

NOTE

DERSU UZALA, COLONIALISM AND ROMANCE: SOME ANTHROPOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON A KUROSAWA'S FILM *

Jussi Raumolin

Centre international de recherches
sur l'environnement et le développement, Paris.

« The Goldi's are praised for being good-natured, sincere people who work hard. They worship wooden gods. Shaman witches are their priests, but they also believe that all objects have their own spirit. During the summer the Goldi people fish and during the winter they hunt sable, bear and other animals for pelts... Like many other Siberian peoples, the Goldis are dying out. Scarcely 2,000 individuals survive ».¹

Movie houses in Helsinki were packed for a year during showings of *Dersu Uzala*, a Soviet-Japanese film set in Siberia. The well-known Japanese director Akira Kurosawa made the film, which is based on the travel diaries of Vladimir K. Arsen'ev, a Russian officer-geographer-ethnographer. The untamed portrait of an exotic, noble savage, brought to life by the cinema technique, stimulated the romantic yearnings of the civilized city dweller. Critics have had nothing but praise for the production. It has received numerous awards, and the producers are satisfied because their product is in demand.

Nevertheless, I believe that something is amiss in the film. For some time I have been interested in Arctic research, and I happened to see the film just as I was in the process of drafting the outline for an article using the ecological approach to the study of religion. Thus the subject matter of the film was rather familiar to me. Moreover I was acquainted with the name of Arsen'ev through studies of colonization. I looked deeper into the lives of the Goldi

* This translation is a slightly modified version of the article published in Finnish in *Suomen Antropologi* 1976 (2): 6-22.

people, and problems initially suggested by the film eventually began to come into focus.²

The film and the anthropological reflections it stimulated suggested four problems that seem to merit further consideration: 1) the movie and primitivism; 2) the interpretation of nature by the peoples of Siberia; 3) colonization and ethnocide; 4) the rather sad state of current Finnish anthropology and its future potential. I shall first make some comments about primitivism as reflected in the movie and then examine the other problem areas in greater detail. Since limitations of space make exhaustiveness impossible, I have provided additional data in the footnotes. Other than that, the footnotes are chiefly intended to stimulate interest in Finnish anthropological research.

Some Observations about Primitivism

In one respect it is possible to regard the film as a return to primitivistic participation. At the time cinematic techniques were developing during the last decades of the nineteenth century, native inhabitants of the colonial areas of Europe regarded cinema projectionists as magicians, and Russian peasants, for instance, burned down buildings where films were shown because they considered the whole affair sorcery. The cinema can also be regarded as the democratization of shamanism or as a technological extension of the human imagination. This medium could imaginatively transport a person to a different time and place, something not unlike the shamans of earlier times who could perform the same feat in their imagination. The cinema is a very effective technique for identification projection.³

At times of great cultural crisis, like the present, the human mind exhibits a longing for its simple origins. The trend of Western culture towards more state control, rationalism, industrialization, and urbanization has fostered recurring periods of romanticism and primitivism. Arsen'ev, for instance, wrote his travel memoirs during the chaos of a great European war. And Kurosawa's career had its beginnings in the unsettled milieu of post-war Japan. In his earlier films Kurosawa was concerned with morality and existential crises, and he has often taken his themes from pre-industrial Japan. Now the august Kurosawa has apparently sought to identify himself in the idealized portrait of the old Goldi.⁴

Primitivism is also an inseparable part of modern Western anthropology. During this century in particular, a number of scholars

have attempted to escape to the primeval forest from their « despicable » culture, in actuality or in thought. Some of the most modern-minded present-day anthropologists have even begun to preach against the ethnocide brought about by Western culture, and others have gone even farther in demanding the restitution and return of their rights. It is possible that the present article reflects a certain sympathy for « scientific primitivism ».⁵

Arsen'ev's Book and Kurosawa's Film

Vladimir K. Arsen'ev (1878-1930) was a Russian officer assigned by St. Petersburg to undertake a field survey of the central regions of the strategically important Ussuri mountains in co-operation with the Russian Geographical Society. He led a total of three expeditions into this forbidden region during the first decade of the present century. After the Russian revolution Colonel Arsen'ev served for a while as the curator of the Khabarovsk Museum, and he subsequently carried out military-oriented reconnaissance expeditions into Kamchatka, among other places. During these expeditions Arsen'ev observed the native inhabitants. He was especially interested in the Udehe or Oratse, a Tungus people inhabiting the coastal region along the Sea of Japan.⁶ During the early 1920s Arsen'ev published accounts of his travels in the Ussuri region in two volumes. They were immediately translated into German. Arsen'ev was a gifted writer, and his accounts were well received. During the late 1920s Arsen'ev died about the time Stalin consolidated his power. It is possible to conjecture that Arsen'ev might have found himself in political difficulties had he tried to publish his diaries in their original form during Stalin's time. This was, in any case, the experience of a number of scholars writing on other native peoples of Siberia.⁷

Following Arsen'ev's death, an even shorter version of his travel accounts was published in 1935. It was simply entitled *Dersu Uzala*. Virtually all reference to Russian, Chinese, or Korean colonization or to the Udehe people was deleted from this edition. In this version, Arsen'ev's account was limited essentially to reflections on his relationship to the expeditions, Dersu, and the natural surroundings. The book had become a testimonial to the friendship between the Russian explorer-colonizer and the native, while it eulogized Dersu's understanding of nature. The revised 1935 edition was intended as didactic reading, especially for children and

young people. Translations into French and Finnish, and a later German edition are all based on this version.⁸

Kurosawa's film is also based on the abridged version. For this reason the film offers a highly idealized interpretation of events in eastern Siberia during the early years of this century. This is not intended to reflect critically on Kurosawa's motives, which were certainly artistic and not political. The film depicts the beauty of the Siberian taiga and the friendship that developed between Arsen'ev and Dersu. The acting is superb, and the film abounds with exotic landscapes, manifestations of the mighty forces of nature, wild game, examples of Dersu's masterly understanding of nature's ways, magic, and meditating Chinese hermits, all designed to captivate Western viewers.⁹

Notwithstanding the idealized approach, the film nevertheless also displays subtle contradictions. On the one hand, it idealizes the « magnificent and glorious » conquest of the « Wild East », while, on the other hand, it evokes admiration for the life of the noble savage. The destructive consequences of the conquest for the native inhabitants are indirectly discernible: disease, wanton destruction of the fauna, abuse of liquor, dishonest trade practices, etc. Arsen'ev's attitude to Dersu is certainly understanding. Nevertheless he takes the man back with him to the city, where Dersu becomes a laughing stock. All in all, the film, with its Japanese director and a Soviet cast, is an example of co-operation between two countries, but one cannot escape the conclusion that some viewers may detect anti-Chinese tendencies in it.¹⁰

A Brief Look at the Goldi People

Russian explorers and traders gave the name Goldi to the Tungus people inhabiting the lower Amur region and the valleys of the Sungari River. The name was also accepted by nineteenth-century Russian ethnographers. The Chinese referred to this Tungus people as Yu-pi-ta-tse (« barbarians attired in fish-skins »). This Tungus people call themselves Hêjê or Hotsen.¹¹

The history of the Hêjê people is bound up with the general migrations of the Tungus, the fortunes of various Chinese dynasties, and especially the Manchu conquests. During periods of dynastic vitality the Chinese sought to settle in southern Manchuria, and the reverse was true when China was weak: the inhabitants of northern Manchuria made attempts to extend their rule into China proper. The Manchus exercised great influence on the neighbouring Hêjê people. The Hêjê were part of the Manchu-led federation that con-

quered China in 1644. The Hêjê are considered outstanding warriors. During the Manchu dynasty they served as border guards along the Amur and Sungari rivers. They were also entitled to enter the Chinese civil service.¹²

The Manchu rulers sought to protect the ethnic traditions of their homeland and they did not allow Chinese migration into northern Manchuria. Only Chinese fur traders were permitted to enter this area. The fur trade flourished, and in the process the Chinese introduced the Hêjê to opium and alcohol. During the second half of the nineteenth century the Russians began to colonize the Amur valley, and the Manchu emperors for strategic reasons permitted Chinese settlements in northern Manchuria. This development signalled the beginning of the end of the Hêjê culture.¹³

The Russian first moved into eastern Siberia, attracted by the region's wealth of fur. As Russia grew and expanded, political considerations of power began to have their influence. Until China weakened dramatically, in the nineteenth century, it managed to resist Russian expansion in the Amur region. During the 1860s the Russo-Chinese border shifted to the Ussuri River. As the Russians penetrated the new region, they undertook to study it.

And this was the beginning of Western scientific study of the native population.¹⁴

Because Russia did not begin to colonize the area until the second half of the nineteenth century, well-preserved traditions and culture still survived. Ultimately, of course, colonization was fatal to this cultural heritage. Nevertheless the material collected among these native cultures is sufficient for fairly thorough investigation of their nature spirits, shamanism, and death and hunting rites.¹⁵

Material collected in Eastern Siberia is also rather well suited for testing various anthropological theories. For instance, it is possible to examine the connection between anthropology and colonization and to compare observations and descriptions by geographers and modern ethnographers. It is likewise possible to ascertain the validity of nineteenth-century theories of evolution or functional monographs as tools for explaining the life and culture of the Hêjê people. Has colonialism not influenced the acculturation model of American cultural anthropologists as well? Perhaps the most useful approach to the study of this important geopolitical area would be one utilizing the geographic anthropology originated by Ratzel, which takes external causation into account. This could further be supplemented by an ecological approach and economic anthropology and the application of the concept of ethnocide.¹⁶

Dersu's Interpretation of Nature

Dersu's interpretation of nature in Kurosawa's film could be described as animistic: an all-encompassing spirit is present throughout nature and functions on the basis of reciprocity. Nature should be viewed as a whole, and everything in it as « people ». The sun and the moon, air and water, earth and forest and animals all communicate with Dersu. Spirits are on the move, especially at night, and reveal themselves in dreams and in fire. It is possible to contact the dead in dreams and see omens of the future. It is advisable to remain on good terms with the spirits.

Nature should not be needlessly damaged, or it will be avenged. The powers of nature should not be underestimated: fire can destroy a forest, a river can overflow its banks, and a snowstorm can lead one astray. Wild game must not be killed needlessly, for over-hunting can lead to disasters. And one must live in harmony with holy animals, such as tigers. A tiger-killer must make atonement. Dersu's attitude and approach to nature in the film might almost have been « taken from a comparative study of religion among Arctic peoples ». Dersu, Arsen'ev, and Kurosawa certainly knew what they were doing. Nevertheless, Dersu is well along to becoming acculturated: he travels alone, hunts with a rifle, neglects traditional sacrifices, smokes...¹⁷

How should Dersu's attitude toward nature be interpreted ecologically? He certainly appears to be aware of the balance of the ecological system. Spirits seem to provide the alarm mechanism in his ecosystem. They prevent the wanton misuse of natural resources. A religion based on spirits appears to have a durable physical base, and the spirits do not prevent Dersu from making sensible observations of concrete physical phenomena. In point of fact, what is really physical and what is spiritual in Dersu's interpretation of nature? ¹⁸

Where Does Finnish Anthropological Research Stand Today?

In the footnotes to these pages I have attempted to point out the excellent Finnish material about the Hêjê people that is available. It is sufficient for a comparative examination of Arctic peoples. It is possible, for instance, to examine some of the central problems in anthropology on the basis of existing source material. In addition, a number of Finnish scholars have carried out extensive field studies among Far Eastern peoples. It would be a mistake to think

that there is no Finnish tradition of research. Years ago Uno Harva made a name for himself as an outstanding international authority on the interpretation of nature and hunting rites among the peoples of Northern Eurasia. Yet almost no research of this kind has been carried out by Finnish scholars since 1945.¹⁹

Foreign scholars, on the other hand, have carried forward the tradition of Uno Harva. Among other things, they have understood the value of the material Finnish scholars collected decades earlier for the study of comparative religion and economic anthropology. They have proven beyond any doubt the possibilities of this material. Meanwhile Finnish scholars have continued to neglect comparative Arctic research. Considering the tradition and standard set by earlier Finnish scholarship, the present state of affairs is tantamount to a scandal.²⁰

What, then, lies at the heart of our problem? Are Finnish scholars deficient in language? Or are they not keeping up with research abroad? Is an aspect of political self-censorship involved? Or is the failure due to faulty decision-making? A catastrophic policy decision was made when established academic chairs were diverted from their original pursuit, thereby cutting off the tradition of scholarship in comparative religion and social anthropology. The discipline of the social sciences in Finland has yet to recover from this error. Finnish anthropological scholarship may lag decades behind because of this decision. If a culture's ability to grasp the essence of its national traditions is a measure of its creativity, then one must conclude that in the period since World War II, we Finns lost our creative powers: we have fallen victim, in a sense, to a kind of cultural colonialism.²¹

To recoup our lost vigor we must re-examine the material we already possess. We need proficiency in languages, in Finno-Ugric studies, in geography, history, social and cultural anthropology, folklore, and in the study of comparative religions. We must revitalize and modernize a tradition of scholarship.

Dersu's Death and the Death of a Culture

Kurosawa presents Dersu as a loner — a hermit. His wife and children have died, and he wanders solitary across the taiga. This is altogether unnatural behavior among the Tungus people. Their traditional way of life was determined by social ties and customs: family, village, clan, tribe. Dersu's isolation and lonely existence must therefore signify the end of Hêjê culture. This must be the

reason why he seeks out the Russian explorers. Life on the taiga has, of course, become more difficult following colonization: there is less game to hunt, and the hunter's needs have also increased.²² Kurosawa very ably portrays the critical effect aging has on Dersu. Traditionally the Tungus people had a very dynamic attitude towards life and living. Growing feeble with age meant death. Under harsh primitive living conditions it was impossible to care indefinitely for the aged and they were dispatched by ritual murder. Since the peoples of Siberia believed that life continued elsewhere under similar conditions they did not let the aged become too weak. Dersu's wretched situation was the result of « an existential vacuum » around him following the dissolution of traditional culture. He could neither live alone in the forest nor adjust to the city.²³

Once Hêjê culture was hemmed in by both Russian traders and Chinese colonizers, it had no chance to survive. Ruthless commercial exploitation and the influx of new, alien people changed the local eco-system: the forests were emptied of game. The natives were mercilessly driven off their traditional hunting grounds. New communicable diseases played havoc with the natives, while many of the survivors were gradually assimilated by the conquerors. The collapse of traditional culture and enterprising merchants made the natives easy prey to alcoholism and opium smoking.²⁴

Can a distinction be made between Russian and Chinese colonization? In the first place, the Hêjê people were racially, ethnically, and historically much more closely related to the Chinese. This made Russian colonization more destructive for the Hêjê in the beginning at least. The Russians introduced hitherto unknown diseases and a totally new interpretation of nature. The Chinese, on the other hand, could much more easily assimilate the native population. Secondly, the Chinese government sought to protect the traditional rights of the Hêjê. The opposite was true of the Russian government. Despite these differences both countries employed essentially the same methods: dishonest and unscrupulous trade practices, dispossession of the natives land, and a general weakening of the population.²⁵

Is there any possible anthropological justification for such ethnocide? The Hêjê people lived a meaningful life in harmony with their environment. Does it suffice to say that this is what always happens when a stronger culture meets a weaker one? Is it not insane to argue for progress, if progress leads to thermonuclear catastrophe or to ecological disaster? Should we simply reassure ourselves by pointing to Western culture's capacity for expansion

or simply blame capitalism when we seek to understand why ethnocide occurs? Anthropology certainly has difficulties in the face of the reality of ethnocide.²⁶

The situation in the Amur and Ussuri valleys at the turn of the century is comparable to that of Lapland when Sweden and Russia competed for its fur trade and the Finns sought to enter the area. The culture of the Sames could not possibly survive, once powerful Eastern and Western emporia competed for it and strategic considerations began to promote foreign expansion into Lapland. Perhaps the main differences between Lapland and Eastern Siberia are that the colonizers did not introduce entirely unknown diseases and that the historical process leading to ethnocide was much quicker in Manchuria than in Lapland.²⁷

Dersu died, because the problem of dying seem so topical in Western culture today. From the point of Hêjê tradition, the manner of Dersu's death was especially deplorable. Dersu was murdered, and he was not accorded the necessary rites when buried. By tradition the Hêjê burial rites were very elaborate and precise, for it was believed that without them the soul of the deceased would be doomed to wander through the taiga forever. In Dersu's case, his spirit was probably left to howl in the forest at night. Western religious rites were not administered at Dersu's interment either. Recent crises confronting the West have again aroused interest in the anthropology of dying. Dersu's death was an « unanthropological death », and in that sense it was very typical of contemporary Western culture.²⁸

Notes

¹ Ingman, Santeri, Ed., *Uusi Siperia sekä lyhyt esitys Mantshuriasta ja Koreasta, Holger Rosenbergin y.m. mukaan* [New Siberia and a short introduction to Manchuria and Korea according to Rosenberg et al.] Porvoo 1905, pp. 134-35.

² After viewing the film I consulted the following studies in order to refresh my memory: W. Mühlmann, *Vorkapitalistische Klassengesellschaften. Beiträge zur ethnographischen Kasuistik*, in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, (1956) and E. Lot-Falck, *Les rites de chasse chez les peuples sibériens*, Paris 1953. These studies, largely unknown in Finland, are partly responsible for the present article, which was completed in May 1976. My work on the ecological approach to the study of religion was completed in June 1976; and was published in 1977 in *Uskonto, aluekulttuuri ja yhteisö* (Religion, local culture and the social unit), Publications of the University

of Helsinki's Department of Comparative Religion, Number 2:83-106. It is to be published in English in *Temenos*.

³ For the anthropology of the film, see, for example: E. Morin, *Le cinéma ou l'homme imaginaire. Essai d'anthropologie*, Paris 1956, and *Les stars*, Paris 1957.

⁴ On romantic primitivism, see: Y. Hirn, *Goda vildar och ädla rövare* [Noble savages and bandits], Helsinki 1941. This is one of the forgotten classics of Finnish anthropology. To illustrate how even a competent scholar may occasionally go astray, I cite Hirn, pp. 304-05: « Although it can be said that there are some exponents of the romance of the Red Indian among the authors of children's stories, it seems to me that this romanticism is no longer related to the same type of escapism as when it was wholeheartedly believed that nobler and more benevolent people were to be found in the great wilderness than in civilized society. A tradition more than a hundred years old broke down when this illusion lost its hold on men's minds. Nevertheless there is some connection between the modern view of the world and those novels, plays, and poems which embody a variety of the traditional view. When the originality of the savage was no longer extolled, the object of adoration shifted to the peasant, who was considered better (by Wordsworth, Almquist, and Runeberg, among others) because he was closer to nature than the man living in the city. In the next generation the proletariat took the place of the noble savage. And subsequently a Rousseauian ideal was embodied in the figure of a man whose education was still incomplete. » Hirn, however, was a believer in progress in the tradition of Edward Westermarck. At the same time, he appears to have thought about the Nazi phenomenon when writing this book. For the urge to return to nature, see my *Herman Hesse ja 1920-luvun kirjallisuuden ajankohtaisuus* [Herman Hesse and the actuality of the novel of the 1920s], Katsaus, (1975). Arsen'ev wrote of Dersu's death in *In der Wildnis Ostsiberiens, Forschungsreisen im Ussuri-gebiet*, Berlin 1924, II, p. 344: « Unbekannte Menschen, die sich eines europäischen Anlitzes rühmten, hatten hier einen abscheulichen Mord verübt mit der Absicht des Raumes. Sie hatten einen armseligen Wilden getötet, dessen Seele rein war, und der nie in seinem Leben irgend jemand etwas Böses zugefügt hatte. Die Zivilisation gebiert Verbrecher. Baue dir dein Wohlergehen auf Kosten anderer auf! — das ist die Lösung des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts. Mit dem Handel beginnt der Betrug, dann folgt Wucher, Knechtung, Diebstahl, Raub Mord — und endlich Krieg und Revolution mit allen ihren Schrecken. Ist das Zivilisation? ». For an introduction to Kurosawa's approach see, for example: G. Sadoul, *Histoire du cinéma mondial*, Paris 1963. Kurosawa took subjects from Russian literature even earlier, e.g. from Dostoevskij's *Idiot*. A number of Japanese artists have recently excelled in critical analysis of the contemporary scene. Less of this kind of criticism has appeared in the Soviet Union. It is interesting to note in this connection that the street scenes of a modern metropolis in Andrei Tarkovsky's film, *Solaris*, were filmed in Japan. This film, of course, betrays a critical attitude toward the contemporary world. More recently, ecological primitivism, so fashionable in the Western World, also appears to have reached the Soviet Union.

⁵ For an attempt to establish the interrelationship between traditional anthropology and exotism see, for example: J. Guiart, « L'ethnologue et l'ethnologie », in *Cahiers internationaux de sociologie* (1967). On ethnocide due to the expansion of Western culture, see: R. Jaulin, *La paix blanche. Introduction à l'ethnocide*, Paris 1970, and on the struggle of anthropologists on behalf of the natives, see: J. G. Jorgensen and R. B. Lee (eds.), *The New Native Resistance: Indigenous Peoples' Struggles and the Responsibilities of Scholars*, New York 1974. It should

be pointed out, however, that those speaking out against ethnocide and scholars interested in the relationship between anthropology and colonialism have as yet to turn their attention to the vast Eurasian continent. Compare I. Lopatin, « The Extinct and Near-Extinct Tribes of Northeastern Asia as Compared with the American Indian », *American Antiquity*, (1940) and. M. H. Fried, « Land Tenure, Geography and Ecology in the Contact of Cultures », *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, (1952). Lopatin and Fried have comparatively examined ethnocide in America and Siberia. See also the « ancient » study of Georg Gerland: *Über das Aussterben der Naturvölker*, Leipzig 1868, which « impartially » covers the whole globe. It hardly needs restating that the following thoughts, expressed by Fridtjof Nansen in the preface to Arsen'ev's book, continue to be as relevant today as they were seven decades ago. « Es ist merkwürdig, dass wir Bewöhner der alten Welt gewöhnlich mehr von den Eingeborenen Nordamerikas wissen als von den Eingeborenen Sibiriens, insbesondere Ostsibiriens, die doch für uns in der Tat viel mehr Interesse haben ».

⁶ My sources here include past editions of Soviet encyclopedias, prefaces to Arsen'ev's books, and scholarly commentary on Arsen'ev's publications. According to the *Bolsaja sovjetskaja enciklopedija*, Moscow 1970, Arsen'ev published his first commentary on the nature and inhabitants of the region in 1912. This work was entitled: *Kratkij voennogeograficeskij ocerk ussurijskogo kraja*. Other sources indicate that Arsen'ev also published *Kitajecy v ussurijskom krae* in 1914 (Khabarovsk). In 1926 he published *Lesnje ljudi udeqèjci* (Vladivostok).

⁷ According to the *Bolsaja sovjetskaja enciklopedija* (BSE) Arsen'ev published two works in the early 1920s: *Po ussurijskom kraju* (1921) and *Dersu Uzala* (1923). The Slavic Connection of the University of Helsinki Library, however, has neither of these works. The earliest publication of Arsen'ev in the collection is the abridged one volume *V debriax ussurijskogo kraja* (1929). Since the preface of this volume is dated early 1926 it is reasonable to conclude that the first edition was published the same year. The German editions of Arsen'ev's travel accounts are entitled *In der Wildnis Ostsibiriens*, Berlin 1926. This was probably the Russian language account that Arsen'ev published in 1914, dealing with the Chinese in the Ussuri region. I regard the German editions as the most useful and reliable, because publishing politics in Germany at the time were not subject to the kind of political controls imposed in the Soviet Union. For instance, the message cited in note 4 does not appear in the Soviet editions available in Finland. It is also reasonably safe to assume on the basis of his quotations, reinforced by other indications, that Arsen'ev did not manifest unqualified enthusiasm and admiration for the revolution and the « progress » that followed it. Non-Marxist scholars were permitted to continue their work until 1929. After that only a Marxist approach to ethnography was tolerated in the Soviet Union. See: S. P. Tolstov, « Sorok let sovjetskoj etnografii », *BSÈ* (1957) and R. Schott, « Das Geschichtsbild der sowjetischen Ethnographie », *Saeculum*, 1960). Leo J. Sternberg, a noted scholar of the people of the Ussuri region, was subjected to criticism at that time. See: J. Koskin's preface « L. Ja. Sternberg kak issledovatel' narodov Dal'nego Vostoka », to Sternberg's *Giljaki, oroci, gol'dy, negidal'cy, ajny*, Dalgis-Khabarovsk 1933. Two other noted Hêjê scholars emigrated, Ivan A. Lopatin to the United States and S. M. Sirokogorov to China. *BSÈ* mentions neither of them.

⁸ The abridged version, published in Moscow in 1935, is in the University of Helsinki Library. Several new editions of Arsen'ev's travels, as well as works not dealing with Dersu, have subsequently been published in the Soviet Union. The French version is entitled, *La taiga de l'Oussouri. Mes expéditions avec le*

chasseur golde Dersou, Paris, 1939. The Finnish translation is *Lumen ja palmujen ihmemaassa. Dersu Uzala, metsästäjä ja erakko* [In the wonderland of snow and palms. Dersu Uzala, hunter and hermit], Helsinki 1946. The German version was published in 1952 in Dresden as *Dersu Uzala, der Taigajäger*. There is also an English edition, *Dersu Uzala, Soviet Literature for Young People*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, no date. This edition reflects the pedagogic function that the Soviet authorities have assigned to the native hunter. The 1950 edition of the BSE article on Dersu stresses this fact.

⁹ Finnish reviews of the film have been uniformly positive and laudatory. The Finnish subtitles refer to the Chinese bandits as «huns», instead of the correct «Hungese».

¹⁰ Arsen'ev's attitude toward the natives was also ambivalent in the original, unabridged version. He admired Dersu and openly admitted that the Russians were in part responsible for the ethnocide of the Hêjê. At the same time he criticized such native institutions as shamanism. Arsen'ev was very anti-Chinese, and his book about the Chinese in the Ussuri region claimed that the Chinese were guilty of economic exploitation in the area. He also gave some thought to means of eliminating Chinese influence there. The article of Arsen'ev in the 1970 edition of the BSE is much more militantly anti-Chinese than the version in the 1950 edition, a reflection of the changes in Sino-Soviet relations over the past two decades. The two countries have come to blows over the possession of islands in the Ussuri River. Both countries have sought to prove their claims legitimate and mobilize public opinion. I do not suggest that Kurosawa has taken sides in this dispute; he is a known admirer of Chinese culture.

^{11/12} S. M. Shirokogoroff [Sirokogorov, 1887-1939], «Northern Tungus Migrations in the Far East (Goldi and their Ethnical Affinities)», *The Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, LVII, (1926) and O. Lattimore, «The Gold Tribe "Fiskin Tatars" of the Lower Sungari», *Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association*, Menasha 1933. Soviet scholars have recently been referring to the Goldi as «nanaj». Sirokogorov, however, maintains that this term should only be used to refer to a particular group of Hêjê; the same is true of the term «Goldi».

¹³ See Lattimore, *Op. cit.*

¹⁴ R.H. Fisher, *The Russian Fur Trade 1550-1700*, Berkeley 1943, and A. Benningsen, *Russes et chinois avant 1917*, Paris 1974. Catherine II, in many ways one of the more «enlightened» Russian rulers, wanted to shed «scientific light» on Russian conquests in Siberia and to announce to the world how «civilization» was advancing into the primitive unknown. See: M. Duchet, *Anthropologie et histoire au siècle des lumières*, Paris 1971, with special reference to the chapter «Les voyages au Nord». It was a problem keeping anthropology separate from geography in nineteenth-century Germany. Prussian officers soon realized the potential value of the new discipline in the service of war. See James N. Ryding, «Alternatives in Nineteenth-Century German Ethnology: A Case Study in the Sociology of Science», *Sociologus* (1975). Russian scholarship followed the German example and took a very utilitarian approach to the discipline. And particularly in dealing with the Far East, ethnographic research constituted only one element of a general inventory of the region. The first genuine ethnographic studies were carried out by such «political» refugees as V.G. Bogoras and W. Jochelson. See: S.A. Tokarev, *Istoria russkoi etnografii*, Moscow 1966. The most important late-nineteenth-century «inventories» of the Amur and Ussuri regions are A. T. von

Middendorf, *Reise in den Aeussersten Norden und Osten Sibiriens während der Jahre 1843 und 1844*, I-III, St. Petersburg 1848-1875); R. Maak, *Putesestvie po doline reki Ussuri*, I-II, St. Petersburg, 1861; M. Venjukov, *Putesestvie po okraïnam Russkoj Azii i zapiski o nix*, St. Petersburg, 1868; L. von Schrenk, *Reisen und Forschungen in Amur Lande 1854-1856*, I-III, St. Petersburg 1858-1900 and *Ob inorodcax Amurskogo kraja*, I-III, St. Petersburg 1883-1903. It was in these works that the Hêjê initially appeared as the Goldi. These works are available in the Helsinki University Library and provide a solid basis for continuing study of the Hêjê people. A number of Finns also took part in the colonization and inventory of the Amur-Ussuri region. Harald F. Furuhjelm, (1830-1871), a Russian civil servant of Finnish origin, was present when the Amur region was incorporated into Russia. Later, Governor-General Muravjere named one of the Sakhalin peninsulas in his honor. Furuhjelm also did research in the region and was made a member of the Imperial Geographic Society in 1869. The same year he was appointed administrator of all Imperial Appanages in the Amur district. Gustaf Jagerskiöld, (1831-1871) founded the Siberian city which later became Vladivostok. Fridolf Hóók (1836-1902?) mapped the Amur coast. Arthur Nordman (1838-1862) was directed by Governor General Kazakevic to prepare a study of the native inhabitants of the Amur region, Giljaks and Goldi among others. He published his findings in *Über den Fischfang und die Jagd der am Amur wohnenden Giljaken*, Moscow 1861. There were also Finnish settlements in this region. See: P. Aalto, *Oriental Studies in Finland 1828-1918*, SSF, The History of Learning and Science in Finland 1828-1918, 10b, Helsinki, 1971.

¹⁵ The following scholars are especially well-known for their ethnographic research on the Hêjê: P. P. Simkevic, *Materialy dlja izucenia samanstva u gol'dov*, Khabarovsk 1896; I. A. Lopatin, *Gol'dy, Amurskie, Ussuriskie i Sungariskie*, Vladivostok, 1922; L. A. Sternberg, *Giljaki, oroci, gol'dy, negidal'cy, ajny*, Khabarovsk 1933. See also: N. L. Lipskaia-Valrond, *Materiali po etnografii goldov, Sibirskaja zivaja Starina*, 1925.

¹⁶ Just as studies dealing with ethnocide neglect to make the connection between anthropology and colonialism, so too scholars concerned with colonialization fail to consider the effect of Russian and Chinese colonization on the natives of the Far East. For an example of this expedient tendency see: G. Leclerc, *Anthropologie et colonialisme*, Paris 1972 and J. Copans, *Anthropologie et impérialisme*, Paris 1974. Is it possible to explain this inconsistency in terms of « ideological preferences? » As far as the Hêjê are concerned, it appears that scholars taking the geographer's approach, von Schrenk and Arsen'ev among them, recognized the polical and economic dimensions of the phenomena. They also looked into the concept of ethnocide. Ethnographers, on the other hand, were usually content to describe vanishing customs. Isolating various disciplines from the environment as a whole has been a major shortcoming of past anthropological field study. I fully concur with J. Koskin's conclusion in the introduction to Sternberg's study (see note 6), that ethnographical research among the peoples of the Far East remains at the descriptive level. This does not mean that one cannot take exception to the models offered by Engels and Lewis Morgan for the study of the cultural dynamics of these regions. For a critical view of theories emphasizing internal developmental causality or the causality of status quo, see: R. Bastide, « La causalité externe et la causalité interne dans l'explication sociologique », *Cahiers internationaux de sociologie*, (1956). Among the founders of modern economic anthropology, Max Schmidt and Richard Thurnwald have continued the line of Ratzel (Alfred Vierkandt and Henrich Schurtz being the media-

tors). In this monograph *Die Aruaken, Ein Beitrag zum Problem der Kulturverbreitung*, Leipzig 1917, M. Schmidt dealt with the foundation of cultural diffusion due to colonialism. Thurnwald wrote an article on the theory of cultural dynamics for a volume in honor of Max Weber, «Die Gestaltung der Wirtschaftsentwicklung aus ihren Anfängen heraus. Gesichtspunkte und Andeutungen», in *Hauptprobleme der Soziologie*, Munich 1923. It summarizes most of the basic ideas of cultural anthropologists of this century. These ideas were simply «forgotten» and then ostensibly «rediscovered» as new ideas. Wilhelm Mühlmann, a student of Thurnwald, developed the theories of Thurnwald in the direction of the ethno-cide view in his article «Vorkapitalistische Klassengesellschaften,» *op. cit.* In this connection he also refers to the fate of the Hêjê people. It is interesting to note that S. M. Sirokogorov, a specialist on the Tungus people, held a view close to Thurnwald on cultural dynamics. See: S. M. Shirokogoroff, *Ethnos*, Shanghai 1923 and *Ethnical Unit and Milieu*, Shanghai 1924. This study has also been forgotten. Mühlmann, in particular, has sought to combine the views of Thurnwald and Sirokogorov. Compare the following studies, for example: *Homo Creator. Abhandlungen zur Soziologie und Ethnologie*, Wiesbaden 1962 and *Rassen, Ethnien, Kulturen*, Neuwied and Berlin, 1964.

¹⁷ Arsen'ev also tried to grasp the theoretical basis of the interpretation of nature of the natives of the Amur region. See his «Etnologiceskie problemi na Vostoke Sibiri: Samanstvo u sibirskix inorodcev i ix animisticeskix vozrenija na prirodu», *Vestnik Asii*, No. 38-39, (Harbin, 1916). He was certainly aware of work being done by other Hêjê scholars. At the end of his book *Arktisia kuvia* [Arctic Pictures], Helsinki 1919. Sakari Pälsi, who traversed the region somewhat north of the Amur, gives a concise description of Dersu's ideas: «The efforts of the Arctic people do not enable them to conquer nature. Cut off from external assistance and lacking a comprehensive system, it was possible for the Hêjê to master nature. The struggle ended with both sides accepting compromise: nature had to allow the people a minimum subsistence level, and they had to adapt themselves to the laws of nature.» It is interesting to note that Pälsi apparently met Arsen'ev (p. 115) in Kamchatka, where they both happened to be exploring in 1918. Uno Harva was one of the first scholars to place the hunting rites of the Hêjê in a Eurasian perspective. He also sought a connection between these rites and the early hunting rites of the Finns. See: U. Holmberg, «Über die Jagdriten der nördlichen Völker Asiens und Europas», *Suomalaisugrilaisen Seuran Aikakauskirja* Journal de la Société finno-ugrienne, 41 (1925). A year later A. I. Hallowell published an article comparing similar traditions, «Bear Ceremonialism in the Northern Hemisphere», *American Anthropologist* (1926). These studies recognize the principle of reciprocity between man and nature, as Pälsi's had done. The religious rites depicted by Kurosawa are considered in a broader and more meaningful perspective in Uno Harva's *Altain suvun uskonto* [The Religion of the Altai People], Helsinki 1933, translated into German under the title *Die religiösen Vorstellungen der altaischen Völker*, FFC 125, Helsinki 1938. The same can be said of Dimitri Zelenin's *Kult ongonov v Sibiri*, Moscow 1936. Zelenin considers evolution in a materialistic perspective. Totemism, for instance, is within the scope of his study. For Zelenin, the tiger was the Hêjê totem animal; they believed they were descended from this animal. Eveline Lot-Falk was the first to apply the principle of reciprocity consistently to the material presented by Harva and Zelenin, in her *Les rites de chasse chez les peuples sibériens*. This study came vividly to mind when I saw the Kurosawa film. See also: J.-P. Roux, *Faune et flore sacrées dans les sociétés aliaques*, Paris 1966. Lot-Falk makes the point that it was precisely the transition

from hunting as a group activity to individual hunting that marked the decay of traditional culture and *ipso facto* the destruction of rites.

¹⁸ In *Types of Religion in the Arctic Hunting Cultures. A Religio-Ecological Approach in Hunting and Fishing*, ed. Harald Hvarfner, Lulea 1956, Ake Hultkranz has sought to apply an ecological approach to the study of Arctic religions. However, he deals only with the culture-ecological approach and does not consider information pertaining to eco-systems that might be found in religions. Hitoshi Watanabe, on the other hand, applies the eco-system approach to the study of Ainu culture: *The Ainu Ecosystem. Environment and Group Structure*, Seattle 1973. Watanabe tries to view religion and rituals as a component of the eco-system. He concludes: «The ecological system of the Ainu functions on adaptation of their techniques to the spatio-temporal structure of the activities of biotic species. The Ainu system of relationship in beliefs and ritual of man and nature is their own theory and practice for maintenance of the ecological system.» But how does this work in practice? Do the *kamui* spirits provide correct information about the eco-system, or is the balance maintained in some other way? Watanabe does not answer these questions because he continues to hold a culture-centered view of the eco-system. Compare this to the view of Roy. A. Rappaport in «Ritual, Sanctity, and Cybernetics», *American Anthropologist*, (1971). On page 71 Rappaport says: «Three aspects of religious discourse are significant with respect to change. The first is that the ultimate sacred sentences are propositions: the second is that they usually contain no material terms. That they are propositions prevents them from containing specific directives; if they contain no material terms they are prevented from becoming irrevocably bound to any particular social form.» Rappaport's ecological cybernetics is actually social cybernetics, and he does not answer the question, how does religion keep the eco-system in balance. In «La notion de propriété et les esprits-mâtres en Sibérie», *Revue de l'histoire des religions* (1953), Eveline Lot-Falck accepts Durkheim's view that the structure of the social spirit world is reflected in the natural environment. In fact, this social determinism does not differ a great deal from Zelenin's Marxist interpretation. However, if we assume that the spirit world is an extension of the social structure, how can it transmit relevant information to balance the eco-system? Claude Lévi-Strauss, in *La pensée sauvage*, Paris 1962, emphasizes the sophisticated thinking processes of the savage and experiences difficulties when attempting to establish the inter-relationship between mythology and ecology. See his «Structuralism and Ecology», *Social Sciences Information* (1973). When culture moves, mythology follows it. Yet, how is unrestricted movement of information in the biosphere possible? This is surely the most baffling of all problems. See my article: «Ihmisen ekologiasta ja ekologian ihmisestä» (Concerning the ecology of man and man in ecology) *Medisiinari* (1974).

¹⁹ See note 13, and especially Pentti Aalto. It should be noted that C.G. Mannerheim made a military-geographical tour of the Russo-Chinese border region very much like the one that Arsen'ev carried out. The timing of their tours almost coincided. See: *Across Asia from West to East 1906-1908*, I-II, Suomalais-ugrilaisen Seuran kansatieteellisiä julkaisuja VIII, Helsinki 1940. Mannerheim regarded the natives with the superior attitude of an educated Westerner. The language of his report is dry and factual, and his journey encompasses essentially areas that had already been investigated and surveyed; but Mannerheim's diaries cannot be compared with Arsen'ev's.

²⁰ The work of Eveline Lot-Falck and Jean-Paul Roux, on the hunting rites of the Siberian peoples and the interpretation of nature of the Altai people respectively came on the heels of Harva's studies. Mircea Eliade calls Harva a pioneer

scholar of comparative Shamanism in the preface to *Le chamanisme et les techniques archaïques de l'extase*, Paris 1951. Ivar Paulson, in *Schützgeister und Gottheiten des Wildes in Nordeurasien*, Uppsala 1961, stresses the importance of Harva's research and the Finno-Ugric collections for the study of the nature spirits of these people. Nevertheless, Harva has not won the recognition that he deserves. Adolf Friedrich neglects to mention Harva altogether in his «Die Forschung über das frühzeitliche Jägertum», *Paideuma*, (1941). Finnish scholars have been conspicuously absent from forums concerned with economic anthropology. After World War II British scholars soon recognized the value of the collections in Finland. In the introduction to *Prehistoric Europe. The Economic Basis* London 1952, J.G.D. Clark remarks on the valuable material collected by Finnish scholars, especially in the study of early European economic institutions. Franz Steiner, in «Notes on Comparative Economics», *British Journal of Sociology* (1954), cites the work of Toivo Lehtisalo, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Renttierzucht bei den Juraksamojeden*, Institute for Sammenlignende Kulturforschung, Series B, 16, Oslo 1932. Wilhelm Mühlmann quotes with enthusiasm the studies of M. A. Castrén and Kai Donner in «Vorkapitalistische Klassengesellschaften», *op. cit.* Thomas A. Sebeok and Frances J. Ingemann applied the anthropological approach to the material collected by Uno Harva and Albert Hämäläinen on the Cheremis. See: *Studies in Cheremis: The Supernatural*, Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology 22, New York 1956. They sought an understanding of «kugu sorta» messianism, which during the last decades of the nineteenth century tried to preserve Cheremis traditions from mounting outside pressures. Wilhelm Mühlmann's «Hyperboräische Eschatologie», in *Chiliasmus und Nativismus*, Berlin 1961, discusses the relationship of Arctic religious phenomena to colonization. His findings were based in part on source material collected by Finnish scholars. But during the early 1960s «Finnish materials disappeared from traditional scholarly hunting grounds.» But at this very moment numerous syntheses on critic religious traditions are being published the world over. See especially: I. Paulsson, A. Hultkranz and K. Jettmar: *Die Religionen Nordeurasien und der amerikanischen Arktis*, Stuttgart 1962 and V. Diószegi (hrsg.): *Glaubenswelt und Folklore der sibirischen Völker*, Budapest 1963. To add insult to injury, only one Finnish scholar, Helmer Tegengren, made a contribution to the symposium on «Life in a Traditional Hunting and Fishing Milieu in Prehistoric Times and up to the Present Day,» organized to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Norbotten Museum in Sweden. Is it possible to imagine a worse deflation in scholarship? See «Hunting and Fishing» *op. cit.* There is no reason to complain if foreign scholars utilize material collected by Finnish ethnographers. But it is another matter when Finns themselves do not take advantage of their own resources. It is a matter for regret when a long-established tradition of scholarship is allowed to go to seed or when Finnish scholars adduce linguistic isolation as an excuse for self-imposed stagnation. The Finns have simply not kept up with international developments in the field. For example, one suspects that E. A. Virtanen, a specialist in traditional economic institutions, was still unaware in the 1960s that a new discipline, economic anthropology, had come into being. See: E. A. Virtanen, «Yksityis- ja yhtiötaloudesta varhaiskantaisessa yhteisössä» [Individual and Communal Economy in Archaic Communities], *Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, Esitelmät ja pöytäkirjat* 1960. The first Finnish scholar after Harva to make references to the Hêjê appears to have been Lauri Honko; See: «Role-taking of the Shaman», *Temenos*, 4, (Turku 1969). Honko is breathing new life into the scholarly tradition of Uno Harva, a most welcome development!

²¹ A reading of Kustaa Vilkuna's acceptance speech on being appointed Professor of Ethnology (« Suomalaisugrilainen kansatiede tietään etsimässä » [Finno-Ugric Ethnography in search of a direction], *Virittäjä* 1950), suggests that the tradition will maintain its vigor. « Earlier generations of scholars and collectors have left us invaluable Finno-Ugric collections. The use of this material in Finnish and general anthropology is a special right and responsibility for Finnish scholars. » Vilkuna then goes on to stress the importance of nature relationships, trade routes, and the interrelationships of religion and government for an understanding of the distribution of culture. Yet it is impossible to cite a single work by a Finnish scholar on the history of Northern Eurasian peoples since Harva published his work and Kai Donner his *Siperia* (Porvoo, 1933; French translation, *La Sibérie*, Paris 1946). But Hungarian scholars have recently published studies in this field. To mention one, see P. Hajdú, *Finno-Ugric Peoples and Languages*, London 1975. Why is there so little interest in Finno-Ugric studies in Finland? Before World War II Finnish social anthropologists, Finno-Ugrists, and specialists in religion and Altaic studies were internationally renowned. Foreign scholars still cite their work. The same claim cannot be made for postwar Finnish scholarship. It may be that Finland, a small country on the periphery of Europe, is no longer concerned about its scholarly traditions of international reputation. Or it may be that nowadays all research must be utilitarian and « modern », as if social scientists could transform the world! Before World War II many Finnish scholars subscribed to the idea of Great Finland « collecting together » the « Finnish » tribes of Northern Russia; see W. A. Wilson, *Folklore and Nationalism in Modern Finland*, Bloomington 1976. That « imperialistic » tendency lost ground on the battlefields of World War II, and a period of cooperation began between Finland and the Soviet Union. One might suspect some self-censorship in the study of the Finno-Ugric minorities of the Great Neighbor.

²² For the social organization of the Tungus, see especially S. M. Shirokogoroff, *Social Organization of the Northern Tungus*, Shanghai 1929.

²³ For attitudes towards aging, see: I.A. Lopatni, *The Cult of the Dead Among the Natives of the Amur Basin*, The Hague 1960, and J.-P. Roux, *La mort chez les peuples altaïques anciens et médiévaux*, Paris 1963.

²⁴ Although the hunting-culture traditions of the Hêjê people have disappeared, the Hêjê have not died out nor have all of them been assimilated by the Russians of the Chinese. Hêjê continue to live both in the Soviet Union and in China. BSE in 1970 estimated that about 10,000 Hêjê lived in Soviet Siberia, while a smaller group lived in China. There are those who might think that everything has turned out for the best for the Hêjê, thanks to the Russian and the Chinese socialist revolutions. Nevertheless, one should regard official statistics and pronouncements about ethnic minorities with a healthy sense of skepticism. Be that as it may, it is clear that change has been almost total for the Hêjê: most of them have been assimilated into an alien culture without their consent. For socialist acculturation see: R. Bastide, *Anthropologie appliquée*, Paris 1971.

²⁵ See works cited of Arsen'ev and Lattimore. In « An Example of Culture Contact without Conflict: Reindeer Tungus and Cossacks of Northwestern Manchuria », *American Anthropologist*, 1938, E. J. Lindgren noted that Russian colonization may also have led in some cases to « peaceful coexistence » with the natives.

²⁶ In Arsen'ev's view the conquest of a native population always and everywhere leads to similar phenomena of decline and deterioration. This proposition, which attempts to put the Russian colonization of the Amur region into a broader

perspective, must, however, be looked at more thoroughly. Among other things, the consequences of colonization depend on prior relationships between colonizer and colonized. The spread of Western Civilization was sometimes unbelievably destructive, because Europeans introduced hitherto unknown diseases among the native people. On the other hand, the consequences of expansion also depend on the technological level of the colonizers: the destructive capacity of their weapons and their means of transportation. Furthermore, Western expansion has been global in character: no ethnic minority has escaped its effect. In this sense, it is quite relevant to speak of a «white peace» as a prelude to ethnocide, as Robert Jaulin has done. But stating that this is what has happened and what will happen elsewhere is no justification for ethnocide or acculturation. The theory of evolution can also be used to argue the necessity for change — to argue that inability to adapt leads up a blind alley. Strong nations tend to believe that they represent the height of progress. This tendency is traditional for the Chinese, and Western culture adopted the same view following the Industrial Revolution. From an ecological point of view, however, «progress» has led to increasingly more serious disturbances in the biosphere, and many traditional values must be reexamined as a consequence. Western anthropology has gravitated in diverse directions with the passage of time: toward evolution, diffusion, cultural relativism, and ecology. At this moment, the objective should perhaps be a cohesive anthropological theory encompassing ecological and evolutionary considerations in ethnic inter-relationships. Such a theory might conceivably put into meaningful focus the phenomenon of ethnocide. In this way, it might again be possible to put into relative perspective the concept of «cultural superiority»: who is superior, why, and at what price?

²⁷ H. Tegengren, *En utdöd lappkultur i Kemi lappmark*, Studier i Nordfinlands kolonisationshistoria, AAAH, XIX 4, Turku 1952; J. Ahvenainen, «Some contributions to the question of Dutch traders in Lapland and Russia at the end of the Sixteenth Century», *Studia Historica Jyväskyläensia* V, (1967) and I. Massa, *Lapin ekologisen historian peruspääteet*, [Basic framework of the ecological history of Lapland], Esitutkimus Valtion humanistisen toimikunnan projektiin «Kulttuurin sopeutuminen arktiseen ekologiaan», [Preliminary study to the State Humanistic Project «Adaptation of Culture to arctic ecology»], Helsinki 1975. Helmer Tegengren wrote a history of the ethnocide of the Forest Lapps. Unfortunately this publication has not been translated into a major language. Such a study might have been more favorably received abroad than in Finland where the Pirkkala myth prevails (the Pirkkalainen were the great medieval fur traders in Lapland). Scholars in Finland are chronically faced with difficulties when trying to promote ethno-historical Arctic research.

²⁸ For an understanding of the death concept of the Hêjê, see especially I. A. Lopatin, *The Cult of the Dead Among the Natives of the Amur Basin*. Dersu died without achieving status. Compare J. Pentikäinen, «The Dead Without Status», *Temenos*, 4, (1969). For anthropology of death see: L.V. Thomas, *Anthropologie de la mort*, Paris, 1975, and for the Western concept of death, see Ph. Ariès, *Essais sur l'histoire de la mort en Occident du Moyen Age à nos jours*, Paris 1975. The «flight from death» is a particularly significant manifestation of the abnormal relationship between culture and nature that prevails in the West today. It is one aspect of Western man's frustration in attempting to conquer nature. Kai Birket-Smith has written an interesting analysis of the relationship between the *potlatch* institution and death rites: «An analysis of the *potlatch* institution of North America», *Folk*, 1964. Might not this interpretation provide a link between the Hêjê death rites and the *potlatch* concept?