

Noaidi – The One Who Sees

Bringing To Light the Religious Experience Among the 17th-18th Century Sámi

by

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ABSTRACT

The ancient religious practices and beliefs of the indigenous people of Northern Scandinavia, known as the Sámi, have been misrepresented and misinterpreted by well meaning ethnographers and researchers who view such practices and beliefs through an Descartes-Cartesian, objective-subjective lens. This thesis develops a more accurate, intersubjective paradigm that is used to illuminate more clearly the religious workings of the 17th-18th Century Sámi. Drawing upon the intersubjective theories presented by A. Irving Hallowell, Tim Ingold and Kenneth Morrison, ethnographic examples from the writings of early Lutheran missionaries and priests demonstrate that the Sámi lived in a world that can be best understood by the employ of the categories of Person (ontology), Power (epistemology) and Gift (axiology).

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A BRIEF SURVEY

Research History – Early Contributions to the Study of Religion

Ever since man was capable of transmitting and recording thought, questions surrounding and statements regarding his creation, moral obligations and future journeys beyond death have found their way into humankind's written and oral history. Communal stories, texts and artifacts have been passed down from one generation to another for millennia; the older generation transmitting these ideas, morals and discoveries to the younger.

Religion is a term used by many as a way to classify these trans-generational ideas, objects, and rites. Religion might be defined as a system of beliefs, traditions, and moral codes which offer explanations for, or control over, major life events with an appeal to the supernatural or spiritual. Because religion often contains obligatory moral codes, it also outlines a socially acceptable mode of conduct for the religious society. For some, the word "religion" might carry with it the ideas of "belief", "faith", and "mystery" of an unknowable but approachable god or deity. For others, the word "religion" carries with it the ideas of "delusion", "fable", and "psychosomatic" grasping sparked by the terrifying fear of death.

The views and opinions of religion and what constitutes religion are as varied as there are people who study the phenomenon. However, in its simplest definition, religion is centered on relationship. Religion informs an individual and a social unit how one is to relate to other beings in their environment. Religion establishes a method of intercourse between beings that is intended to be mutually beneficial, even necessary for mutual existence.

Those interested in the study of these existential thoughts and questions seek answers or, at least, understanding through the disciplines of philosophy, archeology, anthropology, history and religious studies. Some turn to the more tangible sciences of math, physics, astronomy, and biology for understanding. Each discipline brings its best tools to the study, attempting to discover the meaning and purpose of life and relationship. At their basic levels, all scientific disciplines aim to uncover truth through the discovery of laws and principles that can reliably predict future events given certain conditions. One of the cardinal rules of any scientific process is that one must remove himself from the equation and account for every variable being studied. This is paramount. The observer must account for any impact his observation might have upon recorded results.

Applying such a rigid scientific method to the study of religion can be difficult when one attempts to examine such intangible subjects such as “faith”, “angels” and “gods”. Nevertheless, most agree that the scientific method is the best tool available in the study of any subject, be it a phenomenon, an object, a living subject or another human person. As with any scientific discipline, the researcher will always run into problems and will draw incorrect conclusions if he or she violates any of the prescribed rules of scientific discovery. Human history is replete with examples of incorrect conclusions drawn by faulty and corrupt data.

Indigenous (some might incorrectly say “primitive” or “native”) religious thought has been the focus of many observers. The attraction to such a study is understandable. Many have surmised that the “native” is a representative population from which the more

“civilized” world has evolved. By understanding their religious views, one might be able to understand the roots of one’s own, more advanced society. After all, one cannot truly know who one is without knowing one’s past.

Others have been attracted to this area of indigenous religion simply upon the merit of its “different-ness”. Their stories, relicts, rites and rituals seem so much more colorful and vibrant than those of modern day. Blood sacrifice seems so much more alive than sitting through a Lutheran preacher’s sermon...well, at least it might appear the participant is much more “committed” in the former.

There are most likely hundreds of other reasons to study indigenous religion. Regardless of why they studied it, there are many who have engaged this particular area of question. One of the early pioneers in the field of indigenous religion was Edward Burnett Tylor (1832-1917), considered by many to be the father of anthropology.

In his two volume work *Primitive Culture: Researches Into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art and Custom* (1871), Tylor outlines his theory of animism. Animism is the idea that the physical world is controlled or animated by the sometimes unseen spiritual or phantom world. Tylor defined the term *animism* as "the general doctrine of souls and other spiritual beings in general" and that the term often includes "an idea of pervading life and will in nature" (260-261).

Tylor also asserted that all human beings are essentially the same in the methods and logic used in mental problem solving. This statement is used to help explain the “psychic unity of the race,” or the perceived fact that separate and distinct societies logically seem to stumble upon the same mythical or religious explanations for life

events. Built into Tylor's theory is the idea that just as nature itself evolves, so does human thought, myth and religion. One generation builds upon the ideas and thoughts of the previous. However, this religious evolution takes time and is not always uniform in society. Tylor posits that as societal thought evolves, it often leaves leftover strands of mythical doctrine in its wake, a phenomenon he called "survivals". In Tylor's view, these "survivals" impede the progress of the society as a whole and must eventually be rooted out as the society marches on its way towards becoming more civilized.

There are many who discredit much of Tylor's theories today. Tylor failed to take into account the original social context of the societies he compared and used to support his thesis. Other critics disagree with his hierarchical view of religious evolution, challenging the assertion that a large monotheistic religion is somehow more "evolved" than the animistic polytheism of the "primitive".

Tylor is brought into this discussion because his theories of animism and "cultural evolution" have established a major theoretical framework that has severely influenced and incorrectly informed many of the other researchers that will be discussed later in this thesis.

Another contributor to this research is Edward Evan Evans-Prichard (1902-1973). Evans-Prichard spent many years of his career among two tribes of Africa, the Azande and the Nuer peoples. He became an active participant in these two societies. He learned their language and practiced their customs and rituals. He did his best to become Azande and Nuer and to experience their life from their point of view.

As Evans-Prichard worked among the Azande, he discovered that there existed certain fundamental beliefs that were critical to that society's existence. He learned that these fundamental beliefs were so critical to this society that they had to be preserved and protected at all costs. He posited that these fundamental beliefs shaped the boundaries of logic and rational thinking of the Azande society. Recognizing that fundamental beliefs shape the logic and rational thinking of a society is important to the study of religion. A more correct or complete understanding of a society's religious views will depend upon the researcher's correct understanding of the group's logic and way of thinking. Reflexively, the researcher must be aware of his or her own core beliefs and assumptions to be able to correctly identify them and account for their influence in his or her recorded data.

Another critical contribution to indigenous religious studies is his work, *Theories of Primitive Religion* (1965). In it, Evans-Pritchard reevaluated the accepted view of the "primitive" mind. To him, the primitive mind was not childish or in any way deficient to modern man's, it was simply different. The Azande and Nuer approached certain problems in ways that would differ from current Western thought. He felt that most of the anthropological writers he knew were lacking in their understanding of the very poetic and logical minds of the Azande and Nuer with whom he had come in personal contact. These so-called "primitives" were very intelligent and ingenious in their ability to survive and problem solve.

The two specific contributions of Evans-Pritchard that are important to note as we turn our attention to the Sámi of Northern Scandinavia are 1) that there are fundamental

beliefs that shaped the boundaries of logic and rational thinking for the Azande and 2) these “primitive” peoples were not deficient in their mental capacities and abilities.

This thesis will examine some of the historical material covering the 17th-18th Century religious practices of the Sámi community in an attempt to identify the fundamental beliefs and assumptions that have shaped how the Sámi experience the cosmos.

A Brief Introduction to the Sámi

Who are they today?

The Sámi people are the indigenous people inhabiting the Arctic area known as Sápmi. The United Nations recognizes Sápmi as including the far northern parts of modern day Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the Kola Peninsula of Russia (“The Sami of Northern Europe”). According to research assembled by the CIA, today’s Sámi world population has been estimated to be between 80,000 and 135,000 (“The World Fact Book”). While the majority of Sámi live in Sápmi, many can also be found living in cities and towns throughout Europe. The United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe reports that Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia all recognize the Sámi as indigenous and have created some constitutional or legal protection for them and their language and culture (“The Sami of Northern Europe”). The Sámi in all four of these nations enjoy their own parliament. While these parliaments do not provide any direct political power in their host nations’ governments, they do help promote social, cultural, religious and language awareness and preservation. They have also provided political pressure for their host nations to recognize and respond to a number of issues

facing their society today. According to each nation's Sámi parliament websites, Norway's Sámi parliament was organized in 1989, Sweden following in 1993, Finland organizing theirs in 1996, followed by Russia at the end of 2010 (Manndal 1).

Origins

As with any society, it is important to note that the Sámi are not necessarily a homogenous group. They are a socially, culturally and historically diverse people that share thousands of years in common. As such, their origin and language roots have been largely debated for centuries and numerous theories have been proposed. This research will only address briefly a few of these theories. For a more robust conversation regarding where the Sámi came from, please see Lars Ivar Hansen's and Bjørnar Olsen's *Samenes History: fram til 1750* (2004). Their work details several of the past and current theories as well as a great discussion on what culture is and how it is developed.

During the 1840's and 50's, it was widely believed that the Sámi were descendents from a people who lived in Scandinavia during the Stone Age. However, within the short course of about fifty years, many began to question the Sámi's indigenous claim and began to argue that they were actually a foreign people who migrated from Eastern Europe (Hansen 19-20).

During the early 1900's, nations in Europe and even the United States itself underwent a strong nationalism movement. National identity became very important and was discussed and researched in academic settings during this time period. The nations of Scandinavia also felt this pull to identify themselves in the larger European setting. As the nations of Scandinavia began to assemble and define their history, the native peoples

of the north began to pose more of a problem. How do you define a history that appears to be pre-historical? Where do you place the indigenous peoples in the context of the rise of your nation? Couple these feelings with Tylor's then contemporary theory of "cultural evolution" presented in 1871 and the Sámi become much less important. They are viewed as outsiders who have been passed up during civilization's evolutionary march, nothing more than evolutionary throwbacks.

In his work, *Historie og nasjon, Ernst Sars og stride om norsk culture*¹, Narve Fulsås summarizes Ernst Sars' Sámi degradation theory by writing:

The race, that would mean the Sámi, were in exact opposition to the nation and therefore, had to be symbolically eliminated so that the nation could be identical with itself. The alternative, according to Sars' premise, was to say that Norway could never become one nation because the country encompassed two 'races' (240-241)².

Hansen goes on to explain that in light of this notion, the Sámi were relegated and seen at the time as "imports" from the East or as evolutionary "survivals". The study of their culture and society became less important as it had little to do with the nation's larger history. He writes:

In all, however, the Sámi were predominantly relegated to the domain of ethnography, i.e., they were regarded as a natural object of the discipline which had emerged as the study of non-European, "primitive" cultures. In the Nordic scientific debate, the Sámi thus came to be treated as something more of an ethnographic than a historical category. This created the persistent distinction between a Norwegian/Swedish history and a Sami ethnography which, from the second half of the 1800's, has been manifested in scientific texts and museum exhibits. Both the written and the museum exhibits of Sami culture were in this

¹ Title translation: *History and Nation, Ernst Sars and the conflict about Norwegian culture*

² In author's original Norwegian, "Rasen, dvs. samene, var nasjonens absolute motsetning, og derfor måtte han symbolsk eliminerast for at nasjonen skulle vere identisk med seg sjølv. Alternativet var, på Sars sine premiss, å seie at Norge aldri ville kunne bli ein nasjon fordi landet omfatta to 'raser'."

way almost detached from the system of *time* that structured the historical works and historical exhibits at times (12-13)³.

To answer more directly the question of the Sámi's origination, Hansen turns to more modern concepts of ethnicity and culture. He draws significantly from Fredrik Barth's theory of ethnicity, namely, that ethnicity is a form of cultural identity which is formed and demonstrated only in contact with outside groups. It is clear from the archeological evidence that a people have existed in northern Scandinavia since the Stone Age. The question then remains if these first people can be considered "Sámi". In the strictest sense, Hansen argues "no" because "Sámi" as a cultural identity didn't exist until the first and second centuries C.E. He demonstrates that these northern communities did not begin really to differentiate themselves until the last millennium before the birth of Christ when the Sámi language began to be formed. He writes:

The language may have served as a unifying factor between hunting communities and may have helped to contrast them with respect to the surrounding, especially the Germanic, people. In all later known Sámi regions, the Sámi language is ancient by all accounts, extending probably to the last millennium before Christ.

We interpret the material to mean that the Sámi ethnic identity was gradually linked to a common symbol repertoire in the centuries after Christ's birth. This occurred through interaction with both Finnish and Northern Germanic groups. A further cultural consolidation - and stronger ethnic distinction - took place in the Viking Age and early Middle Ages. Several cultural traits that previously had a limited geographical and regional distribution seem to be now

³ In author's original Norwegian, "I all overveiende grad ble imidlertid samene etnografiens domene, dvs. de ble ansett som et naturlig objekt for den disiplin som hadde vokst fram som studiet av ikke-europeiske, "primitive" kulturer. I det vitenskapelige ordskiftet i Norden kom således samene til å bli behandlet mer som en etnografisk enn en historisk kategori. Dette skapte den seiglivete distinksjonen mellom ei norsk/svensk historie og en samisk etnografi som fra siste halvdel av 1800-tallet har blitt manifestert i vitenskapelige tekster og museale representasjoner. Både de skrevne og de museale framstillingene av samisk kultur ble på dette viset nærmest løsrevet fra det system av *tid* som strukturerte de historiske verkene og de historiske utstillingene i perioder."

generalized to a wider cultural complex during this time of transition which has been historically identified as "Sámi" (356)⁴.

Language

The Sámi people today have multiple languages with several dialects. The Sámi languages form a branch of the Uralic language family. The Norwegian Sámi Parliament reports that there are ten living Sámi languages at present day ("Fakta"). These languages are usually divided into two groups: western and eastern. The groups may be further divided into various subgroups and ultimately individual languages. (Sammallahti 6-8). Some of the more closely related subgroups vary slightly from each other in dialect and are understandable across linguistic boundaries. However, those groups which are more distantly related are so different so as to not be conversable with each other without significant study and translation. All of the Sámi languages are considered either endangered, severely endangered or almost extinct (Solstad 21).

The Sámi languages are immensely rich in words that describe the natural environment they live in. Animals (especially reindeer), plants, terrain formations, snow, weather conditions and other categories have an extensively developed and descriptive vocabulary.

⁴ In Hansen's original Norwegian, "Språket kan imidlertid ha fungert som en forenende faktor mellom fangstsamfunnene og ha bidratt til å kontrastere dem i forhold til omkringliggende, særlig germanske folk. Samisk språk har etter alt å dømme stor tidsdybde i alle seinere kjente samiske regioner, og strekker seg trolig tilbake til siste årtusen før Kristi fødsel.

"Slik vi tolker materialet, ble samisk etnisk identitet gradvis knyttet til et felles symbolrepertoar i århundrene etter Kristi fødsel. Dette skjedde gjennom samhandling med både finske og nordgermanske grupper. En videre kulturell konsolidering - og sterkere etnisk markering - fant sted i vikingtid og tidlig middelalder. Flere kulturtrekk som tidligere hadde en geografisk avgrenset og regional fordeling, synes nå å bli generalisert i et mer omfattende kulturkompleks som ved overgangen til historisk tid identifiseres som 'samisk'."

Culture

The Sámi are a society with rich traditions and culture. Their crafts of bone, wood and stone and their clothing are first and foremost functional but also beautiful and intricately created, decorated and colored. Sámi music, known as *joik* and their dance has been threatened and suppressed in the past but is now enjoying a resurgence today⁵. Traditionally, a skin drum was often used to accompany the *joik*. The *joik* is a deep throated, guttural chant that is infused with great feeling and emotion. The drum and *joik* were important to the work of the religious specialist called the *noaidi* or shaman.

Perhaps one of the oldest and most widely known aspects of Sámi culture is their practice of reindeer husbandry. According to the museum in Alta, Norway, the petroglyphs found in that area depicting reindeer are considered to be upwards of 7,000 years old (“Bergkusten”). In Norway and Sweden, the reindeer industry is a heavily protected right of the Sámi and is protected by national constitutional law (Reindriftsloven). The care, breeding and use of the Sámi reindeer is steeped in tradition and an important part of their language development and has been recognized by their host nations and crucial to the survival of Sámi culture. As such, reindeer husbandry is reserved to only those who have native rights (Chapter 2, Article 9 of the Reindriftsloven).

⁵ Umeå University in Sweden maintains an annual Sami Week that helps to strengthen, promote and preserve Sami culture. Access this years’ events here: <http://www.umu.se/english/about-umu/news-events/sami-week>

Religion

Another important aspect of Sámi culture and the focus of this research is their religion. In discussing Sámi religion, it is helpful to specify three time periods: Pre-Christianity Sámi religion, Sámi religion as practiced during the Christian Missionary period, and modern religion practiced today. Of course, when speaking in such broad terms, it is important to remember that the Sámi are not a homogenous group and that religious beliefs and practices change over time. One will find variances in religious practice and thought depending upon area and time period one studies.

The pre-Christian Sámi religion has generally been described by Tore Ahlbäck (1990), Louise Bäckman (1978, 1985, 2005), Harald Gaski (1997), Åke Hultkrantz (1978, 1981, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1994), Juha Pentikainen (1996, 2000), Håkan Rydving (1987, 1991, 1995, 2004, 2010) and many others as a “shaman-based”, “nature worship” world view with several “spiritual deities” that are offered various “sacrifices”. These writers claim that the Sámi “shaman” (called *noaidi* in Sámi) have been placed as spiritually significant religious specialists in Sámi religion and employed their craft to communicate with the “spiritual realm” with the help of their drum, *joik* (chanting or singing), and helper “spirits” all in the effort to effect change in the “natural” world. The *noaidi* were known for their skills in healing, cursing and fortune telling among other things.

During the 16th, 17th and 18th Centuries, Lutheran missionaries began to proselytize the Sámi, demonizing and outlawing most of their religion and ritual practices in an attempt to bring Christianity to the “pagan” peoples of the North. The inhabitants

of entire Sámi villages were baptized with Christian names. The *noaidi* drums were burned and anyone claiming to practice the *noaidi* art were punished severely and even put to death on one occasion (Rydving 1991, 31-33). During this period of great conflict and religious change, many Sámi adapted to a dual belief system which allowed them to attend Church on Sunday and baptize their children with Christian names, while still practicing their own religion during the week in private and at home. However, severe persecution and later policies of assimilation successfully drove much of the old religion and its practices into the shadows where they became changed, lost and forgotten over time.

A religious movement known as Læstadianism took root in the 1840's and has become influential in the Sámi populations today. Lars Levi Læstadius was the founder of this movement and will be addressed later in this work as he is a major contributor to what is known about the old religion of the Sámi.

Apart from Læstadianism, a majority of the Sámi living today belong to one of the Lutheran State Churches of their host countries. However, along with their languages and cultures, the old practices of the Sámi religion have enjoyed a more recent revival. There are some who claim today to be *noaidi* with the ability to offer healing. As partial evidence of this recent revival, the country of Norway has acknowledged the need to be sensitive to the old Sámi beliefs on healing in their "Plan for Health and Social Services Provided to the Sámi Population in Norway." Recognizing the rise in traditional healings, the Norwegian Health and Care Services (Helse- og Omsorgsdepartementet) concludes:

Certain knowledge of the Sámi shamanistic traditions can also be included as part of a wider understanding of Sámi culture and attitudes to illness and healing among health and social workers who work in Sámi areas. Particularly for people from a different culture than that of the Sámi, it is important to avoid mystifying their beliefs, and to put this knowledge in perspective. Most important is to develop this as Sámi cultural knowledge for and among the Sámi (“Plan for helse- og sosialtjenester”)⁶.

According to the Health and Care Services department, this should be done with “the objectives of strengthening the Sami cultural awareness, and the dissemination and promotion of the Sami culture⁷” (“Plan for helse- og sosialtjenester”). Current political and religious attitudes regarding Sámi culture appears to be softening and more tolerant. Greater respect is being shown toward the Sámi people and their way of life.

Geography

The Sámi Nation, called Sápmi is traditionally divided into four geographical areas. Northern Sápmi includes most of northern parts of Norway, Sweden and Finland while Southern Sápmi includes the southern parts of Norway and Sweden. There is also Eastern Sápmi which includes the Kola peninsula, eastern Norway and Finland. The fourth area is called Luleå Sápmi as it takes in the Luleå River valley area of Sweden.

⁶ Original Norwegian, “En viss kunnskap om samiske sjamanistiske tradisjoner kan også inngå som del av en bredere forståelse av samisk kultur og samiske holdninger til sykdom og helbredelse hos helse- og sosialarbeidere som arbeider i samiske områder. Særlig for mennesker fra en annen kultur enn den samiske, må det være viktig å unngå mystifisering, og å sette denne viten i perspektiv. Viktigst må det være å utvikle dette som en samisk kulturell kunnskap for og hos samer.”

⁷ Original Norwegian, “...bør gjøres i forhold til målsettinger om styrking av den samiske kulturelle bevissthet, og om videreformidling og styrking av samisk kultur.”

Era and Geographical Boundaries of Thesis

This research will concern itself with the religious practices as described by Lutheran missionaries of the 17th and 18th century. Much information will also be taken from Lars Levi Læstadius as he addresses the works of these earlier missionaries.

It should be understood that the views presented by these early writers are describing what they see and experience over multiple years and over multiple regions of Sápmi. Unfortunately, these early writers do not differentiate which Sámi group they are describing and habitually mix different groups together in their stories and “ethnographies”. Generalizations are made and facts may have been attributed to the wrong location and groups.

That being said, this is the information that has informed much of the Sámi studies over the past 100 years, and therefore, must be addressed. The very fact that these stories and descriptions are taken from several locations will help strengthen this project’s conclusion that the basic assumptions of the Sámi are consistent and can be applied throughout the sampled populations.

It must again be stated that people change over time. We are looking at the descriptions of groups of people who lived over 300 years ago. It would be reckless to blindly apply the conclusions drawn by this research to peoples living today. However, by being aware of some of the basic assumptions made by these earlier peoples, we would have a more correct lens through which to view history. This could in turn, provide greater understanding to the current views and ideas held by the Sámi today.

THE SÁMI SOURCE DOCUMENT DILEMMA

The Ethnocentricity of the Source Authors

Most of the information available regarding the pre-Christian religion of the Sámi comes from the Lutheran missionaries of the 16th to the 18th centuries. Additionally, there exist vast amounts of archaeological data that can be examined today. Examples include several dozen *noaidi* drums located in museums around the world and the religious sacrificial sites called *seite*. The missionaries who provide us the majority of the written information were not trained ethnographers nor did they maintain any academic standards to their writings. The notes they took on the Sámi religion served only one purpose; to assist in the Christianizing of the Sámi people. These missionaries did not try to hide their disdain of nor their repulsion from the Sámi religion, nor did they care to understand fully their views. Their notes were written to assist themselves and future missionaries in the conversion process of “the primitive heathen”.

As such, their writings are full of ethnocentric views. Concepts and values expressed by the Sámi were captured using the language and views of the missionary. Often, the gathered information was from a native individual under duress or fear of persecution or retaliation from the church.

Translation Woes

Ideas and concepts are often difficult to transmit between two individuals who speak the same language. This becomes even more difficult when ideas and concepts must be transmitted across language barriers also. One word in one language contains nuances that are not completely translated when substituted for another word in another

language. Linguists, etymologists and multilingual individuals and lamented this fact for millennia. Language therefore becomes quite cumbersome when one considers the various cycles of translation these “source” documents have undergone.

As these “source” documents are used, it becomes imperative to remember that the ideas and concepts they contain have been through a number of translation filters. First, an original Sámi speaker is asked a question by a missionary who is not a native speaker. Second, an answer is given either in the original Sámi tongue to a non-native speaker or in a second language for the Sámi speaker to the missionary. Third, this exchange is recorded (often paraphrased) in archaic Swedish or Norwegian. Now please keep in mind that this exchange is taking place on a backdrop of religious persecution, mistrust and hatred. Finally, this record is translated into modern English and is read by a 21st century researcher who comes from a very different place and has a whole set of assumptions that may or may not be shared by the original participants and who, at best, is reading words that are two or three steps removed from the original language they were transmitted in. There are no existing source documents written in the Sámi language that describe the religious experiences of the Sámi during this time period. Most of the secondary source documents used in this project are written in the original Norwegian or Swedish. Some are found written in the original English or later translated from Norwegian or Swedish into English.

The Sámi Drum as a Source Document

With maybe three exceptions, the *noaidi* drum, Johan Turi and Lars Levi Læstadius, there are no original source documents to be examined today that come

directly from a native Sámi during this time period. Johan Turi and Lars Levi Læstadius will be discussed later in this paper.

The first and largest exception to a lack of primary source documentation is the *noaidi* drum, called *runebomme*. There are approximately 70 drums in existence today that were collected during the 17th and 18th centuries (Ahlbäck and Bergman 81). Those not collected and preserved in museums were often destroyed in the priests' attempts to put down the pagan beliefs of the Sámi.

For the Saamis, the drums represented their threatened culture, the resistance against the Christian claim to exclusiveness, and a striving to preserve traditional values - i.e. "the good" that had to be saved. For the Church authorities, on the other hand, the drums symbolized the explicit nucleus of the elusive Saami "paganism" - i.e. "the evil" that had to be annihilated (Ahlbäck and Bergman 29).

The drums were constructed of a wood base with stretched reindeer hide as the face. Reindeer sinew was used as binding material and the drum mallet was constructed from reindeer horn. The drum face was painted to depict multiple images that helped the *noaidi* in his travels and divination. He would sometimes place a small golden or brass ring onto the drum face and lightly beat drum while singing (*joik*). The ring might be circular or triangular and would have additional rings attached to it. The direction the ring traveled and the symbols it came into contact with would be interpreted by the *noaidi* (Læstadius 2002, 152-159). About this ring, Lars Levi Læstadius, an important individual in Sámi studies and who will be introduced later in this project, says:

...the *arpa* [ring] or *väiko* represented the sun, for all of nature was depicted on the drumhead, and the plate with the rings, according to the assertion of Samuel Rhen, was always placed on the mark of the sun when the drumming began. Thus it is evident that the movement of the piece over the drumhead represented the sun's movement through the entire galaxy pictured there. The bunches of rings affixed to the piece represented the rays of the sun. If the piece was rectangular,

four bunches of rings were attached to it, and they represented...the four main points of the compass... The Lappish name may also point to this, for *väikko* can mean ‘bright’, ‘shiny’ or ‘gleaming’. It is derived from the word *väja*, ‘shiny’, which is still used about metals (2002, 159).

It is important to note from the above paragraph that Læstadius chooses to associate this brass ring with the sun and not as “a frog” as many of the other, less-versed writers describe it. Læstadius’ claim seems to bear greater weight when one considers the possible meanings of the inscriptions painted on the drum face as the sun appeared to have a prominent role Sámi cosmology. However, the descriptions and interpretations of the drum markings fall outside of the boundaries of this project although worthy of much closer inspection.

The drum bodies were constructed from wood and can be divided into two main categories differentiated by their construction.

The preserved Saami drums mainly belong to two types. The oldest is considered to be the so-called ‘frame (sieve) type’, most of which have a frame consisting of a single strip of wood bent into a circle. According to Manker [Ernst Manker wrote about the Saami drums in the mid-1900s], in the Saami area this type of drum was gradually displaced, principally southwards, but also northwards. In its place came the so-called ‘bowl type’, which thus seems to have developed from the former, and is known only from Saami culture. Already at the time of the first reliable illustrations of drums, the ‘bowl type’ was more widely dispersed than the ‘frame’ one (Ahlbäck and Bergman 81).

The frame drum utilized a cross brace to help keep the frame’s shape. These cross braces were minimally decorated by the *noaidi*. In contrast however, the “bowl type” drum was often ornately decorated and carved by the *noaidi* (Ahlbäck and Bergman 81-95).

The *runebomme* can be further divided into two additional categories based upon the layout of the symbols painted onto the face of the drum.

The Saami drums can be divided into those in which the symbol of *Päivö*, the sun, with its reins (*labikies*), is situated in the middle of the drum heads, and those whose illustrated surfaces are separated into two or more sections. The first mentioned, or so-called *Åsele*-type, is considered to be of an older style than the others (Ahlbäck and Bergman 64).

Because these drums were made by the *noaidi*, they become a valuable source in understanding something about the Sámi perspective. However, the symbols painted are difficult to interpret, and much discussion has centered on various theories in recent years. According to Håkan Rydving, there are only two ancient drums preserved today with explanations by their original owners (drums no. 30 and no. 71). There are five drums which have been interpreted by someone other than the owner or by some unknown interpreter who might have been the owner (drums no. 1, no. 22, no. 31, no. 39, no. 45). There are four drums which are now lost but for which drawings and/or interpretations are preserved (Lybecker's drum, Rheen's drum, the drum of the *Nærøy* manuscript and the Shanke-Jessen drum). The fourth and largest group of drums consists of those which have been preserved but have no contemporary explanations nor interpretations (1991, 44-45). As already noted, much of the religious conflict of the 17th-18th centuries was centered on the drum. Even in the case where a drum and its symbol interpretations have been preserved, it is important to note that the interpretations were given hesitantly or even under duress and so their validity should be called into question.

The *runebomme* were used in various ways. There are a number of accounts how the *noaidi* was able to use his drum to divine future events or to ascertain answers to

certain important questions by bouncing a ring on its surface. A transcript of a 1687 District Court case in Lysksele states:

At one District Court, "an old, good-tempered man" explained in court that the Saamis used the drum "in the simple belief and opinion thereby to obtain good fortune or otherwise learn whether some good or evil fortune is approaching them, before they betake themselves to the woods in order to catch animals or otherwise practice their fishing[...]" (Rydving 1991, 30-31).

It is not reported in the record if the "old, good-tempered man" was Sámi or a Swedish informant who testified on the matter. However, this account does seem to agree with a multitude of additional accounts (Rydving 1991, 31-33). The *noaidi* often employed his skills and drum in the healing of the sick or even the calling back of the dead. Rydving recounts the following story:

One of the Saamis who handed over a drum in this year [1688] was the Pite Saami, Lars Nilsson. When he later lost his son, he used a drum in a futile effort at bringing him back to life. He was prosecuted, but at the district court sessions he explained outright that he would "observe and use the custom of his forefathers, in spite of what higher or lower authority in this case would now or in the future prohibit him from doing". He was sentenced to death, the judgment was ratified by the court of appeal, and he was thus decapitated and burnt at the stake "together with the tree-idols he had used and the divination drum and the tools belonging to it". The execution was held in the presence of his kinsmen, who had been summoned to attend. Thus Lars Nilsson died a martyr to his religion. The authorities had obtained the example they wanted, and the local clergy man (the above mentioned P. Noraeus) wrote afterwards that he hoped it should "be a notable force and warning for other idolaters and such sinners". To the best of my knowledge, Lars Nilsson was the only Saami ever executed on religious grounds in Sweden-Finland (1991, 32-33).

Perhaps a closer study of the *noaidi* drums could shed further light on Sámi cosmology and how they viewed their place in the world around them. As interesting as this area of study would be, it falls outside the confines of this project but definitely warrants a closer look and more study.

The Lappish Mythology Source Documents and their Authors

The greatest quantity of source material regarding Sámi religious practices and beliefs come to us by the Lutheran missionaries and priests and from a few trained scientists of the 17th and 18th Centuries. This next section will briefly introduce who they were and describe the documents they produced. As mentioned earlier, these documents must be read with a critical eye and with an understanding of their limitations. Rydving explores and represents the relationships between these source document authors (and several additional authors excluded from this project) listed below in his work, *Tracing Sami Traditions* (2010, 57-71).

Johannes Schefferus (1621-1679, Swedish)

Johannes Schefferus was born to German and Swedish parents on February 2, 1621 in Strausbourg, France. He studied at the university in Strausbourg and then later in Leiden. He was trained as a classical philologist and archaeologist. He was summoned by the Queen of Sweden in 1648 to serve as a professor at Uppsala University. In 1673 he published *Lapponia*. He died on March 26, 1679 (Northern Lights).

Originally written in Latin, *Lapponia* was subsequently translated into English, French, Dutch and Swedish. Schefferus' book is the first to describe the Sámi in any detail and is often quoted by those who follow him. His sources were a series of letters he received from the missionaries and clergymen in Northern Sweden to which he would add his commentary and interpretation. Samuele Rheen and Johannes Tornæus are among those clergymen quoted by Schefferus. Schefferus is considered one of "the most credible authors in" the field of Sámi studies during his day (Læstadius 2002, 54-55).

Isaac Olsen (ca. 1680-1739, Norwegian)

In 1703, Isaac Olsen was a hired school teacher in Kjelvik, a small fishing village in the Northern part of Norway (Qvigstad and Olsen, 3). Later that same year, he was hired to teach school for the Sámi in the Varanger district of Norway. From 1708 to 1716, he traveled around the other districts in Finnmark teaching (Kristiansen, “Samisk Religion”).

While traveling and teaching, Olsen learned the Sámi language and had firsthand experience with their culture and religion. He recorded his experiences and observations in a number of manuscripts, some of which were later found and published in 1910 by Just Qvigstad under the title, *Relation om lappernes vildfarelser og overtro (The Relation of the Lapps Error and Superstition)* as part of Qvigstad’s 1910 work, *Kildeskrifter til den Lappiske Mythologi (Source Documents of the Lappish Mythologies)*. Olsen’s experiences give his writings great value as source documents. In the difficult language of his day, Olsen writes:

I will now give hereafter my story by myself, and will not write what other men have written nor give voice to legends, but I will only give that which I, myself, have seen with my own eyes and with my own ears have heard, and I, myself, have traveled among the finns [Sámi], I must speak on that which I have seen and heard and experienced. There is no one who knows it as well as I do, and none who has seen and heard and experienced it as well as I did and none who has been and traveled among the finns in the like manner nor as long as I and has been in each man’s house, and who understands their language as well as I do, therefore, I will now tell only the purest truth about life among the finns and how they live⁸ (Qvigstad and Olsen, 10).

⁸ Original Norwegian, “Nu vil ieg her effter træde til Historien i sig self, og icke skrive effter anders mands skreffter eller talle effter segn, men alleniste det som ieg self med min Egen øyen haver seet, og med min øren hørt, og ieg self har forfaret i blant finnerne, ieg maa talle der om, som haver seet og hørt og Erfaret det at det er saa, thi, der er ingen som ved det saa vel som ieg, og ingen har seet og hørt, og erfaret det saa vel som ieg, og ingen har været, og faret i blant finnerne paa den maade og saalenge som ieg og været i hver mands huus, og for staar deris sprog

In 1716, he met the Protestant missionary Thomas von Westen who encouraged him to take a position at the *Seminarium Lapponicum* in Trondheim as an interpreter and translator of the Sámi language. He was only there for two years when he was called to Copenhagen in 1718 to serve as an advisor to the Royal Mission College. He later moved back to Trondheim in 1722 where he died in 1730 (Qvigstad and Olsen, 4-5).

Thomas von Westen (1682-1727, Norwegian)

Thomas von Westen was born in Trondheim on September 13, 1682. He served as a Lutheran Priest and missionary in Veøy, Norway in 1709 and traveled extensively through the western portion of Sápmi multiple times. He died on April 9, 1727. Von Westen was ruthless and unrelenting in his drive to christen the Sámi people. In 1717 he established the *Seminarium Scholasticum* (later became the *Seminarium Lapponicum*) in Trondheim, a seminary devoted to the training and preparing of future missionaries and priests who would join the work in converting the Sámi ("Thomas von Westen").

There are very few writings from Von Westen that have not become lost to history. Most of his original writings that have survived discuss the organizing of the church and missionary work he oversaw in Northern Scandinavia. However few his personal writings might be, his presence and influence is noted in several of the other missionaries' notes and publications, many of which quoted extensively from Von Westen's now non-existent notes (Rydving 2010, 63-65). Von Westen's significant contribution to this project comes mainly from the *Seminarium Scholasticum* (Kristiansen

saa vel som ieg, derfor vil ieg nu talle den bare blotte sandhed og hvorledis det er fadt i blant finnerne, og hvor der staar til.”

“Kildeskrifter og kildekritikk”). Without his work and influence, there would be far less material regarding the Sámi to consider today.

Johan Randulf (1686-1735, Norwegian)

Johan Randulf was born in Bergen in 1686. He became an ordained Priest and served in Nærøy, Norway and surrounding area from 1718 until his death in 1735.

Randulf authored a manuscript that detailed his and others’ experiences with the Sámi religion in and around Nærøy. His account includes the findings he and Thomas von Westen made during his visit to Nærøy in 1723 (Dunfjeld-Aagård 18).

Randulf’s original manuscript, now called the “Nærøy Manuscript”, has been lost to history but Just Qvigstad included his copy of the manuscript in his work *Kildeskrifter til den Lappiske Mythologi*⁹ published in 1903.

The “Nærøy Manuscript” details an interesting story of the *noaidi* Anders Sivertsen and his attempt to save his son Johannes from a terminal sickness. This story will be presented later in this project.

Knud Leem (1697-1774, Norwegian)

Knud Leem was the author of the first lexicon of the Sámi language. He was born in Haram, Norway and became a theologian in 1715 at a young age of 18 years. From 1725-1752, Leem served as a missionary and priest in Finnmark until he chaired Westen’s *Seminarium Lapponicum*. His works include a Sámi grammar book (1748), a Danish-Sámi dictionary (1756), a two volume *Lexicon Lapponicum Bipartitum* (1768-

⁹ Title translation, *Source Documents of the Lappish Mythologies*

81), and *Professor Knud Leems norske maalsamlingar fraa 1740-aari*¹⁰, a large vocabulary collection of Norwegian dialects published posthumously in 1923 ("Knud Leem"). Most important to this project is *Beskrivelse over Finmarkens Lapper*¹¹ (1767) which was also published in German and Latin (Grankvist).

Erik Johan Jessen (1705-1783, Danish)

Erik Johan Jessen was born November 4, 1705 in Denmark. He began his studies in theology but then, in 1732, decided to earn a law degree. He held various legal positions from 1735 until his death in 1783. He became a member of the newly organized The Royal Genealogical and Heraldic Society in 1777 at the same time he was a member of The Norwegian Scientific Society located in Trondheim (Bricka).

Interesting to this project is the fact that in 1743, he began to record a description of the Kingdom of Denmark including the Sámi. This description was published in 1767 as part of Knud Leem's *Beskrivelse over Finmarkens Lapper*.

Jacob Fellman (1793–1875, Finnish)

Jacob Fellman was born in 1793. He studied theology and science at the Åbo Academy in Finland and graduated with his Master's degree in 1817. He served as a Lutheran priest or vicar to the Sámi from 1819 to 1842 (Memoranda 1-2). He was very interested in the people of Finnmark and also was an amateur botanist. He traveled most of Sápmi collecting plants and preaching to the Sámi. He kept many notes during his travels recording Sámi folklore and *joiks*.

¹⁰Title translation, *Professor Knud Leem's Collection of Norwegian Dialects from the 1740's*

¹¹ Title translation, *A Description of Finnmark's Lapps*

After his death in 1875, his son Nils Isak published his father's notes (2,567 pages!) in 1910 as the four volume *Anteckningar min under Vistelse i Lappmarken*¹² (Nordisk Familjebok 13). The volume most interesting to this project is his second volume which focuses on Sámi language and theology including some folklore and mythology (Memoranda 3).

Just Knud Qvigstad (1853-1957, Norwegian)

Just Qvigstad was born in Lyngen, Norway in 1853. He earned his philosophy (1874) and theology (1881) degrees. He served as the Rector of the Tromsø Teacher Training College 1883-1910 and 1912-1920 and as the Church and Education Minister during 1910-1912. He published two works that are of particular interest to this project, a two volume work, *Kildeskrifter til den lappiske mytologi*¹³ (1903-10), and four volume work, *Lappiske eventyr og sagn*¹⁴ (1927–29) (“Just Knud Qvigstad”).

Qvigstad is seen as one of the greatest scholars in Sámi studies. He authored 112 publications over 74 years. His last publication *Opptegnelser fra sameness liv*¹⁵ (1954) was published when he was 101 years old. Much of what Qvigstad wrote was published during the time of Norway's nationalism discussed earlier. Despite political, social and academic pressure, Qvigstad maintained a more moderate voice about the Sámi and never advocated for their complete assimilation into Norwegian society. He viewed his role as a scholar to advocate for the Sámi and to research for himself their culture and society

¹² Title translation, *Notes During My Stay in Lapland*.

¹³ Title translation, *Source Documents of the Lappish Mythologies*

¹⁴ Title translation, *Lappish Fairytales and Legends*

¹⁵ Title translation, *Notes from the Life of the Saami*

“before it was too late”. His published works have been vital in today’s endeavor to preserve and bolster the Sámi culture (Niemi).

An Introduction to Johan Turi (1854-1936, Sámi)

In addition to the preserved drums and the missionary manuscripts, there are two other documents written by Sámi that provide valuable information to this project.

Although written much later than most of the aforementioned documents, Johan Turi (1854-1936) wrote a small book called, “Turi’s Book of Lapland” published¹⁶ in a bilingual Sámi-Danish edition in 1910 and later translated into English in 1931. He was greatly assisted by Emily Demant Hatt who helped him organize his notes and thoughts and who also performed the Danish translation (Turi 9-15).

While it is true that Turi lived after the turn of the 17th-18th centuries, his contribution is unique due to the fact that he is a native speaker who grew up as Sámi. His views on the Sámi religion come after Christianity had pushed the practice of the old religion aside. He does not claim to be *noaidi* but does have firsthand knowledge of Sámi culture and contemporary religious practices. The basic assumptions held by the ancient Sámi regarding knowledge, personhood and gifting that will be shown in this project can be seen throughout Turi’s work. His writings could be used to demonstrate the validity of this project’s conclusions. It is possible be that these basic assumptions can be carefully applied over generations and may, with closer inspection, still be valid to some degree in the modern era.

¹⁶ Published in the Sámi language in 1910 under the title *Muitalus sámiiid birra*.

An Introduction to Lars Levi Læstadius (1800-1861, Sámi)

The third and final Sámi authored source document comes from Lars Levi Læstadius. As Læstadius greatly informs this project, his biography will be presented in some detail in the following sections.

He was born in Jäckvik, Sweden located in the Southern part of Sweden's Sápmi (Læstadius 2002, 19) in 1800 to a Swedish father and Sámi mother. He married Brita Kajsa Alstadius who came from a long Sámi pedigree. He grew up in a bilingual family and had several generations of clergymen on his father's side of the family (Læstadius 2002, 24).

Læstadius attended high school in Härnösand and later at the University of Uppsala where he studied botany (Læstadius 2002, 19). After a year into his studies, Læstadius decided to also study theology so he could earn more money by working as a priest.

Læstadius as a Scholar

Upon his completion of his studies, he was ordained in February 1824 and served as Lutheran vicar to several areas in Northern Sweden from 1825-1844 (Læstadius 2002, 19). During this time, he continued his work as a botanist and became fluent in two Sámi languages, Lule Sámi and Fell (Mountain) Sámi. He excelled in his botanical studies and research and was invited in 1838 to employ his knowledge both as a scientist but also as a guide to the two year long French La Recherche Expedition to Finnmark. Læstadius was responsible for collecting over 6,700 pressed botanical specimens which he later sold to the expedition leader. Upon his death, cause by stomach cancer, an additional 6,500

specimens from his personal collection were sold to France, many of which are now on display in the Science Academy of Sweden in the Museum of Natural Science (Læstadius 2002, 22).

In addition to his botanical work, Læstadius also wrote and published a number of religious and philosophical works. His pastoral thesis *Crapula mundi* “The World’s Hangover” was published in Latin in 1843. A three part work titled *Dårhushjonet* “The Madhouse Inmate”, was written before 1851 and published after his death in 1949 which explored humanity’s natural inclination towards a spiritual life (Læstadius 2002, 23).

The most important contribution Læstadius makes to this project is his work known as *Fragmenter i Lappska Mythologi*¹⁷. Between 1838 and 1845, Læstadius had drafted several parts of the manuscript which focused heavily upon the religious beliefs and practices of the Sámi. It exists in six parts as outlined below:

- “Reminder to the Reader” – dated May 8, 1840
- “Part 1: Doctrine of Deities” – dated May 8, 1840
- “Part 2: Doctrine of Sacrifice” – dated November 1844
- “Part 3: Doctrine of Divination” – dated November 1844
- “Part 4: Selection of Lappish tales” – dated November 1844
- “Part 5: Addition” – dated May 1, 1845

Læstadius’ *Fragmenter* was never published before his death from stomach cancer in 1861. The reasons appear to be somewhat political in nature. One can read the details in Juha Pentikäinen’s excellent introduction of the 2002 English translation titled

¹⁷ English Title “Fragments of Lappish Mythology”

Fragments of Lappish Mythology. In short, Læstadius agreed to supply his Sámi work to the captain of the La Recherche expedition, Joseph Paul Gaimard, who agreed to publish it. It becomes apparent through a few written communications between Gaimard and Professor Carl Jacob Sundevall who served as Læstadius' messenger and conveyed the completed "Parts" of *Fragmenter* to France, that Læstadius' own religious awakening (discussed later) and his blunt opinions about several individuals in their shared academic circles caused some doubt on the appropriateness in publishing Læstadius' book (Læstadius 2002, 45-48).

A second blow to the publication of *Fragmenter* came in the form of Læstadius' own spiritual crisis and awakening. The details of this religious conversion will be discussed in the next section but it becomes clear that by the mid-1840's the Swedish clergy begin to see Læstadius as a "radical revivalist leader" which would certainly (in the eyes of academia and the Church) call into question the actual value of his manuscripts (Læstadius 2002, 52).

Finally, the advent of France's Second Republic revolution in 1848 that ended the reign of Louis Philippe, who commissioned the La Recherche expedition, also ended any chance that Læstadius' manuscript would be translated and published (Læstadius 2002, 51).

It appears that Parts 1-5 were all delivered to Gaimard in Paris by 1847 and were later sold as part of his collection upon his death in 1858. The manuscript changed hands as it was sold to multiple buyers. Eventually, Yale University purchased it as an addition to their uncataloged Swedish collection. There, the forgotten and lost manuscript was

discovered in 1946 by Olof von Freilitz who was serving as a librarian at Yale. The manuscript was microfilmed which was then archived at the University of Uppsala (Læstadius 2002, 49-50).

Læstadius' "Reminder to the Reader" and Parts 1-5 were finally prepared and published in the original Swedish in 1997 under the title *Fragmenter i lappska Mythologien* and in English in 2002 under the title *Fragments of Lappish Mythology*.

For decades, those interested in Læstadius' work believed that his entire manuscript had been found and published. However, in the fall of 2001, an additional 108 pages of Læstadius' Part 1 were discovered in Pontarlier, France as the La Recherche findings were being researched and prepared for publication (Læstadius 2003, 6). In 2003, a complete Part 1 was assembled and published separately in the original Swedish under the title, *Fragmenter i Lappska Mythologien: Gudalära*. The 2003 printing also contains a very insightful introduction and a concluding essay that are well worth their read.

Læstadius as a Religious Seeker

In both *Crapula mundi* (1843) and *Dårhushjonet* (before 1851) Læstadius offers sharp criticism of the bishops and leaders of the Lutheran Church of Sweden. He was very unsettled by the rationalism and the "dead" doctrines propagated by those in the Church. Læstadius' poor health and the loss of three of his fifteen children at birth added to his spiritual struggle.

During the early 1800's, a religious revivalism began to enter Northern Sweden. The Conventicle Edict of 1726 mandated, among other things, that the laity could not

hold religious services or preach in Sweden. However, in the remote areas of Northern Sweden, the people were allowed to gather to read the Bible and postils. These Pietist Lutherans began to read the writings of Martin Luther and began to proselytize his message of justification by faith. They became known in Swedish as *läsarna* or “readers” (Hepokoski 7). During 1844, this group was under the leadership of Reverend Per Brandell who was the Pastor of Nora (Raittila).

It is during the summer of 1844 that Læstadius “awakens” to his new Christian life. While receiving the confessions of a young woman, Læstadius has a deeply spiritual experience. He records his experience as follows:

In the summer of 1844, I came to Åsele in my capacity of visitor. Here I met some readers of a most gentle kind. Among them was a Lappish girl by the name of Maria, who opened her whole heart to me after she heard my altar speech. This girl had had experiences with the order of God’s Grace of a kind I had never heard of before. She had wandered long distances in order to find the light in the darkness. During her wanderings, she had finally arrived at the home of Rev. Brandell in Nora, and when she opened her heart to him, he resolved her doubt. Through him she came to find living faith. And, I thought, here now a Maria sits at Jesus’ feet. And only now, I thought, only now can I see the road which leads to life. It was hidden until I had my talk with Maria. The simple stories of her wanderings and experiences made such a deep impression in my heart that I, too, saw the light. During the evening I spent in Maria’s company I had a foretaste of the joy of heaven. But the ministers in Åsele did not know Maria’s heart, and even Maria felt that they were not of the right flock of sheep (Læstadius 2002, 30-31).

Previous to this experience with Maria (now identified as Milla Clementsdotter), the death of his son Levi and his subsequent illness (he thought he had contracted the deadly tuberculosis) forced Læstadius to inventory his life. He drew the conclusion that he was not ready to die and needed to find absolution. This conversation with Maria was pivotal in his quest to see “the light” and he felt a deep inner peace by her revelation.

Læstadianism as a Religious Movement

From this point forward, Læstadius begins to change his sermons in Karesuando. A heavy prohibition on alcohol with pledges of temperance becomes the norm. By the winter of 1845, numerous individuals in his congregation begin to feel the “movements” of grace come over them. These “movements” of grace were displayed as sudden emotional and/or physical outbursts. “People shrieked and screamed, rose and embraced one another, swung their arms, jumped, spun in circles, danced and fell in heaps on the floor or even in snowbanks” (Hepokoski 12). Visions of Jesus and of heaven or hell were seen and recorded by many of his followers. Læstadius would often publish these accounts for the benefit of those who have yet to be awakened.

While the atmosphere at church was often loud and infused with excitement, familial conduct outside of church and in the community calmed and was very peaceful. In 1848, the District Magistrate Hackzell writes in a report that:

Anyone who is familiar with the Lapps and their irresistible lust for hard liquor and strong drink and has seen the liquor trade and how it has been used by the settlers and other swindlers to cheat and strip them of everything they own and has witnessed the drunkenness of the Lapps and heard them shouting and chanting their *joiks* at fairs and other gatherings can only be highly amazed at the change that has occurred in them, when now on such occasions he sees them all sober and as quiet and reserved as though gathered in a churchyard to enter the church (Hepokoski 16).

A year later, in 1849, Hackzell adds that crime in the area had entirely ceased to exist and that illegitimate children were no longer born.

This revival, now known Læstadianism, swept over Northern Sweden, Norway and found its way to the United States during the Scandinavian immigration which began in the 1860’s. By 1853, Læstadius’ movement reached a point in numbers and strength

that in order to minimize the religious conflict between the followers of Læstadius and the other Lutheran parishioners, the presiding Bishop of Härnösand, Erik Abraham Almquist, decided to separate the church services into two separate meetings thus allowing Læstadianism to become its own movement and to gain credibility (Cornell). The worldwide Læstadius movement has now grown to an estimated 150,000-200,000 members.

Læstadius' Importance to this Project

Læstadius' upbringing becomes critical to this project. From his father's side, Læstadius receives the direction and heritage of the clergy and education. While on his mother's side, he receives his full Sámi culture, language and view of the world.

Læstadius states:

But I, Læstadius, if there is some measure of godliness in me, if some faith in God, if some patience in adversity, then I surely did not learn those virtues in schools, but in my father's home and at my mother's bosom where I have absorbed whatever religion and faith I may have. For I am forever indebted to the example, tears, and nightly sighs of that happy time for everything I have been taught about religion and faith (Læstadius 2002, 25).

Thus, from his tender years as a newborn, Læstadius was taught one of the Sámi language, experienced both the Sámi and Christian traditions of his parents and grew up surrounded by and an intricate part of Sámi culture in Jäckvik. Juha Pentikäinen, editor of Læstadius' *Fragments*, continues by saying:

Læstadius thus equates religion and mother tongue, which is learned as if in a mother's lap. Lars Levi Læstadius himself was a *homo religiosus* who believed in the supernatural world and also experienced it in a typically Sami way. During his later career as a revivalist leader, he blended this knowledge about Sami ethnic religion into his sermons in such a unique way that his Sami audience could often quite well identify themselves with the roles of various supranormal beings (Læstadius 2002, 25).

Læstadius is critical to this project for a number of reasons. The first issue Læstadius assists with is the source text dilemma mentioned earlier. Since access to original sources was so limited in the 17th and 18th centuries, many of these early writers quoted extensively from each other without verifying the few sources of their predecessors. In fact, Rydving maintains that Olsen is one of the only writers in the 1700's that wrote only from his own experiences among the Sámi. Some of the other writers included a few personal notes of their own experience but then quoted from each other and extensively from Von Westen. A third group, who has been excluded from this project, even went as far as to have had no independent notes from personal interaction with the Sámi and based their works solely upon Von Westen's accounts or upon another, now lost document presumably authored by Von Westen (Rydving 2010, 65). This, of course, causes great concern on the validity of the conclusions drawn and the accuracy of the ethnography they all seem to quote from. This coupled with many of their religious agendas and one must read their works very critically. This is exactly where Læstadius is so very helpful. Pentikäinen writes:

It is difficult to identify any writer of Sami studies of the 19th century who would have been more sharply critical in relation to the use of sources than Læstadius. It is vitally important to the reader of *Fragments of Lappish Mythology* to recognize the basis for his source criticism. Læstadius's own comments, with which the book abounds, are part of the philosophy of science and the theological discussion of the times; they also illuminate the researcher's religion and personality. Included are, in addition to mythology and folklore, Læstadius the researcher's multidisciplinary perspectives, which bring together the observations and conclusions of the ecologist, botanist, and zoologist in relation to his own Sami experience (Læstadius 2002, 50).

Thus, Læstadius is uniquely equipped with his native understanding of the language, his training and education as a scientist, and his personal experience with Sámi culture and religion to give a measure of reasoned, scholarly criticism to these earlier works, serving as something of a check as it pertains to the data they present. He does not hesitate to criticize an earlier writer for their incorrect assumptions or own laziness in presenting actual facts. His language gives him deeper understanding of the Sámi perspective. Much of what Læstadius writes in *Fragmenter* is informed by oral traditions from both Sámi sides of his family as well as his own personal religious experiences (Læstadius 2002, 24). His training as a botanist gives him an eye for detail and a desire to be exact in his description of his study as well as a systematic way of articulating his findings.

A second area Læstadius informs this project is on a religious level. It is clear that Læstadius is operating from an ardent distrust and dislike for the established Lutheran church, its doctrine and leadership. While still maintaining his self-professed Christian beliefs, Læstadius is not afraid to distance himself from the established ecclesiastical order and thus can be very honest in his comments and interpretations in *Fragmenter*. Læstadius is even so willing as to allow his feelings to move him into his own role as a revivalist leader later on in his life. This can be viewed as evidence that he is not trying to advance the same religious agenda of the earlier writers as he himself does not fully agree with their stance and doctrines and leaves him independent to draw conclusions that conflict greatly with the established doctrine of the Lutheran church.

THE NEW PARADIGM

There is a shift that has emerged in the past 60 years in the study of indigenous peoples and their religious practices that has come to be described as post-Cartesian.

Those who engage in a post-Cartesian study of indigenous peoples attempt to limit the intellectual ethnocentrism that comes to academia by the adaptation of Rene Descartes' and Isaac Newton's theories of the objective versus subjective natural world.

Unfortunately, for the most of the nineteenth and twentieth Centuries, those who have conducted research among indigenous peoples have mainly done so through their limiting Cartesian glasses, completely unaware of the gross misrepresentation they have portrayed of the indigenous world. One cannot simply apply concepts, terminology and frameworks of Western European cosmology to indigenous peoples without seriously compromising the integrity of the conducted research. Remember, in pure science, the observer must remain independent of the object of his study or he will introduce and not account for variables in his research. This independence can be achieved, at least to some degree, by being aware of the researcher's own ethnocentric views as well as to be, in this case, equally sensitive to the Sámi's view.

Some of the key authors in this discussion are A. Irving Hallowell (1926, 1955, 1975), Morton Klass (1995), Kenneth Morrison (1992, 2000, 2002, 2013), and Alf Hornborg (2006). While most of these authors fail to completely divorce themselves from their Cartesian marriage, they do put forward some very useful terms and theories that can help one be more aware of ethnocentric bias. Additionally, Hallowell developed

portions of his theories while observing in part, the Sámi culture and thus becomes particularly salient to this project.

Hallowell's Contributions

Introduction to A. Irving Hallowell

Alfred Irving Hallowell (28 December 1892—10 October 1974) received his Ph.D. in anthropology in 1924 from the University of Pennsylvania. He studied under the anthropologist Frank Speck and the framework of his theories are heavily influenced by Franz Boas. His dissertation, *Bear Ceremonialism in the Northern Hemisphere* was published in 1926. Additional works include: *The Role of Conjuring in Saulteaux Society* (1942), *Culture and Experience* (1955), “Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior and Worldview” (1960, essay reprinted in 1975), and *Contributions to Anthropology: Selected Papers of A. Irving Hallowell* (1976). His dissertation *Bear Ceremonialism in the Northern Hemisphere* and his essay “Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior and Worldview” set forth much of the theoretical framework to this project.

Dissertation “Bear Ceremonialism in the Northern Hemisphere” (1924)

In his doctoral dissertation, Hallowell uses cross-cultural examples from circumpolar peoples including the Sámi to develop his thesis. As Hallowell observed more closely the interaction of humans with animals he began to see something new.

Hallowell writes:

Unchecked, then, by scientific observation, we find the utmost variety of beliefs which, in primitive cultures, are held regarding the origin, relationships, characteristics, behavior, and capacities of animals. Practically all of them are decidedly exotic to our habits of thought. Animals are believed to have

essentially the same sort of animating agency which man possesses. They have a language of their own, can understand what human beings say and do, and have forms of social or tribal organization, and live a life which is parallel in other respects to that of human societies (1926, 7).

It is important to note that Hallowell sees an indigenous category of “animal” that is separate and distinct from the Western category of “animal”. In indigenous views, “animals” have “agency”, “language”, an understanding of “what human beings say and do”, have a familial structure and “parallel in other respects to” human society.

Additionally, animals possess power that can be used to aid or harm humans (Hallowell 1926, 8). Also important is Hallowell’s insight that “animals also appear in the ancestral tree of man” (1926, 9). When viewed in this light, Hallowell rightfully states,

It becomes apparent, for example, that the categories of rational thought, by which we are accustomed to separate human life from animal life and the supernatural from the natural, are drawn upon lines which the facts of primitive cultures do not fit. If we are to understand or interpret the *Weltanschauung* of peoples who entertain such notions, therefore, we must rebuild the specific content of these categories upon the foundation of *their* beliefs, not ours (1926, 9).

Another critical conclusion in Hallowell’s dissertation is the idea of reciprocity and relationship. For an individual or tribe to successfully harvest food, whether that food is plant or animal, the individual must satisfy the “powers of a supernatural order” (Hallowell 1926, 10) by “the fulfillment of certain conditions” (11) which might include a deep reverence and respect for how the plant or animal is obtained how, it is prepared to be eaten and how the unusable remains are to be discarded. In Hallowell’s view, it is this careful performance of this reciprocal relationship that has been wrongly categorized as animal worship (1926, 17).

To support these theories, Hallowell convincingly presents several details surrounding bear ceremonialism. These including the securing of power prior to the hunt (Hallowell 1926, 32), meeting the bear on common ground out of respect (1926, 35), showing great reverence and respect to the bear as its is killed (1926, 41), skinned and eaten (1926, 104). Always, there is a “sacrifice”, or reciprocal offering, that is given to help ensure future hunt success (1926, 109).

More than “worship”. What’s going on here?

A number of conclusions become clear from Hallowell’s study. First, with its ability to understand human language, experience emotion, possess the ability to grant power and knowledge, and shares a common pedigree with humans, the bear no longer fits neatly into the Western-Cartesian category of “animal”. Bear is seen as a powerful *person* who must be related to and treated with respect. Furthermore, one may also conclude that the indigenous human person lives in a world that is populated, at least in part, by powerful persons which Hallowell calls “other-than-human persons”.

Interactions in this world are therefore based upon relationships between beings that possess traits, knowledge, or power that the other desires and is willing to contract and relate for. Thirdly, this outwardly expressed relationship has been wrongly classified as ‘worship’ by those in a Western-Cartesian mindset.

“Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior and Worldview”

The ideas presented in “Bear Ceremonialism” are further developed in Hallowell's 1960 (reprinted in 1975) essay, “Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior and Worldview”. Here,

many of the pieces begin to be put together and Hallowell provides a critical key in understanding indigenous thought. Hallowell writes:

...our objective approach is not adequate for presenting an accurate description of "the way a man, in a particular society, sees himself in relation to all else." A different perspective is required for this purpose. It may be argued, in fact, that a thoroughgoing "objective" approach to the study of cultures cannot be achieved solely by projecting upon these cultures categorical abstractions derived from Western thought. For, in a broad sense, the latter are a reflection of our cultural subjectivity. A higher order of objectivity may be sought by adopting a perspective which includes an analysis of the outlook of the people themselves as a complementary procedure (1960, 144).

It is clear that Hallowell is concerned about the researcher's own cultural reflection masking or distorting how a particular society sees their world. While it is necessary as a researcher to continue to hold an objective view of life on the ground in a particular society, this view must be a "higher order of objectivity" by separating themselves from or, at least accounting for, the categorical abstractions that are based in Western thought. This "higher order of objectivity" is arguably difficult but necessary. Some might contend that it is impossible to have a conversation without using ethnocentric language. While this may or may not be the case, this project simply calls for a more reflexive researcher who attempts to identify and be aware of the language he or she chooses to employ. This is, in fact, the particular area that the source authors considered in this paper struggle in. It is critical to accept Hallowell's premise that:

Human beings in whatever culture are provided with cognitive orientation in a cosmos; there is "order" and "reason" rather than chaos. There are basic premises and principles implied, even if these do not happen to be consciously formulated and articulated by the people themselves. We are confronted with the philosophical implications of their thought, the nature of the world of being as they conceive it (1960, 143).

It is these implied “basic premises and principles” that become destroyed and unseen in un-reflexive, ethnocentric research. Yet it is these “basic premises and principles” that one must see and understand in order to completely appreciate the nature of the indigenous world. According to Hallowell, ontology (personhood) becomes a major key in understanding this world (1960, 143).

One of the most fundamental and important concepts Hallowell brings to this project is that the Ojibwa’s cosmos consists of beings that he terms “other-than-human” persons (1960, 144). Furthermore, this cosmos is not a static system but is full of persons who are experienced and related to on a “level of social interaction common to human beings” (1960, 149). Humans and other-than-human persons share a reciprocal, interdependent, and social relationship in which “blessings” or power is shared (1960, 145). Hallowell argues that since the Ojibwa live in a cosmos populated by persons, it becomes irresponsible for any researcher to allow their own Cartesian views of ‘nature’ and ‘culture’ to color the Ojibwa’s view of the world. One cannot retain the category of nature, nor its antithesis the ‘supernatural,’ when discussing Ojibwa life (1960, 151).

Because the Ojibwa live in a peopled cosmos, Hallowell argues that “any concept of impersonal ‘natural’ forces is totally foreign to Ojibwa thought” (1960, 152). For the Ojibwa, it is not *what* caused this to happen but *who* did this (1960, 170). This has interesting implications when Ojibwa relate to or experience thunder, dreams, animals, stones, anything (or should we say ‘anyone’) of the ‘natural’ world. According to Hallowell, sentience, volition, memory and speech are all vital attributes of personhood

and that these attributes are not bound to outward physical appearance nor do they exclusively belong to the category of human (1960, 167).

Hallowell concludes his essay by adding that not only do the Ojibwa live in a personal cosmos, but their cosmos is maintained by moral responsibilities expressed in reciprocal, interpersonal relationships between humans and the other-than-human persons that populate it (1960, 172). These moral responsibilities then inform the actions of human persons who then construct appropriate modes of behavior and ‘ritual’.

Hallowell’s postulates are the base level of this project. First, one must recognize that all humans orientate themselves to the world around them using basic cognitive assumptions given to them by their traditional oral narratives (1960, 149). To be responsible, a researcher must be sensitive to these basic premises and principles as he or she attempts to come to understand a particular group of people. Second, for Hallowell, ontology becomes an essential key that gives a researcher access to these assumptions. For the Ojibwa and perhaps other indigenous groups including the Sámi, the cosmos contains persons, both human and other-than-human, that share power through interpersonal relationships governed by ethics and moral obligations. Third, personhood is defined as any being that is sentient, who can demonstrate desire, has memory and can speak. Fourth, there are no impersonal forces in the world as the world consists of person-actors. Natural disasters do not exist because the category ‘nature’ simply does not apply. Their world consists of subjects, not objects, with whom one must relate with in responsible, reciprocal ways.

Klass and Hornborg

Hallowell's abolition of the categories 'nature' and 'supernatural' fall under the larger Cartesian construct of an object-subject dualism. In *Ordered Universes : Approaches to the Anthropology of Religion* (1995), Morton Klass agrees with Hallowell in that use of the term "supernatural" is ethnocentrically biased towards Western thought and cannot be universally applied. He further calls for the excision of other ethnocentric terms "such as barbaric, savage, primitive, civilized, preliterate, and even leader". Such terms are "irremediably ethnocentric" and lead to "confusion and misunderstanding" (Klass 27). But before the categories of "nature" and "supernatural" become the first two casualties of post-Cartesian sensitivity, Alf Hornborg comes to their rescue.

In "Animism, Fetishism, and Objectivism as Strategies for Knowing (Or Not Knowing) the World" (2006), Hornborg seems to agree that the Cartesian framework of the West is invalid. He writes:

In other words, the 'official' Cartesian ideology of subject-object dualism is not only contradicted in our everyday lives; when applied in social and technological practice, it inexorably produces increasingly conspicuous evidence of its own invalidity. From the ozone hole to genetically modified organisms, the real world afflicted by modernity has shown itself to be not only permeable to, but imbued with, politics, meanings, and human intentions (22).

One should be able to argue from Hornborg's stance that as his reified Cartesian ideology "produces increasingly conspicuous evidence of its own invalidity", the subject-object dualism should be discarded and ruled not useful in describing indigenous life. But latter in his essay, Hornborg seems too committed, or perhaps too doubtful in light of all the "conspicuous evidence," to reject the category 'nature'. He writes:

But does this mean that the categories of Nature and Culture, or Nature and Society, are obsolete and should be discarded? On the contrary. Never has it been more imperative to maintain an analytical distinction between the symbolic and the pre-symbolic, while acknowledging their complex interfusion in the real world (29).

This apparent confusion on Hornborg's part is frustrating. Either the Cartesian framework of object-subject dualism is valid or it is not and if the ubiquitous evidence points toward invalidity, why does he continue to advocate its use? Hornborg is hesitant to dismiss this dichotomy entirely and instead argues for a more hybrid model. He sees the "professional logger who privately cares for his garden, or the industrial butcher who privately cares for his dog" as evidence of an object-subject spectrum which all humanity operate from (Hornborg 24). While Hornborg agrees with Hallowell that "entities such as plants or even rocks may be approached as communicative subjects rather than the inert objects perceived by modernists" (22), he fails to recognize that his professional logger and industrial butcher never come close to sharing the same ontological assumptions about their garden or dog that indigenous peoples employ on a daily basis. One can doubt that the logger and butcher have really developed an interpersonal relationship with their respective "communicative subjects" to the same depth as Johan Turi has to his reindeer herd. Nor has the logger experienced a deep, reciprocal relationship with his garden string beans. The main problem with his hybrid or spectrum model is that it does nothing to help the researcher remain mindful of his or her own relative perspectivism while viewing indigenous life.

Ingold's Contributions

Tim Ingold explains his view in *The Perception of the Environment : Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill* (2000). Ingold strongly develops the paradox of the West's science of evolutionary biology. In attempting to define what an organism is, the West has been forced to consider humanity's own organic building blocks while attempting to remain objectively removed from its own "organism-ness". In science, humans have been reduced to nothing more than a collection of complex evolutionary processes that exist on a cellular level. Yet, the West insists that while "an animal such as a bear or chimpanzee is all organism, the human being is said to be an organism 'plus'..." (2000, 89). "To exist as a knowing subject – is, we commonly say, to be a person" (2000, 90). Ingold then takes the next bold move and desires to demonstrate that "all organisms, including human ones, are not 'things' but beings. As beings, persons are organisms, and being organisms, they – or rather we – are not impartial observers of nature but participate from within in the continuum of organic life" (2000, 90).

Ingold, like Hornborg, either remains outside of total commitment to his thesis or is unable to see the complete ramifications of it. In support of his thesis, Ingold cites the Ojibwa relationship to Thunder Birds. He rightfully explains that the stories or myths the Ojibwa maintain about Thunder Birds are not simple fables but "are tales about events that really took place, in the histories of real persons, and in the same world that people ordinarily experience in the course of their quotidian lives" (Ingold 2000, 92). For the Ojibwa, Thunder Birds are persons, beings that they relate with and share the world. However, in just two sentences later, Ingold rationalizes away Ojibwa ontology by stating

that “there is a striking correspondence between the normal seasonal occurrence of thunderstorms and the period during which migratory birds wintering in the south appear in Ojibwa country” (2000, 92).

One is not disagreeing that there may be a link between meteorological phenomena and migratory patterns of birds in Ojibwa country. The problem is that at least initially, Ingold wants to argue that science has reduced humans to mere organisms and that science denies the mere organism its “being-ness” and yet, in the same breath, he uses scientifically gained knowledge to discredit Ojibwa ontology thereby allowing science to deny Thunder Birds their personhood. It appears that Ingold is really arguing that the Ojibwa operate in a delusional, false reality because Thunder Birds can be explained away by a more correct knowledge brought to him by science.

However, another important point both Ingold and Hallowell agree upon is that for the Ojibwa, personhood is determined by “experience” (Ingold 2000, 97; Hallowell 1955, 148). Ingold states:

For the Ojibwa, however, knowledge does not lie in the accumulation of mental content. It is not by representing it in the mind that they get to know the world, but rather by moving around in their environment, whether in dreams or waking life, by watching, listening and feeling, actively seeking out the signs by which it is revealed. Experience, here, amounts to a kind of sensory participation, a coupling of the movement of one’s own awareness to the movement of aspects of the world (2000, 99).

Movement or participation in one’s world then, generates knowledge. This knowledge gained is not simply mental content but is intimately linked to relating with other beings. In other words, knowledge requires participation with or, one might say, social interaction with others. Ingold goes on to say that:

The kind of knowledge it yields is not propositional, in the form of hypothetical statements or ‘beliefs’ about the nature of reality, but personal – consisting of an intimate sensitivity to other ways of being, to the particular movements, habits and temperaments that reveal each for what it is (2000, 99).

Ingold takes his theory of the epistemology of movement even further in "Rethinking the Animate, Re-Animating Thought" (2006). In his essay, Ingold depicts “being-ness” not as a closed individual that is set apart from the rest of his environment but as a “trail of movement or growth” (2006, 12-13). These ‘trails of movement’ intertwine and can be described as a meshwork. He further states that,

What we have been accustomed to calling “the environment” might, then, be better envisaged as a domain of entanglement. It is within such a tangle of interlaced trails, continually raveling here and unraveling there, that being grow or “issue forth” along the lines of their relationships (2006, 14).

While movement is an important and vital part of being and personhood, Ingold does not place enough emphasis on Hallowell’s relational and intentional aspects of being. One of Hallowell’s essential traits of being is volition, but Ingold seems to want to describe an impersonal, completely unintentional engagement or ‘meshing’ of ‘organisms’. For example, in his concluding paragraphs, Ingold writes,

For rather than waiting for the unexpected to occur, and being caught out in consequence, it allows them [those who are truly open to the world] at every moment to respond to the *flux of the world* with care, judgment and sensitivity (2006, 19, emphasis added).

If the world truly consists of persons with agency and volition, then why are indigenous persons responding to the world’s ‘flux’ and not to the agency of engaged beings? Ingold seems unwilling or unable to fully accept the consequences of his thesis that all organisms are beings.

Another deficit in Ingold's theory is that he does not allow for 'inanimate objects' that indigenous peoples recognize as beings. By definition, inanimate objects do not move. According to Ingold's theory, if a being is sedentary, can it be experienced and thereby known? Are rock-beings only persons when they move? Ingold does seem to allow a rock-being who gives a "negative response" to a man who asked it if it belonged to him to maintain some type of ontological status. However, it is unclear from his movement theory if this could be allowed. Other examples of sedentary, potential beings would include mountains, drums or large sedentary boulders all of which abound in Sámi cosmology.

Nurit Bird-David's Contributions

Nurit Bird-David is another important author to consider in this post-Cartesian discussion. In her essay "'Animism' Revisited" (1999), Bird-David brings three ideas to the discussion. First, she attempts "a synthesis of current environment theory (insisting that the environment does not necessarily consist dichotomously of a physical world and humans) and current personhood theory (asserting that personhood does not necessarily consist dualistically of body and spirit)" (68). Second, she posits "a plurality of epistemologies by refiguring so called primitive animism as a relational epistemology" (68). Lastly, she argues that indigenous 'animism' constitutes a relational (not a failed) epistemology" (68). To illustrate these three theories, Bird-David cites her ethnographic work conducted among the Nayaka.

Another contribution Bird-David makes is to develop Strathern's (1988) and Marriott's (1976) idea of the "dividual" (Bird-David 68). She echoes Strathern's

argument that to assume that an individual is inherently irreducible is a Western, or “modernist” construct that cannot be generally assumed across all peoples. She agrees with Ingold in that an individual cannot be “regarded as ‘a single entity,’ ‘bounded and integrated, and set contrastingly against other such wholes and against a natural and social backgrounds’” (Bird-David 72). Hence, the ‘individual’ is really a composite being that is constructed through, or rather *because* of the relationships of the other beings with whom they have been in conversation with. She argues that the Nayaka recognize themselves not as individuals but as “kin, relatives, ‘ones related with’” (Bird-David 72). She continues by saying,

Transcending idiosyncratic, processual, and multiple flows of meanings, the Nayaka sense of the person appears generally to engage not the modernist subject/objective split or the objectivist concern with substances but the above mentioned sense of kinship. The person is sensed as “one whom we share with.” It is sensed as a relative and is normally *objectified* as kin, using a kinship term (73, emphasis added).

This Nayaka engagement with the sense of kinship as opposed to the Cartesian subjective/objective split is better termed by Kenneth Morrison (2000) as the “intersubjective”. While her continued insistence that the Nayaka objectify while existing outside of the modernist subjective/objective split is troubling, she is correct that indigenous persons appear to be very concerned about the relational aspect of their cosmos.

However, Bird-David too falls short in realizing the full implications of the ideas she puts forth in her work. After developing more fully her idea that animism should be viewed as a relational epistemology, as “we-ness” rather than “otherness”, Bird-David writes, “Against ‘I think, therefore I am’ stands ‘I relate, therefore I am’ and ‘I know as I

relate” (78). Absent in her statement is the “dividual”. If she is consistent to follow her thesis through, she would be more correct to write, “Against ‘I think, therefore I am’ stands ‘*We* relate, therefore *We are*’ and ‘*We* know as *We* relate”.

Morrison’s Contributions

Introduction to Kenneth Morrison

Kenneth M. Morrison (November 22, 1946 – January 7, 2012) received his Ph.D. from the University of Maine in 1975. His published works include *The Embattled Northeast: The Elusive Ideal of Alliance in Abenaki-Euramerican Relations* (1984) and *Solidarity of Kin the: Ethnohistory, Religious Studies, and the Algonkianrench Religious Encounter* (2002) along with several articles including “Beyond the Supernatural: Language and Religious Action” (1992), “The Cosmos as Intersubjective” (2000) and the posthumously published “Animism and a proposal for a post-Cartesian anthropology” (2013).

In a number of his publications, Morrison argues that the world of the Native American is non-supernatural and non-theistic. He suggests, as did Hallowell, that ontology is an important focus in trying to correctly understand indigenous ‘religion’. However, he also broadens this approach to include indigenous views of epistemology (knowledge or power) and of axiology (gifting of knowledge and/or power). His works outline a paradigm shift to a framework based upon the concepts of Person, Power and Gift (1992, 203).

One of the first Cartesian notions Morrison attacks is the idea of the ‘supernatural’, a category used by many without much reflection. He notes that the use

of this category greatly minimizes human agency in cosmic events. Events that take place in the Native American world cannot adequately be attributed to some ‘supernatural force’ or ‘magic’. Additionally, the category of ‘supernatural’ implies vast ontological differences between beings that are seen as gods (who live outside of nature, e.g. “supernatural” beings) verses humans who dwell in a lower plane of existence i.e. who live inside of nature (1992, 202). The use of the term ‘supernatural’ carries with it major cosmological assumptions that may not be shared among the Native Americans Morrison studied. Assuming that the ‘supernatural’ exists further sets up a hierarchical, theistic system. Quoting much from Hallowell now, Morrison writes:

...Hallowell explored the ontological similarity between “spirits” and humans beings. Spirits, he said, “are persons of a category other than human.” Stating his position more fully, Hallowell summarized the ethnographic data: “In the universe of the Ojibwa the conception of ‘person’ as a living, functioning social being is not only one which transcends the notion of person in the naturalistic sense; it like wise transcends a human appearance as a constant attribute of this category of being.” Since “spirits” and human beings share intelligence, power, voice, will, and desire, they are ontologically identical in Ojibwa conception – and in their religious practice. Hallowell was emphatic in identifying the revisionist implications of the Ojibwa conception of the cosmic principle of ontological similarity, implications that have gone largely unexplored in anthropology, history, ethnohistory, and Religious Studies. The idea of “supernatural persons,” Hallowell noted, “is completely misleading if for no other reason than the fact that the concept of the ‘supernatural’ presupposes a concept of the ‘natural.’ The latter is not present in Ojibwa thought (2002, 47).

If one critically understands what Hallowell has said, Morrison argues that the whole field of religious studies among indigenous cultures must make a massive and essential paradigm shift if they are to be represented correctly. To explain this further Morrison sets forth five assumptions that must be agreed to if ‘supernatural’ is used to describe Native America religious views:

(1) an idea of theistic transcendence and superiority, or a theocentric view of reality; (2) a concept that human beings are “natural,” imperfect, and, relatively speaking in relation to “supernatural” beings, powerless; (3) the view that religion derives from human belief in a “qualitatively different, mysterious world;” (4) the view that “grace” is a unidirectional flowing of power from on high; and (5) the assumption that prayer as petition flows from a subservient position toward beings who are greater than human beings (2002, 38).

Morrison uses several examples from his studies of the Yaqui (Yoeme) and the Ojibwa to demonstrate that these five ‘supernatural’ assumptions are simply not shared among these peoples, they do not apply. To more correctly describe Native American views and to replace ‘supernatural’, Morrison suggests that these people live in a multiplicity of dimensions, some on the horizontal and others in the vertical orientation. Persons, no matter in which dimension they primarily exist, are just as ‘real’ as humans are in their dimension (1992, 202). Even though Morrison admits that there is a vertical orientation in the Ojibwa cosmos, he is very careful to note that this orientation should not imply any higher privilege (in knowledge or ontological status) than any of the other seven dimensions of the Ojibwa cosmos (2002, 41-42) and hence are non-theistic.

“The Cosmos as Intersubjective”

In another essay, “The Cosmos as Intersubjective: Native American Other-than-Human Persons” (2000), Morrison further develops this new paradigm by reinforcing several key points and adding a few additional insights. Reinforcing Thomas Blackburn’s (1975) and Hallowell’s arguments, Morrison emphasizes that:

First, the Chumash cosmos is composed of an ‘interacting community of sentient creatures’... Both scholars agree that kin status defines power, privilege, and responsibility for both human and other-than-human persons... Second, like the Ojibwa, the Chumash understand causality in interpersonal, rather than impersonal, ways... Third, like the Ojibwa, the Chumash posit that power, which they understand as ‘sentience and will’, characterizes all animate beings, although

to different degrees. Fourth, since human and other-than-human persons share causal agency, and exercise power in both negative and positive ways, the Chumash perceive the cosmos as a dangerous and unpredictable place... Fifth, Blackburn documents for the Chumash a temporal and special plasticity which Hallowell calls the power of metamorphosis: the ability of persons to shift physical form (2000, 28).

For Morrison, the Ojibwa and Chumash, relate with kin (human and other-than-human) in an interpersonal, powerful and potentially dangerous cosmos where power and bodily form can shift from person to person. Morals, duties and expectations held by the Ojibwa and Chumash are then largely informed by their kin relationships with human and other-than-human relatives. There exists a scale of shared power, that is to say, some persons are more powerful than others and the moral or immoral use of this power positively or negatively affects relationships with surrounding kin.

“A Proposal for a Post-Cartesian Anthropology”

Morrison was approached to include an essay outlining his new paradigm in *The Handbook of Contemporary Animism* (2013) edited by Graham Harvey. The article “Animism and a proposal for a post-Cartesian anthropology” was submitted to the editor prior to Morrison’s death in 2012. The article he wrote was then published in 2013 with some minor revisions conducted by his close associates, Dr. David Shorter and Alex Ginsburg (2013, 52). It is in this essay that Morrison explains much of the path he walked with Hallowell, Bird-David, Franz Boas, and Martin Buber to reach his new paradigm conclusions. In essence, this essay presents his life’s work.

Morrison proposes nine hypotheses that stem from Hallowell and Buber that framework a “comparative, non-relativistic, post-Cartesian anthropology” (2013, 47). As

many of the hypotheses fall outside the bounds of this project, only the first three, dealing with ontology, power, and ethics will be shared as written by Morrison:

Hypothesis 1A: theistic ontology

Scholars have misinterpreted indigenous life because Cartesian and monotheistic ontological assumptions have structured their descriptive strategies and interpretative schemes. These assumptions are categorical commitments to understanding comparative cultures in theistic, hierarchical and their objectivated/subjectivated, ontological terms. The categories include God (gods, goddesses, deities – both theism and polytheism), “natural forces”, plants, insects, animals, humans, spirits, ceremonial and celestial “objects”, on a scale from irrationality to rationality, from profane to the sacred, from matter to spirit.

Hypothesis 1B: non-theistic ontology

Although indigenous peoples differentiate beings in terms of bodily appearance, intelligence and purposefulness (and so gloss relative power and responsibility), they also incorporate all forms of being within the ontological category person – that is, entities with rational faculties, will, voice, desire, sometimes physical form, and interdependent, existential needs: hunger, thirst and sociability. For them, ontology, epistemology and axiology form an undifferentiated relational field.

Hypothesis 2A: Cartesian causal tropes (power)

Scholars misinterpret indigenous understandings of power because they assume that causality refers either to assumptions about natural and social law (impersonal tropes about nature, i.e. biological “forces”, and/or natural forms of causation [geologic, chemical, electrical, mechanical, psychological and social functionalism]), or to the assumption that humans project meaning imaginatively upon the world (as belief and faith, qualities expressed as art, aesthetics, ideology, symbolism, magic, mysticism, spiritualism, super-naturalism). These assumptions play out along two apparently opposed, but actually related, slippery axes: (a) objectivism as progressive rationality (naturalism, materialism, empiricism, quantification) and social-scientific reification (causality attributed to culture and its abstract parts: the family, the economy, politics), and (b) romanticism or idealism (positions that ideology, belief, aesthetics, values have a discernible effect on behavior). This second axis variously stresses subjective factors: Individualism, self-interest, personal autonomy, emotionality, the isolated body, and religion as fear, belief, hope and faith.

The conceptually slippery interaction of these two axes plays out in dualistic ways of thinking about causality: progress/tradition, sacred/profane, mind/body, rational/irrational, male/female, civilized/primitive, ethical/superstitious, among many others.

Hypothesis 2B: indigenous causal principles (power)

Indigenous understandings of causality cannot be described within the objectivist/subjectivist paradigm. There are knowledge systems (not belief

systems) that stress the intentional, relational and interpersonal character of reality as both locally grounded and socially emergent. Indigenous peoples sidestep objective and subjective causal assumptions in intersubjective ways. They stress *who* is dividually, and therefore collectively, acting, rather than *what* causes. They emphasize interdependence, influence, mutuality, responsibility and respect (or not). Embodied power is, therefore, causal because it expresses the peoples' conscious and collective moral choice.

Hypothesis 3A: Cartesian ethics

Within the binary system of objectivism/subjectivism, ethics plays out as (a) situational pragmatism, efficiency and technique and as (b) self-interest, autonomy, self-worth. Both sides of this ethical system stress the value of progress and profit.

Hypothesis 3B: indigenous ethics

Within the interpersonal epistemology of indigenous ethics, morality plays out *positively* in kinship, interpersonal and communal ways that bridge the dividual and others, and *negatively* in individualistic, antisocial ways that isolate the individual from the group, and make the individual a threat to the group (2013, 48-49, emphasis in original).

Native Language and Anthropological Linguistics

There is a shift among today's scholars to move the discussion past the Cartesian argument in favor of a linguistics approach to the understanding of indigenous 'religion'. As already mentioned earlier, language is an essential part of cross-cultural studies that must be dealt with appropriately therefore, the anthropological linguistics approach must be discussed briefly. It must be stated that this project approaches the Sámi question with little to no knowledge of Sámi languages. As also previously noted, most of the source authors are non-native Sámi speakers who recorded their experiences in Swedish or Norwegian and many whom obtained the native Sámi speakers experiences via an interpreter. Therefore, there is simply no source document from the 16th-18th centuries that can be studied in the native Sámi language. This is where Læstadius is helpful as he brings to the table much Sámi language background and goes to great lengths to clarify

some translations. In most cases, this lack of original Sámi source material presents a challenge for any linguistic approach to understanding the 16th to 18th century Sámi ‘religion’.

It is important that the researcher must be reflexive upon his or her own assumptions and views as they approach any cross-cultural study. To this point, even the language and words used to describe the other must be unpacked and examined for inherent biases. To do this for every word choice would be tremendously tedious and time consuming and would leave one with little opportunity to actually present anything new without continually being overwhelmed by language. However, that being what it may, one must still carefully consider language and word choice.

When it comes to ontology, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro suggests great caution (rightfully so) in the use of the word “person”. In his 1998 article, “Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism” De Castro argues that among some of the indigenous peoples of the Americas the Western category of “person” cannot be applied in the traditional way. For De Castro, the designation of “person” depends upon, among other things, the subject’s view of the object and how it is related to. He writes:

The first point to be considered is that the Amerindian words which are usually translated as 'human being' and which figure in those supposedly ethnocentric self-designations do not denote humanity as a natural species. They refer rather to the social condition of personhood, and they function (pragmatically when not syntactically) less as nouns than as pronouns. They indicate the position of the subject; they are enunciative markers, not names (476).

De Castro is correct in noting that the words for being more correctly refer to the sociality of being-ness, as it is the relationship that matters most, the “intersubjective”.

However, he still remains fast in the subjective-objective paradigm. To be true to what has already been demonstrated by the studies among the Chumash, Ojibwa, Yeonte and Saami, the Cartesian categories of “natural species”, “subject” and “enunciative marker” used by De Castro simply do not apply to the intersubjective indigenous cosmos. He goes on to state:

Thus self-references such as 'people' mean 'person', not 'member of the human species', and they are personal pronouns registering the point of view of the subject talking, not proper names. To say, then, that animals and spirits are people is to say that they are persons, and to attribute to non-humans the capacities of conscious intentionality and agency which define the position of the subject. Such capacities are objectified as the soul or spirit with which these non-humans are endowed. Whatever possesses a soul is a subject, and whatever has a soul is capable of having a point of view. Amerindian souls, be they human or animal, are thus indexical categories, cosmological deictics whose analysis calls not so much for an animist psychology or substantialist ontology as for a theory of the sign or a perspectival pragmatics (476).

Thus, Castro demands that by naming animals and spirits a “person” places them in the position of the subject, with ‘capacities’ that are ‘objectified as the soul or spirit’ and the whole argument comes down to “perspectival pragmatics” in an attempt to rightfully understand the indigenous. Again, Castro is unable to move past the objective-subjective paradigm, unable to recognize Hallowell’s 1995 conclusion that anthropological linguistic analysis presents only:

the standpoint of an outside observer... The language of a people, as objectively described and analyzed in terms of its formal categories, is not the language that exists for the individual who uses it as a means of communication, in reflective thought, or as a mode of verbal self-expression... It [language] is neither “objective” nor “subjective” (Hallowell 1955, 88; Morrison 2013, 44).

As further explained by Morrison:

Hallowell repudiates the “natural” and “supernatural” categories of Cartesian cosmology, and with them the psychological dismissal of cosmic life as projective personification and human servility. Hallowell rejects anthropomorphism as a “naturalistic” explanation of the Ojibwa’s orientations to other-than-human persons, even while he calls these entities “spiritual”. Aware that other-than-human persons embody power (and are causally central), Hallowell also acknowledges that some human beings are “*elevated* to the same level of power”, an elevation that, in effect, confounds the Cartesian separation between culture and the supernatural (2013, 45).

The use of Hallowell’s and Morrison’s “person” to describe the other-than-human actors in indigenous cosmology is, contrary to De Castro’s position, exactly intended “to attribute to non-humans the capacities of conscious intentionality and agency” which previously have only belonged to human-persons in Western thought. It is true the words “person” and “power” and several other words must be chosen carefully, especially if these words are not native in the studied group’s lexicon. However, the purpose of this project is not to debate the merits of an anthropological linguistic versus Post-Cartesian approach to the study of indigenous “religion”. It is however concerned about whether or not “religious” life among the 16th and 17th century Sámi has been adequately and correctly described, being sensitive to the, ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions held by these people and the words used to describe them by the early Christian leaders. Needless to say, careful and reflexive thought has gone into the use of the words “person”, “gift”, “power”, and “kinship” among other words in this project.

Putting It All Together

Hallowell, Klass, Ingold, Bird-David, and Morrison all add much to the discussion of a post-Cartesian framework through which researchers should view indigenous life. Hallowell is rightfully adamant about the need to recognize one’s own

ontological and epistemological assumptions so as not to project them upon or assume they correctly apply to persons under study. One must develop the means by which to discern, to the best of his or her abilities, the basic premises and principles native peoples operate from. A close look at the ontology of those people, recognizing the possibility of other-than-human persons, is a useful way to outline those principles. Hallowell's working definition of personhood is therefore critical.

Klass' invitation to become more aware of one's own ethnocentricity and to move away from the use of ethnocentric language in the description of indigenous peoples is refreshing. However, Hornborg offers little of anything useful. His desire to fill the indigenous cosmos with "communicative subjects" is perhaps his only real contribution. It is important to recognize that the cosmos are subjects that can be, and respectfully ought to be, related and communicated with.

Ingold's argument that all organisms are beings is powerful. One must recognize that all living 'things' in native life are beings or have the potentiality of personhood and these beings are known only through experience. For Ingold, movement is a key factor of experiencing the personhood of the cosmos. However, by failing to discuss 'non-living things', what Cartesians call inanimate objects, Ingold leaves a large and important part of the indigenous world out of the discussion, for it appears that some Sámi rocks are alive! Experience as an ontological and epistemological prerequisite must be broadened past movement to include speech, breath, and other avenues of disclosing "being-ness".

Bird-David correctly erases the Cartesian objective/subjective from native epistemology and replaces it with the relational or intersubjective. Her concept and

development of the ‘dividual’ holds some promise as a simple term to represent the composite and relational reality of indigenous ontology.

Putting all of these theories together into a workable paradigm is Morrison. His definitions of the intersubjective, Person, Power, and Gift will be critical to this project. By using several of his proposed hypotheses as a framework, this project examines the ontology, epistemology, and axiology of the Sámi in order to determine if this new paradigm might apply not only to the Ojibwa and Chumash peoples.

**The three pillars of understanding: Ontology (Person), Epistemology (Power),
Axiology (Gift)**

As outlined earlier, this project’s understanding of “person” is taken from Hallowell and Morrison. Both authors agree that the study of ontology is a necessary key in understanding Native Americans. It will be demonstrated that it is equally important in the study of the Sámi. Morrison adds that humans and other-than-humans “share intelligence, power, voice, will and desire” (2002, 47). Therefore, persons (both human and other-than-human) in need will orient themselves towards other persons who can satisfy or assist with that need generally ignoring biological similarity or dissimilarity. Often, but not always, this sharing is defined by kinship relationships and are always viewed as intimate and interpersonal. Thus, a *noaidi relates* to Drum (a Person) rather than simply *using* an instrument (object) to achieve a solution to a need.

It is important to note here that Morrison does agree that not everything in the cosmos is a Person. In fact, Morrison recounts evidence from the Algonkian that in their cosmos, there are some non-persons, some might call them monsters. In the Algonkian

example, Morrison relates the existence of *Windigo* who seem to meet the requirements of personhood (intelligence, power, voice, will and desire) but who are considered non-persons by the Algonkian because they lack one additional attribute, something that Morrison calls sociality (2002, 63-64). In the Algonkian cosmos, the *Windigo* are cannibal giants who fight against the Algonkian, not largely dissimilar to the Sámi *uldas* or *stallo*. Thus, for Morrison, there is an ethical component to full personhood. One cannot be considered a full Person unless one behaves ethically. This ethical, relational aspect of personhood centers on the exchange of Power.

Morrison maintains that Power is the application of one person's ability in relation to another (2002, 49). The amount of Power a person possesses is related to the ability to use knowledge and the amount of knowledge that the person has. Morrison writes,

If person is a principle of ontological similarity, power is the principle of differentiation. Persons are powerful in various degrees, but significantly some human beings, particularly those who have ritual knowledge, exercise power equal to, if not superior than, other-than-human persons. For all persons, power is at once knowledge and the ability to apply knowledge to novel situations. Since power itself is ethically neutral, it must always be grounded in intentional activity. Power is therefore dangerous because it can be used to achieve either good or ill. In effect, power is the existential postulate which accounts for those personal decisions which make for both human and cosmic order and disorder (1992, 203).

In this dangerous cosmos where Power is unequally distributed, there must be some mechanism by which Persons can mitigate potentially harmful, if not catastrophic, meetings with other Persons. This is where Morrison's concept of Gift is important. Through Gifting, Morrison contends that Power is moderated because, through the act of Gifting, social relationships are established and maintained (1992, 203). Morrison also

states that in Native American societies, Gifting is always seen as coming from some compassionate Person who is acting in a responsible, respective way. The opposite is also true, namely selfish, irresponsible Persons, withhold themselves from other Persons.

If, on the one hand, positive, powerful persons share, then, on the other, negative persons withhold and act in self-interested ways. Thus, the power of both the individual religious specialist and of those collective ceremonial societies extend co-operation micro- and macrocosmically. And, in acting irresponsibly, witches destroy such co-operative social order (Morrison 1992, 203).

Here, kinship is also very important as familial ties, whether one is relating to a human or other-than-human kin, help to dictate or establish the mutual responsibility Persons share with each other (Morrison 2000, 27). Since Power is also an extension of being or Personhood, Gifting can be seen as an intimate sharing of one's self with another Person and should not be simply viewed as a passing of knowledge or skill. This is another reason why withholding Power is seen as so monstrous as it undermines interpersonal relationships and/or kinships. Since the Native American cosmos is comprised of interrelated Persons, the sharing of Power, mitigated by Gifting, has "both cosmic and earthly effects" (Morrison 1992, 203).

Rafael Karsten, in his 1955 monograph *The Religion of the Samke: Ancient Beliefs and Cults of the Scandinavian and Finnish Lapps* accurately states:

...a historian of religion who deals with the beliefs and customs of so-called primitive peoples should be anxious to liberate himself from the prejudices which may prevent him from obtaining objective results. Among these prejudices there is the inclination to view the religious practices of a people through the eyes of a certain "school" dominant perhaps for the moment, the theories of which are dogmatically accepted. The studies of the religion of the Lapps also has been unfavourably influenced by such prejudices. Thus we have to avoid the bias of searching, in their early religion, for traces of a genuine belief in a "supreme being" or of a "pre-animistic" belief in supernatural "powers", or of making, without sufficient grounds, this religion mainly a loan from Scandinavian culture.

The religion of a primitive people must be explained in the first place by itself, by the ideas which indisputably are essential to it, and not according to "theories" which for the moment may be common or even predominating. The less an ethnological investigator appears as the adherent of a certain sociological school, the more qualified he is to give an objective picture of the social or religious phenomena he is treating of (9-10).

From the above citation, Karsten seems aware that to reach, what he terms "objective results", one must be consciously aware of the prejudices that can color one's view and obscure the religion of the people one is examining. He advocates allowing the people speak for themselves and allow them to share the "ideas which indisputably are essential to" them. However, Karsten only gives one caution, which is to avoid looking at a particular culture through the lens of a particular school of thought. As careful as Karsten wishes to be, he has failed to recognize and account for some of the most basic prejudices that plague most scholars of indigenous peoples today, namely a Western objective versus subjective thought.

For example, Karsten comments on Sámi *seide* "worship":

In reality it is a form of worship of inanimate nature found among uncultured peoples the whole world round, even though it is particularly conspicuous among the Lapps...

The *seidr* [sic] worship is a form of primitive animism or fetishism which includes two main beliefs: 1) that stones, sticks, and other inanimate objects which from one reason or another particularly attract the attention of primitive man, are endowed with life and are regarded as seats of a spiritual being, and 2) that on account of this, they are thought to possess a mystic supernatural power and for this reason among the Lapps were made the objects of a real worship (11).

Here is a great example of the problems of objective/subjective thought. This is but one of the many instances wherein Karsten uses (as do many others) such phrases as "inanimate", "primitive", "spiritual", "mystic", "supernatural" and "worship". The problem is that Karsten employs the use of these words without realizing the ethnocentric

stance he is taking. When Karsten chooses to use the word “spirit”, is he aware that the Sámi may or may not employ the same meaning behind the word as westerners do? To the western thought, a spirit is a disembodied, intangible and invisible (on most occasions) being. Do the Sámi view spirits as disembodied or do they continue to have a bodied experience that requires nourishment from food, and a need of locomotion for travel? Are they truly intangible or is a *noaidi* able to physically wrestle and fight with a “spirit”? Are they invisible or are they actually visible whenever present? These are questions regarding the assumed ontology of “spirits”. Morrison offers a solution to the problem of ethnocentrism. He writes:

Various forms of ethnocentrism will continue to shape our interpretations until three conditions are met. First, scholars must recognize and control the ethnocentric entailments of their own intellectual tradition. Second, Native Americans’ religious categories must be reconstructed, including views about cosmological dimensions (perspectives toward time and space) and understandings of humans in relation to cosmic being, power, and exchange. Third, the indigenous categories’ influence on Native Americans’ historical behavior must be examined (2002, 37).

In the next few chapters, several examples taken from the notes of the primary sources will be presented and examined for evidence of Morrison’s concepts of Person, Power and Gift using an intersubjective reference point. The author’s own ethnocentric views will be accounted for as the Sámi categories of “being, power, and exchange” are examined. Unfortunately, due to the constraints of this project, Sámi dimensionality will not be discussed in any great detail. This project will demonstrate that this new, post-Cartesian paradigm is readily applicable to Sámi indigenous experience which would demand that current views of the old Sámi religion must be rethought.

THE EVIDENCE OF SÁMI ONTOLOGY (PERSON)

Keeping in mind that both Hallowell and Morrison agree that ontology must be correctly understood if one desires to correctly understand the Native American, this project begins by looking at evidence of other-than-human persons in the Sámi cosmos. As presented earlier, Morrison defines Person as a being with intelligence, power, voice, will, desire and ethics. The examples in the source documents with the most data revolve around Bear, Drum, and *Seite* and will be presented below.

Bear

A curious story told to Pehr Fellström before 1755 by a Lycksele Sámi and retold in Læstadius' *Fragments* demonstrates much about Bear's Personhood. According to Læstadius this story is the source for all of the various customs observed around the bear hunt and is therefore the origination point of Hallowell's own observations and the germination point for his theory of ontology. Due to this story's importance, Læstadius' version of Fellström's story is recounted in its entirety as follows:

Three brothers had an only sister whom they hated so much that she had to flee to the wilderness. Totally exhausted she finally arrived at a bear's den and crawled into it to rest. A bear also came to the den, and after they became better acquainted, he took her as his wife and had a son by her. When after some time the bear had grown old and the son had grown up, the bear said to his wife that, because of his advanced old age, he did not want to live any longer and that he wanted to make tracks on the new-fallen snow this fall so that his wife's three brothers could see his tracks, circle him, and kill him. Even though the wife did everything she could to stop him, the bear was not to be persuaded. He did as he had said so that the tree brothers could circle him using his tracks. In addition, the bear ordered that a piece of brass be placed on his forehead. This was to be a sign to distinguish him from other bears, but also to prevent his son, who was off somewhere, from killing him.

When a deep snow had fallen, the three brothers started off to kill the bear, which they had circled earlier. Then the bear asked his wife if all the brothers had

been equally nasty to her. The wife answered that the two older ones had been worse, but that the youngest one had been somewhat kinder.

When the brothers arrived at the bear's den, the bear sprang out and attacked the oldest brother, biting and wounding him very badly. The bear himself was not wounded, and he went back to his den. When the second brother came, the bear attacked him too, injuring him in the same way as the previous one, and went back to his den. Then the bear asked his wife to put her arms around his waist, and after she did so, he walked away from the den on his hind paws, carrying his wife. The wife ordered her youngest brother to shoot the bear and he did.

The wife sat down a short distance away and covered her face because she could not endure seeing the bear shot and now skinned. However, she opened one eye in order to look...

After the three brothers had gotten the bear, and all the meat had been placed in a pot to be cooked, the [bear's] son arrived. They told him they had shot a strange animal with a brass piece on its forehead. He told them that the animal thus marked was his father and therefore claimed a share of the bear equal with the hunters'. They, however, kept refusing, whereupon the son threatened to bring his father back to life if he didn't get his share. He struck the bearskin with a whip and said, 'My father! Get up! My father! Get up!' Then the meat started boiling so rapidly that it seemed to be jumping out of the pot, and so the brothers had to give him a share... (Læstadius 2002, 183-184).

There is a lot of evidence presented in this story that demonstrates Bear's other-than-human Personhood. Without being too redundant, several points must be emphasized. Keeping in mind the five attributes of Personhood as defined by Morrison, one must find evidence of intelligence, voice, will, desire, ethics and power to conclusively determine that Bear is a Person in Sámi cosmology.

First, a Person must possess voice. Bear "became better acquainted" with the ostracized sister and seems to be able to openly communicate with the woman. Additionally, Læstadius goes on to claim, "I do not know of anything derived from the old superstitions if we don't consider the belief cherished by old bear hunters that the bear understands human speech" (2002, 196). To emphasize this point, Læstadius recounts that if a bear oversleeps his hibernation in the spring, a song can be sung which

will wake him, “Grandpa in the hill! Wake up; the leaves are already as big as little rats’ ears” (2002, 196)! According to Læstadius, quoting Fellström, the Sámi “do not refer to a bear by its proper name while they are getting ready for a bear hunt” (2002, 182) as, apparently, Bear can hear and understand that the hunters are talking about him. This would in some way be considered disrespectful to Bear.

Second, a Person must possess will. In this story, Bear clearly displays agency as he chooses his wife and also the time of his death notwithstanding the pleadings of his wife. Third, a Person must possess desire. Bear expresses his desire to wed, to die and acts out a desire to right the wrongs his wife received at the hands of her brothers. Fourth, a Person must demonstrate power in an ethical manner often along kinship ties. The story demonstrates that Bear has the power to severely wound the two meanest brothers who unethically treated their sister, thereby correcting a perceived injustice to Bear’s and the brothers’ kin. More regarding the reciprocity shown to Bear will be discussed in Chapter 6. The last attribute necessary is intelligence and Bear appears to display innate intelligence throughout the story.

Drum

In Johan Randulf’s “Nærøy Manuskript”, Randulf includes a short story from Niels Knag who, on December 8, 1691, held a conversation with Anders Poulsen, a 100 year old Sámi *noaidi*, regarding his drum, its use and meaning. As presented earlier, Randulf records that the Sámi Drum was made from a *fyrretræ* (fir tree) frame, oblong in shape. Samuel Rhen records that the wood comes from spruce, pine or birch tree which had “grown in a secluded place clockwise and not counter-clockwise” (Schefferus 123). Some were completed with an open back while others would be mostly enclosed like a

bowl with cut-out in its back to allow the *noaidi* to grasp it in his left hand when played (Læstadius 2002, 153). A reindeer hide was stretched over the frame, secured with wooden pegs (Læstadius 2002, 154) and ornately painted with a number of images, many of which “represented” the Sámi “gods”, bears, reindeer, dwelling and worship structures, and various dimensions or realms occupied by different “gods”. The paint was derived from boiled alder bark, mixed with the blood from the heart of a bear and with blood cut from under the breast of the *noaidi*. The mallet (called *ballem* in Sámi) was fashioned from a “T” shaped section of reindeer horn (Randulf 70-72, Læstadius 2002, 157).

The Sámi Drum was consulted by the *noaidi* for a variety of reasons. Randulf records an instance where the *noaidi* consult the drum to determine if a father’s son, who is deathly ill, will survive or die (20-23). The Sámi would consult the *noaidi* drum to determine the best place to construct their dwelling structures (Randulf 27). Drums were also used to curse others and to protect individuals from other *noaidi* curses (Randulf 36). They were used in communication with beings from other dimensions (Randulf 44, Læstadius 2002, 71) and drums were employed in the hunting of Bear (Randulf, 67). Again, employing Morrion’s definition of Personhood, the *noaidi* drum should be examined for power, intelligence, voice, will, desire and ethics.

From the examples presented in the source documents, Drum appears to have a number of ways to communicate. One mode of communication Drum employs is through the use of a small, brass ring. Randulf records a lengthy story told directly to

him in January 1723 by Fin Johannes, a 25 year old Sámi. Due to its length, the story is paraphrased in the following paragraphs.

The incident took place when Johannes was 20 years old and gravely ill. His father, Andreas Sivertsen, sought the help of his brother-in-law who was a powerful *noaidi*. After certain ceremonies were performed (Randulf leaves out any details of the ceremonies), the *noaidi* placed a brass ring on the face of his drum and began to play.

According to Johannes, the ring would move around the face of the drum until it would rest upon or near a particular symbol. When the *noaidi* saw that the ring rested in the realm of the dead, a sign of pending death, he began to play even harder. But the ring would no longer move. It was as if it was glued into place. However, when the father saw that the ring would not move, he promised the Dead a female reindeer. Immediately following his promise, the ring moved back into the depicted realm of the living. However, after a very short time, the ring moved back into the realm of the dead. The father then repeatedly offered more “animal” offerings upon which the ring would move from the realm of the dead to the realm of the living and back again only to stay in the realm of the dead.

After further consultation, it was determined that only the offering of a human life would keep his son from dying. Upon hearing this, the father offered his life for his son's. Immediately, the ring moved from the realm of the dead to the living and stayed. After a few moments the father began to be deathly ill while the son's health made dramatic improvements. Then, during the afternoon of the second day after the *noaidi*

consultation, the son completely recovered at the exact moment the father died (Randulf 19-23).

This is one example of several which Randulf provides which help to illustrate that Drum has the ability to communicate with human beings and other-than-human-beings through the use of the brass ring and the images painted on Drum's face. It appears that the drum is able to communicate the father's intended offering to the "gods" or "spirits" of the various dimensions and then relay their response back to the human beings.

Another example of Drum's ability to voice comes from a footnote Randulf includes in his manuscript from Jens Kildal. He writes:

The *noaidi*, who are among the most grossest offenders when it comes to the art of idolatry, holds the drum occasionally up under the ear, and then asks it questions regarding that which he will know, and the Devil then answers his questions with an audible voice from the drum, in other words, the Devil is in the drum¹⁸ (Randulf, 22 fn 1).

This comment by Kildal helps illustrate that Drum has more than just a brass-ring voice. It appears that Drum also has the ability to audibly speak to the *noaidi* in direct response to his questions.

Unlike Bear whose power is innate, Drum power seems to exist in the fact that Drum is a composite Person, a "dividual" who gains its power from the gifting of several other persons. Its frame comes from Tree. Its face is from Reindeer. Its markings (voice) come from Tree (alder bark), Bear (blood), the *noaidi* (blood) and Reindeer ("T"

¹⁸ In Norwegian: "Den Noyd, some er iblant de allergroveste udj Afguderiets Kunst, holder Runbommen undertiden op under Øret, og da gjør Spørsmal til den om hvad hand vil vide, og Djævelen da svarer ham med lydelig Røst af Runbommen paa det, hvorom han spørger, thi Djævelen er inde I Runbommen."

shaped antler mallet) and a brass ring. About the brass ring, Læstadius writes, “The Lapps apparently believed that brass was a metal which could oppose curses, charms, and the influence of evil spirits. Thus brass rings were used on the *noaide* drum as if they were magic wands” (2002, 158).

Additionally, it appears from Randulf’s text that Drum enjoys some type of human sociability. In order for Drum to become effective, Drum must undergo an initiation and become a member of the *noaidi* group. When a *noaidi* wishes to employ the use of a new drum, at least three or four *noaidi* are invited and required to be present, each with an offering of a Reindeer and a blood soaked *Sturichs*¹⁹ offering. Randulf does not offer much of the detail of the ritual but he does write that the *noaidi joik* then consecrate and initiate Drum²⁰ (Randulf 29). It appears that in order for Drum to be useful as a member of the *noaidi* society, it must be initiated and accepted by more than a few members of that *noaidi* society.

Randulf gives one more example of Drum’s sociality. He writes, “The older a *Runebomme* is, the greater confidence and trust is placed in it²¹ . . .” (Randulf 67). It would appear that Drum increases in power or effectiveness the older it becomes. In fact, Randulf goes on to say those drums older than two years are treated different and

¹⁹ The root “*Stu*” is archaic for “*Stuv*” which is translated as “1 tree stump. 2 remnant (e.g. of cloth). 3 bird’s tail” (Norwegian English Dictionary, Third Edition, Oslo: Universitetsforlaget AS, 1984). A more precise translation of this word is called for and would shed more light on the ritual practice.

²⁰ Original Norwegian: “Ligesaa, naar nogen vil indrette sig een nye Runnebomme, da maae der skee en *Invitation* af 3 eller 4 Noyder i det mindset, hvilke alle med et Reinsdiurs of een *Sturichs* Offring, med hvis Blod den bestenkis, og deris sædvanlige Jougen, den maa *consecrere* og indvie.”

²¹ Original Norwegian: “Jo ældre en *Runebomme* er, jo store Tillid er der satt til den: hvorfor Finnerne efter 2de Aars ofte skiede Anmodning neppe vilde nedføre hosfølgende af Fieldene og lade den fare, som same skal være arved i 4de Leed.”

protected as they became inheritances in the fourth generation, indicating again that the age of a drum has something to do with its power and reliability.

There are two paragraphs in Randulf's manuscript that illustrate that Drum apparently has needs, desires, a will of its own, and is able to communicate these to human beings. It appears that Drum is capable of accepting "sacrifices" or "offerings" offered directly to it. Randulf writes:

...This is remarkable: on occasion, the Devil will completely refuse to answer them through the *Runnebommen*, which they see when the ring will either not leave its place quickly, or else moves too quickly and will not rest by any particular place, and then there is no other advice, than that they must offer a reindeer or some other creature they can descend upon, to the *Runnebommen* itself, of whom they will ask if it is of importance to it or not²² (29).

Removing the obvious Christian bias from the above citation, one must ask the question, if Drum was not ontologically different from a simple, musical instrument, why would the Sámi offer directly to Drum? This sentence clearly shows that Drum has a will it can communicate through the movement of the ring and a desire (which animal it deems important to it and will accept as an offering) which must be fulfilled by the Sámi before the requested counsel can be given.

Another example comes from a small but important paragraph in Randulf's manuscript. Randulf writes:

The thin, leather thongs wrapped with tin threads and the old tin and brass ornaments which adorn their ends, are as gifts and signs of thanksgiving given to

²² Original Norwegian: "...Merkeligt er dette: at undertiden vil Dievelen slet intet svare dennem ved Runnebommen, hvilket de seer naar Ringen enten ikke vil gaae af sit Sted fort, eller og naar den gaaer alt for fort og ikke vil standse ved noget vist Sted, og da er intet andet Raad, end de maae offer til Runnebommen selv et Reins-Diur eller et andet Creatur de kand falde paa, ligesom Sagen, om hvilken de vil spørge, kand være af Importance til eller ikke."

the drum, which the Finns give when they have been successful after following its instructions²³ (67).

Again, one must ask why anyone would offer an inanimate object a gift as a sign of thanksgiving unless there was some alternative ontological status of the so-called “inanimate object”. Drum appears to appreciate the tokens of thanksgiving as evidenced by the Sámi’s actions to decorate Drum upon receiving successful instruction and counsel.

The evidence presented indicates that Drum has an ontological status foreign to most western observers. Drum’s power will be explained in more detail in Chapter Six. Drum has voice. It communicates with human and other-than-human beings. This voice can be illustrated through the movement of a brass-ring or made audible among the most powerful *noaidi*. Drum has desire and will. This desire and will can be expressed through its voice to those skilled enough to listen. Evidence has shown that this desire can be satisfied through direct offerings and tokens of thanksgiving to Drum itself. Lastly, Drum has the need of sociality, especially acceptance from the *noaidi* group. Drum is spoken to, asked questions, offered to, protected in its older age, and kept within family lines for generations.

Seite

Perhaps one of the more difficult Persons in the Sámi world to understand is the *seite* or *seidr*. The *seite* have been described by many as stone or wood idols which the

²³ Original Norwegian: “Remmerne med Tinn-Traaer omviklede og med gammel Tin og Messing i Ended prydede, ere som Gaver og Taknemmeligheds Tegn til Rune_Bommen, hvilke Finnerne giver, naar de efter dens Anvisning har været lykkelige.”

Sámi worships and prayed to. Some attribute this practice to nature-worship. Of this practice Karsten writes,

The seidr-worship is a form of primitive animism or fetishism which includes two main beliefs: 1) that stones, sticks, and other inanimate objects which from one reason or another particularly attract the attention of primitive man, are endowed with life and are regarded as seats of a spiritual being, and 2) that on account of this, they are thought to possess a mystic supernatural power and for this reason among the Lapps were made the objects of a real worship (12).

Karsten's Cartesian language is concerning. Do the Sámi view these stones and sticks as "inanimate objects" that "are endowed with life" and serve "as seats of a spiritual being"? Do the Sámi have a concept of "mystic supernatural power" and do the Sámi "worship" the "object" which posses that power? What is the ontological status of the *seite* in the Sámi cosmos and is there something more going on here than what Karsten is able to see? Several examples from the source documents will help in determining the Personhood of the *seite*.

Læstadius, citing Högström reports,

Some Lapps hold the belief that these stones are alive and are able to move about. Over time many such stones had been erected in the same place. They are generally located in hill slopes, on points and shores of lakes, on islets in the midst of rapids or other sacred places. No one knows who has placed them there or when they have come there (Læstadius 2002, 104).

According to both Læstadius and Högström, the Sámi understand the *seite* to be alive. Högström goes on to explain that *seite* have a desire to be respected and have the power to do harm if individuals are careless in their relationship to them. Högström explains,

The Lapps do not want to show these sanctuaries to strangers because they fear that the deity might resent it and cause some harm to be done to them; they have related to me numerous examples of people who out of curiosity have come too

close to or touched such stone gods and consequently have lost their health, etc (Læstadius 2002, 104).

As an example of a *seite*'s power and the respect one must give it, Högström relates the following account:

From the fact that they make pledges to these stones when either people or cattle fall ill, I conclude that they believe them to have in their power health and illness, life and death. But based on an account by a certain Lapp, who admitted that when moving he inadvertently went too close to a *seite*, I also conclude that they could bring evil things. He walked across the point where the *seite* was so close to it that he himself ended up on the path leading from the stone (*si diis placet*) to the point across from it. Upon realizing this, he pledged reindeer bulls, female reindeer, sheep, goats, etc. as sacrifice. He could, however, not appease him therewith; wolves came at night into his reindeer herd and caused him considerable damage (Læstadius 2002, 106).

The power to cause “considerable damage” is power indeed. Living in a cosmos constructed of powerful Persons can be a dangerous place and is mitigated by reciprocity and ethical treatment. From Högström's preceding example, this certain man failed to demonstrate the proper respect and therefore suffered the consequences.

Another interesting story demonstrates how *seite* communicate their desires and share their power. Læstadius, citing Tuderus, recounts how communication with a smaller stone *seite* took place. He writes,

When a Lap embarks upon this honor worship he removes his hat, places the stone on his hand and addresses his god using the following phrases: “I now touch you with utmost humility in your sacred place. I place you on my hand and ask of you...” (whatever it may be in each case). While in his prayer mentioning all kinds of things and asking for them one at a time, he at the same time tries to feel whether he can lift the stone up with his hand. If he is unable to lift the hand and the stone becomes heavier and heavier, he has no hope of receiving what he is asking for that time.

He therefore asks for something else, then a third thing and a fourth and so on, asking for all kinds of necessities, be they wealth or something else. If he finally happens upon the thing his god wants, the stone, however heavy it may be, becomes so light that the hand rises up from the ground. But as long as the idol

does not want to answer, the hand remains heavy however small the rock may be. When he has received the desired answer he says: “You are my god” or “Oh, I see, my god.” When the worshipper has thus received what the lot gave him, he again asks what the god wishes to have as sacrifice. When the idol announces that he wants this or that, the worshippers get it for him, be it a lamb, female elk, or a wild reindeer, a goat, living or slaughtered (Læstadius 2002, 107).

This example demonstrates the ability of *seite* to voice its desires and its willingness to gift the individual with his needs. It is also interesting to note that in cases where it was impractical to set the *seite* on one’s hand, Drum was used to act as voice for the larger *seite*. Often, drawings of specific *seite* were painted on Drum’s face which allowed Drum to communicate the desire of a particular *seite* (Læstadius 2002, 145-148).

This chapter has demonstrated that among the Sámi, Bear, Drum and *seite* have ontological statuses greater than the Western categories of ‘animal’, ‘instrument’ and ‘rock’ or ‘stick’ would enjoy. Bear, Drum and *seite* all demonstrate intelligence, will, desire, power, voice and relate to other persons in an ethical, reciprocal way. With this new understanding of Sámi ontology, one can now explore more correctly the understanding of power in the Sámi cosmos.

THE EVIDENCE OF SÁMI EPISTEMOLOGY (POWER)

By better understanding Sámi Personhood, epistemological assumptions maintained by the Sámi can be more clearly understood and defined. From the ethnographical data provided by the early writers, two main power brokers appear in the Sámi cosmology. The *noaidi* and Drum appear at the center of most major stories involving Power exchange between Persons. It must be noted that the significance of the *noaidi* and Drum may be artificially inflated as they were the focus of the early missionaries. They the embodiment of “Satan’s power” as viewed by the early missionaries and priests and the *noaidi* were identified as the “religious leaders” or indigenous “priests” of the Sámi. As such, they were the primary targets of these ministers for if one can control the shepherd, the flock will follow. However, it is clear from the available ethnographical data that an individual, a family or an entire village could approach other-than-human Persons by themselves without the *noaidi* serving as a mediator. Only in the direst circumstances, during the greatest need, or prior to an important hunt, it appears that the assistance of a *noaidi* was important and was almost always sought for as they were held in high esteem among the Sámi (Læstadius 2002, 54).

It is clear from the examples presented by Læstadius and the earlier writers that a *noaidi* could be either gender. Most of Læstadius’ examples deal with male *noaidi* but he does recount several stories of a female *noaidi* known as Lapland Tiina who was very skilled at healing a manner of illness (Læstadius 2002, 205-207).

It is not uncommon in the data to see a *noaidi* using his gift for his own needs. Other times, he is asked to assist others. There are also accounts of one *noaidi* using his power to overcome another, more sinister *noaidi* who has caused pain, suffering or even death in another's life.

To understand Power and how it was shared with a *noaidi*, one must also be introduced to Sámi dimensionality. This project will not fully discuss Sámi dimensionality as a precursory search through the source materials has revealed a very complex system that cannot be presented here. However, among many other dimensions, Sámi recognize an existence after death. Læstadius succinctly states, “for the Laps believed that humans as well as animals would receive new bodies in another world” (2002, 71). The world that deceased Persons live in is called *Jabma-aimo* among the Sámi (Læstadius 2002, 108). This continued life after death is significant as it is an important dimension that the *noaidi* often operates in, whose actions often produce powerful effects in the daily life, health and wellbeing of another living Person. Access to this dimension was gained through the knowledge, skill and language of both the *noaidi* and Drum and shall be illustrated later in this chapter.

Another Sámi dimension important to understanding Power is the dimension called *saivo* (*saiwo*). In the Sámi cosmos, other-than-human persons, who were not dead, lived in this underground dimension. They were called *saivo-olmah* (*saivo*'s men), *saivo-lodde* (*saivo*'s bird), *saivo-guolle* (*saivo*'s fish or snake) and *saivo-sarva* (*saivo*'s reindeer bull) (Læstadius 2002, 109-112). Using Læstadius' language, these Persons were “half spiritual, half material beings” (Læstadius 2002, 109) who could be called upon in the

service of the Sámi. The *saiwo* men, women lived together in a marriage relationship with *saiwo* women and had *saiwo* children. There also appears to be separate areas for married *saiwo* and unmarried *saiwo*. They lived lives that paralleled the Sámi and raised livestock that were “far more beautiful than that of the Lapps” (Læstadius 2002, 109). Jessen explains that the only major difference between the Sámi and the *saiwo* Persons is that the *saiwo* “were happier than humans on earth” (Læstadius 2002, 109). Jessen goes on to say,

Hence the Lapps considered *saiwo-olmah*, who lived inside the hills, a noble and rich people well versed in witchcraft and magic. In contrast, the Lapps considered themselves poor and wretched people who needed the protection of the former. The Lapps claimed to have visited *saiwo* often, interacted with *saiwo-olmah*, danced and *yoiked* with them, and seen their men, women and children. They could even enumerate their names. Some gave the impression they had spent weeks with *saiwo-olmah*, smoked tobacco with them, consumed liquor and other treats with them. That is why every male Lapp owned from 10 to 12 of these *saiwo* beings as if as guardian angels (2002, 109).

To emphasize the reality of these *saiwo* Persons, Jessen goes on to explained how the Sámi interacted with them and the reciprocal relationship they shared. He writes,

Since the Lapps consider the inhabitants of *saiwo* to be real beings, they formed unions with them whereby the Lapps sought help from *saiwo*. *Saiwo* were to become their guardian masters who were to give them luck in their endeavors such as for example in fishing, hunting, etc. They would save the lives of humans, help getting to know everything and avenge wrongs suffered by the Lapps. In turn the Lapps promised to serve *saiwo* with their lives and property” (Jessen 27, Læstadius 2002, 110).

These *saiwo* Persons interacted with human Persons and shared Power with them. The Power they shared seemed to be ethically neutral, meaning that the human Person drawing upon that Power could use it for “positive” (luck, health, information) or

“negative” (avenging wrongs, causing illness or death) purposes. Jessen gives a more detailed explanation of *saiwo* Persons as follows:

Every Lapp was to have in his *saiwo* three creatures who would be present any time he called for them; first, a bird, which was called *saiwo-lodde*; second, a fish or a serpent which was called *saiwo-gulle* or *guarms* (No. 45 in the drum figures), and third, a reindeer called *saiwo-sarva* (No. 42 in the drum figures). All these animals were referred to with a common name *saiwo-vuoign* (Jessen 24, Læstadius 2002, 111).

Læstadius is quick to add here that Jessen does not fully understand the term *vuoign* in his example and goes on to explain:

Vuoign actually means ‘spirit’ or ‘the air that humans breathe.’ That explains the metaphor of life and ultimately of an individual (life), in which sense the word is used in this case (Læstadius 2002, 111).

It is also curious to note that the *saiwo-lodde* accompanied a *noaidi* when he *joik*’ed and Læstadius records:

Every animal has its own song [*joik*] in Lappish with words added which describe the animal’s temperament. Every prominent person has a song dedicated to him or her, which reflects the person’s mannerisms or special modes of being (Læstadius 2002, 64, bracket added).

Given the above three citations, there appears to be a connection between life, breath, the *saiwo* and *joik*. A closer study of the relationships these *saiwo* Persons have with breath, song and life should be conducted. Læstadius recites many songs around the killing of Bear that are very important to the Sámi. One minor example of this interesting relationship will be related here.

From the following song and the explanations Læstadius provides around the Bear ceremony, it appears that one way to transfer Power from Bear is by its death.

Læstadius records that when Bear is killed the following song must be sung:

Dear defeated one of the forest!
Give us perfect health!
Take your catch to the storehouse,
Bring a thousand when you come.
Hundred, hundred as prey.
Clearly I come from the gods,
Very happy with the catch,
As if without wonder, without trouble.
Gave a gift, provided money.
When I come home,
I'll celebrate for three nights.
Across valleys, roadless mountains
He drives the evil one before him.
Your torches still came to the shed.
I honor you afterwards,
For a year with the prey of your scythe.
So that I won't forget the correct song,
Therefore come once more (Læstadius 2002, 188)

While the bulk of this song will be discussed in the following chapter, what is very interesting are the last two lines as they relate to the concept of Power. These lines help illustrate the reciprocal nature of Power. Bear has Power to grant “perfect health” and plentiful “prey” to the Sámi while the Sámi have Power to bring Bear back “once more” if they remember the “correct song”. Power is to be given and properly received in this relationship.

Also important to the understanding the Sámi's view on Power is the understanding of how a *noaidi* became a *noaidi*. Unfortunately, there are only a few stories related which are not very detailed in their recounting (Læstadius 2002, 220).

Tornaëus writes,

I can, however, reveal how they come to be *noaides*. Not all Lapps are of the same nature, nor are they equally skilled in methods of conjuration; not all of them necessarily know anything about It or care anything about it nowadays. But some come to be *noaides* by nature, and others by way of learning and practice (Læstadius 2002, 220).

Læstadius continues:

He who by nature becomes ill in *pueritia* [in his boyhood] is said to begin fantasizing in his weakness. If he becomes more gravely ill a second time, he may see and learn more. But if he is taken on a third trip, it is the most difficult and life-threatening journey; then he may witness all kinds of fiendish visions and become fully knowledgeable in all conjuring tricks. This the *incantatores* [reciters of charms] have confessed to me, those who have given away their *noaide*'s drum and promised to abandon such pagan doings. But at the same time they say that even without the drum, those who by nature and through illness have acquired such an art, see things which are not present – whether they want to or not (2002, 220).

It is important to note here that Drum is not always necessary for a *noaidi* to have Power if the *noaidi* has gained his “art” through childhood illness. The experience that Tornaeus had to lead him to this conclusion is restated by Læstadius as such:

Some years ago, a middle-aged Lapp brought me his divination drum, which I had long wanted. But he said: “Although I am giving this away and do not intend to make another drum for myself, I will continue to see things occurring elsewhere.” Taking me as an example, he told me what had happened to me along the way, and it was all the absolute truth. “What should I do to my eyes?” he said. “I see whether I want to or not.” But I told the Lapp that everything he had said about the occurrences along the way was completely false. For I did not want the Lapp to be able to boast that there was any basis to the revelations he had gotten with the aid of the Devil (Læstadius 2002, 201).

If Tornaeus’ account is accurate, the fact that a *noaidi* can participate in the exchange of Power without relating to another Person would serve as a counter-argument to Morrison’s paradigm of Person, Power, Gift. If Drum is removed from the equation, who Gifts the *noaidi* his Power? At this point Jessen adds some additional information that helps to confirm the actual source of a *noaidi*'s Power. Jessen writes,

To young men who were candidates for sorcery the gods appeared at regular intervals, sometimes in the form of *saivo* people (*saivo-gadse*) and sometimes in dreams etc. The *saivo* people would themselves teach these candidates and sometimes took them to the *saivo*, so that *saivo* who had passed on could teach

them there. Then when the candidate had been taught the matters pertaining to the sorcery establishment, he was dedicated to the activity in the following ceremony. – A meeting was held of several *noaides*. The oldest one sat with the candidate outside the lodging so that their feet were side by side. Then the young man began to *yoik* and chant charms (or sing *noaides*' songs) to the accompaniment of the drum. If their *saivo* or *náide-gadse* joined the company and walked over their feet into the tent so that only the young *noaide* noticed it and felt in his feet the *saivo* people moving and walking over them, while the old *noaide* did not feel the movement but only found a sign of the *saivo* people's presence – then the candidate was immediately dubbed a *noaide*, and from that moment on everyone acknowledged him as one. From this moment on, the *nisse* or their *saivo-gadse* began to associate more familiarly with the young *noaide*, and from them he could choose as many guardian spirits as he wished (Jessen 54, Læstadius 2002, 221).

Putting these two accounts side by side, one can conclude that a *noaide* gains his Power as knowledge is exchanged from the *saivo* people. Illness, Drum and *joik* helps facilitate the exchange of Power between the *noaidi* and the other-than-human *saivo* guide. The strength of a *noaide*'s Power lies in the number of *saivo* people he has employed in his service (Karsten 67).

In many of the examples provided by Læstadius and the earlier writers indicate that the *noaidi* enlisted the help of *saivo* Persons to accomplish his task. How the *noaidi*, the needy Sámi making the request, and the *saivo* Persons interact and share Power is the topic for the next chapter. Power is shared through Gifting.

THE EVIDENCE OF SÁMI AXIOLOGY (GIFTING)

Giftng is the process of sharing Power between Persons. As stated earlier, Giftng requires a reciprocal relationship in an interpersonal cosmos, a type of “I’ll scratch your back if you’ll scratch mine” arrangement. There are proper ways of relating and there are improper ways of relating. Those Persons who share Power in proper ways are considered ethical beings and share true Personhood. Beings who take Power or who relate to others in unethical ways or who are asocial in any other manner, are considered non-Persons. Often, there is a kinship element in the ethical sharing of Power between Persons but this does not always need to be the case. In this Chapter, several examples of the sharing of Power are explored to illustrate the applicability of this new Post-Cartesian paradigm to the Sámi.

Perhaps the most documented example of Giftng comes from the ethnographical data available regarding Sámi interactions with Bear. The data is voluminous and cannot all be shared in this chapter. A few representative examples are put forth as follows.

It must first be established that Bear and Sámi share kinship. While Power is not always Gifted along kinship relationships, many of the most elaborate ways of relating (“ceremonies” or “rites”) occur when kinship is involved. Leem records that the Sámi are very careful saying Bear’s name but will often use varying pseudo-names when discussing Bear. Leem writes that “they never call the bear by its own name, *qvuowtja*, so that it will not harm their cattle but they call it by the name *muodd-aja*, ‘fur-coat Grandpa’” (Leem 502, Læstadius 2002, 182). Additionally, the Bear song shared earlier

that is sung for an oversleeping Bear names him as “*Puold ajam*” meaning “Grandpa in the hill” (Læstadius 2002, 196).

Another indication that Power is Gifted along kinship lines comes from the earlier story related by Fjellström (see Chapter Four). Following the retelling of how Bear married a beaten woman and then allowed his wife’s brothers to kill him, Fjellström, according to Læstadius, “relates that the bear’s wife is said to have taught her brothers all the ceremonies to be observed in the bear hunt, and that otherwise they would not be able to overcome such a fierce creature” (Læstadius 2002, 184).

Læstadius takes several pages to describe the intricate ceremonies around the hunt, killing, cooking and burying of Bear (2002, 180-196). Many of these ceremonies appear to be designed to show great respect to Bear for the Gift of his body and Power. This reciprocity appears to be significant. Here again, the Bear song that is sung as he is brought into camp is presented for examination:

Dear defeated one of the forest!
Give us perfect health!
Take your catch to the storehouse,
Bring a thousand when you come.
Hundred, hundred as prey.
Clearly I come from the gods,
Very happy with the catch,
As if without wonder, without trouble.
Gave a gift, provided money.
When I come home,
I’ll celebrate for three nights.
Across valleys, roadless mountains
He drives the evil one before him.
Your torches still came to the shed.
I honor you afterwards,
For a year with the prey of your scythe.
So that I won’t forget the correct song,
Therefore come once more (Læstadius 2002, 188).

According to this song, Bear's death has the Power to grant the Sámi "perfect health", thousands of more "prey" and happiness with the successful hunt. The Gifting of this Power is not, however, without reciprocity. The Sámi must offer a "gift", provide money, "celebrate for three nights" and honor him "for a year with the prey of his scythe". Læstadius indicates that "the pray of your scythe" is a reference to the bear reed, *Angelicha Sylvestris* commonly known today as Queen Anne's Lace (2002, 188).

As Morrison elucidated earlier, Persons ethically share Power with other Persons. To withhold one's self or Power from another is to become a monster. From the earlier story about Bear, Bear is willing to be killed. A part of the ethical response of the Sámi is to remember Bear and its song.

Another example of the Sámi's reciprocity to Bear revolves around the burial customs of the inedible portions and bones of Bear. The body of the slain Bear is not brought into camp until the second day. On the first day, as the men return to camp there are a number of songs and ceremonies the camp participate in. Among these ceremonies, the women of the camp decorate the hunting party with brass rings and chains. Additionally, they spit chewed alder tree bark onto the faces of the hunters. Any dog who also participated in the hunt is dyed reddish with the juice from the alder tree bark (Læstadius 2002, 186).

A number of additional ceremonies transpire on the second day as Bear is brought into camp. Finally, when the skinning and deboning of Bear begins, great care is taken to keep all of the bones of Bear intact. The meat is carefully separated from the bones and

the inedible offal is kept intact from the esophagus down and left attached to the skeleton (Læstadius 2002, 191).

Once the meat had been boiled together in one pot, again accompanied by much singing, the skull was carefully skinned and the skull was severed from the rest of the skeleton. The individual who skinned the head would carefully remove the “hairless skin of the snout” and would tie this skin to his own face. The brass ring that was placed on Bear’s head when he came into camp is also removed and retained. The head, with its attached windpipe, esophagus and innards were then boiled together (Læstadius 2002, 191).

At this point Fjellström, Rhen, Schefferus, Leem and Högström all recount the burial of Bear’s bones in similar ways. Quoting Fjellström’s version Læstadius recounts the following:

Just as none of the bear’s bones can be broken or cut, so are they not to be thrown away like the bones of other animals; they are collected carefully so that not even the smallest bone is lost. Then a bear-sized hole is dug in the spot where the bear was cooked. At the bottom of the hole they put very soft and fine birch twigs as a kind of bed. All the bones are placed in the hole, in the same arrangement as in a living bear. The piece of skin that was cut or skinned off the bear’s nose and worn by the one who skinned the bear’s head is now put in its correct place over the snout where it had been. The above mentioned stubby tail is also set in its proper place in the skeleton. The brass rings and chain links that the women had attached to the branch loop when they received the bear’s tail are, however, taken away. *These brass ornaments are preserved to become implements and decorations of the divination drum.* The birch-bark cone that had been filled with alder-tree bark is also placed down in the grave beside the skeleton. Lastly the grave is covered with split logs the same length as the grave, over which they spread spruce branches so that no predator can disturb the bones. Some do not dig the grave horizontally but vertically as deep as the height of the bear. Then they place the bones (or the skeleton in a vertical position) in order, starting from the bottom and continuing upwards (proceeding little by little) to the head and

snout so that the alder-tree cone is topmost. If some Swedish settlers, to whom the Lapps' ceremonies do not matter, have taken part in the hunt, the Lapps take just the bones that are their share and bury them properly, leaving empty spaces for the missing bones. *When all the bones are in place, they address the bear, asking him to tell other bears about the great honors that have been accorded him so that they will not resist capture* (2002, 194, italics added).

This lengthy account and the several other ceremonies detailed by Læstadius not included here indicate that great care is taken by the entire camp to show great respect to Bear and his Gift. Læstadius concludes that all of this ceremony means “that Lapps in general believe that the bear, like other animals, will be resurrected in *saivo*” (2002, 194). The last sentence in the above citation seems to indicate that these ceremonies are ways of demonstrating “great honors” to Bear that will help him to convince other Bears “not to resist capture”. Additionally, the Bear song recited earlier indicates the same idea. In other words, by their careful attention, the Sámi have dealt in this exchange of Power in ethical, responsible ways and can be trusted to do the same in future exchanges.

Shifting the attention away from how the Sámi relate to Bear, several additional examples are now provided regarding the Power sharing with Drum. As noted earlier, Drum appears to be more of a composite-Person, a “dividual”. Drum demonstrates intelligence, Power, will, voice, and desire. However, Drum is made-up of several other Persons who have shared their bodies and thereby their Power. The Drum body is comprised of wood from special Trees, skin from Reindeer, and blood from Bear, Tree (alder juice) and *noaidi*. A brass ring and the antler from Reindeer help give Drum voice. Morrison's new paradigm demands that there must be a reciprocal relationship for Power to be exchanged between *saivo*, Drum and *noaidi*. Evidence from the sources will now

be examined to illustrate this relationship. Examples dealing with the direct Gifting to Drum and to the *saivo* would be specifically important in this case.

First, as indicated in the Bear burial ceremony quoted earlier, the individual Drum used during the Bear hunt is offered the brass ring that came off of Bear's body (Læstadius 2002, 194). Læstadius also indicates that Bear's teeth, claws and ears were also tied to the body of Drum by Reindeer tendons (2002, 156). Additional brass rings were also seen as a Gift to Drum if it was not related to properly. Rheen recounts:

No woman of marriageable age could touch this sacred object [Drum]. They said that if a woman of that age happened to walk along the road the drum had been carried over within three days, she would either die immediately or some other misfortune would befall her. But if in case she was forced to go along a road over which the drum had been carried, she would have to give a brass ring to the drum" (Schefferus 132-133, Læstadius 2002, 163).

As mentioned earlier, Randulf also records:

The thin, leather thongs wrapped with tin threads and the old tin and brass ornaments which adorn their ends, are as gifts and signs of thanksgiving given to the drum, which the Finns give when they have been successful after following its instructions²⁴ (67).

In addition to being offered direct offerings, Drum was also given special privileges and honor. Not previously discussed in this project is the Sámi dwelling called *kota* and must be briefly explained in relationship to Drum. The *kota* was historically made up of differing materials but always retained its conical shape resembling that of the North American teepee. Long poles were fashioned vertically together and were covered with either moss, sod, wood boards, hides, or a felt/linen tent covering

²⁴ Original Norwegian: "Remmerne med Tinn-Traaer omviklede og med gammel Tin og Messing i Enden prydede, ere som Gaver og Taknemmeligheds Tegn til Rune_Bommen, hvilke Finnerne giver, naar de efter dens Anvisning har været lykkelige."

(Læstadius 2002, 141-142). These *kota* were always constructed with two openings that served as doors. Læstadius explains:

First there was the ordinary secular door, which was so situated as to provide the widest possible field of vision; then there was the smaller secret door opposite the ordinary one. The part of the dwelling closest to the secret door was called the *pässjo*, which was bounded by two pieces of wood laid parallel. They were laid from the fireplace to the secret door so that they took up 6 to 8 square feet, or 1/6 of the entire *kota*. The secret door itself was called the *pässjo raike*. This *pässjo* was a sacred area, which no woman dared to approach, and the secret door itself was sacred. No woman dared go in and out by it. Only a man could crawl in or out through it on his way to a sacred activity, for example, going to or coming from a sacrifice or going to hunt or coming from hunting (2002, 143).

Drum was also afforded this honor and would never be brought into a *kota* through the larger opening but would always be brought in through the *pässjo* (Læstadius 2002, 143). Læstadius includes an interesting side note regarding the name *pässjo*. He writes, "...the word may come from the drawling pronunciation of the word *pässo* meaning 'blower' or 'blowing' ... (2002, 143). Thus this opening may also be interpreted as the breathing hole and can thereby be associated with voice and life. This is interesting as Drum is often invited to voice the needs and desires of the *saivo* Persons.

Another indication of the reciprocity expected from the Sámi is that in numerous stories offered by Læstadius where a *noaidi* is asked for his assistance, there is always a "sacrifice" that is offered in exchange for the Gift of Power. The story related earlier in Chapter 4 regarding Anders Sivertsen and how he offered himself as a "sacrifice" to spare his son is a perfect example (Randulf 19-23).

To remind the reader, Sivertsen's 20 year old son Johannes was gravely ill. He summoned his *noaidi* brother-in-law to assist. It was learned through Drum that Johannes would soon die. Sivertsen suggested a number of different "animal sacrifices"

to which the Drum indicated would not be accepted. Finally after further consultation, Sivertsen learned that another human could offer himself as a ransom for his son to *saivo*. Siverstsen decided to offer himself as that ransom. As he did so, immediately his son began to improve and Sivertsen became deathly ill. The son recovered fully the same second the father died the following day. This example again demonstrates that in the Sámi cosmos, Power is to be ethically shared along reciprocal relationships between Persons.

Two last examples regarding the Sámi's reciprocal relationship with *seite* are now shared. These two examples both come from Högström and are quoted by Læstadius as follows:

If someone shoots squirrels, birds, or other animals within the area belonging to the deity's spirit, he must take the fee, the head, and the wings and sacrifice them to the stone, the rest he gets to keep. In such places it was customary to lift the stones and put spruce branches under and around them. The Lapps do this with bared heads, crawling on all four similarly to how they even otherwise go to offer sacrifices. Then he can tell from the stone's weight whether it is favorable or not (Læstadius 2002, 105-106).

Læstadius clarifies:

Högström writes further about these *seites* that the might of the stones is usually measured by the number of worshippers they have. If sacrificing to them ceases they also lose their power and can no longer do good nor evil. It is not difficult to find such weakened and discarded gods (2002, 105).

From the above two examples two conclusions can be made. First, *seite* are offered sacrifices directly by the Sámi if that individual takes Power in the form of an animal's life. Second, the number of sacrifices a particular *seite* receives is directly proportional to its Power and the ability to Gift that Power to other Persons.

It has been demonstrated in this Chapter that Morrison's concept of Gifting Power between Persons is to be conducted in a reciprocal, respectful and ethical way. Gifting is the process whereby Power is shared between Persons of differing status.

CONCLUSION

Chapter One briefly introduced the modern day Sámi of Northern Scandinavia. Theories regarding their origin and information regarding their language, culture, religion and geography were presented. Some of the early scholars in Religious Studies, namely Tylor and Evans-Prichard, were presented for their earlier theories of "primitive" religions.

Then in Chapter Two, the challenges of Sámi source documentation were discussed. The early missionaries and priests of the 16th, 17th and 18th Century provide a majority of the ethnographical data available today which is wrought with ethnocentric and religious biases. Lars Levi Læstadius was also presented as a type of filter which the earlier writers were passed through. Due to Læstadius' cultural, scientific and religious background, he was uniquely positioned to inform this project.

In Chapter Three, a survey of several authors who had contributed to a post-Cartesian theory available to the study of indigenous societies was conducted. The theories of A. Irving Hallowell, Tim Ingold, Kenneth Morrison and others were combined to construct a new paradigm or general theory of indigenous cosmology that consists of ontology (Person), epistemology (Power) and axiology (Gift). Many of the presented authors called for the identification for and the eradication of the pervasive ethnocentrism found in the religious studies of indigenous peoples.

It was demonstrated that Hallowell's insightful dissertation ignited the conversation and identified the importance of recognizing the ontological assumptions of Person in the circumpolar peoples of his study. From here, Morrison springboards and adds a major contribution to not only the understanding of ontology but also of Power and Gift in indigenous cosmos. His notion of the intersubjective and non-supernaturalistic reality of indigenous peoples could not be overstated.

These theoretical, post-Cartesian ideas were then applied to the ethnographical data available regarding the Sámi in Chapters Four, Five and Six to determine if the data would support the ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions of Morrison's Person, Power, and Gift.

The data for the Sámi examined did indeed demonstrate that the Sámi view Bear, Drum, *saivo* and *seite* as animate, intentional and powerful Persons who must be related to in responsible and reciprocal ways. While it is true that there are ontological differences in the Sámi cosmos, the traditional natural versus supernatural dichotomy is simply not supported by the data available. Instead, humans and other-than-human Persons negotiate these differences by the process of Gifting and acting responsibly towards each other.

Employing Morrison's concept of dimensionality illustrated why the Sámi placed value in the skills of the *noaide* who was uniquely able to navigate these dimensions to ascertain knowledge and secure Gifts of Power from other-than-human Persons. Due to the limitations of this project, this concept of Sámi dimensionality was not fully explored and could be a very insightful area for further study. Læstadius presents an entire section

of his *Fragments* (Part 1) discussing the various other-than-human Persons and where they are located dimensionally in the Sámi cosmos. Upon further research, this dimensionality may shown to have been re-created on Drum's face and might be an integral part of the *noaidi*'s knowledge and Power.

Additionally the early source writers of the Sámi include much data about the many other-than-human Persons in the Sámi cosmos that need to be studied and examined. Much of the current conversations regarding these "gods" are Cartesian in translation, construction and interpretation. Some of the earliest data utilized in this project is over 400 years old and yet this project has demonstrated how a post-Cartesian theoretical framework can clarify and more accurately present the historical assumptions of a people who still struggle today for acceptance in Western society.

The Sámi of Northern Scandinavia have a long and proud history and are known as people who have survived the harshest weather, religious and political persecution, and scientific misrepresentation over the long centuries. Their millennia long struggle for existence has allowed the Sámi to become who they are today. Through the lens of a post-Cartesian framework, perhaps the Sámi religious experience as seen from the Sámi perspective can indeed be brought to light once again.

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