

Two Styles in the Study of Witchcraft

The recent interest of historians in the subject of witchcraft places anthropology under an obligation to look very carefully at its achievements in this field. We might feel flattered that other scholars have felt fit to declare that their own researches can progress only if they make use of our writings (Thomas: 436n) but for this to be true we must be willing to examine critically what we have written ourselves. For, though Evans-Pritchard's Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande is a landmark, the last generation of anthropologists has not, in fact, made any great theoretical progress with this topic. To the extent that this is true I am more doubtful than some historians of the value of what we actually have to offer them.<sup>1</sup>

In this paper I shall marshal a series of ideas from other disciplines in an attempt to open up some promising new lines of thinking on the subject of witchcraft.<sup>2</sup> My particular concern is, with the aid of such concepts as 'semantic field', 'persons' and 'performative utterances', to advance our comprehension of this one problem. But there are issues involved here which transcend this single subject, so I have thought it appropriate to entitle the paper in such a way as to suggest Louis Dumont's 'deux théories'. Those deep differences of outlook which clearly exist within kinship studies in fact permeate every area of social anthropology, so I shall present my re-thinking of witchcraft as a particular example of two very different styles of social anthropology in general. These two outlooks are not to be subsumed under the labels 'functionalism' and 'structuralism', for I hope the kind of concern I raise here will enable the discipline to pass beyond structuralism, as well as beyond our older English style of anthropology.

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I must begin by briefly commenting on some recent works on witchcraft which I find inadequate. Two of the three books I shall discuss are dedicated to Evans-Pritchard, yet clearly represent, in the main, that style of anthropology from which he himself has quietly dissented. In 're-thinking' witchcraft I shall certainly not deny the achievements of this tradition. Mair is therefore right to declare (1972: 40) that one need not scrap everything that has been done in the past thirty years; but, of course, no one has ever suggested this. But I do accept Beidelman's contention that we 'need a rethinking of the approach itself, rather than simply more studies'. (1970)

Beidelman's brief paper is a rather dissonant epilogue to ASA9, for few other contributors in fact offer any fresh approaches. 'Boundarism' in the editor's introduction is certainly a step forward, but the very title of the volume indicates the difference in interest between most authors and Evans-Pritchard. The whole subject seems largely to be stuck in that 'micro-sociology' version of anthropology; Marwick's 'social strain' hypotheses, 'mystical idioms' and the 'dissolution of relationships', and so on, loom large. Thus Esther Goody attempts to explain why it is that Gonja associate evil power with women. Yet we need to be told a great deal if we are not simply to see this as a piece of sociological metaphysics. Goody must at least provide us with a full grammar of the male/female opposition in that culture; and fully constituting the symbolic order might weaken the desire to indulge in sociology. ASA9 is a very uneven volume, but when we recall that Evans-Pritchard's work arose out of studies of English intellectualism and the writings of Lévy-Bruhl, Douglas' remark that his Zande monograph was about 'knowing' serves only to remind us that the more important of

his insights have not been developed.<sup>3</sup>

The second work dedicated to Evans-Pritchard, The Allocation of Responsibility (ed. Gluckman; 1972) is a set of offerings by the Manchester school.<sup>4</sup> Again I can only say that the least interesting aspects of his work have been taken up. It is a typical case of that easy resort to sociology which leaves the real anthropological problems untouched and which has left major areas of our discipline frozen for a whole generation.<sup>5</sup>

Mair's general book on witchcraft (1969) is little more than a simple description of other people's work; it is almost entirely innocent of theory. In one chapter she discusses theories of witchcraft, but does not really pass beyond functional writings. It is indeed rather strange that Mair should have written such a book, for she contributed nothing to ASA9, and her publicly expressed interest is in politics, jural relations and applied anthropology - language and symbolism being subjects which might concern other anthropologists. This bias is not without influence upon the position taken in her discussion of witchcraft. Thus, those who disapprove of such terms as 'supernatural' powers she castigates as 'purists' (ibid: 7). She distinguishes between witchcraft and sorcery in terms of the possibility of finding evidence, irrespective therefore of what the natives say, and presumably in terms ultimately of what the anthropologist himself thinks plausible or not (ibid: 23). She also discusses the 'universal image' of the witch when her ethnographic examples show there is no such image: we need only consider whether witchcraft is said to be hereditary or not, whether witches are claimed to be consciously evil or not, to realise the disparate phenomena which have been subsumed under one label. Finally, Mair suggests that analyses from Evans-Pritchard onwards 'have argued that (such beliefs are) by no means irrational in the context of the African's limited understanding of causation'. I am not sure that others would have chosen that precise phraseology.

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Having made clear my attitude to one style in the treatment of witchcraft, I shall present another view which rests in a rather different conception of anthropology itself. I offer no second theory, merely a series of ideas which singly or in combination might advance our comprehension of the topic. I shall begin by adopting the strategy utilised by Lévi-Strauss with totemism and more recently by Needham with kinship,<sup>6</sup> namely to deny the 'phenomenon' a real existence by asserting that the very acceptance of a separate problem of 'witchcraft' is part of the problem, and one source of our inability to resolve it satisfactorily. I shall contend that 'witchcraft' is wrongly isolated and in that sense is unreal, and consequently that a possible means of analytic advance will be to dissolve it into a larger framework. It may well be that 'the' problem of witchcraft has been constituted in anthropology because of the existence of 'witchcraft' in the history of our own society, and this factor may have destroyed what we have learned about the translation of culture with other problems. For the fact is that English witchcraft is not like the phenomena so labelled in other cultures. Some 'purism' may here be salutary, for there are dangers in both acknowledging that phenomena are different and also calling them by the same name. Here I am not referring to superficial differences, but the very fundamental gulf between the intellectual structure of Tudor and Zande society. English society possessed a word 'witchcraft', but anthropologists have committed a possibly grave error in using the same term for other cultures, of which historians must certainly be aware when they use anthropological writings.

English witchcraft flourished in a culture which possessed such categories as 'natural philosophy' and a theological system upon which witchcraft beliefs were, in part, parasitic. Are we to speak of Zande 'witchcraft' in a culture which lacks these categories of thought which served to define the 'witchcraft' of our own society? Where the intellectual configuration which forms the conceptual environment is so different can we really expect to find the 'same' phenomenon in both?<sup>7</sup> We have possibly been misled here by the availability of a term supplied by our own history which has very probably acted as a general means for the illicit importation of a whole host of cultural terms for the description of another society. Where language does our thinking for us, Wittgenstein's motto 'let us not be bewitched' seems highly appropriate.

I shall commence the discussion of the larger framework which is to absorb 'witchcraft' by referring to Winch's paper 'Nature and Convention'. His remarks here are very important in view of the seeming extreme relativism of The Idea of A Social Science (1958). In his article he argues, against those who associate the conventional with variability, and the natural with invariability, that the possession of some types of norms is not optional in society 'because the idea of their non-adherence is made unintelligible by certain features of the concept of the social life of human beings'. The social invariable I suggest here may aid with the problem of witchcraft, but as a cultural universal it may well prove useful in other discussions.

The data with which the social sciences deal are not 'behaviours' in 'space' but the 'action' of 'persons' in a 'shared conceptual and moral space'. Society as a normative system and a system of ideas could be offered as a truism were it not for the conception and methodology of most social sciences attempting to recast human phenomena in such a way as to make them unrecognizable. But it is in the framework of a 'moral space'<sup>8</sup> that I shall endeavour to lose witchcraft. For this limited purpose I shall propose two primary structurings of moral space: firstly a system of action concepts and action-evaluation concepts; secondly, a system of 'person' categories. I hope in this larger context 'the' phenomenon of witchcraft will lose its identity, and will appear rather like an alien who having watched a game of chess had decided to write a treatise called 'bishops'. No understanding of 'bishops' is possible save in the context of the whole rule system which constitutes chess, for in Saussurean terms, a bishop means nothing by itself but derives its value from all the types of pieces that are not 'bishops'. I am thus suggesting that a study of witchcraft per se is nonsensical, and ipso facto a comparative study of witchcraft an absurdity raised to a higher power. A sign of conceptual advance in this field will perhaps be our ceasing to write on witchcraft. So I disagree with Standefer (1970) who saw the first problem as that of defining witchcraft; I shall endeavour to deny the phenomenon; to define it away.

Proposing that the first articulation of moral space is a set of action and evaluation concepts brings to our attention at once the fact that anthropology has actually done very little work upon this subject. Incidentally, of course, we have gained some knowledge, but our interests have perhaps directed us away from what must be, by any standards, a most important problem. How, for instance, are we to explain 'sacrifice' for example, or ritual in general, if we have made no concerted attempt to constitute the action concepts of the culture in question. There seems no reason to expect primitive cultures to lack a repertoire of such concepts, as rich as that which exists in ordinary English.

Indeed, it could well be that 'folk-social psychology' in pre-industrial cultures would prove to be more discriminating, and it may well be that our own 'scientific' psychology with its penchant for supposedly precise technical terms has impoverished our own culture in this respect. It is at least significant that a recent and very important book in social psychology (see R. H. Harré and P. Secord: 1972) should unashamedly return, with a host of philosophical justifications to the importance of ordinary language. Its claim that the established scientific model gives us a sham-exact knowledge of less than we already knew is surely entirely correct.

I cannot leave this first structure of the moral space without commenting on the word 'moral', which is of course one of our own culture's 'action and evaluation' concepts and in connection with which, therefore, a whole host of translational problems arise. For my universal structure, 'moral' or 'ethical', because culture-bound, are decidedly unsatisfactory, but I cannot here suggest any other terms. For the 'invariable' framework, I need a set of terms on a higher level than that used for comparative purposes, so 'moral' is inappropriate by at least two orders of discourse. With all its specificity, I must continue to use these cultural terms: the 'theoretical' level of discourse cannot be expected at the very beginning of the inquiry. But perhaps I can offer some compensation here by suggesting a few ideas which might at least start the investigation.

I am in agreement with Collingwood and MacIntyre in regretting the loss of the historical dimension from philosophical discussions. We have often been offered general theories of ethics, yet it is surely important to notice that the moral 'ought' appeared at a certain time in our own culture. Collingwood, for instance (1944) suggests that Greek philosophers lacked this concept and therefore it is only by a mistranslation that we can say that Greek moral philosophy and Kantian moral philosophy are on the 'same' subject matter.<sup>9</sup> As MacIntyre says (1971: 154) we need not so much a general theory as a history of moral notions. If we are to attain a better view of what constitutes the 'social' and the 'humane', obviously investigation must be historical and comparative. Here, that inquiry which goes under the name of 'the sociology of knowledge' might prove valuable. Wilden, for instance (1972: 212) draws our attention to certain possibly sociological aspects of the Cartesian 'cogito, ergo sum'. After all there are certain social conditions in which one would perhaps not begin such a premise with a verb in the first person singular. (Perhaps we should now wish to say something like 'loquor, ergo sociale animal sum'.) Certainly, for instance, there are social conditions under which the Kantian 'imperativ' and Puritan view of the 'moral' would be unintelligible. Douglas<sup>10</sup> (1970) suggests that different types of social structure may relate to very different notion of 'sin', 'evil', 'self', and so on. Detailed investigation of the history of the semantic fields embracing such concepts as 'self', 'person', 'moral', 'idea', 'natural', and so on would probably prove extremely valuable. If anthropology is 'man-talk' then study of these basic items of humane vocabulary must sometime be carried out as a preliminary to wider investigations.<sup>11</sup>

The second primary articulation of moral space is a system of person categories.<sup>12</sup> We have a total field of 'persons' through which will be variously distributed ranges of predicates ascribing attributes and powers. Thus, to take a system of terms rendered as 'witch', 'sorcerer', 'diviner', 'prophet', 'priest', we shall expect significant differences in the symbolism of these different persons:

thus, witches may lack certain attributes that other humans display, and be thought to manifest powers not possessed by others. By detailing this particular problem, hopefully attention will be drawn to an aspect not sufficiently treated by the broadly functional approach to witchcraft: namely, the full symbolic systems have not been mapped out for what is probably a most important conceptual system in all cultures. We have been told, for instance, that a witch possesses 'supernatural' powers without being informed on what ranges of predicates are ascribed in that culture to non-witches. And if we fully constitute a 'person' field<sup>13</sup> out of the categories and discriminations made in other cultures we shall perhaps be able to look more closely at the classifications we ourselves make. For the particular purpose of this paper, the image is of an 'ethical game': the person not only wrongly called a 'witch' but also ripped out of context is only one piece on a moral board. The moral game involves other pieces with varying specifications of powers, and it is in this game that the separate problem of witchcraft should be lost.

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Notions such as 'ethical space' and 'moral geometry' may have struck some as metaphysical, but it provides a framework whose internal boundaries may be empirically determined. It is a matter of ethnography how many 'pieces' each culture puts upon the moral board and what particular discriminations it makes between them. This variability will be increased by virtue of the intersection of the two primary articulations I have discussed by other conceptual structures.

I stress the empirical nature of the task of determining the articulation of moral space because much of the work already done which has not made explicit the types of considerations I have discussed here have fallen very far short of the required standard. One source of this failure is undoubtedly the enormous influence of Evans-Pritchard's brilliant Zande study on subsequent studies. Yet the Zande is only one culture and there is no need to make their cultural configuration a model for other societies; we must not simply assume that features of their belief system will be found elsewhere, for this allows the Zande monograph to dominate our thinking. Thus, if in one culture we have a major distinction between 'witch' and 'sorcerer' which is concordant with 'psychic power'/'use of objects', 'unknowing'/'conscious', and so on, we must not simply assume this pattern will be replicated elsewhere, but must, by detailed study, attempt to compose the conceptual structure of other cultures. That is, we must take each case as it comes. The few excellent monographs we possess unfortunately tend to act as structures into which other fieldworkers can without real thought slot their data: there is no telling how much we have lost in this process. And, further, it would be an error in any case to isolate the pair 'witch'/'sorcerer' where this distinction does exist, for these two categories and the nature of the opposition between them get their sense only from the full system of moral categories. Another caution is also in order in view of the possibility of our history providing the category 'witchcraft' and so allowing the transmission of a whole host of cultural terms for descriptive purposes. Many have expressed the 'witch'/'sorcerer' opposition in terms of the notions of 'spirit' or 'psychic' as opposed to 'material object'. In view of the complex theological history behind the term 'spirit' and the detritus of so many scientific epochs which has gone into our word 'matter', it may be wondered how legitimately these terms may be foisted onto other cultures. We can never be sure exactly how odd our own categories of thought are.

One advantage of using the model of a moral field is that it allows an empirical approach to internal articulation; another gain perhaps arises in considering the 'range' of the moral space. Above, I marshalled a set of moral pieces - 'witch', 'sorcerer', 'diviner', and so on whose analogues have been reported for many cultures. But it may be that the alien nature of these persons to our own society will lead us intuitively to close off this area and thus to misrepresent badly the conceptual structure of other cultures. With the idea of person categories, it is obvious that we can proceed from those already stated to embrace 'king', 'mediator', 'chief', and many others. To say that we had passed from 'magical beliefs' to the realm of 'politics' would be inappropriate for the view of an articulated moral space will enable us to eliminate such ethnocentric terms by focussing upon the culture's own constitution of moral space. For instance, among the Safwa (Harwood: 29, 137-8) it is claimed that 'witchcraft' and 'sorcery' operate in two types of relationships - those of affinity (transactional) and those of descent (incorporative). Here one might be tempted to speak of two domains 'kinship' and 'mystical beliefs' but in fact we have two refractions of one larger system.

In relation to 'politics' this ought to be well known. Coomaraswamy, for example, presents the Indian theory of government as an instance of the union of contrary principles. 'King' and 'priest' are associated with a whole series of conceptual distinctions, and government itself, what one might have been tempted to isolate as a 'political' sphere is in fact merely one expression of a total ideological scheme.<sup>14</sup> Hopefully the perspective I have here advocated for the dissolution of 'witchcraft' may contribute to a much larger reshaping of anthropology. The general point is that the particular lines of division within social science departments in English universities do not necessarily provide the appropriate schemes for segmenting other cultures. The remark is obvious, though the chapter headings of our text books seem to deny it.

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I have now sketched the framework of an articulated moral space, and have briefly made some points about its value and use. In the general context of searching for relations between social anthropology, language and philosophy, I should now like to make several more suggestions. They do not follow from the 'moral space', and they are independent of one another.

Winch, in 'Understanding a Primitive Society' develops usefully several notions to be found in the later work of Wittgenstein. We might note (a) the close relationship between action and concepts, since concepts express our interests, and (b) that the task of understanding requires not only grasping rules but also realizing the point of the rules. Or perhaps in Hampshire's words: 'we have to explain types of discourse by reference to the institutions and forms of social life with which they are associated'. (1970: 14)<sup>15</sup>

Evans-Pritchard's Zande book, written partly as a critique of Lévy-Bruhl, has become prominent in what has been called the 'rationality' debate. It is cited in connection with such issues as coherence and falsifiability and used in discussion concerning the nature of science. This would be the subject for a separate paper. All I wish to say here is that through the exchange, science itself seems to grow more like a primitive system of beliefs, far out of inductivism, logical positivism, Popperism, and the view of scientific change associated with Kuhn, our ideas of 'fact', 'evidence' and what it is to 'falsify',

and so on, have grown more mysterious. The wide disagreements within the philosophy of science are themselves significant. Furthermore, there can be no total doubt in science, because certain propositions must be held indubitable in order to possess the language to formulate objections to others: talk of 'secondary elaborations' and 'circularity' in the context of Zande beliefs ought not to obliterate those conceptual features which scientific systems share with all products of human thought. There is, unfortunately, a considerable reluctance to follow up those connections sufficiently. As Habermas has argued (1972: 67) positivism has destroyed epistemology, and science has achieved a scientific self-understanding which explores methodology but protects science from genuine philosophic scrutiny. The problem of knowledge is no longer raised because what is knowledge is defined by the existence and achievements of science itself.

The idea I wish to develop from Winch is his stress upon 'the point' of the rules, for there is an obvious way in which Zande moral notions are 'social' in which scientific systems are not: namely, the relations between thought and action are different. Zande moral notions are clearly intimately related to the evaluation of action, and perhaps it is in considering the relation of knowledge to interest that we can grasp certain features of Zande thought. We know that Zande moral notions have a practical point, also that the system is not really coherent, because there are questions an anthropologist could raise which would have no interest for the Zande. That is, the anthropologist could reveal 'conceptual synapses', beliefs which are not brought together; essentially, questions that are not asked. These problems are not real to the Zande because of the point of the rules, because the relation their moral notions have with action deters them from pushing their beliefs to their logical conclusions. Thus Zande contend that witchcraft is hereditary and yet punish an individual witch. But this is a conceptual feature of other systems of notions, so closely related to social life. Thus, in our culture, our psychology tells us how much we are a product of circumstance, of the experiences of early childhood and perhaps of heritable traits, and yet the law punishes a culpable individual.<sup>16</sup> Our own law, then, operates significantly by not following up certain causal relationships, and by not asking certain questions.<sup>17</sup>

A second idea relating anthropology and language which might prove seminal is this, though we shall certainly here find our lack of competence in technical linguistics an embarrassment. Hare has argued that religious utterances fall somewhere between ethical discourse and scientific assertions. Provided we do not make our language games self-sufficient (accounting for diversity at the price of untranslatability) the idea of domains of discourse may prove useful. In English, for instance, we have terms like 'good', 'right' and so on, which do not behave like 'big' or 'red'. We have a domain of ethical terms and a subject called specifically 'moral' philosophy, and some would argue the 'naturalistic fallacy' as a boundary marking the fact that moral terms cannot be translated into natural terms such as 'effective', 'useful' and so on. We have no reason to think that other cultures will lack domains of discourse, and there may be linguistic markers for them. By the behaviour of words, then, we may be able to spot, let us say, a 'moral logic' in other cultures, which is to be recognised as a specific domain, just as in English we may not simply recast moral assertions as scientific propositions. And this view of a complex of domains of discourse, to be generated empirically, may help us with some of our methodological problems. For instance,

the 'rationality' debate, articulated as it has often been round stark contrasts such as pragmatic/expressive, liberal/symbolic, scientific/mystical, technique/ritual, might be reformulated or dispensed with. For if we replace these dualisms by overlapping styles of meaning, the task of understanding grows more difficult, but we might eliminate some falsely generated problems. Thus, if we can see all utterances as falling between the poles of pure cognitive meaning and pure emotive meaning (neither pole actually occupied by any utterance, and the space between delicately structured by a whole host of discriminations) then we shall perhaps avoid certain explanatory mistakes and conceptual errors.

For my last idea relating these problems in anthropology to language, I turn to the idea of the 'performative utterance' associated with the philosopher J. L. Austin. Ritual action is highly structured and in certain actions, the spell in magic, for instance, language may be central. Tambiah (1968)<sup>18</sup> has recently brought our attention to this subject, but it is with Finnegan's article explicitly on performatives that I shall begin. Her suggestion that such a perspective may be useful in understanding religion is possibly true, but her observation that 'doing things with words' applies well to the Limba view of speech, that in a pre-literate culture there is an acute awareness of the force of speech (illocutionary and perlocutionary aspects, to use some of Austin's terms) is surely very important. But it also reminds us that we know very little about other societies' beliefs concerning language. If we are to understand ritual, for instance, it will surely be crucial to know whether a culture possesses a whole system of beliefs concerning speech and action. There is no reason to assume primitive cultures lack a philosophy of speech, and if they are communication-minded it is reasonable to expect they will themselves look upon speech as a paradigm of social exchange. Unfortunately, in this most important area, if its interests are already set, we can not expect a great deal of help from sociolinguistics. Or it may be, as with other sciences, in a phase which only temporarily prevents the asking of the really significant problems.

A performative utterance, essentially, is one in which to speak is itself to perform an action, and not to state facts. Austin himself (1958, 1962) stressed that the distinction between constative and performative was not radical, but in witchcraft and other areas where belief and action involve the definition of situations and their re-classification we might perhaps gain something by looking at the performative aspect. Thus, Lienhardt (1956: 327) says that in a sacrifice the Dinka create the situation which they name; that is, there is not here a statement of fact but the bringing about of a socially defined situation. In the Nuer ritual which severs ties which might be sufficiently close for relations to be incestuous we have a performance of clarification or redefinition. Would speech in these circumstances resemble the classical performative 'I name this ship x' which does not state a fact but which itself is the act of naming? Such a performative, as an action, is neither true nor false, but happy or unhappy.<sup>19</sup>

I am myself not sure of the value of the performative utterance as such; it might only deceptively solve problems. But Austin thought his distinction constative/performative would be absorbed into a general theory of speech acts, (see Searle: 1965, 1969) and this is probably the field of most interest. Exactly what contribution the work on speech acts will make towards a semantic theory is not clear. But perhaps in the elaboration of the theory of speech acts anthropologists



will have an important role to play, for much of supposedly descriptive 'ordinary language philosophy' has a highly intuitive and culture-bound quality. Work on 'speech acts' and 'domains of discourse' ought to be empirically based, and this will involve comparative research. After all, in view of the total experience of humanity, literate industrial cultures are statistically very odd. It is well to remember, as Macdonald puts it (1950) that cursing and casting spells are older uses of language than the making of dispassionate scientific statements. That broad view need not be lost when anthropologists turn on themselves and realise that the scientific use of language is in fact a good deal more complicated than most of its philosophers have assumed.

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I have dealt in this paper with the specific problem of witchcraft, but clearly my polemic has revolved round some of the largest issues in social anthropology, including the nature of the discipline itself. Space forbids my carrying the argument into the territory of law and politics,<sup>20</sup> so I shall conclude with some very general remarks.

Fundamentally, two approaches to witchcraft, or two theories of kinship, involve two very basic views of what anthropology is or might be. It would be profoundly wrong to see the newer type of anthropology as able only to transform limited areas such as kinship and symbolism but forced to leave law, politics and so on unregenerate in the hands of social science. The real division does not come between the subjects anthropology studies, for the new style may apply to the whole territory: the division, rather, is between different anthropologists. Thus, we need not assume the present coexistence of growth areas and areas almost totally in the old style will be permanent. These latter areas simply require the attentions of new style anthropologists. My bibliography indicates where I think some of the important issues lie, and so where I think some help might be found: the high proportion of works by non-anthropologists is significant.

In discussing witchcraft I have actually been commending a whole style of anthropology. Some will have found the paper wholly unsavoury and will judge it metaphysical. So I ought to say that the philosophy which I have used here has, above all, retreated from ambition and has occupied itself with painstaking and minute conceptual investigations. I hope, therefore, to the extent that this paper is philosophical, that it will be seen as expressing a sense of complexity and misgiving, and not the reverse. It is the new style which envies the confidence of those who have sought or proclaimed a 'natural science' of society, functional laws, and the like. I have here eagerly sought in other disciplines for ideas which might enable us to advance to a minimal comprehension.

Needham (1970) envisaged social anthropology disintegrating, its fragments being swallowed by other disciplines. This might indeed happen, yet it is possible also that a judicious use of those other disciplines may allow sufficient transfusion for social anthropology to remain alive. Lévi-Strauss has invigorated the discipline by looking to language; there is perhaps still a lot of bold exploration to be done. This paper has given expression to doubt concerning the value of what we have already achieved; I cannot share the satisfaction of those who regard our results as so staggering that we can now abandon ambitious thought merely to polish up some minute region. The whole landscape may change if we do enough work on the foundations. This is to say, we must be humble enough to return to fundamentals. I

shall end by indicating three problems. Let us suggest that anthropology has as its object 'the social', has as its method the of translation, and has as its main problem the question of 'meaning'. Let us now state the obvious: we do not know what 'meaning' is; there is no science of translation; and we do not know what 'social' means. Perhaps we can entertain some hope, but I see no warrant for a sense of satisfaction.

Malcolm Crick

#### Notes

1. For a criticism of the historical work, see Keynes (1972).
2. This paper originally embraced two styles in the study of witchcraft, law and politics, which, for reasons of space, could not be printed here. The witchcraft section itself has been mercilessly pruned. The study originated in reflection on the possible ways in which linguistics and linguistic philosophy might aid us in rethinking some anthropological problems. I have not made a special study of witchcraft, and I shall not judge the paper as worthless if it merely serves to suggest ideas to others. The particular topic of witchcraft seemed appropriate, among other reasons, because the interest of Winch and MacIntyre in the work of Evans-Pritchard has been one way in which philosophy and our discipline have already been brought into some type of relationship. I am very conscious of the tentative and exploratory nature of this paper and can entertain that it will, like the Müller paper (Crick: 1972) soon appear to be thoroughly unsatisfactory. Others will perhaps feel that the type of theology and philosophy for which the Institute is by now infamous has its adherents in a younger generation. Many general intellectual debts will be evident, but I should be happy if this offering would remind others of the work of that fine anthropologist David Pocock who was my first tutor and to whom I owe a great deal.
3. For a fuller review of ASA 9 see Crick (1971); for 'castrations' of paradigmatic writings see Ardener (1971a).
4. The one exception, the article by S. F. Moore, is the ~~most~~ interesting in the volume. Gluckman here publishes his 1964-5 Marett lectures and opens by wrongly naming the dedicatee; Robert Ranulph Marett. I hope he will rectify his error.
5. I ought to emphasize that these caustic remarks concern sociology; sociologie inspired Evans-Pritchard and continues to stimulate those who are attracted to his style of anthropology.
6. Those who appreciate that Needham's work in 'kinship' has arisen as much from the work of Durkheim and Mauss on classification as from Levi-Strauss' volume on elementary structures will realise there is no incoherence in Needham's position here as a kinship expert who denies the existence of kinship.
7. Similar considerations are involved in recent discussions of the word caste. See Dumont (1961) and Pitt-Rivers (1971).

8. I do not contend here that my remarks are absolutely alien to other writing on witchcraft, but by making certain problems explicit I hope to be able to start some fairly novel departures. I shall not in the paper elaborate all that might be said about the articulation of a 'moral space'. Fairly obviously there will be a hierarchy of articulations, and also discrepant structurings. Also, the notion 'space' itself is problematic. It might simply be that a picture of a semantic geometry holds us captive. Waismann's open-endedness is a recognisable advance on Frege's image of concepts as clearly bounded spaces, yet the very spatial imagery itself may be deceptive. From Wittgenstein's early mirror theory of meaning it looks as if he was bewitched by a spatial view of propositional structure corresponding to a real spatial structure. But perhaps the juxtaposition of 'meaning' and 'space' may prove seminal in this paper.
9. Anthropologists will find much of interest in Collingwood's Autobiography. His contention that in philosophy and science there is not just a succession of different answers to eternal problems, but that the problems themselves change has been taken up by Kuhn. His 'logic of questions and answers' has been discussed by Waismann. More importantly we should recall that Collingwood died in Oxford only a few years before Evans-Pritchard took up his chair here. If we look at his 1950 Marett lecture (his effective inaugural lecture) the version of history he there discusses in expressing his views on the nature of social anthropology is of the Collingwood variety. Collingwood in his work on aesthetics makes reference to the work of Evans-Pritchard; in the light of the logic of questions and answers it might be profitable to relate the Zande study of 1937 to some intellectual inheritance from Collingwood.
10. Douglas (1970) may be regarded as a contribution to the sociology of knowledge. It opens up an interesting field but I cannot see that Bernstein's dualism of elaborated and restricted codes is a very useful way in. The quality of ethnographical substantiation will also have to be higher.
11. Dr. Needham is currently working on the social organisation of sentiment. It is a sad reflection that anthropology seems to have left out most of the important problems.
12. A debt to Strawson will be evident here, though in my use of 'person' I should not like it to be thought that I am commenting directly upon his work.
13. Unfortunately there is no space here to discuss the sources of this idea of 'field'. The philosopher J. L. Austin used often to elicit complex structures from ordinary discourse by constituting a system of terms by working through a dictionary. The work of the German field semanticists has been commented on by Ullmann, Ardener (1971 b), Basilius, Bynon, Ohman, Spence and Waterman. (see also Cassirer: 1945). The 'systemic' aspects of Saussurean thought (valeur, constellation) are well known. I should briefly mention that I have not here challenged the notion of 'meaning as articulation' of which Lévi-Straussian structuralism is one version. Since we do not know what meaning is, it would seem wrong to discuss outright any approach simply because of a few defects. Within linguistics itself the possibility of a structural account of semantics is still an open issue, so I would be less critical of

Levi-Strauss than some. There remains the possibility of going beyond the stark Euclidean nature of structuralism by refinement: I hope that ideas of the wortfeld and bedeutungsfeld may more adequately capture the complexity of a semantic space. (see Lienhardt: 1951, for a remarkably modern treatment in this context of 'apeth' and related Dinka notions).

14. See also the work of Hocart, who, incidentally, was looking towards language as a source of models. In the two books in the bibliography one can spot the idea of reconstruction deriving from nineteenth century Indo-European philology, and also the linguistic idea of breaking phenomena down to their simplest units. I have cited Coomaraswamy on Indian government, but Africanists need not feel they escape the force of these remarks. See Needham (1967) on 'complementary governance'. One of the more absurd aspects of the old style political anthropology is that it is the anthropologist himself who rips apart politics from religion or ritual. If he must then search for some 'functional glue' to relate ritual to the political system or to associate the political structure with religious ideas, he has only himself to blame.
15. My remarks on the relation between thought and action and, 'the point of the rules', cannot, without important loss, be translated into the functional language of sociology.
16. These remarks were extensively developed in the original paper as a style of anthropological thought on law to contrast with the older style content with 'jural sociology' or 'social control'. I can here only sketch some of the points I would have made. Many jurists have stressed that their investigations are 'practical' and not 'scientific'. The very legal discrimination conditions/cause is itself to be related to practical interests. Anthropologists should investigate legal conceptual systems with Evans-Pritchard's idea of 'morally relevant cause' in mind, for Bacon's maxim 'in jure non remota causa, sed proxima spectatur' does nothing to suggest the very peculiar status of 'causation' in legal philosophy.
17. I cannot expand on this point here, but even when the inquiry involves such questions as 'mens rea' and so issues in the relationship between thought, knowledge and intent, action and responsibility, if a man can be declared a free agent then he becomes an isolated and culpable individual and for practical purposes is surrounded by a conceptual vacuum. Where the point of the rules is that people 'get done', then each man is an island complete in himself.
18. Malinowski's view of speech as action is an aspect of the pragmatism which pervaded all of his work. The idea of meaning as 'effect' in 'context' advocated in Coral Gardens and their Magic is grossly defective as a semantic theory. We might see his resort to child psychology to explain the 'magical power' of words as one manifestation of those nineteenth century assumptions which lie beneath much of his other work.
19. Perhaps the 'performative' illuminates some aspects of law. Thus, when a verdict is delivered, a jury does not state that a man committed x, it makes him guilty. For guilt is a social definition and a man may be guilty or not quite independently of whether he actually committed x. A verdict perhaps does not state a fact, but 'performs a definition'. And a verdict is reversible only by another legal performative utterance. (It should be added here that J.L. Austin and the jurist H.L.A. Hart had many discussions on philosophical and legal questions).

20. I cannot give here any indication of the details of this discussion, but it was articulated around the idea of two styles of anthropology. I have left in the bibliography some of the literature I had used in this discussion, which might indicate some of the issues raised. Some might think that transactionalism had already transformed politics, but I would urge them to read Gledhill (1971) for an excellent critique of anthropological 'game theory'. Admirers of Barth-Bailey anthropology are also required to assent to that conception of the 'social' to be found in Barth (1966). One could also absorb such seemingly unpromising areas as demography into the scheme of 'two styles'. (See Ardener 1962, 1972, 1973 for the new style.) Ideas such as 'folk-demography' or stressing the relationship of the classifying process to 'numbers' argues that a statistical flair is no substitute for intelligent thought. It does not oppose statistics, so is no justification for remaining numerically illiterate. On the other hand anthropologists by now should be aware of the possibilities of non-metrical precision. It is most unfortunate that it is only in the higher realms of mathematics that one realises that numbers themselves are conceptual systems. Since it concerns problems of system and coherence, the work done on Gödelian formally undecidable propositions might prove interesting to anthropologists. (See Gödel's Proof (1959) by E. Nagel & J.R. Newman.)

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