

Rattling Sabres and Evil Intruders: The Border, Heroes and Border-crossers in Panfennist and Soviet Socialist Realist Literature

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Abstract

In this article I analyse Russian and Soviet Karelian literary texts written in Finnish at the time and in the style of socialist realism, and Finnish poems, songs and novels of the same era, proposing the idea of a ‘Greater-Finland’. I turned my attention to the question of how the depiction, construction and use of borders is handled in the respective texts, and look to determine whether the opposed ideologies of Soviet Communism and Panfennism led to similar or different artificial results. This analysis proves that the texts of the two ideologies generally draw strict distinctions between the ‘heroes’ of their own side and the bad ‘Others’. Only the heroes of the plot are able to either cross borders or to establish new ones. While in the Soviet texts opponents of Soviet society inside the Soviet Union are depicted as foreign and separated through ideological, symbolic and topographical borders, the Karelians in the Finnish texts are suspected as a hybrid people, spoiled by their contact with the evil Russians.

Keywords: Topographical and symbolic borders, literary rhetorics, socialist realism, panfennist ideology, Stalinism, Karelia

Introduction

At the beginning of a Finnish book about Eastern Karelia published in 1934, there is a photograph: an aisle between dark fir and birch trees, subtitled '*Raja*' – 'The border' (Akateeminen Karjala-Seura 1934: 7). On the other side of the Finnish-Russian border, in a Pravda article of 1932, a lengthy caption about the achievements of socialism reads: 'Each new factory and sovchoz (*farm state*) stabilises socialism in the USSR and strengthens the power of the world's proletariat in its struggle for communism, and for a *worldwide Soviet Republic*.'¹

The dreams and ideals of the small western country of Finland about security and a greater fatherland called '*Suur-Suomi*' ('Greater Finland'), and the Soviet Russian utopia of worldwide communist upheavals: both for distinct ideologies, but can these two ideologies in any way be compared?

In this text I shall discuss whether and to what extent there were similarities between Panfennism,² and the Russian Communist ideology of the 1920s and the times of Stalinism.³ As sources to analyse I have not chosen seemingly 'objective' or 'scientific' official statements such as geographical textbooks and dogmatic newspaper articles, but rather fictional texts. The reason for this is the assumption that the rhetorics of the two ideologies may find a more diversified and subtle ground for expression, in the especially rhetorical argumentation typical of fictional genres such as novels and poems. By analysing fictional and lyrical texts I want to identify the ideology in the argumentation techniques of fictional narration, plot and lyrically coded emotions. I also wish to detect how those elements of literary discourse in their own way contribute to the underlying ideology (cf. Plett 2001: IV, 1). The motif of the 'border' and connected literary motifs of bordering and liminality such as 'the others', 'the enemies', even possible 'friends abroad' hereby prove to be a central element in the structure of the chosen texts (Schimanski & Wolfe 2007: 14). Taken together, these elements constitute an important part of the ideologies in question.

In the first part of this text, after considering the general question of comparing different ideologies, I shall briefly outline the important traits concerning the 'border' in the ideologies of Soviet Communism and Panfennism. In the rhetorical analysis of selected literary works, in the second part I shall concentrate on the motif of the 'border' as it emerges in the texts (cf. Keränen 1996). In the texts, I shall show how the concept and literary motif of the 'border' fits into the literary discourse of both ideologies from the 1920s until the beginning of World War II in 1939. In my analysis, I shall take into account episodes which deal with topographical and physical borders, and their transgression and confirmation, as well as episodes dealing with inner and symbolic borders. Some general information about Finland and its history in the first half of the 20th century, as well as some details about the cultural impacts of Stalinism will be necessary at the beginning of my reflections.

Comparing Ideologies

Comparing different ideologies such as Stalinism and Fascism has become a frequent subject of studies: Hitler and Stalin, the ‘minor’ dictators of the 20th century (e.g. Mussolini, Franco, Salazar), together with their associated mechanisms, culture and history have been investigated from many different points of view (cf. for example Luks 2007; Fitzpatrick & Geyer 2009; Jessen 2011). These subject studies are all gathered under the general heading of ‘totalitarian regimes’ (cf. Arendt 1962; Pohlmann 1995).

Can these studies set an example for comparing Finnish and Soviet/Russian ideologies in the first half of the 20th century? Since the era of Stalin, the Bolshevik regime in the Soviet Union may without doubt be termed as totalitarian, but Finland was a democratic country at this time.⁴ Having become independent in 1917, it had a functioning parliament with bourgeois, democratic, socialist and even communist parties, and also a free press. Nevertheless, after the civil war in 1918 which ended in favour of the ‘Whites’, reactionary forces were predominant. Communist viewpoints and ideals were suppressed, and for a long time, the victims of the civil war on the ‘red’ side were either criminalised or just not talked about (Ylikangas 2002: 408).

At this time, hegemonic ideas were gaining in repute in Finnish society. During the Romantic period of the middle of the 19th century, Elias Lönnrot (1802–1884) created the national epic *Kalevala* (Lönnrot 1849/1982), mostly from poems he had collected from the Karelian inhabitants of the Eastern ‘Russian’ part of Karelia. Since this time, the ideal of a great past (and future) of Finland had become part of the cultural movement of ‘Karelianism’ in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Sihvo 2003). Among artists and the socially active, there arose a sense of unity and closeness, together with a feeling of obligation by the Finns to help and free the Finnic people on the other side of the Finnish-Russian border (Niinistö 2005: 16–21). The main enemy in this struggle appeared to be the Russians. So, Panfennist ideas already had some tradition before the time of Finnish independence from Russia. Different to the ideal of ‘Karelianism’ in the arts, Panfennism had a decidedly political (if not polemic) impact and also had political actors behind it, for example the members of the ‘*Akateeminen Karjala-seura*’ (‘Academic Society of Karelia’, AKS) – a student and academic association which was very popular and influential in Finland in the 1920s and 1930s (Eskelinen 2004). Panfennism propagated the idea of a Greater Finland, which was considered to comprise of Finland as well as the surrounding territories of the White Sea/or Vienan Karelia and Ladoga Karelia, Ingria, Votia and also Estonia (Paasi 1996: 101); areas which have traditionally been inhabited by Finnic people. Panfennism idealises a hereditary, historically founded unity of different Finnic people under the guidance of Finland, subtly defining Finland and ‘Finnishness’ as somehow superior to others. After becoming independent in 1917, in Finland there were

both political and military attempts to unite the Karelian areas east of the Finnish border with Finland (Kauppala 2013: 160–162). In the Continuation War of 1941–1944, Finnish troops set foot in Eastern Karelian areas which had never previously belonged to Finland. The Panfennist groups openly welcomed this chance to create a ‘Greater Finland’ consisting of the whole of Eastern Karelia and Finland (Pimiä 2012).

What of the development of Finland’s big neighbour, the Soviet Union in the meantime? Founded as a federation of equal socialist countries, the officials of the Soviet Union initially spoke of an expected world revolution. At the beginning of the 1920s, the Karelian Soviet Republic was designed as a model republic, in the hope to lure Finland and other Scandinavian countries to change their political systems and become Socialist (Baron 2007: 20–51). In the 1930s however, when the world revolution seemed to be delayed, the Soviet Union concentrated more intensely on its internal problems – it was the time of Stalinist purges and repression. Even in these times of Stalinist repression, the Soviet Union still presented the ideal of being different people united under the leadership of the Russian Soviets; an ideal opposed to that of backward ‘bourgeois nationalism’ (cf. Slezkine 1994: 414–415). When talking about the imperialist Western countries, it was stressed that any hostility was mainly directed at the ruling classes and not to the working people of these countries. So the ideological framework of the Soviet Union propagated the picture of the Soviet Union as being the defender of every nation and their people’s rights. Under the unifying ideology of free and equal people under the flag of communism, borders were long perceived to be of only minor interest. However, historians and sociologists studying the Soviet era are beginning to realize that the official ideology of a borderless unity and solidarity among all people in the Soviet Union was accompanied from the very beginning by a decided segregation of nationalist ideas and politics (cf. Slezkine 1994: 415). The results of the present literary analysis correlate with this apprehension.

Texts

From the middle of the 1920s, and especially after the First Congress of the Soviet Writers Association in 1934, the fictional texts of Soviet writers of the time under consideration were expected to be a voice of Communist ideology. However, the question is more complicated if one considers those texts written in a Panfennist key. As there was no official obligation or aesthetic prescription of how to express pro-Finnic ideas or ideals in fictional literature, the detection of the traits of Panfennism may prove more difficult. The long tradition of the ‘Karelianist’ idealisation of an ancient Finnish culture in literature, painting, sculpture and architecture can serve as an aesthetic background for a more aggressive ideology of Panfennist superiority. A thorough rhetorical analysis of the topos of the border within each ideology gives a possibility for comparing the two ideals against a

neutral background (Plett 2001:15–16). Not in spite of the fictional character of the texts chosen, but especially because of their fictionality, these texts make it possible to discover the elements of ideological rhetorics subtly intertwined with and part of their literary devices of plot, structure and style.

Panfennism

As mentioned above, Panfennist ideas had a tradition which stemmed from at least the turn of the 19th century – the time of cultural ‘Karelianism’. ‘Karelianism’ then dominated all spheres of the arts, literature, architecture, music – and thus the whole society. Already in descriptions of his journey to Eastern Karelia, in 1880 the journalist Vilhelm August Ervasti (1845–1900) points out, that ‘behind the border, the Finnish land still continues with another third of its parts’ (Ervasti 2005: 239). His observation ends with the wish that:

[...] the time shall come again, when the Finnish fatherland will have the same wide borders, as it had had in olden times [...]. The voice of the blood would not talk in an incomprehensible language anymore [...]. We would not be Swedes in the eyes of the Karelian anymore, nor would they be Russians in our eyes. The same Finnish land would embrace both.⁵

(Ervasti 2005: 242.)

The olden times he refers to are the prehistoric past, which was generally thought to be depicted in the *Kalevala* as an era of some kind of prefinnic kingdom.

During the Finnish Civil War, Ilmari Kianto (1874–1970) compiled a booklet of Anti-Russian poems under the title *Hakkaa päälle* (Hit them on the head, 1918). Kianto was a Finnish writer, who at the end of the 19th century had studied in Russia and lived most of his life in the Finnish part of Karelia. He supported pro-finnic ideals but also wrote socially critical novels and was in conflict with the Lutheran church because of his liberal ideas. ‘*For a Greater Finland – a free Vienan [i.e. White Sea] Karelia!*’⁶ (Kianto 1918: 58) is the title of one of his poems from 1918. To achieve a Greater Finland, he calls for the ‘the payment, which the fatherland demands from its infallible blood [...] the spiritual crown of pearls, which was achieved by martyrs!’⁷ (Kianto 1918: 62). In his novel *The Virgin of Viena (Vienan neitsyt)* Kianto draws the picture of a heroic Karelian girl, ‘Taria of the shore of Tshirkka’⁸ (Kianto 1920: 17), being killed by brutal Russians while fighting for the purity and independence of her homeland of Karelia. The novel is based on the history of the so-called ‘Kinship-Wars’, when in the time after Finnish independence from Russia from 1917–1922, Finnish army divisions and individual volunteers went over the border into Russian territory in order to fight for the independence of these areas from the young Soviet Union and to unite the respective regions with Finland (cf. Niinistö 2005). In the novel, Finnish volunteers come over the border between Finland and White Sea Karelia to a little Karelian village on lake Tshirkka. One of the protagonists (a Finnish soldier) explicitly states that the border they have crossed ‘should not exist anymore’⁹

(Kianto 1920: 171). The Finnish volunteers plan to unite Karelia with Finland. Flowery, lofty comparisons are given, in which their military expedition is compared to ‘the Finnish war-bridegroom, the one who was sent to wed Viena-Karelia.’¹⁰ (Kianto 1918: 48), and ‘[T]he Finnish crowned head is seen to hug the princess of Viena’¹¹ (Kianto 1918: 109). Of course the pure Karelian virgin of the plot, Taria, falls in love with one of the Finnish soldiers. He doesn’t have a name, but she only calls him ‘hero’ (*sankari*): Kianto 1918: 60 onwards), although he protests: ‘*A hero one becomes, only when one ceases to be touchable by the hand.*’ Heroes are the soldiers in the other world’s army.’¹² (Kianto 1918: 63). To leave for the ‘other world’ will be his fate too, as is that of all the heroes in the story, be they Finnish or Karelian. The Karelians, ‘this slaves’ people of ancient poems’¹³ (Kianto 1918: 49), in the eyes of the Finnish savior ‘shall not melt together with the Slavic ill, deceitful blood, but from the very beginning of their existence are presupposed to unite with that dawning land [i.e. Finland]’¹⁴ (48). Nevertheless the attempt to unite Viena-Karelia to Finland fails. In Kianto’s story, this is explained by the ‘double-dealing character of Karelia’¹⁵ (Kianto 1918: 168):

The deceitfulness was the sin of your people’s bosom – the slave’s mark was branded on your forehead, as the curses of your thousands of years’ old history were tormenting you [...].¹⁶

(Kianto 1918: 168)

In his 1931 poem ‘*Rajalla*’ (‘At the border’, Kailas 1939: 247–249), the young poet of Finnish modernism, Uno Kailas (1901–1933) doesn’t offer a word about the ‘hybrid’ Karelians (cf. Young 1995: 4, 18–19). He only talks of the Russians as inhuman, Asian forces of the steppes, and foretells ‘a morning of blood is to be seen’¹⁷ (Kailas 1939: 248). The speaker of the poem, the ‘guardsman’¹⁸ (vs. 1 and 12, 247, 249) swears to defend his homeland against the ‘icy breath of the east’¹⁹ (vs. 5, 248) at the border, which he calls the ‘chasm in the ice’²⁰ (vs. 1 and 12, 247, 249).

Of course it is the Finns’ privilege and obligation to draw the border with a rattling sabre: Kianto’s Finnish bridegroom ‘[a]dvise[s] to clear with the long riding-sabre of the truth, a never heard of deep wound, up to the breast of the White Sea’²¹ (Kianto 1920: 48). In one of the most popular Panfennist poems, the *March of the AKS* (1926, text by a popular songwriter of the time Reino Hirviseppä, 1906–1992), this ideal is made even clearer: ‘[...] we draw the border with a sword. / This is our obligation as brothers / [...]: A new morning of Greater Finland is to break / [...].’²² (Hirviseppä 1942; cf. Sulamaa 2011: 25) Last but not least, there is the famous ‘*Scabbard Order*’ (‘*Miekantuppipäiväkäskey*’) of General Mannerheim, head of the Finnish army at the time of both the Winter War (1939–1940) and the Continuation War (1941–1944) (cf. Fingerroos 2010: 121; Meinander 2012: 72). At the beginning of the Continuation War, Mannerheim rather bluntly talked of new borders between Finland and Russia and of ‘freeing’

Karelia, referring thereby to an order he had given already in 1918 (Niinistö 2005: 24):

[...] I said to the Finnish and the White Sea Karelians, that I'm not going to put my sword into its scabbard, before Finland and Eastern Karelia are free. I swore this in the name of the Finnish people's army, trusting in its heroic men, in Finland's self-sacrificing women.²³

(Mannerheim 1941).

If one keeps in mind that Panfennist thought in the time after Finnish independence up to the 1940s was not an official ideology in Finland, but just one among other ideas in a basically democratic country, it is surprising how open, if not to say aggressively the idea of a Finnish superiority is expressed in the analysed texts. The chauvinist and racist metaphors about spoiled blood, deceitful character and a slave's precondition in Kianto's texts make it clear that the Russians and the Karelians are in every respect inferior to the Finns. The 'Pocahontas-myth' evoked in the character of the Karelian heroine Taria and the comparison of Karelia with a pure princess, adds to this stereotypic structure (cf. Theweleit 1999). Kailas' equations of the Russians with uncivilised forces of 'Asian' origin, point in the same direction. This popular symbolic border confrontation of Russia as representing barbarism, and of Finland as western, representing civilisation, is one of the core elements of the Panfennist border rhetoric (cf. Paasi 1996: 170–172). The motifs of border-shifting, expressed by Kianto's Finnish protagonists as the intention to incorporate Eastern Karelia into Finland are therefore not real border crossings over to the 'other side' of the border. Instead, in the terms of the Panfennists, a 'real' or 'correct border' has to be drawn further east. The metaphor of slashing a wound into the morphology of the Karelian landscape used in Hirviseppä's, Kianto's and Mannerheim's texts makes the aggressive character of Panfennism quite clear. The corporeality of the Finnish state and its border also suggests the 'naturalness' of the aspired borders between the Finnish Self and the Russian Other (cf. Paasi 1996: 195). The Karelian virgin of Kianto's story truly belongs to the concept of the Finnish hero (Kianto 1920: 60). In her purity, the union with the Finnish soldier is symbolised by an innocent ride on a reindeer (Kianto 1920: 62–63), whereas the Russian invaders of course try to rape her. Their illegal penetration into the Karelian lands and their attempted crime against the innocent girl, lead the girl to murder her captors before dying. The seemingly simple plot of the story is complicated by the fact that Taria's brother Arhippa, who had become a soldier in the Soviet army, comes back to his home village and emerges as the one who has killed Taria's beloved Finnish hero. This dramatic revelation fits perfectly with the thesis of the 'hybridity' of the Karelian people, mentioned above.

The seriousness of the Panfennist ideological conflict between the good Finns and the bad Russians as a matter of life and death is stressed by the religious and ethical connotations in the texts – the 'obligation as brothers', and the 'martyr-

dom' of the defenders of Finland and its kin. So it is no surprise, that the male 'hero' of the story as well as the girl herself, her parents, and the loyal younger brother and sister cross the final metaphysical border into death, supposedly all landing on the better side of it, in the realm of heroes. Christian faith is dominant in the story and the girl Taria for example, gives the Finnish hero a silver cross as a token of her fidelity before parting with him (cf. Paasi 1996: 193–199).

Hirviseppä makes use of the symbolic borders of time in another way, in order to stress the truthfulness of Panfennic ideals: 'a new morning' is going to break, when the goal of a Greater Finland will be achieved. Kailas also talks of a border in time, although in a much more pessimistic tone, foretelling 'a morning of blood' – the confrontation between the eastern enemy and the western Finnish border guard.

Socialist Realism

This is the frontier – two posts facing one another in silent hostility, each standing for a world of its own. [...] The two poles stand on level ground, yet there is a deep gulf between them and the two worlds they stand for. You cannot cross the intervening six paces except at the risk of your life.

This is the frontier. (Ostrovsky 1952/2002: 114)²⁴

This epigraph is taken from the novel *How the Steel was Tempered* (Kak zakalialas' stal', 1932) by Nikolai Ostrovsky (1904–1936), one of the canonised and most popular authors of socialist realism. The border mentioned here is that between Poland and the Soviet Union, but it could just as well be anywhere else on the border of the Soviet Union:

From the Black Sea over thousands of kilometres to the Arctic Ocean in the Far North stands the motionless file of these silent sentinels of the Soviet Socialist Republics bearing the great emblem of labour on their iron shields.

(Ostrovsky 1952/2002: 114)²⁵

The main character of the novel, Pavel Korchagin, is also a guardsman (at least for some time of his life). He is the son of a poor worker, a worker himself, hero of the civil war, guardsman and member of the Cheka, the special military force created to fight any enemies inside the Soviet Union (later to become the KGB). In the course of the 1930s, the border guard is to become one of the ideal heroes of the Socialist Realist novel (cf. Herold 1999: 110), and vigilance against internal and external enemies was to become one of the most idealised qualities of that time (cf. Günther 1994: 89). The frontier guard and Chekist embodies these traits of character in an ideal way.

Since the foundation of the Soviet Writers' union in 1932, the latest Soviet literature was bound to the dogma of socialist realism (cf. Clark 2000: 3–4; Lorenz 1994: 81). Soviet novels had to fulfil strict demands to depict Socialist reality in a positive, heroic light, to create positive heroes with no doubts or hesitations, and

to have a relatively simple plot. The creativity of the authors was harshly reduced; facts and a documentary style as used in the newspapers were to be the guideline. Also to provide a template were some exemplary canonical works, for example *How the Steel was Tempered* by Ostrovsky, or *Cement* (1925), a novel about the reconstruction of a factory after the civil war, sabotage and the socialists' struggle with backward engineers and bureaucrat, written by Fedor Gladkov (1883–1958) (cf. Clark 2000: 4–5). In contrast to the flowery language used in the Finnish texts analysed above, the style of the Soviet stories is rather laconic and matter-of-fact, although the special metaphors and symbols of Socialism are of course present. Dialogues and descriptive passages dominate, whereas parables and the comparison of digressions are rarely to be found.

In the Soviet Union, the Finns did not play such big a role as a neighbour as is seen in the Finnish context. Finland fitted into the general picture of capitalist neighbours on the other side of the Soviet border, and even worse, during the Second World War, Finland was perceived as part of Hitler's fascist system and his plan to take over Russia (cf. Meinander 2012).

While the general attitude of socialist ideology can be found in any of the novels published from the 1930s until the 1950s, the Soviet Karelian fiction, written in Finnish and published in the Karelian Soviet Republic can shed additional light on the special relationship between the Soviet Union and Finland. I have decided to analyse both Soviet Karelian and contemporary Russian fiction, in order to grasp as much as possible of the Soviet ideas about borders as represented in fictional texts of that time.

In the Karelian Soviet narratives, the general patterns of socialist realism prevail. The Soviet Karelian Finns are united with the Russians in the struggle against evil capitalists and 'butchers'²⁶ (Heimovaara 1934: 128), creeping from the other side of the Finnish-Soviet border into Karelia at the time of the civil war, in order to cruelly murder innocent Bolshevik cadres. Nationality is not usually mentioned. Only the fact that a certain work is written in Finnish, with use of Finnish names of localities and story characters, suggests that it is about Karelian Finns and not about Russians. This uniformity applies also to Ostrovsky's novel. The main part of its action takes place in the Ukraine, but the story is written in Russian and its characters usually speak Russian; any differences between Ukrainian and Russian nationality seem irrelevant. The fact that a person belongs to another nation or is in any other way different or foreign is mentioned only in respect of the enemies – be they Finns from the other side of the Finnish-Soviet border or enemies within the Soviet Union. The saboteur in Oskari Johannssons (1892–1938) short story 'To the last log' ('Viimeiseen parteen' 1935) is, although not from capitalist Finland, a foreign Karelian from the area of Tver. When he is trying to provoke the honourable Bolshevik Karelian lumberjacks, one of them bursts out: 'Why have you come here then, heretic?'²⁷ (Johansson 1935b: 75) and continues 'Wrap soft cotton bandages around your hands and go back to where

you have come from!’²⁸ (Johansson 1935b: 75). Of course the evil foreign intruder and saboteur is in the end punished and marked as a ‘foreign element’ – ‘a *kulak*’ – an outsider of Soviet society: ‘[...] the kulak had to take the responsibility for his deeds before the people’s court’²⁹ (Johansson 1935b: 84). Enemies on the other side of either inner or outer ideological, or real borders are usually not characterised individually, but mostly through their negative deeds or simply through their being on the other side of the (ideological) border. So, an almost anonymous enemy is placed in opposition to the good, individualised Soviet citizens (cf. Günther 1994: 100; Herold 1999: 114).

In the Russian Soviet novels, the enemies of the new era are seen as ‘foreign elements’. In Gladkov’s novel *Cement* these are also seen as Kalmyk Tatars and uncivilised Cossacks, behaving ‘like gypsies’ (Gladkov 1951: 113), the typical outcasts of society. They live in an isolated mountain area, difficult to reach. In *How the Steel was Tempered*, bandits and smugglers are in close contact with foreign elements, the ‘colony of rich German farmers’ (Ostrovsky 2002: 138).³⁰ The latter do not integrate into the Bolshevik society but their ‘kulak farms’ stand apart ‘within half a kilometre of each other’, their houses are ‘as sturdily built as miniature fortresses’ (Ostrovsky 2002: 138).³¹ In this novel dealing with the time of revolution and the civil war, the outer borders of the Soviet Union play an important role, as they are shaping the new, united Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, and also as a place for heroes to prove their superiority. In *Cement*, which takes place after the victory of the Bolsheviks in the Civil War, only the internal borders are relevant – there is no longer a need to stress the Soviet Union’s general unity. Additional to the heroic borders of the Soviet Union in Ostrovsky’s novel, internal borders of society such as those between the expatriate German farmers and the Soviet citizens proper are mentioned. These internal borders, in a way, repeat and reaffirm the external border, serving as a kind of duplication of the latter (cf. Schimanski 2006: 49–50).

In the stories analysed, the Soviet hero is the one who is able to cross those internal borders which are often immaterial or symbolic, and thus demonstrates his power and qualities as a superior being, not being bound by any limits (cf. Görner and Kirkbright 1999: 9). The special role of the Soviet hero concerning those internal borders becomes clear in an episode of *How the Steel was Tempered* in a scene which takes place in a train compartment. In order to repair some electrical defect, Korchagin, who is serving as a technician for the Soviet railway administration, enters the wagon of Polish (i.e. capitalist enemy) diplomats waiting at a Soviet railway station for further transport. He recognises the lady in the compartment as a former neighbour from his home village, Nelly Leshchinskaia. Again it is the Soviet hero, who is able to cross an important (immaterial) border, the border of languages (cf. Schimanski 2006: 42): Switching to Polish, Korchagin reminds the noblewoman of their former acquaintance. Korchagin’s border-crossing and the conversation which follows makes the border between the

bourgeois woman and the working hero even more real: instead of seeking friendly words for her former childhood playmate, the lady insultingly calls him ‘the servant, just as you always were’ (Ostrovsky 2002: 103)³². The Soviet hero retains his innocence and integrity, reminds her of her bad behaviour and stays polite: ‘[...] in fact we’re even polite to them [i.e. the bourgeois diplomats], which is more than can be said of yourself.’ (Ostrovsky 2002: 103).³³ While trying to re-establish the former social border between the laundress’ son and herself, the lawyer’s daughter, Nelly in fact establishes another one, the (seemingly paradoxical) one between civilized Soviet working men and uncivilized bourgeois Polish diplomats. Her moral inferiority is further stressed by the fact that she is addicted to cocaine (Ostrovsky 2002: 104).

In their heroic lives, the main characters of the Soviet novels often cross more than one spiritual border, those of ideology and faith, when they overcome the mistrust of the old society while serving the party (cf. Schimanski 2006: 55–56). They also have to undergo a transitional situation (usually in war), where they almost die but miraculously survive. Endorsed with superhuman abilities, the Soviet hero ‘cross[es] [...] the borderline of death’ (Ostrovsky 2002: 68),³⁴ sometimes even more than once. ‘A jump over death’³⁵ (Gladkov 1951: 101) is the title of a chapter in *Cement*. In this chapter the female hero is captured by Kalmyk rebels who threaten her and even feign her assassination, after which she again gets free. Describing Pavel’s recovery after being wounded in the civil war, Ostrovsky writes: ‘This was a second birth [...]’³⁶ (Ostrovsky 1954: 147). When defeating death, the hero as a sacrifice, often loses some precious part of his integrity, for example his eyesight (Korchagin in *How the Steel was Tempered*), or his legs like Pesa in *From Beneath the Branch Harrow* (Risukarhin alta, 1934) by the Finnish-writing author Torsten Heimovaara (?–1938). Despite such suffering however, the hero continues with superhuman strength to serve the party. This loss of corporal abilities or parts of the body can be interpreted as a special and very personal kind of gift the hero has to make, in order to cross the border to perfection (cf. Schimanski 2006: 43). For the ‘newborn’ main character, in his feelings and actions, the usual limits and constraints of society no longer seem to be important. He becomes an omnipotent and sometimes rebellious, fairy tale-like hero (Clark 2000: 138–141). When emotions are characterised as absolutely right and ideal in Ostrovsky’s novel, they are called ‘borderless’ –for example there is ‘borderless fury’³⁷ (Ostrovsky 1954: 99), ‘borderless patience’³⁸ (Ostrovsky 1954: 149), ‘borderless joy’³⁹ (Ostrovsky 1954: 156) and so on.⁴⁰

In the scene at the Polish-Soviet border mentioned above, of course it is the Soviet border guard who is, if only symbolically, able to cross the insurmountable border. Being properly and warmly dressed in his Soviet uniform, he is asked by the Polish border guard to lend him some matches: ‘[T]he frontier service regulations forbid one from entering into any conversation across the border’ (Ostrovsky 2002: 116),⁴¹ but he feels pity for the freezing Polish border guard:

‘The poor beggar may be a bourgeois soldier but he’s got a hell of a life. Imagine being chased out into this cold in that miserable outfit, no wonder he jumps about like a rabbit, and with nothing to smoke either.’ Without turning around, the Red Army man threw a box of matches across to the other. (Ostrovsky 2002: 116)⁴²

This kind of border crossing is in no contradiction to Herold’s observation that in the stories she analysed, the Soviet frontier guards explicitly do not cross the physical border. They stay portrayed as the good and righteous ones on their own side, only defending Soviet territory against intruders from outside.⁴³ As Ostrovsky’s border guard does not physically cross the border himself but only makes a thing cross the border, he in fact makes the border more concrete (cf. Herold 1999: 112). The small box of matches however, which symbolises the superiority and freedom of the Soviet guardsman is not allowed to stay on the other side of the border: the Polish soldier notices some propagandistic Soviet text on it and quickly throws it back.

In the Karelo-Finnish novel, the real border can sometimes be transgressed in another way: The actions of some of the novels of Johansson, situated in former, feudal times take place in a removed place: ‘[f]ar away behind the hills [...]’⁴⁴ (Johansson 1935a: 15). Also in his monumental novel *Jymyvaaralaiset*, published in Karelia in 1932, the exiled Finnish communist writer Eemeli Parras (1884–1939) doesn’t make it absolutely clear whether the story of a farmer’s family from before the time of the revolution is taking place either in Finland or in Eastern Karelia. When talking about former feudal times, it sometimes seems to be easier or maybe even desirable to situate the plot ‘abroad’, not explicitly in Karelia or Russia. Thus the border between ‘them’ and ‘us’ is blurred and the situation depicted seems even more remote. The border of time ‘before the revolution’ and the topographical border between ‘here’ and ‘somewhere far away’ unite to stress the total difference of the depicted situations, with the glorious socialist reality that exists in the Karelian republic of the storyteller’s presence (cf. Schimanski 2006: 55–57).

Conclusion

Both Panfennists and Stalinists want to cross borders: the Panfennists want to get over the Finno-(Russian-)Karelian border in order to unite the Eastern Karelian area with Finland, and the Soviets want to cross the borders in order to achieve communism for the whole world, although in fictional literature this aim is only of minor importance. In Soviet literature of the 1920s and 1930s, ‘internal borders’ in society play a much more important role and sometimes act as a mirror for the external borders. Panfennists consider the existing border between Finland and Russia as wrong, and see it as their right and obligation to correct it in order to draw a ‘right’ border between their kin and the ‘others’. The brutal metaphors of slashing the borderline into the ground as a wound, in an interesting way corre-

spond to the body rhetorics that Herold has observed in the Soviet border novels of the second half of the 1930s: there the Soviet state which has to be defended is also associated with a body. The transgression of borders associated to the body's skin automatically becomes an illegal intrusion into the body of Soviet society (Herold 1999: 118–119).

The 'correct' border, (be it new or existing), is depicted as an absolute, insurmountable line, a chasm as represented in Kailas' poem, or an unbreakable chain of border posts as featured in Ostrovsky's novel. All the good is on this side, and the bad on the other. In both Soviet and panfennist literature, the enemy stays as the enemy, and fraternity is restricted to one's own kind. The moral borders correspond to both social and real ones. The moral superiority of the heroes does however make some symbolic temporary border crossing possible, and the defenders of their own borders are portrayed as the idealised heroes of the society which they represent.

Panfennist heroes have to cross the visible, existing border of Finland and by force draw an ideal, 'right' border (or at least try to do so), to achieve real heroic qualities. By being called 'martyrs', their mission acquires an additional religious character, but it also openly declares their fate – they have to die for their great deeds. Soviet heroes on the other hand only have to nearly cross the border between life and death in order to become perfect. In their actions they are the only ones who are able and allowed to cross borders.

Spies or saboteurs in the Soviet novels are marked as foreign, not really belonging to the homogeneous Soviet Society: they are Kalmyk, expatriate German farmers or Karelians from another region. The question of enemies within their own area (be they spies or saboteurs), did not concern the Panfennists to the same extent as the Soviets. The concept of being 'truly Finnish' in some way seems to have been easier to preserve than being 'truly Soviet'. The Finnic neighbours, the Karelians, are seen as a hybrid, spoiled people and play the role of enemies within the Finnish sphere. Logically in Kianto's novel, the bad ones have to finally stay outside the Finnish borders, or the good ones have to perish.

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Notes

- ¹ „Каждый новый завод и совхоз [...] укрепляют социализм в СССР и увеличивают силы мирового пролетариата в его борьбе за коммунизм, за мировую советскую республику.” Pravda 1932: 3, italics are mine. With the exception of the citations from part II of Ostrovsky’s *How the Steel was Tempered* (Ostrovsky 1952/2002), all translations from Finnish and Russian given in the text are by the author, T.M.
- ² The term ‘Panfennism’ was coined on the model of the popular romantic movement of ‘Pan-slavism’ in the 19th century in the Slavic area. Philosophers, authors, politicians and historians at that time spoke in support of the mental, linguistic and even political unification of the Slavic people, especially in contrast to western European influences. They were convinced of a special superior mission of the Slavs to save the world (Ivanišević 2004: 513–515). In Finnish ‘Panfennism’ is often called the ‘idea of a Greater Finland’ (‘Suur-Suomi aate’, cf. e.g. Niinistö 2005: 16). The term ‘Panfennism’ was not used by Panfennists themselves, but can be found in Russian documents (20). It proves to be a fitting locution by which to gather different pro-Finnic ideological viewpoints and ideals of the analysed period.
- ³ ‘Stalinism’ usually is used to characterise the time of the leadership of Joseph V. Stalin as general secretary of the Communist Party’s Central Committee from 1924 until his death in 1953. At the end of the 1920s Stalin succeeded in bringing the party system under his control, which was further centralised under his dictatorship in the 1930s, throughout World War II, until the beginning of the 1950s. The main characters of this time are a centralised totalitarian regime under the leadership of the Communist party, covering all areas of political, economic, social and cultural life of the Soviet Union. (cf. Afanas’ev 1994; Hoffmann 2003: 2)
- ⁴ For a more detailed discussion about the political situation in Finland especially in the 1930s cf. for example Siltala (1985).
- ⁵ ‘[...] taas koittaisi aika jolloin suomalaisella isänmaalla olisi samat laajat rajat kuin sillä muinoin oli [...]. Veren ääni ei silloin enää puhuisi käsittämätöntä kieltä [...]. Me emme enää karjalaisten silmissä olisi ruotsalaisia eivätkä he meidän silmissämme venäläisiä. Sama Suomenmaa sulkisi syliinsä molemmat.’
- ⁶ ‘Suomi suureksi – Viena vapaaksi!’
- ⁷ ‘[...] palkka, jota Isänmaa viattomasta verestänsä vaatii [...] henkinen helmikruunu, joka – marttyyreilla saatiin!’
- ⁸ ‘Tshirkkarannan Tarja’
- ⁹ ‘[...] *rajaa* ei enää olla saa [...]’, italics in the original text.
- ¹⁰ ‘[...] Suomen sotasulho, hän, joka lähetetty oli Wienaa kihlaamaan.’
- ¹¹ ‘Suomen kruununpää nähdään syleilemässä Wienan prinssitärtä.’
- ¹² ‘*Sankariksi tullaan vasta kun lakataan olemasta käsinkoeteltava*. Sankarit ovat – sotilaita Tuonen armeijassa.’, italics in the original text.
- ¹³ ‘[...] muinaisrunolli[n]en orjarahva[s] [...]’.
- ¹⁴ ‘[...] se ei ollut suvattu sulamaan slaavien sairaaseen, viekkaaseen vereen, vaan se oli jo oman olemuksensa alusta säädetty liittymään siihen valkenevaan maahan [...]’.
- ¹⁵ ‘Kaksinaamainen Karjala’
- ¹⁶ ‘Kaksinaamaisuus oli sinun kansallishelmasyntisi – orjanmerkki oli sinun otsaasi poltettu, sillä tuhatvuotisen historiasi kirot sinua kirvelivät [...]’.
- ¹⁷ ‘[...] verta on näkevä aamu [...]’.
- ¹⁸ ‘vartija’
- ¹⁹ ‘[...] hyisenä henkii Itä [...]’.
- ²⁰ ‘[...] raja railona aukeaa [...]’.
- ²¹ ‘Neuvoi sitä raivaamaan valtävylää halki Wienan ja ravahuttamaan totuuden pitkällä rat-susapelilla ennenkuulumattoman syvän haavan hamaan Walkean meren rintaan.’
- ²² ‘[...] me piirrämme miekalla rajan. / Se meidän on veljinä velvollisuus / [...]: Suur-Suomelle aamu on koittava uus / [...]’.

- 23 '[...] lausuin Suomen ja Vianan karjalaisille, etten tulisi panemaan miekkaani tuppeen ennen kuin Suomi ja Itä-Karjala olisivat vapaat. Vannoin tämän suomalaisen talonpoikaisarmeijan nimessä luottaen sen urhollisiin miehiin ja Suomen uhrautuvaisiin naisiin.'
- 24 '„Рубеж – это два столба. Они стоят друг против друга, молчаливые и враждебные, олицетворяя собой два мира. [...] Меж двумя мирами пролегла пропасть, хотя столбы вырыты на ровной земле. Перейти эти шесть шагов нельзя человеку, не рискуя жизнью. Здесь граница.' (Ostrovsky 1954:235)
- 25 '„От Черного моря на тысячи километров, до Крайнего Севера к Ледовитому океану выстроилась неподвижная цепь этих молчаливых часовых советских социалистических республик с великой эмблемой труда на железных щитах.' (Ostrovsky 1954: 235)
- 26 'lahtar[it]'
- 27 'Mitä jerehtnikkaa sinä olet tullut tänne?'
- 28 'Kääri käteesi pumpulikääreet ja painu takaisin sinne, mistä olet tullutkin.'
- 29 '[...] kulakki sai kansanoikeudessa vastata teoistaan.'
- 30 '[б]огат[ые] [...] немцы-колонисты' (Ostrovsky 1954: 251)
- 31 '[...] крепкие кулацкие дворы; дома с пристройками как маленькие крепости.' (Ostrovsky 1954: 251)
- 32 '[...] рабом [...] так и остались' (Ostrovsky 1954: 226). The direct translation of 'раб' is 'slave'.
- 33 '[...] даже грубостей не говорим, не в пример вам.' (Ostrovsky 1954: (226)
- 34 '[...] перевали[вает] [...] смертный рубеж.' (Ostrovsky 1954: 201)
- 35 'Прижок через смерть'
- 36 'Это было второе рождение [...].'
- 37 '[...] его ярости не было границ [...].'
- 38 'безграничное терпение'
- 39 'радость [...] безгранична'
- 40 As a literary translation of part I of the Ostrovsky's novel was not available, these citations are given in my translation – a freer translation would probably prefer 'unbounded' to 'borderless'.
- 41 '[...] [П]олевоу устав пограничной службы запрещает бойцу вступать в переговоры с кем-нибудь из зарубежныхников [...].' (Ostrovsky 1954: 236)
- 42 '«Хоть и буржуйский солдатишка, а жизнь у его дырявая. Выгнали на такой мороз в одной шинелишке, вот и прыгает как заяц, а без курева так совсем никуда». И красноармеец, не оборачиваясь бросает спичечную коробку.' (Ostrovsky 1954: 236)
- 43 Unfortunately these stories were not available for me to consider them more thoroughly for this text.
- 44 'Kaukana tuntureiten takana [...].'

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