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‘MORE INCLINED TO PITY THAN LOVE’: MATTHIAS ALEXANDER CASTRÉN’S PUBLISHED LETTERS ABOUT THE NENETS*

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ABSTRACT
This article reads Finnish linguist and ethnographer Matthias Alexander Castrén’s published letters as travel writing influenced both by imperialist discourses and the tradition of Finnish travel writing. The article examines the letter formulae and the creation of a readership community, explores the ways in which Castrén builds involved and informative and emotional stances vis-à-vis the Nenets, and discusses the ways in which the imperial and nationalistic currents come together in the emotional economy of Castrén’s travel writing.

The article argues that the role of emotion is vital in order to understand how Castrén persuades his readers to see his point of view, and to see how he seeks to expand his readership. Castrén produces emotional stances in alignment with conventions that make the genre and its nationalist meanings readily apparent to his readers. Finally, the way Castrén’s travel writing produces a gaze that legitimates the process of othering is discussed. Concentrating on descriptions of the Nenets, the article argues that these accounts create an emotional relationship that indexes imperialism.

KEYWORDS: travel writing ● emotion ● Nenets ● epistolary conventions

Matthias Alexander Castrén (1813–1852), an esteemed Finnish linguist and ethnographer, travelled extensively throughout northern Russia and Siberia under the aegis of the Russian Academy of Sciences to gather information about and describe the northern and Siberian Indigenous communities. His work also formed a significant part of a

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larger European endeavour to compare languages, mythologies and peoples in order to build a history of humankind. In the 19th century Grand Duchy of Finland Castrén's work had national significance: it was a project that served to define the position of the Finns in history along with their place among other modern nations. (For more background, see Branch 1968; Korhonen 1986: 50–66; Ahola and Lukin 2019; Salminen 2019.) The knowledge derived from the expeditions, whether imperial Russian, academic, or Finnish national, was narrated in letters that were first published in newspapers and later edited as travelogues in the Finnish, Russian and Central European press. The letters made Castrén and his achievements, and the landscapes and places he described and the numerous indigenous peoples and Russians living among them, widely known among his Finnish and international readership. Castrén's reports have been applauded for their rich detail and interesting perspectives on indigenous life in Russia; moreover, readers have valued the sense of humour and intimacy with which he imbues the narration, allowing them to feel that they, too, are accompanying him on his expeditions, experiencing the same feelings and enduring the same hardships.

Apart from being familiar to newspaper readers of the time, this style of journalism, which blurred the boundaries between private, public, epistolary and non-epistolary discourses, had much in common with the genre of travel writing. Castrén's travel reports also follow some of the signature features of travel writing, that is, defining and negotiating the dimensions of and boundaries between us and them, in this case, Finns and their Others, which was often discussed in relation to nationalism. Travel writing has more recently been analysed as a practice that had a significant role in creating and normalising the imperial gaze (Said 1978; Pratt 2008 [1992]). Mary Louise Pratt (ibid.: 29, 37–38), who has studied travelogues chronicling European encounters on the African and South American continents, emphasises the "co-presences, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, and … radically asymmetrical relations of power" in travel writing together with the ways in which the travellers depict themselves as innocent; in other words, they construe their own presence as uncomplicated, portraying themselves as objective and authoritative observers who merely collect and represent knowledge. She argues that travel writing took part in legitimising the European project of conquering the world not only politically but also by controlling knowledge about it.

There are a number of justifications for reading Castrén's travel reports in relation to this kind of imperial travel writing, not simply because he engages with similar structural and poetic strategies. In addition, the relationship that Castrén builds between himself and his readers and his informants repeats similar kinds of hierarchical position that occur in the continental travelogues. In this article, I will continue along the lines of Pratt, arguing that the epistolary format and its power of creating community through communicative practice provides a powerful device for building ties, and identifying borders, between people and communities in travel writing. Consequently, my reading of the travel reports published in *Helsingfors Morgonblad* (*Helsinki Newspaper*, hereafter also *Morgonblad*) is informed by an awareness that they were originally written as private letters. Reading Castrén's letters, I argue that the role of emotion is vital to understanding how Castrén persuades his readers to see his point of view, to make his text interesting and entertaining and, more importantly, how he seeks to expand his readership. Furthermore, I argue that in addition to the influence of imperialist dis-

courses, Castrén leans on the tradition of Finnish travel writing, thus producing emotional stances in alignment with conventions that make the genre and its nationalist or patriotic meanings readily apparent to his readers. Last, I discuss the way Castrén's travel writing produces a gaze that legitimises the process of othering, a fundamental part of imperialist discourse. I argue that the description of the emotions of the Nenets in the travelogues and its association with the description of Castrén's emotions creates an emotional relationship that indexes imperialism. By this, I refer to the relationship where Castrén's text and its stance represents the centre, while the Nenets are clearly set at the periphery.

In the following, I first provide a concise background of travel writing and its relationship with letter writing and journalism in Finland and the rest of Europe. After that, I discuss emotion and stance as methodological background for my article. The analysis consists of three parts: first, I examine the letter formulae and the creation of a readership community; second, I explore the ways in which Castrén builds involved and informative stances and emotional stance vis-à-vis the Nenets; last, I discuss the ways in which the imperial and nationalistic currents come together in the emotional economy of Castrén's travel writing.

SCHOLARS WHO TRAVEL AND WRITE

Castrén is remembered as a linguist and mythologist who further developed the comparative methodology, arguing for the so-called Uralo-Altaic hypothesis and thus interpreting mythology in this same wide framework. According to this hypothesis, later rejected in comparative linguistics, Uralic languages are historically related to Altaic groups such as Turkic, Tungusic and Mongolic. Castrén's work was instrumental in the development of Finnish academic life and national identity. (Korhonen 1986: 64–66; Stipa 1990: 311–312; Salminen 2019) Although he emphasised the national base of his work, it cannot be forgotten that Castrén's research expeditions were prepared in and partly also funded by the Russian Academy of Sciences, where Anders Johan Sjögren (1794–1855) had been appointed Academician and held a chair in ethnography. This directly connects Castrén to the early developments of ethnography within traditions that emphasised linguistically oriented field work practices together with historical and comparative analytical views. Neither Boasian field work methodology nor Tylorian evolutionary visions had been developed at the time, which makes Castrén's – and Sjögren's – work outstanding. Based on empiricism, the methods, developed by Sjögren, produced detailed materials on language and linguistic variation together with immaterial and material culture, which would enable the analysis of the historical connections between, and changes within, ethno-linguistic communities (Stocking 1992; Vermeulen 2015; Lukin 2022). Sjögren played a key role both in garnering support for the project and developing its linguistic and ethnographic aims and methodologies (Branch 1968; 1973: 207–219). The expeditions took place in northern Russia and in vast areas in Siberia between 1841 and 1849. During the expeditions, Castrén recorded several languages and their speakers' cultures. Although this article focuses only on the Nenets, it is worth noting that Castrén met for example with speakers of other Samoyedic languages, with Saami, Komi and Khanty, not to mention speakers of languages belonging to the Tur-

kic, Mongolic, Tungusic and Yeniseic families. He collected a significant amount of linguistic, folkloric, ethnological and archaeological data, of which he was able to publish only a fraction himself. Most know the results through the posthumously published volumes *Northern Travels and Research* ("Nordiska resor och forskningar" / "Nordische Reise und Forschungen") (Castrén 1852; 1856; Castrén and Schiefner 1853; Castrén and Schauman 1855). The former was edited by Castrén, with the latter being a slightly edited collection of reports and letters by Berndt Otto Schaumann. The German volumes were translated and edited by Anton von Schiefner. Castrén's manuscripts and notes are housed in the manuscript collections of the National Library of Finland; his letters can also be found in the National Library[1] (Mscr KK COll. 539; see Castrén 2019a; 2019b; 2021). In this article I will limit my analysis to the published letters because the focus here is on the creation of a public readership.

Although it was only after his death that Castrén's work began to be assessed and his heroic reputation made, it is important to note that he had already gained respect and fame during his lifetime (e.g., Sjögren1854; Snellman 1864; Setälä 1915; Bogoraz-Tan 1927; cf. Salminen 2019: 21). This is because his contemporaries were able to read his reports in the newspapers. The manifest richness of Castrén's letters show us the ways they have been read. As well as offering readers narratives of adventure chronicling conditions in the Russian peripheries, Castrén's letters provide a wealth of contextual data on indigenous languages and place names, as well as folkloric data and other vernacular knowledge, along with ethnographic information about speakers and performers; in some cases this data represents the first findings or even the last available information on a number of linguistic communities. The letters were originally written to two of Castrén's close friends, namely, Fabian Collan (1817–1851) and Frans Johan Rabbe (1810–1879). Castrén presumably wrote his letters knowing that they would be published in the Finnish press, mainly the newspaper *Helsingfors Morgonblad* and the journal *Suomi, tidskrift i fosterländska ämnen* (*Finland, Journal with Patriotic Themes*, hereafter *Suomi*). This becomes clear when reading the non-published parts of the letters, where Castrén repeatedly refers to the publication and authorises Collan and Rabbe to edit his text[2] (e.g., Castrén 2021: 206, 243–244; 245–246; also Salminen 2021: 26–31).

Both Collan and Rabbe were central figures in the cultural and political intelligentsia of the time in Helsinki. Collan, one of Castrén's closest friends, shared Castrén's passion for Finnish language and mythology. After studying philosophy, Collan worked in multiple institutions that functioned to promote Finnish language and culture, such as the Finnish Literature Society and *Helsingfors Morgonblad* (Luukkanen 2000). Rabbe was a medical doctor who actively took part in undertakings and meetings arranged by the nationalistic Fennoman intelligentsia, whose members shifted from their native Swedish into Finnish. He is, for example, one of the founders and editors of the abovementioned journal *Suomi*. (Luther 2001) Like Castrén, both Collan and Rabbe had been members of the so-called Saturday Society (*Lauantaiseura*), a circle of like-minded intellectuals who gathered to discuss the history, culture and language of Finland. The Society's concern with developing a distinct national consciousness led it to establish, among other things, the Finnish Literature Society. The Saturday Society was also responsible for launching the journal *Helsingfors Morgonblad*, which has been characterised as a literary journal with a readership mainly made up of academics, writers, clergymen and teachers. (Tommila 1988: 117–118, 143–145) *Suomi* was founded by the

same community, meaning that researchers could publish their academic texts concerning Finnish, its related languages and their speakers (Häkkinen 2012: 109). The limited circulation of *Helsingfors Morgonblad* (ca. 350 subscribers in the 1840s; Tommila 1988: 117) and the academic focus of *Suomi* indicate that Castrén consciously chose to write for a narrow audience. This readership was made up of the Swedish-speaking intelligentsia who were committed to the Fennoman cause and keenly interested in the history and culture of Finland and the Finns. While it is true that the two journals attracted like-minded audiences, the register of writing and themes dealt with in *Morgonblad* and *Suomi* differed somewhat, which is why I have left the travel accounts published in *Suomi* outside my research. Similarly, I will not discuss the multifarious German letters published in *Bulletin de la Classe historico-philologique de l'Académie impériale des sciences de St.-Pétersbourg* in the late 1840s. These letters were written to Sjögren to convey information about the expeditions to an academic readership based in Russia and to ensure the further financing of Castrén's journeys (Salminen 2021: 26). While these letters were directly connected to Castrén's and Sjögren's careers, the letters published in Finland also served national interests. However interesting it would be to compare the tones and stances in the letters written to two different audiences, such a task is beyond the scope of this article.

Helsingfors Morgonblad was one of the main arenas for publishing travel narratives both from Central Europe and Finland in the 19th century (Tommila 1988: 118; Varpio 1997: 39, 148). Finnish travel writing in the 18th and 19th centuries consisted of a traveller-author with a keen awareness of his role as a speaker; moreover, on their travels, these authors were attentive to their own reactions to and feelings about the worlds they encountered while also seeking to stir the emotions of their readers (Rantanen 1997: 169; Varpio 1997: 38–132). This emotional position surely resonated with the sentimentalism popular in the travel writing of the time (Wilson 1974). Moreover, it was not unusual for travel accounts to be written in the guise of letters to real or imagined recipients (Varpio 1997: 60–61, 82; also Wilson 1974; Lidström 2015: 158–163). Additionally, many writers had their travel letters published in book form after already having had the texts published in the press. Castrén's travel writing is therefore not exceptional, for it represents a relatively widespread practice across the Russian Empire in the 19th century. Moreover, the blurred boundaries between letters, travel writing and academic writing are also rather commonplace. In fact, Castrén's accounts of his travels reflect widespread practices in journalism and travel writing across 19th-century Europe. (Stagl and Pinney 1996; Bazerman 2000; Valle 2007; Lidström 2015)

According to Tim Youngs (2013), many travel writing researchers have recently noted the multiplicity of the form's generic features. Youngs (ibid.: 7) follows Thouroude (2009) by defining travel writing as "a genre whose intergeneric features constitute its identity". The in-betweenness and hybridity constitutive of travel writing is due to its origins in correspondences (reading and writing letters) and journalism. Travel writing and correspondence were hugely popular in 19th-century European journalism. Travel reports had already been a frequent feature in journals since the 17th and 18th centuries and this form of writing soon developed into a form of foreign correspondence (Bazerman 2000; Nevalainen 2007; Lidström 2015: 82–83, 127). In addition, scientific societies used the letter format in the publication of reports that were collectively read and shared, thus not only creating communities of academically-minded

readers but also providing writers with forums for presenting early drafts of scientific articles (Valle 2007). The journalistic and scientific genres also intermingled in the Finnish press (Rantanen 1997: 118); in addition to historical descriptions, travel accounts became one of the most popular forms for conveying information in the written media (Varpio 1997: 12). In short, travel writing in 19th-century Finland and Russia formed just as complex a genre as it did in other places in Europe. Generally, travel narratives retain their epistolary form, thus bearing witness to the centrality of the letter in academic communication, something that held true also in Russia (Marker 1985: 49; also Valle 2007). This tells us about the testimonial evidence attached to both letters and travel writing: the texts were thought to provide readers with first-hand evidence of the traveller's experiences (Lidström 2015: 23, 74–75).

When focusing on the epistolary modes in Castrén's travel writing, I want to emphasise writing as a social practice that aims to create and maintain intersubjective communication through correspondence while also fostering a sense of community between the writer and his or her readers (Stanley 2004: 211–216). This form of writing draws from the intimacies provided by private letters while at the same time aiming to create a wider audience, an emotionally-engaged readership eager to follow – and identify with – the writer on his or her travels.

WRITING EMOTIONS AND COMMUNITIES

As for emotion, I will look at this as linguistic and semiotic activity occasioned by the interactions and encounters between different actors. I follow the conceptualisation of emotion as "shared intersubjective states, performed in complex multimodal contexts, involving … nearly every dimension of language and visible semiosis" (Haviland 2003 in Wilce 2009: 8). This practice of emotional speech in social life (Abu-Lughod and Lutz 1990; Wilce 2014; Fenigsen et al. 2019) can be studied in at least two ways in Castrén's published letters: first, we can define Castrén's letters as emotional writing, in which he interacts with his readership; and second, I read the phases in which Castrén depicts his informants, focusing on the Nenets, their emotions, their emotional life and its characteristics. This kind of emotional discourse always forms part of the intersubjective act mediated by the letters. The discourse builds images of the emotionality of the Nenets, images that have taken on a life of their own, contributing to the ways in which the Nenets have been narrated, imagined and treated by cultural outsiders and insiders alike. These are not emotions as such, but stereotypes, and so in my analysis I will show how the stereotypes work in constructing imperial relations. Castrén thus participated in the process of producing, circulating and consolidating these stereotypes. Ol'ga Bodrova (2013), for example, has observed how Castrén's texts have continued to inform subsequent descriptions of the Nenets and other indigenous peoples in northern Russia and Siberia. His impressions have continued to pervade subsequent texts; what is more, they have also gained an iconic status and form. Repeated, reinforced and naturalised, these views are rarely questioned or challenged, even in contemporary discussions about the Nenets or other northern peoples.

In building rapport with his readers, Castrén relies on multiple linguistic strategies. In the following, I concentrate on the textual strategies of setting up a relationship

between the writer and the reader(s), such as greeting and closing formulae or other metalinguistic devices that refer to the connection between reader and writer, thus giving emphasis to the correspondence. In addition, I focus on the devices used to build the iconicity that can be found in both text and travel (Stasch 2011) as such devices enable travel writers to intrigue their readers and establish credibility. I argue that Castrén, like many other travel writers, makes use of lexical and grammatical devices to take different stances. These, in turn, allowed Castrén, who sought to produce a simultaneously academic and entertaining text, to move between different levels of involvement or emotionality with his readership. This involved stance emphasises emotion and the position of the writer towards what he or she is writing about. Thus, the text is emotionally engaged and self-indexing, while the informative stance, which emphasises the distance between the writer and the subject, underscores authoritativeness and emotional detachment. The informative stance, as its name suggests, stresses the information presented. (Biber and Finegan 1989; Wilce 2014) Although the informative stance plays down the writer's involvement, this does not mean an absence of emotion. In fact, if we look at it another way, giving information priority over emotions can be a way of communicating deep-seated feelings. Since letter writing is primarily about making connections, relationships and community, endeavours to play up or play down sentiments and emotional involvement are interesting and thus worth exploring in more depth.

CREATING A READING AND EXPERIENCING COMMUNITY

When assessing Castrén's published letters, one can immediately see how the general scientific points of departure are woven together with the description of his own personal sentiments, a combination that no doubt explains Castrén's predilection for the letter writing format. His letters clearly follow the Linnéan tradition of travel writing wherein empirical first-hand observations are interwoven into the narrative as the journey progresses (Lidström 2015: 278–316). While Castrén omits the lists that are emblematic of Linnéan travel accounts, he does follow the overall tendency of observing and describing in great detail. Obviously, the personal involvement of the narrator both makes the text more credible to the reader and captivates his or her attention by forging emotional bonds through a relationality and identifiability between reader(s) and narrator. Although Castrén ostensibly wrote the letters as private correspondences to friends, he did hope for publication, two aims that blend to create a textual mode that is simultaneously intimate and public. Intimacy is created through the use of formulae and direct address to the reader(s). These establish an affective bond commonly found in letters and travel writing. Because the letters were edited only slightly for publication, the various intended audiences continue to be addressed in the published letters.

As discussed by Timo Salminen (Castrén 2019b: 316–317 n1), *Helsingfors Morgonblad* published Castrén's letters virtually upon their arrival to their recipients, Collan or Rabbe. Castrén tended to write rather long letters, which explains why each letter, instead of being published in its entirety in one issue, was divided into instalments and published serially. The texts are usually published under the double title *Travel Recollections: From the Letter of M. A. C[astré]n*,[3] which would be followed by the date and place of writing, especially in the first instalment of the series of letters, but sometimes in

every part. The inclusion of the date is a common epistolary convention, and the sense of its epistolarity is further reinforced by the forms of address and references to earlier letters (Stanley 2004: 207–211). Consequently, the text published on July 3, 1843 begins like this:

> Travel reminiscences.
> Extract from a letter by M. A. C[astré]n
> Izhemsk 1 May 1843
>
> If my memory serves me correctly, I left you in my last letter in the little town of Kem, of which I can barely recall a thing, except having been made into a laughingstock for old gossips and street urchins. From here, you can find your way by tracing the route with your finger up the ice-strewn waves of the White Sea to the Solovetsk monastery and further on to Arkhangel'sk. (Castrén 1843a)

Passages like this, which refer to letter writing and to previous correspondence, abound in the published travel accounts. They appear routinely in formulaic opening and closing phrases or salutations, such as the letter dated November 25, 1846, which Castrén (1847) ends like this: "I hereby end this description, whose meagre contents should be forgiven simply because it was written in Tolstoj Nos, near the coast of the Arctic Ocean."

Relying upon these conventions, Castrén endeavours to establish not only a relationship with the reader but also an event of reading, which runs throughout his travels. The passages in question are not so much about the travelling or about the people Castrén is studying, but more about the creation and maintenance of the connection between Castrén and his community of readers. As Castrén guides his audience on his travels, he frequently reminds them of previous incidents along the way as well as the aims and purpose of his work. In addition to the use of opening and closing phrases, which Castrén relies upon to establish a firm rapport with his audience, he occasionally resorts to similar instances of direct address in the middle of a letter, using the second-person singular (Swedish *du*, *dig*) which denotes communication between two men. When published in *Morgonblad*, the initial addressees, Collan and Rabbe, are absorbed into the wider reading public, whose members are addressed in the singular. For example, Castrén 'speaks' to his readers thus: "But where are the villagers, you ask" (Castrén 1842a); "You would not be so interested in…" (Castrén 1842b); "You are surely curious to know what a Samoyed Christmas looks like" (Castrén 1843b); "You smile, but you can be sure that a rich Samoyed thinks himself a better fellow than the little princes" (Castrén 1843f). In these passages, Castrén does more than simply maintain his connection with his audience or engage in chitchat with an imagined reader. The passages are also sites where Castrén constructs his audience, a group of like-minded men with shared interests, tastes and attitudes. Most importantly, these learned men look upon the world with a distinct consciousness of their own place of privilege within it: they count themselves among the ranks of the civilised. Additionally, these forms pave the way for the consequent stance. Therefore, it is important to note that conditions were built with the educated readership in Finland in mind, which is indexed by the mode of publication and contents of Castrén's writing. They are interested observers, together with Castrén, of the peoples that might represent the key to the history and identity of the Finnish nation – in other words, people with whom they could feel a communal

bond. It must be noted, however, that Castrén was not alone in employing this strategy, for the construction of a real or imagined recipient was commonly used in 19th-century travel writing in Finland. To mention a few examples, the writer and historian Zachris Topelius (1818–1898) wrote his travel letters to an imagined woman; Elias Lönnrot (1802–1884), who compiled the Kalevala, wrote letters to writer and Finnish lecturer Carl Niclas Keckmann (1793–1838), which were published as such, and later his travelogue, *Vandraren* (*Wanderer*), included several letters to recipients with whom Lönnrot conversed. In a slightly different manner, Sjögren addressed "the kindly disposed reader", and later, rector and professor of Finnish August Ahlqvist (1826–1889), in his travelogues, addressed the reader in a colloquial tone (Lönnrot 1911; Varpio 1997: 50, 60–61, 85). Perhaps it is safe to note then that there was a shared sense of a community of readers among 19th-century Finnish travel writers.

The gap between the place and time of writing a letter and its reading is crucial to the principle and practice of correspondence; epistolary conventions are thus strategies easily transposed to travel writing. In connection with this, I would like to focus on how Castrén carries readers with him throughout his journey and allows them to experience it. He does this by making reference to the map, as in the extract above: "You can find your way by tracing the route with your finger up the ice-strewn waves of the White Sea to the Solovetsk monastery and further on to Arkhangel'sk" (Castrén 1843a). Here, Castrén draws attention to the temporal gaps between each instalment as the reader tags along with him. For instance, having left the reader behind in Kem, Castrén pushes further ahead on his journey. In addition, he indicates the difference between place and the mode of travelling: while he is travelling readers can follow him by tracing the route on the map with their finger. Furthermore, Castrén brings the readers with him through use of some of the common tropes of travel writing; in other words, he explicitly describes his progress on the road, highlighting the challenges and hardships of the journey. Using these strategies, Castrén builds what Rupert Stasch (2011) has called iconicities between narrated time and the textual performance of time. By iconicity Stasch means a "pattern of step-by-step correspondence between sequences of travel events, sequences of geographic locations, and sequences of discourse units in the text itself" (ibid.: 4). The letter format – like the diurnal iconicity in Stasch's sources – "promote[s] an experience of reading … as iconically resembling the temporality of the narrated chronotope" (ibid.: 5; see also Varpio 1997: 34). In other words, this invites the readers to join Castrén on his journey despite their occasional need to make haste due to the temporal distortions engendered by the travel of letters.

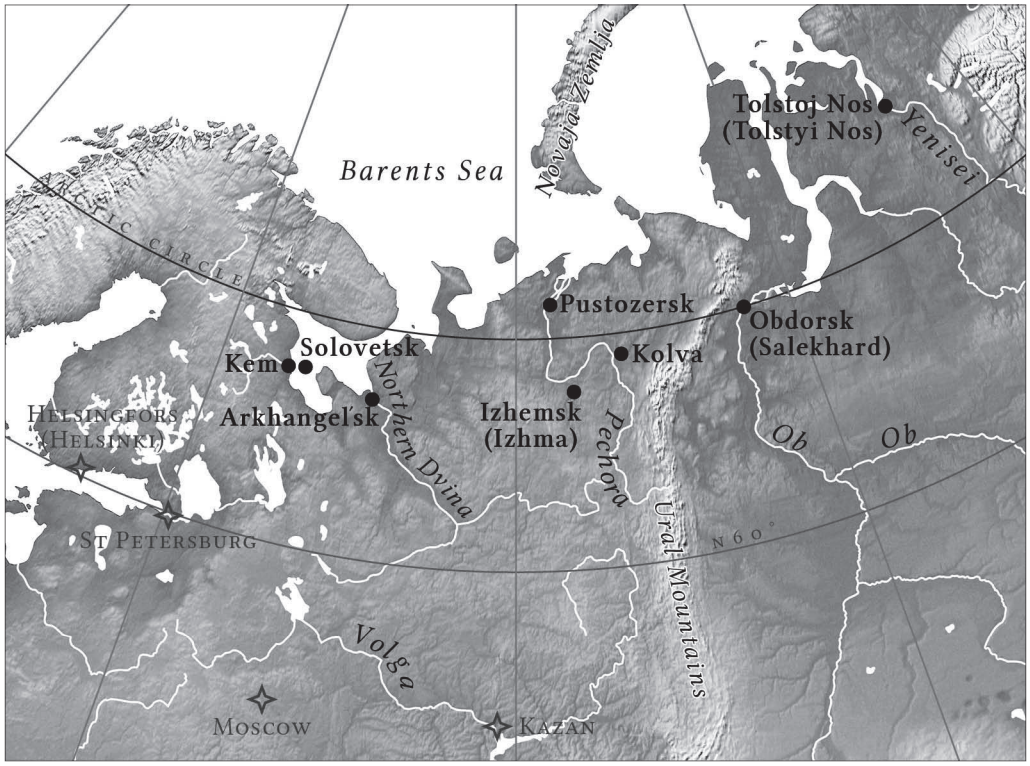

Figure 1. Places mentioned by Castrén in the letters discussed in this article (for a map on Castrén's expeditions, please see Manuscripta Castreniana n.d.). Map by Anna Kivijärvi, Finno-Ugrian Society.

The iconicity is not perfect, though. Because Castrén was writing to two people and because some letters occasionally travelled more slowly than others did, there are gaps and inconsistencies in the travel narrative. Consequently, the letter written from Izhemsk begins with an address to Collan, Castrén then recalls writing his previous letter to him from Kem. He is absolutely right, but readers of *Helsingfors Morgonblad* had already had the opportunity to read Castrén's letters to Rabbe in between, and reading them, were not left waiting in Kem, but in Pustozersk. Similarly, the first letter from Obdorsk arrived and was published two months before the letter from Kolva where Castrén stayed for two months before he reached Obdorsk. This kind of inconsistency has been removed from the published travelogue based on the letters, which was edited by Castrén himself (Castrén 1852). These, I think, are not essential to the experience of reading, because Castrén, when conveying his readers to the places he was, tends to rely so heavily on place names, landscapes and points of the compass that one cannot miss the idea of travelling.

EMOTION IN THE INFORMATIVE STANCE

While Castrén's letters demonstrate his emotional investment in the community of his readers, his travel writing consistently reveals more of an informative stance when talking about the Nenets, that is to say, he shows less emotional involvement in the lives of Nenets, the people whose language and culture he has set out to investigate. In general, the stance in Castrén's letters is informative and strongly related to the genre of travel writing. His letters contain descriptions of travel plans, actual journeys, people he meets, events, not to mention discussions and general remarks about peoples and their characteristics. This informative stance follows the typical Finnish way of chronicling travel at the time, which is often traced back to the philosopher and statesman Johan Vilhelm Snellman (1806–1881), who insisted that such writing should be edifying yet attractive (e.g., Varpio 1997: 40). The emotional or involved stance rarely features in Castrén's letters. There are, though, two contexts where Castrén assumes an emotional stance. One is nature and his emotional engagement with it, the other is places where Castrén reflects on his work and his ambiguous feelings about the people he has set out to study. The emotional stance towards the landscape is one of the main features of travel writing (ibid.: 210–220; Pratt 2008 [1992]: 50–53; Lidström 2015: 282–283), and I shall come back to it later in the article. Before discussing Castrén's ambiguous emotions, however, let me first introduce his way of writing emotion through his informative stance.

Castrén's informative stance frequently emerges in his accounts about working with informants. The Nenets, according to Castrén, present many challenges to the ethnographer seeking to obtain information from them, and the way Castrén produces his involved stance through informative text is a common feature of his narration. In other words, he seldom produces his emotional stance through explicit lexical or grammatical devices, but rather does so with the help of more general narrative devices. For example, he often resorts to using repetitive structures, which are readily apparent in the quotation below where Castrén describes his work with a good informant, a man he refers to as *läromästare* or 'master teacher'.

> With the Ispravnik's help, I finally managed to get a Samoyed master teacher, a man fluent in Russian, and exceptionally clear-headed for a Samoyed.… I did my utmost, using all means available, to keep this unusual Samoyed by my side for a longer time, I spoke kindly to him, paid him well, gave him liquor all day long, never stopping him from getting drunk when he so wished. Despite my efforts, he became bored, and he longed incessantly for the tundra: "You live peaceably with me and that is why I love you," he said to me one day, "but I cannot live in a room. Be kind and set me free." I raised the daily payment, gave more liquor to the Samoyed, and sent for his wife, and thus I tried in every conceivable way to lift the spirits of this sorrowful Samoyed. In this way, he agreed to be detained for a few more days. Now, the man, his wife and their children, sat on the floor of my room, as if in a tent, surrounded by reindeer skins, shanks, knives, boxes and other tools. The man was fully employed by me; the wife sewed Samoyed clothes and occasionally helped her husband with translations. When I asked her about the cause of her anxiety, she would burst into tears and answer between sobs that she felt sorry

> for her husband who had to live confined in a room.… Then, another Samoyed offered to become my master teacher, but he was a typical Samoyed, sluggish and incoherent. I had to ask him the same question many times, but he rarely understood me correctly. (Castrén 1843c)

The above passage is one of the first descriptions of the so-called good informant in Finno-Ugrian studies, but it also depicts a failure to share communicative frames (Briggs 1986). The *Ispravnik*, the leading police officer in the village, had introduced this informant to Castrén because he had noted the man's good qualities: he was fluent in Russian and "exceptionally clear-headed" (Castrén 1843c). Nevertheless, the text suggests that the *läromästare* stayed at Castrén's house because he was ordered to do so by the *Ispravnik*, not because he saw the importance of Castrén's mission to collect material on Nenets grammar, vocabulary and folklore. As a result, instead of a shared communicative frame, the text reflects the inhering hierarchies of the situation: since the Nenets family had apparently been ordered to remain at Castrén's house, they had to beg Castrén to let them go. Castrén describes their emotionality with their own words, using direct and indirect speech and verbs to portray the bodily expressions of their feelings and emotional stances. Their emotionality helps them negotiate their way out of the situation. Nevertheless, Castrén is the writer of the account: he controls the narration of the Nenets' behaviour and speech. Therefore, I would emphasise the contrast Castrén makes between his informative (non-involved) stance and the utterly emotional stance of the Nenets. With heavy hearts, they express their longing for the tundra; they speak of love and implore him, weeping bitter tears as they ask Castrén to treat them with kindness. In contrast, Castrén depicts himself as a reasonable man, offering his informant plenty of incentives to continue in his employment. His actions are further enlivened with verbs that underscore his active role in the communicative frame.

I would like to come back to the repetitive structure Castrén employs to describe his well-founded and legitimate efforts to coax the informant to staying with him. This repetition conveys a growing sense of frustration, an involved stance. Yet this account is shared with a readership that is led to imagine that Castrén maintained his cool and detached stance in the communication with the Samoyeds. In an earlier letter (Castrén 1843b), for example, Castrén had described the problems he was encountering with his informants: sometimes they were hard to find or simply "bad". These obstacles to his work offer an explanation for Castrén's behaviour. Without using any lexical elements to denote emotionality, Castrén describes how he tried to keep the man with him as long as possible. The stance is informative: he itemises his efforts to take care of the *läromästare*'s needs and points out the compromises he repeatedly has to make. Castrén shows that he understands the man's needs; for instance, he even allows the Nenets voice to be heard with regard to their nomadic objection to staying indoors and in the village for long periods. He lets his informant's family stay with him in the house; he even transforms their room into a dwelling befitting them, fashioning a conical tent, where they are able to sit on the floor in comfort; he also describes giving his informant more alcohol, paying him better and talking with him in a friendly manner. Castrén meticulously lists both his own efforts at conciliation and the responses of the man and his wife. In contrast to Castrén' patience, the text expressly reiterates the emotional states of the Nenets: the man's spirits are low, and he misses the tundra, while his wife, utterly

miserable, cries and sobs. These emotional states are pointed out within the informative stance, persuading the reader of Castrén's objectivity. As a result, Castrén emerges as the cool-headed man of science and rationality, whereas the Nenets remain captive to their emotions. It must also be noted that Castrén, in this self-portrayal, showcases his exemplary skills as an ethnographer. He is both patient and resourceful.

Unlike the involved stance displayed in the above extract, where Castrén's emotionality is hidden within the repetitive structures, the involved stance surfaces more explicitly in passages where Castrén discusses the national character or the inner life and emotional states of the Nenets. In these passages, as well as being compared to Finns, the Nenets are implicitly also compared to his readership, or Castrén himself. It is possible to see how Castrén has already handled this topic in the above extract: his portrayal of the good informant and the man's wife transitions from an implicit to an explicit summing up of the fundamentals of the Nenets national character. These descriptions and comparisons formed a substantial and valid part of the then current scientific discussion, which was based on the notion that each nation or ethno-linguistic community shares a national character and history, and establishing these factors are vital to knowing them. As shown by Pertti Karkama (2007: 240–257), the Herderian discussions about national character and national histories have their background in Montesquieuan models that emphasised the impact of the environment on the character and emotional states of men. Related to this, Art Leete (2014: 159–166), by analysing the tendencies in the descriptions of Khanty, Mansi and Nenets, has shown that they are often thought to share similar characteristics because of the climate in which they live. Additionally, Castrén's descriptions originate in popular notions about northern peoples: they were regarded as living examples of the earliest stages in mankind's development. As such, they were characterised as uncivilised savages or the children of nature. Castrén's accounts of the Nenets resonate with ideas conveyed by other 19th-century writers. For instance, he often refers to the effects of the climate on the minds and emotional states of the Nenets. One of the most extensive descriptions of the Nenets portrays them as a gloomy, simple and indolent people, who nonetheless show compassion and a sense of fairness towards the poor:

> A common feature of all the Samoyeds is a dark outlook on life and its conditions. Without and within, the Samoyeds carry the colour of night. If this inner flame contained more violent passions, the Samoyeds would surely be what they are perceived to be: one of the wildest peoples on this earth. But sweet Providence gave them the ability to look upon most worldly circumstances with complete detachment. Naturally, according to Samoyed philosophy, a good meal is one of the most important matters in life, but not even the angriest cynic would perceive this matter with greater equanimity than the Samoyed. Often, he does without the greater pleasure of sleeping, the lesser [pleasure being] eating. For the sake of his comfort, he is prepared to endure hunger, thirst and all manner of humiliation. But just try and get a rise out of one of these sons of the Arctic Ocean, tread on him, insult him or violate his sense of justice, then you will see that his mind, though darkened and cooled under the Polar sky, nevertheless retains some heat probably absorbed from a more fiery sun.… Among the general qualities of the Samoyeds, I should also mention their generosity towards the poor. This virtue, I think, compensates

> for many of the angularities of the Samoyed disposition. I feel that I can understand that a savage people, battling with poverty, having no concept of right and wrong, good or evil, the afterlife and judgement after death, that such a people try to seize the property of their enemies through violence, wile and trickery; on the other hand, these same people are ready to share their last morsel with their brothers. (Castrén 1843e)

Castrén provides information but does not get involved in what he describes. Indeed, the extract above and the descriptions of national character in general do not reflect affect or emotion as a social, bodily and intersubjective state. Unlike accounts of intersubjective states, such descriptions play a part in the history of anthropology where, as noted by James Wilce, certain emotions have become the domains of some communities, whereas the researchers and their communities typically represent rationality and emotional restraint. If the associations linked to linguistic communities and emotions begin to circulate and have continuity in time and place, they can turn into stereotypes that not only reinforce depictions of the communities in question but also their own ways of seeing and representing themselves. (Wilce 2009: 24–28) Wilce (ibid.: 24) identifies these as the "pitfalls" and "tortured histories by which emotion has been attached to whole groups, who have then been judged unable to control or govern themselves." What I find interesting about this description is the way in which this stereotype, despite its long-term internalisation and association with northern peoples, becomes entangled with nationalistic and patriotic ways of describing the Finns and with the imperial modes of description. Moreover, the combination of these two discourses in the letters lead to a stark tension, one that is relaxed by a strong involved stance.

NATION-MAKING NEGOTIATIONS AND THE METAPHORICAL PLACE OF THE NENETS

By the 19th century, there was already a long tradition of portraying the Finns and Finland. These depictions were especially prevalent in texts that chronicled travels throughout the country, with accounts of the landscape and its inhabitants. In her analysis of late 18th-century discourses, Päivi Rantanen (1997) shows how writers constantly sought to validate their views with illustrative and empirical cases based on experiences of travelling through the living environment of the Finns. Their descriptions were shaped by the urban elite's intellectual interest in rural folk: objectified, indigenous people were regarded as not fully human, and their lives and motivations could be understood and explained through the natural world and the climate in which they lived. Writers saw the day-to-day existence of the rural people as harsh and austere; in addition to their exotic way of life, rural people came across as aloof and uncommunicative to travellers. This discourse, which obviously painted a rather unattractive picture of the rural majority, was coupled with the notion that the educated elite needed these country folk to construct the nation. The intellectuals identified themselves with both the travelling author and the rural people who would eventually achieve consciousness of themselves as a nation and thus realise their historical mission (ibid.: 120–148; also Karkama 2007: 419–442). 19th-century ethnographic accounts of rural Finns created a

discourse of ambiguity describing harsh and inhospitable landscapes populated with coarse and filthy denizens; these people were subsequently idealised and ennobled because of their simplicity and authenticity (Rantanen 1997: 160–170). Rantanen (ibid.: 163) regards this discursive activity as akin to a courtship, wherein the travel writer assumes the role of father offering the bride (the country) and dowry (the rural poor) to the elite. Furthermore, Rantanen has shown how Henrik Gabriel Porthan (1739–1804), one of the most important Enlightenment thinkers in Finland, urged people to picture Finns as rational and the Saami as the non-rational or even as those who had brought irrationality to the Finns. This othering is related to the developing paradigm of linguistic affinities and the resolution according to which Finnish and Saami are related. Porthan critically emphasised that despite this linguistic affinity, the separation of Finns and Saami had happened a long time ago, which was proved in the undeveloped, that is nomadic, way of life of the Saami. In the same vein, Porthan stated that not only Saami but also the Samoyeds should be better kept outside of the Finnish family. (Rantanen 1997) Castrén's texts can be read as an appendix to Porthan's writings spiced with the new view of linguistic affinity between the Finns and the Samoyeds, too. In Castrén's courtship, the travel writer proposes using, instead of the land, the peoples whom he encounters as sources of the nation's history (see also Anttonen 2005: 140; Siikala and Ulyashev 2011: 34–38).

There are at least two kinds of affective economy (Ahmed 2014) operating in the letters. While one constructs intimacy with the readership, an imagined group of respondents sympathetic to Castrén's mission, the other produces affects around pity and disgust and their associations with originality and authenticity. Castrén makes use of this general repertoire to describe the other in his letters. The discourse is based on a set of attributes associated with the Finnic tribes: the people were regarded as taciturn, standoffish, brutish and uncivilized. Put together, these characteristics create a stereotype that is also discernible in the cited extract above. (Rantanen 1997) These traits, which are imbued with negative associations, generate tension: the people described by Castrén do not belong to a far-away savage tribe in the wilderness, they are, after all, related to Finns. They are the people with whom the educated class should identify themselves and regard as part of the culture and history of the Finnish nation. This notion of their kinship with the Finns is actually a key reason for the letter-writing, travel narration and their publication. The tension clearly emerges, for example, in a passage where Castrén (1843d) makes the following remark: "I do not fear the Samoyeds, for despite their savagery, they can always be won over with the help of liquor and a good word." The tension is also discernible in his oft-cited words about the joy he feels upon finally reaching the "ground of the esteemed Mother Asia" and the same air breathed by the ancestors. He continues:

> Indeed, I have heard that there are some people who resent the fact that European civilisation is used as a measuring stick and guiding principle for judging the cultures of other peoples; now and then, it has even occurred to me that the pure instincts of the so-called men of nature, their unaffected innocence of mind and good-heartedness, would contain more value than the vast embrace of European wisdom. But during my wanderings in the wilderness, I have unfortunately! among those very same folk of nature, possessed of such beauty, goodness and

> nobility, observed so much barbarism and animal savagery that I, in the end, feel more inclined to pity than to love. Yet this does not diminish the joyful warmth of my feelings, the joy of finally finding myself in the land of my dreams, amidst people, who from near or far, trace their origins to the mother of Kaleva. (Castrén 1844)

In the above extract, the involved or emotional stance is intense and in clear contrast with the informative stance that otherwise prevails in Castrén's writings. Though he writes that he "does not fear them", his feelings about the Samoyed are more akin to pity than love, as he says. Moreover, the text is otherwise heavily laden with emotional or evaluative statements about the indigenous peoples, then commonly referred to as *naturfolk* (primitive people, literally nature people), by European standards of knowledge and civilisation. Furthermore, Castrén describes his own joy upon arrival by calling Siberia the land of his dreams. The comparison between the culture of the native Siberians and European civilisation recalls the implicit comparison of the Finns and those who describe them, the Swedish-speaking intelligentsia authoring and reading Finnish travelogues. The Romantic appreciation of nature and its inherent value and originality is juxtaposed with liberal progressivism. While the latter can be identified with Castrén and his readership, the authentic natural state of the former stands in tension with progress and civilisation. As Rantanen has shown, this tension produces feelings of pity for and admiration of those deemed to be living in a state of nature. In the Finnish context, this is because the unfortunate original state is taken as fertile ground for cultivation. (Rantanen 1997: 201–213; also Varpio 1997: 218)

In spite of the contrast mentioned above, the stance tends to resemble this Finnish discourse, also through its references to Kaleva(la) and the history of the Finns. However, there is one fundamental difference: these people are not Finns, they are not the authentic people with whom the intelligentsia should identify in the first place. Yet these people do constitute part of the solution for the Finnish nation-building project because they offer some clues to the history of the Finns, although they appear to have no place in the future of Finland. From this vantage point, the representatives of Finnish science only have an intellectual interest in the speakers of languages related to Finnish: they are part of Finnish history, or to be more precise, their language and culture could shed light on Finnish history. Seemingly trapped in a bygone era characterised by a state of savagery, they merely arouse feelings of pity, not love. As emotional writing, I want to emphasise the importance of reading Castrén's letters as an invitation to take part in what was understood as pity amongst the mid-19th century Finnish intelligentsia rather than reading them as texts about Castrén's personal emotions. Moreover, instead of pity, it is important to note the relations built between Castrén and his readership on the one hand and the readership and the natives described on the other (Abu-Lughod and Lutz 1990). Whereas the pity should be shared by readers and Castrén, it should simultaneously separate them from the Samoyeds. The difference is not constructed only through emotion, temporal images are also related. Barbarous savages are said in writing to dwell in the historical lands of the Kaleva, the imagined cradle of the Finno-Ugric peoples. Here, Castrén is distancing the Samoyeds allochronically, to use Johannes Fabian's (1983: 32) wording. In other words, Castrén is setting them in another time despite writing the letters in the field, amongst them. As Fabian so illuminatingly notes, this is not an innocuous literary manoeuvre, but part of the ideol-

ogy that sets the objects of description outside the present of the writing subject and his or her audience. As a result, Castrén's stance, emotional at the outset, turns into a matter of hierarchical relations and intellectual superiority, thus transforming his writing and subsequent Finnish research on the Finno-Ugric peoples into an imperial discourse. In sum, the study of the so-called kindred peoples turns into a process whereby the Finnish nation assumes centre-stage and its Finno-Ugric peripheries are described and defined from the standpoint of the centre.

IMPERIAL EMOTIONS

In the context of travel writing, it is worth noting that the habitual ways of describing the Finns or Finland are not limited only to Sweden and Swedish-speaking writers. As shown by Pratt (2008 [1992]), the Linnéan tradition of describing the natural history of the world is a Eurocentric way of gazing upon and achieving dominance through knowledge and naming. Lastly, then, I shall read Castrén's letters as part of an imperial discourse within which a mirror image of Finnish superiority and the national and historical potential of Finland and the Finns is constructed through accounts of the peoples who spoke languages related to Finnish (also Anttonen 2005: 166–177). Although a consciousness of imperialism has not generally informed the study of Castrén's texts, Finnish travel writing has been discussed within similar frameworks. For example, Yrjö Varpio (1997: 78–90) has pointed to the possibilities of reading 19th-century Finnish travel writing in light of its connections to a colonialism coloured by the Fennoman movement. This is especially apparent, according to Varpio, in the focus on the Finnish language, culture and history instead of Swedish, which happened to be the mother tongue of most of the writers of that period, as well as Castrén's. Imperialist discourse is manifested in a phenomenon Varpio refers to as *heimokolonialismi*, a compact term in Finnish to describe a colonial attitude to speakers of Finno-Ugric languages, or 'tribes', across the eastern border (ibid.: 155). It is nonetheless necessary to understand that this form of colonialism concerned itself with intellectual resources rather than economic, territorial or political power or control. Varpio (ibid.: 255) notes how travel writers drew the boundaries of Finnish civilisation by highlighting the backwardness of the Finno-Ugric peripheries in contrast to the Finnish heartlands.

Varpio focuses on the consistencies between descriptions of two opposing poles: the rural landscapes, immobile and silent, and the cities, constantly moving and noisy. What he neglects to do, however, is to highlight the recurring tensions in the texts. Nevertheless, we cannot gloss over the ambiguities that inhere in the portrayals found in the travel writing of Castrén and his contemporaries. Castrén's letters reveal a striking ambiguity: the terrains, the landscapes and the people he describes are not offered as a concrete territory for the nation. Instead, his letters underscore the value residing in the mythologies, languages, traditions and virtual landscapes for the Finnish nation and its history. I would therefore read Castrén's letters within the framework of a similar attitude, namely, imperialism, but with an emphasis on the ways in which it links up with the nationalistic and Russian imperialist discourses (Anttonen 2005; Turoma and Waldstein 2016: 25–32) and creates tensions and ambiguities rather than clear-cut dualisms.

If we read the body of Castrén's letters as an imperial text, we can draw interesting comparisons between his letters and Russian travel writing about Finland. Writing about Finland in the 19th century, Russian travellers echo the Swedish characterisations of the Finns as a taciturn, miserable and silent people; similarly, the Finnish landscape is described as sublime, mythic and exotic (Hirvasaho 1997; Leskinen 2009; Minard-Törmänen 2016). As already noted in the previous section, these emotional stereotypes also approximate Russian discourses about other minorities in the North (Slezkine 1994: 73–80; Leete 2014: 89–171) and can be traced back to more general European tendencies of describing the Other and the North. This North is to be distinguished from the one that makes up part of Russia's own identity. Otto Boele (2016), for instance, has shown the connection between the Russian national identity and the 18th-century desire to master the backward and inhospitable North. Beginning in the early 19th century, these traits were silenced in the Russian self-perception, and the North as a part of the Russian national identity was represented through snowy winters and the Russian ability to live and even thrive there. (Ibid.) As a consequence, the image of the inhospitable north with its backward and taciturn inhabitants formed a reversal of the Russians and Russian identity. This image resided in the indigenous North, of which Finland was also part.

Castrén is building a similar kind of distinction between himself and his audience, on the one hand, and the environment through which he travels and its peoples, on the other. The distinction made is not between the imperial metropole and its peripheries, but rather between Finland and the Finns and their cultural and historical peripheries. In the letters, Castrén transfers the hierarchies and emotional images of imperial discourse onto the Finnish national discourse. He creates an intellectually sophisticated readership with whom he discusses issues related to the history of the Finns and the Finnish nation. This readership is geographically and culturally at a remove from the northern peoples – the Nenets here representing just one example for this chapter – who are characterised similarly to the backward people of the northern wilds. Castrén goes on to make a clear distinction between the Russians and Finno-Ugric tribes that he encounters on his travels. He even names the Finno-Ugric tribes as the indigenous or original inhabitants of the North. As Finland itself was clearly regarded as a periphery within the Russian Empire, the imperial strategies used to build nesting hierarchies within the Empire are evident: conquered by the Russian Empire, the Finns were hierarchically beneath the Russians, but in turn imagined themselves as the conquerors of the Finno-Ugric tribes.

Castrén's letters portray the northern peoples of Russia as captives to the forces of the natural world, thus setting them apart from Russians or the Swedish-speaking readership of Castrén and the Finns. While the Russians and Castrén's readership are represented as civilised and active agents of the modern world, the Finns, according to this logic, are on the way to achieving the same desirable state through their union with the elite. Like the other northern minorities, the Nenets are consistently typecast as children of nature, and thus doomed to extinction as other nations pursue modernisation and development.

NESTED COMMUNITIES

In the letters published as travel narratives, the community made up of Castrén and his readers represents an imperial subject that formulates its object by depicting those who are othered through a complex set of emotions, communicative stances and icons of travel. This constitutes a fascinating combination of scientific rhetoric and national(istic) narrative that aims to construct the history of the Finns as a nation. This is done by drawing upon ethnographic accounts of the then contemporary tribes in Siberia, and by using imperial language that simultaneously naturalised the Russian presence in Siberia and bemoaned the Russification (i.e. modernisation) that was erasing the indigenous peoples from the map altogether. Because it is the Finnish nation (along with Estonia and Hungary) that is said to have what it takes to join in the onward march of civilisation, Finland plays an integral part in this imperial narrative.

One of the main purposes of this article has been to show how Castrén builds two kinds of community in his published letters. The first represents his educated, modern readership, an audience he constructs by using various forms of address to converse with them. This audience is the intersubjective discourse community towards which Castrén constructs his stances and with which he shares his emotions. Despite conversing with his audience and addressing them directly in his letters, the letter format itself exposes the fact that Castrén's readers are not travelling alongside him. The hybrid genre of travel writing, a form which made use of both the intimacy and the collectivity of letters and eyewitness testimonials, made travel writing wildly popular among readers of newspapers and printed books. This is because the letter format makes it possible to represent a plausible reality, establish an authoritative testimony of events and create an intimate rapport with the intended reader. Thus, travel writing brings together the informative and involved stances in order to make the most of their effects. It is notable that this kind of hybridity characterises travel writing globally, not only historically but also in our present day.

The other community is composed of the indigenous Nenets, a group that tends to hover on the margins of Castrén's readership. Although individual informants are portrayed by Castrén, his texts are abundantly populated with faceless Samoyeds, whose character he nonetheless describes in great detail. Castrén's accounts of working with informants reveal how he adopted some of the conventions of imperial travel writing; using these conventions, his portrayal of himself and the indigenous people he worked with served to highlight the researcher and downplay the work and agency of the informants, or *läromästare*, as Castrén called them. If we reread the sketches summing up the fundamentals of the Nenets' character, it is easy to discern the European ideological traditions that harmed the ethnographic object. On the level of emotion, these people can be described within the informative stance. In fact, Castrén only shifts into the involved stance when contemplating the Nenets' affinity with the Finnish nation. Although nationalistic in premise, this marks the beginning of a Finnish imperial manner of narrating the speakers of the Finno-Ugric languages in Russia. This imperial narrative simultaneously places Finland and the Finns at the intellectual centre and the Finno-Ugric minorities of Russia on the periphery as objects of interest.

The ambiguities arise here. In his published letters, Castrén brings together several traditions of describing Finnishness and Finland. Here, he uses discourses that empha-

sise the organic, undeveloped and uncivilised nature of the land and its inhabitants. While the Swedish descriptions of the Finns revolve around feelings of pity, they also exhibit a strong progressivism, which again has no place in the descriptions of Russian minorities by Castrén and his Russian counterparts. Castrén's narration places the northern minorities hopelessly at the mercy of Russian modernisation while at the same time depicting them as part of a wider family, related to the Finns through a shared history and mythology. The connections are imagined through familial ties, which call for intimate emotional engagement. Nevertheless, Castrén paints his Nenets characters with imagery that underlines his own European disgust at their savagery. It is simply impossible for Castrén to love these people wholeheartedly. Indeed, Castrén's writings betray not only his disgust but also his disenchantment with these kindred peoples; these feelings he distils into pity. The structural hierarchies present in the relationships between Castrén and his reluctant Nenets informant, Castrén's readership, and the minorities in Russia, not to mention the Finnish nation and the speakers of languages related to Finnish, if anything, make for an uneasy kinship.

NOTES

1 Additional materials are housed in the archives of the Society of Swedish Literature in Finland (*Svenska Litteratursällskapet*) and the Finnish Literature Society.

2 For example, the October 4, 1842, letter to Collan ends in postscriptum with more personal tone. In its beginning, Castrén (2021: 206) writes: "Moreover, I am vexed at this whole scriptum, because it is suitable neither for a letter nor a newspaper article. Therefore, do as you think best. But if you use this to fill gaps in your newspaper, you mustn't neglect to polish a few things."

3 In original *Reseminnen. Ur bref af M. A. C—n*. Alternatively, the title parts could be *reseanteckningar* 'travel notes' and *utdrag uf bref af M. A. C–n.* 'extract from the letter of M. A. C[astrén]'.

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