LORE AND LANGUAGE

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The Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language

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The Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language, (formerly The Survey of Language and Folklore, founded in the Department of English Language at the University of Sheffield in 1964), is a comprehensive ongoing research project which aims to collect material on all aspects of language and cultural tradition throughout the British Isles. The material gathered by the Centre in the form of tape-recordings, written reports, questionnaires, manuscripts, documents, books and printed sources, photographs, films, video recordings, drawings and items of material culture, is deposited in the Centre's Archives at the University of Sheffield, providing a basic resource for reference and research. The nucleus of a reference library has been assembled in the Archives, which also house a number of important original monographs and dissertations on various aspects of language and cultural tradition. A substantial body of data on language and communication is now on file, including detailed information on regional and social dialects, slang and colloquialism, blason populaire, occupational vocabulary, proverbs and sayings. A comprehensive retrieval classification is being prepared to facilitate access to material in the Archives, and the first section of this classification, covering the whole field of communication, is now completed.

In association with colleges of education, schools and other interested groups and individuals in many parts of the British Isles, the Centre sponsors and directs numerous projects in the general field of children's language and folklore. In addition, it is conducting a systematic investigation of traditional verbal social controls, concentrating attention on the verbal constraints used by adults in controlling the behaviour of children.

Other sections of the Archives include information on calendar and social customs and the rites of passage and on various aspects of belief, traditional health systems, and the lore of cosmic phenomena, plants and animals. Local and aetiological legends, anecdotes and jokes are also well represented.

Material is being assembled for a wide range of projects in the field of traditional drama, with special reference to geographical distribution and textual variation, context of performance and the influence of chapbook texts. A considerable amount of fieldwork has been carried out and has revealed a number of previously unrecorded texts and many details of performance. The Archives also include representative material on folk music and dance.

In the field of folklife, the Centre is conducting a nationwide study of the traditional lore and language of food. It is also assembling a collection of English costume. The substantial material culture collection administered by the Archives includes a wide variety of individual items representative of both indoor and outdoor traditional occupations, pastimes, arts and crafts. The collection includes a considerable amount of urban industrial material, in addition to that from rural areas. Special collections include workshop displays of basketmaking, knifegrinding, silversmithing and filecutting, in addition to handicrafts, furniture and domestic equipment. Many of these displays are available for hire.

The Centre also contributes to both the postgraduate and undergraduate programmes in the Department of English Language at the University of Sheffield. The Department offers an undergraduate optional course in folklore, and postgraduate students may read for the degrees of MA in English Cultural Tradition and Language (by examination), and MA and PhD in language and/folklore (by dissertation). The Centre is also actively involved in the MA course in African Studies offered by the Department of English Literature, and the University Certificate in English Cultural Tradition.

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The Reindeer Antlers of the Abbots Bromley Horn Dance: A re-examination

Theresa Buckland

The reindeer *Rangifer Farandus (L)* has been extinct in Britain since the end of the Pleistocene[1] era until recent introductions made in this century. It is then something of an enigma that six reindeer heads have been carried in the village of Abbots Bromley, Staffordshire, as part of an annual dance ritual continually, since, it would seem, the 1840s.[2] The ritual, performed every Wakes Monday, (the first Monday after the first Sunday after September 4th), comprises six horn bearers, Fool, Maid Marian, Hobby horse, boy with a bow and arrow and two musicians. They commence at about eight o'clock in the morning, after collecting most of the properties from the Hurst Chapel of the parish church, dance on a traditional route via farms and houses to the nearby Blithfield Hall, and return to the village, usually finishing at about half past eight in the evening.

The first known written reference occurs in Dr Robert Plot's *The Natural History of Staffordshire* published in 1686:

> At *Abbots*, or now rather *Pagets Bromley*, they had also within memory, a sort of sport, which they celebrated at *Christmas* (on *New-year*, and *Twelft-day*) call'd the *Hobby-horse dance*, from a person that carryed the image of a *horse* between his leggs, ... with this *Man* danced 6 others, carrying on their shoulders as many *Rain deers heads*.[3]

Sir Simon Degge (1612-1704), who was born at Strangshall, Uttoxeter,[4] added to his own copy of Plot that he had himself often seen the dance performed before the Civil War.[5] It is not certain whether Plot himself visited Abbots Bromley to see the horns. Richard Wilkes (1691-1760)[6] wrote of

> the Town Hall in w^{ch} are 6 Elks Heads, (whereof some are a yard betwixt the Tips of the Horns & weigh ½ a hundred) wth w^{ch} a Bow and Arrow; . . .
> The L. Paget the Embass^{dr} brought these Horns from Turkey.[7]

Problems are raised by this account. It is certainly not possible to place any trust in Wilkes's ability to distinguish between species of the deer family since he was not a student of natural history.[8] There is also evidence from the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries that the word "elk" was used to describe animals other than the species *Alces malchis*.[9] Then it is hardly conceivable that the dancers performed with horns of such a weight. Furthermore, if Lord Paget did present a set of horns to the village, they must postdate those seen by Degge as Paget was in Turkey from 1693 to 1703.[10] Wilkes does not indicate that he witnessed the custom (although his wife was from Abbots Bromley) and it is likely that he either confused two sets of horns present in the village or overestimated the weight of the horns which Degge saw in use. The problem cannot be satisfactorily solved. Rice suggested that the horns lost at Burton on Trent in the tale told by Grandfather Bentley (1789-1882), leader of the dancers, were the elk heads mentioned by Wilkes.[11] This remains pure speculation. In the version of the tale recorded by Rice from Bentley's granddaughter-in-law,[12] however, it would appear that the set of horns lost was later recovered. If any weight can be brought to bear on versions of the tale collected in 1975[13] (in a village in which there are several copies of Rice), it would seem that in three recountings of the tale the horns were rescued. Two versions give the horns as being thrown into the River Trent.

Written references made after Wilkes until the mid nineteenth century either quote Plot verbatim or paraphrase his account with some surprising results:

> ten or twelve of the dancers carried on their shoulders deers' heads each carrying six reindeers's[14] heads on his shoulder[15]

It was not until the 1890s when Sir John Cox visited Abbots Bromley that the horns were examined and pronounced to be those of reindeer.[16] This was corroborated by the Deer Group of the Mammal Society for the British Isles.[17]

According to Wilkes, the Horn Dance's properties were kept in the Town Hall, but Harwood is the first to mention the horns being hung in the church.[18] Garner states that they were housed in the church tower[19] which from other written references and oral tradition we know to be true of the later nineteenth century. The sexton remembered that in his youth the horns hung in the third storey of the church tower and were let down by ropes (early 1900s).[20] Holes, clips and pins in the metal-

work on the horns are evidence of the earlier method of suspension. The horns now hang on brackets in the Hurst Chapel.

The weights and measurements of the horns were published in 1932 by the local vicar, the Reverend A R Ladell, in his small pamphlet on the Horn Dance.[21] The antlers were numbered by Ladell but do not correspond to the order in which they are carried during the dance. A further examination was carried out in 1976 by Dr P C Buckland and myself.

WHITES	Weight	Greatest span
No. 1	25¼ lbs.	101 cm.
2	19 lbs.	82 cm.
3	16½ lbs.	77 cm.
BROWNS		
No. 1	23¼ lbs.	88 cm.
2	20 lbs.	99 cm.
3	16¼ lbs.	92 cm.

The weight of No. 1 (white), carried by the leader, has been grossly exaggerated in Alford's article on the Horn Dance.[22] The antlers are set into wooden heads, although it is impossible to tell without an X-ray whether they are still joined at the base of the pedicle. They are all from castrate animals (i.e. from a domesticated herd) and have not been cast. The woodwork has been estimated as sixteenth century and each head has a definite individual quality. No. 1 (brown) is a particularly good skeumorph of a head of *Rangifer Farandus (L)*, carved after the lines of an original skeleton. It is impossible to see how much of the skull remains beneath the wood, but it is feasible that the complete head and antlers were imported to Abbots Bromley. The lower mandibles of other heads also indicate this possibility. Each head is set on a wooden stick generally about 40 cm. in length and all are strengthened by a transverse iron bar across the broadest expanse, a feature which can be seen on a photograph of 1893.[23] Further metalwork across the heads, judging from a few handmade nails amongst the modern varieties, appears to be part of repairs undertaken in the past. Parts of the metalwork are handwrought. Each head is painted brown, the mouth, nostrils and eyes drawn in red with a black dot for the eyes. In the seventeenth century, the arms of the main families of the town, the Welles, Pagets and Bagots were depicted on the Palms (i.e. the flat expanded part of the horns from which the finger-like points

project) of them.[24] No trace of this remains today. The colours of the horns have altered over the years, for the account in Plot's *Natural History of Staffordshire* declares three to be red and three white. In the nineteenth century, three were white whilst the others were blue[25] and remained as such until at least 1952.[26] The horns have since been repainted so that today three are brown and three off-white. However, the villagers consider that the horns have been wrongly painted and so still refer to the brown horns as "the blues". In addition to their basic colours, the white horns are now (1976) further ornamented by the ends being painted brown with one thin white band beneath the gold tips. The brown horns have gold edges with a narrow red band beneath. All repainting and renovation has until very recently been carried out by village craftsmen. In January 1976, a close examination of the horns revealed, as Ladell had stated in his pamphlet, traces of previous coats of paint. Thus on No. 1 (brown) it was possible to distinguish under a hand lens, a series of coats of paint from the revealed bare antler upwards, red, a dark vitreous colour, red, dark blue, light blue and the top dark brown. This suggests at least six repaintings and confirms information on the colours from both written and oral evidence. It also indicates that at least one head has not retained membership of its original colour group over the years.

In 1976, the small white horn No. 2 was in dire need of renovation since the iron sleeve patched over the broken right antler was inadequate to protect it from further damage. The conservator of Doncaster Museum and Art Gallery, Sherif Omar, offered to perform a more durable repair, but difficulties arose due to the traditional ban on the horns leaving the parish. When the team perform at folk festivals outside the village, they use a set of deer horns acquired in the 1950s, which for them do not possess the charisma of the old horns, but which they believe to be reindeer heads nonetheless. The ban is a curious stipulation since the reindeer horns are carried to the neighbouring parish of Blithfield every Wakes Monday and in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the team went to villages some miles away. An agreement was reached between myself, the Reverend A G Sadler and Douglas Fowell, present leader of the team, to perform the repair within a week. In renovation work subsequently undertaken at Doncaster Museum, it was discovered that the horn at some earlier date had been painted red. The opportunity was taken to extract splinters of bone from the break in the right antler, taking care to remove all traces of paint in order to submit a sample for radiocarbon-dating. The horn was strengthened with fibre glass. Dr G R Coope

kindly arranged for the radiocarbon analysis to be carried out in the Department of Geological Sciences, University of Birmingham. Two radiocarbon assays were run on the sample (Birm.745) and the results were 930± 100 years (before present) and 840± 130 years B.P. This gave a mean date A.D. 1065± 80 years. A control sample is currently being analysed from a nineteenth century reindeer antler which could put the date of the Abbots Bromley horn slightly earlier. It is hoped to carry out urgently required renovation work on the antlers and subsequent radiocarbon dating.

The idea of an importation was put forward by Masefield[27] who recognised the fact that reindeer had been extinct in Britain since before the Norman Conquest. He was not aware of exactly how many years before. Rice suggested the idea of a Nordic importation which the eleventh century date for horn No. 2 (white) supports since this was a period of maximum contact between England and Scandinavia. If further samples could be obtained from the Abbots Bromley antlers, trace elements might be factioned out in order to establish their country of origin, and the dates of the remaining five heads could be determined. Scandinavia appears the likeliest home for the antlers, although why they should be taken to a village which does not appear to have been of any great political or economic significance is a mystery. Although Staffordshire, from present evidence, was not densely settled by the Danes, Abbots Bromley was it seems, under Danish Lordship from c.878 — 917 A.D.[28] Parallels with the dance rituals of the Lapp Shaman exist;[29] but only to the extent that both rituals employ reindeer antlers. It is ludicrous to consider that the ritual of Abbots Bromley survives from the last Ice Age as the hunting rite of a people dependent upon reindeer for their existence. The dance possesses no characteristics of a deer hunt, although inaccurate past accounts have led to this view, since refuted by Alford.[30] Other parallels have been drawn with the buffalo dance of North American tribes[31] and with the deer dance of the Navajos.[32] These interpretations would agree with Kennedy[33] that

> such a relic of pre-history can only be understood
> and interpreted by implication and by reference
> to the folk ritual and barbaric rites of other peoples.

Comparison with the rites of pastoral peoples automatically supposes a like origin from a pre-agricultural community in Abbots Bromley. It is known that the settlements in the area by at latest the tenth century were agricultural.[34] Strömbäck considers the reindeer dances of Iceland

to be a later development of the folk and courtly revels of Europe, citing Abbots Bromley as an example of the latter.[35] It is a close comparison since reindeer in Iceland are an eighteenth century introduction. The question here, as in the case of Abbots Bromley, is whether or not the dancers previously used the heads of deer and later substituted the reindeer horns which are more unusual in appearance. Parallels between the Abbots Bromley Horn Dance and the "sorcerer" of Trois Frères in Ariège, France, from the Paleolithic period have frequently been made. Similarities equally exist with the horns worn by Bronze Age people in Scandinavian illustrations[36] and the red deer antler frontlets discovered at Star Carr, Yorkshire, from a Mesolithic site.[37] Taking symbols from their geographical and temporal contexts cannot, however, explain the function of the reindeer heads of Abbots Bromley. A more feasible parallel is the supposed pageant of victory after a hunt which occurs in Act IV, scene II of Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (1593):

> What shall he have that killed the deer?
> His leather skin and horns to wear.

The hunting-scene in Munday's *Death of Robert Earl of Huntingdon* (1598) has the entrance of

> Frier Tuck carrying a stags head dauncing

What form this "dauncing" took is not known.

Past writers on the Abbots Bromley Horn Dance have failed to question the villagers on their understanding of the ritual. Today with the custom of bringing in people from all over the world to witness it, one frequently receives answers propagated by the media. It remains, however, interesting to discover which interpretations the people of Abbots Bromley have selected. It is by some, naturally enough, considered to be a pagan survival of a hunting rite, since the village was once surrounded by Needwood Forest. Red deer were kept on the Bagot estate until quite recently, but a distinction is seldom made by the villagers between red deer and reindeer. Other villagers regard the ritual as a bringer of luck and fertility and would be disturbed if the dancers failed to visit them.

Despite parallels and the questioning of twentieth century participants, the provenance and early function of the reindeer horns remain an enigma. The dating of the horn obviously does not determine if it was in use for ritualistic purposes from the eleventh century onwards, nor indeed does it establish the date of its arrival in Abbots Bromley. The problem of comprehending how and why an eleventh century reindeer head found its way to stay in Abbots Bromley remains.

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The Vocabulary of Statistics

A Bendell and S Bendell

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this article is to describe something of the technical language used by statisticians. The term "statistics" itself has two meanings: the first refers to numerical facts such as statistical data, and the second refers to the theory and methods involved in collecting, analysing, and using such numerical facts. The science of statistics thus involves the collection, analysis and interpretation of quantitative data which may originate in any of the social, economic, medical, or scientific aspects of life, to mention but a few.

Today the applications with which statisticians as a group concern themselves are very diverse, covering fields such as those just mentioned as well as many more. The result is that statisticians make up a mixed bunch of specialists each equipped with his own specialist skills for solving particular problems in particular application areas. Some are social, economic or biological statisticians, some are actuaries, some work in the Civil Service, and others in industry. Of course, a few are theoretical statisticians and/or teach. Common to all statistical work is an understanding of statistical principles.

But what was it that gave rise to statistics? The first recorded usage of the term "statistics" dates from 1787, and by 1825 the compilers of statistical information were being called "statisticians". But the interest in statistical phenomena had of course existed for a much longer time.

> "The elementary enumeration principles of statistics are by no means new. Their origins are to be found in the very beginning of mathematics. The basic concept is one of measurement and as soon as man began to count his cattle and to cut notches in trees to represent them numerically, so was born the science of statistics."
>
> *W. J. Reichmann, Use and Abuse of Statistics*

The element of chance and the desire to predict the future are equally ancient phenomena. As society developed, life expectancy, birth rates and other numerical information of a social nature became increasingly important to those who were to govern. It is significant that it was in the Victorian era that the field gained an increased number of advocates.

The first organisation to bring together those with an interest in the subject was the Manchester Statistical Society founded in 1833 which the following year was followed by the Royal Statistical Society[1] , which during its first year gathered nearly 400 members. The main object of the RSS was "the collection of facts illustrative of the condition of society and the discussion of Social and Political Economy, totally excluding party politics"[2]. At the time these "facts" were subdivided into four main categories[3]. Gradually the field grew. By 1837 the first index of statistical literature was compiled; in 1839 the Society granted its first direct service to the Government by organising the government census of the population for 1840-1. The London School of Economics and Political Science commenced teaching in 1895 with statistics prominent in its curriculum. But in a sense, it was not until 1948 that statistics completely gained recognition as a profession in its own right when the Institute of Statisticians[4] was founded. This was and is a professional association as opposed to the academic RSS. Today the RSS has approximately 4000 members and the Institute 1300 of which most are also members of the RSS. The RSS today concerns itself with the same objectives as at its foundation. Only the field has naturally expanded since then, its growth has been phenomenal, and the Society now incorporates in its work other important aspects of statistics such as the development of statistical theory and methodology, the application of statistical methods and the encouragement of the use of such methods in industry, agriculture and in central and local government.

The statistics language grew with the breadth and depth of the field as one might expect to be the case with all technical languages. Certain words may start their existence as members of a specialised vocabulary by being no more than short-hand notation for certain concepts. Instead of indulging in lengthy explanations when a particular concept crops up, the particular word is used as an abbreviation. Gradually, its usage may stabilise either by word of mouth or by being employed repeatedly in publications.

However, it must not be overlooked that statistics is a numerical subject and as such an important aspect of its mode of expression is the use of mathematical symbols. A certain operation or concept is covered by a term but sometimes, for all practical purposes, this term can only be defined exactly or concisely by symbols (e.g. "information" in the theory of estimation) and thus escapes much of its potential for linguistic investigation. Most frequently, however, the term can be

defined verbally. When a term is taken from the standard language, the transfer to the field of statistics usually narrows its meaning quite considerably. It must then refer unambiguously to a specific concept or it will not fulfil its mission. At times the same term is also used by a neighbouring field but for a slightly different concept. It is in such cases of overlap that problems of communication among professionals occur.

It is characteristic for the sciences in their language to aim at the greatest possible accuracy of definitions. The standard language on the other hand rests on ambiguities and connotations in order to obtain a maximum of communicative richness and flexibility in its conveyance of thought. The sciences sacrifice this richness for a maximum of clarity. The other side to the statistical language, the mathematical symbolism, is more concise still. Symbols have one and only one meaning and one usually never doubts what this is. The rules of algebra are more rigid and defined than the rules of non-mathematical language. The verbal statistical language is thus situated in the middle of these two extremes using ordinary words with a minimum of ambiguities and connotations, but less concisely than the use of symbols. In statistics, as in other numerical disciplines, concisely used words and mathematical symbols both serve to define concepts.

The borrowing of terms from neighbouring fields has usually a historical explanation. For instance, the word "plot" is an agricultural word (i.e. a piece of land), but since some of the statistical methods originally employed in agriculture and involving plots, were later to be applied elsewhere (especially in Analysis of Variance techniques), the word became adopted by statisticians to refer to a basic unit of experimental material; likewise with other fields like mathematics, biology, medicine and actuarial science. Today the same process is going on. Involvement in the armament and aerospace industries has introduced the word 'mission' into statistical vocabulary, and the increased usage of computer facilities by statisticians may account for say, ANOVAR (an acronym for Analysis of Variance).

When such transfers are employed by statisticians or other professionals, the original definitions usually change. Indeed, whenever one word occurs in two or more fields, its definition may vary. Thus "information" in communication theory covers a different concept in statistics. The confusions which may arise when two professionals from different fields get together and employ the same term with different concepts, are obvious. Louis Guttman[5] regards many of these

specialised statistical meanings which have arisen for historical reasons as "extraordinarily poor terminology". Mathematicians, he says, are accustomed to dealing properly with arbitrary and even misleading symbolization, since they are trained to focus directly on the concepts being denoted and which are otherwise well defined. This is not the case, he says, for non-mathematicians who are prone to react to verbal labels as having meanings and implications apart from and beyond the designated technical concepts. (He fails to point out that to some extent the same is true for all professionals, not just mathematicians. Nor does he note that, indeed, the opposite claim could be made; that statisticians and mathematicians are perhaps prone to assuming too specific a definition for a word.) The consequences, he concludes, are serious; some of the misunderstandings by non-mathematicians of statistical terminology having "demonstratably hindered progress in social science, often leading to useless expenditure of tens of thousands of research dollars, not to speak of waste of enormous amounts of time and scientific manpower".

Similar problems occur in communication between the professional statistician and layman. As already mentioned, many statistical words have their origin in the standard language but become much more restricted in their meaning when joining the statistical vocabulary. The statistician may often find it difficult to project his ideas across to the non-statistical world; but some of his difficulties are due to his technical language. The word "significant" would mean something different to a statistician than, say, a member of management in a big company. To the latter the results of quality control (i.e. statistical methods used to control the quality of mass-produced merchandise) may be "significant" in the sense of "noteworthy" or the opposite of "insignificant". To the statistician, if after having done a formal test on, say, the consistency of particular items, it turns out that the items vary so considerably that the probability that this variation is just due to chance is below a specified level, so that it is likely that the variation is caused by fundamental differences between the items, the result of this test would be called "significant".

Of course statistical jargon (where jargon is used in its usual sense[6]), as well as the technical language used by statisticians, can confuse the layman. Advertising, for example, is pervaded by pseudo-statistical magic. Phrases like "I've now 25% fewer fillings since I used Colmacs toothpaste", are common, and the layman wonders how this can be true when he knows that one toothpaste is seldom much better than

another. The advertisers do not have to tell lies. There are easier (and safer) ways to come up with such sensational propaganda. They equip themselves with statistical methods but in a statistically questionable way. (In this particular case they may rely on using an inadequate sample and awaiting the chance fluctuation which will give them the desired result. Perhaps this will be after 50 other samples, but eventually they will get one which shows 25% fewer fillings irrespective of what toothpaste they use. Alternatively the trick may be purely one of semantics.) The extended use (or misuse) of statistics has brought about a certain amount of scepticism among the public, which indeed is often justified. They are reluctant to accept truth in terms of statistical jargon and numbers which often require more than common sense to dissect. In a sense then, there is not just a difference of vocabulary between the statistician and the layman, but a rejection on the part of the layman of any concept expressed in terms of the statistician's vocabulary.

Despite the growing application of statistical methodology and the consequent growth in the technical vocabulary of statistics, this vocabulary has been largely ignored by investigators of technical languages[7]. The professional bodies too, have largely ignored the lexicography of their subject, unlike their equivalents in other professions who frequently publish updated lists of specialised terms in their journals[8]. However, the International Statistical Institute, realising the need for some linguistic documentation, did instigate the preparation of a statistical dictionary which was first published in 1957 under the editorship of M. G. Kendall and W. R. Buckland[9]. Other dictionaries of statistical terms exist too, but appear to be much less widely used[10].

STRUCTURE OF THE STATISTICAL VOCABULARY

Classification by Subject Origin

When Kendall and Buckland first compiled their Dictionary they did so by starting with a completely clear field. A major problem they came up against and which reflects the nature of the field and the question of the existence of a distinct statistical vocabulary, was the problem of defining what a statistical term is. They arrived at four categories of terms as stated in "The Projected Dictionary of Statistical Terms"[11]:

1) Statistical terms proper, e.g. "mean", "standard deviation", "regression".

2) Terms of semi-mathematical or mathematical character commonly used in statistics, e.g. "matrix", "linear equation".

3) Terms which represent concepts of statistical character used in other sciences, e.g. "index numbers", "national income", "I.Q.", "birthrate".

4) Terms originating in other sciences which have a special interest to statisticians, e.g. "convergence in probability", "relaxed oscillation".

This classification clearly emphasises the origins of statistical terminology in other fields. Many words used by statisticians are mathematical in origin, e.g. "parameter", "matrix", "regression". But other words originate in fields such as physics (e.g. "oscillation", "entropy"), engineering (e.g. "tolerance interval"), geology via sociology to statistics (e.g. "strata"), demography (e.g. "cohort", "hazard"), architecture (e.g. "ogive", "canonical"), botany/zoology (e.g. "cohort", "regression"), gambling (e.g. "bias", "Monte Carlo Methods"), and agriculture (e.g. "plot", "block", "field" in "experimental design").

Indeed, Dr. Kendall's categorisation raises the question of whether statistical terms exist at all since even some of the words he claims are "statistical terms proper" (such as "regression") turn out to have their origin somewhere else. However, there is still a large group left which constitutes terms of a specifically statistical character whose origin is in the statistical or standard language, or whose origin is in proper names. Some of the words which are not transferred from other subject areas and are not coined as proper names were presumably coined for immediate application to specifically statistical techniques, theories, etc. and must as such be regarded as statistical terms proper by concept as well as by formation.

Classification by Formation

However we define statistical terminology — i.e. whatever subset of Kendall & Buckland's four groups of terms we include — it appears that all the varied statistical terms can be classified into one of the five following categories:

a) Terms formed on the basis of proper names

b) Terms formed from classical roots

c) Special coinages

d) Acronyms

e) Terms with equivalents in the standard language

a) This group contains a large proportion of the "statistical terms proper". While it would seem only natural to call certain concepts, theories, methods and schools of thought after whoever invented them, the difficulties of determining the original inventor means that many such terms are in fact misnamed. For example, the Pascal Distribution is defined by Kendall & Buckland as "an unnecessary alternative name for the Negative Binomial distribution, presumably because some untraced individual thought that Pascal had discovered it". Apparently Kendall & Buckland, however, themselves make such mistakes, e.g. the Weibull distribution. They say about this distribution that it was "proposed by Weibull (1939) to describe data arising from life and fatigue tests. It was later derived as a model for this kind of data as the third asymptotic distribution of extreme values." Nancy Mann[12] points out, however, that the so-called Weibull distribution was in fact derived by Fisher and Tippett in 1928. Another interesting case is the "Cramer-Rao Inequality" which is attributed to a number of authors.

A further case of some interest is what is today usually referred to as the "Gauss-Markov Theorem". In Kendall's paper "The Projected Dictionary of Statistical Terms" (1954) he points out that the theorem is due to Gauss, and that Markov himself acknowledges Gauss' priority. However, at that time it was known as "Markoff's Theorem", though in response to general request they gave it as "Gauss-Markoff Theorem" in the first edition and cross-referenced "Gauss' Theorem" and "Markoff's Theorem". By the second edition, however, (1960) such cross referencing has disappeared, and was still absent in the third edition (1970). This presumably reflects the changes in usage, though it is not clear who was the first to adopt the "Gauss-Markov Theorem" title.

It is interesting to notice that even the spelling of Markoff is not fixed. From Kendall's 1954 paper through to the second edition of the Dictionary, Markoff is spelt "Markoff", whilst in the third edition the compilers turned to what seems to be, according to several textbooks, the current spelling of this name, i.e. "Markov". This tendency towards

anglicizing Slavonic names is also in evidence elsewhere in statistics. Between the third (1969) and fourth (1977) editions of Volume One of *The Advanced Theory of Statistics* by M G Kendall and A Stuart, "Tchebycheff" was painstakingly converted to "Chebychev" throughout the book (except on page 241)[13].

b) While the sciences in general cherish vocabulary formed from classical roots, this is not the case in statistics. Perhaps the lack of such words is connected to the fact that statistics is a new science. The old sciences such as mathematics and medicine expanded during the Renaissance period, long before the science of statistics was born, and in doing so adopted Latin and Greek names into their vocabulary. In later developments these sciences continued to coin new words based on the same classical patterns. Statistics is a discipline which deals with uncertainty, the concept of which was alien to the philosophy of determinism of the classical world, and does therefore not fit into this structure of word formation. Statistics may, however, still be described as a science in its own right dealing with new concepts which can only be described by new terms; hence the lack of classical words. This is not to say that Latin and Greek derivatives do not exist in statistics, but only in so far as equivalent words also exist in the standard language. One example is "statist-ics" itself with its Greek/Latin suffix -ikos/ -icus meaning "pertaining to". The prefixes bi-, multi-, uni-, and ortho- may also be candidates for this group e.g. bivariate, orthogonal.

c) New coinages which cannot be found in the standard language are rare in the statistical vocabulary. However, the suffix -ile from the standard language is used to coin e.g. "fractile" and its synonym "quantile" as well as "decile" and "percentiles".

d) There are few acronyms in statistical terminology, but CUSUM i.e. a chart of "cumulative sums" and ANOVAR i.e. "Analysis of Variance" are important and have both presumably been adopted from computer programming.

e) This group is the largest, only challenged by group (a), and offers the best scope for a linguistic survey as the forms are immediately accessible to non-statisticians and allow for comparison of the statistical and standard meanings. In the next section we will largely be dealing with such terms.

Classification by Subject Area

The above two methods of classification only point to a general structure of the terminology of statistics. They offer no well-defined criteria for data collection. The structuring of the field of statistics into "topics" does. By considering such subject groupings, we are more certain of covering at least superficially the whole of statistics. The following three subject areas may be regarded as a basic scaffolding for statistics:

a) Data and data collection.

b) Descriptive statistics dealing with methods of describing and summarizing a large mass of data.

c) Inference i.e. methods that enable generalizations to be drawn from the data itself.

Thus, in order to reflect actual usage the terms we give in the next section will include a number of terms from each of these areas.

Synonyms and Homonyms

Kendall and Buckland's Dictionary, as well as the statistical literature generally, emphasises the overlap, inconsistencies and indeed confusion that exists in statistical terminology. The reason for near synonymy such as e.g. universe/population, block-chart/histogram, nonparametric/distribution free may be due to historical development. Statistics has developed rapidly during the last 50 years. In the course of time authors may have invented new terms for old well-known phenomena for various reasons e.g. to clarify the concept. The new term may go into current usage and if so will exist side by side with the old one until one ousts the other. Also, there are cases where one term covers two or more concepts e.g. "bias" in the list below. This can lead to confusions where a term is brought into a sphere which conceptually is alien to it. Kendall and Buckland's Dictionary draws attention to some of these confusions but very possibly in vain, since there is evidence that its use is of a limited extent and form[14] . The survey reported in the last section of this paper had as an aim the investigation of the extent of these difficulties.

Negations

The negative prefix non- is used frequently in the statistical language as a negative indicator. For example, in the list of the next section appear the terms "non-sampling error" and "nonparametric". Unlike

the standard language which most frequently employs a number of prefixes like dis-, un-, in-, ir-, il-, etc. and uses non- only occasionally, the statistical language has a preference for non-: The situation is illustrated in Table 1. This shows the number of entries giving collocations of the prefixes dis-, un-, in-, ir-, and non- in the second and third editions of the Kendall and Buckland Dictionary, as well as the number of separate entries of these prefixes in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* collocating words beginning with a- (but excluding derivatives of such words). From this we see that non- is quite exceptional in its relative infrequency in the standard language, and its very high frequency relative to the other prefixes in the statistical vocabulary[15]. Indeed, while there is in fact only a total of 9 collocations of non- with *any* words (excluding derivatives) in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, there are 14 distinct entries in which non- appears in the third edition of the Kendall and Buckland Dictionary.

The reason for this extended use of non- in statistics may be partly historical. As techniques improve, concepts are negated or extended, e.g. "Noncentral Wishart Distribution". It is also connected to the tendency apparent in Kendall and Buckland's Dictionary to first define the simplest or exceptional case, and then define the generalization, e.g. "nonparametric", "nonorthogonal".

Colloquialisms

Colloquialisms are apparently relatively rare in statistical language; few journal articles, for example, contain any. Professor Finney in his presidential address to the Royal Statistical Society in 1973[16] does talk about the "uncleanness" of data and how data may be "dirty" when being collected casually, haphazardly, or spontaneously and thus needs to be "cleaned up". Other data, he says, may be "gappy" in the sense that "either a high proportion of the individual numerical values prescribed by the structure of the data are missing or the reasons for values being missing are such as to encourage biases". It is also probably true that accepted terms such as "jack-knifing techniques", and "Tukeys vacuum cleaner" began as colloquialisms. The widely accepted abbreviation for statistics itself, "stats", is indeed also a colloquialism. Another aim of the survey reported in the final section of this paper was to investigate the meaning of the relatively recently coined colloquialism, "data crunching".

Foreign Usage

Statistical terminology is affected by usage in foreign languages. Although English is the standard language and many terms are English, translations into English reveal varied usage especially of terms involving proper names. Perhaps these differences arise out of pride at the achievement of countrymen. For example, what in the U.K. is known as the "Normal distribution" is elsewhere in Europe called the "Laplace distribution", the "Gaussian distribution" or the "Laplace-Gaussian distribution". In fact, it was neither Laplace (who was French) nor Gauss (who was German) that invented this distribution, but a French Huguenot called Demoivre. The "Laplace distribution" is in English a different distribution, and the confusions that may arise in translation are obvious.

DATA

The following are examples of words in common usage among statisticians, appearing in dictionaries of statistical terms, books, journals[17], and in their speech. As far as it is helpful, information is provided about the words both from a semantic viewpoint and in terms of their statistical meaning, and where appropriate the origins of the terms are given.

Data Collection in Statistics

The basis for data collection is a finite or infinite group of individuals or items from which to collect data, called a *population*. The Kendall and Buckland Dictionary says that this term has replaced an older term "universe" which had its origin in logic — "universe of discourse" — but a Pelican book of 1973[18] still employs this term. The author is American and just possibly this reflects an instance of less clear American usage. The Kendall and Buckland Dictionary also maintains that "population" is practically synonymous with "aggregate".

When the population i.e. the group of interest has been decided on, a sub-group of the population is taken. This is called a *sample*.

The sample is usually taken based on a *sampling frame*. This should be the list defining the population from which we wish to sample. But often in practice, it will be the list of all electors in the U.K. (the electoral register) or another list defining only approximately the population from which we wish to sample. If data is collected from all members of a population, this is called a *census*. "Census" is a statistical term which is employed by the Government in a more specialized sense, namely the collection of data from all the householders in the U.K. It is

in this meaning that it is used in the standard language. "Census" in statistics, however, does not mean the enumeration of all householders only, but the enumeration of any "population" with respect to one or more characteristics.

The sample may be chosen at random i.e. a *random sample*. This means a sample that is taken in such a way that every individual or item in the population has an equal chance of being selected. Thus, "random" is not an adjective qualifying "sample", but an adverb qualifying the act or method of selection. In its simplest form it is this strict method that ensures an *unbiassed sample*. However, while in the standard language "random" means "haphazardly", "without principle" etc., "random" in statistics almost means the opposite i.e. (sampling) according to methods.

Samples are *biassed* if the process of selecting them incorporates systematic error. A sample which is random is not biassed. As above, "biassed" does not qualify "sample" but the method of sampling.

The sample chosen may not be a representative cross section of the population in spite of the fact that it is a random sample. If one wishes to investigate the smoking habits of adults in say, Sheffield, one may pick a sample which just happens to possess a larger proportion of smokers than in Sheffield overall, even though every adult in Sheffield was given a fair (and equal) chance of being chosen. This *sampling error* is to be distinguised from *non-sampling error* where the error relates to circumstances not related to the sample section itself but to things like interviewer effects, errors of observation and recording.

Cluster sampling involves "clusters" i.e. groups within any one of which the items are similar. The term is of course related to its meaning in the standard language of a tight bunch. (Grapes were previously associated with a cluster rather than a bunch.) The Supplement to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1972) does not record the statistical usage though the linguistic usage of this term does appear. "Cluster" seems to have influenced some statisticians' more colloquial use of ordinary language at least in statistical contexts[19].

The terms *cohort* and *longitudinal study* are both employed in statistics but are of demographic origin and are not listed in Kendall and Buckland's Dictionary. *Cohort* refers to a group of persons having a common statistical characteristic especially that of being born in the same year (or other period). "A cohort type of demographic analysis

would have been very valuable in such circumstances"[20]. It was first employed in that sense in 1947 according to the Supplement, but this is of course related to its ordinary meaning referring to people banded together or united for a common cause. Perhaps the term was originally taken over from botany/zoology where it refers to a certain kind of classification. The term *longitudinal study* refers to a study of a cohort over time and may originally have been adopted from geography and biology.

From the samples taken from populations the statistician ends up with a set of *data*. If the members of populations are similar, the populations are said to be *homogeneous*, and by extension samples may also be said to be "homogeneous". This term is used in statistics in its ordinary sense as opposite to *heterogeneous* which can also be used of sample data. These terms are also employed by the mathematicians about equal/unequal dimensions, and were already in use in 1695.

Data can also contain *outliers*, the meaning of which is close to the ordinary meaning of "an outlying portion or member of anything detached from the main mass, body or system to which it belongs" *(OED)*. In statistics the term is slightly closer defined as a number which in a given set of observations is so far separated in value from the remainder that it gives rise to the question whether it is not from a different population or whether the sampling technique is at fault. The first recorded usage in the standard language of this term dates from 1849, 15 years after the foundation of the RSS. It would be interesting to know whether it was the early members of the Society who adopted a recent coinage of the standard language or whether the statistical term had made its way into the standard language.

Discrete and *continuous* can be applied both to data and variables (defined below). *Discrete data* can be described as data which increases in "jumps" so that there are gaps between the values. For example, the number of children in a family can only be 0, 1, 2., and not 1.50, 1.75 etc. or any other fraction of a unit. Continuous data (or variables), however, can always have a value between any two given values. These terms are also mathematical terms although the *OED* only records "continuous" as such.

Experimental Design refers to the procedure of designing experiments in such a way that it is possible to separate out (easily) the effects of the various factors which influence the results. The methodology of subsequent separation is called *Analysis of Variance*. The meaning of

"variance" in this context to a limited extent equals that in the standard language. Kendall and Buckland give "Analysis of Variance" cross referenced to "Variance Analysis", although the usual form in textbooks etc. seems to be "Analysis of Variance". Perhaps the Dictionary is out of date. This term is sometimes abbreviated to ANOVAR which may have been due to the influence of computer programming. The employment of computers is essential within the field of statistics. The usual name for "Analysis of Variance" programs is ANOVAR and may have gone into the statistical language for the same reasons as apply to acronyms generally. The Kendall and Buckland Dictionary does not record ANOVAR or Experimental Design.

Realizations of *variables* are *observations.* Generally, a "variable" is any quantity which varies. Thus, if we, for example, stood by a certain set of traffic lights from say, 11.00 till 12.00 in the morning and observed how many cars passed during each green sequence, the number of cars would be different for each sequence. This number is called a "variable". If we cannot predict this number i.e. the number is due to chance, it is called a *random variable* or *variate.*

The concept of *frequency* appears in many statistical contexts. In connection with data it refers to the number of occurrences of a given type of event or the number of members of a population falling into a specified class. It is closely related to the usage in physics where it means the rate of occurrences of any regular repeated event e.g.vibration, the number of times that it occurs in a second or other assumed unit of time. The Supplement records the first statistical usage as 1937 with an example by L H C Tippett in *Methods of Statistics*, "Frequencies and proportional frequencies underlie nearly all methods of statistical representation", but it is generally believed among statisticians that this term in its specific statistical meaning dates from before that year.

Also the terms *univariate*, *bivariate* and *multivariate* are applied to various statistical concepts apart from data. These terms denote that each member bears either one, two or many values. The exact meaning, however, varies with the area of statistics they belong to. While "variate" is an adjective obsolete in the standard language also as a suffix, the prefixes uni-, bi, and multi- are commonly used (uni/bi/multilateral).

Data can be *primary* or *secondary*. *Primary data* are collected specifically for the investigation in hand while *secondary data* were originally collected for a different purpose than the one around which the investigation centres. The historians also use the term "secondary" but in the sense of data which originate in a different period to the period studied[21].

Description and Summarization of Data

A convenient way of presenting data is by visual representations such as graphs, diagrams and maps. *Scatter diagrams (scatter graphs* or *scatter plots)* are graphs with a pair of axes corresponding to the two variables, upon which pairs of variable values are plotted. *Pictograms* as the name indicates, are diagrams which involve the use of pictures to represent data. The pictures may either vary in size according to the numerical values, or remain the same size in which case the values are indicated by the number of pictures shown. *Piechart* is a nice crisp label for a diagram shaped as a circle and divided by radial lines into sections like slices of a pie. The area of each section is proportional to the size of the figure represented. The term probably first appeared as a colloquialism.

In *barcharts* data is represented by a series of freestanding bars, the height of each bar indicating the size of the figure represented. *Block-charts* or *block diagrams* have bars situated adjacent to each other. They can be used to represent frequencies. The height or area of the blocks are proportional to the quantitative variable. Block-charts representing frequencies are usually called *histograms.*

Ogive is the title of a curve showing accumulated frequency, but the term is only properly used for certain "distributions" (see below), especially the "Normal" or "near-Normal". The term derives from architecture where ogive signifies a diagonal groin or rib of a vault two of which cross each other in the middle. The term was first used in 1611. In 1875 Galton applied this term to a curve which resembled the S-shaped singular ogive. Around the same time "ogive" was extended in the standard language to denote a pointed gothic arch, apparently being so-called from the shape of the space between the ogives of the corresponding vault (first recorded usage 1841). In statistics the term is sometimes used wrongly to include *cumulative frequency curves* of a different shape.

Measures are ways of describing or summarizing statistical data into a single numerical or qualitative value. *Averages* or *measures of location*

or *of central tendency* are measures which provide numbers that are indicative of the "centre", "middle" or the "most typical" of a set of data. While in the mind of laymen there is only one concept attached to "average", statistics conceives of an almost infinite number of possible types of averages of which three types are basic: the *mean*, the *median* and the *mode*. The word "average" has only a very loose meaning in statistics, and is virtually meaningless to a statistician if it is not qualified. The *(arithmetic) mean* corresponds to the layman's concept of an average. For example, the arithmetic mean of 3, 4, and 8 is $\frac{3+4+8}{3} = 5$. Already the mathematicians of the Renaissance were aquainted with this term. The *median* is the middle or centre of a set of data when the values are arranged in increasing or decreasing order. Thus the median for the five numbers 2, 5, 7, 6, 10 is 7. The adjective "median" meaning occupying a middle or intermediate position was already used about dice in 1645. The *EOD* gives a statistical usage of "median" as a noun in 1902. The *mode* is simply the value which occurs with the highest frequency. Thus if, say, more applicants for a job are 26 years old than any other age, 26 is the *modal* age. Thus the statistical term is closely connected to the meaning in the standard language of a prevailing fashion.

The *variance*, according to Dr Buckland[22], also causes some confusion as the accountants use it differently from statisticians and both differently from the standard language. In statistics the term was first employed in 1918; it means "the mean of the squares of variations from the arithmetic mean" (Kendall & Buckland). It is a measure employed to measure *spread*, and is quite unrelated to the meanings of variance in the standard language of disagreement, difference of opinion and lack of harmony. The square root of the variance is the *standard deviation*.

Correlation in the ordinary sense means that there exists a mutual relationship between two or more things. Statistics also uses this term in a general sense (as well as more specific senses) but which compared to the standard sense has been narrowed down to denote the interrelationship which appears between the quantitative or qualitative values of variables. Unlike the standard meaning of the term, the statistical meaning contains no implication of causation.

Inference

While descriptive statistics deal directly with the collection, processing and analysis, interpretation and presentation of numerical data,

statistical inference or *inductive statistics* goes beyond the data in order to arrive at generalizations. "Inference" also belongs to the realm of formal logic. In logic it was first applied to deductive methods (1594) and not until much later did it appear in the logic of induction. In fact, it is still not accepted by all logicians in that meaning.

The concept of probability is basic to inference. Current statistical thinking gives two alternative definitions to *probability*. To quote Kendall and Buckland, a probability is either undefinable-expressing in some way a "degree of belief", or it is "the limiting frequency in an infinite random series". Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in Tom Stoppard's play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* also have problems of defining it. In a brilliant passage in Act I they convey complete confusion and randomness in respect of this concept (but still perhaps manage to give laymen a clearer illustration of the term than any statistical dictionary or textbook is able to). The view that the interpretation of probabilities i.e. certain numbers assigned to events, is personal or subjective is currently gaining ground (such probabilities being called *Baysian probabilities*). The probabilities in this sense are measures of the strength of a person's belief concerning the occurrence or non-occurrence of events, and are arrived at by mental processes which are generally difficult to reconstruct, verify, or evaluate. But in both of the statistical meanings "probabilities" are indicative in some way of the chances or likelihood that the respective event will actually take place. It is in either case more closely defined than in everyday usage where it is free from any quantitative connotations and only covers the quality of something being probable or judged by present evidence to be true, exist or happen. In statistics the concept involves the ability to make a statement and at the same time know just how often it will prove true.

The word *parameter* occurs in the technical language of statistics in its customary mathematical meaning of an unknown quantity which may vary over a certain set of values. In statistics parameters most usually occur in expressions defining frequency distributions *(population parameters)*, or in models describing a stochastic situation (see below) e.g. *regression parameters*. "The domain of permissible variation of the parameters defines the class of population or model under consideration" (Kendall & Buckland). This term is one of the few statistical terms which have gained ground in the standard language although not by its statistical meaning but by its more general mathematical meaning.

While *parametric* or *parameter* refers to a given population, *nonparametric* does not. It refers to methods which can be used under very general conditions without making specific assumptions about the population from which samples were taken. These methods are also called *distribution free*, but originally the two terms were not synonymous. Thus "distribution free" originally referred to, or ought to denote, a method which does not depend upon a particular distribution, and "nonparametric" describes a problem the subject of which is *not* the values taken by parameters. Kendall and Buckland recommend that the two terms are kept apart with their different meanings underlying them, but admit that in general practice they are mixed. Some textbooks[23] make no distinctions. Professor Lancaster suggests that one term may eventually oust the other but Dr Buckland says that the confusion is only very slowly being resolved[24].

In the standard language the differences between *estimator*, *estimate* and *estimation* are clear-cut. "Estimator" is someone who estimates, an "estimate" is an approximate judgement, and "estimation" is the action of appraising, assessing or valuing a statement of price, or value. In statistics an *estimate* in its strictest sense is the particular value yielded by an *estimator* i.e. a rule or method of estimating a constant of a population in a given set of circumstances. It is professed that these two terms tend to be confused. Dr Buckland and Professor Lancaster negate the existence of any confusion among qualified statisticians[25]. *Estimation* in statistics relates to the standard usage but is more closely defined. It is concerned with inference and the evaluation of the numerical values of unknown population values from sample data. The *OED* gives a similar but different probabilistic definition, "the process of forming an approximate notion of numbers, quantities, magnitudes, etc. without actual summarization or measurement". The most recent example of usage given in the *OED* is from 1838. The Supplement has not updated this statistical definition of "estimation" by giving more recent examples based on current statistical usage.

Likelihood is connected to the concept of probability. While "probability" looked forward from a parameter to data results, "likelihood" looks back from data results to a parameter. It tells us how likely our observed results would be for various values of the underlying parameters. By the method of estimation called the method of *maximum likelihood* we choose the values of the parameters which would give the largest chance of obtaining the results actually observed.

The term *regression* "was originally used . . . to indicate certain relationships in the theory of heredity but it has come to mean the statistical method developed to investigate those relationships" (Kendall & Buckland). There may for instance exist a simple linear relationship between weight and height apart from a small amount of residual variation of the weights around the mean weight corresponding to each height. The line corresponding to the mean weights for each height on a scatter diagram of weight against height is called the "regression" of weight on height. This statistical term "regression" is related to its original geometrical meaning of returning to a curve which passed out of usage in 1879. A method of estimating the regression line or curve is *least squares*, which is based on minimising the sum of squares of deviations from the regression line.

Two events A and B are said to be *independent* if knowing that event A has occurred does not lead to the probability that event B will occur being altered. Thus, if a teacher predicts that the examination results of a student of French will be fair, and subsequently discovers she has a good A-level in French, he may re-assess the prospects. But if he discovers that she has a good A-level in mathematics, it does not make any difference to his assessment. *Dependence* is in statistics defined in terms of *independence*. It is often the case in statistics with pairs, that the exceptional case, here independence, is defined. Thus it says in Kendall and Buckland's Dictionary, under "dependence: "quantities are dependent when they are not independent". In a similar way two variables are called *independent variables* if the value taken by one variable does not affect the probabilities that the other variable will take each of its possible values, and variables which are not independent are *dependent*.

Unfortunately, however, if in regression situations we have, say, two variables of which one depends on the other, the one that depends on the other is called the *dependent variable* and the other is sometimes called the *independent variable*. In more complex regression situations where one variable may depend on two or more other variables, these may thus be referred to as "independent variables". However, they may well *not* be independent in terms of the previous definition of "independent variables". Hence this regression usage of "independence" "is unrelated to the more usual statistical or mathematical concept of "independence", and consequently Kendall and Buckland (second edition) regard the term as unfortunate although well established. In the third edition they say that modern usage prefers the

terms "explanatory variable", "predicated variable", or best of all "regressor" to be used instead. This use of the one term "independence" to describe two concepts is examined further in the survey of the next section.

The *frequency function* and the *distribution function* are both sometimes defined in terms of probability, and sometimes in terms of frequency. If defined in terms of probabilities, the *frequency function* gives the probability that a variable takes any specified value and the *distribution function* gives the probability that a variable takes any value less than or equal to a specified value. If the terms are defined in terms of frequencies, *frequency function* gives the proportion taking a specified value and *distribution function* gives the proportion taking any value less than or equal to a specified value. These two functions are a basic pair of related concepts but the words used imply definitions from opposite sides. In "frequency function" frequency implies frequency (i.e. proportion), and in "distribution function" distribution implies probability. This causes confusion in usage. There are various well known "distribution functions" or "distributions", one of which is the "normal distribution"; normal does *not* imply usual.

If a man is said to be *expected* to eat 85.2 lb of meat during one year, the amount does not mean the exact amount but a mean or *expected value.* In frequency situations (real data) the term "mean" is always used, in probability situations (theoretical models) the mean might be referred to instead as the "expected value". The process of taking expected values is sometimes called *expectation.* The term is of mathematical origin (1838). The concept was originally used in connection with games. In its simplest form the expected value or *(mathematical) expectation* is obtained by multiplying each of the possible gains by the probability that this gain is realized, and then adding together these products. Thus, if a man is to win £10 if a coin comes up heads, the expectation is worth half the money i.e. the average or expected gain is £5.

Models used in inference are either *deterministic* or *stochastic.* A *deterministic model* contains no random elements. For instance, at a set of traffic lights the model might specify that 8 cars pass per hour. A *stochastic model* involves the presence of random variables; thus a model of traffic lights might show that 8 cars on average will pass. Some statisticians use the word *probabilistic* which frequently is used synonymously with "stochastic". Others, however, associate

"stochastic" with an element of time and would only use "stochastic" about models when this element is present, otherwise "probabilistic". The word "stochastic" derives from Greek. The verb means "to aim at a mark", "guess", and the noun means "target" from which was derived the name for a person who forecasts future events in the sense of aiming at the truth. In this sense of pertaining to conjecture it was used by 16th century English writers. Thus the *OED's* first recorded example derives from 1662 by J. Owen, "But yet there wanted not some beams of light to guide men in the exercise of their stochastic faculty". The word passed out of usage with Jonathan Swift who was the last English writer to use it (1720). It was not until the 20th century that it was revived with statistics.

Statistical tests or *significance tests* or *tests of hypotheses* or *tests* are decision procedures for accepting or rejecting a *statistical hypothesis* on the basis of whether any apparent difference between the hypothesised and observed situation can be reasonably attributed to chance. A *statistical hypothesis* "is a hypothesis concerning the parameters or form of the probability distribution for a designated population or populations, or, more generally, of a probabilistic mechanism which is supposed to generate the observations". (Kendall & Buckland). The statistical hypothesis under test is called the *null hypothesis*, and it is tested against an *alternative* hypothesis. If the difference between the hypothesised and observed situation is so great that it cannot reasonably be attributed to chance, the result of the test is said to be *significant* (further explanation was given in the introduction).

Bias is an example of one term covering various concepts according to its context or juxtaposed expressions. We saw it juxtaposed with "sample" in "biassed sample", and we can also have "biassed (or unbiassed) estimators", "biassed (or unbiassed) tests", and less frequently "biassed indexes". Bias in estimation is like "dependence" defined in terms of the unbiassed estimator which is the unusual case, i.e. "an estimator which is not unbiassed is called biassed" (Kendall & Buckland). An *unbiassed estimator* is an estimator the expected value of which equals the parameter the estimator is intended to estimate. Hence it is an estimator which is right on average. In the standard language we use "bias" almost synonymously with "prejudice" "predisposition (towards)", "inclination". The first examples of English usage derive from the game of bowls. In Shakespeare's time "bias" referred to the construction or shape of the bowl and to lead weights giving the bowl the impetus that caused it to run in an oblique line.

(Today, bowls are no longer "biassed" by lead weights but by shape or a metal plug which is inserted into the bowl.) Shakespeare gives examples of the early use e.g. in *Taming of the Shrew*, IV.v.25,

> "Well forward, forward thus the bowls should run,
> and not unluckily against the Bias."

or in a metaphorical sense in *King Lear*, I.ii.108,

> ". . . there's son against father: the King falls from
> bias of nature;"

It is interesting that there is one special context in statistics where "bias" is used in much the same way as the word's early use in the standard language. This is not in the context of the game of bowls, but in terms of the tossing of coins (which are often used to provide hypothetical examples in probability theory).[26]

A SURVEY

In order to investigate the extent of inconsistencies and confusions in usage, current changes in statistical terminology, and colloquialisms, a survey was undertaken of practising and academic statisticians and closely related professionals in February 1976. The survey also aimed to obtain data from a wider class of statisticians than previously available (i.e. not just those publishing books and papers).

Questionnaires were distributed to 206 individuals;

(a) the 30 members of staff of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, Sheffield City Polytechnic,

(b) the 25 members of the Department of Probability and Statistics, The University of Sheffield,

(c) 151 other Northern members of the RSS from local groups in Sheffield, the Humber area, the Leeds-Bradford area, Merseyside and Tyneside.

The overall response rate was about 15% (31 questionnaires). This was made up of a 33% response from the Polytechnic (11 questionnaires), 15% from the University (4), and 10% from the other RSS members (16). It must be noted that the respondents did not in any sense form a cross section of the statistical profession.

The questionnaire contained 12 terms, arranged alphabetically, which the respondents were asked to define. Some of the terms were included

in order to investigate possible redundancy in statistical terminology and confusions in usage between two terms. Each of the terms of this type included in the questionnaire has a partner with which it tends to be confused, but which was not included in the questionnaire. It was felt that respondents would define their usage of the terms more truthfully if they were not reminded of the fact that closely related terms exist. These pairs included estimate/estimator, nonparametric/distribution free, and ogive/cumulative frequency curve, and "estimate", "nonparametric statistics" and "ogive" were included on the questionnaire. Other terms included were "bias" and "independent variable" (since each of these terms covers more than one concept), "stochastic" (to investigate whether the time element was assumed), and the colloquialism "data crunching" (the meaning of which is somewhat ambiguous).

The results of the survey confirmed Dr Buckland's and Professor Lancaster's remarks that there was little confusion amongst qualified statisticians over the meanings of "estimate" and "estimator". However, it is interesting that whilst only two of the respondents appeared to experience such confusions, three out of the four respondents from the University of Sheffield professed that such confusions exist. Clearly this particular confusion in terminology is more apparent than real.

Half the respondents defined "nonparametric statistics" in terms of "distribution free" methods, so that it appears that it is still common practice to treat the two terms as synonymous. Also, the majority of the respondents placed no restrictions upon the cumulative frequency curve in order for it to be called an "ogive". Interestingly, of the three who answered correctly, mentioning the restrictions, two were mathematicians rather than statisticians.

About a third of the respondents defined "bias" only in the context of a "biassed sample", and an equal number defined it only in the context of "biassed estimation". Only one respondent gave both aspects. A similar phenomenon was experienced for "independent variable", although for this half the respondents gave the unfortunate regression usage, compared to only about a third who gave the more usual statistical meaning. It was apparent that the respondents were unaware that the regression usage *was* unfortunate.

The respondents generally excluded the element of time from definition of "stochastic", but about 20% did include it. Indeed, two

respondents regarded this as the only aspect of the term, completely disregarding the more basic random element.

The most interesting feature about the definitions of "data crunching" were that there were no two answers which agreed entirely. The main characteristics of the answers were that the term was derogatory, originated in computer language (according to 10 respondents), and denoted routine work (according to 9). Seven respondents thought the term was used when a large proportion of work was calculations.

A surprising feature of the results of the survey was just how much disagreement, and indeed lack of knowledge, there was over basic terminology. The sample included a large proportion of mathematicians (mainly from the Polytechnic) who do not use statistical terms on the same scale as the statisticians. Some of them teach elementary statistics and use statistics in their research. In many cases they admitted to guesswork and did surprisingly well, while the statisticians answered incorrectly. This may be related to the fact that many terms are based on ordinary standard words. Thus, while the mathematicians dissected the words by their ordinary meaning and used commonsense for their explanations, the statisticians were inhibited by their institutionalised conception of the word in question. Any distinction between "good" and "bad" usage does in fact rest on the standard meaning of words used in statistics, and thus the mathematicians made correct guesses. Another reason why the mathematicians generally performed well in the survey was that they were more willing than the statisticians to show their ignorance and did not hesitate to leave questions blank.

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Relative frequency of prefixes of negation

	dis-	un-	in-	ir-	non-
Kendall and Buckland, 2nd edition	4	6	7	1	13
Kendall and Buckland, 3rd edition	8	7	8	2	14
Concise Oxford Dictionary, collocating words beginning with a-	20	6	25	1	1

NOTES

1. Referred to in this paper, as in the profession, as the RSS.
2. Annals of the Royal Statistical Society 1834-1934.
3. *economical statistics* (agriculture, industry, distribution of wealth), *political statistics* (legal, national finance and expenditure, civil and military establishments), *medical statistics*, *moral and intellectual statistics* (e.g. statistics of literature, education, religious instruction, criminal institutions).
4. Referred to as the Institute.
5. Guttman, Louis, "What is Not What in Statistics", *The Statistician*, 26 (1977), 81-107.
6. Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1969.
7. It is not considered, for example, in Pei, Mario, *Language of the Specialists* (New York: Funk and Wagnall, 1966)
However a survey of the vocabulary of statisticians is given in Bendell, S., *The Language of Statistics*, Unpublished B.A. English Language (Contemporary English) Project, University of Sheffield, 1976.
8. For example, the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers.
9. Kendall, M. G. and Buckland, W. R., *A Dictionary of Statistical Terms*, 1st edition (1957), 2nd edition (1967), 3rd edition (1971), 4th edition (in preparation). (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd).

10. Other statistical dictionaries currently in use are Paenson I., *Systematic Glossary of the Terminology of Statistical Methods* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1970); and Freund, E. and Williams J. A., *Dictionary/ Outline of Basic Statistics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966). Also of interest is the recent publication
BS5532: 1978 (ISO 3534-1977) Statistics - Vocabulary and Symbols by the British Standards Institution.

11. Kendall, M. G., "The Projected Dictionary of Statistical Terms", *Bulletin de L'Institute International de Statistique*, 34 (1954), 629-640.

12. Mann, N. R., "Point and Interval Estimation Procedures for the Two-Parameter Weibull and Extreme-Value Distributions", *Technometrics*, 10 (1968), 231-256.

13. Ord, Keith, "Statistics are lovely", *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 22-7-1977.

14. Bendell, S., *The Language of Statistics.*

15. This is consistent with the tendency towards the growing use of the prefix non- in the standard language. See e.g., Marchand, Hans, *The Categories and Types of Present-Day English Word-Formation* (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 1966).

16. Finney, D. J., "Problems, data and inference: The Address of the President", *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Series A, 137 (1974), 1-22.

17. A useful indication of the relative frequency of use of terms by statisticians, at least in journal articles, is provided by Appendix B of the paper.
Jones, Susan, "The London School of Economics computer-based bibliography of statistical literature", *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Series A, 137 (1974), 219-226.

18. Huff, D., *How to Lie with Statistics* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973).

19. Healy, M. J. R., "The Varieties of Statistician", *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Series A, 136 (1973), 71-74.

20. Ibid.

21. Floud, R., *An Introduction to Quantitative Methods for Historians* (London: Methuen, 1973).

22. Private communication, appearing as in the appendix to Bendell, S., *The Language of Statistics.*

23. For example,
Freund, J. E., *Modern Elementary Statistics*, Third Edition (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1967).

24. Private communications, appearing in the appendix to Bendell, S., *The Language of Statistics.*

25. Ibid.

26. Bendell, A., and Roberts, G., "The Question of Bias in the New Bronze Decimal Coinage", *Institute of Statisticians Newsletter*, 4 (1972) No.12.

Possible Sources for the Legend of Wizard's Slough in R D Blackmore's *Lorna Doone*

J B Smith

The extent of R D Blackmore's debt to oral tradition for some of the characters and events in *Lorna Doone*[1] has been much discussed, but as far as I have been able to ascertain it has never been suggested that he may have drawn on local sources for the "legend" of Wizard's Slough. It will be remembered that in Chapter 58, which is entitled "Master Huckaback's Secret", John Ridd, on his way to visit Reuben Huckaback at the mine, sits in a niche of rock, "gazing at the slough, and pondering the old tradition about it", which he then proceeds to narrate. His story falls into four main parts, which may be summarized as follows:

1. The wizard lures a pilgrim to his palace, which is situated on a "central steep" of Exmoor.
2. The wizard engages the pilgrim in a contest of words, which the pilgrim wins.
3. The ground opens up, engulfing both the wizard's palace and the crag on which it is built. All that is left is a black bog, which comes to be known as Wizard's Slough.
4. The saint founds a chapel "some three miles westwards", where he lies with his holy relic. It is here that both Lorna's Aunt Sabina and Sir Ensor Doone are buried.

In 1897, some thirty years after the publication of *Lorna Doone*, Frederick Hancock recounts the following tradition in his *Parish of Selworthy:*

> It is related that a very holy man dwelt at one time near the Doone Valley, spending his time in a hermit-like seclusion. He spoke to none and entered beneath no roof tree but his own. But one day a witch enticed him into a circle which he had drawn. The holy man made the sign of the Cross, but the fall was irremediable. He followed the witch into his hut, and was never seen again.[2]

It is true that in the chapter entitled "Folklore", in which this is recounted, Hancock mingles accounts of local survivals gleaned from

oral tradition with examples taken from written sources. However, the latter are generally acknowledged, and in any case this piece of local witch-lore seems too remote, in either content or style, from Blackmore's legend of Wizard's Slough to have been based on it. On the other hand Hancock's story has much in common with the following West Somerset tradition of how a latter-day male witch, who went by the name of Vuzzy Jarge, was also in the habit of ensnaring his victims in a magic circle:

> One of this old witch's wicked ways of doing a person an injury was to make a "witch's circle" to trap them in, that is, he would stand still in a certain place where they would be likely to pass, and there he would mutter his curses on them; next he would turn round slowly, marking out with the point of his old walking-stick a circle on the ground, all the time saying some horrible things. Directly the person to be "witched" entered this circle, the spell would take effect, and mishap of some kind would mar the journey, or sudden sickness would take the victim.[3]

I would therefore suggest firstly that Hancock's account is an authentic popular tradition, and secondly that Blackmore may have come across an earlier version of it, but adapted it in his legend of Wizard's Slough to make the holy man overcome the wizard rather than vice versa.

This brings us to the second element of Blackmore's story, in which the wizard engages the pilgrim in a battle of words and is defeated. Here we have the widespread motif of a contest with the Devil or other supernatural being, examples of which are provided by Child's ballad "The Fause Knight upon the Road"[4] and the following riddle:

> A man in the wilderness asked me,
> How many strawberries grow in the sea?
> I answered him, as I thought good,
> As many as red herrings grow in the wood.[5]

A local variant occurs in the legend of Tarr Steps on Exmoor, which were said to have been built by the Devil in a single night. The local priest, seeking to cross the bridge, enters a dispute with the Devil, which he presumably wins by having the last word:

> "You old black crow," yells Devil
> "If I be a crow," says Parson, "I bain't so black as yew!"[6]

In his story, Blackmore has the wizard ask the pilgrim the following riddle:

> "Where can you find a man and wife, one going up-hill, and one going down, and not a word spoken between them?" — "In a cucumber plant," said the modest saint; blushing even to think of it, and the wizard knew he was done for.

This sounds like a parody of the type of folk riddle in which an object is compared to more than one person, and, more specifically, to the type in which related persons, usually brothers, are said to live together but not to be able to make contact by seeing, touching or speaking to one another.[7]

The third part of the story, in which the wizard's palace is engulfed by a quagmire, is reminiscent of traditions according to which the habitations of evil-doers sink into the ground or are overwhelmed by the waves. There appears to be a paucity of such traditions in Somerset and Devon, but Hunt gives numerous examples for Cornwall.[8] In none of these does a quagmire play any part, but Tony Deane and Tony Shaw tell us that Trewartha Marsh on Bodmin Moor is supposed to conceal a place named Tresillern.[9]

At the same time Blackmore may have been influenced by traditions, common in Somerset and Devon, according to which a supernatural being, usually a troublesome ghost, is laid by a cleric or group of clerics. As often as not the spirit is banished into an expanse of water. Thus it is well known on Exmoor that the ghost of Master Lucott of Porlock was ordered into an iron box which was cast into the Severn Sea[10] and that the restless spirit of Madam Joan Carne was condemned to stay in the Witch's Pond near Sandhill Manor, Withycombe,[11] while Hancock tells of a "Parson A." who "returned" after being decently buried in his parish churchyard, but was banished by "Parson B." to "a deep dark pool, overhung by old gnarled trees"![12]

In the fourth part of the story we are told that the saint, having overcome the wizard at what is now Wizard's Slough, founds a chapel "some three miles westwards". As this is one of the few clues to the situation of the chapel, in order to trace it we shall first of all need to locate Wizard's Slough. There has been much controversy about the site of this and the mine it concealed, but Blackmore does give us some relevant information. In Chapter 31, for instance, John Fry trails Reuben Huckaback from Plover's Barrows, which is near Oare (ss8047), to Wizard's Slough via "the top of the long black combe, two miles or more from Plover's Barrows, and winding to the southward" — this sounds like the valley of Chalk Water (ss8145)) — and over Black

Barrow Down (ss8344), which is about two and a half miles south-east of Oare. Again, in Chapter 72 Blackmore tells us that the "Warren" lies "well away to the westward of the mine". Today there is a Warren Farm, also on the banks of the infant Exe, at ss796408, and in the light of such evidence it seems reasonable to place the Slough at ss8243, "somewhere in the Maddacombe area, where there is to this day much wet ground, though nothing answering to the description that he gives of the fearful bog".[13] If we now look for the saint's chapel "some three miles westwards" we shall find ourselves in the vicinity of Badgworthy Water and the Doone Valley (ss7944). It is at this chapel that Lorna's guardian, Sir Ensor Doone, and her Aunt Sabina are buried. In describing the burial of Sir Ensor (Chapter 41) Blackmore tells us that it took place "in the little chapel-yard", but refuses to tell us where this is "because we are now such Protestants, that I might do it an evil turn". Nevertheless one gains the impression from his account that the chapel was at no great distance from the Doone Valley.

Here one is reminded that the holy man of Hancock's legend dwelt "near the Doone Valley", and that there is also historical evidence for the settlement of Badgworthy by anchorites. Thus a charter of the *Buckland Cartulary* speaks of a "grant by Henry Pomeri of the church of Brandun with its appendages and the land of the hermits (cum apenticiis suis et terram heremitarum) of Baga Wordia, to the brethren of the Hospital of Jerusalem", and a document confirming this refers to "the land of Baggeworth, which the hermits held".[14] MacDermot dates the first of these documents to between 1162 and 1184 and points out that later charters, of the following century, also to be found in the *Buckland Cartulary*, mention several tenements and a chapel there. The same author then argues, on the basis of further evidence, that most of the inhabitants were wiped out by the Black Death in 1348-9, although one tenement was let for several years from 1424 to a certain Thomas Dure.[15] From this time onwards Badgworthy seems to have been only sporadically occupied.[16]

The historical evidence referred to above suggests that the settlement was already well established by the second half of the twelfth century, and archaeolological findings would appear to encourage such an assumption. Thus Charles Whybrow tells us: "Whether the ruins of the so-called Doones' Houses which we now see at Badgworthy are hermitages or the habitations of ordinary peasants, they include several of the longhouses typical of Norman times which probably replaced less solid buildings of the tenth and eleventh centuries."[17]

It is interesting that the existence of a religious settlement in Badgworthy should be echoed, so many centuries later, both in the tradition related by Hancock of a contest between a holy man and a sorcerer and in Blackmore's legend of Wizard's Slough. In the latter we may of course deplore the whimsical and condescending tone, which in its remoteness from popular speech is so typical of many Victorian book-legends.[18] Nevertheless it is possible that here, as elsewhere in *Lorna Doone*, and in his other books about the West Country, the author was drawing on a rich fund of oral tradition which was soon to become extinct.

As was indicated at the beginning of this article, much effort has been expended on attempts to trace the prototypes for the main characters and events of *Lorna Doone.* What is needed, however, in order to establish the true extent of Blackmore's debt to local sources and his attitudes to them, is a detailed and systematic investigation of his lore and language. It would, for instance, be valuable to know how faithfully he portrayed the dialect, customs and traditions of the Exmoor region. Relatively few studies point in this direction, and it is tantalizing that two of the most interesting come to very different conclusions. While Baring-Gould points out that some of Blackmore's motifs were common currency in nineteenth-century Somerset and Devon,[19] in a more recent article [20]William Kirwin maintains that many of his proverbs were synthetic, "created by a literary artist to vivify his country speech".[21]

Notes

1. Richard Doddridge Blackmore, *Lorna Doone* (London: Sampson Low, 1869)

2. Frederick Hancock, *The Parish of Selworthy* (Taunton: Barnicott and Pearce, 1897), p.244.

3. F W Mathews, *Tales of the Blackdown Borderland,* The Somerset Folk Series, No. 13 (London: Somerset Folk Press, 1923), pp. 103-104.

4. Francis James Child, ed., *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (1882-98; rpt. New York: The Folklore Press, 1957), Vol. 1, pp.20-22.

5. Iona and Peter Opie, *The Oxford Book of Nursery Rhymes* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1951), p.284.

6. Katharine M Briggs, *A Dictionary of British Folk-Tales* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), Part B, Vol. 1, "The Curious Cat," pp.60-61.

7. Archer Taylor, *English Riddles from Oral Tradition* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1951), pp.390-392.

8. Robert Hunt, *Popular Romances of the West of England*, First Series (London: John Camden Hotten, 1865), pp.207-225.

9. Tony Deane and Tony Shaw, *The Folklore of Cornwall.* (London: Batsford, 1975), p.29.

10. R L Tongue, *Somerset Folklore*, County Folklore, Vol. 8 (London: Folklore Society, 1965), p.106.

11. Ibid., pp.82-83.

12. Frederick Hancock, op.cit., pp.233-234.

13. S H Burton, "Exmoor of the Doones," *Exmoor*, ed. John Coleman-Cooke, National Park Guide No.8 (London: H M Stationery Office, 1974), p.64. Note that Warren Farm is to the south-west of Maddacombe, whereas Blackmore's "Warren" is "to the westward" of Wizard's Slough.

14. *A Cartulary of Buckland Priory in the County of Somerset*, ed. Rev. F W Weaver, Somerset Record Society, Vol. 25 (London: Somerset Record Society, 1909), p.121.

15. Edward T MacDermot, *The History of the Forest of Exmoor*, revised edn., (1911; rpt. Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1973), p.9.

16. Charles Whybrow, *Antiquary's Exmoor*, 2nd edn., revised, (Dulverton: The Exmoor Press, 1977), p.45.

17. Ibid.

18. Interestingly enough, the legend found its way into C H Poole, *The Customs, Superstitions and Legends of the County of Somerset* (1877; 2nd ed. Guernsey: Stevens-Cox, 1970), pp.76-82.

19. Cf. Rev. S Baring Gould, "Authors' Counties 2 — Devonshire: Mr Blackmore," *Atlanta: The Victorian Magazine*, No.86, November 1894(?), pp.82-91.

20. William Kirwin, "Blackmore — Creator of Proverbs," *Lore and Language*, Vol. 1, No.8, January 1973, pp.26-28.

21. Ibid., p.26. — This is undoubtedly true, and one is reminded of the apparently "synthetic" riddle with which the wizard seeks to gain power over the pilgrim in the legend of Wizard's Slough. In order to redress the balance, however, it must be stated that even a cursory reading of *Lorna Doone* reveals a sprinkling of traditional proverbs and sayings. Thus:
Ch. 23: "The crock was calling the kettle smutty."
Ch. 29: "Cut and come again."
Ch. 69: "All trades had tricks."
Ch. 74: "Laugh he who wins."
It is, moreover, worth noting that Blackmore's works are an important source of traditional proverbs for the *Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs.*

The Idiom of Drinking in Cameroon Pidgin English

Loreto Todd

An idiom can be defined as a group of words "whose meaning cannot be predicted from the meaning of the words themselves" (Palmer p.41). It would thus be impossible for one to deduce the meaning of *a red herring*, *be on the pig's back* or *cry wolf* from the literal understanding of their parts. Idioms can be useful in expressing emotions:

he's flipped his lid
he's nuts about her

and feelings of happiness or disappointment:

he's in clover
he has hit rock bottom.

And they are particularly useful in a pidgin language as it expands its limited vocabulary to cope with linguistic requirements other than those of trade or marginal contact. Cameroon Pidgin English (CP), for example, is a widely used lingua franca which makes extensive use of non-literal word sequences. Some of these such as:

bait han[1]	—	express regret, extreme sorrow (bite hand)
man han	—	right (man hand)
wuman han	—	left (woman hand)
wash bele	—	the last child of the womb (wash belly)

are calques from African languages. Others seem to derive from English — often missionary --usage:

big hat	—	generous (big heart)
blak hat	—	evil (black heart)
wash han	—	refuse to accept responsibility (wash hand)

and still others such as:

las koko	—	the least intellectual (last cocoyam)
smohl wata	—	a bribe (small water)

seem to have been coined by speakers of CP. It is on one aspect of this last category of idiom that I should like to focus attention, examining the non-literal use of CP by a speaker recounting one of his experiences as a drinker. I shall offer the entire story, exactly as it was recorded in 1972 shortly after the narrator Felix Yulem had come to Yaounde in the hope of finding work before commenting, in particular, on the use of idiom.

The recording

a kohmoht waka a luk ples. sohm ples de. sohm pipul dem di shidohng. dem di tek sohmting lehki drink. sohm man hol kohp foh han. *mi a bi smohl man wei di tek kohp* so mi, a ehnta. a geht smohl frank a bai wan bohtul. a bigin shidohng ehnjoi ma skin witam. wehn i dohn finish a kohm foh haus.

sohm dei nau, a wan waka a si sohm ma fren wei mi an i de foh skul. i sei ã na mi dis? a sei "yehs". i sei mek a kohm. mi a kohm. *i nak bohtul foh ma hed. i nak sohm bohtul kingsai foh ma hed. a di krai. a shidohng dohng a krai. a krai ohntohp i finish.* a wan siam agen *i nak sohm big wan foh mi.* dat red wan wei i de laik blohd. a sei: "na wanda! na fain wan dis!" *wi krai ohntohp. wi krai ohntohp. wata bin kam foh ma ai.*

wi kohmoht. mi an i di waka. a si hau i di waka i no di si rod. mi tu a no di si rod. a kam haus. a kam rish doa. a klin ma ai fain *mek i no red.* a ehnta shidohng laik man wei *i no tek nohting.*

sohm dei a wikohp. a go mit pipul dem foh sohm ples. dem di drink. dem di dans. dem di drink. dem di dans. a wan si sohm jandam.. sohm jandam so wei mi an i de foh skul. i sei na mi dis? a sei "yehs". i sei wehti a di du? a sei a de witi ma sista foh hia. i sei ã, mek a kam. i tek mi. i ehntehtehn mi fain. *i nak mi wan dis ting, wan ngohnggi, wan ngohnggi foh ma hed. a krai. a krai ma hed. i nak kingsai foh ma hed. i nak ohdine foh ma hed.* a finisham. so behta dohn fohloh mi foh insai yaunde.

The English equivalent

I went out walking to have a look around. There was a place. Some people were sitting down. They were taking something like drink. Somebody had a glass in his hand. *I'm a man who is fond of a drink* (lit. me, I be small man who habitually take cup) so I went in. I had a few francs so I bought a bottle. I began to enjoy myself with it. (lit. I begin sitdown enjoy my skin i.e. body with it.) When I had finished it I went home.

On another occasion now, as I was walking about I saw a friend with whom I had been to school. He asked was it me? I said "yes". He told me to go with him. I went. *He set a bottle in front of me. He put a large bottle in front of me. I drank it slowly. I sat there sipping slowly. I sipped it very slowly until it was finished.* (lit. he knock bottle for my head. he knock some bottle kingsize for my head. I habitually/ continuity-marker cry. I sit+down down I cry. I cry on+top he finish.) When I saw him again *he ordered a big one for me* (lit. he knock some big one for me.) That red one which is like blood (i.e. wine). I said: "It's a wonder! This is a great one!" *We sipped slowly until it was finished.We sipped slowly until it was finished. My head was turning.* (lit. we cry on+top. we cry on+top. water past-time-marker come for my eye.)

We went out. He and I walked along. I could see from the way he walked that he couldn't see the road. I couldn't see the road either. I went home. I managed to reach the door. I rubbed my eyes well *so that they wouldn't be red.* (lit. make he no red). I went in and sat down like someone who *had drunk nothing.* (lit. he no take nothing).

On another day I got up. I went to meet some people at a certain place. They were drinking and dancing. They were drinking and dancing. Then I saw a gendarme. . a certain gendarme with whom I had been to school. He asked if it was me. I said: "Yes". He asked what I was doing? I said I was here with my kinswoman. He told me to go with him. He took me with him. He entertained me well. *He stood me one of these things called 'ngonggis". He treated me to an ngonggi. I sipped it slowly. I sipped it very slowly. He treated me to a bottle of vin ordinaire.* (lit. he knock me one this thing, one ngonggi i.e. a bottle of locally brewed beer, one ngonggi for my head. I cry. I cry my head. He knock kingsize i.e. a large bottle of beer for my head. He knock ordinaire i.e. a bottle of red wine for my head.) I finished it. So good fortune has followed me to Yaounde.

Comment

The CP narrative is of interest from the point of view of storytelling techniques especially in terms of the use of an unmarked time sequence and in the treatment of direct and indirect speech. But what concerns us most at the moment is the register employed by the speaker. He sets the scene by explaining:

mi a bi smohl man wei di tek kohp

thus implying his fondness for drink and indicating the context in which the listeners are to interpret his remarks. The literal meaning of:

i nak bohtul foh ma hed

is "he hit me on the head with a bottle" but here it is the equivalent of "he set a bottle before me implying that I could help myself". It is not uncommon to hear someone in a bar say:

if yu no go nak wan foh ma hed den, mek yu blo mi wan tausan	— if you're not going to treat me then lend me a thousand francs (lit. make you blow me one thousand).

In the text we have three words for a bottle of non-local alcohol:

i. kingsai from English "kingsize" and often used to mean a large bottle of beer.

ii. ngohnggi from Lamnso, a Cameroon language. In Lamnso *nganggi* can refer to fermented corn beer. And:

iii ohdine from French "ordinaire" and this word is applied almost indiscriminately to both beer and red wine.

On seeing the bottle the speaker tells us:

a di krai. a shidohng dohng a krai. a krai ohntohp i finish

which, out of context would refer to crying or lamenting. In CP, however, *krai* or *krai ma hed* has a non-literal meaning of prolonging a pleasure, usually a pleasure associated with food or drink and so Eric's implication is that he drank very slowly, savouring every mouthful until his drink was finished.

After his first spree Eric rubs his eyes to prevent them looking red. When "red" qualifies the eye in CP it can suggest that the eye is bloodshot but *red ai* more frequently has an idiomatic value. It suggests "anger" and in particular, the anger that often accompanies drunkenness. Eric wanted his hosts to think that he was completely sober and, knowing this, listeners do not misconstrue:

i no tek nohting

which, otherwise, could imply that he had not stolen anything. The expression:

wata bin kam foh ma ai

almost invariably means "I cried" but in the context of drinking it means "I felt dizzy", and could be replaced by:

ma ai bigin tohn — I became dizzy (my eye begin turn)

because in CP "dizziness" is thought to be associated with the eyes rather than with the head.

In an attempt to characterise pidgins, Samarin (Hymes, 1971, p.122) wrote:

> " . . . a speaker of a pidgin, as a normal human being in a normal society, can be expected to have more than one code variety for different uses. The pidgin, on the other hand, is not normal, and when a person is speaking a pidgin he is limited to the use of a code with but one level or style or key or register, to cite some terms used for this aspect of the organisation of language."

An examination of the above CP narrative suggests that a pidgin need not be monocodal but can, by a non-literal use of its vocabulary, become as flexible a language as any other.

Note

1. CP does not have a recognised orthography and yet its seven vowel system cannot be represented adequately by means of the five vowels in the orthography of the standard language. Accordingly I have used 'e' to represent a sound very similar to the initial segment of the /ei/ in the R.P. pronunciation of "gate" and "eh" to suggest a monophthong very close to the vowel in "get". In the text, "o" is close in quality to a Scottish pronunciation of the "o" vowel in "no" whereas "oh" is approximately equivalent to the vowel sound in "got".

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Source and adaptation in the proverb: a Nigerian example

N F Inyama

Two things are aimed at in this paper; firstly, to support the view, through a detailed examination of a number of proverbs, that proverbs may be the works of individuals and can be traced to individual sources. This is important, considering that an appreciable body of folklorists are of the opinion that proverbs are not easily ascribable to individuals, and that such ascriptions

> are extremely untrustworthy. Some may be correct, but many ascriptions to Solomon, Socrates, Plato, Cato, Alfred or some other man famed for wit or learning reflect only the reputation that he enjoyed.[1]

Secondly, I aim to show the manner by which proverbs adapt to, and are enriched by, changing circumstances. Again, this will be done through the examination of a number of sayings.

One general belief about proverbs is that they grow more mature with age and that the harder it is to remember who coined a proverb first, the more its current user can comfortably believe that he is restating ancient and time-tested communal wisdom. The "age" of a proverb, then, is not more dependent on years than on anonymity of origin.

Another factor which turns a witty saying into a proverb is the degree of acceptance a community accords such a saying, which is dependent on the applicability of the saying to given situations, that is the ease with which it can be aptly quoted. When a saying meets this requirement the community is often willing to give credit to the coiner by prefixing his name to the saying before repeating it. But sometimes, or indeed most of the time, the community appropriates the saying and forgets its originator and the saying acquires instant proverbial anonymity, taking its place as one of the "terse summaries of [its] experience"[2] .

However, the problem of origin is one which folklorists have been unable, or rather unwilling, to resolve. For instance, while making a strong case for the theory of individual coinage, B J Whiting in his essay "The Origin of the Proverb"[3] still states that "none of the sayings we call proverbs can be proved to be the work of a conscious

literary artist." The key word in this statement is, I think, "conscious". Coiners of proverbs may not have created proverbs consciously in the sense of a deliberate sitting down to compose and reel off wise sayings, but they were "conscious" in the sense of having aptly summarised given situations or illuminated truths.

At any rate, Whiting's strongest statements favour the theory of individual origination of proverbs. In his view, a proverb is a different folk form from the ballad, and while the latter can have a strong claim to communal genesis, the former cannot. He says further that:

> Just as it is incomprehensible that a group should join in the manufacture of an ordinary word, so is it incomprehensible that a group, working from whatever impulse and under whatever circumstances, should join in the composition of a proverb. Thus, we are forced to admit that every proverb was the work of an individual.[4]

He goes on to quote, and broadly agree with, A H Krappe's view that:

> A proverb can no more than a tale be considered a mass product. On the contrary, each proverb was coined just once, in a given locality, at a given time (situation, I think), by one mind with some gnomic talent. Wherever a tradition is available to shed light on this genesis, it goes far to confirm its essential correctness.[5]

Whiting's subsequent disagreement with Krappe's examples from the *Saga of Grettir the Strong* is a mere matter of detail and does not detract from the essential correctness of Krappe's viewpoint.

The proverbs I am going to discuss in the first part of this paper then are, in fact, examples which buttress the view that proverbs are the works of individuals, at least at their moments of first utterance, even if they become subsequently modified through communal repetition. These sayings are mostly used in a small part of Igboland, from where their original coiners came. Ezinihitte Central, as this area is officially known, is less than eighteen square miles in size and is made up of Itu, Okpofe and Amumara. This area is in Southern Nigeria, more precisely in the Eastern part of what is now Imo State. This limitation of area is deliberate and necessary, for otherwise it would not be possible for me to say with any convincing degree of certainty who coined what saying, when and where. There is no doubt that a wider examination would reveal other local proverbs in other localities, for proverbs have the qualities of either being widely known and "anonymous", or being

very localised and traceable to their coiners. Such local proverbs then are an active tradition, giving coherence to the group, and are therefore in some respects different from the "anonymous" ones with wider currency. My examples belong to this local group. Where better-known or older equivalents of these exist and have been remembered, I have put them beside my examples.

I shall deal first of all with the sayings of Nwachukwu Nweke. He belonged to the Achole kindred of Itu, and I knew him before he died in the fifties. Before his death, however, he had said a number of things in such remarkable ways that they became proverbial in his lifetime. Today, when people have occasion to repeat one of his sayings before any man from the Achole kindred, they are likely to start off with, "Wasn't it your kinsman, Nwachukwu Nweke, who said . . . . "

Nwachukwu Nweke did not live a materially successful life. The only wife he ever had was an inheritance, for he could not generate enough money on his own to marry for himself. Even so, the woman died early, perhaps from lack of care and from other hardships. Needless to say, he was not a successful farmer. He owned no barn of his own and the few yams he owned were usually stored in neighbours' barns, often my father's barn. By all standards of wealth he was a failure in the community. He was not blind to this fact, and never ceased to lament the fruitless existence that his life had turned out to be.

However, what set him apart from other village failures and never-do-wells was the fact that he was witty and humorous and said things about himself that were undeniably apt.

"When I contemplate my next life in this world" (reincarnation) he said, "smiles prevent me from blowing the fire . . . M-chechaa otu m-ga iji alọ uwa ọnu chi ekweghim fuhuo ọku". Again he said of his life: "Had I been tapped when I was ready, I would now be yielding my last wine . . . Akuru-m mgbe m-duru mma m-ga gbagha ula".

The above sayings reveal the two angles from which the man has assessed his life; the first one shows a man who has given up all hopes of success in the present life and believes that the next time around will be infinitely better for him. The Igbo saying and belief "Onye kwe chi ya ekwe . . . If a person says yes, his chi (personal god) says yes too", is strongly implied here. Nwachukwu is saying "yes" now in order to avoid any disappointment from his *chi* when next he comes back to the world. The second proverb shows that Nwachukwu Nweke is unwilling to take all the blame for his failure. Simply put, he did not

get the proper start, or rather, in his opinion someone did not recognise his potential and give him the necessary lift-off that would have made him great. Therefore, he sees himself as a palm-wine tree that was not tapped when it was mature, and so failed to yield wine.

The two examples are studded with the appropriate metaphors, essential ingredients in proverbs. We can imagine the difficulty of a person trying to blow a fire and smile at the same time. Whenever he daydreamed of his prospects in his next life on earth Nwachukwu could not hold back the smiles generated by his happiness, not even when he was blowing the fire. In his context it was most appropriate, for having neither wife nor children, he did his own cooking and knew what he was talking about when it came to blowing fires.

Concerning this saying, I once overheard my grandmother remark that the man did not get it the way he had hoped when he reincarnated. When he died from hernia nobody had bothered to "look over his body", that is, perform a post mortem to determine the cause of death before burial. He therefore came back with the hernia, which killed him within a few days of being born. Fate had cheated him a second time.

In the second proverb he has chosen his metaphors from the principal occupation of many people from the town of his birth — palm-wine tapping. Itu is famous for the quality of its palm-wine, and it is no great surprise that this is one of Nwachukwu's most popular and most quoted sayings. Again, reflected in this proverb is that other quality of proverbs which has been very well-expressed by Whiting in his essay, that is that proverbs from among rural peoples (and those he chooses to call primitives/savages):

> In general . . . are filled with allusions to the life and occupation of the folk and draw illustrations from the wild life of the jungles.[6]

Many sayings are credited to Nwachukwu. Principal among them are these:

1 When I see a well-made latrine, I am tempted to take purgative medicine . . . M-hu otikpiri ekwemara-ekwema ya agum je raa ọgwu afọ.

2 People (women) recognise that I am a man only when I am at the latrine . . . Mgbe l'eji ama si awum nwoko wu mgbe m-nọ n'otikpiri.

3 Even with four hundred guns the cockroach can never go past the fowl's domain . . . Ọchicha kpara nnu egbe, ọgafeghi n'ama ọkukọ.

4 When it is said that I can't speak the white man's language ("okwu bekee") does that include when my concubine is around? . . . Ke asi m'amaghi okwu bekee, ọwu ehi ikom nwanyi biara?

5 The man who is expecting his lover/concubine hears even the footsteps/footfalls of spirits . . . Onye tugha anya iko ya nwanyi ji anu ikete ukwu ndi mmuọ.

I shall now proceed to analyse these sayings and give details of the situations under which Nwachukwu is said to have uttered them. He is reported to have said proverb No.1 in answer to the complaints of another villager whom he had kept waiting, while spending an uncomfortably long time in a newly-made latrine. There is a problem embodied in the saying: the desire is strong in the man to over-indulge himself because of the beauty (!) of the new latrine but since such over-indulgence will only bring problems and discomforts the desire must be kept in check. If, however, the man decides to go ahead and take his purgative medicine in order to satisfy his desire, he will grow sick and tired soon enough. Nwachukwu's rather lame excuse therefore carried an abundant lesson. Other more common Igbo proverbs that embody this ultimate lesson we have derived from Nwachukwu's saying are these: "Ihe na atọ utọ ji egbu ebgu . . . That which tastes sweet can also kill" and "Ifuru osisi n'atọ nwa nnunu n'eji akafu ya . . . The sweet blossom that attracts the little bird lures it into a trap".

Proverb No. 2 is a comment by Nwachukwu on himself and derives from the village way of life. In Igboland the pit latrine is situated a little way from the compound and usually has some kind of cover around it, so that it is not possible from outside this cover to see who is using the latrine at any one time. Besides, it is constructed in such a way that two people (men most often) can use it at the same time if they choose to. If a person approaching the latrine suspects that it is in use the person asks, "Is there a woman there?" (if he is a man), or "Is there a man there?" (if she is a woman).

This is the background to this humorous observation which, like a lot of other things Nwachukwu said, was so true of himself that people could hardly help remembering and filing it away in their stock of village lore; for, having little material wealth, Nwachukwu was no success with the females of the community, and his most frequent opportunities for telling them that he was a man was when they asked the above precautionary questions, that is when approaching the latrine.

Proverb No. 3 is an apt and neat summary of an everyday natural occurrence: the fact that the fowl will always defeat and devour the cockroach, no matter the size of such a cockroach. Nwachukwu is said to have made this statement to another villager with whom he had a quarrel. The man, richer and more prosperous, had threatened to use his resources to punish Nwachukwu. Unfortunately, he and his clan were regarded as little more than recent arrivals in the village as many people, including Nwachukwu, could still remember when their fathers first came to settle in the village. Nwachukwu, whose ancestral roots had gone deep into the village soil, believed that he had a natural superiority over his foe, wealth notwithstanding.

The fact that this statement arose out of a live situation, and the excellent selection of imagery, made it register immediately with those who were present. Moreover, the choice of number is not random, for "nnu" (400) reflects the Igbo way of counting, being the highest point, after which the person counting has to begin again from a unit.

Proverb No. 4 is a very humorous one, deriving its appeal from the associations it would rouse in the mind of any full-blooded male. Nwachukwu never went to school and so could not speak the white man's language; but there is very much more to the saying than just this fact. The handicap of illiteracy, symbolised in Igboland by an inability to speak English, above every other thing, is implied; secondly, the fact that lovers talk a lot of nonsense — "sweet nothings" — to each other. Again, Nwachukwu is in fact saying that he does not need the sophistication of education to be an effective lover. He is said to have made the statement in answer to someone's remark that in spite of his poverty he always bought delicacies on the days his lover (he did have one) came to his house. As another Igbo proverb says, "Age is nothing to an old woman when it comes to the dance she danced in her youth". In other words, Nwachukwu was not going to let his poverty show itself in any manner on such days!

Proverb No. 5 again centres on the lover. When a man is expecting his lover he is, naturally, very excited and listens out for the slightest sound of a person entering the compound. In such a state, any little sound is more than amplified in his mind. There is a striking and effective use of hyperbole here — hearing the footfalls of spirits. The Igbo believe that spirits appear only at night, as can be seen in the rhetorical proverb, "If spirits are never scared of men why do they sneak about in the dark?" If and when they do appear in the daytime, or any other time for that matter, they are believed to walk a few inches above the ground, so that no one can hear their footsteps.

Nwachukwu, then, is the first example to be discussed here of people in the area who created sayings that have become proverbs within the localities where they lived, and which have gradually gained currency in other places, where occasions have made their use relevant. In Itu, his native town, those who know the origin of these sayings often name him before quoting the proverbs, but outside Itu I have heard people start off with the less exact prefix, "Onye Itu si . . . An Itu man said . . . ". With time, no doubt, both his name and place of birth will be forgotten and the sayings will acquire the anonymity of other older sayings. The same fate will befall the other examples which follow.

If you become friends with an Itu man and discover that he has one fault that makes you ignore his other good qualities, he might one day say to you "Ibi-a dim ni amahiele Umuakuru ihu . . . This "ibi" (elephantiasis of the scrotum) on me has misled the people of Umuakuru". Such a man would be quoting a saying credited to a man named Oforma, from Umuakuru kindred.

Oforma had an unusually large elephantiasis of the scrotum, as well as the ultimate flaw of being a thief. Because of this latter flaw he was never allowed to give his opinions in kindred gatherings and deliberations, being treated with a lot of deserved contempt. But on a particularly humiliating occasion, he is reported to have made the above statement to the gathering. One observes the crafty thief's ploy of ignoring the main reason for his public humiliations, his moral flaw, and attributing such humiliations to a physical and irrelevant deformity. However, although his statement did not tell the truth about him, those who thought about it later must have come to see it as a remarkable and picturesque articulation of society's often unpardonable fault of letting one fault in a man totally blind that society to any other commendable qualities such a man might possess. In fairness to Oforma, though, it must be said that his "ibi" was of such an outsize proportion that even when he was not trying to attract attention to himself, people could not help but stare.

If you made it your business in Itu, Okpofe, Amumara, or any neighbouring town to these, to highlight what you consider a problem with any person's life -- that you heard that his wife is a bad cook, for example — he might say to you, "No matter the shape of my lips, they are mine alone to lick", a proverbial way of telling you to take your eyes off something that has nothing to do with you.

This saying is attributed to Awuja, a one-time warrant chief and customary court judge. His wealth and influence could do nothing,

however, to offset his ugly visage, which seemed to be centred on a remarkably large and outsize pair of coarse lips. Among his peers these lips became the centre of attack, either in jest or in serious arguments, when such arguments deteriorated to name-calling. On one such occasion he told them that they were disturbing themselves over what did not concern them, that "Otu-na-otu ọnu-m n'adila a-mu n'aragbu ya", which has been translated above. The saying soon became famous, along with Awuja's lips of course, as people who had never previously come close enough, or bothered to take a detailed look, soon knew that his lips were indeed remarkable.

A slightly similar case concerns a man from my kindred, called Osuagwu Anosike. He was short, but possessed such a remarkable personality that among native court judges, of whom he was one, he was known as "Odi mkpu-mkpu na eme ire — The short one that proves true (effective)". In spite of his social position, however, he had the habit, considered quite unmanly, of spending most of his leisure time in his favourite wife's, Anigbo's, hut, which also contained her kitchen. Whenever his friends came to visit him they would find him in Anigbo's *usokwu* (kitchen). Naturally, they began to make jokes about this habit at his expense, in and away from his compound. He had a sense of humour and on one such occasion replied, "Nga Anigbo dowerem na usokwu ya di-m ahu mma . . . Where Anigbo placed me in her kitchen suits my body".

At that time it was generally interpreted to mean that the man stayed near his wife's kitchen so that he would not miss any occasional delicacies she might cook for her children. Subsequently, however, the wider applicability of this statement became obvious, especially if one wanted to explain away an undignifying weakness, give an action a mysterious cause, or attach to it a mysterious benefit. Wine-bar addicts and compulsive gamblers quote this saying sometimes in defence or justification of their ways. Again, there is that famous statement with which a one-eyed man used to silence teasing children: "You don't know the special advantages of having only one eye . . . Unu amaghi uru anya-mpi bara", implying that his one eye not only had the power of two or even more eyes, but that he could avoid seeing some unpleasant things because of his deformity.

It will have been noticed by now that one common feature of the people whose sayings have been discussed so far is that they were conspicuous in their communities for one reason or another. They were either chiefs, judges, social rejects or failures.

As Whiting says:

> Such persons . . . must have been conscious of their authorship and have been in a position to impose recognition [e.g. chiefs] of their authorship on others.[7]

All this is generally consonant with the view, concerning the origin of proverbs that

> We must suppose that some individual formulated an idea in words, or drew a lesson from a scene, but the result was only a sententious remark or an instructive exemplification of a truth until tradition accepted the statement and, while accepting it, adapted it if necessary, in an inimitable fashion. But the invention and the acceptance are essential to make a proverb.[8]

One also observes, especially in the cases of Nwachukwu Nweke and Oforma, that there appears to be a veiled admiration on the part of the larger community for the fact that these men, failures in various ways, should be able to speak so wittily and strikingly. This should then account for the fact that some of the sayings of some half-demented, or even clearly mad people have grown to the status of proverbs. William Ferris quotes L W Doob as writing that

> A well-established folk figure is a useful ingredient to add to a new communication in the same society. A reference to him is likely to attract attention. Then, when responses clearly associated with him are evoked, they aid the audience in comprehending and learning the content of the communication.[9]

This is valid; but one must add that the "folk figure" could also be the originator of a saying, not merely the enriching ingredient.

For example, "Otu o-kwuru n'Obowo, ọ-wu otu o-kwuru n'Obọkwu . . . How it sounded in Obowo is how it sounded in Obokwu", used to be the concluding statement of a talkative itinerant man called "Dr" Ben. He used to appear, once in every three or four months, in the Itu market place and other such places, carrying a crude amplifier, and would proceed to recite all the wonders he had seen, for he claimed to have gone round the world. One of the lessons he had learned, he said, was that in all places people were the same, or behaved in the same way, which is the purport of the above saying. He was a native of Obowo and, clearly, the world he had traversed must have been a very small one.

However, in 1957, during the tragic outbreak of influenza in Nigeria, a man came to visit my father. He was from a neighbouring town and when my father asked after the general state of health in the visitor's town he replied, "Dr Ben said . . . " and quoted Dr Ben's words. All the grown-up persons around needed no further details to know that things were pretty much the same everywhere.

Another oft-quoted saying of Dr Ben's is this: "Onye eze luru ọgu-ndom-na-iri, ihe onwe wu otu, umu nna ya nwe ọgu-na-itolu . . . The chief who marries twenty and ten wives owns only one, his kinsmen own twenty nine". Apart from the surface truth of the saying, the Igbo attitude to wealth is also embodied here. When a man is very wealthy in his community, it is impossible for him alone to exhaust the benefits of his wealth. One way or another the community will share in it. The saying became a supplement to the more general Igbo proverb: "When it (yam) roasts to perfection, even the ants get a share . . . Ya ghee rughu-rughu ya abara ndanda".

As was said before, the uniqueness of the character who makes an utterance often adds to its memorableness. What would sound mundane and unstriking in a normal, intelligent and socially accepted man-in-the-street would be striking in a person with some social disadvantage, or at the other extreme acquire dignity in the mouth of a man in a distinguished position. In the same way, a statement that looks foolish and crude in normal persons often becomes amusing when uttered by a mad person.

Christopher Okigbo in one of his poems mentions and quotes a character called Jadum.[10] Jadum was a rather demented wag-minstrel who, it is said, was a well-known figure in and around Awka in the forties and fifties. Apart from what Okigbo quotes from him, he is also credited with saying that if a woman was cut into two he would grab the lower half!

Jadum's taste for meat was notorious and he is reputed to have decimated the pigeon population within miles of the market place where he made his home. On one occasion he killed a dog, and proceeded to burn off the animal's hairs. The heat, naturally, contracted the skin around the dead dog's mouth, exposing its teeth. Jadum is said to have looked at this phenomenon and told the dog, "Ọsọọ gi, ọsọhu-m . . . If you are amused, I am not!" The curious crowd of people around were struck by the ironic humour of the situation, a dog laughing when the man who killed it and was preparing

to eat it thought that there was nothing to laugh about. From that moment, a common everyday remark acquired a new, remarkable colour and richness of association.

Finally, Jadum is quoted as having remarked at the burial of a woman that, "Afuhọ nke alalu ọbulu uke enili ani . . . Men haven't seen the one to sleep with, but there is one to be buried in the ground". As we know, some sayings are more risqué than others, and this particular one would have sounded abominable in the mouth of a decent citizen at that moment. But even so, it does find a place for itself from time to time.

The second part of this paper will examine a number of sayings which are unique because they reflect another fact in the making and growth of proverbs: the fact that even when we are not aware of it, the stock of proverbs and sayings in any society is daily enriched by new experiences and contemporary realities. Moreover, old proverbs can be reworded here and there without losing their original flavour, while reflecting the new ways. This should not be surprising. There is a strong possibility that some day "the pot calling the kettle black" will disappear as an expression because it will not arouse appropriate images in the minds of people a few generations from now. But then, a new expression will come up, somehow, to do the work that this one used to do.

Alan Dundes[11] quotes a Yoruba proverb, "What happened to his beard? we ask of the corpse of a man burnt to death". Wole Soyinka has the words "the priest" instead of "the man" in his own version of this saying.[12] What is of interest in this proverb is that wherever I have heard it in Igboland both "the man" and "the priest" have been replaced by the word "Father" (European priest, pronounced "fada"). This reflects the fact that many Igbos are Christian; but more importantly, it embodies the folk remembrance of the abundant beards which the earlier generations of European missionary priests used to wear. There is, of course, a more traditional Igbo proverb for reproaching people for asking silly questions: "When you hear that a house has fallen to the ground, do you ask if the shelf fell with it? . . . Gi nu si ulọ dara iji aju ma ọwu ya na uko?"

Most people who live on the western side of Nigeria's Imo river are familiar with the saying that "There is no way you can go to Ngwa without crossing water (i.e. Imo River) . . . Ọdighi ebe esiri ga Ngwa ghara ife mmiri". The Ngwa people, who live on the Eastern side of the

same river, have the same saying, merely substituting "Ohuhu" for "Ngwa". ("Ohuhu" is their name for those who live along the opposite side of the river and people who do not speak the Ngwa dialect of Igbo). In today's larger world and longer travels, however, one is more likely to hear people say, "There is no short route to Lagos . . . Ọdighi uzọ esi jee Lagos di nso". In both examples there is literal truth, but the second example is more likely to be appreciated by the educated and trading classes who, at one time or another, have to go to Lagos, Nigeria's capital, and are familiar with the physical distance. In other words, it is very much a topical saying, but a proverb can also lend itself to use in any situation where the older "Ngwa-ohuhu" proverb can be used, that is a situation where a difficulty cannot be circumvented but must be confronted.

Another modern saying concerning Lagos is this: "Ije Lagos abughi nsogbu, ọbu inata . . . Going to Lagos is not the problem, it is coming back". The saying reflects the reputation of Lagos as a city whose charms and temptations grip visitors so strongly that they stay put, forgetting their villages and kith and kin. This saying is usually quoted as advice to people who are plunging into ventures that may overwhelm them and from which they may not easily extricate themselves.

Contact with technology has yielded a stock of sayings that are seen, in spite of their contemporariness, as valid proverbs and are used as such. The view that "City or industrial life as we know it in modern times has not given rise to many proverbs"[13] should only be accepted with a good deal of qualification. When Nwachukwu Nweke talked about the cockroach and four hundred guns, for example, he was referring, in the gun, to a recent object, for guns came with the white man. Other examples include, "Onye n'enweghi egbe si ndi mmuọ sọ obi mkpara . . . The man who owns no gun claims that spirits are more terrified of stout sticks". This is quoted about a person who pretends that an inferior possession is as good as, or even better than the real thing, and "Onye ugbọ gburu nti gburu ya . . . The person killed by a motor vehicle died from deafness". There is a one-to-one correspondence between this saying and the more traditional one from which it derives: "Ukpara okpoko gburu nti gburu ya . . . The grasshopper killed by a whooping crane died from deafness". The "motor vehicle" version updates the older one and makes it more comprehensible to a generation that is more familiar with the motor car than with the whooping crane.

The coming of Europeans to Nigeria and the building of north-south roads and railways brought the Igbo man into contact with his Northern compatriot. To the average Igbo man every Northerner is "Hausa"; nobody bothers to know that, though they speak Hausa, most of the cattle traders who come from the North, armed with their ubiquitous bows and arrows are, in fact, Fulani. It appears that no one has ever seen these arrows fired. If, therefore, two people are quarrelling and one boasts that he will harm the other, and if the boaster has a reputation for such empty threats, his adversary might say to him: "Ọwughi taa ka anyi huwara Hausa na uta . . . It is not today we began to see the Hausa and their arrows".

A curious twist was added to this proverb after the Nigerian civil war which the Igbos lost, and which was largely seen as an Igbo-Hausa confrontation. Thus, the boaster might reply to his foe. "They have fired the arrows and you know what it was like!" This reflects changing facts and realities and, perhaps with time, this particular proverb will become obsolete.

New trades and professions are also adding a stock of new proverbs to existing ones. For instance, if a man is faced with a choice between two identical looking objects, but one of which is definitely a fake, he might express his difficulty with the saying, "ndi mechanic ekweghi anyi mara ndi wu ndi ara . . . The mechanics will not let us know the genuinely mad people", an apt commentary on the generally greasy, dirty and ragged appearance of most mechanics in Nigeria. And this other example, "Kedu nke jikọrọ udele na barber? What business has the vulture with the barber?". The vulture is known for his bald pate.

Other sayings have grown out of the adoption of Christianity, even though they are irreverent in their tone. For instance, you might caution a person who is over-indulging himself because he has got the opportunity with this saying: "Anye ga ikwo si nwa aturu Chineke nwuru ragbuo onwe anyi na mmiri aturu . . . Shall we kill ourselves with eating lamb broth just because the lamb of God was killed?" Again, if a person who is engaged in a competition wastes his time on trivialities while his rivals make headway, the following saying might wake him up, "Anokwana na ikele Maria ndi ozo ejuputa na gracia . . . Make sure you don't spend all your time hailing Maria (Mary) while others (rivals) get filled up with gracia".

In the communities from which all the examples are taken, the proverb is still a very vital aspect of speech. The Igbo see the knowledge of

proverbs and their appropriate application as the distinguishing marks of a true son of the soil, a full-blooded Igbo. In daily conversation, especially in a society where interpersonal contact is such a common and expected way of life, proverbs give sparkle and depth to the limitless conversations that ensue between people. As Achebe has rendered it, proverbs are "the palm oil with which words are eaten". There are proverbs which fit into virtually every action of the Igbo man, details of which we need not go into here. But the Igbo expect that every person who has the honour of bearing Igbo blood should know his proverbs, for they are synonymous with the wisdom of the Igbo and embody a good deal of their philosophical viewpoint. Unless in a quarrel, in which case a person would want to confirm his interpretation of his adversary's proverb so that he can use it as evidence later, a person is expected to understand what is intended in a proverb first time, without asking for an interpretation. To ask for one is a reflection of immaturity. As the Igbo say, "If a man asks for an interpretation after a proverb is quoted for him, the bride money paid for his mother was merely thrown away!".

It is conceivable that among a people who have such a respect for them, proverbs have a long lease of life yet and will, in fact, continue to multiply with new experiences.

I have supported firstly the theory that proverbs, no matter what their present age and anonymity of origin, were initially the coinages of individuals in various communities, and that these individual coinages became communal property because the communities were struck by the truths they embody, as well as the quality of expression in them. This discussion has used examples of proverbs whose coiners are still remembered in the places where they were born, or where they lived. In order to do this with reasonable accuracy my examples have been taken from a restricted area of Igboland which I know very well and in which I grew up.

Secondly, I have tried to show, through contemporary examples, that the stock of proverbs in any community is enriched daily as the society experiences new realities and adapts to new facts. Just as new words are coined or are adopted to express or reflect new facts, new sayings are constantly being formulated to enshrine new experiences. Again, old sayings are in some cases being updated through the substitution of new words and images, and thus are becoming more easily comprehensible to newer generations of people in these societies.

Finally, in Nigerian society the proverb still has a pre-eminent place in daily life and has a long lease of life ahead of it.

NOTES

1 Maria Leach (ed.) *Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend*, 2 vols. (New York 1950), pp.902-5.

2 *Ibid.*

3 B J Whiting, 'The Origin of the Proverb', *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature*, XIII (1931), pp.47-80.

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8 Maria Leach, *op. cit.*

9 William R Ferris, "Folklore and the African Novelist — Achebe and Tutuola", *Journal of American Folklore*, 86 (1973) pp.25-36.

10 Christopher Okigbo, *Labyrinths: Poems*, Heinemann African Writers Series, (London 1971) p.8

11 Alan Dundes, "Some Yoruba Wellerisms, Dialogue Proverbs, and Tongue Twisters"; *Folklore* 75 (Spring, 1964) pp.113-20.

12 Wole Soyinka, *A Dance of the Forests* in *Five plays* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964) p.71.

13 Maria Leach, *op.cit.*

Horn Scalepressing with Reference to the Craft in the Village of Stannington, Sheffield

D J Smith

The use of purely natural materials in Sheffield crafts probably reached a peak in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Beside the cutlery industry there were comb-makers using bone, horn and tortoiseshell, and there were also buttonmakers using bone, horn and pearl in addition to metal.

The eighteenth century expansion of the cutlery industry however made it a major consumer of native and foreign woods, tortoiseshell, iron and horn in great quantities, and also of bone, the latter often stained or carved. All these materials were used for hafting cutlery wares and for the scales or "coverings" of knives and other cutlery. Horn, that most attractive of materials, was employed for other uses also, as witness an agreement of 1749 between Benjamin Siddall of Sheffield and John Milner of Sheffield. Siddall agreed to press lanthorn plates for Milner at the rate of two shillings per hundred. The makers of common razors employed horn for hafting them, and in the year 1731, according to Leader in his *History of The Cutlers Company*, Jeremiah Rollinson of Sheffield was fined forty shillings for selling pressed natural horn scales to a London merchant, unhafted, this being against the Statutes of the Company of Cutlers.

The manufacture of "spotted knives", i.e. horn hafted or scaled knives, was extensive during the eighteenth century. An agreement of 1777 exists referring to the making of "horn spotted knives in sizes varying in price from two shillings and sixpence to three shillings and sixpence per dozen." In such agreements a merchant or "factor" would contract to buy a cutler's whole output. Gale and Martins' Sheffield directory for the year 1787 lists 9 makers of "spotted-knives" in Sheffield, with a total of seventy six makers in the neighbouring villages, particularly in the villages of Wadsley, Stannington and Worrall. In early times the knife made by the cutler was entirely of his own manufacture, the early acts of the Cutlers Company decreeing that the cutler forged, marked and finished his blades and also that he made and fitted the hafts or scales to them. Inventories of rural cutlers testify to this; for example, included in the smithy-tools of Benjamin Drabble of Lowash near Worrall in 1710 are "a great vice and four pairs of presses" (the latter

dies or moulds) worth £1 . 10 . 0d. in all. In the inventory of Joseph Trickett of Mousehole forge near Malin Bridge 1779 "a large pressing vice" worth £2, a "lesser pressing vice" worth 16/-, "3 pair of presses" worth twelve shillings. The Tricketts are listed in the directory of 1774 as makers of "spotted-knives " in a variety of large sizes priced at between twenty and thirty eight shillings per gross.

The growth of the razor trade and its adoption in the Stannington area — six makers being listed in this area in 1787 — led to a specialisation of processes, so that by the mid-eighteenth century skilled razor-smiths and grinders are listed in local documents. However, the specialised producers of hafts and scales which emerged with the growth of the industry appear to have been confined within the town of Sheffield until the early nineteenth century, the number of eight haft-pressers in Sheffield in 1787 growing to forty-seven by 1828.

Wilmot Taylor in his book *The Sheffield Horn Industry* (Sheffield, 1927), tells us that even in the early nineteenth century some of the older local firms were wont to make both knife and haft entirely themselves. Thomas Creswick's list of engravings published in 1811 shows that elaborately pressed hafts and scales, bearing such pattern-names as "Highflyer", "Old flute", "Corinthian", "Tulip-head", "Nonsuch", and "Madam Bonaparte", were being made in Sheffield for hafting table knives and other cutlery. Benjamin Kay of Holdworth near Loxley, listed in Wardle's 1814-15 directory, appears to have been one of the earliest haft-pressers outside Sheffield. In his will of 1821 however, he is described as a cutler leaving his smithy-tools to his son Joseph. He was also a small landowner and farmer, and a number of his descendants followed him as scale-pressers.

In the 1820s specialised pressers of scales, probably working to supply the demands of local razor manufacturers, were emerging in the village of Stannington. One such scale presser listed is George Revitt, a surname prominent amongst the Stannington razor-makers from the eighteenth century onwards. At the time of the earliest Census (1841) the craft of scalepressing was firmly established in Stannington. Of the thirteen pressers, seven were working in the Uppergate area, where the craft was prominent, possibly supplying or being employed by razor-makers in this area. Six scalepressers are scattered in other parts of the area; in 1841 two of these were in Dungworth; of the thirteen scalepressers only six were employing apprentices at this period.

In 1841 the Shaw and Revitt families of razor-makers and razor-scale pressers are prominent and a few people originating from outside the

locality were employed in the craft. The will of Samuel Shaw of Nethercliffe farm near Dungworth dated 1842 shows that he combined razor-scalepressing with farming. Cattle, farm implements and craft-tools are given to his son George to enable him to carry on his trade as a razor-scalepresser. Shaw senior died in 1844 aged only fifty seven.

The vast expansion of the Sheffield cutlery trades by 1847 was involving an average yearly import of around 1,400 tons of horn, ox and black buffalo horns from South America, Australia and other places, which was widely used for pressing scales, combs, razor-scales etc. By the year 1861 twenty five scalepressers employing twelve apprentices are noted in the hamlets of Stannington — almost double the numbers of twenty years previously. With the decline in the number of Stannington razor manufacturers the "pressers" produced work for the large Sheffield firms such as J. Rodgers, Cadman's etc. Whilst many workers were locally born, or came from Sheffield, a number of the apprentice Stannington scalepressers of 1861 are from Derbyshire villages, a trend in common with other branches of the local cutlery trade. The development of the Liberty Hill area from around 1860-80, with the building of terraces of new stone houses and workshops, led to the craft being carried on there also. Such names as James Crookes, Robert Mettam, and Abraham Middleton appear as scalepressers in this area by the 1880s, in addition to workers in the old village. Experiments in early plastics as a cheaper substitute for materials such as ivory and horn were being carried out in Sheffield by the late nineteenth century. The ill-starred "Parkesene" of the late 1880s was found to be too brittle and loosely compacted. This early plastic material was used in hafting table-knives. "Xylonite", "Vulcanite" etc. were being used fairly extensively in imitation of the more expensive materials such as tortoiseshell by the year 1902.

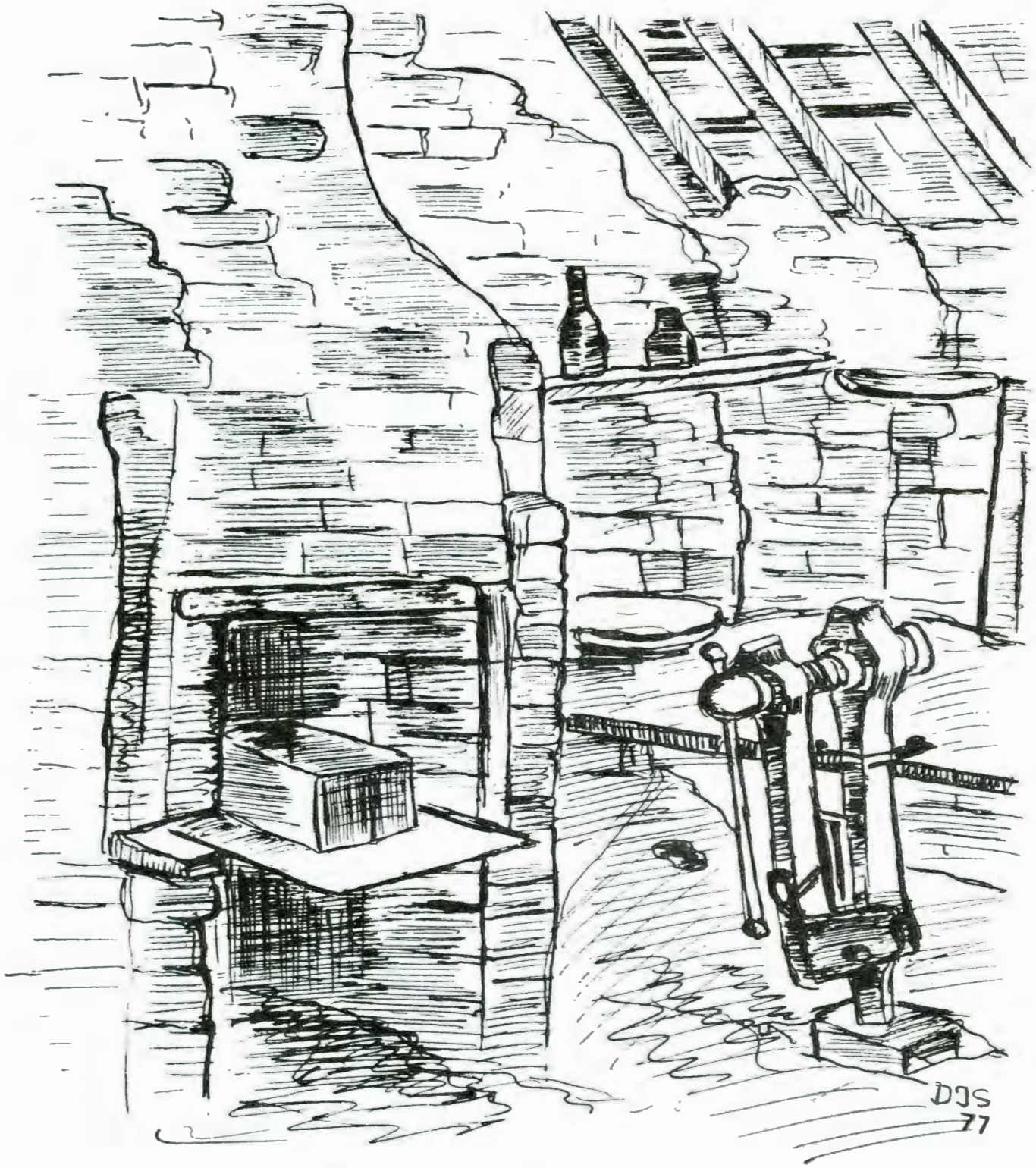
Stannington Scalepressing Processes and Workers in 1900

Whilst a few people combined razor scalepressing with farming or shop-keeping, many worked full time at the craft. Horns fetched by the village carrier or by the small master in his own "spring cart" (a light cart) were used by the workmen of Stannington, some of whom worked alone, some in teams — for example those employed by the Gillots of Uppergate. In the workshop one man cutting horns would supply two or more pressers. A load of about nine to ten hundred-weights would last a considerable period. Horns brought from Sheffield were often steeped in barrels of water for two to three weeks before being cut into sections with a wide-bladed saw of the butcher's type

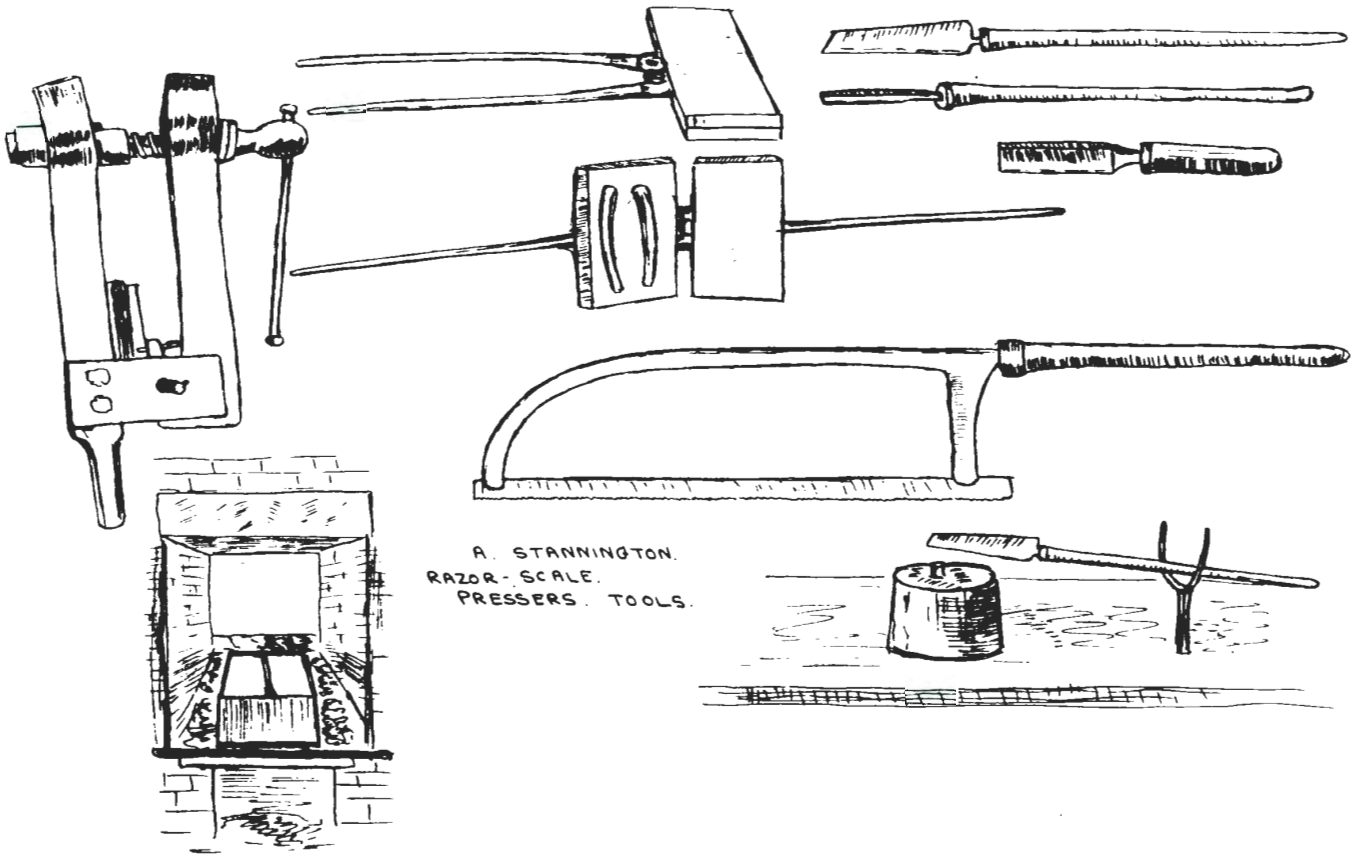
with a blade around three feet in length. The rough, uneven horn was then cut into strips six to seven inches long before being trimmed and boiled in an iron pan with two compartments over a fire of small coals. Scales picked out with tweezers were used in succession from each compartment of the pan.

The ox or buffalo horn, or even hoof, which incidentally resembled tortoiseshell when finished, was then trimmed to size on a round "log" of cherry or some other hardwood. Secured to the workbench by a sunken bolt in its centre, the log was used in conjunction with a knife with a three foot handle, supported in an iron fork or crutch, or by the workman's knee; this knife was the "sweigh-knife" described in the 1850s, called a "sway-knife" by S. O. Addy in 1888 and by the workers themselves as a "swyting-knife"; all these terms describe the action of the knife in use. The horn segments, hot and pliable from boiling in the waterpan, were ready for pressing to the shape of razor scales. Dies shaped like waffle-irons, each holding a pair of scales, were heated on the scalepan. Spitting on the dies to test for heat, the scalepresser lubricated the polished steel faces with linseed oil applied with a goose-feather before inserting the horn strips, closing the dies and screwing them into the press. The great iron scalepress, weighing around two to three hundredweights and standing four feet high, had its screw at the top. The jaws below the screw housed the dies under enormous pressure. The press was set into the floor by a leg and also clamped rigid to the workbench. Presses had "fierce" screws (i.e. screws which did not always hold and had to be wedged or pegged for safety) which were sometimes latched to prevent them flying open. The pressing process was swiftly done as horn remained pliable only a short time. Whilst one pair of scales was being pressed another was being worked on. After pressing, the scales were pared with a long-handled "shaving-knife", its blade being fashioned from the back of an old razor-blade with an edge which had been "turned" on a whetstone. This knife took off shavings of horn in fine layers. Finally the "fash" extruded in pressing was trimmed from the scales with a short-handled knife ("skiver"), its blade being a whole razor-blade.

The scales were then sorted into boxes ready for despatch to the Sheffield firms of Rodgers, Monaghan's of Brown Street etc., the local users of scales having dwindled to the Alpha Cutlery works at Townend, Stannington. We picture Albert Gregory, scalepresser at Knowle Top, Nethergate and other places, bundling the week's work of a few gross of scales into the large red handkerchief or "wallett" which was slung over the workman's shoulder, this taking place on a Friday



Brocklehurst family razor-scalepresser's shop, Uppergate, Stannington (now demolished)



Stannington Scalepresser's Tools

KEY. Top left: Iron scalepress or vice, 4ft high; top centre: closed dies or moulds. shown in both closed and open positions; top right: swyting knife, shaving knife and skiver; centre right: saw for cutting horns; bottom left: hearth with pan for boiling scales; bottom right: swyting knife with crutch and log on which scales were trimmed.

or Saturday morning. Taking with him his small son he would walk via Oldfield Lane, Hollins Bridge, Walkley Bank, Leopold Street to Monaghan's Brown Street warehouse where the scales were counted, and he was paid, a good wage in 1900 being £1. 10. 0d. Paying his dues to the ineffective Razorscalepressers' Protection Society (Sheffield and Stannington) he would shop for meat in the Shambles, visit a few pubs, buy his tobacco at Snig Hill, sometimes take his son to a fair or diarama or in winter to a pantomime before taking a horse-tram to Hillsborough and walking homeward via Malin Bridge.

Workshops and Working Conditions in 1900

The small stone workshops often adjoining cottages or farms were often two-storied, the ground floor being a store for coal etc., the upper floor being reached by ladder and a trapdoor. Probably old cutlers' workshops were adapted. Few purpose-built scalepressers' shops appear to have been built. Room-space which would house six cutlers would however only accommodate two or three scalepressers with their benches, and perhaps in addition a horn-cutter.

The now-demolished workshop of the Brocklehurst family at Inman's or Mettam's yard, Uppergate, housed two small bricklined hearths in a common chimney-breast, the fireplaces being small to conserve fuel and heat around the waterpan. Only three feet separated the fireplace and scalepress, allowing the work to be done swiftly and conveniently. An extant workshop in the Rock House yard, Nethergate, housed three workmen, working six presses. Two presses and two pairs of dies were worked by each man to ensure continuity, the work being virtually mass-production by hand methods.

It was an exhausting kind of job being "piecework". The good scalepresser, rising at five-thirty, lit his hearth fire before his house fire, filling his waterpans ready to start work at six-thirty. Then he would be labouring all day at the huge press in the hot sickly atmosphere of the workshop, deftly, skillfully trimming scales; in winter he worked by lamplight. He worked almost all night near Christmas, this being "bull-week", a week in which as much work as possible was completed before the holiday, and enough money had to be earned for a good Christmas. Nevertheless there were some compensations: no set hours or rules and a degree of independence. Sometimes on hearing the Stannington hunt pass, the scalepresser would cease work, roll up his cloth apron, withdraw waterpan and dies from the fire and set off for a day's hunting. Pigeon racing for small wagers was also popular. There were

however no holidays; a week or two helping out in the fields at haytime or harvest provided a welcome change from the workshop. Otherwise there were only Sunday morning rambles in the locality.

Types of Work made, etc.

Beside the plain "green horn" (natural, undyed horn) razor-scales and black buffalo ones, some workers pressed horn pocketknife scales, some of these being locally used. Gillots of Uppergate pressed the transparent horn scales for the "fishhook" type spring knives which were assembled at Alpha Works, Townend. A gilt paper bearing a trademark was pinned under the scales of these knives, being visible under the horn, the practice bearing a similarity to the penknives of the eighteenth century which bore mottoes. Tableknife scales were being pressed by Thomas Richardson in 1900, his wife carrying on the trade in Nethergate in 1910, probably in conjunction with farming. Horn razor-scales pressed at Stannington were sometimes decorated by having small "German-silver" or Britannia-metal ornaments half an inch long pressed into them; these took the form of racehorses, coats of arms, or devices such as initials or the Prince of Wales' feathers. Nothing of the horn was wasted; points of horns made "pegging-needles" for working rag rugs, slivers made toothpicks, the waste shavings or dust were appreciated by the holders of allotments on the Deer Park, being dug in to produce good crops of vegetables.

The Decline and End of the Craft

The beginning of the twentieth century saw the horn razor-scale being replaced by plastics, in both plain and fancy finishes, even aluminium being used at times. Foreign manufacturers adopted hydraulic presses, though Sheffield retained hand methods. A few scalepressers withdrew from the craft early in the Stannington area, few youngsters taking their places, and then not always liking the work. For those who remained however there was the short boom of 1914-18 when Stannington "pressers" were making scales for army razors. Demand exceeded supply. For a time wages rose and the Gillots of Uppergate had to employ a carrier during these years. Inevitably there was a recession after the war. The trade declined, old scalepressers died or retired, leaving their presses to rust, grease-horns still attached, oil bottles empty, workshops filled with dust from the crumbling sandstone walls.

The early twentieth century saw many "patent" type razors, some of which aped the "cutthroat" but had replaceable blades. By the 1920s

the "safety"-razor spelt the deathknell of the older types. A few optimists hoping for a return to the "cutthroat" razor worked on for a time. Robert Gillot of Uppergate, the last scalepresser, worked until around 1930, working for an all but extinct market. Indebted for materials, Gillot was eventually forced to sell his "stock in trade" of finished scales to his suppliers. A vast quantity of his pressed scales lay around until sold for scrap as a "job-lot".

In Sheffield machete scales were pressed for the South American market until around 1930. These were inlaid with brass ornaments. In this trade one presser worked round a circle of presses. Little survives of the craft in Stannington save the almost derelict scale-pressers' workshop of the Vickers family at Pond Fold near Knowle Top. Alas the tools of the trade have all vanished for scrap-metal.

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Sources and Acknowledgements

My thanks are due to the following: the staff of the archives and local history departments at Sheffield Central Library; Thos. Marshall and Co., Loxley, for permission to quote from the will of S. Shaw of Nethercliffe; Borthwick Institute of Historical Research at the University of York for extracts from the inventory of Benjamin Drabble of Low Ash; Exchequer Probate records, June 1710; Inventory of Joseph Trickett of Mousehole forge, April 1780; will of Benjamin Kay of Holdworth, March 1821; the Central Library, Sheffield, for permission to quote from the following documents and printed sources: Tibbetts Action TC 782, Wheat Col WC1185, Notes on razor patterns 1884-1924 by J. B. Himsworth, Misc. papers 733M., also Misc. Papers 184L by R. W. Cavill - (re plastics). Printed Sources: Wm Fisher, "Notes on Supply of Horns to Sheffield Cutlers", in *Proceedings of the Yorkshire Geological Society* Vol.3 (1849-59), Thomas Creswick, engravings of all horn handles and scales m/d in Sheffield, 1811. Wilmot Taylor, *The Sheffield horn Industry*, 1927. R. E. Leader *History of the Cutlers Company in Hallamshire* (2 vols.), 1906. John Thomas, *The Sheffield local register*, 1830. Sheffield directories, 1774-1930.

Oral Sources

My thanks are also due to Mr. R. Gregory of Brookside near Stannington for most of information on razor scalepressing and regarding the work of his father, Albert Gregory, a scalepresser until 1903. The late Mr. C. Goodison of Oldfield Terrace Road and Mr. J. Turner of Hilltop Road near Dungworth also supplied details of razor scalepressing in Stannington. To them I am most grateful. Without the notes written down by hand from Mr. Gregory it would not have been possible to write in detail about a trade which died fifty years ago.

Further Aspects of Restaurant Stories

G Shorrocks

In a previous issue of *Lore and Language*, I drew attention briefly to the similarity between German restaurant stories and one of the main variants of foreign (usually Chinese) restaurant stories reported for the United Kingdom.[1] Since then I have noted further international interest both in the collection of such stories,[2] and in their interpretation.[3] I should therefore like to take this opportunity of further documenting the genre, and of commenting on the spread and interpretation of the stories. I am grateful to informants who have kindly sent me versions of stories known to them.[4] Round brackets preserve the informants' parentheses; my own comments are in square brackets.

In addition to the variants previously reported,[5] which feature predominantly the "bone-in-the-throat" and "animals-in-the-fridge" motifs, the following may be added for the United Kingdom:

1 Farnworth, Lancs. (now Greater Manchester), early mid-sixties — the tale was told that a Chinese restaurant was using Brand A cat food in its curries.

2. "About 1965, when I was in Nottingham, a colleague told of how a local Chinese restaurant had been found to be serving Brand A cat food. I believe he said a large number of tins had been found on the premises."

3. A more unusual motif is contained in this story, and it would be useful to hear further versions from readers:

"About 1959, while passing through Edinburgh with a friend, I suggested we might have a meal at an Indian restaurant. Horrified at the idea, he told me how a girl (whom he knew?) had once found a piece of gristle in an Indian meal in just such a restaurant. She wrapped it in her handkerchief and later had it analysed. It turned out to be a human finger!"

The following stories concern locations in West Germany[6]:

4. "My wife, who is West German, tells a similar [= similar to number 2] story of a Chinese restaurant in Mannheim. Refuse collectors found empty Brand B tins (Brand B is a dog food) in the dustbins belonging to the establishment."

5. Munich, 1969. The rumour was current amongst students that you got Brand B dog food to eat in the " . . . . . " [Indonesian restaurant].

6. Thansau, 1975. The following story is said to be true, and although it takes place in China, it is thematically close to the stories about restaurants situated in Europe. "A married couple are travelling to China as tourists (it could be another Asiatic country) and go into a restaurant for something to eat. Naturally they cannot speak a word of Chinese, and are only able to make themselves understood by means of sign-language. They simply select something from the menu and point to it. In order that their small dog should not go short, they indicate to the waiter that the dog must be considered too. The meal tastes excellent. Then, when they wish to pay and leave with their dog, they discover that they have just eaten him."

7 and 8 are current tale-types distilled from a number of actual tales by a Munich informant:

7. Chinese restaurant. On inspection frozen rats are found. Possibly a lady got a rat-bone in her throat, which then caused the inspection. It is said that the story is true, and that the restaurant had to close.

8. Chinese restaurant. On inspection enormous quantities of tinned dog-food (Brand B) are found. The inspection is supposed to be due to a complaint about lack of cleanliness. Again it is said that the story is true, and that the restaurant had to close.

The story-type represented by number 7 confirms the impression given by previously reported German material[7] that this particular type is identical to the British examples. Recurrent motifs are:

a. Foreign restaurant (frequently Chinese)
b. Rat-bone in throat
c. Sufferer of (b) female
d. Inspection of premises
e. Animals in fridge
f. Closure of restaurant — Optional.

Motifs (b) and (e) both suggest the consumption of animals which are not normally deemed fit for consumption in British and German society, and tale number 6 — although located in China — would appear to be an elaboration of the same idea.

The type of story represented by tales 1 and 2 is widespread in Britain, although we have not reported specifically on this variant before. It is told of Indian restaurants as well as Chinese. The particular brand of

cat-food cited in these two tales features regularly in the type. The German stories 4, 5 and 8 show a remarkable similarity of motif to the equivalent English stories, and also a remarkable agreement amongst themselves as to the brand of dog-food. This latter point forms a parallel to the use of the same brand of cat food in the English stories. The dominant motifs of this second type are:

a. Foreign restaurant
b. Use of pet-food in cooking
c. Empty pet-food cans in the dustbin — Implies (b)
d. Quantities of pet-food on the premises — Implies (b) ("Inspection of the premises")
e. Closure of the restaurant — Optional

In respect of the "bone-in-the-throat" type of story, Donald Ward has suggested[8] that it clearly reflects a xenophobic attitude of mind. The same interpretation would also be applicable to our second type of story concerning the use of pet-foods.[9] Bengt af Klintberg attributes the restaurant stories to the category of *ethnocentric legends*, and reminds us that there is an older supporting tradition of legends concerned with finding unpleasant things in industrially prepared food.[10]

The only exception to the general theme of "animals" in the stories reported so far is tale number 3. This variant might well be said to take matters one stage further: instead of suggesting that undesirable *animals* are eaten, there is a virtual charge of cannibalism. (At any rate, the strangest of goings-on are implied). Further documentation of this variant is required, and a greater international response would be particularly welcome — if only to say that such tales are unheard of! French informants, for instance, have so far indicated that they do not know any analogues of the German and British foreign restaurant stories. The apparent absence of such stories, at least in parts of France, may possibly be due to strict laws of libel (the legends often name people, specific restaurants, and specific products) and race-relations, although it would obviously be difficult to substantiate such hypotheses.

In respect of Britain and Germany, however, the high degree of similarity between the tales can only lead one to wonder whether specific stories have travelled internationally. Of contemporary rumour in general we read: "Some of these traditions are migratory legends, well known in many parts of the world."[11] Yet it is equally thinkable that like environments and like stimuli could produce identical or

highly similar phenomena. It is perhaps worth remembering that these explanations are not mutually exclusive: both principles may well have been at work.

Once again, I would like to conclude by inviting readers to submit versions of, or comments on these stories. I may be contacted c/o The Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language. With a greater body of data, it would be possible to set up some interesting comparative matrices, and offer a more subtle computer analysis of the motifs.

Notes

1. G Shorrocks, "Chinese Restaurant Stories: International Folklore", in: *Lore and Language*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (July 1975), 30.
2. The stories are requested as part of Item 1 of the Swedish questionnaire: "Nordiska Museet, K. U. Questionnaire 199: The Rumours of Our Time", in: "Contemporary Rumours and Legends", *NIF Newsletter*, Vol. 2, 4/1974, 10-11.
3. See: D Ward, "American and European Narratives as Socio-Psychological Indicators", in J Pentikäinen and T Juurikka (eds), *Folk Narrative Research*, Studia Fennica 20, Helsinki, 1976, and B af Klintberg "Folksägner i dag", in *Fataburen*, 1976, 269-296, see particularly pp.273-276.
4. My thanks are particularly due to D Bouvard, J B Smith, M Sorger and J Steffke.
5. See Shorrocks, *op.cit.*, 30, and the references cited there.
6. I have translated stories 5, 6, 7 and 8 from German into English.
7. Shorrocks, *op.cit.*, 30.
8. In correspondence with the author. See further the reference in note 3, above.
9. In such interpretations, it is perhaps worth noting that humour is "secondary" or "executive" in function to more "basic" impulses, such as fear of the unknown. Should humour itself prove to be a more basic human impulse, however, then there would be scope for different interpretations.
10. Klintberg, *op.cit.*, pp. 294f.
11. "Contemporary Rumours and Legends" (see Note 2, above), 10.

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