



Kranksein in "primitiven" und traditionellen Kulturen by Paul Hinderling

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selbstverständlich keineswegs darum gehen, diese Theorien in ihrer Totalität zu rehabilitieren. Vielmehr wird die These vertreten, daß – trotz mancher Schwächen im Detail – der grundlegende methodisch-theoretische Ansatz auch für die heutige Wissenschaft noch bzw. wieder von Relevanz ist“ (18). Il est vrai que si en ethnologie la problématique évolutionniste est passée de mode, ce n'est nullement parce qu'elle a perdu sa pertinence ou est devenue caduque. Sans doute, comme cela arrive souvent dans les débuts d'une discipline, a-t-on été trop ambitieux, a-t-on mis la charrue devant les bœufs. Mais un jour ces questions qui ont agité les esprits il y a cent ans devront être reprises sur de nouvelles bases, car ce sont des questions auxquelles on ne peut tout simplement pas échapper.

L'ouvrage comporte une énorme bibliographie de plus de 260 pages qui m'a apporté de véritables révélations et sera certainement des plus précieuses pour les chercheurs qui dans l'avenir reprendront cette problématique. Pierre Erny

Hinderling, Paul. *Kranksein in „primitiven“ und traditionellen Kulturen.* 312 pp. Norderstedt 1981. Verlag für Ethnologie.

The author reveals the central question of this study in the first line of his book. I translate: "Which meaning do illness and health have in the awareness of some societies . . . , i. e., how do certain groups experience illness in comparison with health; how do they define and explain this experience of suffering; finally how is people's behaviour related to this fundamental meaning?" To answer these questions Hinderling has scanned a number of ethnographic studies of five ethnic groups: the Kusase in Northern Ghana, the Ngoni-speaking societies in Southeast Africa, the Iban in Sarawak, the Malaysian part of the Indonesian island Kalimantan, the Maya of the Mexican highlands, and people in Central Thailand (his own field notes). The first 200 pages of the book are filled with summarizing ethnographic descriptions of these five peoples, with particular reference to their medical traditions. In the second part of the study the author attempts to present an analysis of the "structural aspects of being ill." These structural aspects include among other things the concepts of illness and health, the medical system, the illness career, the role of specialists, and the communicative praxis.

I must admit that reading the book I felt disappointed after the exciting promise at the outset of the study. Hinderling does not provide a cognitive-semantic analysis as one would expect, but a rather trivial more or less structural-functionalist repetition of what the cited ethnographers have said before.

The idea of presenting some case studies and using them for theoretical analysis seemed attractive at first, but did not work out well. I found it extremely difficult to read through all the case studies because they were too general and long winded for the purpose of this study. The reader gets lost in the details of the descriptions because he does not know what the author is going to do with them. The cases could have been interesting if the author had limited himself to sieving out what the ethnographers have to say about the semantics

of health and illness. An example of a publication where such case studies have been well-integrated in the main argument is Fuller Torrey's provocative *The Mind Game*. Hinderling's book is too general and repetitive to catch the reader's attention.

Another problem of the book is that it lacks a clear theoretical stand. The author tries to arrive at a comprehensive theoretical edifice which can accommodate the various aspects of medical systems. His excuse that such a general framework is not yet available is not completely untrue, but certainly not true either. There are at least impressive attempts to fit the observations of medical anthropologists in a logical and interpretative framework. One example is Wellin's article on the development of theoretical orientations in medical anthropology, which is included in Landy's famous reader *Culture, Disease, and Healing*. Wellin views this development as a growing awareness of ecological implications. Another example is Foster's classification of illness theories in "personalistic" and "naturalistic" etiologies. The author cannot be excused for overlooking these – and other – relevant views.

Hinderling's intention should be appreciated but the outcome has remained below the goals he had set himself. Apparently building a theoretical edifice for medical anthropology is no easy matter. Another book which recently in vain tried to accomplish this is Murdock's *Theories of Illness: A World Survey*. I wait impatiently for a better try.

Sjaak van der Geest

Hodder, Ian (ed.). *Symbolic and Structural Archaeology.* (New Directions in Archaeology.) VIII + 188 pp., illustr. Cambridge 1982. Cambridge University Press. Price: £ 19.50.

Hodder ediert 15 Arbeiten aus dem "Seminar on symbolic and structural archaeology" in Cambridge. Teil I (Arbeit 1–4) befaßt sich mit theoretischen Aspekten. Teil II (Arbeit 5–10) erarbeitet Denkmodelle anhand ethnologischen Materials für archäologische Befunddeutungen. Teil III (Arbeit 11–14) analysiert auf dieser Basis Stichprobenmaterial aus der europäischen Vorgeschichte. Teil IV (Arbeit 15) diskutiert die Grundlagen von G. V. Childe's Theorienbildung („Neolithische Revolution“). Ein ausgezeichnete Index erleichtert auch gezielte Benutzung des Buches.

Der Band stellt so beispielhaft die Arbeitsweise einer neuen und erfolgreichen Arbeitsrichtung in der angelsächsischen "Anthropology" vor. Dabei geht es primär darum, archäologische Quellen nicht nur direkt auszuwerten (z. B. Kulturzugehörigkeit, Zeitstellung, Technikbeherrschung, Handelsbeziehungen), sondern darüber hinaus auch soziologisch (und evt. religionshistorisch) zu interpretieren. Als klassisch empirische Methode kommt dabei vor allem die des Vergleiches zum Einsatz.

Auch wenn es andere Schriften dieser Arbeitsrichtung gibt, dieses Buch ist wegen seines klaren, die Methode explizierenden Aufbaues jedem Interessierten nur zu empfehlen.

Olav Röhrer-Ertl