<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EDITORIAL NOTE</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAX MÜLLER</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malcolm Crick, Institute of Social Anthropology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADAM FERGUSON (1723–1816)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sir E.E. Evans-Pritchard, Emeritus Professor of Social Anthropology, University of Oxford</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIGNS, SYMPTOMS AND SYMBOLS</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drid Williams, Institute of Social Anthropology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECENT WRITINGS ON WITCHCRAFT</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy Mair, Honorary Professor of Social Anthropology, University of Kent at Canterbury</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AN ASPECT OF BOUGLE'S SOCIOLOGY</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Aston, Institute of Social Anthropology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOOK REVIEWS:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Fontaine (ed): The Interpretation of Ritual</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- by Malcolm Crick</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnes: Three Styles in the Study of Kinship</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- by Peter Rivière</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c: Journal
EDITORIAL NOTE

The idea for this Journal has come from the graduate students at the Subfaculty of Anthropology at Oxford, in particular from those at the Institute of Social Anthropology. Papers given at graduate seminars and ideas arising from work for diplomas and higher degrees very often merit wider circulation and discussion without necessarily being ready for formal publication in professional journals. There obviously exists a need in social anthropology for serious critical and theoretical discussion; JASO sees this at its main purpose. The Oxford University Anthropological Society established a Journal Sub-committee to organise the venture.

We should like to express our thanks to Dr. G. Williams for valuable assistance in the production of this issue of the Journal.

FORMAT

We shall produce one issue per term (three per year). Articles are welcome from students in all branches of anthropology and from people in other disciplines interested in social anthropology. Reviews and comments will also be welcome. For the present, it is preferred that the main emphasis should be on analytical discussion rather than on description or ethnography. Papers should be as short as is necessary to get the point over. As a general rule, they should not exceed 5,000 words. For future issues, papers should be submitted following the conventions for citations, notes and references used in the A.S.A. monographs. Communications should be addressed to the Editors, Institute of Social Anthropology, 51, Banbury Road, Oxford.

BACK issues

We have a small stock of back issues still unsold. Individual copies are available at 30p. in the U.K. and $1 abroad. Volume I complete (1970) is available at the following rates: U.K. - 75p. to individuals, £1 to institutions; abroad - $2.50 to individuals, $3 to institutions. The subscription for Vols. II (1971) and III (1972) are the same. (All prices cover postage). Cheques should be made out to the Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford.
Max Müller: '... we feel that we are - in the presence of men who, if they lived with us -- would be looked upon as giants. [299] We must guard against their memory being insulted. [304].

A.A. Macdonell, the professor of Sanskrit at Oxford at the beginning of this century said of Max Müller (Dictionary of National Biography: XXII Supplement: 1909) that his name was as famous as that of any other scholar of the nineteenth century. Well he might, for Müller who died in 1900, besides his contribution to Oriental scholarship, had pioneered in this country the sciences of language and religion and had created the study of comparative mythology. L.R. Farnell, a classicist and Rector of Exeter College, on the other hand, was able to say in 1934 (An Oxonian Looks Back) that 'Andrew Lang's Ballads on Blue China may preserve his name.' Lang, of course, was Müller's most active anthropological adversary, but besides that, one may fairly presume that the Ballads are even less frequently read than his other works.

Nothing of any depth or insight has really been written of Müller. Pater Schmidt, a most learned man, gives a simply erroneous account of his work (see The Origin and Growth of Religion 1931) and Evans-Pritchard's Theories of Primitive Religion (1965) whilst suggesting that Müller's work has been unjustly decried (p.21) nevertheless is generally condemnatory. In fact we have had to wait for the publication of Social Anthropology and Language (ASA 10 ed. Ardenel 1971); see remarks by Ardener in the introduction and the paper by Henson) for even a hint that Müller might be of value to us. Müller's works do not form part of a standard anthropological education, and of course he is not generally regarded as one of our founding fathers. Indeed, for much of his career he was engaged in dispute with those whom we conventionally take to be our disciplinary ancestors, and were it not for Evans-Pritchard's scholarship we might not even suspect that he existed. But in the present reflective and unsure state of anthropology, there is much in his badly neglected works that can be read with profit. More than that, and without wishing to disparage the work of the Victorian anthropologists, I should like to suggest that in certain respects he outranks them all.

This remark rests partly upon my own attitude to the present state of our subject, and reflects also a vision of how it ought to develop. My initial task, then, is to elucidate this view by discussing the very general context of my thesis! To Evans-Pritchard, in large part, we are indebted for our consciousness of a long line of distinguished scholars from whom we might claim to be descended. The outlines of this lineage are well known - thinkers of the Scottish enlightenment; in France, the Encyclopaedists, Comte, Fustel de Coulanges, the Année school. Others have continued this work and we can now add to our past Van Gennep, and, thanks to the efforts of Dr. Needham, the brilliant Hoebart. Some have not shown any enthusiasm for this type of reinstatement - Gluckman, as is well known, finds van Gennep boring - but the scholars among us can well appreciate the achievements of our forebears.
But I should like to suggest that, despite the work that has already been done, our past is still incomplete, and has in a sense only recently become so. Our interests are becoming linguistic and philosophical and it is now relevant to graft on to our conventional lineage a sub-branch of philosophers, philologists and linguists. Should all this seem decidedly unscientific and remind you of the way in which the Tiv manipulate their genealogies, I should say that the great Jacob Burckhardt defined history as what one generation finds of interest in another. And, if amending genealogies to fit present circumstances seems unhistorical, we have the testimony of Benedetto Croce that in a sense all history is contemporary history. History is not in any simplistic sense simply 'the past', and so I do not feel that I am departing too far from the normal methods of western historical science when I construct a past that has not previously existed. (These remarks, of course, have important implications for those who would contend that there is an absolute distinction between myth and history.)

Who appears in this new sub-lineage? In order to make it chronologically central I shall start it in 1770 and end it in 1970. We may begin with Sir William Jones and Colebrooke, two Sanskritists of enormous learning who wrote much of general anthropological interest. A philosopher also appears at the beginning: Immanuel Kant. Now he appears not because he wrote a book on anthropology in 1787 or because he lectured on the subject at Königsberg, though both these are true. Rather, it is his 'Copernican revolution' as he styled it in his preface to the second edition of the Critique of Pure Reason, which entitles him to our consideration. The philosophical revolution was the opposite to that which took place in astronomy, for Kant placed man in the centre of the universe, so to speak, and for that reason his Critique is a profound anthropological treatise - possibly the most important that we possess. And yet it forms no part of our training. What Kant did was to examine critically the powers of the human mind itself, to assess what the mind itself, owing to its own nature, contributes to our knowledge. We may now speak of fundamental structures of the human mind (the Kantian flavour of Mythologiques is well-known) but Kant's investigation into our synthetic a priori knowledge was an enterprise in the same spirit.

Nearer to the present day this lineage contains such linguists - some of them already accorded a recognition in our past - as de Saussure, the Prague structuralists and Chomsky. But I suggest that anthropology will be similarly fertilised, perhaps more so when it realises the brilliance and anthropological nature of the thought of Wittgenstein and those he has, though in different ways, influenced. I am thinking of Waismann, Strawson and Hampshire in particular. If anthropology were only to recognise the direct relevance of the sensitive type of conceptual inquiry in which these men are experts, anthropology could become a real academic discipline instead of merely a social science. We could also honour our Emeritus Professor who so long ago claimed that our real attachments were with history and philosophy.

But I have begun and ended with Kant and Wittgenstein for a very special reason, for, between them these two men represent firstly, Müller's main intellectual problem, and secondly a major aspect of its solution. I can speak in such general terms
because one senses in all that Müller wrote a strong unity of purpose and assumption. (Coherence is another matter. Müller's books are long and rambling and less than consistent, but generalisation is still possible). Let me return to Kant. It was in 1881 on the centenary of its first appearance that Müller published his English translation of the *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*. In the translators preface to this work he says that the Veda was the first arch of the bridge of thoughts that spans the whole history of the Aryan mind and that Kant's critique represents the perfect manhood of that Aryan mind. Having once learnt from Kant what man can and what he cannot know, my plan of life was very simple, namely to learn, so far as literature, tradition and language allow us to do so, how man came to believe that he could know so much more than he ever can know in religion, in mythology and in philosophy. The problem, and so what remained to be done after Kant, would require a 'Critique of Language'.

This brings me to Wittgenstein. Now I should like to make it perfectly clear here that I intend in no way to suggest that Müller is the historical source of Wittgenstein's notion regarding language and philosophy. Anyone with the slightest acquaintance with the history of philosophy will know that many have discoursed on the relation between language and thought and the place of language in philosophy. Even the Greeks, so little conscious of language as compared with ancient India, produced men who berated the evil influence of language on thought. To show the resemblance of Müller's thought to that of Wittgenstein I shall quote several passages from his book *The Science of Thought* (1887). He there quotes Hamann - a friend of Kant's - as saying, 'Language is not only the foundation of the whole faculty of thinking, but the central point also from which proceeds the misunderstanding of reason by herself'. Earlier, in the preface to his 1861 Lectures on the Science of Language at the Royal Institution, he wrote that it was his aim to attract the attention of 'the philosopher, the historian, and the theologian, to a science which concerns them all, and which though it professes to treat words only, teaches us that there is more in words than is dreamt of in our own philosophy'. And he goes on to quote Bacon: 'Men believe that their reason is lord over their words, but it happens too that words exercise a reciprocal and reactionary power over our intellect. Words--shoot back upon the understanding of the wisest, and mightily entangle and pervert the judgment.' This is the background to Müller's own phrase 'disease of language'.

In his preface to the *Science of Thought*, Müller states that it is written for a few friends who share his interests and that it will not be popular. 'There is a fullness of time for philosophical as there is for political and social questions'. Now the theme of the book is this, that the interdependence of thought and language places philosophy on a new basis (514), an obvious basis but perhaps for that very reason overlooked, namely an investigation of language itself. The history of philosophy is a battle against mythology, he claims (217), and philosophical problems must be solved by a study of language. Thought lives in language and 'philosophy must learn to deal with language as history deals with events'. (550). True philosophy, then, consists of its examination and correction. (573). It seems to me that this is nothing if not a clear enunciation of the 'bewitchment and
therapy" view of philosophy. In 1888 Müller had said (Natural Religion) that the dictum 'we think in words' must become the chapter of all exact philosophy in future. But he reflected in his 1878 paper 'On the Origin of Reason': 'What should we say if biologists were to attempt to discover the nature and laws of organic life without ever looking at a living body. And when are we to find the living body of thought if not in language?' (467). But he goes on to remark gloomily that 'whenever the philologist represents the whole history of philosophy as in truth an uninterrupted struggle between language and thought and maintains that all philosophy must in the end become a philosophy of language, he is apt to be taken as an enthusiast'. I would refer you here to a short article of Müller's in the very first volume of Mind (1876) where he points out some weaknesses in Mill's writings on thought. (348) and suggests they would have been avoided had he only taken care to look more thoroughly into how his language was constructed and worked. He refers there to the 'secret cunning of languages' and comments (349): 'Language, as I have often said, always revenges herself whenever we do violence to her or whenever we forget her antecedents'.

In short, then, Müller's way to solve the problem that Kant left is this. We think we know more than we can because we forget how our language is built and so we use words in ways for which they were not originally intended. This is the general background to Müller's system of mythology, and the fact that none of the commentators on his work have fully sensed that this area is but a part of a larger scheme explains, in part, why his writings on myth have been so sadly misunderstood.

I ought to say something of Müller's central assumption that thought and language are inseparable or identical. I am not unaware of the problems this involves. If we take the statement in a philosophical sense we become bemused: what the relation between language and thought is? I cannot address myself to this general issue here - Wittgenstein himself advocates silence when one cannot speak clearly. But I should like to suggest that whatever the validity of the assertion, it is a stance that has very valuable consequences. Before briefly indicating what I mean with a few examples, I must defend Müller against one obvious objection. Possessed as we are now of a semiological consciousness, we would immediately spot that his equation is wrong. That he over-stresses language as against other modes of symbolic thought I do not deny - as a philologist one would hardly expect anything else. But we must see how Müller uses the word language, and thought also, for it is clear that his identity of thought and language is really the interdependence of human reason (that is conceptual thought, begriffe not vorstellung) and any system of symbolic signs. (Saussure, of course, points also to this dependence of definite ideas upon signs). Language is the best, says Müller, but there are other types of signs which may be substituted for the verbal, and he therefore includes under the term language any system of signs which embodies conceptual thought. As he says in his 1870 lectures on the Science of Religion (1873:356): 'we do not exclude the less perfect symbols of thought, such as gestures, signs or pictures. They, too, are language in a certain sense and they must be included in language before we are justified in saying that discursive thought can be realised in language only.' We have signs and signs of signs. Thus, not only gestural language, ideographic
...silence, but such systems as algebra standing in the place of numbers. Language can abbreviate itself, he says, and so we have signs which stand for whole trains of reasoning (ibid: 49). It is clear that what Müller-means is that human beings must think in symbols. 'All I maintain is that thought cannot exist without signs,' and that our most important signs are words.' (ibid: 58). This surely is not objectionable. What he means is made clear by his discussion of a game of chess. Müller does not say that when we play chess we need to talk to ourselves, but chess pieces are names, they are signs. One can silently play chess without consciously stating rules, but the pieces are concepts and the game is a set of rules about how to move pieces. This is clear, he says, in that we can talk about these rules in the eventuality of someone making a mistake. If the pieces were not concepts there would be no game, only chaos.

I should add briefly here that Müller was a fierce opponent of Darwin over the nature and origins of language, though he, like many German scholars, was an evolutionist long before the Origin of Species was published. Müller wanted to insist upon there being a difference of kind between human language and animal communication and his arguments would benefit the na"\i"ve type of ethologist that exists today. Müller, quite rightly, says that human language is more than a medium of communication, it is also a complex conceptual structure. For this reason, the question of the origin of language cannot be tackled in isolation, but must be viewed as part of a larger problem (see 'Origin of Reason': 1873). He says in his lectures on Darwin's philosophy of language (Fraser's Magazine 1873: Vol VIII) that 'our concepts and our words are produced by a faculty or by a mode of mental action which is not simply a barrier between man and beast, but which creates a new world in which we live.' In other words: 'We live in concepts.' (Three lectures on the Science of thought: 1887). As a Kantian Müller accepted that we must acknowledge that the world must accept our terms of knowing. To this extent we do create our own symbolic world. (I commented on this fact in my essay 'Anthropology and the Philosophy of Science' (JASO Vol II No.1). Müller's remarks in fact come close to the central ideas in Langer's Philosophy in a New Key - an inspiring anthropological philosophy). Müller said in 1861 that man possessed a specific capacity for forming general ideas and using general names, and that this put him, uniquely in a human world of symbols and concepts. (see Frazer's Magazine, Vol. VIII: 11). 'Through reason we not only stand above the brute creation, we belong to a different world.' (1861: 364). There is a point here of great import for the human sciences, namely that there are concepts necessary to and specific to the description of human phenomena. When this is realised and its methodological consequences fully grasped, the social sciences will begin to be useful.

I should now like to talk briefly about some of the consequences of his assumption that thought and language are identical. Firstly, though I cannot here develop it, language for Müller is a social institution and it follows that thought is social too. I have time for one quotation only, which of course raises its own problems. It is from the lectures on Darwin's theory of language: 'Though the faculty of language may be congenital, all languages are traditional. The words in which we think are channels of thought which, we have not dug ourselves, but which we find ready made for us.' (1873: 528). We must
remember the individualistic associational psychology which so
influenced the work of his contemporary anthropologists and to
which the French sociological school, including Lévy-Bruhl quite
legitimately took such strong exception. Secondly, consider this
remark from his preface to the Science of Thought (1887): '... there is no such thing as intellect, understanding, mind and reason ...
all these are only different aspects of language!'. No one should
be upset, however, for - (and giving us a Wittgensteinian comfort) -
he says that these philosophical remarks leave the world exactly as
it was before; we simply have a more valid understanding of our-
selves. Now whatever we think of this particular assertion several
important facts follow from his view that language is the embodi-
ment of mind - and indeed in its historical aspect is the
autobiography of the human mind. Many philosophers had complained
that they had no reliable evidence with which to talk about mental
phenomena. With an incredible blindness they had overlooked the
fact that the evidence they needed was language itself. As Müller
says later in the same book (290-5) 'the true philosophy of the
human mind - is the philosophy of language'. It is well known that
psychology in our century has retreated to a nonsensical
experimentalism or unrealistic behaviourism even, afraid of the
'problem of other minds'. But language is surely the means of
access to, and the proof of, our knowledge of other minds (see
Müller: Chips IV 1875: 460). It is the most important medium in
which our intersubjective understanding lives. Müller said on so
many occasions that the investigation of language had a central role
in psychology and the fact that social psychology has still not
fully realized this fact will stand as one of the most absurd
methodological errors committed by any social science. Thirdly,
(and I must make this my last example) logic for Müller was a
general grammar. Now whilst his philological work was outdated
before his death, the fact that Müller's interest in language was
part of a larger problem means that he displayed that conscious-
ess of the relevance of linguistics to philosophy that Chomsky possesses.
Müller, in fact, considered (see Three Lectures on the Science of
Thought: 4) comparative philology as a means towards the inves-
tigation of larger problems, as a severe apprenticeship to be served
before the wider questions of the science of language could be tackled.
He writes in 1885 ('The Lesson of Jupiter' in Chips IV 1895 ed:
380) that the widest comparisons in philology could show what was
essential to language as such, and therefore to thought. It would
be possible to construct a general grammar, not speculatively as
philosophers had done in the past, but empirically. Though I must
leave the issue here, I should just add that Müller was extremely
interested in universals, as indeed were many of the Victorian
ethnologists. But Müller, for reasons which I shall shortly discuss
was extremely conscious of the abuses of this type of wide comparison;
the method might lead us to think we had definite conclusions when
we had not understood any of our evidence. But, discussing the
ethno-psychological approach to mythology he says this: 'If that
motive turns out to be due to our common human nature, the
ethnological method assumes quite a new interest, and may in time
lead to very important results'. Such statements on direct
expressions of the human mind are not infrequent.

I should now like to turn to another problem altogether - the
question of 'ethnological-isms'. which arises from Henson's essay
in ASA 10 ('Early British Anthropologists and Language'). There she
criticises quite justifiably the naive way in which native
categories such as taboo, totem etc. were used as technical terms
by C19 anthropologists. I shall add here as a similar error the
promiscuous utilization of such terms as fetishism and animism,
native terms - in a sense - from our own culture. Now we would possibly be wrong to suggest that the anthropologists were completely unaware of the problems involved, but beyond the difficulties involved in any one of these terms is the simple fact that their employment at all involves a very general error concerning the way in which we should seek to understand meaning. But Müller must be exempted from a general indictment, for it was precisely over these terms that he was most censorious of his contemporaries. He, a translator and philosopher showed in this respect a sensitivity to conceptual problems which they lacked, and which most anthropologists today even cannot match.

As an introduction to this particular section of my paper I had better perhaps say something general on Müller's conflict with the ethnologists. Müller was the representative of German scholarship in England, but we should not exaggerate his hostility to the new science. After all, it was he who in a review in the Times in 1865 first brought to the public attention the profound importance of Tylor's Researches. We should also remember that he was attending lectures on anthropology at Leipzig as a student in the early 1840's a generation before the science existed in England. And he was using savage evidence in mythology before most of the ethnologists, but became disillusioned. He also attempted to establish a journal called Ethnological Records of the Colonies, for which no finance was forthcoming. However, he did send directives through the Colonial Office to begin the collection of linguistic and cultural data. We have been told that the value of field work was only realised in this century, even that Malinowski invented the new method. So let me refer you to a passage which Müller quotes in an address of 1891. They were written by Codrington, himself a Melanesian expert who was in the field for a vastly longer period than the few years of Malinowski during the First War. "When a European has been living for two or three years among savages, he is sure to be fully convinced that he knows all about them; when he has been ten years or so amongst them, if he be an observant man, he knows that he knows very little about them, and so begins to learn! (Let us remember also that Radcliffe-Brown one of the founders of modern anthropology never did any real field-work. He could not speak the language of the Andaman Islanders, and worked through interpreters for the whole duration of his stay there.) Codrington was just one of a group of real Victorian field-workers - other names are Callaway, Bleck, Gill, Hahn - and it was almost exclusively on their evidence that Müller relied. He refused to use evidence from those who could not speak the relevant languages.

But whilst Müller was enthusiastic about anthropology in these ways, he urged many cautions of method and assumption, which we should now accept as absolutely sound. He of course shared many assumptions with the ethnologists such as developmentalism, for instance, but he could not tolerate nursery psychology, nor the crude suggestion that savages were primitives. This later equation was of course, fundamental for the anthropologists, for it generated from a taxonomy the supposed historical time into which progress and survivals could be fitted. But Müller's main objection was a question of language. For him, as a philologist aware of the difficulties involved in deciding the meaning of Greek texts and acquainted with the problems of translating Sanskrit manuscripts he could not accept the way in which anthropologists drew such bold conclusions about societies whose languages they did not understand at all. For him it was simply obvious that if you knew nothing about a people's language then
you could know nothing about its culture. Anthropologists he thought could learn some caution from scholars: 'what I have ventured to say on several occasions is, let us wait till we know a little more of Hottentots and Papuans, let us wait till we know at least their language, for otherwise we may go hopelessly wrong'. (Natural Religion: 216). Müller reflected in his 1891 presidential address to the anthropological section of the British Association that anthropology 'has been raised to the dignity, but also to the responsibility of a real science'. He said that the time would come when an accurate knowledge of language would be regarded as a sine qua non of anthropological work, when the need for a 'scholarly conscience' would become clear. He concludes the address with these words: 'If anthropology is to maintain its high position as a real science, it's alliance with linguistic science cannot be too close'.

I shall start my discussion of Müller on 'ethnological-isms' by exposing a lost chapter in the history of totemism. By this I mean to indicate my annoyance that Levi-Strauss nowhere make any reference to Müller's precocious remarks. We remember that Levi-Strauss talks of a totemic hysteria, Müller talks of a totemistic epidemic - and he lived through much of it. In Natural Religion, he says this: 'There seems to be a peculiar fascination in strange names... In order to secure clearness of thought and honesty of reasoning in the study of religion I am afraid these terms (animism, fetishism, totemism) ought to be sent into exile. They have become dangerous...' (159-60). In an appendix on totemism in Anthropological Religion, he adds: 'All this is thoroughly unscientific: to take a foreign word without accurately defining it and then to add to it the magical termination of ism... may save a great deal of trouble, but what is here called trouble, is in reality accurate thought'. (409) Müller claims (Nat. Relg. 159; 522) that a totem is what it means to certain groups of Red Indians. There it is clarified: 'mark, a visible symbolic sign, an emblem such as primitive societies frequently used. And 'totem' should not be promiscuously used or made a general term of comparison. Indeed, even the word totem itself is wrong. Müller claims, on the authority of Father Cuq, a Canadian philologist, that the proper word for family mark is ote (genitive otem) (Biography of Words and the Home of the Aryas 1888: 249 n.1). He quotes Brinton commenting on 'the animate symbolism employed with such marked preference by the red race to express abstract ideas'. (Anthr. Relig: 407-8). All this was written in the early 1890's, and if it does not make totemism unreal, at least its superiority to what contemporary anthropologists were saying is absolutely clear. For Müller, totemism was a civil institution among some Red Indian tribes by which groups in a village chose emblems to distinguish themselves. The beliefs in the sacredness of the animal, in descent and so on were secondary and grew up, as he says, 'naturally'. The sign chosen 'became surrounded as the colours of a regiment are even now, by a halo of many recollections'. (Nat. Relig: 522). An uncanny parallel, for Levi Strauss makes exactly the same point referring to Linton's 'Rainbow' Division. (Le Totemisme Anjor'd'hui: 10). I will bring this little discussion to a close by saying that Müller was not alone. Winternitz, another orientalist was asked by him to compile the massive index which forms Vol L of Sacred Books of the East. It was published in 1910 after many years labour and in an introductory note Winternitz remarks on the errors that had been made in constructing theories on the origin and development of religion before adequate
materials were to hand (XIV). He goes on to say that in his index such familiar terms as totemism, animism, tabu and fetishism are all excluded because they refer to the theories not to the facts of religion. Likewise the mythologist Robert Brown Jnr. who in 1898 wrote a book defending Müller against Lang's journalism says: 'the totemism of the 'untutored anthropologist' is necessarily destined to an absolute collapse'. (Semitic Influence in Hellenic Mythology; 203).

The superiority of the scholars over the anthropologists on totemism is impressive, but I should not have given it such prominence had it been an isolated incident. I have space here only to outline Müller's attitude to one more ethnological-ism: fetishism. As a stage, some said the first in the evolution of religion, it rested on the testimony of Portuguese sailors who came back from West Africa with stories of strange beliefs among the negroes. Comte misunderstood de Brosses, he misunderstood the sailors, and they never understood the negroes. Fetishism, says Müller has 'become a panacea for all mythological troubles, and the same was reached when more recently a fetish - an African charm - was defined as a totem (an American emblem) inhabited by an ancestral spirit (an Indian concept)' (Contributions to the Science of Mythology: 1897: 195). And for Müller anyway it was quite obviously a 'grammatical' error to talk of anyone worshipping a material object. The object must clearly symbolise something else. Müller's astuteness, however, resided not solely in his caution over these terms referring to what is conventionally called religion; it extended to social organisation also. Witness the following on caste (Six Systems of Indian Philosophy: 1899: 11-2). He says that the word casta is a misleading term for understanding the social conditions of ancient India because it was invented by Portuguese sailors who used it to describe any social divisions that struck their fancy; to ask therefore what casta means in India is like asking what it means in England or what feitiqo means in Portugal. 'What we really want to know is what was implied by such Indian words as Varna (colour) Gâti (kith) Kula (family) Pravara (lineage); otherwise we shall have once more the same confusion about the social organisation of ancient India as about African fetishism or North American totemism. Each foreign word should always be kept to its own native meaning, or, if generalised for scientific purposes, it should be most carefully defined afresh. Otherwise every social distinction will be called caste, every stick a totem, every idol a fetish'. Or let me take another custom, the couvade. Müller did not like folklore method, for it seemed to him nonsense to attempt wide comparisons of beliefs or institutions before any of the examples used was really understood - the similarities, for instance, might be merely superficial. He says (1897: 226) 'a comparison of savage and civilised customs might be useful', but, he maintains that 'we must possess a complete insight into the one as well as into the other, before we can hope that our comparisons may be of real scientific value'. Speaking specifically of the couvade he says: (ibid:290) 'Unless the motive is the same, the custom is not the same; unless the motive is discovered the facts themselves are curious, but no more'. For motive we should read meaning, and there is a great deal in this perceptive remark on 'sameness' that I cannot go into here. This quote will have to suffice. 'It may be said that anybody can describe what he sees, even though unable to converse with the people. I say, Decidedly no -' (1891 Address: 10). One of Müller's chief reasons for disliking folklore was that it assumed to understand you needed first to compare. Müller never denied that
comparison could be illuminating, but he did suggest it was absurd to explain Vedic ceremonies from savage customs before attempting to explain them from the Veda itself (1897: 210): 'we need an explanation from within not from without (ibid: 225) as was involved in ethnological comparison.' Mülller disliked the way savages seemed to perform for anthropological theorists and advises (ibid: 292): 'If we wish to make the study of savage races really useful we must try to free ourselves from all preconceived ideas and instead of looking for idols or for totems or fetishes, learn to accept and to understand what the savages themselves are able to tell us.' Later (ibid: 451) he adds: 'I am bound to say, I know, as yet, of few cases only where Tasmanians, Minicopiaies, or Blackfeet have proved half as useful to us as even Sayana's much abused commentary). Mülller, in his publication of the Rig-Veda-Samhita included, not without the criticism of others, the vast 14th century Commentary of Sayana. Though I cannot present any of the evidence here Mülller and other Orientalists had rehearsed our problem of the use of native models. Should one translate and not consider the native exegesis, or should one slavishly follow the native understanding? Neither, says Mülller, (Sacred Books of the East: 1867 Prospectus) the native commentary is absolutely the essential beginning to comprehension, but we should expect it to contain errors; even a systematic bias, so that the scholar should begin with the native understanding and construct a translation based upon a critical interpretation of that.

Appendix V to Antropolagical Religion is called 'On the Untrustworthiness of Anthropological evidence'. Mülller disliked 'anecdotic' anthropology, which took fragments of evidence from societies whose languages were unknown and from sources whose reliability could not be assessed. As Mülller said (1897: 205) 'I know what our dangers are nearer home.' He, a translator and philosopher could not imitate the fearless anthropologist. Of them he said - and he was right - (ibid: 193) 'They thought that their task was much easier than it really is.' Now if a philosopher - MacIntyre, Hampshire, the ghost of Wittgenstein, were to charge us today in exactly these terms, it would be equally true. We cannot simply dismiss it as a comment from another discipline. We have, in short, as an academic subject failed; we have not appreciated the extreme complexity of our task. We have not yet truly grasped what is involved in doing anthropology well. That 'neo-anthropology' will be demanding is very clear from Ardener's Malinowski Lecture, but as we incompetently attempt to establish universals or simply try to comprehend something particular, we should look back to see what has already been achieved. The purpose of this paper was to suggest that Mülller belongs to a past which we did not know we possessed and that these achievements and this history are 'good to think with'.

Fortes was able in his inaugural lecture at Cambridge to exclaim that we at last had a true science of anthropology. The predecessors of Malinowski seemed merely to get in the way of this achievement. I can only express my complete disagreement. Compared to the significance of the problems with which our Victorian predecessors grappled, I regard much of the work of British social anthropologists in this century as trivial; it could have been left to sociologists. And besides their own obvious theoretical failings, I regard it as the greatest insult of those who have dominated our discipline to have ignored their history, to have pretended that they have done better by not continuing the concerns
with which their ancestors wrestled. But conventionally we are
descended from Frazer, and scholar though he was, he was the least
original of them all (see Leach 1965). It is nonsense to accord
him such a place of honour when there are others of Müller's
stature not accorded any recognition at all. Many of our important
notions within recent decades have come from outside the
discipline, and the suggestion here is that Müller belongs to a
'past' of which we ought to be more conscious. We have, in brief,
robbed ourselves of valuable insights by not thinking about this
lineage of men who were similarly outside our discipline, and who,
in Müller's case, would not have wished to have been called an
anthropologist. It is now many years since Jarvie's 'Back to
Frazer's logaA:W,~OiO$d.

Apart from Frazer being the worst
possible choice, I shall conclude with this remark. This
historical essay looks forwards not back. One does not simply
want to give a man a place in our history. The 'return' is no
more real than that of de Saussure who, reflecting on the classical
grammarians claimed that linguistics 'retournera •••• mais dans un
esprit nouveau et avec d'autres procédés -' (119). One wishes
merely to suggest that in certain ways Müller's astuteness exceeds
that of many of our professors, that many of his views belong to
the very present of our discipline. If I have glanced back, it
should be clear that my mind has really been on our future, and the
immense problems with which we shall require much assistance in
creating an anthropology that deserves to exist.

Malcolm Crick.

Notes

1. This article is a shortened version of a paper read at a
research class at the Institute of Social Anthropology,
Oxford, during Hilary Term 1972. It represents the first-
fruits of six months research on Max Müller. The essay is
dedicated to Exeter College, Oxford, and her talented sons
A.M. Hocart and E.E. Evans-Pritchard.

2. On the production of the editio princeps of the Rig-Veda,
Müller spent the first half of his academic life.

3. Because his mode of composition, it is difficult to know
exactly what Wittgenstein read, but it may be interesting to
note that Wittgenstein's phrase 'family likenesses' or
'resemblances' is used frequently in Müller's work. It is
used firstly, with regard to the organisation of various
versions of manuscripts according to the distribution of
errors, and secondly to refer to features shared by
the members of a language family. Müller's use predates
the appearance of the term in Galton's essay 'On Composite
Portraits' in J.A.I. 1879.

4. I am conscious of the fact that I have only given part of
Wittgenstein - the intolerant, and sociologically less
interesting aspect. On the other hand, this brief discussion
represents only a part of Müller. He - and unlike his
anthropological contemporaries - displays in his work on
religious thought some of those 'charitable' aspects which
characterize the later Wittgenstein and which do not appear
in the literalist anthropologists.
5. See also (1) 'My Predecessors' 1888: 492-3 where he speaks of utilitarian moral philosophy as 'jugglery'. He points out that 'good' like other words has a range of meanings. It has one sense in moral philosophy, but also can mean 'effective'. This latter sense is not one with which ethics has any concern; utilitarianism is a simple confusion of these two senses. (2) Three Introductory Lectures on the Science of Thought 1887: 79-84 where he says that 'true philosophy is a constant katharsis of our words'. He refers there to somersaults in the history of philosophy and calls materialism a 'grammatical blunder'.

6. See the correspondence appendix to Three Lectures on the Science of Thought 1887 especially the last letter by Müllcr and his letters to Galton. Readers of de Saussure's Course will know the great use to which he puts the chess analogy, and its appearance, and the discussion of signs in general by Müllcr may have a significance for the history of ideas. Saussure, like Müllcr was an Indo-European philologist and de Saussure refers to his 1861 lectures on language as brilliant, but goes on to add, rightly, 'mais ce n'est par excés de conscience qu'il a péché' (1949: 16). One should further say that Müllcr defines mythology (1897: 35) as the result of a pathological reaction of the 'sign' on the 'signified'. For Müllcr, as for de Saussure the 'signified' is a psychological reality. To these remarks one must add that the term 'sign' has a long history in philosophy. Locke in his Essay (called by F. Lange in his History of Materialism a 'critique of language') asserts that words are signs of concepts and not of things. Also, it must be said that components of Saussure's thought - language as an institution, for instance - would more likely have been derived from the writings of the Yale Sanskritist W.D. Whitney, whom de Saussure rated above Müllcr.

See also William Thomson's book Outline of the Necessary Laws of Thought (3rd ed. 1853) to which Müllcr appended his 'Essay on Indian logic'. In this work, Thomson has a chapter on language, in which there is a discussion of different types of signs. He also suggests that verbal language is analytic - from which 'Whorfian' conclusions are drawn, whereas the signs in the language of art are 'compositional' and have to be 'unfolded'.

7. The evidence is mainly in; S.B.E. Prospectus; Müllcr's History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature (1859); prefaces to Vols III (1856) and IV (1862) of the Rig-Veda-Sanhita. Briefly, the issue revolves around Müllcr's inclusion of the native commentary in his editio princeps, and his critique of the principles adopted by H.H. Wilson in his translation of the Rig-Veda.

8. See Jarvie: The Revolution in Anthropology (1964). Subsequent debate - see esp. Leach (1965) show that Jarvie knew very little about Frazer or Malinowski.

Bibliography


Crick M. 1971. 'Anthropology and the Philosophy of Science' JASO Vol. II. No. 1.
Henson H. 1971. 'Early British Anthropologists and Language' in Arden (ed.)
Langer S. 1942. Philosophy on a New Key.
Leach E. 1965. 'On the Founding Fathers'. Encounter Nov.
Müller F. Max. 1856. pref. Vol III. Rig-Veda-Sanhita.
1859 History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature.
1861 The Science of Language
1862 pref. Vol IV Rig-Veda-Sanhita.
1873 'On Darwin's Philosophy of Language'. Frasers Mag. Vol VII-VIII.
1876 'The Original Intention of Collective and Abstract Terms' Mind Vol. I.
1878 Translators preface in Kant's Kritik der Reinen Vernunft.
1878 'On the Origin of Reason'. Contemp. Review.
1881 Introduction to the Science of Religion (orig. 1870).
1885 'The Lesson of Jupiter' in Chips IV 1895 ed.
1887 The Science of Thought
1887 Three Lectures on the Science of Thought.
1890 'My Predecessors', Contemp. Review.
1888 Biographies of Words and the Home of the Aryas.
1891 Presid. Address to Anthrop. Section of British Association.
1892 Natural Religion (1888 Gifford Lectures).
1892 Anthropological Religion (1891 Gifford Lectures)
1897 Contributions to the Science of Mythology.
1899 Six Systems of Indian Philosophy.
Schmidt W. 1931. The Origin and Growth of Religion.
Thomson W. 1853. Outlines of the Necessary Laws of Thought (3rd ed.)
Adam Ferguson (1723-1816)

Adam Ferguson was a remarkable person and, in my opinion, though much neglected, one of the major figures in the history of sociological thought. The son of a minister and a child of the Manse, he had the distinction, or may we say advantage, of having served for some years as Chaplain to the 42nd Regiment or 'The Black Watch' (he fought, so it is said, at the battle of Fontenoy); and he was unique among the Scottish moral philosophers in that he was a Gaelic-speaking highlander. He appears to have been a rugged character, sometimes rather difficult; an ultra-conservative and an anti-Stuart; and when one reads about his life one can well understand what he meant when he said that men are at their best when they have difficulties to surmount.

To estimate Ferguson one must see him and his writings in the intellectual setting of his time and place; and for this it might be necessary to dwell on the Jacobite troubles, the suppression of Scottish independence, rapid economic changes, and an element of provincial isolation and language difficulty. Without going into the historical and social setting however it will be sufficient to note how much Ferguson was an intellectual child of his time if I mention the names of Hume, Reid, Adam Smith, Lord Montboddo, Lord Kames, John Millar and Ferguson's pupil and his successor in the Chair of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh, Dugald Stewart. Truly 'Scotland's Augustan age'; two of whom are of particular interest for us, the man I am going to talk about now, and Lord Kames.

Ferguson received recognition at the time he wrote, especially in Germany, where he had much influence on Schiller and others. Also, in France, Saint-Simon and Comte owed much to him. In our own country, and later, J. S. Mill fully acknowledged his debt to him. Nevertheless he has since been forgotten, more or less, for over a century and a revival, though not a general one, in his writings has only recently taken place - regretfully one has to say in America (Lehman, 1931, and Kettler, 1965) and Germany (Kaneko, 1904, and Jogland, 1959), and not in his own country.

Ferguson left the Ministry of the Church of Scotland in 1754 to become Professor, first of all of Natural Philosophy and then of Pneumatic and Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh, and it was there he wrote his books during a long life on a variety of philosophical (as he and his contemporaries understood the word) subjects. His first and best known work, the one I am for the most part going to restrict my comments to, was An Essay on the History of Civil Society (1766). I do not think his Institutes of Moral Philosophy (lecture notes, 1772) or his Principles of Moral and Political Science (two large volumes, 1792) add much of sociological importance to what he had said in his first book; in both there is much tedious moralizing and what 18th century philosophers regarded as psychology; I suppose that was only to have been expected of a moral philosopher of the period, especially of a Scottish Calvinist one. All the same one can at times sympathize with Hume's irritation and even Sir Leslie Stephen's stricture of superficiality. Ferguson's The History of the Progress and Termination of the Roman Republic (1783), a favourite topic among writers of the time, comprises five volumes of almost pure narrative spiced with some rhetoric.
This work has little sociological value; but it is only fair to say that Ferguson was a very good classical scholar.

The Essay is a fascinating book if you like, as I do, the ornate, even florid or inflated English 18th century style of writing. One has, it is true, to put up with a good deal of sententious verbosity (the book is 430 pages long), but in spite of all the moralizing there is much sound thought in the Essay, which, it should be said right away, shows throughout and very clearly the influence of Montesquieu, as Ferguson himself says. It should perhaps also be added that Hume, whose successor he was as Keeper of the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh, though they were great friends and much admired each other, regarded the book unfavourably with regard to both style and content (not that that should necessarily discourage us). If we are to make any further comments on the author's personal life and values as reflected in his writings it may be said that while he abandoned his clerical career he did not go out of his way, like Condorcet for instance, to attack Christianity. After all, he had once been a Minister and a Chaplain. He became I suppose what one might describe as some sort of Deist: there is much 'The Author of Nature', and much of the reasoning from 'design'.

Ferguson's book illustrates many of the basic assumptions we find in modern social anthropology. In the first place he says that the desire to give some account of the earliest form of human society has led to fruitless enquiry and wild suppositions because, while the natural historian thinks himself obliged to collect facts and not to offer mere conjecture, 'it is only in what relates to himself, and in matters the most important, and the most easily known, that he substitutes hypothesis instead of reality ... (p. 3-4). Here we have a clear statement of the scope of a study of human societies — they are part of nature and must be studied, as is any other part of nature, by observation and induction.

Especially in the study of early man must conjecture be avoided. It must not be assumed, as it so often is, that a mere negation of what we find among ourselves is a sufficient description of man in his original state. This is simply judging by our own standards and is, moreover, going beyond, or against, the testimonies of those who have had opportunities of seeing mankind in their rudest conditions. Nor is direct observation replaced by the written traditions of a people about the earlier phases of their history. These are for the most part mere conjectures and fictions of subsequent ages and bear the stamp of the times through which a people has passed rather than that to which the descriptions are supposed to relate (he was thinking of the Iliad and Odyssey and also of writers like Vergil and Tasso, who give us historical information only about the conceptions and sentiments of the age in which they wrote). In spite of all this excellent advice Ferguson, like most of his contemporaries, relied largely on introspection, using historical examples, taken from such classical authors as he knew, when they illustrated or corroborated conclusions reached by deductions from philosophical axioms or psychological speculations rather than from the facts themselves.
Now, when Ferguson speaks of human societies as being 'natural' he has in mind the political theories of his day. He will have nothing to do with hypotheses, e.g. of Hobbes, Locke and others, about a state of nature in which men lived without any form or order, and more particularly of government. That kind of state of nature will be found in the struggle between princes and subjects rather than among rude tribes. He is also scornful of those who imagine that they are studying 'natural man' when they interview a wild man caught in the woods — an 18th century pastime. Human nature is a product of social life and man is only 'natural' in society, whether it be rude or polished. Therefore an 18th century gentleman is not less 'natural' than a savage Redskin of North America; indeed, in one sense he is more so, because the potentialities of men in polished societies have greater scope for expression. Therefore we must not oppose art (culture) to nature, for art itself is natural to man: 'If we are asked therefore, where the state of nature is to be found? We may answer, It is here: and it matters not whether we are understood to speak in the island of Great Britain, at the Cape of Good Hope, on the Straits of Magellan ... If the palace be unnatural, the cottage is so no less; and the highest refinements of political and moral apprehension, are not more artificial in their kind, than the first operations of sentiment and reason' (p. 12). He also says 'all the actions of men are equally the result of their nature (pp. 14-15).

It may here be commented, if only as an aside, that the idea that primitive peoples are in some sense more 'natural' than civilized peoples is still an idea commonly met with in everyday thought. In Ferguson's day it was the centre of much philosophical discussion. He held that it is futile to try to contrast hypothetical man living outside society ('natural man') with man living in society. Did not Aristotle long ago insist that man is by nature a political (social) creature. The question of what in a man in any society is to be attributed to biological inheritance and what to society and culture is altogether different and one which concerns equally both rude and polished man.

It is true that man, unlike the beasts, is endowed not with just instinct but also with intelligence and will and so shapes his own destiny up to a point, though, it must be added, only up to a point. For societies, being natural, do not develop by will or design but of their own nature, like trees: 'He who first said 'I will appropriate this field; I will leave it to my heirs'; did not perceive, that he was laying the foundation of civil laws and political establishments' (p. 186). Men, that is, arrive at ends they may not aim at; they are free to choose but they cannot predict what will happen as a result of their choice, for societies arise from instincts and not from speculations, so that what happens is 'indeed the result of human action, but not the execution of any human design' (p. 187). Institutions spring out of the general conditions of a society and are not the conscious creations of men, far less of any particular man, however gifted. Statesmen who think that they control events are like the fly in the fable who thought it was turning the wheel on which it sat. How often since have sociologists told us this, especially the Marxist ones!

Since man is essentially a social creature he cannot be understood except as a member of a group. So our first task is to get some idea of the nature of a social group. All accounts
from all parts of the earth 'represent mankind as assembled in
troops and companies . . . (p. 4). Therefore, 'Mankind are to
be taken in groups, as they have always subsisted. The history
of the individual is but a detail of the sentiments and thoughts
he has entertained in the view of his species: and every
experiment relative to this subject should be made with entire
societies, not with single men' (p. 6). Then again: 'Mankind
have always wandered or settled, agreed or quarrelled, in troops
and companies. The cause of their assembling, whatever it be, is
the principle of their alliance or union' (p. 23). In the
Principles we read 'Families may be considered as the elementary
forms of society or establishments the most indispensibly
necessary to the existence and preservation of the kind'. The
family in some form or other is universal. Comte was to say
very much the same.

The study of man is therefore a study of institutions in
relation to one another in the total conditions of life,
including national character and climate (Ferguson picked up
some odd ideas about the influence of climate from Montesquieu).
He discusses at length, closely following the classification and
method of analysis of Montesquieu, the nature of various forms
of government, democratic, aristocratic, monarchical and despotic,
observering the circumstances in which each is found and the various
forms of other institutions found with each. He discusses the
beginnings of property in agricultural and pastoral societies
(this notion of property and the part it has played in social
development was, perhaps rightly, an obsession among philosophers
of the period) and the distribution of these two types of societies
over the earth's surface and with reference to climate and some
of the main cultural features of each. Both, however, show the
beginnings of property and the inequalities and subordination
which go with it, and jurisdiction and government which accompany
them. Property comes about in passing from the savage to the
barbarous state. He also discusses how superstition disputes
with valour (he never quite ceases to be a 'soldier') the road to
power: the 'magic wand comes in competition with the sword itself'
(p. 161). - cp Condorcet, Frazer and others. He discusses how
population grows with increase in wealth and security (here again
cp. Condorcet) and is always limited by the means of subsistence.
He has an excellent discussion of the circumstances in which
cultural borrowing takes place (p. 25 seq.). Also how as a
result of borrowing knowledge increases: 'When nations succeed one
another in the career of discoveries and inquiries, the last is
always the most knowing'. Systems of science are gradually formed.
The globe itself is traversed by degrees, and the history of every
age, when past, is an accession of knowledge to those who succeed.
The Romans were more knowing than the Greeks; and every scholar
of modern Europe, is in this sense, more learned than the most
accomplished person that ever bore either of those celebrated
names. But is he on that account their superior?' (p. 44) -
(once again cp. Condorcet.) Anyhow, no people borrows from
another unless they are ready for the loan. He discusses many
other topics of anthropological interest - all of which I cannot,
obviously, enter into now. Throughout he adheres to his general
viewpoint, that culture, like society, is a natural growth,
collectively produced, and having its existence outside, and
apart from individual minds, which they shape. Was not Durkheim
to say much the same as his main thesis a century later?
Since I cannot appreciate all he wrote, I shall mention only two of the topics he treated, as examples of his sociological insights - war and the division of labour - in both of which his idea of a society being some kind of system of balanced parts comes out quite clearly. A political structure is a system of opposed groups. The Hottentots, he says, quoting Kolben, raided each other for cattle and women, but they only do this to bring their neighbours to war. 'Such depredations then are not the foundation of a war, but the effects of a hostile intention already conceived. The nations of North America, who have no lands to preserve, nor settlements to defend, are yet engaged in almost perpetual wars, for which they can assign no reason, but the point of honour, and a desire to continue the struggle their fathers maintained. They do not regard the spoils of an enemy; and the warrior who has seized any booty, easily parts with it to the first person who comes in his way' (p. 33).

In other words, wars arise not so much from an opposition of interests as of sentiments, and the supposed causes of war are only its occasions - the real cause is to be looked for in the functioning of the political structure: 'But it is in vain to expect that we can give to the multitude of a people a sense of union among themselves, without admitting hostility to those who oppose them. Could we at once, in the case of any nation extinguish the emulation which is excited from abroad, we should probably break or weaken the bands of society at home, and close the busiest scenes of national occupations and virtues' (p. 37).

Again: 'The society and concourse of other men, are not more necessary to form the individual, than the rivalship and competition of nations are to invigorate the principles of political life in a state' (pp. 182-3). Athens was necessary to Sparta (for which state and way of life Ferguson had great admiration) as steel is to flint in making fire. When the kingdoms of Spain united and the great fiefs in France were annexed to the crown the nations of Great Britain were joined. Social groups, that is, maintain their cohesion through opposition to like groups. Hence the structural necessity of war - both hot and cold (cp. Gunpowder). In another part of his book he says 'small and simple tribes, who in their domestic society have the firmest union, are in their state of opposition as separate nations, frequently animated with the most implacable hatred ... Even where no particular claim to superiority is formed, the repugnance to union, the frequent wars, or rather the perpetual hostilities, which take place among rude nations and separate clans, discover how much our species is disposed to opposition, as well as to concert' (pp. 30-31).

My second example is what Ferguson says about division of labour. A people can make no great progress in cultivating the arts of life until they have committed to different persons the several tasks which require a peculiar skill and attention. This cannot be done in the savage stage and only partly in the barbarian stage. All this changes with greater prosperity and the development of property, and then we get division of labour, not only in production but in all the activities of social life: politics, war, civil government, commerce and so on. 'These separate professions are made, like the parts of an engine, to concur to a purpose, without any concert of their own' (pp. 278-9). 'The savage who knows no distinction but that of his merit, of his sex, or of his species, and to whom his community is the sovereign object of his affection, is astonished to find, that in
Division of labour is no less a ground for subordination than difference in natural talents and dispositions and the unequal division of property; and it results in different sets of values and modes of custom in each class or profession in society, just as types of society have their special character - the Roman is a soldier, the Carthaginian a merchant; and the subjects of a republic and a monarchy differ in their outlooks, aims and behaviour. Nevertheless, societies in which there has taken place division of labour, in spite of divergences, present a uniform structural similarity. The general point Ferguson is making is that just as a political society forms part of a system of such societies, maintained in a balance through opposition, so internally the same society is a system of classes, ranks, professions, etc., which have an interdependence, it being precisely this which determines the moral solidarity of a complex society (cp. Durkheim). Furthermore he says 'But apart from these considerations, the separation of professions, while it seems to promise improvement of skill, and is actually the cause why the productions of every art become more perfect as commerce advances; yet in its termination, and ultimate effects, serves, in some measure, to break the bands of society, to substitute form in place of ingenuity, and to withdraw individuals from the common scene of occupation, on which the sentiments of the heart, and the mind, are most happily employed' (p. 334).

There are many correspondences one could draw attention to between what Ferguson is saying here and what others have said before and since, but I shall make only two comments. The first is a reference to the purely historical question, whether Ferguson got what he wrote about the division of labour, or at any rate an indication of its significance, from his Coeval Adam Smith. Probably he did, through lectures and private converse. The second comment is that it has been said that Ferguson had the idea that what follows division of labour is what later came to be termed 'alienation'. For this he got a pat on the back from Karl Marx (e.g. The Poverty of Philosophy, 1910, pp. 109 and 187); and in a way it is true, for he saw, and stated, clearly that division, specialization, can bring about what Durkheim called anomie, make a man feel that he does not belong fully to the society of which he is a member, make him fly 'to the woods'. What he wrote may also be linked to what has been written about Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft.

As I have remarked earlier, Ferguson has much to say on many topics to which in a brief lecture I can only make allusion. The anthropologist will note that he was very interested in primitive - what he called 'rude' or 'savage' or 'barbarous' peoples - a study of whose social life he considered most valuable in that it enabled him to make significant comparisons between the simpler societies and the more complex (cp. Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau). He gives a good account, based on Jesuit sources, of what was then
known of the American Indians, and in his chapter 'Of Rude Nations prior to the Establishment of Property' (pp. 125 seq.) he makes many sensible and penetrating observations about these savages, though on the whole he tends to romanticise them somewhat. His brilliant and acutely sensitive skit on travellers' reports is highly amusing.

However, leaving many topics aside, it will be evident to you from what has already been said that Ferguson, conceiving, as he did, of societies being natural systems of some kind, and hence that they can be studied as such much as the natural sciences study the phenomena with which they deal, it was necessary for him to hold also that there are general sociological laws ('principles') to be discovered, by reference to which variations can be explained. 'In collecting the materials of history, we are seldom willing to put up with our subject merely as we find it. We are loth to be embarrassed with a multiplicity of particulars, and apparent inconsistencies. In theory we profess the investigation of general principles; and in order to bring the matter of our inquiries within the reach of our comprehension, are disposed to adopt any system' (pp. 23-4). Again: 'To collect a multiplicity of particulars under general heads, and to refer a variety of operations to their common principle, is the object of science' (p. 40). May I quote him again - I prefer on a matter of this kind to quote than to paraphrase - : 'In order to have a general and comprehensive knowledge of the whole, we must be determined on this, as on every other subject, to overlook many particulars and singularities, distinguishing different governments; to fix our attention on certain points, in which many agree; and thereby establish a few general heads, under which the subject may be distinctly considered. When we have marked the characteristics which form the general points of coincidence; when we have pursued them to their consequences in the several modes of legislation, execution, and judicature, in the establishments which relate to police, commerce, religion, or domestic life; we have made an acquisition of knowledge, which, though it does not supersede the necessity of experience, may serve to direct our inquiries, and, in the midst of affairs, to give an order and a method for the arrangement of particulars that occur to our observation' (pp. 97-8). So we have to fix our attention on the significant general features of social institutions and overlook many particulars and singularities - mere events and personalities, these are 'accidents'. A Classification of types may then be made, and must be made if any general and comprehensive laws are to be reached; this is the manner in which all the natural sciences have proceeded: they have traced facts to their general laws. He lays the same emphasis on the difference between the mere recording of facts and their relation to laws in the Institutes and the Principles: history is concerned with the detail of particulars, science with general principles (laws).

If there are general principles they must be dynamic principles for, like most of his contemporaries, Ferguson was chiefly interested in the study of social development. Indeed, he tells us, the great difference between man and animals is that 'in the human kind, the species has a progress as well as the individual; they build in every subsequent age on foundations formerly laid ...' (p. 7). Every scholar in Europe is more learned than the most
accomplished of the Greeks and Romans, though this does not mean that he is their superior. How often have we been told this, that dwarfs on the backs of giants see further than the giants themselves? If I may quote our author again: 'This progress in the case of men is continued to a greater extent than in that of any other animal. Not only the individual advances from infancy to manhood, but the species itself from rudeness to civilization' (pp. 1-2). Adam Ferguson was a great believer in progress and laws of progress.

Now, the method to be used in making the historical reconstruction necessary for the earlier phases of a people's social development so that the principles of progress can be revealed is that of what Duglad Stewart called 'conjectural', that is, hypothetical, history. Early phases in the history of our own society can, it was supposed, be known by observation of how people now live who are still in those stages. 'What should distinguish a German or a Briton, in the habits of his mind or his body, in his manners or apprehensions, from an American (Indian), who, like him, with his bow and his dart, is left to traverse the forest; and in a like severe or variable climate, is obliged to subsist by the chase. If, in advanced years, we would form a just notion of our progress from the cradle, we must have recourse to the nursery, and from the example of those who are still in the period of life we mean to describe, take our representation of past manners, that cannot, in any other way, be recalled' (p. 122). Ferguson's interest in savages was chiefly that they illustrated a phase, he supposed, in our own history; and the evidences of prehistory give support to his supposition.

As always, the conception of laws ('principles') combined with the notion of progress inevitably led Ferguson to formulate a paradigm of stages drawn up on criteria of production and productive relations. With these economic stages go certain types of institutions and certain cultural traits. The criteria of Ferguson were much the same, and understandably so, as those of other writers who reflected on the different forms of society still to be observed (e.g. Condorcet). The earliest stage is that of hunting, fishing, or collecting the natural produce of the soil; in which there is little property and scarcely even the beginnings of subordination or government. The next stage is that of herders, who have property and hence distinctions between rich and poor, patron and client, master and servant. This distinction must create a material difference of character, and may furnish two separate heads, under which to consider the history of mankind in their rudest state; that of the savage, who is not yet acquainted with property; and that of the barbarian, to whom it is, although not ascertained by laws, a principal object of care and desire', (p.124). Property is the mother of progress, for it implies laws and habits of industry (cp. Condorcet). In all this Ferguson leans heavily on Montesquieu.

In fact we see in this book the essential ideas which make Montesquieu's Esprit so brilliant and original a classic. There is the same insistence on an objective study of social facts and on the need to reach formulations of a general kind based on a systematic comparison of societies. There is also the same emphasis on the logical consistency between series of social facts that we are later to find so strongly emphasized by Comte, and the need to explain institutions by reference to their functions in the activities of the total society rather than by reference to
doctrines or philosophical axioms about social life or human nature (not that he always lived up to his exhortations in this respect). Where he differs most from Montesquieu is in a more rigid, though far from mechanical, idea of what might constitute a sociological law, and in the notion of unilinear social development, stages through which all societies pass and which can be reconstructed by use of what later became known as the comparative method, a notion deriving from a combination of the ideas of law and progress, the first largely a product of discoveries in physics, the second, according to Comte, a consequence of the collapse of Catholic feudal institutions.

E.E. Evans-Pritchard

Bibliography

Anon. Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'Ferguson, Adam', Vol.9, p.172, N.D.

Bouet, H. 'Adam Ferguson et ses idees politiques et sociales', Journal des Economistes, 1898

Bryson, Gladys, Man and Society, 1945

Buddeberg, Theodor, 'Ferguson als Soziologe', Jahrbücher fur National Ökonomie, 1925

Bury, J. B. The Idea of Progress, 1920

Concise Dictionary of National Biography, Part I, 1953 impression p.426

Dunbar, James, Essays on the History of Mankind in Rude and Cultivated Ages, 1780

Dunning, William A. A History of Political Theories from Rousseau to Spencer, 1922

Durkheim, Emile La division du Travail Social, 16th edit. 1932

Fay, C. R. Adam Smith and the Scotland of his Day, 1956


______, Institutes of Moral Philosophy, 1772

______, The History of the Progress and Termination of the Roman Republic, 1783

______, Principles of Moral and Political Science, 2 vols, 1969

Graham, Henry Grey, Scottish Men of Letters in the Eighteenth Century, 1901

______, The Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century, 5th edit. 1969

Jogland, Herta H. Ursprunge und Grundlagen der Sociologie bei Adam Ferguson, 1959

Kames, Lord Henry Home, Sketches of the History of Man 2 vols 1774

Kaneko, Umaji, Moralphilosophie Adam Ferguson's 1904
Kettler, David, *The Social and Political Thought of Adam Ferguson* 1965

Lehmann, William C. *Adam Ferguson and the Beginnings of Modern Sociology*, 1930

Lehmann, William C. 'Adam Ferguson', *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, 1963

MacRae, Donald *Ideology and Society*, 1961

MacRae, Donald 'Adam Ferguson', *The Founding Fathers of Social Science* 1969

Marx, Karl *The Poverty of Philosophy* 1910

Mossner, Ernest Campbell *The Life of Hume* 1954

Small, John 'Biographical Sketch of Adam Ferguson', *Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh* 1864

Stephen, Sir Leslie *History of English Thought in the 18th Century*, 3rd edit., 1902

Whitney, Lois *Primitivism and the Idea of Progress* 1934

**An Important New Journal**

**JOURNAL FOR THE THEORY OF SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

This new journal is published with the intention of creating a nexus of discussion for psychologists and social psychologists, philosophers, anthropologists and sociologists about the major theoretical issues in the study of the individual and his functioning as a social being.

It appears twice yearly. The annual subscription is £2.50.

The editors are R. Harre and P. Secord.

**An Important New Book**

**THE EXPLANATION OF SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

by R. Harre and P. Secord

This book provides both a general theory of social behaviour and a theory as to how social behaviour should best be studied. Both are syntheses of various recent, but isolated, developments in the social sciences and in the philosophy of science.

To be published in March 1972. £3.75 net

BASIL BLACKWELL • OXFORD
Dancing is essentially the active termination of a symbolic transformation of experience. Speaking is also a symbolic transformation of experience. The terminal symbols of speech are expressed in words, sentences and paragraphs, the terminal symbols of dance in gestures, poses and movement phrases. The terminal symbols of speech are often considered to be symbolic in quite different ways from the terminal symbols of dance, and we will now examine a few of these differences.

Both kinds of symbolic system, movement and language, share the function of meaning, for that is what any symbolic system is about, and meaning is based in both systems upon a condition which is logical, although meaning has both logical and psychological aspects. Logically or psychologically, utterances in either medium, just as items of stone or other materials which are to have meaning must, in the first place be employed as signals or symbols, then they must be signals or symbols to someone or a group of people.

To illustrate: until the item or the utterance is employed as a sign or a symbol, it is Nature. When it is thus employed, it becomes Culture. The item has got to have undergone this kind of fundamental transformation. The movements we perform in such fundamental acts as relieving ourselves or in eating, dressing, running, etc. are not dance movements, nor, in the terms of this argument, are they symbolic, although they are definitely symptomatic and could therefore be called signal in that they may be interpreted as signs of various activities, needs, situations, etc. Non-dance movements may be symptomatic of physiological or emotional states or they may be artificial socio-cultural signs of states of affairs.

The problem with symptoms, signs and symbols for the anthropologist when dealing specifically with dance or generally with movement is one which in a larger sense turns around the notion of 'expression'; a much used, — and misused, word, in relation to dance. The word expression points to a concept with which Suzanne Langer has dealt very sensibly: the important point she makes is that when we see a dance, what we are seeing is not a symptom of the dancer's feelings but a symbolic expression (better called exposition) of the composer's or participants' knowledge about all human feeling. Equally, we may say that Macbeth, for instance, is not a symptom of the actors' or Shakespeare's feelings but a symbolic expression of his and their knowledge of human feelings.

Dances may be symbolic expressions of diverse kinds of knowledge. They need not have emotions, the term most frequently associated with 'expression' in dance, as the main axis around which their subject matter turns. A dance may involve emotion but not be about emotions at all. Frequently, states of greater muscular tension or increased speed of movement are wrongly interpreted as 'emotion' of some kind. An outstanding example of an 'emotionless' system of movement, that is, one which does not include any of what we commonly think of as 'emotional expression' at all, is the ancient Chinese exercise technique Tai-Chi-Chu'uan, developed in the sixth century A.D. in contrast to the then prevailing system of movement, nearly universally used in China,
called Shao-Lin. Many dances from India and Africa are more usefully classified as highly disciplined rehearsals of socially sanctioned and correct attitudes. Still others are of a distinctly historical nature. All dances, however, convey meaning, including those which are considered by some to express 'pure beauty' or to project some vaguely defined aesthetic phlogiston. Sometimes the meaning is banal, trivial and superficial but this does not alter the fact of the symbolically expressive nature of the system, nor does it alter the validity or logical characteristics of dance gestures. Similarly, the existence of nursery rhymes, just-so stories and trashy novels and comic books in no way alters the unique syntactical or grammatical character of the English language or any other language.

It is worth quoting Mrs. Langer at length regarding the concept of symbolic expression in dance because her succinct statement helps to clear the notion of so many received ideas about it:

As soon as an expressive act is performed without inner momentary compulsion it is no longer self-expressive; it is expressive in a logical sense. It is not a sign (underline supplied) of the emotions it conveys, but a symbol of it; instead of completing the natural history of a feeling, it denotes the feeling, and may merely bring it to mind, even for the actor. When an action acquires such a meaning, it becomes a gesture....

Philosophers tell us that we can say at least two things about symbols: we can say that a certain symbol means an object, concept or idea to a person or that a person means an object, concept or idea by the symbol. In the first instance, meaning is treated in a logical sense; in the second, in a psychological sense. We can, in view of this distinction, say with impunity that when an Indian dancer assumes a Krishna pose in the Kathak idiom; that is, when the right hand is in a gesture near the mouth 'holding the flute' and the left is extended fully to the side in the ahamsa position, that this gesture (plus the total bodily posture) means the whole tale of the time when Krishna held up a mountain on his little finger thereby saving the Gopis from a flood; that this total bodily gesture is a symbol in the logical sense, for it is but one posture employed within the total idiom which means that story to a significant number of Indians and all non-Indians who have studied the Kathak idiom.

Similarly, when the leading dancer of the Ga Obonu assumes an almost kneeling position before the Ga Mantse at the beginning of the dance and the Ga Mantse then raises his right arm in a certain gesture, these gestures mean, respectively, the questions, 'May we dance?' and the responding affirmative answer. Another gesture or no gesture on the part of the Ga Mantse in this situation would mean that the dance would not proceed; that only the drums would continue. No doubt most anthropologists are familiar with similar uses of gesture in other parts of the world, among the Navajo, the Mohave, the Balinese, Anglo-American speaking peoples, the Poles and others. It would merely be tedious to summarize or re-state all of the ethnographic evidence which supports the thesis of the logical characteristics of gesture and hence, much of dance movement.
Then why dwell upon the point? When we regard gesture in this way, we are looking at it in a logical, near-discursive sense and few would deny the distinction or the supporting evidence. When, however, we lapse (as so frequently happens) into talking about what the dancer may be feeling or what his private meaning may be for the gesture, when, in other words, we focus not upon the symbol but upon the actor, we are in dangerous territory indeed. It is commonly accepted among dancers that little or no personal feeling or emotion is experienced while they are dancing in any case.

Many, although by no means all, of the ways in which dance has been accounted for by anthropologists, aestheticians, psychologists and even dancers themselves are couched in such subjective terms. If such subjective terms are not used, then dance is treated, even by semiologists, as primarily symptomatic or signal rather than symbolic, which only compounds the confusion. Yet both logical and psychological descriptions are related, but only if we view meaning, as Mrs. Langer so rightly argues, as a function of our terms and not as a property of them.

The distinction between signs and symbols is of paramount importance then, if our aim is to discover the foundation of the relation between dance or movement and society. It is indispensable if we are to disentangle movement-which-is-dance from other movement-phenomena. For those who might find such a distinction arbitrary or over-scrupulous, considering that these words, 'sign' and 'symbol' are commonly used terms, it may be useful to look upon the following material as operational definitions. This makes it possible to withhold judgment as to the value of the exercise until a later stage of the inquiry.

A sign, thus operationally defined, indicates the existence; past, present or future, of a thing, event or condition, wet streets, the sound of hail on a roof, smoke, dawn, the presence of palm trees instead of pine, spruce or tamarack, etc. These are natural signs. On the other hand, a person squatting by the roadside in Africa is a socio-cultural sign, perhaps of weariness, perhaps that he is defecating, or, in combination with other objects, that he is selling cigarettes. Following Mrs. Langer, I also take 'sign' to mean a symptom of a state of affairs.

The logical relationship between a sign and its object, she tells us, is simple; they are associated in such a way that they form a pair and they stand in a one to one relationship or correlation. One of the examples she gives is interesting: a white mark on a person's arm as simple data is not very interesting but that data in relation to the past, which discursively tags it as a scar, is interesting. A white mark on a person's arm, to an anthropologist, might include the simple data she mentions plus other much wider, more complex connotations: a white mark on the arm of an African, for example, would not in the first place be a scar, but might indicate some special inner state or condition which in turn would be connected with a socio-religious status of some kind such that, as a sign, we might more usefully think of it like a badge or emblem of some sort, rather than as a sign of a past event in the personal history of the individual.
Train whistles, black arm bands, traffic lights, the streaks of white clay mentioned above, in contrast to the natural signs previously mentioned, are not natural: they are artificial socio-cultural signs. They are not necessarily nor even usually a part of the event or condition they signify although the logical relation is still one to one. A symbol has a more complex frame of reference. Langer says that

Symbols are not proxy for their objects, but are vehicles for the conception of objects.

There are three, not two terms involved. To conceive a thing or a situation or a cosmos, a 'role' or a 'status' is not the same thing as to react towards it overtly or to merely notice its presence. Langer says that words normally evoke behaviour towards conceptions. Movement symbols also evoke behaviour towards conceptions, especially outside of Europe, England and North America. It seems necessary to make a distinction between, for example, Africa or India and the West in this connection, not because many westerners do not perceive what we know as 'artistic symbols' in this way, but because in general, our societies have become so specialized and our artists are in such distinct and usually relatively marginal social categories that we have minimized or reduced our awareness of these facts. We are not a 'people-who-dance' and therein, perhaps, lies much of the difficulty in communication between the minority group of specialists who do and the vast majority who do not.

Tentatively, we might assume that culturally organized form, whether idioms of dance, paintings, sculptures, drumming, etc. are ways of abstracting and/or conceptualizing, which is what I believe we may take Levi-Strauss to mean when he speaks about the face painting designs among the Caduveo. For purposes of clarity in relation to gesture, we might keep the following illustration in mind as a kind of 'shorthand notion' of some of the major differences between symptoms, signs and symbols relating to movement which have so far been indicated: a thumb in a baby's mouth may be symptomatic of an inner condition of hunger or a sign of some physiological or biological condition for which sucking is a necessary accompaniment. A thumb in an adult's mouth may be a symptom of regressive behaviour. A thumbnail flicked against the teeth in Italy (or a thumb pulled quickly out of a sucking position in the mouth in Milwaukee, Wisconsin) is a socio-cultural sign of abuse and may lead to a fight. The baby's thumb sucking is a natural sign which is perhaps symptomatic, the adult's thumb-sucking is clearly symptomatic and the Italian's thumb gesture is a socio-cultural sign of impending violence.

A dancer who employs the Italian gesture of abuse in a dance is not 1) completing the natural history of his feelings, as is the man-in-the-street who does it and 2) he is not making the gesture under the stress of momentary inner compulsion. He is making the gesture because it has been employed as a symbol in the dance to convey a conception about violence, perhaps, or a concept of an abusive person or group of people or something of that nature. Peter Janiero's masterful handling of movements and gesture for the Puerto Ricans in West Side Story is an excellent example of what is meant. In a dance, the gestures become vehicles for the conceptions of people, objects, attitudes or situations. Exactly the same things could be said of the rude or abusive gestures which
are incorporated into the modern Ga dance "Kpanlogo"; these
gestures, which out of context of the dance might invite immediate
and perhaps violent responses do not do so in the context of the
dance.

Nothing has been said so far about the real differences inherent
in the techniques involved in various kinds of systems of
symbolization. For the moment, it will suffice to mention the
major difference between discursive and non-discursive symbolic
systems. Mrs. Langer sums it up neatly in one sentence:

"We cannot talk in simultaneous bunches of names." 8

She illustrates this proposition with the contrasting images of
the layers of clothing which we wear everyday hanging side by
side on a clothes line. Non-discursive symbolic systems deal
with symbols which have the quality of simultaneity; musical
chords, paintings, Grässer's sculptures of Morris dancers, --
the list is nearly endless. Like these, the dance gesture or
symbol has diverse meanings, multiple simultaneous impacts on
many levels. The movement symbol, in other words, is semantically
very dense indeed, hence the dancer's traditional dissatisfaction
with words, which often seem so tedious largely because of their
linear quality. Words seem to lack the specificity that gesture
has to the dancer. While it is true that degrees of emotion, for
example, can be indicated verbally, they can never be denoted
with the degree of sophistication and refinement which can occur
in a dance. On the other hand, a choreographer is wise not to
create a dance work in which the plot or the meaning of the
piece hangs upon the fact that one of the characters is someone's
sister-in-law, unless his idiom provides specific conventional
gestures having that kind of referential value, or unless he
includes paragraphs of program notes which 'explain' such a plot.

The over-riding difficulty, the big problem which Mrs. Langer
posed, and in my view answered, once and for all, is the one which
Nelson Goodman calls

"...the domineering dichotomy between the cognitive and
the emotive." 9

"On the one side", he says, "we put sensation, inference, con­
jecture, all nerveless inspection and investigation, fact and
truth; on the other, pleasure, pain, interest, satisfaction,
disappointment, all brainless affective response, liking and
loathing."

Both philosophers whom I invoke have recognized this problem and
to them in particular and to philosophers in general what follows
may appear to be a revival of exhausted arguments but what may be
an exhausted argument in formal philosophy still seems to have
strong currency as an argument in other disciplines: to the
extent that a brief re-examination of some of these para­
digmatic problems may be justified. For it would seem that
many of the explanations of dance, theories about dance and
definitions of dance are, after all, only based upon an a priori
assumption of this dichotomy, which in the end does involve the
logicians and philosophers who have investigated the limits of
language.
Nothing that is not 'language' in the sense of their technical definitions can possess the character of symbolic expressiveness, contrary to everything which has so far been stated in this argument, though they will grant non-discursive symbolization 'expressiveness' in a symptomatic way. We get the picture from this, as Langer says, that outside their definitional domain, their tiny 'grammar-bound island' as she calls it, is the inexpressible realm of feeling, of immediate experience, subjectivity and satisfactions forever incommunicado and incognito. The earlier Wittgenstein called it 'This logical beyond; the unspeakable.' Russell and Carnap, as she points out, regard this as the sphere of subjective experience, emotion, feeling and wish from which only symptoms come to us in the form of metaphysical and artistic fancies! Moreover, they relegated the study of such products to psychology; the discipline which purports to deal with the inner machinations of individuals. The dance, one of the most 'unspeakable' of all the arts, ranks high in this realm of the logical beyond.

In all fairness, because the argument may now seem to tend towards being a polemic against philosophers, which is certainly not intended, it must be said that no modern philosopher would agree, for example, with Cartesian divisions between mind and body and that they would, in general, be against the kinds of emotive-cognitive distinctions which he made. While it is true, as has been mentioned before, that certain forms of positivism have been rejected within the discipline of modern philosophy during the past fifteen or twenty years, some of these arguments still have strong currency in other disciplines, including Social Anthropology, not totally without reason perhaps. Artists are traditionally lazy intellectually and they often seem to gain their sense of individual and social power from capitalizing upon the mystery and obscurity with which their society surrounds their activities. They respond very humanly and perfectly understandably, to their marginal social and academic categorization with further withdrawal. On the other hand, the 'domineering dichotomy' of intellect vs. emotion has a long intellectual history in the Anglo-American philosophical and academic tradition which is venerable and hoary with age. It is a very deeply entrenched notion, even if some people do think it is dead wrong.

Probably the most damaging features about this positivistic sort of dichotomy for non-discursive artists and any possible contribution which they might have to make to the general fund of human knowledge are the two basic assumptions which lie behind the contentions of the philosophers about whom Langer speaks. Interestingly, these contentions are not so different from the ones which seem to lie between the more recent 'fact-value' distinctions, which found their parenthood in the Humean 'ought-is' distinction. The similarity lies in the fact that all these kinds of dichotomies seem to be attempts to undermine the objectivity of art and of non-discursive symbol systems, not to mention ethics and morals.

The contentions which lie behind such distinctions seem to be that 1) language is the only means of articulating thought and 2) that everything which is not speakable thought is feeling. Language, according to the philosophers Langer mentions, is the limit of the expressive symbolic medium and therefore, the limit of our conceptual power. Beyond this, we can have only inarticulate feeling which neither conveys nor records anything, but which has to be, rather compulsively apparently, discharged in actions, 'self-expression' or some kind of impulsive demonstrations. In
the light of these contentions, dancers, all-artists, and 'primitives' of all sorts are people who have to express themselves, preferably publicly, whether for the edification of, or to the profound dismay of, others.

These contentions and the axiomatic assumptions upon which they are based provide the modern anthropologist with very little in the way of conceptual tools with which to deal with the several non-discursive symbolic systems which he encounters everyday in the field, or, for that matter, those which he encounters at home. It becomes abundantly clear if one reviews the definitional problems connected with dance and examines several naive, unsophisticated theories which have been developed in various disciplines about dance, that all of these problems and theories are perhaps the inevitable products of methodology, models and attitudes which reflect the narrowness of the traditional philosophical paradigm itself.

That language has a privileged position and will continue to hold that position among human symbolic systems is an assertion that few would deny. To question the assertion does not necessarily mean that ultimately we would reject it, to question it merely means that we might enrich our ideas of the nature of its companion systems. Roland Barthes, for example, seems to feel that language is privileged because of its universality, although upon reflection, we realize that speaking is not more universal than moving. Perhaps we think that language is privileged because it has been written. Because of written language we can categorize ourselves as 'literate'; we become writers instead of just speakers. This seems to mean that we can in some way confirm or affirm our existence in the past or the future or that we are then 'civilized' where before we wrote, we were not, or something of that kind. Dance, we say, is no longer an 'illiterate art' because notation systems have, since the time of Laban, been devised which are now universally used.

Certainly, most social anthropologists, as well as many modern philosophers and linguists would agree that there are grounds for reasonable doubt that spoken language is the only means of articulating thought or that it represents the limits of human conceptualizing power.

To conclude: we must summarize the distinction so far made between sign, symbol and symptom. On a basis of this distinction we must then distinguish two kinds of intention which are involved in movements, actions and dances. Expressive gestures or actions can be either signal or symbolic. They are signal when they complete the natural history of feelings and symbolic when they are performed without inner momentary compulsion; i.e. when they denote feelings, emotions, ideas, situations, etc., even for the actor. Quite simply, symbols are taken to be characters which bestow conceptual identity upon an event, object, situation or group of people and signs are characters which do not bestow conceptual identity. I believe that de Sassure meant something very similar when he made a distinction between signs and symbols as well. Gesture or action which is signal may also be symptomatic, on the one hand of inner states or conditions, which is to look at them in a purely psychological sense, or they may be symptomatic of states of affairs, which is to look at them as socio-cultural signs.
Our essential distinction; that between signs and symbols, seems to lead in the direction of being able to postulate both private and public intentions in relation to the 'language' of movement. To pursue this line of thought points towards what modern philosophers, including the later Wittgenstein, would postulate about spoken language; that language has agreed public meanings and interpretations which are often distinct from private interpretations or meanings. de Sausure went a little further, perhaps, when he said that all means of expression are based on collectively agreed upon interpretations, by which he meant conventions, and he said that it was the conventional rules, not the intrinsic value of the signs, symbols or characters of whatever sort that obliges us to use them. In dancerly terms what this means is that it is not possible to create a dance which anyone is going to understand if, for example, the dance is about God and all the gestures are towards the ground.

Modern philosophers argue that language has the characteristic of publicity because people do intend to communicate something when they use language. It is important to note, in connection with this point, that contrary to Prof. Strawson's recent criticism of Noam Chomsky, the latter does take account of the intentions of native speakers of the language because he presupposes that people intend to communicate something by virtue of this system of sounds. This public character of spoken language is, by definition, conventional.

If we are to look upon the dance, even partially, as having the characteristics of a language, then we must grant that it also has characteristics of publicity and I would submit the ethnographic evidence already cited to support this claim. Private gesture languages, like private verbal languages are largely irrelevant to the social anthropologist, although they may be of paramount importance to the psychologist or to the medical doctor. And this does not mean a commitment to the position that the artist, who is often conceptualizing ahead of his time or in a manner similar to the Buryat shamans described by Humphries, is expressing a 'private language' and that his insights and activities are therefore to be discredited. To speak of the public and 'private' intentions of discursive or non-discursive symbol systems, does not mean that only the artist or the shaman will understand. We do not involve the artist or the shaman in this kind of private fallacy. Any language is, as everyone knows, open-ended. We are always involved in the tension between the prevailing cultural canon and current innovation which is based upon these canons. Real innovators are those who can function within the canons and then take us beyond. The reference here is to artists like Picasso, whose innovations were in part, surely, accepted because he could paint supremely well within the framework of the prevailing academic canon of his time. He didn't paint as he did because he couldn't paint representationally, but because he could and moreover, could then lead us beyond that.

Signs and symbols both indicate intention; what is important in considering symbolic systems of dances, is whether or not the emphasis is upon the subjects and the inner states of the subjects or whether the emphasis is upon the publicly agreed upon interpretations of the signs and symbols. That is to say, we must emphasize what the symbols mean to a given people. We need to be very careful that we do not impose technical terms
onto their symbolic systems which distort their publicly agreed interpretations of phenomena; i.e., calling a trance state an hysterical fit and things of that kind.

It will be clear by now that the discussion has so far been chiefly on a syntagmatic level, but dance movements are symbolic both as 'utterances' and as a total apparition. We have so far not discussed dance on a paradigmatic level. We might ask, at this stage of the inquiry, are we to understand, then, that every movement in a dance has the kinds of referential meanings attached to them as does deaf-dumb language? Is dance to be understood in exactly the same way as spoken language, the only difference being that it is mute? The answer is, of course, no. We can only understand from the exposition thus far that dance movements have logical and denotative aspects which make the total system potentially a symbolically expressive one and that we distort matters severely if we confuse movement which is symbolic with that which is signal or symptomatic.

Drid Williams.

This article is a truncated version of some of the preliminary research material for a thesis entitled 'Social Anthropology and Dance'.

REFERENCES


5). Nearly any of the literature on deaf-dumb languages and references in numerous ballet books to gestures in classical mime.


7). Langer; op. cit.: pg. 61.

8). Ibid; pg. 76.


11). I am indebted to Peter Coates for pointing this out to me during a discussion on the nature of intention.

RECENT WRITING ON WITCHCRAFT

Interest in the belief in and supposed practice of witchcraft, and in the attitude of persons in authority towards it - questions which are not always as clearly distinguished as they ought to be - is at a high level at the moment; to judge by the number of recent publications on these themes. The ASA monograph\(^1\) planned to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of Witchcraft among the Azande is introduced by Mary Douglas with an evaluation of the successes and failures of British anthropology in this field that all of us might not share. It includes new data and some discussion of possible new lines of enquiry. British historians, examining the records in the light of anthropological theory, have switched their attention from the wickedness of judges who sentenced condemned persons to death for impossible crimes to the social context of accusations. Keith Thomas\(^2\) has traced the history of magical beliefs in England through several centuries, and offered other reasons than rational conviction for the virtual disappearance of practices directed against witchcraft. Like the French historian Robert Maudrou\(^3\), whose theme is the London trials and the parallel cases that followed them, he summarizes the story of attempts to draw the line between the natural and the supernatural; in France this debate was conducted largely by lawyers. Alan Macfarlane\(^4\) in England and Etienne Delambre\(^5\) rather earlier in France have made detailed examinations of cases recorded in limited areas; the former is interested in the social context, the latter in the belief system which allowed accusers to attach a religious value to confession, and accused to suppose that they might in fact be guilty. Structuralists and cognitive anthropologists have had their say.

All we like sheep have gone astray.

We should begin with Mary Douglas's review of the state of our studies. As she rightly reminds us, Evans-Pritchard treated witchcraft beliefs not only as an explanation for every kind of misfortune, but as a system of ideas that tolerated discrepancies and closed doors to enquiries such as might have invalidated the beliefs. She rebukes us for failing to pursue his questions but turning instead ('every one to his own way') to micropolitics - a field in which, in my view, the study of witchcraft accusations has been richly rewarding.

Dr. Douglas does not mention what some of us would regard as the next advance in the study of witchcraft beliefs, Monica Wilson's\(^6\) recognition that they are inherent in the logic of many religions. She telescopes the thirty years from 1937 as a period in which we were all led astray by the 'crude functionalism' that Evans-Pritchard, she reminds us, himself denounced; the statement that she refers to is not made in the context of witchcraft and is so general as not to constitute any kind of argument. For her, however, we have been inhibited, rather like the Azande, from fruitful enquiry by following what she calls the wrong paradigm. In her terms the paradigm is simultaneously, crude functionalism, liberal philosophy and the 'homeostatic' theory which, according to her, has dominated this field because its data have been drawn from Africa and not from Oceania. Although I would not claim to compete in the field of philosophy with the new anthropology, I certainly had the impression that a paradigm was something more specific than a general theory or an attitude of mind.
How have these three defects in our thinking contributed to our failure to understand witchcraft? First, one must try to distinguish crude functionalism from the more refined functionalism which Dr. Douglas herself professes. In its crudest form, now long since rejected, it asserted that every small-scale society had attained a state of integration to which all its institutions contributed something indispensable. A less crude functionalist might argue that institutions would not continue to exist if they did not have some value - some more than illusory value - for the persons engaged in them. I doubt whether anyone would deny this; the argument is between those who think that every institution benefits all members of a society and those who hold that they are maintained for the benefit of a minority. This type of functional argument can draw support from both Evans-Pritchard and Mónica Wilson: people cannot do without some explanation of misfortune, which includes supposed means of countering it, and people 'need' an explanation of unjustified misfortune which will sustain a belief in a moral universe. Dr. Douglas rejects the first hypothesis. 'People can do without explanations of misfortune,' she says, and refers to the Mbuti pygmies. Here her ethnography is at fault; the pygmies do not believe in witchcraft, but they think they suffer misfortune when the forest is angry with them. In discussion she prefers to cite the Hadza, on whom we still have little published material.

Liberal philosophy led us between the wars to try to avoid ethno-centric judgments, and to see the rationale of beliefs and practices that administrators and missionaries condemned outright. I think this was not misguided, and that there is just as much room for it now that the 'developing countries' are ruled by alienated members of their own populations. The 1935 number of Africa devoted to witchcraft, the contributors to which were not all anthropologists, noted the complaint of Africans that they were at the mercy of witches now that they were not allowed to take action against them. The writers did not expressly say that action against witches should be permitted, but they called attention to the conflict of values.

Dr. Douglas does not make it very clear what she means by the homoeostasis theory. I cannot understand her reference to the 'crude, rigid, homoeostatic control model' to which she refers. Do these epithets describe a total theory of society? I should much like to know whose it is - or was. If the word 'model' means anything more than a dominant metaphor, I should have thought the model-makers would be more likely to criticise functionalists for not having a model. But perhaps homoeostatic theory is different from functional theory. However, I thought the concept of homoeostasis was inherent in the idea of a system as something which maintains itself through change, and that it presupposed nothing about the satisfaction, or even the observable benefit, that the individual members of a society derive from it. Can it be that Dr. Douglas identifies a homoeostatic with a consensus theory? What is even more curious is her argument that work in Melanesia would have destroyed such a theory because of the appearance there of cargo cults. I am quite unable to follow this argument, the more so as all Africanists interested in religion are acquainted with the work of Sundkler and Balandier on prophet religions, the former published before anything had been written about the war-time cargo cults. Is it suggested that we think Africans like having witches among them? The fact that the African millennium often includes the destruction of all witches is familiar to most of us.
There seem really to be two types of argument that trouble Dr. Douglas: that ordeals were 'not as bad as all that', and that only a successful accusation of witchcraft could provide a justification for the division of a descent group. On the first point the evidence of ethnographic data is inconsistent, though there is no reason to suppose that it is particularly unreliable; why should not different peoples have had different kinds of ordeal? Dr. Douglas has argued that decision by ordeal is a matter of pure chance; there is no guarantee that the ordeal would 'cut out dead wood' by killing off the old men who clung to power in the lineage; and it could lead to many deaths, as is evidenced by the hundreds of deaths among the Ife when ordeals were reintroduced at independence (but who counted them?) One of the latest discussions of this subject is Dr. Anne Laurentin's book on the Makaraka, the next-door neighbours of the Zande. She introduces it with the comment that ordeals have been discussed as barbarous customs, but they must be understood in their historical context. Liberal philosophy? One of her most illuminating observations is that, in this kingdom based on conquest, rulers and subjects whom the ordeal condemned were differently treated. A free man would be carried off as soon as the poison began to take effect and given treatment supposed to make him recover. A slave would be deliberately finished off and his body given to the soldiers to eat. Certainly in this case the ordeal could not lead to a bloodless revolution; but the result was not a matter of pure chance either.

What is interesting in such new material as has been published on the ordeal is the evidence that it was part of a judicial process often accompanied with much ceremony. Dr. Laurentin remarks that it supported the authority of the judge by placing responsibility for decisions on an impersonal force which could not be attacked. Her detailed observations of rubbing-board and chicken oracles - both operated among the Makaraka by specialists as part of the public process - show that both can be manipulated to give the result desired. They should lead to closer enquiry elsewhere into the possibility and extent of conscious manipulation; of course we know already that people can evade an undesired answer by consulting a different oracle.

The argument that witchcraft accusations - and therefore the beliefs that justify them - have the function of making possible the breaking of otherwise indissoluble kinship ties was certainly once accepted, by myself among others. Nowadays it seems very naive. Every study of a segmentary lineage system insists on the necessary and continual fission of lineages; every beginner in kinship knows that everyday factors such as population growth and the widening of the gap between cousins in each generation contribute to this. But Middleton's studies in micropolitics made it perfectly clear that accusations of witchcraft accompany these factors; they do not even precipitate fission. I should have thought that by now this was an established part of our theory.

Dr. Douglas's own theory seeks to show how the belief in witchcraft is used by people trying to control one another, and how the nature of the belief is related to the kind of control which it allows. Sometimes the witch is thought of as an outsider; in this case accusations contribute to the definition of boundaries, or what old-fashioned people might call solidarity. If the witch is an insider, there are various possibilities. If accusations are
directed against political rivals, they result in a redefinition of faction boundaries (people stand up to be counted, or what?) or in a realignment of faction hierarchy (the outs beat the ins?) or in a split. In the unique case (so far) of the New Guinea Highlands an accusation has all these consequences at once. But what does it mean to say they are functions? Sometimes accusations are brought against 'dangerous deviants', whether rich men or beggars. Here their function is to control deviants, one of the crudest uses, I would have thought, of the word function.

The ambiguity of witchcraft power.

Much of the other recent writing is concerned with that body of theory that has not yet been generally found unsatisfactory. In line with present trends in anthropology, there is more emphasis on symbolism and the place of witchcraft beliefs in a wider ideology embracing all the various objects which are associated with witches in different cultures. One study of this kind has been made by Alan Harwood, who applies a structuralist analysis to the Safwa of Tanzania. Like many other peoples, they believe that witchcraft is the mode of attack of members of an in-group, sorcery that of outsiders; the in-group in this context is, of course, a descent group. He suggests that any society which recognised two major categories would believe that witchcraft was used within categories and sorcery across them; one might find that members of the same sex were supposed to bewitch one another while cross-sex 'mystical aggression' would be sorcery.

Harwood also argues, with evidence from a number of ethnographies, that the power used by witches is not conceived as inherently evil; it can be used in defence against witches. But this is not the same as saying the act of witchcraft is not inherently evil in a way that no other form of aggression is. One answer to his contention is given in an article by Luc de Heusch, which uses linguistic evidence, as Harwood himself does. de Heusch starts from the case of the Kongo, who use closely related words for the illegitimate action of sorcery/witchcraft and the curse which elders may legitimately call down on disrespectful juniors. Nevertheless they make an important distinction; they would not use the verbal form to describe the justifiable use of this 'power to act and not be seen', as Harwood calls it. Harwood's own material actually shows the existence of a similar distinction. The Safwa word for witchcraft power and its possessors is not derived, as are those of so many peoples, from the 'Ur-Bantu' root -dog-. They refer to itonga, which they categorize as good or bad, and to men of itonga! BUT, like their neighbours the Nyakyusa and like the Kongo, they have a verb which applies only to the evil use of this power: 'ly-', to eat, in the sense of mystically consuming a person's life-force. de Heusch goes on to give a neat structural opposition between

'Kindoki': an act of illegitimate sorcery/witchcraft (envoûtement) performed by a maleficent person, outside the bounds of law, against a victim who has social value and is protected by society

and

'Niko': an action of legitimate sorcery/witchcraft performed by a beneficent person (elder) against an object (his junior) without social value, who has deliberately set himself outside the bounds of law.
Is all this in the minds of the people who use these words, or are we again being shown how much cleverer they are than they realise?

Pitt-Rivers' contribution to the ASA monograph describes a situation that has parallels in two of the ethnographies that I regard as classical, Monica Wilson's of the Nyakyusa and Middleton's of the Lugbara. The Nyakyusa believe that the power to bewitch and the power to defend reside in pythons which are mystically projected from the bodies of their owners and fight a continual nocturnal battle. The Lugbara have no such symbolism, but they hold that an act which is described in the same words in both cases is the invocation of ghosts to punish a malefactor, or witchcraft, according as it is or is not held to be justified. The Chiapas believe that everyone has a mystical animal counterpart, a nagual. The possessor of a powerful nagual can injure his fellows, and threats to do so are expressed as threats to punish. The threatened action would be called witchcraft if it came from someone who was not held to have the right to punish his victim. Unfortunately Pitt-Rivers does not give us the linguistic details. It seems that very large numbers of people are accused of witchcraft (unjustified 'mystical aggression', as Mary Douglas and Esther Goody would call it) and then assassinated.

The Gonja as described by the last-named believe that individuals can acquire the power to leave their bodies at night and attack others in animal shape. Like the Nyakyusa, they believe that this power can be used for defence as well as for attack. And they have their own way of discriminating between the legitimate and illegitimate use of witchcraft power. In their eyes it is universally employed by men in the process of competition for political office. One is reminded of Fortune's account of Dobu sorcery 19, which seems to have its counterpart among other New Guinea peoples; they take it for granted that everyone is practising sorcery against his neighbours. The sorcerer there is not a sinister being with peculiar mystical powers, but an ordinary man who knows the use of medicines. In Gonja no distinction is made between sorcery operating with medicines and witchcraft, without and logically for them a man who employs his mystical powers against a rival for office is also one who must have sacrificed one of his close kin so as to become able to turn into a lion, etc. Whenever a holder of political office dies, he is assumed to have been bewitched by a rival. Yet no attempt is made to identify, still less punish, the person responsible. In part this reflects the belief that the holders of political office need to have this mystical power in order to defend their subjects against its illegitimate use by others.

These others are almost invariably women. Women are thought to use witchcraft-power in ways for which there can be no justification, and extremely cruel punishments were sometimes inflicted on them in the past. So that if 'witchcraft' were defined as 'mystical aggression by women' one could still say it was 'unambiguously evil'. Women have no authority to punish, therefore their attacks on others can never be justified. They are, as Esther Goody puts it, 'beyond the bounds of tolerance'. A woman informant said to her 'We are witches because we are evil' - i.e. because we are aggressive without justification. Women's roles as Goody remarks, does not permit aggression; a hypothesis that might be added to the current ones about the frequent ascriptions of witchcraft to old women - that they are poor, so have to beg, so
may be spiteful, that they have nobody to defend them against accusations.

Mandrou writing of France, and Keith Thomas of England, have traced the progress of discussions among the educated minority which essentially concerned the status of the Devil - the question whether it was possible for him to confer powers of evil on his human subjects. This was a theological question, the answer to which must have affected the teaching of popular religion. It certainly affected the attitudes of judges and juries. But villagers, like Africans today, resented what they saw as a denial of justice when the repeal of the witchcraft Act in 1736 made it impossible to bring accusations. Again like Africans today, they turned to 'informal violence, counter-magic and the occasional lynching'.

It is in connection with the decline of recourse to counter-magic that Thomas is able to offer confident explanations of a change in attitudes. He notes that from the sixteenth century onwards visitations of disaster that had been ascribed to witchcraft were either becoming less frequent or could be better provided against. Famine and plague were less common (though, as he remarks elsewhere, and as would also be true of Africa, these generalized disasters were not usually ascribed to witchcraft). Communications improved, and with them the possibility of identifying thieves and recovering stolen goods. Insurance against business risks, against fire, against death, gave a new kind of security. A greater general sense of security, then, led to a general decline in recourse to magical precautions (including counter-magic against unknown offenders). The magical practices were forgotten as much as discredited by argument. One may expect to see a parallel process in Africa, if someone ever finds the key to that improvement in living standards that we have been seeking ever since the march to independence began. But we can hardly expect a parallel in Africa's intellectual history. The discussion is over now, and Africans have been presented with the result by teachers whom they have had reason to regard with suspicion. Dr. Douglas's attempt to draw a contrast between the decline of witchcraft fears with economic development in England and the alleged increase in similar circumstances in Africa simply does not work (it may not be true, as is so often asserted, that they are increasing, but they certainly are not declining. A possible question to ask, if the answer could be found, would be whether events that used to be imputed to witchcraft are coming to be ascribed to natural causes; the fact that one could make a longer list of possible disasters tells us nothing about the amount of fear). Where Keith Thomas does offer us a parallel is in his reference to the popular reaction to the Witchcraft Act and to the effect of the Reformation in 'drastically reducing the degree of immunity from witchcraft which could be conveyed by religious faith alone'.

Macfarlane's examination of the Essex records follows the anthropologist's principle that the status and status-relationship of accused and victim must be established in order to find what sort of relationships typically give rise to suspicion or accusation. He endorses the theory that this indicates what relationships are sources of tension, to which I would make the reply that an adequate analysis of social structure should indicate where tensions can be expected without the need of such a roundabout procedure. What is more interesting in his book is
his demonstration that the decline first in convictions and then in accusations of witchcraft predated such advances in knowledge as might logically be supposed to invalidate the belief in it. He notes that no explanation in general terms can account for the particularity of individual disaster, and asks whether circumstances had changed so that loss was more bearable. Here, in so far as material loss is concerned, he refers, like Thomas, to the possibility of defence against such loss by insurance. He ascribes the change in attitudes also to changes in social structure which in his view led first to the increase in accusations and then to their abandonment. Here he follows the line first suggested by Lienhardt, that witchcraft is suspected between persons whose relative status - I would prefer to say whose mutual obligations - is/are not clearly defined. This explanation accounts of course for the belief that people bewitch their kin; the mutual obligations of kin are in theory unlimited, but in practice individuals have to judge priorities. In the same way there was in an English village an undefined principle of charity towards the needy, which, as the acquisitive society emerged, began to conflict with the new principle that charity begins at home. The guilty conscience of the man who failed in charity led him to attribute his misfortunes to the poor old woman whose request he had refused. As values changed and it was no longer considered to be the duty of the individual Christian to succour the unfortunate, but rather of representatives of the collectivity such as Poor Law Guardians, no more guilt attached to the refusal of alms.

Confessions

Possibly it is in our attitude to confessions that we have been most ethnocentric. That anyone would voluntarily confess to patently impossible acts seems at first sight absurd. But we have to take care what actions the accused person is confessing. The later developments of European witch beliefs include the manifest impossibilities - to us - of the pact with the Devil and the Black Mass. It is certainly hard to believe that people could be persuaded by suggestion - as opposed to torture - that they had met on a mountain top and danced naked with numbers of their acquaintances. But supposing one seriously believes in the Devil? Supposing one believes that dreams reveal truth, or that in some mystical way one has actually experienced what one dreams?

I mentioned earlier the official Christian attitude towards confession as an act which, though it must lead to a person's death, could yet save him (more likely her) from an eternal torment that all believed in. Delambre in his articles on witch trials in Lorraine makes the illuminating comment that the torture of accused witches was conceived as a form of ordeal, which God would enable an innocent person to resist (though not without feeling the pain); of course this belief has its counterpart in the idea that the Devil too could give his followers strength against torture. Nevertheless, some accused offered to undergo torture, as Africans submit themselves to the ordeal, in the confidence that it would prove their innocence. Few resisted physical maltreatment which was greater than anything known in Africa, but many recanted later, fearing damnation for perjury.

Yet some seem to have made sincere confessions, some no doubt in the abnormal mental conditions to which Margaret Field ascribes all confessions of witchcraft. Some begged the pardon of those they were supposed to have harmed. Some admitted to part of the charges
against them while denying the rest. One is on record as saying
that she had 'no wish to put any livestock to death but only
people who were angry with her'.

It is here that we find the point of contact with African
confessions. At any rate in the field where it is believed that
witchcraft can be involuntary, depending on no deliberate action
(and this field is geographically so wide that one cannot abandon
the analytical distinction between witchcraft and sorcery), accused
persons must always be uncertain of their own innocence. Evans-
Pritchard has made this point himself, though not in the context of
confessions. Morton-Williams' account of the Atinge witch-
finders\(^2\) refers to old women saying 'If they all say I am a witch
I suppose I must be'. Hilda Kuper's play\(^2\) in which the pro-
tagonist is a childless young woman accused of bewitching her co-
wife's child to death - ends convincingly with the line 'I am a
witch in my heart'. Few of us can honestly disclaim any ill-will
towards the people we quarrel with.

Special cases of confession discussed in the ASA volume are
those of the neighbouring Banyang and Bangwa, both of whom believe
in witchcraft through the activity of were-animals. In both these
belief systems it is the sickness of the supposed witch (believed
to have been injured in were-form), and not of a victim, that
calls for confession, which is held to be the only way to recovery.
The Bangwa ascribe these were-animals to children, and if a child
is ill in any of the ways that are supposed to indicate injury to
the were-animal, he is badgered to confess. That some do claim
responsibility for the sickness or death of siblings or fathers
would surprise no psychologist. But others are clever at thinking
of more or less innocuous adventures of their were-animals. Banyang
confessions are often made in extremis, in the hope of escaping
death. They are admissions of the possession of were-animals, not
of causing specific damage - 'a kind of blanket guilt'. They are
not sought in order to explain misfortunes suffered by others, nor
associated with particular quarrels.

\[\text{Repentance and Reform.}\]

The ASA volume ends rather inconclusively with an article by
Beidelman suggesting new lines of study. Like Mary Douglas he
thinks functionalism has put us on the wrong track, but his
criticism is the contrary of what hers appears to be. In his view
we have thought the belief in witchcraft needed explaining because
of its dysfunctional consequences. He seems to be arguing that
this is why we ask why people hold these beliefs, and certainly we
do not ask in quite the same way why they believe in other non-
empirical beings or forces. But in the main what he is recommend-
ing is a closer scrutiny of a larger number of case-histories, and
more attention to the social psychology of attitudes towards
aggression. We should also seek parallels with our own ideas of
mental illness and treatment, and consider more carefully 'the
delusional aspects of behaviour associated with witchcraft and
sorcery!' and should ask how the minds of witches are supposed to
differ from those of saints on the one hand and madmen on the other.
And finally 'our analytical notions regarding witches, sorcerers and
other malevolent beings require a re-assessment which will take con-
siderably more account of moral ambiguities'.

All these new questions are to be welcomed; I am less sure than
Dr. Douglas and Dr. Beidelman that the answers will make it necessary
to scrap everything that has been done in the last thirty-five years.

\[\text{Lucy Mair.}\]
Notes

8. Witchcraft Confessions, p. xxxiii.
10. Witchcraft Confessions, p.xxiv (not directly quoted).
16. Witchcraft Confessions, p.xxv.
20. Religion and the Decline of Magic, p.583. The repeal of the Witchcraft Act did not, as Gluckman states, make accusation a crime as did colonial legislation in Africa. It simply removed witchcraft from the catalogue of crimes.
21. Ibid., p.493.
24. Delcambre in Monter, p.100.
27. Ruel in Confessions and Accusations, p.345.
BOOKS FROM OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Nuer Religion
E.E. Evans-Pritchard
16 plates 5 text figures paper covers £1.25

The Azande
History and Political Institutions
E.E. Evans-Pritchard
6 plates 33 text figures £4.

The Murle
Red Chiefs and Black Commoners
E.A. Lewis
11 text figures £3.25 (Oxford Monographs in Social Anthropology)

The Nyoro State
John Beattie
8 plates 4 maps £3

The Konso of Ethiopia
A Study of the Values of a Cushitic People
C.R. Hallpike
16 plates 13 text figures 8 maps £5.

An Analysis of Malay Magic
Kirk Endicott
£2.25 (Oxford Monographs in Social Anthropology)

Ethology and Society
Towards an Anthropological View
Hilary Callan
£2 (Oxford Monographs in Social Anthropology)

A Portuguese Rural Society
Jose R. Cutileiro
10 plates 2 text figures £5.50

Big Men and Cargo Cults
Glynn Cochrane
4 maps 3 text figures £2.25 (Oxford Monographs in Social Anthropology)

African Political Systems
Edited by M. Fortes and E.E. Evans-Pritchard
5 maps 85p. Oxford Paperbacks (International African Institute)

Development Anthropology
Glynn Cochrane
£2.25 OUP New York

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
Through the work of Dumont and Pocock, Bouglé's contribution to Indian sociology is well known. Pocock's recent English version of the "Essais sur le Régime des Castes" will make this aspect of his work completely accessible. This paper is an attempt to present one aspect of Bouglé's thought. This aspect might loosely be called his theory of cognition, though the term is inadequate.

Bouglé's philosophic position is implied in his own remark, "La science est avant tout un perfectionnement du langage, lui-même produit d'une élaboration collective". (1929: 190). He was an academic and an eclectic. He chose not to present his thought in a rigid, systematic form. In such circumstances, it would be foolish to pretend to give anything better than one interpretation out of the many possible.

For Bouglé, sociology was not a synthesis of all the branches of the study of society, but was a study of "forms". He uses the word in a number of ways. Firstly, the forms can be physical (the spatial distribution of the members of a society, for example). Secondly they can be ideological (a classification, for example). Thirdly, Bouglé speaks of "the forms of the mind", meaning a structure which actively forms ideas. In general, he seeks to provide an account of the "formation of ideas", and so is trying to practise the "formal psychology" which Durkheim advocated. In doing this, he in fact does synthesise all the branches of the study of society, but in a way which is not quite like that of Durkheim or Mauss.

Though he diverged a little from the "party line" of the Année Sociologique, this did not prevent him from taking a place at the spearhead of the attack. He contributed reviews to every number of the Année from its inception till his death in 1940, and he produced the first full length book to be sponsored by the Année (1908 b). Such persistance came from the ambitions he had for sociology: sociology might be the base for a well-founded sociologism, which was "a philosophical effort to crown the specialist, objective and comparative studies ... with an explanatory theory of the human mind" (1951: viii). The methods of sociology alone could ensure the objective concepts necessary for the construction of such a theory: "the sociologist is by definition a relativist"...and, at the same time, a comparatist (1935: 120). Self-doubt combined with empirical classification would generate universally applicable concepts. Then, (and then only), sociology could formulate theories capable of bearing the full weight of rational criticism, and then it would be a true science. History and sociology only stopped being "popular", or ethno-sciences when their explanations were couched in terms sufficiently rigorous and universal to be rationally and universally criticised. (1925, pp.47-9, 55-6). Explanation had to be by means of "laws" of the highest generality. Any other sort of explanation was "the adoration of a mystery", or merely an empirical correlation devoid of explanatory power (1908 a: 66, 80).
None of the contributors to the Année believed that sociology could be anything but historical. Bouglé agreed with Simiand that history alone provided the laboratory conditions necessary for experimentation. It was only in an historical perspective that the specificity of sociological variables could be determined, because it was only in history that extraneous variables (presumably such as ecology) could be seen to be constant, and so eliminated. (Annales S.A. 2: 27-8). Inasmuch as sociology had to be historical, it was most important to refute certain historicist doctrines. The most objectionable of these doctrines was the doctrine that history never repeats itself, that every event is unique. Bouglé pointed out that no human being could really believe this: if they did, the writing of history would itself be impossible (1925: 48).

Other historicist doctrines that had to be refuted were Evolutionism in its rigid form, and "historical materialism". Evolutionism appeared to be untrue on empirical grounds, and when it appealed to the old biological Anthropology, it was aligning itself with a lost cause (1908 a. 57, 68-71; 1908 b; 129-42). The refutation of materialism was a difficult one to phrase: on the one hand, sociology had to be rid of mechanistic associations; on the other hand, the theory that a man of genius appears and spreads his ideas is "the adoration of a mystery". A certain freedom had to be allowed to the human mind, but the freedom had to be shown to be regular in its action. "The Division of Labour" was not absolutely clear on the point, as Bouglé ruefully remarks. In order to escape from this nasty fork, Bouglé chose to stress the "hyperspiritualist" aspect of Durkheim's sociology, using the "Représentations Individuelles et Représentations Collectives" as his authority (e.g. 1951: xv; Année S II: 152-5). More important, he stresses the "relative autonomy" of the mind vis-à-vis its data (1935: 4-5). The mind is not a passive mirror of reality, it transforms it (1929: 186). The mind has its own "formes", but mental forms are themselves instances of an adaptive mechanism: "To know is not to reproduce; it is always to transform. And the order which the mind, by means of the concept, introduces into the chaos of sensory impressions, is, first of all, a revelation of its own forms. Now, are these forms eternal and given from the beginning ne varietur? Do they not themselves undergo a progressive elaboration which takes account of the successes obtained or the disappointment experienced by some idea when put to the test?" (1929: 186-7). The ambiguity of the word "form" is here most unfortunate, but Bouglé must mean that the mind is free to reconstruct the forms of reality, but is not free to choose (or create) reality. The same is true, at a higher level, of the social mind. It is free to create concepts, but cannot in any sense create reality itself. No "collective enthusiasm" can create the nature of things, nor the nature of the mind. The fact that the right hand is generally socially preferred does not mean that "hand", neither the thing itself, nor the idea that man has of it, is created by society. (1929: 192-5).

There is a certain divergence here from Durkheim, and there are other points on which Bouglé is unwilling to interpret Durkheim too literally. He maintained that the passage from reality to collective awareness is always mediated by the individual consciousness. Indeed, strictly speaking, there was no such thing as a collective awareness, only a reforming of
individual awarenesses. He did, however, accept the notion of
the collective mind as a useful locus for all the mental activity
which could not exist in pre-social man. He notes cautiously
that the notion is only heuristic, and in particular, a search
for a collective unconscious, as opposed to a collective conscious
raised more problems than it would solve (1935: 11-12).
Collective representations are a re-ordering of individual
interior states; for example, to say that social density leads
to social differentiation presupposes that the physical condition
passes through individual representations before becoming a
collective representation (1925: 156-7, 160-1; cf. 1908 a:
85-6; Année S I: 126-35). Thus, the individual mind reconstrues
material drawn from what may be called "Nature" (set of real
effects), and the metaphorical "collective mind" reconstrues
material drawn from individual representations. In effect,
Bouglé sees man as a three-part being: he is at the same time,
social person, individual being, and vital organism. (This,
clearly, is a variation on a familiar theme. Durkheim genera-
ly sees man as a social person grafted onto a vital organism, so
finding it often difficult to calibrate the two. Tarde also
posits two levels, but they are mirror-images. Blondel adopts a
three-tier psychology, for which he alleges the authority of Comte.
The important point is that the psychology of the individual being
in Bouglé’s scheme is a psychology which is common to the whole
species of man. It is possible, therefore, for Bouglé to give a
"psychological demonstration" which is really a series of logical
operations, as in "Les Idées Egalitaires".

It must be stressed at this point that Bouglé regarded
constructs such as a three-level being as no more than heuristic
concepts. To oppose bio-mechanical and psycho-social functions
was a way of posing the problem, not of answering it. (e.g.
Annales S.A.I. p.148). What was more, the three parts of man
were inextricably interwoven: "to perceive is already to
conceive, and to remember still" (1925: 42), i.e. perception, that
most individual of interior states, depends not only on
sensations, but also on socially derived concepts.

For the sake of clarity, I will sum up the major themes so far:

1) There are three types of mental activity - bio-mechanical
(sensation), psychic (individual representation), and social
(collective representation).

2) There are three types of "form" or pattern - forms in Nature,
forms from the act of individual representation, and forms
from the act of collective representation. They are not
reducible one to another.

3) Collective representations of Nature are formed via individual
representations.

4) Representations do not create the reality to which they refer
(i.e. collective representations do not create individual
representations any more than individual representations
create Nature). On the contrary, they tend to greater
conformity with it by a process of testing and experience.

The last point is of particular importance. It implies that
representation is in some way translated into behaviour. (cf. the
statement 1908 a: 30-1 that in order to know what a person is thinking, it is best to interpret his actions). In the case of a (hypothetical) pre-social individual being, such "cognitive behaviour" would allow feedback, and a consequent adjustment of the forms of cognition. However, since man is, in fact, always a social being, it follows that his representations are never solely "individual". Collective representations should adjust because of the feedback of collective behaviour; but collective behaviour is unlikely to be in grave disaccord with the facts of individual representation, because the individual representations in this case are not of non-human events which might, or might not, be regular, but of human events which are motivated by a formal system. (This would help to explain the fact that sociological correlates appear to be causal of each other, as noted, without comment, 1925: 30).

Aberrant behaviour poses a problem to any theory of equilibrium such as the one sketched above. Bouglé hints at a solution in his remarks on the logical category of chance. This is expounded later, but it can be said now that Bouglé saw reason as a need for harmony, that the need for harmony manifested itself both in the individual and in the social mind, and that a system of cognition can accommodate considerable disharmony.

Most of this argument can be represented in a diagram. It is not necessary to draw in three levels of mental activity, since the relation nature/individual representation is analogous to the relation individual representation/collective representation.

Fig 1:

```
mechanically determined
"sensation"  "Psyche"  "Knowing"
data" undetermined
```

The arrows of the diagram are to be understood as referring only to relations. In such a scheme, "reality" is a flexible term which refers to anything on a lower level, but Nature is the "basic reality" because it can "know" nothing else, i.e. nothing is lower than it. Man is defined as the combination of all the elements of the diagram, except the natural data (but some of this natural data is of his own making, i.e. the results of what Bouglé calls man's "offensive adaptation", 1929: 162). The interest of the scheme is that it can be telescoped upwards, simply by supposing that representations of any sort can furnish the "data" for a higher level of representation.

If "knowing" is never absolutely determined, it follows that all science and the science of sociology in particular, can only be sciences of possibilities and tendencies. Bouglé never claimed sociology to be anything more than this (e.g. Annales S, A.1: 188-91). Why then bother with correlations of patterns lying at different levels? "Let us allow that conscious meditation transfigures and 'denatures' the materials furnished to it by the milieu; it is nonetheless true that...by showing, for example, how certain social conditions were to lead the minds of
philosophers, in accordance with the general laws of the formation
of ideas, to (the idea of) egalitarianism, we are biting into the
unknown" (1908 a: 80).

The theory of levels is held to account not only for "easy"
concepts, such as judgments of existence, but also for "hard"
concepts such as judgments of value. Values are defined as
conceptions of possibilities of satisfaction. (This presupposes
the existence of teleological categories in the psyche). Values
are ranked inside a level (by definition), but they are also
ranked by the height of the level in which they are situated.
Thus individual values are, as a set, lower than social values,
and these, once social activity starts to separate out into law,
religion and so on, rank, as a set, lower than legal or religious
values. Moreover, concepts which are "polytelic" (which can
convert into many other values) tend to be seen as "autotelic",
and hence as very high values. "Gold" or "Science", for example,
tend to become the highest values, because of the indetermination
of their ends. (1929).

It is easy to see that such a theory of values tends even-
tually to agree, to some extent, with the functionalism of
Durkheim or Mauss; but, because values, like any other concept,
must always be supposed to relatively unmotivated, there could
never be any question of postulating a perfect functional fit
between social and individual representations, let alone between
"culture" and "nature". Indeed, the fit of one level to another
can only be termed functional to the degree that teleological and
functional criteria are involved, and to the degree that such
criteria derive from logical categories.

To show how Bouglé developed and refined his theory, I shall
offer very brief comments on the two monographs, "Les Idées
Egalitaires" (1908 a) and "Essais sur le Régime des Castes"
(1908 b), and on the article "Les Rapports de l'Histoire et de la
Science Sociale d'après Cournot".

Les Idées Egalitaires was first published in 1899, when
Bouglé was 29. It is an attempt to fill the first part of the
programme "relativism and comparatism". Theories of Equality
were to be seen as folk-systems, and correlatable with demographic
data. Explanation was to consist in a "reconstitution of the
mental work" involved in passing from a state of demography to
an ideology. To do this, Bouglé uses some of the arguments of
the Division of Labour" (as he understood them), and adopts
Simmel's argument that individuation (of social persons, that
is) results from a very advanced degree of intersection of
unilateral classes. These theories are both taken as premises,
so that what is assumed by Bouglé is roughly this:

1) a high "density" involves a high degree of competition, which
is resolved by

2) a functional differentiation of the self and competitors by
each individual. This differentiation is in some way
converted into

3) a collective representation of the division of social labour
by means of a classification.
4) Where classification is by unilateral classes, intersection must take place; if there are enough unilateral classes, this will result in individuation.

This corresponds to the scheme (i) Nature (real effects) / (ii) individual representation / (iii) collective representation. What Bouglé tries to show is that, on a fourth level, that of philosophers of law, a transformation of the individuations of level (iii) will most likely involve a predication of "equality" between "individuals". He proposes that "heterogeneous individuals who participate in one quality are equal", and the rest of the book is spent showing that the right mix of heterogeneity and homogeneity occurs only in the societies which are egalitarian. In fact, the whole argument is marred by the fact that the proposition "individuals homogeneous in one respect are equal" is quite fallacious; the "individuals" of which Bouglé is speaking are not "real objects" but are one-member classes produced by intersection. Thus individuals can be equal in respect of A-ness, while remaining unequal in all other respects. All depends on the rules of the classification. However, even though the work raises more problems than it solves, it retains a true interest precisely because it rephrases the problem of egalitarianism as a question about the logic or psychology of classification. Especially interesting is the notion that equality is a special case of inequality (probably a deliberate inversion of the atomistic philosophy of law).

"Essais sur le Régime des Castes" was a meditated contrast to "Les Idées Égalitaires". The argument "differentiation from density" still held, but unlike the Western system, the system of classification that was implicit in caste was such that the classes did not intersect. Thus there was no individualism, and, as yet, no egalitarianism. Bouglé was still confused about the notion of "individual", and maintained that the British by creating towns, speeding communications, and imposing a sense of unity, would eventually motivate an egalitarian ideology. (This follows from the theory of levels, where a sufficient change of natural data should promote a reformation of ideas at all levels. In a sense, however, it is fortunate that the confusion remained: believing that caste was surviving when it should not be, he came to the conclusion that some social representations tended to equilibrium. The resilience of caste came partly from the fact that the "data" was human behaviour which was already "formed", and partly because the system could be so constructed that even exceptions proved the rule: "It can be maintained that the theories of Manu, although they have not expressed the Hindu reality exactly, have managed, to a large extent, to impose their form on it. (The theories) triumph as "idées-force"; they furnish opinion with the frameworks in which it is led instinctively to class groups whatever they are" (121. "idées-force": "force" force-piece, load-bearing channel in an electric circuit, or, improbably, dynamic force; cf. 'prescriptive categories'). "Opinion will not allow you to transgress the traditional order, except on condition that you demonstrate that this order has been skewed; when you do that, you are only breaking the law so as to respect it all the more." (121).

Though the Law exerts an influence on the castes, the system of caste itself ( = system implicit in jati) is a collective representation. The Law is a system motivated by the products of the system of caste. Similar remarks apply to religion,
economics, and art. They are all, as systems, re-formations of the products of collective representations, (which are not confined to caste: it is important that Bouglé does not claim to explain Hinduism by deriving it from caste, he merely claims that part of the peculiar coloration of Hinduism can be explained by reference to caste. Similarly law, economics and art. In the case of law and religion, the peculiarities can also be explained by the fact that they are the creations of the Brahmins).

The category of natural data is widened so as to comprise not only demography and behaviour, but also racial and ecological data, but the demographic data remain the most important.

The levels are now, therefore, as follows:

(i) natural (=demography, behaviour, ethnography, ecology) / (ii) individual (iii) collective (iv) legal, economic, religious, philosophical, and artistic.

To the fourth level could be added other types, science, for example. As far as Bouglé is concerned, terms like "law", economics" etc. refer only to functions which have separated out. Thus if it makes sense to talk of "social representations" when what is meant is the representations of men thinking as members of a society, it makes the same sense to talk of a "legal psyche" or "legal representations". It also explains why Bouglé assumes the "general laws of the formation of ideas" can explain the "mental work" not only of individuals but also of societies, the law, etc. If even the sciences are liable to be treated like any other sociological phenomenon, then the "study of forms", the "sociologie stricto sensu" is in reality the most general of all sciences.

"Les Rapports de l'histoire et de la Science Sociale d'après Cournot" is a presentation of some themes of the "thought of Cournot (the man Tarde apparently "sent a hundred cubits above Comte"), principally so as to insist on a rationalist explanation in history, but also so as to comment on the category of "chance".

Cournot affirms that chance exists in Nature, and that chance, though not itself rational, is a category of Reason. An accident is a "pure fact", a fact at the intersection of a concourse of systems of causality. Bouglé accepts these arguments.

For Cournot there are two types of science: 1) the contemplation of a law-bound nature (e.g. physics), and 2) the contemplation of a law-like cosmos (e.g. biology). The second type has a greater preponderance of historical data. Bouglé observes that all sciences are historical, in the sense that the time through which their data extend is not infinite, and makes the distinction between History, the science into which contingencies enter, and all other sciences, which consider contingency to be eliminated. He is, in fact, reviving a very old distinction: between what may be called "natura nature", which is a nature in the process of a law-like becoming, and "naturating nature", which is a nature in a process of random, law-less becoming.

The implications of this are far-reaching. If chance is held to be a category of the reason, then human beings represent the world as law-like, for the law-less events are discounted as Accident. Now, sociology had to be historical for Bouglé.
That means that sociology had to take account of contingency. The reason must be that contingency alone could provide the test for the epistemological theory. For, if it is assumed that, on the one hand representations are relatively undetermined, and on the other hand relatively adapted to their data, then major change in representations would have to be motivated by a fairly violent change in the order of nature's nature. Such a change would, by definition, have to be the result of an accident - and the accident would have to be not an accident without permanent consequence (such as an unforeseen, but ephemeral catastrophe), but an accident which changed the order of things (such as conquest and settlement by aliens). If sociology wished to find such accidents it would have to look to history.

Bouglé's epistemology, then includes a definition as to what is to count as "natural data". Pure accidents which do not change the forms of nature, are not included into any system of knowledge, because they are so amorphous that they are relegated to a special category. This asserts again most forcefully the lesson that Bouglé learnt from Simmel: that sociology appeals to reality only to claim the forms in reality as the sole legitimate objects of study.

Mark Aston.

This essay is based on a paper read at Mr. Ardener's Tuesday seminar during Michaelmas Term 1971.

REFERENCES

Année S. *Annales Sociologiques*, first series.
Annales S. *Annales Sociologiques*.


1925: "Qu'est-ce que la Sociologie?", 5th Ed. Alcan, Paris. (Chapter 1, "Qu'est-ce que la Sociologie" 1st publ. 1897 *Revue de Paris*.


Chapter 4, "Théories sur la Division du Travail", 1st publ. 1903. Année S.


The appearance of a volume of essays on ritual is, in itself, some index of changing interests in British anthropology. This is not, however, to say that all the papers are modern in style. And, indeed, one who wished to contribute to this festschrift for Audrey Richards felt unable to do so once the theme of the book had been chosen.

The Interpretation of Ritual is, in fact, an excellent miniature of the history of our discipline since 1945. The articles by Firth and Esther Goody still display a desire to talk about 'social adaptation' or 'manipulation' before fully eliciting the grammar which underlies their observational data; the timidity of the references to kinesics and codes merely serves to confirm their date. At the other extreme are the articles by Le Fontaine and Ardener in which the composition of the cultural syntax receives primary attention. The piece by Southall is an 'English reaction to Lévi-Strauss', but of a far higher quality than many of those in this category hitherto published; it is a valuable essay.

There is also a debate between Leach and the sociologist-psychoanalyst Bott. She gives a rather unsophisticated psychoanalytic interpretation of the Tongan kava ceremony. Leach does not raise all the issues involved in the relations between psychology and anthropology, but his critique of Bott's interpretation is just. Quite legitimately he objects to what he calls the fairly straightforward kind of functionalism to which it is attached. Rightly, he draws our attention to the intuitive aspect of functionalism. On the other hand, he exaggerates when he claims that structuralism is 'objective'. No method is objective in a hard sense; but structuralism certainly does not lose its analytical superiority or become undermined by one's acknowledging that the analyst plays an active and selective role. On the broader issue of the debate, one ought to recall the work of Kluckhohn on witchcraft or Bettelheim on ritual. No one would deny the importance of an interchange between psychology and anthropology, but these earlier failures impress upon us the fact that the task is not achieved in a conceptually satisfactory way with any facility. And before the attempt is made, one ought to ask, as Bott does not, just how adequate our different psychological theories are, that is, how useful a model of the human mind psychology gives us.

It is a sign that anthropology has left the Gluckmaniac stage when, as the editor says, there is no longer a need felt to define ritual. Special definitions of ritual, or ceremonial, as different from ordinary social or pragmatic behaviour conceal a rather profound error. If ritual is formal, patterned, symbolic action, then we have all the elements of a definition of any behaviour which we would wish to call social. Once a semiological view of society is seriously adopted the retention of the category 'ritual' at all would clearly be a mistake; finding definition of no import is perhaps a step towards a full realization of this.

An interesting point emerges from Ardener's and Southall's papers - namely that our changing analytical interests show fieldwork to have been defective in important ways. It has become
customary to point to the theoretical failings of our
functionalist ancestors, but to commend them for their excellent
fieldwork. But the obvious influence of a theoretical frame­
work on a research technique lessens the weight of this 'empirical
compliment' considerably. Paradoxically, anthropology in its
recently more penetrating and analytic phase has been more
dependent upon detailed ethnography than functionalism ever was.
It would be a nonsense for functionalists to delude themselves
into thinking that they dealt with 'facts' whilst structuralists
irreverently dabbled in metaphysics. A close scrutiny of these
two approaches might even suggest the justice of reversing the
charge—though doubtless many would remain unconvinced.

Malcolm Crick.

Three Styles in the Study of Kinship. J.A. Barnes. £3.00.

Professor Barnes might ponder on whether he has written the
wrong book. This is a study of the study of kinship (and this
reviewer has no intention of writing a study of the study of the
study ...), or more precisely of the work of three practitioners
in this field; they are Murdock, Lévi-Strauss, and Fortes.
Uneasy bedfellows one would have thought, but the choice seems
to have been dictated less by the range of views which they
represent than by one of the author's aims which is "to assist
the transformation of social anthropology from an intuitive art
to a cumulative science." To achieve this questionable enter­
prise, Professor Barnes deems it necessary to make a decisive
break with the past. Accordingly he has selected 1949 as the
cut-off point on the grounds that the three anthropologists
mentioned above, whom he sees in some sense as typical of some
post-Malinowskian and post-Radcliffe-Brownian era, all published
major works in that year. This seems an extraordinarily arbitrary
step, for the first essential in the founding of this new science
should be to demonstrate that the ideas (I hesitate to say theories,
let alone general laws) in existence at that time were generally
accepted. However Barnes shows only too clearly that there was no
more general agreement in the field of kinship studies in 1949 than
there is today. Paradoxically he almost manages to make a stronger
case for social anthropology as a non-cumulative science than
another book published at the same time by the same house which
mainly supports such a view.

What of the three studies? They provide more or less good
commentaries on the works of the three anthropologists. I found
Professor Barnes at his best when dealing with Murdock and at his
worst with Lévi-Strauss. Fortes comes out of it quite well but
then his batteries of irreducible principles make his position
almost impregnable and impregnate. None of these examinations is
very conclusive (indeed they are all rather negative) and it is
curious that another of Barnes' aims is "to encourage others to
tackle the works of Murdock, Lévi-Strauss and Fortes more effect­
ively" when there are in existence more effective treatments of
these writers than those offered here.

It was suggested at the beginning of this review that
Professor Barnes has written the wrong book. Apparently he had
originally intended a second half to this volume in which he
planned to undertake case studies of particular problems and topics
on the lines represented by his Inquest on the Murngin. Although
it is difficult to know without seeing the result, this sounds a
more valuable, interesting and above all positive exercise than
that which has appeared.

Peter Rivièrè