DIVINING *TROUBLES*, OR *DIVINING* TROUBLES? EMERGENT AND CONFLICTUAL DIMENSIONS OF BANGLADESHI DIVINATION

JAMES M. WILCE
Northern Arizona University

Divination is more dialogical than some diviners or anthropologists have made it appear. I analyze the transcript of one Bangladeshi divination event, comparing it with a dozen others performed by one diviner, Delwar, revealing how tenuously he manages to assign a single meaning to troubles, especially when clients openly compare his declarations with their intimate knowledge of those troubles. I explain how divinations could appear to be texts rather than emergent products of interaction. Diviners entextualize their declamations, doing their best to keep context at bay. Anthropologists who concentrate on textual products of divination—like Delwar's declamations—have made divination appear to enable groups to manage conflicts by transcending personal intentionality. Such representations elide troublesome interactive processes in which declamations emerge, meet potential rejection by clients, and are always vulnerable to recontextualization as clients might return to the diviner as events shift their perception of earlier divinations' accuracy. [divination, dialogism, entexualization, conflict, South Asia]

This article presents an interpretation of divination as dialogic, interactive, and always potentially unsettling. In Matlab, Bangladesh, divination is one of several practices by which troubles are interpreted and the "underlying causes" that are divined become potential social facts. Divination thus is one of a number of practice-genres (Hanks 1996) for managing questions and troubles; others include astrology, palmistry, exorcism, and traditional medicine. Such practices predate and differ from, but are increasingly being brought into line with, reformist Islam. Troubles talk and troubles management in ritual, medical, and everyday contexts occupied me during my fieldwork in 1992 and 1996, and were the subject of my first book (Wilce 1998b).

In a subheading of that book, I placed divination events "outside the dialogical pattern" that holds in most "problem-solving" encounters, such as those between biomedical practitioners and their patients. That perspective was limiting. In this article I uncover the multiple ways in which the divination encounters which one Delwar Kari has with his clients are quite dialogical; they are constructed with the substantial participation of those clients. They fill in the gaps, for instance, when his divined knowledge appears spotty. After presenting an outline distilled from analyzing a dozen divination encounters, I analyze one in detail. First, however, I describe the Bangladeshi context for divinations as encounters that are not only aimed at divining and managing *troubles.* They are themselves laden with potential troubles—troubles inherent in divining, that is, *divining* troubles (if you follow my use of contrastive stress patterns I would use to link and distinguish the two phrases).

Divination and Rural Bangladesh

Divination is a genre of interpretive discourse. Bangladeshis have described several forms for me, and at least one novelistic account of a form of divination is also available in Bangla (Ishaque 1955), the dominant language of Bangladesh. Bangladeshi divination fits the general description offered by John DuBois:

> Viewed literally, divination is a process for obtaining information which is (typically) unavailable by ordinary means, that is, which cannot be gotten by the usual techniques of indigenous practical epistemology, such as seeing, hearing, being told by another person—the commonplace categories of evidential coding systems . . . . Viewed in its social aspect, however, divination is not so much a means of obtaining information as a means of establishing social facts, facts which command a consensus and can form the basis for legitimate, recognized social action (1992: 54).

DuBois distinguishes "mechanical" from "mental" divination processes. The latter would in-

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clude trance-possession, in which a spirit reveals the nature of a problem (the very form of divination described in Ishaque's 1955 novel). "Mechanical" divination methods would include reading entrails or drawing lots. Both mechanical and mental forms are evident in Bangladesh. The cause of a mysterious event may be uncovered by a spirit speaking through a trance-medium such as Shefali, whom I describe elsewhere (Wilce 1998b, 1998a: 236). The difference between the mechanical and mental forms should not be overdrawn. DuBois's statement that "Divination means that no-one will have to be the personal source of a decision" clearly applies to both. Still, their relation can be fraught with ideological conflict. To at least one man who practices divination in the same Matlab marketplace where the diviner in focus in this article—Delwar Kari—plies his trade, the Bangla word for diviner, *ganak*, connotes only a mental or "psychological" sort of trick. Ali is critical of such tricks, preferring a mechanical process. He blows on a string and wraps it around the wrist of a patient whose symptoms might indicate spirit influence. The string's later behavior divines the difference between illnesses caused by spirit and germs. Ali treats each differently. He dispenses prayers and Qur'anic verses encased in amulets (to be worn around the neck, waist or wrist) for the former, and cosmopolitan pharmaceuticals for the latter.

DuBois argues that divination centering on an "aleatory mechanism"—like Delwar Kari's divinatory calculations based on the letters of a client's name rendered into Arabic—suspends intentionality but certainly not social functionality. In the suspension of intentionality is its genius, writes DuBois. To me, even inquiring of a spirit is a divination process "dependent on uncertain contingencies" and thus aleatory, and thus the sort of genius DuBois attributes to divination applies to it as well. He continues,

> Divination means that no-one will have to be the personal source of a decision. . . . And impersonally authoritative decisions can more readily attract consensus, by virtue of the fact that they cannot be attacked as proceeding from some interested person or faction" (1992: 64).

DuBois then approvingly cites Victor Turner's opinion that divination "brings to light and so dispels the quarrels and grudges in the social group" (Turner 1975: 245). DuBois concludes that divination "may function, in concert with any ritual it prescribes, to resolve interpersonal conflicts" (1992: 64).

I will argue that this eufunctional appearance is partly an artifact of DuBois's means of presenting "divination" as "texts." To the extent that DuBois presents transcripts of divination texts as final products, he prevents readers from seeing their emergence through processes of entextualization. "Text" is a coherent set of signs (Hanks 1988), "discourse rendered decontextualizable" (Bauman and Briggs 1990: 73). Discourse that calls attention to itself, for example, by its poetic qualities, performance that "puts the act of speaking on display" (as, in truth, all performance does [p. 73]), is memorable, repeatable, decontextualizable. But to treat discourse as if it were already text, as if performers did not *strive* to poetically package their words, or to produce a monologue impenetrable with questions or challenges, is to beg the question. This is what DuBois's article seems to do.

Further, I argue that DuBois's model—as a version of Turner's particular sort of functionalism—does not fit Bangladeshi divination. But, apart from my Bangladeshi data, other accounts of the role of divination—especially shamanic divination in the Amazon—problematize Turner's model. It certainly fails to describe the rancorous dialogue between shaman-diviner Yankush and his none-too-trusting clients in the Amazon in Michael F. Brown's representation of "shamanism and its discontents" (1988). What Yankush "sees" is vigorously questioned, and his clients openly raise the possibility that his "sight" is clouded by his own side-practice as a sorcerer. Brown's argument is that the symbolic acts of such shamans (including those of a divinatory-diagnostic sort) merely reproduce tensions, "shifting the locus of uncertainty [from the body] to the body politic" (p. 117). I will argue that the unsettling nature of divination events makes a new, more dialogical, understanding mandatory.

"Liakot's" family—friends of mine in Dhaka—told me how they consulted a woman in their ancestral village an hour outside the city. They saw her as a sort of counter-sorcerer, asking her to cure their relative Liakot. That young man, who once earned quite a salary by local standards, had made a friend into an enemy by asking, then demanding, that the friend repay Liakot a very large sum of money. The new enemy then hired a sorcerer, whose curse made Liakot go mad. Liakot's family hired the woman first to divine the reason for his madness. After I had heard their story, I asked whether, as part of the cure, the debt was repaid. It was not. Neither the

debt nor the restoration of Liakot's relationship with his former friend was an important goal, at least in their narrative of the diviner/healer who cured Liakot's madness. That cure itself was evidently the sole objective, though the divination was an important part of it (Wilce 1998b: 157). It could be argued that the cure's ''function'' was still to restore harmony. But to do so would certainly be ignoring the pressing concerns expressed by the family—which, as Wikan (1990) argues, we ought not do—and I see no counterbalancing advantage in it.

I raise this case because of its relevance to the functionalist interpretation of divination and healing. It has another lesson to offer, in relation to gender and the healing arts as commercial practices. There *are* other women besides Liakot's curer who practice various forms of healing and divination in Bangladesh. But I know of no cases of women who had their own stalls in marketplaces at the time of his cure (the early 1980s). Unfortunately I have lost touch with Liakot's family, and I never asked them about the setting in which their female counter-sorcerer practiced. But I have every reason to believe that she, like some elderly women in my adopted Bangladesh village of Baghmar (in the Chandpur subdistrict of Matlab [Wilce 1998b: 4-6, 156]), practiced out of her home in a noncommercial way. Exorcists and possession-mediums (for example, Shefali) also practice in their homes. Men practice mechanical sorts of divination in market stalls in the Matlab area; no women, and no practitioners of ''mental'' forms of divination, are found in such marketplaces. The cash that changed hands in each of the videotaped encounters was about the equivalent of the fee charged by village *daktars*, and diviners and *daktars* are both able to live well from their earnings, relative to their neighbors.[1]

Delwar Kari's Form of Divination

One local form of divination in Bangladesh renders the names of ''patient'' and patient's mother into Arabic and then proceeds to a kind of numerological divination on the letters. In the case of our protagonist, divination is a writing-intensive process. In 1992 and 1996 I observed and/or recorded a dozen divinations on four occasions by Delwar Kari. Delwar's practice is located close to the town of Matlab, the ''seat'' of whatever government (namely, a police station, thānā, which gives this level of political administration its generic name) exists in that subdistrict of Chandpur, Bangladesh.

His title, *karī*, bestows on him an air of Islamic respectability. Etymologically, the Arabic word indicates—how accurately in this case I know not—the ability to recite the Qur'an faultlessly from memory. Its local, Bangladeshi, sense indicates the knowledge of Islamic lore. The ritual use of the signs of literacy, such as the ink of copied Qur'anic verses and the letters of personal names and the number values to which they conventionally correspond, is common to the divination and exorcism practiced in other Muslim societies.

Delwar Kari's procedure is stereotyped. This reflects, in part, the fact that his divinations are ''mechanical.'' (Though there are also ritualized dimensions of ''mental'' forms of divination such as trance-possession, the form and content of the spirit's speech at the revelatory highlight of such an event is, in rural Bangladesh, not the predictable part of the event.) My transcripts of a dozen divination encounters recorded across several occasions (six each in 1992 and 1996) give me a clear vision of their structure, which I have outlined below. The encounters unfold thusly. Delwar's clients sit in his stall in the bazaar, the marketplace. After some small talk he asks them the *rogī* (patient's) name, then the patient's mother's name. These names he transforms into their numerological values.[2] That is, by an esoteric process, he compares a numeric precipitate of the two names with a paradigm of values partly stored in his memory, partly calculated, thereby divining the problem and its underlying cause. Though clients are motivated to visit Delwar by highly contextualized and specific problems—from mood shifts and diarrhea in 1992 to apparent breakdowns just before school exams, or tensions in a new marriage, in 1996—the cause Delwar discovers beneath them never changes. Whatever sort of problem they present, clients are told that someone has conspired against them (or against the rogī whose name they have presented to Delwar) by planting a series of *tābiz* against them. In Bangla discourse, tābiz (Arabic *ta'wiz*) refers both to protective amulets and to items and acts used in sorcery. What Delwar unearths (first rhetorically, then literally) is the presence of aggressive, harmful tābiz.

Delwar's declamations follow the predictable form outlined in Figure 1. Note, however, that the concept of ''text'' as a coherent and decontextualizable set of signs does not capture the event completely, since the very formula includes at least one opening for response (Section F, +/– Section B).

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And therein lies the emergent, dialogic potential of this small piece of culture.

Figure 1. Declaiming the Results of Divination
Delwar's Formula (distilled from a dozen examples)
(italicized items appear only in transcripts of 1992 encounters)

A) Orientation
   1) Naming the victim
   2) Framing as a "sorcery-caused bad-event"
   3) Duration of the problem
B) *Mid-text opening for a response*
C) Declaring the results of divination
   4) Identifying the sorcerers
   5) Sorcerers' aim
   6) *"Loose" spirit factors as additional cause of troubles*
   7) Enumerating the evil charms deployed against victim
      Total # of charms announced
         Four type-sets delineated
            1st set: Unspecified location
            2nd set: Fed (to unspecified victim)
            3rd set: Sent on the air or by breath
            4th set: Fed to dogs
   8) Sorcery-related symptoms
      a) Burning sensation
      b) Abdominal pain
      c) "Heaty" mood
      d) Variable (undesirable psychosocial traits)
D) *Duration of the problem (again)*
E) Diviner's question inviting confirmation
F) Confirmation/Response
G) Writing protective text
H) Inserting text into metal amulet
I) Exchanging amulet for cash payment for the divination

Section C is the heart of the divinatory pronouncement and includes identification of the sorcerers and their aims. Delwar never names names. On the other hand, ever the numerologist, he always specifies how many women and men came together in a plot against the poor soul whose name is presented, whose true state is divined, and whose problems will be revealed. Delwar most commonly mentions *two* women coming together as sorcerers, joined later by *one* man. In about half of the cases, another feature of the sorcerers is revealed: their light skin color. In a spouse that may be a desirable trait, sometimes foregrounded as a kind of symbolic capital in marriage ads which appear in South Asian newspapers even in the diaspora, or in face-to-face premarital negotiation between two families. But calling the sorcerers fair-skinned means they are objects and agents of jealousy, *hinśa*.

In section C5, Delwar makes known their aims. Aims mentioned more than once in my corpus of 12 divinations include "[just for the] conspiracy [of it]," "wrecking marriages" (whether before or after they are consecrated is not clear), and "exercising control over the victim" (something like voudou). Aims mentioned only once include "sheer enmity," "envy" of the victim's possessions, and a desire "to destroy the victim's reputation" or to "light a fire in this family." The community tensions thematized in discourses surrounding sorcery are, thus, similar to those in other communities experiencing rapid change, new forms of stratification, and new possibilities for the accumulation of wealth (see, for example, Toelken 1987).[3] So long as people seek out expert help in the face of such tensions and are prepared to accept a fundamental link between the social and the personal or even bodily, biomedicine's hegemony will be incomplete.

To put flesh on the bones of the outline in Figure 1, here is a translation of one encounter involving a husband (M) and wife (W) presented Delwar (D) with a set of problems. The transcript begins at the point in the encounter when he pronounces the divination. He had been speaking in a normal tone of voice but shifts at line 1, his loudness, intonation, and articulation marking this section off as "not conversational."

Delwar Gives the Results of a Divination[4]

D: This event happened after Asar [a Bengali lunar month], (.5)   1
ten months ago (falling tone) (.5) ((using his pen to guide his eyes, as if he is reading word for word from what he has written))   2
[By] two females (.3)   3
((looks "up" in a sidelong glance, rocking to his left and back))   4
and one male together,   5
(?) (.5)   6
seven charms were made.[5] (.8)   7
One charm is [location unspecified] (.3)   8
One has been fed [victim unspecified] (.3)   9
Two were sent on the wind [or by breath].   10
Three were fed to dogs. (1.5)   11
((much faster)) For Mustafar (1.2)   12
there is one [location unspecified].   13

One has been fed [Mustafar's name not repeated]
(.3),　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　14
one was sent on the wind [or by breath],　　15
and two were fed to dogs (.5).　　　　　16
In Muezzim's name was fed　　　　　　17
one was sent on the wind [or by breath], (.3)　18
and two were fed to dogs.　　　　　　19
In Anwar's name one was fed,　　　　20
one was sent on the wind [or by breath],　21
and one was fed to dogs.　　　　　　22
In the name of you as husband and wife　23
one charm is outside (.5)　　　　　　24
two were fed to each [of you]　　　　25
two were sent on the wind [or by breath]　26
and four were fed to dogs.　　　　　27
(1.5)

　　At this point Delwar makes a transition toward a moment when he expects interaction with his clients. He signals that by speaking in a less deliberate, lower tone of voice. In the lines transcribed below, he framed his speech as conversational; he was no longer declaiming.

D: This (??)　　　　　　　　　　　28
The female and two males ((wiping under nose with hand, gazing at their faces as if now expecting and inviting interaction))　　29
who carried out this [curse] . . .　　　30
the part that depended on backward recitation of Qur'anic verses　　　　　　　　31
was the most /powerful/.　　　　　32

D: . . . .>

W: /yes, yes/　　　　　　　　　　33

D: ,,,,,, ((stretching, enlarging chest [in relief at her agreement?]))

W: There is another son.　　　　　34
(?Comparing sons?)　　　　　　　35

D: ((scratching head and looking down again at his papers))

W: Ours matches [with that]. ((strong overall falling contour))　　　　　　　　36

　　In lines 33 and 34 Delwar gets the response he has markedly elicited by lowering his tone and by looking up. Actually, the marked upward turn of his gaze—toward the woman—occurs just before she responds in line 33. After her brief response, he turns away, though line 34 indicates she has not said all she needs to say.

The Troubles Delwar Divined

Analyzing videotapes I made of the diviner Delwar Kari in 1996 and comparing them with those I had shot in 1992 uncovered both continuities and contrasts. Both sets of tapes reveal a formulaic declamation of the results of a numerological sort of calculation process, one that he has kept shrouded in mystery. The formulaic declamation, however, is public. Given biomedicine's rapid ascent to hegemony in Delwar's area of Bangladesh (beginning in the 1960s but taking off in the late 80s), it is probably no accident that 1996 divinations no longer concerned the sicknesses that dominated Delwar's 1992 divinations. Instead, those who brought names for divining problems in 1996 were concerned about their children's marriages and school exams.

　　One thing that had not changed since 1992 was that Delwar uncovered sorcery behind all problems. Why should people seek out the services of a man whom they must know finds a sorcerer under every bush? It is because Delwar is an astute interpreter. But what does divination interpret? Ostensibly, Delwar does not interpret illnesses or other problems, since he is only given a person's name and no information about the problem. Instead, Delwar is an astute interpreter of village social life and social organization. "He interprets people's own world to them in a distanced fashion that will allow them to see things that are so close to them that they cannot perceive them under ordinary circumstances."[6] Diviners of his stripe are, as it were, moonlighting structuralist anthropologists. Delwar's numerological algorithm must produce outcomes that mirror local models of community, person, and gender. Regarding community, Delwar's pronouncements indirectly index the same critical evaluation of the national self which I heard people voice on those numerous occasions when I got into conversations on public transportation—namely, Bangladeshis often told me that their communities were endlessly capable of hiṇśā. Hiṇśā's common gloss as "envious hatred" does not capture the sense it carries of superior feeling, stratifying tendencies, class-consciousness, "a tendency to make invidious comparisons and set up divisions in order to have someone to look down on."

　　If village communities are endlessly capable of hiṇśā, persons, in the model Delwar draws upon, are endlessly vulnerable, socially entanglable, physically

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penetrable—"dividual" in the sense given by South Asianists (Marriott 1976). At the same time, Delwar's form of divination is in two senses a discourse on agency. First, it shares with other forms of divination an overt attempt to escape from human intentionality (DuBois 1992). Divination only works by suspending the intentionality of client and diviner. In their differing roles, both assume the stance of recipients of the truth that is revealed. On the other hand, Delwar discovers sorcery—which is at once the opposite and the cause of the dividual penetrability of persons, if we can recast Marriott's (1976) concept as vulnerability. Sorcery asserts hyper-agency, as Briggs points out in relation to shamanism and its discourses (1992). In a society that frowns upon strong assertion of individual plans, especially in the absence of "if God wills," those who reach out and magically control *others'* futures through sorcery appear hyper-agentive indeed.

The construction of personhood in Delwar's divination texts hinges in part on a grammar of agency. He does not claim to know the name of the women and men behind the curses. Still, he shows respect for their agency, shifting from an unmarked to an honorific form of third person agreement marking in reference to them. This shift he makes, in particular, when talking about their power to simply blow a charm toward the victim over the wind. These texts frequently alternate between active and passive constructions of the same event—describing *sorcerers* and grammaticalizing their work in active voice at one moment, then foregrounding *the act* and dropping all reference to agents at other moments.[7] The significance of the shift will only be uncovered with further analysis.

Delwar typically divines the problems of absent "patients," if we can call them that, or "troubles owners" (as opposed to troubles tellers, Wilce 1998b). In only one case I taped did a client present her own name for some problem to be divined. Often, the names presented for divination are those of adult children. Elderly parents, acting as Delwar's clients, present their names. Parents must integrate what Delwar says with their own observations of signs or symptoms and a range of other diagnoses from herbalists, exorcists, homeopaths, and allopaths. This *is* divination; I have no evidence that parent-clients described symptoms before the divinatory pronouncement. It is important to keep that in mind as we analyze the symptoms Delwar attributed to the extremely gender-marked male or female

names that clients gave him. All the clients gave him was the name, but the name gives away gender. Thus, the symptoms he divines must fit local models of gender. And in fact the signs of sorcery that Delwar divines do resonate with clients; after all, Delwar's occupation requires that he understand his clients better than even local sociologists might. His pronouncements are collective representations, reproducing images not only of community and person but most particularly of gendered persons. It is more often the female sorcerers who, he says, are fair-skinned. That resonates with clients insofar as fair skin might be a desired and thus a resented trait, thus attracting to itself the projection of hostility or, even more paradoxically, hiṇśā, jealousy (LeVine 1982; Toelken 1987). As for the victims, Delwar may attribute a hot temper to male or female names. However, it is no accident that he ascribed the traits of moodiness and indecisiveness to two different female names, never to males. Given that even Bangladeshi academics unreflectively ascribed to women an excess of emotion (Wilce 1998b: 271, n. 17, n. 18), the cultural model is clear enough.

Troubles with Delwar's Divinations: Dialogical Indeterminacy

Divinations are interpretive pronouncements. On the surface they appear to be endpoints in the interpretive process. I cannot speak about the secrets of the midpoints of that process, about the esoteric algorithms that allow Delwar to turn a Bangladeshi name derived from Arabic into numerological signs and, finally, a pronouncement. But in fact the pronouncement or declamation is not the endpoint. Delwar's clients share a sense of the pronouncement as the first member of an adjacency pair (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974),[8] and a sense of the preferred form of their response. Their response is called for, and the preferred response is agreement. Close inspection of each event, however, shows the contingency of the process by which such divinations might become social facts, especially when the diviner invites the client-parents' agreement with his pronouncement. These parents must judge how closely the divination matches their children's problems. Delwar cannot constrain their agreement with his pronouncements.

When Delwar is done taking the names and using the modality of writing to calculate the cause of the troubles clients bring him, he looks up and speaks loudly and slowly in a bookish sort of regis-

ter. The shift in voice quality entails a shift in Bakhtinian voice, from an everyday, engaged voice to the voice of authority. Delwar signals by this shift that this is a monologic moment in the divination process.[9] Formulaicity is a particular framing device, one which typifies the process which Bauman and Briggs call entextualization (1990).[10] Delwar certainly makes his divinations memorable, text-like— but also decontextualizable—by forcing them into a structure full of parallelism, repetition, and predictability. As Bauman and Briggs argue, the ability to retain some control over texts as they travel between contexts is power indeed. How firm is Delwar's grip on the discourse? Is his "text" beyond interruption or question, safe from being thrown back in his face in the ultimate sort of recontextualization by others?

The monologic moment passes when life in the bazaar, and the demands of sociality, press in upon textuality. Texts are neat, but only exist as ideals; life is messy. The transcript of Delwar's encounter with the couple, still concerned about their children, includes an interruption when the bazaar pressed in on the trio I was videotaping in Delwar's market stall. Just before speaking the words transcribed as line 40 (to reflect the gap between it and the last line of the segment above, numbered 36), Delwar looked up suddenly to address a man passing by in the bazaar.

D: Have you heard any news?   40
Did you hear anything from my homestead
yesterday?   41

   . . .
((Omitting several lines of interaction))

After the brief interruption represented above, Delwar returned his attention to the papers lying before him on the floor of his stall, and to his clients.

D: ((points with pen))   50
Here! (I've put down his name).   51
(15 sec.)

M: ((Begins to lean forward))
(2)
M: Muezzim—   52
Can you do his [divination] a little better,
separately, please?   53

D: ((nods head to left in assent)) I've written it. 54

M: This one [son] is crazy.   55

W: . . . .> ((woman looks up sharply))

D: ((writing still))

M: As if he's been drinking [unthinkable in
Bangladesh]   56

D: ((looking up, but with eyes toward the road,
not his clients))   57
Yes, isn't that common? He's more immature
[than?]
. . . .> Clients
/and [there is the influence of something]
                              $\bar{a}lg\bar{a}$ ("loose")/[11] 58
           [[
    ((lifts left arm))   ((lowers arm forcefully))

M: /Come on [now, his] exam/   59

D: Ah, the vacation /prelude/[12]   60
/I/, here . . .]   61
((looks down toward paper again))

M: He's going to take his exam.   62
His BA final exam.   63
[So] all these problems are happening.   64

Dialogical Features of This Divination

As we review the transcript, presented in several episodes above, we find that the lines I present open with a monologically structured episode—lines 1-26. But the larger encounter of which Delwar's relatively monologic declamation is a part can be "interrupted" both by interaction with non-participant passersby, and by non-scripted interaction between Delwar and his clients. Delwar takes several steps to entextualize his pronouncement in monologic form, including raising his voice, orienting his speech to his authoritative calculation paper, and following a formula (Figure 1) of internal repetition (for example, in the listing of charms distributed in various sites). These measures, which define entextualization, make the formal organization of his speech as oral text obvious to listeners. Despite these efforts, the divination remains contextualized and dialogical in several ways.

First, Delwar invites a limited sort of dialogue; it is built into the very structure of his declamations (Figure 1, part F). Lines 27-35 represent that Part F. But they also illustrate the limits of a structuralist analysis of events like this. No such models can capture what happened in those lines, namely, the evolution of the divination from monologic declama-

tion to emergent, unscripted dialogue. Delwar came to a self-conscious pause in line 31, and looked up, expecting and indeed inviting interaction. Admittedly, the particular sort of interaction he invites is a confirmation of the truth of what he had revealed—seeking, it seems, a dialogue in form more than function (Mannheim and Tedlock 1995: 4). Delwar receives that confirmation, in line 32, from the mother.

In some of the divination events I recorded, such a confirmation was, for all intents and purposes, the endpoint of the encounter. Or so it appeared to me in 1992; I do not know what other encounters with the same clients followed the ones I taped. But in the 1996 encounter transcribed here, tension ebbed and flowed in a more complex pattern. In line 32 Delwar stretched as if he were then able to relax after a moment of tension, a moment in which his work could have been rejected. At that moment, the declamation of lines 12-26 would seem to have been interactively declared complete, finalized (Hanks 1996: chapter 10). Those lines reflect a rather rapid divination of troubles relating to quite a few loved ones. But, reviewing that portion of the videotape from the vantage point of lines 50-64, Delwar's rapid delivery and flat tone take on new significance. It was as if he had been doing something quite automatic. And that did not seem to satisfy the couple before him. The divination that might have been "finished" earlier was instead filled with a new tension seeking a new resolution. This couple was still unhappy enough to insist, in line 53, that Delwar individuate a divination for each person for whom they had a concern, and to pay him more for it. Lines 51-64 highlight the father insisting on a separate divination for Muezzim, who is—literally, the father implies—losing his mind preparing for his BA exam.

Thus there is a second sort of dialogical potential in divinations—the potential for dissatisfaction, leading to revision. In general, it appears that clients who are willing to pay Delwar more can ask for such a revision, or at least an expansion. If he has lumped several of their concerns about loved ones together, they may insist that he disaggregate them, as they did by requesting a special divination for Muezzim alone. Delwar's revelation that "There is also the influence of something 'loose'" (line 58) sheds light on the nature of divination as dialogue. Taking line 58 together with the earlier declamation, we see that what Delwar reveals about anyone (for example, Muezzim) is not just determined by the

process internal to divination per se. Dialogue enters in, too. It was only when dialogically prompted that Delwar went on to reveal something more typically included in all of his 1992 divinations—the role of a "loose" spirit (see Figure 1, C6). Thus, the construction of a divination is not necessarily any less interactive than the construction of a sentence in normal conversation (Goodwin 1979).

Delwar not only mentioned something "loose" upon Muezzim as a response to the couple's concern. He also performed another divination, for which they paid an additional charge. And he uncovered more trouble-causing items. In fact, in a sort of dramatic climax or denouement, Delwar produced a bag containing several charms of the aggressive sort, with dirt still clinging to them as though they had been planted in the clients' courtyard. After reading a text designed to take away the curse attaching to the charm, Delwar took one of the charms, blew on it, and put it back in a container, pushing it down as if it were a cigarette butt. Regarding the soil clinging to it, he declared, "This is the soil of *that* place." The vague demonstrative was evidently meant to be interpreted as referring to the soil of the clients' own courtyard. And with that, at least for that day, the tension ebbed away in a "final" sense. What I do not know, however, is the degree to which this act of revelation—like shamanic revelations in the Amazon described by Brown (1988)—simply projected tension and uncertainty from the realm of the boy, his body-mind, his madness, and his family to a larger social domain of neighbors, the domain of hiṇśā.

I can point more allusively to further evidence of the dialogism of divination events. It is evident in other declamations not presented here that, when Delwar pauses in his monologue, as if intentionally, clients sometimes fill in information he is missing. Information thus supplied is often the amount of time the yet-to-be-declared problem has been going on. (See line A2 in Figure 1). My last piece of evidence indicates another sort of dialogism, namely, intertextuality.[13] There is reason to believe that no divination event stands on its own; all such events are intertextual. Each has significant precontexts, even if Delwar is not supposed to know those by normal means. And each divination is potentially a text to be cited critically in a "you divined this, but this happened, and now what?" sort of exchange between Delwar and an unsatisfied client. I have recorded two such "follow-up visits," one a revisit by a client to Delwar, the other my own visit to one of

his clients' homes. On the day of the divination discussed above, another woman came to Delwar about another adult child. Unlike the couple, this woman had been to see Delwar just a few days before. Their second interchange was not harmonious. They reached some kind of compromise or understanding when Delwar performed another divination to see what other causes he had missed lurking behind this woman's adult child—why the child had, in fact, run away and had still not been found.

The other "revisit" was my own. In 1992 I visited the home of yet another woman who had brought Delwar her son's name. There in her house I heard the story of the son, Kalam, and met him in the company of his mother (Delwar's client), who was surrounded by children and male kin. An uncle showed me Kalam's problem, getting down on the ground and acting out what was obviously a seizure. The family, who had taken Kalam to a number of different kinds of practitioners (allopaths as well as the diviner), felt as though none of them had "caught" the problem and given an effective treatment. True, they had not gone back to argue with Delwar. But the potential was there, and it seems the social atmosphere in 1996 allowed such potential greater expression.

Conclusion

How could we think that any interpretive practice could be reduced to a text, a monologue? Somehow the exotica with which we anthropologists concern ourselves—sorcerers and their power, for instance—cloud not only Muezzin's or Liakot's minds but our own.[14] Thus, for several years I myself was ensorcelled, having allowed Delwar's entextualization to bewitch me. I thought of divination as outside the dialogic paradigm of the other "medical" (or, more accurately, "problem-solving") encounters I describe elsewhere (Wilce 1998b). Of course, Delwar does try to keep dialogism at bay, and probably has enough success at that as to be the envy of any biomedical practitioner in Bangladesh or the U.S. who might wish for greater passive "compliance" on the part of patients (Kuipers 1989). But there is plenty of dialogism in this interpretive process.[15] I see in my tapes from 1992 to 1996 a shift in Delwar's style and content. It changes from confident declaration of even the symptoms being experienced by the target of the divination, to slightly quieter tones and a different focus in 1996. Even that shift testifies to the dialogic nature of his divinatory encounters. Cli-

ents simply do not want their diviner involved in acute illness anymore. Delwar, as I now see, is interrupted and even harassed by clients, especially by those who return for a second round of divining troubles.[16]

It seems to me—as it did to Brown (1988) and Briggs (1992) in their Amazonian context—that such encounters barely keep a lid on a cauldron, and that this is less "their function" than an always contingent achievement within the structure of divination encounters. The anxieties of parents constantly threaten to bubble over. The tensions and hostilities between neighboring families, which Bangladeshis seem to imagine so easily (and perhaps accurately) are "managed" by affirmation rather than denial. Delwar does nothing to discourage neighbors from seeing each other as enemies.[17] Yet the interaction, and the interpretation that emerges therefrom as a candidate social fact, puts some closure on issues at least for the moment. I have never heard of any remedy (like violence) being sought against sorcerers other than that which Delwar offers—unearthing the charms and thus undoing their power. In that sense, Malinowski's understanding of the psychosocial function of encounters such as Delwar's was correct. Bangladeshis do turn to magical rites precisely in the face of events beyond their control, seeking some degree of at least psychological mastery over them.[18]

And if divination indeed produced "social facts," putting closure on a question of causation without potentiating retaliation, it would seem to function as DuBois (1992) claims. But is DuBois correct in his claims that divination makes itself authoritative by distancing itself from personal or factional perspectives? And what of Turner's claim that divination "brings to light and so dispels the quarrels and grudges in the social group" (1975: 245)? These complementary claims only appear true as long as we see divination as a largely monologic declaration from beyond. The social facts produced by Delwar's divinations are always candidate facts, moments in an ongoing and dialogical process. DuBois re-presents divination "texts" recorded by Evans-Pritchard, William Bascom, Paul Bohannan (cited in DuBois 1992), and others—certainly not linguistic anthropologists influenced by Bakhtin (or by later analysts of that prototype of all dialogue, the everyday conversation). Not surprisingly, the only evidence of multivocality preserved in DuBois's re-presented texts entails their embedding of the quoted speech of ancient diviners or deities.

Does divination dispel grudges? Only to the extent that clients receive divinatory indications as to who has cursed their loved one that are paradoxically clear enough and yet understandable enough to forgive. But, not only is that account atypical at least of the divinations I recorded; it also presumes that clients accept the divination as authentic and do not come back in a few days complaining vigorously about inaccuracy or lack of improvement. If clients receive a diviner's "text" as authoritative, but he or she does not name the sorcerer—and Delwar never does—how does that "bring to light and so dispel quarrels"? The potential social functions of either restoring the previously harmonious relationship of

Liakot, whose story I mentioned earlier, with his friend, or perhaps exposing the wicked enmity of his friend and his hired-gun sorcerer, were noticeable by their absence from the story as told me by Liakot's family.

The potential for conflict both between Delwar and his clients (clashing over divinations or the (non)results of the protective amulets he gives) and between his clients and their still anonymous enemies resorting to sorcerers, is *constituted* in part, rather than alleviated, by Delwar's divinations. "Conflict management" is perhaps what such systems are about—but only if we define management as, in large part, production and reproduction.

NOTES

[1]*Daktars* are allopathic in their orientation but their only training (beyond a high school education) is by apprenticeship. Still, they dispense cosmopolitan pharmaceuticals to fight ulcers, parasites, infections, and the like. See Wilce 1998b: 160.

[2]Why does he ask the patient's mother's name? Delwar is drawing on an important cultural theme honoring mothers. A cult of motherhood thrives in patriarchal Bengal (Bagchi 1990) and even draws on Islamic discourse to support it. If precisely identifying the patient is the pressing goal here, Delwar has no choice but to link him with his or her mother. As Byron Good was told by a diviner/ "prayer writer" in Iran, "You can never really know who the father is" (1977: 44).

[3]This is not to claim that sorcery is a new invention, but that it is locally perceived to have increased as modernity brings desires and opportunities for unequal accumulation.

[4]Transcription conventions are as follows:

• Speaker is designated by letter (D, W, M) in the first line of his or her turn; unless otherwise designated, the same speaker continues in the next lines and no letter identifying the speaker is provided.

• The transcript is laid out in lines that I have divided according to their grammatical-poetic structure. They are numbered for ease of reference.

• (.5) Pauses are represented in seconds or tenths of seconds.

• [x] Material in brackets entails commentary or fills in knowledge inferable in the original.

• (?, words?) indicates inaudible words.

• ((actions)) Double parentheses enclose descriptions of bodily movement, eye gaze, postural orientation, and prosodic or paralinguistic features.

• /x/ Slash marks enclose first an overlapped segment of speech then, in the next line, someone else's overlapping segment.

• . . . .> indicates a turning of gaze toward an interlocutor.

• ,,,,,,,,, indicates turning gaze away from interlocutor.

• [marks simultaneity between underlined words (above) and gesture (below).

[5]The literal meaning is "done."

[6]William Beeman, from his comments as discussant of the 1999 AAA session at which this article was originally presented.

[7]I have written elsewhere (Wilce 1998) of the freedom Bangla—as a pro-drop language—gives speakers to allude to agents without naming them, but that is different from passivization. The passive voice is quite marked, unusual in Bangla. The passivization of the reference to the curse is also unlike anaphora or any sort of abbreviation. As to what it *is* doing, that awaits further analysis.

[8]The term "adjacency pair" reflects the sequential nature of how talk is organized—not only by turns, but in such a way that answers follow questions, responses follow summons, etc.

[9]Hill and Irvine (1992), in their introduction to the collection in which Du Bois's essay on divination appears, indicate that what Du Bois calls "apersonal authoritative meaning" is in part produced, in live and interactive performances of divination, by "rhythmic and versified speech, formulaic expression, repetition and parallelism, and distinctive tones of voice" (Hill and Irvine 1992: 10).

[10]Bauman and Briggs argue that even "the prepared-for detachability of texts may be interactively accomplished" (1990: 74) and it is so in the case of Delwar and some of his clients (more than others). The concept of entextualization is further developed in Silverstein and Urban 1996.

[11]On the significance of ālgā ("loose") things like spirits, see Wilce 1998b.

[12]This admittedly awkward translation of c^huttitār ā/ge/—"before the break/vacation"—preserves the word order so that the interruption is accurately associated with the word ā/ge/, "before," which I have translated "prelude."

[13]Not only these Bangladeshi divinations but Amazonian parallels represented by Brown (1988) and Briggs (1992) are thoroughly intertextual. Shamanistic revelations make reference to discourses outside of the trance event, and so does the speech of those who hear, or hear about, these shamanistic speeches. Briggs describes how shamanic speech is, as I put it here, profoundly upsetting and provokes what in his examples seems to be a fairly unified oppositional discourse associated with women. The dialectic of declaration and opposition is taken up into the speech of shamans amongst themselves, as they try to do damage control vis-a-vis their reputations and their grip on authority (Briggs 1992).

[14]I am inverting the relations of the complex and simple, and the marked and the everyday, among language games, in Wittgenstein's comment about deriving a theory of language games from "primitive" games with simple rules:

When we look at such simple forms of language the mental mist which seems to enshroud our ordinary use of language [or, perhaps, our use of divination] disappears (1960: 17).

[15]This is also true in American doctor-patient encounters (Ainsworth-Vaughn 1998).

[16]I have still never seen a client refuse to pay Delwar.

[17]In a different interpretation from that which I have presented, neighbors might indeed be enemies in the sense of aligning themselves with a form of capitalism that is an objective threat (Taussig 1980; Toelken 1987) to people like Delwar's clients, whose allegiance is mostly to the peasant way of life, not capitalist values.

[18]I thank my 1999 AAA co-panelist Pete Haney for reminding me of Malinowski's approach and calling for my response.

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