

## Antropologicheskii Forum # 2

### **Forum: The Research Object and the Subjectivity of the Researcher**

The issue raised in the questionnaire touches on the very fundamentals of knowledge. Objectivity of data has been long associated with scientific and scholarly procedure, understood as an opportunity to prove them in an analogous context. At the same time any translation of fragments of observed reality into the language of scientific symbols would bear signs of its author's identity. In anthropology, scrutiny of the relations between the subjectivity/analytical perspective of the researcher, and the objects of his or her research (informants) has generated two different types of reflexivity. On the one hand, attention is paid to the role of informants, and to the fact that these may adopt an active position in the representation of their culture. On the other hand, interest is provoked by the position of researchers as the bearers of cultural stereotypes, analytical preconceptions, and discursive strategies. According to such perceptions, an anthropological study can be imagined as the result of a dialogue, with each of the sides correcting the information flow in its own way. Ethnographers, historians, folklorists, and linguists of different generations and scientific traditions took part in the discussion.

## Articles

*Stephen Lovell.* Leisure in Russia: Free Time and Its Uses

This article is devoted to the practices of urban everyday life in Russia of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, mainly in order to understand the idea of “recreational” or “free time” (time free of work and civil service), as well as the way it was structured. The emergence of “leisure” is considered in connection with a shift away from a feudal structure of society to the emerging capitalist model.

*Yuri Berezkin.* The Black Dog at the River of Tears: Some Amerindian Representations of the Passage to the Land of the Dead and their Eurasian Roots

The article reviews beliefs about a dog as a conductor of souls into the world of the dead, a guard or owner of this world, that exists in the Old and New Worlds. Chronologically, the taming of dogs in Eurasia marginally precedes settlement in America, and all American domestic dogs come from the Eurasian wolf, therefore the area of beliefs about an otherworldly dog may reflect certain migratory episodes connected to the arrival of men into the New World. In America these beliefs basically characterize Alaska, the East USA and Canada and Central America (Mexico — Peru). The motif is frequently combined with the motif of the rivers of blood, tears, etc., separating the people’s world from the other world. In America this complex of beliefs has Siberian, not East Asian roots. The representation of an otherworldly dog in the Melanesian area is obviously not connected with the Eurasian-American one.

*Dmitry Baranov.* On Objects and their Images: Some Principles of Semanticization in Russian Riddles and Rituals

The article analyzes the mechanisms of semanticizing the “natural” properties of a thing in culture and the connection of practical and symbolical aspects of its being. Extensive opportunities for reconstructing the process of transformation of an object into an image are provided by rituals and riddles that exercise a selectivity of attributes through which the thing is identified. Through ritual and riddle, the author considers the issues of the semanticization and shaping ritual functions of oven utensils.

*Sevir Chernetsov.* Ethiopian Magic Texts

The article is devoted to the Ethiopian manuscript amulets or “magic scrolls”, their origin and function in the Christian tradition of Ethiopia. The texts of Ethiopian amulets are written incantations;

their comparison to other products of magic literature, evangelical plots and apocryphal legends allows us to assume that they did not take place locally and were borrowed through literature from the Near East in the first centuries AD as a part of Christian magic tradition.

*Nikolai Vakhtin.* The Jesup North Pacific Expedition and its Russian participants

The article deals with the Jesup expedition: its preparation, ideas and plans to study the indigenous people of the Far North. The paper is based on archive data, primarily on a collection of letters of participants and organizers of the expedition. Special attention is paid to the Russian part of the history of the expedition, which had been insufficiently studied, and its key figures — V.I. Iohelson, V.G. Bogoraz and L.J. Shternberg.

### **Readings in Honour of D.K. Zelenin**

*Aleksandr Liarsky.* School Superstitions at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: The Perspective of Adults

The article introduces new sources for the history of school folklore around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It contains information on omens, divination and the magic rituals of Russian schoolboys, a description of how these phenomena were interpreted by adult researchers and memoirists, and also an analysis of some features of the interaction between the conventional “adult world” and “children’s world” during the specified period.

*Inna Veselova.* The Rag Paradigm or “In *ripki* we were born, in *ripki* we lived, in *ripki* we will die”

Something which is seldom regarded as an object of research by anthropologists is “ripki” or rags — textile pieces of various forms, sizes and, most importantly, ages. The article, based on data from the Folklore archive of the department of philology of St. Petersburg State University (Vologda collection) reconstructs the semantic and functional connections of these ordinary-looking or, on the contrary, bright items (*ripki*, *liapak*, tapes, rags, handkerchiefs, old textiles). The paradigm of the items in question is represented by a set of stereotypical situations in which the syntagmatic, semantic and pragmatic opportunities of the thing become apparent. Metonymic and metaphorical paradigms are constructed as a result of the analysis of rituals, practices and narratives which include manipulations of these items or references to them. The metonymic paradigm is part of the subject (in rituals of separating noxious subjects — getting rid

of items which have been in contact with a dead man in funeral rituals); the metaphorical paradigm concerns physical properties. This includes the item absorbing (tears) to accept melancholy (in the ritual of getting rid of melancholy), decaying or losing colour (time of decay — time of memory in recruitment rituals), its physical properties (to absorb) and colour (of absorbed substances): a ribbon as a sign of menstrual blood (the right to put on a ribbon from the moment of physiological maturing) and a symbol of the maturity of a “red girl” in the period before marriage (ribbons, tied by girls on “*vereteshki*” and harrows on Christmastide for “*shulikuny*” — male demons). Textiles with red spots or made of red material are a symbol of defloration blood (on shirts hung out after the wedding night) and a sign of the bride’s honesty on the second day of the wedding (red ribbons as gifts for a fair wife). The items can be manipulated in different ways: they can be put on = to include (dressing a newborn in the father’s shirt as an inclusion ritual); they can be tied = to connect (*zalomki* — “for memory” about living relations). The remaking and redistribution of textiles is part of the cycle of “*dolya*” and achievement in traditional female vital strategies.

*Elena Liarskaya*. Female Taboos and the Nenets System of Concepts of the Unclean

The article, based on analysis of ethnographic literature and the author’s own field data, raises the question of the place of the interdictions existing in the Nenets culture which regulate women’s behaviour. The author argues that these interdictions should not be considered separately, but as a part of a single complex of beliefs about the unclean which occupies a central role in the Nenets culture.

*Izaly Zemtsovsky*. Genre-Performance Doubles in Russian Epic Tradition

The article applies the concept of genre-performance doubles to study of the Russian epic tradition. The author marks out three levels of epic consciousness and three initial genre-performance versions: the court epic, the *skomorokh* epic and the folkloric epic; the heritage of Kirsha Danilov represents the fourth, personified version. According to this and taking into account the known forms of Russian epic songs, it is possible to assume the existence of four basic genre-performance doubles of the Russian epic. The author shows that the concept of genre-performance doubles allows the characterization of the system of epic genres as a whole in a new way, including their poetics.

### Materials from expeditions

*Maria Akhmetova, Mikhail Lurye.* Field Materials from Bologoe, 2004

The publication presents data from inter-university expeditions in Bologoe, Tver region. It includes stories about the origin of the name of town and the local norm of its declension, details about the enterprise forming a company town — the railway, and also historical events that are important for the cultural memory of Bologoe citizens (the fire of 1913, the railway accident of 1988).

### Reviews

The section contains three reviews: Jeanne Kormina's review of K.L. Bannikov's book *Antropologia ekstremal'nykh grupp [The Anthropology of Extremist Groups]* (Moscow, 2002), which is devoted to an ethnographic study of the modern Russian army. The reviewer mentions the importance of the topic chosen by the author and indicates the methodological weakness of the book. Arina Tarabukina's review of A.A. Panchenko's book *Khristovshchina i skopchestvo [The Christ Faith and the Auto-Castrators]* (Moscow, 2002), which is devoted to the research of ritual practices, folklore and historical and cultural contexts of two religious movements of the 18th-early of 19th century. The reviewer mentions the great importance of the methodological conclusions of the author for the research of religious folklore and the value of his field data. Nikolai Vakhtin reviews Peter Schweitzer's dissertation *Siberia and Anthropology: National Traditions and Transnational Moments in the History of Research* (Vienna, 2001), which is devoted to the history of anthropological studies of Siberia. The reviewer mentions the persuasiveness of the author's theoretical and analytical approaches, as well as the great value of the presented reference material.

### Personalia

Kirill Vasilievich Chistov is 85

Texts of this section celebrate Kirill Vasilievich Chistov's 85th anniversary, who is one of the leading Russian researchers of Eastern Slavic folklore and culture. The authors — his friends, colleagues and students: Vladimir Kisliakov, Vadim Baevsky, Tatiana Ivanova, Bronislava Kerbelite, Rostislav Kinjalov, Sergey Neklyudov, Yuri Novikov, Irina Razumova — write about the life, scientific and public work of K.V. Chistov, as well as personal meetings and professional contact with him.

### **Publications**

*Nina Krasnodembskaya, Natalia Kudriavtseva.* Familiar voices. Personal correspondence of M.K. Kudriavtsev

In this section Nina Krasnodembskaya and Natalia Kudriavtseva publish the personal correspondence of M.K. Kudriavtsev, who worked at the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography during the Great Patriotic War.

### **Memoirs**

*Elena Ivanova.* About N.A. Butinov

The publication by Elena Ivanova is devoted to a Russian ethnographer specialising in primitiveness, Nikolai Aleksandrovich Butinov, his career in science and his legacy.

### **In memoriam**

*Serge Frantsouzoff.* Sevir Chernetsov: Teacher of Classical Ethiopic

The section contains Serge Frantsouzoff's publication *Sevir Chernetsov: Teacher of Classical Ethiopic*. The author of the obituary shares his memoirs about one of the greatest experts on the Ethiopian Middle Ages S.B. Chernetsov, whom he considers to be his teacher. It refers to episodes of his private life, scientific career and his legacy.