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EDITORIAL NOTE

The idea for the Journal has come from the graduate students at the Subfaculty of Anthropology at Oxford: in particular from those at the Institute of Social Anthropology. Papers given at graduate seminars and ideas arising from work for diplomas and higher degrees very often merit wider circulation and discussion without necessarily being ready for formal publication in professional journals. There obviously exists a need in social anthropology for serious critical and theoretical discussion; JASO sees this as its main purpose.

We are gratified by the enormous interest that has been shown in the Journal. Demand has greatly exceeded our expectations and we shall be reprinting back issues.

We should like to express our thanks to Alan Campbell and Charlotte Hardman for valuable assistance in the production of this issue of the Journal.

FORMAT

We shall produce one issue per term (three per year). Articles are welcome from students in all branches of anthropology and from people in other disciplines interested in social anthropology. Reviews and comments will also be welcome. For the present, it is preferred that the main emphasis should be on analytical discussion rather than on description or ethnography. Papers should be as short as is necessary to get the point over. As a general rule, they should not exceed 5,000 words. Papers should be submitted following the conventions for citations, notes and references used in the A.S.A. monographs. Communications should be addressed to the Editors, Institute of Social Anthropology, 51, Banbury Road, Oxford.

BACK ISSUES

We have a small stock of back issues still unsold. Individual copies are available at 30p. in the U.K. and $1 abroad. Volume I complete (1970) is available at the following rates: U.K. - 75p. to individuals, £1 to institutions; abroad - $2.50 to individuals, $3 to institutions. The subscription for Vols. II (1971) and III (1972) are the same. (All prices cover postage). Cheques should be made out to the Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford.

ANTHROPOLOGISTS AND THE SOCIOLOGY OF LITERATURE: AN EXAMPLE
FROM THE STUDY OF EPIC

"Can there be a sociology of literature?" is a fashionable
question in some circles just now, and there is currently a
rapid expansion of interest in the possibilities of the subject.
In this paper I want to take up this question and suggest, first,
that it is unnecessary, but, second, that it is also important
and directly concerns anthropologists.[1]

First, I suggest that it is unnecessary to go on agonising
about whether there can be a "sociology of literature" when there
quite patently _is_ a sociology of literature - in fact several.
To some anthropologists this may sound surprising, or at least
irrelevant: "the sociology of literature" is usually associated
with what sociologists (and perhaps "literature students") and
not what anthropologists do.   In fact analyses and assumptions
about the social nature and social significance of literature
have been widely made both directly by anthropologists and by
others who have either built on the work of anthropologists or
examined the kind of material which anthropologists usually
accept as peculiarly their own.   The sociology of literature
is thus already part of anthropological study, even if this
often goes unrecognised.

I want to illustrate this contention by reference to work
on one particular genre of literature: epic.   Taking a
specific example of this kind seems to me a more illuminating
way of making general points about the relevance of the socio-
logy of literature for anthropologists (and vice versa) than
remaining on an _a priori_ plane of argument throughout.   However,
as suits the theoretical and critical nature of this journal,
the aim will be to raise questions for further discussion rather
than to present empirical findings.

An exact definition of "epic" could be subject of a paper
in itself, but briefly it refers to lengthy narrative verse which
is usually sung and also often characterised by an elevated
heroic tone.   It is also sometimes known as "heroic poetry"
(Chadwick 1912, Bowra 1952).   A common, though perhaps ultimately
untenable, distinction is normally made between "secondary" or
written epics like the Aeneid, and "primary" epics, like the
Iliad, in which oral tradition is believed to play a large part.
It is the latter which I discuss here, and I shall concentrate
on just four examples: the Iliad, the Odyssey, Beowulf and
(marginally "primary") the Nibelungenlied.   Briefly, and begging
all sorts of questions, the two ancient Greek epics (the Iliad
about the siege of Troy, the Odyssey about the wanderings of
Odysseus) were probably first written in the sixth century B.C.,
though probably "composed" in some sense earlier; Beowulf, a
much shorter poem in Anglo-Saxon alliterative verse about Beo-
wulf's encounters with various monsters, was written down some-
time in the eighth century A.D.; and the Middle High German
Nibelungenlied, about the murder of Siegfried and the revenge
taken by his widow Kriemhilt, dates from late twelfth or early
thirteenth century Austria.   There are of course many other
recorded epics which would have to be considered in a full
account (see Lord 1962, Bowra 1952) but for the purposes of this

paper I have taken these four as a starting point for raising certain more general questions.[2]

There are a number of reasons for choosing epic for treatment, rather than the more conventional areas of anthropological research like "traditional" African literature. It is a topic which, for one thing, has a longer history of scholarly study than, say, Polynesian or African literature, with correspondingly a richer potential for exploitation by anthropologists, while at the same time the various phases in this scholarly study have close links with intellectual phases in the development of anthropology. Again, epic is usually accepted as literature which in some sense comes in the fascinating borderland between the conventionally accepted "primitive" area of most traditional anthropologists and the "civilised" period of most sociologists - for primary epics, though eventually written, are usually assumed to possess an oral element of some kind and to have been disseminated by oral means to a largely non-literate audience; epic belongs, therefore, in an area into which anthropologists are now increasingly entering. Epic, furthermore, has not seemed a standard subject in recent anthropology, so that its treatment here may stimulate further research by anthropologists. "Epic" is a concept that has something of the same aura about it as "myth" - and it is surprising that it has so far attracted so much less attention from anthropologists.

The study of epic has largely been carried out by philologists, historians, classical or mediaeval specialists, literary critics and even archaeologists - scarcely ever by anthropologists. Yet anthropologists will find much that interests them directly in the implicit sociology(ies) of literature that emerge when one considers such studies - at least if we take "sociology of literature" in the wide sense covering the social context and significance of literature and its relation to society.

A number of different aspects of epic could be treated, but I have chosen to concentrate here mainly on the mode of composition. The treatment of this aspect is basic in most analyses, and tends to involve fundamental assumptions about the nature of society and of social relations, and about their connection with the nature and basis of epic.

One of the most influential approaches[3] to studying the mode of composition in epic is what has been dubbed the "historical-genetico" approach. Scholarly research of this type is directed to finding the genesis of each of the various bits of which it is assumed a particular epic is made up. The primary interest is in discovering origins.

Such a preoccupation immediately reminds us of nineteenth century evolutionary anthropology. There is, indeed a certain overlap and many reinforcing links between the two approaches. But one must not be so dominated by the official history of anthropology, with its origins so often declared to be British evolutionism and the reaction against it, that one identifies other strands too readily with this. In fact the profound influence of German philology antedated British evolutionism by many years, and has had a crucial impact in many areas of intellectual history. In the field of epic, perhaps the single most important work was F.A. Wolf's Prolegomena ad Homerum in 1795,

where he put forward his famous view of the composite origin of the Homeric poems. The _Iliad_ and _Odyssey_, he contended, were composed of a number of short lays, originally separate, which were handed down by oral tradition and later collected together to make up the epics as we know them. This "lays theory" (_Liedertheorie_) was then taken over for analysing the composition of other epics. Lachmann, for instance, applied it both to Homer and also, in his influential analyses of 1816 and later, to the _Nibelungenlied_, thus providing the starting point for much later work and, for the _Nibelungenlied_ itself, exerting a dominant influence till very recently indeed (see Fleet 1953, Bekker 1971). Scholars of _Beowulf_ too, if not quite so exclusively preoccupied with origins, were also concerned to identify the stories and possible lays from which Beowulf would prove to have been composed.

Another line was the "kernel" theory: one particular lay formed the original heart of the poem (the "Wrath of Achilles" lay for the _Iliad_, for example), and "accretions" were then built onto this by later poets. Despite differences of detail, this view of the poems as "a kind of coral-accumulation" (Schücking in Nicholson 1963:35) shares the same general historical-genetico approach as the original _Liedertheorie_ of Wolf, Lachmann and their followers.

The consequence of such theories for detailed research was that attention was naturally directed to trying to separate out and trace the discrete origins of the various constitutent songs, which were assumed to be still identifiable, to locating later interpolations inserted for unifying and other reasons, and to explaining apparent (or imagined) discrepancies by reducing them to their separate origins.

This line received further support in its application to epic from the influence of German Romanticism. Wilhelm Grimm, for instance, was both a fervent Romantic and a keen adherent of Wolf's theory. His analysis of German epic has been summed up as including "all the usual symptoms /of Romanticism/ - belief in the indefinite and remote origins of the material, in a gradual development into the present poetic forms, and, finally, no acknowledgement of any individual authorship" (Thorp 1940: 17). Similar views were expressed in Schlegel's conclusion that epic "must be the work of whole generations, not of one man" (Idem:16).

All this scholarly disputation among German philologists may seem to have little to do with anthropologists. But in fact an implicit sociology of literature is involved in this whole approach. Note, for instance, the view of (non-literate) society held by such analysts: as radically different from their own in that individual authorship was out of the question, that the stage of society at which "epic" arose was basically communal, and that such epics could not be understood in their own terms, for the mentality involved in them was too far removed from our own: they could only be _explained_, in terms of their origins. Furthermore this sort of semi-unconscious growth could only be organised and finally put together with the advent of the individualised and self-conscious stage of literacy. Thus in this view _Beowulf_ could be seen as a string of pagan lays

edited into its present form by a Christian monk, the Homeric poems as systematised in the age of Greek literacy, and the literate poet taking various existing lays and "out of them fashioning the Nibelungenlied" (Hatto 1969:356, 395). In this view of relatively un-individual processes at a certain stage of society, accompanied by the blind and uncreative handing on of "oral tradition", it is easy to see implicit a model of the development of human society that is still with us: a movement from non-literate communal "tribal" society (Gemeinschaft, mechanical solidarity etc) to modernised, individualised and rational society (Gesellschaft, organic solidarity etc.). "Literature" and its social significance can be seen as closely bound in with this developmental pattern, for until we approach the modern era it can only be explained (away) not assessed in similar terms to our own modern literature. This general view - an implicit sociology of literature - has also had a pervasive influence on analyses of literature among contemporary non-literate peoples.

It is easy to question this kind of approach, both in its application to the study of epics and in the kind of model implicit in it. Many anthropologists would probably reject the kind of genetico-historical questions asked in the German philological tradition as being in practice unanswerable with any certainty and anyway in principle of lesser importance than the contemporary significance of each poem (though of course what "contemporary" means in this context is a bit tricky). Indeed many of the same points which are commonly made against evolutionist theories can also be brought against this approach to epic.

It is also easy to over-criticise this kind of approach to literature. German philology was often in fact both more precise and more modest than evolutionary anthropology: the aim was to answer specific questions about the historical development of particular pieces of literature and not necessarily to speculate about the first origins or unilinear development of some institution in general. In illustration of this difference, one need only contrast an evolutionist writer like Frazer with those influenced by the philological tradition, like Müller or Maine - both so unaccountably neglected in most versions of the history of anthropology.[4] In other words, some of the anti-historical gibes of the early functionalists may have much more justification against evolutionary anthroplogy than against the more reasoned and particularised approach of those influenced by German philology. Indeed, if one can disentangle some of the assumptions, it is possible to see that a number of the questions asked in the philological tradition are very pertinent ones. What is the mode of production of these epics? Is this different in a non-literate from a literate society? Are some of the longer poems composed, in some sense at least, by a poet building up on or making use of extant pieces? An answer to such questions in terms of the lays or kernel theories may seem implausible in some respects and has often involved certain dubious assumptions - but it is not a priori absurd.

Where anthropologists can contribute is in researching such questions and perhaps indicating a more sophisticated and variegated answer. Definitive research on the epics discussed here may prove difficult, but work on possibly parallel twentieth century forms is probably feasible. A certain amount of relevant material is already available: research on the composition of heroic oral poems in Yugoslavia or modern Greece, for instance, probably

tells more against the lays theory than for it (see Lord 1960, Notopoulos 1964) whereas the sequence of events in the Congo, where a series of what some term "epics" has apparently resulted from the compilation by collectors of various separable pieces, would perhaps lend it some credence. But far more detailed and specific analyses of these questions could be carried out by anthropologists and could clearly involve a major contribution to this aspect of the sociology of literature.

Another strand in the historical approach to analysing epic and its composition should be mentioned here, for though in some ways overlapping with the approach just discussed, it also involves somewhat different emphases. This is the attempt to identify certain motifs in the epics which can then be traced either to common beliefs among human beings or to particular historical/geographical sources. This approach differs from the previous one first because the units looked at tend to be relatively small ones, and second in the use made of "anthropological" evidence. "Fairy tales", "folk beliefs", and the kind of "nature myths" propagated through Müller's writings were all pressed into service. Panzer looked to the significance of fairy tales in his interpretation of Beowulf and the Nibelungenlied (the source of Beowulf, for instance, is said to be a widely known folktale "The Bearson", of which Panzer collected variants in over twenty European languages); Wrenn (1958) regards "folklore" as one of the sources of Beowulf; and for Müllenhoff Beowulf's career is really a nature myth culminating in the advent of winter (Sisam 1965:17). Similarly for Homer one has the analysis of "folk tale patterns" in Carpenter (1946, reprinted 1958) or Germain's attempt (1954) to find prototypes for Odyssean folk tales in the myths and rituals of Egypt and the Middle East, as well as nineteenth-century mythological interpretations like the one which assimilates Helen of Troy to the moon (the root for both related to the Greek word for brightness and both were stolen away and disappeared) - Helen therefore originated in a moon myth (see Carpenter 1958:23-4).

Insofar as specific geographical origins are looked for to account for such elements, this kind of historical approach to epic has obviously much in common with the diffusionist phase in the history of anthropology. Like the philological approach, this too might be received with little sympathy by many anthropologists (in contrast to the 'folklorists") for the same sorts of reasons as those adduced against diffusionist explanation by earlier functionalist critics. Again, a certain view of literature and of the relation between society and literature is often assumed in such approaches: that what matters is to explain the origins of such elements which have apparently been transmitted by relatively unchanging oral tradition, and that it is of lesser (or no) interest to ask about why poets have taken over some and not others, what use poets have made of them, or what meaning they bear for the contemporary poet and his public. The view of society that tends to be assumed - and one which its adherents might claim to be based on anthropological evidence - is of relatively passive and uncreative poets and audience, with the active agents, as it were, being the travelling and extraneous elements and motifs. Again this is a view that has had much influence on studies of other types of literature among non-industrial peoples.

Such a view of literature and society certainly lays itself
open to a critique by anthropologists. It might however be too
strong to dismiss it in its entirety as irrelevant for anthropology.
The tracing of motifs for its own sake may perhaps be a barren
pursuit and involve assumptions some would reject, but the sort
of material worked on by the Scandinavian and American historical-
geographical school of folklorists, and the reference works they
have produced (notably Thompson 1955-8) could well be built on by
anthropologists concerned to ask different questions, or even per-
haps to disprove the view of passive receptiveness by poet and
audience. Again, others may wish to take up the aspect at least
shadowed out by some adherents of this approach, i.e. that certain
motifs need not necessarily be traced to particular geographical
or historical origins, but be universal among human beings (or
among a wide section of human beings). The evidence about certain
mythical themes that supposedly occur again and again could be an
example here. Those interested in the concepts of "deep struc-
ture" as put forward by Chomsky and Lévi-Strauss might well wish
to dispute the historical parameters of most work on such themes
and look instead towards something in the universal constitution
of the human mind rather than to free-floating motifs which, as it
were, force themselves on literature from the outside. Wherever
the truth lies here, it is clear that there are real possibilities
for anthropological analysis and controversy.

Having mentioned interpretation which, to some extent, tie
in with evolutionist and diffusionist phases in anthropology, an
obvious approach to turn to next would seem to be studies which
link with functionalist emphases. But the fact is that, perhaps
because of the historical nature of the epics concerned, the im-
possibility of direct fieldwork, or the long-lasting philological
influence, this emphasis has not apparently been much to the fore
in studies of the epics discussed here. It seems scarcely worth
trying to force the evidence on this just to drag in an opportunity
to indulge in the current sport[5] of chiding "the functionalists"!
On the contrary, it seems to me that one of the gaps in the study
of epic has been precisely the absence of such an approach and
that, if questions had been asked in imaginative and non-dogmatic
terms about the part of such epics in the wider society (or socie-
ties?) in which they were composed and/or delivered, the study of
epic would be much richer.

One study must however be mentioned in this context: that of
H.M. Chadwick on The Heroic Age (1912), supplemented by his joint
work with N.K. Chadwick (1932-40). This in one respect resembles
some of the emphases of functionalist anthropology: the Chadwicks
looked for the causes of the similarities between heroic poetry of
various ages in the nature of the society itself, through their
concept of the "heroic age".[6] "The resemblances in the poems are
due primarily to resemblances in the ages to which they relate and
to which they ultimately owe their origin", hence "the comparative
study of 'Heroic Ages' and the problems which it presents are
essentially problems of anthropology" (1912:viii). It is often
ambiguous in the Chadwick's work how far this heroic age was the
actual period in society when heroic poems were composed, and
delivered, the period to which the events in the Poem actually
refer, or the poet's view of a previous "Golden Age" - but certainly
one aspect, one which has had an impact on later writings, is the
first of these. In this view epic arises in a society in which an
aristocratic and military ethos flourishes, supported by court

minstrels praising warrior princes. The parallel literary
development thus "arises from similar social and political
conditions" (Chadwicks 1932 Vol. I:xiii; also Idem, 1940 Vol.
III, Part IV, ch.3 passim). To some extent, then, the com-
position and content of heroic poetry is to be explained by
the way it reflects the ethos and constitution of the society
in which it arises, and to whose maintenance it contributes
through the poet's praise of established rulers. "Heroic
princes", as the Chadwicks put it, "were generous patrons of
minstrels, partly in order to get their own fame celebrated"
(op.cit.:749).

The Chadwicks would probably not have accepted an extreme
functionalist sociology of literature, but certain constituent
assumptions do seem to be implicit in their approach. The
kinds of questions and analyses they pursued, moreover, are
still of obvious interest. Is there a particular type of
society (we do not necessarily have to call it a "stage") in
which epic particularly flourishes? If so, what are the
functional (or perhaps symbolic?) interrelationships involved?
And are there other genres which can be functionally related
to yet other types of society? Or is it over-simple to assume
a predictable relationship between the society and the litera-
ture it "produces"?[7] These are questions which, quite apart
from the way Chadwick is already involved in the history of
our subject (he was directly encouraged by Haddon and pub-
lished his Heroic Age in the "Cambridge Archaeological and Eth-
nological Series"), it would be a pity if anthropologists left
it wholly to others to pursue.

All the previous approaches discussed have involved in one
way or another the historical investigation of the conditions
or origins of the epics. There is however another approach,
now increasingly influential, which rejects such external ex-
planations, and concentrates on an explication of the text as
it is. This links with the general swing away from nineteenth-
century intellectual and analytic approaches to literary works
(in Biblical scholarship, for instance) towards more "aesthetic"
interpretations. In the case of epic, terms like "structure",
"unity" or "work of art" have become the acceptable ones,
replacing "sources", "strata" or "interpolations", and the con-
cept of interpretation has replaced that of historical explana-
tion. For the study of Beowulf the turning point can probably
be dated more precisely than often, in Tolkien's famous and witty
lecture in 1936 in which he insisted that Beowulf was not to be
regarded as a conglomeration of a lot of separate bits, but as
a single poem. In Homeric studies, unitarian assumptions about
single authorship came earlier, dating back, for instance, to
Andrew Lang's influential work, and have been common through-
out this century. For the Nibelungenlied the reaction against
the search for historical sources was much later: for instance,
Mowatt's insistence in 1961 on a "structural approach" and
Bekker's recent assessment of the poem as "a literary monument
worthy to be read for its own sake" (1971:xi).

The kind of assumptions about the mode of composition vary
and are not always spelt out explicitly, but it is fairly con-
sistently implied in this approach that each poem is an "artistic
unity" and in some sense anyway has a single author. For the

aesthetic school the mode of composition seems generally taken to involve the same **sort** of conscious art and intention as in a modern literary work, and it is assumed that the meaning is in principle accessible to us (even if it needs uncovering). The sociology of literature implicit here is thus very different: authorship is seen as something involving individual creativity and artistry albeit within certain constraints) rather than a passive receptivity to external historical processes, and the poem can be regarded as in some sense relatively free from the determining conditions of the society in which it exists: it makes sense to speak of its analysis "in its own right".

The "structure" that is looked for and analysed in such studies is at various levels. The most common is probably that of the poem as a whole. Tolkien, for instance, stresses this in analysing <u>Beowulf</u>. To a casual reader (or to a philologist) it has often appeared that the poem has little unity of plot and falls into two or three main episodes with little narrative connection between them. But need this be explained by separate historical origins? For Tolkien this would be to start from the wrong question. <u>Beowulf</u> is <u>not</u> a narrative poem and should not be expected to demonstrate a steady advance in plot. "The poem was not meant to advance, steadily or unsteadily. It is essentially a balance, an opposition of ends and beginnings. In its simplest terms it is a contrasted description of two moments in a great life" (Tolkien 1936:271). These oppositions within the poem involve contrasts of youth and age, of first achievement and final death, of beginning and end, rising and setting; and it is the balance and parallelism of these oppositions, not the chronological plot, that give the poem its unity. The metrical form parallels this for the Old English alliterative line presents an analogous balance and opposition in its twofold inner division. The parallel oppositions within the poem as a whole are also, for Tolkien, shot through by the symbolism in which "the monsters" play a significant part and in which Beowulf - and mankind - wars with the world and with evil. This general approach has found favour with many scholars and there is now a large literature directed to showing how apparent anomalies in the poem - the "digressions" for instance - really contribute to the organic unity of the poem (e.g. Bonjour 1950, Brodeur 1960).

A similar change of tone has been evident in recent analyses of the <u>Nibelungenlied</u>. The apparent split between the two halves of the poem or the psychological inconsistencies of the characters are no longer explained by reference to differing historical sources but interpreted in relation to inner patterns and overall structural unity. Mowatt, for instance, interprets the poem as structured by the basic opposition it presents between the patterned and regulated world of the court at Worms, where Gunther and Kriemhilt belong, and its counterpart and opposite, the anti-social uncompromising world of Siegfried and Brünhilt who, in the end, "utterly destroy /the/ cosy little Burgundian society" (Mowatt 1961:269). The dynamic of the poem lies in the way these two different worlds - "society" against "nature" - and their representative characters "are brought together and reshuffled, after the manner of the molecules in Goethe's chemical analogy" (Idem:265). The <u>Nibelungenlied</u> thus represents "what happens when an individual, anti-social ideal of behaviour tries to adopt a set of conventions it does not understand, and a highly formalized society invokes forces which it cannot control" (Idem:269).

Whether and how far anthropologists can take up this kind of approach and advance it further remains to be seen. Some may be sceptical of the position sometimes taken up by the more extreme proponents of the aesthetic school in which every apparent contradiction or lapse can only be interpreted in terms of a perfect and self-sufficient structure of the poem and of the poet's inner meaning. But certainly there would seem to be hints that a further development and/or assessment of some of these analyses in the light of recent anthropological work and controversy (that on myth in particular) might well be fruitful.

Perhaps of even more interest to anthropologists, however, is the series of studies analysing structure at a lower level - that of the so-called "oral-formulaic" style of much epic poetry. Such studies share many of the assumptions of the more aesthetic school just discussed, but differ in certain significant details about the mode of composition; not all furthermore necessarily take a unitarian line as regards authorship. There is a whole literature on this oral-formulaic theory, much of it fairly easily accessible, so I shall only allude briefly to its main lines, and not discuss the detailed internal controversies within this school (on which see Watts 1969).

The main impetus for the development of this theory came from Milman Parry - first his research on Homer, then, more significantly, his field research on Yugoslav poetry in the 1930's. There he recorded and analysed heroic poems in the actual processes of composition, and with the help of his pupil Lord (Lord 1960) showed how they were built up from various formulaic phrases - repeated metrical word groups which could appear in various combinations and transpositions and thus be used by the poet to structure his own poem in the act of performing it. These formulaic phrases also sometimes formed part of yet larger formulaic systems and, again, of even longer narrative themes. In this way both original composition and oral delivery were feasible, for the poet had a stock of formulae which he could exploit and transform for his own poetry without having to turn either to the written word or to rote memory as a crutch for his oral performance.

Parry and Lord argue that the process is essentially the same for the Homeric poems. There too the poet uses and changes around the famous "Homeric epithets" - terms like "god-like", "long-suffering", "lord of men". These and other metrical phrases can, at will, be fitted into specific points in the hexameter line, and thus make oral delivery and com-position by a single poet feasible through a process of trans-formations of traditional formulaic units. Overall this has resulted in a new and influential strand in Homeric scholarship (see Notopoulos 1964, Kirk 1965, Dodds 1968, Watts 1969).

Parry's and Lord's work has also affected Beowulf scholar-ship. The interest in this approach was initiated by Magoun's classic article (1953) on the oral-formulaic character of Anglo-Saxon poetry and has continued with a whole series of papers analysing Beowulf (and to some extent other Anglo-Saxon poetry) in similar terms to Lord's work on Yugoslav and Homeric poems. Questions are now being raised about how far formulaic poetry must necessarily be "oral", but by and large the existence of

formulaic phrases in Beowulf has been amply demonstrated.[8]

It is surprising that this system of substitutions and trans-
formations, arguably characteristic of "oral" epics, has not appar-
ently been taken up to any great extent by anthropologists. There
is much here to interest students of the mechanisms of performance/
composition and also the structuralist analysts. One can look
both at the relatively small-scale transposable units (the formu-
laic phrases) and the wider themes like the stock episodes detected
by Lord in Yugoslav and Homeric poetry which can be substituted and
combined in the same sort of way as the formulaic phrases. Much
here reminds us of the often-lauded (but perhaps seldom exploited?)
structuralist work of Propp (1958). Indeed it could well be
argued (see Jacobs 1971) that for a full structural analysis one
should take this approach further still, not resting content with
the particular stylistic features that Propp happened to take for
his analysis, nor with Dundes' motifemes or Levi-Strauss' oppositions,
but extend it also to many other features of style and content -
and this could fruitfully include the formulaic phrases and themes
of epic. Further possibilities open themselves up too. One
Anglo-Saxon scholar suggests that one should look to the basic
syntactical patterns or frames rather than just the surface formu-
lae: "The syntactic frame, very much like Saussure's _langue_,
underlies the verbal formula, the _parole_, and furnishes the 'scop' with
a certain area of freedom within the patterned realm of his dis-
cipline" (Cassidy 1965:82). Anthropologists may well wish to
exploit this concept and the similar analysis of the formulaic
system as "a generative grammar which is capable of handling all
aspects of ... a complicated cultural production as a narrative"
(Colby and Cole, in press).

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In view of the kind of material and questions involved in a
study of the epics discussed here, it is hard to continue to leave
as an open question whether there can be a sociology of literature
and whether anthropologists have anything to say on it. The socio-
logy of literature - at least as far as concerns the study of epic -
turns out not to be a new or mysterious subject but one in which
anthropologists are already implicated and in which they have a
part to play.

But - for all that - the question of "can there be a sociology
of literature?" is still an important one, at least in its immediate
corollary of "What should such a sociology be like?" Indeed it
is all the more pressing just because anthropologists are already
involved in the implicit sociologies of literature underlying so
many analyses of epic. The assumptions here could be unpacked and
further developed or rejected by anthropologists. Controversy
about the sociology of literature could benefit not only from be-
coming more self-conscious but also from being brought within the
mainstream of academic anthropology.

Questions about the nature of the sociology of literature are
also ones that it is timely for anthropologists to worry about.
For they relate directly to questions and controversies currently
under debate concerning the nature of anthropology itself (and
sociology too for that matter). In certain respects, the study of
literature is a particularly good field on which such battles can
be fought out.

Take for instance the question that must be faced at some point in any discussion of the sociology of literature: how far can it be "comparative"? With epic, for instance, it will have become obvious that many scholars have taken it for granted that one can in some sense proceed comparatively. But is this really possible, and, if so, how? The poems discussed are very different, in length, metre, period, and probably, the degree of "oral-ness". Are apparent similarities, then, due only to parallel modes of interpreting, attributable to fashions in intellectual history not the poems themselves? Must we retreat to a position of relativism - analogous, say, to the linguistic relativism of Whorf or Sapir - where all we can do is analyse the particularities of each poem and question the status of a general term like "epic"? Other alternatives are certainly not self-evident. The "comparative method" of evolutionary anthropology, for instance, may have seemed easy enough once - but involved assumptions which most would now question. Again, the comparative functionalist aims of Radcliffe-Brown and his followers or the general laws sought by positivist sociology may seem to many scarcely suitable for the comparative study of literature. Can one restate and refine the functionalist approach in more moderate and unpositivist terms and look for comparative patterns in, say, consumption and exchange processes in literature? Or is the only alternative to look for our comparisons in the "deep structures" currently under discussion? And, if so, do we look in the structures of the pieces themselves or to universal cognitive processes in the human mind? Such questions are hardly readily answerable - but they certainly take us right to the heart of much current controversy in anthropology.

Or again, there is the question of which of various possible approaches to choose in analysing literature. Some approaches have been discussed here, in the context of epic, but it is worth looking at further possible approaches too and treating the whole subject more consciously. Here anthropologists may find stimulation in tapping controversies among sociologists about how to approach literature - Marxist analyses, the "culture-and-society" school (Williams 1963, Bradbury 1971), or Escarpit's more historical and detached approach (1971) - just as both anthropologists and sociologists could exploit recent anthropological work on language (see Ardener 1971a), on structural analysis, and on relations between cosmology, social structure and literature (e.g. Beidelman 1967, 1971). But while anthropologists and sociologists (if these really are different) can mutually benefit from considering each others' work, it may be that the anthropologists have the greater contribution to make. Insofar as sociologists tend to study their own cultures, it is difficult to take the questioning stance, involving awareness of one's own ignorance and relativity, which is necessary for a valid sociology of any phenomenon. Ethnocentrism holds its greatest dangers for the student of his own culture. This is perhaps why many of the best sociological analyses of literature are historical - a different period at least sets one barrier to be consciously surmounted. Anthropologists by contrast are aware from the outset of the problem of translation. This sort of self-conscious search is surely fundamental. In their insistence on this anthropologists can now gain support from the phenomenologists and from American symbolic interactionist sociologists like Goffman or Becker and their followers. For them too the "meaning" must be taken as "problematical" at the outset: we cannot assume that we know it

already, even if, when it is uncovered, we are capable of translating and recognising it.

But, granted that this is a necessary preliminary, is this process as far as we want to go? As Mary Douglas pointed out in a recent lecture (1972), translation in itself may not be enough. If so, in what further direction should one go in analysing literature? Which, if any, of the various accepted approaches will prove fruitful? Or is there no one "right" line, merely a series of possibilities of whose existence one must indeed be aware but among which one can choose according to one's own view of the nature of the subject?

These and similar questions which one is led on to from the study of epic and the sociology of literature more generally, are scarcely easy ones to answer and certainly not amenable to easy agreement. But they are surely ones on which anthropologists have something to say, even if they have to search their hearts - and their subject - first.

Ruth Finnegan

Notes

1. The controversy about the distinction between "social anthropology" and "sociology" is too lengthy to discuss here, but let me just say briefly that I myself consider there is no essential distinction in principle in terms of subject matter, aim or method. In practice, admittedly, due to a series of historical accidents, they have developed and become institutionalised as separate subjects, but 1) this is merely contingent, not a difference of essence, and 2) this gap in practice is, in some circles at least, being increasingly closed. There are of course certain differences in outlook between many who call themselves "sociologists" and "social anthropologists" respectively, but these are not all in one direction, or necessarily greater than internal differences within these categories.
   In this paper I therefore use the terms "sociologists" and "anthropologists" merely to refer to those academics who tend to refer to themselves by these labels and am not making judgements about the validity of such a distinction. The term "sociology", on the other hand, I am using in the wide sense which involves "sociologists" and "anthropologists" (as in the phrase "sociology of religion" for instance).
2. My work is still at a very preliminary stage and I hope to go more deeply and comparatively into a number of questions raised here in the future.
3. The treatment of the various approaches within a short paper must necessarily be over-simplified and confined to broad trends. The interested reader is referred to the various works cited in the bibliography.
4. For Max Müller, this neglect should be mitigated by Crick's work (see Crick 1972).
5. A list is scarcely necessary to illustrate this, but some examples are Ardener 1971b, Finnegan 1969, and many of the papers in past numbers of this journal.
6. An idea earlier discussed by W.P. Ker, but developed and made famous by Chadwick.

7. This possibility is well discussed by Goody (1971) who shows the <u>lack</u> of correlation between constitution of society and certain aspects of LoDagaa and Gonja literature, and illustrates the inapplicability of at least one kind of functionalist analysis of this literature.

8. There is no space for full references on this, but detailed discussion and bibliography can be found in Watts.1969. Little or no work on these lines has been done on the <u>Nibelungenlied</u> (which nowadays tends to be regarded as a much more "literary" work, albeit one with oral antecedents). But a summary of relevant work on mediaeval French and German literature can be found in Curschmann 1967.

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ANGLO-SAXON MAGICO-MEDICINE

The value of studies of belief, cosmologies and symbolic systems generally is now widely accepted. The Structuralists have shown them to be far too important to be relegated to the periphery of anthropological investigation. But why should an anthropologist concern himself with the present topic, when presumably an Anglo-Saxon scholar would be better qualified linguistically to do so? Let me, in answer, quote the words of Singer and Grattan, perhaps the foremost authorities on the subject. They sum up Anglo-Saxon medicine as:-

'A mass of folly and credulity.'

We may ask whether the people who translated and illuminated the 'Herbarium', whose remedies show such a wealth of plant names, did not show a real botanical awareness. Apparently not:-

'No Anglo-Saxon had any knowledge of these (the Linnaen) presuppositions. Furthermore, the men who wrote the Early English magico-medical texts seem to have been almost incapable of enumerating exactly nor had they much appreciation of measure or weight though they often copied lists of these. Their colour discrimination was poor and their vocabulary for colours meagre and vague.'

The work of Marcellus Empiricus, which was apparently of great influence among the Anglo-Saxons, is summed up as:-

'A mass of disgusting absurdities which touch the depths of pagan superstition, further depraved by the incursion of Christian symbols.'

I am sure I need not comment. One recognises a severe lack of the anthropological perspective. The book from which these quotations are taken was published - by the way - in 1952.

The study of Anglo-Saxon magico-medicine presents an anthropologist with special problems. We have to accept the evidence on the subject bequeathed to us by a whole series of historical disruptions and disasters. Viking raids, library fires, and Christianity seem very often to have conspired to rob us of the very stuff of research. But if the quantity of data is thus reduced, its breadth is not. There remains a mass of tantalising hints and possible connections.

Germanic scholars sometimes bemoan the religious conversion of their noble savages as a fall from grace. For the anthropologist it appears rather as a change from an oral to a written culture. Christianity is the religion of the book par excellence.

The factor of limited literacy creates a severe difficulty in that we no longer have a closed community. The small self-contained social world that we would ideally hope for from a primitive people has already been shattered by contact with Romania when the Anglo-Saxons emerge as a distinct force. There is an elite exposed to a wider intellectual internationalism. A wedge has been driven between two sections of the community. The linguistic expression of this is the use of Latin.

These problems can be exaggerated. They are not new to Africanists. We have to decide how far translated material was incorporated into the collective consciousness and how far it

remained specialised knowledge on the scriptorium shelf. We can
safely exclude the more obviously learned translations and retain
a sizeable corpus for analysis. The basic mistake hitherto made
by Anglo-Saxonists is to deal with ultimate historical origins in-
stead of looking at the synchronic system.

There are, it seems, a number of logically possible ways of
reacting to the problem of disease. Disease can be seen as
caused by the invasion of the body by alien matter or force from
without. Treatment then consists in removing it. It can be
viewed as the loss, by a man, of something normally inherent to
him. In this case, treatment consists in returning it to him.
A third possible view would be to see disease as caused by a dis-
ruption of the natural order within the body. Here, treatment
would entail re-establishing that order. While using this third
approach, the Anglo-Saxons view disease as fundamentally an attack
by the exterior on the cultural sphere and so may be fairly des-
cribed as having opted for the first world-view.

Three basic mechanisms enabled the outside to attack the
inside in the Anglo-Saxon conceptual world.

Firstly, there were 'flying venoms'. We unfortunately know
very little about these. Our knowledge is derived primarily
from the tantalising "Nine herbs charm". This is an exceedingly
complex charm which has caused much learned ink to be spilt to
little purpose. The basic facts are clear. Infectious diseases
are seen as the "hateful foe who roves through the land". They
attack Man, but the use of herbs and incantations to Woden offer
protection.

This charm also introduces the second mechanism of causation.
The snake being the bearer of venom, it is associated with disease,
especially when Christian theology has cast the forces of evil in
this form. But here we must beware. The Anglo-Saxon term for
snake "wyrm" is generic, designating most of the insect and reptile
category. This raises the whole question of animal classification.
It has always been assumed that when the Anglo-Saxons write of
poisonous bites from spiders and frogs, they are translating
literally from Mediterranean texts. Let us note, however, that
a wholly English work such as the Peterborough Chronicle speaks of
people being put to death with toads. I would further suggest
that those penitential prohibitions forbidding the consumption of
food touched by wild animals and rodents are not mere results of
"Exodus" but reflect Anglo-Saxon categorisations.

Returning to the "Nine herbs charm", we see that it depicts
Woden slaying a snake with nine magic twigs and - significantly -
banishing it from the homes of men. The generic nature of the
term "wyrm" becomes clear when we consider parallel passages in the
literature. "Solomon and Saturn", a much neglected source, tells
of a seaman "Wandering wolf" who slew 25 dragons, perishing himself
in the process and liberating the forces of disease. "Therefore,
no man may visit that land, that boundary place, nor bird fly over
it, nor any cattle. Thence the poisonous race first widely arose
which now boiling with breath of poison force their way."

The third source of illness lies in the lesser evil spirits,
dwarfs, elves and Christian devils. For the Anglo-Saxons, as for
many primitive peoples, there is a strong opposition between the cul-

tural sphere of the village and the wild areas beyond, especially uninhabited marshes and forests, - uninhabited by humans that is - because this is the home of the giants, monsters, elves and dwarfs. Marsh is, of course, splendidly liminal, being neither completely land nor wholly water and St. Guthlac is, by no means the only saint to have to wage war on swart marshland spirits. Turning again to the literature, we note that in "Beowulf" the monster Grendel is "A solitary marsh stalker". At this level of abstraction, those outdated interpreters who saw the poem as representing the ravages of disease and hostile elements are not far wrong. Structurally the model is the same and these 19th century interpretations are another - most enlightening - recension. This view of the world found its expression on the legal plain in that a stranger wandering in silence away from the road was classed as a thief and could be slain with impunity.

The link with the previous explanations of disease is again to be found in "Solomon and Saturn". Here the devilish hordes are described thus:-

"Sometimes they seize the sailor or turn into the body of a snake, sharp and piercing."

and later:-

"When the devil is very vicious, he seeks the cattle of a wicked man ... or if he comes across a man's unblessed mouth or body, he then enters the forgetful man's bowels and goes down to the earth through his skin and flesh and thence to the wastes of hell".

Elves, especially, were pictured as firing little arrows or spears into humans and domesticated animals to cause ailments like rheumatism and loss of voice and there is extant a leechdom showing the healer's job as extracting and hurling back the spear. It is worthy of note that weapons were often "poisoned" by making vipers marks on them and it is presumably arrows thus treated that are poetically referred to as "battle adders".

I think we are now in a position to relate this approach to disease to the general attitude of the Germanic peoples to fortune, misfortune and medicine.

The primitive Germanic peoples saw Man as being the focus of divine forces. Central to the problem is the concept of Gothic hails. In many ways it was similar to mana. I do not propose to introduce a lot of linguistic material but let us just note the etymological relationship, still preserved in modern English, between the words heal, whole, health and holy. These concepts were still intimately related for the Anglo-Saxons. "Haelu" was good fortune, material prosperity, health and salvation. It was mediated to Man by king, priest, or certain material objects. Illness was a state of "unhaelu" where "un" signifies both a lack of "haelu" and the presence of a negative "anti-haelu". This then gives us a choice of remedies. Either the intrusive bad force can be removed or a transfusion of "haelu" into the body can be given. Both can, of course, be combined. This attitude is a suitable candidate for baptism and is readily adapted into the belief in saints' miracles.

From this view of the world stems the leech's concern with ingestion and excretion. Spew drinks and purgatives are the physician's chief weapons. He is constantly spitting, blowing and letting blood, while applying salves to the outside and drinks to the inside. The basic concern is with destructuring the present state and redefining boundaries.

As examples of removal of harmful intrusions, consider the following:-

Against elfshot (rheumatism) the leech is to cry out, "Out little spear, if you are in there, out spear, not in spear".

The treatment of warts:-

"First take a stick of hazel or elder wood, inscribe your name on it, cut three incisions on the spot. Fill the name with your blood, throw it over your shoulder or between your legs (symbolic excretion) into running water. Cut the incisions and do all this in silence."

In these last two, the venom is symbolically removed from the body and returned to the unstructured wild by the running water. Similarly:

"For fellon catch a fox, strike off from him - alive - a tooth. Let the fox run away. Bind it in a fawn's skin, have it on you."

In like manner, a crab's eyes are removed and placed on the neck of a man with eye disease. The crab then returns blind to the water. Here, exchange with the environment is to redress the balance and restore the correct state of affairs.

For protection against hostile powers, to prevent their reinforcement during treatment or re-entry afterwards, boundaries are reaffirmed. Thus, there is a leechdom against the dangers to which a man is exposed on a journey:-

"I draw a protecting circle around myself with this rod and commend myself to God's grace, against the sore spasms and the sore bite and the fierce horror and ... etc."

Similar, is the concern with doors and threshholds, e.g. "Against sudden death of swine. Take lupin .... Drive the animals to the fold, hang the herbs on the four sides and on the door, etc."

Or,

"Also inscribe a cross on the four sides with a sword and let the man drink the draught afterwards."

In like manner, the drawing of boundaries seals the affected area, as in the following remedy for the bite of an adder:-

"Make one ring round about the bite then the poison will pass no further."

Hence likewise, the use of virgins and cattle of one colour (both "unmǣle" in Anglo-Saxon).

Returning to the leechdom for warts quoted above, we notice the imposition of silence as a factor in treatment. The whole field of communication in Anglo-Saxon is rather complex but we can observe its chief characteristics.

Speech is an incorporating act. It establishes contact. For the Anglo-Saxons, words commanded what we would class as inanimate objects. During ritual situations, speech must not be dissipated for with it would go the power which the speech is releasing and directing. While engaged in a cure therefore, a leech is to ignore a greeting as it would incorporate the man into the sphere of action in which power is being released. Immediacy of contact is important for what Frazer termed "contagious magic". Thus when a man's goods are stolen:-

"Then you must say first of all, before you say anything else ... etc." There follows a charm.

Too much linguistic interference would reduce the strength of the transmitted message. Similar considerations lie behind the constant repetitions and parallelisms of the spells, e.g. for stolen cattle:-

"Garmund, servant of God,
Find those cattle and bring back those cattle,
Have those cattle and keep those cattle
And bring home those cattle,
That he never has a piece of land to lead them to,
Nor a district to carry them to,
Nor buildings to confine them in."

Runes are par excellence the means of magical communication. We are not told that the writing on the hazel sticks was done in runes but it is beyond all doubt that such was the case.

Runes have always had heathen, magical associations. Not until very late were they used for ordinary communication, and then only in Anglo-Saxon England (where there was a deliberate policy of baptising heathen practises) and in Scandinavia where the Anglo-Saxons had evangelised. So strong were their pagan associations, in fact, that, rather than use them for his Bible translation, Wulfilas created a whole new Gothic alphabet. That such was still the case in Anglo-Saxon times is clear from the dictionary entry for "run":-

"mystery, secret, secrecy, secret council."

It is believed that they were generally cut in wood and stone and smeared with blood as in our remedies. Inscribing with runes imparted an object with magical power and was a common means of a man "leaving his mark" on his most treasured possessions. They were not used for interpersonal communication but for conversation between sacred and profane through inscribed lots.

Against this background we are better able to understand the use of unintelligible and obscure words from exotic languages in Anglo-Saxon spells and the use of rune staves to mediate between culture and the wild.

The problem of communication presents us with the wider consideration of social contact. The home being the focus of one's

personal identity and family life, restrictions were inevitably placed on what could be introduced into it from the outside. Thus the leechdoms contain numerous statements like:-

"Afterwards you must write this in silence and silently put the words on the left breast and you must not go indoors with the writing."

Or,

"Take a handful of bark and bring it home in silence and never into the house of the patient."

Another spell against miscarriage tells a woman to return the evil to the outside world via running water and continues:-

"When she goes to the stream she must not look round nor again when she goes away from there and let her go into another house than the one from which she started and there take food."

The woman has been cleansed and can now enter once more into commensality with her fellows for whom she no longer constitutes a source of danger.

Some of the remedies stipulate that the bloodied twig removing the evil is to be cast, not into running water, but across a cart road. Presumably this represents a trunk road and is thus to be seen as a channel of communication leading away into the wild. Whether or not the ill is viewed as being transferred to the next person to use the road is not clear. This is, however, apparently the case where a woman wraps part of her child's grave in black wool and sells it to merchants with the words:-

> "I trade this,
> You trade this,
> This black wool
> These seeds of woe."

We have now dealt with that area of Anglo-Saxon ethnomedicine that stresses the re-externalisation of intrusive forces. There is however, as mentioned earlier, another way of dealing with the problem. Instead of reducing disease to anthropomorphic proportions, one can expand it to include the whole cosmic order. Disease being a disturbance of this natural order, it can be cured by reaffirming Man's place in the regular course of events. This approach lies at the base of remedies such as the following:-

"In the morning, let him stand towards the East, let him address himself earnestly to God and let him make the sign of the cross, let him turn about with the course of the sun etc."

There is no need to argue whether or not we have here a survival of an ancient sun cult. The question is simply irrelevant. The leechdom is simply to be understood in terms of the underlying theme of order:disorder, inside:outside..

Similar in essence is the use of narrative charms. For example, against toothache, one tells the story of how Jesus cured Peter's toothache. It shows one of the basic mechanisms of Anglo-Saxon medicine, the association of two substances, series of events or

whatever, and the blurring of lines between them. Here the distinction to be blurred is between past and present so that the latter can be assimilated to the former. It fits our model of demonic-wasteland "unhaelu" opposed to divine "haelu" that, when the distant order of the cosmos is the object of attention, emphasis is placed on destructuring. When the danger of the wild is relevant, then emphasis is placed on the reaffirmation of boundaries.

Let us now turn to that part of Anglo-Saxon ethnomedicine that deals with herbal and animal remedies. Animals and herbs form an important part of that outside world to which the Anglo-Saxons were seeking to relate in their medical practices. As Lévi-Strauss has taught us, they were also "good to think".

Before going further, a word of warning. I mentioned earlier some of the special problems offered by Anglo-Saxon data. It is doubtless while asking "Why this particular remedy for this particular disease?" that the failings of our documents are most apparent. The basic problem is that often we do not know what disease is being dealt with, and even more often we cannot positively identify the herb prescribed. Any attempt to correlate these two unknowns is therefore subject to great difficulties. A certain amount of intelligent reconstruction is possible, but the dangers of the most vicious form of circularity are manifest.

The remedies divide, as mentioned, into salves and drinks. Salves are especially used for afflictions of the skin. It is here that worms are most active and in the orifices of the body. This is what we would expect to follow from the Anglo-Saxon model of hostile external forces seeking to penetrate inside. The more a disorder is specifically localised, the more likely it is to be treated by a salve. The more diffuse maladies are treated by drinks. Both may be remedied by an infusion of "haelu" in the form of holy water blessings etc.

The general principle is an association of symptoms and remedies with a subsequent destructuring to achieve identity of the two. The remedies involve grinding, stirring, straining, boiling, burning, slicing and beating. All the ingredients are to be reduced to a destructured mass which is then applied to the body. Consider the following, wholly typical, instructions:-

"... Mingle together and whip up, let it stand till it be clear ..."

Or,

"... Scrape them very small and pound them thoroughly."

The standard "carriers" of the herbal ingredients in salves are butter, lard and oil. It is clear from the leechdoms that these are chosen for their smooth, unstructured malleability and formlessness. When applied to a rough skin or wound they restore that smooth unpunctured epidermis that was not only a sign of safety but also of beauty. They also act as exchange mechanisms. Hence the use of butter as a drink for herbal poison:-

"If a man eat wolfsbane, let him eat and drink butter, the poison will go off in the butter."

In drinks, the standard "carriers" are water, ale, wine, vinegar, and honey. Wine and ale are intoxicants and this gives us a clue to the reason for their use. Alcohol is commonly used in our own society to "break the ice", to free people from their inhibitions and break down barriers. This is not the place for a digression on Anglo-Saxon drinking customs, but let us just note in passing the importance attached to drinking to the point of complete intoxication to cele- brate a marriage agreement or simply as a manifestation of the soli- darity and unity of a warrior retinue with their lord. The relevant herb having been selected, an interchange must occur between it and the patient. The use of alcohol in this process is another means of attaining that destructuring which is also the result of the mechanical operations mentioned above.

Another striking feature of recurrent elements in the leechdoms, is the large number that have undergone a form of cultural destruc- turing. Here are to be mentioned butter, cheese, whey, ale, wine and vinegar, which have undergone curdling and fermentation, both cultural forms of decay. They are thus in a strange intermediate category, having decayed while not having "gone bad". Decay, like disease, was viewed as an external aggression and the remedies given in our documents for calamities of the dairy and kitchen make it quite clear that the lesser forces of evil are involved. Similarly, one of the standard entrance requirements for sainthood was the failure of one's body to decay after death, which Bede takes as proof of virginity. This class of foods is therefore strangely liminal and well suited to bridge the gap between the cultural and non-cultural spheres.

Honey, salt and vinegar have, moreover, yet another quality that qualifies them for medical service in that they are preservatives. We have plenty of evidence for the use of salt. Most of the cattle had to be slaughtered in autumn, owing to the lack of winter feed- stuffs, and their carcasses were salted down for the winter. This salt meat was the sole means of survival. As regards the use of vinegar for pickling and honey for preserving fruit, evidence is sadly lacking at the moment. We do, however, have ample evidence for the use of another regular ingredient, namely oil. This was employed in the embalming of holy bodies and apparently responsible for those saintly miracles of preservation.

One last quality of these substances - they were representatives of the basic tastes as were many of the richly aromatic herbs. Honey was the sole source of sweetness of taste for the Anglo-Saxons and vinegar was "sharp" (bitter and sour). We only have to note that salt is a regular remedy and we can postulate that they were also playing variations on the theme of taste. The evidence supports this. Consider the following:-

"Baths for bowel disorders; they must be made for them of salt waters; if none can be had, let their food be salted."

"First must be given him what shall still and soothe the in- wards, what is neither too sharp nor too austere, nor rending nor caustic."

"Nor let the meat be too sharp, nor too sour, but smooth and fat."

"Give ... him ... salt means with sweetened vinegar, and pre- pared mustard, and radish to eat, and make him eat all the meats and drinks which have a hot sharp quality."

This links up with the Anglo-Saxon acceptance of the theory of the humours as causing disease, which is also evidenced in our documents. It is to be noted that "sharp" herbs often replace scarification in remedies. There remains much to be said on this subfield of classifications but I should like to pass on to a complementary aspect. While the above remedies work on the basis of "unlike negates unlike" (e.g. hot cures cold), there is also rich evidence of the most basic classificatory mechanism, i.e. "like affects like"; Thus we find the whole set of sense impressions given by a plant harnessed to an attempt to determine its uses. Let me give some examples. For swellings and warts, bulbous plants are used; for "wrist drop" limp, creeping plants. Poison is treated with "attor-loth", (poison hater) a plant with a long, twisted root like a snake.

Often the link between ailment and cure seems mainly linguistic. In the long bone salve (Lacnunga 2) the alliterative associations that are the basis of Anglo-Saxon poetry have been harnessed in the service of medicine, e.g. "Beet and betony, ribwort and red hove ...." There then follows a list of tree barks. Now, in remedies for skin complaints, barks play a large role. The reasons for this are twofold. Firstly, the tough outer bark makes a good symbol for the skin which is the external boundary of the body. Secondly, it has the bitter taste associated with vermifuges in Anglo-Saxon medicine. This stems from the presence of tannic acid which the Anglo-Saxons would know from its use to preserve animal hides from decay. We may therefore take the use of bark as symbolising the skin. The next ingredient is a whole series of animal fats, which symbolise the fleshy covering of the bones. The remedy then goes on:-

"Then let one collect together all the bones which can be gathered and beat the bones with an iron axe and seethe and skim off the grease, work it down to a round lump," (the fats having been previously reduced to a similar shape).

All the ingredients are then mixed and reduced to a tar. In the preparation of the salve the three constituents of the body have been compounded together from numerous plants and animals, rendered anonymous and destructured, ready for use on the human frame.

I mentioned earlier the "Nine herbs charm". Let me now return to it. It alludes to nine magic herbs, effective against nine venoms. Each of these venoms is associated with a particular colour. This explains why the Anglo-Saxons were later able to adopt so easily the theory of humours (hot, cold, moist, dry) which occurs associated with the classifications of taste. Our text is here, however, badly corrupted. It obviously once had the form of alliterative verse which has now been partly lost. One of the colours is repeated twice so that its position in the list is no longer clear. One of the terms is a unique occurrence. The list of herbs occurs again in a different order and the list of diseases they cure has obviously been just padded out to reach the number nine. But it does gives us the clue that colour was significant in the treatment of ailments. This, moreover, is what we should have expected, given the use

of other sense impressions for purposes of classification.　Much
work remains to be done on this particular part of the corpus, es-
pecially since there has hitherto been no complete analysis of Anglo-
Saxon colour classifications.　Preliminary work indicates that,
at least in the leechbooks, there are traces of a colour system.
For example yellow-flowering herbs are used for the treatment of
"geolu" (jaundice), purple and white against demons and red for head
ailments.　The extent of this system and its precise nature have
yet to be established.

　　　The above is no more than a short survey of some of the
chief attributes of the Anglo-Saxon magical system.　I hope, how-
ever, that it illustrates the value of the application of the anthro-
pological perspective to a people remote, not in place, but in time.
Anglo-Saxon ethnomedicine is far from being the unstructured mass
that some authors have implied, but a rich symbolic system in no
way inferior to those treated by anthropologists in other parts of
the world.

　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Nigel Barley

Principle Works Used

1.　Leechdoms Wortcunning and Starcraft of Early England, by
　　　Rev. Thomas Oswald Cockayne.

2.　The Medical Background of Anglo-Saxon England, by W. Bonser.

3.　Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine, by Grattan and Singer.

4.　Saloman and Saturn, by Kemble.

5.　The Anglo-Saxon Charms, by F. Grendon.

6.　Anglo-Saxon Magic, by G. Storms.

7.　Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, by Bosworth and Toller.

8.　British Flora, by Bentham and Hooker.

HENRY HOME, LORD KAMES (1696-1782)

Lord Kames was the son of an impoverished Scottish Laird of Kames, and he had a hard struggle to work his way to obtain an education and then to make a reputation at the Scottish bar; but by his brilliant mind and dogged persistence he reached a judgeship, taking his title as a Law Lord from his parental home.

If we may trust what his biographers have written he was critically pertinacious to the point of wearing his correspondents out. We are told also that he was something of a Lothario and bon viveur; and if only half we read about him were true we might still have to conclude that he was not an amiable person.

In his early days he had been a Jacobite and Episcopalian. As far as religion is concerned I suppose he may later be regarded, like Ferguson, as some sort of Deist, and in his writings there are frequent references to 'the Author of our Being', 'the finger of God', 'Providential care', and so forth. He appears to have been very devout. However, his attempt to defend the Christian faith, or some aspects of it (Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion, 1751), against Hume was not very successful and proved to be a boomerang for, ironically, it brought against him a charge of infidelity. Besides being lawyer, author and polemicist, Kames was a farmer who took great interest in his property, introducing new methods in farming, much to the disgust of the local farmers. Also, he corresponded on almost every subject - physics, physiology, natural history, literary criticism with all the leading intellectuals in Edinburgh and beyond. A versatile man, he had all these many interests, and he was a prolific writer, employing always an emanuencis; so prolific that his rival Law Lord, Montboddo, said to him in sarcastic wit that he (Montboddo) could not read as fast as he (Kames) could write. His writings, the more important of which are listed in the bibliography at the end of this essay, are of considerable interest to the student of the social history of 18th century Scotland, but the only one which has much relevance for the history of sociological thought is his Sketches of the History of Man (1774) - I have used the three volume edition of 1807. He intended to write a History of Man but he found the subject too vast, and he too old, to complete it, so it was reduced to the more modest Sketches.

In some ways it may be said that all these Scottish moral philosophers wrote the same books. They started off with the idea that a study of man must be a study of social institutions - of men in groups: so, says Kames, man is endued with an appetite for society, no less than the appetite he has for food, for in a solitary state he is helpless and forlorn. Then, Kames' book, like those written by his contemporaries who were interested in social institutions purports to be a history of man in his progress from savagery to the highest civilization and improvement. This was the aim of all the philosopher-sociologists of the period, and in much the same words. And like them he employed for the purpose of historical reconstruction, the comparative method, Dugald Stewart's 'Theoretic or Conjectural History', to which he gave unqualified approval.

The book starts off with a discussion, much in the air at the time, of whether there are different races of men or just one race with such differences as might be attributed to climate, soil, food or other external causes. Kames, although he was strongly influenced by the celebrated Montesquieu, as he acknowledges, and so was prepared to allow climate to have some effect on character, comes down decisively in favour of the diversity of races, of what today we would, I suppose, call innate racial characteristics. He attempts to support his contention by a hotch-potch of information culled from travellers' reports from all over the world (American Indians, Melanesians, Polynesians, Lapps, Tartars, Chinese, etc.) and from classical Latin authors – much of which might fairly be said to be rubbish. He was certainly credulous and his reasoning highly conjectural; but we must not perhaps judge an author by what we know today, ex post facto. It is true, he says, that the Spanish of Southern America have lost their vigour, that the offspring of Europeans in Batavia soon degenerate, and that Portugese long settled on the sea-coast of Congo retain scarce the appearance of men – but neither climate nor any other extraneous influence can account for fundamental differences in dispositions or character, e.g. courageous and cowardly, pacific and warlike – differences in what today some people would call 'ethos'. Such being his view, it would seem to me that it was not very consistent of him to accept the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel to account for the great number and variety of languages; the alternative, that 'God created many pairs of the human race' (p. 59), he would not accept.

Like all other writers of the time on social institutions his basic criteria for a classification of types of society are bionomic, modes of production, hunting and collecting, pastoral, and agricultural; and like Ferguson, Condorcet and others, he makes (Vol. 1, Chap. 2) the point that as population increases various social consequences follow. Then there is the same emphasis as we find in the same writers on the significance of property in the development of civilization. 'Among the senses inherent in man, the sense of property, is eminent' (Vol. 1, p. 91) and this sense increases in the advance from savagery to higher types of culture; and desire for property is the mother of many arts: 'without private property there would be no industry; and without industry, men would remain savages for ever' (Vol. 1, p. 97). But property combined with opulence lead to decadence and depopulation: 'cookery depopulates like a pestilence....' (Vol. 1, p. 88). There is a good deal about the development of modes of exchange from barter to money.

These three volumes can be rather tedious reading, almost as tedious as The Golden Bough, an erudite catalogue of customs, many entries being cited on dubious authority. I give one quotation as an example. 'The female Caribbeans and Brasilians, are no less fond of ornament than the males. Hottentot ladies strive to outdo each other in adorning their crosses, and the bag that holds their pipe and tobacco: European ladies are not more vain of their silks and embroideries. Women in Lapland are much addicted to finery. They wear broad girdles, upon which hang chains and rings without end, commonly made of tin, sometimes of silver, weighing perhaps twenty pounds. The Greenlanders are nasty and slovenly, eat with their dogs, make food of the vermin that make food of them, seldom or never wash themselves; and yet

the women, who make some figure among the men, are gaudy in their
dress.   Their chief ornaments are pendants at their ears, with
glass beads of various colours....   The Negroes of the kingdom
of Ardrah in Guinea have made a considerable progress in police,
and in the art of living.   Their women carry dress and finery
to an extravagance.   They are clothed with loads of the finest
satins and chintzes, and are adorned with a profusion of gold.
In a sultry climate, they gratify vanity at the expense of ease.
Among the inland Negroes, who are more polished than those on
the sea-coast, the women, besides domestic concerns, sow, plant,
and reap.   A man however suffers in the esteem of his neighbours,
if he permit his wives to toil like slaves, while he is indul-
ging in ease (Vol. 1, pp. 434-5).

Nevertheless, one may say, in reference to the above excerpt,
that in spite of the inadequacy of his sources and of much sen-
tentious and dogmatic moralizing, Kames deserves credit for the
attention he paid to the position of women and 'the gradual
progress of women, from their low state in savage tribes, to
their elevated state in civilized nations' (Vol. 1, p. 404).
However, the progress of women is only one of his topics. Like
Adam Ferguson he wrote about every topic on which he wished to
air his opinions.   I mention just a few headings: Property,
Commerce, Arts, Manners, Luxury, Forms of Government, War and
Peace, Finances, the Army, Aristotle's Logic, Theology.

It would be time ill-spent to discuss in detail all he
wrote on so many topics, but one may be quoted, showing again
the influence of Montesquieu, which dominated thinking about
social institutions in England in the 18th century, that of
government.   There is the familiar discussion in terms of
democratic, monarchical, despotic, and so on.   Kames tells us
'of all governments, democracy is the most turbulent: despotism,
which benumbs the mental faculties, and relaxes every spring of
action, is in the opposite extreme.   Mixed governments, whether
monarchial or republican, stand in the middle: they promote
activity, but seldom any dangerous excess' (Vol. 2, p. 61).
Again 'Democracy is contradictory to nature, because the whole
people govern: despotism is not less so, because government
rests in a single person. A republic, or a limited monarchy
is the best form; because in these every man has an opportunity
to act the part that nature destined him for,' (Vol. 2, p. 75).

Like others before and after him Kames had, since he was
aiming to write an account of social development, to make a
classification of social types so as to relate these various
topics to them, which, like the others, he did on criteria of
production and productive relations; and it is difficult to
see what other criteria he could have used.   Moreover, they
were strictly relevant in that is evident that other social
and cultural differences must, at any rate to a large extent,
be determined by them.

So 'In the hunter-state, men are wholly employed upon the pro-
curing of food, clothing, habitation, and other necessaries;
and have no time nor zeal for the studying conveniences.   The
ease of the shepheard-state affords both time and inclination
for useful arts; which are greatly promoted by numbers who are
relieved by agriculture from bodily labour; the soil by gradual
improvements in husbandry, affords plenty with less labour than

at first; and the surplus hands are employed, first, in useful arts, and, next, in those of amusement. Arts accordingly make the quickest progress in a fertile soil, which produces plenty with little labour. Arts flourished early in Egypt and Chaldea, countries extremely fertile,' (Vol. 1, p. 128).

We are not here to praise or blame Lord Kames, but merely to speak of him as a typical figure in that 18th century Edinburgh circle who were profoundly interested in the development of social institutions and who certainly had great influence on the development of social anthropological thought, as may be seen, I believe in the writings of the two famous Scottish anthropologists McLennan and Frazer.

In conclusion I would add that - though he often broke the rule himself - he laid down a very sound directive for anthropologists to follow: that one should never draw general conclusions from particular facts. Dominated by empirical fieldwork many English-speaking anthropologists have forgotten this advice, which is different from saying that we should not try to see the general in the particular.

E.E. Evans-Pritchard

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THE VERTICAL DIMENSION IN THULUNG CLASSIFICATION

(i) Introduction

Analytic tables of complementary oppositions sometimes contain pairs such as superior:inferior (e.g. Needham 1962:96), but by and large structuralist social anthropologists, following the lead of Hertz, have paid more attention to the lateral opposition of right and left than to the vertical one of up and down. The Thulung Rai,[1] who live some forty miles south of mount Everest, do not practise a system of prescriptive alliance (though there are grounds of a sort for supposing that they may have done so some three centuries ago), and one would not expect to find among them such regular correspondences between social and symbolic classification as have characteristically been demonstrated in societies which do practise it. It is indeed difficult to find such correspondences and we shall not attempt any sort of "total structural analysis". The question we pose is quite limited, namely what use do the Thulung make of the vertical dimension in ordering their conceptions of the world and society. Even so we must ignore many uses, for instance in Thulung cosmology and ethnophysiology (i.e. such facts as that anger, sweat and sneezes "come up"), and some of the others can only be treated scantily. On the other hand it seems to me important, as well as interesting, to attempt to distinguish uses which are likely to have been part of Thulung culture before it made effective contact with the Hindu Indo-European speaking world (probably somewhat over two centuries ago) from those which it has borrowed from that world. The culture of the Thulung, as of so much of the north-east of the subcontinent, is the result of the impact of Indo-European speakers on a Tibeto-Burman speaking world and it is impossible to learn a tribal language without the fact and its diachronic implications being constantly obtruded on one's attention. Where the text leaves the matter in doubt we mark Nepali words or loan words with a following N.

(ii) Language

It is a commonplace that alien languages often make distinctions where the outsider does not expect them, and conversely fail to make them where he does expect them. One practical difficulty of this sort was the demand that Thulung makes that one always take account of the vertical dimension in the expression of motion. The English verb "come" is translated by four separate verbs and selection of the wrong one results in the speaker being misunderstood or, if the context is clear enough, in his being corrected. One of the four, rok- "come circuitously or by chance, or from an unknown direction; turn up", is of little relevance here. Of the remainder bik- means, to a first approximation, "come across, i.e. from a starting point on a level with the point of arrival", get- means "come up from one that is lower", yok- come down from one that is higher". A parallel distinction is obligatory in the four verbs for "to bring", respectively ret-, phit-, khet- and seot- (of which at least the first three are etymologically related to their intransitives). "Going" and "taking" are each rendered by single verbs (leks- and lət-, again it seems related), but here the vertical dimension is expressed, equally obligatorily, but in a way that accords more easily with the habits of an Indo-European

speaker, in a series of particles comparable to our adverbs or pre-
positions (actually they are postpositions). In translating "to
go or take to such and such a place" there is no single equivalent
for "to"; the choice is between an undifferentiated "towards," and
"across to", "down to", "up to". The latter three postpositions
together with a different undifferentiated particle express the
obligatory distinctions within our concept of rest at such and such
a place.

Obviously this feature of the language is entirely appropriate
to the terrain. A three-hour journey uphill is a very different
undertaking from a three-hour journey downhill. The former would
land one among the potato fields of the Buddist Sherpas, in a
climate where a snowfall is a possibility; the latter among the
rice fields of well established Hindu castes where malaria has
only recently ceased to be a danger. The congruence of the Thulung
language with the categories of action that the environment demands
of its speakers, might be taken as a vivid, if facile, instance of
what the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis would predict. For the purposes
of this paper, especially of the next two sections, the linguistic
data are important because they explain why it is impossible to
speak Thulung and remain unaware of the importance of the vertical
dimension in their conceptualisation of space. In Nepali the
terms expressing the vertical dimension are usually optional, very
much as in English.

(iii) Geographical Space

The typical Thulung village is set, roughly speaking, on a
single tract of hillside, i.e. seen from sufficient distance it
appears as occupying a simple inclined plane surface; in this
case the application of the obligatory vertical distinctions offers
no problems. Over larger areas, one possibility would be to apply
them straightforwardly on the basis of absolute height above sea
level, i.e. like contour lines, but this is not what is done. In-
stead, they are applied in the light of a larger scale schema of
Himalayan geography. According to this the Thulung area is re-
garded as situated somewhere in the middle of an inclined plane
running from the plains of India in the south to the snowy heights
of the Nepal-Tibet border in the north. One comes "up" from any-
where in the south, down from anywhere to the north. This may be
illustrated by a fragment of the routine conversation a fieldworker
goes through time and time again with minor variations when he
makes a new acquaintance.

Thulung: Where is your house?
Ethnographer: In England (the country is actually known in Nepali
as belayat, a word of Turkish and Persian origin, which gave rise
to army slang "Blighty").
Thu: It must be very cold for you here and it is difficult to grow
rice.
Eth: Our country (to say "my" would be most immodest) is not to-
wards India, but far away to the north-west (using the Nepali words
uttar and paschim, both direct loan words from Sanskrit). It is
cold and we can't grow rice, but we plant a lot of potatoes, and
wheat and barley, like the Sherpas.
Thu: Ha? (the slowly rising pitch expresses surprise with perhaps
a hint of polite doubt). When did you come up here?
Eth: It's been a year.
Thu: When are you going back down?

The association of westerners with India rather than with Tibet is obviously explicable on historical grounds, but the point of the dialogue is to emphasise that the geographical schema described embraces not only the Thulung area but also the entire geography of the world as conceived of by an uneducated Thulung.

His language has probably always lacked terms for the cardinal points in the abstract. For east and west reference is typically made to particular places, for north and south most of the work can be done by the verbal and postpositional system described. Where nouns are required the Thulung usually borrow the Nepali pair aul and lekh, connoting respectively low, hot, southward place and high, cold, northward place, the equivalent Thulung pair waye and jejiu or jiujiu respectively being virtually obsolete. For obvious reasons the language very seldom has any call to distinguish relative altitude, latitude and climate, and as we have seen has the utmost difficulty in doing so.[2]

The relationship of north and south to up and down is by no means confined to Thulung. If the dialogue had taken place in Nepali the vertical dimension would have been used in just the same way, expect that it would not have been incorporated within the verb "come". When Thulung and Nepali coincide in some feature other than a lexical item it is often a problem to know whether the tribal language has adopted it from the national one or whether the national one has been influenced by the substratum of Himalayan tribal tongues, all of which bear at least some resemblance to each other as members of the Bodic Division of the Tibeto-Burman family. In its geographical schema we can be confident that Thulung has not borrowed from Nepali, and the second alternative seems plausible, although the facts of Himalayan geography make the association so natural that the Nepali usage could be independent.[3]

Of course local details of the terrain do not always harmonise with the overall schema and it may happen that the starting point of a northward journey is higher than the arrival point, and vice versa. In other words there is a conflict between the relative height criterion applying to movement on a single hillside and the north-south criterion applicable to the larger scale. In such cases the north-south criterion seems regularly to take precedence, though further data is needed. In any case each village in the language it uses of each other village necessarily classifies it as either up, across, or down, with only occasional instances where either of two classifications is acceptable. Sometimes reference to the map suggests a certain skew in the application of the categories. For instance, Tingla lies two hours to the west of Mukli, and only marginally to its south, yet it is obligatory in Mukli to speak of coming up from it. This might be because it lay close to the route ultimately leading southwards to Bahing territory (along which the souls of the dead are conducted.[4] Since indications of the vertical dimension of travel is optional in Nepali, it is unlikely that any such regular classificatory system is used by 'native' speakers of that language.

(iv) Domestic Space

Thulung houses invariably have their long axes transverse to the direction of the slope on which they stand. This is easily intelligible as a practical matter. Level ground is hard to find and to clear a flat terrace of given area more earth has to be moved if the terrace extends in depth into the hillside than if it extends in length along it. However the orientation to the average prevailing slope is maintained even when the house is built on ground which is actually flat. Although the long axis of the house is determined relative to the hillside, the axis is not itself conventionally polarised. The house has its porch and main door invariably on one of the short ends (which it seems natural to them and us to think of as the front end), but looking uphill one cannot predict whether this will be on the left hand or the right. The builder would decide according to the lie of the land, the position of neighbouring houses, springs, paths, etc.
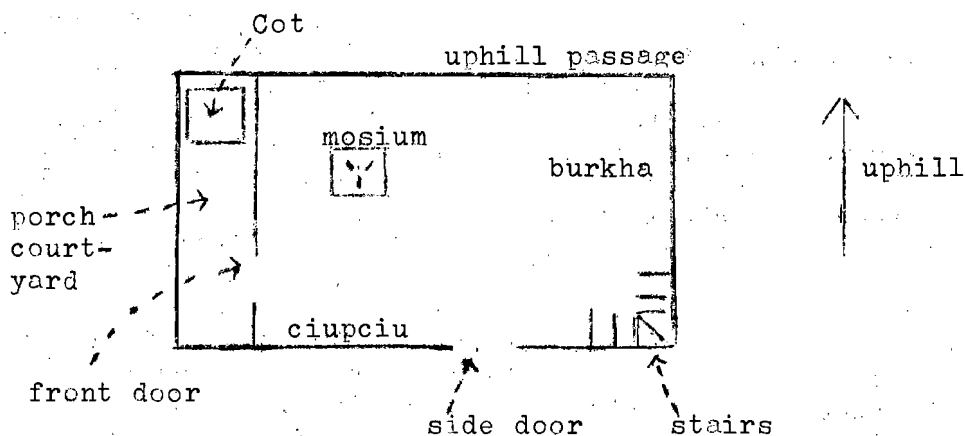
Ground Plan of Thulung House

Certain features of the house's layout are strictly determined by its orientation relative to the slope, and positions and movements within the house are expressed in the up-and-down terms that this orientation makes appropriate. The key facts are that the main door is downhill in the front wall and that the hearth, with its three stones for supporting pots, two uphill, one downhill, is somewhat off-centre in the front uphill quadrant of the floor space (cf. diagram). The burkha is primarily the women's area since it contains supplies and cooking vessels, though there is no bar on men entering it. The mosium and ciupciu are referred to later. The stairs, traditionally a notched pole or trunk, was probably used originally to reach items stored in the rafters; it is usually downhill close to the back wall, but if it is uphill, as in some houses, it is not felt to be out of place.

Nowadays most Thulung houses resemble those of other castes in the area in being substantial two or three storey stone-built structures painted white and red, with upstairs windows painted black.[5] Even before the Gorkha conquest of approximately 1770 the "palace" of the village headman was stone-built but older people recall that in their childhood practically all Thulung houses were made of split bamboo smeared with ordinary mud. Some four or five houses in this style are to be seen in Mukli, and indeed they are

occasionally built in order to economise on time or money. The old
people's memories and the evidence of the present day shacks is cor-
roborated by lexical material. Parts of the house expressible only in
Thulung are the ciupciu, the mosium and its shelf. The following parts
can be expressed in either language; courtyard, hearth, hearth-stones,
drying rack over fire, burkha, ladder, front door, uphill passage, areas
around house where drips fall from eaves, forked stake used for suppor-
ting beams. Parts expressible only in Nepali are: garden (and most of
what is grown in it), barn, porch, its roofing, cot, side door, second
storey , windows (which are never set in ground floor), planks, carved
capitals set on top of pillars, smoke exit holes, door bolt and door
hinge, stone walls of house, stone foundation and its extension outside
the walls, iron cooking tripod used as well as or instead of the hearth
stones.

    . These lists serve to dissect the house into those elements
that are likely to date from before the immigration of Nepali
speakers into the Thulung area and those which have been borrowed
from immigrants. It would be difficult to give a watertight
theoretical justification for making an inference of this kind;
suffice it to say that in practice the method gives generally co-
herent and plausible results, not only as regards houses, but in
many aspects of both material and non-material culture. There
is an additional check here in that for all but the last three
items in the Thulung list I have recorded special names (depcinong),
used when referring to them in rituals; in Mukli not one item in
the Nepali list has a depcinong though some villages have given one
to the side-door. The important point is that nearly all parts
of the house that are closely involved in its conventional up-down
orientation are expressible in Thulung and are unlikely to be
borrowings. Conversely, very few of the Nepali items are relevant
to the orientation. For instance, the tripod is placed in any
old position inside or outside the three stones, the upstairs
windows face in any direction, the barn, though typically facing
the front wall from the other side of the courtyard, can be built
wherever convenient or not at all. It is true that the side
door (not always present) is obligatorily down-hill, but since
it is the one used for throwing slops out of this is not surprising.
Again given the position of the main door, the cot, if it is to
be in the shelter of the porch, is necessarily uphill.

    In its obligatory orientation the Thulung house contrasts
sharply with those of the higher Hindu castes, in which so far as
I could discover, no feature of the layout is strictly related
to the slope of the hillside.

    The orientation of the Thulung house has important implica-
tions in everyday life. The mosium is the place of honour where
the master of the house usually sits. He will invite respected
kinsfolk and guests to come "up" and join him there, but those
who are not Kiranti, i.e. the anthropologist and members of any
caste other than the Limbu, should keep downhill of it or the
ancestors will harm them. Lokhim, in many ways the most "un-
touched" of Thulung villages, e.g. in having the smallest proportions
of immigrants actually interspersed among Thulung, pays little
or no attention to the prohibition, and one wonders whether the
imputation of such xenophobia to the ancestors may not be a sign
of Hindu influence. In any case the association with ancestors
is very explicit. A very old man, who is already almost an

ancestor, may be referred to as <u>mosium lö pa</u> (lit. guardian or watcher of the place. The ancestors do not like goats (perhaps because when they were introduced they were felt to be alien to tribal tradition), and a householder who has eaten goat's meat should not enter the <u>mosium</u> for a week. Offerings to the ancestors are in certain rites placed not merely in the <u>mosium</u>, but on the shelf <u>high up</u> on its uphill wall. This is significant because the position in which a corpse is ritually laid out is on the floor, in the <u>ciupciu</u>. Now the central motif of the Thulung death ceremony is the rupturing of the link between the living and the recently dead. The properly integrated ancestors are a force for good, whereas a good proportion of mankind's woes are ascribed to the activities of dead spirits who have remained among the living. The dead man is told forcibly and repeatedly to depart to where he belongs, to the village of the ancestors. The sharpness of separation is expressed by reversal of the orientations that he has obeyed while alive. A sleeping man keeps his head pointing either uphill or longitudinally, i.e. parallel to the long axis of the house, but the dead man is buried with his head pointing downhill. A longitudinal sleeper can point either way in the <u>mosium</u>, or just below the fire) but in the <u>ciupciu</u> his head must be away from the front door, because (the Thulung are explicit) the dead are laid out heads poiting towards it.

For a living person to disregard these orientations would be <u>kholo</u>. This is an interesting term meaning something like "ill-omened, unlucky, taboo", and I have heard it applied to a number of heterogeneous prohibitions: filtering beer made of rice, wearing a <u>Topi</u> while being given a <u>Tikā</u>, throwing sweepings out of doors at night, hesitating in a doorway, uttering the word <u>homsi</u> "cucumber" in the month of Mangsir, mentioning a dead person's name or discussing his funeral soon after his death; its derivative <u>kholom</u> means "meat reserved for <u>kholome</u>", (officiants at tribal rites.). For confident treatment of the term we should need more data, both local and comparative, but in at least two further examples it refers to reversals of correct vertical relationships. It is <u>kholo</u> to store cooking pots upside down (cf. the English superstition sometimes applying to horseshoes hung over doorways), and it is <u>kholo</u> to spread a <u>gundri</u> N (rectangular mat made of rice straw) so that the part made first (the head end, recognisable by the shorter loops of the warps as they circle back to re-enter the weft) lies <u>downhill</u>

The Thulung say that the Nepali for <u>kholo</u> is <u>khadam</u>, a word which is not in the standard Nepali dictionaries. The existence of the Nepali term, even apart from the prohibitions involving such obvious borrowings as <u>Tikā</u> giving, Mangsir and <u>gundris</u>, suggests that the concept is by no means confined to the Rai, but the close association of <u>kholo</u> with death ritual and domestic architecture suggests that it has long been a feature of Thulung life.

There is a curious contrast between the systematic use of the vertical dimension in the conceptualisation of geographical and domestic space and the apparent lack of any overall conventional spatial schema for the village. The highest and lowest parts of the villages are often referred to, especially in Nepali, as its head and tail respectively (<u>sir</u> and <u>puchar</u> N), but no particular values or customs are nowadays attached to them. At best there exist only tenuous hints as to what may have been. The river <u>phuliuku</u>, from which Mukli takes its ritual name, runs roughly straight north-south and appears once to have separated

the village into two named halves, Congkom and Tekala (which could have been intermarrying moieties). The only previous student of Thulung, Hodgson, British Resident at Kathmandu in the 1820s and 30s, recorded in his unpublished notes (now at the India Office Library) the existence of classifier particles, a grammatical category which has since entirely vanished from the language. The particle bop then used in enumerating villages (as well as eyes, oranges, grains of rice and pillows) certainly referred to round things, as present-day cognate lexical items confirm. Suggestive facts can also be found in reports on peoples whose cultures can be argued to be distantly related to the Rais : cf. for instance the ritual importance of the uphill and downhill village gates among the Zemi Nagas (Graham Bower 1952:93) or the north-south orientation of Tharu houses and villages.(MacDonald 1969:71). Thus it may ultimately be demonstrable that the present lack of any structured village space has been the result of changes accompanying the Gorkha conquest, Hindu immigration, the introduction of intensive terrace farming, and the vast demographic expansion of both Thulung and immigrants.

The conceptualisations of physical space that we have been dealing with are quite distinct from the well known and widely distributed complex concerning the axis mundi or centre of the world, which is typically situated at some point of political or religious importance. This complex appears in relatively unsystematised form among both Thulung and other castes in certain ritual uses of poles, and possibly in connexion with the giant silk-cotton tree at which Thulung agricultural rites take place, but we cannot treat the subject here.

(v) Metaphorical Spaces

A logician might wish to give some sort of fundamental priority to the categories of physical space and speak of their being "carried over" as metaphors (the Greek etymology means precisely transference) to help in conceptualising and organising other areas of life. Sociologically one could as well start with these other areas, from the biological fact that children have to "look up" to adults, or that victors "overcome" and that vanquished "go under". It is equally biological and basic that to lose ones legs is to be crippled, to lose ones head is to die. No doubt all cultures use the vertical dimension metaphorically in their thinking and symbolising, relating in some way up:down with leader:follower, high status:low status, head:foot (or for obvious reasons, head:rump or "bottom"). The possibility of conceiving of bodily space, kinship space and social space in the same terms as physical space appears to be so inherent in the nature of things that it might be thought futile to attempt to analyse this aspect of Thulung life in terms of tribal and borrowed. One counter to this is theoretical. The methods of housebuilding employed by a society depend on its conceptualisation of the possible uses of what the environment offers; similarly the whole of philosophy rests on the fact that people do not in practice realise or express the ideas about the nature of things that are in a sense available to all human beings. If it is legitimate to analyse the methods of housebuilding in tribal-borrowed terms, it is equally legitimate in principle, however difficult in practice, to make a similar analysis of the methods of conceptualising spaces.

Another counter is empirical. Cultures clearly do differ in the sorts of space they consider "bons a penser". An important theme of Bishop Robinson is that vertical imagery referring to a "god up there" was once natural and appropriate but is now an archaism; drawing on Tillich, he suggests (1963:22, 45-6) that if spatial imagery is necessary, that of depth would be more appropriate than that of height.

(vi) Bodily Space

The relative status of the bodily extremities crops up again and again. One should not dishonour the head by using trousers or shoes as a pillow. One should not stand on a pillow. If one treads by mistake on a Topi (hat) one should say Visnu, Visnu for the god may be offended. One should not push faggots onto the fire with ones foot; even worse would be to touch the sacred hearth stones with that extremity. When a person takes something from another's hand and says dhanyabād N (a Sanskrit loan word), it is a sure sign that he has been in close contact with westerners; the normal and proper way to receive an object is, as one brings it towards one, to raise it slightly with a gentle curve in the direction of the fore head, without verbal acknowledgement. Formal greetings are made not only on ceremonial occasions but whenever members of different households meet indoors. According to category of relative there are three grades of respect. The highest is expressed by the giver touching his forehead to the taker's feet. In the next the giver touches his right hand to the taker's feet and then either touches his own forehead or joins both hands. Between equals both parties stand and join hands.

The head is the favourite portion of a carcase of meat, and the one which an owner keeps for himself when he kills an animal for meat on a non-ceremonial occasion. At Mukli's major bhume rite, (agricultural and ancestral) numerous pigs' heads are cut off and placed at the base of the sacred silk-cotton tree, later to be eaten as kholom by the tribal priests. When cooking meat Nepalis do not separate flesh and bone but chop the animal up into small lumps which often contain both, and are particularly likely to do so when the head is involved. Gingerly separating the two the anthropologist is tempted to feel there is no accounting for taste; however with a structuralist background he cannot help recalling that if it is the head that is given to gods and priests, it is the tail plus a small lump of meat from the base of the spine that is given to the Damais, the lowest caste, at the end of a wedding.

There is no good evidence that any of the uses so far mentioned of the head:foot/tail polarity are tribal in origin. Those that involve borrowings and immigrants such as shoes, Topis, Visnu and Damais are evidently not. The polite gesture for receiving is all-Nepali. The gestures of greeting are the same as those used by the Hindu Chetris, both locally and generally (cf. Fuerer Haimendorf 1966:46), and apply to almost identical categories of relatives; the Thulung for "greeting" is sew, which derives from Nepali sebā or sewā "service, attendance on a superior, worship, homage", (though Nepali itself uses the word Dhok for "greeting"). It might be thought that cutting off a large number of pigs' heads and piling them at the base of a tree was about as tribal a custom as could well be imagined. Chetris and Brahmans of course neither keep or eat pigs, and a pig's head is taken to the bride's sister in the traditional Thulung wedding. However, it is clear from the wedding

ritual that the really traditional way of killing pigs is to
shoot them with bow and arrow, not to behead them with a kukri,
a method which is only used at this one bhurae rite.   One
Thulung actually suggested to me that the rite had been copied
from the Chetri diwali rite, which is held in honour of the an-
cestors and involves the beheading of a very large number of
male goats, whose heads are temporarily deposited in shrines
surmounted by tall bamboos.   In all other ceremonies the Thu-
lung ancestors receive inner organs or portions from the middle
of the carcase.   Pending analysis of the pig's head for the
bride's sister, we conclude somewhat tentatively that there is
no evidence of an evaluational polarity having been applied to
the body in pre-contact times, and that if it existed, its
application has considerably increased since contact.

(vii) Social Space

    The vertical dimension is used quite explicitly to express
the status and power structure of society in the recently intro-
duced pancayes   system.   District politics is distinguished
from village politics as belonging to a "higher level" (mat-
hillo taha N);   the terminology is taught in the schools in
the "civics" classes (nagarik N), and no doubt derives from wes-
tern political theory, a particularly popular subject at Tribhuran
University in Kathmandu.

    Caste is not (as in western sociology) spoken of in the idiom
of pure verticality ("high caste:low caste"), but in that of size.
Touchables and Untouchables are contrasted as "big castes:small",
Thulo jat:sano jat N, and finer distinctions within each block
are made in the same terms.   A usage which appears related is the
expression Thulo manche ("big man") referring to any individual
who is particularly rich or influential;   the literal Thulung
equivalent (Dokpu miuciu) is current but has the ring of a trans-
lation rather than of an old and indigenous idiom.   Although castes
are not ordered in terms of physical height pure and simple, it
is interesting, especially in view of the last section, that the
varna model of society (with which most Thulung are at least partly
familiar) explicitly polarises society between the Brahmans, origi-
nating from the head of Prajapati, and the Sudra, from his legs
or feet.

    Within Thulung society the clearest instance of connection
between verticality and social relationships is in the kinship
terminology and behaviour, which is in large measure borrowed
(cf. Dumont 1966:55: "l'idee de hierarchie, si importante en ce
qui concerne la caste, n'y est pas cantonnée, elle pénètre le
domaine de la parenté").   Let us briefly review the remaining
roles of importance in past and present Thulung society.   (a)
The term muliu, often used in the tribal ritual for "wise old man"
is no doubt the Nepali muli "chief, ringleader, head of household".
(b) The talukdar N (though most easily translated as "headman")
does not seem within living memory to have been spoken of or sym-
bolised as in any sense "above" his raiti.   His main function is
to collect taxes.   This is not the place to examine his office
in detail, but we may note that he has no Thulung name, makes no
appearance in tribal ritual, has no ceremonial functions except
at the Hindu festival of Dasain (when he traditionally gave a
feast for his raiti) and at weddings when he receives the Rai
TikaT (N - from English "ticket");   there is no motive for suppo-
sing that he existed before the Gorkha conquest gave him his

original title of Rai and his tax-collecting duties. (c) The
term ngopceo means literally the "five men", and corresponds
exactly to the Nepali and Hindi pānc=five (the root underlying
"panchayat"). Nowadays the term seems to be used only in ritual
contexts of the tribal priest and his four assistants but there
is some confusion between it and ngopso "friend, neighbour"; how-
ever the translation pánc rākhnu = ngopceo prə mu "hold a council"
clearly implies that it once had some role in village organisation.
Most likely it applied to post-conquest councils consisting of
the tālukdār and his four assistants. (d) The only pure Thulung
word meaning "important man" in a general sense is ngaw or ngawa,
which appears to relate to age rather than height or size (cf.
ngáceo "old man", ngami "old woman"; possibly ngaddo "before"
in time or space). (e) The pre-conquest village "rajas" were
hə p (or baya hə p) "earth lord"), a term now used only in addresses
to spirits, as sokmo hə p "lord of the jungle". (f) The tribal
priest is called dewa, a word which significantly is of Nepali
origin, meaning originally "god, respectful term of address to
honourable person". Now only the last two Thulung roles make
any clear use of vertical metaphors or symbolism to express their
social importance, and even so one must look quite hard to find
it. People ordinarily sit on straw mats, either the disk shaped
piro N, or the rectangular gundri N (both borrowings). In prin-
ciple the priest officiates sitting on a special seat not used in
other circumstances. As usual in Thulung material culture, the
design is extremely simple: a board two foot long, eight inches
wide is raised an inch or two off the ground by transverse ridges
at either end. In spite of its simplicity its importance is
shown by the fact that it is regularly mentioned in the priest's
incantations even when there is not one actually available for
the ceremony. Its ritual name is khosəngma sirangma (cf. kho
"axe", səng "wood", sir N "head"); whether or not the first two
elements are correctly identified, the third identification can
be supported by the fact that the site of the "palace" in Mukli
(a place called oga) also has as its ritual name ogama sirangma.
sirangma occurs also in the ritual names of at least three other
places (though not of any other objects); we cannot say whether
this is because they were the seat of some important person, at
the highest point of a village, at the head of a stream, or for
some other reason. The important points are that outside kinship
relationships the only clear instance of vertical symbolism in
traditional Thulung social space (a) is expressed with the borrowed
term sir (b) refers to the superior status of the head (cf. last
section); (c) relates tribal priest and village rajā.

There is no space to examine here the significance of the last
point for a reconstruction of the social history of the post-con-
tact pre-conquest period, but even the highly compressed data we
have given is perhaps sufficient to suggest that before the con-
quest metaphorical uses of the vertical dimension to express
internal social differentiation were being introduced as a result
of Nepali influence. With the abrupt incorporation of the Thu-
lung into the national state their vertical social conceptualisa-
tions have been in terms borrowed from and largely applying to
this larger Hindu society. Only in the last two decades has the
concept of bureaucratic hierarchy begun to become a familiar part
of everyday thinking.

(viii) <u>Height and wealth</u>

Most pairs of opposites contain a potential asymmetry in that one member can be more naturally taken as a departure from the other than the converse, e.g. left-handedness is a departure from right-handedness, illness a departure from health, death from life, and so on. With a similar asymmetry the top of something suggests movement upwards more strongly than its bottom suggests movement downwards. The fact can be used in several ways. It contributes for instance to the appropriateness of the feathered headdress which enables the Thulung shaman to undertake his magical flights or of the tall pole or tree which may be used to make contact with beneficent powers from above. Here we will be concerned not so much with movement away from the earth as with movement up from it, as exemplified by growing things.

There are two customs that vividly associate wealth and height. When a man has threshed his rice by beating bundles of it on the ground, he sweeps the unhusked grain into a conical pile round which he traces a line with the edge of his winnowing fan as a barrier to evil spirits. If he leaves it for a time or overnight he places on the top a flower and plants a sickle, handle downwards and blade pointing to the north (Mukli). The meaning was said to be that he wishes the pile were as tall as the great mountains to which the sickle points. Similarly a bundle of flowers and straw (<u>bung</u>, <u>phul</u> N) may be tied to the top of a pole of the structure on which maize cobs are dried; people do it thinking "let there be plenty", as one informant put it. Note that the Thulung do not have a feeling of security about a harvest that has been "safely gathered in". It is liable for instance to be surrepticiously filched by demons with grabbing hands or taking the form of mice.

Regarding the origin of the customs (a) a Brahman suggested to me that the first was a proper and established one, implying that it was not confined to the Rai, (b) no specifically Thulung vocabulary arises in their description, and they are more likely to have originated among long established agricultural peoples than among an originally largely hunting people, (c) picked flowers, so regular a feature of Hindu rituals, are never used in those of Thulung tribal officiants.

Let us consider next the attitude to mountains expressed in the first custom. Siva (often called Mahadeu - "the great god") is "the most important god of the Nepali Hindu pantheon" (Turner: 1931), and his tridents are found in shrines all along the Himalaya. Siva and his spouse Pārbati (Sk Pārvati "the daughter of the mountain") are peculiarly associated with the snowy Himalaya (above all in fact with Mount Meru). Hinduised Thulung consider their tribe to be <u>sivamargi</u>, i.e. followers of the god, and use the fact to justify their habits of meat-eating. The use of mountains in honorific contexts is illustrated in a ritual dialogue where the bride's priest addresses the groom's as "<u>baba</u> (father, general term of respect), <u>himāl</u>, <u>gaurav</u> (importance, honour, influence), <u>parbat</u>" (all four honorifics being N). The conclusion then is that the pile of rice custom belongs to a complex of ideas which associates mountain summits, gods, res-

pect and prosperity. In contrast to Hindus (and Tibetan Buddhists), the Thulung appear to have shown traditionally a total disregard for spirits attached to mountain tops; mountains are not named, apart from the habitations or pastures that they offer. It is true that the ancestors are associated with the uphill side of the house but the hill to which they are conducted as last resting place is neither particularly high nor snowy, being situated to the south west; nor do they go particularly to its summit. There is one Thulung ritual phrase referring to "mountains of crops" but it seems likely that this, together with the whole complex discussed in this section is a borrowing.

(ix) Psychological Space

The association of the head with prosperity is particularly striking at the seances of an ethno-doctor. When one asks what he is doing to a person who is not ill but with whom he is evidently occupied, the answer whether in Thulung or Nepali is that he is "raising the person's head" (sir uThaunu N, buy phamu). He may in fact be agitating a chicken around the head concerned, but he is certainly not raising it in any literal sense. English metaphors help to make the meaning clear. A man with "head held high" faces the future and the gods with confidence one with "head hung low, or slumped, eyes cast down", is out of favour with the gods. However for deeper insight we must consider the complex of associations surrounding the head in the two languages.

In Thulung we are dealing with two roots, buy "head" and bung or bungma, literally "flower". The Nepali equivalents are respectively sir and phul (the latter meaning also "dry heated grain,[7] menses, egg, testicle"), both of which we have met in other sections. Whatever their etymological relation, if any, the Thulung pair show a close association with each other, as in the following ritual words and phrases:

    inibung siribung "your head"
    bububuyla "upon(-la) the head (buy)"
    bubukomsi "sirani N, pillow, = komsi in everyday language"
    jiujiubung bubebung "mountain (jiujiu) flowers" (the variation
            bubu/bube being most likely dialectal)

The Thulung root bung has wide ramifications, especially in the direction of fertility, but also cross-cutting some of the other semantic sub-fields of the system.

    bok- = phulnu N "open (of flower), pop (of pop-corn), go white
            (of hair), thrive"
    bubum "white" (probably cognate with bok-)
    bungdo "youth, fertile part of woman's life"
    bung "human mother's milk, ? and/or nipple"
    bung Deak- "(of a witch) to make a woman infertile" (Deak-
            "block up a hole")
    bung baTpa "influential man within hamlet" (baTpa "having")

Both bung and sir (less commonly phul) are particularly associated with compensation:

    bungma Diu "phulpan N, beer offered 'in compensation' after
            wedding, small respectful gift"

u mam ku bung/sir "payment to mother on removal of bride"
nokcho ku sir "payment to priest"; cf. basanti N "payment
to ethno-doctor" (literally "spring season", or
"variety of flower")
sir rakhne "payment made to unmarried girl if you marry her
younger sister"

Thus idioms like bung melsiTpa "drooping "of flower or person ",
i sir blem "you will be humiliated," literally "your head will be
felled", and the ethno-doctor's sir uThaunu have behind them a
rich and tangled set of more or less metaphorical associations.
It would be hazardous in this area to offer firm conclusions about
the relations between tribal and borrowed vocabulary, though I
am left with the impression that the association of heads and
flowers is closer in Thulung than Nepali. However it is clear
enough that the Thulung do make a close association of this sort,
one that seems relatively rare in European languages (in spite
of examples such as "head of cauliflower or chrysanthemum", and
"maidenhead and deflower"); and secondly that what in some parts
of the world is expressed in the idiom of "loss of face" is here
expressed in that of "lowering of the head". Conversely the
"raising of the head" in Thulung or Nepali expresses a concept
not easily translated into English, one which combines a psy-
chological element of high morale with a temporary ritual con-
dition of positive liability to good fortune, a state of being
in the grace and favour of the supernatural powers.

(x) Divisions of the Year

Many rituals such as the hut pa used to be and in some place
still are performed regularly twice a year, once during the
two or three months following the rains, once in the two or
three months before them. The latter performances are called
ubhauli N "upper", the former udhauli N "lower". The corres-
ponding Thulung adjectives are never substituted. The inform-
ants questioned could not suggest a precise demarcation between
the two halves of the year; very possibly they are formed by
Magh and Saun sankranti (mid-January and mid-July respectively),
festivals which are widely observed both by tribals and Hindus.
In any case the lexical evidence strongly suggests a Hindu origin
for the division.

(xi) Final Remarks

This essay has attempted to continue the tradition of Durk-
heim and Mauss' "Primitive Classification", as expounded at
Oxford, where a Diploma question of some years back asked for a
comparison of vertical and lateral opposition. Another influence
has been Ullmann's writings (1959) on synaesthesia and semantic
change. After all, as Borges has said, "It may be that univer-
sal history is the history of the different intonations given to
a handful of metaphors".

Nicholas Allen

NOTES

1. I should like to acknowledge the financial support of the
Social Sciences Research Council during the course of field
work carried out between July 1969 and March 1971, and the

long-term encouragement of my teachers, Professor C. von
Fürer Haimendorf and Dr. R. Needham.

2. Littlejohn (1963:9) reports a similar situation in Sierra
Leone where the word for "up" means east, that for "down"
west, in correspondence to the lie of the land.

3. Our own convention, to be seen also in Ptolomy's map, of
putting north at the top of the page, was not shared by the
makers of the so-called T and O maps of the Middle Ages,
cf. the Hereford Cathedral Mappa Mundi (ca 1300), where
east is at the top of the page.

4. Comparable skews have been reported from Iceland regarding
the application of the terms for the cardinal points and
the inland: out-to-sea opposition (see Haugen.1957).

5. Colour symbolism is very little used in the area. White
limestone, red clay and wastes from the blacksmith's are
conveniently available and the people are no doubt right
in asserting that they use them purely for their decora-
tive effect.

6. The reversal of what would be the normal order in Nepali
(məthillo talo) suggests an early borrowing. Pignède
(1966:80ff.) need not have been puzzled by the fact that
the Gurung (like the Thulung) use their airy and spacious
upper stories for storage and not for living or sleeping;
in both areas the upper storey is an innovation.

7. Thulung phul "flour" appears to derive from this meaning
of the Nepali word. In English too "flower" and "flour"
derive from the same (Latin) word.

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REVIEW ARTICLE

A.S.A. 10.   Social Anthropology and Language
edited by Edwin Ardener. Tavistock; £4; 1971

It is now widely believed that, for good or ill, an
important era in British social anthropology has ended.   Yet
the burial rites seem unduly protracted and the final disposal
of the dead presents a peculiar problem for many of them are
still in our midst, apparently alive and occasionally kicking.
Merely ignoring them seems to have no noticeable effect, while,
warmly wrapped in the sheltering syllabus of many departments
and rejoicing in the fruits of office, the living dead stalk
amongst us, occasionally snatching a juicy new student and
turning him into a hard-working but senseless zombie to keep up
their numbers.

     Or so it might seem if we were to accept many current
written and spoken statements at their face value, for many of
the 'new anthropologists' appear to be greatly disturbed by the
problem of dealing with their old-style predecessors, and some
at least are likely to lash about in a fearsome way.   Some of
this unease may be due to the many strong personal ties of
affection and respect that bind the new to their elders. It is,
beyond dispute, to these predecessors that we all owe our original
teaching and inspiration; it was they who helped finance our
research and elected us to whatever posts we now occupy: without
them we and our subject are nothing.   But there is a further
source of unease which lies even deeper than this, for recent
studies and insights have increasingly indicated that anthro-
pology may be tending to become its own subject matter.   The more
we understand about the rules which govern or direct thinking
and understanding, the more we are faced with the problem of our
own freedom in understanding those rules.   If we are to end up
as students of Maxwell's demonology it is no wonder that there
arises a certain nostalgia for old style simplicity, combined
with a contempt for those still blissfully practising it.

     The present volume on anthropology and linguistics reflects
and develops some of the diverse tendencies within the subject
at the moment, for it is both a reconsideration of anthropology's
own selfconsciousness and a clearing away of old faults and
specialisations.   As a result the book is more a matter of care-
ful feeling about, planning and reorientating than a set of new
insights thrown off in a creative outburst.   While it had been
obvious for some time that there was a prime need to reconsider
the relationships between anthropology and linguistics, there
have been few anthropologists in this country competent to help
do this.   (Even Lévi-Strauss has been shown to have little clear
idea of basic linguistic technicalities, while one of his senior
English contemporaries admitted at an Oxford seminar that he had
no real idea of what a phoneme was, although he did think it was
a good idea.)   Fortunately some of these few anthropologists
have contributed to this volume, and have clarified some of the
problems for the rest of us.

     Parts of the book make sad and salutary reading.   Hilary
Henson explores early anthropological attitudes towards language
study and has little difficulty in pointing out their deep in-

adequacies.   In doing so she also makes a useful contribution to
the rewriting of our own intellectual history.   Those old genea-
logies, running back to Comte or Adam Smith, against which we used
to measure our allegiances and generations, may have been suitable
for the tribal factions of the 1940's and 1950's but they are no
longer flexible or many-branched enough to suit the different
patterns and alliances now emerging.   Ardener's 'blank banners'
of as yet inarticulate protest have, after all, often been filled
in the past by writing in old names and old slogans rather than
genuinely new creations.

     The failure to see language as a subject for theoretical
exploration (rather than as a largely unconsidered tool for
research) is also documented by Robins' discussion of the rela-
tions between Malinowski and Firth.   As another piece of his-
torical comment this is interesting and informative, but the
essential point that there is more to be said on the 'context
of situation' can only be followed up in research.   Hymes' paper
on the "Ethnography of Speaking" is the most solid and compre-
hensive contribution from what may still be regarded as the 'other'
side.   In arguing that our concern is to explore rule-governed
behaviour or creativity, Hymes suggests that we have to enlarge
our area of observation to include contextual constraints which
govern speech, and to try to formulate his 'rules of appropriate-
ness beyond grammar'.   Similarly, Pride's discussion of the uses
of Barth's transactionalist approach in relation to speech
encounters, and Crystal's tentative exploration of the factors
involved in code-switching within a 'single' language, all serve
to widen and increase our precision in looking at 'context', and
make it a possibly fruitful area of co-operation between anthro-
pologists and linguists.   Such approaches are clearly capable
of leading to some interesting research, and one can visualise
whole volumes of projects and results appearing as soon as one
reads these papers: and yet they seem likely to produce data/
theory conjunctions at a low level of abstraction, that is at
the level of social analysis which many anthropologists have
recently been concerned to reach beyond.

     Elizabeth Tonkin, in her paper on West African Coastal pid-
gins, attempts to show how someone with a social anthropological
training may throw light on the growth of pidgins.   Although
handicapped by a grave paucity of data, she manages to throw
considerable light on the contact situation and its linguistic
outcome.

     The long and barbarous neglect of theoretical studies in
language, documented by Henson and noted in Robins' paper, is also
dealt with at length in Ardener's detailed Introduction.   In
this he also takes the opportunity discreetly to instruct his
colleagues in some of the basic points of linguistics.   The value
of this introduction lies in the careful way in which Ardener
covers past relations between social anthropology and linguistics
and considers how these may be more usefully developed in future.
His section on de Saussure should prove useful, in so far as it
helps fill in some of the gaps remaining in our appreciation (or
even our knowledge) of what has been happening in Europe during
the last fifty years or so.   Ardener's remarks on the problems
of unpacking ritual systems and symbols into spoken or written
'natural' languages draw attention to how limiting and cumbersome

such a procedure may be. This concern with ritual also
raises, albeit by implication, the crucial problem of unravel-
ling the inter-relations between different codes and how these
may be seen as fitting or failing to fit together. In ritual
the simultaneous and/or sequential use of words, gestures,
objects, music, taste, smell, pain etc. clearly need handling
more satisfactorily than has been done heretofore. The
ritual that is time itself, or serves to denote time must, of
course, also be taken into account here - and it is regrettable
that the basic clue in Needham's paper on 'Percussion and Transi-
tion' has not been taken up and developed.

Of the anthropologists (if we can still use this label in
some contexts) Caroline Humphrey uses terminology and concepts
borrowed from linguistics to consider one group of objects which
are, at least to some degree, seen by their makers and users as
conveying meanings and messages. Clearly, borrowed terminologies
are useful and so are some of the problems they suggest (motivated
signs, isologics etc.). Yet the final use of such terminologies
and concepts must be judged on the grounds of how far they lead
to insights which would not have been possible in more conventional
ways. In Humphrey's case it looks as though much of her analysis
could have been carried out, though more cumbersomely, with only
the most general ideas picked up from linguistics. Her analysis
however, is relevant to more general problems of word-object
relationships. Its real achievement is regrettably not demon-
strated here - that is: her attempt to relate the semiotic in
myth to the semiotic of the object. If, as she implies, con-
flicts or contradictions on one level can be resolved on the
other, we may be moving towards some outlining of simple patterns
of transformation.

The two key papers are Milner's and Ardener's. One of
Ardener's major contributions to the present flux in anthropology
has been to help us to understand more clearly the models we use,
or have unwittingly used in the past. He continues this in both
the Introduction and his chapter on the "Historicity of Historical
Linguistics". The latter is a further examination of the problem
of time in any model, and an argument that Neogrammarian approaches
in this respect have often been misunderstood by outsiders as well
as misconceived by insiders. No Africanist will overlook the
importance of his clarification of the status of starred forms in
relation to the Bantu problem; while the whole paper offers a
warning against borrowing or stealing techniques which are not fully
understood even by their owners.

Milner's paper has to be seen as part of a set of ideas which
he has explored in a number of recent publications. He is
interested in a number of more or less fixed forms of verbalisation,
and in trying to understand the impact these have on users and
hearers. In the present paper he attempts to show that proverbs
can be considered as a universal class of verbal forms which
operate with a homology between the semantic and syntactic struc-
tures, and gain their power from this. In arguing in this way,
Milner is also concerned with problems connected with riddles,
jokes, and puns and the overall problem of human perceptions of
fit or contact between systems, patterns or structures at different
levels, or in different areas of experience. As such the paper
must be read in conjunction with recent work by Leach, Douglas
and others. His method of giving (+) or (-) values to the con-

tent of proverbs is more debatable and one which reflects, as it were, his own intuition about intuition (it should be read in conjunction with his earlier essay on intuition in 'Birds, Twins and the Double Helix').

It is clear that this question of intuition is becoming an area of some importance in our studies. British and French anthropologists have spent a great deal of energy in charting in crude form some of the rules by which people build up or organise their universes, and the linguistic aspect of this is touched on in various places in A.S.A. 10. Some anthropologists have also begun to show how, in particular circumstances, certain basic categories or divisions must be protected against blurring or confusion. But the pictures they have so far produced seem largely one dimensional and static: at bottom there is always the premiss of a static or self-regulating universe in which movement or alteration is unlikely or impossible. What now seems to be happening is that increasing attention is being paid to how actors themselves are able (intuitively) to recognise and jump from one area or one level of the structure or pattern to another, and how they may be simultaneously aware of different patterns or systems within their own culture and manipulate these for their own ends. While Hymes, Crystal, Pride and others are beginning to attack this from the contextual end; Milner and others are attempting to clarify it by investigating the semantic and syntactic structures of common types of verbal formulations.

The whole question of the relationships between codes, structures and patterns within a single culture, or between cultures, is one which it is vital for us to investigate: the days of folding a paper down the middle, writing 'left' and 'right' on either side of the crease and then filling in the rest ... female, male, bad, good, wet, dry, etc., are now over. The grounds for the understanding of the ways people are able to recognise patterns and structures which are not fully manifest is becoming easier to investigate, now that we have realised that a simple set of such complementary oppositions may often be too basic, or too one-dimensional, to apply in circumstances where actors themselves may be manipulating and rearranging the systems. In this respect a large number of recent essays on actor-initiated transformations begin to come together: Tambiah on magic, Douglas on jokes, Hamnet on riddles, and so on. Milner's work on proverbs has begun to demonstrate how these serve to stress clear relationships by posing them in terms of the activities or characteristics of well-known creatures, objects or specific human roles. The relations thus posed are extremely simple, and therefore widely applicable. The head/tail structure allows situations to be formulated or reformulated by posing homologies between existing situations and one part of the proverb, with the implication that the rest of the proverbial relationship will follow and thus serve to formulate or clarify that part of the situation which has yet to occur. In some societies proverb may be tacked to proverb until an elaborate abstract structure has been created, and a situation fully explored on the non-real level and then, when agreement has been reached, the real situation re-ordered.

If proverbs as one type of verbal formulation can be seen as providing batteries of "portable paradigms" in this way, perhaps it may be possible to see riddles as one way people play with un-

important parallel or homologous relationships in the cosmos which each society builds for itself: they are temporary tinkerings with categories which leave the greater structure untouched. Jokes, similarly, come within the same broad framework for they also point out links which are normally just beneath the general level of normal perception and operation. As Koestler long ago pointed out in The Sleepwalkers, jokes are like 'scientific' discovery, for they posit and imply new orderings of relations; but the joke remains a joke rather than a discovery, because these new patterns will not hold right across the board -- no more than a single spark jumping a gap between two charged bodies is the same thing as a continuous current that will weld them together into a new structure.

While discussing the hesitant beginnings of such studies of transformations between patterns, or from level to level, it is also worth stressing the appalling past neglect of technological processes by British social anthropologists. If we are embarking on such a study of patterns and codes it would seem sensible to start at the low level where actual physical transformations take place (the purpose of technological operations) or which native actors recognise as being rule governed transformations. Technological processes centre around physical transformations which are largely unidirectional. Leach and Lévi-Strauss have already shown that the results of these transformations, the items involved or the process used may be built into the system at a different level yet the simple problems of how these physical transformations are explained, categorised, and divided in native systems still await detailed and adequate explanation.

Equally we might pay more attention to material substances which serve to carry out various transformations and translations. One very basic aspect of money stuffs, for example, is that they exist to make things, which are recognised as being disparate, equivalent (and therefore exchangeable) in terms of a common substance. By virtue of the addition of other symbolic systems: number, weight, size, and so on, money gains the increasing power of subsuming or abstracting from other categories. Freud recognised the prevalence of money/excrement equivalences, and Douglas has suggested that excrement not only cuts across boundaries in the human body but, like money, it has the characteristic of reducing the disparate to a common matter. The widespread equivalence of water/money as solvents of things or categories also suggests further areas of investigation.

There is thus some slight interest developing in the various problems associated with the actors' comprehension of 'fit' between various patterns, and how these are manipulated and overcome. This in turn relates to basic questions about the usefulness of all models and why some should be more attractive than others. Certain areas of the relationship between linguistics and anthropology may prove fruitful in developing investigations in this area and the papers of Humphreys, Ardener and Milner are likely to be most useful.

But beyond this lies the far more basic question which continues to trouble anthropology and of which A.S.A. 10 is merely a symptom: the question of whether there still is or

should be a discipline identifiable as social anthropology. A great deal of the energy and worry devoted to this question is misplaced. The question of whether we have a discipline of our own, however defined and constituted, is one which may be relevant to the politics of grant-grabbing and administrative convenience, but has nothing to do with intellectual achievement. We are interested, or we should be, in everything which pertains to the life of man in society: anything, any method, any theory which throws light on this should therefore be of interest to us. Even the usual claim that it is useful to cut off a small area of the total field in order to plough it properly no longer seems defensible: the isolation charted by Hension merely makes our past efforts laughable.

Yet we seem also to be running a further, connected risk at the moment: that of taking two steps backward in order to take one step forward safely and surely. Conferences and debates on past errors and current trends may be useful in some circumstances, but in the final count a research subject can only exist by intelligent people getting on with original research. If our understanding of society is to increase we should cease to sit around bemoaning the fact that anthropology no longer looks like it did a generation ago; nor should we spend our time simply untangling old muddles. Our error in the past was to mistake the predilections and intellectual tendencies of a few established academics for a discipline, and to think that ideas could be tied down to some sort of isolated sphere. Techniques may develop among particular academic groups, but what they are used for is not to be confined in any way. In the past much of British Social Anthropology has been distinguished by a combination of poor scholarship and intellectual narrowness. We now need a new intellectual community. What the members of that community call themselves does not matter: we are after understanding, not labels.

Malcolm McLeod

Book Reviews

Kant as Philosophical Anthropologist.   F.P. van de Pitte.
The Hague: Nijhoff 1971.   £2.40.

It is possible to think of two very different styles of
anthropology.   Kant is one of the more important fore-runners
of a tradition which is well represented on the Continent today.
Such 'rationalists' do not deride the possibility of synthetical
a priori judgements., Their 'philosophical anthropology' is
metaphysical in that judgements of this type perform a crucial
role in the construction of human nature.   Our social anthro-
pology, on the other hand, rejects metaphysics in favour of
synthetical a posteriori judgements.   This raises the question,
'why should we bother to read Kant and his successors'?   Don't
we belong to an empirical tradition which denies that the applica-
tion of pure reason can add to our substantive knowledge of man?

Van de Pitte is a philosopher interested in aspects of Kant's
thought which are not immediately relevant to even the most broad-
minded social anthropologist.   Nevertheless, his short work is
peculiarily suggestive if it is read as an exegesis of the Kantian
solution to the issue of how metaphysically derived insights bear
on empirical anthropology.   Kant belongs to both the traditions
we have mentioned.   Van de Pitte argues that even though Kant's
Anthropologie takes an empirical guise, it could not be adequately
formulated until the a priori structures of human experience had
been presented in the Critiques.

Rationalistically derived presuppositions generate the reality
of human nature to such a degree that strict empirical analysis must
necessarily remain at a most uninformative 'cataloguing' level.
Kant, it is true, supposed that moral philosophy 'cannot subsist
without ... at least some study of man', but the 'practical anthro-
pology' which can be said to ensue from such study took on a
secondary role: Kant largely excluded the evidence of experience
from his philosophical anthropology.   He even reminds us of J.S.
Mill when he claims that the findings of history must be evaluated
against the findings of an a priori sector if man is to be estab-
lished in his concrete entirety.   For Kant, anthropology as
philosophy took precedence over anthropology as the empirical
branch of philosophy.   The individual in his concrete entirety is
subordinated, in the sense that the particulars of human existence
are relatively meaningless even when they are interpreted in terms
of the great fundamental principles of the human mind.

We do not suggest for one moment that this viewpoint should
necessarily disturb our traditional empiricism.   Kant established
a set of distinctions which have since been extensively adjusted
and re-evaluated; metaphysics is today a dirty word, so what
brief has philosophical anthropology?   Nevertheless, we are
currently witnessing the inadequacies of a too strict empiricism.
Look at it this way: in the run of the history of anthropology,
twentieth-century British studies must be regarded as something
of an abberration as a result of the certain interpretations of
Durkheim which have directed our interest towards an autonomous
and institutionalised 'social'.   In other words, to the limited
extent that we have spoken of the nature of man we have almost
always seized upon what might be called the 'social expression'

solution. Recently, the procedure of treating social phenomena as a series of clues to human nature has become more to the fore. Now if some of us are claiming that the traditional scope of anthropology as the study of human nature should be restored, the inevitable corollary of this shift in emphasis must be a critical examination of the adequacies of the 'social expression' solution. What then are we to make of the philosophical anthropologists who already occupy this zone? We all realise that pure empiricism is an impossibility: whether or not our a priori assumptions are of the same ontological standing as Kant's, we cannot proceed without something of the sort. It follows that if we desire to take a broader view of human nature we must ascertain the extent to which a priori formulations intrude on the empirical enterprise. Can we indeed distinguish between a priori's, in the sense of initial assumptions or necessary conditions, and the more fully-fledged Kantian view of the synthetical a priori? For if we decide that our new interest in human nature is in some sense associated with our realisation of the inadequacies of empiricism and the 'social expression' procedure, then is not the way paved for a degree of metaphysics?

At the very least, Van de Pitte's presentation of Kant is a welcome thorn in our flesh. Assuming an interest in human nature, we can either accept Kant's position and put philosophy first on the grounds that there is some sort of connexion between the study of man and metaphysics, reject this on empiricist grounds, reformulate the whole issue, or maintain our present indifference by ignoring possible alternatives in the investigation of human nature. It is a moot point whether there is something to be gained by selecting Kant's theoretical basis as a programme for our reality, or whether social anthropologists should establish a different perspective on human nature, but whatever the case it will be for the empiricist to reject Kant's relatively negative assessment concerning the role of 'factual' anthropology. The great divide, between rationalism and empiricism (the a priori and the a posteriori) is still with us; van de Pitte's work should be read because it presents one corner-stone of a house which has not been properly designed. The walls do not meet, the foundations are ajar, because we do not as yet have an adequate plan to inter-relate the various disciplines which attend to the most important phenomenon of all, namely man himself.

Paul Heelas

Zande Themes. Essays to Sir Edward Evans-Pritchard, edited
by A. Singer & B.V. Street. £2.75 net. Oxford, Basil Blackwell.

The essays in this collection are presented to Sir Edward
Evans-Pritchard as a tribute to "the value his last generation
of students, however diverse their interests, continue to place
on his studies" (eds).

The eight essays usefully show some of the range of approaches
that exist in anthropology today. The article by Krapf-Askari is
a comparison of the sociological function of warfare in two central
African societies and goes further than description by relating the
differences in warfare to differences in marriage practices and
principles in gift exchange. However, it is difficult not to
criticize the simplistic definition of the two societies for com-
parison in terms of isomorphic elements: geographical location,
linguistic similarity, culture (not defined), and their political
systems (only "broadly speaking similar"). Bovin, in her article
on Ethno-terms for Ethno-Groups, moves to an analysis which works
rather through native categories and their meaning in order to
establish an analytical tool which might be useful for inter-ethnic
relationships, and tries to draw out its properties for the method
to be universally applicable. It is a pity that she does not take
the article one step further to show in what kind of situations
and at what levels this type of analysis would be logically appro-
priate. Ethno-terms alone (or combined with kinship terms as she
suggests) cannot solve the complex problem of the relationship
between language and the many categories through which the world
is experienced by different groups.

Singer's article "Ethnography and Ecosystem" applies an
admirable approach yet omits some fundamental questions. He aims
to relate the terms and models of the biological ecosystem to a
group of homesteads in Zandeland. But this exercise rests on un-
investigated procedural assumptions. For example, he ignores the
fact that in the biological ecosystem there are no intrinsic
boundaries. It would have been interesting in such a study to
have explained how the Zande distinguish themselves from their
environment, perhaps in terms of classificatory beliefs. Street's
approach is to establish a cross-cultural universal theme based
on an analysis of the trickster stories collected by Evans-Pritchard
with the Winnebago trickster cycle collected by Radin. This article
picks up some of the lightheartedness of the joker but seriously
introduces the idea that such stories are a reflection and a kind
of explanation of the rules and boundaries of society. It is
difficult, however, not to lose one's way in the meanderings of
the trickster. Douglas, in Purity and Danger, to which Street
finally makes due references, uses the trickster "differentiation"
as an indication of the primitive mentality. It is difficult to
see, therefore, why Street, who uses the same idea of differentia-
tion and the order/chaos boundary to propose a universal theme,
makes no reference to the relativistic primitive/civilised problem.
What bedevils these articles is a lack of punch: an inability to
impress their points on the reader.

The most interesting articles are placed at the end of the
book. One hopes that the reader will be sufficiently stimulated
by the introduction to persue his reading to the last articles,
and especially those by Singleton and Barden. Their approach is

to argue for and to work with a philosophical standpoint. The Zande ethnographic material is carefully used as a source for analysis and for illustration in philosophical discussion. Barden makes an interesting distinction between theory and action, between an analysis in terms of content and one in terms of performance, while Singleton draws a distinction between 'commonsense' and science, comparing it to that between faith and theology.

The value that all the contributers places on Evans-Pritchard's work is evident in the detail and general integrity of their studies. The editors have, however, set themselves a difficult task in drawing together essays around a central theme from people with such varied approaches. Their problem is reflected in the confusion between the theme stated in the title (Zande Themes) and that in the introduction, namely the furthering of contributions to the dialogue concerning the criteria necessary for an understanding of social life in order to try and provide a more rigorous philosophical basis for the social sciences. A lofty and laudable aim! If the essays had adhered to the latter - or both - themes, they would perhaps have had a more homogeneous appeal and satisfying entirety. As it is, the book is worth reading for the amount of Zande material it brings together, for the diligence which all the articles display and for the stimulation of a few. This very variety is, as the editors remind us, in itself a tribute to the wide range of topics in which the ideas of Evans-Pritchard have been influential.

Charlotte Hardman