

# Traditional Northern communities in ethnographic film: Khanty

## The case of the documentary film *Tiny Katerina*

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**Abstract.** This article investigates the representation of traditional culture in ethnographic films among the indigenous peoples of the Russian North. The special attention is paid to childhood in traditional culture of Khanty peoples in Ugra. The article focuses on the documentary film *Malen'kaia Katerina* (*Tiny Katerina*; Ivan Golovnev 2004), which depicts the childhood of a Khanty girl in northwestern Siberia over the course of three years. Authors analyze the child's relation to nature, adulthood, and the development of gender identity. The article looks into the cinematographic techniques used for the film creation and major episodes of the film such as "a child's role in Khanty culture", "play", "the adult world". Also explored are objective and subjective conditions in which the cinematographic image is created, with a special emphasis being put on studying filmmaker's (director's) role in film production. The conclusion drawn is that, on the one hand, the ethnographic film is a valuable contribution to Anthropology that adds to the corpus of documents on traditional culture of the indigenous peoples of the Russian North. On the other hand, the film contains evidence of scientific criticism and allows one to explore cinematographic material from anthropological, historical, and psychological positions. Authors came to conclusion that ethnographic cinema can be seen as promising research methodology in the field of contemporary anthropology. This essay re-elaborates and enriches some of the themes already present in a previous contribution *The Representation of Childhood in Ethnographic Films of Siberian Indigenous Peoples: The Case of the Documentary Film Malen'kaia Katerina (Tiny Katerina)* [Golovnev I., Golovneva E. 2016, 83-106].

**Keywords.** Adulthood, ethnographic film, ethnography of childhood, Khanty, northwestern Siberia, traditional culture, visual methods.

The theme of childhood continues to be studied in numerous ways in various fields within the humanities. For example, sociology reveals the social aspect of the phenomenon of childhood, viewing it as a result of social construction [Kon 2003; Osorina 2004], while pedagogy focuses on the educational moment, and ethnography traditionally investigates childhood in the light of ethnicity and culture [Vinogradov 2009, 196]. In all of these studies, the theme of childhood is expressed, as a rule, by verbal forms of representation.

Much less research attention focuses on the anthropological knowledge of childhood as it is depicted visually; in particular, there has been little done on the representation of the theme of childhood in ethnographic cinema. We understand “ethnographic film” to be a specialized area within academic cinema: films that are based on ethnographic content. Their direction is guided by the thesis put forth by Karl Heider: «an ethnographic film is a film that reflects an ethnographic understanding of the filmed material by the creators of the film, and the main characteristic of ethnographic film is its ‘ethnographicness’» [Heider 2006, 2].

In referring to ethnographic films, we use the compound concept *ethnokino* (ethnofilm) as a term that contains two equal roots - *ethno* (ethnic) and *kino* (cinema) [Golovnev 2011, 93]. The combination of scientific research methods (ethnography) and art (cinema) allows the ethnographer to record and subsequently transmit or present a greater volume of research materials; ethnokino also permits us to expand the resources of ethnographic practice from traditional textual description (pens to notepads to books) to a synthesis of the audio-visual with text (ethnographic film).

### **1. The Theme of Childhood in Ethnofilm**

In ethnographic cinema, children have rarely become the main characters in the film, similar to how the theme of childhood within literature was long characterized by “silence” [James and Prout 1997, 7]. In general, from the first ethnographic films, children have appeared as secondary characters. For example, in the classic ethnofilm *Nanook of the North* by Robert Flaherty (1922), children are part of Nanook’s entourage, appearing in some episodes of the film as “puzzle pieces” fitting into the holistic image of an Eskimo family [Flaherty 1980].

In one of the first Soviet ethnographic films, *Forest People* by A. Litvinov (1928) - which was based on the Far East researcher Vladimir Arsen’ev’s book *Lesnye ludi udegeitsy* (*Forest people - The Udege*, 1926) - the theme of childhood was presented only in short episodes [Golovnev 2012, 157]. In his book, Arsen’ev writes, «All Udege, both men and women, adults and children, smoke tobacco. Sometimes it happens that we see a boy, whose mother has just driven him away from her breast. He feels hurt, and sheds tears. Sitting

by the fire, he pulls out his pipe and, sobbing, lights it» [Arsen'ev 1926, 22]. This scene from the text was filmed in detail by Litvinov, for whom Udege cultural traditions were exotic; in his own memoirs, he notes that he wanted to share his sense of amazement with the audience [Litvinov 1959, 10].

The theme of childhood has been most completely depicted in the ethnographic films of American researchers Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead [Heider 2006, 11]. In the 1930s, Bateson and Mead collaborated on a joint project to study the theme of childhood in the cultures of various ethnic communities in Bali. Margaret Mead sought to harness the power of cinema for the goals of anthropology, using a film camera mainly as a means of recording material [Gardner 2006, 10]. It was believed that the main purpose of the field work for an anthropologist with a movie camera was to collect and capture material for preservation on film, which could be later interpreted [MacDougall 2005, 215]. The authors point out that they «treated the cameras in the field as recording instruments, and not as devices for illustrating our theses» [Bateson & Mead 1942, 43].

The experience of Bateson and Mead was the first example in Western anthropology in which we see the systematic use of film as an integral part of research, with «film [as] the tool and ethnography [as] the goal» [Heider 2006, 3]. Bateson and Mead were both of the opinion that the visual capabilities of film effectively complement written ethnography resources in the investigation and presentation of materials related to such multifaceted phenomena like the world of childhood, from series of daily events to ritual practices.

Particular attention is paid to the theme of childhood in both the ethnographic research and film of the Australian visual anthropologist David MacDougall. For example, in the film *The Age of Reason* (2004), he focuses on the long-term observation of children's behavior in a boarding school for boys in northern India. MacDougall is also known as the author of theoretical work which develops ideas about both the production and viewing of anthropological cinema. He notes that the visual is a way to get to the "signified":

Visual knowledge (as well as other forms of sensory knowledge) provides one of our primary means of comprehending the experience of other people. Unlike the knowledge communicated by words, what we show in images has no transparency or volition—it is a different knowledge, stubborn and opaque, but with a capacity for the finest detail [MacDougall 2005, 5-6].

Thus, discussion on the use of cinema in the ethnography, which began in the early twentieth century, continues to this day [Heider 2006, 8; Rouch 1995, 129; Ruby 2000, 41]. The well-known theorist of visual anthropology Jay Ruby, defending the use of audio-visual aids in research practice, discussed the "crisis of representation" of written anthropology occurring incident at

the end of the 1980s [Ruby 2000, 4]. Another prominent theorist of visual anthropology, Karl Heider, notes that in the cooperation of anthropologists and filmmakers creating ethnographic films, the main responsibility lies with the ethnographer, who must first carry out research work in the field, make analysis of the data and complete the writing of the work, and then return to the field with the director, who would make the film based on the work done [Heider 2006, 33]. However, despite the difference in the positions of individual authors, anthropologists and filmmakers, many agree that film resources can be beneficial in supplementing the textual capabilities of ethnographic description in order to capture the relationships between various elements of a study of culture; in this way, film serves to create a holistic *kinoobraz* (film image) of ethnographic content.

With regard to the anthropological study of childhood, this methodology is particularly important, because a film—by its very nature—allows us to see what is behind the verbal description of the child's reality, infused with ethnic content. The representation of childhood in ethnofilm represents a synthesis of image and judgment. On the one hand, ethnographic materials provide research-based knowledge of “children's culture” and its socio-historical and ethnic dimensions. On the other hand, the medium of documentary film allow us to access images of childhood in a way that is more vivid and memorable to the viewer, as films record not only information about the events and actions of a culture, but also a multi-dimensional figurative and emotional background [Gardner 2006, 8]. For example, Mead's studies contain not only a description of various processes and phenomena experienced in childhood, but also include holistic images that are almost artistic. See, for example, a film narration, consisting of small scenes over the course of a day in the life of young Arapesh or Manus youth in Papua New Guinea [Mead & Macgregor 1951, 12]. «Aesthetics in this context», wrote D. MacDougall, «has little to do with the concept of beauty or art, but rather with a much wider range of culturally patterned sensory experience» [MacDougall 2005, 98].

An analysis of the work on the anthropology of childhood and visual anthropology shows that the combination of theoretical reflection on the nature of anthropological knowledge about children and the practice of embodying this knowledge in non-verbal form is one of the leading methodological tools for studying childhood in a given culture [James and Prout 1997, 15-16]. Ethnographic cinema, in our view, is just such a tool: it actualizes empathy, allowing the viewer to dive into the unfolding events on the screen. Through the careful “gaze” of the camera, childhood is not seen as secondary compared to the reality of adulthood, but rather, associated with it, and at the same time a special, significant material-spiritual world. The viewer of the film has the chance to see how childhood proceeds in one culture or another, and imagine childhood as a time of transition and change [Montgomery 2009, 16]. It is this approach that appeals to us as

particularly interesting in the study of anthropology of childhood among indigenous Siberians.



**Figure 1.** *Malen'kaia Katerina*. Still from the film.

## **2. *Malen'kaia Katerina: Watching the Film***

Our main example for the analysis of the visual representation of childhood among the indigenous peoples of Siberia is the documentary *Malen'kaia Katerina* (*Tiny Katerina* 2004), about the life of a girl in a traditional Khanty family over the course of three years (2002 to 2004). Work on the film about Katerina Moldanova started in 2002, thanks to an initiative associated with video recordings for the exhibition *Child's Play* at the Museum of Man and Nature in Khanty-Mansiysk. The task of creating a of video content for museum required searching out and capturing the remaining elements of Khanty traditional culture. In order to achieve the required “textures,” the director of the film had to go to remote areas minimally affected by the influence of urban civilization.

One of these areas was the territory of the Beloyarsk district of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug (Yugra) in the Kazym River basin. Khanty camps (Yurn Ėsh' Ayyukhan, Rapan Sankhum, etc.) located between the villages of Yuil'sk and Numto on the upper Kazym became bases for the film expedition in 2002. This area is located in the north of the Khanty-Mansi Okrug—Yugra, on the border between the Khanty-Mansi and Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous okrugs.

In the past, the main livelihoods of the indigenous peoples of the Kazym forest-tundra were hunting, fishing, and reindeer herding. Khanty settled in small family camps: every family had its ancestral territory and a herd of reindeer. The families of reindeer herders seasonally roamed with their herds, and the traditional nomadic dwelling place was a conical tent covered with reindeer skins. In ancient times, each clan had its own sacred place and its patron spirits [Sokolova 1975, 44].

Currently, most of the forest-tundra Khanty live in small towns, numbering between about 140 and 200 inhabitants, such as Yuil'sk and Numto. Life in the settlements is accompanied by almost total unemployment, alcoholism, and early mortality among the indigenous population of the region. When it came time to shoot the film in 2002, the last individual areas of traditional land use - such as camp of the Moldanov family (Yurn-Ėsh-Ayyukhan) - could be found only in the remote corners of the Kazym forest-tundra.

At the center of the documentary are observations on the life of the Khanty girl Katerina Moldanova and her family. The story of the film develops together with the heroine of the movie: at the beginning of filming, Moldanova was just over two years old, and at the end, almost five. All the scenes in the film are presented in the same chronological order in which they were filmed. One of the director's tasks was to capture Moldanova's behavior and actions in different situations, in order to reveal the nature of her character. Another objective was expressed by documenting the environment in which

the heroine lives, and the socio-cultural context in which the story develops. In the film, Katerina, as a child, observes and tries to understand the phenomena of the world. The adults (parents) give her hardly any verbal instructions, basically showing by example how to act in any given situation. Katerina is mastering the world on her own, growing and developing as she encounters increasingly complex household tasks, and, in the finale, experiencing a clash with urban civilization.

### **3. Beginning the Shooting**

At the present stage of ethnofilm, there is interest in not only what is filmed, but also in the researchers with the camera as they cease to be invisible to the public. The circumstances of the researcher's activities are all relevant for study: How does the work of filming proceed? In what situations? For what purposes is the camera being used?

Proceeding from this, we found it appropriate to use excerpts from the diary of the film's director, Golovnev, in this chapter. Here we begin with a fragment of his reflections, directly related to the creation of *Malen'kaia Katerina*:

I began my ethnographic practice, as a child, in ethnographic expeditions to the Yamal Peninsula led by my father. At that time, much of what was seen by me was at an unconscious level, or, more precisely, from a child's point of view. I was interested in everything, and I could not concentrate on separate "parts" (themes) of Nenets culture. Not having a scientific paradigm in mind, I was not burdened with a specific research objective of the research, I did not carry a printed questionnaire in a shabby notebook, but felt how people live their culture, and I just watched as I was raised among them.

It should be noted that the experience of the children's perception of other cultures is largely reflected in the director's methods to create an ethnographic film about a child, especially at the emotional and sensual levels. The director's position may differ: in one case, a filmmaker seeks to get closer to the experience of the viewer, while in another, approximates the experience those who are depicted in it. When filming *Malen'kaia Katerina* we are dealing with the latter position.

The first few days I did not film anything. I just experienced ordinary life events together with the characters. It was extremely important to live and sleep in the tent with them, eat what they eat, etc., and seek to immerse myself in the atmosphere of local life. But even more important was participating in the so-called shared experience. For example, after the joint corral of herd of deer, hunting, fishing, and other events related to the overcoming of the difficulties, you become closer to other human beings. In sum, the film itself depends on this system of "person-to-person" relationships. Gradually, the "foreign" becomes "one's own," and family life returns to normal. Like after a stone thrown into water, it takes time for the surface to again become smooth.

The next step for the director is to ensure the film's characters become as used to the presence of the crew and their technology and the process of filming as possible. According to MacDougall, "cameras" may be different; they may respond, interact, or construct. The difference in work methods is determined by the difference in goals [MacDougall 2006, 4].

During the filming of *Malen'kaia Katerina* the "responding" method was used. So the subjects would become adjusted to the shooting process, the following technique was used for the filming apparatus: the camera was set on a tripod in a prominent place, somewhere far away from the place of business of family members, just like that, without recording anything. These "rehearsals" were useful for this film director in accumulating the observations necessary for the work, ideas about daily local life in general, and the sequence of actions in specific processes in particular. Following this, film scenes were shot immediately, and from a distance as much as possible (using the technical capabilities of the zoom lens), to minimize the impact of the camera on the behavior of the main characters of the film. Therefore, one aspect of the film was their natural behavior, in which they did not pay attention to the camera, as well as the director's laconic existence in the frame and the lack of formal interviews on camera.

This technique is often used in visual anthropology as «the very presence of outsiders, be they ethnographers carrying out their research or filmmakers making films, inevitably has a myriad of influences on the subjects' behavior» [Heider 2006, 67]. At the same time, according to Margaret Mead's memoirs, the presence of cameras had minimal effect on the behavior of her Balinese film subjects, as they had little idea of photography and film [Heider 2006, 91]. The same can be said about the young Khanty girl Katerina, who at the time of the shooting did not understand the intricacies of film or television technology. Over time, Katerina gradually got used to the presence of the director, and to the unit (operating the camera), and the shooting process. We also note that when members of the Moldanov family watched the finished film of themselves, their reaction was reminiscent of the reaction of the audience of the first film show by the Lumière brothers: they perceived their screen lives as a miracle—reality, caught on film—all the more so by the time they had to leave their camp and move to the village of Yuil'sk, a place foreign to them.

The film was shot over three years, and each visit demanded the repetition of the pre-shooting steps. From the diary:

The ethnocinematographer should be able to tune in to the tuning fork of another culture. He arrives from another system of value coordinates, with a different sense of time. It is necessary to adapt to the new reality before you start to film, to feel the tempo and rhythm of the characters, etc. The harmony between those filmed and those filming depends on this.



The film director emphasized the long-term observations of the behavior of the protagonist and her family with the help of the camera; in this way, this technique allows the recording of maximally objective ethnographic images of reality and in the end achieves the most direct relationship between the characters and the audience—without the active role of a director-mediator. Another diary entry reads:

Evening. Katerina's mother is preparing food. Her father went to tie up a dog to guard the deer in the forest. The rain is falling ... And so it goes almost every night. I just recorded the scene: a mother and her daughter cleaning a bird. There is little light in the tent, the sky is full of clouds, and the smoke hole is closed, so we had to light kerosene to remedy the situation. Katerina plucked the hunted bird, referring to her as a daughter, as she called her and gave her a name. Cute. Then she bundled up the bird with a handkerchief and kissed ... Suddenly a drop fell on the kerosene lamp and cracked.

It is worth noting that the main scenes of the film *Malen'kaia Katerina* were involuntarily filmed from the point of view of the protagonist—from the lowest point, corresponding to the increase in the girl's height.

The mechanism of constructing the phenomenon of childhood in ethnographic film inevitably bears an objective-subjective character, due to the highly complex essence of that phenomenon itself, as well as the role of director-mediation in revealing that phenomenon in the film. Crop (concluded within the frame of a fragment of reality), according to MacDougall it is a way to draw attention, and a way to organize vision, forcing the viewer to mentally "finish constructing" the framed reality in manner the director requires [MacDougall 2006, 4].

What should be in the frame? And what should stay out of the frame? These positions are determined, on the one hand, by the director, and, on the other hand, by the film's subjects. In the case of *Malen'kaia Katerina* the many manifestations of Khanty material culture and everyday life were absolutely open for shooting, while the depiction of ceremonial and ritual actions "on camera" was considered by the film's subjects to be a "sin." Therefore, any actions associated with the manifestations of the spiritual culture (prayers for ancestral spirits and the spirits of a host locality, sacrifices) were not captured on camera, remaining behind the scenes of the film.

When watching the film, the viewer receives a picture of daily life (clothing, housing, the nature of work, the relationship between family members) and a child's upbringing, along with the presentation of environmental elements. Katerina's mother (Ol'ga Moldanova, age 35) behaves very reservedly in the presence of the camera and men; she does not speak loudly, or laugh, and wears a scarf on her face. The camera carefully observes the daily activities of Katerina's family members, considering all the details that make up the

Khanty camp. As can be seen from the content of the film, the raising of children in Khanty family is enacted not so much by verbal instructions but as learning through action—the mastery of various skills by the child through witnessing the example of the adults, and the gradual assimilation of their cultural roles by the child. The child constructs the world and is actively situated within it [Corsaro 2005, 7].

#### **4. A Child's Role in Khanty Culture**

From the perspective of the bearers of Khanty culture, their daily lives do not deserve special interest for external observation, including the particularities of parenting. Here is another quote from Golovnev's diary:

During my first visit to the camp of the father of Katerina, Nikolai Moldanov, he respectfully commended the length and complexity of the journey I had taken, and shyly added that is unlikely that I would film anything important or special here, referring to the fact that their life was very normal.

In the course of the documentary we observe the camp life to which the protagonists of the film are accustomed. Outwardly, everything goes on as usual: the adults work and children play. But each of their actions visually characterizes their culture. The father whittles a stick to later use when fishing, depicting the man as breadwinner. The mother prepares food, showing the woman in the role of mistress of the hearth.

Katerina's brother, Viktor, climbed on stilts (which are sometimes used by Khanty for traveling in marshy areas) and moves about the camp, in the surrounding puddles, so he appears taller (older). At a lake nearby the camp, a pair of white swans takes off. Katerina looks after them, studying their behavior carefully.

Many details of the outcome of the film depend on the angle and the scrutiny of cultural material. According to Golovnev's diary:

In mid-December 2003, at 45 degrees below zero, making my way by snowmobile through the icy dark taiga to Katerina's camp, I ask myself: «How can an outsider more accurately convey the state of the local?» It is obvious that as soon as you have contact with a foreign culture, the better you start to understand your own ... On the contrary, from the other side, the life of Katerina looks more voluminous—like reality with a mythological background



Figure 2. Film director Ivan Golovnev and Ekaterina Moldanova (2003)

These observations provide some idea about the features of the organization of the Khanty adult-child relationship. On the one hand, the child's existence has its own regulations: determined by certain ages and seasons, by labor and natural processes, including the lives of animals and plants. It is cyclical, accentuating the already known and the familiar, the new and surprising. On the other hand, Khanty ways of being are not child-centric, but exist in the shadow of adult processes, and there is no clear-cut center at which the child-subject would be positioned. The child does something which he or she handles accordingly, and while carrying out the task learns at the same time to be self-reliant; in this way, they become accustomed to act independently, like adults.

To illustrate this relationship between adults and children, we provide one more observation from Golovnev's field diary:

We reached the small camp, where the grandmother is caring for the child of Sasha, the deceased brother. The girl in the house is attached to the post by a short leash, so as not to burn, hurt, or cut herself. This is not frustrating for the child, she even likes it - she even takes the leash to her grandmother: «Tie!»

This episode speaks to the protective function of the adult for the child. Furthermore, the child learns to be careful. For example, in one scene, we see how Katerina blows out a match - a moment that usually causes laughter among the audience. However, from the point of view of the camp residents, this action makes an important educational point: the child understands that fire can be dangerous if it is not extinguished in time - even matches can lead to family misfortune.

The on-screen representation allows you to see something else: identification with a group does not preclude individualization. In the film we see how Katerina, dressed in summer *malitsa* (coat) helps her mother to chop and carry wood to the tent. Mother and daughter are there together in the women's cultural space, in which daily chores start with the tending of fire in the early morning and end only with sleep. All of these tasks involuntarily involve potentially hazardous (fire, water) and heavy (cutting and carrying firewood) activities for the child. At the same time, the Moldanov family acted contrary to tradition, in that Katerina was never "tied"; she always ran about the camp environs on her own. From the shots in the film, it can be seen that Katerina is an active child by nature, and bustling energy awakens in her a craving for different actions. For example, in one scene of the film, we see how she perseveres at trying to take as much wood as possible back from the place of felling. And, after several unsuccessful attempts, Katerina achieves her goal of gathering firewood; she transfers the logs to the tent, humming something in her "children's language."

Thus, socialization in Khanty culture includes both common Khanty cultural components and features determined by an individual family, and involves having both positive and negative experiences. This is evidenced by another field diary entry:

Once, Katerina had an accident retreating with her back to the stove, she fell into a kettle of soup that had just boiled. Her father immediately lifted her out of the brew, but the girl received severe burns. There were no ointments or other medicines in the camp except for bear fat, which they took advantage of for first aid. Then they used the walkie-talkie from a neighboring village to call the helicopter ambulance. Katerina was taken away, and for a month she remained in the hospital. At present she has recovered, but the burns are sometimes itchy

It is believed that children have spiritual guardians. Among the Khanty living on the Kazym River, where *Malen'kaia Katerina* was filmed, there is a common belief that the silver-haired goddess progenitor *Kaltashchch* metes out the lifetime of each person [Sokolova 1975, 44].

A series of labors in the film represents the real integration of Katerina in everyday existence and the technology within it. A child in traditional culture has always been a full member of the community, performing their functions. He or she is able to engage in social action, constantly in a state of dialogue with the world [Uprichard 2010, 4]. At 12 years old, a girl could independently run the household, and the boy would go out hunting [Kulemzin & Lukina 1992, 47]. In the film we see how Katerina helps keep the fire going in the hearth while her mother is busy plucking a duck; we see her knead the dough and then, together with her mother, put it in the oven and close the flap. In this way, a connection is established between children's play and the professional activities of adults.

A key principle of the existence within the traditional culture of northerners is the constant interaction with the environment [Rombandeeva 1993, 10]. People, birds, animals, and insects are all considered spatially equivalent. The child perceives animals as equals and only with time will come to know that they are creatures of a different kind that live by their own laws. In one scene of the film we see how Katerina learns to speak through a conversation with a deer. She stands at the *karalia* (paddock), where deer are wandering around in the cold. Dressed in a *malitsa* Katerina herself looks like a fawn. One of the deer comes very close to her, stops, and listens to the girl. Incidentally, at the time of filming, the main language of communication in the Moldanov family was not Khanty but Russian. In the film there are other episodes where Katerina imitates animal speech. For instance, when her mother braids Katerina's hair, and then spoon-feeds her, while Katerina licks it and yelps like a dog. In another instance, Katerina's brother Victor plays reindeer-herding, learning to fold and throw a lasso. He deftly lassos a *khorei* (a long stick for controlling a sledge) that is stuck in the ground. Katerina closely watches his actions, and after a successful throw she barks happily.



Figure 3. Tiny Katerina. Original drawing

## 5. The Adult World

In the final field diary entry, Golovnev writes:

The finale of the film consists of only a few frames: fallen trees in the forest form a clearing; the clearing stretches to the camp; at the camp, we see all the subjects in the film: Katerina, and her father, mother and brother; Katerina and her family at the tent - a panorama - behind them in the taiga the camera's gaze "stumbles" on the oil rig. I saw this exact alarming situation in reality, when,

during another trip the familiar camp appeared: a clearing, tents, and behind it - a rig.

Since the deposits of underground reservoirs of oil occupy extensive areas, oil companies take a long-term lease (for several decades) on vast regions associated with traditional forms of economy (reindeer herding, hunting, fishing, gathering). In addition, the particularities of the development of deposits in the forest-tundra necessitates the construction of highways connecting the oil fields with villages and beyond, with hydrocarbon transit points into the branches of pipelines. These roads are generally designed on the basis of economic parameters (on the principle of least cost), and often pass through territories used for indigenous livelihoods and sacred sites. Khanty usually do not have legal right to these territories assigned to them, and are often forced to leave their ancestral lands and move to villages.



Figure 4. Film Director Ivan Golovnev and Ekaterina Moldanova (2013)

It seems that in the contemporary study of such phenomena as the complex world of childhood, digital engineering tools are very effective means for the recording and subsequent analysis and formation of ethnographic material. Ethnographic film is not only a visual representation of certain phenomena in the culture of childhood, but something that allows one to explore childhood from anthropological, historical, psychological, and aesthetic positions. In this sense, the union of professional opportunities in cinematography and ethnography and the development of a synthetic language of description can be seen as promising research methodologies in the field of anthropology of childhood.

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