

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Editors' Introduction to this Special Issue ..	iii
<i>Articles on African Oral Literature</i>	
DIANA REY-HULMAN <i>Pratiques langagières et formes littéraires..</i>	1-13
JEAN DERIVE <i>La reformulation en littérature orale. Typologie des transformations linguistiques dans les différentes performances d'une même oeuvre</i>	14-21
JAN KNAPPERT <i>Swahili oral traditions .. .. .</i>	22-30
VERONIKA GOROG-KARADY <i>Retelling Genesis: The children of Eve and the origin of inequality .. .. .</i>	31-44
GENEVIEVE CALAME-GRIAULE <i>La jeune fille qui cherche ses frères. Essai d'analyse .. .. .</i>	45-56
DOMINIQUE CASAJUS <i>Autour du rituel de la nomination chez les Touaregs Kel Ferwan.. .. .</i>	57-67
BRONISLAW ANDRZEJEWSKI <i>Alliteration and scansion in Somali oral poetry and its cultural correlates .. ..</i>	68-83
CHRISTIANE SEYDOU <i>Comment définir le genre épique? Un exemple: l'épopée africaine .. .. .</i>	84-98
ELISABETH GUNNER <i>New wine in old bottles: Imagery in the izibongo of the Zulu Zionist prophet, Isaiah Shembe ..</i>	99-108
<i>Byways in Oxford Anthropology .. .. .</i>	110-111
<i>Commentary .. .. .</i>	112-120
<i>Reviews .. .. .</i>	121-129
<i>Other Notes and Notices .. .. .</i>	130-132
<i>Publications Received .. .. .</i>	132-134

<i>Byways in Oxford Anthropology</i>	
Selections from the Minutes of the Oxford University Anthropological Society Presented by Jeremy Coote .. .. .	110-111
<i>Commentary</i>	
PAULINE WILKINS	
Regaining the Golden Stool: Social Anthropology and Applied Research .. .. .	112-120
<i>Reviews</i>	
ROY WILLIS, <i>A State in the Making: Myth, History, and Social Transformation in Pre-Colonial Ufipa.</i>	
Reviewed by John Beattie .. .. .	121-122
MARILYN STRATHERN, <i>Kinship at the Core: An Anth- ropology of Elmdon.</i>	
Reviewed by Susan Wright .. .. .	123-125
SHIRLEY ARDENER (ed.), <i>Women and Space: Ground Rules and Social Maps.</i>	
Reviewed by Catherine Thompson .. .. .	125-128
PAUL PARIN, FRITZ MORGENTHALER and GOLDY PARIN- MATTHEY, <i>Fear Thy Neighbor as Thyself: Psycho- analysis and Society among the Anyi of West Africa.</i>	
Reviewed by Roland Littlewood.. .. .	128-129
<i>Other Notes and Notices</i>	
PAT HOLDEN	
Conference on <i>Emerging Christianity in Modern Africa</i> .. .. .	130
DESMOND McNEILL	
The Saddest Story Illustrated with a Cartoon by MIKE HITCHCOCK ..	131-132
<i>Publications Received</i> .. .. .	132-134
<i>Notes on Contributors</i> .. .. .	inside back cover

Copyright © JASO 1982. All rights reserved.

ISSN UK 0044-8370

SPECIAL ISSUE ON AFRICAN ORAL LITERATURE: Editors' Introduction

This issue of *JASO* has been specially enlarged so as to accommodate a number of papers on the subject of African Oral Literature that were originally presented at a conference held at Wolfson College, Oxford in June 1981. Readers will observe that the approach to oral literature presented in the papers printed here is not in the tradition of European scholarship that concerns itself with the classification of types only according to subject-matter. Instead it is concerned with the social functions and meaning of oral literature *in situ*, and so relies on analysis of a wide range of social conditions to explain literary performance, such as the time, place, status and quality of both performers and public. This collection of papers also throws light on the perceived difference between French and British approaches to the study of oral literature.

The Editors of *JASO* record their grateful thanks to the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), Paris, from which a generous subsidy has been received that has made possible the publication of this special issue of the Journal. The CNRS has also helped with the simultaneous publication, by *JASO*, of a volume entitled *GENRES, FORMS, MEANINGS: Essays in African Oral Literature*, which contains the essays published here together with one further essay, by Kevin Donnelly and Yahya Omar, on Bajuni fishing songs, and a special Foreword by Ruth Finnegan. *GENRES, FORMS, MEANINGS* is edited by Veronika Görög-Karady, and is available, price £3.75 post free, directly on application to the Editors of *JASO*. We owe a great debt of gratitude to Dr Görög-Karady for her very kind agreement to enlist the support of the Oral Literature Research Group of the Equipe de Recherche Associée no. 246 of the CNRS, and for undertaking to edit *GENRES, FORMS, MEANINGS* (which appears as *JASO* Occasional Papers, no.1) as well as to help in the preparation of the papers presented in this issue of *JASO*.

Regular readers of *JASO* will readily see that this is the first time that all the articles of an individual issue of the Journal have been devoted to a single topic. Occasional future issues of this kind are being planned; comments and suggestions are earnestly invited.

# Cahiers de Littérature Orale

Les CAHIERS de LITTÉRATURE ORALE (CLO), organe du Centre de Recherche sur l'Oralité (CRO), rassemblent des études sur des textes transmis oralement: mythes, légendes, contes, chansons, proverbes, devinettes.... Il s'agit toujours d'analyses et non de recueils de textes.

Chaque cahier (environ 200 p., deux par an) comporte des études, des discussions des articles précédents, des comptes rendus, des informations (séminaires, thèses, archives et collections) sur tout ce qui concerne l'oralité.

Chèques à l'ordre du "Régisseur de recettes de l'INALCO", 2 rue de Lille, 75 007 Paris. 40 FF le numéro. Libeller les mandats internationaux à l'ordre du "Régisseur de recettes de l'INALCO", compte 9100 31 V Paris.

---

## *Editions G.-P. Maisonneuve et Larose*

### EXTRAIT DU CATALOGUE GENERAL

- Histoires d'enfants terribles,  
*par G. CALAME-GRIAULE, V. GÖRÖG, S. PLATIEL, D. REY-HULMAN et CH. SEYDOU. Etudes et anthologie de contes mettant en scène un héros spécifiquement africain, l'"enfant terrible".* 130 FF
- Contes populaires d'Afrique occidentale,  
*par F.-V. EQUILBECQ.* 152 FF
- Littérature orale d'Afrique noire. Bibliographie analytique,  
*par V. GOROG.* 150 FF
- Contes sous la Croix Sud,  
*par G. de GOUSTINE.* 77 FF
- Contes kono,  
*par B. HOLAS* 75 FF
- Contes et légendes du Sud-Ouest de Madagascar,  
*par R. DECARY* 90 FF

G.-P. Maisonneuve et Larose Editeurs, 15, rue Victor-Cousin, Paris 5  
CCP: 16 119 89 T-Paris

---

DIANA REY-HULMAN

## PRATIQUES LANGAGIERES ET FORMES LITTERAIRES

Parler de littérature orale conduit à utiliser l'expression texte oral. De là il n'y a qu'un pas à franchir pour se permettre d'utiliser les classifications dans lesquelles sont rangés les textes écrits de la littérature écrite. (Que l'on me pardonne ce pléonasme!)

D'ailleurs n'en ai-je pas fait un dans 'texte écrit' ? Il s'en faut de peu: à l'origine de la langue française, texte désigne un missel; mais la langue française n'étant qu'un relais du latin, on y retrouve l'image première de la langue 'mère': la trame, l'enchaînement. Curieusement<sup>1</sup> l'écrit retrouve l'oral qu'il représente à travers cette image du tissage: le texte ne cessera d'être quelque peu 'parole' ou 'livret'. 'Formule' ou 'libellé' - libellé a pour étymologie 'libelle' petit livre - donc la parole incantatoire évoquée par 'formule' est là encore confrontée à sa représentation matérielle. 'Texte de chanson' opposé à 'musique' ne constitue pas une opposition de nature différente de celle qui existe entre parole et livret: dans ce cas, les 'paroles' de la chanson sont conçues dans leur forme écrite. Il n'est point nécessaire d'insister davantage sur la référence au livre, à la lettre, pour ce qui concerne la terminologie générale; retenons néanmoins que la 'littérature orale' se trouve ainsi en tant que telle n'avoir d'existence que par rapport à l'écrit.

En réalité les textes oraux sont rarements désignés par les mêmes termes que ceux des genres écrits: roman, nouvelle ne sont que textes écrits. Je ne parlerai pas ici des genres qui, dans bien des cas sont écrits avant d'être proférés (plaidoirie, sermon, discours...) si ce n'est de l'un d'entre eux: la légende. En effet, la légende désigne un genre oral seulement dans son

sens second; dans le premier sens il s'agit d'un terme religieux très précis: 'récit de la vie d'un saint destiné à être lu à l'office des matines'.

Dans toutes les définitions fournies par les dictionnaires - ici le *Petit Robert* est le seul cité mais la même lecture est faisable pour les autres - la description des genres oraux n'est jamais indépendante de l'écrit, c'est-à-dire d'une matérialisation qui nécessite un décodage visuel: 'légende' avant même de devenir genre oral a été 'inscription d'une médaille' rejoignant par synonymie 'devise', 'formule qui accompagne l'écu dans les armoiries'. Par extension 'devise' devient 'paroles exprimant une pensée, un sentiment, un mot d'ordre'. 'Devise' et 'légende' dans leur forme écrite ne sont point genre populaire; liées dans la matérialité de l'écriture, 'devise' et 'légende' acquièrent le statut de 'sentence': 'pensée (surtout sur un point de morale) exprimée d'une manière dogmatique et littéraire'. *Petit Robert*.

A l'intérieur des définitions se dégagent des séries qui sont plus ou moins clairement apparentes dans les dictionnaires et qui ne se recoupent pas toutes. Ainsi pour 'proverbe' le *Petit Robert* renvoie anonymement à 'vérité d'expérience, ou conseil de sagesse pratique et populaire commun à tout un groupe social...' alors que le *Litttré* indique: 'Sentence, maxime exprimée en peu de mots, et devenue commune et vulgaire'.

Le *Litttré* se place ouvertement dans la synonymie tandis que le *Petit Robert* se contente d'indiquer: 'voir'. Ces remarques ne nous éloignent pas de notre sujet car elles nous dispensent de justifier d'une analyse menée à partir d'un corpus dans lequel ces deux pratiques sont traitées comme identiques. D'ailleurs, notre propos n'est pas de faire l'analyse des rapports des dictionnaires entre eux ni même de traiter de leur place dans la pratique langagière en France. Il s'agit de rechercher, à travers l'organisation de cette taxinomie, le mode de communication qui y est en acte. Nous ne poursuivrons donc pas la comparaison du *Petit Robert* avec le *Litttré* pour les autres genres.

Dans le *Petit Robert*, pour 'proverbe' on trouve: 'V. Adage aphorisme, dicton'. Or 'adage' renvoie à: 'Maxime pratique ou juridique, ancienne et populaire'..., aucune série synonymique n'est avancée; pour 'aphorisme', au contraire, la série synonymique s'allonge: 'V. Adage, formule, maxime, pensée, précepte, sentence'. 'Aphorisme' n'est pas un produit populaire mais une 'formule ou prescription résumant un point de science, de morale'. Ainsi en quelque sorte 'aphorisme' a un caractère ambigu de par son lien avec 'formule' identifié par la position paradigmatisée (formule/parole) et de par sa position syntagmatique reproduite dans cette définition elle-même; 'aphorisme' pourrait aussi bien avoir une forme orale qu'une forme écrite. 'Prescription' est bien, en effet, par étymologie, écriture.

Quand la fonction du genre est ambiguë, l'écrit est à coup sûr mentionné explicitement, le genre ne pouvant être défini uniquement par rapport à la situation de communication orale. Dans le cas où il n'y a pas mention explicite de l'écrit, l'oral

n'est, lui, mentionné qu'indirectement par la qualification de populaire attribuée à certains genres.

En effet, les genres sans ambiguïté se trouvent être produits par le peuple, d'une façon populaire - *le Litttré* va jusqu'à qualifier cette façon de faire de 'commune et vulgaire', sans doute dans le sens etymologique de vulgaire et non dans son sens péjoratif! - qui leur a conféré leur ambiguïté.

La lecture des oppositions synonymiques ou des définitions ne permet pas toujours de décider du caractère écrit ou oral des unités lexicales; mais en poursuivant la lecture des articles des dictionnaires, nous trouvons une clé dans les exemples cités qui sont parfaitement explicites: ainsi pour 'dicton', 'sentence passée en proverbe', la citation de Daudet montre qu'il s'agit de paroles orales: 'Tous les jolis dictons, proverbes ou adages dont nos paysans de Provence passent leurs discours'. Quant à 'proverbe' il apparaît comme étant essentiellement dit: 'comme le dit le proverbe'...

Apparemment l'oral n'a d'existence autonome que de par le statut de l'émetteur; autrement l'oral est déterminé par l'écrit.

En fait, cette qualification de populaire ne désigne pas seulement l'agent producteur mais surtout le code choisi qui s'avère dans ce cas être le code oral.

La série organisée autour de 'proverbe' décrit un type de communication dont le message, écrit ou oral est produit par un émetteur qui manifeste une nette volonté d'avoir prise sur le récepteur. A travers les qualifications du proverbe, 'sagesse', 'conseil', il ne fait pas de doute que la fonction perlocutoire est déterminante dans ce type de message. L'absence de précision sur le producteur du message résulte de la priorité accordée au message écrit: l'anonymat du peuple contraste avec le 'point de science'; le message oral est réduit à lui-même dans l'exercice de communication comme le texte écrit est indépendant de l'émetteur. L'existence matérielle du texte écrit fait illusion: le texte écrit n'entre dans le procès de communication que par la lecture, de même que le texte oral n'a d'existence que par la profération.

Pour l'ensemble des genres, qui dans la langue française - celle des dictionnaires - se réfère à l'oral, le message est l'élément central à tel point que c'est le message lui-même qui devient 'mensonger' tandis que son émetteur est mis hors de cause.

Cette analyse d'une partie de la taxinomie française a pour but de démontrer que les éléments sémantiques utilisés pour décrire toute forme de littérature orale même si on les isole de leur contexte taxinomique, ne peuvent être projetés tels quels sur la taxinomie d'autres langues. Mythes, contes, légendes, proverbes, chants, devinettes, devises, salutations, ces lexèmes constituent la taxinomie utilisée en général pour traduire en français les constituants de la taxinomie d'une autre langue. Outre que cette taxinomie est souvent réductrice (dans ce cas d'aucuns ont recours à l'extension de la taxinomie française par exemple 'fable' et 'chantefable' sont souvent utilisées)

elle impose un découpage des genres qui ne coïncide pas avec celui de la langue cible.

En français (académique) la nominalisation du lexique entraîne une survalorisation du message au détriment des autres facteurs en acte dans la communication. Le terme survalorisation est pris ici d'un point de vue quantitatif et non qualitatif, car les genres oraux sont, comparativement à l'écrit, presque tous atteints de dévalorisation.

Si 'dire' peut être producteur de récits, de contes, de devinettes etc, il ne peut l'être de textes chantés. Il y a une coupure parallèle entre les nominaux 'poésie' et 'prose'. Mais les chantefables sont-elles dites ou chantées? Réponse: dans le cas d'un récit entièrement chanté, bien évidemment, il n'y a pas d'hésitation; mais dans le cas où des parties chantées sont intercalées entre des parties non chantées, que faire? La nominalisation renvoie uniformément à parole et à musique par ailleurs, ou à 'poésie', si l'ensemble de la chantefable est scandé, rythmé régulièrement; mais si 'poésie' alterne avec 'prose' ?

Lorsqu'en français on veut rendre compte de la situation dans une littérature étrangère, on a recours, pour la taxinomie, au nominal plutôt qu'au verbal.

Le champ sémantique nominal ne recouvre pas le champ verbal: deviner n'est pas dire des devises, deviner n'est pas dire des devinettes mais 'trouver' la réponse à la devinette 'posée'.

La taxinomie française, de même que celle de n'importe quelle littérature, ne peut être décrite complètement qu'en tenant compte à la fois du champ nominal et du champ verbal, et en considérant verbaux et nominaux dans leurs relations paradigmatiques et contextuelles.

Il est apparu que la classification nominale repose sur le message; on peut donc supposer que la forme du message est déterminante dans cette classification. Or la forme évoquée par la définition des dictionnaires ne correspond pas toujours à la réalité stylistique du message. Il n'est pas mentionné, par exemple, pour les proverbes que la fonction perlocutoire de leurs messages puisse déterminer la forme syntaxique de ces énoncés qui sont seulement sensés être brefs. Ainsi, une fois de plus, la forme du message est définie indépendamment de l'acte de production. La devise a une forme évidemment brève de par la nature du support matériel (l'écusson) qui est déterminant par rapport à la forme orale.

Cette réflexion sur la langue française et sur la difficulté à trouver uniquement dans la taxinomie nominale une représentation de la forme, nous a amenée à accorder une grande attention à l'ensemble des procédés langagiers en action dans la culture tyokossi productrice d'une littérature orale sur laquelle nous allons appliquer le même type d'analyse.



Littérature orale tyokossi<sup>2</sup>

Les pages qui suivent illustrent la difficulté de traduction d'une langue à une autre - ici de l'anufo parlé par les Tyokossi au français de l'anthropologue - et représentent une tentative d'analyser l'organisation interne du discours littéraire tyokossi.

J'ai choisi de traduire par les nominaux suivants ceux de la taxinomie des genres en *anufo*: proverbes, contes, chants, devise, devinettes. Bien évidemment la distribution du contenu de ces termes ne recoupe pas celui de la langue française; la prise en compte d'un découpage des verbaux montrera que dans la langue anufo comme dans la langue française la taxinomie nominale n'est pas suffisante pour appréhender le référent de la communication impliqué dans les genres.

Tout au long des pages précédentes, une représentation implicite des actes de communication a été à l'oeuvre. Le tableau présenté ci-après, est construit suivant d'après le schéma de la communication établi par R. Jakobson, à quelques remarques près:

- la modalité de contact est décrite à travers la forme physique (par exemple: portée des sons) mais aussi à travers la forme stylistique des énoncés, forme qui détermine la réciprocité de la communication entre émetteur et récepteur.
- contexte renvoie uniquement au cycle temporel contrairement à l'ambiguïté de ce terme dans le schéma jakobsonnien.

La description académique de la langue française ne tient pas compte des circonstances temporelles d'émission des messages littéraires (et pour cause! la domination de l'écrit confère à ces derniers leur indépendance illusoire à l'égard du temps) à l'exception près de la 'légende' qui a d'abord été lue aux matines, c'est-à-dire au moment précis de l'office religieux catholique, entre minuit et le lever du jour.

Ce qui saute aux yeux, en premier, dans le tableau en *anufo* c'est la dichotomie basée sur nuit et jour. Cette dichotomie commande une opposition entre les prédicats littéraires: en effet, la nuit est le moment où les énoncés sont 'mangés ingurgités'<sup>3</sup> ou encore le jour est celui où les paroles sont 'parlées' ou encore 'données en présent, présentées'. Quand le jour les paroles sont accompagnées de musique, soit elles ne sont pas considérées en tant que telles soit elles n'ont d'existence que par rapport à l'instrument à percussion: elles sont 'frappées' sur des tambours, petits tambours d'aisselle ou grands tambours.

Les 'vieux'<sup>4</sup> 'parlent des proverbes' entre eux mais les 'donnent' aux 'jeunes', à ceux qui sont en relation d'apprentissage par rapport à eux ou qui doivent subir leur parole. Les vieux me 'donnaient' des paroles à moi, ethnologue, qui étais en situation d'ignorance.

Au cours des jugements, les 'vieux' donnent un 'proverbe' pour annoncer le verdict. Le don est sans retour, le dire est dans ce cas exposition.

Traduction française	émetteur	récepteur (1)	contact	contexte	message signifiant	message forme	langue
	grand-père	petit-fils	tête à tête	chaque nuit	<i>di ngo</i> 'manger le conte'	récit	anufa
CONTE	chef de clan conteur	clan	immédiat	1 nuit/an	<i>di ngo</i> 'manger le conte'	récit avec chant/refrain	anufa étrangère
	vieilles femmes	clan	immédiat case du décès	occasionnel/décès	<i>di ano dyue</i> 'manger le chant du clan'	chant	étrangère
CHANTS	vieilles femmes	jeunes filles	immédiat case rituelle (2)	3 nuits/an <i>kurubi</i>	<i>di ano dyue</i>	chant/refrain	étrangère
	jeunes filles	amants	immédiat ou différé (3) cour de concession	1 nuit/an <i>kurubi</i>	<i>di dyue</i> 'manger le chant'	chant/refrain	étrangère

	vieux	vieux	immédiat case rituelle/ jugement	jour/ semaine	<i>dyodyo</i> <i>anyundere</i> 'parler en proverbe'	récit	anufo
PROVERBES	vieux	dépendant	par hérault intermédiaire case rituelle/ jugement	jour/ semaine	<i>ka anyundere</i> 'donner un proverbe'	récit	anufo
DEVISE	tambours parlants	ville	portée des sons	2 jours/ semaine	<i>bo duma</i> 'frapper le nom'	musique	anufo (4)
DEVINETTE	jeunes hommes	jeunes filles	cour de la concession	1 jour/ kurubi	<i>bo anzama</i>	question/ réponse	anufo

(1) Le terme récepteur désigne ceux qui entendent le message et sont susceptibles ou non d'y répondre.

(2) La case rituelle est utilisée dans différentes circonstances: funérailles, rituel du *kurubi*, jugements.

(3) Le contact est parfois différé car soit le chant est une réponse à un chant prononcé l'année antérieure soit le chant ne recevra de réponse que l'année suivante, au cours du prochain *kurubi*

(4) La musique est présentée comme étant en *anufo* car il s'agit de phrases tonales qui correspondent à des énoncés en *anufo*

Le plaignant reçoit les paroles du pouvoir dans une position qui ne lui permet pas de converser; tout au plus peut-il 'dire' mais alors il ne peut 'dire' que des 'paroles': l'usage du 'proverbe' lui est interdit. Il ne converse pas avec le pouvoir qui 'présente', plus précisément 'fait présent', de paroles. A la cour royale, la mise en scène est éclairante: le roi prononce à voix basse un 'proverbe' et un hérault en situation de dépendance proclame les paroles royales; le plaignant est prosterné le front à terre et reçoit ainsi le présent oral transféré par le hérault.

De même que dans le verdict d'un jugement ou la conclusion d'un débat, conclusion prononcée par le chef de clan, la parole est sans réponse, de même en situation d'apprentissage la relation maître élève est à sens unique. La forme de la parole d'apprentissage et celle du jugement sont donc similaires. Dans les deux cas, les messages prennent l'allure de monologues débités sans interruption. La taxinomie nominale opère ici un véritable croisement entre les genres. En effet, le jour, le 'proverbe' est un récit qui ressemble fort par sa structure narrative à un conte qui, lui, est exclusivement récit de nuit et dont pourtant les brefs énoncés qui les concluent sont désignés sous le même terme de 'proverbe'! Sous le même vocable -nominal- sont regroupés des messages différents sous certains points dans leur forme mais identiques par leur fonction dans la communication: sont 'proverbes' les énoncés produits dans le cadre d'une communication dont la fonction conative est dominante - d'aucuns diraient la fonction perlocutoire. Peu importe la longueur du message; seule sa force perlocutoire est en cause. Ainsi ce qui dans la littérature ethnologique est appelé 'morale' du conte est désigné dans la langue *anufa* par un genre littéraire 'proverbe' dans lequel est concentrée toute la force perlocutoire du récit qui précède.

Or si les 'morales' des contes sont bien des 'proverbes', le terme proverbe ne peut être introduit dans les énoncés de type 'donner des proverbes' ou 'converser en proverbe' quand il s'agit des énoncés produits la nuit par le grand-père à l'adresse de son petit-fils ou de ceux proférés par n'importe quel membre du clan au cours de la soirée rituelle<sup>5</sup>; il ne s'agit alors que de 'contes' qui sont 'mangés' bien qu'ils soient aussi des 'proverbes' non seulement dans leur conclusion mais tout entiers. On peut dire: 'ce conte est un proverbe', 'la signification de ce conte est un proverbe' mais il n'est pas correct de construire l'énoncé 'il mange un proverbe'. La nuit, les conteurs ne 'mangent' que des 'contes'. S'il peut y avoir identification des nominaux 'contes' et 'proverbe', en revanche, la différenciation persiste au niveau des prédicats qui leur sont attachés et qui les situent par rapport à leur acte d'énonciation.

'Converser' implique une relation d'égalité; c'est ainsi que les 'aînés' rassemblés le jour conversent entre eux en utilisant le genre littéraire dit 'proverbe'. Ils 'donnent' ce même genre aux plaignants qui, de par cette condition momenta-

née, se trouvent en situation de dépendance, donc dans une situation similaire à celle de dépendant. Malgré cela, la caractérisation du sens de la communication du point de vue de la situation sociale des locuteurs en présence ne peut être appliquée de la même façon dans la communication d'apprentissage entre le grand-père et le petit-fils, locuteurs qui sont reliés soit par une réelle relation de parenté, soit par une parenté fictive qui, dans bien des cas, est une relation de dépendance. Donc, si le verbe converser ne peut être utilisé, on pourrait s'attendre à ce que 'faire présent' puisse l'être. Cela d'autant plus que le 'présent' de 'paroles' fait par le grand-père au petit-fils intervient après que celui-ci a fourni un certain nombre de prestations matérielles pendant la journée. De plus, nous avons vu que la forme des messages contes dans cette relation d'apprentissage et celle des messages dits 'proverbe' de jour, sont très semblables. Malgré toutes ces similitudes, les contes ne peuvent être 'conversés' ni 'donnés', pas plus que les 'proverbes' - qu'ils sont parfois - ne peuvent être 'mangés'; il est donc nécessaire de chercher ailleurs le fondement de cette taxinomie.

En tant qu'ethnologue et peut-être surtout parce que je suis une femme, il ne m'a pas été possible de me trouver véritablement dans la situation du petit-fils que le grand-père appelle le soir auprès de lui pour lui parler. Il ne m'a été donné qu'une fois de me trouver dans une situation analogue. A cette occasion, il m'a été possible d'entendre un récit proche de ceux utilisés en situation d'apprentissage. Ce récit, qui a pour thème la mort, est apparu avoir pour pendant un conte préféré en situation ritualisée et dont le thème est au contraire la fécondité. La distinction de style entre les deux est nette; le conte du grand-père ne comporte qu'un seul chant qui n'est d'ailleurs pas construit comme ceux qui, dans les veillées, entrecourent les contes: le conteur chante sans entraîner pour autant une réponse en refrain du public. Dans le conte inverse, les chants sont repris en chœur par le public, qui, par ailleurs, tout au long de la narration, est interpellé et répond. Mais si ces deux récits diffèrent, ils ont en commun d'être introduits par des énoncés de type 'proverbe' qui ne nécessitent pas de réponse, et sont simple 'exposition': dans le conte grand-paternel, 'il ne faut pas détruire les biens sous prétexte qu'il va y en avoir d'autres'; dans le conte rituel: 'c'est pourquoi le lièvre ne voulut pas refaire l'échange avec le singe'. Dans le premier la 'morale' est claire, dans le second, elle est ésotérique; la première morale est exposée négativement, la deuxième l'est aussi en quelque sorte, mais l'une est perlocutoire - 'il ne faut pas' - l'autre camoufle sa leçon dans l'ésotérisme et la constatation stylistique - 'c'est pourquoi...'. La fonction éducative du conte grand-paternel est évidente, l'autre n'est que référentielle.

Ces 'proverbes' servent d'introduction aux deux contes dits chacun dans des veillées différentes; mais ils sont avant tout conclusion des contes précédents; ils en sont le 'fond', le fon-

dement, c'est-à-dire le commencement.

Les récits dits contes sont des récits de toujours, qui ne sont pas en référence avec un événement historique; les contes sont simplement transmis par ceux qui les profèrent. C'est pour-quoi il faut aller à la recherche du véritable émetteur; le conteur n'est qu'un intermédiaire semblable au hérault qui répète la parole du roi.

Le grand-père apparaît comme répétant la parole de la lignée des ancêtres morts, lui étant l'ancêtre vivant, donnant cette parole aux membres du clan. L'apprenti conteur est en situation de dépendance vis-à-vis du grand-père, comme le sont tous les membres du clan; en particulier, dans la manifestation cérémonielle de la 'soirée de contes', le conteur qui ouvre la 'soirée' en tant que chef de clan est le représentant des ancêtres, les membres du clan reçoivent cette parole, chacun d'eux en est aussi à tour de rôle le hérault. Il ne s'agit pas d'une 'conversation' entre les ancêtres et les vivants mais d'une véritable 'ingurgitation' de la parole des ancêtres. Si des conteurs semi-professionnels ont pu prendre place entre le chef de clan et le public clanique, c'est parce qu'ils sont en situation de dépendance statutaire et momentanée puisqu'ils sont sollicités par un membre du clan qui se fait ainsi l'entremetteur entre eux et le chef de clan; ceci bien qu'il soit souvent dit que ces conteurs prennent purement et simplement la place du chef de clan.

Avant de parler de la forme des contes, il est nécessaire d'examiner les autres genres qui sont inclus dans les actes de communication désignés par celui d' 'ingurgiter'. Il apparaît que ne figurent dans cette liste que des chants. Ces chants ont ceci de particulier qu'ils sont tous, ou presque, en langue étrangère.

Les circonstances des chants sont toutes d'ordre rituel et plus précisément déterminées par le moment de passage de la vie à la mort. Les chants sont produits au moment de l'événement de la mort: lorsqu'un homme ou une femme décède, les vieilles femmes du clan se rassemblent devant la case où a eu lieu le décès et entonnent en choeur les chants des morts. Ces mêmes vieilles femmes<sup>7</sup> vont, au cours des cérémonies annuelles du *kurubi*<sup>8</sup> transmettre ces chants aux jeunes filles non mariées mais pubères. La situation d'apprentissage est manifestée par la forme échangée et répétitive des énoncés: les femmes âgées entonnent une phrase chantée que les jeunes filles répètent.

Il ne faut pas se laisser abuser par cette apparence de rapport de type éducatif: en effet, non seulement ce rapport est ritualisé dans le moment dit 'répétition' qui ouvre les cérémonies du *kurubi*, mais aussi la forme des chants se maintient telle quelle tout au long du rite. Ce n'est donc pas ce moment particulier de l'apprentissage qui est déterminant mais la fonction de ces chants dans l'ensemble du rituel. Le rôle des chants est appréhendé grâce au code qui est utilisé pour leur création ou leur forme répétitive, figée. Les chants 'pour les morts' sont dans la langue des morts. Or la langue des an-

cêtres décédés est devenue ésotérique à l'ensemble des locuteurs tyokossi y compris les femmes âgées qui transmettent les 'chants des morts'.

Le rite du *kurubi* s'inscrit dans l'ensemble des rites de passage de la vie à la mort mais aussi de la mort à la vie. Le *kurubi* est ainsi un rite de fécondité au cours duquel les ancêtres morts sont invoqués; ou plutôt ce sont les ancêtres qui font entendre leur voix par l'intermédiaire des femmes âgées; les jeunes filles pubères non mariées, sont porteuses à ce moment de l'année - après la rupture du jeûne du ramadan - des paroles ancestrales. Après la 'répétition' dirigée par les vieilles femmes, une jeune fille, la plus âgée - donc la plus proche des ancêtres -, lance les divers chants qui constituent le répertoire figé, répertoire de la parole défunte. Toutes les jeunes filles qui l'entourent répètent les phrases chantées les unes après les autres.

Après les chants figés, ésotériques, chaque années sont proférés des chants, pour la plupart tout autant ésotériques que les premiers, qui sont des chants d'amour, de fécondité, à l'inverse apparemment des chants de mort. Ces chants sont ésotériques car ils doivent être eux aussi émis dans la langue des ancêtres. Dans la communication réelle, ils sont essentiellement destinés aux amants des jeunes filles mais en fait ils visent un autre destinataire: les hommes défunts du clan. La création de ces chants requiert un ésotérisme symbolique qui est réalisé par l'emploi de langues étrangères empruntées, pour la circonstance, aux populations voisines.

La nuit, les femmes ne peuvent que chanter. Il apparaît donc que, pendant la nuit, ce sont elles les intermédiaires entre les ancêtres morts et le pouvoir vivant. La nuit est le seul moment de la journée où elles peuvent parler avec les morts.

Bien que les femmes puissent théoriquement dire des contes, il n'en est pas moins reconnu qu'elles ne sont pas douées pour cet exercice car 'elles ne font que chanter'. Ce sont donc de jeunes hommes qui déclament les contes pendant la veillée rituelle annuelle.

'Un conte sans chant n'est pas un bon conte'. Les contes tirent leur ambiguïté - chant et/ou conte - de leur moment d'émission: la nuit. Ils sont paroles d'ancêtres morts et proférés par des hommes jeunes donc de statut dépendant, définitif ou provisoire, ils doivent être emprunts de l'ésotérisme propre à la langue des ancêtres. C'est par les chants, la plupart ésotériques, que les contes deviennent paroles d'ancêtres. Mais c'est aussi dans la forme répétitive des chants qu'ils sont manifestés comme étant la proclamation de la parole ancestrale face aux vivants réunis dans la grande cour centrale pour l'entendre. Ainsi, les contes ne peuvent jamais être proférés par un conteur isolé qui n'aurait pas devant lui un auditoire capable de prouver par des interjections plus ou moins codées, la reprise des refrains, qu'il entend la parole ancestrale.

La parole du pouvoir, car c'est bien de cela qu'il s'agit,

est une parole proférée, avec intermédiaire, par des personnages en situation de dépendance quand elle se déploie devant plusieurs auditeurs. Dans l'intimité des soirées où le grand-père parle à son petit-fils, le grand-père est lui-même l'ancêtre dépositaire de la parole de pouvoir; dans l'étouffante moiteur de la case sacrificielle, les femmes, détentrices du pouvoir, parlent devant les jeunes filles du clan. Tous les jeunes hommes du clan sont des conteurs potentiels, crieurs d'un soir de la parole reçue tout au long de l'année. Toutes les jeunes filles du clan propagent auprès des clans alliés, la parole des ancêtres de leur clan.

Dans la journée, hormis le hérault du roi, il n'est pas de crieur pour la parole du pouvoir vivant en exercice. Il n'y a donc pas de paroles institutionnalisées: elles ne sont que musique, son de l'instrument; les paroles sont frappées, et non dites, par les dépendants. Quand des paroles se glissent dans la musique elles se répondent les unes les autres comme par exemple dans ce que nous avons traduit par 'devinette': conversation par question-réponse entre garçons et filles.

Nous avons construit une traduction qui ne porte que sur les nominaux car nous ne sommes pas capable de faire correspondre dans une approximation, si vague soit-elle, les énoncés descriptifs des genres oraux; cette nominalisation est justifiée en partie par le fait qu'elle renvoie à une énumération quantitativement identique dans la langue anufo.

Les énoncés anufo décrivent en effet des actes de communication basés sur une différenciation de comportement entre les locuteurs engagés dans ces actes. La forme, qui, dans la langue tyokossi n'est pas plus prise en compte que dans la langue des dictionnaires français, ne trouve justification que si on regarde de plus près quels sont les locuteurs. En effet seuls les dépositaires du pouvoir vivant, c'est-à-dire ceux qui représentent les ancêtres morts, peuvent 'parler' la littérature orale à la seule condition qu'ils se trouvent dans la situation de devoir exercer le pouvoir à la place de ces ancêtres absents partis dans le monde des morts.

Le jour, les vieux qui gèrent les affaires du clan sont les réels émetteurs des paroles dont ils sont responsables devant la lignée ancestrale: ils 'parlent' par 'proverbes'; ces proverbes ne sont pas des paroles figées car les auteurs-émetteurs peuvent en tant qu'ancêtres produire leur propre parole, à ce moment là, et dans leur langue à eux.

Par contre, la nuit étant le moment où les ancêtres morts peuvent se manifester - dans la voix des vivants - les ancêtres vivants ne font que prêter leur voix aux morts. L'émetteur visible n'est donc qu'un émetteur fictif.

L'opposition nuit/jour qui sert de support évident à celle établie entre les actes de communication diurnes ou nocturnes dissimule, en fait, une opposition basée sur le statut social des locuteurs en présence et sur les interactions spécifiques dans les actes de communication. Si le jour, certains émetteurs ne peuvent 'parler' ce n'est pas parce qu'ils s'accompagnent d'instruments de musique mais c'est parce qu'ils sont de statut



dépendant et d'ailleurs c'est pour cela qu'il leur incombe de devoir frapper les instruments musicaux: de cette tâche sont effectivement dispensés les personnages qui appartiennent au pouvoir.

La forme question-réponse des récits et la mise en refrain systématique des chants est une mise en scène énonciative permettant d'introduire un locuteur supplémentaire et de faire de l'émetteur visible un simple intermédiaire entre le locuteur et le public.

## NOTES

1. Le symbolisme de la parole élaboré par la culture dogon est basé sur une assimilation de la parole au tissage. ( Voir les travaux ethnologiques réalisés depuis la révélation de la philosophie dogon dans Marcel Griaule, *Dieu d'eau*, Paris: Fayard 1966.
2. Les Tyokossi habitent la ville de Sansanné-Mango au Togo.
3. Le verbal *di* désigne aussi bien l'action de manger de la nourriture que divers autres actes dont celui de dire des contes:
 

'manger le sexe de la femme'	: copuler
'manger le jugement'	: prononcer un jugement
'manger la royauté'	: être intronisé roi
'manger le marché'	: aller au marché
'manger la pauvreté'	: être pauvre
4. Hommes âgés: homme père d'au moins un garçon et qui ne soit pas de statut dépendant.
5. L'invitation au conte, ou l'évolution du conte tyokossi'.Ed. G. Calame-Griaule, *Langage et cultures africaines, Essais d'ethnolinguistique*. Paris: Maspéro 1977.
6. D. Rey-Hulman, 'Les dépendants des maîtres tyokossi pendant la période précoloniale. Ed. Meillassoux, *L'esclavage en Afrique précoloniale*. Paris: Maspéro, 1975.
7. Vieilles femmes c'est à dire femmes ménauposées.
8. Signification d'un rituel féminin: le *kurubi* chez les Tyokossi du Nord-Togo, *Journal de la Société des Africanistes* Vol. XLV, I-II.

LA REFORMULATION EN LITTERATURE ORALE,  
TYPOLOGIE DES TRANSFORMATIONS LINGUISTIQUES  
DANS LES DIFFERENTES PERFORMANCES D'UNE MEME OEUVRE

La littérature populaire orale offre un terrain d'expérience particulièrement riche et original pour l'étude du processus de création littéraire, par le fait que, grâce aux techniques modernes de collecte, elle peut nous offrir, pour une oeuvre donnée, un très grand nombre de versions qui la réalisent anecdotiquement dans des performances particulières. Certes, dans la tradition culturelle écrite également, il arrive assez fréquemment qu'on crée à partir d'oeuvres de référence antérieures (cf. la fortune de thèmes comme, Prométhée, Antigone, Faust ou Don Juan), mais le projet est alors assez différent. Ce qui caractérise en effet le principe même de la tradition orale, c'est que c'est le domaine littéraire par excellence où la reproduction explicite d'un objet de référence, n'a pas pour but avoué - à la différence des cas les plus courants de la littérature écrite - la subversion du sens de cet élément de référence.

En littérature orale, la réalisation de l'oeuvre littéraire dans une performance particulière n'a pas en principe pour fonction culturelle de renouveler telle et/ou telle autre de ses réalisations, mais au contraire de maintenir une permanence formelle et fonctionnelle en posant comme idéal social un certain effacement (certes illusoire) du sujet. Non pas que l'art de celui qui accomplit la performance soit tenu pour quantité négligeable et qu'on n'attende pas une certaine prestation de son talent individuel, mais cet art qu'on exige de lui, est lui-même soumis à des canons auxquels le performateur est tenu de se conformer. Et le grand artiste, c'est celui dont le talent est précisément le plus capable de tendre vers la réalisation de ces normes idéales. Cette recherche de conformité dans la reformulation de l'oeuvre orale, s'explique par le fait qu'à la différence du texte écrit dont l'existence matérielle, une fois qu'il est pro-

duit, peut s'inscrire dans une certaine durée, le texte oral n'existe plus aussitôt qu'il est énoncé, sinon dans le souvenir, et que, pour maintenir son existence, il a besoin de réalisations successives. Nous ne nierons pas que l'idée que c'est le même objet dont la permanence est assurée à chaque performance est plus ou moins mythique, mais il n'est pas négligeable de noter que c'est la représentation culturelle que la plupart des sociétés se donnent du phénomène.

C'est-à-dire que, pour résumer l'opposition entre reformulation à l'écrit et reformulation à l'oral, nous pouvons dire, un peu schématiquement peut-être, que :

- *lorsqu'il y a reproduction à l'écrit c'est presque toujours dans le but explicite de dire autre chose*, ce qu'on pourrait détailler ainsi :

1°) ou bien par modification opérée sur le signifiant de référence, en vue d'entraîner par contrecoup une modification du signifié, et éventuellement du sens (mais pas nécessairement, car la modification du signifié, en diachronie, peut-être au contraire une réactualisation du sens. Dans ce cas, je dis *autre chose* - ordre du signifié - pour mieux dire la *même chose* - ordre du sens).

2°) ou bien par modification du sens (sans toucher au signifiant) par l'actualisation de la séquence discursive de référence dans un contexte différent (cas des collages purs présentés par Henri BEHAR, par exemple).<sup>1</sup>

- *et qu'au contraire, lorsqu'il y a reformulation en littérature orale, c'est presque toujours pour dire la même chose*, c'est-à-dire que le but recherché est de reproduire un objet linguistique sans toucher à sa fonction culturelle.

1°) soit en maintenant intacte l'intégrité de son signifiant (apprentissage par coeur).

2°) soit par paraphrase, c'est-à-dire que, dans ce cas-là, la coïncidence parfaite du signifiant d'une performance sur l'autre n'étant plus considérée comme indispensable, l'équivalence est cherchée à partir d'une mémorisation plus facile du signifié, auquel le performateur tente de donner des équivalents paraphrastiques.

Et dans l'un et l'autre cas, la culture orale cherche généralement à maintenir un cadre stable des conditions d'énonciation de l'oeuvre pour éviter la subversion du sens (texte à dire le soir, dans la cour, en famille exclusivement, par exemple).

Ce qui fait de la littérature orale un champ d'étude particulièrement intéressant, c'est la possibilité unique qui est dans ce cas offerte de recueillir d'une même oeuvre (c'est-à-dire d'un élément de référence qui, dans le cas où la transmission se fait sans apprentissage par coeur, est regardé du côté du signifié) une multiplicité de versions paraphrasées les unes des autres. C'est un des rares cas concrets qui nous soit donné, à partir d'un nombre fini de versions (mais dont on sait le nombre potentiel infini), d'avoir une ouverture sensible sur l'infini de l'intertexte, et de jeter un regard privilégié sur le proces-

sus de constitution de l'effet de sens.

En effet, les tenants de l'A.A.D. (Analyse Automatique du Discours) pensent que 'la production du sens est strictement indissociable de la relation de paraphrase entre des séquences telles que la famille paraphrastique de ces séquences constitue ce qu'on pourrait appeler la matrice du sens'.<sup>2</sup> C'est-à-dire que pour eux, et notamment pour Pêcheux, 'c'est à partir de la relation intérieure à cette famille que se constitue l'effet de sens, ainsi que la relation à un référent qu'implique cet effet'(2).

De ce point de vue, l'étude comparée de multiples versions d'un même énoncé littéraire oral offre justement des familles paraphrastiques très intéressantes pour une unité narrative donnée, qui permettent de mettre à jour, par juxtaposition, un certain nombre de traits sémantiques matriciels.

C'est pourquoi il est utile de recueillir des versions, à la fois d'un même interprète et d'interprètes différents, surtout dans la perspective où nous entendons nous placer, qui pose que le sens d'un énoncé ne peut se concevoir que dans la mesure où il est nécessairement intégré à une formation discursive existant dans la société.

En effet, il sera alors particulièrement intéressant d'étudier les familles paraphrastiques (qui forment sur la chaîne du discours autant de paradigmes) engendrées par la juxtaposition des versions données par une femme, un homme, un enfant, un maître, un esclave, etc..., ou de toute autre formation sociale par rapport à laquelle est susceptible de se définir l'énonciateur.

Toutefois, si la performance de littérature orale est un lieu privilégié pour l'étude d'une certaine forme de reformulation linguistique, il faut cependant attirer l'attention sur une difficulté particulière : reformulation de quoi ? La difficulté en littérature orale provient du fait qu'à la différence des cas de 'réécriture' de la littérature écrite, l'objet matériel de référence, à partir de quoi un autre texte serait formulé, n'est pas saisissable : il n'a pas d'existence matérielle concrète, isolable, et il n'existe en fait que dans la mémoire de l'énonciateur, à partir d'une somme d'objets matériels successivement perçus (auditivement en l'occurrence). Dans la mesure où il se donne comme idéal la reproduction aussi fidèle que possible d'un modèle individualisé (ce que nous avons appelé jusqu'ici une oeuvre), l'énonciateur d'un texte de littérature orale pourrait être comparé à ces peintres qui font la reproduction d'un tableau, mais à la différence de la peinture, il n'est pas possible de dire ici : voilà le modèle à partir duquel mon texte est reformulé. L'archétype est dans la conscience du locuteur, et comme tel, c'est un objet qui échappe totalement à l'étude, et qui, d'ailleurs n'a probablement pas de stabilité. De ce point de vue, on pourrait par analogie dire qu'il existe à peu près, entre le modèle de référence concret et le modèle de référence conceptuel, mémorisé à partir d'une synthèse de perceptions d'objets matériels, le même rapport qu'entre référent et signifié.

Il est donc très difficile de dire, lorsqu'on étudie plusieurs versions d'une même oeuvre orale, que telle est la reformulation de telle autre, sous prétexte qu'elle a été recueillie postérieurement. Certes, si on prend le cas d'un sujet X donnant d'une oeuvre une performance A, et d'un sujet Y donnant de cette même oeuvre une performance B, en posant comme hypothèse qu'Y n'a jamais entendu de l'oeuvre d'autres versions que A, on pourrait alors à la rigueur dire que B est la réécriture de A, puisqu'A est le seul objet de référence concret à partir duquel se construira la formulation de B. Encore cela n'est-il pas tout à fait exact, car même dans ce cas-là, B n'est pas la réécriture de A, mais d'une image mémorisée de A qui se sera transformée dans le souvenir de Y en fonction à la fois de ses propres composantes socio-psychiques (notamment au niveau de l'inconscient) et du temps qui s'est écoulé entre A et B.

De toute façon un cas aussi simple ne se présente pour ainsi dire jamais dans la réalité, et le chercheur n'a généralement pas l'occasion de recueillir d'un conteur de littérature populaire une performance réalisée à partir d'une seule autre version entendue précédemment. Quand cela serait, par extraordinaire, encore faudrait-il, pour qu'on puisse travailler sur un cas de reformulation comprenant une source et une cible, qu'on ait justement recueilli aussi la version A qui sert de référence.

Une telle somme de coïncidences est quasiment impossible. Ce qui se passe en général -et c'est donc sur ce cas qu'il faut plutôt se régler- c'est que le chercheur enregistre des performances réalisées à partir de plusieurs versions entendues précédemment par le performateur, et que la plupart du temps il ne dispose pas (ou très partiellement) de ces versions de référence. Bien sûr, à un folkloriste soucieux de sociologie, qui travaille pendant plusieurs années sur une petite unité sociale (un village, un quartier, une famille élargie), il est possible, lorsqu'il recueille la réalisation d'une oeuvre en une performance donnée, de disposer d'un certain nombre d'autres versions de cette oeuvre qu'il aura préalablement recueillies, et dont il pourra savoir que telle ou telle a effectivement été entendue par l'actuel performateur. Mais si cela permet de poser l'hypothèse que ces versions précédemment données ont servi d'éléments constitutifs à l'image de référence qui existe dans la mémoire du performateur au moment de l'énonciation, cela ne permet pas pour autant à l'analyste de traiter la dernière version comme la reformulation pure et simple de celles qu'il a précédemment recueillies. En effet, savoir qu'elles ont été entendues par l'auteur de l'actuelle performance ne l'avance guère, car il se peut que celui-ci ait eu l'occasion d'en entendre des dizaines d'autres de la même oeuvre, et il est donc tout à fait impossible au chercheur de déterminer la part que les deux ou trois versions dont il dispose ont pu jouer dans la constitution de l'archétype de référence.

Il faut ajouter, à propos de la constitution de cet archétype, qu'y participent non seulement les performances entendues par le sujet auprès d'autres locuteurs, mais aussi les siennes

propres. Celui qui connaît et a l'habitude de réaliser auprès d'un public une oeuvre de littérature orale, en donne, à condition qu'elle ne soit pas apprise par coeur, une version chaque fois un peu différente, et la somme des versions qu'il a déjà dites détermine également la dernière qu'il énonce. C'est pourquoi même dans le cas limite où un conteur narrerait une histoire alors qu'il n'en aurait entendu qu'une seule version à l'extérieur, il faudrait pour que son discours puisse être considéré comme la reproduction de cette version extérieure, être sûr que c'est la première fois qu'il la formule. A partir du moment où lui-même l'aura énoncée plusieurs fois, ses propres discours antérieurs seront aussi des éléments de référence.

Par conséquent, même dans le cas où deux versions qu'on voudrait comparer proviendraient d'un même performateur, la seconde recueillie ne saurait être considérée comme la reproduction de la première, car il y a en outre l'influence de toutes les versions précédant celle qui a été enregistrée la première fois, et éventuellement de celles qui ont été dites entre celle-ci et la seconde.

En résumé donc, il n'est pas possible de travailler la question de la reformulation en littérature orale selon la même problématique qu'en littérature écrite, c'est-à-dire selon une problématique binaire où certains éléments sont considérés comme modèles et d'autres comme reproductions. Il faudrait pour cela, au moment où on recueille une performance donnée, disposer de toutes les autres performances, à la fois entendues et formulées par l'auteur du présent discours, ce qui est naturellement impossible. Et d'ailleurs cela n'avancerait pas vraiment les choses, car il serait très difficile de déterminer, parmi toutes les réalisations antérieures de l'oeuvre, celles qui ont joué le rôle le plus marquant dans le psychisme du locuteur au moment où il parle.

Ce qui est par contre tout à fait possible au folkloriste c'est, lorsque pour un ensemble social donné, il a recueilli d'une même oeuvre littéraire plusieurs réalisations, qu'elles proviennent d'un même locuteur ou de locuteurs différents, d'examiner, en dehors de toute idée de reproduction de modèles, les transformations opérées d'une version à l'autre. Mais, il faut que ces transformations aient un sens si l'on veut pouvoir les constituer en paradigmes. La notion même que nous avons déjà avancée de 'famille paraphrastique' implique un certain parti-pris quant au fonctionnement de ces transformations, à savoir qu'elles s'opèrent dans l'ordre du signifiant, et que l'idéal recherché est au contraire de garder au signifié une certaine stabilité.

En posant le problème de façon simpliste, on pourrait dire qu'il suffit de découper les textes des différentes versions en un certain nombre de séquences fonctionnelles, de constituer ainsi un archétype des unités de signification d'une oeuvre littéraire donnée, et d'examiner à partir de là comment, dans chaque version, ces unités s'informent dans différents signifiants.

Mais on voit très vite que la réalité est plus complexe, du fait même du caractère polysémique de tout énoncé. Approcher un texte par son signifié et découper celui-ci en unités est une construction subjective, et il est devenu banal de dire que toute lecture -ou toute audition- d'un énoncé est en quelque sorte une (ré)-écriture de cet énoncé. Il est donc assez aléatoire de travailler à partir du signifié, surtout lorsqu'il s'agit d'un ensemble organisé, tel un texte littéraire : on sait que quand on passe du linguistique au discursif se pose toujours le problème classique du rapport entre signifié et sens, chaque unité discursive étant susceptible d'avoir, dans le système auquel elle est intégrée, une fonction, un sens, distinct de son signifié, d'où les notions bien connues d'isotopies et de pertinences.

Or, toute reformulation d'une oeuvre de littérature orale se fait à partir de la 'lecture' que le performateur en aura faite au cours d'une précédente audition, et cette reformulation dépendra de ses niveaux de lecture de l'oeuvre entendue ; c'est-à-dire que le performateur cherchera à reproduire, de la masse du signifié, ce qu'il aura retenu comme pertinent. Mais comme chacun ne retient ainsi d'un énoncé qu'une partie infime de la totalité du signifié - disons de ce qui est potentiellement lisible -, et que cette partie est différente pour chaque individu, il est bien évident que :

- d'une part les transformations opérées d'un texte à l'autre font tout de même évoluer le signifié beaucoup plus conséquemment qu'il n'y paraît au premier abord.

- d'autre part, dans l'état actuel de la recherche en sémantique, il est bien difficile de faire une démarcation précise entre ce qui reste stable et ce qui ne le reste pas, dans l'ordre du signifié, le problème étant celui de l'établissement des traits sémantiques matriciels.

En outre, si l'analyste n'appartient pas lui-même à la culture d'où sont issues les versions de l'oeuvre sur lesquelles il travaille, il lui est également très difficile de savoir ce que signifie l'évolution du signifié dans les transformations qu'il constate d'un texte à l'autre. Il faut en effet disposer d'un nombre très important de versions pour essayer de dégager une sorte de dénominateur commun, donnant une idée de l'archétype idéal de l'oeuvre et des pertinences culturelles qui lui sont traditionnellement attachées dans une société donnée.

La nature de cette évolution sémantique de l'énoncé dépend, nous l'avons dit, du niveau de compréhension de l'oeuvre par le (re)formulateur, ce qui est, au moins partiellement, déterminé par la position sociale qu'il occupe à l'intérieur du groupe auquel il appartient. Elle peut évidemment aller jusqu'au contresens, ce qui est assez fréquent dans le cas de performances données par des enfants, dont le niveau de compréhension du texte entendu se sera situé trop au ras du signifié, compréhension au premier degré comme on dit encore. Dans ce cas, la paraphrase s'est construite plutôt à partir du rapport signifiant/signifié que du rapport sens/discours, ce qui a pu provoquer des ruptures d'isotopie, en créant des énoncés produits

à partir d'un décalque ambigu du signifié allant jusqu'à éteindre le sens, comme dans le sketch bien connu où l'énoncé : 'j'ai vu le couvreur il m'a parlé de toi (toit)' est paraphrasé par le mauvais interprète : 'j'ai vu le couvreur, il m'a parlé de vous', où le jeu de mots initial, qui fondait la fonction culturelle même de l'énoncé a totalement disparu.

Il s'agit donc d'être très prudent, et de ne pas considérer, même dans le cas de versions très proches, formulées par un même locuteur, que toutes les transformations rencontrées d'un énoncé à l'autre sont des transformations qui ont une valeur paraphrastique, sous prétexte que le locuteur est censé chaque fois reformuler un modèle.

La première tâche au contraire, qui semble à faire pour un travail de ce genre, c'est d'essayer d'établir une typologie des transformations offertes à l'attention de l'observateur dans ces cas de reformulation présentés par la littérature orale.

Dans cette esquisse typologique, nous ferons un premier niveau de distinction en opposant des Transformations Paraphrastiques (T.P.) à des Transformations Non Paraphrastiques (T.N.P.).

Les T.P. sont des transformations de substitution qui permettent d'isoler dans les textes soumis à une comparaison, des séquences entre lesquelles il est possible d'établir une relation d'équivalence sémantique (ces séquences peuvent être des monèmes, des membres de phrase, des phrases, des unités transphrastiques).

Les T.N.P. sont des transformations par adjonction, c'est-à-dire qu'à certaines séquences isolées dans la chaîne d'un des textes comparés, il n'est pas possible de donner un équivalent dans les autres textes.

Une distinction d'une autre nature recoupera ces deux catégories : l'opposition entre des Transformations Linguistiques (T.L.) et des Transformations Discursives (T.D.)

Les T.L. opèrent au niveau de la langue et du signifié : Les relations d'équivalence d'une séquence à l'autre peuvent être établies en fonction de critères linguistiques en dehors de toute considération de l'appartenance de ces séquences à une structure discursive.

Les T.D. opèrent directement au niveau du discours et du sens sans passer par le signifié immédiat. Dans ce cas, la relation d'équivalence entre les séquences n'existe plus lorsqu'elles sont isolées de leur contexte. Elle ne peut plus être établie que par la considération de leur fonction à l'intérieur d'un système structuré. Précisons que les T.L. peuvent certes être également pertinentes au niveau discursif, mais nous réservons le concept de T.D. aux transformations qui ne peuvent se lire qu'à ce dernier niveau, et non au niveau linguistique).

La combinaison de ces deux types de distinction, nous amène à établir la classification suivante :

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| 1 - TP    |  |
| 1 - 1 TPL | 1. 1. 1. Substitution d'un élément lexical de même nature dans une même structure syntaxique |
|           | 1. 1. 2. Substitution d'une forme syntaxique à une autre                                     |



- 1 - 2 TPD (équivalence non plus au niveau du signifié, mais à celui de la fonction)
- 12 - 1 L'information est donnée du même point de vue (pas de changement d'aspect), mais il y a transformation d'une modalité de l'histoire.
- 12 - 2 L'information n'est pas donnée du même point de vue (changement d'aspect)
- 2 TNP
- 2 - 1 TNPL : Adjonction d'éléments d'information à l'intérieur d'une unité narrative qui apporte une addition du signifié sans remettre en cause l'existence de la séquence comme unité narrative.
- 2 - 2 TNPD: Adjonction touchant à la structure narrative.

Une telle classification des transformations d'un texte à l'autre a son utilité quand on veut comparer les différentes versions d'une même oeuvre orale. Certes, ce type d'approche peut apparaître très formaliste, mais il est bien évident qu'une typologie de ce genre n'a pas d'intérêt en soi ; elle n'a de valeur que dans la mesure où elle est au service de l'analyse de la signification d'une oeuvre. Or, c'est précisément ce type d'analyse qu'à notre sens elle peut aider grandement. Dans une entreprise de ce genre, il est important de se méfier d'une approche exclusive des variantes par le biais du signifié, en faisant bon marché de la structure linguistique et discursive de l'oeuvre. Une approche par le signifié, très subjective, risque en effet d'amener l'analyste à ne retenir comme éléments pertinents que ceux que lui auront laissé voir les hasards de sa propre lecture, construite en fonction des conditions du moment et de son équation personnelle.

Une classification des types formels de variantes permet au contraire d'offrir un cadre objectif à partir duquel l'analyse peut se développer, en faisant ressortir les véritables pertinences. C'est alors que pourront intervenir les autres disciplines des sciences humaines, pour aboutir à une véritable étude ethnolinguistique, qui permettra de proposer des interprétations pour les variantes, et de découvrir l'oeuvre orale dans toute sa richesse.

## NOTES

1. H. Béhar, 'Le collage ou le pagure de la modernité', *Cahiers du XXème siècle* n° 5, Paris, 1975, pp. 44-45.
2. Michel Pêcheux, 'Mises au point et perspectives a propos de l'analyse automatique du discours', *Langages* n° 37, Didier/Larousse, 1975, p. 13.

## SWAHILI ORAL TRADITIONS

### 1. THE TALE (NGANO)\*

Prose tales in Swahili are in plentiful supply in the sense that almost everyone in East Africa can tell a story on request. Most East Africans are not native speakers of Swahili and so their stories may not be of purely Swahili origin, but then, all the 'pure' Swahili tales themselves are of varying provenance: Arabian, Persian and Indian as well as African, as I have pointed out in the Introduction to my *Myths and Legends of the Swahili*, London 1970. In addition, a large number of the tales of the other East African peoples have been influenced by the motifs which the Swahili travellers brought from the East African coast where they may have heard oriental tales told by the sailors and traders from overseas. In this way many themes that are familiar to us from the Arabian Nights and the Indian Fables<sup>1</sup> penetrated into the interior of Africa, a process that has been going on for centuries. Probably as a result of this Swahili influence, vestiges of Indian fables and judgment tales can be found in tales of the Mongo-Nkundo of Zaire,<sup>2</sup> and even in Southern Africa.<sup>3</sup> The Swahili are very fond of travellers' tales and some of these have been written down and published by the German scholars Büttner and Velten in c.1900.<sup>4</sup> Both also published other Swahili narratives, in verse and prose. The best-known early collection was published in 1869 by Bishop Steere.<sup>5</sup>

The oriental strain in Swahili tales sets them apart from<sup>6</sup> those in most other sub-equatorial languages. Whereas in Zaire there are more animals and spirits figuring in the folklore, in

Swahili we find the (to non-Africans) more familiar characters of princes and princesses, sultans and jinns.

## 2. THE SONG (WIMBO)\*

In Swahili literature, oral and written, songs are divisible into five categories, depending on the metre in which it is composed; the metre also determines the social function or the 'standing' of the poetry. These categories are, sliding down the scale from 'classy-classical' to popular-ephemeral: *shairi*, *tarabu*, *gungu*, *wimbo* and the impromptu songs of love which show no discernible metrical form and are sung in a free plainsong-type manner. All the existing metrical forms can be sung to traditionally available tunes and frequently new melodies are launched at special occasions. In Kenya and Tanzania, love songs, especially the *tarabu* type, enjoy a tremendous popularity which helped them survive the onslaught of the electronic guitar and the jazzification of the original refined Swahili music. The secularisation of Swahili society in the colonial and post-colonial period has gradually worn away the taboo against love songs in traditional Islamic society. See Ralph Russell, 'In pursuit of the Urdu Ghazal', *Journal of Asian Studies*, November 1969, p.113, whose description is almost completely applicable to Swahili society as it was; see also Knappert, 'A Gungu Song in the Gunya Dialect', *Afrika und Ubersee*, LVI, 3, 187-199.

The *gungu* is the oldest type of Swahili songs about love; we have specimens of it which date reputedly from the early seventeenth century; it is traditionally sung at weddings, often by the women for the bride. It contains reflections on marital love with covert allusions to lovemaking, but also with more philosophical feelings like the following lines sung by the bride:

I thought I was born for misfortune  
but now God has made me a bride...

Songs of this type have been collected in Knappert, *Four Centuries of Swahili Verse*, London: Heinemann 1979, pp.76-99; for other types, see Knappert, 'Wedding Songs from Mombasa', *Africana Marburgensia*, VII, 2, 1974, pp.11-31.

The *tarabu* is by far the most prominent of the 'classy' type of love poetry in Swahili. These songs still clearly display the characteristics of their original Islamic culture, so admirably summed up by Ralph Russell for the Urdu Ghazal (*loc.cit.*). Frequently the poet accuses the beloved, or is accused by her, of unfaithfulness, of double-crossing him so that it becomes clear that in the former instance the poet had an illicit affair with a lady of fragile virtue who deserted him for another, but in the latter case, the poet had in some

secret way communicated his feelings to his beloved, who returned his love but then heard no more from him. The poet subsequently protests his undiminished love for the lady who is apparently in purdah, and explains why he has been unable to re-establish contact with her: her father had doubled the guards at the door, or the poet did not want to endanger her still unblemished reputation. Often the poet has apparently married his beloved (or, in the traditionally cryptic language of this poetry, 'I put my song-bird in a cage'), who subsequently escaped; presumably she ran away with The Bad Man. Learning of this sad event, the poet invariably digresses into philosophical reflections on the unsteady hearts of women, and on the painful illness that is called Love. The only medicine for this disease is the beloved herself, another frequent theme in these songs. If she does not come soon, the poet will surely die; she may be compared to one of the chapters of the Koran which Swahili doctors prescribe as a cure for sickness, fever, insomnia, restlessness, listlessness, etc. An analysis of the themes in love poetry can be found in Knappert, 'Swahili *Tarabu* Songs', *Afrika und Ubersee*, LX, 1/2, pp.116-155 (Hamburg 1977).

Much shorter are the *nyimbo* (plural of *wimbo*), made up of stanzas of 36 (6 x 6) syllables, many consisting of only one such stanza, in which the poets compress their thoughts on love, philosophy, politics and many other aspects of life, real gems comparable to the Spanish *coplas*. See Knappert, *Four Centuries of Swahili Verse*, London 1979, p.55; 'Swahili Proverb Songs', *Afrika und Ubersee*, LIX, 1976, pp.105-112. Even in these short songs one may unexpectedly find stray influences from other Islamic literatures, like the following, inspired by an unknown Persian song:

<i>Uwe Shiri * mimi niwe Farahadi</i>	You be Shirin, and let me be Farhad.
<i>Ukaapo, * niwe ndani ya fuadi</i>	Wherever you live, let me be in your heart.
<i>Tawe hai * tutimilize miadi</i>	Let us be alive, let us fulfil our vows.

The metre is 3 x (4 + 8) syllables, one of the variants of the *wimbo*. See E.G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, Cambridge 1964, p.405, for Shirin and Fahad.

The singers are, with one or two exceptions, distinct from the poets, the latter being usually scholars writing poetry in their spare time. See Knappert, *A Choice of Flowers, an Anthology of Swahili Love Poetry*, London: Heinemann 1972, Introduction. Some of them write (or rather, recite in the tradition of Islamic scholars) anonymously when composing amorous poetry, such as the physical descriptions of the female body, of which there are some splendid examples in Swahili love poetry. For a specimen, see Knappert, *Four Centuries of Swahili Verse*, 1979, pp.84-91.



nature, by which is meant that they are harder to get hold of, not that they are less interesting. A person who feels moved by the spirit, may compose a little song, often only one line, 'off the cuff', and sing it for his companions, who will repeat the last word or phrase, while travelling, cultivating or just sitting together. This impromptu singing is universally heard in Africa and needs no further comment, except that we still know very little about the technique of singing, the composition of the tune and the form of the refrain. The problem is that as these songs arise spontaneously and evaporate with time, the research worker seldom has his recording equipment ready to fix the song before it is forgotten.

### 3. THE PROVERB (MATHALI)\*

Swahili proverbs are composed in either poetic or prose form, they may rhyme or scan or both. Many proverbs that do not strike the unsuspecting reader of Taylor's priceless collection<sup>7</sup> as poetic, do in fact have the 'right' number of syllables to form lines of verse, and scan when recited. Many poems and songs<sup>8</sup> in Swahili are composed entirely of proverbs (not only epigrams<sup>8</sup> but love songs too) so that one may go as far as saying that proverbs form the major bricks of Swahili non-narrative and non-lyrical poetry. Even the lyrical poetry, yes, even the<sup>9</sup> amorous songs are often built up of strings of rhyming proverbs to form proverb songs<sup>10</sup> in which lyrical emotions are expressed allusively, so that the poet shows wisdom, resignation and self-restraint as well as love in his song:

Unguarded birds cannot be kept in cages.  
Who can prevent the kites from seizing chickens?  
A cat will slip through narrow lanes and alleys.

These three proverbs are truisms to the unsuspecting listener who might be forgiven for thinking that the Swahili poets enjoy composing jingles for the sake of perfect rhyme and metre. The initiated listener, however, will perceive that this is a song of a resigned, deserted husband whose young wife has 'escaped' the marital home and has run away with another man. A kite is a common image for a man who takes what does not belong to him, a chicken for a good wife, a cage for marriage, and a cat for an adventurous woman.<sup>11</sup> This flowery symbolic language is used for both poetry and proverbs.

In Swahili tales, as in very many Bantu tales, the proverbs play a vital part, as does the song, and often the proverb is hidden in the song and is the clue to the tale. I call the tale to which the proverb refers the referential meaning of the proverb.<sup>12</sup> Many common expressions refer to tales, e.g., 'Do not expect me to be like the washerman's donkey', refers to the story of the monkey and the shark.<sup>13</sup>

4. THE EPIC (UTENZI)\*

Epic poetry forms the largest single corpus of Swahili literature. The titles of some 70 epic poems have become known in the course of research by John Allen,<sup>14</sup> Alice Werner<sup>15</sup> and myself.<sup>16</sup> Not all the epic texts have come to light, so that of a few we know only the title. There are others of which the existence was not even suspected, that have been discovered by Mr. and Mrs. Allen.<sup>17</sup> In Swahili literature, epic can easily be defined as a narrative poem of 150 stanzas or more in the *utenzi* metre.<sup>18</sup> The longest known poem in Swahili, the life of Muhammed (unpublished) has 6,384 stanzas (an *utenzi* stanza has four lines), the longest ever written in an African language - to my knowledge. Modern poets write poetry, including epic, to be read, but the tradition of recitation is still alive, as long as sponsors can be found to pay the reciters for an evening, or a whole night. The reciter is called *mwimbaji* 'singer' in Swahili because he sings the stanzas to a melody that is part of his repertoire. The tune usually comprises two stanzas, then starts again at its beginning, with variations. There is no attempt at representation of characters or the expression of emotions. Singing epic is not accompanied by musical instruments as is the *tarabu*.<sup>19</sup> The contents of the majority of epic poems belong to the Islamic tradition; of the 70 epics, 43 are in the Islamic tradition, 36 of which deal with supposedly historical events, i.e., there is an historical nucleus wrapped up in much legendary material. For instance, two epic poems deal with the creation of Earth, followed by the lives of Adam and Eve and their children. Twenty-three of these 36 narratives, including all the long ones, are set during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad. The great battle epics, which form the nucleus of the true chivalresque romances of Swahili literature are all part of this cycle with only one exception: the two epics that have come to light which immortalise the death of Husayn Bin Ali are set, of course, in a time when the Holy Prophet has already died, in 680 AD.

Of even greater interest to the Africanist are the two epic narratives on the heroic struggles of the Tanganyikans against the German conquest and oppression, known as the *Wajerumani Kutamalaki Mrima* (The Germans taking possession of the northern Tanganyika coast) and the *Majimaji*. In the former there is still a very strong Islamic element in the tradition and motivation, but the latter is entirely African in its setting. Unfortunately, I do not know of any recitations of epic poems other than those of the Islamic tradition. The reciters possess a repertoire of long poems which enables them to sing in their monotonous manner for a whole night. They have a prodigious memory, and can memorise a poem of a thousand stanzas in a week. This they do from the following source material:

(1) By listening to the performance of other reciters. The 'plagiarist' may write down the poem after he has heard it, from memory, for his own use, but some reciters never work with manuscripts, and we possess some epics on tape of which no manu-

scripts are known to exist so that in those cases the tradition is exclusively oral. (2) The reciter may copy a manuscript or have it copied for him by a scribe, usually a student. Or he may borrow a manuscript and memorise it. The singer, especially if he is not a professional, may also use his manuscript notes as an *aide-memoire* during his recitation, but this is the exception. Normally the reciters have no difficulty remembering hundreds of stanzas, although, of course, they do make mistakes. They may make a line longer or shorter than the rigidly prescribed eight syllables, so that it limps where they have forgotten a line, or they may repeat a previous line, but they will not normally improvise a line. The reciter will adapt the performance to the available time, so that if he is paid for an hour (c.£10), he will abridge the poem to half or a third of its length by omitting individual stanzas where they are repetitive, and often entire scenes from the epic. (Swahili epics are not divided into *cantos* but into scenes of differing length, marked by the words 'Now we will tell you of...' 'Now we must see what happened to...' or similar phrases.) Many scenes in the epic are descriptions of dress, jewelry, weaponry, horses and camels, flags and armour, battles and battlefields, scenes which can be omitted without disrupting the course of the narrative. Sometimes the reciter restores a line where he had forgotten a word by inserting another word which 'sticks out' because it has the wrong number of syllables or because it does not rhyme. Sometimes a proverb or other saying is misquoted so that the line limps. But in my experience there is never any real improvisation in Swahili epic recitations. The performer does not compose, he recites as faithfully as he can the lines as the poet has written them, with all the proverbs and other allusions to erudite works in them, which the reciter does not always appear to understand.

The definition of epic in Swahili has been given above. In Swahili, poetry is clearly distinguished from prose by its conspicuous rhythmic arrangement. The question may be posed: why is the term *epic* chosen as a label for these long poems, not the more descriptive one of rhymed narrative? The answer lies in the very nature of the subject. In literature there are no precise categories as there are in the sciences. Content must be the dominant criterion for the distinction of universal categories. For instance, if we decided to classify songs, proverbs or other literary categories by their functions in the society that uses them, these functions would be so different that we could never compare songs in one society to songs in another. The same applies to proverbs, riddles and other international categories. Epic is, more than any other literary form, a reality that one must have experienced in order to recognise it. Swahili epic poetry displays a grandeur of diction, a richness of style, a stately rhythm, a splendour of imagery, a sweep of vision that make it quite evident one has come face to face with the real epic poetry. This is, of



course, a personal statement, but that is inevitable in literature.

For other categories of oral literature the reader will have to be referred to the literature. Praise songs in honour of great personages have been discussed in a short article in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, under *madīh*. Swahili elegies, i.e., songs in honour of the dead, will appear *ibidem* under Marthiya.

Liturgical literature is extensive in Swahili. There are a few good Christian hymns, but the vast majority of liturgical works serves the Islamic community. Hymns, sung prayers, songs in praise of saints and to accompany pilgrims on the road to Mecca, songs to celebrate weddings and homilies in verse. The most important single religious celebration is the Maulidi, when the Holy Prophet's birthday is commemorated. Numerous hymns in his honour are sung, six of which were published by this author in Volumes I and III of *Swahili Islamic Poetry*, Leiden: E.J. Brill 1971.

#### NOTES

1. See Knappert, *Malay Myths and Legends*, Singapore: Heinemann 1980, pp.171-92.
2. E.P. Hulstaert, *Fables Mongo*, Tervuren: Musée de l'Afrique Centrale; Knappert, 'Judgment Tales of the Nkundo', paper SOAS.
3. See Knappert, *Namibia, Land and Peoples, Myths and Fables*, Leiden: Brill 1981, pp.99-112.
4. Dr. C.G. Büttner, *Anthologie der Suaheli Literatur*, Berlin 1894; Dr. Carl Velten, *Prosa und Poesie der Suaheli*, Berlin 1907.
5. Edward Steere, *Swahili Tales*, London 1869. For a modern collection, see *See That We May See* by Peter Seitel, Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1981.
6. See Knappert, *Myths and Legends of the Congo*, London: Heinemann 1971.
7. W.E. Taylor, *African Aphorisms, Saws from Swahililand*, London: SPCK 1894.
8. See p. 25 above.
9. See Knappert, 'Rhyming Swahili Proverbs', *Afrika und Ubersee*, 49, 1965, 59-68.
10. See Knappert, 'Swahili Proverb Songs', *Afrika und Ubersee*, 59, 1976, 105-112.
11. See Knappert, 'A Gungu Song in the Gunya Dialect', *Afrika und Ubersee*, 56, 185-200.
12. See Knappert, 'On Swahili Proverbs', *African Language Studies*, 16, 1975, 117-146.
13. E. Steere, *Swahili Tales*, London 1869, p.3.

14. J.W.T. Allen, 'Tendi', *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, January 1950, 81-83.
15. Alice Werner, 'Swahili Poetry', *BSOS*, I, 2, 1918, 113-127.
16. J. Knappert, 'The Canon of Swahili Literature', in B.C. Bloomfield (ed.), *Middle East Studies and Libraries*, London: Mansell 1980, pp.85-102.
17. J.W.T. Allen, *Tendi*, London: Heinemann's Educational Books, 1971, p.77.
18. See Knappert, 'Swahili Metre', *African Language Studies*, XII, 1971; SOAS London, p.112.
19. See Knappert, *A Choice of Flowers*, London 1972: Heinemann, p.7; Knappert, 'Swahili Tarabu Songs', *Africa und Ubersee*, 60, 1977, 119-155.

\* GLOSSARY

*MATHALI*, pl. *mithali* (or *methali* without distinction of pl.), 'a proverb', (lit.: a parable); the word *fumbo* is also used for 'a gnomic line of verse with a hidden meaning', or, 'an image, a comparison'.

*NGANO*, a tale, a fairy tale; *hadithi* a more serious narrative, a tradition, usually from Islamic history (but which non-Muslims call legend).

*UTENZI*, pl. *tenzi*, in Kenya Coast Swahili, *utendi*, pl. *tendi*, 'a poem in the metre of 32 syllables in the stanza'. This metre being almost exclusively used for epic poetry, *utenzi* has come to mean 'epic'.

*WIMBO*, pl. *nyimbo*, a song in general, and more specifically, a song of 12 syllables in the line.

RETELLING GENESIS:  
THE CHILDREN OF EVE AND THE ORIGIN OF INEQUALITY

Inequality is one of the fundamental facts of social life people have to cope with in every society, both from a practical point of view - by living with it - and from a theoretical point of view - by explaining, justifying or contesting it. In historical or 'Promethean' societies inequality is conceived of in historical terms, that is in terms of dated economical or sociological circumstances. In traditional societies, devoid of recorded history and of categories to chart social change chronologically, inequality (and for that matter most other collective arrangements) tends to be accounted for in genetic terms where happenings in primeval times ('origins') are presented as instrumental in the birth and perpetuation of hierarchical differences among mankind.

However different representations of inequality in historical and traditional societies may be, they generally cover the same problem areas. Both refer to its 'distributive' and 'relational' aspect, that is to 'the ways in which different factors such as income, wealth, occupation, power, skill etc. are distributed' and to 'the ways in which individuals differentiated by these criteria<sup>1</sup> are related to each other within a system of groups and categories'. Still, traditional representations of inequality elaborate more often on non-social (natural, accidental, psychological) sources of social differentiation and, implicitly, also tackle the logical problem of how multiplicity came about in its socially objectivated forms.

This essay deals with two small corpuses of tales that develop the biblical theme of Eve's children in order to exemplify traditional explanations of inequality. The tales have been collected among Hungarian peasants and among a number of closely-related Sudanese societies (Dinka, Shilluk and Nuer). What they have in

common is that the authenticity of the texts is well-documented and that the social environment is well-known through reliable socio-historical accounts in both sets of cases. The purpose of this exercise in literary comparison is to apprehend *different ideological patterns in the elaboration of an identical narrative subject* which further research might eventually relate to broader issues such as traditional conceptions of social order in Europe and Africa. No general conclusions can be drawn directly from the study of such small and, by choice, thematically limited samples, but some qualified observations can be expected regarding two problems which often prove to be crucial for the understanding of oral literature, namely what are the constraints or degrees of liberty with which a very simple story can be reinterpreted to satisfy various ideological aims, and what are the narrative tools to achieve such reinterpretations?

The story under scrutiny is registered in the *Tale-type Index* of Aarne and Thompson but only a few occurrences are cited.<sup>2</sup>

#### *Eve's children in Hungary.*

The Hungarian corpus is the result of recent collecting, mostly by Ilona Nagy, from a cluster of villages in the north-central region of the country.<sup>3</sup> I also worked there and met some of the storytellers, all of them aged and religious-minded Catholics with a measure of basic literacy and a first-hand knowledge of the Bible.

All the Hungarian corpus is clearly inspired by the story of the Fall (Genesis iii), though only one version actually uses the whole story (no.7) while the others refer to one of its minor episodes directly related to Eve's children. The biblical story is based on Eve's double sin, namely her ignoring of God's command not to eat the forbidden fruit and her tempting Adam to follow suit in breaking God's law. Retribution for the offence is eviction from Paradise. God's plan failed to keep men in their original state, implying innocence, immortality, absence of suffering but also the lack of procreation. Henceforth reproduction and sexuality would be part and parcel of the human condition.

#### Hungarian corpus

1. *God went to visit Adam and Eve. They had 12 children. God wished to bless them. Adam and Eve were ashamed to have so many children so they presented only 6 to God. These 6 were blessed by God. They had a happy life therefore. The other 6 whose existence was hidden had a very hard life. That is why some people live well and others badly. The last ones were not blessed by God.*

(Collected in 1979 by P. Villányi, Galgamácsa. Told by Mrs. Julia Vankó.)

2. *God said to Adam: 'Adam, introduce your children to me!' Well, Adam was ashamed....He was ashamed to show all of them. He only introduced 6 of them and hid the other 6. So God blessed the 6. And the others? We are the others. Because of the naughtiness of Eve we are victims. She denied us. We are the denied ones.*

(Collected in 1979 by P. Villányi, Galgamácsa. Told by Mrs. Julia Vankó.)

3. The children of Eve were born. She had plenty of them. God went to pay a visit. He wanted to know the number of the children. She had many, many children. The children were in the forest, between the trees, behind the bushes; they watched out. Eve said to them that the more handsome of them should come along. So the handsomest came out but the ugliest stayed on naked in the forest. That was the custom at that time. Clothes did not yet exist. So Eve presented just the most handsome of her children to God. They were roughly twenty. God became angry, and pronounced a curse. But I do not know what it was!

(Collected in 1969 by Ilona Nagy, Nógrádsipek. Told by Mrs. Erzset Lacko.)

4. Adam and Eve lived in Paradise. They had 100 children. God wished to bless these children and ordered Eve to get them into a row. Eve heard the order. She went to Adam asking: 'What are we doing?' 'Why?', asked Adam. 'God said to get my children in a row because he wants to bless them.' But there were not enough clothes. She dressed 50 of the children and got them into a row next to their small house. God arrived and saw the children and Eve, the latter standing in front of them. 'Eve, all your children here?' 'Yes my Lord all of them are here.' 'Eve are you sure all of them are here?' 'Yes, Lord.' 'Well, Eve I will bless them, and they will rule over the other people.' These became the clever and intelligent ones of that country and of the world. The other 50 became serfs. They work, they plough, they sow because Eve denied their existence. We are the denied children of Eve, those blessed by God rule us.

(Collected in 1966 by Ilona Nagy, Somogyudvarhely. Told by Ferenc Balogh.)

5. Eve had many children. When she was asked she said she had 50. In fact she had 100. Because of her denial half of them became rich and the other half poor. Half of humanity became poor because she did not tell the truth.

(Collected by Ilona Nagy in 1969, Szécsényfalu. Told by Mrs. Mária Oravec.)

6. When Jesus came to the earth Eve had 150 children. She washed in the river. 'What are you doing Eve?' It was not Jesus but God who asked her. 'I am washing, my Lord.' 'What are you washing?' 'Old rags, my Lord.' Since all clothes become rags after a while, nothing lasts forever. God asked again: 'How many children do you have?' 'Fifty,' said Eve. 'Where are the others?' asked God. So, Eve has children who are exiled, orphaned, neglected. These are the poor ones.

(Collected by Ilona Nagy, 1968, Bernecebaráti. Told by Mrs. Borbála Hajas.)

7. Once Eve went to water the flowers, to watch the trees. A big snake watched her intently. In fact it was a real man in the skin of a snake. The snake said: 'Come here and I will give you this beautiful apple.' At this time Eve had not yet any children. Eve

*became very friendly with the snake and so then she had plenty of children. Adam learned of that. The children begotten with Adam were all handsome, the children begotten with the devil, the snake, were all ugly. Once God told Eve to call her children together, her real children. Eve called her real children but she did not dare to call the others. She hid them. So, because of the mischief of Eve God did not bless these people. The stolen children were hidden. The real children who were blessed became more clever and could go to school. The hidden children became the Csango, bandits, and the poor. The latter ones steal from the others. That is the origin of the poor and the rich. (Collected by Ilona Nagy, 1969, Nógrádsipek. Told by Mrs. Erzébet Lackó.)*

The Hungarian stories can be analysed through a few significant thematic elements, all of which do not necessarily appear in each text:

- large number of children (result of excessive and/or adulterous sexuality);
- mother withholds some from God's blessing, hiding and denying the existence of some of them;
- the children blessed by God become privileged, the others under-privileged.

The Hungarian versions draw upon the last ingredient of the biblical tale. The first couple is already separated from its Creator and has procreated children. The central motif of all these stories has to do with the workings of sexuality which the biblical text scarcely hints at. Excessive sexuality, as witnessed by the great number of offspring, incurs shame and sets into motion the process of the division of mankind. In this respect text no.7 is particularly explicit since the hidden appeal of the snake, that is its unambivalently sexual nature, is emphasized. Clearly the snake here represents a man and the means of seduction, the apple represents sexual pleasure. <sup>4</sup>

This general principle of the shame of excessive sexuality and its multiple fruits is inspired by the tight social control of sexuality in rural Hungary backed up by the Catholic interpretation of original sin as it is included in the biblical story of the Fall. This elaboration of the Judaeo-Christian tradition has always commended sexual austerity and Hungarian Catholicism often laid stress on it. Popular morality and even the practicalities of cohabitation sometimes make sexual contact even between husband and wife somewhat shameful. Excessive fertility, attributed in many stereotypes to the lower, non-propertied peasantry and to despised national minorities, is regularly looked down upon. It carries a prejudice against all those unable to regulate their existence biologically as well as economically. One saying addressed to large families is 'They are prolific as the Gypsies' - and it is not meant as a compliment. It is the women who are generally made responsible in peasant morality for excessive fertility. 'She is prolific as a rabbit', as another typical saying goes. A negative interpretation of Eve's prolific offspring is thus supported by a range of ethnographic evidence.

The shame for excessive fertility (and sexuality) is important because it qualifies Eve's responsibility in the ensuing discrimination that will affect her children's destinies. More often than not she does not choose among her children as to which should be 'shown' and which hidden. Even when she actually makes a selection from among the offspring, her choice is over-determined by obvious considerations of coming up to social expectations (cf. nos. 3,4 and 7) and of showing off the more 'presentable' youngsters according to the common criteria of popular 'decency' (the better-clothed, the more handsome, those of legitimate birth). In tale no.7 it is explicitly stated that Eve *dares* not call the children she had with the snake (devil) but there is no mention of any hostility against the ill-begotten. Eve is *objectively* responsible for the primitive discrimination: she is its active agent. This is why she is verbally condemned by the narrators. Thus the stories simultaneously keep up the appearance of an original fault - even if it was not an intentional one - and explain it away by the circumstances. All extenuating circumstances are granted to Eve in advance.

Once again it is perhaps not far-fetched to relate this ambiguity to constraints of a religious and ethnographic nature. God's original responsibility in the ensuing institutional discrimination would have been incompatible with the popular image of the divinity. Eve's full responsibility was also difficult to accept within the same ideological framework, given the much popularised sanctity of the Catholic mother-image which, in Hungary, is particularly well-grounded in the cult of Mary, the 'Holy Mother', 'Mother full of felicity'. In European folklore the mother role can be both good and bad but the negative functions (by a well-known psycho-analytical process of splitting) are usually attributed to the stepmother. Motherly status in a way preserves one from evil and tends to be exalted, whatever different and indeed often derogatory representations are attached to women. Our stories succeed in reconciling the message they convey with the prevalent conception of a benevolent God (He came to bless men's offspring) and with an ambiguous mother image (whose fault is largely excusable).

In the biblical story God punishes the first couple and their descendants collectively but women are inflicted with special penalties both biological and social in nature: menstruation, labour in childbirth, and submission to male domination. The Hungarian versions of the story make no mention of the special retribution reserved for Eve herself. Nonetheless, they perpetuate a justification of the prevailing social relationships where man commands ('he wears the hat', as the proverb states) and 'woman's name is "keep quiet"'. Adam's role is indeed nowhere active, if he has any role at all. In the one case when the fault of lying to God and hiding the children falls on him (text no.2), the responsibility for the division of mankind is all the same ascribed to Eve's alleged 'naughtiness'. Such negative definition of womanhood is common in local folklore<sup>5</sup> and text no.7 elaborates it in the form of seductiveness and proclivity to seduction (infidelity). But even here Eve's frailty is the consequence of the bad man's desire, a temptation that comes from the male. In spite of this only the woman is loaded with the negative stereotype, an apparent conse-

quence of the transfer of the biblical condemnation from the original story (where it is justified) to these versions (where it is not). The special lot of women is also exemplified in text no.6 by the work done exclusively by Eve. Here the biblical state of women and their domestic function in traditional peasantry overlap.

All this considered, the weak role of Adam and the strong part played by Eve is a scheme to unburden men from any direct responsibility, indeed to disimplicate them from responsibility for mankind's destiny. As the story puts woman face-to-face with God, laying all decision in her hands, a simultaneous under- and over-estimation of womankind is accomplished. Such ambiguity of the feminine image is often to be found in European folklore, though it is rarely invested with such an ideological load as it is here.

Even the fact that Eve appears, as we have seen, always unaware of the possible effects of her behaviour (hiding some and presenting others of her children) confirms the stereotyped image of women. The weaker sex is not endowed with the intelligence necessary to recognise the consequences of her conduct. In one instance (text no.7) the sin of the flesh itself is presented as the woman's misconduct though here she is merely responding to temptation. There is at least one more instance where an anti-feminist popular stereotype looms up. Eve's lying to God would, in popular wisdom, be interpreted with reference to the unreliability or untruthfulness of women, a theme which is widely reflected in Hungarian oral literature. The strength of this negative image is in fact so strong that it transcends the story actually presented. In the one case already mentioned (text no.2), where Adam plays the role of the liar, responsibility is still loaded on to Eve.

The reasons for the division of mankind ultimately reflect a fatalistic as well as a Manichean view of history. The motif of an original misfortune is over-stressed and its consequences split humanity into two parts, those blessed by God and the rest of them who are victimized in various ways. Class society, rather than ethnic divisions, go back to these mythical happenings, but the narrative arrangement of the latter is such that an original quasi-biological division of the first humans is clearly suggested. Indeed the 'hidden' children remain away from 'civilisation', naked, sometimes in the forest, in what the popular imagination would qualify as a state of 'savagery'. God's blessing of the others in a way only ratifies the initial division of mankind into those close to nature (the lower classes) and the 'civilised' (the ruling group). Since the stories emphasize the mythical determination of social stratification (that is inequality), they explicitly justify it and display a conviction of the immutability of this state of collective affairs.

The vision of mankind conveyed in the stories is fundamentally dualistic or Manichean. All qualities of people can be sorted into two contrasting registers as found in *Figure 1*.

This dualistic perception of human fate is strengthened by the equal division of mankind. Whatever the number of Eve's children, they are divided into two groups of equal size without any intermediary categories. Such ritualized opposition (through the use of equal ritual numbers) of the blessed and the deprived conveys a



FIGURE 1

<i>initial qualities</i>	-proximity to God (presented to God's blessing)	-distance from God (hid- den, removed from God's blessings)
	-parents are proud of	-parents are ashamed of
	-handsome	-ugly
	-clothed	-naked
	-of legitimate birth (Adam's children)	-of illegitimate birth (the devil's or the snake's children)
<i>derivative qualities</i>	-rich	-poor
	-happy (good life)	-unhappy (bad life)
	-rulers, powerful	-serfs, powerless
	-clever, educated	-uneducated
	-leisurely	-working, toiling
	-honest	-members of out-group:
	-members of in-group	Gypsies (Csango), exiled, orphaned

sense of the inevitability of the established social order. The stories clearly indicate that this pessimistic conception of history belongs to the ill-fated among whom the narrators locate themselves. ('We are the denied ones.')

*The original differentiation in Sudanese tales* <sup>6</sup>

The small corpus of Sudanese versions appear to be heavily syncretic.<sup>7</sup> Though the biblical inspiration is apparent in some (nos.2 and 4), they are rather remote from the story in Genesis, so that it may be assumed that local creation myths are mingled here with the biblical tradition. Whatever their literary status, all these texts are attempts to integrate the white man into the Sudanese world-view. As Francis Deng put it about the Dinka, as they 'grapple with their relative position in the world complex of cultures and technological revolution, their mythology is beginning to react in an attempt to explain the contemporary realities of the Dinka world....'<sup>8</sup> The pieces of this sample, collected over a wide span of time (between 1910 and 1972) show remarkable constancy. Their authenticity has been confirmed, independently, by contemporary scholars. It appears that some Sudanese traditions of the origins of men have been sufficiently close to the biblical story to make it easily acceptable and liable to be used by local story-tellers all the more that the Bible itself was translated into Shilluk for example, as early as the 1920s.

1. (Dinka)<sup>10</sup> *When man was created, it was as twins. One was a brown child and one was a black child. The woman would keep the black child to herself, away from the father. Whenever the father came to see the children, she would present the brown child and keep back the black child because she loved the black child very much. The man then said, 'This child whom you keep away from me, in the future, when they [the children] grow up, I will not show him my secrets.' That has remained a curse on us. It is because of this story which we have been told by our fathers that we have been deprived. Our father did not show us the ways of our ancestors fully....It was the woman who kept her black child away from his father. Otherwise, we would have known more things than we know.*

2. (Dinka)<sup>11</sup> *In the words of creation, it used to be said that when God created people, man was the first to be created. He was created from clay. And then God gave it breath and it became man. The woman was created subsequently. Then God said, 'You two will bear children this way.'*

*Then the woman gave birth to triplets. God made one child white and made one child brown and made one child black. This black child, his mother loved most. She would hide him from the man. The other children were the ones she showed her husband. Those were the only children that the man knew. One day, he found the woman suckling the black child. He said, 'Whose child is this?' She said, 'He is my child.' He said, 'And why do you hide the child? Is he of a separate birth or is he our joint birth?' She said, 'He is of our joint birth.' Then he said, 'This child you are hiding. This child of yours whom you hide will one day be the slave of these other children.' The white child was not really breast-fed. He merely sucked on the breast after they had been emptied. So he was the child his father took. [Whenever people went into public gatherings, she would prevent her black child from going. Only the white child would go with his father.]*

*Interjection of another informant:*

*Yes! This white child, his father thus maintained him; he looked after him very well. As he was prevented from sucking, his father took good care to feed him. He took a gourd, a new fresh gourd, bored a hole in the gourd and emptied it. The child was very hungry. The father of the child raised his hands to the sky and prayed, 'God, is there nothing for you to give to this son of mine?' That gourd was filled with milk. That white son of his drank the milk. This white son he took to God to be the servant of God. That is how the English went away and learned. Arab and Dinka remained; the brown Arab remained with the Dinka with their mother. It was said that their mother was the mother of all people.*

3. (Shilluk)<sup>12</sup> *The cow is our grandmother. It was born as a gourd. Our father is God. We were two of us born by God (a black and a white one). The black one was beloved by his mother; but the white one was hated. When God came, she showed him the white one, but the black one she hid. God asked, 'Why do you hide him?' She said, 'For nothing.' Then God said, 'Well, do but hide him, I like the white*

one. *The black people shall be ruled by the white people.* On that day she brought the black one out too. God asked, 'Why do you bring him out?' She said, 'Oh, I just brought him out (without any special reason).' To the white one was given the book, and the gun and the sword and all kinds of goods. He is loved by God. So now the black people are ruled by the white.

4. (Shilluk)<sup>13</sup> Long ago, when God made the people, the young Turk, Abyssinian, Darfurian and the Shilluk were all God's sons. God arrived. He called the mother of the boys Rao [Eve in Arabic] to bring out the children. But Rao, the mother of the sons, let come only three of them. She hid the fourth of them, the Shilluk. Jwok asked, 'Is that all?' She answered, 'Yes.' So God left. Later he came back and found there four boys. He called the mother, Rao, and asked her, 'You told me, did you not, that they were three. Where does this one come from?' 'What can I do? How could I hide a man from the one who begot him?' answered Rao. God left and did not come back for a time. Later he came back and asked, 'Why is this boy so skinny, this one, the Turk?' 'I do not eat,' said the Turk. He was hardly fed. The Shilluk could eat enough, the Darfurian could eat enough and so could the Abyssinian. God left again and with him the Turk. Soon after he came back and called the sons. But the Shilluk did not want to come, nor did the Darfurian and the Abyssinian. Then God kissed the Turk on the mouth and told him: 'You are not afraid of me, you are my son.' And the other sons spat.

5. (Nuer)<sup>14</sup> God had a wife and they had several different children. One day kot set out on a journey while his wife stayed at home with the children. When he came back, he said to her, 'Bring me the children so that I cut their hair.' The wife said, 'Of course.' And she brought the white one. But she did not bring the Nuer, the Denka and the Shilluk. So kot asked her where were the other children. She said, 'This is all.' Then the kot said, 'You lie, this is not all.' And she said, 'This is so, this is all.' Then he said, 'All right. As you have forged a lie, I will cut this kid's hair.' And he cut his hair and said, 'Those children you have with you must remain yours.' The woman said, 'All right, they must remain mine.' And he gave a gun to the white one....

The significant core of the tales is organised around the following structural elements:

- mankind derives from a primitive father (identified as God or invested with divine authority) and a mother;
- the first offspring of the ancestral couple are racially (ethnically) different: black and white (with or without an intermediary);
- original association of the black child with the mother and, consequently (implicitly), of the white child with the father;
- historical confirmation of the primitive associations: the white receive privileges from the father.

The opposition between the ancestral father and mother is the dominant aspect of all these stories. It is manifestly connected with the male-dominated representation of the social order prevalent in these Sudanese societies. The father's customary pre-eminence in the domestic group is particularly enhanced by its confusion with God. In the Shilluk and Nuer tales God acts as the original father. In the Dinka tales the father and the creator are only formally distinct. In one of the Dinka texts (no.2) he 'makes' the children white or brown or black without actually begetting them. However, the children's destiny is magisterially decided upon by the father who thus appears to be endowed with superior prerogatives. He holds the 'secrets' (knowledge), can condemn descendants to slavery or commend to God (etc.) when he does not directly wield divine power. The overlapping of the creative and procreative functions (giving life is man's most sacred attribute) is not infrequent in mythico-religious representations. It is attested in some forms among the Dinka.<sup>15</sup> However it may be here that the primal confrontation between the parents is, from the outset, a conflict between unequal partners, so that its outcome seems pre-determined by the established power relations. Inequality within mankind results directly from the unequal and conflicting partnership of the ancestral couple. Within the narrative structure the historical destiny of the ethnic groups is the outflow of a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Indeed, since men were born racially different, it suffices to qualify sociologically the existing ancestors so as to project a colonial-type stratified view onto the historical picture. This qualification is implicit in the preferential association of the ancestral children with their mother or father respectively. The stories offer no motivation for the initial preference of the mother for the black child, the father's preference for the white one being only a derivative feature. However arbitrary it is, the mother's preference is a positive choice. The black child is hidden from the father, is fed (especially breast-fed) and exclusively looked after, while the white one is neglected. Thus the father's association with the white descendants comes up to offsetting the initial imbalance, to restoring order and obtaining justice, but it is not a genuine preference.

This motif of preferential associations<sup>16</sup> carries a doubly mitigating interpretation of the unequal destiny of the two racial groups. First, men are born equal though different by colour. Secondly, the black child is distinguished by the ancestral mother's special affection; while the initial status of the white in the family group is low, he is in fact discriminated against. Black ancestry bears the halo of the beloved ones, white ancestry that of the hated ones. On the mythical plane the black has a marked pre-eminence (or superior value) over the white, which the historical reversal of their relative position cannot annihilate since the association of the white with the father flows *not from affection* but from circumstances. The white child will receive better endowment or will be made superior by the father because the black one is hidden or remains aloof (cf. text no.4). There is an element of fault stated here (the mother should not withhold a child from the father, nor should a child be afraid of him), but this is not

to change the two children's basic qualities. With this narrative arrangement African story-tellers achieve a remarkable adaptation of a received narrative structure to their ideological need of explaining prevalent social inequality between racial and ethnic groups without giving up the idea of the Africans' ascendancy of a symbolic (or mythical) order.

Some significant details of the African stories are worth mentioning. The division of mankind is not viewed always in a Manichean manner with reference to the ethnic entanglements of Sudan. The functional equivalent of 'the white' is the Turk in one instance. A 'brown child', the Arab or otherwise non-qualified children sometimes act as go-betweens in the opposition of black and white. But these technicalities do not upset the narrative economy of the tales. Historically established inequality is expressed in terms of *power* (the white rules over the black), *knowledge* (the white receives the book, learns his father's 'secrets'), *military superiority* (the white gets the gun, the black gets the lance) and also of distance from the birthplace (the English leaves while the Dinka and the Arab stay; cf. text no.2). The motif of proximity is a possible reminder (and redundant evocation) of the black child's association with his mother, guardian of the home. In this respect the mother's protection of the black child - who is 'hidden' - is the structural opposite of the exposure of the white and his association with the father. The father is the one who does not remain at home, is engaged in public life etc. More generally, public appearance and presentation are the prerogative of those invested with authority, and this motif as such anticipates the social prerogatives the white is meant to be invested with. This interpretation is explicitly suggested in the interjection inserted in the Dinka version (no.2). In the Shilluk text (no.4) a similar theme appears in the form of an offence committed by the black children, who refuse to answer (come out) to their father's call.

The conflict opposition of the first human male and female can be sketched with the help of their differential attributes in the Sudanese stories:

	WOMAN	MAN
<i>presentation of self</i>	secluded, at home, in privacy	in public, away from home
<i>authority</i>	deprived	endowed with divine power, primogeniture (first created), dominant
<i>theme of 'hiding'</i>	the one who hides, acts behind a screen	open, does not hide

<i>theme of 'mobility'</i>	immobile	mobile, active
<i>theme of 'excess'</i>	excessive (in love for child)	moderate
<i>theme of 'justice'</i>	unjust (neglects white child)	just, dispenser of justice
<i>theme of parental behaviour</i>	selectively good or bad mother	good father

### *Conclusion and confrontation*

The Hungarian and African samples manifestly offer very different elaborations of the same story which lend them often contrasting narrative and ideological significance. These opposite patterns respond to different cultural codes which, applied to the same narrative structure and respecting its internal cohesion, provide diverging 'solutions' to the given 'literary problem'. The differences, though systematic and interconnected within each pattern, can be best apprehended in three thematic areas: the initial set-up (or exposition of the dramatic situation), the original fault (as regards the offspring) and the meaning of the concealment.

The initial situation in the Hungarian stories is strongly dramatised. Eve's excessive fertility (and, implicitly, her sexuality) is indeed the key of all the happenings inasmuch as the fear of social sanctions (shame) sets the events into motion. This motive obviously could not appeal to the African imagination where fertility remains a paramount value, indeed an essential means of assessing women. Consequently another initial conflict situation is put forward which is instrumental in the development of the story. This is the primitive hostility between the ancestors, based on 'crossed preferences' among parents and children. Preference is possible only if the children have different identity. Thus they must be born different and their number must be small (two or three, ideally), so that their opposition according to their proximity from the mother should be meaningful.

Once this narrative arrangement is made, the stumbling-block of the heroes is the mother's 'fault'. In the Hungarian stories the fault is over-motivated, that is - to all practical intents and purposes - it is minimized. In the African stories the fault is an in-built element of the initial situation. The conflict between the ancestral parents is produced by the mother's exclusive affection for her black child on the strength of which she withholds (hides) him from the father. This preference and, consequently, the fault the mother incurs is unmotivated. We have seen the ideological importance of the mother's arbitrary association with the black in the message the African stories convey: they supply the blacks' social disinheritance with a partial and symbolic compensation. In

the Hungarian stories the minimising of the fault is no less significant. It tends to confer an accidental character to the establishment of inequality. The historical damnation of the poor and powerless flows from a mythically contingent source. Both elaborations of the motif offer some narrative solace to those who are dominated.

The nature of concealment (hiding) is exactly opposite in the two samples of tales. In the Hungarian tales the mother hides those she is ashamed of, a normal attitude in the local peasant code of behaviour. Concealment clearly attests to a somewhat negative association also according to the logic of the narrative situation. As there is, initially, no enmity between God and the ancestral mother, there is no point in keeping from his blessing the 'presentable' children, while it is understandable that the others should be hidden. In the African tales the black child is kept out of sight, just as a treasure is sheltered, to be protected. Hiding means above all proximity to the mother and, in the line of the original conflict between father and mother, distance from the father (God) who represents from the start a hostile principle.

These differences do not affect the *dénouement* of the stories, though they provide a slightly different ideological colouring in the two patterns. In the Hungarian tales God's blessing goes to those already distinguished (even if sometimes under duress) by the mother. The two 'choices' coincide and the damnation of the neglected children appears to be all the more irrevocable. In the African tales those who are historically deprived are entitled to a special status as the primitively elect.

#### NOTES

\* The Genesis story was elaborated equally among the Sherente of Central Brazil. Cf. some brief comments on it made by A. Dundes, E.R. Leach, P. Maranda and D. Maybury-Lewis in Maranda, Pierre and Elli Kongas Maranda (eds.), *Structural Analysis of Oral Tradition*, Philadelphia : University of Pennsylvania Press 1971.

1. Cf. A. Beteille, *Social Inequality*, Harmondsworth 1970, p.13.
2. Aarne and Thompson give the following summary of the tale: Eve has so many children that she is ashamed; when God pays her a visit she hides some of them and they fail to receive the blessing given to those in sight; thus arise differences in classes and peoples.
3. I am indebted to Ilona Nagy, Fellow of the Hungarian Academy of Science, for allowing me to use the tales she has collected. Mrs. Nagy is currently engaged in the preparation of the Catalogue of Hungarian Popular Legends and Religious Tales. I am also grateful to Peter Villányi for permission to use the tales he collected in Galgamácsa. The English translations were done by myself.
4. Among others see Theodor Reik, *Myth and Guilt, the Crime and Punishment of Mankind* (London 1958, pp.81-100) for an overview of the theological and psycho-analytical arguments used to interpret the tale of Genesis, which basically converge in considering the

Fall of Man as due to a sexual offence.

5. One of the most popular Hungarian creation stories develops the theme of the animal origins of the first women (made of a dog's tail).

6. In an earlier work I presented a general study of the problem of original differentiation in African oral literature. See V. Görög-Karady, *Noirs et Blancs, leur image dans la littérature orale africaine*, Paris 1976. Cf. also my article 'Noirs et Blancs. A propos de quelques mythes d'origine vili' in *Itinérances...en pays peul et ailleurs*, Vol. II, 1981, pp. 79-96.

7. A range of biblical stories (for example those of the sons of Noah, Jacob and Esau etc.) have often been reinterpreted in African folklore. See T.O. Beidelman, 'A Kaguru Version of the Sons of Noah', *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, Vol.III, 1963, pp.474-490.

8. Cf. F. Deng, *African of Two Worlds*, New Haven and London, 1978, p.76.

9. I am much indebted to Dr. Walter G.A. Kuniwok for complementary information on present-day story-telling in Sudan.

10. Cf. F. Deng, *African of Two Worlds, op.cit.*, p.76. Both Dinka tales (see note 9) have been published in English but it is clear that the interviews to collect them were directed in Dinka. The narrator is Loth Adija, representative of the Ngok Dinka of Southern Kordofan Province, the only Dinka section administered as part of Northern Sudan. If the Ngok are 'Southerners' like the Dinka in the Southern provinces and share their cultural heritage, their more recent political experiences are somewhat different. The interview was arranged in Khartoum in 1974 with Chol Adija, Loth Adija, Marieu Ajak and Acueng Deng together. With the exception of Chol Adija who had been a court member, the informants were elderly noblemen who took turns to tell the stories and completed each other's versions.

11. Cf. F. Deng, *op.cit.*, pp. 77-78.

12. Cf. D. Westermann, *The Shilluk People*, Berlin 1912, p. 178.

13. Cf. W. Hofmayr, *Die Schilluk*, Mödling bei Wien 1925, Vol.II, pp.241-242. (The English translation is my own. Dr. Kuniwok was kind enough to confirm that the story is still told in a similar manner by the Shilluk.) It is to be noted that the only informant Hofmayr identified by name was the person who told him five 'religious stories', among them the version presented here.

14. Cf. S.C. Crazzolara, *Zur Gesellschaft und Religion der Nuer*, Wien-Mödling 1953, pp. 69-70. Crazzolara collected his stories in 1932 in Yoinyan, 40 miles from Lake No. He offers no information about the narrators. The translation is my own.

15. Cf. G. Lienhardt, *Divinity and Experience*, Oxford 1961, p. 39 ff.

16. See my 'Parental Preference and Racial Inequality', in B. Lindfors (ed.), *Forms of Folklore in Africa*, Austin and London 1977, pp.104-134.



LA JEUNE FILLE QUI CHERCHE SES FRERES.  
ESSAI D'ANALYSE

'The Maiden Who Seeks Her Brothers' est bien connue dans la classification internationale d'Arne et Thompson, où elle figure sous le Type 451. Thompson (1946 p.110), qui la range dans la catégorie 'Faithful Sister', déclare que le conte est largement attesté dans toute l'Europe, mais qu'à part une version arménienne, il n'a pas été signalé ailleurs. Quant à Klipple (1938), elle n'en signale aucune version africaine.

L'extension en Afrique de contes considérés, à l'époque des grands folkloristes, comme exclusivement européens ou indo-européens, a été largement démontrée depuis. Cette fameuse 'Jeune Fille', image si touchante de fidélité fraternelle, existe bel et bien au Maghreb, où elle est largement attestée; on la trouve au Sahel, et même (bien que seules quelques versions l'attestent jusqu'à présent) en Afrique Noire. Pour ma part, je l'ai rencontrée pour la première fois au Niger, dans le campement de Tuhugey, chez les nomades Idaksahak, près de la frontière malienne (1). Son histoire m'a été contée par une jeune fille d'environ dix-huit ans, très intimidée d'affronter pour la première fois le magnétophone et l'assistance, inhabituellement nombreuse, qu'attirait la présence des ethnologues. C'est ce qui explique les maladresses et les obscurités du texte. Sa forme originale mérite cependant d'être prise en considération. Nous en donnons ici une traduction très littérale.

Version 1. C'était une femme qui avait sept fils. Au moment où ils sont partis, leur mère était enceinte. Elle a accouché d'une fille. La mère lui a donné le nom que le plus jeune des frères lui avait dit au moment où il partait. Moi, j'ai oublié le nom, celui que son fils lui avait dit. Puis elle lui a donné le deuxième nom, et elle

est restée recluse. Plus tard, elle a mis sa fille à la cure de lait, elle était là. Un jour la jeune fille est allée vers une captive qui pilait et l'a bousculée pour lui prendre du mil. 'Ah! qu'il t'arrache, celui qui a arraché tes frères!'. Elle est allée trouver sa mère en pleurant, elle lui a demandé : 'Est-il vrai que j'ai des frères?' Sa mère lui a dit de soulever le grand plat de bois : elle a vu leurs traces. Elle lui a dit : 'Ouvre ce sac en cuir, tu verras leurs vêtements.' Elle a ouvert le sac, a pris chaque tunique et l'a enfilée, jusqu'à la septième. Elle est partie... (ici un passage obscur où il semble qu'elle confie à une plante un message pour sa mère). Elle est passée ensuite auprès de captives qui balayaient (les graminées sauvages) et leur a demandé : 'N'avez-vous pas vu des chameaux tout blancs qui faisaient la course?' L'une des captives lui a dit : 'Oui, des rapaces là-bas s'envolaient en portant de la laine de chamelles blanches (pour faire leur nid)'. Elle a continué son chemin et est arrivée parmi des chameaux entravés; en suivant le troupeau, elle est ensuite passée au milieu des chamelles adultes. Enfin, elle est arrivée à leurs tentes. Elle a regroupé leurs chamelons, les a attachés, puis est allée se cacher dans la brousse jusqu'à la nuit. Le matin s'est fait, les frères ont dit qu'ils étaient curieux de voir cette personne qui les aimait tellement qu'elle regroupait pour eux leurs chamelons et les attachait. Ils sont retournés vers leurs épouses, qui étaient des femmes-génies; ils étaient assis et causaient avec elles. Mais l'un d'eux est resté et a guetté la jeune fille. Il lui a demandé qui elle était : 'Je suis Une Telle, ta soeur, que tu as laissée quand elle était encore dans le ventre de sa mère.' Les autres frères l'ont vue et ont cessé d'aller chez leurs épouses. Celles-ci se sont inquiétées, sont venues les trouver, ont vu leur soeur. Celle-ci a voulu les raccompagner. En chemin, l'une d'elles lui a dit: 'Attends, je vais t'enlever un pou'. La jeune fille a baissé la tête, et au lieu de lui enlever un pou, la femme lui a enfoncé son alène dans la tête. Elle est restée couchée là. Ses frères l'ont cherchée, l'ont trouvée couchée sur les traces des femmes. Le lendemain matin ils l'ont mise sur leur chameau qui s'appelait *xawshin* en disant à celui-ci : 'Personne ne doit prendre ta corde sauf celui qui dira ton nom.' Le chameau est arrivé près d'un forgeron qui coupait un arbre. Un éclat de bois a sauté et est entré dans son oeil. Il dit : '*xayyo shatt-in*' (aïe! mon oeil! en tamasheq). Le chameau l'a laissé prendre sa corde et il l'a emmené au campement des forgerons. Un enfant rampait, regardait la tête de l'alène (qui dépassait de la tête de la jeune fille), rampait encore. Ils ont dit: 'Laissons faire cet enfant.' Il a pris la pointe et l'a tirée; la jeune fille est guérie, elle s'est levée et est retournée à leur demeure. C'est terminé.

Le premier intérêt de ce texte est de montrer comment un récit où l'on peut facilement, malgré ses lacunes, reconnaître les éléments essentiels d'un type international, est parfaitement adapté au milieu qui l'a produit. Toutes les allusions culturelles que l'on y trouve renvoient à un milieu nomade fortement influencé par le mode de vie et la langue des Touaregs, mais ayant ses particularités propres. Elucidons rapidement ces allusions :

- le deuxième nom : c'est un surnom que la mère donne à son enfant, et que le père et les camarades peuvent employer aussi par jeu, mais que son conjoint, plus tard, ne prononcera jamais, bien qu'il le connaisse.
- la réclusion : après l'accouchement, la mère reste recluse pendant quatorze jours chez les Idaksahak; la durée est la même quel que soit le sexe de l'enfant. Chez les Touaregs, la réclusion est de sept jours, mais ce n'est qu'au bout de quarante jours que la femme reprend vraiment sa vie conjugale et sociale.
- la 'cure de lait' : le terme que je traduis ainsi est emprunté au tamasheq, ainsi que la coutume, qui consiste à gaver de lait, et aussi parfois de farine sèche de mil, les filles à partir de leur dixième année. Il s'agit de les faire grossir pour les rendre aptes au mariage, l'idéal de la beauté féminine pour les nomades étant lié à l'amplitude des formes, image d'abondance et, croit-on, de fécondité (2). Cette coutume, qui ne peut d'ailleurs se pratiquer que dans les familles nobles où les filles ne travaillent pas, tend actuellement à disparaître.
- le grand plat de bois : il s'agit d'un grand récipient creux (*aghlat*, terme emprunté au tamasheq) qui sert généralement à abreuver les animaux. La mère l'a renversé sur les traces de ses fils dans le sable pour conserver d'eux plus qu'un souvenir : les traces chez les nomades sont une émanation de la personne, à tel point qu'on peut agir maléfiquement sur elles.
- les captives : comme les Touaregs, les Idaksahak ont une forme de société hiérarchisée comprenant des 'nobles', des artisans castés et des 'captifs' ou serviteurs qui exécutent les tâches serviles. Dans ce texte, on voit les captives piler le mil et 'balayer', c'est-à-dire ramasser avec un balai spécial les graminées sauvages, méthode de cueillette très usitée chez les Touaregs (cf. Bernus, 1981, p. 250). Ce sont des tâches tout à fait habituelles pour les captives.
- le troupeau : les frères ont apparemment bien réussi dans la vie, car l'approche de leur campement est signalée par un immense troupeau. Leur soeur (avertie par prescience ? guidée par leurs vêtements qu'elle porte sur elle ?) le sait déjà puisqu'elle cherche 'des chameaux tout blancs faisant la course', pratique de fête chez les Touaregs. Notons que seuls les chameaux et chamelles (qui sont en fait des dromadaires, mais le terme est consacré en français par l'usage) sont mentionnés, ce qui n'exclut pas les autres animaux; c'est le chameau en effet qui est le plus valorisé et le plus prestigieux, et particulièrement le chameau blanc, souvent mentionné dans la poésie touarègue; ces chameaux blancs sont signalés de loin par des rapaces qui

emportent des brins de leur laine pour faire leur nids (3). Le premier acte de la jeune fille en arrivant au campement est d'attacher les chamelons (et vraisemblablement les veaux) pour les empêcher de téter leurs mères avant la traite; cette tâche, caractéristique de l'élevage nomade, est plutôt dévolue aux jeunes bergers chez les Touaregs, les soins des animaux revenant en général aux hommes.

- l'épouillage : les poux et autres parasites sont un inconvénient courant chez les nomades, pour qui l'eau est trop précieuse pour être gaspillée en ablutions fréquentes. L'épouillage est un comportement usuel sous les tentes, mais il ne se pratique qu'entre proches parents et comme preuve d'affectueuse familiarité.

- l'alène : c'est un outil exclusivement féminin, qui sert à faire des trous dans les peaux pour coudre les tentes. On s'en sert aussi pour séparer les cheveux avant de les natter.

- le forgeron : couper un arbre n'est pas incompatible avec le métier de forgeron, car dans cette société il est aussi travailleur du bois. L'arbre qu'il coupe dans le conte est un *tuwila Sclerocarya birrea*, dont le bois, très dur et très valorisé, sert à tailler les plats et ustensiles de cuisine.

- le jeu de mots : l'expression touarègue signifiant 'aïe! mon oeil!' est confondue avec le nom du chameau, qui en est d'ailleurs la forme mal prononcée par les Idaksahak (le forgeron est un Touareg). Les contes de ces groupes minoritaires, dont le parler n'est pas compris de leurs voisins et qui doivent recourir à des langues véhiculaires (tamasheq, hausa), présentent fréquemment ce motif de l'incompréhension, du malentendu ou du jeu de mots, dans un contexte de langues en contact mais inégalement pratiquées.

Un autre intérêt de cette version particulière est que, si la première partie du récit est bien la 'quête des frères', la seconde partie (qui commence avec les retrouvailles) offre des éléments également très reconnaissables d'un autre conte-type international, 'Blanche-Neige' (Snow-White, A.T. 709); l'élément charnière qui a permis l'articulation de ces deux types est la jalousie envers l'héroïne, incarnée ici dans les personnages des belles-soeurs et là dans celui de la mère-marâtre. Je voudrais démontrer que ce mélange des thèmes n'est nullement dû à une maladresse ou une confusion de la conteuse mais correspond à une possibilité structurale du conte de la quête des frères.

Mais auparavant je citerai une autre version de la 'Jeune Fille qui cherche ses frères', provenant cette fois des Isawaghen d'In Gall, dans la région d'Agadez, groupe apparenté aux Idaksahak mais sédentaire. Alors que je cherchais à savoir si le conte y était connu, une vieille femme aveugle, excellente conteuse, me donna deux récits totalement distincts, dont l'un était l'histoire de la quête des frères et l'autre une très belle version sahélienne de 'Blanche-Neige' (cf. Calame-Griaule, 1981). Voici le premier de ces deux contes :

Version 2. Il n'y avait rien sauf Ilange et Ilazel, leur mère et leur père. Ils engendrent, ils engendrent, jusqu'à ce qu'ils aient engendré - regarde bien! - ils ont engendré Ilazel, ils ont engendré Ilange, ils ont engendré 'Bouche noire comme de l'encre', 'Long comme une natte', Akhmed, Mokhammed. En tout cela fait six enfants, c'est tout, ils n'ont pas de petite soeur. Ils sont là, ils sont là, ils sont là, jusqu'à ce que leur mère soit encore enceinte. Ils dirent qu'ils allaient partir de leur côté. L'un dit qu'ils allaient patienter jusqu'à l'accouchement de leur mère, un autre dit qu'ils partiraient de leur côté. Quand leur mère accoucherait, si elle avait une fille, qu'on couvrirait pour eux le mortier, et ils reviendraient; si elle accouchait d'un garçon, qu'on frappât pour eux le *tebel*, et ils partiraient. Elle resta, elle accoucha d'une fille. Quand elle eut accouché, les ennemis des garçons jouèrent du *tebel*. Pendant qu'ils en jouaient, la famille maternelle jouait du *tende*, mais ils entendirent d'abord le frappement du *tebel*. Ils partirent. Leur soeur resta, devint une jeune fille. Un jour, elle était assise avec des jeunes gens, et certains la frappèrent. Elle vint trouver sa mère en pleurant et lui dit : 'Oh! maman, je suis la seule que tu aies enfantée, je n'ai pas de frères. A cause de cela, les filles qui ont des grands frères n'ont pas honte de me laisser battre par eux.' Sa mère lui dit : 'Tu as des grands frères. Ils sont partis parce que leurs ennemis - car ils avaient dit que si tu étais une fille, nous devions couvrir le *tende*, et si tu étais un garçon, nous devions jouer le *tebel* - leurs ennemis ont frappé le *tebel* et ils se sont mis en route. Nous avons eu beau jouer du *tende*, nous n'avons pas réussi.' - 'Bon, dit-elle à sa mère, là où sont allés mes grands frères, il faut que j'aille aussi.' Quand le matin se fit, elle se mit en route. Elle marchait, marchait. Elle arriva à un village et demanda : 'Des nouvelles d'Ilange, des nouvelles d'Ilazel, des nouvelles de "Bouche d'encre", "Long comme une natte", des nouvelles d'Akhmed, des nouvelles de Mokhammed. Où les avez-vous vus ?' Les gens dirent : 'Il y a très longtemps. L'année dernière, ils sont passés par ici.' Elle repartit; elle marchait, marchait; elle arriva à un village et s'informa (même question dans différents villages, où on lui répond successivement qu'ils sont passés au dernier hivernage, puis 'hier' puis 'tout à l'heure' et enfin 'ils sont là-bas, où se trouvent les jeunes filles'). Elle chercha l'endroit où étaient les jeunes filles. Ses grands frères accoururent, ils la prirent dans leurs bras, ils poussaient des cris de joie, ils pleuraient, ils poussaient des cris de joie. Ils lui dirent : 'Viens!' Ils revinrent, elle et ses grands frères. On joua le *tende*, on célébra une fête. Une vieille femme de chez eux était là; qu'est-ce qu'elle a dit? 'Loué soit Dieu, loué soit Dieu! Leur soeur est venue. Loué soit Dieu! Leur petite soeur est venue. Loué soit Dieu, Mokhammed! ils ont retrouvé leur

soeur!' Ils sont venus, ils se sont établis. Ils ont marié leur soeur, eux-mêmes se sont mariés. Maintenant ils sont établis. Cela, c'est tout ce que je sais.

Cette version diffère de la précédente par un certain nombre de détails qui montrent que nous ne sommes plus en milieu nomade mais chez des sédentaires, proches cependant des Touaregs auxquels ils ont emprunté, comme les Idaksahak, des traits culturels et linguistiques. Ce texte, plus sobre que le précédent, contient peu d'allusions au contexte culturel, ce qui est peut-être dû au fait que Taheera, la conteuse, a fait un effort pour se le remémorer car elle ne l'avait pas dit depuis longtemps; cet effort a surtout porté, m'a-t-elle dit, sur les noms des frères, qui jouent, on le verra, un rôle important. Ces noms, justement, sont d'origine touarègue et véhiculent des concepts exprimant l'idéal masculin pour les nomades : beauté (Ilande est interprété comme voulant dire 'celui que tout le monde regarde'), haute taille et élégance ('Long comme la nate *awarwar'*, faite en paille brillante et flexible, et décorée de beaux dessins), charme et gentillesse (Ilazel), éloquence ('Bouche noire' comme l'encre des marabouts, à base de charbon et de gomme), intelligence et débrouillardise (qualités que sont censés conférer les noms d'Akhmed et Mokhammed, d'origine arabe mais prononcés ici à la touarègue). Bref, les six frères, pris ensemble, représentent la perfection virile pour les Touaregs comme pour leurs voisins Isawaghen. Autre emprunt culturel : les deux tambours, dont les noms sont touaregs : le *tende* ou petit tambour fait d'un mortier recouvert d'une peau, joué par les femmes, et le *tebel* (tamasheq *attabel*), tambour de guerre marquant la possession du pouvoir politique, donc masculin.

Quant à la relation frère/soeur, je répéterai ici ce que j'ai écrit dans mon analyse de la version sahélienne de 'Blanche Neige' (1981, p.69) : 'Les relations réelles entre frères et soeurs dans la société ingelshi (c'est-à-dire d'In Gall) sont, comme dans le conte, très affectueuses et très suivies. Les frères se réjouissent d'avoir des soeurs; la présence de filles dans la maison apporte, dit-on, la chance et les richesses. Un proverbe dit : 'Une maison dans laquelle il n'y a pas de fille, les gens vont et la dépassent (sans s'arrêter)'. Tant qu'ils sont encore à la maison, frères et soeurs se voient beaucoup, se font des confidences, se consultent sur leurs projets de mariage. (Le grand frère, nous disait un informateur, est presque comme le père. Il est très écouté à propos du mariage de ses frères et soeurs plus jeunes). Lorsqu'ils sont mariés, ils se rendent des visites et conservent des relations affectueuses'. Dans la société touarègue également, la relation frère/soeur est très valorisée; à propos du conte à dilemme classique dans lequel un homme doit choisir entre sauver sa femme ou sa soeur, un Touareg répondra toujours : 'sa soeur'. On peut ajouter également, ce que nous dit très explicitement la version de Taheera, que les frères aînés jouent un rôle protecteur auprès de la fillette; l'enfant unique est facilement en butte aux mauvais

traitements de ses camarades. D'où cette impression de 'manque' ressentie par la jeune fille et mise en évidence dans les deux versions citées.

Ces relations affectueuses entre frères et soeurs, l'importance attachée par la société au fait d'avoir à la fois des filles et des garçons dans une même famille, ainsi que le rôle joué par les soeurs dans le mariage des frères (la dot reçue pour elles par la famille permettra aux garçons de payer à leur tour des prestations pour obtenir des fiancées), peuvent expliquer, sur un plan très général et qui est d'ailleurs valable pour d'autres sociétés, d'une part la présence même de ce conte dans la littérature orale, d'autre part, dans le texte lui-même, le très grand désir manifesté par les frères d'avoir enfin une soeur, leur déception quand ils reçoivent la fausse annonce de la naissance d'un autre garçon, déception si forte qu'ils s'exilent, et enfin l'ardeur mise par l'héroïne à retrouver ses frères.

Toujours à ce même niveau immédiat d'explication, un autre élément d'interprétation a été fourni par les intéressés eux-mêmes, au moins en ce qui concerne la version 2 : les frères, en s'exilant et en courtisant des jeunes filles dans une région très éloignée de leur lieu d'origine, ont rompu le système des échanges matrimoniaux, qui ne peut plus fonctionner. Il est important que leur soeur aille les chercher pour les ramener et rétablir le système. C'est pourquoi la conteuse précise : 'Ils ont marié leur soeur, eux-mêmes se sont mariés'. Dans la version 1, ce motif est moins évident, mais le motif du mariage 'trop lointain', selon l'expression de C. Lévi-Strauss, est apparent dans le fait que les frères sont dits avoir épousé des femmes-génies, qu'ils allaient voir dans la brousse; ils s'étaient donc mis ainsi, non seulement en dehors du système des alliances matrimoniales, mais même en dehors du monde des humains. Il n'est cependant pas précisé que leur soeur les ramène dans leur famille; le récit est tronqué par rapport à la version intégrale de 'Blanche-Neige' (cf. Calame-Griaule 1981), mais on peut dire pourtant que le mariage de la soeur y est préfiguré par l'intervention du forgeron, qui, de par son statut d'artisan casté et endogame, a ses entrées libres partout et sert couramment d'intermédiaire pour les intrigues amoureuses et les mariages (4).

Cette interprétation, quoique satisfaisante, laisse cependant inexplicables un certain nombre d'éléments récurrents dans ces versions et dans d'autres qu'on peut leur comparer, comme par exemple le message inversé qui provoque le départ des frères, le nombre sept (ou six), ainsi que certains détails particuliers à nos versions, tels que les noms des six frères dans la version 2, ou la transformation de la 'Jeune Fille qui cherche ses frères' en 'Blanche-Neige' dans la version 1.

Le message inversé, même s'il manque dans notre version 1 (dans laquelle le départ des frères n'est pas justifié), est en effet un motif fréquent dans le conte-type 451. Dans les versions maghrébines, c'est généralement le personnage classique de la vieille sorcière Settoute qui intervertit les signes convenus pour annoncer la naissance, et substitue le signe masculin

au signe féminin. Cette inversion du message est toujours associée au vif *désir* des garçons d'avoir une soeur : dans le conte arabe d'Algérie, 'Badr az-Zîn', publié par M. Galley (1971), ils vont jusqu'à fabriquer de petites poupées d'argile qu'ils présentent à leur père : celui-ci croit d'abord qu'ils veulent se marier, puis comprend ensuite qu'ils souhaitent une soeur. Mais dans d'autres versions (et en particulier dans un grand nombre de versions européennes), le signe n'est pas inversé, car les frères en fait *redoutent* d'avoir une soeur, la naissance de celle-ci devant être la cause de leur mort (à cause, par exemple, d'un serment de leur père : dans ce cas c'est la mère qui les avertit). Il semble donc que la naissance d'une soeur, tantôt *trop souhaitée*, tantôt *trop redoutée* par les frères, soit toujours l'objet de sentiments excessifs de leur part, et constitue en fait pour eux *un danger*, dont le message inversé marque toute l'ambiguïté.

Or, ce danger, c'est l'inceste. Le mariage avec le frère est, selon les psychanalystes, le mariage idéal au niveau inconscient. C'est bien ce que, sous une forme symbolique et voilée, nous disent les contes. Regardons de près certains détails signifiants de nos textes.

-- Le désir excessif des frères de Badr az-Zîn pour une soeur est interprété par leur père comme un désir de *mariage*

-- L'héroïne de notre version 1 part en quête de ses frères après avoir subi la cure de lait, qui la prépare au *mariage*.

-- Celle de notre version 2 répète comme un leitmotiv pendant sa quête les noms de ses six frères, dont l'ensemble, nous l'avons vu, définit l'homme idéal, le *conjoint* rêvé.

-- Le nombre des frères est le plus souvent sept, chiffre très généralement associé au *mariage*, parce qu'il est formé de la somme de trois et quatre, représentant l'homme et la femme (ou la femme et l'homme, selon les cultures). Dans la version 2, les frères ne sont que six, mais on peut compter différemment et dire que c'est en ajoutant la soeur que l'on obtient sept, ce qui est aussi conforme à la logique des contes.

-- Dans la plupart des versions européennes, les frères sont changés en oiseaux (souvent en corbeaux) par la faute de leur soeur qui rompt un interdit les concernant : par exemple elle cueille des fleurs, dont on apprend par la suite qu'elles représentent ses frères; elle a donc cherché inconsciemment à se les approprier. Par cette métamorphose, ils sont mis pour un temps hors du monde des humains et subissent une sorte de mort (5) que l'on peut considérer comme initiatique puisqu'ils en renaîtront. C'est leur soeur qui, en subissant victorieusement des épreuves difficiles, les ramènera à leur forme d'hommes et au monde des vivants.

-- Les versions maghrébines (Lacoste, 1965, t.II p.467; Galley, 1971, p.30 ; auxquelles il faut ajouter des variantes citées par Lacoste, 1970, p.510) présentent un motif récurrent, absent dans nos versions, mais qui me semble éclairant pour l'interprétation générale du conte : c'est l'épisode de la méchante esclave qui se substitue à l'héroïne en obligeant celle-ci à se baigner dans



'la fontaine des négresses', ce qui la fait devenir noire, tandis qu'elle-même se baigne dans 'la fontaine des houris' et devient blanche; les frères d'abord trompés, finissent par reconnaître leur vraie soeur en comparant les cheveux des deux femmes. Ce motif, clairement érotique de la chevelure (les frères ne doivent pas voir les cheveux de leur soeur), est d'autant plus intéressant dans ce contexte qu'il est facile de reconnaître dans tout l'épisode le thème bien connu par ailleurs de la 'fiancée substituée' ('The Black and the White Bride', A.T. 403) (6). L'interférence entre les deux types n'est certainement pas innocente et prouve à quel point, dans l'imaginaire collectif, la fille qui cherche son (ses) frère(s) est interchangeable avec la fiancée qui se rend chez son époux. Il me paraît particulièrement piquant d'ajouter à cet ensemble une version, provenant d'un contexte très éloigné géographiquement (les Ngbaka de République Centrafricaine; Thomas, 1970, p.648), et dans laquelle on retrouve la mauvaise esclave qui se substitue à sa maîtresse en l'obligeant à traverser la rivière au lieu de la porter sur son dos (là encore l'élément eau joue un rôle déterminant dans la transformation); or il ne s'agit pas d'une soeur, cette fois, mais d'une fiancée qui doit rejoindre son époux, parée de bijoux et de parfums que dissimule (telle Peau d'Ane) une vilaine peau de singe (ici bien évidemment il n'y a pas de changement de couleur); c'est à sa beauté, et surtout à ses parfums, autre thème érotique, qu'elle sera reconnue, lorsque, seule dans la forêt, elle enlèvera la vilaine peau.

Que faut-il conclure de cette trop rapide analyse? Cette quête des frères semble bien pouvoir être interprétée comme la quête du frère, conjoint idéal dans les fantasmes de la fillette. C'est une quête du mariage erroné, quête initiatique semée d'épreuves, affaiblies dans nos versions de référence, mais comprenant dans des versions plus explicites la transformation de l'héroïne en esclave et l'usurpation de sa place par celle-ci, au moins dans le contexte maghrébin. L'exil des frères, leur transformation en oiseaux dans les contes européens, n'est-il pas la conséquence de leur désir d'épouser leur soeur? Ou tout au moins de leur fuite devant le danger qu'elle représente? Eux aussi subissent une période initiatique d'où ils sortiront quand les retrouvailles auront permis d'assumer des relations normales avec la soeur. Mais c'est là que le conte bute sur un problème et propose des solutions différentes selon les cas.

La version tasawaq (version 2 citée) constitue la manière la plus simple de poser le problème de la relation frère/soeur et de résoudre le fantasme. Lorsque l'héroïne a retrouvé ses frères, ceux-ci ne demandent qu'à revenir dans leur famille; les jeunes filles lointaines qu'ils courtoisaient, rivales potentielles de leur soeur, sont facilement abandonnées, mais leur soeur ne reste pas avec eux : elle les ramène et les réintroduit dans le système social où chacun se mariera de son côté. Le récit tadaksahak (version 1) est différent en ce sens qu'il insiste sur la rivalité entre la soeur et les épouses des frères, qui

cherchent à se débarrasser d'elle, élément charnière du récit qui permet le glissement dans le type 'Blanche-Neige'; ce motif de la jalousie met mieux en évidence les motivations incestueuses de la quête.

Le problème des relations frère/soeur est d'ailleurs également traité dans le conte de Blanche-Neige (séjour de l'héroïne dans la maison des nains, des génies, des voleurs, etc.), mais il est marginal par rapport à celui de la relation mère/fille. Dans la version sahélienne que j'ai publiée (1981), les génies qui ont recueilli la fillette rejetée par sa mère, se disputent pour l'épouser, puis décident qu'elle est leur soeur, et donc leur est interdite. Ce thème constitue bien le lien structural entre les deux types.<sup>(7)</sup> Dans cette version, semble-t-il, l'héroïne ne reste pas avec ses frères mais va se marier de son côté (intervention du forgeron). Tout autre est la version kabyle traduite et publiée par C. Lacoste, et dans laquelle, une fois la mauvaise esclave démasquée, la soeur s'installe chez ses frères : 'Alors Fat'ma demeura avec ses frères et ne sortit plus de la maison. Ses frères l'aimèrent beaucoup. Ce qu'elle leur disait de faire, ils le faisaient.' Autrement dit, le conte se termine sur la réalisation du fantasme; la soeur demeure pour toujours avec son frère, la pluralité des frères ne servant qu'à masquer l'interprétation incestueuse (8). Enfin, le dernier exemple que nous avons cité dans cet ensemble Maghreb-Sahel, la version arabe d'Algérie rapportée par M. Galley, montre une autre possibilité de rebondissement du conte : le récit, arrivé au moment où l'héroïne a été reconnue par ses frères, qui ont châtié la méchante esclave, introduit le motif de la jalousie des femmes des frères (comme dans notre version 1) et repart sur une autre histoire, celle de la 'Jeune Fille qui a avalé un oeuf de serpent', histoire qui, bien que non répertoriée en tant que telle dans l'Index international, existe cependant sous une forme indépendante, en particulier en Kabylie (cf. Lacoste, 1965, I, p.131). L'oeuf de serpent que les méchantes belles-soeurs font avaler à l'héroïne au nom de l'amour qu'elle porte à ses frères se développe dans son ventre, et les frères, la croyant enceinte, veulent la tuer; épargnée par le plus jeune, elle est recueillie par un homme qui la débarrasse du serpent (en la faisant 'accoucher' par la bouche de cet anti-enfant, fruit fantasmatique de l'inceste symbolique) et l'épouse.

Tout se passe donc comme si le conte, dans les versions où la quête des frères se développe de façon linéaire, butait sur un obstacle au moment des retrouvailles, et que se posait alors la question : 'Maintenant qu'elle a retrouvé ses frères, que va-t-il se passer ?'. Trois sortes de réponses sont alors possibles:

- Le fantasme se réalise et la soeur reste avec ses frères.
- La fille ramène ses frères et chacun se marie de son côté.
- Le conte contourne l'obstacle et repart dans une autre direction, c'est-à-dire un autre type de récit où la fille peut développer son destin individuel et dénouer la situation en se mariant de son côté. Mais de telles articulations ne sont possibles qu'avec certains contes présentant une problématique commune

et des éléments charnières permettant le glissement d'un type à l'autre.

Il existe encore une autre solution, qui est développée dans la plupart des versions européennes. La jeune fille se marie de son côté pendant la quête des frères, c'est-à-dire pendant la période initiatique où elle accomplit des épreuves pour sauver ses frères et leur rendre leur forme humaine; une de ces épreuves consiste à garder le silence. Pendant cette période, elle est calomniée par sa belle-mère qui l'accuse de tuer ses enfants nouveaux-nés. Ne pouvant se défendre, elle va être mise à mort, mais comme le temps de l'épreuve est fini, ses frères redeviennent hommes et elle peut s'expliquer. Autrement dit : le destin individuel de la fille est tissé en filigrane pendant qu'elle mène sa quête des frères, mais son mariage ne peut pas être un vrai mariage (elle ne parle pas) (9) sa fécondité n'est pas une vraie fécondité (on lui prend ses enfants) tant que le problème de ses relations avec ses frères n'est pas résolu, c'est-à-dire tant qu'elle n'a pas renoncé au frère-époux.

#### NOTES

1. Ce groupe, culturellement et politiquement intégré au monde touareg, a conservé une langue propre, la *tadaksahak*, qui, bien que fortement influencée par la *tamasheq*, se rattache au songhay-zarma. Cette langue constitue l'un des îlots linguistiques de l'ensemble que P.F. Lacroix a appelé 'le sous-ensemble septentrional du groupe songhay-zarma', les autres étant notamment la *tasawaq* des Isawaghen de la région d'Agadez et la *tehetit* des Igdalen.
2. En fait elle est souvent la cause d'avortement précoces.
3. Motif fréquent de la poésie berbère et arabe nomade.
4. Dans la version *tasawaq* de 'Blanche-Neige' que j'ai publiée, le forgeron amène le chameau portant la jeune fille, apparemment morte et emballée dans des tissus précieux, dans la maison d'un chef qui l'épousera.
5. Les oiseaux sont souvent liés symboliquement au monde des morts. Dans la version agni de Côte-d'Ivoire, que m'a communiquée J.-P. Eschlimann, la soeur, qui tient la maison pour ses frères, leur fait manger un condiment qui est leur interdit; ils sont changés en perdrix.
6. Dans le type européen, on trouve parfois une méchante fée qui se substitue ainsi à la soeur (il s'agit en fait du type voisin 451A). Celle-ci se fait reconnaître par une chanson (motif également fréquent dans les versions africaines). Dans une version lithuanienne, communiquée par A. Martinkus, c'est la marâtre (qui est une sorcière) qui se fait passer pour la soeur, ce qui complique encore la relation familiale!
7. Un autre élément annonce le glissement entre les deux récits: c'est le motif de la 'bienfaitrice cachée' (la jeune fille qui attache les chamelons) fréquent dans les deux types en question.

8. Dans le conte lithuanien cité note 6, la soeur reste également avec ses frères, ou tout au moins on peut le supposer, la fin du conte mettant l'accent sur la punition de la sorcière.
9. La parole (le dialogue entre les époux) est un élément essentiel à la réussite du mariage; c'est un élément symbolique fréquent dans les contes.

#### Bibliographie

- AARNE, A. and THOMPSON, S. *The Types of the Folktale, a classification and bibliography*, Helsinki 1973 (second revised edition).
- BERNUS, E. *Touaregs nigériens, Unité culturelle et diversité régionale d'un peuple pasteur*, Paris, ORSTOM, 1981.
- CALAME-GRIAULE, G. *Blanche-Neige au soleil, Itinérances...en pays peul et ailleurs*, Mélanges offerts à la mémoire de P.F. Lacroix par les chercheurs de l'ERA 246, Paris, Société des Africanistes, 1981.
- GALLEY, M. *Badr az-Zîn et six contes algériens*, Paris, Armand Colin, 1971.
- KLIPPLE, M.A. *African Folktales and Foreign Analogues*, Bloomington (microfilm), 1938.
- LACOSTE, C. *Traduction des Légendes et contes merveilleux de la Grande Kabylie* recueillis par A. Mouliéras, Paris, Geuthner, 1965, 2 vol.  
- *Le conte kabyle, étude ethnographique*, Paris, Maspero, 1970.
- THOMAS, J.M.C. *Contes, Proverbes, Devinettes ou Enigmes, Chants et Prières Ngbaka-Ma'bo (République Centrafricaine)*, Paris, Klincksieck, 1970.
- THOMPSON, S. *The Folktale*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1977 (reproduction de l'édition de 1946).

AUTOUR DU RITUEL DE LA NOMINATION  
CHEZ LES TOUAREGS KEL FERWAN

Nous voulons montrer ici, sur un exemple, l'usage qu'un anthropologue peut, à l'occasion, faire de pièces de littérature orale. Nous étudierons les rituels de la nomination chez les Touaregs Kel Ferwan. Ces rituels présentent des similitudes avec d'une part des mythes d'origine, d'autre part un cycle de contes répandu à travers tout le monde touareg. Ayant décrit l'univers touareg, ou ce qui dans cet univers est impliqué dans les rituels, nous essaierons de montrer comment mythes et contes peuvent nous aider à comprendre ces rituels.

Les Touaregs Kel Ferwan nomadisent au nord du Niger, vivant dans des campements regroupant un couple et ses fils, ses brus, et les enfants de ces derniers. Chaque couple vit dans une tente appartenant à l'épouse. La tente est le domaine des femmes auquel les hommes sont étrangers<sup>1</sup>. Le mariage a lieu près du campement des parents de la mariée. Après la cérémonie, les nouveaux époux déménagent et viennent s'installer dans le campement des parents du mari. Lorsque la première grossesse d'une femme est assez avancée, elle revient avec sa tente dans le campement de ses parents, où elle accouche, à même le sol. Elle réintègre le campement de son mari deux ou trois mois après la naissance. Durant tout ce temps, celui-ci se contente de lui rendre de temps à autre des visites nocturnes. Ceci est du moins vrai pour les deux premiers accouchements d'une femme ; les suivants peuvent avoir lieu dans le campement de son époux.

Sept jours durant, l'enfant et sa mère sont menacés par les *aljinan* ou *kél ésuf*. *Aljin* (*aljinan* est le pluriel) est un mot dérivé de l'arabe *jinn*. *Agg ésuf*, 'fils de l'ésuf' (*kél ésuf*, 'gens de l'ésuf', sert de pluriel) peut être utilisé à sa place.

Le mot *ʕsuf* désigne d'abord l'extérieur, la brousse déserte.

Dans certains contextes, on peut aussi le traduire par 'solitude' ou 'sentiment de la solitude'. Etre dans l'*ʕsuf*, c'est soit, au cours d'un voyage par exemple, se trouver dans une zone déserte, soit être loin des siens, isolé parmi des étrangers. Celui qui est dans l'*ʕsuf*, quel que soit le sens du mot, peut être assailli par les *kəl ʕsuf* ; ceux-ci ont un comportement voisin des *jnoun*, tels qu'ils sont décrits par le Coran et les Classiques, mais les Touaregs disent aussi parfois d'eux qu'ils ne sont autres que les Touaregs morts. C'est le rapport des Touaregs avec ces *kəl ʕsuf* qui va nous occuper ici. A cause du danger des *kəl ʕsuf*, on évite de laisser l'enfant seul. Si ceux-ci le surprenaient ainsi, ils pourraient y substituer un de leurs enfants lui ressemblant. La substitution passe inaperçue et seule la laideur de certains adultes laisse supposer qu'ils sont des *kəl ʕsuf* autrefois substitués à des nouveaux-nés.

Le soir du sixième jour après la naissance, l'enfant sort pour la première fois de la tente où il est né. Des vieilles, parentes de l'accouchée, font trois fois le tour de la tente, l'une tenant l'enfant dans ses bras, et une autre râclant l'un contre l'autre deux couteaux en disant : '*kəsshəkəsh*', onomatopée censée imiter le bruit de lames de couteaux qu'on aiguise, et qui donne son nom à cette cérémonie. Au matin du septième jour, le premier nom de l'enfant est proclamé, en présence d'hommes parents et amis du père de l'accouchée. Celui-ci choisit ce nom avec un lettré, qui tient compte pour ce choix du jour de la naissance. Il peut se contenter d'entériner un choix déjà fait, mais c'est tout de même lui qui, aux yeux des assistants, choisit le nom. Quand un nom est adopté, un forgeron égorge un bélier en même temps qu'il proclame ce nom à haute voix. Le bélier est donné par le père de l'enfant qui pour sa part, se tient à l'écart du campement de ses beaux-parents. Plus tard, des parentes et amies de l'accouchée commencent à arriver dans le campement. Hommes et femmes se disputent alors les viscères cuits du bélier jusqu'à ce qu'ils tombent à terre, inconsommables. L'après-midi, les parentes de l'accouchée se pressent dans sa tente. On coupe les cheveux de l'enfant en maniant deux couteaux comme une paire de ciseaux, dans un mouvement semblable à celui du *kəsshəkəsh*. En même temps, les femmes présentes s'accordent sur le choix du deuxième nom de l'enfant, qui peut être un mot faisant allusion à une de ses particularités physiques. Notons qu'un grand nombre de ces noms sont des mots féminins, même s'ils sont portés par des garçons.

Lorsque la naissance a lieu dans le campement du père de l'enfant, ce qui peut arriver à partir du troisième enfant, le même rituel y a lieu mais c'est le père de l'enfant qui discute avec le lettré du choix du premier nom. Un Touareg a donc deux noms, l'un apparaissant comme choisi par un lettré, l'autre étant volontiers un mot féminin. C'est le premier qu'on utilise pour désigner l'ascendance paternelle d'un Touareg : on dit qu'il

est A *agg* (ou *ult*) B : A fils (ou fille) de B, B étant son père. C'est ce nom qui désigne donc le Touareg comme membre d'un campement. Dans un premier temps, nous montrerons que la référence aux *kél ésuif* est essentielle à la compréhension des rituels.

## I

Selon les Touaregs, le *késshékésh* a pour effet de chasser les *kél ésuif*. De fait, on dit même de l'enfant qu'il est non seulement menacé par les *kél ésuif*, mais qu'il est lui-même l'un d'eux. En effet, précise-t-on, il ne sait encore ni se lever ni marcher, il est hirsute, et enfin il ne sait pas parler et n'a pas d'intelligence, tous traits qui l'éloignent de la condition humaine et le font ressembler aux *kél ésuif*. Examinons ces trois points.

En fait, même bien après sa naissance, l'enfant ne sachant pas marcher est menacé par les *kél ésuif* ; on doit toujours effacer les traces laissées sur le sol par un petit enfant se traînant encore à quatre pattes car les *kél ésuif* pourraient venir les lècher, ce qui laisserait à jamais l'enfant incapable de marcher. Même pour un adulte, les traces laissées sur le sol peuvent être la source d'un danger, mais il est moins aigu. Les adultes d'ailleurs ne sont pas en contact direct avec le sol ; ils vont chaussés de sandales (hormis les esclaves qui justement sont considérés comme proches des *kél ésuif*) et s'assoient sur des nattes. Le sol, ou même le sous-sol est la demeure favorite des *kél ésuif*, qu'on appelle aussi parfois les 'fils du sol'. Dire de l'enfant qu'il ne sait pas s'asseoir, se lever ou marcher, c'est donc finalement remarquer qu'il est encore proche du sol, sur lequel, rappelons-le, il est né. Cette proximité avec le sol le met en danger, en même temps qu'elle le rend proche des *kél ésuif* et semblable à eux.

La coupe des cheveux est associée avec le *késshékésh* : la femme coupant les cheveux manipule deux couteaux de la même manière que la femme qui la veille disait *késshékésh* ; c'est qu'elle est, comme le *késshékésh*, un remède contre les *kél ésuif* ; couper ses cheveux c'est enlever à l'enfant ce qui le fait ressembler aux *kél ésuif* ; ceux-ci ont la réputation d'être hirsutes. C'est aussi lui donner une apparence plus socialisée : les hommes ont ordinairement une partie du crâne rasé et les femmes les cheveux tressés ; seul le fou, celui qui est la proie des *kél ésuif*, s'en va hirsute. De plus, les *kél ésuif* peuvent atteindre les humains par le truchement de leur chevelure, ce qui, même pour les adultes, impose certaines précautions. Couper les cheveux de l'enfant, c'est donc lui enlever à la fois ce qui le fait ressembler aux *kél ésuif* et ce par quoi ils ont prise sur lui.

Les *kél ésuif* frappent parfois de mutisme ceux qui d'aventure les rencontrent. Ils peuvent aussi leur 'prendre l'intelligence', les rendant fous ou mélancoliques. Ils s'adressent aussi parfois aux voyageurs égarés dans une langue que nul ne comprend. Contrairement à l'adulte frappé par les *kél ésuif*, et dont on se souvient qu'il a autrefois parlé, le nouveau-né n'a encore jamais parlé ni fait preuve d'intelligence ; la question

de savoir qui il est se pose donc. Tant que les hommes ne lui ont pas transmis l'intelligence ni appris la parole, les *kél ésuf* n'ont rien à lui enlever pour qu'il soit en leur pouvoir puisqu'il n'a rien d'humain. Donner un nom à l'enfant c'est supprimer en partie ce risque ; l'enfant a un nom, il ne peut pas parler mais on peut déjà en parler, et très vite, il comprendra que ce nom est le sien ; ce sera l'une de ses premières lueurs d'intelligence.

Ce développement nous a fait apparaître que les adultes eux-mêmes ne sont pas exempts de cette parenté avec les *kél ésuf* dont ils parlent à propos de l'enfant ; les hommes sont toujours dans un certain rapport avec le sol ; l'art de la parole ne s'acquiert que peu à peu. Les cheveux des hommes repoussent sans cesse. La proximité de l'enfant avec les *kél ésuf* ne suffit pas à le caractériser puisque tous les Touaregs sont proches d'eux. Mais on a entièrement décrit un nouveau-né quand on a relevé ce en quoi il ressemble aux *kél ésuf*. Il n'y a rien en quoi il cesse de leur ressembler ; il n'a pas encore prouvé qu'il en était distinct. Un adulte touche parfois le sol mais il chausse des sandales, il sait enfourcher un âne ou un chameau ; chaque parole qu'il prononce l'éloigne un peu plus du mutisme des *kél ésuf* ; enfin il sait prendre soin de ses cheveux : ils ne sont pas comme ceux de l'enfant, des cheveux qui n'ont jamais été rasés. En bref l'homme adulte sait se distinguer des *kél ésuf*, même s'il en reste proche. Il en est suffisamment distinct pour pouvoir supporter sans inconvénient - dans la plupart des cas - et tout en restant un humain, la proximité qu'il a avec eux.

Le rituel de nomination n'est donc pas seulement une opération visant à 'chasser' les *kél ésuf*, ou à leur arracher le nouveau-né ; à quoi bon les chasser puisqu'ils restent de toute façon à notre proximité, et que, finalement, à notre mort, nous redeviendrons des *kél ésuf*. En fait, il faut plutôt considérer le rituel comme un moment d'un processus qui mène l'enfant de l'état où il se trouve aujourd'hui à celui d'homme distinct des *kél ésuf* ; ce processus se poursuivra bien au delà de la naissance. Il s'est d'ailleurs déjà mis en marche dès la naissance, dans des opérations que, faute de place, nous ne décrirons pas ici. A ce stade, l'enfant ne saurait sortir ; il est encore trop semblable aux *kél ésuf* pour affronter l'*ésuf*, l'extérieur, en étant sûr de revenir. Nous savons qu'à ce moment, les *kél ésuf* peuvent lui substituer un des leurs, sans qu'on s'en aperçoive ; c'est donc bien qu'il leur ressemble. Sept jours après la naissance, il lui est possible de sortir de la tente, non sans quelques précautions il est vrai. Cette sortie préfigure ce qui sera sa condition d'homme : il aura à sortir de la tente, à affronter l'*ésuf*, mais il restera toujours un homme et réintégrera sa tente.

La similitude de l'enfant avec les *kél ésuf* rappelle aux hommes à quel point ils sont proches des *kél ésuf*, et à quel point cette proximité n'est supportable qu'au prix d'une diffé-



renciation acquise peu à peu. Chaque naissance remet brutalement la société au bord de ses propres frontières. Le cadre général du rituel, qui est le rapport des hommes avec les *kél ésuf* ayant été brièvement décrit, nous allons nous attacher à des aspects particuliers de celui-ci.

## II

On sait qu'au moment où le premier nom est proclamé, un bélier est égorgé. L'égorgement a lieu entre le choix du nom et sa proclamation. Il y a donc un lien étroit entre l'attribution de ce nom et le sacrifice du bélier. L'informateur signale que la tête du bélier doit être consommée par l'un des proches parents de l'enfant. Si une personne étrangère consommait la tête de l'animal, il 'prendrait de l'empire sur' l'enfant, qui deviendrait alors étranger aux siens. Ce que nous traduisons par 'prendre de l'empire sur' équivaut mot à mot 'prendre la tête de'. Prendre la tête du bélier, c'est donc prendre la tête de l'enfant ; à ce titre, le bélier est assimilé à l'enfant, conclusion à laquelle semble également parvenir J. Nicolaisen ('Essai sur la magie et la religion chez les Touaregs', *Folk, Dansk*, 3, 1961 ; pp 113-162) ; nous avons donc la situation suivante : des hommes assistent à la mise à mort d'un bélier assimilé à l'enfant. D'autre part, cet enfant est considéré comme un *agg ésuf*.

De nombreux mythes répandus à travers tout le monde touareg, racontent que les premiers Touaregs ont été engendrés par les *kél ésuf*. Un de ces mythes, recueilli au Mali (Hourst, *Sur le Niger et au pays des Touaregs*, Plon, Paris, 1898, p. 195) commence ainsi :

Les femmes d'un village s'étant aventurées en brousse, furent, nous y dit-on, engrossées par des 'génies' (terme par lequel Hourst traduit sans doute *aljin* ou *kél ésuf*). Quand il apparut qu'elles étaient enceintes, les hommes du village voulurent les tuer mais un lettré parmi eux les retint ; quand les femmes accouchèrent, les hommes voulurent tuer leurs enfants : mais le lettré à nouveau les retint, leur demandant d'attendre qu'ils aient grandi ; les enfants grandirent mais leur force et leur intelligence étaient telles qu'il ne fut plus possible de les tuer. Ce furent les premiers Touaregs. Dans ce mythe, les premiers Touaregs sont des garçons. Ce motif ne se retrouve pas dans toutes les variantes des mythes d'origine. La situation du mythe correspond, formellement au moins, à celle du rituel. Dans la suite, nous nous référerons au texte précédant en parlant de 'mythe malien', mais nous saurons que les motifs de ce mythe se retrouvent, épars, à travers toute la mythologie touarègue.

Une situation voisine de celle du mythe, se retrouve dans un cycle de contes répandu à travers tout le monde touareg. Le héros Aniguran cherche, sans y parvenir, à tuer le fils de sa soeur, parfois appelé Batis, nom qui peut signifier 'son père n'est pas' ou 'sans père'. Dans une des versions du conte rapportant la naissance de Batis, la soeur d'Aniguran et son

esclave accouchent en même temps et échangent leurs enfants. Aniguran tue l'enfant qu'il croit être son neveu et le neveu grandit, passant pour un esclave. Dans une autre version, la soeur d'Aniguran et son esclave accouchent respectivement d'un garçon et d'une fille. Elles échangent leurs enfants là encore et Aniguran, se trouvant en présence d'une nièce, l'épargne. Le sexe de l'enfant joue donc un rôle dans le cycle d'Aniguran, alors qu'il n'en joue aucun dans le rituel, et qu'il n'a guère d'importance dans les mythes d'origine pris dans leur ensemble. Les deux seuls acteurs du cycle sont l'oncle maternel et le neveu utérin. Nous verrons que l'oncle maternel intervient dans le rituel, mais dans la partie du rituel qui nous intéresse, c'est le grand-père maternel qui occupe le devant de la scène. Dans le mythe malien, on ne précise pas la relation entre les enfants et leurs agresseurs mais on peut imaginer qu'ils sont ceux auprès de qui ils sont nés, c'est-à-dire leurs parents maternels.

Sur d'autres points, mythe et conte se rapprochent : le neveu est appelé 'sans-père', comme les enfants du mythe n'ont pas de père humain. De même, c'est un esclave qui est tué à la place de Batis ; or, les esclaves sont parfois assimilés aux *kəl əsuf*. Il y a aussi des similitudes entre le cycle de contes et le rituel. Dans un conte du cycle, Aniguran, ayant découvert la véritable identité de celui qu'il croyait être son esclave, décide de le tuer. Un stratagème de ce dernier fait que, croyant le tuer, Aniguran tue un ovin. (Dans tous les contes du cycle, les tentatives d'Aniguran pour tuer Batis sont vaines, le second étant plus rusé que le premier, ce qui rappelle le motif de la ruse des enfants dans le mythe). Comme dans le rituel où le bélier équivalent de l'enfant est mis à mort devant ses maternels, ici un ovin pris pour le neveu est tué par son oncle maternel. De même, si les esclaves sont parfois assimilés aux *kəl əsuf*, des dictons les assimilent aussi aux ovins et aux caprins. Le meurtre d'un esclave à la place de Batis est encore un lointain rappel du sacrifice du bélier. Notons enfin qu'un lettré intervient dans le mythe comme dans le rituel.

En mettant ainsi en parallèle mythe, conte et rituel, nous ne prétendons pas montrer que les premiers 'expliquent' ou 'fondent' les seconds. Nous constatons simplement que ces trois discours semblent dire ensemble quelque chose, et c'est leur signification commune qu'il nous faut essayer de trouver.

Le mythe marque qu'il est vain pour les hommes de vouloir maintenir les *kəl əsuf* loin d'eux. C'est un peu ce qui est redit à chaque naissance. Le mythe précise même que sans les *kəl əsuf*, la société touarègue n'aurait pas vu le jour, ce qui condamne a priori les Touaregs à être leurs proches. C'est cette leçon commune du mythe et du rituel qui explique en première approximation leur similitude. En présentant comme il le fait l'origine des Touaregs, le mythe fait de plus état d'une certaine antériorité de l'ascendance maternelle des Touaregs

sur leur ascendance paternelle. Les mères des premiers Touaregs appartenaient à une société déjà existante lorsque les *kəl əsuf* sont venus à elles. Or, il se trouve que chaque naissance reproduit un schéma analogue. Les Touaregs disent que la tente est identique à elle-même depuis le début des temps. En cela, elle est affectée d'une certaine antériorité par rapport aux campements qu'elle occupe successivement. Et la naissance a d'abord lieu dans une tente et affecte d'abord une tente. En cela, on peut dire que le mythe et le rituel sont similaires mais on peut dire aussi que chaque naissance est la suite, toujours identique à elle-même, du mythe. La tente est depuis toujours antérieure au campement et sur ce point chaque naissance ne peut que répéter le mythe parce que quelque chose n'a pas changé depuis l'époque du mythe.

Cette similitude formelle entre le mythe et le rituel fait ressortir d'autant plus ce en quoi ils s'opposent ; dans le mythe, les hommes du village n'ont pas d'autres partenaires que les *kəl əsuf*. Les maternels de l'enfant ont, dans le rituel, un partenaire, le père de l'enfant - ou plutôt son campement - qui intervient de deux façons : c'est de ce campement que provient le bélier du sacrifice et le nom que reçoit l'enfant à ce moment l'en fait membre. Du mythe au rituel, le bélier apparaît comme un substitut de l'enfant. Nous avons déjà vu qu'il était d'une certaine manière un équivalent de l'enfant ; nous retrouvons qu'il l'est, d'une autre manière encore. De même que le père occupe dans le rituel la place occupée dans le mythe par les *kəl əsuf*, de même un bélier est tué dans le rituel, là où dans le mythe, on tente de tuer des enfants. C'est le père qui fournit ce substitut, et c'est à cette condition que l'enfant reçoit le nom qui le fait sien. Nous avons du mythe au rituel une double translation :

<i>kəl əsuf</i>	→	père de l'enfant
enfants	→	bélier,

toutes choses restant formellement égales d'ailleurs. Cette similitude formelle marque que le rituel pose une question faisant référence au mythe : 'de qui cet enfant est-il fils et n'est-il pas le fils des *kəl əsuf*?'. La translation dont nous parlons marque que la réponse, positive dans le mythe, est négative dans le rituel. Celui-ci dit finalement, et en cela peut se résumer son rapport au mythe : les Touaregs naissent de l'*əsuf*, comme leurs premiers ancêtres (identité formelle), mais leurs pères ne sont plus que des *kəl əsuf* (translation) ; si, dans les tentes, quelque chose n'a pas changé, les hommes ont appris à manier les relations d'alliance.

Dans le rituel et le mythe, les interventions du lettré peuvent être considérées comme équivalentes. En nommant l'enfant, nous savons que le lettré en fait le membre d'un campement qui n'est pas celui de ses maternels ; de même, le lettré du mythe permet aux enfants d'échapper à leurs maternels. Avant de proclamer le nom de l'enfant, le forgeron venant d'égorger le bélier s'écrie à plusieurs reprises : *allah akbar*, 'Dieu est

grand'. C'est une expression que l'on utilise en général pour manifester qu'on se soumet aux décrets du Très-Haut. C'est en quelque sorte parce que Dieu le veut que l'enfant reçoit tel nom. Le lettré choisit parfois ce nom dans un écrit à prétention coranique. Même quand ce n'est pas le cas, on considère que c'est sa connaissance des Ecritures qui lui permet de faire un choix convenable. Pour le Touareg non lettré, tout écrit arabe a une dignité comparable à celle du Coran, dont il n'est pas nettement distingué. Et à ses yeux, tout livre - et a fortiori le Livre, le Coran - ne se conçoit qu'écrit dans une langue et un alphabet étrangers et seuls quelques uns sont censés pouvoir y avoir accès. Le Livre est donc une instance extérieure, mais à laquelle on se doit de faire référence. C'est Dieu qui permet que tel nom soit donné à l'enfant, mais Sa voix ne parvient aux Touaregs que dans une langue étrangère, venue de l'extérieur. Le lettré fait dépendre le nom de l'enfant du jour de sa naissance, utilisant parfois une liste attribuant à chaque jour de la semaine une série de prénoms convenables. Le premier nom d'un Touareg dépend du jour de sa naissance, c'est-à-dire finalement du hasard. Dans d'autres groupes touaregs, il est d'ailleurs tiré au sort (Lhotte, *Les Touaregs du Hoggar*, Paris, 1955, p. 325). Le hasard a la même extériorité que le Livre ; les hommes n'ont pas de prise sur lui, d'autant plus que quand il intervient, dans un tirage au sort par exemple, les Touaregs y voient une intervention du Très-Haut. Le choix du premier nom fait donc intervenir de deux manières une instance extérieure. Il est choisi par un homme ayant accès au Livre et ce choix fait intervenir le hasard.

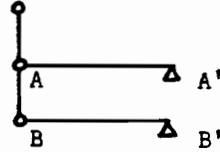
Il y a une extériorité du Livre et de l'Islam par rapport au monde touareg, comme il y a une extériorité de l'*ésuf* par rapport aux campements. Mais il ne s'agit pas de la même extériorité ; on peut parler ici de transcendance. Nous avons vu que les hommes sont toujours proches des *kél ésuf*, qu'ils viennent en naissant de l'*ésuf* et qu'ils y retournent à la mort. Il faut affirmer que, malgré les apparences, le nouveau-né n'est pas un *agg ésuf*, et c'est pour cette raison qu'on lui donne un nom. Mais un nom donné par les hommes ne pourrait pas distinguer un enfant des *kél ésuf*. C'est pourquoi on s'en remet pour ce choix au Livre et au hasard, c'est-à-dire, à Dieu dans toute son extériorité. Devant Dieu, les hommes et les *kél ésuf* sont semblables, ils ne sont que des créatures ; ils forment devant Lui une entité qu'Il transcende. C'est pourquoi Dieu seul, parce qu'Il n'est pas impliqué dans cette confrontation permanente entre les hommes et les *kél ésuf*, peut amener un enfant du monde de l'*ésuf* au monde des hommes. Sur ce point, chaque naissance reproduit ce qui s'est passé à la naissance des premiers Touaregs : un lettré, c'est-à-dire Dieu, a permis que de l'*ésuf* naissent les Touaregs.

## III

Nous avons trouvé au deuxième nom de l'enfant un caractère féminisant. Ce nom sera souvent plus utilisé que le premier, au moins pendant les premières années de la vie de l'enfant. Durant tout ce temps, l'enfant vivra plus près de sa mère que de son père ; disons qu'il appartiendra à la tente de sa mère plus qu'au campement de son père. L'enfant, après avoir été *attribué* à un campement, est *confié* à une tente. C'est là ce que signifient les deux nominations. Les deux opérations se succèdent. L'enfant est d'abord situé par rapport à un campement puis par rapport à une tente. Nous avons parlé plus haut d'une certaine antériorité de la tente. C'est un fait, l'enfant naît dans une tente, et c'est là ce qui est premier ; il est ensuite attribué à un campement ; mais les effets de cette attribution sont *mis en suspens* pour quelques années, et l'enfant apparaît comme membre d'une tente. Son appartenance au campement reste pour l'instant un peu formelle. C'est autour de la tente qu'ont lieu les opérations touchant au corps même de l'enfant : la coupe des cheveux, l'attribution d'un nom souvent choisi d'après ses particularités physiques et non au hasard. Plus tard, au moment de son mariage en fait, l'enfant né aujourd'hui deviendra effectivement membre de son campement. Son père l'aidera à rassembler le prix de la fiancée s'il est un garçon, et recevra pour elle le prix de la fiancée s'il s'agit d'une fille. Un mariage se règle de campement à campement. L'officialisation du mariage présente d'ailleurs quelques analogies avec la première nomination : deux lettrés mandatés par les pères des deux fiancés établissent le contrat de mariage ; puis un forgeron crie à haute voix : 'le fils d'Untel a épousé la fille d'Untel'. Les noms des fiancés ne sont pas alors prononcés mais les noms de leurs pères respectifs le sont ; ce qui revient à une référence implicite aux premiers noms des fiancés puisque c'est par ces noms qu'ils se rattachent aux noms de leurs pères.

L'enfant, qu'il soit fille ou garçon, est donc confié à la tente de sa mère. Cela signifie qu'il passera les premières années de sa vie dans le monde des femmes, mais aussi que son sexe n'a pour l'instant pas grande importance : fille ou garçon, il a plutôt la position d'une petite fille. Le caractère féminisant du deuxième nom signifie donc deux choses : l'enfant est confié à une tente, et pour l'instant, à l'intérieur de cette tente, il a la position d'une fille. Or, nous allons voir que même par rapport à la tente où ils sont nés, un homme et une femme n'ont pas la même position. La mise en suspens dont nous avons parlé est donc double : les conséquences de l'attribution de l'enfant à un campement ne sont pas tirées ; ensuite, qu'il soit fille ou garçon ne prête pas à conséquences. Cette indifférence au sexe de l'enfant s'oppose à l'attitude d'Aniguran dans le conte, différente selon qu'il lui naît un neveu ou une nièce.

Plus tard, bien avant qu'il n'ait sa place dans le monde des campements, le petit garçon apparaîtra comme tel : au moment de sa circoncision. Cette différenciation rituelle entre fille et garçon alors qu'ils sont encore dans la tente de leur mère est la marque d'une différence de destin par rapport à cette tente. Nous allons examiner en quoi elle consiste :



B et B' sont nés dans la tente de A, qui était aussi la tente de la mère de A, dans laquelle A et A' sont également nés. B héritera de la tente de sa mère. B' quittera cette tente, comme A' l'avait quittée. B' et A' ont le même destin par rapport à la tente où ils sont nés tous les deux. La rivalité d'Aniguran et de son neveu dans le cycle traduit cette similitude de destin entre un homme et son neveu utérin : ne peuvent être rivaux que ceux qui sont semblables. De fait, lorsqu'il commente le cycle de contes, l'informateur insiste sur la similitude entre l'oncle et le neveu : c'est parce que son neveu est l'héritier de son sang et à ce titre lui ressemble, qu'Aniguran craint d'être surpassé en intelligence par lui. Sur cette similitude entre l'oncle maternel et le neveu utérin, le rituel ne dit rien. Il ne peut rien dire, car en même temps qu'il est confié à une tente, l'enfant est féminisé. A cette féminisation provisoire de l'enfant correspond dans le conte la substitution d'une fille au neveu d'Aniguran. C'est la mère qui fait la substitution de même que dans le rituel, le deuxième nom, féminisant, est choisi par la mère de l'enfant et ses amies. Le rituel ne dit rien sur la similitude entre l'oncle maternel et le neveu, de la même manière qu'Aniguran ne dit rien quand il se trouve en présence d'une nièce. Si le rituel ne dit rien, il pose tout de même la question : 'Quelle est la relation entre cet enfant et son oncle maternel?'. Nous nous rappelons qu'après que le bélier a été dépecé et cuit, hommes et femmes présents se disputent ses viscères jusqu'à ce qu'ils tombent à terre, inconsommables. La panse du bélier, appelée *tagézwéwt*, est l'objet de la lutte la plus vive. Les hommes et les femmes s'affrontant ainsi sont en fait pour la plupart proches parents de l'accouchée, et de la même génération, car les vieillards ne participent pas à ce jeu. On peut donc considérer qu'ils sont ses frères et soeurs. Le nouveau-né est le neveu utérin de ces hommes. Neveu utérin se dit *tegéze*, mot lié à *tagézwéwt*. Que ces hommes disputent à leurs soeurs la *tagézwéwt* d'un bélier identifié à leur *tegéze* marque bien qu'ils agissent en tant qu'oncles maternels de l'enfant. Frères et soeurs s'affrontent donc ici autour

d'un objet représentant l'enfant des soeurs et le neveu utérin (la nièce utérine) des frères, affrontement restant sans issue. Il a lieu au moment où l'enfant a été attribué à un campement et où il va être confié à une tente. Dès lors, l'oncle maternel de l'enfant, qui n'avait pas joué de rôle particulier jusque là, intervient, pour les raisons que nous avons exposées. Mais que l'affrontement soit sans issue représente le refus provisoire de définir le rapport que l'enfant a avec son oncle maternel. La question est posée, mais le rituel choisit de surseoir à sa réponse. Le cycle d'Aniguran donne la raison de cette question : selon qu'il est fille ou garçon, le nouveau-né occupe dans la tente où il naît la place de sa mère ou celle de son oncle maternel. Le cycle répond à une question que le rituel se contente de poser.

La relation entre un homme et son neveu utérin se définit par rapport à la tente. La relation entre l'enfant et son père se pose en termes de campement. Le mythe malien et le conte d'Aniguran font respectivement référence à l'un et à l'autre. L'oncle maternel de l'enfant appartient au campement des affins du père de l'enfant. En tant que tel, il ne se distingue pas des autres membres de ce campement. A cela répondent les analogies que nous avons relevées entre le mythe et le conte. Mais parmi les affins du père de l'enfant, il s'oppose au grand-père maternel de l'enfant comme étant un homme né dans la même tente que l'enfant. Sur ce point, il est semblable à son neveu utérin. A cela répondent les divergences existant entre le mythe et le conte, et aussi le fait que dans le second, seuls un oncle et un neveu apparaissent.

Ce rite et ces textes que nous avons commentés, traitent tous de la relation des hommes avec les *kəl əsuf*. Le mythe parle de l'émergence des Touaregs, qui ne peuvent émerger que de l'autre de ce qu'ils sont, les *kəl əsuf*. Le rituel parle de l'émergence de l'enfant. Cette émergence est située par rapport à l'émergence originelle dont elle est en partie la répétition, et à laquelle en partie elle s'oppose. L'enfant est ensuite situé dans la société. Mais cette mise en situation de l'enfant n'apparaît qu'en pointillé et seul le cycle des contes d'Aniguran imagine ce qu'elle serait sans ces pointillés. En somme, rituel, mythe et conte sont trois figures séparément incomplètes dont la superposition, les lignes de l'une complétant l'autre, livrerait le sens.

## NOTE

1. Une fille reçoit à son mariage la tente de sa mère, ou une partie des éléments de cette tente, sa mère s'en faisant refaire une autre. Une mère et une fille vivent donc dans des tentes issues de la scission d'une même tente et les Touaregs considèrent qu'elles vivent enfant dans la même tente.

BRONISLAW ANDRZEJEWSKI

ALLITERATION AND SCANSION IN SOMALI ORAL POETRY  
AND THEIR CULTURAL CORRELATES

INTRODUCTION

In the study of cultural phenomena it is often difficult, if not impossible, to establish chains of cause and effect with a clearly defined direction such as have been arrived at by experimentation in physics or chemistry. Nevertheless it seems that various degrees of interconnectedness, reminiscent of those found in ecological systems, can be observed in the cultural phenomena which occur in a particular society.

In the oral poetry of various societies there are wide variations in the systems of versification: some impose demanding formal constraints on the language which poets use, while others are very lax in this respect.<sup>1</sup> The question arises as to whether such variations can be correlated in any way with other cultural phenomena present in the particular society, and although the answer could only be arrived at by a thorough examination of a large number of societies and would require the cooperation of several researchers, I hope that one day such an inquiry will be carried out. In this paper, as an initial step in this direction, I shall examine what I believe to be the cultural correlates of the system of versification in Somali society, restricting myself to the classical genres, i.e. the traditional poetry of the public forum, thus excluding the miniature genres and modern poetry.<sup>2</sup>

The information concerning both the poetry and its cultural correlates is derived partly from my own observation and partly from the sources, published and unpublished, referred to throughout this paper. I was very fortunate in that my researches in Somalia began in 1950 when the traditional way of life in the



pastoralist interior was not yet affected by the rapid changes of the late 1950s and the years which followed. This was the time before radio sets were found in large numbers among the rural population and before the transistor revolution offered cheap portable tape-recorders to poetry reciters as a highly effective aid to their memory powers. It was over twenty years before the official orthography was introduced in Somalia and mass literacy campaigns took place.

#### RULES OF VERSIFICATION

##### Alliteration

The traditional Somali poetry of the public forum had a system of versification which consisted of alliteration and quantitative scansion patterns.<sup>3</sup> The rules of alliteration were as follows:

- A. In poems with short lines, which had no caesura, each line had to contain one alliterative word.
- B. In poems with long lines, which were divided into two hemistichs by the caesura, each hemistich had to contain one alliterative word.
- C. In poems of all types the same alliteration had to be used in all the lines and hemistichs of a poem.

Rules A and C are illustrated in the poem given below, where the alliterative words are marked by the use of capital letters. The authorship of the poem is attributed to Faarax Garaad Xirsi, nicknamed 'Wiilwaal' ('The Mad Youngster'), who died in 1864. He distinguished himself, apart from his poetry, by restoring the chieftainship of Jigjiga to its former sovereignty and splendour through his skill and prowess in warfare and his autocratic methods of government. He is particularly remembered for his victory over the Oromo chief, Guray ('The Lefthanded').

The transcript of the poem was taken from a poetry reciter some time in the late 1970s by Sheekh Caaqib Cabdullaahi Jaamac.<sup>4</sup>

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1. WAR yar oo igu saabsan    | * 1-2. <i>If I present plainly in a few sentences a little account of myself,</i> |
| 2. Haddaan WEEDH ka caddeeyo | 3. <i>you will have, all of you,</i>  |
| 3. WAA inaad WADARTIIN ba    | 4. <i>with none of you contradicting,</i>   |
| 4. Idinkoon i WAGLIILIN      | 5. <i>to say to me, 'You are telling the truth!'</i>                              |
| 5. WAA runtaa i dhahdaan     | 6. <i>When I was a young boy</i>  |
| 6. WAAGAAN WIIL yar ahaa     | 7. <i>and had yet no share in the affairs of men,</i>                             |
| 7. Rag anoon WAX la qeybsan  | 8. <i>with the preaching of good sheikhs</i>                                      |
| 8. WACDI sheekyo WANAAGSAN   | 9. <i>and of my old parents,</i>  |
| 9. WAALIDIINTA gabowday baan | 11. <i>and with the words of guidance they spoke</i>                              |
| 10. WADDADA diinta WANAAGSAN | 10. <i>about the path of the holy faith</i>                                       |
| 11. WACDIGAY hadlayeen baan  |   |

\* In the English translation some lines have been transposed in order to maintain normal English word order.

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 12. Ku WEELEEYEH dhegtayda       | 12. <i>I used to fill my ear as if it were a vessel.</i>                   |
| 13. Anoo WAANSAMAY oo            | 13. <i>Thus rightly guided</i>   |
| 14. WADAAD fiican ahow leh       | 14. <i>I wanted to become a good cleric;</i>                               |
| 15. WEYSADA iyo Kitaabka iyo     | 17. <i>I got for myself the implements of true piety,</i>                  |
| 16. Masalle aad u WANAAGSAN iyo  | 15. <i>The vessel for ablutions, the Holy bo</i>                           |
| 17. WEEELKA daacadda qaatay baad | 16. <i>And a very good prayer-rug;</i>                                     |
| 18. WIILWAAL ii bixiseen         | 18. <i>And yet you gave me the name Wilwaal 'The Mad Youngster'!</i>       |
| 19. WEERARKAAD ku jirteen baa    | 19. <i>The fighting in which you were engage</i>                           |
| 20. WALBAHAAR ficilo             | 20-21. <i>Planted in me the desire</i>                                     |
| 21. WADNAHEYGA ku beermay        | 20-21. <i>To outdo all others.</i>   |
| 22. Haddaanan WEYRAX jareysan    | 22. <i>Had I not put the bridle on Weyrax 'The Enraged One', my horse,</i> |
| 23. WARMIHII cadcaddaa iyo       | 25. <i>Had I not carried with me</i>                                       |
| 24. Gaashaankii WIYILEED         | 23. <i>The shining spears and</i>  |
| 25. Anoo WAAJILAYA oo            | 24. <i>The rhinoceros-hide shield,</i>                                     |
| 26. WAAR kacaay idin leh         | 26. <i>Had I not said to you, 'Onward, men!'</i>                           |
| 27. Kolkuu WAAGU iftiimay        | 27. <i>When the light of dawn broke</i>                                    |
| 28. Intaan WEERAR ku qaado       | 28. <i>As I launched an attack,</i>  |
| 29. Guray WAAXYAHA goynin        | 29. <i>Had I not hewn Guray into quarters -</i>                            |
| 30. Cadow baa WADDANKEENNA       | 30-31. <i>The enemy would have</i>   |
| 31. La WAREEGI lahaa             | 30-31. <i>Taken over our country!</i>                                      |

Rules B and C are illustrated by another poem, a lament on the tribulations of old age, which is attributed to Raage Ugaas Warfaa, a celebrated poet contemporary with Faarax Garaad Xirsi. The transcript of the poem was taken from a poetry reciter by Shire Jaamac Axmed<sup>5</sup> some time in the late 1950s.

The caesura is marked by a comma in each line.

1. Inta khayli DHUUGYAHA cas iyo, DHEEG wiyil ah qaatay
  2. Ee DHALLANKA Aadnigu u baxo, sidatan la ii DHAWRAY
  3. Kolkii hore ba DHERERKIImiyaa, DHABARKI soo gaabtay
  4. Ma ka DHAXAY DHAWAAQ uubatiyo, DHEELMITAAN gibin ah
  5. DHABBE reero qaadeen miyaa, laygu wada DHAAFAY
  6. USHAN DHAABIN mooyee hubki, ma iska wada DHIIBAY
  7. Raggaan DHALAY raggu DHALAY miyaa, DHARABO ii diiday
  8. Kuwi aniga ii DHAXAY miyaa, DHIMASHADAY dooni
  9. DHUUNIGA i siiyaay miyaa, sida DHALLAAN ooyey
  10. Waxan DHAWRSAN jiray ceeb miyaa, igu DHARAAROWDAY
- 
1. *Once I wore a fine red-brown mantle and carried a rhinoceros-hide shield*
  2. *I was looked upon with esteem as one among the best of humankind.*
  3. *But then my backbone grew short and shrank, did it not?*
  4. *I even had to stop for a night's rest - did I not? - when travelling a distance so short that shouting voices could have spanned it*

5. *I was passed and left behind on the way - was I not? - by everyone along the route which trekking hamlets take*
6. *I had to give up carrying weapons altogether - did I not? - except for a stick to support myself.*
7. *The men begotten by men whom I begot refused to lend me support, did they not?*
8. *The women who were married to me wished me dead, did they not?*
9. *'Give me food!' I shouted - did I not? - weeping like a child.*
10. *The shameful things against which I had guarded myself have now come upon me, clear as the light of day, have they not?*

Alliteration in Somali poetry is probably of great antiquity, since it is used in proverbs, including those which are archaic in their vocabulary and grammatical forms. Alliteration is also found in invocations and blessings, some of which appear to be of a pre-Islamic character.<sup>6</sup>

### Scansion

Traditional Somali poetry of the public forum has scansion rules which are applied simultaneously with those of alliteration. Within each genre the lines have a prescribed quantity pattern measured by morae, i.e. time units. Short syllables are treated as having one mora and long ones as having two morae, and the length of the syllable is determined by the length of its vocalic component, i.e. its vowel or diphthong. There are various additional rules concerning the distribution of morae and syllables within the overall pattern of the line, and some constraints on the grammatical structure of the lines.

Although Somali oral poets had applied these rules intuitively from time immemorial, no one had analyzed or had any conscious knowledge of their nature until the middle 1970s, in spite of efforts on the part of various researchers, including myself, to discover them. It was then that two Somali scholars, Cabdillaahi Diiriye Guuleed and Maxamed Xaashi Dhamac 'Gaarriye', working independently, made the discovery.<sup>7</sup> They were no doubt helped by the introduction of the national orthography for Somali in 1972,<sup>8</sup> which made more poetic texts available for research and made it possible for them to publish the results in their own language, creating their own terminology and testing their findings with well-informed Somali opinion through publication of their results.

It should be noted, however, that the introduction of the orthography created some obstacles to research into scansion since it standardized the spelling of certain very frequently occurring words which have optionally variable length, such as the pronouns *aan/an* 'I', *aad/ad* 'you' (sg.), *uu/u* 'he' etc., the definite articles *kii/ki*, *tii/ti*, the negative particle *aan/an* 'not' and the focusing particle *baa/ba*. The orthography

also tends to avoid the contractions between words ending in short vowels and an immediately following conjunction which may be optionally used instead of their uncontracted forms, such as *geeliyo fardaha* instead of *geela iyo fardaha* 'the camels and the horses'.

The variations in length of words which result from the use of these options are very helpful to poets in adjusting their oral texts to the requirements of scansion, but transcripts, published and unpublished, which are made in the official orthography tend to follow the orthographic conventions on the assumption that the reader will make the necessary adjustment as he applies intuitively the rules of scansion appropriate to the genre.

These obstacles did not substantially impede research and now we have at our disposal published information on Somali scansion which in its main tenets is incontrovertible. The discoveries of the two Somali scholars, which first appeared in Somali, were then made accessible to the outside world by John W. Johnson, who not only described the findings but added to them some original formulations.<sup>9</sup>

There were three main genres in the poetry of the public forum: the *gabay*, the *jiifto* and the *geeraar*. The most important was the *gabay*, since it was particularly favoured as the vehicle of public debate in a leisurely style and in poetic exchanges and messages. One could venture to say that perhaps 90 per cent of all classical poetry was composed in this genre. The *jiifto* had similar uses to those of the *gabay* but was rare, while the *geeraar* was traditionally an equestrian poem chanted on horseback and was regarded as appropriate for subject matters of urgency, especially in face-to-face confrontations.

In the present state of research it is the rules of scansion applicable to the *gabay* that are best known, and they appear to have been rigidly observed by poets. The *jiifto* is near to the *gabay* in that respect but the *geeraar* still presents some problems, since the rules so far evolved do not account for deviations from the pattern of the majority of the lines and it seems that there may be a set of sub-rules which still awaits discovery.

It would be beyond the scope of this paper to provide detailed accounts of the rules for each genre and these can be found in Cabdillaahi 1980 and Johnson 1979 and 1980. To illustrate what is involved in the Somali scansion rules a metric analysis of a *gabay* poem is given below, where semicircles represent syllables of one mora and dashes those of two morae. Single vertical lines show the place of foot boundaries and the caesura is indicated by a comma.

The rules applicable to the *gabay* genre are:

- A. Each line consists of two hemistichs divided by a caesura.
- B. The first hemistich normally has 12 morae, with an optional but rare possibility of anacrusis, consisting of one additional mora at the beginning of the line.
- C. The second hemistich always has eight morae and contains two long syllables.
- D. Foot boundaries do not occur in the middle of a long syllable.
- E. The caesura coincides with a word boundary.
- F. Line boundaries do not cut across major syntactic components of a sentence.

The poem is attributed to Cilmi Boodhari, a famous poet who is said to have died of unrequited love in 1941, and in it he describes how the woman he loved appeared to him in a dream. The transcript of the oral text was taken from a poetry reciter in the early 1970s by Rashiid Maxamed Shabeelle,<sup>10</sup> the biographer of the poet.

1. Ma samaynin waayahan tixdii, saaniga ahayde  
U U - U | - U U U | - - U | U U - U
2. Waataan ka saahiday tan iyo, sabanki dayreede  
- - U | - U U U | U U U U | - - U
3. Xaluun ba saqdii dhexe hurdada, wax i salaameene  
U - U U | - U U U | U U U | - - U
4. Aan sifeeyo inanti tiriig, saxan la moodaayey  
- U - | U U U U U | - U U U | - - U
5. Ilka sadaf la moodiyo wajiga, lagu saruuraayo  
U U U U U | - U U U | U U U U | - U
6. Timaha basari baan subkinee, saaran garabkeeda  
U U U U U | - U U | - - U | U U - U
7. Sanka iyo indhaha iyo afkaa, sida sabeedaad ah  
U U U U U | U U U U U | - U U U | - U
8. Suniyaal madoobeey qalbigu, saakin kaa noqoye  
U U - U | - - U | U U - U | - U U U
9. Soomaali iyo Carab Hindiga, Sooya laga keeno  
- - U | U U U U U | U U - U | U U - U
10. Inta samada hoos joogta waad, ugu sareysaaye  
U U U U U | - - U | - U U U | - - U
11. Soo soco Sidciyo qaaliyey, saanad baad tahaye  
- U U U | U U - U | - - U | - U U U

1. *I have not in recent times composed my perfect verses, as I used to do.*
2. *From the midsummer rains till now I have abstained from them completely.*
3. *But last night someone greeted me in my sleep at midnight,*
4. *So let me describe her, the girl who was like a bright lantern;*
5. *Her teeth were like seashells and her face brought joy;*
6. *Only a slut+ish woman does not put oil on her hair - hers was oiled and reached her shoulders.*
7. *Her nose, her eyes and her mouth were fragrant like musk.*
8. *O you who have black eyebrows! It is through you that my heart achieved rest.*
9. *Among Somalis and Arabs and the Indians who are brought from afar,*
10. *Among all who dwell under the sky, you are the topmost.*
11. *Come near, O precious Sidciyo - in value you are as a firearm!*

#### CULTURAL CORRELATES

The combined rules of alliteration and scansion were obligatory in the traditional Somali society and put severe constraints on the poets. It seems unlikely that rules which were so demanding could have been maintained unless they were in some way correlated with other cultural phenomena present in the traditional society. Some of these cultural correlates were direct while others were indirect, and in the former immediate interconnectedness can be observed while in the latter the links can only be established via direct correlates.

A list is given below of both these types of cultural correlates (CC), each bearing a serial number, and in the following section the grounds for linking each with the rules of versification are stated.<sup>11</sup>

CC1. *The goal of verbatim memorization*

Poetry reciters were expected to memorize and reproduce the oral text of a poem word for word; to delete, to substitute or to add any new material was discouraged. As a concession to the frailty of human memory some degree of deviation from this rule was acceptable provided that it was not attributable to the wilful intention of the reciter.

CC2. *Archaic vocabulary*

The oral poetry contained a very large number of archaic words, not used in the ordinary language. In this respect the vocabulary differences between poetry and prose were comparable to those between 15th-century English and that spoken today.<sup>12</sup>

CC3. *The use of certain proper names as common nouns*

The proper names of women, horses and camels were often used as common nouns and were frequently descriptive through their etymological associations, e.g.

*Ugaaso*, name of a woman which suggests that she is like an *ugaas* 'a chieftain' or like the daughter of one; in poetry - a woman of quality.

*Weyrax*, name of a horse which suggests that it becomes angry when frightened, cf. *weyrax* 'become angry and attack when frightened' (applied mainly to cattle); in poetry - a horse useful in battle.

*Xiito*, name of a she-camel which suggests that it is as watchful and alert as *xidin xiito* 'ringed plover' (a nocturnal bird); in poetry - any she-camel, or camels in general.

CC4. *Fictitious place names*

Poets were allowed to make up fictitious place names to denote some unspecified place, especially if it suggested remoteness.

CC5. *Neologisms*

Poets were allowed to exploit the derivational system of the language to coin new words.

CC6. *Length of poems*

Oral poems were seldom very long. One hundred lines was regarded as normal, though much shorter poems were common; very few extended over five hundred lines. Long epic poems did not exist.

CC7. *Methods of composition*

Very few poets improvised their poems during performance. Most prepared them over many hours, and then memorized the final version. Improvisation of a long poem was regarded as a sign of genius.

CC8. *Great prestige of poets*

Poets were highly respected, far more than poetry reciters.

CC9. *Supernatural powers attributed to poets*

In popular beliefs the power to compose poetry came from some mysterious source outside the poet himself. Some poets were also thought to have the power of effective cursing and blessing, clairvoyance and prediction.

CC10. *Oral postal service*

The Somali people occupied a large, sparsely populated territory and most of them were transhumant pastoralists. Kinship, marriage, alliances and trade linked people who were separated by distance, and before the introduction of a modern postal service and mass literacy, the oral message was the main medium of communication. It was carried by travellers or special messengers, and a custom existed which made it a serious moral obligation to deliver a message with accuracy and all possible speed. The sender of an oral message sometimes asked the carrier to memorize it verbatim, especially if it was in a code not known to the carrier. Often messages were in the form of a poem, with the opening lines addressed to the carrier.

CC11. *Poetic exchanges*

Polemics in verse between two, or a number, of poets, often across great distances, were common. It was considered particularly elegant to compose one's rejoinder in the same metre and alliteration as one's protagonist.

CC12. *Storage of historical information*

Most of the poems in the classical genres were topical, i.e. commented on current events or aimed at influencing the listeners to take a particular course of action. With the passage of time they became sources of historical information, for the reciters usually provided accounts in prose form of the circumstances in which the particular poem was first composed, with biographical details concerning the poet and a description of the events relevant to the understanding of the poem, which otherwise might have become opaque.

CC13. *Division into poets and reciters*

Some poets both created their own poems and recited those of others, but more frequently the two roles were divided. Poets usually recited only their own poems, while some never did this publicly but taught reciters their oral texts. Many reciters did not compose any poetry of their own: their talent did not lie in creativity but in prodigious powers of memory storage, in some cases up to twenty hours of 'playback' time.

CC14. *Unwritten copyright law*

It was a strict obligation on every poetry reciter, when he memorized the text of a poem from the poet or from another reciter, to thereafter state the name of the poet at each recital. Any breach of this custom was severely censured. An intentional misattribution was regarded as an act of dishonesty and an unintentional one as a sign of negligence.

CC15. *Personal responsibility of the poet*

A poet was held responsible for his work, even when it was transmitted by poetry reciters. Cases of assault or even assassination occurred in revenge for defamation through poems, and panegyric poems were rewarded by gifts or favours.

CC16. *The ranking of poets*

Public opinion assigned different ranks to poets, in the same way as happens in written literatures. Those of higher ranks enjoyed enormous prestige, even posthumously. This fact was noted by, and caused astonishment to, the early foreign travellers Sir Richard Burton and his near-contemporary Luigi Robbèchi Brichetti.<sup>13</sup>



CC17. *Performance: emphasis on the oral text*

Poems of classical genres were usually chanted, without any instrumental accompaniment, at a slow speed with each line being normally repeated. Although a reciter with a good voice was appreciated, the audience were more concerned with the oral text than with its performance. Any form of mimetic accompaniment to the recital of a poem was regarded as improper.

CC18. *Popularity of oral poetry*

Poetry was one of the chief sources of popular entertainment and was a social equivalent of the modern mass media.

CC19. *Rapid dissemination of poems*

Poetry reciters travelled widely and learnt poems from each other. Poems often spread across vast distances with such speed that this was sometimes attributed in popular belief to supernatural intervention.

CC20. *Social importance of poems*

Poets were entitled, and expected, not only to comment on events of public concern but to influence them by presenting particular views or recommending a course of action. They were often engaged in propaganda, both in local affairs and national politics, and it is known that very often this propaganda was very effective.

#### GROUNDS FOR POSTULATING CULTURAL CORRELATES

##### *Direct correlates*

It is assumed here that CC1-9 were directly correlated with the system of versification on the grounds set out below:

CC1: The versification served as a highly effective mnemonic device in a situation where the goal of verbatim memorization was aimed at. Such a goal could hardly be achieved without a mnemonic device of some kind.

CC2-5: The rules of Somali versification were very demanding and imposed severe constraints on the phonological characteristics of the words used by the poet. His lexical repertoire had to be augmented by sources which lay beyond the limits of the language of practical communication.

CC6-7: Clearly, under the constraints of the system of versification long poems would be extremely difficult to compose. An epic poem alliterating in the same sound would hardly be feasible. It was also very difficult to improvise under those constraints.

CC8-9: The demands of the system of versification acted as a selecting device. Only persons with an unusually high command of the language, both in its vocabulary and grammatical structure, could practise the art of poetry. Such a command was regarded in the traditional Somali society as a sure sign of superior intelligence. Some people were so amazed by the ability of some poets to compose relatively long poems or to improvise without breaking the rules of versification, that they attributed it to supernatural intervention. The obscurity of the poetic diction often produced an aura which confirmed that impression, and some poets made explicit claims of being in direct contact with supernatural beings. In the view of some of their audiences such a contact opened up for the poets the possibility of receiving help from supernatural beings in other spheres as well.

*Indirect correlates*

The grounds for regarding CC10-20 as indirectly correlated with the system of versification are as follows:

CC10-11: Sending messages or engaging in poetic exchanges requires at least some degree of fidelity in their transmission, and this would hardly be possible without CC1. The efficiency of communication would have been seriously impaired if the carriers were allowed to take liberties with the oral text: it would be comparable to allowing telex operators in a modern industrial society to introduce variations and improvisations into the messages entrusted to them.

CC12: The credibility and the sense of authenticity in the historical information contained in once-topical poems depends on CC1. If a number of different poems concerned with the same historical events was available, the dovetailing of information provided additional corroboration.

CC13: Most of the poetry reciters were people endowed with prodigious powers of memory, which were highly desirable in view of CC1. Such gifts, however, seldom coincide with poetic talent in any culture and this fact accounts for CC13.

CC14-16: Individual authorship of an oral text could hardly be established without CC1. If poetry reciters made changes at will and improvised on the received oral text they would be its co-authors and would then share the responsibility for it as well as the rewards of fame.

CC17: In view of the existence of CCl poetry reciters were regarded merely as channels of communication. They kept a low profile, thus giving prominence to the oral text rather than to its performance.

CC18-20: In view of CC8 and CC9 poets were regarded as persons worth listening to whether in face-to-face situations or through the performances of poetry reciters made authentic by CCl. This caused poetry to be eminently suitable as a vehicle of influencing public opinion in matters of local and national politics, and since these subjects were of immediate concern and interest to the public, this in turn provided additional attraction and assured the poets or their reciters of large audiences.

Travelling formed part of the traditional way of life in Somalia for most people, and this included poetry reciters. They were given a warm reception wherever they went, and at wells, watering ponds and markets they always found appreciative audiences, among whom other poetry reciters were also found and who were keen on memorizing topical items or adding to their repertoire of old poems so that they could recite them themselves on other occasions. Thus the oral copy was multiplied through a series of relays.

In Somali society the events of past history often affected relationships between various ethnic and territorial subgroups of the nation. This added to the attraction of the older poems, which in view of CCl were regarded as authentic sources of information about the past.

#### CONCLUSIONS

The versification systems in the oral literatures of African societies are of interest in themselves, and research into them is highly relevant to the general world-wide study of literature, oral and written. Such research, though it must initially deal with the formal aspects of versification, may provide new perspectives if it widens its scope to the study of correlated cultural phenomena. The Somali example suggests that it may offer a fruitful line of inquiry.

The study of cultural correlates of versification may also throw some light on its absence in the poetry of some societies. It is possible that among the correlates of the absence of versification may be found the emphasis placed in a particular society on the musical or mimetic aspects of the performance of poetic texts.

## NOTES

1. For a general account of the prosodic features of oral poetry see Finnegan 1977.
2. Information concerning the genres of Somali poetry can be found in Andrzejewski and Lewis 1964, Cerulli 1964, Johnson 1972 and 1974 and Muuse 1968. Extensive bibliographies concerning Somali literature are Johnson 1969 (supplemented in Johnson 1973) and Lamberti 1982.
3. For information about alliteration see Andrzejewski and Lewis 1964, Cerulli 1964 and Johnson 1974 and for scansion Cabdillaahi 1980 and Johnson 1979 and 1980. Johnson 1979 also gives a complete bibliography of publications of Cabdillaahi Diiriye Guuleed and Maxamed Xaashi Dhamac "Gaarriye" on scansion, written in Somali.
4. Caaqib 1977, p.10. Line 8 of the original which runs *Wacdi sheekh iyo wanaagsan* has been amended here on the assumption that it contains a typing error. For information about Sheekh Caaqib Cabdullaahi Jaamac, a well known poet and collector of oral literature, see Andrzejewski 1970. While translating this poem and the other two poems given in this paper I received help and advice from Maxamed Cabdillaahi Riiraash, of the Curriculum Department of the Somali Ministry of Education, now on a postgraduate studies secondment in London. His assistance, which I gratefully acknowledge, was particularly useful since he is both an historian and a poet.
5. Shire 1965, p.46. The text here follows the original except for the adjustment of the spelling to the official orthography. For information about Shire Jaamac Axmed, a well known collector of oral literature, writer and scholar see Andrzejewski 1975.
6. Cabdisalaan 1977.
7. This discovery is described in Johnson 1980; see also Note 3.
8. See Andrzejewski 1978.
9. Johnson 1979. See also Antinucci 1980 for the aspects of scansion related to linguistic structure.
10. Rashiid 1975, p.50. In Lines 4, 6 and 7 the original transcript, which is orthographic, has the forms *inantii*, *subkine* and *afka* instead of *inanti*, *subkinee* and *afkaa* given here. The final vowels in these forms are of variable length and have been adjusted to the oral rendering by Maxamed Cabdillaahi Riiraash (see Note 3). The words *basri* (Line 6) and *hoose* (Line 10) of the original transcript have been amended to *basari* and *hoos*

since they are almost certainly typing errors. For further information about Cilmi Boodhari (also known as Cilmi Bowndheri) see Andrzejewski and Maxamed 1967.

11. For works relevant to the cultural correlates described here see the References.

12. The difference between the language of poetry and that of ordinary communication is not a recent development. It was noticed by Burton who, referring to Somali poetry, wrote: 'Many of these compositions are so idiomatic that Arabs settled for years among the Somal cannot understand them though perfectly acquainted with conversational style' (Burton 1856, p.116).

13. See Burton 1856 and Robecchi 1889.

#### REFERENCES

Since surnames are not normally used in Somalia the names of Somali authors are given in their customary order and are not inverted. All Somali names are given in the official orthography and if their spelling differs from that used on the title page they are cross-referenced; the symbol = indicates that the variants refer to the same author. This is done in accordance with the recommendations presented in Andrzejewski 1980 which have now been adopted by libraries with major holdings in the Somali field.

Works which provide information about or give instances of the cultural correlates of the Somali system of versification are marked with an asterisk.

- ABDILLAHI Deria Guled. 1980. 'The Scansion of Somali Poetry', in Xuseen 1980, Vol.I, pp.132-140.
- \* ABDISALAM Yassin Mohamed. 1977. *Sufi Poetry in Somali: Its Themes and Imagery*, Ph.D. Thesis (London).
- ANDRZEJEWSKI, B.W. 1970. 'The *Roobdoon* of Sheikh Aqib Abdullahi Jama: A Somali Prayer for Rain', *African Language Studies*, Vol. XI, pp.21-34.
- \* ----- 1972. 'Poetry in Somali Society', in Pride and Holmes 1972, pp.252-259.
- 1975. 'The Rise of Written Somali Literature', *African Research and Documentation*, Vol. VIII/IX, pp.7-14.
- 1978. 'The Development of a National Orthography in Somalia and the Modernization of the Somali Language', *Horn of Africa*, Vol. I, pp.39-45.
- 1980. 'Recommendations for Somali Entries in Library Cataloguing Systems', *African Research and Documentation*, Vol. XXII, pp. 21-22.
- 1981. 'The Poem as Message: Verbatim Memorization in Somali Oral Poetry', in Ryan 1981.
- \* ----- and I.M. LEWIS. 1964. *Somali Poetry: An Introduction*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

- and MAXAMED Faarax Cabdillaahi = ANDRZEJEWSKI, B.W. and MOHAMED Farah Abdillahi.
- \* ----- and MOHAMED Farah Abdillahi. 1967. 'The Life of 'Ilmi Bowndheri, a Somali Oral Poet Who Is Said to Have Died of Love', *Journal of the Folklore Institute*, Vol.IV, pp.191-206.
- \* ----- and MUSA H.I. Galaal. 1963. 'A Somali Poetic Combat', *Journal of African Languages*, Vol. I, pp.15-38; Vol.II, pp. 93-100 and 190-205.
- \* ----- 1966. 'The Art of the Verbal Message in Somali Society', in Lukas 1966, pp. 29-39.
- and MUUSE X.I. Galaal = ANDRZEJEWSKI, B.W. and MUSA H.I. Galaal.
- ANTINUCCI, Francesco. 1980. 'Notes on the Linguistic Structure of Somali Poetry', in Xuseen 1980, Vol.I, pp.141-153.
- \* AXMED Faarax Cali 'Idaajaa'. 1974. *Ismaciil Mire*, Xamar (Mogadishu): Akademiyaha Dhaqanka, Wasaaradda Hiddaha iyo Tacliinta Sare.
- \* BURTON, Sir Richard F. 1856. *First Footsteps in East Africa, or an Exploration of Harar*, London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans.
- \* CAAQIB Cabdullaahi Jaamac, Sheekh. 1977. *Bugga Xoog Warranka Geesigii Wiilxaal iyo Taariikhdiisa iyo Umuuro Kale oo Raacsan*, (Unpublished typescript, awaiting publication by the Somali Academy of Sciences and Arts, Mogadishu).
- CABDILLAHI Diiriye Guuleed = ABDILLAHI Deria Guled.
- CABDISALAAN Yaasiin Maxamed = ABDISALAM Yassin Mohamed.
- \* CERULLI, Enrico. 1957, 1959 and 1964. *Somalia: Scritti Vari Editi ed Inediti* (3 vols.), Rome: Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato.
- FINNEGAN, Ruth. 1977. *Oral Poetry*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- HUSSEIN M. Adam (ed.). 1980. *Somalia and the World: Proceedings of the International Symposium held in Mogadishu, October 15-21, 1979* (2 vols.), Mogadishu: State Printing Press.
- \* JAAMAC Cumar Ciise, Sheekh (ed.). 1974. *Diiwaanka Gabayadii Sayid Maxamed Cabdulle Xasan*, Xamar (Mogadishu): Akademiyaha Dhaqanka, Wasaaradda Hiddaha iyo Tacliinta Sare.
- JOHNSON, John W. 1969. 'A Bibliography of Somali Language and Literature', *African Language Review*, Vol. VIII, pp.279-297.
- 1972. 'The Family of Miniature Genres in Somali Oral Poetry', *Folklore Forum*, Vol. V, pp.79-99.
- 1973. 'Research in Somali Folklore', *Research in African Literatures*, Vol. IV, pp.51-61.
- \* ----- 1974. *Heellooy Heelleellooy: The Development of the Genre Heello in Modern Somali Poetry*, Bloomington: Indiana University Publications (African Series 5).
- 1979. 'Somali Prosodic Systems', *Horn of Africa*, Vol. II, pp.46-54.
- \* ----- 1980. 'Recent Contributions by Somalis and Somalists to the Study of Oral Literature', in Xuseen 1980, Vol. I, pp.117-140.
- LAMBERTI, Marcello. 1982. *Somali Language and Literature*, Hamburg: Helmut Buske Verlag (in press).
- \* LEWIS, I.M. 1980. *A Modern History of Somalia*, London: Longman.
- LÜKAS, Johannes (ed.). 1966. *Neue Afrikanistische Studien*, Hamburg: Hamburger Beiträge zur Afrika Kunde 5.
- MAXAMED Faarax Cabdillaahi = MOHAMED Farah Abdillahi.

- \* MOHAMED Farah Abdillahi. circa 1967. *Sheekooyin Fogaan iyo Dhowaan Ba Leh*. (Place of publication not given; a copy is available at the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London.)
- \* MUSA Galaal. 1968. 'Some Observations on Somali Culture', in *Somalia* 1968, pp.39-55.
- \* MUSA H.I. Galaal (ed.). circa 1964. *A Collection of Somali Literature, Mainly from Sayid Mohamed Abdille Hassan*, Mogadishu.  
MUUSE Xaaji Ismaaciil Galaal = M.H.I. Galaal = MUSA Galaal.
- \* PRIDE, J.B. and Janet HOLMES (eds.). 1972. *Sociolinguistics*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- \* RASHID Maxamed Shabeele. 1975. *Ma Dhabba Jacayl Waa Loo Dhintaa*, Mogadishu: Wakaaladda Madbacadda Qaranka.
- \* ROBECCHI BRICCHETTI, Luigi. 1899. *Somalia e Benadir*, Milan: Carlo Aliprandi.
- RYAN, Peter (ed.). 1981. *Memory and Poetic Structure: Papers of the Conference on Oral Literature and Literary Theory held at Middlesex Polytechnic*, London: Middlesex Polytechnic.
- SACIID Sh. Samatar = SAID S. Samatar.
- \* SAID S. Samatar. 1980a. 'Literary War in the Somalia of the Sayyid Mahammad Abdille Hassan: The Dervish Poetic Duels', in Xuseen 1980, Vol. I, pp.154-190.
- \* ----- 1980b. 'Gabay-havir: A Somali Mock Heroic Song', *Research in African Literatures*, Vol. XI, pp.449-478.
- \* SHIRE Jaamac Achmed. 1965. *Gabayo, Maahmaah iyo Sheekooyin Yaryar*, Mogadishu: The National Printers.
- SHIRE Jaamac Achmed = SHIRE Jaamac Axmed.
- SOMALIA. 1968. *Perspectives on Somalia*, Mogadishu: Somali Institute of Public Administration.
- XUSEEN M. Aadan = HUSSEIN M. Adam.

COMMENT DEFINIR LE GENRE EPIQUE?  
UN EXEMPLE: L'EPOPEE AFRICAINE

Il est remarquable - et, comme nous le verrons, significatif - que, s'il nous est aisé de reconnaître parmi d'autres un texte épique, de façon quasi spontanée, en revanche, définir le genre épique ne semble jamais simple ; c'est que cette reconnaissance spontanée se fait surtout à une certaine qualité d'émotion qui sourd de l'épopée ; si bien que, lorsqu'on veut tenter de donner une définition de celle-ci, on se trouve assailli par des souvenirs d'émotions éthiques et esthétiques, par des impressions plus affectives qu'intellectuelles qui brouillent les voies d'approche objectives, analytiques et que l'on voudrait rationnelles, auxquelles on s'efforce d'avoir recours pour cerner les caractéristiques pertinentes qui fonderaient l'épopée comme genre littéraire distinct.

Nous verrons par la suite que, loin de chercher à nous libérer de cet effet de l'épopée, nous devons au contraire y reconnaître un signe ; car c'est peut-être là ce qui en révèle la fonction et en justifie toute la mise en forme.

Les quelques définitions glanées dans les dictionnaires<sup>1</sup> livrent un certain nombre de constantes concernant les unes le contenu, les autres le traitement littéraire de celui-ci : apparaissent ainsi les termes de 'héros', 'grands faits', 'actions grandes et héroïques' ou 'intéressantes et mémorables', puis ceux de 'récit' et de 'narration' à côté de ceux de 'poèmes' et de 'vers' et enfin, parfois, pour traduire la finalité de l'épopée, le verbe 'célébrer'. Ces caractéristiques s'avérant somme toute assez peu spécifiques, les auteurs essaient de préciser davantage les contours du genre ; et l'on constate alors, chez la plupart, une sorte d'impuissance à fournir des traits positivement déterminés : ils font appel soit à une délimitation négative du genre



épique en l'opposant aux autres genres, soit à une sorte de fusion syncrétiste. Le Littré, par exemple, s'en remet pour ce faire à Marmontel qui, dans son article de l'Encyclopédie, dit de l'épopée qu'elle 'diffère de l'histoire..., du poème dramatique..., du poème didactique..., des fastes...'1. Inversement, le Petit Robert invoque une sorte de métissage des genres et fait de l'épopée 'un long poème où le merveilleux se mêle au vrai, la légende à l'histoire...'1. Dumézil, quant à lui, y voit plutôt une genèse : 'L'épopée est grosse de genres littéraires, l'histoire, le roman, qui s'en différencient plus ou moins tôt'2.

Ce flottement, cette oscillation d'un genre à un autre et surtout ce besoin constant d'avoir recours aux autres genres pour délimiter l'épopée de l'extérieur et lui chercher ainsi sa place dans le système général des divers actes de parole plutôt que d'en déterminer les traits intrinsèques qui la désigneraient comme telle dans la classification des genres littéraires, me semble bien traduire cet inconfort où nous plonge l'épopée lorsque nous prétendons la traiter, à l'instar des autres genres, en tant que texte littéraire pur et simple, réduit à lui-même.

La rencontre avec les épopées africaines<sup>3</sup> ne pourrait-elle pas nous délivrer de cet inconfort en nous replongeant aux sources vivantes de ce genre littéraire et en nous amenant, de ce fait, à en percevoir plus directement les véritables qualités distinctives.

L'intérêt que présente en effet le domaine africain pour l'étude du genre épique est double : tout d'abord - et cela est essentiel - l'épopée (comme l'indique l'étymologie du mot) y demeure *parole* et parole vivante, puisqu'elle y participe de civilisations de l'oralité toujours actuelles ; nous pouvons donc l'y saisir en situation, dans son fonctionnement même et sa totale expression. Ensuite son inscription dans des cultures totalement différentes devrait permettre, par une comparaison serrée, de déceler, à travers ses variations culturelles mêmes, ce qui, cependant, peut l'identifier comme épopée. Ces deux situations de fait semblent tout particulièrement favorables à une appréhension optimale du problème de l'épopée ; aussi, pour tenter de voir plus clair dans ce qui en fait la spécificité, avons-nous pris pour champ d'investigation les épopées de l'Afrique de l'ouest et celles de l'Afrique centrale<sup>4</sup>.

Si nous consultons les auteurs africains qui ont présenté et étudié des épopées, nous retrouvons, chez eux, en premier, ce même flottement, dans la définition du genre qu'ils situent entre ou à la lisière d'autres genres. Pour Massa M. Diabaté, 'l'épopée se situe entre l'histoire et le mythe' et, pour Eno Belinga, elle est 'aux frontières de l'histoire et du mythe'<sup>5</sup>.

Nous voyons ici apparaître la notion de mythe côtoyant celle d'histoire à propos aussi bien de l'épopée malinké que du *met* camerounais et c'est là leur premier point commun. En fait cet apparentement de l'épopée à l'un et à l'autre recouvre un problème beaucoup plus général : celui du traitement littéraire du

savoir collectif et de la reconstruction de la réalité en vue de sa juste appropriation culturelle. Ainsi voit-on, dans l'épopée ouest-africaine, un fait historique réel être utilisé comme catalyseur d'une transposition idéologique ou, au contraire, dans le *mvèt*, une mythologie, être utilisée pour y inscrire une projection de la société et de son histoire. C'est ce qu'explique parfaitement l'un des deux auteurs cités plus haut : 'L'épopée, dit Massa M. Diabaté, se situe *entre l'histoire et le mythe*. Reprenant un fait historique, elle concentre autour d'un personnage qui a marqué son temps, *tout l'acquis culturel d'une société...* d'autre part, elle attribue au personnage autour duquel elle se forme *toutes les valeurs passées et présentes* et constitue alors un *lieu de reconnaissance et de distinction d'un peuple par rapport aux autres*' (c'est nous qui soulignons)<sup>4</sup>. Un autre auteur, Essone Atome Ongoane, estime, quant à lui, que le *mvèt* présente 'l'éclatement de la structure cosmogonique du pouvoir comme humanisation du pouvoir et création du monde...', offre une méta-société, celle des Immortels et amène la société humaine à s'organiser et à agir comme son double<sup>6</sup>. Nous retrouvons dans cette vision de l'épopée comme cristallisation de 'tout l'acquis culturel de la société', pour l'un, comme 'méta-société', pour l'autre, l'éclairage auquel les analyses de Dumézil nous ont désormais accoutumés, pour les épopées indo-européennes dont la finalité et certains modes d'expression ne devaient peut-être pas, en leur temps, se trouver très éloignés de ceux des épopées africaines encore en pleine vitalité.

La richesse de l'épopée vient de cette concentration culturelle qui explique la complexité même de ce genre littéraire : en effet on y peut reconnaître tout un écheveau entremêlé d'éléments présents dans d'autres genres (conte, mythe, devise, proverbe, récit historique, poésie, etc.) mais aussi divers niveaux de relation au monde (mythique, religieux, historique, sociologique, politique, éthique...) qui informent et orientent le récit. Car l'épopée est le genre qui focalise le maximum de données culturelles pour les ordonner dans une forme précise répondant à une vocation à la fois *sémantique* et *pragmatique* : celle de symboliser une *identité* et celle d'appeler à *vivre cette identité* au sein de la *communauté* qu'elle définit. C'est cette finalité même qui, selon les cultures, entraîne l'épopée d'une façon plus ou moins accentuée vers le mythe ou vers l'histoire... La diversité des épopées africaines vient en effet de ce que 'lieux de distinction d'un peuple par rapport à un autre', elles sont, plus que tout autre genre littéraire, conditionnées par la conception qu'a chaque peuple de son identité culturelle ou nationale : ainsi aurons-nous des textes aussi divers que les *mvèt* du Cameroun ou du Gabon, les récits épiques de *Mwindo* chez les Banyanga ou ceux de *Lianja*, chez les Nkundo-Mongo, au Zaïre, qui font parcourir à leurs héros-civilisateurs de véritables périples initiatiques, reposent sur toute une symbolique et dont les rapports avec le mythe, le conte, la légende, sont clairement marqués ; ou bien, au contraire, en Afrique de l'ouest, une gamme de textes qui va de l'épopée malinké de *Sunjata* à l'épopée peule

en passant par la bambara et la soninké etc. ; la première, fondée sur l'histoire originelle du Mandé, réinscrit cette histoire dans le mythe pour mieux justifier celle-là par celui-ci ; la peule et la bambara, fort proches l'une de l'autre, pour ce qui est du contenu (elles concernent souvent des héros et des faits historiques relativement récents et même communs aux deux), ne présentent aucune transposition mythique mais, prenant racine dans la réalité, recomposent celle-ci selon une perspective plus historique et politique, en ce qui concerne la bambara (instauration et maintien du pouvoir dans le royaume de Ségou), plus éthique et idéologique en ce qui concerne la peule qui exalte les vertus du *pulaaku*, incarnées par les héros bien personnalisés qui la peuplent.

En dépit de ces tendances plus ou moins prononcées selon les cas, il est évident que, même dans les récits épiques les plus 'historiques', le traitement du sujet n'est guère celui d'une 'chronique' et se caractérise précisément par un type de rapport au temps qui lui est particulier. En effet, le récit épique, éminemment narratif, devrait, semble-t-il, être marqué par la logique chronologique ; or, nombreux sont les exemples qui illustrent soit une distorsion dans la succession des actes les plus déterminants (cf. la présentation des combats singuliers, dans les épopées peule et bambara, qui, au lieu d'un échange de coups alternés, consistent en une triple succession de coups parallèles), soit une densification du temps (qui fait se rejoindre les origines mythiques du Mandé et le fait historique de l'instauration de l'empire de Sunjata) ou bien au contraire une dilution de certains actes qui se trouvent redistribués dans le temps sous forme de prédiction, récit de leur avènement et relation de leur réalisation etc. ; toutes ces pratiques littéraires traduisent bien le fait que l'épopée n'a point vocation de reproduire pour la transmettre telle qu'elle fut l'histoire chronologique, dans l'enchaînement causal des faits qui la constituent mais bien plutôt celle d'une réinterprétation culturelle ou, pourrions-nous dire, idéologique des faits ; réinterprétation qui, de par sa finalité même, propulse l'histoire ainsi évoquée, hors du système temporel ordinaire pour réorganiser le temps, lui réinventer une durée et une succession autres, en restructurant la chronologie afin de rendre les faits eux-mêmes signifiants ; ce qui, d'une certaine manière, rejoint le type d'atemporalité du mythe, autre réponse à l'ambition de maîtriser le temps, de manipuler la nécessité et de transmuier la réalité en code symbolique ; on retrouve d'ailleurs, dans la reconstruction épique des faits et de la réalité, des traits de la reconstruction mythique, qui élabore des sortes de modèles structuraux sur lesquels se greffent des données du savoir commun qu'ils organisent ainsi en un tout significatif en vertu d'une causalité autre.

Cependant, si l'épopée n'est pas histoire - objet de connaissance, essai de compréhension des événements par l'analyse de leur contexte, de leurs antécédents et de leurs aboutissants -

elle n'est pas davantage mythe - objet de foi ou de croyance, reposant sur un système symbolique secrété par la société dont il émane ; elle est essentiellement objet de reconnaissance, comme le signalait Massa M. Diabaté.

L'épopée réveille la notion d'identité culturelle en même temps qu'elle suscite, par l'exaltation dans la communion, une tension vers cette identification. Plus encore qu'une γυνῶσις, l'épopée est une πρᾶξις : car elle n'est pas qu'un récit à vocation uniquement référentielle, c'est-à-dire porteur d'information ou de signification par rapport au référent qui s'y trouve impliqué ; elle est encore bien davantage un récit qui interpelle l'auditeur et l'implique très intimement dans sa propre finalité en lui proposant un lieu d'identification.

Toute personne qui a, en Afrique, assisté à l'énonciation d'une épopée, n'a pu rester insensible au caractère 'communiel', dirons-nous, de cette manifestation culturelle et n'a pu que reconnaître les qualités spécifiques de ce genre qui sont : son *dynamisme mobilisateur*, sa capacité de faire communier un public unanime dans une *exaltation* suscitée par une *mise en forme particulière* d'une *donnée idéologique commune* faisant partie du *savoir collectif*.

Tout le problème réside, en fait, dans cette *mise en forme particulière* ; car cette donnée idéologique est certes une valeur en soi et bien connue de tous comme telle ; mais seule sa mise en forme *épique* est capable de la rendre véritablement *efficace*. Ce qu'il convient donc de définir et d'analyser, ce sont les *modalités* de cette mise en forme par rapport à sa *finalité* et son *efficacité*.

Pour ce faire, il paraît utile de dresser un tableau comparatif des deux types d'épopées africaines que nous avons choisi de traiter ici : celles de l'Afrique occidentale, sahélienne, et celles de l'Afrique centrale, forestière.

Pour rendre la confrontation la plus efficace possible nous avons choisi, dans chaque groupe, un exemple que nous pouvons considérer comme extrême, soit l'épopée peule du Mâssina pour le premier, le *mvèt* gabonais, pour le second ; ainsi pensons-nous pouvoir déterminer plus sûrement ce qui, en dépit des dissemblances les plus évidentes, relie ces deux réalisations littéraires au point que nous les classions dans un seul et même genre, le genre épique, dont pourraient être, par là-même, identifiées les marques distinctives. Si nous avons pris pour référence l'épopée peule du Mâssina au lieu de la si célèbre épopée malinké, ce n'est pas seulement parce qu'elle nous est plus familière et que nous préférons, pour Sunjata, laisser la parole à Gordon Innes ; c'est aussi parce que ce genre littéraire semble bien, dans cette région, avoir été emprunté aux voisins bambara et que, du fait même qu'il est un genre emprunté, on a quelque chance d'y déceler d'autant mieux les points forts, les modes d'articulation du sens et de la forme, qui durent être ressentis, par les usagers mêmes, comme caractéristiques de ce genre.

Examinons donc ces oeuvres sous tous leurs aspects : au plan formel le plus immédiat : statut de l'énonciateur, organisation et conditions de l'énonciation, mode d'énonciation ; au plan du texte : contenu et style ; au plan de la fonction. Et, à la lumière du tableau établi ci-dessous, tentons de repérer les points de convergence.

#### Statut sociologique de l'énonciateur

- Le griot, homme 'casté', appartient de naissance à une classe socio-professionnelle endogame.
- Pas d'initiation rituelle spécifique. L'apprentissage de l'art et du savoir suffit.
- Pas d'insigne de la profession (sinon l'instrument de musique traditionnel).
- Le joueur de *mvet* est un homme libre ; est autorisé à devenir joueur et récitant de *mvet*, qui le veut et le peut.
- L'initiation rituelle (liée à la révélation initiale, d'origine divine) double l'apprentissage professionnel.
- Costume rituel spécial, à composantes symboliques.

#### Accompagnement musical

- Instrument unique : *hoddu*, luth à trois ou quatre cordes (qui donne son nom au genre).
- Instrument : *mvet*, harpe-luth (qui donne son nom au genre).
- Percussions : baguettes entrechoquées, grelots ....
- Choeur vocal.
- De préférence un seul et même griot récite et joue du *hoddu*, pour une meilleure combinaison de la parole et de la musique.
- Le récitant aime autant sinon plus (cf. Zwé Nguéma) être relevé de son rôle de musicien par un autre joueur de *mvet* pour être libre de ses mouvements.
- Mobilité extrême de l'exécutant : tant : gestes, danses, mimes, théâtralisation du récit.
- Déclamation rythmée mais monocorde, sans effets paralinguistiques. Grande sobriété dans l'utilisation des ressources vocales.
- Déclamation très expressive avec recherche de tous les effets paralinguistiques. Expressionnisme poussé à l'excès : cris, onomatopées, accentuation des intonations poussée à la limite du chant.

#### Structuration formelle du récit

- Récité par épisodes bien circonscrits, formant chacun un tout autonome ; même si un même griot raconte à la suite le cycle entier d'un unique
- Récit unique construit selon un schéma linéaire mais entrecoupé d'interludes (chants, réflexions, anecdotes) totalement extérieurs au récit lui-

héros, chaque épisode est indépendant et construit en conséquence.

même ; en dépit de ces ruptures abruptes, le récit reprend là où on l'avait laissé en attente, les épisodes s'enchaînant les uns aux autres.

- Pas d'interludes, même entre des épisodes distincts. Au contraire, les transitions sont ménagées par la poursuite du thème musical commun.

- Les intermèdes musicaux assez brefs qui ponctuent la structure narrative recentrent constamment le récit sur le héros principal, puisqu'ils reprennent la devise musicale de celui-ci.

- Les intermèdes musicaux et chantés, dans les interludes, avec réponse du chœur et du public, décentrent totalement le récit, créant diversion et récréation.

### Contenu

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>- Récit inscrit dans l'histoire personnalisée :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Contexte historique repérable dans :             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. le temps,</li> <li>. l'espace (terrestre et limité géographiquement),</li> </ul> </li> <li>. les protagonistes (personnages réels situés, par leur généalogie, dans une lignée historique).</li> </ul> <p>- Affrontements :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. rivalité entre égaux : chefs ou 'fils de chefs' ;</li> <li>. rébellion de vassal contre suzerain,</li> <li>. conquête de gloire et de renommée humaines.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">Ressort fondamental de l'action : la <u>transgression</u></p> <p>- Protagonistes :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. héros réels, historiques, particularisés avec certains autres personnages archétypaux ;</li> </ul> | <p>- Récit inscrit dans l'histoire mythique.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Contexte mythique non repérable :             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. atemporel,</li> <li>. situé dans l'espace cosmique illimité, à travers tous les éléments.</li> </ul> </li> <li>. protagonistes : personnages mythiques symboliques resitués par leur généalogie dans l'histoire mythique de la création du Cosmos.</li> </ul> <p>. rivalité entre personnages originellement inégaux : Mortels et Immortels ;</p> <p>. rébellion et agressivité,</p> <p>. conquête de l'immortalité.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. héros irréels, fantastiques, peu particularisés ;</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

- actes du héros illustrent ses caractéristiques personnelles, ses vertus particulières ; les pouvoirs magiques ne sont pour lui que des adjuvants occasionnels empruntés ; l'action reste déterminée par la personnalité et la volonté du héros.
- actes du héros ne font que traduire sa puissance magique égale ou supérieure à celle de son adversaire. Personnages investis par des pouvoirs surnaturels qui leur semblent inhérents. L'action n'est qu'un affrontement - avec surenchère - de pouvoirs magiques plutôt qu'un affrontement de personnes caractérisées.

- Dimension éthique et psychologique de l'action.

- Dimension cosmique et mythique de l'action.

- Structure linéaire de l'action : logique de l'action centrée sur le personnage pivot mis en valeur, acteur de l'événement qui, en même temps, le signifie.

- Structure cumulative de l'action, à plusieurs niveaux de signification. Sens symbolique : les personnages ne sont que des actants d'événements dont la signification les dépasse en tant que personnes.

- Temps : restructuration de la logique chronologique de certains actes-clés du récit.

- Temps : respect de la succession dans la logique chronologique des actes.

- Espace : restriction et condensation : lieu précis et peu étendu.

- Espace : projection spatiale éclatée : on passe d'un univers à un autre.

#### Style

- Style simple de la narration ordinaire, sobre et dépouillé, contrastant avec le style poétique expressif de certaines devises et formules figées.

- Style marqué par la démesure : accumulation et débordement verbal, fantaisie débridée, imagination au service du fantastique. Devises et formules imagées.

- Finesse, retenue, austérité de l'expression ; préférence pour le suggéré, l'implicite et le sous-entendu.

- Recherche de l'excès, de la redondance et de l'explicite.

#### Effets du style sur l'auditoire

- Attention de l'auditoire intensément sollicitée par l'effort fort d'appréciation et d'appréhension du sens à travers les sous-entendus et l'inexprimé.

- Attention de l'auditoire entraînée par le torrent verbal et submergée par la surenchère expressionniste.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communion du public dans cette tension et participation intériorisée.</li> <li>- Effet de la parole sur la personne : l'épopée agit comme une devise collective qui mobilise les potentiels individuels en les orientant vers une vocation commune pour assurer la cohésion du groupe en dépit de sa dispersion.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communion du public dans ce transport et participation extériorisée.</li> <li>- Effet de la parole sur le groupe : l'épopée est une communion rituelle du groupe, qui le resitue dans sa dimension cosmique et mythique pour le réenraciner et en raffermir les fondements.</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

#### Attitude du public

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Silence, immobilité attentive et recueillie du public concentré sur son écoute, dans une exaltation tendue mais muette. Participation intense mais passive.</li> <li>- Impression de communion intériorisée dans la tension vers une identification intime avec le héros et l'idéologie évoquée.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public expansif et extraverti qui, sans cesse interpellé par le récitant, s'exprime beaucoup.</li> <li>- Participation active et bruyante.</li> <li>- Impression de communion extériorisée entre les membres du groupe revivant leur communauté dans la solidarité de la fête.</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

#### Fonction

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Solidarité régénérée dans la perception renouvelée de l'identité culturelle et idéologique projetée dans le texte.</li> <li>- Le <i>hoddu</i> ranime, par l'exaltation contenue et intime, en chacun, l'idéologie éthico-psychologique qui soustend l'identité peule ou <i>pulaaku</i>, sur laquelle repose l'unité profonde du groupe, si dispersé soit-il.</li> <li>- L'épopée peule apparaît réductrice : elle tend à identifier le groupe par une restriction de ses caractères spécifiques qui le distinguent nettement des autres, s'érigent ainsi en marques extérieures de son identité. De plus, elle suscite en chacun l'aspiration intime à la permanence de ces marques.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Solidarité régénérée dans la fête, manifestation vécue de l'identité et de l'unité réaffirmées.</li> <li>- Le <i>mvot</i> ranime, par la participation active et totale à la fête, la solidarité du groupe dans ses structures politico-sociales, reflet et projection du modèle mythique.</li> <li>- L'épopée gabonaise élargit la perspective dans laquelle le groupe se reconnaît, en profondeur, dans le temps, par son réenracinement dans le mythe de la Création et, en extension, dans l'espace et dans le temps vécu, par sa participation unanime à cette entreprise de réenracinement qui apparaît comme un rituel collectif de la cohésion du groupe.</li> </ul> |
|--|---|



A la lecture d'un tel tableau, on reste confondu devant la proportion des différences que l'on peut même qualifier de divergences, voire d'oppositions, face à la rareté des concordances ; pourtant toute cette diversité se résoud lorsque, précisément, on considère les trois principaux points de convergence qui sont :

- . l'association de la parole et d'un instrument de musique spécifique,
- . le ressort de l'action dans le récit : la transgression,
- . la fonction de cette manifestation culturelle.

La rencontre de ces trois points semble bien être la clé du genre épique, dans cette région de l'Afrique.

Revenons plus précisément sur chacun de ces points.

Dans les deux cas, on relève la conjonction obligatoire de la parole déclamée et de l'instrument de musique dont l'importance est révélée par le fait même que c'est lui qui donne son nom au genre épique, genre que l'on hésite dès lors à désigner, dans ce contexte africain, comme un genre simplement littéraire.

Eno Belinga souligne l'importance de cette coïncidence en ces termes :

1. Le Mvet désigne tout d'abord un instrument de musique à cordes ....
2. Le Mvet désigne ensuite une épopée ou bien tout chant épique déclamé avec accompagnement musical de l'instrument ci-dessus.
3. Le Mvet désigne enfin un genre littéraire bien défini. C'est un drame antique, complet, associant la littérature épique, la musique et la chorégraphie traditionnelles....<sup>7</sup>

On sait le rôle que jouent la *kora* et le balafon, pour l'épopée malinké, le *ngoni*, pour la bambara, le *gâbare* pour la soninké etc. Si nous reprenons l'exemple de l'épopée peule, le rôle de la musique et du luth (*hoddu*) impose son évidence dès lors que l'on reconnaît le fil qui relie entre eux griot, luth, devise et épopée et qui n'est rien d'autre que la force agissante de la parole et de son substitut musical, leur faculté de 'prise' sur la personne tout entière.

L'épopée est comme nous l'avons déjà dit (et comme son nom même la désigne) *parole* et elle doit être efficiente en soi, par cette force de la parole qui se trouve surtout exploitée dans un autre genre littéraire particulièrement représenté et vivant en Afrique : celui de la devise. La devise est une définition concise, dense et valorisante (souvent métaphorique et paroxysmique) d'une personne (ou d'une entité abstraite, d'un lieu etc.), dont l'énonciation a pour finalité d'appeler et de contraindre le sujet ainsi interpellé à se conformer à cette définition de lui-même, image essentielle et sublimée de l'acmé

de son être. Nous avons étudié ailleurs la nature, la fonction et le style de la devise, évocation et invocation de la personne<sup>8</sup>, et présenté les raisons qui nous ont fait décerner à l'épopée la fonction d'une 'devise collective'<sup>9</sup>.

On trouve certes, dans les textes épiques, quelques devises, mais ce qui importe ici, c'est de rappeler le rôle prédominant de la devise musicale qui procède de la même façon que la verbale et a une vocation identique. Car la part prépondérante de cet aspect musical dans l'épopée peule nous met directement sur la voie de la fonction de ce genre. En effet, le *hoddu* joue tout au long du récit la devise musicale du héros concerné ou, s'il ne lui en connaît pas, celle de l'un des héros peuls représentatifs du *pulaaku* et auquel il peut l'assimiler. Cette devise musicale sert de toile de fond sur laquelle peuvent venir se greffer quelques thèmes musicaux conventionnels complémentaires (air des chevauchées, tambours des combats etc.) ou quelques variations descriptives qui servent d'enluminures. Elle représente le thème de base qui, repris entre chaque épisode, entre chaque séquence, ressource en permanence le récit et recentre l'attention et l'exaltation du public sur le héros et les valeurs qu'il incarne.

La musique, dans l'épopée peule, apparaît non pas comme un simple accompagnement de la parole mais comme la source même de celle-ci : à elle seule elle peut dire ce que le récit ne fait que développer ; l'auditoire ne s'y trompe pas qui, sitôt joués les premiers accords d'ouverture, se trouve déjà investi de toute la charge signifiante de la devise du héros - qu'il connaît bien - et n'en attend plus que le plaisir de l'explicitation verbale qui en est comme une redondance ; plaisir qui ne fait qu'attiser celui des retrouvailles : retrouvailles avec le héros, avec les vertus du *pulaaku* mises en oeuvre par ses actions et attente d'un nouveau talent capable de les retransmettre. Et c'est là, pour l'auditoire, confirmation affinée de son savoir, renforcement de sa participation au savoir commun et collectif qui fonde la culture du groupe, appropriation renouvelée, enfin, du pouvoir de ce savoir ; en un mot, c'est pour chacun un resourcement dans la conscience aiguïlée et exaltée de son identité et dans l'assurance de la solidarité et de l'unité du groupe qui s'y reconnaît.

Cette analogie foncière entre la devise et l'épopée - qui passe ici par le lien du *hoddu* est aussi confirmée par le fait que ces deux genres, ainsi que leur instrument de musique propre, sont l'apanage d'un seul et même groupe socioprofessionnel spécialisé, celui des griots *maabuube*. Certes le récit qui illustre les faits et gestes du héros et qui met en scène les vertus dont on le sait porteur, est un élément fondamental de la culture du groupe, mais c'est son association avec la devise musicale qui confère à son message outre sa charge sémantique, sa réelle fonction. Le même récit, simplement raconté, sans son support musical, perd - nous en avons fait l'expérience -

son caractère d'épopée pour devenir une anecdote, intéressante, assurément, mais sans autre finalité que d'information ou de distraction ; or l'histoire relatée étant le plus souvent connue de tous, cette seule finalité serait sinon caduque, du moins restreinte. La véritable finalité de l'épopée semble se situer à un autre niveau ; il s'agit moins pour elle de transmettre que d'*utiliser ce savoir*, coulé dans une *mise en forme particulière* et livré au *talent* personnel de l'artiste, à seule fin de revitaliser en l'auditoire la *conscience de son identité distinctive*, de son *unité* et de sa *cohésion*, en le faisant *communier dans l'exaltation*.

L'épopée met donc tout en oeuvre pour créer une exaltation, un élan qui, de la reconnaissance d'une identité commune, fasse une aspiration au maintien de cette identité ; pour que de γυναιξ, elle devienne πᾶξις, le récit ne suffit pas, il lui faut l'adjuvant de la musique qui, par son caractère même de 'devise' informe la nature de celui-ci ; de même que la devise d'une personne agit sur elle par son style et son effet paroxystique, de même le récit épique peut reposer fondamentalement sur cette notion de *paroxysme*. Les héros s'y présentent en effet comme excessifs, hors des normes et foncièrement inimitables (faute de quoi ils perdraient sans doute leur statut même de héros épiques). Il est évident que l'épopée ne propose nullement un modèle, une illustration de caractères ou de comportements à reproduire ; l'épopée n'a pas l'aspect exemplaire et 'pédagogique' du conte ; elle a plutôt une vocation de 'moteur' : elle se veut éveil et élan qui portent l'âme à une intensité de conscience et une tension de la volonté suscitées autant par ce que dit le texte que par les modalités de ce dire.

Cette notion de *paroxysme* prend pour forme, dans la structure narrative, celle de la *transgression* : toute transgression est franchissement d'un seuil que seul autorise un *excès* ; et cette transgression y apparaît sous tous ses aspects :

- . la transgression au sens étymologique du terme, c'est-à-dire le passage d'un monde à un autre, l'intrusion dans un univers auquel on n'appartient pas, l'appropriation d'un attribut ou d'un avoir propre à cet autre univers : c'est le cas de la tentative de conquête de l'immortalité, dans le *mvèt* ou l'appropriation d'une part de viande sur le marché de Ségou par Bilissi, dans l'épopée bambara.

- . la transgression d'une règle ou d'une contrainte, qui se traduit par une rébellion qui peut être d'ordre politique, religieuse, sociale etc. ; c'est par exemple le refus de payer tribut à son suzerain ou d'observer la religion imposée...

- . la transgression des normes de comportement régissant la société et en assurant l'harmonie ; dédain des lois d'hospitalité, inobservance des types de relations conventionnels entre groupes sociaux (telle la gifle assénée au griot par Silâmaka et qui fera basculer son destin) etc.

La *transgression* qui va souvent jusqu'à la provocation caractérisée apparaît comme le point focal et le ressort de toutes les actions qui créent la *dynamique* du récit épique en même temps qu'elles lui donnent son *sens*.

Dans la logique narrative, la transgression se trouve généralement motivée par un *défi concurrentiel* et elle aboutit toujours à une *situation agonistique*. Et cette situation agonistique, clé de voûte de tout récit épique, est elle-même ambiguë dans la mesure où elle est conditionnée et même provoquée par la qualité intrinsèque du héros épique alors que, en même temps, elle est précisément là pour donner à cette qualité une occasion de se manifester ; ce qui, au plan de la structure narrative est cause, se trouve être fin, au plan de l'orientation sémantique et l'action devient simultanément le lieu d'identification et de réalisation du héros, lui-même projection de l'identité et de l'unité du groupe.

Nous ne pouvons, dans le cadre de cet exposé, nous étendre davantage sur l'analyse des particularités qu'entraînent cette orientation et cette finalité du genre épique, dans le traitement des thèmes, l'économie générale du récit, sa mise en forme stylistique etc. Nous rappelons simplement que les divers types d'épopées sont conditionnés par la conception que se fait de son identité chaque peuple concerné : les uns cernent leur identité et leur spécificité distinctive principalement dans leur mythologie, les principes organisateurs de la société étant transmis par un héros-civilisateur (tel que Mwindo) ou bien encore le monde des Immortels étant, dans le *mythe*, comme une méta-société informant celle des humains<sup>6</sup> ; d'autres, tels les Malinké, les Bambara, la situent plutôt dans leur histoire et dans l'occupation de leur territoire politique ; d'autres encore, tels les Peuls, dispersés géographiquement et diversifiés par les aléas de leur histoire, préfèrent la revendiquer dans un comportement éthico-social, une certaine qualité d'être de la personne, révélée à travers les aventures personnelles de quelques héros bien précis et bien humains.

A partir de données communes générales telles que :

- . la narrativité,
- . la focalisation de l'action autour de héros fortement personnalisés ou de personnages archétypaux,
- . les situations agonistiques orientées soit vers l'organisation socio-politique ou l'histoire, c'est-à-dire une construction externe de l'identité du groupe, soit vers la manifestation de la personnalité intrinsèque du héros-pivot, c'est-à-dire, une émanation interne de cette identité,

on peut voir se construire des textes extrêmement différents tant dans leur contenu que dans leurs formes d'expression et dont les traits permettant de les identifier comme épiques tiennent moins à leur qualité de textes qu'à leur fonction d'actes de parole destinés à réactualiser une identité 'idéologique' et culturelle fondatrice d'unité communautaire.

Il est loisible de chercher à déceler, pour chaque culture, les propriétés structurelles et formelles qui caractérisent l'épopée par rapport aux autres genres pratiqués dans la culture concernée, mais leur analyse révèle que ces propriétés ne font que traduire les moyens particuliers que le groupe a choisi de mettre en oeuvre, en raison de leur efficacité, pour ajuster le texte épique à sa finalité et à sa fonction. Ce n'est qu'une fois reconnue la réalité de cette orientation que se trouve validée l'étude de la stratégie textuelle ainsi justifiée.

On conçoit dès lors toute l'importance culturelle d'un tel genre littéraire et l'utilisation à laquelle il peut se prêter comme facteur de mobilisation culturelle, politique, nationale etc. ; ce qui explique d'ailleurs d'une part son implication dans le système socio-politique dans bien des sociétés (genre réservé à une classe socioprofessionnelle, ou bien nécessitant une initiation etc.), d'autre part les aléas de son destin (tour à tour favorisé ou interdit selon les circonstances historico-politiques) et enfin sa grande vitalité qui fait dire à Eno Belinga que le *Mvet*, 'profondément enraciné dans le passé, est un art essentiellement tourné vers l'avenir'<sup>5</sup>.

L'épopée semble donc devoir se définir de façon prioritaire par référence à sa fonction et à sa finalité : car c'est là ce qui peut rendre compte tout à la fois de la diversité de ses réalisations textuelles et formelles selon les contextes culturels et de l'appartenance de ces oeuvres à une même classe dans le système général des actes de paroles.

Par ailleurs, cette situation de l'épopée n'est pas sans illustrer la complexité du problème des genres du discours, lorsqu'on envisage ceux-ci dans le cadre des littératures orales. En effet, pour reprendre les expressions de Tzvetan Todorov, 'la codification des propriétés discursives' ou 'la logique des relations mutuelles entre les éléments constitutifs de l'oeuvre' ne suffisent plus ici à ériger l'épopée en genre littéraire distinct ; il faut y adjoindre la référence à des éléments culturels extratextuels tels que l'association du texte à la musique, la qualité des rapports du texte ainsi énoncé à ses destinataires et la fonction assumée, dans la société, par cette manifestation culturelle prise dans sa totalité.

#### N O T E S

1. *Littré, Dictionnaire de la langue française*, t. 2 :  
Epopée : 1. Narration en vers d'actions grandes et héroïques...  
Epopées primitives : poèmes dans lesquels certains peuples, avant la culture littéraire, ont célébré leurs dieux et leurs héros.
2. Le poème épique soumis à des règles, avec son merveilleux, ses épisodes ; c'est l'imitation, ou récit, d'une action intéressante et mémorable ; ainsi l'épopée diffère de l'histoire, qui raconte sans imiter ; du poème dramatique, qui peint en action ; du poème didactique, qui est un tissu de préceptes ; et des fastes en vers qui ne sont qu'une suite d'événements sans unité (*Marmontel, Eléments de littérature*).

*Le Petit Robert* :

Epopée : long poème (et plus tard, parfois, récit en prose de style élevé) où le merveilleux se mêle au vrai, la légende à l'histoire et dont le but est de célébrer un héros ou un grand fait.

2. G. Dumézil, *Mythe et épopée*, I, Paris, Gallimard, N.R.F. 1968, p. 19.
3. Notons ici que, par commodité, nous partons du postulat de l'existence d'épopées africaines, sans avoir traité auparavant du problème général des genres et de leur distribution dans des cultures diverses ; signalons simplement que, si nous avons classé ces textes sous une étiquette commune, c'est que, dans les cultures qui les produisent, ils occupent une place homologue à l'intérieur du système des genres littéraires propre à chacune d'elles et remplissent une fonction analogue.
4. Nous n'avons pas envisagé ici la riche production épique swahili non seulement en raison des limites de cette étude, mais surtout à cause de l'impact de la culture islamique sur la grande majorité des textes d'*Utenzi*.
5. Massa Makan Diabaté, *Essai critique sur l'épopée mandingue* (thèse de Doctorat de troisième cycle, Université Paris I), p. 648.

Eno Belinga, *L'épopée camerounaise, Mvet* (ouvrage publié avec le concours de l'Université de Yaoundé par le Centre d'Édition et de Production Pour l'Enseignement et la Recherche 1978), p. 39.

6. D. Essone Atome Ongoane, *Société et méta-société* (le système politique fang), (Thèse pour le Doctorat de troisième cycle, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales 1980).
7. Eno Belinga, *op. cit.*, p. II.
8. Christiane Seydou, 'La devise dans la culture peule : évocation et invocation de la personne' in G. Calame-Griaule (ed.), *Langage et cultures africaines*, Paris, Maspero 1977, 187-264.
9. Christiane Seydou, *Silâmaka et Poullôri*, récit épique peul, Paris, A. Colin 1972, Coll. Classiques africains, 13, 277 p., 3 disques.

ELISABETH GUNNER

NEW WINE IN OLD BOTTLES:  
IMAGERY IN THE IZIBONGO  
OF THE ZULU ZIONIST PROPHET, ISAIAH SHEME

It is a characteristic of some oral art forms that they adapt to changing social and political conditions. In some cases new pressures produce a new genre, as in the case of Somali *heello*. In other cases the form remains the same but the content reflects and comments on the changing circumstances. In many instances oral art forms part of changing rituals which are themselves crucial cultural symbols.<sup>1</sup> The *izibongo* (translated as 'praise-poem' or 'praises' ) of Isaiah Shembe ,founder of the Zionist Nazareth Church , are of interest in a number of ways. Firstly they show the extension of a praise-poem to convey a new set of beliefs. Secondly they are an example of *izibongo* for a leader who is not royalty but who has modelled his leadership on the patterns of Zulu royalty, and thirdly the *izibongo* show the ability of a praise-poem to incorporate new imagery and also to capitalise on and in some cases redeploy existing images. This third point will be my main concern in this paper.

Shembe was born in 1870 and died in 1935 at which point the leadership of his Church was taken over by his son Johannes Galilee Shembe. He began his ministry at a time when the Zulus had suffered loss of power, territory and national identity. It is significant that he was baptised in 1906, a year after the Bambatha rebellion which was a short-lived (but long-remembered) expression of anger and outrage at an alien and repressive administration.<sup>2</sup> Shembe started his own Nazareth Church in 1916, three years after the Natives Land Act whereby blacks were debarred from buying land. He acquired land in reserve territory eighteen miles from Durban, and Ekuphakameni (The Exalted Place) became the centre of his Church. Here he adapted Zulu rituals

for the worship of the Nazarites, particularly for the two great festivals held in July and January. Sundkler refers to the 'formative and integrative influence of the festivals' (1961, p.178). In his later *Zulu Zion* he refers also to the regenerative influence of the Zionist Churches (one of which was Shembe's Nazareth Church) on their followers:

There was a new realization of selfhood and worthy identity in these men and women because of their discovery in and with Zion, of the richness and relevance of their own religions and cultural expressions. (*Zulu Zion*, pp.318-9)

Shembe not only adapted Zulu ritual and ceremony to the Christian worship of his Church, he also composed a series of hymns, some 222 in all, some nationalistic, some visionary. The hymns have formed the cornerstone of his followers' religious expression. They have been extensively discussed by both Sundkler (1961;1976) and Oosthuizen (*The Theology of a Black Messiah*, Leiden; Brill, 1967). The *izibongo* of Shembe have not been mentioned in studies on the prophet, yet they were regarded as an important expression of church unity by Nazarites in the east coast of Zululand where I did field work in 1976 and I was lucky to be able to find one of J.G. Shembe's bards, Azariah Mthiyane. The version I have of Isaiah Shembe's *izibongo* is from him. He was, he said, fifth in the line of Nazarite bards and the version he recited was a composite one with sections composed by each of the earlier bards. The Zulu praising tradition unlike the contemporary Xhosa tradition,<sup>3</sup> emphasises stability and continuity in the *izibongo* of leaders. The Shembe *izibongo* therefore do not change radically at each performance; Mthiyane emphasised this by pointing out that certain lines were the composition of a particular earlier bard, and the name mentioned most frequently was that of Mdladla, the first bard of Isaiah Shembe. In a recent paper on the eighteenth century Xhosa Christian, Ntsikana, Janet Hodgson remarks that 'Any new socio-cultural development must find a mode of communicating ideas and ideals through language, as well as in ritual behaviour'.<sup>4</sup> Shembe's hymns and his *izibongo* are a brilliant example of such communication. Other records of *izibongo* show the application of the traditional praise-poem to modern topics. There is for example the praise-poem by S.E.K. Mqhayi, the Xhosa 'bard of the nation' and novelist. He was commissioned to compose and perform *izibongo* for the Prince of Wales on his visit to South Africa in 1925 and his eulogy contained the following ironic and caustic lines:

Ah Great Britain! Great Britain!  
Great Britain of the endless sunshine ....  
She sent us the preacher: she sent us the bottle,  
She sent us the Bible, and barrels of brandy.<sup>5</sup>

Archie Mafeje<sup>5</sup> gives examples of modern Transkei politicians being verbally castigated by Xhosa bards and in another instance illus-



trates the ease with which a richly associative cattle metaphor can be used for modern political comment. The Xhosa bard is commenting on the plight of a chief exiled by the South African Government:

... up to now, nobody has made any reference to Joyi,  
The dark bull that is visible by its shiny horns,  
Horns that today are smeared with streaks of blood.  
It is for that reason that today he is not among us.  
(Mafeje, 1963, p.91)

Mathabela and Cope<sup>5</sup> provide a rare example of a modern Zulu praise poem, performed for the KwaZulu Minister of Education at a Durban school's speech day. Here great play is made of the Minister's illustrious ancestry and in this example a stock martial metaphor is transferred to the classroom:

He overcame me with the spear of arithmetic,  
He overcame me with the spear of English,  
He overcame me with the spear of the Zulu Treasury,  
He overcame me with the spear of the deep thinker,  
The depth and solidarity of the Zulu Storehouse.  
(Mathabela and Cope, 1976  
p.21)

The *izibongo* referred to above serve to demonstrate that praise-poetry is not imprisoned in a rhetoric binding it to a crumbled social structure and a past glory. Yet only Shembe's *izibongo* have attempted eulogy for a contemporary Christian leader on a scale usually reserved for Zulu royalty. With his *izibongo*, past and present fuse in a way not found in other contemporary praises.

Shembe's *izibongo* are clearly the work of bards deeply familiar with the royal *izibongo*. There are many parallels which are obviously intentional and this is not surprising given the way in which leadership in the Nazareth Church is modelled on the Zulu kingship pattern. (Sundkler, 1961: 102, 104). The praises of Shembe are therefore in a sense 'royal'. Yet they are also very clearly the praises of a Zionist prophet and not of a Zulu king. There are clear differences where the needs of communication have forced the composers to new modes of expression and new points of reference. The parallels with the royal praises are as follows: it is essential that a bard include in his composition a number of references to places associated with the hero. In the *izibongo* of the kings from Shaka to Dinuzulu the place names refer largely to conquest and victories. Those in Shembe's praises list many of the places that this untiring traveller visited in the course of his ministry and instead of referring to homesteads associated with the hero the *izibongo* return insistently to Ekuphakameni; so much so that this holy village of the Nazarites, their earthly Zion, becomes a *leitmotif* of the praises moving in its associations from the earthly to the heavenly Zion.

One of the ways in which prestige and crucial lineage links are underlined in the royal praises is through the mention of early ancestors of the royal line. Thus Shaka is praised as *UNodumehlezi kaMenzi*, He-Who-Thunders-At-Home-descendant-of-Menzi. The names of other ancestors such as Phunga, Ndaba and Mageba carry the same eulogistic connotations and help to establish the exalted aura of the royal praises. Shembe had no royal connections whatsoever, his lineage was obscure and though the names of his father, grandfather and great-grandfather are mentioned in the *izibongo* they would obviously carry no affective charge. The bards compensated for this by using metaphorical praise names which stress Shembe's appeal to royalty and to the chiefs while other praise names underline his support for their authority. The following praise suggests not only attraction but dependence as well:

(98) *Nduku yethusi edondolozela makhos' akithi ohlanga.*  
*USwazi oluncokazi*  
*Luyelwabonwa amakhos' akithi oSwayimani bakaZiphuku.*  
*Bathi, 'Nanti uSwazi oluncokazi lukaThixo.*

(98) The Copper Staff on which our royal leaders lean.  
 Switch of many colours  
 Which was seen by our chiefs Swayimani and his people  
 the children of Ziphuku.<sup>6</sup>  
 They said, 'Here is the many-coloured switch of God'.  
 Shembe in turn is drawn to them:

(38) *IMpukane ijing' isilonda*  
*Wobujing' abohlanga lwendlu eSenzangakhona.*  
 (38) Fly which pesters a sore  
 As it pestered the royal line of Senzangakhona.

Besides setting out these indirect links with the chiefs and the royal line the bards attempt closer associations by working into Shembe's *izibongo* praise names already associated with one or more of the kings. For example they open and close with the praise name *uGugabadele*, Kneeler-and-they-are-satisfied, a praise that is used for Cetshwayo kaMpande but also for God. Shembe's *UVemvane olunamabalabala*, Butterfly-with-many-colours, echoes the butterfly praise epithets of Shaka and Dingane and the 'Copper Staff' referred to above is also a praise epithet for both Shaka and Dingane.<sup>7</sup> What seems to matter in taking over such praise names is that the affective charge accompanies the praise. The precise denotative meaning of praise names is often not important; they can convey a heroic aura while they defy explanation. Innes remarks on a similar phenomenon with Mandinka praise names in the Sunjata epic: the meaning of the praise name may be opaque but its affective power for a Mandinka audience is striking.<sup>8</sup>

Besides the metaphorical praise names associated with a particular king there are also metaphors which are normally confined to royalty or to people of status and examples of these

too appear in Shembe's praises. The sometimes ambiguous metaphor of the eagle - it can suggest both protection and potential destruction<sup>9</sup> appears as a praise name for the prophet. Shembe, personified as a great protective bird, is the 'Eagle beating its wings above our own place at Ekuphakameni'. The royal image of 'the horned viper' is also used but in a specifically Nazarite way: the ferocity is balanced by love and Shembe is praised as 'Horned Viper with the compassion of his fathers'.

The praises of Shembe may have these strong and intentional echoes from the royal praise poems yet there are other techniques used which link the *izibongo* to the wider tradition. One of these is the inclusion of formulae in Shembe's *izibongo*. In Zulu praise-poems where the emphasis is on composition before performance and on memorisation the formulae serve as recognised ways of referring to character and action. Although they appear to show no metrical regularity they often exploit standard stylistic devices, and figurative language which features frequently in the formulae, adds to their aesthetic appeal.<sup>10</sup> Shembe's qualities as inspirational leader, his courage and his great thirst for new converts are conveyed in formulae some of which are expanded so that the specific Nazarite message is clear. In two instances the bare formulae suffice. He is described as

(10) *Usambula 'nkwezane kuvel' ukukhanya,*  
Scatterer of the fog and there is light,

and in a line first recorded in 1868 as 'a typical warrior's praise' (H. Callaway, *Nursery Tales, traditions and histories of the Zulus*, London: Trübner, 1868) he is

(12) *Umlamula 'nkunzi ungayeki zibulalane.*  
Peacemaker among the bulls instead of leaving them to kill  
each other.

In another instance, the expansion significantly shifts the thrust of the single line formula by describing Shembe's evangelising ministry. The formula 'Spear red even at the haft' with its evocation of bloody combat is expanded and turned into an image of evangelism:

(54) *UGaq'elibomvu ngasekuphathweni,*  
*Kuhlasele ngalo kuMpukunyoni*  
*Ngoba kuhlasele ngeVangeli.*  
(54) Spear red even at the haft,  
You attacked with it at Mpukunyoni  
Because you attacked with the Gospel.

The themes of combat and more especially conquest provide another rich source of adaptation for the Shembe bards. Instead of listing the victims of battle, the *izibongo* mark off those who succumbed to his preaching, becoming members and priests of his Church. The imagery of the elements in turmoil - derived from

the fierce electrical storms of the region - has martial connotations in the royal praises, for example in those of Shaka (Cope, 1968: 92, 100). In Shembe's praises the idea of spiritual power dominates; the sky thunders and hurls down bolts of lightning to inspire and convert rather than destroy:

(129) *Lidumela liphos'imbane phezu kwentaba eNhlangaazi.  
Lamthath' uGwabhaza kwabakaShangase,  
Lamshaya ngamasango esEkuphakameni.*

(129) (The Sky) thundered and hurled down lightning above  
Nhlankakazi mountain.  
It took hold of Gwabhaza of the Shangases,  
It struck him at the gates of Ekuphakameni.

Cattle imagery which features so prominently in the oral poetry of East and Southern Africa is a vital source of reference for composers of *izibongo*. Cattle play an important part in Zulu society and metaphors of bulls and calves in particular permeate the praise-poems. Yet far from becoming hackneyed as might be the case in a written tradition they continue to give aesthetic pleasure. D. Kunene (op.cit) associates cattle imagery in Zulu and Sotho praise poetry with status but in the Zulu praises they also in many cases stand for a general sense of worth and often have additional associations of strength, virility and beauty. Once again the Shembe bards exploit the metaphors for their own purpose while capitalising on their intrinsic appeal. Using the trinity of colours which dominate Zulu thought patterns the praises refer to Shembe as

(81) *IThole lakithi) eliwaba elihle ngokutshekula kwaNontand-  
abathakathi*  
(Our Calf) of black, white and red, Graceful Mover of the  
Place-of-the Lover-of-wizards.<sup>11</sup>

Elsewhere he is *Luncokazi*, The Many-Coloured Calf, and a little later in lines which hint at the divine qualities which some of his followers ascribe to him he is

(114) *IThole lakithi kwaNontandabathakathi*  
*Elifihle ngamahlaha ehla komuzi kaJan Dube,<sup>12</sup>*  
*Lithe eliqhamuka laselim'bal' imithathu.*

(114) Our Calf of the Place-of-the-Lover-of-wizards  
Which hid among the lopped-off branches at the upper end  
of John Dube's home.<sup>12</sup>  
Then it appeared in a trinity of colours.

In an essay attacking the emasculating effect of Christianity on African traditions Ali Mazrui<sup>13</sup> argues that images of virility such as the bull cannot be absorbed into the new religion. Certainly there is no evidence of any such loss or emasculation in the Shembe praises. Here the prophet is at one point seen as a bull caught by a hostile crowd - a reference to resistance met

during his preaching - and elsewhere, in reference to a successful campaign, he is personified as

(138) *INKunzi yakithi emdwayidwa egweb' ezinye emantshwebeni,  
INohlasela ngeVangeli kwaMpukunyoni.*

(138) Our Tall Bull which gores the others in the flank,  
Warrior with the Gospel at Mpukunyoni.

Not all the imagery of the prophet's *izibongo* is set in the aggressive and martial 'Shakan' mould (see Cope, 1968:50 and R.M. Kunene, *An Analytical Survey of Zulu Poetry*, University of Natal M.A. thesis, 1962:60-107) of so many of the examples cited so far. In an attempt, perhaps, to convey a different aspect of conversion and the softer aspects of Shembe's personality the bards use the metaphors of the hornbills, the heavenly messengers of traditional thought (A.I. Berglund, *Zulu Thought-Patterns and Symbolism* London: Hurst 1976) and a buck:

(143) *I'nsingizi zakhal' esangweni kwaNduli waze wavuka.*

*UMaxala aphande esangweni koMhlakazi waze wavuka.*

(143) The Hammerheads which called out at the gate of Nduli's  
place until he awoke.

Buck which pawed (the ground) at the gate of Mhlakazi's  
place until he awoke.

Similarly, in moving from a record of Shembe's life to the attitudes of the Nazarites towards their leader, the imagery the bards employ is more lyrical. Examples i and ii below convey a sense of the mystical and the visionary as they express the Nazarite view of the prophet's role as intermediary at the gates of heaven (see Sundkler, 1961 pp323; 1976 pp200-201). This sense of other-worldly revelation is also present in the third example below. Here a formula line containing the metaphor of the moon is expanded to describe Shembe's risen presence returning to his old haunts and remaining protectively over the gates of Ekuphakameni. There is no precedent in earlier *izibongo* for the gate image which appears so frequently in Shembe's praises. Sundkler (*ibid.*) mentions its recurrence in the Shembe hymns and its importance in all Zionist dream life. In the praises the gates symbolise entry into a new mode of existence, acceptance by a greater being and protection from the dangers and evils of what lies outside. The use of this key Zionist symbol underlines the visionary dimension in the Shembe *izibongo* which so distinguishes them both from the royal praise-poems and from other contemporary *izibongo*.

Example i

(133) *UPhuhlu njeng' ikhowe emasangweni asEkuphakameni.*

Sudden springer-up like a mushroom at the gates of  
Ekuphakameni.

Examples ii and iii

(105) *UMqhibuka njeng' ithanga*

*Oqhibuka ngaphakathi ngamasanga asEkuphakameni.*

*INyanga bath'ifile kanti basho nje iduke emafini.  
Ugudlagudla i'ntaba zoMkhambathi.  
Uthe ngimbona eshona ngaleziya 'zintaba zakwaMadladla.  
Uthi namhlanje unempilo eside simbona.  
Waseqhamuka esekhazimula esexhophha ngaphakathi kwamasango  
asEkuphakameni.*

- (105) Sudden Blossomer like a pumpkin  
Bursting into flower inside the gates of Ekuphakameni.  
Moon which they said had died but it was only wandering  
in the clouds.  
He skirted the mountains of Mkhambathi  
And then I saw him disappearing in the direction of those  
far off hills.  
Even today he is alive and we behold him constantly.  
He appeared shining, dazzling the eyes, within the gates of  
Ekuphakameni.

The way in which the Shembe *izibongo* resemble and yet differ sharply from the royal praises is also evident in the centripetal and centrifugal tensions contained within them. On the one hand they, like the nineteenth-century royal praises (but unlike the more muted royal praises of Solomon kaDinuzulu d.1933) are intensely nationalistic. They deliberately stress the distinctively Zulu nature of Shembe's Church. Whereas other churchmen are shown worrying over doctrinal niceties:

- (26) *Baphenya amadastamente namaBhayibheli abavumela,  
Athi, 'Kubhaliwe kanjalo !'*  
(26) They brandished their Testaments and their Bibles in  
unison saying, 'It was written thus !'

Shembe's Zulu separatism is applauded:

- (28) *UHlamuka simuke siye kithi kwelakwaZulu,  
Ngoba uhlamuka ngevangeli,*  
(28) Breaker-Away, let us leave and let us head for our own  
Zululand,  
Because he broke away with the Gospel.

And in a striking compound metaphor which plays on the double meaning of 'Zulu' i.e. (a) 'the heavens' and (b) 'the Zulu people', the exclusive nature of Shembe as a Zulu prophet is expressed:

- (70) *ISihlahla esihle somdlebe engasihlalwa 'zinyoni,  
Siyasehlalwa 'zinyoni zeZulu.*  
(70) Beautiful Euphorbia Bush on which no (ordinary) birds perch  
It is a perch for the birds of the Zulu.

Yet the praises also touch upon the universality of Christianity. They chronicle Shembe's incessant travelling not only in Zululand and Natal but to the Transkei and mention is made of a hoped-for journey to the territory of 'Mzilikazi of Mashobane' in present-day Zimbabwe. In lines which stress the supra-national message

of Christianity he is praised as

(135)The Star which brought light to the darkness,  
It enlightened all nations beneath the sun.

(135)INKanyezi ekhanyise emnyameni  
Yakhanyisela zonk' izizwe phansi komthunzi welanga.

Gerard (*Four African Literatures: Xhosa, Sotho, Zulu, Amharic*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971: 184) refers to Shembe's hymns as a phenomenon of transition from oral to written literature. The *izibongo* represent a different kind of transition in that they show bards working in the oral mode and using an established poetic genre to express new concepts and new ideals. Shembe's praises are therefore both conservative and profoundly innovative. It is perhaps significant that these *izibongo* which are still performed for Shembe's successors<sup>14</sup> were for the most part composed at a time when the Zulu kingship was weak. Certainly the praises of Solomon kaDinuzulu (Isaiah Shembe's royal contemporary) do not bear comparison with the prophets' *izibongo* either in the richness of their language or the boldness of their vision. Although they are in one sense an important religious statement Shembe's *izibongo* can also be seen as serving a function sometimes ascribed to epic: they create a sense of national consciousness, pride and purpose at a time of national crisis and weakness. In their nationalism and their continued success as a vehicle of cultural and religious identity the *izibongo* demonstrate how an oral art form can exploit the past and maintain its relevance to the present.

#### NOTES

1. See Abner Cohen, 'Political Symbolism', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 8, 1979, pp. 87-113.
2. See S. Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1970. The sources for details of Shembe's is John Dube, *UShembe*, Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter 1936; for an illuminating interpretation of Shembe as a Zionist leader and a great poet see Bengt Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1961 (2nd ed.), also, B. Sundkler, *Zulu Zion*, Uppsala: Gleerups with Oxford University Press 1976.
3. See A.T. Cope, *Izibongo: Zulu Praise-Poems*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1968, especially pp. 27-38; J. Opland, 'Praise Poems as Historical Sources', in C. Saunders and R. Derricourt, eds., *Beyond the Cape Frontier*, London: Longman 1974, pp. 1-37; and J. Opland, 'Imbongi nezibongo: The Xhosa Tribal Poet and the Contemporary Poetic Tradition', *P.M.L.A.*, Vol. 90, 1975, pp.185-208.
4. Janet Hodgson, 'The Genius of Ntsikana', paper read at a conference on Literature and Society in Southern Africa, University

of York, September 1981.

5. See A.C. Jordan, *Towards an African Literature; the Emergence of Literary Form in Xhosa*, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973; A. Mafeje, 'A Chief Visits Town', *Journal of Local Administration Overseas*, 2, 1963, pp.88-99. Also Mafeje, 'The Role of the Bard in a Contemporary African Community', *Journal of African Languages*, IV, 3, 1967, pp. 193-223. E. Mathabela and A.T. Cope, 'Sabela Zulu: A Zulu Praise-poem', *Theoria*, 46, 1976, pp. 17-25. An early example of Zulu *izibongo* for a contemporary figure is the praise-poem for Harriet Colenso composed by Mboza Matshiwulwana, one-time bard of the Hlubi chief Langalibalele. See Alice Werner's translation in *Ilanga laseNatal*, May 31, 1907.

6. Line references are to the 156-line version recited by and checked with Azariah Mthiyane of Emkayideni, Richards Bay, May-August 1976. My thanks also to Thandiwe Mngadi for checking the transcriptions and translations at the University of Zululand, Ngoye in 1976.

7. See Cope, 1968, p.95 and D. Rycroft and A.B. Ngcobo, Unpublished transcription of the *izibongo* of Dingane kaSenzangakhona recorded by James Stuart, Zonophone 4176, 1927.

8. G. Innes, 'Formulae in Mandinka Epic: their affective function', in *The Oral Performance in Africa*, ed. I. Okpewho, Ibadan and London: Ibadan University Press and Longman, forthcoming 1983.

9. See D. Kunene, 'Metaphor and Symbolism in the Heroic Poetry of Southern Africa', in *African Folklore*, ed. R. Dorson, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979, pp.295-318.

10. See Gunner, 'Wand or Walking Stick?: the formula and its use in Zulu praise-poems', in Okpewho op.cit.

11. One of Shembe's houses at Ekuphakameni. He is said to have converted and therefore loved many wizards.

12. The Zulu writer and politician who was also Shembe's biographer and neighbour. See note 2.

13. A. Mazrui, 'Phallic Symbols in Politics and War: an African Perspective', *Journal of African Studies*, Vol.1, part 1 (1974) pp. 40-69.

14. The Nazareth Church has now split into two sections following a succession dispute after the death of Johannes Galilee (J.G.) Shembe in 1977.



# *Research in African Literatures*

Bernth Lindfors, Editor



University of Texas Press Journals  
Box 7819, Austin, Texas 78712  
Rates: Institutions \$28.00; Individuals \$16.00



## BYWAYS IN OXFORD ANTHROPOLOGY

Selections from the Minutes of the  
Oxford University Anthropological Society

### *Members Past and Present: 2. Dr. Audrey Richards*

Proposed by Mrs. Seligman and seconded by Miss Blackwood, Dr. Audrey I. Richards was elected to membership of the Oxford University Anthropological Society, along with seven others, at its 299th meeting on November 1st 1934. She had already addressed the Society in May 1932 on 'The Function of Girls' Initiation Ceremonies among the Babembe', her talk being illustrated with 'very interesting slides'. Marett, Malinowski (whose name rarely appears in the minutes) and Mrs. Seligman took part in the following discussion, and, as always, the President, Miss Blackwood, 'proposed a hearty vote of thanks to Dr. Audrey Richards for her most interesting [this being the commonest adjective] and stimulating [an infrequent word of praise] lecture which was warmly applauded'. One cannot tell from the existing records of the Society how long she remained a member; not living in Oxford she has never held an official position though she gave three more lectures.

On May 2nd 1935 Dr. Richards came, apparently at short notice, to lecture on 'Some Witchfinders in N. Rhodesia'. This lecture was 'illustrated with exhibits of magical implements discarded by the people under the influence of the witchfinders'. There was 'a lively discussion' in which Marett and Mrs. Seligman again took part, as well as Sir Charles Harper, Professor Gilbert Murray and Mr. Balfour. As after her previous talks Dr. Richards was praised for the stimulating nature of her talk.

Seven years later, in May 1942, Dr. Richards gave a lecture entitled 'Death and Re-birth of a South African Tribe'. Dr. Marett again took part in the discussion as did Professor Manning, Miss Butler, Mr. Maynard, and the President, John Layard. At this time the style of the meetings, or perhaps the minuting, had changed and no hearty vote of thanks is recorded, though Dr. Richards was praised by the President for the 'vivid picture' she presented.

Finally Dr. Richards addressed the 431st meeting in February 1947 (a record of which is on the first page of the third and current minute book) with a paper entitled 'Culture Patterns Re-examined'. The minuter for the meeting that year had little truck with Chairmen's words of praise, or perhaps the President, Dr. Weiner, never spoke any. It is, however, recorded that Dr. Weiner, Miss Blackwood, Mrs. Schmidt, Dr. Fortes and Dr. Tanner spoke in the ensuing discussion which focused on the roles of psychology and anthropology in fieldwork and research.

Dr. Richards is the only anthropologist, who had neither been trained in Oxford nor held a position there, who gave as many as four lectures to the Society. Few speakers have the stimulation and vividness of their talks so clearly evidenced in the minutes of the meetings, not only by

the recorded words of Presidents but also by the consistent efforts, in their roles as minuters, of the three Secretaries concerned (Mr. E.S. Thomas at the first two meetings, Mrs Layard and Mr. John Bradford), who give full summaries of Dr. Richards' lectures. For the first two meetings this took the form of a page opposite the official minutes being filled with the Secretary's scrawled notes made, one is surely correct in assuming, during the lecture. For the third and fourth there are full foolscap-page accounts of the meetings - for many others at that time there are no more than a few lines. While such records are not as important as, say, those of the posthumously published lectures of X which would have been lost to posterity had it not been for the note-taking of Y, it will, I trust, be agreed that it is worthwhile to record their existence. Certainly the Bemba people might like to know how their affairs were discussed in Oxford in 1935.

Society Meetings addressed by Dr. Audrey Richards:

275th Meeting, on 26th May 1932. Miss Beatrice Blackwood, President, in the Chair. 'The Function of Girls' Initiation Ceremonies among the Babemba'.

306th Meeting, on 2nd May 1935. Mrs. B.Z. Seligman, President, in the Chair. 'Some Witch-finders in N. Rhodesia'.

389th Meeting, on 28th May 1942. John Layard, President, in the Chair. 'Death and Re-birth of a South African Tribe'.

431st Meeting, on 20th February 1947. Dr. Weiner, President, in the Chair. 'Culture Patterns Re-examined'.

JEREMY COOTE  
Secretary, 1980-81  
Oxf. Univ. Anthropol. Soc.

## COMMENTARY

### REGAINING THE GOLDEN STOOL: SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND APPLIED RESEARCH

#### Introduction

In this paper I wish to consider whether there is a distinctive role for the social anthropologist in applied research. This is a question which has preoccupied me since 1978, when I was offered funding by the EOC/SSRC Joint Panel on Equal Opportunities to carry out a study of women and training in Plymouth companies.

The nature of social anthropology as an academic discipline, and its relationship with non-academic clients, cannot adequately be understood without reference to historical developments: changes in the subject-matter available to social anthropologists, in the relationship of their discipline to other subjects, and in the clients and general audience for their work. I shall therefore begin with a brief (and necessarily oversimplified) account of these events as they affected my own consciousness, and (I would surmise) the consciousness of many social anthropologists trained in the post-colonial sunset of the classical fieldwork tradition, who attempt to apply that education in non-traditional fields.

The main part of this paper will deal with the fieldwork in Plymouth: not as any kind of model for social anthropologists in applied research, but to provide examples for illustration of the general theme. I shall raise some of the problems (and advantages) of working to a policy-oriented brief; the relationship between social anthropologist, client, and informants; the effects on method of limitations both of funding and access; and the question of the presentation and dissemination of findings. I think it is of more than merely personal interest that I began fieldwork (and presented myself initially) as a social researcher with a qualification in social anthropology, not unequivocally as a social anthropologist; the research proposal with which I applied for funding could have been presented by an industrial sociologist. However, in the course of the research, I rediscovered a belief in social anthropology as a distinct (though not hermetically separate) discipline, with a specific approach to offer clients. This particular experience leads one back to further questions: how social anthropology can be defined and presented to non-anthropologists, and how applied work may feed, and be fed by, the development of theory and method. Within the paper as a whole, when I speak of social

anthropology, I am referring to the British tradition; this is especially true in the brief account of historical events. This is a deliberate piece of insularity, purely for the sake of keeping the argument within reasonable bounds: it does not preclude the necessity of looking to Europe, the USA, and further afield, for fresh interpretations of anthropological approaches.

#### Applied anthropology and the Golden Stool

The idea of applied anthropology is not new; it is as old as the subject itself. The reading of any general introductory text on the subject (for example, Godfrey Lienhardt's *Social Anthropology*) makes this clear. One might go so far as to suggest that social anthropology is *by definition* an applied subject, whether designedly so at the time of the research, or by the interpretation of ethnographic data after the event. As Lienhardt comments, 'anthropological advances have often followed on the interests of governments in their own practical and moral problems'.<sup>1</sup> The case he presents as illustration is that of the Golden Stool of the Ashanti. This is a familiar tale: how, in 1900, the Governor of the Gold Coast asked the Ashanti why he was not invited to sit on the Golden Stool - their sacred symbol of spiritual nationhood - to confirm his rule as Queen Victoria's representative. The Ashanti wars ensued; but conflict was curtailed by the secondment of Captain Rattray to make an anthropological study of the Ashanti and their Golden Stool. As Lienhardt puts it, 'There followed a series of books by Rattray on many aspects of Ashanti culture, and a greater understanding between the Government and the people.'

As an anthropologist's myth, this story could hardly be improved upon. It combines, in a satisfying way, the production of rigorous ethnographic research with a practical application of the most striking kind. Indeed, the high academic quality of the research is crucial to its practical effectiveness: Rattray, the ethnographer,<sup>2</sup> could offer advice to the colonial administration which was of more direct value than the blundering approaches of the political or military 'common man'. The Government (miraculously) listened, and peace was made with the Ashanti. The Golden Stool may fairly be said to be a sacred symbol for anthropologists, as well as for the Ashanti. It represents the intellectual self-confidence and human responsibility of a generation of social anthropologists (or ethnologists, as they initially styled themselves) for whom the maintenance of academic quality, and the consideration of social and administrative problems, were not incompatible.

#### The development of academic social anthropology

The development of academic social anthropology, as a discipline based on University departments, cannot readily be separated from the applied work of Government anthropologists. Fieldworkers were readily interchangeable from one type of post to the other. The ethnographer working from a research institute or University department could expect to have note

<sup>1</sup> Godfrey Lienhardt, *Social Anthropology*, London: Oxford University Press 1964, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> It might be argued that, strictly speaking, Rattray was not a trained ethnographer. However, he certainly became one (in any reasonable meaning of the term) through the extent of his fieldwork experience.

taken of her work by overseas administrators: the Government anthropologist could hope for a relatively free hand (within the context of a regionally limited and possibly problem-solving brief) to produce good quality academic work with general applicability. This, at any rate, is how social anthropology from about 1900 to 1955 appeared to a student in the 1960s.

However, as a result of the post-war expansion of British universities - hence, also, the expansion of university departments of social anthropology - there was a development of fieldwork not directly connected with policy-oriented research. The emphasis on carrying out at least one extended piece of fieldwork in another culture, as a definition of a professional social anthropologist, created a body of published work which might be used for policy applications, but which was not, as a rule, generated by policy questions. Especially in doctoral work, the student could, within reason, change topic or achieve a *post hoc* definition of a subject by what was found particularly interesting in the field. This was justified intellectually by the holistic approach to societies, and by the primacy (if one could apprehend it) of the world view of one's informants.

Though the gap between academic and applied anthropology therefore widened, British social anthropology in the 1960s appears, in retrospect, to have a certain unity. The vital importance of fieldwork (usually with a lone observer, or, at most, a small team) was accepted (is accepted?) by social anthropologists of all kinds. The subject-matter of social anthropology was still clearly defined: small-scale societies<sup>3</sup> and 'other cultures', in Beattie's phrase,<sup>4</sup> usually of the kind called 'exotic'. The continued presence of known clients for commissioned work contributed to a secure sense of an audience for academic work of a more general kind.

#### Return and renewal

The period which followed - from the late 1960s - was a time of change and reassessment; change, first of all, in the subject-matter available to anthropology. Post-colonial political developments in the Third World led to difficulties in access to many of the traditional fieldwork areas. The use by European anthropologists of Third World informants was called into question; by new governments, and by radical social anthropologists.<sup>5</sup>

It may now be argued that 'colonialist anthropology' is another historical myth: that the critique discounted the intellectual independence of anthropologists, and the importance of the large body of work carried on outside the framework of the colonial administration. Nevertheless, after such open debates, fieldwork in the Third World could hardly continue in quite the same way without being an anachronism.

One possible direction for social anthropology, it seemed, was assimilation to a general body of sociological work. Combined departments

<sup>3</sup> Predominantly, but not exclusively: one may note, for example, the work on Mass Observation as an important exception to the rule.

<sup>4</sup> J.H.M. Beattie, *Other Cultures: Aims, Methods and Achievements in Social Anthropology*, London: Cohen and West 1964.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Talal Asad, ed., *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*, London: Ithaca Press 1973.

of sociology and social anthropology - teaching joint courses and carrying out joint research in Britain and overseas - demonstrated the fruitful convergence of interests and methods. For a student of social anthropology like myself, returning to work in an industrial society on social policy issues, it appeared that education as a social anthropologist could be regarded as a source of theoretical capital and useful techniques for research, rather than as a passage to distinctive professional status. Through fieldwork experience in Plymouth, however, I came to believe that this view was wrong, and that fieldwork in itself still defines the meaning of social anthropology as a discipline. I shall now turn to an account of this work, and some of the conclusions I drew from it.

#### Defining the brief: organising the project

The research was carried out from January 1979 to August 1980, with funding from the EOC/SSRC Joint Panel on Equal Opportunities Research. The subject was 'The Effects of Company Training Policies on Women's Employment Opportunities in Plymouth'. Defining the brief is the first task; this, in turn, means identifying the client. The EOC/SSRC Joint Panel was set up to fund and administer a national programme of policy-related research. SSRC administrative procedures and academic requirements applied to the selection and control of funded projects; policy interests apparently stemmed from the EOC. Therefore, despite the creation of a Joint Panel, there was not a strictly unitary client: and it seems likely that, in funded research in general, the anthropologist will be working for diffuse organisations or temporary alliances of interests rather than for one individual or cohesive group. It is therefore helpful to have some statement of the client's aims, and (at a fairly early stage) clear agreement about obligations to report to the client (how, when, and at what length), and rights to publish findings.

The Joint Panel provided a general brief, to aid those applying for funds.<sup>6</sup> The keyword (to use Dr. Kreager's apt term)<sup>7</sup> was 'underachievement'. This apparently begs all kinds of questions: on whose terms are women 'underachieving'? Even within the male-controlled areas specified by the brief - employment, education, and training - are women 'underachieving', or are they (to paraphrase André Gunder Frank) 'being underachieved'?<sup>8</sup> The notion of 'underachieving woman' has echoes of the myth of the 'resistant peasant', which was a recurring theme in development studies of Third World countries, and which has since been justly demolished by the work of Shanin, Hutton and Cohen, and others.<sup>9</sup> However, it is not helpful to quarrel

<sup>6</sup> Equal Opportunities Commission/ Social Science Research Council Joint Panel on Equal Opportunities Research, *Programme of Research*, 1978.

<sup>7</sup> Dr. Kreager referred to 'keywords' in his paper given at the ASA Panel Meeting on Applied Anthropology, held at Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford, on November 17, 1981.

<sup>8</sup> A.G. Frank, 'The Sociology of Development and the Underdevelopment of Sociology', in *Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution?*, Monthly Review Press 1969.

<sup>9</sup> See T. Shanin, ed., *Peasants and Peasant Societies: Selected Writings*, Harmondsworth: Penguin 1971; C. Hutton and R. Cohen, 'African Peasants and Resistance to Change', in Oxaal, Barnett and Booth, eds., *Beyond the Sociology of Development*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1975.

with the apparent premises of the funding body before research has even started, unless the fieldwork conditions are strictly controlled by them (which was not the case with this programme). The Joint Panel allowed a wide choice of specific subject; there were general guidelines, within the areas of employment, education and training, and different types of approach were invited. Despite this freedom, the brief was policy-oriented; it was related to the framework of the existing law (the Equal Pay Act and the Sex Discrimination Act) and the areas of women's lives which are affected by them. This clearly precluded certain kinds of approach to anyone who read the brief carefully, with attention to internal logic rather than verbal detail.

In my research proposal - defining a selected area of the brief - I concentrated on training, as I had worked in that area before. Access was taken to be the key factor; the employing company, as the appropriate level for fieldwork. There was very little empirical material on women on the shopfloor,<sup>10</sup> so there was scope for an ethnographic approach. Later, the actual field research shifted away from the original proposal in some respects, but the basic elements remained constant: company case studies and the extensive interviewing of women workers.

In submitting a proposal, I found the existence of a general, policy-oriented brief helpful and stimulating, despite reservations about its underlying premises. In the field, it led to some problems; it entailed directing attention away from issues which interested me as an anthropologist, but which might seem byways to policy-makers. I kept wishing to be more general in approach, within a very limited fieldwork period, than either the brief, or my own research proposal, warranted. As I remarked earlier, the research proposal was presented as social research rather than as social anthropology; I would have been better able to pursue the theoretical issues which interested me, had I presented a research proposal unequivocally anthropological in its approach, yet acceptable (in practical terms) to a policy-oriented funding body.

The research proposal was accepted for funding, in principle, but the SSRC had to be satisfied that access could be gained to respondent companies before funds would be released. This led to a reversal of the planned research method, as the case study companies had to be selected and approached before general enquiries about the local labour market could be undertaken. The anomalies of my status - applying for funding as a private individual - also caused delays. It eventually emerged that I could not receive direct funding, so Plymouth Polytechnic provided a temporary institutional base. The first three months of the fieldwork, therefore, were carried out without funds, and were funded retrospectively.

To make contacts with informants - often the most delicate and time-consuming aspect of fieldwork - I used a suitably anthropological network, stemming initially from local personnel managers to whom I had taught sociology on the IPM course at Plymouth Polytechnic. This provided contacts mainly with electrical engineering companies. I decided to limit the research to engineering: it provided a bounded field, with useful statistical information on the employment of women nationally and locally; a clear structure of employment, education, and training; and an excellent

<sup>10</sup> See R. Brown's article in Barker and Allen, eds., *Dependence and Exploitation in Work and Marriage*, London: Longman 1976; L. Mackie and P. Pattullo, *Women at Work*, London: Tavistock 1977.



and helpful Industrial Training Board, which had already produced a considerable volume of reference material through its own Research Division.

#### Relationship with informants and client; layers of concern

The relationship with respondent companies, within the fieldwork period, was mostly happy, though I doubt whether their managers would endorse the more radical conclusions of the research. The companies were consciously chosen as 'best practice' companies, since I wished to tap the underlying structures of discrimination against women at work, rather than cataloguing the more obvious horrors. Access to companies of any other kind would, in any case, have been problematical.

The main issue, in dealing with companies in research of this kind, is confidentiality. The companies which gave me access were, often justly, proud of their record in training women workers; but, on occasion, they (or individual managers employed by them) could be in breach of the law. The Sex Discrimination Act is notoriously complicated and difficult to enforce, and the concept of indirect discrimination is particularly hard to interpret. For the protection of informants, a 'confidentiality clause' was written into the contract between Plymouth Polytechnic (as my direct employer) and the funding body; this meant that there could be no legal compulsion on me to reveal the identity of respondent companies to the EOC. In the field, I discovered that companies (and individuals) are more worried about confidentiality than about any other issue, especially where company documents are used or machine-readable data are collected. This requires not only reassurances, but constant vigilance on the part of the anthropologist, to protect the confidences of informants not only from the world at large, but from each other.

In any applied anthropological research there are layers of obligation and concern. There are formal obligations to the funding body or client (even if these are not always as clear-cut as one would wish). There are obligations to informants; these, too, may have conflicting interests. In my own case, I felt under a certain obligation to the respondent companies and their managers (some of whose views diverged from official company policy). Above all, I had a clear obligation to the women workers: the women who are the consumers of company policy and national legislation. I attempted to ascertain and reproduce their world-view, wherever possible, and to avoid blaming the victim in my own generalizations. However, it is with the most vulnerable informants that the problem of reciprocity becomes most acute: how can one adequately repay them for their time, and their help, when no immediate benefits can be promised as a result of the work? For the companies, this was not such a problem: adequate correspondence, and the provision of copies of the final report, meant that they were informed of the results of the research. However, one could not ensure that this information reached the shopfloor (though I have since had the opportunity to discuss the research findings with Trade Union officials in one company). As Shirley Ardener remarked when this paper was originally presented, anthropologists could do much more to involve informants in discussion of their findings; in modern applied anthropology this may become essential.

#### Method

The main research tool was the interview. Long, unstructured interviews were held with fifty-five managers across five companies. One hundred and fifty-one women workers were interviewed with a semi-structured question-

naire, which had been tested in a pilot run with female employees of Plymouth Polytechnic. There were also numerous brief, informal discussions in offices, training departments, and on the shopfloor of the respondent companies, which were recorded in field notebooks; but the formal interviews form the main data base.

The use of a 'male-type positivist grid' (Edwin Ardener's phrase) to create a picture of female informants is clearly open to objections. However, in this project, it was an essential condition of gaining access to the shopfloor. Managers (and Trade Union representatives in some companies) wished to examine the questions that would be asked before interviewing was agreed. There was only one piece of censorship as a result of this: in one company a question on Trade Union membership was omitted. Managements were primarily concerned with the question of time; that each interview should not overrun the agreed half-hour, so that production should not be disrupted.

Providing information to informants was an important part of the interview method. It was essential to avoid any implied compulsion to attend for interview, or to give the impression that the research was a 'management survey'. Interviewees were (within reason) freely selected, and were sent a handout in advance explaining the nature and purpose of the research, and asking for their help. Some time was spent in interviews answering their questions and giving more assurances about confidentiality.

The use of a standardized interview was more helpful than I had anticipated. It produced a body of quantifiable data within a limited field-work period, and still serves as a point of reference for more qualitative assessments. There were open-ended questions as well as codable ones, and detailed responses were tape-recorded. There were questions at different levels of generality; it is interesting that a bland, general question, such as 'Should an applicant for a job be chosen on merit alone?' tends to evoke a bland, general response, whereas a more specific query, such as 'Do you think of your own job as being a "woman's job"? And if so, why?' elicits answers of a more illuminating kind. Thus, the interviews tapped different levels of meaning. As a research worker, I gained valuable new skills, learning to code interview responses for machine-readability, and to run SPSS on the computer.<sup>11</sup> The method remains the means, and not the end, when the critical checks of anthropological analysis are still applied to quantitative data.

Some aspects of the method used in this research were distinctively anthropological. I would suggest that anthropological method is primarily concerned with two areas: language, and structural context. Participant observation - the classic method of approaching these areas within another culture - could not be used in this project, though it surfaced briefly in shared canteen meals and conversations. Non-participant observation, on the shop-floor and in company training schools, had to suffice. Structural information was provided by company documents, and through interviews with managers as well as workers. These interviews (and the circumstances in which they were granted) yielded more than the direct information given in replies. They could be analysed reflexively, and in combination with each other, showing where and how information was blocked and released, and which recurring language patterns suggested the transmission of myths and ideologies.

---

<sup>11</sup> For help in acquiring these skills, I should like to thank Geoff Payne, Marion Ulas, and the staff of the Computer Centre at Plymouth Polytechnic.

Nor was the initial step of the classic fieldwork method - becoming a competent user of the informants' language - entirely absent. One cannot assume a shared language (in the fullest sense) with informants in one's own country. As a fieldworker in Plymouth factories, I found it helpful that I had already lived in the area for three years. From casual conversations in the school playground, the baby clinic, in shops, and on buses, I was already well aware of the themes of gender segregation.

#### Presentation and dissemination of findings

There are two main considerations: fulfilling one's obligations to the client, and making a theoretical contribution as a practising anthropologist. In this project, I hope I accomplished the first (submitting a final report to the Joint Panel in October 1980), and I am beginning to attempt the second. I have experienced some difficulty in disentangling the two; I was uncertain about the Joint Panel's requirements, in length and in nature, for a final report. The report I submitted was factually detailed, generally ethnographic, and far too long for the purpose; I am currently isolating, for the EOC, the policy aspects which are of interest to them.

My advice to an applied anthropologist would be to write, initially, a short report with a strong, clear argument, geared specifically to the policy interests of the client; and to include sufficient hard data only to support the main points and indicate that the work has been done. The general writing-up must be a more long-term operation. It is also important to be positive: 'Band-Aids' in policy, to effect modest improvements, are always possible and are better than nothing. Such suggestions should be presented first in any report. General conclusions (which may well tend to greater pessimism, or call for total social reconstruction) may then follow.

It is essential to maintain quality, even in short reports, without giving non-academic or busy clients material which they do not want, but without underestimating their capacity to appreciate an intellectual argument. There may be a conflict of interests between client and informants, and hence pressure (subtle and not so subtle) on the researcher to toe the line in the presentation of findings. Happily, I did not experience the dilemma in which the anthropologist has to distinguish between compromise and betrayal. However, scrupulous attention to contractual commitments (deadlines for work, and specific requests from clients) should give one more room for manoeuvre and for general honesty in written submissions: it also means that any unpalatable recommendations will carry more weight.

I cannot yet speak with confidence of the second stage of presenting findings to other anthropologists, and (one hopes) to a wider audience. I am still quarrying for meaning in tapes and field notebooks, and exploring anthropological themes in writing-up - boundaries between 'male' and 'female' work, and training as ritual - which were not explicit in the text of the final report. However, it is clear that the quality of this work must be determined by the quality of the fieldwork on which it is based. Whatever the nature of short-term reporting obligations, close attention to language and to non-verbal symbolic systems are still an essential part of anthropological fieldwork, within a holistic, structural approach. The training through 'other cultures' still holds good; any culture is 'other' to the careful observer, and, through close attention, the commonplace becomes exotic.

#### Regaining the Golden Stool

It is no longer possible to return to the era of the Golden Stool, the confident heyday of applied anthropology, even if we wished to do so.

However, the image still has considerable force: not only that the anthropologist was seen to be the appropriate adviser, but that the government actually listened to him. It was suggested at the ASA Panel Meeting on Applied Anthropology (held at Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford, on 17 November 1981) that the problems of applied anthropologists were specific, practical ones, and that they should not be reified to the point that an all-purpose theoretical answer should be sought for them. I would agree that this is true; but theoretical issues are nevertheless involved in the application of the subject, notably the extent to which social anthropology can (or should) be regarded as a distinct discipline in applied research.

Finally, as the feminist aspect of my own work is self-evident, I have made no comment upon it, assuming that the social anthropology of women can be taken as being as general in its application as that of men. However, I should like to suggest that the theoretical regeneration of social anthropology in the past ten years has come about largely through the impetus of the women's movement outside academic circles and within them, in women's anthropology groups. Feminists in the early 1970s suggested that there were lessons to be learned from social anthropology; some of these suggestions were in themselves naive, harking back to Morgan, Engels, and mythical primitive matriarchies. However, the idea was sown that social anthropology could help to provide a reconstructed image of women in society. In this context, theory and practice seem indivisible: perhaps such an image is our Golden Stool.

PAULINE WILKINS

\* This paper is a version of one originally presented to the Oxford Women's Anthropology Group on 19 November 1981. I am grateful to members of the group for their comments, and especially to Shirley Ardener, who read the subsequent draft. However, they bear no responsibility for the views expressed in it, which are entirely personal.

I was a Research Fellow in the Department of Social and Political Studies at Plymouth Polytechnic from 1980-81: thanks are due to Geoff Payne, Dean of the Faculty of Social Science, who enabled me to gain institutional support and acted as my project supervisor, and to the EOC/SSRC Joint Panel on Equal Opportunities, which financed the research. My final report to them was published in 1980 under the title 'Training and Women's Employment: The Effects of Company Training Policies on Women's Employment Opportunities in Plymouth'.

## BOOK REVIEWS

ROY WILLIS, *A State in the Making: Myth, History, and Social Transformation in Pre-Colonial Ufipa*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1981 [African Systems of Thought, general editors C.S. Bird and I. Karp]. 302 pp., Bibliography, Index, Illustrations. £19.50.

Dr. Roy Willis, who received his training as a social anthropologist at Oxford, carried out field research among the Fipa, a Bantu people of western Tanzania, for two years in the early 1960s. He has already published extensively on them, but the substantial work here reviewed must be reckoned his *magnum opus*. Its design, set out in a brief and lucid Preface, is ambitious. Willis has elsewhere described himself as being 'of the structuralist persuasion', and he introduces his book as a 'marriage of a revisionist structuralism and an historical reconstruction which has been strongly influenced by Marxist theory' - and, he adds, by 'exchange theory' as well.

But the prospective reader need not be daunted. Essentially what Willis is trying to do, as all good anthropologists must (or should), is to make the best possible sense of the ethnography. His study is not 'just' ethnography; strictly speaking, of course, no ethnography is. Nor, despite its title, is the book only, or mainly, about historical processes of state formation. Its theme is Fipa ideas and beliefs about the origin and development of their traditional polity, rather than the polity itself. In this context Willis applies both 'action' and 'cosmological' (or conceptual) frames of reference, being careful always to keep them distinct. A brief resumé of the book's organization may indicate the logic of its argument.

There are three parts, and the movement from each to the next is clear and systematic. First comes an analysis of the key Fipa myth (or myths) of origin, one version of which starts with a first man falling from heaven, either accompanied by a first woman or subsequently producing one from his knee (in a variant of the Genesis myth). In an alternative version, the story begins with the arrival from elsewhere of a little group of women. In any case, these events and their consequences led to the establishment of the political primacy of the royal capital of Milansi, at the geographical centre of the country, and ultimately to the traditional division of the territory into two distinct polities, a division which persisted up to colonial times. Willis convincingly explains the wealth of symbolism entailed in the detailed stories, and he goes on to link this complex body of data with an interpretation of Fipa traditional history, in its smooth transition from legend and fable to what actually happened (or may have happened), i.e. the emergence of the two contiguous and opposed Fipa 'states'.

In Part II the economic and political organization of Fipa society, as this may be conceived to have been in or about 1880, is carefully reconstructed, on the basis mainly of oral evidence and of the author's own observations of contemporary institutions which may be presumed to have remained relatively unchanged. The choice of date is not arbitrary, for it was about that time that Ufipa achieved its maximum indigenous development, and soon after it the disruptive impact of European influ-

ence began to make itself felt. The value of Willis' multiplex frame of reference is especially evident here: explanations in terms of kinship and community relations of family and village, of ecological factors and of modes of production and exchange, as well as of agricultural methods and techniques (especially a distinctive form of compost mound cultivation), are all comprehensively and systematically deployed, to give us a rounded picture of a culture in its total context. Willis' 'structuralist' interests, though manifest throughout, do not preclude explanation in historical, ecological, technological and - dare one say it! - 'functionalist' terms. Dr. Willis' book is a shining example of the merits of a controlled eclecticism.

In Part III the author returns to his key myth, now regarded not as a representation, or a form, of traditional history, but rather as a pattern for the analysis of more recent political conditions and in particular of the state system as it was in the last pre-colonial years. This is followed by an Epilogue, bringing the story up to the final destruction of the old order under German colonial rule.

So summary a survey can do but scant justice to Willis' rich and varied saga. He writes well, and he is refreshingly free from the common anthropological tendency to suppose that there must be one 'right' explanation for any cultural phenomenon, so that alternative explanations are regarded as rivals and so probably wrong.

I think that this way of using contemporary ethnography to illuminate not a remote and unspecified past but a specific period in recent history, represents a relatively new approach to understanding. In the African context, the only comparable exercise that comes to mind is Vansina's *The Tio Kingdom of the Middle Congo 1880-1892* (1973, reviewed by the present reviewer in *Africa*, Vol. XLV, 1975). But Vansina could spend only six months in the field, as compared to Willis' two years, and Willis' ethnography is of quite exceptional quality by any standards. His mastery of the nuances of the Fipa language is evident. Judged only as an account of Fipa symbolic representations, his book, consistently with the aims of the series in which it is published, contributes in depth to our understanding of one African system of thought.

The 'marriage' (evidently a polygamous one) which Willis speaks about in his Preface has, then, been splendidly consummated. It may be hoped that it will stimulate others to similar unions, while there is still time.

The book is beautifully produced. There are a number of adequate if not very exciting photographs, and the maps, plans and diagrams (with the exception, perhaps unavoidable, of Diagram 4) are of admirable clarity.

JOHN BEATTIE

MARILYN STRATHERN, *Kinship at the Core: An Anthropology of Elmdon, a Village in North-west Essex in the Nineteen-sixties*, Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press 1981. xxxiv, 296 pp., Bibliography, Index, Illustrations. £18.50.

The extent of migration from urban to certain rural parts of England, suggested by early results of the 1981 census has surprised many social researchers. The English eastern lowlands is one of the areas most affected by these changes. This book results from one of the very few attempts to record changes in such a village. Audrey Richards' Foreword records the story of the research and is important for an understanding of the value of Marilyn Strathern's contribution to the anthropology of Britain.

In 1962 Audrey Richards took Cambridge students to a village in north-west Essex for an exercise in fieldwork techniques. Her attention was caught by residents distinguishing 'real' Elmdon people from other 'villagers' as well as from recent incomers like 'the lady from Cambridge' who had bought a weekend cottage there. Marilyn Strathern, one of the students on that first field trip, has used data amassed between 1962 and 1977, by students and research assistants, and by Audrey Richards in her twenty years of residence in Elmdon.

Strathern reiterates a question posed by Richards in 1964:  
 ...what made some Elmdoners identify with their own village; feel they have prescriptive rights to housing and other amenities; and that they, or some of them, are the 'real' Elmdon people whereas immigrants, of whatever class, stock-keepers or stockbrokers, are different and without the same rights and should not really be there.

The study starts by asking why incomers relate to the village, a name, a place, and a social space, by reference to 'real' Elmdon - four named families whom she calls the core. The book includes close examination of concepts of family, community and village. However, there is more emphasis on discovering the sociological reality of 'real' Elmdon behind these terms than, as her initial question would suggest, analysing through their contextual occurrence the language and processes of interaction between different residents in the village. This is precluded by her method: setting the analysis in an ethnographic present of 1964, the date of the most thorough house-to-house survey.

A typology of families is constructed around social categories in use in 1964. The core, the four families of 'real' Elmdon, were all raised in the village, and at the turn of the century men with these names were agricultural workers. Other 'Elmdoners' include old established families associated with trades and crafts (the old agricultural middle-class) and people who came to the village before 1914 but whose outside origins are recognised. 'Newcomers' are categorised as those arriving after the First World War and especially commuters, weekenders and retired people who came in the 1950s. The obvious difficulty of allocating individuals to families in this typology leads to an examination of how the notion of a bounded set of families associated with village identity arises when neither kinship and marriage systems nor employment patterns before the turn of the century were, according to records, so circumscribed. This is discussed in chapters on kinship, employment and housing.

Villagers are, they claim, 'all related' but 'real' Elmdon presents notions of boundaries. Through bilateral reckoning of descent both men and women can claim membership of several surname groups; personal kin

spreads across many families and with out-marriage, stretches over a number of villages. In practices, in assistance in domestic matters and invitations to ceremonies, only specific kin relations are activated: distant kin are shed. It is argued that conceptually parents as 'sides' through whom family traits and qualities are inherited 'closes' ramified kinship into family groups. Continuance of patronyms only as long as there are male holders further 'closes' the system. The core families' reckoning and shedding of kin is compared with the way a propertied and titled local family with a lineal ideology shed younger sons, collaterals and women in a 'narrow equation between "family" and "estate"'. It is suggested that family name has an external referent: in the case of the squirearchy it is a property; for the old agricultural middle class it is a skill or craft; for the core families it is 'real Elmdon'.

In the section on employment Strathern hypothesizes that 'real Elmdon' was in currency in the 19th century period of High Farming and the identification of core families with village name arises from claims on landowners and farmers for local jobs for local people in competition with agricultural workers from surrounding villages. It may be that with more data on how employment was contracted this thesis could be maintained. As it is, it is one of the instances when, as Strathern herself states, she makes an 'hypothetical extrapolation into history'.

The distinction 'villagers' (of which 'real Elmdon' is an emphatic form), in contradistinction to 'newcomers', is described as occurring in the 1960s over competition for housing. None of the core families own houses and since mortgage-raising immigrants buy not only the old agricultural middle class' houses but also the smaller, previously tied or rented 'working men's' houses, this is seen as an attack on a pool of accommodation to which core families claim access. Council housing allocation policies also disregard what is seen by Elmdon people as a right to Elmdon houses against other villagers.

As the book unfolds, 'real Elmdon' is shown to consist of four families whose high position in the agricultural hierarchy has disappeared with changes in the industry; they own no land, no houses, and have no other assets apart from their labour; and they do not play a visible leadership role in the village. Their 'property' is proprietorial claims to identification with the village, its jobs and its accommodation. Why then do they hold such 'power' in the village that immigrants relate to the village through them?

This is partially answered in a discussion of notions of community. Newcomers visualise the whole village as an actual or potential community with one section ('villagers') as its special representatives. Strathern describes how newcomers have taken over the paternalist landowner's provision of welfare and feel they have a responsibility to provide leadership. However, at the same time they see the village as a place where events should be organized by and for all residents. 'Villagers' on the other hand see community as constituting different interest groups, themselves having claims to village assets (jobs and houses) but proclaiming themselves powerless in relation to other interest groups. Their 'power' is to boycott newcomers' activities with which they disagree, a stance which disturbs the middle class notion of community.

It is hinted that villagers and newcomers have not only different ideas of community but different notions of what constitutes proper organization. Strathern seems to share newcomers' attitudes when she dismisses villagers' apparently effective running of sports teams and a Slate Club in the pub because 'this does not seem to amount to "leadership"'. It would seem that villagers' abilities to make arrangements and assess attitudes in a way invisible to newcomers could be another



source of 'power'. Why, for example, from the scant details given, have newcomers seemingly not sought (or been given room to seek) positions such as parish councillors which are described as fitting their ideas of community and their responsibilities to it? The processes by which newcomers are assimilated only recur in sections of different notions of property and class. The book concentrates on material and conceptual foundations of 'real Elmdon-ness' and how ideas of boundaries are created. It does not show why and how immigrants relate to this image. On reaching the end of the main text one is asking a reformulation of the original question: how do 'villagers' have such influence over newcomers when all they have to lose is their proprietorial claims?

It comes as a shock to find, in an Epilogue by Frances Oxford on the village in 1977, that 'real Elmdon' has no currency. There is fascinating ethnographic detail on how the shrunken number of 'villagers' (the only term now used) upset the 'committee culture' of dominant, leadership-prone newcomers, but between the two authors there is no sign of how the 'community' went through such a change.

It is most valuable to have ethnographic material made available on this sparsely studied subject and there are many stimulating ideas in the book. However, telescoping research carried out between 1962 and 1977 back into an ethnographic present of 1964 with an Epilogue on 1977, means that whereas concepts of 'village', 'community', 'newcomer', 'villager', and 'real Elmdon' can be studied in detail, processes of negotiating meaning of these terms over a period of social change are lost. Perhaps in this case the data was too variable, but if there is any place where anthropologists have the opportunity to study the processes of social change it is on our own (or Audrey Richards') doorstep.

*Two other books have been published as a result of this work:*

A. Richards and J. Robin, *Some Elmdon Families*, privately published by Audrey Richards, 1975.

J. Robin, *Elmdon: Continuity and Change in a North-west Essex Village, 1861-1964*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1980.

SUSAN WRIGHT

SHIRLEY ARDENER (editor), *Women and Space: Ground Rules and Social Maps*, London: Croom Helm 1981. 239pp., Bibliography, Index. £6.95 (Paper).

The saying 'a woman's place is in the home' implies more about the cultural expectations of women than their desired physical location. This is not only because the word home has meanings other than that of house but also because place has connotations which go beyond physical location. In the phrase quoted above 'place' locates a woman within a particular domain of activity and in so doing positions her in relation to other members of society. The writers of *Women and Space* are aware that space like place has connotations other than the physical. As one contributor, Callaway, points out, space has at least three different analytical levels when used by anthropologists:

1. *physical space*, the lay-out and organisation of physical reality;
2. *social space*, such as the kinship structure and the division of

labour between the sexes and generations;

3. *metaphysical space*, which concerns the cosmology or world system and the moral and religious orders which present the logical ordering of the visible and invisible universe.

*Women and Space* provides case studies of how women use and occupy all these levels of space. It also demonstrates the interdependence of these levels; for example women's place in the social space of kinship may explain their place in physical space and the arrangement of objects in physical space may be better understood in relation to women's position in metaphysical space. As the subtitle *Ground Rules and Social Maps* suggests people create categories which organise space and these categories are reflexive for they become ground rules and social maps for action. To quote Shirley Ardener 'space defines people' as well as people defining space.

The book is the fifth in the Oxford Women's Series and derives from a programme of special lectures on women convened under the auspices of the Oxford University Women's Studies Committee in Michaelmas Term 1979. It draws upon the work of participants in the independently organised Oxford Women's Social Anthropology Seminar which also provided the material for *Perceiving Women* (S. Ardener, ed., London 1975) and *Defining Females* (S. Ardener, ed., London 1978). As with the other two books, contributors to *Women and Space* were invited to give papers which related their own particular ethnographic interests to a broader theme, in this case the subject of the title.

The result is the presentation of a stimulating diversity of material and approaches within one volume. It has eleven chapters - an Introduction and ten dealing with specific ethnographic contexts. The range of cultures covered is wide. It includes Andean women (Skar), urban Greece (Hirschon), rural Greece and the Mediterranean (Sciama), Shi'ite Iran (Khatib-Chahidi), Doshman Ziari (Wright), two Soviet minorities - the Georgians and the Tadjiks - (Dragadze), Yorubaland, Nigeria (Callaway) and a South African urban community (Ridd). Nearer home, Rodgers looks at the British House of Commons, Blair examines the world of actresses and Ardener comments on the place of women in the space of science fiction (which one could perhaps classify as either a specific kind of physical space and/or as a kind of metaphysical space).

Obviously there is no dearth of comparative material. However, this can create problems for at times the underlying themes seem to get lost amidst such variety. Different societies have different conceptions of space as Skar shows when she discusses how the concept of physical space in a Peruvian village is hard to distinguish from the concept of time. As *Defining Females* reminded us the term 'women' is itself a cultural category or 'sex class' and so the notion of womanhood also varies cross-culturally. The difference between the freedom of movement of a Yoruba woman, i.e. the way she can move in space, and that of the more enclosed woman in Shi'ite Iran is in part the result of different conceptions of the category woman as well as the different organisation of kinship space and physical space.

Not only do the perceptions of women and space differ cross-culturally but so do the analytical levels in which the contributors are most interested. Hirschon's detailed discussion of a district in urban Greece focuses on how the arrangement of objects and activities inside and outside the house can only be understood with reference to aspects of the organisation of social and metaphysical space. Blair, in contrast is more interested in what happens when the role of the actress requires her to cross certain boundaries by which metaphysical space is organised. An actress plays parts which cause her, to use Goffman's terms, to make 'back-stage' private behaviour 'front-stage' and so public. Her re-arrangement of these cate-

gories leads to a particular kind of position in social space different from that of other women.

Shirley Ardener's Introduction does much to pull together the richness of diversity but she indicates that the papers raise so many questions that she is torn in deciding how much time to allot to the consideration of the characteristics of the organisation of space; for example, the place of objects in space, the relation of time and space, and the many themes that do seem to recur in the relation between women and space in different cultures. She discusses briefly different kinds of space and the way in which physical space and our perceptions are 'mutually affecting spheres of reality'. She also acknowledges that the term 'social map' is a 'handy folk term' rather than having 'the status of a definitive scientific label' thus indicating the varying analytical interests of the writers.

Of the many insights she provides, which all serve to place the papers in the broader context of women's studies and anthropology in general, my personal choice of the most significant is her comment on the vulnerability of women because of the implications it has for new perspectives on relations between public and private spheres. She writes, 'The vulnerability to rape and other depravations is a basic asymmetry (from which perhaps many others may spring or upon which others are built), which has a bearing on how women use space.' In many cultures (although not all as the volume itself demonstrates) this asymmetry is built upon and restricts a woman's use of space as compared to a man's. In Skar's Andean valley the area outside the valley is more unsafe for women than it is for men. Khatib-Chahidi shows how household space is made safe for women by making arrangements for strangers - non-kin - who reside permanently within this space to become fictive kin and therefore safe. Thus the basic asymmetry of the vulnerability of women compared to men may lead to an organisation of space which involves women being kept in safe places.

The association of women with the domestic sphere and private places has often been interpreted in the light of the exclusion of women from the public sphere and the exploitation of her labour. However as Sciana and others point out this can be an ethnocentric assumption. There can be advantages in being kept in safe places and confinement in private places need not mean deprivation. The implications of women's association with the private sphere depend upon how this private sphere is articulated with other areas of life. Ridd's paper on South Africa demonstrates how important and prestigious control of the private sphere may be in a situation where men are forced to go out into a public arena where they have no prestige. Wright's Doshman Ziari women manage to use their domestic space to influence the more public political affairs of their menfolk. In contrast Rodgers shows how British concepts of domestic and public activities are seen as mutually exclusive and so can hamper any kind of involvement or influence that women may find it advantageous to have in the public sphere.

In a recent article La Fontaine has stressed that relations between men and women and between domestic and other forms of organisation must not always be interpreted as being in opposition to one another (*Man*, Vol. XVI n.s., 1981, pp.333-349). Rather there should be a realization of their interdependence and the different kinds of interdependence that exist between them. Discussions about the way in which the vulnerability of women is used to organise space and the different kinds of relations between domestic and public space in this volume provide further support for this argument. Dragadze's tantalisingly brief comments on the way revolution has affected the space of women in two Soviet minorities also

raises important issues about change in either sphere influencing the other.

For the reviewer as for the editor the book presents an embarrassment of riches in the number of questions it raises and which deserve comment. It is hoped that this book will stimulate further lines of more systematic enquiry, for it is a book which provides a better understanding of factors which influence the place of women in many cultures and an exploration of the ways in which anthropologists can use the concept of space to provide new perspectives on old problems.

CATHERINE THOMPSON

PAUL PARIN, FRITZ MORGENTHAUER and GOLDY PARIN-MATTHEY, *Fear Thy Neighbor as Thyself: Psychoanalysis and Society among the Anyi of West Africa* (translated by Patricia Klammerth), Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press 1980. xv, 393 pp., Index, Bibliography, Photographs. £16.80.

Every two or three years the authors leave their private psychoanalytical practices in Zurich to conduct analytically oriented interviews amongst various West African communities. The fruits of their latest visit, four months among the Anyi of the Ivory Coast, are offered by the publishers as 'new reflections...on ethnopsychanalysis as a fieldwork method'. A matrilineal society was deliberately chosen as a challenge to psychoanalysis because 'one of its fundamental concepts, oedipal conflict - allegedly or genuinely - is exclusively a product a patrilineal family organisation'. The book is typical of the newer psychoanalytic approaches to anthropology in that social institutions are no longer regarded solely as individual intrapsychic experiences writ large but as partly autonomous and themselves reflected onto the individual psyche.

A psychodynamic approach would appear well-suited to looking at a society in which the social consensus is disintegrating under the effects of colonialism and the new nation state, in which individuals must choose between a variety of values, roles and identities. Unfortunately there is little basic ethnography or history. It is not clear for instance until half-way through the book as to whether wives with their children live in the same households as their husbands. (Sometimes they do.) As the analysts point out: 'in contrast to other ethnographic techniques, our method made it unnecessary for us to ask questions'. They themselves rely on previous studies but quote them only when relevant to their interpretations. The interpretations themselves are presented not as conclusions but as descriptions; we are introduced to new characters as 'sadoanal' or engaged in fending off phallic breasts (for this is the psychoanalysis of object relations theory). The concentration on the psychoanalysis of a few informants means that much of the book is concerned with the personal reactions of the informants to the authors with little consideration of the effects on this of the colonial experience or current political questions. Additionally, as the interviews were conducted in French with the occasional help of an interpreter, when we learn that the Anyi call the Ashanti 'cousins' we are not at all certain

whether this is in French or Twi or of its significance.

To take as given the value of a psychoanalytic approach has implications for theory as well as method. To take one of the most plausible of the authors' suggestions, the daily enemas administered to children do seem to parallel the Anyi attitude to money - this is always being mislaid or lost or stolen. However we are not offered any intermediate steps or suggestions as to whether these two types of behaviour are linked by the community through concepts resembling 'catharsis'. The relation between public and private symbolism is unclear - whether there is a causal connection between the two, and if so what is the direction of the causality, or whether like Devereux we are to regard the two as just somehow running in parallel lines, artefacts of our mode of perception. The authors appear unaware of somewhat more sophisticated solutions of the problem such as those of Turner (causality running along separately in both psyche and society, with metaphorical associations between the two).

Even the central question - the extent of the individual's identification with his father in a matrilineal society - is in danger of being lost. However it seems that Anyi boys must identify with 'the male aggressive power of the king...because he represents and portrays the aggressive masculinity they need in order to counter the possessive claims of the maternal lineage.' The power of men in the matrilineage is regarded as essentially female in emotional quality for the individual - a familiar problem - but the authors do not even refer to the Jones/Malinowski debate or to such recent contributions to it as those of Ann Pearsons. On the whole individuals pass through the oedipal period by identification with their father. 'A hero is anyone who first manages to evade his "oedipal" conflicts and then succeeds in mastering it outside the maternal family, for anyone capable of this feat can return out of exile to the kin of his mother, like the nephew to the throne of his uncle, and can identify with the nurturing and authoritarian traits of both his father and mother.' Thus to some extent mother's brother stands for father in later adolescence. The problems this couches for the male are admirably illustrated by the psychoanalytic method. Not unreasonably the authors employ the idea of 'extension of sentiment' to explore individual socialisation but they seem completely unaware of the usual objections of using it to explain social facts. Explanation of society by individual psyche is inadequately resisted, and indeed is consistently implied although never clearly stated.

In short, nothing very new. Ethnopschoanalysis should restrict itself to questions of socialisation or else develop a considerably more sophisticated methodology. This book is unlikely to appeal to anyone ignorant of the ethnography of the Akan or who doubts the validity of the analytic approach. Not, I suppose, a very large readership.

ROLAND LITTLEWOOD

## OTHER NOTES AND NOTICES

Conference on *Emerging Christianity in Modern Africa* at St. Catharine's, Cumberland Lodge, sponsored by St. Catharine's in association with the Royal Anthropological Institute, February 26-28, 1982.

A large number of anthropologists, missionaries, theologians, anthropologists/missionaries and others gathered at Windsor Great Park for this conference. (It was largely a meeting of old friends.) What 'emerged' was a heterogeneity of types of Christianity almost beyond classification. There was no consensus on what constituted Christianity in Africa - only agreement on its infinite variability. Some people were concerned about the use of 'folk Christianity'. What was it? Did it indicate a mainstream orthodoxy continuing to be located in the increasingly secular world of the West - with all local variations to be regarded as 'folk'? Could there be a shift, a compromise, a movement of the centre towards the obviously 'living' Christianity of Africa? Adrian Hastings began by pointing to the growing strength of Christianity and urged participants to consider that aspect of Christianity in Africa that involved political discourse. Thereafter, black theology, the situational theology of the South African conflict, raised its head briefly, then disappeared. The papers took off in other directions. They were varied, ranging from African Christologies (Christ as medicine-man) to the Generation of Wealth in Small Communities and the use of language in the early mission field.

It would have been interesting, given the link between anthropologists and missionaries to have some kind of anthropological overview. In the end, this was provided by a preview of André Singer's film (made for Granada TV) on Zande witchcraft. Suddenly (well, relatively so) after the theologies, Christologies, economic and social determinants etc. of the papers, people (strangely absent from the previous discussions) flickered onto the screen. In the film a Catholic priest was presented as living in peaceful (if at times weary and exasperated) coexistence with Zande witchcraft thriving as in Evans-Pritchard's day. The church scenes of the congregation that had earlier been seen consulting the oracles were perhaps the liveliest moments. The audience reaction to the film was surprisingly hostile; it was, after all, merely a competent anthropological film on a topic familiar to most of us. Could the reason for this reaction have lain in the absence of two things: for the anthropologists, the absence of some sort of explanatory framework to 'excuse' this behaviour to the outside world, and for the theologians a similar unease created by a situation lacking perceptible grace?

The Christianity of Africa still seemed, at the end of the conference, separated from that of the West and yet perhaps herein lay its strength. It was difficult to suppress a feeling of excitement that the constant reformulation, rethinking of old ideas and the breaking of boundaries might bring some revitalisation. But to whom? The conference might more aptly have been called 'Emerging Africa in Modern Christianity'.

PAT HOLDEN

## THE SADDEST STORY

Their eyes met across the crowded space. It was a rite of passage, one of the big ones, and all the village was there. She didn't often see him, except on occasions like this. He lived in the north-east of the village, and she in the south-west (except on Big Days, of course, when they all changed round; this was what kept the tribe going, so her mother said, but it seemed a lot of bother to her).

They had never spoken, but she knew it would be a good match. She was his father's sister's daughter; he was her mother's brother's son. She had always heard that patrilateral cross-cousins made a perfect marriage - and they were the real thing (not like her sister and her husband; 'classificatory' was what they told everyone, but only under the most generous interpretation).



Next to him sat his brother. He was good-looking as well, and she sometimes wondered how it would have been if he were a little older (he had only missed her age-set by a matter of weeks). Soon, of course, they would have to avoid each other - but that was the price you had to pay for marital bliss.

She thought about the little gift he had given her earlier in the day. (Well, not exactly given *her* - he had actually given an axe-head to his cousin, who had given a mat to her cousin, who had given a spear to his cousin, who had given a woven basket to her - but somehow she felt that the spirit of the gift, *his* gift, still lingered. She wondered if he felt the same about her gift, which reached him by an equally circuitous route. There was nothing personal about these exchanges. Her mother always said they kept the tribe going. But she couldn't help feeling there was more to it than that.)

A sudden movement roused her from her daydreams. He was on his feet and, unbelievably, walking towards her. He looked so handsome with his

painted face, and wearing all his clothes back to front (the way they did on Big Days). Before she could prepare herself he was in front of her, and smiling gently. He let slip a brief remark in an undertone; in a daze, without thinking, she shouted back the standard response. He laughed and turned away. Her stomach turned to water and her heart thumped. What was going on? Had she got it all horribly wrong? In desperation she cast her mind back over the years, quickly sorting the phratrises into wife-givers and wife-takers as she had done a hundred times before. Suddenly, with horror, she realised her mistake. She had mixed up the moieties. Her dreams came crashing down about her, as she realised the full implications of her error. She, and the man she loved, were condemned forever to a joking relationship.

DESMOND McNEILL

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

- ALLEN, Michael (ed.), *Vanuatu: Politics, Economics and Ritual in Island Melanesia*, Sydney etc.: Academic Press 1981. [Studies in Anthropology, editor E.A. Hammel]. xviii, 393pp., Bibliography, Indexes, Maps. £30.40.
- ARKUSH, R. David, *Fei Xiaotong and Sociology in Revolutionary China*, Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press 1981 [Harvard East Asian Monographs, no. 98]. xviii, 322pp., Bibliography, Index. £10.50.
- AUGÉ, Marc, *The Anthropological Circle: Symbol, Function, History*, Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press 1982 [Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology, general editor Jack Goody]. vii, 115pp., Index. £12.50.
- BENSON, Susan, *Changing Cultures, Ambiguous Ethnicity: Interracial Families in London*, Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press 1981 [Changing Cultures, general editor Jack Goody]. ix, 150pp., Appendixes, References, Index, Diagrams. \$16.50.
- BLANCHARD, Kendall, *The Mississippi Choctaws at Play: The Serious Side of Leisure*, Urbana etc.: University of Illinois Press 1981. xv, 178pp., Appendixes, References, Index. £9.80.
- BROTHWELL, D.R., *Digging Up Bones: The Excavation, Treatment and Study of Human Skeletal Remains* (3rd ed.), Oxford: Oxford University Press 1981. 177pp., Bibliography, Index. £8.95.
- Clinical Immunology Reviews*, Vol. I, no.1, 1981.
- COOK, Noble David, *Demographic Collapse: Indian Peru, 1520-1620*, Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press 1981 [Cambridge Latin American Studies no.41, general editor Malcolm Deas]. x, 280pp., Bibliography, Index, Maps. £22.50.



- DOUGLAS, Mary (ed.), *Essays in the Sociology of Perception*, London etc.: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1982. viii, 327pp., Index. £7.95(Paper).
- Ethnos*, Vol.XLVI, nos. 1&2, 1981 [Journal of the Ethnographical Museum of Sweden, Stockholm].
- HAILE, Father Berard, *Women Versus Men: A Conflict of Navajo Emergence*, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press 1981 [American Tribal Religions, Vol.6, general editor K.W. Luchert]. viii, 118pp. £8.95.
- HAILE, Father Berard, *The Upward Moving and Emergence Way*, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press 1981 [American Tribal Religions, Vol.7, general editor K.W. Luchert]. xv, 238pp. £10.80.
- HENDRY, Joy, *Marriage in Changing Japan*, London: Croom Helm 1981. 239pp., Appendix, Bibliography, Index. £14.95.
- HOOPER, Antony, *Why Tikopia Has Four Clans*, Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland [Occasional Papers no. 38], London 1981. vi, 70pp. £6.00.
- Journal of the Anthropological Study of Human Movement* [JASHM], Vol.I, no.4, 1981.
- KARIM, Wazir-Jahan Begum, *Ma'Betisék, Concepts of Living Things*, London: Athlone and New Jersey: Humanities 1981 [London School of Economics, Monographs on Social Anthropology, no.54, editor A. Gell]. xv, 207pp., Appendixes, Bibliography, Index. £18.00.
- KEMPTON, Willett, *The Folk Classification of Ceramics: A Study of Cognitive Prototypes*, New York etc.: Academic Press 1981 [Language, Thought and Culture: Advances in the Study of Cognition, general editor E.A. Hammel]. xvi, 201pp., Appendixes, Index, Illustrations. £16.20.
- LEACH, Edmund, *Social Anthropology*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press 1982 [Masterguides, general editor F. Kermode]. 224pp., Bibliography, Index. £9.50 (Cloth). Also received, Fontana edition (Glasgow) £2.50 (Paper).
- LITTLEWOOD, Roland and Maurice LIPSEGE, *Aliens and Alienists: Ethnic Minorities and Psychiatry*, Harmondsworth: Penguin 1982. 242pp., References, Index. £3.95.
- LLOYD, Peter, *A Third World Proletariat?*, London etc.: George Allen & Unwin 1982 [Controversies in Sociology 11, general editors T.B. Bottomore and M.J. Mulkey]. 125pp., Bibliography, Index. £3.95.
- LODRICK, Deryck O., *Sacred Cows, Sacred Places: Origins and Survivals of Animal Homes in India*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1981. xii, 206pp., Bibliography, Index. £20.00.
- LOVELAND, Christine A. and Franklin O. LOVELAND, *Sex Roles and Social Change in Native Lower Central American Societies*, Urbana etc.: University of Illinois Press 1982. xix, 173pp., Index. £9.50.

134 Publications Received

- MacINTYRE, Alasdair, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, London: Duckworth 1981. ix, 245pp., Bibliography, Index. £24.00.
- OBEYESEKERE, Gananth, *Medusa's Hair: An Essay on Personal Symbols and Religious Experience*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press 1981. xiii, 201pp., References, Index. £15.75.
- O'FLAHERTY, Wendy Doniger, *Siva: The Erotic Ascetic*, Oxford etc.: Oxford University Press 1981 [1973] [Galaxy Book 650]. xii, 318pp., Appendixes, Bibliography. £5.50.
- OPPONG, Christine, *Middle Class African Marriage: A Family Study of Ghanaian Senior Civil Servants*, London etc.: George Allen & Unwin 1981 [1974]. xx, 160pp., Appendix, Bibliographies, Index. £4.50.
- REYNOLDS, Peter C., *On the Evolution of Human Behaviour: The Argument from Animals to Man*, Berkeley etc.: University of California Press 1981. xi, 259pp., References, Index, Illustrations. £20.00.
- SIGMON, Becky and Jerome S. CYBULSKI (eds.), *Homo Erectus: Papers in Honor of Davidson Black*, Toronto etc.: University of Toronto Press 1981. xiv, 236pp., Map, Bibliography, Index. £21.00.
- Social Sciences*, Vol.XII, nos. 1,2,3 and 4, 1981 [USSR Academy of Sciences].
- Sociology*, Vol.XV, no.4, 1981 (Special Issue, The Teaching of Research Methodology) [The Journal of the British Sociological Association].
- STEARNS, Mary Lee, *Haida Culture in Custody: The Masset Band*, Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, and, Vancouver: Douglas MacIntyre 1981. xiii, 298pp., Bibliography, Index. £14.70.
- THOMAS, David John, *Order Without Government: The Society of the Permon Indians of Venezuela*, Urbana etc.: University of Illinois Press 1982 [Illinois Studies in Anthropology no.13]. 249pp., References, Index. £21.88.
- TURABIAN, Kate L., *A Manual for Writers*, London: Heinemann 1982 [J.E. Spink's revision of the First British Edition (1937)]. viii, 209pp., Appendixes, Index. £3.95.
- WAGNER, Daniel A. and Harold W. STEVENSON (eds.), *Cultural Perspectives on Child Development*, San Francisco: W.H. Freeman 1982. xiv, 279pp., References, Index, Illustrations. £14.80.
- WEBB, Walter Prescott, *The Great Plains* [1931], Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press 1981. 515pp., Maps, Index. £6.00.
- WHITEFORD, Scott, *Workers from the North: Plantations, Bolivian Labor and the City in Northwest Argentina*, Austin: University of Texas Press 1981 [Latin American Monographs no. 54]. xi, 155pp., Bibliography, Index, Maps, Tables. £16.25.

- WHITTEN, Norman E. (ed.), *Cultural Transformations and Ethnicity in Modern Ecuador*, Urbana etc.: University of Illinois Press 1981. xvii, 811pp., Index. £23.80.
- WILLS, Christopher, *Genetic Variability*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1981. 281pp., Bibliography. £24.00.
- WINTERHALDER, Bruce and Eric Alden SMITH (eds.), *Hunter-Gatherer Foraging Strategies: Ethnographic and Archaeological Analyses*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press 1982 [Prehistoric Archaeology and Ecology, series editors Karl W. Butzer and Leslie G. Freeman]. x, 231pp., References, Index, Diagrams. £12.60.
- WREN, Robert M., *Achebe's World: The Historical and Cultural Context of the Novels of Chinua Achebe*, Harlow: Longman 1980 [Longman Studies in African Literature]. 114pp., Notes, Bibliography. £4.50.

# CAMBRIDGE STUDIES IN ORAL AND LITERATE CULTURE

General Editors: PETER BURKE and RUTH FINNEGAN

The question of the significance of literacy in human culture is being raised with increasing frequency by scholars in various disciplines. Social anthropologists have been concerning themselves more and more with the 'ethnology of speaking' and with 'verbal art'; but they have also been looking at the consequences of literacy for traditional modes of thought and behaviour – a concern which brings them close to historians. Historians, for their part, have devoted increasing attention to 'popular culture' as expressed in popular literature, to the spread of literacy and to the cultural consequences of industrialisation, political centralisation and compulsory schooling – concerns which bring them closer than before to anthropologists.

This new series is designed to encourage such cross-fertilisation between social anthropology, social history and other disciplines. It will assess the importance of literacy for political, economic, social and cultural development, and examine how what we take to be the common functions of writing are carried out in oral cultures.

*The first titles in the series include:*

## **Sijobang**

Sung Narrative Poetry of West Sumatra

**NIGEL PHILLIPS**

*Sijobang* – the singing of a poetic narrative about a legendary hero – is a form of popular entertainment in the highlands of West Sumatra. This is a study of its cultural and literary context and the various ways in which it is performed. As well as presenting an account of the particular narrative, Nigel Phillips raises important comparative points which will feed into the wider theoretical debate about oral composition and oral culture. £22.50 net

*Cambridge Studies in Oral and Literate Culture 1*

## **Defiant Maids and Stubborn Farmers**

Tradition and Invention in Mende Story Performance

**DONALD J. COSENTINO**

This study of the *domei*, a popular narrative art form among the Mende of Sierra Leone, presents a challenge to the common assumption that traditional societies are 'closed' societies. Drawing on structuralist and communications theory, Don Cosentino analyses a large selection of these tales and reveals that the Mende not only tolerate but encourage innovation and artistic creation. This book is an important contribution to the study of oral narrative traditions and of modes of expression and thought in 'oral' societies. £19.50 net

*Cambridge Studies in Oral and Literate Culture 4*

**CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS**

---

---

# ASA Studies

---

---

**General Editor: Edwin Ardener**

This series is based on selected sessions of the special Decennial Conference of the Association of Social Anthropologists of the Commonwealth.

---

## **Biosocial Anthropology**

Edited by ROBIN FOX

This collection of essays represents the efforts of a group of scholars drawn from various social and natural sciences to interpret phenomena of social life from the perspective of evolutionary biology.

£2.95

## **The Interpretation of Symbolism**

Edited by ROY WILLIS

This collection of papers represents a cross-section of current anthropological approaches to the understanding of the most cryptic and opaque of social forms: those which symbolically encode the basic premisses of any culture.

£7.50

## **Marxist Analyses and Social Anthropology**

Edited by MAURICE BLOCH

The contributions to this volume reflect a new evaluation among British and American anthropologists of the relevance of marxist theory for their discipline, stimulated by the renewed interest in anthropology among French students of marxism.

£9.95

**Also available**

## **Explorations in Language and Meaning**

**Towards a Semantic Anthropology**

MALCOLM CRICK

Three studies of the ways in which anthropology and language have been related and a series of explorations of topics designed to indicate the interests of an anthropology aware of its own identity as a conceptual system, and of the semantic nature of its subject matter.

£8.95

Available from The Marketing Department,  
Ref. JASO, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd,  
33 Welbeck Street, London W1M 8LX

---

---

# DENT

---

---

# JASO

VOL. XIII

1982

NO.2

## C O N T E N T S

	Page	
N.J.ALLEN		
A Dance of Relatives .. .. .	139-146	
<b>SPECIAL SECTION ON THE AMERICAS</b>		
MARCUS COLCHESTER		
Les Yanomamã, sont-ils libres?		
Les Utopies amazoniennes, une critique.		
A Look at French Anarchist Anthropology. .. .. .	147-164	
C.J.WHEELER		
An Inquiry into the Proto-Algonquian System of Social Classification .. .. .	165-174	
<i>Byways in Oxford Anthropology</i>		
Notes on Ethnographic Collections in Oxford: Some American Indian Collections in the Pitt Rivers Museum		
By LYNNE WILLIAMSON		
with an Illustration by Mike Hitchcock.. .. .		175-179
<i>Commentary</i>		
TOM BRASS		
The Sabotage of Anthropology and the Anthropologist as Saboteur .. .. .		180-186
<i>Reviews of Recent Books on the Americas</i>		
POWERS, <i>Yuwipi</i> (Barnes); AXTELL, <i>The European and the Indian</i> (Bowman); BAWDEN and CONRAD, <i>The Andean Heritage</i> (Williamson); BRUMBLE, <i>Annotated Bibliography</i> (Edwards); OBERG, <i>The Social Economy of the Tlingit Indians</i> (Forth); WHITTEN Jr., <i>Cultural Transformations</i> (Riviere); BUTTERWORTH, <i>The People of Buena Ventura</i> and GONZALEZ, <i>Black Carib Household Structure</i> (Harding); SEEGER, <i>Nature and Society in Central Brazil</i> (Fried); WARMAN, 'We Come to Object' (Hoefle) .. .. .		187-208
<i>Other Reviews</i> .. .. .	209-220	
<i>Other Notes and Notices</i> .. .. .	221-222	
<i>Publications Received</i> .. .. .	223-224	
<i>Notes on Contributors</i> .. .. .	inside back cover	

*Other Book Reviews*

MICHAEL ARIS and AUNG SAN SUU KYI (eds.),  
*Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson.*  
Reviewed by Tadeusz Skorupski.. .. 209-213

JAMES CLIFFORD, *Person and Myth: Maurice  
Leenhardt in the Melanesian World.*  
Reviewed by Jeremy MacClancy .. .. 213-215

RODNEY NEEDHAM, *Circumstantial Deliveries.*  
Reviewed by Scott K. Phillips.. .. 215-217

JOY HENDRY, *Marriage in Changing Japan.*  
Reviewed by Rosamund Bell .. .. 217-220

*Other Notes and Notices*

ANTONY HOOPER, *Why Tikopia Has Four Clans*.. .. 221

BECKY A. SIGMON and JEROME S. CYBULSKI (eds.),  
*Homo Erectus: Papers in Honour of Davidson Black* .. 221-222

J. DAVID LEWIS-WILLIAMS, *Believing and Seeing:  
Symbolic Meanings in Southern San Rock Paintings* .. 222

*Publications Received* .. .. 223-224

*Notes on Contributors* .. .. inside  
back cover

Copyright © JASO 1982. All rights reserved.

ISSN UK 0044-8370

## A DANCE OF RELATIVES

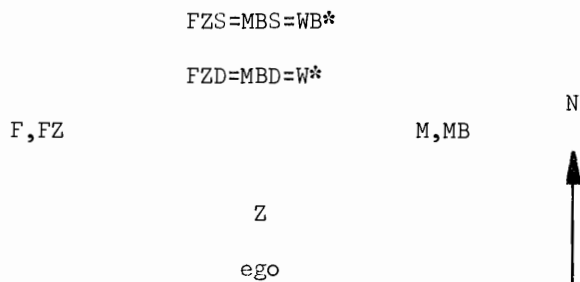
*The scene is a clearing in a tropical landscape, but there are no clues by which one might locate it in terrestrial history or geography. Eight figures are dancing, arranged in pairs. Most of the time each pair occupies one quarter of the clearing, and it is the male from the south who speaks. The audience are anthropologists, and the speaker displays a grasp of their language, mentality and limitations which is unexplained.*

You wish to understand this dance of ours, its rules and its meaning. First I must introduce you to the other dancers, for we are all relatives. I had better warn you that a good deal of what I shall say at first is only true in the most metaphorical of senses; but this will become clear later on.

This, then, is my sister, who always dances close beside me; since we circle round each other our mutual position is indeterminate. My father and his sister, circling similarly, are further off. At this particular moment they are in the west, on my left as I face into the circle. Opposite them, in the east, are my mother and her brother. Just as my mother and father married a generation ago, so did my father's sister and my mother's brother. Their children, my bilateral cross-cousins, are the pair opposite us, there in the north. The girl is my fiancée, the boy will marry my sister. From time to time we change places with our cross-cousins, and so does my father's pair with my mother's; sometimes the whole dance group circles clockwise or anti-clockwise; but a pair never changes place with an adjacent one. So pairs that have intermarried, or will do so, always end



up opposite each other, with neighbours who are always of the other generation. At this particular moment the scene is like this:



*Fig.1* The eight relatives. Asterisks for *future* W(B) (i.e. wife + wife's brother; this convention for the use of brackets recurs in several formulae below).

---

My sister and I take each other very much for granted - it would be hard for you to guess what emotion we feel for each other, if any. It is very different when, as the dance frequently demands, we set to one or other of the other pairs. If you watch closely enough, you will be able each time to distinguish three elements, male-male setting, female-female and male-female, but it is something else that will strike you first. When I and my sister set to F+FZ our movements are constrained: we advance towards each other, avoiding physical contact, even eye contact. I feel reserved in the presence of my father, and FZ is my future mother-in-law; in both cases the sentiments are reciprocated. The quiet slow rhythm expresses the formality of the encounter, for while we are setting to our F+FZ, our cross-cousins are doing the same to theirs. In contrast, when we (and they) set to M+MB, you will sense rather a certain warmth, détente and closeness. With our cross-cousins, the relationship is ambivalent. The threatening gestures we exchange seem to imply an element of real hostility, but the exchange ends in laughter, and some of the time our gestures are frankly erotic, foreshadowing the sexual coupling of affianced and married couples with which the dance will end.

While we set to another pair, the syllable we chant is the one appropriate to that pair - you might call it a kinship term. I use your English numerals, rather than trying to express the phonetics of our chant. F+FZ are my term 1 relatives, the cross-cousins are term 2, M+MB are term 3. If I address my sister, it is as term 0. From the first you will probably have registered a

small, weary, inward protest at the fact that it was a male who was to act as spokesman and presenter of this sacred dance, the essence of our culture. However, so far, the male bias, as you call it, makes little difference: my relatives are my sister's relatives, and when we set to another pair the attitudes we express differ only in detail. It may now seem that my sister and I diverge fundamentally, for while we both address each other as term 0 and both address our cross-cousins as term 2, *she* calls F+MZ term 3, and M+MB term 1, while I do the converse. Actually this apparent divergence is an artefact of your ethnocentric view of relationships. What we actually do, both of us, is use term 1 for same-sex parent (ssP) plus the latter's opposite-sex sibling (osG), and term 3 for osP(osG).

You can now, if you like, work through the terms for the relationships from the points of view of my sister and cross-cousins, but you will not be able fully to appreciate the formal beauty of our dance until I have explained it from the point of view of my parents and their siblings. As I have suggested already, all inter-pair attitudes are reciprocated, but attitudes and terms do not coincide, any more than they did between ego and the +1 level. From my parents' point of view, I and my sister (their children) are term 1, and our cross-cousins (their cross-siblings' children) are term 3. My FZ and MB use term 1, not for us, but for their own children, my cross-cousins; we are *their* cross-siblings' children, hence term 3. In the light of this you can work out the terms we shall in due course be applying to our children's generation. Briefly, one's own children are equated with ssP(osG), one's cross-siblings' with osP(osG).

This equation gives the first hint on how the structure of our dance endures across the years though individual dancers grow old and die. Imagine it like this. In twenty years' time my parents' generation will be nearing sixty and will be retiring from the dance. My F+MZ (term 1) will be replaced by my own children (also term 1), my M+MB (term 3) by my sister's children (also term 3). From my children's point of view, they each replace the PssP of appropriate sex, my son replacing his FF (my F), my daughter her MM (my FZ). It is easy now to see what terms we apply to our grandchildren, who will replace us, and to our grandparents, whom we replace.

I could draw you a filled out Fig. 1 at this point, but you probably dislike working through diagrams, so I shall defer it. Perhaps you are wondering how it is that I talk as if we dancers always come neatly in brother-sister pairs, as if couples were invariably fertile, as if one could ignore same-sex siblings, one-child families, premature death. I have spoken like this for simplicity, giving you a model of the dancers' relationships, not the reality, neither the reality of this particular occasion, nor that of the rules of the dance. In reality all our relationships are 'as if' or 'classificatory', for we tend to think of same-sex siblings as essentially indiscriminable, mutually replaceable, identical in nature. A man and his brothers, or a woman and her sisters, are as it were replicas one of another,

totally representable by one of their number. The logic of same-sex sibling equivalence operates across generations as well as within them, filling in what would otherwise be the gaps in the system arising from demographic accident. A male dancer may not have a real sister (a PD, a parents' daughter), but FB is as good as F, MZ as M, so their daughter (PssGD) is exactly equivalent. And if his father lacks a B, or his M a Z, they will have parallel cousins of some degree, who by the same logic are exactly equivalent. What a laborious way of approaching what to me, coming at it from another point of view, is utterly obvious!

Now that same-sex siblingship has been introduced Fig.1 can be filled out like this:

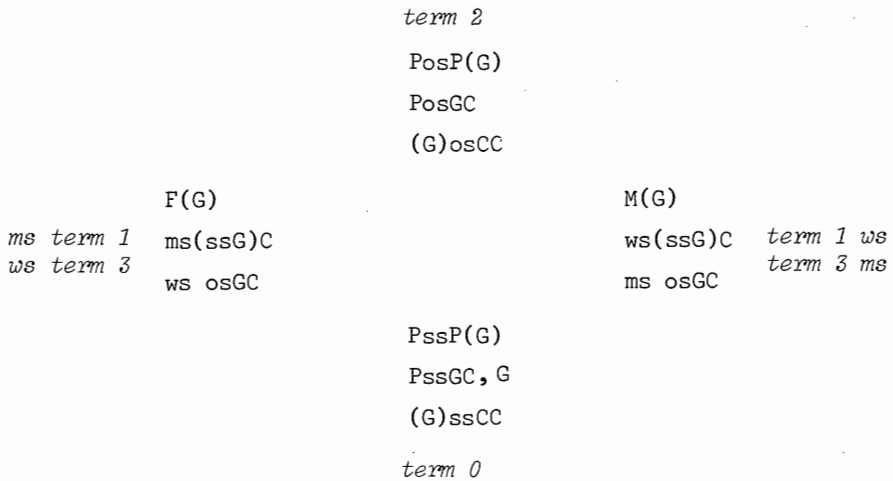


Fig. 2 The four classes of relatives, alias the four sections.

(G)ssCC means, for male ego, SC + BSC + ZDC.

---

I have explained the matter using lots of genealogical symbols because I understand that it comes most easily to you to think of relatives as a set of links extending outwards from an ego. I could just as well put it quite differently, starting with my whole society. There are only a couple of hundred of us, you know - those creatures the other side of the river are said to be subhuman - and we are all relatives. Humanity consists of just my four types of relative. The category I belong to is made up of all my term 0 relatives, which is just another way of saying,

all those whom my father thinks of as his term 1 relatives, my cross-cousins as their term 2 relatives, or my mother's brother as his term 3 relatives. If there is a problem, it is that our categories of relatives are a very different sort of entity from yours. Not only do you discriminate between same-sex siblings such as F and FB, and make the oddest equations, as when you call both FB and MB 'uncle'; you are not even self-consistent, for one person's single category 'uncle' is split by his father into 'brother' and 'brother-in-law'. What a muddle! This sort of discrepancy could never arise with us. If two people belong in the same category for me, then they belong in the same category for anyone else, whether or not the term these other people use for it is the same as the one I use for it. All members of one category are identical in nature. So, personally, when I think of relatives, it is at least as natural for me to think in terms of contraction as of extension. A particular type of relative is one section of society, and within that section the context may demand a further narrowing down of attention, down to my father, for instance, or to our section's representative in the dance.

You people already know about four-section systems, about the genealogical diagrams illustrating bilateral cross-cousin marriage, and about the more or less corresponding symmetrical prescriptive terminologies. What you have not met before is our combination of these into a single system of such perfect simplicity. If the simplicity seems elusive, it is perhaps because your own system is so alien that to translate from the one system to the other I am forced to work by approximations followed by corrections. Thus I introduced my fiancée as FZD=MBD, but later explained that this was only true in a classificatory sense. Actually the girl opposite me now in the dance *is* no doubt some sort of parallel cousin of my only FZD, who happens to be an infant, and of my MBD, who was married to someone else a long time ago; but even this is not really the point. For the rule is not that my fiancée should *be* a cross-cousin, but that she come from the same category as a cross-cousin, i.e. that she be a term 2 relative. This is quite a different matter, for if I try I am sure I shall be able to find several genealogical linkages between us that would locate her in my grandparents' level or my grandchildren's. My own term 0 category contains ascendants and descendants from every even-numbered genealogical level, past or present, and my fiancée's has just the same spread. It can perfectly easily happen - indeed it is to be expected - that some brother or parallel cousin of mine will choose to marry a category 2 relative who is two genealogical levels junior to my fiancée. Thus once one moves outside one's direct lineal relatives within a category, the notion of genealogical level quickly becomes ambiguous and unusable. You can, if you like, think of category 2 relatives as 'classificatory bilateral cross-cousins', using the term 'classificatory' in a broader sense than is usual; but if so remember that neither in terminology nor behaviour do we recognise the distinctness of

ego's genealogical level implied by your word 'cousin'.

Although we ignore genealogical levels within intermarrying sections, nothing is more fundamental to us than the boundary between the even-numbered relatives and the odd-numbered relatives of an ego. This is a difference in 'level' in another sense of the word, and in this case a cross-level marriage would be incest. It would throw out the whole system, for the relationship across this boundary is one of child-exchange. We, my term 2 + 0 relatives, are all the children of my term 1 + 3 relatives, living or dead, and the children we produce are what we return to them. By the way our wise old men sometimes argue about the notion of level membership; personally I prefer the view that it begins at conception rather than at birth.

I have one final correction to my original description. The girl opposite me in the dance is a category 2 relative all right, but in spite of what will happen at the end of the dance, she is not my real fiancée. She is only my 'dance-fiancée'— as it happens I am happily married with three children. Perhaps you already suspected this, when I said that the relationships among the dancers were classificatory, not true. It followed that the dancer I had introduced as my father was only a classificatory father, my 'mother' only a classificatory mother, hence the chances were that these two dancers were not man and wife in ordinary life. As it happens, my 'dance-father' is younger than I am, and although of course he is a term 1 relative, the shortest genealogical path to him would make him my classificatory son. I could indeed have introduced him to you as my son, which would mean redrawing Fig. 1 so that the genealogical level other than my own was -1 rather than +1; but the difference would be inconsequential. The point is that we dancers are simply representatives of our sex and section.

They do say that in the beginning things were very different. If I may speculate for a moment, I imagine it something like this. Outside the clearing we lived in fluctuant territorial groupings, mating like animals, having no recognised rules of marriage, no fixed structure. When we began to assemble regularly in the clearing, many sorts of choreographic groupings were tried out, dualistic, quadripartite, and more complex still. Sometimes all fit adults participated, sometimes we used one out of a variety of methods for selecting the dancers. These gatherings always involved copulation, but at first the combinations of participants had only a tenuous correspondence, if any, with the pattern of mating outside the clearing; this sexual activity in no sense constituted anything like a tribal kinship system. However we were learning gradually, experimenting with the possibilities of structure and exchange, miming the speeded-up passage of the generations. As we came to set more and more value on these occasions of communal excitement and collective creativity, we decided to carry over into ordinary life the rules for sexual activity developed during experiments in the clearing. At that period, then, the dance was the model for profane life, rather than its reflection, and it was thus that our society gained

the holism and clarity of its structure. Actually the number of aesthetically satisfying structures is not great. For instance, a four-section structure equating new members with PosPss rather than PssPss does not allow reciprocated inter-section attitudes.

I have talked a good deal about today's dance in relation to our system of kinship and marriage, which perhaps it helped to create. You will see now how the eight of us epitomise everything significant in the enduring structure of our society. But this is not all, for our dance also embraces the non-human world all about us. So far I have implied that, barring the odd personal detail about an ego's close relatives, our system would be described identically by a spokesman from any section, that one section is as near to being indistinguishable from the others as is biologically possible. Of course the individuals it contains are different, and its size and age structure fluctuate statistically (though excessive fluctuations would be corrected by adoptions). You know too that we hold all members of one section to share the same nature or essence, and you perhaps inferred, correctly, that it is an essence different from that of other sections. But this difference has been given no specific character, and so far it is only my presence as spokesman-cum-ego that has enabled you even to tell which section is which. From an absolute viewpoint all sections have exactly the same activities or functions, and it is only *relative* to one particular section that they differ - one providing it with mother's milk, one with fatherhood, one with spouses. Perhaps this was once the whole picture. Nowadays, however, each section has a number of properties or associations that do differentiate it absolutely from all the others. Each may be associated with a compartment of the cosmos, with a totemic species, a colour, element, humour and cardinal point. Over the generations we have been exploring these various possibilities, incorporating them in dance, drama, chant and body decoration, both reflecting on the world around us and using the links we establish to influence it. Our myths tell us about the original allocation of these properties to sections, or rather to their founding ancestors, but how it really happened I do not know, and logic can not tell you either.

I believe you anthropologists have neither discovered nor imagined a tribe patterned so neatly and symmetrically as ours. It is curious that, for all your talk of elementary structures, you have not previously identified the most elementary ones that are logically possible. I use the plural, because one can devise several other elementary structures, transforms of our own, and perhaps no less simple; but the ethnographic data known to you will make ours seem the least exotic and implausible. I do slightly wonder why none of you postulated us. Perhaps part of the answer lies in the literature's underemphasis on relative sex and its overemphasis on exchange between 'lines' rather than levels.

In any case I think there are two reasons why our tribe may interest you. Firstly, if you think clearly in the abstract about the most elementary possible forms of social organization, it may clarify the concepts you use in analysing the empirical

ethnographic world. Secondly, we pose again, and in a form that you can hardly dodge, the old question of origins: did the social systems familiar to you descend from ones like ours? I can not tell you the answer, nor can I even be certain that the question is properly phrased; but I can counter one possible objection. You tell me that in the past evolutionary theories have so often proved unprofitable that most people have given them up. Why should this one be any different? Well, there is a difference, because of that quasi-mathematical aspect of kinship studies, which is so off-putting to so many. It is not a matter of intuition or guess-work that four-term kinship terminologies are the simplest possible ones of any significance; it is a matter of utterly dry and formal logical argument. Of course, ordinary symmetrical precriptive terminologies *may* derive historically, not from the simplest possible terminologies of the same type, but from altogether different types; but if so, it is curious how often they show equations between alternate genealogical levels, a feature so reminiscent of our own system. What do you think?

N.J. ALLEN

LES YANOMAMĪ, SONT-ILS LIBRES ?  
LES UTOPIES AMAZONIENNES, UNE CRITIQUE.

A LOOK AT FRENCH ANARCHIST ANTHROPOLOGY

The issue of human freedom has not got an obvious place in anthropology.<sup>1</sup> Although it can be suggested that a concern to discover the constraints on free will underlies much of anthropological study (e.g. Sperber 1975 p.x.), the discussion of liberty itself has rarely been explicit. The purpose of this paper is not to review the concept of freedom as it relates to ethnology but rather to demonstrate how a polemic concerning human liberty based on the political convictions of various anthropologists both underlies and determines the way they present ethnographic facts.

The 'anarchist' anthropology that I attempt to reveal here consists of the substantial contributions to the ethnological literature on lowland South American societies made by two Frenchmen, Jacques Lizot and the late Pierre Clastres. It will be suggested that the ideological inclinations of these two authors have led them to conclusions that cannot be substantiated given our present knowledge of the societies they have studied. In arguing this case the close parallels between Lizot and Clastres' ethnology and anarchist philosophy will be exposed, and it will be made clear why, even though these 'anarchists' are ultimately interested in the issue of human political freedom, the current polarization in anthropology between mentalist and materialist approaches (between structuralists, symbolists,

---

<sup>1</sup> This paper was written while the author enjoyed the support of an award from the Social Science Research Council, London, to whom his grateful thanks are due.



culturalists and their opposition the cultural materialists, ecologists and Marxists) has led them to focus their attentions on the problem of freedom from economic constraint.

Clastres (1978) and after him Lizot (1978a) have asked: 'What ethnology is there in Marxism?', and again 'What Marxism is there in ethnology?'; and it will be to the conclusions that Lizot draws in this and other publications concerning the Yanomami that I shall come in the end. But before I discuss these Amerindians I must pose two equally important questions, namely: 'What ethnology is there in Anarchism?', and secondly 'What Anarchism is there in ethnology?'

The anarchists' primary concern has, of course, not been with the interpretation of the past or of distant societies but rather with rebellion in the immediate present and the creation of a just and free society of the future. Nevertheless there is a timeless almost mythical quality to their visions of the future that allows us to see in them a strong reflection of their belief in human nature and their conception of human history, not only as it relates to the past but also to the primitive societies of the present. We cannot obviously talk of a single, coherent vision of the just society shared by all who have called themselves anarchists and those others whom anarchists have seen as sharing their political convictions, such as Godwin, Tolstoy, Winstanley, Lao Tzu, Gandhi and others (see especially Woodcock 1962 Chapter 2); indeed some have argued that it is this very lack of dogma in anarchist theory that has given it its vigour and continuity. Nevertheless it is possible to point out various characteristics that most anarchists hold to be integral to the creation of the society of tomorrow.

In an anarchist society of the future no human has the authority to command another; each individual is considered sovereign to do with his life as he will so long as he injure no other. There shall be no political hierarchy, no government, no state, no laws, no poverty, no money, no private property, no inequality. Instead there shall be individual control, free associations and free federations; the authority of custom shall prevail over disputes; frugality and simplicity of living shall assure affluence; exchange shall occur through barter; property shall be held in common (Morris 1890; Woodcock 1962, 1977; Joll 1964). The satisfaction of physical needs will be assured by the principle of collaborative production and consumption, from each according to his deeds, to each according to his needs: 'The perfect society has no government, but only an administration, no laws only obligations, no punishment only means of correction' (Joll 1964, p. 39). The society shall be the negation of property and government (*ibid.*, p. 54).

There shall be 'Production without possession

Action without self-assertion

Development without domination' (Morris 1981).

It is argued that a dominating characteristic of anarchism has been its yearning for a Rousseauesque past, for that 'happy,

primitive world, a state of nature in which, so far from being engaged in a struggle of all against all, men lived in a state of mutual cooperation' (Joll 1964, p. 15; see also pp. 45 and 259). Thus did Morris look with horror at the rise of shoddy industrialism and dream of a Pre-Raphaelite world of egalitarian mediaevalism (Morris 1890 ; Thompson 1955; Thompson 1977). Tolstoy extolled the virtues of the Russian peasantry (Woodcock 1962) and likewise Lao Tzu preach the reversion 'to the way of life that had been followed in a self-contained neolithic age community' (Morris 1981); but it is only in the works of Peter Kropotkin that we find an attempt to apply in any detail the principles of anarchist philosophy to primitive society.

Kropotkin's ethnological researches, essentially literary though his several years in Siberia provided him with considerable personal experience of 'barbarians' (Kropotkin 1971), are summarized in his work *Mutual Aid* (1902). This book, which attempts to refute Huxley's depiction of life as a struggle of all against all, incorporates a vast body of ethnography and natural history. Kropotkin's underlying motive is to show that humanity has a *natural* tendency to observe a high moral level. He thus denied Hobbes' image (in *Leviathan*) of a brutal primitive life and objected even to Locke's propositions concerning the 'State of Nature' (see also Nozick 1974). Quite contrary to Huxley, whom he sees as an apologist for capitalist exploitation (Kropotkin 1902, p. 77) Kropotkin asserts that humankind is inconceivable apart from society and that it is 'man's essence . . . to cooperate with his fellows to secure his basic needs' (Miller 1976, p. 182). As Kropotkin saw it, primitive *society* was the original and natural state of humankind. The primitive man he conceived as 'a member of a tribe which has certain mores, customs and habits, and attitudes to which he must conform. This is the natural condition of man in which he is freest and happiest' (*ibid.*, p. 183).

His ethnology was, of course, couched in terms of the then dominant evolutionist perspective and owes its formal structure largely to Morgan, Bachofen and Maine (e.g. Kropotkin 1902, p. 85), but the treatise incorporates a wealth of information from a huge range of ethnographic sources. Primitive society he extolled for its lack of chiefs, for its communal property, for its friendliness, and for its lack of legal machinery. These were societies that knew 'no kind of authority except the authority of public opinion' (*ibid.*, p. 87). 'Unbridled individualism', Kropotkin argued, 'is a modern growth, but it is not a characteristic of primitive mankind' (*ibid.*, p. 88). Only with the enslavement of mankind by the state have human instincts to mutual aid and communality been submerged by the capitalist ethos of private advance. Kropotkin argued that the 'purpose of rebellion is to destroy hierarchical authority, to extinguish the laws and legal systems artificially created by ruling classes and to re-establish the tribal ethic' (Miller 1976, p. 183). Latter-day anarchists have not done much to modernize their picture of primitive society; even today they continue to present

them as utopian communes (e.g. Hanna 1981).

The ethnology of the anarchists is quite as polemical as that of the Marxists criticised by Lizot (1978a, pp. 71-72).

Turning to the second question, 'What anarchism is there in ethnology?', my goal is only to reveal that the interpretations that Lizot and Clastres have made of Amazonian societies have not been elucidated exclusively from the ethnographic reality but rather reveal an underlying ideological commitment to the ideals of anarchism. If this demonstration is accepted then Lizot's exhortation, that we should let the facts speak for themselves (*ibid.*, p. 70), begins to sound rather hollow.

Some idea of the political inclinations of these authors is given by the very journals to which they send their publications. The Sartrean journal *Les Temps Modernes* published a number of their earlier articles (Clastres 1971a, 1971b; Lizot 1974), but with the appearance of the libertarian journal *Libre* a more congenial forum has been discovered. (Lizot 1977b, 1978a; Clastres and Lizot 1978; Clastres 1977b, 1977c, 1978; see also Vol.4).

In his book *Society against the State* (1977a) Clastres' concern is with what he calls the 'problematic of power', the basis of the problem being whether power has its birthplace in Nature or in Culture. He sees himself as engaged in a battle against an ethnocentric anthropology that can see primitive societies only in terms of western society. This anthropology either implicitly or explicitly is founded on an evolutionist perspective that sees the outcome of all social development as the development of authoritarian, hierarchical States.

Turning his attention to the societies of lowland South America he discovers 'societies without conflict ... in which "primitive communism" obtains'. To quote the blurb on the fly-leaf of his book he shows us that 'we need not take refuge in imaginary utopias to find societies in which people are not divided into oppressors and oppressed and which can flourish without the coercive institutions of the state and privileged hierarchies'. Thus under his analysis the apparent hierarchy implicit in the role of the Amerindian chief turns out to be no proof of the existence of authority in Amazonia. Such leaders, he argues, exchange the prestige of leadership and the advantage of polygyny that goes with it for a diligent dedication to the good of the entire social group, providing it with a focal identity, a generous supply of meat and other goods, and a fount of oratory. In this transaction the 'group reveals its radical rejection of authority, an utter negation of power'.

To quote Clastres again: 'far from giving us the lacklustre image of an inability to resolve the question of political power, these societies astonish us by the subtlety with which they have posed and settled the question. They had a very early premonition that power's transcendence conceals a mortal risk for the group, that the principle of an authority which is external and the creator of its own legality is a challenge to culture itself'.

In the final chapter he turns to the question that forms the connecting theme to his book, that is, the causes for the origin of the State. From his discussion of chieftainship he claims that all societies can be divided by a dual typology. 'On the one hand there are primitive societies or societies without a State; on the other hand, there are societies with a State.'

After the briefest consideration of the economic significance of the neolithic revolution he claims to have proved that political superstructures are independent of Marxist infrastructures. (We shall come back to these elements of Clastres' argument later on.) He thus argues that it was not an infrastructural revolution that effected the radical transition - the *coupure* between primitive society and State, 'but a political revolution, that mysterious emergence - irreversible, fatal to primitive societies - of the thing we know by the name of the State'. The State - with a capital S, it should be noted - he equates quite simply with 'the development of hierarchical authority, the power relation, the subjugation of men'.

Rejecting that man could *voluntarily* submit to subjugation and allow the State to take control of him, Clastres is effectively arguing for an aboriginal morality whereby humanity voluntarily also rejects power. 'No one in such a society feels the quaint desire to do more, own more or appear to be more than his neighbour'.

Finally we are presented with the preposterous suggestion that the migrations of the Tupi-Guarani in search of the Land without Evil (H. Clastres 1975) were in fact undertaken to prevent the evolution of the State. Faced with a demographic increase that was leading to the development of centralized control vested in the growing hierarchy of chiefs, the Tupi-Guarani wilfully engaged in migrations that prevented the transformation of their society into a State 'at the price of collective near suicide'.

Amerindian societies, then, present us with evidence of mankind's ability to reject power, through their 'continual effort to prevent chiefs from being chiefs, the refusal of unification, the endeavour to exorcize the One, the State'.

Lizot's anarchism is witnessed in a number of his publications (for another comment on it see Fabietti 1979, p. 221). It is Lizot's article 'Economy or Society?' of 1972 that makes his position most obvious. Ironically, as a footnote on the first page of this article Lizot claims that the unusual aspect of his presentation is its very lack of interpretation: instead he claims here to 'present facts, leaving the reader the opportunity to exercise his own mind with the material'. In fact the article commences with a statement on the contrast between non-industrial societies of leisure and the industrial societies. The reason for the difference, Lizot tells us baldly,

...is simple. Industrial societies are animated by the ideology of development (technological, economic, demographic); people work there for a salary used to satisfy

a number of ceaselessly growing needs which are artificially created and maintained; the economy and work have such an importance that they dominate all other activities, so that people's existence is completely subordinate to them: the population, constantly increasing, submits the natural environment to an ever more intense exploitation. Non-industrial societies, so-called primitive ones, have on the contrary only moderately developed their technology and economy: family and social life is developed there with a minimum of limitations. In these societies population increase is checked by infanticide and warfare, and human activities are in harmony with the possibilities of their natural environment.

'Nous voici en plein délire idéologique', Lizot writes (1978a, p. 73), in a comment on one Marxist anthropologist.

After a descriptive account of the Yanomam̄ economy he concludes that 'primitive societies are characterized by a rejection of technological progress' and that their 'disdain for work and their disinterest in autonomous technological progress are certain.... Barely interested in mechanization, the Indians have exercised their intelligence and their will in other inventions, in the development of the game of social life, in the creation of a rich and complex magico-religious universe, even in their observation and experiment with the natural environment' (Lizot 1972, pp. 172-3). Lizot sees the Indians' refusal to allow their economy to constrain them as evidence of the same freedom by which they have refused political power (*ibid.*). He is suggesting that radically different processes underlie primitive and industrial societies, the first being dominated by free choice and the second by economic law. Primitive societies offer us a glimpse of human possibilities, but

...if industrial society comes to cause the disappearance of the last primitives, we will only be left with a uniform image of ourselves: humankind living under the tutelage of co-ercive power, subjected to servitude in the industrial society. The contemporary mind already has difficulty imagining a society without specialised political institutions, without authoritarian powers, dedicating themselves whole-heartedly to an un-mechanized economy. When it can imagine it, it is only to persuade itself that such a society has been passed by on the margin of history, and so hurries on to cause its disappearance (*ibid.*, pp. 173-174).

The central concern for all anarchists and libertarians is, of course, liberty in the sense of individual sovereignty as described by J.S. Mill (*On Liberty*, 1859). It has been the issue of freedom from political constraint that has consistently divided the anarchists from their comrade socialists, the

communists. Just as Bakunin was prepared to destroy the first International in his battle against Marx (Joll 1964; Woodcock 1962), proclaiming that 'liberty without socialism is privilege, injustice: socialism without liberty is slavery and brutality' (quoted in Dolgoff 1973, frontispiece), stating further '... I detest communism because it is the negation of liberty. I am not a communist because I can conceive of nothing human without liberty. I am not a communist because communism concentrates and absorbs all the powers of society in the state: because it necessarily ends in the centralization of property in the hands of the state, while I want the abolition of the state' (quoted in Joll 1964, p. 89),<sup>2</sup> so Morris was alienated from the mainstream of British Socialism as it came to be dominated by Hyndman (Thompson 1955).

The fears of the anarchists have been all too well borne out by the events in communist Russia. With the Bolsheviks ascendant Lenin was safely in the seat of power and could comfortably proclaim, 'liberty is a luxury not to be permitted at the present stage of development' (quoted in Joll 1964, p. 168). It was however this very attitude that prevented Spanish Anarchism from being absorbed into the communist cause (Thomas 1951, p. 22). It is told that when de Los Rios visited revolutionary Russia in 1921 he turned to Lenin:

'But where is liberty?', asked that bearded individualist from Andalusia. 'Liberty?', replied Lenin. 'What for?' (*ibid.*, p. 40).

Correspondingly a major concern for anarchists in their descriptions of the past has been their emphasis on the aboriginal liberty of the noble savage (though not so Proudhon, who feared the tyranny of custom as much as that of the State; see Joll 1964, p. 59). The attempt was to show that Proudhon's 'immanent sense of justice' (Woodcock 1962, p. 89) that all humanity carries within itself can function fairly only in the absence of the paraphernalia of the state (cf. Hanna 1981). This essentialist conception of natural truth contrasts anarchists with the Marxists and existentialists, as witnessed by the attacks made by Marxists on Jensen and the sociobiologists: 'Look into the depths of your own beings. Seek out the truth and realize it yourselves. You will find it nowhere else' (Arshinov, quoted in Woodcock 1962).

Just as Bakunin fought his most vociferous ideological battles with Marx, so it is that Lizot and Clastres see the major challenge to their interpretation of lowland South American Indian societies not as coming from the anthropologies that align themselves more closely with the right but from the cultural

---

<sup>2</sup> For a communist opinion of the anarchists see Marx, Engels, Lenin 1972.

materialists, whose eloquent spokesman and founder Marvin Harris has the opinion that

...free will and moral choice have had virtually no significant effect upon the direction taken thus far by evolving systems of social life (Harris 1977, p. 11).

In Harris' cultural materialism (1979b) the dichotomy between mind and body, underlying virtually all modern anthropology, is displayed in its crudest, most 'vulgar' form (Friedman 1974).<sup>3</sup> Harris' challenge to the 'obscurantists', students of 'mystification' and 'eclecticists', denies even the least admission of a dialectical relationship between the 'emic' and the 'etic' (Harris 1966) and recommends instead that we focus our attention on the 'techno-demo-eco-econo-determinism' (Harris 1975) by which all social forms have evolved. Harris' anthropology argues for the rule of Nature over Culture, for the domination of the 'Emic' by the 'Etic', the rule of the 'mind' by the 'body'; the subordination of reason to material circumstance and the dominance of necessity over freedom.

Those 'anarchists' who would see operating in Amazonian societies the same dominant principles as should underlie the free society of the future are thus faced with a serious challenge by the materialist schools of North America. If, as the North American materialists contend, the external environment in Amazonia simply cannot support the dense populations necessary for the development of hierarchy and State systems (eg. Meggers 1971; Gross 1975; Lathrap 1970), owing to a scarcity of essential resources such as usable agricultural land or huntable game, then the simplicity of Amazonian societies is better explained materially than by reference to ideology. Warfare is thus explained in terms of competition over resources (Harris 1974, 1977), cannibalism as a protection against protein shortage (Harner 1977), the weakness of political authority in terms of the lack of surplus (Leeds 1969; Fabietti 1979), sexual antagonism in terms of hunting proficiency (Siskind 1973), shamanism in terms of ecological modelling (Dolmatoff 1976), and food taboos in terms of optimisation strategies and conservationism (Ross 1978; McDonald 1977).

The suggestion made by the substantivist Marshall Sahlins (cf. his critique of 1976a), that palaeolithic societies are in fact examples of an original era of affluence (Sahlins 1968, 1972), has thus been seen as crucial by both Lizot and Clastres, who have devoted much attention to showing that the era of affluence included the Amazonian neolithic cultivators no less than the palaeolithic foragers of the Old World.

Clastres, who wrote the preface to the French edition of Sahlins' book (Sahlins 1976b), sees the attempt to paint a

---

<sup>3</sup> See Harris' reply to his critics: 'as for my being a "vulgar" materialist, ought there be any other kind?' (Harris 1975, p. 454).

a Hobbesian picture of primitive man as yet another example of anthropology's ethnocentrism. Rejecting the interpretation of Amazonian society as being 'one that barely manages to feed its members and thus finds itself at the mercy of the slightest natural accident' (1977a, pp. 6-7), Clastres asks: 'if it has become possible to speak of groups of hunters and gatherers as the "first affluent societies" how will neolithic agriculturalists be described?', and he thus sets Lizot his fieldwork topic. Even in the absence of any data he concludes however that 'it is not because they have a subsistence economy that archaic societies have survived in a state of extreme underdevelopment up to the present time' (*ibid.*). Quoting no sources he adds, 'Let it be remarked merely that a good many of those archaic societies 'with a subsistence economy', in South America for example, produced a quantity of *surplus* food *equivalent* to the amount required for the annual consumption of the community.' Only 22 pages later he contradicts himself: 'we know', he writes, 'that the Indian societies of South America as a rule possess only a rudimentary technology, and that consequently, no individual, including the chief, is capable of amassing very much material wealth' (*ibid.*, p. 29). Rather than confuse us and himself Clastres might have done better to await the conclusions of field research.

Content however with the merest scraps of data (cf. *ibid.*, p. 78) Clastres goes on to describe the demography of the Tupi-Guarani using population estimates of the coastal Tupi to estimate the density of the inland Paraguayan Guarani (*ibid.*, pp. 71-75). The grounds for doing so are his lack of discrimination of ecological variations and differences in economy over the entire area of Lowland South America where he finds 'a uniformity at the level of "infrastructure"' (*ibid.*, p. 40). Deducing that the Tupi-Guarani were very much more populous than previous estimates have allowed, Clastres then gives his data blanket applicability to the rest of Amazonia.

'If we are right,' he concludes, 'then it is necessary to radically transform our notions about the economic life of forest peoples ... throw out the foolish beliefs about the purported inability of that type of agriculture to sustain a substantial population, and totally rethink the question of political power' (*ibid.*, p. 77).

He thus considers that, having shown that the Indians live in an era of abundance and technological simplicity characterized by a refusal to work, they are outside the scope of economic anthropology (*ibid.*, p. 166). Having also shown, as he believes, that political superstructures are independent of economic infrastructures (*ibid.*, p. 170), he considers it impossible that political relations of coercion should have an economic explanation or origin (*ibid.*, p. 166). Thus just as economic anthropology '...thinks it has grasped "hold of society" ... it loses its object ... the economy becomes a political economy' (*ibid.*, p. 166).

That some traditional anarchists have similarly considered free society to function only in the absence of material constraint



is amply testified. Thus Kropotkin and Godwin saw in mechanization the means for man's liberation from economic laws: even now, nearly a century later, some anarchists still visualize the path to anarchism as lying through over-production (see for example Bookchin's *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*). Only once man is freed from the slavery of production can his natural liberty be expressed. To quote Kropotkin (quoted in Woodcock 1962),

Man is not a being whose exclusive purpose in life is eating, drinking and providing a shelter for himself. As soon as his material wants are satisfied, other needs, which generally speaking may be described as of an artistic nature, will thrust themselves forward. These needs are of the greatest variety.

Most anarchists see their liberation from economic shackles by different means. Their anger is not merely directed at the wealthy but at wealth itself. Like Morris (1890) they reject industrialism as an unnecessary evil that makes man a slave to machinery. Their ideal is that 'in the new society man will live in extreme simplicity and frugality and will be quite happy to do without the technical achievements of the industrial age' (Joll 1964, p. 259). Woodcock (1962, p. 344), referring to the Spanish Anarchists of the civil war, notes of their beliefs that they '... exposed certain elements of anarchism which more sophisticated advocates have tended to gloss over: the moralistic element in particular and that mental shift into a timeless world, out of progress and freed from material temptations, which seems the necessary leap of faith for the true, black anarchist'.

Sahlins' postulations of aboriginal affluence have thus appealed to anarchists too, providing them with a happy argument to justify their extolling the virtues of 'pre-industrial' societies. Speaking of the pygmies, Hanna notes: 'it would be easy for them to acquire a surplus from the forest, but instead they make do with the minimum and enrich themselves in another direction, namely that of socialization' (1981, p. 18). Quoting Turnbull he continues, 'if there is no time for socialization, if it is all taken up in the effort to amass a larger and larger surplus, then man lives in ignorance of his neighbour and society becomes a mere conglomeration of individuals each seeking their own good.'

The Anarchist vision then elides with that of the Taoists who argue that 'to be content with what one has is to be rich' (Morris 1981, p. 14).

The Yanomam̄ are well enough known, I hope, that I can dispense with an ethnographic introduction. An upland people renowned for their bellicosity the Yanomam̄ have been expanding territorially and demographically since before the turn of the century.

Considering Lizot's and Chagnon's data, Marvin Harris (1974, 1977) has advanced the hypothesis that the Yanomam̄'s 'ancestors

were nomadic hunters and gatherers living away from the larger rivers in small scattered bands that relied on wild forest products for their chief source of subsistence' (Harris 1974, p. 76). With the acquisition of bananas (*ibid.*, p. 76) and steel tools (Harris 1977, p. 60), the Yanomam̃ population increased dramatically but with unfortunate consequences for the environment. According to Harris it is a 'fact that there are already too many Yanomam̃ in relation to their ability to exploit their habitat' (Harris 1974, p. 79), and that 'they have already degraded the carrying capacity of their habitat' (*ibid.*). According to Harris the population explosion and consequent depletion of hunting resources forced the Yanomam̃ to escalate their levels of warfare as they competed over resources. Escalating warfare increased the need for warriors to defend home communities so that male children were favoured at birth and female infanticide was practised. Consequently competition over women intensified the warfare. The escalating warfare in turn caused the villages to relocate and so their territory began to expand.

In sum, 'the Yanomam̃ have "eaten the forest" - not its trees but its animals - and they are suffering the consequences in terms of increased warfare, treachery, and infanticide and a brutal sex-life' (*ibid.*, p. 77).

The advantage of Harris' suggestions are that they are open to empirical testing. If he is right, and warfare is a response to environmental impoverishment, the following propositions should hold:

- i) Intensity of warfare is proportional to population density.
- ii) Intensity of warfare is proportional to the sex ratio.
- iii) The intensity of warfare is proportional to the protein intake of the diet.

It is very doubtful whether any of these propositions is in fact true.

Lizot's position is directly contrary to Harris' but not as coherent. He has not attempted to explain Yanomam̃ warfare (Fabietti 1979) and he has consistently failed to explain *why* the Yanomam̃ engaged in a population explosion or *why* they have expanded territorially. He has however collected a considerable body of data on the Yanomam̃ economy, the best of which is published in *Man* (Lizot 1977a) and *Libre* (Lizot 1978a).

According to Lizot the Yanomam̃ have always had agriculture (Lizot 1972, 1977a, 1978b). They live considerably under the carrying capacity of their habitat (1978a) and suffer no dietary deficiencies at all (1977a, 1978a). Infanticide only affects 1-2% of births and cannot explain the distorted sex ratio (1978a). Warfare intensities are not proportional to population density (1977a). Lizot thus considers that he has refuted Harris, and the fact that Harris has consequently altered his argument (Harris 1979a) - so that it no longer allows a null hypothesis! - need not concern us here.

Lizot argues that the Yanomam̄i originated east of the Parima and came into the highlands already practising agriculture. 'In the healthy mountain region they found a new demographic balance, protected as they were from epidemics which decimated the Indians elsewhere: this balance was followed by a strong population increase and concomitant territorial expansion' (Lizot 1977a, p. 500). Between 1900 and 1950 they underwent a six-fold population increase (*ibid.*, p. 503) at a rate of 1.5-2% per annum (*ibid.*, p. 505). Subsequently they have been suffering from epidemics. On the one hand Lizot argues that 'the economic system has not undergone any internal pressures, it could perpetuate itself without alteration, and still support numbers even greater than those which existed before depopulation' (Lizot 1976, p. 10). He even argues that mobility is not a critical aspect of the economy. He notes that 'some Yanomam̄i have been living in the same place since 1950 without any adverse effect on economic activities' (1977a, p. 505). On the other hand he also argues quite contrarily that

this confinement to a reduced space has its repercussions on hunting activities. Formerly, the migrations, the change of residence every five or six years, ... allowed the hunting grounds to be varied and the game to renew itself. Now in the proximity of the fixed group, the game becomes increasingly rare: certain sedentary species have been decimated, others partially decimated, and the survivors put outside the range of the hunters ... over a decade, the Upper Orinoco, the lower and middle Mavaca and the Ocamu have witnessed the irrevocable disappearance of animals which used to populate their banks. Species which move around only a little are exterminated; such has been the case with some large birds, hogs, agoutis, tapirs and pacas: these animals represent an important part of those habitually eaten by the Yanomam̄i (Lizot 1976, p. 13).

And further,

No, the Indians have not "eaten the forest" nor destroyed the environment. On the contrary their economy is in harmony with the possibilities of the natural environment and is perfectly integrated with it. The reasonable limits of population growth have never been reached and territorial expansion could still be carried out into uninhabited areas (Lizot 1977a, p. 513).

It is difficult to know what to believe,<sup>4</sup> especially since

---

<sup>4</sup> Elsewhere Lizot has argued that warfare and infanticide 'brake' the population increase (Lizot 1972, p. 138). Later he argues that warfare and infanticide do not check the population (Lizot 1977a, p. 503).

few of these statements are given empirical substantiation.

Elsewhere I have given the Yanoama economy detailed treatment but the vast body of ethnographic data cannot be reproduced here. Instead I will treat one single issue that I consider of paramount importance in this debate, namely the issue of technology.

Before I present my own case on the influence of metal technology on the Yanomam̄i economy it is worthwhile noting Lizot's and Clastres' positions on this issue. Both argue that technologies have been imposed on the Indians by the whites (Lizot 1976, p. 7; Clastres 1977a, p. 166) and that these imposed needs have consequently led to the Indians' subjugation. Even though Clastres (*ibid.*) suggests that metal tools might increase productivity by ten times compared to the era of stone tool use he seems reluctant to accept the implications. Lizot has almost ignored the issue in his treatment of the Yanomam̄i economy (but see Lizot 1971); admitting that the stone axe may have eased plot clearance and reduced the significance of site selection he argues that metal tools had a minimal effect on the Yanomam̄i economy. With the new tools 'the Indians found a new equilibrium for themselves. And it was a happy one.' (Lizot 1976, p. 7). In his most recent treatment of the Yanomam̄i economy Lizot even suggests that the technical aspects of their subsistence are negligible (Lizot 1978a, p. 101).

My own fieldwork among the Sanema, the northern Yanoama, suggests that their population expansion coincided with the introduction of metal tools. I have found that their territorial expansion was correlated not only with intensive warfare but also with a search for trade opportunities. This migration continues today, encouraging the Sanema to subject themselves to the exploitations imposed by YeKuana Indians and Criollo peoples. The Sanema's lack of modern tools has made them very aware of the 'superiority' of white peoples and they consequently have become readily manipulable by the missionaries. Recalling their past (the Sanema used their last stone axes in the 1930s) the Sanema relate periods of hunger and hardship. They recount the small size of their garden plots and the problems of felling trees.

Like Lizot's Yanomam̄i the Sanema devote very little time to the food quest. Subsistence is indeed easy for them. It would be a crucial mistake however to therefore consider them examples of a *neolithic* era of affluence for they use *metal* tools. My data suggest that like the Siane of New Guinea the *stone-using* Yanoama may have to work about 80% of the day on subsistence tasks (Salisbury 1962).<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps we should not blame Lizot for making this mistake. His inspiration came after all from Sahlins' work *Stone-Age Economics* (Sahlins 1972). When we look at Sahlins' information

---

<sup>5</sup> The data will be made available shortly in my D. Phil dissertation (Oxford 1982).

we find that the Dobe !Kung San studied by Lee, the Aborigines studied by McCarthy and McArthur in Arnhem Land, and the Hadza studied by Woodburn in Tanzania were all using metal tools when they were studied. The Hadza and Aborigines were living in demographically transformed situations too, compared to their stone-age past. The San have had access to steel tools since 1880-1890 (Sahlins 1972, pp. 20-21). The Aborigines of Arnhem Land also had metal tools, which Sahlins notes may have raised productivity. As for the Hadza they were memorably metal-using, employing their metal arrowheads (Woodburn 1968, p. 53) in gambling so that for many men 'games of chance' had replaced 'chances of game' (Sahlins 1972, p. 27).

Has the idea of an era of stone-age affluence any real grounding in accurate ethnography, or is it the polemic of substantivist economists carried to an absurd extreme? At least, the substantive argument seems to be in need of substantiation.

### *Conclusion*

The object of this paper has not been to discredit anarchist political ideals but rather to show how the political persuasions of certain anthropologists, both of anarchist and Marxist inspiration, have led to polemical misrepresentations of ethnographic reality. Where these anthropologists have made quite explicit the political content and context of their discourse such polemic is relatively harmless; if, on the other hand, they disguise their political persuasions behind a pretence of objectivity the results may be more pernicious. In such circumstances it falls on others to rip away their masks, but, ultimately, a healthy anthropology will come about only when anthropologists are more honest with themselves concerning their pretended disinterest and relativism.

That anarchists and anthropologists have been misled into confusing the issue of freedom from economic constraint with that of political freedom and individual sovereignty can best be explained in terms of the dichotomy dominating Western thought, which attempts to set mind apart from body (Ryle 1949). By presupposing that mental and physical phenomena are separate anthropologists have been obliged to explain in some way their evident co-existence, occasionally championing nomothetic attempts to explain one realm in terms of the other. As this paper should have made clear, anthropologists may situate themselves on either side of the ensuing debate for reasons of their own political convictions. It may be that the phenomenological and existentialist perspectives have the potential to heal this rift in anthropology. At the least we should be prepared to admit that in attempting to understand the logic(s) by which cultures have evolved, they must be understood as having done so as parts of societies that operate *within*, rather than *without*, the economic constraints imposed by the external environment. We must take '... as the distinctive quality of man not that he must live in a material world, circumstances he shares with all organisms,

but that he does so according to a meaningful scheme of his own devising. In which capacity mankind is unique...' and therefore take '... as the decisive quality of culture - as giving each mode of life the properties that characterize it - not that this culture must conform to material constraints but that it does so according to a definite symbolic scheme which is never the only one possible' (Sahlins 1976a, p. viii).

Bakunin himself made the same point a hundred years earlier:

What is authority? (he asks.) Is it the inevitable powers of the natural laws which manifest themselves in the necessary concatenation and succession of phenomena in the physical and social worlds? Indeed, against these laws revolt is not only forbidden - it is even impossible. We may misunderstand them or not know them at all, but we cannot disobey them; because they constitute the basis and fundamental conditions of our existence; they envelop us, penetrate us, regulate all our movements, thoughts and acts: even when we believe that we disobey them, we only show their omnipotence.

Yes, we are absolutely the slaves of these laws. But in such slavery there is no humiliation, or, rather, it is not slavery at all. For slavery supposes an external master, a legislator outside of him whom he commands, while these laws are not outside of us: they are inherent in us; they constitute our being, our whole being, physically, intellectually and morally: we live, we breathe, we act, we think, we wish only through these laws. Without them we are nothing, *we are not*. Whence, then, could we derive the power and the wish to rebel against them? .... The liberty of man consists solely in this: that he obeys natural laws because he has *himself* recognised them as such, and not because they have been externally imposed upon him by any extrinsic will whatever ....

(From *God and the State* (1882), quoted in Woodcock 1977, p. 310).

MARCUS COLCHESTER

#### REFERENCES

- Bookchin, M. 1974. *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*, London: Wildwood House.
- Clastres, H. 1975. *La Terre Sans Mal*, Paris: Editions du Seuil.
- ... and J. Lizot. 1978. 'La part du feu', *Libre*, 3, Paris: Payot.

- Clastres, P. 1971a. 'Le clou de la croisière', *Les Temps Modernes*, 299-300, pp. 2345-2350.
- ... 1971b. 'Le dernier cercle', *Les Temps Modernes*, 298-300, pp. 1917-1940.
- ... 1976. Preface in Sahlin 1976b.
- ... 1977a. *Society against the State*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- ... 1977b. 'Archéologie de la violence: la guerre dans les sociétés primitives', *Libre*, 1, pp. 137-173.
- ... 1977c. 'Malheur du guerrier sauvage', *Libre*, 2, pp. 69-110.
- ... 1978. 'Les Marxistes et leur anthropologie', *Libre*, 3, pp. 135-150.
- Dolgoff, S. 1973. *Bakunin: On Anarchy*, London: Allen & Unwin.
- Domatoff, G. Reichel- 1976. 'Cosmology as Ecological Analysis: A View from the Rain Forest', *Man*, n.s., Vol. XI, no. 3, pp. 307-318.
- Fabietti, U. 1979. 'De quoi des Yanomamï ne rient pas', in J.-L. Amselle (ed.), *Le Sauvage à la Mode*, Paris: Editions le Sycomore 1979, pp. 219-242.
- Friedman, J. 1974. 'Marxism, Structuralism and Vulgar Materialism', *Man*, n.s., Vol. IX, pp. 444-469.
- Gross, D.R. 1975. 'Protein Capture and Cultural Development in the Amazon Basin', *American Anthropologist*, Vol. LXXVII, pp. 526-549.
- Hanna, N. 1981. 'Tribal Anarchy', *Undercurrents: The Magazine of Radical Alternatives and Community Technology*, no. 45, April-May 1981, pp. 18-19.
- Harner, M.J. 1977. 'The Ecological Basis for Aztec Sacrifice', *American Ethnologist*, Vol. IV, no. 1, pp. 117-135.
- Harris, M. 1966. *The Rise of Anthropological Theory*, New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- ... 1974. *Cows, Pigs, Wars and Witches: The Riddles of Culture*, Fontana (1977).
- ... 1975. 'Reply', *Current Anthropology*, Vol. XVI, no. 3, pp. 454-455.
- ... 1977. *Cannibals and Kings: The Origins of Cultures*, Fontana (1978).
- ... 1979a. 'The Yanomamö and the Causes of War in Band and Village Societies', in M.I. Margolis and W.E. Carter (eds.), *Brazil: Anthropological Perspectives. Essays in Honor of Charles Wagley*, New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 121-132.
- ... 1979b. *Cultural Materialism*, Random House.

- Joll, J. 1964. *The Anarchists*, Methuen (1979).
- Kropotkin, P. 1902. *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*, Boston: Porter Sargent Publishers.
- ... 1971. *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, New York: Dover Publications.
- Lathrap, D.W. 1970. *The Upper Amazon*, London: Thames Hudson.
- Leeds, A. 1969. 'Ecological Determinants on Chieftainship Among the Yaruro Indians of Venezuela', in A.P. Vayda, *Environment and Cultural Behaviour*, Natural History Press, pp. 377-394.
- Lizot, J. 1971. 'Aspects économiques et sociaux du changement culturel chez les Yanomamɨ', *L'Homme*, Vol. XI, no. 1, pp. 32-51.
- ... 1972. 'Economie ou Société?', *J. Soc. Am. de Paris*, Vol. LX, pp. 136-175.
- ... 1974. 'Histoires indiennes d'amour', *Les Temps Modernes*, 339, pp. 1-34.
- ... 1976. *The Yanomamɨ in the Face of Ethnocide*, Copenhagen: IWGIA Document no. 22.
- ... 1977a. 'Population, Resources and Warfare among the Yanomamɨ', *Man*, n.s., Vol. XII, nos. 3-4, pp. 497-517.
- ... 1977b. 'Population, ressources et guerre chez les Yanomamɨ', *Libre*, 2, pp. 111-146.
- ... 1978a. 'Economie primitive et subsistance', *Libre*, 4, pp. 69-113, Paris: Payot.
- ... 1978b. 'Connaissance et Usage des Plantes Sauvages chez les Yanomamɨ', in E. Wagner and A. Zucchi (eds.), *Unidad y Variedad: Ensayes en Homenaje a Jose M. Crujeant*, Caracas: IVIC.
- Marx, K. and F. Engels and V.I. Lenin. 1972. *Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism*, Moscow: Progress Publishers.
- McDonald, D.R. 1977. 'Food Taboos: A Primitive Ecological Protection Agency', *Anthropos*, Vol. LXXII, nos. 5-6, pp. 734-748.
- Meggers, B. 1971. *Amazonia: Man and Culture in a Counterfeit Paradise*, Chicago: Aldine, Atherton.
- Miller, M.A. 1976. *Kropotkin*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Morris, B. 1981. 'Lao Tzu and Anarchism', *Freedom: Anarchist Fortnightly*, Vol. XLII, no. 17, pp. 9-16.
- Morris, W. 1890. *News from Nowhere*, ed. James Redmond, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1970.
- Nozick, R. 1974. *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, Oxford: Blackwell (1980).



- Ross, E.G. 1978. 'Food Taboos, Diet and Hunting Strategy: The Adaptation to Animals in Amazon Cultural Ecology', *Current Anthropology*, Vol. XIX, no. 1, pp. 1-36.
- Ryle, G. 1949. *The Concept of Mind*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books (1963).
- Sahlins, M. 1968. 'La Première société d'abondance', *Les Temps Modernes*.
- ... 1972. *Stone-Age Economics*, London: Tavistock.
- ... 1976a. *Cultural and Practical Reason*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- ... 1976b. *Age de pierre, age d'abondance*, Paris: Gallimard.
- Salisbury, R.J. 1962. *From Stone to Steel*, London: Cambridge University Press.
- Siskind, J. 1973. 'Tropical Forest Hunters and the Economy of Sex', in D.R. Gross (ed.), *Peoples and Cultures of Native South America*, New York: Natural History Press.
- Sperber, D. 1975. *Rethinking Symbolism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Thomas, H. 1951. *The Spanish Civil War*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books (1977).
- Thompson, E.P. 1955. *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary*, Merlin Press (1977).
- Thompson, P. 1977. *The Work of William Morris*, Quartet Books.
- Woodburn, J. 1968. 'An Introduction to Hadza Ecology', in R.B. Lee and I. Devore, *Man the Hunter*, Chicago: Aldine, pp. 49-54.
- Woodcock, G. 1962. *Anarchism*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books (1963).
- ... (ed.) 1977. *The Anarchist Reader*, Fontana/Collins.

AN INQUIRY INTO THE PROTO-ALGONQUIAN SYSTEM  
OF SOCIAL CLASSIFICATION AND MARRIAGE:  
A POSSIBLE SYSTEM OF SYMMETRIC PRESCRIPTIVE ALLIANCE  
IN A LAKE FOREST ARCHAIC CULTURE  
DURING THE THIRD MILLENNIUM B.C.

The study of relationship terminologies in reconstructed proto-languages is of significance to both linguists and social anthropologists. Where a proto-language relationship terminology can be reconstructed, the analyst is in a position to evaluate precisely the nature of changes in social classification. Such knowledge is invaluable and essential if we are ever to understand the meaning of social classification and the causes of change in social classification.

Disagreements on how these goals are best achieved is apparent from the recent work of Blust in *Current Anthropology* (1980) and subsequent comments on his methods, published in the same journal.

At Oxford the publications of Allen (1976), on reconstructing the Sherpa social classification, and Barnes (1979) on the meaning of Proto-Austronesian relationship terms, as well as their individual comments on Blust (1980) exemplify the social anthropologist's concern with meanings and systems of relationship in proto-languages. This interest in relationship terminologies, meanings and systems of relationship comes to us from Tylor whose essay of 1889 on cross-cousin marriage inaugurated a topic that is still essential to our understanding of social classification. The development of formal arguments that allow the analyst to draw conclusions about principles of social classification, marriage, and cosmology, is most fully developed in the work of Needham (1962, 1973, 1974). In this method of analysis relationship terminologies and their genealogical glosses provide primary evidence from which classificatory principles may be adduced. Where the principles of social classification are sufficiently

clear, one may be able to define the presence or absence of lines of descent, the presence of unilineal principles, or marital prescriptions. What this method of analysis will not do is allow the analyst to make conclusions about jural obligations or the regularity of behaviour. This is appropriate given the number of ways known societies allocate, adhere to, or disregard obligations.

Formal analysis is suited to the analysis of social classification in proto-languages. We need assume no more than that words classify and that by intensive examination of glosses principles of social classification may be adduced. To demonstrate the value of these assertions I will take the case of the Proto-Algonquian relationship terminology and the inferences that have been drawn from its earlier analysis and show that a formal analysis has definite advantages in determining features of social structure for the Proto-Algonquians.

Algonquian languages are found scattered from west of the Rocky Mountains through the Plains and Woodlands to the Atlantic coast. Linguistic studies indicate that the Algonquian languages are related to other major linguistic stocks in North America (Haas 1960). Specific linguistic studies of Proto-Algonquian terms for flora and fauna have been used to establish a Proto-Algonquian homeland in the Lake Forest biome some time prior to the first millennium B.C. (Siebert 1967). A glotto-chronological date has yet to be agreed upon and linguists' general impressions of the antiquity of Proto-Algonquian now seem to be converging around a date late in the third millennium B.C. or early in the second millennium B.C.

Recent archaeological investigations (Buchner 1979) provide good evidence that a cultural chronology for the appropriate time in the Lake Forest, from the most recent Northern Algonquian Archaeological cultures to Archaic cultures, can be reconstructed.

Linguists divide the Algonquian language family into two separate linguistic sub-groups: the central and the eastern languages (Goddard 1978). Many linguists formerly divided the central grouping into western and central sub-groups; similarly some linguists formerly reconstructed proto-terms and glosses for the previous sub-groups. The reconstructed proto-relationship terms and glosses presented are those of Hockett (1964) for the Proto-Central Algonquian languages, excluding the western languages. More recently these reconstructed proto-relationship terms and glosses have been accepted for the Proto-Algonquian language (Aubin 1975). It is to be expected that further comparative linguistic work will alter the form of these Proto-Algonquian relationship terms, but my own researches into Algonquian social structure indicate that Hockett's glosses are fairly secure. By this I mean that the glosses for categories should remain unchanged by further comparative linguistic work on the form of the category.

In the analysis that follows, principles of social classification will be inferred from the reconstructions of Hockett with recourse to limited comparisons to eastern and western Algonquian languages to clarify certain crucial points in the analysis.

AN INQUIRY INTO THE PROTO-ALGONQUIAN SYSTEM  
OF SOCIAL CLASSIFICATION AND MARRIAGE:  
A POSSIBLE SYSTEM OF SYMMETRIC PRESCRIPTIVE ALLIANCE  
IN A LAKE FOREST ARCHAIC CULTURE  
DURING THE THIRD MILLENNIUM B.C.

The study of relationship terminologies in reconstructed proto-languages is of significance to both linguists and social anthropologists. Where a proto-language relationship terminology can be reconstructed, the analyst is in a position to evaluate precisely the nature of changes in social classification. Such knowledge is invaluable and essential if we are ever to understand the meaning of social classification and the causes of change in social classification.

Disagreements on how these goals are best achieved is apparent from the recent work of Blust in *Current Anthropology* (1980) and subsequent comments on his methods, published in the same journal.

At Oxford the publications of Allen (1976), on reconstructing the Sherpa social classification, and Barnes (1979) on the meaning of Proto-Austronesian relationship terms, as well as their individual comments on Blust (1980) exemplify the social anthropologist's concern with meanings and systems of relationship in proto-languages. This interest in relationship terminologies, meanings and systems of relationship comes to us from Tylor whose essay of 1889 on cross-cousin marriage inaugurated a topic that is still essential to our understanding of social classification. The development of formal arguments that allow the analyst to draw conclusions about principles of social classification, marriage, and cosmology, is most fully developed in the work of Needham (1962, 1973, 1974). In this method of analysis relationship terminologies and their genealogical glosses provide primary evidence from which classificatory principles may be adduced. Where the principles of social classification are sufficiently

Before presenting the evidence in this case, I think it best to deal with Hockett's original inferences. While his reconstructed proto-terms and glosses have been generally accepted, his inferences remain controversial (Hickerson 1967; Eggan 1966, p. 104; Aberle 1974, p. 74). It is my contention that Hockett's conclusions must be rejected. His conclusions are: '1. Cross-cousin marriage of the stricter type (man with mother's brother's daughter); 2. Patrilocality.' (1964, p. 256). Patrilocality may be a statistically-defined behaviour or a jural obligation. Where the jural obligation is followed it becomes statistically demonstrable. Relationship terminology is at best tenuously associated with behaviour and classification remains logically prior to behaviour. I have yet to find any convincing theory indicating that specific principles of social classification cause specific residential rules or behaviour.

If Hockett had made a comparative study of residential rules and behaviour in historic and contemporary Algonquian-speaking societies indicating a uniform or probable set of residential rules and behaviour, we might accept patrilocality for the Proto-Algonquian speech community. He does not, and there is no consistent set of residential jural obligations or behaviour associated with Algonquian-speaking societies. If Hockett meant that historic and contemporary Algonquian societies sharing principles of social classification with the Proto-Algonquian speech community have patrilocal residential rules and behaviour, he is wrong. The historic and contemporary Algonquian-speaking societies sharing principles of social classification with their Proto-Algonquian ancestors have bilocal residential rules. Neolocal residence is not prohibited and occurs frequently.

There are neither theoretical nor comparative reasons to assume that the Proto-Algonquian speech community was characterized by patrilocal rules or behaviour. In fact two of Hockett's proto-terms and genealogical glosses only have identical meanings in contemporary Algonquian societies characterized by bilocal residential rules where neolocal residence is not prohibited. This will not prove the Proto-Algonquian speech community had bilocal residential rules, but we can be certain that bilocal residential rules are more probable than a unilateral rule of residence.

The other assertion, mother's brother's daughter's marriage, is equally ill-conceived. Again the correlation between behaviour, jural obligations, and social classification is tenuous, and it is best not to assume a causal chain of events on the basis of limited social facts. As such, a behavioural adherence to a marital injunction requires greater justification than social classification. It is not possible, given Hockett's data, to state the regularity with which MBD marriage would have occurred. Similarly, preferential marriage is irreducible to social classifications. There is no reason to expect that marital preferences necessarily lead to a systematic pattern of marriage or that marital preferences may not be contradictory or verging on the impossible.

If we examine the social organization of contemporary Algonquian-speaking groups sharing principles of social classification with

the Proto-Algonquian speech community, we find that a male ego's relationship with his MB is not characterized by affection and friendship but rather by restraint, limited avoidances and, often, resentment. These are hardly the natural preconditions for marriage.

It is possible to determine an implicit categorical injunction in a social classification. Systems of asymmetric prescriptive alliance are easily identifiable by their lineal principles and identifications of prescribed spouse (Needham 1974, pp. 55-56). Such systems of marriage are still often, and unfortunately, referred to as systems of matrilateral cross-cousin marriage. In systems of asymmetric prescriptive alliance there is a necessary lineal distinction of at least three lines. At the very least the lineal distinctions must separate the categories with genealogical glosses MBD and FZD for a male ego. The MBD category must be the term of reference for a wife prior to marriage before we may claim an asymmetric prescription. Hockett's reconstruction places the MBD and FZD in the same category and does not indicate the category of spouse prior to marriage. There is no possible way this could be a system of asymmetric prescriptive alliance.

There are neither behavioural, psychological, preferential or formal arguments that justify Hockett's inferences. Hockett's foremost justification for his assertions of patrilocality and MBD marriage rested on an undefined principle of 'natural context' and the separation of the relationship terms for MB and WF. Hickerson (1967) suggested that the relationship terms for MB and WF were probably cognate and that these terms were reducible to a single category with the genealogical gloss MB, WF. I think Hickerson is correct, but I will suggest that, even if Hockett is right on this point, it is sufficiently trivial to have little bearing on the overall system of social classification.

I have placed the reconstructed Proto-Algonquian relationship terms and their genealogical glosses in Table One. Traditional Algonquian-speaking societies have classificatory relationship terminologies, and we may infer the same for the Proto-Algonquians. The relationship terms are in the orthography of Aubin (1975). Each term is in the first person singular, and we may assume that these terms are terms of reference where the terms of address would have corresponded closely or exactly to the terms of reference.

Hockett's analysis is sufficiently complete that we may separate the terms of reference for a male ego and a female ego, and I have done so. I have written the genealogical glosses so that the principles of classification may be more easily identified. Hockett framed his discussion in terms of parallel relations and cross relations where cross-relation terminology had affinal meanings, or vice versa. Exact genealogical glosses are easily determined from such data.

Each number in Table One corresponds to a set of genealogical glosses and the candidates for a Proto-Algonquian relationship term. In most cases the final form of the relationship term was indeterminate and the alternate possibilities are included. This has no appreciable effect on the genealogical glosses.

I have altered Hockett's genealogical glosses in three cases. First I have accepted Hickerson's suggestion that all reconstructions for MB and WF should be treated as categorically identical and I have written the genealogical glosses accordingly.

Secondly, I have equated F and FB while Hockett did not. Hockett did not arrive at a reconstruction for the FB term because he had three candidates for these genealogical specifications that were not cognate. The unconsidered Western Algonquian languages equate F = FB in a relationship term for F which is cognate with the Proto-Algonquian relationship term for F (see Eggan 1955, p. 45). This fact strengthens the case for equating F with FB, which I have done.

Thirdly, and most importantly, I have identified the category of spouse prior to marriage. Hockett did not examine glosses in contemporary Algonquian languages with the meaning potential spouse. In the language chains Cree-Montagnais-Naskapi and Ojibwa-Ottawa-Algonquian the cognate term for Proto-Algonquian MBD, FZD also means potential spouse. The Southern Algonquian language speakers (e.g. Fox) are characterized by social classifications that apparently lack a potential spouse category and the cognate relationship term is best glossed as WZ. Most of the Western Algonquian-speaking groups (e.g. Cheyenne) have cognatic social classifications where the cognate relationship term is best glossed as WZ. The Eastern Algonquian speakers (e.g. Mic Mac, Abenaki) currently have cognatic social classifications. There is good reason to suspect that that is a historical phenomenon and that formerly these social classifications were lineal and perhaps prescriptive. However, more to the point, one of the common spouse terms in Eastern Algonquian languages is cognate with the Proto-Algonquian relationship term glossed MBD, FZD. Lastly, and of least importance, the identification of a potential spouse category in Proto-Algonquian removes a classificatory ambiguity from an otherwise consistent social classification.

Relationship terminologies may be formally separated into those which are lineal and those which are cognatic. Lineal social classifications are identified by the principles that sort jural statuses into descent lines in at least the three medial genealogical levels (Needham 1974, p. 55). Equations and distinctions of status indicate whether or not a lineal principle of classification is involved.

The pattern of equations and distinctions in the Proto-Algonquian relationship terminology is as laid out overleaf for a male ego. In the first ascending and descending genealogical levels there are no lineal equations barring the possibility that F = FB. However there are no cognatic usages. This use of status distinctions is consistent with lineal social classification though the lack of lineal equations would not allow us automatically to infer that a lineal principle of social classification is employed.

In the medial genealogical level there is an exact set of lineal equations and distinctions. Statuses are uniformly and obviously defined by the precise application of the lineal principle

---

+1	F = FB M ≠ MZ	F ≠ MB M ≠ FZ
0	B = FBS = MZS Z = FBD = MZD	B ≠ MBS = FZS Z ≠ MBD = FZD
-1	S ≠ BS D ≠ BD	S ≠ ZS S ≠ ZD

---

of opposition; male/female mediated by marriage. The relationship terminology sorts lines of descent into two sections and this characteristic allows us to infer that we are dealing with a lineal relationship terminology. Statuses fall into two formal lines of descent in the three medial genealogical levels.

A lineal relationship terminology is a necessary precondition to prescription. The evidence for a marital prescription consists of the following equations for a male ego:

---

+1	FB = MZH MZ = FBW	MB = FZH = WF FZ = MBW = WM
0	MBD = FZD = WZ = W before marriage MBS = FZS = WB	
-1	ZS = DH	ZD = SW

---

The three medial genealogical levels provide the necessary prescriptive equations to demonstrate a symmetric prescription. The gloss for term number seventeen as wife before marriage allows us to show precisely how the lines articulate.

The manner in which the two lines of descent are formed and their articulation can be mostly clearly demonstrated in Table Two.

The binary matrix is divided into the five genealogical levels, male and female relationship terms correspond to the numbers and genealogical glosses of Table One. Female status categories are paired in the central two columns and the flow of spouses is female



*Table 1*  
The Proto-Algonquian Relationship Terminology

	<i>male ego</i>	<i>female ego</i>		<i>male ego</i>	<i>female ego</i>
1. *nemehso:ha *nemehso:ma *nemehso:meha	FF,MF	FF,MF	16. *ni:ʔtaiwa	MBS,FZS,WB	
2. *no:hko *no:hkoma *no:hkomehsa	FM,MM	FM,MM	17. *ni:θemwa	MBD,FZD,WZ, W, before marriage	MBS,FZS,HB, H, before marriage
3. *no:hθa	F,FB,MZH	F,FB,MZH	18. *neta:nkwa(?)		MBD,FZD,HZ
4. *nekyā *nekyā?siwa	M	M	19. *-a:nkw	WB	HZ
5. *neθwihsa *neθwihsē:nha	MZ,FBW	MZ,FBW	20. *ona:pe:mali		H
6. *nesihSa(?) *nesihSe:nha(?) *nesiNehsa *nesiθehsa	MB,FZH,WF	MB,FZH,HF	21. *ni:wa	W	
7. *nsekwihsa *nsekwihsēhsa	FZ,MBW,WM	FZ,MBW,HM	22. *nekiwi?sa	S	S
8. *ne?θ- *ne?θehse?sa	eB,eFBS,eMZS	eB,eFBS,eMZS	23. *neta:na *neta:nehsa	D	D
9. *nemihsa *nemihse:ha	eZ,eFBD,eMZD	eZ,eFBD,eMZD	24. *neni:cya:nehsa	S,D	S,D
10. *nehSi:ma *nehSi:mehsa *nehSi:menha	yB,yZ,yFBS,yFBD, yMZS,yMZD	yB,yZ,yFBS,yFBD, yMZS,yMZD	25. *ni:cya: *ni:cya:na	S,D	S,D
11. *-i:tesya:n	B,Z,FBS,MZS, FBD,MZD	B,Z,FBS,MZS, FBD,MZD	26. *neto:sima	BS	ZS
12. *netawe:ma:wa	Z,FBD,MZD	B,FBS,MZS	27. *neto:simeθkwe:ma	BD	ZD
13. *-i:tekeHkw		Z,FBD,MZD	28. *neθenkwaθa *neθenkwaθehsa *neθenkwaθema	ZS,DH	BS,DH
14. *neθkwe:ma	Z,FBD,MZD		29. *ne?θem- *ne?θemya	ZD,SW	BD,SW
15. *ni:θka:na	B,FBS,MZS		30. *naha:nka	DH	DH
			31. *naha:nkaniθkwe:wa *naha:nkanizkwe:wa	SW	SW
			32. *no:hsihsa	SS,SD,DS,DD	SS,SD,DS,DD

(Hickerson 1967, Hockett 1964, Aubin 1975)

Table 2  
Proto-Algonquian Categories of Alliance and Descent  
for a Male Speaker

	<i>male</i> ←	<i>female</i>	<i>female</i> →	<i>male</i>
+2	1	2	2	1
+1	3	4,5	7	6
0	Ego 8,10,11,15	17,21	9,10,11 12,14	16,19
-1	22,24 25,26	29,31	23,24,25 27	28,30
-2	32	32	32	32

to male. This version of the binary matrix is one of many equally appropriate representations and should not be treated as implying either a unilineal principle of descent or implicit jural obligations. The flow of spouses from female to male reflects the normal pattern and the Proto-Algonquian ideology of spouse exchange remains unidentifiable.

The Proto-Algonquian relationship terminology is best interpreted as a social classification ordered by symmetric prescriptive alliance. The adherence to the marital prescription is uncertain. Marital preferences such as those inferred by Hockett are not confirmed in this analysis though we cannot claim that such preferences are not possible. Indeed we do have contemporary examples of symmetric prescriptive social classifications with a preference for asymmetric alliance (Needham 1967, p. 43). Though asymmetric alliance cannot be excluded from the possible uses of a symmetric prescriptive social classification, the fact that the social classification is symmetric and prescriptive excludes an asymmetric interpretation except in those cases where preferences and behaviour show a unilateral consistency. This is not the case for the Proto-Algonquians nor is it ever likely that such evidence will be adduced. Similarly, further examination of lexical items and glosses in Proto-Algonquian (Aubin 1975) does not show any great promise of indicating what Proto-Algonquian jural obligations would have been. There simply are not lexical items in Proto-Algonquian that correspond to specific jural obligations. The only relationship terms that have any apparent associations with jural obligations, terms nos. 30 and 31, are found in contemporary symmetric, prescriptive, social classifications in Algonquian-speaking societies where the relationship terminology is accompanied by bilocal, post-marital residential obligations and frequent neolocality.

Further advances in comparative Algonquian linguistics may help to clarify certain points on Proto-Algonquian social structure. It also now seems certain that resolution of structure and symbolic problems in Algonquian-speaking societies with social classifications ordered by symmetric prescriptive alliance should point the way to further advances in our comparative analysis of the Proto-Algonquian society.

As linguistic, archaeological, and structural analysis become complementary, a consistent picture is beginning to emerge of a hypothetical Proto-Algonquian-speaking society that flourished in the third millennium B.C. and whose descendants emigrated from the Lake Forest to occupy much of North America. As research continues, the possibility emerges that further structural analysis may disclose the system of symbolic classification and cosmology of Proto-Algonquian society.

C.J. WHEELER

REFERENCES

- Aberle, David F., 1974. 'Historical Reconstruction and its Explanatory Role in Comparative Ethnology: A Study in Method', in *Comparative Studies by Harold Driver and Essays in his Honor*, New Haven, H.R.A.F. Press.
- Allen, N.J., 1976. 'Sherpa Kinship Terminology in Diachronic Perspective', *Man*, n.s., Vol. XI, pp. 569-587.
- Aubin, George F., 1975. 'A Proto-Algonquian Dictionary', *Canadian Ethnology Service*, Paper No. 29, Ottawa: National Museums of Canada.
- Barnes, R.H., 1979. 'Lord, Ancestor and Affine: An Austronesian Relationship', *NUSA*, Vol. VII, pp. 18-34.
- Blust, Robert, 1980. 'Early Austronesian Social Organization: The Evidence of Language', *Current Anthropology*, Vol. XXI, no. 2, pp. 205-247.
- Buchner, Anthony Paul, 1979. *The 1978 Caribou Lake Project, Including a Summary of the Prehistory of East-Central Manitoba*, Manitoba: Department of Cultural Affairs and Historical Resources, Historic Resources Branch.
- Eggan, Fred, 1955. 'The Cheyenne and Arapaho Kinship System', in Fred Eggan (ed.), *Social Anthropology of North American Tribes*, London and Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 35-98.
- ... 1966. *The American Indian: Perspectives for the Study of Social Change*, Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company.

- Goddard, Ives, 1978. 'Central Algonquian Languages', *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. XV, Washington: Smithsonian Institution, pp. 583-587.
- Haas, Mary R., 1960. 'Some Genetic Affiliations of Algonkian', in Stanley A. Diamond (ed.), *Culture in History*, New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 977-992.
- Hickerson, Harold, 1967. 'A Note of Inquiry on Hockett's Reconstruction of P.C.A.', *A.A.*, Vol. LXIX, pp. 362-363.
- Hockett, Charles F., 1964. 'The Proto-Central Algonquian Kinship System', in Ward H. Goodenough (ed.), *Explorations in Cultural Anthropology*, New York: McGraw-Hill, pp. 239-57.
- Needham, Rodney, 1962. *Structure and Sentiment: A Test Case in Social Anthropology*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
- ... 1967. 'Terminology and Alliance: II - Mapuche; Conclusions', *Sociologus*, 1, 17, 1, pp. 39-53.
- ... 1973. 'Prescription', *Oceania*, Vol. XLIII, no. 3, pp. 166-181.
- ... 1974. *Remarks and Inventions: Sceptical Essays about Kinship*, London: Tavistock Publications.
- Siebert, Frank T., Jr., 1967. 'The Original Home of the Proto-Algonquian People', *National Museum of Canada, Bulletin 214*, (Ottawa), pp. 48-59.

## BYWAYS IN OXFORD ANTHROPOLOGY

### Notes on Ethnographic Collections in Oxford

#### *South American Indian collections in the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford*

The Pitt Rivers Museum contains extensive collections of South American Indian material culture. The extent and depth of the material represented provide a valuable research tool for cross-cultural comparisons and, for many tribal groups, detailed analysis. It seems appropriate to offer information about these collections in the present issue of *JASO*.

The Museum keeps three card catalogues, arranging information about the collections by region, typology and acquisition details. Using these sources it is possible to see quickly which types of specimens and which geographical areas and tribes are represented.

If a specimen can be ascribed to a tribal group or has come into the collections with good documentation of its origin, then it is indexed under the tribal heading. Much of the earlier material arrived with little information and can be catalogued only by region or country. Obviously the more specific the provenance, the more valuable a specimen becomes for research. This proves especially true in the case of Peruvian archaeological material, much of which has been acquired through the saleroom or donated by interested laymen picking up surface finds. Only from Ancon and Arica do we have properly excavated material from named and numbered grave sites.

In order to give a useful overview of the Pitt Rivers Museum collections, it seems best to start with the material listed as originating from geographical and politically defined areas, mentioning only those collections outstanding in their quantity, quality or accompanying information. Then collections from tribal groups will be listed. Although 103 tribes and ethnic groups are represented in the collections, only those with more than five specimens are mentioned here.

*Argentina* - archaeological material from nine sites in Catamarca Province and one site in La Rioja Province, excavated in 1882-86 by H.D. and C.L. Hoskold; pottery and stone tools.

*Bolivia* - some ethnography from Col. Fawcett, especially from the Matto Grosso. Archaeological material, mostly pottery, from Tiahuanaco excavated by Prof. J.A. Douglas in 1911.

*Brazil* - thirty-five pottery figures from Pernambuco, collected by Dr. Goncalves in 1945.

*Chile* - varied archaeological material from Quillagua,

donated by a Mrs. Jones, 1933; pottery from Coquimbo, Diaguita culture, donated by G.H.S. Bushnell, 1947.

*Ecuador* - archaeological material: pottery (no specific provenance) from A. Ruthven-Murray 1929; original Pitt Rivers Collection - stone tools from Macas; pottery from Manta, Louis Clarke 1920; large collection of pottery figurines from La Tolita, R.H. Thomas 1924-25.

*British Guiana* - some provenanced, much unprovenanced ethnographic material, especially weapons, musical instruments and ornaments; collectors: ImThurn 1880s, Burchell pre-1865, S.W. Silver pre-1900; Miss E.C. Bell 1905, William Clark pre-1908; original Pitt Rivers coll., pre-1883.

*Patagonia* - many unprovenanced stone implements, original Pitt Rivers coll. and Baldwin-Spencer Expedition, 1929.

*Peru* - ethnographic material, especially weaving, from H.M. Gibbs 1900; Lt. Maw 1828; fourteen well documented and photographed specimens collected in 1971-72 by N. Stevenson in Santiago de Chocórvos. Archaeology: much unlocalized material of all types, often assigned to styles, especially textiles and weaving purchased in 1934, pottery from the original PR Coll. and W.M. Ogilvie 1852-1901. Sites: a large amount from Ancon, Louis Clarke 1919, H.O. Forbes 1921, well documented mummies from Cmdr. W. Acland 1883-84; Arica, an early post-conquest site, material from Rev. Warner Parry 1884, Lt. M.J. Harrison 1868, Chancay - mostly purchased from Stevens Sale Room 1902; Chillón Valley - Forbes 1921; Cuzco - pottery excavated in 1911 by Prof. J.A. Douglas; Nasca - especially pottery and textiles purchased 1933; Lake Titicaca/Island of the Sun - excavated 1911 by Douglas; Trujillo (Chimu Valley) - pottery from A.R. Murray 1929.

*Tierra del Fuego* - a small but varied ethnographical collection mainly from South American Missionary Society 1892; R. Whaits 1893; Prof. Moseley from 'Challenger' voyage 1873-76; Adm. MacLear from 'Alert' 1879; Baldwin-Spencer 1929.

*Aguaruna* (Peru) - many types of object, especially ornaments, R.H. Thomas 1923.

*Akawaio* (Br. Guiana) - very extensive and well documented collection made by Dr. Audrey Butt in 1951-52, 1957.

*Araucanian* (Chile) - collections from H.C. Colvin-Smith 1955 and Rev. P.E. Class, pre-1925.

*Arawak* (Br. Guiana) - E. ImThurn 1880s; (Jamaica) - Prof. W.F. Harper 1950, photographs of deformed skulls, excavated.

*Arekuna* (Br. Guiana) - a small but well documented collection from Dr. Audrey Butt.

*Bororo* (Matto Grosso) - Oxford and Cambridge Expedition 1960; G.M. Dyott (in search of Col. Fawcett) 1928.

*Botocudo* (Brazil) - five specimens, varied types, mostly original PR coll.

*Campas* (N. Peru) - R.H. Thomas 1923 - weapons, ornaments, musical instruments.

*Carib* (Br. Guiana) - various donors and types of objects:

original PR coll. pre-1883, ImThurn 1880s, then more recently twenty-eight specimens from Peter Gatrell on the Cambridge Expedition to Guiana 1971. As with all the well documented collections, this gives native names, uses and village localities for most objects.

*Cayapas* (Peru) - R.H. Thomas 1924-25, the usual mixture of types of objects.

*Chaco* (Bolivia and Paraguay) - mainly from A. Pride, S. American Missionary Society; some pieces from Col. Fawcett.

*Chavante* (Rio das Mortes, Brazil) - ten objects of different types, P. Rivière 1960.

*Cofane* (Colombia) - Maj. R.H. Thomas 1923.

*Conibo* (Peru) - a few weapons, mostly from E. Bartlett 1865 and Miss Cutter 1901.

*Correguaje* (E. Colombia) - seven objects from Maj. R.H. Thomas 1924-25.

*Huambisa* (N. Peru) - a large collection from Thomas 1923, especially ornaments, some pottery.

*Huitoto* (N. Peru) - Thomas 1923.

*Inca, Iquitos, Yurimaguas* (N. Peru) - a few pieces, mostly pottery, Thomas 1923.

*Jivaro/Xebaro* (Ecuador) - a large amount of varied material from different donors including Dyott 1933, Thomas 1923, Buckley 1871. An especially numerous group of necklaces.

*Juruna* (Upper Xingu, Brazil) - four objects from P. Rivière 1960.

*Kaingua* (S. Brazil) - four musical instruments from Mayntzhusen 1913.

*Kamaiyura* (Upper Xingu) - P. Rivière and Oxford-Cambridge Expedition 1960.

*Lengua* (Gran Chaco) - very large and varied collection; as usual mostly ornaments, weapons and musical instruments in quantity but also stringwork, tools, food apparatus etc. Collectors: A. Pride 1900, J.G. Kerr 1896-97.

*Macusi* (Br. Guiana) - very large, especially ornaments and weapons, and including photographs. Primary donor Rev. J. Williams, collected before 1940. Also Miss E.C. Bell 1913, ImThurn 1880s.

*Mataco* (N. Argentina) - bags, stringwork and musical instruments - C.J. Oliver 1923.

*Nhambiquara* (Matto Grosso) - a few mixed pieces from G.M. Dyott 1926.

*Pianoghotto* (Brazil/Surinam) - two necklaces from the Schomburg Expedition 1841-1843 (this tribe not seen since the expedition).

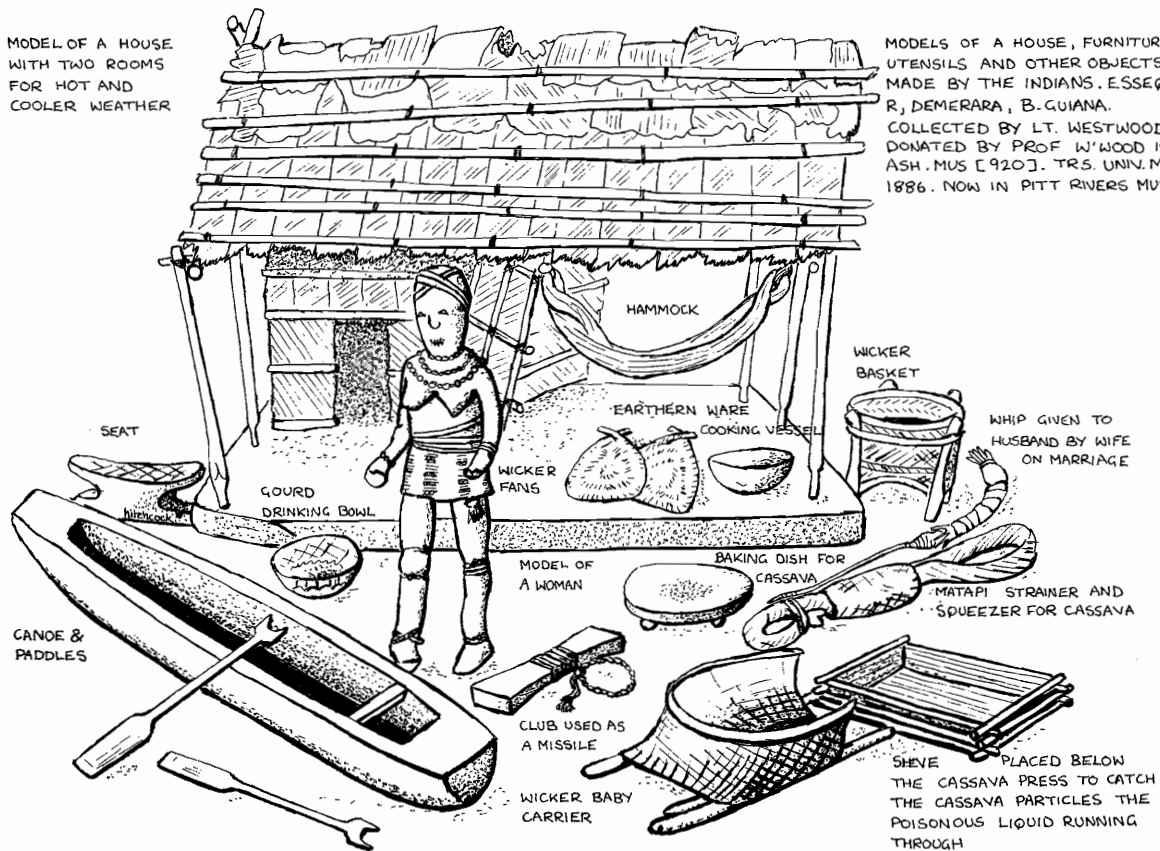
*Quechua* (Peru) - textiles from the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum 1952.

*Sanema* (S. Venezuela) - the most recent collection, made by Marcus Colchester 1979-80. 123 objects of most types of the group's material culture.

*Secoya* (Ecuador) - especially ornaments and musical instruments from the Oxford University Exploration Club 1961.

MODEL OF A HOUSE  
WITH TWO ROOMS  
FOR HOT AND  
COOLER WEATHER

MODELS OF A HOUSE, FURNITURE,  
UTENSILS AND OTHER OBJECTS.  
MADE BY THE INDIANS. ESSEQUIBO  
R, DEMERARA, B. GUIANA.  
COLLECTED BY LT. WESTWOOD 1812.  
DONATED BY PROF. W. WOOD 1874.  
ASH. MUS [920]. TRS. UNIV. MUS.  
1886. NOW IN PITT RIVERS MUSEUM.





*Serente* (Central Brazil) - large, varied collection purchased from D. Maybury-Lewis 1957.

*Akwe Shavante* (Central Brazil) - as above.

*Taulebang* (Venezuela) - well documented material from Audrey Butt 1957.

*Tehuelche* (Patagonia) - mostly stone tools collected by Rev. P.E. Class before 1925.

*Trio* (Surinam) - a large and well documented collection made by Peter Rivière 1963-64. To give an idea of the range of objects covered in the larger collections, here is a list of subject headings: baskets and boxes, clothing, combs, fans, food apparatus, hammocks, mats, music, ornaments, photographs, pottery, shamans' equipment, stools, vessels, weaving, weapons. In this collection, all the categories are about equally represented.

*Toba* (Gran Chaco) - mainly bags and stringwork, J.G. Kerr 1891.

*Tukarramae* (Upper Xingu) - five objects, P. Rivière 1960; two clubs from A. Cowell 1963.

*Waiwai* (Br. Guiana) - ornaments and costume, Miss McTurk pre-1950.

*Waiyana* (Surinam) - large collection made by Audrey Butt 1963.

*Warrau* (Br. Guiana) - ImThurn 1880s and P. Rivière 1960.

*Wapisiana* (Br. Guiana) - mostly musical instruments obtained by H. Balfour.

*Yaguas* (N. Peru) - R.H. Thomas 1923, weapons and clothing.

*Yahgan* (Tierra del Fuego) - interesting material, mixed but mainly hunting equipment. Donors: Baldwin-Spencer 1929, W.S. Routledge 1929, Capt. King 1831, R. Waitts 1893.

*Bush Negro* (Surinam) - from Boni, twenty-four pieces collected by Audrey Butt 1963; from Paramakka, forty objects from the Cambridge Expedition to Langa Tabiki led by David Hugh-Jones 1965.

In addition to material culture objects, archival photographs exist in the collections. Liz Edwards, the Balfour Librarian, is just beginning to discover the extent of these. The Pitt Rivers Museum collections can be made available for study, and I would welcome scholars wishing to see specimens.

LYNNE WILLIAMSON  
Research Assistant,  
Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford

## COMMENTARY

### THE SABOTAGE OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE ANTHROPOLOGIST AS SABOTEUR

What follows is a brief account of arrest and imprisonment while carrying out fieldwork on a rural co-operative near the town of Quillabamba in the Province of La Convención, Peru. Between 1958 and 1962 this particular area in the Department of Cusco was in the view of one observer 'the scene of the most important peasant movement of that period in Peru, and probably in the whole of South America',<sup>1</sup> and thus constitutes a location in which any research addressed to questions of peasant organisation, trade unions, etc., is still regarded by the authorities as suspect and potentially subversive. It must be emphasised, however, that the account is neither a cautionary tale nor a contribution to the literature of prison memoirs : rather, it serves both to illustrate and reinforce the truism that anthropologists engaged in fieldwork are not merely observers of class struggle but also part of the struggle itself, and it is precisely in exceptional circumstances such as those outlined below that the anthropologist-as-participant takes precedence in a dramatic manner over the anthropologist-as-observer.

At 4 pm on the afternoon of 22 March 1975, five students (two male, three female) from La Católica University in Lima, Luis Mamani (then Secretary-General of the Provincial Peasant Union Federation), Enrique Lara (a staff member of the state research organisation CENCIRA) and the anthropologist were

---

1. E.J. Hobsbawm, 'A Case of Neo-Feudalism: La Convención, Peru', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. I (1969), pp. 31-50, at p. 31.

arrested in Quillabamba and taken to the *Guardia Civil* (hereafter GC) barracks where statements were made and personal effects confiscated. Although at this stage no specific charges were mentioned, from the intense police activity and the tone of their remarks ('We are checking with Lima where your friend X is known for political subversion', etc.) it was clear to us that a process was just beginning; our detention in the barracks (without food, drink or bedding) lasted until 3 am the following morning when we were all transferred to an open army lorry which then set off for a destination still unknown to us. We were later informed by one of the four *Guardias* (armed with light machine-guns) positioned at each corner of the lorry that the destination was Cusco (the Departmental capital), a journey of some 280 kilometres up into the Sierra. During the day the lorry occasionally halted in a small village along the route so that we could buy food and drink; here the local GC would congratulate the escort on their capture of the '*guerrilleros*', and the inhabitants would gather to look at us and comment among themselves. That evening the lorry was met on the outskirts of Cusco by a further escort of armed *Guardias* commanded by very senior officers who (ominously) raised the canvas cover on the back of the lorry over us (to prevent recognition) and accompanied us down into the city to the GC HQ. The women in the group were taken away and the men were shut in an empty stone cell with no light; later we were taken out individually for a body-search and to be photographed for the GC files. As in Quillabamba, no food, drink or bedding was provided, a deprivation compounded by the climatic difference between tropical lowland Quillabamba (3400 feet above sea level) and highland Cusco (11440 feet above sea level); the clothing we had was inadequate to withstand the very low temperatures of the Sierra winter, and that night the five male detainees had to share two sleeping bags (two per bag and one on top). At 2.30 am in the early morning of 24 March I was woken by the GC on sentry duty and taken from the stone cell to the courtyard outside where another GC put a red hood over my head; I was then guided (pushed) by these two up a wooden stairway and along a passage to a room on the second floor where I was seated in a chair and left alone for half an hour. Later someone came into the room and took the hood off my head: the room itself was empty except for the chair I occupied in front of which were positioned two very bright reflector lamps focussed on my face; to one side stood a broad-shouldered 'heavy' in a mask revealing only the eyes, nose and mouth. The interrogator was in an adjacent room connected with mine by a microphone system, and the questioning followed explicitly political themes. At 5 am I was taken to another GC barracks in the city and locked in a small single cell until 7 am that morning when all the detainees (or political prisoners, as we had now been officially classified) were reunited in a larger cell, each one of us having experienced the same form of interrogation procedure the previous night. Later that morning we were taken across the

city to the HQ of the PIP (the Peruvian political police) for further investigation and interrogation.

Unlike the cell walls in the GC barracks, the walls of the cell in the PIP HQ were covered with graffiti containing messages and political testaments of past detainees, dates of arrest and torture, and references to political events unrecorded in the official Peruvian press. Here we remained without light or bedding and only small amounts of food, (bought by the women in the group and passed to us on the rare visits they were allowed to make), awaiting the commencement of another round of interrogations. No outside contact was possible, a PIP officer informed us, until the investigation was complete; meanwhile we would stay incommunicado. At 11 pm on the night of 25 March the interrogations began: now guilt of political activity on our part was assumed, merely to be confirmed. The object of the interrogation had changed, since for the PIP the problem was no longer just one of identifying a political position but rather to establish the existence of concrete activity deriving from and in furtherance of this political position. To this end the more sophisticated questioning of the PIP attempted to locate the inconsistencies and contradictions in the prisoners' chronological sequence of dates, times, persons and events, a tactically superior approach when compared with the narrowly political and less subtle questioning of the GC designed only to elicit political position and opinion. Where the GC interrogation method had attempted to instil terror, the method of the PIP was designed to create confusion: the menace of the GC was explicit (and therefore resistable) while that of the PIP was implicit (and unpredictable, making apostasy a certain resolution to an uncertain situation). Two PIP officers would rapidly and simultaneously ask questions on different themes (sometimes related, sometimes not): to most of these questions no complete response was either required or permitted, since the method sought precisely to expose the incipient contradiction of the half-formed answer, the recognition of which by the prisoner reinforced his uncertainty and undermined his argument while instantly uniting his interrogators in common exploration/exploitation of this discovered theme; i.e. the object of this method was the destructuring of the prisoner's concept of temporality (its element of continuity). When each one of us had been interrogated in this manner, we were returned to the cell below from where it was now possible to hear the deliberations of the PIP upstairs concerning the variant forms (the legal constructions) that might be taken by the political indictment; this related particularly to the interpretation of and acceptance by a military court of what in the current political context constituted anti-government activity. Accordingly, at 11 am on 26 March we were taken to the offices of the military tribunal in Cusco: here we were informed that the charge was 'sabotage of the agrarian reform' (a common holding charge employed against political opponents of the junta; cf. Amnesty International's *Peru: Briefing Paper No.15*,

1979, p.6), and that we would be detained in Quenkoru Gaol until the tribunal was ready to hear the case against us. At mid-day we were handed over to the *Guardia Republicana* (the prison police) and taken by prison van to Quenkoru Gaol, where we were to remain for the next seven days.

Situated eight kilometres outside Cusco, Quenkoru Gaol consists of a single open-air compound surrounded by wire fencing and watchtowers and contains two cell blocks, one for convicted prisoners (*culpables*) and the other for those awaiting trial (*inculpables*). We were incarcerated in the latter, in a special section reserved for political detainees who at the time ranged from student leaders (who had been in detention for nine months) to twenty male *comuneros* still untried for killing their landlord six years previously. The members of our group occupied themselves with political discussions and the organisation of a legal defence, a process which entailed the hiring of politically sympathetic lawyers who offered to defend us for nominal fees. After the others had been through a similar procedure, Enrique Lara, Luis Mamani and myself were taken to the offices of the military tribunal on the morning of 3 April, where further statements were made and cross-examinations carried out: that evening the officers composing the military tribunal arrived at the prison and presented us with their written judgments, in all cases a conditional discharge (which indicated that the detainees were released from custody but nevertheless confined to the city of Cusco while the PIP continued with the investigations). As we collected our belongings from the cell block other prisoners informed us that PIP personnel had been seen at the prison entrance, a warning ignored by us in the euphoria of imminent release; accordingly, the *Guardia Republicana* escorted us to the prison gates and pushed us through the narrow exit into the street beyond, where we were instantly rearrested by the PIP, hustled into a van and driven back to their HQ.

During this second period of detention the PIP were more openly hostile, threatening to use torture and confining us for long sessions in standing positions with hands behind our heads. The next day (4 April) we were taken to the offices of the Commandant of the XI Military Zone (the Departments of Madre de Dios, Cusco and Puno) and political boss of the whole region, General Luis Montoya y Montoya, who in a lecture to us on the objectives and achievements of the Peruvian 'revolution' made explicit the reasons for our initial arrest and subsequent rearrest (i.e. the separation of political thought from political action), after which we were returned to the custody of the PIP where we remained for the next three days. Renewed activity on the morning of 7 April indicated, we thought, that in the interim the PIP had formulated new charges, and we were as a result being taken once again to the offices of the military tribunal in the south of the city, the direction in which the PIP vans were travelling; instead, the vans continued on toward the airport, finally coming to a stop on the side of

the main runway to await transport to Lima. Amidst the now familiar security procedure we went aboard the plane and were seated at the rear of the aircraft under heavy guard; half an hour later we arrived in the national capital and were loaded into police vans and taken to the State Security Section (*Seguridad del Estado*) in the Lima HQ of the PIP. Although the questioning process continued as before, it was now more rigorous and co-ordinated; each detainee was simultaneously interrogated by a combination of PIP officers, two or three of us being questioned in this way at the same time. The walls of the interrogation rooms were covered in complex charts and diagrams which purported to trace connections between each detainee; after every interrogation the material content of these charts increased, but no new line of questioning was introduced nor charges made (a new charge of 'illegally attending a political meeting during the state of emergency' was subsequently formulated). As the routine established itself once more, it became clear that the only development in my particular situation would be expulsion (the Peruvian nationals might still be handed over to military intelligence, SIM); on 16 April I was summoned to the office of Sardo, the chief of the Lima PIP, where I was informed that my case had been decided by the Minister of the Interior (General Richter Prader) and that I was required to leave Peru within forty-eight hours (an expulsion order which precluded flying over Peruvian national territory, since if a plane in which I was travelling was compelled to land, the expulsion order would be technically infringed).

Unlike the elaboration of an ethnographic text, where the guise of 'objectivity' mediates reality through the intervention of the anthropologist as its necessarily external interpreter, the events outlined above represent an antithesis to this customary attempt at objectification: the anthropologist is instead absorbed within (and becomes part of) the social process under examination. The distinction between the social components of a process observed and the observer of that process is the ideological product of the separation of the 'professional observer' from the 'subjects observed' in terms of class and social formation: given the concreteness of this ideological construct, the observer (in the capacity of anthropologist) possesses a guaranteed autonomy in relation to the activity of the subjects being studied. During the period of the events, however, this element of externalised that-sidedness specific to anthropological practice was transformed into its opposite, the corollary of the subsequent internal this-sidedness being that the autonomy of the observer was guaranteed no longer. In the course of this transformation the distinction between observer and observed was deprived of some of its more important constituents, the power of a new and hitherto unknowable situation erasing pre-existing ideas and attitudes and in the process creating new alliances and possibilities (political, social). This element of restructuring was both determined and

necessarily preceded by the *de*structuring of distinct identities which gave rise to the observer/observed polarity; the synthesis entailed the development of significantly similar identities, a conflation resulting from the imperatives of the new political context (the state of emergency). The elimination of previously distinct identities was doubly determined by mutually reinforcing processes; on the one hand the establishment of a common political identity *for* the detainees (the object of interrogation) and on the other the construction of a common political identity *by* the detainees themselves (the effect of imprisonment). Both these processes were based on the eradication of originally significant political differences between the detainees and a corresponding emphasis on common elements (constructed during imprisonment): i.e. the creation of a new subject fulfilling the opposed requirements of the protagonists. The site of this conflict/contradiction/transformation was the interrogation room (the domain of the state and *its* definition of identities) where agents of the state sought either to mould the subject into a pre-given identity or merely to confirm the pre-existence of this same identity; and the prison cell (the domain of the detainees and *their* definition of identities) where the process of displacement and the political relocation of the subject was confirmed and reinforced. This transformation of the individual identity and its subsumption under a group identity did not, of course, affect each detainee in the same manner: for those already committed politically, the events served as confirmation of that commitment; for those not similarly committed, the events acted as a catalyst in the change of political consciousness. An example of the latter was Luis Mamani, whose original reaction was hostility toward the students, identifying them as the principal cause of his own arrest (i.e. had the students not been present in Quillabamba and attracted the attention of the authorities, he himself would not have been arrested). During the course of the interrogations and discussions with the students themselves, however, Luis's analysis of the situation changed, as did his ideas about its political significance and determinants; the locus of blame for his arrest was accordingly shifted from the students and their presence in Quillabamba to the reformist politics of the legal adviser to the Federation, Dr. Augusto Medina, criticised by Luis for politically restraining and weakening the Federation and consequently enabling the state to move against its leadership, an impossible act had the Federation possessed political strength. Throughout the period of imprisonment Luis contributed his knowledge of Federation politics to the general discussions of the agrarian reform program, adopting the theoretical viewpoint of the group as a whole. For their part, the PIP encouraged this development since the increasing similarity in views (evidenced in the course of interrogation) appeared to sustain the concept of a pre-existing conspiracy, thereby confirming the correctness of the PIP's action in rearresting the members of the group.

The transformation of identity results in conflict within

the subject(s) experiencing this: hence the discarding of autonomy by the anthropologist shifts the latter into the realm of social activity usually occupied by the objects of anthropological practice, i.e. a subject materially constrained and oppressed by the same elements of (legal, political) coercion in general and state repression in particular. This point has been noted elsewhere with respect to a similar set of circumstances:

...the affair had positive aspects too. The workings of the structure of power in the [Brazilian sugar plantation] had been brought out much more clearly than would have been the case under normal circumstances. I had been made to *feel*, rather than simply *understand*, something of the process of intimidation of workers and peasants, and something about the reasons for their passivity in the face of the powers that be. (E. de Kadt, *Catholic Radicals in Brazil*, Oxford University Press 1970, p.288)

Paradoxically, 'abnormal circumstances' uncover a fundamental contradiction not only at the level of the individual subject but also within the nature of the repressive apparatus of the state: *in order to destroy the existing opposition to itself, the state necessarily creates and extends the conditions of the existence of this opposition.* The formation of a new political consciousness in this manner is, in short, determined by the operationalisation of the state repressive apparatus; it makes possible a situation in which a peasant union leader can be made aware by students of political events (and their significance both in general and specific terms) beyond his immediate sphere, and can in turn make those same students aware of political events, conditions and activity that in other ('normal') circumstances would never be revealed to them.

TOM BRASS



## RECENT BOOKS ON THE AMERICAS

WILLIAM K. POWERS, *Yuwipi: Vision and Experience in Oglala Ritual*, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press 1982. xiii, 101 pp., Maps, Bibliography, Glossary, Indexes. \$9.50.

Powers, the author of an earlier structural analysis of Oglala (Sioux) myth and ritual (*Oglala Religion*, 1977), attempts in this book to exhibit the relations between three rituals: the vision quest, the sweat lodge, and a modern curing ritual called Yuwipi. Written in an enjoyable narrative style, *Yuwipi* describes the vision quest of a dissipated youth named 'Wayne' and the connected curing ritual of his father 'Runs Again'. Early chapters cover the necessary background, and the Postlude relates the dismaying fate of the aged Yuwipi specialist, Plenty Wolf.

The author disguises one or two names (at request) and creates at least one composite personage to protect private identities, but he derives his information from actual conversations and observation. His principal intervention is in drawing his evidence together to create a coherent narrative sequence, which he never witnessed exactly as described--the chief fictional invention of the book. He acknowledges these distortions and offers a succinct account of the true sources of each of his chapters. Nevertheless, the reader is left guessing as to what to make of the thoughts Powers puts into the heads of his characters. This doubt arises particularly concerning the vision. Oglala disapprove of revealing visions; that which the author offers comes from at least two different men, and Powers has never experienced one himself. The advantages which he tries to gain through his informal style, with its attention to the atmosphere of rural relationships and its impressionistic evocations of the South Dakota landscape, may justify dispensing with a more academic manner of

presentation. The book, however, is not the structural analysis the Preface implies it is. Evidently there is room too for alternative ethnographic studies of the Yuwipi and related rituals.

R.H. BARNES

JAMES AXTELL, *The European and the Indian: Essays in Ethnohistory of Colonial North America*, Oxford, etc.: Oxford University Press 1981. xii, 315 pp., Notes, Index. \$19.95.

One of the ten essays in James Axtell's *The European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethno-history of North America* closes with a quotation from the poet Marianne Moore succinctly analysing the hostile ambivalence displayed by European colonialists towards the indigenous peoples of the eastern seaboard of North America. Moore writes that the Indian way of life presented a 'scholastic philosophy of the wilderness to combat which one must stand outside and laugh since to go in is to be lost'. The laugh of colonialists who refused to investigate what they so loudly damned is a bitter and bloody sound as it echoes through the pages of books like Dee Brown's *Bury my Heart at Wounded Knee: an Indian History of the American West* (Picador: 1975). In *The European and the American* it is a more hesitant thing; its harshness is tempered by an unsettling awareness of the attractiveness of the multitude of indigenous cultures which met the Europeans when they first came to American shores. By the 19th century, when America committed itself to a program of genocide against the Indians, the white people of the nation had turned their backs on the dream of freedom the Indians had earlier evoked, and had succeeded in forgetting that Indian cultures had ever seemed to present options to their own. Axtell's book, through a rich presentation and careful analysis of the 17th-century and 18th-century materials (chiefly literary and journalistic) left by English settlers and travellers, portrays an earlier and somewhat more open-minded time when the two cultures struggled over which would have hegemony over the hearts and minds of the peoples of North America.

The Indians were literally struggling for their lives and for the minimal sense of coherence and continuity which made those lives worth living. European diseases caused an 80% reduction in the size of New England's native population during the first century of colonization. The magnitude of the death toll threatened Indian culture with dissolution: kin and clan

structures, central to Indian identity, were shattered, the transmission of technological and traditional knowledge was broken, leadership positions were left empty as political succession was thrown into confusion, and settlement patterns were abandoned as survivors dispersed or regrouped. The religious and cosmological beliefs of the Indians, which had sustained the communities for centuries, seemed invalid in the face of the disaster which had befallen the Indians, and the consequent loss of faith predisposed the Indians to seek the spiritual and material help of the whites.

That help was pernicious. The official spokesmen of the settlements, Protestant ministers, educators and respectable townspeople, were affronted by the 'godless self reliance' of the Indians and saw it as their duty to "reduce" the Indian's proud independence...to the total dependence of a "weaned child". 'Reduction' involved the eradication of all traces of Indian identity (including names) through isolating Indian students (usually chiefs' sons held hostage as guarantors of their fathers' behaviour) from their people and their culture in 'praying towns' or Indian schools. There they were taught a rhetoric of Christian submission and trained in vocations which offered no competition to white settlers--berrying, fishing for hire, making brooms, baskets and pails.

Christianized Indians as well as their 'savage' brethren were drawn into the white man's economy by the lure of European products; Robert Beverly wrote in his *History and Present State of Virginia* of 1705 that the best way of subjecting the Indians to the political desires of the whites was to 'multiply their wants and put them upon desiring a thousand things they never dreamt of before'. The Senecas of New York were valuing European artefacts over their own as early as 1650 as the three-to-one ratio of European to Indian grave goods indicates. The need for European guns, tools and alcohol led the Indians to massively over-hunt their territories. The hunger for furs to trade for alcohol and ammunition (even the European weapons which increased the Indians' hunting and fighting power increased their dependence on white ammunition merchants) spawned extensive warfare between competing tribes and this fratricidalstruggling, made murderous by the efficiency of rifles, assisted in the devastation of Indian populations.

One of the results of this depopulation was that Indians stopped torturing prisoners (Axtell, despite a vast respect for the indigenous populations, does not idealize them) and instead used them as replacements for tribespeople lost through warfare and disease. White prisoners were thus intensively familiarized with the complex and tightly-knit communal networks of their captors. The rhetoric of absolute otherness which the English colonial powers used to justify the exploitation and degradation of the natives failed when white people met Indians on their own ground. Truly 'to go in was to be lost'; Indians, freed of the constraints which bound them to white teachers and ministers, inevitably returned to their peoples' ways, but white captives

and others who had experienced Indian life frequently rejected repatriation. Furthermore, the idea of abandoning the strains of the increasingly overpopulated, fragmented and contentious Protestant communities for the freedom of the forests caught the popular imagination. An extensive and widely popular literature of captivity narratives sprang up and raised disconcerting questions about the central colonial values of humility, obedience and work. The possibility that Indian culture, already mortally infected by its colonial competitor, might in turn undermine the rigorous Protestant morality and agrarian capital economy of settlements was frightening.

The 18th century saw the mood of 'cultural competition' which had characterized the preceding century give way to the attitudes of racial hatred which would dominate the white man's relation to the Indians until there were no longer enough Indians to pose a threat to Protestant-capitalist culture. In 1711 the Virginia House of Burgesses voted a twenty thousand pound war bill 'for exterminating all Indians without distinction of Friends or Enemys'. Methods of extermination extensively practised in the 19th century were tried on during the Pontiac Uprising of 1763-1766 when the British High Command ordered the distribution of smallpox-infested blankets to Indians who had been driven from their homes.

The systematic destruction of Indian cultures ensured that there would be little left to posterity to evoke a vision of another American order. Early anthropologists like Morgan and Tylor were picking among the ruins of shattered cultures when they studied the Indians of late 19th-century North America, and twentieth-century ethnologists, well armed with metaphors and methods for appreciating the integrity of other cultures, find among the remnants of American Indian cultures nothing but alcoholism, poverty, degradation and forms of 'nativism' which speak more about how the dominant culture has defined the Indians than it does of their lost cultures.

The sort of library fieldwork practised by Axtell is the only means we have of approaching the many cultures which did not survive the European colonization of the world. Axtell contends that anthropologists have much to learn from the study of cultures destroyed in history (Nathan Wachtell's *The Vision of the Vanquished: the Spanish Conquest of Peru through Indian Eyes*, Harvester Press, 1977, is another important contribution to this endeavour). The synchronic approach to cultures fostered by fieldwork impels anthropologists to seek 'timeless explanations of cultural uniformities'. They fail to recognise that many characteristics of the cultures being studied are actually improvised strategies for maintaining some degree of cultural integrity in the face of the changes and challenges imported by invading cultures. Ethnohistory, the mating of anthropology and history, is meant to produce scholarly offspring who bear the diachronic dimensions of history and the synchronic sensitivity of anthropology, and *The European and the Indian* provides an excellent model for the discipline.

The book might have been improved by a chapter indicating the sources and evolution of the white myths of the 'Red Man' which finally dominated the American imagination, but such a criticism merely voices the reviewer's desire to see colonial attitudes clearly linked to the history of the Indians in the American west. The early stages of the struggle to convince settlers that peoples whose lives seemed emblems of the freedom and community they desired from their own were in fact 'living impediments to agricultural civilization' are well presented here. The next stage, that of impelling the settlers to uproot and destroy those impediments, is clearly prefigured in Axtell's provocative study.

GLENN BOWMAN

GARTH BAWDEN and GEOFFREY W. CONRAD, *The Andean Heritage: Masterpieces of Peruvian Art from the Collections of the Peabody Museum*, Cambridge, Mass.: Peabody Museum Press 1982. vi, 101 pp., Bibliography. £6.30.

This booklet is published as a catalogue of the exhibition of the pre-Columbian artefacts held in the Museum's new 'rotating gallery' (presumably used for temporary displays). The catalogue's declared aim is 'to provide the visitor with an essay on Peruvian culture history, an interpretation of this civilization's aesthetic accomplishments, and a descriptive section detailing the major Peruvian art styles. The reading of this work will encourage an appreciation of the objects exhibited within an anthropological context of Peruvian civilization.'

It would serve as a useful background handbook for the non-specialist who might visit the exhibition or otherwise need an overview of pre-Columbian Peruvian art styles. As a catalogue of an exhibition, however, it gives little idea of those 'masterpieces' displayed. The art styles are illustrated by only one or two rather poor-quality, unscaled photographs each, with only the cover in colour. Without a wider pictorial description of the styles and their manifestations, it is difficult to form a coherent idea of the culture behind the style. In any case, the trend of many museums to exhibit 'masterpieces' leaves numerous questions about a group's material culture - indeed, the general anthropological context - unanswered.

LYNNE WILLIAMSON

H. DAVID BRUMBLE III, *An Annotated Bibliography of American Indian and Eskimo Autobiographies*, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press 1981. 162 pp., Indexes. £6.60.

For a century and a half now, old country and North American literary interest in the New World native has been bifurcated into popular romance, be it fiction or non-fiction (e.g. James Fenimore Cooper's novel *The Last of the Mohicans*, 1826; Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem *The Song of Hiawatha*, 1855; the autobiography *Geronimo's Story of his Life*, 1906; etc.), and scholarly interest (e.g. L.H. Morgan's *League of the Ho-de-no-saunee or Iroquois*, 1851; Henry Schoolcraft's *The Indian Tribes of North America*, 1853; Franz Boas's works etc.) which has fostered Amerindian studies and their contributions to the social sciences.

When the popular romantic school considers non-fictive Amerindian people it has tended to concentrate on the native in the singular - Black Elk, Pocahantes, the bogus Gray Owl - the personalities of biography and autobiography; scholars have been inclined to specialize in the native in plurality, his societies and institutions - the Eskimo, the Navajo, the potlatch - the subjects of North American ethnography.

The biography and autobiography are clearly distinct literary forms, in literate societies; in primitive societies with an oral tradition, those societies which attract a large part of anthropology's attention, the biography and autobiography of the native personality are post-contact phenomena, and their distinctions are often ambiguous in the early stages of contact with literate societies.

H. David Brumble III, in *An Annotated Bibliography of American Indian and Eskimo Autobiographies*, has provided a retrospective overview of American native literature as it has developed in the form of autobiography. Brumble recognizes the often tangled relationship between native biography and autobiography, and that some native autobiographies, especially the earlier ones, have involved significant prompting and collaboration by various types of literary associates, but he focuses the bibliography on native accounts in the first person, 'for a narrative which has been cast as an autobiography is at least *claiming* to be told from the point of view of an Indian, at least *claiming* either to be written in an Indian's own idiom or in a translation [of it].... A biography makes no such claim.' (Brumble's emphases)

Brumble's bibliography contains a total of 577 entries, 112 of which are cross-references, so that 465 entries are actual annotations. About a quarter of the annotated autobiographies are of 'book length', leaving the majority to slimmer texts, chapters and articles, and only a few of the latter are as short as one page.

The bibliography is up-to-date, with its most recent subjects in press. With a few exceptions (Rev. William H. Pierce and Randal MacDonald, to name two autobiographers) the bibliography

is remarkably complete. Amerindian autobiographies preceding 1850 are rare - only a few are listed. Two of these are *Life of Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kiak-kiak, or Black Hawk*, 1833 (206 pp.), a description of the Black Hawk War, and the couplet of booklets on Okah Tubbee 1848 (43 & 85 pp.), concerning Tubbee's involvement in the black-and-red fringe of slavery in America.

The first theme to develop in Amerindian autobiography was conversion to Christianity. This is not surprising, for conversion to literacy and Christianity were symbiotic in the mission school setting. To some extent the church's early encouragement of native autobiography was self-serving, and this has occasioned some indifference to this literary form. However, these Christian conversion texts provide a corpus of information which may be helpful for questions about the Christian Amerindian autobiographer - his role as spokesman for his people; his compulsion to exercise new-found literacy; his self-image as scribe and prophet, etc. The earliest listed mission material is a collection of inward and outward correspondence (a deviation, albeit a desirable one, from autobiography) of five Mohegan (*sic*) Indians who were trained at Dartmouth, U.S.A., to minister to their own people: *The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock's Indians* (1763-66), edited by J. D. McCallum in 1932 (205 pp.). Once Rev. Apes' *A Son of the Forest. The Experience of William Apes, a Native of the Forest. Comprising a Notice of the Pequot Tribe of Indians. Written by Himself*, 1829 (216 pp.), and *Memoir of Catherine Brown, a Christian Indian of the Cherokee Nation*, 1832 (138 pp.), were published, the Christian conversion theme was established in Amerindian autobiography - over forty other such works followed.

The format of the annotations is best described by the bibliographer:

Where a bibliographic entry contains two names before the title, the first is the name of the Indian autobiographer, the second is the name of the collaborator-editor-amanuensis. The name in caps is the one under which the book or article is most likely to be listed in card catalogs and indexes. Where there is but one name, it is, then, the name of an autobiographer who had no collaborator. [Also included are the] ... autobiographer's birth date, date of autobiography's composition, autobiographer's tribal affiliation, an account of how the autobiography was composed, and some general remarks about the autobiography.

This is an effective convention. It is used consistently and maximizes the ease of reading any one annotation. *Black Elk Speaks* and two other autobiographies each receive the maximum of two pages of annotation. Most annotations are one or two paragraphs in length.

Brumble safeguards the reader from misleading publications, and he does this with admirable economy. The most famous would-be Indian was that mid-war conservationist and author Gray Owl

(Englishman Archie Belaney, as revealed posthumously), and Brumble describes him with 'See no. 10.', which leads to a disclaimer of Belaney within an annotation of the autobiography of Anahareo, a bona-fide Indian and Gray Owl's wife! Similarly, the 1881 text *Ploughed Under: A Story of an Indian Chief, Told by Himself* is dispensed with by 'Although this is sometimes listed as an autobiography, it is fiction, published anonymously by Harsha, who was not an Indian.'

The author strikes a useful balance between including all possible Amerindian autobiographies in the bibliography and being very discriminating in the individual annotations. This is the major strength of the bibliography, its best recommendation to the reader.

Personal naming in American native groups, with its multiplicity and other complications, presents obvious challenges to the bibliographer, but the author 'decided to list that name, or version of that name, given most prominence in the autobiography', and can be credited with consistently observing that convention, as well as with cross-referencing the prominent name with its alternatives (e.g. Crashing Thunder with Big Winnebago, Sam Blowsnake, Gertrude Bonnin & Sun Chief). When the autobiographer's name is sexually nondescript, it is qualified, e.g. 'Pretty-shield (F); Fine Day (M); Feather Earring (M)' etc. Brumble is not too fastidious in this gender game, for he chooses not to qualify Asa Daklugie (who is a male), while requalifying the Zuni sheepman 'FaSiSo47A' as a male: 'With thanks, this is a pseudonym (M)' (granted, not all readers will be kinship jargonists!).

The subject index includes 86 entries. A useful refinement of topic distinction is often reflected by separate entries of related subjects: e.g. shamanism, witchcraft; war, WWI, WWII; courtship, marriage, sexual experience; hunting, trapping, whaling. However, and unfortunately, while modern drugs and peyote (with two and fifteen citations respectively) are listed as subjects, alcohol is not. Adoption and epidemics are not listed as subjects, although they figure in the annotations. The number of autobiographies matched to a given subject in the index is a good if rough guide to predicting the utility of the bibliography to a particular scholar. Those subjects collated most frequently to autobiographies are conversion to Christianity, hunting, marriage, tribal history, schooling, shamanism, visions and war, each featured in at least 29 autobiographies, with schooling enjoying the maximum of 84 collations.

The scope of the index of tribes, with its 109 groups, is most general in listing the Eskimo and mixed-blood Métis as individual 'tribes', and specific enough to enter Gitstkan and Tsimshian, for example, separately and in favour of Northwest Coast. To qualify the book's title, it should be mentioned here that no groups south of the Mexican-American border are considered, Indians and Eskimos of Canada and the U.S.A. are treated equally as generic American natives. One will not find tribes cross-referenced to country, province, state or regional



group in the index, although these associations are made within the annotations.

Although there is an 'Index of Editors, Anthropologists, and Amanuenses', there is no index of autobiographers, and this seems peculiar for a bibliography of autobiographies. However, the reader can retrieve annotations by autobiographer's name once he is acquainted with the arrangement of the bibliographical entries. Each entry is numbered, and each opens with the autobiographer's name. The 577 entries are ordered alphabetically, according to these opening names. If the autobiographer possesses multiple personal names then each is entered separately, with minor names cross-referenced to the major one, and only the latter introduces a full annotation. There are 112 such cross-references, and 465 full annotations. This arrangement is used consistently, but retrieval would be easier if the present bibliography were complemented with an index of autobiographers' names. If austerity is the priority, and it seems to be with this text, then the purpose and space of the main body of the bibliography would be more prudently served with the 112 cross-references removed from it to a full index of autobiographers' names at the end of the text. Multiple personal naming would be more effectively displayed in an index format.

The bibliography presents a list of 56 references which is noteworthy to social scientists with interests in general and Amerindian autobiographical literature. The titles include: *Autobiographical Acts; Criteria for the Life History; The Nature of Biography; The Life History in Anthropological Science; Design and Truth in Autobiography; Spiritual Autobiography in Early America.*

A chronological listing of birth, death and publication dates with the autobiographer's name would be a useful addition to this book. Such a tabulation would clearly exhibit the development of Amerindian autobiography. With the book as it is, if one attempts to group autobiographies by historical period one is obliged to check the dates of each of the several hundred citations in turn.

Letters and journals are intimate first-person literary expressions akin to autobiography. Brumble includes a couple of publications of these forms in the bibliography - *The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock's Indians*, and *Memoir of Catherine Brown* which contains Brown's letters and diaries - but he seems to have included these by exception, and one wonders whether he actively sought out other variants of autobiography. Archival holdings of such unpublished manuscripts, such as those of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives, are available to scholarly research, but because Brumble has not described his methodology we do not know whether he consulted such North American sources.

Brumble incorporates in his bibliography a Danish Rasmussen text translated into English, a Polish publication translated into French, a German reference, and an unpublished Spanish manuscript held by an American library. Again, because he does not elaborate on his methodology, one wonders if his review of non-English publications is exhaustive. It is doubtful -

acknowledgements go exclusively to American libraries. The question would be a pedantic tangent if Amerindian literature were strictly English-American - but it is not. Karl May (1842-1912), with his Indian *Winnetou* and other *Reiseschilderungen* novels, amongst other authors, has placed the Amerindian firmly within German literature. Browsing in 'Red' Indian bookshops on the Continent (as I have found in Zürich and Frankfurt-am-Main) convinces one of the German literary interest in the American Indian and Eskimo. (The elaborate Indian clubs of Germany are a similar manifestation of the interest.) Some seventy volumes of 19th-century manuscripts, journalistic and autobiographical writing by a Canadian Indian, are held in a British archive. Understandably this collection is not cited in Brumble's bibliography, but one wonders, with the diversity of colonial interests (especially French and Spanish) that there were in the New World native, how many other Amerindian narrations remain preserved in Europe.

There were 208 bibliographies in *American Literature* twelve years ago (Widener 1970). Brumble's bibliography serves its respective and useful niche there. More indexing would increase the convenience of the Brumble reference; selected portraits would enhance it aesthetically; and it wants an explanation of methodology; but even at this, the text is an excellent social sciences reference.

Good bibliographies encourage their own up-dating and revision. It is hoped that librarians and archivists in Europe and North America will check their holdings for possible additions to Brumble's first edition, and make them known to the bibliographer.

GRANT THOMAS EDWARDS

KALERVO OBERG, *The Social Economy of the Tlingit Indians*, Seattle, etc.: University of Washington Press 1980 [Monograph 55 of the American Ethnological Society, Robert F. Spencer editor]. xvi, 138pp., Bibliography, Index, Illustrations. £4.50.

Although written as a doctoral thesis in 1933, this study of Tlingit social economy did not appear in published form until forty years later. This is a pity, as the book provides a very clear and concise account of the traditional economic life of a society whose characteristic features (e.g. the potlatch, the emphasis on rank and wealth, a system of slavery etc.) have attracted wide interest in anthropology. What is more, being written at a time when many works concerned with 'primitive economics' concentrated mainly on technology, techniques, and environmental influences, Oberg's book is commendable in that, as its title suggests, the emphasis is placed squarely upon the way economic action forms part of, and is given meaning by, a wider framework of social and ceremonial institutions and values. In effect, the study is an early example of structural-functional analysis - although, by contrast to some other exponents of the genre, the author, to his credit, takes pains to stress the potentially disruptive as well as the integrative consequences of forms of economic behaviour.

As a piece of ethnography, however, the book does have its shortcomings. Prominent among these is the fact that while the Tlingit socio-economic order is to a great extent governed by symmetry and a balanced, bilateral reciprocity, and while many examples are given of usages that involve reciprocal exchange between phratries (the most inclusive of Tlingit social divisions based on matrilineal descent), Oberg does not give sufficient account of the existence in traditional Tlingit society of three phratries. (The answer to this puzzle, it seems, may lie in the fact that most of the institutions he describes operate at the level of the village, where in most cases only two phratries are represented.) One would also have liked to have seen a rather clearer treatment of the topic of rank, a term which the author seems to employ to refer both to a system of named classes and a less formal grading of lineal segments within and between house-groups (largely independent, local divisions of matrilineal clans).

Nevertheless, taken as a whole the book presents a cogent and totalizing view of Tlingit socio-economy that encompasses ecological and technological factors, and changes brought about by contact with Europeans, as well as the inherently social and culturally specific mechanisms of production, consumption, and exchange. In this respect, then, not only will it be of interest to students of Northwest Coast cultures, but it could also serve as a useful introduction to the topic of economic anthropology.

NORMAN E. WHITTEN, JR. (ed.), *Cultural Transformations and Ethnicity in Modern Ecuador*, Urbana, etc.: University of Illinois Press 1981. xvii, 811 pp., Bibliographies, Index. £23.80.

Books are rarely definitive for very long, and those whose central theme is that of social, political, economic and cultural change cannot be, by definition. However, the volume under review here can aptly be described as comprehensive. It comprises 811 pages, divided into four parts or 27 chapters plus a Foreword and an Afterword, and written by 28 contributors. There is probably not much more to be said just for the moment about cultural transformations and ethnicity in modern Ecuador. Furthermore, the title means what it says when it uses the word 'modern'. All the contributions appear to have been written between the end of 1977 and early 1981. It is rare for collections with a quarter the number of contributors to get put together that quickly. Congratulations for this are clearly due to the energy of the editor, Norman Whitten, who is also responsible for the Foreword and Afterword as well as a substantial chapter in the main body of the work. It is also an achievement to have brought together a set of contributions of such uniformly high standard.

When dealing with a volume of these proportions a reviewer risks writing little more than an extended contents page if he tries to mention all the authors and topics. In this case the division of the book into parts allows a way out of this difficulty. The four parts of which the book is composed show a progression from the more general to the more specific. Part I, entitled 'Theoretical and critical considerations', consists of four papers in which basic themes relating to ethnicity and change in Ecuadorean society are introduced. Part II, 'Infrastructure and socio-economic processes', looks in rather more detail at the material base of the society and the various processes at work in it. For example, Susan Scrimshaw describes how migrants from different parts of rural Ecuador to Guayaquil adapt past practices related to family size to their new urban setting. Or, Theodore Macdonald examines how Lowland Quichua have adopted cattle ranching as a strategy by which to retain their land in the face of legislation that threatened ownership. Parts III and IV are concerned with cultural transformation and adaptation in the Sierra and Litoral, and in the Oriente, respectively. The individual chapters consist of detailed studies of particular cases whether these be the weavers of Otavalo or Canelos Quichua ceramics.

The volume is explicitly built round what the editor refers to as 'critical anthropology', which he defines as commenting

meaningfully on the consequences of nation-state expansion and consolidation for the peoples constituted within its sphere of influence and control. It addresses recognized issues of contemporary relevance for the nation-state or any of its subject peoples. But it also delves into unrecognized or seemingly irrelevant issues to explicate

relationships not apparent in the usual process of government planning and development (p. 22).

This last is only attainable through the ethnographic endeavour, and it provides admirable justification for the study of 'exotica' with which anthropologists are so often accused of being preoccupied. An example of this is Frank Salomon's analysis of *yumbo* dancing in which he demonstrates that this age-old ritual is concerned with the paradox at the root of Ecuadorean ethnicity and nationalism. The national planner seeks to mould together the ethnic diversity in order to make it fit his preconceived, theoretical model of national unity. On the other hand, the folk model derives its notion of unity from the lived experience of diversity.

The chapters that caught my attention (for the simple reason that their subject-matter is closest to my own interests and without any suggestion that they are better or worse than any others in the collection) concern the changes that the Shuar and Achuar (Jívaroan people), the Wao (popularly known as the Auca), and the Siona-Secoya are undergoing. Some of the parallels between the experiences of these Indians at the hands of missionaries and those of the Trio in Surinam (aspects of which I described in *JASO*, Vol. XII, no. 1 (1981)) are quite striking. For example, James Yost, writing of the Wao, states 'the concepts of Christ and God were introduced and accepted as spirit beings who are more powerful than the evil spirits who can be sent to cause harm' (p. 695). Anne-Christine Taylor, referring to the Achuar, comments that 'certain Protestant evangelist notions closely tally with native conceptions' (p. 670). However, what differentiates the context of evangelisation here from that of the Trio case is its close involvement in the economic sphere. This is not surprising given the traditional association of shamanism with commercial trading routes within the Ecuadorean Amazon, and, as Taylor remarks, 'the religious practices of the missionaries are viewed by the Achuar in the same light as they view their own symbolic practices in the production of material values' (p. 672). What is surprising is the absence of reference to the influence of medical aid in the conversion process. For the Trio, it was the results of medical work, and not the provision of material goods, that demonstrated the superior power of the missionaries' supernatural agents.

There are a hundred other themes that deserve attention and there is something here to interest most readers, particularly those from Ecuador. If Ecuador is a country which has consistently understood the international nature of scholarship, through such volumes as this it reaps the value of that understanding. It is good that the Introduction and Part I are to be published in Spanish. The rest of it deserves to be as well.

PETER RIVIERE

DOUGLAS S. BUTTERWORTH, *The People of Buena Ventura: Relocation of Slum Dwellers in Postrevolutionary Cuba*, Urbana etc.: University of Illinois Press 1980. xxix, 143 pp., Bibliography, Index. £9.00.

NANCIE L. SOLIEN GONZALEZ, *Black Carib Household Structure: A Study of Migration and Modernization*, Seattle and London: University of Washington Press 1980 [The American Ethnological Society, ed. Robert F. Spencer, Monograph 48]. xx, 142 pp., Bibliography, Index, Illustrations. £4.50 (Paper).

It was Oscar Lewis who noted that there appears to be a 'culture of poverty' common to those sections of populations living on the periphery of 'modern' society in nations all over the world (*A Study of a Slum Culture* New York 1968). The economic marginality of these sections in such societies is accompanied by their non-participation in the social and political life of the nation. They are sub-cultures within these societies and the culture of the group is passed from generation to generation without any significant importations from outside. Lewis can be accredited with popularising one view in a debate which has come to figure as one of the central problems for social anthropologists working in Central America and the Caribbean: to what extent should the way of life of those people standing in a direct relationship, yet marginal social position, to national economies be understood as systematically different from the dominant way of life? Have they a culture different from that possessed by the rest of society, as Lewis would suggest, or is their way of life merely an adaptation to the dominant culture whose values the people share although they are unable to act in accordance with these values because of the prevailing socio-economic climate? Such questions are fundamental to any research in Central America and the Caribbean.

Butterworth is writing of life among a section of the urban poor in Buena Ventura, a new housing project in Havana, Cuba - after the popularisation of Lewis' ideas - whereas Gonzalez describes the social organisation of the Black Carib population in a rural settlement in Guatemala before this thesis was formulated. Indeed Butterworth's study of Buena Ventura was a part of a project set up by Oscar Lewis in 1969-70, and his research design was formulated with the 'culture of poverty' thesis in mind. However when he comes to present his data he does not do so within this conceptual framework, being aware of its shortcomings. He discusses these in his Introduction but abandons any attempt to contribute to the continuing debate, contenting himself with 'a description, unique of its kind, of people living in a strange new environment and their reaction to it a decade after a monumental social and political upheaval'. The writer is able to avoid becoming embroiled in this polemic only because of the rare historical conditions which govern his chosen area of study. He is able to compare the life of the urban poor under a

capitalist regime with their life under socialism. Describing a post-revolutionary housing project, he considers the social, political and economic aspects of life which he observes and compares them with life in the urban slum previously inhabited by the majority of this population - a picture created out of the reports of the residents themselves. Although there has clearly been an improvement in the material conditions of life Butterworth shows that rapid changes in the economic and social order are not, in this instance, matched by rapid changes in behaviour. Traditional ways of acting, governed by the normative expectations of the people, endure despite changes in the dominant value system. On the other hand,

Even if people's behaviour did not change profoundly... they had to find new explanations to justify their behaviour, their attitudes towards others, and their relation to the larger society.

The delicate nature of the interaction of societal values with group norms is brought out in Butterworth's ethnography and makes up, in part, for the lack of analysis.

What is clear throughout his presentation is that the inhabitants of the housing project have brought with them a reputation for being slum dwellers and that they are very much regarded as the 'people down below' by their immediate neighbours. In fact Butterworth's contribution is to social policy rather than to social anthropology when he notes that while the slum dwellers felt a great sense of belonging, the inhabitants of the housing project 'suffered a double alienation from their neighbours and from larger society'. The Cuban government mistakenly rehoused the slum dwellers *en masse* in a housing estate lacking adequate facilities and physically segregated from a nearby residential area populated by more 'middle-class' people. He suggests that a mixing of former slum dwellers and former middle-class residents might have been more appropriate given the ideals of the revolution, but he finishes on a pessimistic note, doubting that this would have been any more successful under prevailing circumstances.

Gonzalez' book is based on a doctoral thesis written over twenty years ago, although valuable ideas from it appeared in article form prior to the book's first edition in 1969. The book remains true to the original thesis form. The author includes a review of more recent material in a Preface but she does not feel that subsequent publications warrant her modifying her original ideas.

Gonzalez is concerned with the consanguineal household. Previous studies, particularly in the Caribbean, have revealed communities with a high incidence of female-headed households (where authority is vested in women) accompanied by a mating pattern with a low incidence of marriage. Of these instances of female-headed households, the consanguineal household is by far the most common. In the consanguineal household all members are

related through a series of consanguineal ties, and no two members are bound together in an affinal relationship. It is always one of a series of household forms, each identified by the composition of the domestic group, particularly by the relationship between adult males and adult females. The household forms range from the nuclear family type of unit where the adult male and female are affines, to the consanguineal household where, if the adult male is present at all, he is related to the adult female cognatically. Gonzalez feels that the consanguineal household is the only one which is 'somewhat unusual', and she proceeds to provide us with an explanation for its existence.

First she hypothesises that the consanguineal household is an alternative type of domestic grouping that develops during the acculturation of populations lacking any long-standing cultural tradition to that which obtains in industrial society, where the usual domestic group is the nuclear family under the headship and hence authority of the adult male in the role of husband and father. She terms these societies 'neoteric' and distinguishes them from other 'traditional' societies which have '*structural self-sufficiency*'. Secondly she tests her hypothesis on a section of the Black Carib population living in Livingstone, a rural settlement in Guatamala. A historical account of the economic development of the Black Carib population is provided as background to a detailed description of the social organisation of these people. She finds that the primary mechanism of Westernisation is the recurrent migratory wage-labour of males for low remuneration. Finally a conceptual framework around the original hypothesis is constructed and this allows for comparison of the Black Carib household with households in other ethnographic areas affected by similar socio-economic conditions. Gonzalez recognises that communities composed exclusively of consanguineal households are nowhere to be found in the contemporary world but she suggests that the consanguineal household is prominent in those 'neoteric' societies characterised by male migrant wage-labour, with a resulting imbalance in the sex ratio.

Gonzalez does not acknowledge the 'culture of poverty' thesis but she is very much in its mould. The consanguineal household is seen as a response to the continuing situation of the economic marginality of the Black Carib in Livingstone, as elsewhere in Guatemala, and she seeks to find other examples of the phenomenon in different ethnographic areas.

I am using the word "type" in a technical sense [Gonzalez writes] much as it has been used by some archaeologists in referring to culture types.... That is a distinctive association or clustering of certain social or cultural forms. Ethnographically, a type is identifiable in particular time and space, as when I speak of Black Carib household organisation in 1956. Theoretically, however, a type may be said to recur whenever the necessary preconditions are present.



In her view the consanguineal household has evolved as a result of the vagaries of an economic system based on capitalism. It is a different type of household from that characteristic of other sections of the population where the conditions outlined above are not operative.

While Gonzalez' explanation is extremely plausible when applied to the Black Carib population of Guatemala, it becomes less so when applied to the population in certain other areas which exhibit a high incidence of the consanguineal 'type' household; Butterworth's Cuba for example. Butterworth notes that consanguineal ties were often strong in Buena Ventura. In fact 25 out of 94 households in the housing project were consanguineal according to Gonzalez' definition. This is somewhat over 25% as compared with 45% in Livingstone. While Cuba is a 'neoteric' society, the fact that females outnumber males 212 to 206 is hardly significant, especially as there is a fairly equal distribution of males to females throughout the age-range. What is more the new housing project is not characterised by migratory male labour. It appears that the occurrence of the consanguineal household in post-revolutionary Cuba does not conform to Gonzalez' model. In defence of her model Gonzalez might claim that post-revolutionary Cuba is moving from a situation of the economic marginality of the male in the lower sections of its population towards providing equal work opportunities for all sections of society, and thus the consanguineal household is becoming less common. We cannot tell; for Butterworth is unable to provide figures for household types in the slum. What we do know is that despite changes in external conditions there were no automatic changes in ways of behaving because traditional expectations remained, particularly as regards family life. While Gonzalez provides a satisfactory explanation for the consanguineal household in Livingstone this does not adequately explain the occurrence of the consanguineal household world-wide.

I do not agree with Gonzalez that the consanguineal household should be seen as representative of a *type* of domestic grouping which stands as an alternative to that found among other sections of the same society. Precisely the problem with Gonzalez' work is that society is viewed as constituted by a population of interacting individuals who share common beliefs and attitudes (culture) and participate in common institutions (ways of thinking, feeling and acting, roles, relationships, customs, practices etc.). Hence she talks of 'Black Carib society' and the consanguineal system that is characteristic of it. However societies in Central America and the Caribbean are not 'societies' in this sense. A view of society as a social formation by virtue of the fact that its members participate in the same system of production - a view that does not require actor consensus as a prerequisite of analysis - is much better suited to Central America and the Caribbean. The consanguineal household would thus be seen for what it is, an element of the social organisation of these people; for what is clear from both Butterworth's and Gonzalez' reports is that the household of husband, wife and

children is the ideal among these populations no matter what the empirical incidence of the various household types.

This criticism aside, Gonzalez' book, like Butterworth's, provides material of value to the anthropologist. Butterworth's new work provides an insight into a historically-specific situation of dramatic social change. He makes no claim for the universality of his conclusions and, within the limits he sets himself, provides a rounded description of urban life in Cuba under greatly differing social conditions. Gonzalez' re-issued work is stimulating, not only for its treatment of an interesting social phenomenon, but also as an example of fieldwork in an era which has proved a watershed for Caribbean social anthropology. The only pity is that her work did not appear in its full form until 1969 for it deserves a place alongside the pioneering work of social anthropologists like Raymond Smith and Edith Clarke. The fact that its first publication in paperback comes in 1980 testifies to the continued importance of her work and the renewed interest in the consanguineal household.

PHIL HARDING

ANTHONY SEEGER, *Nature and Society in Central Brazil: The Suyá Indians of Mato Grosso*, Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press 1981. ix, 267 pp., References, Index. £16.50.

For Anthony Seeger, the study of lowland South American Indians offers specific analytic tools to anthropology in general. The greater attention paid to ideas of what is social and proper, distinctive throughout much of the corpus of South American ethnography, can enrich traditionally 'empirical' approaches to social organisation. Elsewhere, for example, kinship structures have reflected principles of land and resource allocation, but by Seeger's account, central Brazilian kinship structures reveal an ideological basis closely tied to

cosmological principles. However, as Seeger's work neglects the basic ethnographic details of Suyá practical activity it fails to address this point. As an account of a Gê cosmology, it is worthwhile.

In the Suyá case, a conflict between 'human' and 'animal' (interpreted here as between 'society' and 'nature') is the most general and basic classifying principle. Additionally, particulars of the genesis and use of the body and of the development of the social persona explain social form insofar as these details can constitute a unified model of Suyá social organisation.

To his credit, Seeger presents a cohesive and systematic guide to Suyá conceptions of economic and political life. What this study needs, though, is a clear understanding and a concise statement of the impellent natural/social conflict, the dialectic behind the details. Lacking this, the work suffers from a confusion of principle and manifestation, a confusion which is itself manifested in a conflicting, mixed bag of explanatory tactics. Thus, curiously, Seeger's extended discussion of odour classification, with its well developed references to human social classification, is ambiguous in wording, and suggests simultaneously that taxonomy both reflects and underlies social morphology. 'Thus men transform nature, but nature also transforms society' writes Seeger, neglecting the greater subtlety of his own *caveat* that nature (and here odour) is socially constructed.

This problem emerges again in Seeger's treatment of leaders, ritual specialists, and witches, whom he attempts to locate in a scheme of spatial, functional, spiritual and sensuous components. According to Seeger's description, political leaders are central, belligerent, pungent, and articulate. They distribute goods and co-ordinate secular activities. By contrast, odourless ritual specialists are spatial butterflies who co-ordinate ritual activity and orate centrally, but whose spirits leave them and live outside the social village domain. Witches, the most easily classified group, are peripheral, anti-social, and responsible for misfortune, and they have an exaggerated and animal-like visual acuity.

When the three roles are reconciled within one framework, the nebulous nature/society 'principle' cannot explain their relative importance in terms of local ideas. For example, odour would indicate that ritual specialists are more 'social' than the others, but spatially they are more 'natural'. To solve this conundrum, one might rank the contexts in which certain properties are manipulated, or perhaps assert different values for the different social idioms. But Seeger, who does neither, gives us no comprehensive system within which to understand and evaluate different kinds of human activity.

This theoretical shortcoming, coupled with its ethnographic lacunae, prevents *Nature and Society* from advancing structural explanation of Gê political life. However, despite its weaknesses, this study is highly recommended for its interesting presentation of Suya cosmology, and for keeping important issues at the centre of anthropological concern.

N.E. FRIED

ARTURO WARMAN, *"We Come to Object": The Peasants of Morelos and the National State* (translation by Stephen K. Ault), Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press 1980. viii, 313 pp., Maps, Bibliography. £12.00.

The crucial role in the Mexican Revolution of the peasants of Morelos state and how the struggle affected their way of life are the basic themes of this work. Warman approaches the subject with the intimate feeling for and knowledge of the setting, the people and the institutions that only a national writer can have. The author succeeds superbly in doing what many anthropologists say they do and which few foreigners can actually do, that is he places the study firmly in its context within the national culture and relates local changes to those occurring in the nation as a whole. Also, Warman is at greater liberty to be critical, at times to the point of being ironic and polemical, of the changes and injustices that took place, and is able to do this without provoking resentment on the part of other Mexican intellectuals.

The fact that the author is a Latin American anthropologist means that this work has a strong historical quality to it; so much so, that Warman feels it necessary to defend himself in the Introduction by demonstrating that his work is really anthropology and neither history, descriptive monograph nor heroic romance.

We anthropologists explain something as sonorous and serious as class struggle with data like the increase in the price of soap. The people who receive us buy less in order to wash the same clothing, which remains clean but a little less white, a bit soiled. To go on about whiteness and cleanliness is not dramatic, but how important it is!

This example, which involves a seemingly mundane article, is the first indication of how detailed the book becomes, especially when treating technological and socio-economic change. And, it is exactly by way of this wealth of detail that the author wishes to demonstrate the unique quality of the Revolution in the South of Mexico, how the Zapata movement was different from peasant uprisings elsewhere in Mexico and the world. The leaders, local people themselves, sincerely attempted to fulfil peasant demands as a long-term goal. They took novel measures to avoid guerrilla chiefs turning into corrupt *caudillos* as well as to keep professional revolutionaries and romantics of urban origin at arms length. This was important to prevent the movement from degenerating into banditry or being used by ambitious outsiders as a step in the direction of goals other than those desired by the people who were doing the hard work of fighting. The peasants had no lofty visions of state-directed development. They simply wanted land and to get the corrupt, oppressive government off their backs. They provided the force that helped to win the war but they did not possess the requirements, i.e. formal education and knowledge of bureaucratic niceties, to get their way in the political manoeuvring that followed. Land distribution took place early and extensively in Morelos state but merely as a measure to quiet the unrest there, so that the government could get on with the business of industrialisation.

Excluding the Introduction and Conclusion, the book can be divided into three parts, each representing a different historical phase: the formative period, the revolutionary period and the modern period. Each part is equal in size and in importance to the principal theme, that of the survival of the peasants as a social type despite all that was done to try to change them. The story is one of their persistence while confronted first, with the expansion of the colonial and capitalist sugar mill *hacienda*, then the brutal repression of their movement by the State in the hands of the *hacienda* owners and later by the urban revolutionary elite, and finally the erosion of their income by decades of discriminating inflation and price control by which they were forced to finance the industrial development of Mexico.

In the first part of the book, detailed historical material is given on the social and economic changes from the Conquest up to the eve of the Revolution in 1910. While the latter part of this is necessary in order to show the causes of the peasant rebellion, one wonders perhaps whether so much description from the early history is really required even if it does relate to the survival theme.

The chapters on the Revolution and its aftermath, from 1910 to 1940, are the core of the work and portray, event by event, the course of the campaigns against the government and the politics of betrayal by which the urban forces rearranged themselves to hand over control from power group to power group without finally giving in fully to peasant demands. To be sure,

the *hacienda* lands, at least in Morelos state, were distributed, which gave the peasants a new lease of life, but a new group of local exploiters moved in to occupy the vacuum left by the fall of the sugar mills. These individuals had not fought in the Revolution but, together with the city industrialists, they were those who most profited from the rise of the economic and bureaucratic power of the centralized Revolutionary government. The industrialisation policies of the latter were to become the chief bane in the life of the rural folk because a greater surplus on their part was demanded. In textbook fashion, it was expected that the agricultural sector would export to pay for capital importations and would produce cheap staples for the industrialising cities. A number of programmes were implemented to transform the *campesinos* into *los farmers mexicanos*, to discourage them from their near total reliance on subsistence maize cropping and to induce them to grow other commercial crops for the cities.

The inclusion of the third part, entitled Recent Years, is more of a postscript as far as the Revolution is concerned. However, it is absorbing material for those who are interested in modern change in Latin America. For specialists in this region, familiar themes concerning the economic and cultural integration of peasants into a larger national society in the throes of industrialisation are encountered. A number of subjects are well treated, such as how peasants came to cope with inflation, rising population pressure on the land, the emergence of new needs for manufactured goods and the discontinuance of local crafts, increasing commercial farm production for distant markets involving great risks, rural exodus and the growth of towns and cities based on the expansion of commerce, the civil service and in general the valuation of all that is urban.

Missing, however, in the last part, and indeed throughout the book, is greater detail of social and religious changes in lifestyle. The author provides a wealth of information on technological and economic change and a thorough analysis of the ideology of the ruling groups of the country but a well-rounded presentation of the lifestyle of the people of Morelos is lacking. More undramatic material about whiteness and cleanliness might have been included.

Apart from this reservation, Warman's work is a rich source of information on rural change in Mexico and will appeal to specialists of Latin America. Also, the book is required reading for scholars interested in peasant revolutions.

SCOTT WILLIAM HOEFLE

## BOOK REVIEWS

MICHAEL ARIS and AUNG SAN SUU KYI (eds.), *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson*, Warminster: Aris and Phillips 1980 [Proceedings of the International Seminar on Tibetan Studies, Oxford 1979]. xx, 348 pp., Illustrations, figures. £12.00 (Paper).

Ever since Tibet lost its independence in 1959 and thousands of Tibetans fled to India, and in smaller numbers to Nepal and Bhutan, Tibetan studies entered a new phase. In the past, when only a few people were allowed to visit Tibet, the pioneering work on Tibetan religion and history had been done by a small group of men who had a personal and academic interest in studying Tibetan culture. Apart from them, there were individuals who visited Tibet and wrote their travelogues. After 1959 a new impetus to Tibetan studies was given by two main circumstantial factors. One was the relatively easy access to Tibetan people who lived in different refugee settlements, and the other was the publication of Tibetan books on a large scale. Nowadays, mainly due to the efforts of the Tibetans in exile and the American mission in Delhi of the Library of Congress, we possess practically the whole Tibetan literary lore. Most of the Tibetan refugee settlements in India have monasteries and the daily life in them is almost a replica of life as it was in Tibet. Of course, changes have taken place, but for the time being the style of life is Tibetan. Those who wish to work with Tibetan communities or with learned monks can always find a place or person to work with. The Tibetans in exile also make an effort to preserve and to make known their culture and religion to the outside world on which they suddenly depend so much.

The number of people interested in Tibet and Tibetan studies has multiplied several times, though the prospects of obtaining university posts have decreased due to the general economic recession. Despite this sad situation, especially in Britain, many young Tibetologists pursue their work. In 1977 a small group of young Tibetologists gathered in Zürich to meet their colleagues and to exchange experiences of Tibetan studies. The proceedings of that seminar were published in 1978 (*Tibetan Studies*, edited by Martin Brauen and Per Kvaerne, published by Völkerkundemuseum in Zürich). The next seminar, a direct sequel to the Zürich gathering, was convened at Oxford in 1979. This time it was decided to invite Tibetan scholars of all generations. Some seventy scholars from twelve different countries gathered for one week in July at St. John's College. Professor David Snellgrove acted as the chairman and Michael Aris as the convenor of the seminar.

The papers, of which forty-nine are included in the volume under review, were delivered during the nine sessions arranged according to related subjects, the most general division being

that of papers which referred to inner Tibet and papers referring to the Tibetan borderlands. The papers reproduced in the volume are arranged according to the alphabetical order of the contributors and the structuring of related papers no longer applies. For the purpose of this review, I will group them as follows: Religion and Philosophy; History and Politics; Arts and Crafts; Linguistics and Miscellaneous; and Anthropology.

There are over a dozen contributions on religion and philosophy. The most original and interesting ones are those of S. Karmay on the ordinance of *lHa Bla-ma Ye-shes-'od*, the king of *Pu-hrangs*, sent to the Tibetan tantric practitioners to warn them of various tantric abuses; M. Kapstein's on the *Shangs-pa bKa'-brgyud*, a little-known and yet important religious tradition whose teachings centred around the doctrines of Niguma; P. Berglie's on Mount Targo and Lake Gangra, two places of pilgrimage for the *dpa'-bo*, spirit-mediums whose chief activity was to cure illnesses. Two other contributions which merit mentioning here are Lokesh Chandra's provocative reinterpretation of *Oḍḍiyāna* and P. Williams' clear exposition of conventional truth (*kun-rdzob bden-pa*) according to *Tsong-kha-pa*. Other papers on religion and philosophy such as for example Nathan Katz's discussion of a tantric confessional text or Karen Lang's on *Āryadeva's* exposition of the *Bodhisattva* Career contain good and valid materials but lack originality mainly because a lot of the same or similar materials can be found in many books already published in the West.

The only contribution on the Bonpo religion is Per Kvaerna's preliminary study of Chapter VI of the *gZer-mig*, a two volume biography of *gShen-rab*, the founder of *Bon* religion. The Bonpos in exile have published a large portion of their religious books which are now available to Western scholars. Their religion and traditions require urgent study. It is perhaps correct from an academic view-point to purport that *Bon* religion is a somewhat incongruous form of Tibetan Buddhism. However, it must be accepted and admitted that the Bonpos do possess a large literary lore and traditions of their own which form one unique phenomenon which survived in Tibet despite the animosity of Tibetan Buddhist religious orders and rulers.

The papers on history and politics are perhaps the most original and of great interest. Hugh Richardson, in whose honour the proceedings of the Seminar were published, gives a succinct and vivid description of the *Rva-sgreng* Conspiracy of 1947 which took place during his stay in Tibet. Here we have a good example of the complexities and intrigues that went on in Tibetan politics. Other original and good papers are by M. Aris on the very little known *Mon-yul* Corridor, by L. Petech on the Mongol census in Tibet in 1268, and by J. Kolmaš on the negotiations which took place in the twenties of this century between the British in India and the Tibetans concerning the Indo-Tibetan frontiers. Two other contributions of good quality are by G. Uray on *khrom* - administrative units in Tibet in the 7th-9th centuries - and by C. Beckwith on the expansion and wars of the Tibetan Empire during the same period.

Many books have been published on Tibetan art but on the



whole much remains to be done, in particular, on different artistic schools in Tibet and the classification of deities belonging to various tantric cycles and traditions. A complete study of different *bris-yig* (manuals for painting) and regional artistic traditions would yield the long awaited materials for dating and distinguishing artistic styles. Despite a great interest in Tibetan art, a lot of the work of many art historians is based merely on guesswork. Kathleen Peterson's paper on Tibetan iconometry is an interesting one but it is yet another repetition of what is already known. The description of casting bells by V. and N. Rong is of value for it puts on record a very little known and endangered craft known only in some parts of Tibet.

Not much has been known about Tibetan music in the past. At present there are several people who pursue research in this field. Contributions by M. Helffer on the musical notations of the hymn *rTsa-brgyud-ma* and R. Conzio's on the method of playing the drum and cymbals among the *Sakyas*, both very good, are just two samples of the progress that has been made in sorting out musical notations and methods of performance. Also more and more interest is being taken in Tibetan medicine. E. Finckh's description of the theory and practice of Tibetan medicine gives a general but quite comprehensive outline of this discipline.

The discipline of Tibetan linguistics is relatively well established but by no means fully developed. A number of detailed studies were published but much remains to be done, especially about different Tibetan dialects. In England a good number of short studies have been written on the subject by Dr. K. Sprigg and Professor W. Simon, mainly in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London. Those interested in linguistics will find in the volume at least two good papers, one short one by P. Denwood on Ladakhi language, and one by N. Narkyid on the gender markers in Tibetan morphology.

Some of the contributions at the Seminar cannot be clearly classified under any concrete heading mainly because they relate to two or more subjects at once. I shall consider them under the heading of miscellaneous papers. A. Blondeau's excellent analysis and classification of *Padmasambhava's* biographies according to Tibetan sources adds a new dimension to the study of this mysterious personality. C. Corlin's paper on the house of *rGyal-thang* is quite fascinating. It shows how the symbolism of house structure can be interpreted according to folk religion and its ritual significance. There is one excellent contribution on the development of Tibetan currency by N. Rhodes. M. Broido's exegetical contribution on the term *dingos-po'i gnas-lugs* and Helmut Eimer's on the Second *A-kyä* are two examples of detailed scholarly work full of information but yet unfortunately uninteresting to read. One contribution which is evidently missing is one on Tibetan astrology; indeed very little is available in English on this fascinating subject.

There are some half a dozen contributions which fall within the category of Tibetan anthropology. Perhaps the most original

paper in terms of approach is the one by N. Allen on the comparative mythology of the 'Bodic speakers'. In his paper he puts forward a theory and gives examples of how one could examine the relationship of different 'Bodic' speaking groups, in and around Nepal, to the mainstream of Tibetan culture. There is no doubt that much light can be thrown on primitive Tibetan culture and religion by studying peoples who relate to the Tibetans but do not possess their literary heritage of Indian Buddhist origin. For example, in some portions of Tibetan religious literature, especially those parts relating to rituals (e.g. *gto*) and to indigenous Tibetan deities, there are a good number of ancient elements garbed in Buddhist terms. To recapture the originality of such elements a study of more primitive groups would certainly yield materials for their understanding.

S. Macdonald's scholarly paper on the creative dismemberment among the Tamang and Sherpas of Nepal is a good example of how an anthropologist can use written works. Two other papers, one by G. Clarke on the lamas of *Yolmo* and one by B. Aziz on *Pha-dam-pa Sangs-rgyas* provide us with good anthropological information seldom collected by classical Tibetan scholars.

Anthropological studies published so far (for the review of some of them see *JASO*, Vol. XI, no. 2, 1980) are a substantial contribution to the understanding of Tibetan culture. However, some of them do not inspire much confidence not only in Tibetan scholars in general but Tibetan anthropologists in particular (see for example criticism of Sherry Ortner's *Sherpas through their rituals* in *JASO*, *ibid.*, pp. 111ff). Dealing with Tibetan culture is a complicated matter. Apart from the living tradition of ancient beliefs and legends, which have been transmitted orally, Tibetans possess a vast literary lore dealing with practically all aspects of Tibetan culture and society. When doing fieldwork, and in particular at the time of evaluating the material, it is imperative for an anthropologist to refer to at least some literary sources and to be able to relate his/her findings, and interpret them in the wider context of the Tibetan world. Ever since the publications of *The Sherpas of Nepal* in 1964, Tibetan anthropology seems to have been somewhat seriously challenged and attacked by other Tibetan scholars (see for example a review by D. Snellgrove in *Central Asiatic Journal*, Vol. XI, 1966, pp. 199-219). This situation is changing since more and more anthropologists interested in working on subjects related to Tibet, possess a working knowledge of the Tibetan language and a wider knowledge of Tibetan culture.

To assess the situation of Tibetan studies on the basis of the contributions in this volume it can be asserted that while in the past the main interest centred almost exclusively on history and religion, nowadays we have scholars and amateur enthusiasts who pursue work in almost every field of Tibetan studies. More and more new publications appear from the most unexpected parts of the world. Furthermore, it is no longer a question of Westerners working alone. There are a number of Tibetans who live and work in Western universities and institutions, and contribute, in

Western languages, to the understanding of Tibetan culture.

The editors Michael Aris and his wife Aung San Suu Kyi must have worked very hard, for the volume is practically free of editorial mistakes. But it is quite difficult to be perfect in such a complex publication. Just two examples of minor errors: there is no note to the asterisk on page 301; is our Tibetan colleague called Pangling (as in the table of contents) or Panglung (as in the notes on the contributors on page 346)?

The publishers have produced a good example of an occasional publication. However, since the publication was subsidised and the Proceedings of the Seminar were dedicated to Hugh Richardson, the last of a distinguished series of foreigners who visited Tibet before it was taken over by the Chinese in 1959 (the volume contains his appreciation by D. Snellgrove and a complete bibliography), one would expect a rather better and more elegant publication; at least a hard bound one.

TADEUSZ SKORUPSKI

JAMES CLIFFORD, *Person and Myth: Maurice Leenhardt in the Melanesian World*, Berkeley etc.: University of California Press 1982. xi, 256pp., Bibliography, Index. £21.50.

Maurice Leenhardt is the sort of man who diminishes us all. In his life he was husband, father, missionary, ethnologist; twenty-three years in New Caledonia with the *Canaques*; persistent activist, though contained within colonialism, against the wilder (and the more subtle) outrages committed by colonialists; theoretician of 'mission science'; writer of several distinguished monographs ('Dig into [Leenhardt's] dictionary,' Mauss instructed his students; 'he transports you into another world.');

author of that 'resurrected' (did it ever die?) anthropology *Do Kamo: Person and Myth in the Melanesian World* (English translation Chicago 1979). It's a good story and Clifford tells it well.

The biography opens in the last decades of the nineteenth century with an account of Leenhardt's frustrated education and of the influence of his father, both pastoral teacher and eminent geologist (a common saying of his: 'Facts are a Word of God') who inculcated his students with habits of close observation and direct experimentation. Later chapters give us Leenhardt the young evangelist based in the interior of New Caledonia trying to make friends, trying to learn the vernacular, trying to convert *Canaques*, trying to mould Christianity into a Melanesian shape, trying to comprehend exactly what it was he was doing. Branded as an *indigèneophile* by the expatriate administrators and

capitalistic planters with whom he jousts, Leenhardt attempted to mediate between two worlds, between custom and Christianity, between communalism and colonialism, between native rebels and foreign repressors. Back in France, excluded from missionary boards by diffident little men scared of a 'radical', he held the chair at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes, successor to Mauss and predecessor of Lévi-Strauss.

But it is in Part Two of the biography that the meat of Leenhardt's ideas, cured by Clifford, appears. Leenhardt sought open-ended dialogue, a continuing process of mutual interpretation by both 'informant' and 'interviewer' paced to Melanesian rhythms. Rather than indulge in the satisfaction granted by self-validating methodologies, Leenhardt emphasized reciprocal interaction and cultural expressivity. Religion, for instance, 'was not a closed "system" of beliefs or symbols but an open field of expressions in partial *ad hoc* formulation.' Innovation was not a structural embarrassment, it was integral. Mixing phenomenology with sociology, Leenhardt did not banish emotion to the effective end of a causal relationship, but made it an essential component of mythic participation: the fundament of his concept of *personage*. As Clifford summarises it,

Myth is a valid mode of present knowledge fixed and articulated by a "socio-mythic landscape". Place here assumes a density inaccessible to any map, a superimposition of cultural, social, ecological, and cosmological realities. Orienting, indeed constituting the person, this complex spatial locus is not grasped in the mode of narrative closure by a centred, perceiving subject. Rather, the person "lives" a discontinuous series of socio-mythic times and spaces - less as a distinct character than as an ensemble of relationships.

Clifford writes with thought, sensitivity, and clarity. There are no clichés here. His conception of anthropology as the complicit manufacture of ethnographic texts by co-authors (the 'informant' and the 'interviewer') should make anthropologists ponder, yet again, the nature of their enterprise and the status of their final scripts. His working distinction, within ethnographies, of 'interpretation' and 'text', the latter open to re-appropriation by modern indigenes and to re-interpretation by anybody, offers a partial way out from the critique of anthropology as handmaiden to colonialism. Clifford sets his man in his different contexts but, wisely, infers no fictive 'inner self' for Leenhardt, rather he portrays him in his own ethnographic terms: a personality of plenitude, not an individual whole incapable of assimilation. Delightful vignettes are not excluded, however. We read of Leenhardt, then veteran missionary, surprised and saddened to realise his mentor and latter-day father-figure, Lévy-Bruhl, had failed to grasp the meaning of a simple folktale. We are told the anecdote of the student who asked, 'But, *M. le Pasteur*, how many people did you *really* convert during all that time out there?' His reply: 'Maybe one.' - i.e. himself,

for Leenhardt, constantly rethinking his ideas, incorporated his notions of Melanesian female 'life' principles and male virtues of 'power' into his conception of God. To him the roles of missionary and ethnologist were not opposed but complementary in a most intimate fashion. His work is still without equal among the ethnographies of island Melanesia and, in these 'post-structural' times, it remains valuable reading for anthropologists whose interests are not restricted to the bottom left-hand corner of the South Pacific.

To list my (very minor) criticisms of this splendid book would be mere carping. The single major disappointment of this handsomely produced volume is its price: at twenty-one pounds a copy it will be found only on the shelves of academic bookshops and university libraries - an unworthy fate for a work that deserves a wider audience.

JEREMY MacCLANCY

RODNEY NEEDHAM, *Circumstantial Deliveries*, Berkeley, etc.: University of California Press 1981. xiii, 109pp., Bibliography, Index. £9.00.

This set of essays consists of lectures given to academic audiences in Britain and America, and a paper which was written as a contribution to a collaborative volume entitled *Indigenous Psychologies*. In format, length and approach it is a sequel to previous sets of essays, *Primordial Characters* (1978) and *Reconnaissances* (1980).

The general premise of the present volume is 'that social facts may be revealingly analysed by reference to characteristic features in polythetic combination' (p.1). These features are said to be underlaid by 'primary factors of experience' which constitute the universal fundamental components of culture; 'primary factors', the author argues, correspond to aspects of thought and imagination; among these are symbolic complexes recognisable as 'archetypes', and more idiosyncratic forms of affective representation which are defined as 'paradigmatic or exemplary scenes'. These conceptual pre-suppositions inform and shape the comparativist investigations of the five chapters.

The first chapter, 'Essential Perplexities', was delivered as an inaugural lecture at Oxford in 1977. In this piece Professor Needham presents a concise formulation of his conception of social anthropology, especially his stress upon 'the crucial feature of comparativism'. As Evans-Pritchard did before him, Needham locates the discipline in the scholastic tradition of the humanities, and he outlines the theoretical shifts which have occurred throughout anthropology's intellectual history. In the fourth section of the lecture the author outlines the conceptual particulars of his approach (the idea of 'primary factors', for instance). The lecture concludes on a sceptical note with the prediction that 'before very

long he [Man] will make an end to everything, so that hereafter we shall be as though we never had been'.

Indeed the sceptical attitude is intrinsic to Needham's style of thought and writing. The second chapter, 'Physiological Symbols', is a sceptical scrutiny of a posited class of physiologically-determined symbolic components of human thought: right and left, the half-man, white-black-red, percussion, and elementary designs. He concludes that under a sceptical scrutiny this posited class of physiologically-determined symbols falls apart. By recourse to Jung's notion of 'archetype' he proposes to account for the connection between physiology and symbol.

The third chapter, 'Inner States as Universals', prescribes a contextualist methodology as the appropriate procedure whereby an ethnographer may elucidate the culturally-specific psychological meaning of forms of behaviour. And this relates to a larger concern about assumptions among historians and anthropologists that inner states, dispositions, and capacities are the same everywhere and have already been adequately described and discriminated by the psychological vocabularies of Western languages. (This was the point of Needham's enterprise in his *Belief, Language and Experience*.) The author argues sceptically that there can be no such certainty that inner states are constant and universal, and this argument is connected with his use of the polythetic method of classification. He writes,

what is known of one instance cannot be imputed, by inference from class membership, to another instance. This means that 'anger' in another civilization is not equivalent to anger in our own. More generally, the outcome is that inner states are not universals and do not in this sense constitute natural resemblances among men.

'Characteristics of Religion', the fourth piece, is marked by a Pyrrhonian tone of openly sceptical detachment and categorical uncertainty. The author eschews the aim of defining 'religion', which he considers is 'hardly a distinct object of thought'. And yet he uses the concept in an apparently reified sense; for he does not specify what social facts are being pointed to by the use of the word, even in its common sense use for which he opts. Rather, he focusses attention on possible 'characteristic features' which are, in each case, dismissed as not characteristic. Indeed a more telling title might have been 'Not the Characteristics of Religion'. The conclusion of the essay is that the entire repertory of 'religious' thought and action, which is symbolic by nature, may be considered as composed of 'archetypes' which are to be ascribed to 'cerebrational vectors', that is, 'normal operations of the brain'. Well, yes. But what is the explanatory force of this formulation as an account for the 'characteristics of religion'? More largely, does this fulfil the stated aim of 'trying to determine - in the train of countless other investigators - what we are really talking about when we speak of the religion of others'? It would appear to be saying that imaginative proclivities (including 'religious' ones) are associated with the brain. Anything we think or do is bound to relate somehow

to the nature of the brain. Although this essay serves an important function of questioning accepted suppositions about the characteristics of religion, its conclusion, that religious thought and representation are based on the normal operations of the brain, does not seem to illuminate the nature of this complex human phenomenon.

The fifth and final essay, 'Existential Quandaries', argues that social anthropology can help human beings to establish the actual bounds of their understanding and social organisation, and can thereby reveal the essence of human nature. Needham surveys such problematic topics as identity, emotion, order, certainty and purpose. Although the outcome is either 'skeptical or disruptive or negative', Needham hopes that his readers will learn to evade the constraints of ethnocentric prejudice by acquiring a more comprehensive view of the global diversity of social life.

In general, this is a stimulating book. Although its sceptical cast is sometimes perplexing, it does propose a programmatic challenge; namely, to explore more thoroughly the human imagination and the culturally-specific resources for affective representation.

The University of California Press is to be congratulated on their superb quality of production. Regrettably a paperback edition is as yet unavailable. The price of the hardback puts it beyond the range of most students.

SCOTT K. PHILLIPS

JOY HENDRY, *Marriage in Changing Japan*, London: Croom Helm 1981. 239pp., Appendix, Bibliography, Index. £14.95.

Marriage is an event which holds great fascination for the Japanese, frequently entails extensive ceremonial and social interaction, and apparently merits the expenditure of huge sums of money. It is regrettable that it has not captured more serious attention from earlier social anthropologists, yet perhaps we should not be surprised to find so little Western material on Japanese marriage, for the social anthropology of Japan in general is so poorly represented. For this reason alone, Joy Hendry's book may be welcomed. It is a valuable contribution to our understanding of a society which has risen so rapidly to prominence in the developed world, and which yet remains so enigmatic to many.

However, *Marriage in Changing Japan* does not set out to solve grand social enigmas, nor (despite the publisher's choice of title) even to describe and analyse contemporary marriage across the whole of Japan. The author spent time in Kurotsuchi, a community of 54 households, 'with a rural atmosphere', and this book is based upon that fieldwork experience. Its tone is informative, rather than analytical; indeed, it stands well as a partial ethnography of that region. Chapter Two is useful not only because it describes the local context for the marriages we read about later, but also because

the style of community activity indicated here is in many ways characteristic of much of rural Japan.

Readers unfamiliar with Japan's social past and present should also benefit from the first chapter ('Historical Context'), which introduces the traditional notions surrounding relations between the sexes, and within and between families. At the beginning of this century, the 'Confucian-coloured' values of the *samurai* family system were propagated throughout society, and an individual's obligation to be devoted and loyal to his or her family was stressed. The Japanese term *ie* actually implies more than 'family', for it may include household members not biologically related, and certainly includes past and present members (ancestors and their descendants). Since one of the foremost duties of the living members of the *ie* is to ensure continuity by the provision of descendants, marriage is an affair of concern to many more people than the two individuals most directly involved. Furthermore, it is because marriage is an affair of households that it is an event of significance to the whole community.

Dr. Hendry does succeed in making very clear why it may be said that a bride 'marries' the whole household, not just a single member of it; the very word used for the woman who marries in (*yome*) means 'daughter-in-law' as well as 'wife'. Normally, it is the woman who leaves her natal home to join the household of her husband. There, she may have to adapt to new ways and often spends more of the day in interaction with her husband's relatives (particularly his mother) than with him. The husband may himself be a comparative stranger, and is rarely as familiar as he would probably be after a Western-style courtship. This is associated with the different ideology pertaining to the institution: it is not traditionally viewed as being primarily a setting for the intimate companionship of two individuals, but in terms of its significance for the household.

Although young people today still answer 'Why marry?' in these traditional terms, modern influences prompt many responses which do stress a more romantic ideology. This is even more the case in Japanese cities. However, there is a marked discrepancy between what young people say they endorse, and what their actual marriage practice shows to be current. It is now popular to enthuse about unions based on love, but - at least in Kurotsuchi - to accept a spouse chosen by one's parents is in practice more common (it is also common to submit to parental disapproval of a suitor chosen by oneself).

On matters like these, it is illuminating to examine specific cases and read quotations from the author's fieldwork interviews. It would, however, be helpful to know how general or typical these findings are. Both attitudes and practice regarding marriage do vary between city and village, and between different regions of the country. Sometimes it is not clear how freely we may generalise from the Kurotsuchi material to the rest of Japan, although the plentiful bibliography should be useful here. Nevertheless, it is occasionally disappointing to find certain issues which do have a wider setting not to have been given a more extensive treatment. For example, the discrepancy between what people say about getting married and what they actually do has been commented upon by other observers; it is interesting, not only because it is a very large discrepancy, but also because of its central position in any consideration of social change



regarding marriage.

While the author does not venture on a broad or analytical discussion of this issue, she does provide some reasons why young people may have problems in fulfilling their romantic ideals. For example, in rural Japanese community life the sexes are often segregated, making it difficult for young people to interact comfortably and freely with their contemporaries of the opposite sex. This makes more understandable the continuing importance of procedures surrounding 'arranged' marriages. These are described with thoroughness - how suitable prospects are found and investigated by a family, the crucial role of the go-between, the *miai* (mutual viewing, when the two young people officially meet, and normally have the opportunity to form their own opinion of the proposed match).

Dr. Hendry makes a conscientious effort to explain the delicacies of translating Japanese terms like *renai* (which may be inadequately glossed as love or passion, but needs her illuminating discussion to be more fully understood), and she frequently refers us to the historical background and development of traditions and usages concerned with relations between the sexes. Literary orientalist may however be dissatisfied that this work does not contain as much reference as it might have done to Japanese social history, religion and philosophy in general.

The sections on the relevant ceremonial and symbolism are very full, and clearly reflect the author's intimate participation in the social events surrounding a wedding in the community. By the end of her book, it is easy for the reader to appreciate how the *community* is such a salient context for marriage - for a wedding serves as an opportunity for households to maintain or adjust their position in the local social order (as expressed via the formation of alliances, the style of the accompanying gifts, feasts, etc.). It is with justification that the role of marriage is described as 'pivotal', for it is a time of transition and redefinition for individuals (as they enter adult status), households, and the community. A marriage manifests continuity - synchronic and diachronic - and holds a mediating place between the frequently opposed elements associated with life and death, beginnings and endings, Shinto and Buddhism. These important ideas are given rather short shrift in the concluding chapter, further casualties of the (otherwise laudable) economic presentation.

Although this book is not a general treatment of marriage, many social anthropologists will probably be struck by the similarities with marriage traditions in other parts of the world more often studied by them. This subject also holds great interest for those interested in the position of women in society. Feminists may be disappointed by the cursory treatment of the woman's view of Japanese marriage (women seem to be at a distinct disadvantage here, but frequently claim to be satisfactorily compensated by the joys of child-rearing). Because the subject-matter of this book should attract readers from a variety of fields, it would be difficult to please all the audience all of the time. It was perhaps the wisest compromise to decline from producing volumes of discursive text, in favour of this very readable and fascinating study, with its accompaniment of generous footnotes and references (including Western and Japanese

sources). It is hoped that Dr. Hendry's publication will stimulate more research and writing on this challenging area.

ROSAMUND BELL

---

# YALE

## **The Panare** Tradition and Change on the Amazonian Frontier

*Paul Henley*

Despite a century of contact with the outside world, the Panare, an indigenous tribe of South American Indians, have retained their distinctive social and cultural traditions to a remarkable degree. Henley's sensitive study of the Panare is both an account of this little known people and an analysis of their relationship to the modern world.

*Illustrated* £15.00

## **Woman the Gatherer**

*edited by Frances Dahlberg*

In this balanced new survey, authorities from several fields review the likely paths of human evolution and discuss the roles and activities of women in prehistoric groups and among contemporary hunter-gatherers, showing how the uniquely flexible social organisation of our species depends upon co-operation between the sexes.

*Illustrated* £13.50

## **Sons of the Mountains** Ethnohistory of the Vietnamese Central Highlands to 1954

*Gerald Cannon Hickey*

This is the first volume of a two-volume study of the Vietnamese central highlands. Here Hickey traces the highland history from prehistoric ages to 1954, proposing that the diverse ethnic groups that inhabit this crucial area have evolved a common identity because of a number of interrelated economic, political, religious, and geographic factors.

*Illustrated* £35.00

## **Free in the Forest** Ethnohistory of the Vietnamese Central Highlands, 1954-1976

*Gerald Cannon Hickey*

This second volume of Hickey's ethnohistory follows the shifting fortunes of the highlanders from the Geneva Agreements of 1954 to the aftermath of the Vietnam War.

*Illustrated* £21.00

---

**Yale University Press**  
13 BEDFORD SQUARE  
LONDON WC1B 3JF

---

## OTHER NOTES AND NOTICES

ANTONY HOOPER, *Why Tikopia Has Four Clans* (with a Comment by Raymond Firth), London: The Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland [Occasional Papers no.38], 1981. vi, 70pp. £6.00.

In a review of Firth's *History and Traditions of Tikopia*, Edmund Leach hit upon the fact that the Tikopia have precisely four clans (like the four clans of the Trobrianders and the five of the Kachin). 'For Firth, the existence of these "fours" is just one of those things, an accident of history. To me it seems a structural fact of the subtlest significance though I cannot unravel the plot on the present evidence.' In this pamphlet Hooper sets out his own attempt to unravel the plot, in the course of which he touches on a good deal more than the question of clanship. In the reply by Firth which makes up the final portion of the paper, Firth politely but ambiguously commends Hooper's subtlety and ingenuity and praises his respect for the data, barring certain misapprehensions. Firth maintains though that the number four in clan terms is 'a bit of a blind alley'. He tries to do the topic in by finishing with an elaborate spoof, showing by structural analysis that the number four has governed the succession of Kings and Queens of England. The two scholars, having made themselves expert on the same body of facts, can agree on nothing about the significance of those facts. To decide for himself, the reader would have to become expert too. This publication is an attractive invitation for him to do so.

R.H.BARNES

BECKY A. SIGMON and JEROME S. CYBULSKI (eds.), *Homo Erectus: Papers in Honor of Davidson Black*, Toronto etc.: University of Toronto Press 1981. xiv, 236pp., Map, Bibliography, Index. £21.00.

This Festschrift is in honour of the Canadian anatomist-cum-palaeo-anthropologist, Davidson Black, who first identified and introduced the hominid species *Sinanthropus pekinensis* (*H. erectus*) from the evidence of teeth recovered from Chou-kou-tien, near Peking. Though he was not the discoverer of the fossils he was responsible for determining their significance and place in the framework of human evolution. This book seeks to re-establish the memory of Davidson Black in the minds of nascent scholars and to honour him with the results and controversies deriving from his original delineation of the species *Homo erectus*.

The Festschrift consists of fifteen papers that fall naturally into three sections a historical account of Davidson Black's pub-

lished works and achievements; regional studies of the occurrences of *H. erectus* fossils; and an attempt at a synthetic organisation of the data into a general scheme of Middle Pleistocene human evolution. Although the seasoned physical anthropologist will find nothing new within these pages, the emerging student will welcome the generally lucid presentation of the variability among *H. erectus* fossils and the taxonomic and interpretative controversies that the variability generates in the character of the 'evolutionary tree' of fully modern man.

JOHN DUMONT

J.DAVID LEWIS-WILLIAMS, *Believing and Seeing: Symbolic Meanings in Southern San Rock Paintings*, London and New York: Academic Press 1981 [Studies in Anthropology, con.ed. E.A.Hammel]. xiii, 131pp., Appendix, References, Index, Illustrations. \$43.50.

*Believing and Seeing* examines the meanings of rock paintings discovered in the Drakensberg Mountains of South Africa. Dr.Lewis-Williams presents interpretations for a comprehensive survey of rock paintings done by the southern San or Bushmen living in the region around 500-100 B.P. He analyses the artwork on the basis of such readily identifiable features as colour, human and non-human subjects, sex, etc., producing a statistical foundation for further analysis. Based on the quantitative results, the eland is seen to be one of the most salient factors of San art. Armed with this knowledge the author has reviewed the available ethnographic data, primarily that collected by Bleek and Orpen in the nineteenth century, together with his own notes on the !Kung. His findings are presented in an examination of a number of San paintings most of which feature elands and humans, though some depict only human figures. In every case Dr.Lewis-Williams points to the eland as the central symbol pervading many of the essential aspects of San life. The material is presented in a very clear and straightforward manner providing an interesting approach to the understanding of rock paintings.

This work claims to be based on statistical findings, yet these are not adequately presented even in Appendix form. Leaving that aside, in examining the symbolism of San rock paintings, Dr.Lewis-Williams has exhaustively covered the subject of the role of the eland; but wisely, he states that this work should not be seen to have illuminated all possible associations between the ethnographic evidence and the paintings. A major criticism of this work must, however, be directed not at the author but at the publisher of this work. Although the author claims that the drawings presented depict the subject matter more clearly, I would suggest that it is a deficiency of the book not to include a single photograph of a rock painting.

DAVID van ROIJEN

P U B L I C A T I O N S   R E C E I V E D

- ABU ZARA, Nadia, *Sidi Ameur: A Tunisian Village*, London: Ithaca Press, for the Middle East Centre, St. Antony's College, Oxford, 1982 [St. Antony's Middle East Monographs no.15]. xvii, 20pp., Appendixes, Select Bibliography, Index. £11.50.
- ALLEN, J.W.T. (ed. and trans.), *The Customs of the Swahili People: The Desturi za Waswahili of Mtoro bin Mwinyi Bahari and Other Swahili Persons*, Berkeley etc.: University of California Press 1981. xv, 254pp., Bibliography, Index. £11.50.
- ARMSTRONG, John A., *Nations Before Nationalism*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 1982. xxxvi, 299pp., Bibliography, Index. £21.00.
- BAETEN BEARDSMORE, Hugo, *Bilingualism: Basic Principles, Multilingual Matters*, Cleveland: Tieto 1982. viii, 147pp., Bibliography, Index. £4.45 (Paper).
- BANERJEE, Sukumar, *Impact of Industrialisation on the Tribal Population of Jharia-Ranigungi Coal Field Areas*, Calcutta: Anthropological Survey of India 1981. 136pp., Appendixes. No price given.
- BAWDEN, Garth and Geoffrey W. CONRAD, *The Andean Heritage: Masterpieces of Peruvian Art from the Collections of the Peabody Museum*, Cambridge, Mass.: Peabody Museum Press 1982. vi, 101pp., Bibliography. £6.30.
- BERLAND, Joseph C., *No Five Fingers Are Alike: Cognitive Amplifiers in Social Context*, Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press 1982. xv, 196pp., Appendixes, References, Index. £21.00.
- BRANTLEY, Cynthia, *The Giriama and Colonial Resistance in Kenya, 1800-1920*, Berkeley etc.: University of California Press 1981. xiii, 155pp., Bibliography, Index. £22.50.
- BURGESS, Robert G. (ed.), *Field Research: A Sourcebook and Field Manual*, London: George Allen & Unwin 1982 [Contemporary Social Research no.4, series ed. Martin Bulmer]. xii, 263pp., References, Index. £12.95.
- Cambridge Anthropology*, Vol. 7, nos. 1 and 2, (1982).
- CAWL, Farax M.J., *Ignorance is the Enemy of Love* (trans. by B.W.Andrzejewski), London: Zed Press 1982 [UNESCO Collection of Representative Works, Africa Series]. xx, 88pp., Appendixes. £5.50.
- The Central Asian Newsletter* [Oxford], Vol.1, nos. 1,2,3 and 4, (1982).
- Chicago Anthropology Exchange*, Vol.XIV, no.1-2,(1981), [special issue on 'Native American Land'].
- CLIFFORD, James, *Person and Myth: Maurice Leenhardt in the Melanesian World*, Berkeley etc.: University of California Press 1982. xi, 256pp., Bibliography, Index. £21.50.
- COHEN, Anthony P. (ed.), *Belonging: Identity and Social Organisation in British Rural Cultures*, Manchester: Manchester University Press 1982. x, 321pp., Index. £7.50.
- COSENTINO, Donald, *Defiant Maids and Stubborn Farmers: Tradition and Invention in Mende Story Performance*, Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press 1982 [Cambridge Studies in Oral and Literate Culture no.4, gen.eds. P.Burke and R.Finnegan]. xii, 220pp., Indexes. £19.50.
- DAVIS, J. (ed.), *Religious Organisation and Religious Experience*, London etc.: Academic Press 1982 [ASA Monographs]. ix, 207pp., Indexes. £12.00.
- DOUGLAS, Mary, *In the Active Voice*, London etc.: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1982. xiii, 297pp., Indexes. £9.95.
- ELENGA M'BUYINGA, *Pan Africanism or Neo-Colonialism? The Bankruptcy of the O.A.U.*, London: Zed Press 1982. 236pp. £6.50 (Paper).
- ENDICOTT, Kirk Michael, *An Analysis of Malay Magic*, Kuala Lumpur etc.: Oxford University Press 1981 [1970]. viii, 179pp., Bibliography, Index. £6.75 (Paper).
- FERNANDEZ, James, Melford SPIRO and Milton SINGER, *On Symbols in Anthropology: Essays in Honor of Harry Hoijer 1980*, Malibu: Undena 1982 [Other Realities Vol.3, gen. ed. J. Maquet]. 133pp. \$11.50 (Paper).
- GOODY, J., *Cooking, Cuisine and Class: A Study in Comparative Sociology*, Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press 1982 [Themes in the Social Sciences, eds. J.Goody and G. Hawthorn]. viii, 220pp., Bibliography, Index. £19.50.
- GOSWAMI, B.B. (ed.), *Cultural Profile of Shillong*, Calcutta: Anthropological Survey of India 1979. vii, 183pp., Map. No price given.
- HENLEY, Paul, *The Panare: Tradition and Change on the Amazonian Frontier*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press 1982. xxii, 247pp., Bibliography, Index, Diagrams. £15.00.
- HERDT, Gilbert H. (ed.), *Rituals of Manhood: Male Initiation in Papua New Guinea*, Berkeley etc.: University of California Press 1982. xxvi, 355pp., Maps, Index. £24.50.
- Journal of the Steward Anthropological Society* [Urbana], Vol. 12, no.2, (1981), [special issue on 'Contributions to Inner Asian Anthropology'].
- Journal of the Anthropological Study of Human Movement* [JASHM] [New York], Vol.2, no.1, (1982).

224 Publications Received

- LAL, Parmanand and Binar Kumar Das GUPTA, *Lower Siang People: A Study in Ecology and Society*, Calcutta: Anthropological Survey of India 1979. 156pp., Bibliography, Plates. No price given.
- MACCORMACK, Carol P. (ed.), *Ethnography of Fertility and Birth*, London etc.: Academic Press 1982. x, 290pp., Index, Illustrations. £14.00.
- MAJUMDAR, Dharendra Narayan, *Culture Change in Two Garo Villages*, Calcutta: Anthropological Survey of India 1978. ix, 461pp., Illustrations. No price given.
- MALINOWSKI, Bronislaw and Julio de la FUENTE, *Malinowski in Mexico: The Economics of a Mexican Market System* (ed. Susan Drucker-Brown), London etc.: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1982 [International Library of Anthropology, gen.ed. A.Kuper]. xiii, 202pp., Bibliography, Index, Illustrations. £12.50.
- MANN, R.S., *Hakkipikki-Trapper and Seller*, Anthropological Survey of India 1980. vi, 133pp., Bibliography, Index. No price given.
- MAYER, Adrian C. (ed.), *Culture and Morality: Essays in Honour of Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf*, Delhi etc.: Oxford University Press 1982. xvii, 261pp., Index. £10.00.
- MISRA, Promode Kumar (ed.), *Cultural Profiles of Mysore City*, Calcutta: Anthropological Survey of India 1978. xii, 205pp. No price given.
- MORRIS, Brian, *Forest Traders: A Socio-Economic Study of the Hill Pandaram*, New Jersey: Athlone Press 1982 [London School of Economics Monographs on Social Anthropology 55, Man.ed. A.Gell]. xiii, 210pp., Index. £18.00.
- MUKHERJEE, Meera, *Metalcraftsmen of India*, Calcutta: Anthropological Survey of India 1978. ix, 461pp., Illustrations. No price given.
- NEEDHAM, Rodney, *Circumstantial Deliveries*, Berkeley etc.: University of California Press 1981. xiii, 109pp., Bibliography, Index. £9.00.
- NKOSI, Lewis, *Tasks and Masks: Themes and Styles of African Literature*, Harlow: Longman 1981 [Longman Studies in African Literature]. x, 195pp., Index. £4.50.
- PAUL, Robert A., *The Tibetan Symbolic World: Psychoanalytic Explanations*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press 1982. x, 304pp., Bibliography, Index, Diagrams. £9.50.
- PETERS, Larry G., *Ecstasy and Healing in Nepal: An Ethnopsychiatric Study of Tamang Shamanism*, Malibu: Udena 1982 [Other Realities Vol.4, gen.ed. J.Maquet]. 149pp., References. \$15.50 (Paper).
- POWERS, William K., *Yuwipi-Vision and Experience in Oglala Ritual*, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press 1982. xiii, 101pp., Bibliography, Index, Maps. £9.50.
- RAYCHAUDHURI, Bikash, *The Moon and Net: Study of a Transient Community of Fishermen at Jambuchirip*, Calcutta: Anthropological Survey of India 1980. xix, 183pp., Appendixes, References, Index. No price given.
- ROE, Peter G., *The Cosmic Zygote: Cosmology in the Amazon Basin*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press 1982. xvi, 309pp., References, Index. \$40.00.
- SIDDIQUI, M.K.A., *Muslims of Calcutta: A Study in Aspects of Their Social Organisation*, Calcutta: Anthropological Survey of India 1979 [1974]. xi, 120pp., Appendixes, Bibliography, Index. No price given.
- SLATER, Candace, *Stories on a String: The Brazilian Literatura de Cordel*, Berkeley etc.: University of California Press 1982. xvii, 274pp., Bibliography, Index, Illustrations. £22.50.
- Social Sciences* [USSR Academy of Sciences], Vol.XIII, no.1, (1982).
- STERN, Steve J., *Peru's Indian Peoples and the Challenge of Spanish Conquest: Huamanga to 1640*, Madison and London: University of Wisconsin Press 1982. xix, 260pp., Bibliography, Index, Maps, Illustrations, Tables. £15.80.
- THUSU, Kidar Nath, *Gond Kingdom of Chanda - with Particular Reference to Its Political Structure*, Calcutta: Anthropological Survey of India 1980. xv, 273pp., Appendixes, References, Maps, Illustrations. No price given.
- VINCENT, Joan, *Teso in Transformation: The Political Economy of Peasant and Class in Eastern Africa*, Berkeley etc.: University of California Press 1982. xviii, 264pp., Bibliography, Index. £21.50.

# JASO

VOL. XIII

1982

NO.3

## CONTENTS

	Page
GREGORY FORTH	
Sumbanese Finger Names: Some Comparative Remarks.. ..	231-242
ELIZABETH TONKIN	
Rethinking Socialization.. .. .	243-256
<i>Byways in Oxford Anthropology</i>	
Some Problems with Photographic Archives: The Case of C.W.Dammann By Elizabeth Edwards with a cartoon by Mike Hitchcock .. .. .	257-261
<i>Letter to the Editors</i> .. .. .	261
SYBIL WOLFRAM	
Anthropology and Morality. .. .. .	262-274
FELIPE FERNANDEZ-ARMESTO	
Medieval Ethnography .. .. .	275-286
<i>Commentary</i>	
I. J.D.H.COLLINSON	
There Is an Albatross in the Sky.. .. .	287-291
II. MARY PICONE	
Observing 'Les Observateurs de l'Homme': Impressions of Contemporary French Anthropology in Context .. .. .	292-299
<i>Book Reviews</i> .. .. .	300-315
<i>Publications Received</i> .. .. .	316
<i>Index to JASO Volume XIII, 1982</i> .. .. .	317-320
<i>Notes on Contributors</i> .. .. .	inside back cover

Book Reviews

MICHAEL ALLEN (ed.), <i>Vanuatu: Politics, Economics and Ritual.</i>	
Reviewed by Jeremy MacClancy .. .. .	300-301
SUSAN BENSON, <i>Ambiguous Ethnicity: Interracial Families in London.</i>	
Reviewed by Roland Littlewood .. .. .	301-303
ANTHONY P. COHEN (ed.), <i>Belonging: Identity and Social Organization in British Rural Cultures.</i>	
Reviewed by Scott K. Phillips .. .. .	303-305
WAZIR-JAHAN BEGUM KARIM, <i>Ma'Betisék Concepts of Living Things.</i>	
Reviewed by Signe Howell .. .. .	305-306
ROLAND LITTLEWOOD and MAURICE LIPSEGE, <i>Aliens and Alienists.</i>	
Reviewed by Paul Heelas .. .. .	306-309
CHRISTINE OPPONG, <i>Middle Class African Marriage: A Family Study of Ghanaian Senior Civil Servants.</i>	
Reviewed by A. Awedoba .. .. .	309-310
ILSE SCHWIDETZKY, BRUNETTO CHIARELLI and OLGA NECRASOV (eds.), <i>Physical Anthropology of European Populations.</i>	
Reviewed by John L. Dumont .. .. .	311-312
BRONISLAW MALINOWSKI and JULIO DE LA FUENTE, <i>Malinowski in Mexico: The Economics of a Mexican Market System</i> (edited by Susan Drucker-Brown).	
Reviewed by Crystyn Cech.. .. .	312-313
E.D. HUNT, <i>Holy Land Pilgrimage in the Later Roman Empire AD 312-460.</i>	
Reviewed by Glenn Bowman.. .. .	314-315
<i>Publications Received</i> .. .. .	316
<i>Index to JASO Volume XIII, 1982</i> .. .. .	317-320
<i>Notes on Contributors</i> .. .. .	inside back cover

Copyright © JASO 1982. All rights reserved.

ISSN UK 0044-8370



SUMBANESE FINGER NAMES:  
SOME COMPARATIVE REMARKS

In an article published in *JASO* concerned mostly with Kédang number use, Barnes (1980, in particular pp.201-204) described the names applied to the fingers in this eastern Indonesian society in relation to data drawn from other parts of Indonesia and elsewhere. The purpose of the following remarks is to present further comparative evidence from another area of Indonesia--the island of Sumba, and more especially eastern Sumba--in order to extend the discussion of a couple of issues raised by Barnes, and to consider certain questions that arise from the Sumbanese data themselves. My initial focus and point of departure will be the names given to the fingers in Rindi, the eastern Sumbanese domain where I carried out fieldwork for two years.

Most of the linguistic evidence from areas other than Rindi that I present below is taken from a comparative word list of the Sumbanese languages compiled by the Dutch missionary linguist and ethnographer D.K.Wielenga (1917). It is useful to note that with regard to language, Sumba has been divided into two regions, an eastern language region and a western language region, which I shall hereafter abbreviate as ELR and WLR. There are however several districts which are geographically (and to some extent culturally) western but which nevertheless have languages that belong to the eastern group (see Onvlee 1973:165). These include Mamboru, Anakalangu and Wanukaka.

The names for the fingers which I recorded in Rindi are listed in Table 1. Following Wielenga (1917:15-16), the same terminology is employed in Kampera, the major dialect of eastern Sumbanese, and indeed in most dialects of the eastern language region, with the

Table 1: Names for Fingers in Rindi

<i>lima</i>	hand, arm, finger
<i>wua lima</i>	finger
<i>bai lima</i> or <i>(wua) lima bai</i>	thumb
<i>(wua) lima patuji</i>	index finger
<i>(wua) lima padua</i>	middle finger
<i>(wua) lima pandadiha</i>	fourth (ring) finger
<i>(wua) lima kakiha</i>	little finger

minor exception that, according to this authority, the middle finger is called in Kambera *wua lima ndau padua* (*ndau*[ngu], 'to stand, be placed'). It should be noted that *lima*, a reflex of PAN\**lima*', 'hand', 'five' (Dempwolff 1938:97), can refer to the entire arm, the hand, and the fingers; and, as in many Austronesian languages, is also the word for 'five'.<sup>1</sup> The fingers can however be distinguished from the hand as a whole, as *wua lima*, a phrase which, since *wua* otherwise means 'fruit', might be glossed as 'fruit of the hand (or arm)'. In Rindi--and, it seems safe to assume, elsewhere in eastern Sumba--the names of the fingers are also applied to the toes, *wua wihi* (*wihi*, 'leg, foot'); thus the big toe, for example, is *bai wihi* or *wua wihi bai* (cf. Table 1).

As is very common in the Indonesian languages, including Bahasa Indonesia/Malay, in Rindi, and indeed throughout the island, the thumb is designated with a phrase that can be translated as 'mother finger' (or 'mother of the fingers'), *bai lima*--*bai* having as one of its meanings 'mother (of animals; a human mother is *ina*)'. But while it is also common in Indonesia to find the thumb and the rest of the fingers distinguished as 'mother' and 'child'--as, for example, in Kédang (Barnes 1980:202)--the Rindi do not do so. In fact, they have no expression that collectively refers to the (other) fingers in opposition to the thumb. This is somewhat surprising, as the terms for 'mother' (*bai* or *ina*) and 'child' (*ana*) are employed in Rindi in a number of other contexts to distinguish large and small (or superior and inferior, major and minor) objects of the same or a similar kind (see Forth 1981:25, 117), a practice which is also found on Roti (Fox 1972:221). In other parts of Sumba, however, the word for 'child' (*ana*) does appear in the names of individual fingers. Thus in Lauili, in western Sumba, the fourth

<sup>1</sup> Dempwolff (1938) gives three Proto-Austronesian forms for 'hand, arm'--\**lima*', \**linga*', and \**tangan* (see Bahasa Indonesia/Malay *lengan*, 'arm', and *tangan*, 'hand, [fore]arm')--but only one--\**lima*'--for 'five'. Reflexes of \**tangan* seem to be at least as common as those of \**lima*' as the word for 'hand' in the Indonesian languages. Moreover, with reference to the 12 Malayo-Polynesian languages that he samples, Brandstetter (1906:46) notes that *lima* is encountered in all of them with the meaning of 'five' but only in a few with the sense of 'hand'.

finger is called *ana lima*, a variant of which (*ana limè*) is applied in Kodi, in the far western part of the island, to the little finger. Similarly, in the western districts of Mamboru, Anakalangu (ELR), Lauli, Lamboya, Wewewa, and Laura (WLR), the little finger is named *ana kaisa* (or with variants thereof); *kaisa* being related to the eastern Sumbanese *kakiha* (or *kiha*), 'little finger'. (A comprehensive list of names of the fingers recorded by Wielenga [1917:15-16] for the Sumbanese languages appears in Table 2 below.)

Table 2

## Finger Names in Different Sumbanese Languages and Dialects

thumb:	
<i>bai lima</i> (and variants)	all languages and dialects
index finger:	
<i>lima patuji</i> (and variants)	Kambara and other eastern dialects
<i>lima patsyuru</i>	Lewa, Nàpu (ELR)
<i>lima duduku</i> (and variants)	Palamidu, Mamboru, Anakalangu, Wanukaka (ELR); Lauli, Wewewa, Laura, Lamboya, Kodi (WLR)
middle finger:	
<i>lima ndau padua</i> or <i>lima padua</i>	Kambara and other eastern dialects
<i>lima nda pangara</i>	Nàpu, Mamboru, Anakalangu, Wanukaka (ELR); Lauli (WLR)
<i>lima talora</i>	Wewewa, Laura (WLR)
<i>lima kahadu</i>	Lamboya (WLR)
<i>limè ndéngi</i>	Kodi (WLR)
fourth finger:	
<i>lima pandadiha</i>	Kambara and other eastern dialects
<i>lima pandangara</i>	Palamidu (ELR)
<i>eri kiha</i>	Mahu (ELR)
<i>kaca lima</i>	Lewa (ELR)
<i>lima mapa'aru</i>	Nàpu (ELR)
<i>aya kaisa</i>	Anakalangu (ELR)
<i>nda to padua</i>	Wanukaka (ELR)
<i>ana lima</i>	Lauli (WLR)
<i>lima ondo</i>	Wewewa (WLR)
<i>lima ndéngi</i>	Laura (WLR)
<i>lima nda pangara</i>	Lamboya (WLR)
<i>limè mandak</i>	Kodi (WLR)
little finger:	
<i>lima kakiha</i> (and variants)	Kambara and other eastern dialects
<i>ana kaisa</i> (and variants)	Mamboru, Anakalangu (ELR); Lauli, Wewewa, Laura, Lamboya (WLR)
<i>ana limè</i>	Kodi (WLR)

[from Wielenga 1917:15-16; all terms have been adapted to current Indonesian orthography. ELR: eastern language region, WLR: western language region.]

In Rindi, as in nearly all parts of Sumba, the name of the index finger (*patuji*, Rindi, Kampera; *duduku* and variants, Palamidu and western Sumbanese languages) means 'to point, indicate'.<sup>2</sup> It is thus called the 'pointing finger', an idiom which is obviously comparable to the English usage. In Kédang, by contrast, the index finger is called *kurkata* (Barnes 1980:202), the meaning of which is unknown to the ethnographer; while in Bahasa Indonesia this finger, although sometimes called *tunjuk*, 'to point', is more commonly known as *telunjuk*, a word which apparently has no other meanings (Echols and Shadily 1963:s.v. *djari*, *telundjuk*).

Although this is the logical place to consider them, I shall postpone discussion of the names of the middle and fourth fingers since these will form the subject of a more extensive treatment further below.

The name of the little finger in Rindi, as elsewhere in eastern Sumba, is *lima kakiha*. While *kakiha* has no other senses, Kapita in his Kampera dictionary (1974) lists the variant form *kiha* (which can also refer to the little finger) as 'capable, clever' (Bahasa Indonesia *cakap*; *pandai*; *cakap* is also 'handsome') and as 'wise; honest, of good character; well-behaved, nice' (Bahasa Indonesia *berbudi*). I am unaware of any eastern Sumbanese ideas regarding the little finger that might shed light on these attributions. However, the apparent characterization of this finger as being 'of good character', 'well-behaved', and 'nice' is of especial interest, for it would appear to strike a significant contrast with certain ideas concerning the middle finger that are found in other parts of Indonesia.

The uniformity or near uniformity of names for the thumb, index finger, and little finger in different parts of Sumba contrasts noticeably with the variety of terms applied to the middle and fourth fingers (see Table 2). In Rindi the middle finger is called *lima padua*, which, like the name employed in most parts of eastern Sumba, translates literally as 'middle finger' (or 'finger placed in the middle'; *padua* derives from *dua*, 'two', and thus in the sense of 'middle' refers to a division into two). A comparable usage is found in the western Sumbanese districts of Wewewa and Laura (WLR), where the middle finger is named *lima talora*; *talora*, 'in the middle' (Wielenga 1917:15) having in eastern Sumba the meaning of 'intermediate area', 'space between'. In contrast, the Kédang call the middle finger the 'witch finger', because it is longer than the others (Barnes 1980:202), while, as Barnes further notes (*ibid.*:203), in Bahasa Indonesia/Malay it is similarly designated as the 'ghost', 'unlucky', and 'dead' finger (*jari hantu, malang, mati*).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The name for the index finger in Lewa and Nàpu (ELR), *patsyuru*, appears to mean 'to push, stretch (out)' (cf. Kampera *pahurungu*, Kapita 1974:207).

<sup>3</sup> In Bahasa Indonesia/Malay the middle finger is also named *jari panjang*, 'long finger', and *jari tengah*, 'middle finger' (Echols and Shadily 1963: s.v. *djari*).

The notion of the middle finger being of bad character, as it is longer than the others, is also present on Java (see Barnes 1980: 203).

While in Rindi, I did not hear of any comparable ideas regarding the middle finger. I was told, though, that it is forbidden to wear a ring on this finger, a prohibition which is also mentioned by Onvlee (1973: 183). Moreover, in the western Sumbanese district of Lamboya (WLR), the middle finger is called *lima kahadu*. While I do not know the meaning of *kahadu* in this language, with regard to the Malay and Kédang names for this finger it is interesting to consider whether the word might not be related to Kodi (WLR) *hadu*, eastern Sumbanese *hidu*, 'ill, illness'. It is perhaps significant, then, that illness was mentioned in Rindi as a possible consequence of wearing a ring on the middle finger.<sup>4</sup>

In Rindi and in most parts of eastern Sumba, the fourth finger is designated as *lima pandadiha*, 'uncounted (or unconsidered) finger',<sup>5</sup> in regard to which phrase I was further told that 'properly speaking it does not have a name' (*nda ningu tamuna lati*). In a similar way, in Lamboya (WLR) the fourth finger is called the 'finger that is not named, not given a name' (*lima nda pangara*), and in Palamidu (ELR) the 'unnamed finger' (*lima pandangara*). Here, then, we have a situation virtually identical to that which Barnes (1980: 202) reports from Kédang, where the fourth finger has no name at all. Furthermore, van Suchtelen (1921: 298), in his Dutch-Endenese (central Flores) word list, gives no term for 'ring finger' in the *ngab* dialect of that language (though he provides one for the *djab* dialect), which thus suggests that the fourth finger may be nameless in this region as well.

As Barnes (1980: 204), citing Pott (1847), points out, the notion of the fourth finger being unnamed or disregarded is not an isolated phenomenon but is one found in many unrelated and widely separated languages around the world, in which this finger is actually called 'nameless'. Yet from this, and from the foregoing instances from Sumba, Kédang, and Ende, it should not be assumed that the idea of a nameless (or uncounted, unconsidered) finger is general in Indonesia or that, where it is encountered, it invariably concerns the fourth finger. Indeed, the fact is that in several dialects and languages in north central Sumba and the more easterly part of western Sumba - namely, in Nàpu, Mamboru, Anakalangu, Wanukaka (ELR), and Lauili (WLR), which districts form together a fairly continuous area - it is the middle finger, and not the fourth finger, which is called the 'nameless finger' (*lima nda pangara*), while, following

<sup>4</sup> Onvlee (1973: 183), on the other hand, says that to wear a ring on this finger would cause it to become 'blunt'.

<sup>5</sup> *Diha*, 'to count', has the further senses of 'to consider, think (about), weigh' and, nowadays, 'to read'. It is also a word for the numeral 'one' (cf. PAN \**et'a*\*, \**it'a*\*, 'one', 'to count', Dempwolff 1938).

Onvlee (1973: 183), in some parts of the island, apparently including Mamboru, the middle finger is referred to as the 'uncounted' (*nda padisa*) finger. It seems that nowhere on Sumba are terms such as 'unnamed' and 'uncounted' applied to both the middle and fourth fingers, so that it is either one or the other of these digits that is designated in this way. According to the evidence Wielenga provides, only in Mahu and Lewa, in the interior of eastern Sumba, and in the far western districts of Laura, Wewewa, and Kodi are both fingers named in other ways (see Table 2).

Such variation between regions that are linguistically and culturally closely related thus poses an interesting comparative problem. Specifically, the question is why in some parts of Sumba, contrary to what is found in many widely separated parts of the world, and indeed in some eastern Sumbanese dialects, it is the middle finger, and not the fourth finger, which is designated as the 'unnamed' or 'uncounted'. While I am unable to provide a complete answer to this question - not least of all because evidence regarding ideas associated with this finger, and with the fourth finger, is mostly lacking - I suggest that some clues may be found in the notions of 'uncounted' (or 'unconsidered') and 'unnamed' as they occur in other areas of Sumbanese life.

It is useful to begin by noting that the term 'uncounted' (*pandadiha* and variants) is further applied in various parts of Sumba - for example, in Mamboru (ELR) in western Sumba (Onvlee 1973: 183) and in parts of eastern Sumba (Forth *in press*) - to an annual period of prohibition and quiet. In this context, the name evidently refers to the fact that this time is characterized by a paucity of activity, so that it might be described as a (relatively) empty interval. In Rindi, where the period of restriction is reckoned to extend from about late May or early June until August, it is known as the *wula tua*, 'revered, respected month(s)', and elsewhere in the eastern region (for example, in Kapunduku, on the north coast) as the 'forbidden, proscribed month(s)' and the 'false month(s)'. Accordingly, Onvlee (1973: 183), referring to Mamboru (where this part of the year is called *wula nda padisa*, 'uncounted month[s]'), describes the period with the Bahasa Indonesia/Malay word *pemali*, 'sacred, forbidden, taboo'; and he further employs this word in reference to the middle finger, which, as he indicates, is in Mamboru also called *nda padisa*.

In this respect, as I have demonstrated elsewhere, the relevant - and indeed the essential - attribute of the yearly period of prohibition is that it is regarded as a time of spiritual danger and potential disaster, for which reason a variety of special restrictions, not in force at other times of the year, must be observed (see Forth 1981: 110; *in press*). As regards the theme of being uncounted, or the very similar idea of being unnamed, then, this inauspicious character calls to mind attributes of the middle finger in other traditions, where it is spoken of as the 'witch finger' (Kédang), and the 'ghost',

'unlucky', and 'dead' finger (Bahasa Indonesia/Malay). In particular, the common feature would appear to be the idea of maleficent and unfavourable spiritual or mystical power. Furthermore, although it is not the middle finger but rather the fourth finger which is designated as the 'uncounted' in most parts of eastern Sumba, it yet seems possible to detect in this region some connexion between the middle finger and the annual period of prohibition with regard to the previously mentioned eastern Sumbanese rule forbidding the wearing of rings on this finger. In general, however, a more important link is provided by the fact that, in relation to the two major halves of the year (the wet and dry seasons), the period of restriction is medial or transitional, and also ambiguous, in a way that suggests a connexion between times of transition and spiritual or mystical danger (see Forth *in press*). As it is located in the middle of the annual cycle, its position in relation to other parts of the year is thus identical to that of the middle finger in relation to the other fingers.

Interestingly, as the Kodi (WLR) word for 'nine' Wielenga (1917: 67) gives *banda'iha*, a phrase which he translates as 'that does not count'. But in the absence of further evidence I am unable to say what might be the significance of this usage in relation to the similar characterization of the fourth finger, and the annual period of prohibition, in other parts of Sumba. Presumably, though, it has something to do with the symbolic properties of the number nine in Kodi.<sup>6</sup>

With regard to the term 'unnamed' (*nda pangara*) as applied to the middle finger in several neighbouring districts in the more easterly part of western Sumba, it is relevant to note that this designation is also employed as a reference to higher forms, or the highest form, of divinity. Thus in Rindi and elsewhere in eastern Sumba, God is sometimes referred to as 'the one whose name is not mentioned, whose title is not uttered' (*pandapeka tamu, pandanyura ngara*); and there is the more general idea that the Divinity, in contrast to the deified first ancestors of the clans, does not have a (personal) name.<sup>7</sup> This then affords us

---

<sup>6</sup> The Lamboya (WLR) word for 'nine' is *kabani isa* (Wielenga 1917: 67). *Isa* (cf. Kodi *iha*) is 'to count' and 'one', while *kabani* apparently means 'man, masculine' (Wielenga *ibid.*: 17, 19); but I am unable to gloss this phrase as a whole or to guess its import.

<sup>7</sup> This notion should be referred to the general avoidance in eastern Sumba (as elsewhere) of personal names, and most particularly those of persons of nobility; for to utter someone's name, and especially to use a personal name in address, can be taken as a sign of disrespect. This might suggest, therefore, that to have no name at all, or to have one that is never used, signifies the highest form of respect.

additional evidence of a connexion between namelessness or anonymity (and the similar idea of being uncounted or unconsidered) and spiritual power, although in this case the power in question, while it may in some respects be described as excessive (see Forth 1981: 89), is not (exclusively) malign. It is also worth noting that, in eastern Sumba at any rate, God is represented in various ways as otiose, inactive and still - ideas which recall the character of the annual period of restriction, the 'uncounted month(s)', mentioned above (see Forth *ibid.*: 84-5). Moreover, as I have shown in my monograph on Rindi (*ibid.*: 127-28), there are a number of instances in which a 'middle' or 'centre' (*padua*) is identified with a superior, unitary, and relatively inactive and diffuse manifestation of divinity standing in opposition to more active and specialized forms of spiritual power located at certain significant margins. And in several cases, such centres, or medial entities, are characterized as or associated with comparatively empty or vacant locations (*ibid.*: 127-28, 240). Ideas relating to anonymity, divinity, and centrality therefore suggest a wider framework in which the designation of the middle finger as unnamed or uncounted may be usefully considered.

In contrast, there is so far as I am aware no evidence that the fourth finger is similarly associated with spiritual or mystical power anywhere on Sumba, despite the fact that in most parts of the eastern region it is called the 'uncounted finger'. Hence it seems not to be the case that the designation of either this finger or the middle finger as 'unnamed' or 'uncounted', in different parts of Sumba, rests upon a similarity of ideas regarding the two digits. Indeed, in other Indonesian traditions the two fingers appear to have contrasting characters. Thus in Bahasa Indonesia/Malay (where the middle finger is the 'ghost finger' and so on), the fourth finger is called *jari manis*, the 'sweet' or 'nice' finger, while in the *djab* dialect of Endenese it is named the 'fine, beautiful finger' (van Suchtelen 1921: 298). Earlier I mentioned that on Sumba, the little finger, as the 'good, nice, well-behaved' (*kiha*) finger, may be seen as standing in opposition to the middle finger. In this respect, it appears significant then that in some Sumbanese dialects the name of the fourth finger associates it with the little finger. Thus in Mahu (ELR) the fourth finger is called the 'younger sibling of the little finger' (*eri kiha*), and in Anakalangu (ELR), in western Sumba, the 'elder sibling' (*aya kaisa*) of this finger. Furthermore, in Wanukaka (ELR) the name of the fourth finger is *nda to padua*, 'which is not in the middle' (Wielenga 1917: 16), a designation which quite explicitly places it in an antithetical relation to the middle finger.

It seems therefore that we can say little more about the designation of the fourth finger as the uncounted in eastern Sumba, and the unnamed in Palamidu (ELR) and Lamboya (WLR), than that these usages are instances of a widespread phenomenon found in many disparate traditions. As to why the fourth finger should be nameless, called 'nameless', or classified in some other negative way, it may be supposed that this has something to do



with its undistinguished character. The thumb, in contrast, clearly differs from the (other) fingers in respect of both physical form and function, and the index finger with regard to its indicating function and its relation to the thumb. The little finger is by far the smallest finger as well as the outermost of the series, while the middle finger stands apart from the others by virtue of being the longest and because of its central position. Yet, clearly, such considerations cannot fully account for the anonymity of the fourth finger, since in most languages, including a number of Sumbanese languages and dialects, this finger - the 'ring finger' in English and other European languages - does of course have a name, that is, a name which positively attributes to it some distinctive character or function.

Besides those mentioned earlier, other Sumbanese names for the fourth finger include *lima ondo* (Wewewa, WLR), *limè mandak* (Kodi, WLR), and *lima ndéngi* (Laura, WLR). I do not know whether the first two terms have other meanings, but in eastern Sumbanese *ndéngi* means 'to wait, await'. (In Kodi, the same word, *ndéngi*, is applied to the middle finger, thus providing yet another instance of where the names of this finger and the fourth finger are interchanged in different districts.) In the eastern Sumbanese district of Lewa the fourth finger is named *lima kàca*; and *kàca*, I would guess, might be cognate with Kambera *kàha*, 'full, tight; pressed, crowded', in which case it could refer to the intermediate position of this digit between the middle and little fingers.

In Nàpu (ELR) the name for the fourth finger is *mapa'aru*, 'which is the younger sibling', and in Lauli (WLR) *ana lima*, 'child finger'. Like the Mahu (ELR) designation 'younger sibling of the little finger' mentioned above, therefore, these usages indicate the fourth finger to be inferior to the others. As I also noted earlier, however, in Anakalangu (ELR) the fourth finger is by contrast called the 'elder brother of the little finger' (*aya kaisa*); hence apparently not everywhere is it regarded as the most inferior. A similar disagreement can be seen from the fact that whereas the fourth finger is the 'child finger' in Lauli, in Kodi it is the little finger that has this status. Such variation might then be attributed to the fact that while the little finger is inferior to the others in terms of its size - and perhaps also its position, as the outermost and last of the series - the fourth finger is inferior in respect of its undistinguished character. Put another way, we might say that the fourth finger is ambiguous. For while it is the least distinct in terms of form and function, it is also prominent in the sense that it is not inconspicuous; indeed, it is at least as long as the index finger. Interestingly, in this respect the fourth finger, as the 'uncounted finger', may be seen to parallel the aforementioned annual period of restriction, the 'uncounted month(s)' in some parts of Sumba, since the latter too is ambiguous, in that it is not readily classifiable with either of the two major halves of the year (see Forth *in press*).

Referring to the use of the same names for different fingers

in different parts of Sumba, Wielenga (1917: 16) comments that 'it is remarkable how the names of the fingers in various dialects are used interchangeably...'. The fact is however that it is only the names of the middle and little fingers which are employed in other dialects for the fourth finger. As I remarked just above, the interchange of names for the fourth and little fingers can be ascribed to the fact that they are both inferior, although in different ways. In contrast, as I have endeavoured to show, the designation of either the fourth or middle finger as 'unaccounted' or 'unnamed' in different languages and dialects requires another sort of explanation, and specifically, one that in part relates to Sumbanese ideas concerning such matters as anonymity and centrality. In this regard, since the idea of the fourth finger as the unnamed finger occurs in unrelated languages around the world, there are some grounds for supposing that it may originally have been only the fourth finger that was so designated on Sumba, and that for the reasons suggested above, the designation was later transferred in some regions to the middle finger.<sup>8</sup> As to why the fourth finger is called 'unaccounted' (or 'unnamed') in some parts of the island, one possibility is that this was an independent development motivated by the manifestly undistinguished character of this digit. On the other hand, since the fourth finger is nameless in Sanskrit (Barnes 1980: 204, citing Pott 1847), it is also possible that the idea was, directly or indirectly, introduced to Sumba from western Indonesia, and particularly from Java. But while there can be no certainty in these matters, it may be hoped that the foregoing remarks have illuminated the variation found among Sumbanese finger names, and, more specifically, that they have shown the designation of the middle finger as the 'unnamed' or 'unaccounted' in various parts of Sumba to be consistent with themes encountered in other areas of Sumbanese symbolic thought, as well as with ideas regarding the mystical character of the middle finger in other parts of Indonesia.

#### POSTSCRIPT

As an addendum to this paper I should like to raise one other matter which relates to the use of numbers. As I have demonstrated in my monograph on Rindi (1981), in eastern Sumba the number four figures prominently as a symbol of completeness and unity, as do the multiples eight and sixteen, which in some contexts are interchangeable with four (see also Onvlee 1949: 452). The number four also has ritual value in western Sumba,

---

<sup>8</sup> In order to test this hypothesis it would of course be necessary to know whether the designation of the middle finger as 'unnamed', and so on, is not also encountered in other societies which hold different ideas regarding middles or centres, and also anonymity.

and especially it would seem in those western districts which linguistically are more closely related to the east, although evidence concerning its exact significance in this region is wanting. Now in this respect the specification of one of the five fingers - and also toes, since these are named in the same way - as uncounted or unnamed (which, it may be worth recalling, does not occur in the languages of Laura, Wewewa, and Kodi, in the far western part of Sumba) seems to take on an additional significance. For it suggests a representation of the hand (and the foot) as composed of just four digits, a notion which Barnes (1980: 202), alluding to Kédang usage, remarks is 'not entirely improbable'. However, despite this apparent congruity, it must again be recalled that the anonymity or disregard of one of the fingers, specifically the fourth, is a widespread phenomenon. Thus, clearly, a degree of caution is necessary when interpreting this idea with reference to other features of any particular tradition in which it occurs.

As regards the prominence of the number four on Sumba it is perhaps also worth mentioning the use, in Rindi and elsewhere, of terms which refer to sets of four items. Thus *lutu*, for example, denotes four objects of the kind enumerated with the classword *wua* ('fruit'); while eight of such objects is *dua lutu* ('two *lutu*'), and so on (cf. Endenese *wutu*, *sutu*, 'four'; *rua mbutu* (*djab* dialect), 'eight', i.e. 'two times four', van Suchtelen 1921: 315, 254). Similarly, *woku* refers to a group of four small animals; and there is other evidence besides which indicates measurement based on the number four. Yet it needs to be stressed that the foregoing are special words employed only for measuring in bulk - the usual term for 'four' being *patu* - and, more importantly, that the eastern Sumbanese system of numeration is a thoroughly decimal one. Plainly, then, one is not justified in concluding that this mensurational use of four is directly bound up with ideas concerning the fingers, and, even less, that such ideas are determinative of either the mundane or ritual use of numbers on Sumba (cf. Barnes 1980: 201-02). Thus all that can safely be said is that the implicit notion of a four-fingered hand is consistent with the prominence of this number and its multiples in other areas of Sumbanese life.

GREGORY FORTH

#### REFERENCES

- Barnes, R.H. 1980. 'Fingers and Numbers', *JASO (Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford)*, Vol. XI, pp.197-206.
- Brandstetter, R. 1906. *Ein Prodrömus zu einem vergleichenden Wörterbuch der malaio-polynesischen Sprachen für Sprachforscher und Ethnographen*. Malaio-polynesische Forschungen III. Luzern: E.Haag.

- Dempwolff, O. 1938. *Austronesisches Wörterverzeichnis*. (Vergleichende Lautlehre des Austronesischen Wortschatzes, Vol.III. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für Eingeborenen-Sprachen, no.19). Berlin: Dietrich Reimer.
- Echols, J.M. and H. Shadily. 1963. *An Indonesian-English Dictionary*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- Forth, G. 1981. *Rindi: An Ethnographic Study of a Traditional Domain in Eastern Sumba*. Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, no.93. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.
- ... in press. 'Time and Temporal Classification in Rindi, Eastern Sumba'. To appear in *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land en Volkenkunde*.
- Fox, J.J. 1971. 'Sister's Child as Plant: Metaphors in an Idiom of Consanguinity', in R. Needham, ed., *Rethinking Kinship and Marriage*, London: Tavistock, pp.219-252.
- Kapita, U.H. 1974. *Kamus Sumba Timur-Indonesia*. Unpublished ms.
- Onvlee, L. 1949. 'Naar aanleiding van de stuwdam in Mangili (Opmerkingen over de sociale structuur van Oost-Soemba)', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, Vol.CV, pp.445-459.
- ... 1973. *Cultuur als antwoord*. Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, no.66. 's-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff.
- Pott, A.F. 1847. *Die quinare und vegisimale Zählmethode bei Völkern aller Welttheile*. Halle: Schwetschke. (Cited in Barnes, 1980.)
- Suchtelen, B.C.C.M.van. 1921. *Endeh (Flores)*. Mededeelingen van het Bureau voor de Bestuurszaken der Buitengewesten, bewerkt door het Encyclopaedisch Bureau, Aflevering 26. Weltevreden: Uitgeverij Papyrus.
- Wielenga, D.K. 1917. 'Vergelijkende woordenlijst der verschillende dialecten op het eiland Soemba en eenige Soembaneesche spreekwijzen', *Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, Vol.LXI (5e deel), pp.1-96.

## RETHINKING SOCIALIZATION

Social worlds are uneven; they do not have a single texture. We journey out of infancy, where 'self' and 'other', 'group' and 'society' seem meaningless labels, and learn somehow to know the pressures of principalities and powers, economic survival. We learn to live as best we can through different life experiences, from the sheltered to the horrific. Class, clan, gender, all the concepts of sociology and social anthropology must somehow be encountered, expressed and reproduced by individual human beings (including the makers of such concepts) since social theories are in some way or another abstracted from the observation and experience of human action. Are the human abilities which enable them to make such abstractions the same as those which enable them to act? What do we mean by the *social* and how do human beings develop 'socialness'?

In the social sciences answers to the second question have been determined by answers to the first: as I shall try to show, *socialization* is a concept that has been developed within a specific set of assumptions about the nature of *society* and *the individual*. I shall suggest that we need to 'rethink socialization' because there are alternative social theories to which the old concept does not apply, but I also think that such rethinking might modify social theory.

Sociological thinking was made possible by assuming there is a social level of events independent of individual volition. The assumption is simple but fundamental; the status of the social is not described in it and my gloss 'the social *level of events*' is more specific, and substantive, than many theorists'.

'Events' are not described by systemic and organisational theories of society, and it is proper to say that the assumption can be an *as if* one, and often has been. Neither is it easy in practice to distinguish, in analytical descriptions of society, between this purely theoretical supposition, abstracted generalisation, and experiential features of human life - but then, these three interact in ordinary perception.

As we all know, functionalist accounts of *society* need discrete human beings only as slot or role fillers, and so have had to account for the empirical circumstance that this anonymous labour force is composed of you and me by claiming that we are half *social* and half *individual*. Only the first half is the social anthropologist's/sociologist's concern. Nadel made the point with customary firmness:

The whole familiar antithesis individual-society is in certain respects a false one. Action patterns are realized by individuals; groupings and relationships exist through individuals. Yet if the action pattern is conceived of as standardized, regular, and recurrent, it is also independent of the concrete living individual... our analysis also leads us away from the individual to something else. We need a word for this "something else", that is, for the human being who is the point of all things social yet is not a concrete, uniquely existing human being... (1951:92)

Nadel borrows Radcliffe-Brown's term *person* to analyse this focal human being who is *not* unique or existent. The Romantic opposition between wilful individualism and social order is one version of a dichotomy that recurs again and again, though the components may be differently weighted.

People function in our society, as in most societies on the record of history, by becoming adjusted to their social role at the price of giving up part of their own will, their originality and spontaneity.... But man is not born to be broken, so the child fights against the authority represented by his parents; he fights for his freedom not only *from* pressure but also for his freedom to be himself, a full-fledged human being, not an automaton (Fromm 1944 [1949]: 409-410).

This evaluation has been expressed even more sharply in recent years.

Although Nadel argued in detail against the 'antithesis individual-society' he did not in fact dissolve it but rephrased it by antithesising the random and the predictable: with a holistic model emphasising continuity and interdependence there is no way to deal with cruelty, folly, world-conquering ambition or lively passions except as randomly distributed traits. The all-or-nothing character of this

distinction between individual and society, whether of Nadel's or Fromm's variety, belongs to a long-lived, originally Judeo-Christian tradition, most powerfully analysed by Dumont.<sup>1</sup> Nadel's definitions of person or individual, carefully and objectively framed as they are, do not escape from Western world views of self and personality. As Burrige says, 'We contain in the one notion [of the individual] the ordinary or common and the special or peculiar' (1979:4). Despite assuming that there are persons, the distinction between humankind and human being is nevertheless maintained, even though 'persons' belong to the 'social', because the individual is an instance of the species and the species is 'social'. But social description nowadays changes its meaning because of the findings of ethology (I will come back to this later on). If instead one uses the word *society*, the assumption is clearer: the individual is thought to be an instance of society. These reasons are wholly either-or and both concepts are absolute: there is the single category society, and the category items, all individuals.

The individual seems to be the focus of classical psychology as the instance of the species; that is why variations in the behaviour of a small number of university students may be held to instantiate variations at large in the world. Social characteristics can be edited out by randomising, so they are perceived in exactly the same way as individual ones in Nadel's account. Practitioners of social anthropology/sociology first identify features which they consider *social* (and therefore criterial). Non-criterial features are synonymously idiosyncratic, individual, and *psychological*. Practitioners of psychology in their experimental tradition do exactly the same, but their residual category is the *social*. To be fair, social variables may indeed be incorporated into the design, just as attitudes are often a subject for their many sociological counterparts. But in that case, the basic structuring assumption may be at odds with the ostensible aims, and will naturally colour or constrain them. Thus surveys using random samples obscure sociological factors, and may in consequence be wrong, as Leach showed some years ago (1958 [1967]).

It is not my aim here to criticise types of theory, which would in any case be a very unoriginal exercise, nor do I suppose that my accounts fully characterise types of research, still less disciplines. I simply wish to tease out the structural necessities of these theories and approaches. It is clear that concepts of *socialization* have been dependent on the dichotomies I have noted here, that is, that the individual is a species instance and the person is an instance of society. The 'person' is in fact treated as if coterminous with the individual, though Nadel's model, more innovative theoretically, did not require this. Socialization then is the grafting process, by which the individual acquires personhood. This view, I found, was exactly expressed by a rare social

anthropological explorer on the terrain, who begins 'Socialization may be broadly defined as the inculcation of the skills and attitudes necessary for playing given social roles' (Mayer 1970:xiii). It is also the view of earlier sociologists and later psychologists, as is shown by Danziger (1971) who reviewed the literature very critically. His objections focus on different weaknesses of behaviourist and 'psychoanalytically derived' and 'cognitively oriented' theories; his own interests however are in the psychological aspects of socialization, that is the development of cognitive and affective characteristics, primarily in the setting of the nuclear family. *Social* influences mean peers, parents, teachers, 'role behaviour' instanced by 'sex-typing'.

Among the problems which the cited examples present, we can note that psychology and sociology do not 'cover for' each other. Their terrains are not adjacent but on different planets because the species and society are differently conceived entities, though they are based formally on the same laws of taxonomy. Then, Mayer has no means of expressing how socialization occurs other than by *inculcating given roles*; that is, he is working within a paradigm that has no place for change, and does not differentiate the processes of social action. He notes uncomfortably that socialization does not seem analytically separable from social control, 'there seems to be no hard and fast level between them' (xv). He thereby, incidentally, shows why with this paradigm one could not get beyond the poles of 'conflict and consensus'.

One might suppose that as Mayer's approach was already dated - there were already theories challenging functionalism in those dark ages a dozen years ago! - more satisfactory accounts of socialization would already have been put forward. Indeed, accounts of childhood development (and of course socialization can go under different names) were deeply affected by the structuralist propositions of Chomsky and *Structuralism* is the title of a book not by Lévi-Strauss, but by the psychologist, Jean Piaget (first published in 1968). Above all, symbolic interactionists freed the individual from functionalism's and indeed structuralism's bonds, for once human beings can be seen as actors, and makers of social reality, socialization can no longer be described as a reactive process.

Different social theories, one would think, imply different senses of 'social'. The tautology vanishes, alas, when one tries to define these senses, whether by reference to the theoretical propositions themselves, or by abstraction from the research findings that follow them. It is like peeling an onion. However, systems-type theories, including structural ones, require models of generation and regulation, which do not encourage focus on the *variability* of human behaviour, as can be seen even in contemporary examples (cf. Cohen 1981). So in a sense such theories do not investigate 'social relations' at all, and in practice one finds that 'social' is again a synonym



for collective. (One should note that Durkheim attempted a theory of socialization in his description of 'conscience collective'.)

British structural-functionalists argued that their innovation was to focus on social *relations*, for which again Nadel is a good example. For him roles were dyadic relationships, (which means that the term 'role' has some analytical possibilities missed by the general, vacuous user today). Nevertheless their 'relations' remained abstractions from events, and within the taxonomic model. Relationships themselves, therefore, could not be the subject of investigation as they came to be for interactionists. For the purpose of this paper I will lump together several, and in some respects contradictory, movements: my interactionists would include transactionalists, ethnomethodologists and different phenomenologists. These interactionists also have branches in psychology, e.g. construction-theorists and social psychology reformers like Harré and Secord, who explicitly tried to set up a 'scientific study of those psychological states, conditions and powers which are to be attributed to individual people when they are engaged in social activity' from 'a general theory of social action' and by rejecting positivistic methods (Harré and Secord 1972:1).

The theories and methods of social interactionists make it look as if differences of discipline can be transcended or indeed integrated. However, the author of a text-book subtitled *A Symbolic Interactionist Social Psychology* introduces his subject by arguing that 'while a host of interesting materials are to be found within contemporary psychology, for the most part a coherent, sophisticated, and sociologically relevant body of theory is not to be found there. This is a judgment with which most psychologists and many sociologists will take issue, to be sure, but it is firm: the most promising resources for a sociological social psychology are to be found, today, within sociology itself' (Hewitt 1976:3).

In a theory of human interaction 'the social' is the interaction itself, since social beings = interacting beings. This interaction is not specifically human, however, since other animal species display the same characteristic of surviving through patterned relationships in different kinds of interdependence. It can be argued that these relationships have properties which cannot be described by reference to the relators alone, and should therefore be studied independently. When Hinde attempted to do so, he found that he had to try and integrate findings from several disciplines. Starting from scratch and confining himself to human dyads, he still found there was a huge and complex amount of data to simplify (Hinde 1979).

For Hinde then, human relationships are social by definition, and he sees like Harré and Secord that analysing them is analysing social action. But the features of these relationships which he considers are psychological ones in the

usual sense of that term: aspects of perception, affectivity, exchange and dependency, the parent-child relationship (which is always expressed like this - a "given" dyad - in lists of attributes in social psychology). One could conclude from Hinde that human relationships only include the properties of the relationship that have no reference outside the dyad. Thus a master-slave relationship could not be investigated in those aspects of dominance and servility which are derived from law, means of coercion, economic conditions and the like - the social in *these* senses is excluded from consideration. What remains for analysis, therefore, is just those variations visible enough using the universal-species model, exactly as for 'positivist' psychology.<sup>2</sup>

Such consideration may be behind Hewitt's criticism of psychology. He draws his readers' attention to 'the distinction between *social structure* and *social process*' and asks a series of questions that at first made me suppose this paper had been written for me. 'How do members of a class acquire their goals and values from the class experience, and how do they translate them into real behaviour? ... How do the members of one class interact with members of another... And over time how do relationships among classes among individuals within a class change or remain the same?' (1976:5-6). But I do not find that he answers these questions, and the reason, I believe, is that 'from the perspective of symbolic interactionists, society consists of extended interlinkages of joint actions and collectivities are connected over space and time' (Hewitt 1976:167).

It is not enough to divide 'joint action' from 'collectivities'. The network analogy hides the imbalanced pressures and the different *kinds* of relationship which actually occur. To treat society essentially as a network of dyadic relationships - the dyad writ large - is to ignore those non-dyadic relationships into which humans universally enter. The dyad is simply the irreducible feature, the minimum form of relationship, and 'the social' (also called 'sociality'/'socialness'/'sociation') should refer to all the forms in which this principle is manifested.

This point can be demonstrated by reference to the dramaturgical model favoured by some interactionists (cf. Harré and Secord - they do not mention Kenneth Burke). Instead of asking how a drama is a model of society, we can ask how social life is different from a drama.

In the theatre, one can hardly replicate the variety in scale and number of interactions in even one person's ordinary day. Thus I may shop in a crowded supermarket, work in the garden--alone, but conscious of the other gardeners visible across the suburban strips--and go through a space-time dance of interaction in the university. There are so many kinds of interaction, and from 1-1 to 1-100s, involving such complicated power processes. In the theatre these events are transposed onto one limited stage and the interactions, too,

are scaled down, limited, concentrated through a few actors. The great freedom achieved by film was to present a different simple empirical fact of life for so many of the human race; a cast of thousands is able to represent the crowds, armies, processions that each one of us, on occasion, sees face-to-face.

The ways in which art is created to project life are of course part of that life, and social scientists might ponder also on the many aspects of social life which are captured by art and not by social theory. Besides the flattest pragmatic differences of number, we know that art too has its own means of suggesting to the audience's interpretive eye the social differences among people by styles and symbols, glimpsed agendas, deference and guns. Dramaturgical techniques are in turn used in life, and on TV art and life dissolve into one another, policies are personalised, and death becomes a play; but also, when pressures and conflicts are realised in action, the mass media can extend their effects.

Action-based theories of society, then, may be predicated on the theoretical equivalence of individual and network or they may assert that 'society' is sustained by individual interactions, at the level of small groups. Any mode of *socialization* derivable from such theories must correspondingly reduce the structural complexity of social experience. It is surprising that sociological interactionists have not focussed on socialization - so far as I know - but it seems they could only substitute an undifferentiated ability to *create* social forms for the functionalists' *inculcation* of roles.

Functionalist/systemic theories, in which I include Marxist theories of society, do not of course posit an all-or-one atom versus totality as the sum total of social *relations*. Even though 'the individual' (or person) is treated as the minimal unit of structure, this structure is not a network connecting identical nodes but a collection of different structures, which are of different internal organization, can 'nest', overlap unevenly, or simply co-exist. A mass of research and common-sense observation demands this view of society, the social; the moment of error comes when these concepts of structuring are applied to a society. At this point conceptual and pragmatic criteria have often been hopelessly confused, to produce the parti-coloured beach-ball model (Tonkin 1971), which suggests that there are actual societies made up of equivalent and equivalently related parts. That this model remains in use -- implicitly, since many of its users reject the theories which permit it as an explicit proposition -- attests to the power of the either-or dichotomy of 'social' and 'individual' and its necessary corollary of even and invariant socialization. I quote from Dumont's comments on this phenomenon in the footnotes.

Some Marxist theories explicitly deny any significance to individuals in the social process (while advocating policies that are supposed to benefit 'the people' in the long run).

You can turn to E.P. Thompson for a powerful refutation, which demonstrates that it is the purest idealism to 'evict human agency from history' (1978:281) and replace it by structural determinations. (All of structuralism gets wrongly tarred with Althusser's brush, but Thompson's arguments are much too important to be depreciated by anthropologists because of that.)

To Thompson, there is

a missing term: "human experience"...Men and women also return as subjects... not as autonomous subjects, "free individuals", but as persons experiencing their determinate productive situations and relationships, as needs and interests and as antagonisms, and then "handling" this experience within their *consciousness* and their *culture*... in the most complex (yes, "relatively autonomous") ways, and then (often but not always through the ensuing structures of class) acting upon their determinate situation in their turn (1978:356).

It is instructive to compare this vision with the subject matter of social interactionism, for instance in Hewitt's account, from which I quoted extracts earlier. One can certainly argue with Thompson's model, and even strongly criticise the choice and relative weighting of components, but it still recognises more of the character of social life than Hewitt's does. One does not have to be a Marxist to see this.

When I criticised the dramaturgical view of society I deliberately mentioned only actual, visible and audible characteristics of life - the actual number of people one can see in a day and their relative location in space - which cannot be replicated in most dramatic performances. I deliberately ignored the other means by which social life is carried on, and all the invisible powers that have been postulated to explain why human interactions have particular consequences, or no significant consequences (so that personal actions and reactions appear to be irrelevant). This was because it is necessary to show that the dramaturgical model cannot explain social action even as it is empirically observable, without any reference to class or underlying structure or ideology or productive forces.

Human beings are characterised by memory which stores and sorts experience, leading us to face new experience with modes of understanding already built, and enabling new conclusions to be kept for further application. Even the non-literate also have aids to the recording of knowledge outside the human memory and with literate records the capacity to do this and to analyse and theorise experience is much enhanced. Speech, which is a criterial feature of human socialness because it operates interactively, can also be used self-reflectively. The other universal fact for humans, as for other organisms, is that they live in irreversible time, everyone born, everyone dying. Whatever additional beliefs there may be about time and

survival, these conditions are universally understood, as is the need to care for babies and that they have limited capacities compared with adults.

One cannot properly account for 'the social' and exclude these features, which are some (not all) of the tools, the means of social action. They mean that while society, too, exists in irreversible time it may take on the appearance of pattern or even stasis. There does not have to be a gap between 'social structure' and 'social process' - they can be dealt with in the same analytical framework - if one realizes that human beings continuously but fleetingly sustain and create social worlds into which new members are forever being born and will continue to socialise and be socialised until they die; that is to say, they will participate variously in teaching, enforcing, obeying, in mutually acquiring the processes of social life.

Raymond Williams claims that

what is abstracted in orthodox sociology as 'socialization' is in practice, in any actual society, a specific kind of incorporation.... Any process of socialization of course includes things that all human beings have to learn, but any specific process ties this necessary learning to a selected range of meanings, values and practices which, in the very closeness of their association with necessary learning, constitute the real foundations of the hegemonic....(1977:117)

Taking the point that this account does no more than redescribe and relabel - to leave the species hegemonised instead of socialised in an equally holistic manner - Williams then argues that because there are so many specific forms and occasions of *incorporation* 'the hegemonic process... is in practice full of contradictions and of unresolved conflicts... it must not be reduced to the activities of an "ideological state apparatus"' (118).

We may add surely that the hegemonic process (leading to '*self identification* with the hegemonic forms') is more likely to be total where institutions and cosmology are as it were mapped on one another, in communities that are productively undifferentiated and acted on indifferently by external forces. These are small, and rare, 'societies'. Elsewhere, differentiation is such that ruling classes do not monopolize all the messages - contradiction emerges at any moment from the inconsistency of demand, the impossibility of choice, and closure is even more incomplete. Contradictions have even more causes than Williams goes on to describe. Above all, there are creative capacities which not all of society stifles, so *new* messages get across.

These are all processes which operate dialectically on and through people, and with cumulative effect. They must begin at birth, yet very little is known about how small children shape themselves by the actual, successive physical encounters of

their lives, in what shapes they perceive power and authority, how soon they internalise *specific* expectations of social action, how far their milieu successively blocks, or creates, or enables them to become people with certain capacities. So much attention has been paid to child development (and some to politically urgent aspects from time to time, like race consciousness) but so little to these sociological factors, in which I stress aspects of *power*. Salmon writes a programmatic article urging that children be considered as social beings. 'Because the official psychological expertise excludes social settings where children are not clearly in receipt of "socialization" many places and situations of a child's everyday experience have been almost completely overlooked' (1979: 225). In Britain, he notes, these different experiences will result in very different behaviour towards, or feelings about, policemen or social security officials. Indeed.

Salmon also finds it necessary to point out that children will have very different expectations of status and sex in that familiar focus of research 'the family', which takes so many forms in reality, even at the gross level of what he calls 'culture' (he means as between families of Asian and English working-class origin). Such differences will be obvious to social anthropologists, but their training does not direct them to analysing the context I am trying to delineate. It is not true either that anthropologists have altogether lacked psychological expertise, but that expertise has itself been directed to 'psychological', i.e. non-sociological concerns. Cross-cultural psychology has furnished many points of interest to us, but I think still within the paradigm that I have described above; ultimately therefore the focus is on how cognition is affected by culture rather than on how different aspects of culture, including political culture, are entered into and continued.

British anthropologists, unlike American ones, have been conspicuously impatient of psychology as they understood it, which no doubt is why organizers of the conference which gave rise to Mayer's volume wanted to exclude 'child-training' (1970:xi). And yet child development (not just explicit training) could be crucial in answering my questions about the nature of socialization. If we ask in what ways human beings in different classes and cultures become able to perpetuate, change or reject their worlds, we must suppose that this is a question which studies in child development could answer. People in the women's movement have started to ask this question about females: it is a question which is more obviously necessary just because there are, world-wide, fewer inductions into public roles, less formal training even, for women. Investigators therefore have to pay attention to the domestic sphere - the child-raising sphere - and to the non-articulated, inexplicit realms to which women seemingly banished themselves (cf. Ardener 1975). Feminist accounts of patriarchy may over-emphasise the formal, articulated role,

which is itself predicated on male-centred sociological assumptions. Many female roles, on the other hand, continue to repeat the attentiveness, the monitoring and closed-in reference of the domestic sphere. This need not be because these qualities are innate, but perhaps because they become imprinted; and this may contribute to women's roles not becoming so diversified as men's are. We might equally suppose that many males become trained to 'attend to' females in this context, so that later they are genuinely incompetent to notice them in others. Visibility is a social perception, but it may be 'psychologically' developed.

I said earlier that psychology and sociology do not 'cover for' one another. The aspects of socialization to which I am drawing attention are either defined away, as being said to belong to another discipline (although they are not in fact covered by it), or they cannot be explored without extending and applying concepts and methods used in one discipline or theory to those of another. So, for instance, 'hegemony' and 'cognition' would be brought into one discourse. I have suggested that we should pay attention to the palpable social world, which is the mediating element between these two, because it seems to be analysed as such in no discipline. It is however taken seriously by rulers, the military, publicists, mediemen, and all those whose aim is not to describe but to persuade, to legitimate and to mystify. There are conditions under which young and old are socialised through conscious display and bureaucratically organised ritual and others of more spontaneous effervescence (cf. for example, the growth in official Russian ceremonial since the Revolution, Binns 1979, 1980).

When I saw, on an educational TV programme, how French researchers have established that very young children internalise gestures and body postures through interaction, I realised the obvious point that words such as 'deference', 'superiority' and 'threat' presuppose actions and reactions which in the end are of individual physical shape, but can also be generalised and applied to more complex, less visible social behaviour. Our disciplines divide these two realms, and thus we do not connect them. Yet, considering anthropologists have learned from Mauss that there is a *technique du corps*, and from Lévi-Strauss and his followers that the body is good to think with, this question is not remote from structuralists' concerns.

Because I have looked for absences, I may be reproached for ignoring existing work which contributes to 'rethinking socialization'. This work might be more 'visible' if its premisses were part of overt anthropological interests, and if its authors did not have to work against the contemporary theoretical grain. We ought, too, to be able to use and incorporate existing research on complementary, more conventional aspects of socialization, e.g. language learning, or formal education. The whole anthropological enterprise,

is, potentially, relevant. Since so much attention has been paid to the structures of cosmology and its interrelation with social organisation, to rites of passage, to conditions which seem to cause change and to forces and relations which act to make people think as they do, it does not seem a great leap to ask *how* these effects operate through people.

Conceptually and theoretically, of course, it is a very considerable leap, which requires different assumptions and might incur different conclusions. Practically, many difficulties would have to be faced. And there is not one 'how', any more than there is 'the individual' or 'the society'; there are many forms of socialization differently exercised and enacted. *Incorporation*, as inferred by Raymond Williams, is by no means easy to understand, and must be experientially very varied. It may be achieved in selected victims by deliberately used 'psychological' means, such as brainwashing<sup>3</sup> - or by techniques which have a like result (see e.g. Spencer 1970). The real difficulty lies in understanding less obvious forms of conversion. Although anthropologists have been taught that inner states need not be their concern if public rites are the effective transformers (see, e.g. Leach 1969:88-9), transformations are not all of this kind (cf. Tonkin 1979), and if we want to understand events better, we have to find a way of understanding changes in their participants.

This, finally, is why rethinking socialization is necessary: not just to bring it up to date with other approaches in social anthropology and sociology, but to enable new thinking in these disciplines. Anthropological attention, for instance, is turning from structures to people who structure, the makers and processors of knowledge who live and die in historical time. I am interested in social selves, but in order really to understand how these are constructed, I think it will be necessary for anthropologists to explore and no doubt to colonize, the limbo I have described. (For an example of one exploration, see Gell 1979). And since we have wrongly bounded anthropological territory before, we should not accept existing labels at face value, so as to decide in advance that child and adult or primary and secondary socialization are all different.

New academic interest in individual action is, no doubt, related to deeper political and economic changes, as other social models have been before. But this fact does not invalidate a model, any more than its creation thereby invalidates the predecessors; it merely cuts them down to size. Each model can be used for understanding particular aspects of the world, and none account for the whole of it. Socialization revived does not replace systemic or class models, and understanding of the world should not be reduced to socialization. Yet new theories, I have tried to show, prove to be but old ones writ large if their underlying assumptions have not altered. Anthropologists seem to be struggling, in a post-structuralist world, to work out new



approaches that look profoundly different. If these are to be really so, I suggest that they will have to be underpinned by a new approach to socialization.

---

NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> It is too easily said that functionalist thinking is complacently conservative. Nadel wrote after the Second World War and the Holocaust, Fromm in 1944. He and several other contributors to Kluckhohn and Murray's readings seem to be grappling with the problem of explaining these evils in the framework of 'culture and personality', itself predicated on the individual-society dichotomy, which Dumont argues the Nazis actually exploited.

The nation is the type of global society... whose members are not aware of being essentially social beings, but only so many equivalent embodiments of man in the abstract, so many representatives of human-kind.... Renan wrote that the nation was "a plebiscite of every day", a formula which sounds ominous after the Nazis succeeded in using the appearance of consensus against the very spirit of consensus, exploiting the ingenuity of the democratic formula to manipulate it in favour of its opposite. In this formula, there is nor real, no ontological intermediary between the individual man and mankind at large (1970:34).

The State is likewise the 'empirical' manifestation of mankind (ibid).

- <sup>2</sup> As my other examples also show, the *social* in 'social psychology' usually means only 'the psychological' when it is seen operating in a (usually very small, face-to-face) group. I am arguing that social relations even at this level are not so explicable, and especially because one should consider the properties of a relationship. Hinde is not uniquely at fault - but may be misled by his sources.
- <sup>3</sup> One can also learn a great deal about the social as I am trying to define it here from accounts like Primo Levi's wise and distilled *If This is a Man* and *The Truce* (1979) which describe the horrors of the world turned upside down, in Auschwitz and after. Here 'incorporation' was achieved by systematically subverting the features of life which make it rationally ordered, and the prisoners could not survive physically if their social personality died.

## REFERENCES

- ARDENER, S. (ed.), 1975. *Perceiving Women*, London: Malaby.
- BINNS, C.A.P., 1979, 1980. 'The Changing Face of Power: Revolution and Accommodation in the Development of the Soviet Ceremonial System', *Man*, Vol. XIV, pp.585-606, and Vol. XV, pp.170-187.
- BURRIDGE, K., 1979. *Someone, No One. An Essay on Individuality*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- COHEN, R., 1981. 'Evolutionary Epistemology and Human Values', *Current Anthropology*, Vol. XXII, pp.201-218.
- DANZIGER, K., 1971. *Socialization*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- DUMONT, L., 1970. 'Religion, Politics and Society in the Individualistic Universe', *Proceedings JRAI*, pp.31-41.
- FROMM, E., 1944 [1949]. 'Individual and Social Origins of Neurosis', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. IX, pp. 380-384. Reprinted in C. Kluckhohn and H. Murray (eds.), *Personality in Nature, Society and Culture*, London: Cape.
- GELL, A., 1979. 'Reflections on a Cut Finger: Taboo in the Umeda Conception of Self', in R.H. Hook (ed.), *Fantasy and Symbol*, London etc.: Academic Press.
- HARRE, R. and P.F. SECORD, 1972. *The Explanation of Social Behaviour*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- HEWITT, J.P., 1976. *Self and Society: A Symbolic Interactionist Social Psychology*, Boston etc.: Allyn and Bacon.
- HINDE, R.A., 1979. *Towards Understanding Relationships*, London etc.: Academic Press.
- LEACH, E.R., 1958 [1967]. 'An Anthropologists's Reflection on a Social Survey', reprinted in D.G. Jongmans and P.C.W. Gutkind (eds.), *Anthropologists in the Field*, Assen: Van Gorcum.
- ... 1969. *Genesis as Myth and Other Essays*, London: Cape.
- LEVI, P., 1979 [1958, 1963]. *If This Is A Man and The Truce*, (trans. S. Woolf), Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- MAUSS, M., 1979. *Sociology and Psychology*, (trans. B.Brewster), London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- MAYER, P.(ed.), 1970. *Socialization: The Approach from Social Anthropology*, London: Tavistock.
- NADEL, S.F., 1951. *The Foundations of Social Anthropology*, London: Cohen and West.
- PIAGET, J., 1971 [1968]. *Structuralism*, (trans. and Ed. C.Maschler), London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- SALMON, P., 1979. 'Children as Social Beings', in P. Stringer and D. Bannister (eds.), *Constructs of Sociality and Individuality*, London etc.: Academic Press.
- SPENCER, P., 1970. 'The Function of Ritual in the Socialization of the Samburu Moran', in P. Mayer (ed.), *Socialization: The Approach from Social Anthropology*, London: Tavistock.
- THOMPSON, E.P., 1978. *The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays*, London: Merlin.
- TONKIN, E., 1971. 'The Uses of Ethnography', *JASO*, Vol. II, pp.134-136.
- ... 1979. 'Masks and Powers', *Man*, Vol. XIV, pp.237-248.
- WILLIAMS, R., 1977. *Marxism and Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

## BYWAYS IN OXFORD ANTHROPOLOGY

### SOME PROBLEMS WITH PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVES:

#### THE CASE OF C.W.DAMMANN

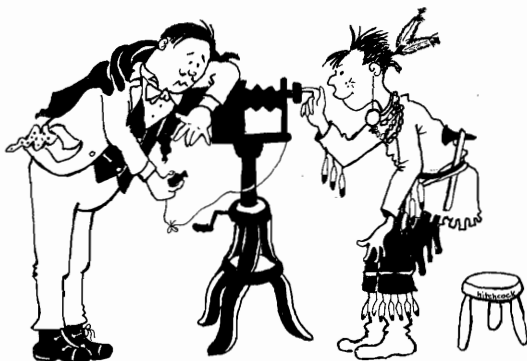
This short piece is not intended to be an exhaustive discussion of the general problems besetting large collections of archival photographs or of the problems of using such collections, but rather a few thoughts on the matter as they relate to one collection in the Pitt Rivers Museum, that of C.W.Dammann, a Hamburg photographer.

To dismiss the growing interest in archival photographs as mere nostalgia is mistaken for there has been a parallel development in the scholarly field. Over the past ten to fifteen years much attention has been paid to the techniques and value of visual anthropology but recently increasing attention has been directed towards early material. Problems are not restricted only to the actual interpretation of the content of the photograph; its source and context are equally important. If a photograph is to be recognised as valid anthropological and ethno-historical evidence it must be correctly provenanced and preferably dated, attributed and documented. Few early photographs have survived with all this information. As demands on collections such as that at the Pitt Rivers Museum grow and the application of photographic evidence diversifies, so more accurate information on the sources of photographs is required. However, to provide this information in retrospect is a mammoth task, and, as the Dammann collection illustrates, very complex.

The mass production of photographs was developing apace by the late 1850s. The reproduction of images on a large scale was made possible by the introduction of wet collodion glass negatives and albumen-coated printing papers. However, given the vast increase in the availability of photographs, anthropological material from the 1850s and 1860s is relatively limited, with field photographs being particularly rare. Very few of the photographers appear to have had any anthropological knowledge. Furthermore, many photographs of this period were taken to satisfy the curiosity of tourists and white settlers in various parts of the world. Consequently many images represent nineteenth-century stereotypes of the 'non-civilised', portraying subjects as the noble savage in a misty and romantic setting or as the barbarous primitive. This sounds dismissive but against such shortcomings can be cited some

excellent ethnographic work, for example, Rouseau in Paris, Eichtal in St. Petersburg, Brady in Washington or Forbes-Watson's monumental work *The People of India* (1868-1873).

The Pitt Rivers Museum has approximately 35,000 photographs, almost half pre-dating 1914 and many of those with little or no documentation. Amongst these is a substantial collection of over 1500 anthropological photographs of races from all over the world from C.W.Dammann. The collection was purchased by the Museum in 1901 through the offices of Professor E.B.Tylor and Henry Balfour from the estate of the photographer's brother, Frederick. It is interesting to look at this collection which at first sight appeared to have been satisfactorily identified and attributed as the work of C.W.Dammann--however, on investigation all is not what it seemed.



Little is known of Dammann's life. He was born in Mecklenburg in 1819 and moved to Hamburg in the late 1860s, establishing a photographic studio at 4, Grosse Johannisstrasse. He died in Hamburg in April 1874. It is not known whether he had any earlier interest in anthropology but in 1870-1871 he was commissioned by the Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte to photograph the Arab and African crew of a ship belonging to the Sultan of Zanzibar. At about the same time he photographed a troop of visiting Japanese acrobats. Both sets of photographs are of good quality and straightforward in their approach. It appears that there was considerable demand for these photographs from learned societies, museums and universities. This prompted the expansion of the project to provide a good and comprehensive collection of photographs for the scientific study of anthropology. Under the auspices of the Berliner Gesellschaft Dammann started to collect and copy photographs belonging to the society and its members, whether their own work or that purchased from commercial photographers. There were appeals to members at meetings in Berlin to loan rare material of anthropological interest to the project. The resulting collection was published in Berlin between 1873 and

1876 as *Anthropologisch-Ethnologisches Album in Photographien...* Herausgegeben mit Unterstützung aus den Sammlungen der Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte.

Dammann's brother Frederick, a teacher of German at Huddersfield Technical College in Yorkshire, completed the work after 1874 but does not appear to have added more than about 100 photographs to the collection.

The *Album* is a collection of over 600 albumen prints, arranged by geographical region, mounted in groups of 6 to 18 on 50 folio-size plates with short captions (some of which are of dubious accuracy). To the best of my knowledge the only complete copy of the *Album* is in the British Library. The Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin has 18 of the 50 plates, the Museum of Mankind has 9. There was also a popular version, *The Races of Man*, produced by Frederick Dammann which is slightly less rare. The Pitt Rivers Museum's holding of Dammann material comprises loose and mounted prints from the Dammann studio, many of which appear in the *Album* and *The Races of Man*, as well as several hundred images copied by Dammann which do not appear in either publication. The prints are mostly *carte de visite* format (108x63mm). Although there are field photographs, notably of Borneo and South America, a majority are portraits, the emphasis being on physical type rather than cultural context. Indeed in some of the field photographs the background has been deliberately blacked out. Certainly Dammann did this himself in some cases, for a photograph of a group from the American Northwest Coast which has had the background painted out in the *Album* appears in the Pitt Rivers Dammann collection untouched, with the group standing in front of a log cabin. The quality of the work in general is variable, doubtless reflecting that of the original, but it seems that many images have lost definition in the copying process. On the other hand, some are so good that one is tempted to assume that he was printing from the original negative.

Although it is clear that Dammann photographed some of the subjects himself (for example, the Arab crewmen), his anthropological work was primarily that of a copyist for the Berliner Gesellschaft. However, this does not diminish the value of his output. The collection contains many excellent and important photographs, many of which would have been lost but for the Berliner Gesellschaft-Dammann project. Although clearly the Berliner Gesellschaft had influence on and provided much impetus for the project, it appears that Dammann had a considerable degree of independence and was not merely working on instructions. The work is thoroughly scientific in its approach; there is no attempt at the sensational. It was the first attempt to produce a comparative physical anthropology in photographs. Professor Tylor described the *Album* as 'one of the most important contributions ever made to the science of man' and continued 'they [the photographs] will do more than any quantity of written criticism to check the rash generalization as to race so common in ethnological systems' (*Nature*, Jan.6, 1876, p.184). The value of the *Album* was also acknowledged at the Vienna World Exhibition in 1873 with the award of a bronze medal.

This is all very well, but we may ask how are these photo-

graphs in the *Album* and the Pitt Rivers Museum collection to be useful other than as a curiosity in the history of anthropological study? The majority of Dammann's output is completely without documentation but the collection's scholarly value would be greatly enhanced if the sources of the photographs could be established. Sadly the magnificent collection of the Berliner Gesellschaft has been lost or dispersed; nor is any catalogue of it known. It is possible that some of the original material copied by Dammann may be located in the future but until then one has to be content to piece together what one can. Some images can be identified as the work of some of the leading ethnological photographers of the period such as Vannerson and McClees in Washington, Whitney and Zimmerman in Minnesota and Albert Fritsch and Alberto Henschel in South America. Some of the Australian material is attributed by some, dubiously I think, to J.Lindt.

The correct attribution of photographs is a perennial problem. *Carte de visite* photographs were widely circulated and openly plagiarized. The sources of some of those used by Dammann can be recognized quite simply because they are copies of images identified and attributed elsewhere (e.g. in the collections of the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, in the National Anthropological Archive, Washington, or the Museum of Mankind, London). Others have been identified through studio fittings (such as backdrops, carpets or even elaborate skirting boards!). For example a photograph of two Plains (?) Indians in a studio has been identified as that of Hamilton and Hoyt of Sioux City, Iowa, in this way. Studio props are also useful in identifying the work of a studio. Many photographs were taken using whatever vaguely suitable props the studio happened to have. Consequently the same props tend to crop up in numerous photographs taken by that studio. Some photographs are ridiculously cluttered with a strange assortment of objects (rather like a Victorian drawing room), obviously an attempt to encapsulate a complete cross-section of a culture in one image. This, incidentally, only stresses the importance to modern users of knowing the context in which a photograph was taken. However, it is only as research on early photographers in general progresses that attributions can be made with any certainty.

What of the rest of the photographs in the *Album* and the Pitt Rivers Museum's holding? The meagre captions in the *Album* give some clues because some of the photographs are acknowledged. Some of them appear to come from members of the German expatriate community in Indonesia, Africa, Australia and the United States. However it is not clear whether these men were the photographers or merely the suppliers. In some cases it is implied that they were the photographers, for example photographs of South Africa acknowledged to a Dr. Schetelig, but it is by no means clear. Photographs of Egypt are similarly acknowledged to Herr. O.Schoeffft, who is known to have been a photographer in Cairo, but at present there is no more information on him. On the other hand photographs of the Sioux acknowledged to a Herr Meineke can almost certainly be attributed to Whitney of St. Paul, Minnesota. Clearly more work must be done before these acknowledgements can be usefully interpreted.

The *Verhandlungen* of the Berliner Gesellschaft is full of

references to photographs being donated to the society or being shown at meetings by members. It appears that many of them received photographs from contacts around the world (are these the men in the acknowledgements?). It is very likely that these photographs found their way into Dammann's studio, as there are certainly groups of photographs mentioned in the *Verhandlungen* which *could* be those in the Pitt Rivers Museum or the *Album*, but as yet there is no evidence beyond the circumstantial to link them.

Clearly a great deal of work has still to be done on the Dammann collection, but it well illustrates the difficulty of providing accurate retrospective documentation. The present photographic detective work grew out of 'routine investigations' whilst gathering information to catalogue photographs of North America mounted on cards with the Dammann studio imprint. The Dammann material is only one of a number of collections at the Pitt Rivers Museum with problems of identification and attribution, but it is probably the most complex and is important because it records so many early photographs. There is, at present, a lively exchange of information amongst institutions working on their photograph collections. The outcome is of immense value to scholars, for the more accurate the information that can be made available to those wishing to use archival photographs as a reliable source the better for all.

ELIZABETH EDWARDS  
Balfour Librarian, Pitt Rivers  
Museum and Department of  
Ethnology and Prehistory

.. .. .

## LETTER TO THE EDITORS

Dear JASO,

A question for the ASA's forthcoming Decennial Year:

Why was the first recognizable contribution to the modern social anthropology of women made by a *man*? I refer of course to Edwin Ardener's 'Belief and the Problem of Women', published in 1972.

Suggestions invited.

Yours etc.,  
Roy Willis  
Edinburgh

## ANTHROPOLOGY AND MORALITY<sup>1</sup>

This paper falls into two parts. I shall begin with some history of the branch of Philosophy called 'Ethics' or 'Moral Philosophy'. The second part of the paper contains criticisms of Durkheim's criticisms of philosophers' activities in Ethics, and suggests that what philosophers in the English-speaking world have studied under this heading could perhaps fruitfully be more widely investigated by anthropologists.

### I

In the period just before the publication of *Principia Ethica*<sup>2</sup> by G.E. Moore in 1903, probably the most generally accepted and certainly at present best known view of morality was that promoted by the Utilitarians, chief among whom were Bentham, J.S. Mill and Sidgwick.<sup>3</sup> The opinions they put forward were not uniform in detail, and had been held with more or less variation before, and there is also disagreement about the correct interpretation of some of them. But roughly speaking the view is that acts are

---

<sup>1</sup> This is a slightly amended version of a paper given at the Institute of Social Anthropology, Oxford, on October 30, 1981. The title was suggested by Godfrey Lienhardt. The original version contained discussion of the title, especially the term 'morality', which has been omitted.

<sup>2</sup> G.E. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, Cambridge 1903.

<sup>3</sup> J. Bentham, *Introduction to Principles of Morals and Legislation*, 1780; J.S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*, 1863; H. Sidgwick, especially *Methods of Ethics*, 1874.



morally right in proportion as they promote happiness, morally wrong in so far as they do the reverse. Mill in his book *Utilitarianism* is careful to explain that he means

not the agent's own happiness, but that of all concerned. As between his own happiness and that of others, utilitarianism requires him to be as strictly impartial as a disinterested and benevolent spectator.<sup>4</sup>

Bishop Butler, in Sermons published in 1726 and other theological works, especially *The Analogy of Religion*,<sup>5</sup> and long before the term 'Utilitarianism' was coined, gave this view a theological background. He claimed that the phenomenon which we know as our conscience was given us by God to guide our steps and that we should not ourselves endeavour to promote the greatest happiness, and especially not contrary to our inner voice:

Some of great and distinguished merit have, I think, expressed themselves in a manner which may occasion some danger to careless readers, of imagining the whole of virtue to consist in singly aiming, according to the best of their judgment, at promoting the happiness of mankind in the present state; and the whole of vice in doing what they foresee, or might foresee, is likely to produce an overbalance of unhappiness in it; than which mistakes, none can be conceived more terrible.<sup>6</sup>

The reason is that we lack the perfect foresight which God possesses:

The happiness of the world is the concern of him who is the Lord and Proprietor of it: nor do we know what we are about, when we endeavour to promote the good of mankind in any ways, but those which He has directed [which, he adds, is] indeed in all ways not contrary to veracity and justice.<sup>7</sup>

In more recent criticisms of the formulations of Utilitarianism, veracity and justice have also commonly been selected as exceptions to the rule, if any, that promotion of happiness is the sole criterion of moral right and wrong.

G.E. Moore's *Principia Ethica* turned the general course of Anglo-American philosophical thinking. He himself believed

---

<sup>4</sup> Mill, *op. cit.*, chapter 2.

<sup>5</sup> J. Butler, *Fifteen Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel*, 1726; *The Analogy of Religion*, 1739.

<sup>6</sup> Butler, 'Dissertation of the Nature of Virtue', in *The Analogy of Religion*, 1739, chapter 3, appendix i (10).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

there to be objective moral values and that moral good and evil are particular properties perceivable by the moral sense as particular colours are perceived by sight. He also thought that promoting happiness is in fact what morality consists in. But he accused previous writers like Bentham and Mill of committing a logical error which he called the 'naturalistic fallacy'. The nature of the error is variously described, but, roughly speaking, is supposed to consist of identifying the 'goodness' of something with some other property or set of properties, such as its being conducive to happiness. According to Moore 'goodness' cannot be defined in terms of other properties - it is a simple indefinable property all of its own. Other descriptions of the fallacy Moore was complaining about are that it involves or consists in deducing 'ought' from 'is' or evaluative conclusions from factual premises.

For half a century after the publication of *Principia Ethica* philosophers were unusually unanimous in accepting that naturalism, as it came to be called, was a mistake. This was thought to be the one truth proved in moral philosophy. They also united in not accepting Moore's positive doctrine that goodness is a simple indefinable property and a succession of theories following in which morality was thought of as a wholly subjective matter, in one or another sense of 'subjective'.

This style of view can be found in such best-sellers as Ayer's *Language, Truth and Logic*, first published in 1936, and, in a different version, in another very influential book, Hare's *The Language of Morals* (1952). The deficiencies of this succession of views, which became apparent to many, led to a re-investigation of the supposed naturalistic fallacy. An outcome was the belief held by some moral philosophers that there had been no logical error. A number thought that the Utilitarians were not identifying goodness as such with any particular properties, the position actually attacked by Moore, but suggesting a factual connection between goodness and happiness. Others, of whom I am one, think that what the Utilitarians were indeed defining was not goodness in general (which they were not discussing) but moral goodness, and that there is no logical error involved in this as there would have been had they tried to define 'goodness' in general, as Moore supposed, by positing being conducive to happiness as its equivalent. Among the points often made in this connection is that 'good' is a type of term which must be adjectively qualified, as in 'morally good', or qualify a particular sort of noun, as in 'good anthropologist' or 'good shot', to be correctly used, and that there may be descriptive equivalents for phrases like 'morally good', 'good orange', 'good sport', even if there cannot be for the word 'good' in general.

It is very noticeable in reading these works historically (and indeed in teaching pupils who come fresh to the subject, with what they have gleaned from the society, rather than from a tradition of philosophical thinking) that at some periods there is a predisposition to believe that there are objective

standards of morality and at others a predisposition to believe the reverse. These predispositions could well form an interesting subject of study to the anthropologist. In so far as they are given way to by philosophers, we have bad philosophy since it is a requirement of philosophy that it operates by reason alone and does not simply regurgitate a socially accepted view of any particular period or society.

The question of the objectivity or otherwise of morality is a subject matter on which moral philosophers have spilled much ink, too much as some think. But no one could suppose it to be the only matter studied. The general concern of the subject is with all those concepts and the logical relations between them which can reasonably come under the heading of 'moral concepts'. One question is of course just what is included in 'morality' and how it is to be distinguished from other phenomena such as law, so-called taboos, conventions, etiquette and so on.

Another, which arises from Moore's muddle between the term 'good' and its use in specifically moral settings, is the logical features of the words which are employed in what is sometimes unhappily named 'moral discourse' but are also used elsewhere. Among obvious examples are such words as 'right' and 'wrong', 'virtue', 'vice', 'evil', 'duty', 'obligation', 'guilt'.

A subject does not continue for so long as Ethics without developing sophistication and a wide range of subject matter. One area which was extensively handled by Aristotle and Aquinas, and less extensively, but nevertheless in some detail, by more recent moral philosophers, J.S. Mill and Sidgwick in the last century, and a number in this, is the question of virtues and failings.<sup>8</sup>

The moral virtues and failings are often treated as a subdivision of virtues and failings in general. Among the views held is that they (*moral* qualities) are divisible into two classes. In one we have such virtues as courage, temperance, thrift, prudence, self-control, patience. The other includes, on the virtue side, for example justice, honesty, generosity, conscientiousness, kindness, possibly integrity. As is well known, Aristotle believed there to be two failings corresponding to each virtue, the virtue being the mean between excess and deficiency. More recent philosophers, who belong of course to a different society or societies, if in the case of the English-speaking world to the same tradition of philosophical thinking, have generally believed each virtue to have one corresponding failing, and that the other which Aristotle finds stands in a different relation to the virtue in question. Thus we have courage and cowardice. We also have rashness. But whereas courage and cowardice relate to dangers worth facing, rashness and caution have to do with dangers not worth facing. The

---

<sup>8</sup> Aristotle, *The Nichomachean Ethics*, 4th century B.C.; St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologicae*, 13th century A.D.; J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*, 1859; Sidgwick, *op. cit.*

virtue and failing terms (in English) are in most cases applicable to both acts and agents, and the relation between the two applications is complex. I cannot begin to do justice (sic) to this subject, so I will draw your attention to just one line of thinking, with which I am not quite in agreement, which led to naming the set of virtues to which courage etc. belong as the 'self-regarding' virtues and the set to which justice and so on belong as the 'other-regarding' virtues. It was believed that the former promoted the happiness of the agent himself and the latter that of others, while the corresponding failings created respectively unhappiness for the agent, unhappiness for others.

In view of the important place in morality accorded to the general happiness by many moral philosophers, and their contrast between acting morally and acting out of self-interest, it is not surprising that the other-regarding virtues should have been accorded a superior position. A collaborator, Gabriele Taylor, and I mounted an attack on this view a few years ago,<sup>9</sup> *inter alia*, on the grounds that while the (so-called) other-regarding virtues *are* defined in terms of specific benefits to others, the (so-called) self-regarding virtues are the ones making up what is sometimes thought of as strength of character, and work for good or ill to the agent or others according to the ends their possessor is pursuing. It is a pity if kind or honest men are cowardly or imprudent. It can well be beneficial to the world at large if the cruel or the dishonest have these failings. Nor of course do the courageous necessarily profit from their own courage. It is for instance of doubtful advantage to be killed in battle.

## II

I say this much about some strands of moral philosophy as a background to the second part of my paper: Durkheim's complaints, starting in Philosophy journals about a century ago and continuing into the 1920s,<sup>10</sup> of the treatment by philosophers of morality, and a definition he himself gave of 'moral phenomena', as he called them.

His principal complaint was that philosophers reason *a priori* about how morality ought to be, whereas what should be done is to study moral phenomena empirically and as they are.

Admirer though I am of Durkheim, it does seem to me that he was not here at his best. In the first place he misconceived

---

<sup>9</sup> G. Taylor and S. Wolfram, 'The Self-Regarding and Other-Regarding Virtues', *Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. XVIII (1968).

<sup>10</sup> References are to E. Durkheim, *Selected Writings*, ed. A. Giddens, Cambridge 1972, chapter 3. Works of Durkheim's specifically quoted from are: 'La Science positive de la moral en Allemagne', *Revue Philosophique*, Vol. XXIV (1887), and *Sociologie et Philosophie 1924*.

and underestimated the treatment of morality by its mother subject Philosophy. His blunders on points of detail and more critical matters are legion. Thus he supposed that Utilitarianism must be incorrect simply because he thought nothing so complex as morality could emanate from a single principle, a point to which I shall return. Or again, Durkheim believed that according to Utilitarianism, what ought to be done on particular occasions is *deducible* from the initial definition of 'morally right' as that which is conducive to the greatest happiness. Mill in fact spends a good deal of space explaining that only by empirical investigation of what has and has not led to happiness in the past can we gauge probable consequences to the general happiness of a proposed course of action, and only so could one discover what it is morally right to do.

There is [Mill added] no difficulty in proving any ethical standard whatever to work ill, if we suppose universal idiocy to be conjoined with it; but on any hypothesis short of that, mankind must by this time have acquired positive beliefs as to the effects of some actions on their happiness; and the beliefs which have thus come down are the rules of morality for the multitude, and for the philosopher until he has succeeded in finding better...<sup>11</sup>

There is an important point on which Durkheim is right viz that philosophers do not usually see their task as encompassing empirical investigation: their concern is to lay bare the logical features of concepts, to say, indeed, where empirical investigation is relevant but not actually to conduct it. That they see this as their role clearly does not entail that they think that everything can be known by means of logic. Many of them spend a lot of time precisely saying that it cannot. Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*<sup>12</sup> published in 1690 was very influential in this respect in British Philosophy, if less so on the Continent. And there is nothing wrong with investigating logic. It is not an activity which has to be discontinued to make room for empirical studies. Indeed it is an important concomitant since to study moral phenomena empirically and as they are, you need to be able to identify them. Durkheim, in his relative philosophical innocence, failed to perceive that this identification is far from simple, so that you can easily think you are investigating one thing when actually you are investigating another.

It is to be supposed from the fact that Durkheim went so far as to transfer the old name 'Ethics' to the subject matter he thought ought to be studied that he supposed it to have at

---

<sup>11</sup> Mill, *Utilitarianism*, chapter 1.

<sup>12</sup> J. Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 1690.

least something in common with the old study, presumably the subject matter of morality.

Not only did Durkheim fail to see what moral philosophers were about, he also himself gave an account of morality which is indeed held in part by some philosophers, though probably not as a result of his influence, but is rejected by more than would accept it and is as it stands as full of holes as a colander. I think it may have been at least partly responsible for an odd rift between what philosophers still most often conceive of as morality or moral phenomena and what social anthropologists most commonly study, sometimes possibly under the delusion that they are including thereby the 'morality' of this or that society. I am not concerned with the different way the two subjects study what they study, which appears natural and in order, but with the different things which are studied which seems less obviously as it should be.

Durkheim conceived of morality as consisting of rules with sanctions, i.e. such that if you break the rule something nasty happens to you, not in the ordinary course of nature but by acts of man. He contrasts murder which gets punished in some places at some times to the natural consequence of falling ill which follows neglect of the rules of hygiene. He says that in the hygiene case we can discover from examining the content of the act that the consequence will follow, which of course is not so: medicine is an empirical study and the causes of illnesses a question of fact, discoverable only by observing that when A is done or not done, B does or does not regularly follow. What he probably meant to say is that the consequence follows in virtue of laws of nature, which he sees as universal. He makes a spiel of the fact that sanctions, in contrast, are not uniform and are imposed. This is rather unhappily identified with the thought that:

A sanction is the consequence of an act that does not result from the content of that act, but from the violation by that act of a pre-established rule .<sup>13</sup>

Where a society has rules the breaking of which carries with it a penalty, formal or informal, we may perhaps say that the society *disapproves* the acts thus forbidden. I put in the 'perhaps' to take account of e.g. obsolete rules, ones imposed by invading forces or tyrants etc., for it certainly cannot be taken for granted that every existent rule is everywhere always approved. More important, it is not at all clear that even the corpus of rules one might include are what constitute the morality of the society.

One reason for this is that there may be things thought morally wrong about which there are no rules proper and no

---

<sup>13</sup> Durkheim, ed. A. Giddens, pp. 96-97, from *Sociologie et Philosophie*.

punishment.

Here are a few examples from England. In *The Claverings* which Trollope published in 1867, Harry Clavering, tempted away by his first love, now a widowed countess, is on the brink of breaking his engagement with one Florence Burton, in a fashion which will reduce her to a 'thing maimed' and so forth. Her brother reflects that: (these are excerpts)

There is nothing more difficult for a man than the redressing of injuries done to a woman who is very near to him and very dear to him....What man ever forgave an insult to his wife or an injury to his sister, because he had taught himself that to forgive trespasses is a religious duty?....Thirty years since his course was easy, and unless the sinner were a clergyman, he could in some sort satisfy his craving for revenge by taking a pistol in his hand, and having a shot at the offender....[But now] There is nothing left for him but to spurn the man, - not with his foot but with his thoughts; and the bitter consciousness that to such spurning the sinner will be indifferent .<sup>14</sup>

Here is a passage from Mill's *On Liberty* published in 1859 about what constitutes moral wrong-doing and doers, which in accordance with his view of morality, not unnaturally are acts injurious to others. It occurs in the course of an argument for not punishing self-regarding failings:

Acts injurious to others require a totally different treatment. Encroachment on their rights; infliction on them of any loss or damage not justified by his own rights; falsehood or duplicity in dealing with them; unfair or ungenerous use of advantages over them; even selfish abstinence from defending them against injury - these are fit objects of moral reprobation, and, in grave cases, of moral retribution and punishment .<sup>15</sup>

But notice that none of these were actually punished. Mill continues:

And not only these acts, but the dispositions which lead to them, are properly immoral, and fit subjects of disapprobation which may rise to abhorrence. Cruelty of disposition; malice and ill nature; that most anti-social and odious of all passions, envy; dissimulation and insincerity; irascibility on insufficient cause, and resentment disproportioned

---

<sup>14</sup> A. Trollope, *The Claverings*, 1867, chapter 28.

<sup>15</sup> Mill, *op. cit.*, 1859, chapter 4.

to the provocation; the love of domineering over others; the desire to engross more than one's share of advantages (the *Πλεονεξία* of the Greeks); the pride which derives gratification from the abasement of others; the egotism which thinks self and its concerns more important than everything else, and decides all doubtful questions in its own favour; - these are moral vices, and constitute a bad and odious moral character... 16

It is unnecessary to labour further the point that acts which may generally be condemned as morally wrong may lack any sanction whatever. It is nice to think that moral turpitude should somehow get punished and the morally good be rewarded. But it is quite unclear that the world operates in this way and is quite clear that not all that is considered morally wrong is always encapsulated into rules with sanctions.

Another reason for which the corpus of rules with sanctions in a society cannot be identified with the morality of that society lies in the fact that not all rules themselves embody moral matters. There are vast numbers of rules, with and without sanctions, which no one would include as matters of morality. In this connection, it is of prime importance to make a distinction between assessment of the rules themselves and the effects they may have on the morality or otherwise of acts contrary to them, since the existence of a rule may make a difference to what it is right or wrong to do.

Thus if there is a rule that one must drive on the left of the road, it will usually be morally wrong to drive on the right, because in most circumstances this is likely to result in accidents. If there is a rule of society that black is worn by the bereaved, then it may well be wrong not to wear black because this will be (say) construed as indicating disrespect for the deceased. No one would, I think, seriously consider it a moral matter which side of the road is chosen as that on which one should drive but only, at most, that where there is a fair amount of traffic one or the other side should be selected. When formalised mourning flourished in England, people could not see any advantage in the custom. One newspaper was reduced to saying that its beauty lay in its uselessness. Nonetheless so long as there is such a rule, breaking it most often brings bad results and in many cases will be considered morally wrong for that reason. Usually there are built-in exceptions. It may be right to show disrespect to the deceased for instance, supposing him to have been a very bad man, or there may be reasons for not keeping the rules of mourning on some occasions which outweigh the disadvantage of the disrespect or indeed are such as to make it clear that the breaking does not indicate disrespect.

It is arguable (and, if I dare say it here, a tenet of structuralism as opposed to functionalism) that a good many of

---

<sup>16</sup>Mill, *op. cit.*, 1859, chapter 4.



the rules studied by anthropologists are of the sort I have just been describing.<sup>17</sup> Thus, arguably, it does not much matter how you organise kinship matters but does matter what you do given a particular set-up, because, given the set-up, acts acquire consequences they would not have in the absence of the particular rules in question. There may be nothing to choose between monogamy and polygamy, but given monogamy in a particular society, it may well be morally wrong, and not just against the law or contrary to custom, to go through a second marriage ceremony if already married.

At this point one hits a difficulty about the meaning of the word 'morality'. Two particular senses it can take need to be distinguished from the use I have been giving the term so far. One was reported to me by an American visiting philosopher as often heard in his home university. This is to say 'It's a matter of morality' when no actual argument can be adduced, i.e. no considerations of benefit or disadvantage can be seen to accrue. I myself have more often heard 'It's a matter of principle', used to try to clinch a point for which there is no rational reason. But one could well hear it said of, say, English mourning customs that they were just part of the morality of the day, having no special utility or disutility that anyone can see.

Whether Durkheim would include this particular custom as a moral rule is unclear because it is not clear whether there was a sanction for disobedience - this depends - *inter alia* - on how you take 'sanction'. A Utilitarian moral philosopher would of course consider such rules to be neither right nor wrong from the moral point of view if they have indeed no special utility or disutility. And rules like this have, I am sorry to say, sometimes been dismissed by philosophers as 'just taboos'.

The other use of the term 'morality' which it is important to separate off is where it is used to refer specifically to sexual mores or habits, a not uncommon use. Interestingly, while anthropological monographs would usually include an account of sexual mores, but rarely what is thought to constitute a bad and odious moral character, moral philosophers discuss sexual mores rather little. When they do it is generally to make one of two opposing points: either, on the one hand, that the diversity one finds in this area proves that morality is relative or, on the other, that a society's views on sexual matters are not *per se* part of its moral views.

So far as Durkheim or the Utilitarians are concerned the case of sexual mores is not very clear. For instance, take

---

<sup>17</sup> This view is set out in more detail in S. Wolfram, 'Basic Differences of Thought', in R. Horton and R. Finnegan, eds., *Modes of Thought*, 1973, p.368 ff.

England and incest, forbidden marriages or adultery.<sup>18</sup>

There was for many centuries a rule against incest enforced by the Church of England (and before that by the Roman Catholic Church); the sanction was excommunication or public penance. This lapsed in 1857, and it was only in 1908 that incest was made a crime, with the same heavy penalties as bigamy.

What constitutes 'incest' changed. Before 1857 any intercourse between blood and in-law relatives in or within the 3rd degree, that is up to and including uncles and aunts, nephews and nieces, was punishable as incest. The 1908 Act treated only sexual intercourse between blood relatives as incest and narrowed the range of these to the 2nd degree, that is, roughly parents and children and siblings, and also latterly adoptive relatives to the same degree. A category known as 'incestuous adultery' ran alongside. Between 1857 and 1923 it was one of the grounds on which a woman could get a divorce, and incestuous adultery included the whole of the old range of blood and in-law relatives.

Marriages within the prohibited degrees were in a different position. There was no penalty for going through the acts of marriage with someone in the prohibited degrees, as there was for doing so with an undissolved marriage on one's hands. The 'marriage' was just no marriage.

Adultery was in a different case again. There have never been legal penalties in England except for a short period under Oliver Cromwell; the only exception is in the case of the Consort to the Sovereign where the penalty is death. However, from about 1700 onwards, a man could generally, initially by a complex procedure including a private act of Parliament, secure a divorce (allowing re-marriage) for his wife's proven adultery. And in 1857 a court was set up specifically to deal with divorces. Until 1937 the sole grounds on which a man could divorce his wife in England (not Scotland, by the way) was adultery. Until 1923 adultery had to be compounded by other offences, such as desertion, cruelty or incest, for a woman to secure a divorce.

There can be no doubt that adultery, especially by women, was spoken of and thought of as morally bad. This comes out in many ways including the vocabulary connected with divorces. Before 1857 divorce proceedings were initiated by the husband bringing a case for damages against the adulterer in the law courts, and what he brought it for was called 'criminal conversation' (if crim. con. by the lawyers). Later there were 'guilty parties'. A regular clause in divorce acts for adultery spoke of the plaintiff as deprived of the comforts of matrimony

---

<sup>18</sup> Some of the material following here can be found in S. Wolfram 'Le mariage entre alliés dans l'Angleterre contemporaine', *L'Homme*, I (1961), pp.47-71. Material on divorce is contained in a paper given at the University of Chicago, Department of Social Anthropology, October 5, 1981.

by his or her spouse's 'adulteries and criminal conduct'. It was also the case that divorced women generally had a thin time (if often marrying their paramours) and that the taint of even being accused of adultery tended to lead to their complete social ostracism. We can get the flavour of this from many works of literature. I will take *The Claverings* from which I have already quoted: the widowed countess is falsely accused of adultery by her profligate husband. The housekeeper in her inherited estate will engage only in the most formal of conversations and though the vicar calls, his wife does not, and the lady lives in a state of almost total isolation. Men's adultery was less bad but it was not uncommon for careers to be broken by involvement in divorce suits.

It seems unclear whether there would or would not be considered to have been or now be a *rule* or a sanction against adultery,<sup>19</sup> and thus whether Durkheim could include adultery as morally wrong in England. The Utilitarian is in a better condition. He can point to the devastation committing adultery caused in particular periods of English history, and there is no difficulty to the Utilitarian in bringing it out as having been decidedly morally wrong, and this accords with explicit statements. In *Mansfield Park*<sup>20</sup> Jane Austen goes so far as to treat Maria Rushworth's adultery with Henry Crawford as proof that she was wholly without moral principle; so bad was it that it showed her not to have begun to learn not to give way to passions that should not be given way to, an essential part of possessing moral virtue.

The Utilitarian is not bound to say that adultery is *always* morally bad. He can concede that it may be so in one society or at one time, and not others, without in any way abandoning his single criterion of moral right and wrong, for it is a matter of social and individual circumstance whether it brings more happiness than misery or the other way about. As to different societies' treatment of adultery he may in many cases be silent: it can easily be the case that there is nothing to choose between their different treatments with respect to the happiness or otherwise thereby created. It does not follow that the Utilitarian can *never* adjudicate between societies. Unlike Durkheim, or for that matter moral philosophers like Hare,<sup>21</sup> he is not obliged to include Nazi rules, for example, as morally on a par with anyone else's since *his* criterion of a *moral* rule (i.e. a morally good one) is that it creates more happiness all round than misery.

---

<sup>19</sup> Certainly in private acts of Parliament what was asked for was not the spouse's punishment but the dissolving of bonds of matrimony 'violated and broken' by adultery, out of the Sovereign's 'kindness and compassion' for his/her subject's 'misfortune and calamity'.

<sup>20</sup> J. Austen, *Mansfield Park*, 1815, chapter 46 ff.

<sup>21</sup> Hare, *The Language of Morals*, 1952.

Utilitarianism has many complications I have not touched on. But I hope I have said enough for it to be apparent that the grounds on which Durkheim swept it aside are not good ones. It may not be capable of explaining all social phenomena. But then it does not set out to do so. What it does is to supply a criterion for when a rule or act can and cannot be said to be good, bad or indifferent from the *moral* point of view. The only test of its correctness as an account of morality, in the sense in which we seriously speak of moral right and wrong, is whether, discounting factual error and idiocy, the judgments made of rules, acts, persons, that count as moral ones are in fact made on the basis of the principle it puts forward, that is, according to the happiness or misery to those involved. This does not require that it can always give the answers. Obvious cases where it cannot are where there is a parity of happiness or an insufficiency of empirical evidence. But Utilitarianism, as it has been expounded, has its problems. For example, happiness is not a straightforward concept. More obvious still is that in most cases of doing A rather than B, or B rather than A, there are both gainers and losers, and the Utilitarian has always had difficulties about the distribution of happiness between different people, or, in other words, about justice. What for instance Mill said on the point, mainly that every man is to count for one, does not resolve the difficulty because there are several ways of doing that, and the principles of equity which can be invoked can easily conflict. I shall not expand on this.

Instead, I shall finish with some observations on the pro-Utilitarian supposition that moral considerations are those to do with happiness and that moral assessments of acts, rules, persons, societies are assessments on the basis of the relative happiness or misery they produce. It follows that there could in theory be societies which lack morality in the sense of making no moral assessments or never being guided in their conduct by moral considerations, that is, ones to do with happiness. It also follows that only empirical data could determine to what extent and in what ways societies differ in their moralities. Yet, the empirical data which would be relevant are most often not present in anthropological monographs. This slightly curious gap could be due to the absence of striking differences, for example, about what constitutes a bad and odious moral character. Or it may arise from the fact that, for this or some other reason, the study of morality proper has just failed to catch on as a standard thing to investigate, as at one time botany or cooking did not feature. Durkheim's re-definition of 'Ethics' could have been an influence by conflating social and moral phenomena, and thus obscuring the fact that there are yet fields to conquer and ones where the despised old discipline of Ethics could provide not only material but also a framework for investigations.

## MEDIEVAL ETHNOGRAPHY<sup>1</sup>

'We found the Tatars, and when I entered among them it seemed to me at once that I was entering a kind of other world [*quoddam aliud seculum*].'<sup>2</sup> In these words, William of Rubruck informed St. Louis of his encounter with the Mongols on 3rd or 4th June, 1253, and the sense of novelty and strangeness they convey is my central theme. Between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries, Europeans' mental horizons broadened with the gradually or fitfully expanding frontiers of Latin Christendom to take in a series of discoveries which must rank among the most remarkable and least remarked of history: the finding of pagan and 'primitive' peoples, whose apparent savagery and oddity constituted a radical challenge to prevailing notions about the nature and rights of man.

In about the twelfth century came the 'discovery', in the sense of detailed scrutiny and discussion, of what we might call Europe's internal primitives - the peripheral, pastoral and mountain folk, like the Basques, Welsh, Irish and Slavs, whose cultures inspired mingled awe and contempt. The thirteenth century followed with the bloody inructions into European aware-

---

<sup>1</sup> Abridged text of a paper read to a social anthropology seminar at Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford, on 2nd March, 1982. I have to thank the Trustees of the Leverhulme Foundation for awarding a Fellowship for work on this subject.

<sup>2</sup> A. van den Wyngaert, ed., *Sinica Franciscana*, (Florence), Vol. I (1929), p. 171.

ness of the Mongols, who came as an intellectual as well as a physical shock. In the fourteenth century the aboriginal Canary Islanders were found, cavorting pruriently and perplexingly in nudity and caves. In the fifteenth century - not for the first time but on a new scale - African blacks were ingested by European minds. And finally, at the end of the period, the American Indians revolutionised European man's views of others and of himself. This lavish accretion of anthropological material had diverse intellectual effects. Here I am concerned only with effects on ethnographical writings. I hope to suggest that recognisably scientific ethnography (though of course they did not call it that) was practised by some authors and approached by others in the late Middle Ages, and to characterise some of the perceptions of primitivism which such authors had.

I want, if you like, to turn the tables on anthropologists: we historians are used now to borrowing from your discipline to study our own. Today, instead of taking an anthropological look at history I am taking an historical look at anthropology, at what I believe are parts of the historical origins of that science.<sup>3</sup> I do not mean to seek modern social anthropologists in the Middle Ages, or even ethnographers who acknowledged that they shared a distinctive discipline. My purpose is more limited and more realistic. I propose three criteria to identify recognisably scientific ethnography: accuracy of observation, reliance on genuine observation rather than hearsay, and attempted objectivity.

In what medieval sources might we hope to find such criteria fulfilled? Newcomers to the subject might turn in innocence to merchants' memoirs, travellers' tales and pilgrim handbooks, but such sources are, more often than not, sources of disappointment.

Expectations of merchant-memorists, for instance, are aroused by the false popular conception of Marco Polo. Now although European merchants were widely dispersed in alien climes in this period - as widely as Pietro Lucalongo who did business in Peking in the early fourteenth century or Antonio Malfante who was in the mid-Sahara in the fifteenth - not one of them has left an account of the peoples he met. I am not overlooking Marco Polo. He was a merchant only by birth and a functionary by adoption. The travels he described were undertaken in the service not of commerce but of the Khan. Nor was he a particularly accurate observer. His curiosity was certainly not scientific. The object of this male Scheherezade was to provide entertaining tales for the delectation of the master whom his other purpose was to eulogise. We can think of other reasons than objective interest for his descriptions of Tibetan sexual hospitality or practised evocations of the embraces of Chinese whores. His candid assurances of the existence of tailed men, men with dogs' heads and islands respectively of males and females who teamed up

---

<sup>3</sup> This is the thesis of M. Hodgen, *Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Philadelphia 1964.

periodically to breed all justified his later medieval reputation as a travelling fable-monger.<sup>4</sup>

At least Marco Polo really did travel among some of the peoples he describes. Most travel literature was spurious, designed to satisfy the prevailing taste for sensational and salacious tit-bits. Authors like the notorious Mandeville or the anonymous writer of the *Book of Knowledge* travelled in the course of their work no further than the nearest book-cupboard.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, I know of no authentic case of travel from disinterestedly curious motives by western Christians in this period. One travelled as merchant, pilgrim, administrator, ambassador, clerk or missionary - but never from the mere *vanitas* of curiosity.

Of all travellers, the group in whom inquisitive tastes and a need for realistic information went most closely allied were the pilgrims. I am not well versed in pilgrim literature, but it seems to me that the guides usually describe foreign races with conventional stereotypes. For instance, one of the richest guides, the twelfth-century *Liber Sancti Jacobi*, describes my own race, the Galicians, as 'more like our French nation than the other uncivilised races of Spain; but they are widely thought excitable and quarrelsome.'<sup>6</sup> But when he comes to the Basques, whom he recognises as primitives - by which I mean he alludes to them in terms generally applied to peoples called 'barbarian' or some equivalent name - he treats us to a long, albeit (as we shall see) equally conventional, description:

Verily they dress filthily and eat and drink filthily....If you saw them eating, you would think them like dogs or pigs. If you heard them speaking, you would be reminded of the howling of hounds.... This is a barbarous race, unlike all others in customs and in essence, full of every malice, black in colour, evil of visage,...wild and sylvan....Basques even practise incestuous fornication - with cattle. A Basque is even said to fit a chastity belt to his own mare or mule, to prevent any one else getting at them.

The last sentence is best left in the decent obscurity of a

---

<sup>4</sup> Marco Polo, *The Description of the World*, ed. A.C. Moule and P. Pelliot, London 1938, Vol.I, pp.86, 270-271, 328-329, 376, 378, 424.

<sup>5</sup> See M. Letts, ed., *Mandeville's Travels* (2 vols.), London 1953, especially Vol.I, pp. xxii-xxv; M.C. Seymour, ed., *Mandeville's Travels*, Oxford 1967, especially p. xiv; M. Jiménez de la Espada, ed., *Libro del conocimiento de todos los reynos y tierras y señoríos que son por el mundo*, Madrid 1877.

<sup>6</sup> J. Vieillard, ed., *Le Guide du pèlerin*, Macon 1950, p.32.

learned language: '*Vulvae etiam mulieris et mulae basia prebet libidinosa.*'<sup>7</sup>

Having discounted merchants', travellers' and pilgrims' literature as sources of scientific ethnography, we are left with missionary writings. It is possible to find at least one writer with a real flair for ethnography who was not a missionary. In the twelfth century Gerald of Wales, a superb observer of the Irish and Welsh, built an original theory of social evolution on his findings.<sup>8</sup> But his is perhaps an unique case: personal interest drew him to study his Celtic cousins. Missionaries form the only *class* of ethnographical writers.

The outstanding case of the combination of scientific observation with missionary purpose occurs in the work of the Franciscan, William of Rubruck. As he had continually to explain to an uncomprehending Khan, he was not an ambassador, as previous visitors had been, but only sought to proclaim the gospel. It is true that St. Louis asked him to purvey information to the court of France, and it is not hard to see that the king's interest was chiefly in military and diplomatic intelligence. But William goes beyond the usual description of Mongol tactics and grand strategy to give us the longest and most accurate Western picture of Mongol society to have survived from the Middle Ages. In fact, as a piece of anthropological fieldwork, Rubruck's book remained unsurpassed for nearly six and a half centuries. And it is remarkable how modern studies of Siberian ethnography confirm as well as extend Rubruck's observations. Two examples on matters of great interest to modern anthropologists - the layout of a Mongol dwelling and the practices of the shamans - show what a good observer William was.

The first is best introduced by referring to a comparison proposed by Rockhill. The way of life of steppe tent-dwellers has been so changeless over the centuries that the veracity of William's description of the layout of a Mongol *ger* can be tested against Radlov's account of the interior of an Altai Tatar *yurt*, published almost exactly six hundred and thirty years later.<sup>9</sup> Both authors agree that the tent was set up on a north-south axis, with the entrance aperture at the south. Both note the division into two mutually exclusive moieties, the east side for the womenfolk, the west for the men, with the men's equipment near the entrance on the south-east circumference. In a

---

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 26, 28.

<sup>8</sup> See Giraldus Cambrensis, *Opera*, ed. J.F. Dimock, (London), Vol.V (1867), pp.149-182, Vol.VI (1868), pp.179-217.

<sup>9</sup> W.W. Rockhill, ed., *The Journey of William of Rubruck to the Eastern Parts of the World*, London 1900, p.57ff; V.V. Radlov, *Aus Sibirien*, Leipzig 1884, Vol.I, p.270; *Sinica Franciscana*, Vol.I, pp.172-175; cf. C. Humphrey, 'Inside a Mongolian Tent', *New Society*, Vol.XXX (1974), pp.273-275.



conspicuous position facing the entrance on the northern circumference, both observers place the master's couch but they differ slightly concerning the location of the *ongons*: according to William, these were suspended above the master's couch on the western side, with the images occupying positions related to the seating-places of the master and his wife on the master's couch. Radlov, however, sites the *ongons* clearly well to the host's right - that is, on the eastern side of the *yurt*. William places the servants on the women's side, but Radlov places them opposite the master. Radlov also assigns places to children and cattle, whose location William does not specify. But the earlier account is in some ways more circumstantial. William places on either side of the entrance images whose existence is confirmed by other contemporary accounts. He describes how a bench with milk for refreshment was set up nearby. He also tells how a cow's udder was suspended by the entrance on the women's side and a mare's on that of the men. No other authorities described the interior of the *ger* at all, though some noticed how it faced south and mentioned, with less detail than William, the ritual oblations which preceded meals.<sup>10</sup>

William is particularly good on shamanism because of his missionary's interest in native religion. He notices the shaman's responsibility for the care of the *ongons* (although omitting the crucial point that in these idols dwelt the ancestral spirits conjured by the shamans in their trances); he accurately describes shamanistic practices; the characteristic nocturnal oracular session he again relates in terms strikingly similar to Radlov's.<sup>11</sup>

By contrast, Marco Polo utterly missed the point of the *ongons*, which he confused with images of a supreme deity. He noticed only the astrological and medical functions of the shamans and ignored the inside of a *ger*. It might be objected that Marco Polo was embroiled in the sophisticated Mongol court, which had abandoned the steppes. The century that opened with the doughty Chinghiz Khan closed with the gouty Qubilai. Where the founder of the dynasty needed only nimble ponies, Marco Polo's master had to be carried around by four elephants; and instead of a *ger* to house him, he decreed a stately pleasure-dome in Xanadu. But Marco had ample chance to observe the more primitive Mongols

<sup>10</sup> See for example John of Piano Carpini and Benedict of Poland in *Sinica Franciscana*, Vol.I, pp.35-36, 136-137; Marco Polo, *Travels*, trans. R. Latham, London 1958, p.67; Rockhill, *Ibid.*, p.59n.; G.A. Bezzola, *Die Mongolen in abendländischer Sicht*, Bern 1974, pp.139-144.

<sup>11</sup> Rockhill, *Ibid.*, pp.xxxviii, 187-188, 246; Radlov, *Ibid.*, Vol.II, p.20ff; cf. C. Humphrey, 'Some Ideas of Saussure Applied to Buryat Magical Drawings', *Social Anthropology and Language*, ed. E. Ardener, London 1971, pp.271-290. I am grateful to Mrs. Shirley Ardener for references to Humphrey's work.

on his journeys. He had an unique opportunity to witness a shamanistic trance - something William was never allowed to do - and produced only a bald and frivolous description. One must also credit William, compared with Marco Polo, with scrupulous care to distinguish his own experience from hearsay. And while Marco Polo assures his readers for a fact of the existence of implausible prodigies, William's only reference to them is to say that he saw and heard of no evidence of monstrous races, 'at which', he confesses, 'I was most surprised.'<sup>12</sup>

There are two respects in which modern scientific practice would find William wanting. He did not make a study of the Mongol language, though he did reduce his interpreter to silent fatigue in his eagerness to communicate.<sup>13</sup> Nor did he have a system of classification, whereby to relate his data to what was known or postulated about the rest of mankind - if you like, to give his 'fieldwork' comparative significance. To some extent, both wants were supplied in the course of the next three hundred years. William's close contemporary, Albertus Magnus, was already plotting out a framework of classification, not only of mankind but of the whole of creation, based on the range of mental faculties supposedly possessed by different races and beings, their physical characteristics and the presumed relationship between physique, physiognomy, mind and behaviour.<sup>14</sup>

It was a wonderful scheme, but vitiated from the point of view of more recent anthropology by three shortcomings. First, it was built around the idea of a descending order of creation, the model with which every reader of medieval or early modern literature is familiar. As a result, almost the only interpretation of cultural relationships we find among late medieval writers is that of degeneracy<sup>15</sup> - usually degeneration from civilisation to savagery, rather than the other way round. The noble savage is admired by only a few writers, to whom I shall return in a moment. It is more usual, for instance, to find Mongols explained as degenerate Jews, Canarians as degenerate Moors, Blacks as degenerate Whites and even, in one sixteenth-century Spanish writer, American Indians as degenerate Spaniards. And, of course, we find apes as degenerate men in a neat pre-

---

<sup>12</sup> Rockhill, *Ibid.*, p.199.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p.88; *Sinica Franciscana*, Vol.I, p.196.

<sup>14</sup> H.W. Janson, *Apes and Ape Lore in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, London 1952, pp. 83-93. See also H. Balss, *Albertus Magnus als Zoologe*, Munich 1928, and *Albertus Magnus als Biologe*, Stuttgart 1947; P. Michaud-Quantin, *La Psychologie de L'activité chez Albert le Grand*, Paris 1966; J.A. Weisheipl, ed., *Albertus Magnus and the Sciences*, Toronto 1980, especially pp. 263-320, 501-535.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Hodgen, *Ibid.*, pp. 264, 378-382; Janson, *Ibid.*, pp. 94-99.

inversion of the theory of evolution. Civilisation is seen by most medieval writers as preceding savagery in a supposed historical sequence, just as men are seen as preceding apes in a natural history of devolution.<sup>16</sup>

The second problem with the available means of classification of mankind in the late Middle Ages is that it was not a system of classification of societies, only of mental faculties and physical types. Few people in this period had what we would acknowledge as a historical - much less a sociological - sense. Writers had to describe (and therefore distort) alien societies in the familiar terms of feudal organisation. The Canary Islands or the Congo seem from fifteenth-century sources to have been as densely crowded with kings, dukes, lords, knights, vassals, villeins and even bishops as the Europe of the time. Such comparisons were nearly always pregnant with disaster for the peoples concerned. In 1489, for instance, the aboriginals of Gomera, who knew nothing of feudalism, were slaughtered and enslaved as rebels against their natural *seigneur*. Natives of the Oaxaca valley were reduced to serfdom after Cortes' conquest. An Inca emperor was garrotted as a bad vassal.

Finally, in the absence of a useful classificatory system there was no doctrine of cultural affinities in ethnographical writings of the Middle Ages, except, as we have seen, that of degeneracy. But some suggestive if superficial comparisons were made - of Canarians with Moors, Amerindians with Jews, Mexicans with Egyptians, the Aztec pantheon with the Roman, Mongol with Mosaic law, until by the end of the sixteenth century speculations about cultural survivals, migrations and cross-currents became commonplace, though still unsystematic.<sup>17</sup>

In the context of linguistic studies it was by a missionary purpose that science was served. The importance of understanding thoroughly the culture in which one proposed to work as a missionary and of learning the natives' language, was stressed in the thirteenth century by Llull. Many missionaries to the Canary Islands were trained in a Llullian tradition, and probably mastered aboriginal tongues. None of their accounts of the islanders has survived. But the tradition survived - or perhaps was revived - in the sixteenth century, among Spanish missionaries in the New World. For example, Bernardino de Sahagún, a Franciscan whose apostolate in Mexico lasted from 1529 until his death in 1590, was a zealous promoter of the study of the

---

<sup>16</sup> See for example U. Monneret de Villard, ed., *Il libro della peregrinazione nelle parti d'Oriente di frate Rinaldo da Montecroce*, Rome 1948, p.54; J. de Mata Garriazo, *El capítulo de Canarias en la 'Crónica de Juan II'*, La Laguna 1946; J. Zoraida Vázquez, 'El Indio americano y su circunstancia en la obra de Fernández de Oviedo', *Revista de Indias*, Vol.XVII (1957), pp. 483-519.

<sup>17</sup> Hodgen, *Ibid.*, pp. 162-353.

Nahuatl language who regretted the excesses of enthusiasm that had destroyed so much Aztec culture. His great collection of ethnographic and linguistic materials was assembled with deep sympathy. And though his aim was the propagation of the faith rather than the satisfaction of scientific curiosity, in every other aspect of his work I am sure modern anthropologists would not be sorry to have his name associated with theirs.<sup>18</sup>

The writers I treat as early ethnographers, like William of Rubruck, Gerald of Wales and Bernardino de Sahagún, were *par excellence* the heroes of an epic struggle to comprehend the strange and new. But it was an epic in which the heroes were outnumbered by the cowards, who made no effort to modify their intellectual equipment in attempting to make sense of encounters with primitives. Historians are more interested in cowards, because cowards are more representative in any society. Mainstream medieval perceptions of primitives were formed, by definition, in unexceptional minds.

Newly found peoples were all too readily assimilated into any of three known categories. First, they could be equated with some race already familiar in the biblical, classical or historical panorama of mankind. Gog and Magog, the lost tribes of Israel, the progeny of Noah, the Saracens or Moors, the Scythians - all were particularly handy for this purpose.

Secondly, and more insidiously, savages could be relegated to the nether links of the chain of being, along with *similitudines hominis*, sub-men, beast-men, wild men of the woods, mythical mutations and apes. In Albertus Magnus' order of creation, the angels were succeeded by man and man by the hypothetical category of *homunculi*, physically monstrous, instinctual creatures, beast-men lacking reason and moral discrimination. Apes formed an independent category above the rest of the brutes, leaving the *homunculi* as a potential anthropological waste-bin for the classification of culturally inferior races. The criteria of such inferiority were sweeping. Nomadism was damning. So was collective nudism. So was a preference for raw food. So - very importantly - was failure to recognise what in Latin Christendom was regarded as natural law - which could include any sexual idiosyncrasy or religious quirk. And though medieval writers were, I think, culturally rather than racially discriminatory, physical appearance could constitute a problem. Albertus Magnus thought reason could only dwell in a normal physique. A simian resemblance was irredeemable. Excessive body hair was dubious. A flat nose, which, according to medieval psychology, denoted a

---

<sup>18</sup> L. Nicolau d'Olwer, *Fray Bernardino de Sahagún*, Mexico 1952, pp. 25-26, 135-36; W. Jiménez Moreno, ed., *Primeros memoriales de Fray Bernardino de Sahagún*, Mexico 1974, pp. xiv-xv; M.S. Edmondson, ed., *Sixteenth-Century Mexico: the Work of Sahagún*, Albuquerque 1974.

sexually rampant disposition, was a dangerous possession on two counts.<sup>19</sup>

We have seen what the *Liber Sancti Jacobi* made of the Basques, freely deploying many of these prejudices. In the same period, Gunther of Pairis called the Poles

A people whose rites are crude, terrible of visage, with a fearsome brutality in their customs. They rage with a horrible sound. They are ferocious, threatening, quick of hand, lacking in reason, used to rapine. They scarcely behave like men. Their cruelty is worse than the horror of wild beasts. Impatient of laws, eager for slaughter, shifting, inconstant, hasty, slippery, deceptive, unaccustomed to keep faith with lords or love their neighbours, uninstructed in moving feelings of piety.<sup>20</sup>

The author re-used many of the images and topics employed to denounce the Basques. Such descriptions were chosen not necessarily because they were germane, but because they corresponded to a stereotype. The Poles appeared to lack some defining human characteristics; they strongly resembled beasts; they were indifferent to natural law. Consistently with the psychology of the day, the nature betrayed in their customs was reflected in their faces.

The same topics are found in descriptions of other peoples. The Mongols thought of themselves as a *Herrenvolk* but to Western onlookers they were *Untermenschen*. They practised incest, sodomy, bestiality; they knew no law but were ruled by instinct; they had flat faces and broad noses. They looked like apes, bellowed like bulls, howled like wolves and fed like lions off the raw flesh of dogs and men. They hated cities (that, at least, was quite true). They drank from the gutter, esteemed drunkenness and honoured vomit. In short, as a Rhineland annalist summed it up, 'Of this barbarous race we hear many things

---

<sup>19</sup> See for example Monneret, *Ibid.*, p.41; J. Richard, ed., *Simon de St Quentin: Histoire des Tartares*, Paris 1965, pp. 31-38; Janson, *Ibid.*, pp. 76, 79-88; *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptores*, (Hanover), Vol. XXVII (1885), p. 474, Vol. XXIX (1892), 548-549, 591, 601, 604-605; Seymour, *Ibid.*, pp. 185, 215; J.H. Elliott, 'The Discovery of America and the Discovery of Man', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, Vol. LVIII (1972), pp. 101-125. I collect and analyse the images applied to the Canary Islanders in a forthcoming study.

<sup>20</sup> J.-P. Migne, ed., *Patrologiae eursus completus series latina*, Paris 1855, Vol. CCXII, col. 405. I am grateful to Mr. Rob Bartlett for pointing out these lines.

which are incredible and altogether inhuman.<sup>21</sup>

Similar or more monstrous images recur in all later accounts of encounters with primitives. Canarians were depicted as sciapods in one source, and dismissed as wild men of the woods in Italian and Portuguese accounts or 'beasts in human form' by a German writer. The wild man image was used of Blacks, though many observers thought it too flattering and preferred to deny them any sort of humanity. Even in the late sixteenth century, woodcuts and a persistent cartographical tradition showed headless and cynocephalic Amerindians. Dreary refrains of 'more like beasts than men' or 'relying on instinct more than reason' echo through our authors.<sup>22</sup>

One might suppose that misconceptions of this kind would be dispelled by contact. More often, however, it was first impressions which were most favourable. One has only to compare the eulogies of the Arawaks framed by Columbus on his first voyage with the unfavourable opinions he voiced on his second, when he found how the supposedly peaceful natives had massacred his men, and that the cannibal, whom he had dismissed as a fable, really existed. Another familiar example is what one might call the curious cartographical phenomenon of the lengthening penis of the Mansa Musa of Mali. In the fourteenth century, when the empire of Mali was at its height, but known to Europeans only through Arab and Jewish intermediaries, mapmakers drew its monarch black in colour but bearded and arrayed in robes of state with orb and sceptre. Familiarity, however, bred contempt and in the next century, when his power was declining and direct European knowledge increasing, the Mansa's image was stripped of his robes and somewhat more crudely represented.<sup>23</sup> This sort of thing is perhaps not surprising. The brutalisation of men's images of alien cultures is yet another example of a well-attested phenomenon - 'the inability of fellow-citizens to conceive strangers in the same way as themselves.'<sup>24</sup>

This brings me finally - since I promised a return to the noble savage motif - to a third model which medieval writers had at hand for the interpretation of primitive society. This could be seen as a divinely-ordained source of moral lessons for Latin Christendom or as an embodiment of the classical legend of the Age of Gold. In either case, it was the innocence of the savage - in contrast to the inhumanity of the beast-men - that claimed the writers' attention. This model was more used by

---

<sup>21</sup> Bezzola, *Ibid.*, pp. 134-144; *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptores*, Vol. XXII (1872), pp. 535-536.

<sup>22</sup> Jiménez, *Libro del conocimiento*, p. 50; Hodgen, *Ibid.*, pp. 410-417.

<sup>23</sup> E.W. Bovill, *The Golden Trade of the Moors*, London 1968, p.91.

<sup>24</sup> C. Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, London 1969, p. 46.

commentators than observers. One cannot but feel that Roger Bacon's or Ramon Llull's choice of Mongols as symbols of simple, innocuous ignorance was not very appropriate, or that Peter Martyr used American Indians to evoke the Golden Age because he had never had to live with them, or that the illustrator of the Vienna Codex of the *Roman de la Rose* chose - I suspect - the Canary Islands as the *mise-en-scène* of Saturn's kingdom because he had never been there.<sup>25</sup>

But there were some eye-witnesses who affected to see golden, sylvan innocence among the primitives. At the start of our period, Adam of Bremen praised Scandinavian pagans for 'desiring nothing more than nature grants' and 'sharing everything with great charity' and the Prussians for despising gold, silver and furs 'as dung', he says, 'much to our condemnation'. Almost the only profound thing Marco Polo ever wrote was that civilisation had brought degeneracy to the Mongols. And if the 'Golden Age' and 'innocent savage' conventions were usually coloured by literary traditions or didactic purpose, the smack of real experience certainly comes through Pero Vaz da Caminha's account of the Brazilian Indians in 1500:

This people is good and of pure simplicity. Moreover, our Lord gave them fine bodies and good faces....One of the girls was painted from head to foot with their paint and so well proportioned and shapely, and her lack of shame so charming, that many women of our own land, seeing such attractions, would be ashamed that theirs were not like hers.<sup>26</sup>

\*

Even after only a very selective romp through the sources, it will be apparent that there were isolated instances, rather than a continuous tradition, of scientific ethnography until the sixteenth century - tentative approaches, rather than a fully-

---

<sup>25</sup> Roger Bacon, *Moralis Philosophia*, Turin 1953, p. 192; R. Sagranyes de Franch, *Raymond Lulle: docteur des missions*, Schönek-Beckenried 1954, pp. 62, 137; N. Daniel, *Islam and the West*, London 1960, pp. 59, 149; Bezzola, *Ibid.*, pp. 201-209; Pedro Mártir de Anglería, *Epistolario*, ed. J. López de Toro, Madrid 1953, Vol. I, p. 242; E. Armstrong, *Ronsard and the Age of Gold*, Cambridge 1968, plate II.

<sup>26</sup> *Patrologia Latina*, Vol. CXLVI (1853), cols. 633, 637-638; Moule and Pelliot, *Ibid.*, p. 174; C. Malheiro Dias, ed., *História da colonização portuguesa do Brasil*, Oporto 1925, Vol. II, 86-99.

fledged discipline. Ethnography developed more or less *pari passu* with other sciences, particularly botany, with which it is often combined in sixteenth-century writings on the New World. This slow parturition was lengthened in part by the circumstances I have mentioned: lack of 'fieldwork' or of disinterested curiosity, the tenacity of traditional models, the reading public's low-brow demands, the absence of a useful classificatory system, the ease with which primitives could be dismissed as bestial. One other restraining influence must be added: the prevalence of juridical pre-occupations which required primitive peoples to be classed according to anthropologically useless criteria - such as whether they possessed sovereignty, whether they could legitimately be attacked or enslaved, whether they could be forcibly or peacefully converted. Indeed, probably the biggest single category of late medieval allusions to primitives occurs in the work of jurists. I have excluded their writings from this paper because they were not direct observers. But it is important to remember that their language was influential outside the ranks of their own profession. The frequency with which sexual perversions and other similar offences are deplored in accounts of primitives reflects the doctrine that infringements of natural law deprived transgressors of its protection, rendering them liable to the attacks of conquistadors and the depredations of slavers.<sup>27</sup>

When scientific ethnography did emerge, it was among mendicant missionaries with a tradition of sympathetic, pain-taking evangelisation, who were prepared in the course of their work to make an effort to understand the peoples they worked with, and who rejected the attraction of received stereotypes. The discovery of primitive pagans literally in their millions in the New World was a decisive stimulus to the triumph of this new approach, but, as we have seen, it had been pre-figured much earlier in the Middle Ages. There is a case for tracing the 'Renaissance Discovery of Man', like so many Renaissance themes, back to the twelfth century. Many of the pejorative images and prejudices to which the American Indians fell victim, and which have continued to influence 'cultural contacts' or race relations to our own day, can be traced back to the literature I have described. In studying medieval ethnography, we can perceive the origins not only of a modern science, but also of many modern myths.

FELIPE FERNANDEZ-ARMESTO

---

<sup>27</sup> See J. Muldoon, *Popes, Lawyers and Infidels*, Liverpool 1979, pp. 10-12, 21, 48.



## COMMENTARY

### I

#### THERE IS AN ALBATROSS IN THE SKY

'Fitting patients' conditions into pet theoretical frameworks' is an accusation often levelled at psychiatrists. If there is any truth in this, then at least one explanation can be found in the condition of psychiatry itself. Whereas the practitioner of 'physical' medicine has many hundreds of named diagnostic choices, the scant resources of psychiatrists allow them little more than a dozen or so labels on which to draw:<sup>1</sup> thus 'schizophrenia', for instance, perforce becomes a blanket term covering many variations. At the same time, there are elements of mental disorder, or symptoms, that may run as strands through more than one of those conditions which have at present received labels, and so we see 'depression' occurring in 'schizophrenia', 'manic depression', 'hyper-active mania', and so on. Given the permeation of some symptoms and the few labels from which to choose, it is no wonder that a psychiatrist may be tempted to use the label he knows best.

My concern here with psychiatry is simply in the analogy it provides, near enough apt, for a similar problem facing social

---

<sup>1</sup> There are conflicting opinions on precise numbers since it depends considerably on which approach to classification is made. Nevertheless, the general comparison holds good. For example, Houston, Joiner and Trounce (*A Short Textbook on Medicine*, Hodder and Stoughton) list over 1,000 physiological conditions as against 22 to 34 psychiatric disorders (and one should note that the gap is likely to widen in a more comprehensive textbook).

anthropologists with their theories. Furthermore, just as it is in the nature of mental processes to be inter-connected and interactive so too is it in the nature of social processes.

In our discipline, social anthropology, no major insights or intensely illuminating new theories have occurred during the last decade or more. We are in the doldrums, without a fresh wind to take us on beyond where we have already reached. Our current discoveries are minor: a view of the other side of a piece of flotsam which has turned over in the night, the rate at which weevils eat ship's biscuits, and so forth. We haul up the mainsail directly a small thermal plays a passing cat's-paw on the water, and then with nothing more to do than haul it down again, and no ensuing hope, are prone to vent our irate attention on colleagues in the same boat. The only things we have to occupy us are the minutiae.

In such a situation, where desperation is likely to prevail, the social anthropologist may well fall to the same temptation open to psychiatrists. Ironically enough, the whole syndrome also has a flavour of the comments made by some social anthropologists in the past on a so-called 'primitive mentality' when they proposed that deficiency in wide areas of knowledge generated a compulsive desire to fill the void at all costs by 'imaginative' processes. I say only 'a flavour' especially since the word 'imaginative' would not apply in all its senses to the problem we examine.

In order to illustrate what I have said, let me take a short article written by Roy Willis called 'Seeing Africa' (*RAIN*, No.45, August 1981). I have particularly selected this article in an attempt to avoid accusations that I, too, am turning a morbid attention on colleagues. I admire Roy Willis, know him well and where he sometimes parks his tongue. In my opinion, therefore, and albeit he has utilized a different approach, his purpose is probably the same as mine and his expectation is that its message will be developed. For those who recognise that I am 'in the same boat' and see me as still not heeding my own warning in regard to other aspects, I would borrow and adapt from Bertrand Russell and seek refuge in a claim that the critical analysis of a problem is not of the same order as the problem itself.

In his article, Roy Willis describes a custom wherein at the end of an official dinner 'the senior man present would propose to his male fellow-diners that they "see Africa". This invitation was the signal for all to take temporary leave of their female consorts, go out into their host's back garden and empty their bladders.' He ascribes the custom to British administrators of colonial East Africa, and later goes on to a structural analysis, 'in the classic Lévi-Straussian manner', of analogically associated dualities such as 'inside and outside'.

Before considering the major point, whether these dualities are applicable, let us see if in any case this example offers a platform steady enough on which to operate the

fine cuts of such an analysis. In the first place, the ethnography itself is open to objection. The custom was by no means confined to colonial administrators but was widespread among Europeans of all occupations, and I have even heard *exact* translations of the same expression in Kiswahili on several occasions, used by indigenous Africans in the same context. Instances of similar euphemisms used by Africans are too profuse in my memory to enumerate. An analysis of 'light' (as 'symbolizing the culture of European, and particularly English civilization') and 'dark' (as 'symbolizing the colonized') consequently becomes less tenable, though not completely defenceless since Roy Willis could still claim that the custom had achieved ritualistic significance among colonial officials. Nevertheless, the platform begins to shake.

Again, where Roy Willis proposes that there was a tendency for the men to line up outside according to rank, thus imaging the actual structure of colonial administration, there is a further ethnographic objection. I have taken part in the custom of 'seeing Africa' many hundreds of times and would hesitate to state categorically whether it was some sort of ranking order or just haphazard placement which occurred most frequently when colonial officials were involved. My recollection, indeed, inclines towards a bias in favour of 'haphazard placement', but at least there is room to doubt if the frequency of 'ranking order' is numerically significant. When order did occur, it is perhaps illuminating that it was usually only a semblance and seldom strict. Surely, this is a pointer towards a more readily acceptable explanation in terms of an entirely distinct custom prevalent throughout the officialdom of Britain and many other countries - the protocol of exit by seniority through the door of a room? The order of exit might well condition the order of final arrival outside, in which case the cause must lie properly with the protocol, and analysis improperly with 'seeing Africa'. Comparative absence of 'ranking order' when officials were not involved tends to reinforce my argument. The platform shakes even more.

Should Roy Willis wish to imply that this custom was exported from Britain to Africa, by attributing it to white, English-speaking, officials, let me say immediately that this cannot be. Otherwise, with Britain's vast colonial experience, we could expect equally large-scale incidences in similar terminology reported from around the globe, such as 'seeing India', 'seeing America', and so on. Undoubtedly the action of relief on an ever-hungry earth has been practised in most of these places (there is even much evidence of indigenous Africans sallying forth from their homes for this purpose), and there are many euphemisms for the practice, in many languages, floating from the urgent lips of people round the world. Is 'seeing Africa' consequently just a geographic variation, or is there some deeper meaning in the usage of this particular euphemism?

We have already seen that Africans themselves frequently use similar expressions, and even indeed exact translations on

occasion, so it does not seem likely at the outset that there will be any significance beyond its geographic reference. However, in order to remove doubt further, the status of euphemisms themselves in this context should be examined. Other than 'urinal' which covers only one bodily function, I have had great difficulty in tracing any term in the English language (and some others) which is not euphemistic, and so far have discovered none that specifically describes a place where both bodily functions may be exercised. It may be that in the beginning, before man began to congregate in towns and was forced to manufacture methods of disposal, 'outside', or something similar, conveniently constituted an automatic euphemism and simultaneously a sufficient description of a place for the performance of both bodily functions. The evolution of pertinent etiquette then continued in the same vein. But this is conjecture. Nevertheless, it remains that specific terms do not come easily to mind, and/or are considered socially impolite, and that consequently euphemisms are commonplace. 'Seeing Africa' is located squarely in this genre, and so is probably no more than just another variation, chosen for its apt regional reference. In this light, the strong indications are that 'euphemism' is a diagnosis simpler and also more likely to be correct than 'symbolism'. The platform now starts to disintegrate.

It may well be that the original use of the expression 'seeing Africa', coined or borrowed, came about in the white community through a combination of pragmatism and politeness. A number of men and women celebrating dinner together, and a tropical climate encouraging the intake of a large quantity of liquid; a compulsive biological function to consider; no withdrawing room for the ladies and but a single lavatory in, or near, the house: taken in conjunction, these pose a practical problem. What better solution than that the men should remove to the countryside? The phrase itself, 'seeing Africa', could not be construed as offensive to delicate ears, and ladies were spared embarrassment from verbal offers to allow them to go first, with an implication that the weakness of their sex extended to their bladders (the offer itself would have constituted a conflict of mores). Moreover, the men were more structurally suited to utilize the facility of a dark, snake-ridden, outdoors ('a handy gadget at a picnic' as I believe it has been described). Furthermore it promoted social harmony, for whatever Roy Willis has to say about men standing side-by-side according to hierarchy, it obviated the worse problem of males having to queue, with all that might entail in the choice of criteria for the order of priority - whether by age, professional seniority, social seniority, sheer need, or overt physical domination.

There is no denying that what may start as a solution to a practical problem can later develop ritualistic tendencies, but to impute symbolic causes to every aspect of this particular custom seems to me more like stretching a theory to fit an

obsession than a realistic analysis. 'Inside and outside'? Given the circumstances and the expedient solution, where else could males go but outside?

Moreover, in his application of analogically associated dualities, how does Roy Willis account for the recalcitrant evidence provided by many thousands of instances in Africa and across the world of females using outside lavatories, or even 'mother earth' when males are not around? Are we to explain this away glibly by 'role reversal'? If so, social anthropological theory treads the path towards becoming a religion.

The desperate theoretician, but not the purist, might argue that there were alternatives to going outside - the carpet for example. In that case he would have to overcome countervailing arguments such as hygiene, material damage, and social constraints. If there is no reasonable alternative to an action, how can we say that the action is governed by symbolism or cosmological values (or, possibly, even evokes them)? If it is not actually *governed* by these factors, then the most we can say is that by chance practical necessity and belief systems happily coincide. But would the last help us in understanding a society? If we cannot surely, and honestly, abstract such values from a social situation, then it follows usually that we are already aware of these values in order to apply them. Once again, danger attends such a path: temptation calls insidiously towards the bear-pit of favoured-label-sticking, and the brink crumbles easily.

All this, of course, is quite different from explaining in terms of cosmological values why a society follows one out of a number of choices. Where there is no choice, then surely that in itself is sufficient explanation? Desperation must not condition any of us into making everything conform to how we want it. The social anthropologist, ubiquitous and predatory as a jackal, and equally prone to poke his nose in domestic garbage bins, should not be surprised when he finds rubbish wrapped in banana leaves rather than supermarket paper-bags. Supermarket paper-bags are not ubiquitous.

There are other details in the article by Roy Willis which are open to challenge, but enough has been said, I think, to illustrate my argument, make the point, and leave Roy Willis in peace.

As I claimed earlier, we are in the doldrums, and doldrums are noted for generating psychological problems. The irony of it all would be if our despair led some of us into the laps of those selfsame psychiatrists where the diagnostic capabilities of one could suffer from the same disorder as the malaise present in the other. It might add a strange dimension to the term 'homeopathy' - and thus continue the chain of bending theories to fit obsessions.

OBSERVING 'LES OBSERVATEURS DE L'HOMME'  
IMPRESSIONS OF CONTEMPORARY FRENCH ANTHROPOLOGY IN CONTEXT

In Paris only a few square miles from Passy across the Seine to the Quartier Latin separate the main centres of French anthropology. Within this *hortus conclusus* theoretical divisions thrive by proximity. In the busy corridors of research centres anthropologists rub shoulders with historians, psychologists, economists - even sociologists.

Present trends are defined in the negative, as 'post-structuralist'.<sup>1</sup> Paris is in the throes of a *crise de succession*; for in the last five years most of the elder *maîtres à penser* have been removed from the scene: Sartre, Barthes, Lacan, Benveniste, Althusser etc.

The typical contemporary practitioner of the *sciences de l'homme* could be a philosopher-turned-anthropologist-turned-sociologist (Bourdieu or L.V.Thomas), or a socio-economist with bio-cultural leanings (Morin), or a historian with an ethnological outlook (Le Goff) - nor do these exhaust the existing permutations....If a blanket term is needed, '*observateur de l'homme*' (from the name of an 18th-century learned society)<sup>2</sup> is comprehensive enough for my present purpose.

The following fragmentary considerations represent an attempt to set down my impressions of a recent visit. For five weeks, in May-June 1982, I went to enquire about French anthropology and so attended seminars at various centres in Paris.

---

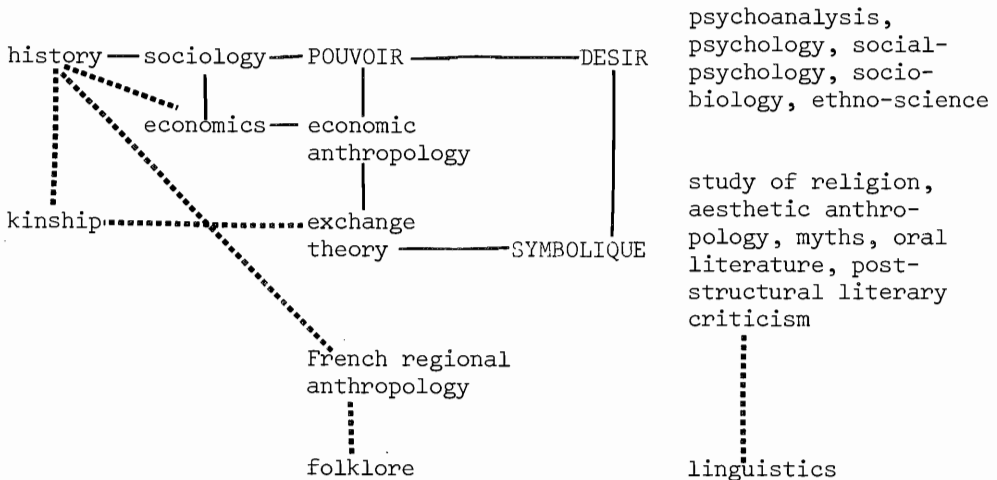
<sup>1</sup> 'Post-structuralisme', as used in France, is a general term, a negative definition implying that, as yet, present trends are only offshoots of a once coherent whole.

<sup>2</sup> The greater part of the members of the Société des Observateurs de l'Homme were naturalists who investigated 'man' as a *genus*. However 'lest it be thought that the *observateurs* were sexist (*sic*) the Société published works such as *Histoire naturelle de la femme*.' (See B.Kilborne, *European Journal of Sociology*, Vol.XXIII [1982], p.77.)

What methods, I may be asked, did I employ 'in the field'? At first I wandered through the corridors of the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme (henceforth MSH) with the diffidence one acquires on the looking-glass paths of Oxford. I had tried, in fact, *d'enfoncer des portes ouvertes*. Too many people to thank individually gave me advice, instruction and friendship.

As I was told, Mitterrand, respecting his promise, has given new impetus (and more funds) to the social sciences but it is feared that this is merely a temporary respite. '*Il ne se passe rien ici,*' people sighed in the MSH, while several telephones rang simultaneously on their desks and stocks of new projects collapsed under their own weight.

In a rather desparate bid for clarity I have re-drawn (below) the contentious margins of the anthropological sphere of influence.



I have not included philosophy in the diagram as it is too pervasive in the terminology (or in the aspirations) of most French researchers.

Alternatively, classification may be attempted by area. Institutionally there are groups such as the Centre d'Etudes Africaines, the ORSTROM (Organisation pour la recherche scientifique et technique d'outre mer), or the Centre de recherche sur l'Asie du Sud-est et le Monde Insulinidien. For Far Eastern specialists there is the long-established and prestigious Ecole Francaise d'Extreme Orient. Among the newest centres there is the innovative Centre d'Etudes sur le Japon Contemporaine.

More generally, anthropologists conduct research in the following organisations: Collège de France; Ecole de Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), 6th section or MSH and 5th section

dedicated to 'religious sciences'. For material culture, ethnography and ethno-science there are various *équipes* in the Musée de l'Homme; specialists in French regional ethnography are most frequently affiliated to the Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires. Within the University there are many courses of interest to anthropologists but only Paris X (Nanterre) and seven provincial universities have a complete degree programme.<sup>3</sup> For a French anthropologist it is also possible to work within organisations such as the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) as a researcher rather than a lecturer. There have been numerous institutional reforms since *les événements de Mai* which, in fact, often merely re-shuffled academic groups already in existence or absorbed the *contestation* within the system. A young researcher who, after years of struggle, is accepted by the CNRS will enter an *équipe de travail*, chosen according to theoretical interest, geographical area or personal ties. Frequently, however, researchers in fact work alone; thus the administrative sub-divisions of the *équipe* are, at times, castles of file-cards.

For the point of view of theory the above diagram, an uncertain polygon, is an attempt to square the Parisian anthropological circle. Beyond the three terms which seem to me the recurrent intellectual landmarks there extend the bewilderingly complex ramifications of theoretical cross-fertilisation.

*Pouvoir* and *désir*, i.e. contemporary re-interpretation of Marx and Freud, are key words in current debates. The ranking of intellectual disciplines can be deduced emphatically by the display order in fashionable bookshops: *psycho* comes first, followed by the once pre-eminent *philo*, then, thanks to Lévi-Strauss, *ethno* - what Augé (*The Anthropological Circle*, Cambridge 1982, p.126) calls a new 'Holy Alliance', constituted by Nietzsche, Reick, Bataille and Deleuze - has come into being.

These liberators of desire and the self have infiltrated hereto unsuspected domains, as is shown by a random sample of recent titles: *Economie libidinale* by the philosopher J.F.Lyotard (Paris 1974), or J.Baudrillard's *L'échange symbolique et la mort* (Paris 1976), or J.Kristeva's latest collection of articles, *Desire in Language* (Oxford 1982).

Of the three main trends outlined above only *pouvoir* and the *symbolique* have developed, if somewhat lopsidedly, on both sides of the Channel. After Leach, Needham, and Douglas have gradually re-thought their *coup de foudre* for French anthropology only a few figures (e.g. Goody) or Marxist anthropologists have maintained the French connection. From Oxford R.H. Barnes has recently taken up the Parisian challenge, confining himself, however, to the restricted discourse of kinship.

---

<sup>3</sup> I am unable to estimate the number of students of anthropology in France. Certainly there is widespread interest in the subject and access to the *séminaires* is limited; students are chosen on the basis of their *dossiers*. It may be added that there is a very high rate of drop-outs within the Hautes Etudes in general and anthropology in particular.



Is Oxford's resistance to desire due to our lingering monasticism?

Why, for that matter, have the French been so influenced by psychoanalysis? In a number of recent publications psychoanalysts have expressed concern with origins (an approach ignored or dismissed by historians or philosophers such as Foucault). The questions most commonly asked may be simply phrased as follows: 1. Why (and when) did humanity go wrong? (i.e. a search for the cause/origin of repressive social institutions). 2. When and where did the concept of the self emerge? ('*Le moi*' is seen as a social construct historically determined).

What exactly is *désir*? 'A dynamic psychic state, an internal movement...conducting irresistibly towards the object from which one expects...satisfaction and pleasure.' More simply: '*le corps a ses raisons et les raisons s'appellent désir*' (R.Dadoun, 'Desir et corps', in C.Delacampagne, *Philosopher*, Paris 1980, p.95).

The repression of *désir* leads to social illusions. The noble savage once again comes into his own as an example of the *raison du corps*. In the work of several anthropologists and psychologists societies at the subsistence level become test cases for a general theory of *involution* in which forms of exploitation (e.g. of women by men) engender, almost literally, the evils Western societies are heir to, viz. the State, Capitalism, technology, patriarchy, even writing and the codification of language.

This summary of the 'anarchist' position (P.Clastres, J.Lizot) is, admittedly, rather reductive. Marcus Colchester, in the last issue of *JASO* (Vol.XIII, no.2, 1982), argued that concern with political ideology has led Clastres and Lizot to generalise beyond their data. I am concerned here with a prior question: the shaping of the cultural environment which helped to form these ideas. Nineteenth-century evolutionism, as mediated through Marx and Freud, colours contemporary thought. The philosopher Deleuze and the psychoanalyst Guattari, in their well-known *L'Anti-Oedipe* (Paris 1972), present a three-stage version of cultural evolution (or perhaps of development since the first stage, savagery, is dealt with sympathetically). For M.Izard there is a tripartite development in Yatunga society: '*droit*' in agricultural *pré-étatique* society, '*pouvoir*' the state society in formation, and finally '*force*', the state provided with a government.

In a different perspective, the intellectual re-evaluation of Catholicism, R.Girard (*La violence et le sacré*, Paris 1972) has also turned to the origins (or more exactly to our attitude, nostalgia or terror, towards the origins) in search of the hidden meaning of all rites. The problem is formulated differently but the solution takes us back to our starting point: the mechanisms of social control. For Girard, in primitive societies, internal violence is exercised by the expulsion or sacrifice of a scapegoat which is defined as 'different' or 'monstrous'. Our modern judicial systems are the perfected result of this original impulse. Violence, mediated by ritual, is the wellspring of power in its social expression.

The second question mentioned above, viz. when and where did the concept of the self emerge, stems from reflection on psycho-

analytic problems from a historical point of view. The best-known statement of the contingency of man as a concept is probably contained in Foucault's work (e.g. *Les mots et les choses*). L. Dumont in a series of meditations (*On Value*, Oxford 1981; *Homo Hierarchicus*, London 1970), has also re-mapped the conditions of the emergence of individual man as a cardinal modern value. It seems to me that literary criticism in the mode of Barthes and Derrida or the depersonalization in the *nouveau roman* can be considered moves in the same direction.

Why have the descendants of Descartes doubted the doubting entity itself? A partial answer lies in the discovery of non-Western and/or primitive societies; anthropology may lead to the eclipse of man.

Contemporary re-thinking of the social sciences has brought other scholars to enlarge the scope of anthropology in an attempt at an all-inclusive coherence. E. Morin, for example, in a series of books (*Le paradigme perdu, la nature humaine*, Paris 1973, or, with M. Piattelli-Palmarini, *L'unité de l'homme: invariants biologiques et universaux culturels*, Paris 1968) has called for a 'bull-dozérisation' of the traditional interdisciplinary boundaries in the name of a 'psycho-bio-anthropo-sociologique'. He emphasises the feed-back (*boucle recursive*) of anthropological and sociological findings on biology and psychology which structure in turn the object of the investigation of these sciences.

An unusual attempt at psychological-mathematic synthesis has recently been made by Bernadette Bucher ('Ensembles infinis et histoire-mythe', *L'Homme*, Vol. XXI [1981]). She has applied to anthropology the theory of 'infinite sets' as developed by the Chilean Matte Blanco. The original of these vertiginous measurements of the soul may perhaps be found among the volumes of the library of Babel....<sup>4</sup>

Marxism continues to be a constant of French anthropology. Since the waning of the influence of Althusser (at its height from 1965 to the 1970s), Marxist anthropologists have become increasingly divided. Departures from orthodoxy are often described as 'structuralism camouflaged by Marxist terminology'; positions range from the hard-core anti-structuralists such as Meillassoux and Rey, with a background in applied economics, to Terray, once a 'dynamic functionalist' and a student of Balandier, to M. Godelier, originally a philosopher, then associate of Lévi-Strauss and now adviser to Mitterrand.

*Pouvoir*, as we shall see, shades into our third term, *symbolique* (which means both 'symbolic' and 'symbolism'), and is used either as an adjective diffusing the materiality of the noun to

---

<sup>4</sup> Actually Bucher, author of *La sauvage aux seins pendants* (Paris 1977), has attempted to re-draw, with considerable ingenuity, the boundaries between consciousness and the unconscious. For Matte Blanco (if I have understood him correctly) certain properties in a set of infinite cardinal numbers will also hold good for the corresponding psychological characteristics in his novel mode of classification.

which it refers, or as a noun lending the concreteness of a label to a shadowy domain of reference. An example of the ambiguities of its usage is Pierre Bourdieu's analysis of the '*capital symbolique*' which, strictly speaking, can be 'a capital of symbols' or 'symbolic capital'. The relations of communication and knowledge, for Bourdieu, are relations of power based in form and content on the non-material entities such as honour accumulated by agents within the system. In *La distinction* (Paris 1981) he investigated with copious, but never tiresome, statistical breakdowns the minutiae of the transmission, in French society, of this intangible 'symbolic capital'. The dematerialisation of capital, the deconstruction of the text and the 'dispensability' of the self have led to the definition of society in terms of objects.

*Le système des objets*, J. Baudrillard's first book, appeared (not by coincidence) in 1968. Further works, progressively more complex and gnomic, return to the theme of the object which exists however only as concept, as a vehicle for exchange relations, itself a basic dimension if not a definition of society. In his most recent book, *L'échange symbolique et la mort* (Paris 1976), Baudrillard, citing as anticipators of his principles the owner of the 'Crazy Horse' striptease joint and the philosopher Chuang Tsu, states that there are *no* natural needs and *no* use value behind the basic mode of exchange. Both Mauss and McLuhan, he maintains, presented more radical hypotheses than Marx.

L. Dumont and De Coppet<sup>5</sup> are holding a series of seminars on exchange theory. The themes of this year's programme include generalized exchange in the perspective of Mauss and in relation to the place assigned to the dead in the perpetuation of the social structure.

In Dumont's view several key themes recur within an elaborate historical re-thinking of the nature of society. Non-modern and modern societies are contrasted in terms of what may be called ordering strategies (i.e. holistic and non-holistic); for Dumont there is no order without hierarchy. Power, in the form of permanent structure of authority inhibits ceremonial exchanges which can be prestations in form of service as well as of objects.

Linguistics and anthropology is far too large a field to examine here. It will suffice to mention the evolution of a well-known figure such as Julia Kristeva from the formalism of her early articles towards the exploration of the further reaches of the unconscious. More traditional themes such as oral literature (cf. *JASO*, Vol. XIII, no. 1, 1982) are still fashionable.

D. Sperber has questioned anthropological methods of gathering data and describing or interpreting conversations with informants (*De l'interprétation en anthropologie*, *L'Homme*, Vol. XXI, 1981). J. Favret-Saada in her *Deadly Words* (Cambridge 1980) has shown that in some cases events are changed simply by communicating them. For her informants in the Bocage anyone talking about witchcraft

---

<sup>5</sup> For a much-needed clarification of issues such as reciprocity in the context of the analysis of ritual see D. De Coppet, 'The Life-giving Death', in S. C. Humphreys, *Mortality and Immortality*, London 1981.

was automatically involved in the interchange of supernatural power and imputed with an ulterior motive. (One of the villagers said that all the villagers were liars....) Favret-Saada disagrees strongly with what she calls the post-structuralist ideal of a 'totally a-topical theorising subject'.

The connections between anthropology and history are increasingly stressed in the current mending of the structuralists' *rupture* yet the relationship remains an uneasy one. The history of anthropological theory, after all, reveals several ways of negating history -- moreover Lévi-Straussian anthropologists all too recently proposed as the object of the discipline the study of societies defined by its absence (*les sociétés sans histoire*). Now, however, several anthropologists work in close collaboration with historians. Françoise Heritier, for example, is using the extremely elaborate and complete documentation of kinship notation invented by a parish priest and used in several parishes in southern Italy to reconstruct developments over several centuries.

The medievalist J. Le Goff has recently defined his main interests as the place of the *imaginaire* in history and the relation between beliefs (*croiances*) and society. In the recent *La naissance du Purgatoire* (Paris 1982) he traces the emergence in medieval Europe of the concept of an intermediary state in the after-life, related to socio-economic change, from a binary system (Paradise - Hell) to a ternary system including Purgatory. Le Goff is also the editor of the *Bibliothèque d'ethnologie historique*. This series is mainly concerned with regional French history but there is much to interest the anthropologist such as M. Vovelle's *Les métamorphoses de la fête en Provence* (Paris 1975), an account of the changes of traditional rituals during the French Revolution and the restoration.

The new interest in rural areas, *la France profonde*, is for some, an unadventurous *répli sur l'hexagone*. This trend can also be seen as an attempt to deal with ethnic consciousness. Interaction rather than the definition of difference is the aim of government-promoted research concerning minorities in France (e.g. immigrant workers).

It is to be feared that the Mitterrand regime will continue Giscard's much decried preference for applied research. Future monographs may then describe the narrow world of African workers in Paris rather than evoke, as did Griaule after Ogotemmel, a magnificently complex vision of the universe.

It may seem obvious to include the study of religion in the *symbolique* but this merely leads to begging a number of questions. Problems of definition (to what extent is religion a discrete category?) may be increased by including religion in a wider domain. The controversy moreover extends to the definition of its various aspects (Dumezil once remarked that after twenty years of study he still could not distinguish myths from folktales).

When glancing through recent publications it appears that more attention is now being paid to ritual; myths, temporarily at least, have thought each other into exhaustion.

To my knowledge one of the most complete and innovative, as also the most baroquely complex, recent French monograph on ritual

is R.Guidieri's *La route des morts* (Paris 1979), an examination of funerary rites among the Melanesian Fatelaka. M.Augé among others has written extensively on religion. His most recent book is *Génie du paganisme* (Paris 1982). There are frequent references to Chateaubriand (lately rediscovered) on Christianity, but rather than an apology of paganism (here defined as polytheistic religion) Augé carries out an investigation of its various modes and typical figures (sacrifice, the hero).

Various other tendencies are represented in P.Smith and M.Izard (eds.), *La fonction symbolique* (Paris 1979), a collection of articles by scholars mainly associated with Lévi-Strauss and/or the Laboratoire d'Anthropologie Sociale of the Collège de France. The volume includes among others D.Sperber on the rational nature of symbolism, F.Héritier on symbolic aspects of kinship, and P.Smith on ritual. Studies of the *symbolique* most frequently centre on language but occasionally also include art (cf. Kristeva's *Desire in Language*).

The *groupe de travail* directed by R.Guidieri at Nanterre are concerned with the aesthetics of traditional societies; a meditation on the object which may concretise the cultural and eidetic imperative of the representation of supernatural entities or, as in modern Western societies, be reified as 'primitive art'.

The above remarks are merely the incomplete observations of a self-confessedly naive explorer of the luxuriant Parisian anthropological jungle. This reconnaissance, if nothing else, suggests the risk of isolation of Oxford anthropology; even the most violent disagreement is better than the cessation of dialogue. In particular, why have we left it to Cambridge to establish a co-publication programme with the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme?

Many of the trends outlined in these pages are to be found in other intellectual *milieux*. The breaking of interdisciplinary and institutional barriers has become a *parcours obligé* for many contemporary academics. Now that, nominally at least, *l'imagination* (or at least *l'imaginaire*) is *au pouvoir* the system, along with the concept of power itself may be deconstructed from within.

As we have seen, a basic methodological *démarche* underlines structuralism, psychoanalysis and Marxism: the claim that a hidden mechanism (the variously interpreted modes of *pouvoir*, *désir* or the *dispositif symbolique*) is both the mainspring and the explanation of human society.

If I have described problems in preference to the approach of individual authors, the recurrent devaluation, if not the abolition, of the writer in favour of the text makes this the only possible means of interpretation.

## BOOK REVIEWS

MICHAEL ALLEN (ed.), *Vanuatu: Politics, Economics and Ritual in Island Melanesia*, Sydney etc.: Academic Press 1981 [Studies in Anthropology, con.ed. E.A.Hammel]. xviii, 393pp., Bibliography, Indexes, Maps. £30.40.

Ageing schoolboys will remember the New Hebrides as eccentric red inkblots on both the left- and the right-hand sides of Mercator's map. The home of *mana*, the John Frum cargo-cult, and the world's most prolific form of secret societies, these islands seem to have exerted an almost mystical hold on English-speaking ethnographers: Layard wrote only the first of his projected four-volume ethnography, and that 30 years after his fieldwork. Deacon's field-notes were collated into an unsatisfactory, posthumous edition. But the hold of the South Pacific on its visitors may be weakening. A memoir of Deacon is in press. Snippets of Layard's life appear in biographies of W.H.Auden. And now, Michael Allen, who has done much to revive interest in the area, has edited a collection of papers by 13 of the anthropologists who have recently worked in the archipelago (renamed Vanuatu on Independence in 1980). Allen sought 'high quality articles on favoured topics' rather than restrict contributors by making them conform to 'some predetermined editorial scheme'.

His endeavour was successful: we are provided with 14 essays which reflect the diversity of the islands and of methodologies. Unfortunately, I have only space to mention a few. Rubenstein writes incisively with fine detail on political process and the varieties of knowledge on Malo; Brunton gives a sociological explanation of the rise of the John Frum movement; Lindstrom perceptively describes the relations between speech and *kava* on Tanna; Jolly shows some of the ways, and in what sense, men exploit women in south Pentecost. It is refreshing to note that several contributors do not shy away from ethnohistory: Facey outlines the continuity and change in the nature of Ngunese hereditary chieftainship; Allen writes a stimulating essay on innovation, inversion, and revolution as political tactics in west Oba; Tonkinson delineates the changing relations between Christianity and tradition in south-east Ambrym; Philibert exemplifies indigenous reactions to the colonial order by detailing the modernisation of a peri-urban village. In the Preface, I was delighted to see a few lines of gratitude to Tessa Fowler, a resident expatriate of much standing, who has given so much help to what must have seemed an endless stream of researchers.

I must end on a sombre note because I doubt this edition heralds an imminent series of ethnographies on Vanuatu, given the present

and proposed cut-backs in the universities. One may grumble at the price and flinch at the typed format (depressingly reminiscent of doctoral theses) but the departure of three of the contributors already from social anthropology is sufficient augury for us all. We must pay our thirty pounds and be grateful.

JEREMY MacCLANCY

SUSAN BENSON, *Ambiguous Ethnicity: Interracial Families in London*, Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press 1981 [Changing Cultures, gen.ed. J.Goody]. ix, 150pp., Appendixes, References. £16.50.

In the fifties and early sixties much of British society was pre-occupied with the spectre of sexual relations and marriage between black and white. For the right the problem was 'the sexually predatory black male and his mongrel offspring'--'interbreeding' signalled the end of the Empire if not the death of European civilisation. An anxious British Medical Association called to the nation for 'chastity' to prevent 'children of mixed blood [who are] becoming an increasing problem'. For liberals and the left, on the other hand, intermarriage promised a solution to racism--by the removal of races. Both left and right regarded the question as primarily biological--racists of course believed that biology determines culture while liberals suggested that a uniform morphology would remove the origin of racism.

The spectre has now disappeared. Indeed it seems it never existed. There has been a surprisingly small amount of intermarriage and its frequency is still dropping. In this first look at the question in Britain, Susan Benson suggests that less than 20% of the black British population have had a white partner.

Studies of racism now focus on power and economics not on genetics and pigmentation. We know that in Japan 'untouchables', like minorities elsewhere, are characterised by poor health, unemployment and low IQ scores. They are, however, physically and genetically indistinguishable from the general population and are kept segregated only by the scrutiny of family genealogies at the time of marriage.

Intermarriage, then, cannot solve a biological racism but it does seem to signal the possibility that some people at least can build their lives without racism. What of those who have endeavoured to construct their personal identities in opposition to this dominant British institution? Benson looks at twenty families in Brixton in the 1970s. Her conclusions are sombre: 'Far from indicating emancipation from the racial attitudes of the wider society, such relationships reflect, only too clearly, a structure imposed by the system of race relations of which they form a part.'

One theme running through all these families is hypogamy: black men tend to marry white women only when these women are

their social or educational inferior. The Afro-British community is of course quite conscious of this. 'Black men's women', as they are known in Brixton, are frequently the socially disadvantaged. In the period when there were few black women in Britain, black servicemen on moving to a new camp would immediately see if there was a remand home in the vicinity--'because they were shut off from society they seemed to have more sympathy with us'. White girls now who are courageous enough to take a black boy-friend are regarded with suspicion by the boy's family--they are presumed to be promiscuous or socially inadequate. As a corollary to hypogamy, the doubly disadvantaged--black women--are unlikely to find a white partner. Interestingly, Benson's fieldwork suggests that such marriages achieve a more satisfying accommodation for both. This is achieved at a cost--the black woman is cut off from all ties except those through her husband--she becomes a classificatory white. The professional black woman typically has difficulty in finding any partner--black or white--unless she is prepared to accept a black man of inferior social status.

As we get to know the families it becomes clear that the white partner has no interest in the other's culture and indeed continues to subscribe to the usual stereotypes. The black partner is accepted as a person in spite of their biology--for culture is still believed to be biological in origin. Still less does it seem that these pioneers are evolving a new set of values. Their children, regarded both popularly and officially as non-white, express a clear preference for identification with white society.

Given her emphasis on the woman's perspective it is a pity that Benson avoids the question of European fantasies about black male sexuality. In the eighteenth century the white Jamaica historian Edward Long, in a typical combination of misogyny, racism and class prejudice, declared that 'the lower class of women in England are remarkably fond of the blacks for reasons too brutal to mention.' Here we have the folk articulation of hypogamy. That such fantasies persist is evidenced by 'the beachboy syndrome' of the tourist Caribbean and West Africa. In my own clinical practice I have frequently been asked to help young British blacks with white girl-friends who find themselves totally unable to live up to the sexual demands which the couples' joint fantasies have generated. How significant were these fantasies in the couple's initial relationship? Did they persist through years of marriage? The book after all is about the relationship between sexual activity and political ideology. Benson seems to have avoided the point at which they meet.

Her sensitivity to personal experience is such that we may regret the short ethnographic descriptions compared with her too extensive tables. She is to be congratulated for avoiding the facile suggestion that her families are somehow poised between two cultures: they are clearly articulating their personal positions by using the dominant symbolic pattern--the relationship between black and white. As she points out, intermarriage is not the solution to racism but it does provide a model by which we can understand certain problems which will be inherent in the solution.



A short protest. 'Miscegenation' (coined as a nineteenth-century journalistic hoax) although derived from *misc-* (mix) carries of course the connotation of *mis-* (undesirable). The use of 'interracial' suggests that 'race' is a valid concept. I should prefer in both instances 'intermarriage' or even the rather dated 'mixed marriage'.

ROLAND LITTLEWOOD

ANTHONY P. COHEN (ed.), *Belonging: Identity and Social Organisation in British Rural Cultures*, Manchester: Manchester University Press 1982. x, 321pp., Index. £7.50.

This book draws together the work and ideas of social anthropologists who, in recent years, have made systematic field studies in British rural communities. As such it is to be welcomed as an important addition to the existing corpus of British community studies; for it integrates, criticises and enhances much of the ethnographic literature which has preceded it.

*Belonging* announces its main concern as 'the ethnography of locality', an enterprise which necessarily addresses the nature of ethnicity. This concern is pursued at two levels: first, by analysis of the relation between a local collectivity and its constituent parts, and secondly, by investigation into how a local community is connected to the wider social totality in which it is placed, and how each mediates the other. Such an enterprise is to be seen as articulating a commitment to a specific ethnographic method and theoretic stance.

In his introductory essay, 'Belonging: the experience of culture', the editor declares a commitment to phenomenological method. Ethnographic craft is seen as consisting in interpreting the meaning of people's social experience in terms of their everyday language, values and beliefs. There is nothing strikingly novel about this kind of methodological perspective. As early as 1951 Evans-Pritchard argued that, in his view, social anthropology studies societies as symbolic systems rather than natural systems, that it seeks patterns not laws, and interprets rather than explains (*Social Anthropology*, p.62). Moreover, E-P saw this interpretative study as part of a more comprehensive task--the comparative study of social structures. And it is precisely this comparative element which is little evident in *Belonging*. There is an intellectual over-kill on describing and interpreting the particularities of local idioms and social forms, and an inversely proportionate lack of comparative study and abstraction. Even so, the ethnographies are good, due largely to the clarity and inventiveness with which the authors use a wide range of theoretical writings.

A common theoretic stance is detectable in all the contributions. First, there is a commitment to 'Interpretivist' theory,

derived largely from the writings of Clifford Geertz and, before him, Max Weber and Alfred Schutz. The intellectual tradition of 'Interpretivism' is less akin to the Durkheimian School, which has informed much of British social anthropology, and more in line with *Verstehende soziologie* which arose out of the German Romantic School of hermeneutics and the *Geisteswissenschaften*. 'Interpretivist' ethnography presupposes the hermeneutical principle of understanding the dialectical relation between the whole and its constituent parts. As Cohen, in agreement with Geertz's prescriptions, observes: 'the ethnographer must not only seek the overall cultural context: he must also elucidate the specific terms of any particular event and must address himself to the unique qualities of any relationship.' His focus is upon culture; and 'Culture to the Interpretivist, is Geertz's "web of significance"--a field within which meaning is made and shared'.

Another common theoretical stance is based on Fredrik Barth's concept of ethnic boundaries. (See Barth's *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, 1969.) A key statement regarding this comes early on in the book. Cohen writes:

The ethnography of locality is an account of how people experience and express their difference from others, and how their sense of difference becomes incorporated into and informs the nature of their social organisation and process. The sense of difference thus lies at the heart of people's awareness of their culture and, indeed, makes it appropriate for ethnographers to designate as 'cultures' such arenas of distinctiveness.

Ethnicity and locality, then, are seen as expressions of culture. 'Thus', writes Cohen, 'one can state a more general principle: that people become aware of their culture when they stand at its boundaries.' This theory disposes the contributors to analyse local communities as boundaries of commonality wherein distinctive meanings are constructed and expressed through particular idioms and modes of social organisation.

Finally, there is a countervailing concern with 'core-periphery' models--that is, with relating the esoteric particulars of peripheral communities to the complex state system of the British Isles and beyond. Local cultures are not presented as isolates; they are analysed in relation to the wider socio-cultural context.

These points of theoretical interest have largely shaped the structure of the book. Part One, 'Belonging to the Part: Social Association within the Locality', deals with the ways in which people experience local life. The papers here describe the elementary structures of belonging (including the ideology of difference), and show how these mediate the association between individuals and their community. The authors aim at disclosing local forms of social organisation through the terms used by the people themselves. Beyond ethnography there is an attempt to analyse the implications which indigenous perceptions of modes of close social association--kinship, neighbourhood, class, sect, ethnicity--have for the nature of local social process. To give a few examples, Cohen shows how bilateral kinship provides a means

for optimising access to limited resources. Robin Fox, in an illuminating essay on his Tory Island material, indicates further work is needed on partible inheritance and common ownership in Europe, and suggests a revision of the mechanical notion of 'norm' and 'deviance' and a new focus on the dialectical relation between principles and pragmatics. Marilyn Strathern relates English concepts of kinship and village status at the local level to nationwide divisions of society into classes. She also makes an interesting point of comparison with North American kinship in a foot-

In Part Two, 'Belonging to the Whole: the community in context', the focus shifts to analysing how local collectivities see themselves in relation to the wider social context. The nature of collective identity is examined with reference to its significance for internal differentiation, the formulation of behaviour in the community, and the framing of interaction between the community and the wider society. For instance, Peter Mewett, in a most stimulating essay, presents a perceptive analysis of the interaction between marginal esoteric cultures and mainstream culture, showing how esoteric cultures are gradually devalued as they become incorporated into the mainstream. He also examines how people's sense of, and attachment to, place affects their relationship with wider society. His analysis of migration accounts for the sentimental associations of 'home' as against the practical associations of 'away'. Strathern's essay in the second part presents a further variation on her kinship-and-village-as-class thesis, and argues that the Elmdoners' concept of 'village' is related to a set of symbols and values which refer to and derive from wider society.

The book has neither a conclusion nor a discussion of the data presented in the ethnographies. This is a drawback, as a discussion might well have suggested further ideas about concepts and areas for future study. But this is a minor criticism of an otherwise high-quality piece of work. The editor is to be congratulated for the thoroughness of his proofreading, and Manchester University Press for its excellent standard of production.

SCOTT K. PHILLIPS

WAZIR-JAHAN BEGUM KARIM, *Ma' Betisék, Concepts of Living Things*, London: Athlone and New Jersey: Humanities 1981 [London School of Economics Monographs on Social Anthropology no. 54, gen.ed. A.Gell]. xv, 207pp., Appendixes, Glossary, Bibliography, Index. £18.00.

During the last decade much anthropological fieldwork has been carried out among the aboriginal peoples of the Malay Peninsula. So far, however, few publications have appeared. It is therefore particularly welcome to receive this study of one of the ethnic groups, the Ma' Betisék (previously known as the Mah Meri) of the

Carey Island off the west coast of the peninsula. The book is a revised version of a doctoral thesis submitted at the London School of Economics in 1977.

The author presents the belief system of the Ma' Betisék via two central concepts which she suggests are fundamentally opposed. They are both expressed in the relationship of the Ma' Betisék to plants and animals. Whereas the concept of *tulah* expresses the idea that plants and animals were 'cursed' by the ancestors to become food for the Ma' Betisék, the concept of *kemali* contradicts this view by expressing an essential unity between humans and animals and plants by virtue of which it is fundamentally wrong to exploit the latter two as food 'because they are human'. *Kemali* is invoked as an explanation for illness and misfortune. From this one might expect a conflict to result, but Karim argues that each view comes into operation only on such occasions as it reinforces the particular occurrence, and that *tulah* and *kemali* are mutually exclusive.

By taking examples of Ma' Betisék myths she shows that the two views are exemplified in the mythology also in mutually exclusive ways. Each myth deals either with *kemali* or with *tulah*. Karim is concerned with demonstrating the consistency by which the two sets of values are manipulated side by side in a system which 'functions as a pendulum. Both systems of ideas have equivalent statuses but neither system can ever be maintained for long since they both refer to events or activities that occur daily', and again, 'both are equally relevant and important. They are only coherent when they are operationalized, not otherwise.' It might have been interesting to consider the possibility that an interactive relationship pertains between the two concepts, that neither can exist without the other, and that the very paradox of their incompatibility gives vitality to both.

Although a wider spectrum of ideas and connections might have been usefully explored, including some reference to similar concepts found in neighbouring aboriginal groups, this is a well-written and well-documented study, filling an important gap in our knowledge about Malay aboriginals. The author also gives valuable information in appendices, listing twenty-four myths in full, as well as several songs and spells.

SIGNE HOWELL

ROLAND LITTLEWOOD and MAURICE LIPSEGE, *Aliens and Alienists: Ethnic Minorities and Psychiatry*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1982. 242pp., References, Index. £3.95.

Born in Jamaica, Evadne Williams came to Britain when she was thirty. Now in her mid-forties, she remains unmarried and has devoted her time to nursing and to her local Pentecostal Church.

Littlewood describes his first encounter with Evadne:

She saw me quite happily, immediately grabbing my arm and making me sit down, but then started sobbing against my shoulder. Before I could ask what the trouble was she suddenly gave a scream and rolled over on the floor crying out something I could not grasp. It was difficult to understand exactly what she was saying, but her speech had a coherent rhythm, something like that of an evangelical preacher or a racing commentator. Suddenly she jumped up, sat down next to me again and explained rather breathlessly and at great length that she was being unfairly treated in the hospital for spreading the word of God and that she was being martyred. Then she quizzed me on my knowledge of the Book of Revelation.

She started singing gospel hymns and, pushing me into a corner of the room, began an ecstatic dance on her own, punctuated by rousing cries of 'Praise the Lord'. She would not answer any questions and I sat by helpless....

A case of excessive religious enthusiasm, or does the inappropriateness of Evadne's behaviour suggest mental disorder? When ten or so of her Pentecostal friends arrived to help assess what was going on, Littlewood was astonished at their judgement: her enthusiasm was attributed to her being 'sick in the head'; it was not held to be anything like speaking in tongues. Littlewood decided to follow their advice to give Evadne an injection immediately.

The problems raised by this episode mark the beginning of Littlewood and Lipsedge's interest in transcultural psychiatry. *Aliens and Alienists* is the outcome, and, although claiming to present a 'theoretical framework', is best regarded as conveying a number of insights as to how to understand and help people like Evadne.

Beatrice Jackson is also from Jamaica. Like other West Indians in Britain, she is held to be both alienated and anomic: alienated in that she is unaware that her understanding and appreciation of the outside world is mistaken; anomic in that she readily suffers from subjective discomfort accompanied by feelings of loss of integration, purpose, and significance. Her life in Britain has taken the form of erecting alienated defences against her anomie--first as a sinner, then as a patient with abdominal pain, and finally as a psychotic. The ultimate step into 'mental illnesses' occurred when her son disrupted her 'symbolic' world view (basically identification with white society, regarded as good) by telling her that the police, representatives of white society, are bad. To medicalize Beatrice would be to fall in line with her own game, providing increased substance to the last of the 'increasingly maladaptive' positions she has adopted. It is better to concentrate on changing her understanding of her situation: 'If we can show her...the social origins both of her difficulties and also of the ways by which she has tried to solve them, we are offering her a powerful way to adjust reality to conform to her needs rather than the reverse.'

*Aliens and Alienists* raises many issues, too many for the book

to be as comprehensible as the subject matter demands. Essentially, though, it is a critique of current psychiatric treatment of immigrants. Comparing men born in England with those born in the West Indies, the rate of hospital admission per 100,000 of the male population over fifteen years old for schizophrenia is 87 and 290, and for affective psychoses (including depression) 45 and 30. The authors suggest that 'the diagnosis of schizophrenia will probably become less common as psychiatrists take more of an interest in the experience of their minority patients'. But it is not simply that current psychiatric diagnoses reflect a tendency to fail to defuse bizarre behaviour by placing it in its proper sociocultural context. In addition, psychiatrists are accused of articulating our racial stereotypes:

The practice of psychiatry continually redefines and controls social reality for the community. Whatever the empirical justification, the frequent diagnosis in black patients of schizophrenia (bizarre, irrational, outside) and the infrequent diagnosis of depression (acceptable, understandable, inside), validates our stereotypes.

More explicitly still, we are told that psychiatry

must always remain conscious of its role in disguising disadvantage as disease and its tendency to offer an identity which is only that of the invalid. The dominant racialism of our age is reflected not just in the theories and practices of psychiatry but in its very structure....

The authors claim that a more relativistic viewpoint--trying to understand mental disorder as an intelligible response to alienation and anomie--will help improve diagnosis and treatment. The relationship between mental 'illness' and the organization of values and meanings is of course a long-standing anthropological concern. Putting it crudely, many have argued along the lines that depression is the absence or rejection of meaning, anxiety the surfeit of meaning, and schizophrenia the division of meaning. The folk therapist has been regarded as the agent who tries to make sense of the patient so as to restore the normal order. So it comes as no surprise to find Littlewood (who does research at the Institute of Social Anthropology, Oxford) and Lipsedge (who also has cross-cultural interests) arguing that 'even the mentally ill are making meaningful statements', and then suggesting that treatment takes this fully into account.

At times the authors write as though mental illness is only a semantic or political construct: it is 'not a "thing" located in the individual but a concept which both explains and controls relations between individuals.' However, we are also told that 'after a certain point, serious mental illnesses have a momentum of their own and they cannot be modified easily by a change of atmosphere or by psychotherapy.' It is confusing to read on the one hand that it is 'essential' for the psychiatrist to distinguish between serious mental illness and 'situational reactions', and on

the other that it is 'unproductive' to question whether mental illness is rooted in biology or culture.

Those who are suffering, society at large, even psychiatrists, no doubt sometimes use mental illness as a stratagem, often in the course of 'race' relationships, and it is the great virtue of this book to illuminate these manoeuvres. However, there must come a point when some immigrants should be treated as invalids, whatever the consequences for their identity, future prospects, and for our stereotypes. The view that mental illness is not 'a "thing" located in the individual' but a 'concept' used to convey messages about adverse circumstances and to articulate relationships reflecting the impact of immigration could have an unfortunate consequence: it might encourage psychiatrists, perhaps immigrants themselves, to desist from engaging in what has to be done--medical treatment. The authors indicate that they do not intend to show that 'psychiatry is a vast conspiracy'. However, by not clearly and consistently acknowledging the endogenous or biological basis of some cases of mental illness, by emphasising the extent to which mental illness is bound up with the problems of immigrants, and by pointing to the racist implications of psychiatry, the authors could perhaps make it more difficult for immigrants to receive and accept treatment of a medical variety.

PAUL HEELAS

CHRISTINE OPPONG, *Middle Class African Marriage: A Family Study of Ghanaian Senior Civil Servants*, London etc.: George Allen & Unwin 1981 [1974]. xx, 160pp., Appendix, Bibliographies, Index. £4.50.

The Akan peoples live in southern Ghana, in what was known in the colonial days as the 'Gold Coast' and 'Ashanti-land'. Oppong classifies them into Coastal, Eastern and Interior Akan, which include a number of groups that share many common cultural features; but there are major differences among them too--particularly regarding the importance of matriliney. Some of the Coastal Akan, for example, attach less importance to matrilineal descent groups than do the Interior Akan; the former have been more exposed to Western influence and culture than the latter.

Senior Akan public servants come from different backgrounds, a fact to which Oppong draws our attention. They have had access to modern higher education, which has equipped them with various skills and enabled them to fill the vacancies created by the withdrawal of British colonial officials from the public sector at Independence in 1957. Some have had further training abroad. More men than women have benefited from higher education, but women through their husbands have enjoyed the benefits which seniority in the public service brings--bungalows at Government-subsidised rates, cars, refrigerators, etc.--a legacy of the colonial era. This stan-

dard of living was very high when compared to the neglect of the rural areas.

Opong's study explores the conflicts and pressures members of this elite group have to withstand in the urban milieu and how conjugal ties between husbands and wives are affected in the process. Western ideas and the emulation of the life-styles of their colonial predecessors incline them to seek the ideal of monogamous conjugal family life and the joint accumulation and distribution of wealth within the nuclear family. Traditional norms however enjoin sharing among kin, the spouse and children being viewed as affines. Where a senior public servant's education was financed by the extended family his improved circumstances are viewed by kin as the reward of their investment materially, if not also morally and spiritually, and they therefore claim the right to benefit from the material resources accruing to his position. The wife, for her part, also considers the claims of the kin of the husband as unacceptable in view of her own contribution to the conjugal family. This self-interest of the participants mars conjugal relations. There is in some cases an on-going latent war between kin and affines, which erupts occasionally in the form of a confrontation between wife and husband's sister. The wife feels particularly vulnerable. The conjugal relationship is characterised by strain and mutual suspicion and some marriages break up before long, owing to inadequate adjustment. Many factors influence the relationship, among them the educational background of the parents and grandparents of the couple. The 'small bilateral family' is a necessary adjustment to the urban milieu, and couples who come from this educational background boasting of literate parents and grandparents adapt more easily to this kind of small bilateral family more or less insulated from the interference of kin. The Coastal Akan would seem to be more successful in this respect than their interior neighbours.

The study is about social change in Akan societies and begins where the older ethnographies of Rattray, Fortes, etc., leave off; and in this respect the book is an excellent supplement. The author, herself the wife of an Akan senior public servant, is very familiar with the Ghanaian situation, having also been a student and lecturer in the country. The appeal of the book goes beyond catering for the interests of scholars. The Akan people themselves would find it useful, as would the general reader. I prefer, however, the earlier title, *Marriage Among a Matrilineal Elite: A Family Study of Ghanaian Senior Civil Servants*, as it leaves the potential reader in no doubt as to the book's content. The present title by contrast is misleading in many ways. Rough sterling equivalents to prices quoted in the local cedis and pesewas would, no doubt, be appreciated by non-Ghanaian readers.

A. AWEDOBA



ILSE SCHWIDETZKY, BRUNETTO CHIARELLI and OLGA NECRASOV (eds.), *Physical Anthropology of European Populations*, The Hague etc.: Mouton 1980 [World Anthropology Series, gen.ed. Sol Tax]. xii, 386pp., Appendices, Biographical Notes, Indexes. DM 92.00.

The wealth of volumes containing hundreds of valuable papers resulting from the IXth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences has been somewhat devalued by the publication of this 'catch-all' collection of poorly translated and/or badly edited papers on potentially interesting physical anthropological topics. This volume is divided into two parts, recent populations and prehistoric populations, and prefaced with a long introduction of 58 pages, by far the most useful contribution, detailing the type and scope of anthropological work being carried out in particular European countries. The second most useful contribution is presented as an appendix and consists of a directory of European anthropological institutions. The intervening papers are, for the most part, merely short presentations of raw or slightly cooked data--that is, if palatable, certainly not digestible without further treatment on the part of the reader.

On the whole, the second set of papers, those on 'prehistoric populations', are of somewhat greater quality than those of the previous section by virtue of the type of data available for study. It appears that when faced with a restricted data set (such as single fossils or small bone collections from cemeteries), paleo-anthropologists switch to a higher plane of reasoning that attempts to derive as much significant information as possible from the evidence and, in so doing, produce an altogether more complete, albeit more speculative, interpretation of the fossils. When faced with the enormous amount of information obtainable from living populations, the essays tend to become much more specific and concentrated to the degree that one forgets that the objects being studied are human beings. It is ironic, at least to this reader, that studies of extinct or prehistoric hominids attempt to present a more rounded picture of the individuals than those concerned with extant populations.

The studies of modern populations presented in this work also miss the important opportunity of discussing the implications of their particular conclusions to the study of extinct populations; namely, what does all this sub-specific physical variation of modern populations tell us about the relatively neat scheme of specific and sub-specific variation in the extinct species of Homo (e.g. *H. sapiens neanderthalensis*, *H. sapiens rhodisensis*, etc.) or the extinct species of Australopithecines (e.g. *A. robustus*, *A. boisei* or *A. africanus*). Surely one of the justifications of studying living populations is the elucidation of the adaptive processes that may have influenced past evolutionary trends and if not, then physical anthropology has driven itself into the cul-de-sac of triviality.

To be fair, this volume does contain one useful paper, 'Man in the Italian Alps: A Study of the Pleistocene and Post-Glacial Evidence' by F.G.Fedele, and several humorous contributions. On the humorous side we are told that although Parisians are taller

and more slender than other Gauls, they are no more intelligent (G. Oliver and F. Bressac, 'The Anthropology of a Capital City and Considerations on Urbanization'). Advances in time travel are also implied by the paper presented by V.V. Bunak, 'The Fossil Man from the Sunghir Settlement and His Place among Other Late Paleolithic Fossils', where he cites I.G. Pidoplichko (*Pozdnepaleoliticheskie zhilishcha iz kostel mamonta na Ukraine* [*Late Paleolithic Dwellings from Mammoth Bones in the Ukraine*], Kiev 1970): 'Mammoth hunters lived and moved in small groups formed around one hearth (four or five in most cases) that from time to time united for a joint hunt or feast.' Alas, to have not only sufficient information to say 'four or five' but the certainty to say 'in most cases' must surely be the greatest of pleasures.

All in all this book is best left on the shelf to be referred to solely as an address directory for various anthropological institutions and as a guide for the tabular presentation of data.

JOHN DUMONT

BRONISLAW MALINOWSKI and JULIO DE LA FUENTE, *Malinowski in Mexico: The Economics of a Mexican Market System* (edited by Susan Drucker-Brown), London etc.: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1982 [International Library of Anthropology, gen.ed. A.Kuper]. xiii, 202pp., Bibliography, Index, Illustrations. £12.50.

This book includes the first English publication of the Mexican research in which Malinowski was engaged when he died in 1942. It is in the form of an essay entitled 'The Economics of the Mexican Market System: an essay in contemporary ethnographic and social change in a Mexican valley'. The essay is based on the findings of two periods of fieldwork in the Oaxaca Valley (Malinowski's first sustained fieldwork since the Trobriands), carried out with the assistance of Julio de la Fuente (who is co-author of the essay) and Valetta Swann, Malinowski's second wife. Malinowski was getting ready for a third period of fieldwork when he died. The work described in the essay was clearly part of a larger research project and mainly covered the field situation. A definitive study of the market system was to follow. Although the essay has never before been published in English, a copy of the typescript was made available to the Inter-American Indianist Institute and published, in Spanish translation, by the Students' Society of the National School of Anthropology and History in Mexico City in 1957. It was originally written with students in mind and is concerned with methodological issues of applied anthropology.

The essay has been edited by Dr. Drucker-Brown, who was engaged in re-translating the Spanish copy when the original English copy was made available to her by Helena Wayne, Malinowski's daughter (see her informative account of the migration pattern of Mal-

inowski's Oaxaca field-notes since his death in *RAIN*, No.49, April 1982, pp.9-10). In editing the essay, Dr. Drucker-Brown has rearranged the chapters and incorporated items of correspondence between de la Fuente and Malinowski highlighting issues on which the two men disagreed. In the long introductory chapter, Dr. Drucker-Brown has placed the essay in its historical context, rather necessary in view of the fact that forty years have elapsed since it was first written. Under separate sub-headings she covers the contribution of Julio de la Fuente, the wider political context of the essay, its position in the context of Malinowski's work, modernisation in the Oaxaca Valley and a note on subsequent research. Clearly one of Dr. Drucker-Brown's intentions is to bring the name of Julio de la Fuente to the knowledge of Western anthropologists. She undoubtedly is the person to do it since from 1957 to 1969 she worked under his supervision at the National Indianist Institute in Mexico.

This work can be assessed in relation to Malinowski's writings, a theory of market economics and to Mexico and its socio-economic development in particular. Starting with the latter, it is encouraging that the original purpose with which the work was conceived has been served. It forms the basis of subsequent studies of markets in Mexico and as a guideline for planned economic change. In addition, the practical advice and Malinowski's 'functionalist' approach were major themes which were incorporated into the courses given at the National School of Anthropology and History in Mexico. As far as its importance in relation to theories of market economics is concerned, it is clearly a pioneering work. Attention is focused on a single institution which linked the urban community of Oaxaca to a series of other rural localities. The text is filled with the imponderabilia of detailed fieldwork observations and the way in which they may lead to the formulation of theoretical questions. Considered in relation to Malinowski's other writings, this essay may be seen as a further development of the theme that preoccupied Malinowski in Africa: culture contact and change. In Mexico it was taken one step further to include the methodology of social change. Although de la Fuente was a student of Marxism, Malinowski did not avowedly owe allegiance to any political party. The method of planned social change suggested in the essay is not 'unilineal' but rather 'multilineal', at the base of which lay Malinowski's 'functional' theory that all aspects of social life are interrelated.

Dr. Drucker-Brown has done an admirable piece of work in presenting this long-lost essay to Western anthropologists. It is lamentable that she did not have access to the rest of the Oaxaca field-notes which remain across the Atlantic in the USA. They would have added greatly to bringing out the personalities of the authors as well as Valetta Swann, who, in the words of Malinowski, '...contributed to the work by drawing a number of plans and keeping a detailed diary during one of the most interesting phases of our fieldwork....'

E.D.HUNT, *Holy Land Pilgrimage in the Later Roman Empire AD 312-460*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1982. x, 248pp., Bibliography, Index. £16.50.

This book provides a new collation of material on Christian pilgrimage for scholars interested in following the anthropological leads of Maurice Halbwachs (*La Topographie Legendaire des Evangiles en Terre Sainte: Etude de Memoire Collective*, Paris 1941) and Victor and Edith Turner (*Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*, Oxford 1978) into this field of historical Christian ritual. Hunt's book (a rewritten Oxford thesis) investigates the origins of the pilgrimage to Palestine in a more meticulous and systematic manner than did Jonathan Sumption's earlier *Pilgrimage: An Image of Medieval Culture* (London 1975) and in so doing provides the anthropologist with a clear and concise vision of the establishment and early propagation of a holy centre for empire and imagination.

Hunt's study is bipartite. The first six chapters deal with the roughly synchronic aspects of building a Christian showpiece and drawing the imagination of an empire to it, while the final four sections diachronically illustrate the way church and court factions used Jerusalem as a legitimizing device in the former's struggle for orthodoxy and the latter's scramble for power. Chapter 1 deals with Constantine's programme of glorifying the Holy Land as both testimony to the Christian nature of his empire and proof that his rule fulfilled biblical prophecies announcing the coming of a new David. Chapters 2 and 4 treat the elaborate stratagems the court and Christian ideologists affected to link the biblical past with the imperial present; the mosaics of S. Pudenziana in Rome, which portrayed biblical incidents occurring in the basilicas which Constantine built on sacred sites, and the sewing of a fragment of the cross into the bridle of Constantine's horse, which fulfilled Zechariah's Old Testament prophecy that horses' harnesses would be inscribed 'holy to the Lord', illustrate two different devices for bringing the sacred past into contact with the present. The Jerusalem liturgy, which spread through the influence of pilgrims and propagandists from the Palestinian city throughout the Roman Empire, is shown in chapter 5 to be what Geoffrey Dix calls a 'sanctification of time' (*Shape of the Liturgy*, Westminster 1945)--a sacralization of the present through ritual re-enactment of the past. Chapters 3 and 6 deal with the logistics of late classical travel, the allure and dissemination of Holy Land relics, and the growing wealth of the Jerusalem bishopric and the local monasteries. The final chapters are enmeshed rather tightly in the specific court intrigues and church controversies which weakened the Empire in its twilight years. The Holy Places in this period were courted by politicians (and especially their wives and mothers) with immense benefices and called upon by Orthodox theologians who used Palestine's biblical sites as concrete proofs of the Church's claims about Christ's substantiality and the nature of his mission.

Hunt places this material firmly in an historical context and for this the anthropologist, dazzled by the historically careless acrobatics of the Turners' study, is grateful. On the other hand,

Hunt fails radically to see pilgrimage against a socio-cultural background, and this failure throws into question the validity of his portrayal of late classical pilgrimage. Hunt, a traditional British historian, neglects to consider the significance of persons and practices which were not acknowledged in the materials left to posterity by a political and clerical elite. It may be difficult for the historian to 'see' what an elite literature deems unworthy of recognition, but surely the appropriation of a popular tradition by an emperor of dubious religious feeling has to be read in the light of the nature of pilgrimage and the localization of the holy prior to Constantine's rise, the characters of the Mediterranean cultures which the holy places were to appeal to (to this day the majority of pilgrims come from the Greek Orthodox agrarian classes), and the effects of the establishment of Palestine as a sacral centre on the beliefs of the general population. It is difficult to ascertain from Hunt's study whether pilgrimage affected anyone outside the cloistered upper echelons of Roman society and, if so, how. Anthropologists and various social historians (Bloch, Duby, LeRoy Ladurie, Thomas and Brown) recognise that the 'history of great men' is made in an effort to influence, counter and control the practices of the silent many. Constantine adopted and proclaimed Christianity as a means of transforming a welter of diverse peoples into a single empire under one god and one emperor, and his 'creation' of Jerusalem as a pilgrimage centre was a set piece in that attempted transformation. The reviewer cannot in justice ask Dr. Hunt to provide a complete cultural history of this immense imperial programme in addition to the well-researched study of Palestine pilgrimage he has given us here, but I can suggest that locating the pilgrimage tradition within this wider context would show it to be a keystone to the understanding of the history of Christian Europe rather than simply an elaborate ritual played out by an elite few in a dusty corner of the empire.

GLENN BOWMAN

## PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

- Academia Sinica, Bulletin of the Institute of Ethnology*, no. 51, Spring 1981.
- BARKER, Eileen (ed.), *New Religious Movements: A Perspective for Understanding Society*, New York and Toronto: Edwin Mellen Press 1982 [Studies in Religion and Society, Vol.3]. xxv, 358pp., Bibliography. \$44.95.
- BARLETT, Peggy F., *Agricultural Choice and Change: Decision Making in a Costa Rican Community*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press 1982. 177pp., Bibliography, Index, Illustrations. \$22.50.
- BLISS, C.J. and N.H.STERN, *Palampur: The Economy of an Indian Village*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1982. xi, 325pp., References, Index. £15.00.
- BOELAARS, J.H.M.C., *Head-hunters About Themselves: An ethnographic Report from Irian Jaya, Indonesia*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff 1981 [Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde 92]. xv, 285pp., Appendices, Illustrations, Plates, Maps. Dfl.90.00.
- DONOHUE, John J. and John L. ESPOSITO (eds.), *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press 1982. xv, 322pp. £5.95 (paper).
- DUNN, Stephen P., *The Rise and Fall of the Asiatic Mode of Production*, London etc.: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1982. xvi, 154pp. £4.95 (paper).
- FADIMAN, Jeffrey A., *An Oral History of Tribal Warfare: The Meru of Mt. Kenya*, Athens: Ohio University Press 1982. 172pp., Bibliography, Maps. £14.70.
- FORTH, Gregory L., *Rindi: An Ethnographic Study of a Traditional Domain in Eastern Indonesia*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff 1981 [Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde 93]. xvi, 490pp., Appendices, Maps, Glossary, References, Plates. Dfl.145.00.
- GESCHIERE, Peter, *Village Communities and the State: Changing Relations among the Maka of Southeastern Cameroon since the Colonial Conquest*, London etc.: Kegan Paul International 1982 [Monographs from the African Studies Centre, Leiden]. xvi, 491pp., Bibliography, Index, Maps, Plates. £25.00.
- HERZFELD, Michael, *Ours Once More: Folklore, Ideology, and the Making of Modern Greece*, Austin: University of Texas Press 1982. xii, 144pp., Map, Appendices, Bibliography, Index. \$17.50.
- HOLLIS, Martin and Steven LUKES (eds.), *Rationality and Relativism*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell 1982. viii, 305pp., Bibliography, Index. £6.50.
- HSIAO, Hsin-huang Michael, *Government Agricultural Strategies in Taiwan and South Korea: A Macrosociological Assessment*, Nankang: Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica 1981. xiii, 294pp., Bibliography. n.p.
- JANZEN, John M., *The Quest for Therapy: Medical Pluralism in Lower Zaire*, Berkeley etc.: University of California Press 1982 [Comparative Studies in Health Systems and Medical Care no.1]. xxii, 229pp., Appendices, Bibliography, Index, Illustrations. £5.75.
- JOSELIN DE JONG, P.E.de and Erik Schwimmer (eds.), *Symbolic Anthropology in the Netherlands*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff 1982 [Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde 95]. vi, 221pp. Dfl. 50.00.
- POLMAN, Katrien, *The North Moluccas: An Annotated Bibliography*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff 1981 [Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, Bibliographical Series 11]. xx, 175pp., Indexes. Dfl. 30.00.
- ROBBINS, Sterling, *Auyana: Those Who Held onto Home*, Seattle and London: University of Washington Press 1982. xi, 247pp., Bibliography, Index. £24.50.
- SMITH, Nigel J.H., *Rainforest Corridors: The Transamazon Colonization Scheme*, Berkeley etc.: University of California Press 1982. xvii, 200pp., Bibliography, Index. £18.75.
- SPIRO, Melford E., *Buddhism and Society: A Great Tradition and Its Burmese Vicissitudes*, Berkeley etc.: University of California Press 1982. xxvi, 477pp., Appendix, References, Index. £26.25.
- STOCKING Jr., George W. (ed.), *A Franz Boas Reader: The Shaping of American Anthropology, 1883-1911*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press 1982. xi, 340pp., Bibliography, Index. £7.70 (paper).
- WEI, Hwei-lin, *An Ethnography of the Seven Villages of the Paseh on the Puli Plain* [in Chinese], Nankang: Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica 1981. xiv, 144pp., References, Plates, Maps. n.p.
- YANG, Kuo-shu and Chung-i WEN (eds.), *The Sinitization of Social and Behavioral Science Research in China* [in Chinese], Nankang: Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica 1982. viii, 464pp., References. n.p.

# JASO

## INDEX TO VOLUME XIII, 1982

### ARTICLES

- ALLEN, N.J.  
A Dance of Relatives .. .. . 139-146
- ANDRZEJEWSKI, B.W.  
Alliteration and Scansion in Somali Oral  
Poetry and Its Cultural Correlates .. .. . 68-83
- BRASS, Tom  
[Commentary] The Sabotage of Anthropology and  
the Anthropologist as Saboteur.. .. . 180-186
- CALAME-GRIAULE, Genevieve  
La jeune fille qui cherche ses freres. Essai d'analyse .. 45-56
- CASAJUS, Dominique  
Autour du rituel de la nomination chez les Touaregs  
Kel Ferwan .. .. . 57-67
- COLCHESTER, Marcus  
Les Yanomami, sont-ils libres? Les Utopies amazoniennes,  
une critique. A Look at French Anarchist Anthropology.. 147-164
- COLLINSON, J.D.H.  
[Commentary] There Is an Albatross in the Sky .. .. 287-291
- COOTE, Jeremy  
[Byways] Members Past and Present: 2.Dr. Audrey Richards 110-111
- DERIVE, Jean  
La reformulation en litterature orale. Typologie des trans-  
formations linguistiques dans les differentes performances  
d'une meme oeuvre .. .. . 14-21
- EDWARDS, Elizabeth  
[Byways] Some Problems with Photographic Archives: The  
Case of C.W. Dammann .. .. . 257-261
- FERNANDEZ-ARMESTO, Felipe  
Medieval Ethnography .. .. . 275-286
- FORTH, Gregory  
Sumbanese Finger Names: Some Comparative Remarks.. .. 231-242
- GOROG-KARADY, Veronika  
Retelling Genesis: The Children of Eve and the Origin  
of Inequality .. .. . 31-44
- GUNNER, Elisabeth  
New Wine in Old Bottles: Imagery in the *Izibongo* of the  
Zulu Zionist Prophet, Isaiah Shembe .. .. . 99-108

HOLDEN, Pat		
[ <i>Shorter Notes</i> ] Conference on 'Emerging Christianity in Modern Africa' .. .. .	130	
KNAPPERT, Jan		
Swahili Oral Traditions .. .. .	22-30	
McNEILL, Desmond		
[ <i>Shorter Notes</i> ] The Saddest Story .. .. .	131-132	
PICONE, Mary		
[ <i>Commentary</i> ] Observing 'Les Observateurs de l'Homme': Impressions of Contemporary French Anthropology in Context .. .. .	292-299	
REY-HULMAN, Diana		
Pratiques langagieres et formes litteraires .. .. .	1-13	
SEYDOU, Christiane		
Comment definir le genre epique? Un exemple: l'epopee africaine.. .. .	84-98	
TONKIN, Elizabeth		
Rethinking Socialization.. .. .	243-256	
WHEELER, C.J.		
An Inquiry into the Proto-Algonquian System of Social Classification and Marriage .. .. .	165-174	
WILKINS, Pauline		
[ <i>Commentary</i> ] Regaining the Golden Stool: Social Anthropology and Applied Research .. .. .	112-120	
WILLIAMSON, Lynne		
[ <i>Byways</i> ] Notes on Ethnographic Collections in Oxford: Some American Indian Collections in the Pitt Rivers Museum .. .. .	175-179	
WOLFRAM, Sybil		
Anthropology and Morality .. .. .	262-274	

## REVIEWS

ALLEN, Michael (ed.), <i>Vanuatu: Politics, Economics and Ritual in Island Melanesia</i> . Reviewed by Jeremy MacClancy .. .. .	300-301
ARDENER, Shirley (ed.), <i>Women and Space: Ground Rules and Social Maps</i> . Reviewed by Catherine Thompson.. .. .	125-128
AXTELL, James, <i>The European and the Indian: Essays in Ethnohistory of Colonial North America</i> . Reviewed by Glenn Bowman .. .. .	188-191
BAWDEN, Garth and Geoffrey W. CONRAD, <i>The Andean Heritage: Masterpieces of Peruvian Art from the Collections of the Peabody Museum</i> . Reviewed by Lynne Williamson .. .. .	191



- BENSON, Susan, *Ambiguous Ethnicity: Interracial Families in London*. Reviewed by Roland Littlewood .. .. 301-303
- BRUMBLE, H. David, *An Annotated Bibliography of American Indian and Eskimo Autobiographies*. Reviewed by Grant Thomas Edwards .. .. 192-196
- BUTTERWORTH, Douglas S., *The People of Buena Ventura: Relocation of Slum Dwellers in Postrevolutionary Cuba*. Reviewed by Phil Harding .. .. 200-204
- CLIFFORD, James, *Person and Myth: Maurice Leenhardt in the Melanesian World*. Reviewed by Jeremy MacClancy .. 213-215
- COHEN, Anthony P. (ed.), *Belonging: Identity and Social Organization in British Rural Cultures*. Reviewed by Scott K. Phillips .. .. 303-305
- GONZALEZ, Nancie L. Solien, *Black Carib Household Structure: A Study of Migration and Modernization*. Reviewed by Phil Harding.. .. 200-204
- HENDRY, Joy, *Marriage in Changing Japan*. Reviewed by Rosamund Bell .. .. 217-220
- HOOPER, Antony, *Why Tikopia Has Four Clans*. Reviewed by R.H.Barnes .. .. 221
- KARIM, Wazir-Jahan Begum, *Ma'Betisék Concepts of Living Things*. Reviewed by Signe Howell .. .. 305-306
- LEWIS-WILLIAMS, J.David, *Believing and Seeing: Symbolic Meanings in Southern San Rock Paintings*. Reviewed by David van Roijen .. .. 222
- LITTLEWOOD, Roland and Maurice LIPSEGE, *Aliens and Alienists: Ethnic Minorities and Psychiatry*. Reviewed by Paul Heelas .. .. 306-309
- MALINOWSKI, Bronislaw and Julio DE LA FUENTE, *Malinowski in Mexico: The Economics of a Mexican Market System* (edited by Susan Drucker-Brown). Reviewed by Crystyn Cech .. .. 312-313
- NEEDHAM, Rodney, *Circumstantial Deliveries*. Reviewed by Scott K. Phillips .. .. 215-217
- OBERG, Kalervo, *The Social Economy of the Tlingit Indians*. Reviewed by Gregory Forth .. .. 197
- OPPONG, Christine, *Middle Class African Marriage: A Family Study of Ghanaian Senior Civil Servants*. Reviewed by A. Awedoba .. .. 309-310
- PARIN, Paul, Fritz MORGENTHAUER and Goldy PARIN-MATTHEY, *Fear Thy Neighbor As Thyself: Psychoanalysis and Society among the Anyi of West Africa*. Reviewed by Roland Littlewood .. .. 128-129
- POWERS, William K., *Yuwipi: Vision and Experience in Oglala Ritual*. Reviewed by R.H.Barnes .. .. 187-188
- SEEGER, Anthony, *Nature and Society In Central Brazil: The Suyá Indians of Mato Grosso*. Reviewed by N.E.Fried .. 204-206
- SCHWIDETZKY, Ilse, Brunetto CHIARELLI and Olga NECRASOV (eds.), *Physical Anthropology of European Populations*. Reviewed by John L. Dumont .. .. 311-312
- SIGMON, Becky A. and Jerome S. CYBULSKI (eds.), *Homo Erectus: Papers in Honor of Davidson Black*. Reviewed by John L. Dumont .. .. 221-222

STRATHERN, Marilyn, <i>Kinship at the Core: An Anthropology of Elmdon.</i>	Reviewed by Susan Wright .. .. .	123-125
WARMAN, Arturo, <i>'We Come to Object': The Peasants of Morelos and the National State.</i>	Reviewed by Scott William Hoefle	206-208
WHITTEN, Norman E. (ed.), <i>Cultural Transformations and Ethnicity in Modern Ecuador.</i>	.. .. .	198-199
WILLIS, Roy, <i>A State in the Making: Myth, History, and Social Transformation in Pre-Colonial Ufipa.</i>	Reviewed by John Beattie .. .. .	121-122