

Roza Laptander

# When we got reindeer, we moved to live to the tundra:

The Spoken and Silenced  
History of the Yamal Nenets



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**When we got reindeer, we moved to live to the tundra:  
The Spoken and Silenced History of the Yamal Nenets**

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February 2020  
Roza Laptander

**To Anna-Meretja**

**Remember your Nenets history and background**

## Abstract

This dissertation is about the role of silence and silencing in remembering the Yamal Nenets historical narratives about the past. The Nenets narratives in combination with individual songs tell the history of these nomadic people of the tundra from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until the present time on the Yamal Peninsula. I argue that Tundra Nenets transmit their historical narratives, traditional knowledge, and personal experiences about the past from one generation to another not only through spoken stories, but also by leaving some things unspoken. Nenets historical stories and narratives retain a system of knowledge and values, which unite several generations.

Silence in combination with spoken words has many important meanings in any story or historical narrative which can have particular social significance and a specific role in everyday life. Although silencing makes words unspoken, at the same time, it endows these unspoken words with a more powerful message, so that silencing can both help to keep and forget memories about the past.

General aspects of oral history theory helped in comparing and giving definitions of the Nenets life stories and narrative terms, which were used in this work. The stories analysed turned out to fall into three types of silence illustrating the roles of responsibility, demands and interests of society, and the political regime of the country.

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## List of transliterations

Nenets personal and family names, as well as place and rivers names, are written using the Library of Congress transliteration system for modern Russian, for example, the Nenets surname Хороля is written *Khorolia*, personal names Хаулы - *Khauly*, Ѓати - *Ngati*. Names for rivers are given in English translation Юрибей – the Yuribey River and Мордыяха – the Mordy-Yakha River.

Other Nenets words are based on transliteration of the Nenets orthography following Tapani Salminen's transcription of palatal consonants.

For example: *ilye"mya*, in square brackets its transcription [il'emia], in parentheses it is written by the Nenets orthography (иле"мя) with the English translation in single quotes 'a life story'.

*Ya' myidykhy ilye"mya* [ja m'idihi il'emia] (я' мидыхы иле"мя) 'an ancient story'; *nyewykhy ilye"mya* [n'evihi il'emia] (невыхы иле"мя) 'an old, past story'; *tyakhakui ilye"mya* [tiahakuj il'emia] (тяхакуй иле"мя) 'a recent past story'; *talytsui ilye"mya* [tal'chuj il'emia] (талыцуй иле"мя) 'a recent story'; *yedei ilye"mya* [jedej il'emia] (едэй иле"мя) 'a new story'.

Furthermore, to indicate the two specialized Nenets glottal stops, I make use of the apostrophe symbol: one apostrophe - ' - for the voiced (nasalizing) glottal stop (Rus. звонкий гортанный смычный) and two - " - for the voiceless (non-nasalizing) glottal stop (Rus. глухой гортанный смычный).

Chapter 4 provides the text of an individual song, written in Latin letters with translation into English. Other texts are given in English translation.

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# Introduction

This dissertation is on the role of silence and silencing in oral history. Through analysing silence in the example of the West Siberian Nenets people, it offers a new approach to understanding how small societies keep memories and stories about their past. This transforms the way in which we see the unfolding in Nenets society of oral history stories and narratives about past and recent events in the tundra that live in both individual and collective memory. An important emphasis in the analysis lies on the study of the communicative functions of silence, represented through a selective way of telling stories and careful choice of a certain language: Nenets, Russian, or the 'language' of silence. This leads us to a more holistic understanding of how the past lives in the present in a particular society.

The principal aim of the study is to suggest a new theory of the relative role of silence and words in oral history research. In order to achieve this aim, as a research question we need to ask about the meaning of silence and silencing during narration.

- How do Nenets cultural customs of silencing stories help to remember memories about the Nenets past and give their special meaning in people's life?
- Is there a common way how Nenets can use silence for keeping important information safe as common knowledge for open, restricted or closed access, for remembering it, but also forgetting?
- What is the influence of the dominant Soviet and later post-Soviet Russian culture with its historical background of a role of silencing among the Nenets, and what does this tell us about types of silencing common for the Nenets, and by extension perhaps also for other people of the former Soviet Union and people of the Arctic?

For answering these questions, we need to pay particular attention to the ways in which the place of silence and silencing in Nenets culture can not only depend on their function for the narrative discourse. We also need to analyse how their informative role during communication depends on demands and interests from within Nenets society.

This allows us to identify mechanisms of how individual and collective memories about past and recent history are saved within Nenets society. Understanding the history that is distinctive to the Nenets' life stories and memories about the past, we also clarify the importance of such stories as markers of Nenets identity. Furthermore, it contributes new insights into the influence of state norms and politics towards indigenous people, which is illustrated here from the very inside of an indigenous

society. Thus, while also taking into account the specifics of this particular situation, the present work also develops one possible way of understanding the importance of silence and silencing for research in oral history in human societies in general.

Oral history studies conducted in many countries have shown that the role of silence has been mentioned as a valuable component of oral narration. However, the role of silence has so far not been the focus of attention by oral historians in their effort to build general theoretical understandings, which also helps to explain why people hide and silence personal, group or collective memory stories (Abrams 2010:104; Passerini 1987). However, for a better understanding of oral history, it should be remembered that silence is an important component in almost every personal story and narrative. Moreover, silence has an important place within Nenets culture. While this is similar to many other Arctic cultures, it is significantly different from “Western” (including “Russian”) cultural perspectives. In Tundra Nenets culture, silence not only expresses emotions, it is also an important part of cultural norms and rules of behaviour and communication. However, the nature of Nenets silencing – the act of keeping certain information unspoken even when it is still significant – can have different backgrounds. The main research question of this work is to understand how different strategies of silence influence the informative fullness of narratives and the way that people want to recount and remember their past.

In the following chapters I shall investigate whether the silence that we observe during communication among the Yamal Nenets can be classified according to specific types, which influence not only remembering, but also ways of forgetting the past.

The Nenets represent the largest community of indigenous northern people in the Russian Federation. According to the Russian national census, as of 2010, 44,640 people recognized themselves as Nenets. The name Nenets means ‘people’. The Nenets live along the coastal area of the Barents and Kara Seas from the Kola Peninsula up to the Taimyr Peninsula. They represent the official titular nation of the Nenets Autonomous District (okrug) of the Arkhangelsk Oblast (province), and the Yamalo-Nenets. Many of them live in Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrugs (Districts) of Tyumen Oblast, the Komi Republic and Krasnoyarskii Krai. The Nenets language belongs to the Northern Samoyedic branch of the Uralic language family. It has two variations: Tundra and Forest Nenets. The Nenets traditional economy is based on reindeer herding, hunting and fishing.

According to the Russian National 2010 Census, among the 536,049 inhabitants of the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug (henceforth YNAO) there are officially 29,772 Nenets, which is 8.2% of the total Yamal population. There are two closely interrelated groups of Yamal Nenets. The first group lives and migrates with reindeer in the tundra. The other group lives settled in the district settlements and towns. We shall see that individuals and families can move between these categories, according

to changes in their fortune and circumstances. These two groups are well described in the works of ethnographers and anthropologists (Khomich 1976; Golovnev and Osherenko 1999; Stammler 2005; Kharyuchi 2001; Mukhachev et al. 2010; Liarskaya 2016; Serpiwo 2016).

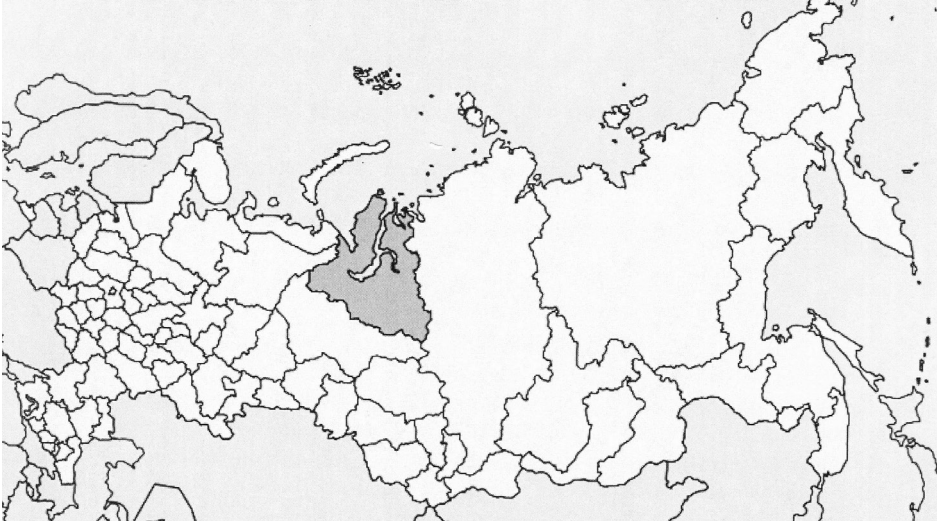


Figure 1.1. *The Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug on the map of Russian Federation*<sup>1</sup>.

The Yamal Peninsula is Russia's and one of the world's largest sites for natural gas extraction. Together with the world's highest population of domestic reindeer, this makes the Yamal a prime site for exploring relations between the Russian state, extractive industries and the nomadic population of the Yamal Peninsula (Forbes et al. 2009; Stammler 2011; Golovnev 2017). Even though the Nenets reindeer herders living in the tundra are successful in their reindeer herding work, the tragic events surrounding the reindeer loss from 2013 to 2019 – due to the icing in the tundra and lack of food for the reindeer – forced some of them to move their families closer to Russian settlements. Nowadays, the group of nomadic Nenets is one of the most vulnerable groups of the district's population. They do not have a secure income and are mostly 'unemployed' (i.e. they do not have another paid occupation). Many of them have no possibility of obtaining accommodation in the district settlements and villages. The only dwellings they have are *chums* -Nenets tents with reindeer skin covers. The only jobs they can do professionally are reindeer herding and fishing. They are good at hand-making traditional clothes and all other necessary items required for everyday life in the tundra. As authentic Arctic dwellers, they have

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1 Source: Wikimedia Commons: The Free Media Repository. By TUBS - Own work, 2010.

developed their unique culture over many centuries and this forms the ground of their stories and narratives.

## 1.2. Documentation of Nenets oral history

Until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Nenets language was completely oral, with only a few texts written for baptizing services by Russian Orthodox missionaries during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (*Bukvar' dlia samoyedov* 1895). Later during Soviet times, the Nenets language was further standardized. The first Latin-based orthography was created in 1931 in Leningrad (St-Petersburg). Three years later, the first ABC book for the Nenets, *Jadaj wada* 'New word,' was published (Prokofjev 1934). Later, because of the requirements of the Communist Party, in 1937 the Latin alphabet was replaced by Cyrillic script. All schoolbooks and other Nenets texts are now published in the Cyrillic alphabet (Lublinskaia and Laptander 2015). The first texts in the Nenets language and folklore were initially documented at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Finnish researcher Toivo Lehtisalo, a pioneer of Nenets folklore studies at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century introduced the Nenets folklore genres, categorizing the Nenets life stories as a separate sub-class of Nenets folklore. He also noticed that within the Nenets legends and individual songs, there was a separate genre of narrated stories or personal stories which he classified under the following headings: 1) Myths and Mythological stories; 2) Sacrificial prayers or incantations; 3) Ritual poetry; 4) Shamanic songs and tales; 5) Fairy tales; 6) Epos; 7) Individual songs; 8) Riddles; and 9) Personal stories about modern life.

This classification of the Nenets folklore genres is still very relevant to the present Nenets folklore and ethnographical studies. Even there are works about the Nenets individual songs (Niemi 1999; Pushkareva 2001). However, there was a very little study done about the Nenets personal stories. There is still no any special research about the Nenets private stories of people and collective narratives about the past and the present time. Within the Nenets life stories, *ilye"mya* particularly, in this work I would like to show the division and gradation of the Nenets personal, group and collective narratives within the time and personal belonging to people. I also do this study within connection of personal stories to individual songs of people and their families. I confirm that Toivo Lehtisalo did not elaborate this in his works, neither any other researcher before. In the present research, I develop further studies about Nenets personal stories and describe the role of individual songs for remembering the past. It is my contribution to the Nenets oral history studies and folklore. This work is done also from the perspective of exploring the various functional roles of silence in Nenets oral history narratives and songs.

The Nenets folklore texts which were documented during the Soviet time in the 1930s by Anton Pyrerka (Рѣра 1935, 1936), Osharov (1936), Viachalslav

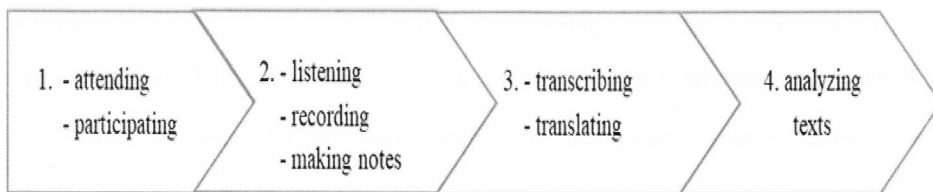
Tonkov (1936:38) and Grigorii Verbov (1937:4), represented the Nenets legends and stories concerning modern life in the Soviet tundra. In her books, Zinaida Kupriyanova (1960, 1965) categorized the different genres of Nenets folklore. She referred to Nenets personal stories as new narratives about contemporary life in the Soviet tundra and regarded such personal stories as a modern genre developed during the sovietisation of the tundra. On the one hand, this means that Russian researchers of Nenets folklore considered this way of narrating a personal story to be rather new (Kupriyanova 1960:19; Shcherbakova 1960; Tereshchenko 1990:26; Khomich 1995). On the other hand, Nenets folklorist Elena Pushkareva considers it to be ancient (Pushkareva 2001). Those Nenets stories recorded during Soviet time describe the positive influence of collectivisation on the life of tundra people. However, there are Nenets historical texts that have never been seriously studied, even though there are published Nenets texts about the history of the Tundra Nenets (Tereshchenko 1954; Susoi 1962; Golovnev 1999; Yangasowa 2001; Pushkareva 2000, 2001; Barmich 2014; Kharyuchi 2018). People tell their stories and stories about their past in their everyday life. They give interviews for the regional newspaper *Nyaryana Ngerm* about their life in the tundra and settlements. From two Yamal TV programmes in the Nenets language broadcast in Yar-Sale and Salekhard, only the second still tells about the life of the Nenets people. There are also two radio programmes per week where people tell stories and legends in the Nenets language.

The Nenets have a rich and unique oral tradition of telling stories and singing songs about the past. However, very limited research has been done on Nenets life stories and historical narratives about the past. In particular, there are many gaps in the research on Nenets oral history. At present, life in the tundra is not the same for the Nenets people as it was centuries ago. The process of transformations has influenced the Nenets' ways of communication with one another. Their memories about the past and their interpretations and connections to people's stories are also changing. For example, tundra people make new stories and new versions of old historical narratives to make them more appropriate for the present time.

### **1.3. Data sources and methodological aspects**

All interviews were collected on the Yamal peninsula and in the Tundra Nenets language. The data of narratives provides a reliable source of information with common benchmarks or touchstones that represent the old and recent historical events in the tundra. This thesis emphasizes that oral history performed in the original language serves not only to convey information and knowledge about the past, but it also reflects the specifics of its narratives and the cultural features of narration.

My work on collecting, documenting, describing and analysing Nenets oral history stories and narratives is a multi-layered process. I explain these specifics of the narrative research process as developed by Catherine Riessman in Figure 1.2.



*Figure 1.2. Levels of narrative research process by Riessman (1993).*

The work of collecting research data depends on one's role in observing, attending and participating in the life of people during fieldwork. Working with interviews means not only making recordings, but also listening to people's stories and making notes. Normally it is good to make transcriptions of the interviews after the field trip, with further translation texts into the target language for subsequent analysis.

The importance of a language as a research instrument and its distinctive role in anthropological studies was acknowledged specifically at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was the American anthropologist Franz Boas who argued that only through living with a people and learning their language that one could develop an accurate understanding of culture (McGee and Warts 1996:129). He believed that information, collected in local languages can help in getting better anthropological results (Boas 1904; Rohner 1969). Boas spent long periods of time studying the groups of Native Americans and trained his students to collect during their fieldwork, detailed empirical data about material culture, as well as, language and social behaviour. His works became known in cultural anthropology under the term cultural relativism, which argues that every culture has different ideas about the world, which can only be properly understood in terms of the people's own standards and values (Hendry 1999:9-10). Every world language has its own cultural norms of thinking, talking, remembering and silencing. This fundamental approach about relationships of language and representation were further developed by the Boas' students, who discussed in their works the norms of the language categories, which people use to think. Edward Sapir and Sapir's students studied this also in connection to the analysis of cognitive specifics of speaking in native languages and bilingualism (Sapir 1983; Whorf 1956; Lakoff 1987; Pavlenko 1999). This sagacity that a researcher should learn and speak the language of people with whom he or she works was mostly oriented to Western and Russian researchers who travelled to small communities of unknown people. However, since the development of a new generation of indigenous researchers, this concept gives more possibilities

to describe the specifics of the individual culture through the instruments of its language, specifics of communication and talks.

The Labovian narrative analysis method provides us with a better understanding of the structure of narratives (Labov and Waletzki 1997). The main motivation and consequences of using this narrative analysis is based on the aspect of selective performance of narratives, when during the process of narration any person pays attention to the focus about what to tell or not, because narratives or other discourses forms usually emphasize emotion and behavior in a culture (Linde 1993:47-48). As a result, the Labovian structural narrative analysis method allowed me to follow every narrative in the way of how people tell the main events, with further development of the events in narratives and their conclusions. In the original Labovian narrative analysis considering oral narratives of personal experience, Labov assumes the factuality of the events described or takes the degree of factuality as a problem for the analysis (Labov 2013). The present study is not concerned with postulating the independent existence of the actual events of the speaker's life or with the study of their relation to the narratives of the events. I am not concerned here with whether the narratives of the life story describe events that actually occurred, or whether people describe occurring events accurately. More important is the fact of how the speaker presents this presentation (Linde 1993). Martin Cortazzi refers to the same approach of narrative analysis by Labov and writes about the two social functions of narrative, "referential" and "evaluative" (Cortazzi 1993). Therefore, for me, it was important to evaluate a place of silence in texts and develop an explanation for the role of silence in narratives.

My curiosity to study the Nenets stories came without a plan to check the truthfulness of these stories, as for my work it was more important to find out how people evaluate their past and tell it to others. The analysis of the Nenets oral history narratives was done on the translated text in English. The other original stories in their original language are presented at the end of this dissertation in the Appendix.

Later I came across the work of prof. Robyn Fivush, who describes the distinction between being silent and being silenced: "when being silenced is contrasted with voice, it is conceptualised as imposed, and signifies a loss of power and self. But silent can also be conceptualised as being silent, a shared understanding that need not be voiced" (Fivush 2010:88-89).

According to Fivush, stories serve as an important cultural tool for expressing feelings and beliefs in the ways in which it is possible to construct a story about any past event, which can be related to the internal representation of that experience. This phrase led me to think that for Nenets culture it is also quite normal not to say things, which are thought to be known to other people, family members and friends. People can understand the meaning of the message of the other person, just because it is part of their shared knowledge. As in Nenets spoken history there are still parts that are silenced selectively by many people. Such stories usually have a

historical background which explains why people want to keep their stories silenced. Such ways of being silent can be quite normal in the tundra. While, in turn, being silenced can have different reasons and explanations, which I am going to describe later in Chapter 3.

#### **1.4. Working with data**

I have transformed selected digital audio recordings of interviews and conversations into transcribed texts. The narrative analysis includes work on transcribing stories. Such work changes digital data both in form and in function (Halai 2007:347). This process of transformation of recorded audio data into textual form is a multi-layered process including further translation of texts into the target language for making their analysis. The conversion of field records into research texts is a theoretically complicated process requiring further analysis and interpretation of texts, which I am going to describe in the next chapter. The Nenets records were translated from Nenets into English, but also into Russian. I do not give a detailed description of the specifics of the translating of the Nenets narratives. Even though this part of the work is very interesting. However, I realized that for this dissertation it is more important to represent the description and the role of silence. For the detailed description of the specifics of the Nenets texts translation see the article Laptander 2008.

#### **1.5. Back to the Nenets**

Officially, I started my work on Nenets oral history when I was awarded a grant from the Finnish KONE Foundation for working on the project “Socio-cultural change of Uralic language minorities in 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> century Siberia, analysed through Nenets life stories”, which I continued in January 2011 with the ORHELIA project team (Oral History of Empires by Elders in the Arctic) under supervision of Dr Florian Stammler (Dudeck et al. 2015). From 2014-2018, my field work was supported by the HUMANOR project, with project leader prof. Bruce Forbes. Later in 2017, I encountered my second supervisor, Dr Tatiana Argounova-Low, who helped me develop my research further.

Unofficially, my first introduction to Nenets oral history dates back to my early childhood. I was born in a family of Nenets reindeer herders, far in the tundra near my family’s sacred place. From my mother, I know that I was the very first grandchild of my grandfather. When he was back from his long trips on the Arctic tundra, he always asked someone to bring me to him. He tried to tell me different stories about our family. Unfortunately, I was too small to understand and remember them. Nevertheless, the most important family story is told about my Nenets name

(I cannot reveal it here, but later I will explain why). It is the name of the woman who found my grandfather in the tundra when he was a baby. It was an epidemic year during which many Nenets people died. This woman came to visit her relatives' camp. When she arrived there, everyone was dead except for one little boy. This woman took him with her and raised him as her own child. She supported and helped my grandfather all her life. I was born many years after she passed away. My mother told me later that when I was born, my grandfather told this story to his children. It was probably also important for him to keep memories about his own family background because he was an orphan and did not remember his mother and father. I believe that this old man could have told me more stories about our family. However, since my father passed away, we stopped having any contact with my grandfather and his relatives. I was two years old when my mother and I moved to a little Siberian town. Thereafter, Nenets culture and language moved far away from me. I got a new Russian name, a new family and never used my Nenets given name again.

After graduation from the Russian State Pedagogical University of Herzen in Saint Petersburg, I started to work on Nenets language documentation for the completion of my Russian PhD dissertation about the grammatical features of the Nenets language. I should say that during my early research, I did not pay special attention to Nenets oral history. My interest in this aspect came much later, when I met many Nenets people and collected their stories about the history of the Yamal tundra. Then I realized that these stories have a very deep connection to my own personal story. All together they were like a long chain that returned me to the Nenets people and culture. I realised that every story has important and very symbolic meanings for the people who shared them with me. I believe that most of these stories can be the same as what my grandfather told me in my childhood but, unfortunately, I forgot. Thus, when I heard them again, thanks to the Nenets elders, I was re-immersed in the world of Nenets oral history. Some of the Nenets families even adopted me, and now I am their travelling daughter and granddaughter. This made me look more carefully at the explanations of their stories, with special attention to verbal and nonverbal ways of performance. I started to listen to messages in stories similar to Bonvillain (1993). Then I found stories that were kept silenced, but the stories of other people opened them. Furthermore, I noticed that Tundra Nenets use the official Russian language for telling stories openly, while they use Nenets for keeping their messages silent from Russians. This will be described and explained later in Chapter 3.

When I started my work on Nenets oral history, at first it was difficult for me to find the right direction on how I would like to represent the Nenets specifics of remembering the past to the world, publicly. Therefore, I published a few articles about the Nenets. However, I admit that these articles do not cover the same topic as this thesis. The Nenets' unique ways of remembering the past, which I am going to describe further, are under the influence of modernity. Through this work I would

like to show that the Nenets, as a small people of the Russian Arctic, are also under this influence.

When I started this research, I was interested in studying the Nenets' ways of remembering the past, historical background stories, national and personal identity and the ways in which these are reflected in their everyday life stories and narratives. Additionally, I had a personal interest in learning about my family background and history. In order to conduct this study, I travelled over several years to the Yamal tundra. There I lived and migrated with Tundra Nenets, talked with their elders and listened to old stories and songs about the past. I visited settlements where I conducted interviews with Nenets elders and young people. As a result, I collected a diversity of Nenets personal stories, songs, and individual, local and collective memory narratives, which prove that Nenets have a rich collection of stories about their past and modern life in the tundra in conditions of intensive industrialisation, climate change and the recent events of reindeer loss on the Yamal Peninsula.

## **1.6. Key storytellers and co-authors**

This research about the Yamal Nenets' spoken and silenced history was completed with the help of many tundra people who live and migrate in the Yamal Peninsula from the area of the Polar Ural Mountains to the northern top of the peninsula.

The very first person who introduced me to the history of the Nenets was my grandfather. He was a reindeer herder from the Baydaratskaia tundra. I am responsible for his and my family history by taking care of my silenced (secret) Nenets name. Another person who introduced me to Nenets history is my mother Tatiana Laptander (b.1958), maiden name Khudi. She has a rich knowledge of Nenets stories, fairy tales, and individual songs, which was passed down from her mother Alexandra Khudi (1916-1996), maiden name Laptander, whose mother was Serotetto from the fishing Nenets family from Marra-Sale on the Yamal Peninsula. Another important person for me is my maternal uncle Vladimir Khudi (1936-2013), the only son of my grandmother. When I started to work on collecting Nenets stories, he opened the door for me to the wider Nenets history and stories of people on the Yamal Peninsula based on stories and memories of his own experience as well as those of his mother.

I would like to say many thanks to other people who shared their memories with me:

Achamboy (Ngachmboy) Serotetto (b.1938) – son of a reindeer herder from the Yarsalinskaia tundra, Yamal'skii Municipal District. He lost his father when he was a little boy. He grew up in the village of Yar-Sale. Achamboy fished for the state fishing farm on the Ob River. Later he worked in the village as a master-builder and did public work for the Communist Party. When Achamboy married his wife, Sofia, he

started to buy reindeer. In the 1970s, when they got enough reindeer, they moved with all their family to live in the tundra.

Vladimir (Ngesoda) Khudi (1936-2013) – son of a reindeer herder. Ngesoda lost his father when he was eight. Since that time, he worked and helped his mother and his three junior sisters. In the early 1950s, Ngesoda collected enough reindeer to live in the tundra. He worked in the state kolkhoz (collective farm), and from the 1960s, in the Baydaratskii sovkhov (a larger collective state farm) as a polar foxhunter. He lost his job in the 1990s along with many other polar foxhunters and reindeer herders of the Baydaratskii state enterprise. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the director of the sovkhov, Nikolai Babin, reorganized his organization. He invited all tundra workers to come to an urgent meeting in Beloyarsk to make new working contracts. Unfortunately, the reindeer herders did not manage to come to the sovkhov's office in time. Many of them who were absent from the meeting lost their jobs. On their working record cards, it was written, outrageously: "Fired, due to absence from the work place". Therefore, nowadays many old reindeer herders, who had dedicated their entire lives to working for the state collective farm, cannot use their working time records to generate proper pensions.

Khauly (Khariton) Laptander (b. 1946) – son of a reindeer herder from the Payutinskaia tundra, Priural'skii Municipal District. He worked in the Baydaratskii state collective farm as a polar foxhunter for 33 years. He started to work there on November 25<sup>th</sup>, 1965 but lost his job in the 1990s. Khauly lost most of his reindeer during the icing event of 2013-2014 and now he lives in a town of Aksarka.

Ngati Serotetto (1936-2015) – son of a reindeer herder. In 1937, his father's reindeer herd was confiscated by the Soviet state. When his family built up enough reindeer, they returned to the tundra.

Seko Lando (1936-2012) – daughter of a reindeer herder. Her father was arrested as an enemy of the Soviet state. Seko worked with her mother at the state-fishing farm. In 1946, her mother died from starvation. Seko was sent to the orphanage in Tyumen. After finishing school, she returned to Yamal and married a reindeer herder. Seko got all her stories from her husband's grandmother.

Irina Anagurichi (b.1936) is originally from the Kutop'yogan (Yer'yakha) River area, daughter of a fisherman. When her father built up enough reindeer, they moved to live in the tundra. She married a reindeer herder. Irina lived most all her life near the Yuribey River. After the icing event of 2013-2014, she lost most of her reindeer herd. Now she lives in the village of Yar-Sale.

Nyadma Puiko (1943-2017) – son of a reindeer herder from the Ob River.

Nyadma Puiko (1958-2016) – son of a reindeer herder from the Yuribey River.

## 1.7. Book outline

Chapter 1 presents the central research subject and the main research questions of this work, with a special focus on silence and silencing during narration. Here I introduce my personal role in doing research on Nenets oral history narratives and on my key co-authors.

Chapter 2 presents methods and collected empirical material. This part of the work describes the specifics of my fieldwork among tundra reindeer herding and fishing people on the Yamal Peninsula. In this chapter, I discuss my work as a native anthropologist/researcher in the field, laying out the specifics of doing research among the Nenets people and the ethics of doing research in the community of one's own origin.

A section of this chapter is dedicated to describing the analysis of the data: the transcribing, transliteration and translation of the Nenets texts. Here I give examples of Nenets stories about the past, providing details of Nenets verbal and nonverbal communication in the narration of stories about the past.

The relationship of the theoretically grounded and introduced concept of "silence" in the formulation of a pre-planned set of research questions and results emerging from the analysis of the data could be explained by the following structure.

Chapter 3 is the theoretical part of the research where I present the role of silence in oral history. In addition, I compare scholarly oral history terminology with Nenets words for life stories and historical narratives. Furthermore, this chapter introduces the role of narrative analysis in describing the ways that Nenets tell their stories and narratives with special attention to different strategies of speaking and silencing during narration. I explain here why the Nenets describe special events in the tundra using special messages. For example, this alludes to possible communication with spirits of the tundra. I describe people's silencing of personal names and how it helps them to remember their family kinship. Since I have a Nenets background, this made me familiar from early childhood with the main concepts of silence, common in Nenets culture. This present research gives me a chance to describe it using the scientific approach. This chapter includes a discussion of the Nenets rules of performing collective stories, with connection to individual songs and personal life stories. Furthermore, I describe the role of Nenets individual songs for remembering and forgetting stories about the past. The significance of this part of the work lies in its typology of silence that can be noticed in Nenets everyday communication.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 present a series of case studies that reveal a range of situations in which stories are silenced. In particular, these examples develop our understanding of the roles of three types of silence within spoken narratives.

In Chapter 4, I introduce the notions of telling and silencing a special type of knowledge, based on four examples of Nenets personal stories, individual songs

and historical narratives. Here I discuss how Nenets people share knowledge and remember their main conception of living and surviving in the tundra. However, the Nenets consider individual songs to be private, following strict rules governing their performance. While these individual songs comprise an important part of Nenets collective memory stories, they cannot be told openly to everyone. These songs describe special events with special messages, for example, about possible communication of human beings with spirits of the tundra. Stories about individuals discuss the importance of supporting one another, and the rules of hospitality and forgiveness.

Chapter 5 represents a collection of stories about one historical event in the tundra. This chapter shows how the Nenets describe their past as a collection of family stories and collective historical narratives about one particular tundra family tragedy. This example shows that societies remember their past not only by personal stories, but also as collective memory narratives. Here I discuss the relevance of speaking or keeping silent when it comes to stories of local Nenets community history in connection with stories about individuals and their family members. Such stories also introduce the Nenets' traditional customs for hunting in the tundra and fishing in the sea. From these stories, people learn lessons about possible dangers that humans can incur by way of punishments from the spirits. In this chapter I describe how the Nenets collectively opened a silenced story, not for remembering - but for forgetting it, by this way they broke their silenced agreement to keep it safe.

Chapter 6 shows how the tundra people may silence their stories due to fear of the state. Here, a series of interviews is presented about two recent tragedies in Yamal: the icing events and the anthrax outbreak in the tundra. Based on selected examples of interviews, I show the difference among Nenets people in terms of how extreme situations such as tragedies of reindeer loss are discussed. During my work, I noticed that tundra people are very careful about discussing their problems on the record. I think the possible explanation is that tundra people consider this to be dangerous for their safety. On the one hand, they believe that the icing was a natural disaster that nobody can intentionally create. On the other hand, reindeer herders believe that the anthrax outbreak was a special action of the state to reduce the number of reindeer. Yet, reindeer herders are hesitant to say this on record because they cannot prove it. In addition, they speak overcautiously with the regional authorities about the difficulties and problems of working with reindeer and fishing.

In Chapter 7 I discuss the meaning of contemporary silence and silencing, which were detected during research with a detailed explanation of their nature and different roles in the Nenets life.

In the conclusion (Chapter 8) I summarise my research results on Nenets spoken and silenced history, mainly illustrating the transformation of the Yamal Nenets' individual memories about special tundra events into contemporary collective memory narratives with different roles of silence and silencing. In addition, my work

on ‘unpacking’ silenced stories helps to describe the role of religion, the meaning of emotions, and the importance of forgiveness, embarrassment, protest and fear in the life of the Yamal Nenets.

## **2. Working with Nenets Oral History: Data Sources, Methods and Reflections**

### **2.1. Introduction**

To collect data for my research during the period from 2010 until 2019, almost every year I made one or two trips to the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District, Western Siberia. Quite often, I was in the Priural'skaia tundra near the Polar Ural Mountains and in the Yamal tundra on the Yamal Peninsula. In the Yamal tundra, I lived with Nenets families near the Yuribey, the Mordy-Yakha, and the Ob Rivers. I conducted part of my fieldwork in villages, especially during the Reindeer Herders' Festival days, which bring many reindeer herders together into villages. I attended this festivity mostly in Aksarka, the administrative centre of the Priural'skii Municipal District, and Yar-Sale. Altogether, I made around 300 hours of audio recording of Nenets stories and narratives about the past.

The preliminary analysis of the linguistic situation among the Tundra Nenets in the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District revealed three groups of language speakers. In the first group are Nenets elders who mostly speak Nenets in their everyday life. In the second group are middle-aged Nenets elders. They represent the largest number of my respondents. I collected most of my interviews in the tundra from reindeer herders who live and migrate in the tundra with reindeer, but there is also a smaller group of fishing Nenets. Furthermore, I collected interviews in settlements from Nenets elders who moved from the tundra to live in the Russian-speaking villages or towns. Many of my respondents were bilingual Nenets-Russian speakers. During my research, I noticed that the Nenets are very skilful in code switching, using their bilingual skills selectively to speak in Nenets or Russian. As in many other multi-language communities, the Nenets categorize the functions of their languages. The choice of one of these two languages during face-to-face communication or interviewing orients people as to the topics about which they can talk openly (Halai 2007; Deckert and Vickers 2011:161). The young Nenets who live in Russian-speaking environments speak only the Russian language, while Nenets children who have spent their early childhood in the tundra and are studying at the boarding schools can speak Nenets. However, they prefer to speak Russian, which is the language of their education and everyday communication with their peers (Laptander 2008, 2011).

When I conducted interviews with Nenets elders and young people, I spoke both Nenets and Russian. This allowed me to evaluate the different position of these languages in Nenets society. For all of my interviewees, Russian is the official

language of communication, even though Nenets may be the everyday language of communication between family members and friends. Yet, while some important parts of people's private stories can be told in Russian, for many of my Nenets respondents it was easier to tell stories in their vernacular language. I recorded a diversity of individual and traditional Nenets songs performed in the Nenets language. Additionally, I managed to collect very old Nenets legends and myths.

During my interview collection, I talked to narrators when they felt comfortable speaking in a natural and spontaneous way. I conducted the interviews in my respondents' chums or in their apartments with people they knew well. It is a pity that I did not make video recordings; this was because tundra people usually do not like video cameras. However, when I used a voice recorder, people were more relaxed telling stories and they did not even pay attention to the recording equipment. Of course, there are interviews in which people asked me to leave their stories anonymous. There were also cases in which narrators asked me to stop the recording when they did not want their words to be recorded.

The tundra was the most preferred place for my respondents to tell me their stories. In the tundra, people feel more comfortable and free to speak in Nenets. They prefer to use this language to tell their personal stories and historical narratives about life in the tundra, its people and the stories about them. I also noticed that the Nenets traditional way of narrating the past helps them remember stories about the past.

During my work, I came across many nuances and difficulties collecting narratives from Nenets people, even as a member of their society. Sometimes people did not want to reveal personal stories that they have tried to keep silenced. In place of their personal life stories, some elders chose to tell me stories about other people. It is common everywhere. People prefer to talk about other people's secrets than to reveal their own! This phenomenon made me look for an explanation for why people would try to keep some of their stories silenced. I should say that it was not always possible to determine the reason for silence in stories when people were silent during interviewing. Especially during my first interviews with elders, I did not know why they would suddenly stop talking and make a long pause, apparently as if thinking about something. I thought that I was not correct in asking them my question, so I would attempt to change the topic of conversation. However, I later realized that I would have better respected this silencing by remaining silent myself, waiting for people to continue their story or to move on to another one – that is, recognising their silence as a necessary part of their telling.

Nenets personal stories and collective narratives have many important meanings in Nenets society. It is important to note that my Nenets background gave me several advantages in understanding and describing the Nenets specifics of speaking and silencing stories and narratives about the past. However, it took me a long time to understand the place of silence and silencing in stories. Due to

the specifics of my work on collecting interviews, I was also a main listener of all recorded stories.

It must be admitted that studying silence in situations of communication, even, or perhaps especially in the insider position, was challenging. It is not an easy task to describe all the possible moments and roles of silence and silencing during communication. Moreover, I must say that all findings and conclusions in this research were made from the perspective of my interpretations of Nenets texts and individual songs. I observe and describe in this thesis the types of silence which got my attention, as I wanted to understand already from my early youth why Nenets elders did not want to tell us young people all the truth about the past. However, since I collected some stories about the past, I was astonished, because they do not tell the same information that I knew from my Soviet childhood about the historical past of the tundra. This work developed also my critical way of thinking about what is written in the official historical texts and narratives, but also what people can say between the lines, which also represent a special type of the silencing of the half-said. This work is not dedicated to psycholinguistic studies of speech. Here I studied the life of ordinary people, told in their everyday stories and narratives, and have retold them to the wider audience of world people, who can also be familiar with similar situations and circumstances of keeping silence. This in turn, helped to clarify the possible contents and meanings of the unsaid by observing the occasions of silence during the acts of communication.

Therefore, my work developed my personal ability to listen to other people and their stories. How I collected these stories also gave me a better understanding of why people did not reveal everything in their stories, leaving something unsaid, silenced. During my work of analysing and describing stories and narratives, I also paid special attention to Nenets traditional norms of speaking and silencing in personal stories, and individual songs, observing the occasions of silence during narration. In this way, my work of analysing Nenets stories and narratives helped me to formulate a description of the specifics of speaking and silencing the past in Nenets culture. In the dissertation, I have tried to concentrate on the concept of meaning, why people could keep unsaid some parts of their stories, even if other people around could know them. Therefore, for me, it was helpful to talk to other people and ask why this or that person did not want to tell his or her life story. Here in this work I describe my position of an insider and try to understand different meanings of such silencing from a personal perspective. I should say that my Nenets background helps me to understand the possible reasoning for keeping silence and silencing. However, only specialist literature gave me the theoretical explanation and description of silence, as part of cultural communication, which helped me to describe and explain the Nenets types of silence in Chapter 3.

## 2.2. Limitations and benefits of doing anthropology at home

In 2009, I went to the tundra to conduct my first fieldwork. I was in the Yarsalinskii Reindeer-herding Brigade 2. I recall that I introduced myself as a researcher, and I also said that I had a Nenets background. People welcomed me very warmly. My hostess gave me the Nenets female reindeer clothes – *yagushka*. I noticed that by changing my Western clothes into Nenets, I also received a new role as I was included in the everyday life and work of the camp. I was supposed to do the same work that all Nenets women did inside and outside of the chum before and after migrations. I would go gather wood for making fires and bring water into the tundra. I helped hold the rope to keep reindeer in the corral before migrations. Even though I did not know how to drive a reindeer sledge and how to work with reindeer, I received four reindeer and a sledge for the next migration. My host was kind enough to give me a good reindeer harness, even though I did not know how to put it on the reindeer properly. I do not silence the fact that it was a very tough summer for me. During this time, not only did I have to become fully Nenets, but also in the process to learn how to live and work in the tundra like an ordinary Nenets woman. I realized that I had to learn this by watching how people do this and listening to what they told me. Therefore, the main instruments of my research were my eyes, ears and memory to remember things I saw, heard and talked to people about. This experience taught me that doing research among one's own nation works very differently from doing the same research in a non-native country. It also showed the benefits and limitations of doing work in the home environment. This anthropological approach, known as *anthropology at home* (Abu-Lughod, 2010; Mughal 2015), is also called *native anthropology* (Tsuda 2015). As it was noted by Garner (2016), there are many positive and negative nuances to doing research as a member of one's own society. In the academic world, there is a common belief that insiders cannot recognize specific cultural patterns of everyday life, while outsiders would pick them up right away (Bernard 2002; Hart 2010). However, I disagree with this belief because working at home with members of one's own nation can be more beneficial and productive with respect to new findings and results (Bernard 2002: 350; Yow 1997), although it does come with many limitations (Kondo 1986; Kikumura 1998; Kharuchi 2010; Tsuda 2015). Nonetheless, this approach helped me a lot in completing the present research about the Nenets spoken and silenced history. It also changed my previous attitude about my Nenets background and helped me to construct my personal identity as a member of Nenets society. Moreover, it developed my professional skills as an oral history researcher. I also noticed since my first years of work that there were many limitations and responsibilities regarding all personal stories I collected from the Nenets people. I even collected common collective memory stories about the past, but I will only publish those for which I received permission from the people to publish. The ethical considerations of my research made me believe that these

individual songs, personal stories and collective narrative interviews have their own personalities and very sensitive backgrounds.

This attitude towards them helped to develop my manner of critical thinking about selected topics: which stories I can tell to the world, and which stories I need to keep silenced. Some people told me very personal stories because I became their good friend and family member. Some Nenets elders adopted me as their travelling daughter, and therefore, they also shared their silenced (hidden) family stories with me.

In regard to the restrictions of doing research at home, American anthropologist Akemi Kikumura (1998) described her personal experience of the influence of her Japanese background on the process of doing anthropological research among Japanese people. I found that those advantages and limitations faced by Kikumura during her research as an 'insider' in Japanese society are quite similar to mine. At the same time, I realized that I completely agreed with her conclusion that the data she had managed to collect could never have been collected by anyone other than a member of her family and a person of her nation. At the same time, I faced situations in which people said that there was no need to tell me stories about people whom I know from my childhood. Therefore, as has been discussed by other researchers, it is better to establish a distance from the insider's position and simultaneously become an outsider inside the community (Shaglamova 2010; Kharuchi 2010). Kikumura also noticed that proponents of the insider perspective are based on knowledge of the language, intuitive sensitivity and empathy, and understanding of the culture and people. My status as an insider helped me to peel away some layers of secrecy hidden in various different ways and silenced during performance. Therefore, later after placing peoples' life stories within a broader social, historical, and cultural context, I began to re-examine and reinterpret them from the perspective of what people want to tell about their past and what they are silencing in their stories. At the end of this work, I redefined my own self-concept within the people-positive framework of their life, with all of its difficulties and changes (Laptander 2017). What I also noticed during my research was that some of the Nenets narratives could have their own place in which they can be told, in what manner, and to whom. For example, there are stories that one can tell aloud outside on the open tundra. There are also stories that are closed and can be whispered only inside the traditional Nenets dwelling, chum. Some of these stories are so intimate that they will forever remain unsaid. There are stories that are open to only to few people who live together. Such stories keep a shared understanding that does not need to be voiced, which joins people by common memories about their background, a place of living, or by a common tragedy. They are informative because of the familiar names of people or places and have strong historical associations only for this group of Nenets people. Whereas for outsiders, these stories do not provide much information. I should acknowledge that my complete participation in Nenets life in the tundra helped me to document some

Nenets silenced stories and historical narratives. Talking to people helped me to understand the silenced and hidden conflicts that they harboured. These are possible to distinguish through examination and interpretation of background stories. As mentioned above, the intimacy of some interviews placed the responsibility of deciding whether or not to publish them on me (similar to Behar 1996). This is related to the controlled selection of personal and public memories and the role of silence and silencing in their, sometimes hesitant, decision about whether to tell them or not. My personal knowledge of Nenets stories and topics of Nenets oral history—which I know from my early childhood, including stories of my parents and relatives which they told openly with neighbours, and those stories which they whispered secretly—helped me in conducting interviews and asking people the right questions about stories I wanted to know better. From every trip to the tundra, I have field notes in which I wrote stories that people did not want to tell on record, or stories told to me while I was without my recorder.

## **2.3. Research Ethics**

I developed the ethics of my research following the requirements of the University of Lapland and the guidelines of ethics laid out by the American Anthropological Association for conducting anthropological research. However, the ethics of oral history research depends very much on the personal involvement of the researcher in the research process and in the lives of the people with whom he/she is working. For example, my friends or even the families who adopted me shared their stories with me and made me responsible for the further life of their stories. Therefore, for me there is no way of escaping from responsibilities to people with whom I talked and from whom I received stories. Also, it is clear that the stories people have decided to share openly for the research must be told. I did not change the names of people because I introduced them as co-authors of this book.

Generally speaking, I followed ethics of my research with full understanding of my personal engagement with the work and my position as a cultural mediator doing fieldwork inside my own ethnic group. I would not wish to insult or cause harm to anybody who helped me to complete this research because I have completed this work with the feeling of love and respect for my Nenets people.

## **2.4. Specifics of transcribing the Nenets texts**

### ***Transcribing***

I transcribed selected audio recordings to create written texts for further interpretive analysis. For this part of the work, I used the computer program Transcriber, specially

made for segmenting, labelling and transcribing speech. I made transcriptions of the Nenets texts in the Cyrillic alphabet. I transcribed all interviews myself and defined relevant topics for my research. Later I listened to selected parts of interviews again for proof checking. Then I translated them into the English language.

### *Transliteration*

I wrote Nenets personal, family, place and rivers names following the Library of Congress transliteration system for modern Russian<sup>2</sup>. The Russian letter X is written as Kh (x=kh); Ц as TS (ц=ts); Ч as Ch (ч=ch) and Ш=Shch (ш=shch), like in the place names, for example, *Шучье* – Shchuchie. Also, in the text I represented the Cyrillic letter X (Kh) as X, following Tapani Salminen's system of writing Nenets texts:

Хобам' хано"мов,	<i>Xobam' xano"mow,</i>	My trip on the reindeer
хано"ма-а.	<i>xano"ma.</i>	skin, on reindeer skin
Хубта я нэй', пон-нэй.	<i>Xubta yaney, pon-ney.</i>	travelling.
Вэва Нэвысэй, Нэвысэй.	<i>Wewa newisyey, newisyey.</i>	Was very long and tiresome.
		This trip was hard and so
		exhausting.

## **2.5. Difficulties in translating the Nenets texts**

The most difficult part of my work was translating Nenets historical narratives and people's personal stories from their original language into English. The methods of oral history describe the specifics of collecting interviews in the language of the speakers, but the methods of working with bilingual texts and translation are few and far between. Therefore, this research is based on reflection of the specific differences in the worldview of Western speakers of English and Russian, and of speakers of Nenets. Translation from Nenets into English comes with many complications due to cultural differences between the two. It is necessary to consider the worldviews, ethics and norms of communication within Nenets society, which are very different from those of Western society. However, I should say that for me it was easier to make Nenets-Russian translation, due to my bilingual skills and previous work on translating Nenets folklore texts (Laptander 2008). There are also grammatical differences between these languages. The Nenets language belongs to the Samoyedic branch of the Uralic languages. Irina Nikolaeva states that "the language exhibits a rather high degree of morphological synthesis: inflected words typically consist of more than one morphological marker per word and some grammatical morphemes

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.transliteration.com/transliteration/en/russian/ala-lc/>

are semantically equivalent to separate lexical items in European languages” (Nikolaeva 2014:8). Due to these differences it is often difficult to translate Nenets terminology into English while preserving the meaning of the Nenets words. In comparison, it is much easier to translate from Russian to English.

When translating, I also looked to my bilingual data, examining how the Nenets used Nenets and Russian in their interviews. I was surprised by the variety of cross-linguistic representation of some stories, which showed that bilingual skills are useful for organizing selective storytelling. For example, people might tell one version of their story in Nenets, and might tell the same story differently in Russian. A descriptive analysis of bilingual interviews shows that the specifics of coding memories in different languages help to control the limitations of narratives: the intended audience (who cannot hear it), its message and its relevance to others. Therefore, following Altarriba’s (1996) recommendation, during my work I spoke in both of my languages to show the role of the Nenets and Russian languages in telling sensitive stories and interviews about the past.

Methods of linguistic anthropology (or anthropological linguistics) helped me to use the Tundra Nenets language as a main language of interviewing with additional Russian. This approach considers language to be an important indicator of membership in a community, which helps one to be a proper insider of the community by allowing him/her to participate in people’s everyday lives (Hymes 1964; Herzfeld 2011). Because many of my respondents were also bilingual, I made some interviews in two languages, which showed, in an interesting way, how people use their bilingual skills for telling stories about the past.

The shared and the separate memory hypotheses are perhaps the most influential views of bilingual memory representation. According to this proposal, bilinguals either organize their two languages into their shared memory store or into two separate memory systems, where each language is organized independently.

(Heredia et al. 2006:229).

During my work, I noticed that Nenets-Russian speaking respondents can express memories differently in their native and second languages. Such distinction in coding emotions in two different languages is quite a common phenomenon. It was acknowledged by Jeanette Altarriba and Rachel G. Morier, that “if the corresponding language is accessed as a cue to memory retrieval, the resulting accounts may provide richer and more elaborate. Experiences appear to be related more vividly when recounted in the language in which they were experienced (Altarriba et al. 2006:253). Altarriba and Morier further noticed that bilingual people use their speaking bias differently mostly because of their emotional level of connecting to their language of communication. Because of this, they can represent their life experiences in slightly

different ways in different languages. Additionally, bilinguals can express their early childhood emotions and memories better in their native language. Usually bilinguals divide functions for every language spoken in their society. For example, for Nenets people, Russian is the official language of education and the language of communication with other Russian speaking people. The Nenets language has a narrower circle of use. In the settlements and in the tundra, people were ready to talk both in Russian and in Nenets. During my research I noticed that some of my respondents would address the public at large by telling a story in Russian, while by telling it in Nenets, they communicated private messages not intended for Russian speakers. The following two stories illustrate examples of bilingual speaking and silencing stories.

1) The first story is about Nikolai Khudi (1936-2013), (Field materials - FM 2012). He is a Nenets-Russian bilingual. Nikolai was born in the tundra and spent his early childhood there. He worked all his life in a local fish factory. Nikolai lived most of his life in a settlement, married to a Russian-speaking woman. When I met Nikolai for the first time in January 2012, he told me his life story in broken Russian. In Soviet times, he fished on the Ob River with his mother and father. Nikolai proudly showed me his medals and letters of commendation, which he got from the Soviet authorities for being a successful Soviet worker. However, his neighbours told me that Nikolai was an orphan. From their stories, I understood that Nikolai had lost his parents at a very young age. His father was arrested during collectivization as a kulak (a wealthy reindeer herder) and died in the Shchuchie village prison. The Soviet authorities confiscated all their reindeer. Nikolai's mother died of hunger in the same village. Officially, they were enemies of the Soviet state without many rights, and everybody could humiliate them. Nikolai did not reveal in his story that his father, in fact, was his mother's uncle. He mentally (or strategically?) altered his relationships with the people who adopted him, in place of his real parents. Therefore, it is also his true life history. In this way, he has defended himself from the people, the society and the state.

There was one moment in our conversation when he moved to his childhood memories. He wished to speak about them in the Nenets language even though his main language of communication is Russian. At one point in our conversation, Nikolai realized that he had forgotten Nenets and that his story could not be told in it. Then he exclaimed in Russian: *Oh, bl'ad', zabil!* 'Oh \*\*\*, I forgot!' He found this to be such a difficult situation that he did not want to continue our discussion.

Next time I met Nikolai, he was walking to the shop to buy bread. I asked him if we could continue our interview, but we did not because he did not feel well. Unfortunately, I did not have time to stay longer in Yamal. Thus, we did not meet and talk any more. Nikolai passed away in January 2013.

Much later, after listening to the interview with him, I realized that I had actually known this man since my childhood. His face was familiar to me because I remember

him walking slowly with a stick near my kindergarten and school. At that time, I did know much about him and his life. I also understood why it was difficult for him to talk about his childhood, even though he tried to tell me his story. Nikolai silenced memories about his childhood and was so afraid to say anything about his parents, that this part of his life became unspeakable. In addition, the Nenets language had a strong symbolic meaning for him, providing him with memories about his parents, their names, family names, and the names of the places where his relatives had lived and migrated. When Nikolai realized that he had forgotten his native language, he was angry at himself because without the Nenets language he could not express his childhood memories. I believe that this conflict of forgetting one's native language reflects not only a deep personal tragedy, it also demonstrates that without the proper language, a story can remain unsaid.

2) Another example of how people use their bilingual skills for speaking and silencing their stories comes from an interview with Lidia O. about the railway across the tundra. Lidia O. is a Nenets leader and pensioner. She has a trading post (faktoria, Rus. 'фактория') in the tundra near the railway, where Nenets reindeer herders buy bread, food supplies and petrol. I took this interview from a film made by the Yamal state broadcasting company during the opening of the Bovanenkovo railway on the Yamal Peninsula in August 2009.

**In Russian:** It is good to have this railway! Look, for me it becomes much easier to transport food to my shop in the tundra. Now we have almost everything in our shop. Absolutely everything is here that you want to buy. There are fruits, almost everything... We have fresh bread here. All baked goods are fresh. I ordered them from Salekhard, directly from the bakery. There are bubliki (bread rolls) and kalachi... Everything! We have all it here. It is so nice. However, listen:

**In Nenets:** *This railway goes across our good pastures. Many of them are destroyed and now it is not possible to use them for reindeer. This land is broken now. When there was no railway, our reindeer could stay here for a few days. There was enough food for them. Now our herders need to move the reindeer to another place.*

This woman expressed her meaning about the railway differently in the two languages. In Russian, in front of a large Russian speaking audience and the Russian state representatives, she mentioned her own and her customers' benefit from the railway. The second part of the interview was conducted in Nenets and in this way, the story was silenced. It was directed only towards a small Nenets speaking community. Therefore, Lidia could only openly discuss the negative impact of the railway on the life of tundra people and on their work with reindeer in Nenets, among Nenets people.

These two contrasting interviews illustrate how Nenets-Russian bilinguals can speak about their memories and how they can silence them.

The first interview shows the dominance of the Russian language in the life of settlement people. It also reflects how particularly negative emotions tied to memories can influence the way people tell them. Specific memories, particularly, autobiographical memories, which relate to memories of emotional events, can be expressed differently. Schrauf (2000) calls this phenomenon linguistic coding and explains that memories about childhood and adolescence are usually experienced in one's native language. Therefore, stories are emotionally richer when told in one's native language, rather than the second language (Schrauf 2000:256). However, I know of cases in which people silence their memories to keep them unspeakable. Therefore, the example of Nikolai Khudi is such a unique and important one. This old man was not able to speak about his childhood trauma. All his life he had silenced the fact that his parents were enemies of the Soviet state; in this way, he tried to protect himself and his children from humiliation. However, other Nenets people know his life story and can speak about his individual tragedy.

The second story gives an example of the same type of bilingual speaking and silencing. By switching from Russian to Nenets, this old woman selected her audience as well as the messages she wanted to tell. Being bilingual can be beneficial for expressing different thoughts. By speaking Russian, Nenets people speak their collective stories and public messages. When speaking in their native language, they can tell very private stories and can express their problems, worries and thoughts.

## 2.6. Analysis of interviews

After turning the recorded narrative into written text, I started looking at theoretical approaches to narrative analysis and inquiry. Then I came across Catherine K. Riessman's (1993) book, *Narrative Methods*. In this book Riessman described four methods of narrative analysis: thematic, structural, dialogic/performance, and visual. Then she specifies four key aspects of narrative research: 1) finding proper narrative terms, 2) making a selection of texts for analysis, which are transcribed oral recordings, 3) selecting methods of narrative analysis, and finally, 4) describing the validity of the narratives selected for the research.

Her approach of narrative analysis is represented from a personal perspective: reading others' stories allow a researcher to enter people's life and understand their life experiences and viewpoints. It is through the written and spoken word that one can reflect on one's own experience to understand someone else's life story. Riessman shows that the interpretation of the narrative may change based on the type of transcription used by a researcher. She also defines two levels of concern about what was a true story told by the participant and if the researcher's analysis is accurate

about what is the true story. People can have their own version of a story depending on their perspective, which can be different from a “real” event. Therefore, the narrative could be compared with other people’s narratives about the same event. If this is not possible, the narrative analysis should lead the reader to believe the narrative.

Following these key aspects, I tried to understand how selected life stories and personal narratives make group and collective memory stories. I considered that people who live in the same territory have their own local memories about special groups of people and their families, and these can become collective memory stories (Stammler et al. 2017). Individual songs have owners, who made them, with connections to their family members, who can be also responsible for these songs with connection to their family history. Therefore, these stories are very indicative. People connect their memories to special events and stories about other people. There are also stories about tragic emotional episodes in the past. In general, as mentioned already, the process of storing personal memories depends very much on the social and political context of the country’s politics towards its people. Commonly human memory filters, selects, and archives those parts of the past that people want to silence and forget. Then people keep and tell those memories that are positive and that they want to preserve for the future.

The Nenets’ storytelling tradition is based on the presentation of a story in which a narrator relates a certain event or historical fact along with his or her own evaluation of it from the perspective of the present day. Such life stories and memories are important and unique sources of unwritten oral information about the Nenets’ historical past. For example, almost every text of collected interviews gives a description of the Tundra Nenets’ social life and of the relationships of Yamal Nenets with other groups of Nenets vis-à-vis their connection to working with reindeer.

Additionally, besides looking to Nenets stories as sources of historical information about the past, I paid attention to the Nenets specifics of narrating and silencing stories and memories about the past. Since I understood that silence and silencing play an important role in the process of remembering and forgetting stories, this made me look for an explanation of verbal/nonverbal communication and the place of silence in Nenets culture. Further, I sought to describe the aspects of telling, silencing and remembering personal names and stories about individuals and families in Nenets oral history. The decision of a Nenets person to open silenced stories for small groups of people or to close them to public audiences also depends on how long people will remember them. In general, there are various reasons for opening silenced, sleeping or even prohibited stories. In my research, I show that awakening silenced stories can be considered a sign of protest and disagreement with official state decisions and actions towards the indigenous peoples of the tundra. At the same time, silencing difficult stories is based on fear. Resented decisions and

plans of the Yamal government to reduce the number of Yamal reindeer made the Nenets people uncertain about their future life in the tundra.

For analysing Nenets individual narratives and songs, I used the Labovian narrative approach (Labov 2013). To analyse narratives, I divided the texts into four main parts: an abstract; an orientation, which gives information about persons, places, and times; the complication action; and then the fourth part is further divided into three more sub-parts: evaluation, resolution, and coda, which returns listeners to the present time.

This method proved successful with long folklore texts and personal life stories. While it was not suitable for working with short texts, dialogues, and group conversations, it worked well for analysing multiple interviews and narratives joined by one topic. The reason is that not all stories and interviews can fit into the Labovian table of narrative analysis. I will show this based on the examples of a Nenets collection of narratives, canonical text stories and a collection of interviews in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

In Chapter 4, there are interviews with Nenets elders based on three stories about Nenets individual songs that describe the Nenets' general perception of acquiring or losing reindeer in the tundra. Interviews presented in this chapter talk about individual songs and the stories of these songs. First, three narratives discuss different cases of reindeer theft and the last one is about confiscation of reindeer by the Soviet authorities. The analysis of these stories gives an explanation of why people remember and tell them, but also why people can silence such stories.

The first song belongs to a reindeer thief who tells the story of taking reindeer from other reindeer herders. Analysis of this individual song was made following an example of Lotte Tarkka's (2013) work on analysing Karelian oral poetry about reindeer theft in the border area between Finland and Russia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In her work, Tarkka provided the example of how border people tell stories about reindeer thieving by signing the events in songs (Tarkka 2013:433). This is very similar to the story about Nany Khorolia father's individual song. I divided Nany's song into three episodes, and can talk about every action of the song and orientate the listener to what happen there, where, how and why. Therefore, the contents of such songs provide orientation and tell narrative episodes, while evaluation of the song gives an emotional description of the personal feeling of a singer. Listeners receive further evaluation of the song in the story of this person, his children and grandchildren.

The second song tells a story that provides information about common tundra rules of crimes and their punishments, depending on the situation and the cruelty. However, it also states that people are aware of the tundra spirits and their punishments, which usually do not fall only on the person who committed a crime. Significantly, the person's punishment can later be transmitted to their family members and even to descendants, who are thus also made retrospectively responsible for their ancestors' crimes.

The third interview tells the story of reindeer thieves giving reindeer to a family. It has orientation, episodes and evaluation as a lesson about Nenets common rules of reciprocity as knowledge. However, the fourth story stands aside from these three stories. Its evaluation is that the negative memories about the past can be silenced because members of Nenets society can make personal decisions concerning what kinds of memories they can pass as a message or as knowledge about the past.

These stories are already parts of Nenets collective memory stories about reindeer theft in the tundra. However, even within the wider audience of the Nenets, when these stories about reindeer theft are told, nobody can say openly that their ancestors were reindeer thieves who stole reindeer from other people. It is still a very sensitive topic, and most people prefer to keep it in silence because in Nenets culture stealing reindeer is a crime. It is especially serious when people know the victims of such crimes but do not know who did it or when. However, there are exceptions, such as stories that tell about people who stole reindeer in old times. Usually in such stories, people also talk about the present descendants of the reindeer thieves as a reminder that they are responsible for their ancestors' past.

In Chapter 5, a canonical narrative is illustrated, represented by several personal stories and collective narratives about one family story. I collected these interviews from three different places. The first interview was collected from people living in the neighbourhood of the Puiko family, whom this story is about. There is a common orientation that repeats narrative episodes. Here every narrator had his/her own evaluation of the story, which showed the specifics of multi-vocalism, that is, the retelling of the same story while giving many different interpretations, meanings and evaluations of it. First, this story was silenced as a common agreement between people who live together. It was made through a group decision that was not protested by anyone. Later, this silence was broken again because of the group agreement to voice their protest.

In Chapter 6, different stories are presented about the recent events involving reindeer deaths. I conducted interviews with reindeer herders, asking them about the recent icing events in the tundra. Information about what had happened in the tundra is an orientation. Episodes of stories tell what people did to help their reindeer. Finally, the evaluation of narratives is the part of interviews where people reflect on their emotions about their contemporary life in the tundra. The second part of Chapter 6 is about why people can silence their contemporary stories about the recent epidemics in the tundra. This part of the work allows us to see what people will tell about their life in the tundra in order to better understand how memories about the recent Soviet past control people's way of telling their tragedies in front of an audio recorder. Whereas the two preceeding Chapters 4 and 5, are about stories that were first silenced, but later voiced, Chapter 6 discusses how memories about the past determine the present nature of being silent among indigenous people of the Arctic.

## 2.7. Conclusion

For conducting my research about the Nenets ways of speaking and silencing the past, I used general oral history methods in combination with other research methods. In this chapter, I have introduced my personal role in collecting Nenets stories by doing anthropological research among my own people. Participation in everyday Nenets life in the tundra and settlements allowed me to obtain a very inside understanding of Nenets cultural and social roles of speaking and silencing. The language documentation methods helped to complete the work on recording stories and narratives about the Nenets past and to organize them as audio records. Further work transcribed them onto paper, and translated them into the Russian and English languages. The methods of sociolinguistic description and linguistic anthropological approaches to narrative analysis, in combination with the concepts of general oral history based on individual and collective memory studies, allowed me to analyse the content of selected interviews. The linguistic anthropological method also helped me to describe the specifics of bilingual communication and its functions in the narrative process. This shows that the Nenets tend to use the official Russian language for telling public (official) narratives, while when speaking Nenets, they prefer to tell collective, unofficial, private and intimate stories, and also sometimes to subvert their own narratives in Russian about the same topics. For analysing transcripts of Nenets stories and narratives about the past, I used the Labovian narrative analysis approach, which helped me to describe the main content of Nenets stories. Such a constructive narrative analysis also helped to indicate the role of silence in Nenets stories and narratives about the past. The texts of the Yamal Nenets narratives provide samples of two north-eastern dialects of the Tundra Nenets language.

### 3. Analysing the meaning of Silence in Oral history

This dissertation argues that any theory and method of oral historical enquiry should consider the importance of silence as well. Silence is the important space not covered by words, a non-verbal language. Here I shall introduce the principal terms of oral history from the literature, for preparing the discussion of the position of silence in Nenets oral history.

In different cultures of the world, silence and silencing have different natures, backgrounds and historical explanations. There is also a diversity of proverbs about silence. Significantly, given the various ways in which verbal expressiveness and rhetorical skills are also praised elsewhere in these cultures, many of these proverbs also place a high value on silence. Both Russian and English say “Speech is silver but silence is golden”. In Germany, people say that *Schweigen ist auch eine Antwort* ‘Silence is already an answer’, which originates from the Latin expression *Silentium videtur confessio* (Boniface VIII). There is also a Latinization of the English expression *Silentium ist aureum* ‘Silence is golden’. This has the same meaning as “Sometimes the best answer is silence” (Georgian), ‘It is better to be silent than to speak, because if you say the truth, you can make trouble’ (Kirghiz). ‘Man has a tongue to keep silence’ (Belarusian), ‘The one who is silent does not cause any problems’ (Karelian); ‘I was thinking to keep silence, but cannot’ (Ukrainian), ‘There is nothing better for a man than silence’ (Jewish).

Such diversity of proverbs about silence shows that in a vast variety of cultures silence is an important part of human behaviour and communication. Thus, silence and silencing can regulate the specifics of cultural psychology and the ways of expressing emotions. In the definition of the Oxford English Dictionary (1986), silence is associated with a *strong silent type*, a man who conceals and controls his feelings. Furthermore, there is always a special attitude about talkative people, especially when they are rambling. The norms of ethics of behaviour impart that the silent man is more respectable and safe. Silence and silencing are connected to many different aspects of everyday life (Hymes 1974; Krestinskii 1991). Silence can express respect, ethics of behaviour, collective unity or subjection to others (Philips 1985; Basso 1990; 1972, 1992; Lebra 1988). Actually, silence is also defined around things which are unsaid and unsayable, such as secrets and taboos (Munro 2014:16).

However, in Northern indigenous cultures, the meaning of silence could be even stronger, because the Arctic environment and nature themselves influenced how humans speak there, where silence has a significant part of everyday communication and culture. Susan Philips (1985) highlights that people who live in nature value

silence differently than people from urban areas. At the same time, being in silence, nonverbal communication also can be an important part of interaction in many Northern cultures (Sajavaara and Lehtonen 1997). It works the same way in the Northern indigenous people's everyday life, regulating their cultural principles of communication. However, as in many societies of the world, Arctic peoples' rules of being silent can vary because of social position, gender and age (Vitebsky 2005). People can keep silent due to rules of hiding, taboos, special rituals, work, showing respect for borders of personal privacy, responsibility and due to emotions such as shame or guilt (Berman 1998; Liarskaya and Dudeck 2012:68; Dudeck 2015), but also disagreement and anger (Novikova 2017). At the same time, silence can also be taken as a sign of weakness, encouragement and blame. It can be the legacy of a formal political regime, when people used it to shield and protect others from the danger of speaking about them (Argounova-Low 2012; Fivush 2010; Humphrey 2005; Stammler et al. 2017). Silence can be a sign of agreement and forgiveness; at the same time, silence can also be an expression of disagreement and protest.

All types of silence during communication can have an important role and various meanings. It can join people together, but also separate them. The next part of this chapter discusses those aspects of silence that allow for a wide range of emotions, evaluation and other human dynamics which remain unsaid. However, silence can be broken, making people speak a silenced story again. In this case, people themselves select which stories are appropriate to open and to share as special knowledge about the past, and, which ones are better not to tell (Passelini 1987; Berman 1998; Boyer 2009). At the same time, there is also the idea that people usually use fewer words to be heard and understood by others if they are family members, good friends, or partners (Munoz 2014:20). The energy of unspoken words can be passed with special messages during special ritual ceremonies (Course 1968:20-1). It is common for people in many animistic societies to use silence during religious ceremonies, when the power of their message is expressed without any articulation, by speaking only in thoughts (Basso 1970). Then the silenced language is performed not only as an instrument of communication between humans, but as an entity of multiple agencies within the broader context of the world, for example, allowing communication with nonhuman beings, the objects of nature (rocks and stones). Because of this, the unspoken language is used as an instrument to allow humans and nonhuman beings to act together (Tambian 1968:184). Susan Philips (1985) compares the middle-class English people and Warm Spring Indians' rules of religious performance and writes about the religious act of silencing during the English church ceremonies and the Indian shamanic rituals. On the one hand, we can observe the same religious acts of silencing among the Nenets, for example, when they direct silent prayers to the spirits at sacred sites, or when they sacrifice reindeer there.

Keeping silence during rituals and the power of unspoken words in prayer are common in many world cultures. However, in my analysis, I uncover a place of

silence that reaches far beyond religious practice. There is such silence when a person keeps feelings unsaid and cannot express them in words but can express them only by singing. Nenets individual songs are a good example of this. Sometimes they are similar to a special code language in communication among Nenets elders. By singing individual songs, they usually express their sensitive or painful memories about the past with connection to their very close family members. This way of expressing the unsaid gives a new interpretation of Nenets individual songs, as techniques for keeping memories about the past, and telling stories about them, which can be uninformative to people who do not know the historical background of the song. In this sense, the Nenets individual songs can be recognized as a form of the ‘non-ordinary’ message, which can be similar to a silence. This topic can be a theoretical starting point for future research for studying silencing and singing in connection to describing people’s traumatic memories about the past.

### 3.1. Oral history terminology

The term *oral history* applies to the stories about past events and how people tell about the past in their life stories and historical narratives (Vansina 1985; Thompson 1978; Thompson 2011). Moreover, this term is used for both the process of recording interviews in order to collect and elicit information about the past and also for the final product of it – the collection of narrative accounts of the past events (Abrams 2010:2). Telling stories is a very ancient form of creating and saving knowledge, telling about individual private experiences, and contributing to understanding the past for a wider audience (Egan 1999; Mello 2001). For example, in oral history, the term *a life story* means the story of someone’s life (Thompson 81; Peacock and Holland 1993:368). Another definition of a life story is *a narrative*, which originates from the Latin word “narro” and means the act of describing, or narrating (Stelten 1995). Besides, the word *narrative* means a representation of somebody’s life experience, which can be sequences of ordered sentences that present the temporal sequences of those events (Labov 1977:105). Thus, telling individual life stories in a narrative gives information about what, when, why and how the events happened to the individuals in the past. In this work, I consider the term *narrative* to be a process of human interaction, or dialogue, in which a teller gives summaries of events in order to let a listener remember them. This means that a narrative has a wider definition than a story, because it defines memories of living people through events or social conditions that people experienced in their earlier lives. As Abrams underlines, the narrative is not just a story and its content, but it is a series of selected episodes of people’s lives that they tell others in a way they would like to be remembered (Abrams 2010:106). A narrative also reflects how people use language to communicate experiences, knowledge and emotions (ibid 109).

For sociologists, stories and narratives are an important source of knowledge in the common social discourse and interaction among people (Labov 2013; Atkinson 1998). Since every individual's life story is connected to a certain period, it can be connected to other stories that tell about the same time in the past. This illustrates how people remember and talk about their past individually and collectively. In addition, through the collection of different narratives about one special event or story, one can get different recollections about how, why and when people want to and are able to recount them (Lemon 2001). Therefore, I understand that the role of the narrative in oral history is not only to transfer knowledge about the past, but also to reflect how people want to remember their past.

Since narratives provide rich material for studying the social relationships and norms of behaviour in different societies, I would like to further describe the Nenets cultural specifics and norms of communication that contribute to their unique style of telling stories. Even telling stories can have different social functions in Nenets culture. However, its main role is transferring special knowledge as nonmaterial cultural heritage and creating responsibility for this knowledge.

### **3.2. Narrating personal stories and collective memory narratives**

In the book, *The Social Life of Stories: Narrative and Knowledge in the Yukon Territory*, Julie Cruikshank quotes an old Inuit woman who said: "Well, I do not have any money to leave to my children. My stories are my wealth" (Cruikshank 1998:xi). One can agree or disagree with this old Inuit woman's statement. However, once an individual's story is told to other people, even to family members, then it gets its own independent social life and can be told by other people. In this way, an individual's story becomes part of the collective memory when every member of this society has a right to tell and share it with other people.

In terms of individual memory, Franco Ferrarotti claims that memory is never a purely individual gift (Ferrarotti 1990:64). This means that not all personal stories can be recognised as a gift. However, people can share a selection of such stories which they are ready to share with others. This means that when people tell their story, they are sharing their experience with other members of their society. Such personal stories give collective memory accounts about how people live inside of their society.

Anna Green has mentioned the incorporation of individual memory into collective memory in her work about individual and collective memory. She describes that memories about the past have influenced our contemporary life (Green 2011:107). According to Green, every personal experience is remembered and understood when connected to another individual memory. Individual memories can tell us when and why ordinary people actively endorsed, acquiesced, or opposed inherited

perspectives or dominant discourses. She considers that societies create their collective memories by selecting one personal story among others and transmitting it further. At the same time, individual and collective memories about the past can give diverse accounts of the past (Green 2011). This can be because individual memories are too intimate and people do not often share them with others, in which case they make individual and private biographical stories. In addition, even though collective memories are supposed to be more open for performance in public, many of them can be shared only inside a group that shares some common elements, for instance a family, neighbours, peers, and people from the same generation, nation and culture (Halbwachs 1980; Wertsch 2009; Connerton 1989; Green 2011). Therefore, individual and collective narratives depend very much on social and political contexts and on how individuals want to remember and tell their stories to other people or officials (LaCarpa 2001; Portelli 1997, 2003; Climo and Cartell 2002; Boyd 2015; Maynes et al. 2008).

Ludmila Isurin proclaims there is no special memory of the group, but every group of people has special memories that they can share with one other (Isurin 2017:12). Therefore, narrators can develop a common narrative of the group, the so-called canonical or public narrative, which would work as a template to other members for what to remember and tell about their past, and in what way. Such narrative templates can be the product of the interaction of numerous factors: socio-cultural, historical political, religious and psychological (ibid.). A collection of canonical narratives can develop a narrative that epitomizes one special historical event (Cruikshank 1996) or a seminal event (Isurin 2017:60; Stammeler et al. 2017). This means that people can select those life stories, narratives and historical memories that are important to them to remember their past. Such stories can work as important markers of their individual and public collective identity. In addition, by collectively speaking and silencing stories, people define which parts of their past they would like to except or exclude from their past memories (Sontag 2003). I will discuss this further by providing examples of Nenets stories. For giving examples of how Nenets tell their stories, I selected such individual and collective stories, which tell about people, their life and special events, which happened in different historical periods of time in the tundra. I then give an analysis on why people remember selected individual and collective stories, in connection to their contemporary descendants and families. This approach helped me to understand how different historical timelines can influence in different ways, how people remember and tell stories about ancestors, family members and other people.

### 3.3. Diversity of stories and Nenets approaches to them

The Nenets oral history interviews include individual life stories, personal biographies, stories about relatives, friends, and neighbours, historical narratives, individual songs, stories of songs and people who made these songs, and collective narratives. There are single narratives, dialogues, group talks, discussions and comments about other people's stories. There are different versions of the same story told by many different people. In general, all of these stories represent the Nenets past from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century until nowadays. This work on Nenets oral history shows that stories and interviews concerning big changes on the tundra reflect a general mechanism of making official historical narratives about past events.

In the Nenets language, the word *wa'al* or *waal* (Nen. ва"ал, ваал) means historical narrative, while the word *ilye'mya* (Nen. иле"мя) is used for a life story and narrative (Bobrikova 1965; Kupriyanova 1965; Khomich 1984; Pushkareva 2001:23; Lar 2001:14; Golovnev 2004:11). Nenets also have stories about historical events which border between a myth, a historical narration and a life story. For example, Nenets researcher Leonid Lar describes stories about recent Soviet time repression and reindeer herder rebellion in the year 1943 as *wa'al* along with other Nenets historical narratives about the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Laptander 2014). At the same time, Nenets folklorist Elena Pushkareva distinguishes *wa'al* (historical stories) from *ilye'mya* (legends, tales or real-life stories), but different from traditional Nenets fairy tales *lakhanako* (Nen. лаханакo), epic songs *syudbyabc* (Nen. сюдбѣѣ) 'epic songs about giants' and *yarabc* (Nen. ярабѣ) 'epic crying songs' (Pushkareva 2001:23). There are also Nenets historical songs *khynabts* (Pushkareva 2010). In general, in Nenets storytelling performance there is no strict rule for defining historical narratives and narratives about the past. However, I consider that *ilye'mya* tells about the nearest past in people's life stories and individual narratives (Bobrikova 1965; Kupriyanova 1965; Khomich 1984; Pushkareva 2001; Golovnev 2004).

The word *ilye'mya* comes from the verb *ilyes* 'to live' and can be translated as 'a life story, a true story and a real fact'. This term has several meanings, as 'a personal story' as well as 'a true story which really happened in the past'. Apart from these characteristics, other stories about people can be *lakharyu* 'a rumour or gossip, which cannot be trusted'. However, when people tell their personal stories, they usually define a story to be personal or about somebody (Boyd 2015). In Figure 3.1. I give the classification of the Nenets life stories and historical narratives.

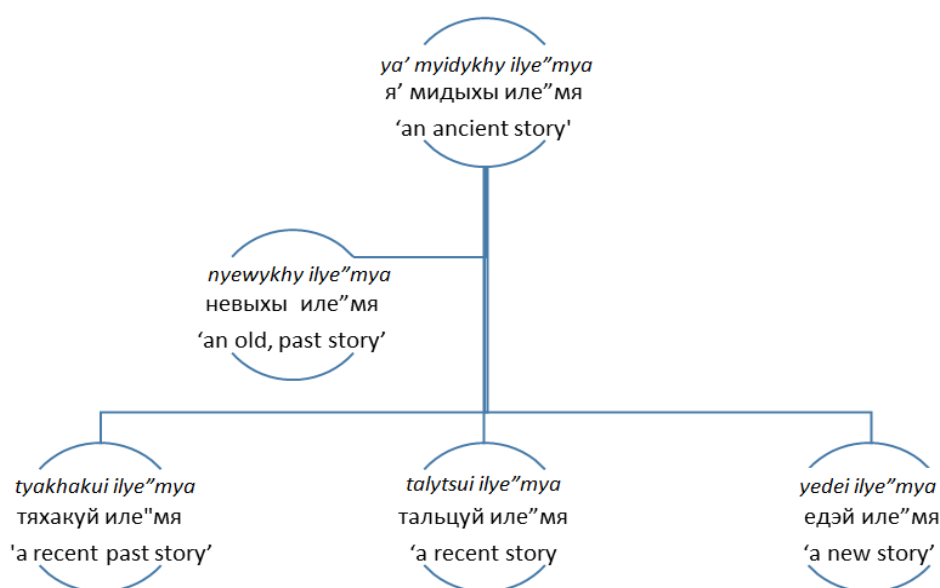


Figure 3.1. Diversity of Nenets stories *ilye''mya*.

Additionally by using the term *ilye''mya*, people define the time of the narrative. It means that the story is about the past, and the time of the story indicates its importance for narrating (Kostikov 1936; Pushkareva 2001; Lar 2001; Lukin 2008; Laptander 2014).

Collected Nenets texts were collected and analysed from the point of view of the local, regional, and national history of the Nenets, the Uralic-language-speaking Arctic minority nation of the Russian Federation, with the following timeline:

a) Memories about the time of the ancestors and their kinship to present-day Nenets families. Most of these stories stem from the Russian Empire until the period before collectivization in the tundra. These stories illustrate the rules of building relationships of reciprocity that Nenets maintain with people, the land and its spirits and the ways in which these stories are embedded in individual and collective memory stories.

b) The Nenets life on the tundra under collectivization, during the period of the formation of the Soviet Empire and its consolidation in remote Arctic areas. Such stories tell how Nenets people remember the transient period of their past. These stories tell how reindeer herders were forced to do industrial fishing in the tundra rivers, and how ex-fishermen moved to the tundra to work with reindeer or as polar foxhunters.

c) When the overall Soviet umbrella of the historical past collapsed, the Nenets had to learn new rules of living in the post-Soviet society. However, even

contemporary life in the tundra has many reflections of the Soviet past, which still influence how tundra people speak about their present difficulties.

In general, the Nenets collective memory stories are represented by canonical narratives and stories about special events in the tundra. Maurice Halbwachs (1992) describes such stories as open access stories, which every member of the society can tell to others. There are stories about significant Nenets people who did extraordinary, unusual things from the point of view of the tundra people; these are called historical narratives *wa'al*. There are also local family stories that are told from generation to generation. There are life stories that make up a collection of kinship stories about the life of individuals in their individual songs, which are performed by other people. There are personal stories *khari ilye'mya* that can change their narratives over time, but their main idea is to transmit the sense of the family past and the origin, which can be opposed in stories of their neighbours *nyenetsya ilye'mya* (Figure 3.2.). However, there are also collective stories that people have never told aloud, which have always been silent. Yet, these silenced stories could be told to young people as special lessons of Nenets unity, tolerance, respect and reciprocity.

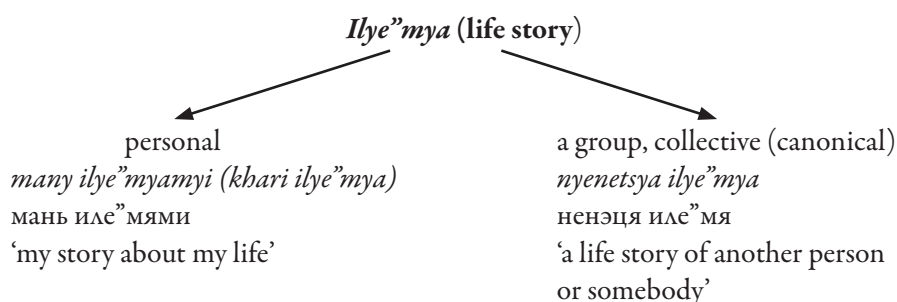


Figure 3.2. Private and collective life stories.

The collective history is inseparable from the life stories of its members. However, collective *ilye'mya* can be made from many personal stories, like the Russian nesting wooden doll *matryoshka*. When one story can be inside of another story, and this second story can tell a story as a song. There are considerable memories, which are also call canonical memories. They are usually told as legends or historical stories, individual/group/collective memories, individual songs or stories of songs, in connection to people and their families. This phenomenon works especially well when Nenets tell collective memory stories about individuals in connection to Nenets individual songs.

### 3.4. Individual songs in the Nenets collective memory

Singing individual songs can encourage people to tell Nenets traditional life stories, *ile'mya*, because for the most part they are based on somebody's biographical story. The Nenets traditions and norms of performing Nenets individual songs were described in works of the early researchers of the Nenets language and folklore (Lehtisalo 1947; Lehtisalo 1960:460; Pushkareva 2000; Pushkareva 2001; Niemi 1999; Niemi and Lapsui 2004). Individual songs are an important part of Nenets oral history, and are worth further investigation as to the place of words and silence within them. This means that individual songs can become part of the group or collective memory stories. However, this happened quite seldom with personal stories. Singing or just retelling the Nenets individual song is another way of remembering individuals and stories about them. During my work on collecting Nenets stories, I managed to record some Nenets individual songs. I was surprised that some of them are connected to collective memory stories.

These works shows that Nenets individual songs have many important social functions in Nenets culture and daily life. My research partners said that singing songs helps them to relax, to express feelings of happiness, joy, sorrow, pain and sadness. Otherwise, being in silence makes a person think about sad moments from the past (FM 2015). Nonetheless, the most important function of individual songs is to keep memories about the past. However, like the narratives that accompany them, this process of remembering them is inevitably selective. Every Nenets individual song has an author and tells a personal story about somebody's life story (Pushkareva 2001:33). Jarkko Niemi explains that Nenets individual songs mostly describe personal experiences of the past (Niemi 1999:104). Additionally, when Nenets tell stories about somebody, they can accompany their narratives by singing this person's individual song or songs. Quite often, it is just a starting point for beginning a typical Nenets collective memory narrative about people and what they did in the past and why people remember them. This way of telling a story explains why people keep memories about different events of the past and why they tell these stories to their children, relatives or friends. Stories of songs can give information not only about the ancestors, but also about the descendants of people who made these songs. It is interesting that nonfamily members can perform other people's individual songs, but then it is important to first give the name of the owner of this song and tell the place name where it was made. Therefore, individual songs give examples of such a form of remembering which is connected both to individual narratives and collective memories about people and their life stories.

If a song is performed by a person who made it, an audience should memorize his or her name and the lyrics of this song. If somebody else performs this

song later, then, before singing it he or she should tell who is the owner of this song, and this song's story.

(Pushkareva 2001:33).

Actually, Nenets perform their individual songs in almost the same way as we declaim poetry to an audience. First, we introduce the name or names of the author/s that wrote it and then recite the poem. However, there are many strict rules and regulations of performing Nenets individual songs. In Nenets everyday life, people usually do not say the names of people, but in individual songs, it is important to give the names of the people who made the songs. Children cannot perform (sing) their parents' songs in their presence. The same rule regulates performing individual songs of other people in the presence of their owners. They are important identity markers because relatives, friends and neighbours know their authors and their family members. In this way, individual songs regulate the *ownership* of Nenets personal songs and keep safe a network of *agency* of Nenets personal names. For example, after singing an individual song, a performer should tell a background story of the song.

In this work, I will tell stories about three individual songs. Two songs talk about the history of Nenets reindeer theft, and the last one is an individual song about childhood trauma. I will discuss these three examples of Nenets individual songs in Chapter 4. There I will explain how the Nenets collective narratives keep memories about people and reveal them in public and what kind of lessons Nenets people get from these stories.

One Nenets individual song tells about committing reindeer theft for saving people from starvation. Moreover, it talks about the power of a human prayer to the tundra spirits, which helped to save a hero. Some Nenets elders even call this type of song a little *yarabc* – 'epic crying story', which originates from the Nenets word – *yar* 'crying'.

Since I collected this Nenets individual song, I started to look for the answers to why and how Nenets tell them. After talking with elders, I understood that every song and every story makes people responsible for them. I asked tundra elders to explain some specifics of Nenets ways of communication with people, nature and spirits of the tundra by speaking or singing. I received a range of answers to my question. Mostly people mentioned that usually people keep special knowledge in silence because it can be very intimate and personal. Thus, telling such a story is synonymous with being responsible for it.

In the literature about the Nenets shamanistic religion and communicating with nature and the spirits of the tundra, I found that for Nenets people, it is normal to worship trees (mostly larch), stones and fire (Golovnev 1995; Pushkareva 2007). Nenets can communicate with nonhuman beings and tell about this in their individual songs (Pushkareva 2001:34). I found some examples of such songs in

Toivo Lehtisalo's book, which are defined as prayers (Lehtisalo 1960: 448-460). Jarkko Niemi calls this phenomenon a ritual communication between people and nature and its spirits (Niemi 1999). This is very similar to the Saami culture of singing traditional Saami joiks (yoiks). Such joiks are equivalent to personal signatures of the people who made them (Jones-Bamman 1993). Moreover, Saami joiks can actually connect many personal stories together and join them to a bigger collective narrative story. This means that joiks are actually part of the collective remembering of the story and can be performed in public. Therefore, joiks are considered different from ordinary Saami songs, and they have different social value. People keep these stories safe to remember the people who made them. Exactly like the Nenets individual songs, Saami joiks reflect the emotions of people, their connection to the family, their memories and the nature where they live, saving the names of the people to whom they belong. Like Nenets individual songs, they can give lessons about how to work with reindeer and how to live and survive in the tundra. In addition, Saami joiks also help to build an important mechanism of communicating between human and non-human beings in the tundra.

The main difference between Nenets individual songs and joiks (yoiks) is that whereas the Nenets make them themselves and it is offensive to perform any individual song in the presence of its author. While the Saami believe that humans get their joiks from the tundra spirits and that they can be given as gifts or inherited by other people (Anderson 2005:216-219).

Nenets individual songs keep memories about important parts of the Nenets personal and local collective memory stories about people and their lives in the tundra (Niemi 1999:104). Not every Nenets individual song can be saved in the collective memory history, but only the examples of songs which were selected by the Nenets audience (Burykin and Pushkareva 2010:334). At the same time, an individual Nenets song *khari syo* can be connected to a personal story *khari ilye"mya*. Because when other people perform them, they know who made them, how and why. People can perform other people's individual songs *nyenetsya syo*", but it is offensive to perform any individual song in the presence of its author. Individual songs are usually performed only for a small circle of family members. Also, if a performer knows the background story of an individual song, he or she should tell to whom this song belongs and also how and why it was made (Tonkov 1936; Pushkareva 1990). There are also Nenets individual songs that are open for public performing. Tundra people can sing them as old legends about the history of the tundra. These songs also are accompanied by a short introduction to the author of the song and the reason it was made. Individual songs which tell interesting stories *nyenetsya ilye"mya"* are very valued by tundra people and can be confided to children as part of their family heritage (Niemi and Lapsui 2004). I show this connection between personal life stories, individual songs and collective narratives in figure 3.3.

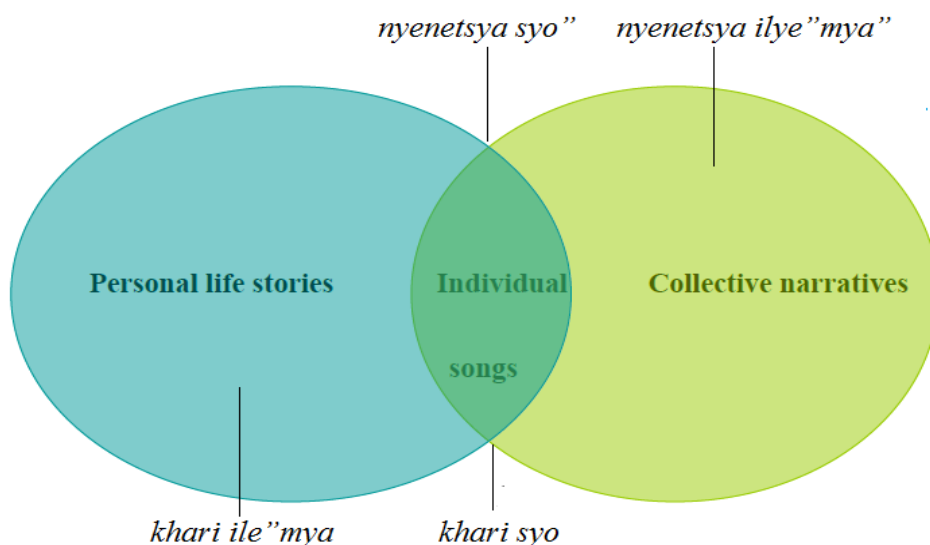


Figure 3.3. Connection of Nenets personal stories, individual songs and collective narratives.

During my work on collecting Nenets stories about the past, I was surprised that the Nenets can remember very old songs and even the names of the people who made them. I consider these old songs, which many people know and can perform, to be a part of the Nenets collective memory stories. They tell about Nenets individuals, and can be told to young people with a special message or a lesson from the past. It is important to underline that all Nenets individual songs can be performed only in the Nenets language. Nenets songs have a special song language, without which it is not possible to perform and remember them. Even to the extent that it is possible to translate them into Russian and English, performing Nenets songs in these languages is not possible.

### 3.5. Silence among the Nenets

For the Yamal Nenets, everyday life in the tundra is built upon many actions and activities, mostly connected to reindeer herding or fishing. They learn and come to know this work from an early age. Children in the tundra observe what elders do and learn how to participate in their everyday family life by copying and imitating them. However, usually the Nenets elders give very little instruction in spoken words. Mostly they show their children how to do this work and encourage them to join it. The Nenets believe that speaking calmly and being quiet have a positive effect on children's psychological health, mental development and learning skills. This is perhaps why the Nenets children who grow up in the tundra are more silent

than their settlement counterparts are. However, parents may also use silence as a punishment, where the exclusion of a child from everyday conversation and family talks can be worse than a telling-off.

According to the Nenets traditional norms of politeness, young people are not allowed to say the personal names of people who are much older than they are. They can address an elder man as 'Father of ...' or an elder woman as 'Mother of ...' with the name of the son or a daughter. This is an identity marker of the social status of a person as the father or mother of somebody. Young people can also say to any old man *iri*, which means 'grandad' or to any old woman - *bada* 'granny'. Since the old Nenets custom did not allow traditional Nenets personal (real, proper) names to be spoken, the Russian names helped to replace such silenced names<sup>3</sup>. Thus, in previous times, and even nowadays, Nenets people may have both a Nenets and a Russian name. The Nenets terminology of kinship is very well developed (Khomich 1995; Nyenyang-Komarova 1996; Kwashnin 2002; Vanuito 2002; Liarskaya 2002; Yaptik 2014). In Figure 3.4. I show the connection and Nenets terminology of kinship in the form of circles.

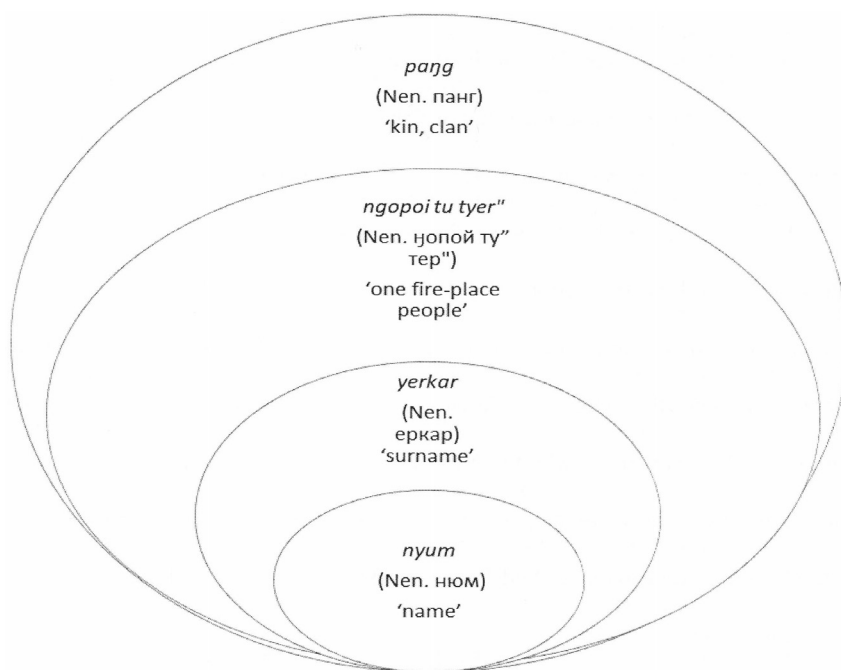


Figure 3.4. Nenets kinship and family names.

3 In 1930-40s, Nenets children silenced their Nenets personal names and kept the names of their parents silent in Soviet boarding schools. As a result many of them received Russian names. In the 1960s, the Nenets got their Soviet passports with personal names and surnames written there. The official Russian name should consist of surnames, first names and patronyms (father's name) (Khomich 1995).

When Nenets meet for the first time, they usually introduce themselves by saying their personal names: *nyum* (Nen. нюм) ‘name’; *erkar* (Nen. еркаp) ‘surname’; *paŋg* (Nen. паŋг) ‘kin, clan, moiety’; *ŋesy* (Nen. ӈэсы) ‘people who live in one camp’; *myad ter* (Nen. мяд’ тер) ‘one’s tent’s inhabitants’ or ‘people of a family, members of the same family’ or ‘family circle’ (Golovnev 2004).

Traditional Nenets anthroponyms has rich definition of traditional Nenets names, individual names, family names, and kinship terminology (Khomich 1976:64). The Nenets rule of silencing personal names is similar to that of other native societies. However, every society has its regulations on speaking names and its own cultural ways of the conceptualization of *their ownership*, *agency* or *objectification*, for example, as described by Barbara Bodenhorn in her work on speaking names in Alaska. She states that speaking personal names can be dangerous for the owner of the name and that names have their personality which should be protected (Bodenhorn 2009:140). The Inuits of Greenland have the same custom of keeping personal names silenced. As it was described in the book of Janne Flora (2019), when the Inuits inherit their ancestors names they become connected to their broad family circle. Flora described this with words of a young man: “You are given a name you won’t be lonely” (Flora 2019:140). Theodora Kroeber (1961) wrote about the last representative of the Yahi Native American people, known as *Ishi*, which means ‘man’. His original name is unknown because he was forbidden to say it through a traditional taboo. It shows that in many indigenous societies people are keeping their names unsaid, even they are in the environment different from their home place. Silencing names can be protection from the spirits of deceased people, who can be still connected to a name. The Nenets also believe that speaking personal names can harm and even destroy their owners by any bad spirits of the tundra (Khomich 1976, 1995). Following the same rule, it is quite common to silence the names of dead people. This can happened mostly during the mourning period, when recently deceased people can feel sad and lonely in the world of dead people. They may want to take somebody from their family there. Therefore people try to avoid saying the names of those who have recently passed away. However, Nenets people can refer to a deceased person by *yanggumy* (Nen. яӈгумы) ‘somebody who is absent’, or *yanguda* ‘absent’ (Rus. отсутствующий, тот, кого нет) (Nyenyang 1996:14). There is also another word for a dead person, *xasayi* ‘deceased’, (хась – to die; sa = Subj, and i= deplorative suffix). In this reference, after the mourning period, people can start to mention the names of dead people but with an additional suffix of absence. A child who was born after the recent death of an old family member can get a Nenets name *Yeiko* ‘the replacement’. This means that children cannot get their parents names, but only names of their ancestors, who passed away long time ago (Tereshchenko 1989: 235). As Janet Carsten wrote in the *Ghost of Memory*, “the history of names may express or conceal the transmission of kinship memory” (Carsten 2007:23). Such stories tell about the origin of people’s families and the stories of their names, as well

as about significant events in connection to the names. For example, I got the name of my grandfather's aunt. She had passed away a long time before my birth. For my grandfather, her name had a strong symbolic meaning, because she had saved him and his family line. My grandfather gave me her name in memorial of her. It is a pity that I never used it because of my Russian given name. However, it gives me a strong feeling that I am a member of my grandfather's family circle from time of his ancestors until now and in the future. Therefore, I feel a high sense of responsibility for this name, which is an important part of my Nenets identity.

In Chapters 4 and 5, I am going to show how the Nenets remember and tell stories and songs with connection to people and their ancestors. The Nenets remember the names of people in connection to their family members. Some stories mention the names of people who have made mistakes or committed crimes in the tundra. This means that the Nenets tell stories about the past with a special knowledge or lesson that teaches that every Nenets person is responsible for his or her actions, and even spoken words. Any bad behaviour, or similarly, any bad words, could influence the family's good luck, and even that of future descendants. This is because in Nenets culture, words and silence can be protective and destructive. Nenets folklorist Elena Pushkareva writes that the Nenets value the power of spoken words: both the material and magical power (Pushkareva 2004). Other researchers, who have worked among the Nenets, among them Laur Vallikivi, also observed the Nenets cultural philosophy and linguistic ideology of the power of spoken words (Vallikivi 2011). Natalia Novikova (2014, 2017) mentions that indigenous northern cultures have a very well developed culture of being silent. People in the tundra respect silence not only as the counterpart to words. People can work together without words when they know and understand each other. This can reveal many things about their relationships to one other, about connections to the natural environment, where they live together. However, silence can also have a spiritual nature and background. People may avoid saying names of people with whom they live and say the names about animals they fear or value. Strong beliefs about the power of spoken words often accompany those people who live very close to nature. They believe words can materialize and reflect a special power in people that is not always positive.

In many indigenous Northern cultures, the different types of silence resemble those of the Nenets very closely:

- 1) People remain silent to keep stories safe. By not saying words aloud, people have more chance to keep their stories safe and remember them as a special kind of knowledge. Such silence can join people together, especially when they have common knowledge about something very special. In such cases, silence is reorganized as a special code for this knowledge.
- 2) People who live in one Nenets dwelling – a *chum* – try to respect each other's physical and psychological private space. This is dictated by necessity of maintaining the everyday routine of living together in the small and restricted

space of the *chum*. This can also be identified as a type of silence of everyday behaviour, which has more caring functions. Although the norms of Nenets hospitality require providing everybody with shelter and food, Nenets openness has strict borders; asking private questions is taken to be rude.

- 3) There are topics of conversation that are only allowed to be discussed by males and from which women are forbidden to speak. Women also have their own silenced topics.
- 4) People should respect the silence and privacy of nature. For example, in the late evening, children are not allowed to make noise in the tundra or play outside. There are also special restrictions concerning topics, some of which may not be discussed in the evening, especially those concerning important work: before hunting or fishing people do not discuss it. The same is about reindeer herding work, especially before calving season.
- 5) Moreover, tundra people usually communicate in silence when they need to make important decisions, for example, to make a formal proposal of marriage, a matchmaker comes into the *chum* in silence, but with a special staff.
- 6) When people visit sacred places, they pray there in silence. Similarly, when visiting graveyards of their nearest relatives, family members try to respect the silence and the peace of the dead.
- 7) When reindeer herders are working, they also have a special language of communication with the animals. However, herders' communication with reindeer can also be silent, because animals and humans work together and can predict each other's next actions.

In general, in Nenets culture, there is a very circumspect or careful attitude about what people can say and what should be kept silent. It is even regulated by Nenets norms of everyday behaviour and communication. This altogether influences how people talk about even their nearest plans. In their tradition, *speaking too soon is not wise*. This tradition has many common elements with those of other neighbouring cultures, like the Khanty, the Komi and the Selkup (Khomich 1995; Golovnev 1995). Many of these rules are based on the norms of shamanic rituals and communication with tundra spirits, which also regulates Nenets verbal and non-verbal communication.

The Nenets traditions and ways of telling and silencing stories are deeply connected to individual and collective memories about historical and recent events in the tundra. Within these stories people can regulate what they can tell as confidential knowledge and share it with everybody or hide it as dangerous information (Walke 2011; Alexievich 2013; Isurin 2017). This understanding of "confidential information" can be also named as "classified information", which people should keep as special knowledge.

### **3.6. The place of silence in the Nenets personal stories, narratives and individual songs**

A narrative analysis method describes the structure of stories and the answers to questions: Why do people tell some stories and why do they silence others? Why do people silence stories, and why do they remember and tell them later? I also understand that working with both personal stories and collective narratives is a very subjective process. This is because when I am writing about Nenets stories, I give my personal interpretation of them. However, I noticed that every story and narrative could have a connection to another story. This is probably one of the main features of the Nenets narrative tradition that can be tied to their nomadic culture: not only do people migrate in the tundra, but their stories do as well.

After reading different works about the place of narratives in the world's cultures, I concluded that every nation of the world has developed its own ways of telling stories and narratives. Each has its own narrative styles, with special contexts of the narratives that can have special referential and social meanings (Hymes 1974; Cortazzi 1993). Martin Cortazzi explains that this diversity of norms of social communication has historically developed ways of speaking that reflect cultural differences of every nation of the world (Cortazzi 1993:101; Lebra 1987). Cortazzi also considers that a language is both a cultural and social instrument of communication and speaking. Therefore, in many cultures an oral narrative is the only instrument for remembering the past. Yet the way in which people tell a story or a narrative always reflects their cultural specifics of talking to each other. At the same time, it shows an organization and a meaning to every story in peoples' lives, with the reflection of special messages as special knowledge of something.

Usually, the life stories and personal narratives tell us situational stories, using different aspects of multi-vocalism (Bakhtin 1979) of a speaker's life, which can be told and retold, reinterpreted and reshaped for different situations. Some people can have a story that is good to tell in a particular situation and to a particular audience in such a way that the narrator understands the meaning of the past in his or her life and how it is good to shape these memories for his or her future. In this way, it is possible to notice that people actually shape their memories to harmonize with the events and values of the main collective narratives (Linde 1993, 2009).

From this point, I understand that the narrative approach emphasizes different ways in which storytellers, along with the researchers, construct a collection of stories, express their opinions and evaluate them. I actually did the same during my fieldwork in the tundra when I tried to join personal and collective narratives, and songs by common topics of narration. In addition, I even tried to ask people what they thought about the story and why it is so important for them.

It is important to mention that the narrative analysis does not aim to ascertain the historical truth. The subject of research in the narrative analysis is a story (Labov 1977; Franzosi 1998).

Here I followed the main oral history concept based on Renato Rosaldo's theory of documentation of life stories and the ways in which people tell their stories to others (Rosaldo 1980:89). For example, in different cultures of the world, individuals and societies remember and tell their memories in their own peculiar traditions (Cruikshank and Argounova-Low 2000; Tonkin 1992). Yet, people transmit memories about the past in the way that they want others to remember and tell in the future. Therefore, a narrative has many roles in telling and remembering personal and collective memory stories.

For instance, while Charlotte Linde looks to hermeneutic approaches of narrative analysis, which significantly influences the understanding of emotions and human behaviour during narration (Linde 1993:47-48), Martin Cortazzi refers to Labov's approach of the narrative analysis and writes about two social functions of the narrative: "referential" and "evaluative". Narrators give their perspective on the narrative content and evaluation as a part of the narration (Cortazzi 1993). In this way, the speaker gives the audience information through the narrator's recapitulation of the experience in the way it happened. He gives a report about what happened in the story in the referential part and evaluates it in the evaluative part, which is based on giving a meaning of the narrative by establishing the point of personal involvement.

According to William Labov, a narrative analysis theory is a sort of calendar order of events that play an important role in the process of transferring the knowledge of the distant and near past to the audience (Labov 2013). At the same time, Charlotte Linde pointed out in her works that a life story is not simply a collection of stories and explanations, but it also includes the relations between them, which means that every new story must be included into themes of other stories included in the life story (Linde 1993:25; Labov 1975). This was a very useful point for my further analysis of selected Nenets collective memory stories. Additionally, Linde writes that a collection of stories about one given period of time and joined by one topic of narration can help to save memories about one special story. Then a collection of stories and associated discourse units has extended reportability: they are tellable and are told and retold over the course of a long period of time (Linde 1993:21). In this way, the narrative becomes part of a social practice or construction that helps us to understand and explain the mechanisms of production and reproduction of social representations about the past in individual, collective stories, which can even be told to others openly.

However, I cannot say that every narrative about the same event can replicate the same story about special events. Based on the example of Nenets stories, I am going to show how people tell their life stories in the frame of groups' stories about

the past; and how people can make their own stories of themselves, their personal life stories of the past of others, and then during narration, how they control their narratives and keep some parts of their own and other people's stories silenced (Tonkin 1992). The ways in which people formulate their messages in different cultures were described in Dell Hymes' (1962, 1964) works on *Ethnography of communication*. For societies that do not have written language, myths and stories about the past are equal to a living official historical document (Cruikshank 1995; Boston 1969; Ntsiname 2008; Freeman 2000; Nugert 2008). It is quite common that people tell a collection of narratives about the same event of the past differently due to their own evaluation of it and feeling of responsibility. Some people tell their story as they remember and know it, while others prefer to silence their past; there is also a third group of people who, in certain circumstances, would be willing to tell the silenced and hidden stories, thereby opening them again.

In this work, I would like to show these selection processes determining which stories get "in" and which do not, and will explain these principles by analysing the structure and content of narratives. Additionally, I would like to show selected stories, their content and Nenets technologies of narrating and silencing during narration of their stories. Therefore, the main part of this study is based on the concept that narratives tell not only the contents of the life experience. The basic components of a well-formed narrative analysis of personal experience were described by William Labov and Joshua Waletzky (1967) and refined later in Labov (1997). As William Labov describes the narrative construction: 'A fully developed narrative starts with an abstract, an orientation with information on the person, place, times and behavior involved; the complicating action; an evaluation section, which identifies the point of the narrative; the resolution; and a coda, which returns the listener to the present time' (Labov 2013:5).

I found this approach to be useful because it allows us to identify the role of silence in human narratives in general. In analysing the structure of Nenets narratives, I identify gaps, which could mean the narrator decided to keep those parts silent.

For example, Keith Basso writes about the specifics of silence during communication where '*the function of a specific act of silence – that is, its interpretation by and effect upon other people – will vary according to the social context in which it occurs*' (Basso 1990:82). In his works, he describes six different situations of silencing in the Western Apache culture. In this culture, it is normal to be silent when people are sad, when they meet strangers and during religious rituals, and people respect their children's silence when they return home from boarding schools. Indigenous parents give young people time to accept their families back. I think the same is true among the Nenets when children return to the tundra from the Russian boarding schools, because they need time to come back to their Nenets culture. These six examples of silence described by Keith Basso refer to types of silence I explain in my work as silence for keeping special knowledge. Moreover, I analyse other types of

silence that were not included in Basso’s analysis, such as silencing for remembering and forgetting and keeping silent because of fear. I recognize silence as an instrument for passing knowledge, as a special code known only to a selected group of people. However, in many cases, silence keeps human knowledge, regulates the processes of remembering and forgetting, and reflects how people accept or deny the legacies of their past (Connerton 1989:200).

The Nenets also value silence for its important social role in every part of their daily communication. It can be recognized as a special code of Nenets ethics of behaviour, shared responsibility and assistance for one another. The Nenets may use silencing as a psychological instrument for self-protection and protection of their society from bad memories about the past. At the same time, the Nenets can silence some stories in order to remember them. Therefore, I also consider it as a form of silencing when Nenets is spoken to keep information from non-Nenets Russian speakers. This is because only the small group of Nenets-speaking people can understand what was said in Nenets; the rest cannot. From my point of view, Nenets people may talk in their native language when they are afraid to tell something dangerous in Russian. This may also occur when they hesitate to say something wrong. At the same time, depending on the situation, narrators can tell their stories in either the Nenets or Russian languages. In Figure 3.5. I illustrate the meaning of silence in the Nenets stories.



Figure 3.5. Nenets spoken and silenced stories.

My explanation for the patterns of silence is that people are careful in sharing a silenced story because of the responsibility attached to it. Once the story is opened, then it becomes accessible for collective narrating, and then everybody has the right

to make his/her own version of the story. People might be afraid that other people could retell the story with the wrong message or in the wrong way. Because of this, people can forget the original story line and its lesson and message. In this way, they can silence memories about other people and negative memories about the past. At the same time, people can tell a story inside of their group as a piece of special hidden knowledge. Thus, the story can be silenced because it is individual, very personal, private and closed. At the same time, a spoken story can be both personal and collective, when everybody has a right to tell it. Therefore, such stories are more open to public performance. Thus, people tell their narratives how they want to tell them to others, leaving what they want to keep silent, unsaid.

In my work, I introduce the story of Nany Khorolia (Chapter 4), about stealing reindeer from other Nenets reindeer herders. Norms of the Nenets common law are different from the Russian official state rules. The Nenets have their own traditions of solving conflicts and punishing for crimes. In this story, Nany did not get any punishment for stealing reindeer, because he did it to save his family from hunger. However, people silenced this story due to the Nenets rules of reciprocity and shared responsibility about this man and his family. Nowadays, everyone can tell this story because there is no risk of his family being punished for the reindeer theft.

There is another silenced story about the Puiko family in Chapter 5, occurring as part of a collective memory narrative. This story was sleeping for a long time. The conflict between the Nenets people and an extractive industry company woke it up. However, people's anger went not to the state representatives, but to a family of their own people. The reason for this situation is that Soviet territorial reforms officially assigned specific territories to indigenous peoples (Vakhtin 1998). On this basis, the Puiko family has every right to receive compensation from the state extractive company, although some of their neighbours considered them to be recent incomers. This story indicates what kinds of difficulties could arise during communication between indigenous people and the state companies because of the Nenets cultural differences. In Russian culture, like in the Latin *Silentium videtur confession* - Silence indicates consent. However, in Nenets and other indigenous cultures, by keeping silent, people can express their hidden protest, which they are afraid to express openly. In reality, indigenous people have a very small voice in the state decisions about their future (Novikova 2014, 2017). Therefore, even though people are ready to talk about their present life in the tundra and its difficulties, many of them are afraid to talk about their future. On the one hand, this silencing is based on the belief of not talking about important things in order not to destroy them (in Rus.: *чтобы не сглазить*). On the other hand, I consider that people are simply afraid to talk about this because they are uncertain about their future and their perspectives of their reindeer herding work on the Yamal Peninsula. I discuss this in Chapter 6. Based on my literature analysis, I suggest these types of silencing to be my main contribution to the general theory of oral history.

### **3.6.1. *Silence as knowledge***

Even though personal memories are not official historical documents about the past, they do provide us with information about how people remember and tell about their personal and collective memories about their past. Many personal stories tell about common periods in the past and introduce how a group of people remembers it. Usually individuals share their private memories very carefully. They are especially responsible for those memories that include family and personal stories. Therefore, during communication with family members, friends, researchers, or other listeners, elders prefer to tell such versions of their individual biographies as personal stories that are interesting to the audience (Halbwachs 1992). Usually most of the people avoid discussing negative feelings of shame or self-victimization. Nancy Adler and Selma Leydesdorff suggest that such silencing of personal feelings creates new stories inside the historical frames as people make their own versions of their life stories that are good enough to tell to others (Adler and Leydesdorff 2013). It can be a universal rule of silencing tragedies of the past as knowledge that also makes members of Nenets society be responsible for their past through the memories they do and do not tell.

### **3.6.2. *Silencing for remembering and forgetting***

The processes of developing personal and collective remembrances, as well as the controlled forgetting of the past, are connected (Adler 2013:22). People do it because they want to protect their children and other family members from the negative emotions of the past. As a result, young people have a chance to pick up the knowledge about their culture that they want to have in their present life. Such silencing of the past makes people forget it. As Paul Connerton (2008) claims, remembering happens through repetition, but forgetting happens through silencing.

Contrary to Connerton, in Chapter 5, I describe how the Nenets remember the importance of stories by silencing them, and by repetitively telling the same story, they forget its original importance and meaning. Connerton's (2008) differentiation of seven types of forgetting the past describes that the process of storing individual memories can depend on their social context. When people forget their negative memories, they develop new ways of thinking and living in their society. Such social conditionality of remembrance is an important basis for forming a new collective identity. By silencing old memories about difficult, unpleasant moments of life that are considered to be no longer relevant or important, people start to talk only about the positive moments of their past. In the theoretical literature on oral history, various authors have expressed that societies select what they want to remember and which memories about the past they prefer to forget (Pennebaker and Banasik 1997:7; Vitebsky 2017). Connerton (2009) actually differentiates seven types of forgetting the past: repressive erasure, prescriptive forgetting, forgetting for formation of new identity, structural amnesia, forgetting as annulment, forgetting

as planned obsolescence and forgetting as humiliated silence. In studies about knowledge and memory, Roger Schank and Robert Abelson write the following words about remembering, silence, and motivation for forgetting memories. Not only do we tell stories to remember them:

The opposite side of the coin is also true. We fail to create stories in order to forget them. When something unpleasant happens to us, we often say, "I'd rather not talk about it" because not talking makes it easier to forget. Once you tell what happened to you, you will be less able to forget the parts of the story that you told. In some sense, telling a story makes it happen again. If the story is not created in the first place, however, it will only exist in original form, i.e., in a form distributed among the mental structures used in the initial processing. Thus, in the sense that it can be reconstructed, the experience remains.

Schank and Abelson (1995:41).

These authors also describe another reason for forgetting is that when people start to tell stories repeatedly, they can have a diversity of variations of them, which can be very different from an original story. This is because when people retell stories, they tell the indexes of stories, reconstructing details and adding embellishments. In this way, the stories become more interesting, but the actual events that make it special can be forgotten.

Therefore, people's memories do not necessarily form a dialogue, because they simply do not match with one another as there is a struggle between personal and collective memories. This is especially common when people live in one place and know each other well. Some of them can responsibly tell stories about historical events in connection to people. At the same time, other individuals can make different versions of the same story. However, the real story, which may have been silenced, can be forgotten when its owner passes away, while the collectively told memory story will continue to live among the people. This shows that every process of remembering the past is an active process and it depends on how people want to remember and tell their past.

For example, in the works of Julie Cruikshank, one can see how the collection of stories of three women from the Yukon represents knowledge that supports people and sustains their society (Cruikshank 1998; Abrams 2010:99). In the same way, I think that people silence their negative memories in order to lead their youngsters to think in a positive way about their past. Therefore, it is quite common for Nenets elders to change their personal narratives depending on the needs of the society. Of course, they can tell their silenced memories to others, but preferably not to their family members. This is something that many societies of the world have in common, that is, people prefer to tell their very intimate stories to strangers rather than to

their family. However, if stories are still too intimate even to tell strangers, then they will remain untold, especially those stories harbouring confidential information about people's lives (Liarskaya and Dudeck 2012). Such motivated forgetting is in the songs about *nyewykhy ilye"mya* 'old stories' (Figure 3.1.) that were silenced for many years. Nowadays, people can tell them again. Moreover, people can open their nearly forgotten stories to give them a new meaning of special knowledge about the past. For example, if people break the common rules for hunting and fishing, they can expect punishment from tundra spirits. I will discuss an example of such an occasion in Chapter 5.

### **3.6.3. Silencing for fear and safety**

The Nenets talk about the Soviet era as an old time story *nyewykhy ilye"mya*, but sometimes it can also be *tyakhakui ilye"mia* or *talytsui ilye"mya* 'a past or a recent story' (Figure 3.1.). The Soviet period taught the Nenets another type of silence. The dominance of Soviet Russian memories taught my Nenets research partners to silence their own memories that differ from the dominant discourse about this period. This is why many of the traumatic memories remained silenced for decades. Their stories about the Soviet time describe how the Nenets lived in the tundra before and during the collectivization in the early Soviet time, and are referred to as *ya' myidykhy ilye"mya* 'an ancient story'. The previous analysis of literature about Nenets life stories shows that those examples of Nenets life stories published during Soviet times are good examples of propaganda stories (Tonkov 1936; Verbov 1937; Kupriyanova 1960, 1965; Shcherbakova 1960). They describe and explain the positive changes in the life of the Nenets people and connect Nenets narratives with the common history of the Soviet people. These narratives do not give any information about the lives of individuals, but there is general information about many positive changes the Nenets experienced since becoming part of the Soviet society. This type of ideological pressure had a strong influence. Even nowadays tundra elders tell stories about introducing the communist ideology and working on its ideas in the tundra. It was also a period of big changes, tragedies and losses. Many Nenets families whose members were arrested and killed during the collectivization campaign in the tundra have negative memories about that time. Therefore, when they talk about this period of their family history, they usually give rather simplistic individual accounts that do not challenge the official representation of the Soviet historical past. However, many accounts of personal stories contribute to the popular memories about the past. Usually it is the production of the local collective memory, where everyone's memory is involved in the process of reshaping it (Laptander 2014; Laptander 2017). Karina Lukin came across the same phenomenon when she collected the memories of Kolguev Nenets concerning relocation from their place of origin (Lukin 2012). I found that my Nenets research partners saw the Soviet period of collectivization as being associated with both positive and negative connotations.

However, while they expressed the positive sides in words, most of them preferred to silence their negative memories. Even nowadays, Nenets elders remember the arrests, the humiliation of family members as enemies of the Soviet state, and all other difficulties, but usually they do not talk much about these experiences. They silence them. Many of them did not even tell their children how their families had suffered because of the old communist regime. Some of the elders can express their pain and frustration in individual songs. However, their children tell positive stories about their parents and even grandparents, as successful and respected members of the Soviet state (Laptander 2017).

One explanation for this can be found in J.H. Plumb's work *The Death of the Past*, which states that everybody believes they are part of their national history; everybody makes their own interpretation of past historical events, and narrates it from their own perspective. It is the memories from the past that dictate what people should remember and believe (Plumb 1969 (2004):116). However, in Piers Vitebsky's *Living without the Dead*, the author states that members of the young generation mostly make their own choice about forgetting their past (Vitebsky 2017). Yael Zarubavel (2011:20) calls this process of controlled transformation of memories about the past the commemorative memory or the time of the memory when young people can remember only short summaries of important stories.

Since the late 1980s, it was noticed that the Nenets had started to talk about the early collectivization time openly, in the form of old legends. The long period of silence changed the narratives of some of these stories because nobody can correct them as all participants of those events had already passed away. Moreover, it happened due to the Nenets way of telling stories, which is based on improvisation. Nowadays, Nenets retell Mandalada stories as *wa'al* 'historical narratives' and even make another versions of them as variations of *nyewykhy ilye'mya* 'ancient stories' (Lar 2001; Vallikivi 2005; Laptander 2014). Another collection of silenced stories talks about hiding reindeer from the Russian authorities. For tundra people, it was important to keep their reindeer herds in the tundra. The strong politics of the Soviet state on the control of the size of the reindeer herds made tundra people very careful with the way they talk about their number of reindeer. For example, in their stories about the recent past *talytsui ilye'mya*, Nenets elders tell how they were hiding reindeer in the tundra from the state authorities (Stammler 2005:140-153). These stories were never told in public as collective narratives. However, to the young Nenets reindeer herders these stories give an understanding of the diverse strategies used to keep personal reindeer safe. By moving reindeer, hiding them from authorities and silencing the real number of animals, they could avoid the risk of authorities telling them to reduce their number of reindeer.

This type of silence is described in Caroline Humphrey's (2005) work on the discourse of Soviet people during communist times. During communist times, all Soviet citizens were taught to be silent and to obey the rules of the state (Soriv-

Chaikov 2003; Argounova-Low 2012). During that time, many Soviet people learned to control what they can say and what they need to keep unsaid, silent. Although people talked about many aspects of their life, they controlled what they said and what they needed to keep unsaid according to what knowledge they wanted to keep safe or to forget.

Silencing through talking was one of the main features of communication in the Soviet communist state. Due to this, the population of the USSR developed a special way of telling and silencing some parts of the historical past (Isurin 2017). The whole period of Soviet communist political power completely transformed Russian society all over the country including the Arctic regions, resulting in stoicism and passivity as ordinary norms of behaviour (Ssorin-Chaikov 2003).



*Figure 3.6. Do not blab! Soviet propaganda poster Vatulina N. and Denisov N. (1941).*

This feature of the society developed under the pressure of the traumatic memories and painful emotions about the Soviet communist regime, as Anike Walke (2011) and Svetlana Alexievich (2013) describe in their works about silencing in self-defending narratives of Soviet women.

Paul Connerton (2008) writes about the same type of humiliated silence and silencing that German women experienced in war times. The communicative

function of silence can also depend on the assumptions and expectations within the discursive context in which silence is used, invoked, and constructed for the right to self-defence, which can be interpreted as acquiescence (Schweiger 2018). During my work, I also noticed that for some people, it was difficult to tell their interviews on record. They asked to switch the recorder off when they were about to tell very intimate parts of their story that they did not want to open to the larger public. This selective way of narrating on record, telling other unofficial and individual accounts when the recording gear is off, was discussed by Julie Cruikshank and Tatiana Argounova-Low (2013). This knowledge also made Nenets people selective in their decision of what and how to tell, even concerning their *yedei ilye* 'mya' 'contemporary life' in the tundra.

### 3.7. Conclusion

This chapter presented theoretical approaches and concepts for understanding the roles of words, silence and silencing in Nenets traditional life stories and narratives. Here I described the Nenets cultural norms and tradition of silencing in the tundra. The theoretical concept of silence and silencing in human communication showed that in human cultures more widely, silence is opposed to spoken words. Yet, both words and silence have their own kind of power and are communicatively meaningful if they convey important information from a speaker or 'non-speaker'. In this chapter, I demonstrated the social constructions and meaning of silence in Nenets stories and narratives about the past.

Moreover, I have demonstrated that research on life stories and narratives is inherently interdisciplinary and common across many different fields of research. My analysis of oral history literature revealed the gaps in describing the specific roles of silence and silencing in narratives. By describing the Nenets social constructions and meaning of silence in stories and narratives about the past, I contribute to oral history research in general.

First, I provided the general oral history definition of a life story as well as the narrative terminology concerning individual, group and collective stories, and narratives about the past. Then I compared the classification of different stories about the past with Nenets terminology. The diversity of Nenets stories and narratives about the past, and their recognition of a range of genres, were shown in Figure 3.1. After this, I wrote about the importance of Nenets individual songs for remembering not only personal stories, but also for keeping collective memory narratives safe. Following this, I described how people silence their personal stories and songs, what they can tell in the collective narratives, and how individual songs help to preserve and remember old silenced stories about people and their family members. Moreover, I introduced silencing as an important marker for defining and

shaping a common group identity in personal stories and individual memories about the past.

Anthropological and cultural studies showed that in both Western and Arctic cultures, silence can have many common features. However, I distinguished several diverse social roles and meanings of silencing within Nenets culture. General aspects of oral history were useful for comparing and giving definitions of the Nenets life stories and narrative terms used in this work; helping to select stories for analysis; and illustrating three suggested types of silence found in the Nenets narratives.

1) These stories represent common (group) knowledge, open for everybody. Moreover, from my main point of view, one of the social concepts of Nenets stories is to connect people by way of special knowledge about their kinship networks.

2) Silencing for remembering and for forgetting personal stories about family tragedies can be part of collective stories and narratives about the past. Therefore, this part of the work showed that historical pasts and memories about tragic events regulate Nenets ways of telling or silencing their traumatic memories. Although the gap of silencing in stories should be minimal for me, because I am supposed to know the majority of the Nenets collective canonical narratives, I acknowledge that many of these narratives are rather new for me.

3) Collective tragedies join people by their common difficulties. They also give special lessons about difficult situations of epidemics and tragedies in the tundra. Tundra people usually avoid talking about their problems and difficulties. Moreover, during Soviet times, the communist regime taught people severe lessons about keeping silent and silencing. These lessons still have a noticeable influence in the life of tundra people, as seen in stories about the state authorities and indigenous people. Thus, these stories do not talk about how to make a dialogue with the state and its representatives. People know that the state power has a priority of one-way communication in which ordinary people are supposed to silently accept any decisions of authorities. Thus, due to the requirements of the Russian state and Nenets society, people try to silence any criticisms about the old and present regime as well.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 are based on examples of Nenets stories and describe how the Yamal Nenets speak their silenced stories. Altogether, my findings describe the main principles of speaking and silencing in Nenets culture, providing a contribution to general oral history theory.

## **4. Nenets memories in individual songs**

### **4.1. Introduction**

In this chapter, I use examples of Nenets individual songs and stories to describe the role of silence in remembering the history of the tundra and how Nenets elders tell lessons of the past to their young generation. This chapter introduces Nenets songs and stories performed by Achamboy Serotetto (b. 1938) from the Yarsalinskaia tundra, Seko Lamdo (1936-2012), a private reindeer herder from the Laborovskaia tundra, Ngesoda (Vladimir) Khudi (1936-2012), a private reindeer herder from the Baydaratskaia tundra, Khauly Laptander (b.1946) from the Payutinskaia tundra, and Ngati Serotetto (1936-2016), a fishing Nenets from the Yuribey River.

### **4.2. Personal stories in individual songs**

Individual songs represent an important part of Nenets culture, describing different parts of their history before and after the Soviet revolution (Castren 1940; Lehtisalo 1947; Dolgikh 1961; Niemi 1999; Kupriyanova 1957, 1960; Pushkareva 1990, 2000; Labanauskas 1992; Golovnev 2004). Every individual song has an author, each one detailing special episodes of the Nenets life in the tundra. In individual songs, tundra people reflect on their thoughts, express feelings of happiness and joy, but also pain, sorrow, and grief. Some songs may be very personal and intimate, and are performed alone. By singing, people can express their very special memories about their life in the tundra. The emotional improvisation of stories in songs could reveal how these songs were made (Portelli 2013: 275). At the same time, the common historical background of the stories, and the silencing of some parts of them, can be contextually understandable only for people who know the original stories. While for people of younger generations, these stories of the past events may become silent, because they do not have any emotional connection to them (Cruikshank 1998:2; Fivush 2010). Moreover, cultural variation in the regulation of talk (Philips 1976, 1985) and personal decisions of people, make them tell their life stories and stories of the past events selectively.

However, Nenets historical narratives of the past and individual songs are always connected to people, family members, and to the home landscape and traditional place of living in the tundra. In this chapter I would like to start this journey into the Nenets historical past by way of an individual song of Nany Khorolia. This

song was collected near the Modry Yakha River in the summer of 2014. Achamboy Serotetto presented Nany Khorolia as a reindeer herder who lived in this tundra at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, before the Soviet revolution.



Figure 4.1. Winter chums in the tundra. April 2018. Photo. Roza Laptander.

#### 4.2.1. The story of Nany Khorolia's individual song

##### *Text 1*

1) Xobam' xano"mow.  
Xano"ma.  
Xubta yaney, pon-ney, Wewa newisyey.  
Newisyey.

2) Nyaxar" yud" nej, xabtaney".  
Xabtm' wadarney.

3) Syinyani'-nej xabto"-nej  
Iri yalyaxana. Yalyaxana.  
Nob xana"nyisyaney.  
Nobey'

1) My trip on a reindeer skin,  
When I was travelling on the reindeer  
skin,  
Was long and not easy.  
This trip was hard and exhausting.

2) Thirty reindeer,  
I drove all reindeer with me.

3) These reindeer were grazing behind  
the tents.  
In the moonlit winter night  
I took them all with me.

4) Pewdyaxana sirasawey salmameym'  
Nyiwew xamada".  
Xamada".  
Syey xesy, samlyang xabtarkow  
Nyidum lerkabto'. Lerkabta".

5) Xarwan' xanmi syidya yan' lyekey'.  
Lyekey'.  
Njulyi' paromba xan' xoba' syidya xa  
syiwnya. Syiwnya'.  
Sam' sina"deim'. Sina"dm'.  
Tyiki samlyang xabtarkinyi sawawna  
syariney. Syariney.

6) Pixidaxani nyaxar" yu xabtm' sawawna  
syar"nyisyanaw".

7) Samlyang xabtarkinyi  
pinya pyideyiney.  
Pyideyan.

8) Many yixinan-nyei madam-ney:  
«Sira salaney. Salaney.  
Yur" tasyinyani tyukowna tobtow'.  
Tobtow".  
Nyod nedata"! Nedata!

9) Yu" tasyinyani nyibnand nedata-ney".  
Xuna malynganey xananey.  
Xanadormane syito' myetadeim'.  
Metadeim».

4) In the darkness I did not notice  
An old dry tree under the snow.  
My five female reindeer did not notice  
it either.  
Getting scared from it  
They all jumped aside.

5) Suddenly my sledge bumped into the  
old larch wood. It was broken into two  
parts.  
Two parts...  
Quickly I took a reindeer skin from my  
sledge  
I fixed a harness on it with  
All five female sledge reindeer.  
I tied a rope to

6) All thirty reindeer, which I took with  
me  
Attached to my belt

7) Then I pushed my five female  
reindeer  
I pushed them to run further  
I pushed them

8) I thought to myself:  
"Old tree under the snow, listen to what  
I want to say to you.  
There are ten Nenets from the Lower  
Taz area  
Running after me. If they come here,  
Please, stop them. Do not let them  
catch me!

9) If you do it, if you stop ten Nenets  
from the Lower Taz area.  
I will make a gift to you  
Take them as a gift,  
I offer them up to you as a gift."

After these words, the old larch tree supported Nany and stopped his enemies. Here the larch tree is represented as a special custodian of the place. I consider this part of the song to be an evaluation of Episode 2 about the power of unspoken words. When words are said as a silent prayer, they can have powerful meaning and help people in difficult situations.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>10) Syaxa' yu" tasyinyanji tyor nadyimey.<br/>           Namdamey:<br/>           «Talyerta pasi'nyow. Pasi' nyu.<br/>           Syit nyam"nguwow"!»</p>  | <p>10) When later I had heard the voices<br/>           of<br/>           The Low Taz Nenets,<br/>           I heard them shouting to me:<br/>           "You, damn thief, we will get you!"</p>  |
| <p>11) Njamgi pyirkana marnado' nadyimey.<br/>           Nadyimey.<br/>           Munm' namdamey-ey.<br/>           Taryem' mamondow":<br/>           «Sirasawey salm' nyiwew manesey'.<br/>           Manesey.<br/>           Pod pud' xanoŋey-ey"<br/>           Nob' taxaraney-ey"».<br/>           Nyaxarto' ŋewiey. Njewiey.<br/>           Paryidyesy xainey".</p> | <p>11) Suddenly they gave a shout.<br/>           After I heard a murmur,<br/>           A murmur of somebody:<br/>           "I did not notice this old tree under the<br/>           snow<br/>           We all did not notice it.<br/>           Our sledges smashed on it.<br/>           No sledge is left".<br/>           Only three people, there were only<br/>           three of us who survived...<br/>           Like three dark spots, I left them<br/>           behind.</p> |
| <p>12) Tend xayedeim', xayedeim'.<br/>           Xalew' syedaney'. Syedaney.<br/>           Xarasyi' tewiwey".<br/>           Tewiw".<br/>           Tyi.<br/>           (FM 2014).</p>  | <p>12) I continued my trip.<br/>           I travelled to the Khalev seda hill,<br/>           I arrived without problems.<br/>           I arrived.<br/>           That was it.</p>  |

#### 4.2.2. Analysis of the song

The starting point for the analysis of these personal narratives was the background story or background knowledge (Agar 1980), which helped me to shape an interpretation of it from the present perspective.

**Abstract** - This song tells a story about a poor fishing Nenets who did not have enough reindeer to save his family from hunger. He went to the south of the Yamal Peninsula and stole reindeer from another Nenets.

**Orientation** - The author of the song Nany Khorolia, acknowledged that stealing reindeer is not an easy job. However, Nany did not suppose this to be a sin because the reindeer he took were good trophies and the price for this hard work. From the first lines of the song, we know that it happened on a winter night, when people were sleeping and there was nobody outside. Nany was alone and drove thirty reindeer away to the tundra quickly in silence. Here the song makes reference to the power of the human and non-human connection in the space of the tundra. It also provides basic knowledge on the rules of living and surviving in this world (Schneider 1987:67).

**Complicating situation** - The owners of the stolen reindeer broke the silence of the tundra by shouting to Nany and running after him. Suddenly Nany's sledge ran into an old larch tree that was hidden under the deep snow. Nany had not noticed it, driving his reindeer. However, he managed to make a quick decision to improvise using an old reindeer skin as a sledge. Then he asked the local spirit of the place to help him. Nany made a deal with the old larch tree and asked it to stop his persecutors. This way of talking with non-living nature is an example of the vestiges of old Nenets paganism and shows the special place of the larch tree in Nenets culture. Such vestiges of animism and magic are attested to in the Nenets folklore texts as *syudbabts* and *yarabts*. The Nenets believe that nonmaterial spirits and custodians of the places can take different material forms (Tonkov 1936:20; Kharyuchi 2004, 2013) and that it is possible to communicate with them. For example, in Jarkko Niemi and Anastasia Lapsui's book, there is a mythological hero called *syudbya wesako*. By singing a shamanic song, he asked a stone about his son's fortune. Without giving an answer, the stone killed him (Niemi and Lapsui 2004:87). However, in Text 1, Nany silently asks for help from an old larch tree. This story shows that in Nenets religion and culture, the larch tree has a very significant role and has the power to communicate with people. The larch tree is supposed to be magical because it can give its living energy to the people while tundra spirits continue to live inside of its body (Lar 2001:43-45). Because of this special connection to the tundra spirits, in old times the Nenets made their shamanic drums from larch trees (Lehtisalo 1998; Adaev 2007:178). A single old larch tree is considered to be one of the special living beings of the tundra (Kharuchi 2012). For the Nenets, such places in the tundra have a very strong and important meaning because they believe them to be sacred. Therefore, in this episode of the song in which Nany talks to this tree, another strategy of speaking in silence in the tundra is introduced. This can be recognised as more like a prayer than a regular communication.

**Resolution** – Stealing reindeer is a hard job. Not everybody can do it because it is dangerous and physically tough.

**Evaluation** - Nany's trip home was treacherous and with many difficulties. Yet, he managed to get 30 reindeer, which helped him and his family to survive the hunger during a cold and severe Arctic winter.

**Coda** –After singing the song, Achambo said that Nany managed to save his family from dying of hunger. His children and grandchildren still live in the tundra. Nany's daughter was married to Nyako Puiko from the Yuribey River (see Chapter 5), and his granddaughter lives in the Yar-Sale village.

Initially, Nany silenced this story from other Nenets because he was afraid of being punished for stealing the reindeer. Although other people knew about this theft, they did not tell anybody this story. Therefore, silencing here can be acknowledged due to Nenets collective responsibility for this man and his family. However, once Nany told his adventure in the form of a song, somebody heard it and performed the song to other people because it tells an interesting and very special story. After I shared this song with other people, some Nenets elders said that it sounded like a *yarabts*. That it is actually *yar* 'a crying song', because it talks about a difficult trip, which was dangerous for this reindeer herder. At the same time, everybody agreed that this story happened in the past, but that people remember the song and the name of Nany Khorolia. Therefore, nowadays people could call it a *nyewykhy ilye"mya* 'an old story' or *lakhanako* 'a fairy tale, legend'. However, not every Nenets individual song is remembered as a song; some of them may have been silenced because of conflicting motives.

### 4.3. Stories of silenced songs

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Nenets were not highly controlled by the Russian authorities. They had as many reindeer as they could breed and keep safe. The number of reindeer tundra Nenets possessed determined their migration patterns and distances. From the Nenets historical narratives, I understood that at that time, reindeer theft was quite common among all reindeer people and only few people were punished for their crimes. Furthermore, it is difficult to call it 'theft'; rather, 'uncoordinated sharing of reindeer' would seem to be a better description.

Some rules of Nenets common (extended) reciprocity are described in the book of Vladimir Evladov (1992), who travelled in Yamal in the early 1920s. He noticed that rich Nenets reindeer herders could rent reindeer to their poor relatives as a part of the Nenets extended reciprocity culture, which is also another form of reindeer insurance in the tundra (Evladov 1992:172). However, there were some Nenets who did not want to work with reindeer. They just wanted to reap the final benefits from reindeer as an entire herd. Therefore, it was easier for them to steal reindeer from other people. In fact, it was even their profession; they were called *taley* 'thieves'. Even the main hero of the Nenets historical stories *wa"al* - Wauli Nyenyang - would steal reindeer from rich reindeer herders to help poor people survive in the tundra (Lar 2001:72-74, 206-209; Evladov 1992:101-102; Kharyuchi 2018). In the Nenets

collective memory, there are other stories and songs about how ordinary people would steal reindeer not for fun, but in order to stay alive and help their family members.

Stealing other people's reindeer was the cause of many conflicts and tensions between different groups of Nenets. However, when taking reindeer was necessary for survival, it could be a part of the hidden "extended reciprocity", mentioned above. At the same time, if people could not confirm the name of the person who had stolen reindeer, then the conflict was closed (Gorbunova and Makeev 2014:206). Quite often, reindeer thieves were real criminals and reindeer herders were afraid of them. At the same time, for example, Robert Paine described Saami reindeer theft, which was performed to send a special message to a reindeer herder to take better care of their reindeer (Paine 1999). Lotte Tarkka described the practice of Finnish reindeer herders stealing reindeer in the border areas between Finland and Russia. She also claimed that people told stories about reindeer thieving not as disapproval, but rather as hunting songs of those who practiced it (Tarkka 2013:433). In the same way, the Nenets could compare their reindeer theft with hunting reindeer, as in the song about Nany Khorolia and his adventures stealing reindeer. The Nenets do not blame Nany for this theft because he took reindeer from unknown people who lived in a different part of the tundra. However, by telling stories about other named people's crimes, the Nenets give special knowledge about incorrect and unaccepted behaviour in the tundra.

#### **4.4. The terrible Syadey family and their punishment**

The terrible Syadey family lived in the tundra before the revolution. Seko Lamdo and Vladimir Khudi told this story as special knowledge about the rules of living in the tundra. The Syadeys did not travel on the tundra for reindeer thieving. They killed people who came to visit their camp looking for help and food. This is still considered very cruel and not acceptable in Nenets society. Nenets life in the tundra is based on the rules of extended reciprocity and mutual help. Without these, it is difficult to survive in the tundra alone. This family did not follow these rules and were convicted for their evils by the whole Nenets society. Nowadays, their descendants live on the same tundra. People remember this story, but have silenced it as special knowledge which is familiar only to this local group of Nenets people.

##### **4.4.1. *S. Lamdo's story about the individual song of the Syadey's sister***

I met Seko Lamdo in Aksarka while she was in the hospital. Seko's name means 'got by pleading'. She told me a story about her husband's grandmother. Seko's husband's grandmother was the second wife of a Nenets reindeer herder. His first wife hated his second young wife and put every effort into getting them divorced. Her plan was

successful; this man left his second wife and their little son alone on the tundra, with very little food. The young woman walked over the tundra looking for other people and came across the Syadeys' camp. It was quite late, and there was only one woman in the *chum*. This woman was the Syadeys' sister. She gave them some food and told them to leave the camp as soon as possible because it was not safe to stay there.

## *Text 2*

### **Episode 1**

#### **Abstract**

*My grandmother came to the Syadeys' camp.*

#### **Orientation**

*To the place where the Syadeys lived. She entered with her child to the nearest chum. Of course, they were both hungry.*

#### **Complication**

*There was a woman there.*

*She was terrified when she saw them:*

*«Oh, oh, you came to the wrong place.*

*You cannot stay here if you want to stay alive.*

*You can have a little rest, and I will cook food for you.*

*Please, you should leave this place as soon as possible.*

*Just recently, one man came here by dogsledge.*

*Follow his road.*

*You should run away from here».*

*Syadeys' sister said to my husband's grandmother:*

*«Follow the road of this dogs' driver.*

*Tell his family: "Your man is dead".*

*Maybe they are looking for him.*

*If you follow his road, you will come to his hut.*

*He should be from the Khanty village.*

*He is Khanty.*

*He came here to ask for some reindeer meat, they do not have anything to eat».*

*This woman said:*

*«These Khanty should tell you what you need to do.*

*You should not hide these crimes, please, tell them about everything.*

*I know that you will meet your family again.*

*They usually come to Salekhard.*

*While you are waiting for them, try to find a place to live.*

*You will find a job there. I believe that you will find a better life».*

## Episode 2.

### Evaluation

After her words, our grandmother took her son, Khanguta, and walked away.  
They walked all night.  
Nobody knew what the Syadeys did with the dogs; maybe they killed them as well.  
Of course, they killed this Khanty man.  
The Syadey were afraid that he might complain about them.  
They wanted to shut him up.  
It was a dark and cold night.  
They had some food with them.  
They walked into the night.  
While they were walking, morning came.  
They had walked all night.  
At last, they came to the Khanty village.  
There were many little wooden huts there.

This village was very close to Obdorsk (Salekhard). The woman went to the police and told them about the Syadey brothers and their crimes. The three brothers were arrested and executed. Their sister was there, crying and asking for their forgiveness, but nobody listened to her.

### Result

*There was also her individual song, but I have forgotten it now.  
She was the younger sister of Ngach Syadey, or the elder sister of Mursi  
Or the elder sister of Ngyach Syadey and Mursi.  
Or she was the junior sister of Ngyach Syadey or the elder sister of Mursi  
I have forgotten it. She was also Syadey.  
She was singing:*

*«It is winter and cold.  
Give my brothers some warm clothes.  
Their bodies are getting cold».*

(FM 2012).

### Analysis

**Abstraction** - From Seko's story, we know that the Syadey brothers had reindeer. People, who lived nearby the poor Nenets, came to ask them for help and reindeer meat. According to the Nenets rules, they wanted to pay by fish later. The Syadey brothers killed their visitors and slaughtered their sledge reindeer for meat.

**Orientation** - One day, they made a rather cruel plan to get reindeer. Most of the people who visited the Syadeys' camp were reindeer herders. They were usually travelling alone. The brothers invited their guests to drink some vodka with them. After making the herder completely drunk, they killed him. Somehow, the Syadey brothers managed to hide their crimes. The people who lived near them were afraid to report them to the officials. Seko's grandmother and her little son were lucky that they managed to escape from their camp.

**Resolution** When Seko's grandmother arrived to Obdorsk (Salekhard), she informed the officials about the Syadey family and their crimes.

**Evaluation** - Why is it interesting? The Syadey brothers broke the Nenets common rules of reciprocity and norms of hospitality. They killed many people. They were arrested by the Russian state police and received a death sentence. Their sister, who helped Seko's relatives, was not arrested. This woman only saw her brothers in court and when they were executed in Salekhard. It was in the winter. In her song, she tells that her brothers were outside in the cold, and that she did not have any warm clothes to cover their cold bodies.

**Result** - When I asked Seko if she could perform her song, I got a negative response. Seko did not even know the name of this woman who had saved the lives of her husband's relatives. She tried to remember her name, but did not manage to. This is probably because people wanted to exclude this family from their memories, but at the same time, they could not, due to the shock and anger they felt.

#### **4.4.2. V. Khudi. About Mursi and a curse of the Syadey family**

Another reindeer herder who told me the story of the Syadey family was my uncle Vladimir (Ngesoda) Khudi (1936-2013). He said that they had killed many people in the tundra and that after their arrest, all tundra people wanted to get rid of them.

**Coda** - Ngesoda said that in the tundra, there is a man with the name of the junior Syadey brother - Mursi. This man is a descendant of the Syadey family. Other people have suggested that Mursi Syadey is mentally retarded because of the Syadey family's old sin. The main message of this story is that every Nenets person is responsible for his or her family history (FM 2012).



*Figure 4.2. Vladimir Khudi, Ngatyena Syadey (stands) and Vasilii Laptander around 1960's.  
Photo. Roza Laptander.*

I selected this story about the Syadey family because it gives a good illustration of how people tell stories to convey a message about the Nenets customs and traditions of living together. This story asserts that any violence committed among people who live together is forbidden.

Stories about crimes in the tundra have a special role in the society and constitute an important part of the local collective memories about the historical past of the tundra. They show that any crime in the tundra is forbidden. If it happened, then the punishment for it would go not only to the person who committed it, but also to his or her descendants for many generations to follow. I am sure that the descendants of the Syadey family never talk about their crimes. However, people who live in the neighbourhood remember this story and tell it to young people as a lesson.

#### **4.5. Kh. Laptander's story. Getting reindeer from reindeer thieves**

There is another story about reindeer theft. This story tells about how reindeer thieves gave reindeer to a poor Nenets family. Tundra criminals kept stolen reindeer by giving them to other people. Khauly Laptander, who is from another part of the Priural'skaia tundra, called Payuta, told his family story about the reindeer thieves.

### Text 3

#### **Abstract**

*In the old days, people would steal (reindeer) from each other.  
There was no food. There were no villages with shops.  
There were tundra criminals who stole reindeer.  
It was difficult to stop and punish them.*

#### **Orientation**

*My father's father ran away from his homeland.  
He was from the other side of the Ural Mountains, from the Pechora River.  
My grandfather was from the Pechora River.  
My father's father.  
Actually, his father had stolen reindeer.  
Later they lost these reindeer.  
Other reindeer thieves drove these reindeer away...  
They (reindeer thieves) stole reindeer from rich reindeer herders.  
And ran away with their plunder.  
Sometimes they gave reindeer to other people.  
In this way, they hid their crimes.  
However, you know that these people from the Kara River are stubborn.  
They were strong people.  
And they were professional reindeer thieves.  
They stole reindeer from anybody, even from those who had few reindeer.  
These thieves came in the night to my grandfather:  
«Take this stolen reindeer and run away to the other side of the Ural Mountains.  
Nobody will find you there».  
They told my grandfather:  
«You should run away! Don't stay here.  
Run away from the Pechora River. Go to the other side of the Mountains.  
Nobody can find these reindeer there.  
Nobody will know if these reindeer were stolen or are just yours!»  
My grandfather and his sons moved from the Kara River to the other side of the Ural Mountains.*

#### **Result**

*So, my great grandfather moved away from the Pechora River.  
His name was Paride, Ivan Tekovich.  
My grandfather was Jak or Ivan Ivanovich.  
These people came to Yamal because of such circumstances.*

#### **Coda**

*We have been living here ever since that time.*

(FM 2013).

## Analysis

**Abstraction** - This story tells about a poor family who got reindeer from tundra criminals.

**Orientation** – Once, in middle of the night in the autumn, reindeer thieves came. Bandits asked Khauly's grandfather if he had reindeer. When they received a negative response, they gave him all their stolen reindeer and asked him to hide them on the eastern side of the Ural Mountains.

**Evaluation** - The story does not tell from whom these reindeer criminals took the reindeer. From one point of view, the bandits are equivalent to the Western Robin Hood, who helped poor people. At the same time, when Khauly's family got the reindeer, they supported these tundra criminals by hiding the stolen reindeer and silencing their origin.

At the end of this story, Khauly estimated that they had already been living on the Yamal for a few generations. They had lost their reindeer several times, but had managed to replace them with other reindeer. This meant that their family was no longer responsible for the reindeer that they obtained from the bandits. The way in which Khauly told this story is also deeply connected to emotionality and the emotional connection to his family. This family was afraid to tell anybody how they had come upon the reindeer because the owners of these reindeer could have been nearby. At the end of his story, Khauly said that he lives in the tundra with reindeer that he got from his grandfather and father. However, he has been working on breeding his herd all his life. Khauly has divided his reindeer among his children and their families.

## 4.6. Ng. Serotetto's individual song about his father

In the summer of 2013, I was near the Yuribey River again. In one of the Nenets camps I conducted an interview with an old man who had just moved there. Previously, he had worked as a reindeer herder on a local state collective farm. He explained that although he had spent his entire life looking after a large state reindeer herd, at that time, he had only had a small number of private reindeer. It was a few minutes into our meeting when I asked this family about their life during Soviet times and the most radical change in their life. This old man asked me again what exactly I would like to know, while his wife replied to him that I was probably asking about their reindeer that had been confiscated by Russians.

Text 4

a)

Wife: 'She asked you about your family reindeer.'

N.S.: 'I was a small boy when they collected our reindeer. I do not remember how it was. It happened when I was small.'

N.S.: 'Now I do not remember how it was.'

R.L.: 'Did somebody tell you about this?'

N.S.: 'It was during wartime.'

Wife: 'But what about recent confiscation? (of reindeer – R.L.).'

N.S.: 'About recent, I do not remember when it was.' - Singing a song.

Wife: 'They left us just a few reindeer.'

N.S.: 'I do not remember when it was. Maybe in the 50s... No, I do not remember when it was that they took the reindeer.'

(FM 2013).

From our dialogue, I understand that Ngati Serotetto is the son of a reindeer herder who was arrested by Soviet authorities in the 1940s and his reindeer were confiscated for the needs of the Soviet state. By the irony of his life, Ngati worked as a herder in the same state reindeer-herding farm where his father's reindeer were placed. Talking about this, Ngati started to hum a Nenets song. Later, when he went outside, his wife told me that he was singing his father's individual song. Apparently, this song helped him to keep memories about his father. Ngati performed his father's individual song and in this way, he remembered his family's tragedy, which was silenced during Soviet times. At that time, it was normal to keep silence about one's imprisoned relatives, not only in the tundra, but also among all residents of the former Soviet state. It was taboo to say their names openly, proving a connection to them, because this would put one at risk of becoming an enemy of the state. Ngati became a successful reindeer herder and managed to earn reindeer. From another side, this old man does not wish to let his children know about his feelings of pain about his father. It is understandable because he wants his children have a feeling of confidence among the people of their nation and a feeling of protection from the Russian state. His children are familiar with their family history, but their father's tragedy of being the child of an enemy of the Soviet state was silenced from them. Ngati's story and his father's individual song together express feelings of this pain, sorrow, depression, disorientation and loss. This proves that to silence painful memories, people create positive stories about their past. Yavel Zarubavel called this process of controlled transformation of memories about the past *the commemorative memory*, referring to situations in which a detailed description of the past helps young people to remember it, but concise concession of the story lets them forget it (Zarubavel 2011:20). The border between these two lines of the Ngati Serotetto

story marks the transitional border between two epochs of Nenets society. These two storylines make the narrator feel a contradiction. From one point of view, he is telling a positive narrative about his life during Soviet time, but at the same time, he is silencing, hiding memories about his arrested father. It is important to mention that most of the Nenets narratives about the past are linked to the topic of collectivization in the tundra. Confiscation of relatives' reindeer by the Soviet state is often the starting point of people's storylines about collectivization. Reflection of such stories marks the border between changing periods in the history of the Tundra Nenets during Sovietization. Nenets elders do not usually speak about this, probably because they do not want the younger generation to feel resentment.

In *Transformation of Experience*, Labov (2011) states that most narratives of conflict involve linguistic devices that contribute to the polarization of protagonists and antagonists and other linguistic forms that lead to the integration of participants. Meanwhile, Farrell concludes that in oral cultures, memories endure in the sense that people continue to talk with one another:

In conclusion, in oral culture people are culturally conditioned so that they tend to favor cyclic patterns of thought and expression, to have a world-as-event sense of life, to put manliness to work in socially constructive ways, to use oral stories of heroes as ways to help orient and put manliness to work, and to use ritual process very effectively to promote and support socially constructive behavior.

(Farrell 2011: 573).

At the same time, family tragedies are commonly silenced. People hide their complex feelings of pain, fear, and malice between the lines of their narrations about their family's past by simply remaining silent (Simpkins 2010). As also noticed by Michael Lemon, narratives about past events do not always give an answer to the question of what actually happened; rather, they may simply raise many new questions about people's perception of the past (Lemon 2001: 108). This is especially true in such cases where there is a tragic background to the family history. Quite often, elders do not like to tell their painful memories about the past, for example, about the wartime, or about imprisonment (Connerton 2008). They try to hide and silence their negative memories not only from their children, but also from themselves. Such dualism of memory transmission is quite a controversial process because double lines of narration, for example, when people only tell the good things explicitly, but tell the sad parts through symbolic language, like singing a song, or only mentioning the people's names and the places they live. It does not transmit a complete story, especially when young people do not understand the references to symbolic names of people or places in the stories. Narrators balance between the two processes of introducing the historical past and cloaking it at the same time.

The reconstruction of a life narrative means that someone tells alternative narratives about their life, which helps them to realize that certain past events are not meaningful to them but are given significance through the configuration of their narratives. However, there are voices of people who can openly tell stories about the Nenets past:

b)

*Here in Yamal, there are many state reindeer farms where ALL reindeer belong to Russians. Tell me, did Russians have reindeer herding culture before? No! However, why do they say that these reindeer belong to them? These reindeer originally belonged to Nenets, they belonged to Nenets families, and the Russians bereaved them.*

An old man from the Yuribey River (FM 2013).

This manner of talking about the pain experienced suggests that the people could be experiencing trauma. The most serious traumatic events in Nenets history occurred during collectivization. People keep such stories silenced, but could express their feelings within their individual songs. Singing individual songs gives them a connection between their present life and the past lives of their ancestors. It seems that every time Nenets elders start to sing their family songs, they are bringing their family history back, but in a very implicit way, which may not be very apparent to their young generation (Laptander 2017). Nenets elders want to have stability and certitude for their future generation. Therefore, they silence memories about difficulties and cruel aspects of their past. They tell stories about the past without mentioning the details of the conflicts, which they keep in silence as special knowledge that is important to remember and know.

## 4.7. Conclusion

This chapter showed that stories which tell about crimes on the tundra, stealing reindeer and committing acts of violence towards members of one's own society, are a part of the hidden or silenced knowledge among Tundra Nenets people. In the tundra, there is a special common system of rules among the Nenets regarding crimes and their punishments. There are situations when, in order to survive in the tundra, Nenets could 'borrow' or simply steal reindeer from their neighbours. Tundra people always denounce such actions, but depending on the situation, people could judge such crimes differently. However, the elders consider some stories about stealing reindeer worthy to tell to young people. Nevertheless, killing people over reindeer is considered a serious crime for which many generations of the guilty party's family will be held responsible; nobody will mention this sin openly. Yet Nenets collective

memory remembers it and silently passes it from one generation to the next as a kind of special knowledge. In this chapter I have demonstrated the first role of silence in Nenets narratives: to remember special knowledge about the past. Here, the social role of Nenets individual songs was described as a method of remembering people and their stories. The individual songs of Nenets people, which were illustrated here, reveal how tundra people remember stories about individuals and their songs. Many of these stories were silenced for different reasons. However, the main motive for keeping them unsaid was people's common agreement to silence them in order to keep them sacred, as special knowledge or information about strategies of living together in the tundra. The Nenets rules of reciprocity said that everything and everybody in the tundra live in the space of one universe that connects the past and present. People believe that everything that has happened in the past to their ancestors is reflected in the present life of their descendants. Everybody is responsible for their ancestors' past, just as ancestors are responsible for their descendants' future. The present time shows that people could still be responsible for their elders' old mistakes. Therefore, such knowledge teaches people to avoid committing wrongdoings and behaving inexcusably towards themselves and other people.

In this chapter I determined why the Nenets tell personal and collective memory stories by singing somebody's individual song. I explained why individuals choose to silence personal stories and how other people end up telling them by singing their individual songs; singing the songs of other people is a part of Nenets performing culture. One important lesson of the tundra is to respect people's right to have personal property and reindeer. According to the Nenets belief, people get their reindeer fortune from the *Ilebyam pertya* (Илебям' пэртя), the Nenets god responsible for reindeer. The name of this god has the same stem as the Nenets word *il* 'life' and could also be translated as 'somebody who gives life' (Kostikov 1930:116; Tereshchenko 2008:141). In Nenets culture, every person has the right to have reindeer as private individual property. Personal reindeer (Rus. *chastnye oleni*, Nen. *khari ty*) have their owner's personal marks on their ears and fur. As Florian Stammer (2005) noted, such a visible way of indicating each personal reindeer is deeply rooted in Nenets reindeer herding history. Every Nenets family has a common (general) reindeer ear mark, with slight variations for every family member. The tundra rule of personal property says that no one has a right to steal another's reindeer, but giving a reindeer as a gift builds good relations and contacts. However, the concept of "extended reciprocity" does not always work well.

In this chapter, I described how the Nenets tell and silence stories about reindeer theft or confiscation of reindeer in their everyday speech. The first individual song told a story about Nany Khorolia and his adventures stealing reindeer from other reindeer herders. This story did not blame Nany for this theft. He took reindeer from unknown people who lived in the southern part of the Yamal Peninsula and in very difficult conditions drove them home. Therefore, for other Nenets people,

his song tells a brave story, a raid equal to a successful hunting story. Yet, people remember it in connection to Nany's descendants.

The story about the Syadey family told of a crime in the tundra that was shocking for its inhumanity. This story was silenced because of its brutality and cruelty. When Nenets people do tell this story, they do so to share the special knowledge that every improper behaviour that goes against the rules of tundra hospitality will be punishable. Nenets people could even be punished by the tundra sprits. Such curses could carry on for many generations. In the example discussed, people tell the Syadey family story in connection to that of their descendant, Mursi Syadey. Another story, illustrating details about how a herder's reindeer were obtained, was silenced because it was connected to criminal acts of stealing reindeer. The family whose story was told in this chapter chose not to mention how they came by the reindeer, even though everybody around the region knew the origin of this herd.

Finally, a fourth story illustrated the trauma of reindeer confiscation by the political regime of the country. This story differs significantly from the others about gaining and losing reindeer. This story about collectivization showed how people silence negative and traumatic memories about the past when they cannot express their pain through spoken words, but only through singing the individual songs of their parents. This story also reflected the time-varying amplitude of public memories. One explanation could be that people tell other people's stories because they try to keep a distance from their own personal stories, which they consider too intimate and personal to talk about with strangers. At the same time by telling the stories of other people who are from the same community, narrators reflect how people have created and remembered the public and individual memories of their past. The difference between performing stories about previous reindeer theft versus confiscation of the reindeer by the state is based on the dichotomy of openness and silencing for forgetting this part of tundra history.

## **5. History of the Puiko family: an individual tragedy in collective memory stories**

### **5.1. Introduction**

In this chapter I discuss how opening a silenced story and retelling it as a canonical narrative about special events in the past does not serve as a remembrance of the original story. The repetitive telling of the same narrative could result in the development of many different versions of the same story. However, personal stories and collective narratives do not always match. The long silencing of the real story makes society forget it, along with its importance for remembering and silencing, so that all that survives are re-workings from various perspectives.

### **5.2. Fishing Nenets. A story of one letter**

In the summer of 2009, I was migrating with Brigade number 2 near the Mordy-Yakha River with brigadier Vasilii Serotetto and his family. Vasilii and his sons had a herd of 10,000 reindeer. Such a large number of reindeer could not survive long in one place, as they need plenty of food and good pasture. Therefore travelling to the summer pastures was quite intensive: migrating one day and resting the next day, all the way to the North. Altogether I joined this Brigade for one month of migration from winter to summer pastures, which went near places with extractive industry fields and along the Gazprom railway on the Yamal Peninsula. The railway line actually marks a symbolic borderline between tundra people and extractive industry territories. Even though tundra dwellers say that they have many positive benefits from the railway, like a mobile telephone connection and the possibility to get petrol from the railways stations, at the same time, the same Nenets families confirmed that since the railway appeared in the tundra, they have had more problems and difficulties in their reindeer herding work<sup>4</sup>. In some places, the Gazprom workers have destroyed the most important fishing lakes. In the summer, the Nenets eat mostly fish, their main food ration. Destruction of the fishing lakes by railway workers caused a great disaster for many Nenets families. One day in the middle of

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4 This railway goes across the migration routes of many Nenets families. It goes through precious reindeer pastures and has created many limitations and difficulties for nomads to do their seasonal migrations in the tundra. Some groups of Nenets reindeer herders have even changed their routes, while others have continued to follow their old ways of roaming in the tundra, but with many difficulties and limitations (see Degteva and Nellemann 2013; Golovnev and Abramov 2014; Forbes 2013).

July, around 20 reindeer herders came for a meeting to Vasiliï's camp. After a long discussion, they wrote this letter to Alexander Miller, the director of the Russian Gazprom company.

*Dear Mister Miller,*

*We, private reindeer herders of the Yarsalinskii enterprise of the Yamal'skii District, inform you of the following problem and ask you to assume the measures of it. On the territory of our migrations, the land usage agreement between the Yamal'skii District and your company was broken. The Gazprom workers from the Bovanenkovo area made a sand pit for building a road and fished illegally on the territories that are being used by the reindeer herders. It is down the Nadykin flow channel and within two kilometres of the Lake Wibiko; this lake was rich with fish, but now it is empty. Moreover, railway workers were stunning fish with dynamite. This way of fishing has not only polluted the whole ecosystem of this area, but it is also the cause of fish extinction in the surrounding lakes and rivers. As a result, we have lost the ability to obtain fish, which is the main source of food for us and our families in the summer.*

Signatures of 50 reindeer herders.  
(FM 2009).

The local department of the indigenous people in Salekhard did not accept this letter. Later it was given to a local representative of the Yamal Reindeer Herders Association, but after reading it, he returned it, saying, that it was written correctly. The copy of this letter was sent to Gazprom, but there was no reply. However, the reindeer herders were quite active in talking openly about their problems. As a result, the Gazprom Company made new rules for extractive industry workers prohibiting them from conducting illegal fishing in the tundra (Kumpula et al. 2010).

In 2010, the Gazprom Company paid compensation to a few Nenets families for the destruction of their fishing lakes in the tundra. A few expensive Japanese boat motors were given to Nenets families from the Yuribey River. The first family to get such compensation was the Puiko family, while other Nenets from the same area did not get anything. People were rather disappointed and disagreed with such a limited number of motors, given only to selected families. They did not make any statements to official authorities about this; they did not complain and were silent. However, they started to tell the story of how the Puiko family came to the Yuribey River, which had been silenced for many years and was almost forgotten by other Nenets. This story was told to insinuate that the Puiko family should not have received this compensation. It also reveals that people remember the Puikos to be newcomers on the Yuribey River, even though they came there almost one century ago.

The largest rivers of the Yamal Peninsula are the Ob (*Обь*), the Shchuchie (*Щучье*), the Mordy-Yakha (*Морды-яха*) and the Yuribey (*Юрибей*) (Figure 5.1.).

Almost all tundra rivers and lakes are rich with freshwater fish like Siberian white salmon (*нельма*), whitefish (*муксун*), broad whitefish (*coregonus nasus*) (*чир*), peled (*coregonus peled*) (*сырок*), and small white fish known as vendace or European cisco (*ряпушка*). There are special fish such as Siberian sturgeon (*сибирский осетр*), pike and burbot, which are considered to be sacred and which women are not allowed to cut.

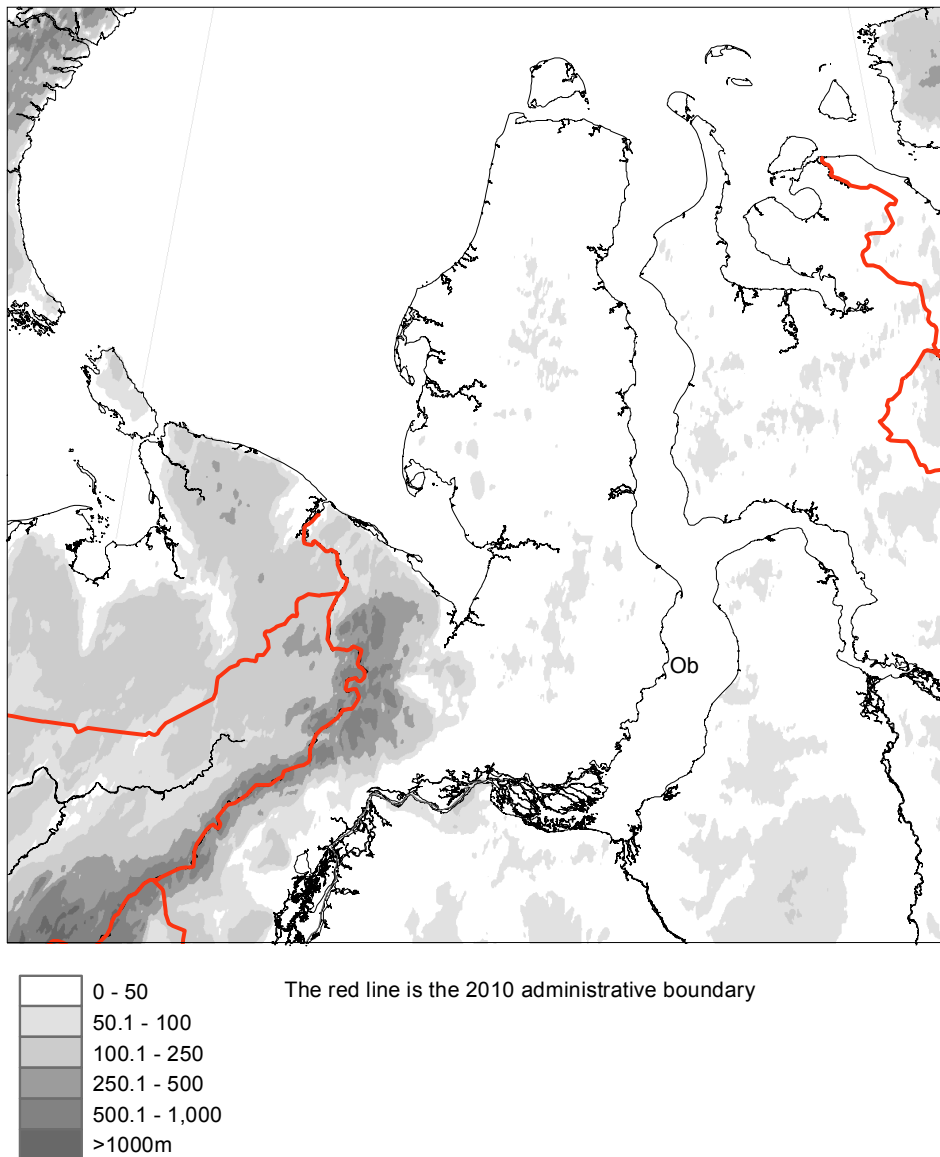


Figure 5.1. Map of the Yamal Rivers. Made by Frits Steenhuisen.

Knowledge about good fishing places has developed among Nenets people over decades. However, there is not so much literature about the fishing Nenets (Zuev 1999; Golovnev 1997). As Stammmler (2010:222-223) describes, reindeer herding Nenets have a good knowledge of tundra lakes and rivers on their routes of seasonal migrations that are rich with different types of fish. Fishing lakes as well as fishing rivers are very valuable, and people try to take care of them. Reindeer herders put out nets there to catch some fresh fish whenever they can. Of course, eating fish saves them from the need to eat their valuable reindeer.



*Figure 5.2. Fishing Nenets. Near the Mordy-Yakha River. Summer 2017. Photo. Roza Laptander.*

According to the Tundra Nenets' traditional economic rules, everybody could fish in the tundra and take as many fish as they needed for their daily consumption. However, fishing is usually the occupation of settled or semi-nomadic Nenets. In the Nenets language, they are called *nyadena* (нядэна), which means 'people who do not migrate'. They have a small number of reindeer or they are pensioners who cannot follow long-distance migrations. Usually they give their reindeer to other Nenets who go far to the north to the summer pastures. *Nyadena* do fishing throughout the summer. In the autumn, when herders bring reindeer back, they give fish as a payment for their work.

The Yuribey River—historically and even today—is famous for its good fishing. Even nowadays reindeer herders and fishing Nenets go there just to fish. Local people have many stories about fishing on the Yuribey River. Every personal story, along with people's narratives, together represents the history of fishing on the Yuribey River in connection to people who live nearby it. During my first visit to the Yuribey River, among other stories about the history of this place, I collected a story about the Puiko family.

### 5.3. The story of the Puiko family tragedy

#### *Text 1*

*Once, five Nenets men came for summer fishing to Yuribey Bay. They sailed from there to the Kara Sea and tried to fish there. They were quite lucky and got a rich haul, which surprised them nicely. They had never had so much fish and became greedy. They wanted to get more fish and put their nets out again. It was the second time they went to sea the same day. Nenets believe that people can use their good luck only once, because the second turn brings problems. This concept guides the whole system of Nenets hunting and fishing rules. Tundra people believe that spirits give them special limits, the breaking of which can bring possible punishments.*

*Unexpectedly, a strong storm came and swept everybody into the sea. Nobody survived. Among these people was Puiko. That summer he had come to the Yuribey River with all his family to get some fish for the wintertime. He never had enough reindeer and lived from selling fish. That Puiko had only one son, who was too small to go to sea with the adults. The boy stayed on shore with his sisters and mother. After the loss of their father, the Puiko family did not return to their home place. They did not have enough reindeer to travel, nor relatives who could help them. The Puiko boy grew up, obtained reindeer and lived there all his life. He died and was buried on the bank of the Yuribey River. All the Puikos who live there are his grandchildren.*

### 5.4. Breaking the rules and punishment

I consider that the main message of the Puiko story is educative and says that people do not need to risk their lives, if it is possible to avoid it. After talking with Nenets elders and asking for their evaluation of this story, I got the impression that people wanted to tell me this story not only because of its tragic context. They also tell this story as a protest against the decision of the gas company to pay such limited compensation, and only to this family, in order to get to deal with Nenets complaints.

Although the Puikos have lived near the Yuribey River for several decades, by getting the Gazprom compensation, they drew other locals' fire. This attitude among local Nenets, that the Puikos are outsiders, reveals the difficulties of integration for newcomers and of establishing relationships inside of Nenets society. It also reflects the process of taking root in a new place and keeping knowledge about one's place of origin.

#### **5.4.1. Ng. Serotetto: There are three different Puiko surnames**

The very first story about the Puiko family I collected was from Ngati Serotetto from the Yuribey River in the summer of 2013. The analysis of his father's individual song was presented in Chapter 4.

##### *Text 2*

*There are three different Puiko families. Actually, there are not so many people with this surname. The people who live in the village of Puiko are relatives of the Puiko from the Yuribey River. They are relatives of old Nyadma Puiko. I think that they should be relatives. Those Puikos who now live near the Yuribey River, you should know, they are not locals. It is not like that at all. The Yuribey is not their home place. They came here quite recently. All their life they sold fish to get reindeer. Now they have managed to collect enough reindeer to live in the tundra.*

In this story, the old Nenets reindeer herder Ngati Serotetto supposed that the first Puiko came to the Yuribey before Soviet times. At that time, many Nenets lived near the big tundra rivers, and most were poor, with summer fishing being their only way of preparing food for the long Arctic winter and of purchasing reindeer.

In personal and collective memory stories, the Puiko family is described as very poor. They did not even have enough reindeer to migrate. When Puiko's father died during fishing, his family was not able to return to their home place near the Ob River. They had to stay on the Yuribey River until they managed to collect enough reindeer. However, when they got the reindeer, they were already connected to the new place and did not want to return to their father's homeland.

After World War II, the Soviet authorities sent another group of people with the same family name to do industrial fishing on the Yuribey River. It was the time of industrial fishing, and most of the reindeer herders were involved in this work. These people from the Puiko village on the Lower Ob River were relatives of the first group of Puikos. They connected their recent arrival to the Yuribey to the story of the first Puiko family.

#### 5.4.2. A. Serotetto: How the Puikos sailed in the sea

Here is another story from the Mordy-Yakha River about the same Puiko family. I collected it from an old reindeer herder, Achamboy Serotetto, and his wife Sofia (FM 2014).



Figure 5.3. Achamboy Serotetto with his wife and grandchildren. Summer 2014. Photo. Roza Laptander.

#### Text 3

*This is an ancient story. Yes, it is a very old story. It tells how in old times people fished and hunted in the sea. There were Nenets from the Yuribey River who sailed along the Kara Sea shore in wooden boats. They were hunting for sea mammals.*

*Once, during the storm, their boat was taken away to Baydaratskaia Bay. Everybody was safe. However, when they were on the way back home, their little wooden boat sank in the sea. It was a strong storm. I do not know exactly how many people were in the boat. The owner of the boat was Khewko Puiko. His brother, Nyawa Puiko, stayed at home to look after the reindeer. It was not only Puikos who were on the boat. There were other Nenets there, with whom they were hunting. After this tragedy, Puiko stayed on the Yuribey. Later Nyako Puiko's son Nyudiako Puiko also migrated with his family to the Yuribey River and lived near the lakes. Myanggelya Puiko is also from the Yuribey. He is connected to Lyuba Puiko's family.*

#### **5.4.3. B. Puiko: The Yuribey Puiko are one family people.**

On another trip to the Yuribey River, I recorded another story about the Puiko's family history from Lyuba Puiko<sup>5</sup> and her elder brother Nikolai Puiko.

I also conducted an interview with Berkut (Nyadma) Puiko, a local businessman from the Puiko clan. It was actually he who had received a Japanese boat motor from Gazprom, making the other people jealous. Berkut is Nikolai's and Luba's younger brother. He has the same name as old Nyadma Puiko from the Ob River. Marina Puiko, wife of Berkut Puiko, explained that her husband got his nickname Berkut because people mixed him up with this old man from the Ob River. Now his nickname helps people to distinguish these two Nyadma Puikos. During summer, Berkut does not migrate, but gives his reindeer to his relatives to migrate further to the north.

#### *Text 4*

**Abstract** - *There was one Puiko family.*

**Orientation** - *Eight to ten Puiko brothers came to Baydaratskaia Bay to hunt for sea mammals.*

**Complicating action** - *When they were crossing the bay, a strong storm came. All the brothers perished.*

**Evaluation** - *There was only one little boy left, who was waiting for his father on the seashore. After his father's death, this little boy became responsible for his family.*

**Resolution** - *The Puiko family did not have enough reindeer to migrate to their home place, since that time they have been living on the Yuribey.*

**Coda** - *The Yuribey Puiko are one fireplace people (the Yuribey Puiko are kin).*

#### **5.4.4. M. Serotetto: This tragedy had happened on the Yuribey River**

In this interview, Mikhail discussed the people who had died while fishing on the Yuribey (River). He also provided their names and causes of death. One of these deceased Nenets was Puiko. That year, he took all his family to the Yuribey to prepare and salt fish for the wintertime. This man did not have enough reindeer, and fish was the main source of food for his family. He had only one son, who was too small to go

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5 I made my first trip to the Yuribey River in July 2010 and the second one in August 2013. During both trips I collected different stories about the history of the place and the people living there. Most of the interviews I collected are presented as oral stories about people living in the Yuribey River territory. When I traveled to my fieldwork area in the summer of 2010, I met Lyuba Puiko. I met her in Yar-Sale, the capital of the Yamal'skii District. She invited me to her tent to have tea. Later she introduced me to her family elders. At that time (and now as well), she and her family live near the Gazprom railway station and the long bridge across the Yuribey River. Lyuba and her husband Yuri have three children. They have also adopted a few children from the local orphanage. Lyuba has a good relationship with the local railway station workers, and sometimes she works there as a cleaner. Also, Lyuba's family travel with all their children to the Yuribey (River) for their holidays. In Russia, travelling further away for the summer vacation is quite expensive. Therefore, they spend all their summer holidays on the Yuribey River.

fishing with the adults. This boy stayed with his sisters and mother, waiting for his father. After the death of his father, this family could not return - they did not have any reindeer or relatives who could help them to travel back to their home place. This boy stayed to live near the Yuribey, helping his mother. He grew up there and lived there all his life, and now his children live there.

According to Mikhail Serotetto, there are special hunting rules in the sea that it is better not to break.

#### *Text 5*

*The Nenets have distinct hunting rules and customs. There is a regulation of time when you can do fishing and hunting. It is allowed only once a day. Those people who went twice to sea, got severe punishment. They all died. Among them was my grandfather. There were also Ngokolya Puiko, Nyelya, Yalyeko, and Tokhocha. People said that they were all taken by the sea. It was a big tragedy for all of us. Why did it happen? Most probably they did not listen to their leader. They did not listen to Ngokolya Puiko. They were all taken by the sea during a terrible storm. In addition, our missing family member said that if there was a sound of a supernatural thing, as if it was crying, it was better to stop. I also heard this sound once. I do not know what it is. It is some kind of animal. It makes a screaming sound, which is quite terrifying. Even in the nighttime, it can start to scream. If it makes such a sound, then you should stop hunting or fishing as soon as possible. The first time it gives a warning. The second time, you had better leave that place. Do not wait for the third time. The old Laptander told me, if it screams the third time, then it will kill you.*

#### **5.4.5. P. Puiko: The Puiko are Khanty**

There is also an interview with Puibane Puiko, the wife of Nikolai Puiko from the Yuribey River. In the summer of 2014, they lived near Yaroto Lake. Their *chum* was just a few kilometres from the Yuribey River. I asked Nikolai a few questions about his work in the state reindeer herding enterprise. After drinking tea, he went to check his fishing nets. I stayed with his wife and their two-year-old grandson. We talked about the history of the Yuribey River and of the Puikos.



Figure 5.4. Puibane Puiko with her grandson. The Yuribei River Summer 2014. Photo. Roza Laptander.

#### Text 6

*All Puiko people are my husband's relatives. Those from the Puiko village are also our relatives. They are kin. Their fathers were brothers. They are related by their fathers.*

*The Puiko are divided into the Low Puiko and the tundra Puiko. We are the tundra Puiko, because we live in the tundra. Puiko from the Ob River are called the Low Puiko and they are considered to be Khanty. Actually, they are Khanty by origin<sup>6</sup>. Their sacred place is on the Ob River near Panaevsk village.*

In her story, Puibane considers all Puikos to be one family clan, which is divided into two groups: the upper Puikos and the lower Puikos, according to their territory of habitation. For example, Puikos who live on the Lower Ob area near Puiko village belong to the Tundra Puiko, because in the past they lived in the tundra. There are also the Puikos who live on the Gydan Peninsula. What was most noteworthy during this interview was that the Puikos have a Khanty God, which is said to prove their Khanty origin, which is distinct from Nenets culture and religion. Probably in this way, Puibane further reflected the Yuribey Nenets' attitude, that the Puikos are different from local Nenets not only because of their place of origin, but also because

<sup>6</sup> It was also mentioned by my mother, Tatiana Laptander, that the Puiko follow Khanty rules of burial rituals.

of people's evaluation of them as more Khanty than Nenets. However, Puibane does not separate herself from her husband's family and identifies herself as Nenets.

#### **5.4.6. Old N. Puiko: 'The Puiko surname is part of the Wanuito clan'**

It was the very first time, in 2014, when I had an interview with the old Nyadma Puiko (1943) from Puiko village. It is not far from Salemal village on the Lower Ob River, 238 kilometres south of the Yuribey River. This old man first introduced the origin of the Puiko surname. In his life story, Nyadma reported having started to fish when he was 17 years old. He worked for the state fishing enterprise, at that time fishing on the Yuribey River. He was sent there with other people for industrial fishing in the tundra.



*Figure 5.5. Nyadma Puiko in his chum near Puiko village. Summer 2014. Photo. Roza Laptander.*

Nyadma's family had a small number of reindeer. In his life story, he reported purchasing reindeer by selling fish. He was happy that at last he had gained enough reindeer. His sons live on the tundra and work with reindeer.

### Text 7

*The Puiko surname is part of the Wanuito clan. In previous times, Nenets travelled to the sea for the hunting of sea mammals. The Puikos travelled there as well. They all died in the sea while they were hunting for a walrus. They were hunting with guns. They had Russian guns. Their wooden boat with eight oars was strong enough to go to the sea. These people built it themselves. Later, they all died on this boat. When they were fishing, a strong wind came and took them to the sea. It seems that there is a noise in the Kara Sea. This boat was found there. When this boat was thrown out on the land, the people on it were all dead. They all had died. There was my father's brother there. Other people were not our relatives. Altogether, there were eight or nine people. It happened so. They came to the Yuribey River by reindeer, transporting their boat on a wooden sledge.*

*My father's brother grew up near the Yuribey, and he worked there in the state reindeer brigade. After his mother's death, he returned to the Puiko village, and since that time, he has been living here. He worked there in the state fish farm.*

Nyadma from Puiko village told a story about a previous time when Nenets people travelled for sea hunting and fishing. They sailed on self-made wooden boats. Once five Nenets men came to the Yuribey River mouth to fish and to hunt walrus. They sailed along the coastline of the Kara Sea. They got a large haul. Since they had never caught so many fish, they wanted to catch more. They threw their net into the sea again. It was the second time that day that they went to sea. According to the Nenets traditional hunting rules, this is not allowed and could anger the water spirits. The Nenets believe that hunters should come to their hunting places only once in a day, because the second time could bring bad luck. These people broke this Nenets rule and got their punishment: they were all taken by the sea. When their wooden boat came back, all the people on it were dead.

## 5.5. Analysis of the interviews

The very first story about the Puiko family constitutes a fabula for six other stories about how the Puiko's neighbours and descendants have represented its plot in their stories. All together, they represent a canonical narrative about the Puikos' family history. I consider all stories about the Puiko people to be a canonical narrative of the Yuribey River people, which describes the local fishing and hunting rules. Tundra people, who due to their animistic religion believe that nature is a living being, have historically developed special rules of communicating with the tundra spirits. This knowledge helps them to live and work in severe, dangerous and violent Arctic conditions. This knowledge of communicating with nature is connected to religious and everyday rules of behaviour of indigenous people who live very close to

nature (Kohn 2013). It also helps the Nenets to interpret uncommon occasions in their lives and provides an explanation for many difficulties they face.

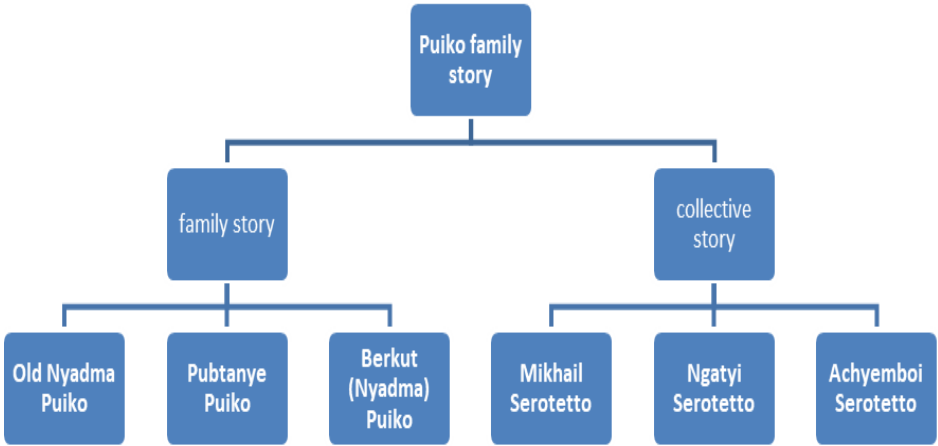


Figure 5.6. Private, group and collective stories about the Puiko family.

The diversity of stories about the Puiko family tells the history of their relocation to the Yuribey River. Following the instruction of Lynn Abrams, I conducted a narrative analysis on a collection of selected stories (2010:115). Thus, I consider that all six versions of the Puiko history represent a collective narrative about this family tragedy.

Here, I provide a short description of these stories, along with their common summary. The very first story, which I call a fabula, gives an introduction to the history of the Puiko family and how they came to the Yuribey River and stayed to live there. Three family stories were told by members of the Puiko family: Nyadma, Berkut and Pubtane Puiko. In their stories, they told how the Puikos came to the Yuribey River. Old Nyadma (1943) explained that the Puikos belong to the Wanuito clan. It is interesting that Nyadma did not mention any personal names of the people who were on the boat. He mentioned that there were eight or nine people on the boat, but only one was a Puiko, his father’s brother. The Puiko boy, who stayed without his father, lived his entire life on the Yuribey River, but at the end of his life, returned to the Ob River. However, Berkut (1958) mentioned that on the boat there were around nine or ten people, and they were all Puikos. Pubtane, the wife of Berkut’s brother, did not know the whole story. She is from a local Nenets family, but considered the Puiko family to be Khanty because they were originally from the Ob River, they worship Khanty Gods, and their funeral rites are very similar to Khanty funerals.

Such a comparison of narratives about the Puikos allows one to construct multiple variations of their family history. However, the Puikos' own evaluation of their historical past gives a deeper understanding of the common rules of integration in Nenets society. Rooting into a new place has different levels, every one of which not only influences the development of new people's identities, but also makes them look for possible relatives in the new place. I think that this is quite common when people try to root to a new place but local people are not yet ready to accept them.

Three other collective narrative stories about the Puikos were told by Michail Serotetto, Ngati Serotetto and Achambo Serotetto. In their stories they told how grandfather Puiko came to the Yuribey River. He went to the sea either for fishing or for hunting for sea mammals. Also, in all three stories about the Puiko family the names of the people who were on the boat are mentioned explicitly. Michail said that Ngokolya Puiko, Nyelya, Yalyeko, Tokhocha and his grandfather were there. They got punishment for fishing twice in one day. Ngati said that all the people present were Nyadma Puiko's relatives. Moreover, Achambo said that Nyako Puiko, son of Nyudyako Puiko, lived on the Yuribey. Khewko Puiko died in the sea, while his brother, Nyawa Puiko, was looking after their reindeer. In addition, he said, Myangelya Puiko is related to Lyuba Puiko, who lives near the Yuribey River during the summer.

The neighbouring Nenets people adopted the Puiko family members after the death of their family leader. After that, they never talked about how this family came to the Yuribey. I define this type of the silence as a sign of acceptance, equivalent to that of parents who have adopted children and do not tell them about it.

The Yuribey Nenets have many different and powerful explanations about the history of the Puiko family. New requirements and interests of the society can change the evaluation of the old story. For example, the new interpretation of the old stories of the Puiko family shows how people evaluate these stories so as to tell their children, relatives or friends that they are newcomers. The story about the Puiko family also makes a listener understand that some local stories can promote rather radical views. It also helps us understand the rules of exception, exclusion and adaptation within Nenets society.

## **5.6. Discussion**

The history of the Puiko family is connected both with the history of traditional and industrial fishing in the tundra. The collection of the Yamal Nenets' personal stories and group narratives reveals that when the Puiko family came to the Yuribey, they were poor and had only a small number of reindeer. They lived only off fishing and hunting sea mammals. When the Soviets came to the tundra, this family was employed by the state collective reindeer farms. Some of them even got new jobs and high positions of brigadiers there. In this way, they obtained a new position within

Nenets society, as successful fishermen and later, as successful reindeer herders. However, other Nenets reindeer herders still consider them to be newcomers from the Low Ob River. People remember that this family broke traditional hunting and fishing rules and received a severe punishment for it. They tell Puiko family story as a lesson about Nenets rules of fishing in the tundra. It is similar to how other Arctic people preserve and remember their important hunting and fishing instructions (Willerslev 2007).

The State Puikovskii fishing factory (*Пуиковский рыбозавод*) was the biggest Soviet fishing factory on the Lower Ob River. When the Soviet administration built a fishing village within 20 kilometres of the present-day Salemal village, they named it the Puiko village because the local fishing Nenets, the Puikos, lived there permanently. According to the official Russian documents, the Puiko village factory started to work at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but it developed intensively during Soviet times because of the regional politics of high industrial fishing on the Ob River and other large tundra rivers like the Yuribey and the Mordy-Yakha Rivers. The Puikovskii fishing factory was relocated to a new fishing factory in Salemal at the end of the 1970s.

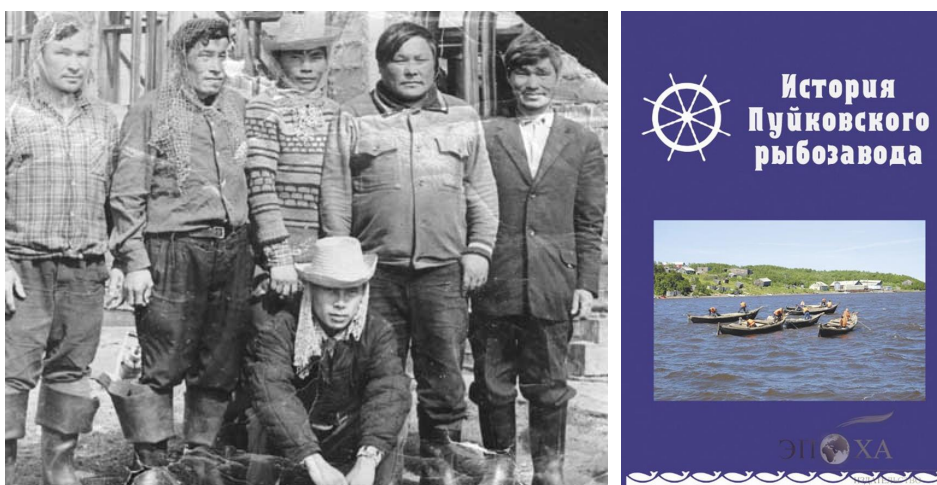


Figure 5.7. a, b. The Puiko fishermen<sup>7</sup>.

This village does not exist anymore because it was completely destroyed by the water of the Ob River. In the summer of 2015, only a few fundamentals of old wooden houses remained. However, the Puiko family continues to live nearby, still fishing,

<sup>7</sup> This photo is taken from the book *Istoria Puikovskogo rybozavoda* (*The history of Puikovskii fishing enterprise*) (Zaitsev 2011).

but now for the Salemal fishing factory. Even though the old village is gone, this place is still called Puiko. Nyadma Puiko, who actually lived all his life in the Puiko village, told how he was obliged to fish on the Ob. At that time, he was also a private reindeer herder with a very small number of reindeer, but to officials, he was one of the *darmoeds* 'parasites' who had to work for the benefit of the Soviet country. He was employed by the local fishing farm, from where he had got a wooden boat and fishing nets. Nyadma went for his first fishing trip on the Ob River and set his fishing nets. As Nyadma mentioned, his fishing luck helped him to obtain the status of the most successful fishermen among the local fishing Nenets. At the same time, Nyadma never considered that his good fishing luck was good for his family, because after successfully fishing for the state farm, his father died. There is a Nenets word *wenzoyoi* 'something or somebody's action, which brings bad luck, misfortune' which people use to explain unexpected misfortune. Thus, Niadna conjectured that perhaps his successful fishing had brought bad luck to his family, considering what had happened to his grandfather while fishing in the sea. These people were lucky with fishing, but since they broke the custom, they paid for their breach with their lives. Here Nyadma had to pay back nature for his fishing success with his father's life. Such fishing rules and other beliefs of the supernatural power of the universe are quite common in many animist societies, particularly across the Siberian North. Although many Nenets people are not connected to shamanic beliefs nowadays, and many do not even know anything about it, they still believe that the power of nature influences their fishing and hunting luck and their life in the tundra. This story represented *nyewykyhy ilye"mya* 'an old story' which is now told as *lakhanako* 'a legend'. Fishing has always been an important part of life in the tundra, both prior to and during communist times, and is still a key occupation of the tundra people.

This chapter told the story about awaking an old sleeping story, which had been silenced due to its sensitive nature and as common knowledge of this tragedy. The narrative about the Puiko family was told as a collection of stories, which did not provide us with trustworthy information as to whether their events had really taken place, because all stories were told by third parties – descendants of the Puikos and the grandchildren of their neighbours. There is only one topic of this tragedy, but every narrator has his or her individual version of it. Furthermore, the history of the Puiko family here reflects the Nenets rules of adoption and responsibility with respect to people and their ancestors. Even the Nenets names in such stories can be a part of "confidential knowledge" about the history of the place and its people. Moreover, every one of these stories can have its own informative meaning during narration, similar to what Cruikshank (1998) wrote in her book about the social role of stories in the life of indigenous people in the Yukon. This collection of stories also states the importance of fishing in the lives of the Yamal Nenets nomadic and semi-nomadic reindeer herders, since fishing is even nowadays the main source of food for reindeerless Nenets in the tundra.

## 5.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, I showed a second role of silence: for remembering and forgetting. Based on the collection of stories detailing one Nenets family history, I demonstrated here how opening a silenced story and retelling it as a canonical narrative or legend does not prove that people remember the original story. The repetitive telling of the same narrative could result in many different versions of it developing. However, the information in personal stories and collective narratives might not always match. This means that the long silencing of a story makes it unlikely for members of a society to remember it according to its original account. This work also showed that the process of developing a canonical narrative about a special historical event is very social. People who live together in the same environment might tell different versions of the same story. For example, these stories from the Yuribey River are represented by diverse accounts of personal and collective narratives about the Puiko family tragedy. Such multivocality of people's stories showed that people could remember the stories about the historical past in different ways, over several generations. Such diversity of individual, family and collective narratives showed how people remember and tell memories about special events in the tundra as a type of hidden knowledge. As time has passed, people's memories about this silenced story have become more distant, which may allow them to talk about these real-life events as old legends.

This chapter also showed how creative the Nenets can be in developing their oral memories by reconstructing and retelling old stories. Transformation of memories in oral societies shows that old stories do not stay in one form. Stories are always changing because nobody can retell them in the accurate original way, especially since all eyewitnesses have died. Thus, their long suppression has given rise to new stories, which follow the needs and interests of the present society as well as those of the current political regime.

## 6. How many reindeer costs the right to live in the tundra

### 6.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I show silence as a legacy of a formal political regime. Here I contribute to the description of silence as a protective instrument of Northern people from the danger of speaking about present problems of life in the tundra. Moreover, I show the social function of silencing because of fear, which gives another interpretation of the role of silence for telling stories. I describe how memories and knowledge about the totalitarian politics of the state cause people to maintain silence as an act of silencing information. Therefore the tundra people are careful in sharing stories even (or indeed especially) about recent tragedies of reindeer loss in the tundra.

### 6.2. Nenets perception of reindeer

“Reindeer are like the wind” was said in July 2010 by reindeer herder Nikolai Yaptik from the Yuribey River. “You have them today, but tomorrow they could all be gone away.” These words illustrate the general attitude of all Yamal reindeer herders towards their reindeer in the tundra. It reflects the Nenets general idea that the wealth from having reindeer does not directly depend on people’s actions. There are several factors affecting reindeer health, such as nature and the weather conditions, reindeer diseases, pastures and, simply, good or bad luck.

#### *Text 1*

*Frankly speaking, although we have reindeer today, we do not have any guarantee that in the case of any natural cataclysm, we would manage to keep our reindeer alive. Moreover, if that should happen, I have no idea how to live without reindeer, what to do with all my dogs, children. Every day, it does not matter what the weather is like, you have to go to your reindeer. It is my only source of living. In the tundra, we make a living from reindeer alone. If you lose your reindeer, it means that you lose everything. In old times, you could even die in the tundra. Moreover, reindeer are like the wind. It is the same as what Russians say: Деньгу что вода ‘Money is like water (it does not stay)’. You can say the same about reindeer. Therefore, in order to keep the reindeer alive, you have to look after them properly, and every day. That is the Nenets main concept of keeping the reindeer safe and healthy.*

### **Analysis of the interview**

Here, by saying, *reindeer are like the wind*, Nikolai introduces the general Nenets attitude of being psychologically ready to face any difficulties that arise with reindeer work. In his interview, Nikolai Yaptik gives advice to young people to work with reindeer every day and with strong motivation and love for their animals. At the same time, tundra people should keep in mind that their reindeer are vulnerable animals; any icing or epidemics could be dangerous to them. In reindeer herding work there are many predictable and unpredictable situations that can be the cause of reindeer loss. However, there is no official insurance in Yamal for protecting or for giving compensation to reindeer herders in the case of reindeer loss. This interview indicates that Nenets reindeer herding is as an integral part of Nenets culture. Also, like in other Northern reindeer herding cultures, the value of reindeer herding is built on people's motivation to keep their way of life safe (King 2002). Therefore, I consider that the coda of this interview states that reindeer herders are responsible themselves for the wellbeing of their reindeer herding work. The main Nenets approach to the value of reindeer was described in Vladimir Evladov's book about his trip to Yamal Nenets reindeer herders in the early 1920s (1993:170-172). Since that time, Nenets reindeer herders have not changed their attitude much about the importance of reindeer in their life. Even nowadays, they consider their reindeer to be granted due to their luck with reindeer and their own hard work. However, they know that reindeer are never protected from the harm of nature and people. Perhaps this is why reindeer herders think that they have to expect reindeer loss at any given time and try to evaluate this as one of the most unavoidable parts of their life in the tundra

Within four years of conducting this interview with Nikolai Yaptik, in the winter of 2013-2014, the Yamal reindeer herders lost more than 60,000 reindeer. Since 2014, winter rains, which result in the tundra ground being covered by solid ice, have been occurring quite often. Even so, it is still difficult for the reindeer herders and animals to learn how to deal with it. The ice cover usually is very thick and the average thickness in some places can even be double. Reindeer cannot break through the iron-hard ice cover to get food from the ground. Because of hunger, animals become weak and if they do not get any food, they die over a few days.

### **6.3. Stories about reindeer loss in the tundra**

In their interviews, people talk about this icing year and their reindeer loss in many different ways. At the same time, they try to restrain themselves because they know that it did not happen because of their mistake. It happened because of a natural cataclysm that tundra people could not avoid or control. The herders tried to save their beloved reindeer, but as they said later, they had never had such an experience

before, and nobody knew what to do to save the reindeer from hunger. Throughout the winter, the reindeer herders looked for proper pastures, but everywhere there was a solid ice cover on the ground. Some of the herders tried moving their animals from one place to another, looking for better places with food. However, this did not help them, but only made their reindeer weaker. The thick ice covered the huge territory of the tundra. In the year 2014 every herder had lost reindeer. There were even herders who let their reindeer run away into the tundra because it was their only hope that the animals would manage to survive without human help.

The spring migration in 2014 was the most difficult migration for many Yamal herders (Perevalova 2015; Forbes et al. 2016; Golovnev 2017). It was tough and agonizing. The thick layer of the ice on the ground covered the entire tundra, and the reindeer could not break through it. They did not eat for several winter months. Many of them died. The rest were very skinny and weak, like living reindeer skeletons. The following is an interview with Irina Anagurichi (b.1936) and her stepdaughter Maya (b.1960s) about their last migration in the tundra.

### **6.3.1. Interview with I. Anagurichi and M. Valuito about spring 2014**

#### *Text 2*

*Irina: In April, we started to cross the Ob River. Usually it is a one-day trip. We did it in three days! It was a harsh time for our reindeer and for us. Our transport reindeer were so weak that they could not pull sledges. They were so exhausted because of hunger. They just fell to the ground and could not stand anymore. We did not know how to help and feed them. Thus, we went to the village administration and asked for help to transport our chum and our sledges closer to the Yar-Sale village. They sent us a lorry to transport our camp.*

*Maya: I remember that I did not notice how many reindeer died during the winter, because their bodies were under the snow. However, in the spring when the snow melted, we saw such an awful picture. It was horrifying... There were so many reindeer carcasses all over the tundra, and they were everywhere. These reindeer all died during one winter.*

*Irina: That spring we stopped migrating in the tundra. We did not manage to come to the Yuribey River where we usually stayed for the summer. All summer I lived near Yar-Sale. I had my chum near the village. I was amazed that there were so many other Nenets chums around! I am not sure how many, but around Yar-sale lake there were only chums. I think that around 50 families lived here.*

*Maya: Our family did not live so far from the village. During that icing year, we travelled only by snowmobile. Our reindeer ran away into the tundra. We did not stop them. These reindeer were looking for food. Some of the reindeer survived without human help. My husband started to look for our reindeer only after the summer, when most of the animals had recovered from the winter starvation.*

*Irina: During that winter and that short spring, we lost our entire reindeer herd. We do not have any reindeer left. Almost every Yamal reindeer herding family lost the majority of their reindeer.*

*Q: Can you talk about previous icing years on the tundra?*

*Irina: I am not sure how old I was at the time. Maybe I was 12-13 years old. I remember that I was big enough to drive on a reindeer sledge after elders. That time there was also icing in the tundra, when many reindeer starved to death. However, it was not as horrible as it was this time. I remember that in old times people could not even come to the villages. They stayed in the tundra without any food or bread. Only in the summer, when the rivers were open, were some families transported by boats closer to the villages, where they could get some food. Many reindeer herders who lost reindeer started to work in the Soviet state fishing enterprises. When they managed to get some reindeer, mostly by selling fish, they returned to the tundra. At the same time, nowadays Nenets are not allowed to do any fishing. I have no idea how we can get new reindeer.*



*Figure 6.1. Irina Anagurichi with her grandchildren. Yar-Sale. April 2015. Photo. Roza Laptander.*

### **Analysis of this interview**

**Abstract.** This narrative tells about the icing in the winter and spring of 2014. Reindeer herder Irina Anagurichi tells about her last day of migration across the

Ob River. In normal conditions, they could make the trip in one day, but due to reindeer weakness, they migrated the same distance over three days. Even so, they did not manage to complete it because their reindeer were weak and could not move anywhere. During the migration, reindeer were dying on the ice of the Ob River. This family had to ask for the help of the village administration, which sent them a lorry to transport chums, sledges and other belongings closer to the village. That spring Irina and all her family lost their entire reindeer herd.

**Resolution.** This tragedy occurred because of the winter rain on the tundra, which created a solid layer of ice, thus reindeer could not dig through the snow to get food from the ground. During several months, the reindeer suffered due to severe starvation and hunger. A huge number of reindeer died.

**Evaluation.** The harsh conditions of the winter and the icing events are the most difficult part of the present reindeer herding work in the tundra.

This is a description of the consequences of events or **resolution** of the narrative conflict. In addition it works on the theme “That’s all. The end.” It marks the story as an event that happened, or happened in the past, but that got told during the interview. It tells that as the result of the icing event people who lost their reindeer moved to live closer to the villages. However, they could not find jobs there that would provide an income.

**Coda.** In the year 2014 Yamal reindeer herders lost their reindeer due to the icing event. Some reindeer mixed with other herds and ran away into the tundra looking for food. A huge number of reindeer died from starvation. At first, the tundra people did not realize the whole extent of their tragedy of reindeer loss. However, even after five years, some of them still live near villages because they could not get enough reindeer to return to the tundra.

The narrator, Irina Anagurichi, returns the listeners to the present time and talks about the situation from the perspective of the present day. By mentioning about the old times, when people could recover their reindeer numbers with the help of other reindeer herders, she underlined that reindeer loss in 2014 was the most enormous in the history of the Yamal reindeer herding. Even until these days, reindeer herders suffer from this huge loss of their animals. Moreover, people could not earn reindeer by selling fish, because fishing in Yamal is controlled by the state. There are many severe regulations that prohibit tundra people from doing any business from fishing. For tundra people it is rather a new experience since in the previous time fishing was their main source for earning reindeer.

### **6.3.2. When my reindeer ran away. Interview with Kh. Laptander, Payutinskaia tundra, spring 2016**

Text 3

#### **Abstract**

*In the spring, there was terrible icing in the tundra. I was living alone in my chum in the tundra. It was the most terrible time in my life. That winter I lost almost all my reindeer.*

#### **Complication**

*The first rain was in the late autumn and the second was in the spring. We were just starting to recover after the autumn ice, and we gradually began to collect the reindeer which had run away that autumn. After the second rain, we lost our reindeer again. Therefore, in order to have enough reindeer to migrate in the tundra, reindeer herders joined their reindeer herds together. Other reindeer herders travelled by snowmobile across the tundra, looking for reindeer. These reindeer had run away and had since gathered with other reindeer. Even the local administration gave salt to feed the reindeer, but they were not accustomed to eating it so much. They simply do not know to eat only salt. As for me, I had no reindeer left near my chum. They had all run away. Ice was everywhere in the tundra, and it was so solid that the reindeer could not break it, and they had nothing to eat. Then they made little groups and ran away looking for food wherever they could find it. If a reindeer did find a little bit of food, it would lay down there, waiting for the snow to melt under its body. After some time, it would have a little food to eat. We were lucky that year because there were no wolves in the tundra. That helped the reindeer to survive. The ground was as hard as the surface of the table here.*

#### **Evaluation**

*That year I lost half of my reindeer herd. I was not the only one. Other tundra people also lost many reindeer.*

#### **Resolution**

*The reindeer that ran to the Yamal'skaia tundra, managed to survive there. In the Priural'skaia tundra, there was barely any food. This does not mean that there are no pastures, but remember that there was a terrible icing in the tundra. Reindeer were searching for any food in the tundra. They ran away and mixed later with other people's herds.*

#### **Result**

*Later in autumn, together with other reindeer herders we separated the reindeer in a special place for counting reindeer. There is a corral near the Panaevskaia tundra. First we separated reindeer there. The rest of the animals we lassoed.*

## Coda

*We had never had such severe icing in the tundra before. Such severe icing years appeared just recently, just nowadays. There were minor icing years before but they were not as bad as it was in 2013-2014. That year was extremely hard.*

This narrative analysis reveals Khauly's evaluation of the very first icing event in 2014 from his personal perspective. The abstract introduces the occasion of the reindeer loss and constructs Khauly's feelings of tragedy and powerlessness in the face of natural conditions. First, he tells how the icing came to the tundra and then he explains what reindeer herders did in order to collect their surviving reindeer. The evaluation of the narratives also reflects that for Khauly and other reindeer herders, their reindeer loss was the most tragic event of their lives. In the result there is a description of what reindeer herders did to return their reindeer. The coda of the interview indicates that the winter of 2013-14 was the most severe and tragic in the whole history of the Yamal Nenets people.

This interview includes the Nenets evaluation that it is difficult to predict the possible results of extreme weather and snow conditions in the tundra. However, icing, *salaba*, is historically familiar to tundra people, and they know that it could happen again (Golovnev 2016:122; Forbes 2016). From this interview one can understand that reindeer herders were not prepared for the extreme weather situation in 2014. However, over the last years they have experienced such events more often than they had in previous years.

### 6.3.3. *I lost half of my herd. Interview with D. Khudi, Baydaratskaia tundra*

*Text 4*

#### Abstract

*In the winter of 2013-2014, I lost half of my herd. It was the icing year when many reindeer died of starvation. In order to find food, I tried to move my reindeer from one pasture to another. However, there was a double-layer of ice everywhere. At the end of March, there was rain and later it grew colder.*

#### Complication

*That time, many reindeer died. People could not migrate. Some of them tried to do migrations with snowmobiles. Others, who work in the state reindeer farms, asked the administration for vehicles to move their chums to the summer pastures.*

#### Evaluation

*Before the icing year I had around 600 reindeer.*

## Result

*Because of the ice, I lost half of my reindeer herd. In the summer, I migrated with my family by the same migration routes, but with a very small number of sledges and a little chum.*

## Coda

*However, I consider myself lucky. Other people lost almost all their reindeer and now they cannot live and migrate in the tundra.*

This interview illustrates the confident attitude of young reindeer herder Dmitrii Khudi (b.1981), about his work with reindeer during the icing event. Dmitrii is the father of three schoolchildren. After the icing event, Dmitrii realised that he could not live all his life in the tundra. Therefore, the next autumn he sold some of his reindeer to the slaughtering house. From this money, his wife bought a flat in Aksarka. Now they live for part of the winter in the settlement. However, during the summer they live and migrate in the tundra near the Baydarata Bay.

### **6.3.4. This slaughtering house is just a hell. Interview with M. Khudi**

The next interview was made in December 2014 with Mitya Khudi, a private reindeer herder from the Priural'skaia tundra. He lost almost all his reindeer during the icing in the winter of 2013-2014. He is an advanced reindeer herder. Herding reindeer was the only way for him and his family to generate income. Since Mitya lost reindeer he cannot find a job in the settlement, because he has only a primary-school education. In the autumn of 2014, Mitya came by foot to the Payuta railway station. There is a slaughtering house nearby where many other reindeer herders who lost their reindeer during the same icing event were employed.

Drinking tea in the kitchen of the slaughtering house hostel, Mitya told me that he had not seen his family since August. He was happy that he had a few months to work there. For him this work and life on the territory of the slaughtering house was mentally and physically hard. Mitya described working there for only one reason, that after completing this job he would get proper payment, which he was planning to spend on buying reindeer.

#### *Text 5*

*This work in the slaughtering house is just hell. I just try to think that this work will give me money to buy reindeer. This keeps me alive. Nevertheless, life and work here in the slaughtering house is just a nightmare.*

This short interview gives an emotional evaluation of the ex-reindeer herder about working in the slaughtering house. The irony of this situation is that this reindeer herder is killing other people's reindeer in order to earn money to buy new reindeer for his family.

### 6.3.5. Discussion. Analysis of narratives and stories

**Abstract** – Four interviews about the icing events in the tundra tell about the negative effect of the changes in climate there on the life of the tundra people and their reindeer herding work.

**Orientation** - Who? The Yamal reindeer herders. When? Icing in the winter of 2013-2014. Where? In the tundra of the Yamal Peninsula. How? The icing event was the cause of the huge reindeer loss.

**Complication** - Why did it happen? Abnormal weather conditions caused a winter rain in the tundra (Forbes et al. 2016). After that, cold weather covered all the ground of the tundra with solid ice. The reindeer could not break ice for getting lichen, which is the only food source for reindeer in the winter.

**Evaluation** - Uncertainty about the future of reindeer herding on the Yamal Peninsula is one of the main topics (I encountered) in the interviews with reindeer herders. After this tragedy, many families had to stop living and working with reindeer in the tundra and had to live near the settlements. Due to the new legislation of the Yamal District and the controlling of fishing there, indigenous people were faced with the problem that they could not longer use their traditional ways of insuring reindeer by fish.

**Result** - Reindeer herders have to change their way of life in the tundra. They are obliged to learn alternative professions and find jobs in the regional settlements and villages.

**Coda** - Icing events used to exist in the tundra, but they were very rare and were not as frequent and severe as they are now.

After the icing winter, many reindeer herders stopped migrating in the tundra. Only a few of them managed to continue their work in the tundra. The rest hung around settlements. Around Yar-Sale alone, there were about 50 *chums*. Although this was the only place at that time for reindeer herders to spend the summer, nobody managed to find a job in the settlement. As Irina Anagurichi said, many reindeer herders started to drink heavily. They were depressed because they could not find any ties to life in the settlement. Most of them did not have a professional education but were highly skilled for working with reindeer. However, this knowledge is useless and not suitable for village life. Therefore, those reindeer herders who managed to continue their migrations in the tundra, even for shorter distances and with very small numbers of reindeer, considered themselves to be very lucky.



*Figure 6.2. Reindeer herders on snowmobiles on the tundra. April 2017. Photo. Roza Laptander.*

Moreover, during my work I noticed that Yamal reindeer herders have a strong feeling of guilt about their reindeer. At the same time, in their interviews, people said that they were happy that they saved even a small number of animals. According to the Nenets belief system, the reindeer god (demiurge) *Tybertya* gives people reindeer, though of course people also acknowledge their own role in the reindeer herding work. At the same time, natural cataclysms that are caused by unexpected changes in weather or climate, or by icing events, are not predictable. Moreover, such events give a strong sense of loss and powerlessness. There is a general sense that people could not control nature, but some of them think that they got this as a punishment from the tundra spirits for their improper work with reindeer. Reindeer herders talk about this openly and even with a sense of self-irony in their stories.

#### **6.4. Silenced stories about the anthrax outbreak**

The summer of 2016 was extremely hot and dry. It was in July when all news channels started to broadcast the anthrax outbreak on the Yamal Peninsula. Russian biologists and Yamal administrative workers together in one voice emphasized the need to reduce the number of reindeer because of overpopulation and overgrazing of pastures. However, Nenets reindeer herders have their own historically developed strategies of managing risks of extraordinary situations in the tundra. Therefore,

when reindeer herders got the news about the anthrax outbreak, most of them reacted calmly. At the same time, everybody was waiting for the district administration to take action concerning the tundra population.

I went into the tundra one year after the anthrax outbreak. From my perspective, I was surprised that many people seemed to evaluate the anthrax outbreak as a special state plan to cut the number of reindeer. At the same time, when I asked people to tell this to the camera or on record, they refused to have their accounts recorded. Even though they told this face to face, they talked with muffled voices, as if they were afraid to let others hear their stories.

People got the very first information about the anthrax outbreak on the tundra of the Yamal Peninsula in July 2016. The Yamal local state TV and radio stations reported about it in every news programme. There were special series of news programmes about it which told the official story of the anthrax outbreak in the tundra. They showed how the state representatives, the ex-governor of the Yamal District, Dmitry Kobylkin, military forces and ordinary people were helping reindeer herders and their families during the anthrax event. This story of the anthrax outbreak is described in several articles written by Russian and foreign researchers. The Russian ethnographer Andrei Golovnev wrote about it in a very detailed way in his article for *Arctic Anthropology* (Golovnev 2017). At the beginning of July 2016 in the central part of the Yamal Peninsula, reindeer herders informed authorities about the high number of dying reindeer. When veterinarians came to the tundra and examined the dead reindeer, they sent all samples to the National Agricultural Academy. There experts diagnosed the anthrax outbreak.

The Russian army of the state military defence came to the tundra. This was the first time since the Second World War when such a large number of soldiers came to the tundra. Their last appearance in the tundra had happened in 1943, during the Nenets unrests in the tundra (Laptander 2014). They were all dressed in white protective clothes. Soldiers helped to evacuate the Nenets reindeer herding families from the contaminated area. They also burned the bodies of the dead animals and disinfected areas. In the area affected by the anthrax outbreak, all Nenets *chums*, sledges, clothes, and sacred family items were burned. Officially, 2,349 animals died from the anthrax outbreak. Two people were deceased, a 12 year-old boy and his grandmother (Golovnev 2017: 46-47).

Due to very limited information about the anthrax outbreak the local TV-company film was the only source of information about this tragedy in the tundra. At that time, I did not have the possibility to interview any of the tundra people, who were in the thick of it. The other tundra people did not know what happened during the anthrax outbreak. Therefore, many of them made different assumptions about the anthrax outbreak, but they did not want to tell those assumptions on the record. For these reasons, I also selected this film as an example of how people can differently interpret the information given by the officials and how the officials

might inform ordinary people about disastrous events and their consequences. I must say that I watched this film not only from an anthropological perspective, with a focus on the meaning of silence and unsaid information, but also as an inquisitive member of Nenets society. Therefore, I listened carefully to what people said in their interviews. Considering there was no direct translation of what people said in Nenets language and not everything was told in Russian.

This means that the Nenets language in this case was silenced towards the broader Russian speaking audience of the Yamal region. Only TV views who are fluent in Nenets could understand this part of the story. The TV team did not ask local people about their feeling of necessity to burn everything that they have. People's feelings about this act of burning were shared only in Nenets. While the version for the Russian public displayed their obedience towards authorities' decisions.

The idea of the film *The sacred fire* is that dangerous diseases can be killed only by burning. However, burning can also be connected to the religious ceremony of cleaning. For example, the Nenets do an every-month fumigation of their tents and important belongings. For the Western people, it is difficult to understand the concept of the sacred fire. Maybe the only exclusion is a film by Andrei Tarkovsky *the Sacrifice*, where the main hero, to stop the possible danger of nuclear holocaust, vows to God to sacrifice all that he loves and values and he burns all of his belongings and his house (Tarkovsky1986).

The way the reindeer corpses and people's things were burned in the tundra was comparable to a big scarification ceremony that aimed at stopping this terrible disease in the tundra. After it, the Nenets families, who lived near the anthrax outbreak place, lost everything. All the items inside and outside their chums: sledges, food, clothes, and documents - everything was burned. They could only take their Russian passports and other necessary documents with them. Fortunately, they later received new tents and clothes, which were collected from all parts of the district especially for them.

The regional Yamal TV news showed again a Nenets woman who was thanking everybody who had helped her family that summer. After that, she added in Nenets that it was painful for her to let everything burn, especially photos of her family and children. It was not written in the Russian subtitles. I think that this is also a good example of how tundra people use their native language for expressing their personal feelings and thoughts, but saying only positive things in Russian.

After the anthrax outbreak, there was one-month quarantine across the entire Yamal Peninsula. From August until September, authorities controlled people's movements in the tundra and between settlements. People were not allowed to pick berries and mushrooms, or to hunt for wild birds.

Most tundra people did not expect the authorities to take the anthrax outbreak so stringently. The Nenets remember previous anthrax outbreaks and other reindeer epidemics. In their stories, elders tell that the last anthrax outbreak happened in 1941. Elders say that their parents did not do anything to protect humans and

animals from anthrax. There are a few bad places in the tundra that reindeer herders try to avoid. People call them *wewako ya* 'bad place', dangerous for visiting by humans, where in old times, people and reindeer died because of dangerous diseases. The Nenets elders who know any information about the places of mass death of people and reindeer, shared information since they could help to carry out work on fixing and enclosing these places in order to protect them from unexpected visits by other reindeer herders.

The extractive industry and railway infrastructure are present in most of the territory of the Yamal tundra. There is less space for herding reindeer in the tundra. Because of this, in the last few years, reindeer herders have started to migrate nearby dangerous places, as herders cannot avoid them when these places are by the migration routes. Moreover, these places become especially dangerous because of the intensive melting of permafrost in the summer. However, because the reindeer herders always observe the ground of their pastures in terms of its quality for reindeer food, they can recognise them. Once I talked to my mother about the old places where there were epidemics. She said that places where reindeer had died could still be found. Such places could be identified, especially when there are remains of reindeer carcasses and bones on the ground.

In the summer of 2016, reindeer herders received very little information about what had happened in that part of the tundra, where the anthrax outbreak had occurred. Thus, herders started to create different stories about this event. One of these stories told that soldiers built a 200-meter long fence on the tundra. Some people said that Gazprom put up gas extracting towers. Some people consider that anthrax was developed in the Soviet Union as a chemical weapon during the Cold War. Therefore, some reindeer herders suggested that the anthrax spores were probably strewn on the tundra by a plan to kill reindeer. However, when I asked my respondents to tell this for the recording, they refused because they were not sure whether it was true (FM 2017, 2018).

Three years after the anthrax outbreak, I asked people again about their work with reindeer. I wanted to know their opinion about the obligatory vaccination of reindeer against anthrax. A few herders told me that they did not believe in its positive effect on the health of their reindeer. They said that in some cases this vaccination makes their reindeer weaker and more vulnerable. The vaccination works starting in February and continuing until springtime. As the reindeer herders said, after such vaccinations, pregnant females have more miscarriages. Moreover, newborn calves are weaker than in previous times, so not all of them can survive cold springs.

Some reindeer herders said that they had heard from somebody that those Nenets families, who were affected by the anthrax outbreak, lived on territories rich with gas deposits. They believed that this is what had caused the anthrax outbreak in the tundra. As soon as the land was free of the Nenets and their reindeer, gas companies put in new gas towers. Of course, nobody has any evidence that these stories are

true. Even herders said that it was probably just gossip. At the same time, they did not have any proof that the state was using that land for new extraction work. They thought that the state and its representatives were keeping silent to protect classified information and their confidential decisions. This indicates that the Nenets do not trust regional authorities, believing that they have the power to make any decisions without informing tundra people about it.

## **6.5. Interviews about contemporary life in the tundra**

These interviews were collected mostly from people who were originally from the tundra but now, for various reasons, live and work in the settlements.

### **6.5.1. Interview with A. Serotetto about state reindeer herding**

The following interview with Alexander Serotetto, director of the municipal reindeer herding enterprise “Yarsalinskii”, was recorded during the Reindeer Festival in the village of Yar-Sale in April 2016.

Alexander is a local indigenous politician. He plays a mediating role in building a dialogue between Russian extraction industry workers and the reindeer herders in the tundra. At the same time, as a leader of the local community, he considers himself to be a decision maker who can decide which model of working with reindeer is best for the tundra people.

#### *Text 6*

*It is good that nowadays there are slaughtering houses in the tundra. This means that people have more possibilities to sell reindeer there. I do not know how it will work in the future. If the state gives more subsidies for buying meat, then I think the number of reindeer will decline. Do you know why? Because when the meat price is very low, cheap, reindeer herders try to have more reindeer in order to get better income. If the price for meat would be higher, then people would try to have fewer reindeer. In reality, reindeer herders do not need many reindeer. They need enough transport animals to live on and migrate in the tundra. It would be good to get 15-20 thousand rubles (200-250 euros) for one reindeer. Then, it would be easier for tundra people to reduce their number of reindeer. We are now moving to this model of having fewer reindeer. I would like to repeat that during Soviet times, there was no necessity to have many reindeer. At that time reindeer meat had a good price. It is a pity that we forgot about that old Soviet system of working with reindeer. Now we are trying to bring it back.*

In this interview, Alexander talks about the commercial value of reindeer herding on the tundra, mostly from the perspective of an official Russian bureaucrat. He

considers that the old Soviet system of working with reindeer and controlling the reindeer number was well organised. He believes it would even be suitable nowadays for contemporary reindeer herding work. Alexander considers that it would guarantee Yamal herders the opportunity to get reindeer herding work and provide the possibility to obtain a good income, not based on the quantity of reindeer meat, but on its quality and price.

The municipal reindeer herding enterprise “Yarsalinskii” was established during collectivization time in the 1930s. Prior to this, most reindeer were in the private sector. Collectivization made them the property of the state. However, some of the former owners were employed by the state reindeer brigades to look after their reindeer (see Chapter 4).

This interview also reflects that a state plan to cut reindeer numbers was put in place in order to make reindeer pastures less stressed. Reindeer herding work has many local nuances. While the Soviet collectivization campaign made the number of private reindeer smaller, it became higher in the state enterprises leaving the total number of animals the same. This means that for contemporary reindeer herding these two models work quite well. Moreover, private reindeer herders themselves do not believe that they could change their traditional methods of working with reindeer to different ones. However, many of them have worries that the state could cut all private reindeer and could prohibit the tundra people from fishing in the tundra. After all, herding and fishing provide reindeer herders and their families with all necessities for living in the tundra, supporting them in many different ways.

#### **6.5.2. Interview with A. Tokholia about regulation of fishery**

The fishing regulations in the Yamal are quite new. Officially, they were put in place in 2015. Every indigenous family has the right to fish in the rivers and lakes for a limited number of fish, only for their everyday consumption. However, officially indigenous people may not sell it for making money. Otherwise, they get a fine for poaching. Yet, for many semi-nomadic Nenets, fishing is the only source of income, which they rely on to buy food, bread and petrol.

However, over the last years, the fishing inspectors have been traveling far away in the tundra, searching for and confiscating all fishing nets and fish they can find. Usually tundra people are afraid to ask for the return of their fishing nets and traditional fishing tools even though they have them only for private use. They keep silence when inspectors ask them about people who are fishing in the area, because not all of them have managed to get the official fishing papers for fishing in the Yamal District.

The following is an interview with Alexander Tokholia, a Nenets activist. He is a leader of an *obshchina* ‘a fishing enterprise’, but because of the new fishing regulations and quotas his employees cannot work.

Text 7

*You know that God created every nation in the world. Moreover, every one of them got what was necessary for them to live: They could make a living from it. We, Nenets people, got fish from our God as our preferred food. However, the Yamal government does not let us do fishing. Fish is our food, but we are not allowed to eat it.*

At the end of his interview, Alexander made a joke:

*If you have fish, keep it secret. Do not tell anybody. Keep silence. You should close all doors and windows at home. Eat this fish, and hide all the fish bones, hide everything from the fish. After, use a good perfume, hide any smell of fish from the fish inspectors. Otherwise, they will arrest you and make you pay a fine.*

This part of the interview is quite ironic and reflects that the Nenets are afraid to do even private fishing in the tundra and near villages. Fishing provides people in the tundra and little villages with their daily food. However, if there is a state fishing inspector nearby, people are afraid to check their nets. Even if people do not sell any fish unofficially, but do fishing for providing food for their families; still it gives them some benefits for living in the tundra.

**6.5.3. Interview with Ju. Puiko (Wylko): When we got enough reindeer we moved to live to the tundra**

Julia Puiko (b.1989) is mother of five children. Her husband, Danil Puiko is a private reindeer herder who works in the Salyemal'skii fishing factory. He is a great grandson of Nany Khorolia's daughter (Chapter 4) and a grandson of Nyadma Puiko (Chapter 5). Their two children study at boarding school in Salekhard. Another three juniors live with their parents in the tundra. Their *chum* is 30 km from the Salemal village, at the place of the Puiko village.

Text 8

*My husband works in the fishing factory close to the old Puiko village. He fishes for pike, burbot, ruff, and ide (язь, *Leuciscus idus*). This fish is cheap, and you cannot make any profit from it. A pity now muksun - the white fish is not allowed to be fished, as it has a higher price. My husband gets salary only in the summer when he is employed by the state fishing factory. In the winter, he does not have any work, and then we do not have any income. We live only on subsidies for our little children and kochevye – compensation from Gazprom<sup>8</sup>. Sometimes*

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<sup>8</sup> 3000 rubles, paid monthly by the regional administration as compensation from Gazprom Company to all reindeer herding families in the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District.

*we even have no money to buy food. Therefore we do shopping on credit. Later, when we have money, we pay all our debts. Then for the next month, we need to buy food again on credit. Therefore, we are always behind. In the summer, my husband has a small income. Then we have some money in cash, and we can pay for everything at one time.*

*Even among Nenets, we are bednyaki (paupers), because we have a small number of reindeer. Before the icing year (2014), along with other Puiko families, we had around a hundred reindeer. During the icing, we lost all of them. My husband's family usually trades with reindeer herding people. They buy fish from us in exchange for reindeer. The price for the white fish is stable, and even nowadays, it is the same. For example, one wooden box of salted fish costs one living reindeer. It is around 40 kg, and the slaughtered reindeer meat weight is almost the same. We also buy reindeer skins from reindeer herders. In this way, we collected enough money to buy a second-hand snowmobile. Now we can travel to the settlements without problems. Recently I bought an apartment in Aksarka. I got money from the state maternal capitals subsidies for giving birth to my last three children. I started the paperwork in 2012, and I finished it only in 2017. Yet, the monthly payment for our flat is very high. It is also quite expensive for our family to live in the settlement. Therefore, we do not live there. Good that we had our chum, because when we obtained enough reindeer, we moved to live to the tundra.*

From this story, it is clear that this family of young fishing Nenets has a small number of reindeer. They have five little children, but they do not have any stable income. Like all fishing Yamal Nenets families they can only sell fish to a local fishing factory. Their relatives from the same Puiko family, who were mentioned in the previous two chapters, continue to live only from fishing.

This interview proves that nowadays industrial fishing is less profitable work than it was during Soviet times. Even though private fishing people try to follow historically developed ways of trading with reindeer Nenets, nowadays it does not work the same way. This interview also shows that Yamal Nenets private reindeer herding and fishing families do not have any stable income. They represent a very vulnerable population group of Yamal. Only people of pensionable age have regular social payments and pensions. While for young people the only income they have comes from compensational payments from the extractive industry companies. Usually Nenets reindeer herders and fishing Nenets know their traditional work well but do not have enough education to find proper work in the settlements. Thus, every change in the tundra that makes people to move to the settlements is considered to be a tragedy. While in their stories people mention that returning to the tundra is very important for them and their children.

## 6.6. Conclusion

This chapter gives another interpretation of the role of silence, which local people recognise to be due to fear of the state (Fivush 2010; Humphrey 2005). Here I described why the tundra people were cautious in telling stories about the recent changes in their life, due to the present politics of the Yamal district towards its nomadic and semi-nomadic indigenous people. The Soviet historical background taught many tundra people to acquiesce in official decisions towards them and their life in the tundra. However, if the decisions of the state are contradictory to the Nenets conception of life in the tundra, people can complain. In stories and narratives about the history of the Yamal tundra, the Nenets state that their connection to the tundra is an important marker of their identity, which gives them a feeling of self-respect and freedom. Reindeer herding is a lifestyle for many Nenets families. The Nenets main economy is based only on reindeer herding. In addition to the reindeer herding work, fishing is for the Nenets another source of earning a living in the tundra. Recent regulations on fishing on the territory of the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District have restricted tundra people's traditional fishing. For the Nenets in the tundra, fish is not only daily food, but also serves as the main tundra currency for running a successful reindeer herding business. After previous epidemic years, it was only fishing that helped the Nenets obtain new reindeer and return to the tundra.

Regional news about cutting the number of reindeer caused uncertainty among tundra people about the future of reindeer herding. Tragedies of reindeer loss during the icing event and the anthrax outbreak in the tundra were especially difficult for Yamal reindeer herders. Even though the state authorities supported tundra people in their work with reindeer, and reindeer herders got some help from their local municipalities, the tundra people do not have much expectation that the state would protect them from results of the unpredictable changes in nature that are beyond human control. My research results proved that the Yamal Nenets shared their memories about cases of icing and reindeer loss, but they were careful about sharing their thoughts about their future life and work in the tundra.

In the last part of this chapter, I illustrated interviews with Nenets people who described present-day life in the tundra (Texts 6, 7 and 8). One was conducted with a Nenets administrative worker, the second with a leader of the *obshchina*, the reindeer herders and fishermen's community, and the last one with a young tundra woman. These interviews give an image of Nenets thoughts and evaluations of reindeer herding on Yamal. The interview with A. Serotetto, a director of the state reindeer herding enterprise "Yarsalinskii", represents an official story about reindeer herding in the tundra. In the second interview, A. Tokholia tells about the contemporary life of fishing reindeer herders in *obshchinas*. Their work is limited by many regulations on the territory of the Yamal-Nenets district, imposed by regional

and state laws. Many reindeer herders struggle with these rules that restrict their life and work in the tundra. Therefore, one could say that the Nenets have paid a rather high price for their right to live in the tundra.

I decided to include the third interview with Julia to illustrate the life of an ordinary tundra family with young children. Julia (27) does not have an official job. After finishing school, she did not study further to get a professional education, and neither did her husband. Julia's family has a very small income. Her husband Danil (28) works at the local state-fishing factory, but it is seasonal and only for the summer period. Julia and Danil have a small number of reindeer, which they share with their relatives. Even though Julia did not say it openly, it is clear that this family could live and survive only in the tundra. Even among other Nenets, this family is acknowledged as poor. In the Russian settlement, they only have a small chance to earn enough money to cover all living costs, to feed and bring up their five children. They are not the only example. Their situation is comparable with that of many young Nenets families who want to live in the settlements, but because of different social difficulties, have returned to the tundra.

## 7. Discussion

From the first lines of the title *When we got reindeer, we moved to live to the tundra: The Spoken and Silenced history of the Yamal Nenets* this dissertation traces the importance and value of reindeer in the life of the Yamal Nenets. It is not only about the Nenets and their way of living and working in the tundra, but more about enabling the continuation of their culture and reindeer herding. When Nenets have reindeer, there is no better life for them than in the tundra. Therefore in the last decade, when people lost their reindeer due to icing and reindeer diseases, they had very limited capacity to get them back. The old rules of reciprocity, which were discussed in Chapter 4, and analysed by other authors (Stammler 2005:170-205), nowadays do not work in the same way as they functioned in previous years. Fishing as another basis of life in the tundra nowadays is strictly regulated by the state's official rules. Therefore tundra people cannot make a living from fish anymore, as was discussed in Chapter 5. Since the time when the Soviet authorities came to the tundra, tundra people learned to keep silence and not to protest against the state and its decisions. However, during my current research I noticed that not all people agree with the new requirements of the Yamal government to reduce the number of reindeer and to move a part of the nomadic population to settlements and towns. There are those Nenets who want to live in the settlements, but the rest want to stay in the tundra. Even though reindeer herders have strong arguments that they need to stay in the tundra, their voice is very weak, because the Nenets' rights to live in the tundra and migrate there with their reindeer herds are not protected by the local government.

From the Nenets elders' stories I know how the Communist past and the long period of working for state collective farms under the control of state representatives, taught the Nenets to be wary of the Russian leaders and keep their memories silent (see Ngati's story in Chapter 4). Even though reindeer herders developed new methods of working with reindeer and made it profitable (Golovnev 1998; Stammler 2005), they always remember that they are vulnerable against the power of the state (Laptander 2014). I believe that the role of silence, described in Chapter 6, gives examples of how the fear of the totalitarian regime was transmitted to young Nenets through the stories of their elders, and why they keep the same silence today.

For example, by a series of interviews about the icing events in the winter of 2013-2014, which killed the highest number of reindeer in the recent history of the Yamal tundra (Forbes 2016), the Nenets reindeer herders reconstructed episodes of this tragedy in the tundra. They told openly how it had happened and why. Without

any hesitation they acknowledged that the icing is a natural cataclysm and is beyond human control. Reindeer herders recognised that they cannot protect and support their reindeer during regular icing events in the tundra. They acknowledged that the recent climatic changes in the tundra have posed many difficulties and challenges in their life and work with reindeer. Due to icing events almost every Nenets family lost reindeer. Some Nenets families even lost their entire reindeer herds and because of this they no longer migrate in the tundra. These families do not have any income and do not have apartments or jobs in the Russian settlements and towns. Some of them live in *chums* near the Russian settlements. In their interviews, they actually said that it was their own fault that they had lost reindeer. It is the reindeer herders' duty to keep their animals safe. They believed that the Nenets no longer valued reindeer in the same way as their grandparents had in old times. However, nobody denies that reindeer have a different value now than they ever had before (Beach 1993; Anderson 2000; Stammmler 2005).

Another collection of interviews about anthrax in the tundra was conducted in the summer of 2016 (Laptander and Stammmler 2017; Golovnev 2017). Over centuries, the Nenets developed special strategies of living and surviving in the tundra. The oral stories and narratives of reindeer herders also indicate that anthrax outbreaks had occurred previously in Yamal. These interviews indicate that Nenets collective memory stories preserve rich knowledge about previous epidemics in the tundra. Some reindeer herders know the places that are dangerous to visit, where epidemics have occurred. Such places are recognized as potentially dangerous, and visiting is prohibited. Often, they are called *wewako ya* 'bad places'. Moreover, from these stories, one can determine the actions the reindeer herders took after the epidemic. For instance, in order to continue living in the tundra, herders try to find appropriate solutions to their problems: they can change their migration routes or move their herds to new places with better reindeer food (and, it is hoped, no disease).

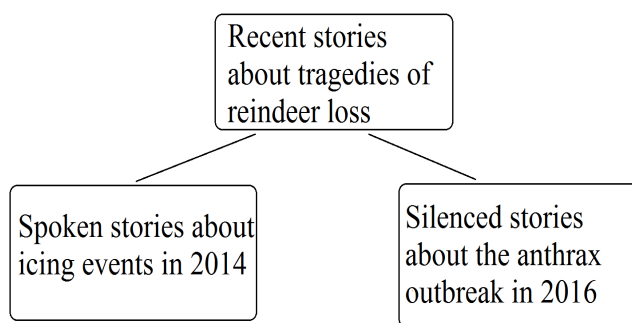


Figure 7.1. Icing events and Anthrax outbreak stories.

Figure 7.1. shows that the reindeer herders were open in talking about icing event stories, while they preferred to silence the last case of anthrax in the tundra, which happened two years after the severe icing on the Yamal tundra.

Mostly they refused to talk about it on record because they were afraid that the state authorities could later punish them for their words. For example, people did not want to record their thoughts that anthrax could have been a planned action of the Yamal administration to cut their reindeer numbers and to use the tundra for extractive industry work. I noticed that tundra people did not have any proof that anthrax was a planned action to decrease their reindeer population. Therefore they showed their caution over sharing their thoughts about possible regional plans towards cutting the number of reindeer in the district. This could be the main explanation for why they silence their stories about the anthrax outbreak on the record. However, reindeer herders supposed that all recent changes in the tundra landscape and climate change are the cause of many problems in the life of the Yamal nomads, among them the icing being the most terrible case. Even so, officials connected this topic of icing in the tundra to the problem of overgrazing and the wear of reindeer pastures in Yamal because of the high number of reindeer (Sever Press 2016). It also is the main topic of the local mass media: television news shows, the Internet, newspapers and journals. However, the more the authorities spoke about this, the more silent the tundra people became.

The nomadic life and historical background prepared the tundra people to be ready to deal with any unpredictable difficulties in their life. The changing climate in the tundra, poor pastures, and the recent tragedies of reindeer loss did not move all people from the tundra. However, nowadays the biggest part of the Yamal Peninsula is an extractive industries province, and is divided by infrastructure: networks of pipelines, roads and rails. This feeling of uncertainty about the future makes the Nenets maintain silence. Some Nenets can keep silence as a sign of their disagreement and protest, which they could not express openly because of their fear of the present political regime. Such concealment of problems and difficulties resulted in a protest that people could not express openly in words and actions (Stammmler 2011; Argounova-Low 2012; Novikova 2017). The powerlessness to cope with conflict situations causes a diversity of social problems in all societies of the world, and the Nenets are no exception. Drinking as a social phenomenon in the North among indigenous people has been described by many scholars in connection to psychological trauma and as a way of hiding from personal difficulties (Sumarokov et al. 2016; Istomin 2015). Also when elders silence difficulties and traumas of the past, they may do this to protect and support their young people. This work showed that it is the same among the Nenets. At the same time, the majority of the Russian population in Yamal is contemptuous of indigenous people. The young Nenets come across this feeling that they are second-best in every aspect of their life in the Russian settlements and towns, but especially at school (Laptander 2013). Many of

them feel embarrassed by their Nenets culture and background. They do not want to recognize the Nenets people and culture. They keep silence about their Nenets origin. They refuse to speak their Nenets language and try to assimilate more to the dominant Russian culture and language. For many of them the Nenets stories and memories about the tundra people and the history of the tundra are not important to remember. I think that such a refusal of one's own culture and self is part of the silence, which also has a political reason and social background common to many indigenous societies.

The social function of such silence has a historical background. For example, for members of Soviet society, Nenets as well, silence was an important individual and collective technique of protection from the politics of the state towards its members. However, the present silence among people is not always a sign of the same obedience and fear. It can be also recognized as a symbol of opposition and protest, which tundra people are afraid to express openly, but in silence.

During the Reindeer Herders' Day meeting in Yar-Sale in April 2015, the Nenets men sit in the concert hall of a local village and listen to important speeches, congratulations and talks by official people and bosses about the development of extraction industry work in the tundra. Even though some of these speakers have never visited the tundra, they instruct reindeer herders how they should live and work with reindeer in the tundra. Evidently, the extractive industry companies are working in the tundra following the principle, *who pays the piper calls the tune*.



Figure 7.2. Reindeer herders meeting with regional and industrial company representatives. Yar-Sale. April 2015. Photo. Roza Laptander.

Officials of the Gazprom company asked reindeer herders to wear light blue sweaters with the Gazprom logo as a sign of their silent agreement to support the company (Figure 7.2.). People did not protest, and their way of being silent is usually – but mistakenly – taken by Russians as a sign of agreement with them (Novikova 2017). I consider that this type of silence as acquiescence was originally introduced to the Nenets during Soviet times and has been developing up until the present.

The regional plan to move a part of the indigenous people to the settlements and to cut the number of reindeer shows that not many Nenets families wanted to change their traditional living and move to the settlements. Some young Nenets families think about moving to the settlements, but only those who already have flats there. Meanwhile most of the Nenets want to stay in the tundra because they know that in the settlements they do not have any prospects to have a proper life due to many social problems and mostly because of probable financial difficulties.

## 8. Conclusion

Imagine that you are standing somewhere in the Arctic tundra in the winter. Snow is all around. It covers all the hills, valleys – the whole tundra landscape far beyond the horizon. It is so deafeningly quiet around, that it causes ringing in the ears. Everything is in silence... When you shift from one foot to the other, a sudden creak from the snow makes you shudder, as if this strange sound has broken the beautiful harmony of the tundra universe. You stand still again, to remain in silence as a sign of respect to Nature and being a part of it.

Without subscribing to total environmental (cosmological) determinism, we can observe that this silence of the tundra has influenced and developed human cultural norms of behaviour and diversity in social communication. Types of silencing in speech may depend on diverse social divisions of people like age, gender, and cultural norms of communication. Communication in silence has more agency and broader contexts when unspoken words are used as an instrument to induce humans and nonhuman beings to act together. Silence can also be regulated by rules of responsibility, taboos and rituals (Tambiah 1968:184; Cohn 2014). Sustaining silence can be a sign of respect to humans, animals, nature and the environment. Silence can also be a sign of self-defence and an agreement to fulfil responsibilities and to keep memories about others. Silence can be connected to painful emotions, like shame or guilt. At the same time, people can use silence to express their disagreement and protest, which can be erroneously misunderstood as acquiescence.

Based on the material of the Yamal Nenets, this research about Nenets spoken and silenced history is done from the perspectives of linguistic and native anthropology. The uniqueness of this research is underpinned by the data which were collected from inside Tundra Nenets society by a speaker of the Nenets language. Oral history methods in combination with methods of anthropological research, mostly based on participation in the Nenets everyday life, helped me to conduct and collect many hours of recorded Nenets texts. This work allowed for the discovery of hitherto unknown depths of indigenous Arctic cultural heritage. The oral history approach helped in collecting the texts and analysing them through the lens of memory-theory and clarifying the fine-grained borders between the individual, collective and public spheres. As a result, I collected a series of Nenets narratives during my fieldwork seasons between 2010 and 2018. The collected audio materials make a large corpus of narratives and stories. It constitutes a collection of Nenets personal and collective stories in the vernacular style of two northeastern dialects of the Tundra Nenets language.

Linguistic anthropology and studies of bilingualism helped to determine how memory travels between these three different ways of remembering. Native anthropology enabled an analysis of the specificity of Nenets oral history from the point of view of an insider of Nenets society. Together with participant observation, this methodological combination afforded opportunities to approach complex topics from several angles and to go beyond spoken words. It thus became possible to uncover the various roles of silence. Using the general narrative analysis approach, I described Nenets strategies of narrating stories. Additionally, the Labovian theory of narrative analysis helped me to examine different functions of silence in order to identify different modalities of the narrative discourse and the role of silence. This work provided a description of the communicative functions of silence during narration. Silence is studied here as an analytical lens through which a new theory of silence in oral history research can be proposed, one in which silence strengthens the value of spoken words. It illustrates that the role of silence can depend not only on cultural norms of narration, but also on different social approaches to classifying and evaluating the past. Firstly, silence and silencing do not necessarily mean that words are without power, but may strengthen the power of a particular message by the very fact of its not being enunciated. Secondly, silence can keep memories about the past, but it can also help one to forget them. Thirdly, we can better understand the place of silence in contemporary stories by understanding their connection to the recent history and social background of people.

The research question of this work was in what way - does the silencing of narratives and stories as a part of a dialogue unite every participant in communication by common knowledge? For unpacking the common-sense notion of silence, which is connected to words, in Chapter 3 I examined the discursive context of silencing, through which silence gains different functions. I argued there that for technical understanding of the acquiescence to these rules, silence is taken as a given, but in connection to the discursive context.

At the same time, interpreting every narrative that is built on invoking silence is a very individual process. This dissertation shows how silence is linked to discursive formations, which create a sense of people's different reactions to narratives. Silence can also speak depending on what is listened to and how individuals translate silence, not only through words, but through the meaning of speaking words and silencing them. I noticed that narrators could selectively tell stories that they consider are safe to tell and conceal those ones that are better kept in silence or simply forgotten. It means that tundra people can tell their stories and individual memories, which include family, and group (collective) stories, though quite often narrators tell selected and edited versions of the stories. It is remarkable that tundra elders are very thoughtful and selective about sharing their memories even with their close family members. By becoming familiar with the tacit background of their stories, one can understand the reasons for silencing some of their memories. Silencing and silence

are very personal, private and intimate processes. Silencing can be for remembering and forgetting and, vice versa, for forgetting and remembering. I consider, for example, that collective silencing can be due to common knowledge, where people can hold back information because of a tacit group agreement to keep something unsaid. Silencing stories can work not only as a form of exclusion from speaking, but also as a tie binding people together by their special common knowledge. Thus, the responsible sharing of stories can be recognized as an important part of the cultural norms of communication, as a sign of respect, and as a part of a collective agreement to keep certain knowledge safe.

The results of my research show that in Nenets culture, the place of silence has a very essential role with meanings common to many other Arctic cultures, but different from 'Western' perspectives. Moreover, in Nenets culture, silence is a very significant form of social interaction. Through three examples of roles of silence in discourse, I demonstrated the role of a selective way of telling and silencing traditional historical narratives with connection to Nenets individual songs and stories for remembering people. In addition, the Nenets selective speaking and silencing of stories about the historical and recent events in the tundra conceivably have political reasons.

These results were divided into three strategies of telling and silencing the past: telling and silencing as special knowledge; silencing for remembering and forgetting; and silencing because of fear. These selected types of silence correspond to three different types of communication: 1) for keeping special knowledge safe in connection to people and their families; 2) as a protest; and 3) because of fear of being punished, which makes people remain silent and do what officials tell them to do.

In Nenets culture silence has many important social roles not only in their everyday communication, but it can be also recognized as a special code of Nenets ethics. Therefore during my research I observed that the Nenets can have very strong feelings of responsibility not only for their family members, but also for neighbours and other people. This may be due to moral ethics and respect for the confidentiality of peoples' personal stories. Due to this moral law, people do not share other peoples' stories, but keep them unsaid. Only extraordinary situations can lead them to break this silence. The Nenets may use silencing as a psychological instrument for self-protection and protection from bad or inconvenient memories about the past (Chapter 4). In addition, by keeping silence they can express acceptance, agreement or protest (Chapter 5). At the same time, the Nenets can silence some stories in order to protect people who are the subject of these stories. I also think that the Nenets' bilingual speaking abilities help them to regulate what to say openly or keep closed, that only a small group of Nenets-speaking people can understand what was said in Nenets (Chapter 6). From my point of view, the Nenets people may talk in their native language when they are afraid to say in Russian something risky. This may also occur when they hesitate to say something wrong or unsafe.

Furthermore, I investigated how the communicative functions of silence are linked to other discursive representations. Listening to personal stories makes listeners think about why the story is important and why people are responsible for it. During the process of storytelling, the narrator acts as an editor who makes decisions about what to tell and to whom.

In the stories in Chapter 4 from the examples of Nenets individual songs, I identified how the authors teach rules of behaviour to the audience by telling silenced stories in the form of a song. This way, the silenced heritage of these families, expressed through the songs of non-family members, has become a source of knowledge about their past and their ancestors for the following generations. While the families themselves chose to silence the wrongdoings of their ancestors, this silence travelled as knowledge to other members of the community who chose to uncover that silenced past and use it as a teaching resource on proper behaviour. The lessons to be learned from this uncovered silence imply that in present society, members of a family remain responsible for the past crimes of their ancestors.

The Puiko family's story analysed in Chapter 5 shows how silence is about both remembering and forgetting. The silence about the family's arrival at a particular place in the tundra made members of the community forget their different provenience in everyday life. However, when they received Gazprom's compensation, their neighbours started remembering that silenced knowledge, which became a source of tension within the community, instead of directing their anger to the outside actor, here Gazprom. It also shows that misunderstanding and envy can awaken silenced stories about neighbours and friends. This proves that every Nenets story depends very much on people's emotional connection to the past, and on their obligation towards other people.

The story about the Puiko family is a historical narrative about the family drama. This story shows that long silencing made people forget it. They tell it in many different versions with different messages and aims. Before, people remembered these stories as special hidden knowledge, but when this sleeping memory was awakened, it was told in the form of a collection of myths or legends about the past. There are no witnesses left to tell the original story.

The collection of interviews about Nenets contemporary life and work with reindeer was discussed in Chapter 6. In this part of my work, I describe how Nenets memories about the Soviet regime and the knowledge of the risk of telling a dangerous story made tundra people wary of telling stories on record. Tundra people keep silence during official meetings with important people and state representatives (Novikova 2014). I describe this as the third type of silencing, that due to fear, which has a political reason and a negative historical background. The 73 years of communist political regime made the Soviet people silent in strategic situations. Its nature was based on fear of the authorities, who could be cruel towards ordinary people and could control their lives even in the most abandoned parts of the Arctic tundra. This

work is especially relevant in describing the present period of Russian history. In their interviews, tundra people alluded to the feeling that they are slowly returning to a time of control, similar to the time of the Soviet regime. My interpretation of the official narrative of administrative workers was that tundra people are silencing the true number of their reindeer, which officials consider now to be very high. Moreover, the administration believes that this high number of reindeer is the main cause of pasture degradation in the Yamal tundra and therefore the number of animals should be reduced. However, the situation in the tundra and interviews with reindeer herders showed that during the last years, since winter 2013-2014, icing events took a large number of reindeer. Because of this, many Nenets reindeer herders lost their transport reindeer and therefore they can no longer migrate in the tundra. Some of them moved to live to the settlements, but they cannot find the right niche there, or jobs. Difficulties of settlement life, unemployment, people's despondency and alcoholism raise many social problems. However, when the same people live in the tundra in their natural environment and work with reindeer, they are at a distance from all these 'settlement life' objectives. This supports the words of many reindeer herders, that the Nenets feel more comfortable living in the tundra where they work with reindeer in the way which is natural for them. At the same time, they are not sure that their children will have the possibility to live in the tundra, because of difficulties in the reindeer herding work which are caused by the intensive industrialisation of the tundra and drastic events associated with climate change. Thus, their feeling of self-responsibility and responsibility for each other made them break their hesitation, shame and silencing of difficulties, and start to talk openly about these problems to the authorities.

At the same time, the authors of the stories used in this research have learned from the Soviet Union and the present political regime that certain interpretations of recent events in the tundra, like the anthrax outbreak of 2016, must remain hidden from officials (silenced) because voicing it might bring to the tundra inhabitants various kinds of punishment. This is probably not specific to Nenets, as all inhabitants of dominant political regimes are subject to such danger when they voice their version of stories publicly. Indeed, other authors on oral historical heritage have shown that this is common among many other nations (Walke 2011; Isurin 2017). What is particularly noteworthy about the Nenets examples in comparison to others, is that this technique of silencing for fear and punishment works even in the remotest parts of the Arctic tundra.

To sum up, this work about spoken and silenced stories of the Yamal Nenets describes cultural and social norms of narration in which silencing is represented as the main mechanism to regulate remembering and forgetting the past. Secondly, the socio-political context of situations can awake silenced stories. Thirdly, people use silence as a tool of protection. Examples from my work explained the reasons for selective recollection in telling stories about the past. It also proved that telling

stories is a multifaceted process, which is regulated by people's memories about the recent and distant past. This is my main contribution to research on the role and functions of silence in general oral history theory. I hope that this research makes an important contribution to the studies about the spoken history of Arctic indigenous peoples in general and Yamal Nenets in particular.

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## Резюме на русском языке

### **Когда у нас появились олени, мы уехали в тундру: Устная и умалчиваемая история ямальских ненцев**

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#### ***Вступление***

Настоящая работа посвящена исследованию места молчания в устных рассказах ненцев. Актуальность данного исследования вызвана возрастающим интересом к исследованию памяти прошлого в общей теории устной истории. Исследование молчания является сравнительно новой темой, которая раньше отдельно не разрабатывалась на материале устных рассказов народов Севера.

Основная цель исследования:

основываясь на материалах ненецкого языка, предложить новую теорию о роли молчания и слов в исследовании устной истории.

Дать описание:

- традиционных видов ненецкого молчания и умалчивания, которые способствуют сохранению воспоминаний о прошлом и их особом значении в жизни людей;

- ненецкого молчания, обеспечивающего безопасность важной информации как общего знания, находящегося в открытом, ограниченном или закрытом доступе, и как это способствует запоминанию или забвению памяти о прошлом;

- последствий советского исторического прошлого и российской культуры на формирование современного вида молчания ненцев в сравнении с другими народами бывшего Советского Союза и Арктики.

Диссертация состоит из введения, семи глав, заключения, библиографии, резюме на русском и ненецком языках, приложения с текстами интервью и их переводами на русский язык. Результаты исследования имеют значение для решения общетеоретических вопросов исследования дискурса и роли молчания в устных рассказах о прошлом. Данное исследование представляет ценность для историков, антропологов, лингвистов и прочих исследователей, интересующихся устной историей Арктики, в частности, ямальских ненцев.

#### ***Люди и место исследования***

Самоназвание ненцев *ненэця*, или *ненэй ненэць*, переводится как 'настоящие люди'. Ненцы представляют крупнейший коренной малочисленный народ

Севера России. По данным российской переписи 2010 года 44857 человек назвали себя ненцами. Ненцы проживают в европейской части Севера России и в Западной Сибири.

На территории Ямало-Ненецкого автономного округа (ЯНАО) ненцы, ханты и селькупы имеют официальный статус коренных малочисленных народов ЯНАО. Из них ненцев 30 тыс. человек, что составляет приблизительно 8.2% населения ЯНАО (Laptander 2016).

ЯНАО является регионом Севера России, где официально зарегистрировано наибольшее количество домашних оленей. По просторам Ямала кочуют с многочисленными стадами оленей пастухи муниципальных предприятий и оленеводы-частники. По соседству с ними работники газовой промышленности заняты на газодобывающих месторождениях Ямала и на Бованенковской железной дороге (Головнев и Абрамов 2014). В населенных пунктах полуострова: Тамбей, Сё-Яха, Новый-Порт, Мыс-Каменный, Яр-Сале и др. проживает русскоязычное население округа и местные поселковые ненцы. Данные группы населения Ямала имеют разный подход к понятию о тундры. Для работников «Газпрома» тундра – это газодобывающее месторождение, которое обеспечивает энергией местные населенные пункты, крупные города страны, а также идёт на продажу за рубеж. Более того, газодобывающая отрасль приносит основной доход в бюджет Российского государства. Для оленеводов и рыбаков тундра является основным местом ежедневной работы и домом, который они унаследовали от своих родителей и дедов.

### ***Материалы и методы исследования***

Материал исследования представлен устными рассказами (нарративами) о повседневной жизни ненцев, собранными от тундрового и поселкового населения полуострова Ямал с 2004 по 2018 годы. Полевая исследовательская работа в тундре требует, чтобы исследователь, наряду со своей работой, принимал активное участие в жизни людей. Исследователь должен включиться в повседневную жизнь и работу оленеводов: оказывать помощь в повседневной жизни с её постоянными перекочевками, перегоном оленей и установкой или разбором жилища. Здесь условия жизни, питание и общение с людьми в тундре значительно отличаются от тех же оседлых ненцев и жителей посёлков. Хотя работа по сбору записей в тундре значительно легче и предоставляет больше времени на встречу с людьми, на разговоры, в то же время, в поселке есть больше времени на обработку собранного материала. Оба вида работы в тундре и в поселке предполагают, что исследователь документирует и описывает процесс работы через свой личный опыт участвующего наблюдения, даёт описание окружения и личных размышлений, на основе того, что ему рассказали люди.

Во время работы были собраны интервью, личные рассказы и устные воспоминания о прошлом на ненецком и русском языках. Имена исполнителей

ненецких устных рассказов и личных песен сохранены и представлены как соавторы исследования. Записи, исполняемые на языке оригинала, служат не только для передачи информации, знаний, памяти о прошлом, но они рефлексировать специфику повествования устных рассказов и ненецкие особенности пересказа.

О необходимости сбора материалов на языке исследуемого этноса писали многие исследователи (Boas 1904; Rohner 1969) и отмечали их важность для лучшего понимания и описания культуры исследуемого народа (Duranti 1997; Cruikshank 1998). Такой комплексный подход к анализу языкового материала особенно актуален при исследовании текстов на ненецком языке, поскольку довольно часто грамматические, стилистические и культурологические особенности повествования не всегда сохраняются при переводе на другой язык (Лаптандер 2008).

Анализ устных рассказов ненцев был проведен по методике Катарини Риессман (1993). Все материалы, отобранные для исследования, были расшифрованы, переведены на английский язык. Для проведения анализа текстов на ненецком языке был использован метод структурного анализа устного нарратива, предложенный Уильямом Лабовым и Джошуа Валецки (Labow, Waletzki 1997). Согласно разработанной системе анализа нарратива, устное повествование может состоять из шести частей, каждая из которых подразумевает свой специальный вопрос: 1) Зачин – Представление, о чем идет речь в повествовании. 2) Описание (*Ориентация*) – Кто? Когда? Где? Как? В этой части повествования определяются время, участники повествования, место действия, исходная ситуация, что дает возможность слушателям понять полную картину рассказываемых событий. 3) Осложнение – Что собственно произошло и почему это произошло? 4) Развязка – Чем это все кончилось в итоге? Маркером резолюции могут служить формулы типа «Вот и всё. Конец». 5) Кода. Рассказчик возвращает слушателей в настоящее время и приводит оценку событий прошлого с точки зрения сегодняшнего дня. 6) Оценка – Почему эта история интересна? Каково отношение рассказчика к ней? Поскольку в устном рассказе события описываются в хронологической последовательности, в которой они произошли, то такого рода календарный порядок описания событий играет важную роль в процессе передачи рассказчиком знаний о далеком и близком прошлом. Основная цель такого рода повествования – дать ответ на заданный вопрос, или наоборот, задать его в процессе повествования: что? когда? и почему так случилось? (Lemon 2001).

Любой устный рассказ, устное повествование, нарратив даёт информацию не только о жизни рассказчика, но также приводит оценку событий прошлого в его жизни. Рассказчик выбирает для рассказа сюжеты из прошлого и рассказывает о них с точки зрения сегодняшнего дня. Своим повествованием он может сравнивать как, например, жили люди в прошлом, как теряли оленей,

жили впроголодь, но рыбачили и продавали рыбу. Так многие тундровики могли приобрести какое-то количество оленей, достаточное, чтобы вернуться в тундру. К сожалению, в настоящее время это не всегда бывает возможным.

Материалы исследования показали, что индивидуальные рассказы о жизни, объединённые одной общей темой и периодом повествования, могут стать рассказами коллективной памяти, называемыми ещё каноническими (*canonical*) рассказами о знаменательных событиях в тундре. Люди могут рассказывать такие рассказы не всегда согласованно с реальными фактами, часто опуская то, что считают нужным умолчать. Среди устных рассказов о жизни в тундре есть истории, которые не рассказывают открыто и умалчивают по разным причинам. Есть среди них рассказы, которые были пересказаны из третьих рук, поэтому рассказчики не всегда знают, как происходили реальные события прошлого.

Во время работы я обратила внимание, что умалчивание деталей событий прошлого является нормой устного повествования. Довольно часто рассказчики умалчивают моменты своей жизни, о которых стесняются, боятся, не хотят, не считают нужными рассказывать. При этом другие люди, те же родственники, могут знать об этом и рассказать. Так, сопоставив факты других рассказов с рассказом этого человека, поговорив с людьми, можно открыть закрытые детали повествования. Бывает, что люди молчат, чтобы не сказать чего-нибудь лишнего, во избежания дальнейших проблем и расспросов от членов семьи, соседей или других людей. Как я заметила, в последние годы тундровики особенно боятся высказывать критику по отношению к власти. Это может быть по причине того, что тундровое население является самой бедной и уязвимой группой населения Ямала, для которого любое решение относительно их жизни и работы в тундре может быть судьбоносным.

### *Документация устной истории ненцев*

Как и другие бесписьменные народы Арктики (Cruikshank 1998), ненцы передают свои исторические предания и песни, традиционные знания и личный опыт жизни от одного поколения к другому лишь благодаря устным рассказам. Устные рассказы ненцев являются малоисследованной темой. Это связано с тем, что систематическая работа по документации и описанию ненецкого языка началась только в начале 20-го века. Тогда же была создана ненецкая письменность (Lublinskaia and Laptander 2015). Интересно, что именно финский ученый Тойво Лехтисало выделил впервые рассказ как самостоятельный вид фольклора ненцев (Lehtisalo 1960). Затем устный рассказ был отмечен в работах Г. Д. Вербова: «Наряду со старинными произведениями, огромный интерес представляет зарождающееся современное народное творчество ненцев, отражающее жизнь советской тундры» (Вербов 1937: 4). Советские исследователи ненецкого фольклора тоже описывают рассказ как

современный вид творчества ненцев (Щербакова 1960; Куприянова 1960, 1965). З.Н. Куприянова пишет в своих работах: «В наше время, наряду с традиционными жанрами устного творчества, у ненцев появляется жанр рассказа, в котором обычно рассказывается о жизни и работе в наше время» (Куприянова 1960: 19). «В простой форме, он раскрывает жизнь и чувства людей в наше время» (там же: 23). Далее она делает замечание, почему это происходит: «В настоящее время ненецкий фольклор угасает, уходит из живого бытования, потому что, по своему содержанию, он далёк от современности, от современного мировоззрения» (Куприянова 1965: 56).

С другой стороны, устный рассказ является одной из архаичных форм передачи традиционных знаний и опыта о прошлой жизни следующему поколению. Манера исполнения устного рассказа отличается от других форм традиционных ненецких фольклорных произведений *хынабиц, ярабиц и судбабиц*. Ненецкие устные рассказы являются отражением личного опыта жизни и воспоминаниями о событиях прошлого и являются источником информации о прошлой жизни кочевого народа и судьбах людей, рассказанных в современной интерпретации ненцев (Пушкарёва 2003; Головнёв 2004; Харючи 2018).

Е.Т. Пушкарёва различает в своих работах понятия *ва"ал* 'историческое предание' и *иле"мя* 'предание и/или приключение, житие, случай из жизни' как отдельные жанры ненецкого фольклора (Пушкарёва 2001: 23). В то же время, Л.А. Лар, в сборнике «Мифы и предания ненцев Ямала» не разделяет предания и исторические рассказы как отдельные жанры, а включает их в *иле"мя* 'житейские истории'. «Другой жанр ненецкого фольклора – предания, рассказы о прошлом. В них нередко освещаются реальные исторические события и факты. Это повествования о происхождении родов и священных мест, песни и рассказы о восстании 1841 г. Все они представляют значительный интерес как источник знаний о жизни предков современных ненцев» (Лар 2001: 14). «Ряд текстов рассказывают о репрессии шаманов и раскулачивании богатых оленеводов, о мандаладе (мандале)» (там же: 15). В этот же раздел Л.А. Лар включает истории о Вавле Ненянге, которые другими исследователями включаются в жанр *ва"ал* (Куприянова 1965; Хомич 1984; Пушкарёва 2001).

Другое определение *ваал* (*ва"ал, я-ваал*) дано А. Головнёвым: это предания, краткие легенды, былички, притчи. «Сюжетный спектр *ваал* разбросан от притч про жадного оленевода или торопливую швею до этиологических мифов, объясняющих, почему разные звери едят друг друга, или почему бог Нум моет землю потопом. *Ваал* обычно содержит нравоучительный подтекст или завершается прямым назиданием. По наблюдениям Людмилы В. Хомич, к *ваал* относятся также рассказы о сихиртя и мятежном вожде Ваули Ненянге» (Головнёв 2004: 11). При этом, современные ненцы не называют свои устные исторические рассказы *ва"ал*, а относят их к рассказам о прошлом *иле"мя*. Кроме этого, ненцы помнят своё прошлое и людей из прошлого не только рассказывая

истории о их жизни *иле*”мя, а ещё исполняя авторские индивидуальные песни *сё*. Личные песни *хари*’ *сё*, хорошо сохранились в коллективной памяти ненцев. Они дополняют рассказы о событиях прошлых лет информацией о людях, которые сочинили их по причине тех или иных событий (Пушкарёва 1990; Niemi 1999). Как и в устных преданиях о прошлом, в личных песнях память о событиях прошлого сохраняется с установленной хронологией (Niemi and Lapsui 2002).

Таким образом, традиционные устные повествования ненцев *иле*”мя на ненецком языке сохраняют систему знаний и ценностей, объединяющих несколько поколений амальских ненцев (Головнёв 2004:8). Такие устные рассказы имеют своё особое социальное значение в жизни ненцев. *Иле*”мя” ‘бытовые или биографические рассказы’, делятся на *я*’ *мидыхы иле*”мя ‘древняя история’, *невыхы иле*”мя ‘старинная история’, *тяхакуй иле*”мя ‘прошлая история’, *талъчуй иле*”мя ‘недавняя история’ и *едэй иле*”мя ‘новая история’. Устные рассказы могут быть рассказаны участниками или свидетелями событий прошлого (Азбелев 1964<sup>9</sup>; Vansina 1985; Thompson 2008). Они включают личные воспоминания о минувшем времени, о жизни родственников и знакомых, которые могут быть получены не из первоначальных источников, а услышаны рассказчиком от кого-то, передаваясь из поколения в поколение. Исторические рассказы, являясь устными свидетельствами прошлого, объединяют сюжеты прошлой жизни и дают представление о жизни ненецкого общества на различных этапах его формирования. Устный рассказ может быть общественным достоянием, являясь неотъемлемой частью народной памяти. Как правило, устный рассказ повествуется с целью передачи какого-то специального знания о прошлом в определённой хронологической последовательности и временном порядке. Такого рода календарный порядок передачи событий играет важную роль в процессе передачи рассказчиком знаний о далеком и ближнем прошлом.

В процессе работы было выявлено, что в рассказах ненцев хронология событий прошлого начинается с рассказов о необычных случаях из жизни тундровиков в дореволюционной России. Следуя по временной цепочке событий, далее идут рассказы о коллективизации, о том, как люди жили в период раннего Советского Союза. Эти рассказы повествуют о переходе на осёдлость кочевого населения, когда часть ненцев переехала из тундры жить в посёлки, о начале сбора детей в интернаты и контроле количества оленей в стадах. В то же время, есть много положительных воспоминаний о советском периоде времени как самого спокойного и благополучного в жизни тундровиков. В 1990-е годы, после развала Советского Союза, в стране начался хаос. Всё, что строилось за долгие годы коммунизма во благо огромной социалистической страны,

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9 Азбелев С. Н. Современные устные рассказы // Проблемы современного народного творчества. Русский фольклор. М.; Л., 1964.

рухнуло. Были закрыты государственные предприятия, распущены совхозы и много людей остались без работы и денег. Особенно тяжело было выживать в буквальном и в переносном смысле тундровикам. Тогда традиционные знания оленеводства и дальнейшее развитие данного вида хозяйства помогли оленеводам справиться со многими трудностями. Не исключением стали и осёдлые ненцы-рыбаки. Некоторые переехали жить в посёлок, другие вернулись из посёлка в тундру, к своим истокам. Устные воспоминания данного периода о том, как тундровики старались растянуть полученную норму продуктов на период годовой миграции, как оленеводы-рыбаки шли на контакт с рабочими газодобывающих предприятий в тундре, чтобы обменять на оленьё мясо и рыбу продукты первой необходимости и бензин. Эта часть устной истории ненцев представлена индивидуальными и коллективными рассказами-воспоминаниями о недавнем прошлом.

Среди индивидуальных рассказов есть повествования, которые могут находиться в конфликте со своими владельцами, поэтому умалчиваются. С другой стороны, коллективные рассказы формируют коллективную память ненцев. Эти рассказы являются важной составляющей идентичности ненцев. Они повествуют о необычных или отдельных событиях из прошлого. Индивидуальные и коллективные рассказы могут иметь общие темы, но повествуют о них в разных вариантах, в зависимости от интересов и требований ненецкого общества. Моё исследование показало, что коллективные рассказы ненцев могут тоже умалчиваться.

### *Слова и молчание в культуре ненцев*

Молчание и умалчивание являются важной частью повседневной жизни ненцев. Молчание является ведущей составляющей ненецкого воспитания, которое учит детей жить по нормам и правилам ненецкого общества. Молчание необходимо для выработки самоконтроля, выносливости и трудолюбия, которые так важны в тундре. Молчание помогает установить контакты с другими людьми и соседями. Молчание в тундре регулирует не только нормы общения, но и процесс повествования ненецкого рассказа. Такое молчание бывает коммуникативно-значимым, если через него передаётся некоторая информация, которая может быть расшифрована на основе знания контекста ситуации. Молчание может сохранять интонационное содержание речевого акта, а также контролировать коммуникативную ситуацию. Я воспринимаю этот вид молчания как общее знание, когда группа людей умалчивает что-то знакомое, значимое или запретное. Раньше тундровики так умалчивали специальное табуированное знание, личные имена людей, названия священных животных и всё то, что нужно было оберегать молчанием от злых духов. Даже сейчас рассказчики, когда выбирают темы, то рассказывают о том, что считают стоящим и интересным слушателю и безопасным для других. Ненцы могут

умалчивать не только важные моменты своей личной жизни, но информацию, которая может навредить им или их близким. Многие верят в то, что нельзя говорить даже свои ближайшие планы на будущее, про охоту или перегон оленей, так как так можно потерять удачу.

Настоящая работа показала так же, что люди предпочитают рассказывать истории о жизни других людей, которые уже умерли, так как их рассказы *иле*”мя и личные песни *се* остались без владельцев-охранников. Когда-то эти рассказы умалчивались в силу разных причин, но со временем необходимость их умолчания отпала. Такие рассказы или песни могут стать *лаханако*. Интересно, что в своих рассказах ненцы рассказывают не только то, что они помнят, но и то, как они хотят, чтобы их дети помнили прошлое, знали семейно-родовые знания о родственниках и предках, местах традиционного проживания и святилищах. Я рассматриваю это молчание как знание.

Если умалчиваемая история просыпается в силу какой-то причины и становится важной для пересказа, то люди начинают пересказывать события далекого или недавнего прошлого в их современной интерпретации. Иногда рассказчики могут не знать первоначальную историю, хотя в ней могут упоминаться имена участников событий и их родственники. Такое молчание я называю молчанием для памяти. Когда это молчание нарушено и люди начинают пересказывать умалчиваемую историю по много раз, меняя сюжет и содержание, имена людей и названия мест событий реальной истории, то происходит утрата памяти о прошлом.

Долгий период коллективизации научил людей рассказывать о своей жизни, согласно требованиям советской власти. Этот период истории России научил всех граждан единой коммунистической страны молчать и повиноваться. Ненцы не стали исключением. Это знание сохранилось и по сей день. Многие ненцы говорят открыто о своих трудностях жизни в связи с изменением климата, из-за развития инфраструктуры, по причине запретов рыболовства и массового контроля оленеводства даже в самых отдалённых уголках тундры. Ненцы готовы говорить о многих сложностях жизни, но не под запись, чтобы не было задокументированного материала, случайно высказывающего критику по отношению к представителям власти. Этот вид устных рассказов не под запись я называю молчанием из-за страха, для защиты себя и окружающих.

### ***Память о прошлом в личных песнях ненцев***

Практика раздачи оленей родственниками и соседям как способ страхования оленеводов от несчастных случаев и падежа оленей во время эпидемий или гололёда встречается по всей территории расселения ненцев. Некоторые примеры такого страхования описаны в работах ранних исследователей ненцев (Костиков 2010; Евладов 1992:172). С другой стороны, когда люди, даже в случае крайней необходимости, вынуждены взять у кого-то оленей без

разрешения, это осуждается соплеменниками, но не наказывается. В 2014 году была записана песня о человеке, который угнал четыре или пять поколений назад тридцать оленей и пригнал их в район реки Морды-Яха. Прошло много лет. Все участники событий ушли в иной мир, но личная песня угонщика осталась. Её исполнил старик-оленовод и рассказал историю владельца песни. Назвал имя человека, который умер ещё до его рождения, имена его родственников и даже сказал, кто и где живет сейчас. Этот пример показывает, что даже если соплеменники знают о случаях кражи или иного проступка, то, в зависимости от ситуации, об этом не будут широко распространяться. Это молчание их общее знание. Оно может пониматься как прощение, поскольку люди знают, что человек, который совершил данный поступок, действовал в интересах своей семьи, чтобы спасти близких от голодной смерти в тундре. Другие случаи воровства оленей рассказывают о том, как люди теряли и получали оленей. Об этом не рассказывают открыто, хотя жители тундры знают некоторые семьи, у которых в прошлом воровали оленей и людей, которые приобрели от воров оленей. Это хранится как общее коллективное знание о прошлом так как не имеет документального или иного подтверждения своей исторической достоверности. Такие исторические предания, часто сопровождаемые личными песнями, являются рассказами-поучениями. Они имеют не только педагогическую направленность, но являются семейными преданиями об истории рода и семьи (Васильев 1984).

События коллективизации в тундре произошли сравнительно недавно. Многие тундровики потеряли оленей, которые были конфискованы в пользу Советской власти. Дети людей, которые пострадали в это время, ещё живы, но знают о событиях тех лет плохо. Только личные песни их родителей, отцов являются памятью о том сложном, переломном времени в истории тундры. Сами же рассказы очевидцев умалчиваются, о них мало кто говорит, так как это умалчиваемое знание. Такое умалчивание необходимо для того, чтобы молодому поколению ненцев не передалось чувство травмированности, а сложилось положительное представление о прошлом своих родителей и предков.

### ***История семьи Пуйко: личная трагедия в коллективной памяти ненцев***

Так было отмечено выше, устные истории, пересказываемые ненцами как исторические предания, не всегда дают достоверную информацию о событиях прошлого. Такой многоголосый пересказ способствует скорее забыванию первоначальной истории, хотя остается память о самом событии. История семьи рыбаков-оленоводов, которая приехала летом на Юрибей рыбачить и осталась там по причине потери кормильца, была практически забыта соседями. Все молчаливо приняли семью погибших в море рыбаков. Жизнь в тундре сурова и не всегда считается с человеческими жизнями, поэтому сила

человека в его сплочённости с другими. С другой стороны, человеческая натура завистлива и памятлива на чужое горе.

Жизнь меняется, и перемены в ней не всегда бывают положительными. Развитие газовой промышленности и появление железной дороги в тундре заставило людей просить компенсацию за ущерб, причинённый их традиционному образу жизни. Государство пошло навстречу и люди получили небольшие выплаты, в том числе и лодочными моторами. Вот тут случился конфликт: лодочный мотор дали не той семье. Не семье старожилов, а семье Пуйко, приехавших на реку Юрибей почти столетие назад. Соседи вспомнили старую историю и стали рассказывать её, чтобы подчеркнуть пришлось этой семье. Хотя эта семья уже пустила корни и считает себя здесь местными. Данный случай, когда государство непреднамеренно подтолкнуло людей к конфликту, не является нормой. История семьи рыбаков-оленьеводов Пуйко свидетельствует о том, что для оленеводов рыбалка и даже работа в советское время в промышленном рыболовстве до сих пор имеет огромное значение. Благодаря рыбе и заработкам на рыбодобывающих предприятиях многие ненецкие семьи приобретали оленей и возвращались жить в тундру. Такой ритм смены деятельности и работы, когда летом оленевод рыбачил для себя или на рыбодобывающее предприятие, а зимой снова был с оленями, был привычным для среднего и старшего поколения ненцев. Рыба в тундре всегда была частью страхования оленей. Кроме того, рыба была самой ходовой валютой для многих торговых операций в тундре. В настоящее время, по причине строгого контроля рыболовства на Ямале, для современного поколения ненцев эта система торговых отношений в тундре почти невозможна.

Люди почти забыли первоначальную историю семьи Пуйко, поскольку участники трагедии давно умерли, но их рассказы представляют ещё один пример того, какую роль имеет молчание для сохранения и забвения памяти о людях и их семьях.

### ***Сколько оленей стоит право жить в тундре?***

В данной части работы собраны интервью оленеводов ямальской и приуральской тундр о последствиях падежа оленей во время гололёда зимой 2013-2014 года. В своих рассказах оленеводы делятся своими воспоминаниями о событиях гололёда и делают выводы о результате его воздействия на их последующую работу с оленями. Рассказы и интервью были разгруппированы по тематике и проанализированы. Примечательно, что оленеводы рассказывают о своей беде открыто и не умалчивали того, как им было больно быть бессильными перед силами природы и терять оленей, не имея возможности помочь им. Многим пришлось оставить привычный образ жизни в тундре и переселиться ближе к посёлкам.

Другая тема рассказов об эпидемии сибирской язвы летом 2016 года интересна в том плане, что тундровики не хотели говорить на эту тему под запись. При этом, ненцы из разных мест и тундр полуострова Ямал приводили свои версии и доводы о причине эпидемии сибирской язвы. Хотя потери оленей во время эпидемии были небольшими, но эта тема до сих пор актуальна и вызывает много дискуссий и споров среди оленеводов. Большинство моих респондентов считают, что данная эпидемия не могла иметь за собой естественную природу, как допустим гололёд зимой 2013-2014 года. Многие тундровики даже высказывают предположение, что эта эпидемия была вызвана властью искусственно, чтобы систематично уменьшить поголовье ямальных оленей и освободить территории традиционного проживания оленеводов для работ газодобывающей промышленности.

Данный пример о том, как люди рассказывают и умалчивают свои рассказы, отличается от приведенных выше примеров. Природа молчания здесь вполне понятна: народ боится критиковать и обвинять представителей власти. Особенно, если у них нет веских доказательств, чтобы подтвердить свои предположения.

У оленеводов нет возможности застраховать оленей от воздействий и последствий природных и антропогенных факторов. Исторически сложившиеся традиционные механизмы страхования оленей за счет человеческого фактора, как взаимопомощь и выручка оленями, в настоящее время не актуальны. Рыболовство и торговля рыбой на Ямале запрещены, а это было всегда главной формой страхования оленей и основой для приобретения оленей после падежа и эпидемий. Кроме того, оленеводы-ненцы являются самой бедной и незащищённой группой населения ЯНАО. Они уязвимы не только перед силами природы, но незащищены перед органами местной власти и мощью государства, в интересах которого идёт увеличение добычи углеводородных запасов. Поэтому оленеводы защищают себя только молчанием.

### ***Выводы***

Данная работа об устной и умалчиваемой истории посвящена описанию особенностей повествования устных рассказов ямальных ненцев. Собранные во время работы устные рассказы о событиях прошлого, о жизни людей, личные песни, являются культурным нематериальным наследием ненцев об их прошлом. Эти рассказы формируют коллективную историческую память ненецкого народа. Следует отметить, что устные рассказы не всегда являются прямым отражением событий минувшего прошлого, а только их описанием. Многие устные рассказы забываются, уходят вместе с их владельцами. Хотя, как показало настоящее исследование, в ненецкой культуре память о людях сохраняется в личных песнях, индивидуальных рассказах и в рассказах коллективной памяти народа.

Культура повествования устного рассказа является сравнительно гибким процессом, который подчинён веяниям времени, различным социальным потребностям общества и требованиям политического строя страны. Многие устные рассказы, в том числе и личные рассказы, могут искажаться, умалчиваться и интерпретироваться в зависимости от требований времени и общества. Иногда рассказы людей могут умалчивать трагические воспоминания о прошлом, которые считают излишними для запоминания и передачи молодому поколению ненцев.

Таким образом, данное исследование представило молчание и умалчивание как важную составляющую традиционной культуры повествования устных рассказов ненцев, в которых оно представлено как: 1) общее знание, сформированное религиозными и повседневными нормами поведения в тундре, 2) помогающее не только помнить, но и забывать прошлое; и 3) быть средством защиты от представителей власти и государства.

## Ненэй вадавна падвы резюме

### Тэдва" вадава" сэр" хой' ня' танэйнаць: Ямал' тер" вадэ" мы иле" мя"

Роза Лаптэй' падвы, Университет Лапландии, Рованиеми, Финляндия

Ненэй ненэцяҗэ" Россия яханана" толырто' тянэ' ненэцяҗгат сямьхат җока". Пыдо' җано' хан" яхат' тавысо' ё" поҗгана иле". Ненэй ненэцие тенз" Нюдя яхана, Җарка яхана иле". Ямал, Тасу' я җани' ненэй ненэцие' я". Ненэй ненэця" хой' няна, выҗгана, пэдрахана, пэхэ" на" иле". Танянандо' пыдо' ты пэрҗа", ёрҗа". Хардахана ненэй ненэця" җани' иле".

Тюку падвы падар" ми Ямал' ненэй ненэцие" иле" ми" нямна җа. Ханзер" ненэця" иле" мидо' вадэ" җа", җамгэ нямна лахана", җамгэм' ни" вадесь, мунзипой' хаеби".

Хибяри ненэця' тэнз" я' тигэвна харта иле" мяда тания. *Я' мидыхы иле" мя, невыхы иле" мя, тыхакуй иле" мя, тальцуй иле" мя* тад тикахад *едэй иле" мя* – тикы мал *ненэцие иле" мя' тэнз*".

Хари сё" ненэцие' иле" ми" җани' вадесь пир" сдо'. Теда' тюку едэй илҗгана хари' сё җояк' мэта". Хынота ненэць" теда' сабе тянэ. Ханяҗы" ненэця" невхы иле" ми лаханакодрев' мэцитыдо'. Харто' ненэцие' нюби, иле" мидо' тензебтемби", нюхото' тамна тыха' вадэ" ядо'.

Падвэни' няби пеляхана ханзер' иле" ми ма" ламбсын, хибяхат, ханяд', сяха' падсын. Тамна вадэ" эв ханзер' ненэцие" иле" ми падарт' тасласын. Тикы' хавна, мунзява' нямна җани' паднадм'. Ханзер' ненэця" сэхрана ненэцяҗг' иле" мидо' вадэ" җа", җамгэ' нямна мунзя пэрциты". Җарка ненэця" җацкэхэто' иле" мидо' тасламба вадесь пэрҗадо'. Тикы хавна, нито' иле" ми хараси" вунидо' вадес". Ханяҗы" ненэця" иле" мидо' ненэй' вадавна вадэ" ядо', няби" – луца' вадавна.

Манзаяни няхарамдэй' пеля мунзява нямна җа. Мунзи", мунзипой', вадам' нись мэс" - тикы вада" җани' лаханава нямна җа". Я' тигэвна ненэця" невыхы', тальцуй', едэй' иле" мидо' хуркаривна вадесь пэрҗадо'. Җадьбьанда, хуркари" иле" ми тания". Мань тарем' тасламбив: 1) хусувэй хибя харта иле" мямда ватонда сер", ханзер' ихинда ха" мы", тарем' вадетада; 2) тарем' җод хибяри ненэць' иле" мида Җарханда вунида вадэ", җамгэхэв' пелямда мунзи" хае җани' пир" җада; 3) тад' тикахад, ненэця мысыта тарця, ханяҗы иле" мямда тосарка вадесь тир" җада.

Падвэни' тетюмдэй' пеляда ненэцие сё" нямна җа. Хари' сё" месури' сертабада" ни" җа". Хари' сё" тикы" ненэця' иле" мя". Ты" талебада" невэхэна җули" җока"

җэвы". Пыдо' мале җока ненэцие" ты" ханавы". Тарем' җод' хусувэй хибя ты" талей вуни" җа". Ты" тарава' мальҗгана, ненэц' ханя' тым' хана". Наны Хороля' сём' Җацымбой Сэротэтто мэ' җадась. Тикы ненэця' иле" мям' пыда җани' ваде" эдась. Җацымбой вэсако тарем' мась: Невэхэна Наны Хороля яв' тяханяд' ненэцие" ты хунтавы. Тамальҗгана җока ненэця" маҗгба илевы". Тыдо' тынэ җэвы. Җобҗгуна Наны Хороля, Юрибей' тер, Таси няд няхар" ю" тым' талевы. Яханда танавыда.

Няби иле" мя Сылка Сядэй' нямна җа. Пыдо' ненэцие' тыто' е" эмня хадабавы". Ненэця" Сылка Сядэй' пилю" мыдо'. Сейто' хэсь, тикы ненэцие" нидунзь вадес". Тикы хавна, совет" мальҗгана җока ненэцие" ты" ханавы". Тикым' хусувэй хибяри" теневы, тамальҗга җока ненэця сей хэвы. Җадабята җарка ненэця" тикым сабе нидо' вадес".

Сямлянзимдей' пеляхана халяндана" Пуйко" нямна паднадм'. Пыдо' Неро яв' тер". Танянда' харто' хардадо' таниявы: Пуйко' харад. Пыдо' тикы я' тер". Тарем' җод, тикы еркарм' мэта ненэця" Юрибей' няна' җани' тания". Пыдо' невхэна Неро яв' няд' мюсе товы". Җобҗгуна Пуйко" явняна ёрмы", ханевы". Җаномдо' яв' и" ханавэда. Ёрты" хасава" мал' хавы". Мято' тер" евакоҗэ хаёвы". Неро' яв' няю' пуны' хэсь тыдо' яҗговы. Тенд' Юрибэй' няна иле". Едэйвана я' индадм' нэкалпада" пициц', еся сехэрым' сертабада" манзарана" Юрибей' хэвхы ё" мал' нёхоло" мыдо'. Халя сусавы. Нядэна" ненэця" луци' ервха" хэвы". Ям' тахабтава' няю', халы' сусавы' няю' нядаҗгобцыам' хамы". Луци вадидо' намдавыдо'. Ханяҗы ненэцяҗг' еся җано' мотор" ми"мы". Тикы ненэцие" поҗгана Пуйкон' җани' моторм' ми"мы". Пыдо' җани' Юрибей' тер" ни"им' җа". Юрибей' тер" ненэця" нензямы". Тарем' мамы": Пуйко" ненэйвана Неро яв' тер". Тарем' Юрибейняна иленя" невхы Пуйко" иле" мям' җани' вадець пяйдо'. Җенэйвана тикы иле" мям' теневана" ненэця яҗгу". Тикы иле" мям' ненэця" сабе сававна ехэрадо'.

Падвэни матдамдей' пеляда салаба по' нямна җа. Тикахана паднам' ханзер' ненэця" салаба пом' вадёҗа". Тад тикахад, ненэй ненэця" едэй поса хабця' нямна ни лахан", мунзи". Җабцата җод, ненэй ненэця" луци" мальҗгана мунзя' пэрҗа". Тикы Совет' мальҗгэхэт' тохолавы мэсы": Луцан' пуны' лахана ни серос", мунзя тара"! Тюку тенд' ненэй ненэця" луци' вато' сер" иле". Пуны' лахана сейдо' пина".

Книгани' пудана пеля хусавэй падвэми җобт' тасламбида: ханзер' ненэця" ханяҗы иле" мидо' мунзи', вадам' нись мэс" хаебидо', пуна юрыбидо'. Ненэй ненэця сава иле" миридо' пон' тенейдо', тарем' ненэцяҗг', җацекэхэ" вадё"ядо'.

# Appendix

## Chapter 4

*Text 1. Nany' syo*

Nenets text and Russian translation

### Nenets

Наны' сё.

Тики ябе вадида ни"им џа".

Ти џынив".

1) Хобам' хано"мов.

Хано"ма-а.

Хубта я нэй', пон' нэй,

Вэва џэвысей.

џэвысей.

2) Няхар" юд"џэй, хабта-џэй"

Хабм' вадарџэй.

3) Синяџы'-џэй хабто"-џэй"

Иры яляхана. Яляхана.

џоб' хана"нися-нэй'. џобэй'.

4) Пэвдяхана сырасавэй салмамэйм'.

Нивэв хамада".

Хамада".

Сей хэсь, самляџг хабтарков

Нидум" леркабто', леркабта".

5) Харван' ханми сидя ян' лекэй'.

Лекаей'.

џули' паромба хан' хоба' сидя ха сивня'.

Сивня'.

Сам' сыџа"дэйм'. Сыџа"дм'.

Тики самляџг хабтаркини сававна

сярынэй. Сярынэй.

### Russian

Это личная песня Наны.

Про это он рассказывал, когда был выпившим.

Вот так ведь.

1) Езда на оленьей шкуре как на нарте, на шкуре езда.

В далекую сторону долгой была.

Дорога эта нелёгкая была.

Была такая.

2) Тридцать оленей-хабтов

Хабтов увел я за привязь с собой.

3) Пасущихся за чумом быков

При свете луны, при лунном свете

Я увел их всех, увел их.

4) Только в темноте не заметил я

дерево сухое, торчащее из-под снега.

Не заметил я, не заметил его.

Испугавшись его, мои пять хабтарок

Отпрянули в сторону, отпрянули.

5) Ударившись об сухую лиственницу, моя нарта сломалась пополам.

Пополам.

Очень быстро через две ушные

дырки шкуры оленьей. Через дыры.

Просунул я упряжь оленью.

Просунул я.

Своих пять хабтарок я хорошо

привязал. Привязал я их.

6) Пыхыдахани' няхар"ю хабтм'  
сававна сяр"нисянав".

7) Сямляґг хабтаркини' пиня'  
пидеянэй, пидеянэй.  
Пидеян.

8) Мань ихинан-ґэ́й мадам-ґэ́й:  
«Сыра салаґэй, салаґэй.  
Ю" тасиняґы тюковна тобто'.  
Тобтов".  
Нед" ґэдата"! ґэдата"!

9) Юр" тасиняґы нибнанд ґэдата-ґэ́й.  
Хуна мальґганэй ханаґэй.  
Ханадормаґэ сито' мэтадэйм'.  
Мэтадэйм'».

10) Сяха ю" тасиняґы тёр" ґадимэй.  
Намдамэй:  
«Талерта пасы'нёв, пасы'ню.  
Сит ня"амгувов"!».

11) ґамгы пиркана марнадо'  
ґадимэйю  
ґадимэй. Мунм' намдамэй-эй.  
Тарем' мамондов:  
«Сырасавэй салм' нивэв манэсэй'.  
Манэсэй»  
Под пуд' хано-нов".  
ґоб' тахараґэй-эй"».

Няхарто' ґэвысей, ґэвысей.  
Паридесэй хаиґэй".

12) Тенд' хаедэйм', хаедэйм'.  
Халэв' седанэй', седанэй  
Хараси' тэвывэй".  
Тэвыв".  
Ти.

6) К поясу своему я привязал веревку,  
к которой были привязаны 30  
быков- хабтов.

7) Пять хабторок я вперед погнал.  
Погнал я.  
Понукнул их ехать вперёд.

8) Про себя я подумал:  
«Старое дерево, дерево, слушай.  
Когда здесь 10 ниже-тазовских  
оленоводо́в проедут. Проедут тут.  
Не пропускай их, не пропусти их!

9) Если ты их не пропустишь, если не  
пустишь.  
Тогда тебе в жертву.  
Жертвой тебе их приношу.  
Приношу».

10) Когда я услышал крики нижних  
ненцев. Услышал я.  
«Ах ты вор несчастный, сукин сын!  
Мы сейчас схватим тебя!».

11) Через какое-то время я услышал  
шум,  
Услышал я, шум услышал я.  
Так сказал кто-то:  
«Не увидел я это заснеженное старое  
дерево. Не увидел.  
Нарты об него.  
Все нарты сломались».

Трое, оказывается, было их, кто  
уцелел.  
Как черные точки они остались  
позади.

12) Так я поехал дальше, поехал я.  
До сопки Халев седа, до сопки  
Без приключений доехал.  
Доехал я.  
Вот и всё.

## Story of the song

А.С.: Халэв' сэдахана, туюкохона илесь.  
Софья (жена): Морадэхэна, туюкохана  
иле"нисяв.

А.С.: Тика тыта е"эмня Һамгы хун'ян'!  
С.: Я'техэ.

А.С.: Счита́й, Хале́в' сэда́н' ся"ня  
теву́гу" тыда' ёховэр.  
Пунахав' се́да ханхат хандамда хувы  
ҺэванҺгаб́я. Харта ивнянда харта  
иле"мямда сочи́няйда́ва.  
А.: Тикири́хина хоба хан'ни́ня хунвы́кы.  
С.: Яв' ма́рахана иле́ць. Нене́ця" се́мда  
тенева́ду́ню".  
Сян' по Һэ́нгу? Юр" по тыхана тики  
иле"мя Һэ́выкы?  
А.С.: Тики иле"мя ся"ны Һэ́выкы.  
Р.: Һоб не́выкы вуні' Һа"?  
А.С.: Һоб' не́вэхэв ни Һа'. Тайку́й,  
Һэва́нда лы Һа́диню".

С.: Һари' танда́я яҺгу́мась.

А.С.: Халме́р Һэ́вада...

С.: Не ню́да та́ндая...

Р.: Не ню́да хи́б́я?

А.С.: Не ню́да Ня́ку Пу́йко пу́хуця.  
Пу́хуцяда та́нясь. Тики Һа́цекы́та не́б́ям'  
ме́ва́нда не́рня.

Р.: Ня́ку Пу́йко, тики та́кы ха́рдахана  
илена?

С.: Ни́Һо'.

А.С.: Ха́рдахана ни иле". Һа! Тики си"ми  
таба́дамба́вы Пу́йкоми. Тики пу́хуця́Һэ  
та́рась На́ны' не ню́. Не ню́да, не́ры ты  
та́левэ́нд.

На Халэв се́да жили они здесь.  
Жил же он здесь, на Морды́ яха.

Только оленей воровать ездил так  
далеко.  
За три́десять зе́мель.

Счита́й, на Хале́в се́да никто и не  
будет и́скать укра́денных оле́ней.  
Потом-то он взял, наве́рное,  
на́рту у оста́вленных возле со́пки  
на́рт. Сам сочи́нил пе́сню о сво́их  
при́ключе́ниях.

Как он смог убе́жать на оле́нейей  
шку́ре.

На бе́регу мо́ря они жи́ли. Лю́ди  
же зна́ют его пе́сню.

Ско́лько ле́т про́шло. Мо́жет это  
слу́чилось сто ле́т наза́д?

Мы не зна́ем, ко́гда э́та исто́рия  
прои́зошла.

Она́ же не та́кая ста́рая исто́рия?  
Не́т, она́ не та́к да́вно прои́зошла.  
Вон, че́реп э́того че́ловека е́щё  
це́лый на зе́мле ле́жит.

Не та́к да́вно он уме́р.

Его́ че́реп...

До́чь у не́го е́сть...

Кто́ его до́чь?

До́чь его́ же́на Ня́ку Пу́йко. Же́на у  
не́го бы́ла. До то́го, ка́к он же́нился  
на ма́тери сво́их де́тей.

Э́то у те́х Пу́йко, ко́торые в  
посе́лке жи́вут?

Не́т.

Они́ не жи́вут в посе́лке. Да! Э́то  
у то́го Пу́йко, ко́торый ме́ня учи́л.  
Же́на его́ бы́ла до́щерью На́ны.  
До́чь то́го, кто украс оле́ней.

5.Р.: Тика тикы Няко ханяна мэбто’.

А.С.: Няко? Нюдяко Пуйко, тика  
Пуйко Лёва нябиюм’ нюда.

Р.: Тикы Марады яха’ тер”, тюкохона  
иле”на”?

А.С.: Тедахав Юрибейм’ та”ля’  
маторцитыдо’. Та ханяна хантакы”.

К.: Ясавэй’ тохо тэворҥа”. Тика  
Юрибэйхана ҥани’ Пуйко танияциню”.

А.С.: А, Пуйко? Тикахабид Мяҥгаля’  
ню”.

Эти Няко Пуйко где сейчас?

Няко? Это Нюдяко Пуйко, другой  
сын у него Пуйко Лёва.

Они на Морды Яха или здесь  
живут?

Иногда они Юрибей здесь  
переваливают. Иногда летом  
проезжают.

На озере Ясавэй бывают. А на  
Юрибее же тоже Пуйко есть.

А, те Пуйко? Они же дети  
Маҥгаля.



*Reindeer herders: children and neighbours of Achamboy Serotetto. Photo. Roza Laptander.*

Russian translation of the interview with Seko Lamdo

Q: Расскажи, как тебя зовут.

Сeko: Моя фамилия Лаптандер. По-ненецки зовут меня Сэко. Я выпрошенный, вымоленный ребёнок (Мань Сэк”мы нем’). Мать моя три года просила меня. Поэтому дед мой сказал, назовём её так. Дед мой Хаҗота умел давать имена людям. Дед женил моего отца, когда ему было 17, матери было 30. Это мой дед. Это у моего отца отец. Значит, он будет мой дедушка. Он тоже отсюда родом. Раньше этот старик был сыном второй жены своего отца. Жены эти ссорились, поэтому их муж решил оставить вторую жену в лесу. Еды оставил только оленью лопатку. С ребёнком её там оставил. Мол, поmrёте, так поmrёте. Еда у них закончилась, наступила весна. Хановэй (ястреб) поймал гуся. Так женщина сварила эту птицу в баночке. У неё даже котла не было. Поели они этого бульона и пошли искать людей. Всё лето шли, ни одного чума не нашли. Осень наступила. Раньше люди мало кочевали. Если ездили на Обь рыбачить, то всегда вместе ездили. Эта старуха пошла в сторону Салехарда. Где ребёнка несёт, где он сам идёт ногами. Он тогда был ещё маленький. Ладно, оставим это. Эта женщина пришла к Сядаям. К тем, которых называли Ужасными Сядаями (Ңылика Сядэй). Они зашли в крайний чум. Голодные были. Женщина из крайнего чума быстро поставила котёл.

«Ой, ой, ты пришла в плохое место. Отсюда ты живой не уйдёшь. Пока тут отдыхайте, я сварю котёл. Тут недавно приезжал человек на собачьей упряжке, пойдите по его следу. С ребёнком уходи отсюда. Пока ночью вас никто не увидит. Будете в темноте идти. У этого человека, который на собачьей упряжке приехал, не знаю куда дели собак. Эти Ужасные Сядаи тем ужасны, что они убили этого ханта. Пусть не будет сказано мной (Нея вадаялу”). Пусть не я говорила этого. По его следу пойдёте, потом скажешь, что его убили, а то они будут ещё искать его. По его следу пойдёшь, там у них деревянные дома. Там ханты живут. Этот хант по приезжал к нам просить мяса».

Вот они поели. Женщина показала им, куда надо идти.

«Потом не скрывай, расскажи, как тебя бросили в тундру. Всё расскажи. В Салехард твои соплеменники приезжают. Найдёшь в Салехарде где жить. Будешь работать. Без работы не будешь жить».

И вот они с Хаҗота взяли немного еды и пошли. Видать это было далеко. Пока шли, начало светать. Всю ночь шли, пришли в поселение хантов. Хаби’ Таҗоча – так называлось поселение. Если они идут в Салехард, значит, это был Горно князевск. Ей говорят, вот, мол, тут недалеко Сядаи богатые стоят. У нас один пошёл к ним. Как же их звали. Песня ещё была, я уже забывать стала.

Начь Садай Папа Мурси нябако. Не знаю, кого как звали. Это песня сестры Сядаев. Ладно, пусть так будет. От них она пошла дальше. Сказала им, что того ханта Сядаи убили. Ханты показали ей, куда надо идти.

«Тут пойдешь, Салехард недалеко отсюда. Перейдешь Обь (Неру ямб сябтер” мадаир”). Дороги туда есть. В Салехард много народу ездит».

Как ей сказали, так она и пошла. Пришла в Салехард. На окраине города нашла где жить. Там они хорошо поели, стали хорошо жить. Рассказывали, что эта женщина была Окотэтто Ханями. Наверное, её звали Хань, пусть так будет. *Нохо”седа нися нив уа”*. Это отец её был, его дочерью она была (значит, девичья фамилия у неё была Ного – Р.Л.). Между делом она рассказала, как её бросил муж, хоть и сама пошла за него замуж. Она была второй женой у мужа. Старшая жена мужа, её же старшая сестра, не терпела её. Это она сказала мужу бросить эту женщину с маленьким ребёнком в лесу. Хаҗота – это мальчик, наш дед. У Хаҗоты отца имя забыла я. А, Хылто его звали. У Хылто от старшей жены было много детей.

## Text 2 b

Interview with Vladimir Khudi in Nenets, translated into Russian

*Мурси танясь.*

*Ѓоб” невыхы иле”мя.*

*Парангоди мальнгы.*

Был такой Мурси.

Это старинная история.

Ещё во времена царя было это.

## Text 3

Interview with Khauly Laptander in Nenets, translated into Russian

*Салиндеры, Лаптандеры, Ного, Вылка - нгани’ Лаптандер”. Сядэй – нгани’ Лаптандер” нгыниим”. Нгапой тэнзду, нгапой ненэчангэ толы”. Невыхы похона сваты не дают. Нем нин мэngu. Садэйхат, Вылкахат сват нгэдарамба ни тара”.*

Салиндеры, Лаптандеры, Ного, Вылка – они все Лаптандеры. Фамилия Сядэй – тоже к Лаптандерам относиться. Они все одного рода, одного происхождения. В старину им свататься нельзя было. Не женились. Сядэи не могли отправить свата к Вылкам.

Нэвыхы ненэча” талер”ниим”. Хлеб  
нету. Посёлкар Һамгы Һэвна. Талэрць  
пэрниим” невыхы ненэча”. Хибя нянда  
тым’ талеҗу, Һани хуҗу”. По талейма”,  
хусувэй ненэчие ты’ талеби”ма.  
Масьядума мале.

Граница вуни тая”.  
Нисяда хаява, хунба.

Нисяда Печёра тяхад тувы. Мань  
нисяни’ нися. Ну, нисяда ты талевы.

Пунахав’ тикыда ха”. Несэй талей  
тавыдо’, ты”. Сава илена ты” талё”. Тикы  
талей” хэвня’ хая”. Тым’ талеҗудо’,  
Һанисэй ненэчан’ митыдо’.

*Ма”ниим: «Ямдад”! Пэ’ тяха’ ханяхав”.*  
*Сит ни” хунггу”!»*

*Талевэдо’ янгуа то” лаха. Һоб” тикы*  
*Хара яха’ ядэрта ненэча”. Твенама”!*  
*Мэбэта” ненэча”!*

«Хунад”, хунад”. Тюкохона нён мы”. Пэ’  
тяха’, Пёчора’ тяха хань”!  
Печора тяхана хибя хуҗуда, сян’  
малтаҗу”. Ты” талевэда яҗу, ты  
талевэраха’ вуни’ Һэҗу”».  
Һобтикы Хара яха ня’ ядэртниим’.  
Пэ’ тяха’.

В старину было много воров,  
которые угоняли оленей. Хлеба  
не было. Поселков, где можно  
было бы отовариться, тоже не  
было. Поэтому в старину угоняли  
оленей. Годами крали оленей, у  
любого могли украсть. Они же были  
профессиональными ворами.

Границ не было. Вот так наш прадед  
приехал сюда в Приуральский район  
с двумя сыновьями.

Раньше его отец жил за рекой  
Печора, что в Коми республике.  
У моего отца отец. Ну, отец у него  
украл оленей.

Они у него потом погибли. Потом  
другие воры украли оленей у богатых  
оленоводо́в. Они воровали оленей и  
отдавали их другим.

Эти люди сказали: «Беги отсюда! За  
Уральские горы куда-нибудь. Там тебя  
никто не найдет».

Словно они оленей не воровали. Они  
были жителями реки Кара. Крепкие  
были! Сильные люди!

«Беги, беги куда-нибудь. Не  
оставайся здесь. Иди на земли за  
Печорой,  
За Печорой там тебя не будут искать,  
не найдут. Там никто не подумает, что  
у тебя олени сворованные».  
Они на реку Кара ездили.  
За горы.

*Талей танеситыню". Таледа – таледа  
– хибяхарт җопой нёмда ху". Несэй  
ненэчанд пуна мис"нидум. Тикар пуна  
Печора' тяхана хаява.*

*Мань ирими Пареде – Иван Тэкович  
җэвы. Дедушками Як, Иван Иванович-  
ва. Тарем' тувы ненэча".*

Воры же есть. Своровал так своровал,  
главное, чтобы никто не поймал за  
руку. Потом они отдали этих оленей  
другому ненцу. Потом он уехал за  
Печору.

Мой дед Париде, Иван Тэкович. Деда  
же звали Як, Иван Иванович.  
Так они приехали сюда.



*A Nenets couple from Pauta tundra. Photo Roza Laptander.*

## Chapter 5

### Interview with A. Serotetto about the Puiko family tragedy

С.: Ямидыхы иле”мя.

А.С.: А. Тикахав невыхы иле”мя.

Пыдо-о, тайкуй Морды ня”ав

Карский моря беригавна җанохона

хане тюковна хан”мы”. Тикавахад

тики Байдарацкий губан’ мерця тания

хана”нидав. Танияхав ян’, җаводана,

неҗәдяҗә, тәв”ниим”. Тад тикахад

таняҗы яхад’ та”ля’ пывандо’ җанодо’

тахарнив”. Җани’ мерцан’ ерәвниим”.

Пя җанокочева.

Тикавахана нанондо’ ервота Хэвко

Пуйко. Җанидо’ җамгы” җэвыкы”.

Нява Пуйко, җаркадо’ җэвадю” нив.

Җанидо’ җамгы” җэвыкы”. Җанидо’

Пуйкори җэвы” җэвыкы”. Җобкана

ханаць пәрҗама. Тикахана илена”.

Ты” летамбадидо’ хай”, җанидо’ хане

хы”ниим”. Тарем’ ханевась хэвы”,

ханиим’.

Это древняя история.

Это старинная история. Они по устью Морды яха в Карское море выходили. Однажды их лодку унесло ветром в Байдаратскую губу.

Там их прибило к берегу. Когда они возвращались обратно, то лодка потонула.

Это когда они снова попали в шторм.

Лодка же деревянная.

Тогда лодкой руководил Хэвко

Пуйко. Других не знаю. Нява Пуйко

остался живым. Других не знаю,

кто был там. Может там тоже были

Пуйко. Они тогда всегда вместе

ездили на охоту. Кто рядом жил.

Те, кто сторожил оленей, живыми

остались, остальные во время охоты

погибли. Так погибли их охотники.

### Text 7

#### Nyadma Puiko’s story

Җани’ итя җабтєня икана ха”ма.

*Ханесэйм’ хадаба. Җартим’*

*хадаба. Явняна, итя җамтена няна.*

*Енер”ниим”. Тунихина едпюнидум”.*

Хари сертавы җано”я җәрхавы.

Сиднтет ламбда җэвы. Харту

сертавэду’ җәрхавы.

Другие погибли в море.

Во время охоты. Когда на моржа охотились. В море. Они тогда охотились с ружьём. Из ружья стреляли.

Лодка у них была самодельная.

Восемь весел было. Они сами её сделали.

Тикад пуна тикы ненэця", Һано' тер"  
ха"ма. Тарсе"э! Мерцяда нябиняд'  
то, ян' харе"ма. Итя Һабтенахана'  
паха таниянарха. Итя Һабтена' паха"я.  
ИтняҢы' саля пыя ни'. Тикан'  
харьрархавы". Тикы хавы" ненэця".  
Мал ха"ма. Һаносавэй".

Һаносавэй тикан' харьрархавы".  
Нисяни' ня Һопойри тикахана  
мэрхавы. Һанидо' Һанисей ненэча"ма.  
8-9 ненэця Һэвы ни Һа". Тикад' тиҢэ,  
тэри тарем' илевы" Һэдараха". Мюсе  
то"ма" тания', Һаносавэй.

Потом все люди на лодке погибли.  
Вот как! Ветер с другой стороны  
подул, и их прибило к берегу. Там  
бухта была. Залив морской. Как  
мыс был. Их туда прибило. Этих  
погибших людей. Все они погибли.  
Кто в лодке был.

С лодкой их выбросило на берег.  
У отца был там только один брат.  
Другие были не из нашей семьи.  
Всего их было 8-9 человек. Ну  
вот, как жили раньше. Они же  
прикочевали туда на оленях, с лодкой.

## Chapter 6

### Text 1

#### Interview with reindeer herder Nikolai Yaptik

*Если по-русски сказать, олени сегодня есть, Ыюпой ураган тута, мерця хад – тэр яҕу. Хуняна эту голову не знаешь куда сунуть, этих детей, этих собак. Харт ихинанд мандан, хад ҕэя, тэхэни” хэхэмэ. Хуняна ҕамгым’ хуҕгум’*

*Больше нечего найти в тундре, кроме оленей. Тыд’ хая”, все, мят” тер’ня” тикан’ хан”. Хаҕгун’, хась тамна пирь”ы.*

*Тэр нум’ мерцараха. Теда’ луца сёхона манзитыню”: «Денежки как вода». Тэр ҕани’ тарця, харт нид лэтамбаҕу” - всё, мал” тикы ян’ ха”.*

Если по-русски сказать, олени сегодня есть, потом налетит ураган, пурга – оленей уже нет. Завтра не знаешь куда голову сунуть, этих детей, этих собак.

Поэтому даже в сильную пургу идёшь к оленям. Так, как только от них живёшь.

Больше нет нечего в тундре, кроме оленей. Олени погибнут, то всё, ты без них со всей своей семьёй пропадёшь. Помрёшь, умереть можно.

Олени – они словно ветер небесный. Вот русские поют же: «Денежки как вода». Олени такие же, если сам не присмотришь за ними – всё, на том же месте погибнут.

### Text 6

#### Interview with Alexander Serotetto about the Yamal reindeer herding

Мы сейчас построили убойные пункты. Значит люди сдают своих оленей на доходы. Дальше как будет? Мы так думаем, если субсидировать будут больше на закуп мяса, то думаю, что оленей ещё уменьшится. Почему? Так как, чем меньше цена, тем больше наращивают оленей, чтобы доход был. Если цена выше будет, то олени тоже сократятся. Оленеводу не надо много оленей. Если один олень будет 10 -20 тысяч рублей, то ещё больше сократится (поголовье), мы тогда к этому будем идти. Я потому и говорю так, что в Советском Союзе не было потребности иметь много оленей. Если оленей сдал, то считай, что нормальные деньги получил. Мы же от этого отошли, но сейчас идем к тому хорошему, что было при Советском Союзе.

Interview with Julia Puiko (Wylko)

*Мы живем Салемальской тундре. Возле реки Хаде"теэ. Летом живем в Пуйко. Осенью в Воронках. Это 24 км от нашего чума. Там стоят два чума. Живем рядом с родителями мужа. Дедушка Пуйко живет со своими детьми тоже там. А у нас отдельный чум. У меня пятеро детей.*

*Муж рыбачит на рыбзаводе недалеко от Пуйко. Ловит щуку, налима, ерша, язя. Это чёрная рыба, поэтому дешёвая. На белую рыбу рыбачить нельзя, хотя она стоит дороже. Щёкур попадает, но это редко. Ну, у мужа зарплата летом только, а зимой нету. Если он рыбы мало поймал, то и зарплата у него маленькая. Зимой зарплата у него не идёт. Зимой... живём на детские и кочевые (смеётся). Тогда мы в долг отовариваемся. Потом денежку получаем и отдаём. И потом опять в долг на месяц вперёд. Получается, что мы постоянно в долгах. Только летом у мужа есть зарплата. Тогда есть наличка и можно за всё платить сразу...*