonian Folklore Archives, digital sound recordings on CDs (1997–2002)
ERA Foto – Estonian Folklore Archives, photographic collection
EFA – Estonian Folklore Archives, manuscripts as of 1996
RKM, Mgn. II – Estonian Folklore Archives, analog sound recordings (1953–1993)

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