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Reproducing and shifting discourses on indigenous culture: Ethnographic self-descriptions of the Kola Sámi*

M.S. Kuropjatnik

Saint Petersburg State University,
Universitetskaya Nab., 7–9, Saint Petersburg, 199034, Russia
(e-mail: kuropjatnik@bk.ru)

Abstract. The article considers ethnographic self-descriptions as a cultural form in which indigenous authors conceptualise their culture in the shifting social contexts. Ethnographic self-descriptions present (a) the transformation of the oral-discursive practices of indigenous culture into text; (b) the interpretation of the scientific versions of culture by indigenous authors. The author focuses on how Sámi culture is conceptualized in the text and as the written text by Sámi authors, taking into account the scientific descriptions of their culture and non-discursive cultural forms (such as ethnographic collections). In the texts of indigenous authors, anthropological versions of culture become a source for reproducing some patterns of culture's conceptualization as relevant to a particular tradition in social sciences. Thus, ethnographic self-descriptions are interpreted in terms of intertextuality with an emphasis on relations between oral and written discourse, academic and indigenous discourse, discursive and non-discursive practices. Texts as a part of cultural reality or as elements of social events have causal effects which contribute to changes in the perception of Sámi culture and in the ways it is represented in the indigenous perspective, i.e., texts participate in the reproduction, creation and modification of numerous discourses on the Kola Sámi culture. In the ethnographic self-description of many Kola Sámi, 'culture' can be recontextualized by actors. Moreover, positions and identity of the observer (the author) and the observed (indigenous people) are partly connected, which implies a change in the epistemological status of the indigenous discourse. The processual approach to the cultural conceptualization and the focus on indigenous insights presented in the ethnographic self-descriptions constitute the methodological basis for examining some contemporary cultural trends of the Kola Sámi (Russia). The author analyses the published texts of the contemporary Kola Sámi authors, who are not professional anthropologists.

Key words: indigenous culture; Kola Sámi; discourse; ethnographic self-description; text; partial connections

In recent decades, the research focus of social anthropology has shifted from the idea of differentiating cultures (traditional and modern) to the conceptualisation of all cultures as 'hybrid' [29]. According to the processual approach, the major patterns of culture are the result of specific social processes [5. P. 123, 133] and their interpretations by various actors. Since the idea of authenticity is embedded in the

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Western project of modernity [19. P. 15–16; 20. P. 2], the patterns for conceptualizing culture as ‘traditional’, ‘genuine’ or ‘pristine’ are seen as the modern sociocultural interpretations in which the past or models for describing and explaining cultural diversity in social sciences and humanities gain relevance. Thus, “‘traditional’ is not an objective property of phenomena but an assigned meaning” [21. P. 286]. The focus on the indigenous and non-indigenous actors’ role in the permanent production of cultural meanings allows to understand how they constitute the projects of ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’ [17. P. 3–4, 11].

However, the problem is that “hybridity is a genealogy, not a structure... It is an analytic construal of people’s history, not an ethnographic description of their way of life. In their way of life, externalities are indigenized, engaged in local configurations, and become different from what they were” [42. P. 412]. Such cultural forms as ethnographic self-descriptions of the indigenous peoples show how cultural patterns and social practices of different origin, including those related to the past or a particular tradition, are reinterpreted and recontextualized in the present. Ethnographic self-descriptions reflect “a joint production of meanings” [16. P. 88], in which local communities and indigenous authors are always involved. On the one hand, ethnographic self-descriptions imply “the process of self-understanding, the way the community explains itself to itself” [16. P. 88]. On the other hand, they are a reflection by indigenous authors of their culture in the wider historical, cultural and social contexts. In many cases, culture is conceptualized by indigenous authors in terms of cultural authenticity.

Some methodological approaches to the study of indigenous cultures

Today, many indigenous peoples express desire to define their culture, its boundaries and ways it is represented in local, national and global contexts. The desire to define “their own cultural space in the global scheme of things” [42. P. 410] not only constitutes one of the key cultural problems of our time, but also implies a revision of methodological approaches and concepts of social anthropology for the study of indigenous peoples.

Until the 1980s, indigenous peoples were conceptualized as primitive and radical Others in Western countries [20; 41. P. 448–449]. Their involvement in self-determination and self-description leads to a change in the epistemological status of the indigenous discourse. Overcoming the reification of the ethnographic Other is associated with the transformation of the “epistemo-political organization of the discourse of the discipline... in the terms of polarities us/them, self/other, subject/object” [8. P. 32]. This shift in the social-anthropological focus becomes more evident as we realize “the increased interconnectedness of objects and subjects” [39. P.135] in the contemporary. Dichotomous holistic cultures, including those categorized as ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’, can no longer serve as adequate analytical models, which explains why the definition of indigenous

peoples as an object of the study is revised in social anthropology. Today, the epistemological and moral foundations of the conceptualization of indigenous peoples as Others no longer resonate with “our own culture’s most pressing concerns” [41. P. 450].

Indigenous anthropology considers those cultural, political and ethical issues that are central to indigenous peoples [22. P. 210], with a particular regard to epistemology and methodology. M. Strathern notes the increasing reflexivity of those conducting ‘anthropology at home’ and writing texts from the indigenous perspective [43. P. 17–19]. But this perspective of the researcher or ‘tradition bearers’ does not refer to authentic culture, rather to its representations in the context of intercultural and power relations, and can only be partial [23. P. 40; 38. P. 671]. Therefore, the question of “how native is a ‘native’” remains relevant as implying the possibility of consistent representation of the groups with which one is associated [15. P. 8; 38. P. 676–678]. K. Narayan showed the essentializing effect of identification of non-western people as ‘native’ anthropologists, which is possible only if ignoring their complex background. The German-American origin of Narayan’s mother is irrelevant for those who portray her as Indian — ‘native’ — anthropologist [38. P. 671–678]. Moreover, the “narrative transforms ‘informants’ whose chief role is to spew cultural data for the anthropologist into subjects with complex lives and a range of opinions” [38. P. 681].

This trend is relevant in the Sámi research affiliated with indigenous studies [23. P. 210]. For instance, the Kola Sámi researcher A. Afanasieva defines her position as ‘indigenous insider’ or ‘native-born Sámi from Russia’ [2. P. 56], belonging to ‘the same ethnicity’ and sharing ‘the same culture and language’ with her informants. She argues that ethnic identity matters as a way to get a privileged access to data and insights required for the study of her ‘own community’ [2. P. 56]. However, such an ‘anthropology at home’, when the researcher is represented as Sámi, has certain limitations [23. P. 4; 43. P. 31]. While acknowledging her education background as related to ‘both classical Russian and Western academic traditions’, Afanasieva notes that this analytical approach cannot be unambiguously defined in terms of outsider/insider [2. P. 58].

The use of ethnographic self-descriptions as a way for understanding one’s culture, which cannot be reduced to dual structures, is even more interesting — when ethnography is conducted in the social context that produced it. The idea of ‘partial relations’ [45] between different people or groups and inside the same person seems promising. Partial relations imply “that any part of one thing may be also part of something else”; this term also refers “to relations through partition, through cutting out obvious connecting material” [45. P. XXIX]. The subject and the object are also connected by multiple partial relations. Ethnographic self-descriptions imply that the positions and the identity of the observer (the author who describes) and the observed (indigenous people described) are partly connected. Thus, the late 20th century witnessed the transition of anthropology from the plural perception of the

world to a postplural approach [45. P. XVI, XX], implying a new understanding of cultural diversity. Like other ‘post’ concepts (such as postmodern, postnational, postcolonial, postcultural), the term ‘postplural’ introduced by Strathern articulates both continuity and changes. The former image of ‘cultural islands’ with clear borders on ethnographic maps and genealogical schemas representing social forms no longer correspond to a new cultural diversity [45. P. XVI, XX]. “The relativizing effect of multiple perspectives will make everything seem partial; the recurrence of similar propositions and bits of information will make everything seem connected” [45. P. XX]. Strathern introduces the notion ‘multiple perspectives’ to reveal the connections of the “discourses of the ‘observer’ and the ‘observed’” [8. P. 31]. Thus, the postplural perception of diversity implies a shift to the concepts ‘partial relations’ [45. P. XVI, XX].

Ethnographic self-descriptions of the Kola Sámi

Ethnographic self-description is a cultural form in which indigenous authors conceptualize their culture in the shifting social contexts. M.-R. Trouillot argues that “they enter the debate not as academics — or not only as academics — but as situated individuals with rights to historicity. They speak in the first person, signing the argument with an ‘I’ and ‘we’” [50. P. 10]. Texts as a part of cultural reality or elements of social events have causal effects [18. P. 8–9] which contribute to changes in the perception of Sámi culture and in the ways it is represented from the indigenous perspective. According to N. Luhmann, the description in self-description is always a part of what it describes and changes it by the very fact of observation [30. P. 25]. In the ethnographic self-description and self-promotion, in which many Kola Sámi are involved, ‘culture’ can be recontextualized by actors [39. P. 130; 44. P. 3].

In the article, the term ‘text’ refers to written works that present the oral-discursive experience of indigenous culture. In the Sámi contexts, J. Turi (1910) was the first to write in his mother tongue about Sámi life in the native perspective, transforming the oral tradition of storytelling to a written form [12. P. 19, 42; 51]. Critical discourse analysis [18] with the focus on the text as an expression of discourse and as an element of social event [18. P. 8–22] is applied as the methodological approach to the study of the Kola Sámi self-descriptions. Following Fairclough’s approach, the texts are considered in the relation to both the context and the authors producing and publishing them [18. P. 10, 27]. Thereby, such aspects of the cultural context as the relation of the analysed texts to other texts (including scientific) and to ethnographic collections in museums are examined. Intertextuality as the presence of elements of other texts in the text [18. P.39] and relationships of discursive and non-discursive practices [18. P. 25] contributes to the construction and modification of discourses about the Kola Sámi culture. Understanding discourse as a process for production and representation of social reality [42. P. 410; 18. P. 26] implies an active role of the Sámi author expressing a personal interpretation of the indigenous

culture. Therefore, texts can be seen as one of the arenas for conceptualizing culture by the Kola Sámi.

Producing and publishing texts that articulate an indigenous worldview and insights have played a special role in cultural revitalization both in Russia [27. P. 92–95] and Fennoscandia [6. P. 30–31; 2014. P. 79–81] from the mid-1990s. For instance, this process is manifested in the desire to preserve the native language, including the involvement of some educated Sámi people in language studies and teaching [1; 7. P. 173–180], in the revival of handicrafts and the Sámi costume, in the ‘revoicing’ of the Sámi folklore texts and in the development of the Sámi literature. The inclusion of the Kola Sámi in the transnational cultural field is accompanied by the transfer of new ideas and concepts into Russian discourses, including the idea of the Sámi as “one people in four countries” [3. P. 9; 27. P. 92; 53; 54]. As C. Cocq argues, successful cultural revitalization requires changing community’s attitudes towards tradition and place [14. P. 81]. In the cities of the Kola Peninsula, the status of the Sámi culture as authentic and indigenous is associated not only with its rethinking in new contexts [27. P. 106; 32; 46], but also with a dialogue with authorities [26. P. 254]. “People or groups are ‘called’ and ‘hailed’ to act as authentic cultural subjects” [11. P. 47]. Thus, the contemporary patterns of social and cultural diversification of the Sámi can hardly be presented by just one vision of culture, even if this is an indigenous perspective [23. P. 8].

Recently, a new figure, the indigenous author — not a professional anthropologist or historian — has started to conceptualize the Kola Sámi culture. Many such authors graduated from the Institute of the Peoples of the North (Herzen Pedagogical Institute) in Leningrad (Saint Petersburg) and were schoolteachers in the Murmansk Region. In one way or another, the Sámi authors invest their social and cultural capital in the development of the Sámi language and culture, being involved in social practices of recontextualizing culture [44. P. 3, 5]. In addition to the professional career in education, they write books, translate texts from Sámi into Russian and from Russian into Sámi, participate in the creation of local museums, also as curators. Some of the Sámi authors were participants or leaders of public organizations of the Kola Sámi. With rare exceptions, Sámi authors are not involved in the economic activity based on the traditional Sámi way of life. However, their parents were engaged in reindeer husbandry and fishing. The authors are perceived and identify themselves as Sámi regardless of their mixed origin (for instance, mother is Sámi, father is from a family of Pomors). In addition, most of the Sámi authors, who spent childhood in the Sámi villages of the Kola Peninsula, lived in Murmansk or other cities of the Murmansk Region when writing their texts. Thus, their position, defined in terms of the origin, place of residence and education, cannot be reduced to the worldview of an informant presenting authentic and unproblematic data about Sámi culture. Rather the position of the Sámi authors implies partially positions

of the object (described and observed) and the subject (observer of one's culture), and at the same time contributes to the hybridity in their texts.

The fact that all authors of the texts are women raises the question of how these descriptions express women's experiences. In recent decades, the Kola Sámi women have become particularly visible in the public and cultural space. At the same time, they tend to be dissociated from traditional economic activities (for example, reindeer-breeding) and places of residence [3. P. 9; 26. P. 219; 27. P. 94]. The indigenous reflection of these processes as incorporated in the published texts present the gender aspects of the Kola Sámi cultural revitalization. Publishing texts in both Sámi and Russian [33; 37] implies that the context for representing the indigenous culture by the Kola Sámi has significantly expanded.

The contemporary texts by the Sámi authors, which provide ethnographic descriptions of their native culture and are analysed, consist of six books — by Nadezhda Bolshakova, Ekaterina Mechkina, Nina Mironova and Anastasiya Mozolevskaya — published in the last two decades. Several short articles by the Sámi authors on specific cultural events, such as the celebration of the National Sámi day, and the discourse on preserving the Sámi language were also studied. Several ways of self-description are presented in the texts by the Sámi authors: a) a comprehensive description of culture in the ethnographic and historical perspectives; b) a focus on topics in the field of the author's competence; c) an autobiographic project within the history of the author's native settlement.

For example, the canonical scheme of ethnographic records typical for the Russian (Soviet) science of the late 19th and most of the 20th century (until the 1980s) is reproduced in the book by the Sámi writer Bolshakova *Life, Customs and Myths of the Kola Sámi in the Past and Present* [7]. This is a research approach in which culture is divided into spiritual (immaterial) and material, and the descriptions focus on ethnic culture. Following this approach, Bolshakova describes 'Sámi settlements', 'Sámi family', 'Sámi food', 'gods and heroes in Sámi myths', 'Sámi songs', 'Sámi drums', 'Sámi games', 'Sámi folklore', implying "the idea that cultural elements belong to people" [48. P. 88]. The description of the Sámi culture "in the past and present" refers to the ideas of evolutionism but does not reproduce its conceptual schemas.

According to Bolshakova, the desire to correct information about the Sámi that is "far from the truth" and to avoid such inaccuracies in the future motivated her to write this work [7. P. 8]. Perhaps, the author sees her position as an expression of an unproblematic, authentic perception of the Sámi culture, while this position can be more accurately defined in terms of partial relations, including the author's scientific and indigenous knowledge. At the same time, Bolshakova's text refers to the multiple contemporary discourses on the Sámi culture as produced and transcribed in its context. This text includes transcripts of interviews, fragments of local residents' memories, and stories of Sámi families and settlements as recorded by the author [7. P. 40–42, 47, 58, 289–290]. Moreover, Bolshakova cites folklore

texts and diverse information about the Sámi culture, which was written by other indigenous people [7. P. 332–334, 368–369]. Thus, the author transforms the oral discourse into a text and combines it with versions of the Sámi culture from the texts of Russian and foreign researchers. In other words, Bolshakova reproduces, reassembles and reinterprets previous discursive practices which both shape the object under the study and are shaped by being incorporated into the new text.

Another example of the textualization of the oral discourse is Mechkina's book [33] with proverbs and short folklore texts recorded by the author and translated from Sámi into Russian. There are no comments or references to other texts on Sámi culture — only the author's observations are systematized. Such narratives recorded by an indigenous author in the context of one's culture can be considered a manifestation of the intra-cultural transcription, transforming the oral into the written.

The self-reflection and personal cultural experience of the author, for example in arts and handicrafts [37] or the Sámi costume [36], can be represented in the form of self-description. Such texts focus on a specific topic, namely material objects and non-discursive practices like Sámi handicrafts. All descriptions of cultural objects contain information about the masters who made them. The master is identified as affiliated with the Sámi culture with such criteria as ethnic origin, living in Sámi settlements or traditional activities (reindeer herding, fishing, clothing manufacture). It seems that some material objects are perceived and represented by the authors as diacritics. Thus, the Sámi costume belongs to those idioms that, according to T. Thuen, unambiguously signal Sámi identity [48. P. 96]. In the same way, the Sámi costume and its elements are articulated in the ethnographic self-descriptions.

Many objects considered as traditional or authentic are no longer used in everyday life but are still preserved in Sámi families as 'relics' [37. P. 26, 106]. This text provides data on such practices as creating family 'archives', collecting items of one's culture or transferring items from their owners to local museums [37. P. 106, 146]. Such cultural practices are associated not only with the recognition of the symbolic significance of material objects and giving them new meanings, but also with the emergence of such configurations of the Sámi culture that cannot be reduced to the concept of traditional culture.

As a Sámi handicraft master, Mozolevskaya not only textualized her personal knowledge of how to create objects traditional for the Sámi, but also recorded the stories of people who were skilled at the Sámi handicrafts, and published the results of her observations. She was a collector and curator of the Sámi culture 'archives'. Multiple partial relations and inclusions connect the authors of the text (indigenous people who preserve native culture, craftswomen and those who describe what is happening here and now), local residents (informants, craftsmen, owners or curators of cultural objects) and the objects represented in the shifting social contexts. These texts focus on the relationships between discursive and non-discursive aspects through which the Sámi culture is rendered and objectified.

Ethnographic self-description can be focused on the history of the author's family or the history of one's native settlement. For instance, Mironova reproduces the history of Yokanga village located in the eastern part of the Kola Peninsula through the history of her family and personal life story [34; 35]. Memories and personal experiences are constantly included in these emotionally coloured texts and are combined with the recorded memories of relatives and other residents of Yokanga village. Unlike other authors, Mironova's narrative is less based on scientific texts and focuses on the description and interpretation of the events she observes or participates in. The text has individual and group photographs in family life, economic practices, culture and education. Since the book has photographs from the family archives of Yokanga residents (personal documents), we can assume that they visualise important aspects and events of everyday life in the perspective of the local people.

Two parts of this narrative are interconnected by a common topic and form a dual structure. In the first part, changes in the lifestyle and cultural practices of Yokanga residents are presented in the context of such social transformations of the 20th century as collectivization, development of the education system and the Second World War [34]. These changes are shown through the life stories of the Yokanga Sámi as recorded and published by Mironova. In the second part, the author describes several generations of her family, the Danilovs, focusing on kinship relations and daily life events [35]. The search for 'roots' is based on the pattern of retrospection [10. P. 113] and allows the author to connect the past with the present: "The history of our family which belongs to the ancient Sámi family of the Danilovs dates back to 1593. Our family has lived in this region from time immemorial" [35. P. 6]. The author's reflection on her studies in Leningrad and life in the big city is presented as "the path of the Sámi girl to the temple of science" [35. P. 24]. Hence, within the contexts of mobility and education, the self-perception of an individual goes beyond the local cultural tradition and is presented in an autobiographical perspective.

Patterns of conceptualizing the Kola Sámi culture: From scientific research to ethnographic self-description

Recently, the indigenous peoples' perception of the anthropological research has become one of the significant factors affecting the ideas about their native culture. Ethnographic and anthropological texts have become the object of interpretation and criticism by indigenous authors involved in the self-description of their culture. In some cases, the indigenous people perceive the anthropologist as a curator of 'cultural heritage' and even as "a repository of... older people's knowledge about the country" [40. P. 235–237]. Mamontova drew attention to the fact that when discussing issues of their culture, the Evenks of Eastern Siberia constantly refer to the works of the famous Soviet ethnographer Vasilevich and now also to the Internet [31. P. 105]. The Kola Sámi also refer to the texts of ethnographers, travellers, missionaries and local officials as a data source for describing and explaining aspects

of their culture. That is, the data is transferred “from the text to text” [10. P. 116]: “The old Sámi wedding ceremony is known only from the monograph by Kharuzin and some other researchers, from the old Sámi residents” [7. P. 85]. “Certainly, only those few fragments of the wonderful world of myths, legends, stories, religious ideas of the ancient Sámi survived — they were saved by the scientists who studied Lapland” [7. P. 259].

However, there is a more important possible perspective for studying a new phenomenon in the context of indigenous peoples. Anthropological versions of culture become a source not only of the return of ‘lost knowledge’ to the contemporary social contexts, but also of the reproduction of patterns for the conceptualisation of culture as a research object embodied in various scientific traditions in the indigenous authors’ texts. For instance, culture can be perceived as bounded, monolithic, homogenous or essentialized. M. Sahlins’ statement about “transferring to the people’s own consciousness of their culture all the defects that used to be attributed to anthropological descriptions thereof” [42. P. 402–403] seems somewhat exaggerated but generally fair. What impact does the cultural image of the Sámi “in the texts and as the texts” [8. P. 25] as an analytical construct have on the today’s understanding of their culture by the indigenous authors?

Thus, the cultural forms described by the researcher or traveller as local or specific in some respects can be given a general cultural status in ethnographic self-descriptions. The methodological approach, according to which various local traditions observed by the researcher were represented as the Sámi culture, was also inherent in Russian ethnography and determined an idea of the monolithic and homogenous Sámi culture. In the summer of 1887, N. Kharuzin made a trip to the Kola Peninsula on the Kandalaksha–Kola route. His work *Russian Lapps* [25] presents not so much the results of personal observations and research as a generalisation of both the ethnographic information accumulated by that time and ideas about the Sámi people. Kharuzin’s text became the starting point for ‘writing culture’ by the Sámi authors, and the effect of such generalizations was further enhanced. On the other hand, the inclusion of the Kola Sámi in the transnational cultural field at the end of the 20th century contributes to the fact that through textualization local versions are gradually replaced by a universal model of culture, reassembling from ‘patches’ of different origin. However, “the origin of cultural practices is largely irrelevant to the experience of tradition: authenticity is always defined in the present” [21. P. 286].

Kharuzin reproduces the evolutionist interpretation of the Sámi way of life, “as partly reminiscent of previous cultural stages and being a kind of anachronism in modern Europe” [4. P. 208]. The aura of scientific ethnographic descriptions, invariably ‘resurrecting’ cultural forms as unique, exotic and disappearing, is now enshrined in the texts of contemporary Sámi authors. For instance, they define their culture as “unique, distinctive” [54. P. 120] and “ancient” [7. P. 350]. Bolshakova, referring to the opinion of the ethnographer Lukyanchenko, describes the Sámi

as a people with “an extremely distinctive culture, whose originality is difficult to explain, which created a peculiar ethnographic riddle” [7. P. 23]. Thus, the interpretation of the Sámi culture as distinct, internally homogenous, territorially localized on the Kola Peninsula becomes a common ground for some Russian and Soviet ethnographers, on the one hand, and for the Sámi authors on the other.

In the ethnographic self-descriptions, culture is often understood in terms of ethnicity, which implies a distinction between the Sámi and non-Sámi culture. In a broader social context, Vladimirova draws attention to the “new visibility of the Sámi ethnicity” on the Kola Peninsula [53. P. 48]. Despite the reflection of the complex cultural transformations of the 20th century by local residents, the essentialist understanding of tradition prevails [53. P. 48]. It focuses on the limited list of cultural elements that evoke associations with the authentic Sámi tradition. However, there is the marked contrast between daily practices and the representation of culture as the basis of belonging [26. P. 219; 53. P. 48–49], which has been rearticulated and performed in new contexts for different audiences [11. P. 16]. Indigenous peoples’ appeals to the antiquity and authenticity of their traditions are rather important when articulated in external contexts, including the global. For instance, the imagined homogeneity and uniqueness of the Sámi culture are articulated by indigenous people online [13. P. 10]. However, such practices often contribute to the ‘freezing’ [47] of cultural differences and to essentializing the idea of culture as the property of an ethnic group [52. P. 412]. But this is not a one-sided issue: indigenous peoples are encouraged to promote a particular kind of traditionalism or to rely on essentialized criteria [49. P. 24–25] seen as their features in the discourses of indigeneity by the majority. Moreover, multiple cultural narratives constructed when the Sámi were non-literate and recorded by ‘outsiders’ are integrated into texts by indigenous authors, which is also a matter of intertextuality [18. P. 17]. In a broader sense, these practices of reintegration mean the transfer of the forms and ideas initially formed outside into the context of the Sámi culture [28. P. 773].

Let us consider a case that demonstrates how the ideas about the Sámi deities are assembled and returned into the contemporary culture. When describing the Sámi mythology, Bolshakova [7. P. 241–281] combines information from Kharuzin’s work [25. P. 135–235] with fragments of the Sámi fairy tales recorded and published in the 20th century [9; 24]. The list of sources cited by Bolshakova is wider, but another circumstance seems more important: ‘reassembling’ and interpreting numerous fragments of the Sámi mythological descriptions originated from different temporal and cultural contexts become the pattern of rethinking and representing their culture in the text of the indigenous author. The names of the Sámi deities, recorded and transcribed by Russian and Western scientists for several centuries when the Sámi were non-literate, were now translated into Sámi, i.e., into the original language.

Today, the ethnographic collections of the Murmansk Regional Museum of Local History and the Russian Ethnographic Museum (Saint Petersburg)

are used by Sámi masters to recreate and attribute objects in accordance with museum items. These collections are considered cultural heritage. It should be noted that such cultural practices also become objects of self-description. For example, Mozolevskaya and Kulinchenko highlight those elements of the Sámi costume that were reconstructed by indigenous craftswomen in the 21st century, based on the collections of the Russian Ethnographic Museum, especially on the collections of the ethnographers D. Zolotarev and V. Charnoluskiy of the 1920s–1930s [36. P. 14, 20].

Mozolevskaya reconstructed the traditional Kola Sámi clothing (*jupa*) based on the collections from the early 20th century stored in the museums of Gothenburg (Sweden), Helsinki (Finland) and Murmansk (Russia) [36. P. 39]. However, collectors and curators of ethnographic collections also represent different methodological approaches and national traditions, i.e., they are involved in the production of cultural meanings. In this perspective, the practices of reconstructing objects by Sámi craftswomen imply assembling them from elements from different temporal and local contexts, and their recontextualization in the present. It should be noted that objects created in accordance with museum samples are usually perceived by indigenous craftswoman as traditional. But the reconstruction becomes possible provided the partial connections of the master's social competencies acquired in various educational, professional and cultural contexts with the hand-to-hand skills associated with tradition. Such practices do not mean replication of cultural forms but imply the continuous creation of cultural hybrids.

Thus, ethnographic-self descriptions of the Kola Sámi are both a product and a production of discourse. In the article, they are interpreted in terms of intertextuality focusing on the relations between oral and written, academic and indigenous discourse. Transferring and enacting ideas from outside and reassembling culture from 'patches' of different origin in the texts of indigenous authors — all contribute to the production of new cultural meanings. The choice of texts to comment by indigenous authors and the patterns of their interpretation lead to the modification of the object — the Sámi culture. Moreover, the anthropological patterns of presenting the Sámi culture as essentialized and homogenous are reproduced by indigenous authors, introducing ambivalent complexity into their understanding and representation of culture. The question is mainly the unintended consequences of the drift of ideas and the use of the anthropological research results based on them. Accordingly, ethnographic self-descriptions contribute to the reproduction, creation, and modification of numerous discourses on the Kola Sámi culture. The texts by indigenous authors not only determine changes in the knowledge and perception of the Sami culture but also imply that 'culture' is recontextualized in the self-description. Moreover, the subject who describes and the object described are partly connected. Therefore,

the boundaries between the internal and external, local and global, traditional and modern, and anthropological versions of culture and indigenous culture are constantly shifting and becoming permeable.

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Воспроизводство и изменение дискурсов культуры коренных народов: этнографические самоописания кольских саамов*

М.С. Куропятник

Санкт-Петербургский государственный университет,
Университетская наб., 7–9, Санкт-Петербург, 199034, Россия
(e-mail: kuropyatnik@bk.ru)

Аннотация. В статье этнографическое самописание рассматривается как культурная форма, в которой индигенные авторы концептуализируют свою культуру в смещающихся социальных контекстах. Этнографические самоописания подразумевают: (а) трансформацию коренными народами устно-дискурсивного опыта своей культуры в текст; (б) интерпретации научных версий культуры индигенными авторами. Вопрос заключается в том, как саамская культура концептуализируется в тексте и как письменный текст — саамскими авторами, принимающими во внимание как научные описания своей культуры, так и недискурсивные культурные формы (этнографические коллекции)? В текстах индигенных авторов антропологические версии культуры могут выступать источником воспроизводства некоторых паттернов концептуализации их культуры, релевантных ряду подходов в социальных науках. Этнографические самоописания интерпретируются автором в терминах интертекстуальности, при этом в фокусе внимания — отношения между устным и письменным, академическим и индигенным дискурсом, а также между дискурсивными и недискурсивными практиками. Тексты как часть культурной реальности и как элемент социальных событий имеют каузальный эффект, способствуя изменению видения и способов репрезентации саамской культуры с точки зрения коренных народов. Таким образом, они вовлечены в воспроизводство, создание и модификацию множественных дискурсов саамской культуры. В процессе самоописания «культура» может быть реконтекстуализирована акторами. При этом позиции и идентичность наблюдателя (автора) и коренного народа, чья культура выступает объектом описания, связаны множественными частичными отношениями, что подразумевает изменение эпистемологического статуса индигенного дискурса. Процессуальный подход к концептуализации культуры и фокус на точке зрения коренных народов, представленной в этнографических самоописаниях, составляют методологическую основу изучения ряда культурных тенденций у кольских саамов (Россия). В статье анализируются опубликованные тексты саамских авторов, не являющихся профессиональными антропологами.

Ключевые слова: культура коренных народов; кольские саамы; дискурс; этнографическое самописание; текст; частичные отношения

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