

A POSSIBLE CASE OF COSMOLOGICAL GENDER IN KHMER

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Like many another language, Khmer makes frequent use of constructions involving two loose-knit constituents standing in semantic opposition to one another. The constructions themselves may be verbal or nominal while their constituents may be single items or phrases. The antithesis in question---that is to say, the linkage between the two terms of such constructions---may be coordinate or alternative depending on the particular terms used and their context. Common examples from modern Khmer are /cèp còol/ 'to go out [and/or] go in', /tòoc thum/ 'to be little [and/or] big', /sliiæk pèək/ 'to put on a lower garment [and] put on an upper garment', /sèeh kuu/ 'odd [or] even', /cwèeŋ sdam/ 'left [and/or] right', and /wíiəl pnum/ 'lowlands [and/or] highlands'. Instances of phrasal constructions are mentioned hereafter. The semantic value of all such constructions is often greater than the sum of their parts, and their investigation from this point of view is of considerable interest in its own right. What I am exclusively concerned with here, however, is the manner in which the members of these constructions are ordered.

Conspicuous in the art, ritual and literature of Southeast Asia is a dualism which in most cultures and in most of its

ifestations appears to lie some distance below the surface of an consciousness. While the peoples of the region are consequently hardly ever able to explain it, most scholars involved in Southeast Asian studies recognize certain instances of this dualism when they encounter them. Common examples of the type of dualism I refer to are the orientation of habitations, sanctuaries and mausoleums; the use of certain colors in the graphics, rites of passage and the romance; the traditional manner in which men and women bind on the sarong or its equivalent; attitudes toward the head, feet and other body parts; and the distribution of the dramatis personae in the *wayang orang* according to sex or function.

Dutch scholars seem to have been the first to acknowledge the existence and significance of this dualism in Southeast Asia, and they undertook its investigation during the first two or three decades of this century.¹ Outside their small circle, however, little response to this work was for the most part lukewarm. Today it seems to be the fashion to grant that dualistic features are present in greater or lesser number in most Southeast Asian cultures, to take them as self-evident, and to suppose that nothing more need be said or done about them. As a result, apart from earlier Dutch work on Indonesia, next to nothing has been done toward examining dualism in specific Southeast Asian cultures or in the region as a whole. Indeed, there is good reason to regard the subject as one of our blind spots.

Properly speaking, investigation of this matter falls within the jurisdiction of anthropologists. At the same time, it should be clear that psychologists and art historians concerned with symbolism as well as students of religion, drama and literature would also have much to add to our understanding of it. Except in one respect, to be mentioned toward the end of this paper, it cannot be said to come within the purview of linguistics.

As briefly as possible, the dualism in question here is a conception of the universe in terms of polar opposites, commonly denominated by anthropologists as a male or positive principle and a female or negative principle. It must be emphasized from the outset that binary cosmological analyses are by no means peculiar to Southeast Asia or even to Asia as a whole.² Rare indeed are the corners of the world where evidence of such conceptions cannot be found. Much of the difficulty the researcher encounters in coming to grips with Southeast Asian dualism arises, in fact, from the circumstance that precisely the same order of ideas is seen not only as underlying many sectors of Hinduism and Buddhism (not to mention Mazdaism, Islam and Christianity) but also as constituting the ideological basis of the *yin-yang* philosophy of China. Moreover, much the same sort of dualism is especially well developed in many cultures of the Pacific.³ To make matters even more embarrassing, what we find in specific Southeast Asian cultures is not a coherent system of dualistic ideas but only what appear to be fragments of former systems, some of which may have

n fairly elaborate. It is only by reassembling ostensible
gments from several neighboring or related cultures that we
begin to synthesize an earlier and fuller system from which
y may or may not have derived and which brings us closer to
understanding their symbolic value. Unfortunately, after two
lennia of heavy outside influences on the cultures of South-
t Asia, it may be too late to hope for much success in separ-
ng fragments of putative local systems from elements brought
from India and China or elsewhere.

The case of Cambodian dualism seems to be typical. What we
re left to deal with is a narrowly circumscribed set of stereo-
es involving polar patterns of expression now relegated to a
bolic function which is only dimly perceived if perceived at
. It will have to suffice here to mention that the basis of
e dualism that can be inferred from these selected remains is
essentially taxonomic: at one time it presumably responded to
a's urge to classify and thereby understand all things coming
thin his field of observation. One of the early manifestations
the spirit of scientific inquiry, this reading of sexual pol-
ty into the organization of the cosmos was probably inspired
knowledge of natural phenomena close to home, notably the dis-
nctive sexual rôles in human society and the cycle of plant
fe. What the precise line of development may have been, if it
s generally similar in Cambodia and other parts of Southeast
ia, we shall probably never know. For purposes of exposition
can do no better than to postulate a set of polar opposites

fundamental enough to presuppose others and at the same time provide impetus for extension.

At the hypothetical outset, knowledge of the interdependent sexes in man's own society must by an easy stretch of the imagination have led to early recognition of sex among mammals and in particular recognition of the striking sexual parallel between man and other creatures. From eventual perception of zoological sex in general it would have been inevitable that early thinkers with a penchant for animism would extend this parallel to the vegetal world and beyond. For members of cultures on a certain level of development it is difficult not to see in the life and growth of plants, especially those plants on which man is dependent, a close analogy to the life and growth of man and animals. The animistic outlook merely carries the analogy one step further to encompass features of the environment we deem inanimate. Eventually, in any case, a short chain of sexual antitheses is fixed

<i>female person</i>	:	<i>male person</i>
<i>female animal</i>	:	<i>male animal</i>
<i>female plant</i>	:	<i>male plant</i>
<i>female thing</i>	:	<i>male thing</i>

It is unlikely that this attribution of sex to plants, objects, and selected features of the environment was ever metaphorical or "poetic." On the contrary, the parallels seen so far probably involved a less-than-abstract transference of categories which cast a new and helpful light on man's relationship to his world.

emerging concatenation of ideas, which of course was partial-demonstrable, was a form of empirical knowledge which attested an ordered universe in which all beings and things fulfilled a role which was theirs by reason of some propriety held to be innate and natural.

Once the basic parallels were grasped, the chain of polar associations extended itself. Overriding grammatical categories, biological attributes of the sexes must have been recognized early and somehow endowed with sex themselves or at least as manifesting sex:

<i>little</i>	:	<i>big</i>
<i>weak</i>	:	<i>strong</i>
<i>fecundity</i>	:	<i>virility</i>
<i>germination</i>	:	<i>impregnation</i>

the process of analogizing gathered momentum the inventory of metaphors took in salient features of the landscape and environment:

<i>earth</i>	:	<i>sky</i>
<i>moon</i>	:	<i>sun</i>
<i>water</i>	:	<i>fire</i>

Moreover, the original parallels carrying the germ of virtually limitless expansion, sex could be ascribed to anything capable of classification. Polar pairs already in the developing system gave rise to new pairs:

<i>left</i>	:	<i>right</i>
<i>night</i>	:	<i>day</i>
<i>black</i>	:	<i>white</i>
<i>cold</i>	:	<i>hot</i>
<i>low</i>	:	<i>high</i>
<i>descent</i>	:	<i>ascent</i>
<i>heavy</i>	:	<i>light</i>
<i>wet</i>	:	<i>dry</i>

In all the paired associations mentioned above and hereafter the member on the left is to be construed as female or feminine, that is to say belonging to or identified with the female or negative category; the member on the right, conversely, is male.

While the pairs in the parallel chains follow no particular order of priority or logical progression, at an early period the possibility of vertical as well as horizontal relationships must have been seen. *left* is horizontally related to *right* as its "natural" opposite; but, more than this, *left* is vertically related to *earth* or *moon* or *black* in the sense that all are members of the same category. Each category, then, can be represented by any one of its members; also, any member can be represented by any other member of the same category. With perception of this nicety a rudimentary symbolism becomes possible.

Predictably, ambiguities and apparent contradictions were accepted into the scheme; these can usually be explained by reference to underlying associations. Nor was it always necessary to

have an explicit antithesis or logical counterpart for cosmological gender to be imputed to a single idea:

<i>issue</i>	:	<i>maturation</i>
<i>blood</i>	:	<i>(non-blood?)</i>
<i>death</i>	:	<i>life</i>
<i>to come forth</i>	:	<i>to penetrate</i>
<i>(non-mana?)</i>	:	<i>mana</i>

In addition, readjustments in the original inventory may have multiplied the complementary pairs taken into the system:

<i>black (of earth)</i>	:	<i>blue (of sky)</i>
<i>red (of blood)</i>	:	<i>green (of plants)</i>
<i>groundwater</i>	:	<i>rainfall</i>

Meanwhile thought must have returned again and again to the physical environment, reaching out to the macrocosmos to pick up new associations and ring the changes on the old:

<i>setting sun</i>	:	<i>rising sun</i>
<i>west</i>	:	<i>east</i>
<i>back</i>	:	<i>front</i>
<i>foot</i>	:	<i>head⁴</i>
<i>afternoon</i>	:	<i>morning</i>
<i>dusk</i>	:	<i>dawn</i>
<i>midnight</i>	:	<i>noon</i>
<i>dark, shade</i>	:	<i>light, bright</i>
<i>north</i>	:	<i>south</i>
<i>decay</i>	:	<i>growth</i>

<i>old age</i>	:	<i>youth</i>
<i>valley</i>	:	<i>hill</i>
<i>downstream</i>	:	<i>upstream</i>
<i>to fall</i>	:	<i>to rise</i>
<i>to recede</i>	:	<i>to advance</i>

Finally, a limited number of abstractions and quasi-ethical associations developed out of this concrete core:

<i>bad</i>	:	<i>good</i>
<i>difficult</i>	:	<i>easy</i>
<i>wrong</i>	:	<i>right</i>
<i>pain</i>	:	<i>pleasure</i>
<i>bad luck</i>	:	<i>good luck</i>
<i>odd</i>	:	<i>even</i>
<i>ineffective</i>	:	<i>effective</i>
<i>cowardly</i>	:	<i>brave</i>
<i>impure</i>	:	<i>pure</i>
<i>profane</i>	:	<i>sacred</i>
<i>common</i>	:	<i>royal</i>
<i>inferior</i>	:	<i>superior</i>
<i>low-priced</i>	:	<i>high-priced</i>
<i>covert</i>	:	<i>overt</i>
<i>sour</i>	:	<i>sweet</i>

For a unified theory of dualism in Southeast Asia there is no lack of evidence that more sophisticated antitheses were introduced into the system under the influence of such extraneous

conceptions as animism, *mana* (already implicit in attitudes toward the east and the head), magic, and astrology. These culminated, as in India and China, in the idea of a cosmic order (*ṛta*) in which the male and female principles, susceptible to manipulation by experts, are in perfect balance---disorder, whether local or universal, resulting from an excess of one over the other. Establishment of a "natural" order of things (*dharma*) became an artistic as well as a moral and political goal, while from here it is but a short step to the Taoist ideal of harmony, which has exerted such a concrete and pervasive influence on East Asian art and letters.

For specific Southeast Asian cultures, however, the notional apparatus that can be inferred from available evidence appears to be limited to local concerns, that is, one culture gives emphasis to certain features of the total system while a neighboring culture gives emphasis to others, without discernible rhyme or reason, though a universal preoccupation with man and woman and the baffling differences between them admits a common stock of elementary antitheses. In Cambodia the heaviest emphasis seems to have been placed on high versus low position, on certain colors, on right and left, and on the cardinal points. The uninitiated may well wonder how these cosmological genders are manifested, particularly since I have said earlier that they are "conspicuous" in the art, literature and ritual of the area. A few examples of their occurrence will have to suffice.

721

In sculpture, painting and drama it is usual for groups of figures to be so disposed that "male" (that is, heroic, divine, auspicious) subjects are on the right while "female" (evil, common, inauspicious) subjects are on the left. Commoners may also be represented as occupying a lower physical plane than gods or kings. Characters of negative function will be depicted with at least their visages in dark, notably black or red, colors while heroes and other agents of good are shown in white or blue.

In ritual and numerous acts of a ritual nature the officiant as in India and China and so many other parts of the world, faces east. He reserves his right hand for ritually pure functions, his left for ritually impure functions. Prayer and spells have greatest efficacy during the morning hours. *Mana*, at once the medium and the agency of supernatural power, emanates from the east, while the dead (and in some cases even the aged) are held to travel westward into their universal abode. Houses and public buildings are oriented on the east, tombs and mausoleums face west. The sleeper in premodern Cambodia lay, on his back, with his right side to the east and his head to the south. Underlings, particularly on ceremonial occasions, take positions behind their superiors, and the correct signal of respect in the presence of a magnate is to lower oneself to the ground.

The traditional literature of Cambodia verbalizes these same ideas and many more of like kind. As in our own culture, the hero or heroine rides a white horse, the miscreant a black one. The

inished principal and his suite travel westward into the limbo
of exile in order to enter the realm of danger and death, to un-
dergo supreme tests and transformation, and to make a climactic
eastward return in which all is set to rights and good order is
enjoyed forever after. A bird-call coming from the west, north
or left presages evil. All the virtues distinguishing the man of
destiny may be condensed into possession of certain magic powers
or artifacts. One character may be represented as sitting or
standing with his back to another, a sure sign of rejection and
antipathy.

In the first paragraph above antithetical constructions were
described briefly, and it was explained that we are concerned
here only with the way in which members of these constructions
are ordered. In the light of what has been said so far by way of
necessary background, it can now be advanced that there is some
evidence that Khmer has been partial to the female + male order
in antithetical constructions. All of the examples cited in the
opening paragraph show this partiality, while other examples are
given below. It may be well to mention that this phenomenon first
came to my attention several years ago in the course of work on
the Middle Khmer *apā'pa* /cbap/ or "codes of conduct." Outside
this genre I have not yet examined it in any detail. Some months
ago I did, however, have the opportunity to work hurriedly on a
2-item wordlist with three Khmer-speaking informants. This ef-

fort showed quite convincingly that sensitivity to the ordering of this type of construction is all but lost in the modern language and is still alive only in a few fossil expressions such as /kraa ŋíəj/ 'to be difficult [and/or] easy, *i.e.* of whatever difficulty', /jup tɲaj/ 'night [and/or] day, *i.e.* at any hour', and /cii dòn cii taa/ 'grandmother [and] grandfather', plus those mentioned in the first paragraph. This suggests that if fuller evidence is to be sought it will have to be looked for in the older literature.

There are at least two, and possibly four, types of interference which operate against the regularity of this apparently favored female + male order.

In the first place, it is fairly clear that if a preferred order of antithetical constructions can be argued at all for India and China, that order is not geared to cosmological gender but to what might be termed relative auspiciousness, with the propitious constituents standing first. Thus in Khmer prose texts it is common for antithetical constructions involving Sanskrit or Pāli loans to observe the Indic order, *e.g.* sukha dukkha /sok tuk 'bliss [and/or] woe'. In the same way heña śāya /hèŋ sɔɔj/ 'good luck [and/or] bad luck', both terms of which are Chinese loans, follows the Chinese rather than the Khmer order.

In the second place, one or both members of an antithetical construction may be subject to overriding metrical requirements: preordained rhyme may cause a reversal of the preferred order.

both praṭau dāṃṇa prusa srī /prədaw tēṅ proh srə̀ej/ (P 2c)⁵
 to teach all males and females' and doḥ srī prusa /tóh srə̀ej
 oh/ (P 3b) 'whether females or males' the ordering of /proh/
 and /srə̀ej/ fulfills metrical requirements. As a result, neither
 of these occurrences can be adduced as evidence for or against
 the hypothesis of a preferred female + male order. For all that,
 one should not be forgotten that it is precisely the most gifted
 poets that would succeed in accommodating a preferred order to
 the meter. In oy ṭiṇa pāpa puṇya /qaoj dýṅ baap bon/ (A 28a) 'so
 as to know [the difference between] evil and good' we have a case
 in which the meter brings about an inversion of the favored Indic
 order, /bon baap/ 'good [and/or] evil'. This particular verse
 rhymes with sgā¹la dosa niṇa guṇa /skoel tóoh nýṅ kun/ (A 28b)
 'to recognize [the difference between] sin and virtue', where
 the identical inversion is seen. The preferred order of this Indic
 antithesis crops up further on in sgā¹la guṇa niṇa dosa /skoel
 un nýṅ tóoh/ (A 38d) 'to recognize [the difference between] vir-
 tue and sin', where the ordering is independent, that is to say
 not determined by metrical requirements. The one exception to
 this rule of evidence concerns antitheses between transposable
 verses, e.g. ca¹ṇa guṇa oy dukkha | ca¹ṇa pāna ktī sukha /caṅ kun
 qaoj tuk | caṅ baan kdə̀ej sok/ (PUB 12ab) 'to desire merit [but]
 give sorrow | to desire to attain to bliss' may be a case in
 point: here the female + male order prevails over the Indic order
 (/sok tuk/ 'bliss [and/or] sorrow') even though the impact of the
 lines would not have been lessened had verse *b* come before *a*.

A third type of interference operating against the favored female + male order may for want of a better term be called economic. In māsa prā¹ka srūva 'aṅkara /mfiəh prak sròow qəŋkaar/ (P 1a) '[your] gold and silver, [your] paddy and husked rice' we may have a double illustration of this. Both /mfiəh/ and /prak/ appear to be loans from Austronesian, and their order here is independent. *Gold* and *silver* in nearly all cultures that assign cosmological gender to them are male and female respectively, and we should expect /prak mfiəh/ in an independent context. That we have /mfiəh prak/ instead may reflect the preferred order in Austronesian or may simply be referable to the higher value and greater desirability of gold. By the same token the recurrent antithesis srē camkāra /sraəc camkaar/ '*sawah* and *ladang*, wet [and/or] dry fields', which does follow the expected female (wet, groundwater) + male (dry) order, may have survived longer or may be more properly explained on grounds of the greater frequency and economic importance of ricefields. As for /sròow qəŋkaar/ 'unhusked [and/or] husked rice', both terms of which are Mon-Khmer, the order here may be imputable either to the sequence of production, that is the temporal precedence of paddy, or to the assignment of *fruits* to the female principle. This latter association, which I have not been able to confirm, is perhaps seen in comparing raka ja¹ka thnām šT mlū slā /rəək cuk tnam sii mluu slaa/ (P 16d) 'go get tobacco to smoke [or] betel-and-areca to chew', wherein /mluu slaa/ shows dependent order, with slā mlū šT by criəka /slaa mluu sii qəəj crìlək/ (P 12a) 'partake of areca-

nd-betel [after] cutting them small', where the preferred /slaa
luu/ is independent of the meter. I suspect that the areca nut,
being the fruit of the palm, was formerly deemed female (contrary
to the case in Indo-European) while the enveloping leaf of the
betel pepper was seen as male.

A fourth type of interference might be called euphonic. When
a monosyllable having primary stress is coupled with a dissylla-
ble (regularly with primary stress on its main syllable, weak
stress on its presyllable), the construction is more agreeable to
the ear if the monosyllable stand first so that the two stressed
syllables are separated by the presyllable. The /sraaε camkaar/
and /sròw qɑŋkaar/ cited above illustrate this principle, which
may be operative in the texts used here.

Evidence of partiality for female + male ordering in anti-
metrical constructions which has been collected so far is already
so abundant that space forbids my giving more than a sampling of
it here. I include a few cases illustrating the contradictions
and ambiguities encountered.

. *Man : woman.*

It is surprising that for this most basic of all antitheses
I have no cases from metrically independent contexts in the sour-
ces used here. The most that can be done is to contrast such oc-
currences as doḥ prusa doḥ srī /tòh proh tòh sràəj/ (KC 40a)
'whether male or female' (cf. the verse already quoted from P 2c)

with such occurrences, considerably more frequent, as khñuṃ srṭ
 prusa phaṅa dāṃṅa t̄āya /krom srə̀ej proh phooŋ teəŋ laaj/ (DK 24b)
 'all slaves, female and male alike', khñuṃ srṭ prusa go krapṭ
 /krom srə̀ej proh koo krabə̀ej/ (DK 51b) 'female and male slaves,
 cows and buffaloes', and the verse already cited from P 3b. With
 these may be grouped such antitheses as m̄ē 'ū /maaε qòow/ (P 9a)
 'mother [and] father' and mtāya 'ū buka /mdaaŋ qòow puk/ (DK 27b)
 'mother [and] father', which are similarly dependent yet, thanks
 perhaps to the versatility of the poets, conform to the female +
 male order.

2. *Big : little.*

sruka tūca dhaṃ phaṅa /srok tòoc thum phooŋ/ (K 23e) 'vil-
 lages both small and large'.

tūca dhaṃ oy criəka ceṅa /tòoc thum qaaoj cr̄iək cèer/ (P
 12c) 'whether small or large, slice [them] into several parts'.

3. *Much (many) : little (few).*

tica crəna mina stāya /tèc craaen min sdaaj/ (DK 98b) 'whe-
 ther it is little or much, have no regrets'.

4. *Brave : cowardly.*

kum khlāca kum hāna ṅā'sa /kom klaac kom h̄iən nah/ (P 10c)
 'be not fearful, be not overbold'.

5. *High : low.*

All collected occurrences are dependent but suggest partial-
 ity for the female + male order. Contrast oy t̄iṅa khba'sa dāpa

qaaoj dỳŋ kpuh tǐiəp/ (RN 20g) 'so as to know [the difference between] high and low' with tǐiña dāpa tǐiña khba¹sa /dỳŋ tǐiəp dỳŋ puh/ (DK 18c) 'know the low, know the high'. Note also jœña tai cœəŋ daj/ 'lower [and] upper limbs' at V 31b and thoka thlai thaaok tlaj/ 'low [and/or] high priced' at KK 14a and 31c. Such cases as tūca pāva niña nāya /dòoc baaw nỳŋ nǐiəj/ (RN 27c) 'like servant and master' and khñuŋ guŋ kǎ¹pa mcā¹sa /krom kum kap mcah/ (P 73a) 'the slave threatens to slay the master', while conforming to female + male ordering, are as dependent on the sense as on the meter. Independent, however, is the ordering of pœ ptǐ sliəka cā¹ka cā¹sa /baaə pdèəj sliiək pœk cah/ (S 131a) 'if [your] lord wear lower and upper garments [that are] old'. This is paralleled by dependent expressions such as swra cuŋ swra tœña /sùuəŋ coh sùuəŋ laaəŋ/ (S 56c) 'to inquire down, inquire up (i.e. in all quarters)' and bākya tœma bākya cuña /pǐiək daaəm pǐiək coŋ/ (PUB 10b) 'first words, last words', which uses /daaəm/ 'stock, trunk, root' in the sense of 'beginning, source' and /coŋ/ 'end, tip, top' in the sense of 'last'.

6. *Senior : junior.*

Growth to the zenith of maturity is male, age beyond that point is female. Such fixed expressions as paña p'ūna /baaŋ pəòon/ 'older [and] younger siblings' may be so ordered because of the social precedence of elders, and are certainly interpreted in this light today. The fact remains that they also conform to the favored female + male order. Contrary evidence is seen in a few independent expressions such as kmwya niña mā /kmùuəj nỳŋ mǐiə/ (P

1c) 'nephew/niece [and] uncle', which place the younger member first.

8. *Light : heavy.*

nā dhña'na nā srāla /nfiə tɲun nfiə sraal/ (K 26g) 'this is heavy, that is light'. The identical passage occurs at RN 34c.

9. *Dry : wet.*

The sole independent example found so far is dāmña srē camkāra graña /teəŋ sraae camkaar krɔŋ/ (VP 30c) 'living off all *sawah* and *ladang*'. Dependent occurrences are exemplified by dhvə srē camkāra /tɔh twéə sraae camkaar/ (P 36a) 'whether [you] till *sawah* or *ladang*' and dhvə srē kum cola camkāra /twéə sraae kom caol camkaar/ (P 41b) '[if you] till *sawah*, neglect not [your] *ladang*'. In dhvə srē prāmña srē vassā /twéə sraae pran sraae woəhsaa/ (KK 27b) 'tilling *sawah* of the dry season or those of the rainy season' we have an inversion of /woəhsaa/ and /pran/ for the meter's sake.

10. *Outside : inside.*

Parallel to knuña krau pandāya /knɔŋ kraw bantfiəj/ (T 22b) 'inside [and/or] outside the citadel' is the dependent verse rīəna gita knuña krau /rfiən kit knɔŋ kraw/ (PUB 3c) 'study and ponder the inside [as well as] the outside' or 'learn to consider the interior and exterior [of all things]'.
 10. *Hither : thither.*

Movement hitherward seems to have been viewed as penetration and hence assigned to the male principle, while movement thither-

ard was viewed as emergence or issue and assigned to the female principle. Note the fossil expression *dau n̄ā maka n̄ā /t'éw naa rɔk naa/* 'go somewhere, come somewhere (*i.e.* go back and forth, all over)' as well as the transposable verses *ge præ kum 'āla dau ge oy hau kum 'āla maka /k'ée praaə kom qaal t'éw | k'ée qaaoj hau kom qaal rɔk/ (DK 13ab)* '[If] someone sends [you] forth hasten not to go, [if] someone summons [you] hasten not to come'. On the same basis the opposition *near : far* is nearly always expressed as *chñāya jita /çŋaaj cit/* 'to be far [and/or] near' but cannot be illustrated with any except dependent occurrences, *e.g.* *doḥ tɔra dau chñāya jita /t'óh daaər t'éw çŋaaj cit/ (P 26a)* 'if [you] go abroad to any distance', *'ita ge raka tɔra chñāya jita /q'ət k'ée rɔk daaər çŋaaj cit/ (P 45d)* 'oblige them not to go any distance to seek [you]', and *t'iña chñāya t'iña jita /d'ỳn çŋaaj d'ỳn cit/ (PUB 5e)* 'know far, know near (*i.e.* thoroughly)'. The one inversion encountered in my limited data is *n'iña ñāti jita chñāya /n'ỳn n'íət cit çŋaaj/ (DKŭn 34b)* 'with (toward) [your] kinsmen near or far'.

11. *Day : night.*

Parallel to independent *kra ya¹pa thñai brwya tɔra chñāya /kroa jup tɔaj pr'úwəj daaər çŋaaj/ (P 23d)* 'the bother by night [or] day, the nuisance of going far' is the dependent verse *doḥ ya¹pa br'ika kum gita ñāya /t'óh jup pr'ýk kom kit n'íəj/ (P 24b)* 'whether at night or morn, deem this not a menial chore'.

12. *Good : bad.*

This is one of the most productive areas encountered so far. Except for the cases involving Indic or Chinese loans previously noted, the order in independent contexts is invariably *bad* : *good*. A typical example is *cūra t̄iṅṅa khusa gā¹pa /còor d̄yṅ khoh koep/* (K 19d) 'know thou [the difference between] wrong and right'. Note also such ideas as *doh̄ k̄aca j̄a m̄ela oy stēṅṅa /tòh̄ kaac cíe* *h̄éi qaaoj sdaaeṅ/* (KK 19d) 'be it bad or good, look to [his] ability' and *khusa trūva dau pambāna /khoh tròow t̄éw bampíien/* (P 37c) 'wrong or right, [he] persists in abusing others'. In P 10a we have the independent verse *kuṃ k̄aca kuṃ slūta beka /kom kaac kom slòot péek/* 'be not wicked, be not overly good', while in P 58d and 69c we have dependent verses in which Indic loans follow the female + male order: *nām̄ vaṅveṅṅa bhleca pāpa puṅya /noəm puṅwéṅ pléec baap bon/* 'it leads [one] to go astray and fail to distinguish sin from virtue' and *bhleca dosa bhleca dām̄ṅṅa guṅa /pléec tóh̄ pléec teṅ kun/* 'to forget sin and every virtue'. A similar inversion of the Indic order, *dhv̄e pāpa mina dhv̄e puṅya /twéé baap min twéé bon/* (DK 26c) 'doing evil and not doing good', is justified both by the negation and by the meter, yet the same terms are contrasted in transposable verses: *p̄e p̄a p̄ana dhv̄e pāpa /p̄e p̄a p̄ana dhv̄e puṅya /baaə baa baan twéé baap | baaə baa baan twéé bon/* (DK 26a/27a) 'if you did do evil | if you did do good'. Inevitably, the meter inverts the normal order (e.g. *oy t̄iṅṅa gā¹pa khusa /qaaoj d̄yṅ koep khoh/* (KC 32b) 'so as to know [the difference between] right and wrong'); but such inversions are few and far between and the normal order tends to be preserved

ven in dependent contexts: *bum sgā¹la kāca jā /pum skoəl kaac
 fīə/ (T 73f) 'not knowing evil [from] good'. In the verse khusa
 ā¹pa kāca jā /khoh koəp kaac cīə/ (KC 27f) 'wrong and right,
 evil and good', the first antithesis is independent of the meter
 while the second, retaining the preferred order, is dependent.
 Probably associated with ideas of good and bad, finally, is the
 antithesis *easy : difficult* which in all my data is expressed as
 kra nāya /kraa ŋīəj/ 'to be difficult [and/or] easy', whether
 in dependent or in independent contexts. A single instance will
 suffice: *jwna krēna kra nāya ya¹pa thnai /cúuən kraaəŋ kraa ŋīəj
 jup tŋaj/ (P 25d)*, which may be rendered freely as 'there may be
 cause to fear its [the task of keeping up the water supply] rela-
 tive difficulty at any time of day'.*

All instances of such antitheses as *right : left, life :
 death, front : back, east : west* which have been collected thus
 far are from dependent contexts, and will not be cited here.

On the other hand, I can do no better than give in full four
 consecutive strophes of the *Cpā¹pa trīneti* in which a long series
 of antitheses, not unmixed with tangential ideas not in opposi-
 tion, forms a recurrent theme and amply illustrates the problem
 of distinguishing an underlying proclivity toward the female +
 male order from overriding metrical requirements and other types
 of interference. In my verbatim translation the contrasting ele-
 ments are marked as 'female' (f) and 'male' (m).

67. sgā¹la dosa sgā¹la guṇa
know sin (*f*) and virtue (*m*)
- sgā¹la kroya sgā¹la muna
know what is behind (*f*) and ahead (*m*)
- ṭoṃa cuṇa kaṇṭāla
the beginning (*f*), end (*m*), mid
- sgā¹la pāpa sgā¹la puṇya
know evil (*f*), know good (*m*)
- sgā¹la dhā¹na sgā¹la srāla
know what is heavy (*f*) and light (*m*)
- sgā¹la prājñā sgā¹la bāla
know wisdom (*m*), know folly (*f*)
- sgā¹la khlāca sgā¹la hāna
know fear (*f*) and being bold (*m*)
68. sgā¹la tica sgā¹la crœna
know little (*f*) from much (*m*),
- saṅvāta kravœna
striving to be prudent (*m*),
- sgā¹la 'a¹ta ghlāna
know how to endure hunger (*f*)
- sgā¹la viœca sgā¹la tra¹ṇa
know how to bend (*f*) and be rigid (*m*)
- sgā¹la bhūta sgā¹la mēna
know what is false (*f*) and true (*m*)
- sgā¹la ṭṭ sgā¹la ṭēna
know the land (*f*) and state (*m*?)
- sgā¹la brai sgā¹la trā¹ṇa
know the forest (*f*) and clearing (*m*?)
69. sgā¹la gā¹pa sgā¹la khusa
know what is right (*m*) and wrong (*f*)
- sgā¹la slā¹pa sgā¹la ra¹sa
know what is dead (*f*) and living (*m*)
- sgā¹la jhnaḥ sgā¹la cā¹ṇa
know how to win (*m*) and lose (*f*)

sgā¹la pā¹ñña sgā¹la poḥ
know how to shoot and throw

sgā¹la ṭoḥ sgā¹la ṭeñña
know how to escape (f) and pursue (m)

sgā¹la cūla sgā¹la ceñña
know how to enter (m) and come out (f)

sgā¹la pā¹ta sgā¹la pāna
know how to lose (f) and win (m)

70. sgā¹la tiñña sgā¹la dhūra
know how to be taut (m) and slack (f)

sgā¹la chā¹pa sgā¹la yūra
know what is swift (m) and slow (f)

sgā¹la hūla sgā¹la khiēna
know best silk (m?) from common muslin (f?)

sgā¹la ṭæra sgā¹la ṭeka
know how to move (m) and rest (f)

sgā¹la sreka sgā¹la ghlāna
know thirsting (f) and being hungry (m)

sgā¹la ca¹ñña sgā¹la pāna
know desiring (f) and how to get (m)

sgā¹la māna sgā¹la khsa¹ta
know being rich (m) and being poor (f)

Because of the requirements of the *kāḥagati* meter,⁶ inversion of the Indic ordering of *guṇa* : *dosa* occurs in 67a; *puṇya* : *pāpa* is similarly inverted in 67d. In 67f the Indic order of *prāḥjñña* : *la*, coinciding with the metrical scheme, overrides the preferred order. In 68b and c *kravæna* has the same gender as *prāḥjñña* (7f) while *ghlāna*, which recurs in 70e, is identified with negation, distress and the like and is hence female. Because of the metrical requirements these two verses are not transposable, and reverse the favored order. In 68d *viæca* derives its gender from

the association of flexibility and passivity with the female, while *tra^lña* 'to be straight' is a male attribute. In 68f and g I can only conjecture that *ṭēna* 'land, territory, domain' and *trā^lña* 'small grassland' are male, for I have not encountered them elsewhere. In 69a, despite the fact that both terms are Mon-Khmer, we have an inversion of the female + male order for the sake of rhyme with *ra^lsa* in the next verse, while in 69c inversion is again made for the sake of rhyme with *ṭeña* in *e*. In the latter *ṭoḥ* 'to loose' expresses an aspect of outward movement and is hence female, while *ṭeña* 'to chase' seems to connote movement hitherward (*i.e.* toward an objective) and to be male. In 69f we have another inversion for rhyme's sake. In 70a *tiña* 'to be taut' is associated with energy and activity, *dhūra* 'to be limp' with passivity. Another inversion of the normal order occurs in 70b, for the sake of rhyme with *a*. It is probably only in relation to the cheaper, more common *khīəna* 'unbleached muslin' that *hūla* 'patterned silk' in 70c is male. In 70d we have still another inversion to permit *ṭeka* to rhyme with *sreka* in *e*. The latter term is probably to be interpreted as female since it denotes the same kind of negation as 'hunger'. In 70g, finally, still another inversion occurs to make a needed rhyme with *prākaṭa* in 71c.

At the beginning of this discussion it was opined that detailed reconnaissance of Cambodian dualism falls within the purview of linguistics in only one area. I do not intend to define this area very clearly here, since to do so would be premature and would carry us far beyond the boundaries of Austroasiatic.

the most I shall attempt is to suggest a few linguistic implications of the findings reported.

In the first place, the thesis advanced here points to the likely fruitfulness of examining the arrangement of antithetical constructions in other languages, initially perhaps in Mon-Khmer, later in Austroasiatic as a whole.⁷ If dualistic thinking can be reflected in Khmer, it is not unreasonable to suppose that it may be reflected elsewhere---though not necessarily in the same way. Even the widespread distribution of cosmological gender in other cultural contexts around the world, its linguistic manifestation in some societies should not be unexpected.⁸ The mode of ordering would be relevant to specific languages and cultures while the effect of ordering, if demonstrated, would open the door to new possibilities of investigation in historical and comparative linguistics.

Secondly, any propensity toward the female + male ordering of antithetical constructions would appear *prima facie* to be less common than male + female ordering. If Khmer has indeed exhibited such a propensity at one stage of its development, this would call for explanation. One naturally looks to Khmer culture and postulates a link with a former matriarchal social structure.⁹ This has often been imputed of the Khmer, particularly by 19th-century French historians, but is recognized by modern scholars as no more than an unproved possibility. It may be, therefore, that linguistics can contribute to the resolution of a major an-

thropological question.

Thirdly and lastly, assuming the present thesis proves tenable, we have here an instance of cosmological gender translated into linguistic expression. If this is so, we would seem to have before us the welcome prospect of advancing our understanding of grammatical gender. Specifically, Middle Khmer may represent a transition between languages without grammatical gender and those with it. It is useful to recollect in this connection that linguistic science has not yet elaborated a general theory of grammatical gender. Back in the Golden Age of American linguistics, Whitney¹⁰ wrote:

"Only . . . our own family of languages (along with two or three others) has erected this distinction of sex into a universal one, like number, making it a test to be applied in the use of every word; breaking away from the actual limits of sex, and sexualizing, as it were, all objects of thought, on grounds which no mortal has yet been wise enough to discover and point out in detail."

Examination of the literature of present-day linguistics shows that we have made scant progress since Whitney's time, most discussion of gender in recent years belaboring its "arbitrary" nature.¹¹ Brugmann probably came closest to formulating a viable theory of gender. As far as Indo-European is concerned, the crux of his view is (a) unconscious reinterpretation of suffixes increasingly associated with female beings, culminating in a limited inventory of "feminine" forms contrasting with others seen as "masculine," and (b) analogical change, gathering momentum until a grammatical category is established.¹² The main weakness in

gmann's view is the assumption that analogical change is self-generating. Even with a core of $-\bar{a}$ or $-\bar{i}$ forms designating female beings, there would have been no impulsion for linguistic innovation unless the gender category had pre-existed on the periphery of the language. It is likely that only a dualistic cosmology of the kind sketched here could have provided this impetus.

¹ A good review of this earlier Dutch work, including an extensive bibliography, is Justus M. van der Kroef, "Dualism and Symbolic Antithesis in Indonesian Society," in *American Anthropologist*, 56 (1954).5: 847-62.

² From binary cosmological analyses and their linguistic expression one must distinguish binary expression as a paratactic device. On parataxis in epic literature see E. Vinaver, "Epic to Romance," in *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 45-46 (1964): 46-503. For an outstanding study of parataxis in terms of non-antithetical 'dyadic sets' see James J. Fox, "Semantic Parallelism in Rotinese Ritual Language," in *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Letter- en Volkenkunde*, 127 (1971).2: 215-55.

³ Appended hereunder is a list of representative sources providing undigested details on the subject from various areas.

⁴ Since this hasty exposition is intended only to provide background to what follows, discussion of the rationale of these associations is out of the question. Suffice it to say by way of example that the head is classed as male not only because it is physically high in relation to the feet---which are low, in contact with the female earth, and ritually defiled---but also because it is mystically high or tabu as the principal repository of *mana*, which flows from the east. It must be emphasized that these ideas are not now conceptualized, much less articulated, in Cambodia.

⁵ Abbreviations used for the texts cited are A = 'Ariyasat-*ā*, DK = *Dūnmāna khluṃa*, DKūn = *Dūnmāna kūna*, K = *Krama*, KC = *na cau*, KK = *Ker(ti) kāla*, P = *Prusa*, PUB = *Paṅtām 'ū buka*, RN = *janeti*, S = *Srī*, T = *Trīneti*, V = *Vidhūrapaṇḍita*.

⁶ For the requirements of the *kākaḡati* see "The Relative Dating of Some Khmer Cpā'pa," in this volume.

⁷ I am avoiding the question of gender in Khasi until more detailed information comes to hand. What little I have collected so far holds out scant hope of correspondence with the system described here.

⁸ It is interesting to note that out of 39 antithetical pairs

a Javanese informant has assigned the female + male order to only four: *moon/sun*, *far/near*, *wet/dry field*, *rainy/dry season*. In all other cases the male + female order was preferred. Fox, *op.cit.*, includes a 134-item list of Rotinese 'dyadic sets' among which ten could be construed as polar sets with female + male order: 5 *bafo // poi* 'mouth, valley // tip, peak', 19. *bula // ledo* 'moon // sun', 32. *ei // lida* 'foot // wing', 33. *ei // lima* 'foot // hand', 38. *feto // ina* 'girl // woman', 48. *hu // lai* 'trunk, origin // top', 72. *latu // mafo* 'ripe // half-ripe', 83. *loe (loloe) // sali (sasali)* 'receding // overflowing', 114. *taë // tou* 'boy // man', and 120. *bui-nggeo // meni-oe* 'black-tipped // white-sugared'. Only three of Fox's pairs could be termed polar with male + female ordering: 28. *dua // esa* 'two // one', 29. *dua // telu* 'two // three', and 92. *modo // tole* 'green // dark'. Note that 'girl // woman' and 'boy // man' are contrary to Khmer order.

⁹The risks of such an assumption can be seen in the results of several hours' work I recently carried out with a native speaker of the Pajakumbuh dialect of Minangkabau. The female + male order was judged to be normal in only eight cases out of 35 polar pairs examined: *far/near*, *odd/even*, *mother/father*, *sour/sweet*, *rainy/dry season*, *wife/husband*, *elders/youngsters*, and *downstream/upstream*. Curiously, *left/right* was preferred for profane usage while *right/left* was preferred for ritual purposes. Both *son/daughter* and *daughter/son* were deemed normal, as were *big/little* and *little/big*. In fourteen cases the male + female order was definitely preferred. In the remaining ten cases no antithesis was recognized.

¹⁰William Dwight Whitney, *The Life and Growth of Language* (New York: D. Appleton, 1896), 215. The first edition dates from 1875.

¹¹Bloomfield stands virtually alone in refraining from this whining over the apparent irrationality of gender; see his *Language* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, [c 1933]), 271-2. Compare Sapir (*Language: An Introduction to the Study of Speech* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, [c 1921]), 100-3), Meillet (*Introduction à l'étude comparative des langues indo-européennes*. 8^e édition (Paris: Hachette, 1937), 189-90), and even Jespersen (*Language: Its Nature, Development and Origin* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1950), 346-8), Vendryès (*Le langage* (Paris: Albin Michel 1950), 108), Hockett (*A Course in Modern Linguistics* (New York: Macmillan, [c 1958]), 232), Gleason (*An Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics*. Revised Edition (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, [c 1961]), 277) and Hall (*Introductory Linguistics* (Philadelphia: Chilton Books, [c 1964]), 154).

¹²This is rather different from Jespersen's summary of Brugmann's theory (*op.cit.*, 391-4), which stresses the proposition that "grammatical gender originally had nothing at all to do with natural sex" and reduces the problem to explaining the feminine.

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