

## OLD ICELANDIC NAMES OF EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS

Gvozdet'skaya N.  
Ivanovo State University

Every modern European language distinctly separates two categories of human existence - life events as objective situations of the "outer" environment and emotions as subjective sensations of the individual characteristic of the "inner", psychic sphere of human life, cp. such semantic pairs as "misfortune - sorrow", "danger - fear", "quarrel - anger", etc. Their distinction is deeply embedded in the modern European mind due to the differentiation of linguistic contexts and the use of special verbal predicates (an emotion is what is felt while an event is what happens to us). Thus, the word semantics reflects that contrast in the psychosocial nature of man which is so typical of our culture - the contrast of the "man acting" and the "man feeling".

Following some other researchers of the Old Germanic vocabulary we have many reasons to think that the epic mind did not differentiate the concept of feeling (emotion) from the concept of social event (or action) as clearly as the compilers of glossaries are often apt to present in their definitions. For example, in H. Kuhn's glossary for the Elder Edda Old harmr is rendered through the German Harm ("sorrow") while its typical linguistic contexts show it to be closer to the English harm ("injury"). Harmr is normally combined in the Elder Edda with such verbs as hefna, reca, gjalda, boeta, vinna and, hence, should be more naturally understood as the objective results of revenge (damage, insult, crime) than the accompanying feeling. Cp. also the synonymous usage of harmr and bol (treated in the same glossary as "Unglück") as the members of epic variation: Fic hefir Brynhildr

ból at gerva, heiptan hvattan, harm at vinna (Br 3). Here, as in many other usages of harmr, the visible, active, "outward" side of human behaviour is made much more distinct in the text than its often imperceptible, psychological side. F.Maurer (Bern 1951) appears to be quite right in stating that the heathen Germanic world, with its highly developed traditions of bloodfeud did not know the concept of suffering as separated from the concepts of damage and insult. The Old Germanic "Leid" was always imbued with the idea of "Beledigung".

This view helps us better understand some instances of contextual variability of those Old Icelandic word in the Elder Edda which at first glance seem to have one definite sense. E.g. OI reiðr (or: vreiðr) is generally treated in the glossaries as "angry" and can hardly be denied this sense in many contexts (Prk 1, etc.) but in Sg 13: Reiðr varð Gunnarr, oc hnipnadi, sveip sínom hug, sat um allan dag; hann vissi þat vilgi gorla, hvat hánom væri vinna scemst, eða hánom væri vinna betzt. Here the unequivocal description of the hero's behaviour shows that his psychic state should be treated as depression or sorrow. The ability of reiðr to refer to so different emotions as anger and sorrow may puzzle the modern reader until we take into account that "angry" and "sad" were regularly combined in this Common Germanic root with the third sense - "warlike, hostile", cp. Old English wraþ "hostile, angry", wraþe "grievously"; Old Saxon wreð "sad, angry, hostile". In Old English epic poetry wraþ is often used substantively as a set expression for the "enemy". In the Elder Edda vreiðr can be used substantively too, in the meaning of "warrior", but in the formulaic phrases only, cp. hvars scoló vreiðir vega (Fm 17, Sd 27), hvars vreiðir scoló vega (Fm 30). In case of predicative usage in the meaning "warlike" it always stands in alliteration with the verb vega "fight", e.g. vega þú gacc, ef þú vreiðr ser (Ls 15). In our opinion, both the formulaic usage and the alliterative

pattern indicate that the oldest conceptual sphere of reiðr was a kind of social activity (struggle or strife) which constituted the basic meaning of the root while the associated feelings (anger or grief) could appear as the connotative meanings depending on the context.

The adjective reiðr in the Edda does not retain this archaic "wide" meaning but shows traces of its later differentiation ("angry" is the main semantic variant of the word, "sad" and "warlike" appearing as semantic relics). It is much more important, however, that the same semantic mode of combining the three different characteristics of a person in one word was still alive in the eddic epithets being highly relevant for the strategies of the epic narration. Thus, the semantic presentation of the epithet móðgr in the glossary (1.erregt, zornig, 2.mutig, 3.schmerzerfüllt) can not be understood as modern polysemy as many usages of the epithet allow of double interpretation. E.g móðgir applied to Guðrún's sons (Ghv 7) who are ready to avenge the death of their sister should naturally be interpreted as "warlike, brave" though the sense "sad, mournful" cannot be excluded as this epithet is followed by Hamðir's prophecy of the brothers' death. Móðgr applied to Sigurðr whom Guðrún tries to call up from the realm of Hel (Ghv 19) looks more like a set expression for the "warrior" though it can also be understood as a hint to the suffering lover. On the contrary, móðug spiql (Ghv 9) told by "Guðrún grá-tandi" and generally translated as "sad story" turns out to be both an expression of grief and a scrupulous counting of damages and insults.

The epithet of Guðrún harðhugú in the beginning of Guðrunarhvöt can have three interpretations, each of them confirmed by the nearest context: "Pá frá eg senno sliðrfengligsta, traud mal, tallo af trega stórom, er harðhugú hvatti at vígi grimmom orðom Guðrún sono. Here Guðrún is presented both as: 1.brave, warlike- because she "hvatti at vígi", 2.angry - because she provoked a "senno sliðrfengligsta" with "grimmom orðom", 3.sad - because her

speech is also characterized as "trauð maí, talic af trega stórom". In our opinion, the same three meanings are naturally combined in the epithets móðug and hardhugug occurring in synonymous variation in Guðrunarvíða in fyrsta: Þeygi Guðrun grata matti; svá var hon móðug at mog dauðan oc hardhugug um hrer fylkis. In this lay Guðrun can hardly be treated as a model of pure sorrow filled with elegiac sentiment. Her speech beginning as a lyric monologue very soon acquires a vindictive strain and turns into a sequence of accusations and curses provoking a passionate argument about the cause of Sigurðr's death.

Thus if Guðrún of the Guðrunarhvöt is not just an infuriated mother instigating the revenge, then Guðrun of the Guðrunarvíða is not merely a sorrowful wife mourning over her dead husband. The two feelings - sorrow and anger - form a natural fusion in the epic narration which is more concentrated on the details of a family feud than on the psychological states of its participants. They do not require special designations, and the corresponding concepts appear in the text as a semantic "aura" of the words originally meant to designate behavioural human qualities. The images of both Guðrun and Brynhildr are outlined in all their mimics and gestures but the fine movements of their souls are hidden from the reader. They remain in the first place the subjects of actions which very often do not have a clear psychological motivation. In this we are inclined to see the same tendency that can be found in the Old Icelandic family sagas where feelings are mainly shown through their outward manifestations only.