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## ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНЫЕ ВОЗМОЖНОСТИ ЭПОСА И СКАЗОК КОРЕННЫХ МАЛОЧИСЛЕННЫХ НАРОДОВ СИБИРИ\*

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**Проблема и цель.** Постановка проблемы – исследование возможности формирования позитивной этнокультурной идентичности через образовательный эффект такого педагогического материала, как древний эпос и сказки коренных малочисленных народов Сибири. Цель статьи – выявить образовательные возможности эпоса и сказок коренных малочисленных народов Сибири.

**Методология.** Методы: выделение и анализ культурного репрезентанта, сравнительно-типологический анализ, экстраполяция.

**Результаты.** Авторы выявили образовательные возможности эпоса и сказок коренных малочисленных народов Сибири, в том числе потенциал формирования позитивной этнокультурной идентичности читателей.

**Заключение.** Образовательные возможности эпоса и сказок коренных малочисленных народов Сибири состоят в познании основ культуры с традиционным типом хозяйствования, формировании позитивной этнокультурной идентичности слушателей и читателей, а также экологическом сознании и развитии способностей к философскому обобщению.

**Ключевые слова:** образовательные возможности; эпос; сказки; коренной малочисленный народ; Сибирь; этнокультурная идентичность.

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## Educational potential of epics and fairy tales of indigenous minority peoples of Siberia

### Abstract

**Introduction.** *The formation of a positive ethnocultural identity as a possible educational effect of such teaching material as ancient epics and fairy tales of the indigenous minority peoples of Siberia. The objective of the article is to reveal the educational potential of epics and fairy tales of Siberia's minority indigenous peoples.*

**Materials and Methods.** *The authors employed the following methods: Identification and analysis of a cultural representation, comparative and typological analysis, and extrapolation.*

**Results.** *The authors have identified and clarified the educational potential of epics and fairy tales of Siberia's minority indigenous peoples, including the potential to shape a positive ethnocultural identity among readers.*

**Conclusions.** *The educational potential of epics and fairy tales of Siberia's minority indigenous peoples comprise learning the fundamentals of a culture with a traditional economy, shaping a positive ethnocultural identity among listeners and readers, as well as their ecological awareness, and developing the ability to make philosophical generalizations.*

### Keywords

*Educational possibilities; Epics; Fairy tales; Indigenous minority people; Siberia; Ethnocultural identity*

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## Introduction

The main problem on which the article focuses is the formation of readers' positive ethnocultural identity by engaging with the epics and fairy tales of the indigenous minority peoples in Siberia. The problem stipulates that to form a positive ethnocultural identity, the most archaic fairy tales require a contemporary "adaptation" with the help of animation, book illustrations, and this will consequently require a greater role to be played by facilitators and interpreters (culturologists). The circumstances for reciting fairy tales and epic works in ancient times differ significantly from the modern conditions for reading these works on paper, which also calls for a greater role to be played by a pedagogic mediator in the process of recovering the possible artistic vision. The objective of this article is to uncover the educational possibilities of the epics and fairy tales of the indigenous minority peoples of Siberia. The following steps have been adopted as the main tasks driven by the given objective: 1) to define works representative of indigenous epics and fairy tales, 2) to record the relations of epics and fairy tales in the representative traditional written word of the indigenous minority peoples of Siberia, 3) to compare the epics and fairy tales based on the peculiarities of their perception, 4) to identify the educational potential of epic works and fairy tales.

The literature of indigenous peoples is of great interest to both Russian and foreign researchers. Contemporary scientists pay particular attention to the study children's fiction. An educational function is recognized as an important aspect of children's fiction. This is despite the fact that the educational values are quite poorly represented in modern students' the value systems according to the results of an associative experiment presented in the article by K. V. Reznikova, N. P. Koptseva, N. N. Serechkina, Y. S. Zamaraeva "Regional

specifics of social values and their impact on Central Siberian territories' modernization (based on research of Krasnoyarsk region)" [20], the consideration fictional literature as an educational resource seems to be one of the prospective ways of involving young people to the educational process.

Literature as an extensive informative "field" which plays an important role in the education of the younger generation is analyzed in work by J. E. Conacher [1], S. Parlevliet [15]. According to the authors, literary works for children is not just a tale falling under a specific literary genre, but a kind of construct, through which the reader develops a perception of history, the world, their own place in it, and a specific system of values.

The idea of constructivism applied to literary works is grounded in theoretical work by M. Nikolajeva "Recent trends in children's literature research: Return to the body" [13]. According to the author, a work of literature with its representations is a construct that allows the reader to mentally "construct" what one is not able to in real life. For example, infiltrating the thoughts of another person, learning what animals feel or what they are thinking about, etc. Works of fiction allow us to do this. Thus, they can prepare youth for the various challenges of the modern world.

In the context of considering children's literature as an effective instrument for presenting official ideology, V. Muñoz-Chereau refers to analysis of modern Chilean children's literature in the article "Representations of dictatorship in contemporary Chilean children's literature" [11]. The author addresses the issue of the embodiment of Augusto Pinochet in modern literature, the statesman of Chile's dictatorship, and analyses the representation of children living under the conditions of dictatorship. The author finds a difference in embodiment of the children's images



in books written by those authors who were expelled from Chile and those brought up in the environment of the dictatorship. According to the researcher, the functions of modern children's literature lie in the understanding of literature as the memory of the past, a socialization tool, a means of presenting a new interpretation of the past to the younger generation.

The author of another scientific study "Children as implied readers in poetry picturebooks: The adaptation of adult poetry for young readers" M. Del Rosario Neira-Piñeiro [3] analyzes Spanish children's poetry to show the significance of visual material for the reader. The most significant is the type of illustration that is designed specifically for a particular publication. Illustrations transform the work through visual presentation of the storyline, disclosure of the figurative language of text, and presentation of the poetic voice. The analysis of a number of literature works completed by the author reveals the pedagogical purpose of illustrated collections that make the works more appealing to be read by children.

The leading role of the author of children's literary works and the teacher in the correct interpretation of texts is grounded in the study by J. Hope "The soldiers came to the house": young children's responses to *The Colour of Home*" [5]. The introduction to the article provides a description of the current situation of refugees around the world. According to the author, children of all ages are not indifferent to this problem. It forms the basis of literary works intended for young children's reading. The study by J. Hope is based on a vertical trajectory study: an interview with the author of the work "The Colour of Home", Mary Hoffman, the analysis of the role of the teacher as a mediator in interpreting the content of the text and children's interviews (refugees and non-refugees) aged from 5 to 8 on the content of this book. The author

concludes that the role of a teacher is key to interpreting the content of the text. Through reading, questions and discussions with children the teacher is able to focus the young readers' attention on the problem of the refugees' socialization.

Works by J. Pesonen and C. You. are devoted to considering children's literature in the context of an ethnic problem. J. Pesonen in the article "Anti-racist Strategies in Finnish Children's Literature: Physical Appearance and Language as Signifiers of National Belonging" [16] on the example of the analysis of Finnish children's literature shows changes which occurred in children's literature in demonstrating the cultural markers of a nationality. The author is of the opinion that modern children's literature represents various forms of ethnic and family culture. Based on the analysis of children's literature (200 books for children), the author comes to the conclusion that the physical characteristics of a child and language have become important markers of a nationality. According to J. Pesonen, children's literature enables us to display the social and cultural situation of its time. In this case, literary works for children advocate the reconstruction of ideology and world view. The books studied by the author are aimed at training the reader to confront the prejudices of society and the processes of discrimination. This is seen as an obvious educational function of children's literature by the researcher, capable of teaching children, explaining their role in today's global world, teaching understanding of the value of national diversity.

The embodiment of the growth in homogeneity in Chinese society and the decline in the significance of national minorities' culture are discussed in the article "Harmony, Home and Anthropomorphism: Representation of Minority Nationalities in Contemporary Chinese Ethnic



Children's Literature" by C. You [25] through the analysis of the animalistic literature. On the one hand, there is the animal kingdom and a teenager representative of the ethnic groups, on the other, the embodiment of two cultures, the dominant and marginal ones, to which national minorities belong.

Artistic works of indigenous peoples as a source of information on the ethnic group are analysed by scientists T. Nyoni, M. Nyoni [14], L. Rafapa [17], Y. K. Sung, J. Sakoi [23], et al. According to T. Nyoni, M. Nyoni, for instance, the literature of indigenous Shawn peoples is the heritage of African oratory art and is an important component of the knowledge about this ethnic group. The research into the form and content of Shawn children's literature revealed that literature is a powerful tool for teaching an individual, and a society as a whole about certain values and attitudes.

The history and specifics of fictional literature of indigenous peoples of the North and Siberia are revealed in studies by Yu. S. Zamaraeva [19; 20], M. A. Kolesnik [7], N. M. Libakova [8], V. S. Luzan [9], N. A. Nepomniashchikh, I. S. Poltoratsky [12], K. I. Petrova [8], K. V. Reznikova [19; 20], N. N. Seredkina, M. G. Smolina, A. V. Kistova<sup>1</sup>, E. A. Sertakova [21], A. A. Sitnikova [22], et al. The scientists are focused on uncovering the historical characteristics of the formation and development of national literature schools, unique features of fairy tale material of such ethnic groups from the North and Siberia as the Dolgans, Nenets, Nganansans, Evenks.

Moreover, a search for the best literary traditions of the indigenous minorities of the North was carried out in the Soviet period [9].

The article by M. A. Kolesnik [7] is devoted to the problem of illustrating the children's literature of the indigenous minorities of the North which is closely related to the problem discussed herein, i.e. the formation of a positive ethnocultural identity among minority peoples.

The relevance and modernity of fairy tales is considered in the article by O. A. Karlova [6] to fill the fairy tales material with educational potential. However, linguistic distance makes the translation of literature works by minority indigenous peoples into other languages an important and complex process (V. A. Razumovskaya [18]).

Thus, having analyzed modern studies on literature for children, its educational purpose becomes obvious. Literary images, visual material, and a teacher as a mediator in the dialog between the reader and the work contribute to the literary work's modernization in its educational function.

Our further study is focused on identifying the educational possibilities of the epics and fairy tales of the Evenk and Nenets literature schools.

Objective of the Article is to expose the educational potential of the epics and fairy tales of Siberia's minority indigenous peoples.

### Materials and Methodology

In order to study the structural features of the epics and fairy tales of indigenous peoples, the method of comparative and typological analysis of a fairy tale has been applied by V. Ya. Propp<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Seredkina N. N., Smolina M. G., Kistova A. V. The influence of the epic on the fairy tales of the indigenous peoples of the North and Siberia. *Siberian Anthropological Journal*, 2017, vol. 1, issue 6, pp. 62–73.

<sup>2</sup> Propp V. Ia. Structural and historical study of a fairy tale. *Folklore and Reality*, Moscow, 1976, p. 140 (In Russian).



The basis for unlocking the educational potential of works of art is the concept of the maieutic aspect of art criticism developed jointly by the authors V. I. Zhukovskiy<sup>3</sup> and N. P. Koptseva<sup>4</sup>. According to this concept, in every work of art a kind of image is embedded, conceived in the process of interaction between the author and the material, which means that each work of art hides internal passages built under the recipient's administration. The critic and maieutic scientist helps in unlocking these passages who assists the recipient in solving the problems and difficulties met when interacting. Here education is understood not just as the acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities, but as a holistic image of the recipient's own "ego", which serves as an ethnocultural identity in the selected material.

In addition, the study has adopted concepts developed by scientists from the Ural-Siberian school as a basis: the theory of culture as an ideal generating aspect of people's lives, approaches to the analysis of the cultures of indigenous and minority peoples of the North in the context of global transformations, and ideas of the educational mission of cultural analysis.

## Results

Based on review of the history of the Evenk and Nenets literature schools formation and development, on analysis of a number of their representative works of art (the epic "Brave Sodani Bogatyr", fairy tales), it becomes possible to highlight a number of the literary features of the indigenous peoples in Siberia from the point of view of its educational potential.

1. The reason has been determined as to why one can mainly tap into the Evenk epic and fairy tales as well as the representative epics of the

minority indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East, where educational possibilities can be found. The Evenks are settled across the northern part of Siberia and the Far East and their epic works called Nimnagakans present their vivid representation of Northern Siberian literature, exposed to the influence of other nationalities (the Yakuts and Buryats). The Evenk fairy tales about animals contain some images universal in Siberian tales in general. It is also possible to compare the material of the fairy tale with Southern Siberian variants, and variants by other northern peoples.

2. The controversial nature of the form and genre division in the literature of the minority indigenous peoples of Siberia has been recorded. The epic as a branch of literature and folklore is divided into the archaic epic with the most ancient views of the world, and epic genres of a modern kind: novels, novellas, short stories. This is the form and genre system adopted in world literature studies. However, it sometimes has contradictory characteristics, when it comes to the "literary tree" of certain nationalities. For example, the Evenk epics includes Nimnagakans which belong to the most ancient types of legends, and Ulgers, which means "a fable", which should not be based on fiction, but on history. However, the word "Ulger" acquired the meaning of a "fairy tale" with the Evenks inhabiting the Transbaikal area under the influence of the Buryat genre system and the Buryat language. The Evenks from other localities (for example the Krasnoyarsk Territory, Khabarovsk Territory) preserved a certain originality of genre.

3. The main differences in the perception of epics and fairy tales have been identified, which determine the conditions for the manifestation of educational possibilities. The distinctive feature

<sup>3</sup> Zhukovskii V. I. (Ed.) *Educational function of the art culture*. Krasnoyarsk, Siberian Federal University, 2013, 222 p. (In Russian).

<sup>4</sup> Koptseva N. P. (Ed.). *New art criticism on the Yenisei river banks*. Krasnoyarsk, Siberian Federal University, 2015, 340 p. (In Russian).





of an epic, important for the listener's perception, is the length of the piece. The heroic epic is usually long, is performed in a singing voice for a long period, which creates a special story line that seduces its audience to continue listening, enchanting them. Captivation is achieved through the performer's slow pace, the thoroughness of the story with all the details and nuances of the incident. It is unlike the relatively short fairy tale that the listener or reader perceives in a short span of time, making it immediately integral and ideal for a one-off experience. Thus, the length of the work and the pace of the narration values its recipients for their qualities of patience and perseverance, or quickness and focus of their attention. A universal recipient, mature enough to be able to control their attention can listen to both types of work, however, here it is necessary to use pragmatic logic in assessing the readiness and possibilities in the modern "high speed" age: is the listener ready to sacrifice a lot of time, do they have a certain esthetic mindset? When forming an esthetic mindset for the perception of an epic, a listener is involved in the special laws of epic distances and epic length. This is also referred to as the "chrono act", when an entire human life can be spent on a character's intermediate action (for example, it took 70 years for the dog and the cat to walk to King Arsalan in the fairy tale "How King Arsalan became a shepherd"). The action of an epic hero is measured in inhuman units of time which contributes to the fact that a listener perceiving the epic is released from the pressure of his/her own discontinuity and limitedness, and begins to think differently, of a larger scale, not only at the level of personal goals and satisfactions, but thinking about the history of mankind as a whole, rising above oneself.

The Evenk epic "Brave Sodani-Bogatyř" consists of 2 632 poems. This piece holds the unique content of the Evenks folk spirit, and its educational value increases in relation to the

performers or storytellers. Storytellers of a certain form of Nimnagakans have been educated in the required autochthonous culture and have absorbed the legends from their teachers or relatives since childhood. Only they can become true guides to the genuine meanings of this epic. The tradition of learning by heart demonstrated the superb memory abilities of storytellers from the Buta family (Nikolay Germanogevich Trofimov). The Bogatyř ancestor of the Evenks takes shape in the listener's mind, who is a concentration of these peoples' best qualities, the chosen storyteller emphasizes the status of this character. The potency of the epic is that upon literature catharsis the recipient feels like a small representative of a minority and can feel a part of something great that occurred in history.

4. The link has been identified between the epics and fairy tales of the indigenous peoples of Siberia and the ability to make philosophical generalizations and model the world in its structural integrity. Modeling the picture of the universe prepares the recipient for understanding the world as a complex system. The epics and fairy tales preserve the threefold nature of the universe, which is typical in shamanic representations. In a fairy tale "Nirkhushka-Emerkhen" (recorded by K. M. Rychkov from the Yenisei Evenks in 1911) and the legend "Brave Sodani-Bogatyř", the native land of the main characters is the Middle World. The plot develops in such a way that the hero must go to another, lower or upper, world where there is also life. In this different world, the hero finds a wife ("Nirkhushka-Emerkhen"), or saves sister (Irkinichen, the brother of Sodani-Bogatyř, defeats avakhi Seleme Degiyandyu in the Lower World and takes sister Ayakchan Ivekchan away who was stolen by him). The hero can only enter other worlds without his assistant, a mounted deer or a horse. The existence of the irrational in the dominating world of rationality is often ignored,



however, the idea that beyond the earthly world there is something less tangible generally involves an individual in the process of thinking and leads to an attempt to solve complex philosophical puzzles, which contributes to his/her "ego" formation and placing oneself in a kind of coordinate system.

5. The specifics of the educational potential within the fairy tales of the indigenous minorities of Siberia have been characterized. The animal epic makes up a great part of the fairy tales. The educational role of the animal epic, or fairy tales about animals, is related to becoming familiarized with the natural world and simultaneously with the world of feelings and characteristics, which is why it is well suited for recipients of pre-school and primary school age. Vivid imagery of the animal world captures the qualities applicable to social world, for example sly and cunning foxes, fair and royal bears. The fairy tales of indigenous peoples of Siberia about animals successfully combine ethical and environmental values. The fauna diversity in the fairy tales of indigenous peoples raises environmental awareness, develops curiosity and a creative approach to solving complex issues based on careful observation ("Why the tips of the hare's ears are black", "Why the red deer drops its horns").

6. The esthetic expressiveness of fairy tales and epics has been considered as a specific system of techniques which can be called realistic grotesque. Grotesque images are present in the epics and fairy tales of the peoples of Siberia. The grotesque involves exaggeration and expressive techniques when it comes to perception and understanding "get a sniff of my words with your guts", "screw it in your ears", "get it into your nut". Perhaps, to some extent, it refers to the issue of problems with translation into the Russian

language by representatives of a different culture. However, the translation of abstract concepts of attention and understanding into the local sphere of physical sensations is descriptive in its brutality and unexpected realism of speech.

7. The connection between the formation of ethnocultural identity and exaggerated images in the heroic epics has been established. Hyperbole brings an interesting dissonance: wonderful nine-legged horses become symbols of incredible speed, exaggerated height of the mountain that reaches the sky, highlight the incredible strength of a hero holding the mountains. The superpowers that characterize the heroes are designed to surprise and reinforce a positive attitude that is associated with the presence of reliable support and protection of humanity in the form of these wonders. Therefore, both the epics and fairy tales of the indigenous minority peoples employ special artistic techniques engaging the listener and the reader in the formation of a fantastically strong image of the peoples in question.

Superpowers can be in the form of an ability to see the future, which is characteristic for the epic heroes. In the legend "Brave Sodani-Bogatyr", Tulivchan, the daughter of Sodani's younger brother Irkinichen, possesses such superpowers. Being endowed by nature with the ability to foresee the future and bring the dead to life, Tulivchan became a shaman, a mistress of the Taiga. In the end of the legend she predicts the future of the Evenks: "We are destined to be the Evenks. / The tribe of the Evenks-ai / Will live through the years / Will pass through the days / Will multiply from generation to generation / Will become very-very rich / In deer, horses and cows ..." (Brave Sodani-Bogatyr, lines 2620-2633)<sup>5</sup>.

8. The additional impact produced by the fairy tale materials on the listeners' mind in

<sup>5</sup> Myreeva A. N. *Evenki heroic legends*. Novosibirsk, Nauka. Sibirskoe otdelenie Publ., 1990, 392 p. (In Russian).



forming the environmental consciousness characteristic of the indigenous peoples culture has been specified. In the tales of indigenous peoples, the ability of animal protagonists to talk is not treated as a superpower, but as something natural, since an animal is initially seen here as a living creature with whom conversation is possible. The dialog with the living world, in particular with animals, rivers, lakes, is natural for shamanism, according to which nature is entirely inhabited by spirits. The equal rights and abilities of a human being and an animal is a principle leading to the discovery of a new sides of the universe and breaking down pragmatic economic views that an animal is a commodity, it is property, and nature is a resource that can be only used. In connection with this in particular, the fairy tales of indigenous peoples of Siberia are a unique way to enhance creativity in the issues of economy and creative socially-oriented industry related to the development of an environmental attitude towards nature. Nature often becomes the regulator of unfolding events which guides the action of the characters towards a better way. The personification of animals, nature in the space of the Middle World demonstrates the unity, to some extent, even the equality of all living beings in this world.

9. The ethnographic illustrative form inherent in the epics and fairy tales material of the indigenous minority peoples of Siberia has been recorded. The specific feature of both fairy tales and epic-heroic legends is the embodiment of the material and spiritual values of national cultures in the artistic symbolic constructs of works. This is what creates an image of the ethnic culture in the mind of the respondent. Constructs of this kind in the Evenk fairy tales and epic "Brave Sodani-Bogatyr" can include such basic concepts

as "chum" (raw-hide tent), "deer", "hunting", "Evenk", "Middle World", "Upper World", "Lower World", "shaman", "spirit". Chum ("uten", raw-hide tent) is not only the traditional dwelling of the Evenks, it also plots the centre of the Middle World ("In the middle of this Middle Land, / On a high standalone hill / There is built one uten", "Brave Sodani-Bogatyr", lines 94–96)<sup>6</sup>. In fairy tales, the chum is generally located in the Taiga. The Taiga is characterized as a space of cold, frosts, a place where there is snow, but at the same time it is rich in food: "He (a wood grouse) has enough food and space in the Taiga. He does not fear frosts. He sleeps in the snow. Sleeping in the snow is as warm for a wood grouse as for a man in a good chum" ("Wood grouse and a black grouse").

The activities of the characters of the indigenous minority peoples of the North Siberian peoples are associated with traditional Evenk production activities: reindeer breeding, hunting, fishing, reindeer migrating, gathering food, the manufacture of tools. The characters' food is mainly fatty venison. Therefore, there are fairy tales that are typical for the North, in which the main characters are usually specifically northern animals and birds (loon, dog, deer). For instance, "What, how, why"<sup>7</sup> is a collection of Nenets fairy tales adapted by Lyubov Prokopevna Neniang. The foundational myth and fairy tale "Where the land and the people came from" gives an impression of the extremely precarious situation of the first creatures (Dog and Loon) who lived in the midst of the water and collected algae to somehow fix the earth. These elements are symbols of ethnocultural identity, particularly of the dog cult in the North. Many foundational works begin with chaos and earth that was long knitted with straw, stressing the Nenets ancestors'

<sup>6</sup> Myreeva A. N. *Evenki heroic legends*. Novosibirsk, Nauka. Sibirskoe otdelenie Publ., 1990, 392 p. (In Russian).

<sup>7</sup> Neniang L. P. *What, how, why? Nenets tales and legends*. Krasnoyarsk, Book Publishing House, 1984, pp. 16 (In Russian).



particular rootless (nomadic) perception of world. The educational potential of such fairy tales in which there is a sense of loss and loneliness, since there is a specific focus on when the dog felt lonely without the loon, must be supported by a professional mediator or teacher, who should place more emphasis on the hardworking loon and on how they jointly created something coherent and coped with the lack of soil underfoot.

10. The importance of a mediator or teacher in the familiarization with the non-adopted fairy tales and myths material has been considered. The aggressive and violent images found in the Nenets' tales suggests that they were not intended for children and are not delicate in approaching child psychology. Their audience is a reader of an epic who has moral and stable view of the world. These tales possess a warning and deterrent nature: there is danger and anxiety all around. For example, the image of a dead hare, who was trapped in the fairy tale "Hare and Wolverine": "The Hare lies in the middle of the road, his eyes are still and the mouth is open. He got trapped"<sup>8</sup>. The tale ends with a moral conclusion that it was necessary to listen to the advice the old Wolverine shared. In the tale "Lemoroko Bird and a Mouse", the mouse-wife cuts off the bird-husband's frozen wings, and then the bird is eaten by other mice. This violence suggests that we are directly encountering an ancient archaic myth, unveiling the ancestors' wisdom and the structure of the world. However, the Nenets fairy tales as well as the tales of other peoples of Siberia demonstrate the amazing observance and thoughtfulness of a hunter: why a pike is full of bones, why a partridge has red eyelids, why a cuckoo leaves its children.

11. The universal heroes of the animalistic epic of the Russian indigenous peoples have been

identified. The traditional economy of indigenous peoples in the North, South, and East of Siberia differs, for example in southern Siberia fairy tales depict other everyday realities: herdsmen in Altay, Khakassia and Tuva have horses and cows instead of dogs and deer. Herdsmen heroes change mounts, but the plots in the fairy tales are common, due to the fact that in the Siberian hunting and fishing certain wild animals are found throughout the entire breadth of the Siberian territory. The most universal Siberian animal heroes in fairy tales include the fox and the bear. Apart from these, the fairy tale characters of the indigenous minority peoples include inhabitants of different natural spaces: taiga forest (hare, chipmunk), air (bird, swan, wood grouse, black grouse) and lakes (crucian carp).

The fox is a universal character appearing in fairy tales of different peoples. Numerous Russian, Khakassian, Evenk, and Nenets tales about foxes exist. "The tale about a tricky fox" in the Khakassian variant (retold by Mikhail Kilchichakov)<sup>9</sup> is very long, and consists of several plot turns, mimicking the elaborate cunning of the predator. This also displays another epic feature: structuring the fairy tales in cycles around one character. The intricacy here is that it shows how using the talent of eloquence, Fox fools the birds, heroes holding traditional tribal values, promising offspring a beautiful life in the future or promising safe shelter. Thus, one can see the desire of a storyteller to draw parallels between the animal world and the world of people. Clearly formed imaginary comparisons of human actions with natural phenomena are inherent in the epic style in general.

The folklore of practically all the indigenous peoples in Siberia stresses the importance of the bear character, which is why

<sup>8</sup> Neniang L. P. *What, how, why? Nenets tales and legends*. Krasnoyarsk, Book Publishing House, 1984, pp. 16. (In Russian).

<sup>9</sup> Kilchichakov M.E. *Why Do Deer Shed Their Antlers?* Moscow, Detskaia literature, 1979, 64 p. (In Russian).



one of the most important fairy tales is about how the bear left five stripes on the chipmunk's back as a reminder. This is found in Mikhail Kilchichakov's retelling of the Khakassian people's tales, but it can also be encountered in the Northern nationalities. The mythological explanation of an animal's appearance does not serve the primary body of knowledge, since mythological matter does not meet scientific criteria, but this is rather a creative image, which emphasizes these two species in the diversity of nature, which are related to each other through the illogical but rather creative plot line. The author's translation of the tale adds a lot of details that introduce a young reader to the psychology of animals behavior, for example M. Kilchichakov clarifies the causes of the ranging bear's fury, who woke up hungry in spring, through verbalization of the hero's thoughts and verbal animation of its image. The storyteller's ability to connect events and episodes to each other, while carefully depicting all the important details, positively affects the reader's way of thinking, who adopts the integrity and learns to think sequentially and slowly, which is very useful in a hyperactive modern world, where thorough and detailed ways of thinking are becoming a rarity.

The reminder the host of the Taiga left of Chipmunk's back is a trophy for any creature, since meeting a bear in the wood is always fateful, and anyone who has survived this meeting can consider their life as gifted. In a syncretic way, the fairy tale links basic safety (meeting with a predatory beast in the forest), biodiversity (describes the kinds of birds and animals), artistic thinking (description of vivid details) and logic (narrativity).

### Conclusions

The educational possibilities of the epics and fairy tales of Siberia's minority indigenous peoples comprise grasping the fundamentals of a

culture with a traditional economy, shaping a positive ethnocultural identity among listeners and readers, as well as their ecological awareness, and develop the ability to make philosophical generalizations.

The educational potential of fairy tales and epics is not only related to the broadening horizons in the area of the traditional economy type, accumulation of information about everyday life and customs in the culture of the indigenous peoples of Siberia, but also to the exploration of ethnocultural boundaries, the extrapolation of the cultural characteristics to their own culture, and thus, self-discovery. The study of ethnocultural boundaries and extrapolation are not simple tasks, and may in some cases require a mediator (a teacher, culturologist, critic specializing in maieutics). In addition, the role of the educational mediator is that they rule out the situation of misunderstanding the foreign culture, its instances of brutal images inherited from the archaic culture.

The educational possibility of the epic and fairy tale material for the indigenous peoples can be apparent in the conceptualization of the meaning of works among listeners who are representatives of these peoples. When performed in the language of the indigenous peoples in the appropriate conditions (in the homeland, in traditional housing and with the appropriate lifestyle) such works broadcast an integrated verbal-auditory image. A different way of perceiving the epic, in the context of the modern lifestyle of a typical urban dweller, on paper, through the perception of letters, certainly weakens the intended educational effects, and yet they can be transmitted through the meaningful narrative structure, and also involve the visual-tactile component: printed symbols, touching the paper and illustrations of professional artists. A large role in organizing educational activities based on this material in the modern world should



be given to temporary length in the perception of a work, while in the case of working in groups it is required to organize reading long works by episodes, under special conditions close to natural for nomadic deer herders. For example, in an open natural space, simulating the space of the chum, etc.

The epic and the fairy tale provide a syncretic model of the universe, while European educational technology, starting from the Modern Age, teaches readers into straightforwardness, strict consistency, determination and differentiation even in the humanitarian sphere. Syncretism is currently scarce, and the proponents of this way of thinking can be considered as rare representatives of society, contributing to its diversity and calling for to be saved.

As the story behind the epic is almost always already known by the listener, the stress is not on the content, but rather on the narrative style: slow, with a lot of vivid details that can captivate the listener with the adaptation and coloring of the myth already known to them. It is important that the epic makes long-standing myths relevant, gives a new interpretation to their past from an epic distance: the very events that have played a key role both in the life of the

character and all their decedents (peoples, tribe) should be visible.

The special role of animalistic fairy tales for indigenous ethnic groups is usually related to the fact that this is one of the cornerstones forming their ethnic picture of the world, as beasts and animals are a necessary condition for the survival of the ethnic traditions. However, the educational role of such tales can also be found for the reader leading a "civilized" urban settled lifestyle, and not only so that the reader gets acquainted with another culture and another form of existence. Fairy tales and the epics of indigenous peoples teach a reader a syncretic educational act, as they usually present objects in unity which are given separately in the modern world. The objects are connected to basic safety, nature and social studies, fictional literature, and logic. The desire for a mythological explanation of the world develops the creative abilities of the reader, allowing them to escape from a situation in an extraordinary way. Apart from the basic documentation of a model for a traditional hunting (cattle breeding) lifestyle, the recipient of a fairy tale is able to extrapolate and draw parallels between the natural world and societal life.

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