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978-0-521-28135-5 - Hunter and Habitat in the Central Kalahari Desert

George B. Silberbauer

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# Hunter and habitat in the central Kalahari Desert

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## Preface

Much of social anthropological literature is about small-scale societies whose members have life-styles, world-views and philosophies radically different from those of both the anthropologists and their readers. As a discipline, anthropology fits squarely into the European intellectual tradition; its concepts and theories are consistent with other areas of the philosophy and science of that tradition. It is natural that we should seek to understand the unfamiliar in terms that we already know, that we should try to explain alien cultures through the use of concepts that can be reconciled with our understanding of our own way of life. This is, of course, only part of the anthropologist's task. It is necessary for me to explain the socioecology of the G/wi Bushmen in a way that, I hope, makes sense not only to those familiar with the European intellectual tradition but also to those who have studied other societies and can coherently relate my observations to their own specialized knowledge. The societies studied by anthropologists differ from one another to at least the extent that, and in as many ways as, any one of them differs from an industrialized society. Anthropological theory, models, and concepts have been developed from a universalistic perspective to bridge the differences among societies. Looking beyond the different usages, values, and philosophies of small- and large-scale societies, we begin to discern the similarities among them and to realize that they have in common certain themes in the ways in which they are organized and in the sorts of problems faced by social man. The ways in which we organize our different societies are variations on those themes, serving as different ways of facing what is a fairly uniform set of basic problems. By considering social and cultural variety in the light of its underlying similarity, we may come to a deeper understanding of the extent of, and limits to, man's freedom to innovate.

It is not for anthropologists to say how that understanding shall be used; that is the responsibility of men and women, common and uncommon, of the societies in which the anthropologists' ideas are read and discussed. I am not putting forward the selfish, ethnocentric argument that social anthropological insight is the exclusive luxury of

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industrialized societies, only to be used for their benefit. With our economic and political power, we who are members of those societies profoundly affect the lives of the less powerful. It would be well for us to have a clearer understanding of the nature of sociocultural systems in general so that when we encounter particular societies, as aiders, traders, or tourists, we may act with greater sensitivity and skill and do less inadvertent harm.

This book is about one aspect of the way in which one people lives. It is about the interrelationships of a population, its sociocultural system, and its habitat. The people are the G/wi Bushmen of the central Kalahari Desert in Botswana. The interrelationships are easier to see in the case of desert-dwelling hunter-gatherers than in a metropolis-oriented society like our own. The very much smaller size of the former population, the lesser complexity of the sociocultural system, and the comparative simplicity of the ecology of an arid biome like the central Kalahari mean that there are fewer factors to recognize and keep track of in conceptually linking them together. Furthermore, almost all the total stock of G/wi knowledge is current in the band as general knowledge (that is, as far as I could discover), and I therefore had access to a more nearly complete range of data than would be the case in a complex, plural society where much knowledge is esoteric and difficult of access. (This does not mean that I gathered a complete range of data – that would take a lifetime.)

The relations between industrialized society and its environment are obviously very different from those of a hunter-gatherer band and its habitat. The former are virtually global in their scope and are of immense scale and complexity. Transformations of energy, materials, and information within and between society and ecosystems are so many and so varied as to defy analysis by the simple means I have employed here. A direct comparison of the respective socioecologies is therefore likely to be sterile. To gain any useful insight into the relationships between a high-energy society and its environment from this study of the G/wi requires intermediate comparisons of socioecosystems of increasing scale and complexity. But at a simple level of comparison, it can be said that the members both of a G/wi band and of a large-scale complex society share the common lot of all life-forms in having to use the resources available in the environment to meet the pressures the environment exerts. Only by processing the material, energy, and information taken from the environment can any plant, human being, or other animal withstand the hazards of heat and cold, thirst and hunger, disease, predators, and so on sufficiently well and for long enough to raise its offspring

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to reproductive capacity and thereby prolong the existence of its species.

Our species, more than any other animal, has supplemented its genetically transmitted ability to utilize environmental resources to meet environmental pressures by developing extrasomatic, cultural means. Lacking effective claws to kill larger animals or teeth to rip anything but small and soft prey, our distant ancestors devised techniques of using sharp stones to enhance their predatory and defensive capabilities and invented missiles and ways of launching them with enough force and accuracy to compensate for bodily frailty and so on, through the inventory of man's gadgets and the repertory of their use. Such an inventory has allowed cultured man to make a larger and larger portion of the energy, materials, and information in the habitat available and gained for himself increasingly varied means of resisting environmental pressures. (All this cultural development required and stimulated anatomical and physiological changes. The emphasis here is on the role of culture and society, and for the sake of clarity, I have not discussed somatic changes.)

The cultural alteration of a species' relationship with its environment can be employed and function only in a social context. This is not to say that a spear needs a committee to use it but that the technology of its manufacture and use is too complex for each spearman to devise and develop *ab initio* for himself. Instead, the knowledge is shared among a cohesive, coherent group and is passed on to other individuals, groups, and generations. Our ancestors were able to develop extrasomatic, cultural aids because, at some stage and probably gradually, they largely abandoned instinct for learned behavior (or, if the sociobiologists prefer, they expanded the scope of instinct by introducing learned variations of its underlying themes). Whatever the case, the problem remains the same. Learned sequences of behavior, unlike instinctual programs, are not stereotyped and shared by the whole species. If one individual's learned action is to be effective, others must understand, hence learn, its meaning. Cooperation between people and coherent responses to one another's behavior entail the communication of, and agreement to, the intended meaning of action.

To learn the meaning of another's behavior does not necessitate the use of language: A homely example is provided by our chickens, ducks, and geese. They expect that when my wife appears with a bucket their feed troughs will soon be filled and they come rushing from every corner of the property. On occasion, however, the bucket is used not for feed but to collect eggs. In the latter instance the birds

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troop up to the house after my wife, angrily voicing their expectation of a feed, and will carry their protest meeting into the kitchen unless forcibly restrained at the door. Language makes it possible to define meaning more precisely than this and enhances the efficiency and versatility of communication. Through the use of nonconcrete, verbal symbols (instead of feed buckets) man gained partial freedom from the bonds of space and time by enabling those in the same speech community to communicate thoughts about the past and future and about things located elsewhere than in the vicinity of the conversation. It seems reasonable to suppose that this measure of four-dimensional freedom stimulated the human imagination to project states and actions to hypothetical, conditional circumstances so that people could build more elaborate patterns of interaction. Another domestic example illustrates this point: Dogs can be trained to obey commands. This is a simple pattern of interaction. Although the training is contractual in nature (reward in return for obedience), it is nevertheless one-sided, for the dogs have little capacity to initiate action in order to gain reward; that is the owner's prerogative. A more nearly symmetrical and complex relationship with one's dogs would result if the contract could be elaborated to include a clause specifying the rewards the dogs would get in return for killing the rabbits and foxes that plague the farmer. (Considering the jungle of labor relations, the farmer might be better to suffer the rabbits and foxes and leave his dogs as they are.) Without language, we are confined to a direct and immediate reciprocation and cannot elaborate a relationship to include more complex exchanges in a generalized mode or one in which a balanced exchange is conditional upon completion of agreed-on requirements over longer periods of time.

Language is preeminently learned behavior and therefore imposes the necessity for stable relationships to effectively communicate, and establish, agreement about its meaning. As I have said, it is also a means of broadening the potential scope and variety of relationships. It is also, of course, a means of expressing, or realizing, relationships and, furthermore, a means of regulating them. The structure of relationships impels, facilitates, and regulates the ways in which environmental resources are tapped, converted to use, and distributed among the personnel bound by the relationships. It follows that the state of the network of relationships is a factor limiting the variety and versatility of ways of using resources and of meeting environmental pressures (consider, again, the farmer and his rabbiting, fox-hunting dogs). The social organization of behavior is, therefore, a necessary (but not sufficient) requirement for the success of



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the human sociocultural strategy of survival. It is no less important an aspect of behavior than are the techniques by which people obtain their food.

As has so often been observed, there are neither free lunches nor free rides in nature. There are costs entailed in the establishment and maintenance of social order. Cooperation nearly always requires the participants to forgo some potential benefit in return for attaining a more widely shared goal. There are also opportunity costs; time and energy spent on decision making, for example, are not then also available for food getting. Learning, teaching, courtship, singing, and dancing are activities that have important social functions but produce no direct, concrete survival benefit. They are investments that, if all goes well, will yield a positive contribution to survival. Nevertheless, the investment must be fueled by food that is gathered or hunted or grown. In this sense the subsistence base sets a limit to social activity and its organizational tasks. The limitation is of the amounts of time and manpower that can be spared from food getting and says nothing of the nature of social behavior and its ordering nor of the choice that will be exercised among the permitted variety of ways of behaving.

Further organizational costs are incurred when, in adopting and developing a particular strategy, it becomes progressively more difficult for a society to switch to an alternative strategy. This is akin to the rule that specialization is achieved at the cost of evolutionary potential. A hierarchical society organized for authoritarian rule and backed by physical violence will not easily convert to an egalitarian style of decision making; a society in which the exchange of goods and services is an idiom of expression of kinship and other social relationships will find it difficult to adapt to a capitalist, profit-seeking socioeconomic system. Specific structural development tends not only to inhibit development in other directions but also to acquire a momentum of its own that constrains the society toward further commitment to the adopted strategy. The sort of thing I have in mind is what I describe later as the social hibernation of the G/wi band: When favorable conditions permit, the members of a band move as a group to a series of campsites throughout their territory; when the food supply deteriorates, each household disperses to its own isolated camp. This is not the only way in which the G/wi could organize themselves. Smaller bands, for instance, could manage with fewer shifts of campsites under the favorable conditions of midsummer to autumn and might even cope with the grueling first half of summer by living together as a united band but moving to fresh

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campsites at shorter intervals. Assume, for the purpose of illustration, that such a strategy would secure the energy budget of, say, three average-sized households (15 people) as effectively as does the practice of social hibernation in a band of, say, a dozen households. The latter pattern confers the benefit of a fourfold increase in the total size of the band but is achieved at the cost of seasonal isolation of each constituent household. This means that each household must possess all the skills required for short-term survival on its own. It seems to me that this burden must tend to inhibit the development of specialized skills. Furthermore, the organization of the band must now be of such a nature as to attract members back into the joint mode of territorial occupation after the period of isolation but not so attractive as to inhibit their dispersal in the following autumn. I am not, of course, saying that the hypothetical alternative strategy of smaller bands would solve all problems; it would generate its own set of difficulties and organizational costs and tend to complicate, or even block, development in some other direction.

In explaining the relationship between population, sociocultural system, and habitat, the once accepted narrow and simple determinism that saw environment as causing culture lingers on in vulgar thought. It is perhaps understandable that this misapprehension should persist in a society as remote from the firsthand experience of the workings of habitat ecology as is ours (our view of population dynamics and sociocultural systems might also be somewhat clouded). After all, it is in the habitat that environmental pressures arise and it is from there that the resources for meeting the pressures are taken. As the environment sets the problem and also supplies the means of dealing with it, it is a seductive logical trap to conclude that the environment also determines behavior. The proposition, of course, is only true if there is but a single way of using the resources in a singular solution to the problem – conditions that seldom, if ever, obtain. Even something as specialized, mechanistic, and structurally simple as my pocket calculator allows me a choice of methods of doing my sums; the tripartite combination of a human population whose behavior is ordered by a sociocultural system in its relationships with its habitat will allow a much wider range of choice of ways and means of meeting problems. None of the component systems will be determinate in the narrow sense.

Possibilist models remind me of a wireless operator-gunner who whiled away long sea patrols by looking up “dirty words” in a large dictionary, which he took on every flight. He complained bitterly that, although he had searched every page in “H,” he was unable to find “whore.” Possibilism merely lists the range of things that could

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be done or that could happen, but says nothing of how or why and seldom covers the full range of why not; it explains very little about why some possibilities are exploited and others not.

A further fallacy in both determinist and possibilist models is their implication of a one-way relationship between a society and its habitat, that the society simply responds to what its habitat confronts it with. As I see it, it is, instead, a relationship of interdependence in that, for instance, change in the population will give rise to responses in both the sociocultural system and the habitat. Furthermore, the habitat is, to some extent, an artifact of the population acting within its sociocultural system (i.e., an artifact of the society). I am referring not only to the concrete consequences of the society's behavior (the huts that are made by a hunter-gatherer band or the cities that industrialized societies build) but also to the way in which the society perceives and construes its habitat and the rest of the universe and, consequently, defines that part of the habitat's resources that may be used and the manner of its use.

A systems approach is well suited to the analysis of a people's socioecology. It conveniently permits examination of population, sociocultural system, and habitat, each being viewed both as a system in itself and as a component of the larger socioecosystem. Interaction and interdependencies among the three can be traced by following exchanges of materials, energy, and information. Operation of the whole and the component systems can be perceived and explained in terms of transformations of these and in terms of structural arrangements and rearrangements in the systems. It is a conceptual framework for the study of relationships within wholes, a strategy of searching for critical junctures in these relationships and a vehicle for explaining the consequences of interaction along the vectors of relationship. It is not a substitute for a theory to explain these consequences but a means whereby the differing areas of relevance of complementary theories can be reconciled and integrated. Incorporating, as it does, the concept of entropy, systems theory recognizes that the systems under examination need to be maintained if they are not to fall apart, cease to function in their accustomed manner and mode, and lose their identity.

As a social anthropologist, my main interest is the sociocultural system, and it is to this that I give most attention. If my descriptions of population or habitat stray beyond the limits of what their status as Durkheimian *faits sociaux* strictly justifies, it is because I needed to sketch them as coherent systems.

Some warnings must be posted. In what follows I interpret to you the relevant aspects of my experience of G/wi life. As I have said, my

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knowledge is not complete; absent material is a result of my failure to see and hear. Although our discipline developed out of innumerable studies of small-scale societies, we, the practitioners, nearly all come from metropolis-oriented societies and were reared or, at least, educated in large cities. Generally, social relationships in urban situations are notoriously fragmented, attenuated, and shallow, blunting our perception of others and of ourselves. I misgive our understanding of the deeper layers of interpersonal relationships and communication. The sensitivity of G/wi men and women (and there is a legion of other examples) to the behavior of their band fellows would be attributed, perhaps, to extrasensory perception if manifested in our milieu. (Some evidence suggests that there are Bushmen who possess unusual means of communication, but there is no need to invoke that argument here.) To live much of one's life in the same small community in the unprivate intimacy of a band and to have the lifelong habit of attending not only to *what* is said but also to a wide spectrum of indications of *how* it is said must sharpen perception to a degree that we, perhaps, cannot even imagine. The G/wi are not superhuman paragons of social virtue; if their skill is remarkable, it is a skill that anyone with comparable experience could develop. It is no more remarkable (nor less so!) than your ability to form a mental image of the G/wi from looking at the little marks on these pages. The G/wi customarily scan others' behavior so keenly as to read a cue as slight and fleeting as a momentary change in the set of a man's neck muscles, from which they know that he has struck a difficulty in the work he is doing, a work that demands the concentration of his attention to the exclusion of conversation around him. The consequent withdrawal into silence is explained, and potential frustration and annoyance are thus avoided.

Considering this matter from another angle, I am, of course, more fully informed of the circumstances of my children's lives than I am, for instance, aware of the conditions of my students' and colleagues' lives. However, although our family lives in a friendly, fairly small community, most of the knowledge I have of my children's interaction with their friends, teachers, and others is indirectly gained. How much fuller and richer would social life be if I saw for myself most of that interaction, knowing the other participants from a shared experience of most of their lives and able to discern their moods, thoughts, and reactions to what we share? My concern is that we anthropologists may be missing a substantial part of what we are examining, that the ephemeral, impersonal relationships that embrace most interaction in our large-scale native societies have left us

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with an ethnocentric impairment that prevents our perception of what is virtually an additional dimension of society. If this be so, if there is a network of communication too subtle for me to sense, then I have overlooked a large part of the information that guides G/wi behavior and am ignorant of the structures by which that information is coded. Had I knowledge of the texture, colors, and the intricate variation of pattern that band members weave into their social fabric, I might understand more clearly what I have discerned of the tapestry of their society.

Sociocultural systems, the objects of anthropological study, are extraordinarily complex. One might almost say that they contain more variables than one can count, let alone account for. In the holistic perspective of the discipline, any subset of variables is potentially relatable to any other subset, and the anthropologist has no certain means of knowing how long the chain of essential relevance might be. That is to say, one cannot be sure that a discovery made the next day will not refute results obtained up to that time. To compound doubt, what is learned of the operation of a sociocultural system is subject to an unavoidable and uncertain degree of selectivity and refraction induced by the idiosyncracies of personality and prior experience of both the fieldworker and his or her informants. The methods by which we conduct research can reduce the potential for error and omission but cannot protect us from every pitfall. Our findings are not unique; there are songs, poems, paintings, and novels that said it all long ago. But a songmaker or poet uses idioms that serve emotional needs – how such insight was achieved can seldom be explained. These idioms are also susceptible to differing interpretations. The statements of social scientists should be unequivocal in their meaning and should include the evidence on which they are based. The conclusions must be logically consistent with that and other known evidence and must be empirically refutable or verifiable. Research methodology is designed to help in attaining this ideal but, as I have said, we undertake the survey of a field of unknown dimensions and cannot be certain that the instruments we design and use will record all that it contains. The development of anthropological theory progressively reduces uncertainty, but theory building must be fed by research. That we are not in an impasse is, I believe, because there is a generous measure of redundancy in sociocultural systems and in research itself. What is overlooked today will eventually be found on another occasion or by another researcher. I also believe that anthropologists are attentive to intuition. We may not do it with the gifted elegance of the poets and songmakers, but

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we do take some account of gut-felt innuendo, and to be nudged by such nonempirical intimations is not necessarily inimical to scientific validity provided the methods of science are later used to test the results and to search for their explanation.

There is no one best way of carrying out a research project. In the same way that a fieldworker must recognize that intuition is a skill to be developed and used, he or she should work out a style of investigation that suits his or her individual inclinations, situation, and abilities. I studied the G/wi from a socioecological perspective because, as I explain in the introductory chapter, it made sense of what I saw. This book is a version of part of my doctoral thesis. When I first began to write up my work, my supervisor, John Blacking, now professor of social anthropology in The Queen's University, Belfast, encouraged me to persist with this line. In the chilly climate of British structural-functionalism, seemingly inimical to human life, this was dangerous heresy in the early sixties. I am grateful to John for his intellectual naughtiness and rejoice that he has remained an unrepentant freethinker. There have been many other socioecological studies of Bushmen (e.g., those of Richard Lee, Jiro Tanaka, John Yellen) and other hunter-gatherers (e.g., by Richard Gould and Nicholas Peterson on Aborigines), and some must wonder if this is the only way anthropologists see hunting peoples. There are, of course, other ways; there is the outstanding example of Lorna Marshall, honored tribal mother of Bushman scholars, whose approach was entirely orthodox, as was H-J Heinz's most competent analysis of the social organization of the !xō: Bushmen. More recently, Alan Barnard built his Bushman research around kinship studies and Mathias Guenther concentrated on social change and religion. In a less conventional vein, Megan Biesele investigated !Kung folktales; to understand these in their context, she immersed herself in the life and thinking of the people. Each of these fieldworkers illuminated the general, as well as the particular, aspects of the sociocultural systems he or she studied. Whatever the emphasis in the investigation and point of entry into the system, each has achieved and communicated an understanding of the whole. None of us will understand all of the whole, and the variety of emphasis and approach that exists is necessary if we are to fill one another's gaps and clarify perception of sociocultural systems by showing them in the nuances and contrasts of our different perspectives. It seems to me that requisite variety is sure to follow if fieldworkers continue to develop their own styles of research.

## Acknowledgments

It is sad that none of my G/wi informants is likely ever to read this book and appraise it; a teacher likes to see what a pupil has made of his lessons, and for his part, the pupil wants to hear what his mentors think of his efforts and to thank them for what they gave him. Perhaps children or grandchildren of some of my informants will read this; I ask them to remember my gratitude.

I thank Boy Magetse and Phuthego Matsetse for carrying a heavy burden cheerfully and competently. There are many others among my former Service colleagues whom I thank for their support, tolerance, advice, and instruction. Alec Campbell and his wife, Judy, gave me very special support and encouragement at times when things seemed bleak beyond endurance. Karl and Elise Weyhe, too, are true friends. The farmers of Ghanzi, even when we disagreed over something, were gracious hosts and never failed to invite us to *kom nader aan die huis*. They taught me much about many things. All of these people I thank for their good company.

Max Marwick and Des Cole gave me much of their time and knowledge and made available to me invaluable resources at the University of the Witwatersrand. They persuaded me to loftier ambitions than I started with and for that faith I sincerely thank them.

Richard Gould, Ed Wilmsen, and Sally White encouraged me to rewrite my doctoral thesis for publication and made detailed and helpful suggestions, for which I am very grateful. John Pfeiffer cast a spell on Cambridge University Press. I hope the spell has sustained that most patient of men, Walter Lippincott, in the difficulties I have caused him. However, one of his pleasures must have been the faultless typing of the manuscript by Mary-Lou Maroney and Joan Green of the Department of Anthropology and Sociology, Monash University. I thank them for their painstaking work, fitted into busy schedules and carried out amid constant interruption by me, my colleagues, and our students (to say nothing of that invention of the Devil, the telephone).

The ideas in this book come from more books than are cited and from more personal communications than are acknowledged. I learned much from those who accompanied us on journeys. It is impossible to keep ac-



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count of the sources of knowledge and understanding. Although I have written this book and am responsible for the form in which the ideas are presented, it is very much an anthology of the thinking of my friends and colleagues in southern Africa, Australia, and the field of hunter-gatherer studies.

Long before writing my report on the Bushman Survey (Silberbauer, 1965), I discussed with my informants the recommendations I was formulating (the more important of these were submitted in a separate document) and explained, as clearly as I could, that I intended to publish an account of their life in the central Kalahari. They found it difficult to believe that a description of their ways would be met with anything other than scorn and derision. I reminded them of the people who had come out to visit them – of Alan Donald, government information officer, and his wife, Peggy; of Joe Podbrey, poet and editor of *The Mafeking Mail*; of Quill and Janet Hermans, gentle people who had responded to them with warmth and a sensitive appreciation of the logic of their ways; of my close friend Alec Campbell (now, fittingly, director of the National Museum of Botswana), who had helped me see more clearly the beauty of Africa. It was then that the G/wi could believe that there were people who could take a sympathetic interest in them, people who would not see them in the light of the national stereotype.

I have taken so long to finish this book that our children have come to regard it as some sort of elder sibling. They and my wife, Penny, will be heartily glad to see it leave home. I apologize to them for the nuisance my procrastination has been. As companions in the field, Penny and I look back on our time in the Kalahari with much happiness. As a qualified nurse and psychologist, Penny contributed more to our relationships with people and gave me more understanding of them than I can adequately acknowledge. Many of the ideas in this book are hers. Over the years she has striven mightily to cure my Germanic habit of contorted, overengineered writing (which is an occupational as well as an ethnic disease). Although the malady lingers on, I thank her for the great improvement her efforts have brought.

G. B. S.



## Note on Orthography

G/wi is one of the click languages. The Roman alphabet is adequate for some languages that include clicks among their consonants (e.g., the Nguni Bantu languages). However, this would not serve the needs of G/wi. First, it has more click consonants than have those that use Roman characters. Second, G/wi has other phonemes to which the International Phonetic Association assigned the Roman characters that elsewhere designate clicks. I have therefore followed the IPA conventions with certain modifications to fit the normal English-language typewriter keyboard and the fonts common to most printers. I have also departed from IPA usage by positioning *g* and *n* before the click symbols to designate voicing and nasalization, respectively. This seems to me a more logical sequence of information and to occasion less aesthetic offense than the customary jumble of letters after the click symbol. From a purely phonetic point of view, there is nothing to choose between these two styles as the two characters are technically a digraph for a single sound, which is, in each case (i.e., nasalized, voiced, or unvoiced click), distinct from the others. My feelings may be biased by my earlier experience of Zulu and Xhosa as written languages in which the convention is to place the voicing (or nasalization) element first. If this is so, then I would point out that the practice is satisfactory in these and the other Bantu click languages, which have a firmly established tradition of literacy. Where an *h* represents aspiration of the consonant (whether click or non-click), I believe it should be postpositioned. This is in accord with the sequence of phonatory processes and also avoids making a typographical mess of the representation of aspirated-voiced and aspirated-nasalized click consonants. This, also, accords with Bantu practice.

I have omitted tone markings as I doubt that the information is of sufficient interest to most readers to justify cluttering the page with diacritics and thus raising the price of the book yet higher. I am fairly confident that two significant tonemes exist in G/wi, as stated by Koehler (1962). My earlier impression was that there were three tone levels, but I was unable to find the minimal triplets that could be ex-

*Note on orthography*

Table 1. Orthography of click sounds in the G/wi language

	Dental	Alveolar	Palatal	Lateral
Voiceless	/	≠	!	//
Voiced	g/	g≠	g!	g//
Nasal	n/	n≠	n!	n//
Aspirated	/h	≠h	!h	//h

pected in a three-toneme language with a large proportion of mono-syllabic words. However, if there are only two tonemes, it must be recognized that there are also high and low ranges of these, that is, a high-high tone and a low-low tone, even if these are not phonemically significant.

Vowel transcription is very broad but not, I think, likely to dangerously mislead anyone. A colon after a vowel indicates its extended length and a tilde represents nasalization of the vowel over which it is placed.

The clicks are written as shown in Table 1. Two of these clicks, the unvoiced dental and lateral, occur in English. The first (/) is written "tsk-tsk" and means either "reproach" or, in South African English, "sympathy" (when it is usually followed by "aag, shaaame"). The lateral click (//) is understood by some horses as an instruction by the rider to break into a faster gait; its unmounted use expresses lascivious appreciation of the female form. The other consonants have values approximating those for English excepting:

- ph, th, kh* are aspirated, voiceless stops
- kj* is a palatalized velar fricative
- s* is a voiceless, alveopalatal fricative (like *sh* in shout)
- z* is a voiced, alveopalatal fricative (like French *j* in *j'ai*)
- x* is a voiceless velar fricative (like *ch* in Scots or German *Loch*)
- kx* is a voiceless pharyngeal fricative
- h* is voiced when it appears between vowels; after a consonant or a consonant cluster it indicates aspiration
- w* and *j* are semivowels (as if the following vowel were preceded by *u* or *i*, respectively)
- ng* is a velar nasal (like *ng* in song)
- ' is a glottal stop
- r* is trilled, or is tapped (when it sounds like a *d*)