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2017

Lukin, K. P. 2017, 'Matthias Alexander Castrén's Notes on Nenets Folklore', *Société Finno-Ougrienne*, vol. 96, pp. 169-211. <<http://www.sgr.fi/susa/96/susa96lukin.pdf>>

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Matthias Alexander Castrén's notes on Nenets folklore

This article contextualizes Nenets folklore notes taken by M. A. Castrén from three different angles. First, it discusses the historical research background of Castrén's work, situating his field expeditions especially in the context of ethnography which was a new and developing discipline during Castrén's research. Second, the article examines the Nenets generic system as a flexible regime, and discusses how Castrén has categorized the texts he collected. Third, the article discusses the processes of textualization and the performance of Nenets epic poetry and shows that not only that Castrén had systems of textualization of the Nenets oral poetry in use, but also Nenets did. These are related to the different levels of dialogicality in the performance of Nenets epic poetry, of which only some can be interpreted in the texts written down by Castrén.

1. Introduction

In 1839 M. A. Castrén, at the time a young linguist, travelled in Karelia in order to collect supplements for the "Kalevala", the epos that he was to translate into Swedish. According to his report to the financier, Finnish Literature Society, the expedition represented a slight disappointment to him, as it turned out that Lönnrot had indeed managed to collect "all the poems". Castrén had to be content with fairy-tales that he found to have some connections to Finnish mythology. (Castrén 1904.) At the time of his travel to Karelia, Castrén was already waiting for the news about the financial and academic support for the expedition to northern Russia and Siberia from St. Petersburg. As the news were long in coming, Castrén devoted himself to the translation of the "Kalevala" and linguistics before he left for Lapland and Karelia with Lönnrot. This was the beginning of an expedition that resulted in the notes that I will discuss in this article. It comprises of notes on Tundra Nenets epic and ritual poetry, prose narration, individual songs and sporadic annotations on prayers. Most of these have already been published either in "Nordische Reise und Forschungen" II (1856: 175–182), IV (1857: 157–181) VII (1855: 311–339)¹ or later by Toivo Lehtisalo (Castrén 1940). Tundra Nenets folklore has a modest role in Castrén's "Lectures on Finnish Mythology" (Castrén 1853a; 1853b; 2016) and in travel notes (Castrén 1856: 174–176), and he did not survey the texts systematically in other studies. Notwithstanding, the folklore notes, not only on Tundra Nenets but also the ones made in numerous other languages, are an invaluable collection of oral poetry of the northern Russian and Siberian communities, as they very often represent first (and sometimes also last) records of the folklore of these groups. The Tundra Nenets notes are also remarkable in their extent and accuracy. However, they are, almost 200 years after their collection, still understudied and poorly known. In this article, I will

1. In Swedish, Castrén 1855: 169–175; 1857: 167–192.

open up the notes from three different points of view: I will discuss the ethnographic background for collecting Nenets folklore, the genres brought out in Castrén's corpus, and the performance and textualisation of Nenets folklore, which should contextualize the Nenets oral poetry and Castrén's work on them for the readers of "Manuscripta Castreniana Jurak-Samoiedica".²

Castrén's notes on Nenets folklore can be found in two different places in the "Manuscripta Castreniana" collections located at the National Library of Finland (KK MC). The main body of these notes has been divided into three parts that can be seen as forming separate collections, each representing different kinds of genres of Nenets folklore. However, the generic boundaries are not clear in all cases, so that one becomes uncertain about what objectives Castrén had in mind while forming these three groups. In the following, I shall sketch former studies on Nenets folklore genres and discuss the difficulties in defining the genres. My main point of departure is that, rather than sticking into the generic system and defining the boundaries of the genres, we should treat folklore as a communicative system where a genre is created and used in a dialogue with other genres.

Most of the texts published in "Manuscripta Castreniana Jurak-Samoiedica Folkloristica" represent epic poems. This is indicated by the form of representation, where the text is rendered in short lines following each other in the left column of the notes page. Moreover, most of the lines are hexasyllabic, which represents the so called basic text line of Nenets epic poetry. However, there is significant variation in the line structure and further difficulties arise if one assumes that the lines in Castrén's notes represent the actual sung lines. One should nevertheless bear in mind that the lines were probably not sung, but dictated to Castrén. The second task of this article is, therefore, to discuss the difference between sung and dictated Nenets epic poetry. I shall first present the readers with recent studies on Nenets epic poetry's metrics and its performance style and after that discuss how the dictation might have affected the text. My argument here is that the performers and language masters of Castrén had to adapt the poems for the researcher's time frames and note-taking technique. They did this in the course of the dictation but they must have followed their own conceptions and ideas about the poem's contents and themes, as well as its structure.

Before discussing these two main themes, which will open up the materials and help the reader to contextualize them, I will outline the general background for Castrén's Nenets folklore notes and their publication. Castrén's expeditions, their background and practices have been described on multiple occasions and in multiple texts (Setälä 1915; Korhonen 1986; Stipa 1990; Stammler-Gossmann 2009). Here, I shall discuss the ethnographic and folkloristic background in particular, and leave the often described research history of linguistics aside, although these disciplines

2. This article has been written to be part of the digital edition "Manuscripta Castreniana Jurak-Samoiedica", providing background information especially to the subsection "Folkloristica" of the edition. The edition and the research related to it have been funded by the *Emil Aaltonen Foundation*, *Jenny and Antti Wihuri Foundation* and *Kone Foundation*. I have also conducted this research as a member of *Finnish Academy Project Oral Poetry, Mythic Knowledge and Vernacular Imagination: Interfaces of Individual Expression and Collective Traditions in Pre-Modern Northeast Europe*.

naturally were and still are in interconnection with each other. In the beginning, then, I shall ask why Castrén collected vast amount of Nenets folklore in the first place and how this is related to the ongoing development and emergence of ethnography and folklore studies in Europe and Russia.

2. Additions for the "Kalevala", materials for comparative mythology and ethnography

In recent studies on the history of ethnography and folklore studies, it has been common to make a basic distinction between imperial countries where ethnographical or anthropological disciplines developed with more strength, and emergent nation states, whose researchers tended to centre on oral traditions living in the geographical and social margins – a course that resulted in folklore studies. (Dundes 1985; Baycroft 2012; Gunnell 2012: 303; Wingfield and Gosden 2012; Ó Giolláin 2014; Vermeulen 2015: 449.) For example, Diarmuid Ó Giolláin has made a distinction between the so-called metropolitan folkloristics, which “commonly made comparisons between the provincial and the colonial, both of which were outside of and beneath the national high culture to which such ethnological debates were largely external” and perspectives within which folklore was as “a key national-aesthetic legitimation of national movements [, and] necessarily looked to the provinces, the source of an authentic culture rooted in a sometimes obscure national past and in opposition to the cosmopolitan city, which was part of a ‘universal’ history.” (Ó Giolláin 2014: 73, 79.) Finland should be – and has been – posited on the national-aesthetic side in this picture, representing areas that were in the process of becoming nation states, and where the instrumental, symbolic value of folklore was realized and made most of (Wilson 1976; Anttonen 2005). Moreover, Pertti Anttonen has argued that the Finnish ethnographical disciplines, directed mainly towards the speakers of Finno-Ugric languages in Russia, also constituted mainly a nationalistic project. Its results emphasized that, while Finland, as well as Estonia and Hungary, had a history, nation-state, and modernity, the ‘kindred peoples’, i.e. peoples speaking Finno-Ugric (Uralic) languages, lacked these and represented the history of the Finns. (Anttonen 2012: 347.)

Together with this basic distinction between imperial ethnography and national folkloristics, recent studies have emphasized that despite the ideological underpinnings of any research, the scholars have been quite internationally oriented in their scholarship (e.g. Roper 2012: 239; Hopkin 2012). Moreover, Russia as an imperial state has always been different in the sense that its *others* do not live overseas and in faraway places, but within the Russian (or Slavic) population, thus forming a part of everyday life. While this undoubtedly concerns especially the multiple minorities in the European side of Russia, the Siberian indigenous peoples have clearly been thought of as the other. The development of ethnography and folklore studies in Russia has been seen as having its own specific traits that are nevertheless keenly related to European discussions. (Tokarev 1966; Clay 1995; Knight 2000; Knight 2009.) In this respect, I

have found it important to sketch M. A. Castrén's fieldwork among the northern and Siberian minorities of Russia from the point of view of international, or European, development of ethnography and folklore studies, which is closely related to the scientific conquest of the North and Siberia. I will also discuss the Russian traditions of folklore studies that are related to Castrén's undertakings. I argue that following the national Romantic lines of Castrén's project has given too much emphasis on the national side of the project and has downplayed the international and scientific, both central European and Russian, contexts of his work. The 19th century has been sketched as a formative period for many disciplines, such as ethnography and folklore studies, and they were developed in the intense cooperation and enthusiasm of scholars working in different parts of Europe. The scholars were naturally affected by and intertwined in the ideological, e.g. national currents of the time, but also by and in the unique scientific spirit that combined systematicity with visions of a multiform and variable yet definable family of nations and languages.

In this context, Castrén's expeditions and writings can be seen as a central part of the emergence of ethnography and folklore studies not only in the Grand Duchy of Finland, but also in Russia and Europe in general. Castrén himself has emphasized in his writings the national points of departures in the often-quoted lines in the beginning of his 1852 travelogue:

För vid pass femton år tillbaka fattade jag beslutet att egna min lefnads verksamhet åt undersökningen of den Finska och andra dermed beslätade folkstammars spark, religion, seder, lefnadssätt och öfriga etnografiska förhållanden. [...] Det visade sig likväl snart, att jag, för att med framgång kunna fortsätta mina studier inom detta gebit, borde vara betänkt på att förse mig med ett rikare och mera tillförlitligt material än det i skrift tillgängliga, och till den ändan nödgades anställa forskningsresor till särskilda delar af Europa och Asien. (Castrén 1852: 3.)

'Approximately 15 years ago, I made a decision to dedicate my life work to the study of languages, religion, customs and other ethnographic matters of the Finnish tribe and its relatives. [...] It soon turned out that in order to successfully continue research on the field, I should think about obtaining a more abundant and reliable material than the ones available in written form, and for this I was compelled to carry out expeditions in different parts of Europe and Asia.'

The aim was to study Finnish history. Thus, it is not reasonable to contest the national and even Romantic background and objective as it certainly was a personally and societally important point of departure, which also gave the whole project its public relevance. Nevertheless, the extract also points to ethnography, which at the time was not a national, particularistic discipline, but a name for a systematic and comparative project. From the point of view of this ethnographic research, which included the practice of collecting sung, epic poetry and oral tradition, the expedition had also different justifications. Looking for these, I cite another extract, just as often quoted, in

which Castrén justifies his actions to J. V. Snellman, one of the leading philosophers and national activists of the time:

Mitt görande och sträfvande i denna werlden är ett intet; men så länge man lefver, måste man dock söka att allvarligt arbeta för den sak, hvars kämpe man är. Det är blott *en* sak, som djupt och mäktigt gripit mig, jag kan endast lefva för denna sak, allt det öfriga är en bisak för mig. Jag har beslutit, att wisa för Finlands folk, att wi icke äro ett ifrån werlden och werldshistorien lösryckt, enstaka kärr-folk, utan stå i förwandtskap med åtminstone en sjettede del af menskligheten.

'My undertakings and aspirations in this world do not have any significance; but as long as one lives, one has to work for the cause one has begun to fight for in the first place. My mind is filled exclusively with one concern, and I can live only for it, everything else unessential. I have decided to show to Finnish nation that we are not a separate and solitary marshland people detached from the world and world history, but we are related at least to one sixth of mankind. (Castrén to Snellman 18.10.1844.)'

Both extracts point to the general, large-scale, comparative objectives of Castrén's work. Again, they also show up the national aims of the project – Castrén wanted to build the history of the Finnish nation and, as he himself had stated, to collect additions to the epic of the same Finnish nation, the "Kalevala". Nevertheless, the objective of building history through linguistic and ethnographical materials and their comparisons was not a national project from the outset, but represented an international academic project. In this, Castrén was not only following the lines of the central European researchers, but also producing pivotal materials for the historical and comparative research projects and developing the methodology. These international projects had their aims to build a comprehensive history of mankind through analysing the variation of languages, poetries, or folklore and ethnographic or ethnological phenomena. While the research history of diachronic and comparative linguistics is fairly well described, and Castrén's project has been reasonably associated with it (Korhonen 1981; Stipa 1990; Bunzl 1996; Campbell 2002), the emergence of ethnography in Europe and Russia has been discussed again only fairly recently. Here, for the sake of brevity, I will skip the linguistic backgrounds and focus to the ethnographic ones. This said, it must be noted that the linguistic projects were deeply interconnected with the ethnographic ones both in ideas and through the actual researchers who were often linguists with broad interests in humankind.

The ethnographical research tradition within which Castrén's work is relevant was born from the cooperation of Russian and German scholars taking part in the organization and practical work of the so-called Academic Expeditions of 18th century Russia. The overall aims and starting points of these expeditions were economic and political: they were designed to collect relevant information about the resources of the vast imperial areas. Although the two Kamchatka Expeditions, led by Vitus Bering

(1725–1730 and 1733–1743), are well known for their immensity and political significance, the expeditions undertaken by Daniel Gottlieb Messerschmidt (1685–1735) and Peter Simon Pallas are of interest here as they travelled in the same geographical areas as Castrén. Messerschmidt was a scientist whose 1720–1727 expedition opened many areas for research in Siberia. His data has been used by most subsequent researchers. Pallas' expedition (1768–1774) focused on central Russia, West Siberia, Altay and Transbaikalia, and his travelogues and reports were published as a collection, often cited by Castrén (Pallas 1771–1176). As shown by Han F. Vermeulen, the German scholars, from Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) to Gerhard Friedrich Müller (1705–1783), managed to add to the imperial explorers' instructions directions about how to collect materials on linguistic details, mainly word lists or translations of the Lord's Prayer in local languages, and on the manners and customs of the people. The expeditions and their backgrounds are well enough described in several publications (Tokarev 1966: 75–110; Vermeulen 2015: 39–218), and the central role of Gerhard Friedrich Müller, a German historian, who took part in the organization and work of the Second Kamchatka expedition, has been often emphasized. Müller's several instructions written for different purposes laid the foundations on *Ethnographie* or *Völkerkunde*, and they are important also as a background for Castrén's work, as will be shown later. Chronologically, the last of Müller's instructions was written to Johann Eberhard Fischer (1697–1771), who was to become his successor. The instructions are divided into six parts, of which the first gave instructions about keeping a journal, the second about geographical descriptions, the third on describing the present state of towns, forts and regions. The fourth and fifth were instructions on working in the archives and describing and collecting antiquities. The sixth part of the instructions advised the reader how to make detailed descriptions about the peoples of Siberia, and aimed at the holistic, empirical description of each community so that they could be compared. The instructions in what was called *Völkerbeschreibung* by Müller also set this apart from other types of antiquity-collecting, thus forming the basis for the separation of the disciplines. Significantly, Müller emphasized the importance of getting acquainted with people, spending time with them in the places where they live – a methodic principle that clearly aimed at rapprochement. (Bucher 2009; Vermeulen 2015: 164–183.)

The discipline was later developed and named *Völkerkunde* or *Ethnographie* by August Ludwig Schlözer, who wrote his "Allgemeine Nordische Geschichte" (1771) based on the material collected during the Academic Expeditions of the 18th century. In Schlözer's definition, *Völkerkunde* and *Ethnographie* were interchangeable and were part of the study of history: the ethnographic method of history would first of all divide human beings into groups. Secondly, ethnography would describe each group as part of the larger world history. Schlözer emphasized the significance of language in defining the groups and the power of systematic comparisons in revealing the history of mankind. (Vermeulen 2015: 279–293.) Schlözer's theories and texts are important for Castrén in at least two ways. Firstly, the ideas were quickly absorbed into Finnish academic discussion through Henrik Gabriel Porthan (1739–1804), who studied in Göttingen in 1779, and has had an enormous impact on the humanities

in Finland ever since the late 18th century. It was Porthan who first proposed that, in order to understand the history of the Finns, one should also study the speakers of related languages in Russia. (Tarkiainen 2000; Siikala & Ulyashev 2011: 34–42.) Although Porthan could never leave for fieldwork, his ideas were left alive and, in the beginning of 19th century, the young Finnish enthusiast Anders Johann Sjögren did his best to get into contact with the speakers of related languages. Michael Branch has rightly described Sjögren's memorandum to Nikolaj Petrovič Rumjancev (1755–1832), a Russian Count who was willing to finance research on the history, ethnography, and languages of Eastern Russia, and later Sjögren's letter to Baron Robert Henrik Rehbinder (1777–1841), who finally approved Sjögren's application, as “Porthanian document[s]” emphasizing “the importance of studying the Finno-Ugrian peoples in order to reach a proper understanding of the history of the North”, with strong influences from evolving historical and comparative linguistics (Branch 1973: 41).

What Branch does not focus on is the later influence of Russian academic discussions about ethnography, and possibly also about collecting folklore that can be seen in Sjögren's texts. Sjögren worked in the Russian Academy of Sciences and was nominated as the first holder of the chair of Ethnography and Languages of the Finnic and Caucasian Peoples – the first chair of ethnography in the world – in 1844. He also took care of the ethnographic museum from 1844 onwards. (Stagl 2009: 43.) Sjögren deserved these positions. He was an enthusiastic fieldworker who, during the regular and long expeditions among the speakers of Finno-Ugric languages in the European side of Russia, not only contributed to the study of the language family, but also developed ethnographic methodology. His field method was based on acquaintance with the people studied, on a striving to learn, understand and master the languages they spoke through everyday speech and possible ritual contexts, and on the collection of knowledge about their customs and historical folklore. He also paid great attention to archival work. The outcome of his fieldwork research was a series of publications on each linguistic group, *Volk*, on which he had been working, on their language, dialects and customs, and their relations to neighbouring peoples' language and customs, which again shed light to the history of these people. (Branch 1973.) Sjögren's keen interest in the place and personal names and their integral role can be seen as an innovation in the otherwise very Müllerian–Schlözerian principle, which he must have both learned from Porthan and by reading Müller's notes in the archives of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

The ethnographical strain can be clearly read in the travel instructions written by Sjögren for Castrén for his second expedition, which represent just one of the many forms of support that Sjögren offered Castrén (Sjoegren 1844;³ Branch 1968). The instructions were published in “Bulletin de la Classe des Sciences historiques, philologiques et politiques de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences de Saint-Pétersbourg”, and they were commented on by Köppen (1844), who was preparing ethnographical maps of Russia. If the

3. The instructions were also published posthumously in Swedish as a supplement to Castrén's travelogues and letters. Castrén 1855: 447–457.

texts of young Sjögren can be called Porthanian, I would emphasize the impact of possibly Messerschmidt's notes, which were not published by that time but which were certainly read by Sjögren. Two things are very clear from the instructions: first, Castrén's journey was depicted as linguistic and ethnographic and these domains were seen as serving the interests of historical interpretations. Second, the materials collected were thought to comprise a large and holistic totality with linguistic materials covering every possible branch of life coupled with ethnological, archaeological and archival data. The principal aim of Castrén's expedition was to clarify the relations between Samoyed peoples (*samojedische Völkerstammen*), their geographical distribution in Siberia and their relations with neighbouring groups (*Ostiaken*). In short, the instructions were after a more detailed and reliable linguistic map of Western Siberia, which would be based on empirical data collected among the speakers of these languages. The instructions emphasize time and again that the materials should be collected by the researcher himself among the speakers themselves, in the places where they live. This is reminiscent of Müller's instructions, but is also typical for its own time more generally. (E.g. Aalto 1971; Vermeulen 2015; Bunzl 1996.)

In addition to as complete linguistic material as possible, Castrén should also collect popular songs, proverbs, tales and traditions about the origins and prehistory of the peoples in question.⁴ The instructions emphasize the instrumental value of lore in building historical analyses – only the songs are given an aesthetic value as literature. This is clearly a Russian, especially Petersburgian, emphasis adopted by Sjögren and does not reflect the discussions that took place in Finland at the same time, which I will consider soon. The ethnographical goals required taking notes on the physique, ways of life, clothing, customs, state of culture and religious ideas of the tribes studied, and “on anything which can describe them and their particularity.”⁵ (Sjögren 1844: 332.) This instruction was given in 1844, and, although it reflects both the longer discussion deriving from the German Enlightenment Ethnography (Vermeulen 2015) and Sjögren's own views, it must also be a shared outcome of the ethnographically minded scholars in St. Petersburg who were meeting each other regularly in 1840s. These included explorers and researchers such as Köppen, Ferdinand von Wrangell, Friedrich Litke, Alexander von Schrenk. (Tammiksaar 2009: 143–144.)

Castrén's expedition can be interpreted as having begun in the last possible moments, as the soon-to-be established Russian Imperial Geographical Society with its Ethnographical Division came to define ethnography as following differing lines compared to systematic and comparative methods of the so-called old school ethnographers.

4. “In historischer Hinsicht muss Herr Castrén noch alle Aufmerksamkeit auf die unter den Völkern selbst etwa gangbaren Sagen und Traditionen über ihre Herkunft und Vorzeit wenden, mögen solche Sagen und Traditionen allgemeinen Inhalts [...]”. The term for popular songs is Volkslieder. (Sjögren 1844: 331.)

5. “Erfahrung die Körperbildung, Lebensart, Trachten, Sitten und Gebräuche, den Culturzustand und die religiösen Meinungen der resp. Völker, so wie überhaupt aller, was dazu dienen kann, sie als solche in allen ihren Eigenthümlichkeiten zu charakterisiren, vollständig kennen lernt.” Interestingly, the Swedish version lists not only religious ideas, but also shamanism, paganism, and Christianity. (Castrén 1855: 456.)

The Geographical Society was established in 1844, and in addition to its two geographical (comprehensive and Russian) divisions and the statistics division, from the beginning it also had an ethnographical division. It was led by Karl Ernst von Baer (1792–1896) who spoke for general ethnographical studies about the importance of doing fieldwork and describing the peoples whilst they still lived (Baer 1849). The tension between this line and the more Russian-centered line of thought seems to be evident from the first meeting onwards, as it was in the very first meeting that Nikolaj Ivanovič Nadeždin spoke about the significance of focusing on Russian people. According to Nadeždin, the most important goal of the Society should be to describe “what makes Russia Russia, i.e. Russian man”. There were also differences in the views on ethnography itself: instead of the comparative program of scholars with a German (and Finnish) background, Nadeždin preferred studying linguistic and dialectal details, physical anthropology, and psychological ethnography, which included everything material and spiritual among the people. (Nadeždin 1849.) The people, though, were not anymore the ethnic *others* of Russia, the numerous *Völker* (*narodnost'*), i.e. the minorities of Russia, but the socially other, *das Volk* (*narod*), and the program was directed to the study of the contemporary moments of their lives and aimed at particularism. (Semenov Tjan-Šanskij 1896: 378–40; Berg 1946: 42–43; Knight 2009: 124–129.) This line of inquiry and thinking won over the Geographical Society in 1850, when Baer and Litke were displaced by Nadeždin, who became the head of the ethnographic division. While it certainly was a battle between two strong personalities and their lines, it also reflects more general tendencies in Russian thinking, and has its background in the reactionary politics of Czar Nikolaj I. Consequently, a similar kind of movement of interest away from the Russian minorities and non-Russian phenomena towards the Russian people and matters Russian took place in other disciplines as well. (Azadovskij 1958: 122–123; Rabow-Edling 2006: 26–34.)

In the context of Geographical Society, though, this meant that a growing interest was given to the verbal art of the people (*narodnaja slovesnost'*). This materialized in the wide collection activities, based on circular letters and a large web of informants sending their knowledge to Geographical Society. This resulted in huge and multisided collections on the basis of which several publications were edited⁶. The 1840s and 50s was also a time for regional movements that cherished and promoted peasant culture, and began to collect ethnological and folklore materials. (Azadovskij 1958: 11–27.) All this changed the discussions around oral traditions at a more general level. If the discussions were critical towards the aesthetic value of oral tradition and emphasized its role as historical source before, as surviving from the ancient times as was characteristic for the Enlightenment (Azadovskij 1958: 42–111), the 19th century movements discussed the possibility of oral tradition being part of national literature and history, and having a role in the rise of national consciousness. In addition to being collected and analysed, the oral tradition became to be utilized, e.g. in art. (Azadovskij 1958: *passim*.)

6. E.g. Etnografičeskij sbornik (1853–1864) in six volumes; collection of fairy-tales (Afanas'ev 1855–1863), collection of charms (Majkov 1869); collection of riddles (Hudjakov 1861); description of the archive (Zelenin 1914–1916.)

This is very close to the movement and ideas around the “Kalevala” and Finnish oral tradition and folk life that were discussed in Finland, and are certainly part of Castrén’s background, as outlined at the beginning of this chapter. The irony is that the rise of this thinking in Russia closed the doors to possible future scholars like Castrén and Sjögren whose aims were not only in studying one’s own community, but putting it in the larger system of tribes, peoples and nations of the world. These two lines of thinking also bring clearly out how special and unique the program of Sjögren and Castrén was. It combined the imperial lines of global ethnography with the Herderian national folkloristics. There was tension between these ideas not only in Russia, but also similar kinds of pressure that were unleashed by downplaying one at the expense of the other among other research traditions, as discussed in the beginning of this chapter. In Finland, the research lines were legitimized by national aims, but it is clear that the ideas of Enlightenment played a great role in the formation of research traditions, as shown by Pertti Karkama (2001). Still, the focus of Finnish researchers under emergent ethnographic and folkloristic traditions has always been in studying one’s own people, the uneducated, agrarian other. This tradition is reflected in Sjögren’s and especially in Castrén’s texts and research practices which aimed at the same time to describe the speakers of kindred languages and place them within the category of other peoples, and to frame them as Finnish or Finnic, our own.

Consequently, the tension between national and aesthetic and colonial has been part of the Finnish research project on ‘kindred peoples’. It is, though, important to note that Castrén and Sjögren did not conceive or interpret the languages, customs, or oral traditions as informative only about the history of the Finns, but as an important source of information about the history of the peoples in the Northern Russia, and humankind. The ethnography was not a historical discipline if it was not comparative and systematic. In the same way, the oral traditions should be compared systematically with other oral traditions. This is a practice that differentiates Castrén from Sjögren, who used folklore only as a source for his historiography. Castrén aimed at building historical and comparative mythology, which is clearly reflected in his mythological lectures (Castrén 1853a; 1853b; Ahola & Lukin 2016.) The notes on Nenets folklore were collected in this framework: to be studied in a large comparative frame that would supplement the “Kalevala”, its mythology and the history of that mythology.

3. Generic system

In the manuscript, Castrén has given some of the texts specific titles that refer to Nenets emic genre categories, and I assume that the categories are based on the definitions of the informants. Furthermore, the epic poems seem to be divided into two groupings, and a group of shorter poems tends to form its own group accordingly. In addition to these, there are Swedish texts named *sagor* that form still a

further grouping inside the manuscript. In the following, I will discuss the possibility of treating these groups as different genres. I will also discuss the interference between the texts and their possible place in the more general Tundra Nenets emic genre system.

My starting point is that Castrén's notes consist of differing genres but represent only part of the Nenets genre system as a whole. The partial nature is understandable, as Castrén had a limited time frame during his fieldwork. The consistence of the material is also due to Castrén's own preferences: long, poetic forms, mythic narratives, and shamanistic themes were of primary interest for Castrén. This comes back to his interest in mythology and shamanism. Moreover, Castrén was instructed to collect popular songs, proverbs, tales and traditions about the origin and prehistory, as discussed in previous chapter. This represents clearly a research interest that does not take into account the possibility of other kinds of local categories of oral tradition.

Another important starting point for this chapter is that the genres form a communicative system. This implies that the genres are not isolated, ideal units of textual artefacts, but historical and culturally meaningful categories for producing and interpreting human expression. (Briggs & Bauman 1992; Hanks 1987; Seitel 1999; 2013; Frog 2016; Koski 2016) Genre theories in folklore studies can be roughly described as having evolved from the so-called text-centred views towards discussing the contextual variation. The text-centred scholars tend to emphasize that genres are objectively existing, and that the categories can be used for organizing individual texts. These views began to be criticized in the mid-20th century at the latest, as the interaction of the performer and the audience, the interference of different texts and genres and the processual nature of both context and genre became to be emphasized. (Bauman & Briggs 1990; Frog, Koski & Savolainen 2016.) Recently, there has been a tendency to emphasize not genres or performances *per se*, but more holistic views, discussing not only the performance or texts but also their relationship to other kinds of practices. These discussions clearly indicate that understanding and describing human behaviour need to take into account several different modes and moments of interrelated practices. (Koski 2016.) Another kind of tendency has been to argue for the analytical significance of combining the contemporary fieldwork materials with the insights that can be gained through working in the archives. These points of views bring out the potential of historical and text-centred approaches, when combined and enriched with the understandings gained from context centred studies. They emphasize the possibilities of the scholars to know about the historical stages and development of community's expressive systems, and its relevance to the analysis is contemporary practices. (Siikala & Siikala 2005; Frog 2016; Koski 2016.) Frog, for example, has written about a usage-based approach that should take into account the form and the content or enactment of the cultural expressions, the practices related to these, and the function, i.e. the role of one genre in the generic or other social and semiotic systems. When working with a historical corpus, such as Castrén's, it is important to remember that it is not suitable for the pure contextual analysis, but rather serves as a representation of the forms and contents of the Nenets oral tradition in history.

The texts and their intertexts might form a suitable frame for analysis anyway. (Foley 1992; Tarkka 2013.)

One more helpful distinction made quite recently by Tomi Kokkonen and Inkeri Koskinen (2016) is the one between genres as *kinds* and as *projections*. This distinction arises from philosophy and helps us to understand and keep in mind that our understanding of genre has critical epistemic consequences. Accordingly, if we think of genres as projections that researchers construct from the research material, we cannot infer new properties and generalize them as a property of the whole category from a sample of genres based on researchers' projection. When working with projections, one can thus discuss the properties used for the classification, but not any *new* properties. On the other hand, genres as *kinds* consist of groups of texts that share a relevant amount of features so that one can take them as similar, although not every single instance of the group share all of the relevant features. These kinds are historical and "constructed and dependent on people's ability to conceptualize, understand, and give meaning to things they do." (Kokkonen and Koskinen 2016: 96).

In the following, I shall take the classifications made by Castrén as my point of departure. At first sight, I will treat them as projections made not only by Castrén, but created in the cooperation between Castrén and his informants. I will also discuss some other, research-based Tundra Nenets genre classifications and their nature, and ponder their value and significance for Castrén's notes. Because Castrén has neither explicitly discussed his materials within generic frameworks, nor offers any systematic descriptions about the performance or social significance of Nenets folklore, it is challenging to evaluate these. However, I will reflect on the recent discussions about the Nenets generic system in relation to Castrén's material and discuss the shared and unshared properties in the texts in Castrén's notes. This will hopefully show that both earlier scholarly attempts to describe the Nenets generic system and the historically constructed descriptions of the Nenets emic genre system have failed to understand the fuzzy and flexible nature of oral tradition.

3.1. Folklore texts published in the digital edition and their place in the manuscript

Tundra Nenets folklore notes can be found in two different locations in the collection of Castrén's manuscripts. The first division is situated in "Manuscripta Castreniana's" part "VII Samoeidica 2", in its subsection "Juraksamoiedica 1" (KK MC VII.2.js1). This division with folklore texts is mistakenly titled *Ordförteckningar* 'word lists', on page 147, but it is the beginning of around 500 pages of folklore notes. Here, one can find ten epic texts with titles denoting to different genres, one entitled "I Kolwa" 'In [the village of] Kolva', epic poems numbered 6, 7, 8, and 9 and a section titled "M. A. Castréns manuskript till af honom samlade Samojediska sagor" 'M. A. Castrén's manuscript for the Samoyed tales collected by him'. It comprises of five tales, although the tales are numbered up to

six; number five appears twice in the manuscript. In addition to these, there is an excerpt of Bible translation titled "Ioann Gad".

The second division of texts is situated in part "IX Samoiedica 3", and its sub-section "Juraksamoiedica 2"; it has 22 pages (KK MC IX.3.js2). There are shorter epic texts numbered from 1–5 in this section. Additionally, there is a ten-page manuscript "Samojedskija Pesni" 'Samoyed Songs', and a Tundra Nenets translation of Orthodox *Apostles' Creed*. Based on the numbering system and the division of texts in the manuscript, it seems reasonable to assume that the numbers 1–10, with the text titled "I Kolwa" in "VII Samoiedica", are classified together (division I) in contrast to the numbers 1–9 (division II) placed in both parts of the manuscript. The tales (division III), on the other hand, clearly form a separate part of the manuscript: not only is it titled plainly, but the text is also represented in Swedish and in paragraphs in contrast to the poems, which are in columns. Additionally, both parts of the manuscript present translations. Moreover, there is the manuscript, possibly written by Castrén himself, about the Nenets singing (division IV).

In the case of epic poetry, which constitutes the bulk of the material, the Tundra Nenets text has been written on the left hand side of the page and the translation, either in Russian or Swedish, is given in the right column. In a few cases, Castrén has numbered the lines. Three of the poems, numbers 1, 2, and 3 in "Samoiedica VII", are produced in three dialects. As pointed out already by Toivo Lehtisalo (Castrén 1940: XV), the first and second variants were probably noted down in Pustozersk, where Castrén spent the winter months in 1843, and where speakers of both western and central dialects visited to trade and pay taxes. The third variant is most probably noted down in Obdorsk (Salekhard), where Castrén stayed from November 1843 until early 1844. It is also possible that the Taz variants are recorded during the second expedition. One should keep in mind that these dialect variants do not tell about the actual existence of the themes among the speakers of central and eastern dialects, but only among the speakers of western dialects. The variants serve, for the most part, the interests of linguistics and dialectology in particular. They do not have folkloristic value. Further, it should also be noted that there are so few collections of Nenets folklore combined with such seemingly striking variation that we cannot know how locally or widely distributed the themes of Nenets folklore are. This is why we cannot even decide whether the texts collected from amongst the speakers of the western dialects have been sung among the speakers of other dialects.

The texts in the first division are mostly named as *syudbabc* (Sjudubaepts'eh, Sjudubaepts' or its abbreviations). Nevertheless, number five is entitled *tadyeybco* (Taadieibtso) and six *laxanako* (Lahanako); the text entitled "I Kolwa" has not been given either a number or a title that would name the genre. I have included it in the first division of the digital edition because it is situated close to numbers 1–10 in the manuscript and the narration goes on in third person, as in the other texts in the division. The texts in the second division, on the other hand, are narrated in first person. They are not titled, but I assume they represent *yarabc* or *xinabc*, or individual songs, *syo*.

Page number in the manuscript	Division in Digital Edition	Title (if given) / Content	<i>Samojedische Volksdichtung</i> (categories given by Lehtisalo given in brackets)
MC VIII SAMOIEDICA 2: JURAK-SAMOIEDICA 1			
149–166	I	1. Sjudubaepst'eh	1. (Heldenlied; sjudubabts')
167–183	I	2. Sjud.	2. (Heldenlied; sjudubabts')
183–221	I	Sjudub. 3	3. (Heldenlied; sjudubabts')
221–252	I	4. Sjudubaepst'	4. (Heldenlied; sjudubabts')
253–274	I	5. Taadieibtso	5. (erzählendes Lied mit Schamanenmotiv)
275	I	6. Lahanako	6. (singende Geschichte)
282–289	I	6. Lahanako	6. (singende Geschichte)
290–318	I	7. Sjudub.	7. (Heldenlied; sjudubabts')
319–327	I	8. Sjudub.	8. (Heldenlied; sjudubabts')
328–353	I	9. Sjud.	9. (Heldenlied; sjudubabts')
355–379	I	10. Sjudub.	10. (Heldenlied; sjudubabts')
381–387	I	I Kolwa	14. (singende Geschichte)
391–392	II	Short texts in poetic form; unnumbered	Not available
395–411	I	1. Sjudubaepst	1b. (Heldenlied; sjudubabts')
412–427	I	2. Sjudub.	2b. (Heldenlied; sjudubabts')
428–437	I	3. Sjudub.	3b. (Heldenlied; sjudubabts')
439–459	I	1. Efter Tasowska dialekten	1c. (Heldenlied; sjudubabts')
460–477	I	2. [Efter Tasowska dialekten]	2c. (Heldenlied; sjudubabts')
478–494	I	3. [Efter Tasowska dialekten]	3c. (Heldenlied; sjudubabts')
495–497	II	A text in poetic form; unnumbered	19. (Schamanenlied; sambadapts')
507–504	III	Text in prose form (saga 5)	Not available
503–498	II	6.	12. (erzählende Lied; hinnabts)
521–524	III	Text titled Saga (saga 5)	Not available
533–535	II	Text in poetic form	13. (Klagelied; jarabts')
537–538	II	Text in poetic form	
539–544	II	7.	13. (Klagelied; jarabts')
545–546	IV	Ioann Gad	Not available
547	III	M. A. Castréns manuskript till af honom samlade Samojediska sagor	Not available

Page number in the manuscript	Division in Digital Edition	Title (if given) / Content	<i>Samojedische Volksdichtung</i> (categories given by Lehtisalo given in brackets)
549–552	III	4 sagan	Not available
553	III	6-te saga	Not available
554–556	III	6-te saga	Not available
563–566	II	8.	Not available
567–572	III	Saga I	Not available
573–576	III	Saga II	Not available.
577–578	III	Saga III	Not available
MC IX SAMOIEDICA 3: JURAK-SAMOIEDICA 2			
154–164	IV	Samojedskija pesni	Not available
149–153	IV	Fader vår	Not available
146–147	II	1. [in Swedish]	Not available
260	II	5. from line 122 on	11. (erzählende Lied; hinnabts)
262–269	II	5.	11. (erzählende Lied; hinnabts)
270–274	II	2.	15. (Rauschlied; jabje'ma)
275–276	II	3.	17. (Rauschlied; jabje'ma)
276–277	II	4.	16. (Rauschlied; jabje'ma)
279–280	II	Poem 1. in prose	18. (Rauschlied; jabje'ma)
280–282	II	1.	18. (Rauschlied; jabje'ma)

Table 1. Texts published in the digital edition and their place in the manuscript and in “Samojedische Volksdichtung” (Castrén 1940).

As can be noted in Table 1, Lehtisalo has not followed Castrén's numbering and divisions in “Samojedische Volksdichtung” (Castrén 1940), but has organized the texts anew according to his own knowledge on the content and structures of the genres. Therefore, the epic poems 1–10 have been published first in “Volksdichtung”, but the next three epic songs, 11–13, are named either as *yarabc* or *xinabc* by Lehtisalo (5–7 in the division II of the digital edition). The text entitled “I Kolwa”, which I have included in the division I, is numbered 14 by Lehtisalo, and described as *singende Geschichte* ‘fairy-tale that is sung’. Numbers 15–18 in “Volksdichtung” have been categorized as *yabye'ma syo*, *Rauschlied* by Lehtisalo. Castrén has numbered them 1–4 (KK MC IX3. js2), and I have included them in the second division of the digital edition, which also concerns poem number eight, unpublished in “Volksdichtung”, and the unnumbered shamanistic ritual song, numbered 19 by Lehtisalo. Likewise, the shorter texts in poetic form, representing individual songs, are situated in division II.

Division III consists of Castrén's manuscript of tales. They have been published as an appendix to “Ethnologiska Föreläsningar” (1857a). Schiefner has also translated the five tales, included in the manuscript and published them as

an appendix the German translation of the “Ethnologische Vorlesungen über die altaischen Völker” (1857b). The tales are numbered up to six, but the sixth tale is apparently mistakenly merely a copy of the fifth one. The texts published now in the fourth division of the digital edition have not been published before. They constitute a manuscript on the songs of the Nenets, and translations of Russian texts. It is unclear who is behind the translations, but archimandrite Veniamin is the most likely candidate.

3.2. Thematic and structural variation of the epic poems and tales

The epic poems numbered 1–10 and the one entitled “I Kolwa” can be generally described as long, mythic narratives. The following nine poems in the digital edition differ from the first ones both in length and in thematic level, but the most notable difference is in the person of the narration: while the first eleven poems are told in the third person, the next nine use first person singular. This forms the most notable division inside the Nenets poetry, most likely important also for the Nenets themselves. On the thematic level, the differences between the poems in groups one and two also seem to be quite evident in Castrén’s notes, which, again, is not always the case on the structural level. In order to show this, I will shortly introduce the plots and themes of the poems and discuss their structural patterns. As more detailed summaries of the texts are attached in the digital edition, I will here discuss only contents on the general level and in accordance to the structures. This will be followed by discussion on the themes and structures of the *sagas* in division III, and their relationship to the epic poetry.

What is clear from the outset is that first division’s poems that share the title *syudbabc* with its variants are of the same kind, and they clearly differ thematically from the texts five and six, named *tadyeybco* and *laxanako* respectively. Consequently, the texts 1–4 and 7–10 represent poems that focus on the growth and development of a young hero or heroes to both obtain a wife and to take care of the honor and wealth of the family. Honor and wealth are the main reasons for war and revenge, which end in concurrent wars and blood feuds that seem to form into chains of themes that can be endlessly combined by gifted performers. The circles of revenge end only if the hero is able to kill all of their enemies, for example by separating entire capes from the mainland, thus drowning the people in the cape. Leaving a baby alive is a certain promise of a continuation of the revenge, as the baby will eventually find out reasons for their orphanhood and engage in a blood feud. One of the motives of the Nenets epic poems is a boy who is living with his elderly grandparents (or just one of them), and who coincidentally finds out that his family has been killed by the people in the neighboring camp, on which he begins to exact revenge. The initial lack of knowledge and the increasing amount available to the hero during their travels in the tundra is one of the leading features of not just *syudbabc*, but also other Tundra Nenets epic poems.

While the poems might be as much about the search for wife as about the honor of the family, the marriage as such is not a motive in the *syudbabc*. The repeating

episodes tend to focus on travelling and warfare. These are naturally surrounded by sections that justify the warfare and blood feud: they often consist of dialogue in which the hero takes part or which s/he accidentally overhears. These episodic sections form the basic structure of a Nenets epic poem. The poems often begin with short description of the main actors and their family or other social connections, and their place of living. The complication for this starting scene is often rendered by (1) reported speech or conversation according to which one of the son or daughter will be married; (2) the straying of the young hero who gets acquainted with people who eventually disclose the hero's past and the injustice; or (3) appearance of a stranger who is the main antagonist of the hero and their family. These are followed by scenes of preparation for the travel or warfare; travelling is accompanied by getting acquainted with allies, either relatives or old friends of the relatives. If the initial motif of the narrative is obtaining wife, the travelling which ends in the neighboring camp and, after some negotiations, the marriage is agreed upon; the married wife stays at the camp of his husband, but if the hero is a man, the couple will leave soon after the marriage. The trouble begins after the marriage: either the wife is mistreated or the husband finds out on the way back home that his wife had already been promised to someone else. Both are reasons for war, which form the central parts of the narratives. The wars continue until everything is avenged and reconciled, after which the narrative comes to its end: the hero comes back to his homeland and begins to live peacefully.

The fifth epic poem differs a great deal thematically, although not so much in structure, from the other poems in the division. It begins with a typical scene: a boy living alone with his grandmother. The boy gets lost and comes to an iron swing, and meets there an older woman who tempts him further. They come to a tent, where the boy meets a girl who disappears during the night. The boy leaves for the underworld, apparently looking for the girl. He comes to a hill that turns out to be a roof of a conical tent. During the night, the boy transforms himself into a ptarmigan, goes down to the tent, hurts his feet in the hot coals and transforms himself into a spark and flies on the breast of a girl and sleeps there, and apparently wounds her honor. In the morning, the family wonders what has happened during the night, and they call a shaman to find it out. The shaman loses all his limbs during the several shamanistic séances described and in the end the shaman has only his head left. At this point, he orders the family to sacrifice reindeer, which saves the shaman, who has now been restored as before by the boy. The boy also shows up and begins to live with the camp community. After having lived for a while the same boy asks the same shaman to see what his way back home will be like. The shaman tells him and gives advice how to overcome the obstacles under way. The boy leaves with his wife, finds his sorrowful mother who has looked for him since his disappearance. The mother dies in tears, and the boy begins to live around the swing.

The poem's motif revolves around shamanizing, which is why the title *tadyeybco* is more than suitable for it. The underlying structure is nevertheless of the same kind. A young, ignorant boy gets lost and tempted and cheated by strangers, and ends up

looking for a girl who is to become his wife. This results in series of shamanistic battles, which exceptionally end up into a friendship and marriage. After the marriage, the boy returns home. The basic structure of these poems, and, as discussed by Simoncsics (2001), Nenets shamanistic poetry more generally, is based on parallelistic mirror structure, according to which the hero's travels always finish where they began in the first place. Very often, the return is structurally the exact mirror of the departure and further travel. While it must be noted that this is not exceptional when compared to narration generally, the Nenets tradition specifically can be interpreted as an allusion of shamanistic travels. This opens up particularly exciting possibilities for further interpretations, especially concerning the mythic or shamanistic themes, but also the structure's possible influence on the poetry with overtly everyday themes. Such are the poems in the division II of the digital edition.

The sixth poem, titled *laxanako*, tells the story of two fishermen living with a giant, who extorts the boys to give him food, threatening to eat them otherwise. The boys teach the giant to seine and to chew food so that he feels sated more quickly. The giant and the boys become allies and it turns out that the giant himself had previously been a man. He sends the boys overseas so that his giant-sons do not eat them. In the end, the sons find their camp and smash their father with their axes, during which time they themselves become human beings and end up drowning in the sea. The giant returns with the boys, marries the boys' mother and they continue to live in their home camp. The *laxanako* is close thematically and structurally to tales in the third division. These tales are mostly shamanistic in content and reflect Castrén's own interest in shamanism.

As pointed out earlier, the most notable difference between the poems in divisions I and II is that, in the first division, the narration goes on in the third person, while in the second division only first person singular (and from time to time plural) is used. The poems in the second division can be divided into two groups, which is reflected in the decisions that Lehtisalo had made in "Samojedische Volksdichtung". While the poems 1–4 are more or less individual and short, 5–8 are longer and autobiographical; 9, on the other hand, is a separate piece of poetry as a whole. Numbers 1–8 can be described as representing Nenets everyday realities and miseries, travels made, not in the mythic otherworld, but rather from tundra to the Russian towns and to Russian regimes of order.

The tales, written down only in Swedish, comprising a part of their own in the manuscript, vary quite a lot thematically. As shown by Pushkarëva (2003b), the Nenets prose tales share multiple features with international folktales, but there are just as many Nenets vernacular features that make them curious enough. Tale number one, entitled "An orphaned boy" by Pushkarëva, tells the story of a man who loses his family, because they do not trust his views about the necessity of reindeer sacrifice. The orphaned boy ends up marrying a woman in a community where the same man kills him three times. Another man with only one leg, one arm and one eye, always comes to save him. After the third time, the orphaned protagonist kills the whole community except his wife and her parents and again dies fighting with the man who has already

killed him three times. The protagonist gets his life back in the underworld, where the one-legged man takes his bones to be burned to ashes by a woman. He gets married to the woman in the otherworld, comes back to this world and loses both his wives and relatives after slaying the man who had killed him as well as the one-legged man. Pushkarëva has indexed this tale as 369C*. The second tale is about sisters who escape a cannibalistic woman, who had already eaten their mother. The fleeing of the sisters reminds of the ATU 313 themes of magic flight, and is continued with the encounters of the sisters with animals, requiring sweet talk. They help the sisters, but lead the cannibalistic woman to death. A boat moving by itself takes the girls away from the island where they escaped, but it also kills the younger sister who disobeys the order that prohibits them from touching the items in the boat. The older sister buries her in a wolf cave. After some time, the elder sister's husband hears speech in the cave, and they take the younger sister away. She gets back to her normal life after some troubles. This is numbered 483* by Pushkarëva, and it is unclear what she is referring to, but it is quite apparent that the tale contains the features of several motifs ranging from the classic magic flight to animistic themes.

The third tale is the only one without clear international counterparts. It is a classic tale about the contests of two shamans combined with motifs about stealing the moon and the sun. The contest ends in the death of the weaker shaman, while the stronger one comes back to his home camp after living as a goose in Novaya Zemlya. In the fourth tale, a man gets first to know the secret of seven maidens swimming in the lake and, after extorting one of them whose clothes he has stolen, he gets the woman to steal the hearts of seven brothers. These brothers have killed the mother of the man, who now kills the first six, and then, after he has given his mother's life back, the seventh. Later, the hearts of everyone get thrown into air by a woman, but they are retrieved, rise in the heaven and become clean and sacred. The tale type number 413D* refers to the beginning of the tale, where someone is hinting about the bathing maidens. The consequent events around the hearts are shortly commented by Castrén: "I hjertat ligger det onda" 'The evil lies in the heart', referring to ideas which counter many western ones that place the goodness in the heart. The fifth tale is, according to Pushkarëva, the only one that has Nenets counterparts collected after Castrén. Pushkarëva has numbered the tale as 1537B*, referring to type "The Corpse Killed Five Times". In addition, the tale refers to ATU 1536(A) "Disposing of the Corpse". In the tale, a man kills his wife, for the ptarmigans promise he will get rich if he does so. Once the man has killed his own wife, he tricks the Khanty leader into believing that he (the Khanty leader) has committed the crime. Willing to compensate for the man's loss, the Khanty leader offers him his daughter as a wife. Afterwards, the man kills a shaman and deceives two hunters and, later, also a Khanty in another camp into believing his story about the death of the woman. Later, the same man tricks his former neighbors into burying their property and themselves, comes back to his two wives and sons and begins to live there in wealth.

While some of the AT(U) type numbers that Pushkarëva has designated for the tales are a bit unclear in their reference, they clearly show that the tales share features of international motives. Furthermore, the tales share a common northern

cultural component which is not only related to the geographical, material or population background of their tellers, but relate to deeper ideas and images of Nenets culture. What is more, the tales also share features with, e.g. Khanty and Mansi and Sakha tales, and, in the future, one should make more of an effort to study features shared by Siberian indigenous peoples. Structurally, the tales differ from epic poems in divisions I and II, for they lack the clear mirror structure. However, the repetitive episodes are shared by tales and epic poems alike.

3.3. Earlier descriptions of the Nenets genre system

As noted by Natal'ja Tereščenko in 1990, and Elena Puškarëva in 2001, Nenets folklore's genre system has not been sufficiently described, and the system is still awaiting a coherent description. Generic systems can naturally be described in several ways depending on the purpose of the classification. This is also clear from the history of Nenets folklore studies. In the following, I will bring out some of the earlier descriptions of Nenets genres and evaluate their significance for discussing Castrén's notes and their genres.

Zinajda Kuprijanova is among the first of the scholars who tried to describe Nenets genre system as a whole both in the introduction to "Epičeskie pesni nencev" 'Nenets epic songs' (1965), and in a textbook "Neneckij fol'klor" 'Nenets folklore' (1960). Kuprijanova's description has been clearly influenced by Toivo Lehtisalo's list of contents in "Juraksamojedische Volksdichtung" (1947). It cannot be considered a genre classification, but rather a pragmatic apparatus for the organization of the material in the book, and it is interesting that it has had such an influence. Although Kurpijanova's description is old, it has influenced several scholars, and I will use it here as a starting point in discussing the Nenets genre system.

- (1) Etiological legends (*etiologičeskie skazanija*)
- (2) Sacrificial prayers; charms (*žertvennye molitvy-zagovory*)
- (3) Legends (*predanija*)
- (4) Ritual poetry (*obradovuju poeziju*)
- (5) Shamanic songs and tales (*šamanskije pesni i skazki*)
- (6) (Fairy-)tales (*skazki*)
- (7) Epic songs (*epičeskie pesni*)
- (8) Lyric songs (*liričeskie pesni*)
- (9) Riddles (*zagadki*)
- (10) Contemporary narratives (*sovremennye rasskazy*) (Kuprijanova 1965: 19.)

According to Kuprijanova, etiological legends, sacrificial prayers, tales, ritual poetry, and contemporary narratives were either badly known or insufficiently recorded. In addition, one should add to these that the category of contemporary narratives refers to “narratives about life in the kolkhozes” (1965: 27), and, although people were certainly narrating their lives, this category is most probably invented for ideological reasons. If we think about these categories from the point of view of Castrén's materials, it is quite clear that most of the texts belong to the category of epic songs. On the other hand, one cannot be sure where to situate the tales recorded by Castrén: they represent etiological and shamanic themes, but, depending on what one means by tales, they could also be situated in the sixth category.

The main problem with Kuprijanova's list is that it downplays Nenets emic genre system of both mixing different kinds of genres in one category (e.g. shamanic songs and tales) and of grouping genres of the same kind (e.g. epic songs). Thus, the description is a projection, to use Kokkonen and Koskinen's terms, and not built solely on the characteristics of Nenets oral poetry. Moreover, the categorization is made from the western scholarly and Soviet ideological points of departure. The western scholarly categories, such as legends, fairy-tales, epic and lyric songs do not fit to describe Nenets generic system from its own point of view. However, they do offer the readers who share western genre concepts an idea about the possible contents and structures of Nenets oral tradition. The Soviet ideological weighting, on the other hand, downplays the religious or shamanistic contents and functions of the Nenets oral tradition, and the ways in which shamanism and mythic qualities penetrate the whole oral tradition. Likewise, Kuprijanova's note of the small quantity of the recordings or poor knowledge of religious traditions is in contradiction with the earlier research that had concentrated mainly on the mythology and shamanism of Nenets oral tradition (Castrén 1852: 198–212; Lehtisalo 1927; Žitkov 1913; Veniamin 1855).

Contrary to Kuprijanova, Elena Puškarëva (2001) has described Nenets genres departing from the emic terms (see Table 2 on the following page). Puškarëva's list represents most of the Nenets emic terms for genres, omitting only the names used for genres that are explicitly named ‘Russian’ or that denote to Russian traditions, e.g. *luca wadako* ‘Russian fairy-tale’ or *yanggebc* ‘Russian song’, both extremely popular among the Nenets according to my own experience. Examining both lists above, it is quite obvious that both the researchers and the Nenets use several different criteria for classifying Nenets genres – which again is typical for any classificatory system (Frog, Koski & Savolainen 2016). There are categories for prose (*laxanako*, *wadako*, *wa'al*, experience narratives) and sung (*syudbabc*, *yarabc*, *xinabc*, *syo*, *sambdabc*) narration separating the mode of telling, but also for mythic (*laxanako*, *syudbabc*, *yarabc*, *yudero'ma*), historical (*xinabc*, *wa'al*, *syo*), and mundane (experience narratives) stories that again highlight the contents of the narratives; children's lore has been separated from other oral traditions, and the sung tradition seems to be divided between epic (*syudbabc*, *yarabc*, *xinabc*) and what Puškarëva calls lyric (*syo*), which focuses attention on form. Puškarëva's description of the Nenets genres takes the geographical (but not historical) variation into account. Consequently, she infers that

Name of the genre	Explanation
<i>Xebyidya laxanako</i>	Myth, etiological and cosmogonical narrative, myth-tale
<i>Laxanako</i>	General concept for few genres
<i>Wadako</i>	Fairy-tale
<i>Syudbabc</i>	Epic song syudbabc
<i>Yarabc</i>	Epic song yarabc
<i>Xinabc, xinc</i>	Third category of epic songs with historic elements; occasionally personal songs attracted by epic characteristics
<i>Syo</i>	General term for songs, chiefly lyrical
<i>Yabye syo</i>	Individual song
<i>Yorota syo</i>	Humoristic song
<i>Nyukubc</i>	Children's song
<i>Wekolabc</i>	Children's teasing song
<i>Ngacyeki laxanako</i>	Children's fairy tale
<i>Sambdabc</i>	Shamanic singing
<i>Xobco</i>	Riddle
<i>Talyerye'mya</i>	(Personal) experience narrative
<i>Sew' talyerye'mya</i>	Experience narrative about something that has been seen
<i>Yudero'ma</i>	Dream narrative
<i>Wa'al</i>	Legend
<i>Yilye'mya</i>	Life narrative

Table 2. Nenets folklore genres according to Puškarëva (Puškarëva 2001: 23).

wadako and *laxanako* refer to the same kinds of prose narratives, but as *wadako* is used mainly in the westernmost living areas of the Nenets, *laxanako* tends to exist in the central and eastern areas. The meaning of *xinabc* varies so that in the western areas it refers to long individual songs and, in the east, it is a category for epic songs with both historical and mythic content.

This already infers that the genre system has always varied depending on the time and place, which means that long time periods and wide geographical areas require some level of generalization at the expense of specificity. What must also be borne in mind is the flexibility of the generic systems, which means that the categorizations such as the ones described above are good starting points and general rules of thumb for discussing the actual use of genres by the performers. The former research has described the Nenets genre system as coherent and unquestionable, at least when it comes to Nenets and good performers. This comes up in statements such as: "There are several terms for concrete forms of oral art in Nenets. Good performers never mix up the terms with each other." (Kuprijanova 1965: 20.) In the research literature, this kind of attitude has meant that the researcher should discover the conceptions and inner logic of the generic system that is out there. This has led to refinements in the descriptions of genres in ways that do not always make the classification and the genres in them clearer or more understandable. This is especially apparent when the researchers have described the generic conventions around Nenets epic songs.

Zinajda Kuprijanova has defined epic songs *syudbabc* and *yarabc* according to their contents, poetics and age. Her definitions rely on a Marxist historicist view combined with the so-called text-centered paradigm emphasizing the more or less stable character of folklore texts. According to Kuprijanova, *syudbabc* represent the most archaic genre of Nenets epic poetry and is related to the early stages of the disintegration of the patriarchal family society, which it glorifies and idealizes. The *yarabc*, on the other hand, are related to the latest stage of the disintegration of the patriarchal society, which it idealizes but also criticizes by pointing out those who suffer inside the system. According to Kuprijanova, this is reflected in the ways in which the main themes of the epic songs, i.e. marriage and the quest for a wife, blood vengeance, and battle over reindeer herds or possessions, are dealt with. While the *syudbabc* tend to be glorifying and solemn, the *yarabc* might bring out more mundane, even humoristic features and highlight the details of everyday life. Moreover, according to Kuprijanova, the *yarabc* describe in more detail and length the inner life of the hero, their thoughts and dialogues, while the *syudbabc* centers on the flow of events. This is related to the point of view of the narration: the more distant *syudbabc* are told in the third person, while the *yarabc* are told in the first person so that the narrator is always performing the role of the hero. Kuprijanova also mentions that the *yarabc* story realm is closer to the contemporary world of the narrators: the place names and the ethnic groups around the Nenets point to the everyday realms, whereas the heroes of the *syudbabc* have names denoting to their appearance or to their reindeer, and the places are not named at all. (Kuprijanova 1965: 28–55.)

The archaic nature of the *syudbabc* and the later origin of the *yarabc* has been repeated by most of the researchers of Nenets songs and singing (Xomič 1995: 258–265; Tereščenko 1990; Niemi 1998: 55–60; Puškarëva 2001), notwithstanding their engagement to a theoretical background. This seems to be confirmed by the fact that the *yarabc* texts refer the historical realms, whereas the *syudbabc* do not. This historical argument gives the classification its basis but it has also prevented the researchers from evaluating how different these genres really are, and in what ways they are different. Recently, scholars have begun to emphasize the interaction of the genres and their fluid borders, which has again shifted attention away from the structural and contentual characteristics of the genres themselves. Thus, for example, Tereščenko has noted:

It is obvious that there are no clear boundaries between the genres of Nenets folklore that we have described. The performers themselves can characterize one text as a *syudbabc* that has elements of *yarabc* and another as *yarabc* with elements of *syudbabc*. There are also *laxanako* that are close to *yarabc* due to the nature of the events that take place in them, and so forth. (Tereščenko 1990: 31.)

She herself then characterizes the texts published in her collection as “*syudbabc*, *syudbabc* with elements of magic tale, *syudbabcarka*, *syudbabcarka yarabc* with elements of magic tale, *syudbabcarka laxanako*, *yarabc*, *yarabc* with elements of

syudbabc, yarabcarka with elements of fairy tale.” (Tereščenko 1990: 31.) The terms *syudbabcarka* and *yarabcarka* are translated by Tereščenko as ‘half syudbabc’ and ‘half yarabc’, and as she denotes they are in use among the Nenets themselves. The narration of the *syudbabcarka* is, according to Tereščenko, more realistic and they come close to the *yarabc*. *Yarabcarka*, again, are tales that are close to the themes of *yarabc*. (Tereščenko 1990: 26–31.) This list lacks clarifications beyond the texts themselves, and is clearly formulated to represent the flexibility or porosity of the generic boundaries, and the interaction of the genres in folklore performances and texts deriving from them. But it fails to discuss what the performers or researcher think that the elements of *syudbabc* and *yarabc* are: what is moving between the genres, how and why. Later, the picture of the generic system got somewhat more complicated, as discussed by Elena Puškarëva in her monograph on *xinabc*, a third genre of Nenets epic poetry. The term *xinabc* or *xinc* is a general noun referring to Nenets songs, but it has special, and apparently local, meanings. *Xinabc* can refer to songs that are autobiographical in nature but sung and poetically structured in the same manner as *yarabc*. These kinds of *xinabc* can be found in Toivo Lehtisalo’s “Juraksamojedische Volksdichtung” (1947), but also in Castrén’s notes. The *xinabc* that Puškarëva is treating in her monograph are not autobiographical but more or less historical in nature.⁷ They are told in the first person, and are thematically close to *syudbabc* and *yarabc*, i.e. they describe travelling, marriage, warfare etc. According to Puškarëva, the *xinabc* are of later origin than *syudbabc* and *yarabc*.

The picture of the generic system gets further complicated when one thinks about the genre of *laxanako*, already mentioned by Tereščenko, or especially *xebyidya laxanako*, translated as myth-tale by Puškarëva (2003b). Some of the epic songs are thematically and through performative strategies related to *laxanako* or *xebyidya laxanako* in ways that sometimes make it difficult to assess which genre we are dealing with. Moreover, there are so called *syosawej laxanako* ‘laxanakos to be sung’ which are sung in ways described below. (Puškarëva 1983.) The *laxanako* number six in Castrén’s notes is an example of a *syosawej laxanako*. As already mentioned, it differs thematically from the rest of the texts in the first division with its explicit motif of the interaction between humans and giants, which again is one of the themes in prose *laxanakos* (Puškarëva 2003b).

The above-mentioned classifications and descriptions form our basic knowledge about the Nenets oral tradition’s genre system. They are all based on texts collected and later assessed by researchers, who have had their own points of departure for the classifications. The descriptions have not been totally research-centered, but the researchers have worked both on genre names, texts, their contents and structures in defining the system. Overemphasizing the historical nature of the epic texts has led Kuprijanova to downplay the mythic qualities of the poetry, which has left its mark on the understanding that *syudbabc* are more archaic than the *yarabc*. On the other hand, the descriptions also tend to emphasize the historical or chronological nature of the *yarabc* and *xinabc*, even though they share the mythic and shamanistic story realms

7. Puškarëva (2000: 3) uses the formulation “events of chronological nature”.

with the *syudbabc*. (See also Niemi and Lapsui 2004.) As Tereščenko decided to emphasize the fluid nature of genres and their borders, she ended up, in my view, creating more problems, as it is not clear what the elements are that are moving between the genres. What is important in Tereščenko's formulation, though, is that she points out that the performers themselves are not very strict about the genre classification.

Finally, Andrei Golovněv has discussed Nenets genres focusing on their fluid nature. According to Golovněv, *xinabc* as a general category refers to singing, the mode of performance on a more general level. The *syudbabc* are narratives about gods, while the *yarabc* tell about humans who turn into gods or spirits after the hardships described in the narrative. The *xinabc*, in Golovněv's classification, are narratives about humans and deities alike, but they are framed as a telling of Minyeko, a mythic being. *Laxanakos* are tales that are generally told, although they can also be sung according to Golovněv. The difference between *laxanako* and *wa'al*, which are also prose narratives, seems to be more about length and detail rather than content. (Golovněv 2004: 10–11.) According to Golovněv, the performers think it their responsibility to make the narratives their own. This can be seen or heard in the ways that the gods and spirits switch their places in the narrative structures, but it is also represented through a “generic freedom”: genre is just a tuning fork for the listeners. (Golovněv 2004: 9.) By this, I think, Golovněv refers to what has been called “frames of expectation” in recent folkloristic discussions. (Siikala 1984; Hanks 1987.)

3.4. Defining the Genres in Castrén's Corpus

The Tundra Nenets oral texts collected by Castrén could be categorized naturally in several different ways: in addition to Castrén's own categorization, we could discuss the texts' relationship to later collections and categorizations used therein or we could use the Nenets emic system as a starting point. These all lack detailed knowledge about the principles according to which the categorizations have been done. The Nenets own flexible way of relating to their ways of speaking is of no help if one wants to understand the basic differences and similarities between the texts that Castrén has collected. In the following, I will sketch the objectives Castrén had in organizing the notes in his three divisions and discuss the interconnections between the texts collected. Consequently, the systematic picture of the genres of Nenets oral tradition will still not be done, as the materials at hand do not allow me to do it.

As noted already, the difference between divisions I and II is in the point of view of the narration: the texts are all poetic in form, but while third person singular is used in the poems of the division I, the narratives in second division use first person singular, sometimes plural. This is a rough segregation, and I suggest that it has been done, at least in the beginning, to differentiate the so called epic and lyric genres from each other. At the time, the lyric poetry was defined through its subjective point of view: lyric poetry told about the feelings, hardships and worries of the singer. The epic poetry was, in this scheme, historical, mythical, and collective. The extract below suggests this distinction: Castrén is contrasting heroic songs (*hjeltesånger*) with

lyrical ones, remarking that the Samoyeds tend to value those people who can sing the heroic songs over anyone who can produce songs about one's feelings. Moreover, the first poems in the second division represent personal or individual songs. Lehtisalo has categorized them as *yabye''ma syo* 'drunken songs', and they are similar to the poetic and short songs studied by Niemi and Lapsui (2004). These individual songs' meanings are often opaque to outsiders: they frequently refer to the central events in the life of the ego of the song. Their general context of performance is get-togethers where alcohol is consumed. Their social significance as a self-portrait of an individual reduce the possible contexts of performance, as these songs should not be performed – except in the case of the individual themselves – in the presence of the person about whom the song is sung. They thus *are* different from the epic poems told in third person in the first division, which are not primarily personal or subjective and focus on events in the otherworld and mythical past. The rest of the songs in the second division, on the other hand, come close to the individual songs in their themes: they refer to concrete places in the contemporary areas of living of the 19th century Nenets (*Salya' xarad* 'Salekhard'; *Xo' xarad* 'Berëzov'; *Tobol' xarad* 'Tobolsk'). They also bring out very concrete characters named according to their ethnicity (*luca, xabyi*), and the encounters of the Nenets with them. Compared to the character names such as *Iron Belt, Black Woman, Slim Hosts, Hornless Reindeer Ox, Seven Tabrikos* and *Seven Icy Ones* in the poems of the first division one, which index mythic and imaginative worlds, the ethnonyms of the poems in the division II are much closer to the everyday realms of the Nenets. The poems 5–8 in the second division could be characterized as autobiographical, and as such they fit to the concept of lyrical poetry. I would, however, point that they differ in length and style from the poems 1–4, which must be the reason for Lehtisalo's categorizations. This said, I cannot evaluate why Lehtisalo has characterized poem seven as *yarabc*, as it fits both structurally and thematically to other poems in the division, which he names as *xinabc*.

To conclude on the poetic forms in Castrén's notes, I would emphasize that the sung poetic forms offers Nenets a wide variety of means to express both collectively and culturally and subjectively significant moments of their life. The main difference in the notes lies between the point of view of the narration, which separated culturally important mythic and heroic songs from the more subjective and communally significant contents from each other. The mythical or shamanistic themes, though, cut across the entirety of the material so that the subjective *yabye''ma* songs have shamanistic themes as well as the explicitly mythical *syudbabc*. What is not brought out in Castrén's corpus is that the *yarabc* and *xinabc* might also deal explicitly with mythical themes, and thus the line between them is as flexible as it seems to be between the *xinabc* and *yabye''ma* in Castrén's notes.

The prose narratives in Castrén's notes represent clearly mythic and shamanistic themes. They could be characterized as *laxanako* or *xebyidya laxanako*, which raises the question about their relationship to the *laxanako* in the first division. I would also suggest, in accordance with Lehtisalo, that the poem titled "I Kolwa" could be characterized as *laxanako* or *wadako*. This poem is thematically close to the European wonder

tales, and apparently Nenets have categorized many of them as *laxanako* or *wadako*. The *laxanako* tend to focus on mythical times, since they have etiological features and magical elements that do not always arise from Nenets shamanistic worldview.

4. Entextualization and the Performance

The prose narratives in Castrén's notes are available only in Swedish, which makes it utterly clear that they do not even try to encode the actual performance of the tales. One should remain similarly cautious when reading and analysing the poems. As Castrén was making his notes by hand, he made the notes most probably from dictation. This was the practice among the researchers of Nenets folklore up until 1959, when Zinajda Kuprijanova carried out the first tape-recorded collections of Nenets epic poems⁸. What is more, not all researchers have presented the epic poems in poetic lines, but particularly Soviet scholars, Kuprijanova (1965) and Tereščenko (1990) presented the texts in stichic layout without marks that would indicate poetic lines. Niemi (1998) has noted that this might have purely technical reasons: the line layout would have resulted in multiplied amount of pages in the publications. What Niemi also points out is that the scholars were most probably also uncertain about the structure of the text lines, as most of the materials were collected by hand, and possibly after the actual performance with the help of the performer. Besides, the line structure of the Nenets poems has been an academic puzzle that was solved only after the linguists attested the relevance of vowel reduction in Tundra Nenets in the 1980s and 1990s (Helimski 1989; Janhunen 1986; Salminen 1997). Before that, many scholars considered (see also Lehtisalo 1922; Castrén 1855: 168n), in the lines of Castrén, that the poems do not have a metric structure:

I Samojedernes sånger öfverhufvud är det ej fråga om ett och annat enskildt ord, än mindre om versmått och pedes. Vet sångaren, hvad han har att saga, så kommer ordet af sig sjelf, och passer det ej till melodin, så halkar man öfver en och annan stafvelse eller tänjer den längre ut, allt efter som melodin fordrar. Men om Samojeden ej afsjunger, utan blott reciterar ett qvåde, då är han angeläden om en viss rhythm, som äfven mitt öra vant sig vid. Denna rhythm låter ej analytisera sig till något bestämdt versmått, men likväl röjer den en viss benägenhet för tvåstafviga trocheer. (Castrén 1852: 202.)

'Neither separate words nor meter and foot are in the main role in the Samoyed songs. If the singer knows what he wants to say, the words come by itself, and if they do not fit the melody, then one slides over one or two syllables or stretches it as the melody requires. But if the Samoyed is not performing in singing, but recites the poem, he has to take a certain rhythm into account, one that even my ears got used to. This rhythm cannot be analysed as any particular meter, but it still has some kind of tendency towards dimetric trochee.'

8. Lehtisalo's recordings evaluated by Niemi (1998) are a notable exception.

Although Péter Hajdú had suggested certain coherence in Nenets oral poetry (Hajdú 1978), it was not until 1989 that Eugene Helimski proved that, despite the octasyllabic lines on Nenets ritual poetry, the lines in Nenets oral poetry follow the hexasyllabic principle. Both Helimski and Hajdú referred to the so-called basic text or line, where the abundant additional syllables of the performance were not taken into account. Later, Jarkko Niemi (1998; 2016) dealt with the metre in the sung performance, and I shall discuss the possibilities of analysing the sung performance in the texts from Castrén's notes.

The differences between texts derived from sung and dictated performances, or the differences between sung and dictated performances, have been discussed widely in the folklore studies during recent decades. Furthermore, it has been shown that the textualization of any texts results in varying forms depending on the person doing the textualizing. A reasonable starting point for assessing the relationship between the original and its copy is to consider that the copy may both contain materials that are lacking from the original and also lack some characteristics of the original; some of the elements may have been transformed into new ones. While the uttered stretch of speech may be transformed into a textual representation in multiple ways, it is interesting to discuss the possible regularities in the process: how is speech or singing converted into a text and what parts of orality or textuality do these representations refer to? (Urban 1996; Haviland 1996.)

Pertti Anttonen has discussed the textualization processes related to the folklore collecting practices among the Finnish scholars during the 19th century. He has emphasized the overtly political nature of both collecting and selection processes and their relationship to the formation of nationalistic ideologies and policies. Anttonen has also convincingly shown how the textual artefacts that were created for the archival practices formed yet another layer in the textualization process and our understanding of tradition in the context of modern. (Anttonen 2012; Anttonen 2005.) The ideological and scholarly background of Castrén and his Tundra Nenets folklore notes have already been discussed in this article, and I would like to turn attention to the possibilities of sketching the textualization processes from the Nenets point of view. This has to be done based on the materials themselves, on the recent studies on the transformation taking place between sung and dictated performances and their textualization on the what we know about the performance of Tundra Nenets folklore.

When assessing the accuracy of Castrén's notes, one should bear in mind that he has been considered particularly exact by his contemporaries and followers alike. When noting down in languages that he himself was just learning, Castrén developed a phonetic transcription style that was not used, e.g. by the collectors of Kalevala-metric poetry, until the late 19th century. For example, Axel August Borenius, who has been considered one of the first to produce linguistically accurate notes on Kalevala-metric poetry, considered Castrén as his model in transcription (Lauerma 2004: 8). Nonetheless, the detailed studies on Kalevala-metric poetry have shown that, as the researchers were noting down the poetry from dictation, many linguistically and performatively significant details were left out of the transcriptions. Petri Lauerma has stated that especially the older transcriptions of Kalevala-metric poetry are linguistically problematic, as the collectors have used

abbreviations and written in shorthand, which is why mistakes have appeared in the process of interpretation of the stenographic notes. The collectors have also modified the texts to match their native language and dialect or understanding of language use, which again has downplayed the Karelian or dialectal qualities of the expression. While these observations do not directly apply to Nenets folklore notes, as Castrén did not write shorthand, and could not have any idea of proper Nenets in his mind, they reveal the more general views about how to make folklore notes at the time. The researchers were not after exact pronunciation or performative details, but they were looking for “the said of the speaking” (or singing), to use the expression Anna-Leena and Jukka Siikala have taken from Ricoeur. Siikala and Siikala make a crucial point, noting that in the 19th and early 20th century scholars were – despite their consciousness of different renditions in time and place – after documents that would tell about the history of the humankind. Consequently, they were not documenting the tellings (as contextually meaningful utterances), but the tales (as textual inscriptions of the tellings). (Siikala & Siikala 2005: 26–32).

Another important point made by Siikala and Siikala is that the informants are textualizing themselves (also Silverstein and Urban 1996). This is also evident in the results based on Kalevala-metric poetry and in this sense Lauerma's observations about what happens to sung poem when it is dictated are applicable to Nenets materials. According to Lauerma, the sung forms are usually longer and linguistically more conservative than the dictated texts, where one can find expressions typical for everyday language and shorter forms, e.g. of lines, which has been compensated with additional vowels and words. There are also changes on lexical and morphosyntactic levels (Lauerma 2004: 24–32, 91–93; see also Kallio 2013: 146; Saarinen 2015). Moreover, Elena Puškarëva has stated that the limited time frames of recording result in “denser narration, shorter episodes, incompleteness of the poems, simplification of language, lack of coherent background of the narrative, and lack of the remarks of the listeners among other things.” (Puškarëva 2000: 18–19.) Puškarëva's observations are based on *xinabc* and the remarks are made in more general level compared to Lauerma's very detailed analysis of Kalevala-metric poetry. The simplification of language most certainly refers to the appearance of everyday language, not forms that might be characterized as a special register of sung epic poetry, which agrees well with Lauerma's observations on Kalevala-metric poetry. With denser narration, shorter episodes, incompleteness of the poems, and lack of coherent background Puškarëva refers to the contents of the poems, and the overall tendency of the performers to omit lines, possibly entire episodes from the narrative, which results in incompleteness, incoherence and difficulties in understanding the narrative and its meanings. All of the observations resonate with remarks made on the textualization of oral epics around the world. (Honko (ed.) 2000)

In addition to the remarks made about the contents and expressive structures of the poems, Puškarëva also refers to the dialogic nature of the performance of Nenets epic poems. Folklore performance is by its nature universally dialogical, but in order to understand what kinds of dialogical elements Nenets performance has, I shall introduce descriptions and analyses of the performance.

4.1. Descriptions of the Performance of Nenets Epic Poetry

Some of the differences between sung and dictated lines appear in a more general performative level so that they affect the appearance of the whole text. This does not refer only to the melody of the song, which is obvious, but also to expressions and the dialogical nature of performance of Nenets epic poetry. These performative strategies have been lately described thoroughly by Jarkko Niemi and Elena Puškarëva.

Jarkko Niemi has described the performance of Nenets sung poetry especially from an ethnomusicological point of view. According to Niemi, the Nenets singing style is based on six parameters through which one can open the features of the performance. The performance is (1) based on singing and human voice and (2) on solo singing. Instruments are marginal and, if they are used, they do not accompany the singing, but are used to create a special cloud of noises (also Dobžanskaja 2008: 53–65, 88–91). (3) The ranges of melodies are narrow, as the singer usually uses few tones: a melodic line circulates around the fundamental tone, and only in longer performances the pitch rise in the process of singing, resulting in breaks in singing and a start of a new melodic passage from a lower level. (4) The melodic rhythm is processual and varying and it is affected by the stress pattern of the syllables more than anything else. This is reflected also in the basic structures of the songs, where (5) the isometric text and melodic lines are based on hexa- or octosyllabic meter. (6) The singers tend to produce the singing voice in the back of the throat. (Niemi 1998: 79–82.) I would like to highlight and open the points four and five, as the remainder of the points cannot be even speculated on with regard to Castrén's notes. On the other hand, we can discuss the metric structures of the notes. In the performance of epic poetry, the musical unit corresponding to the text line can be considered the main unit of the poem. The syllabic lines can be grouped into two: in the first group, the number of word-forming syllables is even and the second uneven respectively. These two groups produce their own manifestations in the melodic rhythm, which is based on the predictability of the stress patterns between spoken and sung lines. Thus, the stressed syllables go unchanged and the unstressed tend to change into specific sung syllables. These changes give more emphasis on the unstressed syllables. The performers add so called supplementary syllables in the word or line borders. The syllables, often *-ngei*, but also *-[ng]ow*, do not carry any direct meaning, but they give the sung lines their specific rhythm and rhyme (on the syllables, also Simoncsics 2001). As noted by Niemi (1998: 38), the Nenets transcribers tend to omit the supplementary syllables in their transcriptions. This has also been done, most likely, by Castrén's informants. The dictation has also resulted in shorter and longer lines: not all the lines in Castrén's notes are hexasyllabic, although most of them are. I here refer only to Niemi's judgement according to which dictation as a method of collection "has resulted in a collection of basic texts, which would be problematic as material for metric studies even if we knew how the basic text was transformed into a sung text." (Niemi 1998: 245.)

What is important to keep in mind, however, is that the Nenets themselves do not consider it a problem to dictate whole poems or just parts of them. This again

emphasizes the flexibility of performative practices. The singing most certainly is and has been an index of heightened form of speech, i.e., of performance, but there are several other keys to performance in Nenets oral tradition that also tend to be missing in Castrén's notes. One of the most important is the dialogic nature of the oral tradition. This comes out in the performance only and it is related to the interaction (1) between the performer and the repeater, (2) between the performer and their audience and (3) the performer and the personification of the text or genre.

The interaction between the performer and the audience is often mentioned, but it has not been studied in detail. Castrén already noted in his travel notes:

Med en nästan religiös andakt lyssna åhörarne till hvarje ord, som flyter från sångarens läppar. Liksom Schamanen, sitter äfven sångaren på en pall eller ett skrin i midten af rummet, medan åhörarne intaga sina säten rundt omkring honom. I Tomska Gouvernementet har jag anmärkt, att sångaren genom sina åtbörder vill ådagalägga ett slags deltagande för sina hjeltar. Hans kropp skälfver, rösten är darrande, med sin venstra hand betäcker han städse det tårfulla ögat, medan den högra omsluter ett pilskäft, hvares spets better emot golfvet. Åhörarna sitta merendels stumma, men då en kämpe antingen faller eller på en vingsnabb örn svingar sig upp till molnen, instämma de i ett *hee*, motsvarande vårt *hurra!*

Ett vida mindre anseende åtnjuta jemförelsevis de lyriska sångerna. Också fortgår de ej ifrån slägte till slägte, utan föda och förgå med stunden. Man anser det ej löna mödan att bevara dem i minnet, emedan hvar och en tilltror sig förmågan att kunna uttrycka sitt hjertas fröjd och smärta. Att dikta en visa, anses bland Samojeerne för en ringa sak; men att sjunga och väl exequera visan, detta är en sällsynt och högt skattad talang. Rösten och melodien utgöra enligt Samojedens begrepp det förnämsta i en lyrisk sång; på innehållet gör man ej större anspråk, än att det på ett enkelt och lättfattigt sätt uttrycker vanliga känslor och föreställningar. (1846: 50.)

‘The listeners listen with almost a religious devotion every word that flow from the mouth of the singer. The singer is sitting, like a shaman, on a stool or a box in the middle of the room, and the listeners take their seats around him. I noticed in Tomsk Government that the singer wants to show sort of sympathies towards the heroes through his gestures. His body is trembling, his voice shivering, he covers his tearful eyes with his left arm at the same time as the right arm grabs an arrow pointing to the floor. The listeners sit mostly silent, but when the fighter either loses or rises up hovering on the fast eagle to the skies, they join in *hee*, which is equivalent to our *hurray!*

The lyric songs are valued to a considerably lesser extent. They neither are passed from generation to another, but are born and vanish in the moment. They think that it is not worth remembering them, as anyone is able to express their heart's joys and mourning. The dictation of a song is not considered a big thing among Samoyeds, but to sing a song and to perform it well is a rare and respected talent.’

The remarks about the insight into and participation in the narration by the audience are confirmed by, e.g. Puškarëva (2000: 20), Tereščenko (1990: 17) and Kuprijanova (1965). They all refer to an understanding that a successful performance is more than just poetic dictation or singing: it is the narration of entertaining and significant events that arises excitement and reciprocity among the listeners.

The ideal performance of an epic poem is accompanied by an assistant, a *teltanggoda*, who repeats each line either verbatim or explaining or commenting on its contents. The role of the repetition is crucial in the sense that, if there are no suitable *teltanggodas* around, the singer might repeat the lines themselves (Niemi 1998: 61), and sometimes the collectors themselves have served as assistants (Puškarëva 2000: 20). According to Tereščenko, the *teltanggoda* emphasizes some specific moment of the narration, but from the point of view performance and entextualization this performative strategy might offer some further points of views to the assessment of Castrén's notes. The repetitive structure – a consequence of the dialogue between the main performer and the *teltanggoda* – results in a form of parallelism which is typical not only for the epic genres but also for *laxanako* (Puškarëva 2003b), building one more link between these genres. They also bind these genres to shamanic ritual songs, where the *teltanggoda* is not only repeating but assisting the shaman during the séance as a whole. The *teltanggoda* is not mentioned by Castrén, nor are the lines repeated in his notes, which indicate once again that the texts were most probably dictated to him. The interaction of the main singer and the assistant opens one more possibility to evaluate what Castrén's notes represent. To discuss this and to demonstrate the interaction of the main singer, here called *xinabc' meta* 'the owner of the *xinabc*, the performer of the *xinabc*', and the *teltanggoda*, I present eight initial utterances of a *xinabc* "Xansosyada-Vera" 'Mad-Vera', published by Elena Puškarëva, in Table 3. Note that the numbered utterances do not always represent metrical lines, but performative entities that are repeated by the assistant.

As can be seen from the extract, the main performer of the *xinabc* sings the text, adding the vowels and syllables *-ŋei*, *-ei*, *-naŋei*, *-ow* to the beginning of the lines, word stem, and word or line endings, creating quite complex surface structure to the text. This not only adds to the length of the words and lines, but also affects the vowels in unstressed positions, as described by Niemi. From the outset, this makes it hard to follow the actual basic text. The *teltanggoda*'s utterances, on the other hand, very often represent the basic text line unavailed of the additional vowels and syllables. Moreover, the *teltanggoda* tends to repeat the previous line sung, recognizing the line ending because of the longer passages of supplementary syllables⁹. The *teltanggoda* does not always only repeat the basic text as such, but they might bring some lines together so that they form full sentences, as e.g. in utterance three, where the *teltanggoda* combines the lines of utterance two and three, making the first line consisting of a participial phrase *xinabc xomad* 'After the *xinabc* had found' complete with the ending *yud po yilye* 'he lived ten years'. However, the *teltanggoda* does not always

9. I would like to thank the anonymous reviewer for pointing this out.

1	Хынабц' мэта:	Хансосядаҕэй Вэраҕэй	Mad-Vera
	Тэлтанҕода:	Ханзусяда Вэра	Mad-Vera
2	Х.М.:	ҕэ-ий-ҕаней хынабцэйҕэй хомадэйҕэй-	After that xinabc found him
	Т.:	хынабц хомад,	After that xinabc found him
3	Х.М	ҕээй юд боовҕэй илеҕоов	Lives ten years
	Т.:	хынабц хомад юд по иле.	After xinabc found him, he lived ten years.
4	Х.М	ҕаней. Юд поҕэй ханзусиҕэй	Ten years fools around
	Т.:	Юд по ханзуси.	Ten years fools around.
5	Х.М	ҕаней, Хансосядаҕэй Вэраҕээй ҕаней сёридовҕэй ҕэдалэй ҕаней, Хансосядаҕэй Вэраҕээ-	Mad-Vera sings all the time, Mad-Vera
	Т.:	Хансосяда Вэра сёрнда ҕэдалы.	Mad-Vera sings all the time.
6	Х.М	эй ҕаней юдм боҕэй ханзосиэй ҕаней. Нисядаҕэй маси- нёовҕэй	Ten years he fools. The father said:
	Т.:	Нисяда масью:	His father said:
7	Х.М	ҕаней, масинёвҕэй ҕаней: «Тюку ханзусин хансосял- мадм». «Тюку ханзоси- ма, — Ханзо- сялҕэймаҕадэймҕэй ҕаней». Нисядаҕэй масинёовҕэй ҕаней: «Хыйвоовноов яхано- овҕэйов тадебя ҕод яҕунив, хыйва яхана».	Said: "I am tired of this mad. This is crazy," said "I am tired of him." The father said: "There is no shaman in nearby, nearby places."
	Т.:	«Тадебя ҕод яҕунив».	"There is no shaman."
8	Х.М	Манив: «Хансосялмадм, хансосялэйҕэймадэймэй ҕаней». Манив: «Хансосялмадм».	He said: "I am tired, I am tired." Said: "I am tired."
	Т.:	Манив: «Хансосялмадм».	Said: "I am tired."

Table 3. Initial utterances of the *xinabc* "Xansosyada-Vera" (Puškarëva 2000: 110).

produce a basic text of everything the main performer has sung, as in utterance six, where the main singer is coming back to a foregoing line, and, after that, continuing with a new line framing reported speech. The *teltanggoda* is repeating only the frame, *nyisyada masynyu* ‘His father said’. Same kind of phenomenon happens in the utterance seven, where the main performer presents the words of the father, “I am tired of the mad one” in parallel lines, and then states that there is no shaman nearby; the *teltanggoda* repeats only the last line about the absence of the shaman. As the main performer tends to produce more than one metrical line in one utterance, the utterances of the *teltanggoda* are often longer than one line. In this example, the *teltanggoda*’s utterances range from six to twelve syllables long. While the main tendency is that the *teltanggoda* is repeating what the main performer is telling, the *teltanggoda* is not doing it word by word, but rather producing meaningful wholes by either adding to the main singer’s basic text or by omitting some of their words. The narrative, in other words, is constantly brought out in at least two versions within the same performance: the first version is sung with expletives and the typical Nenets singing style and a rhythm that is tied in the syllabic structure of the text. The second version is most often dictated without expletives and is not necessarily tied to the metrical structure at all. The alternation between the main performer and the assistant produce another kind of dialogic rhythm into the performance: it arranges the metrical lines into larger wholes, here called utterances, which are produced in dialogue by the *teltanggoda*.

This kind of dialogic nature is altogether missing from Castrén’s notes, as are, naturally, the other features of sung performance. However, it is quite possible that the lines that were dictated to Castrén represent same sorts of lines that a *teltanggoda* would have produced. This is a hypothesis and a suggestion which is more or less impossible to attest, but it would explain the structure of the lines in Castrén’s notes, which every now and then extend the hexasyllabic structure. Moreover, if we cannot be convinced that the lines in Castrén’s notes would be representing the *teltanggoda*’s lines as such, the dialogic nature of the performance and the constant existence of both sung and dictated lines in the performance of Nenets epic poems explains the willingness and ability of the informants to dictate epic poetry to Castrén, and to the researchers following him. It also suggests that the dictated lines might represent another half of the performance of epic poetry, not the sung performance, but an entextualization that has been as much alive in the performance as the sung lines themselves.

In addition to the dialogue with the assistant, the main performer of the epic poetry is considered to get their words from a personification of the narrative or the genre. This metapoetic notion is not related only to epic poems, but also to prose narratives such as *laxanakos* and *wa’’al*. (Puškarëva 2003a: 216–241; Bobrikova 1965.) The personification of the narrative has been recently quite thoroughly dealt with by Elena Puškarëva, who argues that the personification of the song reflects the relationship of the performer with the otherworld or cosmos. Puškarëva’s analysis has brought new perspectives to the assessment of the personification, since previously it has been dealt with only as a

narrative device, which the narrators use to structure narration (Tereščenko 1990: 25, 33; Kuprijanova 1965: 37–38). Puškarëva's views get further support from recent knowledge by Gennadii Puiko, interviewed by Jarkko Niemi:

Syudbabts is the kind of thing, when there is transformation (i.e. in which the hero of the story transforms himself) into something else, to a beast or a bird. And the enemies can transform as well. [...] the performers of syudbabts are mostly the kind of persons, who master some kind of supernatural powers. They know the seven spheres (of the Nenets mythical world view) well... There are some people (i.e., performers) so familiar with that, that I can't imagine, how much room there is in a man's head! These kind of people may perform, say, three days, perhaps a whole week. It is usually considered, that there isn't room for all that in the head of a normal man. (Niemi 1998: 62.)

According to the Nenets conceptions, then, the narrative comes to the performer from the personification of the song or narrative, who is considered to be an otherworldly phenomenon. The performer is just a transmitter of the narrative, and the performance has supernatural qualities. The interaction with the personification of the song is reflected in framing formulas that precede the speech, thoughts or actions of the personification of the song. As it does not come up often enough in any collections of Nenets poetry, I consider it to be a metapoetic notion framing the dialogic nature of the performance of Nenets oral tradition that can be also represented poetically, but is not consistently used by all the performers.

The three dialogic moments of the performance of the Nenets epic poems, and to a certain extent also other genres of Nenets folklore, are coupled with the gestures and movements of the main performer, the *teltangoda* and the audience. The few existing descriptions of the performance situations refer to the heightened quality of the performance, the insight of the performer into the narrated events and the aspiration to transmit the narrative event into the narrated event. This comes up, in addition to Castrén's description cited above, in Tereščenko's description, according to which "the performance itself resembled the play of an actor: the performer aimed at transmitting the surroundings, and the stages of the struggles of the hero with the help of the movements, mimicry, and vocal strategies so that the impression would be more powerful." (Tereščenko 1990, 17.)

Zinajda Kuprijanova and later also Andrej Golovněv and Elena Puškarëva have emphasized the personalities of the performers, which offer an even closer view of the actual performative situations. It is clear that each performer has to make the texts and performances their own, which affects the whole performance. These kinds of idiosyncratic values are not available in Castrén's notes, as we do not know the names of the performers. The personal or idiosyncratic qualities simply were not of interest in the early or mid-19th century.

4.2. What is in a Text?

The users of the digital edition of Castrén's notes cannot analyse the performances of the epic poems represented in the notes. The relationship of the notes to the performance can be considered in two ways. First, they can be interpreted as representing actual sung performances of Nenets poetry. Considering them as this sort of text, the notes would serve as a key for understanding past performances of Nenets epic and lyric poems. This point of view would eventually emphasize the missing things in the texts: the melody, the expletives, the gestures, the interaction between the performer and the audience, the interaction between the performer and the *teltanggoda* and the interaction of the performance with the otherworldly origin of the narrative. The last moment, indeed, can be interpreted as being missing in Castrén's notes simply because the lines were not performed, but rather elicited and represented to him. Therefore, I would consider the poems from another point of view: as the result of multiple, and simultaneous textualizations that were created in the interaction between Castrén and his informants. This interaction is also hard to follow, as Castrén rarely opens up his methods of collecting and interviewing. According to some early descriptions, Castrén was kind of an impatient researcher and wanted his informants to catch his ideas quite fast. It is also clear that the Nenets did not prefer to sit inside the houses for hours just talking and singing, and Castrén was rewarding them with vodka.

The technique of writing down is another point that should be taken into consideration: not only is it slow, but, as Castrén was apparently demanding the informants to translate the lines to him, this work was even more so. The singing was probably not an option in this kind of context: it was easier for everyone for informants to dictate. But while dictating, they had to come up with solutions as to what to dictate and how. It is noteworthy that they did not decide to dictate the poems in prose, which would have been possible. But in dictating, they were omitting the expletives, and mostly within the hexasyllabic line structure. This indicates that the informants had models for the basic text both from the sung performances and their repetitions by the *teltanggodas*. They must have been thinking about both at the same time when dictating the poems to Castrén. Therefore, there are some lines that are shorter and some that are longer. Castrén, however, did not understand the line structure of the poems, although he tends to mark many of the reduced vowels that were key in opening up the metrics. For him, the sung poetry was not metrically meaningful, although he recognized a certain rhythm. He thus treated the dictated lines as givens, something that the Nenets "gave" him. It is due to this and Castrén's phonologically accurate way of inscribing that we have the notes that are the earliest representations of Nenets ways of entextualizing their own poetry. Its relationship to the possible sung lines should be studied in connection to later performances of same kinds of poems.

5. Conclusions

When assessing the Tundra Nenets folklore notes made by M. A. Castrén during his expeditions, I have emphasized three important aspects, which are crucial in further studies of these texts. First, the notes should be contextualized as part of a larger ethnographic project, which was comparative and aimed at studying the history of mythologies, mythological images and thinking, and, eventually, the history of humankind. The oral tradition was collected and textualized by Castrén with these aims at his mind. Although the project was international, it was also national: Castrén aimed at fixing the place of the Finns and their thinking in the international framework of mythologies. Second, the notes reflect these aims at the level of the genres that came to be part of the notes. The themes of the notes are mainly mythic and shamanic, but the bulk of the notes also represents poetry that was believed to offer information about the most ancient ways of thinking about the humankind or peoples. Third, the texts should be interpreted understanding the contemporary considerations of the nature of the oral tradition and the technical possibilities of recording oral texts at the time. Castrén was not after the actual performances and performative strategies, but he wanted to record the tales, the said in the line (in the Ricouerian sense), not what was sung, including the expletives and the repetitions. On the other hand, the linguistic background explains the detailed phonological transcription, which reflects the poetics at a certain level rather well. The industriousness of Castrén resulted in a huge collection of Tundra Nenets oral texts that are still awaiting further analysis.

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