Russia as the Subconsciousness of Finland

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The sword and the scimitar

Beer bottles can tell stories. Sitting in a Helsinki pub and examining a bottle of *Karjala* beer in front of me (was it half-full, or already half-empty?), I was feeling Huntingtonian inspiration. The sticker depicted the coat of arms of the Province of Karelia, and served as a perfect illustration of the "*Clash of Civilizations*". The coat of arms shows a field. In the western side, one sees a hand in armor, supposedly that of a Christian knight, holding a straight European sword. Opposing it, is a hand holding a curved scimitar. It is West against East, but also a Christian cross, represented by a sword, against the Islamic half-moon (Fig. 1, Fig. 2).

Figure 1. *Karjala* beer sticker, ca. 1998

Figure 2. Coat of arms of the Province of Karelia, ca. 1562

The emblem dates back to 1562, and symbolizes the centuries-old struggle for Karelia between Sweden and Russia, and earlier between Sweden and Novgorod. In 1581, the Swedish King, John III, seeking to multiply the heraldic attributes of the young House of Vasa, as compared to the Polish Kingdom or Muscovy, introduced the title of the Great Duchy of Finland, and its coat of arms, which featured the same opposition of the sword and the scimitar, and which the Finnish state has preserved until today (Fig. 3). Since then, the sword and the scimitar have appeared in numerous other representations (Fig. 4, Fig. 5), becoming an important element of the Finnish semiosphere. It passes almost without saying that the scimitar represents Russia: e.g. Paasi (1996: 87) speaks of a "Russian scimitar".

Figure 3.
Finland's coat of arms

Figure 4. Shield of the Wärtsilä metal company located on the Finnish-Russian border

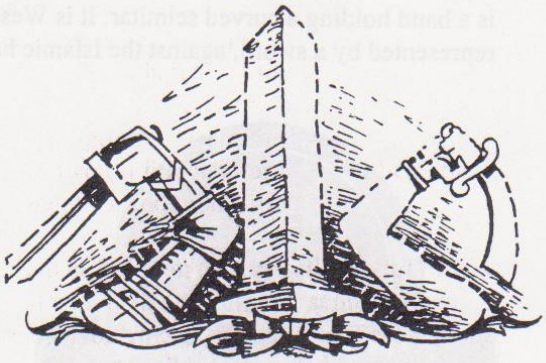

Figure 5. Illustration to the 1941 patriotic poem "*On the boundary*" by Uuno Kailas

The problem is, Russian warriors, especially "westernized" Novgorod tribes fighting in Karelia and on the Baltic coast, did not have scimitars, but used almost the same kind of straight European swords as the Swedes did. (Only later, in the 18th century, did Cossacks start using curved Turkish sables). Furthermore, for Russia, too, the oriental scimitar (a Turkish *yataghan*) was a symbol of the Other, being identified with the half-moon of Islam. The cross of the Russian Orthodoxy (not unlike the lion on the Finnish coat of arms) tramples upon the half-moon, representing the victory of Christ over hell; it can be argued that the Soviet emblem also secularizes the opposition in the dichotomy of hammer (cross) and sickle (half-moon). (Fig. 6).

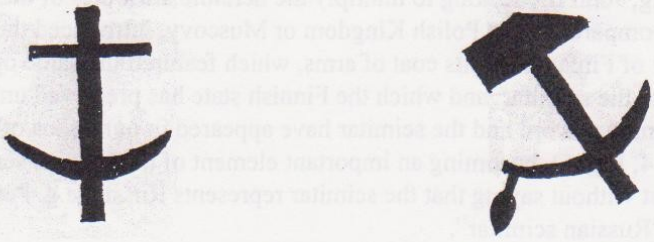

Figure 6. Orthodox cross symbolizing the victory of Cross over hell/death, and the Soviet emblem symbolizing the unity of hammer (cross) and sickle (half-moon), and also the triumph of the former over the latter.

The scimitar, unlike Russia, belongs to the Islamic Orient, whereas Russia was, and remains, just plain "East". Somehow, this was not sufficient for the architects of Swedish, and later Finnish, statehood; Russia had to be fully "orientalized", identified with Turkey, made an accomplished enemy and ultimate Other.[1] This was an argument of inverse proportions: the less western Russia was depicted to be, the more western Sweden and Finland appeared to themselves. Although this "orientalizing" discourse did occasionally give way to more positive images of Russia in Finland (e.g. during some periods in the 19th century), it prevailed until the 20th century, and was evoked each time Finnish identity and national cohesion were at stake. Naturally, it was called into being in the time of the First Republic (1918-1944), and especially during the Winter (1939-40) and Continuation (1941-44) Wars, when the propaganda represented the 'Russki' as a "bloodthirsty Asian barbarian" (Luostarinen, 1989: 132). In fact, the Finnish construction of the Other had much in common with the European tradition of representing Russia (cf. the French proverb *Grattez le Russe, et vous trouverez le Tartare* — "Scratch the Russian, and you'll find the Tartar"); but here, the relationship was intensified, even dramatized, by a common border.

A variation on the "fighting arm" theme is to be found in the later allegory of Finnish statehood. This depicts the Maid of Finland with both her "arms" resembling two stretches of Finnish territory: Käsivarsi in the Northwest, and Petsamo (Pechenga) in the Northeast. In a picture from 1905, the eastern "arm" is interpreted in a rather assertive manner: it is stretched eastwards, holding the Finnish flag against a strong wind from the east, as if projecting the idea of a nation (Fig. 7a). After World War 2, and the loss of eastern "arm" to the Soviet Union, this territorial surgery was reinterpreted in a popular poster of 1948, circulated for promoting tourism: The Maid now uses her left hand to protect her against the sun; conspicuously, the wind still blows from the east (Fig. 7b).

Figure 7a. Maid of Finland, 1905.

Figure 7b. Maid of Finland, 1948.

[1] Cf. the statement of Konrad Adenauer from 1946: "Asia stands on the Elbe" (cited in Rupnik, 1994: 94). For Finland, Asia stood on the border river Rajajoki.

Fortress Finland

Like almost all nations bordering vast expanses of Russia in the east, Finland developed a feeling of a fortress, of a strategic and cultural outpost. For instance, since its baptism in the 10th century, and until the 1960s, Poland was referred to as *antemurale Christianitas*, "the fortress of Christianity", in the official documents of the Roman Catholic Church. In Norway, the coat of arms of the county of Finnmark is a stylized picture of Vardøhus, a fortress on the border with Russia. Likewise, in Norway's border regions with Finland and Russia boarding schools, churches and chapels built in the easily recognizable Norwegian log architecture were officially called "cultural fortresses" (Niemi, 1996).

In Finland's semiosphere, the image of a fortress is of even greater import. Apart from the obvious strategic significance of Swedish citadels (Olavinlinna, Hämenlinna, etc.) the entire nation was influenced by the "fortress mentality". Shaped by historical experiences, including periods of strategic abandonment, like e.g. on the eve of World War 2, and fostered by a Lutheran ideology of prudence, patience and self-reliance, the self-image of Finland contains elements of a fortress mentality: a self-sufficient and relatively isolated outpost. Despite considerable changes in this image (joining the EU), many of its aspects are still valid.

The fortress ideology had two specific implications. On the home front, it stressed national homogeneity, cohesion, and self-sufficiency. In the world, it often sought to portray Finland as a fighter for Western values and civilization against chaos and barbarity. As Mannerheim put it in the wake of the Winter War, "We are proudly conscious of our historical mission, which we will continue to fulfill: the protection of the Western civilization, which for centuries has been our inheritance; but we also know that we have paid back, indeed for the last penny, everything we have ever owed to the West" (cited in Patomäki, 1996: 85).

In Finnish political mythology, the country, or rather the state, emerged as a fortress and outpost, a protected area bordering the chaotic and hostile Other. In terms of the Scandinavian *Edda* epic, Finland was a *Midgard*, built by the gods, and surrounded by the barren and frozen *Utgard*, inhabited by giants. It is instructive that Nordic mythologies localize these giants in the North (cf. *Edda*'s *Hel* and *Kalevala*'s *Pohjola*) and East, so Russia emerged as a territorialization of chthonic archetypes, a frozen desert of primeval forces.

There's a joke about a Finnish lumberman living in a hut in the Karelian backwoods. As the new border is delimited between Finland and Russia in 1944, the line runs straight through his house. When asked on which side he wishes to live (let's concede such a situation was possible), he thinks for a while and says: "On the Finnish side". When asked why, he replies: "Winters in Russia are too hard"... His answer is not at

all absurd: Russia is imagined as a land of hard winters and other elements (cf. wind from the east in the Maid of Finland picture above), a tougher place, inappropriate for civilized habitat.

The Finnish border with Russia thus acquired a mythological dimension: a border between Self and Other, Inside and Outside, it also became a border between order and chaos, light and darkness, mild winters and hard winters, and ultimately a sacred border between Good and Evil. In general, the sacredization of borders is characteristic of any modern state:[2] with the demise of *Christianitas*, and the advent of secular modernity, the powers of sacral were gradually removed from God and the Church and vested into nation-states; thus, borders between Good and Evil became state borders, with the Good contained inside, and the Evil outside. According to Bordieu,

> "[*R*]*egere fines*, the act which consists in 'tracing out the limits by straight lines', in delimiting the interior and the exterior, the realm of the sacred and the realm of the profane, the national territory and the foreign territory is a religious act. (1991: 221-222).

In Finland, this discursive practice was intensified by a chthonic image of Russia: not just another Other, but an all-encompassing primordial chaos.

Finnish territory and Russian space

In this context, the construction of the Finnish state and national consciousness can be interpreted as an attempt to distinguish oneself from the bordering entropy. Architects of Finnish identity in the 19th century were not simply building it as an antithesis to Russian imperial rule, but rather (even if inadvertently) as an opposition to chthonic forces of chaos. As a small community bordering on the vast and insuperable Eurasian space (and for over a century being an administrative part of it), the only way to survive was to try and dissociate itself from it; in an attempt to break out of *space*, Finland came up with a structured and delineated *territory*.

The Finnish state was therefore always preoccupied with its territory and borders; it was, and essentially remains, a state *par excellence*. It was this importance of territory, and the border with Russia (which Paasi calls a "constituent in the historical construction of the grand narrative of the Finnish nation" [1996: 63]) that shaped Finland as an "ontological, state-centered project" (Joenniemi, 1993). Russia was a necessary opposition in the Inside/ Outside paradigm, something from which the Finnish nation could dissociate itself, an unconscious space from which a conscious terri-

[2] E.g. in the Soviet Union in the late 1920s and 1930s the localization of Good and Evil respectively in the Soviet territory and the "capitalist encirclement" was so intense that the Supreme Soviet passed a law in 1936 proclaiming defection a capital crime: i.e. a person crossing the border, or attempting this, was automatically falling out of grace, suffered moral death, and his physical extermination was a technical consequence of his desacralizing act. Cf. the East German practice of shooting people attempting to get over the Berlin Wall.

tory was carved. In the cosmogony of Finnish statehood, Russia is the primordial, pre-national, pre-conscious condition, something that precedes Finnish national consciousness, the darkness from which a nation (a piece of light and Enlightenment) is born. Russia is the space of non-discrimination, darkness and water, like Mother Night, like a mother's womb.

The emergence of Finnish national consciousness in the 19th century comes with experiencing specific territory, with the revelation of place (e.g. in the narratives of Topelius). In psychological terms, this resembles the formation of a child: as observed by Piaget, the importance of a place is striking for children, leaving an imprint on their psyche for the rest of their life (Piaget and Inhelder, 1956; cf. Forsberg, 1996: 361), or as put more simply by Dorothy from the "*Wizard of Oz*", "there's no place like home" (cf. Morley & Robins, 1990). In fact, the formation of a child's psyche is largely a territorial act: from a certain point, his/her consciousness and memories are inscribed into a certain place, anchored in boundless space to a specific delineated territory. "To know a place is also to know the past" (Tuan, 1975: 151); consciousness begins with territoriality, while space (as opposed to territory) is mostly pre- (or un-) conscious.

Extending the psychological template in Freudian terms, the 19th-century construction of Finnish statehood and identity through the revelation of territory can be compared to the emergence of the ego from the pre-conscious id (Russian space), which used to occupy all of the mind in early infancy. However, with the emergence of Finland's national consciousness, pre-conscious images of Russian space were not erased, but rather became the *subconsciousness* of the Finnish psyche. Is it not therefore appropriate to hypothesize a general psychoanalytical format of Russian-Finnish relations: Russia as the subconsciousness of Finland?

In approaching this question, two further considerations shall be added. First, Russia proper tends to identify herself as the space of the subconscious. Second, the West, too, imagines Russia this way. So before continuing the analysis of the Russian-Finnish relations, one has to examine these two discourses.

Russia: A mother, a family, an unconscious belonging

Freudism was never quite popular in Russia (Pyatigorskii, 1977). In a sense, it was not in demand since for the last two centuries Russia has been identifying herself as the space of the subconscious, but using her own, indigenous terms. Indeed, many Russian philosophers have observed a certain irrationality and amorphousness of the national character. This started with Pyotr Chaadayev and his "*Philosophical Letters*" (1836) in which he asserted that Russia "did not belong to any of the great families of humankind", "stood out of time", that Russians did not have "fascinating memories, or gracious images in memory" (i.e., that memory was repressed, "erased" — *S.M.*),

did not have "anything individual, on which thought could rely" — in fact, did not have tradition, morality, culture, duty, justice, etc. (1987 [1836]: 36).[3]

According to Boris Groys, Chaadayev construed Russia as "an absolute Other, absolutely external to thinking, as the space of the subconscious" (1993: 248). This leads Groys to conclude that

> "Russia *is not* the domain of subjectness, *is not* a subject, or consciousness. The space of Russia is the space of losing space, of losing spatial certainty, individuality. The time of Russia is the time of losing time, losing history, memory, 'consciousness'. Russia lives in post-history (...), but it also lives in pre-history, before the Creation. Russia does not 'create' anything, because creativity is only possible in the chronotope of the individual, or collective, *conscious* experience; all creations of other nations dissolve within her, losing their certainty, and enter into random combinations: Russia as a dream, as the space and time of a dream, but also a field of Lacanian psychoanalysis, based on free combination of the signifiers, as the practice of Surrealist 'automatic writing', etc." (Groys, 1993: 246).

This description refers to the Russian psyche, but also to Russian *space*: boundless, insuperable, lacking subjective creativity. In this fluid and open space, a moving frontier provides land in abundance, and there is little need to settle down and work at a particular plot of land. Endless space is forgiving and undemanding, irresponsible and undiscriminating; its human embodiment is a weak-willed and dreamy Iliya Iliych Oblomov from Ivan Goncharov's classic novel: a man of instincts and amorphous desires, incapable of conscious creativity (Medvedev, 1997: 523).

In general, creative manliness in Russia is subdued in favor of amorphous femininity; Russians tend to see their country as a woman. In the Russian language, this is conveyed by grammatical gender. Spatial phenomena are predominantly feminine; quite often words like *mat'* or *matushka* ("mother" and affectionate for "mother") are used: *mat' syra zemlya* ("mother moist earth"), *Rossiya-matushka* (Russia-mother), *Volga-matushka* (the Volga is in a way synonymous to the length and breadth of Russia), etc. This feminine line culminates in Alexander Blok's exclamation "*O Rus' moya, zhena moya!*" ("O my Russia, o my wife!"), and in the popular Soviet *Song of the Motherland*: "We love our Motherland as the bridegroom loves his bride; we care for her as we care for our tender Mother".[4] (Fig. 8). By the same token, the Russian rite of coronation (*venchaniye na tsarstvo*, "marriage to a czardom") literally repeats the wedding ceremony, with the Czar symbolizing the husband, and Russia the wife.[5] The Russian Orthodoxy, too, is very much a cult of the Mother of God, *Bogoroditsa*.

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[3] After the publication of this letter, Chaadayev was announced insane by the Czar, and placed in a madhouse.

[4] "*Kak nevestu, Rodinu my liubim, // Berezhem, kak laskovuyu mat'*!" (*Pesnia o Rodine* [*Song of the Motherland*], words by V. Lebedev-Kumach)

[5] "The Sovereign may bear a masculinized face, but the nation itself is feminized, a mother, a sweetheart, a lover". (*Millennium*, 1991: 402)

James Billington has observed the indigenous, intimate character of the veneration of the Holy Virgin that developed in Russia's hinterland (1967: 19).

Figure 8. "Your Native Motherland Calls Upon You!", a popular wartime poster encouraging people to join the Army; a 52-metre-high figure of the Motherland at the *Mamaev Kurgan* War Memorial in Volgograd, formerly Stalingrad.

Summing up this feminine discourse, Nikolai Bereave wrote somewhat disdainfully on the "always womanish" in the Russian soul ("O *vechno-babiem v russkoi dushe*" [1990: 36-40])[6], stressing the same irrational, undiscriminating elements in the national consciousness. According to Hellberg-Hirn,

> "[T]he adherents of the female myth of Russian nationhood persist in seeing the essence of Russia in submissive and suffering passivity, as if she were an eternal *baba* always 'awaiting her bridegroom', a hero who will redeem and deliver her, be it the Varangian Prince, the Byzantine priest, Western Enlightenment, German socialism or the European market" (1998: 126).

In Goscilo's reading, this passive quality matches the open landscape of the steppe, its black, fertile soil, which like the dark continent awaiting discovery and 'civilization' (or colonization), was imagined as "the female body ever ready to be tamed and impregnated" (1995: 69).

Russia-the-endless-steppe, Russia-the-caring-Mother, Russia-the-loving-wife, Russia-the-big-family are all just various guises of the same unpronounced subconsciousness. These definitions are summarized in the famous Orthodox term *sobornost'*, literally

[6] Originally, "*baba*" is a name of a married, esp. older, peasant woman, and in many cases this word has a humiliating meaning, and is different from the neutral "*zhenshina*", woman.

meaning "conciliarity", and implying a bunch of meanings — from communality to spirituality and irrationality.[7] Looking at *sobornost'* from the perspectives of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, Marx and Heidegger, structuralism, race theory, deconstructivism, etc., we see that *sobornost'* is the Russian name for the libido, Eros, language, *Wille zu Macht,* for class consciousness, archetype, simulacrum — indeed, the Russian name for the subconscious (Groys, 1993: 249).

However, there is a meaningful difference. Whereas in mainstream Western narratives the words "unconscious" and "subconscious" tend to sound ambiguous (i.e. "out of control"), in Russia figures of the subconsciousness are traditionally interpreted in a positive manner. Apart from the Orthodox *sobornost'*, other positive readings of the subconsciousness include:

- *narodnost'* (nationality) from Count Uvarov's triple formula of official ideology of the1840s: "Orthodoxy, autocracy, nationality";
- the Bolsheviks' *classovost'* (class consciousness), and
- later Soviet *partiinost'* (adherence to the Party principles);
- Leo Tolstoy's idealization of the "unconscious life" of the Russian peasant;
- Vladimir Soloviev's Sofia, and his reading of Nietzsche's *Übermensch* as a step to the "God-Man" (*Bogochelovek*) Christ;
- Lenin's vitalism ("being determines consciousness"), and his practical Nietzscheanism;
- Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of the carnival,[8] created in parallel to, and in a way conceptualizing, the irrationality of Stalin's "Great Terror", and finally,
- anonymity of the Soviet political anecdote (Groys, 1993), and similar anonymity of the Soviet verbal practice of denunciation (*donos*, or *anonimka* [Medvedev, 1995: 93-94).

In a sense, Russia is permanently describing and reformulating herself in terms of the subconscious (not really in Freudian terms) by inventing various names for the communal, feminine, family-type belonging.[9]

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[7] In this bunch (Italian *fascio*), the prevailing meaning is communality. The bundling nature of *sobornost'* begs for a comparison with Italian fascism. At least, they both are rooted in communal, *Gemeinschaft*-type habits in Russia and Italy.

[8] Isn't Russia in general a carnival of European culture, a space of parody and transgression, like Venice in February? In Russia, European culture and institutions are emulated and sometimes parodied, becoming non-referential signs that enter into random combinations, into a perpetual play.

[9] Contemporary Russian political and philosophical narratives, especially of the nationalist (*pochvenniki*) and Eurasianist vein, too, stress the subconscious nature of Russia, especially in her relationship to the West: according to Sergei Kortunov, "Russia is the memory of the West about the Universal, the memory of the West about itself... Russia is the imperial principle of the Universe, its spiritual hypostasis, the embodiment of its freedom of will" (1997: 62-63). In the same passage, Kortunov, referring to Sergei Kurginian, recourses to a more bodily metaphor of the subconscious, what Bakhtin called the "aesthetics of the bodily bottom" (*estetika telesnogo niza*): "The West should understand that Russia is a place from which one can see its prospects and its diseases. This is not a dumping site (*pomoika*) of the

Russia as the subconsciousness of the West

The self-definition of Russia is matched by the imagination of Russia in the West. Just as Russia identifies herself as a woman, the West, too, perceives her this way, vesting her with its own repressed desires. The Western image of Russia is pervaded by meanings of femininity, irrationality, unpredictability and transgression; the myth of a "Russian woman" is deeply rooted in the Western collective psyche. The perennial Faustian quest for *ewig Weibliche* ("eternal femininity") that "draws us to herself" (*zieht uns hinan* in Goethe's *Faust*) identify the Western man's desire that cannot be satisfied within the West's territorial body, the realm of the conscious.

A geopolitical transformation of this unconsummated desire can be found in the *Lebensraum* and racial narratives of earlier this century: the German *Drang nach Osten* meant that the manliness of the Aryan race sought to subdue the soft womanish nature of Russians and other Slavs. The play on words "Slavs/Slaves" found in some Western languages[10] stresses the supposed submissiveness of people of the East.[11] The West's element is creative fatherly fire: it is fire that engulfs Don Giovanni, an essentially Faustian figure, in the finale of Mozart's opera. The East's element is forgiving motherly water: in a Slavic operatic example, Leoš Janacek's opera "*Katja Kaba-*

West, but its rectifier, its intellectual drainage (*smyslovoi drenazh*). Stuffing this drainage with its own waste, the West kills itself" (1997: 62). Inadvertently, the Russian *pochvennik* finds almost the same metaphor as Marcel Duchamp in his acclaimed "*Fountain*": *le pissior*, a urinal as a symbol of the subconscious and post-Freudian culture, as a drainage of traditional valorized culture.

[10] Cf. the depiction of the Moscow Kremlin by the caustic Marquis de Custin in the 1830s: "Here, under the heirs of Genghiz Khan, Asia for the last time looked back at Europe, stamped its foot when leaving, and the Kremlin rose out of the ground. Glory in slavery: such is the allegory symbolized by this satanic monument" (Custin 1930 [1840]: 190). Here one can find some major topics of the Russian theme universe as seen by a Westerner: Asia, satanism, slavery, retreat (descent).

[11] Cf. a recent study on "*The Slave Soul of Russia. Moral Masochism and the Cult of Suffering*" by Daniel Rancour-Laferriere (1995). The author sees the pinnacle of Russian masochism in the ritual of *banya*, bathing at a traditional steaming bathhouse, where people expose themselves to clouds of hot steam and scourge each other with bunches of leafy birch-branches (*venik*). In the bemused eyes of a Westerner, the *banya* emerges as a key Russian symbol, a clue to the subconsciousness of a nation. In fact, a ritual weekly visit to the *banya* is akin to psychotherapy, immersion into the subconscious where it is dark and wet, where a man is reminded of his childhood and early experiences with his mother, and at the same time can realize his libido: in the Russian narratives the *banya* is a setting for numerous erotic occasions.

nova" after Alexander Ostrovsky's play, the heroine throws herself into the waters of the Volga.[12]

A contemporary transformation of the image of the Russian woman/space surfaces in Western mass culture, with innumerable novels and movies glorifying the mystical Russian belle (e.g. Greta Garbo's *Ninotshka* [1939]), and showing a Western protagonist confronting, falling in love, and ultimately winning over the Russian woman, and in this symbolic act also defying the Soviet/Russian system, stressing the division of the world and the otherness of Russia (cf. *The Russia House*, *Gorky Park*, *Back in the USSR* and especially some of the James Bond series: *From Russia with Love, The Spy Who Loved Me, GoldenEye*, etc. [Bäckman, 1997]). Western conscious creativity (understood in Uranian and Faustian sense) seeks Russia's subconscious submissiveness; Uranus seeks Gaea which is the Mother-Land, Mother-Space.

For the West, Russia is a wife and mother at the same time (in terms of the Oedipus complex), a cosmic pra-mother,[13] but she can also be an aggressive female, the Freudian "castrating woman".[14] It is interesting how, in vesting Russia with various codes of the subconscious (femininity, lust and desire, but also fear, threat and trauma), the West depicts the Russian belle as an assailant (Rosner, 1995). In his novel "*The Saint*", on which a recent movie was based, Burl Barer shows a Russian nationalist, Ivan Tretiak, addressing a crowd: "Russia is not a sweet old babushka who's seen better days. No! Soon the babushka will rip off her rags, rear up, and reveal that she is Mother Russia, roaring bear!" (1997: 19). In the same manner, the Western cinema industry shows the Russian female not simply as a beauty, but as a spy(der) woman, a delectable Soviet agent like Xenia Onatopp from *GoldenEye* (Bäckman, 1997).

Contemporary narratives of mass culture emphasize the same perception: lucrative or threatening, Russia is the ultimate Other. Russia is external and exterritorial for the West, for the post-Enlightenment European rational metaphysics and the Hegelian tradition in the same manner as libido, dreams and complexes are exterritorial for the patient's consciousness — and also in the same manner as Zigmund Freud, the Vi-

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[12] The same opposition of Western manliness and Slavic softness can be found in the (otherwise congenial) music of Brahms and Dvorak.

[13] Groys interprets Malevich's *Black Square* as one of the key symbols of Russia in world art: "the darkness of some cosmic pra-vagina" [1993: 247; cf. Malevich, 1968]. For Walter Benjamin, the symbol of Russia is the traditional *Palekh* black lacquer box: "There are the heavy little boxes with scarlet interiors; on the outside on a gleamy black background, a picture... A *troika* with its three horses races through the night... No night of terror is as dark as this durable lacquer myth in whose womb all that appears in it is enfolded." (Benjamin, 1978: 114. Cf. Benjamin, 1997: 113; Boym, 1994: 107). Similarly, Bäckman (1997) observes that contemporary Western movies, e.g. *The Saint*, actualize the theme of Russian gloom in contrast to Western light.

[14] Or, referring to another archetype, *vagina dentata*: cf. some Western politologists' image of Russia in the early 1990s as a "geopolitical black hole" threatening the neighboring regions.

enna Jew, was external for the contemporary European cultural institutions. Freud possessed the only vehicle for territorialization: his own body; similarly, a psychoanalyst acts as the Other for the patient, submitting his own conscious body to the territorialization of the patient's complexes and dreams (Groys, 1993: 253). In our analysis, Russia acts as the Other for the West, offering her body as a vessel for Western complexes, fears, dreams and desires. The West projects and territorializes its discourse on the subconscious (Eros, libido, will to power, aggression, fear, class struggle, etc.) in the mythical space of Russia; the West *creates* the Russia myth by territorializing its own subconsciousness.

Russia as the subconsciousness of Finland

Finland's geographical proximity and historical experience with Russia make the conscious-subconscious relationship an ontological and political problem for the country; in a sense, Finland is more involved in daily dialogues with the subconscious than the rest of the West.

Applying Freudian terms, the structure of Finland's collective mind has three layers:

- the dark pre-historic and pre-conscious id, identified with pre-natal memories of the nation, childhood traumas,[15] and Russia, a jealous and proprietary mother (Fig. 9);
- the conscious national *ego* which emerges as a realm of daylight, and manifests itself in a modernist state-centered project of *Suomi* poetized by national romanticism;
- the normative and institutional *superego*: the West. Infant Finland solves the Oedipus complex by identifying itself with the fatherly and masculine West, accepting it as a "parent-in-the-mind", together with codes of conduct, concepts of morality and ideals of society.[16] (See Table 1).

Figure 9. Finnish caricature from 1914: Mother Russia holds in her embrace (in Siberian exile) Pehr Svinhufvud, the former speaker of the Finnish parliament and the future President of Finland. Svinhufvud was exiled to Siberia in 1914 for administrative disobedience.

[15] The so-called classical theory of Finnish history refers to deep-rooted memories of earlier wars, especially to the two occupations — the periods of 'Great Hate' and 'Lesser Hate' — in the early 18th century (Luostarinen, 1989: 128).

[16] In religious terms, the id-ego-superego relationship can be described as Russian hell (hence satanic and barbaric images of the half-moon/scimitar), Western heaven (the normative Garden of the Father, a seat of light and morality), and Finland as a purgatory.

Table 1. Finland: structures of the mind

superego the normative and institutional. Child Finland solves the Oedipus complex by identifying itself with the fatherly and masculine West, accepting it as a "parent-in-the-mind", together with codes of conduct, concepts of morality and ideals of society	**The West** (Father)	The normative **environment**	**Heaven** (The normative Garden of the Father)	**Cross** (Straight Western sword)
ego the conscious national ego which emerges as a realm of daylight, and manifests itself in the modernist state-centered project of *Suomi* poetized by national romanticism	**Finland** as a nation-state project (Child)	Revelation of **territory** (Topelius, *Järvi-Suomi*, etc.)	**Purgatory** (the transitory condition of frustration and neurosis)	Domain of collision, balance and compromise
id the dark pre-historic and pre-conscious id, identified with pre-natal memories of the nation, childhood traumas, and Russia, a jealous and proprietary mother	**Russia/Asia** (Mother)	Boundless **space**	**Hell** (chthonic forces, the realm of water and frost, a space of chaos and irrationality)	**Half-moon** (Asian scimitar)

The genesis of the nation can be traced back to the emergence of the territorial Finnish ego from the id of Russian space. However, just as the person can never become fully independent from the id and can only localize it as *It*, as the *Other*, Finland, too, tried to control and localize the subconscious by identifying it with Russia; a territorial independence was accompanied by a psychological dependence. Russia was beyond the border, but inside the Finnish mind, at the back of it, where memories and fears nest. The border looked safe in the daylight of consciousness and reality, but became vulnerable and penetrable at night time, in the space of dreams.

The construction of enemy images in the early period of Finnish statehood, and especially in White Finland, was therefore a defense mechanism whereby national consciousness tried to cope with subconscious anxiety, a mechanism of *projection* attributing anxiety-producing impulses to the Other. Finland had to construct and maintain the image of Russia-the-Other, Russia-the-Asian-Barbarian, the territorial embodiment of subconscious fears and childhood traumas. The anti-Soviet sentiment in Finland assumed such proportions that in 1934 *Izvestiya* labeled the country as the world champion in fostering the notion of a Soviet threat (Luostarinen, 1989: 124).

The dramatic outcome of the Winter and Continuation Wars (although they both, especially the former, amounted to kind of a moral victory rewarded by the superego: the pride of "protecting the West"), particularly the territorial losses and displacement of nearly half a million Karelians from the ceded territory, added a major dimension to Finland's relations with her own subconsciousness. A powerful subconscious drive emerged in the nation's psyche: a desire for Karelia.

In fact, one can observe the gradual submerging of the Karelian question from the conscious to the subconscious level over the postwar years. During the Paris Peace Negotiations in 1947 Finland tried to set out the issue cautiously (Forsberg 1995: 210), but after the conclusion of the Treaty, and until Stalin's death in 1953 the question disappeared from the public agenda, overshadowed by Cold War concerns. In the mid-1950s, the late President Paasikivi assumed that the return of Karelia could be an appropriate price for the continuation of the 1948 FCMA Agreement (Paasikivi, 1986: 565-74, 968-70), but having returned the naval base of Porkkala to Finland in 1955, the Soviet Union ruled out any further discussion on the territorial matter.

With the advent of the Kekkonen era (1956-81), the Karelian question started to be repressed (both politically and in the Freudian sense) out of the public consciousness into the subconscious level. It is instructive that President Kekkonen himself appears to have repressed the idea in his own mind, but it did surface on various occasions, like e.g. in the 1961 "note crisis". The official version of the events is that in the conditions of high international tension in the latter half of 1961 (the erection of the Berlin Wall in August, the Cuban crisis, enhanced NATO presence in the Baltic Sea area with the FRG granted access to Norwegian military bases) resulted in the Soviet note to Finland in late October in which the USSR offered to use the military negotiations clause of the FCMA Treaty, which could eventually mean the entry of Soviet troops into Finland. President Kekkonen who was at that moment on a holiday in Hawaii, did not cut short his visit, but sent Foreign Minister Karjalainen to Moscow, and later went himself to Novosibirsk for a meeting with Nikita Khrushchev at which he managed to persuade the Soviet leadership of Finland's ability to remain neutral and to remove the threat to Finnish sovereignty.

There are two subtexts in this story. The first is domestic: President Kekkonen was facing a re-election campaign in February 1962, in which he was being challenged by the powerful and united opposition of the Social Democrats and the Coalition Party in the form of the candidate Olavi Honka. The note crisis enhanced Kekkonen's image as the saviour of the nation, and the only man able to deal with the Soviets. This allowed him to disband Parliament, and eventually to win the election. Already at the time, there were numerous speculations that the Soviet note was ordered by Kekkonen himself who was going to use it as a trump card in his re-election campaign (see e.g. Rasila, 1996: 237).

Another, less perceptible, subtext was Karelia. In prior talks with Khrushchev Kekkonen argued that the return of Karelia, or part of it, would reinforce his domestic position, and Soviet-Finnish relations. Recent findings of Juhani Suomi in Soviet archives opened after the end of the Cold War seem to prove the point that the Karelian question was on the agenda of the Khrushchev-Kekkonen talks in the President's residence in Tamminiemi in late 1960 (1992: 329) that started the chain of events resulting in the Soviet note the following year (cf. Patomäki, 1993). In other words, in interpreting the note crisis one discovers that under the obvious international and stra-

tegic layer was a layer of domestic politics, but still deeper, lay a repressed desire for Karelia.[17] In 1962, Kekkonen still managed to lease the Saimaa Canal in the ceded territory, but further attempts to extend this arrangement into the whole of Karelia ended in vain, and the quiet coup in October 1964 in Moscow, which brought to power the military and military-industrial elite represented by Leonid Brezhnev, shut the door completely — in fact, for a good quarter of a century.

The invisible presence of Karelia in Finland's dealings in the international arena (e.g. Kekkonen's playing with the idea that a Finnish recognition of the GDR could bring Vyborg back [Forsberg, 1995: 212]) was a kind of subconscious impulse surfacing in conscious political activity. Obeying the Freudian reality principle, the Finnish ego was permanently postponing the gratification of a subconscious desire until conditions in the outside world were suitable. This involved mechanisms of repression and self-censorship: indeed, the whole Russian theme universe, including historical memories, the Karelian question, feelings of injustice and threat, etc. were consciously rejected, even tabooed, by the public mind and left to the fatherly figure of President Kekkonen. In Finnish domestic discourse, this rigorous mental discipline and a unique system of political etiquette was called the Paasikivi-Kekkonen line, and in the world it was named Finlandization.

The neurosis of Finlandization

Finlandization is a classical case of *neurosis*, when defense mechanisms of self-protection dominate and distort behavior, and energies of the ego are consumed by efforts to avoid anxiety. Finnish scholars point to the predominance of psychology in the phenomenon of Finlandization. Thus, Tarkka refers to the change in Soviet tactics: after military means in World War 2 and political pressure in the 1950s and 60s, in the 1970s, the focus was moved into the "mental field" (1992: 203-4). Vihavainen (1991), on the other hand, speaks about the "Finlandization of consciousness". Finlandization was rather a "self-Finlandization", a self-fulfilling prophecy which had largely to do with the subconscious complexes and traumas of Finland rather than with the objective reality of the Soviet threat.

In fact, despite blatant Soviet interventions into Finnish domestic politics during the Khrushchev era (most notably the "night frost" episode of 1958-1969 and the note crisis of 1961), no major interferences followed. Instead the Soviet coercion became more remote and suggestive ("psychological"). The fact that the Finnish government was very prepared to take Soviet interests, real or imaginary, into consideration, even in the absence of major external pressure, can be interpreted as a neurotic reaction to subconscious fears and taboos. This surfaced even in minor political episodes, and

[17] Although not a Karelian himself, Kekkonen had been elected into parliament from a Karelian district.

also in economic life. When the first nuclear power station was being planned in Finland in the late 1960s, the government intervened in the tendering process and awarded the contract to the Soviet Union. Initially, it had also been decided that new electric locomotives would be purchased from a Finnish supplier, but they were again eventually ordered in 1970 from the Soviet Union. Even some environmental issues were subject to subconscious censorship, as was the case with the Soviet cruise missile crash in Lapland in 1985, and the Chernobyl disaster in 1986: in both instances information released by the Finnish authorities for the home public was suspected of being subject to political expediency (Zetterberg, 1991: 135-8).

In the meanwhile, repression of the Russia theme, especially of the instinctive desire for Karelia, resulted in a different psychological phenomenon: the policy of pro-active neutrality aimed at the wider world which can be interpreted as a typical *sublimation*. One can say that sublimation in the form of neutrality and international activism was a reverse side of the neurosis of Finlandization: a transfer of the repressed instinctual energy into creativity on the world arena, the emergence of Finland as an international mediator and peacemaker.

An early sign of this was the hosting of the 1952 Olympic Games in Helsinki,[18] but the real breakthrough occurred in 1955, with the reclaiming of sovereignty over the Porkkala Peninsula, and with membership of the United Nations and Nordic Council. As a result, Finland gained enough leeway to initiate a policy of neutrality. (It was equally meaningful, though, that the USSR endorsed this stance by a resolution of the 20th Party Congress in February 1956 which included a mention of Finland's neutrality). The nation could now compensate for repression and self-censorship in relations with Russia (and also meet the moral criteria set by the superego, and satisfy the longing for the West) by engaging in humanistic creativity.

Since the Suez peacekeeping operation in 1956, Finland has maintained a continuous and strong presence in UN peacekeeping forces (e.g. in Cyprus in the 1960s), especially in the Middle East (in Suez and Sinai in the 1970s). New avenues in this field were opened when Finland became a member of the UN Security Council in 1969-70 as a result of the system of rotation. Finland attracted high-level international attention by hosting the U.S.-Soviet SALT Talks in 1969-1972.

Finland's role as a "healer" in the international arena[19] culminated in the 1975 Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe: the Finnish government proposed Helsinki as a venue as early as in 1969; the city also hosted preparatory negotiations at the ambassadorial level from 1972. It is instructive that even during preparatory

[18] No less importantly, at least for the domestic discourse, that same spring the Finnish girl Armi Kuusela was crowned Miss Universum.

[19] According to the 1961 statement by President Kekkonen, Finland was acting as a doctor rather than a judge, preferring to search for healing methods rather than to pronounce sentence (Zetterberg, 1991: 116).

talks Finland never raised the Karelian issue; finally, by endorsing the principle of the inviolability of frontiers the Final Act sealed the post-World War 2 borders. Finland's biggest success in Cold-War foreign policy came at the cost of legitimizing the loss of Karelia — or, conversely, it was the mental repression of the desire for Karelia that made the Finnish CSCE efforts so productive; an unsatisfied longing was distilled, sublimated, and morally gratified. By thoroughly tabooing the Karelian issue Finland proved to be a responsible international actor.[20]

The same situation was reiterated some 20 years later with Finland's accession to the EU: "clearing" the Karelian issue with Russia was one of the main concerns during pre-accession talks (Pakaslahti, 1994). In the early 1990s, Finland was in negotiation with the USSR, and later with Russia, on a new Treaty to replace the FCMA Agreement. These negotiations took part on the eve of Finland's accession talks with the EU (then EC). Obviously Finland felt itself under pressure to make moves concerning the border issue prior to the beginning of accession talks: the border had to be settled bilaterally before being taken up to a multilateral level. The accession negotiations would have been complicated, it was thought, by the existence of the FCMA-type defense policy commitments or open border disputes with Russia. Finland therefore rushed the concluding of negotiations with Russia in 1992, downgrading and virtually closing the Karelian issue, which was an even harder (indeed much criticized at home) decision, given that public interest for the return of Karelia was at the time revived by the reunification of Germany, the breakup of the USSR, and a post-Cold War spirit of hope.

Pertti Joenniemi cites certain censorship measures taken to dismiss any impressions that there existed a border dispute. In January 1993, on the eve of the EU negotiations, the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued an order to its embassies not to display and distribute copies of a particular issue of the *Finnish Defense Review* containing a critical article on the Karelian question by Martti Valkonen, a Finnish correspondent in Moscow (Joenniemi, 1997: 11). Ultimately, there are no indications of the Union having raised the issue, but the Finnish interpretation of EU logic was the stability of borders. Once again, Finland had to repress a desire for Karelia to advance the prospect of joining the EU.

This Finnish policy can be placed into a wider European context of a series of "renunciations" of "historical territories". Just as Finland has become willing to "amputate" Karelia (the "cradle of the nation") from its "organic whole" (Paasi, 1996), Germany, too, showed a willingness the "amputate" Silesia, Pomerania and East Prussia from the historic "organic Germany". In Hungary, an obvious territorial interest in Transylvania (the "cradle of Hungary") and parts of Slovakia, Ukraine and Serbia has been suppressed, not only for economic reasons, but also because of Hungary's keen interest in joining the EU (Tunander, 1997: 34). By the same token,

[20] Freud observed that civilization in general was made possible through the sublimation of subconscious energy (especially the libido) into love for humanity.

> Prague was willing to let Slovakia go — or rather, important power elites in Czechia happily cut off its 'proudflesh', amputating its more nationalistic East — in order to strengthen the Czech economy, make the negotiations easier with the European Community and move its center of gravity westward, closer to the EC (ibid.).[21]

On can also cite the censoring by official Bucharest of ideas of "Greater Rumania" (reunification with Moldova/Bessarabia) to prop up its EU membership chances. Everywhere in post-Wall Europe, nations are suppressing their territorial desires for the sake of wider institutional arrangements and compliance with the moral principles of the superego.

For Finland, though, this is not a recent phenomenon, but has been the case for most of the post-World War 2 period. The Finnish national ego has always been preoccupied with negotiation and mediation between the desires of the id (fear of Russia and a longing for Karelia) and the moral requirements of the superego (the fatherly West and its institutions). Much of Finland's foreign policy in the last 50 years testifies to this hard psychological struggle and the search for compromise within the ego. One instance was the rejection of Marshall aid in 1947 when the Finnish elite was split between the desire for Western assistance and "joining the club" and fear of the Soviet reaction.[22] Another example is the UN voting behavior of Finland during the Cold War: the country abstained from voting more often than any other of the Nordic countries among which it otherwise classed itself in the UN — like e.g. in the case of international condemnation of the Soviet invasion into Hungary in October 1956. Finland's occasional inability to reconcile the moral judgment of the superego (the international community) with her own subconscious fear of the possible Soviet reaction resulted in a political neurosis.

This pattern became so deeply embedded in Finnish foreign policy that a similar situation (Russia's war in Chechnya in 1994-1996) in a vastly different context (the USSR had dissolved, the FCMA Treaty had been replaced by the much more benign 1992 Agreement on the Foundation of Relations, and Finland had gained membership in the EU) still prompted the same neurotic response: through most of the war, Finland tried to walk a fine line between a harder coordinated European stand unequivocally condemning the Chechen war, and traditional prudence and reserve with Russia, between moral judgment of the superego and precautions of the id.

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[21] Budapest's and Prague's efforts paid off in December 1997 when the European Council in Luxembourg named these two countries among first candidates to join the EU.

[22] This case in not purely psychological though, since Finland was kept in check by the unratified Peace Treaty with Moscow, Soviet troops on its territory, and a powerful Allied Control Commission in Helsinki, and, after all, the USSR directly suggested that Finland decline the Marshall offer, together with East European countries under Soviet control.

Conclusion: Interpreting the Russia dream

The latter case suggests that the subconscious presence of Russia is still strong in the Finnish political ego; although in reality, the "Russian threat" has receded dramatically, it is still deeply rooted in the collective mind. The "Russian threat" is psychological rather than real, an essential, even if painful, part of the national consciousness and discourse: it is one of the justifications of the grand national narrative and of the last 50 years of Finnish history, of individual life stories, and also professional discourses. It is indicative that a deep concern for Russian interests is to be found within the Finnish military: in the early 1990s, it was the head of the General Staff, General Gustav Hägglund who argued that Finland should not claim Karelia "even if it were served on a golden plate" in order not to threaten Russia's strategic thinking and defense buffer of Leningrad.[23] Even today, during debates on the possible NATO enlargement in the Baltic area, a high-ranking Finnish officer has rejected the idea by referring to the Russian Governor of Finland General Bobrikov, who had claimed almost a century ago that the zone of Russia's strategic interests "runs from Tornio to Liepaja" on the Baltic coast of Latvia, including the entire territory of Finland.[24]

The present NATO debates in Finland, in which the lucrative prospects of membership meet the inherent reluctance to disturb Russia, reveal the nature of psychological dependence. The "Russian factor" is obscure and largely unpronounced; the Finnish elite feels uncertain about future developments in Russia, its traumatic memories are mixed with fear, concern with curiosity. The ego defenses are still too strong, preventing the subconscious fear of Russia from emerging into the daylight of consciousness where it could be analyzed and dealt with. The omen of the taboo is still too strong, and now a new generation of Finns is taking the stage that cannot even relate the fear of Russia to their personal experiences, that do not have memories of war, the evacuation of Karelians, or the political pressure of the 1950s and 60s: for them, a repression of the Russia theme is a pre-natal instinct, part of the collective subconscious, part of the national cultural code. A psychoanalytic investigation that would reveal repressed memories and fears, and show the real meaning of the "Russian threat", has not yet occurred in Finnish political culture. Johan Bäckman calls the current situation, in which the "Russian threat" is fading away but behavioral stereotypes in Finnish politics remain intact, "post-Finlandization".

The geopsychological situation into which Finland was born remains essentially unchanged: just as any person lives on the border of his own subconsciousness, Finland dwells on the border with Russia. "The border is at the back of the mind of every Finn" (Austin, 1996: 150) — yet it is physical, and one can cross it, walking straight into his own subconsciousness, his own memories and traumas. This happens with the so-called "nostalgic tourism", when older Karelians from ceded territories, or their

[23] An interview with Gen. Gustav Hägglund in *Keskisuomalainen*, 29 March 1992.
[24] Comments made at the Conference on the "CFSP Northern Dimension", Helsinki, 4 November 1997.

descendants, visit native places on the Russian side. Anssi Paasi conducted field work among people traveling back to their native town of Värtsilä, currently situated just a few miles behind the Russian border, and the prevailing sentiment he witnessed was disillusionment:

> "The old Värtsilä community is the one they identify themselves with, not the present one. Many visitors [to their native places on the Russian side] have been of the opinion that they will never go back to Russian Värtsilä: it is no more their place. Their place is old Värtsilä that has been preserved, over the years, deep in the collective memory of the community" (Paasi, 1995: 56).

What the older generations of Karelians are experiencing now is psychotherapy, the exposure of their subconscious — or rather exposure *to* their own subconscious — bringing disenchantment and relief. Their mental Utopia is ruined, memories of the past are destroyed by the images of today, the territory of the subconscious fails to meet their expectations. More often than not, they see abandoned villages, a polluted environment and dilapidated post-industrial landscapes: a picture reminiscent of the Zone from Andrei Tarkovsky's *Stalker*, a zone of emptiness. [25] Their Forbidden City is deserted.

Such personal experiences are literally devastating (instilling a sense of emptiness), yet revealing and pacifying, and essential for the entire national discourse. Perhaps such kind of psychotherapy, revelation and disillusionment can be experienced by the whole Finnish body politic. This will be a critical deconstruction of the Russia theme in the Finnish mind, a demystification of Finland's "historical memories" (of which there are plenty), of Russian "strategic thinking" (of which there is actually little), and the "Russian threat" (of which there is virtually none), of phantoms of the Red Army or the Red Mafia, of the East-West and "clash of civilizations" narratives... In short, this will be an understanding that for Finland Russia is a matter of psychology rather than geography and history, no more than the space of a dream — although dreams can be much more compelling than reality.

[25] It has been suggested that Tarkovsky's Zone is a metaphor of God; but this may well be a metaphor of the subconscious: fenced by barbed wire and guarded by soldiers on the outside — yet strangely void and barren inside, a land of water, oblivion, and eerie solitude.

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