

On the 4th of July 2002, Éva Schmidt, Hungarian ethnologist, died in the West-Siberian Hanti-Manszijszk. Four months later a three member delegation set out to bring home and make an inventory of her inheritance. The mission failed, the inheritance has been locked up again in a safe.

The Legacy

1. On the 5th of July, a phone-message was waiting for me at my apartment. Anna Vándor was speaking, she only said: Márta, I am sorry you are not at home, I wanted to tell you something, there is big trouble. There was also a nother message, that I should call somebody, from whom I learned that the day before, Éva Schmidt died in Hanti-Manszijszk. This shocked everyone.
2. On the weekend, we were at my parents with the family in Székesfehérvár. There was a phonecall, which not I, but Kata answered. Kata was in a very close relationship with Éva, they had a very special, personal tie of mutual sympathy. Kata came in the room, pale white, and said: Éva died. If there is such, as a bolt from the blue, this was it. Already in that moment it was evident, that we had to go there. The reason for this is that among the colleagues, we two were Siberia researchers. This is important from the view, that Siberia is a Russian field of live, where you find the same conditions, no matter if you are West or South. I wasn't wrong, because few days later they called me, and ordered me in to the Institute and told me that they definitely want me to go. The main reason that they chose me was that I am a man, and I don't feel lost in such situations.
2. I knew about it from the hanti-gossips, since I was there on field at that time. Éva's birthday was on the 28th of July or so, and the accident happened on the 4th of July. I tried to call her on the occasion of her birthday, to tell her that I managed to cross the border and that I registered myself, and now I am off to the village for fieldwork. We haven't met there, because I travelled on a different rout, somewhat away from her, but I knew where she is and I also had a phone number, but I couldn't contact her, since she already went to Hanti-Majszijzsk, and even there I couldn't reach her, which I was sorry about, but what could be done...
I spoke with her sometime, when I was still in Moscow. I spent a couple of days in a village where there was still a phone line, and tried to call her again, without success. One day, we decided to go fishing on the Ob, and we did, so in the last moments, -this was a Friday afternoon, and Éva died on Thursday- I was still running around the village for food and different things for the trip. Meanwhile, the woman I stayed at there, wrote me a note on the table, thas somebody phoned, and asks me to call a number in Hanti-Majszijzsk. I read the note when I was jumping into the boat, and I thought that when I get to the Ob, sooner or later I will arrive to some village, and I will call, it must be Éva. This was already the news, but I knew nothing, usually these things aren't so urgent. So then I went fishing on the Ob, and spent ten nice days with the family we stayed at, when I was there in '92. with Éva. Then the celebration called

'the fishermens day' came, which fell on the 14th of July this year, and Éva died on the 4th. Then the daughter of the old man, with whose family I stayed with arrived. She was a coming and going souvenir maker, who travelled through the fishermans' villages and always brought the vodka for the actual celebrations, and now she came to visit her father. They set shore, we had dinner. Just when they set out for home again with her husband, around midnight, to Muzsi, the village where they lived, when they came out of the tent where we slept by the river, I asked her: Could you call Éva, and just tell her that I am here by your parents, and that everything is alright! She looked at me and said, that she can't call. I said: why not, it is not a big deal, even there, there are already digital phones, you just push the buttons... She said, no, there is no way to reach Éva anymore... then the others also became perplexed. This is how I found out, how she told me that Éva no longer exists. This is how it happened. .

1. This is how it began, the academic machine started to work. Our trip was supposed to be managed according to the cooperation-contract between the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Russian Academy, but meanwhile some problems evolved. The Russian Academy of Sciences had no institutions in the Hanti-Majszinszk ethnical region, therefore they couldn't send any of their people there, at least not within the frame of the Hungarian-Russian exchange-pact. For a while it seemed that apart from the costs of the journey there is no money for our trip. We turned to ministries, and everywhere, to find somebody who could finance this trip. Then, finally the last day before the trip we received the visa, and managed to get the allowance, from which Pista Sánta bought the raw material that we took, and we could also collect our travel allowance from different organizations, such as the Ministry of Education, Cultural Heritage, the Hungarian national organization of the Finno-Ugrian World Congress, the Institute of Linguistic Sciences. So our departure was very hectic, but finally we set out, and arrived, to the greatest surprise of those in Siberia.

3. Then I decided to phone, it is easier to call Siberia than Hungary, I called the archives, the archives of Éva, to ask when the Hungarians are arriving. What Hungarians?, they don't know- they said. I thought, hmm... this is going to be interesting. This was around the 5-6th of November. It is lucky that I haven't set out yet, a snowstorm set out then, which lasted a week, not even the helicopters flew. Then I called Márta, who told me that they are planning to set off around the 11th of November, if they get the visa, but they are still waiting for it. At last we managed to meet, but as it turned out to be a problem, they didn't come to the invitation of the archiv, not even to the invitation of the Institute of Hanti-Manszijszk, but they received their visa through the Hungarian Cultural Institution of Moscow. Their arrival to Siberia was a surprise, they weren't expecting them in Hanti-Manszijszk.

1. We arrived at the airport. I was the only one, who has never been on field before among the Hantis, and probably I won't come again, unless there something, but I don't plan to come again. A small hanti woman with bleached hair, wearing a mink coat and high-heel shoes, was waiting for us at the airport. They took us inside, they knew who we were, and the first question they asked was where we are going to stay. From this I knew, that it is going to be exactly what we were expecting. We told them, that for us it is a basic ethical approach, that with all the money we spend here we wish to support them, not the Russian. They didn't get the point. It became obvious that very moment, that money was not important to them. They didn't even think about one family moving to the other for the time of our stay, and us paying the

money that we payed for the Russian hotel, to them. Neither of us had made a good bargain, but it didn't really matter on our side. They took us to a hotel. Since this used to be an oil-drilling region, energy was free here, which meant that there was +30 Celsius in the house, and -40 outside. One always had to keep the window open, in order to survive. The food was just terrible, everything made of powder, I haven't had a warm meal for a whole month, except the special occasions, for example when Eszter made fish-porridge from the fish that she brought with herself. The stores were filled up with goods, but all clingfilmed. We had to recourse to it after a while, and I haven't eaten meat for the whole month, which is a tough thing for me. I have seen the city on Éva's films before, but I just didn't believe it. She used to call it the Switzerland of the North, well almost. All the buildings are covered with glass, hyper-modern, nothing that can be compared with Russia. Perhaps only that the single Hungarians who lived in the city were Karcsi and his wife, who are Sub-Carpathian Hungarians, and good friends of Éva. They were also oil-workers, and stayed here as pensioners. Theirs is the last beam-house.

1. When we arrived, as much as I can recall on the 14th of November, when they greeted us, they said: - It is great that you arrived. Éva's room is sealed up and could not be opened until the Hungarians arrived, but now that we are here, they will call the representatives of the Hanti-Majszinszk Center and the woman whom Éva appointed to settle her things according to the Hanti traditions. The Institute and Éva's flat are technically one apartment, which used to be a 3-room apartment, and now two rooms belong to the Institute and one to Éva. The fellow researchers of the Institute can no longer work from the pressure, they feel that as long as Éva's belongings are there in that room, Éva keeps coming back for them, as a ghost. They are afraid to be there alone, they can hear her breathing, they see her boots, she appears in their dreams. They couldn't wait for her things to get out of that room.

3. Back in summer it happened the same way, when we were in the room, 4-5 colleagues were sitting on the couch, while I was packing the things and dictating to them, because they were afraid to touch anything. I was also afraid, but somebody had to do it. I arrived there ill in the first place, but after the packing I became even more ill, which the hantis still explain with the fact, that I was the one to touch the things. It is a strange situation..... sending the sacrifice-sheep among the wolves. So we entered the room. It was Olga Krashchenkova who has been entrusted with everything. Among the few things we agreed in was that we are not going to let books be burned.

1. They sent some people from the Center among them a lawyer, we held a discussion. The lawyer was told just the day before, what his task will be, so he seed quickly after Éva's work contracts, and from these he read out that the original recordings should stay in the archives, and the copies should be sent to Hungary.
2. The matter of Éva's archive is very complicated legally. Since she lived in the archive, she had an own room, with her own things in it. Some objects of the archiv were maybe outside, maybe within this room. They brought the somewhat childish decision, that those things that were in her room at her death belonged to her personal inheritance, while those that were outside it, remained in the archive.

1. The agreement was, that the original papers should be brought away by us, but to keep the inheritance complete, copies should be made for the Belojarski Institute. The colleagues of the institute were making copies continuously, on more machines. They also worked a lot. At the end, the papers were doubled, the video and audio recordings were also doubled, so besides the originals there were the copies.
3. I asked Martha if we could speed up the process, and do the work in three weeks, instead of a month, so that we could solve the other problems that might occur, in the remaining one week. We finished the work with toil and moil in three weeks, everything cut and dried, the papers in large heaps, so that everything be as precise as possible, that they couldn't find any mistake in it. It should be all in order, conscientiously. Sometimes we asked: do we really need a copy of this? But finally we made it. We ordered the appointed members of the Hanti-Majszinszk committee there, who appeared and declared that we cannot take the copies with us.

1. Of course this announcement was a shock for all of us. We couldn't even say a word. We weren't expecting this, and we found no other explanation, then that when we arrived, they were not prepared to receive us, and they didn't have no ready objection for us, so they told us: go on and work. During these three weeks, we were working day and night, and meanwhile, they found out a suitable complaint, only to deprive us from being right. The young man was a native Hanti, toughened by his former job as mediator between the Hantis and the oil companies. He supported the interests of the oilers against his own people, so he really knew how to twist words. He let us now, that it is only out of their good will that we can be here, and that this is only a friendly gesture on their side. There is no formal relationship between us.

2. We had an authorization, that allowed us to decide in everything, but they said, that we don't have the rank to enforce anything at all. What can one do on such grounds?

3. One cannot listen to this, smile and say: good, then we will just leave it here. There were a lots of problems, and one can blame himself afterwards for not doing or saying things then. But anyone who would have done better would have been welcome in our team. Neither in language, nor in the way of thinking, we were not prepared to get involved in dubious Russian arguments, anyway, this is a nother handicap of ours. This is the summary of how things happened.

2. The final result was, that the very same people, sequestered the thing, in front of our eyes, just as when we came, only that we made copies of the whole material, and doubled it. They closed it back the same way. The only thing that was important to them, was that Éva's room should be emptied. Now it was, they put up new wallpaper and rearranged the furniture. This little larder-like safe was closed back, just the way it was when we arrived.

3. The most important character of the event was the shaman-woman. To us she had no significance, but for the Hantis, she was the one who cleaned Éva's room. For the Hantis, this was the main point: to legalize the whole process and verify that all affairs here are

clean. It was important that it can be said that the shaman was here and cleaned everything. Éva was very political in this, because the shaman woman was chosen from one of the local rival families, and trusted to perform the ritual. Thus the legalization was perfect, this political step is completely clear. Éva thought of such things, the game was played almost to the end.

3. The Hantis said that there was something about Éva, which made her similar to the seers. She must have seen things that I don't see, and probably this is why she chose Olga Kraftsenko. What is important to know about her, is that she is the sister of Tanya Moldanova. Their maiden name is Moldanova, which is also the name of her husband. And about Tanya Moldanova: simply speaking, she is the leader of the hanti people at the moment.

2. In the present situation, which is recorded on the film, at the opening of the rooms, the word of the shaman-woman was decisive. The strife was for her favours. Eszter was our representative, the bargaining happened in hanti language. On their side there was the head of the Institute, but the shaman-woman was the one to tell everybody's fate.

3. Those who knew Éva know that she had no mink-coat, or any clothes that would be worth keeping, or handing over. She didn't collect fortunes or antiquities. She drew, since she used to learn at art school. Just to make clear what sort of objects one can expect to find there. I was afraid, that with these 'sacred' objects, which were to be found there in abundance, wrapped up in scarfs... the Hantis still say that I got ill because of touching them. But what we are going to do with all these, because it turned out that they needed special care, maybe it is a selfish approach, but I felt very relieved that the whole process was taken over by Olga. This way the responsibility stayed at the Hantis. If she did something wrong, it is all going to be their fault. I granted her all rights of decision, not if anybody there thought that I should decide.

2. We agreed not to burn at least what was Hungarian and scientific. This was the price that we paid for saving these things, since everything else was destroyed. For them to say that those things that Éva wrote in Hungarian could be saved, however, they knew that the will contained parts that said these should also be burned. We had to be silent about things or go into such situations that here from Budapest might seem.... We were blamed for not standing out for the other objects which had been burned. Simply because this was the price of saving the Hungarian documents. From this point, it depended on us, what we consider important and scientific out of the things that were written in Hungarian. Of course none they burned none of these.

1. István stood there with the camera. The colleagues were also there, they were interested in what was happening and watched the events with feelings mingled with fear. The women covered their heads with scarfs, because this is the only way they can be there, where spirits are present. I watched from behind, or not even watched, but listened to the discourse, the sharing of the things. But the truth is that the ethnologist, or anthropologist in us rebelled against the destruction of these valuable cultic objects, or the beautiful, old embroidered cloaks.

3. I wouldn't be able to do what Éva has done. Back in summer we talked about it, and her colleagues said: „Éva told us you are going to work here when she is no longer with us.” I told them to forget it. You don't want a nother crazy Hungarian to moove here, and neither does the director of the institute, and I couldn't do it anyway. That Éva carried the whole arhiv on her back has more reasons. One of them is this concept of feedback, that the Hantis should document themselves. The other, practical reason is, that back then, this was the only way Éva could go and do research there. In '91, it was not so easy to go there, even today it is difficult to get visa or a scholarship. Today it is still not easy, but if I feel like it, I can manage to gather the amount of money and spend half a year there. I don't know whether Éva would have started the whole project of founding an archive is she had such possibilities then. It was incredible drudgery in the beginning, literally, because we went to the rubbish dump to steal the wooden planks for the shelves. It is unbelievable how much there was nothing. During the '91-'92 expedition there was still rationing, there was a shortage of food. They portioned the vodka for the expedition on backdoors, we diluted the pure alcohol. We sent the things after Éva in wooden boxes, she went there in February, the funds that she applied for in January arrived in March. I did the shopping, we packed the things and posted the package. Everything was sent from here, from cherry-brandy to sanitary pads, the typewriter with Russian keyboard, the batteries, everything.

1. The Belojariskij Institute layes on the side of the river Kazin, on the lower-Kazin, near to where the Kazin joins the Ob. Her first colleagues came from the surroundings, from the two sides of the river, and also from the upper-Kazin. After a short while it turned out that these people are very self-conscious and don't allow anyone to interrupt their work. And however Éva tought her a lot of things that they needed to learn, a lots of conflicts arouse between them. She had to begin to collect a new group of fellow-researchers for the '94-'95 expedition. This time she compiled the group from the Ob-region. These people were despised by the Hantis, whose emerging nationalism evolved in a way, that the people from the Kazin tried to seize all political and cultural power in the region. Éva stood in the way of the people of the Kazin, and after a while they forbid her to work there. Fortunately the Hanti-language region is so large, that she could continue her work in other river-vallies, such as the Kunováč-valley, and in the Southern regions, where she was the only one to study extinguishing dialects. She was in opposition with the influential Hanti intellectuals of the Kazin-region, and she wanted to get out of their way, not of her own colleagues, who felt completely abandoned without her, loosing their leader, guide, helper and 'nurse'. So it was a conflict between the different Hanti ethnical groups inwhich she was trapped. It was not the Russian she had problems with. They didn't care about these things. The conflicts between the Hantis caused her death.

1. Éva had a constant white-man conscience, wondering what the white-man would think this or that situation, as opposed to what a Hanti would think. In this opposition, we white people always remained weaker. The philosophy of Éva was to document the Hantis from a Hanti perspective, so that the Hantis should film themselves. We who are not Hantis cannot understand their things in their way, this is true, but still, I believe that it is interesting to understand what we can, about them. Sometimes Éva thought this was harmful. She had a great role there, with the establishment of the archive in '91 she made a big change there. Later archives grew out of the earth like mushrooms, but she was the first one to think of it and do it. From a scientific, white-man point of view, Éva's archive is categories above the others. Hantis work in the

other archives, just as everyone in Éva's, except her, and they write scientifically interesting things, but not at all in a style appropriate for the Hungarian Academy of Science. Even if they write in an academic style, it is very different, a different science, but still, rather Russian-academic.

1. There is a scientific research center in Hanti-Mansiysk. The director of this research center is a young woman, who has been present at the negotiations in the beginning, and mentioned more times that the Éva's collections are the national heritage of the Hanti. She said that they are fed up that the national treasures of the Hanti are taken abroad and processed there, that others gain from the songs and stories of the Hanti. It is not the first time that such doubts arise, that the researchers abuse the collected material and the people who gave the records do not profit from the collections of the European or other researchers.

1. One sees these points of exposure, as Éva called it, that the way of experiencing national identity is cultural activity. This is the reason why everyone becomes a scholar. It is the only way they can represent their culture. Almost everyone is a candidate, because this is the way. On the other hand, this provides a source of living, and possibilities of course... One can see that unfortunately this doesn't work. Unfortunate, as we see it with our white-man mind. For us it would be an appealing career. Here, to be a folk-dancer or a candidate is a good career. There also sometimes, for someone it proves good, for someone doesn't.
2. When Éva died, they told us she said on the phone that everything she put her life up on, lost its meaning. I thought a lot about this, I think this was a very important key-sentence in the whole affair. Two things arose, firstly that why Éva went out to the Hanti became realized or that it will never become. These are the two meanings of this statement. Both can be true, it's the matter of interpretation. Éva was no longer head of the Institute, she was a scientific colleague, who legalized their activity. With Éva's death they had to face the problem: there was no one who could do this instead of her. The other fact is, that she raised a group of intellectuals among the Hanti, who dealt with culture and folklore. There were a few among them, who –to say it nicely– were annoyed by Éva's presence. Éva knew this beforehand. There were two important things she thought about Siberia-research. Firstly that we Hungarian researchers are different from others in that we are able to learn the Siberian languages and approach people through their own language.– This shows her values very well. The other, which is also a very Hungarian thing, that our role is to raise their conscience towards their own culture with our presence. If this mission is completed, we will be oppressed, and no longer wanted there. She said the same happened with Diószegi, and it will happen to me too. She knew that she had no other choice, that she could no longer breathe there. I think everything was connected to this. She didn't want to come home, she was preparing during her whole life to carry this out among the Hanti. She had to die, because this was the only way she could become Hanti. Only with her death could she become one, not alive. With her death she became a spirit in the life of the Hanti, a spirit that appears in their dreams. They interpret their dreams in a way that Éva can potentially appear in them. She entered the life of the Hanti people through their dreams.

What she thought about herself is hard to answer. Come to think about it now, after having searched through her belongings, she was surprisingly Hungarian. She was truly Hungarian in her soul. Of course, like all of us who have experienced life abroad, she adopted a lot of Hanti customs. We all differ in the way we adopt things and how we adopt these traditions. It is like what István does or doesn't adopt from the Burjáts. Since the time I started fieldwork with Éva, all customs I didn't adopt straight from the Hantis I adopted from her. This means that in a lot of cases I adopted the same things as Éva. Our ethics are much the same too. This makes my work easier and also in a sense, harder. At the same time I have to view the world with Eva's and the Hungarian National Academy's eyes. I have to view things from the aspect of science, conservation or the future, and its becoming harder and harder every day. Eva viewed the world from these aspects too; otherwise she would not have collected 400 hours of video footage. What did she consider herself to be? On the one hand once the Hanties dropped a brick when we participated in a conference, and there were three of us from Hungary there. They said: we would like to ask the three Hungarian participants to the stage. This of course meant, since Eva was the fourth, that they considered her to be a Hanti. They trusted and followed her, even though she was a foreigner. Everyone knew how much knowledge she held. On the other hand, I think she was a Hungarian in her soul, for she made us bring her body back to Hungary. She did this nevertheless that I knew exactly where she wanted to bury herself, in which village, next to which old man, based on a discussion that we had some 3 years ago. This shocked me. It is like she aborted the whole process of becoming a Hanti in the last minute. Mission impossible. This is the first lesson for me.

2

We had to make a video footage to document what was happening; it is a minute-book really. The Hanties asked us to write a minute-book. I told them that it is not necessary, I'll tape everything. I did so and left the whole thing there as a minute-book, so we have documented everything that happened to Eva's heritage. This is not a strange conception, for all Eva's life was about that she documented everything, made an archives of all things that happened in that city along the last ten years. Especially things that were associated with the Hanties. School celebrations, investiture happenings, the celebration of reindeers or the feast of bears. She participated in all social happenings and taped them.

3

The situation of copyrights is difficult, even is we do not take mysticism into account. It is like the case of some young men, who started fieldwork there the same time I did, and got killed a couple of years later. They left a pile of tapes. It is still not clear who has the right to touch these tapes. Eva's work leaves us with the same questions. She has organised an amateur audio footage-collector network. She handed out tape recorders to certain people, like club leaders in the villages. We took these tapes into stock, organising compact footages. In many cases only Eva knew the exact copyrights associated with these tapes. Mostly the singer is unknown, the collector is unknown therefore it is hard to tell how and when the footage got into the archives. This would certainly not be the first thing I publicized.

1

To make things more complicated Eva on her last day wrote a testament, which can not be legally viewed as a testament. It is only a disposition addressed to the MTA's Ethnology Department, declaring that she pronounces the whole Obiugor archives secret for 20 years based on the will of the informants. It is not easy to define what these archives are. It can be the archives based in the Institute of Ethnology or even the archives in the Institute of Music,

because Eva had records in both places. It could even mean her collection in her parent's house or the archives in the Institute of Velojansk. The Hanties like to interpret this testament, for it is written in Hungarian, that it only applies for Hungarians. They like to think that they can process and research it freely. They would like to enforce this 20 year distraint. It even makes things more complicated that Eva has written a testament like material, which is sort of an intellectual last will. Neither did this become a testament legally, but there is a rough copy of it with the signature of Eva. In this draft she defines different categories in her archives. There is a category of inventory that she defines, that should be kept under distraint forever. These are highly sacral materials and the material that was collected in the valley of the Kazin River. It is forbidden to research it, listen to it or even to think about it according to her will. There are materials that can be researched and processed under some conditions and there are freely accessible materials, primarily her grammar collection. When the Hanties say that they would rather not allow Eva's collection to get out of the Hanti-Majsi ethnical region, they mean these. They would not like anyone to abuse materials which are recorded on Eva's tapes.

3

The other problem is obviously the mystical and cultural side of things. I must confess that I do not know enough about this. The wonderful knowledge that Eva had in the field Obiugor folklore and believes is impaired. I simply do not know as much as she and I do not speak the language either. These sacral songs are sung in such an ancient language that even the singers themselves do not understand them. They just sing them. Of course once they were decoded and Eva knew about it. I had the chance to learn the Hanti language as they speak it today among Hanti people. Eva did not have the chance to go there for a long time so she had to learn from texts. She knew all the texts they published off by heart. Her language skills therefore were much more advanced than mine. The Hanties said it is beautiful how Eva speaks, because of the wonderful ancient words she uses. Eva always had a strong attraction towards psychology and spiritualism. Her whole thesis issued towards the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, some parts of which are accessible in Hungarian language, was based on Jungian psychology. I got to know the Hanti culture through a bear cult course which was lectured by Eva. At that time I did not know anything about the Hanties neither about Jungian psychology so it was a tough training. On the one hand Eva had such an approach towards things that is alien to me, because I am not home in these fields. On the other hand her knowledge is totally beyond most peoples depths. I know if Eva says that something is red than it is red. This is why we can not criticise Eva's decisions. If she said that there should be 20 years distraint on the archives, then there should be one.

1

In her disposition written on may the 15th she would have saved a lot more things, for instance the books related to **arvisura** should have been taken to **Vezsakori**. She even disposes of her money, who should have and how much of it. Her disposition written on July the 2nd is all about burning and destroying things. Burning and destroying. She writes that all texts written in Hungarian should be destroyed. Luckily neither the Hanties nor did we take her seriously. We both knew that when someone is preparing for self-destruction then that person is ready to destroy everything else too. We did not destroy everything that Eva wanted us to in her last will.

3

It was very hard, especially the spiritual side of things which I do not know much about. All I can say is that I knew each tape in Eva's heritage. I know what Eva said about each of them,

some of them were totally secret. We copied even these. I was totally sick when I was packing her stuff around. Eva left clear instructions which tape to place on top of others. The tapes had to be placed in perfect order. Notwithstanding the tapes are just piled randomly on top of each other.

3

I never heard about the Hanti tradition that the belongings of the dead have to be burned. This was a surprising wish from Eva, even for the Hanties. Later Sofia Vladimirovna told me about her mother, who used to live at the place where I am conducting my research, who also wished her belongings to be burned. This shows me that people miss out on many things that happen around them. They believe that the items that are burned appear in Eva's spiritual world, so Eva no longer awaits or comes back to this world later. So she has to get these things.

2

There were many sacks labeled in both Hanti, Russian and Hungarian languages with items in them saying they should be taken to east, into the forest. They should have been burned. Sometimes they did as Eva instructed so automatically. This can be followed in the video footage. I have the feeling that in other cases they looked through these bags and judged otherwise. I am certain that nothing was placed in the woods. With this they ignored Eva's will. Actually Eva's will was only a governing principle. They discussed it and decided whether to follow them or not.

1

It was interesting that the director of the Hanti Science Institute and the other woman tried to follow some scientific approach. Clearly the other co-workers had their own mystical or mythical beliefs. At least in their relationship towards the dead and its belongings. There was a case of some old robes. We and some Hanti co-workers thought that we would save them. Olga Kraftsenko said that if we do not fear the dead, then we can take them. She said to the Hanties that the worst thing that can happen is that they will be cursed. She started to purify them with smoke and told us that we can do as we like with them afterwards. She held them over the smoke and suddenly the lights went out in the whole city. At that time we thought the lights only went out in our flat but later we were told that they went out in the whole city. I looked up and said: they should be burned; there was no need for further explanation. People who are familiar in such environment or believe in similar things need no further comments. It was clear that they should be burned. Obviously Eva needs her most beautiful, precious and oldest belongings.

2

In certain situations we took up the burden of disobeying traditions, as people from the European Civilization, and thought that we will bear all responsibility of packing up her stuff and taking it with us. All three of us thought that the robes that were at least 50 years old and must have been hard to make, and which had a certain aesthetic value for us must be taken. The Hanties agreed too, this is clearly visible from the video footage. We could take whatever we wanted almost freely, until the day the lights went out. They thought about this event like an omen that reverses everything. After this incident everything that we managed to save had to be taken back.

1

There really was a case of the old robes. The medicine woman told us that they have to be definitely burnt, because Eva holds on to her oldest belongings and would come back for them later. Eszter and Istvan said we would take on all responsibility associated with denying Eva's will and would take the robes back to the Ethnical Museum, so it would survive. The medicine woman started to purify them with smoke and in the same moment all the lights went out in the whole city.

3

Such folkloristic happenings saw through our stay there. For example the Kazin goddess manifests herself in the body of a black cat. This means that if a black cat appears that the people living there associate it with the Kazin goddess, the protector of the Kazin River. As we arrived an errant cat appeared in the door of the archives. Of course in -40C degrees the errant cats often retreat to heated staircases. So this young jet-black cat appeared in the staircase and our co-workers did not want to send it away. Instead they made a nice nest for it and always gave all the leftover food to it. This made the cat so spoilt, that it sometimes came in the flat and once even pissed on the copies that we were making. Everyone thought that it is the Kasin goddess that is looking over our work. Eva had a lot of trouble with the Kazin protector of the river. On our last day as we visited the institute once more before our flight home, the cat was in there and was hissing at us with an ssszzz sound. This was her farewell. Of course this can be explained in a lot of ways, but since we were in that environment, we thought about it as a work of some higher forces or the work of some spiritual force.

3

If we analyse things then on the one hand there is a certain scientific approach to things, which says that we must write down everything that we can. On the other hand there is a spiritual approach to things, which means we must experience things, like energy flowing through us. Both approaches have their own pros and cons. Obviously if someone can not live thorough things, because that someone lacks the energy to do so, then it is impossible for that person to approach things spiritually. The scientific part of things clearly need a scientific approach. The question is that in the case of religion, which is all about spirituality, are we allowed to apply a scientific approach at all? This means that both approaches alone look totally hopeless. Applying them together on the other hand is difficult. Eva knew and applied both. This way she came to understand a lot of things, but for some reason thought that it is best to keep this knowledge to herself.

1

Eva believed in the same spiritual forces that the Obiugors believe in. She lived her life and even died according to these. If she disposed that her death, burial and the arrangement of her belongings should be according to Hanti tradition, then we must respect her will.

3

I'm starting to think more and more that this was the best possible solution. If I think about it, what could we possibly have done with Eva's shirts? Where would we have put them? Perhaps in the rubbish? Or should we have taken them home? These are very sad things? What could we possibly have done with them? No one needs them, but they are things that people don't just throw away! If Eva asked us to burn them and it is the Hanti way of things then let it be. So what if Olga Kraftsennko burned a couple of Buddhist books? I'm not really tied up about it.

1

Fortunately she did not burn the written materials like such as papers and tapes. Of course she burned all Eva's other belongings: her clothes, cultic objects, the tapestry of her room and her bedding. The next day, after taking away a great load of belongings, the medicine-woman came and told us that she had a dream that it is impossible to enter Eva's room, because the bed is in the way. She explained the dream to us and said that the bed has to be burned. The director of the institute held the same opinion and amended that Eva had oppressive and depressive thoughts that led to her suicide lying on the sofa, so it has to be destroyed. So the bed got out of the room. The medicine woman also dreamed that a Buddhist temple appeared above the table that Eva's computer was standing on. She explained that this is a disturbing circumstance. This would have meant that the table has to be burned too, but they grudged it, because it was a really well designed table, it could perfectly fit a computer and the keypad on it, so it survived. They did not burn it. In the same dream the woman saw some folders and these would had to have been burned too, but we pretended not hear this and did not let her touch the folders.

1

If the Hantis were to blame for it, one could easily get rid of them by coming back home, but the truth is that she didn't consider us worthy of spending time in her company, so I don't know whether it was about the Hantis....

2

I had the illusion that if anything happens to me in Siberia than the institute and my country would stand behind me and support me. It turned out that this is not the way of things. There is noone supporting you and only personal contacts matter. What I mean is that Márta respected Eva. I had strong personal ties to Eva as well as Kate. My partner would never have let me go on such a journey otherwise. So all these things had to come together to start the whole case.

1

It is almost the end of April and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences has done nothing so far to bring the heritage home. This creates an awkward situation, because we were totally shocked when our Hanti partners did not allow us to bring the material home. We thought that the Hungarian Academy of Sciences would also be indignant, but according to our recent knowledge the academy so far has not even officially contacted the Hanties. This could suggest the mock idea that it is not important for the Hungarians to bring the heritage home.

2

I can still not decide whether Eva wanted the heritage to get home or not. I can not be sure of this, for we could not bring the heritage home. If we could have brought it home this would not be a question. Sometimes I wonder if she ever calculated with the difficulty of transporting the material home. This is an interesting thought, if we consider the fact that Eva rather had ethical concerns towards the Hanties than towards us. She represented the interests of the Hanties, even in the case of the heritage, rather than the main interest of Hungary, that it should have tangible scientific Hanti archives.

1

It was a shocking experience to be confronted with Eva's vast collection, her heritage; although I knew she had worked and gathered materials for a long time. I also visit the Eastern-Ostjak territories during summer for 1-2 months since 1992. I also have collections of my own, but they are insignificant compared to what Eva has gathered. This is the reason I know how much effort is put into scribing down 10 minutes of audio footage. Eva's achievements are impaired, the richness of her material is incomparable and the greatness of her task is constantly oppressing. It is Eva's scientific method that became clear to me as I looked through her work.

3

Objecting Eva's way of approach against her, saying that she did not show what she was supposed to show is simply outrageous. Asking her why didn't she deal with the cultural aspects of today's Hanti society with over 400 hours of video footage and 300 hours of audio footage behind her back is simply ridiculous. Sometimes I feel that if Eva didn't die the way she did, if she would have died in a motorboat accident for example, than the Hungarian Academy would be more concerned. Objecting the fact that it would have been her job to safeguard, process and research the whole material is just simply outrageous.

2

I view the whole story as a failure, that we could not retrieve the heritage, because I know that it is very hard to evolve such a situation once again, when someone is there in the right place and right time and the Hanties give the heritage back to them. This time we were there and it was very hard to fund the whole expedition. As we arrived home, the outright approach followed by the Academy was that we shouldn't even think about such an expedition next year, because we won't be given any further funding, even this one required a huge financial effort. This is why I started to look for other sources of funds. It is very humiliating to consider someone else's life's work as something that is worth or not worth retrieving. This is a very cosy point of view and it is also morally insulting for me as a scientist. Upon what ground does someone judge how much someone else's life's work is worth?

3

Besides Eva's Hungarian and Russian final letters there is also a Hanti one, which I could only take a brief look at in a bus stop. I was allowed to read some parts of it others I wasn't, but there are rumors spreading about these. According to these rumors Eva wrote a list of those people who would follow her into her death. And many do follow her. Some of her favorite informants hung themselves after the public spread of her suicide note. Another woman shot herself in the head three days before Eva's death. Sadly these things happen. I can not exactly tell how much influence Eva had over these things, because the suicide and mortality rate among the Hanties is very high anyway. Accidents are also common. I spoke to Tanja Moldanova about these facts, who was the last person Eva visited before her death in the hospital. On my journey home I had to spend a day in Hanti-Majsi, because I had some problems with my visa. Things looked like I can not leave Russia and the leaders of the Hanti-Majsi community were not helping either. I spent a night at Tanja's house. I was not in the mood to talk about spiritual issues. Looking back I regret this. Tanja Moldanova told me that Eva foresaw the dark times that were soon to come to Western-Siberia and that she can not do anything against this. She also foresaw that Pure-Hanties will die. I have never heard this expression used in the Hanti language before.

2

I don't know whether I am allowed to speak about this or not or even how to speak about it. Eva was systematically preparing for her suicide. As we looked through all the documents -we had to evaluate each whether to burn them or not- it turned out that she was preparing for it since 3-4 years at least. There were hints supporting this within the documents. Eszter told us later that Eva had a previous suicide attempt before. We found a piece of rope that was probably the remnant of this attempt.

3

I would say Eva was not sure of what she really wanted. She was torn between the reservation and the total destruction of things. She documented her recordings with such accuracy, that even an outsider could find its way about them. This is an evidenced that supports the idea that she wanted to preserve things; she wanted her work to become public treasure. Her forbidding statements became tighter and tighter in her testaments written in February, March, May and June. As time went by she wrote down stricter and harsher things which were parallel to her self-destruction. She developed an „all is lost and nothing matters anymore” approach towards life. She held this dichotomy until her final moments. Just before she chose the perfectly suitable hook to hang herself, she drew up a very detailed plan of a dialect gathering projects. She even wrote down which symbols should be used to scribe down the details when something is not perfectly clear or how to mark a cough in the conversation. Summing it up on the one hand she had a desire to systematically, scientifically and accurately record everything. On the other hand she wanted to hold everything aloof so things don't get into the hands of uninitiated people. This dichotomy is the main key to her death.

3

I would have never thought that Eva would end her life with her own hands. Although there is much evidence supporting that it was her own will I still make up a lot of theories, that she felt her death coming anyway, just did not have the patience to wait for it. This is how I comfort myself. She had a lot of serious illnesses. For many years her life was all about leaving behind everything in order. Well, everything is in perfect order now. This must have been in the air for a long time. It never appeared in my mind though, that it would all end like this.

Once I had a dream that we were in a half-finished building. It was like a student-hall. There was not enough money to finish the construction so we invited more investors, so they could take a look what else needs to be built. We went through all the levels, because it was a multi-storey building. It was interesting that all the bathrooms were in the basement. We looked through them and then we went up to the bedrooms which were located on the 1st, 2nd and third floors. People in the attic told us that the new Finnish lector would live there and Eva was there. There were bookshelves everywhere. Eva's archives were there on the shelves. I was surprised that Eva's heritage, which we packed up, has arrived. I explained to myself that Eva brought home the photocopies that we made. Eva was playing the organ in the centre of the room. We told her that even though it is the residence of the new Finnish lector she can remain there. She told us she has plans what to do after she has to leave the place. It was a really comforting dream to know that Eva is in a nice place with all her dearest books. I can not explain the organ. It was interesting that the floor was very soft and fluffy, because it had a wall to wall carpet. It was like walking on clouds.

We were sitting in an airplane with Eva to draw up an inventory of her heritage. There were more of us seated on the airplane. It was a company that I and Eva once really flew with. We, Tanja Moldanova and all the co-workers as well, took this plane returning from a conference to our hometown Beverisk. Eva was seated in front of me or maybe I turned back? I can not tell. Then it appeared to me that if Eva is alive why are we going to draw up an inventory of her heritage? So I asked her: Eva are you still alive or not? She looked at me with her small but sparkling eyes and returned the question: Don't you know? I still don't know for sure.

In the summer of 2003 the heritage has arrived to Hungary. It was transported to the Institute of Linguistic Sciences where it was stored once again in a sealed room. Since 6 months it is waiting for customs clearance.