GATHERING AS ONTOLOGICAL PRACTICE AMONG EVENKI OF EASTERN SIBERIA

TATIANA SAFONOVA, ISTVÁN SÁNTHA

Tatiana Safonova, Central European University, Budapest, e-mail: tvsafonova@ gmail.com; István Sántha, Research Centre for Humanities (Institute of Ethnography) at Hungarian Academy of Science, Budapest, e-mail: istvansantha@gmail.com

Through visual analysis presented in 15 tables the authors looked at the complexity of gathering as practice that not only plays a role in subsistence, but also creates meaning and frames an engagement with the environment. Gathering is studied as consisting of several processes: the searching; cleaning and sorting things, to lay out and to dry things; and transportation, consumption and packing. Objects that are gathered are shown to play important roles of mediums for people and their environment. Cases of berries, firewood, jade stones and ice are presented as illustrations of this argument. In the final part of the article gathering is studied as a metaphysical phenomenon: a process of switching from disorder to order and back. Gathering poses many metaphysical questions in a practical form, and the authors propose to look at how people deal with these questions. How does the world change for those who gather things? How do they experience this transformation? Does the human attempt to collect things become an attempt to order the chaotic environment, classify it, and contain chaos into small volumes of their bags and buckets? This study is based on social anthropological fieldwork conducted among Evenki people of East Buryatia.

Keywords: gathering, berries, taiga forest, photographic analysis, social anthropology

INTRODUCTION

In this article we pursue two goals. On the one hand we look at how gathering as a practice creates a frame for the relationship between humans and their environment. We look at a particular case of Evenki people from East Siberia. On the other hand we propose a reintroduction of a forgotten methodological approach, a photographic analysis in which photos made by researchers from the field become sources of data to be analyzed and interpreted. Originally this method was proposed by Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead, but never became wide spread. We argue that advances in contemporary study of materiality and new semiotic approaches in social anthropology provide a basis for the reintroduction of this method on new premises.

The recent rise in the study of ontologies in social anthropology became a hallmark of many debates, and one of the frameworks for the return of interest to indigenous people and their particular forms of engagement with the world.[1] Interest in ontologies united numerous researchers of Amazonia, Siberia, Africa, Papua New Guinea, but also researchers representing science and technology studies, as well as anthropologists interested in multispecies ethnographies. The ontological turn in anthropology can be defined as a transformation of a focal research question, which is now *how things could be otherwise*, different from our limited perspectives. Ontological anthropologists became famous for their imaginative engagement with philosophical approaches, such as the assemblage theory proposed by Deleuze and Guattari. In this respect we support the overall enthusiasm about the possibilities of this research agenda, but at the same time see that it is very often rooted on the unchallenged approach to the way scientists collect their data and merge ethnography with theoretical concepts. In this article we share the results of our experiment in merging old-fashioned and forgotten ethnographic methodology with new studies in anthropology. This assemblage of old and new is actually a restoration of an unclaimed link between the very popular philosophical approach, namely the works of Deleuze and Guattari, and now rarely cited work of Bateson and Mead that now is seen as classic. We suppose that restoration of this link could become beneficial for ontological anthropology, and would provide it with a new research instrument.

In 1942 the world anthropological community got one of the most outstanding results of anthropological fieldwork – the book presented by well-known anthropologists Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead about Balinese character (Bateson and Mead, 1942). The book contained 100 tables with more than 700 photos, selected from 25,000 of leica negatives made in the course of their collaborative fieldwork in Bali. Photos played the main role in the book and were organized according to categories, which the anthropologists elaborated during the coding and analysis of their visual data and ethnographic field notes. This book became one of classical handbooks for visual anthropologists (Pink, 2007), but also raised reflexive feedback both from anthropologists (Grimshaw, 2001) and researchers from other social sciences (Silverman, 1993). The attempt was a success according to most reviewers and was repeated by Mead in collaboration with Macgregor (Mead and Macgregor, 1951) although it was more an illustrative work in which the authors described the pre-existing categories, that were used in psychological theory, with photos made by Bateson. Later Jensen and Suryani repeated the project preserving the same structure of the book that Mead and Bateson used in 1942, but they used other categories and even tried to re-examine and criticize the earlier interpretation of Balinese culture (Jensen and Suryani, 1991). Critical and supportive discussions very often are supplied by materials collected in fieldwork in the same areas, where authors of classical manuscripts worked. The most famous examples are the refutation of Mead's work on Samoa (Mead, 1928) made by Freeman (1983) and the less scandalous study of Naven ritual among Iatmul, conducted by Houseman and Severi (1998) after Gregory Bateson (1958 [1936]). Here we propose to reproduce the logic of the photographic analysis proposed in *Balinese Character*, with curtain changes in the approach. If Bateson and Mead were looking at a particular cultural set of psychological traits and the way they were embedded into the routine

---

1   For examples of ontological anthropology see Brightman, Grotti and Ulturgasheva, 2012, Holbraad, 2012, Pedersen, 2011, Jensen and Rödje, 2012, Povinelli, 2011.

interactions, we propose to use their methodological framework to look at the web of relations between objects and people, and the way meanings are generated in this web of relations. For example, we propose to look at the way objects that Evenki gather, create references to various contexts of hunting, travelling, consumption, business activity and so forth. In other words, we propose to look at gathering as an assemblage.

The theory of assemblages was originally presented by Deleuze and Guattari in their monograph *A thousand Plateaus Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (2008 [1987]). The main notions of the book were directly and explicitly adopted by Deleuze and Guattari from Bateson.[2] For example, the term 'plateau' initially designated the horizontal line on the diagram describing the intensity of the schismogenetic processes. These were the moments of equilibrium, when schismogenetic accelerations were counterbalanced by each other. The system was in peace, appeared to be a stable and unmoving whole, but under this cover of equilibrium thousands of local schismogenesis were accelerating and intensifying but could not resolve themselves into collapses due to the feedback loops of self-correction of the system. How this intensity, stability and self-containment of the system revealed itself, Bateson and Mead illustrated with their photos with hundreds of small episodes that occurred in a Balinese village. These photos were documents of instances of the multiplicity of the equilibrium and stability of the Balinese ethos. Taken from the context of photographic analysis and the theory of schismogenesis, the term plateau, through the work of Deleuze and Guattari, entered mainstream philosophical discourse to experience other various becomings.[3]

We argue that the structure of Balinese Character, and not the content of its findings, maintains the potential for studying various becomings and assemblages. Categories that unite tables with photos and descriptions provide the possibility to reconstruct relations between visual images caught on camera, field notes and complex contexts of experiences. We suppose that photographic analysis provides the possibility to trace semiotic processes that according to Kockelman are grounded in ontologies (2013, p. 54). Semiotic processes include "object-sign relations analyzed by their relation to sequential unfoldings of interpretant-object relations" (Ibid, p. 53-54). In this experimental paper we propose to ethnographically trace these unfoldings by following objects in various contexts that they are registered to be featured in by our cameras.

From September 2008 to November 2009 we worked in three different field sites in Baunt in East Buriatia among Evenki people. The autumn of 2008 and the first half of winter we spent in Ust'-Jilinda, an Evenki village. In the middle of the winter we moved to Ilakachon, and stayed there until the spring to study the life of an isolated reindeer-herding Evenki community. The following summer and autumn we moved to another Evenki group living near the Taloi and Kudur rivers. These Evenki people were keeping in touch with nephrite miners for the most part of the year. István visited this region and conducted two months fieldwork in 2004 for the first time. When we started our fieldwork, the aim was to write a book about the situated non-verbal aspects of Evenki culture, which would be based on an analysis of video and photographic materials. Tania worked with a simple Konica-Minolta DiMAGE 23 digital photocamera in autumn of 2008 and in spring of 2009. Then she changed to Pentax K1 mirror reflex camera, which was equipped with a 2/35 millimeter normal Pentax digital objective. She shot

---

2   For more details see Jensen and Rödje, 2012, pp. 18–22.

3   For the discussion of the 'becomings' of concepts in relation to the theory of Deleuze and Guattari see Grosz, 2005 (p. 36, 159).

black and white photos with the Konica-Minolta, and then made color pictures with Pentax. István worked with a Nikon-FM2a with 1.4/50 millimeter normal Nikkor manual objective using Kodak Elitechrome slide-positives. Tania shot photos mostly around campsites, while István worked more in the taiga. Tania made 14 thousand, and István did around three thousand photos all together during this period. Besides making photos, we wrote diaries and made videos (almost 100 hours in total). We tried to shoot photos randomly to collect a wide spectrum of materials not restricted by strong preconceptions to analyze afterwards, giving the chance of recognizing things that were not noticed in the field.

One of the findings of this study is that gathering is not simple about finding food, but there is another component of gathering. People through gathering make order in their life. This order in the context of disordering gives rhythm for the life. In this sense gathering is similar to science, an approach to find order, systematize things and discover relations. Not by surprise one of the basic practices of science is collecting and gathering of data. In this article we paid particular attention not just to the substance of what people gather, but to the relation people create through gathering with the environment. This relationship exists not in a verbal code of ethic, what to gather and what not, but in a complex of practices, which can be called a skill or habit. Photographs that we provide in this article can be explored as parts of independent visual narrative that we have cut into phrases and sentences and quoted. Reading of this article in a way turns into a process of gathering, collection of information about Evenki life and about our interpretations. In this sense our reader is forced to deal with the same problems of turning chaos into order, and breaking order into chaos again.

1. GATHERING VARIOUS RESOURCES

When people are in the forest they frequently gather various things, from firewood to berries. This is one of the most routine and familiar activities, and is most egalitarian in its form, because everyone can collect and bring things home. The scheme for gathering is open to change: it is flexible enough to incorporate new objects and aims for gathering. Gathering does not need a concrete plan for the processing of gathered things: the latter can be left as a chaotic mass and stored. In this respect gathering provides an important buffer zone in the routine that creates a horizon for the activity of gathering, but does not lead to the immediate integration of this activity with further stages and plans. Gathering is relatively autonomous from other activities, in the sense that it does not inevitably cause other actions. You can store the gathered things or postpone the decision about what to do with them. This is why new things can be easily included in the list of things to gather. And this is also why gathering frequently is experienced as entertainment. Gathering itself does not contain a commitment to further action and this is why it suits the egalitarian ethos so well. Gathering is also a form of flexible practical categorization, in which actions are embodied thoughts about the distinction between desired objects and other stuff. This distinction is accomplished through the practice of separation (of the object from the stems, roots, branches and whatever obstacles), collecting together several objects of the same kind, carrying them somewhere and storing them for some time. The scale of things is in correlation with the capacities available to realise these actions. People develop their capacities to collect various objects and choose the objects to collect in accordance with their capacities. There is no direct cause and effect relationship between the scale and the capacity. Through gathering people create a potential to do something with the collected things.

1. When the reindeer herder comes home with the herd, several hundred metres before the forest edge, he starts to collect dry branches. These branches will help him to easily light a fire in the stove, so that the firewood will burn quickly and he can warm up the kettle to have tea.
2. Berries, cowberries in this case, are gathered with a special manual combine tool, an instrument that looks like a scoop with a metal comb.
3. At the top of the hill the hunter collects branches of redcurrant bushes, to make an aromatic tea with.
4. In winter, when the river is frozen, people use ice as a source of drinking water. The ice is chopped. Then blocks of ice are collected, transported and stored in front of the houses. People carry the blocks home and melt them in special barrels.
5. Moss is collected to interlay between the logs in building. Moss provides insulation.
6. Every year reindeer herders help the local vet to collect samples of reindeers' blood for analysis to inform a report about the state of health of the reindeer herd.
7. Ideally, assembling a satellite dish should be an opposite practice to gathering – it should be conducted with a clear plan of what is supposed to be the result. But when reindeer herders assemble whatever new device they happen to buy, usually they do not have any particular idea of the end product. Such assemblages quite often end up only half way completed, with the semi-assembled thing stored to be thought about at a later time. These projects are also experienced as puzzling entertainments. And their detachment from concrete purposes makes them akin to gathering.

2. BERRIES

Berries provide the most typical case for gathering. People are not the only creatures that collect berries; bears and reindeers eat them, squirrels and chipmunks collect and store them for winter. Gathering is a practice that is not exclusively human. Because the collection of berries is so widely shared, the effects of this practice are not so visible for people themselves. Berries are supposed to be collected and eaten by something (it does not matter whether it is by animal or bird) and as such it is normal. When people collect berries they do not intrude or change the relationships between things in the ecosystem of the forest. What they do is that they occupy one of the possible niches and endanger other competitors who are also reliant on the same resource. People can change the environment and disrupt the existing order not by gathering berries *per se*, but by the scale of this practice. In the environment of the reindeer herders even the use of such instruments as manual combine tools that help to collect berries, do not provide people with the possibility to exhaust these resources. Here it is not the scale of the gathering practice that changes the environment, but the scale of the berry harvest that changes and affects the practice of gathering. The fact that this sensitivity exists is a sign that the limit, after which berry gathering is unsustainable, is reached.

1. The Cowberry (or Lingo berry) is one of the most popular, due to its taste and medicinal qualities. It is very well preserved under snow in winter and can be collected even at the beginning of summer, although then the berries are not plentiful enough to collect them for cooking. The main season for gathering is in August and September.
2. The Black Crowberry is a berry that is not very tasty to eat uncooked, but the jam is very good. The conserves made from these berries lower the blood pressure.
3. These cowberries were collected and stored in the moss by a chipmunk.
4. In summer people collect Wild redcurrants to make jams. In winter the branches of this bush are collected to make aromatic tea.
5. Dogs eat Northern Bilberries as well. In winter these berries remain on the branches of the small bushes above the snow cover. They are frozen and preserve all their taste and flavour.
6. Normally people collect berries sitting. This means that the quantity of berries is sufficient to justify staying in one place for a while.
7. When people search for a place to collect berries, they sometimes collect some berries on the way. This is relatively difficult, but at the same time it shows that there are not sufficient berries to justify sitting down and then standing up again. The collector has to move on to find a better place.
8. Sometimes there are so many berries that people can lie down and continue gathering. This is an indication that the place is particularly plentiful.

3. FIREWOOD

The other essential item for people who live in the forest to collect is firewood. Because people have started to cut trees, instead of collecting dry branches, this practice leaves visible traces, as new trees take longer to grow than new branches. The damaging effect caused by people collecting berries and branches is remediated in a year, whereas the effect of cutting trees needs several years to be erased. Places where people have cut trees can be visibly recognized. They differ from other places, where the forest remains untouched. But at the same time there are other causes for similar damage, such as fires and storms, and even in this respect people do not create a new niche in the ecological system of destruction. Here they share this niche not with bears and reindeers, but with fires, storms and other factors that lead to deforestation. Territories that have been cleared of trees slowly become grassy plots or bogs, and are inhabited by various organisms.

1. Even now, when people live in houses with stoves, and not in tents, and make fewer open air fires, dry twigs are widely used to light the stove. This process needs to generate sufficient intensity of heat so that the logs, that are always a little bit damp, catch alight.
2. In winter people cut trees at the level slightly above the snow, so that in summer the sizes of the stumps show what the levels of snow have been in past years.
3. A petrol-powered saw provides the opportunity for an individual to cut trees alone and to do it very quickly. But it is heavy and requires petrol, so its use is always bound to certain means of transport and reliant upon resources such as petrol.
4. An all-terrain military vehicle can fell trees just by crashing into them, and it also provides the opportunity to transport trees of all sizes, shapes and weights. But consequently people need at least a petrol-powered saw to cut these trees down into logs. Otherwise they need to spend an enormous effort to saw them manually.
5. The territory around a camp is deforested, and the bigger this area is, the longer people have been using this camp. Like the rings across a section of a tree can tell the whole story of the tree's development, so the landscape around a camp carries the details of the history of the camp.
6. There are some points, when technology is not available, and people cannot use petrol-powered saws. At this stage people start again to collect brushwood and twigs, and to manually cut small dry trees and even use stumps that have been left after the previous felling of trees. These stumps are leftovers. They have been discarded in the forest to wither, without any intention as to their future use someday. In this respect the potential that gathering as a practice creates is never fully seen and appreciated at the moment of collection. But at some future point this potential will unfold in the reality of its availability.

4. SEARCHING AND GATHERING

When people are gathering something, their attention is constantly switching between two logical types: the things themselves and groups of the things. To start gathering, people have to select a group of things to gather, then they gather these things one by one, and then start over again, searching for a new group of things to gather. A group of things might be represented by a cluster of berry plants covered with masses of berries, but it also can be a visually solid entity, such as a tree trunk. To cut down the latter you have to cut all the timber fibres, the more such fibres constitute one trunk, the more difficult it is to cut it. When people collect berries from one plant, or cut one trunk, they do not search for other groups of things, but monitor the work that they are doing to separate objects from their original environments. These moments of intensive attention to the group of objects are framed by another activity, notably the search for the next group to work with. This constant zigzag between the thing and the class of things, when people see trees and choose one particular tree, provides grounds for common confusions, when actions in these two modes overlap, for example, when people start to search for the next tree well before finishing off the cutting of the previous one. These situations can be dangerous, if people are dealing with tools such as saws, or ineffective, as when people look to collect berries in another place, where the distribution of berries is just as sparse and any investment of time in further searching, will just reduce the time spent on gathering. The main strategy to avoid such confusions is constant switching from one mode of attention to the other and back. This zigzag method of interchange in practice is so fundamental, that people continue applying it in situations, where one of the modes of attention is not needed. For example, in the village, during chopping, people used to look around as if searching for something during the short pauses between chopping logs that have been already collected in one place. Such alternations in attention, from the particular object to the environment and back, also are seen as a rhythm for work, that helps to rest and economise strength.

1. Before starting to collect berries, a person needs to find a place where there are enough berries. For this, even the first place that seems to be good enough has to be compared with the surroundings.
2. When the person has collected enough berries and is packing things to go home, he takes one last look at the surroundings. This is done almost unconsciously, but provides an opportunity to remember the place and the density of berries, so as to be able to find a good place to collect berries the next time. This last look is taken in advance of the next gathering session.
3.–4. The switching from collecting to searching happens all the time. People search not only for new places, but at the place where they are already searching, for new plants, and for new clusters of berries. So that there are lower and lower levels of abstraction, between which the person's attention shifts.
5.–6. During sawing people have to mind not only issues relating to their own safety, but also risks for other people involved in the situation. The tree falls in a particular direction that can be determined by the way one is sawing. After the tree falls down, the person looks around to find a new tree and decide in which direction it should fall.
7.–8. Chopping interchanged by looking around is a common case demonstrating the practice of constantly switching between doing and watching.

5. INSTRUMENTS

The instruments that are used to separate the collected objects from their environments can be specialized or universal. Berries, for example, provide a very special configuration, so that there are no other parallels in the everyday life of people, and to collect berries people use a specially designed instrument. A combine tool can be relatively easily made at home through the transformation of other instruments, such as scoops. What people do with this instrument looks like brushing, during which berries are detached from their stems and collected in the scoop. This very specific design to some extent repeats the constitution of a human hand with some simplifications and changes that transform the practice and its orientation to the logical types. With a hand people tear off berries one by one, with a combine they scoop and filter, a cluster of berries at a time. This shift in the logical typing makes the procedure more efficient. Other instruments used in gathering are more universal, because on the one hand they compensate for a more general inability of a human body, and on the other hand they help to deal with tasks of a more general kind, such as the dividing of something into two parts such as a saw, or the breaking of something into pieces, such as an axe. The fact that such universal instruments can be useful in gathering shows that gathering as an intellectual task is based on elementary operations, such as the splitting of something into two parts and the carrying away one of the parts, or the breaking of a whole into a group of fragments, that can be collected and reassembled, not as previously complementary parts of something, but as members of a class. In this respect, gathering, no matter whether of berries or wood, is an act of reconstitution of the relationship between elements and the class of elements. Before gathering, berries are parts of the plant, they are representatives of the plant in its reproductive strategies, they contain seeds that can one day become plants with their own berries. After gathering, berries are individual autonomous things that due to their similarity in form, shape, colour and taste are identified as members of one class of berries. Their relation to the rest of the plant is severed, and a new relation with other berries is constructed. These new objects are located in the same place and probably most of them will share the same trajectory in the human consumption process.

1. A combine tool to collect berries looks like a scoop with brushing teeth, with additional holes in the middle to allow the leaves accidently detached with the berries to be sorted out.
2. People hold the combine tool with the thumb and index finger. Otherwise with these fingers people would pinch berries from the plant. The combine tool is not just an extension of the human arm, it is also a transformation of the whole body scheme of the practice and the logic of this action as well.
3. Sawing divides the tree approximately in the middle between its trunk and branches and its underground roots. This divide creates an opposition, in symbolical terms between top and bottom, in practical terms between the parts that humans can take and those that cannot be extracted from the ground.
4. Frozen meat is sawn to divide it into two parts. One part will be eaten; the other part will be stored. This is the creation of an opposition between consumed and stored, or between existing and not existing.
5. The petrol-powered saw makes it easier and faster to create new divisions and reorganize the relationships between elements that have been severed.
6. The axe is used to cut off the branches from the previously sawn trunk, so that the tree is transformed into a log and a heap of branches that do not have relations between each other anymore. Most often branches are just left in the forest lying on the ground with other branches that have been torn from the trees by winds.

7. An axe is used to chop bones to extract the bone marrow: splitting and separating the edible and the inedible.
8. Water in the barrel is frozen into ice. To use this water people have to chop the ice with an axe, then collect and melt down the chopped pieces.

6. CLEARING AND SORTING THINGS

Clearing and sorting out the things that have been collected is a meta-practice, because it is based on switching between different logical types of things to be collected from the environment (the wide set of things) to searching out unwanted things in the new set of collected things. During such sorting the collected berries become the context from which to extract the leaves and berries of bad quality. During clearing and sorting things people again gather. Gathering things and clearing them of junk are inversions of each other. In the former case people collect things they want from the environment they leave as unwanted. And in the latter case they collect elements they do not want to be present in the set of things they want. The shorter the path between gathering and consumption, the fewer are these inversions. For example, when people collect berries to eat, they compress gathering and clearing into one operation and collect them one by one, excluding leaves and rotten berries at the stage of gathering. When they have to collect more and faster, to store and consume later, they use a combine tool. Berries collected in this way are inevitably mixed with some leaves and have to be filtered and sorted out at later stages. Operations of logical typing need time to prevent confusions and paradoxes, and that is why all actions that are based on switches between logical types of things also inevitably need to take a certain amount of time. For example, people need dry firewood. There are two options here, either to cut trees without selection (but store the logs to dry – this can take a year), or to select dry trees only to cut from the beginning. You economize time on drying, because this process has already happened naturally before, but you have to spend time searching for such trees and then carrying the logs from different places. Time investment is unavoidable, although it can be optimized and reduced, but there is always a risk that either the cut trees will need more time to dry than planned, or that the dry trees you have chosen to cut will turn out to be not dry enough. Various techniques of gathering and potential possibilities of how to collect things show that every concrete instance of gathering is a two-fold process: it already contains a compression of gathering and clearing, but is also open to future elaboration, with new inversions. The gathered stuff can be cleared and recollected again and again.

1. To eat berries people collect them without leaves. But even the unseen process of digestion can be interpreted as a process of clearing and sorting out, with ongoing gathering.
2. When people scoop with the combine tool to collect berries they can sort the leaves out by blowing them away. Not only shapes and colour, but the weight and various other differences between things are used to identify, clear and filter the gathered things.
3.–4. The collected berries undergo several relocations: they are put from the combine tool into a sack, then into a bucket, then are set out in the sun to dry, then are stored in a box in a cool place. Every such relocation is used as an opportunity to filter out the leaves and bad berries.
5. The cut tree is sawn into several parts, and branches are cut off with an axe. Through these clearing operations the tree is transformed into logs.
6. These parts of the log are initially set out in the forest to dry. They also are left in a position where they can be seen from a distance, so that they can be found once again later and taken home.

7. Some of the dry trees selected to be cut have already shed branches by themselves. These branches should not be cleared away as they can be used as firewood straight away. But people need some form of transport to collect them from the various locations where such trees were discovered.
8. The stump forms that piece of the tree that is left in the forest as the unwanted part. In time this piece of tree dries naturally and can be used as firewood too. When people do not have a means of transport to carry the logs home, they cut the stumps of the trees that are situated near the camp.

7. LAYING OUT THINGS AND DRYING THEM

Drying is also a form of clearing and sorting things. During this procedure, the unnecessary water is evaporated from the collected objects. Drying takes time, which marks the division of a wet object into its dry part and water. To dry things they are usually laid out and are left exposed to contact with the air and sometimes to the sun's rays. Because the process of drying requires time and space, people need to introduce order into the organization of dried things, to reduce the space needed and to guarantee a certain level of air circulation. Visually things that are left to dry present a mixture of order and disorder. On the one hand things are organized according to some symmetrical patterns, on the other these patterns provide an opportunity to compare the collected things and to see their unique differences. All berries laid out together are of more or less the same colour, but a closer inspection shows that there is always some subtle difference in tint. This cannot be seen without putting the berries together. In the forest berries all look red, for example, because people compare them not with other red things, but with the green and grey moss, with the yellow, needle-like leaves of larch, and with the brown rocks. The process of drying can be initiated and supported through the organization of things and the layout, but it cannot be easily stopped or controlled. Some things continue drying all the time and should be consumed before they become too dry. Or some things cannot be dried at all, and the process of drying is simply a way of slowing down rotting. In this case such things also have to be consumed within a certain time. To control the processes of drying or rotting, people have to reorganize the things left out to dry from time to time, changing the order, moving portions of things into other places and correcting changes in the environment.

1. Dry twigs are things that have been cut from the internal circulation processes of a tree due to some non-human cause. These twigs have been left to dry by themselves. People collect them to use immediately to light their stoves. There is no need to allocate additional time and space to process such materials.
2. Before making jam, berries are set out to dry. This procedure not only helps to prolong the period of rotting for the berries, but also to make clearing simpler. The dried leaves can be easily identified and detached; they do not stick to the berries any more.
3. Herbs are hung up in the attic to dry. These drapes are funny toys for a kitten to play with.
4. People put moss between logs to insulate buildings. Both logs and moss continue dry and to rot. In this respect all buildings in the forest are displays of the materials from which they are built, that are left to dry and rot away.
5. The pieces of ice set out in front of the house are of course not left there to dry. This is a way to store the stocks of drinking water in winter. Rapid changes of temperature rather than stable cold lead to the fusion of parts into a frozen mass.
6. During hunting various things that are left out to dry are frequently collected together in one place. Freshly cut wood to heat the hunting cabin; a saddle and the fresh skins of squirrels and a sable function as layers for each other. On top are the most fragile and precious things. Every layer of drying things also plays the role of insulating pad for the layer above.
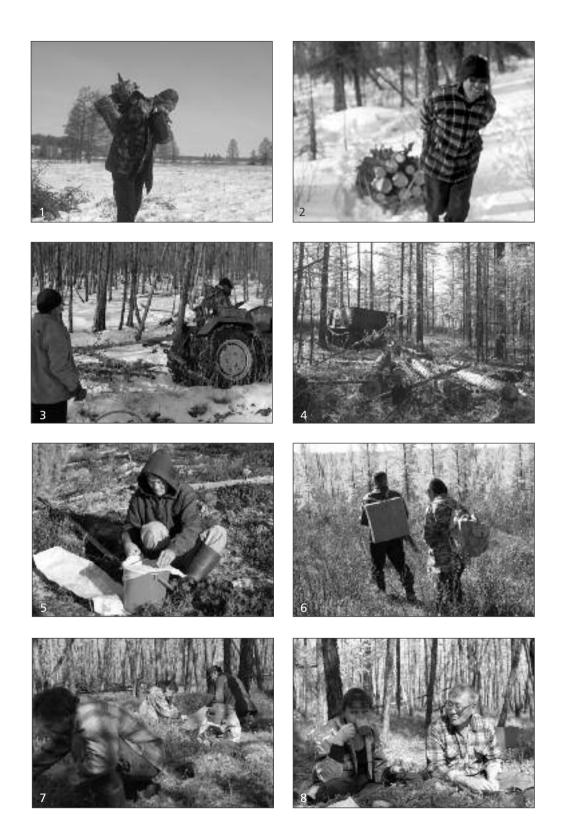
7. People cut logs into shapes that are easy to stack in a pile. The shape of things is suitable for three main operations: to store wood in compact piles in the yard, to carry the logs also in compact piles on a hand cart, and to make a smaller pile of logs inside the stove in order to burn them.
8. Various reorganizations are routine tasks that can be easily carried out by children. To reorganize things so that elements change positions but the overall order stays the same is a playful task.

8. TRANSPORT AND CONTAINERS

Gathering can be defined as a task of concentrating things that are scattered, and then moving this concentration to the place you need it to be. This twofold aim of gathering explains why often the container in which things are collected and the means of transport are adjusted to each other. In the forest the main means of transport is usually a human being, who carries the container (a bucket for example), drags sledges, or carries bound heaps of things on his or her back. When people carry containers with things that they have gathered, they form a kind of a moving whole. Usually during gathering the container is put aside to collect scattered things. Sometimes, like in the case of collecting mushrooms, people collect along the way. When they put the container down on the ground it becomes an object with a special status. Its main role is to secure the collected things, and there is a kind of gravitation that appears around it. People collect new items and put them into the container, more and more objects pass the same centripetal trajectory. The container, not being the main focus of attention for people who are involved in searching and gathering things, forms a centre for the situation of gathering. People do not go far away from the container, put other things that they do not need for gathering (such as guns or pots) near it, sit near the container during pauses and smoke breaks. Any means of transport, such as a tractor, also forms the same centre as a potential container. The container is not the focus of attention, but it is the vital centre of a field of actions. Without the container people do not have a place to search around and come back to. The paradox of the container is that it swallows things (like a black hole), but is not visible itself. People do not look at the container, when they search and collect things, but they need to know that there is such a central point; they themselves should be unfocused on it to be able to find things to put in it. In this sense, the container does not provide feedback, as long as it has the capacity to swallow more and more things. Only when it is full and its role as the focal point of centripetal forces is completed, does the container transform into a solid object that now has to be transported to the desired destination. From then on it is not its capacity to collect things within itself that makes it central, but its weight and inertia that make this object the focus for people's actions.

1. The term 'container' can be misleading, as sometimes it is just a rope that helps to hold collected logs together.
2. Sledges are typical examples of the mutual adjustment of container and means of transportation.
3.–4. In the case of logs transported by tractor and by all-terrain vehicle it is the strong wire that holds the logs together and attaches them to the dragging vehicle.
5. Once the bucket is full it has to be covered, so as to insulate it along with its content from possible interference during the transportation.
6. There are two ways to carry the container on the back: either to attach the shoulder straps directly to it, or to put the container inside the backpack.

7. The plastic barrel with a cover is not even taken out of the backpack. People gather close to the place where they leave it.
8. During the lunch-break people stay near the container.

9. BUCKETS

A bucket is the most useful container in which to collect things and carry them home. The capacity to contain is always important and is on demand. On the way into the forest people carry the instruments with which they collect berries (a combine tool, a plastic sack to lay berries out for selection, etc.) in a bucket, on the way back they carry these things in their hands along with the bucket filled with berries. Regarding this we can say that the bucket is an object that can play multiple roles in the logical typing of gathering. It is a conundrum that appears both on the level of instruments, being one of them, and on the level of collecting instruments, being used as a container to carry instruments. The bucket is a meta-object that plays the role of a meaningful context for gathering. It frames the situation of gathering for so long as it is capable of storing more berries, and it frames the gathering as a distinct activity by being used as an instrument to transport the instruments for gathering to the locus of action (collecting berries) and then as a container of berries, as they are transported back home. The bucket is created and adjusted to the human body and its ability to carry things. Usually people need a couple of hours to fill the bucket with berries. Usually this is exactly the amount of time that they feel comfortable to spend gathering. If it took longer, they would probably feel tired. The bucket filled with berries weighs between 5 and 8 kilograms and this weight is commonly accepted as being easy to carry for some distance. The capacity of the bucket to contain from 5 to 8 kilograms of berries is a function of the time spent collecting and the strength to be able to carry. All these parameters relate to capacities of the human body. This explains why buckets are so widely used in households too, for collecting and carrying water, in milking and in cooking.

1. A combine tool and other instruments for collecting berries are kept inside the bucket. The future berry-container contains the instruments with which these berries will be collected. Gathering starts, when these instruments are taken out and the bucket becomes an empty container, open for collecting in.
2. On the way back all the instruments are carried in individuals' hands, and the bucket with its top covered by a sack for insulation contains only berries.
3. The bucket is stable. It can be left standing by itself on the ground. But uncovered it always runs the risk of being knocked over. Just as it is open to receive berries, it is also open to spilling the collected things out.
4. Sometimes people do not collect straight into the bucket, but onto the sack. They then sort the berries and take out the leaves.
5. Cleaned berries are poured into the bucket from the sack.
6. Buckets are good for collecting ingredients for baking bread and kneading dough.
7. A bucket is the best container in which to collect milk during milking.

10. CONSUMPTION

The ultimate goal of gathering is consumption. For immediate consumption people collect relatively moderate amounts of things. The longer the time span between gathering and consumption the bigger the quantities of things collected. Immediate consumption is experienced as pleasant and entertaining, but it is frequently not the focal activity but a kind of entertaining moment embedded in other mainstream activities. For example, whilst collecting berries people from time to time eat them. And although all berries are collected to be eaten someday, in the frame of gathering, immediate consumption is not part of the practice but marks a short break taken to have a rest. Consumption in other circumstances also frequently performs the function of entertainment, for example treating oneself to jam before departure or during a break in doing household chores. Various forms of gathering can overlap, and they are usually coordinated in such a way, that collecting for immediate consumption continues to be instrumental for the purposes of collecting for postponed consumption. For example, people can collect wood for the fire to cook lunch during a break in berry gathering. In immediate consumption people are less constrained and can select what they like to consume, for example, setting up the fire to cook lunch, they might collect dry branches that will burn fast and easily. But for later, people would collect trunks to set up the fire in the stove, they would chop these trunks into thin sticks. They would produce things from this chopping instead of collecting separate branches. Collection for postponed consumption presupposes the possibility to adjust the collected things for various types of use in the future, while the collection for immediate consumption is based on a straightforward ongoing selection of collected things for the immediate purpose.

1. Eating berries during berry collection is a moment when people rest. These are moments when the main goal of collecting (consumption) intrudes and disrupts the actual practice of collection, thus generating a paradox and overlap of two planes of action, aimed respectively at the short and long terms.
2. Hot tea, bread and jam made from berries are the main snacks for pauses in work, but they are also entertainments that divert people from boredom and routine.
3. A stop along the way to have a cigarette, a toilet break and to eat berries from the plants that grow on the side of the track.
4. During berry collection people also pause to cook lunch in the forest and to collect firewood.
5. Sticks are cut from the logs that were themselves chopped trunks. These thin wooden sticks help to start the fire in the stove. For immediate consumption in the forest people would not need these chains of work, instead they would just collect dry branches.
6. The principle of postponed consumption is also applied to the consumption procedure itself. People warm themselves by staying close to the fire in the forest. But at home people let the fire warm the stones and bricks of the stove and only then get warm by staying near the stove or inside the house.
7. Ribbons are smoked on the fire in the forest. The logs for the fire were chopped and burnt immediately. Rituals frequently consist of short term consumption sequences.

11. ICE AND JADE

There is a striking parallel between how ice and jade are treated in this region. Ice is the main source of drinking water in winter. People break up the ice in the river, collect pieces, transport them home and set them out on wooden platforms. At home people have iron tanks where they leave pieces of ice and let them melt. Jade is a semi-precious stone that is extracted from the mountain by open-cast mining. The mountain is dynamited and the resultant pieces of jade are transported to the mining camp and stored on wooden platforms. Then the jade is transported in all-terrain vehicles to the places where it is sold to Chinese buyers. People gain enormous profits which, however, vanish into the air and disappear without trace, like the water from the ice. Jade extraction is a new occupation for the region, before the 1990s it was not even known that there was a deposit of white jade that is valued in the neighboring China. The fact that people organize the extraction of the jade as a copy of the ice collection could be both a coincidence and an intuitive recognition of the commonalities between water and jade, with the only difference being that these substances circulate on different scales of consumption. Water is ultimately consumed by people in their daily routines, and jade is consumed somewhere far away. Local people do not know how exactly it is consumed by itself. When jade is sold and transported to China people are left with money but no information about the life of the jade afterwards. This disappearance is comparable with the melting of ice, when firm, vigorously shaped pieces of solid ice melt and become water, without color or stable form.

1. Usually ice is smashed and broken up with axes.
2. Dynamite is put inside drilled holes in the mountain rock.
3. Pieces of ice are set out in front of the house on a wooden platform, from which it is easy to take pieces and carry them home to melt into water.
4. In the mining camp pieces of jade are stored on wooden platforms similar to those constructed for ice.
5. Ice is transported by tractors.
6. Jade is transported by all-terrain vehicles, as the routes are through the forest where there are no roads.
7. The pieces of ice are heavy and very cold, so it is quite uncomfortable to carry them.
8. Jade is very heavy. Some pieces can only be carried by several men.

Collecting and gathering happen not only when people collect resources such as food or fuel. Every journey starts with collecting and gathering things to be taken. In the region of this study, travelling is an integral part of people's lives and a substantial amount of time is spent on gathering and packing things in this regard. Such collecting differs from previously described forms of gathering as it is based on hesitation, the doubtful thoughts about what to take and what to leave. Gathering things before a trip is an action which attempts a balance between the open variety of possible future needs and the limited capacities of the means of transport. Hesitation is absent from the general process of collecting resources because people not only gather them but also always extract them from their previous context. The capacity to transport such things usually does not imply the risk of leaving substantial things behind, because such collections are always surpluses to basic belongings. When they travel, people frequently have to carry essential elements of their personal belongings that play important roles in their lifestyles. Any decision has its effect not only on future consumption processes, but also on future collection processes. People have to decide what instruments to take, and this decision defines what they will be able to collect in the future. We can say that collecting things before going somewhere is a framing practice, the meta-level in relation to the practice of collecting and gathering resources. People collect instruments to go to collect resources. And they collect resources to be able to collect instruments and so forth. Things collected also go through these logical typing procedures. Berries are taken to the village to be given as a gift to the hosts that provide people with a place to stay in the village. During these stays people collect and maintain contacts with other people. They find bullets to go hunting or they buy a new bucket. Instruments that help people to collect things are exchanged for things that have been collected by them. These are the logical loops of gathering and collection that help to reiterate cycles of these activities.

1. People gather around individuals preparing to go away. They share their hesitation about what is worth taking and what should be left behind.
2. People look at the heaps of things that they plan to take and think how to pack them. These are decisions that take time to be made.
3. Animals participate in these decisions as they show their eagerness to carry things. Even their passive presence helps people to keep in mind that what they take will be carried by a living creature with its own capacities and risks.
4. All-terrain vehicles are less involved in such decisions due to their almost inexhaustible capacity to transport things. People usually do not have more things in total than the all-terrain vehicle can carry. Vehicles are instruments that help to collect and transport instruments that will be used to collect other things.
5.–6. Animals carry things that people have loaded onto them. Animals have the capacity to carry things because they themselves do not need instruments to collect food, neither do they need the infrastructure for storage. In this region people do not collect and transport hay or moss for the horses and reindeer which they use to transport their own instruments and storages. Otherwise there would no place for the human belongings and animals would carry only their own collections.
7.–8. People live in camps and go on their trips to gather resources with only those things that they need for their limited tasks. They leave all other various instruments behind at the camp.

13. CONTAINERS OF DISORDER

Packing things consist of several stages that we can designate as stages of order and disorder. First of all, people collect things that they think they will need from their camp environment, and then they lay them out to estimate the quantities and make decisions, what to take and what to leave. These stages replicate the same process as with collecting berries or wood and then laying out them to dry, clear and select. These actions aim to create new groups and categories of things, first the general group of stuff to be taken on the journey, and then the sub-groups of things put into different sacks and bags together. These operations in logical typing – switches from members of the classes (or groups) to classes of classes and back – designate the relationship between logical types and highlight the question of chaos (or disorder) versus order. When people deal with the environment from which they extract things, this environment shows itself as disordered. The moment when people collect things they need together, is the moment of order, i.e. a pattern or a sequence of repetitive actions. But as soon as people have collected these things together, they once again return to chaos, a group inside which there is no order, and people have to create this new order, by dividing the initial group into sub-groups according to their places in bags and sacks. The moment of switching from one logical type to another is the moment of order, and this is also the moment that divides two different disorders. Order is a black box by itself; we have the input of the first group of things with its chaotic and unorganized pattern of collocation, and we also have the output – another type of chaotic co-location of the things. Inside the black box we can try to recognize patterns and sequences that have supported the transduction process. But we will just realize that inside the black box of order there are more and more new black boxes that contain stages of order and disorder. Every process of packing can be subdivided into smaller and smaller sequences of interchange of collecting, displaying and recollecting (or selecting).

1. The chaos of things set out on display before packing into bags. People experience the openness of chaos to ordering through hesitation.
2. Things are regrouped and put into bags. Although from afar these bags look more ordered in comparison to the previous picture of the lay out, they still contain groups of things that can be seen as disordered, and can be unpacked and redistributed between bags.
3. The phase of display can contain internal regroupings, for example, when glass jars are grouped together separately from plastic bottles. These orders have no sense in relation to the repacking process, because glass objects cannot be put together due to the risk of smashing. So what looks like order can also be a case of disorder in respect to new criteria.
4. When things are packed into different sacks the new stage starts. This is when sacks (that contain things and are material groups of things) are displayed and people group various sacks together to find the perfect match between sacks, bags and horses that will carry all this.
5. Finally all things are packed, and the disorders that sacks contain are covered by bags. These are black boxes of order that once unpacked can be seen as containers of disorder.
6. Sometimes things are isolated in sacks inside these containers of disorder to avoid contact with other disorders. For example clothes are isolated from meat.
7. But these segregations can be rearranged so that pieces of meat are put inside the car as they are, without packing them into sacks. So the car itself becomes a kind of container of disorder.

14. GATHERING AND ATMOSPHERE

People experience a wide range of emotions, from hesitation to joy, when they deal with the task of collecting things. The person who gathers something, for example, who collects things before departure, attracts the attention of others. People gather around the person who gathers. The operation of switching between logical types opens potential for the expansion of this shift into higher meta-levels of organization and communication. The person has to deal with a logical operation to select and collect different things into one group and create relationships between several such groups, and this person collects other people around him to deal with this task more efficiently. The operation of collecting things ultimately collects people who collect things. This cascade patterning creates an atmosphere, which can be defined as a bundle or dense entanglement of elements that refer to different logical types. A special atmosphere of gathering is created when people try to make order out of chaos, because through these attempts they increase complexity and create cross-cutting relations between logical levels. By picking up things and assembling them together they create a new thing, which consists of collected things. And this new thing leads to new possibilities and potentials to relate to other things of its kind. The thing is a bundle of new possibilities: possibilities to share collected things, to store them, to transport them and to carry out other actions, which were not possible so long as things were not yet collected. People feel that there is a kind of special atmosphere that surrounds gathering, and what they feel is hesitation, joy or anxiety. These are emotions devoted to the experience of this openness of the situation to new possibilities. They mark the shift to a meta-level of communication and practice.

1. Men gather before starting to butcher the carcass of a calf and dress the meat. They drink beer and chat. The hard work for which they are preparing is anticipated with enthusiasm.
2. Later the men cut the meat into pieces, and order the internal organs, tissues and bones according to future storage plans, consumption and exchange. Parts of the carcass become separate things that then are reassembled and collected again into new categories and groups.
3. When a relative comes from a distant village, people welcome him with various delicacies. They collect this food from neighbors and friends and they themselves gather at the table. The atmosphere of joy is a result of this recollection, when people who are usually separated are brought together.
4. The sacred ritual of offering of food to the spirits consists of the collection of delicacies. People gather samples of all the foods they like and offer them to the spirits. The event is experienced as joyful.
5. Packing things into the car is a time not only to think collectively about how to pack things better, but it is also the last opportunity to spend time together. Packing gives people the possibility to say goodbye without saying anything, just by helping and assisting to collect things properly. Such gatherings can be not only joyful, opportunities to be together and make final jokes about each other, but also sad and full of anxiety.
6. What to take and what to leave, what things to pack together and what packs to load on which horses, all these are decisions that people make together. People who are going and people who are staying have an equal say in this process. This is due to the interchangeability, because there have been (and there will again be) other occasions when people needed to resolve the same problems, although others were travelling away and others were staying.
7.–8. When people feel bored and want to entertain themselves, they make home brew with sugar and yeast. Sometimes they add berries to improve the aroma and taste. Alcohol provides a substitute for the actual atmosphere of reuniting. Light drunkenness is a state in which people feel as if they have gathered something. They also feel the joy and enthusiasm of being part of a collection, as if some force has gathered them with others into new categories or groups, and new potentialities for communication and collaboration have been opened to them.

15. GATHERING CHAOS

Gathering and collecting would not be possible without disorder and chaos. Things should be extracted from the chaotic environment to become bits of information about the new order in which they are assembled. And once things are recollected and reorganized, the previous order in which they were put should be abandoned and identified as chaos. Order and disorder are interchanging environments of the practice of collecting. We can see that the practice of collecting is something that takes place between two distinct states of disorder. When people start gathering, they operate in a chaotic environment of things (that is how you need to see it to be able to propose a new order for the selected things), and when they finish, what they have is a group of things they have collected, which can itself be seen as a chaotic environment for new operations of selection and gathering. This chaos refers to different levels of logical types. Gathering (or collecting) is an operation that generates the relation between them. Such gathering is always open to paradoxes. People need again and again to collect things or recollect previously collected objects, because either the aims for which the storages were created change, or the collected things themselves change. All these changes are the spores of chaos that continuously recast the order that people implement.

1. As children grow up from time to time things that are too small for them should be packed into wardrobes, and things that they are now big enough for should be taken out. These reorganisations, when people unpack and pack things without travelling, do not happen often, but at least once a year.
2. Things previously collected also do not remain unchanging for long. People take potatoes out of the wooden box, where they keep them, and cut off the shoots. The rotten potatoes are sorted out.
3. Numerous sacks and bags hang on the outside wall of the hut. Inside these bags people store important things that they have previously collected: medicines, food stuffs, various instruments and materials. From time to time people reorganize these storages to maintain them in order. If left unattended, these storages will revert to disorder.
4. Repairing is also a case of recollection. People check for problems, search for break downs and disassemble the machinery they want to repair. First they collect information about its structure and all the details of its functions. After the problem is identified (hopefully), they reassemble the mechanism. Often they introduce their own hand-made substitutions for the missing pieces, because it is almost impossible to find spare parts. As a result the mechanism they reassemble is different from the one they were trying to fix. There is no guarantee that the fixed mechanism will work properly. And there is not any device or vehicle that can be fully relied on.
5. The reindeer herd is also changing all the time. Each time herders collect their reindeer and drive them home, the herd is different. Some reindeer stay in the forest, others that have been absent for a long time reunite with the herd and return home.
6. The best parties happen when somebody arrives at the camp. The next day some people who have been staying at the camp depart, using the transport that brought last night's arrivals. The party is a moment of gathering that unites those who are about to leave with those who have just arrived. And it is also a moment of recombination, when the group of residents of the camp changes.

REFERENCES

Bateson, G. (1958 [1936]). *Naven: A Survey of the Problems Suggested by a Composite Picture of the Culture of a New Guinea Tribe Drawn from Three Points of View*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.

Bateson, G., Mead, M. (1942). *Balinese Character: A Photographic Analysis*. New York: Academy of Sciences.

Bateson, G. (1979). *Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unity*. New York, E. P. Dutton .

Brightman, M., Grotti, V. E., Ulturgasheva, O. (Eds.) (2012). *Animism in Rainforest and Tundra: Personhood, Animals, Plants and Things in Contemporary Amazonia and Siberia*. New York: Berghahn Books.

Deleuze, G., Guattari, F. (2008 [1987]). *A Thousand Plateaus Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by Brian Massumi. London: Continuum.

Freeman, D. (1983). *Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Grimshaw, A. (2001). *The Ethnographer's Eye: Ways of Seeing in Modern Anthropology*. Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Grosz, E. A. (2005). *Time Travels: Feminism, Nature, Power*. Next Wave. Durham: Duke University Press.

Holbraad, M. (2012). *Truth in Motion: The Recursive Anthropology of Cuban Divination*. Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press.

Houseman, M., Severi, C. (1998). *Naven, or the Other Self. A Relational Approach to Ritual Action*. Leiden, Boston and Köln: Brill.

Jensen, C. B., Rödje, K. (2012). *Deleuzian Intersections: Science, Technology, Anthropology*. New York: Berghahn Books.

Jensen, G. D., Suryani, L. K. (1992). *The Balinese People: A Reinvestigation of Character*. Singapore and New York: Oxford University Press.

Kockelman, P. (2013). *Agent, Person, Subject, Self: A Theory of Ontology, Interaction, and Infrastructure*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

Mead, M. (1928). *Coming of Age in Samoa*. New York: Harper Collins.

Mead, M., Macgregor, F. C. (1951). *Growth and Culture: A Photographic Study of Balinese Childhood*. New York: Putnam.

Pedersen, M. A. (2011). *Not Quite Shamans: Spirit Worlds and Political Lives in Northern Mongolia*. Culture and Society after Socialism. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Pink, S. (2007). *Doing Visual Ethnography: Images, Media and Representation in Research.* London and Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.

Povinelli, E. A. (2011). *Economies of Abandonment: Social Belonging and Endurance in Late Liberalism*. Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press.

Silverman, D. (1993). *Interpreting Qualitative Data. Methods for Analysing Talk*, *Text and Interaction.* London and Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

TATIANA SAFONOVA, candidate of science (2009), Saint-Petersburg State University, 2003–2013 she worked at Centre for Independent Social Research. She published articles on the problems of natural and cultural conservation in post-soviet Russia, anthropology of Siberia, and ethnomethodological studies. She has an MPhil in Social Anthropology at Cambridge University (2014). Recently she has been working on her PhD project at Central European University (Budapest) on the relationship between humans and plants in Hungary. Author of *Culture Contact in Evenki Land: A Cybernetic Anthropology of Baikal Region.* Brill: Global Oriental, Leiden 2013 (in collaboration with István Sántha).

ISTVÁN SÁNTHA, Ph.D. (2004), Eötvös University, Budapest, is a senior research fellow at the Research Centre for the Humanities at the Hungarian Academy of Science. He has published articles on the problems of modern hunter-gatherers in East Siberia and their culture contact strategies with hierarchical societies. Recently he initiated a new project in the frames of Regional History Research Team in collaboration between Research Centre for the Humanities and the Institute of National Remembrance on the topic *How Word War II and the post war period form the life and the strategies of the people in South Vertes Mountain (Hungary)*. Author of *Culture Contact in Evenki Land: A Cybernetic Anthropology of Baikal Region.* Brill: Global Oriental, Leiden 2013 (in collaboration with Tatiana Safonova).