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The Usually Invisible, Occasionally Visible, Spirits of the Dead in Early Twentieth-Century Sámi Folklore

Thomas A. DuBois

Comparative Literature and Folklore Studies, Religious Studies Program, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI 53706, USA; tadubois@wisc.edu

Abstract: Turn-of-twentieth-century Sámi concepts of spirits of the dead are presented along with accounts of those exceptional individuals able to see, hear, interact with, and sometimes control them, particularly persons termed *noaideslágáš*, i.e., skilled in *noaidi* arts. Examples and analysis are drawn from the writings of Sámi author and scholar Johan Turi (1854–1936), contemporaneous accounts recorded by Norwegian folklorist Just Qvigstad (1853–1957), the fieldwork of Sámi legislator, educator, and folklore collector Isak Saba (1875–1921), and an 1886 anthology of Aanaar (Inari) Sámi folklore. Described with varying names and sometimes contradicting accounts, the spirits of the dead in Sámi culture during the early twentieth century could be used to protect or enhance the fortunes of the living, but could also play roles in situations of disease, misfortune, and interpersonal conflict. The various narratives recorded in the period reflect a complex fusion of Indigenous Sámi traditions with ideas stemming from various Christian denominations and the belief legends of non-Sámi neighbors in the Finnish, Norwegian, Russian and Swedish sides of Sápmi—the Sámi homeland. Spirits of the dead figure as potent, expectable, but sometimes unpredictable elements of daily life—beings that could help or harm, depending on how they were dealt with by those with whom they came in contact and those who could wield power over them, particularly *noaiddit*, Sámi ritual and healing specialists.

Keywords: Sámi people; Johan Turi; folklore

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This contribution introduces a set of usually invisible spirits of the dead known in turn-of-twentieth-century Sámi culture and the exceptional individuals able to see, hear, interact with, and sometimes control them. I draw primarily on the writings of Sámi author and scholar Johan Turi (1854–1936)—his books *Muitalus sámiid birra* (An Account of the Sámi; Turi 1910, 2010, 2012), *Sámi deavsttat* (Lappish Texts; Turi and Turi 1918–1919; Turi 1988), and *Duoddaris/Mátkemuitalusat* (From the Mountain/Travel Accounts, Turi 1988, 2018, 2019), written in the first two decades of the twentieth century—to glimpse the complex ways in which spirits of dead human beings were said to play roles in situations of disease, misfortune, and interpersonal conflict, particularly when deployed or deflected by an individual who was *noaideslágáš*, i.e., skilled in *noaidi* arts. Turi's explanations and examples are supplemented by roughly contemporaneous accounts recorded by Norwegian folklorist Just Qvigstad (1853–1957) in his monumental anthology *Lappiske eventyr og sagn* (Qvigstad 1927–1929). A further important source are the fieldwork notations of Sámi legislator, educator, and folklore collector Isak Saba (1875–1921), who collected Sámi folklore in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Many of Saba's notations were incorporated into Qvigstad's four-volume anthology, but others of his writings have now been edited and published in an edition by Line Esborg (2019). A somewhat earlier collection of folklore, A. V. Koskimies's anthology of Aanaar (Inari) Sámi folklore, collected in 1886, also provides details, accessible through the excellent recent translation and reissue of the anthology by Tim Frandy (Frandy et al. 2019). As I hope to show, together these various accounts suggest a framework of belief that regards spirits of the dead as potent, expectable, but sometimes unpredictable elements of daily life—beings that could help or harm, depending on how

they were dealt with by those with whom they came in contact and those who could wield power over them.

1. Background and Methods of Analysis

The Sámi people, formerly called Lapps, are the Indigenous inhabitants of northern Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the Kola peninsula of the Russian Federation, a place known collectively in North Sámi language as *Sápmi*. Living traditionally through varying combinations of hunting, fishing, gathering, reindeer husbandry, and trade, Sámi possessed a markedly mobile lifestyle, migrating along established routes over the course of the year in order to take advantage of seasonal harvesting opportunities and/or follow reindeer migratory patterns. They possessed a rich and nuanced belief system, that included key roles for a ritual specialist called the *noaidi* (plural *noaiddit*) in dealing with spirits, maintaining luck, performing divination, and healing (Bäckman and Hultkrantz 1977; Mebius 2003; Solbakk 2015).[1] Over the course of centuries, under the colonizing regimes of Danish, Swedish, and Russian monarchs, Sámi became indoctrinated in Orthodox, Catholic, and eventually Lutheran religious denominations, a process that occasioned both painful cultural destruction and creative adaptation and that has only recently been recognized by Nordic state churches as a source of profound historical trauma (DuBois 2012; Lindmark and Sundström 2016, 2018; West 2020; Gindt 2023).

In the early twentieth century, veteran hunter, trapper, and herder Johan Turi set about describing his culture in the first secular book ever written in Sámi language, *Muitalus sámiid birra* (An Account of the Sámi; Turi 1910, 2010, 2012). Turi was intent on explaining the value and effectiveness of Sámi culture in an attempt to persuade Swedish authorities to mitigate their harsh assimilationist policies toward the Sámi, premised as these were on racist and Social Darwinist assumptions of Sámi as a primitive and backward population in need of state control and eventual assimilation into the state's majority culture and livelihoods. In dialogue with Danish artist and ethnographer Emilie Demant Hatt (1873–1958) (Valkeapää 1994; Kuutma 2006; Sjoholm 2017), Turi also wrote about different aspects of traditional Sámi healing and magic practices, i.e., *noaidevuohta*, an area in which Demant Hatt was particularly interested. Turi's writings on these sensitive and usually covert topics, which he initially supplied only for Demant Hatt's private reading (see discussion below), eventually became published in Turi's second and third books *Sámi deavsttat* (Sámi Texts) and *Duoddaris/Mátkemuitalusat* (From the Mountain/Travel Accounts) after Turi decided to permit their publication.

In terms of methodology, this study seeks to contribute to the ethnographic tradition of "thick description" (Geertz 1973; Luhrmann 2015; Honko 2000), in which the goal is not to summarize or simplify accounts of others' beliefs and practices but rather, to delineate ethnographic phenomena in as complete, complex, and nuanced a manner as possible, so that the interconnectedness of beliefs and practices in various areas of the informants' culture can be sensed. The detailed writings of Johan Turi—assembled in handwritten notebooks by Turi himself and only subsequently excerpted and organized into the books as we have them (Kuutma 2006; Svonni 2011; Gaski 2012)—provide an ideal basis for such work, as Turi not only recounts narratives concerning spirits of the dead but also contextualizes them in wider discussions of *noaidevuohta*, the careers of particular *noaideslágáš* individuals, Sámi belief culture more generally, and the circumstances and experiences of his own life. The richness of Turi's resulting texts reveals by contrast the sometimes disjointed and fragmentary nature of the notations made by Qvigstad, Saba, and Koskimies. In these works—more typical of folklore collecting as it was practiced at the turn of the twentieth century—stray accounts of spirits of the dead tend to be presented laconically as decontextualized snippets, removed from their wider webs of meaning and left to puzzle or confound readers. It is only through combining these stray reports of beliefs with the more extensive discussions provided in Turi's books that we can begin to see these pieces of evidence in their proper light and arrive at a more complete sense of Sámi beliefs regarding spirits of the dead at the beginning of the twentieth century.

We should also note at the outset that the covert nature of Sámi knowledge regarding spirits of the dead, as well as healing (which, as we shall see, was a closely-linked topic), strongly affected the materials that folklore collectors, or even independent writers like Turi, were willing or able to obtain and share in publications. On the one hand, Sámi of the early twentieth century—like many other communities, past and present (see Lindstrom 2015)—regarded secrecy as an important component or feature of such valued knowledge. In her preface to Turi's second book (Turi and Turi 1918–1919, p. 97), Emilie Demant Hatt writes:

> A large part of the present material has been in my possession since 1908 when I collected the material for Johan Turi's *Muittalus Samiid Birra* [sic., earlier orthography]. This is the case with most of that which belongs to "noaide-art" and "medicine". I could not publish this at the time, because Johan Turi had handed over to me his noaide-knowledge as a gift which I personally might use, but with the injunction not to publish it because it would "lose its power".

Although Demant Hatt's abundant scare quotes attests to her skepticism regarding Turi's beliefs, she nonetheless seems to have respected his request for secrecy until he later decided to allow his more covert materials to be published.

From a historical perspective, we may justly assume that such secrecy, even if originally part of the Sámi belief system, may have become more pronounced during the centuries of forced suppression of Sámi traditional beliefs that accompanied Christian missionization, as Håkan Rydving (1995) has detailed. In contexts in which the practice of Sámi belief traditions could result in jail time, fines, or even execution, Sámi became understandably reticent regarding discussing their beliefs and practices, particularly with cultural outsiders or authorities.

Further, in addition to these motivations for silence, Turi seems to have hesitated to write about these topics because of his disinclination to contribute to outsiders' stereotypes regarding Sámi as superstitious, backward, and prone to magical practices. In a statement that became included as an introduction to Sámi healing practices in *Muitalus sámiid birra*, Turi writes:

> Muhto ii soaba jur visot goansttaid čallit dán girjái, dan dihte go dát girji šaddá lohkkojuvvot oba máilmmi mielde, ja olu oahppan hearrát eai soaba goassege gullat visot goansttaid. Eai sii jáhke daid, dušše bilkidit sámi jallodaga, vaikko jos oainnáše visot maid sápmi dahká, de imaštivčče dan vuoimmi, ja gos dat boahtá. (Turi 2010, p. 123)

> But it is not right to write down all these treatments in this book, because this book will be read the whole world over and many educated gentlemen do not need to hear of these treatments. They won't believe in them, and they will just poke fun at Sámi craziness, although, if they were to see what the Sámi do, they would wonder at their power and where it comes from. (Turi 2012, p. 135)

Turi's anticipation of the snickering of "oahppan hearrát" (educated gentlemen) was well founded. When *Muitalus sámiid birra* was first rendered in English—in a problematic and inaccurate translation that portrayed Turi as a simple-minded rube (Turi 1931)—reviewers did indeed poke fun at Turi's knowledge, particularly his healing remedies (see Valkeapää 1994, pp. 256, 260 for examples; see also DuBois 2010, 2013 for further discussion). They did so despite the fact that Turi assured his readers that his remedies were based on empirical evidence: in fact, many of the specific remedies that reviewers singled out for ridicule have since been proven clinically effective by researchers in the fields of ethnomedicine, ethnobotany, and pharmacology (DuBois and Lang 2013). Since Turi wished to persuade Swedish authorities of the competence and effectiveness of Sámi people to manage their own affairs, the potential of confirming majority members' negative stereotypes of Sámi must have weighed heavily upon him as he selected what to include in his books and in what detail. To the extent that it is possible through close and careful reading of Turi's often indirect and evasive statements, the following discussion seeks to recognize

these conflicting concerns as reflected in Turi's works, and probably also in the narratives recorded by Qvigstad, Saba, and Koskimies.

2. Terms, Descriptions, and Sightings of Spirits of the Dead

The spirits of the dead familiar to Turi and other Sámi of the early twentieth century went by various names, including *mánnelaččat*, *mánnilašveahka*, *bijagat*, *birot*, *hihpelaččat*, *jámehat and jámešat*. Some of these terms are derived from related verbs in Sámi language: *mánnelaččat*, for instance, is related to the verb *mánnet* (to curse, upbraid), with a nominalizing suffix and plural marker. *Jámehat* is similarly a nominalized plural derivative of the verb *jápmit* (to die). As discussed below, *bijagat* (singular *bijat)* derives from the verb *bidjat* (to put, set), and is used when referring to spirits that are "set upon" a person in an act of interpersonal aggression. Sámi tended to use multiple terms—bynames— when talking about particularly significant and powerful beings: Turi notes that the bear, for instance, could be called by various names, including *biertna* and *muoddá-áddjá* (Turi 2010, p. 107; 2012, p. 115), and the wolf was called by a variety of names, particularly during the hunt, including *gumpe*, *ruomas*, *stálpi*, and *návdi* (Turi 2010, p. 109; 2012, p. 117). This tendency may in part explain the multiplicity of terms for spirits of the dead. As illustrated below, Turi sometimes makes use of two or more terms in a single passage, suggesting that he may have seen the terms as equivalent or even synonymous, although semantic nuances may have existed that Turi did not choose to clarify. Some terms, like *áhpparaš* (see below)—the spirit of a murdered infant—remained distinct from other terms and were not treated as synonyms. In order not to oversimplify or erase distinctions that may have existed, the following discussion cites the words used in each instance for the spirits described, while using *mánnelaččat* as a possible blanket term, and *spirit* as an English equivalent.

In the materials that made their way into Turi's first book, *mánnelaččat* are described in this way:

> Ja go dat gullo, de dat leat mánnelaččat, muhto eai oidno dat ge go jur soames olbmo čalbmái. Ja vigihis luonddogáhppálagat gal oidnet ja gullet dalle nai, go eai jama nu ahte olbmot gullet. Ja mánnelaš lea oaivveheapmi, ja dat go leat golgame, dat girdet ja nuppit leat nuppiid alde, eanas leat oalggi rájes, ja muhtumat leat beare gaskka rájes vulos juolggit. (Turi 2010, p. 138)

> People can hear that the mánnelaččat are coming, but they cannot see them; only certain people can. And innocent animals can both hear and see them, even when they don't make such a racket that people will hear them. And the mánnelaččat have no heads, and when they are on the move, they fly one on top of another. And most of them have nothing above their shoulders, while others are nothing but torsos on legs. (Turi 2012, p. 133)

Turi's description of the spirits indicates that, although these were normally invisible, some people did provide reports of their physical appearance, enough to permit Turi to provide a general characterization. Isak Saba recorded a first-hand account of a sighting from the coastal Sámi Pieraš Gunnar that closely matches Turi's account (Esborg 2019, p. 100). Pieraš Gunnar was 76 years old when he was interviewed by Saba in 1913. He recalled chopping timber in the Suovvejo (Bergeby) valley with his friend Máte-Bigga Andeš. In Gunnar's account, when Andeš heads home for the night, Gunnar remains in the forest to continue his work. Sleeping in the forest, he is suddenly awakened by a being that claps him on the shoulder and asks "oađak go?" (Are you sleeping?). On opening his eyes, Gunnar sees a torso with no head, hands, or feet, but wearing a *beaska* (fur coat) and carrying an axe similar to those of his friend Andeš. The being remains in view until Gunnar happens to look away for a moment, when it abruptly disappears. Gunnar noted to Saba: "Son lei boares olmmuin gullam, ette i daggarid galga ennet gukka čelmi oudast" (He had heard from old people that one must not keep such a thing in sight for long).[2] Gunnar later reunited with his friend Andeš, who was in no way injured, closing his narrative with the assertion "Immel dam dietta" (God only knows what that was).

In explaining the etiology of *mánnelaččat*, Turi writes:

> Mánnelaččat šaddet dain sieluin, mat leat beallesuroheamit ja bealleristtahasat. Ja dat eai beasa eai helvehii eai ge dáivahii. Ja sii šaddet orrut beare áimu siste. Ja dat leat hálus oažžut barggu. Ja sin noaiddit ožžot álkimusat veahkkin, go álget noaiddástallat. (Turi 2010, p. 138)

> Mánnelaččat are formed from souls that are partly full of worldly wiles and partly full of Christian virtue. And so, they are able to pass into neither hell nor heaven. They do not get to hell or to heaven. And so they can only live in the atmosphere. And they are anxious to find something to do. And these are the beings that the noaiddit first get as helpers when they have just started to practice noaidi arts. (Turi 2012, p. 133)

In materials that Turi included in his second book, Turi describes the method a *noaidi* could use to enlist such restless spirits as helpers. The process involves interacting with the deceased's body before it is buried, drawing a silken thread between the dead person's lips, rotating the body three times in a counterclockwise direction, and reciting the command: "Don galggat veahkehit mu álo, go mun čurven du namma" (You must help me always when I call your name). Provided these acts are performed precisely at midnight, the deceased will become commissioned as the *noaidi*'s appointed helper (Turi and Turi 1918–1919, V, p. 108; Turi 1988, p. 22). *Mánnelaččat* could also be summoned from their graves at a graveyard, with the *noaidi* providing a sacrifice of some kind to enlist their aid (Turi and Turi 1918–1919, VI, p. 109; Turi 1988, pp. 22–23). They could thereafter be summoned by the *noaidi* when returning to the graveyard and calling for their help (Turi and Turi 1918–1919, VII, 109; Turi 1988, pp. 22–23).

Turi, like virtually all Sámi adults of his time in Norway, Sweden, and Finland, was a confirmed Lutheran who had received catechesis and was well versed in Christian norms and strictures. At the same time, as the above quotation illustrates, his writings seek to accommodate earlier ideas that had been forcibly suppressed during centuries of missionization, including notions of *noaidevuohta* and roving spirits of the dead. With the absence of a notion of Catholic purgatory in the Lutheran theology of his day, Turi—and other Sámi knowledgeable about *mánnelaččat*—saw *mánnelaččat* as souls caught between the rewards of heaven (a place destined for the truly good) and the torments of hell (a place intended for the truly evil), providing an explanatory framework that would incorporate *mánnelaččat* into a Christian worldview. Turi notes that some *noaiddit* swore away their souls in order to gain *noaidi* power (Turi and Turi 1918–1919, IX, p. 110; Turi 1988, p. 24), an action that would link *noaidevuohta* with notions of witchcraft and pacts with the devil, while others practiced *noaidevuohta* as part of their Christian faith, acting as an "*Ipmilis noaidi*" (*noaidi* of God), and employing powers that ultimately derived from God (Turi and Turi 1918–1919, XI, p. 112; XV, p. 114; Turi 1988, p. 27). Even so, Christian *noaiddit* could find their effectiveness in healing or controlling spirits hindered if they were reminded of their faith during ceremonies (Turi and Turi 1918–1919, LV, p. 165; Turi 1988, p. 67).

Johan Turi and Pieraš Gunnar were not alone in possessing stories of sightings of *mánnelaččat*. In the second volume of his *Lappiske eventyr og sagn* (Qvigstad 1927–1929, II, pp. 192–229), devoted to the folklore of Sámi of the Troms and Finnmark districts of northern Norway (the region from which Johan Turi's family also came), Just Qvigstad includes seven accounts of encounters with such spirits under the title "Skrømt i Ødemarken" (haunted in the wilds; Qvigstad 1927–1929, II, no. 95.1-7, pp. 348–59). Isak Eira (b. 1891) recounted in 1921 a story of a man who chose to spend the night in a lakeside *goahti* (turf hut) that was rumored to be haunted by *mánnelaččat*. Sámi reindeer herders, like Eira himself and the unnamed man in his story, used unlocked turf huts, and occasionally also state-owned cabins, as places to spend the night when traveling through sparsely populated areas. The structures were open to any passer by and could occasionally be shared by multiple travelers passing through an area.[3] In Eira's account, the man and his dog settle down for the night in one such *goahti*, but the dog's nervous whining makes it

hard for the man to get any rest. Soon a large and mysterious dog appears at the doorway and tries to take away the stick the man has beside him for poking the fire. Eventually the man also sees the menacing figure of a large man, which again disappears. Suddenly, the man feels something grab him by the legs, violently hoist him out of the *goahti* and fling him over some bushes onto the lakeshore. The man retrieves his pack and spends the rest of the night outside. In the morning he makes himself some coffee on the lakeshore where he has slept and then leaves, never stepping inside the *goahti* again (Qvigstad 1927–1929, II, 95.1, pp. 348–53). Another reindeer herder, Ellen Ucce (also spelled Utsi; b. 1902) recounted a story in 1926 of a man who encounters a mysterious woman who silently approaches his campfire.[4] Thinking at first that she is a local woman who has been collecting grass for lining shoes (an important summer activity for women and children in Sámi tradition), the man soon realizes from the strange appearance of the woman's legs and face that she is not alive. She disappears as suddenly and inexplicably as she had appeared (Qvigstad 1927–1929, II, no. 95.3, pp. 352–55). Utsi also recounted having herself heard a man and pack reindeer arrive outside a *goahti* she was staying in one night. Sensing the arrival outside, she expected that she would soon have company in the *goahti* and put the kettle on the fire to prepare some coffee to share. But when no one entered, she went out to see what had happened and could find no trace of either man or reindeer (Qvigstad 1927–1929, II, no. 95.4, pp. 353–55). In yet another account, Utsi recalled an occasion in which both she and an older woman heard a man joik and a dog bark outside their tent. She called out to the man and the sounds abruptly stopped. She notes in her account: "son lei guođđan vaiga mannjasis dan olmušmæt'tomvuođa gæžil" (he had become consigned to this fate because of his inhumane acts), a statement that indicates that Utsi may have recognized the deceased man's voice and regarded his haunting as punishment for wrongs done in life. In this way, her statement parallels Turi's characterization of the *mánnelaččat* as beings stranded in the earthly "áibmu" (atmosphere) between heaven and hell.

3. Controlling Spirits of the Dead

Ellen Utsi notes that *mánnelaččat* could be employed by *noaiddit* to harry or even kill other people, e.g., women or men who had jilted their lovers (Qvigstad 1927–1929, II, no. 145, pp. 198–99). In this role, they became known as *bijagat*. Turi twice writes about such a situation involving a man who was mysteriously taken ill, apparently due to *bijagat* sent by a *noaidi* in the employ of the man's wife's former lover. *Birot* (a term related to the Finnish *pirut*, demons) attack the man, causing strange symptoms: "De bohte birot dan nuorra boatnji nala, ja de álggii buváhallat nu, ahte gullui gal, ahte buvvodii, muhto de ii fal oidnon miige dan olbmui, mii ii lean oaidni" (*birot* came upon the young man and he started to become strangled. It was clear that he was being strangled, but nothing was visible to one who was not a visionary) (Turi and Turi 1918–1919, XLIV, p. 138; Turi 1988, p. 47). The man's suffering is alleviated for a time by the actions of an aging unmarried Sámi woman who can see and control the *bijagat* invisible to others. Turi writes in a passage that became part of *Sámi deavsttat:*

> Okta boares nieida leai gal dan áiggi noaideslágáš. Son oinnii gal mánnilašveaga, gos dat leai, ja gulai, maid dat áigot dahkat. Dat leai sámenieida. Ja de dat nieida oinnii, dan dievddu nalde leai mánnilašveahka, ja olbmot eai diehtán, ahte dat leai dakkár. Ja de dat oktii, go oinnii dan veaga, de čanai son buvssaidis sealggi nala olgol biktasiid, ja de álggii vuojehit eret, ja barggai son ollu, ovdal go oaččui eret. Dat náđodii juohke sadjái, gerresiid vuollái ja vaikko gosa, ja soggemáddagiidda vuohččan; ja go viimmat oaččui mátkái, de gal manne. Ja de son vuojehii dego boazočorraga daihe loddemoađi, muhto gal dat gáidda vigge muhtumin jorggihit ruoktot; muhto son vuojehii jur čáhcejuohkama badjel. Ja jándora son jávkkai, ja de gal manne. Muhto de eai goitge lean guhká, oval go fas bohte. Ja gal dat leai ein jorgalit, jos dat livčču sihtan—de leai oažžut buoret vuoimmi; muhto olbmot eai dádjadan sihtat. Ja de fas bohte ja godde eret. (Turi and Turi 1918–1919, XLIV, p. 139; Turi 1988, XLIV, p. 47)

> There was an old maid at that time who was skilled in noaidi arts. She saw indeed the mánnilašveahka [host of mánnelaččat] that were there and heard what they were planning to do. She was Sámi. And that old maid saw the mánnilašveahka alongside the [sick] man, while the others there did not sense them. And when she saw them there, she tied her pants up on her back over her other clothes and she started driving them away. And she worked a long while before she got them to go away. She poked in every place, beneath the sled and underneath the tent edges and everywhere imaginable. And when finally she got them to go, they went indeed. And she drove them like a band of reindeer or a flock of birds. But indeed, at times they tried to double back to where they had been. But she drove them forth over a watershed. It took a day and a night and then they left. But they were not gone long before they came back. And she would have turned them away again, if they [i.e., the family of the ailing man] had wished; she would have gotten greater power [in doing so]. But those people did not know to ask her. And then they [i.e., the mánnilašveahka] came back and killed him [the sick man].

Turi describes here a woman who can see and hear *mánnelaččat*. She uses her pants and her body odor (see below) to drive the spirits away, herding them across a watershed, a boundary that normally acts as an obstacle to the movement of spirits (cfr. Turi and Turi 1918–1919, XII, p. 113; Turi 1988, XII, p. 25). Turi's analogy of the spirits as like reindeer or birds is telling: they are beings that move in flocks, and that can be managed through a combination of threats and urging, much as animals subjected to other kinds of herding. In recounting a meeting with the spirit of a deceased former girlfriend, the Skolt Sámi Ondrej Jakvitsch Romman of Neiden told Isak Saba in 1920 that the spirits of the dead travel in flocks led by an *ised* (leader; Qvigstad 1927–1929, III, no. 101, pp. 324–25; Esborg 2019, p. 214). Presumably, the woman in Turi's account assumed the role of leader to herd the spirits away. Turi notes that the woman would have repeated her actions if asked, and that she would have gained "buoret vuoimmi" (greater power) in doing so, but the family of the ailing man did not know to ask her, and in the end the spirits returned and took the man's life. The family's failure to follow through on the remedy seems to reflect a situation in which Sámi healing practices have become fragmented, with some Sámi no longer possessing the traditional knowledge needed to effectively call upon, reward, and sustain potential healers like this *noaideslágáš* woman.

Sometime around 1924, Turi wrote about the event a second time, in a passage that became published in his final book *Duoddaris/Från fjellet*, (From the Mountain) which originally appeared in 1931, and was reedited and reissued by Mikael Svonni in 2018 as *Mátkemuitalusat* (Travel Accounts) (Turi 2018; translation Turi 2019):

> Muitalus ovtta boares nieidda birra
>
> Go leai okta sámi nuorra dievdu skihppán dakkár dávddas maid eai dovdan dat olbmot, muhto de dat boares nieida dovddai ahte sus leat bijagat dahje mánnelaččat. Ju nu juo ahte buváhallet jur oinnolaččat ja de dat boares nieida čatnalii buvssaidis hárdu nala. Ja de riemai huškut rissiin juohke sajis gerresiid vuollin ja de viimmat gearggai ja de manai jođáhatráigge Norgga guvlui ja doalvvui dan mánnelašveaga badjel Norgga ráji.
>
> Ja son jávkkai jandora ovdal go bođii ruoktot. Ja de leai dan dievdu beassan nohkkat dakkaviđe. Son leai dakkár gii oinii visot got leat ja jos leat biddjon. Mon lean gullan das gean bárdni leai skibas ja son lea leamaš ieš dalle das. Ja gal dan leat muitalan iežát nai ja dat dal bohte fas go eai dan olbmo sogat sihtan dan nieidda bargat dan barggu ja de gal godde. Ja dan olbmo mánát ellet ain dal nai jagi 1924. Dat ledje Norggas biddjon. (Turi 2018, p. 71)
>
> An Account of an Old Maid
>
> Once there was a young Sámi man who had grown ill with some mysterious disease. But there was an old maid there who recognized that he was beset by

> bijagat or mánnelaččat. And those spirits were strangling him. And that old maid hitched up her pants over her shoulder. And she started striking everywhere with branches underneath the sleds, and finally when she finished that, she headed off on a trail toward Norway and brought that mánnilašveahka across the Norwegian border.
>
> And it took a full day before she got back. And that young man had been able to go to sleep immediately. She was one who could see everything that was there and whether they had been sent. I heard this from one of the parents of the sick boy who had been present when this happened. And indeed others have told about it as well. And they [the spirits] came back because that man's family didn't request the old maid to do her work again. And then they [the spirits] killed him. That man's children are still alive today, in the year 1924. They [the spirits] were set upon him from Norway. (Translation as in Turi 2019, p. 71, slightly modified)

Turi's second account repeats much of the information of the first, although now the border across which the *mánnelaččat* are banished is a national boundary rather than a watershed. Again it is clear that the woman possesses a valuable skill: she "oinii visot got leat ja jos leat biddjon" (saw everything that was there and whether they had been sent" and in using her skills (and odor) to drive the spirits away. But again, her skills go unrecognized and the result is fatal for the ailing man.

Turi is explicit about the odor of old maids, which he classifies as a type of *bostta*, or poison, that could cause illness to anyone who comes into contact either with the woman's underwear or who stands downwind of her. Yet, as with *mánnelaččat* and the practice of *noaidevuohta*, such odors were not necessarily viewed as evil in every circumstance. A skilled practitioner, like the woman in Turi's accounts, could use her odor to control *mánnelaččat*. And when young women possessed such an odor they could make their bed partners feel warm, even in the coldest of weather. Such young women were known as *lihkkobiddun* (lucky pants; Turi and Turi 1918–1919, XIX, p. 120; Turi 1988, pp. 31–32). Although no longer alive, the *mánnelaččat* appear susceptible to some of the same weaknesses, or proclivities, as the living.

Turi describes the efficacy of an established healer's ability to control *mánnelaččat* in his account of the *noaidi* Bávllos-Iŋgá. When she is called in to treat a man suffering from *mánnilašveahka* secretly set upon him by a *noaidi* in the employ of the man's estranged wife, Bávllos-Iŋgá uses her visionary abilities to advantage:

> Son gal oinnii, ahte birot leat nalde. Ja go son oaččui deid su imašvuimmiid, mat sus ledje ein dalle, go son leai dakkár doaimmain, ja de dat dollii gihtii ja logahii muhtun lohkosiid, ja de doalai, dassá go veahka fertii eret vuolgit—ja manne maid nu, ahte eai boahtán goasge. (Turi and Turi 1918–1919, XLVIII, p. 155; Turi 1988, p. 59)
>
> She saw indeed that birot were upon him. And as she received those wondrous powers that she always had at her disposal in such endeavors, she took him by the hand and read some readings/recited some incantations until the veahka (host) had to leave him—and leave they did, never to return.

Turi's account states that Bávllos-Iŋgá "logahii muhtun lohkosiid", i.e., (pronounced/read/recited some readings), an act that refers equally plausibly to reading a passage from the Bible as to reciting a prayer or an incantation, again reflecting the integration of *noaidevuohta* into the Lutheran Christianity of Sámi of Turi's day. In the primarily oral culture of turn-of-the-century Sápmi, the verb *lohkat* (to read, recite), its frequentative derivative *logahit* (to read/recite repeatedly) and its pluralized nominal derivative *lohkosiid* (readings/recitations) referred both to acts of reading and oral recitation, both of which were associated with church activities. From Turi's account, it appears that the "imašvuimmiid" (wondrous powers) Bávllos-Iŋgá is said to possess may be enhanced by successful healing encounters like this one, so that she could count on her abilities, or the spirits she had been able to control, whenever tasked in the future with addressing similar situations.

Turi recalls a further instance of Bávllos-Iŋgá's skills that occurred once when he was traveling with her. The two spent the night in a *goahti* belonging to Sámi they were not closely related to. He and Bávllos-Iŋgá are obliged to sleep in places nearest the entrance to the *goahti*, i.e., places allotted to visiting travelers with the least degree of status or personal connection with the host family. By morning, Turi feels ill:

> Ja go iđit šaddai, de mon ledjen skibas, mus oaivi bávččastii hui sakka. Ja son gii leai oaidni, son fas ii bállen nohkkat, son oinnii hihpelaččaid ja ii ožžon ráfi nohkkat muđui go son logai Ipmila sániid, de son viimmat sáhtii nohkkat. Ja gal son diđii, ahte dat bohtet mu nala. Ja de son muitalii munnje dan áseja, maid son leai oaidnán, ja jearai, lean go mon gullan maidege, ja ein, lean go mu dearvas. Ja de mon muitalin, ahte oaivi bávččasta mus sakka, ja de jearai son, ahte "got dat dovdo, jorrá go eatnan?" Muhto ii mus lean ila bahá, muhto bahát fal go goasge leai leamaš ovdal. Ja de son dálkkodii mu, son vuoiddai oaivvi dearppahiin ja ruvvedii ja suige logai sániid. Ja leai su gieđain dat vuoibmi, ahte ábuhii dat juo. Ja de mon nai dearvvasnuvven, ja moai manaime. (Turi and Turi 1918–1919, XL, p. 134; Turi 1988, pp. 43–44)
>
> And when morning came, I was sick: I had a terrible headache. And she, who was a visionary, was not able to sleep, for she saw hihpelaččat and she could get no peace to sleep until she read/recited the words of God, and then she finally got some sleep. And she knew indeed that they had come upon me, and she told me what she had seen and asked if I felt anything and if I was in health. And I said that my head ached terribly. And she asked if it seemed that the world was spinning around [i.e., if he felt dizzy]. But it was not that bad, although it was a worse feeling than I had ever had before. And then she treated me: she rubbed my head with turpentine and massaged it and probably read/recited some words. And there was in her hands such power, that I started to feel better at once. And then I recovered and we left.

Here again, Turi's text indicates the seamless association of a *noaidi*'s healing words with Christian prayers: Bávllos-Iŋgá cannot sleep until she recites "Ipmila sániid" (the words of God), and she "suige logai sániid" (probably read/recited some words) when massaging Turi's head. She can see the *hihpelaččat* (a term possibly derived from a Finnish term for a forest spirit, *hippa*), and this ability protects her from falling under their influence. But Turi is not as fortunate and needs Bávllos-Iŋgá's treatment of turpentine, massage and words, applied by her powerful hands, to reverse the ill effects of their attack.

Where *noaidi* figures like Bávllos-Iŋgá, and the unnamed old maid that Turi twice describes, are depicted positively and demonstrate their control over *mánnelaččat* through perception, commands, and apparent negotiation, Turi notes other practitioners who seek to employ *mánnelaččat* through more underhanded and coercive means. Turi writes disapprovingly of a villainous woman named Raže-Girste who was rumored to have a bag of soil taken from a graveyard as well as a bottle of foul-smelling fluid collected from the mouth of a corpse, which she could use in her career of secret murders (Turi and Turi 1918–1919, XLVI, pp. 147–48; Turi 1988, pp. 54–55). Similarly, he notes learning from a relative that fluid extracted from a corpse's spine could prove fatal if administered to a victim (Turi and Turi 1918–1919, XXXIII, p. 126; Turi 1988, p. 38). Presumably these materials control the will and activities of the *mánnelaččat* they are associated with. Similarly, a "suoma golgi" (Finnish hobo) sells the Sámi herder Stuora Biehtár "okta unna, fasttes, boares, čáhppes liidneseahkaš, man siste leai muoldu ja bánit" (a little ugly old black linen sack containing graveyard soil and teeth)—an object that would reputedly provide Stuora Biehtár with "olles noaidevuoimmi" (complete *noaidi* power), preventing future reindeer depredations by either thieves or wolves (Turi and Turi 1918–1919, XLV, p. 143; Turi 1988, p. 51). The sack causes great troubles for the family, however: Stuora Biehtár dies, and one of his daughters goes insane, apparently from contact with the menacing *mánnelaččat* brought into the household through her father's clandestine purchase. Eventually, after

attempted treatments of the woman by both Turi and a woman also skilled in healing, the family elects to bring the bag back to the Vittangi graveyard from which the soil and teeth were taken. The *mánnelaččat* resist the return, however, and almost "doalvut loktosis" (lift into the air) one of the men tasked with carrying the sack (Turi and Turi 1918–1919, XLV, p. 146; Turi 1988, p. 53). The *mánnelaččat* are not to be treated lightly, especially not by people without the visionary abilities or wondrous powers of a figure like Bávllos-Iŋgá.

4. Spirits of the Dead as Birds

Although *mánnelaččat* and other spirits of the dead are generally invisible to all but the visionary, they sometimes manifest themselves visibly in the form of birds. In his fieldwork among Skolt Sámi, Isak Saba found that spirits of the dead could appear to family members as birds, particularly immediately after their deaths. He reports a narrative of a woman who sensed that her brother had transformed into a *gáranas* (raven; *Corvus corax*) as a way of announcing his death to her (Esborg 2019, pp. 31, 60). Historical legends concerning the unjust beheading of Anna/Hanna/Hanne Mårtentytär Aikio (executed in 1740; Lehtola 2003, p. 161) state that people saw either a star or a bird arise from her beheaded body and soar up toward heaven (Frandy et al. 2019, pp. 121–22; Qvigstad 1927–1929, III, no. 193, p. 533). Turi notes in his *Muitalus* that when *bijagat* or *birot* are set upon a person, they will sometimes send a bird, or take the form of a bird, particularly a *garjá* (raven) in order to reach their victim (Turi 2010, p. 141; 2012, p. 153). For this reason, Turi calls the raven a "biro loddi" (*biro* bird.) (Turi 2010, p. 141; 2012, p. 153). In his account of *bijagat* in *Sámi deavsttat*, Turi notes an instance in which a man is pursued by a particularly insistent "garjá vai leai go vuoražas" (a raven, or was it a hooded crow *[Corvus cornix]*) whose identity as a transformed *mánnelaš* is confirmed by the fact that it is seen to be wearing "stevveliid", (Norwegian *støvelen*), i.e., heavy boots worn by non-Sámi (Turi and Turi 1918–1919, XLVIII, p. 155; Turi 1988, p. 59). The bird was presumably a *mánnelaš* who in life had been a Norwegian or Swede. Perhaps in recognition of this tendency to take bird form, Turi notes that people can protect themselves against attacks by *mánnelaččat* or *jámehat* by wearing a large wing feather whose quill has been filled with quicksilver/mercury: "go dat lea alde, de dat eai boađe ala dan olbmo" (if a person has that on, they cannot attack) (Turi 2010, p. 141; 2012, p. 153). Turi's text also mentions other means of staving off such attacks: walking through three fires, carrying on one's person the testicles of a beaver, or reciting the Our Father in three languages, a reflection of the multilingual nature of early-twentieth century Sápmi (Turi 2010, p. 141; 2012, p. 153).

Ambiguity regarding such bird apparitions arises, however, from the fact that birds also have other meanings in Sámi tradition. According to historical accounts of *noaidevuohta*, the *noaidi* was served by a spirit helper in the form of a bird, the *noaidi-loddi*, or *saiva-leddie* (Bäckman and Hultkrantz 1977, pp. 43, 44), along with spirit helpers taking the form of a reindeer bull or fish. In addition, a spirit known as *šuoggja* often took the form of a bird as it laughed or cackled in anticipation of a person's impending death or some other disaster (Nielsen 1932–1938, III, 679). A monstrous bird, known as *guoddan*, could also be set upon another person by an enemy (Qvigstad 1927–1929, III, no. 145, pp. 414–15; Esborg 2019, pp. 155–56). Turi further notes that certain bird species are "noaidelottit" (*noaidi*-birds), and their appearance in one's vicinity predicts or leads to misfortune (Turi 2010, pp. 118–20; 2012, pp. 129–31). These include the *goartocizáš* (Siberian tit; *Poecile cinctus*), *giehka* (cuckoo; *Cuculus canorus*), *vuoražas* (hooded crow; *Corvus cornix*), and *skire* (magpie; *Pica pica*). Turi's wording in his text suggests not that individual birds of these species represent *mánnelaččat* in disguise, but rather, that all members of these species function in general as omens or shapers of humans' destinies. Referring to them as "váiggaslottit" (omen birds), Turi writes:

> Jos skire dahje vuoražas álgá sámi siidda čuvodit, de son dovdá ahte dan siiddas jápmá olmmoš. Ja jos dat álgá ovta goađi čuovvut ja čoahkahit ovtta goađi bálddas, de son dovdá dan goađis jápmime olbmo. (Turi 2010, p. 120)
>
> If a magpie or hooded crow starts to follow a siida [i.e., a reindeer-herding band], then it [i.e., the siida] senses that someone in the siida will die. And if it starts

> to follow one particular goahti and perch beside it, then it senses that there is someone in that goahti who will die. (Turi 2012, slightly modified)

The ambiguities that arise from these different understandings of bird appearances can be sensed in a narrative Aanaar (Inari) Sámi Mikko Aikio (1837–1918) recounted to A.V. Koskimies in 1886. A local Sámi man had been murdered and his body hidden. Not knowing what had happened to the man, family members saw a woodpecker pecking at the door of their *goahti*. Viewing it as a bad omen, they killed it, but, Aikio states, the man never returned. Eventually his murderers were identified and punished (Frandy et al. 2019, p. 124). In describing the woodpecker's arrival and behavior, and the family's violent response, Aikio remains noncommittal regarding whether the woodpecker was indeed an omen bird or perhaps was, as in Skolt tradition, the murdered man himself, returning to his family to notify them of his death.

5. Helping Spirits of Noaiddit

Just as not all birds are *mánnelaččat* in disguise, so also, not all of a *noaidi's* helping spirits are *mánnelaččat*. Although Turi notes of *mánnelaččat* "Ja sin noaiddit ožžot álkimusat veahkkin, go álget noaiddástallat" (these are the beings that the noaiddit first [emphasis added] get as helpers when they have just started to practice noaidi arts; Turi 2010, p. 138; 2012, p. 133), *mánnelaččat* appear distinct from the team of spirit helpers (*noaidi-gázzi*), that the fully qualified *noaidi* employs. In accounts of past *noaiddit*, including the famed Hannu Andaras and his son Karen Ovlla (who died in 1852), Isak Saba provides details of the *noaiddit*'s interactions with their *noaidi-gázzi*, which could be seen by the *noaidi* but were usually invisible to all others (Qvigstad 1927–1929, III, no. 149, pp. 420–33). In one instance, Karen Ovlla sees one of his *noaidi-gázzi* fall asleep by the fire and mistakenly roll into the flames. When Karen Ovlla laughs at the mishap, the spirit, angered, goes outside and kills one of Karen Ovlla's best pack reindeer geldings (Qvigstad 1927–1929, III, no. 149, pp. 424–25). The *noaidi-gázzi* could be passed down from one *noaidi* to the next, particularly within families, and this was the case with Hannu Andaras's *noaidi-gázzi*, which he passed on to his son Karen Ovlla while he was still an infant lying in a cradleboard (Qvigstad 1927–1929, III, no. 149, pp. 420–21). In contrast, when Karen-Ovlla judged that his own grandson was too mean-spirited to use the *noaidi-gázzi* properly, he decided not to bequeath them to the next generation but instead send them to serve scurrilous Russians living far away (Qvigstad 1927–1929, III, no.149, pp. 424–25). He also refuses to give them to a malicious local man Kærta-Han'sa, who, Karen-Ovlla judges, would use them immediately to kill many local people (Qvigstad 1927–1929, III, no.149, pp. 428–29).

According to coastal Sámi Henrik Olsen Reppen (1865–1914), *noaiddit* could be subdivided into three different ranks according to the magnitude of their power: at the most basic were *oai'ne-noaiddit*, (seer-*noaiddit*), i.e., visionaries who can see what others cannot, followed by a more potent class of *diet'te-noaiddit* (knower-*noaiddit*) who could use their knowledge to heal, followed by a class of *bora-noaiddit* (eater-*noaiddit*) who could use their powers for highly consequential purposes, such as murder (Qvigstad 1927–1929, III, no. 149.2, pp. 427–31). These distinctions also correlated with different kinds of *noaidi-gázzi*, and a fully qualified *noaidi* possessed all three, which Reppen characterizes as "dego golbma uhca mánáš" (like three small children) (Qvigstad 1927–1929, III, no. 149.2, pp. 426–27). To what extent any of these "three children" correlated with the *mánnelaččat* recruited from among the newly dead or in graveyards, as detailed by Turi, remains unclear. Apart from revered healers like Bávllos-Iŋgá and malicious figures like Raže-Girste or the unnamed *noaiddit* residing in Norway, most of the fully qualified *noaiddit* in narratives provided by Turi or his contemporaries are figures of legend like Karen Ovlla, who lived in the nineteenth century and whose exact practices, and *noaidi-gázzi*, were no longer to be found in Sápmi.

6. *Eahpáraš*/*Áhpparaš*: Spirits of Murdered Infants

A further class of being similar to the *mánnelaččat* but markedly distinct is the *eahpáraš* (also spelled *áhpparaš)*. The victim of infanticide before baptism, the *áhpparaš* is not guilty of any personal wrongdoing but is similarly consigned to an unsettled existence on earth (Pentikäinen 1968). Its howling or crying and occasional visible appearance in the area where it was abandoned create great fear among persons traveling at night. Where there appears no way to lay the *mánnelaččat* to rest, the *áhpparaš* can be brought to peace through conferral of baptism and a name. Turi writes:

> Ja dat lea gullon boares áiggis ollu, ahte dat eahpáraččat gullojit dávjá, ja dat čirrot; ja go leat rohkes olbmot ja álgá deid gullat čierrut, de sii jerret: "Manne don čierut?" No, de son muitala, ahte son lea dasa biddjojuvvon ja son háliida nama. Ja de dat rohkes olmmoš gásttašá na: "Mon gásttašan du golmma persuvnna nammii, Ipmil-Áhči ja Bártni ja Basse-Vuoiŋŋa nammii, Addám daihe Evá lea du namma", ja de lohket Hearrá sivdnásusa ja rohkadusa ja dan, ahte "Nohka Ipmila ráfis, dassá go manjemus beaivvi čuorvu duopmostuolus ovdii alimus gonagas!" (Turi and Turi 1918–1919, XLIII, p. 136; Turi 1988, p. 46)
>
> And from of old we have heard that these eahpáraččat can often be heard, and that they cry. And when brave people hear that crying they ask: "Why are you crying?" And [the eahpáraš] recounts that it had been left in this spot and that it wants a name. And then the brave person baptizes it thus: "I baptize you in the name of the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and Adam or Eve is your name." And they read/recite the Lord's blessing and prayer and also this: "Sleep in the peace of God, until on the Last Day you are called to the Judgment Seat by the King Most High."

Turi's account stresses that knowledge of what an *áhpparaš* is has been widely known among Sámi, but that only people with sufficient knowledge and requisite bravery are effective in laying it to rest. Henrik Olsen Reppen adds to Turi's characterization in his account noted in 1903 that the Our Father and Trinity blessing performed in this ceremony must be recited backwards (Qvigstad 1927–1929, III, no. 67, pp. 272–73). Giving the spirit two names, one male, one female, is also noted as a necessity in several accounts, as it ensures that the *áhpparaš* receives a gender-appropriate name. Nils Paulson of Fauske, Nordland, described in 1890 an *áhpparaš* receiving the names Johannes and Juhanna at the hands of its compassionate and fearless baptizer (Qvigstad 1927–1929, IV, no. 15.2, pp. 510–11). Sámi accounts of the *áhpparaš* have close counterparts in other Nordic cultures: the Norwegian *utburd* or *utbor*, Swedish *utböling* or *utkastning* (Kvideland and Sehmsdorf 1988, p. 113), and Finnish *liekkiö*, *ihtiriekko*, or *äpärä* (Jauhiainen 1999, p. 109; Pentikäinen 1968). Reidar Christiansen (1958), supplies narratives of such infant outcasts with a type number: ML 4025. In contrast with the *mánnelaš*, the *áhpparaš* is blameless of any wrongdoing. Nonetheless, the perversity of its situation makes it a menacing being, helping explain why laying it to rest not only involves the performance of a Christian baptism, but also the recitation of the prayers and blessings backwards.

7. Spirits of the Drowned and Unmarked Burials

Linked as it is to the place of its abandonment as an infant, the *áhpparaš* is more tied to its corporeal body than is typical of *mánnelaččat*. A further class of dead beings, however, are intimately tied to their bodies. People who drown or die on land could end up haunting the place where their earthly remains lie. They particularly resent living people who unwittingly try to sleep on their graves and will wake the sleeper up and order them to leave. Pieraš Gunnar remarked to Isak Saba in 1913 that he had once received such an order when trying to sleep on a hillside in Unjárga (Nesseby). The being woke him and notified him (in Norwegian) that he would have to leave at once (Esborg 2019, p. 105). Jak Ondrej of Neiden recounted for Saba in 1918 an occasion in which he was subjected to *raimotaddat* (incubus—the feeling of being pinned down by an oppressive weight while

sleeping). After a long struggle against the pressing weight, he was able to sit up, but by then his shirt and bedclothes were soaked in sweat. Jak Ondrej conjectured that there must have been a "hævvanam olbmak" (drowned person) lying beneath the gravel on which he had chosen to sleep (Qvigstad 1927–1929, no. 69, pp. 276–77; Esborg 2019, pp. 182–83). Describing such revenants, Pieraš Gunnar refers to them as "čacce-jammek" (water dead), employing the term *jamišak* (i.e., the dead), for beings that had died on land. Both sorts of beings could make sounds, bawling like oxen or singing (Qvigstad 1927–1929, III, no. 112, pp. 348–51; Esborg 2019, p. 114).

Like the *áhpparaš*, there are counterparts to these beings found in other Nordic traditions, e.g., the Norwegian *draug*, a reanimated corpse of a person who had drowned (see Christiansen 1958, ML 4070). The Norwegian term is borrowed into Sámi as *rávga* and in Finnish as *(meri)raukka* (Jauhiainen 1999, C 1011). But Pieraš Gunnar drew an explicit distinction in his conversation with Saba between a *draug (rávga)* and the *čacce-jammek* (water dead) of his narrative, in that the former is a "sivnnadus" (i.e., a physical creature) while the latter are "vuoiŋak", (i.e., spirits) (Esborg 2019, p. 113). Uvl-Andde of Falesnjárga (Kvalsnes) recalled having encountered a physical *rávga* that entered the *goahti* in which he was spending the night. With kelp hair dripping from its head it took a seat by the fire, warmed its fingers, and asked for coffee. Uvl-Andde fired at it with his pistol and it fled (Esborg 2019, p. 120).

Pieraš Gunnar noted that Norwegian fishermen from the south (*fælla*) were particularly prone to becoming revenants: "Fælla ges læ hirmos baha gomutaddat. I dat darbaš læa embbu go mi nu læ gaddai rievddam, mi fæallaidi læ gullam de dat gomutadda" (A Norwegian fisherman is a terrible one for haunting. All that is needed is for some piece of property to come to shore in a place that it had owned for it to start haunting there; Esborg 2019, p. 102). A notable account of a deceased Sámi man reanimating involves a Skolt *noaidi* in Russian Sápmi repeatedly rising out of his coffin during the night to torment his family and those tasked with transporting him to a place of proper burial (Qvigstad 1927–1929, III, no. 68, pp. 274–77; Frandy et al. 2019, pp. 115–16). In contrast, Russians *(ruoššalažžat*) are said to rarely transform in this way, something that Pieraš Gunnar finds puzzling. He notes: "Muttomak lokkek ette dat rista mi ruoššalažžast læ čæpetest, dat dat dædda, ja denne i gomutada" (Some people say that the cross which Russians wear around their necks weighs them down and therefore they do not end up haunting; Esborg 2019, p. 102). The power of the cross, as a badge of Christianity, has the capacity to prevent such undesired afterlife transformations. As with stories of the *áhpparaš*, these accounts of hauntings and reanimations point to ongoing, sometimes conflicting discussions concerning such events among Sámi of the time, discussions that formed a diverse body of discourse concerning the nature and control of spirits of the dead.

8. Conclusions

The extensive and wide-ranging writings of Johan Turi—combined with the more truncated but often tantalizing accounts collected from other Sámi of the same era—provide a snapshot of Sámi beliefs concerning spirits of the dead at the outset of the twentieth century. They reflect a time in which traditional Sámi knowledge regarding such spirits was familiar to many (but not all) Sámi, some of whom not only knew details in general about beings like *mánnelaččat*, the *áhpparaš*, or the *rávga*, but who could occasionally recount personal experiences in which they saw or interacted with these beings themselves. Some people knew how to lay an *áhpparaš* to rest or drive away *bijagat* lurking underfoot or manifesting in the form of bird, while others possessed neither the talent nor the knowledge to undertake or support such work. Early twentieth-century Sápmi was also a time and place in which Christian notions of the dead and the afterlife had become deeply intertwined with earlier traditions in complex and variable ways. The *mánnelaččat* as well as the *noaidi* could be accounted for in Christian terms, although Sámi occasionally differed as to whether they regarded *noaidi* healing as a Christian or a demonic activity. Concourse with spirits of the dead for the purpose of healing or aggression was known but often shrouded in secrecy and

recrimination, whether due to longstanding traditions of secrecy, the pressures of Christian colonization, or self-consciousness regarding outsiders' views of Sámi as superstitious or prone to magic. By attending to all the details of these various and sometimes conflicting accounts as we find them in Turi's writings and in the notations made by folklorists like Qvigstad, Saba, and Koskimies, it is possible to arrive at a "thick description" of Sámi beliefs at the time, one that neither oversimplifies the situation nor imposes a hierarchy that would discount or dismiss beliefs reflecting Christian understandings or non-Sámi folklore as somehow apart from Sámi tradition as it existed at the moment.

Broadening discussion from the Sámi case to belief traditions more generally, we can note that because folklore regarding the dead—among Sámi people at the turn of the twentieth century, as among many cultures the world over, past and present—operates outside (but sometimes in dialogue with) formal theological teachings, it is seldom a unified or uniform set of beliefs. Concepts and understandings may vary from person to person, or region to region, or period to period, and may enmesh longstanding cultural beliefs with more novel concepts arising from contact with other belief traditions or other cultures. Rather than perceiving such a multiplicity of understandings as a sign of religious decay or the breakdown of traditional beliefs in a particular culture, we can recognize in such contradictions a dynamic process of evaluation, negotiation, and evolution, in which influences from within and outside the culture become juxtaposed or harmonized. In this ongoing process, personal experiences and narratives play key roles in asserting, achieving, or advancing communal understandings, particularly regarding complex and mysterious events like occasions of misfortune or disease, the ending of life, or the persistence of contact with beings after their death. As memorably stated by the folklorists Klein and Widblom (1994) in the title of their important anthology of folklore, "all tradition is change." Thick descriptions of belief systems in action allow us to sense the processes of change as they unfold in the individual and collective performance of tradition.

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Notes

1 While scholars have noted connections between Sámi *noaidi* traditions and broader religious and cultural practices subsumed under the overarching scholarly term *shamanism*, contemporary practice in Sámi studies is to use the term noaidi for the Sámi spiritual practitioner, and *noaidevuohta* for the system of rituals and beliefs associated with the *noaidi*. This usage emphasizes the Sámi particularities of the tradition and eschews broader generalizations about its relation to the beliefs and practices of other Indigenous nations.

2 All translations not otherwise credited are my own.

3 For a discussion of cabins made available through the state for tourists and travelers, see DuBois (2014).

4 For an extended discussion of the lives and repertoires of both Isak Eira and Ellen Utsi, see Cocq (2008).

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