**Reckoning of Time and Space by The Neur**

For the reckoning of time Neur have some distinct usage- Ecological time which is based on the environment and the changes which occur due to seasons changes and due to the movement of sun and the moon. Similarly they also have Structural Time which is based on personal relationships in their social structure.

**Ecological Time /Oecological Time**

**The oecological cycle is a year**. Its distinctive rhythm is the backwards and forwards movement from villages to camps, which is the Nuer's response to the climatic dichotomy of rains and drought. The year [**roun**) has two main seasons, **tot and mai**. **Tot, from about the middle of March to the middle of September**, roughly corresponds to the rise in the curve of rainfall, though it does not cover the whole period of the rains. Rain may fall heavily at the end of September and in early October, and the country is still flooded in these months which belong, nevertheless, to the **mai half ( September -March) of the year, for it commences at the decline of the rains — not at their cessation** — and roughly covers the trough of the curve, from about the middle of September to the middle of March.

Besides these two main seasons of tot and mai Nuer recognize two subsidiary seasons included in them, being transitional periods between them. The four seasons are not sharp divisions fbut overlap. Just as we reckon summer and winter as the halves of our year and speak also of spring and autumn, so Nuer reckon tot and mai as halves of their year and speak also of the seasons **of rwil and jiom**. **Rwil is the time of moving from camp to village** and of clearing and planting, from about the middle of March to the middle of June, before the rains have reached their peak. It counts as part of the tot half of the year, though it is contrasted with tot proper, the period of full village life and horticulture, from about the middle of June to the middle of September. Jiom, meaning 'wind', is the period in which the persistent north wind begins to blow and people harvest, fish from dams, fire the bush, and form early camps, from about the middle of September to the middle of December. It counts as part of the mai half of the year, though it is contrasted with mai proper, from about the middle of December to the middle of March, when the main camps are formed. Roughly speaking, therefore, there are two major seasons of six months and four minor seasons of three months.

When Neur wish to define the occurrence of an event several days in advance ,such as dance or wedding ,they do so by reference to the phases of the moon: new moon, its waxing, full moon, its waning, and the brightness of its second quarter.When they wish to be precise they state on which night of the waxing or waning an event will take place, reckoning fifteen nights to each and thirty to the month.

The course of the sun determines many points of reference, and a common way of indicating the time of events is by pointing to that part of the heavens the sun will then have reached in its course. There are also a number of expressions like the first stroke of dawn, sunrise, noon, and sunset. It is, perhaps, significant that there are almost as many points of reference between 4 and 6 a.m.as there are for the rest of the day. The daily timepiece is the cattle clock, the round of pastoral tasks, and the time of day

and the passage of time through a day are to a Nuer primarily the succession of these tasks and their relations to one another.

The better demarcated points are taking of the cattle from byre to kraal, milking, driving of the adult herd to pasture, milking of the goats and sheep, driving of the flocks and calves to pasture, cleaning of byre and kraal, bringing home of the flocks and calves, the return of the adult herd, the evening milking, and the enclosure of the beasts in byres. Nuer generally use such points of activity, rather than concrete points in the movement of the sun across the heavens, to co-ordinate events. Thus a man says, 'I shall return at milking', T shall start off when the calves come home', and so forth.

Oecological /ecological time-reckoning is ultimately, of course, entirely determined by the movement of the heavenly bodies, but only some of its units and notations are directly based on these movements, e.g. month, day, night, and some parts of the day and night, and such points of reference are paid attention to and selected as points only because they are significant for social activities.

It may conclude that the Nuer system of time-reckoning within the annual cycle and parts of the cycle is a series of conceptualizations of natural changes, and that the selection of points of reference is determined by the significance which these natural changes have for human activities.

**Structural Time is Based on the Social Events Which Took Place**

Moreover, it can be said that **all time is structural since** it is a conceptualization of collateral, coordinated, or co-operative activities : the movements of a group. Otherwise time concepts of this kind could not exist, for they must have a like meaning for every one within a group. Milking-time and meal-times are approximately the same for all people who normally come into contact with one another, and the movement from villages to camps has approximately the same connotation everywhere in Nuerland, though it may have a special connotation for a particular group of persons. There is, however, a point at which we can say that time concepts cease to be determined by oecological/ecological factors and become more determined by structural interrelations, being no longer a reflection of man's dependence on nature, but a reflection of the interaction of social groups.

Nuer have words for the year before last, last year, this year, next year, and the year after next. Events which took place in the last few years are then the points of reference in time-reckoning, and these are different according to the group of persons who make use of them: joint family, village, tribal section, tribe, &c. One of the commonest ways of stating the year of an event is to mention where the people of the village made their dry season camps, or to refer to some evil that befell their cattle, A joint family may reckon time in the birth of calves of their herds. Weddings and other ceremonies, fights, and raids, may likewise give points of time, though in the absence of numerical dating no one can say without lengthy calculations how many years ago an event took place. Moreover, since time is to Nuer an order of events of outstanding significance to a group, each group has its own points of reference and time is consequently relative to structural space, locally considered.

Nuer have another way of stating roughly when events took place ; not in numbers of years, but by reference to the **age-set system.** An age set is a social category or corporate social group, consisting of people of similar age, who have a common identity, maintain close ties over a prolonged period, and together pass through a series of age-related statuses.