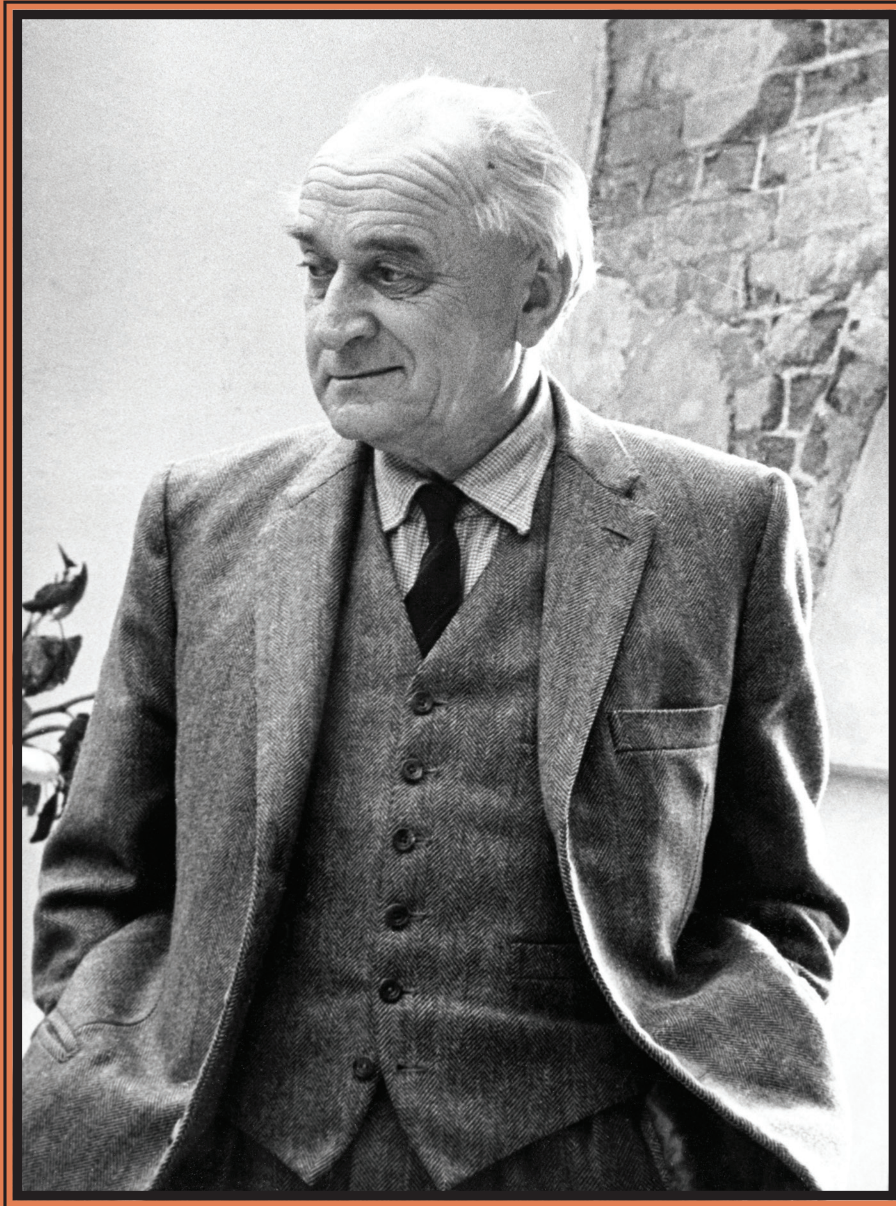
A Touch of Genius



The Life, Work and Influence of Sir Edward Evans-Pritchard

Edited by André Singer

A Touch of Genius

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A Touch of *Genius*

The Life, Work and Influence of Sir Edward Evans-Pritchard

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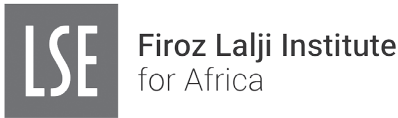

Funds for research and authorship of some of the chapters, as well as dissemination and discussion of the book in countries where Evans-Pritchard researched, was supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AH/T007524/1), the Economic and Social Science Research Council (ES/W00786X/1) and the Firoz Lalji Institute for Africa (London School of Economics and Political Science).

First published in 2023 by
Sean Kingston Publishing
www.seankingston.co.uk
Canon Pyon

Editorial selection © 2023 André Singer

Individual chapters © 2023 Grace Akello, Tim Allen, Ahmed Al-Shahi, Raymond Apthorpe, Bruno Braak and John Justin Kenyi, Douglas Davies, Francis Mading Deng, Susan Drucker-Brown, Deirdre Evans-Pritchard, John Evans-Pritchard, David Hicks, Wendy James, Timothy Jenkins, Douglas H. Johnson, David B. Kronenfeld, Eisei Kurimoto, Pierre Lee, Harriet D. Lyons and Andrew P. Lyons, Piero Matthey, Leben Nelson Moro, Christopher Morton, Elizabeth Ngutuku and Auma Okwany, Juan Ossio, Bruce Ross-Smith, Gary Seaman, David Shankland, André Singer, Richard Werbner, Roy Willis, John Gai Yoh, Melha Ruot Biel, Kim Jal Lieh and Naomi Pendle

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

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Ebook ISBN 978-1-912385-50-8
DOI 10.26581/B.SING01

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Evans-Pritchard, 1956. Photograph by Walter Stoneman. Courtesy Royal Anthropological Institute (400_035962).

FOREWORD

Evans-Pritchard and the paradoxes of anthropology

Francis Mading Deng

Evans-Pritchard and his Oxford context

André Singer has put together a remarkable volume honouring the icon that is Evans-Pritchard, and mobilizing an impressive array of prominent scholars who were his friends, colleagues and students. It covers Evans-Pritchard as a personality, a promising student, a young graduate in search of career opportunities, an adventurous cultural explorer, and a determined warrior yearning for battles, and as an innovative professor with a global reach. He was tough on his students and yet a supportive mentor; to his colleagues, he was cordial, yet ruthless against adversaries; as a researcher, he was a diligent participant observer who valued both close proximity and distance; he was an empiricist who was also creative and a poet; and, of course, he was a loving husband and father, who loved being at home, but whose adventures often took him far and away, before he eventually settled in his Oxford family home, and in his professional home, the Institute of Social Anthropology, which he 'built'. What emerges is a complex character whose attributes cannot easily be holistically represented, though they come through vividly in biographical accounts, interpersonal correspondence, recollections of family members, friends, students and colleagues, and, of course, his own scholarship.

In his Introduction, Singer offers a poignant summary of the extraordinary legacy of Evans-Pritchard in the field of anthropology and in related disciplines:

> E-P's work in Africa, both in the Sudan and in Cyrenaica, have of course formed a central plank in anthropological thought since the 1930s. The extraordinary detailed and perceptive ethnography, and the resulting analyses, have meant that generations of anthropologists everywhere have read, understood and appreciated, in particular, Azande, Nuer and Sanusi, social structures, belief systems and history.… The influence on Sudanese studies was, and remains, profound.
>
> (p. 8)

Many of the contributors to this volume are individuals I either know personally, or whose works I have read or have been cited in the works I read. I must however admit that my knowledge of the field is limited, as I am not a certified member of the 'anthropological club', to which most of the contributors belong. I did however enter that club through a backdoor, which I will not call trespass, as I was invited.

As I reflected on how to respond to the honour of being asked to write a Foreword to this volume, the first and obvious question I posed to myself was what qualified me for this honour. The main reason, I believe, was my informal association with Oxford anthropological circles, once I was invited to enter what has been described by Raymond Apthorpe as 'The house that E-P built: the Oxford Institute of Social Anthropology'. This association was instrumental in helping me bridge the discipline of law, which I loved, and in which I was on a newly instituted graduate course in African Law at the School of Oriental and African Studies under Anthony Allott. African customary law is a subject closely connected with anthropology, which soon turned out to be even closer to my heart, as it represented my cultural background. How this began is a rather comic story that resonates with Wendy James's own account (Chapter 6):

> I met Godfrey and Peter Lienhardt in the bar-billiard room at the Commonwealth (formerly Colonial) Services Institute. After sizing me up (I had just been in Tanganyika), Godfrey fixed me with an intent eye, pronounced on my character in a way that would have been difficult to accept from anyone else, and announced that I should come to the Institute.
>
> (p. 61)

I was standing, talking with a group of students in the Senior Common Room of the School of Oriental and African Studies, when someone patted me on the back, while I was in the middle of whatever I was saying. I turned to see a rather 'smallish' man, seemingly in his early forties. He spontaneously asked, in an almost blase' manner and as though he had not interrupted our conversation, 'Are

you a Dinka?' Under the circumstances, the appropriate reaction might have been to be dismissive, if discreetly. Somehow, more curious than offended, I was surprisingly cordial. 'Yes, I am a Dinka,' I said smilingly. He went on asking in the same spirit: 'Which Dinka?' 'Ngok Dinka,' I replied. 'I have a rather nice photograph of your Chief,' he added. 'Who!?', I asked, just to be sure. 'Deng Majok,' he said. 'That's my father,' I responded. I had a glass of coke in my hand. In a manner quite consistent, and which I was becoming increasingly intrigued by, and responsive to, he said, 'Put that down and let us go for a drink.' I did exactly as he commanded, smiling, captivated and curious. We left the room without even excusing ourselves from the group. I soon learned that my companion was Godfrey Lienhardt, whose doctoral field work in anthropology had been carried out among the western Dinka of Bahr el Ghazal Province. He soon gave me a copy of his book, *Divinity and Experience: The Religion of the Dinka,* published by the Clarendon Press the year before (in 1961).

I later received a proposal from Godfrey Lienhardt that we jointly present a talk on the BBC Third Programme on the subject of 'Man in Society', in which he had been scheduled to speak on the Nilotics. I liked the idea, and quickly recalled the large number of Dinka songs I had tape-recorded just before I left for England, with the tape recorder of a Catholic missionary in the area. I had gone home in connection with the death in a car accident of a young uncle, who had been studying medicine in Italy. It was therefore a period of mourning, when such recording was inappropriate. But I persuaded my father to see the value of my recording Dinka songs, both for my personal enjoyment and for promoting Dinka culture in Europe. He became very supportive and even facilitated my recording of prominent singers from all parts of the tribe, and personally attended the recording, the first in the experience of the Ngok Dinka.

I now had the opportunity to make important use of the songs. How wonderful it would be to illustrate whatever I would say with the recorded voices of the Dinka singing about their religious devotion, their spiritual conception of authority, their material and aesthetic dedication to cattle, their loyalties to family ties, their pride in their Dinka ways and their concerns, worries and agonies about the disintegrating effect of disruptive change! Godfrey liked the idea and so did the programme director. Naturally, the material in the songs would be even more enriched by translating the excerpts into English, to be read immediately following the voices wherever appropriate.

This BBC programme thus introduced me to the treasures of my own song collection, the rewards of which eventually went far beyond the pleasure of listening to the tapes. I had initially recorded the songs for anticipated nostalgic reasons, as a prospective link with home while abroad. Now they were playing an educational role, and evolving into a source of information on various aspects of the Dinka. I was now making use of words translated into English, rather than merely listening to the sounds of Dinka songs for entertainment.

Godfrey soon realized the quality and the quantity of my song collection, and that it had significant potential. He suggested that we work on producing a volume of Dinka poetry for the series of the Oxford Library of African Literature that he co-edited with E.E. Evans-Pritchard and W.H. Whitely. In the end, Godfrey would gracefully suggest that as I had enough material for the book, and he himself was already published, it would assist my professional future if the volume carried my name alone, though he would of course assist me. This eventually resulted in my book, *The Dinka and Their Songs*, which appeared in the series of the Oxford Library of African Literature in 1973.

The opportunity could not have come at a better time, for even as my academic and professional future seemed dim and doomed by the threat of blindness from a newly detected chronic case of glaucoma, traceable back to secondary school days, and as persecution loomed from the government of the Sudan, which accused me of masterminding and directing South Sudanese anti-government activities throughout Europe, I could see the cathartic and lasting value of the production of a volume that would embody a vital expression of an important aspect of my people's tradition. Highly motivated by this opportunity, I worked industriously on transcribing and translating the songs, with the help of Wendy James, who was then Godfrey Lienhardt's student, and found solace in the process.

My frequent visits to Oxford and interaction with the close-knit family of the Institute of Social Anthropology formed a major part of my rebirth as an anthropological academic. Indeed, the pleasure of writing this Foreword is that it gives me the opportunity to recall the good old days of my frequent visits to Oxford. Although my field was law, specifically customary law, which is closely connected to anthropology, I became virtually a student of anthropology, learning not formally in the classroom, but informally through social interaction, mostly in the pubs when open, and in the residences of key members of the circle when the pubs were closed.

Many contributors to this volume have commented on the central role the pubs played in the lives of the Oxford family of anthropologists. Most of my time with Godfrey, his brother Peter, and their close-knit circle of students, friends and colleagues, and occasionally Evans-Pritchard himself, was in the pubs. I must confess that it crossed my mind at times to worry that those brilliant minds were being poisoned by alcohol, but I became an intimate member of the pub culture. Godfrey at times indicated some concern that E-P was drinking hard liquor instead of beer, but in my observation, it was always in small quantities, compared to

the number of pints of beer the others consumed. Later, when I was at Yale University and I was placing a call to Godfrey through the operator, the most reliable place I was expecting to find him was one of the pubs they patronized. The operator asked whether it was a private home or a business. When I said it was a pub, the operator was clearly taken aback that they were directing a call from America to a pub. 'A pub!?', he asked in apparent disbelief.

My connection with Godfrey Lienhardt, and through him with Oxford, eventually helped shape, in a fundamental way, my own work on customary law among the Dinka, which incrementally extended into areas that are viewed as essentially anthropological. And this itself provides me with the lens for focusing my vision on what I now see as the paradoxes of anthropology, as I discovered the wealth of knowledge generated by these anthropological giants, who studied our people in exceptionally great depth, and how this treasure is not made effective use of, either because it is not accessible, is not fully understood or appreciated, or is perhaps ignored as an 'alien' construction, designed to serve foreign, perhaps even adverse, interests.

Reflections on the work of Evans-Pritchard

The more I read the works of Godfrey Lienhardt and Evans-Pritchard, the more I was awed by their depth of insight and width of knowledge about our cultures. Much of this I could recognize, some of which was new, but exciting to know, and all of which intrigued me further about my own culture, about which I now wanted to know more. I could not believe that months, or a few years of living among strangers, could produce such deep and recognizably authentic knowledge about an alien culture. I remember an occasion when, I was visiting Oxford, someone alleged that the Dinka ate snakes. I did not know that, and could not believe it, although I vaguely recalled that perhaps some people ate the python. To be sure, I turned to Godfrey, 'Do we eat snakes?' That was how much I trusted his knowledge of the Dinka.

E-P was an enigma to me. He was a towering figure, who was also modest in a dignified way. He would surprisingly appear, discreetly, among his students and colleagues, who all referred to him deferentially and affectionately as E-P. I knew of his work on the Nuer, which also featured in our African Law classes. But what I had read, which portrayed the Dinka through Nuer spectacles, was not flattering to us. One crucial sentence in his book, *The Nuer*, stated, 'All Nuer consider them [the Dinka] – and rightly so – as thieves' (1940a:125) and more negatives followed. I was outraged, but I did not, of course, reveal my views and feelings to him. Of course I shared my observations with Godfrey, who was also discreet in his understanding and support for my feelings.

Although E-P was one of the leading names in the study of African customary law, I developed a somewhat built-in ambivalence about his scholarship. How could a prominent scholar be so biased as to add the words 'and rightly so' to a prejudiced view of a rival tribe about their antagonists? One of my shining moments in my African Law class was when we were discussing E-P's description of the role of the Leopard Skin Chief in dispute settlement, in which he said that the chief could intervene successfully only if the parties were willing to accept his mediation. I raised my hand and made the point that the statement implied that he could always take the initiative to intervene, although his success would depend on the willingness of the parties to accept his judgement. But once he did intervene, I contended, other factors might play a role in influencing the parties and determining the outcome. Professor Allott was conspicuously impressed with my comment. Pausing and smiling with satisfaction, he remarked, 'Very clever.' I was embarrassingly flattered and pleased that I had scored a 'clever' point against the prejudiced giant.

And yet, E-P was always very kind and cordial to me whenever I visited Oxford. One thing was puzzling to me; each time we met, he always spoke to me in Nuer. Although I repeatedly corrected him that I did not know Nuer and that I was not a Nuer, he kept talking to me in Nuer. I decided in the end that he was probably in courteous denial, because he did not want to know that I was a Dinka, bearing in mind the offensive things he had written about the Dinka. And indeed, I continued to be quite ambivalent in my interaction with him. I did not feel that I could openly contradict him. I also felt that Godfrey had not corrected him in his writings because he had been his teacher, and was now his colleague and a friend. Loyalty dictated that he kept silent on the issue. Godfrey only indirectly corrected E-P through his description of the Dinka value system, which was in sharp contrast to E-P's prejudiced view. I also felt that if I were to refute E-P's comparative views by presenting the Dinka counterview about the Nuer, I would risk being accused of tribalism and of fomenting divisiveness between the Dinka and the Nuer, which, as a South Sudanese, I should not do. Ironically, my interpretation that E-P courteously wanted to make a Nuer out of me eventually neutralized my anger, and made me forgive him.

Despite his negative views on the Dinka and my somewhat ambivalent relationship with him on that account, I always saw E-P as a gentle and kindly person. I did see indications of what his son, John, meant when he wrote that although his father was very loyal to the people with whom he worked and the tribes he studied, he did 'not suffer fools gladly'. As John elaborates:

> There were some people, however, for whom E-P had little respect and he was not loath to make his feelings known. This not only applied to when he was carrying out his fieldwork, but also in his assessment of some other anthropologists.
>
> (p. 86)

I remember one incident that corroborates John's view of his father. I was meeting E-P with a book in my hand. It was written by a prominent African National leader who had studied anthropology under E-P. When he saw the book, he remarked, 'He is not able to write anything of value, is he?' I mumbled back something noncommittal, especially because I liked the political message of the book, whose author happened to have been an eminent West African tribal chief aiming at promoting African indigenous cultures.

Although the image and legacy of E-P is legendary in the academic and scholarly world, his work is viewed with considerable ambivalence and even hostility by Africans. Even the Nuer, whom he somewhat idealized, hold mixed feelings about his perspectives on them. Commenting on the reaction of Africans generally to the works of E-P, Tim Allen observes in his chapter, 'Unsurprisingly, Africans who see themselves as being represented in E-P's publications can find aspects of what he wrote inaccurate or offensive and can be critical or dismissive. That is nothing new.' (p. 209). By noting that it is nothing new, Allen might be alluding to the African view of anthropology generally. Focusing on the reaction Okot p'Bitek, himself an anthropologist and poet from Uganda whom I met in Oxford in the early 60s, he writes,

> In 1960 Okot p'Bitek, who was soon to be recognized internationally for his poetry, arrived in Oxford to study anthropology with E-P and his colleagues. He was a Ugandan Luo speaker, and he later recalled enjoying his talks with E-P about Luo dances and sexual practices. However, he was appalled by the terminology and social categorizations to which he was introduced. He objected to the use of the words 'primitive' and 'savage' for Africans, and he viewed the use of the concept of 'tribe' for African groups as being more about European assumptions and prejudices than lived realities in Africa.
>
> (p. 209)

P'Bitek had a similar reaction after reading ethnographic accounts of African religious beliefs and practices, including E-P's *Nuer Religion*.

He later published a book, that discussed his experiences in Oxford, *African Religions in Western Scholarship* (1971) and contained many passages in which he expressed his disdain for the approach and theories he was taught. He asserted that the whole discipline of social anthropology is little more than a colonial instrument to ensure effective control and exploitation. He asked: 'Is there a place for social anthropology in an African university? In my opinion the answer is, no. The departments of social anthropology in African universities were campaigning grounds for Western anthropologists. African universities can ill-afford to maintain these bases. Africans have no interests in, and cannot indulge in perpetuating the myth of the "primitive".' (ibid.:6).

Grace Akello, who taught anthropology at Gulu University in Northern Uganda, was disturbed by what she perceived to be a racist conception of Africans, who were categorized as primitive and obsessed with explaining everything with reference to magic. She was bemused that anyone might think Azande had child-like mentalities in the first place and was irritated by the use of the anthropological present, because it suggested that these quintessential Africans had a way of life and thinking that is suspended in time.

E-P's connection to colonial domination and the fact that he was commissioned by the colonial administration to study the subject population to facilitate their control compounds African antagonism to his studies. As Tim Allen observes,

> The anger of oppressed Africans under White rule seems justified. It can make E-P's colonial connections, his use of the present tense, and his choice of terms difficult to set aside, even if the rewards for doing so may be significant.
>
> (p. 213)

E-P himself 'acknowledged that there was hostility to anthropological inquiries among those being studied, because of a perception that anthropologists imagine African countries are populated by uncivilized savages' (ibid.).

> Anthropology smells to them as cultural colonialism, an arrogant assertion of European superiority – the white man studying the inferior black man; and they have some justification for their suspicions and resentment, for anthropologists have in the past only too readily lent and sold themselves in the service of colonial interests. The late Dr Nkrumah once complained to me that anthropologists tried to make the African look as primitive as possible: photographing people in the nude and writing about witchcraft and fetishes and other superstitions and ignoring roads, harbours, schools, factories, etc.
>
> (Evans-Pritchard 1976:251)

As the views of several South Sudanese collected by Tim Allen demonstrates, the memory of E-P among the South Sudanese studied is a remarkable mix of admiration, even affection, with strong criticisms of what are viewed as racist undertones and linkages to colonial domination. I myself consulted a select number of South Sudanese from the communities among whom E-P conducted his research, including Azande, Nuer, Anuak and Shilluk, and

by extension, the Dinka. I include their responses in an annex to this Foreword**.** What they reflect is a range of views, some quite objective, others rather critical, and most of them very positive. Even those who were critical saw his studies as having prominently placed the people of South Sudan on the world map.

E-P's prejudiced comments on the Dinka brought to mind other remarks by Western anthropologists and writers, and made me wonder whether they ever expected that their works would be read by the people they were writing about. Paul Howell was an anthropologist who served as a District Commissioner among the Nuer and wrote an influential book on Nuer law (1954). He subsequently served as District Commissioner in Western Kordofan, whose jurisdiction covered the Ngok Dinka. In a well-researched article published in *Sudan Notes and Records* (1951) he wrote about the Ngok Dinka, with the Nuer political system as his comparative point of departure. Commenting on my grandfather, Paramount Chief Kwol Arob, and his successors, including my father, Deng Majok, he wrote,

> A Chief with considerable autocratic powers has been in the process of evolution over a number of years and if Kwol Arob was not a *Nazir* to begin with, he soon became the Dinka equivalent. His son, Deng Majok, has carried the evolution a stage further and has a burning ambition to pattern himself on the Ali Gulla 'Nazirate' of the Homr (Baggara) with all the pomp of State visits to Khartoum, tribal gatherings, and in addition the Dinka ideal of wealth, a company of wives.
>
> (Howell 1951:263–4)

In another context, he referred to my father using what he described as 'cheap' Arab fragrance, which I mistakenly thought was a reference to monitory value, rather than aesthetic quality, though I subsequently learned that it was not cheap in that market context. I later got to know Paul Howell and found that he thought very highly of my father. I had a clear sense that he was rather apologetic about what he had written about my grandfather and father.

Through K.D.D. Henderson, another former British administrator who had known my grandfather and praised him highly in his writings, I met and got to know Sir James Robertson, former Civil Secretary, who had served as District Commissioner in our area from 1934 to 1936. Robertson, commenting on my grandfather, wrote,

> Chief Kwol Arob of the Ngok Dinka, [who] lived in a buffer area between the Arabs and the great mass of the Dinka in the South [...] had the diplomatic habit of changing his dress to suit his company. When he came North to Muglad, he would don the flowing white robes and turbans of an Arab Sheikh; going South, he wore the topee, shirt, tie and trousers of a Southern Chief; but in his own country, he appeared in the usual Dinka dress – nothing more than a few beads.
>
> (Robertson 1974:50–1)

As I got to know Robertson well in England, I found him to have fond memories of my grandfather. But I doubt that he would have expected me to read his comment on him.

Overall, I believe that education in Africa caught up with the Western observers and writers. As a graduate student in England and later as a diplomat, I came across former British colonial administrators whose reaction ranged from utter surprise with the progress made, to flattery that they had seen the potential. One leading former administrator/scholar in favourably reviewing my book, *Tradition and Modernization: A Challenge for Law Among the Dinka* (1971), argued that it was an affirmation of the value of their policy of indirect rule. It was a very flattering review, although it was not clear to me whether he was referring to the substance of the book, or the author, as his proof of indirect rule's merits.

If the Western scholars and writers did not anticipate that their works would be accessible to the people whom they were studying, or their descendants, then for whom were they writing and to what end? In the case of E-P's works on the Nuer, the answer was clear. His study was commissioned by the Anglo-Egyptian administration to help them understand a people who were considered very unruly and hostile to the administration. The study was therefore aimed at giving them an intellectual tool for more effectively controlling the colonial subjects. It is indeed reported that E-P was torn between upholding scholarly ideals of objective and neutral investigation, and gearing his research to the interest of the government. He wrote,

> I was asked to make a study of the Nuer, at the time very hostile to the Government of the Sudan. I did not want to do this and I twice refused; then came a personal appeal from MacMichael to which I could not say no. Perhaps he thought I was expendable. So came about eventually my three volumes on this people and also a book on the Anuak; but my bibliography tells that story.
>
> (this volume, p. 9)

To the extent that the studies of E-P influenced the policies of the Anglo-Egyptian Administration in the south, and perhaps in the country as a whole, accounting for the strategy of indirect rule, it served, at least in my view, a very constructive purpose. Indeed, that remains the only experiment in applying indigenous cultural values and institutions to maintain law and order, and to ensure peace security and stability throughout the country, inexpensively.

Babo Nimir, Paramount Chief of the Missiriya Arab tribes, favourably compared the relative value of native administration to that of the central government. The comparison is between the Parker pen and the pencil. While the pen is more expensive than the pencil, what they write is the same. (Deng 1982). Unfortunately, this constructive application of knowledge to policy was seen as a colonial exploitation of tradition to facilitate foreign domination on the cheap.

The objectives of E-P's subsequent research, and those of numerous scholars who followed him in studying the Nuer and other groups in South Sudan, became increasingly more academic and less policy oriented. Even then, the policy dimension of anthropological studies lingered and E-P's pioneering work charted the way. His daughter Deirdre Evans-Pritchard succinctly explains this in her chapter:

> Beyond the fact that E-P did not undertake any new ethnographic research after the war, his slow transition to more theoretical writing can be seen as reflective of his awareness of the wider potential impact and application of anthropology. Ethnography at the time was very literal, down to the names of kitchen utensils, with intricate kinship diagrams and the careful descriptions of a full year of daily life. After the war, E-P encouraged the British colonial administration to employ anthropologists, aiming to insert culture brokers into deliberations so that local communities had louder voices. This was an early step towards professionalizing anthropology beyond academia and can only have been influenced by E-P's own experience during the Second World War, when his research and writing were parallel to his work as a British officer. Treating anthropology as an exchange of ideas and cultures captures the spirit of the post-war cultural-diplomacy movement.
>
> (p. 176)

The mutuality of interest between the researcher and the people being studied was inherent in what Deirdre describes as an aspect of the emerging cultural diplomacy:

> This was not the acknowledged mission of E-P's generation of anthropologists, but people like E-P were interacting with local communities to connect, explain and translate. Anthropology and cultural diplomacy are deeply linked and both are fraught with influence and messaging problems. On one level, research about tribes is information for the sake of policy and strategic planning, and could potentially hurt the very tribes themselves. On another level, immersive learning from 'their' point of view is positive cultural diplomacy.
>
> (ibid.)

As this volume shows, the discipline was fast growing, and comprised a close circle of pioneering scholars who were globally connected. It is remarkable that they not only knew each other well, but closely followed what professional openings there were and who was being considered for which posts. The competition was stiff and often pitted colleagues, and even friends, against each other. The well-known phenomenon of academic politics emerges as a cut-throat competition, what Richard Werbner describes as 'the cruel force of this academic warfare' (p. 144). This fight becomes increasingly directed toward generating knowledge for knowledge sake. The progress of scholarship in the academic arena is largely determined by one's thesis being critiqued, discredited and replaced, only to have the new thesis soon find its adversaries to discredit and replace it. The durability of 'the truth' is constantly challenged. All this is done with no direct connection to the interests or policy objectives of the communities being studied. The claim that scholarly work should be policy neutral only creates a situation of normative ambiguity, where one's own value standpoint is concealed behind a screen of objectivity and neutrality. And indeed, despite the denial of policy motivation, every serious study must have 'a hidden agenda' and inherent policy implications. This is what has been widely acknowledged as normative ambiguity.

Although his study of the Nuer was clearly intended to serve colonial ends, it would be unfair to label E-P's overall work as intended to serve any particular policy objectives, other than perhaps his own scholarly interests. In my admittedly intuitive, and perhaps naïve view, I began to suspect that anthropologists, and social scientists in general, study other societies in search of alternatives to the values and patterns of behaviour prevailing in their own societies. Even in religious terms, the notion of experience being the core of Nilotic beliefs, as described by Godfrey Lienhardt in his *Divinity and Experience: The Religion of the Dinka* (1971), and earlier by E-P in *Nuer Religion* (1956), could be a dynamic of their own belief. The theory portrays an empirical conceptualization that I personally found convincing and appealing. I also recognized it as a true presentation of our religion. But in addition, I believe it is arguably relevant to religion in general.

Perhaps the cross-cultural differences involved are details that offer a potential basis for complementarity between aspects of Western and Nilotic belief systems. What in Western perception is considered conscience, a deeply individualized concept, is externalized and cast into an objective reality that is collectively perceived as acting upon the source-object in the context of the family or community. What is seen by the Europeans as a purely personal matter, to be dealt with by the individual concerned, is seen by the Nilotics as having communal repercussions and should therefore be managed through some form of collective family or communal action. The

culturally specific functional roles involved become those of a psychiatrist in the West and a diviner in the Nilotic context. This normative perception is therefore both culturally contextualized and conceptually universal. Personally, I found that interpretation of religion more compelling than the prevailing dogmas of conventional religion.

Another area where I believe research into other cultures might indicate a search for alternative value systems reveals itself in E-P's description of the Nuer as an egalitarian people among whom 'lording it over others' (1940:215) is not allowed. The Nuer are presented as fiercely independent and resistant to domination and their political system as 'ordered anarchy'. While the Nuer themselves have responded negatively to this description, I believe E-P was paradoxically presenting it approvingly, as a normative system that was in contrast to the centralized domination that ultimately depends on state monopolization of force, the positivist order that prevails in Western societies. E-P's description makes the Nuer system come across as an almost utopian alternative, in which social order is maintained without domination. This is what Michael Duany, a Nuer scholar who was critical of E-P, must have meant when he wrote a doctoral thesis that paradoxically seemed to confirm the normative essence of 'ordered anarchy' that he was challenging in his title: 'Neither Palaces nor Prisons: The Constitution of Order Among the Nuer' (Duany 1992).

What I am trying to say is that in my, perhaps fictional, interpretation (E-P's functional ethos) of the works of anthropologists, I wondered whether they were intellectually or conceptually leaving behind what they saw as negative aspects or shortcomings in their own societies, and creatively looking for alternative models, through which they could, at least theoretically, reconstruct a more perfect conceptual system. And in a way, Michael Kenny's chapter alludes to this when he quotes Godfrey Lienhardt's interpretation of E-P seeing himself reflected in the Zande trickster. According to Kenny,

> Godfrey Lienhardt refers to an earlier period of Evans-Pritchard's life as a kind of 'dream time' in which fact and fiction are inextricably mixed, an obscurity enhanced by E-P's own mythopoetic tendencies. Lienhardt observed that even in later life he enjoyed the 'ambivalence of fact and fiction'.
>
> (p. 43)

Kenny goes on to say that,

> This appreciation of ambiguity no doubt stimulated his interest in Zande tales concerning Ture, the Trickster, in which similar difficulties arise. E-P asked himself whether the Zande take these as 'true' stories and concluded that the question is irrelevant. 'Fiction', he observes, 'imposes itself upon experience'.
>
> (ibid.)

If this interpretation is correct, then is the anthropologist describing what in fact is or what ideally ought to be? And to what extent is all this about the society s/he is studying, or indirectly about his or her own society, with an implicit call for reform? Or is it perhaps about the society being studied as embodying elements of the envisaged reform of the system back home? In the end, where and how would the implications of the study be acted upon, or will the only results be the stimulations of intellectual exercise in the classrooms, and literary debates in articles or books?

Policy implications of Evans-Pritchard's work

My interest in anthropological literature is not a purely academic or scholarly exercise. I believe strongly that knowledge of our culture(s) should be applied to the challenges of nation-building and development. Such notions as acephalous political systems, stateless societies, tribes without rulers, the segmentary-lineage system, balanced opposition, and ordered anarchy, which were central to the anthropological description of the Nilotic societies that Oxford anthropologists and their colleagues in related anthropological institutions championed, have built into them concepts of governance, democracy, respect for human rights and constitutionalism that, if applied, could help shape an admirable model state. I believe that colonial rulers did apply them when they adopted the policy of indirect rule, and post-colonial administrations then abandoned this as part of the colonial exploitation of culture as a tool of domination. The culturally oriented approach I envisage is what the chairman of my doctoral dissertation at Yale Law School, Professor Harold Lasswell helped me dub, the strategy of 'transitional integration' (Deng 1971).

My approach to legal anthropology led me to assume that every cohesive society has an integrated, coherent and well-established system based on fundamental values and institutional structures, akin to Kelsen's German concept of the *Grundnorm* (1949). This fundamental norm forms an underlying basis of the social order that determines the way a society governs itself, utilizes its human and material resources, and allocates functional responsibilities among the various categories of its members. Over long experience, trial and error, this eventually results in an established order that enjoys optimum communal acceptance, essentially by consensus, and establishes a system that is stable, self-sustaining and resistant to disruptive change. I believe this is what David Kronenfeld means when he writes in his chapter,

> For me, the take-home lesson is that a good description is not just a passive snapshot of how things look at some given moment, but it includes an understanding of the mechanism involved and the values, understandings, social relations and contexts (including ecology) that feed into the mechanism.
>
> (p. 276)

Many contributors to this volume have emphasized the extent to which E-P identified, or empathized, with the people he studied, even as he maintained his objectivity. John Evans-Pritchard, writing about his father in his chapter in this volume, cites the opinion of one observer that E-P 'allowed his natural interest in religion to prejudge a number of his finding' (p. 84). E-P himself 'maintained that one's personal religion should not be allowed to colour the field work anthropologists carry out when studying other cultures, religions and customs' (ibid.). It is nevertheless asserted that his conversion to Catholicism influenced his views on religious studies, although he himself denied this and insisted on an objective neutral approach in research.

To underscore this ambiguity, which is stressed by a number of contributors as a matter of his character or approach to issues, he valued both the way the Nuer imposed on him through intimate interaction with them, and the attitude of the Azande, who kept him at arm's length. The Nuer enabled him to observe them in action at close range, but without willingly answering his questions, while the Azande openly provided any information he asked for, but from a relative distance. His war experiences both with the Anuak against the Italian's occupation in Ethiopia, in South Sudan's borders with Ethiopia, and the Arab nomads in the desert war, demonstrate the extent to which he fully integrated himself into sharing the hardships of war and life with his local comrades in arms, including suffering from the tropical diseases of the region, to which he was more vulnerable than the locals. As I read his experiences in the battlefield with the local people, it seemed almost as if he were already on field research outside the academic norms, and these experiences presumably enriched his later scholarly field research. As Deidre wrote about her father in her chapter,

> The Second World War was a period in E-P's life that defined paths he took later as an academic, especially his turn to theoretical writings about anthropology and history, and his defence of tribal and rural communities.
>
> (p. 174)

What I have said about relatively stable societies having a coherent and cohesive inner logic to their political, economic and social processes should not be interpreted to mean that these societies are static. Indeed, the dynamics of change are inherent in any social order. That is in effect the point underscored by Douglas Johnson in his chapter. After first observing that 'The lack of reconstructions created the impression that the peoples of the colonial empires, particularly in Africa, were more or less static prior to European domination.' (p. 163), Johnson explained how E-P brought a historical perspective, which shed light on change, into the discipline of anthropology:

> This is, though I really need not spell it out, an awareness of the fact that the society he studied was not timeless, that it had undergone change in the lifetime of those persons who were his chief witnesses, and that these changes had taken place very largely in the time preceding his acquaintance with them. He was not living in a 'zero time'; his evidence was not confined to what he could observe, nor to a single location or single trained informant. Rather his reconstruction of the past was based on a combination of written contemporary sources, the testimony of living witnesses, and the observation of the traces of the past in the practices of the present…
>
> (p. 165)

Change becomes accelerated when societies suffer such shocks as war or humanitarian tragedy. Shocks may be so severe as to shatter the existing order, necessitating the development of a new logic for reforming the system and determining a reallocation of roles and responsibilities. Such is the case in South Sudan, where the experience of war has brought radical changes in the position of women, and has introduced reforms towards gender equality and the role of youth. But change should be a process of reform, not the obliteration of what was existing, to be replaced by something totally new to the society.

Having observed radical changes in our South Sudan communities within my lifetime, I have come to liken studying societies to watching a movie. You can watch a film as an ongoing process in which the scenes are constantly changing, or you can pause the film and analyse the details of a specific scene. Even when you watch the film to the end, in real life, that represents only an episode in an ongoing 'life theatre'. In studying societies, we must always bear in mind that we are capturing a scene in an unfolding story. Ideally, the observer should revisit the scene periodically, to see the process and reconstruct the part missed in the interim. Both stability and change are relative aspects of the dynamics of any given society at any given time.

Perhaps because of the influence of the works of many anthropologists who have studied our people, many of whom I got to know personally, headed of course by Godfrey Lienhardt and Evans-Pritchard, for me in that order, I became a strong believer in developing systems of governance, constitutionalism and development on the basis of indigenous cultural values and institutions. The portrait of the Dinka social order that I have delineated over the years uses a merger of law and anthropology, in a manner largely shaped by the Oxford School of Anthropology and their Nilotic studies. It is ironic that it was at the London University School of Oriental and African Studies that I found African customary law newly introduced as a respected subject of formal academic study, as taught by Anthony Allott. At Yale University in the

United States, I was privileged to introduce the subject of customary law for my doctoral dissertation, but I also found new intellectual tools to build upon in my expanding study of African customary law.

Through Yale jurisprudential school of 'law, science and policy', which was founded and expounded by Professors Myres McDougal and Harold Lasswell, and which amply accommodated my anthropological leaning, I learned that law is not an abstract objective concept to be unscrupulously upheld, but rather the outcome of a constitutive competitive power process in which people, individuals or groups, guided by overriding goals, seek value objectives, through institutions, using base resources. The overriding goal of the theory was human dignity, defined as the broadest shaping and sharing of values. This means maximizing production and widening equitable distribution. Before I went to Yale, I would have been reticent to talk about 'values', a concept which was seen as antithetical to the 'positivist' or 'command theory' of English jurisprudence, or the American and Scandinavian 'realist' school, through which I had been introduced in my earlier study of law. When I mentioned to one of my Yale professors how my English legal education was against value judgments, he said with a sense of affirmative humour, 'At Yale, we force our students at gun point to take a value position.' Indeed, there was explicit warning against the risks of normative ambiguity, and an explicit demand for the clarification of the observer's standpoint, goals and objectives.

Portrait of the Nilotic cultural value system

My interest in Dinka culture began to expand as I addressed questions related to my new understanding of law, science and policy: What are the overriding goals toward which the system is aimed and based? What are the specific objectives, whose pursuit process law is regulating? What are the institutional structures for the pursuit of values? What resources are used as base values? What are the sources of information for identifying those values? How are the values transmitted to the next generation? What is the Dinka world-view in which the value system is embedded? And how has that world-view been historically impacted by the changes the society has undergone? My answers to these questions, as my numerous publications on Dinka culture may suggest (e.g. Deng 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1978, 1980, 1985), derive from a sustained delineation of a culturally oriented system of governance, constitutionalism, development and nation-building, approaching the Dinka in the pluralistic context of the Sudan and beyond.

In addition to my doctoral dissertation, *Tradition and Modernization: A Challenge for Law Among the Dinka of the Sudan* (1971), I also published the volume of Dinka songs which Godfrey and I had planned (1973). While the idea of using songs as a source for substantiating social and legal norms was initially resisted, or at least viewed with scepticism, it was eventually endorsed with enthusiasm by my doctoral committee. I even attached the volume of songs to my dissertation. Other books followed. *The Dinka of the Sudan* (1972) was another joint project that Godfrey had proposed to me, and we even agreed to use the conceptual framework of a life cycle. But our plans did not materialize until the project was proposed to me by the editors of the Stanford Series of Social Anthropology, George and Louise Spindler, at the initiative of Godfrey's friend and colleague, John Middleton. I wrote the book following the life-cycle format which Godfrey and I had agreed upon. Other initiatives of my own included *Dinka Folktales: African Stories from the Sudan* (1974), *Africans of Two Worlds: The Dinka in Afro-Arab Sudan* (1978) and *Dinka Cosmology* (1980). I mention these books because I believe they were direct and indirect products of the intellectual influence of the Oxford School of Anthropology on me.

But my interest in the Oxford-related anthropological literature was not a purely academic or scholarly exercise. I believed strongly that knowledge of our culture(s) should be applied to the challenges of development and nation-building. Some of the overriding cultural values which Godfrey Lienhardt underscores in his studies of the Dinka, and for which there are parallels among the Nuer and other Nilotics in E-P's studies, have featured prominently in my policy-oriented works. In preparing this Foreword, I debated whether or not to focus on the Dinka value system and risk being seen as ethnocentric or self-serving. In the end I decided to do so, with dual objectives: first, to provide insight into Dinka values for those who may know them only through the Nuer-guided E-P's eyes and ears; and second, to present a normative framework which, ironically, the Dinka for the most part share with the Nuer and other South Sudanese ethnic groups.

One of the fundamental Dinka values which Godfrey Lienhardt highlighted is embodied in a concept called *cieng*, an idealized notion of human relations aimed at unity, harmony and conciliatory management of differences. The concept, however, has a wide range of interrelated meanings, including custom, law, control, behaviour, conduct and way of life. *Cieng* is both prescriptive, what ought to be, and descriptive, what in fact happens. It is supposed to be inherently good, but may be specified as good or bad. It is sometimes described as *cieng e baai*, where *baai* means home, village, community, tribe or country. *Cieng* is therefore specific to a social unit and inclusive to expanding circles, ultimately embracing humanity. A person who abides by the moral code of the Dinka social order is said to know *cieng*. Conversely, an ill-mannered person is said not to know *cieng*.

Built into *cieng* are fundamental principles of what might qualify as human rights. But the Dinka believe that *cieng* should not only cover respect for humans, as God's creatures, whatever their race, culture, or religion, but also for non-

human creatures of God. It requires being in harmony with humanity and nature. As Chief Ayeny Aleu put it,

> Even the tree which cannot speak has the nature of a human being. It is a human being to God, the person who created it. Do not despise it; it is a human being.

In the words of another chief, Makuei Bilkuei,

> It is the Government that has taken away our unity. We were one with our hyenas, with our leopards, with our elephants, with our buffaloes… We should all combine – the people, the animals, the birds that fly, we are all one. Let us all unite… Even the animals that eat people, even the people who keep black magic that we do not like, let's embrace them all and be one people.

This calls to mind David Kronenfeld's mention of ecology as one of the elements of the social context to be covered by anthropological field research.

Respecting God's creatures is in the end seen to be in one's personal interest. Chief Ayeny Aleu, once more: 'If you see a man walking on his two legs, do not despise him; he is a human being. Bring him close to you and treat him like a human being. That is how you will secure your own life. But if you push him onto the ground and do not give him what he needs, things will spoil [for you] and even your big share, which you guard with care, will be destroyed.' This normative code implies an all-embracing respect for the environment as an ideal that is of course not fully observed in practice, but which was upheld as a matter of principle. It is on that basis that clans established special relationships with totems, such as wild animals and snakes, with whom they entered into pacts committing them not to harm one another. One must respect even birds that fly in the sky, the fish in the river, the trees and all things that do not speak; they also have the dignity of being creatures of God. Despising them risks divine wrath that might be disastrous for the wrongdoer.

The paradox is that while *cieng* is against the use of violence and prescribes peaceful means of resolving differences, violence was a frequent occurrence among what are often referred to as the warrior Nilotic tribes, including the Dinka and the Nuer. This was largely due to a division of roles that made chiefs and elders the peacemakers, and organized young men into age-sets whose identity and dignity rested in being warriors, aesthetically inspired and supported by their female counterpart age-sets, who defended society against external aggression – a role they exaggerated by going to war at the slightest provocation, especially anything seen as touching on their pride and dignity, *dheeng*, and often in defiance of the chiefs and elders.

Dheeng, best translated as dignity, is indeed another fundamental concept among the Dinka. Closely associated with it is *atheek*, respect, which was highlighted by Godfrey Lienhardt as central to peaceful human relations. These two concepts cover such elements as physical appearance, beauty, and artistic expression in song and dance, and admiration for distinguished performance. They also cover proper conduct in relationship to others, which includes observing the ideals of *cieng*. One can have *dheeng*, and be respected as *adheng*, which can best be translated as a 'gentleman' (though the concept also applies to women), either by virtue of the status one is born into or by acquisition through merit. One can be an *adheng* because of wealth, but that must be connected with generosity or benevolent attitude toward others. Otherwise, one may be rich, and an *adheng* by wealth, and yet be known as *ayur*, the opposite of *adheng*, if one is miserly or ungenerous.

These moral values are embodied in attributes associated with leadership and responsible exercise of authority and control, which also feature prominently in Lienhardt's writings. When a person assumes authoritative control of a family, clan, community, tribe or country, he is said to *dom baai*; with *baai*, as I said, referring to home and expanding up to the tribe and the country. *Dom baai* implies ensuring peace, security and order. The next requirement is *guier baai*, which means 'putting in order' or reforming and improving the situation by solving any problems that existed before assuming control. Two additional concepts relate more directly to ensuring the stability of the improved situation. One is *mac baai*, which means to tie down or bind, a term normally used to mean tying a cow to a peg with a rope, and when applied to exercising authority over people, means to control. *Mac* refers to control over the family, clan or community. The other word is *muk baai*, which means 'keeping', a word that also applies to nurturing a child, and implies stabilization.

There are other concepts that focus on rights, the administration of justice, and the adjudicating role of traditional authority. One is *yic*, which literally means 'truth', but also means 'right'. The expression, '*ke yic*' simply means 'it is the truth.' But to say, '*ke yic du*' means 'it is your truth' or 'it is your right'. A related term is *luk*, which means to resolve a dispute, but also means to implore or persuade. The combination reflects the Dinka method of settling disputes, which is not an adversarial determination of rights and wrongs, as is in Western judicial process, but a conciliatory process of resolving a dispute in an amicable way that aims to reach a consensus and achieve reconciliation.

The chief among the Dinka does not wield coercive force by which to impose his will on his 'subjects'. He is primarily a moderator whose authority and effectiveness rest on his managing relations between and among his people through his ability to persuade. His only coercive function is social approbation for compliance with his decisions, and condemnation or ostracism and, in extreme

cases, divine intervention in the form of punishment, for disobeying him.

It is noteworthy that although the chief had no military or police force, the Dinka were highly praised by British colonial administration as exceptionally law abiding and their society free of such crimes as murder as opposed to killing in inter-communal fights, or theft as opposed to taking what is owed to one through forceful self-help. There is a tendency among foreign observers to describe cattle raid as theft, which is incorrect. Theft, by which a person takes another person's property in secrecy, is seen as morally debased and a thief is publicly ostracized and may be forced to leave the community. Cattle raiding is seen as an element of warfare and an open show of force. This is not to say that it is more acceptable than theft, but simply to see it as substantively different and therefore requiring different preventive and punitive measures.

Gawain Bell who was the colonial District Commissioner of Western Kordofan (1937–9) in which the Ngok Dinka were administered together with Arab tribes, wrote about the lack of what he calls common crime in the Ngok Dinka area:

> I can't remember that we ever had any serious crime in that part of the District. Among the Baggara of Missiriya, there were frequent quarrels and fights. The same applies to the Hamar in the North. But I seem to remember that the Ngok Dinka were a particularly law-abiding people… I cannot recollect that either within the tribe or as between their tribe and the Baggara they ever had any serious trouble when I was there.
>
> (Deng 1985:138)

Godfrey Lienhardt described the Dinka cultural method of resolving disputes as a search for *yic*, 'the truth', which is there to be explored and found as the basis for the solution:

> I suppose everyone would agree that one of the most decisive marks of a society we should call in a spiritual sense 'civilized' is a highly developed sense of justice, and here, the Nilotics, with their intense respect for the personal independence and dignity for themselves and others, may be superior to societies more civilized in the material sense… The Dinka and the Nuer are a warlike people and have never been slow to assert their rights as they see them by physical force. Yet, if one sees Dinka trying to resolve a dispute, according to their own customary law, there is often a reasonableness and a gentleness in their demeanour, a courtesy and a quietness in the speech of those elder men, superior in status and wisdom, an attempt to get at the whole truth between them.
>
> (Lienhardt 1963:828)

All this would tend to fall within the normative framework Michael Duany sought to establish in his Ph.D. dissertation on the Nuer social order: 'Neither Palaces nor Prisons' (1992).

The question that arises is whether knowledge has an inherent value devoid of any moral or normative objective or is a means to value objectives. An argument can be made for both, but in Nilotic culture and practice, knowledge must serve moral objectives. The word for knowledge among the Dinka is '*ngic*', 'knowing', to which is normally added the word '*wel*', 'words'. Knowing the words implies the words of wisdom, a morally upright knowledge to be distinguished from mere '*ngic jam*', knowing how to talk well. I was once in a meeting, around 1974, in which we were trying to unify the Ngok Dinka, amidst the north-south civil war, in which the commanding officer, using local informants, was terrorizing the population. Our immediate objective was to reconcile the leading informant for the security forces, seen as the principal source of terror, with the legitimate tribal leaders. At one point, he said, 'There is no one in this tribe who can speak better than me, not even the late Chief Deng Majok.' One of my uncles, Arob Kuol, responded, 'No one has ever questioned your ability with words. What people do not know is your heart.'

Even the mere documentation of people's views about their situation is seen as a means of transmitting a point of view, and therefore has a policy value. It is interesting that the authors of the chapter on E-P's work on the Azande, Bruno Braak and John Kenyi, note,

> …the Azande were the first to know that one day our culture will be eroded. So they cooperated with E-P to document the culture for our children. That was the agreement: they allowed him access in return for his documentation of the culture.
>
> (p. 226)

When I interviewed Dinka chiefs and elders in 1973, on their people's world-view, their past, present and projected future, they all welcomed my initiative as an important means of getting their voices heard and preserving their culture. As I noted in my book, *Africans of Two Worlds: The Dinka in Afro-Arab Sudan* (1978), which embodies the results of that research,

> The traditional Dinka do not expect any one to be a neutral observer. A researcher may be viewed as a person of influence by virtue of status in that society or of academic involvement. Quite apart from what he is, what he records may be seen as a way of influencing events.
>
> (1978:34)

That was the way my role was perceived by those I interviewed. As one chief put it,

> We are very pleased. Things we have told you, you will give them a purpose. You will write them down, and that is a big thing… Now we have trusted you… We trust in you fully.
>
> (ibid.)

In another interview, an elder said,

> Mading, as we talk today, our hearts will cool down because you have been found. The pains of the past will cool down because, if people have talked to you, people hope that you can do something.
>
> (ibid.:37)

As Braak and Kenyi observed, the mere identity and status of the researcher might be a significant factor in the equation:

> Evans-Pritchard emphasized that in anthropology findings are influenced by the researcher's background, character and outlook (Evans-Pritchard, 1976:240–54). Our work is no different. John Kenyi is a South Sudanese man from Central Equatoria State, who was educated in Norway and now lives as a refugee in Uganda. Bruno Braak is a white Dutch man, who first came to (then) Sudan in 2011. Our research assistants were young English-speaking Azande. People we met, explicitly or implicitly, reflected on our backgrounds to decide whether and with whom to speak, and what to speak about.
>
> (p. 226)

The authors give a specific instance in which permission to be interviewed was given only after clarification of the researcher's standpoint:

> Bruno was refused an interview with a grandson of King Gbudue, whose defeat at the hands of Anglo-Egyptian forces is seen by many as the beginning of colonial rule over the Azande. The next day, he called Bruno back to his home. During the polite introductions before our interview, he asked me: 'Do you know what the white man did to my grandfather, King Gbudue? They killed him! Have you come to kill me?'
>
> (ibid.)

In my case, one chief asked me in what capacity I was interviewing them. If I was talking to them as a member of the government of President Nimeiri, some things would remain unsaid. But if I was talking to them as the son of Chief Deng Majok (of the Ngok Dinka), then nothing would be left behind; I would be told everything. The young man who was accompanying me, and who was of a known and respected social standing, reassured them. This is why it is important for the identity and standpoint of the researcher to be transparently revealed to avoid any ambiguity regarding the research objectives.

As I have already stated, and as underscored by Johnson and Braak and Kenyi in their respective chapters, social systems and related cultural values are not static but dynamic. Chief Arol Kachwol of Gok Dinka, one of the leaders I interviewed in 1973 on the Dinka world-view, summarized the cultural values of lineage continuity, which Godfrey Lienhardt called the 'the only immortality they [the Dinka] know' (1971:26), the dual role of father and mother, and the challenge of generational change in the following words:

> Mading, it is God who changes the world by giving successive generations their turns. When God comes to change your world, it will be through you and your wife. You will sleep together and bear a child. When that happens, you should know that God has passed on to your children, borne by your wife, the things with which you had lived your life.
>
> Chief Arol went on to say,
>
> Your father, Deng Majok, if he had lived without a child until his death, his would have been the kind of life that continues only as a tale. But if he left behind a big son who can be spoken of, 'this is Mading, son of Deng', then, even if a person had never met your father, but he hears that you are the son of Deng Majok in the same way he had heard of your father, he will meet through you your father whom he never met.

The value of the concept is not racially or culturally limited to the Dinka, but is interracially and cross-culturally expandable, specifically through mixed marriages. Referring to my American wife, Dorothy, who joined me on her first visit to South Sudan shortly after our wedding, and was assisting me with the recording, Chief Arol Kachuol introduced the issue of mixed marriages as a bridge across tribal or racial divisions:

> For instance, where is this girl, your wife, from? Is she not from America? And you have brought her back to your country. If you bear a child together now, in that child will combine the words of her country and the words of your country. It is as though God has given her to Deng Majok, your father.

Chief Arol concluded:

> The way we see it, God has brought peace and reconciliation into your hearts. None of you is to hate the race of the other. That's the way it goes. Tomorrow, the people of that tribe or the people of that race, God will take them and mix them with the people of that race. They too will bear their own races through their children. When that happens, whatever hostility might have been between people, should no longer be allowed to continue. Relationship kills those troubles and begins the new way of kinship.

In words reminiscent of the Old Testament, Chief Arol Kachuol concluded, 'Man is one single word with God.'

Conclusion

I would like to conclude this Foreword with a few observations on the impact of E-P's work on the people he studied. I focus my remarks on two issues: his comparative perspective on the Nuer and the Dinka, and the policy implications of his work on South Sudan and the ongoing challenges of nation-building.

On the first, it must be emphasized that E-P's work in anthropology has had global impact on the discipline and the people of South Sudan whom he studied are now known worldwide. No student of anthropology has not heard of the Nuer and their alleged perpetual conflicts with the Dinka, or of accounts in which the Nuer come across in a glowing light by comparison to the Dinka. It must be underscored that Evans-Pritchard never lived among the Dinka, nor did he have close contact with them during his field research. His views are therefore based on information provided him by the Nuer. As I have pointed out in this Foreword, this has confronted me with a moral dilemma. Should I make a contrasting case in favour of the Dinka and risk coming across as wedded to a tribal viewpoint, when a national perspective is more appropriat, a risk E-P himself did not face? The answer for me was obviously in the negative. As for Godfrey Lienhardt, as a protégé and friend of E-P, he could understandably not directly criticize him, except through his more accurate description of the Dinka and their value system, which is in sharp contrast to E-P's writings. I have no doubt that this was one aspect to a complex, and perhaps at times ambivalent, relationship between the two towering scholars of Nilotic societies.

I once asked Godfrey Lienhardt what were the best and the worst things he had experienced in his professional life. He did not hesitate in his response to both: 'Evans-Pritchard'. This point was once edited out in a piece I wrote about Godfrey, presumably because it was seen as reflecting disloyalty by highlighting a negative in what was otherwise a close and lifelong friendship. I see it differently. For me, it was a human affirmation of a deep friendship with tensions, not totally surprising in such intense relationships. I believe it in fact underscored the importance of the friendship, in which differences in their perceptions of the people they studied must have been unavoidable and natural.

On the policy implications of scholarship, the works of E-P and other anthropologists have bequeathed to the people of South Sudan a treasury of knowledge, but this has not been used to guide policies in nation-building or development, either because it has not been adequately accessible to those involved, or it has been deliberately ignored. It is ironic that some of the attributes for which the Nuer have become known to the world of anthropology and related fields, such as their egalitarianism and democratic character, reflected in such notions as 'ordered anarchy', have been negatively construed and resented by the Nuer. It is quite paradoxical that some Nuer intellectuals have told me that E-P did not speak Nuer, and that the views about the Nuer which they see as negative came from non-Nuer interpreters, whom they claim were mostly Dinka. This would imply that even E-P's negative views about the Dinka emanated from his Dinka interpreters, an improbable proposition.

I often argued to our leaders, including the late John Garang, and those who are currently dominating the political field, foremost among them Salva Kiir and Riek Machar, that our people have been thoroughly studied and found to be deeply egalitarian with strong democratic values that make it impossible for dictatorship to succeed. Salva Kiir, in discussing with me his differences with John Garang in 2004, agreed with me and invoked those values in his criticism of what he saw as Garang's dictatorial leadership style; and when I told Riek Machar about my having invoked our cultural values to both John Garang and Salva Kiir as antithetical to dictatorship, he asked me to 'please remind Salva Kiir again'. Indeed, all of them need to be reminded of our indigenous cultural values, in which they should ground their leadership and thereby adhere to a culturally contextualized governance system.

Annex: Evans-Pritchard remembered

As I was preparing this Foreword, I decided to ask a few South Sudanese intellectuals from the communities E-P had studied, how, in their opinion, he is remembered there. These included Azande, Nuer, Anuak and Shilluk representatives, in the order in which he studied them, and by extension, the Dinka. What I received was a range of views, some quite objective, others rather critical, and most of them very positive. Even those who were critical saw his studies as having placed the people of South Sudan prominently on the world map. The following are their responses.

Azande – Professor Samson Wassara, academic

The Azande remember Professor E.E. Evans-Pritchard for the ground-breaking research he conducted among them from 1926 to 1930. He acknowledged receiving hospitality

and assistance in Zandeland at many locations in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and Belgian Congo. While remembrance of Professor Evans-Pritchard may be fading from memory at the grass-roots level, a few elders do remember him under the name 'Kakarika' given to him by the natives during the research. The name derives from the fact that he used to walk bare foot in the grass like the natives. The Azande referred to the young Western social anthropologists who were conducting follow-up research in the sites studied by Professor Pritchard as the children of Kakarika. Only people in their 90s or late 80s can remember stories about Professor Evans-Pritchard, as told by their parents in oral tradition.

Educated people among the Azande remember Professor Evans-Pritchard for his work describing the history, culture and ethnography of the Azande in the academic world. Azande intellectuals remember Professor Evans-Prichard for his publications that made Azande people famous among social scientists the world over. Among the reasons Professor Evans-Pritchard remains in the memories of Azande intellectuals is that he engaged young Azande students, like Angelo Beda and the late Richard Mambia of the University of Khartoum in 1960s, to participate in his research work. Zande intellectuals do remember Professor Evans-Pritchard for the impact of his 1937 book *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*, which spread the knowledge and fame of the Azande in the world. Documentaries about Zande beliefs enable the Azande to refresh their memories about the role of Professor Evans-Pritchard in recording the beliefs of their society.

Nuer – Peter Lam Both, politician

Sir Evans-Pritchard was one of the foremost social anthropologists, who introduced the Nuer people as one of the most important cultural groups in Africa through his trilogy: *The Nuer* (1940a), *Kinship and Marriage among the Nuer* (1951) and *Nuer Religion* (1956). This is in addition to various articles E-P and his colleagues published in reputable academic journals. For such reason, the culture of the Nuer, who are also known as Naath, became famous around the world and generated interest for later anthropologists, who further studied the Nuer and their culture.

Generally, the work of E-P is evaluated from positive and negative perspectives in the Nuer community. He is appreciated for his ability to expound on the Nuer socio-economic, cultural and political systems, in which everyone is equal, free and respected, under the control of cultural mores and norms. In the Nuer society, there are no masters or servants. All are created equal by God (*Kwoth*).

For that reason, E–P was challenged by some of his research participants as to why he had people carrying his belongings and doing chores for him, as though he were their master. In fact, E-P had workers and translators from other communities, because the Nuer refused to work for him, as this could have been misconstrued to mean that they were his slaves. In his own words, E-P (1940a) explained that 'It is impossible to live among the Nuer and conceive of rulers ruling over them … no man is recognized as superior. Every man considers himself as good as his neighbour.'

This kind of belief and feeling is what brought the Nuer to loggerheads with authorities that were seen to be intrusive, exploitative and in violation of their rights. The Nuer considered it their duty to correct the situation peacefully, or if need be through the use of force. As E-P (1940a:181) summed it up: 'The Nuer is a product of hard and egalitarian upbringing; deeply democratic and easily aroused to violence, if his rights are threatened.'

The absence of organized institutions of governance in the Nuer community does not inhibit the Nuer society from functioning smoothly or in an orderly fashion. The power in Nuer culture is vested in individuals who possess the specific skills and characteristics of leadership. However, those individuals do not have the monopoly of power over the community members, as Nuer society is governed through consensus and understanding.

Even with such a positive assessment, there are also critics of the work of E-P in the Nuer community, especially by some Nuer anthropologists, around three issues. These include: his description of the Nuer political system as 'ordered anarchy'; his assertion that the Nuer migration from west to east was 'spontaneously triggered'; and his affiliation with the British colonial army.

In his work, 'Neither Palaces nor Prisons' (1992), Michael Wal Duany challenged the principle of 'ordered anarchy' espoused by E-P. Duany argues that the constitution of order among the Nuer in their society is acephalous, borrowing from Alex de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* (2000), which explained how the principle of self-governance can be used to constitute societies that do not rely on a single headship (Jal 2013).

Duany also argued that the Nuer migration from west to east had carefully designed objectives and strategies in order to reach the final destination. For him, the migration was not spontaneous, as Evans-Pritchard alleged, but planned and implemented with precision.

Finally, there is the general feeling among the Nuer that E-P was a British colonial agent sent in the guise of an anthropologist to collect information about how the Nuer could be subdued, after the British failed to quell their resistance to colonialism militarily. There is a belief that the results of his research were used to eliminate the Nuer leaders and prophets who served as centres of power and mobilization against the British colonial aggression.

Those are some of the sentiments among the Nuer on how their people remember Sir Evans-Pritchard.

Nuer/Azande – Dr John Gai Yoh, scholar and politician

In the British-Sudanese literature Sir Edward Evans-Pritchard is presented as an anthropologist and army officer. He was attached to the British army. His assignment to Southern Sudan was prompted by the difficulties the British administration were facing in Central Upper Nile and in Western Equatoria during the 1902–29 period. In the central Nuer, the Gawaar, Laak and Lou Nuer resisted the expansion of British administration into their area. This led to regular raids by the British army against them. In Western Equatoria, the Azande princes, mainly in Maridi, Yambio and Tambura, also resisted British expansion into their land. This resulted in confrontations for almost 20 years.

It is in this context that the British government sent Evans-Pritchard to study the Nuer and Azande political, economic and social ways of life. During his interaction with the Nuer, Evans-Pritchard was surprised by their openness and the freeness of his interaction with different age groups within the society. He thought that they were communally cooperative. They shared everything except their wives.

Evans-Pritchard also observed that the Nuer did not have a centralized political system, rather they were ruled through what he termed 'ordered anarchy'. This characterization of the Nuer political system implies that they were organized, but not well structured. He also believed that the Nuer migration system from the west to the east of the Nile was not well organized, although he admitted that the Nuer assimilation system was very effective.

In response to Evans-Pritchard theory of ordered anarchy and unstructured expansionism, as described by his former student, Raymond Kelly, in his book *The Nuer Conquest* (1985), two South Sudanese Nuer scholars tried to respond to Evans-Pritchard's assertions. Dr Michael Duany wrote his Ph.D. thesis entitled 'Neither Palaces nor Prisons: The Constitution of Order Among the Nuer' in which he disapproved of Evans-Pritchard theory of 'ordered anarchy'. He argued instead that the Nuer political system was institutionalized and governed by what he referred to as 'the constitution of order'.

On the other hand, Professor Gabriel Giet Jal, in his doctoral thesis entitled 'The History of the Jikany Nuer Before 1920' (1987), attempted to refute Kelly's theory of Nuer conquest by arguing that the Nuer expansion in 1800s was peaceful, and slow, in terms of the years spent in every area they reached, whether in Dinka, Anyuak or Burun territories. The assimilation process was determined by the length of the period they spent in those areas and the kind of relationships they built.

The Azande perceived Evans-Pritchard as part of the colonial authority, just as the Nuer did. And given the fact that the Azande princes were defeated by the end of 1920, it was natural that by the time Evans-Pritchard arrived in their territory, the British had already established outposts in Yambio, Maridi, Tambura and Nzara.

Shilluk – Dr Peter Nyaba, geologist and politician

I encountered the works of Evans-Pritchard in the course of my desktop investigation and study for the House of Nationalities Project, which we developed as a framework for managing ethnic diversity in South Sudan, particularly his pioneering work on the Azande and the Nuer. Although that work informed the colonial policy on how to administer those peoples, it also contributed to the evolution of his theory on religion, and his attempt to remove anthropology as an academic discipline from the domain of sciences, lumping it within the humanities.

I have learnt from this theory that society and social constructs evolve in response to the development of their modes of social production, and not in response to natural selection. In this respect, I understand the context in which Evans-Pritchard observed that among the Nuer he was an equal, while with the Azande, he was more than equal. He suggests that an egalitarian way of life, even at the lowest level of socioeconomic and cultural development of a people, is a social construct.

Sir Edward Evans-Pritchard was a towering figure who helped build and develop British anthropology, and who contributed to British policy in the colonies. This is something we should be angry about in the light of the massive abuses committed against the colonial people.

Anyuak – Ambassador Dhano Obongo, diplomat

E.E. Evans-Pritchard conducted field research among the people of Anyuak (Anuak) Kingdom. He carried out a scientific and social anthropological study of Anyuak society, using ethnographic investigation that focused on their culture, and social and political system, as a kingdom in Anglo-Egyptian Sudan.

Professor Evans-Pritchard spent three months on field research, on the basis of which he wrote his well-researched and famous book, *The Political System of the Anuak of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan* (1940b). We wish he had spent more time among the Anyuak people to write more books about them, especially on the role of the Anyuak women, particularly the princesses, in the political system of the Anyuak Kingdom. He also focused his investigation on the environmental conditions.

I believe that Professor Evans-Pritchard was the first white man to visit the Anyuak Kingdom. He also tried to visit Gore, in Ethiopia, formerly the land of Galla ethnic group, now known as the Oromo. The Oromo is the biggest ethnic group in Ethiopia. The Oromo neighbour the Anyuak ethnic group. The Italian invasion of Ethiopia compelled Evans-Pritchard to leave Ethiopia.

Professor Evans-Pritchard is considered by the Anyuak people as having opened the eyes of the world to the

Anyuak community. He is remembered as having done a spectacular job for the Anyuak people. If he were still alive, he would have been honoured by the Anyuak community for what he did for them.

Nevertheless, although he is gone, he left behind a rich legacy in his writings, for the Anyuak generations to come to benefit from. And yet, Professor Evans Pritchard's field research can still be described as unfinished.

May almighty God rest his beautiful soul in the eternal life.

Dinka – Professor Jok Madut Dut, academic

Although Edward Evans-Pritchard is better known globally, and locally within South Sudan, for his classical ethnographies on the Nuer, his Ph.D. dissertation was on the Azande of the south-western part of what is now South Sudan. His dissertation, 'The Social Organization of the Azande of the Bahr-el-Ghazel Province of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan', presented to the London School of Economics and Political Science in 1927, is the oldest graduate thesis on South Sudan. This in itself is a great scholarly feat, breaking ground in a social-science discipline that was then relatively new, but which was also mired in the politics of the conquest and suppression of the colonized people of Africa and beyond.

E-P, as he is often affectionately referred to by his students, colleagues and associates, painted multiple images of the people of South Sudan that he endeavoured to know so well. His work on Nuer and Azande religious traditions were only to be rivalled by Godfrey Lienhardt's work on the Dinka religion, in terms of their rootedness in the mastery of the languages of these two communities. Two premier British social anthropologists studying South Sudan's biggest ethnic groups, decided that the best entry way to understanding them was through knowing their languages. This is how anthropology used to be done, though it is not so common anymore. The fact that young anthropologists are now going to remote corners of the world to study people whose languages they do not know, without needing to learn them because they can find local interpreters who know European languages, is in itself a sign of the times, and tests the rigour of ethnography in modern times.

As post-colonial societies grapple with their past and how best to know it, E-P has rendered South Sudanese unable to say categorically whether British social anthropology sold them to an empire or helped them record ways to remember aspects of their own past. He will always be remembered fondly, first for getting the descriptions of religion, marriage, livelihoods and inter-ethnic relations correct, and secondly for his impact on the discipline. *The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People* remains a classic within anthropology, and has triggered responses and critiques the world over.

By the same token, there are increasing voices within South Sudan, Africa and the Global South in general that criticize anthropology as a particular way of knowing and of knowledge production. E-P's work may have generated a narrative about the Azande, the Nuer and the Anyuak (Anuak) of South Sudan built on a foundation that misread the social structure of these communities, masking stories about women as free agents, not cognizant of issues of sexuality, gendered power relations, and simply taking at face value what men reported – and this narrative has now come to constrain these communities within a straitjacket, as if time and space had not touched their ways of life.

The influence of his work on South Sudanese themselves is mixed. His work put these communities on the world map in ways that are both flattering and not so flattering. But the knowledge he generated is not being applied to addressing the challenging contemporary problems. So, what is E-P's work worth in the drastically changed context of South Sudan? His descriptions of the Nuer can be said to have emphasized violence and warlike nature of the people, with their spiritual objects depicted mainly as war objects. As for positive influences, while his books are read in undergraduate anthropology classes as fixed facts, the truth is that more interpretive reading of these works can provide a better way to use them.

It is now close to a century since E-P began his studies in South Sudan, and the societies he studied have long since changed, and as the political climate has shifted so far, the question confronting all social science is of the utility of old ethnographies in understanding the new dynamics of war, the rise of post-colonial states, population increase and movement, the spread of Christianity, new weapons, modern medicine, new livelihoods. To what extent can the ground-breaking ethnographies be useful in encouraging evidence-based research and knowledge production to become the basis for public policy-making? Can the sound theories and ethnographic facts that were generated by E-P's work be relevant to the design and implementation of programmes that address contemporary needs in South Sudan?

Can policy endeavours built on ethnographic knowledge be made relevant and effective in delivering services to the people who have been made so well known by these very ethnographies? In Africa, and because of the connections between this discipline and colonialism, between ethnography and the state control of otherwise exceedingly democratic and egalitarian people, the value of social science is becoming questionable with regard to practical issues of development. If it is assumed that it enables policymakers, designers of development programmes, implementers to serve the people it studies, then it is important for policymakers, practitioners in the fields of development and welfare in general to grapple with how much the development interventions that use ethnographic

knowledge are situated in, and in conversation with, its subjects, their knowledge and their insider's perspective.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

If you have opened the cover of this volume you will immediately appreciate what a huge and collaborative undertaking it must have been. The contributors first of all, from all over the world, have patiently responded to being badgered for their contributions, and have been equally patient waiting for the results after more than four years of discussion, collation and editing. I owe all of them a great debt and hope they will think it has been worth the wait. I am grateful to many others who were happy to share their memories of E-P and I have tried to reflect that by passing some of them on in the Introduction.

The Evans-Pritchard family have been wonderfully supportive of this endeavour. In fact it was a paper about his father's fieldwork[1] by John Evans-Pritchard that chimed with the seed growing in my own mind, prompting me into action. All the siblings attended the workshop hosted by the RAI in October 2018, and both John and Deirdre Evans-Pritchard have contributed to this collection. I hope they, Shineen, Nicky and Ambrose feel this does some justice to their father's memory.

One of the most important parts of this collection is that dedicated to work in Africa[2] and I owe an enormous debt to Tim Allen who introduces that section (p. 209) and who liaised with the contributors from Africa, giving a perspective proving vital to understanding the contemporary relevance of E-P's work for a new generation of African scholars.

At the RAI, support for both workshop and this subsequent publication has been unfailingly and generously given by the Director, David Shankland. E-P as a past President of the RAI has always fascinated David, leading to his own research at Exeter College, Oxford about the relationship between E-P and R.R. Marett.[3] Thanks too to Amanda Vinson, Deputy Director at the RAI for helping organize the workshop and giving uncomplaining assistance with references and information for the book. I am similarly grateful for help from David Gellner and Vicky Dean from the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Oxford and from Sarah Walpole and Andrei Naçu at the RAI who helped with the photo archive and alongside the skills and enthusiasm of Christopher Morton at The Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford enabled us to provide most of the illustrations. I owe massive thanks to the vital work of Lauren Greenwood, who over a long period of time has helped source material, tackled some of the complex clearances, pulled me out of innumerable internet muddles and calmly put order in the chaos I invariably left when compiling and searching for appropriate contents.

The task undertaken by Sean Kingston in editing this volume and readying it for publication was enormous and one he fulfilled with meticulous care and aplomb. I am sure he breathed a sigh of relief when the day came when all the woefully absent references and page numbers had been finally hunted down.

Finally, overwhelming gratitude goes to my wife Lynette. We have journeyed together from the Institute of Social Anthropology at Oxford and this volume couldn't have been realized without her support, knowledge of the subject and the people, and her keen literary eye.

1 That paper was an earlier version of what is included in this book as Chapter 9.

2 Part IV.

3 See Chapter 11.

PART I

Introduction

Evans-Pritchard in uniform. Courtesy of Bruce-Ross Smith.

1

Introduction

André Singer

The work of Edward Evans-Pritchard, a towering figure in the genesis and unfolding of anthropology, still exerts a powerful influence on the discipline half a century after his death. However, his impact reached beyond his academic publications, and he had a profound influence, both academic and personal, on those he met and worked with. Yet he remained, though famously convivial and sociable, a surprisingly private person.

In 1973 I began an obituary for E-P using his own words,

> The work of the anthropologist is not photographic. He has to decide what is significant in what he observes and by his subsequent relation of his experience to bring what is significant in to relief. For this he must have, in anthropology, a feeling for form and pattern, and a touch of genius… The personality of an anthropologist cannot be eliminated from his work.
>
> (Evans-Pritchard 1951:82)

This volume is an attempt to elicit some aspects of E-P's own personality; to look for insights into a unique scholar with a touch of personal genius. It aims also to reflect on the different ways in which E-P influenced the lives of those who passed through the Oxford Institute – how his work, his thinking, his actions and his friendships formed threads weaving through the lives of those he knew.

In its preparation, it has been important to elicit contributions from those who knew him personally, as well as those who have been influenced by his work. A Royal Anthropological Institute workshop held in October 2018,[1] and this subsequent collection, presented the opportunity to address some matters largely neglected over the half century since he died: an insight into the man himself, into the extraordinary nature of the Oxford institute over which he presided, and into the way his work is seen and used by subsequent scholars, in the West, Africa and elsewhere.

I was E-P's student and research assistant at the end of the 1960s and in the early 1970s.[2] Part of the responsibility assigned to me as the graduate assistant at the Institute of Social Anthropology at Oxford from 1969 was, in addition to sorting out his notes for possible publications and lectures,[3] to assist E-P as a kind of combination of batman, driver and live-in aide. I am not sure how much this was a step up from what Raymond Apthorpe bemusedly remembered when he was appointed graduate assistant in 1956, 'to dust the top shelves in the Institute library',[4] but the role was challenging in many ways, not least because as a diabetic, E-P was nonetheless partial to the odd whisky. Skill, discretion and a repertoire of diversionary tactics were required to ensure that on august occasions (such as receiving an honorary doctorate alongside Henry Moore as the special guest of Max Gluckman in Manchester in 1969, or, a year earlier, responding to a Mary Douglas lecture on grids and groups in Oxford), things would pass off without too much disruption. I felt that over those few years I had got to know E-P well and had become in a minor way an honorary member of the family. Assembling this collection of papers by family, friends, colleagues and others influenced by E-P was therefore a labour of love, and it became increasingly revelatory to realize that what I thought I knew and understood about him hardly scratched the surface.

When the call went out for notes, comments, memories and articles about him, the response was overwhelmingly affectionate and respectful. From the 1950s to the 1970s, those who knew him remembered the same man – a raconteur, scurrilous, wry, shambolic, courteous, astute, disrespectful, ever ready with advice and modestly brilliant. All, of course, was not always sweetness and light, as E-P himself recalled when remembering his relationship

1 Convened over two days at the RAI and attended by all five of E-Ps children: Shineen, John, Nicky, Deirdre and Ambrose.

2 I first met E-P as an undergraduate in 1965 and in 1966 he became my supervisor for the Diploma, B.Litt and D.Phil.

3 Resulting in *The Azande: History and Political Institutions* (1971) and the posthumous *A History of Anthropological Thought* (1981).

4 See Chapter 5, p. 50.

with Malinowski,[5] or as Richard Werbner recounts in his description of the sometimes-fractious tensions between E-P and Max Gluckman,[6] and it becomes clear from many of these essays and from his correspondence that those of us who knew him, each only knew a part. Many of the following chapters, whilst reflecting and elaborating on his work, give us a series of glimpses of who E-P really was, and although the E-P remembered by Raymond Apthorpe in his brilliantly whimsical reflection of the Institute in the 1950s, was recognizably the same E-P that I knew between 1965 and 73, other memories fill in many new and unexpected elements. Mary Douglas (1990), R. Barnes (1987) and Godfrey Lienhardt (1974) all touched upon his personality, as did Michael Kenny 30 years ago (see Chapter 4), but in this volume we are also fortunate in having the far more personal contributions of two of his children (Chapters 9 and 18) and of the poet Bruce Ross-Smith who, as Bosworth to his Dr Johnson, has chronicled what I can only describe as the poetic soul of E-P through the detailed notes and memories he compiled (Chapter 3). He has uniquely traced influences from E-P's childhood and student years that impacted on his fieldwork and his understanding of the peoples so central to his work, and has shown how indelibly poetry formed a part of E-P's character and writing.

Throughout E-P's last years he was surrounded by the affection of his friends, family and students, as reflected in many of the comments in the following chapters or quoted here in the introduction. Sadly, many of the colleagues closest to him, such as Godfrey and Peter Lienhardt, Max Gluckman, John Beattie, Mary Douglas, Ioan Lewis, Emrys Peters and Meyer Fortes, are no longer with us, but others have generously contributed papers or comments that give a palpable sense of a much loved and influential man.

The volume falls into five parts. The first has an unashamed flavour of nostalgia, as students, family colleagues and friends reflect on his personality and the influences that shaped his twenty-four years at the helm at Oxford.[7]

The overwhelming impression throughout this period of 'dream-time' was one of relaxed intermingling between staff and students. The informality of the man infused the atmosphere of the Institute until academic and social life rolled into one. E-P took over the Institute as Professor from Radcliffe-Brown in 1946, 'inheriting' a student who was to become India's greatest anthropologist and sociologist, Mysore (M.N.) Srinivas. Srinivas offers the earliest description of what it meant to study with E-P in those early years, setting a recognizable scene for the many fruitful years to follow:

> E-P's style offered a profound contrast to R-B's. He did not seem to enjoy lecturing or presiding over seminars but he came into his own in a small group of students, colleagues and friends where he was free from the constraints of the set lecture and seminar. It was usual for a small circle of his students, and occasionally one or two others, to meet in one or other of the pubs near the Institute of Social Anthropology or his house on Headington Hill, and discuss anthropology and everything else under the sun over tankards of beer. I came to know E-P the man as well as scholar in these pub sessions, and looking back, I am amazed how he was able to give so much of his time to his students and during a period when he was extraordinarily creative. E-P had the gift of establishing contact with human beings of diverse cultures and this was due in part at least to his deep and almost instinctive acceptance of all mankind as one in spite of racial and religious barriers. He was a conservative Englishman at heart but an odd conservative who could place himself in the position of the black man, the transhumant Nuer and the feuding Sanusi chief. I found it easier to communicate with E-P than with other white scholars, some of whom were known for their sympathy for India and for leftist causes generally.
>
> (Srinivas 1973:14)

Soon after Srinivas, in 1947, Paul 'Jim' Bohannan[8] joined the Institute from America and similarly recollected how unique an environment it was:

> what I really remember are the Friday seminars, the long walks in the parks, often with Evans-Pritchard, sometimes with Max Gluckman, and the focused intensity of social anthropologists. All of contemporary British social anthropology showed up in those seminars. I have heard Evans-Pritchard and Firth argue, none too civilly. I have heard Audrey Richards gather all her forces and face Evans-Pritchard down. I have heard Schapera give an almost inspiring, and very thoroughly researched, paper about kinship in the novels of Jane Austen; I have several times heard Evans-Pritchard argue with Daryll Forde – both enjoyed it.[9]

5 E-P and Raymond Firth were Malinowski's first two students when he became a lecturer at LSE in 1924. 'I never got on with Malinowski, and Seligman would not, or could not, stand up to him so on my return to England I found myself barred from the London School of Economics and, such was Malinowski's influence, it appeared, from anywhere else.' (Evans-Pritchard, Chapter 2, p. 9.

6 Below, Chapter 14.

7 1946–70: a period labelled by Godfrey Lienhardt, in a usage picked up by Michael Kenny, as 'dream-time'.

8 See Seaman, Chapter 33.

9 Audio recording between Paul Bohannan and Gary Seaman, Paul Bohannan Interview 1998–2004.

It was the intimacy of the Institute that enabled E-P to generate a club-like regime. In a report written in 1953,[10] he described the smallness of the post-war establishment he was then running:

> When I succeeded Professor Radcliffe-Brown in the Chair in 1946 the staff consisted of myself, a Lecturer (Mr M. Fortes) with the personal status of Reader, and a secretary-librarian, Miss P.H. Puckle. In the following year we were joined by Dr H.M. Gluckman, who gave up the Directorship of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute in Northern Rhodesia to take a lectureship at the Institute of Social Anthropology. In 1948 a new lectureship, in Indian Sociology, was created for the Institute by the Board of Oriental Studies, and Dr M.N. Srinivas was appointed to it. In 1949 Dr Gluckman left us for a Chair at Manchester. He was replaced by Dr. J.G. Peristiany. In the same year the Board of Oriental Studies gave us a further lectureship, in African Sociology, and Mr R.G. Lienhardt was appointed to it.

That same year, Raymond Apthorpe[11] joined as a student and pointed out how a unique Institute culture had become properly entrenched and centred around The Lamb and Flag in St Giles:[12]

> At the Institute's regular weekly Friday afternoon seminar in the mid 1950s (I was a D.Phil. student there 1954–7) E-P would seldom say much, and in fact not always even attend. For him that was a time for a light nap. The seminar was held at the Institute, but forensics were at the Lamb and Flag – and later, wetter pastures. Any views E-P might have on the seminar or seminar-giver would be expressed – dropping in briefly on his way home or to All Souls – at the post-seminar discussions relentlessly waged at the Lamb and Flag immediately afterwards. These forensics were 'driven' in one direction or another – usually another – by Godfrey Lienhardt, sometimes with the lieutenant aid of his brother Peter. Often also with David Pocock as a sparring partner – if, that is, he hadn't already safely sloped off to the relative isolation of his place out in Kidlington. Like most other graduate students of the day I also attended E-P's lectures, Edwardianly elegantly delivered, matter-of-factly informative, curiosity rousing, on Scottish enlightenment and other early 'sources' of social anthropology.
>
> (pers. comm.)

From the 1950s to the 1960s, the informality in E-P's department was easily fostered because of its size. As Peter Rivière[13] recalls,

> One is inclined to forget just how small the Institute was in the 1960s. There were only three non-teaching staff members. The secretary, the librarian, and the graduate assistant. There was also one telephone which was in the corridor (it was answered by whoever was at hand who then called the required person). When I took up my lectureship in 1971 I had E-P's old room at the top of the stairs in 51.[14] It was not unknown for E-P to wander in and sit down. He never seemed surprised to see me there nor did he interrupt what I was doing even if it was a supervision. He would likewise get up and wander off again without a word.
>
> (pers. comm.)

In the early 1960s, Malcolm McLeod[15] was the then graduate assistant, and recalled a similar atmosphere that prevailed for at least the next decade:

> The staff, led by EP, were very willing to treat students in a friendly and easy-going way. Most lunch times there was a pub visit, mostly to the Kings Arms, starting around noon. EP would peel off just before one to get his lunch in All Souls. He sometimes had his spaniel Barko with him and a tatty American cloth shopping bag. Rodney Needham drank one pint of Guinness and left, John Beattie also drank Guinness but stayed for another pint. Others also stayed longer. Evening drinking centred around Godfrey and Peter Lienhardt, with Clarendon Press people (Dan and Winnie Davin, Peter Sutcliffe) in the Victoria Arms in Walton St. There were always visiting anthropologists from many parts of the world around, taken to the pub and mixing with students and staff at coffee time/teatime. I think

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10 This report, kindly forwarded to me by David Shankland, was found in typescript in the papers of John Linton Myres (MSS Myres) at the Bodleian Library. It is dated at the top in Myres' hand 'Received Professor Evans-Pritchard 13.02.53'.

11 See Chapter 5.

12 Once the Institute moved from Keble Road to Banbury Road, the main social venues fluctuated between the Victoria on Walton Street and the Gardener's Arms on North Parade.

13 Peter Rivière was in post at the Institute from 1971 until 2001, retiring that year as Professor of Social Anthropology and Fellow of Linacre College.

14 51 Banbury Road, where the Institute moved to in 1965.

15 Malcolm McLeod was a student at the Institute from 1963–6. He taught and carried out research in Ghana before teaching anthropology at Cambridge. In 1974 he was appointed Keeper of Ethnography at the British Museum and was Director of the Museum of Mankind there until 1990, when he moved to Glasgow as director of the Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery, 1990 to 1999; he was professor of African Studies from 1994–2006; vice-principal from 1999–2005 and pro vice-principal from 2005–6. He was awarded a CBE in 2006.

> the essence of the place was the easy way diploma and higher students were able to mix with the staff and with those who had just returned from fieldwork and were writing up.
>
> (pers. comm.)

Invariably, E-P and Godfrey sponsored visits from itinerant Nuer, Dinka or Shilluk scholars,[16] whilst the full-time students, for their part, were from international and hugely varied backgrounds, and received a somewhat eccentric intellectual and social education at the Institute – first at 11 Keble Road and then from 1965 onwards on the Banbury Road. Time spent in those extra-curriculum hours at the local pubs introduced them to flows of wide-ranging, often humorous, yet incisive argument. The unconventional nature of these sessions seemed to do little to impede their progress in their post-Oxford careers; indeed, it may be said to have enhanced it.[17]

The uniqueness of the atmosphere at the Institute was most remarked upon by American students who came to study with E-P. Historian Douglas Johnson[18] was bemused at how his expectations from his earlier education in California were overturned:

> The atmosphere E-P helped to create (and which Godfrey and Peter deliberately perpetuated) was very different from the graduate department I came from in UCLA. My undergraduate college, Haverford, in Pennsylvania retained some of its Quaker ethos, in that professors were not addressed by their titles (or their doctorates), but by their names. In laid-back California, however, professors were addressed by their titles until graduate students had passed their doctoral qualifying exams. It was only then that they were allowed to address their professors by their first names. It was something of a surprise to me, therefore, to find UCLA was more hierarchical than Oxford, where all staff at the Institute were addressed by their first name (or their initials). Even staff pigeonholes were labelled by first name.
>
> (pers. comm.)

Whilst for another American student Peter Bicknell, tutorials added more unusual and surprising activities to those of quizzical intelligence:

> Whilst supervising my B Litt. on primitive warfare, I accompanied E-P on Saturdays to Oxford's speedway stadium to watch and bet at the greyhound races. I think he was thoughtfully introducing me, a young American, to another, different aspect of Oxford's culture. One day, seeing me in the Anthropology Institute's library, he asked how it was going. I assumed he was not asking me about my dismal dog-betting success and I told him that I was having a problem finding a useful reference to anything about the weaponry used by some of the Azande neighbours. E-P paused for a second and then suggested that I might like to take a look at something by P. Larken in the 1930 Sudan Notes & Records, Volume 13, part 1. Second paragraph. And, there it was.
>
> (pers. comm.)

Another American, James Fox,[19] arrived as a Rhodes Scholar from Harvard in 1962:

> One of the recurrent issues was what constituted good ethnography and who among the anthropologists whose works we were reading were indeed good ethnographers. This was also one of the main topics of many of my conversations with E-P. which often took place in a pub or on the walk to the pub. Needham and both Lienhardts usually joined the group, Pocock occasionally and also Burridge; Beattie rarely. The rest would mainly be diploma students, like myself, who were anxious to listen in on what was discussed. Visitors would also attend, if they came to Oxford early for the weekly seminar. I remember encountering Edmund Leach standing outside the locked door of the Institute and uncertain where to go. I was able to escort him to the pub to join E-P and the others. Renovations were being done to the Eagle and Child, which meant that some regulars from there had to shift across the street to the Lamb and Flag. I remember E-P pointing out C.S Lewis, whose work I knew, with his drinking partner, J.R.R. Tolkien whose name I was not familiar with. Only years later, recovering from flu at Duke University, I read the whole of the *Lord of the Rings* and came to know Tolkien's work. It impressed me that E-P seemed to know so many of the regulars at the Lamb and Flag. One piece of almost mystical wisdom that E-P passed on to me during one of our walks together was his explanation that writing a good ethnography

16 Including Francis Deng, later to become minister of state for foreign affairs for the Sudanese government.

17 From McLeod's diploma year alone, examples included the following: Peter Sarpong (from Ghana) ended up Roman Catholic Metropolitan Archbishop of Kumase; Eric ten Raa (from Holland) pioneering research in Australia and Tanzania; Ngapare Hopa MNZM (from New Zealand) the first Maori woman to be awarded a D.Phil. at Oxford and to head Maori studies at Auckland University; Aidan Shorter (White Father); Jose Cutilero became Portuguese Foreign Minister; Garett Barden, (from Ireland), Emeritus Professor of Philosophy, University of Cork; Anjeli Patnaik (from India), became a senior diplomat. etc.

18 See Chapter 16.

19 Currently professorial fellow at the Australian National University.

> meant capturing and conveying 'the grain of the wood' of the society one studied. Like every tree species, each society had its unique wood grain and it was the task of the ethnographer to represent that distinctive grain. My last and perhaps most memorable encounter with E-P was at my viva. E-P and Leach were my oral examiners. Leach began with some vigorous questioning but before he could go too far, E-P began to chide him about his own fieldwork. Leach took the bait and the two of them spent much of my examination time arguing with each other. When it was over, I asked Leach for his notes on my thesis, which he kindly gave me. I have no idea whether E-P ever read it.
>
> (pers. comm.)

David Hicks,[20] a young student from Wales joined the Institute that same year:

> When I arrived at the Institute, I discovered to my considerable delight I had E-P as my tutor for the Post-Graduate Diploma. At lunchtime, visits to a local pub followed. Years later Raymond Firth professed some disquiet about the alcoholic culture prevailing at the Institute in those days, but for students these occasions in the 'King's Arms,' 'Lamb and Flag,' or whichever pub E-P happened to be patronizing that week were priceless opportunities to hear E-P's take on the history and current state of the discipline we were training to enter. What we heard added substance to what we learned in our lectures and tutorials.
>
> (pers. comm.)

And for philosopher Garrett Barden[21] those encounters with E-P changed his life:

> Lives have many beginnings; some are remembered as important. My first experience of E-P was when he allowed me to come to his lectures in the Institute, then still in Keble Road when I was in my final year as a student in the Jesuit Philosphate at Heythrop, and I came to his lecture once weekly by bus. The next year, then living in Campion Hall, he became my tutor in the Institute that had moved to the Banbury Road. We met on Friday mornings at 10 o'clock, sometimes over a bottle of cider, after which there was coffee in the common room. E-P sometimes came and paid for his coffee with a Ghanaian coin that he later retrieved, saying that he collected Ghanaian coins. Two years later, when I was living in New York, E-P visited with Margaret Mead. We had a memorable evening, and although I was not to meet E-P again, his influence and the memory of our friendship remain.
>
> (pers. comm.)

Scholars came from the far corners of the world to study and teach under the supervision of E-P, and many found his manner and approach both unique and eccentric. Ravindra Jain[22] arrived at the Institute from India, and taught between 1966 and 1974.

> [E-P's] manner as tutor and supervisor was deceptively light-hearted, even frolicsome. Behind the unassuming exterior lay a keen and incisive intellect. Rarely do we find an Oxford professor mistaken as was E-P by a newly arrived student, for a porter of the Institute of Social Anthropology. E-P had a big hand in maintaining the masquerade; it enabled him to live with the ease and integrity of an anthropologist in the stuffy world of 'intellectuals'... His quizzical intelligence made any conversation with him a subtle and gruelling duel of wits.
>
> (Jain 1974)

For others coming from afar, whilst the culture nurtured by E-P was unique and welcoming, it was the singular character of the man himself that remained indelible. In 1967, Juan Ossio came from Peru (he was later to serve as his country's first Minister of Culture). He found E-Ps eccentricity a distinct inspiration:

> In the street he could have been taken as an ordinary, even scruffy, man, wearing an old green turtleneck jumper, corduroy trousers tied at his waist with a rope; and almost always in the company of a dog that was so dear to him that in order not to leave him behind he turned down many invitations from academic institutions both in the United Kingdom and abroad. Just before I left Oxford, in an emotional impromptu, he gave me what I consider to be the warmest definition ever offered to me about what anthropology is. He said, 'Anthropology is friends'. For me, that definition synthesized the kind of anthropology that E-P developed throughout his life.[23]
>
> (pers. comm.)

The myths about who E-P really was began even before he died in 1973, as witnessed by my contemporary Michael Kenny:[24]

20 See Chapter 8.

21 Student at Oxford 1965–7, Professor of Philosophy at University College Cork 1972–99.

22 See Chapter 35.

23 See Chapter 34.

24 Michael Kenny is Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at the Simons Fraser University.

> As a then naively Anglophilic American student at Oxford, I was present during Evans-Pritchard's last days as Professor of Social Anthropology, and by a curious twist of fate on my way back from Africa I attended his funeral service at Blackfriars – a service with mythic qualities of its own. He is still the centre of a rich folklore that helps bind those who perceive themselves to be in some way anthropologists of the Oxford persuasion (he himself denies there was such a thing).
>
> (pers. comm.)

The anecdotes could continue ad infinitum, and the reader will find others embedded in the chapters of this volume, so a final one here from the memories of Alan Macfarlane,[25] whose encounters with E-P encapsulate that combination of erudition and comradery that were so much the trademark of his era at Oxford:

> I first encountered him, I think, when I started to go to lectures in the Institute of Anthropology in Oxford on the advice of Keith Thomas. I remember reading his various books, both on Azande witchcraft, which greatly influenced my writing, and more generally on the nature and history of anthropology, as well as his great works on Nuer kinship and religion from which I taught for many years. I remember him demonstrating the two types of causation in witchcraft with the story of the two spears that killed an animal among the Azande, as we stood sipping coffee in the Institute coffee room. As I became more interested in anthropology, and advised by Wendy James who was one of E-P's students, I sought E-P's advice. (Perhaps after the vividly remembered occasion when I helped E-P push-start his car in the snow-filled car park on his way to give the famed lecture on 'History and Anthropology' at Manchester). In the middle of my D.Phil. I had a sort of crisis of indecision. Should I continue with a history D.Phil. or should I get some formal anthropological training? I went to see E-P, who was very affable and kind – gave me coffee, beer etc. He advised me to finish my thesis and *then* to do a Diploma. Later, in summer 1967, he was one of my two D.Phil. examiners and I talked to him at some length afterwards, when he encouraged me to publish the thesis. He told me that your first book was the one by which you were always known, so it was important that it be good – and that the first (bad) draft of 'Witchcraft among the Azande' had been blown off the back of a boat on the Nile – and he had had to re-write it, and it was much improved. He offered to write the preface to the book, and did, indeed, write a charming preface. After the viva we went off for a drink at a nearby hotel and talked about anthropology and the future.
>
> (pers. comm.)

Having grasped the significance of taking field notes, Macfarlane jotted down E-P's comments, which moved from revelatory personal observations about contemporary figures to scurrilous gossip. The conceit of Radcliffe-Brown was followed by comments about how Malinowski bullied Raymond Firth and threatened to derail E-P's career; how Lévi-Strauss's son fired urine at a maid in the Randolph Hotel when he was in Oxford as E-P's guest, to personal comments about his children, tortoises, a German maid and how he was unafraid of death: 'I've seen death close too often to be very afraid.'

Those who knew E-P will immediately recognize the flavour of this discourse and remember the many hours filled by similar discussions; as Ernest Gellner (1981:xv) described him, 'an intellectually restless, ever-questing, sceptical Hamlet', or perhaps better summed up by his close friend and colleague Godfrey Lienhardt, whose eloquent pen described him with pinpoint accuracy:

> There was something more than his great eminence as a social anthropologist in E-P: he had intellectual and personal grandeur. Those who frequently kept his company (and very many did, for he was extremely gregarious and gave himself generously to all comers) felt themselves in touch, from time to time, with a natural nobility of mind and sentiment, an unusually acute and delicate perceptiveness. His manner, secure, effortless and at the best serene, distinguished him in any gathering… He would seem affectionate even on first acquaintance, though he once told me that he could not demonstrate affection to those he deeply loved.
>
> (Lienhardt 1974:299)

To those attributes can be added a genuine modesty. E-P rarely paraded his erudition, but then this was the post-war academic running his fiefdom at Oxford, and a somewhat different personality to the adventurous scholar-soldier-poet described by Ross-Smith in the pre-war and war years.

Adam Kuper, chronicler of British anthropology, in reviewing Christopher Morton's enlightening book on E-P's photography (2020), eloquently describes the heady circles E-P moved in (and clearly enjoyed) during the pre-war years as an Oxford and LSE student, and gives a markedly different picture to that prevailing of E-P in post-war Oxford:

25 Anthropologist and historian, currently professor emeritus of King's College, Cambridge. He is the author or editor of twenty books and numerous articles on the anthropology and history of England, Nepal, Japan and China.

> An evocative picture of Evans-Pritchard … was published in the memoirs of the novelist Anthony Powell. Remembered by Powell as 'grave, withdrawn, and somewhat exotic in dress', Evans-Pritchard was photographed wearing a Berber gown at a fancy-dress party given in 1924 by the hard-drinking, men-only Oxford University Hypocrites' Club. (Its motto, taken from Pindar, blazoned in Greek, was 'Water Is Best'.) Founded by a bunch of rowdy aesthetes in 1921, the club was shut down in 1925 by the Dean of Balliol College following a party at which the members dressed up as monks and nuns and danced the night away. Powell recalled that on his first visit to the club he was introduced to another future novelist, Evelyn Waugh, 'one of the rowdiest members', who was sitting on the lap of Christopher Hollis, later a Conservative member of Parliament. Christopher's younger brother Roger was also a member. (Their father was the bishop of Taunton.) Another member, Tom Driberg, later a Labour Party member of Parliament and a famous hell-raiser, was a school friend of Waugh and Roger. Tom's brother Jack, who would become a district officer in the Sudan, studied anthropology under Bronislaw Malinowski and became a bosom friend of Evans-Pritchard. These men all belonged to the bohemian fringe of that cohort of boarding-school-educated, upper-middle-class Englishmen who came up to Oxford and Cambridge in the aftermath of World War I. Their wildness, a reaction to the pointless slaughter in the trenches, was prolonged into the party world of the Bright Young Things, chronicled in the early novels of Waugh and Powell. Waugh's friend Graham Greene was another Oxford contemporary. He 'looked down on us (and perhaps all undergraduates) as childish and ostentatious', according to Waugh. 'He certainly shared in none of our revelry.' But Greene and Waugh later became friends, and moved for a while in the same cynical, boozy, depressive circles. As they reached middle age, a number of these men turned to religion. Evans-Pritchard, Waugh and Greene converted to Catholicism. Tom Driberg became an Anglo-Catholic; his brother Jack converted to Islam. A few found a new faith in communism. And they were travellers and adventurers. When Hitler's war broke out, Evans-Pritchard led his band of Anuak irregulars against Italian forces. 'In the Victorian age I should have been an explorer,' he wrote to a friend. 'In earlier times a Crusader or buccaneer. I am just beginning to enjoy myself.' Greene worked for MI6 in West Africa under the direction of Evans-Pritchard's friend and colleague Meyer Fortes. Roger Hollis also became a spy and ended up as director-general of MI5. (He was later accused of having been a Soviet agent, as was Tom Driberg.)
>
> (Kuper 2020)

An exhausting merry-go-round of hedonism and scholarship.

In the second section of this volume, we get further and different glimpses of the character of E-P through some of his surviving correspondence.[26] In his exchanges with Lowie and Kroeber, E-P's main interests were with employment prospects in Oxford and with various potential visits to the US, he only occasionally touches on personal matters; but then his relationship with neither of the scholars was very close. Even in the correspondence between 1921 and 1956 with Marett, E-P's tutor and sponsor at Oxford, matters relating to employment and the field dominate, over a lengthy period of time and in semi-formal terms – student to mentor even when the student eclipsed the master – all E-P's letters were signed off as E.E. Evans-Pritchard, and Marett was addressed either as Dr Marett or Rector. It was only when writing from the field to Meyer Fortes that a deeper and more feeling nature emerges, and although here too employment and status remain a preoccupation, he is able to more freely discuss family, to include barbs about colleagues,[27] and to consider the state of the discipline and his endeavours in the field. The more wide-ranging correspondence that Ahmed Al-Shahi has been analysing as literary executor of Godfrey Lienhardt, and the waspish dispute with Max Gluckman, add to the portrait a more belligerent and perhaps discontented character than so far seen. Despite the emphatic rejection of further fieldwork in his letter to Fortes from 1944:

> One thing is certain – NO MORE FIELDWORK of the detailed kind for me. Max is trying to entice me to apply for the directorship of the R-L Institute, but, between you and me, I would rather shoot myself than go there and be chained to horses pulling in opposite directions; the use-anthropology-for social-research-and-welfare-horse and the fieldwork-anthropology-

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26 In the last years of his life, E-P burned personal papers, correspondence and photographs in the garden of his home at The Ark. Bruce Ross-Smith, who witnessed this, told me that:

> [E-P] used to joke that he was going to pack up the Ark and live like a desert father, free of possessions, free of the past, God his guide in all things. The burning of papers, correspondence, and photos must obviously seem extreme but what ended up in the flames was to an extent random, gathered up and tossed on to the conflagration without close observation.
>
> (pers. comm., Ross-Smith to Singer, 13 July 2020)

27 Such as the cautious but revealing letter about Malinowski: 'He [Seligman] showed me a letter of yours re Malinowski which I shall keep entirely private. I have the lowest possible opinion of the man but I did not think he would stoop quite to such meanness.' (22 June 1936). See Chapter 13, this volume.

> papers-in-each-journal-endless notebooks-all-to-little-purpose horse.
>
> (20 August 1944, see this volume, p. 139)

There is a sense that the excitement he entertained as 'crusader or buccaneer' before the war had evaporated as he entered post-war academic life.

E-P's work in Africa, both in the Sudan and in Cyrenaica, has of course formed a central plank within anthropological thought since the 1930s. The extraordinary detailed and perceptive ethnography, and the resulting analyses, have meant that generations of anthropologists everywhere have read, understood and appreciated, in particular, Azande, Nuer and Sanusi social structures, belief systems and history. Though in post-colonial Africa, as we see in Part V of this volume, contemporary scholars and students look back at the context of 1930s material with a healthy scepticism. His influence on Sudanese studies was, and remains, profound (James, Chapter 6) and, as Deirdre Evans-Pritchard points out (Chapter 18), had an often neglected impact on administrators and policy-makers as well. A small flavour of the continuous use of E-P's material among Nuer, Azande and Luo are followed in this collection by accounts of the more theoretical influences his work has had. In his perceptive analysis of E-P in *The Slain God* (2016), Timothy Larsen provides us with a startling reminder about anthropological chronology. He points out that in 1937 Sir James Frazer published the preface to his final volume of *The Golden Bough* a mere five months before E-P published the preface to *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*. An extraordinary marking of the end of one anthropological era and the beginning of another. To students of anthropology, these two colossi have always felt generations apart. It reminded me of another tragic transition that occurred only five years later, when Franz Boas died in the arms of Claude Lévi-Strauss during a dinner at Columbia University, New York. The death of E-P in 1973 might similarly have felt as though a yet further anthropological epoch had drawn to a close, were it not that, as evidenced by the richly rewarding contributions to this volume, his work has formed such an essential part of an anthropological continuum and his influence has not only survived the intervening fifty years but still continues to have contemporary relevance.

This is an era in which the colonial heritage is being belatedly reassessed, and it was therefore of invaluable significance when Tim Allen suggested that we should look not only at the relevance of E-P's work within academia in the West, but also see how he is regarded in Africa. He undertook to collate contributions from African scholars, and these under his guidance form a fourth section of the volume. There is no one better or more appropriate to contextualize E-P's work in Africa, particularly the Sudan, than Francis Deng. His legal, anthropological and diplomatic heritage, his role in the UN and Sudanese governments and his friendship with both E-P and Godfrey Lienhardt give him a unique perspective. Both he and I were therefore grateful to be able to take a fresh look at how E-P's work was perceived by contemporary African scholars. This section of the volume, curated by and with a contribution from Tim Allen, is an important reminder how different anthropological sensibilities in Western academia and intellectual thought can be regarded locally; and throughout, it shows a healthy scepticism about how the theoretical constructs created in E-P's work have value for current students in Africa.

Yet, that we are, in the final section of this book, still exploring and questioning whether and why segmentary lineage systems have relevance in India, Ghana and Turkey, eighty years after E-P first published *The Nuer*, and similarly reflecting on his understanding of religion and mystical thought, is surely testament to the revolution his work generated in the discipline, and I suspect we will be debating the relevance and influence of it for decades to come.

There is huge variety to absorb and enjoy in the chapters that follow, and I hope that for the reader, as for me, it adds new light to the persona and work of an extraordinary man and scholar with that undoubted touch of genius.

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2

Autobiographical fragments

E. Evans-Pritchard

Anthropology (Evans-Pritchard 1973c)

I thought I would never write anything autobiographical but my young friend Tom Beidelman has kindly undertaken to write a brief biographical sketch to a bibliography of my writings [Beidelman 1974], and it is only fair to give him a chance by recording a few notes about myself which he might not otherwise be able to discover. This is a short account, little more than notes – more is not deserved or required – on how I became a social anthropologist.

I went before the age of six to one of the best and oldest preparatory schools in England, The Grange, at Crowborough in Sussex. I say one of the best schools in a social sense – stables, golf course, beagles – but not, I would say, from the point of view of scholarship. I had never even seen a Latin dictionary before I went to Winchester; and I should make it clear at this point that I am not, and never have been, clever; imaginative and industrious if you like, but not clever in a bookish way of speaking; and though I was very happy at Winchester during my four years there, I only just managed to scrape through by the magnanimity of the Headmaster. Curiously enough and much to my surprise I won a scholarship at Exeter College, Oxford, in History. It was not till long afterwards that my tutor confided in me that he never read scholarship papers, only the essay, holding that anyone who could write a good essay, especially on a subject of which he knew nothing, could get a first if he worked reasonably hard; which I am afraid I did not. So although I was orally examined for a first I got a second. At Winchester my education had been in the humanities – Latin, Greek, history and English literature. For a short time I took chemistry but being inattentive one day I mixed up water and sulphuric acid the wrong way and caused an explosion, after which it was thought better that I should specialize in history under the guidance of Williams ('History Bill'), the future Bishop of Winchester, and the cricketer Harry Altham.

That is how it all began. My tutor at Oxford, C.T. Atkinson, was a complete philistine, the narrowest of military historians, and though he was a good man, I got little inspiration from him. On the other hand Exeter College was then the home of Oxford anthropology. Dr Marett, that genial boaster, later the Rector, gave an anthropological tone to the College; also Henry Balfour, Curator of the (ethnological) Pitt Rivers Museum, and Dudley Buxton, Reader in physical anthropology, were members of Common Room; and various other anthropologists, such as Rattray, had a close association with Marett. Also I came to be a close friend of the archaeologist Francis Turville-Petre, then reading anthropology at Oxford (at Exeter College). In that climate I began to vary the tedium of the History School, as I then regarded it, by taking an interest in books like Tylor's *Primitive Culture* and Frazer's *Golden Bough*; and thus I became a social anthropologist in embryo. But there was here a snag. I did not want to become, I was going to say, just an intellectual. I wanted a life of adventure too, and fieldwork seemed to be the solution to combine both.

There was nobody at Oxford – I had had enough of Oxford anyway – who had engaged in field-research, so I went to London to study under Professor Seligman (Malinowski started teaching there in the same year, 1924; I learnt more from him than from anyone, though I used to see quite a lot of Haddon, Elliot Smith and Perry). Now it happened that Seligman, not a brilliant mind but one of integrity, had to abandon, because of ill-health, his ethnographical survey of the Southern Sudan and he persuaded the Sudan Government (in effect the Civil Secretary, Sir Harold MacMichael) to take me on to complete it. So all the rest follows: first, among other research, my study of the Azande; MacMichael said I could do anything I liked, he chose the man, not the plan. Then I was asked to make a study of the Nuer, at the time very hostile to the Government of the Sudan. I did not want to do this and I twice refused; then came a personal appeal from MacMichael to which I could not say no. Perhaps he thought I was expendable. So came about eventually my three volumes on this people and also a book on the Anuak; but my bibliography tells that story.

I never got on with Malinowski, and Seligman would not, or could not, stand up to him so on my return to England I found myself barred from the London School of Economics and, such was Malinowski's influence, it appeared, from anywhere else. However Elliot Smith got

me appointed to a Chair in Philosophy or Sociology in the Fuad the 1st University at Cairo (now the University of Egypt), I was never certain which. Anyhow I quickly got myself placed in the Department of Geography, where there were some very good teachers, mostly trained, if I remember rightly, in Liverpool and with a leaning towards anthropology. This gave me a chance, in addition to gaining in teaching experience, to improve my Arabic, to learn some Galla and Matokki, and also to do a good bit of desert camel-travel, hardly to be dignified by calling it exploration (two of my best friends in Cairo were Count Almásy and Baron von der Esch, both of whom turned up during the war as Rommel's advisers on desert warfare). Then, although Marett had said he would never help me if I left Oxford to study in London, he was too kind a man to have meant it, and when I decided to leave Egypt and engaged in what proved to be an abortive study of the Pagan Galla in Western Ethiopia, abortive because in that year (1935) the Italians invaded that country, and arrived back in London I found a letter from him offering me a small teaching post at Oxford, which I gladly took up.

Not long afterwards war broke out and I was determined to take part in it operationally, however small a part it might be. In despair of ever getting a post I could live on in England I had accepted a Chair at Yale. War broke out three days before I was booked to sail with my bride who was joining me from South Africa. I at once resigned from the Chair and joined the Welsh Guards, only to be hauled out by an indignant University (Oxford) on the grounds that I was in a 'reserved occupation', whatever that may have meant, especially in my case, for when I had accepted the Chair at Yale for a year in the first instance my friend Meyer Fortes was appointed to the Oxford Lectureship in my place, so all I could have been reserved for was to sit on my behind without any duties. In the out-come I got so fed up that I returned to the Sudan on the plea of carrying out further research there, and there, with relief, I joined the Sudan Auxiliary Defence Force, having been recruited as a matter of form into the Sudan Political Service (as a member of which I never functioned). That story I have told elsewhere in the *Army Quarterly* [1973d]. Then came a spell of leave in South Africa to see my wife, who had just lost her first baby. When I was there General Smuts offered me a colonelship in the South African Army. It was politely refused. Then a high explosives course in Palestine. I have never been quite sure how I got involved in this. I was intending to join the Long Range Desert Group. Anyhow high explosives were clearly not in my line, and I almost blew up the monastery in which we were housed. My friend John Hamilton got me attached to the Spears Mission in Syria, which was supposed to liaison with the Free French, though much of our time was spent in quarrelling with them. Part of my time was spent in preparing clandestinely for what was rather vaguely called post-occupational sabotage, that is to say, if the Germans came through Turkey into Syria, as at the time it was thought they might, I was to remain behind when our more-or-less token force there withdrew and blow up roads, bridges and so forth and send out Morse intelligence. I don't suppose that would have lasted long. However, our relations with the French, in my case liaison with General Montclar, a brave man who liked having rows, being strained, I felt uncomfortable especially as Montclar tried to get me court-martialed, and so asked to be relieved of my duties. About this time I was asked to organize underground resistance among the Jews in Palestine in case the Germans got there. But I said that I thought the Jews could do that for themselves. I was then sent to do the same thing among the Kurds of Iraq, but General ('Jumbo') Wilson, the Officer Commanding, was not sold on the project, He said he had had me in Syria and did not want to have me again. So after a pleasant month with my wife (who had a secretarial post in the British Embassy in Baghdad) and riding General Bromilow's polo ponies (I stayed in his home), I returned to Cairo to rejoin the Sudan Defence Force, and I was just in time for Alamein. It was then only too clear that the Italo-German forces were beaten and as the Sudan Defence Force could not serve outside Africa it would have meant garrison duties for the rest of the war, not at all my idea of a picnic. So I went to see Brigadier (now Sir Duncan) Cumming, a political officer in the Sudan Administration who was recruiting staff for the Military Administration of Cyrenaica. He took me on and made me Governor of Cyrene District. Cyrene is one of the most charming spots in the world and I had General Graziani's delightful villa to live in; but I was quite hopeless as an administrator of the sort required and as I knew I should be happy in the tents of the Bedouin I asked Cumming whether I might act as his liaison officer with the Bedouin and he kindly consented. Thus I spent over two years wandering with my camels and horses in desert and semi-desert with interludes in the forests. I don't suppose I did much to assist the war effort but at least I did nothing to retard it; and I provided my Bedouin friends with somebody to work their feelings on when they were feeling disgruntled. Though I could not conduct any serious anthropological research in the circumstances, I got to know Cyrenaica, its people and their history well enough to write later my 'The Sanusi of Cyrenaica' [1945]. My liaison work was combined with some mapping of mine fields, a bit of a hazard as the British, the Germans and the Italians had all put them down all over the place and nobody quite knew where; so there were some accidents.

Then home again. My father-in-law, the Right Hon. George Heaton Nicholls, had by this time been appointed High Commissioner for South Africa so I stayed in his official residence in London. Here I ran at once into one of those snags one gets used to in uniform, at least I did. I was told I was posted to Germany. I flatly refused to go there: I

had had enough of it, and after all they could hardly shoot me in the middle of Whitehall. However, by this time I had learnt to take precautions, so down I went to Oxford (I was still on leave) where I had the good fortune to discover a Naval Intelligence unit. I asked whether I might join them and in their good-natured way they said that of course I might, and to keep me busy they gave me some dozens of numbers of the American *Geographical Magazine* to read. When this was found out further complications ensued for apparently it was unheard of that a man should transfer from one Service to another without authority to do so (though Sir Hugh Boustead got away with it). Indeed I felt quite sorry for the Army Officer who had to sort out the situation. This time I took drastic steps. I dashed over to see Professor Hutton at Cambridge, where I had accepted a Readership, to be taken up on demobilization, and he somehow managed to get me out of the army. It would seem that as a Reader I had some degree of priority in the process of getting out of it.

All this has been a rather lengthy digression but it was difficult to give an account of my academic career without it. Anthropology is my metier and, though the war was a useful, even pleasant fallow period which I in no way regret, I wanted to get back to it. I should have mentioned that when I joined the Sudan Defence Force I lost my Lectureship at Oxford. I had ignored regulations and instructions. It was no excuse – indeed it was adding insult to injury – that I defended myself on the grounds that if Socrates fought at Thebes and Descartes in the Low Countries, why shouldn't I have a little excitement in Ethiopia and elsewhere. So when, towards the end of my duties in Cyrenaica, Cambridge invited me to take a Readership I was only too glad to accept. But when I got to Oxford (the Naval episode) and went to pay my respects to the Registrar (Mr Douglas Veale) he received me with his usual courtesy. My sins must have been forgotten or passed over by this time for he told me that he was glad I had arrived as the University was giving me a Readership on the following morning. This put me in a quandary as I had already accepted the Cambridge Readership, so I sought advice from Mr Barber, the Rector of Exeter College (Marett had died) who wisely advised me to go to Cambridge and not to put foot in Oxford for a year, during which the Chair at Oxford would fall vacant. So we, my wife and I and our daughter Shineen, who had been born in Baghdad, went to Cambridge for a year. I was, during that year, offered the Chair at Oxford and resumed my duties there, though I continued to teach at Cambridge as well until I could be replaced. Radcliffe-Brown had been in the Oxford Chair from 1936 but soon after war broke out, when I was in the Middle East, he went to Brazil, I believe to a British Council post, and did not return to Oxford, I think, till the end or towards the end of the war. When I took the Chair he resumed his world-wide wanderings: Alexandria, Grahamstown, and other universities. I suppose one may say that he was not a success at Oxford. Personally and in private urbane, he was inclined when talking to colleagues to combine arrogance with vanity. This can be done at Oxford, but only in the Oxford manner. What has happened in Oxford social anthropological studies since, up to my retirement, has been recorded by me in various articles.

So much for the record. Of course I have left out much; of course there have been ups and downs and I have written of the ups rather than the downs; and of course not everybody I have met has endeared themselves to me, but I have mostly spoken of those to whom I can look back upon with pleasure and gratitude. Brief though these notes are, I hope they may be useful to anyone, if there will be anyone, who wishes to write about the social anthropology of my time. In trying myself to reconstruct the social anthropology of earlier periods I have so often found myself in impenetrable darkness that I am glad to be able to shed a little candlelight on my own.

Faith (Evans-Pritchard 1973e)

I have often been asked by incredulous, though well-meaning, people – and almost apologetically – 'Why did you become a Catholic?' The suggestion being that there must be some explanation to account for such a strange, even a remarkable, lapse from rational behaviour on the part of one supposed to be some sort of scientist. The question is not well put. I suppose that none of us can say truthfully and certainly why we do anything. It would be better to ask not *why*, but *how*, did a man become a Catholic; and this is the question I shall attempt to answer.

I am the son of a clergyman of the Church of England, a simple, humble, pious man, with strong leanings towards the *Unam Sanctam*. If he had any bias it was against dissenters. He would say in a tone of charitable exasperation that so-and-so might be a drunkard, a poacher, and a wife-beater, but at least he wasn't a Methodist. Also, although he tried to conceal it, when he wasn't exercising his usual lovely discretion he could not approve of St Paul, who he felt had, in a magnificent way, it is true, somehow lost and won at the same time. My father died at 72. My mother lived till 97. She was a sentimental kind of Christian. She never mentioned it, but in sorting out my books recently I came across a printed book of her poems, dedicated to her mother, to whom she had a loving attachment to her last moments; and they were so sugary that they made me feel slightly sick. She must have changed a lot since then; perhaps that is why she never mentioned the poems. Anyhow, when I became a Catholic and had to face some personal difficulties, as many of us have had to do, she backed me up and said that no one in their senses would do anything else. She ran our home, though, I think, in some ways misguidedly, and I pay my respects, even now not without tears.

My father came from Caernarvonshire of farming stock, though I am not sure what his father did; nor do I know what his religious background was – it was probably Calvinist, but my father was brought up by an Anglican parson in Anglesea. My mother's family came from near Portarlington, some sixty miles west of Dublin. They were Anglo-Irish, having come to Ireland in Strongbow's invasion in the twelfth century; and they were strongly Fenian in sympathy and suffered thereby. We still have a castle, Lea Castle, a ruin, thanks to Cromwell. The Welsh and Irish meet in Liverpool – my maternal great grandfather was a prominent public figure in that city. I suppose my father and mother met there. And there my father, rather reluctantly, and after a slightly stormy career at Oxford – in which his son followed in his footsteps – became ordained and served as a curate in some parish in Liverpool, preaching in both English and Welsh, until, always having been in delicate health, he was advised to move to the South of England, to Crowborough, in Sussex, where I and my elder brother were born. I may as well complete the picture. My brother was an exceptionally brilliant classical scholar who, after Winchester, went to Jesus College, Oxford, where he began to show schizophrenic symptoms. He has been in a mental home ever since. I might add that I was a seven-months baby. The doctors said that I had not a chance of life; but I had a devoted mother and I am obstinate.

I mention just the barest facts about my family and only in order to make it clear that 'conversion' is an ambiguous word which explains little, if anything. I was brought up in a religious home and at religious schools and college. It is true that the faith was often dim, but the light, though sometimes a flicker, never quite died out and at moments of crisis would flare again. I could not have faced the dangers I had to face in Africa and during the Second World War had I not known that I had divine support. During this period of crag and moorland, this period when the light was scarcely to be seen, I twice attempted unsuccessfully to be received into the Catholic Church. I was put off by the catechism and some of the arid scholastic, theological and tortuous arguments with which I was familiar (the God I had been taught to revere was not just a lot of attributes but the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob). I won't go into details, but looking back I can see what a deep unobtrusive influence on my life were two persons whose names I do not even know: a Russian Jesuit in the Tyrol and a secular priest in Transjordan. But I was not yet ready. The catechism was still more than I could stomach – it still is, but I have learnt, and so am able to tell younger men faced with the same obstacles and who, on occasions, have consulted me, that if you want the pearl of no price you have got to take the oyster with it (it would seem, however, that some people like oysters).

So there was nothing sudden or anything to write about my conversion, though that is what I am doing. It was a slow maturing; accumulating much sin, I regret to say, on the way to the final plunge. This came towards the end of the war, when I was liaison between the Military Administration of Cyrenaica and the Bedouin of that country (my Arabic at that time was fluent and Bedawi). I had been for a long camel journey through the desert and that gave me time for reflection, and with the encouragement of some Catholic friends (I am trying to keep away from names, but I must mention the present Prior of our one and only Carthusian Monastery) and the patience of the Catholic Chaplain, Fr. Turner (I think the catechism bored him as much as it did me). Between us we made it and I was received into the Church in the Cathedral of Benghazi. To have made that final surrender was, of course, rapture: *Di un ciego y oscuro salto*. But rapture or no rapture, what I am trying to say is that I have always been a Catholic at heart (most of my friends have been Catholics or Jews) and that it took me thirty years to take that final dive; so 'conversion' can be a very confusing term. I have no regrets. Bad Catholic though I be, I would rather be a bad one than not one at all.

War in the Sudan (Evans-Pritchard 1973d)

Perhaps I should begin by explaining first how I became caught up in the events I describe. When war broke out I was at the time a Lecturer in Oxford University and I made attempts to join the Welsh Guards. The regiment accepted me but I was prevented from joining by the University on the grounds – pointless as it seemed to me – that I was in a 'reserved occupation.' So I went to the Sudan on the excuse of continuing my ethnographical researches there and on arrival joined the Sudan Auxiliary Defence Force. This was just what I wanted and what I could do, for I had made researches in the Southern Sudan for some years and spoke with ease some of its languages, including Nuer and Anuak, these being the languages spoken by peoples on the Sudan-Ethiopian border (on both sides), where our operations were to take place.

Captain Lesslie attached me to the Gila Force, with instructions to patrol the upper Akobo River and keep an eye on the Anuak of the Adongo region, for no one knew what was happening there. I should explain at this point, and before going further, that the Anuak are a Nilotic people, on a rough estimate 35,000 in number, living along rivers in the Sudan and Ethiopia. They are almost entirely agricultural, tsetse fly preventing the keeping of cattle in most of their country. They have somewhat complicated social and political institutions, and all that need be said here is that in the eastern (Adongo) part of their country, where the minor operations about to be described took place, there is a king who keeps his pre-eminence so long as he can retain the royal emblems. If a noble kinsman attacks him and can deprive him of them he loses his crown to

Figure 2.1 Operations on the Akobo and Gila rivers, 1940–1.

the attacker. The Adongo area of Anuak country is remote and difficult to reach, and it can scarcely be said to have been administered, at any rate in more than name, either by the Anglo-Egyptian Administration of the Sudan or by the Ethiopian Government; and its people are warlike and independent.

At Akobo I was issued with fifteen rifles of a last century model and 50 rounds apiece, and told to recruit a force of irregulars from among the Anuak. I took with me from Akobo seven of the local Anuak as I knew the men personally, though I had little confidence that they would remain with me for long. I decided to recruit the other eight from the Adongo Anuak to the east because they knew the area in which we were to operate, had more sense of discipline than the local (Ciru) Anuak and had some regard for the opinion of the man who at that time was the Anuak King, Cam war Akwei. Fortunately all Anuak could handle rifles and were fairly accurate shots at very close range, and they did not object to living on the country. With so small a force everything obviously depended on mobility and good intelligence. We moved mostly at night, as is the Anuak custom in war. I had the great advantage of having been through the country before, in 1935, and of knowing also the people and their language. I gave a very liberal interpretation to my instructions. I left Akobo for Adongo on 28 October by the southern route, still very much under water, and reached Akwaiyajwok on 3 November. Cam war Akwei seemed very glad to see me, for he thought that the Italians would be persuaded by his kinsman and rival Ujulu war Udiel, who lived in Ethiopia, to attack him and seize the Anuak royal emblems. I recruited eight Adongo lads at Cam's home, including his brother Agada, later king of the Anuak, and I started to organize an intelligence system which would give me information about Italian moves on the Gila River from their post at Agenga and on the upper Akobo from Gurafata.

Leaving Cam's home on the 6th I started with my force of fifteen Anuak for the upper Akobo. We got through the swamps and high grasses with the utmost difficulty. I received a warm welcome from the inhabitants of these upstream villages for they remembered me well from my earlier visit. Our party went as far south as Gwac, intending to return downstream on the following day, but we learnt that there was a small picquet from the Boma force at Ukwaa. I sent a message to it saying that I intended to pay it a visit next day, but shortly after the message had gone I received intelligence that an Italian force was advancing towards Ukwaa to attack the picquet so I left for the village at once, arriving opposite it about midnight. The picquet's information, later confirmed from Italian sources, was that a force of native irregulars with a good number of Somali regulars under two Italian officers, probably round about 200 strong, was just outside the village near a rock called Abula, a well-known Anuak landmark. I told the picquet to evacuate Ukwaa and join me on the Sudan side of the river.

Early on the morning of the 12th we tried unsuccessfully to ambush the Italian force near the river and then followed it downstream on the opposite bank. When we found that it had returned on its tracks we crossed to the Ethiopian side of the river and went after it as far as the edge of Ukwaa where my scouts made contact with one of its outposts and exchanged a few shots. There was some more moving backwards and forwards and on the 14th we were camped opposite the Italian force with the river between us. The Italians sent a message to say that if we did not clear off they would attack us. I sent back a suitable reply. Nothing happened and on the following day the greater part of the enemy force went back to their base at Gurafata leaving a detachment of some thirty men on the Akobo. This detachment moved downstream and we attacked it at Ukuuna on the 17th. There was much wild rifle fire and from the Italian side some machine-gunning and throwing of hand grenades, the total result of which was one Italian casualty. They reported this as an important engagement. They packed up at once and moved upstream and we never saw them again. There appeared to be no further threat from this force, and as my men were tired with ceaseless trekking in most difficult country on insufficient food, and on exposure at nights to heavy rain, and as I had fever, we moved downstream for a rest at Nyighum, where we cleared a site and established a camp on the Sudan side of the river. I took this opportunity to reorganize my band, replacing the Ciru Anuak with Adongo Anuak.

I may here say something of the qualities of the Anuak as fighters. They are brave, but become very excited and

expose themselves unnecessarily. They like to fire from the hip and when firing from the shoulder do not use the sights, so to conduct a successful skirmish it is necessary to take them right up to the enemy and let them shoot at point-blank range. They must be led. They will go with you anywhere and will not desert you in a scrap if things go badly, but they will not go without you.

I found too that it was necessary to consult them before any action and to lead by example rather than by command, for they are rugged individuals and very obstinate. I learnt that if, after discussion of the course of action I proposed they refused to agree to it, I could attain my object by proceeding to carry out the proposed operation myself, whereupon all eventually followed suit.

I now turned my attention to Agenga, which was the headquarters of the Italian force on the Gila River. It was being held by Lesslie's force near Cenhthoaa. I was confident that Agenga could be taken by surprise and without much loss of life. I had already asked permission to seize the place and thereby break Italian prestige on the Gila, but it had been refused. No doubt to compensate me for my disappointment Lesslie sent me a half-section of foot-police. This brought my little force up to twenty-five.

On 9 December the Italians tried to catch us at Cam, where we had been spending a few days. I was at Teedo at the time and hastened to intercept their force, which had burnt the village of Cam on its way back to the Gila, but I just missed it. On the 22nd spies reported that an Italian force of about 200 strong had entered the village of Thony on the Gila. I decided to have a look at it and moved by night to Bwola on the opposite bank. Here I learnt that only a small advance party of about thirty men under an Ethiopian N.C.O. had entered the village. This seemed too good an opportunity to be missed. I sent my Anuak to start an attack on the village on the land side while I and the foot-police moved up to it on the river side. The enemy had the advantage of the village ramparts and were assisted by the Anuak population of the village. My Anuak drew enemy fire and enabled the police and myself to get close to the village without being spotted. They afterwards worked round the village to join us in a frontal attack. We crawled under heavy, but very wild fire to within point-blank range. Some of my Anuak got into the village and fired the huts and in the confusion created by this manoeuvre we rushed the position. We had contacted the enemy at 7.30 in the morning and took the village just three hours later. Enemy casualties were eight dead and two wounded. We had no casualties. The Italians reported they had been attacked by fifty askari and 250 Anuak. Having got in quickly the next thing to do was to get out quickly. We just got back across the Gila, which was in high flood, as an Italian relief force arrived from Pocala. It came after us and burnt the villages of Bwola and Dhau, but did not attempt to pursue us to the Akobo. The taking of Thony was a blow to Italian prestige in that part of Anuakland where it was strongest: the middle Gila from Thony to Abileny. It was also an encouragement to our supporters among the Anuak, especially as in Anuak fighting among themselves the great object is to take a village from its defenders and destroy it, as we had done.

Attack on Agenga

I spent Christmas day with Lesslie at Cenhthoaa. I then tried to draw the Italians out of Pocala into the open where I could attack them without the risk an attack on entrenched positions would entail. This effort led to nothing more than a skirmish on the 28th between Acua and Thony in which there were no casualties. However, it had the effect of directing Italian attention towards the west while on the following day I cut through the bush from Bwola to Pinyghudu to try to take Agenga by surprise. We lay outside Agenga that night intending to attack it at dawn but learnt just in time that the main enemy force had moved back parallel to us from Pocala to Agenga. This was bad luck as Italian documents captured later showed that they had returned to Agenga without being aware of my move. We could not attack the main Italian force in prepared positions. Through a mischance some shots were exchanged between some of my men and enemy scouts and I thought it better to get back to the Akobo as fast as possible. This meant an eight hours' trek through the heat of the day to Teedo without water, and the men were already tired from their march of the previous day and a good deal of moving about during the night. In ordinary circumstances the route from Pinyghudu would not be traversed at this time of the year in the daytime, only at night. The Anuak are tough but three of them had to fall out and wait till nightfall before completing the journey. During a rest at Nyighum I made plans for attacking Agenga from upstream. In preparation for this I then moved rapidly about the country at night to confuse Italian intelligence, much to the annoyance of my Anuak who were prepared to march and fight but not just to march.

Perhaps I need not have troubled them, for Italian intelligence was very poor. It was clear throughout the campaign that they never got news of my movements till it was too late to act. This was confirmed later from captured documents. On 3 December Lt. Sapienza wrote to his superiors that he had heard of the approach of an English officer along the Akobo from the east but was uncertain whether to credit the report. This was a month after I had begun patrolling the Akobo. He said that it had been reported to him that the Englishman Udier Uscian (my Anuak name was Odier wa Cang) had passed from the Burathoi area towards the southeast (Ukaadi), information which was either untrue or hopelessly out of date. The Italians indeed do not appear to have been certain that there was an Englishman patrolling the Akobo until their force which burnt Cam village on 9 December ran into a

porter bearing my mail-bag from Akobo and seized it. The Italians had been unaware, in spite of the shots exchanged, that we had spent the night of 29 December just outside their headquarters at Agenga. The Anuak did not like the Italians even though many of them took Italian pay and joined their irregular bands, and they let my force through their country without warning the enemy, whereas the slightest move in our direction was at once reported, the civilian population acting as self-appointed scouts, sentinels and spies. The Italians tried to get information by threats and promises of rewards and only got nonsense. They did not know how to obtain information from the people by treating them decently.

On 13 January ten more rifles, which had long been promised me, turned up and I recruited another ten Anuak, bringing my force up to twenty-five Anuak and ten foot-police plus a few more Anuak armed with rifles we had captured. On the 16th I joined Lesslie at Akemagila and we moved together to Tietwadnyigwor where I left him to return to Nyighum to put into operation my part in a more general plan. British planes were to bomb Agenga and I was to clear it up afterwards. I left Teedo on the Gila at sunset on the 21st. On the way I had the worst trouble I ever had with the Anuak. They said they were completely fed up with this constant marching about the countryside to no purpose and would not go to the Gila again unless I could promise them that there would be a fight when they got there. For security I felt that I could not tell them about the planes until just before they were due to carry out their bombing at Agenga. Finally I told them that they could come with me to Agenga or not as they pleased but that I was going there in any case. In the end they followed. We arrived opposite Agenga at 8 o'clock on the morning of the 22nd and waited all day for the planes, which never appeared. By this time I was as fed up as the Anuak and determined to take Agenga whatever happened. We started at midnight to make a long detour through the forest and high grasses, crossing the Gila, and working slowly round to just west of the Italian post. We had been told by local Anuak that it was held at that time by between twentyfive and fifty irregulars (there were probably about thirty-five). As we had been compelled to wait near Agenga for the planes for twenty-four hours there was a chance that the garrison had been informed of our presence by the local population, who could scarcely have been ignorant of our being in the vicinity, and reinforced from Pocala, where the main Italian forces were. We found out later that the garrison had no information about us; but in any case I was prepared to take the risk. I knew I could rely on my Anuak and experience had taught me that if they thought a thing was a good bet we should win.

Agenga is a small mound about 200 yards across protected by the steep bank of the river on one side and by an earth rampart, behind which trenches had been dug, all round. The enemy had foolishly not cleared a line of fire. At 5 o'clock in the morning we got to within a hundred yards of their position before a sentry gave the alarm. The enemy, mostly Galla, who are brave and tenacious fighters, got into the trenches and we only saw the tops of their heads when they fired. It took us over three hours before we killed enough of them to rush the trenches at 8.30. In the middle of the engagement a detachment from the main Italian force at Pocala turned up in our rear and part of my band had to withdraw from the attack to deal with them. For some reason not known to me the Italian officer in charge of this detachment withdrew after a short skirmish and left the garrison to its fate. We killed seventeen irregular troops, including a sergeant and two corporals, and wounded a considerable number of those who got away. Unfortunately five women, wives of Galla, and a child, who were in the trenches were killed also. Two of my Anuak were wounded, one only slightly, when we charged the trenches. The Anuak had fought very courageously. They were a dreadful nuisance most of the time but they were good to have around in a fight. We captured sixteen rifles, two revolvers, a pile of hand grenades and a big quantity of stores and money. We also found a set of enemy reports and correspondence which were of considerable interest and some intelligence value. We burnt Agenga to the ground and after a talk with some of the local notables started back for Nyighum before the Italian force at Pocala, which must have heard the firing, could take action. We were all very tired having been marching, largely through high riverside grass, for thirty out of forty-eight hours.

Fight on the Gila river

After the men were rested we set off to join Lesslie on the Gila. On the way I got a message from the chief of Nyighum to say that the enemy were about to attack his village. I felt that I could not leave him in the lurch, as they would be attacking him on my account and were said to be a big force, so I turned back to see what could be done to help the villagers. It proved to be a false alarm and I was able to meet Lesslie, whose force had been augmented by a K.A.R. unit at Dhiwathpem on 5 February and to go with him to attack the Italian force at Poca1a on the 8th. The British force on the Baro was beginning its advance on Gambela and it was evident that if it succeeded in taking the place the Italians would have to withdraw their men from the Gila. So this might be our last chance of attacking them. The attack was a failure.

Lesslie and I did not see eye to eye about the best way of attacking the post. The Anuak, whose point of view I expressed, thought the venture was a bad bet but that it might come off if we approached the enemy position by night and attacked at dawn, extending when the fighting began. Lesslie wanted to act more in accordance with textbook tactics and attack by daylight. As he was in

command we had to do things in his way. My instructions were to go ahead of the main body with my Anuak and one section of foot-police and to halt on the Obua-Pocala path at least a quarter of an hour from Pocala village before sunrise. The main body was to join my detachment there and to advance on Pocala in extended order through the forest. I and my Anuak were to be on the extreme right, with a platoon of K.A.R. and two of their Lewis gun sections on our left. A number of foot-police sections were placed between the K.A.R. and the Gila river. Lesslie remained in reserve with other sections of foot-police. I had forebodings from the start since I knew from experience what the enemy would do: get round our flank under cover of the forest. Our instructions were that if this happened we were to retire on the centre sections and, if necessary with them on the left sections running down to the Gila.

At about 7.30 firing began on different sectors and I sent out scouts to our right to see if the enemy were getting round our flank. They were, and engaged the scouts. We were soon engaged to front and right and shortly afterwards to our rear as well. I talked the situation over with Lieutenant McPherson, who was in charge of the K.A.R. platoon, and we came to the conclusion that things were getting too warm and that it was time to retire on the centre sections. The Anuak protested strongly but they carried out the order to withdraw. Unfortunately the centre sections, who had no British officer with them, had bolted and the enemy had occupied their positions. We were therefore surrounded and a hasty retreat to the extreme left was necessary. The left sections had also bolted and the Gila bank was in the hands of the enemy. We lost a number of men before it was realized that it was the enemy and not our own people who were in front of us. We were now entirely surrounded and under intense and accurate fire at short range from the forest and grass. Without the Anuak we would, I think, have been lost, but following their guidance we bolted into the long grass away from the river and taking our wounded with us made a wide detour to strike the river some distance upstream. We crossed it about 9.30 and made our way to Bwola to join Lesslie, who had crossed the river some time earlier. The K.A.R. had suffered most, having several killed and a large number of wounded. Three of my Anuak were killed and the section of foot-police operating with them lost one killed and four wounded. When we had rejoined Lesslie another calamity befell us. The first case of cerebrospinal meningitis broke out in his camp. I separated from him and returned to the Akobo but rejoined him at Thoo a week later and stayed with him there for some time. We were immobilized by the epidemic of meningitis.

Early in March I set out to show the flag up the Gila, the Italians having withdrawn their troops from the region, but while carrying out this demonstration I received orders to go at once to the Baro to take part in the attack on Gambela. I recruited another twenty-five Anuak from Pinyghudu to go with me, so that I now had a force of about fifty Anuak. We made a forced march from the Gila to the Baro at night and reported to Lieutenant-Colonel Johnston there at about 10 on the morning of the 22nd, just before the attack on Gambela. Johnston told me to take up a position across the Baro to the south of Gambela so that when the Free Belgians delivered an attack from the west and the K.A.R. from the east we could block any attempt on the part of the Italian garrison to break out of Gambela to the south of the river. If the enemy showed no signs of attempting to break out we were to close in and help take the post. It had not been possible to inform the K.A.R. of our part in the plan so that when we began to close in on Gambela we met with heavy fire from their people, to which we replied until it was realized that we were engaging the K.A.R. and not the Italians. We had no casualties from this encounter. In the circumstances we did not attempt to cross the river into Gambela. I did not want to be under Free Belgian as well as K.A.R. fire, not to mention the Italians! After sunset, therefore, we retired to Johnston's headquarters. We were very tired as we had been marching the entire night before and had no rest during the day. The Italians left Gambela by the eastern road that night. On the following morning I went into Gambela with Johnston. Lesslie had been killed during the fighting at Gambela. From Gambela I went by lorry to Malakai and thence to Akobo where I met and paid off my Anuak, who had footed it back from Gambela. I then recruited afresh to show the flag up the Gila, some of my old companions joining me. I was also to be accompanied by a sergeant and three sections of foot-police from Malakal.

By this time the Italians in East Africa were in a pretty bad way. In Eritrea the battle of Keren had been fought and decided against them. British forces operating from Kenya had seized all the strategic points in Italian Somaliland and returned to British Somaliland in March. By the end of March General Cunninghame was threatening Addis Ababa itself, and on 6 April the Italians capitulated.

On 12 April I started on a six weeks' march up the Gila into the Gok region in the foothills of the Ethiopian escarpment. I did not want to do this trip because I was very tired after the strenuous campaigning and had lost three stone. I found that cuts, unavoidable when travelling through riverside grass in Anuakland, did not now heal easily, a sure sign that I needed a change. My instructions were to show the flag so I decided to do so in the most literal sense. My column was preceded on the march by a large Union Jack at the end of a pole and this was planted in all the villages where we camped. Military precautions had to be taken as it was uncertain what might be the attitude of those Anuak who had assisted the Italians and served in Italian units. In the event we were received cordially at every village except Pocala, where the people fled to the bush. I collected a considerable number of Italian

rifles from men who had served with them. Coming back through the swamps was a real hard job, but on the whole the trip was interesting. After it all I went on leave to South Africa and was then posted to the Middle East.

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PART II

Personality and memories

Linguist A.N. Tucker (left) with Evans-Pritchard, at Pakur or Yoinyang, South Sudan, 1930. Photograph possibly taken by one of E-P's two Zande assistants. Courtesy Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (1998.355.581).

3

'My soul there is a country'

E-P in the mirror of poetry

Bruce Ross-Smith

On Maundy Thursday 1965 I was taking a short cut back from the centre of Oxford to my home in Headington through the garden of The Ark, the Evans-Pritchard's family home on the slopes of Headington Hill. Since Easter 1961 my family and I had been near neighbours to the E-P's and my twin brother and I were at the same school as the E-P twins, Johnny and Nicky. I am pleased to say that I have enjoyed a friendship with the family over a lifetime; and long may that continue!

I had just bought in Blackwell's Stanley Burnshaw's *The Poem Itself* (1964), a selection of over 150 (late nineteenth and twentieth century) poems in their original French, Spanish, Portuguese German and Italian, with literal line-by-line translations and detailed commentaries on the poems and the poets. First published in 1960 in hardback, and then as a (Penguin) Pelican, it has been an essential companion these fifty-five years, always close to hand, wherever I happen to be.

E-P had spotted me from his study and came out to say hello, as he often did when not too busy. I couldn't resist taking *The Poem Itself* out of my bag and handing it to him. He flipped through and by chance stopped on the Italian section, which included five poems by Giuseppe Ungaretti (1888–1970). Ungaretti was born in Alexandria in 1888 and spent his first twenty-two years In Egypt, returning, July to December 1931, to write a series of articles in his capacity as foreign correspondent for the Turin daily *La Gazetta del Popolo*, which was published in Turin from 1848 to 1945. The articles on Egypt are more than passing reports, rather meditations on his upbringing in Alexandria and on Egypt between the wars. E-P, however, had no time for Ungaretti's collaboration with Mussolini or for *Il Duce*'s brutal imperialism in Libya.

E-P had come across these articles in the library of the Geography Faculty of the Fuad the 1st University at Cairo (now the University of Egypt), during his time there as Professor of Sociology 1932–4, but knew little of Ungaretti the poet. The Ungaretti poem which captured his eye and ear was

> **'Mattina'**
> *M'illumino*
> *d'Immenso*
>
> (Burnshaw 1964:311)

Just seven syllables long, written in January 1917 when Ungaretti was taking a necessary break at the village of Santa Maria la Longa, away from the hell of the trenches on the Kras Front, in *The Poem Itself* John Henry Nims translates the poem literarily as:

> **'Morning'**
> I flood myself with light
> Of the immense.
>
> (ibid.)

E-P chanted the original into the Maundy Thursday air and swept his left arm across the garden towards Oxford. We agreed to meet in the study on Saturday afternoon into evening, for poems, including, I added, Ungaretti. It was a particular delight to share with E-P poets new to him, which over the years would include, for example, Yves Bonnefoy and Hagiwara Sakutaro.

> *La fer des mots d guerre se dissipe*
> *Dans l'heureuse matière sans retour.*
>
> (Bonnefoy 1968:112)

> The swimmer's eyes are listening through water
> To the drowned promise of a hanging bell;
> His soul observes the white moon on the water,
> There is but water in a wishing well.
> (Sakutaro 19xx:70)

I

In Michaelmas term 1971, E-P's friend and fellow Wykehamist, John Sparrow, organized a gathering at All Souls, Oxford, where Sparrow was still Warden and E-P had been Sub-warden 1963–5. The gathering was in celebration of A.E. Housman's 1933 lecture 'The Name and Nature of

Figure 3.1 E-P as a young man. Courtesy Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford.

Poetry' (Housman 1933) with an assembly of poets present at an occasion E-P found both engaging and amusing, especially when he mistook Philip Larkin for a (new) college scout, a mistaken identity which Larkin, dressed as so often in a sober black suit, found pleasing. Larkin spent two terms during 1971–2 at All Souls, working on the final proofs of his *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse* (1972). Through his friendship with Dan Davin, his editor at Oxford University Press (OUP), Larkin met Peter and Godfrey Lienhardt, and recalled at least one encounter with E-P at the Institute of Social Anthropology as well as chance encounters at All Souls. In the spring and early summer of 1970 E-P encountered a tongue-tied Robert Lowell, one of All Souls early Visiting Fellows (as A.L. Rowse, 1903–97, harrumphed, 'better than having to take students',[1] which was the other proposal on offer one of the alternatives) in the Trinity term of 1970. In September 1972 W.H. Auden moved to Christ Church, Oxford, for the autumn and winter months, renting a small cottage, The Old Brewhouse, and frequently sitting in a near empty Senior Common Room (Luke 1975:202–17).

For a few weeks Auden stayed at All Souls as a guest of his friend and publisher, Faber's Charles Monteith, also E-P's friend, and publisher for his later books not published by The Clarendon Press. These were E-P's late and last encounters with poets face-to-face, from the voiceless Lowell to the at times over-voiced Auden and Larkin. As it happens, E-P and Auden died within weeks of one another, in September 1973, as did their friend Tolkien, in his later years a Headington neighbour whom E-P had first met at Exeter College through Marett at the beginning of Michaelmas Term 1922. As a matter of record, Auden and Christopher Isherwood had been Berlin friends of E-P's close undergraduate friend, the archaeologist Frances Turville-Petre (1901–41), whose livid and vivid decline into madness and early death were captured by Christopher Isherwood in *Down There on a Visit* (1962) in the character of mad bad King Ambrose.

E-P enjoyed the company of poets and artists, especially in his spells of residence in London (1924–32). Further, his immersion in Arabic and Persian poetry when he was in Cairo (1932–3) and the poetry of his days and nights in Cyrenaica, en route to his conversion to Rome in the Cathedral of Bengahzi on St. Michael's Day, 29 September 1944, bear witness that poetry was at the core of his faith, a touchstone which never failed. Gerard Manley Hopkins, an earlier convert to Rome, captured this in his Wordsworthian 'To a Beautiful Child':

> …thy book
> Is cliff and wood, and foaming waterfall;
> Thy playmates are the wild sheep and birds that call
> Hoarse to the storm; – thy spirit is with the storm
> To wrestle or are not and were not; – and thy piety
> stand
> Musing on things create, and their Creator's hand.
> (Hopkins 1967:311)

More to the point, through his reading of Housman's *The Name and Nature of Poetry* (1933) it might be possible to locate E-P's *point-de-repère* for what poems are and were, or are not and were not – with the clear warning that E-P had no desire to theorize or conceptualize the many moods and rhythms of the poems he loved. At the beginning of *The Name and Nature of Poetry* Housman clearly declares that 'the function of poetry is to transfuse emotion not to transmit thought' (ibid.:7). He went on to define poetry 'as a secretion, whether a natural secretion like turpentine, or a morbid secretion, like the pearl in the oyster' (ibid.:8). Of his conversion to Catholicism, E-P noted in his 'Fragment of an autobiography' that 'if you want the pearl of no price you have got to take the oyster with it. It would seem, however, that some people like oysters.' (1937:35–7) It was something E-P would say often, then grin and shrug in his familiar way.

1 Personal communication, 9 May 1970.

One of his long-standing post-war friendships was with Dan and Winnie Davin, New Zealanders who made their home in Oxford. Dan was variously a delegate and publisher with the Clarendon Press and OUP, and Winnie was a writer, editor and extremely successful promoter of New Zealand authors. Above all, though, Dan was a novelist and poet and a 'pub-man'. His final novel, *Brides of Price* (1972) has as its narrator a social anthropologist who is trying to avoid being appointed professor and to write his magnum opus, and is caught up in a web of complications over the women in his life, or the women in the complications of his life. Davin wrote *Brides of Price* as E-P was approaching retirement in 1970 and the choice of his successor was being much discussed. In the event the gifted scholar Maurice Freedman, after 24 years at the London School of Economics, was appointed. He was only in post for five years, succumbing to a heart attack in July 1975. E-P died on 11 September 1973 and told me a number of times how much he liked and admired Freedman.

In his 1975 essay memoirs, *Closing Times* (1985:121–50), Dan Davin evokes aspects of the post-war Oxford (and beyond) familiar to E-P. His essay on Dylan Thomas (ibid.:123–50) recounts Thomas's 'acquisition' of a blue felt hat which Davin had bought in Paris and which Thomas had picked up in the then George Bar (George Street) when Davin was in the restaurant upstairs. When Davin came down to collect his much cherished hat, Thomas refused to hand it over. E-P said he witnessed this curious incident. Dan Davin didn't get his blue felt hat back but remained friends with Thomas all the same. Poets have licence.

E-P enjoyed the conviviality of pubs, including with his family and friends on Sunday lunchtimes at the White Hart (now gone!) in Old Marston. In his book on Mary Douglas, Richard Fardon talks of people's recollections of E-P's 'hours of yarning in Oxford pubs' (1999:32). Some 'yarning', yes, but I saw E-P frequently in the afternoons and evenings over the last years of his life, when, as Godfrey Lienhardt has noted (1974), he liked to be back at 'the Ark', to see his children and to have time for himself, to contemplate, read and work. It was in those non-yarning times, and on weekends, that poetry would be and could be a guest of rapture.

Dan and Winnie Davin held court in a number of central north Oxford pubs, all within easy walking distance of their home in Southmoor Road, backing on to the Oxford Canal, where Louis MacNeice and Dylan Thomas used to come to stay, and Julian Maclaren-Ross moved in across the road, as for a while did Iris Murdoch.[2] Of the poets and writers based in Oxford, E-P came to know Joyce Carey, John Wain and the cradle Catholic Elizabeth Jennings, for whom the composing of poems was 'sacrament and prayer' (1953:46–7). Here is her poem 'Answers':

> I kept my answers small and kept them near
> Big questions bruised my mind but still I let
> Small answers be a bulwark to my fear.
> The huge abstractions I kept from the light;
> Small things I handled and caressed and loved.
> I let the stars assume the whole of night.
> But the big answers clamoured to be moved
> Into my life. Their great audacity
> Shouted to be acknowledged and believed.
> Even when all small answers build up to
> Protection of my spirit, still I hear
> Big answers striving for their overthrow.
> And all the great conclusions coming now.

In 1961 Elizabeth Jennings published a collection of essays *Every Changing Shape: Mystical Experience and the Making of Poems*, which E-P hadn't read but would have found both familiar and persuasive. He did, however know 'Answers', which was first published in 1953, when Elizabeth Jennings was working in Oxford's Central Library and could be encountered at her favourite Indian restaurant not far away in Walton Street.

Franz Steiner's *Unruhe Uhr/Ausgwewahlte Gedichte Aus dem Nachlass*, his first selection, was published in 1954, two years after the anthropologist-poet-philosopher's death, aged 43, from a heart attack. E-P kept this selection on a shelf in his study not far from where he worked and could, and did from time to time, reach over and hold it tight. Folded within was Michael Hamburger's translation of Steiner's '*Gebet im Garten*' ('The Prayer in the Garden') (1962), a meditation on the Shoah which Steiner began to write on his late father's birthday in 1947. Steiner's parents, family and many friends perished at the hands of the Nazis while he was a refugee scholar at Oxford:

> The prayer of the will is not fitting for me
> For the words I utter turn against myself –
> The prayer of wishing is not fit for me.
> The prayer of the will I am not able to say,
> For the prayer is only a part
> But what the will destroyed
> Became the cornerstone of peaceful glory
> And what the will has wounded
> Turned in the glow of inwardness within me.
>
> (ibid.)

'Prayer in the Garden' has been compared (Steiner 1999:96) to Paul Celan's (2003:40) '*Todesfuge*' ('Death Fugue') and to Gerard Manley Hopkins' (1967:12–23) 'The Wreck of the Deutschland' (ibid.). For E-P 'Prayer in the

2 In July 1971 E-P and I had lunch with Iris Murdoch in the much missed Luna Caprese in North Parade. It was a particularly jolly lunch, which ended with E-P saying to Iris Murdoch that he, E-P, was the novelist, while she was the anthropologist. Iris Murdoch agreed with enthusiasm.

Garden' evoked the Steiner E-P first encountered when he, E-P, became Oxford Professor in the autumn of 1946 and very quickly recognized Steiner's scholarly and intellectual brilliance and personal suffering. This last something E-P felt deeply for those who had survived the war. This poet-scholar-philosopher's early death was a depthless loss ('the most scholarly of them all' – ibid.:94) to E-P and to his colleagues at the Institute, as Mary Douglas (1999) and M.R. Srinivas (1999) have recalled; and, above all, to Iris Murdoch, who encountered Steiner briefly in 1941 (Conradi 2002:317–34), then met again for drinks together in Oxford, usually in the Lamb and Flag in St Giles (ibid.:325–39). From February 1952 the two met more and more frequently, in pubs and pub gardens and in their respective rooms, and by mid November 1952 marriage seemed a real prospect.

Franz Steiner died on 27 November 1952 and was in Iris Murdoch's words 'certainly one of Hitler's victims' (ibid.:339). To his first English translator, Michael Hamburger, Steiner was 'one of the best German-language poets of his time' (1992:7–9). For E-P, he was the most remarkable intellectual to have been integral to the post-war Oxford Institute, which fielded a remarkable range of brilliant cosmopolitan minds. Franz Baermann Steiner was a poet-scholar-thinker from whom E-P could and did learn.

E-P had an earlier link with Iris Murdoch. In the first week of June, 1942, he met in Latakia, in a seaside café, the 22-year-old ex-Wykehamist, Frank Thompson, then an intelligence officer and Iris Murdoch's great love as an undergraduate at Oxford. Thompson wrote to Iris Murdoch on 7 June that E-P 'as a "political officer' he is rumoured to be a pushover' (2010:110), which is certainly not how General Monclar (Raoul Charles Magrin-Vernerey) of the Free French and his Alawite French associates found E-P. Although E-P recalled (1973a:20) that Monclar 'tried to get me court-martialled', he had a signed photographic portrait of Monclar hanging in his study at 'The Ark': bravery and courage against bloody-mindedness admired on both sides.

Two years later Frank Thompson, aged 24, was executed in Litakovo, Bulgaria, after at least three days of torture. Murdered in early June, neither his family nor Iris Murdoch would learn of his death until the end of September 1944.

Thompson's poem '*Politica Meliora*' heads the Roll of Honour at M.J. 'Monty' Rendall's (head teacher or 'headman' of Winchester throughout E-P's time there) 'War Cloister' at the school, created for those Old Wykehamists (OWs) who died in the First World War but taken as a memorial for all OWs who died in armed conflict in the twentieth century.

> So we, whose life was all before us,
> Our hearts with sunlight filled
> Left in the hills our books and flowers,
> Descended and were killed.
>
> (Thompson 1995)

II

> **'The Secrets of Men's Hearts'**
> Memories never far away,
> Here in mesmerised silence the statues speak,
> fold unfolded on a rise
> where angels seek no compromise,
> below the heathland meek it
> it seems at first stretches everywhere
> as two boys come up for air,
> fearless in their expeditious play,
> quiet to enter the rustling of souls
> where ghosts once strayed
> on St Michael's Day, your father's
> voice sonorous in its Welsh divining.
> Criccieth out of Liverpool, you see
> you say, memories never far away.
> In Aarhus you followed a rainbow
> across a flattened sea,
> then remembered how often
> Wordsworth's child had failed
> to be the father of the man
> as you fought 'to feel a child again'
> but couldn't dispel the wartime
> raid which, you whispered,
> had filled a trench with the angels
> of the innocent dead.
>
> (Bruce Ross-Smith)

It is the height of vanity to include a poem to E-P's memory by this very writer, though it at least announces some of the themes to come. Worse, there will be more BR-S poems. For it was poetry that brought us together when I was in my early teens and E-P in his early sixties, neighbours from 1961 and lifelong close friends with E-P's children to this day. Beyond (my) vanity, the focus here will be on why or how the hundreds of poems E-P knew by heart were vital to his moral, imaginative and spiritual existences, markers across a lifetime. Or a lifetime across poetic markers. E-P gave me a copy of this extraordinary lecture to the Durham University Anthropological Society, 'Some reflections on mysticism'(1970), on May Day 1970. In this he brought together a wide range of mystical writings, from the nature mysticism of Richard Jefferies, who had a for a time lived not far from E-P's Crowborough, to Sufi and Buddhist prayers, the Kabbala, transcendental voices which were for E-P the antiphons of his inner life. A few days after he had given (a gift to and for those listening and watching) the lecture, E-P wrote to Meyer Fortes (23 May 1970), who had attended: 'It must have been apparent to you, if not to them (the audience), that this is my inner life.' (Barnes 1987:480). It must be suspected that the audience, mostly made up of students, understood this very well. E-P's then

research assistant, Juliet Blair, who was there, told me it was a 'triumph'. Rapture…

Poetry read and recited was always with E-P, from his earliest years in Crowborough to his final family holiday on the Suffolk coast, in August – September 1973, near the lost city of Dunwich invoked by Swinburne in the eddies and currents of his poem 'By the North Sea' (Swinburne 1904, vol. 5:85–110). The poem E-P liked to recite in Suffolk, on Dunwich Heath, was Arthur O'Shaughnessy's 'Ode':

> We are the music makers
> And we are the dreamers of dreams,
> Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
> And sitting by desolate streams;
> World-losers and world-forsakers,
> On whom the pale moon gleams;
> Yet we are the movers and shakers
> Of the world for ever, it seems.
>
> (O'Shaughnessy 1874:10–11)

While E-P loved the 'Ode', F.R. Leavis and many twentieth-century critics dismissed O'Shaughnessy as 'a poetaster … with nothing personal to communicate' (Leavis 1932:10). Only T.S. Eliot praised 'Ode' (1957:39) while damning the rest of O'Shaughnessy's published poems (modest in number).

Arthur O'Shaughnessy's 'Ode' will be recalled by E-P's family and friends who holidayed joyously, 1966 to 1973, at the 'Fort' on the Suffolk coast not far from Dunwich, a location, as W.G. Sebald would later find, of poetry, mystery and, on Dunwich Heath, panic (Sebald 2002:171–4). Sebald went on to visit his friend, the poet and best translator into English of Franz Baermann Steiner, Michael Hamburger, at Hamburger's cottage on the edge of the village of Middleton (ibid.:175).

> **'Openly True'**[3]
> 'And so they are ever
> Returning to us, the dead'
> In one or twos, landing
> beyond the future in winter
> until wisdom speaks
> of ordinary folly.
> nothing special this
> in a furtive view
> yet extraordinary
> when openly true.
>
> (Bruce Ross-Smith)

E-P died on 11 September 1973, the day after returning to Oxford from Suffolk, where he also stayed annually by himself at The Anchor, Walberswick, usually in early December. E-P's last stay there fell in December 1972, and during it he wrote to Lévi-Strauss, who responded on 24 December 1972, from his country retreat at Montigny-Sur-Aube, Northern Burgundy:

> Dear Sir Edward,
> You wrote me from the marshes of Suffolk where you were watching birds, and I answer from the woods of Northern Burgundy where I kept myself busy this morning supplying birds with raw fat to help the tits, robins, nuthatches and others to survive throughout the winter months. Thus, you see, we have more in common than plain anthropological interests and a dim outlook on the future of Anthropology in England as well as in France where the situation is hardly more encouraging than the one which you describe. Anyway, this is to wish you a happy New Year.
> Yours as ever,
> Claude Lévi-Strauss[4]

It would be intriguing to know what 'dim outlook on the future of Anthropology in England' E-P had set out to Lévi-Strauss from Walberswick.

In his 'Preface' to *The Principles of Art* (1938:8), R.G. Collingwood quotes E-P on Zande thought and language, 'Let the reader consider any argument that would entirely demolish all Zande claims for the power of the oracle. If it was translated into Zande modes of thought (which is the same thing as saying it was translated into the Zande language) it would serve to support their entire structure of belief.' (Evans-Pritchard 1937:8n). On the final page of *The Principles*, published just a year after *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*, Collingwood casts poets and artists as prophets who must not be ignored:

> For the evils which come from ignorance the poet as prophet suggests no remedy, because he has already given one. The remedy is the poem itself. Art is the community's medicine for the worst disease of mind, the corruption of consciousness.
>
> (1938:8)

I did read this to E-P (of course he knew it already). He grinned and shrugged. As much as he admired Collingwood and lamented his early death, aged 54, and had contemplated post war the writing of a biography, E-P had no desire to label poems in what Roman Jakobson variously termed 'the magic, incantatory function of language' (1960:374). In brief, poetry for E-P was belittled by critical over-labelling and what he saw as laboured interpretation, even as supple and subtle as those of Jakobson and his collaborators,

3 This poem is based on a passage from Sebald's *The Emigrants* (2021:20).

4 Postcard given to BR-S by E-P, subsequently passed on to Johnny Evans-Pritchard.

who famously included Lévi-Strauss, notably in their 1962 structural analysis of Baudelaire's 'Les chats' (Jakobsen and Lévi-Strauss 1970:43–80). I did suggest for fun to E-P that perhaps one of A.L. Rowse's (a historian fellow Fellow of All Souls) cat poems could be subjected to structural analysis. Grin and shrug…

Yet it was magic and incantation which E-P brought through his chanting of poetry to those who heard him. Winchester headman Monty Rendall spoke in what Kenneth Clark described as 'stressed incantation' which 'All Wykehamists of that date tried to imitate' (1974:60–1).

Magic and incantation do not require definition, rather, to echo Archibald MacLeish's 1926 '*Ars Poetica*':

> A poem should not mean
> But be
>
> (1962:22)

What E-P certainly harvested from poetry was 'the poem itself' (Collingwood 1938:8). Poetry speaks to us; we speak to poetry; vocal and multi-vocal; we become poetry. Perhaps this can be oracular and prophetic. Perhaps this is what Collingwood was getting at. He writes earlier: 'The artist must prophesy not in the sense that he foretells things to come, but in the sense that he tells his audience, at risk of their displeasure, the secrets of their own hearts.' (ibid.:256). Mary Douglas reminded us that E-P 'has been called the Stendhal of anthropology. Certainly, he has revealed the secrets of men's hearts.' (1975:38)

Poems, read aloud, often chanted, repeated, in E-P's childhood homes in Crowborough, Waterperry and Calverton, and those read/chanted decades later in his study at 'The Ark', were drawn in time, and beyond time, the *nunc fluens*, the timeless now, to the *nunc stans*, the now in time, a notion which E-P took from Boethius's *De consolatione philosophiae* (ibid.) and placed at the heart of his mysticism lecture. Here E-P's life meets Collingwood's art.

In the summer of 1925 E-P and his father, the Revd T.J. Evans-Pritchard (1858–1929) – who had retired as Rector of Calverton, Buckinghamshire, in 1923, visited Italy, staying first with LSE students at the Malinowski villa at Soprabolzano, in the southern Tyrol, and then heading south to Milan and on to Pavia, where Boethius wrote *De consolatione philosophiae* over the last year of his life, in prison charged with treason against the Ostrogothic King Theodoric. Boethius was beaten to death in 524 and entombed in San Pietro in Ciel d'Oro, not far away from The Ark of St Augustine, one of the most spectacular (ninety-five statues, fifty bas-reliefs) tombs in Christendom, brilliant in white Carrara marble. On a smaller scale, E-P as a child had been moved by the funerary monuments in the Sackville chapel within St Michael and All Angels, Withyham, and by the four fourteenth-century *Scenes from the Passion of Christ* of Niccola di Pietro, subsequently sold at Sotheby's in 2013 for £1,105,250. With the exception of St John the Baptist (in E-P's time, St John's Crowborough Town), built in 1839, all E-P's father's churches were rich in Roman Catholic imagery, which he recalled with much affection, always a Catholic, as he would later often reflect.

E-P read Dante's *La vita nova* while in Italy, and decades later would have Augustine's *The City of God* on his bedside table, while Longfellow's *The Ladder of St Augustine* was one of the many nineteenth-century American poems E-P chanted/recited. He knew great tracts of Longfellow, as did his mother:

> **'The Ladder of St Augustine'**
> Saint Augustine! Well hast thou said,
> That of our vices we can frame
> A ladder, if we will but tread
> Beneath our feet each deed of shame.
>
> (1910:110–11)

In his 'Fragment of an autobiography' E-P writes 'we read that Augustine was converted by Ambrose, that Augustine was a Neo-Platonist and was, already, so to speak, half-way there' (1973a:36). Reciting Longfellow's 'The Ladder' linked present to past, past to present, in a very simple tangible echo. E-P in Pavia with his father was, I think, the only holiday abroad they took together. E-P's mother stayed at home, to visit E-P's brother, Tom, 'an exceptionally brilliant classical scholar who, after Winchester, went to Jesus College, Oxford, where he began to show schizophrenic symptoms. He had been in a mental home ever since.' (ibid.).

E-P wrote this in his 'Fragment of an autobiography', where he also touched upon his parents' origins, his father a son of Caernarvonshire, possibly from Criccieth. My wife, Sally Mercer, in response to a request for Pritchard family history from Ambrose E-P, through census and parish records came up with the following tentative (with many apologies if these are completely wrong) kin details: Thomas John Pritchard was born in Liverpool in 1858, son of Evan Pritchard, a builder, born in Bangor in 1820, who married Anne Williams in Liverpool in 1850. Evan with his two younger brothers had set up as joiners in Walton (then not Liverpool incorporated) and built up a successful construction business. At the age of fifty, in 1870, Evan was able to retire with the title 'Gentleman' and died in November 1889, a month after his son, the Revd Thomas John Pritchard, had married Annie Dorothea Edwards on 24 October at St Michael's, Toxteth, a year after TJP had been ordained at St Peter's Anglican pro-cathedral and the parish church of Liverpool, precursor to the Anglican cathedral built in 1978.[5]

5 More research needs to be undertaken on the (Evan) Pritchards of North Wales, possibly from Cwm Pennant, near Criccieth, or

In his 'Fragment of an autobiography' E-P wrote that his father's 'religious background was probably Calvinist, but my father was brought up by an Anglican parson in Anglesey' (1973a:36). The Anglican Church in Wales was disestablished and disendowed in 1920 to become the Church in Wales, the culmination of much tension between the English and Welsh churches throughout the second half of the nineteenth and early decades of the twentieth century. It cannot be known what tensions might have existed in the Evan-Pritchard household over denominational loyalties, nor why TJP (by 1907 the family name had changed to Evans-Pritchard) was placed in the care of an Anglican priest on Anglesey, though that arrangement might well have been to help his health problems, notably what the Victorians termed 'a weak chest'. TJP's father attended his son's Church of England wedding in Toxteth and had perhaps earlier become a communicant at St Mary's Church, Walton-on-the-Hill, where his son had served as curate from 1887–90: TJP's first clerical position after ordination before he and Dorothea moved to Sussex and to a climate better suited to 'a weak chest'.

How Welsh? E-P used to recount with pleasure a tale of one of his Welsh cousins, a Pritchard-Jones, who had lost a leg in the Great War. E-P happily recounted that twenty-odd years after the war Pritchard-Jones attempted unsuccessfully to blow up an RAF installation on Anglesey. I have not been able to find a source for this, but certainly there were such attacks, like the arson of the bomb school near Pwllheli on 8 September 1936. Whether the tale of his forebear's action was true or not, E-P greatly enjoyed the sentiment…

E-P's mother's family 'were Anglo-Irish, having come to Ireland in Strongbow's invasion in the twelfth century' (Evans-Pritchard 1973a:36) and in 1737 settled near Portarlington, sixty or so miles west of Dublin, where the ruin of the medieval Castle Lea/Lea Castle is currently being restored by a local historical society. The Evans were to become prominent at Portrane, County Dublin, on the Donabate Portrane Peninsula, about twenty-five miles north-east of Dublin. There are many tales to tell about the Evans of Portrane, and much has been written about the area, notably on the Portrane mental hospital, St Ita's, opened in 1903 on 450 acres of what had been Evans lands, and which became the most expensive building ever commissioned by the British Government in Ireland. It has recently been rebuilt and reopened as the National Forensic Mental Health Service (O'Brien 2013). E-P used to say that the people at Portrane had all been 'quite mad', by which he meant his ancestors rather than the patients at St Itas's.

In the spring of 2020 the Irish writer Gerard Ronan, a native of Donabate, published two books, *Sophia Parnell-Evans: Feminism, Politics and Farming in 19th Century Portrane* (2020a) and *Margaret Evans: Poet of Portrane* (2020b). The latter lived to ninety-five, a life of considerable difficulty, which is reflected in the high emotion and intensity of her poetry. She was a very remarkable figure, as was Sophie Parnell-Evans. Anyone who visited 'The Ark' will recall the bust of Sophie's husband, George Hampden Evans, MP in the 1830s for County Dublin, who died suddenly in 1842 from what was described as 'an attack of flying gout to his heart' (2020b:23). E-P was both amused by and proud (not a contradiction) of his Fenian ancestors, and their courage in standing up to the oppressions of English (Westminster) domination. To rally against tyranny was in E-P's blood, as he demonstrated in Latakia Province in August 1942 (Rabinovich and Yaffe 1990) and more widely in his work on the Sanusi and, indeed, to varying degrees, in Sudan. Tony Free has made the point that E-P's 'political position was far from being that of an apologist for colonialism or for that matter that of a typical representative of Oxbridge England' (1991:20).

Below is a poem by Margaret Evans, E-P's great-grandmother, who, Gerard Ronan notes, was a poet and a person of high and tremulous emotion, much as was her granddaughter, E-P's mother, also a poet, but so sentimental that E-P found her poems, when he came across them in his later years, unreadable (1973a:34). E-P recognized in himself a tendency towards the sentimental, but kept this under tight control, most of the time. The tears E-P shed in joy when he received one February morning in 1972 a letter from the French ambassador, Geoffrey de Courcel,[6] announcing E-P's elevation to Chevalier de la legion d'Honneur, were, he told me (I was lodging at 'The Ark' at the time), 'tears of sentiment and gratitude'. After he showed me the letter from Geoffrey de Courcel, he rushed off to write to Lévi-Strauss without delay, to thank him and to thank the French Republic for '*donner un sens plus pur aux mots de la tribu*'.[7] Later that day E-P reflected that this 'elevation' wouldn't have been possible if his old foe de Gaulle had still been alive: de Gaulle had considered him a traitor for arresting some of the Syrian followers of the Free French. Here, from the pen of Margaret Evans, a poem 'written to mark a treaty signed in Amiens in March 1802'

Llangybi, further along the Lyn Peninsula.

6 Geoffrey de Courcel (1912-–93), French ambassador to London 1962–72, whom E-P met once or twice in Egypt during the war. De Courcel was the first serving French officer to join De Gaulle's Free French and flew with De Gaulle and General Edward 'Louis' Spears from Bordeaux to London on 7 June 1940. E-P briefly corresponded with de Courcel's wife, Martine. E-P served in the Spears Mission in Syria from the spring to the early autumn of 1942. See Rabinovich and Yaffe 2008.

7 Line 6 of Stephane Mallarme's 'Le tombeau D'Edgar Poe' (1945:189). Famously/translated/interpreted by T.S. Eliot as 'To purify the dialect of the tribe' (2015:74).

which 'temporarily ended hostilities between France and the United Kingdom' (Ronan 2020b:110).

'On Peace'
Peace, thou genial spirit, hear!!
Quickly, oh! Quickly to appear!
Drive away, with all its horrid train,
Famine and plague, those scourges twain.
Let not vile discord show his face,
That cruel foe to human race.
'Tis thou alone, sweet Peace can bring
Pleasures still greater than the Spring
To suffering mortals here below;
No happiness like thee we know'
Without thee, all the rest were vain! –
Oh! Come, and realise my strain,
Let arts and plenty ruse again,
And bless this present race of men,
In public and in private dwell:
Without thee, paradise were hell!

(ibid.)

'Sweet Peace' echoes one of E-P's most-chanted poems, 'Peace' by Henry Vaughan: 'sweet Peace sits crowned with smiles' (Dixon 1967:50), which shall be looked at below.

In 1967 E-P and his children took a holiday at the Mosney Butlins, about 30 miles north of Dublin. Alan Macfarlane visited E-P in Oxford shortly before the Irish holiday, and was curious to know why E-P was taking his family to Butlins – not, one would think, the sort of place which would attract a Fellow of All Souls. E-P proclaimed 'It is the one place I can be certain I shall not meet any of my colleagues.'[8] The E-Ps also had a later Butlins holiday at, I think, Bognor Regis, which E-P and his family also enjoyed with or without Fellows of All Souls being around. As in any setting, E-P was curious about Butlins, its campers, and its staff, including the famous redcoats, who offered aspects of life never to be found at All Souls, though the All Souls Fellows' annual mallard chase would not have been out of place in a Butlins skyline pavilion.

E-P's Anglo-Irish kin included the Eyres, the Frekes, the Evans-Frekes, the Hampdens, and the Crowes. George Evans of Carberry became in 1715 Baron Carberry in the Irish peerage. He had supported William and Mary in the Glorious Revolution and would later represent Westbury in the House of Commons. The title persists through the Evans-Frekes of Castlefreke, County Cork.

E-P's Anglo-Irish kinship web is rich with MPs, public servants, an explorer and colonial governor, a noted journalist and his painter son, and more. As the bust of George Evans, MP, outside 'the Ark' demonstrated, E-P was proud of his heritage and not without reason, though he acknowledged that John Edward Eyre's 'reign of terror' as governor of Jamaica (1854–72) was indeed 'bloody' and oppressive and said he would have sided with John Stuart Mill against Eyre.

Although E-P had little to no contact with his kin, in the 1950s his cousin Sybil Crowe (1908–93), a fellow of St Hildas and an expert on the Mahgreb, bought a house in Headington, a short distance from 'The Ark', which meant the cousins often met in passing, and certainly Sybil was guest at a memorable garden party held at 'The Ark' in July 1967. E-P had in his first year at the LSE met Sybil Crowe's father, the distinguished, if controversial, diplomat, Sir Eyre Crowe, head of the Foreign Office from 1920 until his death in 1925. In retirement Sybil Crowe devoted her time to a meticulous study in vindication of her father's policies, especially towards Germany, which had been dismissed by Lloyd-George, just as thirty years later Sybil's acute analyses of the Mahgreb were passed over by the Foreign Office.[9]

Sybil Crowe was also a poet and published a volume of poems, *Amoris Laus*, which included poems by the late Arthur Fraser, with whom she had fallen in love at Cambridge, plus her poems to Arthur's memory (Fraser and Crowe 1981). The couple had hoped to marry. Arthur fell to TB before this could happen, and E-P didn't live long enough to have read *Amoris Laus.*

The timeless now or the now in time? From Augustine's Ark in Pavia to the E-P family's home. Of course, there is always a danger of fantasizing links, but in my experience (I can say no more!) E-P intuitively made such links, leitmotifs of memory. Mnemosyne is both the Greek goddess of memory and of time, for the two ride the same rapids and dive deep in the same pools; and E-P was most certainly 'El Gran Buzo', the Great Diver, as Leon Felipe (1964) declared in tribute to his fellow poet Pablo Neruda.

E-P agreed with Francis Turner Palgrave in Palgrave's 'Preface' to *The Golden Treasury* (1902:ix) that there is 'no strict and exhaustive definition of Lyrical Poetry … Lyrical has been held essentially to imply that each Poem shall turn on some single thought, feeling, or situation.' This is mercifully straightforward. E-P knew *The Golden Treasury* from childhood and it travelled with him at home and abroad, and was close to hand near his study chair, as was a little volume *Poetry for Repetition* (1916) edited by E.H. Blakeney, sometime headmaster of King's School, Ely, who came out of retirement to teach at E-P's school, Winchester College, during the Great War, when younger teachers were away in the armed services, many never to return. Also close to hand were Quiller-Couch's *Oxford Book of English Verse* (1900), Yeats' *Oxford Book of Modern Verse* (1936) and, to complete these essential sources, a small volume, *Winchester College Songs* (1914), embossed with the Winchester crest and motto: 'Manners makyth man'. These

8 A. Macfarlane, personal communication.

9 A. Macfarlane, personal communication.

were E-P's companions when young, and not so young. From time to time he would sing the chorus of the Winchester School Song, penultimate entry in the songbook:

Domum, domum, dulce domum,
Domum, domum, dulce domum,
Domum, domum; dulce domum,
Dulce, dulce, dulce domum,
Dulce domum resonemus.

(ibid.:102–3)

E-P's head teacher ('headman' in Winchester parlance) Montague Rendall (1868–1938) encouraged his boys ('men') to sing this daily (Firth 1954:132). E-P entered Winchester in 1916, when the spirit of 'Home Sweet Home' was depressed by wartime deprivations. For Rendall, much admired by E-P, singing the song, which he himself sang more often than the boys, was a vital morale booster. All major public schools, possibly many not so major, had songbooks to create camaraderie and loyalty, boy to boys, and boys to school, at least in principle.

Other rousing Winchester songs were 'Paddle Your Own Canoe', 'Forty Years On' and 'Rule Britannia'. E-P could remember many of these from group singing … communal singing … tribal singing. Jingoistic, yes; patriotic, certainly; imperialistic, yes; but E-P said they were above all communal, creating an *esprit de corps* in time of war, sung in houses led by prefects. Wykehamists in the Great War could from time to time hear shelling from across the channel and 'headman' Rendall in morning chapel would chant the names of Old Wyekamists ('the fallen') who had perished, with a stillness which, E-P recalled, was spellbinding, unaffected, deeply moving. 'His majestic dignity in Chapel came from the man himself, from the splendour of his appearance, from his, at times, prophetic voice and from his rapt intensity, and humble sincerity of his worship.' (1973a:18).

E-P moved from his prep school, The Grange, grand and sporty but distinctly unacademic ('I had never even seen a Latin dictionary before I went to Winchester' – 1973b:18), to Winchester College in 1916, two years after his brother, Tom.

If a reader were to scan the poets in Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* (1902), then this would provide a substantial body of E-P's 'closest' poets, that is those which were part of him. E-P claimed, in terms of understanding, he never got beyond Tennyson, certainly a poet he knew well and recited often: 'the great Achilles whom we knew!' (1932:206). Tennyson and his wife had helped Palgrave with his 'First Series' *Golden Treasury*. Their son, Hallam, working as his father's secretary, became engaged in suggestions for revisions and additions.

E-P did, however, have on his shelves collections from poets he had known in London in the twenties and thirties, including Bryan Guinness, Roy Campbell, Walter de la Mare and the great translator Arthur Waley (1899–1996); and, as already noted, those from post-war Oxford, through his friendships with Dan and Winnie Davin, Joyce Carey, Louis MacNeice, Dylan Thomas and, later, Elizabeth Jennings and John Wain; and until his death in 1952, with Franz Baermann Steiner.

E-P felt at ease in the company of poets and artists and, when living in London, intermittently from 1924 to 1932, first at 42 Guilford Street, later at 38 Mecklenburgh Square, enjoyed what he called 'an almost bohemian existence', when, that is, not working away in the library of the Royal Geographical Society, a safe distance, as he put it, from Malinowski up the road at the LSE (Evans-Pritchard 1973b:21). His two-plus years in Cairo allowed E-P to develop and explore his Arabic and gain some Persian, all the better to chant on his desert exploration camel trips with his friends, Count Almásy (best known now as a character in Michael Ondaatje's novel *The English Patient*) and Baron von der Esch, an explorer and post-war diplomat.[10] E-P noted both 'turned up during the war as Rommel's advisers on desert warfare.' (1973b:17–23). E-P also travelled by sea to Cyrenaica in 1933, disembarking at Benghazi and taking in for the first time Jabal al Akhdar, the fabled 'green mountain'. As E-P noted, all a person's senses should be on high alert when travelling (pers. comm.), and E-P's certainly were in Cyrenaica, as they had been in the High Weald of East Sussex and elsewhere through the landscapes of his upbringing.

Here are three poems E-P chanted often, both indoors and out, on at least one occasion to a young American youth hosteller E-P had invited to stay at 'The Ark' when the youth hostel next door was full, a regular occurrence. On a number of occasions Deirdre and Ambrose, E-P's two younger children, when weekly boarders, would come home to find their rooms occupied. As for that young hosteller, the poetry recital alarmed her. She declined E-P's hospitality.

The first poem is Henry Vaughan's:

'Peace'
My Soul, there is a Country
Afar beyond the stars,
Where stands a winged sentry
All skilful in the wars;
There above noise, and danger

10 Almásy (1855–1951) was the son of the Hungarian zoologist and ethnographer, Gyorgy Almásy (1855–1931). Hansjoachim von der Esch, b.1899, served post-war as (West) German ambassador to Syria (1952–7) and then to Morocco (1957–60). He died in 1976. In 1933 E-P took part in at least one of Hansjoachim von der Esch's Senusi camel-train expeditions, to the Siwa Oasis, 541 km west of Cairo and 50 km east of the Libyan-Egyptian border. This was E-P's introduction to the Senusi Bedouin.

Sweet Peace sits crown'd with smiles
And one born in a manger
Commands the beauteous files.
He is thy gracious friend
And (O my Soul awake!)
Did in pure love descend
To die here for thy sake,
If thou canst get but thither,
There grows the flow'r of peace,
The rose that cannot wither,
Thy fortress, and thy ease.
Leave then thy foolish ranges,
For none can thee secure,
But One, who never changes,
Thy God, thy life, thy cure.

(Dixon 1967:50)

Henry Vaughan (1621–95) was a Welsh metaphysical poet and translator and occasional Hermeticist, whose 'poems are not description of religious experience but are actually the naked experiences themselves' (ibid.:8).

This would certainly have been part of Vaughan's attraction for E-P, and it's hardly surprising he included 'Peace' in his September 1970 mysticism lecture at the University of Durham. Shortly before the Durham lecture, E-P's much-loved spaniel, Barko, died in the street a short distance from 'The Ark'. As Barko was being buried in the garden at 'The Ark', E-P chanted Vaughan's 'Peace' while sprinkling rose petals over the grave. Around this time E-P opened a file on the importance/significance of dogs across cultures.

In his translucent *The Anthropological Lens: Rethinking E.E. Evans-Pritchard*, Christopher Morton reproduces a photograph (2020:fig 1.3) of E-P and the linguist Archibald Norman Tucker in Nuerland, 1930, in which E-P holds what seems to be a very contented dog. Alongside the anthropological lens could be added the anthropological ear, as demonstrated for E-P in the eight-seven wax-disc recordings of the Nuer 1930–2 held by the Pitt Rivers 'PittSound' and two Zande recordings held by the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv – albeit this collection is but a fraction compared to the thousands of photos Christopher Morton has illuminated through many years of close analysis.

Like E-P, Vaughan was acutely sensitive to landscape, in his case the landscape(s) of Brecon, with the Beacons in sight, and for Vaughan suffused with a divine light. E-P and his older brother Tom had been raised in the High Weald of East Sussex, where from 1905–8 E-P's father was curate of Withyam St Michael's as well as being responsible for St John's (also known as St John's, Crowborough Town) about 5 miles away by road. St Michael's, a particularly beautiful church inside and out, and home to the private Sackville family chapel, is sited on a rise with spacious views to the south-east across to Ashdown Forest, an ancient heathland now designated as one of England and Wales' forty-one Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. E-P held precious memories of the High Weald rambles he and his brother enjoyed around East Sussex, good preparation for 'rambles' to come.

E-P was born in 1902, a month premature, which he said had made him a fighter for life. His brother Tom was born in 1900, after a first-born son in 1897, who died at 18 days. The family lived in Crowborough until 1913, then moved to Waterperry, Oxfordshire, where his father took up the living of the pre-conquest St Mary the Virgin. Just up the road from the vicarage lies Bernwood Forest, rich in flora and fauna, especially butterflies. E-P's mother encouraged the boys to explore and collect fossils in Sussex, with the encouragement of Arthur Conan Doyle, who had moved to Crowborough with his family in 1907; and butterflies in Bernwood, just up the way from Waterperry, all good preparation for fieldwork, searching and naming and discovering.

I mention this because Vaughan's poem is transparently both religious and a fountain of nature, which for Vaughan were one and the same. If read aloud, then the flow of Vaughan's words can be heard as prayer. In 1918 Hubert Parry set 'Peace' to music and in 1920 E-P heard Howell's setting performed in Winchester Cathedral, an experience which remained vivid always. For although E-P was not instrumentally musical, he greatly valued the music he heard while at school and university, both in the school chapel, in Winchester Cathedral, and in Exeter College Chapel (daily attendance still compulsory in his student days). E-P would from time to time attempt to sing both Ambrosian and Gregorian chants. In the school vacations he would hear his father's sonorous voice, mostly in English, sometimes in Welsh, preside and deliver highly effective, sometimes dramatic, sermons (as noted in a clipping from a Sussex newspaper which E-P kept in a bowl on the mantelpiece in his study at 'The Ark').

The second poem is a far remove from Vaughan's gentle generous spiritual passage to peace. Robert Browning's 'The Lost Leader', of which I quote the first of its two stanzas, was written in 1845, when Browning was thirty-three. It is an attack on the ageing Wordsworth, then seventy-five and Poet Laureate, and formerly much idealized by Browning. The younger poet was by 1845 disillusioned with the great man for having abandoned his principles, and for having become dimly conservative and intolerant of the young. E-P liked it because he could think of many people who, like Wordsworth, had sold out, and to whom Browning's poem could apply, for example the 'peacemakers' at Versailles. As an aside, E-P also thought these 'peacemakers' all had syphilis, in the case of Woodrow Wilson at the tertiary stage. Anybody who spent time with E-P will recall the nature of some of his 'virtual' stories. Like his friend and

fellow Malinowski skirmisher, Jack Driberg, E-P practised Horace's *splendide mendax*, nobly false for a good cause. Mischief and a sense of the absurd were also characteristics of being a good Wykehamist, especially in the face of authority, as E-P found in his undergraduate days at Exeter College, Oxford. That said, E-P was in all things *sui generis* and deeply contemptuous of the pompous and the overblown. He could also be self-mocking whenever he edged towards his own versions of grandiosity.

'The Lost Leader'

1

Just for a handful of silver he left us,
Just for a riband to stick in his coat –
Found for one gift of which fortune bereft us,
Lost all the others she lets us devote;
They, with the gold to give, doled him out silver,
So much was theirs who so little allowed:
How all our copper had gone for his service!
Rags – were they purple, his heart had been proud!
We that had loved him so, followed him, honoured him,
Lived in his mild and magnificent eye,
Learned his great language, caught his clear accents,
Made him our pattern to live and to die!
Shakespeare was of us, Milton was for us
Burns, Shelley were with us – they watch from
their graves!
He alone breaks from the van and the freemen,
He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves.

(1919:3)

E-P saw this as minor verse, certainly not lyrically resonant, rather an assassin's stiletto in a pantomime, intended for those who were tempted by journalism or worse away from the purity of the ethnographer's vocation. When I saw E-P at 'The Ark' on the day he received notice of his knighthood, I did exactly what E-P would have done in reverse, I quoted the first two lines of 'The Lost Leader':

Just for a handful of silver he left us,
Just for a riband to stick in his coat –

which E-P took in good grace, grin and shrug. Of his knighthood, he would say he wasn't joining the Establishment, the Establishment was joining him. And went to Buckingham Palace accordingly.

The third poem is 'Remember' by Christina Rossetti (1830–94), the youngest of the four Rosetti children and the only daughter. According to her brother, William, she had been an exuberant child until the family suffered financial and emotional difficulties that moved her towards high Anglicanism (Pusey, the Anglican theologian, was a friend) and, finally, conversion to Rome. 'Remember' was written in 1849, when the poet was 19, but not published until 1862 in *Goblin Market and Other Poems* and represented in part the poet's tug-of-war between heaven and earth. For E-P it became personal, on love and loss, and would sometimes bring him to tears. He would say he felt in and through poetry, but found it difficult to express his feelings to those closest to him, a view confirmed by Godfrey Lienhardt: 'He would seem affectionate even on first acquaintance, though he once told me he could not demonstrate affection to those he deeply loved.' (1974:299).

E-P also enjoyed the Rosetti family's pre-Raphaelite 'gifts' to Exeter College from William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones, both Exonians, as realized in the chapel and beyond, most notably in Morris and Burne-Jones'a *Adoration of the Magi* tapestry(1890).

If Vaughan's 'Peace' is prayer, and the Rossetti piece an elegy, then the Browning verse is angry disappointment, a stiletto, yes. But E-P also saw 'The Lost Leader' as a hand grenade to be kept at the ready as a reminder of the vanities and pomposities of others and, on occasion, to check his own tendencies, in Godfrey Lienhardt's words,

In his last years [to] put on an appearance of died-in-the wool Toryism … he scented a kind of Phariseeism in the received liberal wisdom of the day, and set out to shock in much the same way as he would rebel against any bourgeois self-complacency.

(1974:299)

Of course, E-P liked to tease and be mischievous. Sometimes, as Lucy Mair and Raymond Firth recalled, teasing could be 'acerbic' or 'a glancing blow' (pers. comm.). It would be simplistic to say this was the Wykehamist tongue, though as E.P. (Palmer) Thompson, not a Wykehamist, used to complain to his Wykehamist older brother Frank (1921–44), being superior, at times supercilious, is nothing to boast about (Conradi 2012:71–2).

'Remember'

Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more day by say
You tell me of our future that you planned;
Only remember me; you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yes, if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile
Than that you should remember me and be sad.

(Rosetti 1865:58)

How, though, did poems exist in and for E-P? Morally? Imaginatively? Spiritually? Towards the end of his 'Personal view', published ten months after E-P's death, Godfrey Lienhardt wrote that E-P:

> had a strong sense of transience and permanence in human affairs – it was translated sociologically into his interest in time and structural relativities – but he increasingly found that poetry expressed those contradictions more adequately than sociological analysis.
>
> (Lienhardt 1974:304)

When E-P walked with his dog Barko, for some of the time he might have his hands behind his back, unless with walking stick, with head down, deep in thought, then he would lift his head and raise his eyes, keen to observe, always observing, frequently recalling, sometimes Tennyson's 'better to have loved and lost/ Than never to have loved at all' (1850). Or the closing lines of Christina Rossetti's 'Remember':

> Better by far you should forget and smile
> Than that you should remember me and be sad.
>
> (1865:58)

In *The Muqaddimah* Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406) writes

> Poetry is difficult in its tendency and strange in its subject-matter. Therefore, it constitutes a severe test of a person's natural talent, if he wants to have a good knowledge of poetical methods. [The desire] to press speech into the moulds of poetry sharpens the mind.
>
> (Khaldun 1967:445)

For E-P, poetry mediated understandings and revealed paradoxes, not so much strange as true. Once in the University Parks, with his Barko at his side, he pointed at a leafless tree and said, 'A tree without leaves is as much a poem as a tree in full bloom.' This reminded me of one of the poems collected in E.H. Blakeney's *Poetry for Repetition*, a Winchester 'set' book published in 1916. Here, the first verse of Charles Water Moule's:

> **'Last Year's Leaves'**
> Every green leaf hath her singer:
> These, on beech and oak that linger
> Brown and bright, will no man sing?
> Dreaming of their own fair summer,
> Waiting for the fair new-comer,
> Silent to the stem they cling!
>
> (1916:77)

Moule (1834–1919) was a Cambridge classical scholar who ended his career as president of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. It is doubtful whether others today would know this or any other of Moule's poems. In his 'A note on poetry', which precedes his 116 selections, Blakeney sets out why poetry should be remembered and repeated:

> we need to keep alive the imaginative element in humanity; to transmute our materialism into something spiritual; to refine the chaotic, anarchic elements of our nature, and bring them into harmonious and serviceable order.
>
> (1916:vi)

A year after he wrote this morally bracing exhortation, Blakeney was teaching E-P at Winchester, and would also have heard the sounds of shells exploding across the Channel in northern France. E-P told me that when shells were heard he and his classmates would sit in silence and wonder, aware they were just a few years too young to be at the front.

At risk of over-reading and superimposing, it seems to me that E-P the 'poet' is visible and audible not just in his Durham lecture on mysticism, where he hoped the voices of his inner life would be heard and absorbed, but also in the prose of his greatest books, from *Witchcraft, Magic and Oracles Among the Azande* (1937), through the Nuer trilogy, to *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica* (1949a). Here a passage from *The Nuer* (1940), from the 'Time and space' chapter, which I suggested to E-P had a touch of Proust about it. Grin and shrug.

Beyond the annual cycle, time-reckoning is a conceptualization of the social structure, and the points of reference are a projection into the past of actual relations between groups of persons. It is less a means of co-ordinating events than of relationships, and is therefore mainly a looking-backwards, since relationships must be explained in terms of the past.
(1940:108)

Not so much in search of time past as in locating time *nunc stans* and *nunc lumens*. E-P credited his history don, at Winchester, A.T.P. Williams ('History Bill') for drumming into him the hard-won verities of English prose, in particular to ensure clarity within carefully balanced and varied sentences, and words chosen for their sound and echoes as well as their immediate 'meaning'. 'History Bill' would read aloud 'a man's essay' and ask, 'Why is this so dull? Answer. It lacks rhythm! Re-write and read it back to yourself aloud. Listen and feel!!' Or words to that effect. And it was Williams and the cricketer Harry Altham who nurtured E-P's approach to history, which he said was just as well given how little he gained from his Oxford tutor, C.T. Atkinson; 'Though he was a good man, I got little inspiration from him'. (1973b:18).

Williams succeeded Rendall as headman of Winchester from the beginning of the academic year 1924–5, was then appointed Dean of Christ Church 1934–8, subsequently as Bishop of Durham and finally home, as Bishop of Winchester. E-P was very pleased to have been able to give Alwyn Williams an inscribed copy of *Witchcraft, Magic, and Oracles Among the Azande* when it was published by the Clarendon Press in 1937, while Williams was pleased by his sometime pupil's prose, rhythm, balance, cadences, imagination and thinking.

E-P was proud to have on his shelves a first edition (1865) of William Rossetti's translation of *The Inferno*, which he had picked up in Thornton's bookshop, when he was an undergraduate. In his first year at Exeter College, 1921–2, W.B. Yeats and his wife Georgie and their two infant children, Anne and Michael, were living at 4 The Broad, just a few doors up from Thornton's and not far from Exeter College. On at least one occasion E-P and his friend Francis Turville-Petre were in Thornton's when they saw Yeats wander by, seemingly very distracted, possibly after a night of seances and automatic writing. On at least one occasion, E-P and Turville-Petre decided to follow Yeats down the street, mimicking his curious dancing gait. They followed him down past Exeter College, around the Sheldonian, across to Hertford Bridge (Bridge of Sighs), then down Catte Street to the chapel entrance of All Souls, into which Yeats disappeared.

'A chapel awaits Mr Yeats'
Long ago, perhaps yesterday,
Willy Yeats came out to play.
At Christ Church in 1888
you transcribed Aesop's Fables
while pinching buns
from the highest of tables.
Oxford in its wisdom
called you back to this
page of redeemings,
a retracing of names
through heaven, earth,
then purgatory: a feth fiada
brought you here to this chapel
at Pentecost, a restless time
no more than usual for poet and wife…
no more than usual for the phases
of the moon, where to ally
the lizard with the loon not quite
what you had in mind when once
you were introduced as Keats,
not out of place in the very least.

(BR-S)

III

The child is the father of the man / And feel today a child again

When I was lodging at 'The Ark' in 1972, in June, around the solstice, E-P beckoned me to his study one brilliant sunny afternoon. West facing, the sun was streaming through and 'haloed' E-P's head as he sat with his back to the study's French window. Poetry sessions were many, by this time often joined by E-P's children. On this near-solstice moment, E-P had on the table next to his chair an A4 lined sheet, showing its age, which he handed to me. On it were two poems in E-P's unique 'spider-in-the-sand' handwriting, both written in 1944: 'On my 42nd Birthday' (21 September 1944) and 'Farewell' (November 1944). E-P's poetic diction could certainly be said to be pre-modernist; and we would, that sun-blest afternoon-into-evening, read again J.E. Flecker's (1884–1915) Parnassian 'The Golden Journey to Samarkand':

> What shall we tell you? Tales, marvellous tales
> Of ships and stars and isles where good men rest,
> Where nevermore the rose of sunset pales,
> And winds and shadows fall toward the west.
>
> (1916:144)

This recitation was often paired with 'The Hound of Heaven' by Francis Thompson (1859–1907)

> His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.
> Whether man's heart or life it be which yields
> True harvest, must Thy harvest fields
> Be dunged with rotten death.
>
> (Thompson 1917:239)

We did not, though, recite E-P's poems. Rather, he asked me to type out copies for me and copies for him. I couldn't avoid noticing the tears in his eyes as he handed over the yellowing sheets and went off to do as he had bidden. E-P never mentioned the 1944 poems again, but we did go through the Flecker and Thompson verses, whose respective poetic dictions were like a garden on the edge of dusk, brightness fading but enhanced by the shadows…

I will now turn to E-P's visits to the University of Aarhus in the late 1960s. He was drawn to this university of beautiful research parks and 'natural' gardens by the anthropologist Mette Bovin, when she was attached to Oxford's Institute of Social Anthropology from 1967 to 1968. E-P's delight in his trips to Aarhus was palpable.

E-P told me that on his return from his first trip to Aarhus he saw a rainbow over the sea that reminded him of the rainbows he and his older brother, Tom, had often seen over the Ashdown Forest, an ancient area of open heathland in the Sussex High Weald of their childhoods.

To state the obvious, the experience of seeing and sensing a rainbow is familiar to all who can see, but for E-P in Aarhus it also elicited instantly Wordsworth's poem 'My Heart Leaps Up', which he first read at home with his brother and parents at The Lea, Crowborough, past into present. I directly contrast Wordsworth's 'My Heart Leaps Up' with the poem E-P wrote in Cyrenaica on his forty-second birthday, towards the end of his two years with his Bedouin companions.

> My heart leaps up when I behold
> A rainbow in the sky.
> So was it when my life began,
> So it is now I am a man;
> So be it when I shall grow old,
> Or let me die!
> The child is the father of the Man;
> And I could wish my days to be
> Bound each to each by natural piety.
>
> (Grasmere 1832, Wordsworth 1975:62)

> **'On my 42nd Birthday'**
> No harvest have I gathered in
> Except a few chance grains of truth
> That ripened mid the tares of sin
> I scattered in the years of youth;
> No store of sacramental grace,
> No merit won by constant prayer,
> Nothing garnered with which to face
> The bitter winter of despair.
> And yet, I thank thee, Lord of years,
> This day of retrospective shame,
> This day of memories and tears,
> That faith now burns a stronger flame,
> From this dull spark thou hast fanned
> With wings of sorrow and of pain
> Till I can place in thine my hand
> And today feel a child again.
>
> (Cyrenaica, 21 September 1944)

In reading the sixteen lines of E-P's forty-second birthday poem set against Wordsworth's nine lines, it will be immediately apparent that E-P seems far more troubled, yet we know from the *Grasmere Journals* of Wordsworth's sister, Dorothy, that the composition of what she called 'The Rainbow' had caused her brother considerable anxiety: (26 March) 'When I was getting into bed he wrote the rainbow.' then (14 May) 'William very anxious. And he was in bed, haunted by the Rainbow.' (1897:104, 122). On the morning of 27 March, Wordsworth immediately went on to write what would become 'Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood', for which the last three lines of 'My Heart Leaps Up' form an epitaph (1969:62). Wordsworth was thirty-two when he wrote 'Rainbow/My Heart Leaps Up'.

E-P was forty-two, to the day, when he wrote 'No Harvest Have I Gathered In', coming to the end of four years of active service, including the emotionally and physically gruelling operations on the Akobo and Gila Rivers, from 28 October 1940 to mid-May 1941. If for now the severity of the penitential language in E-P's poem can be set aside, a question which could be asked: are the two poems saying something similar across the 112 years which separate them? Is Wordsworth saying directly 'Or let me die' if he can no longer greet a rainbow with the excitement and purity of the child he once was: 'The child is the father of the man/ And I could wish my days to be/ Bound each to each by natural piety.' The equation Wordsworth's 'natural piety' to E-P's 'Till I can place in thine my hand/ And today feel a child again' is perhaps a stretch.

Whatever, the longing to hold on to the pure excitements and discoveries of childhood, a natural piety, to the Godly piety of 'in thine my hand', E-P wrote his birthday poem eight days before he went down to the Cathedral of Benghazi, to be received into the Catholic Church.

Joao de Pina-Cabral writes of E-P's 'deeply emotional conversion to Catholicism' and that E-P had 'opted for the Ultramontane Catholicism of his day rather than the bland Protestantism of his own father's faith.' (2014:37, 49). This needs qualification. In his 'Fragment of an autobiography', E-P explains:

> I was brought up in a religious home and at religious schools and college. It is true that the faith was often dim, but the light, though sometimes a flicker, never quite died out and at moments of crisis would flicker… (the God I had been taught to revere was not just a lot of attributes but the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob).
>
> (1973a:37)

As quoted earlier: 'if you want the pearl of no price you have got to take the oyster with it (it would seem, however, that some people like oysters)' (ibid.).

Thomas John Pritchard was ordained just two years after the death of St John Henry Newman, the Tractarians/ Oxford Movement still ringing, at times raging, around the aisles of the Anglican Communion. A number of E-P's father's churches held strong Roman Catholic associations, with the Curson family of Waterperry House, Catholic worshipers at St Mary's, Waterperry, until 1813; while the stately dining room at Calverton Rectory had in mid-nineteenth century been a frequent meeting place for the Tractarians Newman, Manning, Lyddon, and Pusey (Shea and White 2000:xxii). Add in Broad Church/High Church, the *Essays and Reviews* trial (Larsen 2014:80–119), the Darwinian challenge, and it will be seen, as Timothy Larsen has demonstrated in a number of outstanding studies

(Larsen 2006, 2012, 2014), the ecclesiastical habitat of TJP's time was far from bland. E-P used to say that he wanted to go to the source, and that source was the throne of St Peter rather than of Becket at Canterbury.

In spring 1972, when E-P was attending an ASA conference at the University of Kent, E-P and I and E-P's son Nicky walked into Canterbury Cathedral though Christ Gate, on our way to take in the site of Archbishop Becket's bloody martyrdom. Rather than talk of Becket, as we passed through the gate into the cathedral, E-P mentioned not Becket ('a heathen ruffian'), but rather Julian the Apostate (331–63 AD), the last pagan ruler of the Roman Empire, who also came to a bloody end, but whose resistance to Christianity E-P believed to have been noble (a favoured word). Then E-P moved on to the Gnostic scriptures. Yes, we looked at where Becket had been chopped down in what was almost certainly a 'martyrdom' organized by Becket himself, as E-P put it, 'the only way he could appear holy'. This was typical in my experience of E-P's conversation, free-flowing, often including scurrilous stories, as Alan Macfarlane had found when he spent a day in Oxford with E-P in 1966. What E-P had wanted to stress, in Canterbury Cathedral, was that Julian was a good person, Becket not. Further, Julian was a philosopher, Becket a political operator. Julian wins!

On his father's Christian disposition, E-P would say that TJP held strong leanings to the *Unam Sanctum* and saw dissenters as beyond any kind of pale, his (own) family background notwithstanding. E-P was not so averse to 'dissenters' as had been his father, either in Sudan or elsewhere, as his *Nuer* dedication showed: 'TO THE STAFF OF THE AMERICAN MISSION AT NASSER' (1940:iii).

E-P certainly saw Rome as the bearer of true faith, as much for aesthetic as doctrinal reasons. He knew he was a 'bad' day-to-day Catholic, didn't attend his local Catholic Church, and politely rebuffed Tolkien's attempt to bring him in to a new parish church which opened in 1960 just around the corner from 'The Ark'. His attendance at Blackfriars, the Dominican house (now a private hall of the university: Aula Forum Praedicatorum) in St Giles, and contributions to *Blackfriars* and *New Blackfriars* from 1946 to 1973 were acts of faith, intellectual engagement and friendship. E-P sought the most direct pathway to God through Rome, through its imagery and its poetry rather than from its clergy, with notable exceptions. His father, from a Nonconformist background, shuddered at the thought of dissent and held strong to his faith. Perhaps 'parochial' would be more persuasive than 'bland' to describe that denominational faith. Nor should TJP's (henceforth) powerful sermons be forgotten. Pity, then, that nothing of those sermons has survived.

In his Durham lecture on mysticism E-P delivered the transcendental in his chanting voice, these realities 'his inner life'. He described his father as a 'simple, humble, pious man' (1987:448) and a fine preacher whose incantatory style E-P inherited. Nor should his mother's role in E-P's move to Catholicism be forgotten, when twice he failed to enter the church before the war. As a widow living at Pevesney in the 1930s, E-P's mother was a good friend and counsel to her second son, even if she had misgivings about that son's desire to become an anthropologist, a rare species at that time. She had wanted E-P to join a Sussex law firm after Oxford, secure in income and the model of respectability, the last something E-P never consciously sought. What if? At midnight masses at Blackfriars E-P recalled earlier midnight masses, history in the present, the present in history, and family. Godfrey Lienhardt used to reflect on how loyal the E-Ps were, and that certainly has been my experience over six decades of friendship.

After a short spell as governor of Cyrene District in November 1942, with a grand office in the El-Manar Palace once occupied by the murderous General Graziani, E-P persuaded his commanding officer, Duncan Cumming, to appoint him liaison/tribal affairs officer with the Cyrenaican Bedouin. For over two years E-P travelled by horse and camel with his Bedouin companions along tracks and paths around the wooded al-Jabal al-Akhdar (the green mountain) in the north down to the rugged *arqub* country in the south. Among his duties were the mapping of minefields littered around Cyrenaica by the British, Germans and Italians. These were very happy times for E-P, who greatly admired and appreciated the simplicity, stoicism, openness and generosity of his Bedouin companions, who accepted him as an equal, physically, mentally and spiritually. Just before his departure from Cyrenaica, E-P wrote his 'Farewell' to 'his' Senusi Bedouin.

'Farewell'
Good-bye
To Cyrenaican winds and sky
To sun and sand jackal's cry
Good-bye.
Farewell
To tent and desert well
To wormwood, thyme, and asphodel
Farewell
Adieu
My Bedouin-hosts and friends, to you,
Ever yours, ever true.
Adieu.

(November 1944)

'Farewell' speaks for itself in its sentiment and directness. E-P knew his poetic diction was 'antique'. As for Modernism, he saw this as a distraction. For example, E-P was pleased when T.S. Eliot quoted him approvingly in *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* from E-P's *Blackfriars* November 1946 article on social anthropology:

'The answer would seem to be that the sociologist should also be a moral philosopher and that, as such, he should have a set of beliefs and values in terms of which he evaluates the facts he studies as a sociologist.' (1948:60).

He didn't much care for Eliot otherwise and didn't 'chant' Eliot's poems. Indeed, he once showed me a *Sunday Telegraph* photograph of Eliot with his second wife, Valerie, looking 'lovingly' into each other's eyes: 'That is why I dislike him', said E-P, without explanation other than a grin and a shrug. We did at least once have a look at 'Little Gidding' ('To purify the language of the tribe') (2015:205) but E-P immediately turned to Blake's 'The Garden of Love' (1970:44) for something 'better'.

What, though, of E-P's punishing, penitential language of the birthday poem, with echoes of Gerard Manley Hopkin's 'tears of sin' (1967:61–3). In the first stanza E-P writes of 'the tears of sin/ I scattered in the years of youth', and he ends the stanza with 'No merit won by constant prayer,/ Nothing garnered with which to face/ The bitter winter of despair.' As noted, E-P wrote his birthday poem on the eve of his reception into the Roman Catholic church: the second and final stanza talks of 'This day of retrospective shame,/ This day of memories and tears,/ That faith now burns a stronger flame, …' The stronger flame of faith would be formalized on St Michael's Day, 1944, when in the far-from-beautiful Italian-built Cathedral of Benghazi, E-P was received into the Church of Rome.

In his 'Fragment of an Autobiography' E-P explained:

> there was nothing sudden or anything to write about
> my conversion, though that is what I am doing. It was a
> slow maturing; accumulating much sin, I regret to say,
> on the way to the final plunge.
>
> (1973a:37)

In his searching and sensitive essay on E-P in *The Slain God*, where the forty-second birthday poem is reproduced, Timothy Larsen suggests that E-P's 'feelings of guilt' expressed in that lamentation might in part have resulted 'from the fog of war' (2014:116).

E-P's admission in his autobiographical fragment that his path to conversion had been 'a slow maturing; accumulating much sin', would certainly encompass what in private he would at times call 'the massacre'. This is an 'event' and area of deep grief that should be respected, for a great teller of anecdotes though E-P was, he was also profoundly private: open to God but not to the world. Johnny Evans-Pritchard has said to me E-P's private griefs should have been and should remain private. My few words here on what he sometimes called 'the massacre' are included because he told me this was a primary factor in his conversion. E-P's eldest, Shineen, has told me that in the 1960s she asked her father why he had become a Catholic: he replied 'the massacre'.

That he had on two earlier occasions sought reception into the Church is a matter of record in his 'Fragment of an autobiography', in which he concluded 'that conversion is an ambiguous word which explains little, if anything' (1973a:37).

'The massacre'?

E-P was very pleased in 1973 when Major-General Goldsmith, editor of the *Army Quarterly* accepted for publication 'Operations on the Akobo and Gila Rivers 1940–41' (1973c), one of a number of short memoirs, published over what would turn out to be the last two years of his life. These were certainly not intended to be confessional, and were not. As E-P's youngest son, Ambrose, told Timothy Larsen, 'My father always disguised his deepest thoughts behind layers of self-irony, mischief and intellectual barricades which could make him seem irreverent. This was clearly not the case.' (2014:116). In poetry, in the poems he loved and often shared with others, E-P needed no barricades. At Winchester he had to translate *The Satires* of Juvenal 'Never does Nature say one thing and Wisdom another.' (2008:xiv). He used to say his brother, Tom, had been a better translator!

Of 'Operations', E-P wanted to have on record what his Anuak companions had achieved, starting with just fifteen warriors with 'rifles of a last century model and 50 rounds each' (ibid.:471). The band of 'flying' Anuak grew to fifty and were operational for eight months, October 1940 to mid-May 1941. E-P's Anuak ox-name was Odier wara Cang – 'a brilliant black and white beast with the bright sun' (Lienhardt1974:300). E-P and his band were able to pick off Italian soldiers at speed and, in most cases, without casualties to themselves. So baffled were the Italians by what was happening that they reported to Addis Ababa that "the unidentified Englishman was a *Cheruor* (spy)' (Collins 1983:306).

About halfway through the campaign an incident took place that would haunt E-P for the rest of his life, particularly at night. A raid went disastrously wrong when a squad of British regulars arrived just as a flying Anuak raid was to begin. The regulars opened fire. This resulted in what E-P called 'the massacre', in which seventeen soldiers were killed and many others wounded. Sheltering in a trench on the edge of the settlement were Galla wives and children: five women were killed and one child. For E-P this was deeply distressing and he took it as his personal and moral failure to protect those for whose welfare he felt responsible.[11] It would be impertinent to suggest that 'the massacre' was the prime element in his conversion to Rome a few years later; rather, it could be seen as an intensification towards conversion, however tendentious that might sound.

As his son Ambrose E-P told Timothy Larsen, E-P 'suffered from terrible feelings of guilt over what happened

11 Personal communication.

in the war, and would wake up screaming in the night. The memories tortured him.' (2014:116). I too remember his cries from when I lodged with the E-Ps in the early 1970s. E-P was not unique in carrying with him forever open and unhealed wounds of war. E-P had been much affected by Goya's eighty-five etchings *The Disasters of War*, from *The Complete Etchings of Goya*, foreword by Aldous Huxley (1943), during his brief spell as a Reader at Cambridge (he didn't take to Emmanuel College, to which he was attached 1944–6) before he moved back to Oxford as Professor at All Souls, the second Professor of Social Anthropology, in succession to Radcliffe Brown (1881–1955). Hand-to-hand combat, killings at close quarters, all were within Goya's tangible and terrible realization of combat, terror, and death; E-P donated the book to Emmanuel College Library.

E-P was deeply suspicious of the confessional mode, yet his birthday poem, as already stated, certainly can be described as penitential. He enjoyed personal stories about others, even if he then reported them on, with galaxies of invention. Virtual truth appealed. Grin and shrug.

I mention the killings of the Galla women and child to indicate, if indication be needed, that E-P felt and mourned deeply the loss of life, and not just human life, with currents deep and far in how he 'felt' in and of the world. Here, from 'Fragment of an autobiography':

> I was brought up in a religious home and at religious schools and college. It is true that the faith was often dim, but the light, though sometimes a flicker, never quite died out and at moments of crisis would flare again. I could not have faced the dangers I had to face in Africa and during the Second World War had I not known divine support. During this period of crag and moorland, this period when the light was scarcely to be seen, I twice attempted unsuccessfully to be received into the Catholic Church.
>
> (1973a:37)

After retirement E-P used to joke he would sell up 'The Ark' and take up *la vie religieuse* – grin and shrug! In the 'Fragment' he reflects: 'I suppose that none of us can say truthfully and certainly why we do anything. It would be better to ask not why, but how, did a man become a Catholic.' (ibid.:35). Towards the end of the 'Fragment': 'I was received into the Church in the Cathedral of Benghazi. To have made that final surrender was, of course, rapture: "*Di un ciego y oscuro salto*". (1950:54). This line is from *St John of the Cross*, as translated by E-P's friend, Roy Campbell, a post-war convert to Rome: 'I gave that mad, blind reckless leap.' (1960:53–4).

'Rapture'
Against the outstretched sky
the eagle took flight,
perpetual at first
not a contradiction,
lean against the coast
for a full crew of angels,
blow, the sails, blow
where no-one waits
for very long
along the narrows of the moon,
this beyond words forever.
But what, then, for meaning
this evening in Benghazi?
Wrong question, you see
you said, rapture can't
be captured for all to see.
Words lost on the rising breeze:
Not why but how…

(BR-S)

When E-P joined the Sudan Defence Force in the summer of 1940, Oxford University withdrew his lectureship. E-P then defended his actions with characteristic gusto: 'If Socrates fought in Thebes and Descartes in the low countries, why shouldn't I have a little excitement in Ethiopia and elsewhere.' (1973b:22). It's doubtful he would have used the word 'excitement' post-war. E-P had no doubt it was his duty to see action. He and Ioma Heaton Nicholls were married on 5 September 1939, two days after France and the UK had declared war on Germany. E-P was living at 22 St Michael Street, now part of the Vanbrugh House Hotel, just across the road from the Oxford Union. E-P's bride-to-be, a diploma student in social anthropology, was staying just around the corner at the Randolph Hotel. The day after the wedding E-P rushed up to London and joined the Welsh Guards. Oxford University blew up at this and hauled him out of the Guards on the grounds that he was in a reserved occupation. E-P was in fact on leave as a research lecturer, with Meyer Fortes his replacement. He did in the end manage to get back to Sudan and was commissioned as *bimbashi* in the Sudan Auxiliary Defence Force. E-P's daughter, Deirdre, has with great skill excavated E-P's war activities in her chapter in this collection. When staying in St James, at the Royal Societies Club, that September, 1939, E-P recalled Richard Lovelace's:

'To Lucasta, going to the warres'
Tell me not (Sweet), I am unkind
That from the nunnery
Of thy chaste breast, and quiet mind,
To war and arms I fly.
True, a new mistress now I chase,
The first foe in the field;
And with a stronger faith embrace
A sword, a horse, a shield.
Yet this inconstance is such

As you too shall adore;
I could not love thee (Dear) so much
Lov'd I not Honour more.

(Wilkinson 1925:78 [1649])

IV

The beautiful names of God

In his first contribution to *Blackfriars*, in January 1946, E-P published 'The beautiful names of God' (1946a). He explained that while on 'a six-week trek through the deserts of Libya, I took from the Muslim Rosary all the names I could remember and strung them on to my own string. The names are the names of God in the Koran, but the feeling is my own and also much of the sense.' (ibid.:1). As visitors to E-P's study will recall, his rosary was always present. The poem/hymn is in twenty four-line stanzas. I will quote stanzas 1, 10 and 20:

He is God, there is none other,
Blows his name on every wind,
The revolving spheres intone it,
He the Merciful, the Kind;
The Protector of whose guidance
Lonely prophets oft have told,
He whose loving arm hath shielded
Tenderly the saints of old;
The glittering stars, his girdle
Bind the raiment of the skies,
The Conqueror, the Glorious,
The Omnipotent, the Wise.

(ibid.:2–3)

E-P introduced his 'The beautiful names of God' by mentioning both Edward Fitzgerald's *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayam* and Richard Burton's 'faked' *Kasidah*. E-P loved and often chanted the Fitzgerald but was not impressed by the Burton work or by Burton as a person, whom E-P judged 'a scoundrel'. The journey E-P mentions here he also mentions in his 'Fragment of an autobiography': 'I had been on a long camel journey through the desert and that gave me time for reflection.' (1973a:37)

We might now leap from reflection to realization:

'Choirs of the Heart'
I gave that mad, blind, reckless leap
through faith, belief, every level
of meaning and then stopped
at the end of a long journey
and made my peace, 'my peace
I give you', whether Sufi knock
and it shall be opened, blending
of thought in the choirs of the heart,
let's be clear from the start.

(BR-S)

'The beautiful names of God' is simply devout and devoutly simple. This sounds glib but echoes the prayer-like language, which is of course what it is. E-P's long journey to the Cathedral of Benghazi was of course his own, with poetry and prayer as vital outriders.

V

Elegy

When E-P arrived in Cairo early in 1932, to take up a Chair in Philosophy or Sociology in the King Fuad the First University at Cairo (now the University of Egypt), he had ahead of him nearly two years of hard intellectual work, but also a time of great fun centred on Shepheard's Hotel and strong friendships with, amongst others, Major McPherson, for whom E-P wrote an foreword (1941) to his *The Moulids of Egypt (Egyptian Saint Days)*. Desert travel/exploration with Count Almásy and Baron von der Esch has already been mentioned. It was through his desert excursions that E-P first encountered the Sanusi Bedouin, refugees from the brutal oppressions of Generals Badoglio and Graziani about which E-P would write with sensitivity and sadness in *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica* (1949a):

> Hunger, disease, and broken hearts took a heavy toll of the imprisoned population. Bedouin die in a cage. Loss of livestock was also great, for the beasts had insufficient grazing near the camps on which to support life, and the herds, already decimated in the fighting, were almost wiped out by the camps.
>
> (1949a:189)

As Wendy James noted, *The Sanusi* is 'a book of unusually committed characters … in its treatment of an anti-colonialist national movement and its clearly anti-Fascist sympathies' (James 1973:57).

The most 'committed character' in the Sanusi and Bedouin resistance to the murderous Italian occupation/pacification was Sidi Omar al-Mukhtar, born around 1858. After being wounded and captured on 11 September 1931, Sidi Omar…

> was taken to Suluq where on 16 September, still suffering from his wound, he was hanged before 20,000 Bedouin and the urban notables of Cyrenaica, brought there from confinement to witness his end. The Italians were exultant. They believed, this time rightly, that the rebellion had been stamped out.
>
> (Evans-Pritchard 1949a:169)

When E-P moved into 1 Rue Montillard, Cairo, not far from Fuad 1 University, the great Egyptian poet Ahmed Shawqi was in the last year of his life. He died at his home

in Giza on 14 October 1932. In 1927 he had been crowned by his peers 'Amir al-Sho'araa' – 'Prince Among Poets'.

Over his two years in Cairo, while working hard on the manuscript of *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*, E-P applied himself to deepening his Arabic and soon came across the works of Ahmed Shawqi, 'The Prince of Poets', both poems and plays, the last heavily influenced by Moliere and Racine, whom E-P had read as an undergraduate at Oxford with his friend Frances Turville-Petre.

One of the last poems written by Ahmed Shawqi was an 'Elegy on the occasion of the Execution of Sidi Omar al-Mukhtar al-Minifi', which E-P went on to publish in translation (1949b), and through which can be heard/sensed E-P's poetic voices and sympathies. I would urge the reader to read out loud E-P's translation, for here can be heard the inner worlds of E-P's lifetime inside poetry/poetry inside E-P.

E-P champions Mukhtar much as he had championed his Bedouin companions in Cyrenaica. In *The Sanusi* E-P portrays Mukhtar as 'a simple man, religious, courageous, contemptuous of worldly honours and success, and with singular tenacity and powers of physical endurance' (1949a:169). This echoes the admiration and respect E-P showed towards all the peoples with whom he lived, at home and abroad. For example, Tony Free (1991) argues that *The Nuer* could be seen as an allegorical statement against Fascism and, on colonialism, argues persuasively that E-P was anti-Hobbesian. On the first Italo-Sanusi war, E-P reflected that:

> Like a great octopus Europe had stretched out its tentacles to seize and exploit the whole of Africa and Asia. The tentacle which now held Tripolitania and Cyrenaica in its grip belonged to the same beast which held half the world in its clutches. It was not the future of a handful of Bedouin which was being decided, but the future of Europe.
>
> (1949a:116)

In 1981 the Syrian American film director, Moustapha Akkad, backed by Muammar Gaddafi, made *The Lion of the Desert* (1981), an epic account of al-Mukhtar's resistance to the Italians. Anthony Quinn played al-Mukhtar and Oliver Reed, Graziani. Not surprisingly the film ends with al-Mukhtar's hanging at Suluq. The film has proven popular throughout the Arab world, with al-Mukhtar a symbol of strong and persistent resistance, and at times has been appropriated by those whose intentions and actions he would have condemned.

> Your ears from hearing what is spoken to them.
> The chieftain has gone, but you are immortal.
> Sift the young men, choose your chiefs,
> Remove your old men from the burden of battle
> And place it on your young men.
>
> (Evans-Pritchard 1949:2–3)

Had he lived long enough to see Anthony Quinn as Sidi al-Mukhtar, I suspect E-P would have suspended historical judgement and enjoyed the sentiment.

In the spring of 1969, in his penultimate year as Oxford professor, E-P was invited by King Idris to visit Libya in September 1970, at the beginning of E-P's retirement. In September 1969 the Gaddafi-led coup, mounted when Idris was travelling abroad, meant that visit became impossible. The poet Anthony Thwaite, from 1965–7 an Assistant Professor at the University of Benghazi, had previously tried to get E-P out to Benghazi. E-P was tempted, but did not want to be away from his children, colleagues and friends.

He often said he'd done his travelling. In retirement he was offered a visiting chair at Fordham University, New York, time at the College de France, and no doubt more, none taken up, in part certainly for health reasons, but above all because he wanted to be in Oxford with his children, friends and colleagues (also friends, mostly). He wanted and needed 'peace', spiritual as well as material. He did, though, hope to make a farewell trip to South Africa in the autumn of 1973 but died on 11 September 1973. There had also been an invitation to go to Cairo and stay at Shepheard's Hotel, rebuilt after the 1952 Cairo fire destroyed the grand edifice EP had known in the 1930s and 40s.

Towards the end of his 'Fragment of an autobiography', E-P writes of his reception into the Catholic Church: 'To have made that final surrender was, of course, rapture … but rapture or no rapture, I have always been a Catholic at heart.' (1974a:37). To this must be added that E-P was always a poet at heart, a poetic heart he was always keen to share with others. This he did, with what Collingwood and Stanley Burnshaw celebrated as 'the poem itself' (1973a:36).

> **'Translation of an elegy by Ahmed Shauqi Bey on the occasion of the Execution of Sidi 'Umar al-Mukhtar al-Minifi'**
> They planted your body in the sand as a standard
> Which rouses the Wadi by day and by night
> Curses be on them who have built a blood-lighted beacon,
> To guide to vengeance the generations of tomorrow.
> How would it have harmed them of they had made future ties
> Between nations those of friendship and brotherhood.
> It is a wound which shrieks for ever and a victim
> Who gave sharpness for ever to the swords of the Arabs
> Whose Bedouin deserts have been the scabbard of every sword
> Which has been well tried against the enemy.
> And are the graves of the young Umayyad braves

And their fathers. Who live in memory and in God
If a fortress were to be removed to the refuge of
The Gemini.
They would take by storm the strongholds of the stars
And swung round into Green Tunisia and overran it.
There they built up a civilisation, and the pillars thereof
were equal.
To Baghdad and Grand Damascus
You could choose, and you chose to pass your night
fasting.
You did not seek to rule nor to store up riches.
Heroism is to die from thirst.
It is not to drink greedily
Africa, the cradle of lions and their grave,
Its men and women made a great lamentation
And Muslims of every race and country
Could find no consolation in this tragedy.
The Arabians of old from their graves
Lament the loss of Zaid al-Khail and 'Antar.
In the hands of the Gracious and His keeping
Be the dead body pillowed by the sands of Barqua
The grinding-stones of battle have left in it no bones
To crumble, and the lances of blood no blood to flow
Left brittle in a veil of moving dust.
This hero of Bedouin ways did not raid
In tanks or in the air
But 'the brother of horses' has guarded their backs
And from their manes has directed the fight.
Yesterday he yielded to the destiny of God's will a soul
Which has ever yielded except to Heaven's decrees
And he met it with head unbowed
As Socrates advancing to his judge, trailing his robe
An old man who overcame the weakness of age and
did not burst
Like a child in fear of punishment, into tears
Brother of circumstances in which he had lived
Securely.
They changed, and he had expected evil days.
Caged lions roar and you will never find
A mean-spirited lion whimpering in captivity,
The captive came dragging the weight of his chains, as a
lion, sore wounded and encoiled, trails the spotted
serpent,
The chains had bitten into his flesh, but he did show
an overburdened spirit.
And the years had sapped his body of its strength,
Had severely mounted on the shoulders of a high
mountain.
Its plateaux would have fallen from weariness,
Those seventy years were hidden from the judge.
The gentle soldiers and noble commanders
did not see them.
Old are draws sympathy from hearts of gallant men
Who knew their ancestry and the manners of their
fathers
They brought to the hangman of the glorious, the lion-
Hearted
The salve of wounds and the freer of captives
Who share treasured arms with his comrades
And sat his enemies down to meat
And they have chosen the despised rope to be
The instrument of his fate
For the lion to breathe out his soul by it,
They deprived him of death by swords and lances,
He who used, the foremost, to strike with them.
I saw the hand of civilization loved
Sometimes to pull down justice, sometimes to build it
That it made laws for its citizens
Save those who refused to submit to injustice,
And the weak
O you kinsmen, see you hearing
That I may fashion my elegy for 'Umar the Martyr
Or have disasters curbed your mouth and prevented
Your ear from hearing what is spoken to them.
The chieftain has gone, but you are immortal,
Sift then young men, choose your chiefs
Relieve your old men from the burden of battle
And place it on your young men.

(Evans-Pritchard 1949b:93–7)

I end with Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406), born in Tunis of Yemeni heritage, on whom E-P lectured throughout his years as Professor at the Oxford Institute of Social Anthropology. He knew these words well from the 'The Muqaddimah' and endorsed them for social anthropology, for the pursuit of wisdom, and as a catalyst for action:

> The Arabs thought highly of poetry as a form of speech. Therefore, they made it the archives of their sciences and their history, the evidence for what they considered right and wrong, and the principle basis of reference for most of their sciences and wisdom.
>
> (Ibn Khaldun 1967:444)

Acknowledgements

Much of what I have written is drawn from memory and can't be 'referenced' beyond that sunny or shady corner … 'personal communication' of course means from a conversation 'remembered' beyond documentary evidence.

My huge gratitude to André Singer cannot be overstated: he has waited and waited for 'my copy' and allowed me more space than any other contributor. And my thanks, too, to André's wife Lynette, who tamed my prose from 'stream-of-consciousness' to at least a semblance of coherence.

My greatest debt is to Shineen, Johnny, Nicky, Deirdre and Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, who welcomed me into their family sixty years ago. Even if we only meet intermittently these days, the E-Ps are always on the near horizon, not least because my family and I live just a stone's throw away from 'The Ark' and E-P is a constant presence. That said, any mis-rememberings, misattributions or other blatant blunders are all my own.

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4

Trickster and mystic

The anthropological persona of E.E. Evans-Pritchard[1]

Michael G. Kenny

A Moulid for el Scoh
Can one look into a person as one looks into an openwove basket?
– Zande Proverb

Controversial even now, E.E. Evans-Pritchard presents us with a self-made myth of the dream-time of British social anthropology. A shape-shifter who dressed as an Arab and converted to Catholicism, a mystic who empathized with the Zande trickster, E-P personifies the enigmatic relationship between the culture of the observer and that of the observed.

E-P derived much pleasure from writing his article on *sanza,* aphoristic and innuendo-laden Zande double-talk employed as commentary on difficult or ambiguous social relations, or as he described the *sanza:*

> any remark or action which is intended to suggest a meaning other than they have in themselves, which have that is, a double meaning, a manifest meaning and a hidden one
>
> (Evans-Pritchard 1962:336)

In an account of how he became a social anthropologist, one of the few autobiographical notes he left behind,[2] E-P showed himself to be a master of the same arc:

> In trying to reconstruct the social anthropology of earlier periods I have so often found myself in impenetrable darkness that I am glad to be able to shed a little candlelight on my own.
>
> (Evans-Pritchard 1973a:23)

Does E-P mean that he is attempting to illuminate the history of the social anthropology of his time or – in words evidently drawn from Conrad – the impenetrable darkness that he took *himself* to be? In the article on *sanza* he says that the Zande, 'often attribute a hidden meaning, an innuendo, where possibly none may be intended' (1962:336–7). Possibly, therefore, I am merely playing a role of a suspicious Zande in seeing more in Evans-Pritchard's words than is actually there. However, when his comments about himself are taken in conjunction with those of others about him, his personality becomes more obscure, not less. He evades understanding while suggesting that there is more to him than anyone is ever likely to know. Here I will pick up a few leads to suggest how more light might be shed on this matter than he managed to do.

The effort is also personal. As a then naively Anglophilic American student at Oxford, I was present during E-P's last days as Professor of Social Anthropology, and by a curious twist of fate on my way back from Africa I attended his funeral service at Blackfriars – a service with mythic qualities of its own. He is still the centre of a rich folklore that helps bind those who perceive themselves to be in some way anthropologists of the Oxford persuasion (he himself denied there was such a thing). In sum, my interest is not only in Evans-Pritchard and his work but also in the English culture from which he came.

Godfrey Lienhardt refers to an earlier period of Evans-Pritchard's life as a kind of 'dream time' in which fact and fiction are inextricably mixed, an obscurity enhanced by E-P's own mythopoetic tendencies. Lienhardt observed that even in later life he enjoyed the 'ambivalence of fact and fiction' (1974:300).

This appreciation of ambiguity no doubt stimulated his interest in Zande tales concerning Ture, the Trickster, in which similar difficulties arise. E-P asked himself whether the Zande take these as 'true' stories and concluded that the question is irrelevant. 'Fiction', he observes, 'imposes itself upon experience' (1967:25). His experiences investigating the *moulids*, ceremonies at the tombs of Muslim and Coptic saints in Egypt, are a demonstration of this truth; yes, the saint lived, there is his monument; but did he actually

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1 Reproduced by permission of Michael Kenny and of the American Anthropological Association from *Anthropology and Humanism* 12(1):9–15, 1987.

2 See Introduction to this volume.

perform the miracles the *moulids* commemorate? My position in attempting to regain a living sense of the 'dream time' is roughly parallel.

E-P was a self-made myth, a situation brought about, if for no other reason, by the fact that others found in him some aspect of themselves. For example, T.O. Beidelman, in a review of Mary Douglas' book on E-P, remarks that the figure that appears in the review 'is nearly unrecognizable as the reviewer's teacher; instead he turns out to resemble Mary Douglas' (1980:1420). Presumably Beidelman alludes to Douglas' use of the concept of 'personal accountability' as a heuristic device through which to interpret the general thrust of E-P's thought (Douglas 1980). Yet, all who have written about E-P's character agree that he thrived on the individual, the eccentric, the idiosyncratic realm of undetermined free choice. Perhaps this proclivity, coupled with his Catholicism and his interpretive rather than positivist anthropological style, led Douglas to pick up the theme of accountability while recognizing, as she states, that others might find this model questionable. And so they do. Beidelman in turn rightly points out that Douglas' characterization provides no 'proper discussion of E-P's social background or any really meaningful account of his personality and character' – a gap, I might add, that has still not been filled.[3] In any event Beidelman saw a different E-P than did Douglas; he presents us with a richer and earthier figure – one who led a shocked New York taxi driver to ask, after being treated to 'an incredibly bawdy monologue' delivered in his cab, 'Who *was* that dirty old man?' (Beidelman 1974:556). Who indeed?

David Pocock's reminiscences evoke the quality in E-P's style that led to such different perceptions of him:

> His respect for the mystery of the other in his professional work was reflected in his character by a considerable sense of privacy. Outside of his own family he would confide only when some chord of his complex personality met a response in another: thus throughout his life many friends could claim a unique intimacy with a part of him and yet remain intrigued by all that was held in reserve – and he was often most reticent where he was most seriously concerned.
>
> (1975:329)

Lienhardt concurred:

> He would seem affectionate even on first acquaintance, though he once told me that he could not demonstrate affection to those he deeply loved. The only way to deal with the Nuer, he said, was to flirt with them, and his conversation certainly engaged anyone and everyone with a well-judged intimacy. He knew better than anyone how to make people think well of themselves.
>
> (1974:299).

E-P was a mirror for the self-perceptions of others, an animate projective test. I find it difficult to think of the Nuer as *flirtatious*, but easier to see E-P himself as such. Flirtation, like *sanza,* is an art of the covert, in which the true significance of what is transpiring is screened by the artful manipulation of social conventionalities; one can always draw back behind the conventions to claim that the surface of things is all that there is – that the *sanza* is not a witchcraft accusation after all.

E-P's encounters in the field were apparently like those with his friends and students. Lienhardt remarks that

> E-P was the most scrupulous of men in checking his ethnography and distinguishing between his own thought and those of his people. Yet there are naturally correspondences between him and what he saw in them.
>
> (1974:303)

In the Azande he saw 'lively humour, suspicion, and superstition'; in the Nuer 'personal independence, uncompromising and courageous forthrightness' (Lienhardt 1974:303).

Superficially these qualities are diametric opposites; if they are what E-P believed himself to be like, he can hardly have entertained any illusion of his own consistency. Flirting with the 'uncompromising' Nuer seems an unpromising strategy, unless this too is confabulation. It is no surprise that, as Lienhardt tells us, E-P in fact got most pleasure from the Azande, the masters of double-talk, whose aristocracy cultivated, in addition to *sanza*, the art of speaking their language *backward with* no other purpose 'than play, though perhaps play intended also to display aristocratic superiority, and sometimes with a touch of malice' (Evans-Pritchard 1954:185). This type of 'play' sounds suspiciously like what can be surmised about Evans-Pritchardian pub conversation.[4]

What are the origins of such apparently inconsistent qualities: scrupulous scholarship and mythopoetry, aloofness and intimacy? There is little to go on. E-P was evasive when pressed to record more:

> I don't want to do an autobiography because I have led a pretty vigorous and variegated life and I do not wish to lie to myself or embarrass my children.
>
> (Beidelman 1974:555)

3 But which is a prime reason for the 2018 conference and this resulting book.

4 Professor Needham states, on the other hand, that E-P was not prone to telling war stories in pubs.

Alluding to his conversion to Catholicism, he speaks of a slow maturing toward that end, 'accumulating much sin, I regret to say, on the way to the final plunge' (Evans-Pritchard 1973b:37). There is much he did not care to tell. The lengthiest account that he gives of himself, that of his operations with Anuak irregulars against the Italians on the Ethiopian-Sudanese border, is only indirectly informative about anything but matters of fact (1973c). Clifford Geertz, however, finds the uninvolved character of the account illuminating; it is expressive, he believes, of 'the general authority of a certain conception of life' associated with the Oxbridge Senior Common Room and the Imperial system at large (1983:79). For Geertz, E-P looms large precisely because of what he does not say and the matter-of-factness and self-assured superiority of what he does say:

> It would be as unwise to assume that Evans-Pritchard was anything less than intensely aware of the figure he is cutting here as it would be to swallow him or his story whole; the tale has clearly been through too many pub recitals to be the offhand account it so industriously pretends to be.
>
> (1983:69)

The accounts that E-P *meant* to give of his personal history, which are all written in the last several years of his life, are perversely tantalizing and flirtatious. We learn a little of his Anglican clergyman father in Wales, his sentimentally Christian mother, and his schizophrenic older brother, Thomas ('a brilliant classical scholar'), who preceded him to Oxford before being consigned permanently to an institution. We are told that their mother 'ran our home, though, I think in some ways misguidedly' (Evans-Pritchard 1973b:36). We find that the formative influences in his young life were his religion and nineteenth-century romanticism. One must wonder what kind of family it was that produced a schizophrenic and an anthropologist.

What is known of E-P from his later friends – that he was a shy and modest, deeply feeling man – is at least consistent with a recollection of him during his undergraduate days while a member of the so-called Hypocrites' Club. Another member, novelist Anthony Powell, recalled 'E.E. Evans-Pritchard, the anthropologist, grave, withdrawn, somewhat exotic in dress' (Powell 1977:17). And there is a photograph as well of Evans-Pritchard in an Arab burnoose at a fancy-dress party of the club. Already one sees a keen interest in Islamic culture and a proclivity for adopting foreign cultural identities.

Perhaps T.E. Lawrence, Lawrence of Arabia, had some impact on this budding romantic. Lawrence was also an Oxford man before the war who, shortly before E-P came up in 1921, had in 1919 accepted a fellowship at All Souls where, rumour has it, he raised the flag of the Arab Revolt over its towers. E-P would himself later speak for the cause of the Sanusi Order in Libya. In his autobiographical notes E-P wrote of how he 'did not want to become, I was going to say, just an intellectual. I wanted a life of adventure too, and field-work seemed to be the solution to combine both.' (Evans-Pritchard 1973a; see Beidelman 1974:558). What better example to follow than that of Lawrence, the soldier-scholar,[5] or perhaps one of his Victorian predecessors such as Sir Richard Burton, who had made his way into Mecca dressed as an Arab.

In his comments on the Zande trickster, E-P rhetorically asks:

> Whose personality among ourselves has not been in some degree shaped by characters of fiction with whom he has identified himself in imagination?
>
> (Evans-Pritchard 1967:29)

Lawrence restlessly searched for a comfortable identity – changing his name twice in the process – and cultivated his own myth while denying he was doing so. Robert Graves characterized Lawrence in terms nearly identical to those David Pocock used about E-P: 'Lawrence presented a different facet of himself to each of his many friends according to their activities and characters.' Graves adds that Lawrence actually liked to be a model for painters and sculptors, 'to see what they made of him. Nobody painted the same man.' (Graves and Hart 1976:4).

In the middle years of E-P's life there are only snapshot views of his activities. He has disputes with obtuse Imperial civil-servants in the Sudan (Johnson 1982). He drives around in a motor-car investigating *moulids* with a retired policeman named McPherson, who recounts this adventure at one of them:

> A first class moulid: a crowded mosque on one side of the road, and on the other so gay and happy a crowd that it did one's heart good; picturesque also to a degree. Prof. E-P of the University had motored me there, and we flitted from attraction to attraction, we halted where a crowd was watching a strength contest – pushing a cannon with ever increasing load up an incline till it rang a bell. Some hero had achieved great things, when my companion cut in. I heard amusing comments – 'He can't be very strong, I don't suppose he has ever had a *fass* in his hand in his life.' When E-P beat the record there was the most generous applause, and I confess I was surprised for the Egyptians are the most powerful people muscularly that I have ever come

5 We can note another similarity between Lawrence and E-P. In 1921 the former published in the British *Army Quarterly* an account and analysis of the nature of guerrilla war as he practised it in Arabia. In 1973 Evans- Pritchard published a similar tale in the same journal (1973c).

> across. Three years later I was asked by a Bedouin at the moulid – 'Where is your friend who rang the bell with the top weight on?
>
> (McPherson 1941:249)

A German resident in Egypt, Hansjoachim von der Esch (one of my 'best friends in Cairo', Evans-Pritchard remembered) had a taste for antiquities and wished to see if there were truth to ancient documents which claimed that an army under the Persian general Cambyses had been lost during a sandstorm in the western desert on the way to attack Libya. In 1934 or 1935, he got up an expedition and included Evans- Pritchard in it:

> Here a fortunate accident came to my help. Professor Evans-Pritchard, a youthful anthropologist of Oxford University, intended to record the Arabic dialect of the little studied Magabra Bedouin … Pritchard [*sic*] stemmed from the principality of Wales; he was in his style as unenglish as possible and a companionable, reliable comrade.
>
> (von der Esch 1941:239)

While searching for camels for the trip, E-P saved von der Esch from attack by Bedouin who mistook him for an Italian. They got underway again and trekked through the desert, finally reaching the oasis of Siwa where the journey ended:

> Pritchard, a man of singular sociability, modesty, and perseverance, sickened through contracting on the trip a severe abdominal chill. He had presumably brought it on the night it rained and was suspended three days and nights between life and death. When he, hardly recovered, wished to get on his ship in order to relax in his homeland, a new misfortune beset him. He was bitten by a mad dog in the dockyard and hurried in a plane to Paris in order to undergo an exceedingly painful treatment at the Pasteur Institute … I first saw him again several years later; in letters, which he wrote from Oxford, he longed in the rainy climate of England after 'warm sand and dusky Bedouin faces'.
>
> (von der Esch 1941:277)

E-P later recalled that he had undertaken 'a good bit of desert camel-travel, hardly to be dignified by calling it exploration' (Evans-Pritchard 1973a:19). Ironically, von der Esch later 'turned up as one of Rommel's advisers on desert warfare' (ibid.). Still later E-P, not put off by the dog episode, had what was regarded by some as an excessive fondness for his large, disreputable, and somewhat demanding spaniel, Barko.

Another snapshop of E-P, now in Syria during the war, as he recalled himself:

> My friend John Hamilton got me attached to the Spears Mission in Syria, which was supposed to liaison with the Free French, though much of our time was spent in quarrelling with them … However, our relations with the French, in my case liaison with General Monclar, a brave man who liked having rows, being strained, I felt uncomfortable especially as Monclar tried to get me court-martialed.
>
> (Evans-Pritchard 1973a:20)

Robin Maugham, Somerset's nephew, happened to be in Syria during this period, recuperating from injuries received in a battle in North Africa. Recalling when he was introduced to E-P, Maugham wrote,

> I had expected a red-faced officer on his dignity, whom I would have to call 'sir.' I found a man of about thirty [closer to forty in fact] with a strong Roman nose, bright twinkling eyes and a thick mop of black hair which fell in festoons about his neck. He wore an old bush shirt with baggy cotton trousers. His buttons were covered with verdigris, and he looked incredibly scruffy.
>
> (Maugham 1947:40)

Maugham's observations were certainly consistent with the later E-P:

> His eyes laughed constantly and his frequent chuckles showed more appreciation of wit and fantasy than any guffaw could. Indifferent about dress to the point of eccentricity (how one had to look him over before he went to any formal occasion).
>
> (Lienhardt 1974:299, 302)

Maugham and E-P became friends and would sit on the verandah of E-P's place by the sea where they drank and discussed 'life and death and love until the sky grew light and crimson with the miracle of dawn' (Maugham 1947:41).

The problem with the French had something to do with what Maugham called *l'affaire murshid*, a dispute over a supposed Muslim saint whom the French supported for political reasons and E-P opposed.

> Leader of the former party was the French Governor, General Monclar, bemedalled, gallant veteran of a dozen wars; leader of the latter was his opposite number, Captain Evans-Pritchard, anthropologist and professor. Monclar spoke no Arabic and no English. E-P. spoke fluent Arabic but little French [It became a point of honour with each not to understand one word of the other's language.] Moreover, by temperament they were not ideally matched. Monclar was very much a soldier, fiery and fiercely serious with a strict, dominating personality. E.P. was a civilian and a don at that; he

> was clever, gentle, gay, unconventional and beloved of the Arabs. However, they were alike in their peculiar tenacity.
>
> (Maugham 1947:41)

This led to one of the more outrageous of the verandah conversations, now in the company of the 'Sharifian brothers' with whom E-P and Maugham spent much time.

> As we sat drinking coffee outside on the terrace which overlooked the sea shining in the moonlight, we were joined by an aggressive sheikh who we knew was one of Murshid's cronies. He began boasting tediously of his skill with a pistol. Four empty beer bottles had been left on the balcony at the sea's edge. Suddenly E.P. took out his revolver and, without altering his position as he lolled in the deck-chair, shattered a bottle with each shot. 'What a rowdy evening it is!' he said as he put his pistol away.
>
> (Maugham 1947:48)

The crux of the Murshid affair apparently came when E-P sent the French general a ceremonial dagger with a *sanza-like* note. Maugham reported,

> And I could see the next scene only too well. E-P's odd-looking Arab servant arriving at the General's house and being suspiciously received; the General cautiously opening this parcel from the Englishman he considered a lunatic; the dagger falling with a clatter to the floor; the note being torn open; and the fatal sentence: 'I hope you will find this present acceptable *and will know what to do with it*.'
>
> (Maugham 1947:67)

Shortly after, E-P went to Cyrenaica, thence numerous camel-trips into the desert on behalf of the British Army, and finally conversion to Catholicism shortly before returning to England; his fieldwork days were over and the reshaping of the Institute of Social Anthropology at Oxford about to begin.

Recalling the demands of fieldwork he said, 'I suppose that one was very isolated in those days, though I did not feel lonely, and anyhow I like solitude. My happiest days have been in deserts with a couple of Arabs, our camels, and no footsteps but our own.' (Evans-Pritchard 1973d:237). After such a trip came his conversion:

> I had been on a long camel journey through the desert and that gave me time for reflection … and I was received into the Church in the Cathedral of Benghazi. To have made that final surrender was, of course, rapture … But rapture or no rapture, what I am trying to say is that I have always been a Catholic at heart … and that it took me thirty years to take that final dive; so 'conversion' can be a very confusing term. I have no regrets. Bad Catholic though I may be, I would rather be a bad one than not one at all.
>
> (Evans-Pritchard 1973b:37)

But *why* a Catholic?[6] E-P said that he had no taste for the catechism nor much for dogma; in this he was not only a bad Catholic but indeed a rank heretic:

> I have never been able to understand how anyone could entertain the idea of a God who created the universe *ex nihilo*, as Christian and Muslim dogmas assert.
>
> (Evans-Pritchard 1970:113)

I think that he was a Catholic on emotional and aesthetic grounds. He seems to have been attracted to that faith's acceptance of paradox and mystery. And here we go back to the beginning, the mystery of the self. In some way E-P was a mystic. In a talk before the Anthropology Society at the University of Durham, he did not give an anthropological account of the social context of mysticism, but rather he offered an existential account of what it is to *be* a mystic: 'to say that if we are to have any comprehension of what the mystics are trying to tell us we must contribute some of it ourselves' (1970:102). Mysticism is 'an acute awareness of God (however conceived of); it is a universal language, a universal faith, the sea into which all rivers flow and are united.' It is monistic and pantheistic, and most importantly, it's a faith in which all contradictions are united, all paradoxes re- solved:

> So if the opposites merge into identity both cease to have any meaning, cease to be. It follows that if the self has an existence only in relation to the non-self, the 'I' in relation to the 'non-I', then if the subject-object relationship can be got rid of, seen to be an illusion, both subject and object are united in nothing. The self is eliminated. The true self, the soul, the *atman* survives but as it were in a deep dreamless sleep, as a drop of wine in a cask of water. This is the final mystery.
>
> (1970:109)

'Though it may seem odd to you,' E-P wrote to Beidelman, 'I have always taken it for granted that any contribution I have made to knowledge is not mine but God's through me.' (1974:555). In the end, as in *Nuer Religion's* famous metaphor, even the individual finally

6 The novelist and one-time Secretary to the International African Institute, Barbara Pym, wrote that, 'Yes, Professor Evans-Pritchard is perhaps the greatest of his generation … E-P is an R.C. convert – rather unusual in an anthropologist.' (Pym 1984:233).

becomes a 'refraction' of the divine. During his travels in Libya he wrote a poem called 'The Beautiful Names of God.'

> When I was doing a six weeks trek by camel caravan through the deserts of Libya, I took from this Muslim Rosary all the names I could remember and strung them on to my own string. The names are the names of God in the Koran, but the feeling is my own and also much of the sense.
>
> (Evans-Pritchard 1946:1)

> He is God, there is none other,
> Blows his name on every wind
> The revolving spheres intone it.
> He is the Merciful, the Kind.
>
> He is the Pardoner, Forgiver,
> Limitless his mercies seem,
> Bountiful as rains of winter,
> Cooling as the mountain stream.
>
> He Creator and Destroyer
> By whose hands all things are wrought.
>
> Who created man from nothing
> And who bringeth him to nought.
>
> He is the One, the One and Holy,
>
> To his will all creatures bend,
> He is the Living and Eternal,
> The Beginning and the End.

E-P had the sense that, like God, the depths of human nature are a mystery, to be sensed not known. We return to the Trickster and what it is that the Zande see in him.

> Here I am out of my depth, but it may not be going too far to suggest that in the tales the opposites to the ordinary appears in the characters, as in pantomime. It is as if we were looking into a distorting mirror, except that they are not distortions. We really are like that. What we see is the obverse of the appearance we like to present. The animals act and talk like persons because people are animals behind the masks social convention makes them wear. What Ture does is the opposite of all that is moral; and it is all of us who are Ture. He is really ourselves. Behind the image convention bids us present, in desire, in feeling, in imagination, and beneath the layer of consciousness we act as Ture does.
>
> (Evans-Pritchard 1967:30)

Perhaps his mystical Catholicism symbolically accomplished the union of the opposites, which E-P found himself to contain, and established a certain stability in doing so:

> The choice is between all or nothing, a choice which allows of no compromise between a Church which has stood its ground and made no concessions, and no religion at all.
>
> (Evans-Pritchard 1960:118)

This view came later in life, and his earlier opinions are not known; but perhaps the beginning points toward the end. E-P was himself the Zande Trickster, and these remarks a prologomena for a biography that will never be written. In the end we have as a reminder of the dream time of Oxford anthropology little more than the Cheshire Cat's smile. E-P combined the trickster and the mystic, an ability to control the witchcraft-laden art of *sanza* and a devotion to a God of the Desert beyond such trickery, or so deeply implicated in it that there is no separating the two. As Lawrence wrote in *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*:

> This creed of the desert seemed inexpressible in words, and indeed in thought. It was easily felt as an influence, and those who went into the desert long enough to forget its open spaces and its emptiness were inevitably thrust upon God as the only refuge and rhythm of being.

When confronting the inexplicable the Nuer say, *e Kwoth*, 'It's God.' Their God speaks in phenomena, in riddles, in parables to be deciphered. It is as though the whole world were a Zande *sanza*, riddled with innuendo and mystery. E-P, The Trickster, merely found himself part of a greater puzzle.

Acknowledgment

I thank William Arens, Ivan Karp, John Burton, Rodney Needham, Clifford Geertz, and the Department of Anthropology at the University of Durham for information and suggestions concerning this paper, and again John Burton for organizing the symposium on E-P's thought, which led to its composition (1983 meetings of the American Anthropological Association).

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5

The house that E-P built

The Oxford Institute of Social Anthropology in the mid-1950s

Raymond Apthorpe

In deep retrospect, and high nostalgia, here are a few brush strokes to sketch something of the atmosphere in the mid-50s of the modernist, Edwardian-esque, liberal-humanist, 'only connect' house that E-P built: the Institute of Social Anthropology, 11 Keble Road, Oxford. Thanks to a Nuffield Foundation Sociological Bursary (August 1953 – July 1956) Balliol College was my home first for three years as a D.Phil. student and then, as a long thesis-examining process loomed, for a further three months as E-P's departmental Graduate Research Assistant. 'You are tall,' he said sideways when coming to my rescue, 'so you'll be able to dust the top shelves in the library.'

Unless, as well she might have done, the Institute's long-serving and supremely capable secretary, Miss Phyliss Puckle, working out of her small office at the back of the building, came to think that half an hour's work of some kind wouldn't be out of order – I swear that in those *laissez faire* days neither she nor E-P ever asked me to do anything at all for that great favour.

Not personally a student of E-P's, nor – how life changed – in those days (my thesis was in another area altogether) having any particular scholarly Africanist interests, you'll find no account in these remembrances of his Azande studies or Sanusi history, or even of the first of his Nuer trilogy with, as Louis Dumont later put, it 'in Britain its overlooked structuralism' (1975). That too is my view, that E-P as an anthropologist can sometimes very well be described as thinking like a (social) structuralist[1] – but with the important proviso that at other times he might also think as a functionalist as well, including when 'moving anthropology on from function to meaning' as David Pocock described what he perceived (and advocated for) as a major shift (1998:6). For me, the 'structural-functionalist' label doesn't fit what he brought to social anthropology.[2]

But though this memoir doesn't go down that particular path, that is not because the non-Africanists in the house failed to become reasonably intimate with that famous corpus, nor because we didn't form immediate opinions of our own about some parts of it ('oh so the Nuer are Roman Catholics too', when the third Nuer volume came out). Rather, it is because it is more the style than the substance of that mid-50s modernist 'moment' in social anthropology I want to recollect. What in those distant days was it like being a thesis student at 11 Keble Road and in whichever *après seminar* pub (say the Lamb and Flag, or later the Kings Arms) was favoured at the time? With which guests of the day of E-P's might you in the library turned salon for the occasion find you find yourself coffee-ing with on their way out of the building? And so forth. Four such guests I happen to remember are Oskar Kokoschka the artist; Vladimir Ashkenazy the pianist; F.R. Leavis the F.R. Leavis;[3] and the Nobel Laureate who was so pleased to take our questions as to how she had come in her research to her brilliant conclusions, Dorothy Hodgkin. Simply, she said, if the received wisdom 'just didn't look right' she sought to move on – our introduction I suspect to 'pattern recognition' as we say now, however probably then most of us, budding Schutzian phenomenologists included, and women as well as men, chalked that up as 'feminine intuition'.

Who delighted in insisting at every opportunity that, not to be fooled, you must always understand 'working-understandings' as 'working-*mis*understandings'? Mercurial Jim Bohannan, who was constantly at hand to enthuse about his latest enthusiasms, the systems theory of Louis Hjelmslev for example, or Gregory Bateson's *Naven.* Who would talk and talk on in a Bloomsbury, Roger Fry-ish, 'sensibility not science' way about anthropology, even as a 'moral framework for living'? David Pocock. John Beattie, wherever you might bump into him, would likely as not be deeply Nyoro-ing, including about Bunyoro's lost cause of its lost territories, but would nevertheless always be

1 In his 1948 Oxford inaugural lecture and subsequently E-P tended to use 'social structure … this cardinal concept in social anthropology' and 'the concept of a social system' interchangeably.

2 Terry Eagleton (2007) once remarked of Bakhtin that while his thinking was both historical and materialist, nevertheless, he was 'not exactly a historical materialist'.

3 Founder and editor with his wife Queenie of the literary journal *Scrutiny* – in which both Godfrey Lienhardt and David Pocock published before coming to Oxford: see Mulhern 1979.

instantly pleased to see you and ready to help you through a sticky patch in philosophy or – in which as a student he had won a prestigious prize at Dublin – logic. How many of us did he ask whether a sock having many holes in it, all of which had been darned and darned (which was what you did to socks with holes in them in that era), was 'still the same' sock or not?

Of my fellow thesis students in the house, who regularly became only more and more outraged about the havoc the sinful *petitio principii* fallacy always wreaked on an argument; and about how, yet again, a paraded 'truth' proved to be 'true only by definition' (of which later parts of Anthony Flew's *Thinking about Social Thinking* reminded me sharply)? Sybil Wolfram (who, side by side over perhaps blue stockings, would choose to wear the trophy-like skirt she had had made of men's silk neckties seamed together), and who would lament and lament for us – much as twenty years later and in a similarly playful style Juliet Ford laid out in her *Paradigms and Fairy Tales* – how utterly poisonous excessively positivistic method could be for social research, whether quantitative or qualitative? Renate Barber.

The Maharaja Raj Sahed of Dhrangadhra, in already by then an antique version of hail-fellow-well-met bonhomie, would invite you to drinks in his suite of rooms on the High – in each of which sat a secretary: one for land affairs, another for governmental affairs, another to help with his thesis (of course) on the sacred thread; and so on and so forth. Afterwards, he would generously arrange for you to be driven to wherever in the city you wanted to go, in his gleaming Jaguar car with, as could scarcely be missed, what appeared to be custom-made solid-gold door handles. The Sudanese El Madhi cousin-brother grandsons (one of whom years later became President of the Sudan) might be around dropping in on Godfrey; Nana Nketsia IV, of Ghana, was then a student at the Institute. Oxford then!

That despite the passage of more than half a century so much in these remembrances is in quoted speech will, I realize, invite some disbelief, but, there it is, these are words I believe I hear now as clearly as then.

While it is (just about) true, as Edmund Leach in a characteristic piece remarks (1984), that E-P liked to wear his considerable eminence lightly, that was ordinarily only. It was by no means always his style to hold back. When he thought it mattered he could wax every bit as infallibly and canonically as he thought the occasion demanded. Think, for example, of the tone and manner of his 1950 Marett Lecture, including its final, 'Orientalist', part about 'natives' being 'unable' to be anthropologists,[4] delivered in the Oxford college – Exeter – which formerly Marett had headed and where in the 1920s as an undergraduate E-P had read history. Certainly, what E-P built in Keble Road was not a 'school' with an official line for initiates to toe at pain of expulsion (and from which external critics must be seen off the premises, violently if necessary), nor a *laboratoire*, nor an area-studies programme, nor, his 1959 Aquinas Lecture notwithstanding, a church. Whether on high it was reckoned to be in your best interests or not, thesis students were left to find their own ways.[5]

In short, Oxford was far from being a Manchester, E-P was not a Max Gluckman (though when it suited them, the two remained on good terms, more or less, throughout their careers). But this is not to say that the house that E-P built was a turbulent republic of independent minds and liberated ideas, neither showing nor following any discernible accustomed shape whatsoever. How could a self-respecting university department not come to have a worshipful institutionalized intellectual culture of its own?

What, then, did rule – reign if you will – in the house that E-P built on its road to anthropological rectitude, which from within was described (not altogether accurately) as 'from function to meaning'? Given the benefit of hindsight and reflection on later historical intellectual 'moments' when more anyway was happening than in the quiet 1950s and on which there is richer information and analysis,[6] one clue is outstandingly clear. John Beattie's (1964), David Pocock's (1975) and Godfrey Lienhardt's (1964b) and Paul Bohannan's (1963) 'what is anthropology?' texts share so very much in common that really no part of any one of these departs in any major paradigmatic sort of way either from each other or from E-P's texts of that didactic kind. To be considered too is the power throughout of the intellectualist persuasion first seen in E-P's lectures at the University of Cairo (1932), where thanks to Elliot Smith's support he was Professor of Sociology for three years in the early 1930s, then in his D. Owen Evans Lectures in the mid-60s published as *Theories of Primitive Religion* (1965), then twenty years on in his *A History of Anthropological Thought* (1981).

In sociological analysis, pursued in the house in a severely Durkheimian manner only, 'social values', seen as

4 On this occasion the 'primitive' word – which was to continue on its un-inverted commas way in the anthropological world in Oxford, as elsewhere in Britain, for some years to come, was not brought to the party. To judge from E-P's other writings, somewhere in the wings it may have been rather a folklore/anthropology distinction that was defining in usage of 'native'/'primitive' terminology.

5 E-P's told Jean Peristiany that his support for a travel award for me to study grand theory for a month in Salzburg with Talcott Parsons and Hans Morgenthau was because 'everyone should become inoculated as young as possible against the Parsonian disease'.

6 Among other things a serious such account would ask how different the Oxford brand was from British social anthropology at large – on which two of John Beattie's mid-1950s UK overviews are indispensable (1955, 1956).

moral values, are allowed to occupy centre stage. Neither specifically Firthian 'purposive social organizations', nor more generally Weberian economic and political and other 'interests', both parsed as categorically different from 'values', were given pride of place in the 'tribal character' or the 'national character' types of construction familiar in British history in the 1930s. Admittedly, here and there in the corpus comes a call or two for a problem-centred anthropology, and some brief programmatic remarks near the end of the first Nuer volume call so plainly and strongly for a situated sociology as to virtually invent, or anticipate rather, the central character of what was to become the part of 'Manchester School', led and policed by Max Gluckman and his lieutenants. But such calls remained only interesting remarks, what – fieldwork conditions and access permitting – might have beens.

To be considered too, for a deeper account, is the extent to which in Oxford's Nilotic studies in the political area (where governmentality trumped sociality) could be summed up as essentially more focused on elementary classificatory political systems[7] than, say, political ideas. Accordingly, only rather apolitical politics, plotless plots, made it to the page, economics-less governance too, where political ruling is imaged as something different and separate from business management.[8] In fact 'no politics at all' according to a newspaper cartoon, which Nana Nketsia gave me with great amusement when visiting him in 1962, of Kwame Nkrumah waving *African Political Systems* in the air declaiming that it was nothing but colonial 'so-called political anthropology' because shamefully it made no mention whatsoever of the 'political kingdom', Nkrumah's word for the independence he had won from colonial Britain.

The institute's Durkheimian and *Annales* orthodoxies of the day and times were firmly endorsed, first with Jean Peristiany's appointment to the faculty, later through showcasing in English editions – with appraising introductions added – some of the key texts of that tendency. As then, still in British anthropology broadly, any form of material causal analysis applied whether with deliberation or not to 'societal' (or 'cultural' or 'economic' or 'political') forms and forces was best kept buried as deep in the 'functional' as possible, thus ensuring that anything even remotely Marxist could be kept as far out of sight and mind as could be managed. Yes, a minor Marxist murmur or two might at times escape from a daring deviant dabbling delicately with the devil on a wet afternoon: Jean Peristiany, for example. Yes, Louis Dumont in later years told me that Meillasoux's Marxist questions about caste systems 'had a point'. But that as far as 'anything of that sort' was allowed to go.

For the Humean humanist orthodoxy in the house to be kept 'pure' social anthropology must be neither an art nor a craft (let alone a science) but a humanity that would only be defiled by letting any whiff of materialism in. As Godfrey, in full defensive mode one evening after a seminar, put it, 'social anthropology if not kept pure risked becoming nothing', or words to that effect. It risked, he was saying, losing its treasured ethnographic exceptionalism, its sacred cultural relativity, if not kept completely aloof from the nurture/nature (and white and black, and conservative and progressive), race and similar debates then growing. Best, therefore he thought, for anthropologists not to enter such dangerous-for-the-discipline territory at all.

Another trait of the times was the huge store set (provided only that it was technically well done) on just 'translation', problematized as a straightforward matter of language and linguistics (occasionally with aesthetics added as in American cultural anthropology). In the modernist mid-50s any 'critical' thought stirring about, say, 'ethnography and objectivity' (for example, Lienhardt 1964a) would be more a matter of someone striking out, seemingly where no one had gone before. The routine in Oxford, as elsewhere, of standard repertoires of critical analytical practice were still some way off.

Into the 60s and beyond, one concern was seen to matter much more to the integrity of the discipline than any internal 'turn'. For anthropology to deserve to keep its nicely developing place in the academic world it must professionalize, as guaranteed by not our RAI, but by a new body that E-P helped to found (and served as its first Chair) the ASA. To qualify as a respectable liberal profession anthropology must always be: a) fieldwork based and b) meeting professional standards in that regard (I cannot recall any small print, though I think some ideal duration for fieldwork 'properly' undertaken was laid down). No serious fieldwork, no ASA membership; no ASA membership, no meal ticket, no university anthropology appointment. The discipline must be protected from both amateurism (and conjectural history and such), and contamination by other disciplines, psychology particularly (but by extension also inter-disciplinarity, in favour of which contributors to *Man* and other suspect RAI publications, and various of its honorands, had argued for ages). Hadn't E-P's 1948 Oxford inaugural lecture stated that 'a primary duty of the Institute of Social Anthropology [is] to train field workers for [fieldwork]' (1948:10). But again there is little clarity: training for fieldwork? No 'methods course' then ever came anywhere near that, certainly on Oxford anthropology curricula (as probably with all others in Britain and Ireland then). A remark E-P dropped, I think when it was my turn

7 In the late 50s it was Ioan Lewis who led the way and the day in critically overviewing 'comparative African political systems' and their 'elementary forms'. Ioan was also the first (1957) to add demographic numbers to the scales when weighing the merits and demerits of E-P's 'lineage theory': see also Lewis 1959.

8 An idea gratefully I owe to Robert Chiluwe (1968).

to be walked in the Parks before a Friday afternoon seminar, that it was 'better always to wear plimsolls [trainers, tennis shoes] in the field as they dry quicker' may have been the most on the methods front that we ever got.

Equally, probably none of us attending, for example, Godfrey Lienhardt's popular diploma lectures, reading as was his custom straight out from the foolscap Boots diary he had kept in the field (now in his papers collected at the Pitt Rivers Museum?) ever asked how what had made it to those pages had been selected, or what had not (an omission that many when starting their own fieldwork must have regretted). Only at some overall level of abstraction was 'theory' routinely conceptualized as inherently problematic (for example as regards the pros and cons of 'controlled comparison' and the like that E-P often talked about). 'Facts', *viz.* fieldwork, were not contended.[9]

Whether deliberately or (more likely) not, did the sought-after professionalization in effect to come to privilege one particular approach as the best way of getting to the heart of (all) matters? I believe that it did, in taking 'equilibrium' and 'balance' to matter for a satisfactory analysis more than other possibilities: a 'muscular neo-classical' view of the world and (all) its ways. I suspect (with the benefit of hindsight) that the huge anthropological attention E-P's 'balance of equal and opposite [fission and fusion] forces' analysis in his Nuer studies enjoyed (almost a Newtonian Third Law) had little to do with whether, ethnographically speaking, 'segmental lineage theory' did or did not 'fit the facts' better than something else. The standard-setting it elegantly displayed, of a non-dialectical ideal of seriousness of analytical purpose, was highly valued, though (to continue with my physics metaphor) it remained lacking in conceptual provision for either mass or velocity. In short, it presented the synchronous over the diachronous, the static over the erratic, the stable over change. 'Theory' over 'fact'.

Apart from the rallying against functionalism and for structuralism in anthropology in the mid-50s (and before and later), quotidianly speaking, this was rather an ism-less time in the pubs and coffee shops as well as the classrooms. Was there in fact in that prosaic era any Anglo discussion whatsoever of transcendence and deduction and the like before, in the mid-60s in his chapter in Raymond Firth's edited ASA volume *Themes in Economic Anthropology*, Ronald Frankenberg (1967) fully identified 'the neo classical': – if there limited to economic analysis – as an issue for anthropologists to ponder?

The institute's beating pulse at the time, its diploma programme, was established in 1905 (as E-P proudly remarked when addressing the 500th meeting of the Oxford University Anthropological Society in 1953) and comprised a series of taught courses, two of which – 'material culture' and 'physical anthropology' – were given in the Pitt Rivers Museum around the corner. As thesis students we didn't actually have to attend any lectures, but that didn't mean we wouldn't shop around wherever in the university we wished – in philosophy and law for example.

The usual practice was that few thesis students would meet formally with their thesis supervisors more than once or at most twice a term (in addition, once a term you had to report to your 'moral tutor', as the expression went, at your college for a tick for your good conduct – ritually, failure was not allowed). There were, however, exceptions, for example Mary Tew – as Mary Douglas was then – and Jean Buxton were often up to see their supervisor, E-P (did his supervision practice differ from that of his colleagues – or was it his supervisees who were different?). John Campbell – another friend – was exceptional in spending hours and hours seeking assistance from really anyone he could find to help him cook his Sarakatsani fieldwork into thesis shape. But what little time those of us in the D. Phil. cohort actually spent together (other than when in for a seminar and perhaps also its aftermath) was not generally spent exposing or sharing our 'writing up' of 'raw data' into tasty morsels (or whole menus). 'Writing up' may sound something as easy as pie, but in reality, it was closer to a form of self-torture that decently, and defensively, you would normally choose to perform as solitarily as possible. As everyone in that cohort other than for Sybil Wolfram and myself was 'writing up' for their degrees, there was a lot of solitude around.

While in the mid-50s E-P was still a fairly regular attender at the open-to-all Friday afternoon seminars, he would hardly ever say anything at all in them. Rather, after walking someone in the Parks after his lunch, for him they were occasions more for some dedicated (sometimes quite spectacular) nose-picking, then as often as not, with his unlighted pipe in his hand, for some nodding off. No, he was not an Oxford – or an All Souls – eccentric, but that didn't mean that he was entirely without eccentricities, untouched altogether by the personal and personality feud. He was, for example, clearly sorely provoked every Friday at the seminar from the back row, just inside the door, by 'loony Layard' (W.H. Auden's description of John Layard in his poem 'The Orators' (1932), when all three – Auden, Layard and E-P – were together in bohemian

9 Where to go for fieldwork, however, could be an issue, E-P's 'to go to Portugal would be for a holiday not fieldwork' did (with a paper by myself at Jean's invitation on some socio-logic competition and hierarchy) not exactly amuse either Jean, then about to launch what would turn out to be the first of his series of Mediterranean seminars, or Julian Pitt-Rivers, who was then visiting Jean frequently.

Berlin for a while),[10] until finally managing to get the Hebdomadal Council to ban his tormentor from entering university premises. Regularly, every week, Layard would very loudly pin whatever sin he said he could, and must, on E-P. A practising Jungian psychoanalyst (as well as an anthropologist of repute of Malakula and the author of other studies, one of the most important being, he would say, his *The Lady of the Hare*), Oxford was home for Layard as well as for his victim (in 1941–2 he preceded E-P as President of the Oxford University Anthropological Society) and both were at times BBC lecturers whose talks on anthropology came out in the *Listener*. That bitter personal conflict we graduate students 'knew' must be about some sexual, personal rivalry in London (but admittedly another story was in circulation as well, about a professional reputational dispute in Oxford).

Sometimes the Friday seminarist was a graduate student. Everyone in those days, faculty or student, read from a typed text, page by page, sentence by sentence, comma by comma, with or (mostly) without presentational skill. Not, however, the redoubtable Margaret Mead, who one week E-P had invited to speak and with whom he appeared much at ease – unless Capt. E.E. Evans-Pritchard, which was how he signed much of his early correspondence to the university, was simply on special diva squiring duty detail that afternoon? With divine inspiration or something else lofty and no less sure, strangely she sought actually to converse and communicate with us. But about what precisely, either at the seminar or at the Lamb and Flag afterwards, unfortunately I have no recollection. I remember only her flailing about the huge double-headed sort of crozier-type staff, which ordinarily she used as a walking aid, or when she wanted to knock something particularly important into turnip heads.

It was mostly only at the pub that any forensics, any fun and games, about the seminar would really take off, driven in one direction or another – usually another - by Godfrey with the help of his younger brother Peter, who while normally never attending any seminar often turned up with a story or two of his own to tell us languidly ('I have been so busy all this term, if not year, and now I am exhausted from putting these slips of paper in to mark all the important passages in this Persian text…'), but mainly came just to see Godfrey. If David Pocock attended, before he left early for the relative isolation of his place out in Kidlington (to perch on his Indian swing seat with a pad on his knees to get his writing done, mostly for the *Contributions* Indian studies journal he co-founded and was co-editing with Louis Dumont, what Louis called 'our divorce' was then yet to come) it would before this week's gladiatorial conflict with Godfrey.

If E-P dropped by to air any views on the seminar or the seminarist, it would be just for a minute or two on his way home to Headington or to dinner in All Souls. Normally, he would not bring the seminarist with him, however another exception besides Margaret Mead was Stanislaw Andreski – with whom he clearly relished skewering one sociologist or anthropologist or another, or some blot on African studies, that neither liked.

Both Godfrey and Peter – 'the Goncourts' they were sometimes called for their personal closeness – were ardent London Africa Bureau-ists. Something ten years later I was dramatically reminded of. On disembarking in the early morning after a very 'organic' over-night sailing of the Mombasa cattle boat (with, I suppose, a hundred or more seasick cows) to Lamu island, someone on the quay, on seeing me, shouted in the loudest possible way: 'Most welcome, dear Father of Uhuru.' It transpired that he had mistaken me for Peter – whom he had met some years earlier in Zanzibar – and wanted everyone in those newly post-colonial days to know about 'my' great and noble campaigning for Julius Nyerere and Tanzanian *uhuru*.

One Friday someone from the *Sunday Times* was waiting for Godfrey. A book reviews editorship for that newspaper had become available and was on offer (Godfrey turned it down). Once someone from the international baccalaureate in Switzerland appeared, for which then or soon after Godfrey designed its founding anthropology curriculum (which originally included E-P's Azande witchcraft and sorcery). Besides Dan Davin of the Clarendon Press, Gervase Mathew, Cornelius Ernst and others of his close Roman Catholic friends who tended at times to be regulars, Mary Tew and Jean Buxton might also be in attendance if in town, Jean once with the news, which she must absolutely tell us immediately, that on the train into Oxford she had encountered 'some such so sweet strong men in charming blue suits' (translation: some workmen in boiler suits).

Godfrey's young friend and protégé Francis Deng (who eventually rose to the very summit of UN international fame as well as to writing some Dinka ethnography that vividly drew on his own upbringing) might also – quietly, and it always seemed to me reflectively – be along for a while.

Normally, Louis Dumont, then in his last – my first – year at Oxford never ('once was enough') pubbed after the seminar, which he steadfastly attended. But that absence may just possibly have been more because of his continuing English-language limitations then than anything else. Certainly, his Piramalai Kallar lectures, also those on how poorly throughout anthropology both kinship and affinity were understood, and his ruminations on *prestations* (a word he would intone and chant endlessly and necessarily, 'because it was untranslatable', always in Mauss's tongue)

10 Layard figures very prominently in Charles Osbourne (1979), Richard Davenport-Hines (1992) and Edward Mendelson's (1999) absorbing writings on Auden and his friends and Berlin in the 30s, but I have yet to find reference to E-P there.

were excruciating, language-wise, even to the few who braved them. But conversationally, he would expand and be totally fascinating on, for example, how greatly he admired the work of the philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty, also the sociology of George Gurvitch.

Another regular attender and discussant at the weekly seminars, always with something pertinent to contribute, Jean Peristiany, was usually too busy – with *enosis* and perhaps with Bishop Makarios from Cyprus, or Prince Peter of Greece, the anthropologist of polyandry, or visiting his family and being entertained – to follow up and join us down the road. Or he had spotted a renaissance goblet in a country-house auction catalogue and had gone off to bid for it, later to sell to support his expensive lifestyle, which he said meant pleasing 'all three of the powers that be in Greece: the military, the politicians, and the royal family'.

Seldom ever seen anywhere else other than at one end of the big table in the institute's library, certainly never at the pub, was Ahmad Abou Zeid, older than the rest of us twenty somethings, putting his D. Phil. thesis together from fieldwork notes, topic by topic, he had written on to index cards of different colours, yellow for one chapter, blue for another, and so forth. Nor, apart from special occasions, were my other student friends – Sybil driving back to London, Renate going home to her family and young son out of town, Al Blackman off somewhere with his partner Maria Dolores keeping careful watch, Hugh Sampath taking as usual his measured views of everything and always keeping his counsel.

Unfortunately, my cohort was just too late to know Frans Steiner, but did even his much-reported verve and perspicacity match irrepressible Jim Bohannan's excited and exciting and highly engaging enthusing – then more about Tiv economy than law and land, but also much else. Jim was a Lamb and Flag regular. His wife Dusty (aka Eleanor Smith Bowen) always had something rare and wonderful to celebrate with you, and preferred to entertain at home.

Rodney Needham, a formerly military man we graduate students had heard, and as we thought still showed, was first met when he appeared one Friday to give what today would be called an appointment-interview seminar – on, I am fairly sure, something Durkheimian. Our student view, shared with some passion by David, was that he had given such a poor paper that 'obviously' we wouldn't be seeing him again. But, already E-P anointed, we did. And that is how his long and strange and highly productive, also highly divisive and controversial, career in Oxford (eventually as successor in the Chair to E-P) began. His bitter dispute with John Beattie over John's ethnographic work on Nyoro right/left hand symbolism was then still to come. Each complained (separately of course) of having had to spend a whole year of their lives fighting for the truth. Rodney disputed John in fierce and forensic frenzy; John, despite not usually living that way, replied in kind with no lesser animus (though he was normally a soother, a provider of support, the champion of the case for the middle ground). He had had, he said, no idea of what Rodney was about in his persimmon-painted office (which as it happened was immediately next to his own in the institute) until suddenly it appeared in the pages of *Africa* (1967).

In August 1961 Phyllis Puckle wrote to me that, after years and years running the institute day to day, she was,

> moving on to a much less demanding part-time job … at the University Observatory in the Parks, through the telescope I'll be able to keep an eye on the anthropologists, I shall miss them very much … one of my amazingly generous [retirement] presents … was a very pleasing picture by Stanley Simmonds. Do you know his pictures? He has exhibited several times at Oxford and John Beattie and Godfrey each have one – but I like mine better as it represents something (a harbour) though built up by blocks like a child's box of bricks … you will have heard that John Argyle has been offered a lectureship at Grahamstown – so that is *one* fewer person for my successor to write testimonials for. The Library books are at present being dusted by Graduate Assistant, Lewis Hill, the latest of a distinguished line of Dusters. Godfrey's book [*Divinity and Experience* presumably] has been slashed by Geoffrey Gorer in *the Listener*, who apparently has never heard of him, but that may be Gamesmanship.

Godfrey and David and I had shared the flat at the top of Phyliss's house in north Oxford during my last summer (1957) in Oxford, Godfrey disappearing every morning into the institute to write *Divinity,* David not bursting out of his room until much later, to rampage somewhere else for the day.

John Argyle, back from national service in the navy, a year older than me, along with his brother Michael then an undergraduate, was a diploma student when I first met him. Already his ethnographic and other Africanist interests were evident. Our respective B. Litt. and D. Phil. theses examined, E-P intervened decisively for both our careers. For John, his gift was a Research Officer position for Soli research at the Rhodes-Livingston Institute in Lusaka (where the successor organization today is the University of Zambia's Institute for Economic and Social Research). For me, it was the created Research Secretary position with its research direction responsibilities (neither Gluckman nor E-P considered the ex-colonial administrator Henry Fosbrooke, recently appointed to the RLI directorship, appropriate for those – but then of course why on earth me, a total Africanist ignoramus, if one free from any colonial entanglements?). But, we needed jobs, and E-P kindly provided us with them (without, I believe, in either case any appointments-committee interview intervening).

That in one fell swoop E-P thus planted not one but two Oxford men into the heart of Manchester territory *d'outre mer* was a coup in itself on the wider plane of Africanist anthropological academic politics at large.

Now, at the outset of writing these remembrances, I suddenly recalled something from one of E-P's lectures on the Scottish enlightenment and other historical 'sources' of British social anthropology, a maxim. Each of those lectures was always carefully composed and read like the best essays Oxbridge undergraduates (when serious and diligent and sober) write and then read to their tutors each week, and were attended by everyone around on the day. 'If it is a sociological theory you seek to [solve] first *cherchez* its primary postulate', is what I remembered him saying loud and clear: '*cherchez la vache* to understand Nuer culture', as he writes in his first Nuer volume. Sociological analysis and critique as investigative detection Something absolutely to memorialize. 'Look for its [guilty] premise', as R.K. Merton, well regarded by E-P, might have (and almost did) put it in a long essay on functions and functionalisms, then out in a new edition (1957). One must find, as the American jurist O.W. Holmes termed it, 'the inarticulate major premise' (as cited by Seidman 1965) that shapes a judgement from the beginning.

So you do what you can, identify and scrutinize how the issues considered to be basic are named and framed (as I'd say today), and only then move on to assessing any evidence adduced along the way. In short, or less exactly as a friend put it the other day, 'for a can of worms you need a can opener'. Which, as it happened, was exactly my predicament when starting my RLI responsibilities as a young complete ignoramus about everything African yet with three packed decades of 'Manchester' research monographs and journals and papers and reports to get my head round (and teeth into). This was an Everest to climb and get down afterwards without oxygen. What else then could such an ignoramus get up to, other than some fancy primary-postulate picking of his own.[11] Thankfully, at last something non-Durkheimian for these notes to celebrate, my detecting at that time couldn't have been more Weberian, more *Gesichtspunckt* and *Wertideen*, in its bones.

Did that detection work on my part, which extended, among other things, to making some explicit contrasts and comparisons of Durkheimian and Weberian positions, borrow directly and deliberatively from that maxim in those origins lectures (as, having relived some of my graduate life in these pages, I am now inclined to think)? However, was it not time, at the start of a new life, to want to escape from (while at the same time in other respects looking for a way of remaining in) the mid-1950s orthodoxy of the house that E-P built? Quite possibly.

11 Some of which found its way as Daryll Forde, then the Director of the International African Institute in London, insisted into my 'Foreword' (1964) to B. Stefaniszyn's *Social and Ritual Life of the Ambo of Northern Rhodesia*.

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6

'A feeling for form and pattern, and a touch of genius'

E-P's vision and the Institute 1946–70[1]

Wendy James

Elements of myth have grown up around the success of anthropology, specifically social anthropology, in the post-war years at Oxford under E-P's guidance. Both oral memory and written accounts have tended to emphasize colourful personalities, the cut and thrust of bright ideas, the contemporary euphoria. As yet we have no film or TV series,[2] but there is a novel – Dan Davin's *Brides of Price* (1972) portrays the Oxford anthropology circle of this period, admittedly a little disguised and larger than life (and echoes of its characters can be found in Iris Murdoch). In this chapter I try to anchor the myth, or in other words to give some 'explanation' of the special atmosphere of the time – the ethos of commitment, being part of a crusade – by sketching in the less well-known background of institutional development.[3] This story reveals the precariousness of the subject at Oxford and the often unexpected factors that helped it make its mark.

The success of social anthropology was arguably achieved despite the administrative and political obstacles it faced in the University hierarchy of committees. Because of official scepticism about general anthropology as an undergraduate subject, social anthropology took off as an autonomous specialism at the level of postgraduate degrees and research (then a very small part of the University's activities as a whole). The resulting diversity of recruitment from outside Oxford, the surprisingly international character of staff and students, and the interdisciplinary mix of their previous studies, turned out to be a tremendous strength. The pre-war and wartime researches of E-P himself, in their considerable complexity, sophistication, and variety, proved an inspirational resource for people from many backgrounds. Because his work came to be deployed in interdisciplinary ways, social anthropology was able to establish itself on a wider intellectual scene than would have been the case if a more orthodox undergraduate anthropology department or degree had been set up in the late 1940s.

The inspirational figure of E-P and his shaping of the Institute of Social Anthropology have already been documented by several people – some commentators have been participants, some observers, and some both (among whom were some of the key myth-makers). Jack Goody's detailed sketch (1995) of the first few years immediately after 1946 describes the Institute as a 'power-house' of intense work and the coming and going of strong personalities (Meyer Fortes and Max Gluckman stand out) who had in several cases known each other since well before the war. John Burton's commentary (1992) emphasizes the way this period distilled some special qualities of E-P's impact on anthropology: and Godfrey Lienhardt's memorial tribute (1974) both to E-P's sharp ideas, on the one hand, and his personal capacity equally to inspire or infuriate on the other, helped confirm the mystique.[4] Mary Douglas's intellectual biography of E-P (1980), an act of homage from an inspired and inspiring disciple, is a brilliant piece of evocation and recreation. As Richard Fardon has recently shown, her own work has ranged far and wide, productively and provocatively, away from the 'mainstream' of social anthropology – whatever that mainstream might be – but her distinctiveness as an anthropologist emerged from what 'was briefly the most significant anthropological

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1 First published in Rivière, P. (ed.). 2007. *A History of Oxford Anthropology*, pp. 98-118. New York: Berghahn Books.

2 The sixth episode of the Strangers Abroad series (dir. André Singer) was 'Strange Beliefs: Edward Evans-Pritchard' and tackled elements of this in 1985.

3 In preparing this chapter I have been given guidance on earlier drafts and helpful suggestions by Eva Gillies, Richard Garndon, Bob Parkin, Peter Rivière and Malcolm Ruel.

4 Jack Goody spent part of his student days at the Institute, taking the B.Litt. in 1952; his study of the rise of British social anthropology devotes a chapter to 'the Oxford Group' (Goody 1995:77–86). John Barnes has also written on E-P's anthropology from the point of view of a one-time student (Barnes 1987). John Burton, trained in the USAS carried out fieldwork in the southern Sudan in the 1970s and was a frequent visitor to Oxford; he has provided several assessments of anthropology at Oxford (for example Burton 1992). Godfrey Lienhardt arrived in Oxford from Cambridge (initially registering for the D.Phil. in 1948) and became a close colleague of E-P's.

Figure 6.1 Edward Evans-Pritchard. Professor of Social Anthropology 1946–70. Copyright All Souls College, Oxford.

institution in the world, the Institute as rejuvenated with E-P's appointment in 1946.'[5] However, 'part of the E-P myth in British anthropology' rested on what he had previously achieved in research and his extraordinarily successful publications (Fardon 1999:24–36, quotations at 32). The making of these classics of ethnography had depended on methodical observation, but had also engaged the creative scholarly and personal imagination of the anthropologist. As E-P was later to write, not without ironic self-reference. 'The native society has to be in the anthropologist himself and not merely in his notebooks… The work of the anthropologist is not photographic He has to decide what is significant in what he observes… For this he must have, in addition to a wide knowledge of anthropology, a feeling for form and pattern, and a touch of genius.' (1951a:82).

There were important differences between the kind of research, and analysis, that E-P carried out in the first part of his career and the work of his contemporaries. The conditions of E-P's own pre-war fieldwork were never those of the peaceful island communities where Malinowski and R-B, or even Firth, had forged their anthropological careers. Nor were they those of the close and orderly district administration one might have found in the settled British colonies of the time, or certainly in those of the later colonial period. Conditions in the southern Sudan of the 1920s–10s (a really vast territory, and under the FO rather than the Colonial Office) were more those of the open, often violent, 'frontier' period of primary colonisation. All E-P's field researches took place against a large stage-setting of regional variety and political process.

The Anglo-Egyptian government in the Sudan still had somewhat uncertain relations even with the Zande kingdoms when E-P first arrived, and had only just 'pacified' the Nuer by punitive military action when the government required him to study these people (Johnson 1982, 2007). The context or E-P's 1940s work on the border with Ethiopia, and then in Cyrenaica as part of the British military administration, was directly war-affected. The imperial context of all these fieldwork experiences was arguably more of an eighteenth or nineteenth, than a mid-twentieth century, character – as he himself is known to have boasted (Goody 1995:65). The transparency of his accounts, in my view, amounted to far more than a robust ethnographic writing style, despite Geertz's witty remarks (1988). In so far as models drawn from E-P's own analyses of regional or kingdom-wide political relations were later applied on a more domestic scale to relatively peaceful circumstances in the well-ordered colonies of the 1950s, they were obviously open to later accusations of 'functionalism'. But the example of his own fieldwork, of a scope not matched by anything else that had been done in Oxford, led quite easily into E-P's post-war appropriation of history (rather than natural science) as anthropology's twin. The appearance of some of R-B's much earlier essays under the banner of 'structure and function' in 1952 had very little to do with the kind of anthropology actually being fostered in Oxford by this time.

Anthropology in Oxford as elsewhere was profoundly affected by the Second World War, and its reassembly afterwards was shaped by the experiences of all during that time. E-P himself had explicitly taken on historical research in Libya, and been drawn to Islamic mysticism, before being converted to the Catholic faith in 1942; Franz Steiner arrived as a refugee from Nazi Germany and witness to the holocaust; R-B had found little to do in the early 1940s, before departing for Sao Paulo, leaving Daryll Forde as caretaker of the Institute and of the project to establish

5 Mary Douglas, in her maiden name Tew, joined the Institute in 1946 as a B.Sc. student gaining this degree in 1948 and her D.Phil. in 1953. She served as a lecturer from 1950–1 before moving to UCL. For her study of E-P's ideas and their roots in what we might call cognitive disciplines, see Douglas 1980. Richard Fardon's contribution to the history of Oxford anthropology includes not only his full-length intellectual biography of Mary Douglas herself (1999), a book which includes a quite complex portrait of the 1940s and 1950s (especially chapter 2 on 'Oxford Years: 1940s'), but also his three co-edited volumes devoted to the work of Franz Steiner, who became a key figure in that setting even before his premature death in 1952 (Adler, Fardon and Tully 2003; Steiner 1999a, 1999b).

anthropology as a social science (though Steiner designated himself keeper of the Oxford school). Shortly after the time of R-B's return, many others, both dons and students, were returning to Oxford from the theatres of war, and there is no doubt that a feeling developed across the University that a new start was required. For anthropology, the new start was the appointment of E-P.

Proposal for an Honour School of Anthropology, 1948–9

When he first took up the chair in 1946, E-P worked very hard to establish anthropology on a broad, inclusive basis. After all, his own research work had already spanned many strands of anthropology – he had photographed heads in the Sudan for their shape, collected objects for the museum, made drawings and musical recordings, and collected folk tales and poetry. Looking back at the detailed documents, the proposal for an Honour School of Anthropology which he co-ordinated over several years was ahead of its time, for as it turned out Oxford was not yet ready for such a degree. The 1948–9 plans, even down to some of the details, were remarkably in harmony with the degree in Human Sciences agreed in the late 1960s (admitting its first students in 1970). There were to be three main branches of study: Social Anthropology, Archaeology and Ethnology, and Physical Anthropology including Human Biology. Special subjects were to be examined, chosen from a list of eight across the board. Finally, there were to be two papers in Regional Studies, chosen from another list of eight, and treated in a very scholarly way – the paper on Islam and Arab Asia, for example, included elementary Arabic, and that on the British Isles from early times to the Roman era required a knowledge of Latin. The introductory justification claimed that 'recent developments in the applied natural sciences lend emphasis to the need for integral studies of man, which related his biological characteristics to his unique quality as the creator and transmitter of culture' (OUA, UR 6/ANT/4: Proposed new Honour School of Anthropology). The proposal suggested that such studies should be recognized as a 'vital aspect of modern University education in general'. There was also a reference to the urgent need to study the problems of 'social and cultural adaptation … among the less developed peoples of the Empire'.

The Anthropology and Geography Faculty Board endorsed the proposed in May of 1948, but questions were raised by the General Board's Standing Committee on Examinations. While noting that there might be thirty students per year, and that sixteen potential teachers in Anthropology and Geography together with nine in other faculties who had 'promised their active assistance', it concluded that if a new School were established there would eventually be a need for accommodation and further leaching appointments (OUA, UR 6/ANT/4: Note, 2 May 1948). Moreover, the teaching for the proposed school would have to be done 'outside the Colleges': that is to say, most – if not all? – of the proposed teachers were employed in museums, science departments, etc., and did not have undergraduate College Fellowships (OUA, UR 6/ANT/4: Report of meeting, 15 October 1948). The General Board then consulted a range of faculty boards and other interested parties.

There were two real sources of difficulty in getting the proposal through. The first emerged from the Social Studies Faculty Board, which asked whether Anthropology might not more appropriately be examined as part of a wider School instead of as single School in itself, while the 'special subjects' should be at postgraduate level (01 A. UR 6/ANT/4: Letter from Secretary of Faculties to E-P, 11 December 1948). The second difficulty emerged from the Lit. Hum. committee. Their criticisms were based on a distinction between 'an education', which is the proper concern of an Honour School, and a 'technical training', which is the business of a diploma course. They did not doubt the suitability of anthropology to have a place in an Honour School, but 'we are not convinced that a satisfactory education can be obtained from a School so predominantly confined as that envisaged by the present plan to the study of man in a primitive or uncivilised state' OUA, UR 6/ANT/4: Communication from General Board to Faculty Boards, 28 October 1949:5). In the end the Standing Committee on Examinations decided not to approve the proposed degree. They concluded that it seemed neither to provide a strict scientific training nor a humanistic education: that the material used would hardly ever be first hand, and could not be tested by undergraduates 'who will be driven to rely on opinions expressed in lectures'; that there was force in the points made by representatives of Lit. Hum.: and that the studies proposed were essentially postgraduate in nature (ibid.:2–3). This was not the last time that difficulties for anthropology would emerge from rival interests, especially perhaps in social studies, as will be seen below.

Had the proposal for the undergraduate degree been accepted, the course of anthropology at Oxford would have been rather different. Staff would have had to concentrate a good deal more of their energy on the systematic teaching and administration of an agreed syllabus. This would have left much less time for encouraging innovation, promoting publications, and making the most of the interdisciplinary mix represented by staff and students – activities which, in the event, they were free to concentrate on.

The 1950s: a campaign for social anthropology

Social anthropology in Britain inherited, it goes without saying, a deep connection with the imperial world; this was particularly the case in Oxford. There was, for example, a direct and close collaboration with the Committee for Colonial Studies in the University. Institute staff

devoted a good part of their time to lecturing officers and probationers of the Colonial Service (later known as colonial cadets, and then as overseas services cadets). This commitment continued right up to 1962. At least one lecturer (John Beattie) and several students had formerly served as colonial district officers. E-P himself lectured to the cadets on the relation of anthropology to colonial issues, insisting, however, as he did so on the autonomy of academic research – which was not merely a matter of providing useful information to administration (abstracts of the lectures survive: see E-P 1937b, 1938). However, in his more general teaching, writing and publications, he was addressing a wider horizon. He was explicitly constructing a new agenda for social anthropology, speaking to older and broader questions about human nature and human history, shared with neighbouring disciplines in ways which would, in the event, help the subject survive the 'end of empire'.

In the usually positive assessments of the first decade or so of the E-P years it has often been forgotten how vulnerable social anthropology was as a University discipline at this time. The responsibilities of the professor were to lecture and supervise research in the discipline, and to have charge of the library. There was no established 'Department' in the modern sense, and as E-P himself explained: 'The "Tylor Library" forms the nucleus of the Institute of Social Anthropology. This fine library, the kernel of which is Tylor's personal collection, presented in 1911 … not only provides full teaching facilities but also … full research facilities for students' (1951b) However, there were very few professional teachers in any of the fields of anthropology. and their various efforts to establish the discipline, jointly or separately, faced firstly the inbuilt difficulty of change within Oxford and secondly the inevitable emergence of rivalries and intrigues among themselves, E-P's struggle to establish social anthropology in the 1950s faced competing interests, on the one hand, from the museum side and from biological anthropology, but also on the other hand from the ambitions of Sociology. By contrast, the Institute's best allies emerged from subjects that were not rivals, and which might have inherited some sympathetic attitudes from the Marett era: that is, in particular, philosophy and religious studies, where E-P's own friendly contacts with the religious community of Blackfriars were certainly fruitful. In this respect, it was a great advantage for social anthropology to be channelled solely into postgraduate training and research with a leaning towards the humanities. Outside Oxford University, the Institute of Social Anthropology enjoyed considerable success both in the local 'town' constituency (where there was a long-standing interest in anthropology as shown in Parkin 2007), and more importantly in the wider national and international setting. Both kinds of success helped it survive and eventually root itself firmly within the University.

The opposition encountered in 1949 to the idea of an Honour School helps us see how and why there developed a kind of crusading spirit in the Institute, to promote the cause of social anthropology despite the local sceptics. I first became aware of this as a first-year undergraduate in Geography, through the year 1959–60. We had lectures at the Pitt Rivers Museum, by Audrey Butt (later Colson) and Ken Burridge, on something like 'Peoples of the World' with demonstrations of their material culture, and I found these riveting, especially my first introduction to the Nuer. This prompted me to request E-P's *Social Anthropology* as a school prize I was due. I started asking friends about the Institute: A.R. in my college told me 'they're all brilliant [in the sense of madly brilliant]: and they're mostly Catholics: the only sane one is John Beattie': and because I was involved later in various African-related activities, I met Godfrey and Peter Lienhardt in the bar-billiards room at the Commonwealth (formerly Colonial) Services Institute. After sizing me up (I had just been in Tanganyika), Godfrey fixed me with an intent eye, pronounced on my character in a way that would have been difficult to accept from anyone else, and announced that I should come to the Institute.

Part of the promotion of social anthropology consisted of providing a history for the subject itself, tracing sources for its key ideas or what E-P once called social anthropology's 'theoretical capital'. Filial allegiance was accorded the Durkheimian school, and a whole string of newly discovered ancestors in the tradition of the French and Scottish Enlightenment was lined up as a genealogy of the discipline. An explicit break was made about this time with R-B's views: E-P's engagement with political processes and regional cultural connections had always been a feature of his work, and his wartime research on the Sanusi of Cyrenaica had taken on a truly historical character. It is not clear why his inaugural lecture of 1948 placed social anthropology squarely within the social-science tradition we would now associate more with R-B, though they were jointly concerned (with Fortes) to give a shape to the subject during the 1940s. There is a view that the text of this lecture owed something to an earlier manifesto-style draft by R-B himself, who never gave an inaugural. Another received report suggests that the delivered version differed from the later published text (both these oral reports deserve further research). But E-P's Marett Lecture of 1950, delivered safely after R-B's departure, famously took a different turn and proclaimed that the subject was properly one of the humanities. E- P's personal vision, now licensed to re-invent social anthropology in the image of the humanities, was after all more in line with his original training as a historian, and he was now free to pursue it. He was very pleased to be invited to deliver a set of radio lectures in 1950 to a wider audience, later published (1951a) and translated into Japanese, Spanish, Arabic, Hindi, French and Italian. A local manifesto was published in the *Oxford*

Magazine (1951b). E-P here setting out a confident and optimistic agenda for the subject. A slim volume of essays was edited from further broadcast talks, several by Institute colleagues, as *The Institutions of Primitive Society* in 1954. An update on the progress of anthropology in Oxford appeared in *Man* (1959).

His field research over, E-P had turned to critical and reflective studies (cf. Gellner's introduction (1981) to the posthumous collection of his pieces edited by André Singer). In addition to writing up further field notes (mainly on the Azande) and reworking some of his existing publications into the volume *Nuer Religion* he produced a steady series of commentaries on his chosen predecessors and on topics such as the nature of religion. In doing this, he went far beyond the writings of paid-up members of the anthropological profession. His aim was parallel to the project of the philosopher and archaeologist R.G. Collingwood, who had provided critiques of 'the idea of nature and of the idea of history', not to mention concepts of art and philosophy, by engaging with the way that thought patterns of the past have been periodically transformed (e.g. Collingwood 1939, 1946; cf. 2005).

Who or what may have helped E-P to select his newly chosen forebears in the series of lectures and papers he worked on during his time in the Oxford Chair? In my view, his thinking and reading on this matter was considerably influenced by the writings and conversation of Sir Isaiah Berlin, who had been a Fellow of All Souls from 1932–8, and then returned in 1950, not long after E-P's joining the College in 1946. There is, as far as I know, no reference to Vico, Montesquieu, Comte and so on in E-P's writings before the war, but these are standard points of reference in Berlin s lectures and essays, as they became in E-P's own revision of social anthropology's history.[6] E-P's friendship with Berlin was a steadfast one, and I myself remember Berlin being invited to give a talk on Vico to the Institute in, I think. 1969 or 1970. When Sir Isaiah became the founding President of Wolfson College, he was very supportive of anthropology.

The graduate students who came to Oxford were of varied and often mature experience, from the early days when a good number had wartime employment of one kind or another, on to the later years when not a few were doctors, priests, or professionals in fields such as translation or business. They came with existing qualifications in a range of subjects, mainly the humanities, and thus brought a variety of perspectives into their study of anthropological theory and ethnographic literature. The result was an enrichment of debates at the Institute, and of variety in the individual research contributions made. It is well known that Godfrey and Peter Lienhardt, and David Pocock, studied English with Leavis in Cambridge: it is less well known that among the staff John Beattie's first degree was in philosophy: or that Paul Bohannan had read German literature; Ken Burridge, jurisprudence; Mary Douglas, PPE (politics, philosophy and economics); Meyer Fortes, psychology with English; Rodney Needham, Chinese and Malay. Among students of the early 1950s, Freddy Bailey had read PPE, Paul Stirling Lit. Hum., John Middleton English, Ioan Lewis chemistry, John Barnes maths with anthropology, Clyde Mitchell sociology and psychology, Robert Paine history, and Peter Lloyd geography. In the later 1950s into the 1960s, the pattern continued with a similar mix but expanded numbers. Still only a few came with existing degrees partly or wholly in anthropology. This diversity helps us understand why so many of the professional publications from the Institute were addressed to a readership way outside the confines of the anthropology classroom or teaching syllabus.

The literary activities of the Institute took a variety of forms. Translations of E-P's own works appeared in a range of languages, often sponsored or undertaken by students. A series of English translations from the works of the Durkheimian school was promoted by E-P shortly after his appointment. He approached Ian Cunnison (not long after his arrival as an Advanced Student in 1947 after studying French along with his archaeology and anthropology in Cambridge) about the work, and contacted a potential publisher about this project as early as April 1949.[7] The series was launched in 1954 with Cunnison's translation of Marcel Mauss's essay on 'The Gift'.[8]

In 1956. another Oxford initiative saw the launch of the journal *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, edited by David Pocock of the Institute and Louis Dumont, whom he had

6 On a hunch I compared the indexes of the volume edited by Singer (E-P 1981) and Berlin's *The Hedgehog and the Fox* (1953). There are no fewer than twenty-one authors occurring in both lists, and this number includes some quite new names for anthropologists to ponder adding to their genealogy – such as Condorcet, Diderot, de Maistre, Chateaubriand, Sorel, Taine, Voltaire.

7 Letter from E-P to the Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, of 20 April 1949 mentioning that Cunnison has partly finished a translation of some well-known essays by Mauss and by Hubert and Mauss – 'The Gift', 'Magic' and 'Sacrifice' – asking if they might be interested in publishing them. The Free Press had already brought out some translated work of Durkheim and replied (9 May 1949) that they had already been considering an English translation of the more interesting papers by Mauss and expressed interest in seeing the manuscript (OUA ISA F/I. 25). In the event, the main publisher for the series became Cohen and West.

8 A clutch of other significant texts followed and the tradition of these translations is continued at Oxford to the present day, with the support of the British Centre for Durkheimian Studies – more recent examples are versions of Hubert's *Essay on Time* (1999) and two works of Mauss, *On Prayer* (2003) and *Techniques, Technology and Civilization* (2005).

succeeded, and who was now at l'École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris. It is worth noting that the good relations cultivated by the *Times Literary Supplement* (from at least 1955) with anthropology owed something to the literary-philosophical style of anthropology that E-P himself helped foster: the anonymous reviews carried by the *TLS* included anthropology books of various provenance, though not infrequently they were reviewed by Oxford authors. Several pieces by Institute staff also appeared from time to time in *The Listener*.

Consolidation: the 1960s

The public pronouncements on social anthropology's 'progress' continued during the 1960s. Rodney Needham noted in *Man* (1964) how the old Diploma in Anthropology at Oxford was now split into four specialist diplomas, of which by far the most in demand was that in social anthropology. The habit of providing reports to the general public continued right through E-P's tenure of the Chair and beyond; in 1973, when the ASA's Decennial Conference was held in Oxford, the *TLS* carried a final piece by him on 'Fifty Years of British Anthropology'.

Intense efforts were continued right through E-P's tenure by himself and his colleagues to define the scope of what they understood as a subject quite transcending what were seen as older kinds of anthropology. There can scarcely have been a department in which so many close colleagues published introductions to their discipline, or polemical or promotional arguments aimed at specifying its focus. E-P's own 1951 book and programmatic writings from the 1950s were followed by a spate of others in the 1960s. The first of the introductory books was Pocock's *Social Anthropology* of 1961, followed by Paul Bohannan's *Introduction to Social Anthropology* of 1963 (though I do remember E-P being a bit dismissive of the latter); and in 1964 both Lienhardt's *Social Anthropology* (the final fruit of an original invitation by the Home University Library to R-B) and Beattie's *Other Cultures: Aims. Methods and Achievements of Social Anthropology* appeared (the main title having been proposed by the publisher's US branch). Needham's *Structure and Sentiment*, a passionate argument for the rule-based nature of social relations, and thus a defence of social anthropology against psychological explanations, appeared in 1962. Mary Douglas (who of course had long since moved from the Institute to UCL) published *Purity and Danger* in 1966; this certainly drew very wide attention to a style of anthropology many would associate with her Oxford background, and in its own way constituted an important extension of anthropology's conversations with philosophy and theology.

The crusading ethos continued through the whole of the E-P period and indeed beyond – it resonates with some of us still (see Dresch and James 2000:4–6). Let me just mention here Edwin Ardener's Malinowski Lecture of 1971 which was entitled 'The New Anthropology and its critics', and constituted a broadside on scientism, as did his elegant short piece '"Behaviour": social anthropological criticism', published only a couple of years later, aimed mainly at students – and even fellow teachers – in the new Human Sciences degree (Ardener 1971, 1973). It was, significantly too, published in the *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford*, over whose emergence Ardener had presided in 1970. Polemical and critical work by Oxford-trained anthropologists was also spreading in other directions: let me just mention the conference envisaged in the late 1960s and organized in 1972 by Talal Asad, then at Hull University after a period of teaching in the Sudan, which demonstrated the formative effects of the colonial period upon anthropological thought and practice. He had tried to get the ASA to adopt this topic for one of their annual conferences, but it was turned down by Raymond Firth, reportedly, on the grounds that we went through all that in the 1930s. The resulting volume (Asad 1973) has attracted enormous attention.

Social anthropology during the post-colonial years did start to catch the eye of scholars in neighbouring fields. A notable example of the interchanges which look place were the 1960s debates on 'rationality' with philosophers (Wilson 1970), continuing later with joint meetings on topics like 'sacrifice' with the theologians (Bourdillon and Fortes 1980). Some had forecast that the demise of colonialism would put an end to the discipline: but the opposite proved to be the case, as there was a great expansion of student interest from the early 1960s. The growing ranks of graduate students more than replaced the trainee administrators. When I myself became a student at the Institute (in 1962), I think it would not be wrong to say that the excitement of rising nationalism and colonial liberation in Africa and elsewhere provoked a new and potentially radical interest among young people, in the UK at least, about what anthropology had to offer as insight into the contemporary peoples and cultures of such regions, and thus the events going on in them, since conventional books on history or politics had very little to say. Reciprocally, students from Africa and other 'remote' parts of the world often found an affinity with the anthropologists because so few other academic disciplines actually focused on grassroots studies in these countries.

The research agenda which E-P was promoting included from the start the study of areas beyond the contemporary colonial territories. He had been able to establish a post in Indian Sociology as early as 1948, and to push for the development of Mediterranean anthropology, which John Campbell was able later to consolidate over many years from his position at St Antony's College. Between 1960 and 1963, the years which finally saw the end of the Overseas Cadets and showed the new trend, completed B.Litt. theses included Finnegan on early Irish kingship,

Figure 6.2 The Institute staff in the library at 11 Keble Road in 1953. Standing, left to right, Godfrey Leinhardt, Paul Bohannan, David Pocock. Seated, left to right, Phyllis Puckle (librarian/secretary), E-P, John Peristiany. Copyright ISCA, University of Oxford.

Asad on changing family structures in the Punjab, and Kesby on British missionaries in the Pacific: and D.Phils. included Paine on the coastal Lapps of Norway, Miller on the religious kibbutz, and Maraspini and Lisdn-Tolosana on rural Italy and Spain respectively (Institute of Social Anthropology, Annual Reports). There were also of course the more standard anthropological-looking field studies in Africa. South America and S.E. Asia. Studies of this kind seemed increasingly, however, to reach into questions of history, cultural change, oral literature and religion; and indeed politics, as radical questionings of the older forms of authority and the dominance of the West began to spread. There was no great taking to the streets in Oxford, as in Paris and London, or campus occupations as in the United States, but the Proctors wisely turned a blind eye as gowns gradually disappeared from lecture rooms. 'Anthropology at home' was given a good start in Oxford in 1968, with Barbara Harrell-Bond's study of the Blackbird Leys housing estate on the outskirts of the city's declining industrial zone of steel and motor manufacture.

On the literary front, there was a burst of activity in the 1960s. Relations between the Institute and Oxford University Press were very good during E-P's time. He had proposed a series of Oxford Monographs in Social Anthropology (securing a grant of £500 from the University) in 1956. The series, overseen by a committee including E-P and John Peristiany of the Institute, Tom Penniman of the Pitt Rivers Museum, and Isaac Schapera of the LSE, was launched in 1963 with Jean Buxton's first book on the Mandari, and this was followed up with fifteen other titles by 1979. Several were the distinguished results of doctoral fieldwork (for example, Barnes 1974; Cutileiro

1971; Gilsenan 1973). However, it was the normal practice for graduate students to prepare theses mainly based on library work for the degree of B.Litt., before going to the field for their doctoral research, and the standard of these was often very high (a valuable output not paralleled, to my knowledge, in other departments). Several B.Litts. became books in the Monograph series, for example Eva Gillies on Yoruba towns and cities (Krapf-Askari 1969), Hilary Callan on the relations between the study of animal and human behaviour respectively (1970), and Hilary Henson on the historical relationship between British social anthropology and language (1974), while other B.Litts. of this period also found willing publishers (for example, Just 1989).

As part of the engagement with the humanities, E-P with Godfrey Lienhardt and the linguist Wilfred Whiteley launched a major and brand new series, the Oxford Library of African Literature, with four volumes in 1964. By 1979 when it came to an end, some 27 volumes of largely 'unknown' stories, oral and literary genres, songs and myths had been published, an extremely significant contribution to the growing field of the study of African history, languages and civilization. Many involved in producing the series were trained originally in Oxford – for example, Ioan Lewis (1964 with B.W. Andrzejewski), Ruth Finnegan (1967, 1970). Peter Lienhardt (1968, edition of Hasani bin Ismail), Jack Goody (1972), Roy Willis (1978), Ahmed al-Shahi (1978 with F.C.T. Moore), but the majority of the volumes were edited by scholars from elsewhere – including several from Africa itself, such as John Mbiti (1966), S.A. Babalola (1966), Daniel Kunene (1971) and Francis Deng (1973).

There was rarely a conscious sense of a party line within E-P's Institute, especially as internal rivalry developed, sometimes reaching the public domain (see for example the articles by Needham and by Beattie in the journal *Africa* during the 1960s). But beneath the competing efforts to define, explain and defend the principles of social anthropology and somehow capture its soul, there was much in common. Looking back we might sum up its approach as a comparative but empathetic study of the forms and experiences of human sociality, in so far as we can have access, as scholars and as persons, to their historical reality. The currents of new systematizing theory which spread in the 1960s, in particular Lévi-Strauss's structuralism, French neo-Marxism, and the new utilitarianism ('rational choice') could be met and engaged with: as just a little later, social anthropologists began their efforts to engage with the challenge of the new biological sciences through the Human Sciences degree. But the most comfortable engagement, as I see it, was yet to come, in the context of the Archaeology and Anthropology undergraduate degree, which began only in 1992.

Institution building

The Institute and its Chair survived the E-P years partly by design and hard work, but partly also by hazard, and by odd favourable winds, it was surely an asset to the rest of the University because of its outstanding reputation and ability to attract students, but administrators and committee chairs probably felt it better not to provoke the sometimes fiery loyalty of its denizens. E-P certainly worked hard to build up the Institute's finances, its posts and its accommodation, through the move from 1 Jowett Walk (shared with the geographers) to Museum House in South Parks Road, then to 11 Keble Road, and then in 1965 to 51–3 Banbury Road. The story of the accumulation of posts has been summarized by Rivière (2007:43–61): here let me just emphasize the support of the Colonial Studies Committee and of Oriental Studies, especially for the posts in Indian and in African Sociology. First held by Srinivas and by Lienhardt respectively. These were finally transferred to the establishment of the Anthropology and Geography Faculty Board in 1966, which, as Rivière has pointed out, in retrospect was an addition which helped to secure social anthropology during the retrenchments of the following decades – and as I note below, their very titles were judiciously redefined a few years later when the social anthropologists felt the need to close ranks against poachers.

Many of the immediate post-war students were able to obtain funding from the Colonial Office or win Treasury Studentships. Others in the 1950s were supported, especially for field research, by a great variety of bodies – including the Rhodes-Livingstone Foundation, the Sudan Government, the Wenner-Gren Foundation, the SSRC (USA), the Horniman and Leverhulme Funds, Goldsmiths, All Souls College, the International African Institute, the Egyptian and Belgian Governments, and the Australian Army Fund (Evans-Pritchard 1959:121–2). Philip Bagby, a former student, left funds for the comparative study of the development of urban, literate cultures in accordance with anthropological principles and methods: the studentship in his name was first advertised in 1963, and has regularly supported a student since. As E-P's retirement approached, colleagues proposed to set up a fund in his name, and he asked that it commemorate his late wife: the Wenner-Gren Foundation matched the monies raised locally, to provide the Ioma Evans-Pritchard Studentship at St. Anne's College (later a Junior Research Fellowship). In the 1960s, the British SSRC was generous to social anthropology: between six and nine studentships were provided to Oxford each year from 1966–9 and this rose to thirteen in 1970.

The archives contain a surprising amount of paperwork over specific efforts by E-P to improve the infrastructure and equipment of the Institute, such as to secure a £120 grant for a tape-recorder (1954) and then £25 for a photocopier (1955), not to mention regular efforts to persuade the

various levels of the administration that further secretarial or academic posts were needed. He was treated with some circumspection. I think, partly because of a kind of personal doggedness – one complaint against his behaviour (by John Layard, Oxford resident and anthropologist of Melanesia, trained in psychoanalysis and of considerable emotional temperament himself, who wished to make use of the Institute) reached the Visitatorial Board in 1958. While E-P's decision to exclude Layard by rather firm means was upheld, this case cannot have made E-P or his colleagues seem any easier to deal with. It also revealed some of the uncertainties over the extent of the formal, statutory powers of the Professorship of Social Anthropology, and the activities over which he presided (as mentioned, these were formally limited to lecturing and supervising research in social anthropology, and having care of the Tylor Library). E-P's demands tended to be treated with care by the University administrators, some of whom were aware of one or two anomalies about the standing of the Chair and the Institute. In 1960 E-P claimed that he was the only Professor with administrative responsibility who did not draw an administrative allowance: an internal comment in the files from an administrator notes 'I realise that the existence of the Institute is de facto and not de jure' (OUA, UR 6/ANT/1 file 2).

From the statutory point of view, at that time 'Departments' were defined essentially on the 'science' model, and specific professors had charge of specific departments, thus entitling them to an allowance. In 1964 a proposal to use 'Department' was turned down by the General Board. They were not convinced this was necessary, that it would raise a number of difficult questions and require legislation, and that it would be better for the matter to be left in status quo (OUA, UR 6/ANT/1 file 2 [AG(64)42]). The University saw the Institute not as a Department but only as a 'unit of academic administration'. If social anthropology could get along without being a statutory Department, so be it.[9] The uncertainties felt in the Institute over the University's attitude were matched, no doubt, on the other side by a perception of E-P and some of his colleagues as unpredictable, and there is no doubt of the spreading reputation for eccentricity.

The Institute's achievement is nevertheless beyond questions of personality or quirkiness in E-P or for that matter his colleagues. He was a prolific scholar throughout this life: a rough count based on Beidelman's bibliography (1974) gives for the 1920s, sixteen published items: and for subsequent decades. 58; 82; 70; 84; and 74 (just up to 1974). While the position of social anthropology was remarkably fragile in Oxford itself, the Institute under E-P was well known as a nursery for the training of professional anthropologists who spread out to take posts and found departments in other UK Universities and across the globe. Students, staff, and academic visitors were attracted from overseas to a remarkable extent, many then returning to develop their own networks, and many keeping in touch with Oxford through correspondence and reciprocal Invitations.[10] As E- P himself noted in 1959, 'being a post-graduate school, we are largely dependent on recruitment from outside Oxford and partly from outside the British Isles' (1959:121) (a dependence, in both respects, which continues to the present, and in respect of overseas recruitment has greatly increased).

The threshold of an era: 1970 and the succession

At the end of the 1960s Oxford anthropology was flourishing. Taking the information in the very full loose-leaf edition of the ASA Annals for 1969, I find that of the total of 168 members of the Association, forty-two had acquired either the B.Litt., or the D.Phil., or both, in social anthropology at Oxford – that is, precisely a quarter. For those with doctorates in social anthropology at other Universities, the LSE came closest with thirty-seven. UCL had eight, SOAS one and there were seven described as simply 'London', so taken as a whole London would predominate. Others of note were Cambridge with sixteen, Manchester with fourteen, ANU with nine; but no other had more than four.

However, as was perhaps only to be expected, E-P's charisma had led to a dilemma for the succession. He had encouraged a very high level of disciplinary commitment among his students and colleagues, and it can easily be understood that there was no internal or external candidate obviously acceptable all round as the successor. Quite apart from this, however, there is evidence that the social anthropologists were justified in some of their fears about the future of the Chair. The Social Studies Board, which as I have noted made some observations in 1948 about the need for anthropology to be placed in a wider setting, reported to the General Board for its meeting on 17 July 1968 that it considered the occasion of the vacancy in the Chair 'might be an opportune time for reconsidering the general position

9 This matter of course did come up again and did have financial and other implications to be resolved in 1977–8, after the title of 'department' came to be used across the University in a more varied way than before. At that time the Institute adopted a constitution based on a departmental committee with a rotating chair, a pattern already obtaining in the Mathematical Institute. By the late 1980s however, the Chairman of the General Board himself proposed the adoption of the title 'Department', in the context of the planning of the new School of Anthropology. Peter Rivière, then on the General Board prevented the change on the grounds that you do not change a successful brand name (Rivière pers.comm.).

10 This is clear from the files of correspondence from the 1950s and 1960s, often containing significant sets of letters from students in the field and in posts elsewhere (OUA, ISA/F. Correspondence files).

of Social Anthropology in the University, particularly in relation to Sociology; [and] that the electors should be prepared to consider applications from persons interested in modern industrial communities as well as primitive societies and that the post should be advertised in terms that would make this quite clear' (OUA, UR 6/ANT/2A, file 2). However, the anthropologists proposed that 'The study of Social Anthropology should continue to be advanced along the lines developed by the present Professor', which led to the Board stating that they were willing to discuss the advancement of Sociology as such, but not in relation to the Professorship of Social Anthropology. The A&G Board dragged its feet about who their representatives should be for the joint meeting to the point where the Secretary of Faculties reported that the only practical course would be for the Planning and Development Committee to see representatives of the two Boards separately, '(since otherwise there might be an explosion dangerous to life)'. The Committee later reported that the Social Studies Faculty Board 'certainly did not have in mind a take-over', but there was a close connection between social anthropology in some of its aspects and sociology: 'the point really was that the line of work in which Professor Evans-Pritchard has made his uniquely distinguished contribution had perhaps been taken as far as it could profitably go, and the Social Studies Board did not want to see him replaced merely by a "disciple" who would simply follow in his footsteps…'.

In the event the General Board authorized the filling of the Chair without making any appeal to 'persons interested in modern industrial communities as well as primitive societies'. The battleground chosen by the sociologists was based, surely not in all innocence (though that might have been a reasonable excuse in 1949), on an outdated image of what social anthropology had by this time become. The work of E-P and the Institute over the period since the war had surely modified, if not transcended, the old conception of the 'primitive' as its object. But there were other problems, ironically, in relation to what had evolved from Colonial Studies and was by this time Commonwealth History, whose representatives, including the distinguished figure of Margery Perham, also looked rather askance at social anthropology, so little concerned with 'progress' (I know this from an unsuccessful interview I had at Nuffield with her).

During the intensive period of the 1950s and 1960s, social anthropology had defended itself well against doubters and critics in the University, but its devotees under E-P had developed the virtue of loyalty almost to a fault. They were seen variously as creative and brilliant, sometimes jealous of each other, unpredictable and difficult to manage, more awkwardly defensive by 1970 in relation to the history of empire than they had been during its heyday. They did manage to hang on to their Chair but, arguably, with crucial support from external champions of the subject in other Universities rather than wholehearted endorsement from within Oxford. The succession went in 1970 to an unexpected 'outsider': Maurice Freedman, from the LSE, was a specialist in China and the overseas Chinese communities, an ethnographic field quite new for Oxford.

John Beattie left to take up a Chair of African Social and Cultural Anthropology in Leiden, being succeeded by Peter Rivière who was able to consolidate South American anthropology. Rodney Needham resigned in order to accept a Chair in the University of Virginia, though he later withdrew from this move (finally being elected to the Chair in 1976 after Freedman's premature death). Concurrent with preparations for the 1970 succession, plans for the new Honour School of Human Sciences were coming to fruition, spearheaded on the social anthropology side by Edwin Ardener, and by Geoffrey Harrison on the side of biological anthropology, with a number of colleagues from other fields. Institute staff found various ways to further protect and prolong the life of social anthropology in the University: for example, by retelling the posts held by Ravi Jain and Godfrey Lienhardt from 'Indian Sociology' to 'The Social Anthropology of South Asia' and from African Sociology' to 'Social Anthropology' tout court. Within a short time of Freedman's appointment, further accommodation had been acquired at 61 Banbury Road, and a brand new lectureship in social anthropology secured (to which I was appointed in 1972). E-P was knighted, but only after his retirement: his vision had in some ways run its course, but in other ways it has left a permanent and valuable legacy. This is why so many evoke even now the myth, the special aura, of the E-P years. He would have been delighted to know that in 2005 we were able to secure a second chair in the discipline he championed with such infectious passion.

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7

E.E. Evans-Pritchard

A note in memoriam[1]

Roy Willis

> I recall an incredibly bawdy monologue in a taxi across Manhattan in which the tough and seasoned New York cabby appeared blanched and stunned after Evans-Pritchard went into his hotel. The cabby could only murmur, 'Who was that dirty old man?'
>
> T.O. Beidelman (1974)

> *Those who know do not speak;*
> *Those who speak do not know.*
>
> Traditional Zen saying

The perennially shabby appearance of our hero was a source of wonder and occasional confusion to many; but even more so were his words, as when, one balmy Oxford afternoon, and well pissed in The Royal Oak or The Lamb and Flag, he of the oracular stare and strangled chortle announced to his astonished disciples that there was only one method in social anthropology, the comparative one, and that was impossible.

*

My first meeting with E-P happened in the spring of 1960 on the threshold of 16 Keble Road, then home of the Oxford Institute of Social Anthropology, when I, a fragmentarily self-educated savage from the suburbs, and having been introduced by the principal of Ruskin College as one who, for unknown reasons, wanted to study anthropology, found myself momentarily exposed to the full force of that lighthouse beam of a stare. Had I then had an inkling of the man's towering stature in his profession I would doubtless have been far less self-possessed than I managed to be, so probably it was fortunate that at the time I knew of only three anthropologists by name – Frazer, Malinowski and Mead – and of these had read a little of only one.

Yes, E-P said, after a moment's contemplation, I could do the Diploma in Social Anthropology. I realized I had, as the saying is in the profession, been accepted. It was thus I came to join the small community of scholars in Keble Road. Although, as soon became apparent, certain of these scholars hated each other's guts, E-P floated above it all by the power of his will, assisted by such simple expedients as never holding staff meetings (Lienhardt 1974:302). Disguised as the gardener or handyman, he delivered his lectures on the history of anthropology. After a time, I came to see that E-P's often lack-lustre manner at the lectern, his abstracted stare as he spoke of de Coulanges, Tylor, Durkheim, reflected his own boredom and unease with the hierarchical teaching mode rather than contempt for his illustrious intellectual ancestors. So, he accommodated himself as best he could to the formal requirements of a job he probably saw as much on a par with that of a tradesman. His own considered thought was available to the seeker in his books and other writings, expressed in a prose style that is, as Beidelman (1974:565) has well observed,

> among the finest in all anthropology; forceful, deceptively lucid (the words are pregnant with more meaning than they first appear to hold) and without any trace of jargon or pretentiousness.

But there was more. The force and lucidity of the prose took a distinctively different form as it reflected and explored the special qualities of particular peoples and places. The meandering and criss-crossing bush paths of the Zande in their forest habitat, at once concealing and leading to the secret location of the poison oracle and the witchcraft accusation, were like the devious interconnections of Zande thought patterns: purposeful, allusive and ambiguous. Just so, in his study of Zande mystical beliefs and practices, I found Evans-Pritchard's prose faithfully mirroring a mental and material *Lebenswelt* in its peculiarly recursive style, constantly doubling back upon itself:

1 An earlier version of this little essay was read on my behalf, reportedly with notable verve and histrionic skill, by Professor William Arens at the 82nd Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association in Chicago in December 1983. The paper, submitted in absentia, was part of a retrospective symposium on the life and work of Evans-Pritchard, organized and chaired by Professor John W. Burton.

> Those who always speak in a roundabout manner and are not straightforward in their conversation are suspected of witchcraft. Azande are very sensitive and usually on the lookout for unpleasant allusions to themselves in apparently harmless conversation. This is a frequent occasion of quarrels, and there is no means of determining whether the speaker has meant the allusions or whether his speaker has supplied them. For example, a man sits with some of his neighbours and says, 'No man remains for ever in the world.' One of the old men sitting nearby gives a disapproving grunt at this remark, hearing which the speaker explains that he was talking of an old man who has just died; but others may think that he wished the death of one of those with whom he was sitting.
>
> (1937:111)

But the Nuer, and Nuerland, were another world again. Here the stark beauty of the Nuer concept of spirit resembles the classical severity of the landscape with its vast distances and enormous overarching sky that encourages men to see themselves, as if from afar, as 'the ants of God'. And the noble simplicities of this vision were, so it seemed to me, in some magical way recreated in the slowly rolling periods of *Nuer Religion*:

> This impress of the social structure on Nuer religious thought is to be marked also in the natural and moral attributes of the different types of spiritual refractions. Mighty celestial phenomena, and great and terrible happenings, such as plagues and famines, and the moral order which concern all men are attributed to God…
>
> (1956: 118)

This ability E-P had of allowing himself to serve as a medium for the projection into our cultural world of alien universes made him subtly disturbing to have around.[2] It accounts for his well-known 'charisma' as well as for the covert and overt hostility he aroused, and still arouses, among certain of our anthropological colleagues (a medical academic from Edinburgh, seeing E-P, whom she didn't know, at a conference, asked me: 'Who *is* that old man everyone's genuflecting to?'). So, I was not surprised to read, in Tom Beidelman's splendid obituary tribute, E-P's statement in a letter that 'though it may seem odd to you, I have always taken for granted that any contribution I have made to knowledge is not mine but God's through me' (Beidelman 1974:555).

Given that E-P was, as I now see, among other things, an authentic shaman, his intuitive powers are also no surprise: the extraordinary way he could read the hearts and minds of his fellows.[3] And what he read was, or course, often discreditable:

> E-P was known for his entertainingly sharp conversation in which he made excoriating fun of the pomposity, hypocrisy, prejudices and stupidity of others. He was full of anecdotes involving those who had 'made it' or who were 'on the make'.
>
> (Beidelman 1974:557)[4]

It appears that such outspokenness was not always confined to private occasions. Professor David Schneider has said of Evans-Pritchard that 'his rudeness could be monumental' (1981:721). But others, including Beidelman (ibid.) have attested to E-P's unfailing kindness and consideration to all those within his professorial care – something I can confirm from experience.

There is no doubt, however, that E-P's verbal thrusts could be – and were meant to be – disconcerting, even when kindly intended. His characteristic method was akin to that of the Zen master's unexpected use of paradox, with the object of shaking his disciple out of his conventional pattern of thought and provoking, if not the ultimate experience of *satori*, then at least some illuminating insight.[5] His aphoristic appreciation of the comparative method stands as epigraph to this paper. A 'translation' might read:

2 Evans-Pritchard himself likened his incomparable gift for rendering the 'otherness' of exotic cultures to that of a translator (1950:22), whence the misleading impression seems to have got about that Evans-Pritchard originated the idea that anthropology translates from one culture into another. In fact, this theory was clearly formulated by Malinowski in the third chapter of Argonauts. In Britain it is of course the received opinion that Malinowski had no ideas worth talking about; perhaps by way of compensation, he is also commonly and erroneously credited in Britain with being the first anthropologist to work through the vernacular, as though Cushing and Boas had never lived. Even Evans-Pritchard appears to have believed this mythical account of his erstwhile teacher (cf. Kuper 1981).

3 According to Eliade, the extraordinary powers of the shaman reflect the fact that he or she is intermediary between the two cosmological planes of earth and sky and also that they combine in their own person the feminine element (earth) and the masculine element (sky). We have here a ritual androgyny, a well-known archaic formula for the divine bi-unity and the coincidentia oppositorum (Eliade 1964:507).

4 It is heartening to see this astringent tradition being vigorously upheld by the reigning Professor of Social Anthropology at Oxford, when he writes: 'It is a fact of common, if dismayed, observation that universities can, in their less reputable actions, find posts for dullards, placemen and time-servers.' (Needham 1970:xcii); and ' the reputation of the subject is often blemished by opportunists and even charlatans who peculiarly infest our discipline' (Needham 1978:26–7).

5 As is well known, Zen derives not only from the teachings of Buddha but also from the millennial tradition of Chinese Taoism, itself rooted in prehistoric shamanistic religion.

> An anthropology presupposes comparison, yet the socio-cultural entities that constitute the units of comparison are, precisely to the extent that they are distinct entities, unique and therefore incomparable.

Contemplation of this *koan*-esque proposition was presumably intended to provoke in E-P's students the sudden insight that the troubling contradiction could be resolved by changing the meaning of the term 'anthropology', particularly the built-in axiom of 'objectivity'. But that of course would be to explode anthropology, and industrial civilization's social science, whether bourgeois or Marxist, into an altogether new space for which there are as yet no words.

Another example, for which I am indebted to my friend Michael Kenny, has E-P bursting into the Institute library after a heavy lunchtime session in the Lamb and Flag, and exclaiming to the bowed heads therein:

There you are, you silly buggers! Trying to learn what I'm trying to forget!

Here again, and noting the irony that the works being pored over might well have been E-P's own, we have the shock calculated to 'awaken', to compel the mind to see that the reality it should be concerned with lies way beyond established theory and the printed page.

Another disturbing trick of E-P 's was suddenly shooting questions at you, to which the textbooks suggested no ready answer. This tactic was frequently deployed at the morning coffee break, when, having posed his question, E-P would quickly move to the other side of the room before his victim could attempt a fumbling response. For example, recalling the tripartite division of so many nineteenth-century schemes of social evolution, he asked me: 'Why do they always come in threes?' (Too late, it occurred to me to suggest that there could be some connection with the form of the Aristotelian syllogism.)

I have referred to the desiccated texture of E-P's characteristic lecturing style, which contrasted markedly with the self-consciously sparkling 'Oxford' delivery of some of his junior colleagues. But there was one occasion when he relented. It was near the end of the packed Diploma year, when we eight students were feeling the strain of taking in and ordering so many odd facts and intricate ideas, compounded by the felt imminence of the examination. All of us, that is, with the likely exception of the gifted author of the *Song of Lawino*, the late and lamented East African poet Okot P'Bitek, who never allowed such mundane matters to bother him.

As soon as E-P entered the classroom we knew something different was in store. Instead of the monotonous intonation and glassy stare, his face was animated as he adjusted the pages of the lectern and launched into 'Man and Woman among the Azande', a sizzling ethnographic catalogue of sex and violence. The man who committed adultery with a royal wife, he told us with evident relish, was punished with castration:

> The operation involved removal of *the entire genitalia* – testicles and – ah, um – *penis!*
> (Chortle)
> I don't know why, but the victims were supposed to *run faster than anyone else!*

Pre-examination nerves relaxed. Anthropology, it seemed, could be fun.

I have little doubt that E-P's unorthodox method of teaching, recalling both the radical Socrates and the no less radical Zen teachings of the East, alternating severity with indulgence, influenced the whole scholarly hierarchy at the Institute, right down to the low-ranking Diploma students. The sound of one hand clapping might often have been discerned by the attentive in the timeless calm of that Victorian villa in Keble Road. Only once a year was there a collective worship of the spirit of Dionysus, and, *a fortiori*, of Bacchus, when the Institute held a garden party to celebrate the end of the examinations and the academic year. Then it was normal to see world-renowned luminaries collapsed on the lawn in an advanced stage of inebriation, unable to resume the vertical. As far as I could see, E-P took only a marginal role in these collective proceedings, perhaps considering that he played his part adequately in that department of life throughout the rest of the year.[6]

It is time to confront the question of E-P's famous theoretical reticence, the implicit character of his guiding concepts:

> Evans-Pritchard never cared for easy ideas or simple points. His books rarely contain sections which summarize and which label conclusions or theories as such. Evans-Pritchard's theories and reasoning flow within the works…
>
> (Beidelman 1974:565)

E-P received much mindless adulation, which he must often have found embarrassing, in his own country during his lifetime. But it is a remarkable fact that, leaving aside Professor Mary Douglas's idiosyncratic and essentially misleading account of his life and work, leavened through it is by some characteristically brilliant insights (Douglas 1980), no critical appreciation of Evans-Pritchard by a British anthropologist can match, for depth and range, the American philosophical anthropologist David Bidney's penetrating discussion (Bidney 1953), the sympathetic analysis by Elvin Hatch (1973), or even Beidleman's much

6 '…organized entertainment was not on the whole for him [E-P]' (Lienhardt 1974:299).

briefer appraisal (1974).[7] This is particularly ironic in view of E-P's well-known contempt for American anthropology in general (cf. Kuper 1981), an irony he would doubtless have relished. Certainly Evans-Pritchard took pains to avoid spelling out what he really thought, even to the extent of feigning to subscribe to the positivist tenets of his teacher and predecessor in office, A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, when he had secretly disavowed them (Evans-Pritchard 1970).

According to the interpretation of E-P I am proposing, E-P's reluctance to indulge in grand theory arose from a profound insight very like the 'way of liberation' celebrated in Zen teachings. According to this ancient Asian tradition, liberation can never be 'taught', it can only be 'shown' (Watts 1962). This is because any theory, however liberationist in intention, inevitably creates a further oppressive duality as between 'thought' and the 'real world' (look what has happened to Marxism and, more recently, to phenomenology). Zen seeks to avoid this trap by 'direct pointing' to the 'just-so-ness' of things; in particular, it uses the verbal instrument of the seemingly self-contradictory *koan* to momentarily demolish the student's mental world-picture with its inherent divisions and enable him to see the totality of things, including himself, as whole and undivided. Even so did Evans-Pritchard, through his superlative powers as an ethnographer, point out to us the 'suchness', as Watts puts it, of the world. Indeed, he regarded himself as 'first an ethnographer, and secondly as a social anthropologist' (1963:25). And even so did Evans-Pritchard constantly seek to 'awaken' the minds of those around him.

> his conversation prodded, tested and satirized many beliefs, from those involving class, race and religion, to pseudo-liberalism and pedantry.
>
> (Beidelman 1974:557)

Nothing and no one was sacrosanct. He told me once that early in his career he had written a paper on Zande magic, in the course of which he had attacked the well-known Malinowskian theory on the subject. He left the manuscript on his desk, where it chanced to be seen and read by Malinowski, who excised the adverse references to himself and sent the manuscript to a learned journal. It was duly published in this doctored form.[8]

According to Watts, who relies on the classic texts, the distinguishing marks of a Zen master are spontaneity and naturalness in behaviour (Watts 1962:154–73). These qualities also distinguished E-P, as Godfrey Lienhardt has memorably recorded in his sensitive and loving tribute (Lienhardt 1974). A few months before his characteristically unconventional and enigmatic death, there was a large gathering of anthropologists at a college garden party in Oxford. Among them, as I well recall, was E-P, seated on the summer grass within a circle of young people, several of them strikingly beautiful, while wine flowed. It was a classic scene: the aged master surrounded by golden and adoring youth. On the way out, I turned for a moment to look back and there across the immemorial lawn staggered Sir Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard, dishevelled as ever and, for reasons not immediately apparent, with fly gaping wide. A comrade of yesteryear – now alas also no longer with us – moved in swiftly and chivalrously, and zipped him up with a deft hand.

This was my last glimpse of E-P on this Earth.

> Like the empty sky it has no boundaries,
> Yet it is right in this place, ever profound and clear.
> When you seek to know it, you cannot see it.
> You cannot take hold of it,
> But you cannot lose it.
>
> The *Cheng-tao Ke*, quoted in Watts (1962:164)

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7 I am not forgetting the acute assessment by D.F. Pocock (1961:72), when he characterized a major shift in anthropology associated primarily with Evans-Pritchard as one 'from function to meaning', a striking phrase subsequently adopted by Malcolm Crick in his 1976 collection of essays, *Explorations in Language and Meaning.*

8 This story, which I am uncertain whether or not to believe, could of course be an example of those told, according to Beidelman, in order to test his interlocutor's beliefs (' he would even concoct a particularly outrageous anecdote on the spot, just to see if any gullible student or colleague might believe it' – Beidelman 1974: 557). E-P may also have performed certain acts in a similar spirit. The late Meyer Fortes once told me that E-P had torn up what were understood to be his Nuer fieldnotes in the presence of himself and the late Max Gluckman. Apparently, no explanation was offered except that the notes had 'served their purpose'. I believe Fortes believed this had happened. There was also said to be a particularly scabrous E-P story, which I heard about but never heard him actually recount, allegedly involving Malinowski and a dog in Port Moresby.

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8

A decade of memories

1961–71

David Hicks

What I shall try to do in this chapter is add something to the record we have of E-P as a person and as a scholar.[1] I shall do so by reflecting on my personal interactions with E-P as a graduate student at the Institute; registering various observations he made to me about doing research in the field; sharing with you views he held on other scholars that he had shared with me, and describing the influence his advice and approach to understanding social phenomena had on my first field research, which was for my DPhil., and later fieldwork. His influence can be seen in the work I subsequently published and am presently engaged in, not least in his thoughts about the relationship between social anthropology and history.

What career I would have had or, if it comes to that, what course my life would have taken had I not chanced upon an article in *Man* early in 1961 before I took my finals in geography at the University College of Wales in Aberystwyth, I have not the remotest notion. But without a doubt, 'The teaching of social anthropology at Oxford' (1959) changed the direction of my life. It persuaded me to apply to the Institute of Social Anthropology to read for the Post-Graduate Diploma in Anthropology. E-P accepted me and instructed me to seek admittance in a college. I applied to St Edmund Hall and was invited by its principal, Dr John Kelly, to come to Oxford early in 1962 for an interview. After our meeting I decided to take a look at the Institute before leaving Oxford, walked down Parks Road, and turned into Keble Road, where the Institute was located in those days. As I began walking up the path to the Institute its front door opened and from beyond the lobby a quizzical visage suddenly appeared near the bottom of the stairs leading to the floors above and stared out trying to see who the visitor was. I had no idea whose face it was and as I lacked courage to introduce myself I hurriedly turned around and departed.

Several weeks later E-P happened to come to Aberystwyth to deliver the Sir D. Owen Evans Lectures on 'Theories of primitive religion' and as soon as he entered the lecture hall I knew instantly who had been staring at me that morning. Later that day, around lunchtime, I chanced upon E-P walking along Great Darkgate Street in the centre of the town with some local academics who were hosting him. Nearing a pub, E-P headed straight for the door without hesitating, but it was only after glancing diffidently over their shoulders and exchanging some words that his companions followed suit. But they followed E-P inside. I had lost my second chance to introduce myself. That Michaelmas Term I arrived in Oxford for the diploma.

For those unfamiliar with the Institute in the sixties, the physical kingdom E-P and his colleagues and students inhabited was arranged in the following manner. On the ground floor were two library rooms; a lecture room; E-P's secretary's office; and an office for the Institute's Graduate Assistant. E-P's office was on the first floor with offices for 'the staff', as lecturers were called. The third floor, more-or-less an attic, contained more staff offices. A basement, rarely explored, comprised sundry unlighted and uninhabited rooms crammed with assorted chairs, tables, cases and other cast-offs laced with spiders' webs.

Our daily routine began with lectures that started, if I recall correctly, at 9:00 a.m. and in the late morning we had a coffee break during which E-P more often than not would hold the floor, 'switching' his deaf ear from left to right or right to left according to whether he choose to acknowledge his would-be interlocutor or not. One day a prominent member of my intake year, whose mirror on the world came from the *Daily Telegraph*, conveyed the news to E-P (who was giving him the benefit of his hearing ear) of what he chose to call 'a scandal!' Catherine Deneuve, the French film actress, was reported as being pregnant, we learned, and yet had publicly announced she had no intention of marrying the begetter of her child, the French film director, Roger Vadim. E-P did not demur. He also read the *Daily Telegraph*, for which he was publicly admonished by Rodney Needham for relying upon 'that reactionary' broadsheet as his source of news.

At lunchtime visits to a local pub followed. Years later Raymond Firth professed some disquiet about the alcoholic

1 I thank the Royal Anthropological Institute for its invitation to give a paper, on which the present version is based, at their conference.

culture prevailing at the Institute in those days, but for students these occasions in the King's Arms, Lamb and Flag or whichever pub E-P happened to be patronizing that week were priceless opportunities to hear his take on the history and current state of the discipline we were training to enter. What we heard added substance to what we learned in our lectures and tutorials. To my delight, E-P always seemed to enjoy offering his views on fellow anthropologists. I heard how in his declining years the author of *Primitive Culture* would recite as a purported scholarly insight, 'Ding, dong dell, pussy's in the well!' Max Gluckman, E-P remarked, was very sad to leave Oxford for Manchester University to take up its chair and we learned why he thought Edmund Leach wrote unpleasant reviews about his colleagues' books. Frustration, E-P averred, that the Cambridge chair was already occupied.

Friday seminars were highlights of our weekly routine, when visiting scholars, like Leach and Lucy Mair, came to read papers; and students recently returned from the field, Clark Cunningham, Ruth Finnegan and others, would present their findings.

When I arrived at the Institute, I discovered to my considerable delight that I had the marvellous luck of having E-P as my tutor for the Post-Graduate Diploma. During our tutorials he would talk about his relationships with his Zande and Nuer informants and describe the circumstances of his fieldwork – stuff that always fascinated me even though I already knew some of this from his books. E-P was fond of contrasting his personal relationships with the Azande and Nuer, and emphasizing how thoroughly he had immersed himself in Zande life, even to the extent of consulting the Zande rubbing board as a matter of daily routine. E-P said he had started the habit when he had asked a friend to accompany him to the house of a neighbour and had been asked if he had consulted *iwa* to make sure the neighbour would be at home. He was advised to do so immediately, for 'why risk wasting a journey?'

Every week I would write E-P an essay on some topic relevant to the diploma exam scheduled for the following Trinity Term, and I would drop it off at All Souls the night before. The choice of topic was mine and given my interest in E-P's work these usually involved ritual, belief and politics, the Zande and Nuer ethnographies, and how field research is carried out.

I grew more relaxed in his company as time went by and one day mentioned the circumstances that had led me to apply to Oxford. When I told him his article in *Man* had been the reason E-P was pleased and I was flattered when he said, 'I'm glad it had some good effect!' I also told him that I had attended his Sir D. Owen Evans Lectures and had noticed him with the Aberystwyth faculty going into the pub. He remembered the occasion well and chortled in that distinctively E-P manner at the memory of how his companions – residents in non-conformist central Wales – were taken back at his suggestion they have a beer at lunchtime. E-P had been amused by the way they had looked over their shoulders to satisfy themselves no one was witness before they entered the pub. As a self-styled 'de-tribalized Welshman' E-P may have forgotten natives' attitudes about alcohol in 'wild Wales', where alcohol was frowned upon and the pub stayed shut on Sundays.

Other tales from the past came during those tutorials. One story concerned how he tore up sheets of fieldwork notes on a Nile steamer and tossed them overboard. His reason? He had discovered he had lost half his notes and so what was the use of the rest? On more than one occasion E-P referred to his celebrated relationship with Bronislaw Malinowski. Once, after he had read my essay comparing Trobriand and Zande magic, E-P related his version of the history of his article, 'The morphology and function of magic', that had appeared in the *American Anthropologist* in 1929. E-P said that because he was going somewhere at the time (I forget where) Malinowski instructed him to leave the manuscript in his hands and he would send it to that journal. By E-P's account Malinowski had 'tinkered' with E-P's wording before sending it off and made Zande magical practices more similar to those of the Trobrianders' than in the original. In his famous seminars Malinowski would, according to E-P, by way of rejoinder to some statement he had made remark 'E-P, don't be such a bloody fool!', and at one time had told him he would make sure E-P never got a job in England. E-P qualified that threat by adding that Malinowski had never carried it through.

Once, when we were discussing the Diploma exam, E-P mentioned a time, years previously, when Rodney Needham was a candidate and did not turn up on a particular exam day. E-P had hurried to Merton, Needham's college, to see what had happened and found Needham walking around the Merton quad killing time before he left for the Exam Schools. 'His watch had stopped,' E-P said, adding that if he had not gone to look for him Needham would not now be 'here', that is, at the Institute.

Our Friday seminars gave E-P the opportunity to display his knack for getting to the crux of a problem in fieldwork or some thorny theoretical issue. Once, when Gluckman read a paper on gossip (by chance, he had visited Aberystwyth several weeks after E-P's visit to read the same paper) and had tried to account for its apparent prevalence in the communities with which he was familiar in terms that seemed abstrusely abstract, E-P inquired, 'Max, don't you think the ethnographer being present encourages people to gossip more than they usually would?'

Other scholars talked about in our tutorials included Lévy-Bruhl, a 'real scholar' by E-P's estimation, ready to adjust his opinions in light of new evidence; and Mauss, who according to E-P wrote most of *Les forms élémentaires*. And when Meyer Fortes decided that Tallensi social structure closely resembled that of the Nuer he represented it in

diagrams that were supposed to make the structure clearer but only made them more confusing.

Practical tasks were interspersed with personal titbits in these tutorials. My tutorials immediately preceded the lectures E-P gave and sometimes, before departing for the classroom, he was unable to locate his gown, which University Statutes required lecturers to wear. Helping him search his capacious office for the mislaid garment became my job and on one occasion, when our search proved fruitless, he said, 'Well – if I can't find it I shan't *give* the lecture!' Sometimes, too, when the pages on which his notes had been written had fallen out of proper sequence, I would assist him in putting them in order.

My second year began with library research for a Bachelor of Letters degree[2] and E-P had appointed me the Institute's Graduate Assistant, and although he was no longer my tutor I still worked closely with him in my new capacity.

E-P was a generous mentor who used his influence in academia to advance my career as it unfolded. After the Diploma exam in 1963, in addition to offering me the Graduate Assistantship, he recommended me for the Alan Coltart Scholarship in Anthropology at Exeter College and did so again the next year. Although my B.Litt. research concerned a pair of Brazilian tribes and was dense in ethnographic detail, E-P did not demur when asked to join Francis Huxley (a specialist in South American ethnography) to serve as one of the two examiners for my viva in January 1965.

His willingness to read a thesis dealing with an entirely different cultural region from his own was both generous (it was anything but bedtime reading) and consistent with his advocacy of 'comparativism' in social anthropology. Once, when I had mentioned the Africanist reputation of the Institute, he told me that had occurred by chance rather than design, as his policy when the Institute had an opening was 'to go for' the best applicant regardless of regional specialization.

The tasks I carried out as Graduate Assistant were wide-ranging and often involved E-P directly. He would arrive at the Institute before most of his staff in the morning and I would make sure the front door was open for him and lay the fire in the grate before he arrived. I would make the coffee and prepare the table by the time the lectures ended and our morning 'get-togethers' began. On one occasion I challenged Needham's sense of aesthetic consistency and earned a rebuke by putting green cups on blue saucers. Or perhaps blue cups on green saucers? E-P didn't care.

E-P was well known, of course, for his distinctive sartorial taste and singular sense of self-presentation, but he could change course when he judged the occasion – or audience – required him to vary his dress. Before greeting professors from the United States, E-P would shave, and my task on those mornings was to boil water for him. One morning he noticed me pouring water into his coffee mug (his habitual receptible for the hot water he shaved from) so that he could shave before welcoming an academic from London University. 'What are you doing?' he asked. When I told him, he said, 'Don't bother!'

When greeting visitors, E-P was in the habit of sporting a tie over his green woollen sweater. This neckpiece was quite exceptionally wide, blue in colour and decorated with a red sailing boat dyed into the fabric. A gift, so I was told, from an admirer to supplement the brown corduroy trousers and sweater he customarily wore.

Although – happily, not a regular duty—I had on one occasion to help him manoeuvre his car through the gates of Queen Elizabeth House, where he sometimes used to park at night. E-P found the avoiding the walls and gateposts a trying process on this occasion and even after he had made several semicircles in front of the exit, somehow he still couldn't manage the trick. But after going backwards and forwards with a few promptings from me, E-P finally succeeded in escaping. He afterwards explained he was more at home on a horse than in a car. While graduate assistant I had joined the RAI, and during the annual conference that year had heard Isaac Schapera lecture on history and anthropology and in the talk he referred to E-P as one of Britain's two foremost social anthropologists. He did not mention who the other was, and later, when I suggested to E-P that perhaps it was Raymond Firth, he replied, 'Schapera had no business saying that!'

During my tenure in the job I came across a copy of a letter E-P had written to Paul Radin years ago, asking for his help in securing an academic position somewhere. He continued to use his influence on my behalf. Before completing my thesis on Brazil, I had decided to switch ethnographic regions and work in Portuguese Timor instead, but getting a research visa presented difficulties because of the colonial situation prevailing at that time, and here E-P's relationship with Rui Cinatti, a former student at the Institute, was invaluable. Cinatti was an influential civil servant in the government who could, if he so wished, aid me in obtaining a visa. He liked and respected E-P, and E-P, I believe, spoke to Cinatti on my behalf. He spoke to me, too, voicing the cautionary advice, 'Don't play your Rodney [Needham] card too strongly!'

I listened to the advice about fieldwork practices he enjoined upon me in his tutorials, and in Portuguese Timor followed them when I could. His 'know the language' injunction was one I tried hard to follow. But before I left England, his 'go alone' instruction fell on deaf ears because I had recently married, and when the time came to leave for the field my wife, Maxine, and I were accompanied by our 6-weeks' old baby boy, Paul. I don't remember if I told E-P about Paul but I think perhaps I didn't, because I

2 Now, Master of Letters degree.

would surely have remembered his reaction. Residing in the local community, of course, was de rigueur, and we lived in a urban community of 2,000 inhabitants surrounded by hamlets we visited most days. Another E-P mandate was to record everything we saw going on, however trivial. He said you could never know when the notes might prove a help.

I carried out fieldwork in Portuguese Timor for nineteen months in 1966 and 1967, and E-P's methods and findings, as I assimilated them in our conversations, his lectures and from my reading of *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande* (1937), *The Nuer* (1940), and *Nuer Religion* (1956), framed my perspective on what I saw going on in Viqueque and the villages that surrounded the town. My two doctoral theses and publications that resulted from that first spell in the field were structural-functional in character, and I found E-P's African findings held up to an appreciable extent in the context of a South-east Asian society. Like the Azande, but in contrast to the Europe of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Timorese thinking distinguished witchcraft, an imaginary phenomenon, from magic, a ritual practice. As in Nuer thought, Timorese moral values made use of lateral symbolism and later visits to Timor provided data that enabled me to use lateral symbolic opposition as a tool for suggesting a new approach to understanding Timorese cockfights, and argue why Timorese men are conditioned to cradle babies in the crooks of their left arms rather than their right (Hicks 2004).

From 1975 to 1999 the Timorese had become recolonized and were subjects of another and more repressive colonial power, the Republic of Indonesia. Their homeland was now renamed 'Timor Timur' and research by foreigners was out of the question. In 1999 I returned and since then have revisited the country on many occasions, and with my earlier study as a baseline am now in a position to write Viqueque history.

E-P was no structural-functional dogmatist and held history in high regard: 'I shall only say further that I believe an interpretation on functionalist lines (of the present in terms of the present) and on historical lines (of the present in terms of the past) must somehow be combined and that we have not yet learnt to combine them satisfactorily.' (Evans-Pritchard 1962:62). His study of the Sanusi of Cyrenaica (1949) bears out this position, as does the case he made in 'Anthropology and history' (1962) for the interdependence of the two disciplines. He quotes, approvingly, the historian F.W. Maitland who contended that anthropology must choose between being history or being nothing (Evans-Pritchard 1962:26), a precept Evans-Pritchard accepted, with the proviso that that history must choose between being social anthropology or being nothing.

During the research that followed my first spell of fieldwork I discovered that the political, economic and social changes wrought by the Indonesian occupation and the presence of the United Nations and other international

Figure 8.1 The giraffe model E-P gave to our son.

agencies had profoundly changed Timorese attitudes and behaviour towards foreigners. Timorese were considerably more aware of the world outside their localities and most were now literate. My field research became less pressured, as people no longer resisted divulging information and permitted me to record directly into my notebooks (or rather into my tape recorder) what they said, an attitudinal adjustment that became a new topic of research for me in its own right. From their point of view, I had something to show for my first period of research among them and could share it – a material artefact people could relate to. I opened the pages of *Tetum Ghosts and Kin*, my first book, and they could see images of their past. Although unable to understand the English text, those who leafed through its pages were able to identify themselves and kin and neighbours, a revelation which appeared to give them pleasure. I read sections of the book to them and they found mistakes that enabled me to make corrections. Some interlocutors filled out my ethnographic record, while others brought me up to date with developments since 1967. When I recited narratives and verses from my 1960s ethnographic data to them, those who listened to me sometimes offered exegeses, suggested emendations or added incidental embellishments.

One final recollection. The last time I saw E-P was when my wife and I visited Oxford shortly before his death and crossed the Cherwell to visit The Ark. As we

approached the front door I was intrigued to see a jagged hole crudely cut into it. When I asked E-P its function, he explained that 'Barko', his dog, needed to go in and out of the house because otherwise he would get cold.

E-P inquired about our domestic life before Maxine and I left, and after we told him we had Paul (he did not approve of the name because of apostle Paul's character, he said), E-P went to a display cabinet and withdrew a wooden giraffe and told us to 'give it to the little laddie!' This treasured object now resides in the Hicks family living room in New York.

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9

The man, the society, the conditions

Influences on E. E. Evans-Pritchard's early fieldwork

John Evans-Pritchard

I was invited to give a talk by Luci Attala, Senior Lecturer in Anthropology at University of Wales Trinity St Davids, Lampeter, on my father, E.E. Evans-Pritchard. I chose, as the main focus of my talk, the comments he had made about fieldwork in two articles he had written just before he died in 1973: 'Some reminiscences and reflections on fieldwork' (1973a) and 'Some recollections on fieldwork in the twenties' (1973b). This allowed me to clarify some of the points he had made in these two articles and to reflect on what I knew of him personally. As the son of a renowned academic, I have always taken a keen interest in my father's chosen subject and his place within it.

Introduction

Collins dictionary defines 'fieldwork' as 'the gathering of information about something in a real, natural environment, rather than in a place of study such as a laboratory or classroom'. This chapter considers the effect that the real, natural environment had on my father's early fieldwork and the effect that other factors had, in comparison, on the way the fieldwork was carried out. The particular approach taken here comes from the observations made by E-P in the two articles mentioned above but also from an appraisal of what contributed to and influenced the success, and failure, of some of his fieldwork.

E-P has been taken as the subject of this appraisal of anthropological fieldwork, but it could apply to anyone carrying out fieldwork, especially to the many anthropologists who carried out their studies under the backdrop of the colonial world, such as Alfred Haddon, Charles Seligman, Bronislaw Malinowski, Alfred Radcliffe-Brown, Margaret Mead and a host of others.

The man, the society, the conditions

E-P died in 1973 after a long and illustrious career in social anthropology. One of the last articles he wrote, published in 1973, was 'Some reminiscences and reflections on fieldwork', in which he addressed the question that he had often been asked by puzzled students: 'How does one go about fieldwork?'

His initial answer was to look at what he had learnt from others:

> The American anthropologist Paul Radin has said that no one quite knows how one goes about fieldwork. Perhaps we should leave the question with that sort of answer. But when I was a serious young student in London I thought I would try to get a few tips from experienced fieldworkers before setting out for Central Africa. I first sought advice from Westermark. All I got from him was don't converse with an informant for more than twenty minutes because if you aren't bored by that time he will be. Very good advice, even if somewhat inadequate. I sought instruction from Haddon, a man foremost in field-research. He told me that it was really all quite simple; one should always behave as a gentleman. Also very good advice. My teacher, Seligman, told me to take ten grains of quinine every night and to keep off women. The famous Egyptologist Sir Flinders Petrie just told me not to bother about drinking dirty water as one soon became immune to it. Finally, I asked Malinowski and was told not to be a bloody fool. So there is no clear answer, *much will depend on the man, on the society he is to study, and the conditions in which he is to make the study.*
>
> (1973a:1, emphasis added))

This final conclusion shows what E-P himself felt were the most important elements of fieldwork, hence the title of this article. But what exactly did these three elements encompass?

'The man' is taken to mean the characteristics and background of the anthropologist carrying out the fieldwork. E-P did not mean just men, although it was mainly, but not exclusively, men in the field in the 1920s and 30s. My use of 'the man' should be taken as referring to 'the anthropologist'.

'The society he is to study' covers the nature and characteristics of the cultures being studied. In the era of E-P's study, anthropological/ethnographic research was

Figure 9.1 Evans-Pritchard's portrait, as painted by Rosa Hope.

almost exclusively restricted to the study of 'primitive tribes'.

'The conditions' include whatever led to the study, whatever constraints and supports influenced the study, why this particular study was carried out rather than some other study, and whether there were any particular conditions that either supported or constrained the study.

Inevitably, specific aspects of the three elements – man, society and conditions – cross over into, and affect, each other.

It is also interesting to note how universal, and lasting, E-P's observations about the influences on fieldwork were and still are. Although not an anthropologist myself, it was clear that these three elements were very much present in my own experience of the importance of bullfighting to the inhabitants of Pamplona in Spain. In this case 'the man' was fresh out of university with contacts, through his father, E-P, to the Spanish anthropologist, Don Caro Baroja, specialist in Basque culture, and to the family of one of E-P's students from Pamplona. Staying in Pamplona at the time of the Fiesta of San Fermin it was inevitable that bullfighting, and drinking, would be at the centre of my time there. What very quickly became apparent was the importance of bullfighting to the culture of the residents. Very much at the heart of the society are the *peñas*, the social clubs, dressed in white with red neck scarves. Sitting in the midst of them at the bullfight and talking with them one felt both the excitement of the festival and the importance of the bullfighting itself. It symbolizes '*la virilidad*', manhood. This was also emphasized in the conditions as I stood in the Plaza del Ayuntamiento at the start of the *encierro* (bull run) with the bulls running past. '*Virilidad*' or '*locura* [madness]'? My understanding of the importance of bullfighting to the *peñas* came from my thirst for knowledge and experience, the society I was able to experience this in, and the conditions of being able to be with a particular family whose son was a member of the *peñas*.

In his 'Workshop on social research and social research writing' in 2011,[1] Vijay Prakash Sharma noted factors that affect fieldwork, similar to those of E-P, including the topic of the investigation, where the research would be carried out, who was funding it, external political or economic factors, the age, sex and ethnicity of the researcher.

In a recent meeting in Aberystwyth with Trevor Marchand, Emeritus Professor of Social Anthropology at SOAS, I asked him about the idea of 'the man, the society and the conditions' being important influences on his fieldwork. He agreed that they were important, and his fieldwork confirms this. With a degree in architecture, his two main periods of fieldwork were carried out with a thirteen-month apprenticeship with minaret builders in the South Arabian city of Sana'a (Marchand 2001) and researching craft knowledge and vocational training in England alongside trainees in fine woodwork (Marchand 2016). Two very different societies, the first in which the builders considered themselves to be superior to those building ordinary houses down the street and the second with English apprentices learning skills for future employment. In both periods of fieldwork Trevor's study was hands-on, in participant-observation mode, helping to build the minarets and to make pieces of fine woodwork. In both environments there were apprentices learning the trade, but the conditions in which this learning took place were completely different, even in terms of the willingness, or convention, of the apprentices asking questions about what they were being taught.

The man

In applying the three elements to E-P's fieldwork, I will focus primarily on his study of the Azande and Nuer in the late 1920s and early 1930s. His research at this time was almost exclusively conducted in Sudan, and mainly southern Sudan. Figure 9.2 shows E-P when he was in Cairo, a necessary fly-swat at the ready.

E-P concluded that major influences on fieldwork research came from the characteristics of the anthropologists themselves.

1 At the 'Fieldwork in Contemporary Social Research' conference at UGC Academic Staff College, Ranchi on 17 December 2011.

Figure 9.2 Evans-Pritchard in Cairo.

> Moreover, one may say that since what we study are human beings the study involves the whole personality, heart as well as mind; and therefore what has shaped that personality, and not just academic background: sex, age, class, nationality, family and home, school, church, companions – one could enumerate any number of such influences. All I want to emphasize is that what one brings out of a field-study largely depends on what one brings to it.
>
> (1973a:2)

Most people carrying out fieldwork would readily agree with E-P's assessment. For instance,

> The data generated in turn depends upon the field worker himself, his psyche, his level of involvement, and his ability to see and visualize things that any other person visiting the place often fails to notice.
>
> Nitin Maurya [2]

And, as Sherry Ortner puts it in her 2006 book, *Anthropology and Social Theory*: '[ethnography] has always meant the attempt to understand another life world using the self – as much as it is possible – as the instrument of knowing.'

I now apply E-P's list of factors to E-P himself.

Sex

The gender of the anthropologist, especially when studying native African tribes, clearly affects the ability to observe certain practices and to communicate with some of the people. Being male, E-P found that this did have an impact on his ability to carry out full and in-depth research.

> Does one get the native view about life (and about women) from men only or can one get to know the women as well and see things from their viewpoint? It much depends on the people one is studying and the status of women among them. During an abortive field-study in an Upper Egyptian village I never spoke to a woman or even had more than a fleeting sight of one at night. Bedouin women in Cyrenaica did not veil and could be conversed with, if not with intimacy, at least without embarrassment. With the Zande, women were almost an inferior caste, and, unless they were elderly matrons, they were shy and tongue-tied. In Nuerland, where women have high status and assert their independence, they would come and talk to me whenever they chose, often at times most inconvenient to me.
>
> (1973a:7)

Age

E-P was only 24 when he first visited the Sudan in 1926, with limited experience outside the world of academia. His fieldwork covered the period, with significant breaks, from 1926 to 1944. In that time his understanding of what would be the most effective methods of fieldwork changed, both through experience and the practicalities of studying in very diverse situations, from colonial rule to war.

Age inevitably affected how he carried out and viewed his research and how, in later years, he wrote up his many notes and records. Age, experience and much soul-searching, also changed his perceptions of anthropology itself as he moved away from the functionalism of Malinowski to the structuralism of Radcliffe-Brown and to his own humanistic approach to anthropology.

Class

EP's immediate English background would lead to him being classified as upper middle class. That was clearly different from the people he studied, but then most anthropologists at that time were so divorced in terms of class from the 'primitive' tribes they were studying that the

2 'Fieldwork in Anthropology: reflections from working in Nicobars', Nitin Maurya: anthropology-bd.blogspot.com/2008/08/fieldwork-in-anthropology-reflections.html (accessed 7 January 2023).

Figure 9.3 Hypocrites' Club. E-P is seated, at the front, on the right.

exact 'class' they might have come from their own country was generally irrelevant in terms of the fieldwork being carried out.

It should, however, be noted that there was a definite aristocratic history to E-P's Welsh and Irish ancestors, and that he was proud of that ancestry. The beautifully presented genealogy of his father traces direct links back to Baron Carbery and even to Beli Mawr, 'King of Britain'. This sense of heritage would also have been taken into the field with him. 'As anyone who reads accounts of Zande Kings and Princes will recognise, they appealed to his sense of aristocracy.' (Lienhardt 1974:303).

Nationality

E-P was very nationalistic and patriotic. When war broke out against Germany, he immediately joined the Welsh Guards so that he could be part of the effort to defend Britain, but was stopped by Oxford University on the grounds that being a university lecturer was a reserved occupation. Instead, he used his position at the university to begin further research in North Africa and then joined the Sudan Defence Force when Italy entered the war.

E-P was also a romantic, which explained his wish to research and travel in remote parts. At Oxford he met T.E. Lawrence (of Arabia) and knew of his exploits in the First World War. There were parallels between the two. Lawrence studied History at Jesus College, Oxford, and worked for four years as an archaeologist in Syria. In 1919 he was given a seven-year research fellowship at All Souls College, Oxford, in order to write his book *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (1935). E-P was at Oxford from 1921–4, studying history at Exeter College, and then spent many years as an anthropologist in the field before joining the war effort and fighting behind enemy lines much in the way that Lawrence had done. In a photograph of the Hypocrites' Club taken while studying at Oxford, with the members in fancy dress, E-P (on the floor, bottom right) is dressed as an Arab, reflecting part of Lawrence's own war experiences.

Family

E-P's father, Thomas John Evans-Pritchard, was a vicar in Liverpool and then in Crowborough, Sussex, where E-P was born. His father studied history at Hertford College, Oxford. E-P studied history at Exeter College, Oxford. His elder brother had also studied for his degree at Oxford. An academic career was almost inevitable.

His upbringing, which he himself acknowledged was formative in the way he thought about life, was clearly

affected by the religious environment in which he was brought up. Both his father and mother were devout Christians (1973c). Some of his major anthropological fieldwork focused on the religions of other cultures.

School
E-P's education was plainly more privileged than most, going from The Grange (preparatory school) to Winchester College (public school) and then reading Modern History at the University of Oxford. This education clearly not only gave him a sound grounding in the academic world that he was joining, but also engendered the clarity with which he presented his very many articles and books. It also provided him with the tools needed to observe and record what he learned as he carried out his fieldwork.

> I do not think I could have made a contribution to an understanding of the political structure of the Shilluk and Anuak if I had not been deep in Mediaeval studies. And I could not have written as I did about the Sanusi had I not had in my mind the model of the history of other religious movements.
>
> (1973a:1)

Church
E-P was brought up in the Church of England but later converted to Catholicism during the war. Although he was not 'what is called a "good catholic"' (1974:303), he was very much a practising one, regularly visiting Blackfriars chapel to pray and encouraging us children to join him for the Christmas midnight mass at St Aloysius, even though we were brought up as C of E. He did not, however, knowingly allow his religious beliefs to colour his observations in the field.

His initial reaction to witchcraft while studying the Azande was sceptical, but he put that aside so that he could understand the way the Azande thought. Others, however, have seen the influence religion might have had on how E-P carried out his fieldwork and then how he later wrote up his notes.

> Fortes sees a difference between the work on Zande witchcraft, carried out by an 'agnostic observer', and the study of Nuer religion, with its emphasis on their belief in Spirit (*Kwoth*). Involved here is Evans-Pritchard's 'theistic religious commitment' (1980:vii). Firth maintains that Evans-Pritchard 'allowed his natural interest in religion to prejudge a number of his findings' (1993:213).
>
> (Matthey 1996:29)

E-P, however, maintained that one's personal religion should not be allowed to colour the fieldwork

Figure 9.4 Godfrey Lienhardt. Courtesy of the Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (2005.51.234).

anthropologists carry out when studying other cultures, religions and customs.

> What I have said does not imply that the anthropologist *has* to have a religion of his own, and I think we should be clear on this point at the outset. He is not concerned, *qua* anthropologist, with the truth or falsity of religious thought… The beliefs are for him sociological facts, not theological facts, and his sole concern is with their relationship to each other and to other social facts.
>
> (1965:17)

Companions
It is clear that some of the people E-P worked with in the Sudan had a major impact on how his fieldwork was carried out. However, they were not really 'companions' in the actual field itself. The companions in the field were the people he was studying, as he emphasized in his BBC Third Programme lectures in 1950.

> What is perhaps even more important for his work is the fact that he is all alone, cut off from the companionship of men of his own race and culture, and is dependent on the natives around him for company, friendship, and human understanding. An anthropologist has failed unless, when he say goodbye to the natives, there is on both sides the sorrow of parting.
>
> (1951:79)

Figure 9.5 Garden Party at the Ark, Oxford.

Other characteristics

There are other important characteristics of 'the man' that could affect the anthropologist's fieldwork. Godfrey Lienhardt was a student, colleague and close friend of E-P and his family, and in 1974 he published his own reminiscences of E-P entitled 'E-P: a personal view'. In these reminiscences he identified other characteristics of E-P which had an important impact on his fieldwork and also on his published works and the way he taught his students.

Gregarious

By nature E-P was both social and outgoing, but on his own terms. He felt most relaxed in the atmosphere of the pub. Godfrey wrote:

> The Institute, under E-P's auspices, supplied many students with the social warmth and company which their colleges denied them. In term-time always, and for much of the vacations, E-P gave up most of his mornings to being sociable, and ended them by moving with his court from the coffee-room to the pub.
>
> (ibid.:302)

On the occasions when I was with him in the pub, usually the Gardener's Arms, having moved on from the Department, he would be there with his pint and pipe discussing points with colleagues and students. All were treated as equals and clearly enjoyed the discourse as much as he did.

As Professor of Social Anthropology at Oxford, E-P hosted an annual garden party at his home, 'The Ark', in Headington, with a wide, multicultural range of guests that included colleagues, students and visiting dignitaries. As with his gatherings in the pub, E-P took great pleasure in being involved in these meeting and being a centre of attention, even if he was often only on the sidelines. The photograph shows E-P on the far right, smiling, Meyer Fortes second from the left and Max Gluckman behind E-P. Giving the address is one of the Ghanaian Ashanti princes who studied Anthropology at the Institute in Oxford.

E-P also had a sense of humour, often with a dry wit. His close friend and colleague, John Beattie remarked of E-P that 'He used to rib people rather, and if they were the sort of people who didn't mind being ribbed then they got on like house on fire.'[3]

In the field it was vital that he could communicate easily with both the administrators and with the people he was studying, and, in often very difficult situations, keep a sense of humour.

Acute

E-P was very perceptive and, through his conscientious approach to all of his studies, he was able to identify the most important aspects that his fieldwork could reveal. Without this perceptiveness he would not have been able to collect the huge range of material that he did and to focus on those relevant elements he should present in his books and articles.

3 John Beattie, interview with Alan Macfarlane, 5 July 1983: www.dspace.cam.ac.uk/handle/1810/435 (accessed 7 January 2023.

> Evans-Pritchard's writings demonstrate how greatly he differed from contemporary British social anthropologists. His approach to the peoples he studied was comprehensive, covering as many fields as possible, even when he knew there was not enough time to cover everything.
>
> (Matthey 1996:28)

David Pocock, one of E-P's students, and Reader at the University of Sussex, wrote in 1975 that in his fieldwork E-P considered no detail irrelevant and each was carefully and comprehensively recorded in his field notebooks, so that even thirty or forty years later he could write from them with authority (1975).

Intensely hard-working

E-P published close to four hundred works, mainly articles but also more than seven books. Much of the content of these publications came from the notes he had taken as he carried out his fieldwork. His approach to his fieldwork, and the amount of work he was prepared to put in so that his studies would be as valuable as possible, is perhaps best exemplified by his insistence that if he was to carry out his research effectively he must learn the language. He learned Azande, Nuer and Anuak amongst other languages and, in preparation for fieldwork in Sudan, he learned Arabic.

> I had become interested, in a rather romantic way, in the Azande of the Nile-Congo Divide, so obviously I had to read what had been written about them, and this was in English, French, German, Italian and Dutch, so I had to master these languages… then it was hopeless to get around in the Sudan without a knowledge of Arabic.
>
> (1973b:236)

Time to himself

Although gregarious, E-P did insist on time to himself. When carrying out his fieldwork he rarely took notes while he was observing or conversing with people, but would write down his findings when he was on his own. Following his periods of fieldwork, he insisted on time to appraise the notes he had collected before he was prepared to publish them and this was generally done on his own. However, when asked about isolation as he carried out his fieldwork, he replied:

> Although isolated… I did not feel lonely, and anyhow I like isolation. My happiest days have been with a couple of Arabs, our camels, and no footprints but our own.
>
> (1973b:237)

This need for time to himself was also later a part of his regime at home at The Ark. His study was his place of work and, when concentrating on some new article or research, he would often lock the door to ensure he was not disturbed.

Unending curiosity

When E-P carried out fieldwork he observed and noted a vast range of different aspects of the environment in which he was studying. These were not just the ethnographic elements he is most well-known for – witchcraft, religion, customs, politics, kinship, etc. – but also more obscure elements such as Jumjum rock art, Moro beehives in a tree, quail birds captured in baskets in Kenya and many other features he photographed or wrote about. The Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford has 3,181 photographic images from E-P, and a great number of physical artefacts.

> Evans-Pritchard published papers on subjects ranging from native texts to string figures, and he did not ignore rock carvings at oases in the desert of western Egypt.
>
> (Matthey 1996:29)

Just before his death in 1973, E-P was researching the relationship of dogs and people in different ethnic groups.

Loyal

E-P was very loyal to the people he worked with and especially to the tribes he studied. His agreement to study the Nuer was in part because he was specifically asked to do this by MacMichael, someone he counted as a friend. And, when Willis later distorted E-P's findings (see below), it was the Nuer whom E-P defended. An example of this loyalty is also shown by his comment about his teacher at the LSE, Seligman, whose work in his book *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan* E-P considered to be 'largely superficial and dubious', but he did not make this comment until after Seligman had died.

John Beattie commented in his obituary on E-P for the RAI:

> He made few claims on his colleagues, but they could, and did, rely always on his full support and loyalty.
>
> (Beattie 1973:55)

Not suffer fools gladly

There were some people, however, for whom E-P had little respect and he was not loath to make his feelings known. This not only applied to when he was carrying out his fieldwork, but also in his assessment of some other anthropologists. The academic world was often not a happy family. He was intolerant of the 'knowing', the brash, and the foolish (Pocock 1975:329). I personally remember certain anthropologists he would invariably preface with a favourite four-letter word, depicting someone offensive and of little value.

In his fieldwork, some individuals did become very obstructive to what he was trying to do, especially C.A. Willis, of whom it was written:

Figure 9.6 Azande witch-doctor's hut, E-P photograph. Courtesy of the Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (1998.341.176.2).

> Towards the end of this first field trip, it was later reported by one of his acquaintances, Evans-Pritchard could speak of Willis only in words of four letters.
>
> (Johnson 1982:xx)

This then is 'the man' leaving England in 1926 to study in Sudan. But there is also another question that might be asked about this man – why he chose to become an anthropologist in the first place. The Rector of Exeter College was R.R. Marett, who in 1914 established a Department of Social Anthropology at Oxford. E-P had great respect for Marett and this persuaded him to follow in his footsteps. However, the Department at Oxford offered little opportunity for fieldwork. E-P summed up his decision to go to the LSE as follows:

> I became a social anthropologist in embryo. But there was a snag. I did not want to become, I was going to say, just an intellectual. I wanted a life of adventure too, and fieldwork seemed to be the solution to combine both.
>
> (1973d:18)

The Society

The society that affected the fieldwork was dependent on who was being studied and when. Below is the timeline of most of E-P's fieldwork. He studied a great many different peoples and this is not a complete list.

Timeline of EPs studies

1926: Ingassana (Ingessana), Tabi Hills in the Blue Nile Province West Sudan (three months)
1927: Moro(u), west bank of Nile (seven weeks)
1927: Azande, Bahr-el-Ghazal (five months: March to August)
1927: Bongo study (South Sudan, south and east of Wau)
1927–8: England, completing Ph.D. thesis
1928–31: part-time lectureship at LSE
1930: Nuer Lek (Leek), Yoinyang on the Bahr el Ghazal, then Azande (four months)
1931 (February): Malakal, then Nasir with American Mission (two weeks)
1931 (March–April): Lou
1931 (May/June): Jikany/Lou/Leek – malaria
1932–4: Professor of Sociology at Fuad I University, Cairo
1935: the Anuak at Galla, Ethiopia, invaded by Italy (two-and-a-half months), then with Nuer (seven weeks)
1936: Luo, Kenya (six weeks); then Sudan with Nuer, Dok and Leek (seven weeks).
war period: Anuak, Bedouin, Sanusi and many others.

E-P's main work was with the Azande and the Nuer, and that is what will be the primary focus here. It is the nature of the peoples E-P studied that will be considered under the heading of 'society', leaving the nature of the environment to the 'conditions' section.

Azande

The Azande were mostly sedentary communities who farmed their ancestral lands, growing many unique tropical

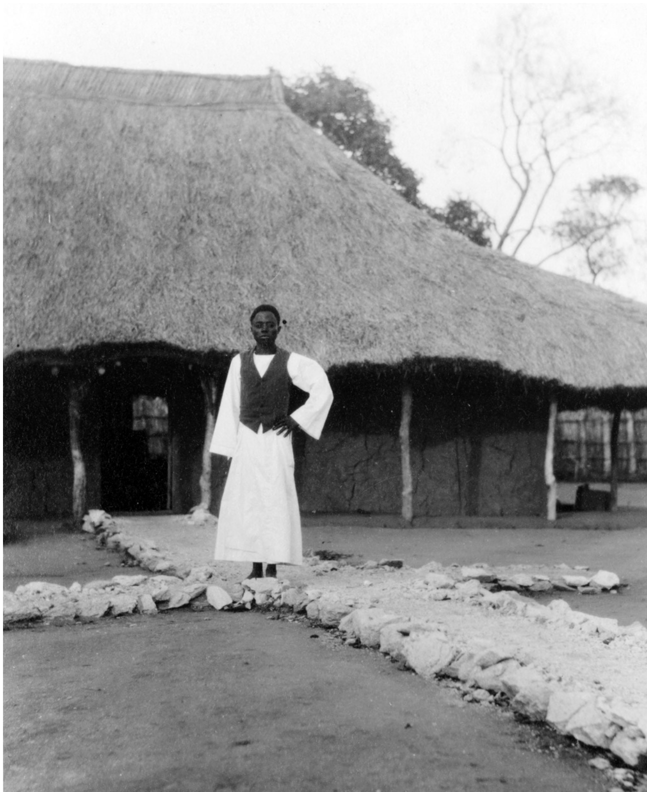

Figure 9.7 *E-P's hut in Zandeland. E-P photograph. Courtesy of the Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (1998.341.274.2).*

Figure 9.8 *Nuer hut, E-P photograph. Courtesy of the Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (1998.355.593.2).*

crops and fruits. Figure 9.6 shows the hut of a witch doctor. This would have been one of a group of homesteads in one location.

The centre space of the homestead is enclosed by a garden cultivated year after year and bearing his permanent crops such as sweet potato, arrowroot, banana, and the fig tree from which he makes his waist cloth.

> These homesteads may be any distance from one another from 200 yards to half-a-mile or more. Within a distance which he can cover in about half-an-hour's walk, some two to four miles, a man will know all the occupants of the homesteads and it is amongst these people that his own social life is staged.
>
> (1927:6)

Both the sedentary nature of the Azande and the fact that members of the community lived in relative proximity to one another, either by choice or Government design, meant that if E-P was to study them closely he also needed to live in the heart of these communities. The proximity of the homesteads also meant that he could learn about the social structure of the community from individuals within that community as well as from his own observations.

Figure 9.7 shows E-P's hut, somewhat more substantial than the witch doctor's, and he did have two Zande helpers, one of whom is shown here.

The lifestyle of the Azande allowed E-P to carry out in-depth fieldwork with relative ease, especially when compared to his fieldwork with the Nuer.

Nuer

The dominant cultural features of the Nuer were their mobility and cattle-keeping, though some also tilled the land and grew crops. However, the Nuer (and the Dinka) were known for their seasonal migration, mainly in search of pasture and drinking water for their cattle.

Nuer women tended to be more sedentary, so more permanent huts are found away from the swampland, as shown in Figure 9.8. The men, however, will move with their cattle and have more temporary accommodation, often sleeping with their animals.

For the Nuer, cattle were at the heart of their culture, and in order for E-P to understand the Nuer he needed to be within that culture. Initially that was made very difficult, because of the Colonial administrators' attitude to the Nuer and the understandable reaction of the Nuer, who resisted the punitive regime imposed upon them.

For these reasons when E-P was studying the Nuer he was forced, to begin with, to live in a tent, as the Nuer were

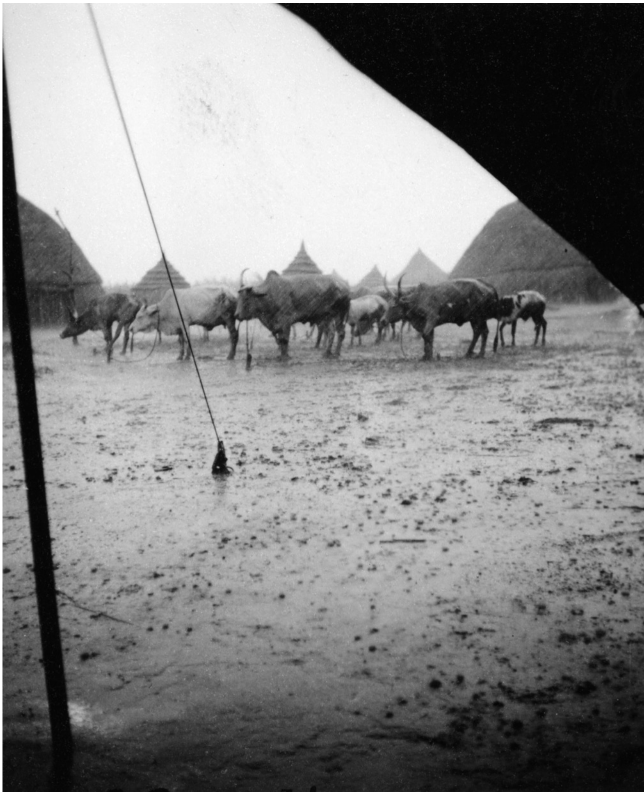

Figure 9.9 E-P's tent in Nuerland. E-P photograph. Courtesy of the Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (1998.355.22.2).

Figure 9.10 Evans-Pritchard with his two Azande servants. E-P photograph. Courtesy of the Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (998.341.468.2).

hostile to his presence. He still tried, so far as he could, to place his tent near, or in, the Nuer homestead itself. On later fieldtrips E-P was able to live more as the Nuer themselves lived.

Methods of fieldwork

It is a combination of the anthropologist, the society and the conditions that influence the methods used in the field to collect data. Whilst E-P used all of the methods given below, some were far more important for him than others.

Previous research

E-P did not go into the field unprepared. He studied what information was available. This was sometimes fairly sketchy as it had often not been carried out by anthropologists. He emphasized the importance of proper training.

> The first imperative is a rigorous training in general theory before attempting field-research so that one may know how and what to observe, what is significant in the light of theory… It is useless going into the field blind. One must know precisely what one wants to know and that can only be acquired by a systematic training in academic social anthropology.
>
> (1973a:1)

Surveys/questionnaires

When E-P first went into the field he was carrying out research for his LSE teacher, Professor C.G. Seligman. Seligman had used questionnaires so that missionaries and administrators could collect data for him on the Nilotic people of Sudan, after he was forced to leave Sudan because of illness. This was not a method E-P approved of and he soon abandoned it for his preferred method of participant observation. Neither the Azande nor the Nuer had any written language, so it was impossible either to see anything they had written about themselves or to get them to write their own answers to questions.

Interviews/interpreters

E-P generally gathered his information by speaking to those he was studying, or observing them. Observation on its own has the drawback that frequently it is not possible to know why people do things in the way that they do. E-P could have used interpreters, and occasionally he did, but he wanted to know exactly what he was being told by the people he spoke to, so he learnt the language.

There were interviews, but these tended to be conducted as conversations, often with both sides asking questions and looking for answers. E-P's willingness to allow this two-way conversation with the people he was studying was a

Figure 9.11 Malinowski with Trobriand islanders, 1918. Courtesy LSE Library and Malinowski Archive.

significant factor in his ability to find details that other, more casual, researchers had failed to find.

Use of 'informants'

The term 'informant', as E-P himself admitted, was a rather unfortunate term because of its connotations (ibid.:6). For the anthropologist it meant someone who was providing them with information and had no suggestion of 'informing against another'.

> It is necessary therefore to have confidential informants who are prepared to attend regular sessions, maybe daily; and it is evident that they must be men of integrity, truthful, intelligent, knowledgeable, and genuinely interested in your endeavours to understand the way of life of their people. They will become your friends.
>
> (ibid.:6)

Figure 9.10 shows E-P with two of his informants, one of whom, Kamanga, was training to become a Zande witch doctor.

> My friend and best informant, Kamanga, was initiated into the corporation and became a practising witchdoctor. He gave me full accounts of procedure from the commencement of his career, step by step, as it developed.
>
> (1932.:296)

Initially the experienced witch doctors would not give E-P any direct information about their practices, but Kamanga's teacher was happy for him to feed back to E-P everything he was being taught. In that way E-P learned about the practices of witchcraft among the Azande and could then quiz the other witch doctors themselves on some of the finer points.

Participant observation

E-P's main method of research, especially with the Azande and the Nuer, was participant observation. In this he was following in the footsteps of Bronislaw Malinowski, who used this method when studying in the Trobriand Islands. Malinowski was also teaching at the LSE when E-P was studying for his Ph.D.

E-P never directly credited Malinowski with his own decision to use participant observation, possibly because he felt that Malinowski had prevented him from getting a full-time lecturing post at the LSE; but he did acknowledge Malinowski's contribution to anthropology. In E-P's *Theories of Primitive Religion*, he commented that 'As a field worker, Malinowski has put anthropologists for all time in his debt…' (1965:39).

He had also commented more fully on the benefits of Malinowski's fieldwork in his lectures for the BBC:

> It can be fairly said that the comprehensive field studies of modern anthropology directly or indirectly derive from his (Malinowski's) teaching, for he insisted that the social life of primitive people can only be understood if it is studied intensively and that it is a necessary part of a social anthropologist's training to carry out at least one such intensive study of a primitive society.
>
> (1951:74–5)

E-P described participant observation in the following way:

Figure 9.12 Charles Gabriel Seligman. Courtesy of the Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (1998.271.58).

> This brings me to what anthropologists sometimes speak of as participant-observation. By this they mean that insofar as it is both possible and convenient they live the life of the people among whom they are doing their research. This is a somewhat complicated matter and I shall only touch on the material side of it. I found it useful if I wanted to understand how and why Africans are doing certain things to do them myself: I had a hut and byre like theirs; I went hunting with them with spear and bow and arrow; I learnt to make pots; I consulted oracles; and so forth.
>
> (1973a:xx)

In his talks on the BBC he put it is more general terms:

> He must live as far as possible in their villages and camps, where he is, again as far as possible, physically and morally part of the community… He then not only sees and hears what goes on in the normal everyday life of the people as well as less common events, such as ceremonies and legal cases, but by taking part in those activities in which he can appropriately engage, he learns through action as well as by ear and eye what goes on around him.
>
> (1950:xx)

When with the Azande, E-P would consult the oracle beforehand if he was to travel or hunt with them, otherwise they would not go with him. When he was with the Nuer, he had his own small herd of cattle.

Conditions

There are many conditions that could influence fieldwork. Those given below had a very significant effect on E-P's own studies. The fieldwork he carried out in the war years is not covered and those conditions brought their own unique demands on how he carried out his research. The starting point here was to ask why he chose southern Sudan as the main focus of his early, and main, studies.

Why southern Sudan?

This was E-P's first and main area of study. There could have been many other areas of study and later there were. The main reason E-P started his fieldwork in Sudan in the late 1920s was that he studied under Seligman at the LSE. Seligman wanted additional information for his books: *Races of Africa* (1930) and *The Pagan Tribes of Nilotic Sudan* (1932). Seligman also influenced how E-P carried out his initial fieldwork with the Ingassana, taking with him callipers for measuring skulls and a measuring rod for measuring height, both instruments E-P later described as rather pointless. Despite his objections to these methods, they were the ones he used to make comparisons between the Bor, Lou and Bongo when assessing their history and relationships (1931).

It was also Seligman's contact with the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan government that placed E-P in the situation of working under the overall control of the Colonial administrators there.

> The Sudan government in 1908 recommitted itself to the support of anthropological work in two ways. The first was to hire Charles Seligman and his wife Brenda for an expedition to the Upper Nile in 1910, ultimately with the hope that they would be able to coordinate anthropological research in the Sudan.
>
> (Johnson 2007:xx)

Geography

Although both the Azande and the Nuer were in southern Sudan, the natural features were very different.

Zandeland

This is an area of tropical rain forest and grasslands. Zandeland covers a very wide area and it is clear from E-P's photographs that his fieldwork was mainly in the grassland areas. It was a pleasant environment in which to study, but also home of the tsetse fly, so there were no cattle or horses

Figure 9.13 Azande grasslands. E-P photograph. Courtesy of the Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (1998.341.752).

Figure 9.14 Nuer swamplands. E-P photograph. Courtesy of the Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (1998.355.279.2).

etc. For E-P this meant that moving his equipment and belongings required the use of porters.

> The section of this area (Zandeland) in which I have worked is restricted to the Yambio district of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. Here the country is typically African bush, impassable except along the paths during the greater part of the year, until the high grasses are burnt. Water is plentiful… and it is hard to go a mile without meeting a stream. However there are no large rivers which make crossing difficult.
>
> (1928:2)

The geography also affected the food available and E-P's ability to try to live as the Azande lived, by growing his own food and hunting.

> In Zandeland vegetable food was plentiful and I grew my own maize, groundnuts, beans, pineapples, tomatoes, bananas, and so on, and I kept my own fowls for eggs and otherwise lived by the gun.
>
> (1973b:238–9)

Nuerland

Much of Nuerland is in the swamp area of the Upper Nile, as shown in Figure 9.14. In the summer months the area is fairly dry, but in the winter months it is very marshy and almost impassable.

> Nuer build only temporary houses or shelters. Houses in wet-season settlements have circular mud walls over stick frames with thatched roofs. As grain is harvested, it is dried on temporary scaffolds. In dry-season camps, men sleep with the cattle in shelters made from local grasses. Women may remain in or near the wet season areas when the men follow the receding waters toward the lower areas.
>
> (Boyd Jenkins – http://strategyleader.org/profiles/nuer.html, accessed 7 January 2023)

The geographical conditions had very significant effects on how E-P was able to carry out his studies in Nuerland, in terms of when study was possible (essentially only in the dry season), what travel was possible, the food sources and the way the Nuer themselves responded to outside observers. Some reminiscences from E-P illustrate the

Figure 9.15 *South Sudan map. Map No. 4450 Rev 1.1 UNITED NATIONS October 2011.*

effect of the physical and cultural environment in Nuerland as he carried out his fieldwork.

> Since the Nuer generally refused in any circumstances to act as porters I usually had to travel by native canoe, which meant my movements were more or less determined by the rivers.
>
> (1973b:237)

> The country was packed with deer and cob and waterfowl were abundant, also guinea fowl, francolin and pigeon; and as the Nuer will not eat birds they were easy, if embarrassing, prey.
>
> (ibid.:239)

The different tribes of the Nuer were also widely spread, from west of the Nile to the border with Ethiopia in the east (see Figure 9.15).

E-P gives a very clear description of both the geographical conditions, and the effects of that on the Nuer society at the beginning of his essay 'The Nuer of the southern Sudan' (1940a).

Transport

Transport was vital in order to get to where the fieldwork was to be carried out and then for moving around to visit the very many different areas where the tribes E-P studied were located. Even initially getting to the chosen areas was very time-consuming. Below are the timings E-P gave for getting to Zandeland, when he first went there in 1926. There was, of course, an intermission in the middle of this as he studied the Ingassana.

> A week by train and ship to Egypt.
> Several days by train and boat to Khartoum.
> Ten days by paddle-steamer up the Nile to Terakara.
> Three weeks by foot to the heart of Zandeland.
>
> (1973b:236–7)

The distances involved as he moved from one area of study to another can be appreciated by looking at a map of southern Sudan.

The Ingassana of the Tabi Hills are close to the top of this map, in northern Sudan, west of Renk. From their lands to the Azande was over 1,000 miles by the route E-P was forced to travel. He travelled by river to Terakara (Terakeka) and then walked over 200 miles to the Azande at Yambio. Later, when studying the Nuer, he should have been provided with transport by the administration in order to get to where Willis wanted him to carry out fieldwork, but that was often not forthcoming.

Finance

Research is not cost-free, especially with fieldwork in remote countries, and unless one was wealthy, gaining financial support was vital for fieldwork in the 1920s and 1930s. The funding E-P received included the following:

- Government of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan – arranged initially by Seligman. This allowed E-P to study the Azande and the Nuer between 1926 and 1931. In 1930/31 this finance came with the clear requirement that the Nuer would be the primary focus of E-P's fieldwork.
- 1928–31 – a part-time lectureship at LSE.
- Royal Society/Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Fund. This funding came with more freedom, but E-P still needed permission from the Colonial Government in order to study in Sudan. E-P acknowledge this support in his article *Zande Blood-Brotherhood* (1933).
- Assistant Professor of Sociology – University of Egypt, Cairo, 1932/1934. This mainly allowed him time to write up and publish material he had already collected from his earlier fieldwork.
- In 1934 he returned to England and was appointed to two posts, Research Lectureship in African Sociology at Oxford University and Honorary Research Assistant at University College London, both paid positions.
- Leverhulme Research Fellowship. Initially this was to enable E-P to study the Galla, but following the invasion of Ethiopia by the Italians in 1935, he spent time with the Anuak instead and, later, with the Nuer.

> My study of the Nuer was undertaken at the request of, and was mainly financed by, the Government of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, which also contributed generously towards the publication of its results. Part of the inquiry was carried out as a Leverhulme Research Fellow. To the Sudan Government and to the Leverhulme Research Fellowships Committee I make grateful acknowledgements.
>
> (1940b:vii)

He also had a private income of £300 a year.

Sudan Notes and Records (SNR)

Sudan Notes and Records (*SNR*) was an important facility for the publication of fieldwork, initially mainly by serving officers and administrators, but later as a platform for trained anthropologists. As well as providing somewhere to publish their findings, the Government of Sudan also helped to fund the publication. E-P had many findings of his initial research with the Azande, Nuer and other tribes first published in *SNR*.

E-P first article was published in *SNR*, 'Preliminary account of the Ingassana tribe in Fung province' (1927). In the next ten years, seventeen of E-P's articles and notes were published in *SNR*, on the Azande, Bongo, Shilluk, Basiri, Mani, Dar Fung, Mberidi and Mbegumba, Nuer, Dimbia People and Ingassana.

Health

This has an impact on many areas of fieldwork, especially in remote areas. In Zandeland the tsetse fly and sleeping sickness were endemic, as were the mosquito and malaria in Nuerland.

In E-P's article 'Some recollections on fieldwork in the twenties' he put this in very basic terms: 'This can be a problem for if you can't keep well you can't do fieldwork.' (1973b:239).

The regions of southern Sudan were far from healthy at the time when E-P was carrying out his fieldwork. The problems of health and their effects on fieldwork are exemplified by the following:

E-P's first piece of fieldwork in Sudan was to complete work that had been started by Alexander Mactier Pirrie on the Nuba people. Pirrie had made an expedition to Southern Sudan in 1907, contracted a fever and died of kala-azar just months later, aged only twenty-five.

Seligman's research in Southern Sudan during the third expedition 1921–2 was ended by ill health which prevented him from carrying out further fieldwork.

E-P's father was very ill in November 1930 and, fearing this might cut short his planned one-year study of the Nuer and Azande, he insisted on starting his study of the Nuer with the Leek, rather than the Lou.

E-P caught malaria in June 1931 and had to cut short his research after five and a half months with the Nuer and return to England. The same problem occurred after a seven week visit to the Nuer in 1937. In all, during various periods of fieldwork, E-P estimated that he had seventeen attacks of malaria, the worst being whilst studying the Anuak, when he contracted a complication that led to blackwater fever, which very nearly killed him.

Colonial rule

Of all the conditions that affected anthropologists' fieldwork in the 1920s and 30s, the existence of colonial rule was one of the most influential, whether the anthropologists approved

of it or not. Sudan was a prime example. The Anglo-Egyptian occupation lasted from 1899 to 1956. Control passed to the British, but there were not enough resources to have full control of southern Sudan, so a 'southern policy' was created that pitted the tribes against one another in a classic divide-and-rule strategy.

The memorandum on the southern policy stated:

> The policy of the Government in southern Sudan is to build up a series of self-contained racial or tribal units with structure and organisation based, to whatever extent the requirements of equity and good government permit, upon indigenous customs, traditions, usage and beliefs.
>
> (Mayo 1994:167)

On the face of it, this sounds like an eminently laudable objective, and one that would clearly benefit from the input of anthropologists. However, the ultimate objective was always colonial authority and hence the possibility, even likelihood, that the work of the anthropologists might also be overridden by the controlling objectives of the administrators. That seems to have been the case with E-P's initial fieldwork with the Nuer.

Personnel

Anthropological fieldwork is very rarely, if ever, conducted in complete isolation from those people who are not directly part of the group one has chosen to study. This was most particularly true of E-P's fieldwork. The influence of his lecturers at the LSE has already been mentioned but, because he was working with the Azande and the Nuer in southern Sudan under a colonial rule, its personnel also had a major impact on how he was able to carry out his research. E-P had a great many contacts in Sudan, but four significant ones help to show how influential these other personnel could be to his fieldwork.

Harold MacMichael

Decisions as to who would be allowed to carry out, and be funded for, research in Sudan ultimately came down to the powers in Khartoum. MacMichael, as Civil Secretary for Sudan, was an important part of that decision-making process. It was while considering the problems the administration was having with the Nuer in the late 1920s that MacMichael, with others, suggested the study of the Nuer to E-P.

It is clear that E-P agreed to the study as a personal favour to MacMichael, even though he wanted to continue his studies with the Azande.

Major Larken

As District Commissioner of Yambio, the ancestral home of the Azande, Larken had a much better understanding of the people he was given administrative control over than did the majority of the District Commissioners over their regions. He learnt the language and, as one can see from Figure 9.16, he had a good rapport with the people.

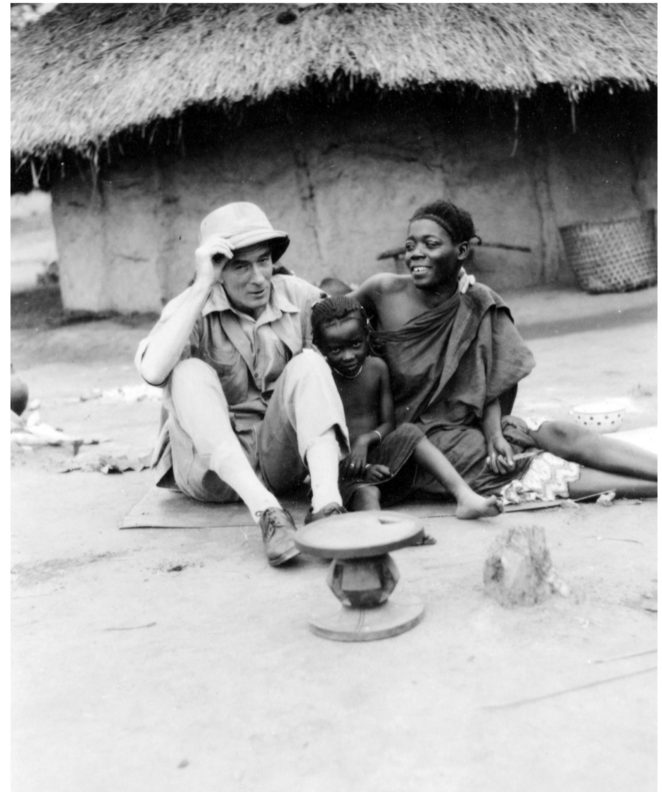

Figure 9.16 Major Larken, 1927. E-P photograph. Courtesy of the Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (1998.341.276.2).

He was very supportive of E-P and this undoubtedly made E-P's fieldwork with the Azande much easier to carry out. E-P gave the following tribute to Larken in 1971.

> I pay tribute also to the researches of an old and lamented friend, Major P.M. Larken, who spent over twenty years among the Azande of the Sudan and spoke their language fluently.
>
> (1971:viii)

Percy Coriat

Coriat was the first colonial administrator to learn the Nuer language, which he did when unwisely remaining in his district during the rainy season. He was also with the Nuer for ten years and in that time was District Commissioner for Western Nuer and earlier for the Lou, Gaawar and Zaraf Island Nuer. This gave him a very good understanding of the Nuer, which he was able to pass on to E-P.

C.A. Willis

It is difficult to underestimate the impact that Willis had on the fieldwork that E-P carried out in Nuerland. This

is in no part due to the agenda Willis himself had. He had been Director of the Intelligence Department in Khartoum, but was removed from that role after his failure to identify the subversive insurrection in Khartoum by the White Flag League. He was then, essentially, demoted to the post of Governor of the Upper Nile Province.

With Willis's own agenda of suppressing the Nuer and essentially inventing an excuse for carrying out punitive control of, and even military attack against, the Nuer, this left E-P in a position where, initially, real anthropological study of the Nuer was almost impossible. Willis was aggressively opposed to any interference from anthropologists, and was also in conflict with control from Khartoum, especially with MacMichael.

How did the conditions affect E-P's early fieldwork?

The impact of the listed conditions on E-P's early fieldwork have, in part, been shown above as each condition was considered. Here are some further comments on this topic.

E-P's studies of the Azande were relatively straightforward because he had support from the District Commissioner and the physical conditions of climate etc. were favourable. It also helped that the Azande were sedentary. His study of the Nuer was quite different. This was chosen by the administration, not by E-P, and the environment in which the fieldwork was carried out was very challenging.

1926–7 FIELDWORK

For this first period of fieldwork there was limited direct government control over what and where E-P studied, and he was largely continuing what had been started by Seligman. Even here, however, the administration of colonial rule had a significant affect on how he was able to carry out his research.

> To-day, however, the natives have been concentrated into settlements along the Government roads over the greater part of the district in which my work was done. Usually a mile or two apart they allow of no expansion since no one is allowed to dwell outside their boundaries, whilst it is now possible for a man to change his concentration settlement on the payment of a small sum, his new life is repugnant to the Zande for magical and religious no less than for economic reasons.
>
> (1928:7–8)

Following his fieldwork with the Azande, E-P returned to England to write up his notes and complete his Ph.D. thesis. At the end of 1928 E-P wrote to the Sudan Government in Khartoum, outlining his plan to remain in England, complete the writing up his fieldwork and return to the Azande in May 1930. The reply from Khartoum insisted that the Nuer were the most import current priority.

> At the time Evans-Pritchard wrote this proposal the Sudan Government had been embroiled for nearly a year in a punitive campaign against the Nuer of Upper Nile Province, the last of its type in the Sudan. The campaign had begun badly in December 1927 when an attempt to use airplanes to overawe the prophet Guek Ngundeng and his Lou followers failed. Government actions in the neighbouring Gaawar territory during the dry season of 1928 alienated the Gaawar prophet Dual Diu and brought him into open rebellion during the rains. In its attempt to capture the main leaders of these risings the government had to send troops throughout the Nuer country east of the Nile.
>
> (Johnson 1982:231)

Despite the actions of the Sudan Government, E-P did agree to study the Nuer, but made it plain that he still wanted to return to the Azande to complete his studies there.

> In the face of very great financial and personal pressure the government exerted on him, Evans-Pritchard tried to extract some concessions that would allow him to continue his other work. He offered to do an immediate survey on the Nuer for six months from December 1929. The government acquiesced and agreed to him then spending time with the Azande.
>
> (ibid.:233)

1930 FIELDWORK

As E-P started his 1930 fieldwork with the Nuer a mixture of 'conditions' conspired to affect its success.

- Willis wanted E-P to start his research with the Lou and then go to the Nasir Station on the Sobat or the Gaawar at Rufshendol.
- Research needed to be carried out in the dry season, which would end in April or May.
- E-P's father was very ill in November 1929 and he therefore chose to study the Leek (Lek) Nuer to the west of Nuerland, from where he could get back to England fairly quickly if needed.
- He went to the Catholic Mission at Yoinyang on the Bahr-al-Ghazal hoping to find Father Crazzolara and learn the Nuer language from him, but Crazzolara had been posted to Tonga. There were almost no Nuer at the Yoinyang mission, so he then moved to Pakur.
- E-P requested to go to the Dok Nuer, overland but Willis refused on security grounds, despite the fact that other civilians were travelling unescorted in the country. Willis insisted that E-P first travel to Malakal, which he did, and then on to Muot Dit and the Lou. Muot Dit was the

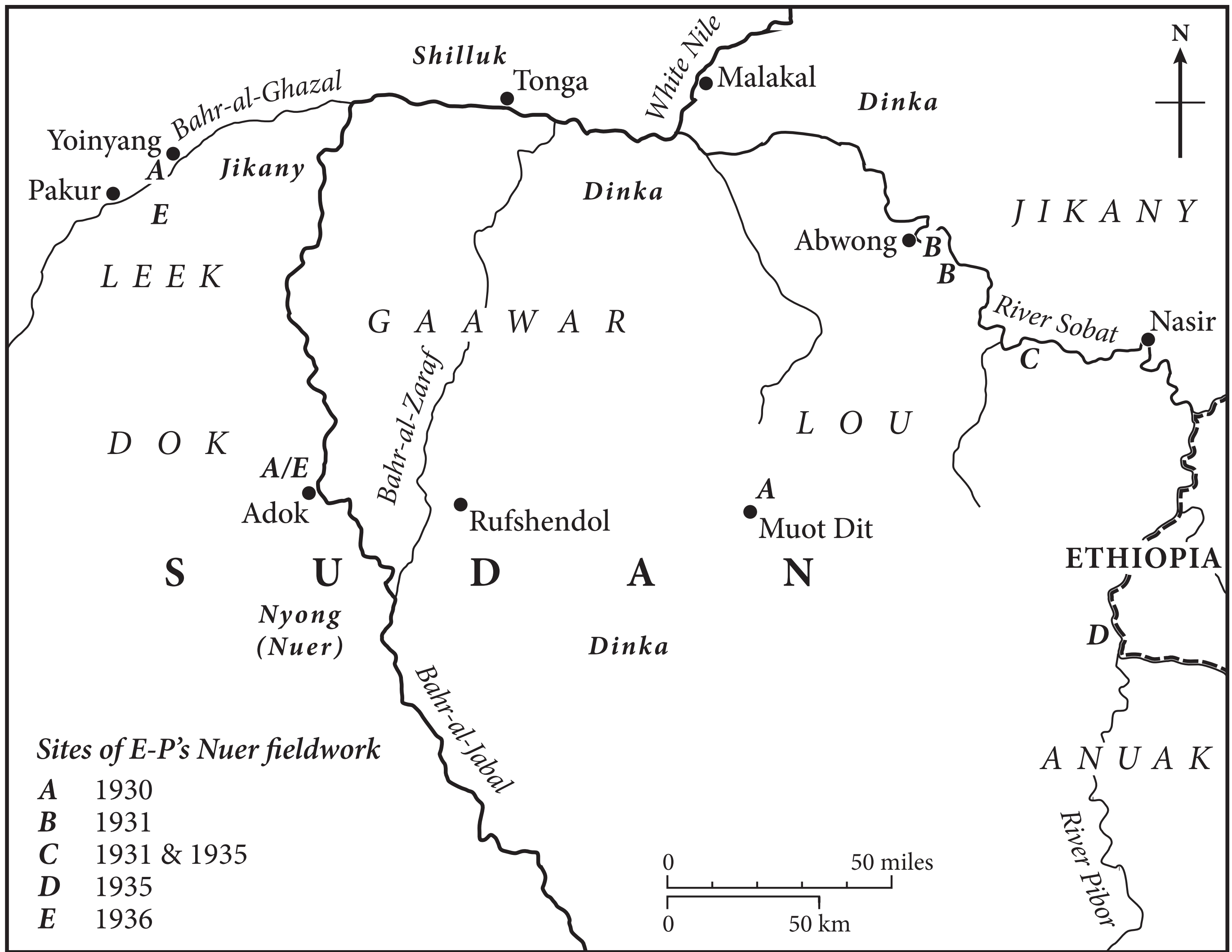

Figure 9.17 Map of E-P's fieldwork sites. Adapted from Johnson 1982.

Nuer settlement furthest away from a river and so quite unrepresentative of most Nuer settlements.

- Everywhere E-P went in this first period of fieldwork with the Nuer he found a hostile reception because of the actions of the colonial administration.

The conditions he faced are shown in the two extracts below.

> Evans-Pritchard has left a vivid description of the tensions that existed in Lou country on his arrival there early in 1930 while troops still roamed the country looking for outlawed prophets. Guek Ngundeng had been killed the year before, and Dual Diu had been captured on the Sobat river near Lou country about a month before Evans-Pritchard's arrival. After only a short time Evans-Pritchard was outlining his difficulties to MacMichael:
>
> 'From our point of view the natives of this area are too unsettled and too resentful and frightened to make good informants and the breakdown of their customs and traditions too sudden and severe to enable an anthropologist to obtain quick results.'[4]
>
> (Johnson 1982:236)

One morning government troops surrounded the Lou cattle camp where Evans-Pritchard was staying, moved in looking for the prophets Pok Kerjiok and Car Koryom who were still at large, and took hostages, insisting that the Lou of the camp find and turn over the prophets to the government. The Lou had already made their resentment of Evans-Pritchard known because of his association with the government who had bombed them, burned their villages, seized their cattle, took prisoners, herded them into dry

4 The quote is from a letter – Evans-Pritchard to MacMichael 27 March 30, Civsec 112/1/2.

'concentration areas', killed their prophet Guek and had blown up and desecrated the Mound of his father Ngundeng, their greatest prophet. After this latest incident Evans-Pritchard noted, 'I felt that I was in an equivocal position, since such incidents might recur', and he decided to leave. (ibid.:236)

He concluded this fieldwork with a further four months' study of the Azande.

1931 FIELDWORK

E-P's study of the Nuer in 1931 continued to be affected by the 'conditions'.

His father had died whilst he was in England. E-P planned to return to the Lou east of the Nile but was concerned about the state of disturbance there and requested a return to the Leek Nuer. Willis refused permission, insisting he go to the Lou Nuer at Abwong on the Sobat, first going to Malakal and then the Nasir mission station (see Figure 9.17).

Initially the conditions E-P faced on this further study of the Nuer made useful fieldwork almost impossible, as he outlined in great detail in his book *The Nuer*.

> Every effort was made to prevent me from entering the cattle camps and it was seldom that I had visitors. I was almost entirely cut off from communication with the people. My attempts to prosecute inquiries were persistently obstructed.
>
> (1940b:12)

Willis again made travel difficult for E-P, despite having used E-P's request for transport in order to get spares for his own vehicles.

Luckily for E-P's research, Willis retired as governor in early 1931 and was replaced by Guy Pawson, of whom E-P wrote:

> He is in every way as helpful as possible and besides assisting in practical matters he supplemented this by showing a keen interest in the sort of work I am doing. It makes a great difference having him at Malakal.[5]

This fieldwork was brought to an end in June when E-P contracted malaria.

No funding was available from the Sudan Government to continue his fieldwork and he was not able to return to his research until 1935, on a Leverhulme Research Fellowship and using his own funds.

Conclusion

Clearly, fieldwork will be affected by all three elements – the 'man', the 'society' to be studied and the 'conditions' that led to and impacted on that study, both positively and negatively. In so many of the situations in which E-P found himself it was a mixture of all three. But was, in the end, one element more important than the others? Without the anthropologist's willingness to work through all of the difficulties there would be no fieldwork and E-P's own words should be repeated:

> What one brings out of a field study largely depends on what one brings to it.'
>
> (1973a:2)

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5 Evans-Pritchard to Sigmar Hillelson (Assistant Civil Secretary, Khartoum). 18 July 1931, Civsec 112/1/3.

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PART III

Insights through correspondence

Round table, E-P sat next to Meyer Fortes. Print supplied by Bruce Ross-Smith.

10

A glimpse of Evans-Pritchard through his correspondence with Lowie and Kroeber[1]

Piero Matthey

Introduction

While scholars have always differed in the ways they handled their personal papers, the emergence of computers, fax machines and, above all, electronic mail has considerably altered the documentation of academic work. Historians and biographers will almost certainly regret the end of the era in which letters were either typed or written by hand. In the past, there were scholars who systematically filed their incoming mail, along with carbon copies of their outgoing letters. Whether this happened by plan or by chance, invaluable material became available for historical research, once these files reached a public archive. Of course, there were always those who, lacking storage space or an eye for history, or having the more deliberate aims of privacy and confidentiality, destroyed some or all of the papers in their possession. The mediaeval historian Ernst Kantorowicz, for example, who taught at Berkeley in the 1940s, sometimes went so far as to ask his colleagues to destroy his letters once they had been answered. No trace whatsoever was to remain (Professor Yakov Malkiel, personal communication).

But as a general rule, the decision to destroy records is restricted to what is in one's own hands. One cannot eliminate what has become the property of others. E-P, for example, decided not to leave certain kinds of information to succeeding generations, and, during the last years of his life, apparently disposed of every item of correspondence in his personal papers (Dr Godfrey Lienhardt, personal communication). Yet in 1952 he saw fit to publish the English translation of a letter in French which had been sent to him by Lucien Lévy-Bruhl in November 1934. The letter was Lévy-Bruhl's reply to E-P upon receiving a copy of the latter's essay, 'Lévy-Bruhl's theory of primitive mentality', published the same year, while E-P was Assistant Professor of Sociology at Fuad I University in Cairo. In a brief introduction, E-P argued that making the letter public was important because it had a bearing on the understanding of Lévy-Bruhl's thought at precisely the time the French scholar was revising views he had elaborated in earlier works, including *Les fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures* (1910). Lévy-Bruhl's letter to E-P reflected on the criticism his work had received during the previous twenty-five years, and hinted at those reformulations of his earlier theories which would not be made explicit until the posthumous publication of the *Carnets* in 1949. Moreover, wrote E-P, the letter demonstrated that the French scholar had been 'tolerant, open-minded, and courteous', showing virtues not always possessed in academia.[2] Since Evans-Pritchard destroyed the correspondence in his possession, any surviving material found elsewhere assumes great importance. It may shed light on his personality, both as a scholar and as a human being, suggest missing signposts to his own intellectual itinerary and to those of his colleagues in anthropology, and provide the context needed to avoid misinterpreting statements which would otherwise remain elusive and ambiguous. T.O. Beidelman, for example, has drawn a fascinating portrait of Evans-Pritchard, thanks to excerpts from letters he received from the British anthropologist over a period of many years (Beidelman 1974).

I have accordingly brought together here the letters that Alfred L. Kroeber and Robert H. Lowie exchanged with E-P. Together, they provide a picture of the intermittent but continuing dialogue between the Department of Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley, and Oxford University. E-P's originals have been matched up with outgoing carbon copies preserved by both Kroeber and Lowie.[3] Some of the letters are short and deal only with

1 This is a revised version of a paper first published as Matthey, P. 1996. 'A glimpse of Evans-Pritchard through his correspondence with Lowie and Kroeber', *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford* 27(1):21–45.

2 Evans-Pritchard made the same point in Lévy-Bruhl's obituary (1940a:24–5). The article was a grand tribute to a scholar who had consistently proved himself an outstanding thinker while continuing to embody remarkable human qualities.

3 The material comes from the Alfred L. Kroeber Papers (C–B 925, Boxes 6 & 14), the Robert H. Lowie Papers (C–B 927, Box 7) and the records of the Department of Anthropology, University Archives (CU–23, Box 17). For permission to publish, grateful acknowledgment is here made to the Bancroft Library, University

routine matters (which may nevertheless be of interest). But others contain important nuggets of information and offer an exciting view of anthropology and anthropologists on both sides of the Atlantic. I highlight some of the important points below.

E-P graduated in Modem History from Oxford University in 1924 with second-class honours. Later the same year, he moved to the London School of Economics to study anthropology, as it was the only institution which would allow him to conduct fieldwork. Unlike Sir James Frazer, he had always dreamt of an adventurous life in the field. As E-P entered the world of Seligman and Malinowski (who were on the teaching staff), Robert H. Lowie, who had left his native Vienna in 1893 at the age of ten, returned to the Old World for the first time. At the end of June 1924, he sailed to Europe, mainly to attend the International Congress of Americanists in Gothenburg, Sweden, that August. But in the weeks preceding and following that event, he visited Scandinavia, Germany, Austria, France and England before sailing home from Southampton in November. While in London, he met Malinowski, with whom he felt an immediate intellectual kinship. They remained close until Malinowski's death in 1942, despite the profound differences in their understanding and practice of anthropology. Lowie also met E-P during his visit to the London School of Economics.

Oddly enough, in the 1920s neither of the foremost exponents of British functionalism, Malinowski in England and Radcliffe-Brown in South Africa, had a book of his own which covered the entire gamut of problems involved in kinship and social organization. The only outstanding work available was Lowie's *Primitive Society* (1920). In Cape Town, this was one of the books that Radcliffe-Brown recommended to his first-year students, as did Malinowski in London. Hortense Powdermaker, who entered the London School of Economics in the autumn of 1925, remembers that it was neither Boas nor Kroeber but Lowie whom Malinowski considered his 'favorite American anthropologist' (1966:41).[4] Along with fellow students E-P, Firth and Schapera, her London experience was based on *Primitive Society,* and it is reasonable to assume that it played an important role in Malinowski's seminars.

The impact of *Primitive Society* on E-P was a lasting one. In a paper published during the early 1970s (Evans-Pritchard 1973), he acknowledged the magnitude of the intellectual debt he owed to Lowie. When he was about to travel to Nuerland in 1930 and needed to keep personal belongings to a minimum, a discussion with Max Gluckman led E-P to conclude that if he could take just one book with him, it would be Lowie's *Primitive Society.* Thanks to *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*, not much could be achieved in the area of fieldwork. In retrospect, E-P considered that 'It was a very good choice' (1973:12). The profoundly felt words of sympathy which E-P sent to Lowie's widow upon receiving the news of his death (see Letter 18, below) are the best testimony that could be paid to the American anthropologist by his British colleague. In that letter, E-P says that it was Seligman who recommended *Primitive Society* to him, and in fact Seligman and Malinowski shared the same opinion of the book.

Because of the geographical distance involved (E-P was in Africa before and during the Second World War, and otherwise in England), it was difficult or impossible for the two men to remain in close contact. They kept in touch in the only sensible way – by paying attention to what each other published. On 14 November 1938, in a letter to Dr Harry Alpert, Lowie mentioned 'the unequivocally excellent field work reports of the last ten years by, say, Blackwood, Evans-Pritchard, Birket-Smith, Rasmussen, Lesser, Spier, *et al.*'[5] Just a few years after their encounter in London, E-P thought of Lowie when he was planning a Festschrift in honour of Seligman. Ultimately, it was edited by E-P, Firth, Malinowski and Schapera.[6] Lowie accepted the invitation and provided a paper on 'Religious ideas and practices of the Eurasiatic and North American areas' (1934:183–4), a topic of great interest to Boas, who was always anxious to establish ancient Asian cultural relationships with the American continent. (A junior Boasian, Melville J. Herskovits, also appears among the contributors.)

Evans-Pritchard's high esteem for Lowie is further demonstrated by the fact that he asked his American colleague for a letter of recommendation (Letter 4) when

of California at Berkeley; Dr Deirdre Evans- Pritchard, daughter of E. E. Evans-Pritchard; and Professor Karl Kroeber, son and literary executor of Alfred L. Kroeber. To Mrs Lorise C. Topliffe of Exeter College, Oxford, go my profound thanks for providing essential information included here.

4 Similarly, while Schapera was studying under Radcliffe-Brown in South Africa, he was advised by his mentor to study under Malinowski in London, the only other suggestion was to study in the United States under Lowie, judged the only competent American social anthropologist. No mention was made of either Boas or Kroeber (Kuper 1973:90-1).

5 CU–23, Univ. of California Archives.

6 Malinowski had asked Firth to join the project in order to avoid having his name close to that of Evans-Pritchard, with whom he was clearly at loggerheads. The complexities of the issue can be surmised from Firth's recollections of the episode, which occurred in 1934, the same year the book appeared (Firth 1981:121–2). It is interesting to note that on 'the list of those who have promised to contribute (a copy of which is enclosed)' – see Letter 1 – the wording is 'Edited by Prof. B. Malinowski, D.Sc., Dr. I. Schapera, and E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Esq.' The editors are not listed in alphabetical order, as they are in the published volume. As Seligman's colleague, Malinowski is understandably listed first, followed by Schapera. Evans-Pritchard has put himself last, and further humbled himself as 'Esq.'

the Readership in Social Anthropology at Oxford University became available (Marett, said E-P, was leaving 'almost at once'). Academic positions in England were rather limited at that time, and E-P definitely wanted to settle down and to devote his time to publishing the results of his prolonged fieldwork in various parts of the Sudan.

Once again, the situation is more complicated than it appears from E-P's letter. He apparently resigned from Cairo University not because of his frustration with the situation there (see Letter 2) but because he was offered a chance to conduct fieldwork among the Galla in Ethiopia in 1935. Unfortunately, the Italians invaded Ethiopia that year and no such research was possible. E-P had no choice at that point but to return to England, where he was given a research lectureship in African sociology at Oxford through Marett's good offices (Barnes 1987:453). This appointment seems to have been no more than a temporary arrangement, designed to fill a gap and provide E-P with some respite. Marett was surely sympathetic to E-P, whom he had known since his days as an honorary Scholar at Exeter College (Marett 1941:267–8, 309).

It is rather strange that in November 1935 E-P should tell Lowie that Marett was suddenly vacating his readership, since Marett would reach seventy the following June and would only then become due to retire from the post he had held since 1910. Nowhere in his autobiography does Marett mention having left the readership suddenly. Moreover, E-P knew that *Custom is King* (Buxton 1936), a volume of essays in Marett's honour, would be presented to him by his friends and pupils on the very day of his seventieth birthday; E-P himself contributed a paper entitled 'Daily life of the Nuer in dry season camps' (1936). What impact Lowie's testimonial of 2 December 1935 (Letter 5) may have had is unknown. To whom did E-P give it? There is no record of a committee having been appointed to find a suitable successor to Marett. Only archival research at Oxford could possibly shed light on the situation there in late 1935 and early 1936.

Further confusion arises from the fact that the Readership in Social Anthropology at Oxford was upgraded to a professorship following Marett's departure. Marett says that he came close to being appointed Professor of Social Anthropology at the very last minute, the chair having been established in 1934 (1941:269). Either Marett was in error or the date is a misprint, accepted uncritically by Ruel (1968:566). Barnes dates this event to 1936 (1987:454). Records in the University of Oxford Calendar put us on a firmer ground in regard to the sequence of events following the creation of the chair in 1937. A board of selection decided in favour of Radcliffe-Brown, who was then at Chicago. A note from Marett to Radcliffe-Brown dated 17 June 1937 informs us about the transfer of power.

E-P had to wait nearly a decade to succeed Radcliffe-Brown, who retired in July 1946. The Second World War intervened, leading to E-P's long absence from his own country. But the war also offered him a unique opportunity to realize his dream of returning to Africa. His residence at Cairo University in the early 1930s had allowed him to acquire fluency in Arabic, to tour the Egyptian desert, visit its scattered oases, and meet some of the Sanusi exiles from Libya. During the war, he was able to travel into the interior of Cyrenaica and to gain first-hand experience of its Bedouin tribes. The defeat of combined Italian and German forces at El Alamein in November 1942 resulted in Libya coming under British control for the third (and last) time. As a tribal affairs officer, E-P spent the following two years travelling extensively by camel and horse in the desert, steppe and forest of the plateau.

Out of that experience came *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica* (1949). Because of the post-war paper shortage in England, the text was reduced by half for the published version. While the original full text has apparently been lost, the work none the less stands as a very important milestone in E-P's personal career, as well as in the development of British social anthropology. In this respect, the treatments that Douglas and Barnes give the book are unsatisfactory. Douglas deals at length with E-P's works on the Zande and Nuer, but devotes only two pages to the Sanusi (Douglas 1980:44–5). Barnes mentions it briefly as the product of E-P's sojourn in Cyrenaica during the war (Barnes 1987:456). Against this, attention should be paid to E-P's letter to Kroeber dated 26 February 1950 (Letter 11). Writing to a 'historically minded' anthropologist like himself, E-P tells Kroeber what that book meant to him and, consequently, how it should be approached. E-P's inner feelings, and the goal he set for himself in writing the book, are made explicit in a single sentence: 'It is an anthropologist's attempt to write political history.' And the emphasis is definitely on 'history'.

Why (if we are to believe E-P) was the book treated so lightly by his colleagues? Here we enter the treacherous terrain of personal relationships and the attendant gossip which continues long after its subjects are dead and unable to contest it. Neither E-P nor his supposed detractors, Fortes and Radcliffe-Brown, can tell us anything now. We have to rely on their books and essays, supplemented, where possible, by unpublished papers. To the best of my knowledge, neither Fortes nor Radcliffe-Brown ever wrote what E-P attributes to them (Letter 11). Fortes was E-P's closest colleague, bound by a friendship that began in Malinowski's seminars at the London School of Economics and lasted until E-P's death in 1973. In 1971, in fact, E-P rebuked a commentator who suggested that there had been a clash between him and Fortes (Barnes 1987:477; see also, Chapter 14 this volume).

It is difficult to imagine that a balanced scholar like Fortes would dismiss *The Sanusi* as 'mere literature'. Whatever one's personal bent, the book impresses the

reader at once as a work based on solid historical research, beginning with a careful reconstruction of the life of the Grand Sanusi from his birth in Algeria in 1787 until his death in the oasis of Jaghbub in 1859. The narrative then shifts to the fortunes of the Sanusiya Order in North Africa and its emergence among the nomads of Cyrenaica. Tracing the relationships of this religious order first with the Turks and then with the invading Italians, who waged war against the Bedouin, E-P demonstrates how it ultimately became a politically unifying force. Similarly, one has to take issue with Radcliffe-Brown's alleged assessment of *The Sanusi* as 'diachronic sociology'. E-P was by no means unique among anthropologists in his habit of distorting the viewpoints of his colleagues in order to bring his own into sharper relief. Neither Fortes nor Radcliffe-Brown had the training in history E-P had received at Oxford, and neither had the sense of history that ran in his blood. It is not unreasonable to suspect that in his letter to Kroeber, he highlighted what he believed he had achieved in *The Sanusi* at the expense of Fortes and Radcliffe-Brown.

If there were any doubts about the nature of his book, E-P forcibly dispelled them in 1961, when he delivered the 'Anthropology and history' lecture at Manchester. 'One of the few genuinely historical books written by an anthropologist *de carrière*', he told his audience, 'is my own book *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*' (1961:13). Its uniqueness is clearly seen in any comparison with other books dealing with similar topics and problems. E-P published three works in 1940, all of them dealing with political institutions. The subtitle of *The Nuer* is *A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People* (1940b). His investigations among the Anuak were published in *The Political System of the Anuak of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan* (1940c). And, together with Fortes, he edited *African Political Systems* (1940), whose introduction so profoundly influenced British anthropology for many years to come.[7] That same year E-P's paper on 'The political structure of the Nandi-speaking peoples of Kenya' appeared in the journal *Africa* (1940d).

Even in 1971, when his essays on the Azande were collected as *The Azande: History and Political Institutions*, E-P did not view this work as equal to that on the Sanusiya. The reason is clear: in writing about the Azande, Nuer, Anuak and Shilluk, he had relied on data collected during his own fieldwork, as well as those collected by others, and compared them with available European sources. He did not always put the material under the microscope of his sharp historical eye and at times accepted reports uncritically (Johnson 1981:508–27). In the Sudan, however, he had studied peoples whose language was spoken but not written, whose societies lacked archives of any kind and who possessed a limited interest in their own past. While the Dinka and Nuer were excellent examples of a segmentary system, the Ambomu, led by the Avongara ruling clan, had subjugated a variety of foreign peoples with different cultures and imposed upon them their own institutions and language. Several kingdoms had evolved out of the Zande expansion. Their oral traditions spanned a much deeper period of time, and their concern for events of the past was much more pronounced than among the Nilotes, who in fact practised a kind of built-in amnesia, remembering no more than the most recent five or six age-sets. Anything that happened earlier was systematically forgotten.

The events of the war led E-P from Egypt to Palestine, Syria and Iraq, and provided him with a wider and deeper sense of Arab civilization, which included a well-known history and an elaborate written literature spanning several centuries. E-P's love of poetry (both recited and written) was thoroughly satisfied. He enjoyed the refined and outstanding artistic achievements found in cities from Cairo to Jerusalem, Damascus to Baghdad. A historian found himself suddenly plunged into a fascinating history. *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica* (1949) is much more than the accurate reconstruction of the personal vicissitudes of its founder. In a way, the focus is on the founding of the Mother Lodge of the Sanusiya Order on the plateau of Cyrenaica by the Grand Sanusi in 1843. E-P shows how the order planted its roots among people who were already Muslim, rather than infidels to be converted.

The Sanusiya Order's foreign origin allowed it to stand outside the tribal system and therefore to arbitrate disputes when they arose in the highly segmentary political structure of the Bedouin. As time went on, it became both a political movement and a national symbol. While this process had begun under the Turkish administration, it reached its height in 1911, when Italy, a foreign, Christian country, captured Libya from the Ottoman Empire. It was the intervention of an outside force that caused all the segments of the society to coalesce in the face of a common danger from across the Mediterranean. Blending the common religious faith with a profound sense of Bedouin patriotism, the Sanusiya acquired a greater and greater political character. The second Italo-Sanusi war (1923–32) was even more decisive from this viewpoint than the first (1911–17). The Bedouin were defeated by the overwhelming power of the Italians, their country was desolated, and the losses in life and livestock were staggering, but an Islamic fraternity had become a political organization and laid down the embryonic foundations of a state. When the Second World War brought an end to the Italian presence in Libya, the British authorities understandably looked to the Sanusiya as the future source of authority in the country. E-P himself had hoped that the

7 It appears that Fortes may have been the sole author of the introduction, and that Evans-Pritchard merely subscribed his name to it (Barnes 1987:461).

Bedouin's long struggle would result in the independence of Cyrenaica (1949:196). The situation had still not been settled when his book was published, but in 1951 the United Kingdom of Libya was finally proclaimed, and Sayyid Idris, the Sanusi leader, became its first monarch. After studying the kingdom of the Azande and the acephalous society of the Nuer, E-P had the opportunity to demonstrate how a state could evolve out of a stateless society.

And he did so in a very considerate and balanced way. His indignation in response to the military operations conducted against the Bedouin is expressed with restraint, letting the facts speak for themselves. His admiration goes to those who fought for their country against overwhelming odds and who gave up their lives rather than live under a foreign yoke. Where the Italians disparaged them as *ribelli,* he calls them 'patriots' (ibid.:161). I do not see how one can agree with Douglas's reading of *The Sanusi* (1980:46). In her view, E-P's 'sympathy for guerrilla herdsmen, their courage and conviction, illumines his own academic vendettas'. While Barnes dealt at length with E-P's relations with Radcliffe-Brown, Malinowski and Fortes, at least he did so on the basis of accurate documentation, avoiding the sort of oblique hints and ambiguous allusions which simply baffle the reader unacquainted with the details of British social anthropology. Douglas was well informed in such matters, but she provides no evidence to support her statement.

E-P's writings demonstrate how greatly he differed from contemporary British social anthropologists. His approach to the peoples he studied was comprehensive, covering as many fields as possible, even when he knew there was not enough time to cover everything. In a letter of November 1934 to Fortes, he acknowledged that he had 'jettisoned language and material culture since something had to go or I should have had a fit with overwork' (Barnes 1987:473). In any case, an anthropologist should be above all a good ethnographer, that is to say, a conscientious gatherer of data, irrespective of the use he might one day make of them or how trivial they might seem to others (Evans-Pritchard 1951:80). E-P published papers on subjects ranging from native texts to string figures, and he did not ignore rock carvings at oases in the desert of western Egypt.

Barnes has sensibly pointed out that a good deal of caution is necessary when evaluating E-P's writings. It is tempting but dangerous to take certain passages at face value. He often seemed to contradict himself within a short space of time, and the location of a public lecture sometimes influenced what he was saying. 'Anthropology and history' was delivered at Manchester, after all, not Oxford. A useful comparison can be made between his letter to Kroeber of 19 September 1950 (Letter 15), in which he mentions British anthropology's 'total neglect of culture', and the lectures he delivered during the winter of 1950 at the request of the BBC (published in 1951 as *Social Anthropology*). Kroeber's *The Nature of Culture* could not fail to interest him the following year (see Letter 16).

I come now to the issue raised by E-P in a letter to Kroeber (Letter 20) and in Kroeber's reply (Letter 21): the relationship between a scholar's religious faith, if any, and the way he writes about religion. Obviously, the question also has to do with E-P himself and the frequent speculation on how his conversion from the Church of England to Roman Catholicism may have affected his writing on religious matters, particularly in *Nuer Religion* (1956). Leach refers to unknown commentators, 'cynics', to whom the natives appeared like 'first-class Jesuit dialecticians' (1980:24). Fortes sees a difference between the work on Zande witchcraft, carried out by an 'agnostic observer', and the study of Nuer religion, with its emphasis on their belief in Spirit (*Kwoth*). Involved here is E-P's 'theistic religious commitment' (Fortes 1980:vii). Firth maintains that E-P 'allowed his natural interest in religion to prejudge a number of his findings' (1993:213). Apparently, E-P's colleagues considered his conversion to Roman Catholicism a turning-point in his life, after which he interpreted religious matters quite differently. But is there any convincing proof of this?

Evans-Pritchard acknowledged two attempts to enter the Roman Catholic Church prior to 1944, when he formally adopted the faith at the cathedral of Benghazi – paradoxically not in England, but in a church built in Cyrenaica under the Italian occupation. I find it very strange that no questions have been raised in regard to his writing of *The Sanusi*, completed long before *Nuer Religion*. There is no specifically Roman Catholic bias in the work on the Sanusiya Order. The Bedouin saw their fight not only as a desperate attempt to maintain their independence, but also as a *jihad*, or holy war against Christian infidels. When Enver Pasha sent Bedouin boys to be educated in Turkey in 1912, they were greeted as the offspring of Cyrenaican *mujahidin*, fighting for their faith (1949:111–16). E-P succeeded admirably in portraying this attitude without letting his religious beliefs intrude.

In 1940–2, as the fighting between Italian and British troops in Cyrenaica shifted backwards and forwards, British soldiers trapped behind the front line were hidden and nourished by the Bedouin, who provided precious and continuous assistance. Significantly, E-P made the following comment: 'It must not be forgotten that we are Christians and strangers and that the Bedouin have no obligation to us.' (1945:77). With great impartiality, he saw 'the Italian colonial record to be [not] very different from the records of other Colonial Powers'. He was aware of the contradictions in the colonial policies of all European countries (1949:iv, 211). To him, the Old World looked like an octopus, and one of its tentacles had got hold of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania. It 'belonged to the same beast which held half the world in its clutches'. At stake was not so much the fate of a group of nomads, but the very future of Europe itself (ibid.:116). The

Figure 10.1 Robert H. Lowie. Courtesy Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI 36022).

issue had to be understood in moral terms and not simply with regard to spheres of political influence or the division of spoils.

Furthermore, why did E-P claim to have learned more 'about the nature of God and our human predicament from the Nuer' than from a Christian country like England? In a lecture, which Fortes attended, E-P argued that there was basically no difference between the mystical experience of Hindus, Buddhists and adherents of the three monotheistic religions (Barnes 1987:478–80). Jews, Christians and Muslims worship the same God, he seemed to be saying, albeit in different ways.

In the end, it is impossible truly to enter other people's lives. To understand them at all we must rely on what they say, provided that they have spoken with sincerity and are approached by us without prejudice. The letters of E-P, Kroeber and Lowie help us in trying to understand them and contribute to a more balanced appraisal of them. It is worthwhile mentioning an impromptu and frank evaluation of E-P volunteered by Edmund Leach in 1987, as we studied a sketch of Meyer Fortes hanging in a corridor at King's College, Cambridge. He praised Fortes' scholarly achievements, then added, 'But Evans-Pritchard was the brightest of us all.' His words still ring in my mind.

The letters[8]

Letter 1

38, Mecklenburgh Square,
London W.C.1.
8 September 1931

Dear Dr. Lowie,
I have just received your letter from the field. I am very glad indeed that you will be able to see your way to write a paper for the Seligman Festschrift, if time allows. I do not think that there is any difficulty on this score as we are prepared to wait till next April or May for the MSS. I have therefore taken the liberty of adding your name to the list of those who have promised to contribute (a copy of which is enclosed) and I shall be grateful, if you think you can take part in our enterprise, if you will send me a title of your subject.

I may add that the enclosed list is a preliminary one and that there are still a number of people from whom I have not received replies.

Yours sincerely,
E.E. Evans-Pritchard

Letter 2

Flat 18
1 Rue Monillard
Cairo
Egypt
24 May 1932

Dear Prof. Lowie,
I wonder whether you will be able to let me have your contribution to the Seligman Festschrift sometime in June or July.

I am sorry to press you but I get summer leave from the Egyptian University at Cairo and I want to send in the MSS to the publishers while I am in England.

8 Of the twenty-one letters that are printed below, half are to be found in the University Archives in Berkeley (see footnote 3 above), viz. Letters 1–6, 8–10, 12 and 13. The remainder come from the Kroeber Papers (Letters 7, 11, 14–16, 19–21) and the Lowie Papers (Letters 17 and 18). Most of the letters were handwritten and bear the author's signature (Letters 2, 4, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19 and 21); some, however, were typed and bear a signature (Letters 1, 7, 9, 16), and some have been transcribed from a carbon copy and were thus unsigned (Letters 3, 5, 6, 8, 12 and 20). Letter 14 is a signed, handwritten postcard. Very little editorial change has been introduced into the texts of the letters, except for the correction of spelling mistakes and the standardization of layout, which might otherwise have interfered with ordinary readability.

My address will be 16 Cross Deep, Twickenham, Middlesex, England.
I am trying to cope with Egyptian University conditions but it is a hard swim against a tide of ignorance and incapacity.

Yours sincerely,
E.E. Evans-Pritchard

Letter 3

[Washington, DC]
June 10, 1932
Dr. E.E. Evans-Pritchard,
16 Cross Deep,
Twickenham,
Middlesex,
England

Dear Dr. Evans-Pritchard:
I was very much interested to get your letter of May 24th, with your impressions of Egyptian University conditions.

I may say that I wrote you some time ago, but received no reply. Since the letter had obviously miscarried, I wrote to Dr. Malinowski's French address, asking whether the substitution of an article originally prepared for the Vancouver Congress would be legitimate. I have not heard from him, although there has been ample time; and since you are eager to get contributions as soon as possible, I am enclosing the paper in question. I hope this will do in place of the one ['Theory and Practice in Ethnology'] originally contemplated.

With best wishes,
Sincerely yours,
Robert H. Lowie
Chairman, Division of Anthropology and Psychology

Letter 4

Exeter College, Oxford
14 November 1935

Dear Dr. Lowie,
You may have heard that Dr. Marett vacates his readership in Social Anthropology at Oxford almost at once.

I am applying for the readership and I wonder whether you would be good enough to give me a testimonial. I am assuming, I hope not entirely erroneously, that you are acquainted with my work. We have only met for a few moments some years ago in London.

If you feel you can recommend me for the post on the grounds of my work I shall be very grateful to you as I have made 5 ethnological expeditions to Central Africa & want a few years of peace to write up my notes.

Yours sincerely,
E.E. Evans-Pritchard

Letter 5

[Berkeley, California]
December 2, 1935
Oxford University
England

Gentlemen,—
Mr. E.E. Evans-Pritchard has suggested my writing to you in connection with his candidacy for a readership at Oxford University. I am very glad to do so and must explain that I can do so only from the point of view of the general anthropologist, not as an Africanist, since my special investigations—apart from theory—lie in the Americanist field.

Having read several of Dr. Evans-Pritchard's articles, I should like to say that I consider them valuable and useful for my lectures on primitive supernaturalism. The field technique, involving the use of the native language as a tool, seems very good, and I am pleased to note the appreciative references to his predecessors—a feature often glaringly absent in recent publications. He is not a mere collector of raw facts, but brings them into relation with the theories of students of comparative religion. Here, again, I observe with satisfaction that he does not accept the mere dicta of 'authorities', but forms an independent judgment. I shall be greatly interested in his ultimate formulations and hope a University appointment will help to expedite them.

Very truly yours, Robert H. Lowie
Professor of Anthropology

Letter 6

[Berkeley, California]
December 3, 1935
Dr. E.E. Evans-Pritchard
Exeter College
OXFORD
England

Dear Dr. Evans-Pritchard,
It was news to me that Dr. Marett is retiring so soon, and I am interested to know that you are an applicant for the position. As you do not specify to whom the testimonial is to be sent, I am addressing it in the enclosed and unsealed envelope to Oxford University, and if necessary you can insert the name or office of the proper authorities. I certainly wish you the best of luck

and hope that my letter may do its bit to assure you the position in question.

Sincerely yours,
Robert H. Lowie

Letter 7

Institute of Social Anthropology,
1 Jowett Walk,
Oxford
18 May 1948

Dear Professor Kroeber,
Just a line to thank you for the copy of your Anthropology, which I have just received. It is a book that is always in great demand among our students over here, and I am very glad indeed to have this new edition.

With best regards,
Yours sincerely,
E. E. Evans-Pritchard

Letter 8

[Berkeley, California]
October 4, 1949

Professor E.E. Evans-Pritchard
All Souls College
Oxford University Oxford
England

Dear Professor Evans-Pritchard,
David Mandelbaum, writing from London, just reminds me that you are to be in Chicago for the first quarter of the year 1950 and might consider teaching in our First Summer Session, which extends from June 19th to July 28th. Needless to say, we should all be very happy if it were feasible for you to come. At the moment the budget for the Summer Sessions has not yet been fixed, but it is very likely that last year's salaries will be again available. [C. Daryll] Forde received travel expenses from the East and a fee of $1200. Current usage is for each lecturer to give two courses on five days of the week, from Monday to Friday, inclusive. The topics are, of course, chosen by the professor; but naturally, in your case, we should be very desirous of having one course on Africa. As a possibility I should suggest 'Primitive Religion' for the other. However, you are entirely free to select other topics.

The administration of the Summer Sessions is always eager to get relevant information at the earliest possible opportunity. I have just been notified that material for the Announcement of Courses should be available by the end of the current year. Could you then indicate whether you could arrange to come in

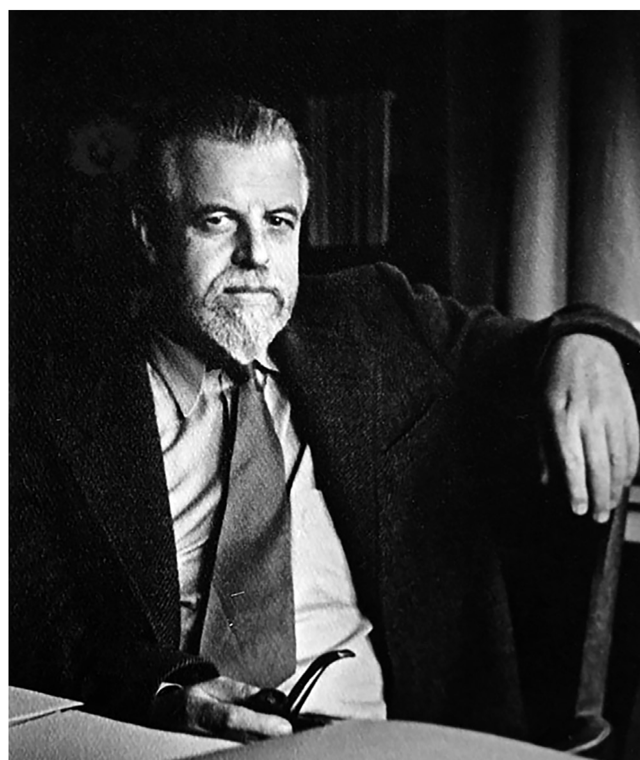

Figure 10.1 Alfred L. Kroeber seated at desk, holding pipe (Bancroft Library).

the given circumstances, with a statement as to your subjects and the hours (from 9 on) that would suit your convenience? I may indicate that Forde lectured from 9 to 10 (actually 9:10 to 10:00) and from 11:10 to 12:00. These are considered very good hours; 12 to 1 is the universal lunching period here and may be eliminated from consideration.

Hoping to hear from you affirmatively, at least in principle, I am, with cordial greetings,

Sincerely yours,
Robert H. Lowie

P.S. A brief statement—say of 40 or 50 words each—concerning the nature of your courses would be appreciated.

Letter 9

University of Oxford
Institute of SOCIAL Anthropology
Museum House
South Parks Road
Oxford
13 October 1949

Dear Professor Lowie,
Many thanks indeed for your invitation to lecture at California. I am afraid, however, that Mandelbaum has got his dates a bit mixed up. I start work in Chicago on

5 January, and have to be back in Oxford by the middle of April, so unless Chicago are prepared to allow me to take off my last fortnight or so to visit California I should not be able to do so. This was the suggestion made to Mandelbaum, but of course so short a visit might not in any case suit you. If it does, I should have to ask Redfield's permission—unless you would care to do this yourself?

With kind regards,
Yours sincerely,
E.E. Evans-Pritchard

Letter 10

The University of Chicago
Department of Anthropology
7 February 1950

Dear Prof. Lowie,
Thanks for the compliment, but I am afraid that I could not leave Oxford next academic year, especially since I have taken this term off to come to Chicago.

With all the rapid changes now taking place in England in the expansion of Anthropology I doubt whether you would find any English anthropologist available.

I am sorry not to have seen you in U.S.A., but California is a long way away from Chicago.

Yours sincerely,
E.E. Evans-Pritchard

Letter 11

The University of Chicago
Department of Anthropology
26 February 1950

Dear Prof. Kroeber,
I am spending a quarter at the University of Chicago and on my way back to England I shall be spending from 23rd March to 30th March in New York. I would very much like to meet you & Mrs Kroeber again and, as I shall have a good number of appointments in New York, I thought that maybe you would excuse my writing some time in advance to ask you whether you could give me a time when I might call on you.

As we are both historically minded people, I wonder whether you have seen my last book, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica* (Clarendon Press). If not, I will ask them to send you a copy. It is an anthropologist's attempt to write political history. Fortes says it is 'mere literature'. I call it 'history'. Radcliffe-Brown, with great charity, calls it 'diachronic sociology'!

Yours sincerely,
E.E. Evans-Pritchard

Letter 12

[Berkeley, California]
March 6, 1950

Professor Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard
Department of Anthropology
University of Chicago
Chicago 37,
Illinois

Dear Professor Evans-Pritchard:
As you may have heard, I retire on June 30, 1950. My successor has been appointed, but will not be able to come to us before September 1951, which raises the problem of a visiting professor for the academic year that begins in September 1950 and closes in the beginning of June 1951 so far as lectures are concerned. I have been asked to cast about for a visiting professor for the period indicated, and you were naturally among those the Department would regard eminently desirable. Would it, then, be possible for you to come to us in September of this year and remain until June 1951? Before reaching even a tentative decision you obviously require information on certain points, which I shall try to give you forthwith.

The minimum salary of a full professor at the University is now $7,200; I should naturally propose a somewhat higher figure to the Administration. The normal teaching load of a professor is eight hours a week,—one 2-hour seminar for graduate students, two 3-hour lecture 'Upper Division' courses (for senior and junior undergraduates). It might be possible to offer two seminars and one lecture course. So far as subject matter goes, our policy is to leave that largely to the visitor, with the hope that he will give our students the advantages of his special knowledge. In your case a general course on Africa, with such emphasis as you desire and extending over the year would be ideal from our point of view. Then there is the course on 'Primitive Religion' which Mandelbaum and I have given in recent years, but which we cannot offer every year because of other urgent requirements. Seminar topics have differed widely. My 'History and Theory' seminar has been very elastic in this respect. It has sometimes dealt with the history of cultural anthropology, sometimes with special topics, such as Primitive Literature, Folklore, particular schools of thought, individual scholars; currently I am devoting the course to Boas, each participant contributing a report on some special phase of his work viewed in historical perspective.

If there are any further points on which you wish enlightenment, please let me know.

Hoping to hear from you in the near future, I remain
Cordially yours,
Robert H. Lowie

P.S. Quite apart from this matter, I should have sent you a line of friendly greeting before this, but I had to undergo an operation in January and, though able to resume lectures after a slight setback, am not able to do much more.

Letter 13

The University of Chicago
Chicago 37 — Illinois
Department of Anthropology
8 March 1950

Dear Prof. Lowie,
It has just struck me that Radcliffe-Brown is at a loose end & might very well accept an offer.

Yours sincerely,
E.E. Evans-Pritchard

Letter 14

[Chicago, n. d., March 1950?]
Prof. A. L. Kroeber
Dept. of Anthropology
Columbia University
New York, 27

Very many thanks. I will come to your house at 6.0 on Saturday, March 25th. My wife is not with me.

Yours sincerely,
E.E. Evans-Pritchard

Letter 15

All Souls College
Oxford
19 September 1950

Dear Prof. Kroeber,
I hope that I have not misrepresented you in this lecture ['Social Anthropology: Past and Present'].

I shall be glad of comments because I am using most of the argument again in a series of B.B.C. talks, which will be published next winter as a book [Social Anthropology].

I wrote this lecture, & in this vein, because, in addition to a dislike of positivism in all its forms, I felt that Social Anthropology in England had to be forced to reconsider the hypotheses on which it was working, which led to arid classifications & a never ending discussion about the methods of such things as biology & astrophysics. Also, its total neglect of culture has unfortunately reduced its problems to the kind of formal sociology which ends when it began.

My wife joins me in our regards to you both.

Yours sincerely,
E.E. Evans-Pritchard

Letter 16

University of Oxford
Institute of Social Anthropology
11 Keble Road
Oxford
5 November 1952

Dear Kroeber,
Many thanks for the copy of your book, 'The Nature of Culture.' I am very glad to have this, and am just sitting down to read it.

Yours sincerely,
E-P.

Letter 17

Center for Advanced Study in the Behavorial Sciences
202 Junipero Serra Boulevard - Stanford, California
16 October 1957

Dear Prof. Lowie,
I am at this Center and hope to be able to see you again. Perhaps when you get back to Berkeley you could let me know. Our home is 951 Hamilton, Palo Alto (Tel:—Davenport 4-4615).

I shall look forward to our meeting.
Yours sincerely,
E.E. Evans-Pritchard

Letter 18

University of Oxford
Institute of Social Anthropology II
Keble Road, Oxford
10 October 1957

Dear Mrs Lowie,
I have just received a letter from Leslie Spier to tell me of your husband's death. You will, I hope, allow me to express to you my sympathy. It is also a great satisfaction for me that I was able to meet him again and to enjoy such pleasant conversations with him so recently.

I would like to add that, in my opinion, no one has done more for anthropology than Dr. Lowie. When I was a student, my teacher, Dr. Seligman, told me that whatever else I read, I must read & read again 'Primitive Society', and when I did my research among the Nuer, where transport was non-existent & a choice had to be made, I decided to take with me as my only anthropological guide, that book. I have read everything else, I believe, since, that he wrote; and my admiration has increased for his learning, method, tolerance, geniality and good humour. I am afraid that such an appreciation is the only comfort merely a colleague, and a junior one, can offer.

Yours sincerely,
E.E. Evans-Pritchard

Letter 19

from E. E. Evans-Pritchard
All Souls College,
Oxford
15 November 1959

Dear Prof. Kroeber,
I have been meaning to write to you for some time but I have had a difficult last two years. Last year my mother [Dorothea Edwards] died and this year my wife [Ioma Gladys Heaton Nicholls] died also, after a long and depressing illness. I now have to cope with five children between the ages of 2 and 17.

I do wish I could meet you again for, apart from liking you as a person, I have, as you must know, a very great admiration for your works. Is there any chance of your coming to Europe again in the near future and would you come if an opportunity arose?

I am now going to bother you. I gave a lecture recently—now to be published—to a priory of Dominican monks on 'Religion and the anthropologists'.[9] It is a fragment of a chapter on the history of ideas, dealing with the attitude of sociologists and anthropologists towards religion, and more especially Christianity, from Comte & Saint-Simon till today. In it I have made the remarks about Americans I enclose with this letter. I shall be most grateful if you will, without going to any great trouble, confirm that what I have said is correct.

With kindest regards,
Yours sincerely,
E.E. Evans-Pritchard

'Morgan, the founder of Social Anthropology in America, refused to have anything to do with religion and he particularly abhorred ritualistic religion… Among the last generation of distinguished American anthropologists there was not one, as far as I know, who gave assent to any creed or who regarded all religious belief as other than illusion; and I do not know of a single person among the prominent sociologists and anthropologists of America at the present time who adheres to any faith.'

Letter 20

[Berkeley, California]
December 28, 1959

My dear Evans-Pritchard:
I had learned of the death of your charming and devoted wife, and felt very sorry for both of you.

I just spent two months, with J. Huxley, Sir Darwin, and others you know, at Chicago University, on the Darwin Centennial, and my present feeling is that I have done enough teaching, symposiuming and the like for this life. At any rate, I look forward to doing a stretch of writing, quietly at home. However, Paul Fejos, ever since his [Wenner-Gren] Foundation got the castle [Burg Wartenstein] in Austria, has been after me to visit there for a summer fortnight with a group of Europeans, and while I have so far not agreed, the possibility is still open if my health holds.

As to religion, I have sometimes thought my frequent study of it may have been a surrogate for not having one of my own to practice and believe; my parents were both agnostics. How completely American anthropologists in general are wholly without religion or profession of it, I do not know; but it is certainly very common. I did hear that the late Frank Speck of Philadelphia was once converted by the evangelist Billy Sunday; but this may have been just teasing by his friends. I do not personally recall any American anthropologist who is an attending member of a Protestant church. Some few may belong without going, out of respect for their still living or dead parents.

As to Morgan, I recall his anti-Catholic or perhaps anti-Latin remarks when he travelled Europe late in life—Leslie White published excerpts from his diary in Rochester Hist. Soc. Publs. 16:219–389, 1937. See also, on your question, White's 'Morgan's attitude toward religion and science', *American Anthropologist* 46:218–230, 1944. If I run across any exceptions to your generalization I will write you.

Of course there have been American Catholic Clericals who have been professional anthropologists, like the late Monsignor Cooper and Father Ewing of Fordham College.

Best luck to you,
Alfred L. Kroeber

Letter 21

All Souls College
Oxford
14 March 1960

Dear Prof. Kroeber,
I am sorry that I shall not be with you at the Wenner-Gren conference. It comes just at the end of my children's annual holiday & coincides with their return to school, for both of which I am now solely responsible. Even if this were not so, I would be disinclined to attend, as it seems to me that such conferences are a waste of time, & also of money, which might be spent to better purpose on research.

9 Evans-Pritchard delivered the Aquinas Lecture on 7 March 1959 at Hawkesyard Priory, Oxford. See Evans-Pritchard 1962:29–45.

I trust that on your way back to U.S.A. you will pay us a visit. It will be much appreciated by all at Oxford.

Yours very sincerely,
E.E. E-P

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11

Evans-Pritchard and Marett

Or how E-P found a job

David Shankland

That there exists no biography of Edward Evans-Pritchard has perhaps added to his allure. There are short autobiographical pieces where he summarizes aspects of his own career in attractive, even light-hearted fashion (Evans-Pritchard 1973a, 1973b). But there is no weighty, blow-by-blow account, no detailed understanding of the different dilemmas or difficulties that he may have faced at any particular stage in his career of the kind, for instance, that Young has started with regard to Malinowski (2004).[1]

E-P's transcendent monographs, which shaped generations of social anthropologists here and overseas, exist therefore without the detailed contextualization that might render their making prosaic. His legendary role as the head of the Institute in Oxford, where he genially supervised so many of the next generation, reinforces their importance. Even the posthumous collection of essays on the *History of Anthropological Thought* (1981), though occasionally harshly criticized (Clifford 1983; Stocking 1983), to my mind helps to cement this great reputation once more. Through reading, and rereading them, one can gain a sense of his final lecture courses, surveying three hundred years of intellectual thought from across the European continent and from his many decades of experience as teacher, fieldworker and writer.

What though, of his early years, before he achieved such world renown? How did he become an anthropologist at a time when there were so very few openings for university teaching? Was his way straightforward? Whilst the recipient of the Humphrey Wanley Bodleian Library Fellowship, which was tenured at Exeter College, I came across a number of letters in Marett's files that shed considerable light on his early steps toward gainful employment, stimulating me to look in more detail at this period in E-P's life.[2] I offer them here as a small contribution toward that biographical appreciation that surely will be produced before too long. That we have such letters indeed is all the more important in that as is widely known, E-P himself burnt his papers before his death, and later much of the professional correspondence in the Oxford Institute was cleared out as part of a regular tidying up exercise in the 1970s (Apthorpe: personal communication).

Malinowski and the founding of modern anthropology

This account also has a wider purpose. Over the past few years, we have at the Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI) been examining afresh the history of anthropology, and its influence within it. During the course of these discussions and conferences, I have gradually come to realize that the conventional trope, that Malinowski should be regarded as the fountainhead of modern anthropology is, if not quite wrong, then at least so oversimplified as to be grossly misleading. That Malinowski had a great influence is hardly in doubt: however, it was an influence that has to be understood in the light of the already developed and developing centres of anthropology in Cambridge, Oxford and London.

Perhaps the clearest way to conceptualize this is to reconsider Adam Kuper's *Anthropology and Anthropologists*, a very fine text, one that I have used for study and teaching over many years, indeed the only one that I have carefully read every edition of as it becomes successively renewed

1 There is, it is true, an intellectual overview by Douglas. Yet, this has few details of his life, and was remarked upon by Gellner (1981:xv–xvi) as being too abstract to be of use. There are obituaries, such as by Barnes (1987) in the *Proceedings of the British Academy*, some extended, such as that by Beidelman (1974). The closest is perhaps the synoptic account by Burton (1992), which deserves to be better known, but looks mainly at the development of E-P's writings chronologically. The recent essay by Larsen in his *Slain God* (2014) is also extremely stimulating on the question of E-P's religious beliefs.

2 I would like to thank the Rector, Professor Sir Rick Trainor, the Bursar, William Jensen, Dr Chris Fletcher, Keeper of Special Collections, and the Fellows of Exeter College for their very kind hospitality, which has made this an extraordinarily enjoyable and stimulating project to be part of. I would also like to thank the Exeter College Archivist, Penelope Baker, for her kind assistance. I acknowledge with gratitude permission to publish this correspondence, which is held at Exeter College.

(2014). However, I now believe that the emphasis in the way that the story is told is wrong. The first chapter of the book gives pride of place to Malinowski, as if he is the beginning of the story of the 'British' school of anthropologists. Radcliffe-Brown is given the second chapter. From the outset, this gives a profoundly misleading impression of the chronological development of the intellectual roots of the modern discipline, an impression that is only reinforced by presenting as the frontispiece to the book a picture of the author kneeling next to Malinowski's grave.

In fact, Radcliffe-Brown (1881–1955) was older than Malinowski (1884–1945), and formulated his ideas in anthropology before Malinowski had presented his. Nor can it be said that, though of course they knew each other, Radcliffe-Brown came subsequently to base his conception of anthropology on Malinowski's. Radcliffe-Brown, shaped not only by his study of Durkheim, but also by his socialism, preoccupation with science, interaction with Rivers and Haddon in Cambridge, and indeed his aesthetic modernism, developed a discipline that is in many ways antithetical in style to Malinowski's.[3] To put this point simply, Radcliffe-Brown's codification of anthropology would have not differed very much even if Malinowski had not become an anthropologist.

Kuper doubtless realizes this. However, in order to permit this realization to show through his work, Kuper would have had to allow that anthropology was developing already in Oxford and Cambridge, and before that in the RAI, in a more dynamic way than is commonly understood, even before Malinowski founded his seminar. When this is realized, Malinowki's comparatively brief tenure at the LSE can be seen in its true light, as a profoundly important contribution, but one that fed into a discipline whose intellectual shape was already forming in multiple ways and in multiple locations.

This is evident if we consider the shape that Social Anthropology eventually took as it consolidated after the Second World War. Malinowski having first gone to the US, and then died in 1942, the leadership of anthropology passed to E-P at Oxford. Social Anthropology as a distinct discipline then became codified through the creation of the Association of Social Anthropologists in 1946. Radcliffe-Brown became the life-president, and E-P its chairman and secretary. Thus, the way that social anthropology came to fuse together in such a coherent way throughout the second half of the twentieth century may be directly linked to Oxford, Radcliffe-Brown and E-P. Indeed, as Gellner (1958) remarked when Firth eventually prepared a posthumous festschrift in Malinowski's name (1957), anthropology's leading practitioners took pains to distance themselves from the functionalism that Malinowski had developed. This can only be understood if one realizes that the anthropology that came to be forged after the Second World War was far from the one advocated by him.

Leach, Marett and Myres

A well-known essay by Leach, 'Glimpses of the unmentionable in the history of British anthropology' (1984), like Kuper's account, has come to be widely accepted and further illustrates the way the history of the discipline needs readdressing. Leach's article was part of our undergraduate reading at Edinburgh, and later I too used it for teaching. But, attractive and waspish though his style may be, Leach's assertion of the supposed snobbishness of Oxford and Cambridge in excluding anthropology from their midst is, I now realize, misleading. Leach's essay helped to inculcate and reinforce a proud sense of outsider status, and perhaps reflects it. In fact, though, the 'proto'-modern anthropologists at Oxford, that is, those who prepared the way for the first fully professional appointment in anthropology of Radcliffe-Brown in 1938, were far from outsiders. Marett, the chief protagonist here and protector of E-P, was an aristocrat who could trace back his Norman heritage on Jersey for nearly a millennium and was elected unanimously Rector of his college, Exeter. John Linton Myres, who was later knighted for his services to anthropology, with whom he worked closely, was also an Englishman who had been (just as E-P) to Winchester. Anthropology's two champions could hardly be more 'insider'.

Marett describes in his autobiography (1941) how, as a young tutor, he had developed a strong interest in anthropology alongside his work as a philosophy tutor. He was seemingly stimulated to publish by Myres, when asked for a paper to deliver to the Ipswich meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1895 (Myres 2012). Growing ever more enthused through his wide reading, eventually, he took over the Readership in Social Anthropology left vacant after the retirement of Tylor. Marett then founded the Oxford Anthropology Society, taught the Diploma in Anthropology, and ran the small Department of Anthropology that supported it for several decades. Excelling in university politics, he prepared the ground for the appointment of a chair, becoming Acting Professor for one year until Radcliffe-Brown's appointment in 1938. Radcliffe-Brown stayed in the chair until his retirement in 1948, though he was absent throughout the much of the war in South America. Marett himself died in 1943, whilst still Rector, exhausted by the war and in mourning for the death of his son in action. Evans-Pritchard took over the vacant chair in 1946.

A similar case can be made for Marett's great companion in this enterprise, J.L. Myres, who was first secretary to the anthropology committee in 1906. By his own account, even

3 I am most grateful to Dr Isak Niehaus (Brunel) for his kindness in sharing his thoughts on Radcliffe-Brown with me, and also for drawing our attention to R-B's modernism at a seminar he gave at the RAI on 13 March 2019.

when still a very young man he had declared his interest in society, rather than the texts of antiquity. After graduation in 1900, he was offered several fellowships, and then the founding Chair of Classics at New College in 1912. Though not as skilled as Marett in university politics, he was a stalwart supporter of anthropology throughout his long career, becoming President of the RAI and the first editor of *Man*, the Royal Anthropological Institute's popular journal of anthropology, and was the founder of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences.

The correspondence

Evidence to support these contentions is, to my mind, also supplied by the letters offered here, held in the archives of Exeter College. Marett did not keep systematic files of correspondence, though his must have been voluminous, and it perhaps is an indication of the worth that he gives to E-P that he appears to have kept a substantial part at least of the correspondence that passed between them. Though it is not complete, there are letters both to and from E-P at that crucial stage after he graduates, and before he has found his first lectureship, that is, in today's terms, whilst E-P is taking on a series of post-doc positions. The outline chronology that emerges from the letters may be summed up in the form of a table.

A summary chronology of the life of E-P based on the internal evidence of the papers in the Exeter College Archive

1902	born: 21 September;
1921	matriculates at Exeter College, 18 October;
1924	graduates with a second-class degree in history;
1926–31	four expeditions on behalf of the government of Anglo-Egyptian Sudan;
1929	offered tutorship of the children of the Maharaj Kumar of Kutch, a friend of Marett;
1927–32	lecturer at the London School of Economics;
1931–2	hon. secretary of the RAI;
1932–4	Professor of Sociology in the University of Cairo, gives up post in June 1934;
1934	occasional lectures in Oxford, arranged by Marett; nothing further possible at LSE because of tension with Malinowski;
1935	appointed lecturer of African studies for five years by Marett, lapses in 1940–1 (but E-P maintains his Universities Superannuation Scheme contributions by paying both the employer and employee component; hopes to take over Marett's readership but worried that it will interfere with the possibilities of gaining a chair); wishes to retain good links with Elliot Smith and Perry at UCL;
1942	E-P lectureship is renewed by Rockefeller Foundation;
1942	political officer to the Alawis (and other war-service);
1943	death of Marett, 18 February;
1946	appointed Professor of Anthropology at All Souls in succession to Radcliffe-Brown;
1956	appointed Fellow of the British Academy;
1973	dies, 11 September.

In sum, this archive confirms that E-P came up to Exeter in 1921, where Marett was his tutor. He appears to have had rather a lively time as an undergraduate, as his record card – also in the archive – shows him being sent down for two weeks, for 'drunkenness, foul language, and striking coll[ege] porter, April 30, 1923. Side whiskers & "labour" red-flag agitation.' (Item 1). However, he appears to have settled down subsequently before his finals, and graduated in Greek and Modern History in 1924.

E-P himself, in both conversation and writing, was fond of recounting Oxford's dismay at his departure for the LSE after graduating. But if Marett held any rancour at E-P's going, he did not show it. As this correspondence illustrates, certainly from 1929 onwards, he tried to help E-P find a job in several ways, writing to him with suggestions, and eventually providing him with a reference for the professorship in Egypt that E-P has been put up to, by his own account, by Elliot Smith at UCL. We see too that Marett also helped E-P by arranging for publication of his first book, the seminal *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (1937) with the Clarendon Press. Eventually, Marett was able to bring him into his own department, first as a lecturer, then a proper appointment as a lecturer. In the year before he died, he even helped to sort out E-P's USS contributions whilst he was away at the war. In other words, he acted as an effective patron, friend and confidant to E-P as he was seeking to establish himself.

The first half of the correspondence shows what might have been. A friend of Marett's, the Maharaj of Kutch, decided that he needed a tutor for his son. The Maharaj's aim was to have his son prepared for the common entrance examination, so that he could go to a suitable public school in England and then into the Indian Civil Service. Marett writes to E-P in 1929 to inform him of this opportunity. E-P is clearly torn between the possibilities of exploring Hindu culture and carrying on with his African work. The Maharaj offers a house, horse and car, as well as £600 per year. It is also likely that the work that E-P was undertaking in Africa was precarious, renewed only from year to year by the government, and E-P gives a sense of not wishing to turn down an opportunity that would certainly be a great deal better than nothing. As we will see, eventually E-P decides that the Maharaj's position would not permit him sufficient time to conduct fieldwork, and would leave him disadvantaged in the search for a permanent university position. It also appears that the emolument he could obtain from the government research was greater than the Maharaj was prepared to offer.

The second half of the archive continues the same theme of E-P's search for a job. He writes to ask for a reference from Marett for the Egyptian Chair, a letter which is interesting in particular because E-P provides a curriculum vitae summarizing where he feels he stands in his career. It is only two years later that E-P decided to resign the chair in Egypt. He returns to Britain to look for employment. However, in 1934, Seligman now old and tired can do no more for E-P. He writes to Marett (Item 8) asking him to take responsibility for his old student, all the more so as he is about to retire, leaving Malinowski in sole control at the LSE.

Answering immediately to the call from Seligman to rally round, Marett arranged first for E-P to deliver lectures in his department, over which he enjoys 'absolute rule' (|Item 21), then finally to take up a lectureship, so that for the first time E-P had some guarantee of full-time employment in England. The war then interceded. The last letter to Marett from E-P is announcing his job as political officer to the Alawi state in Syria, saying that he wants 'to do some fighting'.

The final letters in the archive consist of a cordial exchange with the new Rector Barber, when Barber congratulates him on being elected to the British Academy. E-P himself recalls Barber warmly, saying that it was he who insisted that he take up a Cambridge readership so that he could wait until the chair in anthropology became clear. This he eventually obtained. E-P's response is to acknowledge the role of Exeter College in founding anthropology at the university.

The detailed story that the archive at Exeter tells us begins with E-Ps record card. It reads, verbatim, as follows:

Item 1: E-P's Exeter College record card

Evans-Pritchard, Edward Evans. M.A. (1929)
Sept. 21 1902. 2nd son Rev. T.J. E-P.
B[orn]. Crowborough, Sussex: ed[ucated]. Winchester [School].
Add[ress] Calverton Rectory, Story, Stratford, Bucks.
M[articulated] Oct. 18, 1921. Hon. Schol. (History).
T[utor] Marett.
History. Previous Dec. 1921. Greek History March 1922
Mod. History 1924. Class II.I, † 11.9.73
Sent down a fortnight & deprived of his status as hon. scholar for drunkenness, foul language, and striking coll[ege] porter, April 30, 1923. Side whiskers & 'labour' red-flag agitation. Not attractive. Worked well in last year & scholars gown restored in last term.
8.6.29 MA. Professor of Social Anthropology, 1946.
Fellow All Souls, F.B.A. Kt.

Other than the interesting record of his kicking over the traces as an undergraduate, it is also noticeable that on the card at least Marett is down as his tutor, whereas E-P himself recalled that his tutor was Ackermann, whom he did not like. Presumably, this is a reference to Marett being Moral Tutor, responsible for the well-being of the undergraduate body.

The dozen or so letters which follow trace the possibility of becoming a tutor in Kutch. Kutch was an Indian state on the coast that eventually merged with the new Indian Republic in 1948. The Maharaj appears to have been an enlightened prince who sought to modernize the country, and pass on this sense of public duty to his children. He visited Marett in the Channel Islands, where they appear to have become close and played a great deal of golf. In his autobiography, Marett remarks that he arranged for four head of cattle to be shipped to Kutch, which the Maharaj had presumably admired and desired as part of his modernizing initiatives. Marett is prepared to go to considerable lengths to attempt to help him, as the correspondence shows.

E-P in turn is drawn to the possibility sufficiently to make it very difficult for him to turn the opportunity down flat. Though nothing came of this venture, the correspondence is also revealing as to the impression that E-P had made not only upon Marett, but also the Maharaj.

Item 2: Marett to Evans-Pritchard

October 23rd, 1929

My dear Evans-Pritchard
The Maharaj Kumar, heir-apparent of Kutch, has a small princeling, rising ten, who is to be educated up to the standard of an English public school, probably Cheltenham, during the next three or four years. The salary would be pretty good, say £600 a year or more, a matter of negotiation, plus all sorts of allowances including car, passage money and so on. Kutch is a native State, very healthy, and on the coast, where the M.K. resides during the summer never more than 90 degrees temperature. He wants someone who isn't just fresh from the Schools. Henry Balfour suggested your name to me because he through that something really good might be done with a study of the native life there. Would you think of taking it? If so, you would have to see the M.K. at the Hyde Park Hotel without delay, as he is leaving for India about November 12th. An Exeter man, J.H. Smith, is his secretary, a very nice fellow who would put you wise about all the details, in fact you could write to him at the Hyde Park Hotel and fix up details if you thought well of the suggestion. Personally, I think it would be rather a lark. The M.K. himself is a proper sahib, a really nice man and a good friend of mine. I saw a lot of him lately in Jersey.

I was going to ask you to stay here for your Paper, but I understand that you are being put up by Balsdon.

We look forward to your talk.

Yours sincerely
Rector

Item 3: Advertisement for the position of tutor to the son of the Maharaj of Kutch

OXFORD UNIVERSITY APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

40, Broad Street, Oxford.

E618/29 Confidential 4.10.29

A tutor is required for the son of the Maharaj Kumar Shri Vijayarajji of Kutch (India), probably with effect from January 1930, or even earlier.

He will be required to coach him for the Common Entrance of an English Public School for three years in India, and perhaps to look after the boy for his first year at a Public School.

The salary will not be less than £600 per annum, and the tutor will have a free furnished house and conveyances and a free passage out. A married man would not be objected to provided that "his wife is also well fitted to help the boy along".

A hill station for the hot weather cannot be guaranteed but there are buildings on the sea coast "which is quite as cool as a hill station and very healthy". There are three or four European officers in the State, some of whom are married. It is hoped that the boy will subsequently enter the Indian Civil Service.

The Maharaj Kumar Sahib is leaving for India on Nov. 12th and would like to interview candidates in London before that date.

If you would care to be considered for this post, will you please let me know.

E.A. GRESSELL
SECRETARY

Item 4: Evans-Pritchard to Marett

[*c.*25 October 1929]
4 Fitzwilliam Avenue
Richmond
Surrey

Dear Dr Marett,

It is very good of you to remember me, and to write to me about the chance of going to Kutch. I have written to Smith to suggest that we meet to discuss the matter more thoroughly.

You will understand that I do not want to give up my African work unless I have freedom to carry on researches in India at the same time as tutorial work.

However, I would like to talk the matter over with Smith & then come down to Oxford to see you to have your advice & to lay the whole position before you for your opinion on it. Meanwhile, I will see Smith first.

I am looking forward to seeing you on Thursday Friday.

Once again with many thanks.
Yours sincerely
E.E. Evans-Pritchard.

Item 5: Evans-Pritchard to Marett

[*c.*28 October 1929]
Sunday
4 Fitzwilliam Avenue
Richmond
Surrey

Dear Dr Marett

I saw Smith & the Maharaj Kumar this morning. The job is a whole time one at very low remuneration & no possibility of either writing up my African notes or of making any anthropological observations in Kutch. I should get £540 (approximately) – 600 rupees per month – & out of this I have to pay my food and service & clothes & other incidental expenses. It is true that I should get a car & a horse but these hardly add to one's income. I should not however mind this stipend were it possible to do tutorial work in regular hours so that I should have part of the day free for my own research. The Maharaj assures me however that this will be more or less impossible as the boys will live (two of them) in my house & I will have sole charge over them, a charge which will really make me responsible for 24 hours a day (on his own statement). Obviously in this case my anthropological work would go to the wall & at the end of three years I should be in a completely "fag-end" condition vis a vis anthropological appointments or any other.

I have told Smith that I would consult you before giving a reply to the Maharaj & I shall be glad if you will let me have your opinion.

Many thanks for your kindness & apologies for troubling you.

Yours very sincerely
E.E. Evans-Pritchard.

Item 6: Marett to the Maharaj

29.10.29

My dear Maharaj Kumar,

Firstly about Evans-Pritchard. He wrote to me as if about to decline the post at Kutch, partly because of the salary but chiefly I think because he would have so little time for his private work. I am sending him on your letter, however, and I daresay it will make all the

difference, especially if he comes, as I am inviting him to do, for a talk with me here.

Secondly, Mr Barber has only just heard from the Headmaster of Shrewsbury. He thinks it quite possible to have your son, as at least one Indian, the Thakor Sahib of Palitana, was an unqualified success. The only trouble is that the Headmaster is not likely to remain in office so late as 1932 and cannot therefore be sure about the attitude of the new Headmaster. However, he will be very glad to see you if you care to visit the School. Thirdly, I have had no reply from the Headmaster of Harrow, a somewhat astonishing fact if he is not away. I am writing by this post to ask him at least to acknowledge my letter and to communicate with you directly to save time.

Yours sincerely
[Marett]

Item 7: Marett to the Maharaj

30.10.29

My dear Maharaj of Kumar
I feel that we are such good friends that you could read anything of mine, even if marked confidential, and no harm would be done. As to Evans-Pritchard, please understand that I myself think your offer quite reasonable, but of course cannot answer for what Evans-Pritchard might think of it. I fancy that he has some means of his own, and that therefore he must be especially tempted before he consents to give up the free life of one who goes out into the wilds to explore, as he did in Africa. However this may be, I shall see him tomorrow and will lay before him your very generous proposals. I cannot tell in the least what he will do, in fact I should suspect that the only drawback to him is that he is rather independent-minded and not very ready to submit himself to collar-work of any description. However, we shall see what happens. I have not yet heard from Harrow.

Yours sincerely
[Marett].

Item 8: Marett to Smith

01.11.29

My dear Smith,
Firstly, Harrow is no go. See the enclosed. Secondly, I interviewed Evans-Pritchard last night. He is going to see you on Sunday. I do not know what he will decide, but my own impression is that he has got a certain obligation towards the Soudan Government to go on with his work there and will in end feel that the call of duty is in that direction. He is getting about £850 from them and would probably get more if he became their regular anthropologist. I hear incidentally from one of the authorities there that he has given great satisfaction. In some ways, then, it would be a pity if he dropped a line of work likely to be profitable to himself as well as scientifically. For the rest, I am not quite sure after all whether he is the right man for you, as you want someone who would have his heart in the education of the boys, while Evans-Pritchard is really interested chiefly in his anthropology. If therefore he went out there might be disappointment on both sides. I have not interfered to make him decide one way or another, but I thought it only right that you should have my mature judgement.

Thirdly, the Headmaster of Oaklands School, Jersey, C.F.H. Crawshaw, an Exeter man, for whom I got the appointment, is giving up at Christmas before, through no fault of his own, Lord Trent who established the School is winding it up in order to divert the funds to another charitable purpose. Crawhaw has a wife with a small baby and I fear that the latter may be an objection to their thinking of Kutch. If however he would take the job on he would be simply ideal. He has all the experience, is a very good sportsman, and has a charming wife (a relation of our Senior Tutor, Barber) who thoroughly understands the management and teaching of small boys. It might be worth writing off or telegraphing to him, and you can use my name freely, but I am not sure that he would take on work in India as he thinks of setting up a preparatory School of his own. Fourthly, Gabbitas & Thring in London ought to provide you with names to choose from.

Yours sincerely
[Marett]

Item 9: Evans-Pritchard to Marett

[*c.*6 November 1929]
4 Fitzwilliam Avenue
Richmond
Surrey

Dear Dr Marett,
I told the Maharaj Kumar that I really could not see my way to come out to Kutch in the Spring as I felt that I was under an obligation to the Sudan government & because my research work in the Sudan would not be completed until August. The Maharaj Kumar was very nice about it & suggested that I should come out next autumn instead (you must have given me a very good recommendation!).

I told him that I should be very glad to do this – for a year at any rate – & thanked him for making this extension.

In August my Zande studies will have reached an end and I have no particular wish at present to

undertake a long intensive study of the Nuer Tribe through their own language. If I can get anyone to take my place I should be glad of a holiday & an opportunity to work up my Zande notes & catch up with my reading. This opportunity would be given to me in Kutch even if I fail to make any observations (I mean really thorough ones) on Hindu life & customs. Consequently, I feel that if the Maharaj can wait I shall be very glad to go to Kutch next Autumn. It will, of course, be necessary to make various preliminary arrangements. These I could make soon & if the Maharaj is prepared to keep his offer open I will let him know by Cable as soon as it is possible whether I can get out to India by next winter.

He tells me that a wait of six months or so will really make very little difference to him.

I wonder, if you are writing to the Maharaj Kumar, whether you would be so kind as to put my desire to go out to Kutch in (say) next November before him & to urge his acquiescence. I am meeting him once again on Nov. 11th just before he leaves England. I dare say that a letter from you – whom he admires so much – will put him in the right frame of mind or rather help to confirm his present frame of mind.

At present there will be three lines of activity for me next August.

1) To go out to Kutch for a year at any rate & perhaps for two years.

2) To continue working in the Sudan – probably with much better financial terms than I have received so far.

3) To come down to Oxford & there write up a book on the Azande so as to have something published in the event of an anthropological job occurring in the next two or three years.

I really don't know which of these three courses to adopt. At present, I rather favour Kutch. Naturally I shall always be glad of your advice & am very grateful for your interest.

With many thanks.
Yours very sincerely
E.E. Evans-Pritchard

P.S. I send a Copy of Man which has an article of mine just out.

Item 10: Marett to Evans-Pritchard

November 7th, 1929

Dear Evans-Pritchard,
It is news to me that it would suit the Maharaj Kumar well enough if you deferred coming out to Kutch until October or November next. If so, I don't think it would be at all a bad thing for you to take a spell out there, even if you could not do much anthropology in the time. On the other hand it would be only fair to the M.K. to tell him that you were ready to call the deal off if he can at this eleventh hour get someone ready for the full time originally proposed. I say this because I believe the Master of University is proposing someone to him, though I know nothing exactly about it as it is not taking place through me. Meanwhile I am writing to the Maharaj, putting before him your desire to go out to Kutch, say next November.

Thanks ever so much for the article in "Man", which is extremely sound and interesting.

Yours sincerely
[Marett]

Item 11: Marett to Smith

November 7th 1929

Dear Smith,
I enclose a letter from Evans-Pritchard. I don't think that I am violating any privacy in letting you see it. It was news to me that you could afford to wait so long for a tutor. If you can, than I daresay Evans-Pritchard would fill the bill very well. Has anything come of the Master of University's endeavour to find a man?

Yours sincerely
[Marett]

Item 12: Smith to Marett

Hyde Park Hotel
Knightsbridge
London SW1
Nov 11th 1929

My dear Dr Marett,
I return you with many thanks Evans-Pritchard's letter to you. M.K.S. has had a long and interesting talk with him this morning. It is quite possible that he may take up the Kutch work after his next spell in the Soudan.

With our thanks

I remain
Yours sincerely
I H Smith.

Ugh. Looks like a rough sea tomorrow.

Item 13: The Maharaj of Kutch to Marett

S.S. Viceroy of India,
Gulf of Suez
November 21. 1929

My dear Dr Marett
I really don't know how to thank you for the genuine interest that you have been taking in the future up-bringing of my son. You have been a tower of strength and one I can rely upon with confidence.

I have decided on Cheltenham, and have informed Mr Hardy accordingly. You would perhaps like to know why Cheltenham compared favourably in my eyes with Shrewsbury. I will explain in my next.

I like that man Evans-Pritchard quite well. He seems to me a strong character with plenty of originality – I mean, quite out of the ordinary run of graduates whom one meets. However, I begin to think that what attracts him to Kutch most is not so much the offer of favourable terms or the art of teaching, but another opening for his favourite hobby. I do not doubt for a minute that the fellow will not make a fine effort – but is it in him? If he were as successful and as keen on looking after and training the young mind as he is on anthropology, I would take him up. After all, teaching is a study of the mind of man, and it is perhaps closely associated with the work he is so fond of. I daresay he would take to it all right. He wants to come about September.

Now I want your advice before I write to him again. He is your pupil, and you know him best – as they say, inside out. I know I shall get your frank opinion. I quite understand myself what it is to express an opinion about a third person, however well one may know him. After thinking the whole matter out, I now think a few months' delay will not, in a way, have an ultimate ill effect on the boy's joining the school a little later.

I very much regret I was not able to send my photos to your son, as the parcel of photos sent from Kutch never reached me and I doubt if it ever will do so.

Well, I saw Le Gallais in London, and again in Marseilles – and probably you will discuss more about his trip when you play another round of gold with him at La Moye.

Please remember me very kindly to your family, and with my kindest regards.

I am
Yours very sincerely
Shri Vijayarajji
[of Kutch]

PS When you give me your advice about E. Pritchard, please do not feel your responsibility too great.
If you would sound him & find out whether he has made up his mind to come to Kutch in Sept, it will also help matters.

There is no question that my terms are far better than what he gets now. He also believes this now, but not perhaps fully. Well, the taste of that pudding will be in the easting of it, if he ever comes to us.

Item 14: Item 14: Marret to the Maharaj

December 9th, 1929

My dear Maharaj,
I am glad that it is settled that your boy is going to Cheltenham. I do not think that you could do better for him. About Evans-Pritchard, I told you already that he is a very clever man, with considerable originality. He is a man of honour, and would do his best, I am sure for your son, if he took on the job, though undoubtedly his interest is not in teaching so much as in research. At the present state of the negotiations you would have, I think, to break with him if you did not want him, as I do not know how far each side is bound by its mutual promises. If, however, you have definitely broken with him at any time and want me to look out for someone else, I shall be very glad to do so.

I feel that you and I contracted a real friendship, and shall always look back with pleasure to the time when we were together. Who knows, we may meet again, perhaps in Jersey perhaps in Kutch?

Yours sincerely
[Marett]

Item 15: The Maharaj to Marett

Telegram 10 January 1930:
EVANS PRITCHARD UNWILLING STOP YOU KNOW FULLY WELL ALL ABOUT MY REQUIREMENTS TERMS ETC IF YOU COULD SUGGEST NEW NAME WRITING FULL PARTICULARS I SHALL FEEL GRATEFUL OBLIGED STOP … MAHARAJA KUTCH

The trail then goes quiet again, until E-P desires to take up the chair in Cairo. Marett immediately does what is necessary.

Item 16: Evans-Pritchard to Marett

Sept 29th [1931]

Dear Dr Marett,
I shall be very grateful if you will give me a recommendation for the chair of Sociology at Cairo for which I am going to apply.

There does not appear to be much chance of getting a job in England for a long time to come and if I can get this professorship at Cairo it will give me three years in which to work up my notes & write a book or two.

At the same time, I shall be able to commence a study of Islamic institutions which I have long been interested in.

I shall be very glad if you will help me again as you have so kindly done in the past.

Yours sincerely
E.E. Evans-Pritchard.

PS I think you know all there is to know about me.

Common of Winchester College: Hon Scholar at Exeter College, Oxford: M. A. (Hons): M.A. (Oxon), Honours Schools of modern history, PhD (London) in the Faculty of Science (Ethnology and Social Anthropology).

1926–1931 four expeditions on behalf of the Government of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan to make intensive studies of the Azande, & Nuer tribes & to survey several other tribes.

1927–1932 lecturer at the London School of Economics & Political Science: 1931–1932 Hon Secretary to the Royal Anthropological Institute.

Publications About 15 papers in scientific journals.

Item 17: Evans-Pritchard to Marett

38 Mecklenburgh Square
W.C.1.
Tel. Terminus 5941

Dear Dr Marett

I had written to you before but after seeing you at the Exeter dinner I threw away my letter & am therefore writing again.

Ever so many thanks for giving me a recommendation for the Cairo Chair. I don't suppose the thing really exists – everything is nebulous in Egyptian scholarship & administration. If it does exist I don't suppose I shall get it.

Many thanks for telling me about the Oxford job of teaching probationers about African societies. I expect that Rattray will take the post.

I am meeting the Sudan Government today & when I see you at Oxford I would like to talk about my further plans with you.

I enjoyed your speech and the dinner very much.

Yours sincerely
E.E. Evans Pritchard.

Item 18: Marett to Evans-Pritchard

June 22nd 1932

Dear Evans-Pritchard,

Herewith my screed, which I understand from Miss Mare meets with your approval as regards length. If proofs are to be sent shortly, my address until October will be Le Haule Manor, St. Aubine, Jersey, C.1.

I long to hear how you got on in Egypt. It is the sort of job that would have amused me greatly – at least, so it seems from a distance. When I lectured the other day at the School of Economics, your friends there said all sorts of nice things about you.

Yours sincerely
[Marett]

Item 19: Marett to Evans-Pritchard

April 21st 1934

Dear Evans-Pritchard

Many thanks for sending me the two reprints from Sudan Notes. I find a lot of good stuff in them and it is all very clearly written.

I hear from Miss Mare that you are thinking of leaving your Egyptian job. It was good experience for you, I think, but you never contemplated it as a permanency. The only bother is to find you something good in its place. Count on me to help you all I can, but there is not much going at the moment. My elder son, for example, has been casting about in vain for the last year. Your claims, however, are stronger.

Yours sincerely
[Marett]

Item 20: Seligman to Marett

Cambridge 1753 5/5/34

The Old Granary
Cambridge

Dear Marett,

Evans-Pritchard is applying for a Leverhulme grant & is I think likely to get it. He hopes to get among the Galla, failing these he might I suppose tackle the Anuak.

But he won't be leaving England till November (I expect you've heard that he gives up Cairo in June) & having spent much time as he's wanted working up his material on magic (first class; I've seen a good deal of it) he wants to give some lectures in the autumn term. He is quite prepared to do this gratis. Owing to the friction between him & Malinowski I can't do anything for him at the School of Economics, but I know how excellent his material is & wonder whether you would care for him to give a short course to your students. Let me say that this is my suggestion not his, he wrote suggesting he might give some lectures somewhere but left suggestions to me.

I write now hoping you'll consider possibilities & perhaps there'll be the opportunity of a word with you on Thursday.

I shall be home tomorrow night.

Being 60 now & none too fit I'm giving up my job at London at end of this term and meanwhile am not doing very much.

With my best regards
Yours sincerely
Ch. Seligman.

Item 21: Marett to Evans-Pritchard

May 8th 1934

Dear Evans-Pritchard

This is more or less of a dittograph, but I addressed my first letter to you vaguely, and Miss Mare has since given me your true hiding place. I hear from Seligman that you might like to give a course of lectures in Oxford in the October term – at any rate up to the middle of November, or whenever you propose to go off on your next venture. I write at once to say that, so far as my Department is concerned, over which I exercise an absolute rule, I can assure you that you will be welcome, though I have no money with which to pay you. On the other hand the Committee for Anthropology will not meet till early in June, and they will be asked by me to appoint you formally. Even they, however, cannot offer you much, if anything; though Seligman says that that does not matter. Meanwhile I cannot guarantee that there will be many students, but there will be some.

Another thing. My son, J. R. Marett (Lieut.-Commander, R. N. Diploma Anthrop. With Distinction, B.Sc) would like the reversion of your job, if he has not meanwhile got something else. He is a very good lecturer, and altogether would fill the bill, I believe, unless paternalism blinds me. I asked the Oxford Appointments to make enquiries about how to apply and to whom; but perhaps you could tell me more easily, and the sooner the better.

Yours sincerely

Item 22: Seligman to Marett

9th May 1934

Court Leys
Toot Baldon
Oxford

Dear Marett

Thanks for your note. I am very glad indeed that you will fix up some lectures for Evans-Pritchard; I think that he will be delighted to hear from you about it.

As for your boy, I am afraid I am already pledged to support Hocart, so, sympathetic as I am, I don't see that I can be of any assistance. I don't know if the job is advertised yet. Brander generally has these things in charge & I know that there are at least three candidates. Perhaps we shall have an opportunity of discussing matters tomorrow afternoon. I have to go to town now (so my secretary will sign this) & am pretty busy tomorrow, but I hope to arrange for the car to meet me at Reading so that I can reach Oxford between 4.40 & 5.

Very sorry to hear that Frazer is not well enough to be present.

Yours sincerely
pp. C.G. Seligman

Item 23: Marett to Penniman

Dear Penniman

June 9th 1934

Evans-Pritchard's address in Egypt is:
86, Selim el Anwal,
Hilmiyat el Zeitoun
Cairo

Hadn't you better inform him that we have put him down provisionally for a course next term and try to fix up precise title and time? He can use my lecture room except at my advertised hours and Tuesdays at eleven.

Yours sincerely
[Marett]

Item 24: Evans-Pritchard to Marett

Royal Societies Club
St James Street
S.W.1
3rd October, 1934

Dear Dr Marett,

I would like your advice about the content of my lectures at Oxford this year. Do you think it would be better to give an account of Zande Magic giving as I go along an account of the sociological problems which the material presents and showing how it bears upon the various theories of Primitive Mentality or to give an account of the various schools of thought about Primitive Magic and to take examples, in criticising these theories, from the African material at my disposal. I feel that I can do either of these things but would like your opinion about which will be the better course form the point of view of your students.

I hope that I shall see you at the Exeter College Dinner on October 9th.

Yours ever
E.E. Evans-Pritchard

Item 25: Marett to Evans-Pritchard

October 11th 1934

Dear Evans-Pritchard

I saw you at the Dinner before your letter, which followed me to Jersey and back here, had reached me. I think that, of the two possible courses, the one dealing directly with the ethnological material would be simpler for you and better for your audience than a discussion

of theoretical views about the nature of Magic. All that dialectical stuff can wait till we have got our facts clear.

The facts are the thing.

Yours sincerely

Item 26: Evans-Pritchard to Marett

Dec 4th 1934

Dear Dr Marett,

Thank you for allowing me to give a course of lectures at your department. I am grateful for the honour and tried to make them as interesting to my audience as possible.

Yours very sincerely
E. E. Evans-Pritchard

Item 27: Marett to Evans-Pritchard

December 5th 1934

Dear Evans Pritchard,

In my turn may I thank you sincerely for having lectured for us so brilliantly and usefully. Everyone who heard you agrees that it was splendid stuff. I wish I could have come myself but, as you know, that was my day for visiting Birmingham and I had to cram all the more into the morning.

Yours sincerely

Item 28: Evans-Pritchard to Marett

21.1.35
Calverton,
Channel View Rd
Pevesney Bay
Sussex

Dear Dr Marett,

Ever so many thanks for your letter. If the Oxford University Press do not want too large a subsidy I will pay it. I shall be very grateful if you will try & convince them that the book ought to be published.

Shall I send it to them direct or to you?

It still lacks a preface & a final chapter but what has already been typed out is sufficient for them to judge the book.

Yours ever
E. E. Evans-Pritchard.
21.01.35
Calverton

Item 29: Marett to Evans-Pritchard

January 22nd 1935

My dear Evans-Pritchard,

Send the MS as it is to the Press (to the Secretary of the Delegates), and I shall do what I can to get them to take it. By the way, on Friday I am going to propose that you be given a small honorarium for those lectures you gave last term. It will probably be only a fiver or something of that kind, but it will be a sort of acknowledgement of the fact that they were pukka lectures given for the Diploma course and with the official sanction of the Committee for Anthropology.

You say nothing about the permission for me to reprint that paper. Try to settle the matter for me somehow before you disappear into the blue.

Yours sincerely
[Marett]

Item 30: Marett to Coupland

May 8th 1935

Dear Coupland,

I thought, perhaps, that you had better know that the address of Evans-Pritchard, who is somewhere in the wilds of Africa, is:

E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Esq.,
c.o. The post-master
Khartoum
Anglo-Egyptian Sudan

The post-master is a personal friend of his, and keeps, I understand, in touch with him as far as possible.

Yours sincerely
[Marett]

Item 31: Registry to Marett

Ref. No. MS/3

University Registry
Oxford
October 8, 1935

Dear Rector

With reference to the Meeting of the Social Studies Research Committee yesterday and to the proposed appointments by decree to Research Lectureships, are you in a position to let me know whether Mr. Evans Pritchard's name may be inserted in the decree as the holder of the post in African Sociology?

I should be grateful if your reply could be received by Friday next.

Yours sincerely
S Caldwell.

Item 32: Seligman to Marett

17/10/35
Savile Club
69 Brook Street W1
As from Toot Baldown Oxford

Dear Marett
Evans-Pritchard's boat was late, he only got in tonight. I had left a letter telling him more or less the position as to Oxford at his club & he came round to mine. I think he is very appreciative of your wanting to see him, although your son will be a candidate for the Readership & is of course very grateful for the lectureship in which you [?] have played so large a part.

He is going to see his mother at Pevesney tomorrow I suppose over the weekend, but will call on you at Oxford on Monday.

Yours sincerely
CG Seligman.

Item 33: Evans-Pritchard to Marett

Oct. 18th 1935

Royal Societies Club
St James Street
S.W.1

Dear Rector,
My boat was late and I only got to London yesterday. When I reached my club I found a note from Prof. Seligman telling me something of the Oxford appointments and saying that he would be at his club during the evening. I saw him last night.

I am most grateful to you for putting my name before the Social Studies Research Committee. I need scarcely say how honoured I feel, but before accepting this lectureship I think I ought to know whether this would exclude me from applying for the Readership in Social Anthropology later. As your son is to be a candidate I do not feel that I can expect you to back me nor would it be fair to you to ask your help in the matter.

I am therefore writing to Prof. Myres to ascertain whether acceptance of the one post would exclude me from applying for the other. Prof. Seligman tells me that he understood from Mrs Seligman who discussed the matter with you that it would not exclude me. He also tells me that the best thing I can do is to come and see you at once.

I am leaving today for Sussex to see my mother and I shall come down to Oxford on Monday and call on you as soon as I arrive there.

I am much looking forward to seeing you again.

Yours ever
E.E. Evans-Pritchard.

Item 34: Evans-Pritchard to Marett

Oct 18th 1935

Dear Rector
I have just reached home and then find your letter of Sept 17th awaiting me. It missed me in Khartoum and has been send back to England.

By this time you will have received my letter of yesterday and will know that I am coming up to Oxford on Monday.

Once again many thanks for suggesting my name to the Committee.

Yours sincerely
E.E. Evans-Pritchard

Item 35: Social Science Research Committee to Evans-Pritchard

MS/3

October 22, 1935

Dear Mr Evans-Pritchard
The Social Studies Research Committee today decided to offer you a Research Lectureship in African Sociology, for five years as from the 1st October last, at a stipend of £300 per annum. The conditions are that you shall reside in the University during Term, though the Committee will be prepared at any time to consider an application from you to be allowed to reside for only two terms in any given year.

It will also be open to you to apply to the Chairman of the Committee, the Vice-Chancellor, for shorter periods of leave than a full term in the interests of your research. You will be expected to select your subject for study and to undertake to give two lectures and hold a class every week during term under arrangements which you are requested to discuss with the Reader in Social Anthropology, the Rector of Exeter, who will submit the arrangements for the approval of the Chairman of the Committee, who has been authorized to approve them on the Committee's behalf. The Committee offers no objection to your holding the Research Lectureship in conjunction with the Leverhulme Fellowship.

If you are willing to accept the post on these terms, will you call upon the Rector of Exeter as soon as you conveniently can.

Yours sincerely

E. E. Evans-Pritchard Esq.,
Royal Societies Club
63 St James St.

Item 36: Evans-Pritchard to Marett

Oct 23rd 1935
Dear Rector
I have accepted the Research Lectureship and I thank you very much for the post as I owe it entirely to you.

The Registrar has written to inform me that I shall be expected to give two lectures and to hold a class every week and that I must select my subject of study.

I shall be grateful to you if you will give me your views about the way I can best carry out my duties in your department.

I shall come into residence this week and will call on you as soon as I arrive in Oxford.

Yours sincerely
E.E. Evans-Pritchard

Item 37: Registry to Marett

University Registry
Oxford
25th October 1935

Dear Sir,
I understand that Mr Evans-Pritchard, who has been appointed to a Research Lectureship under the Social Studies Research Committee, is to lecture under your direction. When you return to me the lecture schedule, which is being sent to you this week, will you be good enough to include in it not only your own lecture but those of Mr Evans-Pritchard?
Yours faithfully

Item 38: Evans-Pritchard to Marett

25th October 1935

Calverton
Channel View Road
Pevesney Bay
Sussex
As from Exeter College
Oxford

Dear Rector,
Last year I gave one lecture a week to assist Dr Perry at University College where I am an hon. Research Assistant in the Department of Embryology and Anatomy. I had promised him that I would do the same this year. This is unpaid work and you know how ill Mrs Perry is.

Do you think that the Committee for Social Sciences would have any objection to my giving one lecture a week in London? And would you object yourself?

If convenient I would like to go up to London on Tuesdays & give my lectures then as this would enable me to attend meetings of the Royal Anthropological Institute at the same time.

Yours sincerely
E.E. Evans-Pritchard.

Item 39: Registry to Marett

1st July 1942

Dear Rector,
Thank you for sending me the interesting letter from Evans-Pritchard of 2 June. I return it herewith.

It is true that Evans-Pritchard was required to pay both contributions of his superannuation policy during the academic year 1941–1942, when his appointment had expired and there was no money available from the Rockefeller Foundation to pay the University's share. The Foundation has renewed its grant, however, for the year 1942–1943 and the University's share of Evans-Pritchard's contribution (£50) is being taken from the grant. The Chest has informed Evans-Pritchard's Bank of this because he asked that further correspondence with regard to his finances should be sent to his Bank. You might like to let him know his position.

Turning to another matter, I have just heard from the University Grants Committee that deferment of calling up has been arranged for your Clerk, R.E. Westall, until further notice.

Yours sincerely

Item 40: Evans-Pritchard to Marett

[Aerogramme]

We sit in Syria waiting to see which way the tree is going to fall. I have a very pleasant job – Political Officer to the Alawite State. However, I am getting tired of waiting for an enemy who never comes and will try to get some more fighting as soon as it can be arranged. I read your autobiography with great interest.
With best regards to Mrs Marett.

Yours ever
E.E. Evans-Pritchard, Capt.

Item 41: Barber to Evans-Pritchard

19th July 1956

Dear Evans-Pritchard,
Hearty congratulations on your election as a Fellow of the British Academy. I would have sent you my felicitations earlier, but I am only just back after a stay in the Acland Home for an operation.

Yours sincerely
Rector.

Item 42: Evans-Pritchard to Barber

20/7/56
Dear Rector
Thank you very much. It was most kind of you to write. I was glad that Social Anthropology, so much the child in this University of Exeter, receives this recognition.

We will all miss you and Mrs Barber, but we hope you will continue to live in Oxford.

Yours sincerely
E.E. Evans-Pritchard.

Conclusions

These letters show the great shaping influence that Marett had on E-P's career. He was his tutor at Oxford, wrote references for him, offered him work, and arranged for his appointment in the anthropology department which he, Marett, had himself created. Yet, in order for us to realize just how important a figure he is, we have to unpick several generations of hostile historiography, and move towards a sense that British anthropology emerged from multiple centres, and from multiple confluences of active figures. The LSE was a certainly vital part, but only one element of a wider nexus that also included Cambridge, Oxford, the RAI and UCL. Indeed, all of these were important to E-P as he forged his career: not just Marett at Oxford, but Seligman did what he could for him at the LSE; Hutton in Cambridge later offered him a readership before he moved back to Oxford to the Chair. Earlier, Elliot Smith helped him to gain his first proper teaching position, the Chair in Cairo. Yet, if Marett is written out of disciplinary history, the same could be said for Hutton and Elliot Smith: Hutton is regarded as rather a dull man, the last of the non-professionals before the appointment of Fortes, and Elliot Smith derided to the point that he is caricatured.

What other pointers to these letters offer for those who would like to write the life of E-P? In this correspondence, at least, we see a side of E-P that is polite, courteous and careful. But he is also very pointed in his remarks, and masterly at using all the contacts that he has in order to gain a professional foothold. Particularly interesting is his bold manoeuvre to ensure that Marett's son does not gain the possibility of a sniff of the readership that E-P is hoping always that will come up. As we see, realizing that Marett might be looking for a job in anthropology for his son, he writes directly to Marett raising the issue, whilst simultaneously ensuring that Seligman and Myres know that this might be afoot, an ambush of very great risk, but one that in the event succeeded. Marett's son did not succeed in finding a post, and eventually was recalled to the navy, before dying in the war, to Marett's infinite distress. Indeed, all the protagonists in this correspondence want something: the Maharaj a tutor for his son, Marett a job for his son, Seligman a peaceful retirement, and E-P a job. Of these four, E-P, at least judging on the internal evidence, comes out best.

E-P himself, however, fully recognized the great importance of Exeter College in helping the creation of modern anthropology, as he wrote to the then rector, who had succeeded Marett. Indeed, Marett was the centre of a group of anthropologists who were taught at, or came through, the college, of which one may mention only not only E-P himself but Max Gluckman, Arthur Hocart, who took over the chair in Egypt vacated by E-P, Andrew Lang, Robert Rattray and Baldwin Spencer. It is surely as part of this great constellation of Exeter anthropologists that the early development of E-P's intellectual life will need to be set when the biography is finally written.

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12

A letter to E.E. Evans-Pritchard[1]

L. Lévy-Bruhl

(with E-P's explanations in italics and brackets)

[*In 1934 I published a paper, 'Lévy-Bruhl's theory of Primitive Mentality,' in the Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts of the Egyptian University. I sent a copy of the article to Lévy-Bruhl, whom I had met previously, and I received from him a letter which I now publish for several reasons. Firstly, because it is in itself of value for students of Lévy-Bruhl's writings. Some of those who have read my article may have wondered what Lévy-Bruhl would have said in reply to my exposition and criticism of his theory. Secondly, because it is interesting to know that he was turning over in his mind in 1934 some of the reformulations of his theory which appear in the posthumous Carnets. Thirdly, because it shows Lévy-Bruhl to have been as great a man as he was a scholar – tolerant, open-minded, and courteous. His letter is a model for any senior scholar replying to criticisms of his views by an inferior in years, knowledge, and ability. My explanatory comments are in square brackets. Phrases in single quotation marks are those in English in Lévy-Bruhl's letter.[1]*

The letter was translated by Mr. Donald G. MacRae.

E.E. E.-P.]

Paris, 14th November, 1934.7, Rue Lincoln.

Dear Colleague – and if you will allow me to add – friend, allow me to write in French, in order to save time. ' I know that it is quite safe to do so, and that you are accustomed to my style of writing.'

Your offprints reached me just at the time when I was leaving for a short trip to Holland, and your letter reached me at the Hague. I do not know how to thank you enough for the trouble which you have taken in order to arrive at the exact significance of my work, and to make it understood by English-speaking anthropologists and ethnologists, who, for the most part, appear hostile to it. Your article does my theory the most valuable of services, and only a scholar such as you, English himself, could explain to English scholars that they are wrong in looking down on works (whose faults, on the other hand, you do not disguise), which possess scientific interest, which can be useful to them, and which have truly been 'misrepresented.' My lecture at Oxford [Herbert Spencer Lecture, 1931] has appeared to be merely a plea *pro domo*: one distrusts the advocate who pleads his own cause. If anything is capable of effectively combating the prejudice against me which exists in England, it is the exposition and examination of my theory to which you have devoted this article. I can imagine the work and the time which it has taken you, and I am profoundly grateful to you for it. It will certainly do much good, and has done it already, and I believe that it was necessary. Without it this theory ran the risk of remaining for a long time misunderstood, if not unknown, in the world of English-speaking scholars. You ask if I think that you have understood me properly – I do not hesitate to answer 'Yes,' and I consider your article at least equal, from this point of view, to the best that has been written on my conception and my explanation (in so far as I try to explain) of primitive mentality. I do not find that you are ' over-critical ', save in one or two places which I will point out to you. If you will allow it, in order to be as precise as possible, I am going to follow your article page by page, submitting my doubts, when I have any, to you, and my reflections. This is, I believe, the best way of confronting the idea which you have of this theory with that which I have tried to give.

P. 2. [*Where I remark that the reception of Lévy-Bruhl's views among English anthropologists is perhaps due partly to the unfamiliar key expressions he used in his writings, such as prelogique, representations collectives, mystique and participations.*] Like you I think that my terminology has greatly contributed to making English anthropologists ill-disposed and to giving them a distaste for reading me. However, this reason, although serious enough, cannot be the only one. But this is not the place to examine this question.

P. 3. (At the bottom of the page.) 'Nevertheless it may be said…' [*The passage is: 'Nevertheless it may be said at the outset that Lévy-Bruhl in his works does not attempt to correlate the beliefs which he describes with the social*

1 Permission to republish this correspondence was kindly given by Paulette Goldweber, Permissions Manager at Wiley. It was originally published in 1952 in the British Journal of Sociology 111(2):117–23.

structures of the peoples among whom they have been recorded.'] A just remark. I have made it myself, and I explained myself on this point in H.S.L. [Herbert Spencer Lecture]. I had to change my position when I came to know the facts better.

Pp. 4–7. [*In which I state the characteristic differences, according to Lévy-Bruhl, between the thought of primitive, and the thought of civilized, societies.*] No objection. You have entered thoroughly into my thought.

P. 8. 'It seldom touches...' [*The passage, which refers to criticism of Lévy-Bruhl's writings by various authors, is: 'It seldom touches LevyBruhl's main propositions.*'] Quite right.

P. 8. 'He makes savage thought far more mystical than it is... 'This is an important point. I plead guilty', and I recognize that your criticisms appear just (you develop them on pp. 27–8), but I can say something in my defence. My intention was to introduce the idea (which seemed to me to be new), that there is a real difference between primitive mentality and that of more developed civilizations, particularly those of the West, and consequently, I was not obliged to give the most complete picture of this primitive mentality, including in it what is common to our own – which is considerable and which I in no way try to deny – but to insist continually on that which is characteristic of it and constitutes the specific difference. All the same, I do not at all deny mystical elements exist in the mentality of the English and French peoples, etc.: but I thought I ought to insist on the rational character of this mentality in order that its differences from the primitive might emerge clearly.

I admit that in my work (and it is here that 'I plead guilty') the savage is presented as more mystical and the civilized man as more rational than they in fact are. But I have done this 'on purpose': I intended to bring fully to light the mystical aspect of primitive mentality in contrast with the rational aspect of the mentality of our societies. Once this difference is recognized – but 25 years ago nobody had pointed it out – I have no objection to all that you say; that the savage is not so exclusively mystical, that the civilized man is not so consistently rational. Perhaps I have been wrong in insisting so strongly on these differences. I thought that the anthropological school had done enough to make the similarities evident. On this point, I think those who will follow us will know how to keep the right balance.

Pp. 8–9. [*Where I criticized Lévy-Bruhl's writings on the grounds of the insufficiency of the records which he used and of his use of the comparative method.*] 'The poor quality of the facts of which I make use – the weakness of the comparative method as I use it.' More than once I have had occasion to explain myself on this matter (for example in reply to Mauss at the Societe de Philosophie). I know well that one can consider travellers' tales and the memoirs of missionaries as very little to be relied on. And for a work of technical anthropology – for example on the institutions of some tribe or other – I would agree with you that it is preferable not to make use of them. But for the kind of researches which I intended (concerning the essential and general character of primitive mentality) I thought it legitimate not to disregard the evidences, often involuntary, which were furnished by such people as the Jesuits of New France, or Dobrizhoffer, etc. I know their minds, I can understand the factors of their personalities, and behind what they say I can find what they have seen. I have no need that they should have understood what they saw nor even of their having had some sort of scientific education. On the other hand more than one worker has gone off to do 'field work ', armed with a questionnaire furnished by an eminent anthropologist, and having followed it to the letter, has reported nothing interesting, at least to me.

Pp. 10. 'A secondary selection has taken place...' [*The passage is: 'Out of a vast number of social facts observers have tended to select facts of the mystical type rather than of other types and in Lévy-Bruhl's writings a secondary selection has taken place through which only facts of a mystical type have been recorded, the final result of this double selection being a picture of savages almost continually and exclusively conscious of mystical forces. He presents us with a caricature of primitive mentality.*'] I admit this, but it was done deliberately, and I have not hidden it.

No, this is not a caricature of primitive mentality. But it is an image through which I have wished to bring out strongly a dominant trait, leaving the rest in the shadow (and indeed cartoonists often work like this). I told you above the motives which led me to proceed like this. I have not claimed to give a complete analysis and description of primitive mentality – above all I was trying to bring further into the light what distinguishes it from our own.

Pp. 10–11. 'To describe the collective representations of Englishmen and Frenchmen with the same impartiality and minuteness...' [*The passage is: 'Clearly it is necessary to describe the collective representations of Englishmen and Frenchmen with the same impartiality and minuteness with which anthropologists describe the collective representations of Polynesians, Melanesians, and the aborigines of Central and Northern Australia, if we are to make a comparison between the two.*'] This would be a fine piece of work whose results would be most interesting ... but ought I, in all conscience, to undertake it in order to realize my design? Can I not take it as agreed that our patterns of thought (an excellent expression which I borrow from you, and which comes close to what I call '*habitudes mentales*' depending on '*l'orientation de la pensee*') are sufficiently known for me to compare them with the 'patterns of thought of the savage'?

You find, and not without good reason, that I ask much of the good will and patience of the reader in presenting him with four thick volumes (I scarcely dare admit that they are going to be followed by a fifth). What would it

be if I ought to have conducted a parallel inquiry into the mentality of our compatriots!

I now go on to the five questions which you examine in sequence (beginning on p. 13).

(a) [*I cited various authorities to show that Lévy-Bruhl was inquiring into a genuine problem in investigating the differences between primitive and civilized modes of thought.*] Agreed.

(b) Pp. 15–19. [*I discussed what Lévy-Bruhl means by 'prelogical' and showed that he does not mean that savages are incapable of thinking coherently or are intellectually inferior to civilized man.*] Among the parts of your article which have given me most pleasure and which will suffice to show that you have thoroughly understood me on this most important point. The passage concerning Mr. Driberg has amused me [*where I showed that Driberg in criticizing Lévy-Bruhl says the same as he in different words*] because, in reading *The Savage as He Really Is*, I had the same thoughts as you: if I had known how to express myself so as to be understood by Mr. Driberg, he would see that we are in agreement. As you say, he brings to my theory the support of his great experience in Africa. I have read with much profit his *Lango* and most of his other works – I admit that the term '*prelogique*' was 'rather unfortunate'. You have also seen very clearly that according to me ' primitive thought is eminently coherent, perhaps over-coherent'.

(c) [*I discussed what Lévy-Bruhl means by 'collective representations' and showed that whereas his critics say that he contends that savages think illogically what he is really saying is that savage thought is mainly unscientific and also mystical. He refers to the content, or patterns, of thought – social facts – and not to the processes of thinking – psychological facts.*] Here the discussion becomes more refined and it becomes necessary for me to explain exactly what I mean by primitive 'thought'. I can at any rate say that at bottom it seems to me that there is no disagreement between us on this question. The fact that the 'patterns of thought' are different does not, once the premises have been given, prevent the 'primitive' from reasoning like us, and, in this sense, his thought is neither more nor less 'logical' than ours. I have never made this appear doubtful and the way in which you explain my ideas on this point is of a sort to dissipate misunderstandings which have done me so much wrong among English and American anthropologists.

(d) [*Here I discussed what Lévy-Bruhl means by 'mystical': that collective representations of the supra-sensible form integral parts of perception. The savage cannot perceive objects apart from their collective representations. He perceives the collective representation in the object.*] Yet here again you do me a great service. When I said that 'primitives' never perceive anything exactly as we do I never meant to assert a truly psychological difference between them and us; on the contrary I admit that individual physio-psychological conditions of sensory perception cannot be other among them than as among us – but I did intend to say, as you put it (p. 25), 'that a savage's perception of, in the sense of noticing, or paying attention to, or being interested in, a plant is due to its mystical properties'. As a result I am inclined to subscribe to the two propositions which you yourself accept and which are formulated at the foot of p. 25. [*The passage to which Lévy-Bruhl refers is: 'A restatement of Lévy-Bruhl's main contentions about the mystical thought of savages is contained in the two following propositions, both of which appear to me to be acceptable: (1) Attention to phenomena depends upon affective choice and this selective interest is controlled to a very large extent by the values given to phenomena by society and these values are expressed in patterns of thought and behaviour (collective representations). (2) Since patterns of thought and behaviour differ widely between savages and educated Europeans their selective interests also differ widely and, therefore, the degree of attention they pay to phenomena and the reasons for their attention are also different.'*]

(e) P. 27. [*I discussed here what Lévy-Bruhl means by 'participations' – mystical relations between things.*] I believe that on this notion of 'participation' we are in agreement about essentials. Besides, as you remark, what I say about 'participation' links up with what I have said about the 'mystical' character of representations.

P. 28. 'Mystical thought is a function of particular situations.' I have committed 'a serious error in failing to understand this point'. [*My criticism of Lévy-Bruhl here was that he does not adequately appreciate that mystical thought is often a function of particular situations. Collective representations of a mystical kind may be evoked by sight of an object but they may not be invariably evoked. Savage thought has not the fixed inevitable construction that Lévy-Bruhl gives it.*] Here, 'I do not plead guilty.' But I recognize that in my first two books my thought is perhaps not expressed with sufficient precision and accuracy. It is better expressed I believe in the introduction to '*Le Sumaturel*' and also in the H.S.L. [Herbert Spencer Lecture]. I do not find the argument which you present in the second half of p. 28 decisive. 'The resulting pattern of belief may be a fiction since it may never be actually present in a man's consciousness.' [*My argument here was that there may be a big difference between a system of native beliefs as put together by a European inquirer and what any individual native believes, just as there is a difference between the formalized body of Christian theology and what an individual may know of it. Religious beliefs are held by the individual as isolated bits, as it were, and not as entire systems.*] Would you say that the Oxford Dictionary 'may be a fiction' and cannot give a true idea of the English language? The content of the Oxford Dictionary however has never been 'actually present in an Englishman's consciousness'. On the other hand in every human mind there are always ineradicably fundamental mystical elements, which moreover can only

manifest themselves through beliefs and practices which are necessarily social; and if one perhaps sees them most easily in 'primitive' societies, they are by no means absent in other civilizations. If we could talk about this together it seems to me that we could arrive at agreement.

P. 30. 'Savage thought has not the fixed inevitable construction that Lévy-Bruhl gives it.' – Agreed. But if I give this impression it is because I have expressed myself badly – as ever through my attempt to make what is mystical and 'prelogical' (in the good sense of this word, if I am understood as I wish to be) in primitive mentality stand out. I completely admit that numerous interests of every kind attract the attention of the primitive, that he is continually attentive to all the claims that are made upon him by the practical life, and the necessity of satisfying his needs, of nourishment, etc., etc., and that he is not uniquely preoccupied with the mystical powers of beings and objects. Far from that: he must live. I therefore accept what you say (pp. 30–1), and I believe that it can be reconciled with what I maintain.

P. 32. The relations of my theory with those of Tylor and of Frazer. [*I discussed here some of the main differences in approach between Lévy-Bruhl on the one hand and Tylor and Frazer on the other, saying, among other things, that Lévy-Bruhl had no need to make a distinction between categories of magic and religion, and that whereas to Tylor and Frazer the savage believes in magic because he reasons incorrectly to Lévy-Bruhl he reasons incorrectly because he believes in magic.*] Another passage for which I am very grateful to you and which shows that you have correctly understood me. I admire the *Golden Bough* and always recall the extraordinary impression which it made on me; to me it was a revelation, a new world appeared before my eyes. But I have never been able to interest myself in discussions about the relations of magic and religion and you very clearly explain why. He, Tylor, and their school base themselves on postulates and an over-simple psychology which seem to me little to conform to the facts and to be untenable. I have thought it a duty to take up a different position and I have tried to follow another path which seemed to me to lead more closely to an exact description of so-called primitive mentality. I am no doubt not altogether wrong since, from the point of view of an anthropologist with experience of field work, you conclude that my theory is not without use. But I regret that it has exacted from you prolonged and painful effort while considering it very fortunate for me that you have not recoiled from this task. And I wish to close this over-long letter in again thanking you with all my heart.

PS. What can explain to a certain extent the evident misunderstanding among many anthropologists of my theory is the difference between the points of view in which they and I place ourselves. They relate what I say to the particular point of view of their science (which has its tradition, its methods, its achieved results, etc.). What has led me to write my books is not the desire to add, if I could, a stone to the edifice of this special science (anthropology, ethnology). I had the ambition to add something to the scientific knowledge of human nature, using the findings of ethnology for the purpose. My training was philosophical not anthropological. I proceed from Spinoza and Hume rather than from Bastian and Tylor, if I dare evoke such great names here.

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13

Correspondence between Evans-Pritchard and Meyer Fortes[1]

Susan Drucker-Brown

Letters from E-P to Meyer Fortes, many of which are archived in the Cambridge University Library, are the product of a lifelong friendship. The correspondence begins in 1932 and continues until E-P's death. The two men could hardly have had more different backgrounds.

> Fortes grew up in poverty, in multi-racial South Africa; the eldest son of seven children. His parents were among the Russian Jews who fled from Europe in the wake of the pogroms which ushered in the 20th century, and his close natal kin were scattered over three continents. He was aware through personal experience of racial discrimination, economic privilege, and the accidents of history which crucially affect individual development. As a child he spoke three languages; Yiddish, English and Afrikaans. His traditional Jewish education taught him to read Hebrew. Later he studied Latin, Anglo-Saxon, and German. He had a working knowledge of French and Twi (spoken by the Ashanti). But it was his knowledge of Talni (the language of the Tallensi) that was most extraordinary. When he returned to Ghana after a thirty-year absence his fluency was unimpaired. Until his death in 1982, he continued to perfect and enjoy his command of Talni. His profound understanding of the language came both from his scholarly knowledge of Tallensi culture and his personal intimacy with Tallensi people. Meyer Fortes' ability to become close to others, to see and feel things from their point of view, was combined with wisdom and generosity. His understanding of humanity was not only theoretical. He gave of it in the simplest and most direct ways.
>
> (Druker Brown 1983:15)

Their early correspondence chronicles, above all, the search by both men for future academic employment. E-P, as the senior and better connected, provides counsel and information on the politics involved. The result is a kind of 'back-room' view of the academic world of the time, but also shows how war experience shaped E-P's post-war theoretical position.

The letters contain little information about E-P's domestic life, though there are flashes of intimate communication. He expresses profound distress at his wife's illness and relief that his children have 'a reliable nanny'. He did, of course, spend long periods away from home and family. The letters record the physical discomfort and illnesses accompanying fieldwork. There are references to his and Meyer's published papers, bits of ethnography and some comments on anthropological theory and practice; as well as usually barbed commentaries on colleagues.

However, the first of E-P's letters to Fortes (29 August 1932) begins in an uncharacteristically tentative tone:

> My dear Meyr,
> Is that the way you spell it?

He continues, in the three-page typed letter, to discuss a position in Cairo as Experimental Psychologist for which Meyer has applied. Advising Meyer on the wisdom of the application, he writes 'you may hate the job', and reassures Meyer that Rockefeller money for research in West Africa is forthcoming.

Five months later (January 1933), E-P is offering Meyer and Sonia the use of his cottage in Sussex. In 1934 E-P writes from Egypt that 'I will try for a position in Oxford or, if that fails, dedicate myself to a life of indulgence in Tunis.' He thanks Meyer for sending him novels and asks him to get his (E-P's) mother to send him *Punch*. A letter from Meyer included in the file, thanks EP's mother for also sending him *Punch*, 'which we read from cover to cover'.

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1 Editor: The author, for the sake of brevity, provided selections from the letters. The full contents were so interesting that in many cases I have taken the liberty of reverting to the full letters. David Shankland, the Director of the RAI hopes in the future to publish a companion to this volume that would include as many of E-Ps letters as are available.

In his letters[2] he also refutes Malinowski's views on exogamy.

> Exogamy has nothing to do with cohesion of family or any other group, but is, in fact, a mechanism for breaking up the family and other groups to enable local and political links to be formed by kinship and affinal bonds. This was the main action of exogamy among the Nuer.

EP goes on to predict that there will be a big and proper 'reaction against all this balls and more purely descriptive and ethnological work will rank higher than that functionalist hotch-potch'. He dismisses other contemporary theories somewhat more politely and claims Durkheim as his own 'base'.

On Christmas Eve 1934, he writes from Sussex to Meyer (in the field) congratulating him on 'the free flow of information from the Tallensi. Nuer information trickled in and no more; I cannot make up my mind whether to cut my losses and start on the Anuak or try the Nuer once more.'

He recommends Gluckman to Meyer.

> I think I have thoroughly corrupted him but l have left the final stages of dissolution to you. I have suggested he get in touch with you as soon as you return as he will learn more from you than from anyone else in anthropology today. This is a Xmas bouquet but I mean it.

The following year from Khartoum, E-P writes to Fortes about the hardship of fieldwork

> Aug. 25th 1935.
> c/o The Postmaster
> Khartoum
> Anglo-Egyptian Sudan
>
> My Dear Meyer
> Very many thanks for your letter and for the papers & books you so kindly sent me. I spent 2 days reading them and other literature sent at the same time. I did no work during those two days. Very refreshing.
> Your people seem to be able to last out longer than I can in the field. I find that a malaise sets in after 7 or 8 months – on this expedition after 6 months because it has been very unsettling and disappointing.
>
> I am glad that you are in agreement about fieldwork. We generally seem to agree. The mistake made by many survey workers was to investigate problems which cannot be investigated by survey methods. The whole system of genealogies or the use of kinship terms as words of address (as apart from words of description) are absurd techniques of investigation by survey methods. One has to know a people and their language really well before one know how they address their kinsmen. In their book the Seligmans too often neglect to record what was suitable to their mode of observation e.g. economic life & technology, & too often recorded what was quite unsuitable e.g. intricacies of the kinship system & religious notions.
>
> However once this is understood I am all in favour of survey work. The present 'functional' method of studying a single society and spending the rest of your life writing about it is grotesque. Supposing in the early stages of biology a man had spent a lifetime in investigating and writing about a single species of spider before any kind of classification of spiders as a whole had been made. He would be considered a lunatic. I know that 2 or 3 societies are as much as a man can competently study in a lifetime but he ought also to survey around these societies and be able to place them in their general cultural and historical setting as specimens of a type or series of social units.
>
> By the way Sligs[3] tells me that Oxford is about to fall vacant – I mean the Chair of Anthropology (the

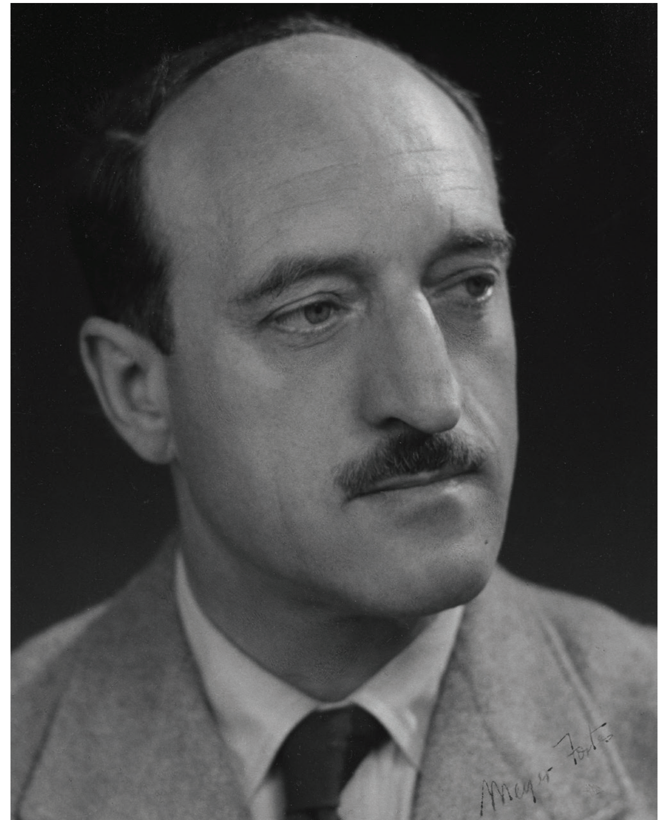

Figure 13.1 Meyer Fortes (1906–83), RAI President 1965–7. Courtesy Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI 36982).

2 The letters referred to in this chapter are held in Cambridge University Library: Meyer Fortes: Notebooks, correspondence and papers; reference code GBR/0012/MS Add.8405.

3 Professor C.G. Seligman.

University has always been 'vacant'). I shall apply for it. I don't suppose I shall get it – especially if B.M. is going to apply for it. Marett did not tell me anything about it and I understand that he will probably have a shot at putting his son into the job! Oxford is, of course, capable of almost anything.

I had a letter from Gluckman. He told me he had met you and that I had not spoken too highly of your abilities (blushes please!) I also found his thesis rather undeveloped but he knows a great deal and is able. I think one can be too anxious to seek a stable & consistent basis for one's work – I mean a theoretical basis. B.M., R.B., & G.E.S. have all found such bases. If one must have a base I am still convinced that the best base is found in Durkheim's writings.

Well so long till October. Salaams to Sonia. Please drop a note to Royal Societies Club to give me your phone number so that I can ring you up when I get to London.

I am sure that I have not answered your letter but it was blown away in a storm together with other papers, including notes, when my tent collapsed.

Yours ever
E-P

Nine months later, E-P expressed irritation at Oxford and their inability to resolve the anthropology readership to which he had applied:

Mantola
June 22nd 1936.
As from Poste Restante
Nairobi
Kenya.

Dear Sonia and Meyer
We are just leaving Aden in a glorious swelter of heat. I have come all out in spots with prickly heat. I had no idea the Red sea could be quite so unpleasant. I spent 10 days in Cairo on the way out. I caught a chill there and was in and out of bed for a week so the holiday was not a great success. I land at Mombasa on 28th June. I shall then have to make up my mind what – if anything – I am supposed to be doing in Kenya.

I had a cable from Max[4] at Port Said telling me that he had got his doctorate. I had no doubt about the result but it is satisfactory to know that things have gone well and as expected. He did not seem at all well the last few weeks at Oxford but had, I am glad to say, hardened a bit over the Doreen affair. I hope he will do well in Zululand.

I saw Sligs shortly before leaving. He was very fit after his holiday. He showed me a letter of yours re Malinowski which I shall keep entirely private. I have the lowest possible opinion of the man but I did not think he would stoop quite to such meanness.

There is no news about the Oxford job & I have lost all interest in it. It is now a full professorship (£1200 a year) and they are, I suppose, electing a new set of electors since those chosen to elect to the readership are not eligible as electors to the professorship unless re-elected. Typical of Oxford the only two anthropologists (Balfour & Buxton) who were ex officio electors to the readership are not electors to the professorship, their places having been taken by two fellows of All Souls. There is therefore no anthropologist on the electoral Committee to the Professorship of Anthropology! It looks well for B.M.!

So sorry I have not written before now. I had a terrific rush with the book, having rewritten a large part of it in the final revision. I sent in the last bundle of MSS. the day I sailed. Heaven only knows what it will read like. A copy is being sent to you. Be charitable. Max kept on fussing me with bits of his thesis up till the last moment too. Anyhow I have no news from the English front. I was very glad to get your letter and to know that all is well with you. The Lord only knows how and when you will get this letter posted at Mombasa. Couldn't we organize a system of direct correspondence from Nairobi to the Tallensi?

If you start off on educated natives you might drop me a line to tell me what particular problems you are investigating so that I can have a shot at the same range of questions in East Africa. At present I have a vague plan for a survey of the Jolus, the only Nilotic tribe in Kenya. They speak the same language as the Anuak among whom I was last year and it is of interest (ethnological) to know whether they have the same kind of political system.

Best of Luck
E-P.

He later (1936) reports that Radclifffe-Brown 'has got Oxford' and hopes 'that will break Malinowski's stranglehold on British Anthropology and anthropologists'.

In 1936 E-P visited Palestine and, in a long, typewritten letter approved of Jewish settlement but sees the Jewish-Arab conflict as insoluble.

He then returned to the Sudan and the Nuer travelling via Uganda:

4 Max Gluckman.

c/o The Postmaster
Khartoum
Anglo-Egyptian Sudan.
Oct. 6th 1936.

My Dear Sonia and Meyer

Very many thanks for your letter of 28/8/36. which I received today.

Yes, I met Wagner[5] twice in Kenya and had long talks with him. I gathered from these that he considered culture-contact studies, as at present pursued, to be bilge. This is confirmed by the very weak effort he made to defend them in 'Africa' in an article which the local officials, with the unerring judgement of the almost-illiterate, said had 'no meat in it'.

Wagner may have been saying things to please me but he gave the impression of genuine disillusionment. He said that B.M. had tricked and fooled him for so long that he had gone off on the wrong tracks for the better part of his tour!

I am sorry to hear of your sickness. I have had a bad go of fever and a nasty relapse ending in complete collapse for some days. I was only six weeks among the Luo (i.e. working weeks). The administration is so bad that I could stand it no longer and motored to the Sudan through Uganda. In the Sudan I sold the car at a big loss but was so glad to see the last of the beastly thing that I was not so worried by the financial side as I might have been.

Uganda is certainly not all beer & skittles. With monotonous fidelity we have reproduced there all the worst features of landlordism, tithe-system, and industrial exploitation. The economic oppression is bad, especially as it is run by people on the verge of savagery.

I am now back among the Nuer. As usual the life is hard but it is good to be back again. Nevertheless I think this will really be my last visit to the malarious tropics. Blackwater last year and a collapse this year. The pitcher must not go too often to the water.

I am glad that you are assisting the Government. They will probably repay you by giving you ample funds. Governments (i.e. the head-people) are decent in this way. If the African Institute had gone the right way about it they would have helped you before now.

I have no idea who is going to get the Oxford chair but I feel pretty sure I am not. The book has only reached the stage of half of it having been corrected in proofs. The Oxford Press are very dilatory. However, it ought to be completed by November.

I am all in favour of a comparative study of Political institutions. Few people have any idea how they work over the greater part of Africa. Indeed I think this is the most neglected aspect of social organization and therefore the playground of all sorts of cranks and crooks. I don't read Lucy's articles but I only avoided the Perham girl in Kenya by the skin of my teeth. I am going to camp in a spot in the Sudan which will be quite inaccessible to her, for she is on my tracks.

I hear often from Sligs. He has very kindly gone over the whole book & sent me innumerable corrections. These have got the Oxford Press on the warpath. I have fortnightly homilies on style from the Dear Old Man. Best Luck to you Both.

Yours, Edward

P.S. I return to England in December.

Towards the end of the same year E-P reiterates where his friendship and loyalties lie:

Hakone
Dec. 29th 1936.

My Dear Sonia and Meyer

It was a great pleasure to receive your letter of 26.9.36. I got it in Cairo on my way home. I spent 14 days having a grand time in Cairo. It made up for all my fasting in the wilderness. I am now on a Japanese boat somewhere between Port Said and Marseilles – I have no interest to wonder where as there is a rough sea and I lie most of the time in a coma in my cabin.

So sorry to hear that you have been down with fever again. It takes up so much time, to say the least of it. However it does not seem to do much harm once one has got over the bout. After trying every remedy & every prophylactic I am now back to the old belief in 5 grains every evening and a lengthy course once fever has developed. I mean of quinine, for I have not found atebrin & plasmoquin of much use.

I sent you some time ago a paper I wrote for the Sociological Congress in London. Owing to the fact that Firth did not condescend to write to me about it my first intimation that I was reading a paper was a printed notice received by chance in my camp at Kenya. I then just had to sit down and sweat out any old rot that first came into my head. Let's hope it did not sound too ghastly.

I think that I wrote to tell you that R-B got the Oxford job and that I have few regrets about his appointment. Mrs Hoernlé has written to ask me to apply for her job at Johannesburg which is vacant in June. If it turns out to be a good enough job I shall apply. I will let you know my intentions as soon as I have seen Mrs Hoernlé in January.

I don't think that Max would have an earthly chance of getting it so I shall not abstain on his account. You might stand a good chance, especially if I don't apply. I say this not because I have any merits which

5 Gunter Wagner, German anthropologist and student of Franz Boas.

you don't possess but because Mrs H., Schap, & Raikes, the Chancellor of Witwatersrand University, have all promised, definitely or indefinitely, to support me. However, I will let you know how matters stand on my arrival in England.

Firth is in for Cambridge & it looks like a race between him and Driberg. I cannot make up my mind whether to apply or not. Here again I will let you know after I have had a talk with Sligs.

It is understood that when, if ever I have an opportunity to get a man a job you come first & Max afterwards. We must stick together & fight our battles as allies. I think that Schap.[6] may be counted on as one of the allied forces but not entirely so.

I have just been through the final proofs of my book. The Oxford press are very dilatory but I suppose now the thing is really finished they will condescend to think of publishing it.

I have not yet made up my mind what my next book will be – whether on Azande or on Nuer. This depends on happenings in England. The Governor General of the Sudan has 'Culture Contact' on the brain and is willing to give me what finance I ask for if I care to revisit the Azande & try to determine the direction, extent, & rapidity of social change which has gone on in the last 10 years. He is willing to let me spend 2 or 3 months finishing off my Nuer work if I will visit the Azande afterwards.

The Egyptian University in Cairo has also asked me back to take up a special post of ethnologist. I would be able to spend half my time in the Sudan doing research.

Both these offers are very tempting.

I see that Firth's book is out. Hocart had a copy in Cairo. He is reviewing it for Nature. As far as I could gather he very much disapproved of it and is giving it a rather hostile review.

I don't know any other anthropological news yet but will let you have it when I know it.

I hope that R-B's presence in England will release B.M.'s stranglehold over anthropology & anthropologists.

I will send you a reprint of my 'Pareto'[?] paper on my return to London. Also a paper on 'Zande Theology'.

Please drop me a line to say how you both are to Royal Societies Club, 63 St James Street, London. S.W.1.

Yours, Edward

Three months later he is back in Oxford and in March 1937 he writes that he has declined three jobs offered him on his return. These included Capetown and Johannesburg. After rejecting Johannesburg, E-P strongly urged that Meyer should be elected.

Feb. 10th 1937

My Dear Sonia & Meyer

I ought to have written long ago but have been plunged into an ocean of work since my return to Oxford. However I hasten now to give you a rough idea of how the land lies, as far as I can survey it.

On my return I was offered three jobs, all of which I have declined. Schapera asked me to take a lectureship at Cape Town. This was not good enough, for I would have to be far more fed up with Oxford than I am to throw up a lectureship there for one at Cape Town.

The Egyptian University offered to create a research-professorship for me. This was tempting but things are so uncertain in Egypt now that fear of continual interference and nationalist humbug put me off.

Lastly there was Johannesburg. I thought seriously of accepting this post but Sligs advised me very strongly not to take it. There were two main objections. It would prevent any further work in North Africa and it would mean leaving Oxford just as there is a chance of getting a good school of anthropology under R-B. So I declined that too.

I urged the Hoernlés[7] very strongly that you were by far the best person they could elect but they said that with Schapera[8] at Cape Town it would not be advisable to elect a Jew to Jo'burg. They were so definite about this that I don't think it would be worthwhile for you to apply.

Wagner and Audrey[9] are both putting in for the job. I understand that Max, Lucy,[10] and Ashton[11] are all in for the Cape Town job.

Things at Oxford are uncertain but it seems that there will soon be an honours school which means another job or two.

I am not applying for Cambridge. Things have been so 'fixed' there in advance that there is little possibility of getting the job. I think Hutton will get it though Driberg and Firth are also favourites.

I shall hope to see you both home soon though as far as jobs go nothing can be done till R-B arrives in July.

6 Isaac Schapera.

7 Agnes and Reinhold Hoernlé. Agnes (1885–1960) was regarded as 'the mother of South African anthropology' (Gordon 1987:68).

8 Isaac Schapera (1905–2003), Professor of Anthropology at Cape Town and subsequently at the London School of Economics

9 Audrey Richards.

10 Lucy Mair.

11 Hugh Ashton.

I have not seen B.M but one hears little about him now. R-B's appointment will be a sad event in his eyes.

I will write again soon. Meanwhile is there anything I can do for you or send you. I will have a look at some books to see if there is anything I can find which you might like.

I hope you are both fit again now.

Yours as ever
E-P

By 1938 the possibility of war is mentioned, and in 1942 E-P heads his letter 'Capt. Evans-Pritchard' from GHQ in Syria. He writes:

> I am a political officer. I'll be disappointed if left out of the fighting. I seem to have been most things in this war: guerrilla leader, member of a suicide squad, and now political officer.

In 1943 he notes that Nadel is a Major. By 5 January 1944, E-P is also heading his letters 'Major'.

In 1944 E-P writes one of his most revealing letters and explains why he intends to do no more fieldwork once war has ended.

From Major E E Evans-Pritchard
BMA (Cyrenaica)
MEF
20/8/44

My dear Meyer,

The days your letters arrive are always red-letter days for me. Your last (11/8/44) was most welcome as it showed that, in spite of our very different circumstances at present, we are both thinking along the same lines. With regard to the Lt. Colonels: I have been all kinds of fool since the war began and continue to be, but one thing I want you always to remember in my favour is that I never traded my scholarship for a good war job. I always refused the easy offers to take higher rank and sit among the experts and know-alls and planners. I preferred, and still prefer, to do my job (or jobs) during the war without pretending that anthropology enabled me to do them better than anyone else.

What I chiefly want to say in this note is that, like you, I am now interested in the larger problems. I find little enthusiasm in my breast for twins, the mother-brother, totemism, or land tenure among the Kavirondo. I hope when the war is over, to devote myself to larger problems such as the ones you suggest, the essential sameness about all Colonial enterprise, the fundamental cause of war, the reorientation of the Arab world against European Imperialism, and so forth. One will just have to work up one's voluminous fieldwork notes bit by bit as time allows. One thing is certain – NO MORE FIELDWORK of the detailed kind for me. Max is trying to entice me to apply for the directorship of the R-L Institute, but, between you and me, I would rather shoot myself than go there and be chained to horses pulling in opposite directions; the use-anthropology-for social-research-and-welfare-horse and the fieldwork-anthropology-papers-in-each-journal-endless notebooks-all-to-little-purpose horse.

It is very kind of you to say you will dedicate vol 11 to me. I am very touched by this tribute to our common standard of scientific values and integrity.

A mournful and very angry letter from R-B. He seems to have realised at last that he has lost you and me and the chance of ever starting a school at Oxford, and in addition is a hostage in the hands of Daryll Forde, Margery Perham, Audrey Richards, Danny Copeland, Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all (now all together boys: 'Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all').

I hope to return to England this year. If Cambridge improves my position financially I shall be content to remain there for a while. If not, we will see.

I expect to go on leave in October and visit Ioma and Shineen in Jerusalem. All love to Sonia and Nathalie. N. must be quite big by now – even Shineen (of whom a snap is enclosed) is running about.
I much look forward to seeing you all again.

Yrs, Edward.

The remaining post-war letters are less revealing and deal with more conventional matters. Once in Britain, no doubt both men spoke rather than wrote to one another.

In a letter from the Ark in 1972 E-P complained to Meyer about 'lobbying, jockeying, even cheating' on the Council of the RAI during Edmund Leach's presidency, adding 'One may not be able to stop it, but at least one can decline to take part in it.' He then refers to his Irish background:

'Have a good time in Ireland. Had I known you were going there I would have given you letters to old friends of mine – the Earl of Wicklow, Lord Moyne and the Earl of Rosse (sorry, but everybody in Ireland has a title; even I have an Irish title!)' and then, poignantly and presciently, refers to his final bout of travelling with a message to Meyer's second wife Doris:

> Please come to Oxford when you can. I shall be away a good part of next year – Ghana, South Africa & Denmark. Tell Doris that I won't look after myself. What is the use of trusting to God if you can't leave it to him.

This very last letter in the archive, was written on his return from a visit to Denmark:

> Denmark was lovely. They did me so proud that I cried. A private room with my name above the door, a silver key and so on. What can all that mean to me? All I want is Ioma again.

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14

Perilous mentoring, fraught friendship

Between Evans-Pritchard and Gluckman

Richard Werbner

In keeping with the special spirit of the meeting held in Evans-Pritchard's honour and memory at the Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI) on 18 November 2018, I want to present my contribution to this volume as an expanded version of my informal talk on that occasion.[1] I began by recalling that Gluckman was fond of saying that the pygmy who stands on the shoulders of a giant sees further. Being about six foot two, he often took the opportunity to stand on E-P's shoulders to see a bit further still. Which is not to say that the giant was always happy with the vision of his pygmy. Or that the pygmy and the giant were always, in private, at peace. Indeed, over time, they had to be reconciled to each other, as I discuss below. But my initial point is that in a good number of his most celebrated pieces, Gluckman took on the role of publicizing and popularizing Evans-Pritchard's ideas, as well as seeking to redirect E-P's influence.

Let me begin with a footnote. After Gluckman gave a 1954 BBC talk about Mau Mau and the magic of despair, E-P complained about the political argument, which he dismissed. In response, Gluckman added this footnote to the published version:

> My attention was first directed to these types of rites by Evans-Pritchard's 'Some collective expressions of obscenity in Africa' (1929) and by his analysis of secret societies in his *Witchcraft Oracles and Magic among the Azande of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan* (1937). Here, almost casually, as an aside, he penetrated the essence of these movements, in a passage which is often overlooked:
>
>> Yet perhaps the associations assist Azande to fight against the pessimism and loss of confidence that is directed against the vagaries of European rule. Azande, faced with a power they can neither stand up against or avoid, have found in magic their last defence, New situations demand new magic, and European rule which is responsible for new situations has opened up roads into neighbouring countries which can supply new magic. Furthermore, when I speak of a break-down of tradition I do not speak in an evaluator sense but merely record changes in modes of behaviour. It may be that associations appear revolutionary only when we think of Zande culture as it has been and that the behaviour which they encourage is in character with other changes going on among Azande in adapting to European rule.
>>
>> (1963:137–8)

Gluckman's appeal to E-P's inspiration follows the public stance of respect which Gluckman maintained through the stormiest times in their close relationship. Let me say more of the stormy times after the sunnier moments.

Gluckman was a pupil of E-P's, going back to Gluckman's D.Phil. at Exeter College in 1934, where E-P gave a weekly lecture, and became Gluckman's mentor. In writing about this, and many other aspects of the mentoring and friendship between E-P and Gluckman, I am indebted to Robert Gordon's monumental biography of Gluckman, *The Enigma of Gluckman* (2018). Among other things, Gordon drew my attention to the fact that the RAI holds a copy of Gluckman's D.Phil thesis. I have seen that it has a long inscription in Zulu to E-P *inkosi yami*, 'my chief'.

From that period too, came the acknowledgement by E-P in the Introduction to E-P's masterpiece: 'The following anthropological friends, besides Professor Seligman, have read the greater part of this book and have given me criticism and advice: Professor I. Schapera, Dr. M. Fortes and Dr. H.M. Gluckmann.' (1937:viii).

Profoundly significant for our present discussion, is the intellectual history of E-P's deep dialogue in his masterpiece with Lévy-Bruhl and Malinowski; and to that deep dialogue, I devote the first chapter in *Divination's Grasp* (Werbner 2015:27–51). Taking that as essential background, I want to turn here to Gluckman's response to this masterpiece and then E-P's other early contributions.

1 For some of the expanded parts of this version, I draw on chapter 2 in *Anthropology After Gluckman* (Werbner 2020).

More specifically, I want to focus first on his idea of a social process for explaining away failure: the secondary elaboration of belief in closed systems of thought (Evans-Pritchard 1937). This idea has become possibly the most familiar one in his masterpiece. Over decades, Gluckman showed how this idea spoke to his times, not merely in Africa but rather across the world; very broadly, he brought it to the interest of social scientists, historians and philosophers of science and, through a BBC talk, a very wide public. Already in 1937, Gluckman applied this idea to labour relations on South African farms, when he gave evidence to a government commission (1944a:33n.1). Extending the argument further, beyond witchcraft, Gluckman later compared Azande and Nazi ideologies in his earliest published discussion of E-P's contribution (Gluckman 1944a:31, 34, 1944b:71–2).

There is a related idea, also very familiar from E-P's masterpiece, which became critical for later perspectives, especially among Gluckman's circle known as the Manchester School, on social situations (Gluckman 1940) and for what has come be known as 'situational selection'. Famous as this passage on the practice is, it bears being recalled, having been omitted from the abridged edition of E-P's masterpiece:

> Each situation demands the particular pattern of thought appropriate to it. Hence an individual in one situation will employ a notion he excludes in a different situation. The many beliefs I have recorded are so many different tools of thought and he selects the ones that are chiefly to his advantage…
>
> A man uses for his individual needs in certain situations those notions that most favour his desires. Azande cannot go beyond the limits set by their culture and invent notions, but within these limits human behaviour is not rigidly determined by custom and a man has some freedom of action and thought.
>
> (1937:351)

Re-reading this now, we recover a missing aspect of 'the moulding of British social anthropology as it was when E-P took over the chair at Oxford in 1952' (Singer 1981:vii). This aspect – and its regard for self-interest and rational choice – later became heralded in the transactionalist perspectives of the 1960s and 1970s (Barth 1959; Kapferer 1972, 1976). Admittedly, in these now dated perspectives, excessive concentration on tactical transactions exaggerated individualist tendencies far beyond E-P's own views, and indeed, Gluckman's also. Nevertheless, E-P's elucidation of advantage-seeking in different situations anticipated approaches by members of the Manchester School to 'situational analysis' with 'situational selection' and interest-driven manipulation of 'norms in conflict' (see van Velsen 1964, 1967). Gluckman's own critical doubts about transactionalism, which E-P might well have shared, are clearly put by Sally Moore, who notes that Gluckman was 'not always happy with the transactional, choice-making game theory, exchange theory approach that dominated the work of his younger colleagues in the late sixties, because he thought it too much preoccupied with explaining behaviour in terms of narrow self-interest, and neglected the larger cultural and societal behaviour in which interests and social positions were defined' (Moore 1987:118).

Following the *Nuer* (1940), and pursuing his commitment to the cumulative project of science, Gluckman continued to build – in *The Economy of the Central Barotse Plain* (1941) and *Essays on Lozi Land and Royal Property* (1943) – on E-P's major work, by relating it to his own early fieldwork on ecology, political economy and historical sociology.[2] Of these, critical for his own project was his bringing history to bear on the general arguments and broad formulations that E-P advanced.

It is remarkable that in an account of modern British social anthropology, following the *Nuer* (1940), even the distinguished Norwegian anthropologist Frederik Barth loses sight of the breakthrough in Gluckman's development from E-P of an historical approach to ecology, political change and state formation (Barth 2005:33). From an ecological perspective, there was, of course, the obvious interest in comparing very different peoples, both with economies involving transhumance in flood-plains: the Nuer and the Lozi; and Gluckman highlighted the fact that the Lozi 'had a land basis for social inequality of power, as the egalitarian Nuer did not' (Gluckman 1941:104). There was also a shared tradition in fieldwork, influenced by Malinowski; he stressed, as Fortes recalled, 'the first priority in fieldwork must be the study of a people's modes of livelihood, their economy, their technology of production and organization of consumption and exchange, their systems of land tenure, their responses to modern economic incentives and opportunities like the labour market' (Fortes 1983:20). Gluckman set out to evaluate 'the structural principles which operated in the old [pre-colonial] system … and to show how the weight of various principles changed with innovations' (1941:2). But rather than claiming a breakthrough of his own, he credited his mentor with the exemplary treatment of change and innovation: 'Evans-Pritchard has succeeded admirably on the Nuer and Anuak; and in his account of the structural principles underlying mystical beliefs.' (1941:2n.2). Nevertheless, Gluckman also made the point that his own methodology 'has previously been used by some historians' (1941:3n.1).

In Gluckman's view, each system, the pre-colonial and the colonial, developed through change; neither was static.

2 For a bold and challenging 'thought experiment' which looks at the Manchester School from what is seen as the perspective in E-P's *Nuer*, see Van Binsbergen 2007.

One challenge for a sociological analysis was to work out the relative balance over time of certain principles enduring in one form or another from the old to the new system. Another challenge was to understand that the changes which came with British political sovereignty – mining, European farming, a cash economy and labour migration – meant that 'an entirely different social system has to be studied' (Gluckman 1941:3).

Taking the long view, to start with, Gluckman was willing to speculate on earlier state formation. This was through the pre-colonial accomplishments of immigrants to the Barotse Plain from grasslands beyond it, who expanded their tribe into a tributary state, a centralized kingdom of many tribes, in command of the flood-plain as the heartland of a whole region, with internal and external trade based on a differentiated economy. Loziland appeared to be 'a land of milk and honey' in the eyes of early travellers, missionaries and traders, upon whose nineteenth-century observations Gluckman drew for his reconstruction of the past system and its mode of production and distribution. In this past system, he argued, the growth of inequality in power, along with centralized hierarchy, had its basis in the ways that physical resources, such as mounds, the scarce sites above the floods, were turned into social resources. As such, they were deployed, with reciprocity and without marked exploitation, in widely extended productive co-operation, barter, and economic exchange of surpluses. Even tribute-taking proceeded with a return to the giver. Increasing the labour supply, bringing in dependants and more children from subject communities, was critical to meet and generate new needs, especially in the development of irrigation canals: only the Lozi kings 'had the labour force to dig the big canals which made communication easier, and which were later used to drain wide tracts of marsh in the outer-plain, and even some of the damboes [*sic*, now dambos, seasonally waterlogged depressions] in the bush' (Gluckman 1941:92).

Each system was shown to be not isolated from wider intervention, such as, in the pre-colonial period, from foreign invaders who, during a time of civil war in about 1840, took over the kingdom under their own kings until 1864, and from the penetration from the coast of long-distance commercial trade in guns, cloth, ivory and slaves; and in the colonial period, from involvement in trade for many new commodities and a cash economy within a modern world system. The impact of the external trade was relatively small until late in the pre-colonial period. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, 'What the new trade effected was to give these commodities (cattle, beeswax, ivory, skins, etc.) and slaves high exchange value where previously they had little, and to make far more profitable such enterprises as hunting and beekeeping.' (Gluckman 1941:80–1). Some preliminary threats to the existing commitments to 'kinship-labour assistance and political tribute-labour' had begun to be felt due to the introduction of money by European travellers and traders in payment for short-time service, with no other obligations and responsibilities.

Underlying the analysis is the question of capitalism and the factors for and against its emergence in Loziland from pre-capitalism (something Gluckman delineated but did not label as such). For his answer, he looked to the early limits on the accumulation and storage of wealth, on exchange value and consumption of goods, on the making of profit; and to scarcities in labour, to kinship and tributary obligations, and poor communications. These limits were already being somewhat or slightly overcome in late nineteenth-century pre-capitalism, with significant economic and social consequences. Beyond that, Gluckman's account of modern change showed how innovations, including salaries for leading Lozi – the king, royals and influential elites around the king – enabled these royals to push even further beyond their limits; to control the means of production, primarily still on the land, and wealth of their own, not strongly subject to re-distributive obligations (Gluckman 1943). These made 'these big Lozi into capitalist employers, while the commoners work as wage-labourers for them, as for Whites' (Gluckman 1941:111).[3]

Having published these early 1940s essays, with their ecological and historical perspectives, Gluckman entered a new phase in his relationship with Evans-Pritchard, while taking up a lectureship at Oxford between 1947 and 1949. Gluckman gathered around him his team of the early stars of the Manchester School from his staff of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, namely Elizabeth Colson, John Barnes and Clyde Mitchell. If not quite simply 'a group of eclectic and left-leaning marginals in an upper middle-class academic discipline' (Mills 2006:166),[4] nevertheless, Gluckman's team made a collective stir at Oxford when all gave lectures on their research. After an initial writing-up, they returned to the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute (RLI) in Livingstone.

Oxford then served as a foil, against which the RLI stars won the game, so to speak, according to their moves both in opposition to and in collaboration with an Oxford circle, which the following letter reflects, from Gluckman at Oxford to Mitchell in Zambia. I cite it at some length from the report by David Mills, who points out that it reveals, 'a growing difference of intellectual opinion between Gluckman and Evans-Pritchard over just what it meant to be a social anthropologist':

> We've been having rather a battle this term in seminars with an idealistic wave – it started with Mrs Bohannan

3 For a Marxist reading of Gluckman's study and an account of the later history of 'big Lozi' seen as a ruling class, see Frankenberg 1978.

4 The description does not apply to Elizabeth Colson; see chapter 3 in Werbner 2020.

> in a discussion of Malinowski's Argonauts saying that sociological theories were just attempts of the mind to bring order, and there is no way of testing between theories. Then EP, Lienhardt and others said there were no facts about a people, only what the observer wrote in his notebooks. Meyer and I are fighting hard for our scientific attitude: the facts are public, DCs and Barotse read what I write about the Lozi and it has meaning for them, the facts are checkable in the subject so that I told Lienhardt that even if he wanted to lie about the Dinka he couldn't get away with it. That we have a series of propositions which are being tested all the time etc. And more and more I feel I am a social anthropologist, and I must stick to my last. [Gluckman to Mitchell 5/1 38 12.2.49]
>
> (Mills 2008:102–3)

This difference culminated in the intellectual parting of ways, in which E-P became a new advocate of history in his Marett Lecture and Gluckman still pushed forward, through the rest of his life, his view of social anthropology as, at once, testable science and history. There is a further difference, of course. Evans-Pritchard's exemplary ethnographies, general propositions, theoretical arguments and influential paradigms generated rich streams of social anthropology, including comparative works by others, in particular by Gluckman. But whereas Gluckman throughout his career sustained his comparative work with re-analyses of others' ethnographic data, E-P did not, and even seemed to gain no boost from accounts other than his own: becoming the historian, he was no longer, if ever, the explicit comparativist.

Gluckman tells of the time in 1949 when he was about to leave his lecturer's post at Oxford to take up his foundational chair at Manchester. This is the conversation he reports between a visitor and E-P. The visitor commented that Gluckman was leaving in the same way as another colleague X. 'Evans-Pritchard remarked, No, not in the same way. X is a refugee: Gluckman is a colonist' (1972:x). Gluckman goes on to say, 'Evans-Pritchard was right: we have in many ways been a colony of his (though I hope we have established our independence)' (ibid.).

Gluckman was also proud to remind us that in his own inaugural 1950 lecture at Manchester he chose as his subject 'Social beliefs and individual thinking among primitive peoples'. To start with, he took up E-P's insight into the specific logic of Azande beliefs, their theory of causation and morality, and related issues. These he later considered in his 1964–5 Marett Lectures at Exeter, his and E-P's college, lectures in which he deliberately meant to honour E-P as Marett's successor.

If in this and other ways, over a very long period, Gluckman continued to navigate his way with acknowledgment of his intellectual debt along with open disagreement with E-P, it was in the 1950s that their friendship became most fraught. The bitter moments of academic warfare are sensitively conveyed by Robert Gordon:

> [Evans-Pritchard] had been bad-mouthing the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute and accusing several of its members of being Communists, ostensibly in a battle to ensure research funding for their respective institutions. Matters came to a head in 1955 when Max was involved in a bitter, and ultimately losing struggle to get Bill Epstein appointed as Clyde Mitchell's successor as director of the RLI. EP was spreading the story among influential people that Epstein was a card-carrying member of the Communist Party, which at the height of the Cold War would have had major implications.
>
> (Gordon 2018:157)[5]

E-P later admitted that he had confused Epstein with Peter Worsley, who in fact actually was a member of the Communist party.

Here we have to understand the cruel force of this academic warfare, not only in breaking a friendship, during the Cold War, but also in making the vulnerability of colonial and later postcolonial fieldwork almost intolerable. This calls for something of a digression. The threats to academic freedom posed by colonial security assessments of anthropologists are well documented in Geoffrey Gray's recent and full account of Epstein's difficulties in Central Africa and later in New Guinea, as well as the attempt to ban Gluckman from Papua New Guinea (Gray 2019). What E-P's intervention made even worse, for Epstein in particular, was festering suspicion in a situation of 'cross-fire', now all too familiar to postcolonial as well as colonial anthropologists. Carrying out fieldwork in politically sensitive conditions and times of crisis often means a high personal cost for the fieldworker – it means becoming, under 'cross-fire', an endangered object of suspicion by people on opposite sides, as Epstein felt driven to explain, in a letter to Clyde Mitchell:

> I have come to the conclusion that urban research in Central Africa is not really my cup of tea. It seems to me that urban field investigations of an intensive kind where one can really get among the people cannot be undertaken without getting oneself involved in a situation such as I found myself in on my last trip. The whole protracted process of tight-rope walking is conducive neither to good work nor to one's mental balance.
>
> (ALE to JCM, 30 March 1955, Bodleian)[6]

5 For more detail on the institutional and intellectual rivalry in the mid-1950s between E-P and Gluckman, see Mills 2008:104–5.

6 For a fuller account of the implications for anthropological research represented by Epstein's vulnerability and the troubling

When Gluckman turned to Meyer Fortes for advice and some consolation in this crisis, he wrote deeply about his quarrel with E-P. I quote his letter at length, as reported by Robert Gordon, for it is moving, and it sheds much light on his perception of a dark predicament constituted in large measure by E-P, despite his well-known virtues:

> My dear Meyer,
> Many thanks for your letter about my quarrel with EP… I value your sympathy in what was a decisive step, carefully considered. I agree with you that as one gets older and as one's troubles increase one values more and more the few friendships that stand for long periods. In my case, this is perhaps even more so as my simple socialistic faith in the future has been undermined by events. I have felt that the one thing which mattered and endured was my personal loyalty to my friends, and from them. There were therefore two shocks in EP's remarks. – first that in his position of power and security he should hit at a young and helpless man – a man who comes from the same kind of insecure and poor immigrant background as ourselves, self-made in Britain so to speak. And second, that EP should use this helpless person to attack me – for he knew that I was urging Epstein to apply for the Directorship of the RLI – which Epstein does not want. So I had to react strongly: first, as Head of Department I had to protect my student, or lose my self-respect; and secondly, I was at last moved by this to stand up for myself – and about time too – I know that EP is capable of great kindness and magnanimity – I have profited from these myself. But in the course of my analysis, I have learnt that it is hopeless to proceed on the assumption that people's true selves are their virtues and (that) their vices are not truly them. I used to shock myself by my fits of rage, and treat them as something against my better nature. I've learnt to control them by accepting responsibility for them as part of my character. So with EP. His cruelty and irresponsibility are not surface faults – they are part of him, as much as the kindness and generosity. The malice is real, the ill will is real.
>
> Three years ago he told Sir John Waddington – former Governor of N. Rhodesia and my boss – that I ran a communist cell in Manchester and that the RLI was full of communists. Irresponsible – perhaps Waddington paid no attention to it. But EP said it to a man like Waddington, uncaring of its effects on myself, the RLI, my students and colleagues. Well, I cannot take friendship to have this hate at its core. I don't expect perfection – I can't myself give friendship of that sort. But I can't allow myself and my students to be traduced in this way.
>
> The situation now is that EP sent me a postcard to say 'sorry I don't (know) what you are talking about.' … Anyway, whatever happens it may be possible for EP and me to meet with surface cordiality, but I've had it. The past is the past, the present and the future are different. It is clear to me that EP cannot maintain our friendship despite the development of my separateness and independence, and in some sense my rivalry with him. I feel structural strain even with you, but I trust you to the limit. This is friendship, love and confidence and respect. Hate and hostility are now too strong in my relationship with EP – hate and hostility on his side, distrust on mine.
>
> (MG to MF, 10 July 1955, Cambridge University Fortes Papers, cited in Gordon 2018:158–9)

With perhaps some hope of reconciliation and, at least, some appearance of cordiality, Gluckman invited E-P to Manchester to give the Simon Lectures in 1961. Honouring his old teacher mattered a great deal to Gluckman, as he showed in securing for E-P the D. Litt. Honoris Causa from Manchester, on 17 March 1969. Following that, also, as editor he dedicated to E-P *The Allocation of Responsibility*, the 1972 collection of essays, mainly by Manchester colleagues, in E-P's honour and responding to his witchcraft book. In the 1972 volume, Gluckman took care to highlight the great comparative force of the insights E-P won in research in relatively small-scale societies with simple technologies: 'his genius has enabled him to illuminate general problems in our understanding of the interaction of every population of human beings, each living in an ecological situation where they operate with tools within a cultural heritage of law and morals' (1972:ix).

When E-P pointed anthropology towards being a discipline within history, Gluckman sought to drive home his own view that E-P's contributions were in propositions, systematic and social structural propositions, '[E-P's] analyses start firmly rooted in superb research among particular peoples: they produce general propositions about the structure of social systems, propositions which can be applied independently of specific place and specific period' (1972:x).

These propositions of E-P's, under Gluckman's dissemination, became very influential at Manchester, and attracted great interest among leading scholars in different disciplines and faculties, Ely Devons in economics, Dorothy Emmett in philosophy, William Mackenzie in government, and the philosopher of science, Michael Polanyi in social studies. In widely read published works, each of these scholars came to relate their arguments explicitly and at some length to E-P's propositions about the circularity of conceptual systems and the idea of the secondary

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consequences of his 'security' record which followed him from country to country, see chapter 4 in Werbner 2020.

elaboration of belief. Polanyi's arguments, pushing E-P's, are rightly still celebrated in debates about science and the sociology of knowledge.

We have seen that the friendship between E-P and Gluckman became so fraught that it survived, barely, in a surface of cordiality, and without any depth of mutual trust. Yet we need also to appreciate unshaken knowledge that was the more resilient truth of their relationship, as a changing whole. The fact that Gluckman became ever more concerned about rivalry and the increasingly competitive nature of their relationship did not drive him to disparagement or to fail to extol E-P's path-breaking contributions, in the past, to the making of modern social anthropology. In 1951, Gluckman wrote of E-P in a review of his *Kinship and Marriage among the Nuer* (1950), 'No-one would deny that Evans-Pritchard has contributed greatly to the development of social anthropology; it is doubtful though whether social anthropology has contributed to Evans-Pritchard's development' (Gluckman 1951, cited in Gordon 2018:157).[7] It mattered greatly to Gluckman that what endures, well beyond Manchester and indeed well beyond the social sciences, is the creative inter-disciplinary interest in E-P's propositions and his masterpieces. This is the interest which Gluckman was himself in the very forefront of fostering, on his mentor's behalf, throughout his own life as a social anthropologist, 'sticking to his last'. Hence came Gluckman's final gestures through the Simon Fellowships and the Manchester honorary degree towards some reconciliation with E-P and, most strikingly, to pay homage to what Gluckman valued deeply for a fundamental moment in modern social anthropology: E-P's liberating impact at the height of his creativity.

7 As Gordon suggests, 'It was about this time [around 1949] that Gluckman started feeling that EP while still producing good work, had lost his creativity. [The 1950 kinship study] … good, as it was, had not taken into account theoretical developments since EP's own *Some Aspects of Marriage and the Family among the Nuer* (1945).' (Gordon 2018:157). E-P had his riposte ready for Gluckman. Gordon reports on this, from Gluckman's correspondence with Milton Singer,

> Shortly after the review was published, Gluckman gave a seminar at Oxford, and seeing him off at the station, EP commented that he had in fact read all the literature on the topic. Max responded that there were some people who were public readers and secret drinkers, but that EP was a public drinker and a secret reader, and that he had not paid attention to the contemporary literature. EP replied that there had been nothing worth responding to.
>
> (MG to MS, 22 January 1974, RAIGP, cited in Gordon 2018:157)

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Correspondence Abbreviations

ALE – Arnold 'Bill' Epstein; JCM – J. Clyde Mitchell; MG – Max Gluckman; MS – Milton Singer.

Bodleian – Bodleian Library; RAIGP – Royal Anthropological Institute Gluckman Papers.

15

Professor Sir Edward Evans-Pritchard's correspondence[1]

Extracts from his surviving letters

Ahmed Al-Shahi

The letters from which I shall quote are part of a collection of letters (132), mainly received by E-P, and few were sent by him, who was then Professor of Social Anthropology and Head of the Institute of Social Anthropology, Oxford University (1946–70). The letters vary in size and throughout this chapter I will be quoting sparingly from them. Further, I have given brief biographical information for some of the people cited in the text. During his lifetime E-P destroyed both personal correspondence and, it is said, notes from his fieldwork. People sometimes enquire as to why E-P did not leave his research material that would have been useful for future anthropological enquiries, for researchers on Sudan and South Sudan, for historians, for sociologists, for linguists and other interested people. His justification was that he has published most of his fieldwork material, and, in particular, his much-consulted publications on the two tribes of South Sudan: the Nuer and the Azande. Thus, the survival of the letters that I have were a 'miracle'. This chapter is based on extracts from these letters that provide information regarding E-P's wide-ranging contacts, as well as the variety of topics on which he was consulted or he sought answer to.

The reader may enquire as to how Godfrey Lienhardt came to have these letters? There are a number of possibilities: as Godfrey was E-P's literary executor, he may have inherited these letters; or, these letters may have been passed on to Godfrey during E-P's lifetime. Another possible explanation is that Godfrey borrowed these letters for whatever reason, but did not return them.[2] However they survived, I am glad that they did so. I hope to deposit these letters at an appropriate institution for interested people to read and consult.

E-P's letters inform us of his interest in the progress made in teaching anthropology and undertaking anthropological fieldworks in various parts of the world following the Second World War. No doubt other heads of anthropology departments their staff members in universities in the United Kingdom, and elsewhere, have also endeavoured to promote the study of anthropology and research. Further, E-P's letters show his wide-ranging correspondence with anthropologists and others in the United Kingdom and abroad; and his personal interest in and research on various tribes of South Sudan. Interest in anthropology and fieldwork have expanded after the Second World War, as shown from the correspondence that E-P had received from colleagues from Australia, America, Africa, Europe, Middle East and Latin America. The contents of the letters have many themes. To list a few: invitation to speak at conferences or to join departments for short academic periods, personal appreciation of E-P, praise for his contributions to social anthropology, engaging in intellectual dialogue with people who have read E-P's work or have listened to him talking on the radio, seeking advice from him on conducting anthropological research, adjudicating manuscripts for publication, examining theses, personal encounters, refereeing for posts in anthropology, queries about his own research among tribes of South Sudan, his election to various organizations, and dialogue with Roman Catholic missionaries with regard to his research on tribes of South Sudan. Apart from letters sent to E-P from within the UK, others were sent from Australia, Europe, USA, Africa, Japan, Brazil, South Africa and Jamaica.

1 Some extracts of these letters were read at the workshop 'The life and works of Sir Edward Evans-Pritchard (1902–73)' held at the Royal Anthropological Institute, London, on 18–19 October 2018. Contributors to this volume refer to E-P's background, personal and academic; and thus, there is no need for me to duplicate such material. I am grateful for the Royal Anthropological Institute for its hospitality during the two-day meeting held in London. It is envisaged to publish the majority, if not all, of these letters in full under the auspices of the Royal Anthropological Institute. I would be pleased to receive any comments or corrections. Please contact me on: namlas159@gmail.com. My thanks for Caroline Davis for typing this paper and to Maria Luisa Langella for translating the content of the French letters.

2 To the best of my knowledge Godfrey Lienhardt also inherited the literary executorship of Professor A.R. Radcliffe-Brown from E-P after his death. Both executorships were passed on by Godfrey during his lifetime.

The dates of the letters span period of time between 1939 and 1973, and they were sent to E-P via the Institute of Social Anthropology, Oxford. The exception is a letter dated 1939 that was sent to him through Exeter College, just before he took his first post in Oxford.[3] Some letters have been marked 'replied' in E-P's handwriting, but there are no copies of E-P's replies,[4] to many of the letters in the collection. Had there been copies of his replies to the letters he has received, or his initiating correspondence, we would have come to have more insight into E-P's intellectual rapport and interest with regard to his own works and in promoting the study of anthropology. It is hoped that some of the replies he wrote to these letters are to be found in the recipients' archives. It would be instructive to pursue research in these, as it would give a wider ranging scope of E-P's interest in ideas, research and the development of anthropology. It is important to point out that E-P's letters must be seen in the context of the time and circumstances during which they were written, as well as in the context of the anthropological fashion following the Second World War. The additions I have made to the texts are bracketed [ ].

Stories, negative or laudatory, were circulated about E-P during his lifetime and after his death. Gossip is frequent in anthropology departments. However, what one should remember is E-P's enormous academic and intellectual achievements as well as his influence on generations of anthropologists; his interest and support to colleagues and students; and his humility. Students who were taught and supervised by E-P have become well known in their fields of specialization. They, like E-P, have contributed to the development of their academic institutions, and have also written anthropological works that are taught and consulted.

E-P and Godfrey Lienhardt spoke, during their lifetimes, of the injustices that were inflicted on the South Sudanese at the hands of different northern Sudanese regimes, both military and civilian. However, they would have been pleased to learn that South Sudan became an independent state in 2011, and that South Sudanese can now pursue their future as they see proper. But E-P and Godfrey would have been disheartened to learn of the recent brutal conflict, which has developed into a vicious tribal conflict, mainly between the two largest tribes in the south: the Dinka and the Nuer. The two civil wars between South Sudanese and North Sudanese governments have had devastating consequences, and recent conflict has caused further damage, adding to the existing hardship of the ordinary South Sudanese. E-P conducted his research during peaceful times, on the Nuer and the Azande, and other tribal groups; and Godfrey on the Dinka and Anuak.[5] Nowadays, security and safety in the region are poor. To conduct anthropological, or any other type, of research in South Sudan is highly risky and dangerous for both local and foreign researchers. If in the past the Dinka and Nuer used spears in their cattle raids or blood feuds, nowadays they use automatic rifles and machine guns in their conflict in the south. At present the conflict between the two tribes is about controlling, and benefitting from, the state and its institutions. Unfortunately, the state has taken sides in the conflict, which would have displeased both E-P and Godfrey. While they were united in their endeavour to explain the social systems of both the Nuer and Dinka, respectively, the two tribes have conducted a brutal and destructive armed confrontation that has led to adverse consequences, including the creation of a large diaspora, belonging to many tribal groups, to be found in neighbouring African countries, Sudan, Europe, the United States of America, Australia, Canada, Italy and others. The present diaspora is a continuation of an earlier diaspora created during the two civil wars (1955–72 and 1983–2005). Though the political and economic situation in South Sudan looks despairing at the moment, I am hopeful that South Sudanese will come together to address the fundamental and difficult issues regarding the future of their new state, their relationship with it and their relationship with each other.

Space does not allow me to cite many of the letters received by E-P or sent by him. However, I will give extracts from some of these letters in order to illustrate the themes that I have referred to. Invitations followed E-P's much respected academic reputation and fame. The earliest letter in the collection is dated 23 March 1939 and was sent to E-P by E.S. Furniss[6] via Exeter College:

> We have received from the Department of Anthropology a recommendation for your appointment as Assistant Professor for the coming academic year at a salary of $4000. Dr Murdock,[7] Chairman of the Department, informs me that he has from you assurances that this invitation is acceptable to you.

To the best of my knowledge E-P did not take this appointment, as on the outbreak of the Second World

3 E-P was attached to Exeter College as an undergraduate student reading history. This attachment continued during E-P's early career in Oxford, when he was appointed as Research Lecturer in African Sociology (1935–40).

4 I think the replies in shorthand were dictated by E-P to the secretary of the Institute of Social Anthropology.

5 In Oxford, Godfrey Lienhardt used to receive frequent Dinka friends and visitors; as well as other South Sudanese.

6 Edgar Stephenson Furniss (1890–1972): American economist who served as provost of Yale University, 1937–57.

7 George Peter Murdock (1897–1985): American anthropologist who was Chairman of the Anthropology Department Yale University, 1938–60.

War in 1939 he volunteered for military service, which he undertook in Sudan first and later in Libya, 1940–5. On demobilization in 1945 he was appointed Reader in Anthropology at Cambridge University,[8] where he stayed for one year, and then was appointed in 1946 to the Chair of Social Anthropology at the Institute of Social Anthropology and Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford University, which he occupied until his retirement in 1970.

In recognition of his academic reputation, E-P was invited by Professor Georges Gurvitch[9] of the Centre d'Etudes Sociologiques, Paris, to deliver two to three lectures during the academic year of 1948–9. It seems that E-P had accepted the invitation, but he wrote that in the event that he could not join the Centre in 1948, suggesting 'Dr Meyer Fortes' as an alternative speaker. The Centre had on its board of directors many French luminaries, including L. Lévy-Bruhl[10] and Marcel Mauss.[11]

After expressing the reasons for his displeasure regarding the lack of support for the Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies, Jamaica, its Director, H.D. Huggins, wrote a letter to E-P dated 19 May 1956, asking for his support:

> I would welcome your coming out to Jamaica and seeing us at first hand. Socially, politically and economically the Caribbean is in an active state of change and you would find it of interest. From my own point of view your influence on our team would be stimulating and rewarding… Your family would enjoy it.

E-P replied in his letter of 26 May 1956, explaining that he was intending to spend his sabbatical in Tripolitania (Libya). If this plan failed he might take the offer to go to Jamaica. However, E-P expressed his feeling about the cost of living and bringing his family to Jamaica (six members) and finding schooling for his children. To the best of my knowledge, he did not go to take up the offer.

A letter of invitation dated 11 July 1956 was sent by Dr A.A. Duri, Dean of Faculty of Arts and Sciences, University of Baghdad, to E-P, asking for suggestions as to an experienced anthropologist who might spend a year in the College of Arts Faculty, in order to be Head of Department of Sociology and Anthropology. In his reply on 18 July 1956, E-P suggested a number of colleagues, as he was not able to take up the offer. However, the offer was taken by Godfrey Lienhardt, who spent the year 1955–6 at the College of Arts establishing anthropology as a taught subject. Godfrey Lienhardt was followed by Ken Burridge, who spent two academic years (1957 and 1958) at the same college.

An unusual request in a letter from Hazel Ballance Napier[12] to E-P, dated 22 June 1947, sought his advice on the publication of a play, *Moon Over Ethiopia*.[13] She wrote:

> What shall I do next I wonder? Your kind hospitality at the Sherry party last Thursday has revived my courage to write to you – combined with my vision of the twins and my impression of your conceptions of life and your Mohammedan poem[14] – all unite to compel me to send you not Virgin Island Design as I hoped earlier but the enclosed play 'Moon Over Ethiopia' written some years ago. Yes strange as it may seem Ethiopia!

She goes on:

> Incidentally this is the Ethiopia with whom mystical and cultural links already exist – though I doubt if the Huntingford[15] would delve deep enough into the unconscious to find them.

I think she wrote to E-P because he served in Ethiopia during the early part of the Second World War. It would be interesting to learn of E-P's response to the play and whether it was published or publicly performed.

E-P was keen on receiving information regarding, and on promoting, the study of anthropology in universities in the UK and abroad. Some of the letters in the collection were in response to his enquiries about the extent of anthropological teaching and research in academic institutions, as well about meetings with academic visitors who came to Oxford. E-P and his wife were generous in their hospitality. For example, on 20 January 1947 A.R. Müller of the Escola Livre de Sociologia e Política de São Paulo, Brazil, wrote to E-P:

8 It is during his year at Cambridge that E-P has taught Godfrey Lienhardt social anthropology, in the latter's Tripos Part II.

9 Georges Gurvitch (1894–1965): Russian-borne French sociologist. He held the Chair in Sociology at the University of the Sorbonne, Paris.

10 Lucien Lévy-Bruhl (1857–1939): French philosopher/ethnologist and sociologist. His major interest was the study of primitive mentality.

11 Marcel Mauss (1872–1950): French sociologist/anthropologist who became well known for his work on gift exchange.

12 She wrote a book, *Lagooned in the Virgin Islands* (1931) and an article on her research area in Man (1943). Hazel Ballance's surname was changed to Eadie after her marriage.

13 She wrote to E-P on the advice of Professor Sir John Myres (1869–1954), who was appointed in 1910 as the Wykeham Professor of Ancient History at the University of Oxford.

14 To the best of my knowledge it has not been published.

15 George Wynn Brereton Huntingford (1901–78): linguist and anthropologist. He lectured at School of Oriental and African Studies, London University, 1950–66.

> I was very glad indeed to learn from a letter dated 31st sent to me by Mrs Wyatt, the Secretary of the International African Institute, that you are back in Oxford both as Member of All Souls and as Professor of Social Anthropology. Therefore, let me convey to you my most sincere congratulations.

Following a detailed account of progress of the anthropological component, both in subject and in personnel, in Escola Livre de Sociologia E Política de São Paulo at the Instituição Complementar da Universidade de São Paulo, Müller went on:

> It is always fresh in my memory how friendly you and Mrs E-P were to me in Oxford and I do look forward to reciprocating your kindness here in São Paulo.

Two long and informative letters from Leonard Adam[16] of the Queen's College, Melbourne University, give details of the anthropological interests in Australia's academic institutions. On the 3 February 1947, he wrote:

> The news of your appointment as Professor of Social Anthropology in the University of Oxford reached me only recently, so I am a little late in offering you my congratulations on your election. I am very glad indeed to know that you are now occupying the Chair.

In the same letter Adam informed E-P that anthropology in Australia is 'enjoying a certain popularity' in that anthropological societies 'can be found in all capital cities' though a large number of their members are 'laymen'. Further, the University of Sydney was the 'official centre of our subject and A.P. Elkin[17] occupied the only chair in Australia'. In 1942 Adam undertook a study of the Australian Aborigines at the suggestion of Dr Marett.[18] He must have met E-P at Exeter College.

In his second letter, dated 5 April 1947, Adam wrote to E-P:

> I am particularly glad to know that you are cooperating with Fortes,[19] of whom I have not heard for quite a long time. I think he was in Africa when I had my latest news about him, through Mrs Seligman.[20] I have been thinking of Dr and Mrs. Fortes very often in connection with my habit of sending food parcels to all those friends in England who were very kind to me in the past.

Adam informed E-P of his ethnological, archaeological and anthropological research interests and teaching, as well as the subjects taught in anthropology, psychology and ethnology in Australian universities. He continued:

> Anthropology would probably have flourished in Melbourne long ago but for the departure of Prof. Wood Jones.[21] He is now being referred to almost as a mythical personality, and everybody who knew him is sorry that he left Australia.

Adam ended his letter with a personal accolade, to which it would be interesting to find E-P's response:

> I am telling you all this for your information, since I regard the Professor at Oxford as being in about the same position as the Archbishop of Canterbury in the hierarchy of the Church of England – *sit venia verbo*.[22]

Heads of departments of anthropology encouraged, if not expected, their staff to carry out fieldwork, and these were achieved through sabbatical leave, with various sources of funding. The Institute of Social Anthropology under E-P's headship achieved an international reputation for its contributions to the advancement of social anthropology and research in various parts of the world. A letter sent by

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16 Leonard Adam (1891–1960): a German anthropologist and lawyer. Due to his Jewish background, he was interned in Australia, but due to the intervention of Bronislaw Malinowski, he was released under supervision and progressed to be a staff member of Melbourne University in 1942.

17 A.P. Elkin (1891–1979): Anglican clergyman and Australian anthropologist who succeeded A.R. Radcliffe-Brown as the Chair in Anthropology at Sydney University when the latter resigned in 1931. Elkin remained in the Chair until 1956. He became President of the Association for the Protection of Native Races, 1933–62. He advocated the assimilation of indigenous Australians.

18 Robert Ranulph Marett (1866–1943): British ethnologist who spent his academic career in Oxford. He became a Reader in Anthropology (1910) and, first, Fellow of Exeter College and later as Rector of the same college, 1928–43.

19 Meyer Fortes (1906–83): a South African anthropologist who spent his academic career in Cambridge University, first, as Reader in Anthropology and later as William Wise Professor of Social Anthropology (1950–73). Most of his work concerns the Tallensi and Ashanti tribes of Ghana, West Africa.

20 Brenda Seligman (1882–1965): photographer, collector and academic. She married Charles Gabriel Seligman. (1873–1940), a physician and ethnologist who became professor at the London School of Economics. He undertook a study of the Vedda people in Sri Lanka and the Shilluk tribe of South Sudan. Among his students were Bronislaw Malinowski, E-P and Meyer Fortes.

21 Frederic Wood Jones (1879–1954): British naturalist, anatomist and anthropologist who taught at the London School of Medicine for Women, at universities of Adelaide, Hawaii, Melbourne, Manchester and the Royal College of Surgeons of England.

22 'May there be forgiveness for the word.' An English gloss might be, 'if you will pardon the expression'. My thanks to Dr John Penney for this translation.

John Peristiany[23] to E-P while the former was at Cambridge illustrates this. Peristiany was at Cambridge teaching at the Department of Anthropology when in 1945 he met E-P, the latter was Reader in Social Anthropology at the same institution. Then, in 1949, Peristiany was appointed as staff member of the Institute of Social Anthropology, Oxford, after E-P was appointed to the Chair in Social Anthropology in Oxford in 1946. With his appointment, Peristiany became Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford University, but he resigned his post in 1962. In 1947, Peristiany went on a field trip to Kenya and reported to E-P in his letter dated 12 April[24] from Kericho, Kenya, as to his future fieldwork on detailed study of chiefs and native tribunals, land-tenure, Kipsigis law and bride-price. Though he did not want to return to the Kipsigis, circumstances, however, obliged him to spend two months among them, as a compromise. In his letter he summarized Schapera's[25] recommendation of undertaking fieldwork among tribes of South East Africa. Such recommendations are indicative of the perceived need at that time of carrying out ethnographic surveys in Africa's diverse population.

On the theme of keeping E-P informed of progress in the promotion of the study of anthropology and in carrying out fieldwork, A.P. Elkin sent a letter to E-P dated 13 November 1948 which was in response to the E-P's letter of enquiries concerning Australian students from Sydney University coming to Oxford to study anthropology. E-P was keen on institutional collaboration and on promoting the Oxford style of anthropology, theoretical orientation and methodology. Further, the Institute of Social Anthropology was a postgraduate centre and E-P was keen to recruit postgraduate students from the UK and elsewhere. Elkin corrected E-P's impression that students were sent to America only; as some went to the England. Elkin continued:

> I am sorry … that you got the impression from my letter that I intend to send all my graduates to America. The very object of my letter was to see what possibilities there are for them to go to England.
>
> I hear that some American graduates are now going to England, or will be, to study Anthropology, etc. That is all to the good. A few are even coming out here. I think some three-way traffic would be a good thing for us all.

In his postscript at the bottom of the letter, Elkin clarified the wrong impression E-P had about 'no study of an Australian tribe had been made through the language'. Elkin cites anthropological studies made through vernacular languages and ends his letter:

> I am seeking money to send workers for five years (with two breaks) to continue work in areas where we have laid the foundation. We are just beginning to understand the Philosophy of the Aborigines.

John Gibbs St. Clair Drake[26] of Monrovia University, Liberia, wrote a letter to E-P, dated 20 May 1954, informing him of his research interests and the desire to carryout anthropological research in 'an African community'; a shift from his research in urban life in America. He also asked E-P to be a referee in his application for a post at the University College, Gold Coast (Ghana).[27] John Gibbs taught in a number of universities in the USA and was instrumental in establishing black studies in American universities. He wrote to E-P:

> I decided to come out to Africa for one term. I am lecturing in social anthropology here at this very young institution.[28] It is entirely new experience – teaching anthropology to students who have spent several years in the 'Pere bush'…

Colonial administrators recognized the importance of anthropological investigations to their policy-making and administration. A letter from W.B. Trips, The Secretariat, Tanganyika Territory, Dar Es Salaam, dated 16 October 1947, informed E-P of the need for anthropologists to join the Secretariat to help with 'planning the Population Census for 1948 in Tanganyika and Demographic Survey'. In particular he wanted help over classification of tribes. This request was not forthcoming and thus he wrote:

23 John G. Peristiany (1911–87): Mediterranean anthropologist and Africanist. He studied the Kipsigis tribe of Kenya and became interested in the value system of Mediterranean communities, particularly in terms of honour and shame.

24 Though Peristiany referred to a second letter in his correspondence with E-P, this was not found in the present collection of E-P's letters.

25 Isaac Schapera (1905–2003): South African anthropologist whose major studies were on the Khosian peoples and Tswana chiefs of Botswana. He left South Africa for England, to take up a Chair in Anthropology at the London School of Economics, and where he remained from 1950 until his retirement in 1969.

26 John Gibbs St. Clair Drake (1911–90): Afro-American sociologist/anthropologist. He published *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* (1945) in collaboration with Horace Cayton Jr.

27 This was suggested to him by Dr Kofi Abrefa Busia (1913–78): academic and nationalist leader who served as prime minister in Ghana (1969–72).

28 He is referring to the University of Liberia.

> I suppose we ought to consult the Colonial Science Research Bureau and Dr Kuczynski[29] who wants to come out here now but we are palming him off until the general census is completed next year.

The correspondence shows a rather an unusual request on a related topic. E-P wrote on 17 September 1952 to the War Office with regard to its invitation of joining the Advisory Committee of Psychologists. In his letter E-P stated that the invitation issued to him was in 'error'. But this was not so. P.B. Humphrey stated that:

> We do need a social anthropologist for the following reasons:
>
> 1. The Army has become increasingly aware of the tactical use of psychological warfare, and in this respect, we feel that a knowledge of the racial characteristics of the enemy, and their culture, is likely to be important.
> 2. The Scientific Advisor is very interested in the application of the techniques of social psychology to the Army. Many of the problems we may have to tackle may require guided cultural change, or the study of group structure, and he feels that in this field a social anthropologist would probably be able to contribute much that would be of value.
>
> I would, however, like to point out that much of the work of the Advisory Committee and psychologists will still be concerned with psycho-metrics, and for this reason there would not always be a need for you to come, unless you wished to do so.
>
> If any fields of study that I have mentioned interest you, the Scientific Advisor would be most grateful if you would reconsider your decision not to serve on this Committee.

Though E-P had recommended Professor Meyer Fortes for membership of this committee, he also stated that he was prepared to serve on it. Consequently, the scientific advisor, in his letter, 24 October 1952, wrote that he needed E-P's help 'on the solution to some social and cultural problems arising in Malay and possibly in Kenya.'[30]

He went on to write:

> I agree with you that Professor Meyer Fortes would be very useful, but I would prefer it if you would be prepared to help us for the first year or so.

However, the scientific advisor, in his last letter, dated 13 January 1953, wrote to E-P:

> Sir,
> I am commanded by the Army Council to inform you that the War Office Advisory Committee of Psychologists, of which you have kindly agreed to become a member, has been officially appointed…

I am not sure how much advice E-P gave or for how long, or if ever he did, as the following stipulations would have been laborious and, perhaps, outside E-P's expertise

> To advise on:
>
> i) The psychological aspects of manpower allocation and personal selection.
> ii) The method of content and training.
> iii) The assessment and measurement of attitudes and opinions in the Army.
> iv) Motivation and leadership.
> v) Psychological warfare.
> vi) The psychological aspects of job requirements and environmental influence.
> vii) The psychological aspects of equipment.[31]
> viii) The psychological aspects of the rehabilitation of Service personnel.
> ix) Suitable techniques.

These are not impossible tasks, but seem unlikely to have been undertaken by E-P. It would be instructive to find out the particular stipulation that was chosen for E-P to advise on, as requested by Mr. P.B. Humphrey.

Another unusual request to E-P came from Dr Felix Brown of Harley Street, London, in a letter dated 24 January 1956. Dr Brown wrote:

> A large firm of dog and cat food makers, or to be exact their advertising agents, got in touch with me through the M.O.H. [Ministry of Health] of Hammersmith asking if I would be interested in taking part in a research on the subject of the Psychology and Anthropology of Dog and Cat ownership. They maintain it is to be pure research, no advertisement, no hint of dog food…

After giving more details of the research requirement, Dr Brown ended his letters:

29 Robert Rene Kuczynski (1876–1947): German economist and demographer, who was brought up in Germany but went to the USA. Finally, he settled in England and lectured at the London School of Economics and became advisor to the British Colonial Office.

30 There is no information from the correspondence of the War Office as to the nature of these problems.

31 A rather puzzling stipulation.

> Is it significant as a branch of Anthropology? Are you likely to be interested?[32] If so I would arrange to meet you in Oxford.

From the letter it seems that Dr Brown knew E-P and his wife, and that E-P liked dogs. Perhaps for the latter reason E-P was asked to consider the project, though to the best of my knowledge it was not taken up in Oxford.

A great deal of discussion regarding female genital mutilation (FGM) is currently taking place in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. Traditionally, the custom, which is performed by women on women, is common among the communities of the Sudanic belt; an old geographic designation of the area stretching from Ethiopia to West Africa.[33] Though it is predominantly practised among the Muslim communities of this belt, there are Christians and believers in traditional religions who also practise FGM. Neither Islam nor Christianity prescribe this custom, which is brutal and is performed on females as young as few years old. Both men and women blame each other for the continuity of this custom. Despite continuous criticism, as well its illegality, the slow abandonment of FGM is due, in part, to the complex relationship, both social and sexual, between men and women. Due to recent discussions and the conviction in the United Kingdom of an FGM case, the practice has been highlighted in the mass media.[34] However, in 1949 the issue was raised on two occasions in the Houses of Parliament, when two Members of Parliament, Mr Wilson Harris and Sir Basil Neven-Spence, put questions to Mr Creech-Jones, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and to Mr McNeil, the Minister of State regarding: the increase or decrease of female circumcision, the slow progress in bringing the practice to an end; the humanitarian sympathies to be given to the victims of this 'abhorrent' custom, the need for spreading effective propaganda to combat it and to seek expert advice on the nature and consequences of FGM.[35]

It is in accordance with the last above recommendations that E-P came to offer his advice on how best to undertake meaningful research on this custom. Grace Mary Crowfoot (1879–1957), an archaeologist interested in textiles in Sudan and Egypt,[36] wrote two letters in 1949 which appeared in Hansard protesting the practise of this custom. She also wrote to E-P, seeking his opinion with regard to researching FGM.[37] His sensible and measured reply on 19 March 1949 stipulated three requirements:

> 1. I think before further steps are taken to make female circumcision illegal in its full social context, that is, anthropologically, and not just from a medico-legal standpoint. [*sic*]
> 2. Apart from an intensive study of this kind, I think a survey should be made to determine the distribution of the custom, and what is happening on the periphery of its extension.
> 3. To complete a study of this kind it would also be necessary to have some general knowledge of the custom of circumcision in its widest historical and ethnological setting (for instance, it is not generally known that male circumcision is not even referred to in the Koran).

Muslim religious authorities would have responded to E-P's last point. The justification for male Muslim circumcision is that it is claimed to be Sunna; a tradition among past and present generations of Muslims. The practice is commonly called *ṭahāra*, *ṭahūra*,[38] meaning cleanliness and circumcision, respectively. I think E-P's advice on how to conduct research on FGM is to the point and much relevant to present-day research on the topic.

The next letter indicates that E-P was interested in knowing the religious affiliation of anthropologists. For example, E-P wrote to Alfred Kroeber[39] about this issue, and the latter replied in a letter dated 28 December 1959:

32 Dr Brown also asked whether any other person in the Institute would be interested in the project.

33 FGM is also practised in Egypt and some Arab countries.

34 The issue was brought into the public domain in 1985, when a nurse working in a private clinic reported the performance of FGM without any medical justification. The practice was then outlawed. Recently a Ugandan woman was sentenced to 11 years in jail for the 'barbaric' cutting of her three-year-old daughter. See, for example, *Independent,* 8 March 2019: www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/fgm-sentencing-trial-uganda-mother-guilty-old-bailey-conviction-a8814051.html (accessed 10 January 2023).

35 See Hansard: 26 January 1949 (Series 5, Vol. 460, cc907-08): hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1949/jan/26/sudan-female-circumcision and 16 February 1949 (Series 5, Vol. 461, cc1119–20): http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1949/feb/16/women-circumcision (accessed 10 January 2023).

36 Mary's husband, John Crowfoot, was Assistant Director of Education in Sudan. Both were the parents of the late Professor Dorothy Hodgkin, OM, who won the Nobel Prize for Chemistry.

37 Unfortunately, her letter to E-P is not in the present collection.

38 From the Arabic root: *ṭahara*, to clean or to be pure, and *ṭahāra*, meaning cleanliness, chastity and circumcision. The majority of Muslims communities do not perform female circumcision. The more drastic female circumcision practised in the Sudan is called Pharaonic *ṭahūra fir'ūniyya*, implying that the custom has continued since Pharaonic times.

39 Alfred Louis Kroeber (1876–1960): a renowned American anthropologist who joined the Department of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley.

> My dear E-P
> I had learned of the death of your charming and devoted wife and felt very sorry for both of you.
>
> As to religion, I have sometimes thought my frequent study of it may have been a surrogate for not having one of my own to practice and believe; my parents were both agnostics. How completely American anthropologists in general are wholly without religion or profession of it, I do not know; but it is certainly very common…
>
> I do not personally recall any American anthropologist who is an attending member of a Protestant Church. Some few may belong without going, out of respect for their still living or death parents.
>
> As to Morgan, I recall his anti-Catholic or perhaps anti-Latin remarks when he travelled to Europe late in life. Leslie White published excerpts from his diary in Rochester Historical Society Publishers, 16, 219–289, 1937.
>
> If I run across any exceptions to your generalisations[40] I will write to you.
>
> Of course there have been American Catholic Clericals who have been professional anthropologists, like the late Monsignor Cooper[41] and Father Ewing[42] of Fordham College.

As we do not have E-P's letter to Kroeber, one may wonder whether E-P's correspondence with Kroeber out of personal interest or for a research purpose? The answer to this is likely to be found in Kroeber's personal collection of letters or in the archives of the Department of Anthropology, Berkeley.

It is generally assumed that E-P converted his colleagues to Catholicism at the Institute of Social Anthropology; an assumption which was refuted by Godfrey Lienhardt (Al-Shahi 1999). It is possible that E-P's interest is in knowing the commonality of Catholicism among American anthropologists.

Mr Henry Spalding[43] wrote to E-P on 12 June 1951 seeking his advice and support regarding the study of comparative religions at Oxford University and in other British universities. In particular, Radhakrishnan[44] and some influential friends were drafted to:

Promote ethical, philosophic and religious education and culture, as far as possible throughout the world, through the study of the great religions.

On 18 June, E-P gave his response and to revealed his own religious sentiment:

> I am naturally interested in the Foundation of Chairs of Comparative Religion in this country, and would be glad to be of any help I can in their establishment, but I very much doubt whether the study of the Stoics and Neo-Platonists enriched the life of the Early Church 'and that Aristotle and the Muslim philosophers that of the Medieval Church'.
>
> I have myself always preferred the thought of the Hebrews to that of the Greeks. However, at least I agree with you entirely in deploring the appalling ignorance there is in this country of the great religions of the Near and Far East.

While he was in South Sudan undertaking fieldwork, E-P was in touch with the Catholic Missionaries[45] and this continued after his return to the UK. One of E-P's substantial works on southern Sudan was on witchcraft and magic among the Azande (1937). The logicality and justification of these practices had puzzled the missionaries and hence they were in correspondence with E-P over the nature and function of religion among the diverse tribes of South Sudan.[46] They were also instrumental in establishing educational institutions and basic medical facilities to help local people. Of course, their aim was to convert 'unbelievers' to the branch of Christianity they adhered to. In learning the social systems of the 'natives', missionaries thought it necessary to begin to learn their vernacular languages, which helped them later in the translation of the Bible into a number of native languages. They were

40 Unfortunately there was no copy of the letter that E-P had sent to Kroeber in order to reflect on these generalizations.

41 Monsignor John Montgomery Cooper (1881–1949) was President of the Anthropological Society of Washington (1930–2).

42 J. Franklin Ewing SJ (1884–1968) was Director of the Anthropology Programme at Fordham University.

43 Mr and Mrs Henry Spalding established a trust in 1923 and 1928 to establish a Chair in Eastern Religions and Ethics in Oxford University at the Oriental Faculty.

44 Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888–1975): An Indian philosopher who served as first Vice-President of India (1952–62) and second President of India (1962–7). He was a scholar of comparative religion. In 1936 he was appointed to the Spalding Chair of Eastern Religions and Ethics.

45 They are called the Comboni Missionaries (Fathers and Sisters) and more commonly known as the Verona Fathers. Saint (Bishop) Daniele Comboni (1831–81) came to South Sudan in 1858 to the Holy Cross Mission on the banks of the White Nile. The first missionary station opened by Comboni Missionaries was established in 1901 among the Shilluk tribe.

46 Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries were not allowed to establish missions in North Sudan and thus devoted themselves to the South and to the Nuba Mountains. These churches established a sphere of influence each, in the south and south-western Sudan. The Coptic church was already in Sudan before the arrival of the two branches of Christianity.

successful in this endeavour, which has helped the spread of Christianity in South Sudan.

Some missionaries, like Father P.L. Bano, Father Bernardi and Father Grazzolara, engaged E-P in discussion regarding his fieldwork, offering corrections to his findings and helping him in his research. They also sought E-P's help in raising funds for the publication of works undertaken by the fathers. In particular, Father Filiberto Giorgetti was interested in the Azande religion and their music, and wrote three detailed letters to E-P from South Sudan. However, I quote from his letter dated 29 March 1956 offering his apology and corrections to E-P's ethnography on the Azande:

> You do not know me yet, but all our passed English friends[47] they know me as the one who criticized your articles and books. But it did not bring me any luck. My articles were considered by all too polemic and offensive to you. That I thought you a materialist, to find instead that you are now a Catholic[48] and a friend of our Society, and esteemed person in Rome.

Father Giorgetti promised to remove any offensive remarks about E-P and to correct his own articles 'properly'. In this respect he wrote:

> This is just to be a little more charitable, and for the danger of ruining your name, that in anthropology got already an international fame.[49]

He further informed E-P that:

> I hope this shall be my *ziga*[50] to cool your *mangu*[51] and to prevent so your unwilling *nefast*[52] action against any future articles.

He offered E-P help over the Azande ethnography and glottology and, in ending his letter, Father Giorgetti wrote to make peace with E-P:

> We must be friends and, I am sure, I will gain from your friendship.

E-P was consulted about the methodological of investigating of sickling[53] among African tribes of South Sudan. Dr Henry Foy of the Wellcome Trust Research Laboratories wrote to E-P on 5 February 1953, pointing out the variation in the incidence of sickling among tribes of East Africa and wondering the reason(s):

> This is due to:
> a) Whether they [subdivisions of the Nyika tribe on the East Coast] all belong to the same tribe, or
> b) Whether the sickling phenomenon has any ethnological significance particularly as we have turned it up in high rates in Macedonia.

I am not sure whether E-P could answer these questions! However, Foy continued:

> This makes us inclined to do all the sub-divisions of the larger tribes, but it means an immense amount of work, and if unnecessary would not do it. What do you think about the eleven clans of the Dinkas, and all the sub-divisions of the Nuers that you have listed.[54]

At the end of his letter Foy requested:

> Should be most grateful if you could be so kind as to give your opinion, and any other information bearing on the tribes in S. Sudan.

E-P's reply below did not elaborate on the medical questions asked by Foy but he gave the following sound methodological advice:

> I think that you will be well advised in the case of the larger tribes anyhow, to distribute your test over a number of fairly widely geographically distributed points. The ethnology of the Southern Sudan is more complicated than it might appear, and I suggest that if you can, besides noting down the place where each test was carried out, you photograph the individual preferably full length, but at any rate so that his face and head can be seen. This gives a check, which can help with, on the tribal affiliation of your subjects.

---

47 I assumed that by 'English friends' he meant other researchers, administrators and Anglican missionaries who were in South Sudan at the time. It is not clear whether 'passed' meant dead or former/previous.

48 E-P converted to Catholicism in 1944. He was brought up in an Anglican household as his father was an Anglican vicar.

49 I think Father Giorgetti was somewhat presumptuous in his estimation of his influence on the international anthropological community, or on others who recognized the intellectual brilliance and contributions of E-P's research.

50 In Zande, 'antidote'.

51 In Zande, 'witchcraft'.

52 Also 'witchcraft' in Zande.

53 A medical condition in which sickle cells are developed in the blood.

54 While E-P could speak of on the Nuer's subdivisions, I wonder whether he consulted Godfrey Lienhardt on the 'eleven clans of the Dinkas'?

Two groups of letters demonstrate how difficult personal situations ended up well for E-P. The first group consists of four letters which required detailed responses from E-P, Fred Eggan[55] and the University of Oslo, Norway. The exchange between them underline differences of academic systems and standards in academic assessment and examination. The theme of the correspondence concerns Fredrik Barth's[56] book/thesis. E-P was asked to assess Barth's book/thesis and Fred Eggan wrote on 1 February 1954, after E-P had submitted his report:

> I was somewhat surprised to learn that you recommended that the University of Oslo not accept Frederik Barth's monograph on the Kurds, partly on the grounds that any such monograph should be based on two year's research. Such a requirement is quite contrary to our conception of the Ph.D degree.

E-P replied on 4 February 1954 to Dr Sommerfelt[57] of the University of Oslo after receiving a letter from Fred Eggan criticizing:

> …the advice I gave you about it, and the grounds on which I based my opinion…

Further, E-P protested in the same letter:

> I understand that (as customary) any opinion I gave would be treated as strictly confidential; otherwise I should not have accepted the invitation. Would you be so good as to let me know why my letter was passed on to Dr Eggan, and who was responsible?

Dr Sommerfelt replied in a letter dated 14 February 1954 to E-P to clarify the situation and communicate that he was 'very sorry' and that he should have pointed out the 'rules in the Scandinavian universities' which state:

> The candidate has the right to see the documents when a decision has been taken by the Faculty and the Collegium Academicum (the Steering Committee of the University…)
>
> It is very regrettable that Mr. Barth should have taken the unusual action of trying to appeal against the justice of the Committee's decision. The members of the Committee had arrived at the same result as you on practically the same argument.

Then he ended his letter:

> It ought to be clear … that the Norwegian degree of Dr. Philos. does not correspond to a Ph.D. but is intermediate between the latter and an English D.Litt.

The matter continued involving more correspondence of clarification and criticism. Professor Gutorm Gjessing[58] wrote a letter, dated 3 March 1954, to Fred Eggan in which he pointed out:

> It is, indeed, nice of you to take so much personal interest in the 'tragic' fate of Fredrik's book as far as its submission for D. Phil. degree is concerned.

After explaining the complex system of evaluating theses/books, Gjessing reminded Fred Eggan that:

> Whether Fredrik's monograph is up to the standards at Oxford or not, has not been of decisive significance for our judgement. But we certainly have put considerable weight on Professor Evans-Pritchard's opinion as a scholar. His criticism, moreover, was concentrated on exactly the same points as was our own.

He praised Barth's personal achievement but:

> You will perhaps agree that the combination of brief time spent in fieldwork and absence of linguistic competence puts the burden of documentation heavy on the author.

Finally, Gjessing wrote to placate E-P:

> I am extremely sorry that you have been involved in this correspondence following upon our decision. I too have now got a letter from Professor Eggan, in my opinion perhaps a somewhat unnecessary intervention.

He hoped that there will be no further correspondence.[59]

55 Frederick Russell Eggan (1906–91), an American anthropologist who spent most of his academic career at the University of Chicago and became Chairman of the Department of Anthropology.

56 Thomas Fredrik Weybye Barth (1928–2016), a Norwegian social anthropologist who taught at the universities of Boston, Oslo, Bergen, Emory and Harvard. His training in anthropology took place in Chicago and Cambridge.

57 Alf Sommerfelt (1892-1965); Norwegian linguist who worked at the University of Oslo from 1931 until 1962.

58 Gutorm Gjessing (1906–79): a Norwegian archaeologist/anthropologist who was Head of the Ethnographic Collection at the Museum of Cultural History at the University of Oslo.

59 Barth was successful in the end in being awarded a Ph.D. from Cambridge. It was on an entirely different society than this original submission.

The second group of letters relate to the strained relationship between E-P and Max Gluckman.[60] This was interpreted as a difference in orientation and methodology between the 'Manchester' and 'Oxford' schools of anthropology. However, there was a personal acrimony between Max Gluckman and E-P which can be illustrated by quotations from the three letters sent by Gluckman to E-P. In his first, dated 3 July 1955, Gluckman stated that it came to his knowledge that:

> My colleague Epstein[61] as 'the man whom Evans-Pritchard is worried about, because of his Marxism'. I also got other evidence to support this information that you are gossiping viciously and ignorantly about Epstein.

He went on to say that if this is 'true', then it was to be:

> Construed … as a general attack upon me and my associates in anthropology.

He continues, stating that the attack on Epstein:

> Dishonours you[r] position as Professor and Fellow, and abuses your status in anthropology.

Gluckman ended his letter by:

> I myself feel that it is impossible for us to remain friends. I appreciate deeply my personal and professional debt to you, and value the friendship we shared in the past. But that friendship involved trust and respect; when these are replaced by distrust and contempt friendship no longer exists.
>
> Of course, if the ascription of these remarks to you is false, I shall be pleased.

Clearly E-P did not let this pass without writing to Gluckman. Thus, Gluckman in his letter of 10 July 1955 wrote to E-P:

> Your postcard to say that you didn't know what I was talking about in my last letter … I am naturally very glad to hear this.
>
> … as I told you some three years ago, I heard that you had told Sir John Waddington,[62] my former boss, that I ran a Communist cell at Manchester and that the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute was full of Communists. I think it would be fair to us if you took the opportunity to deny that you had ever said these things.

Gluckman ended his letter:

> I am glad that the matter between us is straightened out; but you may be sure that it was the accumulation of persistent and apparently consistent evidence from many sources over some years which moved me to write as strongly as I did. For this, I am sorry…

Finally, Gluckman wrote to E-P in a conciliatory letter dated 15 July 1955:

> I quite agree that letters going backwards and forwards are likely to harm everyone; but so does loose talk going about.
>
> Anyway, I still see no reason why this sort of gossip should be spread. We want neither spies nor false witnesses in our ranks.

The matter concerning Epstein was put to rest without further communication from Gluckman or E-P.[63] Longstanding friendship and professional etiquette seem to have prevailed over gossip and misrepresentation.

A request to E-P of a different kind came in a letter dated 9 May 1956 from Monkichi Namba[64], the President of Kobe College,[65] Nishinomiya, Japan. He began his letter:

> I wish to express my deep appreciation and heartfelt gratitude for your courtesies and hospitalities shown to me during my visit to your institution.[66] Really I was delighted to be able to get new information and I learned a great deal from talking to you. I am firmly convinced that my experiences will not only help promote the education and administration at our College in the future but also contribute to the advancement of women's higher education in general

60 Herman Max Gluckman (1911–75): a South African-born British anthropologist who joined the Rhodes-Livingston Institute and taught at the universities of Oxford (for a very short time) and Manchester. See Chapter 14, this volume, for more regarding his relationship with E-P.

61 Arnold Leonard Epstein (1924–99): an anthropologist who taught at the Australian National University and Sussex University.

62 Sir John Waddington (1890–1957): Colonial Service Administrator and later Chair, International African Institute.

63 Despite the accusations and temporary rift, E-P was awarded an Hon. D.Litt. from Manchester University while Max Gluckman was still Professor of Social Anthropology and Head of Department of Social Anthropology.

64 Monkichi Namba was a Japanese sociologist who specialized in the field of education.

65 Kobe College was the first women's college in Japan, and received its charter in 1948.

66 In reference to the Institute of Social Anthropology, which has since become the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology.

> in Japan and to a better understanding between our nations.

Then he asked E-P the following, in a handwritten note at the bottom:

> Would you kindly write me words for preface of the Japanese edition of our Social Anthropology. Thank you again for your thoughtfulness.

E-P wrote on 10 July 1956 a letter and an introduction to the Japanese edition of his book in which he stated:

> Author's Preface
>
> It is a pleasure and an honour that this book should appear in a Japanese translation. Since I have been asked to write a short note in preface to this translation, I would like to emphasize that these lectures were given on the Third Programme of the B.B.C. and were therefore intended for a general, and not for a specialist, audience. Yet I had in mind also the student who is about to read Social Anthropology in a university and seeks for a brief and simple introduction to the subject, but an introduction which does not fall below the standard of scholarship demanded in an academic discipline. I hope that the book will introduce Social Anthropology to the general educated public in Japan, and also serve as a guide to students of the Social Sciences in her universities.[67]

Hitherto I have given glimpses of the surviving E-P correspondence that illustrate the extent of his dedication to the promotion of the study of social anthropology in academic institutions worldwide, and his advice to fellow anthropologists and others on various matters. As can be seen from these extracts, appreciation and admiration, both personally and academically, abound. One piece of appreciation is a letter[68] from Radcliffe-Brown[69] sent to E-P, from which I quote his second paragraph:

> I think that you know that I esteem and admire your work and that I was determined that you were the right man for Oxford (quite apart from any consideration of the fact that you are an Oxford man). I appreciate highly the work you have done there.[70]

E-P's appointment lived up to Radcliffe-Brown's prediction. Further, E-P built up the Institute of Social Anthropology in teaching and research to an acknowledged and renowned international reputation. I hope that his surviving letters, once published, will be reflected upon and appreciated as a testament of his profound contributions to the reputation of the Institute of Social Anthropology in particular and the University of Oxford in general. Generations of anthropologists owe him a great deal for his intellectual influence, encouragement and support. His legacy will live on.

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67 The quotation is from the typescript prepared by E-P for this introduction. E-P's book: *Social Anthropology* (1951) was translated into Japanese as *Shakai Jinrui-gaku* (1963). For detailed bibliography of E-P, see Chapter 36, this volume.

68 The letter does not specific the place and the date. However, he was staying at the Endsleigh Hotel and the letter was obviously written after Radcliffe-Brown's retirement.

69 Reginald Radcliffe-Brown (referred to as Rex or R-B), 1881-1955, British social anthropologist whose main anthropological study was on the Andaman Islands. He served as Professor of Social Anthropology at the universities of Cape Town, Sydney and Chicago; and finally at Oxford University from 1937 until 1946. E-P succeeded him from 1946 until 1970.

70 I think Radcliffe-Brown was referring here to E-P's anthropological researches on the tribes of South Sudan.

PART IV

In Africa

Captain Evans Pritchard. Courtesy Imperial War Museum (HU 49599).

16
Evans-Pritchard as a pioneer of African history

Douglas H. Johnson

Anthropologists generally approach the peoples of South Sudan through their interest in the work of Evans-Pritchard, where his methodology and theories often are of more interest than the peoples about whom he wrote. I came to Evans-Pritchard from the opposite direction: starting from an interest in the history of South Sudan and its peoples led inevitably to Evans-Pritchard's ethnography. It is as a historian that I came to appreciate his contribution to the development of the discipline of African history in general, and in particular of the neglected field of the internal histories of South Sudanese societies.

E-P was frequently critical of anthropologists for being insufficiently historical in their research, and of historians for being insufficiently anthropological in their analysis. With an undergraduate degree in history, and as an admirer of R.G. Collingwood and his interest in obscure provinces, E-P brought an awareness of social processes to his research on societies in today's South Sudan and elsewhere. He cited his *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica* (1949) as an explicit example of anthropological writing about a society developing over time (1962a:24, 58). But he demonstrates this same historical awareness in many of his other ethnographies. His *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (1937) is implicitly historical with its account of changes to Zande society under colonial rule that had an impact on witchcraft accusations and trials. In *The Political System of the Anuak of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan* (1940a) he provides an historical outline of Anuak kingship and the circulation of royal emblems among Anuak nobles. *Kinship and Marriage among the Nuer* (1951) provides the foundation on which an analysis of social change among the Nuer as a result of their incorporation of other peoples into their social system can be constructed. E-P also left much shorter studies of numerous smaller groups of people he encountered in his field trips in Sudan, and these accounts frequently refer to the recent past. At a time when Oxford's historians were still focused on the history of Europeans in Africa (when noticing Africa at all), E-P was publishing his Zande oral historical texts and his account of pre-colonial Zande kingdoms and court life. This chapter will describe Evans-Pritchard's contribution to African history as a subject, and specifically to the historical study of South Sudan, and will show how his work can be used as the foundation of new research.

Evans-Pritchard and African history

In his essay on 'Anthropology and history', written after he had published his main monographs, Evans-Pritchard argued that social anthropology and history were related branches of social science that had much to learn from each other (1962b:62). The main thrust of his criticism was aimed at anthropologists for their lack of historical method in assessing sources, and their failure to treat historical material sociologically. Specifically, he accused them of being 'uncritical in the use of documentary sources, including our own field monographs, which we take far too much on trust'. He faulted them for seldom making 'very serious efforts to reconstruct from historical records and verbal tradition the past of the people they have studied', and he pleaded for a greater effort in recording verbal traditions as texts 'which permit the sources to speak for themselves and in their own idiom and without selection and interpretation by the ethnographer'. The lack of reconstructions created the impression that the peoples of the colonial empires, particularly in Africa, were more or less static prior to European domination. Knowing a people's traditional history was important because 'it forms part of the thought of living men and hence part of the social life which the anthropologist can directly observe'. Referencing R.G. Collingwood, he reminded anthropologists that 'the history of the past [is] incapsulated in a context of present thought, and though thus belonging to the present is separated from it' (ibid.:50–2). He concluded:

> Anthropologists of today and yesterday, owing to lack of interest in history, have not in this matter asked themselves some important questions. Why among some peoples are historical traditions rich and among others poor? … What sort of events are remembered and to what social attachments and rights do they relate? … Then, what mnemonics are employed as points of reference in tradition – features of landscape

> … features of social structure (genealogies, age-sets, royal successions); and artefacts (heirlooms)? Then again, to what extent do environmental conditions affect tradition and a people's sense of time?
>
> (ibid.:52)

If anthropologists were insufficiently historical in their approach to research and analysis, historians needed to be more sociological in their study of the past, especially in studying the history of non-European peoples. Writing, no doubt with Oxford historians – and especially imperial and commonwealth historians – in mind, he predicted that when historians

> show more initiative and write histories of non-European peoples and cultures they will better appreciate how relevant to their studies is our own research. In case this should seem to do historians an injustice, I must ask how many scholars there are in England who could write a history of India or some part of it (and I do not mean a history of British rule in India), or of China (not just the Boxer wars), or of the South American republics, or of the peoples of Africa or some part of Africa (again, I do not mean a history of British conquest and administration)? You could count them on the fingers of both hands, if most of them had been amputated.
>
> (ibid.:64)

Just as anthropology must choose between being history and being nothing, he declared, so history must choose between being social anthropology and being nothing (ibid.).

A lot has changed among both anthropologists and historians since this essay was published over fifty years ago. One of the changes that have brought anthropologists and historians closer together has been the emergence of African history as a distinct branch of history, where historians have had to adopt the methods of anthropological fieldwork in order gain access to the internal histories of African societies. Jan Vansina, one of the early proponents of oral history, early on urged African historians either to be social anthropologists or work in areas already studied by social anthropologists (1965:86, 188). Yet over thirty years after the publication of E-P's essay, Vansina and his former Madison Wisconsin students seem to have claimed the discovery of historical fieldwork for themselves, or at least to put some distance between themselves and their anthropological colleagues. In a book dedicated to examination of the fieldwork experiences of historians in Africa, Adenaike and Vansina's *In Pursuit of History: Fieldwork in Africa* (1996), we learn, according to Joe Miller, that 'real "fieldwork"' was invented by Jan Vansina in the 1950s.[1] Vansina himself does not make this claim, but in his own contribution on the 'avatars of fieldwork' he mentions only two of his predecessors in the field: the Nigerian historian Kenneth Dike in 1948,[2] and Ian Cunnison in the Luapula valley in 1951. He mentions no other African anthropologists as 'avatars', and draws a sharp distinction between the fieldwork of historians and the fieldwork of anthropologists (possibly based on internal battles with Madison-Wisconsin's own anthropology department). According to Vansina:

> Historians study a local society and its culture for its own sake in order to obtain data about its past, while anthropologists study a society as a case in order to obtain data pertinent to general theories… Historical fieldwork focuses on the recording of messages and their context: what people say is crucial… when anthropologists follow Cunnison in paying attention to local history-telling, they use these data as expressions of historical consciousness and often tie their particularities to particular social characteristics without regard to the validity of each message as a source, a crucial question for historians. … Anthropologists treat the situation at the time when they arrived on the scene (the point of zero time) as unchanging and proceed to uncover the essence of a timeless society and culture unsullied by the mundane influences of modernity. This ethnographic present is anathema to historians…
>
> (1996:128–9)

We know from E-P's study of Nuer genealogies that ancestors are routinely shed. We are certainly aware that there are currents in modern anthropology that have been busy shedding their own ancestors. Vansina's reference to Cunnison and not to Evans-Pritchard shows a curious blindness, in that Cunnison was a product of E-P's Institute of Social Anthropology in Oxford. It is also a revision of Vansina's earlier positive appreciation of E-P's critique of functionalist anthropologists' refusal to admit that oral traditions have historical value, and his use of verbal testimony in reconstructing Zande history (1965:12–13, 206n44). African history is such a recent discipline that perhaps it would be better off acquiring, rather than dispensing with, ancestors. As R.G. Collingwood said about his father's own work in England's Lake District, 'a pedigree branches upwards as well as downwards, and there are other ancestors to be considered' (1935:2). Here I consider

1 Joseph C. Miller, back-cover blurb, Adenaike and Vansina 1996.

2 Dike began research on his doctoral thesis at King's College, University of London, in 1948. The thesis was later published as *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830–1890: An Introduction to the Economic and Political History of Nigeria* (1956).

E-P's place in the genealogy of African history. It is not my intention to use Vansina as a straw-man, in the way he did with anthropologists as a whole. Vansina's contribution to African history is undeniable. But so is E-P's, and to illustrate that, I will compare aspects of his work with some of Vansina's early work.

Vansina started his career examining dynastic history of African kingdoms and subsequently moved on into social history of the African past, a style of history giving a privileged place to African voices, especially the voices of the unheard, especially commoners, slaves and women. E-P did the opposite, beginning with a type of social analysis and later moving on to the study of kingdoms, kings and courts. Both men were, however, writing about African kingdoms at about the same time. When Vansina began to publish his first work on the kingdom of Kuba, E-P was rounding out his Zande studies by turning to the historical aspects of the Zande kingdoms. They even published in the same journal at the same time. In 1957 E-P published a three-part article on 'The royal court of Zande' in the Belgian journal *Zaïre* (1957a). The issue that carried the second part of that series also published an article by Vansina on the Kuba state (1957). It is instructive to see how each author began his article.

Vansina opens his article with the declaration, '*L'organisation politique kube présente certaines particularités structurelles qui appellent une révision du classement typologique usuel des structures politiques africaines.*' (ibid.:485). ('The political organization of the Kuba presents certain structural particularities that call for a revision of the usual typological classification of African political structures.') In other words, he is presenting his findings in this article not for what they say about Kuba, but what they say about the typology of African political systems – the sort of general theoretical sin he later accused anthropologists of committing.

E-P's article was a continuation of the one that had preceded it, but again, his opening paragraph is instructive of the type of history he was attempting. He wrote,

> Now, all the people I have mentioned had to be fed: pages and young warriors at court, visiting deputies and elders, visiting provincial governors, the king's sons living at court, the lads who operated the oracles, the king's wives and daughters and small sons in the harem, and possibly sometimes also (I am not certain) the Belanda craftsmen – a considerable body of people. This required organization, both for the obtaining the food and for its preparation.
>
> (1957a:493)

In other words, this is the nuts and bolts of true social history, dealing with class and status, gender, generation and the logistics of feeding a large concentration of a non-productive population. These are topics that would be taken up by later generations of African social historians, including many of Vansina's own students (and even what might be termed his grand-students).

It is equally instructive to see how E-P began the series in his first article, where he states:

> This paper is intended to give a picture of a Zande Court and to show how it was maintained. … I write in the past tense partly for convenience, since it is awkward to have constantly to state what courts were like in my day [1927–30] and then again what they were like prior to European rule, but also because much of what I describe had vanished between Gbudwe's death in 1905 and my first visit to Zandeland early in 1927….
>
> I want to make it clear that while I had many opportunities of observing court life, it was a court life which had largely broken down; and as I found that I was generally treated by the princes with a polite reserve which indicated that I was an embarrassment to them I frequented courts seldom and only for short periods. What I describe here is to a large extent a reconstruction of the past from a combination of what I could still observe and the many accounts of what I could no longer observe given me by Azande, mostly, though not all, commoners, who lived under the old dispensation. Where there are also descriptions of court life by early travellers, who saw it in full flower, I cite them.
>
> (1957a:361–3)

This is, though I really need not spell it out, an awareness of the fact that the society he studied was not timeless, that it had undergone change in the lifetime of those persons who were his chief witnesses, and that these changes had taken place very largely in the time preceding his acquaintance with them. He was not living in a 'zero time'; his evidence was not confined to what he could observe, nor to a single location or single trained informant. Rather his reconstruction of the past was based on a combination of written contemporary sources, the testimony of living witnesses, and the observation of the traces of the past in the practices of the present; a combination of sources which later historians would also use in their work. E-P also made some of that evidence available in the publication of Zande historical texts, in Zande and English, with named informants (1955, 1956a, 1957b).

Toward the end of his active scholarly life E-P published several other articles: on Zande kings and princes (1957c), the history of the kingdom of Gbudwe (1956b), the origins of the ruling clan of the Zande (1957d), the ethnic origins of other Zande office holders (1960a), Zande warfare (1957e, 1957f), and finally an historiographical dissection of the written sources on Zande cannibalism (1960b). Many of

these articles were gathered together in one of his final book, *The Azande: History and Political Institutions* (1971). Not one of his best books, it must be admitted, lacking the integration of themes that characterized his earlier monographs, many of them also compiled from previously published articles. While this book may now seem archaic in some of its topics and interpretations, or restricted in its range of informants (what E-P wrote about the relations between the sexes was based on what Zande men said about Zande women, and not on what women said about themselves or about men), it still has a place in the genealogy of the historical study of African states.

But it is not E-P the self-conscious historian that I want to resurrect. Rather, it is the historically informed anthropologist that I want to reclaim.

When E-P began his study of the Azande in the 1920s, the type of history written about the Azande and their neighbours by Belgian scholars was largely dynastic. An example is A. Hutereau's *Histoire des Peuplades de l'Uele et de l'Ubangi* (*c.*1921). This is concerned with the lineages of the ruling dynasties, expansion of the kingdoms, their wars with each other, succession disputes and wars with the Belgians. In other words, very much the same sort of subjects Vansina investigated in the African kingdoms he studied in the 1950s. The type of ethnography being produced by Belgian administrators and missionaries similarly confined history to the kings. Commoners were presented in a more timeless way.

By contrast, E-P's description of Zande society as he observed it was informed by an acute awareness of historical changes in that society, an awareness imposed on the observer by the testimony of his informants. His first great monograph, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (1937), is a historically informed ethnography, which makes constant references to how things were (or were remembered), in contrast to how things are (when he observed them). It is, in essence, a book about social status in a society of mixed origins, assimilating the practices of neighbouring peoples and adapting to the changes imposed on it by external colonial authority. He states this explicitly throughout the book, and two themes he returns to over and over again are the way Zandeland had 'been specially affected by the undermining of the power of the royal class and of the authority of men over women' (1937:18).

E-P's description of witchcraft practices is implicitly historical, moving between the present and the past, contrasting current with former behaviour. It had to acknowledge change, for, as E-P pointed out at the beginning of the book, 'The new legal codes, which refuse to admit witchcraft as a reality, will not accept evidence of oracles, and will not permit vengeance, have also considerably altered social behaviour.' (ibid.). Thus there are frequent references contrasting the way in which the kings' oracles were used in the past and used in the present; the rarity of witch-doctors in the past and their proliferation in the present; the certainty of witchcraft identification in the days of the kings, and the uncertainty under colonial rule, with the subsequent increase in witchcraft autopsies; and the payment of compensation for death by witchcraft in the old days and today (ibid.:26–7, 40–1, 128–9, 183, 202–3).

It was in his treatment of secret societies, or closed associations, that he found indications of wide and deep social change, directly related to the impact of European rule and the 'break-down of tradition' (ibid.:511–12). His interpretation of the closed associations was a salutary reminder to the colonial administration that what they most opposed and disapproved of in Zande society was, in fact, a response to itself.

> Yet perhaps the associations assist Azande to fight against the pessimism and loss of confidence that their sophisticated manners cannot entirely conceal. In so far as the magic of the associations is not redundant it is directed against the vagaries of European rule. Azande, faced with a power they can neither stand up against nor avoid, have found in magic their last defence. New situations demand new magic, and European rule which is responsible for the new situations has opened up roads into neighbouring countries which can supply the new magic. Furthermore, when I speak of break-down of tradition I do not speak in an evaluatory sense but merely record changes in modes of behaviour. It may be that the associations appear revolutionary only when we think of Zande culture as it has been and that the behaviour they encourage is in character with other changes going on among Azande in adapting themselves to European rule.
>
> (ibid.:512–13; see also Johnson 1990)

E-P also made a contribution to the methodology of African history in an unexpected place: his structural analysis of the Nuer. Historians deal with the passage of time, especially in the construction of chronologies, and E-P's analysis of Nuer time reckoning identified certain aspects of Nuer society, such as age sets and naming years after significant events, that historians can use in constructing their chronologies. But he also identified the limitations of assuming that genealogies record the passage of time, rather than social distance, as genealogies contract and ancestors are merged or excluded (1936, 1940b:94–138). Historians who fail to examine indigenous systems of time reckoning in the societies they study run the risk of making a fundamental error if they assume all genealogies can be used to calculate time depth using an average age for all generations.

Evans-Pritchard and the production of texts and documentary evidence

In his 1962 essay E-P made a specific plea for the recording of verbal traditions in the form of texts. There was a difference between the way E-P collected and treated historical evidence that distinguished him from the first generation of post-Second World War Africanist historians. When Africanists turned to history and began collecting indigenous historical sources themselves, they tended to concentrate on 'traditions': traditions which could be turned into texts and compared for variants, much like medieval manuscripts (Vansina 1965:26–7). E-P was more concerned with 'testimony' than with 'tradition'. What he gives us is the testimony of witnesses, whether of the past or the present, and this is one of the sources of the deep richness of his Zande material, where many different 'voices' are brought out to speak on different topics. This 'multi-vocality' is now all the rage among social historians of Africa, and Africanist historians are no longer preoccupied with rendering 'traditions' into texts. In this respect, they would do well to return to the Azande and see how E-P wove observation with testimony to reveal the historical processes of change in social life.

It was not just in the publication of his own texts that E-P promoted the production of indigenous source materials from African societies. He was also one of the founding editors of the Oxford Library of African Literature, which began publishing volumes of oral texts as well as written documents in 1964. Along with texts of specific historical value, such as praise poems, heroic recitations and court literature, there were volumes of more general literature, often containing references to historical subjects.[3]

Evans-Pritchard and the history of South Sudan

The focus of much historical research on Africa in the 1950s and 1960s was on the central institutions of empires, kingdoms and trading states. But there were many more African communities that even other historians denied had any 'history', but which rather needed other techniques to recover that history. Looking at the total output of E-Ps work (Appendix), we find that not only did he do much to reconstruct the history of the independent African kingdoms of the Azande, acknowledging their sovereignty and examining their inner workings (even into the logic of their criminal justice systems), but via his encounters with smaller societies in Dar Fung, Bahr el-Ghazal, and Equatoria, he also gave snapshots of those communities who were pressed between kingdoms and harassed by their expansion. In addition, he demonstrated that even so-called 'stateless' or 'acephalous' societies have a history, often revealed in their kinship systems or their religious beliefs.

E-P's analysis of the Zande kingdoms extended to the peoples they raided, giving brief accounts of those who resisted, those who were scattered and those who were incorporated in Zande society (1929, 1931). He used linguistic analysis, as well as an analysis of place names, to hypothesize about the extent of the Shilluk kingdom, or at least the early presence of Luo-speaking communities in the area of Dar Fung in the Blue Nile region of Sudan (1932). He applied his own field-based knowledge of Anuak testimony to published accounts of the Pari of Jebel Lafon in Equatoria to suggest a southern Luo homeland (1940c), a hypothesis that has been supported by more recent research (Simonse 1992:56–7).

The importance of E-P's contribution to the history of South Sudan has been obscured by a later generation of anthropologists interpreting his ethnography as meaning that the Nuer have structure rather than history, especially in the ahistorical models applied to explain the nineteenth-century expansion of Nuer societies. E-P's position as a pioneer in South Sudanese history doesn't depend on his earlier conclusions being confirmed by later researchers. Much of what he wrote about the history of Nuer prophets and Nuer migrations, for instance, has not been substantiated by more recent field-based research (see, for instance, Johnson 1994; Stringham 2016). But historians who have followed him into the field have built on the foundation he provided in his detailed accounts of Nuer time reckoning, age sets, genealogies, kinship relations, and religious ideas and practices.

In the post-independence Sudan, the history of the southern Sudan was discouraged and suppressed in favour of a national history based on northern Sudanese ideas of nationhood. New historical research in post-independence South Sudan must of necessity build on an ethnographic foundation. When South Sudanese do, at last, write their own history, they can turn to Evans-Pritchard as one of their principle 'avatars' – and ancestors.

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3 See, for instance, Andrzejewski and Lewis 1964; Cope 1968; Coupez and Kamanzi 1970; Damane and Sanders 1974; Hodza and Fortune 1979; Huntingford 1965; Kunene 1971; Morris 1964; Norris 1972; Schapera 1965; Shack and Marcos 1974.

Appendix: Tabulation of Evans-Pritchard's publications on South Sudan

General	Major studies	Minor studies	Texts (included in other studies)
Anthropology of Administration (2)	Azande (94)	Shilluk and Luo (9)	Azande historical (22)
Autobiography and biography (7)	Nuer (48)	Anuak (8)	Azande folk tales (8)
Bibliography and historiography (2)		Peoples of Dar Fung (3)	Anuak folk tales (3)
Surveys (7)		Peoples of Equatoria (3)	
		Dinka (3)	
		Peoples of Bahr el-Ghazal (2)	
		Murle (1)	

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17

The E-P legend

Perspectives from the Sudan

Wendy James

Gunnar Haaland has described how he happened to meet 'the legendary Evans-Pritchard' in 1965 on his research trip to Sudan: it was exam time in the University of Khartoum and E-P was the external examiner for Anthropology and Sociology. Four years later Gunnar met a range of fully qualified Sudanese anthropologists, who would leave their mark on the development of the subject, and on joining the department himself a little later found 'the most inspiring group of students I could ever wish for' (2015:37–8). In this chapter I will trace some of the ways in which perspectives stemming from the Sudan and the Sudanese people on the work of E-P – through his direct contacts during fieldwork, his publications, his teaching and the international academic networks he helped set up – became a key thread in the modern history of anthropology itself.

It is clear that E-P developed a range of fruitful contacts – with local communities, occasional figures in the Condominium administration, a few missionaries, and the youngsters who explained things to him and even acted as interpreters and translators – during his main fieldwork before the Second World War. In the introduction to his 1967 major compilation of stories from a variety of sources, *The Zande Trickster*, he gives full acknowledgement of the help he had from Zande speakers, some of them schoolboys and students:

> Fr. Giorgetti tells me that the first twenty-nine tales in the Gore collection were written by Antonio Kusakpio, a Catholic of Mupoi in Tembura District, who served as clerk to Major Larken round about 1920… Between 1926 and 1930 I took down, as I have said, a number of tales, and my at-that-time Zande clerk, Mr. Reuben Rikita, also recorded a number, in the Yambio District of Sudan. I had begun to translate both when war broke out in 1939 and the task of translating these and many other Zande texts was abandoned till 1956. One text … was written by a Zande schoolboy of Yambio District. Between 1961 and 1963 a Zande student at the University of Khartoum, Mr. Richard Mambia, made for me a new collection of the tales of the Yambio region; and in 1964 another student at the same University, Mr. Angelo Beda, added a few from the Tembura region … The tales recorded by Mr. Reuben Rikita have been translated by me; those recorded by Mr. Richard Mambia and Mr. Angelo Beda were translated by these two gentlemen, with some emendations of mine; those in the Mrs. Gore collection were translated by myself, with Mr. Angelo Beda's help…
>
> (Evans-Pritchard 1967:16–17)

E-P's first major publications appeared from 1937–40, but after his appointment to the Oxford Chair in 1946, he continued to publish influential books and articles from his pre-war research in the Sudan, completing his Nuer trilogy with *Kinship & Marriage among the Nuer* (1951), *Nuer Religion* (1956), and continuing a stream of publications on Zande history, society and oral literature. He also remained in active contact with number of persons and institutions reshaping both anthropology in Britain (the Royal Anthropological Institute and the Association of Social Anthropologists) and British relations with African countries, through the Colonial (later Commonwealth) Studies Centre in Oxford, where he taught occasional courses and recruited others, for instance Siegfried Nadel, who had worked in the Nuba Hills.

Having good relations with the Sudan administration of the day, E-P supported the recruitment of Ian Cunnison, with an Oxford D.Phil. on central Africa, to do a survey of the Humr pastoralists for the Sudan Government between 1952 and 1955. E-P was also very pleased that Cunnison had taken on the task of translating Marcel Mauss's *Essay on the Gift* from the French. It appeared in 1954 and heralded a long series of translations from the Durkheim school which were sponsored by E-P's Oxford, and certainly helped shape 'British social anthropology' in the post-war decades.

Shortly after the Sudan's independence in 1956, a key development was the foundation of the independent University of Khartoum, based on what had started in 1902 as the Gordon Memorial College. A new Department of Anthropology and Sociology was created in 1958, and Ian Cunnison was appointed its first professor. The deliberate combining of 'anthropology' and 'sociology', which

elsewhere might have been kept as distinct subjects, was a real success (even though later the order was reversed!) E-P was subsequently supportive of this department for years to come.

My own experience

Looking back, I am surprised to remember that way back in my small grammar school, at Ambleside (in what is now Cumbria), I selected E-P's *Social Anthropology* (1948) as the book I would like for a school prize they had offered me in my last year. I was going up to Oxford to read Geography, but reading this book of E-P's helped to turn my interests towards human communities, rather than landscapes and places as such. I moved on to Social Anthropology as a graduate student; E-P became one of my tutors for the Diploma, and supervisor for my B.Litt. and eventually my D.Phil.

We were a generation of students increasingly interested in the subject, and I was among those developing a strong interest in Africa: my father had once been seconded to Makerere in Uganda, and partly through his efforts I spent a few months as a replacement geography teacher in what was still Tanganyika between my second and third years at Oxford. When a new post opened up in the University of Khartoum for a young lecturer in social anthropology, with access to Ford Foundation funding for field research, I was persuaded to apply, and was offered a five-year contract. I accepted, and during my time there (1964–9) I taught classes of Sudanese students (plus a few from other African countries), helped mark and examine their work, and gained some experience, often with colleagues or students, outside the capital city (mainly Port Sudan). As teachers, beyond our special research interests, we all helped on courses dealing with communities of the Sudan generally; focusing on historical links, social problems, urban problems and development schemes, as well as what we could now treat as the creative 'classic' studies of E-P and the first generation of his followers.

While E-P's worldwide fame was based to a large extent on his work with the Azande and the Nuer, in the department we tried to cast him as an expert on the wider region – sometimes mentioning his time in the early 1930s teaching in the King Fuad University in Cairo, his wartime studies of the Sanusi Order in Libya, his love of Arabic poetry, and his research plan of the late 1930s for a major study of the Oromo of Ethiopia (which could not be carried out because of the war).

Ian Cunnison as our head of department encouraged us to carry out research; he was of course keen to expand the scope of research in the northern regions of the country, and to give new research more relevance to ongoing practical issues. He had been able to secure a major Ford Foundation grant for young lecturers to be given some research leave to carry out their own projects. At the same time, it was being made clear to all scholars planning research in the country, whether Sudanese or foreign visitors, that the southern provinces were out of bounds, for security reasons. I then started planning my own doctoral research in the southern hills of the Blue Nile Province (as it was at that time). Those of us from Oxford, and who had previously been taught or supervised by E-P, Godfrey Lienhardt or others in the Oxford Institute (e.g. Talal Asad, Lewis Hill, Ahmed al-Shahi) had plenty in common; but of course another highly stimulating set of contacts was developing with Norwegian colleagues, starting with the visit led by Fredrick Barth of Bergen University in the mid-60s on a project in Darfur. This was followed by long-term links of a series of Norwegians with the University of Khartoum, including Gunnar Haaland and Gunnar Sorbo. This sparked off a long, very productive period for social anthropology in the University of Bergen, and elsewhere in Norway and Denmark. I myself was invited to fill in for one of the Bergen colleagues doing fieldwork in Afghanistan in 1971–2. Barth asked me to include some topics in the anthropology of religion, and symbolism, as they didn't normally include things like that!

A sort of triangle emerged in those days between anthropologists in Khartoum, Britain and Norway. It gave momentum to a continuing debate, at least in the English language, over 'colonial anthropology' (of which the Norwegians were relatively innocent). It also gave rise to quite sharp discussions over the difference between the approaches to anthropology of E-P, on the one hand, and Barth, on the other. After one of my classes at Bergen (it could well have been on Zande witchcraft) the students put a question to me: was it true that E-P was a Marxist? Because he did talk a lot about history, didn't he?

Quite a number of contacts of importance for anthropology have been maintained between the Universities of Khartoum and Bergen, where the Chr. Michelson Institute has been of real support to Sudanese and Ethiopian research and publications in particular. One of the earliest Sudanese to gain his Ph.D. from Bergen was Prof. Abdel Ghaffar Mohd. Ahmed, who remains very much in contact, and another leading Sudanese from Khartoum, Prof. Munzoul Assal, actually based his own research on the study of Sudanese and Somali refugees who were engaged in making new homes in Norway.

During the strengthening of the humanities from the 1960s on in Khartoum (and indeed other Sudanese universities), E-P's own academic reputation and influence was spreading internationally. Sudanese were still coming to Oxford, for instance, Natale Olwak Akolawin, a lecturer in the law faculty of the University of Khartoum obtained a postgraduate diploma in social anthropology at the Oxford Institute, but his doctoral research on Shilluk customary law was interrupted when he was appointed a minister in the High Executive Council of the Southern Regional

Government, following the end of Sudan's first civil war in 1972. Interest in E-P's publications on Sudan helped to attract not only anthropologists, but historians, archaeologists and development experts, who began to arrive in the Sudan and work in partnership with locals. Sudanese scholars who trained elsewhere, for example the United States, often valued the continuing input of British anthropology. In 2008 Department of Anthropology and Sociology in the University of Khartoum marked its first half-century with a special golden jubilee conference, bringing the generations together (the resulting publication, Assal and Abdul-Jalil 2015, is discussed below).

Over time members of this department have offered critiques of colonial-era anthropology, but in many ways they are the heirs to the type of social anthropology brought to Sudan by E-P and developed there by some of his students. Not least of these, of course, was Ian Cunnison, but they also included Sudan administrators who studied at E-P's institute in Oxford, such as Paul Howell, who as chair of the Jonglei Investigation Team and the Southern Development Investigation Team pioneered development anthropology in Sudan prior to independence (Howell 1954a, b). This is what I have termed elsewhere the 'critical tradition of Sudanese ethnography', concerned with investigating the realities of the human condition, seeking fresh perspectives from participant observation, posing a series of questions, and marshalling evidence to answer them (James 1990:113–14).

The legacy in print

I conclude by mentioning a few key publications which help to mark the profound debt that all anthropologists who carried out research, studied or taught in the Sudan feel they owe in one way or another to E-P's example. And, perhaps in contrast to some other countries linked in one way or another with the former British Empire, sympathy for the style of his approach and the underlying questions he pursued have outlived not only the end of empire but a series of other major social changes affecting the country to which he was devoted.

Essays in Sudan Ethnography, Presented to Sir Edward Evans-Pritchard (Cunnison and James 1972)

Most of the contributors to this *festschrift* were linked with the University of Khartoum Department. There was a wide geographical spread of rural studies, in both the northern and southern Sudan, including aspects of development schemes, and urban studies in El Obeid and the Three Towns. Sudanese anthropologists were represented by Abdel Ghaffar M. Ahmed and Taj al-Anbia Ali al-Dawi, two other Arabic speakers were Talal Asad and Ahmed al-Shahi, and the Norwegian link was further represented by Gunnar Haaland.

Anthropology & the Colonial Encounter (Asad 1973)

This volume arose from a special seminar organized by Prof. Ian Cunnison at the University of Hull in September 1972. It included four chapters by former members of the Khartoum Department: Wendy James, 'The anthropologist as reluctant imperialist'; Talal Asad, 'Two European images of non-European rule'; James Faris, 'Pax Britannica and the Sudan: S.F. Nadel'; and Abdel Ghaffar M. Ahmed, 'Some Remarks from Third World on anthropology and colonialism: the Sudan'.

Anthropology in the Sudan: Reflections by a Sudanese Anthropologist (Ahmed 2003)

Despite the singular of 'anthropologist' used in the subtitle, this was a collection of previously published articles by four Sudanese authors, some with Norwegian connections: Abdel Ghaffar M. Ahmed, Munzoul Abdalla M. Assal, Mohamed Abdelrahim Mohamed Salih, and Idris Salim al-Hassan. They analyze the colonial origins of anthropology in Sudan and chart its post-independence concerns with social stratification, development, displacement and aid.

Past, Present, and Future: Fifty Years of Anthropology in Sudan (Assal and Abdul-Jalil 2015)

Eighteen brand-new chapters based on papers presented at the Jubilee Conference of the Department of Anthropology and Sociology in the University of Khartoum, celebrating its fiftieth anniversary in 2008. All contributors had current or previous links with the department. They cover topics of current importance in Sudan, such as identity, ethnicity, gender, conflict and peace building, religion, governance, livelihoods, urbanization and health.

Anthropology and Development in Sudan: Contributions by Ian Cunnison (Ahmed and Ali 2016)

A timely revival of some of Ian Cunnison's earlier pieces, reissued and newly introduced by the editors.

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18

Latakia to Benghazi

E-P and the war years

Deirdre Evans-Pritchard

My life and work in the Middle East have intersected with that of my father, E.E. Evans-Pritchard, in unexpected ways. These intersections have forged my understanding of the constraints, contextual realities and impacts of Evans-Pritchard's (E-P from here forward) war-time experiences in Syria and Libya. He, I and many others have been caught in the literal, ideological and ethical crossfire of research, employment and fieldwork undertaken during conflict. In the Second World War the rules of academic engagement were few; the need for fieldwork and documentation was high. The work of war photographers and journalists embedded with troops can reveal their affiliations and beliefs. I think this applies to E-P's research and work during the Second World War. This personal essay includes my experiences projected onto those of my father.

The Second World War was a period in E-P's life that defined paths he took later as an academic, especially his turn to theoretical writings about anthropology and history, and his defence of tribal and rural communities. It also culminated in his conversion to Catholicism in 1944, a major transition impacted by his experiences in Libya interacting with Bedouin tribes and his respect for the efficacious role of ritual. E-P was thirty-six years old when France and Britain declared war on Germany in September 1939. He had already lived through the First World War as it played out for school children in the United Kingdom, with the bombings, the absent fathers and the nationalistic war effort. He turned sixteen before that war ended, and had wanted to enlist.

Like many attached to the British military during Second World War, E-P journeyed across Arab and African countries on military assignments in Egypt, Iraq, Beirut, Syria, Ethiopia, Sudan and Libya, depending on troop movements, battles, plans for counter-espionage and post-war administration, and his own sense of where he wanted to be. He had already experienced living and working in the Middle East, having been in Egypt for several years, and his Arabic was good. He chose to be actively part of the war, escaping the confines of academia and attaching himself to whichever British military unit or commander would have him. There were many armed camel corps, both Allied and Axis, ranging the steppes of North Africa, trying to claim land and allies. E-P had tried to join the Welsh Guards, the Sudan Auxiliary Defence Force and the Long Range Desert Group (Evans-Pritchard 1973:20–1). There is no doubt that E-P loved the desert, admired the Bedouins and identified with their tribal lifestyle. He did spend time with the Sudan Defence Force, which had a reputation for an adventurous, inquiring life that attracted the likes of Wilfred Thesinger, and permitted: 'independence of command, sporting (game-hunting) opportunities in leisure hours and local promotion'.[1]

E-P spent a short time in Syria as an information officer attached to the Spears Mission before being posted as part of the British Military Administration of Cyrenaica in Libya from November 1942 to the end of 1944. It is his work in Syria and Libya among local groups and communities that is the focus here: the Alawites on the Syrian Coast and the Bedouin tribes of Cyrenaica. Both he and I had experience living with Bedouin communities, working in conflict zones and acting as government representatives.

I myself was a child of post-war Britain, where rationing still shaped kitchen habits, comfortable lives were being built and nobody around me ever acknowledged the war except for implicitly in the stoic heavy silence of annual Poppy Day services. I do not even remember being taught about the world wars in school. On my second trip to Lebanon and Syria in 1975, I dug through those books and papers inherited from my father and found some things to take with me: A notebook E-P used to study Arabic, written in with his spidery hand, and showing his perennial love of Arabic proverbs; a 1929 tourist brochure of the Alawite state on the Syrian coast that reminded me that this was anything but uncharted territory; a trove of excellent hand-drawn maps; and a 'secret' Spears Mission report that provided an intensive history of the Alawites in French. Early on during the war, the Spears Commission placed E-P as a captain in Latakia on Syria's Mediterranean Coast, liaising with the Free French who were cultivating Alawite separatism in the

1 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sudan_Defence_Force (accessed 31 October 2022).

face of the Arab Nationalism movement that was building in Syria. His responsibility to the British government was research and community engagement that would forward the Allied war effort and protect British forces.

A vague mandate to win over the hearts and minds of the locals applied to many European explorers and researchers employed by their national governments at the time. Lines sometimes blurred between research, nationalist agendas and employment. Post-colonial analysis has been essential in highlighting resulting incompatibilities and compromises, but sometimes specific details belie blanket statements. In E-P's case, even in a war in which he was unequivocally British serving the British government, it was not so easy to take anthropology out of the anthropologist. For a start, E-P did not last long in Syria following an incident in which he sided with a village community whose lands were being grabbed by Suleiman Al-Murshid, a French-backed Alawi spiritual leader turned strongman. E-P referenced this incident in an autobiographical piece written in 1973, but it was of great import at the time and impacted choices he later made, such as avoiding another bureaucratic post in Libya. Not only a case of 'once bitten, twice shy', an administrative position stymied his skill of navigating communities as a free-wheeling anthropologist.

What occurred? On 16 August 1942, E-P and three other British officers arrived in the village of Bab Jennah in the highlands east of Latakia, Syria, following a fight between Al-Murshid's men, who were cutting down trees to build a house for Al-Murshid, and the villagers who resisted them. Several villagers had been injured. Al-Mushid was staying in the nearby town of Slenfe, where he had imprisoned some of the villagers, and E-P warned him that his actions were unacceptable, and told the French that Al-Murshid and his new militia represented a danger to British troops. The event escalated into a strategic and political back and forth between the British and the French as to whether their Alawite ally should be reined in. In the end, E-P took the fall: he was accused by the French of not following instructions and of overstepping his authority, and was taken to court and convicted on a technicality, resulting in him leaving his post. After a short sojourn in Egypt with his wife, my mother, E-P moved to Libya.

Rabinovich and Yaffe (1990) wrote an enlightening article about this Bab Jennah incident using first-hand reports and memos. They noted:

> Evans-Pritchard justified his conduct on several grounds. It was a 'paramount duty' of a political officer to maintain public order. From a moral point of view he could not stand by 'watching the poor and weak being plundered by the rich and powerful without making some effort to stop them'.
>
> (Rabinovich and Yaffe 1990:185)

When I lived, worked and researched in Syria and Lebanon in the 1970s and again in the 1990s, I witnessed first-hand the weight of the Alawite regime that resulted from a colonial power pursuing a path of patronage-derived prosperity for their local allies. Suleiman Al-Murshid, the man E-P confronted, and Hafez Al-Assad, the president of Syria from 1971 to 2000, were associates. In Hafez Al-Assad's Syria the majority of the population was kept in place, kept down and kept an eye on, while just a few prospered. As I travelled, I was followed everywhere, as a large file on me in a government office in Damascus grew fatter. Buses in the middle of the vast desert were stopped by inspectors to check on me en route to spend time at the Bedouin Ruwallah summer encampment near Tudmor (Palmyra). Everyone on the bus was questioned and had their IDs checked. Suspicion of authority was a founding principle among everyday Syrians and the local assumption was that every second person was a spy. People never risked discussing politics, grievances, their own advancement or the Alawites. The Second World War notwithstanding, witnessing social inequality in Syria united my and my father's experiences.

E-P's short stint in Syria evidenced him standing up for those who lived in the path of other people's ambitions. The Bab Jennah event and its negative fallout had an impact on his sense of who anthropology was supposed to serve, and this is reflected in his writings just after the end of the war. In a short book review of *Paysans de Syrie et du Proche-Orient* by Jacques Weulersee (1946), his viewpoint was made clear. Weulersee's book critiqued the impact of the inter-war French Mandate on rural populations and E-P used this opportunity to condemn the unscrupulous Syrian landowners that he himself had witnessed:

> Political institutions are imposed from above and are not a growth from the land itself. Hence in the Syrian countryside, as all over the Near East, there are only two classes, the exploiters and the exploited, the notables (*aghas*, *pashas*, *beys* and *shaikhs*) and the common people. Those who cultivate do not own and those who own do not cultivate.
>
> (Evans-Pritchard 1947:136)

In a post-war article on applied anthropology (Evans-Pritchard 1946) and throughout his book *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica* (Evans-Pritchard 1949), he maintained this same tone. He discussed the contemporary situation of tribes and communities and how they were linked to oppressive histories. Many argue that being an advocate should involve going against a dominant institution, and that the fact that E-P was working for Britain and its colonial administration means he cannot be labelled so. E-P was a military officer, a researcher, British and an anthropologist and each role was defined by the others. Notably, E-P embraced his British

'values' and attitudes in his book on the Sanusi, using 'our' in writing of Great Britain and thus making it clear that his intended audience was from his homeland (ibid.:227). He certainly was not going against the grain in North Africa during Second World War, where for decades the British had been working with tribal communities to assure their cooperation. While the British had fought against the Sanusi in the past, in the Second World War it benefitted Britain to promote Sanusi interests against the Italians in Libya. E-P very much aligned himself to those interests. But *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, written in English just after the war, did more than support a strategic end: it gave the Bedouin of Eastern Libya and their difficult Italian colonial history a voice in Europe.

Beyond the fact that E-P did not undertake any new ethnographic research after the war, his slow transition to more theoretical writing can be seen as reflective of his awareness of the wider potential impact and application of anthropology. Ethnography at the time was very literal, down to the names of kitchen utensils, with intricate kinship diagrams and the careful descriptions of a full year of daily life. After the war, E-P encouraged the British colonial administration to employ anthropologists, aiming to insert culture brokers into deliberations so that local communities had louder voices. This was an early step towards professionalizing anthropology beyond academia and can only have been influenced by E-P's own experience during the Second World War, when his research and writing were parallel to his work as a British officer.

Treating anthropology as an exchange of ideas and cultures captures the spirit of the post-war cultural-diplomacy movement. This was not the acknowledged mission of E-P's generation of anthropologists, but people like E-P were interacting with local communities to connect, explain and translate. Anthropology and cultural diplomacy are deeply linked, and both are fraught with influence and messaging problems. On one level, research about tribes is information for the sake of policy and strategic planning, and could potentially hurt the very tribes themselves. On another level, immersive learning from 'their' point of view is positive cultural diplomacy.

From 2009 to 2015 I worked with young Libyans seeking to study in the United States of America as Fulbright Awardees. This coincided with the onset of the destabilizing Arab Spring in Libya, which started in February 2011. The aim of my work was to create a space for a wider range of voices to be heard. Such cultural diplomacy is government sponsored and designed to supplement and sometimes save national-level diplomacy with person-to-person interactions. This allows people, not just governments, to have voices. Having been a Senior Fulbright Scholar, I then worked for the Fulbright Program itself. Senator William J. Fulbright founded the programme in 1946, just after the war and after he had studied at Oxford University and learned the importance of experiencing a different cultural lifestyle. He famously said:

> The rapprochement of peoples is only possible when differences of culture and outlook are respected and appreciated rather than feared and condemned, when the common bond of human dignity is recognized as the essential bond for a peaceful world.
>
> (Fulbright 1989)

My work in the Middle East was fraught with the assumption that we were spies and had ulterior government-backed motives. Irrespective of how those who were paying my bills understood the situation, I know that my work had lasting value in expanding opportunities to women, minorities and the under-represented. As for E-P, he was one of the early anthropologists bringing the importance of understanding a culture to the attention of policymakers. He provided the tribes of Cyrenaica with a cultural megaphone, giving their histories and identities a global reach. His book, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, has held its own and continues to be referenced. I personally believe it has theoretical importance because it exemplifies the analytical forces of agency and structure in anthropology and the conflict between the two.

The book has also become a touchstone for understanding how Colonel Ghaddafi maintained tribal power, why Libyan militias rise and fall, the separatist nature of Cyrenaica, and Islam as localized belief. It has achieved a certain mythic status as part of the fabric of Libyan history itself, a sort of appropriated anthropology. The book has even been criticized for setting up false paradigms of tribal violence used to explain Libya's 'Arab Spring' fall into chaos (Mundy 2016). The book certainly describes waves of conflicts during multiple wars, but there is a period of sixty-two years between the publication of the book and the Arab Spring of 2011. What is remarkable here is the resilient influence of an anthropologist and his writing.

The Second World War in the Middle East was chaotic: there were so many fronts, so many HQs, so many generals, so many different armies, so many tribal loyalties. Soldiers were marching across wide open deserts to skirmishes and battles to obtain airfields or oases or small port towns, day after day. Supply lines stretched for hundreds of vulnerable miles. In Cyrenaica and the interior, the distances are enormous, the desert unwelcoming and communication difficult. The Italians, Germans, British, Sudanese and local Bedouin all had camel-mounted soldiers attacking here and there. Soldiers did not always respect the Bedouin and there were cases of unacceptable shootings (Philip Noyce, personal communication).

Without people like E-P to translate and explain them, tribal loyalties, territory and relationships were

unfathomable to Allied and Axis troops. Trust of outsiders, especially of Westerners, was limited; something that continues to this day. In 2011 I witnessed competing Libyan militias circling their proverbial wagons while the US Embassy in Tripoli attempted to maintain positive cultural relations while holed up in an armed fortress for protection. Working for the Fulbright Program through a non-profit organization, I was allowed to wander independently and learn for myself what was going on. So too, E-P, riding his camel into the desert with his local guide Salih bu'Adb al-Salam, had the freedom to learn about things from the point of view of the Bedouin of Cyrenaica. He was forever grateful for that opportunity and for 'the hospitality of the tents' (Evans-Pritchard 1949:iii).

Were the Bedouin equally grateful to E-P? History suggests yes. He wrote that everyone in Cyrenaica 'almost to a man' followed the Sanusi Order, and that the Order 'never once resorted to force to back its missionary labours' (ibid.:47). His book lauded the Sanusi Order and indeed E-P was presented a portrait of the Sanusi leader, King Idris, as a gift. During the war the tribes of Cyrenaica, united under King Idris, formally allied with the British Eighth Army in North Africa against the German and Italian Axis forces. Their support proved decisive in the British success in North Africa in 1943,[2] and in 1951 King Idris became the official leader of the new unified Libya under the watchful eyes of the British government. E-P was on the winning side and his work bolstered the Bedouin claim to self-governance. He wrote in his chapter on Italian rule and colonization: 'I give a resume of events leading up to what is, I hope, the threshold of Cyrenaican independence.' (Evans-Pritchard 1949:190). He regarded his book *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica* as the work he was most proud of and the voice he identified with.

It is estimated that some 250,000 to 300,000 Cyrenaican Bedouin died during the war years. Benghazi changed hands five times during the war, and was bombed over one thousand times, leaving nearly eighty-five per cent of the city damaged or destroyed when the British occupied the city in December 1942. E-P witnessed a ravaged society trapped in the storm of the Second World War. Their population and livelihood decimated during the Italian occupation of their lands, the Bedouin were now challenged by columns of European soldiers, tanks and bombings. So the Bedouin retreated into the security of their own culture. As E-P noted throughout his book, the Bedouin were demoralized and angry. By addressing this directly, acknowledging where he was and what he was doing there, and putting his research in historical context, he made no claim of writing an atemporal tribal ethnography. Instead, he reflexively acknowledged a war and a people who had been fighting for their sovereignty for decades. The final lines of the book read: 'Amid the roar of planes and guns the Bedouin learnt to see themselves more clearly as a single people.' (Evans-Pritchard 1949:229).

E-P arrived in Benghazi at the end of 1942, having already seen active service with the Anuak Expedition and the Sudan Defence Force. The vast second battle of Al-Alamein had just been won by the British Eighth Army, some distance to the east of the city. E-P was a soldier among hundreds of thousands in North Africa and the losses were staggering. During the entire North African campaign, the Germans and Italians suffered 620,000 casualties and the British Commonwealth lost 220,000 men. At the second battle of Al-Alamein the year E-P arrived in Libya, the Axis forces ended up with 9,000 dead, 15,000 wounded and 30,000 captured, out of 110,000 troops; while the Allied forces faced 4,800 dead and 9,000 wounded from 195,000 troops.

Looking at E-P's experience in the context of this war, I see battalions of tired, hungry, confused, shell-shocked German, Italian, Australian, Sudanese, British and South African soldiers in a desert landscape of exhausted, trampled upon Bedouin. I think of the young British poet Keith Douglas, author of the memoir *Alamein to Zem Zem* (1966), describing his experience as a soldier in the Western Desert campaign before his death at twenty-two:

> But by a day's travelling you reach a new world
> the vegetation is of iron
> dead tanks, gun barrels split like celery
> the metal brambles have no flowers or berries
> and there are all sorts of manure, you can imagine
> the dead themselves, their boots, clothes and
> possessions
> clinging to the ground, a man with no head
> has a packet of chocolate and a souvenir of Tripoli.
> (from Cairo Jag, 1946, Douglas 1966:97)

Today we describe all this as combat exposure resulting in PTSD: post-traumatic stress disorder. I personally witnessed the impact of the chaos, violence and bombings that descended on all aspects of Libyan life in 2011 after the fall of Muamar Ghaddafi. The Libyan students I worked with began to show increasing signs of strain, stress and distress. Some ended up needing psychiatric care, some lost their way. Tripoli and other cities were not safe; fighting was incessant but unpredictable. The streets were flooded with young men with guns. There were frequent shootings and killings at hastily constructed militia check-points. It was hard to get across town, let alone get out to study in the United States. The airport was pretty much unusable. The war impacted people through loss, fear and insecurity: lives were upended, expectations changed, futures put in question.

2 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Senussi (accessed 31 October 2022).

We all know that war changes people. First-hand experiences of war can also change a professional path and beliefs. Being in the middle of the Second World War while working with tribal groups – the anthropological structures that had already defined much of his pre-war research – can only have shaped E-P's later work. He converted to Catholicism in 1944, just as he was leaving Libya to go home. The conversion was undertaken in the cathedral at Benghazi, which was built by the Italians from 1929 to 1939, the very Italians E-P wrote about as mistreating the Bedouin of Cyrenaica; the very Italians that he and the British Army were fighting. Miraculously, the cathedral still stands, testimony to one of many ill-advised colonial expansions. Yet E-P wrote in his preface to *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*: 'I do not wish it to be thought that I have any but friendly feelings for Italy and her people, or that I believe the Italian colonial record to be very different from the records of other Colonial Powers.' (Evans-Pritchard 1949:iv).

The Sanusi of Cyrenaica was published soon after returning to England and dedicated to my mother, Ioma, who had given birth in 1942 to their first child, my sister Shineen, in Baghdad, Iraq, and who had been based in Cairo, Egypt, for much of the rest of the war.

At the time, no one knew how the Second World War was going to end, but people still refer to it as 'the good war' and the impact on British troops, the so-called returning heroes, will be written about for years to come. All I know for sure is that for Captain Evans-Pritchard – war-time British officer, professional anthropologist, defender of the powerless, new family man and even newer Catholic convert – it was a transformative war.

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19

Types of relationships between men and animals in *Nuer Religion*

Timothy Jenkins

A summary of the argument
Evans-Pritchard proposes three possible ways of thinking about the relationships of men and animals in his study of *Nuer Religion* (1956). The first is a logic of substitution and sacrifice, where an animal life may be substituted for a human's in an effort to achieve some desired end, whether at a personal or a higher social scale. The second is a proto-structuralist approach that compares relations between men with relations between animals. The first, which appears to derive from E-P's reading Christian theologies of the Atonement, has excited relatively little comment, while the second has been the focus of attention because of Lévi-Strauss's use of the 'twins are birds' motif as a trope for his structuralist claims in both *Le Totémisme aujourd'hui* (1962a) and *La Pensée sauvage* (1962b). There is, however, a third possible relation sketched, which falls into neither of the first two classes, instead raising the possibility of the asymmetrical taking-on of properties between the two series of men and cattle which structuralism claims to keep separate, without adopting the teleological substitutions demanded by a theory of atonement. E-P can be shown to have anticipated in plainer language the different ontologies invoked by more recent pioneering French studies.

Introduction
Relationships between culture and nature have been a central concern of social anthropology, and the varied relations between humans and animals lend themselves to anthropological discussion of different ways of being in the world. E-P describes three kinds of such relations in *Nuer Religion* (1956) and, by offering such a survey, sketches a fourth kind.

First, some remarks to situate this work. E-P's account in *Nuer Religion* remains the classic ethnography of sacrifice. This is disconcerting, for E-P spent a total of a year among the Nuer between 1930 and 1936, while his work on Nuer religion came out twenty years later, and in the preface he states that religion was not the first priority he had in mind in his time among the Nuer and that he undertook no systematic study of their religion (Evans-Pritchard 1956:v). Further, it is strange that in the past sixty years no new study has come to displace this account from its pre-eminence, almost as if anthropology consisted in a few modernist classics. Last, there is an uncomfortably Christian feel to the account. The Nuer, E-P states, have features resembling the Old Testament Hebrews (ibid.:vii), and he employs a wide range of terms drawn from Christian theology, such as atonement, substitution and expiation, redemption and covenant, ransom and oblation, to describe and explain their practices. Indeed, the key term in the account is that of *Kwoth*, translated as God or Spirit, or spirits, according to context, and Evans-Pritchard clarifies the purpose of his book in this way: 'a study of Nuer religion is a study of what they consider to be the nature of Spirit and of man's relation to it' (ibid.:vi).

Yet the methodological importance of E-P's work lies in part in the scrupulous attention he pays to the semantic fields of native terms, which allows reinterpretation of data. It is from him I learnt that anthropological writing is of value when it allows us to continue to think and to analyse, not because it presents a perfect case about which no more can be said. The recourse to theological terms, in one view, simply allows him to define one of the relations Nuer hold to the animal world.

Substitution
This is the account whereby the sacrifice of an ox is seen as an offering of a life to *Kwoth*, the beast having been identified with the life of the man who offers it, and so becomes an act of substitution and atonement. E-P says there are two kinds of occasion for sacrifice (ibid.:198): personal sacrifices, made to rid a particular human world of contact with the spirit world; and collective sacrifices, which accompany social activities and are confirmatory in that the spirits witness and endorse a change in status. The one serves to distance the spirits and men, the other serves to bring them into communion (he cites Hubert and Mauss's 1899 essay). E-P concentrates upon the first class, which he describes as being 'piacular' or 'expiatory', and which he holds to be the key to sacrifice, even dismissing the distribution of meat from the account as being 'non-religious' (see Evans-Pritchard 1956:215, cf.274). He, perhaps

arbitrarily, thereby excludes the social as secondary, and concentrates upon the individual's relation to God as the heart of the matter.

This sounds very 'Protestant' to modern ears, with a focus on substitutionary atonement and the individual offender. We find a string of terms to this effect, 'ransom' (ibid.:221), 'indemnifying' (228), 'atonement' (229), a 'wiping out of debt' (ibid.), ending in the statement that 'the central piacular idea [is that] of substitution of lives of cattle for lives of men' (230). Yet there are ethnographic reasons for this emphasis. The Nuer, unlike the Sanskrit texts drawn on by Hubert and Mauss, are not elaborately ritualistic. There is a structure to their sacrifices, which E-P (again, drawing on Hubert and Mauss) outlines as presentation / consecration / invocation / immolation, but there is no great ceremony. Purification is not an issue; it is not necessary in most cases to have a ritual expert, there are no special sacred sites involved, nor is there any sense that a sacrifice is invalid if certain elements are left out or performed out of order. This has led critics to suggest that Hubert and Mauss's account is quite inappropriate as a model, for there is no clear sense of 'the sacred' in terms of dangerous boundaries and arbitrary rules among the Nuer. Nevertheless, as Mary Douglas (1970) points out, one might make the contrast between 'Sanskrit' and 'Nuer' in terms of 'high' and 'low' church: there is no doubt that the Nuer do not stand upon ceremony, they are not ritualistically minded, but, on the other hand, they appear to take very seriously the question of intention, or the attitude of those most concerned. Those involved are concerned to restore a right order to the world, and one cannot do this insincerely, they believe. So, it is quite sound that E-P should emphasize the personal and the relational in his account of Nuer sacrifice.

My interest, however, is more in the formal relationship of substitution and how it works. The objective of sacrifice in this account is to alter the relationship between some part of the human world and God (*Kwoth*) or the spirits which are 'hypostases, representations, or refractions of God' (Evans-Pritchard 1956:200). And this alteration is achieved by use of an intermediary – an ox – or a chain of intermediaries, as in the case of the cow-cucumber, which can stand in for a beast in case of need, postponing the killing of an animal or, in cases of minor anxieties, sufficient to the task. 'The victim is an intermediary between God and man', E-P states, 'in that they are brought together in the offering of its life' (ibid.:275).

The problems of substitution are notorious. Why should a third life serve to reconcile men to Spirit? What mechanism is at work? If you ask who benefits, the profits all accrue to the human side. Yet there appears to be a logic, based on resemblance or contiguity, although it is hard to complete the syllogism: men are close to cattle, the cucumber shares a name with the cow, all life belongs to God… E-P discusses these difficulties in some detail, noting in particular the paradox that sacrifice establishes communication with God not to bring him close but to keep him at a distance. He suggests that gift-giving establishes a contract between parties but notes that sacrifice goes beyond the 'dialect of exchange and contract' (ibid.:277). His solution is to point to the importance of sincerity of heart (278ff.): the moral person making the sacrifice is symbolized by his spear, and he identifies himself with the victim in the act of consecration: there is a transfer of guilt, and the victim serves as a scapegoat. The sacrifice-maker becomes a divided self, offering up a part-life by his act, so that 'some part of a man dies with the victim' (281), while the other part knows absolution and rebirth.

Structure

Lévi-Strauss, we know, objected strongly to this logic of serial substitutions. In *La Pensée sauvage* (1962b) he identifies two contrasting ways of being, through human relationships to animals, ways that he links to the institutions of sacrifice and totemism respectively (Lévi-Strauss 1962b:295–302, ET 1966:223–8). The logic of the first is that of substitution, where one object can stand for another. There is a continuous series of graded terms, so that a person may pass from one to another along the sequence. Under such conditions, concepts of identity and non-contradiction – that this is this, and not that – are being flouted; substitution confuses boundaries. Moreover, not only does the series allow continuous passage between terms, but also there is an orientation; the gradation goes in a single direction. In such a system, Lévi-Strauss claims, 'the series of natural species … plays the part of an intermediary between two polar terms, the sacrificer and the deity, between which there is initially no… [kind] of relation' (1966:225).

We may characterize this kind of thinking as the 'series'; it is found in the continuous variation of a particular quality, it emphasizes resemblances over differences, and it allows animals to be related to humans in the imagination through the comparison of external features. In this way of thinking, men may relate to crows because both go on two legs; or they may relate to foxes by a common reddish colour, and so forth. A series then joins different beings together and seeks the term which allows an equivalence of relations; it grades resemblances, and finally arrives at an identification of man and animal in a mystic participation. The series lends itself to the notion of a chain of beings, each link in the chain imitating or resembling the previous one, progressing towards or regressing away from a highest term, which the other links imitate as the model or reason of the series.

The series permits the logic of sacrifice: which attempts to achieve its ends, Lévi-Strauss suggests, by establishing a desired connection between two initially separated domains through this form of thought. He distrusts sacrifice so

conceived on two grounds: first, its confusion of distinct kinds; and, second, its making a non-existent term, divinity, intervene in its failed attempts (his term) to achieve these desired ends. 'The system of sacrifice', he concludes, 'represents a private discourse wanting in good sense' (ibid.:228).

In contrast, Lévi-Strauss proposes a second form of social logic, the structural thought of totemism, which instead of judging and grading by external resemblances, seeks internal homologies. In this form of thought, there is no chain of substitutions, but clear distinctions are made between species: differences rather than similarities are the key, and the relations established are not graded but reversible. In totemism, a homology is postulated 'between two parallel series – that of natural species and that of social groups – whose respective terms do not resemble each other in pairs' (ibid.:224). There is a formal correlation between two systems of differences, so that, for example, one may deduce that the relation of one clan to another corresponds to the relation between two species of birds. The two series are brought into relation to confirm differences, not to establish similarities. We may recall Lévi-Strauss's analysis of the Nuer statement 'twins are birds': 'Twins are "birds", not because they are confused with them or because they look like them, but because twins, in relation to other men, are as "persons of the above" to "persons of the below", and, in relation to birds, as "birds of the below" are to "birds of the above"' (152–3).

This then is the second kind of relation between men and animals identified by E-P, not sacrificial (or serial) but totemic (or structural). It comes, interestingly, as part of a discussion on the substitution of the cucumber for the ox in terms of analogy (see Evans-Pritchard 1956:126–33). Lévi-Strauss's discussion may be seen as clarifying E-P's efforts to distinguish the different mental processes at work. In Lévi-Strauss's view, totemic classifications have, in contrast to sacrificial series, a doubly objective basis: there are natural species, existing in a discontinuous series, and it is legitimate to form representations that compare this to the also-existent series of social segments. 'Classificatory systems belong to the levels of language: they are codes which, however well or badly made, aim always to make sense.' (Lévi-Strauss 1966:228). The reference to 'levels of language' is important, and we will briefly come back to it in concluding.

This identification of structure as opposed to series permits a revolution in thought (in this following Deleuze who, although a philosopher and not an anthropologist, is important for the following argument). Instead of a series of resemblances, we move to a structure of differences; from an identification of terms, to an equality of relations; from the metamorphoses of the imagination, to conceptual metaphors in the mind; from continuity between nature and culture, to a separation of the two, permitting correspondences without resemblances. And we move, perhaps most significantly of all, from the imitation of a model – whether the origin or end of the series – to a distribution of differences within the structural frame, a sequence of mirroring imitations between two series, without any external model or reason (Deleuze and Guattari 1980:289). This last point indicates one of the prime attractions of the structural method, for while the world becomes clearer and more reasonable, it does so without any theological appeal outside the sphere of the mind. The cool formalism of the structure replaces the elisions and teleology of the series. And we may wonder whether E-P's recourse to theological terms prevents him making the difference between them as clearly as he might otherwise have done so.[1]

Indeed, the contrast between totem and sacrifice as products of distinct kinds of thought can be extended to other disciplinary pairs, to analogy and homology in biology, metaphor and metonym in linguistics, structure and function in engineering, and so forth. Extending the scope in this way draws attention to the complementary nature of structure and series, for both are needed to make sense in varying conditions. And from this complementarity a second general point emerges, that, despite their differences, both series and structure are variant forms of representation or mimesis. The one depends upon a series of imitations or representations of the final (or original) term; the other upon internal representations, imitations between the two series composing a structure. In either case, comparisons are permitted because the world or nature is considered as an immense mimesis, ordered by resemblance. Whatever their differences, and even antagonism, these principles as forms of mimesis are in fact complementary, and indeed series and structure have always existed together in various combinations. The point here, in short, is that both series and structure are forms of representation.

We might suspect that, in terms of explaining how a given sacrifice achieves some end in the world – instead of simply 'representing' that aim – that neither the series nor the structure will serve our purpose, for both are forms of representation, and representation conjures away the question of production or performance in favour of a focus on meaning. If a sacrifice is to have effects, we need something more than fusion and common essence, on the one hand; or breaking down the solidarity between men and cattle into correspondences between relations, on the other. We need a third way of considering the relation between humans and animals, one that focuses on production rather than representation.

1 This question is important in the context of the recent question asked as to theology's potential contribution to anthropological analysis (Lemons 2018).

Double capture

And we find such a third way in E-P's writing, a second possible account of sacrifice. His argument goes as follows. The Nuer are a cattle-rearing people. Cattle are the key in many respects to how the Nuer order the world. The first chapter of E-P's first book on them (*The Nuer*, 1940) is titled 'Interest in cattle', and describes how relations to cattle define the individual, life stage and sexual division of labour; how social solidarity is cast in terms of pasturing and defending herds; how cattle payments mark marriage and kinship; how personal names are taken from cattle descriptive terms; and how prestige and personality are expressed through cattle. Further, the continuity of the lineage is expressed in terms of the continuity of its herd (Evans-Pritchard 1956:259). We might say that the Nuer order their lives and their world through juxtaposing and bringing two series into a particular relation: a series of men (individual, group, lineage) and a series of cattle (ox, herd, ancestral herd). As E-P says, *cherchez la vache* (1940:ch.1); if you want to understand the Nuer, you should look to the relation of the two series, men and cattle: they have a common destiny or fate.

To turn this observation into a general point, this kind of process – of the relating of two series – is extremely widespread and may be described (after Deleuze 1977) in terms of 'double capture', whereby both terms (or series) in a relation take on qualities of the other, while each retains its separate identity. It is not a case of mimicry or forming an image, for both the terms of the relationship change and become something else – something new – in relation to the other. Yet throughout, there is no question of confusion of essence. This then is double capture: an asymmetrical taking-on of new properties, without any sort of fusion, for both are caught in a single process of 'becoming' – in this sense of becoming something else than they would have been had they not engaged in this relationship. The phenomenon corresponds to many processes of mutual interpretation or mutual mapping that constitute the substance of the interactions making up 'everyday life'. Here we have a case of men and cattle, where the mapping may be supposed to be one sided, although – it may be suggested – it does not leave the potential of the cattle unchanged. In any case, what is important is that the Nuer do not confuse or substitute men with cattle. Cattle (in particular) are sacrificed on many occasions: to restore order (as in cases of sickness, barrenness, anomaly – the birth of twins – or 'sin' in E-P's translation), but also to integrate into the social order (after the birth of the first child, initiation of sons, marriages), and to restore the social order (funerals, mortuary ceremonies, after homicides, and at the settlement of feuds). In short, cattle are the key to a right ordering of the world, whether we are concerned with what we would call natural, social or supernatural categories.

Looking at chapter 10 of *Nuer Religion*, 'The sacrificial role of cattle', it is possible to suggest that right order is restored, or reiterated, not in the substitution of cattle for men – it is not clear why that would restore or reiterate anything – but in the fundamental act of reasserting the relation of men and cattle. The purpose of sacrifice is to reiterate the key relation at the heart of the Nuer world: to assert the common fate of the two series: men are only men through cattle; cattle are only cattle through men. And the world with all its order is only the world through the reiteration of this key in sacrifice: in a sense, the world is created anew in sacrifice. It is the moment of becoming-human of the Nuer, their specificity, their Nuer-ness.

It is possible to read off from this reassertion of the relationship of common fate and reiteration of right ordering the various functions E-P finds: communicating with Spirit; protecting from spirits; atoning for the bad; confirming the good. But I think that putting the notion of substitution at the centre is a mistake. The advantage of this reiteration of a double series approach, too, is that it allows the social and personal aspects to be reintegrated: it suggests that division and distribution of food need not be excluded as non-religious, and it permits the possibility that among the orders affirmed and repeated one may find political and religious powers, rather than privileging the 'vertical' relationship between the individual and Spirit.

This second theory of sacrifice is by no means complete: it is not clear why killing should reiterate the relationship – though E-P recounts Nuer myths which state the relation: in the time of 'the ancestor', 'the cow' gave her life for his salvation, and so it is today. Hence the identification, E-P says, of man with ox, of lineage with herd, and of men with cattle (1956:271). Nevertheless, the theory suggests the sort of criterion one might look for in an explanation of sacrifice; or to paraphrase Hubert and Mauss, in the creation of moral personality, or the reiteration of humanity, always in its specific forms, for it has no other.

Language and 'ontologies'

I have not tried to give a theory of sacrifice, but rather to trace three forms of relationship between men and animals in E-P's work – series, structure and double capture. In presenting such a classification, he has of course identified a fourth such relationship, one that we might call the scientific gaze, the only one that does not emerge from the Nuer material. I want to make two points in conclusion, to emphasize the continuing importance of E-P's thought in the discipline, and, in particular, how he does business with four generations of French theorists – Mauss, Lévi-Strauss, Deleuze and Descola.

First, in this four-fold classification of the relationships between men and animals we find an anticipation of Descola's recent account of 'ontological regimes', which Descola identifies as animism, totemism, analogism and naturalism.

Animism produces confusion of types, totemism is based in comparison between relations, analogism is identified by the transfer of properties, and naturalism allows the scientific project (Descola 2005). E-P was engaged in a similar project, though – characteristically – his was more embedded in ethnographic description.

Second, an important proviso: the regimes identified are all resources present in a single society and probably should be seen, as Lévi-Strauss suggests, as operating at the level of language, rather than believing in a plurality of 'ontologies'. Although Descola is right to emphasize that the distribution and importance of regimes may vary enormously between societies (with the Western focus on naturalism as the exceptional case), this problem is probably best tackled by a return to language and to linguistic anthropology. If we are to find grounds for a common humanity, the structure and powers of language may well be a good place to base ourselves, and E-P's account is not a bad guide in this territory.[2]

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2 I would begin with a classification of linguistic functions, such as that offered in Deleuze (1969), of designation, manifestation, signification and meaning/expression, which at least points to the possibilities of structure, series, naturalism and production/double capture.

20

Thinking outside the box

An exploration of E-P's Azande fieldwork through his supply case

Pierre Lee

Introduction – a case study

E-P's 1926 Azande expedition resulted in the publication of numerous works, notably his 1937 text *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*. As part of this overseas fieldwork expedition, E-P placed an order with the Army and Navy Co-operative Society for a case of general supplies to supplement his stay. This case (Figure 20.1) was accessioned by the University of Cambridge's Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA), then known as the Museum of Ethnology. The interior of the case was empty apart from a few filaments of straw and fragments of newspaper probably used to protect the packed items. Affixed to the inside of the case was also a list of supplies ordered by E-P that were consumed by him during the course of his fieldwork.

This chapter uses this supply case, and the objects that were packed inside it, as an analytic fulcrum to acquire wider insights into E-P's Azande fieldwork. More importantly, as the case was ordered by E-P, analysing it has enabled a different perspective of the Azande fieldwork expedition to be revealed – with a focus not on the Azande people, but of the facilitator of the fieldwork, E-P. The three principle focuses of this paper are: the Army and Navy Co-operative Society – suppliers of the case, the list of supplies attached on the inside of the case, and a separate collection of E-P's handwritten notes, likewise held in the MAA archives. The framework for the analysis of these objects is founded on Ian Hodder's (2012:3) 'entanglement' theory, which states that artefacts are constantly layered with different meanings brought on by factors such as different ownership, different socio-cultural contexts, as well as the passage of time. These factors then become 'entangled' with each other, creating a multifaceted relationship with the original source object – thus effectively becoming an inextricable part of the object itself (ibid.). As explained by Hodder (2012:88), entanglement arises from 'humans depending on things', 'things depending on other things', 'things depending on humans' and 'humans depending on other humans'. Consequently, the wider themes of colonial encounter, adventure and exchange which surface through this chapter are all intertwined in relationship between E-P himself, his supply case, the supplies he ordered and the lasting legacy of E-P in, and beyond, the realm of anthropology.

Case contextualization

Very little information is held by the MAA for the supply case or the handwritten notes. The MAA's Collection Management System (CMS) entry for the supply case merely provides a brief description, calling it a 'large wooden box, belonging to E.E Evans Pritchard' (no date). No correspondence was found detailing the accession. However, a search of associated Azande artefacts on the MAA register found this entry by Rachel Hand:

> Annual report notes 1927.2230–2285 were 'part of a large ethnographical collection, made by E.E. Evans-Pritchard, Azande, S. Sudan' and given by Louis Clarke a fact noted only in 1927.2230 in the register but which seems to be a continuous donation from 1927.2230–1927.2299. This is confirmed by 1927.2299A–B was noted as made for Evans-Pritchard.

It is therefore possible that the supply case was used to ship part of this 'large ethnographic collection' of the Azande back to the MAA. As for E-P's notes, they are not mentioned as part of this larger ethnographical collection. However, there are reasons to suppose that these notes were wrapped around some of items shipped back to the MAA in the supply case – thus forming a crucial component for understanding the case's story. Firstly, the notes exclusively mention the Azande, and MAA database CMS entry indicates that they were 'originally found wrapped around items of his collection'. Secondly, besides the clear wrinkles in the notes, there is likewise noticeable brown-coloured staining (Figure 20.2). The colour of the stains is extremely similar to some dirt residue found on the inside of E-P's supply case. It also resembles the staining of the wood of the supply case itself, highlighted by the contrasting colours between the protected and exposed part of the wood (Figure 20.3). Consequently, it is likely that the notes gathered the dust present in the supply case, while the wrinkles are a result of the notes as a protective wrap

Figure 20.1 Evans-Pritchard's Army & Navy Co-operative Society supply case, no date. Reproduced by permission of University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology (AA5/1/8).

for the items that were shipped back to the UK. Finally, the handwriting on the notes matches that of E-P's annotated copy of *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic of the Azande* (1937) housed in the collection of Oxford's Pitt Rivers Museum, corroborating the MAA's entry that these notes were 'handwritten' by E-P.

Additional context for this chapter was gathered from E-P's observations during his fieldwork experience and complemented by narrative recollections of E-P. These sources facilitated a better understanding of the choices he made (supplies), as well as how this supply case and its contents fits into the 'entangled' (Hodder 2012:3) wider narratives surrounding E-P, expeditions and some British colonial attitudes of the time. It is likewise important to note that E-P ordered a large amount of his personal correspondences to be destroyed (Burton 1992:14). Thus, any analysis of E-P's personal effects, such as this supply case, will never be able to fill in all the gaps regarding his persona and his preferences.

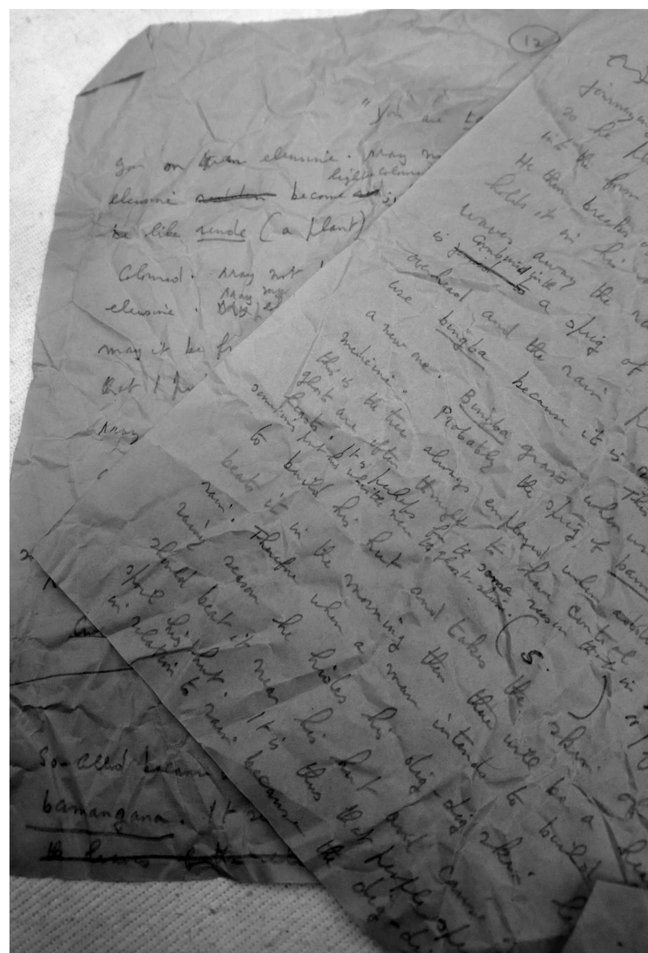

Figure 20.2 Collection of Evans-Pritchard's handwritten notes on Azande, with noticeable staining. Reproduced by permission of University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology (AR8/1/2).

Food for Thought – embodiments of enjoyment, empire and exchange

> Steward: …We're expecting rather hot weather tomorrow, so I've arranged the menu accordingly: cold breast of chicken, potted meats and prawns, curried lamb and rice.
> Colonel Proctor: Ahh, capital! Curry is the only dish useful for this filthy climate: purifies the blood, tones up the system…
> Phileas Fogg: Quite. My luncheon will remain the same, steward. Kindly adhere to my instructions.
> Steward: Well of course, sir, but all that food on a hot day?

Figure 20.3 Colour contrast caused by staining of exposed wood on exterior of Evans-Pritchard's supply case. Reproduced by permission of University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology.

> Phileas Fogg: Steward, my Thursday midday meal has always been and will always be: hot soup, fried sole, roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, baked potatoes, suet pudding and treacle.
>
> *Around the World in 80 Days,* 47:33–48:04 (Anderson 1956)

Although this exchange is not found in Jules Verne's original novel, the artistic license taken by screenwriters John Farrow, S.J Perelman and James Poe embodies within it the colonial attitudes towards food preferences as well as the colonial adaptation of meals to local conditions (or resistance to such), with curry being a well-studied example (e.g. Bickham 2008). Arguably, similar observations can be extrapolated from E-P's list of supplies from the Army and Navy Co-operative Society, for some of the items listed are entangled with embodiments of colonial adventure and exoticism. A photograph of the supply list, alongside a transcription, is found in Figure 20.4.

Gerd Spittler (1996) notes that a predominant concern for African expeditions conducted up to the nineteenth and early twentieth century was the difficulty of obtaining food and supplies on site. Reflecting on his fieldwork, E-P (1973) stated that he also sought advice from several mentors and 'experienced fieldworkers' before he headed to Sudan. He noted that he received no 'clear answers', with advice such as 'take ten grains of quinine every night and keep off women' from his mentor Professor Charles Gabriel Seligman (Evans-Pritchard 1973:242). Not to be 'a bloody fool' was the advice from another mentor, Professor B. Malinowski (ibid.). Thus, it would be reasonable to assume that E-P would want to pack some comfort items for his enjoyment given the potential uncertainty, hence the presence of confectionary items such as jam and biscuits. However, this supply list arguably stems from more than a simple practical consideration of nourishment and supply – it concurrently embodies deeper socially constructed concerns.

Figure 20.4 Evans-Pritchard's supply box and list. Reproduced by permission of University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology (AA5/1/8).

Roland Barthes (2008:32) argued that the consumption of food facilitates the 'partake[ing]' of a communal 'national' or personal 'nostalgic' past. Indeed, certain items on E-P's list do have significant ties to Britain's colonial history. Lea & Perrins' Worcestershire Sauce ('L&P sauce'), for example, was already so ingrained in British Empire food discourse that its purchase, distribution and consumption was an indirect symbol not simply of personal preference, but of colonial power and reach (Gewald 2012:222). With Lea & Perrins sauce, E-P is able to have a taste of a familiar, comforting condiment in a new, unfamiliar landscape. Concurrently, the presence of Lea & Perrins sauce on the supply list furthers the brand's ubiquitous presence in

15/7/26

Content Package No.: 1 Packed by: T.H

Name: E.E. Evans Pritchard Destination: Khartoum

1 tin b'berry jam

1 tin b'berry & apple jam

1 tin strawberry jam

1 tin red plum jam

1 tin damson jam

8 tins sardines

1 tin standard biscuits

1 tin wheatmeal

1 tin plas… plain

1 tin apricots

1 tin pears

1 tin fruit salad

1 tin tea

1 tin ve… cheese

1 tin cheddar

1 tin mustard

1 tin fruit drops

1 tin Cerebos salt

1 tin Poulet au Pot

Content Package No.: 1 Packed by: Continued Name:

Destination:

1 box candles

1 bar lifebuoy soap

1 bottle L&P sauce

1 bottle tomato sauce

1 bottle F. olives

1 bottle parmesan cheese

1 bottle bastor white pepper

2 rolls hovio(?) paper

1 padlock key & bolt

Venesta H & P 20×13×10

- 1 -17

colonial narratives and discourse. Thus, E-P's choice of Lea & Perrins sauce for his Azande expedition is very much situated in greater colonial entanglements brought about by the company's legacy.

These colonial undertones can be likewise found in the company supplying E-P's goods, the Army & Navy Co-operative Society. First set up in 1871 as a cooperative from which military officers could purchase familiar household goods, including foodstuffs, at competitive rates, the society eventually expanded and had multiple outlets as far-reaching as the colonial outposts of Karachi and Mumbai.[1] The society also operated a restaurant, where officers who had returned from the 'distant empire' could be look forward to a 'welcoming atmosphere' (Graham 2008:35). Hence, the symbiotic connotations of adventure, familiarity and identity through food as expounded by Barthes (2008) can be likewise seen in the way the Army & Navy Co-operative Society positioned itself through its marketing of merchandise.

John W. Burton (1992:53) notes that E-P's first fieldwork expeditions in Sudan were 'as much descriptive exercises as they were processes of self-discovery'. Interestingly, several scholars have noted similarities between E-P and the semi-mythical explorer T.E. Lawrence, highlighting that E-P developed a fondness for Lawrence's adventurous persona while studying at Oxford (ibid.). Michael G. Kenny (this volume, Chapter 4) furthers this observation, arguing that E-P's own narrative, through his ethnographic expeditions and his writings, has likewise been rendered mythic, akin to that of his supposed role model, T.E. Lawrence. Consequently, The Army & Navy supply case examined in this chapter creates a material link entangled between the constructs of colonialism and adventure alongside Evans-Pritchard's personal and professional objectives for his Azande study. In essence, the case is entangled with wider embodiments of exoticism and adventure both by its purpose, its contents and its owner.

Orvar Löfgren (2016) wrote that suitcases carry manifestations of travel and adventure within their materiality. And as aforementioned, the provision and partaking of home comforts in an exotic land (Lea & Perrins sauce in the Army & Navy case, for example) by a researcher observing native Azande tribespeople further contributes to this entangled mystique. However, it is also important to highlight that although there is an undoubted colonial mystique surrounding E-P, he himself was often said to be sympathetic towards the local African communities he visited. He often was annoyed at being associated with government work, which he perceived to be a moniker for colonial subjugation of Britain's African colonies (Beidelman 1974). Herein lies another advantage of using entanglement theory to analyse this collection of E-P

1 housefraserarchive.ac.uk/company/?id=c0512 (accessed 3 November 2022).

artefacts, for an entanglement also connotes that the stories and knowledge associated with objects do not necessarily perfectly intersect, but rather, are layered atop one another in a socio-temporal construction of the object's history (Hodder 2012).

Furthermore, the embodiments of colonial adventure can be seen not only through the supplies held inside (and the supplier of) the case, but also in the construction of the case itself. The supply list (Figure 20.4) notes that the case was made of Venesta boards. In fact, the use of Venesta packing cases was an innovation by Ernest Shackleton, who wanted to maximize lightweight and waterproof qualities for his Nimrod expedition. It is thought that using Venesta packing cases saved approximately 4 tonnes of weight (Smith 2014:86). Similarly, weight and durability were considerations in E-P's fieldwork preparation. He noted that because of accessibility difficulties, only essential supplies could be taken, with careful consideration for bulk, especially as porterage was the only feasible option for travel to the Azande (Evans-Pritchard 1973). It is possible that the Army & Navy Co-operative Society took inspiration from Shackleton's Venesta cases, as the ratio of the dimensions of the Shackleton cases, which he standardized to 30 × 15 inches (Smith 2014) are similar to E-P's Venesta case (20 × 13 inches). Venesta cases were also used for Scott's Antarctic expedition (Hince 2000:366).

Consequently, the heritage of E-P's case is felt through the material used for its construction, Venesta – imbued with the legacy of past British explorers. Hence, the case's entanglement with the embodiment of travel is seen not simply via the romance and exoticism of expeditions of the period, but also the difficulties of access – a point which E-P stressed to students when asked for his reminiscences of fieldwork (Evans-Pritchard 1973:241). It likewise points to the concurrent importance of supplies to the success and well-being of expeditions. In fact, while embarking on his later study of the Nuer, E-P's luggage and supplies were misplaced en route, arriving only in Sudan after he had left Khartoum for Malakal. Consequently, he left for Yoinyang (his base for the study of the Nuer) 'with very few clothes and supplies to sustain him' (Johnson 1982:234).

It is not just the embodiment of travel that can be extracted from E-P's supply list, but also the embodiment of exchange. Mary Douglas (1982), incidentally a student of E-P, wrote that food is one of the most powerful forms of communication, especially for groups who do not share a common language. In his reminiscence of fieldwork in the 1920s, E-P (1973:238) noted that he would sometimes thank the Bedouin for their hospitality by 'slip[ping]… goods' like tea and sugar' regretfully 'pinched' from army stores. Tea and sugar were listed in E-P's supply list (Figure 20.1) and it was entirely possible that this form of exchange also existed between the Azande and E-P. As E-P himself remarked:

> I tried to adapt myself to their [Azande] culture by living the life of my hosts, as far as convenient, and by sharing their hopes and joys, apathy and sorrows. In many respects my life was like theirs: I suffered their illnesses; exploited the same food supplies; and adopted as far as possible their own patterns of behaviour with resultant enmities as well as friendships.
>
> (1976:45)

In this passage, it is clear that that the shared partaking of food was present. In fact, E-P (1973:237) also reminisces growing his own food while in Zandeland, as well as purchasing chickens from the Azande people. It is also entirely possible (if not probable) that the Azande took an interest in, and partook of, E-P's British food supplies. There is precedent for this, for one nickname given by the Azande to an earlier Italian explorer Giovani Miani was *Balikuhe*, which translates to 'he was eating raw and bland food' (Likaka 2009:80). What the above extract also highlights is the potential that food has for creating relationships as well as establishing status. E-P noted that the Azande often treated him as 'superior', almost as a chief (Evans-Pritchard and Fortes 1940:15). This has very interesting implications when related to the power dynamics of food within Azande society. In his observations of the Azande Royal Court, E-P noted that for the Azande, the principle of '*ru ae*: the giving of things (to a prince), ought to be balanced by *fu ae*, the giving of things (to his subjects [from the prince])' (1971:215). Thus, any form of food exchange by E-P and the Azande could also be interpreted as a manifestation and subconscious consolidation of E-P's status amongst the Azande following the '*ru-ae – fu-ae*' principle.

Incidentally, E-P himself placed key emphasis on the role of food in shaping society. He wrote about the 'bovine idiom', referring to the symbolic use of cattle in Nuer society as currency,and in marriage dowries and sacrifice (Evans-Pritchard and Fortes 1940:19). By using E-P's supply list, this chapter is able to use food as a fulcrum to interpret the deeper dynamics between him and the communities he observed, rather than simply amongst the community itself. It is also clear that E-P developed a fondness for certain comfort items in the field. A photograph of E-P's tent during his Nuer study in 1935 shows two Huntley & Palmer biscuit tins under the table (Figure 20.5). Huntley & Palmer biscuits were in the Army & Navy Co-operative Society Trade Catalogue (1883:21). Although there is no evidence pointing to the specific brand of biscuit E-P ordered for his Azande expedition, it is possible that his food preferences in the field could have developed from the supplies he ordered for his first observational study. E-P also noted that his tinned supplies were replenished from stores in Khartoum during his time with the Azande (Evans-Pritchard 1973:239), so his Army & Navy supply case would not be the only source of comfort or nourishment.

Figure 20.5 E-P's tent during his Nuer study in 1935. Under the table can just be made out two large Huntley & Palmer biscuit tins. Courtesy of the Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (1998.355.480.2).

However, the presence of Hunter & Palmer biscuits in later expeditions suggests that this initial supply list not only hinted at his initial food tastes, but potentially also shaped his future preparation and preferences for comfort items.

'Comfort' items also play a crucial role in the analysis, for while links to wider notions of colonial exoticism and exchange have been made with regard to certain items on the supply list, the lack of other items is also telling. For example, there is no mention of medical supplies. Therefore, it is important that this supply case, and the list which accompanies it, is not read as an exhaustive compilation of what E-P brought along with him for his Azande fieldwork. Instead, the large presence of comfort items such as condiments suggests that this supply case was more like an oversized 'tuckbox'[2] for E-P and formed only part of the items he brought and used on this expedition.

Unwrapping a noteable discovery

As aforementioned, another item analysed as part of this chapter is a collection of E-P's handwritten notes. What is most astonishing about these notes as they are not simply an assortment of observations, but rather resemble first drafts of E-P's seminal work on the Azande and indeed his first major text: *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (1937). Moreover, all of E-P's observations in this set of notes are found almost verbatim in the published text. A full transcription of the notes is provided at the end of this chapter, along with the page number in *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (1937) that these notes correspond to.

Clifford Geertz (1988:58) noted that an influential but sometimes under-appreciated quality of E-P was his ability to present his fieldnotes in a sharp, purposeful, but engaging style. The fact that these drafts contain relatively few changes compared to the final text is testament of both his observational and writing ability. For example, when writing about eleusine, a staple crop for the Azande, the words 'decrease/decreases' in the phrase 'may not be eleusine decrease/decrease' are struck out and replaced with 'may not be eleusine fail', emphasizing to the importance of this crop (note 13 in the transcription).

Interestingly, these notes are also wrapped up in the wider folklore surrounding E-P and his fieldnotes. He (1973:239) stated that he never took a notebook while in the field, instead choosing to 'memorize what I saw and heard and wrote it down when I got back to the privacy of my abode'. Thus, these notes would appear to represent his ability to acquire, remember and contextualize knowledge, utilizing his expert grasp of participant observation, further accentuated by the fact that there appear to be few edits between these notes and the final *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande* text. However, as noted by Dr Christopher Morton,[3] there are numerous instances of E-P being photographed with a notebook in the field at many of his sites, including the Azande, seemingly contradicting his words.

These notes are permeated with additional layers of significance when situated within the larger collection that E-P gifted to the MAA. One of the items shipped back was a Zande sex-potency charm, called a *gbaga*.[4] And a page of E-P's notes happens to be dedicated to *gbaga* (note 15 of the transcription). Entanglement theory advances the notion that the knowledge of an object becomes intimately wrapped around the object itself (Hodder, 2012:15). Unfortunately, it is impossible to confirm whether the sex-potency charm was shipped back in the case, and whether that exact page of E-P's notes was wrapped around it during transport. However, this potential link aptly illustrates how museum artefacts, whether on display or in the archives, carry with them entangled narratives created by different people and places.

The fact that E-P's notes were separated from the supply case while other packing material (old newspapers,

2 I am grateful to Bruce Ross-Smith for the 'tuckbox' analogy, which arose during discussions about this supply case.

3 An observation noted by Dr Morton when we were discussing this supply case.

4 'Charm – sex potency charm, 1927', Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology Archives, 1927.2273.

straw) were left inside highlights a certain value ascribed to them by staff of the MAA at the time. However, it would also be interesting to speculate the reasons for E-P deciding to consign these notes as ‘packing material’ – essentially rubbish and no longer of any value to him. One possibility is that he transcribed these notes on his field typewriter; this provides an avenue for a symbolic commentary on the permanence of typewritten ‘pages’ versus the ephemeral value of handwritten ‘notes’. However, the fact that these notes appear to be early drafts of his text adds to their significance, further elevating their already existing value as handwritten notes. The reasoning is threefold. Firstly, as mentioned, relatively few notes and correspondences of E-P’s hand remain (Burton 1992). Secondly, the corresponding pages of text are only found in his original 1937 – and now out of print – publication. They are completely omitted from the abridged 1976 publication of *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*. Thirdly, they could be used to complement Oxford’s Pitt Rivers Museum’s E-P manuscript collection. Their collection likewise includes manuscript excerpts corresponding to certain passages within *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (Evans-Pritchard Papers 2018)[5]. Furthermore, as already mentioned, the Pitt Rivers Museum has E-P’s personal annotated copy *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (1937). By comparing and analysing these manuscripts and the annotated text alongside the newly (re)-discovered drafts held by the MAA, insightful perspectives could be acquired on the writing, editing, typing and publishing process of this seminal text and influential author. These notes could therefore be integrated into the wider entanglement of knowledge and material on E-P.

Conclusion – keeping the ‘case’ open

Löfgren (2016:60) notes how suitcases can also function as a ‘nostalgic museum’, whose objects form a collection of travel(led) stories. However, museums too often consider suitcases in their collection as mundane, ‘dead knowledge’ (ibid.). In the example of E-P’s supply case, its emptiness could be taken as knowledge disappeared, with the case completely dissociated from the Azande objects it helped transport – and with only a supply list affixed to its cover as a reminder of objects once stored. Its ‘emptiness’ meant that this chapter required some literal and figurative ‘outside the box’ thinking, but always with the possibility of future interpretation and analysis.

E-P’s supply case has also inadvertently been a part of the MAA’s other ethnographic collections beyond the Sudan. A note on its lid shows that the case once contained stone implements accessioned by the MAA from a Guinea Fly River expedition (Figure 20.6), suggesting that although its interpretive, entangled qualities were not always explored, its practical qualities as a robust storage unit were always recognized. Intriguingly, however, when E-P’s supply was accessioned by the MAA, it was recorded not as an object, but as a document.[6] On hindsight, this accession as a document was apt, for the case certainly had – and still has – numerous layers to be ‘read’, analysed and shared.

Hodder (2012:5) notes that in the entanglement of objects, things ‘endure over different temporalities’. From a supply case ‘tuckbox’ for Evans-Pritchard’s first Azande expedition, to a case which carried artefacts back to the UK, to a storage box for other MAA objects, to a now ‘empty’ remnant of expeditions and exhibitions past, Evans-Pritchard’s supply case has indeed endured. Evans-Pritchard (1973:245) lamented that early ethnographers too often focused on narrating their personal journeys to their field sites in publications, rather than providing critical insights into their research communities. However, with this chapter, some aspects of these ‘personal journeys’ were re-introduced in order to provide some reflexive insights not only into Evans-Pritchard himself, but also wider entangled narratives revolving around colonial encounter, adventure and exchange.

Transcription of Evans-Pritchard’s notes

The corresponding page of *Magic, Oracles, and Witchcraft among the Azande* (1937) is at the bottom of each transcription.

7: Whistle track your friend (the thief); track him to kill him, the thief who has deceived me. This whistle which I blow, even if it is my wife, you slay her. | if the thief is not of my household, is not my wife, is not one of my kinsmen, you hack that unrelated man and kill him so that I may praise you for your action. Wangbia (noise of whistle).

> ‘A test! (Zunga[7])! A test between me and you who stole my spear! May you not sleep in the shelter of a hut, beneath a thatched roof. The whistle which I blow sickness upon you. May you not eat. Thief! If you eat anything you will vomit it on account of the whistle. May madness seize you this year. Madness! Madness! May you become an imbecile who stole my spear. I send medicine after you.
>
> Even if you go and buy…
>
> (pp. 453–4)

5 www.prm.ox.ac.uk/evans-pritchard-papers (accessed 13 January 2023).

6 Accession notes: Large wooden box, belonging to E.E. Evans Pritchard, no date’, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology Archives, AA5/1/8.

7 Zunga whistle, not mentioned in final version, but seemingly something to do with judgement.

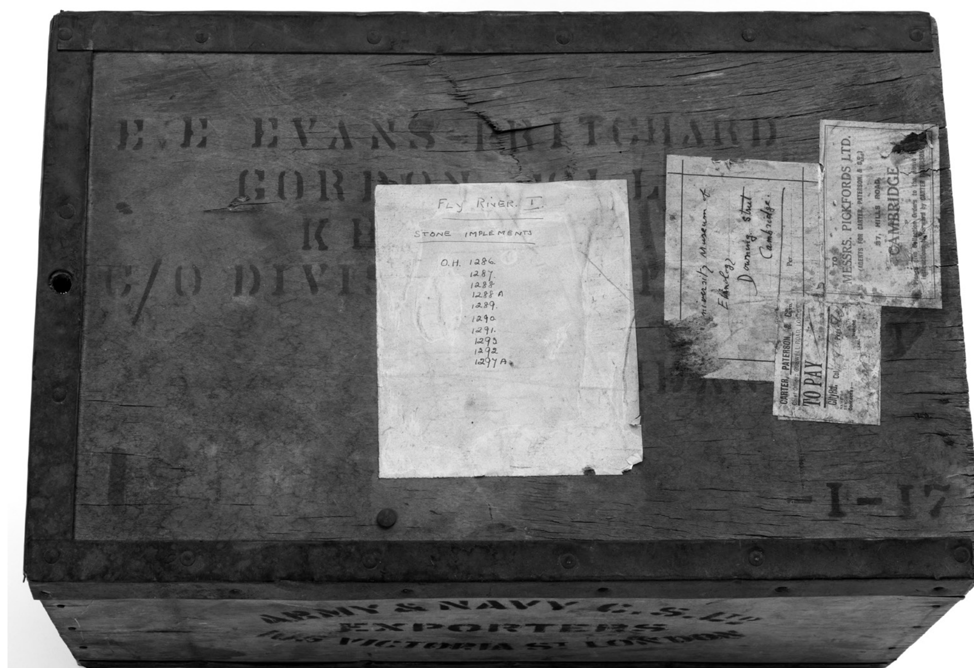

Figure 20.6 Fly River Expedition note affixed to lid of Evans-Pritchard's supply case. Reproduced by permission of University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology (AA5/1/8).

8: …medicine e.g. medicine protect my groundnuts from which, you make my groundnuts flourish, or he may address the groundnut e.g. my groundnuts you flourish if a witch comes to bewitch you may he die, he may address neither but say: May but my groundnuts flourish, may no-one bewitch my groundnuts. If a man comes to bewitch them may he die. A magician often embodies all these moves of speech in even a short spell.

In asking a medicine to act on his behalf a man does not beseech it to do so. He is not entreating it to grant a favour. He tells it what it is to do just as he would tell a boy were, he dispatches him on an errand. Most spells are spoken in a normal matter of fact tone of voice and the medicines (pp. 452)

10: (4,) 'A man goes on a journey and after journeying for some time he sees that rain threatens so he plucks some <u>bingba</u> grass and twists it around into the form of a head-pad and holds it in his hand. He then breaks off a twig of the <u>bambiri</u> tree and holds it in his hand with the grass and with them waves away the rain and continues on his way. <u>Bingba</u> is combined with a spring of <u>bambiri</u> to drive away rain overhead and the rain passes over. It is thus that they use <u>bingba</u> because it is rain medicine.

The rite is said by some people to be a new one. <u>Bingba</u> grass when used in this manner is rain-medicine. Probably the spring of bambiri is also used because this is the tree always employed when addressing the ghosts and the ghosts are often thought to have control over rain (see no. 10), especially at feasts. It is perhaps for the same reason that in no. 3 a magician may sometimes put his whistle near the ghost-shrine (5). 'If a man begins to build his hut and takes the skin of a dig-dig and beats it in the morning then there will be a heavy shower of rain. Therefore, when a man intends to build his hut during the rainy season he hides his dig-dig skin lest someone should beat it near his hut and cause rain to fall and spoil his hut. It is thus that people speak of the skin in relation to rain because the dig-dig attracts rain.' (pp. 473)

10/11 [unclear, strike 1 over the 0]: **'**Beer with the spear' If you go to marry a girl with it, then when you marry the girl she will die, and when people come to drink the beer hernia will attack them.

> 'Oh this is a test between me and you. Oh this is a test between me and you. A test! A test! I have finished with you! I have finished with you! All your sisters will wear a girdle of mourning this year in the house of your death, they will sleep this year as mourners on leaves of <u>dama</u>, on leaves of <u>dama</u> will they sleep.'
>
> (pp. 454, top)

12: [10] You are togo, I put drops of you on eleusine. May not the leaves of my eleusine become lighter coloured. May not my eleusine be like <u>rende</u> (a plant), but may my eleusine be dark-coloured… May not <u>bamangana</u> (a disease (1)[8]) seize my eleusine. May my eleusine grow. Let it not refuse, but may it be fruitful beyond that of all men. It is thus that I put drops of <u>togo</u> on you. May eleusine be very fruitful

8 So called because it resembles the leaves of a plant called bamangana. It seems to be some kind of blight which whitens the leaves of the eleusine.

for me. May it be healthy and have large hands with much grain.'

The magician pinches the plants with some… (pp. 454)

13: the soaked ashes.

He says 'I seize you, my eleusine, with medicine. If a man who has inherited witchcraft from his father comes to take away the fertility of the eleusine with it in the guise of witch-bats, let the bats die in the midst of the eleusine. If a man with bad teeth eats my eleusine let his hand swell. It is on this account that I pinch you with this medicine. Eleusine you increase**. Let but a little be cooked and it becomes a very large amount of porridge. May not be eleusine ~~decrease/decreases~~ fail.

** But a little is harvested and a large basket is filled. (pp. 454–5)

15: omitted in practice though in giving me texts my informants usually inserted one. Also Azande seldom address charms worn about their persons.

When spells are said to such simple medicines and in accompaniment to such simple rites they consist of a few words and perhaps a single sentence as the following four example [sic] show:

// Azande tie gbaga (the fruit of the palm tree) to their waist-ends so that they be very potent sexually and have powerful erections. It is medicine of masculinity, when they tie it to their waist and they say: you are gbaga may I be very potent sexually.

> May I not become ~~impotent~~ sexually weak. May I not become impotent. This charm is figured on page…

// (2) People plant sarawa at the foot of a ghost-shrine. A man plans one of the crops that people plant, such as groundnuts and plucks a leaf of sarawa and walks with it over his and cultivates among the seedlings. He does this at dawn without first

rinsing his mouth (performing his early morning ablutions). He stands… (pp. 455)

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21

Attempted portrait

From cover to context in Evans-Pritchard's Luo photography

Christopher Morton

I recently took up the difficult task of choosing a front-cover image for a book that I had written on Evans-Pritchard's fieldwork and photography (Morton 2020). How to choose an image, I asked myself, that summed up the contents of the book and yet also added something about the approach I was taking. There are many memorable images from E-P's rich photographic archive at the Pitt Rivers Museum, many of which are well known to generations of students from his many publications. Yet as I completed the final chapter of the book, on his 1936 visit to Kenya, and was going through potential figures, one image leapt out at me (Figure 21.1).

At first I saw this image as an oddity, a failed attempt to take a portrait of a man standing on a path. Just at the crucial moment of exposure, the man has seemingly turned around, his attention taken by some people further down the path, one of whom, a woman with a basket on her head, can be seen in the background. If he had been facing the camera as was intended, it would be an unremarkable portrait, one of a considerable number that E-P took of men attached to the Church Missionary Society mission at Maseno. But the longer I looked at the image, which is striking, the more its metaphorical qualities came to the fore, especially when I considered the work that the book cover image was being asked to do. These metaphorical qualities are summed up in the caption that I gave it in the book: 'attempted portrait' – which is, after all, what anthropology tries to do, attempt to create a representation of another society or culture. But these portraits of other societies are always just attempts, done at a certain point in time, when the anthropologist tries to translate one culture in terms that are intelligible to another. The translation of culture was of course how Mary Douglas summed up E-P's anthropological project and in particular his writing style – an attempt to bring the experience of the peoples he studied fully into the everyday intelligibility and recognition of his own culture (Douglas 1980).

'Attempted portrait' is then on one level a failed attempt to establish a portrait, but which is so much more interesting as a result. It resists in its very nature what it is meant to be (a full-face portrait), and yet it is also fully what it is at the same time. A book-cover image is a particular type of visual communication that has complex semiotic work to do, not least within the marketing department of a publishing company, and it was the turning away from the camera that somehow summed the book up, being a study of how photography can lead us to rethink the relationship between E-P's classic textual accounts and their fieldwork contexts as evidenced in fieldwork photographs, whose abundance of information often resists simplistic readings. There are other metaphors at work here too – the often unseen agency of E-P's numerous local collaborators, whose knowledge was both particular to them and shared within their community, whose voices often blended in the ethnography as 'the Nuer say' or 'the Azande say', but whose faces and encounters with the ethnographer become clear when the photographic archive is revealed.

Whilst the rich metaphorical possibilities of this photograph are clear, at the time of its selection the circumstances of creation were entirely unclear to me, and so I here explore them in some detail in order to reveal more of its context as the product of a social encounter, rather than merely an image subject to iconographical and metaphorical readings.

In 1936 E-P was awarded a grant by the Leverhulme Trust to continue his comparative studies of Nilotic groups, and this time he proposed to visit Kenya. However, as with his abortive attempt to study the Oromo in Ethiopia the year before, circumstances changed. His plan was to visit the Masai or Turkana, but the Kenyan government 'considered it unwise' given the difficulties the colonial administration faced in those parts of the country (Evans-Pritchard 1949:1). He decided that a brief survey of the Luo would be a good alternative, especially as there was so little social-anthropological literature about them. It isn't clear exactly when he entered Luo country, but as we know that his subsequent visit to the Nuer in South Sudan took place in October/November of that year, we can assume that his visit took place before this, possibly around August/September.

The question of how closely the Luo fitted into E-P's developing theory of a wider Nilotic socio-political 'system', or whether he unsurprisingly found corroborating evidence

Figure 21.1 *Attempted portrait of a Luo man near Gangu village, Siaya county, Nyanza, Kenya, 1936. Courtesy Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (1998.349.245.1).*

Figure 21.2 *Woman carrying a basket on her head, near Gangu village, Siaya county, Nyanza, Kenya, 1936. Courtesy Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (1998.349.243.1).*

Figure 21.3 *Group with baskets on a path near Gangu village, Siaya county, Nyanza, Kenya, 1936. Courtesy Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (1998.349.17.1).*

Figure 21.4 *Women with baskets on a path near Gangu village, Siaya county, Nyanza, Kenya, 1936. Courtesy Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (1998.349.147.1).*

Figure 21.5 Woman wearing ligisa head dress on a path between fields of sorghum near Gangu village, Siaya county, Nyanza, Kenya, 1936. Courtesy Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (1998.349.230.1).

Figure 21.6 Group on a path between fields of sorghum near Gangu village, Siaya county, Nyanza, Kenya, 1936. Courtesy Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (1998.349.239.1).

that it did fit, has been the subject of some debate since. Given that illness kept his visit short, to around six weeks, and that he was restricted to interviewing, in English, mainly Luo mission converts as well as relying heavily on a Church Missionary Society archdeacon Walter E. Owen (1879–1945) to guide him, it is hardly surprising, and fully acknowledged by E-P himself, that his data were 'sketchy' and 'superficial' (Evans-Pritchard 1949:16). As an intelligent and eloquent critic of the Kenyan administration, with deep interests in African society and culture, Owen was an obvious choice as guide for any visiting scholar. Shortly before E-P's visit, Owen had shown the archaeologist Louis Leakey around an archaeological site at the Kisumu tennis club. The combination of cultural interests and extensive Luo contacts made Owen stand out as someone 'who knew the Luo better than anyone has known them' (Evans-Pritchard 1949:1). As he notes, his survey was made possible 'largely out of regard for the Archdeacon and Mrs Owen' (Evans-Pritchard 1949:1), and as I have argued recently the photographs that E-P had taken on this visit to Luoland need to be understood both as an anthropologist's visual record and as a record of local responses to an influential and respected local missionary (Morton 2020:196–223).

At some point during his visit, Owen took E-P to Gangu village, in Siaya county of Nyanza, and it is here that the 'attempted portrait' photograph was taken. Although the negative was uncaptioned by E-P himself in his documentation, we know from other images that have the same background location that it was taken near this village. The unnamed man looks backwards over his shoulder towards a woman in the distance with a basket on her head, leaning on a stick. In one of the related images (Figure 21.2) a woman walks towards the camera with a basket on her head, and to the right, standing in the distance, is the same woman who the man in 'attempted portrait' was turning back to look at. Standing in the same position, E-P takes another image (Figure 21.3) as more women with baskets, a boy and a man walk towards him. Elsewhere on this same path, some of these same women appear in another image (Figure 21.4), which has a different feel to it, with two of the women standing quite stiffly, just off the path. Their awkwardness suggests discomfort with being photographed. Perhaps walking further into the fields, E-P encounters two women on a path between fields of sorghum, as a man and others behind him walk towards them. Possibly intrigued by the woman's headdress (known in dhoLuo as *ligisa*, worn by married women), he takes a photograph of her (Figure 21.5). The man and the other women walking down the path having now reached them, the arm of a European reaches into the frame towards the man as E-P takes another exposure (Figure 21.6). In another photograph taken at the same time (Figure 21.7), we now see who the European arm belonged to, Walter Owen, with a cigarette on the go in his left hand, and the other gesturing out of frame to the left. Perhaps the arm gestures were intended to encourage the man to move out of the view of

Figure 21.7 Archdeacon Walter Owen with a group on a path between fields of sorghum near Gangu village, Siaya county, Nyanza, Kenya, 1936. Courtesy Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (1998.349.25.1).

Figure 21.8 Portrait of a woman wearing ligisa head dress on a path between fields of sorghum near Gangu village, Siaya county, Nyanza, Kenya, 1936. Courtesy Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (1998.349.81.1).

the camera so that E-P could photograph the women. In any case, the women seemingly find the situation amusing. Owen spoke dhoLuo and was well known and respected locally as a missionary who often took up Luo welfare issues, to the consternation of colonial officials. 'As far as I can gather,' wrote Dobbs as Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza in 1929, 'he does little or no mission work, but rushes round the country, trying to catch the wretched administrative officers out in some illegal act.' (Murray 1982:659). One of the issues that Owen took up with the administration was forced labour. Communal forced labour was an integral part of colonial rule in Nyanza, being essentially unpaid coerced labour for state purposes (Okia 2004:37). Owen's moral outrage at the practice shocked audiences in England in 1938, when he told several congregations that 'certain features of British Administration in Kenya are but the modern expression of the desire to exploit for profit which gave rise to slavery' (Murray 1982:660). The relaxed social interaction between Owen and the Luo on the path in Figure 21.7 is an interesting insight into the local relations of one of the most interesting late colonial figures in Africa.

In the final image taken near Gangu village, E-P manages to negotiate a full-face portrait of the woman wearing the *ligisa* headdress, pipe in mouth (Figure 21.8). The low angle of the portrait (as well as the negative formats of his Luo photographs) shows that E-P was using the Rolleiflex camera that he bought in the early 1930s. With this camera, the operator looks down into a ground-glass viewing screen to frame the image, rather than directly through a viewfinder at the subject of the image. This is quite a different type of social interaction than the standard viewfinder interaction; the woman looks directly into the camera where the anthropologist engages with her as an image on glass rather than face to face, before taking the exposure.

Yet throughout this series of images, the one person that really stands out is the one person who appears to be doing everything possible to avoid the European anthropologist and his camera, and that is the woman seen keeping her distance in 'attempted portrait', the woman who the man is looking back towards. In the series of images taken during the encounter on the path between sorghum fields, this woman keeps out of view, hiding behind the woman wearing the *ligisa* head dress. And when the rest of the group are photographed walking towards the camera down the path through the fields, she stands in the distance, with her basket and its woven basketry cover on her head, leaning on her long stick. Perhaps people are calling to her in the 'attempted portrait' image. Perhaps the woman's suspicion of the European visitor, leading her to keep her distance, has been mentioned to this man who was to be the subject of the ethnographer's photograph, and he turns to look at her. We cannot know for sure, but her presence – and yet non-presence – in most of the Gangu images is notable. Taken together, the images are circumstantial evidence that the woman was reluctant to be near the

European men visiting the village or to be photographed by them. The immediate context of 'attempted portrait' can now be seen in a new light, not just as the attempted portrait of a man, but in his turning away from the camera towards this woman she becomes the central subject, and he the supporting character, reflecting her refusal to be represented by the anthropologist in his own hidden face.

This short case study highlights the importance of a relational approach, in which photographs that have an archival 'kinship' are brought together in analysis to explore the social context of their production. The question of E-P's photographic intentionality in relation to this set of photographs is not straightforward; few captions exist that would be suggestive, and so we are left to infer intention from the subject matter, framing and relationships between images. The similarity between some of the images is suggestive of opportunist snapshot photography, taking further images of a subject if the opportunity for a better view presents itself, such as of the woman wearing the *ligisa* headdress, and of the women carrying baskets. As Elizabeth Edwards has argued, 'intention, meshed with the evidential, articulates a meaning to be communicated. However, inscription outlives intention by the very nature of the photograph, and thus we have the beginning of a refiguration.' (Edwards 2001:89). A refiguration of the Luo photograph that I have called 'attempted portrait' is exactly what I have undertaken in this essay: the photograph's indexical qualities (the image content) transcend in many ways E-P's intention, whatever that may have been, in setting up the original exposure, enabling alternative readings and tantalizing narratives about its social contexts to emerge. 'Attempted portrait' reflects the fugitive nature of anthropology's subject, the representation of social phenomena from one cultural context to another. Yet in another sense it also represents fully the alternative narrative of local non-responses to the anthropological lens, the distant figures who chose not to approach, to remain just out of sight of colonial scrutiny and its technologies of visual appropriation.

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22

E.E. Evans-Pritchard

A Japanese Perspective

Eisei Kurimoto

The position of Evans-Pritchard in anthropology in Japan

Today the names of Evans-Pritchard (E-P), the Nuer and Azande (Zande) are familiar to Japanese students who study social/cultural anthropology. They are mentioned in many introductory textbooks and lectures. E-P's main ethnographies, namely ヌアー族 *Nuāzoku* [*The Nuer*] (1978), ヌアー族の宗教 *Nuāzoku no shūkyō* [*Nuer Religion*] (1982) and ヌアー族の親族と結婚 *Nuāzoku no shinzoku to kekkon* [*Kinship and Marriage among the Nuer*] (1985), and usually called the 'Nuer trilogy', and アザンデ人の世界——妖術・託宣・呪術 *Azandejin no sekai: yōjutsu takusen jujutsu* [*Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*] (2001) are translated in Japanese, and are recognized as 'classics' of modern anthropology that one must know. This recognition is a result of a long historical process, which will be reviewed below. Then I will discuss how the anthropology of E-P has influenced Japanese anthropologists, in particular, in the shaping of an ethnographic writing tradition, by focusing on my own personal experience.

The first E-P's book translated into Japanese was *Social Anthropology* (1951a). It was translated as 社会人類学 *Shakaijinruigaku* by Monkichi Namba (1897–1979), and published in 1957. Namba is a sociologist who studied under Franklin H. Giddings at Columbia University during the pre-War era and was professor at Doshisha University in Kyoto at the time. According to the translator's preface, he came to know this book during his stay as research fellow at Department of Social Relations of Harvard University between 1951 and 1952.[1] He also had a keen interest in social/cultural anthropology, had published *Cultural Sociology and Cultural Anthropology* in 1948, and attended Clyde Kluckhohn's seminar at Harvard. He found this 'new' publication an excellent introductory book and thought it would be useful if translated for Japanese students. Namba also met E-P at Oxford, presumably in 1955 or 1956, and this resulted in E-P contributing a short foreword to the Japanese translation of his book.

Anthropological studies in Japan started in the 1880s when 東京人類学会 'The Anthropological Society of Tokyo' was established. Academically, it was a mixture of physical anthropology, archeology and ethnology. In 1934 日本民族学会 'The Japanese Society of Ethnology' was organized and has remained the national association of ethnologists and social/cultural anthropologists. It changed its name to 日本文化人類学会 'The Japanese Society of Cultural Anthropology' in 2004. Nevertheless, it was only in the 1950s that undergraduate and graduate courses in social/cultural anthropology were set up, first at Tokyo Metropolitan University, then at the University of Tokyo, and that students majoring social/cultural anthropology appeared. At the time introductory textbooks in anthropology were few, and E-P's 社会人類学 *Shakaijinruigaku* [*Social Anthropology*] (1957) would have been useful for students.

The second book that was translated to Japanese was *Theories of Primitive Religion* (1965), published in 1967 as 宗教人類学の基礎理論 *Shukyojinruigaku no Kisoriron* ('Basic Theory of Religious Anthropology'). It was translated by Kokan Sasaki and Motoyoshi Omori, both of whom are anthropologists. In 1970, Teigo Yoshida (1923–2018), one of Japan's leading anthropologists, compiled E-P's 'Social anthropology: past and present' (1950a) and *The Institutions of Primitive Society: A Series of Broadcast Talks* (Evans-Pritchard *et al.* 1954). It was translated and published as *Jinruigakunyūmon* [*Introduction to Anthropology*] (1970). Then in 1972, *African Political Systems* (1940), co-edited by M. Fortes and E-P, was translated and published as アフリカの伝統的政治体系 *Afurika no Dentotekiseijitaikei*, 'The Traditional Political Systems in Africa'.

It was not until the publication of 'the Nuer trilogy' that the work of E-P became truly appreciated by students of anthropology in Japan. ヌアー族 *Nuāzoku* [*The Nuer*], ヌアー族の宗教 *Nuāzoku no shūkyō* [*Nuer Religion*], and ヌアー族の親族と結婚 *Nuāzoku no shinzoku to kekkon* [*Kinship and Marriage among the Nuer*] were published, respectively

1 At the time Japan was still under the American military occupation. It regained the status of sovereign state in April 1952.

in 1978, 1982, and 1985.[2] The translator was Motoko Mukai, who studied cultural anthropology at the University of Tokyo. *Kinship and Marriage* (1951b) was jointly translated by Mukai and Nobuhiro Nagashima (1937–). Nagashima contributed an eighteen-page afterword commentary to the Japanese edition of *The Nuer*, which provides a picture of E-P's life and works. He puts an emphasis, while quoting Dumont (1975) and Pocock (1975), on 'the transition from function to meaning'. It is one of the first in-depth introductions to E-P in Japanese.

Nagashima studied social anthropology at Oxford between 1965 and 1967 under the supervision of Rodney Needham (Nagashima 1966). As his research interest became focused on the Nilo-Hamitic (para-Nilotic) peoples, and with a suggestion of P.H. Gulliver, he chose the Teso of Uganda as his research subject. Then Needham advised him to study under the supervision of Jean Buxton (Nagashima 1972:46–7). Nagashima took off to Uganda in 1968 and started a two-year fieldwork among the Teso. He has been an influential anthropologist in Japan since the 1960s, and is particularly known by his two seminal ethnographies (Nahashima 1972, 1987), one on the Ugandan Teso, and the other on the Kenyan Teso, and also as a sharp critic with a 'bitter tongue'. He played a pivotal role in introducing British social anthropology at Oxford to the Japanese academia, and in connecting the two (Goodman 2007).[3] Nagashima also translated, together with Yoshio Masuda, Lienhardt's *Social Anthropology* (1964) as 社会人類学 *Shakaijinruigaku* in 1967.

In 1985 a three-volume series, *Portraits of Cultural Anthropologists*, edited by Tsuneo Ayabe, was published, and E-P was one of some seventy world anthropologists chosen for the series. Motomitsu Uchibori contributed the article on E-P. First, he praised E-P's unrivalled quality as fieldworker, and second, argues that his outstanding contribution to anthropology lies in the departure from the Radcliffe-Brown's style structural-functionalism, putting an emphasis on social anthropology as a discipline of humanities, and in demonstrating the essential importance of writing ethnography (Uchibori 1985). Finally, the Japanese translation of *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (1937) was published in 2001 as *Azandejin no Sekai: Yojutu, Takusen, Jujutsu*, 'The World of the Azande: Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic'. It was translated by Motoko Mukai. In addition, the translation of *Divinity and Experience: The Religion of the Dinka* (Lienhardt 1961) was published just recently in 2019. Now Japanese readers can read it in comparison with *Nuer Religion*.

During the 1970s and 1980s anthropology was emerging as a popular subject in Japan. Many articles and books were published by Japanese scholars. As a matter of fact, Claude Lévi-Strauss and his style of structuralism was at the centre of interest, not only among the anthropological circle, but far beyond. Works by some British social anthropologists such as Edmund Leach, Mary Douglas and Victor Turner were also popular and their writings were widely read at that time. They were appraised in the context of structural and symbolic anthropology that was a novelty and considered to address a general theory on human culture. I would like to argue that E-P's works were read in a very different way. They were neither addressing a general theory nor being appraised by literary critics. They were not flashy and flamboyant. One may feel that they seem to be endless and boring ethnographic descriptions, with too many details, about Others have little to do with We, and anthropological theory. Nevertheless, ethnography is not a mere description of what 'they' do and say, and what the ethnographer sees and hears. Without a theoretical framework, be it overt or covert, it is not possible to conduct fieldwork, nor to write up an ethnography. A careful and sensitive reader may find, thus, a variety of theoretical issues that are interwoven in the ethnographic texts. I would like to argue that this is how E-P's ethnographic texts were and are read in Japan and elsewhere. Included in the theoretical issues are rationality, causation of misfortunes, maintenance of law and order, statehood and statelessness, intra- and inter-community violence, kinship and marriage, sacrifice, notions of spirit/Spirit or god/God, and so on.

The Nuer and Anuak ethnography and my own research

I first read *The Nuer* in 1977 in an informal seminar organized by Katsuyoshi Fukui (1943–2008), who was an associate professor of the National Museum of Ethnology at the time. Those who joined the seminar were undergraduate students of Kyoto University and members of the Explorers Club of Kyoto University.[4] Kenji Yoshida, Masayoshi Shigeta[5] and myself were among the members. We had a vague idea of 'going to Africa'. Fukui was an ex-member of the club and we went to see him, seeking for advice, as he had already

2 *Nuer Religion* and *The Nuer* are reprinted by Heibonsha as pocket size paperback, respectively in 1995 and 1997.

3 See also, 'Nobuhiro Nagashima, Chronology and List of Publications,' in アリーナ *Arīna* [*Arena*]*2007*, pp. 403-410. This book is published by the Institute of International Human Studies, of which Nagashima was the director. *Arena 2007* is a special edition dedicated on the retirement of Nagashima that contains a number of articles by those who had associations with him in one way or another. Roger Goodman's essay is one of them.

4 The Club was established in 1956 as the first student explorer's club in Japan. It was an offshoot of the Alpinist Club of Kyoto University.

5 Kenji Yoshida is now Director-General of the National Museum of Ethnology and Masayoshi Shigeta was Dean of the Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies (ASAFAS), Kyoto University.

had rich experience of fieldwork both in Tanzania and Ethiopia. Instead of giving us the sort of advice that we wanted, he suggested that we should read books of African ethnography. We agreed. That was how it began. The first book we read was *The Murle* by B.A. Lewis (1972). The foreword of the book is written by Evans-Pritchard. Then the second one was *The Nuer*. At the time we had never read an academic book in English, and in the beginning it took a lot of effort to read, page by page, and understand the unfamiliar world of the peoples of the Sudan.

During the 1960s and 1970s anthropology and African studies were emerging subjects in Kyoto University. Kinji Imanishi (1902–92), an explorer, biologist, primatologist and anthropologist, was the founder and organizer of this new tradition. However, there was no department of social/cultural anthropology at the time, where students could be trained in that discipline, Therefore, original researchers and students who became interested in anthropology and African studies came from quite a mixture of disciplines: geography, archaeology, sociology, psychology, ecology, zoology, botany, primatology, physical anthropology, human evolution studies, and so on. In the 1960s an informal weekly seminar, 'Konoe Rondo', started by Tadao Umesao (1920–2010), a disciple of Imanish, and later the founding Director-General of the National Museum of Ethnology. Konoe Rondo became a focal point for the network of researchers and students who were interested in anthropology, with a very vibrant, free and open atmosphere, and a special emphasis on 'going to the field and doing fieldwork'. It was radically different from the existing conventional departments in the university. These were the circumstances in which we were raised up, and through this network we came to be acquainted with Fukui.

At the time Katsuyoshi Fukui was still in his early 30s, a young associate professor at the newly opened National Museum of Ethnology, and academically quite energetic and active, with a specific interest in pastoral peoples in East Africa. In September 1977, he organized the first international symposium at the museum, 'Warfare among East African Herders', the result of which was published in the following year, and is now considered a 'classic' in the anthropological studies in warfare (Fukui and Turton 1978). Yoshida, Shigeta and myself also participated in the symposium, which was a great opportunity, and I personally became acquainted with David Turton and his wife, Pat. Turton was to become one of my academic mentors.

In 1978 Yoshida, Shigeta and I organized the 'Kyoto University Upper Nile Expedition' and we set off for the Sudan (Kurimoto 1996; Yoshida 2016). Based in Juba, and with the association of the University of Juba and the Regional Ministry of Culture and Information, we had a plan to conduct anthropological fieldwork, at different locations in the Equatoria Province of the Southern Sudan. I had an interest in pastoral peoples, while Shigeta's interest was agriculture and ethnobotany, and Yoshida was interested in 'primitive art' and material culture. What we had in hand at the time as the main references were *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan* (Seligman and Seligman 1932) and *A Tribal Survey of Mongalla Province* (Nalder 1937). Given this, combined with the name of our team 'expedition' and members of the 'explorers club', our setting was unusually 'colonial'.

In the beginning I chose the Toposa, a 'Nilo-Hamitic' (now called Eastern Nilotic) pastoral people. I had to give up this idea because of logistic and transport difficulties, and instead chose the Lokoro (Pari). At the time I had no information about them. I did not even know their name. I just found them in the 'tribal map' of *A Tribal Survey of Mongalla Province*. It was Kast Olema Daniel, an officer of the Ministry of Culture and Information, who suggested to us that they are a unique and interesting people. They live at the foot of Lafon Hill (Jebel Lafon) in Torit District. When we visited the place as part of extensive survey of the region, I thought the people were fascinating. Each of the six villages surrounding the hill was huge, condensed with hundreds of homesteads. The view from the top of the hill was spectacular. Beneath your eyes you could see six villages. When you looked up, to the south you could see mountains and hills where Lopit, Lotuho, Lokoya and other peoples resided, and to the north vast uninhabited plains stretched up to Upper Nile Province. They are a Nilotic people (to be exact, they speak a Luo language of Western Nilotic), like the Nuer, and there are large herds of cattle. That is how I chose the place and people, and I went back to live there for two months.

Based on the assumption that cattle are the essential medium, social, cultural, economic and religious, I conducted research in a cattle camp, located in the bush outside the village. I visited the camp every morning and made a complete register of some 200 cattle in it. For each and every cattle, I recorded the colour-pattern name, sex and growth stage, from where and how it came, mother-children relations etc. An important visible sign was an ear-cut. When a calf is born, the owner cuts some parts of both ears. Each clan has its own cuttings. Therefore, one can tell, by looking at ear-cuts of the cattle, where he or she was born. Usually a cattle herd owned by one person is quite a mixture, although the cattle of his own clan will be many, there are also other cattle with various ear-cuts.

The idea of the research was not of my origination. It was modelled on the preceded studies by Morimichi Tomikawa (and Tadao Umesao) in the early 1960s on cattle herds among the Datoga in Tanzania (Tomikawa 1972; Umesao 1966). In the case of Datoga, it was brands on the body, not ear-cuts, that signified the clan identity of owners. I thought it was one thing to say that cattle are an essential medium for social relations among East African pastoralists, and another to verify it based on empirical research, and

put an importance on the latter. Anyway, I completed my research project, and its results were published as one of my first academic papers (Kurimoto 1981).

During the preliminary fieldwork among the Pari, I soon realized that the Pari are not the Nuer. Although they are a Nilotic people, they are not 'a pastoral people' in E-P's sense. They do raise cattle, sheep and goats, and it is undoubted that cattle are important media, socially, economically and ritually. But there are important differences between the Pari and the Nuer. First, among the Pari, although they seemed to have a lot of cattle, their population in relation to the human population is rather small. So, in daily diet, milk and its products occupy a minor position. Secondly, I soon found there is no 'personal' or 'favourite' oxen with whom young men identify, a cultural practice that is ethnographically well known among East African pastoralists. Young men sing songs, not about their favourite oxen, but about their bravery and achievements in hunting expeditions. They take pride not in their oxen but in the numbers of 'big animals', that is elephants, buffaloes, lions and leopards[6] that they spear. E-P writes: 'Men are frequently addressed by names that refer to the form and colour of their favourite oxen, and women take names from oxen and from cows they milk. Even small boys call one another by ox-names when playing together in the pastures…' (1940a:18); 'names of cattle, especially oxen, and ox-names of men are used profusely in songs' (ibid.:46). It is simply not the case among the Pari. Nuer children play with 'cattle kraal games'. 'They build byres of sand in camps and of moistened ashes or mud in villages, and fill the toy kraals with fine mud cows and oxen, with which they play at herding and marriage.' (38). Instead, Pari boys make fine mud elephants and buffaloes, surround them, with toy stick-spears in hand, and throw them at the animals, competing for how many they spear.

In the beginning, to find that – as far as the cattle and pastoralism are concerned – the Pari are very different from the Nuer was a disappointment, to be honest,. But soon, I came to think that the differences themselves were interesting research topics to be explored, and what I should pursue is what seems to be important for people's daily life. In the initial stage of my fieldwork what I thought important were such topics like hunting and age sets.

It was after the initial preliminary research that I came to know what E-P wrote about the Pari. In 'Nilotic studies' he says: 'Far to the south-west of Anuakland, on Gebel Lafon, about 40 miles almost due east of Mongalla, live there small, but very interesting communities, numbering about 6,000, who are said to speak a dialect of Anuak, though Father Crazzolara would appear to regard their speech as a different language.' (1950b:14). 'They are known as Pari or Föri. We have only the barest ethnological references to them.' (ibid.:3). In 'The Sudan: an ethnographic survey', he argues,

> Surveying the whole field of Nilotic studies and the ethnological problems they raise, I would say that the study pay the highest dividend would be that of the Pari, a small people speaking a dialect of Anuak, for a knowledge of their culture and social organization, besides being valuable in in itself, might answer what seem at present to be unanswerable questions about the Anuak, the Shilluk, the Mandari, and other peoples of the region.
>
> (1960:337)

At the end of this essay, he suggests ten peoples as subjects of future research. The Pari are listed as nomber one, although he says, 'what may seem to be, but is not entirely, an arbitrary order' (ibid.:340)[7]. Of course, these comments by E-P were a great encouragement to myself, although I am not certain, even after more than forty years since I first visited the Päri, to what extent I have found answers to 'unanswerable questions'.

After the preliminary fieldwork for two months among the Pari in 1978–9, I went back there to continue in 1982, after having completed a BA and MA in sociology, as a Ph.D. student. Then I came to know Wendy James and Douglas H. Johnson personally. At the time, Johnson was working at the Southern Records Office as assistant director under the Regional Ministry of Information and Culture, and James accompanied him with two small children. They were very kind to me, and I used to visit their home and talk about different issues: my own research, their research, the political, social and historical situation of the Sudan, and so on. I appreciated this association that has continued until today, and for me it also provided a way to learn about E-P.

As the Sudan's civil war intensified, the Pariland also became a war zone, and I had to evacuate in 1986. Thus fieldwork among the Pari discontinued. Many Pari young men joined the rebel army, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). In 1993 the entire six villages were burnt down as a result of the inter-factional war of the SPLA (Kurimoto 1996). In the meantime, I continued writing ethnographic articles on the Pari, and E-P's works remained the main reference (Kurimoto 1984, 1986, 1988, 1992a). I believe that, at least partly, I tried to answer a few of the 'unanswerable questions' in my articles. One was on the issue of age system that occupies the last chapter of *The Nuer* (1940a). While the whole book, except for the last chapter, has a clear and coherent structure, the

6 Until recently rhinos were included.

7 Those 10 peoples in the list are as follows: (1) the Päri, (2) the Ingassana, (3) the Bor, (4) the Didinga, (5) the Atwot, (6) one of the so-called 'Jur' peoples, (7) the Shilluk, (8) one of the peoples of the Nuba Mountains, (9) the Basiri, and (10) one of the Burun peoples.

chapter on age system is rather uncomfortably located in the book's structure. The collection of papers on the age systems, which I co-edited with my long-term friend and co-researcher Simon Simonse (Kurimoto and Simonse 1998), tried to answer this puzzle. This book also offers an answer as to why the Pari are not a 'typical' Nilotic people. The issue of 'wild cucumbers' and its substitution of oxen as sacrificial victim, dealt with in *Nuer Religion* (1956), is shed in a new light based on the Pari ethnographic data (Kurimoto 1992a).

In the course of time, my own research interest also changed. As the people were deeply affected by and also involved with the civil war in the Sudan, such issues like war, ethnic conflict, displacement, refugee issues and humanitarian intervention emerged as new topics as they became people's own everyday issues.

In 1988, as the war in the Sudan was continuing, and there seemed to be little hope to go back to Pariland, I decided instead to start new fieldwork among the Anuak (Anywaa) in the Gambella region of western Ethiopia. The Pari and the Anuak have very close linguistic and historical ties, which are recognized by both, and the shift of my fieldwork brought me even closer to the works of E-P.

E-P conducted fieldwork twice in Anuakland, the first in 1935 for two and a half months (Evans-Pritchard 1940b:3), and the second in 1940 for some months. (Evans-Pritchard 1950b:3, 1973). It is notable that both are very far from the conventional style of anthropological fieldwork. He was on the move, not staying at one place. During the first one, 'much time was spent in actual trekking, between 400 and 500 miles being covered on foot' (Evans-Pritchard 1940b:3). The second one was even more extraordinary. He was there, not to conduct research, but as an army officer commanding Anuak irregulars. In fact, he was waging guerrilla warfare against the Italian troops. The Anuak have two distinct hereditary political leaders: one is 'noble' (*nyeya*) and the other is 'village headman' (*kwaaro*). The first fieldwork was focused on the nobles (1940b), while the second fieldwork provided him opportunities to observe the system of village headmen on the Ethiopian side of Anuakland (1947). After E-P, Godfrey Lienhardt also conducted fieldwork among them for a considerable period of time in the 1950s (Lienhardt 1957, 1958, 1962).

Unlike my preliminary fieldwork among the Pari in 1978–9, I was well prepared for the commencement of fieldwork in Gambella. I had carefully read E-P's work (and that of Godfrey Lienhardt) on the Anuak, and took it to the field. I had also read basic literature on the modern history of Ethiopia. Another advantage was that I could speak and understand the Anuak language from the beginning, as it is so close to Pari language.

Given the nature of E-P's fieldwork, for me, it was a big surprise to realize how accurate and deep his ethnographic details were. In fact, they were already historical records, demonstrating how things used to be in the past, as the two political systems, that is, that of *nyieye* (nobles) and that of *kwaari* (village headmen) were banned by the socialist regime of Ethiopia in the 1970s, and completely disappeared among the Anuak on the Ethiopian side. Anything else considered to be 'feudal' or 'anti-revolutionary' was abolished, including the payment of *dimui,* special blue grass beads, as bride wealth, and the office of 'father of the land' (*wa-ngommi*) (Kurimoto 1996).

In August of 2019, I had an opportunity to conduct research at the Pitt Rivers Museum on the files of E-P, Lienhardt and Jean Buxton.[8] There I read the 'Anuak grammar' written by E-P.[9] It is both typed and handwritten 130-page-text, and I was quite impressed by the extensive and accurate knowledge E-P had both in vocabulary and grammar. The text was prepared at the Akobo Post in 1940, before he set out for a military operation, and apparently he took it with him during the operation, so that handwritten parts could be added in the field. Until then I thought that, given the nature and duration of his fieldwork among the Anuak, E-P's ability in Anuak language would be rather superficial, compared to his ability in Azande, and also in Nuer. Having read 'Anuak grammar' I have had to change my understanding. At least during his second fieldwork it seems probable that he could adequately communicate in Anuak. It was important and a matter of life and death, that as he was alone with the Anuak irregulars during the operation, and they spoke only Anuak, that E-P, as commanding officer, could adequately communicate with his men. The need for him was much more than that of an anthropologist doing fieldwork.[10]

I continued fieldwork among the Anuak in Ethiopia intermittently until 1999. It was certain that the works by E-P and Lienhardt gave me a much better starting point. For me, they have remained invaluable sources that I refer to again and again, time after time (Kurimoto 1992b, 1996, 1997, 2002).

When I started fieldwork, I soon realized that E-P was remembered very well by Anuak elders. Although he was not remembered as 'E.E. Evans-Pritchard the 'anthropologist', but as 'Udier', which is an Anuak name given to him, a tough British army officer who could speak their language, walk in the bush and fight for months.

In 1990, I visited a noble (*nyeya*) at his home for an interview. At the time I had been interviewing a number of elders to collect oral traditions on history and myth (Kurimoto 1992b). Many of them were former nobles and village headmen (*kwaaro*, pl. *kwaari*). After the deposition

8 I am grateful for the generous assistance of Dr Christopher Morton.

9 E-P Papers, 1/8/46, 'Anuak Grammar', Pitt Rivers Museum.

10 Lienhardt also tried to compile an 'Anuak-English, English-Anuak Dictionary': Lienhardt Papers 3/3, Pitt Rivers Museum.

of nobles, he was staying simply as a village old man, but the fact that he still was given respect and dignity was obvious from the attitude of other village men surrounding him. To my great surprise, he was one of the Anuak irregulars who had been commanded by E-P during the war against the Italians in 1940 and 1941. He said, 'Last night I had a dream of you. Are you a son of Udier?' I said, 'No, I'm not his son. But I know of him and I read his books, although I have never met him. He passed away some 20 years ago.' For the Anuak, an East Asian like me is also categorized as a 'White man'. The news of my coming, a 'White man' speaking their language, walking and eating with them, like E-P did, awakened his memory of 'Udier' of 50 years ago. And we know that for Nilotic peoples dreams are not simply dreams but 'real' experience. This is how I am connected to E-P in Anuak thought.

Although the works of E-P are not theoretically flamboyant, his influence among the Japanese anthropologists, I would like to argue, has been persistent. The influence is particularly evident for those seriously engaged with 'doing fieldwork and writing ethnography'. This issue revolves around that of 'translation of cultures'. For Japanese anthropologists doing fieldwork among a people whose mother language is not Japanese, and writing ethnography not only in Japanese, but also in English and other languages such as Chinese, Spanish, French and Russian, the issue of 'translation of cultures' is extremely multiple and complex, and E-P remains as an important source of inspiration.

Let me give one illustrating example of E-P's influence among Japanese anthropologists. Akira Okazaki conducted fieldwork among the Gamk (Ingassana) in the 1980s in the Southern Blue Nile region of the Sudan. The Ingassana are the people that E-P listed in 'The Sudan: an ethnographic survey' (1960) as number two (after the Pari) of ten peoples that need to be studied. Okazaki later had the honour of delivering the first E-P Lecture at All Souls College, University of Oxford in 1999. The title of the lecture was 'Recapturing the shadow: dream consciousness and power in the borderland between North and South Sudan'. His Ph.D. student at Hitotsubashi University, Eri Hashimoto, conducted fieldwork among the Nuer in South Sudan between 2008 and 2013. Her dissertation was published in 2018 as *E Kwoth*, and analyses the dynamic process of endurance and change in the interpretations of prophecies in the complex contexts of war and post-war periods. This book was given various awards by the Japanese Society of Cultural Anthropology, the Japanese Association of African Studies, the Japan Association for the Nilo-Ethiopian Studies, and so on.

Finally, I have one last comment. I often wonder what E-P would say if he were alive. I mean, if he should witness the great changes and upheavals, such as revolutions, civil wars, displacements, refugees, humanitarian interventions and so on, that peoples both in Ethiopia and the Sudan had to go through after his death in 1972. If he sees that now South Sudan is an independent sovereign state with a Dinka President and a Nuer Vice-President, and the new country sliding into a bloody civil war soon after the independence, in which politicians, generals and warlords of Dinka, Nuer, Shilluk and other peoples would be held accountable, what would be his reaction? Would he only heave a deep sigh and shake his head, or become excited and say, 'Yes, they are the very topics that we, the anthropologists, should now tackle'?

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PART V

Contemporary relevance in Africa

E-P on the veranda in Cairo, Egypt, around 1932. Print supplied by Bruce Ross-Smith.

INTRODUCTION TO PART V

E.E. Evans-Pritchard

Perspectives on his contemporary relevance in Africa

Tim Allen

The chapters collected in this section are mostly written by people from the areas in which Evans-Pritchard carried out his ethnographic fieldwork. Elizabeth Ngutuku and Auma Okwany discuss their experiences as 'native' researchers with reference to Evans-Pritchard's representations of the Luo and other Africans. The chapter by Leben Nelson Moro, and the chapter presenting the views of John Gai Yoh, Melha Ruot Biel and Kim Jal Lieh, drawn together by Naomi Pendle, focus on the Nuer. My chapter, the one by Bruno Braak and John Justin Kenyi and the one by Grace Akello focus on the Azande.

The chapters offer a series of reflections about E-P's legacy in South Sudan and East Africa, rather than a general overview of his relevance in contemporary Africa. Both my chapter and the one by Braak and Kenyi use insights from E-P's work to help interpret recent fieldwork. All the others comment on how he is currently read, interpreted or ignored.

Unsurprisingly, Africans who see themselves as being represented in E-P's publications can find aspects of what he wrote inaccurate or offensive and can be critical or dismissive. That is nothing new.

In 1960 Okot p'Bitek, who was soon to be recognized internationally for his poetry, arrived in Oxford to study anthropology with E-P and his colleagues (Allen 2019). He was a Ugandan Luo speaker, and later recalled enjoying his talks with E-P about Luo dances and sexual practices (p'Bitek 1986:33). However, he was appalled by the terminology and social categorizations to which he was introduced. He objected to the use of the words 'primitive' and 'savage' for Africans, and he viewed the use of the concept of 'tribe' for African groups as being more about European assumptions and prejudices than lived realities in Africa. He had a similar view after reading ethnographic accounts of African religious beliefs and practices, including E-P's *Nuer Religion* (1956). He was not persuaded by efforts to make African religions seem like proto-Abrahamic faiths. By the time p'Bitek ended his connection with Oxford ten years later, his D.Phil. had been referred for changes by E-P, and those changes were not considered sufficient by subsequent examiners. He was refused the right of resubmission, and Okot p'Bitek's D.Phil. thesis sits on the shelf in the Tylor Library in Oxford's Institute for Social and Cultural Anthropology, but it was actually never awarded.

P'Bitek published the text of the D.Phil. a few months after it had effectively been failed as *The Religion of the Central Luo* (1971a), and he also published a book that discussed his experiences in Oxford, *African Religions in Western Scholarship* (1971b). The latter contained many passages in which he expressed his disdain for the approach and theories he was taught. He asserted that the whole discipline of social anthropology was little more than a colonial instrument to ensure effective control and exploitation. He asked:

> Is there a place for social anthropology in an African university? In my opinion the answer is, no. The departments of social anthropology in African universities were campaigning grounds for Western anthropologists. African universities can ill-afford to maintain these bases. Africans have no interests in, and cannot indulge in perpetuating the myth of the 'primitive'.
>
> (p'Bitek 1971b:6).

Elsewhere in the book p'Bitek noted that Ashley Montagu, the American anthropologist who had been much involved in the denouncing of racist theories of human difference since the 1940s, had urged scholars to drop the term 'primitive' as a no longer expedient fiction. Yet, E-P and others persisted in using the label, and for p'Bitek that involved ignoring the realities of the world in which they lived. According to p'Bitek, writing three years or so before E-P died:

> The attainment of political *uhuru* by many African states during the 1950s has swept away the subject of study of many white Africanists; and the plain language which was once used habitually without question in the days of robust self confidence is rapidly becoming diplomatically taboo.
>
> (p'Bitek 1971b: 23)

Okot p'Bitek was by no means the only African exposed to British social anthropology in the colonial era who became defiant. Leading figures in promoting the political uhuru (freedom) that he mentions, Jomo Kenyatta and Kwame Nkrumah, both studied the subject at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). The former wrote *Facing Mount Kenya* (1938) under the supervision of Malinowski at the time E-P was researching among the Nuer. Kenyatta dedicated his book to 'all the dispossessed youth of Africa'. Malinowski was himself an outsider in Britain, and was more openly critical than Evans-Pritchard, his erstwhile pupil and rival, about British rule in Africa. Shortly after working with Kenyatta, Malinowski went so far as to suggest that anthropological analysis of the 'colonial situation' should be focused on recognizing and protecting the rights of Africans against White domination (Malinowski 1938). Malinowski did not live to see his student become president of Kenya, but he and Kenyatta appear to have come to an understanding. That was not the case for Nkrumah.

Nkrumah enrolled to study for a Ph.D. in Social Anthropology in the same LSE department in the 1940s, not long after Malinowski's sudden demise, but he did not impress Audrey Richards in terms of his training and focus. She thought that he was wasting his time, and Nkrumah quickly concluded that he had made the wrong choice. Resisting the analytical lens that he was required to take in the anthropology department and having been closely involved with Kenyatta and others at the Fifth Pan-African Congress held in Manchester in October 1945, Nkrumah asked to start his doctorate again in Political Science. However, he was not allowed to do so, and never completed his thesis (Donnelly 2018). According to Johan Galtung, a huge painting hung in his anteroom after he became Ghana's first head of state, depicting him throwing off the chains of colonialism. Among the terrified white men fleeing him was a diminutive anthropologist clutching a book. It was *African Political Systems* (1940), edited by Meyer Fortes and E-P (Galtung 1967:13; Kuper 2015:64).

Current attitudes towards E-P's work in Africa can be somewhat similar, and it is not surprising that African readers are likely to be less sanguine about E-P's links to colonial agendas, as well as his terminology and analytical notions, than someone from the Global North, myself included.

The first time I read E-P's work was as an undergraduate at Lancaster University in the 1970s. I was asked to read his *Theories of Primitive Religion* (1965) and compare it with Lévi-Strauss's *The Savage Mind* (1962). I was taught that, in different ways, both authors rejected the idea of there being a kind of primitive mentality, both critiqued evolutionary theories of religious beliefs, and both suggested humans have equal capacities. I found the books fascinating, and – bizarrely in retrospect – was not particularly troubled by their titles.

My next encounter was when I was offered a job as a teacher in Sudan in 1980. Looking for books to read, I ended up with a copy of *The Nuer* (1940). I realized when I read it that it had been published forty years before, but other than Holt and Daly's *History of the Sudan* (1979) there did not seem anything more up to date for me to buy. When I arrived at the Ministry of Education in Khartoum, I was invited to choose a location in the country to be posted in, and so I chose somewhere my book on the Nuer might be useful. I ended up being sent to a school in a rural location south of Malakal, where many of the students were Nuer.

I used free time to visit Nuer settlements, and asked lots of probably irritating questions about segmentary opposition. I also visited Nasir (Nasser), where E-P was based for a period. He dedicated *The Nuer* to the staff of the American mission in the town. Kuac Nyoat, who was born nearby, was in his early teens at the time, joining the mission school in around 1936. On conversion to Christianity, he took the name Moses. He became one of the first Nuer Presbyterian pastors, a translator of parts of the Bible into Nuer, and a well-known figure due to a book that had been written about him by an American missionary based in Nasir. He explained to me that Kuac in the Nuer language means 'leopard' and the book about him was called *A Leopard Tamed* (Vandevort 1968).

He proved to be a very interesting informant, and patiently explained to me many aspects of Nuer livelihoods. Much of what he said corresponded with what I had read in *The Nuer*. It seemed the book was perhaps not so out of date, even if people appeared more welcoming and friendly than I had anticipated. However, when Moses became a little exasperated by my endless enquires, he suggested I just read what E-P had written. It turned out that he had his own copy of *The Nuer*, which he proceeded to show me. He had been drawing upon it when responding to my questions, because that is what he thought I wanted to know about. He also had another book by E-P, *Nuer Religion* (1956), which he thought was better in that it resonated with his own spiritual life.

Moses was not the only Christian activist I met in South Sudan in the 1980s who liked *Nuer Religion*. Paradoxically, it was often for the reasons that Okot p'Bitek criticized in Western academic depictions of African religion. As the view of Moses Kuac illustrates, Christian Nuer respond positively to the sympathetic way that E-P describes Nuer beliefs about Kwoth, which he suggested could correspond with ideas about God. It suggests that the Nuer had a sense of the numinous before they were evangelized, and E-P refers explicitly to their 'monotheistic tendency' in his discussion of their prayers and the roles of their prophets (Evans-Pritchard 1956:49).

In contrast, the emphasis that E-P made in *The Nuer* on persistent feuding, combined with cohesion in the face of external threats, can seem unconvincing (or unappealing), in the light of more recent developments, and has also been questioned in relation to the pre-colonial and colonial events. Leban Moro reflects on this in his chapter, commenting on the scale of violence linked to the machinations of politicians and elites, while also noting how kind he has found Nuer people to him as an outsider, and how welcoming they were compared with what he expected after reading E-P. Comparable points are made by the Nuer intellectuals interviewed by Naomi Pendle. However, they also note that E-P made their people famous, even if he was working with British colonial authorities.

The point about E-P making the Nuer famous is interesting in comparison with his work on the Azande. Although it is noted that E-P's books on the Nuer are not generally available in South Sudan (and are now even absent from the library at Juba University), Nuer intellectuals are likely to know that they exist, and will probably have an idea of what sorts of things they describe. In my experience, that is not the case with E-P's Azande work.

When I solicited a chapter for this collection from an Azande academic who works in South Sudan, it became apparent that she had no idea who E-P was, and when I carried out research in Azandeland in 2006, I did not find anyone who knew about *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic* (1937), let alone his other books about the Azande. For those who encounter the book, the analytic focus can be troubling. There are aspects of the ways of life recorded that are not things for which many African people would want to be well known. These points are reflected in the chapter by Grace Akello, who teaches anthropology at Gulu University in northern Uganda, not far from where Okot p'Bitek was born.

Akello was introduced to E-P's *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic* for the first time as a postgraduate in Amsterdam. She was disturbed by what she perceived to be a racist conception of Africans, who were categorized as primitive and obsessed with explaining everything with reference to magic. Although she recognized that the book was making an argument about Azande rationality, she was bemused that anyone might think Azande had child-like mentalities in the first place, and was irritated by the use of the anthropological present, because it suggested that these quintessential Africans had a way of life and thinking that is suspended in time. In the context of his links with the Condominium government, and as military officer during the 1940s, she has decided to set aside his book as unhelpful for her own teaching. Some of her students in Uganda read it as observations of contemporary facts about uneducated and ignorant people, while others are unable to engage with it at all, dismissing it as a discredited product of colonial rule. The book is, after all, dedicated to Larken, the British District Commissioner when Evans-Pritchard was doing his fieldwork.

A further factor is the focus on witchcraft. The term has taken on new meanings since E-P chose to use the term 'witchcraft' to translate the Azande term *mangu* in the late 1920s. He distinguished it from Azande concepts that he translated as 'bad magic' or 'sorcery', which involved instrumental acts aimed at harming victims. Even at the time, E-P's translation of *mangu*, a term which the Azande used for involuntary qualities in a person that caused affliction for others, was not exactly what many people meant by witchcraft.

Overwhelmingly, this is the case for E-P's current potential readers in formerly British governed parts of Africa. The English word 'witchcraft' is used widely, and linked with abominable practices, such as child sacrifice. Christian activists associate it with Satanism, NGO's campaign against it, and even the BBC has become involved in spreading salacious and misleading accounts about unspeakable acts, encouraging moral panics and witch-cleansing (Allen 2015; Kuper *et al.* 2010). Witchcraft is viewed as something evil. Therefore, to suggest that the Azande allocate to 'witchcraft' the ultimate cause of affliction in so many instances can be interpreted to imply that E-P is suggesting that the Azande are evil in general. In other words, while E-P's Nuer (with their 'religion', their 'prophets' and their 'Kwoth') may appeal to current prevalent Christian sensibilities, E-P's Azande (with their 'magic', their 'oracles' and their 'witchcraft') do not.

In this context, it is revealing that a survey of attitudes and livelihoods in Azandeland that took place in 2015 did not find any indication of witchcraft at all. The authors did not ask questions about it in their questionnaire, and it is not even mentioned in the published report (JSRP 2016). E-P is cited, but rather than *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic*, the references are to a couple of his articles on Azande political organization and history (1957, 1960). John Kenyi was involved in that survey, and it is striking that his chapter below, written with Bruno Braak, also does not mention witchcraft. Kenyi is not an Azande, and like me, used English-speaking interpreters. This raises the issue of exactly what questions asked about the causes of misfortunes mean in the Zande language, and how answers might overlap with the range of things that E-P. related to his key Zande terms: *mangu*, *soroka* and *gbegbere ngua*.

When I ran a survey in Ezo, a town in which E-P researched in the 1920s, located at the border of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic, I similarly found very few people mentioned witchcraft when asked directly. It was also noticeable that the terms in the Azande language being used for witchcraft by translators tended to be those E-P used for 'sorcery' or 'bad magic' (*gbegbere ngua*). However, working with a small group on Zande terms and phrases that E-P used in

his work, and asking about specific instances of illness and misfortune, things looked rather different. Any explanation for suffering connected with the English word 'witchcraft' was declared to be something that rarely happened, but those doing the translating did not always think of *mangu* in that way. I was soon taken to meet a range of specialists who deployed oracular devices, some of which were the same as those described by E-P, and I was able to observe their use in the divination of illness. It was also acknowledged by the chief that such oracles were sometimes consulted in court cases. All those specialists I met who were divining were overtly Christian, and most had Christian symbols at the places in which they met people. A few were active pastors. I discovered that the situation was not so different in many respects from the region of northern Uganda where Grace Akello works. Practices that Okot p'Bitek describes in *The Religion of the Central Luo* still occur in new forms, mostly adapted to Christian contexts, and occasionally for social mobilization (Allen 1991, 2015).

Returning to E-P and how his work is currently perceived, for careful readers of *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic*, there is awareness that his translation of *mangu* as witchcraft is meant to suggest something different to the way the word witchcraft is commonly applied. Yet, the contemporary conception of 'witchcraft', imbued with moral opprobrium, and linked to activism to stop it and punish those involved, makes the text disturbing, especially when linked to use of the term 'primitive'.

As noted above, the use of the label 'primitive' by anthropologists is something that shocked Okot p'Bitek in Oxford in the 1960s, and remains a general problem for African readers of E-P's work. Scholars like Akello know that E-P's book was influenced by his debates in the 1920s and 1930s with his European contemporaries about the role of magic in 'primitive' societies, and about how 'primitive' people think. They also know that his use of the word primitive was not intended by E-P to be insulting, or to suggest that the Azande or the Nuer are at a lower stage of social evolution. However, that does nothing to stop his use of the term being irritating to read, and few Africans will be much interested in the details of intellectual exchanges about their behaviour and beliefs, occurring between Europeans in Europe, almost a century ago. It is a problem even for potentially sympathetic readers of E-P's work by self-styled 'native' researchers, like Elizabeth Ngutuku and Auma Okwany, who endeavour to find value in what he wrote so long ago. It might also be asked, if the term 'primitive' was not meant to be derogatory, what did E-P actually mean by it?

The word is strikingly absent from E-P's book on the Sanusi (1949). Is that because the Bedouin Arabs he studied were not 'primitive' in the sense that E-P intended? As Muslims, an established faith with a rich tradition, they were not followers of what E-P called 'primitive religion'. Does that mean Azande Christians at the time of his fieldwork were no longer 'primitive', and no longer represented the Nobel Savage of the Enlightenment imagination, in which E-P located the origins of his discipline. Is that why they are not discussed in his books? Perhaps that is also why his works on the Azande and other African people are presented as if suspended in time, while the Sanusi are presented to us by E-P for the most part in the past tense, replete with their history, their wars and their politics. The choice of tense was clearly meant to suggest something of the sort. *Nuer Religion* was published seven years after *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, and twenty years after E-P carried out his Nuer fieldwork, but returns to the present tense. It is hardly surprising that African readers might be troubled by the distinctions being made, especially in South Sudan where E-P's 'tribes' have fought against Arab slave raiders and invading armies for so long. *Nuer Religion* was published in the year of Sudan's Independence, and at the start of the first war waged by South Sudanese against the government in Khartoum.

My own engagement with E-P has, inevitably, been transformed since my first naïve encounter with *Theories of Primitive Religion* almost half a century ago. For me, he has been something of a lodestar. After my conversations with Moses Kuac in Nuerland, I ended up teaching at Juba University in the mid-1980s, where, at that time, some of E-P's books could be found in the library. However, I did not start reading most of his work until I returned to England and started studying Social Anthropology in Manchester, where my Ph.D. supervisor was one of his students, Paul Baxter. Baxter had completed his own doctorate in Oxford six years before the arrival of Okot p'Bitek, and by that time had already co-authored a book on the Azande (Baxter and Butt 1954). While at Manchester University I was also taking courses in economics and development studies. Baxter would tease me by saying that all that new stuff was all well and good, but the best book on African development was *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic*. He was perhaps not being entirely serious, but his point was that E-P taught well-meaning promotors of progress, including Larken (the District Commissioner to whom E-P dedicated the book), that Azande beliefs about magic were sensible, and that African people were just as reasonable as they were, and probably often more so. Incidentally, according to Baxter, Larken loved living in Azandeland so much that he went to live there when he retired, only to discover that most Azande lost interest in him when they discovered he no longer had any power. Sadder and wiser, he settled in Leamington Spa, where Baxter had grown up.

Despite Baxter's prodding, I did not read the whole of the unabridged version of *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic* until I arrived in Oxford as the Ioma Evans-Pritchard Junior Research Fellow. It took me a couple of weeks, which does make me wonder how many people who comment on the

book have read the whole thing. Grace Akello's students in Gulu and Leben Moro's students in Juba are unlikely to make a similar commitment, even if they have access to the book, and not many of my own students at the LSE will do so either. Perhaps the days of reading long ethnographies written in the colonial era has passed, and not only for African readers. Moreover, in the context of discussions about the need to de-colonize academic curricula, Okot p'Bitek's scathing remarks about anthropological concepts and stereotypes probably seem reasonable to all modern scholars, irrespective of where they come from. The anger of oppressed Africans under White rule seems justified. It can make E-P's colonial connections, his use of the present tense, and his choice of terms difficult to set aside, even if the rewards for doing so may be significant.

In the last year of his life, and shortly after the death of Kwame Nkrumah in 1972, E-P commented on how his work was read in Africa. He acknowledged that there was hostility to anthropological inquiries among those being studied, because of a perception that anthropologists imagine African countries are populated by uncivilized savages:

> Anthropology smells to them as cultural colonialism, an arrogant assertion of European superiority – the white man studying the inferior black man; and they have some justification for their suspicions and resentment, for anthropologists have in the past only too readily lent and sold themselves in the service of colonial interests. The late Dr. Nkrumah once complained to me that anthropologists tried to make the African look as primitive as possible: photographing people in the nude and writing about witchcraft and fetishes and other superstitions and ignoring roads, harbours, schools, factories, etc.
>
> (Evans-Pritchard 1976:251)

E-P is not clear as to whether he included himself amongst those who had 'lent and sold themselves in the service of colonial interests'. Perhaps he thought he had kept enough distance, but it is worth recalling that his co-editor of *African Political Systems* (the book depicted in the painting outside Nkrumah's office), worked for MI6 in Ghana (Kuper 2015:88). Be that as it may, E-P acknowledged that anthropology had become a bad word in Africa's new and independent states. He understood why that was so, and felt that a consequence was that his discipline's intentions and achievements were not really being understood. He recommended anthropologists starting fieldwork to claim that they were doing something less likely to be offensive, like sociology, linguistics or history. E-P was originally trained as a historian and that is the direction he took at the end of his career, when he reflected on his work and imagined his discipline's future.

It is surely best for E-P's books and articles to be introduced as he came to view them himself. He argued that anthropology and history are, or should be, very closely intertwined (Evans-Pritchard 1961). It is strange in this context that his famous ethnographic insights are still sometimes presented, as they were to me in the 1970s and to Grace Akello thirty year later, as if they were observations about African livelihoods now. While writing this piece I asked a recent Oxford graduate how E-P had been taught to him. He told me he had been asked to write an essay on scientific thinking with reference to *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic*, with the implication that the book was still paradigmatic of African thought. That approach needs to be set aside. If E-P himself came to see his ethnographic accounts as historical texts, we should do the same. They are products of their time and need to be assessed in that way. It might make it easier to learn things from them.

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23
HIV/AIDS and Evans-Pritchard in Azandeland

Tim Allen

In 2006, I went to southern Sudan, now South Sudan, to investigate HIV/AIDS among the Azande in places E-P lived in the 1920s, and to make suggestions about what to do about controlling the disease. The Zande I spoke to were much more worried about HIV/AIDS at the time than about armed groups in the neighbourhood, including the Lord's Resistance Army. That was one of several surprising things. Another was how useful E-P's insights were, including those in *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic* (1937). Eva Gilles observes in the introduction of the abridged version of the book that what E-P described is a 'world long vanished' (1976:vii). That proved to not to be entirely so.

A circuitous journey to a largely absent epidemic

I never met E-P. The first I heard of him was when I was asked to discuss his ideas about 'primitive religion' as an undergraduate three years after E-P had died. My understanding of him was, to say the least, superficial but proved important soon after I graduated. I was working in the civil service and had come to terms with the fact that it really was not my thing. Sitting in my office in London on a wet day in early autumn, I felt that there must be more to life, and I noticed an advert in the newspaper on my desk for people to work as teachers in Sudan. I had never taught, and I had no idea where Sudan was, but it seemed like a good idea. I rang the number and was asked to come to the Sudan embassy immediately. On arrival I was given some incredibly sweet tea and was asked questions about Oscar Wilde. I explained that I had studied *The Importance of Being Earnest* at school, which seemed to be the right answer and was offered the position. Excited, if somewhat bemused, I then went to a big bookshop in Tottenham Court Road and asked an assistant if they had anything on Sudan, and in which department I might find them. 'Anthropology' was the answer. So that was my next destination. I asked about Sudan again when I arrived, and the response was 'Evans-Pritchard'. I left clutching a copy of *The Nuer* (1940).

I gave notice at work and within a few weeks found myself in Khartoum. I went to the Ministry of Education, where I was given a warm welcome, but was a bit surprised to be asked where I wanted to go and live. In my book by E-P was a map of Nuerland, so I suggested the biggest town marked on it, Malakal. The official looked puzzled, but made no objection. I was told to make my way to a place called Kosti, and then take the Nile boat. To cut a long and eventful story short, I eventually managed to reach my destination and was then posted to a school in a remote location, several miles south of the town, on the banks of the Nile and Sobat rivers, where most of the students were Nuer or Shilluk.

I was also eventually sent a box of books with which to teach the English classes. The box contained numerous copies of the plays of Oscar Wilde. *The Importance of Being Earnest*, it turned out, was the Sudan School Curriculum set text. During the following months, I tried to explain to my students, whose English was not great, that someone who was called Ernest in town and Jack in the country, had been found in a handbag, and had a girlfriend, Gwendoline, who had been brought up to be short-sighted, and was only engaged to marry him if his name was definitely Ernest. Communicating a joke like 'the piano is not my forte' was also a challenge.

I later spent time in other parts of Sudan that E-P had written about, and ended up becoming an anthropologist myself, living among Acholi and Madi people across the border in Uganda. From there I applied for the Ioma Evans-Pritchard Junior Research Fellowship at St Anne's College, Oxford. At Oxford I had the time to read E-P's other works, including the unabridged version of *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande*. It had a considerable impact on my own writings about witchcraft among the Madi, (Allen 2015; Allen and Reid 2015; Allen and Storm 2012).

Skipping forward fifteen years, I returned to my African fieldwork sites, initially at the invitation of humanitarian aid agencies. South Sudan had been caught up in a terrible war, and northern Uganda was also affected by various armed conflicts, including the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) insurgence, led by the mysterious, terrifying and elusive Joseph Kony. By 2004 well over a million people were living in appalling circumstances in internal displacement camps, and more than 50,000 people, perhaps half of whom were children, had been recruited to the LRA, often by force

(Allen 2006a; Allen and Vlassenroot 2010). When the International Criminal Court intervened, issuing warrants for the LRA commanders in 2005, there were concerns about what would happen to those who had been abducted, and whether threat of prosecution would make negotiations impossible, or compromise the amnesty arrangements that the Ugandan government had offered to those escaping the LRA or choosing to surrender. While researching on these matters, my research team met several people who had apparently accepted the amnesty, but clearly still had connections with the LRA leadership, who at that time were in South Sudan or the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). One day, a group of these individuals asked for a meeting, and handed a phone to one of my Ph.D. students, Mareike Schomerus. On the other end was the LRA's second in command, Vincent Otti. After several further communications, the possibility of a visit to the LRA base was discussed, including the possibility of an interview with Joseph Kony, linked to possible peace talks. The issue then was how to make such a visit safely.

In spring of 2006, I became aware that an NGO was looking for someone to do some investigations in the Azande area of South Sudan on HIV/AIDS. This location was not far from where Kony was thought to be, and so I offered to do this work. It was agreed that Marieke and I would fly to Kenya, and then take a series of flight in small planes and a car journey to reach Ezo, on the border of South Sudan, DRC and Central African Republic (CAR). In the event, Mareike travelled the week before me, and was met at Nairobi airport by two people who claimed to be representing the LRA. When their identities were confirmed, she travelled with them to Juba, the capital of South Sudan, and joined the delegation led by Riak Macar that went to meet with Kony at Garamba in DRC. She was able to spend time with Kony, and her recorded interview was subsequently shown on BBC's *Newsnight* in a controversially manipulated form, much to Mareike's frustration (Schomerus 2010). Meanwhile, I went to Ezo.

In June of 2006, the Azande population living in the places where E-P researched in the 1920s were resident in what was still Sudan, but which would formally become South Sudan in 2011. They had played a significant role in the armed struggle for South Sudan's independence between 1956 and 1972. Indeed, the army mutiny that is usually said to have initiated that war occurred in the area. The Azande role in the fighting that broke out in 1983 was different, in that there had been bitter divisions during the years of southern Sudan's regional autonomy between rival factions. One of these, often referred to as the Equatoria faction, was associated with places along the borders with DRC and Uganda, and was led in the early 1980s by an Azande politician. Another was associated with some Dinka groups, notably the Bor. This division echoed a long history of hostility between Azande and Dinka populations, and when the Equatoria faction gained control of the Regional Assembly in Juba, it was the prelude to outbreak of war. The expulsion of Bor Dinka cattle traders from Juba market triggered the mutiny of the garrison in Bor town, and the forming of the Sudan People's Liberation Army under John Garang. As a consequence, during the war that was waged in southern Sudan from the mid 1980s until 2005, there was little enthusiasm among the Azande for the Dinka-dominated SPLA, nor for Garang's political objectives. However, Azande areas of southern Sudan were taken over by the SPLA in 1992, and an uneasy security situation prevailed until the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the SPLA and the Sudan government in 2005. In November that year, violent incidents took place between Azande groups and Dinka soldiers in the SPLA, and when I arrived a few months later, the few Dinka soldiers I met were keeping a very low profile (Allen 2007).

I researched in and around Ezo town, where people had much to say about these events, and about how they would drive the Dinka from their homeland. There was, in fact, open discussion about how Zande in southern Sudan, DRC and CAR might unite together and re-establish the Azande Empire. During the nineteenth century, the vast Azande homelands had been divided into kingdoms, with wide areas of unpopulated bush between them. The kingdoms had a well-organized political system of headmen, chiefs and a king (or paramount chief). Each was ruled by a different member of a single royal dynasty, called the Avongara. Most chiefs were also from this same lineage, although there were also some commoners who were appointed as governors. In the early years of Anglo-Egyptian rule in Sudan, there was initial resistance to the imposition of colonial authority, but following the death of King Gbudwe in a skirmish in 1905, the Azande proved, from a British point of view, to be friendly and malleable. The system of indirect rule they established acknowledged the Avongara hegemony, and King Gbudwe's sons and other relatives were incorporated into the new system of government. Nevertheless, according to E-P, the death of King Gbudwe was seen as 'the end of an epoch, nay more, it was a catastrophe that changed the whole order of things' (1976:xi). In 1926, when E-P arrived to start his fieldwork, the Avongara remained relatively aloof, and they still lived on the tribute paid to them by commoners (known as Ambomu and Auro), although their status was in the process of being weakened. Major Larken, who was the District Commissioner at that time, was busy resettling the population in large settlements along the roads. This was done as part of a campaign to control sleeping sickness, but it also had the effect of intensifying direct administration, and undermining the authority of the chiefs.

In 2006, the paramount chief in Ezo was still from the Avongara dynasty, and was eloquently nostalgic about the slain Gbudwe's former authority. He was rather more

interested in re-establishing royal power and Azande autonomy than what would happen when the planned referendum occurred on South Sudanese independence. He was certain the vote would be in favour of establishing a new country, but that made it all the more important for the Azande to cohere and repel any group that wanted to take control of their lands. He had the SPLA and Dinka soldiers in mind, and was sanguine about the LRA units, who were also based nearby. The LRA had actually been supplied with weapons by the Sudan government, with Riak Machar acting as go-between when his Nuer forces were fighting Garang's SPLA for a period during the war. The LRA had acted as a Sudan-government militia. As a result, the Ezo paramount chief explained, the LRA had no problem with the Azande people, because they were equally hostile to Dinkas. Two years later, he would take a different view. Following the meeting that Mareike Schomerus attended, Machar was able to broker negotiations between the LRA and the Ugandan government. When those broke down in 2008, the LRA in Azandeland went on the rampage. Thousands of people were displaced, and in August 2009 LRA victims were reportedly crucified during an attack on Ezo's Catholic Church.

However, when I researched among Zande people in 2006, Ezo was peaceful. The LRA were described ironically as 'our visitors from abroad', and stories were told of how locals would frighten Dinka soldiers by telling them that the Azande reputation for cannibalism was true – a topic about which E-P had published an article in 1960. Of much more immediate concern was a different kind of Azande reputation. Following the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, there was an expectation that, with political stability, there would be migrations of populations, and that the Azande population might become a vector of HIV/AIDS. This was a view that was premised on a widely held perception among government officials and aid agencies that the Azande are particularly prone to having multiple sexual partners and had been exposed to HIV/AIDS in neighbouring countries. This was something that Zande themselves seemed to accept.

With a team of Zande assistants, a rapid survey was run to ask about 'most serious health problems' in the area. By moving from home to home, 381 adults were randomly selected. Surprisingly, 71 per cent ranked HIV/AIDS as the worst problem, above malaria (57 per cent), diarrhoea (44 per cent), sleeping sickness (24 per cent), worms (22 per cent), tuberculosis (21 per cent), and measles (14 per cent). When asked why HIV/AIDS was ranked at the top of the list, the response was usually that most people who are infected are unknown – so will go on infecting others, and that HIV/AIDS is 'incurable' and 'fatal'. These results were perplexing. Aid agencies were almost entirely absent, only starting to plan projects, and there was no externally funded HIV/AIDS awareness campaign. Staff of the aid agency I was working with had anticipated that HIV/AIDS would not be at all well known. To add to the mystery, there had been a small amount of testing by various organizations. It was difficult to interpret the results with any confidence, but they suggested that the actual number of those infected might be as low as 2 per cent (OCHA-IMU 2005:13; Phelan and Wood 2006:35). It was certainly the case that the actual number of confirmed HIV/AIDS cases was small, and Zande men are circumcised, a factor which halved the risk of adult males contracting HIV through heterosexual intercourse (*Lancet* 2007). So why was there such fear, even panic, about spiralling rates of infection, expressed with conviction by Zande people themselves? E-P proved helpful in working out what was going on.

Knowledge and fear of infection

One of the things that required investigation from the survey was why 38 per cent of adults interviewed said that they knew someone with HIV/AIDS or who had died of the disease. It may be that some of those alleged to have been infected with HIV/AIDS had actually been infected with something else. However, there were a few HIV positive people, who just about everyone knew in Ezo. They were remarkably open about their status. They had links with the Catholic or Anglican churches, and played an active part in church services. In Ezo town, one of them made a point of turning up at public meetings, and talked about his condition to anyone who would listen. He would sit in the busy border market of Nabia Pia, surrounded by a group of young people, telling the story of his illness. The following is an extract of his recorded account, translated into English – note his mention of an oracle.

> I was born in 1978, and have been sick for two years. It started as joint pains in my legs and hands. Then there was diarrhea and skin rashes. I had a severe headache and I felt dizzy. Also, my heart burned… I went to traditional healers and oracles. The oracle told me that I might have stolen someone's money or that I had committed adultery. But I had not done those things, so it was false. They said I would die from the sickness, and that they had no cure. So, I went for an HIV test in Nzara… I was not frightened when I went for the test. People thought I was dying already… Before the test they gave me counselling. I was found to be positive, and I have followed the way of life they recommended. Their advice has made me feel better… I have protected myself and others by avoiding sex. Also, I don't share razor blades. The disease has to be stopped. It should not be spread. Now I need medicines for symptoms, hygiene, and a balanced diet… I don't know how I caught the disease. Maybe from a razor blade or from a needle (syringe) or from sex. I did have girlfriends, a few of them… I was advised not to be shy about the disease. Those who are secretive are the ones who want

> it to spread. The person who is open can give advice. I share my experiences with others, and I have formed a group for positive people. Church leaders are also in the group. They help us with the word of God. Sometimes they contribute with food… I am totally dependent on assistance from people… Some people fear me and do not like me. They think I might infect them. But most shake hands with me, and even share food with me.

It was the presence of such people in public places that had evidently contributed to awareness about HIV/AIDS. People had also been informed about the epidemic when they were living in Uganda, DRC or the CAR during the war. A group of men interviewed at the market where the HIV positive man was explaining his symptoms commented that attitudes or illness symptoms had been affected: 'If someone has a disease like malaria or sleeping sickness and begins to change shape (become slim), people will suspect it to be HIV/AIDS.' The term they used for AIDS was 'echive' (i.e. 'HIV'), or 'sida' (i.e. the French acronym – SIDA), or sometimes by Zande terms (*ugudi kongo* or *kaza ango*). The Zande terms were potentially ambiguous, and could possibly refer to other diseases too, so were always combined with 'echive'/'sida' in asking questions. Here are some of the general comments people made about the epidemic.

> 'HIV/AIDS is a disease that has come to kill everybody. There is no treatment. You just die.'
>
> (group of women, Madoro, Ezo County)

> 'The sickness has definitely defeated the Azande, because some sicknesses used to be treated locally. The only option is testing to know your status…'
>
> (headman, aged 66, Naandi Payam)

> 'Now HIV/AIDS is living with people, you can bring awareness, you can bring test, but what is the use of bringing all these to us if there is no medicine for it?'
>
> (male elder, aged fifty, Andari Payam)

> 'We don't know how to protect ourselves because we can't identify who has it.'
>
> (chief, Andari Payam)

Sexual intercourse was mentioned as a way of becoming infected by 84 per cent of surveyed adults. Other modes of infection mentioned were needles and syringes (34 per cent), razor blades (38 per cent), open wounds (7 per cent) and blood transfusion (20 per cent). There was virtually no awareness of mother to child transmission. An emphasis on sexual intercourse, and occasionally sharp objects, was similarly highlighted in open-ended discussions, as illustrated by the following quotes.

> 'The factors leading to catching AIDS are that our sisters do not refuse foreigners. I mean they are like prostitutes, because they are after money. It is travellers who cause it. Look at where they spend the night … and at what they do (with local women)…'
>
> (teacher, Naandi payam)

> 'Commercial sex increases the spread of HIV/AIDS in our country. And also those who come from outside. They infect us, because people don't protect themselves from unsafe sex.'
>
> (group discussion with county staff, Ezo Centre)

> 'Travellers and truck drivers are the biggest risk. They come from countries like Uganda, where they are exposed to sex…'
>
> (male trader at Nabia Pai market)

> 'Travellers, immigrants and youth are carriers of AIDS, and traders too as they get through a lot of sex and sharp objects [e.g. they use razor blades to cut their hair and shave].'
>
> (group of traders at Nabia Pai market, Ezo county)

> 'It is spread because of our traditional ways of getting new wives/girlfriends by going in a hidden way outside marriage. Polygamy may cause AIDS. Also widow inheritance.'
>
> (deacon, Naandi payam)

> 'We are at risk, because they (boys) indulge in a lot of sex.'
>
> (a group of girls at Baikpa)

While sexual intercourse and contaminated blood were emphasized, there are also other views which did not relate so closely to biomedical understandings. Some of those surveyed mentioned infection from kissing (6 per cent), sharing food (5 per cent) and urinating in the same place (3 per cent). Nevertheless, only a few rejected the threat of infection and the link to sexual intercourse completely. For example, in one group discussion it was asserted that: 'HIV/AIDS is a disease of monkeys. It does not affect people in our country. I don't know why people are worried about it. You will only get it if you eat monkeys.'

Several of those interviewed also posed their own questions. These could be very revealing of underlying fears and confusions. For example, one young man had a barrage of queries:

> Does AIDS also affect the brain, like sleeping sickness? Is AIDS the only cause of skin rash? I was told that lubricants on condoms make you sterile. Is it true? Is it true that people with gonorrhoea cannot be infected

> with HIV? Is it a clear indicator of being negative? My penis does not fit in a condom. What should I do to have protected sex? Is it true that much friction during sex increases the risk of HIV?

Such specific inquiries about signs and symptoms reflected an appreciation that HIV positive people might not look ill. For example, a group of ten men interviewed at Nabia Pai market remarked that, 'One may look smart and healthy – meanwhile being infected.' In the survey, 45 per cent of adults said that it was not possible to know if somebody has HIV/AIDS infection. Symptoms mentioned by those who thought it was possible, were becoming slim or anaemic (50 per cent), diarrhoea (26 per cent) and skin rash (18 per cent).

In terms of avoiding infection, respondents most frequently emphasized 'faithfulness' and 'abstaining or avoiding sex'. When asked why, they referred to messages given out in church services and community meetings by Christian activists, health workers, HIV-positive people and other local leaders. Here again, there was a tendency for answers to reflect what people had been told, rather than the full range of their own perceptions, and open-ended discussion quickly revealed more complicated views.

Most respondents had heard of condoms, and a minority were enthusiastic about them. Condoms were available for purchase at certain shops in town centres, and were supposed to be given out at primary healthcare centres (although no informant stated that they actually obtained condoms from that source). Nevertheless, relatively few respondents mentioned condoms as a possible way of avoiding HIV infection, and the majority stated that condoms were not being used (72 per cent of adults). Staff interviewed at the lodge at Ezo town reported that they occasionally found used condoms in the morning, usually when rooms have been occupied by 'outsiders' (e.g. traders from Uganda or Congo). They also told stories of how local women were shocked when men put them on, and sometimes run away.

Men who said that they used condoms sometimes explained that sexual intercourse with them does not really 'count'. For example, one educated informant told me that he is a Christian and happily married, so if he 'goes outside' for women, he always used a condom. His wife knew this, but was content, because he was not really having sex. Others interviewed expressed somewhat similar opinions. However, responses to the survey questions indicated that it is much more common for condoms to be rejected. The Christian churches had been teaching that they should not be used, and for many of those interviewed, condoms prevented sexual gratification, as well as pregnancy, and might even be dangerous.

Oracles and witchcraft

It was with respect to diagnosis, the possibilities of healing, and the specifics of sexual behaviour that E-P's insights were particularly useful. A question asked in the structured interviews was: 'If people have HIV/AIDS who do they consult?' It was assumed that ill people and their relatives were likely to consult several different kinds of healers during their quest for therapy, so respondents could give more than one answer. However, most only mentioned one or two, and all mentioned primary healthcare centres. It was only by further questioning in group meetings, using Azande words from E-P's *Witchcraft Oracles and Magic*, that other perspectives and more revealing information began to emerge. These were then followed up with more detailed ethnographic research.

Using the terms used by E-P was important, because it facilitated a bypassing of answers that reflected Christian teachings on 'witchcraft' and satanic practices. A few people had mentioned 'magic' in answers to survey questions, using the Azande term *ngua*, which E-P associated with 'sorcery', but almost no-one mentioned *mangu*, the term E-P used for 'witchcraft', or *soroka*, the term he used for 'oracles'. They were much more forthcoming when asked directly about the things E-P had written about, using those and other Azande words. Learning from my experiences in Nuerland, I was open about having read E-P's book, and asked about it directly. I met no one who had read it, but there was lots of interest in hearing me tell what was in it, and debating how it related to the contemporary situation. I soon found myself being taken to one oracle after another, some of whom were very similar to those E-P had described.

Once asked about *mangu* and *soroka* in open-ended discussions, many respondents stated that those who think they are HIV positive would consult various kinds of non-biomedical specialists, including diviners, oracles and 'charismatics' – Pentecostal Christians – who heal by prayer and the laying on of hands. Not all Christian leaders were entirely enthusiastic about these Pentecostal healers. For example, one expressed the view that: 'The place where people share sharp objects is with traditional healers. He will cut many people with the same razor blade, and may also use syringes.' The reference to sharp objects relates to the technique of cutting the skin of patients, to rub concoctions into the blood. Nevertheless, it was widely accepted by those interviewed that local specialists can accurately diagnose HIV/AIDS, and possibly even treat it. For example, here are some comments from a discussion with staff at the Ezo county office:

> Yes there is a treatment for HIV/AIDS from our own people, such as 'bird keepers' [a special kind of healing specialist and oracle], eating cooked dog, and a man called XXX [name given by informant] in Yangiri payam. He can cure the disease using his own methods.

> Also, a man called XXX [name given] was cured from AIDS through charismatic prayer, and he is here living still among us. Other people also are cured when they pray a lot.

As E-P explained, the Azande (like many other African peoples) tend to ask 'why' as well as 'how' questions about misfortune. They may accept that someone has a particular disease or has suffered an injury in an accident. They nevertheless also tend to ask why that particular person suffered such a misfortune and not someone else. In the 1920s, according to E-P in a famous passage:

> Azande believe that some people are witches and can injure them in virtue of an inherent quality. A witch performs no rite, utters no spell, and possess no medicines. An act of witchcraft is a psychic act. They believe also that sorcerers may do them ill by performing magic rites with bad medicines. Azande distinguish clearly between witches and sorcerers. Against both they employ diviners, oracles and medicines.
>
> (Evans-Pritchard 1937:21)

Since then, the acceptance of Christianity, public-health interventions, formal education and various social upheavals have obviously had a profound impact on the ways people conceptualize personal afflictions. Even back in the 1920s there was debate about them. Alternative explanations were often put forward, and a range of therapists consulted. However, as my research progressed in Ezo, it became apparent that the beliefs and rites that E-P described had proved to be more resilient than I had anticipated. In 2006, Christianity and bio-medical ideas about diseases played a significant role, but 'witchcraft' (*magu*), oracles (*soroka*) and magic (*ngua*) remained prevalent.

Deaths were still often interpreted as a form of homicide, and those accused of *kitikiti ngua*, and possibly *mangu* too, were taken to the chief's court, as was explained by the paramount chief of Ezo county:

> I deal with crimes and community problems at my court. In cases of witchcraft, people will first have visited an oracle. The one who is accused will come to my court and will swear on the Bible that he is innocent. Sometimes he is given a special water to drink. If he vomits, then he is the one. It confirms he is a witch. I deal with one or two cases of this kind per month. The oracles we use at the moment are not the most effective ones. For that we need to obtain *benge* [a special poison] from Congo. If the situation stabilizes, we will get it.
>
> (Paramount Chief, Ezo county)

In this interview, the paramount chief was referring to a form of strychnine derived from a certain jungle creeper, unavailable in most of Ezo county. As in E-P's time, it was regarded as essential for the most accurate kind of oracle. It was administered to chicks, some of whom survived, while others died. The oracle specialist then interpreted the answer from having observed what happened. In the pre-colonial past, *benge* was also administered to humans. From the paramount chief's statement, it would seem that some kind of poison was still being used in this way, although the special water administered to the accused was not lethal.

The oracular methods observed in 2006 were mostly different in detail to the non-*benge* oracles described by E-P, but followed the same principle. Questions were asked, and the oracle gave a yes or no answer. E-P referred to a corporation of witchdoctors or diviners, known as *abinza* (or *avule*), who were believed to combat witchcraft 'in virtue of medicines which they have eaten, by certain dances, and by leechcraft' (Evans-Pritchard 1976:228). Leechcraft refers to a technique of sucking witchcraft substance out of the patient's body. He also mentioned *boro ngua*, other people who possess magic and who practise leechcraft. In addition, there were the oracles (*soroka*). Certain simple kinds of oracle tool were owned by lots of older men, who would consult them at the request of friend and relatives.

In 2006, there was less distinction between the types of person consulted. All the local healers visited combined divination with the use of oracles, herbal remedies, leechcraft and magical techniques. The healers interviewed countered any implications of impropriety by asserting a Christian aspect to their actions. They included prayers in their oracular consultations, and one of those visited had turned his place of work into a kind of church. They had also adopted practices associated with clinical practice, such as having separate wards for patents and their families, and sometimes giving advice about bio-medically categorized diseases. All claimed to be able to diagnose HIV/AIDS, but said that they could not cure it. Only one healer was thought to be able to do that – the man mentioned in the quotes above (it was not possible to talk to him during field research). Those diagnosed as HIV positive were sometimes given local treatments for HIV/AIDS symptoms, such as skin rashes and diarrhoea, although one healer I visited explained that his treatments are too powerful for someone who is already very weak. All the healers said that they always tell HIV/AIDS patients to stop having sex, and to go to the health centres for advice.

HIV/AIDS, like other potential ailments, was diagnosed by asking the oracle a 'yes' or 'no' question. In the case of a rubbing-stick oracle device I was shown, the inner stick became wedged in the outer stick if the answer was yes. Another healer prayed to God to help his diagnoses. At his feet was an old bicycle frame. When the answer to a question was 'yes', it became stuck to the ground and could

not be lifted. This particular healer was one of the most highly respected in Ezo Payam. He operated in a remote place that could only be reached by wading through a bog. I visited on a Sunday, so he was not actually working. Groups of patients were waiting with their families to consult him the following day, including a woman who had been paralysed, probably by witchcraft or sorcery. Another patient had undergone a minor operation for a tropical ulcer in his leg, which the primary healthcare centre had apparently failed to cure. It had been cut out and treated with a herbal concoction, one that had been revealed to the healer in a dream.

It turned out that Azande beliefs in what E-P called 'witchcraft', 'oracles' and 'magic' remained strong, and had adapted to changing circumstances. Moreover, the Zande conception of *mangu* had striking similarities to local perceptions of HIV. A witch and a HIV-positive person might be doing dreadful things, while appearing normal and harmless. In addition, there was worry that there were those who were HIV positive who acted as sorcerers (*ira ghegbere ngua*). Like sorcerers, they used things to deliberately harm others, such as mixing their blood in food or leaving a contaminated razor blade on a path. It was small wonder that Zande I spoke to expressed such fear of HIV/AIDS and turned to oracle specialists for protection and guidance.

Possibilities of HIV control

Okot p'Bitek, the famous Ugandan poet, recalled with affection the lively conversations he had with E-P about doing anthropological fieldwork on sexual practices, presumably while p'Bitek was based in Oxford in the early 1960s. According to p'Bitek, the beating E-P received one night when he used a torch to see what a pair of Shilluk lovers were doing left him with scars on his legs (1986:33). However, E-P did not write specifically on the topic of sexual intercourse until the end of his career, when he published articles on what he termed Azande 'sex habits' (1973).

Some passages in those articles are very explicit. They offer specific details, for example, about the preferred qualities of sexual organs and expected sexual responses. It is not clear why E-P left it until the early 1970s before writing about these matters from his Azande fieldwork forty years earlier, or why he chose to do so at that point. Perhaps it was a response to the 'sexual revolution' going on in Britain at the time. For some readers, the articles have a prurient quality that makes them troubling to read. Yet, this was another arena in which E-P's work struck me as relevant to the situation in 2006. The ways that the Azande I spoke to described sex acts resonated with points E-P had made and, when combined with the rumours abounding about HIV/AIDS, exacerbated fears about an epidemic inevitably spreading.

Before turning to that, however, it is worth noting that Azande I spoke to all rejected observations E-P made about Azande homosexual and lesbian relationships. These were described to E-P by elders in the 1920s as having once been common among young men unable to marry, and among co-wives (1970). When people were asked about these matters in 2006, any possibility of such practices was vehemently refuted, and elders I spoke to did not believe that they had ever occurred. Assuming E-P's information was correct, attitudes may have been affected by Christian teaching about sexuality, but it is also likely that they were linked to the lifting of sexual constraints on young men. According to E-P, in the past it was almost impossible for most men to marry until they were in their twenties or thirties, because young women formed sexual unions with much older polygamous men, and because Zande princes had large harems. Wife inheritance was also practised, whereby a widow would form a sexual union with one of her diseased husband's relatives. The result was that there was simply a shortage of marriageable women, and that married women might have limited access to a shared older husband. However, at the time of E-P's fieldwork in the 1920s, the weakening of the authority and power of the chiefly class was already changing this situation.

In 2006, polygamy and wife inheritance were still practised, but were said to be much less pervasive than they once were, and both young men and young women stated that they experienced few restrictions to having sexual encounters if that is what they wanted. I was also surprised at how frank and unembarrassed people were about discussing sexual behaviours, both in individual interviews and in public meetings. Indeed, there was a performative quality to the exchanges. What was said often resonated with E-P's accounts, including the points he made that virginity was not emphasized as being particularly important, that women took an active part in their own and their partner's satisfaction, that men were expected to copulate frequently, and that relatively dry sex was preferred.

Although abstinence from sex contact was often stated to be the best way of being protected from HIV/AIDS, almost nobody thought that the HIV/AIDS control programmes that just promoted it would be effective. Girls invariably stated that boys are always wanting sex, and elders complained that young men were impossible to control. Back in the 1920s, elders complained in a similar way to E-P about the behaviour of the youth, so perhaps not too much should be read into such assertions. Nevertheless, I found that young men had much to say about their own sexual needs and activities. Here I provide just one example, extracted from a discussion with a group of young men:

> For us youth, young girls may come from elsewhere, including other countries. As we try to engage

> and get into sexual contact with them, we end up being infected… One may look smart and healthy – meanwhile being infected… You may find one pretty girl from Uganda or Yambio. You are longing to have sex with her by all means. But no condoms are available. She may be infected… Girls are responsible for the spread of AIDS. They should be tested and those positive be given a T-shirt for recognition.
>
> (Comments from a group of 10 men at Nabia Pia market).[1]

Some of this may have been bravado, but it did become apparent from my interviews that stability of sexual unions took time to establish, and probably more so than in E-P's day. The various exchanges of brideprice might only commence after the birth of a child, and could go on for years. Marriage had always been a process rather than a single event, and when informants talked about being married, they mostly meant beginning a sexual relationship, rather than embarking upon a long-term commitment.

For many of those interviewed, abstaining from sexual intercourse themselves was stated to be unlikely. One explanation was that it prevented pregnancy, which was something desired even by many very young women and their families. Also, as has been noted elsewhere in Africa, the sex act itself was associated with well-being.[2] It was said that telling young men to stop having sex was like telling them to act as if they were ill, and came close to suggesting that they should stop eating or breathing.

As noted above, apart from sexual contact, understandings about HIV/AIDS infection ranged from the use of sharp objects and blood transfusions to sharing water, kissing and urinating in the same place. For several of those interviewed there were a wide range of dangers, not all of which were connected with blood contact. Broader concerns, and public health information about different diseases were conflated. However, miscommunications were only part of the story. Informants described an ever-constant threat of HIV/AIDS infection, whereby the specific mechanism was almost arbitrary. The highlighting of razor blades by so many respondents was connected with such a perception. Concerns about them being left on paths to deliberately infect passers-by suggest that they could have the properties of sorcery (*ngua*).

At one level, everyone, including the local healers themselves, would talk about 'echive' or 'sida' as if it was a disease with an aetiology recognized by primary healthcare workers. But that aetiology existed in a context and had limitations. It did not explain why sexual intercourse, which is something that all healthy adults do, could be harmful for certain individuals, but not others, or why one razor blade was harmful but another benign. What E-P called 'witchcraft', 'sorcery' and 'magic' retained their explanatory powers for HIV/AIDS, as they did for other afflictions, and with respect to HIV/AIDS there was an additional factor. An HIV-positive person had characteristics that were similar to those of a witch, in that he or she looked like everyone else, but was secretly killing them. The alarm that was expressed about the disease reflected unease that witches were everywhere. This helps explain why certain HIV-positive individuals were so public about their condition, and why they became so closely connected with the Christian churches. It also sheds light on some of the specific alternative measures for HIV/AIDS control that were proposed in response to the question 'how should the spread of HIV/AIDS be stopped in our community?' Around twenty per cent of those asked wanted HIV-positive people to all be publicly known and located in an isolated place. Amongst these were those few people who knew their HIV-positive status.

It is easy to interpret proposals for enforced testing and isolation of HIV-positive people as something that reflected both an acceptance of biomedical facts and a tendency to stigmatize infected people. However, this was rejected by those who were challenged. They pointed out that with sleeping sickness, it was considered appropriate to make sure that everyone is tested, and to locate those who are infected at centres where they can be treated (normally when the disease has crossed the patient's blood-brain barrier). People also had heard about the need to isolate people with ebola and other highly infectious diseases. They asked why HIV/AIDS should be treated differently. The paramount chief, for example, pointed out that if the testing facilities could be established, he could use his sub-chiefs and headmen to ensure that everyone was checked. Those who were positive could then be located at special places where they could be assisted. He noted that some positive people were already doing this voluntarily. One had located himself near the Ecumenical Church of Sudan compound, and was encouraging others to join him. For numerous informants, this was obviously the right thing to do. The paramount chief, like others who were interviewed or whose behaviour was observed, was accepting of those who are openly positive. It was the secret 'positives' that were feared. It was widely stated that they have to be exposed or, like sorcerers, some will 'choose not to die alone'.

HIV/AIDS control in Africa has tended to avoid social-compliance procedures in favour of voluntary behavioural change. Strategies have been borrowed from North America and Western Europe, where the human rights of those who are positive have been prioritized, partly because they are mostly from relatively contained and marginal groups. As several analysts have asked, is that a sensible approach

1 Many more examples are available in Allen 2007.

2 For example, in Botswana, where it had important effects on HIV/AIDS policy – a point discussed in Allen and Heald 2004.

where HIV/AIDS is, or may potentially be, a major public health catastrophe? (Allen 2004, 2006b; Allen and Heald 2004; De Cock, Mbori-Ngacha and Marum 2002; De Waal, 2006). Worried people in Ezo county who urgently wanted mass testing and controls on the actions of positive people are not wrong when they claim it would prevent rates of infection exploding. The absence of aid agencies and minimal primary healthcare provision meant that they had not yet been taught to treat HIV/AIDS as exceptional. Anonymity was not thought to be essential for those who were positive. Indeed, for the Azande I spoke to, it as the crux of the problem, one that resonates with local understandings of *mangu* and *kitikiti ngua* (i.e. 'witchcraft' and 'sorcery').

Conclusion

In 2006 no one knew what the actual rates of infection were, and very few people were able to find out their own status. The population had nevertheless been persuaded that healthy looking people living amongst them were killing them in large numbers. Everyone, from visiting traders and women selling mangoes at the market, to neighbours and loved ones in the home, were potentially like witches. They had been told that the only way they could save themselves was by voluntarily choosing to live a different kind of life, one that most considered unhealthy and untenable. In several group discussions participants openly expressed their frustration or even irritation. This was especially the case when they knew of medical treatments offered to HIV/AIDS patients in other places. In Ezo, people were being told to suspect everyone, avoid intimacy and expect death – but for what purpose? HIV/AIDS awareness was being experienced as kind of social torture.

As has been explained, the research in 2006 occurred in a brief period of calm before the LRA attacks of 2008 and 2009, and the outbreaks of fighting between factions inside South Sudan. Currently, Ezo is relatively peaceful, but a new health threat in the form of an Ebola outbreak in eastern DRC has become a priority for aid agencies. The Azande have again been foregrounded as a potential reservoir of infection, because of assumptions about the spread of the virus in bushmeat, which Zande people are known to consume. However, as with HIV/AIDS, the actual evidence is weak or non-existent (Bedford 2019).

Meanwhile, the Azande HIV/AIDS epidemic never happened as anticipated. Despite the ways that Azande people talk about sex and about their own sexuality, there does not seem to be any robust information to suggest they are, in fact, any more sexually active than their neighbouring populations (or any more averse to use of condoms). Things claimed about them, such as their supposed promiscuity or cannibalism, have a mythical quality, which Azande themselves occasionally choose to evoke. It is interesting that E-P seems to have taken the former for granted, but was more sceptical about the latter (Evans-Pritchard 1960). In so far as data is available, HIV/AIDS rates have not escalated in the way that the Azande I spoke to in 2006 worried that they would. Many of them conceptualized the disease in ways that coincided with or echoed notions that E-P glossed as 'witchcraft', and they consulted Christianised oracles for divination and advice. Perhaps, from their point of view, it was a more effective strategy in constraining sexual behaviours than they had anticipated. A project in Yambio, the nearest large town to Ezo, has recently assessed almost 15,000 adults (Médecins Sans Frontiers 2018). The 504 people tested positive (3.4 per cent) have been introduced to antiretroviral therapy, with an 80 per cent take-up rate.

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24

Zande chieftaincy and kingship

Historical memories, future visions and reinstatement of a Zande kingdom

Bruno Braak and John Justin Kenyi

Introduction

> A certain generation may be lost. Those in the diaspora in Europe and the Arab world, they are born there and are really lost. The first point of an identity is the language, but they don't know it… But back home everybody is also lost in one way or another. There has been no stability for one century. First the colonials – Egyptians, Turkish and English – then the conflicts. So people have been moving all over. I thought I knew a lot about the Azande, but then I realized that so much has been lost.[1]

The South Sudanese Civil War (2013–present) and the consequent forced migration presented a new chapter in the long Zande history of turbulence. Today, as in the times of the fieldwork of Evans-Pritchard (late 1920s) and his student Reining (1950s), the everyday lives of many Zande people are marked by unpredictability, confusion and change. Many Azande now live as refugees in other countries, and for some this is the fourth such experience.[2] Some of those people, like the above cited former minister, express despair. They say people are 'lost' and that the Zande language and rites are forgotten. War and displacement are also often seen to have weakened the custodians of tradition and culture, i.e. elders and chiefs.

But on the burnt remains of war and displacement shoots of constructive change have taken hold. 'Zandeland' is now intimately connected to the rest of the world by migration, trade and aid. There are sizeable and well-organized Zande communities in Uganda and Sudan, and smaller ones in the UK, Canada, Australia and the US.[3] Some Zande families manage to send their children to good schools and universities in Uganda. Others are discovering the old books that Evans-Pritchard once wrote about the region, and have begun to write anthropological essays themselves.[4] Meanwhile, the urban centres of 'Zandeland' have grown more cosmopolitan, attracting Dinka butchers, Darfuri and Eritrean traders, Indian pharmacists and Western loggers, missionaries and aid workers. These global connections are facilitated by modern technologies like Western Union, Facebook and WhatsApp (Barnes *et al.* 2018).

This flux of people, ideas and goods has also had ramifications for traditional practices and institutions, such as chieftaincy and kingship. By some accounts, globalization is alienating particularly the youth from traditional authority structures. But modern technologies and connections can also bolster renewed traditional practices (Geschiere 1997). In Yambio, this was apparent from the discussions about a draft constitution for the envisioned reinstated Zande Kingdom. In October 2014 Bruno Braak interviewed a young man, who was studying law in the UK and was proud of his Zande heritage. He had been involved in drafting this constitution, and explained the various sources of inspiration they had had:

> We found that the Colombian Constitution allows for a fair degree of autonomy for ethnic communities. Also, some American tribes have a tribal constitution. We also look toward the Baganda in Uganda. We need a local system of governance to suit our needs. The fundamental question was: What part of history can we maintain, and what part should we improve?[5]

This chapter draws on qualitative research (2014–19) among Azande in South Sudan and in displacement in Uganda, to explore a paradox: Zande traditional authorities

1 Former state minister in Western Equatoria State now living as a refugee in Kampala, 1 August 2017.

2 The Sudanese Civil Wars (1956–72 and 1983–2005) resulted in forced migration. Some people were also displaced by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). See also Hillary and Braak, 2022.

3 For instance, in London the 'Azande Community UK' organized a King Gbudue Memorial Day on 16 February 2018.

4 Most notably Isaac Waanzi Hillary has written anthropological essays and poems in Zande and English, which are available on his blog, worondimo.wordpress.com (accessed 11 November 2022).

5 Interview with Zande law student, Yambio, 2 October 2014.

were widely seen as weak, and yet they enjoyed widespread public appeal. Visions of a future that more resembles the imagined past – with prominent roles for chieftaincy and kingship – had gained currency, we argue, in large part due to the precarity and uncertainty that many Azande have recently experienced. Traditional authorities' wartime weakness and suffering had not decreased their credibility, quite the contrary. People felt that when traditional authorities had suffered in this way, this had demonstrated their loyalty to 'their people'. By some accounts, cultural erosion has not just resulted from war and displacement but was at the root of it. Bringing back traditional institutions, then, was presented as a way to salvage what remained, and to promote peace and development. We argue that it is in this light that the reinstatement of a Zande Kingdom in Yambio in February 2022 should be seen.

Methods

This chapter draws heavily on *Customary Authorities Displaced*, a report written by the authors for the Rift Valley Institute's (RVI) South Sudan Customary Authorities project (Braak and Kenyi 2018). Most of the research for that report was conducted by the authors in July and August 2017 in Uganda in several refugee settlements (Bidi-Bidi, Kiryandongo and Rhino Camp) and urban centres (Arua, Bweyale and Kampala), where many refugees have settled. We further draw on our research in Western Equatoria[6] up to 2015, and in refugee settlements in Uganda between January 2017 and November 2018. Our research methods included semi-structured and oral-history interviews, focus-group discussions and video elicitation. Most of what we write in this chapter reflects the situation in those times and places. The reinstatement of a Zande Kingdom in February 2022 fits with the trends we describe, but we have not yet conducted follow-up research on its current form and function.

Evans-Pritchard emphasized that in anthropology findings are influenced by the researcher's background, character and outlook (Evans-Pritchard 1976:240–54). Our work is no different. John Justin Kenyi is a South Sudanese man from Central Equatoria State, who was educated in Norway and now lives as a refugee in Uganda. Bruno Braak is a Dutch man, who first came to (then) Sudan in 2011. Our research assistants were young English-speaking Azande. People we met, explicitly or implicitly, reflected on our backgrounds to decide whether and with whom to speak, and what to speak about.

In one instance in August 2017, Bruno was refused an interview with a grandson of King Gbudue,[7] whose defeat at the hands of Anglo-Egyptian forces is seen by many as the beginning of colonial rule over the Azande. The next day, he called Bruno back to his home. During the polite introductions before the interview, he asked: 'Do you know what the white man did to my grandfather, King Gbudue? They killed him! Have you come to kill me?' At times people were more open to speak with our Zande research assistants, at other times they refused to do so and instead only wished to speak with one of us directly. One former minister explicitly linked his willingness to speak to a foreign anthropologist with his concern about the erosion of Zande culture. He argued that Evans-Pritchard was given access under the same terms:

> You know the Azande were the first to know that one day our culture will be eroded. So they cooperated with Evans-Pritchard to document the culture for our children. That was the agreement: they allowed him access in return for his documentation of the culture.[8]

There are countless ways in which these sorts of sentiments may have influenced our findings. But we feel that working in an international team has helped us to mitigate for some of these limitations.

In this chapter we write about the 'Azande' (plural) and 'Zande' (singular or adjective), that is, people who self-identified as Zande and typically spoke Pazande as their mother tongue. This 'population' is far from homogenous. Evans-Pritchard describes how from the mid-eighteenth century, the 'Ambomu people under the leadership of their Avongara royal house' had migrated east to what is now South Sudan (Evans-Pritchard, 1971:xi). In the process, they conquered and subjected many smaller groups, amalgamating them into the Zande language group. Over time, this group came to share certain cultural beliefs and practices, and to self-identify as a 'people' – even as differentiation between clans and regions persisted (Evans-Pritchard 1957). Still today, the wider Zande group is subdivided into clans. It appeared to us that these clans mattered more in South Sudan, where they continued to shape the distribution of land; than in Uganda, where clan relatives are fewer and clans anyway cannot offer access to land. In South Sudan, as elsewhere, 'blood-based' notions of identity are common, but in everyday life identities are often fluid and negotiated, emphasized or concealed, depending on the context. Some Zande-speakers today care very little about 'Zandeness' or emphasize other identities – including the new-found Ugandan one. Intermarriages between ethnic groups are not uncommon, and youth groups of friends – especially in displacement – typically include members of other ethnic groups. In Uganda, Zande refugee youth have set up numerous football teams –

6 Especially in the Zande-majority counties of Yambio, Nzara, Tambura and Ezo.

7 Also written as Gbudwe.

8 Interview with a former state minister in Western Equatoria State living as a refugee in Kampala, 1 August 2017.

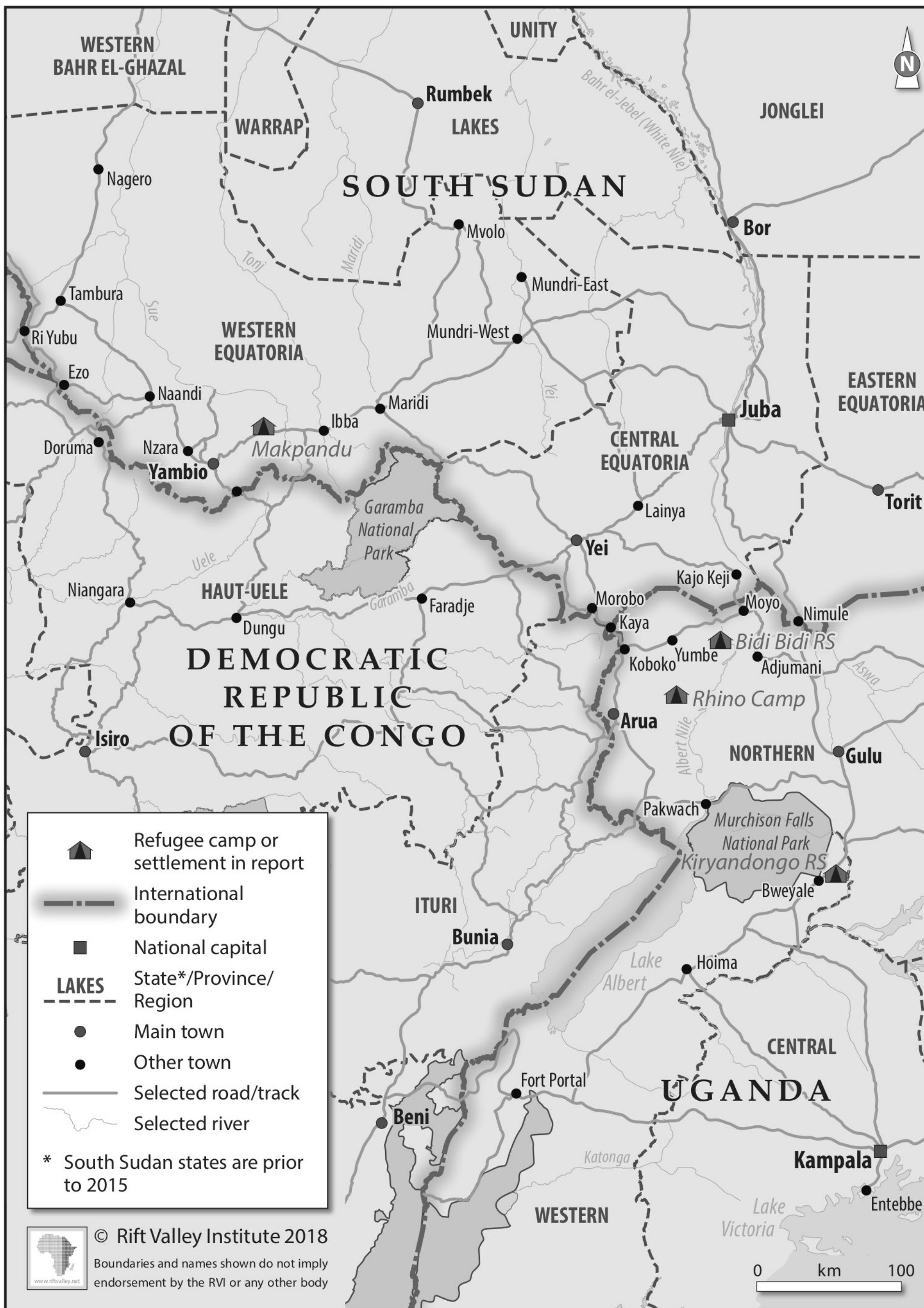

Figure 24.1 Relevant areas of South Sudan, DR Congo, and Uganda. Cartography by Jillian Luff, MAPgrafix. Source: Braak and Kenyi, 2018.

sometimes with Zande names like 'Gbudue', 'Bakindo' or 'Anisa' – which nonetheless often include non-Zande South Sudanese players.

Most South Sudanese Azande live in the west of Western Equatoria State. That area borders the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Central Africa Republic (CAR), where sizeable groups of Azande also live. Some South Sudanese Zande use the term 'Zandeland' (*Ringara Zande*) to refer roughly to the area from Tambura in the north-west to Ibba in the south-east. Yet its boundaries are contested, and the area hosts a rich diversity of people. The notion that land should belong to a certain (ethnic) group of people had been periodically reinforced by state policies. In colonial times, for some time there was a 'Zande District'. And between 2015 to 2020, 'Western Equatoria State' was formally divided into four states, two of which – 'Gbudue' and 'Tombura' – were named after pre-colonial Zande kings. The wars and displacement that affected

the region have increased mobility between the various Zande-dominated areas (Hillary 2021) and beyond it. During the current civil war (2013–present) many Azande have sought refuge in Uganda, especially in Rhino Camp and Kiryandongo Refugee Settlements, and in Arua and Kampala.

Signposts

The remainder of the chapter is divided into three sections. The first briefly explores the turbulent history of 'Zandeland' since the first non-African foreigners arrived in about 1858, and the roles of chiefs and kings in it. It highlights five episodes that contemporary Zande narratives often discuss when speaking about this history. The second section describes the state of chieftaincy in the last South Sudanese Civil War (2013–present) – both at home, and in displacement. The third section describes and analyses some of the current debates and future visions about chieftaincy and the reinstatement of a Zande Kingdom.

Historical memories, reflecting on 150 years of turbulence

For many Azande, the story of disruption and decay begins with the death of King Gbudue – a member of the Avungara royal clan – in February 1905. King Gbudue (also known as Yambio, born circa 1835) is remembered for ruling over the Azande during a period of military prowess that included battles with the Dinka, Moru, Arabs, and British. By some accounts, the Azande lived in unity and peace, and together resisted colonial occupation. But both Evans-Pritchard, Reining (1966:7), and Poggo (1992), and oral histories such as told by then-paramount chief Wilson Peni, testify to considerable intrigue and warfare between the various kings and princes.[9] In fact, the 'betrayal by King Tombura' of King Gbudue is still brought up to this day – most recently at a meeting of Azande in Kampala, Uganda.[10]

Many Azande still speak of 'those days of Gbudue' and associate it with an unchanging order of culture, authority, and identity. Evans-Pritchard wrote that during his field research between 1926 and 1930, '[for the Azande] before and after Gbudue's death is not to them just a difference in time before and after an event. It is a deep moral cleavage.' (1957:65). Some ninety years later, Gbudue's death continues to serve as a watershed moment in Zande historical memory: since then, colonization, wars, and displacement have disrupted what once was. But to nuance too neat a periodization, Evans-Pritchard (1971:283, 294) discusses how Arab and European influences in Zandeland date back as far as 1858, and historical records and present-day oral histories suggest that resistance to colonial occupation continued until at least 1914.[11]

The (colonial) state and chieftaincy

Colonial occupation divided the Zande people into three states: Belgian, French, and Anglo-Egyptian. Many Azande today feel that these divisions were designed by the colonial powers to subjugate them: 'When the British came in, they saw that these [Zande] people were not easy to handle or convince so they had to divide them in to three countries.'[12] In other parts of Sudan, the Anglo-Egyptian colonial administration empowered or invented chiefs. But with the Azande the colonial strategy was first to divide, co-opt or militarily overthrow pre-existing authorities. After a period of military administration (1905–11), the civil administration recognized or appointed chiefs it could control and regulated their powers. It diminished chiefs' powers over land but endorsed or created their role in taxation and dispute resolution.[13] The colonial government also influenced the relations between chiefs, people, and land by resettling hundreds of thousands of Azande – first in the 1920s to combat sleeping sickness, then in the 1940s as part of the Zande Scheme. The coming of colonial authority is still associated with a decay in cultural order: 'Azande were civilized before the coming of British.'[14]

9 In Evans-Pritchard's account, the overthrow of Gbudue himself was facilitated considerably by the cooperation with the Belgian colonial forces of Zande Prince Renzi (son of Wando), and the cooperation with the Anglo-Egyptian colonial forces by King Tambura and the sons of King Ndoruma (Evans-Pritchard 1971:388–9).

10 A Zande friend told Bruno that during this meeting of Azande living in Uganda in early 2019, friction arose between people from Tombura and Yambio. The latter made comparisons between the betrayal by Tombura of Yambio in 1905, and the unpopular governorship of Patrick Zamoi (from Tombura) over Gbudue State (based in Yambio).

11 The Sudan Archives at Durham University hold a series of letters from R.G.C. Brock, Inspector of Maridi District, to R.M. Feilden, the Governor of Bahr el-Ghazal, 'concerning unrest amongst the Azande and … plans to drive the government out of Yambio' (1914). Three chiefs were found guilty and sentenced to ten years imprisonment by a Mudir's court. This sentence was later suspended by Governor-General Reginald Wingate, who instead fired the three chiefs and exiled them to Khartoum. T.A.T. Leitch, Letters from colonial officials R.G.C. Brock, R.M. Feilden, and W.R.G. Bond pertaining 'unrest among the Azande', Durham University Library, Archives and Special Collections. Reference code: GB-0033-SAD.315/6/1-30, 1914 January 21 and November 30. Evans-Pritchard doubted whether the chiefs – four of Gbudue's sons: Mange, Basongoda, Gangura and Sasa' – were seriously contemplating armed revolt given the futility of open resistance (1971:394).

12 Interview with female Zande elder, Makpandu, March 2015.

13 The colonial government incorporated and limited the chiefs' judicial tasks through the Chiefs' Courts Ordinance (1931). Among other things, this regulated the kinds of cases they could handle and the sanctions they could enforce. (Leonardi 2013:81).

14 Interview with female Zande elder, Makpandu, March 2015.

The government's incorporation and regulation of the chiefs, leaving them a considerable degree of autonomy, has essentially remained unchanged since colonial times (Rolandsen 2005). Chieftaincy became a gateway position between the state and its people, one that offered risks and considerable opportunities (Leonardi 2013). Some Western Equatorians assert that colonialism has never ended. Whether the government is controlled by the British, Arabs or Dinka is not always thought to matter much, because it still 'belongs to other people' (de Vries 2015).

Chiefs during the Sudanese Civil Wars

The First and Second Sudanese Civil Wars (1956–72 and 1983–2005) profoundly affected life in 'Zandeland' and the position of customary authorities. During the wars, then southern Sudan fractured into various shifting spheres of control and many Azande fled to the DRC and the CAR. In the Second Civil War, the relationship between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) and customary authorities in Western Equatoria was ambiguous. In the areas it controlled, the SPLM/A set up civil institutions to rule over local populations, and in some instances SPLA commanders took over chief-like roles (Leonardi 2013). The SPLM/A incorporated chiefs into the military structure and relied on them to 'provide what was needed (recruits, porters, grain, cattle, etc.) in addition to their local conflict resolution capacity' (Rolandsen 2005:69).

Chiefs argue they were instrumental to the war effort, but that their partnership with the SPLA was one-sided. Chiefs who were unwilling or unable to provide the SPLA with what they needed were humiliated in front of their people. A former state minister recounts that: 'Some chiefs were made to carry loads in front of their subjects. Some were lashed … You know when a chief is lashed in front of his people… He loses a certain dignity.'[15] These malpractices were acknowledged by President Salva Kiir in 2009, when he opened a conference with traditional leaders by thanking them for their contributions during the war, and by apologizing for the fact that 'some of you were manhandled and treated badly by some of our soldiers' (Leonardi 2013:1).

This wartime sense of neglect was further aggravated by the SPLA's inability to protect Western Equatoria State when it faced incursions from the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).[16] In response, senior Western Equatorian politicians and customary authorities supported the establishment of vigilante groups, called 'Arrow Boys'.[17] The South Sudanese central government promised support, but this never materialized.[18] The Arrow Boys proved effective in countering the threat of the LRA – in the process bolstering a sense of pride among Western Equatorians and Azande in particular (Schomerus and Rigterink 2016:17).

Independence (2011) and chiefly relations with the new state

Independence Day celebrations in Yambio on 9 July 2011 began with 'an early gathering including the governor at the grave of King Gbudue' (Siemens 2015). This was perhaps illustrative of the hopes people held for bringing back sovereignty to local society, and for the renewed importance people at this time attributed to pre-colonial history. In 2015, Zande society – through a variety of efforts involving chiefs, the state government, and the church – sought to rediscover and promote elements of its culture that had been lost or suffered due to colonization and war: the language, the clothing, the ways of cultivating.

The years of war and displacement, however, had left many chiefs poor, humiliated, and demoralized. Chiefs were often unable to give resources to those in need, to influence land and labour, or to access state authority, which had helped cement their authority in earlier days. In 2015 a county commissioner summed up this change in status, observing that, 'Many chiefs drink too much. They don't have a reasonable house.… As a leader, you must feed people. You must have wealth!'[19] A grandchild of a pre-colonial Zande king agreed: 'Now the chiefs or traditional authorities just lead a normal life among their people. The names and titles are there, but no real power.'[20]

South Sudan's chiefs had hoped that upon independence, national government would reward their support for the war effort with more prominent positions. But they were disappointed. By 2015 the main government-endorsed function for customary authorities was to resolve minor disputes in their communities. Often, this was done in state-recognized customary courts, at the lowest three administrative levels.[21] The higher chiefs were paid salaries by local government, but this remuneration grew increasingly insignificant as inflation soared from early

15 Interview with former state minister in Western Equatoria, Kampala, 13 June 2017.

16 The LRA is a Ugandan rebel group which crossed to South Sudan, DRC, and CAR. It had been making incursions into Western Equatoria since 2005, which intensified after failed peace talks in Juba in 2008.

17 Particularly influential in this regard, was governor Joseph Bakosoro (2010–15) – Braak and Kenyi 2018:26.

18 'Some 5 million Sudanese pounds (more than USD $2 million) will be spent arming the "Arrow Boys" vigilantes, Western Equatoria State governor Joseph Bakosoro told Sudan Tribune.' (Ruati 2010).

19 Interview with county commissioner, Yambio, 27 January 2015.

20 Interview with grandchild of pre-colonial Zande King, Arua, 9 August 2017.

21 These levels are the county, *payam* (sub-county) and *boma* (village, ward). See also: Government of South Sudan 2009, 2011.

2015. Meanwhile, chiefs were no longer allowed to levy taxes, which had bolstered their wealth in the past.[22] Chiefs' roles in land tenure and transactions were equally challenged, especially in urban areas, by the government's land formalization programmes. As in colonial times, chiefs relied on government, which was seen by some to undermine their authenticity and legitimacy.[23]

Chieftaincy at war and in displacement (2013–present)

The current civil war started in December 2013, and by 2015 it spread to Western Equatoria.[24] The war cost an estimated four hundred thousand lives (Checchi *et al.* 2018), and over four million people fled their homes.[25] For many South Sudanese, forced displacement is a familiar condition. For some people who were alive during the First Sudanese Civil War (1955–72), this is their fourth such experience (Hillary and Braak 2022). Some of the people we interviewed had spent more time living in refugee settlements 'outside' than at 'home' in South Sudan.

Chiefs and royalty and the return of war

War spread to Western Equatoria when the SPLA clashed with local armed groups, some of whom were former Arrow Boys. The return of war was seen by some chiefs to stem from their lack of control over an increasingly militarized and undisciplined youth (Miettaux and Garodia 2015; Miettaux 2016). But our research suggests that the mobilization of the youth happened in part through existing (customary) authority structures. As one former Arrow Boy narrated to us, 'Our leaders started the war and pushed it to the youth. Because we do not have education, we do not understand.'[26] Whether stronger chieftaincy and a more obedient youth would result in less violence, thus remains contested.

With the resumption of war, the chiefs' uncomfortable dual reliance on government and local communities became more dangerous. When chiefs sought to convince the SPLA and the local armed groups that they were neutral, they were often not believed, especially when they moved between the government-controlled towns and the rebel-held countryside. Chiefs became vulnerable to suspicion, allegations, and attacks from all sides.[27]

This precarious situation of customary authorities was perhaps best illustrated by the arrest of then-Paramount Chief Wilson Peni in November 2016. Peni is the grandson of King Gbudue and was at the time heir-apparent for a to-be-reinstated Zande Kingdom. When he was arrested in 2016, there was no trial or explanation. Yet Azande in Uganda interpreted Peni's arrest as retribution for his continuing to speak to the Arrow Boys and for his strained relations with the then governor of Gbudue state.[28] Former governor Bakosoro protested his arrest, warning that it could 'destroy the social fabric of the Zande community' (Radio Tamazuj 2016). Some also considered it to undermine Zande visions of a reinstated kingdom. Peni was detained for a month, and after his release was given a position on the National Dialogue Steering Committee. In February 2022, he was crowned King of the South Sudanese Zande.

This points to a contemporary paradox in the power of chiefs in South Sudan. King Peni's legitimacy is in large part based on him being an Avungara-clan member, grandchild of Gbudue, and a good traditional leader for his people. But his formal position, first as paramount chief and later as king, and his personal freedom, are controlled by the South Sudanese government. Of the many sources of power that a chief can draw on, government support and protection remain vitally important. Reflecting this, King Peni has spent much of the recent years in South Sudan's capital, Juba.

Displaced/absent chiefs in Uganda

The war's large-scale displacement further undermined the position of chiefs. Most chiefs stayed behind in South Sudan, because for a chief crossing the border is understood to mean a decline in power. They are highly regarded when they manage to shield their communities from the worst shocks of war or at least suffer in solidarity. One elderly woman living in a refugee settlement said that, 'You die

22 Under the Khartoum regime, the Sudanese government used chiefs to levy a household tax (*kofuta*). The revenue was divided between the chiefs and the town council.

23 Telephone interview with high-level government official in Yambio, 10 August 2017.

24 For a deeper analysis of the South Sudanese civil war and its manifestation in the southern Equatoria region, see Copeland 2016.

25 The 'Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre' estimated that 1.9 million South Sudanese people were internally displaced as of 1 April 2019. UNHCR estimated that 2.28 million South Sudanese people were refugees or asylum seekers as of 28 February 2019.

26 Focus-group discussion with former Arrow Boys, refugee settlement in Uganda, 6 August 2017.

27 Schomerus and Rigterink describe how prior to the conflict 'depending on personal relations', chiefs in Western Equatoria could be viewed as a 'government representative' or 'buffer between government and people' (Schomerus and Rigterink 2016:26). This research suggests that under the Bakosoro administration it had been possible for chiefs to switch between both of these roles, depending on context. As the conflict in Western Equatoria escalated, however, the position of customary authorities became more precarious.

28 Between 2015 and 2020 Western Equatoria State was split into four new states. Major General Patrick Zamoi was the first governor of Gbudue State when it covered Yambio, Nzara and Tombura counties. Later, Tombura became a separate state with Zamoi as its governor. Interview with former government official, Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, 19 June 2017.

with your people! … That is the spirit we appreciate in them!'[29]

The few chiefs from Western Equatoria that are living in Uganda, have mostly opted to live in towns and cities if they can afford to do so. When interviewed, they generally had a personal story of persecution or other reasons – often health-related – to justify their departure from South Sudan. Most emphasized that they would go back as soon as the war ends. The chiefs in Uganda generally stress that they have no formal position there and that they want to abide by the country's laws.[30] In the refugee settlements chiefs are not actively involved in governance. Instead, the settlement commandant from the Ugandan Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), the UNHCR and a variety of NGOs hold authority. The highest South Sudanese authorities in the settlements are the Refugee Welfare Councils (RWCs) – elected bodies of refugees who are involved in settlement coordination meetings.

In Uganda, South Sudanese refugees from different parts of the country now live as neighbours. One female refugee in Uganda explained that now 'the people are scattered, including the chiefs in South Sudan. So everyone is "free" and lives in his own ways.'[31] In some instances, refugees organize community bodies. Kiryandongo Refugees Settlement, for instance, has organized 'communities' of 'the Azande', 'Western Equatorians' and 'the Equatorians'. These structures tend to be very formalized – with a 'chairperson', 'cabinet' and so forth – but to date have limited influence (Braak 2022).

Current debates about the future of chiefs and the Kingdom

The previous two sections described some of the changes that 'Zandeland' has experienced, and how they are seen to have weakened traditional authorities. Since the Zande kings and princes were defeated or co-opted by the colonial state at the beginning of the twentieth century, they have not played roles of similar importance. In part through displacement, urbanization and globalization, Zande people are living more urban lives, enjoy more education, and are in contact with ideas and people from all over the world. One could imagine such 'modern' influences would further weaken the appeal of 'traditional' institutions like chiefs and kings. And yet our research confirms the findings of an earlier survey in Western Equatoria, which found that the initiative to 'reinstate the Zande Kingdom' enjoyed overwhelming support.[32] And indeed in February 2022, on the 117th anniversary of the death of King Gbudue, a new Zande kingdom was reinstated in Yambio – with formerly paramount chief Wilson Peni as the new king. Why?

The future of chieftaincy

Most Zande people we spoke to in Uganda supported the idea of, once again, having stronger chiefs. What they expected from them, however, varied quite widely, depending on their societal position. It was clear to all, including to chiefs themselves, that their claims to 'tradition' and historical rootedness did not rule out future change and reform. When asked about customary authority, people often also spoke of cultural order in a wider sense: about the existential anchoring offered by a body of knowledge encompassing history, culture, morality and identity. In the ideal-typical memory, this knowledge used to be taught by elders to youth around the fires at night, and it was reinforced on significant days (e.g., births, weddings and funerals). War and displacement, with its scattering of people, were seen by many as threats to this order.

People in the camps projected their personal predicament onto the future roles they hoped stronger customary leaders could play. Elderly men often emphasized that elders and chiefs are the custodians of culture, language and law. They hoped that customary leaders could bring youth back into the fold. Women in the refugee settlements often stressed that they were alone in providing for their families. Stronger customary authorities, they reasoned, could provide them with advice, security and money.[33] Youth often expressed different hopes for a restored chieftaincy. First, they hoped that customary authorities would reverse the inflation of dowries. As one former combatant explained, 'In those days of [King] Gbudue, they helped the youth. Unlike now, where people marry using money.'[34] Second, younger people hoped that chiefs would resume their role as conduits between their people and the (central) government. As one former combatant put it: 'It is the chiefs who know and present issues to the government. Many people are far from the government and the government does not know about them or their challenges. If anything happens, the government will not know… It is the chief who knows.'[35] In other words, support

29 Focus-group discussion with elders, female respondent, refugee settlement in Uganda, 12 August 2017.

30 Interview with former Mundu chief, refugee settlement in Uganda, 12 August 2017.

31 Interview with a 40-year-old Moru refugee, Bidi Bidi refugee settlement, 18 August 2017.

32 Some 94.5 per cent of households surveyed in Tombura and Ezo counties agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: 'I support the coronation of a new Zande King.' (Rigterink, Kenyi and Schomerus, 2014:60).

33 Interview with 19-year-old Moru refugee woman, Rhino Camp Refugee Settlement, 11 August 2017.

34 Focus-group discussion with former Arrow Boys, Bweyale, 6 August 2017.

35 Focus-group discussion with former Arrow Boys, Bweyale, 6 August 2017.

for chieftaincy in South Sudan did not mean a desire to have a parallel system, but rather to have stronger links to the state.

Whether and how chieftaincy ought to be reformed was debated by Azande in the Ugandan refugee settlements. Three questions frequently resurfaced. First, should chiefs be elected or appointed, or can they inherit their position? Traditionalists argued that the hereditary quality of chieftaincy gave the institution its independence from politics and politicians.[36] But reformists argued that chiefs should always be elected, so that good people without chiefly heritage could come to positions of leadership, and so that bad chiefs could be held accountable for their performance.

A second question concerned the eligibility of women for chiefly roles. It appeared that most people supported a stronger role for women. Since the Second Sudanese Civil War, women have played more prominent roles in government.[37] Western Equatoria has had female members of parliament and state ministers, and a female governor[38] and county commissioner. In 2015 many customary courts also had a female member on their three-person panel of judges and there were also headwomen (the lowest rank of chieftaincy). Stronger positions for women also enjoyed support from, for instance, then-Paramount Chief Peni, who argued that 'Women can sometimes understand some topics much deeper than a man.'[39]

A third question was whether chieftaincy should be open to non-Avungara. At the time of our research in South Sudan in 2015, most paramount chiefs in Zande-majority counties hailed from the Avungara (royal) clan. Chiefs below the paramount chief, such as executive chiefs, sub-chiefs or headmen, more often came from other clans or ethnic groups.[40] Some people remained strongly in favour of keeping the Avungara in power, arguing that their right to rule was 'God-given.'[41] The view that other clans should rule appeared a minority one.[42]

Reinstating the Zande Kingdom

Efforts were made to reinstate the Zande Kingdom after independence in 2011.[43] A committee was formed, in 2014 collections were held, and a sub-national Zande constitution was being written. Although the initiative was widely seen to come from a group of Zande customary leaders and politicians in Yambio, it enjoyed overwhelming support in other Zande-dominated parts of Western Equatoria, with one chief in Ezo saying, 'People are ready! If anything comes from Yambio, we are ready.'[44] At the time, the church and state government supported reinstatement, too. But, as a senior Avungara clan member explained in 2015, 'Politicians in Juba fear the kingdom. They want divide and rule. The kingdom will create unity among the Azande and they will be very powerful.'[45] His words foreshadowed the conflict that would come to Western Equatoria later that same year.

Due to the South Sudanese Civil War, the reinstatement was put on hold. The Zande leadership wished to avoid the impression that they wanted to separate from South Sudan and were keen to have state recognition and support for a reinstated kingdom. As the Avungara clan member indicated, 'The launch of the kingdom was supposed to be attended by the president and other African kings. But [now there is] insecurity. How long will we wait?'[46]

Azande in the Ugandan refugee settlements in 2016–18 expressed unanimous support for the reinstatement of a Zande kingdom. But as with chieftaincy, the exact form and function of such a kingdom was debated. Some hoped that a reinstated Zande kingdom would restore peace to Western Equatoria, others said the kingdom would help to maintain Zande culture at a time when, in the settlements as well as at home, it was eroding.[47]

Traditionalists insisted that the new kingdom ought to resemble that of King Gbudue, but everyone acknowledged that it would differ in important respects. A revived

36 Focus-group discussion with men, Arua, 25 August 2017.

37 Since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005, a twenty-five per cent quota for female representation at various levels of government has been enshrined in a number of laws.

38 Jemma Nunu Kumba, from 2008 to April 2010. Prior to independence she served as Member of Parliament (MP) to the national parliament in Khartoum. After her tenure as governor of WES she held a variety of national ministerial positions in Juba, and became the deputy secretary general of the SPLM.

39 Interview with Paramount Chief Wilson Peni, Yambio, 1 October 2014.

40 For example, Chief Mombasa in Yambio, who was widely respected, was not Avungara. I did not ask about his clan, but another former chief identified Mombasa as being of the Bungo clan. Interview with former chief, Yambio, 25 February 2015.

41 Interview with 31-year-old Zande woman, Arua, 24 August 2017.

42 Interview with 40-year-old Zande woman, Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement, 19 August 2017.

43 We were told that earlier attempts were made in the late 1990s, as a senior politician explained, 'But Tombura also wanted its king and Ezo, too… Then there were the Zande in Khartoum, who had a different way of restoring it.' Phone interview with high-level government official in Yambio, from Arua, 10 August 2017.

44 Interview with chief, Ezo, 25 March 2015.

45 Interview with senior Avungara clan member, Yambio, 16 February 2015.

46 Interview with senior Avungara clan member, Yambio, 16 February 2015.

47 Interview with cluster chairperson, Rhino Camp Refugee Settlement, 7 June 2017.

kingdom was seen by all as a sub-national political entity, rather than an independent one – and people often referred to the Shilluk kingdom in South Sudan or the Buganda kingdom in Uganda as models. Most respondents also opined that some pre-colonial practices should not be revived.[48] More generally, most Zande refugees rejected the notion that the king would be above the law and could theoretically decide over life and death on a whim. A senior politician in Yambio who is Avungara elaborates:

> People were enthusiastic about the kingdom but they want it to be amended. People now consider certain things in our tradition not good – like our way of marriage, interpersonal relations, that a father canes his child. Then they say a right in a convention has been violated. Back then, a person did not belong to himself but to the community. In those days, elders were respected… I am not saying the Zande kingdom cannot be restored but I am saying that it would not be authentic. It's due to globalization and Christianity, which forbid certain things.[49]

For this man, the restoration of 'the kingdom' was about much more than reinstated royalty; it was about societal change towards a more authentic communal and hierarchical kind of social life. The speaker juxtaposed Christianity, international conventions and globalization, on the one hand, with authenticity and tradition, on the other. This speaker considered that modern amendments to the traditional institution would undermine its authenticity. Others saw adaptations to the present time in a more positive light. A non-Avungara former state minister said:

> I am in favour of a reformed Zande Kingdom. I am from that community but that does not mean I can support every tradition blindly. The king had absolute power over life and death. Instead there should be an investigation, a case before the court of law and then a formal sentencing. One hundred years back, life was completely different. Forget about 100 years ago in Europe, 100 years ago in Zandeland. There was no telephone, no internet and the [Christian] faith was not there. So of course, these things have to be reformed.[50]

Importantly, there was a broad consensus among non-Zande Western Equatorians in Uganda that they would stand to lose from a reinstated Zande kingdom. In their historic memory, the golden era of King Gbudue came at the expense of many smaller groups.[51] Some stressed that the Zande ethnic group always dominated Western Equatoria, and that its members also received ample opportunities at the national level.[52] These non-Zande often express anxiety over the prospect of a stronger Zande community, which they expected to dominate the smaller groups in Western Equatoria. Some said this was already happening when Western Equatoria State was divided into four new states between 2015 and 2020. A Mundu refugee encapsulated the problem: 'My paternal uncle was chased from Yambio to Maridi after the creation of the many states [in October 2015]. Because they said he does not belong there.'[53] Some feared that a reinstated Zande kingdom would cause similar dominance and exclusion for non-Zande in the unclearly delineated 'Zandeland'.

In the refugee settlements, identities were often formed or invoked contextually and in opposition to one another. Sometimes ethnicity seemed to matter less in the settlements, where Western Equatorians and Equatorians more broadly, united in community structures. The establishment of those structures was partially driven by the 'scattering' of Western Equatorian ethnic groups over the Ugandan settlements, and by fear and mistrust of other large ethnic groups, such as the Nuer and Dinka. Discussions about the Zande Kingdom, however, revealed that there remained considerable friction and distrust between the Azande and other Western Equatorian communities.

Conclusion

On 9 February 2022, the 117th anniversary of King Gbudue's death at the hands of an Anglo-Egyptian colonial expedition, a new Zande Kingdom was reinstated in Yambio. A festive crowd gathered around the tomb of King Gbudue in Yambio. Then-paramount chief Atoroba Wilson Peni Rikito Gbudue arrived in an SUV and was dressed in bark-cloth

48 The most notorious and widely rejected past practice was that of burying kings and princes with a number of live women.

49 High-level government official in Yambio, from Arua, 10 August 2017.

50 Former state minister in Western Equatoria, Kampala, 1 August 2017.

51 'The kingdom was against non-Zande tribes. Reinstating the kingdom means bringing back the bad old system of misrule. They used to speak ill about the non-Zande, abducted children and women, and gave them Zande names, robbing them of their identities through assimilation.' Interview with non-Zande community chairperson, Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement, 17 August 2017.

52 A Mundu elder explained, '[In 1972] the speaker of the southern Sudan parliament was from the Zande – Angelo Beda – who is now the co-chair of the National Dialogue committee. And then later, the president of the High Executive Council was also from Zande, the late Joseph Tombura… And when Western Equatoria became a state, you know? Most of the governors are Zande.' Interview with former Mundu chief, a refugee settlement in Uganda, 12 August 2017.

53 Focus group discussion with non-Zande refugees, Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement, 19 August 2017.

attire covered in lions, for the rite of passage that would make him king. During the ceremony and out of respect for the new king, three Western Equatorian political leaders reconciled after years of violent political differences (Okuj 2022). This chimed with many Zande people's hope; that after the return of the kingdom a more peaceful future beckoned.

This chapter was researched years before the reinstatement (until 2018), but it helps to explain how war and displacement strengthened Zande people's nostalgia for the pre-colonial days of King Gbudue. He came to symbolize a time of sovereignty, self-determination, stability and cohesion. In the midst of lifetimes of insecurity, displacement and change, that vision was a persuasive one, as the near unanimous support for the restoration of the Zande kingdom indicated.

Support or opposition to the Zande kingdom, as well as for stronger chiefs, shared similarities. They offered people a canvas on which to paint their frustrations about the present and their aspirations for the future. Young men envisioned that customary authorities would ensure reasonable bride prices and engage in dialogues with the government. Parents and older people insisted that customary authorities would help to shepherd the community (in particular the youth) away from malign global influences, and towards respect and responsibility. While the chiefs were weak and the kingdoms defeated, it had been easy to imagine that a restoration would bring all things desired. But now that a Zande kingdom has been reinstated, what will come of it? The present moment calls for new anthropological research into the contemporary reconstruction of traditional institutions.

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25

'Anthropology became the magic'

Perspectives on Evans-Pritchard from Juba

John Gai Yoh, Melha Ruot Biel and Kim Jal Lieh, compiled by Naomi Pendle

Evans-Pritchard's works are the most acclaimed and critiqued in anthropology. He first travelled to the Nuerlands (in southern Sudan) in the 1930s, and his writings on the Nuer have become a seminal part of how Evans-Pritchard's scholarly contribution is understood. Books from his trilogy on the Nuer still appear in foundational lectures and debates in the discipline. Over the last century, revisiting the Nuer became an important way for a host of international scholars to build on, critique and revise not only his approaches but the assumptions of anthropology more broadly.[1]

Yet, of course, Nuer themselves have also been observing and navigating the shifting socio-political systems over this century, both in their everyday lives and through scholarship and debate. For Nuer, there was often much more at stake than the epistemic and ontological accuracy of Evans-Pritchard's work and the associated discipline of anthropology. Yet, Evans-Pritchard has both inspired and prompted critique from people who live in the socio-political systems that he attempted to describe.

Previous scholarship by Nuer academics has sought to correct or make use of the work of Evans-Pritchard. For example, Michael Wal Duany's 1992 doctoral thesis highlighted how regulatory ideas and institutional arrangements yielded an orderly way of life among the Nuer despite a lack of 'prisons and palaces'. This work heavily references that of Evans-Pritchard but also draws upon his own research findings. The framing of his doctoral thesis was heavily influenced by Vincent and Elinor Ostrom, and their concern with how institutions shape and are shaped by individual and group behaviour. Evans-Pritchard's work had useful resonance with this desire to notice less visible, non-state institutions and the role of culture, but Michael reinterpreted the role these institutions could play in modern governance structures. Michael Wal, unlike Evans-Pritchard, wanted to make clear that Nuer society was one of constitutional order. For Michael, the Nuer had clear institutions of governance that had contemporary relevance in the modern world.

Gabriel Giet Jal's 1987 doctoral thesis also heavily references Evans-Pritchard, but his whole approach can be seen as a critique of Evans-Pritchard's work (Jal 1987:2). Evans-Pritchard's work on the Nuer, especially his first book *The Nuer* (1940), lacks a historical perspective. As other chapters in this volume highlight, Evans-Pritchard clearly had a deep appetite to push anthropology towards history. However, his work on the Nuer, while being among his most famous, is among his least historical (Jal 1987:2–3). Jal's history of the Jikany Nuer confronts the lack of historicity in Evans-Pritchard's work and other ethnographies of the time. Two main concerns with Evans-Pritchard's work are visible in Jal's histories. Firstly, Jal is concerned that Evans-Pritchard's work presents the Nuer as primitive and inherently violent. This has distorted later historical accounts that have drawn on these perceptions of the Nuer. Secondly, Jal implicitly advocates for Nuer to be seen in terms of human history. The fundamental danger with a lack of history is that it dehumanizes the Nuer, portraying them as immune to the forces of human history (ibid.).

In more recent years, a new generation of scholars, including Kim Jal Lieh, have quoted, built on, nuanced and critiqued the work of Evans-Pritchard.[2] Kim Jal Lieh's 2019 book is a wide-ranging and interdisciplinary exploration of the long *durée* of African history, as well as a critique of the ways Africans have been misrepresented in archaeology, history and anthropology, including in the work of Evans-Pritchard. Discussions of racism through academic misrepresentations play a significant role in his book. Lieh provides a broad critique that reflects the contemporary, growing encouragement to explicitly confront racial hierarchies.

1 The work of Sharon Hutchinson is a renowned example of this (Hutchinson 1996).

2 For example, see: Kim J. Lieh (2018), The Curse and Legacy of the Naath and Jaang People of South Sudan: csps.org.ss/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/kim-2018.pdf (accessed 25 January 2023).

This chapter seeks to build on these discussions and record responses to Evans-Pritchard's work from three renowned contemporary scholars who identify as Nuer and were living in Juba in early 2021. The reflections that make up this chapter are not all from anthropologists or historians, but they are from people familiar with Evans-Pritchard's work. Through conversations on Whatsapp in early 2021, these intellectuals were invited to comment on what they perceived to be the significance of Evans-Pritchard's work. Extracts of these conversations are transcribed below.

The perspectives in this chapter reflect conversations with Dr. John Gai Yoh, Dr. Melha Ruot Biel and Kim Jal Lieh.

Dr. John Gai Yoh has been both a diplomat and politician for South Sudan, as well as a prolific scholar and supporter of black history (Kuyok 2015:926). He is the former Minister of Higher Education in South Sudan, and he previously led the SPLA mission to South Africa and was South Sudan's first ambassador to Turkey. As a scholar, he has worked for universities in Jordon and South Africa. He has published in both English and Arabic.

Dr. Melha Ruot Biel has published in English and Germany, and has lectured at universities in Germany and South Sudan. From 2011–19 he was Deputy Vice Chancellor at the new University of John Garang in Bor (Jonglei, South Sudan). He has also served as Director General in South Sudan's national Ministry of Housing. He is currently appointed to establish a new University College of Petroleum in Unity State.

Kim Jal Lieh studied at the University of Aberystwyth (UK) before going on to work for UNICEF in various different contexts of armed conflict around the world, including Iraq and Syria. He is also a prolific writer, and in 2019 published a book following a seven-year-long research project. On the back of the book, he described this work as 'a historical vignette of the mis-representations, racism and blackmailing of the Black Africans by some archaeologists, historians and anthropologists and researchers' (Lieh 2019).

This chapter is divided into two sections that address two common debates about the work of Evans-Pritchard. Section one discusses the historical context of his work, Evans-Pritchard's own positionality and what this means for how we should now approach his canon of scholarship on the Nuer. The second section explores his concept of 'ordered anarchy' among the Nuer. This focus is selected as it is one of the most contested elements of his work among Nuer who have engaged with it.

1: 'Anthropology became the magic to solve all the colonial problems'[3]

Evans-Pritchard's personal positionality, especially his attachment to the colonial apparatus, has long been levied against his scholarship. Anthropology shuddered epistemologically and ethically when the end of colonial period forced it to confront the colonially embedded legacy of its founding figures such as Evans-Pritchard. Among contemporary students of anthropology, the work of figures such as Evans-Pritchard is easily, and fatally, tainted by accusations that it is colonialist and ethnocentric (Schmidt 2017).

In 1898 the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium government took control in Khartoum, and the following decades were shaped by their attempts to bring the peoples of Sudan into their administration. The Nuer were among the last to be 'pacified'. At the time of Evans-Pritchard's work, the Anglo-Egyptian government perceived the Nuer as antagonistic. As Giet Jal summarized in his doctoral thesis,

> In 1898 when the Anglo-Egyptian government appeared in Upper Nile, the Nuer refused to accept their authority over their country. This open passive resistance against the Anglo-Egyptian government and the previous impression of them appear to have made the government administrators think that the Nuer were an intractable problem which impeded the peaceful establishment and efficient running of a new colonial administration.
>
> (1987:2)

When Evans-Pritchard first went to the Nuer, he was supported by the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium government in Sudan at the time. Shortly previously the Sudan government had conducted violent offensives against the Nuer, even in the areas Evans-Pritchard was to research in. As he himself describes, about an early attempt at research, 'When I entered a cattle camp it was not only as a stranger but an enemy, and they seldom tried to conceal their disgust at my presence, refusing to answer my greetings and even turning away when I addressed them.' (1940:11).

That Evans-Pritchard researched at a time of violent government controls was no coincidence. Both colonial violence and knowledge acquired through anthropology were means for controlling the Nuer. The 1930s were a period when the British government came to implement a belief that the knowledge gained through anthropological study could have utility in securing foreign rule. As the Civil Secretary of the British Colonial Office famously wrote, 'There can be no doubt that our troubles with the Nuer have been intensified by our lack of knowledge of the social structure of this people and the relative status of the various kinds of chiefs and Kajurs [a term used by government officials for Nuer prophets].'[4]

3 John Gai Yoh, per.comm. February 2021.

4 H J. MacMichael, quoted in Ahmad 1973:267.

John Gai:

> His [Evans-Pritchard's] personal perception was both as a scholar and the mission which was given to him [by the Anglo-Egyptian government of Sudan]. Of course, Evans-Pritchard going there [the Nuerlands] came after the crisis that took place between the British and the Nuer. So, the British felt that subjugating and asking Nuer to surrender, as they did militarily, may not create a smooth administration as time goes by. So, these people must be studied. The same that they did with Azande and other people.
>
> Evans-Pritchard, therefore, had two intellectual capacities. On the one hand, he was under British protection, but also as a scholar, he had his own purposes and prejudices.
>
> As you know, during that time, anthropology became like magic to solve all the problems. These colonial authorities thought that to be able to govern these people, you must first study them.
>
> (pers. comm., February 2021)

As John Gai highlights, the Sudan government came to see anthropology as a means to solve the problem of Nuer resistance against violent incorporation into government control. For the Sudan government, it was anthropology that came to be magic, in that it could explain how to govern the Nuer.

As Lieh has written,

> Many foreigners like him [Evans-Pritchard] also penetrated into the heart of the Nuer land through the main rivers of the Sobat, White Nile and the Bhar el Jebel. All of the writers who managed to penetrate into the Naath land wrote voluminous accounts of the Nuer that were later used by those with the intent to colonize the people. Different ways were used to make sure that every tiny aspect of the Nuer was documented and scrutinised.
>
> (2019:19)

Evans-Pritchard was working for the government and knew his ideas would be tested by that government.

Kim Jal Lieh:

> His [Evans-Pritchard's] work combined with colonialism. A lot of cultural assets were destroyed by the British of that time. They took some items. They destroyed some of the shrines. They displaced people. So, his work also aided colonialism… He gave copies of his work to the administration in Khartoum.
>
> For you to understand someone, you need to know their way of life. For example, Nuer, during the dry season, migrate with their cattle and go to water sources. In the wet season, they return. For someone who wants to colonise you or to make you do something, they will need to know where they will find them in the different seasons.
>
> That is exactly what Evans-Pritchard was doing. He was coming to study the Nuer way of life, the culture, the way they move their cattle and the meaning of cattle to the Nuer. And, for the Nuer, if you control their cattle, you will control the Nuer. So, Evans-Pritchard had to scrutinise all these things and then give this information to the colonisers in Khartoum. Then those government officials in Khartoum could devise ways to get the Nuer to confirm to their ways. Evans-Pritchard's work helped the government as it helped the government understand how the Nuer could be brought into the administration.
>
> (pers. comm., March 2021)

What does this colonial legacy mean for understanding Evans-Pritchard's work today?

Evans-Pritchard's work was used instrumentally by the colonial authorities and had consequences for the Nuer at the time. Yet, as his work was so fundamental to shaping anthropology and hierarchies of knowledge production, it could be claimed that the violence of this work extends much further and into discussions of knowledge production today. As Lieh has written elsewhere,

> The West has contributed strongly to creating low self-esteem of the black man and instilling an inferiority complex. This was achieved after generations of research and investigation, and reports conducted and presented by explorers. The mental perception of the black man has changed from a man of invention to an inferior man. The way he was classified, analyzed, and given a new class made him believe that he was that person from ancient times to the present. Education played a major factor in instilling inferiority; instead of developing further ancient hieroglyphs, which was the first writing style developed by the Cush, Egypt and Babylon, the West took it and placed it in a museum as an artifact. Instead, they introduced their own writing style, which promoted their culture and advanced their civilization. A good example is the work of Evans Pritchard among the Nuer, when he said, 'I described … the ways in which a Nilotic people obtain their livelihood, and their political institutions.' Such a description was not for peaceful purposes, but instead to study the Nuer as a way to pave a path for the Sudan Condominium. His research actually did much harm to the Nuer and Nilotic people, rather than good.
>
> (Lieh 2019:274–5)

At the same time, there is sympathy for the historical context in which Evans-Pritchard found himself and a reluctance to devalue his work.

Melha Ruot Biel:

> The period when Evans-Pritchard did his work was a very difficult period. Africa was under colonial systems. He had been under the payroll of the government, and there was no way he could go and criticize government. So, some of the work that he did was reflecting the will of the master, the employer, which was the government. Yet, the other side of the coin is that he made Nuer popular. People know about Nuer. Some of us Nuer intellectuals have now written about Nuer, and they have written things totally different from what Evans-Pritchard has written. Some of them tried to correct his writing.
>
> At the same time, he did understand a lot. He was with the Nuer, speaking with them, being with them for quite a long time. This can also change the mindset of somebody. If someone coming from the UK, it is not easy for him to put himself in the mindset of the Nuer. That's why successful anthropology requires you to live with people for quite a long time, and he did. He was a pioneer and he did whatever he could within an environment where there was not much scholarship for him to build upon.
>
> If he was living now, he would come up with different research questions and issues to ask. Yet, still his work remains a useful entry point for other researchers.

In the introduction to *The Nuer*, Evans-Pritchard writes, 'The reader must judge what I have accomplished. I would ask him not to judge too harshly.' (1940:9).

Kim Jal Lieh:

> I looked at Evans-Pritchard's work in the context of them trying to colonize the Nuer and make the Nuer come into conformity with the administration and join the administration. At the same time, one of the interesting things that I like about him is that in the introduction to *The Nuer* he says that whoever reads his work should not 'judge too harshly'. I completely understand this.
>
> He did a lot for the Nuer. The Nuer back then were unknown. He came and tried to write these books, and then everyone was interested in the Nuer people. That was a fabulous thing. Although he was commissioned by the administration in Khartoum, maybe he could not imagine how they would use it. But the most important thing is that he did what he was supposed to do. It has positive and negative side effects, which is always the case.
>
> (pers. comm., March 2021)

Evans-Pritchard's portrayal of the Nuer not only made them famous, but also used representations and categories that allowed a positive moral reading of Nuer society. As Allen discusses in this book, Evans-Pritchard's discussion of 'witchcraft' among the Azande may have made it less acceptable among the Azande because of recent understandings about the evil and immoral nature of 'witchcraft' (this volume, Chapter 23). Among the Nuer, Evans-Pritchard talked about 'religion' and explicitly stated that Nuer religion (unlike other neighbouring religions except the Dinka) 'have features which bring to mind the Hebrews of the Old Testament' (1956:vii). He even labelled the '*guaan kuthni*' (owners of a divinity) as 'prophets' in an explicit reference to Biblical prophets. For Nuer who converted to Christianity, Evans-Pritchard's work positively highlighted how Nuer already had a sense of God before conversion (Allen this volume, Chapter 23). For other Nuer, these portrayals of Nuer religion also allowed them to claim that it was comparable to Abrahamic faiths, and therefore should be taken seriously.

At the same time, the fame of the Nuer and Evans-Pritchard's representations have also often meant that people have experienced negative assumptions and unhelpful stereotypes based on Evans-Pritchard's work. These have shaped large-scale policies and individuals' daily interactions.

John Gai:

> When I first travelled to study overseas, I had not heard of Evans-Pritchard's books. I came to know about him through a fellow student; one of the people I met when I was at the American University in Lebanon. He told me that Nuer were known for their markings. I was not marked, so he was surprised that I was a Nuer. He said that they never knew that there could be a Nuer without them being marked. But this triggered my interested in Evans-Pritchard…
>
> This man, he was a banker. But he said, 'I was a student of Evans-Pritchard many years ago, and one of the romantic things to do was to go through his manuscripts about the Nuer and see the pictures to see what this society looked like and read the descriptions. Nuer were slim and marked with tattoos.' He said, 'It is very strange that you are Nuer and you are not marked.' It was very interesting to me as I was at the American University of Beirut – one of the old universities – and now I am being told that the Nuer are not Nuer unless they are marked. He laughed. We laughed.
>
> For him, Evans-Pritchard was like a revolutionary in anthropology. Evans-Pritchard had his descendants, his students, who see the Nuer this way. You know, in academia, you are a student of somebody, then you have your own students, so you become the son and the

next generation will be like the grandchildren. This is a lineage.'

It was not only Evans-Pritchard's entanglement with the colonial system that bought concern about his work, but also his ability, as an outsider and as an anthropologist, to understand Nuer social systems and cosmologies. Concerns about the ability of outsiders to understand is nothing new. In the 1960s, Lienhardt was himself concerned about his own understanding because of his inability to actually encounter DENG and GARANG (Dinka divinities) – (Lienhardt 1961:147).

Kim Jal Lieh:

> There was a young guy who used to come to his tent. When the young guy came, he would ask him questions. But the young man questioned him about why he wanted this information. We are known for not sharing information easily. We want to know why you want the information. Tell me what you will do with that information. So, the people that Evans-Pritchard spoke to might have given him some information, but most of the books were based on things that he observed. Then he asked about things on a daily basis. There are certain types of information that are constant, and others that are changing…

Melha Ruot:

> If you ask someone like me, who grew up partly in Nuerland, or other people who are from Nuerland, definitely you will come up with different understandings about the Nuer. That's why I said it was a different time, with a different purpose, and he was on the government payroll. He came to Africa to gather information so that people are known. So, they had different research questions at that time. But his work remains a useful entry point… There is no research that is perfect.

John Gai:

> What does it mean to study people? Does the time in which you study matter? How should we take account of the people in charge at that time? Does the role of the individual historian and anthropologist and his prejudices matter? Can society change? All of this explains prejudice.
>
> Evans-Pritchard's prejudices mean that his observations were logical. Yet, being logical does not mean that they were right.
>
> He observed that the Nuer are an egalitarian society, a highly democratic society, where there is free thought and he used the court as a model. When they are sitting and judging something, everyone can add something, even the onlookers. They are fair and their justice system is good. They treat foreigners with friendship.
>
> He was studying different parts of the society, but he did not recognize them as a political system. You cannot say they are democratic on the one hand, while also saying that they do not have a political system. He missed the political thought behind the system because of his own prejudices.

2: Anarchy

In the introduction to *The Nuer*, Evans-Pritchard famously writes, 'Indeed, the Nuer have no government, and their state might be described as an ordered anarchy.' (1940:5–6).

'Anarchy' has meant many things to many people over time. In work in recent decades, Kaplan's 'Coming anarchy' (1994) portrayed anarchy as something to fear, while work of activist anthropologists, like David Graeber, have lauded a communitarian system that could be known as 'anarchy' in that it was acephalous (Graeber 2004). In a lecture to students at LSE, Graeber even provocatively suggested that Evans-Pritchard could have been an anarchist in the most positive sense. He justified this based on Evans-Pritchard's refusal to comply with the government's demand to research primarily on the Nuer prophets.

Scholarly responses from Nuer intellectuals and politicians have usually concurred with popular global assumptions that anarchy is necessarily negative. Notions of chaos and anarchy have been levied against the Nuer as a way to justify violent suppression by state governments. In the 1980s and 1990s, the Sudan government was contesting the Nuer (and South Sudanese) ability to be governed by the state without radical transformation of their culture. Nuer and South Sudanese intellectuals saw a need to contest any suggestions that the Nuer, Dinka and other South Sudanese were ungovernable and without an order that could be consistent with the modern state.[5] Plus, more recent years have seen the formation of the new state of South Sudan and much personal and collective investment by leaders and the educated in ideas of the state. In this context, suggestions of an inherent culture of 'anarchy' were seen as intensely problematic.

At the same time, even if there is contestation over whether Evans-Pritchard should have used the language of 'anarchy', there is recognition that the values that he described have long been part of Nuer political thought.

John Gai:

> He could not find the king. You know, among the Nuer you can be a leader without a position. This idea of a

5 A good example of such scholarship relating to the Dinka is the work of Francis Mading Deng (1987).

lack of central authority from which legitimacy and an institutional system is built, he found it very interesting. The second thing he found out was that although the structures as we know them in the West do not exist, there seemed to be an order. Things are structured in such a way that they actually work. They can decide to move on to new pastures. They can decide on social things such as marriage, and other things such as issues of war, of peace and social hierarchy.

So, he was puzzled by what the link would be between the existence of order and what he perceived as an absence of structures. To describe this, he used the words 'ordered anarchy'.

If you asked him today, he would probably say that he did not really mean that it was 'anarchy' as we understand it today. The use of the word 'anarchy' was the problem. The use of the word 'anarchy' has been misunderstood and it has led people to say that the Nuer are just chaotic people.

Practically, what this meant for Evans-Pritchard was that Nuer could not fit in the formula of the state structures. Why were there no prisons to punish people? Why were there no criminals? Why were there no issues of rape?

Evans-Pritchard had fixed ideas about how society should be governed, or at least an idea of the minimum institutions that were deemed to be proper for society to be governed.

Then, in the Nuer he found something completely different; all the things needed in a society were there. Everything was there. But everything he studied suggested to him findings contradictory to what he had already described as 'ordered anarchy' … In the cultural and social aspects, he thought everything was done properly.

Discussion repeatedly highlighted that it was an error to see the Nuer as acephalous.

Kim Chuol Kuon:

Let's use the example of the prophet Ngundeng. Then he was the ultimate prophet to the east of the Nile and to the west of the Nile. He was one of the most respectable people. Once he had built his pyramid, many people went there to consult him. It was the centre where decisions are made and where decisions were communicated. Then, even if they wanted to fight, they would then consult with everyone. It is where you had the unity of everyone…

Actually, what Evans-Pritchard did was have an assumption, and this assumption was where he went wrong. He had an assumption that Nuer society does not have a leadership. But that is where he got it wrong. Nuer society has a very strong leadership. This leadership is the council of elders – *duol dit ni.* These are the group of people, during migrations a long time ago or when there is a threat, who will come together and decide what to do. They call a meeting, they sit together and they ask what they will do. They strategize and then instruct the youth.

Let me give another example. In every cattle camp there is a leader. An elder. Every cattle camp will be named after that leader because these are my people, they listen to me and I give then orders.

Also, he did not talk about the prophets enough.

Let me give you another example. It is the elders who caused this conflict that is happening today. You will see them preaching hate speech. This is the role that the elders and youth have been playing throughout history. We have a very great respect for our elders.

Melha Ruot:

Evans-Pritchard was coming from a country ruled by a king and queen where there is a very clear structure. So, when he comes to the Nuer, that will be the conclusion – that they don't have structure, they don't have leadership. But you know the leadership will not necessarily be structured like it is in the UK. So that was his conclusion, when comparing the two systems, on the one hand, in the UK, there is a clear structure of who is the king and who are the others, and on the other hand, among the Nuer, there was not. But interestingly these societies were also functioning. So, he was making it known that societies without a king could function just like societies with a king and queen.

The other thing you should know is that Nuer have this culture of equality. Every man is equal to another man. This has been in the mind and culture of the Nuer. But, of course, the leadership is always there. It may not be structured like any other country, or like other modern systems, but they have been working. The rule of law is there. The courts are there.

John Gai:

The British government went and tested what Evans-Pritchard had found out. What they realized was that although there was no king, there were ruling families in Nuer societies. The second problem that they faced was the link between power and religion. The Nuer seemed to not fear anyone unless they had some kind of religious power. In contemporary politics, everyone who wants to be a leader, tries to bring close to them someone with religious powers.

The reality of Nuer leadership was even more clear when the government's role in shaping society was taken into account.

Kim Chuol Kuon:

> The chiefs still have the Union Jack. I went home to Ler a few years ago, and the chiefs were having a Union Jack [the UK flag]. I asked them why, and they answered that the Union Jack was a symbol of authority. I responded that this is the flag of different countries. Why are you still wearing them? They are not concerned with these other countries, but they know that these flags have been a symbol of authority for a long time.
>
> There have long been symbols of authority. For example, a long time ago, when a chief called you to come, they would either take the stick that they carried or the flag. They would send it with the messenger to call people to the court, and if they did not come the chief would threaten to beat them or take their cattle. So, this has stuck with people that these things are a symbol of power. These symbols of power have played a big role in Nuer society.

At the same time, Evans-Pritchard's work can be read as political philosophy and not an account of political realities. Michael Wal Duany, in his Ph.D. thesis (1992), explicitly related Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* to Nuer society, highlighting how self-governance is possible in the absence of single headship. He argues that it is in these acephalous societies that despotism is less likely to arise, even if they are less well understood, especially from the perspective of states and Hobbesian ideas. In this view, Evans-Pritchard's description of the culture of the Nuer could be seen as a political vision.

John Gai:

> Evans-Pritchard must be credited for one important thing. He was one of the first anthropologists to create a debate on institution and governance in African societies. This is very important. He studied different societies and compared them. From this came the idea of Nuer not having a central authority. He went as far as saying that other Nilotic societies were the same. This idea seemed to be very attractive for scholars.
>
> Among South Sudanese intellectuals up to today, these ideas remain important. They have created an opening for debate on issues such as democracy and human rights.

Beyond this, there is a nostalgia for the imagined past that Evans-Pritchard describes. Even if it is not real, both the equality and peace of the society he describes are now desperately longed for. The times described by Evans-Pritchard involved restraint in battle and normative limits to violence. The last decades of war in South Sudan often seem to have been void of such restraint.

As we reconcile the value of Evans-Pritchard's work with his problematic positionality and the possible errors in his findings, we are also invited to read Evans-Pritchard's work as not only about a historic moment but also about an imagined future (however impossible it is to create). His attention to the Nuer ability to combine equality and order without the state makes him not only a pioneer in anthropology but in political thought.

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Evans-Pritchard's works on the Nuer and their relevance to contemporary South Sudan

Leben Nelson Moro

Introduction

Sudan, my former country that split into two in 2011, came under British rule at the end of the nineteenth century. Already entrenched in Egypt, the British colonialists were determined to exert unchallenged hegemony over the valley of the Nile, which flowed through Sudan before reaching Egypt. The British colonialists recruited many of their erudite sons, who had gone through education at their premier institutions of learning, Cambridge and Oxford, and deployed them to the Sudan as administrators. Actually, they only deployed them to the largely Muslim Northern part of the country. At least initially, British colonial officers with military backgrounds were posted to the southern part, which was perceived as inhabited by pagan and potentially recalcitrant tribes.

One of the most recalcitrant tribes, which the British took time and effort to pacify, was the Nuer, which became the subject of some of E-P's great anthropological writings. His book entitled *The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People* (1940) made 'the Nuer famous all over the world' – and made him famous too (Tvedt 2000:122, 177). However, while E-P's writings have been rightly celebrated, they seem to be little known in contemporary South Sudan.

My early career as an agricultural advisor took me to live in Azandeland, but I was not familiar with E-P's publications at that time. I first read his books in Cairo, when I used his work during activist research projects that pushed against northern Sudanese cultural dominance, and later at Oxford in preparation for my doctoral fieldwork. My D.Phil. was on conflict and displacement linked to oil extraction in Sudan, and focused on Nuerland. So, it is my responses to E-P's work on the Nuer that I comment on in this chapter. I also reflect on why E-P's work is now largely ignored in the country where he carried out his ethnographic studies.

First encounters with Evans-Pritchard's writings

In this section, I explain how I came to learn about E-P's writings. I began my professional career as an agricultural advisor in a camp for Ugandan refugees in Maridi district of Western Equatoria in the early 1980s. This followed two year's training at the then Yambio Institute of Agriculture in the heart of Zandeland, where E-P began his anthropological studies during the period of British and Egyptian joint rule (1899–1956) over the Sudan. He conducted fieldwork on Azande cultural practices to complete his doctoral degree in 1927 at the London School of Economics under Seligman, and carried out further fieldwork in the early 1930s

In Yambio, the capital of Western Equatoria, I enjoyed a good relationship with fellow Azande trainees in the institute, but no substantial contacts with the local people. I came from Kajokeji, which is distant from Yambio, and like many outsiders was referred to by locals as a foreigner, or *auro* in the local language. I had not read the work of E-P when I was living in Yambio, but I became well aware that, during the pre-colonial period, the Zande had a powerful ruling clan which subdued and incorporated people from neighbouring groups. Therefore, their boundaries with other groups were not precisely defined. Of course, the same observation was true of ties among other so called 'tribes' in Africa.

After working with Ugandan refugees, in 1984 I enrolled as an undergraduate student in the College of Economic and Social Studies (CSES) of the University of Juba. The University had a Department of Anthropology where the late Associate Professor Simon Monoja Lubang, a former student of anthropology at the Department of Anthropology of the University of Oxford, was a staff member. I was introduced to anthropology as a subject in my first year, but did not hear anything about E-P's writings. In fact, most of the students were not keen to pursue anthropology, which did not receive much attention from the government of autonomous Southern Sudan in Juba. The main preoccupation of the government was production of manpower to help efforts to harness the bountiful natural resources of the region and to promote development. So, the focus was on the Colleges of Natural Resources, Education, Medicine and other natural-science-based colleges at the University of Juba. Some attention was also directed to Law, Accounting, Economics, and Management, which apparently led to more valued careers.

I completed undergraduate studies in 1990 in Khartoum, where the University of Juba had been forced to relocate due to ever worsening security and economic crises in Juba. I enrolled in graduate studies at the American University in Cairo, where I first learned about E-P's work on south Sudanese groups, especially the Nuer. The university had an established Department of Anthropology from which several South Sudanese, including Professor Jok Madut Jok, had read for graduate degrees, mainly with the financial support of the Ford Foundation.

After completing a course in Public Administration, I developed an interest in studying and writing about the cultures of Southern Sudan with a group of colleagues who had studied at the same university. To an extent, we were driven by nationalist sentiments. The feeling among many south Sudanese and other marginalized Sudanese groups was that our cultures were being recorded by politically dominant northern Sudanese and by foreigners. We hoped to contribute our unique perspectives. Moreover, we also felt that refugee life was eroding our cultures in Cairo, and that we needed to keep them alive by studying them and also by holding public events. We therefore set up the Sudan Cultural Digest Project, with funding from the Ford Foundation, and had it hosted by the then Office of African Studies at the American University in Cairo.

We gained the support of two American anthropologists from the Department of Anthropology at the American University in Cairo to advise. One of the recommendations they made was that we should study key writings on Sudanese cultures that had been produced by anthropologists, including E-P. For some of us who were not anthropologists this was particularly pertinent advice. Writings by E-P and works by other anthropologists were readily accessible in the university library.

We conducted field studies among displaced Southern Sudanese in Egypt and refugees in camps in Uganda, and communities in the rebel-controlled parts of Southern Sudan from 1995 to 1998. Out of these studies, we produced a number of reports, including *Coping with the Dynamics of Culture and Change: Sudanese Refugees in East Africa and Internally Displaced Persons in Southern Sudan* (Sudan Cultural Digest Project 1998a) and *A Study of Some Ethnic Groups in Sudan* (Sudan Cultural Digest Project 1998b) that dealt with cultures of Jieng (Dinka), Fur, Kuku, Nyangwara, Avukaya, Shilluk and Bari. There were plans to do more work focusing on other cultures, but many of the project members increasingly found life unbearable in Egypt and opted for resettlement in Western countries. I also decided to leave for further studies in the United Kingdom.

I obtained a better understanding of E-P's writings at the University of Oxford, in which I enrolled for a master's course and, later, doctoral studies at the Department of International Development. During my stay in Oxford, I studied E-P's writings at the Department of Anthropology as well as works by Sudanese and other Africans.

One thing I noted from my reading, and from what I had learned in Yambio and from friends in Cairo, was that it is possible to get the incorrect impression from E-P that the 'tribes' he described, including the Zande and Nuer, were bounded. That was certainly not my understanding of the Azande, and several scholars have noted that the idea of the Nuer as a unified ethnicity fails to take account of regional variations of culture and history, and variations between men and women – points that have been elaborated by Sharon Hutchinson (1996:29).

This weakness was evident in the writings of many Europeans who came to Africa during the colonial times. Donald Wright succinctly pointed out that Europeans who arrived in Africa, carried with them preconceptions of ethnic nationalism, and that administrators from these cultures seem to have come to Africa expecting to find 'tribes' and so they labelled the people they encountered as ethnic 'tribesmen' (Wright 1999:419). In the case of Southern Sudan, the British colonialists tried unsuccessfully to solidify boundaries between these supposed tribes, such as the Dinka and Nuer, by displacing people and creating a 'no man's land' (Hutchinson 1996:115–16). They tried to separate groups who might fight each other forcibly, but these groups also intermarried and blurred distinct boundaries.

At Oxford I became especially interested in the way E-P dealt with Nuer cultural practices and violence, and this became an important aspect of my doctoral project. I decided to focus on the development of oil resources in Southern Sudan and its links to violence and displacement. So, I read about how E-P dealt with the organization of the Nuer, especially the notion of segmentary society and of fission and fusion. Many of Southern Sudan's oilfields fell in the lands of the Nuer. I was quite aware that E-P's studies were undertaken during the colonial times, when the British embarked on a violent conquest of the lands of Nuer and other tribes, and so they also served the British irredentist interest. Yet, I wanted to learn as much as possible about past Nuer society and change to provide a background to my work.

At this time, the Nuer were grappling with intense violence as the former Sudanese government and the then rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) were locked in a vicious contest over oil-bearing areas, which were producing the wealth that kept President Omer el Bashir's government afloat. While many Nuer were fighting on the side of those determined to halt oil production, others were allied to the opposing side, with the civilians caught in the middle.

Meeting the war-scarred Nuer after the CPA

After completing preparations for fieldwork in Oxford, I travelled to Egypt, where I spent several months as a research fellow of the American University in Cairo. Then, I flew to Entebbe Airport in Uganda in 2005 and later travelled by road from Kampala, the national capital, to Yei in Southern Sudan, which was an SPLA stronghold during the closing days of the war. From Yei, I caught a truck bound for Juba. The road had lots of huge potholes, one of the relics of the fighting, and I spent the night on the road a few miles from Juba city. It was unsafe to enter the city in the dark.

I spent weeks in Juba before heading off to Malakal to start fieldwork in Upper Nile, and then in Bentiu in Unity State, where oil was being extracted. I visited many Dinka and Nuer villages in the course of this research and talked to local people about their experiences of the oil industry. Interestingly, many of the roads in the oil areas were better than the roads in other parts of the country, and travel was easy and safe. However, these roads were constructed not to ease movement of ordinary people, but rather to facilitate the movement of oil workers and security forces deployed to protect the oil infrastructure from rebel attacks. During the war, the SPLA had labelled oil infrastructure as a legitimate military target.

In this situation of insecurity, I had my first encounters with Dinka and Nuer in their homelands. To my surprise, I found it quite easy to interact closely with members of these groups. Like E-P, I was in their homelands to collect information for research purposes. Of course, E-P was a white man from far away, and I was an African sharing the same country with the Nuer and Dinka, but from Equatoria. I was also an outsider to a great extent. Born in one of the southernmost parts of South Sudan, Kajokeji, and raised mostly in Uganda, in reality I did not have strong links with the Dinka or the Nuer.

During university days in Juba I studied with students hailing from Dinka and Nuer, but my connections with members of these groups were not substantial. Reflecting poor ethnic relations, particularly during the war, the image of members of these groups was that of people easy to anger and turn to violence at the slightest provocation. Reading E-P's works, which were researched during the era of British colonial adventurism and military campaigns of pacification, the image given of the Nuer is of a violent people who adored cattle. They were presented as people who came together to confront an external enemy, but who habitually turned on each other when the external threat had disappeared.

In the field, I was very concerned about security and hence often nervous about what was out there. This feeling almost landed me in trouble at the outset of my study in Unity State. One time, I sought to interview Nuer chiefs at a location called Nhialdiu, situated to the south of Bentiu town. I travelled there and found a group of Nuer chiefs gathered under a tree. As an introduction, I told them that I had come to their area to learn about the impact of oil exploitation on their people, and that the people in this part of Southern Sudan might not like people coming from Equatoria regions very much, but anyway I decided to come and if they refused to talk to me, I would understand.

They reacted with shock and bewilderment. The most senior chief of them asked: 'Who told you that?' I replied that people were talking about it. Then, he regained his composure and asked again: 'Where are you from?' I replied 'from Kajokeji'. 'Did you know that the first *Mamur* or administrator of Bentiu district, was from Kajokeji,' he continued. Another said, 'Ignore the things happening or talked about in Juba. You are welcome. Our sons went to your area to fight the enemy, and some did not return.' 'They died for our land,' another chief stated. 'When are you going back to Bentiu?' another asked, and I said later that same day. He continued, 'If you were not leaving we would slaughter an animal for you. So, go ahead and ask your questions.' We talked for a long time. It was very fruitful and informative.

My fears subsided as I continued my interviews in the Nuer area. The Nuer turned out to be very kind and generous people, which was contrary to what I heard or read in books, including those of E-P. I felt truly welcome in Nuer as well as Dinka villages. On several occasions I was given a goat or a sheep as gift. My interviewees readily shared their stories of suffering under the rule of the 'Arabs' in Khartoum and their accomplices, oil workers and militias. The image that emerged was one of hard-working, dignified, and generous people, completely different from the image presented by colonial era anthropologists, like E-P, and other individuals affiliated with the colonial regime. They also did not fit the image of aid dependency that was often propagated by aid organizations, sometimes to serve vested interest by attracting donations, much of which went to fund their operations.

As I continued with interviews, the atrocities committed against the Nuer people took on increasingly gruesome proportions. The greed for oil on the part of the Sudanese government and their allies had driven a determined quest to control territory, regardless of the tragedy visited upon the indigenous Nuer inhabitants of the territory. Bizarrely, some of the worst atrocities were committed by Nuer in the pay of the Sudanese state. They were supplied with sophisticated guns by the government to do the dirty job of cleansing the oil-bearing areas of their own people. One notorious Nuer warlord was General Paulino Matip, who was bought off by President Omer el Bashir.

Were E-P's notion of fission and fusion to hold sway, the Nuer from different areas and subgroups would be expected to coalesce into a force to confront the enemies from the north and suspend their divisiveness. But this did

not happen. Instead, the Nuer political and military leaders were easily divided and manipulated by their enemies, particularly the state, to wreak havoc against their own people in the oil areas.

In her interesting book, entitled *Nuer Dilemmas: Coping with Money, War and the State*, Sharon Hutchinson (1996) persuasively discussed the changes that had been taking place in Nuer society since the time of E-P's research in the 1930s. Nuer society had been changing as money, education and weapons became more available in the context of war. Many highly educated or connected individuals from Nuer ethnic groups have simply abused their access to resources and power, ignoring the interests of the majority of their people, with devastating consequences. Many Nuer military and political elites, such as General Matip, were easily bought out by the state. Moreover, the proliferation of guns – especially automatic rifles – meant that attacks on civilians became more indiscriminate and deadlier.

In the context of the war, the traditional norms that guided the way violence was deployed were simply flouted. Jok Madut Jok and Sharon Hutchinson (1999:128) pointed out that after a split in the SPLM/A in 1991, a new subculture of ethnicized violence emerged, unseen in past tribal conflicts, and involving 'killing of women and children, destruction of property, and the use of advanced weaponry'.

Unfortunately, when the war ended in 2005 and Southern Sudan broke away from Sudan in 2011, violence did not end. In fact, South Sudan relapsed into war less than two years after it won independence. In December 2013 the SPLM/A split again, and factions of it subsequently committed shocking atrocities against civilians. In particular, Dinka elements in the security forces hunted down Nuer individuals in their homes and murdered them (African Union Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan 2014). The survivors fled for safety to United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) bases. To this to date, thousands are still holed up in these sites, afraid to leave.

In response, some Nuer military and political elites mobilized youths to march on Juba and overthrow the government. Benefiting from control of the state, the Dinka-dominated government recruited Ugandan soldiers to protect it from the vengeful Nuer, who were not far from Juba. So, the Dinka elements who committed the atrocities continued to escape justice while their protectors are still entrenched in power. Unable to reach Juba, the Nuer fighters then committed atrocities against Dinka civilians in other parts of the country.

The return to war found me in Unity State doing fieldwork. Initially, there was calm in Bentiu when fighting spread in Juba. But when the news of atrocities against Nuer by the Dinka reached Bentiu, the situation changed quickly and dramatically. The Nuer mobilized to kill Dinka men, while giving women and children safe passage to Dinka areas. While attempting to travel to Juba on 19 December 2013, I witnessed the killing of unarmed Dinka men and a military man, who came from my home area in Kajokeji. I and the other people in my group were spared because we were not Dinka men, and also not part of the security forces of the government based in Juba. This was heart-wrenching violence on the basis of 'tribal' categories far removed from the things E-P had described. The escalation of ethnicized violence compelled the UN to warn in 2016 of violence escalating along ethnic lines, and becoming genocide (UNNC 2016).

Teaching and researching anthropology

This section discusses how war and poor governance impacted on higher education. It also examines how the stifling political climate in the new country and the choices of political elites have influenced what is learned in these institutions. I contend that these further constrained the teaching and researching of anthropology, including the writings of E-P.

Without doubt, wars inflicted a monumental toll on higher educational institutions in the country. Amongst the worst hit institutions were universities, which were 'exiled' to Khartoum during the wars in the 1980s and 1990s, where they were subjected to the Arabicization and Islamization policies of the Omer el Bashir regime. After the peace agreement, the universities were relocated to Southern Sudan, leaving behind most of the assets they had acquired in Khartoum. The University of Juba that returned to Juba was a shell of its old self. Most of the assets of the University were grabbed and turned over to a newly created university in Khartoum called Bahri. The staff and students returned to Juba to occupy a run-down infrastructure intended to accommodate fewer than 1,000 students.

It was very hard for the administrators of the University of Juba to ensure the provision of quality education and tranquillity, as students frequently ran amok in protest against the appalling conditions in which they had to learn. The required books were not available, and the political elites paid no attention to the university. Instead, they embarked on massive looting of state resources, especially the revenues from oil, to fund luxurious lifestyles and patronage networks.

For sure, some teaching has taken place at the Anthropology Department at the university, and the work of E-P has been covered. However, when I went to the main library of the university to look for E-P's writings while composing this chapter, I came back empty-handed. Like most departments in the university, the Anthropology Department has been grappling with inadequacies of qualified staff, books and other necessities. The most experienced anthropologist, Associate Professor Simon Monoja Lubang, unfortunately passed away last year. At one point, Professor Jok Madut Jok expressed a serious

interest in joining the department, which would have been a huge boost, but he did not stay in the country for long enough, as the political climate became worse.

The fierce fighting that began in 2013 compounded the already dire conditions in the university. Some of the worst affected members of the university were Nuer students, who had to take refuge on UNMISS bases. Some of them did gradually resume classes, but remained scared. My own Nuer students returned to classes at the beginning of 2014, but were visibly shaken. Other students, including Dinkas, did their best to help them recover from the trauma. The whole university administration also supported all students who felt vulnerable. I was thrilled by the displays of magnanimity at a dark time for our country.

In this changed environment, the space to engage in free discussions of some topics, such as violence and justice, narrowed. The lecturers had to be careful not to create harm for themselves and others, especially after some academic staff were targeted for expressing opinions on some national issues. Many simply steered away from potentially contentious issues, including discussion about Nuer and Dinka ethnic identities in the past and how they have changed. Self-censorship became a tool for self-preservation.

Conclusion

E-P's writings on the Nuer have played a crucial role in the development of the field of anthropology. Although not trained in anthropology, I came to learn about them while in exile in Cairo, when we felt that our cultures were under threat and we had to study and write about them; and later at the University of Oxford, when I embarked on a study of the impact of oil extraction in Southern Sudan, especially in the Nuer heartland during the war. However, despite the prominent role of EP's writing for anthropologists and others, they seem to be little known or read in the newly independent South Sudan.

One possible reason for the diminished visibility of E-P's works in the new country is the huge changes that have taken place since they were produced. In the context of long periods of conflict, the descriptions of the Nuer of the 1930s do not fit neatly the current situation of the Nuer today. For example, the ideas of fission and fusion to describe the political life of the Nuer of the colonial time do not apply to the contemporary Nuer situation. As Sharon Hutchinson (1996) has shown, the Nuer are not immune to change.

Crucially, we see that the Nuer are unable to come together to protect the interests of the majority of Nuer. Instead, Nuer military and political elites have been co-opted with promises of power and money to serve the interests of those who control the state. Before and after the independence of South Sudan, Nuer military and elites had been bought off by those who control the state, and then have worked against the interest or welfare of the majority of the Nuer, or simply remained mute when atrocities were meted out against their own people. In December 2013 Nuer civilians were murdered in Juba in their thousands, but some Nuer generals continued to serve the system that masterminded the mayhem, oblivious to the carnage visited upon their people.

In the tense context of South Sudan, where academics have been targeted for expressing their points of view on national issues, it is risky to discuss freely or engage in debates on some topics, such as the past, violence and justice. This definitely affects the teaching and researching of some topics. Moreover, the neglect of basic services, especially to universities, as elites syphon away oil revenues for personal enrichment, meant teaching and research have suffered. The University of Juba, for example, has been starved of resources and is hardly delivering a quality service. The libraries lack essential readings. When I tried to find the writings of E-P in the main library, I discovered that they are no longer there.

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Teaching and reading Evans-Pritchard as a Ugandan anthropologist

Grace Akello

Introduction

In Uganda, anthropology is a discipline that is deeply intertwined with its colonial past. The argument made in the early 1960s, when Uganda gained its independence from British rule, was that anthropology was a mechanism for perpetuation of racist ideas and the colonial viewpoint about Africans. It was a discipline that did not contribute to the development of the country. As a consequence, I was not introduced to Evans-Pritchard until I studied abroad. In this chapter, I focus on Evans Pritchard's book *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (1937), which I first read in Amsterdam. I became aware of how he showed that the Azande had a comprehensive cognitive capacity, and that, in the 1930s, that amounted to a heavy critique of common contemporary perceptions. However, while I found that interesting, I was alienated by his terminology, and by the way his work was presented to me as being representative of an African way of thinking and acting in the present. His arguments about primitive Azande attributing everyday happenings, like termites eating a Zande granary and it falling on one particular individual due to ultimate-cause witchcraft, seemed offensive and absurd. Whatever his intentions, for me, his book reinforced racial stereotypes, rather than challenging them, which made it hard to appreciate. Now, as a university teacher back in Uganda, I encounter similar reactions to Evans-Pritchard among my students, and I have come to the view that recommending his work as set readings can be counterproductive.

Enrolling for a medical anthropology course in Europe

For my five undergraduate and postgraduate years at Makerere University, I did not encounter any student doing anthropology. That is unlike the trend I observed in European, and North America universities, where a significant proportion of undergraduate courses do offer anthropology. In large part, that is because in Uganda anthropology was viewed as a discipline compromised by its connections with colonial rule. Then, in 2002, I was offered a scholarship by the Dutch Government to pursue a Masters in Medical Anthropology in Amsterdam.

The offer was based on my undergraduate dissertation, in which I had assessed how resource-poor mothers managed childhood diarrhoea in a highly populated slum in Kampala. This slum is located adjacent to the National Referral Hospital on one side, and Uganda's Ministry of Health on another. They were poor mothers living in dilapilated and low-cost housing, who ecked a living through small-scale trade, including selling charcoal, weaving mats and hairdressing. The mothers knew the causes of childhood diarrhoea. They associated their children's frequent episodes of diarrhoea to poor sanitation and poor feeding. They, however, indicated that they were unable to stop their children playing in dirt, or ensure that they ate properly cooked food or drank clean water.

When I contacted a Dutch professor and described this limited research experience, she advised that I would easily fit within the field of medical anthropology. She even wrote me a recommendation for the autumn intake in 2002. She argued that my technique of conducting research was more inclined to anthropological techniques than public health, and that I exhibited skills of an ethnographer. I did not know what medical anthropology was about, apart from being told that the discipline applies qualitative ethnographic methods in investigating people's behaviour and culture. It was also mentioned that anthropologists live among the people they study for months because they aim to find out their insider/emic viewpoints.

In August 2002 I started attending lectures in the Netherlands. These were highly participatory and all students needed to prepare for each class through extensive reading. The students came from Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America and Russia. One of the classic readings for the first module was Evans-Pritchard's *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (1937). The University of Amsterdam library also has a huge collection of anthropological literature, including by Firth, Malinowski, Evans-Pritchard, Gluckman, Kleinman and Geertz, and our professors encouraged us to read widely. This was all very new for me, and rather exhilarating.

However, I was troubled that the anthropological works I encountered referred to non-Western societies as savage, native, proto-scientific, psuedo-scientific, primitive or magico-religious. Also, in the recommeded readings of old anthropological texts, the people in the non-Western societies studied were described as bounded, closed off and, it seemed, unable to learn from global, social and political changes. An impression was given that these publications described the everyday life in Africa as was currently being lived. That contradicted my own experiences, and it was alienating and sometimes demeaning to read works about Africa that used such perspectives.

In *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic*, for instance, Evans-Pritchard subscribed to the anthropological idea of documenting primitive societies before they were changed by development and were lost as modernization occurred. Like most people at the time, he assumed that economic and political development was inevitable, and would be rapid once capitalism took hold; and he did not think that would necessarily be a good thing. For him, the notion of the primitive, at the time he was writing about the Azande in the 1920s and 30s, related to ways of life that were unique and worthy of understanding in detail, but were already disappearing. In his desciptions of the Azande, he used the present tense as a device to suggest a way of life suspended in time, to a large extent as if changes were not occurring. Reading him seventy years later, that seemed very odd to me. Moreover, E-P explains that, even though the Zande are able to see that termites completely destroyed a granary support, causing its collapse, they will still attribute its falling at a particular moment on a particular person sitting underneath as witchcraft. He thereby suggests that they reject coincidence and empirical causality. In making this argument and using the terms 'witchcraft' and 'magic', he effectively reinforced European stereotypes of primitive Africans.

Little of what Evans-Pritchard wrote coincided with my own experiences. In my own undergraduate study about resource-poor mothers dealing with frequent episodes of childhood diarrhoea, none of them mentioned witchcraft as an explanatory model and none of them resorted to witchcraft in its management. Mothers were more concerned about treating the child with tablets that they bought from small drug shops located in the slums. They sometimes rushed the child to the nearby National Referral Hospital, but they tried to avoid these trips because of the long queues. The mothers I interviewed mentioned dirt and living in a poor environment as the 'ultimate causes' for their children's diarrhoea.

In my international Amsterdam class, there were lively debates about these issues. For example, some European and American students offered contributions about how primitive societies are not aware that they are losing their valuable heritage, through adapting to globalization. It was suggested that Africans were better off living in grass-thatched huts than aspiring to have tin-roofed houses, and that wearing Western clothes, rather than traditional garments, was not something to encourage. In contrast, students from Africa, Asia and Latin America tended to find these ideas rather naïve or overly romantic, and wonder if the people referred to in anthropological texts are really so different to people in the West.

The differences of views were interesting, but often seemed too divergent to reconcile. I could not help feeling that our class in Amsterdam had these debates because one side was a privileged group of European and American students, and the other side was made up of students from non-Western societies. The latter were viewed as the representatives of those non-Western groups in the literature we read by European and American authors. This power dynamic could be quite strong and alienating, and I came to view it as a characteristic of anthropology. I felt othered, and in a way that was linked to an implied hierarchy in societies.

Years later, I came across Talal Assad's edited book, *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter* (1973). It was helpful to see how Assad and other former students of Evans-Pritchard reflected on these things, and particularly how Evans-Pritchard's research in South Sudan was shaped by the context in which it occurred and ways of seeing things at the time. Social anthropology, with its supposed intellectual origins in the Enlightenment, including the notion of the noble savage representing some kind of deep quality in all humans, was also rooted in unequal power relations, and reinforced value-laden representations of non-European societies.

At the time he was writing his book on Azande witchcraft, Evans-Pritchard's work was pioneering in the way in which he showed that African people who looked primitive were actually highly rational within their own frame of reasoning. It was a perspective that was unusual in Europe before the Second World War. I have also become aware of Evans-Pritchard's later work on the Azande, in which he explored in detail their history and their changing political institutions. It became apparent to me that his anthropological present was not meant to imply stasis, but was linked to an endeaveour to capture a vision of what might once have been.

Nevertheless, his writings were aimed at readers and students who were overwhelmingly not African. I very much doubt any Africans in the 1920s would have given credence to the claim that they only had the mental capacities of children, and they must have viewed Europeans they encountered as, at best, peculiar. Evans-Pritchard challenged assumptions that were prevalent among people from a similar background to himself. Those assumptions can seem both bizarre and offensive to an African audience,

and the quest to counter them can seem an enterprise that gives racist myths a status that they do not deserve.

Teaching anthropology to medical students and social scientists in Uganda.

Returning to Uganda after completing my Ph.D., I was appointed to a post at Gulu University, where I teach anthropology to medical students and run a master's degree in Medical Anthropology. From being introduced to Evans-Pritchard, I now introduce him to others, drawing on what I learned in Europe. However, in my African context the classes do not have the European and African students who find value in his work, notably Evans-Pritchard's challenge to views decentring colonial conceptions of the irrational and inferior African – that is, depicting them as lying at the lowest level of scientific hierarchy and development. In general, I have not found his work helpful in teaching anthropology to my students, not least because it tends to reinforce Eurocentric assumptions about primitive, magico-religious and pseudo-scientific Africans.

Medical faculties in Uganda teach sociology and anthropology with the main objective of preparing clinicians for different behaviours and practices outside a hospital setting. In all their courses, the students are taught that reproducing knowledge with great precision will enable them, as medics, to apply theory to practice. The main curriculum for medical students will therefore comprise of basic science and clinical information, which must be learned, reproduced and applied with precision during their encounters with patients. Sociology and anthropology are taught in the same way, or, more accurately, the students learn in the same way, and find it almost impossible to treat the subjects differently. Thus, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic* is included in the readings mainly so that the extent to which Evans-Pritchard's ethnography is relevant for current medical practice and treatment of African patients can be examined.

Medical students, at first, are curious about culture in general, as it is taught as everyday behaviour, which will affect their medical practice. In this context, classic anthropological readings like Evans-Pritchard's work among the Azande can be problematic, in that they are understood to mean that the Africans described live in a world that is primitive and static. Evans-Pritchard's anthropological style of writing does not make it easier for the students either. It is hard to explain to students that these are historical texts and were using analytical constructs and engaging in debates that were occurring more than half a century ago – particularly when the text is read to ostensibly depict the current present. Students, therefore, tend to read Evans-Pritchard uncritically, as if he is simply outlining facts. They unfortunately end up learning that non-Western cultures are primitive, savage and pseudo-scientific. The purpose of being taught such things, they assume, is that as medical practitioners they will need to know about irrational beliefs and practices in order to dispel them, or possibly, in some circumstances, to harness them in ways that can be helpful. Along these lines, Evans-Pritchard's ethnography describes ways of thinking and behaviours that are part of the problem of health and healthcare in Africa. However, perhaps in contexts where there is no available biomedical therapy, or in cases of chronic mental-health problems, they may have uses if they can be adapted to the alleviation of suffering. The extent to which Ugandan medical students view themselves as being part of the static cultures described in many anthropological texts they are asked to read is questionable.

In general, Ugandan medical students are taught to completely disengage from ways of thinking and acting described by anthropologists like Evans-Pritchard. They are inculcated into their own biomedical culture and their training necessitates particular kinds of understanding and acting. In this respect, they are trained in a comparable manner to that described in other locations, including by medical anthropologists (e.g. Good 1994). They embrace what Foucault called the 'medical gaze' and do all they can to separate the treatment of bodily and mental malfunctions from ideas of affliction linked to divine, moral or spiritual meanings (Foucault 1973). Perhaps in part because they want to separate their futures from their pasts, they respond to the othering and exoticizing of Africans in classic anthropological writings in ways that reinforce their own life choices. These views often turn into caricature when the students are asked to write essays comparing African therapeutic pathways and modern medicine. The Africans described by these African students always attribute episodes of malaria to witchcraft, and these African beliefs are contrasted with scientific knowledge about malaria parasites, detected through laboratory tests.

Thus, the students are expected to be interested in anthropological works such as *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic* to find out relevant things for their future work. The book is not supposed to resonate with their experience, and if it does, then they are not expected to highlight it or explain how. Exotic accounts about primitive worlds are meant to be far removed from medical practice. The students' objective is narrowed down to how to pass the Sociology and Anthropology examination. In so doing, they will mention how such knowledge is useful general information. Sometimes, too, they may associate that information with problematic and uneducated patients that they may meet in their clinics, who perhaps still hold on to old and irrational views, even though they are seeking biomedical treatment. To a worrying degree, what they learn from reading Evans-Pritchard are views about Africans that resonate with European prejudices of the 1920s and 30s. The nuances and complexities of Evans-Pritchard's description and analysis are largely set aside,

and the focus on everything being explained by witchcraft is read in much the same way that the aetiology of a disease is described in one of their medical textbooks. For some of them, it even comes as a surprise when they meet patients from remote villages seeking treatment for diseases like malaria, who know how infection with the disease occurs and have already tried self-treatment with tablets bought from a local shop.

This tendency to be over respectful of any text and to refrain from criticism, is much less pronounced with other students at the university. However, these non-medical students are expected to make points about the lack of discussion of social change in old anthropological texts, the emphasis on exotic practices, and the colonial context. That makes it hard for them to read and appreciate what Evans-Pritchard actually wrote, and they are mostly antagonized by his emphasis on witchcraft causality and by his terminology. These students want to know how African populations are engaged with global processes, and with social and economic development. Those who become interested in Evans-Pritchard point out that the Azande people he describes cannot easily be dissociated from his own background, including his outmoded debates with other British-based scholars, which are irrelevant to modern Uganda.

Concluding remarks

My own views about *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic* have changed significantly since I first read the book in the Netherlands. I have come to appreciate the book as a historical text, which is probably how Evans-Pritchard himself came to view it. It is a historical text in that it describes a world long gone, and in that it is shaped by attitudes and argument that were current in Europe in the decades between the two world wars. It is a work of its time, and to treat it as an accurate account of facts relevant today is absurd. It would be considered strange to give students a medical textbook from the 1920s and expect them to take it at face value. It similarly makes no sense to do so with Evans-Pritchard's witchcraft book. I have tried not to do that with my own students, but that is how they commonly choose to read it, otherwise they dismiss it a discredited colonial product with racist qualities, or they wonder why they should be interested in an old text that engages with perplexing notions espoused by Europeans almost a century ago. I have concluded that it is not a particularly useful reading to recommend. It is better that the students are introduced to anthropology with more up to date ethnographies, and general overviews, such as that by Eriksen (2004).

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28

Un-scripting African cultures

Historical tensions and contemporary possibilities for anthropology in East Africa

Elizabeth Ngutuku and Auma Okwany

As two long-term collaborative researchers from Kenya, we locate ourselves in the work of early anthropologists in Kenya, including the work of Evans Pritchard (E-P) and his study of several African communities such as the Luo of Kenya. We also explore the gaps and the aporias present in the work of anthropologists of his time. Such reflections continue to influence our need to interrogate the representations of communities, and our work on children and youth in the African region. We do not attempt to intervene in a revisionist sense in these representations and the weakness of such work. We instead engage with the question of what the early work of anthropologists in Kenya, including E-P, means for the people on the ground and for reflexive modes of knowing communities, and for re-centring local and indigenous perspectives.

Reflections on our research and the gaze of anthropology

Elizabeth trained as an anthropologist at the Institute of Africa Studies of the University of Nairobi in the 1990s, and the work of E-P influenced the learning at the institute. Students there grappled with the question of why they were studying anthropology, and with the aporias in the glaringly essentialist accounts of most of the 'classic' anthropologists, including the work of E-P. At that time Elizabeth, like her two hundred anthropology classmates, had no idea what anthropology was all about, and some neighbours said she had been enrolled to study 'bones of dead people'. This was what was known there about anthropology at that time, as was confirmed by authors like Onyango-Ouma (2006) and Ntarangwi (2002), who noted that anthropology was seen as a discipline that studied prehistoric cultures that people wanted to forget, and which was thus not 'useful' for the pressing problems of Africa.

Elizabeth only came to understand the famous script that anthropology is the 'holistic study of human societies across space and time' when she took her first class, 'Introduction to Anthropology 101'. Indeed, anthropology was not seen as important and one of the professors from the law department who taught the 'Introduction to the Legal Anthropology' course often wondered aloud why they were studying 'miserable anthropology'.[1]

At the Institute of African Studies, where the Department of Anthropology was housed, in addition to the work of other early anthropologists like Malinowski, Myers, Benedict and Radcliffe-Brown, was E-P's work around the Zande, Nuer and Luo. These were some of the 'classics' found in the one-roomed library located at the National Museums of Kenya. Some of these existed as books, while some of it were photocopies by the librarian. Col narrated how he would ask senior anthropologists what classic in anthropology they would save from the apocalypse were it to occur (Col *et al.* 2017:5). If they had played Col's game at the institute, E-P's work and that of other early anthropologists would be salvaged to save Elizabeth and her classmates from failing to graduate, as that was perceived as the most important thing anthropology could grant.

The apparent lack of utility in studying anthropology, especially the 'classics', was a paradox that students grappled with daily. However, it was at the Institute of African Studies that in addition to learning how to study other cultures, they also learned the imperative of critically engaging the dominant anthropology categories, assumptions, and treatment of the (non-Western) other. These included, among other anthropological fossils: Malinowski's savages, little animals, and inferior natives (Hsu 1979), E-P's 'primitive people' and other such representations. Indeed, these aporias were more accentuated for the young students because one of their teachers, Professor Mathu, who sadly died in 2020, would narrate his encounters with racism during his studies in the USA, when people would chant 'monkey' behind him on the streets. Such reflexivity travelled with Elizabeth even after she graduated from the University of Nairobi.

Auma studied Educational Policy and African Studies at Indiana University in the USA and is currently an educationalist and social policy academic at the International Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus University Rotterdam. Her teaching and research are animated by questions about

1 Legal Anthropology was an elective course.

power and social justice in trying to understand the place of young people and their families in social policy. Privileging epistemic diversity, she has built alliances with scholars in the region to nurture and mentor researchers, to amplify African voices and to anchor their writing in contextual realities and situated approaches.

A shared critical outlook and reflexivity towards the study of communities and cultures put Elizabeth and Auma on each other's paths. We first encountered each other in 2004 at the ISS-EUR, where Auma had taken up an academic position and Elizabeth was pursuing her master's studies. Our collaboration evolved from research assistance to research collaboration including Ph.D. thesis supervision and working together on several research and capacity-building projects. Drawing on her background in anthropology, Elizabeth had worked for several years with an organization that was leveraging local and indigenous knowledge to support childcare in Eastern Africa. She drew from her practitioner diary and decided to pursue her graduate studies and research endeavours around dominant representations of children and youth in Kenya.

In terms of ethnic subjectivities, Auma is a Luo from Siaya, which falls into what E-P in his research called Kavirondo Gulf or what was labelled Nilotic Kavirondo in the colonial era. Elizabeth is a Kamba from Eastern Kenya, who married in western Kenya, or what was known during the E-P era as part of Bantu Kavirondo. Though linguistically distinct, Luhya and Luo have similarities in some cultural practices, and within the ethnic imaginaries in Kenya they are often seen as bastions of tradition.

We therefore continue to be connected with these spaces, writing and researching as insider-outsiders, and from standpoints that we perceive as ontologically marginalized. In these spaces we frequently encounter the fossils of anthropology: the exoticization of the culture of these communities. Our main area of research interest and focus is on children and youth, and how cultural and other shifts affect and influence their well-being and citizenship. In our shared quest for knowing the 'other' differently, we have engaged in the representation of communities and cultures in Africa.

Alongside supervising Elizabeth's Ph.D., Auma was also one of the cultural interlocutors providing linguistic and socio-cultural insights for her thesis on the experience of poor and vulnerable children among the Luo of Siaya. We also co-conduct research initiatives, including an auto-ethnographic study in which we are putting together the subjective memoirs ('*mama memoirs*') of our mothers to generate layered accounts of the tensions and complexities of childhood and girlhood in Kenya through time, space (pre-, colonial and post-colonial) and intergenerationally. Srinivas (1997:23) argues that anthropologists have no choice but to study other cultures through the prisms of their own culture. He also adds that such research ought to be done by researchers from two different cultures to enable a clash of subjectivities.

We have also reflected on the nebulous boundaries of inside-outside, and what it means to study one's own community as an insider-outsider. Studying these two communities, which have a lot of cultural and other diversities, including gender and the influences of external forces and shifts, has made it clear to us how thin the line is between insider and outsider and native and non-native subjectivities.

Re-encountering E-P among the Luo of Kenya: further tensions in anthropology and our work

E-P is credited as the first anthropologist to study the Luo of Kenya professionally, undertaking pioneering sociological work with them (Campbell 2006; Morton and Oteyo 2009; Musandu 2012). He reportedly earned a Leverhulme grant to study Nilotic groups in Africa (Morton 2020) but could not continue with his onward journey to Sudan because he fell ill. He therefore settled among the Luo in Kenya in the 1930s, where he interviewed Luo mission converts in English (Musandu 2012:542). It is notable that, after being in Kenya for only six weeks, E-P wrote 'Marriage customs of the Luo of Kenya' (1965a) in which he focused on courtship as well as wedding ceremonies. He noted that for this piece, he only interviewed one pastor, Ezekiel from Alego (ibid.; Morton 2020:199). His other works are 'Ghostly vengeance among the Luo of Kenya' (1950), a two-page article in which he focuses on ghosts in relations to ill(well)-being, and 'Luo tribes and clans' (1949), which focused on the people and their culture, as well as their social structure.

Anthropology in Kenya from the 1930s to 60s was seen as the preserve of those who were scientifically trained, and E-P is reported to have lamented the scientific laissez-faire identity of anthropology in Kenya, which according to him had been left in the hands of individuals who did not rely on theory or even knowledge of field methods (Sutton 2006:298). Although the work of E-P has been seen as a break from the prejudiced accounts of missionary anthropologists, it does not escape the critique of a gendered, masculine, male-gaze of most anthropologists' work at this time. For instance, in his key reliance on male informers, seen as custodians of culture and its treatment of women.

Indeed, in her article 'Daughters of Odoro: Luo women and power: re- examining scripted oral traditions', Musandu (2012) engages with the gender-scripted work of anthropologists as well as cultural historians among the Luo from 1938–50. These scripts, she argues, were collected from men by other men and have specific assumptions about gender and the role of women in society. Within this context, Musandu's study illuminates and puts in further context E-P's work and reliance on missionary anthropologists and men. Such missionary accounts, she

argued, tended to represent the customs of the Luo as primitive and the Luo as victims of these traditions. She also argued that both E-P's work and that of other scholars tended to present Luo women as powerless and as victims of tradition, with no regard to, and obviating the fact that, Luo women were centres of power (Musandu 2006). She explains the central power position that Luo women held, albeit one that the men only tacitly acknowledged, and also points to the problem of only relying on the narratives of men. For example, by drawing from Malo's book, *Luo Customs and Traditions* (2003), she presented a narrative of how the husband to a 'daughter of Odoro' would not admit that his wife had wrestled him to the ground:

> when the daughter of Odoro was beaten by her husband, she would take hold of him with great anger and trip him and throw him on the ground. Then she would boast, saying, 'Have you seen the daughter of Odoro?' Her husband would reply, 'What daughter of Odoro? Can't you see that it is the shoes that tripped me.'
>
> (cited in Musandu 2012:556)

Morton (2020) confirms this and argues that a portion of E-P's work based on his 1955 Fawcett Lecture, 'The position of women in primitive societies and in our own' (1965b), was seen as sexist because of the way he questioned the benefit of the changed position of women in England through comparison with the situation of women in communities he had studied, including the Luo. We have retraced some of E-P footprints, especially around the experiences of the widows among the Siaya, who are known as *chi liel* (Evans-Pritchard 1950:140) or wives of the grave, for their own perspectives on marriage rituals and customs among the Luo.[2] This is especially interesting given the way they position themselves around the protective role that graves were meant to play. This kind of layered and nuanced analysis is something that has not been given a lot of focus in other discussions, which tend to focus more on aspects seen as 'wife inheritance'.

It is not only foreign anthropologists like E-P who are targets of such critiques. John Mbiti, the prolific scholar (who was also Elizabeth's neighbour), who in his seminal work *African Religions and Philosophy* (1969), critiqued foreign representations of religion in Africa, was himself challenged for his patriarchal orientation in understanding marriage in Africa (Verstraelen, 1998). In another example, among the Luo, Ogot (1967), claimed a native's representation of accounts of Luo in Kenya and Uganda by cross-checking with the clan leaders. His accounts were however seen as male and elitist, as he uncritically accepted the claims of the elders who were seen as custodians of culture and history (Campbell 2006:81).

The work by anthropologists in Africa and among the Luo at this time was also said to be represented as static and timeless, and not to consider cultural shifts. Indeed Morton (2020:201) argued that E-P's article on 'Luo tribes and clans' did not acknowledge the role of colonial or missionary influence on Luo social or political life, and only gave a cursory reference to the way land conflicts were enhanced by European rule. Nyoka (2019:175) supports this assertion, and argued that anthropology as a theoretical discipline could not account for change, and therefore continued to focus on the primitive, erotic and exotic 'other'.

Adding to the critique of foreign anthropologists, including E-P, Fashina (2008:65) questions the presumed absence of theory in Africa, and provides a perspective on the prevailing scholars of African tradition, such as poets and court officials, who were not appointed by formal universities or were not ethnographers. He claims that these were 'the unacknowledged sociologists and anthropologists of the African space of their time' whose knowledge has provided modern day researchers with records for these communities.

These critiques connect with the commentary that anthropology was a twin (and we add, 'brother') to colonialism in Africa (Elie 2006). This is already well understood, and early British social anthropology is over-represented in this context with its love of 'primitive' societies. One remembers all too well the iconic speech by President Kwame Nkurumah of Ghana, 'The African Genius', during the opening of the Institute of African studies in Ghana in 1963, in which he noted that African studies both in Africa and the West, were influenced by these same colonial assumptions and that African knowledge, arts, dance etc. were seen as curious or grotesque (Nkrumah 1963). Similarly, Jomo Kenyatta, the first president of Kenya and a famed student of Malinowski, in his book *Facing Mount Kenya* (1938), saw anthropology as a discipline that was monopolizing the mind of Africa by speaking for her.[3]

In Kenya, Sutton (2006:287) seems to excuse some anthropologists like Huntingford, referred to as a plodding disciple of the British school of social anthropology mentored by E-P, and Louis Leakey, with his prehistoric archaeology work in Kenya. He argued that even though both were British and therefore products of their era of colonial anthropology, they were not colonial administrators. He presented their occasional 'errands' for the colonial government as volunteering 'their wisdom' about 'native

2 A research project done by Elizabeth under Auma's supervision.

3 Ntarangwi (2002) notes that even though Kenyatta had a background in anthropology, he did not champion the its study at the tertiary level during his presidency. The first cohort of anthropology students were only admitted to the university in 1986.

customs' and mentality whenever inexperienced officials, insensitive settlers or zealous missionaries encountered distrust or open protest. Mwenda Ntarangwi, a Kenyan anthropologist, who was based in the USA and currently works in the continent, engages the colonial tendencies of anthropology. In in his book *Reversed Gaze* (2010), he chides anthropologists for their love of alterity and troubles the unequal power relations embedded in the discipline. As an 'outsider within', first as an African student of anthropology and then immersed as a professional anthropologist, he is able to have a 'reversed gaze' in his re-examination of the construction and becoming of anthropology in America.

We would be naïve to dismiss the work of E-P and the company of like-minded anthropologists entirely on the basis of the 'sins above'. Some of the critique may seem passé given more recent engagements with anthropology, including what Elie (2006) calls a compromised acceptance of 'postcolonial insurgency' within the ranks and the feminist post-modernist critiques of anthropology. Some authors have seen this positioning of anthropologists who worked within the era as inevitable and as a product of a specific time its contexts (Myers 2017:8–9). However, we agree with Bonila (2017:24) that there is need for continuous reflexivity 'around these and other Anthropology aporias'. Such reflexivity has been the basis of our scholarship and knowledge activism.

We are aware, like E-P, of the labour and the obstacles that have gone in producing such texts (Owusu 1978:326), and our commentary is not to intervene in these debates. We instead now turn to our own work in Eastern Africa, to show how one can study other communities while being aware of the shortcomings of knowing the 'other'. Drawing on these critiques, but also superseding them enables us to understand how we can indeed do anthropology differently and in ways that are beneficial to the societies we study, that is, as anthropology with cultural and political commitment. In our work and together with like-minded Africans and Africanists, we are particularly concerned with the forgetting or marginalizing of local ways of knowing. These were earlier often represented as a barrier to development and were exoticized (and continue to be so), but we now explore how they pertain to the pressing issues of childcare and well-being in the continent.

Research around local knowledge of childcare

Our reflexivity around representations of local knowledge, including customs, arts, oral literature etc. started in 2008, when we started a movement leveraging local knowledge to improve childcare in Africa. We carried out one year of ethnographic research on how indigenous knowledge systems can be brought to bare on the growth and development of children (Okwany, Ngutuku and Muhangi 2011:40). This was a collaboration of three researchers, Auma, Elizabeth and our colleague the late Arthur Muhangi from Uganda, who sadly and suddenly passed on in 2013. We also worked with several organizations in Kenya and Uganda. This study was carried out among the Luo and the Bukusu of Kenya, and the Baganda in Uganda. Aware of the burning questions around the role of ethnography for its own sake, we wanted to avoid voyeurism into the lives of people and we thus presented ethnography as relevant to the practice and theories of childcare in Africa. In addition, we were also aware of the assertion by Pence and Nsamenang (2008:34) that early childhood development practice (and policy) in Africa has been based on 'extrapolated evidence'.

We noted that the Luo and Luhya communities (our research sites) have been the target of various research within the context of HIV/AIDS. Many of these studies have attributed the high HIV prevalence rates in these communities to their 'retrogressive cultural practices' around marriage. We were therefore not only wary of the singular narrative, but also, by placing these cultures within a larger context of the dominant understandings, we asserted that the narrative was not only colonial but was too unitary, too white, too exotic, too stuck in the past, and in some cases too androcentric. Through this research, we also wanted to engage the Victorian imaginaries that children are supposed to be seen and not heard, which curiously became the lens for imagining Africa's childhoods, and the case where Africa was imagined through the lens of the mistreatment of children. We therefore called for dialogue between different epistemologies and questioned what Soares (2019:10) would call 'exogenous discourses, exogenous categorizations, and ethnocentric epistemologies'. In his bold piece about 'Divining the future of anthropology' Nyamnjoh (2012:67) rightly points out that ethnographic representations of Africa are often crafted as 'delicacies without rigorous, systematic dialogue with the Africans in question'. In our work we have strived to respond to this epistemic injustice, by foregrounding situated and contextual accounts of children and caregivers and writing ourselves as speaking subjects in childcare-knowledge production in Africa (Ngutuku 2018; Okwany 2016; Okwany and Ebrahim 2015, 2019).

In seeking to recentre narratives of the role of culture and custom, we drew from the Bukusu proverb 'every mother dances her baby'. The literal meaning of this proverb is that the size of the baby does not hinder the parent/caregiver from nurturing it, while the underlying meaning speaks to the distinctive, valued, indigenous ways of childcare that all communities have and that have been passed down intergenerationally. We also rallied around Okot p'Bitek's metaphor of a pumpkin (1996) in defence of traditional epistemology and the embeddedness of local knowledge. He exhorts that 'the pumpkin that grows in the old homestead must not be uprooted'. In his commentary on the pumpkin, as used by p'Bitek, Fashina (2008:71) argues that:

> The 'pumpkin' in the Acoli tradition carries ethereal significance, not just as a leguminous crop, edible and rich in vitamins necessary for good health. Rather, the pumpkin has a pictorial, ritual and archetypal significance, as a denizen of the forest and a co-habitor with man and ancestral spirits in the homestead and lineage. The pumpkin of the homestead is history, and it is a databank for understanding the people's cultural epistemology. The pumpkin is an elaborate figure and icon of power, tradition and magic. It is a character in its own right and its presence evokes the principle of 'presence' as against 'absence' from the process of negotiating existence within the cultural ideology of the homestead and clan.

We were aware that we should not continue relying on foreign anthropologists as 'unquestioned guardians of Africa's collective memory' (Owusu 1978:326)'. In this endeavour we found inspiration in the African proverb that 'until lions have their historians, tales of the hunt shall always glorify the hunters'. We therefore not only wanted to become historians for the lions in Africa, but also to enable the communities to become their own historians. We note that we were not actually the first historians of the lions, and our accounts are no truer than those of earlier studies of these communities. However, we are also particularly aware, as earlier discussed, that these tales of the lion are gendered, classed and told by adults, and that we, therefore, also wanted to include the voices of the young people, as well as women, who are often marginalized in accounts of the 'other'.

We also reminded ourselves, as E-P (1976) once noted, that 'one owes a debt to posterity'. This debt is, however, not just to our future students in far off places, eager to understand local cultures through epistemes of 'primitivity'. It is for Africa herself, where most of our ways of life and philosophies are in large part preserved within human libraries. In this research we also rallied behind the inspiration of the late Malian philosopher Amadou Hampâté Bâ, who noted that 'each time an old person dies in Africa a library burns down' (Okwany, Ngutuku and Muhangi 2011:40). We therefore worked with three generations of caregivers to explore not only the shifts, but also the generational and gendered perspectives in childcare in these communities.

To enhance conviviality in knowledge production, we worked with mothers, fathers, elders, cultural and linguistic historians and other interlocutors, including teachers and midwives. The oldest of these libraries was a 102-year old man, who died soon after we completed our research. Culture emerged as useful for childcare, but the cultural shifts were also not seen as loss but instead as a source of rejuvenation.

Among other aspects of childcare, we focused on proverbs which codify and embody the conceptualization of childhood, care and the place of children in society. For example, the Luo proverb '*nyathi ok ma ngetane*', which translates as 'a child must not be deprived of their play seed', is illustrative of the processes of cultural shifts. The word for 'play seed', *ngeta*, was no longer common parlance, so in order to interpret this proverb we started group discussions around meanings of the unfamiliar words in it. This was followed by a collaborative analysis of its underlying meanings. Many third-generation participants were not aware of the proverb and those aware of it gave its literal meaning, of denying a child their play toy. Discussions with second- and first-generation study participants as well as cultural historians revealed the deeper meaning as mandating a bundle of rights and entitlements a child is owed. These range from the right to play and includes the right to be nurtured, to guidance and to protection, security and identity (ibid.:103; Okwany 2016).

The variety of avenues to enrich contextually grounded childcare research, policy and practice within the region has been undermined and marginalized by the prevalence of African research agendas being conceptualized, developed, funded and driven by researchers in the Global North. Our scholarship-building has responded to this injustice by privileging epistemic diversity and Auma, for instance, has built alliances with scholars in the region to nurture and mentor researchers, so as to amplify African voices and anchor their writing in contextual realities and situated accounts. The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (Codesria) is a key hub of knowledge production for the social sciences in Africa that is dedicated to building African scholars through research, networking, publications and knowledge dissemination. In 2015, Auma was co-director of the first ever Codesria Child and Youth Institute, focusing on children 0–3 years old, an age group that has received marginal attention in scholarship and policy because their well-being is often subsumed under that of their mothers. Elizabeth was one of the fifteen scholars from South, East, West and Central Africa who participated in the institute. The outcome of the institute is the edited volume *Early Childhood Care and Education at the Margins* (Ebrahim, Okwany and Barry 2019) with chapters from the fifteen African scholars. Drawing on the quest by Odora-Hoppers (2010) for cognitive justice, the institute provided space to the scholars to interrogate, investigate and innovate through the kind of reflexive and responsive situated research that is traditionally relegated to the margins. The volume is a testimony to the importance of building a cadre of emerging scholars in the region, who can engage within and against dominant accounts of childcare issues from a cultural perspective, and can address epistemic injustice through their writing, practice and knowledge activism.

Our numerous research collaborations are rooted in and extend these initiatives.

We have also been reflexive about the way the 'exotic lens' of earlier anthropologists may frame the way 'native' researchers' material on indigenous culture is read. For example, during the publication of our book *The Role of Local Knowledge and Culture in Child Care in Africa: A Sociological Study of Several Ethnic Groups in Kenya and Uganda*, though the internal reviewer gave a good review, they started by apologizing for the negative aspects of African culture (despite these featured in a few cases, when showing how communities were using resources to engage in aspects of culture that were seen as regressive). The reviewer then added that despite these, 'there are however many positives'.

It is also worth mentioning that the title of the book itself was contentious, and there were shifts in the wording: from initially including the role of customs to eventually only retaining the term culture. One of the titles proposed was 'The role of a mother's instinctive knowledge in the development of young children: how indigenous knowledge systems shape African child rearing'. We were strongly opposed to the first part of this title, preferring a focus on 'The role of local knowledge in childcare'. In the emotionally charged discussions amongst ourselves and with the editors, we thought that the use of instinctive took us back to the dark past early anthropologist's 'exotic' 'primitive' accounts and their associations of African cultures with the world of animals who rely on instincts. The reasoning given by the editors was curious, as they noted that they were guided by the need to cater for 'cultural differences between North American, European, and African ideas' and therefore 'instinctive knowledge' rather than 'indigenous knowledge' as the main title would enable librarians to place the book properly'[4]. We sat for hours trying to negotiate with a sense of veritable rage and thinking, together with Odora-Hoppers (2008), of the possibility of our book being scandalously 'museumized' into a ghetto of 'African knowledge' only to be valued for its exotic aesthetics.

In this venture, we have been cautioned by editors of journals and books that we should not be polemical. We were careful, as warned, to avoid belligerence and not to present our quest as an endeavour to replace one epistemological orthodoxy with another. At the same time, we wondered if there was not a space for respectful polemics in anthropology (Clifford 1997), where we can engage in dialogue that does not stop thought. We have also been cautioned not to romanticize the knowledge of our communities. Here we have wondered if a more dominant knowledge was the norm, and the more valued comparator, to which all other knowledge is indexed, so as to be understood (Okwany Ngutuku and Muhangi 2011:53).

4 Communication with editors in 2011.

Conclusion

Our work has been guided by the imperative to enhance conviviality in knowledge production about other cultures, including our own. While our location as 'native' researchers has given us a unique standpoint from which to examine our cultures, we have not done so innocently, and our quest has been imperfect. We are aware that we might not have escaped the same critiques levelled against anthropology ancestors, like E-P, because researching about the 'other', even within our 'own', given our location in the Global North, is still laden with power, and can also be perceived as colonializing knowledge. Such aporias do not imply impossibility in representation of other cultures. We continue to be guided by the need to do ethnography in ways that are reflexive and beneficial to the communities within which we do our research.

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PART VI

Continuing impact

E-P with his father. On the back of the photograph: 'E-P with priest at Malinowski villa in North Italy (1925)'. Courtesy Dr Patrick Burke.

29
An interesting misunderstanding?

Harriet D. Lyons and Andrew P. Lyons

The question of whether Evans-Pritchard's Catholicism influenced his ethnography has been much debated, with no firm conclusion. Perhaps, E-P's religious beliefs influenced his understanding of other anthropologists and sociologists more than his understanding of the Nuer. In his 1960 article on 'Religion and the anthropologists', which precedes *Theories of Primitive Religion* (1965), he claims that atheist and agnostic anthropologists, including not only Tylor and Frazer but also Durkheim, miss the boat on religion because they try to avoid discussing believers' relationships with deities, concentrating instead on explaining religion away in terms of other things. He believed that scholars with a Protestant background, who had rejected fundamentalists' literal readings of the Bible, were particularly prone to regard religion as an error to be explained. Catholics, whose religious practice was embedded in a total Church hierarchy, were, in his view, better equipped to understand religious practice. Both E-P and Mary Douglas, who served as examiners for Harriet Lyons's B.Litt. thesis on Jewish mysticism, 'A Structural Analysis of the Symbolism of the Cabbalah',[1] told her that only a religious person could understand Jewish mysticism as she did, and doubted her statement that she was a Jewish atheist. Perhaps, as Catholics, they did not understand the labours history has imposed upon Jews, even Jewish atheists. Gershom Scholem, the leading scholar of Jewish mysticism, suggested that Jewish mystic texts reveal a longing for order and salvation within a shattered community, a desire allegedly shared by Jews across the religious and political spectrum.[2] This might well include Durkheim and Lévi-Strauss, who, along with Scholem, were major influences on the thesis. This is a religious habitus very different from the intellectualism E-P rejected, and might help explain how a left-wing Jewish atheist could arrive at conclusions about Jewish mysticism that E-P thought could only come from a believer, and might also provide an argument for exempting Durkheim from E-P's blanket rejection of agnostic anthropologists of religion.

It can be argued that anecdotes have no proper place in academic writing, but perhaps an exception will be permitted inasmuch as the stories reflect attitudes of anthropologists toward religion (usually, but not always, they have been atheists or agnostics), and shine light on ways in which questions of the observers' belief and the type of religion that they have practised or abandoned have affected both theory formation and ethnography concerning religion, myth and ritual, and also the reception of anthropological work on religion by believers. These are all questions with which E-P was very concerned.

As noted, the first-named author of this chapter wrote a thesis for the B.Litt. Degree (now the M.Litt.) entitled, 'A Structural Analysis of the Symbolism of the Cabbalah'. The bulk of the thesis concerned the body of texts known as The Zohar, which, according to Gershom Scholem, was written by Moses de Léon towards the end of the thirteenth century. Also discussed in the thesis were the earlier Merkabah mysticism of the fifth century and the Lurianic Kabbalah of the sixteenth century. The thesis was informed by its author's reading of the work of E-P, the Durkheimians, Mary Douglas, Rodney Needham, Victor Turner, Edmund Leach and Claude Lévi-Strauss. E-P's *Theories of Primitive Religion* (1965) was published just a year before work on the thesis began. *Purity and Danger* (Douglas 1966), *The Forest of Symbols* (Turner 1967) and *The Ritual Process* (Turner 1969) were all published during the time it was being written. The English translation of Lévi-Strauss's *La Pensée Sauvage* came out in 1966. At the time she prepared the thesis Harriet Lyons did not know that E-P and Douglas would be her examiners, that both Vic and Edie Turner would become her friends, and that the work of these four great Catholic anthropologists would be the focus of an excellent recent book, *The Slain God* (Larsen 2014), which raises some of the issues we shall examine from a profoundly different perspective (significantly, the author omits Lévi-Strauss).

1 In 1970 there was no standardization of the orthography of Cabbalah/Kabbalah. The word is usually spelled with an initial 'K' nowadays.

2 This concept permeates Scholem's work, and is perhaps expressed most clearly in his chapter on the sixteenth-century Kabbalist, Isaac Luria (1955:244–86).

So, these are the anecdotes. In 1967 the two of us encountered Andrew Lyons's former English teacher, R.C. Shepard, in Cornmarket Street in Oxford. He had returned to the city to attend a conference of Catholic scholars who were to discuss the dangerous writings of Edmund Leach and other structuralists. Some time in 1968 or 1969 a friend of ours introduced us to the man she was then dating, the distinguished Islamic scholar, Samuel Miklos Stern. He was outraged at the very thought of the thesis: 'How dare you, a *mere* anthropologist, compare the writings of the greatest *Jewish* geniuses to the antics of savages prancing round a pot in the jungle?' This was an unusually forceful statement, but it was not an isolated reaction. Just a week before we wrote this paragraph, Harriet happened to mention, at a Toronto luncheon for graduates of Barnard College, the women's affiliate of Columbia University, that many Jews had believed in metempsychosis, and that some Hasidic Jews still do. The other women at the table, all synagogue members who considered themselves 'progressive', assured her that she must be mistaken, that Jews could not possibly have believed in anything so irrational. Fortunately for Harriet Lyons, the two 'mere' anthropologists who examined her thesis in 1970 reacted in a very different way than Samuel Stern. Although Harriet Lyons protested that she was a secular, left-wing atheist who had abandoned her religious faith more than a decade earlier, both E-P and Mary Douglas insisted that this could not be so. They liked the thesis and thought that only a believer could have written it. E-P was emphatic in expressing this opinion.

For years we have wondered why this was the case. A lifetime of reading and teaching, including specifically classes on ritual, myth and witchcraft, and many re-readings of E-P's work, have led us to some partial understanding of his position. Our attention has recently focused on three short pieces, the 1959 Blackfriars Lecture, 'Religion and the anthropologists' (1960), the last chapter of *Theories of Primitive Religion* (1965) and, last but not least, 'Some reflections on mysticism' (1970), a paper published in a student anthropology journal that was a version of a lecture he had recently given at the University of Durham. In that talk, the essence of mysticism was seen as the pursuit of a direct experience of God. 'Some reflections' reads like a very personal statement, as well a scholarly paper that cites many eminent sources including Scholem and E-P's All Souls colleague, Robin Zaehner. Speaking to Fortes, who heard the talk, Evans-Pritchard remarked, 'It must have been apparent to you, if not to them, that this is my inner life.' (Barnes 1987:480; Engelke 2002:6). A critical perusal of these three short essays may assist us in better understanding E-P, and we can appreciate that some of the questions he asked are still in a way being answered, not always satisfactorily, in the anthropology of religion.

We shall be examining E-P's conceptualization of the anthropology of religion and his critique of the directions taken by most of his predecessors in that subfield. We must first mention *en passant* debates about the nature of his Catholicism, the degree to which he imbued the Institute for Social Anthropology with his faith, and thirdly whether or not his religiosity diminished his competence as an ethnographer of Nuer religion. E-P described himself as a 'bad Catholic' and Michael G. Kenny recalled that description(see Chapter 4, this volume). Larsen notes that the self-description originally appeared in a Dominican publication, and further argues that although he was not a regular church attender Evans-Pritchard took his religion very seriously. Ashley Montagu, who took Malinowski's seminar in 1924 with E-P and Firth, heard a quip by their professor about all three students, in which E-P (who may not have taken kindly to the joke) was identified as a Catholic convert (personal communication, 1989). The conversion process in fact suffered a few stops and starts: it was only in 1944 that E-P was formally received into the church in Benghazi. The other two questions are addressed in a brief paper in *JASO* by Ahmed Al-Shahi (1999), the literary executor of Godfrey Lienhardt's estate. This summarizes a correspondence on these issues between Godfrey Lienhardt, who provided the answers, and Fr. Peter Vidot, who asked the questions in the course of his work on an MA thesis on E-P and the anthropology of religion. Lienhardt attacked Adam Kuper's exaggerations about the role Catholicism played in the Institute under E-P's direction. Kuper (1973) had gone so far as to imply that non-Catholics at the Institute often underwent a conversion experience as a form of initiation. As non-Catholics, we were certainly unaware of any such pressures at that time. It is certainly true that the Institute was characterized by very idealist, rather than materialist, approaches to the discipline; that it was somewhat apolitical in times of political strife; and that religious believers of many kinds were welcome, as also were atheists. All this we personally knew. The most important of Vidot's questions concerned the effects of Catholicism on E-P's work as an anthropologist. Lienhardt responded that there was 'no link between his Catholicism and his historical methodology (except negatively – he wasn't a Marxist).' Furthermore, 'You will be hard pressed in reading E-P's anthropological work alone to find enough evidence of his Roman Catholicism to make a thesis.' (Al-Shahi 1999:70, 69). Few would dispute that these statements ring true with respect to E-P's early writing, including the work on Azande witchcraft. However, critics with very different positions (e.g. Jarvie 1969 and Douglas 1981:87) have criticized *Nuer Religion* (1956) because it uses very Christian (and Judaic) concepts to explain Nuer concepts of the divinity (e.g. 'sin'; 'hypostases' of the single deity).

Nuer Religion reflected an unfashionable methodological stance in disciplines that dubbed themselves social 'sciences' in mid-century. The fashionable stance in the

sociology/anthropology of religion was articulated in the writing of Peter Berger (1967) as 'methodological atheism'.[3] Berger believed that religion was socially constructed, but the approach was congenial to others who did not share his perspective but also wished to study religion 'scientifically'. Perhaps, 'methodological agnosticism' was a better phrasing of the position. Anthropologists should seek to block out mental predispositions that might affect their ability to study the religion of others (including their own religious beliefs and world-view) and concentrate on the others' acts and sayings. It is doubtful that E-P ever committed himself to such a project. Whilst he could say that he found it feasible when in the field to follow (or feign to follow) Zande procedures of oracular consultation (Evans-Pritchard 1937:270), he also undertook to call out a witchdoctor for fraud (ibid.:230–1). In *Nuer Religion* (1956) he used concepts from Christian theology, Judaism and the work of both missionaries and sociologists/anthropologists (Durkheim, Hubert and Mauss, for example, despite criticizing Durkheimian approaches elsewhere). Anthropologists should use whatever apparatus would work to translate cultures, and there was an assumption that there were universals that transcended difference and addressed common human experiences, which is why the Nuer could feel they were like ants before Kwoth. That was also why in 1970 he had no hesitation in applying the very Christian concept of mysticism to the work of Hindu, Jewish and Zen thinkers.

E-P disliked most of the work on religion that had been done by earlier anthropologists. In his Blackfriars Lecture to a Catholic audience, published as 'Religion and the anthropologists', as well as in the concluding chapter of *Theories of Primitive Religion*, he argues that Tylor, Frazer and the other evolutionists assumed that religion was deservedly on its way to obsolescence as a means of explaining reality. They asked how primitive humans had fallen into error in the first place and tried to put themselves into the minds of people they had never seen, imagining mental states that were alien to what they perceived to be the modern mind. Religion emerged as either the product of a childlike mentality or a valuable (if erroneous) tool of social engineering. E-P thought that proper anthropological fieldwork required that beliefs be seen in their own context. For example, he noted that while an outsider might label belief in witchcraft as 'supernatural', for the Azande nothing could be more natural (Evans-Pritchard 1965:110). In the 1960s E-P expressed regret that the sophisticated fieldwork that had replaced armchair anthropology had paid relatively little attention to religion, perhaps because the intellectual world had settled into a comfortable agnosticism. He does mention a few exceptions, apart from his own work (1965:113), e.g. Lienhardt's *Divinity and Experience* (1961) and Turner's early work on the Ndembu (1961a, 1961b). In these writings, particularly in the Blackfriars Lecture, E-P seems to swing between labelling as biased those who see religion through an agnostic lens and suggesting that one can get a better view through a Catholic one, as he felt that the Catholic experience in some ways resembled that of ethnographic subjects. Thus, a call for detailed study of religious experience in its context did not become a call for the 'methodological agnosticism' discussed above.

In 'Religion and the anthropologists' E-P criticizes Thomas Henry Huxley for defending agnostics (E-P specifically includes Tylor in that category) by a simplistic mocking of such Biblical stories as Noah and the flood (Evans-Pritchard 1960:113). E-P says that the Catholic Church was less affected by attacks of this kind than the various Protestant factions, because Catholicism did not depend on the literal belief in Scripture (ibid.:112). In rejecting literal reading of the Bible as a domain which might be legitimately equated with 'religion', E-P's thought is evocative of the stance of the Jewish mystics discussed in the thesis E-P examined. Gershom Scholem, whose definition of mysticism E-P cites in his own essay on that subject (Evans-Pritchard 1970), saw such a rejection as a (perhaps the) central point of the Zohar. This was the thirteenth-century Kabbalistic work that was core to the thesis E-P had deemed to be the work of a religious person. While E-P thought that literal readings of the Scriptures distorted genuine religious experience, he was equally dismissive of interpretations which attempted to rescue belief in God from rationalist disparagement by claiming that it was really about something else, whether society or the individual psyche. According to Scholem, Moses de Leon, the author of the Zohar, rejected Aggadic (allegorical) exegeses of the Torah as well as literal readings, so in both of these senses, any close and appreciative reading of the Zohar could be seen by E-P as evidence that the person providing it occupied a standpoint at least somewhat similar to his

3 Because this chapter is an analysis of a particular point in the development of the anthropology of religion, we have not endeavoured to discuss what contemporary anthropologists have to say about such issues as the desirability of methodological atheism or agnosticism (as opposed, perhaps, to stated observer commitment). We can say that such an approach no longer would appear to be fashionable. This does not necessarily mean that E-P would be comfortable with contemporary trends. E-P assumed that it was possible to accomplish cultural translation between Azande and Westerners, between medieval mystics and contemporary Jews and Hindus. He did not believe in the irrelevance of subjectivities, as some cognitivists appear to, nor did he assume as perspectivists do, that the near incompatibility of diverse thought worlds makes the anthropologist's task unbelievably difficult. On 1960s examination papers for the one-year postgraduate Diploma in Social Anthropology there was a recurrent question which consisted in a quotation (we recall) from F.W. Maitland: 'The Comparative Method is all we have, and it is impossible. Discuss.' And we did so.

own. This is where E-P may have missed certain differences between Jewish and Protestant sensibilities in the hundred years between *Primitive Culture* (1871) and 'A Structural Analysis of the Symbolism of the Cabbalah' (Lyons 1970a).

Tylor, Frazer, Durkheim and Freud shared a modernist rejection of religious faith, for which they were disparaged by E-P, but the latter two shared a constraint which the former did not: the religion in which they had ceased to believe was one by which they would continue to be defined, mostly by people who disliked its adherents, and with which they had, in one way or another to come to terms. Their parables about God as a castrating father, or as society stretched out to the stars, may be seen as attempts to resolve this struggle, by seeing religion as a chain from which we cannot break free, though from which, perhaps, some ethical principles might be salvaged. Moses de Leon, writing in the thirteenth century, emphatically did not reject God, but he certainly saw divinity as very hard to find. E-P (1970), citing Scholem and others, wrote that the essence of the mystical experience was an attempt to achieve a direct connection with God. Scholem (1955:15–17), along with other writers on the topic, has suggested that such connection may be particularly difficult to achieve when the search is conducted across millennia of exile and persecution; indeed, he sees the search for individual ecstatic experience as rare in the Jewish mystic tradition. For the author of the Zohar, the solution was to see God as ultimately hidden while present in everything, a stance not all that dissimilar to E-P's conception of the Nuer's conception of their relationship to Kwoth, at a time when they were undergoing struggles of their own. Against this background we can begin to explore more fully the reasons why E-P saw more of a kindred spirit in a young, female Jewish atheist who had been drawn to study Jewish mysticism as a prime example of the workings of what Lévi-Strauss (1966) – another Jewish anthropologist who could neither believe in myth or walk away from it – called the 'savage mind'.

We might begin to explore the apparent misunderstanding by noting E-P's identification of a key indicator, as suggested in the concluding chapter of *Theories of Primitive Religion*, that an anthropologist writing about religion is not a believer. Non-believers, according to E-P, have directed their work toward seeking the origin or 'essence' of religion, a question which assumes that belief is based in illusion, and must be answered in terms of how people have been 'stupid enough' to fall for such untruths. (Evans-Pritchard 1965:121). The thesis E-P and Mary Douglas examined did not overtly seek to understand the origin of religion, it is true, but that is largely because by the time *Theories of Primitive Religion* appeared, three years before work on the thesis commenced, the question of origins had largely fallen out of fashion. Nonetheless, in so far as the thesis was primarily an attempt to demonstrate that the structuralism of Lévi-Strauss, at least as it was understood by British anthropologists in the 1960s, could be applied to Jewish mystic texts, there was at the very least an implicit theory of origins at its root. Lévi-Strauss argued that myths throughout the world incorporated and attempted to mediate irresolvable contradictions through stories that reinforced socially constructed dualisms while concealing their essential arbitrariness. Lévi-Strauss believed that a tendency to think in this way was attributable to (as yet undiscovered) structures of the human brain, so that human physiology was, at bottom, the origin of mythic thought. Moreover, in so far as Lévi-Strauss was concerned to demonstrate that that the products of the savage mind were elegant and logical in their structure, though they did not employ modern scientific methods, he was also addressing the other question E-P disparages: how could humans come to believe in falsehood? Unlike the nineteenth-century evolutionists, Lévi-Strauss was concerned to demonstrate that the falsehoods in question were the product of fully functioning adult brains. This mode of analysis was very enticing for a Jewish atheist writing about Jewish mystics. It offered the opportunity of escape from the constraints of Jewish exceptionalism by placing an important portion of Jewish thought firmly within a universalist context, while also permitting admiration of elegant texts without demanding acceptance of their doctrines. Did E-P and Douglas miss all this because simply because they liked the thesis, or were there deeper currents at work, perhaps on both sides of this brief encounter? That is what we shall now explore.

In the thesis, and in most surveys of Jewish mysticism (e.g. Dan 2005; Scholem 1955), the core events in the development of the Kabbalistic tradition, the circulation of the Zohar in thirteenth-century Spain and the emergence of the theosophy and ethical precepts of Isaac Luria in Safed, Palestine, in the sixteenth century, are seen as attempts to answer two questions fundamental to Jewish existence. The first question was how could one 'know' a divinity that was both singular and hidden. In his 1970 essay on mysticism, E-P perceives a quest of this type as central to all mystic projects, though it might be tailored to specific religious traditions. The second question was whether one could maintain worship of that God in the light of persecution, and an ensuing sense of abandonment. Though E-P explores in some depth mystics' guidance on accommodating (or escaping) the sufferings of worldly existence, he explicitly states that he does not intend to approach such particular social questions as how Jewish mysticism reacted to the exile from Spain (Evans-Pritchard 1970:104). In the thesis, Harriet Lyons explored both questions, as the answers proffered by the Jewish mystical tradition were highly amenable to the sorts of emerging anthropological analyses that she found attractive. Moreover, though she didn't make it explicit in the thesis, or even in her own internal monologues, both

the theories and the data had considerable relevance to the dilemmas facing a young, non-believing, Jewish female in the 1960s. For E-P mysticism was a universal concept; Harriet was writing from a very specific place.

The Zohar, which most contemporary scholars agree was mainly the work of a single thirteenth-century author, Moses de Leon, presented itself as a newly revealed first-hand account of a journey undertaken by a highly revered second-century sage, Simeon ben Yohai, during which he shared his knowledge of the true meaning of the Old Testament and Jewish ritual with his followers. Scholem and Dan, among others, see the pseudo-epigraphy as primarily motivated by a desire to render acceptable ideas which might otherwise have seemed radical. These ideas in some ways followed trends in Jewish writings dating back to antiquity, and certainly encompassed materials from many traditions, including folkloric ones, but the sheer massiveness of the Zohar allowed for a degree of elaboration and concentration that could appear at once attractive and dangerous. Some contemporary Hasidic Jews and other enthusiasts of the Kabbalah still believe in ben Yohai's authorship, and Edith Turner wrote an article about pilgrimages made to his tomb (Turner, E. 1993). In the summary which follows, the references will be to the Zohar as it was presented in the document E-P read, rather than to the text itself; for the record the edition of the Zohar primarily consulted was a five-volume translation published in 1933–4 by Harry Sperling, Maurice Simon and Paul Levertoff. A more extensive and highly regarded translation by Daniel Matt, Nathan Wolski and Joel Hecker appeared between 2004 and 2017, and should probably be consulted by any reader interested in further exploration of this topic.

Like many earlier writings discussed in Scholem's influential text *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (1955), the Zohar presents both divinity and creation through a series of dualisms. One of the most important dualisms concerns God himself, who is said to have two aspects, each of them a question: the Mi and the Mah, the Who and the What. The Zohar circumvents a challenge to monotheism by stressing that these are parts of the same entity, God in and of Himself (the *En Sof*), part of which (the what) was expended in creation, and part of which, the who, remained hidden. Devout humans might get some idea of the true nature of the *En Sof* by a proper understanding of sacred texts and might contribute to the maintenance and restitution of divine unity by their own actions and the spirit in which those actions were performed. 'Understanding' sacred texts, for Kabbalists, was not a matter of simple exegeses. It consisted of using multiple methodologies to discover meanings that were believed to be part of the original revelation on Mt. Sinai, but which were not evident through ordinary reading. It involved using units in the text other than ordinary words, such as letters and their numerical equivalents, and lexical permutations, which might disclose equivalences and oppositions that answered important questions about theosophy (in the strict sense of 'knowledge of God', especially through mystic insight) and the relations between God, angels, Biblical personages and ordinary human beings.

The terms Mi and Mah themselves are an example of the sort of wordplay that characterizes the Zohar. The text uses many permutations of the various names of God that exist in the Jewish tradition to make points about the nature of God and God's relation to people and creation. Mi and Mah are said to be contained in the Hebrew word Elohim, אלהים, 'Lord'. The last two letters of this name, when reversed, spell Mi (מי), while the first three letters (אלה) spell 'Eleh', or 'these', which was used interchangeably with Mah, as 'what' and 'these' both refer to objects in the external world; in fact 'these' could be an answer (therefore an equivalent) to the question 'What?' The name Elohim is thus a union of two opposed concepts of God, and putting them together constitutes a mediated opposition of a type characteristic of the Zohar's logic (the following diagram is taken from the thesis):

God before creation	Created works	God, combining original formlessness with creation
Unknowable	Obvious	Partially knowable through study of the obvious

In a manner typical of the Zohar, the alphabetical and the theosophical (in the sense of knowledge of God and the creation and purpose of the universe) are linked to Biblical narrative, to affirm a culture hero, the patriarch Jacob, as a mediator. Jacob is referred to in Exodus XXVI, 28, as 'the bolt that passes from extremity to extremity', and thus is seen to provide a link between a higher extremity, identical to Mi and a lower one, identical to Mah.

This exercise in symbolic manipulation offers a concise demonstration of both the mechanical and prescriptive aspects of Kabbalic reasoning. Seemingly disparate contexts are juxtaposed to provide a common message, which, within the overall text, can be read as a template for human action. God before creation was whole, but unknowable. Through revealing part of himself, he became partly knowable, but divided. It became the duty of biblical mediators, and living humans who would follow their examples, to work toward reunification, which would, however, not be complete until Messianic times. The means for such work could be revealed by readings that made the language of holy names

and the text of the Torah echo similar messages, and by the performance of ritual with the goal of reunification in mind. The human body, Scripture, moral categories and clues in the physical world could be read to give congruent messages of opposition and mediation, for example the opposed aspects of divinity, justice and mercy, were symbolized by left and right, red and white, night and day, weak and strong, Esau and Jacob, lilies and thorns, linking together biblical passages as diverse as Genesis and the Song of Songs, without regard to chronology, but with regard to a system of equivalences that made the central message seem inevitable. All of this seemed to more than validate the hypothesis that structuralism provided a good rubric for the analysis of Jewish mysticism; indeed, the congruence was so overwhelming that it became the subject of a brief article for the newly established *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford* (Lyons 1970b), which concluded that either Lévi-Strauss had indeed discovered the key to the mythmaker's mind or that he had been secretly borrowing from his grandfather's books. More recently, Jerome M. Levi has published a far more extensive and sophisticated article on this subject than a graduate student allotted three pages of space in 1970 could have managed. (There has, after all, been a half century of commentary on Lévi-Strauss, and on Kabbalah, in the interim.) Among Levi's conclusions is that:

> The idea that the apparent diversity of things hides a deeper unity, and that it is this deeper unity that constitutes the true or 'real' reality, even though it may be contradicted by our sensory perceptions, is a concept basic not only to structuralism, but also Kabbalah.
> (Levi 2009:937)

At the end of an erudite and sophisticated comparison of structuralism and Kabbalah, Levi ends with a question and an answer: 'Is this Kabbalah? God only knows.' (ibid.:980). We think that there may be a somewhat different answer to this question than either Levi's or that of the young Harriet Lyons. Acknowledging, as Levi does, that some elements of Kabbalic thought had permeated the Jewish milieu and may have exerted some general influence on the development of structuralism, there may be another resolution that does not disparage the insight and originality of either Lévi-Strauss or the Kabbalists, who, after all, were involved in similar endeavours: the deep reading of texts to understand the mind of their creators (or in the case of the Kabbalists, their Creator). Being skilled interpreters, they may have arrived at similar conclusions, though with different ends in view. Moses de Leon, Isaac Luria and the rest wanted to understand how and why God created man; Lévi-Strauss sought to answer how and why people created gods.

If the thesis had only been about testing structural analysis against the texts of a 'higher' religion, E-P would have simply been mistaken in saying that it only a believer could have written it. Like most human endeavours, however, the choice of topic was overdetermined, in the sense of having multiple causes, some of them not (or barely) acknowledged. There was a definite Tylorian, or Huxleyesque, element in the authorial motivation, and it was probably lucky for Harriet Lyons that E-P didn't see it in the occasional whiffs of irony that crept into the thesis. For example, one of the exercises prescribed by the Zohar for reuniting the fragmented divinity involved conducting one's sex life in accordance with hidden messages in the unpronounceable name of God, YHVH (יהוה). The first and third Hebrew letters, reading from right to left were regarded as somewhat phallic in appearance and the two open letters as feminine. Accordingly, it was suggested that the parts of God could be reunited if pious men conducted their sex life to mirror sexual unions on high, bringing together the two parts of God's name. God was imagined to have intercourse with his female emanation, the Shekinah, at midnight on the sabbath, and the devout were advised that by limiting their own intercourse to that hour, they could bring together Creator and created, man and woman, and the hidden and visible parts of God (Lyons 1970a:223; Zohar vol. 5:93). A source read at the time, though precisely which is now forgotten, indicated that this practice apparently continues to this day among some Hasidic Jews. When we discussed this between ourselves, and with other secular Jews, we took great amusement at the thought of couples in contemporary Brooklyn and Jerusalem looking at their watches to know exactly when to begin, which in itself might be difficult, given that the Orthodox are forbidden to turn on electric lights on the sabbath. But there was more going on than that. The injunction to the pious to have intercourse at midnight on Friday was part of an elaborate analysis of Jewish ritual, which linked all ritual observance to the ancient temple sacrifices, no longer possible in the diaspora, and ascribing to all of them the power to bring about at least temporary unity between opposites. This elaborate system was not greeted with irony, either textually or privately, though no claim was made to belief in its veracity as a model of the real world.

Like the Barnard women discussed earlier, we had been raised to believe that Jews were more rational than members of many other faiths; indeed, the Zohar was written partly as a reaction to the beginnings of a rationalist tradition, with which Kabbalah remained in tension during the succeeding centuries. To some degree, the insistence on rationalism was an attempt to make Jewish practices seem more acceptable to the outside world and to Jews attempting to assimilate to it. Hygienic theories for the dietary laws and infant circumcision were regularly touted as evidence of such rationalism. Such theories could, ironically, provide ammunition both for persisting in such practices and for abandoning them, while

retaining respect for those who invented them, a peculiarly Jewish problematic. Marvin Harris, who provided perhaps the most famous rationalist interpretation of the Jewish prohibition on pork in modern anthropology (Harris 1974), while at the same time seeing Melanesian and Hindu practice as equally rational, was observed by us enjoying spare ribs at the Columbia University Faculty Club in the 1970s. This possible consequence of rational explanations of ritual practice was foreseen almost as soon as Maimonides suggested them in the twelfth century, hence the need for the Kabbalists to integrate them in a total system, within which one could not pick and choose. Mary Douglas, the other examiner of the thesis, was particularly delighted by Harriet's preference for the Zohar's analysis over Maimonides (Harris's hadn't yet appeared), and said in a delighted voice, 'You proved I was right in *Purity and Danger*.' Later, of course, Douglas rejected her analysis of Jewish dietary laws in terms of the maintenance of order in a classificatory schema, in favour of an explanation in terms of ancient Hebrews' desire for communion with God. Of course, both of Douglas's approaches are totally consistent with the spirit of the Zohar, which teaches that strict order (separation) in the revealed world is one pole of a dualistic relation with the unity of God, creating a need for mediation. The necessity of separation is described in the Zohar in extensive discussions of the rules for separating meat and milk, and mediation in terms of prayer, fasting and the study of the Torah. The latter was, like marital intercourse, said to be particularly effective at midnight, a time when borders are especially permeable (Lyons 1970a:222). Douglas, like E-P, could not believe the author of the thesis was not a believer.

The form taken by ritual mediation in the Zohar's analysis also formed a perfect illustration of concepts from a work which had just appeared in 1969, the notions of *communitas* and liminality central to Victor Turner's book *The Ritual Process*. The interpretation of the meaning of the lighting of the sabbath candles is perhaps the best example. For Turner, ritual allowed participants to step outside the constraints of social structure and achieve a melting of difference that could only be achieved in a state outside normal time. The sabbath candles, lit by women at sunset on Fridays, are described in the Zohar as uniting, among other things, the red flame and the white smoke (red and white are very important in Turner's analyses of ritual), women and men, and the community of Israel and God. It should be noted that Turner, another Catholic anthropologist, later read the thesis with admiration.

The Zohar was written at a time when the danger of assimilation and the danger of oppression were both being felt among Spanish Jews. The next major development in Kabbalism took place in the sixteenth century, after the exile from Spain, and both Scholem and Dan see it as having had lasting influence on the mindset of succeeding generations of Jews, not all of them Kabbalists, or even religious. If Lévi-Strauss, Douglas and Turner informed Harriet's analysis of the Zohar, Durkheim was the *éminence grise* behind her understanding of Lurianic Kabbalism, though he is cited less extensively than the others. Isaac Luria wrote very little, but his circle of students and admirers in Safed circulated his ideas widely, to a degree that made Safed, to this day, a centre of mystic thought and pilgrimage. To state it briefly, Luria turned the Zohar's theosophy around. Where Moses de Leon saw God as having sent part of himself into the world, leaving a hidden part behind, Luria saw God as having been sent into exile, in part by human sin and in part because earthly vessels were too fragile to contain divine emanations, and had accordingly broken into pieces, leaving scattered shards. It was the duty of the faithful to gather those shards together by righteous acts, literally bring about the repair of the world (Tikkun Olam), and hastening the coming of the Messiah, at which time the repair would be complete. For Luria, Tikkun Olam demanded strict obedience to Jewish law and orderly social practice, which differed from routine obedience only in the practitioners' awareness of its eschatological significance.

Tikkun Olam is a concept that has permeated the Jewish communal consciousness from Luria to the present day, though its understanding has not been consistent. At one pole, contemporary Hasidim attempt to put Tikkun Olam into practice in much the spirit Luria encouraged. At the other extreme, otherwise non-observant Jews have often claimed Tikkun Olam as motivation for various forms of secular advocacy for social justice. There is a magazine called *Tikkun* whose masthead describes it as 'The Prophetic Jewish, Interfaith & Secular Voice to Heal and Transform the World'. Some organizations of such Jews have designed 'secular' rituals to replace Orthodox ones, and frequently employ the words Tikkun Olam in describing and justifying these observances, as well as their political activities. We have attended some rituals of this kind, and found them rather bland, as we do many attempts to preserve Judaism by rationalizing it.

Although we have never suggested that Durkheim was consciously motivated by any doctrine of Tikkun Olam, we have, along with others, long speculated about the degree to which his Jewish background influenced his theory of religion. For the main purpose of rituals and taboos to be the promotion of a general social good seemed appropriate for our experience of mainstream Judaism (not the mystic variety) in the 1950s, and certain interpretations of Tikkun Olam certainly seem to fit with such a notion. In *Durkheim and the Jews of France*, Strenski (1997) warned against attributing to Durkheim's social thought any kind of Jewish essentialism, and that is not being suggested here. Strenski does, however, suggest that the bourgeois Jews, with whom Durkheim associated in France, had certain interests in common, linked to their position in

French society at the time, and these included promoting general social well-being in a manner which did not call their patriotism into question, as demands for radical social change might. This position has been characteristic of many milieus in the Jewish diaspora. While it is impossible to know if the mature Durkheim, a non-observant Jew, had any conscious notion of Tikkun Olam, we saw in *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1915) something with which we were familiar. In the Jewish mystic tradition, particularly in Lurianic Kabbalism, Harriet heard many echoes of Durkheim's esteem for social solidarity and social order, in a context which did not reduce religion to the social, as E-P complained Durkheim had in 'Religion and the anthropologists' (1960). (Douglas remained a staunch admirer of Durkheim throughout her life.)

So why was E-P certain that Harriet Lyons was a religious believer? To some degree, he may have been confusing the messenger with the message, the anthropologist with the texts she was analysing. Robert Alter, in his Foreword to a 1995 reissue of *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism,* says that Scholem saw in Jewish mysticism a mythical element which had been stripped from Judaism by Rabbinic legalism. Interestingly, Alter attributes this to Scholem's position, not as an antiquarian but as a modernist, who 'came of age in the era of Kafka…, Mann, Joyce and Eliot'. As a modernist, Alter suggests, Scholem may have been drawn to the mythic because in myth there is 'an essential link between the ultimate nature of reality' and man's 'own passions, his sexuality, his very biology and anatomy' (Alter 1995:xxiii). It is possible to be compelled by these things without being a believer, without the transcendent experience E-P described to Fortes. On the other hand, to be attracted to a field of study by such matters is not to be a dispassionate observer, either, so what transpired between Harriet and E-P at the B. Litt. exam may not have been a total misunderstanding.[4]

Acknowledgment

We are most grateful to André Singer for supplying us with a scanned copy of Evans-Pritchard's article, 'Some reflections on mysticism', along with some annotations to the text, apparently by the author. The article, which was published in a University of Durham student journal, does not appear to be available in Canadian university libraries.

4 Ed.: Perhaps in effect E-P was ascribing a level of mysticism to Prof. Lyons. When discussing mystics in 'Some reflections on mysticism', E-P says that 'the only thing to do is to empty the self of all the self – the self-oblivion we read of in the Talmud' (170:101). He then scribbled in the margin of his annotated version of the paper a quote from George Orwell 'robbing reality of its terrors by simply submitting to it. Get inside the whole – or rather, admit you are inside the whole (for you are of course).'

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The edition of the Zohar used in the preparation of the 1970 thesis was the five volume translation by Maurice Simon and Harry Sperling, published in London by the Soncino Press in 1933–4. The French translation by Jean de Pauly (Paris 1900) was also consulted, as well as the pointed edition of the original, published by R. Cohen, Jerusalem, 1926.

30
Theories of primitive religion

Douglas Davies

Evans-Pritchard's 1965 *Theories of Primitive Religion* is something of a Janus-faced publication, with its resolute critique of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century speculative evolutionist theories of religion contrasting with a reflective and non-reductionist awareness of personal religious experience. This interplay of criticism and apologia invites our appreciation, especially given its potential appeal for emergent early twenty-first century interests in anthropology and religion, not least those described as the anthropology of Christianity and Christian anthropology. In this chapter I intend to move slightly beyond both the critique of reductionism and the testimony-like apologetic for personal religious experience to consider E-P's interest in the poetic mind. I will also avail myself of the opportunity to add a few more personal comments of my own.

Lectures and context

Though published in 1965, much of this book was based on materials published 'very many years ago' and which had, as its foreword makes clear, 'circulated' in various Anthropology Departments from the time the thirty-year-old E-P was at The University of Cairo in 1932–4. This makes *Theories* something of a pivotal point from early-mid to late twentieth-century thinking in terms of the anthropology of religion. His extensive African, empirically grounded, ethnographies of the Azande and Nuer, as well as his wartime coverage of the Sanusi of Cyrenaica, substantiated both his strong negative judgement of 'armchair' scholars with their 'scissors and paste' approaches and his advocacy of a greater alertness to human complexity (1965:9).

In terms of context, and with the exception of the fourth chapter on Lévy-Bruhl, *Theories* originated as the Sir D. Owen Evans Lectures delivered early in 1962 to a general, yet academic, audience at University College of Wales, Aberystwyth. It was subsequently published in 1965 with the lecture style retained in the text and this, as in many of his other publications, makes for a pleasing flow of argument, albeit with a largely critical tone addressed to many of the authors discussed. This criticism, however, is offset by a persuasive and much more positive apologetic strain evident in the conclusion. However, remaining with the critical tonality for a moment, especially evident in the chapters on psychological and sociological theories, it may be worth reporting some memories of the lectures conveyed to me in personal correspondence from someone there at the time, John Tudno Williams. While he would become ordained at and, later also a professor at, the United Theological College, Aberystwyth, and a distinguished Welsh theologian, in 1963 he was a doctoral student. He tells me that he not only well remembers the occasion, taking place as it did in the Examination Hall of the Old College, Aberystwyth, but still possesses some three pages of notes made at the four lectures describing 'various categories of theories of primitive religion'. Looking back over 'those 56 years' his memory of the lectures is that 'the delivery of them was rather flat and uninspiring'. This makes me wonder whether there is, perhaps, something inevitably uninspiring in any extensive litany of criticism. Though not having heard those lectures, myself, I can speak of the impact *Theories* made on me as an anthropology undergraduate at Durham around 1967. It certainly stimulated my interest in this field and, in its own critical anticipation of a more appreciative study of religious identity, was a catalyst for my postgraduate engagement in the anthropology/sociology of religion beginning in 1969 at Oxford's Institute of Social Anthropology and overlapping with E-P's concluding years there.

The religious factor, social life and inner life

Rather than attempt an appraisal of E-P's critique of the numerous Victorian-Edwardian thinkers addressed in *Theories,* my simple intention is to note three concerns that stand out as its theoretical basis, namely, the issue of cultural translation, the significance of relational contexts and, perhaps most emphatically, the individual's sense of self that defies both psychological and sociological reduction. To combine these three features is not only to grasp something of the rationale behind the severe critique of most of the historical theories of religion summarized in the book, but also allows the sense of self as a dynamic presence driving E-P's analysis of theories of religion to come to the fore. Both cultural translation and the import of human relationships emerge from, and play back into, the

'self' accounting for them. Within the context of *Theories*, it would be understandable, if not actually tempting, to frame E-P's appreciation of this 'sense of self' in terms of some notion of 'spiritual' or 'religious' identity. This would be justifiable given the book's conclusion with its allusions to 'our own religious experience', to 'the believer' for whom religion 'has another dimension' beyond that of psychological and social explanation, and to his invocation of Wilhelm Schmidt. Schmidt's affirmation of 'religion as essentially of the inner life' and of the 'inward consciousness' where 'an experience of religion plays a part' appeal to E-P in their strong defence of personal agency (1965:121). While this rehearsal of Schmidt's comment on Renan carries echoes of Max Weber being religiously 'unmusical', what is enormously striking is E-P's testimony-like reference to the biblical text in which the resurrected Jesus of St John's Gospel says 'Peace be with you' when first appearing to his male disciples (1965:120, citing John 20:19). To invoke this particular biblical reference at the conclusion of his Aberystwyth lectures would, more likely than not, have carried its own force for a significant Christian component of his mid-Wales audience of the early 1960s.

To this invocation can be added E-P's reference to 'he who accepts the reality of spiritual being' as not being satisfied only with psycho-social explanations of religion. There is, then, something of a double venture driving these lectures and its ensuing, albeit decontextualized, published format. The one dynamic touches the anthropological analysis of social practice where, as he sees it, it makes 'little or no difference whether an anthropologist is a theist or an atheist' as far as the 'study of religion as a factor in social life is concerned'. The second dynamic arises if and when the anthropologist wishes to 'go further' than the social context, at which point the personal dimension becomes significant and seems to demand its own mode of understanding. For then, it is the inner life that becomes germane in terms of the 'reality of spiritual being', something that is not simply 'an illusion' (1965:121). While, at this point, it would be possible to try and analyse E-P's religiosity, his Catholic affinities and the like, I think that would be too precipitate an interpretative focus, too much of an end in itself. Instead, I prefer to align the religious, apologetic, strain in *Theories* more with an aesthetic and emotional frame of personal reflection approached through the notions of poetics, sentimentality and ethos.

Poetics, sentimentality and ethos

So, rather than over-emphasize the opposition between social life and inner life as a differentiation between 'atheist and theist anthropologist', let me invoke notions of poetics, sentimentality and ethos as closely related hermeneutical drivers that bring their own rationale to interpretations of the individual and society, especially in the context of issues of religion.

One starting point for this line of thought lies in E-P's interest in the 'poetic mind which moves easily in images', an approach to the study of religion in which such a mind lies in a force-field that includes both the issue of sentimentality and the distinctive emotional ethos of particular cultural contexts. That the 'poetic' factor appeals to E-P is evident in his appraisal of Durkheim's social theory of religion, for while deeming it ultimately a 'just so story', he, nevertheless, describes it as 'brilliant and imaginative, almost poetical' (1965:64). Nevertheless, when it comes to theoretical analysis of, for example, Durkheim's dichotomy between the sacred and profane, itself an extension of William Robertson Smith's polarity between the holy and the common, E-P sees it as not being of much use when accounting for actual social behaviour. In a very similar vein, E-P's dual appreciation of the 'logical structure' of Durkheim's conceptualization of religion as an expression of people's underlying sense of society on the one hand, and his final adjudication of it as 'an unconvincing piece of sociological metaphysics' on the other, provides a parallel example for his comments on the work of Robert Hertz. E-P acknowledges Hertz's accounts of both the symbolism of right and left handedness, and on double burial, to be remarkable essays (1965:70).

Despite this applause for Hertz, who was both a kinsman and part of Durkheim's intellectual circle, E-P criticized the double-burial material in terms of the lack of any potential means for either its ratification or disproval through 'experimental verification' (1965:76). Before commenting on this verification factor, I should say in passing and speaking personally that it was precisely Hertz's double-burial idiom, and the theory of identity inherent in it, that prompted my own analysis of modern cremation and the ritual use of cremated remains in the UK (Davies 1990, 1997). E-P was, perhaps, setting too high or even an unrealistic expectation of and for the nature of anthropological analyses. His was, in this context, a problematic and perhaps even strange criticism, one that poses the question of the very nature of anthropological method in terms of the diverse models of historical, social scientific and natural science. Just how E-P might evaluate his own methodology in such terms becomes its own query, one not directly answered in *Theories.* In more general terms, his own work of ethnographic description often seems to carry its own mode of narrative interpretation along with it, something that accords more with his sense of anthropology as a form of historical narrative than as a verifiable account of social phenomena. In his *Theories* critical mode it seems as though he holds out too excessive a sense of anthropology as a predictive and testable venture rather allied to the natural sciences. Whether or not this served as its own attempt at differentiating studies of the 'outer' social world from an inner world that defies verification it is hard to say. Still, it is with issues of that inner world and affinities with

the social domain that we can now press our account of poetics, sentiments and ethos further.

Despite the extensive literature sustaining each of these notions, I want only to highlight their underlying significance for the place of ritual symbols in anthropological analysis and, indeed, in E-P's own ethnographies (1965:112). It is telling, for example, that he favourably pinpoints the 1960s studies of Godfrey Lienhardt, John Middleton and Victor Turner as paying considerable attention to ritual. This he takes to be a corrective to a general lack of concern with this behavioural domain of religion for much of the earlier twentieth century. Whether or not E-P would entirely favour the emergence of 'ritual studies' as something of a discrete late twentieth-century venture, must remain a moot point, but it is obvious that he does advocate a kind of comparative symbolics, one that draws heavily upon poetic materials. It might be that Roy Rappaport's magisterial *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (1999) would be more expressive of E-P's *Theories,* in the sense of its creative progression of thought that does, in practice, integrate poetics, sentiments and ethos, as well as occasional theological seasoning, often in references to the existentialist theologian Paul Tillich.

Perhaps the key issue here concerns not only the layered notion of the poetic mind, and its value, whether in fieldwork and its accompanying theoretical analysis on religion or, indeed, its potency within each person's life experience. One of the additionally relevant thinkers he incorporates into the most important conclusion to *Theories*, is Vilfredo Pareto, cited to highlight 'non-logical conduct', for E-P is concerned to set 'non-logical' phenomena, whether in thought or action, in complementary opposition to 'logico-experimental' phenomena (1965:114–15). For the same reason he deploys Henri Bergson's more philosophical idealization of 'nature' as working on humanity's myth-making capacity in ways that supersede rational intelligence and its allied doubts and fears – not least of death – in the fostering of survival. While E-P severely criticizes other scholars for their speculative and evolutionary theories, he does not treat Bergson in the same way, probably because of his more philosophical than anthropological goals, and because of Bergson's interest in a 'dynamic or mystical' form of religious experience that affects individuals (1965: 115).

Amidst these accounts, E-P accentuates the nature of the moral obligation that binds individuals together in aiding social survival, despite any potential grasping for personal advantage. It is surprising, here, that while he acknowledges the positive theoretical significance of Marcel Mauss and his notion of the total social process – *fait total* – as the needful context for understanding any part of social life, he makes no explicit reference to Mauss on gift theory, nor to the deep significance of reciprocity theory for the interdependence of people (1965:112).

What E-P does stress, however, is the importance of sentiment, the feelings that frame 'our values, affections, and loyalties'. This he links, as already intimated, with Pareto's recognition of 'non-logical' activities that foster human relationships, where 'constructs of the heart rather than of the mind' come to the fore (1965:114–15). In theoretical terms, it is interesting that E-P is working largely before what would emerge as the anthropology of the body, where embodiment theories tend to integrate such apparent dichotomies of heart and mind. As far as cordial contexts are concerned, however, E-P now brings Max Weber into the debate, identifying him as a 'social historian' who adds to our understanding of how, 'doctrines may create an ethos' (1965:117, 118). Here he has in mind Weber's famous thesis in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.* But more should, perhaps, be added to that, taking a cue from Weber's *Sociology of Religion*, and its crucial reference to the significance of a mood of salvation. This is rooted in the concept of mood or *Gesinnungsethik*, something that Weber also aligned with 'a quality of inwardness' so reminiscent of E-P's concern in the Conclusion to *Theories* (Weber 1965:195). To re-analyse E-P's major ethnographies through the lens of Weber's notion of *Gesinnungsethik*, and moods of inwardness, might generate valuable insight into the role of agency and self-reflective awareness motivating E-P and his ethnographic work. For Weber's use of that perspective deals with how emotions pervade attitudes, and how ideological and emotional factors cohere and mutually affect each other. Such an integration goes some way to transcend or transform the division between rational and emotional, or cognitive and affective dualities as more recent 'embodiment' studies in anthropology have demonstrated. This post-E-P development reinforces his concern with the individual as an agent and not simply as a 'cog in a machine' (1965:118).

Testimony

This is crucial for E-P's espousal of the human being engaged in and with religion, and brings us to the epigrammatic, and testimony-like, flourish of his concluding chapter. There (1965:121), he alludes to Renan's affirmation of the inwardness of religion and its experiential force that qualify a scholar to empathize with religiosity in others. Here Renan's allusion to colour, and the inability of the blind to grasp it, and, perhaps, also Weber's recognition of himself as religiously 'unmusical' came to religion carry additional weight.

Some 'blind', 'deaf' or otherwise incapacitated folk might, then, not be able to participate in the more mystical dynamics of awareness to which E-P's *Theories* alludes, though they might well, of course, document the social and behavioural aspects of life that people reckon to embody such dynamics. For, running throughout this volume, are the two streams of thought, one concerning the social, and the other the personal focus on religion. E-P spent

most of *Theories* criticizing reductionist, speculative and evolutionist views of religion as a social phenomenon, while coming to affirm the personal and inward import of religion in his conclusion. This affirmation comes in a remarkably literary and religious fashion when he cites the biblical text, derived from St. John's Gospel's formulation of the words of Jesus – 'Peace I leave you, my peace I give you.' (1965:120). It is here that his preference for a poetic turn of mind couples with his personal inclination towards mysticism, understood as an inward-aware appreciation of life's significance.

This is something echoed in his *Sanusi* study with its sympathetic account of the distinction between devotees happy to accept the 'tenets of' a faith and the 'conscientious performance of its duties' and others possessing 'deeper longings of the soul which seeks always by entire love of God a perfect communion with Him' (1954:2). Mary Douglas's commentary on E-P also pinpoints the *Sanusi* volume as explaining E-Ps. 'shafts of criticism against reductionist theorizing and against sociological determinism' (1980:46).

It is as though anthropology and piety gently stand apart in much of the early part of *Theories*, only to surface with considerable energy in the conclusion, where they provides material for those who wish to elaborate upon E-P's religious identity, as is the case with Timothy Larsen. Larsen avidly depicts E-P as a person protective of his inner-self, a view that accords with *Theories* and its accounts of religion at large and of the inner depths of personal piety in particular. His appreciation of E-P's Christian identity makes much of this feature and of E-P's later expressed interest in mysticism and, indeed, his lecturing on it. This is something I recall some forty-five years or so after hearing E-P lecture on mysticism. Looking back, I seem to recall a certain authentic tone driving his reflections, while I also remember thinking how strange it was to listen to him on mysticism in the same context that I heard Rodney Needham's lectures that would appear as his *Belief, Language, and Experience* (1972).

In connection with these diverse tonalities framing social and personal contexts of religion, I would also like to record, albeit briefly and in passing, one recent aspect of my own current thinking that aligns concepts and levels of personal appropriation of them that would hardly have impinged upon E-P's pedagogy. I am thinking of how, for example, some students with degrees of autism may be unable to grasp – intellectually – certain theoretical concepts precisely because they find no emotional sense in them. I have found this, recently, in the context of gift or reciprocity theory (Davies with Williams 2019). Doubtless, there are other states or modes of thinking and feeling that foster or hinder some key anthropological notions. I cannot pursue this issue here, but introduce it simply to show how one critique of phenomena in one age and social context can catalyse allied considerations much later.

Potential influence

In some ways *Theories* has not been as influential and extensively cited in texts on the study of religion as one might have expected, perhaps because its date of publication corresponded with an emergent interest in religious studies programmes in the UK, spearheaded by Ninian Smart (1927–2001), that certainly fostered comparative study, but often with a more philosophical background, and which self-identified with what E-P specifically alludes to as a 'method … that is now often called the phenomenological one – a comparative study of beliefs and rites such as god, sacrament, and sacrifice, to determine their meaning and social significance' (1965:17). E-P's criticism of Durkheim and Freud was little heeded in a number of texts converting the theories of religion they espoused, though this is also understandable given their high profile in the history of the study of religion.

One scholar singled out for his naive evolutionism, Frank Byron Jevons (1858–1936), had his 1896 *Introduction to the History of Religion*, described as a 'collection of absurd reconstructions, unsupportable hypotheses and conjectures, wild speculations, suppositions and assumptions, inappropriate analogies, misunderstandings and misinterpretations, and especially in what he wrote about totemism, just plain nonsense' (1965:5). Having read practically all of Jevons' academic output, I have sought elsewhere to come to the aid of this Durham predecessor in an intellectual biography of a person who would, I think, have had a great deal in common with E-P in terms of the complexity of human identity and religion, albeit not having had the opportunity of active anthropological study (Davies 1991).

There remains one potential point of influence, not only of *Theories* but of E-P's work at large, that touches the interplay of the anthropology and sociology of religion in and through the work of Bryan R. Wilson and his highly influential sociology of sects (1970, 1973). As is well-known, E-P's Azande study (1937) described how people organized their life by decision-making processes involving chance situations or situations of difficulty, stress, anxiety, illness, death and the like. In all this, his overarching concern was with misfortune and what we could describe as 'evil', a perspective that much influenced some of my earlier work on evil, plausibility, witchcraft and salvation in religious studies (Davies 1984). Mary Douglas makes this clear when describing how 'Evans-Pritchard believed in making comparison possible and expected it to be possible by studying different responses to misfortune.' (1980:35). She emphasizes this point when commenting on his *Nuer Religion*: 'His programme was to translate by selecting the key words and dominant themes or motifs … and insisted that crises of misfortune were the moments in which people revealed their central occupations so that the dominant themes could be recognized.' (1980:89).

That description could apply equally as well to Wilson's programme for classifying the dominant depictions of evil within religious sects.

The potential link between E-Ps work on the Azande and Wilson's on sects only dawned on me some years later. I was very familiar with E-P's ethnographies and had Bryan Wilson as my postgraduate supervisor, and while I had been in college contexts where both were present, I had not entertained the idea of E-P having an intellectual influence on Wilson, rather assuming that Max Weber held that position. However, in preparation of this very chapter, and reading *Theories* yet again, my eyes fell on its foreword, where E-P thanks a series of colleagues who had read the book and offered 'criticism and advice'. These were Godfrey Lienhardt, John Beattie and Rodney Needham, all Oxford colleagues at the Institute of Social Anthropology, but it also included Dr B.R. Wilson. This had not previously registered with me. Bryan R. Wilson, sociologist from Leicester University and the London School of Economics, arrived in Oxford in 1962 and in 1963 became a Fellow of All Souls College, where E-P was already a longstanding Fellow. So they knew each other, and this causes me to think that Wilson's typology of sects (1970) with its driving criterion of how a people define and cope with 'evil', as well as his *Magic and the Millennium* (1973), may well have been reinforced by Evans-Pritchard's work. This remains one of those background questions meriting more detailed research than I have given it, but I raise it here as a reflection on how academic disciplines can so easily remain separate, even for those, like myself, who should know better.

Conclusion

It is, of course, not only apparently different disciplines that invite mutual knowledge. The same applies to the issue of 'the social' and 'the personal' that has played such a significant part in this chapter where E-P draws distinctions between the inner and outer life, itself one of fundamental and ongoing significance to all social science. Here the relation between individual and society, the complexity of an individual or dividual approach to personhood, and the potential enigma of persons to themselves, all make an appearance. If and when 'spiritual realities' or 'other worlds' are also brought into the existential and ontological arena, then the enigma may intensify. Just how cultural traditions accommodate to the radical complexity of embodied minds, and how such embodied persons create traditions while becoming personal through those traditions, remains the challenge of and for social theory, cognitive science, philosophy and theology. Something of this complexity is caught in E-P's later consideration of mysticism (1970).

With that in mind I have decided to conclude these brief considerations of *Theories* by taking the liberty of rehearsing some observations I made on E-P as long ago as 1983, when ending a paper on his work as a potential form of structuralism. My goal is to offer a kind of meditation on that personhood that frames our lives, whether in fieldwork interaction with others, institutional engagements with each other, or our life within ourselves. Just how might one achieve that for E-P? My response is to 'confront our attention in a non-logical and non-discursive way' through 'the mental toyings of a great scholar' (Davies 1983:98). The medium I choose for signing-off from these conundrums is none other than the symbolic form of doodles, and the idiosyncratic yet often satisfying social performance of doodling. Some, with better trained acuities than I possess, might seek some psychological significance here but, for my part, I leave them as ends in themselves to 'exemplify in a rather indirect, but perhaps powerful way, a central conviction of Evans-Pritchard, that man is ultimately enigmatic' (Davies 1983:98). Here then, are two sets of E-P's doodles that I, foolishly perhaps and as an inveterate doodler, even when a young postgraduate, purloined at the end of two seminars held at the Oxford Institute of Social Anthropology in November 1969. Doodle A was from a seminar led by Mary Douglas, and doodle B from one given by Sir Isaiah Berlin (Davies 1983:100). Make of these what you may.

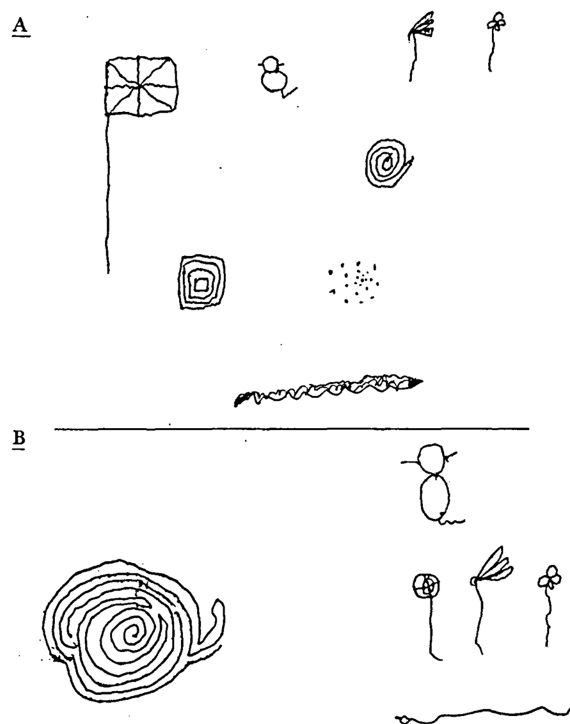

Figure 30.1 Doodle A was from a seminar led by Mary Douglas, and doodle B from one given by Sir Isaiah Berlin (Davies 1983:100).

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31
E-P's attraction for cognitive anthropology

David B. Kronenfeld

I met Professor Evans-Pritchard while at Oxford as a Recognized Student in 1968–9. I was working on my Ph.D. dissertation for Stanford Anthropology on Fanti kinship, and was at Oxford accompanying my wife who had a Leverhulme Fellowship to conduct research on Shakespeare at the Bodleian for her Stanford Ph.D. in English. E-P was my designated tutor, and we met several times for general anthropological conversations. I actively participated in the Institute of Social Anthropology and attended that year's 'valedictory' lectures by E-P (as he was stepping down as head of the institute, but, as it happened, not yet that year). The lectures provided a sometimes insightful and sometimes entertaining history of Oxford anthropology.

While this contact left me with a sense of E-P as an attractive persona, it was my subsequent careful reading of his major works (particularly his Azande and Nuer books) in the context of my own teaching of courses on African cultures and on kinship that produced my tremendous admiration of E-P and his contributions to anthropology – even to parts of anthropology that he himself was not involved in and perhaps did not even care for. At one point I envisioned publishing a contrast of E-P's understanding of social structure and of unilineal descent groups (as presented in his Nuer work) with that of Fortes (as seen in his Tallensi work[1]), showing why, in spite of my great admiration of Fortes as an ethnographer, I found E-P's version much more insightful in its understanding of the role of cognitive systems and of the nature of the cognitive underpinnings of social systems.

Alas, the focus of social anthropology moved on to versions of structuralism before I could produce my essay.

I should note that my own background and training have been in American cognitive and linguistic anthropology, though always with some serious interest in British social anthropology.

I want to sketch out four areas in which E-P's contributions were insightful and creative and in which their importance to ongoing and current work remains as strong as ever.

1

The first area is one that E-P shared with many of his colleagues, but that he was particularly good at. This is the production of ethnographies that did not simply describe the facts of a given ethnographic case, but that saw the case as a coherent organized (productive and dynamic) system, and presented the system clearly enough and fully enough for the reader to understand how actions were generated and to infer how the system would apply to relevant situations not themselves described in the ethnography. His ethnographies were, in effect, simulations – descriptive and phrased in ordinary language rather than as mathematically (or computationally) formal propositions. It was this aspect of the best classic ethnographies, particularly ones in social anthropology, as epitomized by E-P's work, that explains the important role of anthropology in the early days of the new discipline of cognitive sciences.

For me, the take-home lesson is that a good description is not just a passive snapshot of how things look at some given moment, but includes an understanding of the mechanisms involved and the values, understandings, social relations and contexts (including ecology) that feed into the mechanisms.

2

The second area is one in which his work contrasted significantly with that of many of his colleagues. There are two ways in which a portrayal of a social system can be approached.

One way is as an inductively arrived at abstraction of actions and patterns of actions actually observed on the ground. The structure of society, as seen in Fortes' Tallensi books, can be understood via a kind of thought experiment – in which each person in a community wears

1 Fortes' characterization, in his 1953 classic, 'The structure of unilineal descent groups', applied quite well to E-P's understanding of Nuer social structure, but (Fortes' claims notwithstanding) did not fit the picture of Tallensi social structure presented in his Tallensi books (1945, 1949).

a light bulb (along with an individual ID tag) and in which the ethnographer takes a time-lapse photograph of the community over some period. In this picture, social entities would be defined by nodes of dense light; interactions would be defined by the density of lines of light connecting the nodes; hierarchical relations among nodes would be determined by relative density of lines connecting linked nodes and the transitivity of relative brightness among linked nodes. Social structure and social relations would thus be objective and directly visible – and directly induced from the cumulative actions and patterns of actions of actual specific individuals.[2] Within this frame, descent relations (signalled in the Tallensi case by worship at appropriate shrines) are literal and actual. Let us take A, B and C as people, and X, Y and Z as shrines – and let's name our lineage segments after the shrines. If A and B are observed worshiping at X and Y, but not Z, while C is observed worshipping at Z and Y, but not X, then we conclude that X and Z are segments of lineage Y. In such a system, no one who ever worshipped at Z should ever be observed worshipping at X, but everyone who worshipped at A or Z could also worship at Y. This is the classic segmentary system, as described by Fortes in 'The structure of unilineal descent groups' (1953) and worked through by E-P in *The Nuer* (1940). In my quick overviews of the Nuer system and of Fortes' depiction of the Tallensi system below I, obviously, am leaving out much about how each version was seen actually to play out on the ground!

Fortes considered that the Tallensi had the same sort of segmentary system as he described in his 1953 article and as E-P described for the Nuer. In his Tallensi books he just set out to describe how the Tallensi version worked. His problem – and apparently the problem which made his Tallensi books so hard to follow, even though he was otherwise a clear and easy-to-read writer – was that his second year of fieldwork greatly complicated his task. (He noted in his foreword that he could have written a much easier book after only his first tour of fieldwork!) The complication seems to have been that the worship patterns he observed in his subsequent tours (during the nearly two and a half years of his total Tallensi fieldwork project) seemed in some significant way inconsistent with the patterns he had seen in the year before. The books' difficulty came when he tried to explain the apparent inconsistencies while being both absolutely honest in his ethnography and absolutely firm in his crediting to the Tallensi of the particular version (or implementation) of the segmentary pattern described just above.

The alternative (second) way in which a portrayal of a social system can be approached is to see the folk model of the local social system not as a literal characterization of that system, but as a cognitive model to which relevant action gets assimilated. The ethnographic objective, here, becomes the explication of the cognitive system and of its application to actual action decisions. It is here that E-P excelled, and that his work was so far ahead of its time.

E-P, though his fieldwork was not so neatly carried out as Fortes' (because of illness and military confrontations), faced a similar problem in his Nuer research. All Nuer were on one patri-genealogy. Men were located on the genealogy by their ancestors, and groups of kin by their lowest level shared ancestors (say, M and N); such groups were spoken of as 'the sons of M' or '…of N'. The Nuer form of segmentary opposition, involving fighting and feuding, opposed patri-kinsmen to non-patri-kin, and closer patri-kin to more distant patri-kin. The problem was that the sides did not always sort that way. Sometimes men who had been on one side, say A and B (as 'sons of M'), against C (with the 'sons of N') (implying A and B more closely related to each other than either to C) later divided differently, with A and C on one side (implying a shared apical patri-ancestor), and opposed to B who was on the other side – implicitly under a different apical patri-ancestor opposed to the one shared by A and C.

But E-P (and, apparently, the Nuer) did not take the genealogically based rule as literally and all-embracingly as had Fortes, and so gave us the second way in which the portrayal of a social system can be approached – as an intellectual or cognitive model that users can apply to a variety of relevant situations. Nuer villages were associated with apical ancestors on the genealogy, and inter-village relations, including higher-level groupings, were based on the genealogy. (It looked to me much like the biblical Hebrews' use of genealogy!) The Nuer preference was for patrilocal residence, perhaps leading to an expectation that residence would match genealogical relations; but often the two did not match – because: a) sometimes men were located with their mother's patri-kin or with their wife's patri-kin (whether because of conflict or as a reflection of relative ecological resources); and b) these men's sons sometimes stayed, patrilocally, with their fathers in the new place. E-P said that a minority of residents in any location typically belonged to the lineage with which the location was associated. In effect, then, the Nuer genealogy served as a kind of political charter for the Nuer. Thus 'the sons of M' could, according to context, refer either to literal descendants of M or to residents of the territorial unit associated with M, and a fighting party associated with the 'sons of M' could be made of both descendants and residents.

2 As evidence of the importance of this position, and of the relevance of my portrayal of it, see Radcliffe-Brown's 'On social structure', where he notes that 'In the study of social structure, the concrete reality with which we are concerned is the set of actually existing relations at a given moment of time, which link together certain human beings.' (1940:4).

Thus, the Nuer model is that genealogically close entities (communities) unite against more distant ones – the united entities are spoken of as making up two fingers of one hand (in opposition to the other hand), and the feud-like conflict is interpreted as the sons-of-M vs. the sons-of-N, where M and N are ancestors at a comparable level of the Nuer genealogy. What distinguishes E-P's Nuer picture is the make up of the contending communities. As in the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament), the 'sons-of-M' refers not only to the genealogical descendants of X, but also to the communities associated with M (including the people and land of those communities); these communities include in-marrying affines, hangers-on (including versions of the biblical manservants and maidservants) and, in the case of patrilineal societies such as the Nuer or the biblical Hebrews, the communities included sons of daughters of lineage members who had fights with their own fathers or who couldn't make a living on their home turf. Thus, a son-of-M, in a battle could be an actual descendant of M[3] – or could be a descendant of someone else, even N, who happened to be living in an M community.[4] Looked at more broadly, the master Nuer genealogy provided the model for the political (and moral – but that's another story) structure of Nuer society.

E-P made clear the distinction between an intellectually coherent model of a social system as a conceptual system (or model) that was applied to events – and any kind of direct (objective) inductive distillation from those events (that is, for Fortes, a 'son-of-X' was a literal descendant of X; while, for E-P, 'a son-of-X' was a structural position associated with X). Thus, for E-P, the segmentary lineage structure was a folk model for a kin-based social-political structure – a kind of template that could be used to assist individuals in relevant decisions and to interpret/make sense of what those around them were doing. In more modern terms, E-P produced a cognitive theory of the understanding and reasoning that drove participants' interpretation and action with regard to the chosen aspect of the given society – as opposed to a simple generalized description of participants' behaviour in that selected aspect. His ethnography was a model that, in Lévi-Strauss's later terms, was 'good to think with' – that is, good to use as a lens through which to interpret events on the ground.

3 And, as in the US Civil War, when brothers (or other close relatives) found themselves facing each other on the line of battle, they found ways of sliding down the line in opposite directions in order to avoid the risk of killing their own close relative.

4 In terms of modern semantic theory, one would say that the focal or prototypic sense of 'son of' is the genealogical one, while the social, political and geographical sense are extended, but still correct, senses – in much the same way that, in English, our prototypic cousin is a first cousin, while a third cousin is a denotatively extended member of the cousin category.

3

The third area is one that has always been central to the anthropological endeavour, but that, as illustrated in my earlier examples, E-P was particularly good at. In *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (1937) he clearly offered us a picture of the understanding that members of the given culture had of a phenomenon that struck Westerners as irrational and capricious.

A telling example was his characterization of how, when a somewhat rotten corn crib fell on a man sitting under it, Azande informants answered the 'why?' question. The ordinary Western answer, presumably, would have been – for the main reason – that the crib was rotten and bound to fall soon, and that – secondarily – why it fell when the guy was sitting there was simply bad luck. The Azande answer was witchcraft. The informant knew the crib was rotten and bound to fall soon, but for him the important question was 'why then?', 'why when the guy was sitting there?' The conventional Western understand of witchcraft is no longer as an active force (though it once was such), and thus leads to a tendency to dismiss the Azande response; but I do note that our folk sense of having 'bad luck'[5] isn't much more helpful. The Western problem with the Azande explanation, then, was not that the Azande were irrational, but, rather, stemmed from what is seen as a gap in their empirical understanding of the physical world. Westerners have tended not to give Azande (people Westerners think of – even if they don't mean to – as less developed than they are) credit for seeing the obvious (here, the state of the corn crib). Instead, Westerners see their explanation (of why the crib fell when it did) as being 'blind' to the obvious (state of the crib), rather than as asking the difficult question that most would like to be able to answer (why it fell at that moment on that person).

The picture E-P gives of Azande understanding of different aspects of causality and of their reasoning regarding the interpretation of specific events is one that not only anthropologists but also colleagues in other social-science and humanities disciplines still refer to. Its usefulness has persisted through structural-functionalism, structuralism, post-structuralism, and into post-modernism.

4

The final area concerns the contrast between E-P's Azande and Nuer work. 'Because I had to live in such close contact with the Nuer I knew them more intimately than the

5 An engineer, of course, might talk about something like the disposition of stresses in the crib structure, the rate of deterioration of the stressed structural members, and the ambient conditions at the moment it fell. But few are up to making that calculation and actually explaining the timing of the crib's fall.

Azande, about whom I am able to write a much more detailed account. Azande would not allow me to live as one of themselves; Nuer would not allow me to live otherwise.' (1940:15).

He made clear, especially in his introductory discussion to *The Nuer*, that ethnography, even one as observationally based as his Nuer work, was the joint product of the people being described and of the ethnographer describing them The point was made in his observation, quoted above, that while the Nuer would not tell him about their lives, they were quite content to have him observe and participate in their village life. These conditions of work, he observed, made the Nuer the opposite of the Azande – who, he said, kept him totally out of their lives while being perfectly willing to tell him anything he asked for.

In *The Nuer*, he quotes an interview about an informant's lineage, tribe etc. The interview's difficulty is summed up in the interviewee's resulting 'neurosis' (1940:12–13). But, in partial defence of the informant, I would note that the contrasting categories that E-P was querying the informant's membership in – even if conceptually and culturally real for the Nuer – were not distinctively labelled. Instead they were spoken of in the relative (and sliding scale) terms that I described earlier (see 'sons of…', and 'two fingers of one hand').

In effect, an ethnography is like a conversation. The description produced reflects not only the theoretical or substantive interests of the ethnographer but also what those described choose to reveal, how they choose to reveal and share (or not reveal or share) it, and the modes of understanding that underlie their participation in the enterprise. The content of an ethnography is, likewise, affected by the match or overlap of the ethnographer's conceptual apparatus with that of the people whose culture is being described and whose language is being relied upon.

What follows from all this, if I can briefly conclude by speaking for myself, is that there exists no perfect ethnography nor any ideal perspective from which to construct one. The same reality does look different when seen through different eyes. This is not to say that there is no truth, but only, first, that the truth about culture is complex, and, second, when everything is considered, every culture becomes unique and incomparable. Indeed, the same is true of any concrete entity. Any rock, or any sound, or any swing of a bat etc. is unique – if looked at carefully and closely enough. Any categories into which we group phenomena become, then, always an analytic imposition. Any description of that truth is cast in terms of analytic (or summarizing) categories – which at best pick up on some regularities at the expense of others. Different viewing perspectives (insider member vs. outsider ethnographer, ethnographically particular vs. ethnologically comparative, linguistically oriented vs. behaviourally oriented, ecologically focused vs. socio-politically focused, what one sees quickly vs. what requires long familiarity, and so forth and so on) produce descriptions cast in different terms. I am not saying that there are no such things as wrong answers. The usual ways by which we distinguish analytic truth or descriptive truth, or better vs. worse historical or geographical patterns, etc. all still apply. All I am saying is that, when all is said and done, there may still remain several different truths about any given phenomenon. What makes for better or worse categories is the degree to which given categories appear to 'carve nature at its joints'[6] – that is, appear to meaningfully and interpretably segregate phenomena into categories that differ in other ways in addition to the category definitions. It follows that the fullest description of a culture comes from a team composed of people with differing perspectives, who then try each to find meaningful categorizations and then to interrelate the different categorizations they each have found.

E-P does not, to the best of my knowledge, actually say this, but I feel it is consistent with what he does say, and it is an insight that was in significant part stimulated by his work

Acknowledgements

My deep thanks to Judy Z. Kronenfeld, H. Russell Bernard and Susan Mazur for their careful reading of and insightful suggestions for this chapter. And I thank Professor Bernard for calling my attention to the Radcliffe-Brown quote and reminding me of the *Phaedrus* source.

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6 The phrase – 'carving nature at its joints' – comes from Plato's Phaedrus asking how and why people 'carve-up' and partition the organic world in the way they do. In short: 'How do we classify the world?'. See discussion in Williams and Ebach (2020).

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32

Segmentary lineage systems re(re)considered

The example of the Alevis of Anatolia

David Shankland

Evans-Pritchard's *The Nuer* and its companion volume *African Political Systems* edited by Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, both published in 1940, could hardly be more iconic texts. I vividly remember my first days as an undergraduate at the University of Edinburgh in 1982, when we were instructed go to the supplementary branch of James Thin in Buccleugh Street to buy books for our first-year course. There we would find piled high paperback copies of each, their prominence and profusion pronouncing their importance. Though already then more than forty years had passed after their first publication, they remained an essential part of the syllabus. I remain firm friends with both. Indeed, I often wondered whether to model the monograph from my fieldwork on *The Nuer*, so fine an example does it set for us all.

Just at that time, however, segmentary lineage theory was increasingly questioned in anthropological teaching. There are no doubt many such criticisms, but to mention only some of them from published sources, there is the Holy edited volume from Belfast *Segmentary Lineage Systems Reconsidered* (1979); the long summary criticism from Adam Kuper in *Annual Review of Anthropology* (1982); and the rebuttals by Peters (1990). These last were aimed at *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica* (1954), E-P's attempt to extend the model to Islam and North Africa. They were held back by Peters through a reluctance to criticize his teacher, E-P, while he was still alive, but were later collected after Peters' own death by Marx and Goody. All this means that during the period of my studies there was rather a contradictory message: lineage theory was both taught and not taught, a model that, perhaps, was not quite the model that it was thought once to be.

Of the different anthropologists who have subsequently attempted to save lineage theory, perhaps the best known is Gellner, who placed it absolutely at the heart of his *Muslim Society* (1981), a development of his monograph *Saints of the Atlas* (1969). *Saints* was based on fieldwork in Morocco, and depicted a village constituted of a dense cluster of sacred agnatic lineages which mediated relations between the surrounding tribes. This approach led him to a – at the time – famous series of altercations, first with Clifford Geertz and his school working on North Africa, then with the next generation, such as Munson (1993). Though Wolfgang Kraus (1998) thought lineage theory useful, Gellner often found himself facing up to what must have felt rather an onslaught of criticism, much of which can be read in the exhaustive collection edited by Hall and Jarvie (1996).

Gellner, of course, could look after himself. The point is that it is safe to say that even though he himself felt that his perspective was fully justified, the weight of opinion in Britain by the end of the twentieth century was that *African Political Systems*, and *The Nuer*, however famous, were of historical rather than current sociological import, a cul-de-sac rather than a source of insight into the complexity of contemporary human society.

With regard to the ethnography of Anatolia, the area in which I eventually came to specialize, I regard this rejection as utterly mistaken. I would go further, and say that the models developed in *The Nuer* and *African Political Systems* are totally necessary in order to make sense of the ethnography.

It might be useful to rehearse briefly how I came gradually to this conclusion. The criticisms of the lineage model are many, but one in particular eventually appears to have become dominant: that the ethnographers who claimed that lineage theory is useful were, in effect, making up their material, even if unintentionally. The model, then, was held to be no more than this: an over-specific, even indulgent, abstraction from a reality that was far too complicated to be shoehorned into such a tight and specific explanatory framework.

Such then, were the thoughts that were in my mind when I set off for my first fieldwork in Morocco in 1985 for my MA undergraduate dissertation at Edinburgh. Initially, it was extremely difficult to find a fieldwork site: when I tried to reach the Berber villages in the Rif I was unfortunately kidnapped by dope smugglers, and could only extricate myself with difficulty. After a pause to recuperate for a few days in Spain, I tried the High Atlas, this time at its highest point, Mount Toubkal. But such was the enormous tourist flow, even in those times, that this too was not easy.

After I bumped into a happily stoned childhood friend from my home town on the side of the mountain amongst the continuously passing throng, I decided to try somewhere else again. A friendly mountain guide suggested that I try the area around Ait Buggmez, and so I resolved to do that.

Here again though, I was struck by a misfortune, or so it appeared at the time. There were no easily passable roads near Ait Buggmez then, so it was usual to take a jeep up from the town of Ait Muhammed, and I struck a bargain with a driver accordingly. After lurching across the stony steppe, through the moonlit night, packs of wolves running alongside, bumping themselves against the vehicle doors howling, we eventually the next day ended up in a picturesque village. It turned out to be Zawiya Ahansal, the settlement of the 'saints' featured by Gellner in his early monograph. In other words, the driver had had no wish to go to Ait Buggmez, but had taken my fare anyway to help his journey to Zawiya Ahansal. Seeing that I was in a difficult position, a group of young school teachers kindly took pity on me, and put me up until we could arrange a lift in a jeep that really was going where I wanted to go. Finally, I did reach Ait Buggmez, and to my great good fortune was able to work successfully, before eventually returning for the autumn term of the final year.

This initiation into fieldwork was, as no doubt for all fieldworkers just setting out on their journey, profoundly transformative. For me, though, the greatest shock was that I realized that the ethnographic accounts were much closer to reality than the sceptics – one is tempted to call them armchair sceptics – had maintained. The saints of Ahansal really did exist: their houses, demeanour, actions and words were as Gellner described them. In Ait Buggmez, there were large patrilineal households grouped together according to agnatic-kin links, formations which profoundly influenced the social activities and organization of the society. The words that Fortes, somewhat despairingly, had written in the preface to *Rethinking Segmentary Lineages* came to mind, 'I am an unreconstructed positivist empiricist and I don't hold with all this business about the anthropologist's notions in his head. As far as the Tallensi are concerned, I cross my heart and say that what I have described is there.' (Fortes 1979:ix). Henceforth, I had a great deal of sympathy for him. This meant that, at the very least, I regarded the lineage-theory argument as unresolved, and grew increasingly sceptical of the sceptics.

This initial lesson learnt, as I started on my work on Turkey, I resolved to become sensitive to broad societal patterns, particularly seeking those which did not appear to be an artefact of the external observer. One of these appeared to be a great social cleavage in Republican Turkey, which in the 1990s was in one of its most intense periods, between the Kurdish rebel groups in the east and the Turkish state. Even a cursory reading of the ethnography illustrates immediately that this rebellious activity is associated with patrilineal tribal formations, amongst many indications of this one may cite the brilliant work of Martin van Bruinessen (1992), certainly the leading ethnographer of the Kurdish east. Indeed, to view Ottoman history in terms of a continual struggle by the centre to appease or supress tribal uprisings in Anatolia could be a very fruitful approach (e.g. Lindner 1983). In the decades I have worked in Turkey, I have never had occasion to doubt that there is a correlation between the kind of tribal social formation described as operating independently of central government as outlined in *African Political Systems* and the manifest long-running social unrest. This conviction was only reinforced by taking into account the literature from the surrounding region – for example, the beautifully detailed account by Layard (1887) of his time with the Bakhtiyari and the way that the central state manoeuvred their eventual acquiescence.

Alevi and Sunni

There is a further split. Turkey's modern population is overwhelmingly Muslim. The non-Muslim populations have gradually declined over the last hundred years: the Armenians reduced to a few thousand, the Orthodox Christians first fleeing, then their departure crystallized by the population exchange after the Turkish War of Independence. Even the Jewish population, though refugees from the Nazis were welcomed during the Second World War, gradually emigrated in the subsequent years.

Albeit now Muslim, there is still a distinct religious division, between mainstream Sunnis and the alternative Alevis, who are in the minority. This distinction crosses ethnic boundaries, so that there are Alevi Turks, Alevi Kurds, Sunni Turks and Sunni Kurds. A way of representing this is in the form of a simple table:

Turkish Sunni	Turkish Alevi
Kurdish Sunni	Kurdish Alevi

These groups, and the divisions between them stand out in modern Turkish society as being of the greatest import. In order to appreciate this, it should be recalled that there are dozens of different kinds of ethnic minorities in Turkey (Andrews 1989), many immigrants to Anatolia as the territories of the Ottoman Empire gradually contracted before the Great War. The plethora of different migrant Muslim populations have, by and large, integrated easily and successfully, as testified, for example, by the rapid expansion in the 1920s and 1930s of new towns – such as Çumra in the Konya plain. Individually, almost every family in that town can trace their immediate descendants from outside Turkey, yet it appears and operates as a successful community, benefitting from the expansion of the agricultural economy in the region, and with little internal disturbance. A parallel argument could be made

with regard to the integration of the Laz population of the Black Sea Coast (Hann 1990; Meeker 2002). It is too early to tell whether the very recent massive refugee influx from Syria will break this pattern, as the integration has been so very linked to the incomers being prepared to learn Turkish, and to adhere to the precepts of the Republic. However, up until today, it appears to hold.

One could point out, with regard to the division between Kurdish and Turkish populations, that there are very many Kurds entirely content to be part of the Republic, to say nothing of the many mixed marriages and their children. But equally, can be no doubt as to the sustained nature of this ethnic split, as can be seen in the brutal recent wars in the east, and in the current political process which has led to the leaders of the political party held to represent the Kurds becoming proscribed.

The division between Alevi and Sunni is often also very marked. The Alevis were, until modern labour migration, primarily a rural community. As they gradually became part of the new nation-state and began to urbanize, they did not habitually turn to Sunni Islam, but rather sought to celebrate their own distinctive dances and music in celebration of their Alevi culture. Though the Turkish Alevis in particular are very strong supporters of the Republic, their own vision of a secular nation along the lines of the Kemalist revolution has not triumphed, and they feel increasingly exposed, even excluded, by the rise of religion in the public sphere. Even though their support for the Republican People's Party, the CHP, has occasionally wavered, still today they form its largest support group. Yet the CHP is languishing in permanent opposition and shows no signs that it will be able to obtain a majority versus the Islamist AKP. Nevertheless, the Alevis hardly feel attracted to the AKP, even though it could potentially give them some share in power.

Why, then, has there historically and today been such a division between the Alevis and the Sunnis in Turkey, one that appears to be deeper than other religious differences between other Muslim groups? The answer is complex, as it can be traced across so many different aspects of social life, including politics, belief and economics, each contributing toward a discrimination that may be mirrored in the case of minority groups in very many societies. However, in the case of the Alevis, it appears to be profoundly linked with the way that they have achieved social order within their communities. In sum, they achieve social control independently, or near independently, of the central state. Instead, they possess a strong reliance on hereditary and patrilineal leaders, who are given sacred sanction to mediate in disputes and to teach the Alevi form of Islam, whilst at the same time insisting that both men and women take part in their rituals and ceremonies, which traditionally have been closed to outsiders. Mediation is central to this: Alevi religious culture as a whole draws very strongly on the quiescent or mystical side of Islam in justifying and supporting this hierarchical understanding, producing a life philosophy that is predicated upon reconciliation and an insistence on all within the community being at peace (Shankland 2007).

The Alevis do not reject, but at the same time do not give priority to, a rule-based scriptualist form of faith based on the 'five pillars'. They acknowledge that a person might wish to go to the mosque and might wish to fast, but at the same time do not regard it as a requirement to reach religious fulfilment. They insist instead on the priority that each person, both men and women, should give to their own internal development: 'Know thyself! [*Kendini bil!*]' is one of their most frequent sayings. Indeed, many of the stories that may be swapped when they meet to chat concerning their relatives and friends' activities are illustrative of this tenet: often showing how a person came to encounter a misfortune, or distress, because they were insufficiently aware of their own limitations.

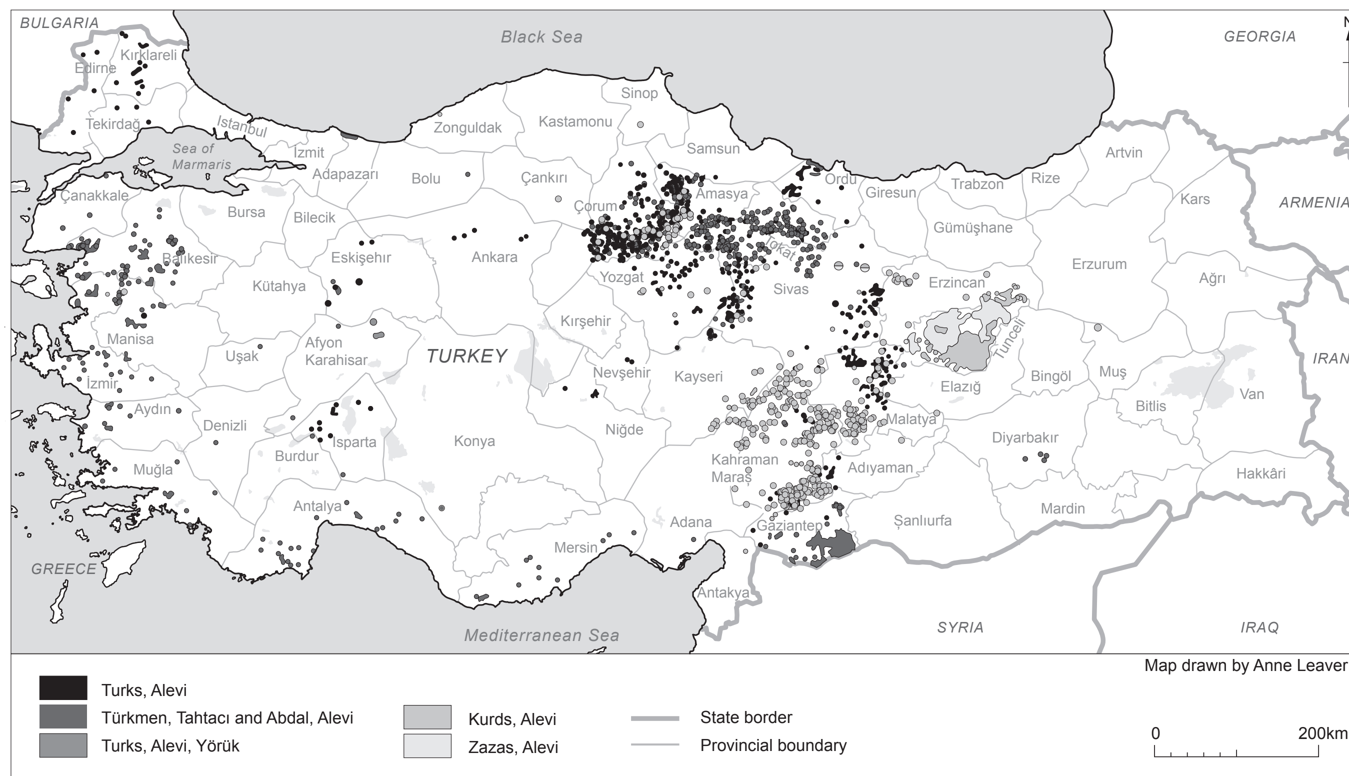
It is sometimes thought that the Alevi interpretation of Islam constitutes a form of Shi'ism. This is not quite the case (Shankland 2012). In their religious credo, they do place enormous importance on Ali, and their central collective ritual, the *cem*, celebrates the martyrdom of Hüseyin at the Kerbala. Nevertheless, they do not follow the *şeriat* (Islamic holy law), and they have, at least in the village setting, no sympathy for Iran. It is perhaps best to regard the Alevis, therefore, as expressing a distinct understanding of Islam, one that is neither Shi'i nor Sunni, and which has proved remarkably durable. It is one that, particularly when combined with the Kurdish sense of rebellion in the east, is regarded with suspicion by central authority, all the more so as the Alevis are often associated pejoratively with the Kızılbaş, the tribes recruited by Shah Ismail in the sixteenth century in his war against the Ottoman Porte in Istanbul.

The Alevis in Turkey

The distribution of the Alevis within Turkey may be seen from Map 32.1, which shows as best we can their location in rural Turkey before mass migration caused the cities in Turkey to expand exponentially, and the village population to become depleted.[1]

From the map, it may be seen that there is a distinct geographic distribution of the Alevis: the Kurdish Alevis are mainly situated in the central-eastern region, and gradually merge into the Turkish Alevi communities in Sivas, Tokat, Yozgat and Amasya. There are very few on the Black Sea Coast, and equally almost none in the central Anatolia

1 Map 32.1 is obtained through reanalysing the work of Peter Andrews in his *Ethnic Groups in Turkey*. I am extremely grateful to him, both for his generosity, and for so kindly sharing his later data, which is also incorporated within it. The map was first published in Shankland 2010.



Map 32.1

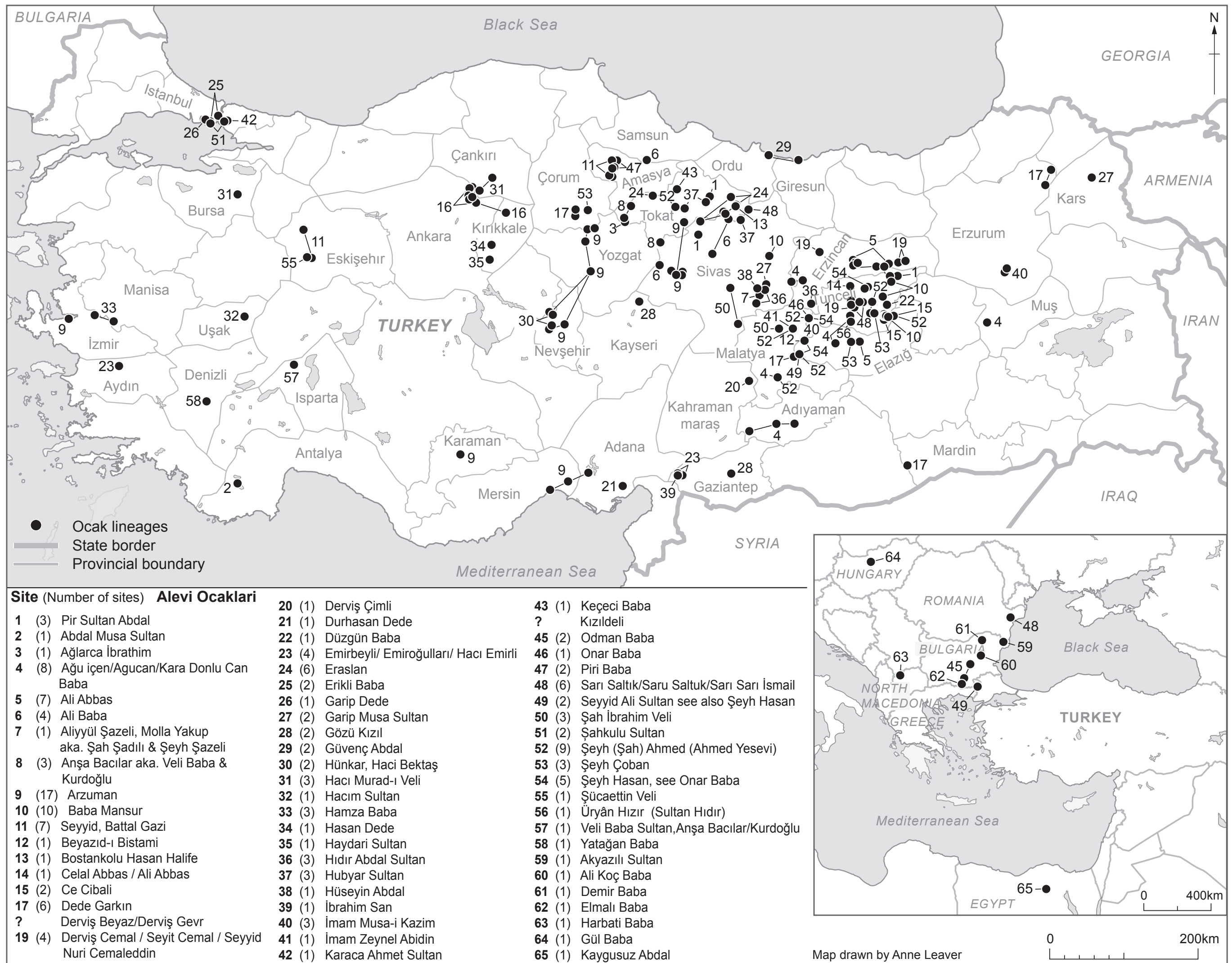
plains. In the west, there are *Tahtacı* Alevis: literally 'woodcutters', who are widely supposed to have been brought there by the Ottoman Sultans to help build ships for their navy. It is equally widely supposed that the Alevi population used to be more extensive, but has gradually contracted through conversion, both in the Ottoman Empire and during the Republic.

There are neither organized churches nor clerical organizations serving the Alevis. Instead, throughout the Alevi population there are found spiritual or holy patrilineages, which they term *ocak*, literally 'hearth' (Langer *et al.* 2013; Shankland 2020). Many may be local, but some of these in turn are regarded as the more senior, and therefore respected by the wider Alevi community over a wide geographical location. The reason that a lineage is regarded as being particularly sacred is that it is closer to God than others, as shown by its founder or a later member performing a miracle. Additionally, they may be held to be able to trace their lineage back to the twelve *imam*s, to Ali and hence to the Prophet Muhammed.

The founder of any lineage may be marked by his local followers with an elaborate grave or a tomb, *türbe.* Tombs which attract visitors can in turn grow to become part of a monastic or *tekke* complex, and become major sites of sacrifice and pilgrimage. Present-day *ocak* patrilineages may be based around these *tekke* complexes, drawing their religious authority on the basis of their being descended from the holy figure who is there interred. The prime example of this is to be found at Hacıbektaş, the town where the *tekke* and tomb of Hacı Bektaş is to be found. The *tekke* was closed at the foundation of the Republic, it was later reopened as a museum. Today it is visited by more than a million visitors a year, including very many Alevis from across Anatolia. Many sites in its vicinity are also regarded as holy, and thus have become part of a pilgrimage that marks different incidents in the life of Hacı Bektaş and his followers.

The Bektaşis today have two major divisions: there are celibates who have chosen to follow the Bektaşi way, who may be regarded as members of the Bektashi *Tarikat* (brotherhood). These are very small in absolute numbers, but have different centres across the world that are open to attracting adherents, such as that described by Frances Trix in her monograph on Baba Rexheb, who moved from Albania to Michigan, where he founded a new *tekke* in the 1950s (Trix 2009). However, there also lives in the town of Hacı Bektaş an extended patrilineage, known as the Çelebis, many of whom have the modern surname Ulusoy. This patrilineage is regarded by many Alevis in central Anatolia as being the senior *ocak*, which they may refer to as *efendi*s.

Not all members of the *ocak* will become practising leaders, or *mürşid*. However, those who do appear promising, and able to sustain the teachings and practices of *Alevilik* (Aleviness), may be gradually introduced by



Map 32.2

their elders to a particular region of Anatolia, for which henceforth they will have responsibility on behalf of the Çelebi lineage. In turn, they may accept visitors from the Alevi community, advise on questions of doctrine, and also mediate in the case of particularly difficult disputes.

The identification of the rural Alevis with Hacı Bektaş is extremely strong, so much so that many of the prayers and forms of ceremony in Alevi villages appear to be based on Bektaşi doctrine. In turn, the *efendis* may write books on the life of Hacı Bektaş, his teachings and the ritual and practices of the Bektashis, and make them available for sale and distribution amongst the Alevis. The Bektashi lineage in turn is, though the principal, by no means the only such large, overarching *ocak*. Though it would be typical for Alevi communities in the central parts of Anatolia to regard themselves as linked to the Bektashis, other notable centres of worship may become dominant in the region where they are found, meaning that though the Alevis in that area would regard themselves as respecting the life and traditions of Hacı Bektaş, they may have a more direct connection with the senior *ocak* nearest to them. Map 32.2 attempts to depict an indicative selection of these.[2]

Though in detail the history of each lineage varies greatly, in each case their members may act as a local and regional focus of leadership for Alevis. In turn, they possess cadet branches, whose influence and reputation may remain

2 The production of this map was supported by a small research grant from the British Academy, to whom I am extremely grateful. The primary source is a catalogue prepared by Ali Yaman (2004), a leading figure amongst the Alevis in Turkey, and I am most grateful to Professor Yaman for his generous assistance throughout this work. Conversion into cartographic form was once more assisted by Dr Peter Andrews, and the map was drawn by Anne Leaver.

influential only amongst their most immediate followers. Sub-branches of these lineages may in turn undergo fission lower down the hierarchy, and their subsequent followers criss-cross each other. This may give rise to, as in the area that I know best, a dense and overlapping network of small patrilineages and their immediate followers.

Though it is characteristic of Alevi communities that they acknowledge the existence and importance of such *ocak* lineages, the relationship between them and their followers may vary tremendously. In the area where I worked, it was held that the followers, *talip*, were denoted which local *ocak* to follow by Haci Bektash himself, and that these links continued from one generation to the next. In other parts of Anatolia the relationship may be rather less structured and the sharpest division be between those lineages which are sacred, and those which are lay, and a follower from a lay lineage free to consult any active *dede* (acknowledged religious leader) from the sacred lineage. In the east of Turkey, again, it appears that the ranks are more structured: the highest *ocak* may appoint a *dede*, which in turn may appoint localized representatives known as 'guides', *rehber*, whom the followers are instructed to respect.

Though the details may vary tremendously, the underlying pattern is nevertheless clear. There is, from the level of a few households up to that of whole regions, a pattern of sacred and lay lineages that denote where any particular Alevi community and the individuals within it may turn to receive instruction in their religious traditions, to seek mediation in conflict and to obtain ritual leadership. This is supported in turn through a complex but overlapping series of doctrinal presumptions: that the Alevis are Muslim, and revere Ali in particular; that they have hereditary saints which act as local focal points for communication between God and the believer; and that, in spite of any local differences, the 'road', *yol*, which they follow, is one.

The transmission of culture in the Alevi communities is, then, from one point of view profoundly hierarchical. Only a *dede* can lead an Alevi religious ceremony, and only *dede* can bless a sacrifice. The teaching of *Alevilik* is in their hands. Nevertheless, the great array of Alevi communities across Anatolia is connected in turn by a common understanding of what it means to be an Alevi, ideals which are reinforced continuously through ritual, poetry and song. Music forms an essential part of the core religious ritual, the *cem*. It is also prevalent in everyday life, particularly for weddings, and celebrations accompanying eating and drinking. A well-known performer, *aşık*, may gain renown not just in his or her own village or locality, but much further afield, across Anatolia. This means that a talented *aşık* may travel far and wide, and his songs become known amongst all the Alevis. Even if performed outside religious ceremonies, in more public form, the music and lyrics retain some of the characteristics of mystical allusion or *tassawuf*. Indeed, drinking together is in itself regarded as being auspicious, for it is in this intimate context that it is possible to get to know other persons, where one can see into their hearts. There is then, an underlying, and extremely powerful means of transmission of Alevi ideals that moves easily across community boundaries.

This in turn leads to a common cultural understanding amongst the Alevis of the relationship between authority, religious orthodoxy and the state, an understanding which insists that these, though they may need to be respected, are no more than the superficial trappings of the everyday world. It is important, instead, to look at the underlying reality, the importance of humanity and the human, as an alternative path to God. As the Alevis gradually integrate with modernity, and with the modern nation-state, it is their distinctive alternative culture that becomes predominant in their thinking. This helps to explain their strong support for the Republic People's Party, the party that founded the Republic along secular lines. At the same time, their music has gradually integrated with the left-wing movement in Turkey and become popular with the secular youth. Indeed, a great proportion of the modern popular musicians in Turkey are of Alevi background; and when a politician becomes impatient with resistance movements, such as the recent *gezi* demonstrations in Istanbul, he may liken them to the Alevis.

Our initial diagram

Going back now to our initial diagram, we can see more clearly how lineage theory, and the opposition between central control and alternative ways to keep the social order, are so crucial. The majority of the population is Sunni Turkish. It is around the Sunni Turkish cities that the population of Turkey has gradually come to crystalize during the Republic, so that Konya, for example, having had no more than a few thousand people at the beginning of the twentieth century now has two million; the populations of Antalya, Adana and many other previously small provincial centres likewise now number in their millions. Istanbul is the extreme version of this: having had a population of not more than 400,000 at the outbreak of the Second World War, it has now an almost unquantifiable number, certainly 15,000,000 or more.

The other three groups, all three of which are oppositional in their social forms, have fared less well. The Sunni Kurds, caught up in a cycle of violence in the east that shows no signs of relenting, have been crushed with extreme military force over the last two years. The Alevi Kurds, likewise, have frequently joined oppositional groups, and many have migrated to Germany or to other European cities The Alevi Turks, though initially very happy, have become gradually excluded from the Republic as it re-Islamifies, and are now afraid for their jobs.

The setting that E-P describes in *The Nuer* is clearly very different from Anatolia in many ways, in that the one is a primarily a Nomadic, pastoralist society, whereas the Alevi have been settled for a least two hundred years and conform very clearly to the model of a peasant mode of production. However, in other respects, E-P's ethnography is very suggestive indeed. He describes a community that has no particular regard for centralized rule, and in doing so develops a conception of the social order based on kinship, where figures who are part of particular lineages may act as mediators, cajoling disputants to peace until a sacrifice can be offered to mark the settlement. Though the idea of segmentation is central to this conception, he is also very well aware of the fluid and amorphous divisions that may emerge in any conflict. In effect, what he is proposing is that disputes draw in agnates, but that the resulting conflict becomes balanced out by the different groups that become drawn in to fight until it can be resolved.

In effect, I am claiming that E-P was right twice over: right in supporting the broad claims made in his edited volume with Fortes concerning the great importance of the contrast between societies which are under direct control of the state and which are in opposition to it, and equally accurate in describing the importance of kinship and the role of priestly or sacred lineages in achieving mediation within balanced conflict. Anatolia, and the Alevis in particular, to say nothing of the Kurds, illustrates this afresh in an extremely suggestive way.

When I gave this presentation at the conference from which this book derives, in the discussion afterwards one colleague remarked that as well as the objections that I had noted, there was a further one: that the Manchester School had demonstrated that a segmentary lineage system was impossible because of the bilateral kin ties that inevitably result from marriage exchange. Of course, it is absolutely true that Turkey has a bilateral kinship system: for example, in the village where I worked a very frequent form of marriage was through bridal exchange delayed by one or two generations. This could take place through the father's side, but equally through the mother's. Nevertheless, any attempt at asserting equality in terms of kin responsibilities would be regarded as quite inappropriate: when a bride leaves her natal home for her husband's, she is regarded as becoming part of his lineage and as leaving her own. Her new links, therefore, take priority over the old.

As a criticism, then, this is roughly akin to that of those who claim that bumble bees are unable to fly because they are too heavy: the point is to explain why the kind of lineage-based system exemplified by the Alevis exists and functions so successfully, not to claim that it does not. It is, to my mind, this type of superficial, even supercilious comment that has done so much damage to the proper appreciation of E-P's contribution. However, to extrapolate from this, I am very happy to affirm solemnly that I have not made up the ethnography, nor have I made an abstract model that has no basis in reality. I myself have spent some thirty-five years gradually understanding how the ethnography of the Alevis functions. However, the sceptical reader is not required to take my word for this: there is the work of many other scholars, such as the team from the University of Heidelberg led by Robert Langer and Raoul Motika, who have built up an extensive ethnographic record, including sustained research on the *ocak* lineages (Langer *et al.* 2013); there is the writing of other travellers and researchers over the last century, such as F.W Hasluck (1926); there is the literally the dozens of books written by the Alevis themselves describing their own religion and the way that it operates, a trend that has accelerated since the 1980s and shows no signs of abating today. The work of one of these, Professor Ali Yaman (2006), indeed forms the basis of the map above that shows the distribution of the *ocaks*. Above all, the sceptical reader can go to Turkey themselves, and interview as many *dede*s and their followers as they should like. Many *dede*s are very concerned about the future of *Alevilik*, and fear that it is dying out. But, in the west of Turkey and parts of central eastern Anatolia at least, it is possible even today to discern its operation, whatever difficulties it is facing in these post-modern times.

Quite why an approach of such brilliance, expressed in the most nuanced of ways in *The Nuer*, should be so occluded is beyond the scope of this chapter. In closing, however, one might recall that the anthropological community in the UK is, after all, quite large, and there are no doubt varied views amongst it, whatever the sceptical hegemony would wish to claim. Additionally, the criticism appears to be, in part at least, nationally based: I have already mentioned the work of the great Dutch scholar, Martin van Bruinessen, and that of Wolfgang Kraus in Vienna. To take a few further instances: a recent issue of *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* has an article by Ismailbekova (2018) drawing on lineage theory for her description of Kyrgyzstan, whilst meticulous mapping of lineages formed part of the work by White (UC Irvine) and Johansen (Cologne) (2006). Fliche and Massicard (2006) have described in detail the Çelebi lineages at Haci Bektash. Seaman (USC) likewise, working on a Chinese village, has found lineage theory indispensable in his research (Seaman *et al.* 2009). Ultimately, a remark made to me some fifteen years ago by an extremely senior German Africanist has remained long in my mind: that British anthropologists appear to have rejected the best idea that they ever had.

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33

Segmentary lineage among the Tiv

Bohannan's work as inspired by Evans-Pritchard

Gary Seaman

For roughly twenty years, from 1948–68, the American husband and wife Paul and Laura Bohannan together formed a team that published an immensely rich and detailed body of work in African ethnography, focused on the Tiv tribe of Nigeria.

They had begun this endeavour almost by accident and riding on the wings of a lark: in a period of a few weeks at the end of 1947, the couple had cast aside their plans for graduate work at Harvard and writing careers in New York to start as newly fledged acolytes of E-P in the Institute of Social Anthropology at Oxford University. Their subsequent work among the Tiv of Nigeria has provided the world with perhaps the most detailed, nuanced, wide-ranging and, arguably most perfect, example of a tribal people whose polity is based on principles of segmentary lineage organization. These principles, characterized as a form of social organization, were made manifest in publications by their mentor-to-be E-P shortly before the Bohannans began their studies with him in 1947 – most famously in his monograph *The Nuer* (1940).

This essay will focus on outlining Paul Bohannan's career, mostly as it relates to Tiv ethnography. I never knew or met Laura, but I worked closely with Paul on several projects in the last decade of his life, which brought him back to the Tiv ethnography that both of them had virtually abandoned over thirty years before. I am not aware that Laura ever published any other work on the Tiv after the great success of what was perhaps her most famous work 'Shakespeare in the bush' (1966). In the course of working with Paul on his last three publications on the Tiv (Bohannan and Seaman 2000, 2004a, 2004b), I recorded a number of interviews with him. Along with materials from draft manuscripts for these last publications, these interviews form the basis for much of what follows.

Paul Bohannan (5 March 1920 – 13 July 2007) made several radical career choices over his lifetime, after graduating from high school in Arizona at age seventeen. Some sixty years later, when he died in 2007, he was working on an 'autobiographical novel' (as he described it) that he called 'The Four Fates'. He neither finished nor published it, but the title provides some guidance to his own sense of the main stages of his lifetime. He divided his life, or at least his professional life as anthropologist and writer, into four major phases, which he also referred to as 'golden ages' (1997). I will briefly outline these lifetime phases in the essay which follows.

He made his first fateful turning when he decided not to attend college: he would become a musician.

> My parents tried to encourage me to do what came naturally. I turned my back on university and ran off with a dance band. For three years I played either piano with small bands for dances or electric organ in cocktail lounges. I was making $100 a week in 1939 which was a lot of money in those days.
> (Paul Bohannan Interview [hereafter PBI], Tape IV, 5 June 1998)

Fifty years later, when I was making the interview videos mentioned above, I would sometimes drive up to Paul's house in the mountain canyon above Three Rivers, California. While the eagles from the peak to the south hovered above us, I marvelled at his massive collection of music tapes and recordings. I also noted and commented on the large collection of videotapes of ballet performances. He assured me that it was a major regret of his life that he had not pursued the dream of his youth of a career in music and dance. He had really wanted to leave the heartland and go and live in Greenwich Village in New York City, where he could find people whose sensitivities in music and the arts that matched his own.

The first fate: undergraduate Anthropology and German at the University of Arizona

When the Second World War turned from phony to the real thing with the fall of France in 1940, Paul decided he had better prepare for whatever might come and entered college at the University of Arizona in Tucson, just down the highway from his hometown of Benson. He would study German to make himself useful if war came to American shores, which he said everyone thought would happen sooner rather than later.

Nonetheless, in spite of the many machinations President Roosevelt's administration launched in support of the British and to bring on war with Germany, there was deep opposition to any reprise of the First World War among the American people; even the defeat of France and England's consequent last ditch stand did not create public opinion strong enough for the president to declare war. So Paul was still studying German language at the University of Arizona in the summer of 1941, waiting for the big show to begin with an invasion from across the Atlantic. In the meantime, he had to complete the 'general education' degree requirements for his BA degree, and one of them was a social-science course.

'Introductory Anthropology' was being taught in summer school as an intensive course; it could be over and done with in a short five weeks. Even though the new published textbook by Franz Boas (1938) was a weighty tome of about 800 pages, this burden was offset by the fact that the instructor was a very attractive young woman named Clara Lee Tanner. She was not only young and beautiful, but was the first professor in his college career that Paul remembers as being an inspiration. A specialist in Native American arts and crafts, Tanner was able to appeal to Paul's artistic bent, and she left one indelible concept in his mind that he ever after remembered: the first evidence of the human soul was to be found in the cave art of the Magdalenian period. This thought remained so strong that when the opportunity was offered after the Second World War, he made a special pilgrimage to the prehistoric caves of southern France, excitedly sending postcards back to his mother about having been able to visit the places where the human soul had first emerged, if not into the light of day, then into the underground of French culture.

> I've been writing since I was a child… It keeps me
> going. I told my mother, I was going to write books.
> But, there was really no family tradition [of writing].
> (PBI, Tape IV, 5 June 1998)

It was from this summer course at college that Paul first conceived that the grand scope and sweep of anthropology might be an abiding place for his own mind and eventually a professional home place. Particularly appealing was the idea that music and the arts held an important position in the anthropological cosmos. He credits Tanner's inspirational teaching, in that intense summer of 1941, with his later decision to seek a graduate degree and a career in anthopology.

Like everyone else in the USA, from the president on down, Paul was more than surprised when war arrived not with the Germans from across the Atlantic, but out of the west across the Pacific. Perhaps his German language studies might not be so useful after all. Almost immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Hitler gave Roosevelt an unexpected early Christmas present and declared war on the USA, so Roosevelt's standoff with American public opinion was resolved and Paul's preparation for the war was perhaps not in vain after all. Paul shortly volunteered his services to the army and he left college to enter officer-candidate school.

As a '90-day wonder' and newly commissioned second lieutenant, Paul was posted in 1942 to Fresno, CA. Since he was proficient in German, he was of course scheduled to join forces in the south-west Pacific theater opposing the Japanese. In the meanwhile, while waiting for orders, he took the initiative to study with a Danish missionary who knew Japanese. Paul learned from him how to write Chinese characters and began to confront the complexity of Japanese verbs, which Paul thought made German noun declensions pale by comparison.

His engagement with the languages of the Germans and the Japanese did not go unnoticed. He was tapped for transfer to the Army language schools for intensive training in Japanese. This in turn led to an appointment stateside with the Army Security Agency for the duration of the war.

In May 1943 Paul married Laura Marie Altman Smith (1922 – 19 March 2002; pen name Elenore Smith Bowen). They had met as undergraduates in the early 1940s at the University of Arizona. After their marriage, they spent the rest of the war in Arlington, Virginia, working for American Army Intelligence in decoding Japanese messages. After the war, Paul was sent to Japan in late 1945 with the Strategic Bombing Survey. The credentials of military authority provided to him courtesy of President Harry S. Truman stated that Bohannan could arrest anyone, and confiscate any papers he wanted to examine: 'Now, that's power!' (PBI, Tape IV, 5 June 1998).

The time spent investigating the results of bombing attacks on the Japanese war effort enhanced his Japanese-language skills considerably. He returned to the USA and left the army as a captain, decorated for his work in decrypting wartime Japanese messages. What to do now?

'After I was demobilized in 1947, I entertained the idea of becoming a ballet dancer, but I was already 27-years old, so I decided against it and went back to the University of Arizona to get my BA degree.' (PBI, Tape IV, 5 June 1998).

Having decided on anthropology as a graduate student after completing his BA, Paul thought he would do anthropological fieldwork in China or Japan. In 1946, Paul and Laura both again enrolled as undergraduates at the University of Arizona. They enthusiastically took up their studies in the anthropology department, where they had met before the war, pursuing many of the same subjects and with many of the same teachers.

Whatever future anthropology might offer them, they also harboured ambitions of working together as a partnership in writing fiction. In fact, as students they co-authored at least one novel, tentatively entitled 'Murder in the Kiva', that was based on their experiences in the

anthropology department at the University of Arizona. Neither of them gave up their undergraduate dream of writing fictionalized versions of their professional experiences as anthropologists. But as it turned out, although their consortship was largely very productive in regards to their joint and singular productions on Tiv ethnography, only Laura wrote a successful fictionalized 'anthropological novel' about their fieldwork experiences among the Tiv – *Return to Laughter* (Bowen 1954).

In Washington, DC during the war, Paul had been assigned to a unit commanded by the famous Japan scholar Edwin O. Reischauer. Paul thought he had an inside track to admission to Harvard graduate school, where he meant to study under the tutelage of anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn, author of books on the Navajo and Southwestern archeology, and a prolific writer. Paul and Laura intended to pursue advanced degrees in anthropology and perhaps realize their dream of living in Greenwich Village.

In his graduate work, Paul thought he would do fieldwork in China or Japan, as his language training had provided him the tools now made de rigeur by Malinowski's example. Topically and theoretically, 'culture and personality' studies were the coming fashion in American anthropology at war's end, along with 'acculturation and cultural change'. Paul was especially interested in language and personality development, so he wanted to study with Kluckhohn, who had just published *Children of the People: The Navaho Individual and His Development*. (Leighton and Kluckhohn 1947).

Before graduate school, Paul had to hurry to complete his BA degree as soon as possible. After being demobilized, he had the academic year 1946–7 to finish up, so that he could apply to graduate school at Harvard and reap the fruits of his wartime connections. Paul considered that the first turn of fate toward the realization of his four 'golden ages' of his life was that at the University of Arizona: 'I got a good training in American cultural anthropology. That was my first golden age.' (1997:122).

That training mainly came at the hands of Edward Spicer, a Quaker whose early development had been strongly influenced by a family friend, Scott Netting, a famous radical economist of the Wharton School. Spicer had also been a student of Radcliffe-Brown at the University of Chicago, and his teaching reflected some prefiguring glimpses of this most influential British 'social anthropologist' who was emphatically not a 'cultural' anthropologist:

> He [Radcliffe-Brown aka 'Anarchy Brown'] established social anthropology in Cape Town and Sydney, and recreated it in his own image at Chicago and Oxford. His tenure of the Oxford Chair [1937–46] permitted him to establish an ascendancy over British social anthropology which lasted almost until his death in 1955.
>
> (Kuper 1975:52)

But Paul had no premonition, when he and Spicer intensively read and discussed Radcliffe-Brown's ideas in Arizona, how he was being introduced, all unknowingly, into his new English kindred-to-be, nor how he was soon to fall heir to the ideological lineage of the hyphenated Oxford chairmen, Radcliffe-Brown and Evans-Pritchard.

Both Laura and Paul were introduced by Spicer to practical fieldwork with trips to Pascua, a Yaqui village near Tucson. Paul credited this early fieldwork experience under Spicer's direction with the inculcation of orderly habits of note-taking and organized writing up of reports:

> Spicer hoped that I would either stay at Arizona and take my degree with him or else go to the University of Chicago, where he had studied with Radcliffe-Brown (long since departed). I had other ideas. I was preparing to go to Harvard to study Japanese with Edwin Reischauer (a Harvard professor and later ambassador to Japan, who had been my colonel for two years during the war), and anthropology with Clyde Kluckhohn.
>
> (1997:123)

But neither of these well-laid plans came to fruition, for a second turn of fate brought the Bohannans to a meeting of the anthropology club at the home of Emil Haury

> As I came in the door, Doc Haury asked me, 'Do you want to go to England?' 'Sure,' I replied instantly, 'What for?' ' Apply for a Rhodes scholarship,' he said... 'Don't be silly, Doc. I don't play football.' The only Rhodes scholar I had ever heard of then was Whizzer White, the all-American football legend from the University of Colorado who became Justice Byron White of the US Supreme Court... A few weeks later, in the Athenaeum of Cal Tech in Pasadena, I was declared one of the four scholarship winners from the six Western states, for 1947. No more fortunate piece of luck has ever come my way.
>
> (ibid.)

The second fate: Oxford and Tivland, 1948–56

Casting aside their previous dreams of Harvard and Greenwich Village, Paul and Laura enthusiastically embraced the chance to attend such a prestigious English university as Oxford. Paul intended to find an academic advisor who could supervise his intended topic of Japanese society and culture, as did so many of his contemporaries with wartime experience in the Pacific theater of the war. But this was also not to be. 'We have landed in a nest of Africanists,' he declared, and decided he must join them to be a successful scholar at Oxford. His wife agreed, and the two of them under the direction of E-P undertook an ethnographic study in West Africa, describing an almost unbelievably perfect example of a 'segementary lineage society'.

Unbelievable, that is, if it were not for the fact that between the two of them, Paul and Laura provided anthropology with perhaps the most deeply researched, documented and published ethnography of such a possible people: the Tiv of the Benue River region of Nigeria.

And yet, if Paul had resisted the twist of fate that the gold mines of Sir Rhodes had bequested to him, and had instead followed his set path to East Asian Studies at Harvard, and ultimately to China, for ethnographic fieldwork, even with eyes uninformed by the precepts of E-P, he might well have discovered and described an even more perfect example of a 'segmentary lineage society', as his contemporary Maurice Freedman (1920–75) was to do (Freedman 1958, 1966). And that might have meant succeeding E-P as Professor at Oxford (as Freedman did, boosted by applying the segmentary lineage model to the society of the imperial Chinese state).

After learning of his Rhodes scholarship award, Paul and Laura read furiously to try to prepare themselves for this unexpected turn of fate. E-P was the new professor at Oxford, having just replaced Radcliffe-Brown. In reading *The Nuer* (1940) and some of E-P's other writings, Paul was particularly impressed by the structured reasoning and the careful ethnography:

> But, in the light of my American training, I thought it limited. Today [1996] – when I envision Evans-Pritchard in the African idiom 'He is my father and my mother' – I feel a little filial impiety when I say I still think it limited, no matter how brilliant.
>
> (Bohannan 1997:123)

At the University of Arizona the Bohannans had been used to the 'four fields' model of anthropology, where the subdisciplines of cultural, biological, linguistics and archaeology are located within a single department, and students are expected to have at least a passing knowledge of all four of them. Not the case at Oxford, where little contact was had with anyone who was not actually a part of the Institute of Social Anthropology. Paul was not even sure that linguistics as a discipline existed anywhere in the university. To further accent the difference from their American expectations, Oxford did not even offer an undergraduate degree in anthropology, only graduate studies. After he had returned to the USA, Paul offered some advice to prospective American students at Oxford:

> For various reasons, mainly historical, there is no Honour School in anthropology at Oxford… All non-British and most British students are required, when beginning anthropology at Oxford, to take the Graduate Diploma, which is a year's full-time course, and is somewhat fuller than the undergraduate major in an American university. Experience suggests that non-British students, even those with degrees in anthropology, do not do well in their research degrees unless they have had this intense introduction to British anthropology… Depending on the needs of the individual, as little as six or seven hours a week or as much as forty-eight hours or more, can be devoted to it.
>
> (Bohannan 1958:73)

One of the most confusing issues that Paul had to deal with upon arrival at Oxford was the rules of the game as enforced by the gatekeepers. He had submitted a thesis topic on Japan.

> It soon became quite evident that I was in the right place for anthropology, but the wrong place for Japanese. In those days, you had to state the title of your B.Litt. thesis at the time you enrolled – none of the advantages of looking around before you made the choice. My thesis title had the word Japan in it. I talked to Evans-Pritchard about switching to Africa. He noted that anthropologists would readily grant such a change of location, especially if I did not change anything else about my thesis topic. But in those days, anthropology was in a combined faculty with Geography – and Evans-Pritchard also noted that geographers might think that going from Japan to Africa was about as big a leap as one could make. However, they allowed it, probably because of Evans-Pritchard's forcefulness – and he almost surely told them that I was a helpless, simple-headed American who, in total *naïveté*, had made a serious mistake which should be remedied.
>
> (1997:129)

After settling in 1947 into the 'nest of Africanists' that was Oxford anthropology, the Bohannans began to learn the whereabouts and nature of the other hotspots of anthropology in England. According to Kuper,

> The key points on the map were the three London departments, and Oxford, Cambridge and Manchester… The three leading departments outside London were all more firmly dominated by the views of their professor. At Oxford Evans-Pritchard abandoned much of Radcliffe-Brown's dogmas and moved increasingly towards a historicist position. The main job of the anthropologist, as he came to see it, was the translation of cultural values into the language of the anthropologists' culture – an essentially humanist rather than a scientific pursuit.
>
> (1975:156–7)

The Bohannans had a lot to learn, not least the dramatis personae and the stages upon which they, and especially the professors, strutted; as the professors usually firmly

dominated their staff, who indeed were recruited largely to reflect views compatible with that of their professors. The Bohannans found their fellow travellers were a small and compact group, intensely focused on the issues important to the 'Oxford school' of social anthropology and particularly those issues as defined by their professor:

> In 1937, the year in which *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic* appeared, Radcliffe-Brown took up the first chair in Social Anthropology at Oxford. Evans-Pritchard and Fortes worked in his department, and together they developed a type of analysis new to British anthropology. This was concerned with the social structure and dealt mainly with kinship and political systems. … When Radcliffe-Brown came to Oxford his only teaching colleague was Evans-Pritchard, who had joined Marett two years previously as Research-Lecturer in African Sociology on a salary of 300£ per annum. Even after the war when Evans-Pritchard took over the department in 1946, his staff consisted of himself, Fortes and a secretary-librarian.
>
> (Kuper 1975:105–6)

I cannot resist comparing Paul's income as a seventeen-year-old jazz pianist with that of his mentor-to-be E-P at Oxford: 2018 dollar equivalents would give the Research Lecturer a yearly income of roughly $25,000 versus that of the American dance band musician at about $100,000. As Paul noted above, that was serious money in 1939, although a popular band musician might well make more than that in twenty-first century postmodern times. My own father, who was the same age as Paul, made about $21,000 a year in 2018 dollars in 1939 as an oilfield roughneck, which was also considered good money.

They had arrived at Oxford in the immediate aftermath of a palace revolution, when the 'crown prince', the newly installed E-P, was beginning an ideological jihad against the intellectual bastions of the previous potentate, Radcliffe-Brown:

> The theoretical position to which British anthropology returned at the end of the war was that of Radcliffe-Brown and his Oxford adherents. The key texts had all appeared in 1940: Radcliffe-Brown's lecture 'On Social Structure', Fortes and Evans-Pritchard's *African Political Systems*, and Evans-Pritchard 's *The Nuer*… Evans-Pritchard accepted Radcliffe-Brown's theoretical position at least until the war, but shortly after succeeding him [as professor/chair] at Oxford in 1946, he issued a manifesto of rebellion.
>
> (Kuper 1975:160–1)

The nature of this rebellion was clearly stated in his Marett Lecture while the Bohannans were in residence at Oxford:

> The thesis I have put before you, that social anthropology is a kind of historiography, and therefore ultimately of philosophy or art, implies that it studies societies as moral systems and not as natural systems, that it is interested in design rather than in process, and that it therefore seeks patterns and not scientific laws, and interprets rather than explains. These are conceptual, and not merely verbal, differences.
>
> (1950:152)

The happenstance that Radcliffe-Brown was no longer chair was truly fateful for Paul's ambitions to build upon his investment in learning the Japanese and Chinese languages. At the time he arrived among the 'nest of Africanists' at Oxford, he was intent in doing fieldwork in China or Japan. If Radcliffe-Brown had still been professor, given his well-known passion for Chinese philosophy, he would likely have encouraged Paul to continue in East Asian endeavours.

But now it seemed that the Bohannan destiny was to be found in Africa. And that meant accepting the theoretical positions and topical orientations of E-P and the other anthropologists closely associated with him and his Institute of Social Anthropology:

> But what I really remember is the Friday seminars, the long walks in the parks, often with Evans-Pritchard, sometimes with Max Gluckman, and the focused intensity of social anthropologists. All of contemporary British social anthropology showed up in those seminars. I have heard Evans-Pritchard and Firth argue, none too civilly. I have heard Audrey Richards gather all her forces and face Evans-Pritchard down. I have heard Schapera give an almost inspiring, and very thoroughly researched, paper about kinship in the novels of Jane Austen; I have several times heard Evans-Pritchard argue with Daryll Forde – both enjoyed it. In the pub after one session, Daryll kept asking him 'Haven't you read' such and such. He kept mentioning newer and newer books. Evans-Pritchard cleverly kept bringing up older and older books. For that reason, Evans-Pritchard had more ammunition. He argued better than Forde, for all that he may well actually not have read as much. It was heady stuff.
>
> (1997:126)

Paul decided to take advantage of his earlier investment in learning German and found a field-site among the Ewe in Togoland, which had previous to the First World War been a German colony, so there existed historical materials that he could exploit. In this intention he was again frustrated,

probably because his background in wartime American intelligence work alarmed both the British and French colonial administrations of the Ewe, so his permissions were first granted and then inexplicably withdrawn. Luckily, he was able to get permission to do fieldwork among the Tiv of Nigeria, for whom there also existed a German-language literature dating from when the Cameroons were a German colony.

> The train got into Makurdi late – it always did. Due about five in the afternoon, it made it about eight. As we got off, we were greeted by a slender, shortish Englishman with a monocle in his right eye. He was Desmond MacBride, who was the Resident of Benue Province; Makurdi was the headquarters of that province. He was accompanied by a young Tiv whom he introduced as Tyum. When I started to fuss about my 26 crates, he said, 'Leave it to Tyum.' When he saw me hesitate, he said, 'If he gets it wrong you can give him hell at your leisure.' We were more or less ordered to get into his car, which he drove instantly to the 'residency' where he was living. We crossed the spacious veranda and went into the open, unscreened reception room. A group of about eight English colonial officials were waiting for us. We were introduced around: this one was a 'District Officer,' and that one was 'with P.W.D.' … MacBride said, 'You need a drink.' He was right.
>
> (Bohannan and Seaman 2000:13)

The fact that Bohannan became one of the most professionally eminent of E-P's students, and indeed was called to serve alongside his teacher as an Oxford don from 1951–6, motivates us to compare Tiv and Nuer cultures in the context of the development of anthropological thinking. It is uncanny: peoples of such different linguistic and cultural background, separated by thousands of miles, distinguished by such divergent economies, and contrasting in so many cultural particulars, yet the political (tribal) system of the two can be expressed in almost the same terms – segmentary lineage organization.

Given how important the blessing of the professor-cum-chairman of the department was for the future careers of their students, it is not surprising that Paul would be somewhat diffident about how his fieldwork results would be received by E-P:

> After fourteen months of field research, I came back to Oxford to write my dissertation (I would ultimately do another fourteen months among the Tiv). Evans-Pritchard met me a little before noon the day after I arrived and began instantly to ask questions. We closed the pubs that night at ten o'clock, with his still asking questions. It is the most intense tutorial I ever had. I fell exhausted into bed – but I had a hunch I had passed… And Evans-Pritchard offered me a job in the Institute of Social Anthropology at Oxford. It took me two or three days to make up my mind: I took the job at Oxford on the assumption that it would be easier to get from Oxford back to the Tiv than it would be to get from the Tiv to Oxford.
>
> (1997:129)

Paul was an Oxford don for five years; it seems that after a heated political discussion with some English colleagues closing the pubs one evening, he decided suddenly to leave Oxford and return to the USA. To some extent, the bright lights of New York still attracted, so he accepted an offer to teach at Princeton in New Jersey. Not quite New York City, but just across the river.

Laura's career as a student of E-P was in some ways more obviously favoured than Paul's. She, rather than Paul, wrote the definitive statements on Tiv descent and political structure, 'A genealogical charter' (1952) and 'Political aspects of Tiv social organization' (1958), which described the Tiv more explicitly in the manner perhaps expected of a student of E-P. She also achieved success in the creative-writing field; something Paul openly aspired to, but never found. He eventually gave up even trying to write fiction, after his many attempts found little interest from publishers. On the other hand, Laura's fictionalized account of the Tiv, *Return to Laughter*, published under the pen name Elenore Smith Bowen by Victor Gollancz in 1954, gathered considerable international acclaim from its first publication. It was translated almost immediately into German and Swedish, and a French translation was published in 1957.

Laura also wrote one of the all-time most popular essays about transcultural translation: 'Shakespeare in the bush' (1966), which her obituary in the *Chicago Tribute* describes as a short story: 'a humorous look at attempts to relate "Hamlet" to another culture'. Anthropologists, however, took the account quite seriously and it is without question still one of the most frequently assigned readings in introductory and fieldwork methodology courses.

Both Paul and Laura became closely identified as students, or even acolytes, of E-P. Laura worked with him to edit the *Nachlass* of Franz Steiner, publishing several of Steiner's essays and the volume *Taboo* (1956) for which E-P wrote the introduction. In evaluating the Bohannan corpus on the Tiv, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that E-P's influence and example was overwhelming. Paul was quite sensitive on this issue. I have frequently been in situations where he was asked about his time at Oxford and his association with E-P. In reply, he would invariably give some version of the following:

> Yes. I am the student of E.E. Evans-Pritchard. I am glad to say it. Evans-Pritchard studied the Nuer. He

> was particularly fond of the idea that 'if you have two parties, you don't need an overarching political state.' … A lot of people have claimed that because Bohannan had studied with Evans-Pritchard, therefore he found lineages. I like to think that that isn't true. We found lineages because the Tiv had lineages!
>
> (PBI, Tape 1, 5 June 1998)

> It is generally acknowledged that E-P, at least among the English, … was the greatest social anthropologist of his generation. His elegant analyses, developed in pellucid prose, influenced everyone who read them. While his pessimism about the sociological enterprise had a particular effect within Oxford, as did his idealist bias, his colleagues elsewhere were more deeply impressed by his earlier monographs, and in particular *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic* and *The Nuer*. A surprising number of the books written in the decade after the war were virtually local recensions of these masterpieces.
>
> (Kuper 1975:164)

The long list of publications on the Tiv left in bequest to anthropology by the Bohannans certainly are a sincere expression of their homage to their master teacher. For such a judgement, I refer the reader to the interactive CD-ROM version of the Bohannan photographs of the Tiv (2004a). Even in the matter of photography in the field, the Bohannans acknowledged a debt to the example of E-P:

> I am not sure this is the picture, but I do remember that a number of us at Oxford decided we would all take pictures of girls in millet fields so that, when we did a Festschrift for Evans-Pritchard, we could each publish a girl in a millet field in response to his 'Girl in a millet garden' (facing page 91 of *The Nuer*). At any rate, this is a Tiv girl in a millet garden.
>
> (Paul Bohannan describing photo jj08, TIV1-9, #67, 20 October 2003)

The third fate: an expatriate returns to American academia, 1957–87

> I remain grateful to Oxford and its golden age. I cherish many friends there. But I have never been sorry that I recrossed the Atlantic. I am not an expatriate by nature – except in the sense that every anthropologist feels like an expatriate when something about his own culture strikes him as inefficient or cruel or positively weird. But you do not flee. You look into it.
>
> (Bohannan 1997:130)

As mentioned above, Paul decided, after five years as an Oxford don under E-P, to return home to the USA. He accepted a position as the only anthropologist in a Department of Economics and Sociology. Being so close to New York City was a great attraction, and it was during his three-year stint at Princeton that he developed a close relationship there with Karl Polanyi. His interests shifted more and more towards economic topics, and he began his collaborations with George Dalton, resulting in the publication of *Markets in Africa* (Bohannan and Dalton 1966) and a number of other edited publications on African economic and legal issues. They also jointly wrote Polanyi's obituary in the *American Anthropologist* (1965).

In 1959 the Bohannans moved to the Chicago area, Paul to a position at Northwestern University, and Laura gaining an appointment at the University of Chicago. It is after their move to Chicago that the Bohannans' output of works on the Tiv begins to taper off. Their last joint publication was *Tiv Economy* (1968).

It was also after returning to the USA that Paul rekindled his interest in culture and personality; in 1968 he began a course of therapeutic psychoanalysis and then spent two years training to become a psychoanalyst at the Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis. He toyed with becoming a therapist himself, but in this instance he did not take the fateful turn of leaving academia for clinical practice; instead, as an anthropologist who had immersed himself in the language and culture of a people whose social structure and cultural processes were so strongly imbued with the principles of kinship, he used his experiences among the Tiv as a lens through which to view the family institutions of his own native land.

After Laura and Paul divorced in 1975, Paul moved to the University of California at Santa Barbara in 1976, and began to undertake intensive ethnographic studies of North Americans, focusing on family relationships. Noting the 'brittle' character of Tiv marriages in a series of studies and publications, Bohannan sought to place the increasing divorce rate in American marriages in a comparative functional context (e.g. Bohannan 1985).

In 1982 Paul accepted his last academic appointment, Dean of Social Sciences and Communication at the University of Southern California, for five years:

> As Dean, I came to realize that there is no good way to run a university. You bring in creative people – then tell them to shape up. The good ones can't or won't. And should not – you brought them in because they were creative thinkers! There must, it always seems, be a better way to run a university than the way it is currently done. The culture of universities is, however, limited. People forget their own history. So they suggest as a remedy something that failed fifteen years ago. The result is a sort of repeating cycle of reforms. At the end of my five years, I was 67. The Provost offered me another five years. The prospect was daunting. I retired.
>
> (1997:133)

The fourth fate: retired and writing up his life, 1987–2007

> Being retired has been the best period of my life. I wrote another textbook in cultural anthropology, *We, the Alien* [1991], to tell students what I thought cultural anthropology was about… I wrote *How Culture Works* [1995] to tell my colleagues what I think it should be about. I have just finished a manuscript on the seven deadly sins – the point par excellence where the physical drives intersect with cultural strictures. I hope it will tell people who are not anthropologists about the linkages of their drives and their culture. I am working on a small book for university courses called 'How Ethnography Enriches Our Lives'. I am toying with the idea of a book on power, a subject to which anthropology could make a huge contribution – but has not, as yet (except in terms of supplying lots of data). I have not yet made up my mind whether I really want to do all that reading.
>
> (1997:133)

Drawing on his experiences among the Tiv, Bohannan was also motivated to observe how the methodologies and epistemological orientations of the professional anthropologist can be adapted to a practical guide for living in today's ever more multicultural world. He wrote up the moral implications of this fieldwork informed worldview in his manuscript the 'Seven Deadly Sins', but he never found a publisher.

> Culture, we will find, really is part of our physiological attributes – attributes of a choice-making species who have got comfortable with blatant contradictions so long as we can keep them from appearing in a single social context which demands that we choose between them. There have 'always' been people who want to get rid of the idea of culture – I find it as absurd as trying to get rid of the idea of evolution. … And that – how genes and hormones fit together with culture – is one of the things anthropologists will have to figure out in the twenty-first century.
>
> (1997:134)

The fifth fate: returning to the Tiv, 1987–2007

> I don't want to go back – These people are part of my past, part of my youth. And I don't want to go back. I don't want to know what's happened to them. Now I know that's silly on my part and I know that's not very progressive. But there it is.
>
> (PBI, Tape I, 5 June 1998)

During the time that Paul was dean at USC, one of our students in the Department of Anthropology was recruited to help him organize his collection of his photographs of the Tiv 1949–53, but which had deteriorated badly from neglect and poor storage. The student was mainly interested in working in the darkroom with black-and-white negatives and interesting subjects, but in any case, the negatives were in bad shape and the student graduated.

After Paul retired, the computer age began to extend its influence into academia, and I was exposed to a new imaging software called Photoshop. I remembered Paul's difficulties with his photographs, and contacted him to find out if he would like to try to recover them by using computer-assisted graphics. He gave me the negatives, and I had them scanned and 'photoshopped' them. After some discussion, during which I subjected Paul to a 'guilt trip' about the images only having value if they were translated from Tiv into terms our culture could understand, we then decided to not just restore and print the photographs: he would provide them with descriptive captions and I would link them interactively with his publications. This resulted in Paul's final virtual visit to the Tiv and Tivland. The photographs were originally taken by both Paul and Laura, but he was unable to distinguish between them, and indeed did not wish to do so, so the publications ended up with just his name being credited. This is reflected also in that the CD-ROM version only includes publications on the Tiv by Paul alone or by Paul and Laura as co-authors, but none by Laura as sole author (Bohannan and Seaman 2000, 2004a). This was Paul's wish. I intend a revision in future to include all of Laura's publications as well, in order to round out the record and to give them both authorial credit.

Thus it came about that the Bohannans returned to their Tiv ethnography, through the images that they captured on camera and which lay in storage, unseen and mostly unverbalized for decades. It was a fate that Paul did not expect, indeed did not formally recognize, but some things stranger than science fiction do happen.

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34
Anthropology is friends

Juan Ossio

Perhaps what I am going to say in this chapter will sound familiar to many scholars who had the privilege of meeting E-P personally. Given his fame, those only acquainted with his publications could perhaps have imagined his appearance: a well-dressed gentleman, perhaps even a bit formal. But they would have been completely mistaken, because in the street he could have been taken as an ordinary, even scruffy, man, wearing an old green turtleneck jumper, corduroy trousers tied at the waist with a rope and almost always in the company of a dog that was so dear to him that in order not to leave him behind he turned down many invitations from academic institutions both in the United Kingdom and abroad. It was apparently not unusual to find him conversing with the gardener about tips for the greyhound racing.

I have introduced this small portrait to convey the unpretentious nature and extraordinary human sensitivity expressed in all his work. It was this that led me to study at the Institute of Social Anthropology, influencing my entire career.

In October 1970 I had just obtained my B.Litt. degree at the Institute of Social Anthropology and had been accepted as a D.Phil. student there. Before returning home to Peru to begin fieldwork, I went, with my friend and fellow student Antonio Jáuregui, to say goodbye to E-P, who received us warmly. He generously opened a bottle of Johnny Walker to make a toast; as the hours passed anecdotes were related and more toasts were made until finally, the bottle empty, we made our leave – but not before he offered the definition that has stayed with me ever since – 'Anthropology is friends'.

For me, that definition synthesized the kind of anthropology that E-P developed throughout his life.

The first time I heard about E-P was in 1962, when I was studying history and law at the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú.

The anthropologist John Murra, by far one of the greatest experts on Inca society, was at that time a visiting professor at the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos. Knowing that the study of the Inca society had inclined me towards history, and that my particular interest was to investigate their religion, Murra suggested that I read E-P's *Nuer Religion* (1956).

At that time, *Nuer Religion* was unavailable in Perú; the only work by E-P that I could locate was *Social Anthropology and Other Essays* (1962a). Among the articles included in this book, there was one entitled 'History and anthropology' (1962b). Thanks to this essay I started to appreciate the views of E-P, as they closely resembled the theoretical interests I was beginning to develop. I needed to consolidate my theoretical frameworks, which oscillated between, on the one hand, the humanistic views of my Peruvian mentor Onorio Ferrero, trained in Raffaele Petazzoni's study of comparative religion as well as Benedetto Croce's idealism and liberalism, and, on the other, the Marxist and functional views, closely linked with the very fashionable domination or dependency theory, which strongly impacted the social sciences in Latin America.

E-P's essay, together with his the Marett Lecture 'Social anthropology: past and present' (1962b), which he had given in 1950, not only clarified my views about the relationships between history and anthropology, but also made me aware of the bias against freedom and humanism hidden behind those positivistic tendencies, inherited by Alfred Radcliffe-Brown from Émile Durkheim, which modelled the social sciences according to the patterns of the natural sciences, setting forward their aim to search for laws in human behaviour. EP's position was that social anthropology, being a kind of historiography, philosophy or art, implied 'that it studies societies as moral systems and not as natural systems, that it is interested in design rather than in process, and that it, therefore, seeks patterns and not scientific laws, and interprets rather than explains' (Evans Pritchard 1962c:152).

E-P's views, framed under British anthropology and empirical tradition, consolidated my sympathies towards a theoretical framework that would become the guide for my future work, not only in facing the dangers of determinism, but also those of ethnocentrism, regarded in Peru as the most serious threat to anthropology.

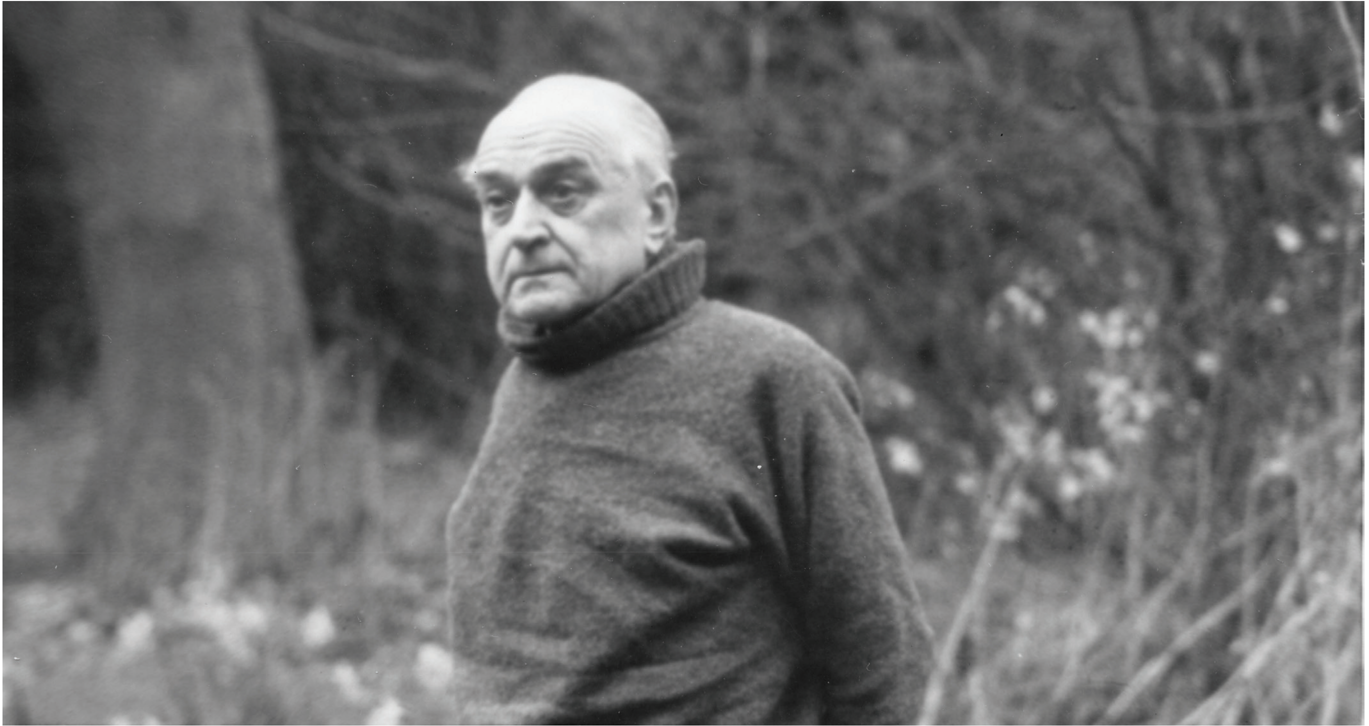

Figure 34.1 Sir E.E. Evans Pritchard n the garden of his home, the Ark, Jack Straw's Lane, Headington, Oxford, 2 April 1973; photograph by J.C. Kenna. Courtesy Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI 35960).

Although strongly critical of Radcliffe-Brown's structural functionalism for its mechanistic and positivistic bias, E-P shared with Radcliffe-Brown his antagonism towards evolutionism for its conjectural view of the unfolding of history. Consequently, both agreed that the best way to overcome many of the conclusions of that theoretical style was to test them in the light of prolonged fieldwork, as proposed by Bronislaw Malinowski.

Because of their emphasis on synchrony (due to their tendency to derive explanations from the interconnection of behaviours, beliefs and institutions or, in general, of viewing societies as social systems without major concerns for history), both Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown became characterized as 'functionalists'. However, this was not completely accurate. While Malinowski limited himself just to explaining these connections by establishing their mutual interdependence or their derivation from some of the basic needs of human organisms, Radcliffe-Brown emphasized, in contrast to the general concern for culture, the need to study society as a system of social relationships framed in what he called 'social structure' or the 'network of actually existing relations.' (Radcliffe-Brown 1952:190).

Between the two scholars, E-P's sympathies, as could be deduced from his lectures and as confirmed by Jack Goody in his book *The Expansive Moment: The Rise of Social Anthropology in Britain and Africa, 1918–1970* (1995), went towards Radcliffe- Brown; he admired his intelligence and his involvement in theory, although E-P recognized both Malinowski's and Radcliffe-Brown's contributions in stimulating the development of detailed ethnographies. Their emphasis on fieldwork had been of enormous value; thereafter, if there is anything that characterizes social anthropology in contrast to other social sciences, it is its concern towards interpersonal relationships rather than in impersonal ones.

But something was still missing. What was needed was to go beyond manifest behaviour to examine underlying conceptual frameworks, while avoiding systematizations that were the product of the mind of the investigators rather than of the people they were investigating. It is for developing this kind of approach that, for some anthropologists like David Pocock, E-P represents the transition from function to meaning. As was noticed by Pocock (1961:72), *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande* (1937), the first book that E-P published, contains few references to the function of institutions and even fewer explanations of the phenomena he studies. Rather, E-P's concern was to disentangle the logic behind Zande beliefs and actions to show that their rationality was not different from ours, as many had previously postulated.

E-P was able to achieve this insight thanks to his extensive social interaction with members of the community. He tried to share as far as possible the life of his hosts:

> In many respects my life was like theirs: I suffered their illnesses; exploited the same food supplies; and adopted

> as far as possible their own patterns of behaviour with resultant enmities as well as friendships.
>
> (Evans-Pritchard 1937:99)

This passage confirms what he told Antonio Jauregui and myself at his home: friendship, a close involvement with the social actors, was anthropology, or, even better, proof of good anthropological work. In analysing socio-cultural organization through the conceptual eyes of his hosts he was able to transcend the ethnocentric bias of his own conceptual system to come to an understanding of another.

E-P placed special importance on learning the language of his hosts, not only for its great importance in fostering relationships but also for perceiving the group's socio-cultural reality through the lens of their concepts. Knowing the language allowed E-P to make much better sense of his observations and to penetrate into realms difficult to grasp outside the semantic chain in which they belonged.

Both in his study of Zande witchcraft and the religion of the Nuer, he acknowledges concepts that are vital to understanding what he intends to investigate. Thus, in his introduction to *Nuer Religion*, he writes:

> A study of Nuer religion is a study of what they consider to be the nature of Spirit and of man's relation to it. I had previously spent many months among the Azande people of the Nile-Uelle divide. From my earliest days among them, I was constantly hearing the word *mangu*, witchcraft, and it was soon clear that if I could gain a full understanding of the meaning of this word I should have the key to Zande philosophy. When I started my study of the Nuer I had a similar experience. I constantly heard them speaking of *kwoth*, Spirit, and I realized that a full understanding of that word was the key to their – very different – philosophy. The attempt to reach it and, even more, to present my conclusions has occupied me for a long time and has proved to be a formidable task.
>
> (Evans- Pritchard 1956:iv)

Not only did E-P search for understanding in fields like religion; he focused as much on daily activities and facts that could be reckoned as central to the life of the members of that society. Thus, in E-P's first volume of his Nuer trilogy, the opening statement would be: '*cherchez la vache* is the best advice that can be given to those who desire to understand Nuer behaviour' (Evans-Pritchard 1940:16).

E-P lists a large amount of evidence that convincingly supports the fact that cattle herding is central to the life of the Nuer, despite having to face difficulties in the environment and an increase in diseases such as rinderpest. E-P's records not only include consumption of products such as milk, meat, dung, urine, skin, bulls' scrota and so on, but also the relevance of these products in social relationships – in the settlement of marriages, feuds and even the emergence of conflicts. Accordingly:

> Cattle are not only an object of absorbing interest to Nuer, having great economic utility and social value, but they live in the closest possible association with them. Moreover, irrespective of use, they are in themselves a cultural end, and the mere possession of, and proximity to, them gives a man his heart's desire. On them are concentrated his immediate interests and his farthest ambitions. More than anything else they determine his daily actions and dominate his attention.
>
> (Evans-Pritchard 1940:40)

Beyond this, the evidence for the importance of cattle for the Nuer is additionally enhanced by an elaborate vocabulary associated with classifications of the animals according to colour, shape of their horns, names granted to each of them (that the Nuer borrow for naming themselves), the composition of songs etc. According to EP, not only can the Nuer be said to be a parasite of their cow, but 'with equal force it also can be said, "that the cow is a parasite of the Nuer". (Evans-Pritchard, 1940:36) They are so interdependent that it can be asserted that a symbiosis exists between them.

Correspondingly, something similar could be said of the relationship between cattle herding and the local ecology, due to the narrow interdependence between them. So ideal is the latter to their herding practices that although, as EP states, 'From a European's point of view Nuerland has no favourable qualities… Nuer think they live in the finest country on earth.' (Evans-Pritchard 1940:51).

Some of the unfavourable qualities that E-P sees in Nuerland are:

> (i) It is dead fiat. (2) It has clay soils. (3) It is very thinly and sporadically wooded. (4) It is covered with high grasses in the rains. (5) It is subject to heavy rainfall. (6) It is traversed by large rivers which flood annually. (7) When the rains cease and the rivers fall it is subject to severe drought.
>
> (Evans-Pritchard 1940:55)

Moreover, he adds that these characteristics interact with one another, composing 'an environmental system which directly conditions Nuer life and influences their social structure' (ibid.). Facing the problem of ecological determinism, he will answer at this point that it 'is of so varied and complex a nature that we do not attempt to summarize its full significance at this stage of our description, but shall ask ourselves a simpler question: to what extent are the Nuer controlled by their environment as herdsmen, fishermen, and gardeners?' (Evans-Pritchard

1940:55). To answer this question, he turns towards their chief interest in herds, which combined with the physical conditions of the terrain, necessitates a certain way of life. The description of this life runs along the subsequent pages until the end of the book and throughout the remaining volumes of his trilogy.

It is not just because cattle are more important that is it possible to deduce that the Nuer's land, by itself, is 'more suitable for cattle husbandry than for horticulture, so that the environmental bias coincides with the bias of their interest and does not encourage a change in the balance in favour of horticulture' (Evans-Pritchard 1940:57). However, the Nuer need horticulture, together with fishing, because, while it is true that they could survive only by livestock, outbreaks of rinderpest made it very difficult. On the other hand, a purely horticultural life would be precarious, as fruits and vegetables are regarded more as a supplementary diet to the products derived from cattle.

A consequence of the importance attached to pastoralism is that the Nuer must live a transhumant life according to the requirements of the rain patterns and the layout of the terrain. These different products have consequences for the care granted to their animals, as well as for variations in their social relationships and in the configuration of their social and political groupings. Also, these consequences are seen in the organization of time and space, and in the nature of their social structure, where segmentation fulfils an important role.

Ecology, therefore, far from determining the activities performed by the Nuer, can be seen as both restrictive and complementary with regard to the food sources that the Nuer have selected for their survival. This view matches E-P's aversion to determinism; instead he emphasizes a search for equilibrium within the different social instances that make up the society as a whole. Without this kind of approach, it would have been very difficult to explain how order could be kept in a society such as the Nuer, who lack a central administration or notion of divine kingship, as seen among the Shilluk people (Evans-Pritchard 1962d).

It was my discovery of the uniqueness of E-P's thought in work such as this that prompted me to pursue my postgraduate studies in anthropology at Oxford. I may say that my long-standing career as an anthropologist and historian is largely indebted to him, as well as to his closest pupil, Godfrey Lienhardt, who became my supervisor for my Diploma in Social Anthropology; to Peter Riviére, who succeeded him as supervisor for both my B.Litt. and D.Phil. degrees; and also to the rest of the staff who were part of the Institute and the Pitt Rivers Museum.

One of E-P's first contributions to my training was clarifying the relationships between anthropology and history, the very fields that I had studied in Peru. Through him and my acquaintance with the work on the Incas by the Dutch anthropologist Tom Zuidema, I chose a research track that has guided all my subsequent work.

My first, undergraduate, fieldwork was with a branch of an Amazonian Jibaro group, the Aguajún, and later, the Q'eros, a Quechua group of Cuzco, regarded as the last Inca *ayllu* (Andean social group). Although I dealt with two different kinds of societies (the Q'eros were closer to the style of life of the Incas), both gave me experience of subjects such as kinship, time reckoning and conceptualizations of the past, notions that were to become the themes accompanying me throughout my anthropological career, focused mainly in the Andean World.

Hence, when I had to decide what to investigate for my postgraduate *Baccalaureus Literarum* dissertation, the topic emerged almost automatically. It had to be something related to the two fields mentioned above. But what, in particular, would incorporate the ideas posed by Zuidema that I had examined in my earlier work?

In contrast to the Aztecs and the Mayas, whose knowledge of a writing system have permitted investigators of these societies to accede to texts left by pre-Columbian actors, there is still no evidence that the Incas produced similar artefacts for future generations. The closest devices they achieved that could be compared to a writing system were the *khipus* or knotted coloured cords, which were mainly for numeric purposes and not so much for narrative accounts, according to the state of our knowledge.

As a consequence, scholars have to rely mainly on second-hand written sources left by the Europeans who conquered them. As is well known, the problem with these sources is that they are biased by the cultural views of the dominators. In their pages, it is very difficult to determine what is properly autochthonous and what is alien.

In order to overcome this difficulty, Zuidema suggested simply making use of what seemed to be factual information. The material Zuidema used was the *ceque* system of Cuzco that consisted of a number of imaginary lines passing through places of worship that radiated from the temple of the sun to the four quarters, in which the capital city and the whole empire of the Incas were divided. The peculiarity of this system is that it forms a closed system in which the places of worship occupy a fixed place in space. Some of the forty-two lines, on top of which the sacred spots are aligned, were tended to by ten social groups. The *panaca* was the highest (in the hierarchy) of these groups, while those known as *ayllu* were the lowest. As the former was associated with each of the supposed rulers of the Inca empire and occupied a fixed position within the system, the corollary that could be drawn, as suggested by Zuidema (1964) and before him by Edward Seler, that all Inca rulers emerged at the same time, without having to wait for the vanishing of an earlier one. In other words, the kings of the surviving lists were not historical, but rather mythical beings representing social positions.

Influenced by the lack of acceptance of Zuidema's argument, and eager to clarify the issues from another perspective, I decided to undertake for my B. Litt. dissertation a study of an Indian chronicler. I considered the author a representative of the many informants used by the Spaniards to write their chronicles. A key objective was to understand his view of history.

Chosen for its magnitude (about 1,200 pages of which nearly 400 bore black and white illustrations), the chronicle I studied was *El Primer Nueva Coronica y Buen Gobierno*. Its author was Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, a sixteenth- and seventeenth-century non-Inca native of the land, raised in the province of Huamanga, in Ayacucho, Peru. On the one hand, *El Primer Nueva Coronica y Buen Gobierno* provided a thorough description of the pre-Hispanic and colonial periods. On the other, because Guaman Poma did not show a command of the historiographical patterns of the time and also expressed himself in a mixture of Quechua and Spanish, the work had been harshly criticized. Therefore, it had the advantage of highlighting the incapacity of some scholars to approach it, particularly historians, who went so far as to judge the author's thought as incoherent and chaotic – '*behetría mental*', as stated by the great Peruvian historian Porras Barrenechea (1971:6).

After reading Guaman Poma's manuscript backwards and forwards, and analysing his view of the social order, his spatial and temporal categories, and his conceptualization of the Inca monarchy, I managed to comprehend that his thought was not in the least chaotic, but rather that it had to be understood by way of the mental categories inherited from the Andean culture. From that perspective, what emerged was that, more than a chronicle, the work could be described, following a suggestion provided by John V. Murra, as a 'letter to the King'. Guaman Poma's book conveyed very coherently a messianic expectation: the crux of the whole document.

Just as with E-P in his study of witchcraft, magic and oracles among the Azande, I may also say that throughout my research on this Andean culture I have emphasized the coherency of their beliefs when they are considered together and are interpreted in terms of situations and social relationships. As in the case of Azande as described by E-P, Andean notions only appear inconsistent when ranged like lifeless museum objects. When we see how an individual uses them, we may say that they are mystical, but we cannot say that Guaman Poma's use of them is illogical or even uncritical. As with the Azande, once the idiom is learnt the rest is easy, for in Zandeland one mystical idea follows on another as reasonably as one common-sense idea follows on another in our own society.

Why in my opinion is Guaman Poma's chronicle to be considered a 'letter to the King'? What led me to arrive at this conclusion? The first step was to try to understand the reasons that could have encouraged Guaman Poma to undertake such a colossal work, which, in his own words, took him about thirty years to complete. Of course, as he expresses himself in the language of the Europeans, at a surface level he reproduces many of the statements of his contemporary chroniclers. However, digging somewhat deeper, what emerges is that his motivation derives from a discomfort, explainable in great measure from his pre-Hispanic culture. This derives not exclusively from the behaviour of the conquerors towards the vanquished, but from something more hidden: the confrontation of two social systems that expressed very radical differences. In the Andean case, this is a social system mostly based on status dependent on kinship dominance, while in the European case, it is more influenced by contract and the development of much stronger social mobility.

The social system Guaman Poma describes is of a static nature. According to him, 'each one must remain in their natural place, as God created them and placed them in the world' (Guaman Poma, *c*.1615:1168 [1178], my translation). Hence, he advocates,

> …remaining what you are. If you are a gentleman or *hidalgo*, you should be happy, and if you are a *pechero* [a person who paid the *pecho* or tribute] or a Jew or a Moor or a *mestizo* [a person of a mixed blood] or a *mulato* [the offspring of white and black parents], then you are as God created you; do not try to become a gentleman or *cacique principal* or a lord.
>
> (Guaman Poma *c*.1615:1168 [1178], my translation)

Being a hierarchical system, the main mechanism for maintaining immovable status was strict marriage endogamy. Thus, Guaman Poma throughout his chronicle recounts that weddings must be between equals; unions of unequal couples being the worst sign of an altered order, particularly because they engendered *mestizos*, which he sees as the worst consequence of the encounter of the two worlds. In Quechua the term for *mestizo* is *chhulu*, the connotation of which in both Quechua and Aymara languages was derogatory, alluding to something imperfect.

So negative was this mixture that he repeats insistently that Indians and Spaniards should live separately and that the main solution for the restoration of the order disrupted by the conquest is that the Spaniards should return to Spain. Their conjunction has turned the world upside down, and in addition, they have no right to remain in these lands because they are foreigners (*mitima)* and therefore without titles to claim any property.

Moreover, the Spanish presence in the Indias broke a basic cosmological principle represented by a dual organization that divided time, space and social relationships in pairs of opposites, which sustained order by being separated, and in equilibrium. Intermingled chaos was triggered in the shape of a cosmic cataclysm known as

pachacuti, which according to their cyclical view of time ought to occur every 500 or 1,000 years. And that is exactly the way in which Guaman Poma, and in general the Andean Indians, saw the conquest.

Being a cosmological detonator that has made the world topsy-turvy, only an entity with similar proportions could restore that which had been upset. That entity was the sole Inca with the capacity of mediating between the opposing principles – a personage who unfortunately, had already been killed by the Spaniards. The only replacement Guaman Poma was capable of conceiving as equivalent, in the wider world that has emerged with the conquest, was the King of Spain, who he saw as a monarch who holds the world in his hand. The best characterization of this divine king with the attribute of a metaphysical being, is when Guaman Poma definitely states: 'king is king of his jurisdiction, emperor is emperor of his jurisdiction the monarch does not have any jurisdiction, he holds the world under his hand' (Guaman Poma *c.*1615:949 [963], my translation).

El Primer Nueva Coronica y Buen Gobierno becomes, therefore, through Guaman Poma, a kind of letter addressed to this metaphysical principle, pleading to restore the order disrupted by the cataclysm of the conquest.

Therefore, the contents of the chronicle can be disentangled, as was the case of the Azande, to reveal the coherence, in this case of the Andean beliefs, when they are considered together and are interpreted in terms of situations and social relationship. The shape that this consistency takes is of a religious phenomenon that has attracted the attention of scholars all over the world: religious messianism.

Hence, what started as the study of the idea of history in an Andean native chronicler, opened for me a vast number of questions that, after more than forty years, I am still pursuing.

After finishing my B.Litt. dissertation, I became aware that several investigators of Andean society, in one way or another, had touched upon subjects relevant to Andean messianism. Above all, these scholars helped to support my view that messianism's roots were not so much to be seen in the nature of the domination, but most importantly in the culture of the vanquished. Consequently, I decided to compile a number of studies under the shape of a book that I entitled *Ideología Mesiánica del Mundo Andino* (1973). This volume established that the components of the messianic phenomenon in this part of the world originated, on the one hand, from a feeling of discomfort that went beyond human factors; and on the other, the hope that not only would such dismay be overcome, but also that this result could be attained in the earthly world through the mediation of a supernatural being. Among the cultural ingredients that accompanied messianism, the following could be numbered:

1. Lack of social mobility within a hierarchical order associated with an endogamous orientation.
2. A dual conception of the cosmos organized in complementary and equilibrated opposites.
3. A cyclical or static conception of time.
4. A political system based on an image of a divine king who is closer to the gods and an equilibrator of complementary opposites.

In spite of the many years that separate me from Guaman Poma, I consider him not only an informant but a friend, who not only helped me to disentangle the mysteries hidden in his chronicle, but who also during my research into Andean culture became a kind of guide for understanding issues concerning the past, as well as other issues that are part of the present. We became so attuned that, for my D.Phil. degree, I elected to conduct my fieldwork in one of the geographical areas where he claims to have been Administrador Teniente de Corregidor (Administrator Secondary Mayor) at the end of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. This was the Repartimiento de los Rucanas Antamarcas and, among its different divisions, I chose the District of Carmen Salcedo, or the Andamarca community.

Guaman Poma's thought was considered chaotic by some notable scholars, and something similar had occurred to the Andean communities, although not phrased in identical terms. If the thinking of their members did not go as far as being regarded as chaotic in practice, it was considered as lacking intelligence and creative capabilities. In addition, it was assumed that in terms of development the past was irreconcilable with modernity, so the peasants should be encouraged to abandon their technological traditions. For many scholars, this tendency was expanding to the point of turning the peasants into passive recipients of external forces. In essence, this dynamic was at the root of what became known as the 'domination or dependency theory' and obtained a great expansion among many Latin-American sociologists, influenced by Marxism and functionalism.

This view of Andean peasant communities reminded me of the prejudices suffered by Guaman Poma's chronicle, and with this in mind I decided my dissertation should introduce a perspective that considered the subjects' own mental categories and the nature of their social organization. Aware, from E-P's experience, that this attempt would demand more time than the brief fieldwork that the ethnocentric scholars had conducted, I managed to obtain generous supports from the Wenner-Gren and the Ford Foundations. This funding permitted me to live with the social actors, if not continuously, at least for more than two years. I stepped down from the bus that left me in Andamarca hoping to approach an authority, to whom

I could explain the purpose of my arrival. Fortunately, the bus stopped in the main square, which was crowded with people expecting the arrival of relatives or friends. Among them were the mayor and the governor, who, attracted by my unfamiliar face, approached me to enquire about reasons for my visit. Upon hearing that my selection of the area was due to Guaman Poma de Ayala, the reception was enthusiastic, the author being a kind of icon for most of the inhabitants of the province. I explained that I had already made a study of his chronicle and that I wanted to continue that research through the contemporary traditions of the people. So pleased were the officials with my plans that, with an extraordinarily friendly attitude, they insisted that I go no further, but rather that I stay in their village.

Overwhelmed by such a generous welcome, and after surveying a large majority of the communities that had been part of the Repartimiento de Rucanas Antamarca, I decided to accept the invitation of the authorities of Andamarca. I was impressed by a landscape characterised by beautiful land terraces that, like sculpted stairways, descended softly along the slopes of the mountains.

First, they gave me a room on the second floor of the town hall, where they tried to accommodate me as comfortably as possible. They even offered to feed me, which was something that I felt I must reject. I once in a while accepted breakfast and meals due to the persistence of a family that practically adopted me. In spite of the generosity with which I was treated, I soon became aware of a problem. By inhabiting a public building located at the centre of the village, where many gatherings took place, I lacked the necessary privacy for my work. But worst of all, I became identified with the authorities' social strata, who were negatively acknowledged as outsiders, *mistis*, whites, *vecinos* or *qala* (gentlemen or neighbours). Although this group was small in number, they were not completely trusted by the autochthonous population or *runa*, who represented the majority of the population.

Notwithstanding all these drawbacks, a warm friendship emerged with the leaders. I have to admit that, although many times they lacked the necessary competence to understand the cultural traditions of the *runa* fully, without their mediation it would have been very difficult for me to be trusted by the community. They even helped me to clarify many concepts that, even for those called *mistis*, who were bilingual, were difficult to translate.

For about three months, I lived in the town hall, until I managed to rent a small adobe house with a tiny interior garden at the north-western periphery of the village. Adjacent to it, the owner, who was an extremely old and kind peasant, had another house. He was part of a very prestigious family, several of whose members had been renowned 'scissor dancers' (*danzantes de tijeras*).

From that moment on, the distance that many *runa* had kept from me changed abruptly. If not one of them, I began to be seen as somebody who deserved to be trusted, especially because of the reason for my stay in Andamarca, and because in trying to be near them, I was attempting to study their history and traditions as guided by Guaman Poma. Hence, a week after changing my residence, I started receiving invitations to participate in their agricultural and pastoral activities: the building of houses, events associated with the life cycle, and in patronal and other religious celebrations.

My continued eagerness to participate in their multiple activities, along with my learning of their language and traditions, convinced them of my good intentions and persuaded them to extend their collaboration. They understood that my work could be important to them – a book that would reproduce in its pages all that they were allowing me to observe.

In the Andes, the most highly appreciated value that sustains the ethos of the peasants is reciprocity. Selfishness is regarded as the most serious breach of this ethos, resulting in various levels of condemnation. One very common curse is to die infested by lice (*piojos*) or to suffer from damnation for accumulating wealth or committing incest.

As in many Latin American groups, the role of reciprocity is mirrored in the central themes of concentric and diametric dualisms, perhaps the most important classificatory devices for organizing the universe. According to many myths, dualism is the means of expressing social dynamics, the organization of time, space and social relationships. In Andamarca, this concept reaches such a degree of importance that the division of the village into two parts holds the names (*tuna* and *pata* equivalent to corner and border) given to the two main parts in which a land terrace is divided. Significantly, these land terraces were generally dedicated to maize, the crop mostly associated with reciprocity.

This importance granted to maize is reminiscent of that of cattle for the Nuer. In the two cases, both productive resources go beyond the values established by a market economy. Although among these peoples the incomes are very low, they dedicate a large amount of effort to raising and cultivating maize; because through maize they can consolidate welfare and prestige in a system that values reciprocity, not only between humans but with divinities.

The continuation of traditional values attached to corn does not mean that the Andamarquinos are unaware of other resources that could integrate them into a modern market economy. Indeed, they are an example of a society that has been capable of reconciling tradition with modernity. It is firstly the traditions that they try to enhance, because through them their social solidarity and cultural identity are reinforced.

Knowing the importance of complying with their reciprocal rules, I always tried to keep in tune with the Andamarquinos. I even forged ceremonial relationships with

representatives of three families and then, indeed, the whole community when I was asked to become a godparent to a bus that marked the beginning of a transport cooperative.

Such was the nature of the friendship we developed that I hardly had time to record the multiple events to which I was invited. The moment arrived when I had to put in order the material I had collected. Following the model of E-P, who chose the concept of *mangu* to understand the philosophical notions of the Azande, and akin to when I had selected Guaman Poma to understand the Andean's idea of history and the categories that were tied to it, I chose to focus on ceremonial kinship. On the one hand, kinship in general had been neglected in Andean studies. On the other, it was a ritualized mirror that explicitly reflected what kinship, marriage, reciprocity and the life cycle meant. It was also useful in understanding the nature of their social relationships, spiritual beliefs and the role they accomplished both in the private and public instances that recreated the unity of the family groups, as well as that of the community in its entirety.

Several years later, my thesis completed, the level of rapport and friendship I had achieved was brought home to me. At the end of 1983 a terrorist group known as 'Sendero Luminoso' ('The Shining Path') was committing all sorts of atrocities against those peasants who were not willing to join them. So fierce was their expansion in Lucanas that, frightened by their cruelty, even the police had to abandon their headquarters, leaving many villages unprotected. One of these was Andamarca. One evening 'Sendero' decided to attack them by surprise.

As was the Shining Path's custom, the first to be imprisoned were the authorities and any peasants who laboured for the state, whom they assumed to be wealthy. Having taken advantage of the approaching darkness of night, some villagers hid and eventually ran away. Twelve were unlucky and were taken to the town hall, where years before I had stayed. One by one they were taken to the main square to be executed. To save the cost of bullets, the terrorists preferred to use knives. Forcing the condemned to kneel down while holding their hair, each victim was stabbed by the attackers. If anybody survived, a woman, famous for her cruelty, ordered their skulls to be crushed with a stone. Seven villagers died in this manner. Thanks to a power cut at 9 p.m., five men who were next in line managed to escape and hide, although they were wounded. The next day, they succeeded in climbing onto a couple of lorries that were on their way to Puquío, the capital of the Lucanas province. Once there, they were treated in the hospital and rapidly evacuated to Lima. On arrival, the first thing they requested was a phone to call me. Ignorant of what had happened, I suddenly received a call from the hospital, requesting I go there immediately because a group of Andamarquinos who had been wounded by *senderistas* clamoured for my presence.

Although I had finished my fieldwork about eight years before, I always kept in contact with the many Andamarquinos who lived in Lima. Whenever they had a celebration they invited me, and on several occasions I had found work for them. But I never imagined that I was such a presence in their lives as to call me seeking comfort during the calamity that their community had suffered. Astonished by the news but moved by their thinking of me in such circumstances, I immediately went to visit them. The five survivors were in adjacent beds. They received me warmly and sought consolation by narrating to me the experience they had suffered. The eldest of them, who had always been the closest to me, was the first to talk. Avoiding missing any details, which in any case were completed by his companions, he told me the horrifying story summarized above.

If anthropology is friends, as E-P conveyed to us in the farewell visit mentioned at the beginning of these pages, the Andamarquinos gave me extraordinary evidence of the strength of this ideal. As this value was sustained by reciprocity, apart from seeking comfort from their pain, what they needed from me was to report to an official who might understand their suffering and reinstall armed forces to restore order in the area.

Risking the possibility of The Shining Path's revenge, I thought that the best I could do was to write an article for a journal with wide distribution, outlining all the information I had received. *Caretas* was the journal I chose (Ossio 1983). Soon, other press media started to call me, because until that moment everybody thought that 'Sendero' like other revolutionary groups of those years was fighting in favour of the poor, particularly peasants who were seen as being at the bottom of the scale. As I had evidence of the incomes of those who had been murdered, I provided information, collected after years of research, that proved that poverty was indeed the least of this group's worries. It was clear that for The Shining Path their killings were simply a way of eliminating anybody who did not agree with them.

Unfortunately, an armed forces' headquarters was not installed immediately, and the exodus of numerous Andamarquinos followed. The Shining Path declared the area a 'liberated zone', not so much for revolutionary reasons, but rather with the objective of appropriating the resources of those they had driven out. This chaotic situation lasted for several years until the armed forces did take control of the zone, and peace began to reign again, not without the development of new abuses from some of the soldiers.

When I returned to Andamarca in the middle of the 90s, the well-being I had seen when I did my fieldwork had vanished. The population had decreased. There were not sufficient people to sponsor saints' festivities. However, the two main festivals associated, respectively, with agriculture and pastoralism still continued, with even more splendour

than before. Today the population has increased again, so much so that one of its *anexos* (annexed localities) was negotiating to become an independent community separated from Andamarca.

About three generations separated me from the Andamarquinos whom I met when I started my fieldwork. Many of the latter have passed away. However, to my surprise, my name is remembered by the younger generations. Perhaps the reason is that the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú published my D.Phil. thesis in 1992 under the title of *Parentesco, Reciprocidad y Jerarquía en los Andes. Una Aproximación a la Organización Social de la Comunidad de Andamarca*, and a year later I donated some copies to the town hall and the school. To express their gratitude for my donation, more than ten years later, the Andamarquinos showed me the use they had made of the books. Evidently, they had read them with regularity, because the volumes looked old and worn out. 'See,' they told me, 'you cannot complain about the use we have given to them and we would be very happy if you could give us some extra ones.'

Glancing through the pages, I noticed that the most worn out were the ones where I described some of their rituals. As an answer to my observation, they replied that those passages were relevant, 'because they reminded us of the performance of our past rituals, most of which we had forgotten, particularly the displacement of the offerings and the locations where they had to be buried'. At that moment, I realized that not only had they been my reliable informants, but that also, thanks to the mutual trust we developed, my book had become a sort of encyclopaedia that transformed me into both a recipient of information and a trustworthy informant to them.

Not long ago I had a similar experience with my book *El Tahuantinsuyo Bíblico. Ezequiel Ataucusi Gamonal y el Mesianismo de los Israelitas del Nuevo Pacto Universal* (2014). The volume deals with a contemporary Andean messianic congregation, founded in 1967 by the very charismatic Ataucusi Gamonal. As the group lacked a formal compendium of its history and organization, what I wrote for an academic audience became an essential record for the 'Israelites'. Once again, friendship not only provided me with good informants who enabled the success of my research but also, in the end, they themselves became compensated by the warm links we had forged.

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Comparison as cultural translation

South Asian diasporic coextension and bicentric networks

Ravindra K. Jain

To the best of my knowledge E-P himself never ventured to write about South Asian ethnography. However, at one remove, his explication of segmentary structure among the Nuer has been the inspiration behind certain analyses of the Indian caste system (e.g. Beteille 1964; Dumont 1970; Parry 1979; Pocock 1972). Further, Louis Dumont's classic study *Homo Hierarchicus* (1970) acknowledges his global comparison between hierarchical and egalitarian ideologies is rooted in the cultural translation that characterized Evans-Pritchard's comparative method.

Comparative studies of the Indian diaspora, a topic that has occupied me for more than five decades now, may also be carried out fruitfully through this methodology. In this essay I illustrate one variant, employing the concepts of diasporic coextension and bicentric networks amongst villagers of the eastern Punjab Doaba region and its Punjabi migrants in Wolverhampton, UK. These concepts are an extension of the characteristic 'circulation', which must be added to Safran's (1991) six-point model that lays down the features of a diaspora, namely: dispersion from the original homeland and retention of collective memory; vision or myth of the original homeland; partial (never complete) assimilation in the host society; idealized wish to return to the original homeland; desired commitment towards restoration of the homeland; and, continually renewed linkages with the homeland. My data, derived from secondary sources, pertains to inter-caste and intra-caste networks set specifically in the arena of Sikh and non-Sikh *deras* (religious congregations) in Punjab and the transnational diaspora (Jain 2018a). The major castes involved are the dominant Jat Sikhs and the subordinate Dalit.[1] In conventional sociology of the diaspora, the relations being studied are seen as a carryover from the home to the host society; here, however, it is seen as a two-way process exhibiting novel features inherent in the dynamic situation (refer to 'situational analysis' of the so-called Manchester School) itself. Coextension and the bicentricity of networks show both the possibilities and limitations of change and 'transcreation'.

Networks and coextension

Claude Markovits (2000) concludes his historical narrative of network centres and circulation with reference to two monocentric Sindhi merchant networks by alluding to polycentricity in the post-colonial phase (Jain 2004). With transnationalist analysis in focus, we may distinguish between wider and narrower transnationalism with reference to networks. In diaspora all networks are polycentric in origin and spread, and here we consider as an illustrative case study the bicentricity of networks in the intra-caste and inter-caste contexts of Punjabi diaspora in Britain. Rather than circulation in the historical Shikarpur and Hyderabadi Sindhi merchant networks described by Markovits (with regard to persons, ideas and goods), here we examine the networks as mediated by mutual coextension in the bicentricity framework. The two networks are those of the Jat Sikhs and the Dalit in Wolverhampton, UK, and in East Punjab villages in India, and they are in that sense bicentric. Though from the viewpoint of consciousness (for instance as regards music) and morphology (intra- and inter- caste relations) these networks are coextensively transnational, yet the bicentricity mediates them; thus the two networks show facets of coextension differentially. In other words, the possibilities and limits of Jat Sikh and Dalit networks – despite coextension – configure the effects of bicentric mediation.

To take the Jat Sikhs first, though the overall context in which they operate is transnational (here specifically as between Wolverhampton and East Punjab villages), the specific modalities of village society in Punjab and a metropolitan 'public arena' (Habermas 1974) in the urban society of Wolverhampton regulate the effects of coextension in the two networks in both directions. Many of the critical ambivalences of consciousness and morphology (Vertovec 1999) in Jat Sikh transnational networks can be attributed to the surrounding environment. Thus, while on the one hand diasporic Jat Sikhs aspire for greater

1 The term *dalit*, meaning 'broken/ scattered' in Sanskrit and Hindi, refers to a category of backward castes, including untouchables, who have been kept depressed owing to their subjection by the higher castes.

izzat (honour and prestige) through conspicuous display of enhanced consumer behaviour, their aspiration for a surplus of cultural capital is seriously thwarted both in the village society and via the various juridically disempowering mechanisms in the urban society of UK (see Mooney 2006). As an example, while the diasporic Jat Sikhs may invest in conspicuous display of infrastructural superiority (big houses, expensive clothes, gadgetry etc.) and even philanthropy in the villages, many of their village compatriots refuse to take the bait attributing them the social and moral superiority that would redound to enhanced *izzat* (Taylor *et al.* 2007). In the urban society of UK, however, while their migration and settlement may be viewed as engendering ethnic colonization (Ballard 2006) they are excluded from the process of 'gentrification' that is concomitant upon socio-economic mobility among the native (non-diasporic) citizenry. In other words, the bicentricity of Jat Sikh transnational networks is configured to certain limits, or a glass ceiling, that constrain their impact. In contrast to the above stated limits, the opportunities of coextension in Jat Sikh networks are manifested in heightened reversion to orthodox religious behaviour in the gurdwaras and Sikh *deras*[2] and involutionary attacks on non-Sikh (especially Dalit) *deras*. We shall explore this latter modality more fully in the next section, but let me note here summarily the practice among Jat Sikhs transnationally of entrenched endogamy, kindred formation (Mooney 2006), machismo and, more expressively, the efflorescence of bhangra music and dance. All this is combined with attacks, for example in a gurdwara in Vienna, on Ravidassia *deras* that are predominantly Dalit, and acute violent inter-caste factional conflict. These may be read as symptoms of a crisis of status among the Jat Sikhs and the non-sustainability of eco-systemic controls in a transnationalist context.

It is similar but not quite the same: transnationalism and bicentricity

I wish to introduce the caste dimension – both the intra-caste matrix and inter-caste relations – in the narrative of diasporic networks in a situation of coextension. While discussing 'caste' a caveat is necessary. The Jat Sikhs are not a caste or jati in the classical Indological sense.[3] And the contending subordinate, untouchable or scheduled castes have also to be viewed, in the segmentary sense, not strictly as jati (thus Chuhra, Chamar, Balmiki etc.) but collectively as Dalit (a backward and oppressed community as we have noted). There are sections within the Punjabi Dalit community, and here we are concerned mainly with the sectarian divisions conspicuously congregated into '*deras*' both in Punjab and in the diaspora. The *deras* have been classified by scholars (e.g. Ram 2007) into Sikh and non-Sikh ones, the former adhering to orthodox Sikhism (following the *rahit maryada* or scripturally ordained correct ritual code of conduct) and the latter showing various diacritics of heterodoxy. The classification Sikh/non-Sikh does not refer primarily to membership in the *deras* nor even to religious distinctions among the Punjabis. Thus we have Jat Sikh chiefs of non-Sikh *deras* and various functionaries of Dalit community in the Sikh *deras*. The main distinction, as we have noted, is between orthodoxy and heterodoxy with regard to Khalsa Sikh practice.[4] That this distinction has led to antagonism between *deras* of the two persuasions is, from the Jat Sikh point of view, an outcome of the acute status conundrum that they face in the coexistentionist universe. For the Dalit heterodoxy, belonging to diasporic networks of more recent vintage than the Jat Sikhs, this is part and parcel of a protest-cum-assertion movement following on the tracks of economic mobility and their placement in a transnational public arena.

To return to my paradigm of bicentric coextension, what is rendered possible in the metropolitan framework of Wolverhampton is severely limited in the village environment. In the village ecosystem there is ample evidence that strident moves for Dalit socio-economic mobility are thwarted because of a hegemonic inter-caste and class regime. In the village context, there is lack of bold assertion and a commensurate kowtowing to the 'dominant' castes by the Dalits in the secular (economic and occupational) sphere, and even religious assertion in the form, for example, of constituting a separate Ravidassi *panth* (a religious sect or sub-sect) is shied away from (Singh 2017). There could be no better illustration of the comprehensive bicentric coextension in this transnational context. It is, therefore, easy to assess the circumstances in which heterodoxy flourishes among Punjabis in Wolverhampton whereas it is limited in the village setting of Punjab.

Let me take up the issue broached earlier, of the failure of a sustainable ecosystem of social control in the Wolverhampton context. I allude here to the violent antagonism and factionalism between the orthodox and heterodox Punjabi *deras* in India and the diaspora. Here the feedback between the *deras* in Punjab and in the diaspora is palpable and acute. The murderous attack on Ravidassi priests in the Vienna branch of Dera Sach Khand

2 *Deras* are camps/religious buildings where the congregation of devotees takes place.

3 'The claims of the Jats to be a caste is contested by historians, as they do not fulfil the condition for the formation of castes. It might be more accurate to describe the Jats as a tribe (Roy 2011:100). Also, 'The emergence of a Jat consciousness has been visible since the 1970s with the Jat synechdochically serving as the signifier not only of Sikhs but also of Punjabi identity.' (ibid.:95).

4 *Khalsa* (Punjabi: 'the pure'). The Khalsa tradition was initiated in 1699 by the last living guru of Sikhism, Guru Gobind Singh. Its formation was a key event in the history of Sikhism.

and its reverberations in Punjab should be seen in the light of this feedback. In the inter-juridical, international, environment of the Austrian Punjabi community there were no holds barred in violent conflict, (and the conflagration took on the character of so-called 'Sikh terrorism'). In Punjab villages of Meham and Talhan, on the other hand, the ongoing confrontation between Ravidassis and non-Ravidassis stopped short of violent and murderous conflict, even when fuelled by the Vienna incident.

Another dimension of bicentricity in Jat Sikh and Dalit networks may be seen in the proliferation of bhangra music and dance among the Jat Sikhs (Roy 2011) and of 'mission songs' among the Dalits (Singh 2017). Music is a common cultural template for Punjabis both at 'home' and abroad, though as an expressive modality the two variants are opposed and contraposed. There has been a tendency in the extant interpretive literature to functionally equate the two variants of musical expression as Dalit assertion versus hegemony of the Jat Sikhs. This is a simplistic reading of the 'opposition', which may profitably be viewed not functionally but structurally (see Douglas and Douglas 1975; Evans-Pritchard 1940). Once we restore the expressive modalities to their structural space, functionally the instrumental aspect of Dalit assertion contra Jat Sikh hegemony can be explained in terms of our model of coexistentist bicentricity, namely, the organizational success of Ambedkarite[5] Dalit protest movement in the UK and its failure to make a dent in the Punjabi village society (Taylor 2014). There is thus a disjunction between the expressive and instrumental efficacy of protest movement triggered in the bicentric space of diasporic coextension. It would pay analytical dividends, a) if we do not conflate structural and functional 'oppositions'; and b) we pursue further the disjuncture in bicentric space of coextension the quality of Dalit and Jat Sikh networks. Such an approach would bear out the validity of my statement: 'as an experimental laboratory of spatio-temporal distantiation for familiar socio-cultural phenomena, diasporic studies provide important instruments of comparison and analytical understanding' (Jain 2018b:85).

Final note

My analysis has moved away from depiction of a framework of identity with enduring and stable caste-blocks. The working out of caste in a segmentary fashion through situational and processual progression has been the staple of my analysis. Could there be a better illustration of Evans-Pritchard's conception of social anthropology as a kind of historiography, of what can be seen as situational fission and fusion of structural units, and of interpretation as a mode of cultural translation? The transnational social process delineated above shows how, within a common template of culture, the bicentricity of networks leads compellingly, if imperceptibly, to nuanced differentiations in the template. Cultural translation itself becomes an ongoing process that weans us away from a mechanistic model of final explanations towards an episteme of the humanities, viz., historiography and situational analysis.

5 B.R. Ambedkar (1891–1965) was the most prominent and iconic leader of Dalits in India and abroad.

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PART VII

Appendix

E-P as an older man. Courtesy Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford.

36
A biography and bibliography of E.E. Evans-Pritchard

Tom Beidelman, with additions by André Singer

A biographical sketch

This brief biographical note was not intended as an appraisal of Evans-Pritchard's contribution to the field or even as a personal or intellectual portrait. Rather, it was simply intended to set down various basic facts about E-P's life and career. It was originally prepared by Tom Beidelman and updated by André Singer. In 1972 E-P checked the facts for accuracy.

Sir Edward Evans-Pritchard was born on 21 September 1902 at Crowborough, Sussex, the son of Revd John Evans-Pritchard, a clergyman of the Church of England, and his wife, the former Dorothea Edwards. He attended Winchester College (1916–21) and then Exeter College, University of Oxford (1921–4), where he took an MA in Modern History.[1] On graduation he entered graduate studies at the London School of Economics (1923–7). He left Oxford for London partly for a change of environment but mainly because he wanted to do field research and no one in anthropology at Oxford had done that. He selected London on account of the presence there of C.G. Seligman, who was distinguished for being the first professional anthropologist to do fieldwork in Africa; in the term that E-P arrived at London, Malinowski arrived to teach. His main teachers were Seligman and Malinowski; the former encouraged E-P in his study of the ethnography of the peoples of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, the latter, perhaps even more influenced E-P in his appreciation of the importance of the intensive and comprehensive field studies of a particular people. E-P and Raymond Firth were Malinowski's first students in London. He took the Ph.D. in 1927; this was based on his first three months' fieldwork among the Azande and was entitled 'The Social Organization of the Azande of the Bahr-el-Ghazel Province of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan'. The thesis dealt with Zande social organization and its relation to beliefs and practices of witchcraft, magic, divination and sorcery. It provided the introductory groundwork for the first intensive fieldwork in Africa conducted by a professional social anthropologist.

E-P's first major fieldwork, among the Azande, was undertaken in three fieldtrips (1926–30) totalling twenty months. These were chiefly supported by the government of the Sudan (£400) with supplementary funds from the Royal Society and the Trustees of the Laura Spellman Rockefeller Memorial Fund. E-P chose the Azande having been encouraged by Sir Harold MacMichael, then Civil Secretary of the Sudan. During this period E-P took up an appointment as Lecturer in Anthropology at the London School of Economics (1928–31).

In 1930 E-P began his research among the Nuer of the Sudan, under rather difficult circumstances, as the Nuer had only recently been subjected to harsh military suppression of a series of revolts against British colonial authority, and as their area was physically difficult to reach. The first visit in 1930 lasted only three and a half months; the second, the following year, five and a half months. This was supported mainly by the government of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. In 1935, E-P received a two year Leverhulme Research Fellowship to study the Galla of western Ethiopia. As there was a delay in receiving permission to enter Ethiopia, he spent two and a half months making a survey of the political institutions of the Anuak of the southern Sudan. When he finally did reach the Galla, the Italians invaded Ethiopia and British citizens were instructed to leave the country. He then spent a further seven weeks among the Nuer. In 1936 he went as the anthropological member of an Oxford University team to do research in Kenya. He had hoped to study the Maasai but was discouraged by the Kenya Government, as the Maasai had recently tried to kill their district commissioner. He also tried to study the Turkana of the Kenya-Ethiopian borderlands, but unfortunately the political difficulties resulting from the Italian invasion of Ethiopia led to the Kenya government making E-P abandon these plans as well. Instead, he made a six weeks' research survey of the Nilotic Luo of Kenya and then a final seven weeks' stay among the Nuer, thus making a total of about

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1 Although much of Evans-Pritchard's work shows parallels with that of the great Oxford historian Collingwood, Evans- Pritchard never met Collingwood at Oxford nor did he read most of Collingwood's works until long after his Oxford days. However, curiously, Collingwood appears to be one of the first persons to have cited Evans-Pritchard in print (1967:8).

one year's fieldwork with that people. During these years of research in the Sudan, E-P also collected considerable ethnographic information on other peoples of the area.

In 1932 E-P became Professor of Sociology at Fuad I University (now the Egyptian University of Cairo). It was during this period that he greatly enlarged his knowledge of Islamic culture and Arabic, which were to prove of great use to him later in both his military and academic careers. In 1934 E-P resigned from this post to be replaced by A.M. Hocart, with whom he had previously been briefly associated in London. E-P became Research Lecturer in African Sociology at Oxford (1935–40), at the same time also holding the post of Honorary Research Assistant in the Department of Anatomy and Embryology, University College, London. During this period (1939), he married Ioma Gladys Heaton Nicholls, by whom he has had three sons and two daughters.

E-P entered military service in 1940, serving as a *bimbashi* (lieutenant colonel) in the Sudanese Defence Force and as a major in the Intelligence Corps, British Army. This early part of his service was spent in Ethiopia and the Sudan. In the later portion he was Political Officer in the Alawite Territory, Syria, and posted as Political Officer to the (Third) British Administration of Cyrenaica, Libya, a post which he held until the end of the war, May 1945. During his military duties he was able to collect much valuable ethnographic data on all of the areas where he was posted. During the war he was converted to the Roman Catholic Church (1944), a step which has had considerable impact on some aspects of his anthropological career.

In 1945 E-P returned to England to take up a Readership in Anthropology at Cambridge University. In 1946 he left Cambridge to become Professor of Social Anthropology, University of Oxford, the post from which Radcliffe-Brown had retired. The Chair carried with it a Fellowship at All Souls College, Oxford, where E-P later also served as Sub-Warden (1963–5). During his professorship at Oxford, E-P took leave of absence to serve a term as Visiting Professor of Anthropology at the University of Chicago (1950) and a year as Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences. Stanford, California (1957–8). E-P served as Honorary Secretary to the Royal Anthropological Institute (1931) and as its President (1949–51) and as Life President of the Association of Social Anthropologists, which he helped found with Meyer Fortes in 1946 and for which he served as its first Chairman and Secretary-General.[2]

E-P's wife died in 1959; in 1960 he spent some weeks in Ghana as an educational adviser to the Ghanaian Government. He retired from the Chair at Oxford in 1970 and was knighted in 1971. Among the many academic distinctions which he received were: Rivers Memorial Medal (1936), Frazer Lecture (1948), Marett Lecture (1950), Mem. Hon. Institute francaise de sociologie (1950), Henry Myers Lecture (1954), Fawcett Lecture (1955), Fellow of the British Academy (1956), Foreign Hon. Member, American Academy of Arts and Sciences (1958), Aquinas Lecture, Blackfriars, Oxford (1960), Hobhouse Memorial Lecture (1963), Viking Medal, Wenner-Gren Foundation (1961–5), Hon. Fellow, School of Oriental and African Studies. University of London (1963), Hon. Dr. Sci., University of Chicago (1967), Hon. Dr. Sci., University of Bristol (1967), Member, American Philosophical Society (1968), Hon. D. Litt., University of Manchester (1969), Hon. Professor, University of Wales (Cardiff) (1971), Chevalier of the Legion d'honneur (1971), Hon. Lecturer, University of Aarhus, Denmark (1972).

Sir Edward Evans-Pritchard died on the 11 September 1973.

2 I am grateful to Professor Meyer Fortes for clarifying details on these events.

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Abbreviations

AA – American Anthropologist
AQ – Anthropological Quarterly
AS – African Studies
BFA – Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts (Faud I University; now the Egyptian University, Cairo)
BSOAS – Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London)
JAL – Journal of African Languages
JASO – Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford
JRAI – Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute
SNR – Sudan Notes and Records
TLS – Times Literary Supplement

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Lucien Lévy-Bruhl (1857–1939) was a French philosopher, sociologist and armchair anthropologist. He was Professor at the Sorbonne and founder of the Institute d'Ethnologie with Paul Rivet and Marcel Mauss. E-P wrote of Lévy-Bruhl, 'Contrary to the judgment of most English anthropologists, I find Lévy-Bruhl's writings a great stimulus to formulation of new problems, and I consider his influence most fruitful, not only on anthropological theory but also in directing the attention of field-workers to a new set of problems.' (1981:131).

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Volume Four

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ISBN 978-1-912385-50-8
90000
9 781912 385508