

Two temporalities of the Mongolian wolf hunter*

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Bernard Charlier

Mongolia and Inner Asia Studies Unit - Cambridge

This chapter proposes an analysis of how a particular event, that is wolf hunting, is conceptualised in the Mongolian language. It aims at contributing to the ongoing debate about the interactions between potentially universal and language-specific features that shape the ways people relate to their natural environment. The analysis, which is based on ethnographic fieldwork, describes and explains how a Mongolian wolf hunter experiences two modalities of temporality: cyclical and ‘evenemental’. It shows how these two modalities are embedded into the Mongolian concept of ‘wind horses’, *hiimor*, in the context of wolf hunting. The actualisation of these temporalities reveals a particular perception of the environment as well as the singular moral position of an individual in it.

Keywords

Mongolia, wolf hunting, event, language, environment

1. Introduction

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Space and time are everywhere but are experienced in many different ways in many different contexts. Bodily presence and intelligibility are closely related to the cognitive schemes of space and time, which are differently present in knowledge, actions, languages, perceptions and institutions. The various theoretical perspectives adopted in each chapter of this section, do not dissolve the discontinuities between the universal and relative dimensions of these ontological categories, but on the contrary, they complicate, multiply and put them under tension in order to make them more visible. They trigger a reflection about the change in scales and complexities which happen when the analysis shifts from the global and universal dimension of space and time to their local and relative actualisations as spatial and temporal modalities. In other words: what happens to these categories when they are analysed *across* space, time and disciplines?

As part of that reflection, the analysis does not focus on the ontological status of space and time but on their social expressions, analysed not as forms of intuition (Kant 1998 [1787]: 157–191) but as forms of practice: spatiality and temporality, which have to be understood here as stabilised forms of pragmatic and symbolic relationships underlying actions such as acts of memory (Filipović and Geva, *this volume*) and gestures (Fibigerová *et al.*, *this volume*). Although both spatiality and temporality entertain relationships of simultaneity attention is mainly paid to the idea of temporality in regards to the particular ethnographic context of West Mongolia.¹

¹ The analysis is most particularly about an ethnic minority of nomadic herders called Dörvöd (see Atwood 2004: 150, Delaplace 2008). The family of elders who welcomed me during my doctoral research for about two years lives in the district of Sagil in the province of Uvs. They are my main informants and their opinions and practices should obviously not be considered representative of ‘all’ what Dörvöds say and do.

The single English word ‘fortune’ encompasses several different concepts for the Mongols (*huv zaya*, *az*, *zol*, *hišig*), each conveying slightly different senses of spatiality and temporality (Humphrey: forthcoming). Some of these notions are interrelated and their potentials of meaning are mobilised differently according to the contexts of their actualisation. For the sake of clarity *huv zaya* is defined as ‘fate’, *az* as ‘luck’, *zol* as ‘felicity’ and *hišig* as ‘grace’.² However the analytical approach towards these terms is definitely contextualist (Jaszczolt 2010, see also *volume 1*) as they achieve their full meaning only in relation to the particular context of their actualisation. The analysis of wolf hunting is an opportunity to understand why and how the concept of *hiimor*’, which is temporary defined as ‘fortune’, is actualised, and how it articulates two types of temporality, cyclical and ‘evenemental’³, what da Silva Sinha *et al.* (*this volume*) call ‘Time-based time intervals’ and ‘Event-based time intervals’.

The *hiimor*’ resides inside humans and animals, especially the wolves. The wolf is the main enemy⁴ of domestic animals and a prestigious prey for the herders who like sometimes to go hunting and for those who just want to protect their herd. It is feared for its greediness and praised for its intelligence, courage and strength. The herders perceive it as the ‘domesticated dog’ of a powerful supernatural spirit in the area, which is named ‘White father’, *Cagaan Aav*. *Cagaan Aav* is believed to be the supernatural owner of the land and the wild animals. As a predator and a prey the wolf is at the core of two technical relationships, herding and hunting, endowed with particular cosmological ideas such as *hiimor*’ and *hišig*. Unlike wild animals, humans can increase their potential of *hiimor*’ through moral actions and intentions. Killing a

² See Hamayon (1990) on that term.

³ I am greatly indebted to Giovanni da Col, whose article on fortune and event (2007) provides the theoretical background of my own reasoning.

⁴ There are no bears in the area.

wolf, and appropriating its high level of *hiimor*’ through predation, account for the moral dimension of the successful hunter. Only ‘good’ hunters can kill a wolf.

It is important to analyse how a hunter tries to channel and develop that potential through the use of the astrological calendar organised mainly according to the cycles of the sun and the moon. The hunter reads that calendar to know whether he has *hiimor*’ or not before hunting. Every week, a person has a particular auspicious day.

Burning incense at the hunting encampment to ask for game from the spirit master of the land counts as a moral action increasing the level of *hiimor*’. The killing of the prey is not only obtained but also produced, which refers to a linear and subjective temporality.

The chapter is divided into five sections. In the first section, the concept of *hiimor*’ is analysed in relation with the use of the astrological calendar and the second section is devoted to a reflection about the production of *hiimor*’ in the context of wolf hunting. The third section consists of an analysis of the link between *hiimor*’ and predation. In the fourth and fifth sections, the reflection focuses on the relationships between the two temporalities, cyclical and evenemental, conveyed by the concept of *hiimor*’.

1.1 Use of the calendar: looking for ‘wind horses’, *hiimor*⁵

The analysis is most particularly about an ethnic minority called Dörvöd (see Atwood 2004: 150, Delaplace 2008). The Dörvöd constitute a relatively isolated ethnic minority living in

⁵ *Hiimor*’ is the Mongolian translation of the Tibetan ‘wind horse’ (*rlung-rta*). ‘Hii’ is the air and ‘mori’ the horse. The wind horse refers to the prayer flag usually depicting a horse carrying a jewel and surrounded by Tibetan formulas. Karmay notes that in Tibet the word *rlung-rta* is often mistakenly taken to mean the actual flag planted on the roof of a house or on a high place near a village. “In fact, it is a symbol of the idea of well-being or good fortune. This idea is clear in such expressions as ‘the increase of the *rlung-rta*’ (*rlung-rta dar-ba*) when things go well with someone, and ‘the decline of the *rlung-rta*’ (*rlung-rta rgud-pa*) when the opposite happens.” (Karmay 1993: 151).

Western Mongolia (1500kms away from the capital city Ulaanbaatar). They are geographically close to the Kazakh minorities in the West, Tuvian in the North (located just above the border with Siberia) and other Mongolian minorities in the East and in the South. In Uvs most of them are nomad herders. They live in Mongolian circular tents (*ger*) and survive on their cattle and herds constituted of sheep, goats, camels, horses and cows. They can sell milk, meat, wool and cashmere for money in the administrative centre. Some Dörvöd who live in the provincial centre work in the local administration and the primary and secondary schools. They also trade various goods (clothes, flour, salt, sugar, batteries, radios, etc.) imported from Russia and China on the local markets. Others work as taxi driver as well and link the different sub-provincial administrative centres. None of these activities is exclusive as a person may have several jobs at the same time. Although some herders want to kill wolves to protect their herds, many Mongols from various backgrounds express an interest in hunting that animal even though they do not define themselves as hunters. Hunting wolves is often practised as a 'hobby' (*sonirhol*) that do not have much in common with the type of middle-class passtime we may have in England. Hunting is endowed with effective symbolism and cosmological ideas that bring into play a singular way of interacting reflexively with the environment and oneself as a person living in it.

Any time he goes hunting Doržoo, a herder who practices hunting, looks at the astrological calendar and check if the day is *hiimortoi* (i.e. *with hiimor*). It is impossible to explore the different implications of this term without considering a whole series of other concepts which are very close. It has a much broader meaning than just 'luck'. In the calendar Doržoo refers to three tables which have to be consulted.

The first table refers to the correspondence between the year, the stars and the days and the astrological sign of a person. In the superior part of the board entitled 'twelve years', we find

the twelve animals of the Chinese astrology, each corresponding to one year. On the left we find the person's days (*garag*), and the stars (*od*). There are three types of days: *Süld*, *Am'* and *Üheh*. Those terms can be translated as the day of 'life-force', of 'life' and of 'death'. Each day has a number. For a person born in the year of the snake, such as Doržoo, the *süld* day corresponds to the number 3 (i.e. Wednesday, the third day of the week). The life day is Saturday and the death day is Thursday. The day associated with *hiimor'* is the *süld* day. The life day can also be considered to be a good day, but to a lesser extent as, following the calendar, if a person commits bad actions that day, he/she may die. It is suggested that one should not play with knives for instance. The death day is not a good day as it refers to the day of the person's death.

The favourable signs (*iveel gurav*) are written below the days and the stars (next to last line). Each animal of the calendar gets on well with two other animals. The snake, for instance, gets on well with the chicken and the cow. There is also a particular animal with which a person has an antagonistic relationship. For the snake, the bad sign (*daisan*), is the pig. The day of the pig would not be a good day to go hunting for the snake. In other words, the most important data here are the *süld* day and the favourable and bad signs. These data allow the reader to find his way through two other tables. The second table juxtaposes the days of the solar and of the lunar calendars, so that the reader is presented with various pieces of advice and a series of warnings. The third table indicates, among other things, the person's state of *hiimor'* for one year.

According to these tables, *hiimor'* is cyclical. It comes back every week and refers to a circular time. The calculation of luck is not easy. Reading the calendar strangely evokes a journey through a labyrinth, not because it conveys a sense, for the anthropologist, of being lost, but because at the same time as going from crossroads to crossroads, the reader must

make choices and consider the pros and cons of his/her situation. As Roger Caillois (1981: 179) says in his comments about the famous Argentine writer, essayist, poet and translator Jorge Luis Borges (1999 [1944], 1988 [1962]), whose main interests are the nature of time, infinity, mirrors and labyrinths, the labyrinth is a place of recurrent creation, implying symmetries and mirror games, systems of correspondences and equivalences, compensations and equilibriums that constitute the person beyond his/her own body. The calendar literally organises the hazard according to a labyrinthine geography like a chessboard. Its circular time involves the two other themes, those of space and causality. The calendar offers a series of hermeneutic clues to the user who wants to predict or explain *a posteriori* the success or the failure of a particular action. It enables the reader to infer a type of causality based on pre-defined links between an individual and the spatiotemporal movements of celestial objects such as the sun, the moon, and the stars. The calendar refers to an external and unintentional causality, the date of birth. What is of importance for the reader is not the meaning of the various potentials but rather their actualisation at a certain time. We are not so much facing a chronological time but rather a qualitative time, as Geertz mentioned with regard to the use of the calendar in Bali (2000 [1973]: 404, see also da Silva Sinha *et al.*, *this volume*). Indeed, what interests Doržoo is to know his state as a person before going hunting.

Fuzziness and hybridity

The notions of *süld* and *am'* are related to the notion of *hiimor'*. These concepts are very difficult to define, as people do not have a precise idea of what they are. To the question “What is *süld*?” a herder replies that such a question does not make sense, a better question is “what happens if a person has no *süld*?”. Nobody can define *süld*, *am'*, or *hiimor'* with

precision. Several informants answers “We do not know very well what *hiimor*’ is as this is something we cannot see or touch. This is something empty, like air.” Instead of describing the properties of these entities, they mention the causes and the consequences of their presence and absence in a person’s body. Their linguistic meanings are of little interest for them. These notions are intertwined and interdependent. For Tsengel, who is a teacher of Buddhist philosophy at the monastery of Ulaanbaatar, *süld* is the same thing as *hiimor*’. The *am*’ is based on the *süld*: if the *süld* is bad, the *am*’ becomes bad as well.

A person without *süld* [*süldgüi hün*] is not healthy, he/she does not sleep well, his/her work is not successful. If you do polluting [*buzartai*] things such as stealing your *süld* will leave your body [*süld zailah*]. A lama will have to call your *süld* back [*süld duu duulah*]. The soul (*süns*) of a person can also leave his/her body after being scared or ill for a long time. (Tsengel)

The fuzziness of these concepts leaves the anthropologist with a proliferation of composite meanings (da Col 2007: 221), which generates various tautological interpretations.

An informant mentions that the phrase *süld hiimor*’ *baidgüi* can be used to describe a person who has no *süld*.

We say *süld hiimor*’ *baidgüi* for somebody who is not healthy, who is not motivated, we can see on the person’s face that there is something wrong. For instance, my brother-in-law drinks alcohol and does bad things: he does not help his parents and always comes back home late at night. He has no *süld hiimor*’ [*süld hiimor*’ *baidgüi*]. Such a person cannot hunt a wolf. If somebody works well and struggles to improve his/her life, his/her *hiimor*’ can increase.

Such an opinion underlines the ethical and intentional aspect of it. Cecegbal, Doržoo’s mother, associates *hiimor*’, *süld*, and the soul (*süns*) when she speaks about her herd. In

spring, many lambs and kids had died soon after birth, and after a day of pasture the herd never stopped near the yurt but carried on its way further to find more grass, giving more work to Doržoo. One day she exclaimed: *Yamar yadargatai mal ve! Süns süld baihgüi. Hiimorgüi mal*, “What a tiring herd! It has no *süns süld*. It is a herd without *hiimor*”.

According to another person, it is difficult to determine whether the *süld* is linked to *hiimor*'. The *süld* is rather linked to the soul, *süns*. The *hiimor*' is linked to the result of an action. If nothing works for us in life, it means that we have no *hiimor*'.

Contrary to the *hiimor*' the *süld* cannot be increased. It changes place in the body every day.⁶ If you have to be operated a lama must read a book to see where your *süld* is. If the *süld* turns out to be in your head you cannot be operated in that part of the body. The *süld* guarantees the good health of a person. It does not influence the success, when we succeed in something it is *az hiimor*'. (Sainzaya)

The *hiimor*' is thus linked to intentionality, ethics, and success.

The association of *hiimor*' with *az* is interesting. Bawden (1997) gives the same translations for both terms: 'luck', 'fortune'. Following the information mentioned above we can see that *hiimor*' is linked to intentionality and morality. It can be increased by our actions and our behaviour. In contrast to *hiimor*', the *az* is not located in the body and is not linked to the individual's intentionality. It is not controlled by an individual and does not increase or decrease inside his/her body. *Az* refers to an auspicious hazard, or luck, while *hiimor*' refers to a 'potential' that allows the individual to be successful. It is related to a way of being. According to an informant, a mean person, like a thief, can be *aztai* (with *az*) but not *hiimortoi* (with *hiimor*'). In the winter, a neighbour stole a cow from Nadmid and Cecegbal

⁶ Other people told me that it is the *süns* which changes place every day in the body.

mentioned that the thief would become *hiimorgüi* (without *hiimor*'). She added that stealing things was polluting, *buzartai*.

The use of the terms *hiimor*' and *az* depends on the events they refer to as well as on the attitude of the person towards these events. Only the contexts of actualisation allow the anthropologist to understand the nuanced meanings of these notions, which belong to the same semantic series, and so to escape from tautological explanations.⁷ An informant remarks:

We generally use the term *hiimor*' for big things. If we have to take an exam we will use the term *hiimor*'. If I succeed, I will say: 'I am *hiimortoi*' and if I fail, I will say: 'I am *hiimorgüi*'. It also depends on how you studied for your exam. For instance, I have ten examination questions to revise for the exam and I know I will have to answer two of these questions. Instead of studying the matter for ten questions I study the matter for only two questions hoping that I will get them at the exam. If I get them I will say: 'I am *aztai*', if I do not I will say: 'I am *azgüi*'. (Batceceg)

The term *hiimor*' does not only refer to specific events, but also to the process allowing the events to happen. In relation to games the terms *hiimor*' and *az* can be used differently according to the event and the preparation for it:

When we play with cards or ankle bones we say *az* or *azgüi*. The *hiimor*' is difficult to have. Sometimes a man can say after playing cards: 'I won, I am *hiimortoi*', he seems to pretend: 'I am like that'. But in fact, he was just lucky for one day, he was just

⁷ Qualifying the idea of *hiimor*' as a potential of success does not mean that it has nothing to do with the ideas of vitality or might (Humphrey forthcoming, Empson forthcoming). On the contrary these meanings are reciprocally implicated in a way that is reminiscent of the Derridean idea of dissemination. The concept of *hiimor*' seems to escape any attempt to assign an original and totalising meaning to it. It is an irreducible and generative multiplicity. Contrary to polysemy, the dissemination: '... pour produire un nombre non-fini d'effets sémantiques ne se laisse reconduire ni à un présent d'origine simple ... ni une présence eschatologique' (Derrida 1972 : 62).

aztai. The games of the national celebration (*naadam*) are different. We use the term *hiimor*’, as a long preparation is necessary for them. The *az* it comes one day and it does not come again, but, when your *hiimor*’ is high you can succeed several times. (Orgil)

Interestingly, *hiimor*’ is not associated with *az* in the context of hunting. When Doržoo and I came back unsuccessful from hunting, we could hear: *hoer hiimorgüi zaluu*, “two youngsters without *hiimor*’”. The term *az* was not used.

Contrary to *az*, which comes up in a present time before vanishing indefinitely, *hiimor*’ results from a process of development. While *az* does not originate in the person’s past and does not last longer than the moment of its coming up, it emerges and ‘collapses’ in the present, *hiimor*’ involves a temporal process that encompasses the past and the future.⁸ *Hiimor*’ does not only refer to a temporal but also to a spatial ‘volume’ since it allows the hunter to connect efficiently different multi-scaled cosmological levels (including his own body).

2. Pleasing the White Father and producing *hiimor*’

⁸ The same kind of temporality is found in a particular use of the idea of destiny (*zaya*), which is referred to as lot or share (*huv zaya*). The lexical pair is used to justify the occurrence of an event changing the course of somebody’s life. It may also be used to explain success or lack of success in life. Somebody who cannot stop drinking or doing bad things is said to be a person with a bad destiny (*muu zayatai hün*). Such an affirmation is implicitly morally loaded as somebody’s destiny depends on his/her behaviour in previous lives. Although the idea of *hiimor*’ seems to be encompassed in the idea of *huv zaya* they belong to different spheres of explanation, at least in the context of wolf hunting. The idea of *huv zaya* is not mobilised to justify a kill or lack of kill as it does not represent a big rupture in life.

In early spring we went hunting on the winter pastures.⁹ We slept in wooden sheds used by the herdsman to protect the calves in winter and to store pieces of felt, old chests and divans. Before hunting, the hunter pleases White Father (*Cagaan Aav*),¹⁰ the spirit of the land, with incense (juniper powder) for game. Doržoo also offers the upper part of the tea (*deej*), by throwing it in the air. At the same time he says: *An hišigee hairlač ažil töröliig min' büteeč hairal*, “Give me some hunting *hišig*”¹¹, help me to succeed in my work’ Another hunter I met recited the same kind of prayer:

Cagaan ovgon aav min'

Angyn hišigee hairlana uu?

Högšin ugalzaa hairlana uu ?

My old *Cagaan Aav* (White Father)

Will you give me some hunting *hišig*?

Will you give me an old wild sheep?

The necessity to ask *Cagaan Aav* for game refers to a hierarchical relationship of dependence between the hunter and the supernatural entity. The hierarchical pattern of relationships present in herding is reproduced in hunting. The reproduction is visible through

⁹ The winter encampments are generally located in the hollow of mountains to avoid the wind.

¹⁰ See Hamayon (1990: 710–712) for further details about this supernatural entity.

¹¹ This term has a complex history and covers a semantic field as large as religion and politics (Atwood 2000: 86-139; Hamayon 1990: 630; Even and Pop 1994: 57, §70, 263, note 2; Ruhlman 2008: 15). Although I prefer to define it as a potential of growth, it is generally translated as fortune (Chabros 1992) or grace and is the object of relations of accumulation and dispersion (Empson 2002; 2007a; 2007b; forthcoming). In the context of hunting it refers to the game.

the attribution of the status of ‘owner’ (*ezen*) to *Cagaan Aav* and ‘cattle’ (*mal*)¹² to the wild animals. The prey is not the product of a symmetrical exchange between peers but is perceived as a gift or a favour from *Cagaan Aav*, the transcendent and omnipotent spirit that knows people’s actions and intentions. Obtaining a gift is induced rather than conditioned by an act of production orientated towards the self. The fumigation is perceived as a meritorious (*buyantai*) action and intention, which influences the inner state of the hunter, that is, his *hiimor*’, but never guarantees the kill. The fumigation is not *a priori* perceived as a gift generating a counter-gift, but rather as a visible mark of respect, which is also a connector, accounting for the recognition of *Cagaan Aav*’s moral power.

The fumigation being an act of production, it is differentiated from the use of the astrological calendar. Whereas the former produces *hiimor*’ and allows the hunter to personally induce an advantageous situation and influence the result of the hunt, the latter objectively unveils it. These two modes of management of randomness involve a tension, which is at the heart of the concept of *hiimor*’. Almost imperceptibly we passed from the sphere of the external and unintentional causality of the calendar to the sphere of responsibility towards *Cagaan Aav*, that is, an internal and intentional causality linked to an event.

3. Wolf, *hiimor*’, and predation

Unlike the killing of a domestic animal, the killing of a wild animal, especially the wolf, is always joyful. For Nadmid, Doržoo’s father, the only animal which is really *hiimortoi* is the

¹² See Broz (2007) for a similar situation in the Altai region.

wolf. It is said to be a resourceful (*avhaalžtai*), and intelligent (*uhaantai*) animal. Many hunters confirm that the wolf is resourceful because it can find its food on its own. The fact that wild animals have to find their food on their own is a criterion that determines their *hiimortoi* character – Nadmid affirms that domestic animals are generally less *hiimortoi* than wild animals as they live near the yurt and cannot survive without the herder's protection.¹³ They do not live in the mountains. The *hiimor'* of the wolf refers to its intelligence, stamina, resourcefulness as well as its proximity to *Cagaan Aav*. A person is considered as *hiimortoi* if he/she sees a wolf. According to Nadmid, the wolf is more divine (*ilüü tengertei*) than people, which is translated by the expression “It has ten more skies than any human being”. That is why somebody who is able to see a wolf is *hiimortoi* for one day and a hunter who kills a wolf is *hiimortoi* for one year. How does the *hiimor'* of the hunter increase?

According to Nadmid, the only animal of which the *hiimor'* is appropriated is the wolf. “When I kill a wolf I take out its *hiimor'*, it comes [*ireh*] into me. Afterwards, my *hiimor'* increases for one year.” Most hunters gave the same interpretation of the increase in *hiimor'*. This attitude of predation is interesting as it refers to an ability to incorporate non-human otherness in order to define the self. The process is asymmetrical and non-reciprocal (Descola 2005: 437). In order to assimilate another being, the predator must perceive it as close enough to him to be able to incorporate it and not too similar to take benefit from it. The maintenance of such a balance is revealed by Čambaa, a hunter from Ovohangai. He has a clear idea about the origin of his *hiimor'* when he hunts. A few questions provide interesting answers: “Are there animals which are more *hiimortoi* than others?” — “The first one is the wolf.” — “Why?” — “The wolf is very *hiimortoi*. Its spirit [*uhaan*] is almost the same as that of a human being. There is just an idea missing for it to be like a person. That is why the wolf, can

¹³ The horse is an exception. It is considered as *hiimortoi* because of its intelligence.

bring a lot of *hiimor*” — “Why is the wolf almost like a person?” — “It has been predestined like that by the natural world [*baigalaas zayasan*]” — “What is the idea missing for the wolf to be a person?” — “A person has more ideas than the wolf that is why he can kill it.” Hunting the wolf translates the desire to identify oneself with some aspects of the animal’s *hiimor*’, such as its intelligence, stamina, and resourcefulness.

Killing a wolf and revealing a moral individual

The association between the killing of a wolf and *hiimor*’ raises the question of the status of the kill. In other words: “What does the killing of a wolf do?” We have already partly answered the question: it increases the hunter’s *hiimor*’. But a few remarks made by my informants are confusing. “Hunting a wolf is complicated. In order to kill it, you must be more clever than it is. People say that if we kill a wolf we are *hiimortoi*” (Bacuh). The favourite animal of Nadmid’s brother-in-law is the wolf:

The wolf is *hiimortoi*. In order to kill it you need to be more *hiimortoi* than it is. The wolf is an animal which allows the man to increase his *hiimor*’. When I go hunting the wolf, I throw some vodka to Cagaan Aav. Everybody cannot kill a wolf. So, when I kill one, I think I am more *hiimortoi* than the wolf is. (Cagmid)

There are two types of data in these statements: killing a wolf increases your *hiimor*’, but, at the same time, you need *hiimor*’ to hunt a wolf. Actually, the killing of a wolf reveals an aspect of the individual which is his *hiimor*’. Doržoo and Cecegbal state that being *hiimortoi* is much more than being intelligent, it refers to moral qualities. To the question “Do *hiimor*’ and *hišig* cover the same concept?”, they answer:

No, the *hiimor'* is located inside the persons while the *hišig* comes from outside, it enters [*oroh*] the house and the cattle. Somebody who has *hišig* has good cattle, it increases and his life becomes better, he becomes rich. The cattle of a person without *hišig* becomes bad, the owner becomes poor. The *hišig* is given by Buddha [*Burhan Bagš*] whereas the *hiimor'* depends on the person. For example a person who has *hiimor'* is somebody courageous, honest, who does not drink, does not smoke and does not commit bad actions. A *hiimortoi* person is also healthy and has good friends. Such a person is beloved by *Burhan Bagš*, it protects him/her and gives him/her *hišig*. Somebody who has no *hiimor'* cannot have *hišig*. For example, if a person is sick he/she will lose his/her job and will lose *hišig*. When a person dies his/her *hišig* goes away and we have to call it back with the help of a lama. When we lose our parents we must wipe their mouth with a ceremonial scarf [*hadag*] in order to keep their *hišig*. The scarf is kept in the family chest.

The kill does not reveal qualities of which the hunter might not have been conscious, it reveals the potential of success developed by those qualities expressed in actions and intentions, actualising them and making them more visible to the hunter and the others. It legitimates a way of being *a posteriori*. We remember the difficulties of the informants to give a clear definition of *hiimor'* and *süld*. They explain them as a series of causes and effects due to their presence or absence in the human body. The revelation of *hiimor'* is, in the first instance, a consequence, the result of a temporal process, the last stage of that process, which was triggered by the accomplishment of moral actions and intentions. The revelation of the potential of success implies a temporality turned towards the past. It is difficult to acquire *hiimor'*, unlike *az*, because it depends on behaviour. It can be suggested that killing a wolf allows the hunter to re-evaluate his past positively. During a conversation Nadmid said: “*Cagaan Aav* does not give game to bad people, to those who have bad intentions [*muu sanaatai*], he knows their heart [*setgel*]”. The killing of game, which is perceived as a gift, legitimates *a posteriori* the actions and intentions (invested with moral qualities) of the

hunter. He may select, from a repertoire of past actions, those which are the most meaningful to make sense of the success of the kill.

This process of selection is used to justify the lack of success. The process of remembering the past is not always successful and, in that case, the reasons of failure must be determined by a lama. This is nothing very original, as we all wonder what is happening when we are facing repeated failures. Nevertheless, it implies a temporality and an effect on the definition of the individual which seems proper to *hiimor*'. This search for meaning points to some phenomenological characteristics. An intentional movement of the individual flows from the present to the past and from the past to the present. Some elements of the past, which might have been forgotten, may be 'excavated' from oblivion and given a meaning or a surplus of meaning in relation to the kill. In this double movement, remembering gives meaning to actions and intentions, and correlatively these past actions and intentions give meaning to the kill or failure to kill. In other words, the kill generates a perspective articulated to a point of view which makes particular elements of the past appear under a new light.

In this context, the point of view should not be understood as a fixed point facing an external environment, but as a result of internal differences between inner potentials (*hiimor*', *süns*, *süld*, *am*') fluctuating inside the individual. Seeing a wolf, killing it or not, does not refer to a form of perception conceived as a distance to be filled with sight. Rather, it refers to a form of perception conceived as a modality of internal relations between inner potentials.¹⁴ Perception is thus a modality of existence, not the contrary. However, if the point of view is the result of inner fluctuations, its actualisation is external, as it depends on external signs, which are the presence or absence of the wolf. The hunter's point of view on his past is actualised externally in such a way that in this situation signs precede acts of intelligence,

¹⁴ See Jaszcolt (*volume I*) on the idea of modality. The author adopts a universal but modality-based approach to reflect on the human concept of time (see also Jaszcolt 2009).

memory, and imagination, i.e. interpretation (Deleuze 2000 [1973]: 182). The point of view is virtually ‘folded’ into the wolf. As da Col says in a Tibetan context: “subjectivities are hidden and become temporarily visible through astrology, divination or specific *events* and signs which would reveal one’s assemblage of potentials” (da Col 2007: 219).

The wolf triggers a creative and selective memory. The dependence of the perspective on the action of the kill echoes Husserl when he affirms: “The apprehension is singling out, every perceived object having a background in experience” (1931 [1913]: 117). The perspective also depends on the movement. Ricoeur’s ideas about attention are also enlightening: “Thus the essence of attention is that temporal shift of vision which turns towards or turns away from and thus makes an object appear such as it already covertly was in the background” (Ricoeur 1966 [1950]: 155). The point of view of the kill generates a partial view of some elements of the past and the kill generates a perspective which makes particular things appear under a new light. As Merleau-Ponty (1945) says, the essential partiality of our view of things, their being given only in a certain perspective and at a certain moment in time, does not diminish their reality, but, on the contrary, establishes it, as there is no other way for things to be co-present with us and with other things than through such profiles.

Nevertheless, the process of remembering is less determined than the process of vision. While the materiality of the object influences our vision and the type of action we can have on it, the act of remembering is more flexible (Bergson 1991 [1939]: 179), it leaves a margin to the hunter who can choose in his subjective past experience between different recollections, those able to make sense of the actual situation. Thus, the temporal determination of the perspective is important. We saw that the kill, which is perceived as a manifestation of *hiimor*, an effect, underlines the development of that potential and implies a non-voluntary

and conjectural memory, that is, a consciousness of time that pays attention to the past and the links entertained with the present. The act of remembering produces a re-presentation, which is also a re-cognition. “It is the privilege of representation-memory to allow us to the search of a particular image [to] remount the slope of our past” (Bergson: 92 quoted by Ricoeur 2004: 25). The re-evaluation of the past thus corresponds to a temporal intention which is teleological.

4. *Hiimor'* and temporality

In Section 1.1 we can recall that one informant mentioned the effects of the presence or absence of *hiimor'* in a person's body. Unlike *az*, *hiimor'* allows you to be successful several times; it has long-lasting effects. Somebody who has no *hiimor'* cannot hunt a wolf. Cecegbal and Doržoo said that a *hiimorgüi* person could not have *hišig*. A person who has *hiimor'*, such as during a *hiimortoi* day, can go far away to carry out a work, it will succeed. It was argued earlier that the revelation of *hiimor'* through the kill was, in the first instance, a consequence, the result of a temporal process, the last of a series of stages. Here, in the second instance, we see that the revelation of *hiimor'*, and especially its increase generated by the kill, is the initiatory cause of a temporal process, that is, a temporalisation turned towards the future. It is the first step of a series. It can be suggested that the kill allows the hunter to think about his future in relation to the kill. He will feel more confident in the undertaking of important projects. The repeated lack of success also implies a representation of the future, as somebody without *hiimor'* must consult a lama and carry out with him a *hiimoriin san*¹⁵ to reinvigorate

¹⁵ This is a ritual undertaken to increase one's *hiimor'*.

his/her *hiimor*'. That is what Cecegbal suggested to Doržoo and to me after we had come back unsuccessful from the hunt. We may conclude that a temporal, anticipative intention is embedded in such a consciousness of time, linking present and future (as well as past). The lack of kill becomes a virtual indexical memory to explain a possible future situation: "every act of memory contains intentions of expectation whose fulfilment leads to the present" (Husserl 1976 [1928]: 76). I use the term 'anticipative' rather than 'predictive' because the Mongols are reluctant to predict the outcomes of future actions, as it would bring misfortune. A bus driver would never give the exact arrival time for instance (personal communication with L. Højer, see also Højer 2009). This piece of information reveals a difference between the temporalisation of time turned towards the past and the temporalisation turned towards the future. While the former leaves no room *a posteriori* for randomness, the latter does. The temporal consciousness turned towards the future is particularly interesting as it 'tricks' itself. You have to pretend to keep the future random in order to influence it. One should not predict exactly the future as it would influence it in a negative way. Pretending to keep the future random is a way to avoid randomness. So, the individual creates a 'causative randomness', which has a negative efficiency, i.e. the avoidance of misfortune. The temporal consciousness turned towards the future is much more short-term oriented than the temporal consciousness turned towards the past.

The possibility for the hunter to 'temporalise' time from a singular perspective raises the question of the connection between the kill and the temporality. Why does the killing of the wolf seem so indissolubly linked to a past and future time? Temporality has been studied in anthropology from various points of view: theoretical (Gell 1992, Munn 1992, James and Mills 2005), methodological and ethical (Fabian 1983, Dresch *et al.* 1999), and political (Verdery 1996, Empson 2006, Das 2007); but this is the Deleuzian notion of 'event', which is

used here to make sense of the double temporality contained in the kill. It is argued that the kill, as a manifestation of *hiimor*, has an evenemental aspect.¹⁶ In order to define the evenemental dimension of the kill it is important to understand what a ‘fact’ is, as an ‘event’ always emerges from a fact. The fact is opposed to what is illusory, fictive, or only possible. In other words the fact is concrete, empirical, and objective. It happens in a determined frame of space and time. For instance, if somebody says to a British friend, “The father of my Mongolian family killed a wolf not far away from his encampment last week”, for the friend the kill is a fact, a concrete action with an objective existence and material implications. It is localised in space and time. The kill does not generate further interpretations than the fact itself. But for the father of my family, the kill is much more than a fact. It is loaded with moral and emotional values others than the fact in itself. It becomes an event.¹⁷ The kill, or the lack of kill, becomes an event for the Mongolian hunter because it is subjective and linked to a temporality that eludes the present time, expands simultaneously into the past and the future, and erases any distinction between past and future. The kill, or the absence of kill, is:

a becoming whose characteristic is to elude the present. Insofar as it eludes the present, becoming does not tolerate the separation or the distinction of before and after or of past and future. It pertains to the essence of becoming to move and to pull in both directions at once (Deleuze 1990 [1969]: 1)

¹⁶ This argument is inspired by da Col’s article about the evenemental character of fortune in Tibet (da Col 2007: 215–235).

¹⁷ The boundary between a fact and an event is not rigid and fluctuates according to societies. Thus the proportion of facts and events is not the same in every society. In ancient China we do not find epics and theatres showing the exceptional, dramatic, and sublime character of an event. What is rather valued is the ‘wisdom’, a notion referring to a constant adaptation to the temporal modifications (Jullien 2001: 88 quoted by Lévy 2006: 11).

The killing of a wolf and the lack of success ‘open’ the time and ‘stretch’ the individual between the past and the future. They occur in the present time, but this temporal dimension is ephemeral, as the meanings of the event immediately invest the past and the future. The kill, or the lack of kill, is the spatio-temporal realisation of the *hiimor*’, or of its absence, in a state of affairs. In other words, the kill as a fact, an ‘accident’, becomes an ‘event’ connecting simultaneously causalities and consequences, past and future, when it is perceived as a manifestation of *hiimor*’. In a similar way the lack of kill becomes an event as it is perceived as an absence of *hiimor*’. A fact, which is an occurrence rather than a process, always happens in a fixed singular moment of time, but does not go beyond. That is why, unlike the *az*, this auspicious chance which comes up in the present and ‘collapses’ into it, the *hiimor*’, or its lack, revealed in hunting, is evenemental, as it invests the whole temporal sphere. According to Deleuze each event is a part of the Event, that is, a duration (*Aion*) which stretches simultaneously and infinitely past and future: “the paradoxical instance is the Event in which all events communicate and are distributed. It is the Unique event, and all other events are its bits and pieces” (Deleuze 1990 [1969]: 56). In other words any fact becomes an event when it is invested with the kind of duration that covers past, present and future, which is called Event or *Aion*. Whereas the terms ‘Event’ and *Aion* refer to a duration, the term ‘event’ here refers to a particular situation in which such a duration is subjectively perceived. The kill, or its absence, shares the main characteristic of the Event as it implies a duration proper to *Aion*, which is embedded in the concept of *hiimor*’. As soon as a fact is invested with *hiimor*’ it becomes an event, “a bit and a piece” of the Event, pulling in both temporal directions at the same time and creating a perspective, a point of view from which the hunter temporalises the

time and gives a meaning to the kill, or its absence.¹⁸ In the same way, *hiimor*’ would allow the winner of a game¹⁹ at the national celebration (*naadam*) to re-interpret his past and think about his future positively. The temporal perspective created by the investment of *hiimor*’ into a fact is correlated to the legitimisation of the hunter as a moral being. We can now understand better why the kill, or the repeated absence of a kill, generates a temporalisation of the time which is turned both towards the past and the future.

The *hiimor*’ revealed in hunting has other evenemental aspects, such as a reversible relationship between the active and the passive, the cause and the effect.

Becoming unlimited comes to be the ideational and incorporeal event, with all of its characteristic reversals between future and past, active and passive, cause and effect, more and less, too much and not enough, already and not yet. The infinitely divisible event is always *both at once*. It is eternally what has just happened and what is about to happen, but never that which is happening The event being itself impassive, allows the passive and the active to be interchanged more easily, since it is *neither the one nor the other* but rather their common result Concerning the cause and the effect, events, *being always only effects*, are better able to form among themselves functions of quasi-causes or relations of quasi causality which are always reversible (Deleuze 1990 [1969]: 8)

We have already mentioned the particular temporality of the *hiimor*’. The duration is the ideational, incorporeal dimension of the *hiimor*’, which is indissolubly linked with the body.

¹⁸ We can now understand better why the hunter’s point of view is actualised externally, in the events, i.e. the kill or the lack of kill: “A la différence du fait qui se produit toujours sous l’horizon de sens d’un monde, l’événement transcende sa propre effectuation comme fait et apparaît irréductible à son propre context. ... [the event] ménage son propre horizon d’intelligibilité et prescrit, bien plutôt, à tout projet herméneutique les possibilités interprétatives à partir desquelles une compréhension à sa mesure peut, seulement se faire jour”(Romano 1999: 162).

¹⁹ The three manly games which take place during the national celebration are horse race, wrestling and archery.

In the context of hunting, the *hiimor*’ has simultaneously an active and passive aspect. In section 3 we saw that hunting is an action and a non-action. The kill and the revelation of *hiimor*’ depend on the hunters’ actions but at the same time the result of the hunt always remains in the hands of *Cagaan Aav*, which decides to grant a favour or not to the hunter. The prey is perceived as a gift. The kill and the revelation of *hiimor*’, as well as the tenacious inability to kill, are the results, the effects of previous past actions and intentions. But, at the same time, they constitute the causes of imagined future actions. It can be suggested that an event retrospectively creates other events. It creates a new perspective within which personal memories are newly contextualised. After the event happened an anonymous fact ‘excavated’ from the past will become an event as it is kneaded with *hiimor*’. In the same way the killing of a wolf will create future events retrospectively perceived as penetrated with the *hiimor*’ of the kill. The kill and the absence of kill contain in themselves other events whose metamorphoses and redistributions according to a particular perspective will form new stories, allowing the hunter to interpret himself through new narratives and to create new temporalisations of time. In other words time is re-organised according to a newly interpreted event. That event inaugurates a series of repetitions and possible exploitations in other contexts than hunting. The effect of ‘contamination’ of the event is reminiscent of the ‘organic’ time mentioned by Wagner: “[the] organic time does not accumulate (and *count*) like intervals; its events are in themselves relations, each one subsuming and radically transforming what has gone before” (Wagner 1986: 81).²⁰ In relation to the killing of a wolf, the relations constituting the event are conjunctive and can be qualified as ‘ex-

²⁰ The idea according to which an event contains other events in itself was formulated in philosophical terms by Whitehead (1929), who speaks of an event as a ‘prehension’, which is the result of a conjunction of relations, that conjunction being always the conjunction of other conjunctions. (See Deleuze 1987: 7; Debaise 2006: 67)

tension' (diverging relations),²¹ 'in-tension' (converging relations),²² and 'in-dividuation'²³ (excluding relations). For the hunter, the event of the killing of a wolf is the conjunction of these three relations: extension (predation of the wolf's *hiimor*'), intension (revelation of the hunter's *setgel*), and individuation (increase of the hunter's *hiimor*' in comparison to others) (Deleuze 1987: 3, 4, 6). The three relations gathered into the event prolong their ramifications into the past and trigger a reminiscence under the form of a metaphor. The non-voluntary memory is the analogue of a metaphor: it takes two different 'objects', the kill and a memory, both endowed with respective contextual qualities (such as places, temperatures, colours, smells); it envelops the former in the latter *a posteriori* and makes their relation into something internal.²⁴ Both share a semic element which is *hiimor*'.

The kill allows the hunter to experience a time which is non-actual, since the *hiimor*' or its lack contains a volume of duration which extends it in both directions past and future at once. The man comes back to past presents which he had not paid attention to before. These 'presents' are not located in a chronological past but are contemporary with a historical becoming in which they do not stop having effects. The event makes a chosen memory an active agent in contemporary life rather than a simple trace of the past. Both the kill and its absence unfold signs and multiply them into the past and future. They give an iconic dimension to a situation, which was mundane before.

²¹ It is the application of a particular knowledge (*hiimor*') to a whole set of objects (the wolf is one of them). For a concept, the extension is the whole of objects which it can refer to (i.e. of which it is the attribute). The role of extension is particularly important in the way an event contains other events in itself; it is the first component and condition of the event (Deleuze 1988: 105).

²² The intension concerns the whole set of characters considered as essential to a class. These characters define the term which they refer to. The *setgel* is one of the characters.

²³ This refers to a being which has a specific type and a singular and concrete existence determined in time and space.

²⁴ This argument is inspired by Deleuze (2000 [1973]: 59)

5. Concluding remarks

The advantage of the anthropological approach to time adopted in this chapter is to root its analysis in concrete ethnographic contexts. Here the context is not considered as an abstract background used to exemplify ideas, but on the contrary, it is what triggers processes of creation of meaning. In other words, what this chapter makes clear is that in the Mongolian language, the understanding of the concept of *hiimor*’ can only be fully achieved in relation with the pragmatic context of its actualisation. It also shows, along with the other chapters of this volume, that time is far from being predominantly organised according to the model of the arrow of time as it can be found in many western societies.

In Mongolia, the wolf hunter experiences two types of temporalities, synchronic and ‘heterochronic’. The first is linked to the factual dimension of *hiimor*’. It is a cyclical present predicated by the astrological calendar. This temporal variation of *hiimor*’ has no other meaning than being there, until the occurrence of an event, to which it attributes a causality other than the objective astrological determinations. From that moment on, when a fact becomes an event, the factual temporality of *hiimor*’ becomes evenemental and, in a process of individuation, allows the hunter to redefine himself as a ‘social’ and ‘cosmological’ person. Actually the killing of a wolf does not only open the time, but it also opens the individual as it makes his intention (embedded in actions) visible. So, the hunt contributes to the construction of the person as well as the personalisation of time. The act of predation allows the hunter to capture some principles of identity (resourcefulness, intelligence, strength, etc.) intertwined with a vital potential which is perceived as necessary to the perpetuation of the self. Wolf

hunting involves the recognition of principles of identity between the animal and the hunter without which the hunter, as a male person, would be incomplete. The hunt also allows the hunter to evaluate the state of his relations with *Cagaan Aav*, and so involves a whole economy of feelings, intentions, and actions. So, in Mongolia, interpreting time does not only reveal co-existing temporalities but also different ways in which subjects constitute themselves as moral persons. Further studies about the idea of *hiimor*’ should reveal other contexts in which temporality and morality are deeply intertwined.

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