EVANS-PRITCHARD AND THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF RELIGION

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DECLARATION

I certify that the content of this thesis is my own work and that all sources used have been acknowledged.

Peter Vidst

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THIS THESIS

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the development of Evans-Pritchard's approach to the anthropological study of religion. This study is both an exegesis and an analysis of the formulation of his theoretical framework. Evans-Pritchard's perspective is complex, due in part to the range of people who had significant influence on his development as a thinker and to his evolving response to them.

This thesis will focus primarily on the intellectual influences in Evans-Pritchard's life as an anthropologist, but will touch briefly on the more personal aspects of his life when these have direct bearing on an issue. One feature of his life that is important to his intellectual enterprise is his becoming a Catholic in 1944, at the age of forty-two. The effects of this will be considered later, especially in relation to his study of Nuer religion.

I will attempt to demonstrate in this thesis that Evans-Pritchard's Catholicism was incidental to the development of his historical perspective in anthropology. It is true that a number of people who taught and studied at the Institute in Oxford were Catholics. From a textual point of view, however, it is very difficult to find objective evidence of an idealist influence of Catholicism on the anthropological enterprise engaged in at Oxford by Evans-Pritchard. In the later writings that will be considered there is evidence that he uses a Christian theological framework as an analytical tool. I will also show that the basic idealist influence is Durkheimian.*

The major intellectual influences to be considered in this thesis are Tylor, Frazer, Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, Lévy-Bruhl, Hubert and Mauss. Although

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*   Adam Kuper in *Anthropology and Anthropologists* (revised edition, 1983:127), however, suggests a
     link between the idealist position built up by Evans-Pritchard upon his historical perspective and his
     use of the writings of the *L'Année Sociologique,* and Catholicism, but he presents no evidence for
     this. He also offers no evidence for the claim that it was '...an odd fact that several members of the
     department were converts to Roman Catholicism'(127). I will concentrate on the evidence regarding
     the degree of intellectual influence that may be attributed to Catholicism, as that influence emerges
     in Evans-Pritchard's writings.

eventually Evans-Pritchard rejected much of Durkheim's position on the sociological analysis of religion (*Nuer Religion*, 1956:313), he did not move very far from Durkheim's methodology. This poses many questions and problems which I will attempt to address. The intellectual relationship that Evans-Pritchard had with Durkheim provides the principal area of enquiry in this thesis. The pattern of thought formed through the use of Durkheim's ideas is never simple.

In exploring Evans-Pritchard's development as a theorist, I will concentrate on three of his major monographs, *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande* (1937a), *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica* (1949a), and *Nuer Religion* (1956), and a number of his important papers in order to demonstrate the degree to which his analytical framework developed in response to those who influenced him. This response is complex as it comprises elements of agreement with and divergence from his sources, including his oral sources, the Zande, the Bedouin, and the Nuer. Evans-Pritchard's writings are primarily ongoing, but largely implicit, debates with Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, Lévy-Bruhl, and Durkheim in which his own theoretical perspective unfolds.

The papers to be examined in relation to the monographs listed above fall into two groups : those published during, and shortly after, his Professorship at the Egyptian University in Cairo (1932-34), and, those published during the early and middle stages of his Professorship at Oxford University (1946-1970). The significance of these papers is that they act as a map of Evans-Pritchard's development as an anthropological theorist. In them he presents his position in a more detailed fashion than he does in the monographs.

DEFINITIONS

Much of the discussion in this thesis revolves around various understandings and uses of certain terms. These include : 'social fact', 'collective representations', 'determinism', 'intellectualism', 'functionalism', 'dualism', 'empiricism', 'rationalism', 'materialism' and 'pragmatism'. Evans-Pritchard uses these terms in diverse ways. This gives rise to the need for clarification of his use of them. In that need lies the substance of this thesis. Paradox and ambiguity will be apparent but, as will be seen in the next section, there is a unity in Evans-Pritchard's perspective which emerges in much the

same way as that of a mosaic. Individual elements of a mosaic considered separately from the whole often appear partial and perplexing. The purpose of this clarification of terms is to help bring some of the asymmetrical factors in Evans-Pritchard's discourse into focus.

Social fact

This term is complex and 'slippery' and Durkheim's definition and explanation of the term serve to demonstrate this. Durkheim's intention to free sociological analysis from the effects of the psychology of his era underlies his formulation of the concept in *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1901 (Lukes and Hall 1982)

> "Social facts differ not only in quality from psychical facts; *they have a different substratum*, they do not evolve in the same environment or depend on the same conditions" (Lukes and Hall,1982:40).

He does not intend a total separation between the two, since he continues :

> 'This does not mean that they are not in some sense psychical, since they all consist of ways of thinking and acting. But the states of the collective consciousness are of a different nature from the states of individual consciousness; they are representations of another kind. The mentality for groups is not that of individuals: it has its own laws' (1982:40).

The principle Durkheim presents to support this view assumes that the nature of society is distinct from that of the individuals who comprise it (1982:40).

Durkheim gives two related definitions of the concept 'social fact'. First,

> '...they consist of manners of acting, thinking and feeling external to the individual, which are invested with a coercive power by virtue of which they exercise control over him' (1982:52).

Secondly,

> '[that] which is general over the whole of a given society whilst having an existence of its own, independent of its individual manifestations' (1982:59).

Lukes (1973) discusses some of the problems raised by Durkheim's definition. Much of what he has to say helps to clarify what Durkheim intended, and points to the ambiguity of Durkheim's use of the term. This in turn assists in grasping Evans-Pritchard's use of the concept. Lukes points out that for Durkheim the basic principle informing his perspective is that of the 'objective reality of social facts' (1973:9). In answer to the question of what Durkheim counted as social facts and how he classified

them, Lukes states that Durkheim '… should be understood to mean social phenomena or factors or forces…' (1973:9). And,

> '… by the rule that they should be studied as things he meant that they are to be seen as "realities external to the individual" and independent of the observer's conceptual apparatus' (1973:9).

Taken as it stands the last statement is misleading and Lukes argues that Durkheim uses four senses of the term 'things'. First, the term refers to phenomena with characteristics independent of the observer. Secondly, phenomena whose characteristics are ascertained only by empirical investigation, and not by *a priori* reasoning or intuition. Thirdly, phenomena whose existence is independent of individual person's wills. Fourthly, phenomena which may be studied through 'external' observation only, '…by means of indicators such as legal codes, statistics …' (1973:9, n.40).

Lukes elaborates this, arguing that Durkheim '…saw social facts as lying along a continuum' (1973:9). This continuum embraced the structural, 'anatomical or morphological' social phenomena at one extreme, and non-institutionalised norms, those which have not crystalised formally, at the other. The latter possess the same objectivity and ascendancy over the individual as do the institutionalised norms. These lie in the middle part of the continuum and consist of the established beliefs and practices, whose origin is in the political society as a whole (substratum) or in one of the partial groups comprising it (1973:9-10).

Lukes states that in Durkheim's view the differences between these senses are only "…'in the degree of consolidation they present'" (1973:10). Lukes concludes that collective representations, in this classificatory system, are '…social facts located in superstructure' (1973:10). He also notes the very important point that at the time of writing *The Rules of Sociological Method*, Durkheim treated structural and superstructural phenomena as being '… intimately interrelated and of the same generic type' (1973:10), but at the same time specifically differentiated.

This understanding of social fact is a factor in Evans-Pritchard's distancing himself from Radcliffe-Brown. The latter tended to use the term in a less differentiated way as the following suggests.

'(1) A society depends for its existence on the presence in the minds of its members of a certain system of sentiments by which the conduct of the individual is regulated in conformity with the needs of the society. (2). Every feature of the social system itself and every event or object that in any way affects the well being or the cohesion of the society becomes an object of this system of sentiments....' (Radcliffe-Brown 1922:233-4).

The lack of a sharp differentiation of perspectives indicated by the above references reveals the complexity of Evans-Pritchard's intellectual lineage and some of the basis for the ambiguity of his relationship with his principal mentors. He does not always signal clearly which mentor he is engaging and which term, with what use, he is debating. This failure is an important aspect of the difficulty to which his work gives rise.

In *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande* (1937a), for example, Evans-Pritchard reveals the degree to which he allied himself with Radcliffe-Brown's perspective outlined above

'My object in this book is not to describe in full every social situation in which magic, oracles and witchcraft are found, but to study the relations of these practices and beliefs to one another, to show how thy form an ideational system, and to enquire how this system is expressed in social behaviour' (1937a:2).

Twelve years later, commenting on the 'social functions' of the Sanusiya lodges in Cyrenaica, he uses the idea in a similar fashion.

'Propaganda of the faith, educational work, cultivation of gardens, settlement of disputes, provision of shelter, hospitality and security to travellers, and of refuge for the pursued, the weak and the oppressed are all functions especially appropriate to tribal and barbarous conditions of life' (1949a:71).

Evans-Pritchard in this instance uses the concept in the sense of the 'institutionalised norms' and 'established beliefs and practices' referred to by Lukes as the mid-point of Durkheim's continuum of meaning of 'social facts'. Both of these statements also reflect something of Malinowski's perspective on the process of analytical abstraction illustrated in the following quotations from his essay *Crime and Custom* (1926).

'...In looking for 'law' and legal forces we shall try nearly to discover and analyse all the rules conceived and acted upon as binding obligations, to find out the nature of the binding forces, and to classify the rules according to the manner in which they are made valid'(15).

Lukes (1973:10) also discusses further examples of aspects of the continuum of the concept of social fact which help demonstrate Durkheim's view that the variations along it are in degree only. Durkheim argues :

> 'Thus there exists a whole range of gradations which, without any break in continuity, join the most clearly delineated structural facts to those free currents of social life which are not yet caught up in any definite mould. This therefore, signifies that the differences between them concern only the degree to which they have become consolidated (1982:58).

Evans-Pritchard applies the concept differently throughout his writings, which helps to reveal some of the complex and subtle nature of his thought. But, this subtlety seems sometimes to be a vehicle for making points against a view he disagrees with. On occasions, too, the subtlety acts as a vehicle for an apparently clear statement that remains tantalisingly just beyond the reader's mental and imaginative grasp.

Two statements made by Evans-Pritchard in *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica* (1949a) are illuminating. The first illustrates his use of the expression 'social facts' as aspects of institutionalised and non-institutionalised norms, while the second presents a morphological understanding of social facts. First, he argues that the Sanusi movement is based explicitly on religious particularity.

> 'In doing so [it has] only done what any movement of the kind is bound to do in a barbarous country if it is to continue to exist, namely to create an administrative system which would ensure a measure of peace, security, justice, and economic stability. A religious organisation cannot exist apart from a polity of a wider kind' (1949a:9).

Secondly, he states that the Bedouin tribal system.

> '... furnished the Order [the Sanusiya] with its political foundations just as it was the tribesman of the country whose hardiness and courage enabled it to stand up to the succession of defeats it had to endure' (1949a:10).

The statements indicate that Evans-Pritchard's use of the term emphasises the ambiguity inherent in Durkheim's definition and explanation of it.

A still more ambiguous and paradoxical use of the concept of social fact appears in *Nuer Religion*, where, in his concluding statements, Evans-Pritchard says that religious concepts are not really concepts but 'imaginative constructions' (1956a:321).

'Words and gestures transport us to a realm of experience where what the eye sees and the ear hears is not the same as what the mind perceives' (1956a:321).

The problems raised by this sort of use of the concept will be examined later, since the different mode of employment signalled here forms a significant part of Evans-Pritchard's divergence from Durkheim.

In relation to this difficulty, Lukes raised an interesting point regarding the externality of social facts. Externality may be understood vis-a-vis any given individual or all individuals in a given society (Lukes,1973:11). According to Lukes, the definition of social facts given above embodies three distinguishing criteria - externality, constraint, and generality-plus-independence (1973:11). With each there is a serious ambiguity. The use of the expression externality is even more confusing because of Durkheim's insistence that social facts exist 'outside individual consciences', which leaves him open to the charge of reifying the notion of society. Accordingly, Lukes argues that since Durkheim meant that 'externality' was to be taken in relation to any given individual (1973:11), he should have said that social facts

'... are both external to and internal to (that is, internalised by) any given individuals in so far as they have been culturally transmitted to them from the past' (1973:12).

A major aspect of this thesis is the consideration of the subjective element of social facts, and indeed that the subjective, personal experience is very much a social fact in relation to religion in particular.

At first sight there is conflict between Durkheim's view of individual consciousness as it is expressed in *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1982:40-43), and that found in *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1915:416-4). In the first place Durkheim argues that '...to understand the way in which society conceives of itself and the world that surrounds it, it is the nature of society and not that of individuals which must be considered' (1982:40). Second, he acknowledges the existence of subjective experience, but argues that '...it does not follow that the reality which is its [religious experience] foundation conforms objectively to the idea which believers have of it' (1915:417). In the discussion of Nuer religion Evans-Pritchard presents a view which challenges not so much Durkheim's position regarding personal beliefs, but the way in

which the latter articulates his understanding of the 'essential characteristic of religions', that is, their process of systematic idealisation (1915:421). Despite the challenge, Evans-Pritchard maintains an ambivalent perspective, since his analysis is modelled very much on Durkheimian lines.

The second aspect of Durkheim's definition of social facts which Lukes treats is that of constraint. He argues that Durkheim's paradigm of constraint '...is the exercise of authority backed by sanctions, to get individuals to conform to rules' (1973:13) since his (Durkheim's) central interest was '...in the ways in which social and cultural factors influence, indeed largely constitute, individuals' (1973:13.). Lukes also states that Durkheim's approach to social facts in *The Rules of Sociological Method* was to provide an indicative definition only. He notes a point Durkheim makes in a footnote to his preface to the second edition of *The Rules of Sociological Method* which is very significant in regard to Evans-Pritchard's discourse in *Nuer Religion*. Durkheim, Lukes argues, moved more towards an understanding of constraint in terms of psychological compulsion, cultural determination and the influence of socialisation (1973:12,14). In doing so Durkheim recognises that the '...coercive power that we attribute to the social fact represents so small a part of its totality that it can equally well display the opposite characteristic' (1982:47). Internalised ideals exercise an attractive power, especially that of the 'good' (as the opposite pole of 'duty'), to which people are attached and which also influences their behaviour (1973:14). It is this particular dualism which Evans-Pritchard confronts in *Nuer Religion*. He has major problems maintaining this aspect of Durkheim's perspective, while at the same time challenging the latter's elaboration of the expressive and functional roles of religion in society which Durkheim took to be most effective when considered primarily in secular terms (1915:427-31).

The third aspect of the definition, that of 'generality-plus-independence', adds to the complexity of this analysis. Durkheim presents the view that a social fact is identifiable through '...the power of external coercion which it exerts or is capable of exerting' (1982:56). The presence of this power may be recognised in the existence of a predetermined sanction, or in discerning 'how widespread it is within the group' (1982:57), and that '...it exists independently of the particular forms that it may assume in the process of spreading itself within the group' (1982:57). The combination of the notions of generality and independence of the general form is stated by Durkheim in

terms of the relationship between social facts and society. A phenomenon is a general one because it is collective '…but it is very far from being collective because it is general. It is a condition of the group repeated in individuals because it imposes itself upon them' (1982:56). Lukes points out (1982:56) that this merely reproduces the ambiguity examined earlier regarding 'constraint'. This is reflected in Evans-Pritchard's own analysis. It is because these ambiguities are not entirely distinct that there are difficulties in being quite sure, in each instance, which particular reading of 'social fact' Evans-Pritchard is using.

Determinism

Evans-Pritchard is very critical of determinism because it views social life in a mechanistic fashion. The problem faced throughout his corpus and particularly in the texts under examination in this thesis, is that he quite consistently fails to provide explicit definition. In allowing his view to emerge from his discourse the onus is placed on his reader to make the appropriate inferences. Thus, when he criticises Durkheim and his colleagues for arguing that '…the religious conceptions are nothing more than a symbolic representation of the social order' (1956a:313) he takes them to task on the ground of their extreme social determinism. The question also arises as to whether Evans-Pritchard uses the notion 'determinism' with precision or rhetorically. Even though this view is supported in Lukes' (1973:23) analysis of Durkheim's theoretical perspective, he also presents Durkheim's efforts to free his central idea, that personal autonomy is socially generated, from the constrictions of determinism. Reasoned evaluations regarding human behaviour must be made on as informed and scientific basis as possible (1973:427). Reasoned reflection on the structure of society can therefore lead to effective changes within that society, or aspects of it (1973:428).

Evans-Pritchard's rather brusque criticism of Durkheim continues. 'It is his society that primitive man worships in the symbol of a god. It is to his society that he prays and makes sacrifice' (1956a:313). This expression of Durkheim's thinking does not take as much account of the uncertainty that he appears to have felt about his position. According to him the

> 'world of representation in which social life passes is superimposed upon its
> material substratum, far from arising from it; the determinism which reigns
> there is much more supple that the one whose roots are in the constitution

of our tissues and it leaves with the actor a justified impression of the greatest liberty' (1915:272).

Evans-Pritchard's objection seems to be directed against Durkheim's belief that individuals find freedom from physical forces through opposing these with collective ones (1915:272). According to Evans-Pritchard there is no constant characteristic of the religious life, 'which is rather to be defined in terms of disposition than emotion' (1956a:313). In this Evans-Pritchard expresses freedom in relation to religion according to necessary and sufficient conditions. These may be expressed as

> '...the determining source of the appropriate direction of action (the choice of this particular good) and the factual release of the process of action rather than inaction (freedom of action)' (Krapiec,1983:212).

Evans-Pritchard's concern, signalled by the term 'disposition', according to Durkheim's perspective of 'society', is that human freedom is equivocal.

Intellectualism

This term can be confusing because it may refer to a specific view of reality, as it is used by Evans-Pritchard of Tylor and Frazer in particular. Evans-Pritchard is also critical of Durkheim's intellectualism, when, for example, he states about Durkheim and his colleagues that

> 'The religious conceptions of primitive peoples are nothing more than a symbolic representation of the social order' (1956a:313).

The magico-religious world view is seen to provide '...a crude natural philosophy' as Evans-Pritchard expresses it in his summary of Tylor's exploration of traditional religion (*Theories of Primitive Religion,* 1965a:26). According to the intellectualist perspective then, primitive religion, while providing some logical consistency through its classification of knowledge and experience, falls short through its reluctance to test its assumptions with the same vigour that empirically based science does.*

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* c.f. Skorupski(1976:1-13) for a different approach to the question. There he marks out the basis for an analysis of the intellectualist assumption that a contrast exists between traditional and modern religion.

Durkheim worked with a different type of intellectualist perception. Nisbet argues that Durkheim '...is severe on those rationalists who have thought their analysis of religion complete when they delineated religion in assertedly scientific fashion without regard to the elements which are dominant in the minds of the religiously devout' (1915 (1976):ix). This forms the basis of Durkheim's criticism of this type of rationalism. He takes the view that the universal and enduring appeal of religion lies in what it does for the believer in his relation to world, society, and self (1915 (1976):ix). Religion '...is a system of ideas with which the individuals represent to themselves the society of which they are members, and the obscure but intimate relations which they have with it' (1915:225). Evans-Pritchard challenges both the intellectualist world-view of Tylor and Frazer, and that of Durkheim in his analysis of Nuer religion. It is Durkheim's tendency to reify society that is the focus of Evans-Pritchard's criticism. We will also find that Evans Pritchard's analysis maintains a tension similar to that presented by Durkheim, and it is this that contributes to the ambiguity in his discourse. At the same time Evans-Pritchard criticises Durkheim for creating uncertainty by arguing that the meaning of society is as the representation of religion (1956a:313). One of the problems explored more fully in later chapters, is that Evans-Pritchard is fully aware that Durkheim had more to say about the relation of religion and society than this.

Functionalism

This term refers to that perception which assumes that any society may be studied 'as an organic whole of which the parts are functionally interdependent', thereby focusing on the present and seeking to explain 'the existing relations between the different institutions of any society' (Lienhardt, *Social Anthropology*, 1964:28). Durkheim's perspective includes elements of such an approach as Lukes (1973) points out.

Lukes' discussion of the functional aspects of Durkheim's theory of religion shed some light on the problem of definition. He argues that Durkheim saw religion as performing social functions, operating both as 'a system of communication of ideas and sentiment, and as a means of specifying and regulating social relationships' (1973:47). What emerges as very puzzling from this is the fact that Evans-Pritchard values

Durkheim's symbolic expression of society, and seems to accept that degree of functionalism in his analysis, but holds back support for the way in which Durkheim actually goes 'underneath' symbols to the reality they represent (1973:482).

Rationalism

In the context of this thesis 'rationalism' is used in its broad sense in which it relates to the philosophical programme

> '... which stresses the power of a priori reason to grasp substantial truths about the world and correspondingly tends to regard natural[and social] science as a basically a priori enterprise' (*The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, 1967, Vols. 7&8:69).

There are elements of this understanding of rationalism in Durkheim's analytical framework, and to some degree, Evans-Pritchard's critique of it is a criticism of the a priori aspects of that framework.

Empiricism

This term is also used in its more basic sense in the context of this discussion. Generally speaking it is that philosophical attitude '...which takes experience...alone as the foundation of true knowledge and of science' (*Sacramentum Mundi*, 1968, vol.2: 227-228). Experience in this sense is an enigmatic concept because it provides a '...special kind of supreme certitude' (1968:307) which relates to the external and internal aspects of the term. These relate, first, to corporal objects known directly through the senses and indirectly through technical aids (1968:307).

Secondly, inner experience relates to that '...of one's own states of mind...' (1968:307). There is an enigmatic quality regarding such experience which compounds the ambiguous aspects of Durkheim's discourse on religion, and, still more so, parts of Evans-Pritchard's analysis of the character of religious experience. Many of the differences that will be seen to emerge between Evans-Pritchard and Durkheim, are centred in their attitudes to the relation of inner experiences to the broader and more public manifestations of religious experience.

Pragmatism

This concept is related to both the preceding ones and is concerned with determining '... not the truth in the abstract, independent of the process of knowledge, but truth as it is also verified and justified in the actual process of living experience' (*Sacramentum Mundi*, 1968, vol.4:73). The distinction between truth and knowledge of the truth must be kept clear (1968:74), because were that not done, there is a risk that the notion of truth will be limited simply to what '... is given in experience or what can be tested by experience' (1968:74).

Evans-Pritchard argues in the conclusion to *Theories of Primitive Religion* (1965a) that he, on the one hand, does not deny '...that religious ideas and practices are directly associated with social groups - that religion...is a social phenomenon' (1965a:111); but on the other hand, he does deny '... that it is explained by any of these facts, or all of them together...and ...that is not sound scientific method to seek for origins, especially when they cannot be found' (1965a:111). Evans-Pritchard states that a sociological explanation is tenable regarding the facts of primitive religion   in relation to other facts '...both those with which it forms a system of ideas and practices and other social phenomena associated with it' (1965a:111).

Lukes considers a confusion of theses occurs in Durkheim's discussion of pragmatism.* He argues that Durkheim does not clearly distinguish the important philosophical thesis 'that there is a non-content-dependent or non-culture-dependent sense of truth (as correspondence to reality)'... (1973:495), and a sociological one concerning beliefs' (that is, propositions accepted as true) in different contexts and societies' (1973:495). Lukes notes that the second thesis has four component elements. The last one, especially, adds to the sense of paradox and ambiguity regarding Evans-Pritchard's objections to Durkheim's position. First, '...such beliefs (including scientific ones) have a social origin' (1973:496). Secondly, '...their *authority* comes from society...' (1973:496). Thirdly, '...they have social functions (the 'expression of reality' constitutes societies, though one might equally say that it derives from them')'

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*   Lukes is referring to Durkheim's *Pragmatism and Sociology* which was published posthumously in 1955, but was originally presented as lectures during 1913-14.

(1973:496). Fourthly, '...they are 'in no way arbitrary : they are modelled on realities and in particular on the realities of social life' (1973:496). It is clear from these that Durkheim, does not confine the meaning of social facts in the way Evans-Pritchard suggests in *Nuer Religion* (313). Evans-Pritchard also argues implicitly for a similar flexibility of understanding in relation to the role of religious concepts as symbolic representations of the social order (1956a:232). There he discusses the existence of a symbolism deeper than one that operates at a more functional and purposive level. Its meaning '...is neither obvious nor explicit' (1956a:232).

Materialism

Evans-Pritchard concludes his critique of sociological theories in *Theories of Primitive Religion* with the statement that Durkheim could well have written Marx's aphorism '...that it is not the consciousness of men that determines their being but their social being which determines their consciousness' (1965a:77). Durkheim argues that it is true '...that we take it as evident that social life depends upon its material foundation...just as the mental life of an individual depends on his nervous system and in fact his whole organism' (1915:423). And he goes on to state that the collective consciousness is, however, '...something more than a mere epiphenomenon of its morphological basis...' (1915:423-4). Contrary to Durkheim's claim, the synthesis of particular consciousnesses required does, seem very like a type of epiphenomenal element. A way to a partial resolution of the problem is suggested by Skorupski. He points out, in a footnote, that there is a fallacy in Durkheim's argument through his confusing 'the reality of religious beliefs with the reality of their objects' (1976:246,n.22).

All this shows Evans-Pritchard's conclusion to be that there is an inherent materiality concerning religion; otherwise there is no purpose in symbolism. Evans-Pritchard's elucidation of the character of Nuer religion effects a divergence from Durkheim's position. Yet he too finds himself on the horns of a dilemma similar to that of which he accuses Durkheim. Commenting on the latter's views on religious beliefs, he says that '...on his own showing. they are generated by the action of social life itself, and are necessary for its persistence' (1965a:64). It is true that Evans-Pritchard does not argue that religion in a spiritual sense is dying out. His dilemma arises in the context of

such statements as 'Nuer religious conceptions are properly speaking not concepts but imaginative constructions' (1956a:321). Evans-Pritchard is not wholly successful in distancing himself from the elements of Durkheim's theoretical framework of which he is most critical.

Collective representation

The discussion of this term flows from the preceding perspectives. Evans-Pritchard made extensive use of the concept, both in the way it is employed by Durkheim and, with slightly different emphasis, by Lévy-Bruhl.

Lukes presents a concise summary of the ambiguities attached to the term as it is found in Durkheim's theoretical framework. As has been seen before, religion constitutes for Durkheim, 'a special kind of representation of social realities' (1973:465). Lukes argues first, that '...religion could be seen as 'representing' society and social relationships in a cognitive sense, to the mind or intellect. In this sense religion afforded a means of comprehending or rendering intelligible social realities' (1973:465). 'Representing' may also be understood as '...in the sense of expressing, symbolising or dramatising social relationships' (1973:465). Durkheim, according to Lukes, offers a variety of modes of interpreting the meaning of men's religious beliefs and practices : '...as a particular way of understanding their society and their relations within it...', and,'...as a way of expressing and dramatising these in a particular symbolic idiom' (1973:465).

Durkheim asserts that religious forces, those which give rise to social institutions, are human and moral forces, and that the religious life is the 'concentrated expression of the whole collective life' (1915:419). He also states that it is '...true that since collective sentiments can become conscious of themselves only by fixing themselves upon external objects, they have not been able to take form without adopting some of their characteristics from other things : they have thus acquired a sort of physical nature...' (1915:419). The essential elements, as it were, are situated with the hidden mental operations (1915:419). This process means that an ideal is created, and this is part of the real society (1915:422).

Lévy-Bruhl's understanding of the term 'collective representation' is a little different, although there are aspects of his view which coincide with Durkheim's perspective. Lévy-Bruhl argues that collective representations are recognised in two ways. First of all, they are 'common to the members of a given social group' (1926:13), and secondly,'...they impress themselves upon its individual members, and awake in them sentiments of respect, fear, adoration, and so on, according to the circumstances of the use' (1926:13). Collective representations have a distinct existence because they are not explicable simply by considering the individuals who comprise a given social group. In this way they have their own laws and connections (1926:14).

Lévy-Bruhl's thought most resembles Durkheim where he states that collective representations are social phenomena '...like the institutions for which they account...', and that these phenomena have their own laws, '...laws which the analysis of the individual *qua* individual could never reveal' (1926:23). These collective representations are part, however, of each individual's experience (1926:24). Myths, funeral rites, agrarian practices and magical exercises are '...the primitive's response to collective needs and sentiments which are profound and mighty and of a compulsive force' (1926:25). Lévy-Bruhl argues in a seemingly different fashion to Durkheim on this score because of the weight that he appears to be prepared to give to the emotional aspects of human experience. At the same time he shares a further Durkheimian-like concept of the solidary nature of social phenomena, and the mutual relationships they can enjoy, and the view that it is this quality which gives a definite type of society its distinctive mentality (1926:27).

Another distinctive feature of Lévy-Bruhl's perspective is that of the role of the law of participation. The primitive mentality is not concerned with verification in terms of an objective order nor necessarily with regularity or order. For such people

> '...it suffices for the objects to be united, and felt as such, in a complexity of collective representations whose emotional force fully compensates, and even goes beyond, the authority which will be given to general concepts by their logical validity at a later stage' (1926:128).

Evans-Pritchard comments on Lévy-Bruhl's position, arguing that like Durkheim, he discusses social facts, which are general, traditional, and obligatory

(1965a:82). He also notes that the primitive mental state is objective because the affective states which accompany the ideas available to people are socially determined (1956a:82) Evans-Pritchard also stresses the importance of Lévy-Bruhl's recognition that *values* '...form systems as coherent as the logical constructions of the intellect, that there is a logic of sentiments as well as of reason...' (1965a:86). Lévy-Bruhl seeks to show the structure of and the ways in which primitive magic and religion '...are evidence of a distinctive mentality common to all societies of a certain type' (1965a:86) rather than try to explain their cause or origin. Evans-Pritchard asserts that his analysis is free of the 'just-so' quality of which he accuses Durkheim. This only adds to the paradoxical relationship, between Evans-Pritchard and Durkheim on an intellectual level.

CHALLENGES

The principal challenge in this thesis is to explore the organic development of Evans-Pritchard's theoretical perspective. He is certainly not a 'perfect' thinker and would have scorned such an attribution. Despite some of the implications in his writing, particularly his later works, he did not attempt to suggest that there could be an hermetic seal around sociological statements regarding religion. Evans-Pritchard's highly developed reticence towards some types of causal explanations supports this view. His disdain for what he calls 'just-so stories' is evident in *Theories of Primitive Religion* (1965a:86).

An example of the way in which Evans-Pritchard approaches the processes of explanation is found in his critique of Lévy-Bruhl. The latter is said to be wrong for supposing '...that there is necessarily a contradiction between an objective causal explanation and a mystical one' (1965a:89). Evans-Pritchard argues that the two types of explanation supplement one another, and are not exclusive of each other (1965:89). The example of a man killed by a buffalo is examined, since it illustrates the supposed contradiction of the attribution of the actual cause of death, whether through witchcraft, or the action of the buffalo. Evans-Pritchard states that Lévy-Bruhl is mistaken in assuming that there is a contradiction involved to which the natives are indifferent. Perfectly aware that the buffalo killed the man, their real interest is discovering how the two independent chains of events crossed (1965a:89).

The approach adopted by Evans-Pritchard demonstrates his elusiveness, because so far we have been given nothing very substantial to support the fact that Lévy-Bruhl is wrong about the contradiction. Evans-Pritchard's point however, is a logical one. There is another feature of his style evident as he attempts to draw in the reader by opening the next stage of the discussion with the phrase '...You will agree that there is no contradiction here ...' (1965a:90). It is this structure of argumentation which requires great care bythe reader and makes one aware of its subtlety. Evans-Pritchard makes no formal declaration of his view, but allows it to emerge, implicitly, in mosaic-like form. His argument continues :

> '...but on the contrary the witchcraft explanation supplements that of natural causation, accounting for what we would call the element of chance' (1965a:90).

Evans-Pritchard does not present an explanation as such, but diverts the line of argument without changing it substantially, and so, in effect, retains the contradiction. The question still remains of how the witchcraft explanation supplements that of natural causation, especially when they are of such different cognitive orders. A distinctive approach emerges when Evans-Pritchard argues that the witchcraft cause of the accident is emphasised '...because, of the two causes, only the mystical one permits intervention, vengeance on a witch' (1965a:90). This same mixture of mystical and experiential knowledge applies to other basic human events.

> 'The objective properties of things and natural causation of events may be known, but are not socially emphasised or are denied because they may conflict with some social dogma which is in accordance with some institution, mystical belief being in these circumstances more appropriate than empirical knowledge'" (1965a:90).

In rebutting Lévy-Bruhl's position, Evans-Pritchard employs terms, e.g. 'mystical', which only a few pages earlier he criticised because of their possible misleading consequences (1965a:83). Even though he accepts Lévy-Bruhl's assertion that he employed the term '..."in the strictly defined sense"' (1965a:83),where 'mystical' refers to '..."the belief in forces, in influences, and in actions imperceptible to the senses, though none the less real"' (1965a:83). Evans-Pritchard quotes directly from Lévy-Bruhl's *How Natives Think* (E.T.1926, first published in French in 1912) here. He goes on to summarise Lévy-Bruhl's theory further and points out the powerful link between primitive people's collective representation and these imperceptible forces.

Conscious thought is in terms of mystical conceptualisation. A distinction is drawn between 'seeing' an object, and the actual 'perception' of it, since '...the mystical idea of the object comes between him (primitive man) and the object and transforms its purely objective properties' (1965a:83). Evans-Pritchard also notes the contrast between the use of collective representations by educated Europeans who have an objective perception of the object because the representation accords with that object's objective features, and the mystical, yet equally direct perception of a primitive. He suggests that '...for most people both alike are fiduciary' (1965a:83).

There is reasonably clear evidence within this brief example of a point that John Barnes makes in his Memoir of Evans-Pritchard, when he comments on a remark of Firth's that Evans-Pritchard '...was "a great polariser", sharpening points of disagreement with his colleagues, but it should be added that he shifted sometimes from one pole to another' (1987:461). In this instance Evans-Pritchard argues that

> '...a social representation is not acceptable if it conflicts with individual experience, unless the conflict can be accounted for in terms of the representation itself or of some other representation, the explanation being, however, acknowledgement of the conflict' (1965a:90).

.Evans-Pritchard thus uses Lévy-Bruhl's terms to present a rather different, if not opposed, view. The question facing anthropology, suggests Evans-Pritchard, is not a simple confrontation of primitive and·civilised mental perspectives, but that these patterns of thought exist in all societies. Both perspectives are faced with ...'a problem of levels of thought and experience' (1965a:91). Even so, part of Lévy-Bruhl's basic problem, the nature of the difference that exists between such mentalities, remains.

All of the preceding discussion illustrates an argument presented by Geertz (*Works and Lives,* 1988) where he explores aspects of Evans-Pritchard's work to demonstrate some of the characteristic features of the "British 'School'" of social anthropology (1988:59). Geertz uses Evans-Pritchard's rather terse account of his war-time exploits in the Akobo River area of the Sudan as the raw material for his discussion. He justifies this mode of proceeding in terms which themselves are not far removed from Evans-Pritchard's style. The account of the Akobo-Gila operation '...displays virtually all the characteristics of Evans-Pritchard's way with a discourse in a text in which his substantive and methodological argument as an anthropologist do not, save glancingly, figure' (1988:50).

Geertz's analysis rests on the assumption that Evans-Pritchard was very careful to formulate his argument in such a way as to appear off-hand (1988:57), and to include an implied 'of course' (1988:58). Geertz argues that it is very difficult, as the preceding discussion of Evans-Pritchard's remarks about Lévy-Bruhl testifies, '...to isolate the means by which this in fact quite elaborate text-building strategy is pursued' (1988:58). There is a 'familiar between-us hum' which suggests '...the existence of a very strictly drawn and carefully observed narrative contract between writer and reader' (1988:58). Geertz asserts that this bond of presumptions, social, cultural and literary, which is so strong, pervasive, and deeply institutionalised, is such that '...very small signals can carry very big messages' (1988:58). The same is true for the many similar types of 'worlds' which exist in political parties, and military and civilian institutions, as well as in religious groups of all different belief systems. The question of a common pool of language, and to some degree of experience, has considerable bearing on the issue of Evans-Pritchard's Catholicism. This is especially so in regard to his use of Christian theological terminology as part of his analytical framework.

The combination of 'simple subject-predicate-object' sentences with the 'pervasive personal distancing by means of a constant play of the lightest of light irony' (1968:60-61) helps produce this particular literary form. Its confidence and clarity is such that even the stranger succeeds only in bending, not breaking, the accepted categories (1988:61). Geertz calls this mode of writing 'Akobo Realism' and states that

> '...the overriding point of every image, every elegance, every nod, is to demonstrate that nothing, no matter how singular, resists reasoned description' (1988:61).

This style of discourse is evident throughout the texts which are to be examined in this thesis. The method is used in relation to all Evans-Pritchard's intellectual sources, historical, philosophical, anthropological and ethnographic. The people he lived among, and studied, are equally important in their intellectual influence as Durkheim, Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown, and Lévy-Bruhl.

CHRONOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT

The thesis examines initially how close Evans-Pritchard remained to his sources in his early works. For our purposes *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande* (1937a) is of particular significance since it is a classic intellectualist interpretation of witchcraft, but stands in a very different relationship to Durkheim's views than does *Nuer Religion* (1956a). Evans-Pritchard was intellectually close to Malinowski, but, despite a number of functionalist elements in his discussion of Zande witchcraft, he had rejected the latter's approach by the time he came to write the monograph. Radcliffe-Brown's influence was stronger and longer lasting, and Evans-Pritchard patterns his early use of Durkheim very much on that of Radcliffe-Brown. *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica* and *Nuer Religion* signal a move away from Radcliffe-Brown's approach, and, especially in the latter work, a divergence from Durkheim himself. One of the central features of this emerging methodological pattern and dialogue is the way in which Evans-Pritchard uses Durkheim to distinguish himself from Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown.

OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

Chapter Two will focus primarily on the issues raised in *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande*, and will also study the 'Cairo Papers' (1933a, 1934a, 1936c). The chapter will concentrate on discussing the ways in which Evans-Pritchard's academic influences are revealed in his intellectualist treatment of Zande witchcraft, oracles and magic. The points Geertz (1988) made regarding the literary style of Evans-Pritchard's later writings are equally valid of *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic Among the Azande*. The material covers a complex of interrelated dialogues with Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, and Durkheim principally, and to a slightly lesser extent with Hubert and Mauss.

Chapter 3 examines Evans-Pritchard's study of the sociological impact of the Sanusiya Islamic Order on the Bedouin of Cyrenaica. It is a Durkheimian analysis, but one in which Evans-Pritchard presents a different picture of religious beliefs and practices from those depicted in his earlier works. In the context of the thesis, it is his handling of the notion of popular or folk religion in relation to Islam that is significant. Evans-Pritchard takes up the issue of the role of the subjective and of the individual in social

activity several times. In this case it is the way in which individuals respond to Islam as it activates Bedouin society. Individual consciousness '...is overwhelmed by a single sentiment...a common objective' (Hubert & Mauss, 1972:133). The monograph is also of importance because it was published only five years after Evans-Pritchard became a Catholic. We will see that there is great sensitivity towards the Islamic faith, and that the discourse is couched in Durkheimian terms. By this Evans-Pritchard produces a sociological analysis of the relationship of Islam and the events he describes.

The focus of Chapter 4 is the unfolding dialogue, principally with Durkheim, but also with Hubert and Mauss, and, to a much lesser extent, Malinowski. The approach to the Nuer material is laid out very definitely in the preface, in which it is clear that Evans-Pritchard attempts a quite new approach to the study of religious belief and practice. The tone and structure of his argument reflect his intellectual allegiance to Durkheim. At the same time, however, the study is used by Evans-Pritchard to mark his separation from Durkheim in the area of the sociological study of religion. Part of the ground for this divergence appears to be Evans-Pritchard's attitude towards religious beliefs. While it would be foolish to deny this, it would be even more so to claim that this is the only reason. The challenge of the monograph is to unravel the complexities and ambiguities of Evans-Pritchard's use of Durkheim, and the way in which he made his own some of Durkheim's key concepts without any particularly obvious signalling of his intentions.

CHAPTER TWO — WITCHCRAFT, ORACLES AND MAGIC AMONG THE AZANDE

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the early stages of the development of Evans-Pritchard's theoretical perspective regarding religion. I will examine the salient features of his dialogue with several authors, but in particular with Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, Lévy-Bruhl and Durkheim. The work on Azande magic and witchcraft also includes discussion with other authors, such as Hubert and Mauss. Religion, magic and witchcraft are not intended as synonyms here, but magic and witchcraft come under the overall rubric of religion and religious phenomena. They were treated like this by such men as Frazer, Tylor and Robertson-Smith. The magical world-view was understood to be an integral part of a traditional world-view. *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande* was published in 1937, but much of the theoretical position presented in this study was formulated in papers published earlier. I will consider 'Sorcery and Native Opinion' (1931a), and the three Cairo Papers, 'The Intellectualist (English) Interpretation of Magic' (1933a), 'Lévy-Bruhl's Theory of Primitive Mentality' (1934a), and 'Science and Sentiment: An Exposition and Criticism of the Writings of Pareto' (1936c). 'The Morphology and Function of Magic' (1929a) is not discussed, because Evans-Pritchard regarded it as having been 'doctored' by Malinowski. In a letter in response to Myer Fortes' article in *Cambridge Anthropology* (1974b:1(1)) Evans-Pritchard states categorically that he had left his paper on the morphology of magic (1929a) with Malinowski, who made unauthorised alterations '...giving it a twist to his credit...' (1974b:1(2):3). This suggested that the originality in the paper was due to Malinowski (1974b:1(2):3). Evans-Pritchard also acknowledges that he was in debt to Malinowski, and that his paper (The Morphology and Function of Magic) indicated that it was a commentary on Trobriand magic (1974b:3).

The Azande study marks a turning-point in the analysis of religion, especially the need to delineate, but not set in opposition, the domains of magic, morality, and religion. It will be demonstrated in this chapter that Evans-Pritchard distances himself from Malinowski's style of intellectualist understanding of magic and religion. The

process is a subtle one, and is the more so because there are a number of passages which resemble Malinowski's perspective. An example of this occurs when Evans-Pritchard discusses the place witchdoctors have in Zande society. There is no question, it seems, of the Azande not perceiving them as integral members of their society. Evans-Pritchard asserts that '...All their beliefs hang together and were a Zande to give up faith in witch-doctorhood he would have to surrender equally his belief in witchcraft and oracles' (1937a:194).

The basic Durkheimian tone of Evans-Pritchard's analysis is established very early in the discourse. He makes it plain that his object is to study the relations which exist between the practices and beliefs that the Azande have regarding witchcraft, oracles, and magic. Evans-Pritchard's intention is '...to show how they form an ideational system, and to enquire how this system is expressed in social behaviour' (1937a:2). Knowledge of 'bare facts' is insufficient to achieve this end. It is necessary '...to discover uniformities in them and to relate one fact to another' (1937a:4).

The concept of *'social facts'* has been discussed in the introduction, and however clearly Durkheimian the notion is, we find here that Evans-Pritchard establishes something of his own meaning for the term.He does not actually use the term 'social facts' but the import of his statement of the need to relate facts to one another is Durkheimian. This point is exemplified further when he states what he means by 'purposive description', that

> 'Explanations, therefore, will be found embodied in my descriptive account and are not set forth independently of it. My interpretations are contained in the facts themselves, for I have described the facts in such a way that the interpretations emerge as part of the description' (1937a:5).

In this statement, there is also an example of the 'British School' of anthropological writing explored by Geertz, *Works and Lives*, (1988) which was referred to in the introduction. The assertiveness and seeming ease and clarity of statement are a quality which Evans-Pritchard, Malinowski, and Radcliffe-Brown share. Durkheim shares the same strength of expression, but does not always display the same degree of ease of presentation.

The process of abstraction that Evans-Pritchard presents is very much the same type of sociological analysis propounded by Malinowski, Durkheim and Radcliffe-Brown. The differences between them surface in the ways in which this abstraction is achieved and presented. Evans-Pritchard makes it clear that he intends to consider historical and functional aspects of the relationship between the beliefs and rites connected with magic, oracles and witchcraft, and agriculture, hunting, and collecting (1937a:3). The elements of his analytical perspective are re-stated many years later in his paper 'Social Anthropology : Past and Present' (*Man*, September, 1950c). There he argues that there are three levels of abstraction, which, as it were, form an anthropological programme. First, the anthropologist '...seeks to understand the significant overt features of a culture and to translate them into terms of his own culture' (1950c:122). Secondly, he '...seeks by analysis to disclose the latent underlying form of a society or culture' (1950c:122). Thirdly, he '...compares the social structures his analysis has revealed in a wide range of societies' (1950c:122). This latter point is not applicable at the moment, since the study of Azande witchcraft is the beginning of such an experiment.

From the outset of *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic Among the Azande* we are faced with a paradox central to Evans-Pritchard's methodology, by which he disclaims some feature or features of the prevailing anthropological outlook, only to find that aspects of these do emerge in is own analysis. This sort of contradiction contributes to the ambiguity found in his perspective. For example, he states that he has not

> '...introduced current psychological and sociological explanations of mystical notions and ritual behaviour, nor have I attempted to show the bearing of Zande belief and custom on anthropological theory' (1937a:5).

It is important that our reading of Evans-Pritchard take account of the contemporary intellectual environment, and especially the contrast between Malinowski and Durkheim in relation to psychological explanations. One question that is difficult to handle in relation to this, is why it is that Evans-Pritchard takes no obvious account of Malinowski's *Coral Gardens and Their Magic* (1935), and rests most of his case against him on earlier works (e.g. *Crime and Custom in Savage Society*, 1926 and *Magic, Science and Religion* (1948 (1925)). We will see that Evans-Pritchard does in fact consider psychological aspects of witchcraft, oracles and magic for the Zande.

Witchcraft is, for example, perceived by the Azande to be both a physical and an inherited trait. In regard to this belief Evans-Pritchard argues that for a Western, educated person, if one man is proven to be a witch on these grounds, then so would his whole clan be (1937a:24). Evans-Pritchard points out that the Azande see the sense of the argument, but do not accept it because '...it would involve the whole notion of witchcraft in contradiction were they to do so' (1937a:24.). Witchcraft is considered primarily as an individual trait, and the kinship element is not stressed. In Evans-Pritchard's view the

> 'Azande do not perceive the contradiction as we perceive it because they have no theoretical interest in the subject, and those situations in which they express their beliefs in witchcraft do not force the problem upon them ' (1937a:25).

This makes it clear that he values the psychological dimension in anthropological analysis. Evans-Pritchard's understanding stands in marked contrast to that of Frazer and Malinowski, who themselves have distinct perspectives. Evans-Pritchard stresses the very 'rational' approach of the Azande towards witchcraft in which he is interested

> '...only as an agent on definite occasions and in relation to his own interests, and not as a permanent condition of individuals' (1937a:26).

There is another feature of Evans-Pritchard's approach to the psychological aspects of witchcraft, which highlights the intellectualist dimension of his perspective. That is his attitude towards Zande scepticism about witchcraft. He notes his surprise at the extent of sceptical opinion (1937a:183). Evans-Pritchard's explanation reflects Durkheim's style of intellectualism. '...The differences of opinion depend largely upon modes of upbringing, range of social contacts, variations of individual experience, and personality' (1937a:183). At the same time this statement is a good example of an ordering of facts from which a theoretical position emerges. Evans-Pritchard also takes account of the existential situation, particularly the effects of the presence of colonial forces and administration :

> 'In the general cultural disequilibrium due to the social changes consequent on conquests and administration, belief in magic and witchcraft has ceased to function adequately, and witchdoctorhood tends to become more a pastime than a serious profession' (1937a:183).

Thus he sees the function of magic, and faith in it, tempered by scepticism (1937a:185). The statement is also an example of the polished style of prose which

Geertz sees as so typical of Evans-Pritchard, which is limpid and yet elusive at the same time. Geertz describes this as having '...a studied air of unstudiedness...' (1988:59), and the result of this 'dialectical approach to ethnography' '...is that it validates the ethnographer's form of life at the same time as it justifies those of his subjects - and that it does the one by doing the other' (1988:70).By 'dialectical approach' Geertz means the way in which Evans-Pritchard establishes distance between the people studied and the ethnographer, but it is a gap that can be bridged. The subjects of study appear as 'otherwise' and not 'other', and who differ from ourselves, as Europeans, 'only in things that do not really matter' (1988:70).

SORCERY AND NATIVE OPINION

In this paper, published in 1931, Evans-Pritchard discusses Zande attitudes towards sorcery and the impact of these on their general view of life. While the influence of Malinowski, both in terms of his approach to functionalist analysis, in regard to his literary style, is evident, other important intellectual sources are addressed. The two most significant are J.G. Frazer, and Hubert and Mauss. The relevance of the latter to this discussion is that they are part of Durkheim's school of collaborators and students. Elements of ambivalence towards Malinowski's position emerge in this paper. There are also echoes of Radcliffe-Brown. 'Sorcery and Native Opinion', while not a watershed of ideas, is something of a confluence of partially captured streams of thought.

Evans-Pritchard sets out the basic question succinctly :

> 'The problem before us is to analyse native ideas about magic and to find out what types of magic they regard with approbation, and what types they regard with disapprobation; whether their opinions in this respect are clearly defined and held by all members of the community and backed by legal sanctions; and what are the distinguishing attributes by which we can class any type of magic as good or bad (1931a:23).

Malinowski (*Crime and Custom,* 1926:2-3) also complains of the lack of methodical ethnographic studies based on systematic field-studies. He makes his point in regard to primitive 'jurisprudence', much of which functions in relation to sanctions associated with the practice of magic. Part of Evans-Pritchard's view is that the 'native view-point has been little studied' (1931a:23), but he cites only the limitations of Frazer's approach to the subject in support of this. The latter's distinction between 'homeopathic'

and 'contagious' and 'black' and 'white' magic are insufficient basis for a thorough analysis of magic (1931a:23).

In making such a claim about the lack of an organised study of primitive religion Evans-Pritchard appears to ignore Malinowski's stated intention of looking for 'law' and legal forces' with the purpose of trying '...merely to discover and analyse all the rules conceived and acted upon as binding obligation...' (1926:15). The reason for seeking to make such a classification is in order to better understand the process of the observance of the rules of law under 'normal conditions', which when '...it is followed and not deified, is at best partial, conditional, and subject to evasions...' (1926:15). Malinowski argues that fear is not the primary instrument for enforcing the law, but rather '...very complex psychological and social inducements' (1926:15).

Radcliffe-Brown explores the correspondence between Andamese customs and beliefs concerning magic and 'a certain system of social sentiments', and argues '...that there is also correspondence between these sentiments and the manner in which the society is constituted...' (1922:234). He defines sentiments as '...an organised system of emotional tendencies centred about some object' (1922:234,note). The indigenous explanation is also important :

> 'In explaining any given custom it is necessary to take into account the explanation given by the natives themselves '(1922:234-235).

Radcliffe-Brown adds that the Andamese is like a civilised man in seeking to rationalise his behaviour. He argues that the Andamans

> '...being impelled to certain actions by mental disposition of whose origin and real nature he is unaware, he seeks to formulate reasons for his conduct, or even if he does not do so when left to himself, he is compelled to when the enquiring ethnologist attacks him with questions' (1922:235)

The intellectualism displayed here is closer to that of Durkheim rather than that of Tylor and Frazer. Radcliffe-Brown's concern to discover, to elicit meaning, resembles Durkheim's desire to be able to formulate clear ideas. An example of the latter's thought is

> 'Thus when the sociologist undertakes to investigate any order of social facts he must strive to consider them from a view point where they present themselves in isolation from their individual manifestations' (1982:82-83).

Durkheim, in a letter to the Editor of the *American Journal of Sociology* in 1898 which is included by Lukes in his edition of *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1982:252-2), argues strongly regarding individuals as 'active forces' of society. He states that once joined together, they form 'a psychological entity of a new species...' (1982:251). The point which is relevant to this discussion follows

> '"No doubt the elementary properties from which results the social fact is contained in embryo within the minds of individuals". But the social fact only emerges when they have been transformed by association. Association is - **it too** - an active factor which produces special effects ' (1982:251).

Durkheim is quoting from his own work. *Suicide*, and while the comments are not related specifically to magic, the general principle of taking account of the *embryonic aspect of social facts* is an essential part of understanding the resultant association. Evans-Pritchard uses the same idea in his exploration of indigenous patterns of thought and behaviour concerning magical beliefs and practices, as these form a tradition which is passed on from generation to generation.

Early in the discussion Evans-Pritchard draws on Hubert and Mauss's study, *A General Theory of Magic* (E.T. 1972), as support for his argument. His intellectual debt to them is clear, because they too lament the haphazard classification of facts regarding religion, and the lack of scientific terminology, which combine to produce a 'blurred bundle of ideas' (1972:7). There is also a distinct functionalist aspect to their project, since they intend to

> '...pass from observing the mechanism of the rite to the study of the milieu of these rites, since it is only in the milieu, where magical rites occur, that we can find the *raison d'être* of those practices performed by individual magicians (1972:9).

Evans-Pritchard summarises their thesis that magic '...is a social fact and not merely composed of mistaken and illogical processes of individual psychology...' (1931a:23). Hubert and Mauss express their thesis a little differently, and in the difference between the statements we discern something of Evans-Pritchard's own programme. They argue that magic has never forgotten its social origins :

> 'Each of its elements, agents, rites and representation not only perpetuate the memory of this original collective state, but even help in their reproduction in an attenuated form ...The world of magic is full of the expectations of successive generations, their tenacious illusions, their hopes in the form of

magical formulas. Basically it is nothing more than this, but it is this which gives it an objectivity far superior to that which it would have if it were nothing more that a tissue of false individual ideas, an aberrant and primitive science (1972:139).

The historical element in this understanding of magic is important, especially because Evans-Pritchard later develops a particular historical perspective in his anthropological analysis. Hubert and Mauss situate the origins of magic in the notion of magical judgements. These they consider to be '...the cosmos of...ritual, the links in the chain of representations' (1972:124). Human experiences '...occur in order to confirm them and almost never succeed in reflecting them' (1982:124). Both of these ideas are central to Evans-Pritchard's handling of witchcraft and magical beliefs among the Azande.

In Durkheim's view magic lacks the development of a moral community (1915:44). He argues that magic '...does not result in binding together those who adhere to it, nor in uniting them into a group leading a common life' (1915:44). Evans-Pritchard does not accept this aspect of Durkheim's theory, but he does make use of another aspect of his position. Durkheim states that

'...in order to understand these fundamental axioms of magic [e.g. like produces like], they must be replaced in the religious atmosphere in which they arose and which alone enables us to account for them' (1915:362).

He considers that the only way to make sense of faith in magic is that it must be '...a particular case of religious faith in general' (1915:362). Evans-Pritchard does not involve himself with the issue of separating magic and religion, but he does take up the question of faith, and presents magic within the overall framework of religious experience. He shares the view presented by Hubert and Mauss (1972:139) that magic is something collective, but that it also embodies real people's hopes.

Evans-Pritchard states that in contrast to Malinowski's view of magic in which there are no '...clear-cut moral distinctions between the legal and criminal uses of magic' (1931a:24) with the Azande, that there is a clear distinction. He argues further that the Azande themselves distinguish the different types of magic according '...to moral principles which are vital to the whole theory of magic in this community' (1931a:25).

Evans-Pritchard states that the Azande distinguish between *mangu*, witchcraft, and *ngwa*, magic. The grounds for this opposition are twofold. On the one hand, witchcraft is a physiological fact, that is an integral part of the sorcerer's body and requires no other material substance, and no spell or rite. Spells and rituals, however, are needed for the exercise of magic. Secondly, magic is a common daily occurrence, while the actual performance of witchcraft in Evans-Pritchard's view seems highly improbable (1931a:27). The issue before him is that of good and bad magic, and the framework of laws and morality which stands in relationship to these (1931a:28). The Azande distinguish between 'oracular magic' and 'productive', 'protective', and 'destructive' magic which are simply '...aspects or function...' of Zande magic (1931a:29). Good and bad magic are denoted according to whether they circumvent or flout the legal and moral rules of their society (1931a:30) and whether they act in accordance with '...the recognised modes of behaviour which are expected of every citizen' (1931a:30). According to Evans-Pritchard the dignity of magic '...is due to its impersonal and impartial role in the maintenance of justice' (1931a:30). An example of this occurs in the discovery of someone who killed a person with witchcraft or sorcery, and tracking down that person and killing them, in order to leave others in peace (1931a:31). Public approval of magical action depends upon the impartiality of that action. This is important because most Zande magic is '...to some degree or other injurious to the lives or property of others' (1931a:31). Evans-Pritchard explored this more fully in *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande* (1937a).

In contrast to this illegal magic, sorcery does not judge and acts '...blindly against the established principles of justice in this community, that no man should be punished who has not committed an offence against the laws' (1931a:34). This type of magic is generally personal and is used against individuals whom the sorcerer dislikes (1931a:34). The secrecy of its practice highlights its socially pernicious nature (1931a:40).

Turning briefly to Malinowski's discussion in *Crime and Custom in Savage Society* (1926), the text which Evans-Pritchard challenges, it is seen that his aim in looking for 'law' and legal forces is to try

'...merely to discover and analyse all the rules conceived and acted upon as binding obligations, to find out the nature of these binding obligations, and to classify the rules according to the manner in which they are made valid' (1926:5).

The challenge is not made explicitly. Evans-Pritchard appears to accept that division between crime and legal magic made by Malinowski, yet his own material does not support completely the notion that there is so much blurring of the ideas of magic and sorcery on the part of primitive people. Evans-Pritchard's study actually supports some of Malinowski's findings, except that he poses the question explicitly of the *social* value of sorcery (1931a:51). In doing so he challenges Malinowski's view of the cathartic value of magic. For Evans-Pritchard it is a cultural and social phenomenon and not '...a naked product of emotion...' (1931a:52). Malinowski proposes arriving at a '...clear distinction of primitive law from other forms of custom, and at a new, dynamic conception of the social organization of savages' (1926:15-16). Thus far his stated aims are very little removed from Evans-Pritchard's. Malinowski bases his exposition on a notion of law and order for which he employs the conditions of use and concrete facts of ownership regarding canoes as an example of the '...sum of duties, privileges and mutualities which bind the joint owners to the object and to each other' (1926:20-21). Integral to the system of mutualities is the concept of reciprocity, which, in Malinowski's view, is the weapon each community possesses to enforce its rights (1926:23). Reciprocity functions legally in respect to marriage, cooperation regarding fishing teams, food barter, and some of the ceremonial duties of mourning (1926:39).

Malinowski asserts that the real mechanism of law is 'social and psychological constraint' (1926:39), which constitutes 'the actual forces, motives, and reasons which make men keep to their obligations' (1926:39). In this approach there is the suggestion, at least, of an echo of Durkheim's concept of collective representation, against which Malinowski offers a 'caution'. He does so because he regards the 'savage' as being '...neither an extreme "collectivist" nor an intransigent "individualist", but that he is "like man in general a mixture of both"' (1926:56). Law, Malinowski argues, '...represents ...an aspect of their tribal life, one side of their structure, [rather] than any independent, self-contained social arrangements' (1926:59, and 1926:93-94). From this is derived a view of primitive morality which is not as completely distinct as the one articulated by Evans-Pritchard.

Evans-Pritchard argues for example, that sorcery among the Azande is a personal weapon used out of spite in opposition to the community's laws. It is essentially aberrant. Whereas in Malinowski's account sorcery fulfils a role similar to what Evans-Pritchard calls legal magic, which upholds the social structure through the maintenance of justice. Sorcery, for the Trobrianders, (the chiefs especially), has a positive, constructive, role in the culture, whereas for the Azande it plays the opposite part. In both instances magic, in all its modes, is a form of vested interest. Malinowski's statement that

> 'In whatever way it works, it is a way of emphasizing the *status quo*, a method of expressing the traditional inequalities and of counteracting the formation of any new ones' (1926:94)

is parallelled in Evans-Pritchard's argument. Accordingly, sorcery has '...the same subjective role to perform in human culture, and this role among the Azande is similar to that of witchcraft' (1931a:52). The aspects of their argument which are parallel are their efforts to establish the cultural validity of sorcery from the point of view of the indigenous people. Evans-Pritchard and Malinowski's particular emphases, however, are rather different. The issue here is definitional rather than substantive, and it is an example of persons who have very similar views, but who argue these without really acknowledging the common ground that exists between them. Homans makes the same point about the dispute between Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski (in Lessa & Vogt, 1979:62).

The clearest difference in the perspective merges over the question of whether the concept, as Malinowski expresses it '..."justice" in our sense' (1926:94), is applicable to indigenous law. Malinowski argues that it is 'hardly' so, because of the ambiguity of native attitudes to quasi-legal and quasi-criminal applications of sorcery (1926:94). For example, he presents the fulfilment of obligations to trading partners in terms of enlightened self-interest and obedience to personal social ambitions and sentiments (1926:30). Malinowski re-states this view later in his argument when he asserts that the real mechanism of law is social and psychological constraint (1926:37). Sorcery is then a conservative force serving vested interest, and is both a method of administering justice, and a form of criminal practice, and as such emphasises the *status quo* (1926:97). Evans-Pritchard ,meanwhile, takes the view that '...All magic with destructive functions can only receive the moral and legal sanction of the community if it

acts regularly and impartially' (1931a:34). The suggestion here is that because there is some measure of what Europeans might call equity present in Zande practice of law, it may therefore be understood to proceed with similar principles. Evans-Pritchard and Malinowski are not actually opposed here either, but Evans-Pritchard does imply a difference. They are making the same basic points : (a) sorcery provides a complex context for reciprocity and sanctions; (b) it is a means of acquiring power; and (c) it is a social and cultural feature that is effective because it adheres to the logic of the particular world-view involved.

From another point of view a concurrence of interest between Evans-Pritchard and Malinowski is found. Both of them state quite strongly that the indigenous practice of justice needs to be considered without applying European moral or legal principles in too simple a fashion. Malinowski argues that

> 'The rash, haphazard, unscientific application of our morals, laws, and customs to native societies, and the destruction of native law, quasi-legal machinery and instruments of power leads only to anarchy and moral atrophy and in the long run to the extinction of culture and race' (1926:93).

Evans-Pritchard comments that Europeans are generally ignorant about native attitudes towards the practice of magic :

> '...in no other sphere of native life is ignorance more likely to lead to infliction of injustice and the destruction of good institutions...[and]...we may well leave the natives to decide between good and evil, morality and immorality, right and wrong, crime and law' (1931a:53).

With this rational treatment Evans-Pritchard counters the view that magic is the native's method of overcoming 'irremovable misfortunes' and paralysing helplessness (1931a:53). Evans-Pritchard has produced an account of sorcery which challenges, for example, Bergson's assumption that magic functions to calm temporarily

> '...the uneasiness of an intelligence whose form exceeds its content, which is vaguely aware of its ignorance and realizes the danger of it, which divines, outside the very small circle in which action is sure of its effect, ...a vast area of the unpredictable such as may well discourage action' (*The Two Sources of Morality and Religion,* 1935:161).

At the same time Evans-Pritchard's exposition of Zande sorcery bears out the theoretical position adopted by Hubert and Mauss in which they argue :

> 'In magic and religion the individual does not reason, or if he does his reasoning is unconscious. Just as he has no need to reflect on the structure

of his rite in order to practise it or to understand the nature of his prayers and sacrifices, so he has no need to worry about the whys and wherefores of the properties he employs, caring very little to justify in a rational manner the choice and use of his materials' (1972:75).

The process of sorcery (and magic) within Zande culture is fundamentally subjective, as Evans-Pritchard states:

'It is likely that much Zande sorcery is a creation of the imagination produced by a realization of the spite, envy, and ill-wishing of others. But even if this is the case it has a role in culture to perform, and to make its role more useful it is not a naked product of emotion but is clothed with the robes of culture, with rites and spells, with medicines and traditions.At least it is an elaborate fact of human imagination which is transmitted from one generation to another as surely as more objective products of tradition' (1931a:52).

Evans-Pritchard states that Zande sorcery does exist, and recognises that envy and anger are its emotional staring-point and energy, so that '...we may presume that its function is cathartic' (1931a:52). At the same time this admission places Evans-Pritchard very close to Malinowski's position. Evans-Pritchard concludes with an ambivalent statement : '...But whether sorcery is an objective reality or a fact of imagination it had the same subjective role to perform in human culture...' (1931a:52). The ambivalence arises because to remain true to his Durkheimian approach, Evans-Pritchard has to maintain that he is dealing with social facts, objective realities. At the same time the 'content' of the social fact (sorcery) is subjective experience. The same point is made in more general terms by Hubert and Mauss who argue that in his mind the individual '...has only the vaguest idea of a possible action, for which tradition furnishes him with a ready made means, yet he has an extraordinarily precise idea of the end he wishes to achieve' (1972:75). Or, as Evans-Pritchard expresses it, the person who can successfully combat the evils of sorcery can enjoy peace and fortune (1931a:53). The achievement sought is happiness, a sense of well-being, of knowing and being comfortable with oneself and the world, at least the part one is familiar with. To that extent magic is clarity itself, but its means are far from being so. Its haphazardness of means is at odds with its clarity of purpose. In these ambivalences and seeming confusion of categories, and in Evans-Pritchard's handling of them, we begin to sense an undertow pulling against the formal and scientific nicety of the 'clear and distinct ideas'. The empirical evidence of the Azande experience at least poses this question. Evans-Pritchard seems to be, however diffidently, suggesting this by his return to centering the conclusion of his analysis on the subjective role of magic and sorcery in Zande culture.

Hubert and Mauss argue that 'the idea of the sacred is a social idea...' because it is '...a product of collective activities...' (1972:8-9). Magical practices are social facts in the same way that religious rites are, even though they do not appear to be so (1972:9). Their a priori approach also included the idea of approaching the study of magic in terms of 'the ensemble of magic' (1972:9), which they assumed to be the 'immediate milieu of magical rites'. The issue then was to analyse the way in which individuals could affect social phenomena (1972:9). Evans-Pritchard tackles the Azande material here in very similar terms, and in an even more detailed fashion in *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande.* The foregoing also implicitly presents in a Durkheimian intellectualist mode, the 'idea of sympathy being the presiding principle in the formation of ideas concerning properties', as Hubert and Mauss argue. Sympathy

> '...is the notion of property and the social conventions behind the objects which allow the collective spirit to link together the sympathetic bonds concerned' (1972:78).

The concept of the 'transference of sentiments' is allied to this since the belief in and the practice of magic assumes that a sentiment informs the whole of activity especially directing and ordering the association of ideas (1972:66). Hubert and Mauss argue that such an association is '...accompanied by transfer of sentiments, by phenomena of abstraction and exclusive attention, and by the direction of intent', phenomena which take place in the 'consciousness, but which are objectivized in the same way as the association of ideas themselves' (1972:68). The outcome of the process is a tradition of magic which is deemed inalienable since without it 'there can be no belief nor rites' (1972:70). A central part of this tradition is the continuing juxtaposition of entities opposed to each other, as for example, good and bad fortune. The opposition is overcome by one opposite drawing out the other '...by evoking its equivalent' (1972:9). This process brings out the notion of the 'ensemble of magic' assumed at the beginning of this argument (1972:9), and with it comes the idea of 'formal convention', which is another way of speaking about tradition. It is a tradition of confusion, however, and one in which the '...diverse elements of magic are erected and qualified by the collectivity' (1972:88). Very much in harmony with this perspective Evans-Pritchard concludes his analysis : 'Misfortunes do not come by chance; they are initiated by man through witchcraft and sorcery' (1931a:53).

Evans-Pritchard's discussion reveals the central ambiguities regarding magic and that it is through these that it functions and helps to uphold and develop the moral values of Zande society. Ambiguity is a central feature of human life in general. Ambiguity about magic can be taken as a model of this broader reality. The treatment of the concept 'social fact' is more realistic than Malinowski's almost romantic portrayal of the same question. Nonetheless we are faced with a picture of confusion since each of the theorists discussed so far works from a similar basic intellectual outlook and basic data. The imaginative relationship of the various aspects of human experience found in magical practices provides a cultural solidity. It is this which enables the Azande to maintain a rational grasp of that experience. Evans-Pritchard's acknowledgement of the 'fact of human imagination' (1931a:52) reflects Hubert and Mauss's analysis where they argue

> 'And just as words have only a distant relationship, or none at all, with the things they describe, between a magical sign and the object signified we have very close but very unreal relations - of number, sex or image, qualities which in general are quite imaginary, but imagined by society as a whole (1972:79).

Through this method of exploring Zande magic and sorcery Evans-Pritchard effects a sociological analysis of that material, but in Durkheimian rather than in Malinowskian terms. As we have seen, however, the break from Malinowski's theoretical standpoint is not a clean one, for many elements of this view remain in Evans-Pritchard's perspective.

The 'Cairo' Papers

As I hope to show, these provide a clearer understanding of the theoretical paradigm employed by Evans-Pritchard in his exploration of magic and religion in *Witchcraft, Oracles ,and Magic Amongst the Azande* (1937a) than does the book itself. Evans-Pritchard states there that 'explanations will be found embodied in my descriptive account and are not set forth independently of it' (1937a:5). He presents a clearer view in these papers of the manner in which he is to 'describe the facts in such a way that the interpretations emerge as part of the description' (1937a:5)). The principal focus in the discussion will be on Evans-Pritchard's conclusions, since these reveal much of his methodological perspective.

'The Intellectualist (English) Interpretation of Magic'

Evans-Pritchard states that to bring clarity to the discussion of magic the problems involved must be kept distinct (1933a:307). Frazer's view of magical practice that like produces like, and that contiguous things remain in contact even when their contiguity has become an image in the memory is regarded by Evans-Pritchard as misleading (1933a:306). Evans-Pritchard focuses his attention on the difficulties raised by the expressions 'implicitly believed' and 'tacitly assumed' used by Frazer regarding primitive beliefs in magic. 'For the same principles which the magician applies in the practice of his art are implicitly believed by him to regulate the operation of inanimate nature; in other words he tacitly assumes that the Laws of Similarity and Contact are of universal application and are not limited to human actions' (*The Golden Bough*, 1922:11). Beliefs and assumptions are judgements, he argues, '...they are conscious processes in which the middle term between two associated images is known to the thinker' (1933a:306). Evans-Pritchard argues against Frazer's assertion that primitive magicians know only the practical side of magic and that they never reflect on the abstract principles involved -

> '...At the same time it is to be borne in mind that the primitive magician knows magic only on its practical side; he never analyses the mental processes on which his action is based, never reflects on the abstract principles involved in his actions' (1922:11).

The approach to the process of abstraction, and the relationship of objects, colour and other sensory perceptions, that are based on 'implicit belief' and 'tacit assumption' creates, for Evans-Pritchard, a 'terminological haze'. The situation is made more difficult because of the '...hopeless jumble of psychological and sociological problems in which psychological concepts are used where they are quite irrelevant' (1933a:306).

The point that Evans-Pritchard makes about the psychological aspect of the problem is helpful. He argues that

> 'Sensations and abstractions and simple comparison of abstractions are psychological processes common to all mankind and in a sociological study of magic they do not concern us as psychological facts' (1933a:307).

He expands this view, stating that the problem '...is related to social value or social indication which is given to objects and qualities' (1933a:307).

Value may be considered in two ways, empirically and mystically. The first way indicates qualities attributed to an object of which it is in actual possession. 'For example, a stone is considered to be hard and is therefore used as a tool' (1933a:307). Secondly, qualities are attributed which the object does not possess, and that are beyond sensory perception. "For example, a stone may be used in magical rites or be considered the dwelling place of a spirit (1933a:307). In commenting on the example of gold being used in the treatment of jaundice, Evans-Pritchard argues that the perception of similar colouring in gold and jaundice is a psychological fact requiring a psychological explanation (1933a:307). He asserts further that the '...embodiment of this perception in a social technique is a sociological fact and requires a sociological explanation' (1933a:307). Evans-Pritchard stresses the need to focus on explaining the social qualities with which people invest the object (1933a:307).

The distinction of the concept of 'value' into an empirical and a mystical view of reality parallels that which is made between the morality of magic, and the moral basis of magic. The morality of magic provides the empirical question, and the moral basis the theoretical aspect. We have to be careful, however, not to identify the concept of mystical with that of theoretical. One problem which faces us here is Evans-Pritchard's use of the term 'social value'. His employment of it indicates the degree to which Radcliffe-Brown's theoretical position had influenced his own. The other problem concerning the term 'mystical' will be examined later during the discussion of Lévy-Bruhl's theory.

Radcliffe-Brown proposes an exact definition

> 'By the social value of anything I mean the way in which that thing affects or is capable of affecting social life' (1922:264).

Value may be viewed negatively and positively

> '...positive value being possessed by anything that contributes to the well-being of the society, negative value by anything that can adversely affect that well-being' (1922:264).

Radcliffe-Brown also argues that

'...the social value of a thing...is a matter of immediate experience to every member of the society, but the individual does not of necessity consciously and directly realize that value. He is made to realize it indirectly through the belief, impressed upon him by tradition...' (1922:264).

He notes a distinction between 'beliefs and sentiments' which have regular outlets in action and those which 'rarely or never influence conduct' (1922:264) There is a gap between the relationship of the notions of 'belief' and 'tradition', and the fact that individuals are not necessarily conscious or directly aware of the value of things which are taken for granted at the level of experience (e.g. fire). Radcliffe-Brown's explanation, while stressing the social nature of such 'value', fails to provide a more exact explanation of how tradition inspires belief. His use of the term reflects his adaptation of aspects of Durkheim's theoretical perspective.

Durkheim's use of the concept of 'representation', in regard to religion is part of his effort to produce a scientific method for analysing religion and religious experience. Something similar to the notion of social value, seems to underlie the concept of 'representation', in so far as the latter is understood to embody a perception of some aspect of reality. Durkheim asserts that 'religious forces are...human forces, moral forces' (1915:419). An organic understanding of society emerges in both these views. Also there is a very real sense in which both Radcliffe-Brown and Durkheim see tradition, the collective sentiments, as giving direction and discipline to individual consciousness (1915:419). The argument opens with the assumption that '...collective sentiments can become conscious of themselves only by fixing themselves upon external objects...' and that '...they have not been able to take form without adopting some of their characteristics from other things...' (1915:419). In this way they acquire a physicality and consequently consider 'themselves capable of explaining what passes there' (1915:419). This process extends to include the most impersonal and anonymous of forces, which are regarded as 'nothing else than objectified sentiments' (1915:419). Durkheim tries to establish here that this view of religion is the means of seeing its real significance (1915:419). The point of similarity being established here between Radcliffe-Brown and Durkheim is that both propose that in some way the individual is subordinate to the social whole, and in doing so becomes more individualised (Durkheim 1915:423; Radcliffe-Brown 1922:402).

For Durkheim a '...society can neither create itself nor recreate itself without at the same time creating an ideal' (1915:422) and this process closely relates the ideal and the real society. It is the 'ideal of society' (1915:422) that forms the ground which individuals occupy (1915:422). Radcliffe-Brown's assertion that the '...very existence of a human society...necessarily involves the existence of [the] actual experience of a moral force, acting through the society upon the individual, and yet acting within his own consciousness (1922:402) expresses a comparable idea. For Durkheim argues that the 'formation of the ideal world...it is a natural product of social life' (1915:422). Radcliffe-Brown argues that the '...necessary regulation of conduct in a given society depends upon the existence in each individual of an organized system of sentiments' (1922:401). Evans-Pritchard's use of social value seems to incorporate both of these views, especially in the way he presents his distinction between empirical and mystical.

Another aspect of Durkheim's understanding of the cognitive role of 'representation', which also sheds light on Evans-Pritchard's position, is found concerning the relationship between things, and the explanation of how things are in the world. Durkheim asserts that '...a collective sentiment can become conscious of itself only by being fixed upon some material object; but by this very fact, it participates in the nature of this object, and reciprocally, the object participates in its nature' (1915:236). To this he adds that the process of explanation

> '...is to attach things to each other and to establish relations between them which make them appear to us as functions of each other and as vibrating sympathetically according to an internal law founded in their nature' (1915:237).

The point of this type of explanation is to ensure that the mind was not left '...enslaved to visible appearances, but to teach it to dominate them and to connect what the senses separated...' (1915:237). The power of knowing the internal connections between things makes science and philosophy possible (1915:237).

There is another way in which Durkheim's concept may be viewed. Religion may be taken as a way of 'representing' in the sense of expressing social realities, as Lukes suggests (1973:468). In the same place Lukes argues that Durkheim '...seems to have seen this expressive aspect of religion as a by-product of its cognitive role' (1973:469). Durkheim's text recalls, if tenuously, a point examined earlier when

exploring Evans-Pritchard's paper, 'Sorcery and Native Opinion', where he spoke of sorcery as '...an elaborate fact of human imagination' (1931a:52).

The concept of 'imagination' is clearer in Lukes' translation than in Swain's (1915). Lukes' reads

> 'Although, as we have established, religious thought is very far from a system of fiction, the realities to which it corresponds can still only be expressed in a religious form when transfigured by the imagination. Between society as it is objectively and the sacred things which represent it symbolically the distance is considerable. The impressions really experienced by men, which served as the raw material for this construction, had to be interpreted, elaborated and transformed until they became unrecognizable. So the world of religious things is a partially imaginary world, though only in its outward form, which therefore tends itself more readily to the free creations of the mind' (1973:469).

In Swain's translation the crucial line is translated

> '...religious thought is something very different from a system of fiction, still the realities to which it corresponds express themselves religiously only when religion transfigures them '(1915:381).

Imagination possesses considerable potency as an explanatory tool because it gives greater impact to the distinction between empirical and mystical, where the term 'mystical' serves to indicate relationships between object and persons which do not have immediate empirical grounds. Evans-Pritchard gives the example of a stone which '...may be used in magical rites or be considered the dwelling place of a spirit' (1933a:307).

This discussion has been to demonstrate the very definite Durkheimian structure that emerges in Evans-Pritchard's critique of Frazer and Tylor, and, implicitly, of Malinowski. Evans-Pritchard, however, does not dismiss all of their analytical efforts regarding magic (and religion). Tylor's explanation of the logic of magic, which acknowledges it to be a rational, yet mistaken, 'inference from natural phenomena' (1933a:285), is accepted as an intellectualist perception. In this paper, as in the other two 'Cairo' papers and in *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande* Evans-Pritchard himself argues a strongly intellectualist case. The difference in the approaches is not a dispute over the fact that the primitive mentality, in regard to magic and religion, makes primarily subjective and not objective connections between events and things. Neither is

it a dispute over the question of the 'savage' mistaking ideal analogy for a real connection (1933a:283).

Evans-Pritchard concludes his paper using a distinction between the empirical and mystical aspects of social value or social indication (1933a:307). The importance of this is that it allows him to get round the problem caused by the psychological explanation offered by Tylor (and Frazer) for the subjective connections made between events and things. To the extent that these perceptions are embodied in social technique, they can be considered social facts requiring sociological, not psychological, explanations (1933a:307). The relationship between Evans-Pritchard's distinctions of subjective and objective and mystical and empirical is not made clear in this paper. Its importance, however, emerges in his discussion of Lévy-Bruhl, which we will examine shortly.

This paper sees Evans-Pritchard juggling with the difficulties raised by an intellectualist appraisal of the phenomenon of magic.. The subjective-objective distinction enables the magical world-view to be presented as a '...false association of phenomena in which the link is of a subjective, symbolic, and ideal, nature...' (1933a:284). While Evans-Pritchard's position is an intellectualist one, he is convinced (as was Malinowski) that it is a '...psychological absurdity...' that primitive people be considered to have mistaken an '...ideal connection for a real one and [to have] confused subjective with objective experiences...' (1933a:309). Malinowski states in relation to canoe building that '...they [the Trobrianders] understand perfectly well that the wider the span of the outrigger the greater the stability yet the smaller the resistance against strain' (1948:30). Evans-Pritchard introduces the empirical-mystical distinction much later in his argument at the point where he states the Durkheimian character of his analysis.

> '...Sensations and abstractions and simple companions of abstractions are psychological processes common to all mankind and in a sociological study of magic they do not concern us as psychological facts. We are also not concerned with the question why magical associations embody notions of position and resemblance. It is inconceivable that they should not' (1933a:307).

This itself is very close to aspects of Malinowski's approach,

> '...Magic is not only human in its embodiment, but also in its subject matter it refers principally to human activities and states...It is not directed so much to nature as to man's relation to nature and to the human activities which affect it' (1948:75).

The empirical value of something relates to qualities which it really possesses (Evans-Pritchard,1933a:307), and the mystical, to those not really possessed and '...which are not subject to sensory impressions' (1933a:307). In this way the different factors involved, including the psychological may be treated as social facts which require 'sociological explanation' (1933a:307). This position is achieved because, especially regarding mystical value, the perception is embodied in a social technique, and is therefore a social fact which itself may be treated objectively.

Evans-Pritchard argues that Tylor takes the view that

> ...this ideal or subjective association of phenomena is not haphazard but rests on a rational appreciation of the similarities which exist between phenomena, an appreciation which takes the form of analogy or symbolism' (1933a:284).

This is balanced by the existence of associations which are arbitrarily invented to fill gaps in the magical system,which do not possess a rational basis or have been forgotten (1933a:284). Evans-Pritchard's criticism of Tylor stems from the latter's failure to discuss explicitly the difference between magic and science, that is, the difference between a subjective, ideal but false association of phenomena, and an objective and real, association. Explicit distinction of these factors is desirable in Evans-Pritchard's view because it facilitates the study of magic and religion as they are found among primitive peoples in rational and positive terms. It also permits the subjective, imaginative, mystical aspects to be treated as social facts. These then enable a much more objective analysis of traditional religious and magical practices.

Evans-Pritchard recognises nevertheless Tylor's efforts to unravel the 'symbolic principle or ideological logic' of magic, and 'the causes which have prevented its exposure as a fraud' (1933a:286). The most important of these is the plasticity of the primitive notions of success and failure, and the ability to ignore ('hard to appreciate') negative evidence (1933a:286).

The picture which emerges from Evans-Pritchard's discussion is that he is not positing a starkly opposed view in terms of the facts of the problem, but he does elaborate a distinct methodological view which is based on Durkheim's sociological

perspective. This form of differentiation is just as true of Evans-Pritchard's discussion, and use, of Frazer's perspective.

Skorupski (*Symbol and Theory*,1976) sheds useful light on this discussion when he summarises Tylor's answer to the problem of 'why people go on believing the religious and magical doctrines which give point to their rites' (1976:4). First, '...magico-religious rites are often combined with techniques...which effectively bring about the desired results' (1976:5). Secondly, they are also performed to bring about events '...which would have occurred in any case' (1976:5). Thirdly, detectable failures are attributed to improper performance of the rite. Fourthly,

> '...it is not supposed by the traditional thinker that results are fully determined by the rite. They are, rather, a **function of a number of factors** * of which the ritual performance is only one. Other magical forces or spiritual agencies may always intervene' (1976:5).

Skorupski states that these points concern 'blocks to falsifiability' (1976:5). By this he means that '...each one describes a way in which facts and theories lose their potential for coming into direct opposition' (1976:5). The division which he makes of Tylor's four points is applicable to this discussion. The first two refer to 'the traditional believer's attitude to magical and religious beliefs' (1976:5), and the second two concern '...the logical structure of those systems of beliefs themselves' (1976:5). Evans-Pritchard, following Durkheim and Radcliffe-Brown, and, to a much lesser extent, Malinowski, presents both traditional believers' attitudes regarding such beliefs and the logical structure of the belief systems as social facts. Malinowski does not use that term, but there is some degree of concurrence of purpose between himself and Evans-Pritchard regarding the functional aspects of sociological data.

Frazer's appraisal of magic and religion, and the experiences of both, suggest some similarities in approach. Evans-Pritchard argues, however, that Frazer, more so than Tylor, was influenced by the late nineteenth century understanding of evolution. The point which Evans-Pritchard finds helpful for his analytical perspective, is Frazer's distinction between 'Theoretical' and 'Practical' Magic. From a theoretical point of view magic may be

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*   my emphasis

'regarded as a system of natural laws that is, as a statement of the rules which determine the sequence of events throughout the world...' (*The Golden Bough,* 1922, vol.1,p.51).

Practically speaking, it may be

'regarded as a set of precepts which human beings observe in order to encompass their ends...' (1922:51).

To this Frazer adds that at the same time we need to be aware that

the primitive magician knows magic only on its practical side; he never analyses the mental processes on which his practice is based, never reflects on the abstract principle involved in his actions (1922:51).

The basic problem which Evans-Pritchard articulates concerning Frazer's analytical procedure is that the latter fails to examine in full one culture of which there is a detailed history. Frazer also fails, in Evans-Pritchard's view, to define carefully cultural types on 'a consensus of cultural traits' and then demonstrate 'the correlation between these types and modes of thought' (1933a:299). Evans-Pritchard further tackles Frazer's perception that there was a chronological priority of magic 'over religion and empirical knowledge' (1933a:299). Frazer's position rested on the assumption that the Australians possessed the simplest natural culture and that they possessed much magical and little religious behaviour' (1933a:259). This view is claimed to be wrong by Evans-Pritchard because it is based on too narrow a sample. Another point that is taken up by him relates to Frazer's view that magic was psychological and subjective. Evans-Pritchard states that magic '...is a system of ritual techniques and not simple mental associations between phenomena' (1933a:299-300). This view is very close to that of Malinowski :

'...man's selective interest...is ritually expressed and socially conditioned [and these] appear as the natural result of primitive existence,of the savage's spontaneous attitude towards natural objects and of his prevalent occupations' (1926:46).

Despite this criticism, Evans-Pritchard agrees with the assumption '...that magic as a dominant form of social behaviour is restricted to savage and barbarous peoples' (1933a:300). At the same time he states that it does not mean that 'all uncivilized societies are magic-ridden' or that civilised societies are completely free of magic (1933a:300). Evans-Pritchard himself is not entirely free of the evolutionary view of human history. He suggests that were a comparison to be made of societies which lack writing and advanced technology with those which possess them we would discover that '...on the

whole the technique of magic is less prominent a mode of behaviour in the latter than in the former' (1933a:301).

Evans-Pritchard's states that Frazer's analogy between science and magic is futile, because :

> '...he sees both as modes of thinking and not as learnt modes of technical behaviour with concomitant speech forms (1933a:302).

The problem here is that Evans-Pritchard does not say what he means by this, and he fails to indicate how the 'modes of thinking' are acquired, if they are not learnt themselves. He distinguishes the concept of science, which may mean '...an elaborate system of knowledge, the result of experimentation in the hands of specialists...' (1933a:301), or it may be understood as '...any correct knowledge of natural processes and acquaintance with technological methods...' (1933a:301). In both instances the knowledge is something acquired or learnt. The first aspect is the manner in which science is regarded in western society, but the second is not necessarily opposed to a world-view which includes magical knowledge. Evans-Pritchard asserts that :

> '...it is evident that no peoples could possibly have lived in a state of culture sufficient to engage in ritual unless they first had sufficient technological knowledge to master their environment' (1933a:301).

Malinowski states a similar position :

> '...a moment's reflection is sufficient to show that no art or craft however primitive could have been invented or maintained, no organized form of hunting, fishing, tilling, or search for food could be carried out without the careful observation of natural process and a firm belief in its regularity, without the power of reasoning and without confidence in the power of reason...' (1948:17-18).

Malinowski also argues that it is certain that

> '...magic is not born of an abstract conception of universal power, subsequently applied to concrete cases. It has undoubtedly arisen independently in a number of actual situations. Each type of magic, born of its own situation and of the emotional tension thereof, is due to the spontaneous flow of ideas and the spontaneous reaction of man (1948:78).

Malinowski then states that the gap in primitive experiential knowledge induces '...a tension in his organism which drives him to some sort of activity...' and that '...his organism reproduces the acts suggested by the anticipations of hope...' (1948:79). Nevertheless, there is a considerable body of experiential knowledge covering all areas of

human (Trobriand) existence. The difficulty which arises again is to gain a clear picture of how and to what degree Evans-Pritchard saw himself as distinct from Malinowski. He rejects the notion of the 'gap' between empirically acquired knowledge and that derived from magic,which Malinowski places at the centre of his analysis of magic. It is the particular psychological weighting that Malinowski gives to his interpretation that Evans-Pritchard disagrees with most.

Evans-Pritchard acknowledges that the two understandings of 'science' given above, merge, and that there are 'many degrees of knowledge' and that 'the empirical shades into the scientific' (1933a:301). The way in which he presents the differences in understanding, suggests a continuum of the understanding of 'science'.

> '...The difference between scientific knowledge used in the first sense and scientific knowledge used in the second sense is one of degree but it may be generally stated that in the first usage means that you understand that certain things do happen invariably and that the second usage means that you understand how and why they happen' (1933a:301).

He argues that Frazer's use of the term seems to refer to '...the conscious striving after knowledge, the systems of criticism and controls, and the use of logic and experiment...' (1933a:301). This modern understanding of the concept is hardly a suitable analogy for magic. This brings us back to the point of difficulty with Evans-Pritchard's distinction between 'modes of thinking' and 'learnt modes of technical behaviour with concomitant speech forms' (1933a:302). If, as he suggests, that there is a real distinction between these, it is not elaborated. Further, Evans-Pritchard himself uses the term 'ideology of magic', and states that it '...rests upon fundamental laws of thought...' (1933a:304).

Frazer's analogy, and, hence, to a large extent, his analysis, are not therefore helpful in the discussion of magic (1933a:302). In the first place, Evans-Pritchard states that 'the magician is 'impervious to experience, as science understands the term, since he employs no methods of testing or control' (1933a:303). Secondly, the types of comparative study carried out by Frazer were made on 'the grounds of similarity between common phenomena in virtue of a single common quality' (1933a:303).In so doing Frazer neglected qualities that were different. The danger, according to Evans-Pritchard is to assume that these other qualities are also held in common.

This assertion is in line with Evans-Pritchard's Durkheimian perspective, in which a study of social facts is 'defined by their inter-relations'. Should these be abstracted from their social milieu '...it is essential to realize that they are comparable in a limited number of respects and not as complete social facts' (1933a:304). These facts also relate to aspects of social behaviour (1933a:310).

Evans-Pritchard argues in conclusion that there should be unambiguous meanings for such terms as magic and religion for 'students in the same field', and that magic and religion '...are clearly what we define them to be in terms of behaviour' (1933a:311). Evans-Pritchard's intention was to contribute to the removal of the terminological haze which hangs over the whole discussion (1933a:306). Frazer and Malinowski make similar statements. Frazer says, in support of his decision to analyse magic as homeopathic or contagious, that for the primitive magician, as for the '...vast majority of men, logic is implicit, not explicit' (1922:11). Malinowski's states that there is '...an appalling lack of relevant and reliable observations...' (1948:26). A tantalising aspect of Evans-Pritchard's comments is that the issue is largely a substantive one, but with some definitional elements.

The rest of the chapter will attempt to ascertain whether Evans-Pritchard was himself successful in following this 'rule'. As I hope to show in the following chapters his own thinking on what constitutes religion does change. The evolution of his thought was something which emerged gradually from the texts. His Catholicism was a significant part part of this intellectual development.

'Lévy-Bruhl's Theory of Primitive Mentality'

Evans-Pritchard concludes his appraisal of Lévy-Bruhl's theoretical perspective by presenting the elements of that view which he considers useful to the development of anthropological theory :

> 'Perhaps Lévy-Bruhl's most important contribution to sociology is to have shown that ignorance, like knowledge, is often socially determined and that primitive thought is unscientific because it is mystical and not mystical because of an inherent incapacity to reason logically. He demonstrates that the images which are evoked to combine with elementary sensations to

complete perception are evoked by selective interests which in their turn are directed by collective representations towards the mystical qualities of things rather than to their objective qualities ' (1934a:36).

Evans-Pritchard's statement highlights Lévy-Bruhl's Durkheim-like approach, so that terms such as 'mystical', and 'ignorance' are to be understood in a sociological sense. The relationships between 'selective interests' and 'collective representations' form an 'ideological' framework of bonds that are social in origin and have existential value in giving society cohesion and equilibrium (1934a:36). The initial statement seems to indicate a shift in position on Evans-Pritchard's part. In the previous paper (1933a) we saw that he stressed the need for objectivity in the study of magic. Here he argues in Lévy-Bruhl's language that the real informant of individual and group activity is the collective representation. The mystical qualities toward which collective representation directs the images and elementary sensations pertain to the over-arching feelings and ideas about the group, society and its practices. These provide the content in which the objective qualities may be considered in terms that are faithful to the primitive world-view.

Lévy-Bruhl argues in contrast to Tylor that the individual's mental content is to be explained in terms of his society's collective representations, and not in terms of individual psychology (1934a:3). Evans-Pritchard is critical of the 'determinist assumption', on Lévy-Bruhl's part, which results in the latter not attempting to correlate the beliefs described with the social structures of the peoples involved (1934a:3-4). By saying this Evans-Pritchard is being more severe on Lévy-Bruhl than seems just. The latter points out later in his own discussion that it is important not to reduce the mental operations of different peoples to a single type (1926[ET]:28), and that as comparative anatomy and physiology are indispensable to biology, so a 'comparative study of the various types of collective mentality is just as indispensable to anthropology' (1926:29). Evans-Pritchard himself advocates a comparable study when he praises Hubert and Mauss' work on magic as the '...first competent analytical study of magic...' (1931a:23) in which they '...were anxious to show how magic is a social fact and is not merely composed of mistaken and illogical processes of individual psychology' (1931a:23). And in his paper on Tylor and Frazer Evans-Pritchard argues that social facts from different cultural contexts may be compared in '...a limited number of respects...[though]...not as

complete social facts' (1933a:304). His caution stems from his view that social facts are '...defined by their interrelations...' (1933a:304) within the same social milieu.

For him to assert then that Lévy-Bruhl makes a determinist stand is severe in light of the fact that the latter is quite clear that his preliminary study '...remains incomplete [and that] it opens many more questions than it can answer; and it leaves unsolved more than one vast problem which it touches in a superficial way' (1926:29).

Evans-Pritchard (1934a:5) states that according to Lévy-Bruhl the mystical orientation of primitive peoples arises because of the nature of their collective representations, which act to inhibit activities which conflict with those representations. It is on this basis that Lévy-Bruhl postulated his thesis

> '...that there are two distinct types of thought, mystical thought and logical thought, and that of these two types the mystical type is characteristic of primitive societies and the logical type is characteristic of civilized societies' (1934a:6-7).

Despite the fact that Lévy-Bruhl recognises that the mystical mode of thinking, represented especially by the law of participation, is far from absent in civilised societies themselves (1934a:7), Evans-Pritchard is quite critical of his theory. The grounds for this are that Lévy-Bruhl 'makes savage thought far more mystical than it is'; that he makes 'civilized thought far more rational than it is'; and, that 'he treats all savage cultures as though they were uniform and writes of civilised cultures without regard to their historical development' (1934a:8).

In regard to this point Evans-Pritchard argues that most of Lévy-Bruhl's information came from missionary and travel reports, the authors of which 'were dominated by the *représentation collectives* of their own culture...' (1934a:8). The rather generalised use of the comparative method, similar to that for which Evans-Pritchard criticises Frazer, is also noted. Evans-Pritchard asserts that

> 'Social facts are described adequately only in terms of their interrelations with other social facts and in compilations like the works of Frazer and Lévy-Bruhl they are torn from the network of inter-connections and presented in isolation and therefore shorn of much of their meaning' (1934a:9).

Nevertheless Evans-Pritchard does qualify these criticisms and states that in a description of social life 'from a single angle' it is not incumbent upon the writer to ' describe all the social characters of each fact' (1934a:9).

Evans-Pritchard, nevertheless, is highly critical of Lévy-Bruhl's restricting himself to a consideration of facts of a mystical type only (1934a:9) in regard to primitive patterns of thought. Evans-Pritchard states that, contrary to this caricature of primitive life, the evidence shows that people

> '...are predominantly interested in practical economic pursuits...[and] behaviour of a mystical type in the main is restricted to certain situations in social life' (1934a:10).

He supports this argument empirically in *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande* (1937a:10) where he states that while magic has an important place in Zande society, much of life is taken up with practical affairs.

The second point upon which Evans-Pritchard takes issue with Lévy-Bruhl concerns the 'us'-'they' opposition in the latter's discussion. Evans-Pritchard poses two questions. First, whether European peasants are scientifically oriented, and whether the Negro peasant is mystically oriented to such a degree that it is possible to speak of civilised and primitive mentality (1934a:10). Secondly, he argues that it is inadmissable to ignore in such a project as Lévy-Bruhl's, the views of ancient and modern European philosophers, logicians and psychologists on civilised thought (1934a:11), and these as examples of collective representations. Evans-Pritchard has, however, already provided a reasonable justification for such a selective approach, and it is one which is characteristic of his own methodology. We have seen something of this already in his use of Malinowski and Durkheim, especially the former. Evans-Pritchard does not justify a selective focus on mystical facts alone, but he does argue that effective understanding of primitive peoples comes from careful study of many facets of their societies in the form of interrelated abstractions, that is, social facts.

Evans-Pritchard's third criticism is the most relevant to his own programme. Lévy-Bruhl makes insufficient effort to distinguish patterns of thought and their role as functions of institutions (1934a:11). This is highlighted by his failure to consider the question of primitive mentality in an historical context, which should include an

evaluation of the variety of European cultures and their sociological conditions (1934a:12). The question of the historical context of a particular society and culture, as well as the observation of and participation in it, is a central part of Evans-Pritchard's anthropological perspective. Lévy-Bruhl is criticised for producing too uniform an account of primitive thought (1934a:12). Evans-Pritchard argues that if '...patterns of thought are functions of institutions [as Lévy-Bruhl asserts] we might reasonably demand that a classification of institutional types should precede a study of ideational types' (1934a:11-12). Added to this Lévy-Bruhl fails to make any distinction between different modes of European thought at different historical periods (1934a:12). The issue at stake here is the opposition between the historical and the functionalist perspective. But it is the functionalism of Lévy-Bruhl, and especially that of Malinowski, that Evans-Pritchard criticises. He is not advocating an historical perspective in the style of Frazer or Tylor, however, but one which accounts for the functionalist standpoint and uses Durkheim's method of universalising. The abstractions derived from this procedure possess an historical context which gives them greater scope for use in comparative sociological analysis. So while mystical and scientific thought are very distinct, they can be compared in this way 'as normative ideational types in the same society' (1934a:12), or with respect to 'their historical development in relation to one another...traced over a long period of history in a single culture' (1934a:12). This seems to be an implicit facet of his discourse because of his way of drawing us into the story as if it were happening there and then.

According to Evans-Pritchard, five questions arise from Lévy-Bruhl's material. These relate to (a) whether primitive modes of thought are so different from educated European modes so as to require definition; (b) the meaning of 'prelogical'; (c) the meaning of 'collective representation'; (d) the meaning of 'mystical'; and (e) the meaning of 'participations'. The first question is hardly answered at all, except in a rather elusive way, where he cites a variety of authors, some trained observers, all of whom present the primitive manner of thought as being very different to that of educated Europeans. Evans-Pritchard, having criticised Lévy-Bruhl for his ahistorical mode of procedure, appears to accept as a fact that primitive ('mystical') thought is definitely distinct (1934a:14).

The second question reveals that Evans-Pritchard does not understand Lévy-Bruhl to accuse savages of being 'intellectually inferior' (1934a:16). To say that primitive people are 'prelogical' is not to accuse them of being 'alogical' or 'antilogical'.

'Prélogiques, appliqué a la mentalité primîtive, signifie simplement qu'elle n'astreint pas avant tout, comme la notre, a éviter la contradiction' (1934a:18).* Evans-Pritchard provides further explanation of Lévy-Bruhl's terms, and notes that 'logical' indicates 'conforming to the system of logic which regulates modern science', and 'thought' means 'the *social content* of thought which forms part of the cultural heritage which a man acquires from the community into which he is born' (1934a:18)). In a footnote, Evans-Pritchard states that 'It is a great pity...' that Lévy-Bruhl uses the term logical without defining it. He then distinguishes 'logical' in the scientific sense of testing inferences and the interdependence of ideas as well as the validity of the premises, and 'logical' which is concerned not with validity of premises but 'with the coherent structure of thought (1934a:18). It is hard to grasp in which direction Evans-Pritchard is moving without his giving some definitions.. He argued in the preceding paper that primitive man would be in a state of chaos if he were to mistake ideal connections between things for real ones, and to confuse subjective with objective experiences (1933a:309).

Evans-Pritchard introduces the 'mystical - empirical' distinction as a way of incorporating the process of abstraction, as it is represented in primitive thinking, so that is could be treated objectively. He chooses not to refer to Malinowski directly, choosing rather to use J.H. Driberg, for whom he had great respect* as an example of those anthropologists opposed to Lévy-Bruhl's theories. Driberg's comment that savage cultures '"...approach the manifestations of our culture through categories which are not able to cope with them"' (1934a:17, a quotation from J.H. Driberg, *The Savage as He Really Is,* 1929:12-13) could very well be used in reverse to support some of the argument that Evans-Pritchard constructs regarding the problem of too uniform comparative-functionalist approaches to the analysis of primitive societies. Much of his analysis is opposed to Malinowski's summary of Lévy-Bruhl's position that '...primitive man has no sober moods at all, that he is hopelessly and completely immersed in a mystical frame of mind. Incapable of dispassionate and consistent observation, devoid of the power of abstraction...unable to draw any benefit from experience...' (1948:25).

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*   Evans-Pritchard quoting from Lévy-Bruhl's Herbert Spencer Lecture, *La Mentalité Primitive.* 1931.

*   c.f. Barnes,J.A., Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard, *Proceedings of the British Academy,* LXXIII,1987:481-482.

Evans-Pritchard gives himself some methodological room, by distinguishing 'logical' as he does, but he creates an atmosphere of ambiguity in the process. The main reason is that his own use of the term ranges over both senses of the word that he gives here. He also reveals his intellectual bias, when he states how the anthropologist can come to predict answers to his questions.

'One mystical thought follows another in the same way as one scientific idea in our own society engenders another. Beliefs are co-ordinated with other beliefs and with behaviour into an organized system. Hence it happens that when an anthropologist has resided for many months among a savage people he can foresee how they will speak and act in any given situation' (1934a:19).

Intellectualism needs to be understood as it applies to Durkheim's position (1915:225) which was examined in the introduction. In an earlier work he asserts his belief in the Cartesian notion of clear and distinct ideas, '...we have the need to bring things back to definite notions' (1973,E.T.(1900):22). Durkheim acknowledges that Descartes' world-view is archaic and narrow (1973:22), but it is '...important to go beyond it [and]...preserve its principle' (22). For him it is crucial that we

'...must have faith in the power of reason in order to dare submit to its laws this sphere of social facts where the events, by their complexity, seem to escape the formulations of science' (22).

Evans-Pritchard takes a similar stance here. He argues for the need of sociological knowledge and the understanding that it provides. Evans-Pritchard thereby gives ground to his claim:

'For once we have understood wherein lie the interests of a primitive people we can easily guess the direction which their thinking will take, for it represents the same intellectual character as our own thinking' (1934a:19)

It is this type of intellectualism that he eschews in his later writing. Evans-Pritchard thus follows an intellectualist view which focuses on the explanation of the social role of beliefs by their cognitive properties rather than by their function. This is the way of translation for the anthropologist, which is in keeping with his programme of treating the elements of primitive people's lives as social facts, and of assuming, even of the most unscientific modes of thought, (from a European perspective), that there is a reciprocal dependence between their ideas (1934a:19,footnote). There is also evidence here of Evans-Pritchard's manner of capturing a stream of thought, and making it his

own. At the same time, he distances himself from some of the assumptions which inform Lévy-Bruhl's methodological perspective.

The approach taken so far by Evans-Pritchard towards Lévy-Bruhl's theory is emphasised in his commentary on the terms 'prelogical', 'mystique' and 'mystical participation'. One key aspect of Evans-Pritchard's analysis is the distinction between the 'content' of thought and the 'psycho-physical functions of thought' (1934a:20) The first, Evans-Pritchard argues, is 'mainly a social fact', while the other' is an individual physiological process'. Evans-Pritchard then asserts that Lévy-Bruhl

> '...is speaking of patterns of modes of thought which, after eliminating individual variations, are the same among all members of a primitive community and are what we call their beliefs' (1934a:20).

This clearly Durkheimian approach continues in Evans-Pritchard's discussion of what Lévy-Bruhl means by collective representation.

> 'A collective representation is an ideational pattern, which may be associated with emotional states, and which is generally expressed not only by language but also by ritual action' ((1934a:20).

He tells us that Lévy-Bruhl intends it to mean '...a socially determined mode of thought ...' which is '...common to all members of one society or of a social segment' (1934a:20). From what we have seen of his debate with Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, and Durkheim there is something of each of their perspectives expressed here, especially that of Durkheim.

The common ground that Evans-Pritchard seeks is to be able to compare the mystical thought of savages, and the scientific thought of civilised people, in terms of both being socially determined modes of thought (1934a:20). At the same time, he continues to distinguish 'savage' and 'civilised' thought in terms of the social content of that thought (1934a:21). There is, however, a general similarity in the mental processes and the content of thought 'is similarly derived' (1934a:21). The distinction arises because the social content of 'savage' thought is not in accord with reality, or with the objective facts.

When Evans-Pritchard takes up the question of the term 'mystical', he argues his point in two ways. It is not so much the word 'mystical' itself which he queries, but

its ill-defined usage. He states, following Lévy-Bruhl, that collective representations are integral to the savages' perception of reality, and objects can be perceived only through collective representations (1934a:23). Evans-Pritchard opposes Lévy-Bruhl's use of 'mystical' on the grounds that '...once thought is expressed in words it is socialized' (1934a:24). Furthermore, the naming of an object gives it social indication (1934a:24). He states that

> 'A man's interests are the selective agents and these are to a great extent socially determined for it is generally the value attached to an object by all members of a social group that directs the attention of the individual towards it' (1934a:24).

It is therefore '...a mistake to say that savages perceive mystically ...' (1934a:24).

He argues, secondly, that their interest in an object results from its mystical qualities. This type of belief '...translates purely psychological sensations into conscious images' (1934a:25). Evans-Pritchard summarises Lévy-Bruhl's position. He says first :

> '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)' (1934a:25).

And secondly,

> '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' (1934a:25-26).

The first of these comments reflects the influence of Malinowski, (affective choices), Radcliffe-Brown (value, patterns of thought and behaviour), and Durkheim (collective representations). The second makes it clear that Evans-Pritchard is in agreement with Lévy-Bruhl's basic perception. Europeans, it seems, also experience the process of translation of 'purely psychological sensations into conscious images' (1934a:25)., but because their interests are different, so are their collective representations. Both savage and European produce material which can be studied sociologically and objectively.

Evans-Pritchard also distinguishes the term 'mystical participations'. These '...form a network in which the savage lives', the sum total of which constitute his social personality (1934a:26).

'...There is a mystical participation between a man and the land on which he
dwells, between a tribe and its chief, between a man and his totem,
between a man and his kin...' (1934a:26).

The term covers a perception of reality that uses quite distinct terms of reference to that
of a European scientific one, and it is, for its adherents, consistent. This, however, is not
an empirically based perception. Yet because it establishes social linkages it can be the
object of sociological enquiry. On the other hand, Evans-Pritchard asserts that for the
greater part of the savage's '...social contacts and [of] his exploitation of nature [he]
acts and speaks in an empirical manner...' (1934a:27).

Lévy-Bruhl's view that the whole of the social life and nature is 'permeated with
mystical beliefs' is erroneous (1934a:27). The reason for this is the way in which Lévy-
Bruhl reads his evidence, which leads him to present '...a composite and hypothetical
primitive culture...consisting of a selection of customs from many different cultures'
(1934a:27). Evans-Pritchard argues that Lévy-Bruhl compared '...the systematised
ideology of savage cultures with the content of individual minds in Europe' (1934a:28)
rather than '...comparing what savages think with what Europeans think...' (28). In
doing so, Lévy-Bruhl failed to make the necessary investigation of '...the situations in
social life which evoke patterns of mystical thought towards objects which at other times
evoke no such ideas' (1934a:27). Had he done so he would have realised that in taking
the '...formalised doctrines of savage religions as though they were identical with the
actual mental experience of individuals' (1934a:29), he adopted a view that '...is full of
contradictions which do not arise in real life because the bits of belief are evoked in
different situations' (29). Accordingly, Evans-Pritchard considers that the core problem
with Lévy-Bruhl's argument is the latter's assumption that the '...elementary sensations
produced by the sight of an object...'can only be evoked to combine with its mystical
qualities, '...even of these qualities are irrelevant to a particular situation' (29).

Evans-Pritchard argues against this. First, he says that '...It can be shown that
many of the most sacred objects of primitive cultures only become sacred when man
deliberately endows them with mystic powers which they did not possess before' (29-
30). This is consistent with his view that it is the ritual, social context which give virtue
and meaning to sacred objects (1934a:30). Secondly, 'mystical notions about nature are
part of culture and, therefore, have to be acquired by every individual' (30). Thus Evans-

Pritchard concludes that savage '...thought has not the fixed inevitable construction that Lévy-Bruhl gives it' (30). He summarises his position with the statement that

> 'An object may be perceived in different ways according to different affective interests, interests which in their turn are evoked by different situation' (30).

Individual interests thereby have scope within the broader social framework.

Evans-Pritchard's dispute with Lévy-Bruhl stems from the latter's sources of evidence and the use he makes of it but he does empathise with his attempt to provide some clear sociological analytical tools. Evans-Pritchard pushes Lévy-Bruhl's theory beyond the latter's constraints. He argues

> 'Patterns of thought of a mystical kind are never exclusively mystical. They are never fantastic for they are bound by limits imposed by psychological and biological requirements. At the core of mystical thought we find recognition of natural causation and other scientific observations which lie as it were, dormant, known yet socially inhibited because they are irrelevant to the particular situation which evokes the pattern of thought because they contradict it' (1934a:31).

This statement raises further problems in regard to Evans-Pritchard's own methodology, because he invokes ideas very close to those of Frazer and Tylor with respect to the evolution of scientific, logical thought. He also presents a common sense counter to the supposed fantastic aspects of 'mystical', which come within the scope of his view that in anthropology the psychological and biological must be treated as social fact. Nonetheless, Evans-Pritchard's notion of 'individual experience', with which a representation must also be in accord, apart from being collective (1934a:34), is important in this context. On the one hand, Lévy-Bruhl considers that the '...savage reasons incorrectly because he believes in magic (1934a:32). On the other, Evans-Pritchard points out that this 'pattern of thought in which this mystical connection [exists] is socially established' (1934a:33).

Evans-Pritchard asserts '... mystical thought is conditioned by experience ...' which is why there are '...secondary elaborations of doctrine which account for discrepancies ... for mystical thought ... must be intellectually consistent, even if it is not logically consistent' (1934a:34). This is an example of Evans-Pritchard's appropriation of elements of other people's arguments and of the way he shapes them to express his own. This is something he admits to doing in this paper in respect to Lévy-Bruhl

(1934a:35), so that it sometimes becomes a moot point where the reformulation begins and ends. The issue of intellectual consistency as distinct from logical consistency is a central one in Evans-Pritchard's discussion of Zande magic, just as later, in *Nuer Religion* and *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, it is instrumental in his discussion of belief and practices of religion.

'Science and Sentiment'

This paper was presented in 1936 and reprinted in JASO 1974(5)1:11-21. It is an exploration and appraisal of Pareto's *The Mind and Society*, which was published first in Italian in 1916, and in English translations in 1935. Evans-Pritchard's interest focuses on Pareto's ideas regarding the classification of types of thought and interrelationship (1974:1). While Evans-Pritchard recognises Pareto's philosophical ability (1974:1) he is very critical of his methodology, especially for Pareto's failure to address Durkheim, Freud, and Lévy-Bruhl, among many 'savants' (1974:1).

He lists five major propositions contained in Pareto's study. First, there are sentiments ('residues') some of which make for social stability and others for social change ('group persistences' and 'instinct for combinations'). The study of these, argues Evans-Pritchard, their persistence, distribution, and inter-relations, in individuals and groups '...is the whole subject matter of sociology' (1974:2).

Secondly, sentiments may be expressed in behaviour and ideologies ('derivations') which Evans-Pritchard regards as having little social importance. Study of them, however, reveals the sentiments these express or conceal (1974:2).

Thirdly, in any society individuals can be considered as biologically heterogeneous, with some naturally leaders through being superior to the others (1974:2).

Fourthly, Evans-Pritchard says that Pareto claims that the

'...form and durability of society depends on (a) the distribution and mobility of these superior persons in the social hierarchy, and (b) the proportion of individuals in each class who are mainly motivated by sentiments that make for stability...or by sentiments that make for change...' (1974:2).

The fifth proposition that Evans-Pritchard derives from Pareto is the existence of alternating periods of change and stability in society due to variation in numbers of biologically superior persons and in the proportions of those inclined to stability and to change (1974:2).

Evans-Pritchard also notes that Pareto distinguishes various expressions of the concept 'residue', especially those which are 'non-logical' and those which are 'logical', that is, that 'derive from and are controlled by experience' (1974:3). Evans-Pritchard states that Pareto considers that '...logico-experimental thought depends on facts and not the facts on it and its principles are rejected as soon as it is found that they do not square with the facts' (1974:3). On the other hand, the non-logico-experimental theories '...are accepted *a priori* and dictate to experience. They do not depend on facts but the facts depend on them' (1974:3). Should these facts clash with experience, '...arguments are evoked to re-establish the accord' (1974:3).

Evans-Pritchard states that Pareto chose to speak of thought and action '...as logical when they are in accord with reality and are adapted to the end at which they aim and as non-logical when they are not, from the point of view of science, in such accord nor so adapted' (1974:4). He quotes Pareto as saying that

> 'Every social phenomenon may be considered under two aspects : as it is in reality, and as it presents itself to the mind of this or that human being, The first aspect we shall call objective, the second subjective' (1974:4).

Evans-Pritchard summarised a related aspect of Pareto's argument concerning the problem grasping the structure and flow of 'primitive' thought. Thus Pareto

> '...emphasises that an objectively valid belief may not be socially useful or have utility for the individual who holds it. A doctrine which is absurd from the logico-experimental standpoint may be socially beneficial and a scientifically established doctrine may be detrimental to society' (1974:5).

Evans-Pritchard takes up the question of Pareto's meaning and use of his terms, asserting that 'sentiments' and 'residues' refer to 'quite distinct' and not as interchangeable things (1974:11). 'Residue' is that which denotes the common factor in human behaviour, and it '...is the important variable in a complex of real behaviour'

(1974:11.). 'Derivations' are the 'inconstant' factors and are '...the unimportant variable in the complex' (1974:11). Evans-Pritchard then argues that the

> '...residues and derivations are therefore observed facts and the sentiment is a conceptualisation of the facts, i.e. the facts translated into a system of ideas' (1974:11).

This statement is clearly Durkheimian. It is also another example of Evans-Pritchard's capacity for translating the ideas of others, and, in that translation   revealing his own perspective.

The term 'residue' is '...a pure abstraction...', which cannot be observed except in combination with the variable elements in real behaviour but it is observable behaviour none the less' (1974:12). The notion, despite denoting a psychological state, '...is useful because it enables us to relate a great number of facts to one another...' (1974:12). It is important to note that Evans-Pritchard does not criticise Pareto very strongly for his use of these terms, and the constellation of concepts and feelings they appeal to, even though they are drawn directly from Durkheim's *The rules of sociological method* (1983:132).

Accordingly Evans-Pritchard states that Pareto saw a 'functional relationship' existing between 'sentiment', 'behaviour' and 'ideology' (the explanations advanced in support of action) (1974:14), and consequently, that Pareto objected '...to theories that interpret behaviour by reference to the reasons that men give to explain it' (1974:14.). The reason for this is that sentiments remain constant, are 'basic and durable', even though ideologies may react on them. Derivations, however, '...are always dependent on the residue and not it on them' (1974:14). This, according to Evans-Pritchard, results in a 'one-sided functional relationship' (1974:14.).

He then summarises what he finds most useful to his own programmes in Pareto's analysis

> 'If we want to understand human beings therefore we must always get behind their ideas and study their behaviour and once we have understood that sentiments control behaviour it is not difficult for us to understand the actions of men in remote time' because residues change little through the centuries...' (1974:15).

In this text we can discern elements of various influences including Radcliffe-Brown's concern with behaviour, Durkheim's emphasis on the formative authority of the

collective representation, and the historical aspects of Lévy-Bruhl's perspective. For both Durkheim and Lévy-Bruhl traditions are closely involved with the the impact of collective representations. A difficulty arises because Evans-Pritchard speaks on the way persons think of and respond to sentiments having control over behaviour. 'Sentiments' are equivalent to collective representations. The difficulty is that he suggests a determinist role for the representations, and at the start of his discussion he is critical of a similar point in Lévy-Bruhl's argument.

Evans-Pritchard concludes his exploration of Pareto's perspective, acknowledging some of its positive and negative aspects. He finds, first of all, in line with his discussion of Tylor, Frazer and Lévy-Bruhl that Pareto's analysis is useful because it highlights the fact '...that a study of unscientific thought and ritual behaviour cannot be restricted to primitive societies...' (1974:17). This is another example of Evans-Pritchard's own interest in the historical view of sociological phenomena . It is also a further indication of his ability to extract something useful to his enterprise from a view that does not mesh with his own. Evans-Pritchard also considers Pareto's distinction between 'logico-experimental' and 'non-logico-experimental' thought as really helpful in providing clear categories to assist with sociological analysis of human thought and behaviour (1974:17). The classification is not absolute, however, since it is '...always relative to present-day knowledge...', and it '...tells us nothing about the psychological and sociological qualities of the facts under investigation' (1974:17).

This distinction parallels that which Evans-Pritchard reports earlier in his paper. There he discusses Pareto's distinction between objective and subjective in relation to those actions where, on the one hand, the purposes are identical, and, on the other, where objective and subjective purposes are different (1974:3-5). Pareto's explanation of what constitutes logical action (logico-experimental), is very close to what Evans-Pritchard himself accepts as 'objective' or 'empirical'. The non-logical (not illogical) experimental where the purposes are not necessarily identical, resembles the meaning Lévy-Bruhl gives to 'mystical'. In this part of his discussion it is interesting that Evans-Pritchard fails to take up more specifically that part of Pareto's argument where he speaks of the subjective aspect of human knowledge.

> '"We must not be misled by the names we give to the two classes [objective and subjective apprehension of reality]. In reality both are subjective, for all human knowledge is subjective...[and]...It amounts to saying that when a

person makes a classification, he does so according to the knowledge he has'" (1974:5).

Evans-Pritchard criticises Pareto's classification because of its failure to provide information about the psychological and sociological qualities of the facts which are under consideration (1974:17). Yet it is said that Pareto believes that the answer to the problems raised by the confusion of categories and individuals' relative perspectives lies '"in their psychic states expressed in residues'" (1974:6). Evans-Pritchard later argues the validity of the subjective perspective in a rather different way. In *Nuer Religion*, he distinguishes between the collective and personal expressions of religion, and states that in its personal expression we can learn more of what constitutes religion (1956:320). Evans-Pritchard takes a similar position in the early chapters of *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica* (1949) in regard to Bedouin practice of Islam, and in the conclusion of his treatment of Zande magic (1937a).

Evans-Pritchard criticises Pareto because his non-logico-experimental category '...does not tell us about the validity of inferences from propositions, but only about the validity of the propositions themselves' (1974:18). He states that it is '...desirable to distinguish between science and logic' (1974:19) since logical 'reasoning may be unscientific since it is based on invalid premises' (1974:19). The difference between scientific and unscientific lies in the validity of the premises and inferences drawn from them. Evans-Pritchard's argument edges round to the position he came to regarding Lévy-Bruhl.

> 'Logical notions are those in which according to the rules of thought inferences would be true were the premises true, the truth of the premise being irrelevant. Illogical notions are those in which inferences would not be true even were the premises true, the truth of the premises being irrelevant' (1974:19).

The confusion caused by Pareto's use of the terms 'logical' and 'non-logical' in relation to actions (1974:19) is very similar to the problem Evans-Pritchard highlights regarding Lévy-Bruhl's use of the prelogical and mystical. It is worth noting that Lévy-Bruhl acknowledged this flaw in his argument (1952:118-120). Lévy-Bruhl's defence regarding the use of his sources is pertinent both to the terminological problem Evans-Pritchard raises regarding Pareto and to Evans-Pritchard's own style of presentation. Lévy-Bruhl says of his portrayal of primitive mentality that '...it is an image through

which I have wished to bring out strongly a dominant trait, leaving the rest in the shadow' (1952:120).

Evans-Pritchard acknowledges the positive aspect of Pareto's psychological focus :

> 'There are in all individuals certain psychological traits and in any society there are psychological types and these traits and types will manifest themselves in culture regardless of its particular forms' (1974:20).

Evans-Pritchard. however, asserts that Pareto's position is flawed because he considers that 'derivation; and 'residues' (social facts) are psychologically determined (1974:20).

He comments that the issue tackled by Pareto is '...perhaps the basic problem in sociology...' (1974:20)and concedes that Pareto attempted to present a process whereby the variable characteristics of behaviour in different societies could be stripped away (1974:20). Uniformities would become clear and observed behaviour be reduced to abstractions, which then would provide units for comparison (1974:20). Evans-Pritchard does emphasise inclusively his Durkheimian historical perspectives in asking the question

> '...who would deny that in all societies there is a range of simple and uniform modes of behaviour...for how else could we ...so easily understand the speech and behaviour of savages and men of earlier times?' (1974:20).

Evans-Pritchard makes it clear that he sees that 'great similarity' exists between Lévy-Bruhl's collective representations and Pareto's derivations.

> '...The thought of men is organised not so much by the logic of science as by the logic of collective representations or the logic of sentiments, and an action or statement must accord with the representations, or sentiments, rather than with experience' (1974:20)

The influence of Tylor and Frazer is also evident in a modified fashion in the following.

> 'It is only in the technological field that science has gained ground from sentiment in modern societies. Hence our difficulty in understanding much of primitive magic while we readily appreciate most of their other notions since they accord with sentiments we ourselves possess for "Derivations vary, the residue remains"' (1974:20).

Given the obviously slippery nature of the notion of magic, it is hardly surprising that Evans-Pritchard is so critical of other theorists, and very reluctant to offer a defined theoretical framework of his own.

Perhaps this is the reason for his returning to the question of the relation between psychology and culture. Evans-Pritchard argues, that psychological traits and types manifest themselves in a culture '...regardless of its particular forms' (1974:21). The principal reason for this lies with individuals. These he suggests

> '...are not entirely conditioned by culture but only limited by it and always seek to exploit it in their own interests [and as a result]...a moral ideology may be acknowledged by all men but often they twist it till it serves their interests even though it is contradicted in the process and one man quotes as authority for his actions what another quotes as authority for condemning them' (1974:21).

Although the sociological enterprise can work only if it is social facts that are studied, it is evident that society does not function so neatly, and a source of the complexity in its analysis lies in the individual. The patterns of thought, and other uniformities of behaviour are the context in which such individual variations are considered. but we may not assume that they are determined by them. This is the first time that he gives such a developed appraisal of the role of the individual in society, expanding this theme in *Witchcraft Oracles and Magic Among the Azande* (1937a:540).

Evans-Pritchard concludes his appraisal of Pareto and notes two important features of his position. First, reality demands that some factors be examined, and that others be neglected. Evans-Pritchard does not approve of Pareto's psychological focus but he does accept it as an example of tackling abstractions in a systematic fashion (1974:21). Secondly, he accepts that Pareto '... tried to make a functional study of these facts by noting uniformities and interdependencies between them' (1974:21). Pareto's psychological emphasis in treating his data led him to neglect a study of cultural development and cultural variations which alone enable functional relationships to be established (1974:21). In these remarks we can see that Evans-Pritchard holds fast to a Durkheimian inspired position. The functionalism he speaks of is in keeping with Durkheim's intellectualism rather than that of Malinowski or Radcliffe-Brown.

Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande

Evans-Pritchard concludes his discussion in *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande* (1937a) with a nuanced statement about the analytical method he used and findings he came to by means of it. He says that his aim throughout the book has

been to highlight '...the coherence of Zande beliefs when they are considered together and are interpreted in terms of situations and social relationships' (1937a:540). He makes a second important claim regarding his treatment of Zande beliefs in magic which concerns the '...plasticity of beliefs as functions of situations' (1937a:540). These beliefs '...are not indivisible ideational structures but loose associations of notions' (1937a:540). Evans-Pritchard supports this approach on the grounds that when

> '...a writer brings them together [i.e. the associations of notions] in a book and presents them as a conceptual system their insufficiencies and contradictions are at once apparent' (1937a:540).

He asserts the 'English' intellectualist view that magic beliefs are contradictory. At the same time he notes that in '...real life they [magical beliefs] do not function as a whole but in bits' (1937a:540. This allows him to present an argument that is more sympathetic towards a magical world-view than the 'English' intellectualist one.

Evans-Pritchard almost sets up a dialectic between the '...general coherence and interdependence of Zande beliefs in other fields' (1937a:540), and the co-ordination of Zande magic. Magical rites do not form an interrelated system, and there is no nexus between one rite and another' (1937a:540). It appears to be a dialectic because the 'thesis' he works with is Durkheim's theory of collective representations and the role of social facts in that process. The 'antithesis' is represented by the highly individualistic nature of the practice of magic. Evans-Pritchard attempts to bring these contradictory variables under control by treating the '...plasticity of beliefs as functions of situation' (1937a:540), that is, giving them a behavioural context so that they may be treated as social facts. In this manner he avoids an actual dialectic, the reason for which seems to rest on his observation of the fact that no one person has a complete grasp of magical beliefs, so that they function in a piecemeal fashion. 'A man in one situation utilises what in the beliefs are convenient to him and pays no attention to other elements which he might use in different situations' (1937a:540).

Evans-Pritchard takes up this theme in different ways throughout this period of his writing. We have seen, for example, his remarks in his paper on Lévy-Bruhl and Pareto. In the first he argues against Lévy-Bruhl's assertion that '...savages perceive mystically or that their perception is mystical' (1934a:24). Evans-Pritchard states that

> '...A man's interests are the selective agents and these are to a great extent socially determined for it is generally the value attached to an object by all

members of a social group that directs the attention of an individual towards it' (1934a:24).

He goes on to acknowledge the theoretical significance of Lévy-Bruhl's focus on the fact '...that attention is largely determined by collective representations and that is they which control selective interests...' (1934a:25). Yet for all the power implied here of the collective to 'shape', as it were, individual responses, it is individual '...belief which translates purely psychological sensations into conscious images' (1934a:25). Evans-Pritchard cites the example of the West African Bakwiri belief that his or her shadow, is very much part of a person, and not something physically extraneous as it can be for an educated European. Evans-Pritchard presents a view of the individual that is very much in keeping with that of Durkheim, and it reflects the same dilemma which appears in the latter's argument.

Evans-Pritchard's sums up his debate with Lévy-Bruhl, and argues that

'...Attention to phenomena depends upon the affective choice and this selective interest is controlled to a large extent by the values given to phenomena by society and these values are expressed in patterns of thought and behaviour (collective representations)' (1934a:25).

He takes up later the question of mystical participations, which he presents as collective representations, as social facts.

'These participations form a network in which the savage lives. The sum total of his participations are his social personality. There is a mystical participation between a man and the land on which he dwells, between a tribe and a chief, between a man and his totem, between a man and his kin, and so on' (1934a:26).

Evans-Pritchard pursues the flexibility of this view in his exploration of Zande magical beliefs and practices. The tension in his analysis arises from the dynamic relationship between individuals' selected use of collective representations, the overall content of the representations, and the various possibilities for individual expression of these values.

There are also parallels to be found between this aspect of Evans-Pritchard's view and that of Radcliffe-Brown. The latter asserts in a similar fashion the domination of the individual by the social. He says that '...In human society the sentiments in question are not innate but are developed in the individual by the action of the society

upon him' (1922:234). Radcliffe-Brown also argues that it is in a society's ceremonial customs that these sentiments are given appropriate collective expression (1922:234), and that this expression both maintains the intensity of the sentiment in individual's minds and is the means of transmitting the tradition (1922:234). The view expressed is not identical with Evans-Pritchard's, but it is structured in a very similar fashion. Radcliffe-Brown defines sentiments as '...an organised system of emotional tendencies centred about some object' (1922:234, footnote). Evans-Pritchard usually avoids the term 'emotional', but he does speak of 'affective choice'. There is then a marked ambivalence on the part of these writers, on Evans-Pritchard's the more so, concerning the relationship of individual and society.

Evans-Pritchard in his treatment of Pareto's perspective, states that individuals retain freedom of operation within their cultural framework. They exploit it to suit their own interests (1936c:21). Recognition of the 'moral ideology', and individuals' capacity to manipulate it for their own ends reflects the equivocal aspects of Durkheim's position, and illustrates the way in which Evans-Pritchard utilises these in his anthropological investigations.

Evans-Pritchard establishes therefore that it is not possible to argue effectively that there is an absolute separation between the individual and the social, between the psychological and sociological. In this can be detected an influence of Malinowski who states that one of modern anthropology's achievements (as distinct from those of Tylor, Maine and Frazer), is that magic and religion are recognised to be '...a special mode of behaviour, a pragmatic attitude built up of reason, feeling, and will alike' (1948b:24). Magic and religion, Malinowski continues

> '...is a mode of action as well as a system of belief, and a sociological phenomenon as well as a personal experience. But with all this the exact relation between the social and the individual contributions is not clear...Nor is it clear what are the respective shares of emotion and reason' (1948:24-25).

These passages indicate, despite the opposition that Evans-Pritchard shows towards Malinowski, that basic issues have common recognition.

Another similarity exists between Evans-Pritchard and Malinowski's approaches. Together with other writer's such as Hubert and Mauss, and Tylor, both

were concerned about the problems associated with terminology and appropriate methodology, Malinowski states that his historical survey reveals a bewildering range of views, a '...chaos of opinion, and...a...jumble of phenomena' (1948:36). He also argues

> 'Let us remember that in primitive conditions tradition is of supreme value for the community and nothing matters as much as the conformity and conservation of its members. Order and civilisation can be maintained only by strict adhesion to the lore and knowledge received from previous generations' (1948:39).

Evans-Pritchard refers to the 'terminological haze' which he considers to be hanging over anthropological discussion that is due in large part to the '...hopeless jumble of psychological and sociological problems in which psychological concepts are used where they are quite irrelevant' (1933a:306).He reiterates the same point at the beginning of *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande* (1937a:8).

The sociological/psychological conflict is obliquely referred to when he states that he has sought explanation of phenomena from the Azande themselves, and that it was necessary to bring '...into the orbit of a fact all other facts that are closely related to it in thought and action' (1937a:5). To this end he has already stated that he is presenting a purposeful description of the beliefs and practices related to magic, oracles, and witchcraft, and how the relations between beliefs and practices form an ideational system (1937a:4,2). Evans-Pritchard quite clearly distances himself from the interests of friend and mentor C.G. Seligman, who, in his foreword, raises the issue of 'normal' and 'abnormal' happenings (1937a:xviii) in regard to witchcraft and magic. Similarly by treating the Azande as quite rational, Evans-Pritchard does not take up the question of the Azande retaining their '...infantile aggressive instincts through life...' (1937a:xvii).

The structure of Evans-Pritchard's discussion reveals the intricate pattern which influences his own thinking. To complete this chapter I would like to pursue some of the points already raised as they recur in his analysis of Zande magic and witchcraft. One of the problems already referred to, to be faced, is Evans-Pritchard's reticence in defining his terms. He does begin his exploration with a set of definitions, it is true, but such notions as 'bare facts' and 'purposive description' are left to the reader's imagination.

Nevertheless there are some clues. On the one hand, he refers to P.M. Larken's sojourn among and study of the Azande in which details of Zande customs '...are recorded with simplicity and diffidence and constitute a document of special importance since they are free from suspicion of sociological and theological preferences' (1937a:6). An analysis of Larken's work is beyond the scope of this thesis, but we have here two important points in relationship to Evans-Pritchard's methodology and presuppositions. In regard to methodology he suggests that he presents a sociologically undistorted view. Hence the use of such terms as 'bare facts' and 'purposive description', and his care to offer as an 'enquiring mind' a study of the uniformities and relations which exist between the facts. At the same time, he uses many aspects of Durkheim's analytical structure, though without necessarily acknowledging that fact. The reference to Larken is also indicative of the type of intellectualist approach adopted by Evans-Pritchard, because he indicates that his analysis is free of any theological preference. In his later writing, as will be seen, this is not such an easy claim to make.

On the other hand, Evans-Pritchard states that his interest is in exploring how things are rather than why. Azande beliefs and practices are explained through their interdependence, with their explanations embodied in his descriptive account (1937a:5). For Evans-Pritchard's interpretation of facts emerges '...as part of the description' (1937a:5). Purposive description may well be an attempt to break away from too subjective an analysis on the part of the anthropologist, but Evans-Pritchard claims also to focus on Zande thought, and on the use of the differences they make between different types of behaviour, as the basis for his distinctions (1937a:8). For both the Azande and Evans-Pritchard, the claim he made earlier about people selecting according to their particular interests, is pertinent.

Evans-Pritchard addresses the issue of terminology and argues that formal names

> '...are only labels which help us sort out the facts of the same kind from facts which are different, or are in some respects different.If the labels do not prove helpful we can discard them. The facts will be the same without the labels' (1937a:11).

This claim is paralleled by two earlier ones. First, Evans-Pritchard states that '...texts are not sacred...[and the]...evidence recorded in them has no more weight than that recorded

in my own words' (1937a:2). He feels quite free to delete whatever in the native texts '...is not relevant to the situation in which they are used' (1937a:2) by him. Second, he admits that he makes partial abstractions regarding magical activities because he is dealing '...with only some of its relations' (1937a:3). The descriptive process that Evans-Pritchard adopts focuses on presenting the beliefs and practices as an ideational system (1937a:2). He claims not to have '...introduced current psychological and sociological explanations of mystical notions and ritual behaviour...' (1937a:5).

We have seen that this theoretical material is covered very fully in the Cairo Papers. Evans-Pritchard, in one of his typically limpid statements says that

> '...the ethnologist need not search for mystical notions and ritual practices. He will have daily evidence of them in ceremonies, quarrels, legal cases and other social situations. Therefore we shall not be examining strange ideas of minor sociological importance to which Azande themselves pay scant attention: but we shall be examining ideas which, though they do not accord with reality, are of supreme importance, both to Azande and to European residents among them' (1937a:19-20).

In other words Evans-Pritchard is saying that the important sociological facts emerge, and that the anthropologist must be able to make the necessary abstractions from the flow of everyday events, and not be blinded by the elements in the culture which are at variance with Western scientific modes of thought. The statement addresses the positions of Tylor and Frazer, as well as that of Lévy-Bruhl.

Magic and witchcraft, while not constituting the bulk of daily life, are important, and are not, therefore, arcane matters. Evans-Pritchard states quite clearly that common sense talk forms the bulk of conversation, and that without such a common sense basis there would be no empirical action (1937a:20). This view accords very much with that of Malinowski (1948:28-29). Also, contrary to the notions that witchcraft ideation form a primitive science (Frazer, 1922:48), Evans-Pritchard states

> 'There is no elaborate and consistent representation of witchcraft that will account in detail for its workings, nor of nature which expounds its conformity to sequences and functional interrelationships. The Zande actualises these beliefs rather than intellectualises them, and their tenets are expressed in socially controlled behaviour rather than doctrines' (1937a:82-83).

He explores the notion of actualizing rather than intellectualizing belief further in his treatment of Islam (1939) and in *Nuer Religion* (1956).

For the moment Evans-Pritchard's concern is to anchor firmly the view that a successful analysis of Azande beliefs about magic must be based on observable behaviour and indigenous accounts of that behaviour. This statement builds very much on the position established by Lévy-Bruhl. Malinowski argues a similar case in regard to religion when he says that '...it is only possible for the sociologist to establish the function, the sociological *raison d'être* of the act ' (1948:38). Evans-Pritchard does not accept Malinowski's functionalist approach, but the point about observable behaviour as the basis for analysis is the same. Evans-Pritchard states that the actualizing process is what causes the difficulty in '...discussing the subject of witchcraft with Azande, for their ideas are imprisoned in action and cannot be cited to explain and justify action (1937a:33).

At an earlier stage in his argument Evans-Pritchard adopted a different intellectualist view.The one just presented is very much closer to the view of Frazer. Evans-Pritchard also argues that the Zande mind regarding witchcraft is '...logical and enquiring within the framework of its culture and insists on the coherence of its own idiom' (1937a:42). Accordingly, witchcraft can be viewed as a physiological and objective condition. Evans-Pritchard argues that the qualities and beliefs concerning it are mystical (1937a:63). Witchcraft as a concept may be considered as a '...natural philosophy by which the relations between men and unfortunate events are explained ...[and this provides]...a ready and stereotyped means of reacting to such events' (1937a:63). Further to this he states that '...witchcraft beliefs also embrace a system of values which regulate human conduct' (1937a:63).

Evans-Pritchard argues that Zande notions of causality are based on the view that for them witchcraft is all pervading, is everywhere (1937a:63). He states three things in relation to this which resemble Malinowski's general comments about Trobriand attitudes to magic. First, that the concept of the ubiquity of witches '...is an important theme of mental life in which it forms the background of a vast panorama of oracles and magic...'(1933b:63). Secondly,

> '...its influence is plainly stamped on laws and morals, etiquette and religion;
> it is prominent in technology and language; there is no niche or corner of
> Zande culture into which it does not twist itself' (1933b:63).

Thirdly,

> '...if, in fact, any failure or misfortune falls upon anyone at any time and in relation to anyone of the manifold activities it may be due to witchcraft' (1937a:64).

Malinowski argues in a similar vein that

> 'Magic is not only human in its embodiment, but also in its subject matter : it refers principally to human activities and states....It is not directed so much to nature as to man's relation to nature and to the human activities which affect it' (1948:75).

Magic's affects are usually regarded as magical, and not as a product of nature (1948:75). Malinowski also observes that magic

> '...is a primeval possession of man to be known only through tradition and [that it affirms] man's autonomous power of creating desired ends' (1948:76).

Accordingly, magic '...is the one and only specific power, a force unique of its kind, residing exclusively in man... (1948:76), and is not therefore a universal, omnipresent force (1948:76). What is crucial in this comparison is that Evans-Pritchard agrees with Malinowski to the extent that they regard magic as an '...essentially human possession...' (1948:76) which is '...literally and actually enshrined in man and can be handed on only from man to man...' (1948:76). Evans-Pritchard does not express himself with quite the same flamboyance, but does refer to witchcraft as '...an organic and hereditary phenomenon' (1937a:21). Similarly, both Evans-Pritchard and Malinowski make the point that interest in witchcraft is restricted to definite occasions which relate to particular persons' interests. It is not a permanent condition (1937a:76). Malinowski expresses the idea in terms of a 'clear-cut division', between the world experienced on empirical terms, and the domain '...of unaccountable and adverse influences...' (1948:29). Evans-Pritchard maintains this distinction more fully and does not subscribe to Malinowski's view of magic bridging '...over the dangerous gap in every important pursuit or critical situation' (1948:90).

According to Evans-Pritchard witchcraft performs a number of important tasks for the Azande. It provides a classification of misfortunes (1937a:64), is an unremarkable feature of everyday life and it provides an explanation of '...particular conditions in a chain of causation which related an individual to natural happenings in such a way that he

sustained injury' (1937a:67). Witchcraft is not believed to be the sole cause of phenomena, but provides '...the particular and variable conditions of an event...' (1937a:69). Evans-Pritchard argues that witchcraft belief does contradict empirical knowledge of cause and effect, but is used by the Azande to foreshorten a chain of events. In a particular social situation they use witchcraft as a means of selecting a cause (witchcraft itself) '...that is socially relevant...' (1937a:73). Thus it becomes, in the case of death, '...the idealogical pivot around which swings the lengthy social procedure from death to vengeance' (1937a:73). Evans-Pritchard considers that the '... attribution of misfortune to witchcraft does not exclude what we call its real causes but is superimposed on them and gives to social events their moral value' (1937a:73). Witchcraft is both a commodity (knowledge which can be bought), and the '...dynamic relationship of persons to other persons in inauspicious situations' (1937a:213,107). Evans-Pritchard's appraisal of magic is therefore complex, both in terms of the intricacies of magic and witchcraft, and as a result of the different authors with whom he debates the issue. There is a constant tension in his analysis between his efforts to present his findings in Durkheimian terms, and the influence of Malinowski's more subjective oriented explanation. Thus Evans-Pritchard exploits the ambiguity in both of these theoretical frameworks, never abiding entirely by either, nor being as free of them as he implies.

CHAPTER 3 — THE SANUSI OF CYRENAICA

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the way in which Evans-Pritchard treats the concept of religion in *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*. As I hope to show there is a marked development in his thinking, which constitutes a movement away from the more classically intellectualist study he made of Zande magic and religion. This discussion of the way an Islamic religious order, the Sanusiya, made an impact on and helped shape the political fortunes of the Bedouin tribespeople, is presented in Durkheimian tones. It is also a complex analysis, and for very much the same reasons we have examined regarding Evans-Pritchard's style and methodology in the earlier chapters. In particular, care is required not to be drawn in too rapidly to the flow of the narrative, because in this text we have a very striking example of the type of "of course" clarity which Geertz calls 'Akobo Realism'.

The discussion in this chapter will follow the pattern established already, that of examining the dialogue that Evans-Pritchard conducts with his intellectual influences. The person who receives most attention is Durkheim. The reason for the latter is that in *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica,* Evans-Pritchard develops further an historical perspective which is present in a less formed fashion in his earlier works. Barnes states, in his memoir of Evans-Pritchard (1987), that, given the latter's training in history as an undergraduate, it was not surprising that he retains '...a strong sense of the value of historical analysis' (1987:463) in his anthropological work.

The major thrust of this chapter is to examine the way in which Evans-Pritchard uses Durkheim's analytical framework to set forth his understanding of Islam's functioning as a popular religion. An important aspect of this use of Durkheim is the way in which Evans-Pritchard distances himself from some of the former's perspective, while maintaining a Durkheimian expressed position. The other figure in the dialogue of importance is Radcliffe-Brown. Evans-Pritchard separates himself from his particular use of Durkheim's ideas.

One other important point that needs to be remembered is made by Barnes in regard to the changing dominant theoretical orientation in anthropology, from the functionalism of Evans-Pritchard's earlier career to the structuralism of his later years (in the same sense that Durkheim is a structuralist). Barnes states that Evans-Pritchard '...was never a fully committed adherent to any of these positions, though his writings contain passages supportive of all of them' (1987:458).

Another facet of the same issue is commented on by Barnes, and this time in relation to Evans-Pritchard's conversion to Catholicism. Evans-Pritchard himself asserts, in a rather fragmentary account, that it was a very gradual process and not a sudden or dramatic re-direction of his life :

> 'It was a slow maturing ...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' (1973:37).

Barnes sets this event in the context of the overall development of Evans-Pritchard's when he suggests that '...it seems more likely that, just as he (Evans-Pritchard) did not, make a sudden conversion to Catholicism, there was also no sudden conversion to a new goal for anthropology' (1987:462). There is, in this portrayal of events, a lingering touch of the same note of the "of course" to which Geertz directs some of his attention in his analysis of Evans-Pritchard. It is always as if the particular academic culture represented here so much reveres caution, that a note of, or even the suggestion of a note of, precipitous or dramatic action would shake the atmosphere of objective and dispassionate calm. This seems to be one aspect of the British academic school, of the type and era described by Geertz (1988:58-59).

The Sanusi of Cyrenaica is a study of the popular religious impact of Islam on the social life of the Bedouin, through the historical medium of the Sanusiya religious order. In it Evans-Pritchard presents an argument that appears to be very much in tune with that outlined in his paper, 'Social Anthropology : Past and Present' (*Man*, 1950:118-124). There he states 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 process and that it therefore seeks patterns and not scientific laws, and interprets rather than explains (1950c:123).

* [which]

There are many problems touched on here, some of which we have considered already. The statement is not Durkheimian, because he did not subscribe to any of the notions, except that of societies being moral systems. It does reveal the degree to which Evans-Pritchard remained influenced by Durkheim, as well as some of the directions he established for himself. The diachronic setting provides a context for handling the relationship of the historical evidence, and the cultural patterns which focuses the material in a sociological manner (1950c:123). This new direction also indicates Evans-Pritchard's divergence from Radcliffe-Brown's position as it is expressed in *The Andaman Islanders* .

The theoretical stance given to us in 'Social Anthropology : Past and Present' differs from that put forward in Evans-Pritchard's inaugural lecture at Oxford, entitled 'Social Anthropology' (1948b). The latter paper makes similar, but less developed suggestions about the importance of history, which permits the 'study of important problems of social development' of historic peoples of whom it is not possible to make adequate field study (1948b:11). Evans-Pritchard argues

> 'Use of methods of the natural sciences implies that societies must be conceived of as systems analogous to the systems postulated by these sciences, and that the explanation of an institution or custom must be in terms of its function in the maintenance of the whole system of which it forms a part' (1948b:8-9).*

While this is very much closer to Radcliffe-Brown's approach than he was to remain, Evans-Pritchard also asserts that if 'conjectural reconstructions of the past' are to be eschewed, only the concept of a social system provides the basis for making abstraction and building coherent accounts' (1948b:9). The place of history is thereby given a new significance for anthropology, because it can provide factual evidence from which uniformities of thought and behaviour can be abstracted. At the same time, Evans-Pritchard rejects the natural science analogy as a logical model for anthropological research. By way of footnote, it is interesting that Barnes brings to light, from an earlier and briefer paper also entitled 'Social Anthropology' (published in *Blackfriars*, 1946c, xxvii: 409-414), that Evans-Pritchard even then had begun to distance himself from the natural science model approach. There Evans-Pritchard argues that the assumptions about

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* 'Evans-Pritchard used to say that he did this as a courtesy to his predecessors'(personal communication, J.J. Fox,1991).

'laws' are only that, and that '...if sociological laws may have to be regarded as fictions they [still] have heuristic value' (1987:460, quoting 1946c:412). Evans-Pritchard repeats the same idea in the 1948 paper, where he argues that he would 'be content' to view the concepts 'social systems' and 'sociological laws' as heuristic fictions '...justified by the quality of the research to which they led' (1948:9).

Evans-Pritchard and the Study of Religion

Evans-Pritchard states that the social anthropologists study specific fields of human experience, 'language, law, religion, political institutions and economics' (1948:12). The social anthropologist ceases to be

> '...simply the ethnographer describing the life of a particular people and becomes the social anthropologist who seeks to interpret the facts he has observed by relating them to one another within a framework or theory...' (1948:12).

At this point the anthropologist is concerned '...with the same problems as the student of these subjects in the great civilizations of the world' (1948:12). Evans-Pritchard argues that on these grounds there can be no separate discipline which studies people only. He goes on to assert that

> 'It would be pointless to try to interpret the religious cults of primitive peoples except in terms of a general theory of religion' (1948:12).

This same sentiment is expressed in his study of Nuer religion, where he uses a Christian theological framework as an interpretative tool.

From these views two points emerge which are important for an understanding of *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, and, later, of *Nuer Religion*. First, Evans-Pritchard has a basically hermeneutical approach in mind, that is, to interpret the facts. This re-iterates a position he established in his early writings. The manner adopted is consistent with his Durkheimian perspective. Secondly, is his intention of proceeding in terms of a general theory of religion. *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica* does not contain such a theory in any explicit form, and yet aspects of a theory do emerge. True to the rather 'British' character of his style, Evans-Pritchard avoids definitions. This is consistent with his understanding of the place of history in anthropological discourse, which is to help prevent '...rigid

formulations of any kind' (1950c:123). The problem that we face in trying to interpret such statements, and the arguments leading to them, is precisely one of definition.

Evans-Pritchard, for example,criticises those social anthropologists who are '...dominated consciously or unconsciously...by positivist philosophy...', and who

> '...have aimed explicitly or implicitly, and for the most part still aim... at proving that man is an automaton and at discovering the sociological laws in terms of which his actions, ideas and beliefs can be explained and in the light of which they can he planned and controlled' (1950c:123).

The picture he conjures up of the type of anthropologist that he suggests borders on the grotesque. Evans-Pritchard's comments are stringent, and, without some further clarification, are hard to appreciate.

One person he does make reference to is Comte. Lukes also argues,that Comte had a formative, but not enduring, influence on Durkheim, in the area of the 'extension of the scientific to the study of society' (1973:68). He quotes from Durkheim's thesis on Montesquieu

> 'No further progress could be made until it was established that the laws of societies are no different from those governing the rest of nature and that the method by which they are discovered is identical with that of the other sciences. This was Auguste Comte's contribution' (1973:68, quoting from *Montesquieu and Rousseau: Forerunners of Sociology*, 1892 (E.T.1960):63-4)

Durkheim employs a modified positivist-rationalist approach in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1915), and in his review of Lévy-Bruhl's *Les Fonctions mentales dans sociétés inférieures.*

Durkheim states

> 'The explanations of contemporary science are surer if being objective because they are more methodical and because they rest on more vigorously controlled observations, but they do not differ in nature from those which satisfy primitive thought (1915:238 - using Steven Lukes' translation ' (1973:439).

As Lukes argues, Durkheim '...saw clearly that there are criteria of truth and 'objective' explanations as well as principles of logic, which are non-relative and non-context-dependent; and he further saw that these principles of logic are fundamental and universal to all cultures' (1973:440). We have seen in the preceding chapter to what extent Evans-Pritchard himself was guided by these ideas in his treatment of Zande magic. There is

then a clear positivist aspect to Durkheim's understanding of the notion of collective representations, which are social facts, and as such are '...common and communicable, ...they are the means by which "minds communicate"' (1973:440).

Durkheim states, in his review of Lévy-Bruhl's *How Natives Think*, that there is a special value in collective thought, that, as collective, it has been '...enriched by all the experience and all the knowledge accumulated by collectivity throughout the course of time' (1913: in Pickering (ed.) *Durkheim on Religion* (1975:172)). The concept of 'collectivity' and collective representation have their basis in the view of science that Durkheim adapted from that espoused by Comte (1973:68). The positivist influence on Durkheim's thinking is evident as well as the evolutionary aspect of his theoretical perspective.

The point that I have tried to demonstrate so far is, that Evans-Pritchard's remarks about positivism require qualification, especially in the light of the fact that his intellectual development was influenced by the positivist aspects of Durkheim's theoretical structure.

The more fruitful aspect of Durkheim's perspective for Evans-Pritchard is the argument that

> 'For a long time it has been known that the first systems of representations
> with which men have pictured to themselves the world and themselves were
> of religious origin. There is no religion that is not a cosmology at the same
> time that it is a speculation upon divine things' (1915:9).

The cosmological element in Evans-Pritchard's treatment of religion is quite marked, both in regard to *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica* study and *Nuer Religion*. For example, he describes the way in which the Sufis, who seek, within Islam, a very intense bond with God, for which the '...formal acceptance of the tenets of the faith and conscientious performance of their duties ... are insufficient' live and try to establish that bond.(1949a:2). Evans-Pritchard also points out the almost tangible reality of an Islamic Order as '... a way of life ... a *tariqa*, a road, a path, a way' (1949a:3). These suggest a strongly theocratic perception of reality, that God is part of every daily event. From the Bedouin point of view, as Evans-Pritchard presents it, their allegiance to Islam is summed up as '... "we fast and we wage war"' (1949a:63). The importance of *Ramadan*

and *Jihad* (the major Islamic fast and the concept of 'holy war; which is waged in the first instance as the means of personal, interior, purification, and by extension of this cleansing and strengthening, in actual war against unbelievers) is obvious. In *Nuer Religion* Evans-Pritchard's closing argument turns on his application of the concept of a primitive world-view, 'philosophy', to Nuer religious beliefs and their relationship to everyday life (1956:314-315).

Durkheim also argues about cosmology in the context of his discussion of systems of primitive classification. These systems view things in such a way that '...they are not simply arranged by them in the form of isolated groups, but ...in fixed relationships to each other and together form a single whole' (*Primitive Classification*, 1901-2 (E.T.,1963:81). Durkheim further states that such classifications are intended '...above all, to connect ideas, to unify knowledge,...and to constitute a first philosophy of nature' (1963:81). The first logical categories, furthermore, were social ones (1963:82), so that the overall belief system is understood in terms of '...the totality of things ...conceived as a single system...', which is the result of the perception of society' (1963:83). Accordingly, Durkheim expresses the interrelatedness of the groups of ideas and things which, linked by social ties, are themselves social ties , form the complex that is the belief system or cosmology. He also sees in the hierarchy of relationships, which he believes to be natural to this process, a counter view to the positivistic one (1963:84).

There are however, problems with Durkheim's theoretical stance, problems *that* have already been acknowledged. The reason for raising them here is that some of the uncertainties in Evans-Pritchard's perspective result from the manner in which he addresses them. The particular issues treated here are by way of illustration only; they are not intended as a full discussion.

The first point concerns what Lukes regards as Durkheim's overriding 'methodological assumption'. In *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* Durkheim claimed to have found the simplest of cases '...that contained in germ "all the essential elements of religious thought and life"...' (1973:479). Lukes states that the very particularised basis of Durkheim's theory means that he neglected a range of important aspects of religion and religious experience :

'...the role of individuals, especially religious leaders and functionaries, such as prophets, magicians, sorcerers and shamans, and of religious elites; of social and religious conflict and the non-integrative consequences of religion' (1973:479-480).

This criticism is emphasised when Lukes argues that for all the brilliance of Durkheim's theory it is '...altogether too unilateral' and that he was obsessed with '...the vision of society as the unique and all-encompassing *fons et origo* of religion...' (1973:481).

Collective forces are presented to account for the '"...characteristic effects which have at all times been attributed to religious forces"' (1973:507, quoting from Durkheim 'Le Probleme religieux et la dualité de la nature humaine', 1913:64). The collectivity is the result of the grouping together and synthesis of individual forces in and through society (1973:506). From a philosophical point of view Durkheim's approach was also intended to account for the belief in the duality of human nature (1973:507). Lukes argues that Durkheim's intention was to provide a sociological answer to the division between a number of factors : immediate sensation and conceptual thought; egoistic appetites and religious and moral appetites, the latter which are '...expressed in religious thought as that between body and soul, and between profane and sacred' (1973:507). Durkheim himself asserts that man is double 'simply because he exists', and that '...between the two beings that reside within him there is a solution of continuity, the very same which exists between the social and the individual, between the parts and the whole *sui generis* that results from the synthesis of those parts. From this perspective the duality of human becomes intelligible, without it being necessary to reduce it to no more than an appearance, for there really are two sources of life that are different and virtually antagonistic in which we participate simultaneously' (1973:507, quotation from 1913:65).

In his discussion of the Sanusiya Order Evans-Pritchard begins to challenge some of the implications in this part of Durkheim's theory. He continues the debate in *Nuer Religion*. Some of the grounds on which Evans-Pritchard bases his critique are very similar to the objections of Delacroix, as Lukes reports them in his exposition of Durkheim. Two in particular are significant : first,that the duality between intelligence and will in human beings was of psychological, not social origin (1933:508). Secondly, Delacroix considered Durkheim's view to be metaphysical, which made relations between society and the individual unintelligible (1973:508).

Durkheim's response, especially to the second point, was that society '"...is an observable phenomenon just like the individual" and clearly required certain given individual predispositions' (1973:509). Lukes also reports Durkheim's rebuttal of the charge that his use of the concept of collective formation of religious ideas contradicted the view that these consisted of '...the impression of influence and authority that society caused individuals to experience' (1973:509).

Lukes summarises Durkheim's rejoinder

> '...religion was a collective force penetrating individual minds. It was a moral force, a system of ideas and sentiment elaborated by the collectivity and symbolising it. It exercised a stimulating and imperative influence on individuals but was not formed by them' (1973:509).

'Sentiments',considered as social fact, form a fruitful part of Evans-Pritchard's treatment of the impact of the Sanusiya on the Bedouin. The concept is problematic, however, and this emerges in Evans-Pritchard's use of it. Needham makes some points which are pertinent to the discussion. In the introduction to this translation of Durkheim and Mauss, *Primitive Classification* (1901(E.T.:1963)), he states that the premise that social groups are based on sentiment 'rests on a *petitio principii*' (1963:xxiv).

Needham argues two points. First, '...sentiments, intensely though they may accompany aggregation into social groups, are more plausibly the results of such aggregation' (1963:xxiv). Sentiments explain neither how such different systematisations arise from individuals of '...common psychic dispositions' (1963:xxiv), nor how similarly structured societies could have sentimental values so distinct as to '...compose disparate classifications' (1963:xxiv). Secondly, he states that sentiments explain nothing, because no light is shed on the problem regarding societies that are structured differently, but which have '... virtually identical classifications' (1963:xxiv). Nevertheless he acknowledges that '...certain ideas may be the objects of intense emotion...' (1963:xxiv). Evans-Pritchard takes up this aspect of Durkheim's theory in his analysis of religion, concerning an individual's beliefs. He does not consider the issue of the *petitio principii* in Durkheim's position except in so far as he points out the range of attitudes towards the practice of Islam. This includes the mystical and ascetic intensity of the Sufis, the scholarly conservatism of the educated orthodox believer, and

the varying forms of Islam's more popular expressions. In his earlier writing we saw that Evans-Pritchard used 'sentiment' without much qualification.

The concept of 'religion' as it is used in *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*

Evans-Pritchard states his purpose in an assured and typically inclusive manner

'I have, ...described briefly the nature of an Islamic Order and how this particular Order became established and spread. The Sanusiya differs from most other Orders not so much in its teachings and rites as in its political and economic organisation, a development arising from its absorption into the Bedouin tribal structure, but owing much also to opposition from the outside, particularly to the Italo-Sanusi wars' (1949a:iv).

The focus of the discussion is on the 'nature' of an Islamic Order, and, on the interrelationship between that institution and the segmentarily organised Bedouin tribes. Islam is the particular element in this complex picture that plays a considerable part in helping to bring about the political and economic organisation explored by Evans-Pritchard. He not only presents religion as a general phenomenon, but he also explores aspects of the nature of popular religion.The analysis of the relationship is predominantly Durkheimian in structure.

Evans-Pritchard uses the aspects of Durkheim's perspective in which ideas and values are understood to comprise systems of which the social order is the objective expression. They are not mere ideological reflections or superstructures of the social order (1960b:16-17). Evans-Pritchard asserts that it is a misconstruction of Durkheim's teaching not to realise that society dominates individuals, and that it, as a system of ideas, is '"...neither an epiphenomenon of social morphology nor an organ devised to satisfy material needs"' (1960b:17). This argument is based on taking Durkheim's writings 'as a whole'; and Evans-Pritchard attempts to suggest that these ideas reflect Durkheim's mature period. As we have seen, there are passages in *The Rules of Sociological Method* which make the same point. For example, Durkheim speaks of the need for the collective sentiments which form the basis of morality to be malleable, so that the process of transformation in society can take place (1982:101). Evans-Pritchard seems to labour the point unnecessarily. In our earlier discussion we saw that he invariably stresses the processal aspect of ideals and values. The same is also true of Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown, although these diverge greatly in their application of the concepts.

The purpose of reviewing these particular views of Evans-Pritchard is twofold. First of all, the comments appear in something he wrote in 1960, that is, after both *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica* and *Nuer Religion*. As we shall see in the exploration of his perspective of religion in the latter study, he is particularly critical of Durkheim, dismissing his approach as a 'sociologistic metaphysic' (1956:313). Secondly, the statement considered here holds a middle ground. This understanding of Durkheim is one of Evans-Pritchard's most important methodological tools in *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica* and *Nuer Religion*.

The description of Sufism provides a further example of Evans-Pritchard's assured style, and it is the gaps in it that provide the greatest challenge in interpretation. In his portrayal of the relationship between the Sanusiya organisation and the Bedouin tribes, Evans-Pritchard argues that the distribution of lodges '...may be said to have reflected tribal segmentation, mirroring lines of cleavage between tribes and between tribal sections' (1949a:71-72). Indeed, he states that '...the Sanusiya organisation was fractionalised along these fissures' (1949a:72). Tracing Evans-Pritchard's thought in relation to Durkheim and others reflects an analogous process. Evans-Pritchard's theoretical stance emerges along the fissures between aspects of Durkheim and Radcliffe-Brown's perspectives.

There is a need on the part of 'simple people' for personal contact and tenderness in religious practice. Orthodox Islam, Evans-Pritchard states, '...tends to be a cold and formalistic religion... (in which) the gulf between God and man, spanned by the bridge of the Imans among the Shi'ites, is too wide...and its rules and regulations deprive it of warmth and colour' (1949a:1). The cult of the saints, Sufi mysticism, and Darwish ritual provide this warmth and colour. We are also informed that these '...tend to be frowned on by the puritans and Pharisees of Islam and sometimes by its secular rulers' (1949a:2).

The image of Islam gained from this portrayal resembles any major religious institution, and Evans-Pritchard's own Christian (and general British) cultural background emerges in his use, as epithets, of such terms as 'puritan' and 'Pharisee'. In the broadly understood way in which these notions are employed, they do not necessarily

express a specific religious view or prejudice. The terms have become secularised. The texture of Evans-Pritchard's discourse suggests a legalistic narrowness of orthodox Islam which verges on the inhuman, but none of this is actually said. What is achieved is the juxtaposition of different appreciations of the system of ideas and sentiments which comprise Islam. The way in which Evans-Pritchard presents his view, suggests that it is possible that he considers that the different appreciations of Islam, are in fact competing collective representations. He, however, does not state this openly.

Evans-Pritchard's argument is also challenging from the point of view of the opposition that he appears to establish between the 'simple people' and some religious leaders. His description of the nature of what Sufis seek suggests that in the mystical strand of Islam some of the dualities of religious experience are shown to be less absolute than that implied by orthodoxy.

> 'In every religion there will be found people who, like the Sufis, feel that while formal acceptance of its duties are sufficient for righteousness and salvation, they do not satisfy the deeper longings of the soul which seeks always by entire love of God a perfect communion with Him. Human souls are rays of the divine sun imprisoned in the material world of the senses' (1949a:2)..

Complete a statement as this may appear, it makes a number of claims which are left unqualified. The opening phrase suggests that Evans-Pritchard is working with a general theory of religion in mind, but, assured as his words are, we are not given any indication as to which approach he is following. The passage also highlights the conceptual dilemma presented by Durkheim's equivocal treatment of the relationship of the individual's collective, but Evans-Pritchard does not pursue this argument. Implicit in Evans-Pritchard's appraisal is that a purely functional understanding and practise of religion, no matter its structural and ideological orthodoxy, does not satisfy the religious aspirations of many people. At the same time he suggests that the purpose of orthodox representation in a religious belief system is to help integrate the dualistic elements of human nature, both within individuals and the collectivity.

Evans-Pritchard reinforces his argument regarding the relationship of the 'simple people' with the religious orders in general, and the Sanusiya Order in particular. There has always been opposition to the Orders which came principally from the *'Ulama'* (the official exponents of theology and tradition), because they were mistrusted as popular movements, and were often associated with particularist aspirations. They were

perceived as challenges by both religious and secular leaderships. Evans-Pritchard comments that

> 'Opposition from these sources has not lessened - it has probably increased - the popularity of the Orders among the masses, who, rather dumbly but quite rightly, are irritated by governments and meddlers of all kinds' (1949a:3).

The masses are the 'humble' who have 'always sympathised' with the Orders (1949a:3). Durkheim's principle regarding totemic symbols, that they express social unity in a material form and thereby make that unity the more obvious to all, (1915:230-231) is partly called into play here by Evans-Pritchard. Durkheim also argues that without symbols, the 'social sentiments could have only a precarious existence' (1915:231). His argument is based on a certain physical propinquity of the social group, the clan or tribe, which is strong while '...men are together and influence each other reciprocally...' (1915:231). These sentiments exist only '...in the form of recollections after the assembly has ended ...' and these tend to weaken over time (1915:231).

Evans-Pritchard implies an almost physical relationship between the 'humble' and the Orders, but not to the extent that these become totems to the 'masses'. On the other hand, he suggests strongly that the Orders provide a symbolic focus of integrity which is founded on a set of representations or sentiments that denote, for the 'humble', their religious identity, and, in turn, their political identity. The manner of Evans-Pritchard's criticism of the cold formulation of official Islamic clergy, and his espousal of the cause of the 'humble' indicate his own personal predilections regarding religious authority and the practice of religion. Although he makes no references to it, Evans-Pritchard must have been aware of the parallel development of orders within Christianity, and especially that of the Friars (Order of Preachers, Franciscans, Augustinians, and Carmelites) during the mediæval period. These initially filled a similar role in the life of the Church, but became more interwoven into the fuller institution as time passed. Yet most retain some of the ideology and dynamism of their early history.

Evans-Pritchard sets up his arguments, in terms of the dichotomy between the Islamic faith and practice of the '...old learning of the official clergy' (1949a:3), and the more intensely personal and 'brighter' way of the Orders. At one level the opposition is expressed as that obtained between the formal official, theological institutions, and a less formal, freer, no less theological, mystical institution. There are a variety of theologies,

all related in terms of their primary focus on God and his relations with humankind, but there are very many simple, even unformed, articulations of this, and there are the mystical expressions of theological tradition. These often push them beyond the boundaries of what orthodox theologians deem appropriate, but the reason is that formal teachings of themselves do not necessarily place people in contact with God. The mystical traditions are highly poetic, and usually extremely rigorous theologically. The rigour, however, reflects personal experience of God through penetrating orthodoxy's wall of theological nicety. Another, and far more subtle, opposition is suggested, that existing between the mass of believers, whose lives are shaped by many forces in addition to religious ones, and the formal teachings of that religion and the institutions within it that exist to preserve its orthodoxy. Through establishing the dichotomy between the official clergy and secular orders and the Orders and the 'humble', Evans-Pritchard challenges any literal interpretation of Durkheim's perspective. Durkheim is careful to distinguish the moral force which sustains the believer from its symbolic form, but asserts that both have an origin external to the believer. '...The objectivity of its symbol only translates its externalness' (1915:231). Durkheim elaborates the distinction further when he argues '...social life in all its aspects...is made possible only by a vast symbolism' (1915:231). Thus material emblems and figurative representations are 'one form' of this understanding of the phenomena of social life.

> 'Collective sentiments can just as well become incarnate in persons or formulae' (1915:232).

This approach is questioned by Evans-Pritchard (1960b). He comments on the difficulty raised, especially in English, as result of Durkheim's use of the term *des choses*, 'things'. Evans-Pritchard states that the term 'thing' has a general sense, in common thought and speech, of something '"concrete" in contrast to "abstract"' (1960a:18). Yet Durkheim's intention was to emphasise that social facts are '...general phenomena and therefore objective' (1960a:18). Evans-Pritchard is also critical of Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski for their assumption that totemism could be explained...' in terms of utility (1960a:19), whereas Durkheim considers totemic creatures as secondary and of symbolic value (1960a:19). From Evans-Pritchard's analysis of *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica* emerges the use he makes of Durkheim's theory of the immateriality of social facts, collective representations, which themselves are social facts.

Evans-Pritchard includes in this appraisal of Durkheim critical comparison of other theorists, among them Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown. The views of both men have been examined in some detail already, especially that of Malinowski. Radcliffe-Brown is more significant here since Evans-Pritchard made more extensive and positive use of his main ideas. Evans-Pritchard, however, does not refer to Radcliffe-Brown explicitly in *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, but his application of Durkheim's theory reveals the moral and almost spiritual power of social facts. Radcliffe-Brown's utilitarian view of them is too limiting, restricting them to the material level of interpretation. Evans-Pritchard states (1960a:19, footnote 1) that Radcliffe-Brown in his paper 'The Sociological Theory of Totemism' (1929, in 1952b) 'made nonsense' of Durkheim's perspective. He does not give specific grounds for this judgement, but we find that Radcliffe-Brown considers the most important part of Durkheim's theory to be the '...the recognition that the function of the ritual relation of the group to its totem is to express and so to maintain in existence the solidarity of the group' (1952b(1929):128). Radcliffe-Brown earlier asserts that a ritual relation exists '...whenever a society imposes on its members a certain attitude towards an object, which attitude involves some measure of respect expressed in a traditional mode of behaviour with reference to that object' (1952b:123). In his study of the Sanusiya Order Evans-Pritchard does not condemn these views, but shows that they are inadequate methodological tools, because their utilitarian focus restricts their ability to handle the more complex spiritual aspects of the relationship to Islam of the Sanusiya and the Bedouin. Evans-Pritchard's awareness of these factors, and his willingness to address them contribute to ambivalence that is part of his appraisal.

In a later paper, Radcliffe-Brown ('Religion and Society' 1945 (in 1952b)) returns to the topic of religion. He proposes an approach to the difficulties which ensue when studying primitive peoples' religion as systems of beliefs, erroneous and illusory as some may consider them (1952b:153). He argues that we are to deal with 'the social functions of religion', that is, as these contribute to '...the formation and maintenance of a social order' (1952b:154). He is also intent on studying religion from the point of view that its social function '...is independent of its truth or falsity' (1952b:154).Therefore, rather than considering beliefs, the understanding of religion should begin with the ritual actions, which are '...symbolic expressions of sentiments' (1952b:155). In support of this view Radcliffe-Brown invokes Robertson-Smith who saw that the key to the study

of primitive religion lay in considering ritual and practice rather than in seeking for credal formulae (1952b:156). Rites are represented by Radcliffe-Brown as having a '...specific social function when, and to the extent that, they have for their effect to regulate, maintain and transmit from one generation to another sentiments on which the constitution of the society depends' (1952b:157). These views resemble aspects of Durkheim's theory, but Radcliffe-Brown promotes a more physical appraisal of social reality. Durkheim also, through his notion of morality, is very much aware of the need to consider the nature of the relationship between individuals and collective representations. Rites may have the power to transmit tradition, but it is not an automatic, ex operato, function.

Evans-Pritchard is not altogether just in his dismissal of Radcliffe-Brown's views on religion and totemism in particular, for being utilitarian, since the latter does acknowledge dependence on a spiritual power (1952b:157). That there is a degree of ambiguity about his perspective in that respect emerges when we consider Durkheim's ideas about the place of ritual in religion. Durkheim argues that '...which makes a man is the totality of the intellectual property which constitutes civilisation, and civilisation is the work of society' (1915:418). In this he sees the explanation for '...the preponderating role of the cult in all religions, whichever they may be' (1915:418). The reason for this runs along very similar lines to the view put forward by Radcliffe-Brown, namely

> '...because society cannot make its influence felt unless it is in action, and it is not in action unless the individuals who compose it are assembled together and act in common. It is by common action that it takes consciousness of itself and realises its position; it is before all else an active co-operation' (1915:418).

The difference on this point between Durkheim and Radcliffe-Brown is that the former strongly emphasises the notion of consciousness on the part of individuals and society. Radcliffe-Brown does not give it the same weighting. Durkheim concludes that '...it is in action which dominates the religious life, because of the mere fact that it is society which is its source' (1915:418). Underlying Evans-Pritchard's exploration of the Islamic belief and practice is an unease with this position. Durkheim does not really pursue the nature of the action involved, nor in the end succeed in doing any more than postulating society as its source.

Durkheim considers the question of the real and the ideal society. Real society has many imperfections, injustice, and justice, evil and good, among many related

opposites, are juxtaposed (1915:420). The ideal, where justice and truth would be supreme, is the goal towards which all religions strive (1915:420). Durkheim argues that this society 'is not an empirical fact', but is an idea which expresses human aspirations for the 'good, the beautiful and the ideal' (1915:420). Nonetheless, the ideal may be explained only in terms of the real, so that it is '...not an irreducible fact which escapes science; it depends upon conditions which observation can touch; it is a natural product of social life' (1915:422). Durkheim asserts on this basis that

> 'A society can neither create itself nor recreate itself without at the same time creating an ideal' (1915:422).

In this way the ideal is part of the real society, because society is made up primarily of the '...idea which it forms of itself', and secondarily of the '...mass of individuals who compose it, the ground which they occupy, the things which they use and the movements which they perform...' (1915:422.).

Durkheim's argument contains two other elements which have bearing on Evans-Pritchard's analysis. First of all, he states that conflicts take place between ideals, and not between the ideal and the reality (1915:423), between that '...which has the authority of tradition and that which has the hope of the future' (1915:423). This is the perennial tension between institutional authority and prophetic freedom. The second point returns to an earlier part of the discussion :

> 'But facts and rites...the cult, are not the whole religion. This is not merely a system of practices, but also a system of ideas whose object is to explain the world; we have seen that the humblest have their cosmology' (1915:428).

There are tensions between Durkheim's view of the relationship of symbols to collective representations, real and ideal perspectives of society, and that of rituals to a religious world-view which arise from the uncertainty caused by his shifting ground in his argument. Evans-Pritchard exploits the ambiguity implicit in these ideas in much the same way as was noted in the discussion of his use of *The Rules of Sociological Method.*

The concept of religion as a system of ideas, a belief system comprising many collective representations, is applied to Islam in a number of ways by Evans-Pritchard. For example, an Islamic Order is known as a *tariqa* in Arabic, a road, a path, a way (1949a:3). There are various paths counselled, differing according to whether reason or

intuition is stressed, and according to the means of attaining the goal. That, however, is the same for all, '...the identification of the soul with God by the elimination of all worldly desires and distractions' (1949a:3)).

Evans-Pritchard's emphasis in the initial part of his analysis, on the type of spiritual freedom sought by the mystics is part of his challenge to Durkheim. Durkheim's view is a rationalist one, even though he accepts individual feelings and the role of subjective experience, but only as minor players. Evans-Pritchard's presents two types of knowledge that are basic to Islamic philosophy, intellectual and traditional knowledge *('ilm)* and gnosis, wisdom, *(ma'rifa)* (1949a:4), both of which reflect something of Durkheim's notions of real and ideal. Each type of knowledge suffers from a similar tension between the ideal of what constitutes the truth. A body of theological knowledge tends to assume, even in its more radical and challenging forms, an orthodoxy, or an idealised form. There is a constant tension between it and the real, but not necessarily antagonism. A large measure of this tension derives from activity on the level of the real in which the idealised notions are confronted by new perceptions, feelings and events. These fresh ideas and experiences bring about a reappraisal of the ideal.

He said that the Grand Sanusi and his successors '...very strongly disapproved of external aids ...to achieving the goal of wisdom. Processions, music, dancing, piercing of the flesh with sharp instruments, were not acceptable means' (1949a:4). Evans-Pritchard here suggests implicitly that Radcliffe-Brown was wrong to focus on ritual in the study of religion, in the manner that he did.

One of the most important facets of Islamic orthodoxy is that '...perfection is to be sought through spiritual identification with the prophet Muhammed rather than with God...' (1949a:4). This is especially true of ordinary people. Identification is achieved through contemplating the essence of the Prophet, and by means of attention to imitation and praise of him which provides an inner knowledge (1949a:4). This process is pursued until the adept identifies wholly with the prophet. This popular view of Islam is presented by Evans-Pritchard as an ideal, in the Durkheimian sense of the term, as a challenge to the more rational form of orthodoxy. Both the rational and the mystical strands of knowledge agree upon the purpose of embarking on the way of learning, but

differ radically in regard to the means. They can be considered aspects of the same belief system depending on its degree of openness.

Evans-Pritchard then leaves the discussion of the mystical aspect of the Sanusiya. He states again the Order's rigorous orthodoxy and conformity to the Prophet's original teaching (1949a:4). There are two consequences of this which have an important sociological impact on the Sanusiya and Bedouin. First of all, conformity '...meant that the faith and morals which the Prophet preached to the Bedouin of his day, and which they accepted, were equally suited to the Bedouin of Cyrenaica, who in all essentials were leading, and still lead, a life like to that of the Bedouin in Arabia in the seventh century' (1949a:4). Secondly, Evans-Pritchard states that the

> 'Bedouin of Cyrenaica...have only the slightest knowledge of either the religious teachings or the ritual of the Order, and are interested in neither. They belong to the illiterate class of *Muntasabin,* the simple adherents of the Order who follow its Shaikh personally and politically ' (1949a:5).

It is also asserted, that Bedouin '...seldom, if ever, know the special prayers and litanies of the Order, and if they do use them that ... it is restricted to getting a scribe to write them on paper so that they can sew them up in leather and tie them to their bodies' (1949a:5).

So far Evans-Pritchard has set the scene in such a way that we are led to read what is happening as if it were all quite natural. Implicit in the points made above is his elaboration of Sanusiya and Bedouin grammar of thought.* He indicates that these grammars are connected with the historical development of each institution, and with the structure of their value systems. This is consistent with Evans-Pritchard's use of Durkheim's perception of the development of moral systems. Evans-Pritchard in this fashion sets up a model, as it were, which supports some aspects of Durkheim's sociological theory regarding religion, and at the same time challenges others.

Evans-Pritchard uses Durkheim's basic questions : 'How have things come to be what they are?', and 'What is their position in the social system?' (Durkheim, 1953:xxiii). These, as Peristiany states in his introduction to *Sociology and Philosophy*

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*   c.f. Coulson, J., *Religion and Imagination*, 1981:3-83, for his appraisal of J.H. Newman's discussion of the relationship of imagination and belief in the process of assent (in regard to faith).

(Durkheim, 1953), provide an historical and sociological framework for analysis. The sociological may be considered either as functional and dynamic or structural and static (1953:xxiii). Evans-Pritchard seeks to explore the historical, religious and sociological aspects of the Islamic opposition to the Italian colonial administration in early twentieth century Libya. The organisation and operation of the opposition centred around the Sanusiya Order. The structural aspects of the issue are not static. The merging of the Sanusiya and Bedouin value systems, to the degree that they do, demonstrates that value systems are dynamic.

A further duality arises from Evans-Pritchard's presentation. There is the orthodoxy of the Sanusiya Order and the rudimentary practice of the Bedouin. Then there are the simple illiterate, adherents of the Order contrasted with the tiny educated minority of the Brothers of the Order. All identify as followers of the Prophet, but each, Evans-Pritchard implies, had their own 'working' system of beliefs.

Another aspect of the Orders' popularity in the Islamic society, is their capacity to provide corporate structures in situations where these do not exist. Evans-Pritchard adds this interesting statement '...In becoming social institutions, and sometimes political movements, in the Arab lands they had shed most of their original content of mysticism' (1949a:2). The impact of the Sanusiya, from this point of view, is very marked because initially they were largely foreigners, and, having no kinship ties, stood outside the Bedouin tribal system and remained uninvolved with its ancient loyalties and feuds (1949a:18). The success of the Sanusiya as a missionary group within a Bedouin society is attributable in part to its cutting across the tribal structures and also to the fact that the members of the Order lived an austere form of Islam (1949a:6). Furthermore the Order was self-supporting and, in its conventional expression of orthodoxy, approached its missionary work peacefully. It sought to persuade the Bedouin and the people of the Sudan and Sahara '...to a fuller understanding of the beliefs and morals of Islam, while giving them at the same time the blessings of civilisation: justice, peace, trade, and education' (1949a:7). Once again the question arises as to how such a smooth relationship managed to be established. Evans-Pritchard juxtaposes the seemingly primitive and innocent Bedouin with the more astute members of the Sanusiya, who are interested only in the spiritual welfare of the Bedouin. This, however, is not a complete picture. The Bedouin are very skilful in their use of the Sanusiya in inter-tribal conflicts,

as educators, and as political leaders. The apparently bluff practicality of their practice of Islam is shaped by the facts of their traditional existence. Evans-Pritchard gives two conflicting signals in regard to Bedouin belief and practice, one of a deep, unlettered piety, and the other of a pragmatic sceptism. Either way he pursues the problematic relationship of individual to society according to the ambivalent position adopted by Durkheim.

Evans-Pritchard pursues further the notion that the Orders may provide a social structure form when he argues the naturalness of their missionary activity, from the structural point of view. The Sanusiya did '...what any movement of the kind is bound to do in a barbarous country if it is to continue to exist, namely, to create an administrative system which would ensure a measure of peace, security, justice, and economic stability' (1949a:9). The attitude and behaviour of the Sanusiya is set in stark contrast to those of the Italian invader, and to the early military expansion of Islam. Evans-Pritchard does not make a formal contrast, but leaves the implication lurking. The strict liturgical asceticism, moderated by a genteel life-style, along with scholarly pursuits, is the foundation for a mission of peaceful persuasion (1949a:7) among a people whose religious experience focussed on the cult of the saints (1949a:10). Evans-Pritchard returns to this irenic theme and clearly mounts a defence of the Sanusiya Order. He states quite categorically that it never resorted to military force in support of its mission work. The military dimension developed in response to French pressure from the west, and later to the Italian invasion of Cyrenaica.

The question arises as to which model of missionary activity is the basis for this view. At one level it reads like many similar attitudes, prevalent at the time, which supported colonialism because of these benign effects. The long history of Islam, is implied from its golden age of Medieval period when it provided the ideological and religious basis for the development of very powerful and richly complex societies ranging from Spain to India. The crucial point made relates to the dynamic nature of the social structure of the Sanusiya, as a representative of the Islamic Orders, which enabled it to provide an over-arching political framework for the Bedouin. Evans-Pritchard states, in terms opposed to Durkheim's notion of religion as the source of all social institutions, that a '...religious organisation cannot exist apart from a polity of a wider kind' (1949a:9). The religious Orders did not, '...create the sentiments of community which

made the growth of governmental functions and the emergence of a State possible' (1949a:9).

Durkheim espoused similar ideas regarding the development and inter-relationship of societies. He asserts that '...in certain cases, this universalistic tendency had been able to develop itself to the point of affecting not only the higher ideas of the religious system, but even the principles upon which it rests' (1915:426-427). Durkheim also argues that the 'fundamental categories of thought ... are of religious origin' and that 'nearly all the great social institutions have been born in religion' (1915:418-419). Evans-Pritchard emphasises the point that the Sanusiya became a politico-religious movement because it was able to utilise the tribal political structure of the Bedouin. The latter formed a homogenous population, due to their isolation in the desert, and to their common traditions and 'strong feeling of community blood' (1949a:10).

Evans-Pritchard states that religious divisions in Islam '...have commonly been the expression of social and cultural exclusiveness' (1949a:9), and he cites the example that '...all reactions against foreign domination as much as revolts against orthodoxy' (1949a:9). He argues that the process of religious deviation '...was the expression of the intense desire of a people to live according to their own traditions and institutions' (1949a:9-10). This line of argument is a significant change of direction since it involves an historical focus. Evans-Pritchard cites several examples of 'social exclusiveness' from the past, ranging from the 'Alids in Persia and Arabia, the Umayyads in Africa and Spain, the Fatimads in Egypt, the Kharyites in North Africa, and the extreme Shi'ites in the mountain regions of Syria and among the Kurds. He argues that, whereas in the past nationalism was expressed through religious movements, '...today it is expressed in the political language of nationalism' (1949a:10). Evans-Pritchard's position is not as straight-forward as the lucid flow of language suggests. He is discussing representations, social facts, belief systems, and their interrelationships. Evans-Pritchard uses a Durkheimian structure in his argument, but the discourse is actually quite opposed to Durkheim's view of religion.

The historical assumption made here is contrary to some of the views prevalent during the period in which Evans-Pritchard wrote. The argument in his opening chapter stresses repeatedly that the Sanusiya did not in any sense invade, and therefore change

dramatically, the Bedouin way of life apart from bringing them an austere but acceptable form of Islam. Their tribal structure remained intact. The Sanusiya settlement on the margins of tribal areas, perhaps, he implies, aided their development, because of the intermediary role often carried out by the local head of a zawiya (lodge). The Bedouin were not dominated in any fashion by the Sanusiya, but, as Evans-Pritchard suggests, they had instead a marked influence on the political and social evolution of the Order.

Evans-Pritchard's representation of the impact of the Sanusiya on the Bedouin has much Durkheimian colouring, but it is a rejection of his theory of religion nonetheless. Durkheim's view that society must be engaged in common action in order to experience its own consciousness and to realise its position rather begs the question (1915:418). This is especially true regarding his juxtaposition of the notions of the civilisation which constitutes an individual, and that this civilisation is the artifice of society (1915:418). The relationship between the Sanusiya and the Bedouin reverses this, because it is the latter's political structure which provides an important element in their collaboration. The religious framework brought by the Sanusiya is also modified in this process.

Evans-Pritchard argues that the reasons for the Sanusiya's political success are many, but the religious element in that success is what concerns us here. From the Bedouin point of view the fact that the cult of saints was tolerated helped their acceptance of the Sanusiya. Similarly the Grand Sanusi was recognised and accepted as *Marabtin*, a holy man. Such people, like the Old Testament prophets were by definition more powerful in a political sense precisely because they were on the boundaries of the mundane political order (1949a:10). The contrast between the earlier *Marabtin* and the Sanusiya was not in their teaching, but in their social organisation (1949a:11). According to Evans-Pritchard, most Islamic Orders disintegrate into autonomous segments, but the Sanusiya maintained its organisation and control because of its coordination of the Orders' lodges with the tribal structure (1949a:11). In other words, the Sanusiya were assumed into the political structure, but in a modified fashion, just as much as other Orders elsewhere took on the segmentary structure of Bedouin. The process, is a unilineal one.

The issue of Bedouin social practice is considered and particularly the impact of the 'laws of the tents', which, Evans-Pritchard states, gives all Bedouin great freedom of movement (1949a:54). This is a fact of general knowledge. Evans-Pritchard, however, appears to suggest some kind of pastoral idyll, emphasising as he does the commonly practised aspects of Bedouin (Arab) lifestyle. He makes very little comment on the harsher side of segmentary conflicts over land and water, the necessary concomitants where these are sparingly available.

Two statements illustrate this style of exposition. First, Evans-Pritchard contrasts the free-spirited Bedouin with the peasant class of Palestine, Egypt, Iraq and Syria who, because they are fixed to the earth, can be dominated and made to work for others. The Bedouin (Cyrenaican) '...is fixed to no place and cannot be forced to sell his birthright by bad seasons or intimidation' (1949a:46). Secondly, Evans-Pritchard suggests the Cyrenaican context is less trammelled than others, having no Berber, Jewish or European cultural influences. The Bedouin there are like Bedouin everywhere in all essential matters '...they have the same tented, pastoral, way of life, the same social organisation, the same laws and customs and manners, and the same values' (1949a:47).

The need to travel for water, markets, the following of stock, sowing crops where rain had fallen, all these '...imposed a recognition of individual rights with regard to tribal affiliations or social status' (1949a:54). Evans-Pritchard asserts that without the social structural framework with the specific characteristic that we have just noted, the Grand Sanusi could not have built '...his inclusive organisation' (1949a:54). It is extremely curious that Evans-Pritchard does not pursue the intriguing question of how someone who was initially a form of political client could achieve such comprehensive social and political dominance. The Italian factor is important but does not provide all the explanation. Evans-Pritchard mentions a consequence of mutual dependence between tribes, that they are expected to share in the payment of blood money. The Sanusiya, by definition, are removed from that chain of events. Perhaps this gave them great potential for political flexibility which facilitated their rise to political dominance. The notable structural feature of Bedouin is the balanced opposition between the various segments, tribes and tribal sections (1949a:59). This results in no one authority in a tribe, even

though each section has its own Shaikh or Shaikhs (1949a:54). Each Shaikh's status reflects the complicated network of kinship and other structural relations (1949a:54).

Influence and wealth depend upon this network and how he manages the personal and other resources available to him (1949a:59-60). This material is frustrating at times, because these statements obscure as much as they reveal. A Shaikh is involved as an arbitrator, is representative of his group in larger gatherings, commands men in war, and is responsible for collecting the Government tribute. On the one hand he has limited power, depending on the size of his network, and on the other, he may have much more influence based on the strength of his personality. There follows another instance of Evans-Pritchard's inclusive toned approbation, this time of the Shaikh

> 'Nevertheless, a Bedouin Shaikh, however large the group he represents, lives and dresses like his fellow Bedouin, though, being rich, his tent may be larger than most and he has more horses and they are more richly appointed. He also has more wives than other Bedouin and is usually more cultured and intelligent' (1949a:60-61).

Evans-Pritchard's prose has a heightened sense of clarity, which while charming of itself, gives an impression that Bedouin society is an example of remarkable egalitarianism and simplicity.

The problem with Evans-Pritchard's analysis lies in the smooth merging of the Sanusiya and the Bedouin. There is no evidence of any conflict whatever between the two, which is surprising, given the independent nature of the Bedouin. While it may be that the Sanusiya orthodoxy and austerity blended well with the spartan life-style of the Bedouin, Evans-Pritchard's perspective on religious practice, signifies a major departure from Durkheim's assumptions and conclusions. He, however, does not provide any clear suggestion of this, rather, it emerges, as it were, from the 'facts' (c.f.1937a).

When he turns to discuss the relationship of the Sanusiya with the 'tribes' there is more helpful material. Evans-Pritchard reiterates the motif of austerity, monotony, and nobility of the Bedouin way of life, which is accompanied by a profound ignorance of the outside world and of Islam (1949a:62).

The ignorance of Islam, its doctrine, ritual and moral duties, he assures us, touched the Grand Sanusi's heart, which was moved by missionary zeal (1949a:62).

Evans-Pritchard also remarks on the basically perfunctory approach to religious practice on the part of the Bedouin. This is a benign image of Islam and the Bedouin, the description having a cameo-like quality. Evans-Pritchard seems to have an almost romantic, sense of association with the spirit of freedom and individuality which he sees represented variously in the Sanusiya and the Bedouin.

One of the turning points of his argument is contained in the statement about the Bedouin attitude to the practice of Islam.

> 'In saying that they are lax, I do not suggest that they are not very sincere, Muslims.... Nevertheless, though they would not belittle, the Cyrenaican Bedouin feel no embarrassment at neglecting, the duties obligatory on every Muslim' (1949a:62).

On the positive side Evans-Pritchard notes that the Confession of Faith '...is known to all and implicitly accepted by all' (1949a:62). Overall, the Bedouin view of their faith appears to favour those aspects which '...impose no irksome restrictions or tiresome duties' (1949a:62). Thus prescribed prayers are neglected, but the fast of Ramadan, and the practice of *jihad* are adhered to. Evans-Pritchard asserts, in regard to Ramadan, that in it the Bedouin perceive a summary of the '...obligations and privileges of Islam and its unity and strength' (1949a:63).

Evans-Pritchard's description of Bedouin attitudes to religious practice has the same icon-like quality of his description in the first chapter of the book. Now as then he places side by side the conception of near religious indifference in terms of practice with that of profound faith. The latter enhances the superb dignity which is often masked by poverty and rags, even 'habitual filth' (1949a:64). The image that emerges in this process is not unlike that taken from a high-altitude reconnaisance plane. Certain details stand out with remarkable clarity, but the lack of perspective prompts more questions than the answers. Evans-Pritchard presents Bedouin piety as a formal, outward reality. He fails to discuss that *Ramadan* and *Jihad* are fundamentally interior realities. Durkheim and Lévy-Bruhl's concept of collective representation, especially that of sentiment, is applied here implicitly. Evans-Pritchard almost hints at a quasi mystical relationship, in Lévy-Bruhl's sense of the term, between the Bedouin and Islam.

In the midst of this account of the Bedouin interpretation of Islam, as mediated by Evans-Pritchard, he presents another evocative portrayal of the Bedouin as unlettered

men, shepherds and warriors, they take up and fulfil their obligations to their faith
(1949a:63). An important aspect of their living out of ^their faith^ stems from their respect for the
piety and learning of the Brothers of the Order (1949a:63). Evans-Pritchard almost
evokes the impression of the Bedouin warrior as a type of 'noble savage', but that is a
mirage. Dilatory, and negligent about his practice of his faith as the Bedouin may be,
Evans-Pritchard does not suggest, but verges very close to saying, that they are, in a
pejorative sense, simple.

Durkheim's theoretical stance does not consider collective sentiments about
religion in this fashion. Through his use of 'simple' and 'humble' Evans-Pritchard
allows a quite different understanding to emerge. The Bedouin, he suggests, despite
contrary indication, have a very complex and subtle grasp of their faith, they are acting
quite rationally in a way similar to the Azande's belief in magic and the mystical
relationships that it established and helped to maintain.

Further suggestive evidence of Evans-Pritchard's view is his statement that '...it
must also be said that it would be an error to suppose that Islam had not, long before this
time of the Grand Sanusi, strongly affected the character and custom of the Sulaimid
Bedouin...[who]...assume that their customs are Muslim customs' (1949a:63).
Language is an important cohesive factor for the Islamic religion, especially in North
Africa, but Evans-Pritchard does not discuss it.

Durkheim observes that concepts are essentially impersonal in contrast to
sensual representation, and that it is through language that human intelligence
communicates (1915:434). He insists on the impersonality of collective representations
that have their reality most especially in relation to that '...very special being, society...',
which '...considers the things of its own proper experience' (1915:435). Although
concepts 'are nearly always general ideas', such generality is 'not necessary for them'.
Moreover, the representations are the 'work of society and are enriched by its experience'
(1915:435). Durkheim realises that the sensual side of experience may not be neglected in
this context. He argues that collective representations add to our ability to learn from our
own experience '...all that wisdom and science which the group has accumulated in the
course of the centuries' (1915:435).

Evans-Pritchard does not take issue with Durkheim over the objectivity and immateriality of collective representations, but he implies, through the distinctions he has drawn regarding Bedouin practice, that there is a much greater flexibility possible in our understanding of the way in which they function and practice. The question of the manner in which the Bedouin practice Islam faith, and the attitudes which underlie that practice, is set up by Evans-Pritchard to challenge Durkheim's view, in which feelings are secondary in the process of religious experience. Evans-Pritchard's argument concerning the way in which the Bedouin say they approach the living out of Islam highlights the question begged by Durkheim regarding the capacity of collective representations to enhance our ability to learn from experience.

The sentiment of faith is experienced in a very broad, yet intensely personal fashion, which, Evans-Pritchard implies, demands a large measure of individual freedom. Durkheim acknowledges this to some degree, in so far as he accepts that each person 'sees' a collective representation according to his or her own lights (1915:436). Such individual perception, however, because it modifies the representation, he regards as falsifying that representation (1915:436). Evans-Pritchard does not see that to be the case. even though he argues that the Bedouin mode of religious practice of Islam represents one of the ways that that religious world-view is integrated into another. The interiorising of religious experience is largely shaped by the overall context of that experience. It is a fusion of ideas and experience, and their expression reflects this.

Evans-Pritchard also appears to be further distinguishing Durkheim's view of the individual living in time and having a temporal orientation (1915:440). Durkheim does acknowledge that 'all sensations have something special about them', but he argues that resemblances and the relations between them ...are strictly personal for the individual' (1915:440). For Durkheim the focus must be on the idea of 'all', of 'totality' (1915:441). Evans-Pritchard shows that there may be an 'all' which is held in common, that, as a sociological entity, may be expressed in very individual ways. Such individuality may perhaps also be posited of the groups who adhere to the generic meaning, or experience, of what is believed and practiced.

Evans-Pritchard accepts, in principle, the notion of the duality of human activity, social and individual. But there is some other, rather intangible quality, which yet had very definite consequences and blurs the sharpness of Durkheim's dualism. Evans-Pritchard, for example, argues that the Sanusiya inherited the accumulated capital of the Marabouts and exploited it. Through the process of incorporation each lodge of the Order made it possible for the many isolated tribal and tribal section cults to be unified. At the same time, each lodge '...was part of a general cult directed through the lodges towards the Head of the Order' (1949a:69).

The 'single, sacred, Head' was linked thereby through all the lodges with the Bedouin tribal system, who, for all their feuds and enmities and lack of political unity, possessed a high degree of oneness expressed in 'common sentiments, a common way of life, and a common lineage structure' (1949a:69). Evans-Pritchard makes it clear, however, that the still more common sentiment is the Islamic faith, as it is experienced, even though that experience ranges from the austere, learned piety of the Brothers to the more rugged unlettered devotion of the Bedouin. At the core of Evans-Pritchard's argument there seems to be the implication that it is the imprint of the shared devotion which reveals itself as popular religion, a complex interrelationship of feeling, knowledge and ritual expression. So far as the Bedouin are concerned, it is the emotional intensity with which they adhere to and believe in Islam that gives them the sense of being part of the collectivity . In this way they interweave the sacred and profane elements of their lives.

The relationship between the Sanusiya and the Bedouin is presented in somewhat poetic terms by Evans-Pritchard as the Sanusiya seeding itself '...in the crevasses between tribes and between tribal sections, and its points of growth were thus also the points of convergence in tribal and lineage structures' (1949a:73). Physically this meant that the Sanusiya built its lodges at oases and other neutral points. Evans-Pritchard seems to imply that there is also a less tangible, but not less real, way in which this physical and moral presence of the Sanusiya acted as a 'blind force'. The presence of the Order is an undeniable historical fact, and, especially in the religious realm, they form an aspect of the proximate environments for the religious experience of the Bedouin. Apart from being a way of exploring the notion of popular religion, it is also an indirect

manner of asserting the rationalism of the Bedouin. Evans-Pritchard has been particularly emphatic about the independent mindedness of the Bedouin, paralleling the Azande sceptism towards magic and magicians while yet believing in magic. The 'blind force' aspect emerges partly in relation to the Bedouin feelings about Islam.

Another dimension of this reality lies in Evans-Pritchard's description of the relationship between Bedouin groups and the lodges built in their vicinity. He argues that '...the lodges were tribal institutions built by the local Bedouin so that they might participate in the *baraka* of Sayyid Muhammed bin 'Ali al-Sanusi' (the founder of the Order)' (1949a:82). This *baraka*, Evans-Pritchard tells us, belongs to the tribe or tribal section '...just as the *shaukha*, the secular Shaikhship of the tribe ... belonged to it and had to be kept in it' (1949a:82.). Thus the spiritual and secular power are brought into a constructive balance. The inner side of the process of building lodges is the explicit intention of claiming a link with the founder of the Order, and some share of his blessing, which would extend beyond the realm of personal piety to the overall well-being of the tribe or tribal section. Similarly, the honour given to the *shaukha* is in terms of a continuity of autonomy as tribes and tribal groups. This freedom is the basis upon which the allegiance to Sanusiya can be given, and sustained. The inner process of thought enabled the later transformation of the two societies into one through the fierce external pressure of the Italian invasion.

CHAPTER 4 — NUER RELIGION

Introduction

In this chapter I will explore Evans-Pritchard's analysis of Nuer religious experience. My purpose is to discern what further development there is in his theoretical perspective regarding religion, I will also consider the nature and scope of this development. The discussion will focus primarily, as in the previous chapters, on Evans-Pritchard's continuing debate with Durkheim. It will also take some account of other theorists, including Radcliffe-Brown. The concluding section will show that Evans-Pritchard elaborates a perception of popular religion in which he separates himself conceptually from Durkheim.

The one feature of this analysis that is noticeably different is that Evans-Pritchard uses terms and ideas drawn from Christian theology and scriptural exegesis and weaves these into his analysis. Part of what I am attempting to do in this chapter is to demonstrate that, even though Evans-Pritchard was a Catholic, his discussion is sociological both in structure and intent. There is no intention of presenting a Catholic view of Nuer religion. There is, however, evidence that a much more adequate perception and analysis of a primitive religious framework is possible if the anthropologist has a religious framework within which to work. It will be seen that Evans-Pritchard generally exercises great care with the language he uses. This indicates his awareness of his heavy reliance on the main influences on his development as a thinker. It will also be seen that he displays similar concern to distance himself from these same influences.

Evans-Pritchard's exploration of Nuer religion reveals much of the inherent uncertainty regarding religion and religious beliefs and practices. In it he attempts to discuss and analyse some of the problems which arise. One aspect of this process is the manner in which he argues the need for engaging the imagination in the analysis of religion. Evans-Pritchard comments on the difficulty of translating Nuer concepts 'by abstract analysis' in contrast with the ease he experienced in thinking in their categories while he lived with them (1956a:106). A distinction emerges between a notional grasp of religion as a second order expression of reality, and the experience of religious beliefs

and practice within a first order framework. The first mode is a largely intellectual apprehension of religion as a phenomenon, while the second is predominantly an imaginative and experiential apprehension of the same phenomenon, but mediated through the actual experience of the religion in ritual.* Evans-Pritchard attempts also to illumine the dichotomy between piety and scepticism and that between personal, non-structured experience and the structured expression of religious experience found especially in ritual content. For example, Evans-Pritchard discusses the contrasting attitudes of the Nuer in relation to sacrifice made to God and those made to the spirits. The first are offered principally in expiation, very often for incest. Man, not God, is the recipient of any benefits. Evans-Pritchard suggests that a different psychology operates in relation to sacrifices to the spirits. These are based on the ideas of propitiation and satisfaction, and '...the huckstering is conducted through a human agency' (1956a:284). Some of the ambiguity regarding religion, such as we have seen already in regard to the Azande magical beliefs and practices, and in contrasting expressions of Islam by the Sanusiya and the Bedouin, is inherent in anthropological discourse because of the varying attitudes that those making analyses may have towards religion.

Evans-Pritchard confronts this issue in the Preface, where he asserts, echoing Durkheim, Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown, that there is a lack of a commonly accepted vocabulary among anthropologists in regard to comparative religion. The problem is made more acute because, as Evans-Pritchard perceives it, '...it is not merely a matter of definition, but also involves personal judgement' (1956a:vii). It was noted earlier, in the introductory chapter, that Geertz argues that the disinclination towards definition, and the type of explanation based on it, is a feature of the 'British school' of academics. Evans-Pritchard almost disdains the notion of explanation, arguing that his interpretation of facts will emerge from his discourse (Geertz, 1988:59; Evans-Pritchard, 1937a:5). Geertz also argues that Evans-Pritchard's texts derive great persuasive power from '...his enormous capacity to construct visualisable representations of cultural phenomena' (Geertz 1988:64). This power or authority is expressed in another way in relation to what Geertz terms '...the same equanimous "of course" tone in which one talks, if one is who one is, about one's own's values, practices, feelings, and the like' (1988:69). This style is

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*   c.f. Coulson, J., *Religion and Imagination*, 1981:30-31, where he distinguishes between language as metaphors and analogues, and as illustrations, interpretations or projections (in Marx & Sense) in relation to the distinction between the language of faith and the language of belief.

> 'Powerful for "including out", it is, in its tone and in the assumptions and judgements it projects, equally powerful for including in, and indeed for doing both at the same time' (1988:69).

Geertz's comments are directed to the manner in which Evans-Pritchard writes about the Nuer. The idea may also be applied to Evans-Pritchard's view of other theorists. Part of his method of distancing himself from the other anthropological perspectives is the way in which he depicts them '...as not other but otherwise...' (Geertz, 1988:70). This type of statement is both evocative and difficult to grasp precisely because it too acts to draw us in, as if we are part of a common intellectual outlook. Geertz is employing the same anthropological 'we'. It conveys not so much the notion of opposition, as of difference. Evans-Pritchard claims that it is both useless to deny and rash to ignore the difficulty involved in arriving at an agreed upon vocabulary for the discussion of comparative religion. The argument continues

> 'It may be said that in describing and interpreting a primitive religion it should make no difference whether the writer is an agnostic or a Christian, Jew, Muslim, Hindu, or whatever he may be, but in fact it makes a great deal of difference, for **even in a descriptive study judgement can in no way be avoided*** (Evans-Pritchard,1956a:vii).

The assertion that judgement can in no way be avoided repeats similar, but less direct, statements made in the opening stages of his arguments in *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande,* and *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica.* In the first work Evans-Pritchard states that he proposes asking 'how?' rather than 'why?' about Zande beliefs and practices and that facts are explained by others from the same culture. Interdependencies between facts also need to be examined. What constitutes a fact, and the various interdependencies between facts, suggests some measure of judgement on the anthropologist's part (1937a:5). Evans-Pritchard describes his approach to the material concerning the Sanusiya and the Bedouin as a description of what '...seemed necessary to an undertaking of the political development of the Order which sprang from their association' (1949a:iii-iv). Here again judgement was exercised as to what was necessary for the analysis. From these then it is clear that Evans-Pritchard saw that judgement is a necessary part of the hermeneutical process and in this contradicts the view that explanation 'emerges' from the facts.

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*   emphasis added

Evans-Pritchard develops this notion more fully in *Nuer Religion* than he does in *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande*, and *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*. He makes a very significant addition to the question of making judgements concerning the analysis of religion

> 'Those who give assent to the religious beliefs of their own people feel and think, and therefore also write, differently about the beliefs of other peoples from those who do not give assent to them' (1956a:vii).

From one point of view this can be read as a truism, but, on the other hand, it may also be read as evidence of Evans-Pritchard's determination to emphasise that social life is 'anchored in the material world'. From the point of view of religion, he appears to be saying that this applies both as it is studied and as it is lived. Morris comments that Evans-Pritchard's approach to religion coincides with that of Marx and Weber and does 'not treat politics (or religion) as autonomous realms...' (Morris, 1987:197). Morris argues that Evans-Pritchard does not suggest either a reductive analysis or that 'the different levels of social reality are simply reflective' (1987:197). Morris states that the 'underlying orientation ... is neither idealist nor phenomenological' (1987:197). The latter point I will consider later, since Evans-Pritchard does suggest that his approach is in some way phenomenological.

In Evans-Pritchard's *Theories of Primitive Religions* (1965) there is a very different emphasis. There he argues that as far as

> 'a study of religion as a factor of social life is concerned, it may make little difference whether the anthropologist is a theist or an atheist, since in either case he can only take into account what he can observe' (1965:121).

The social reality of religion stands irrespective of the personal beliefs of the anthropologist. The atheist looks to the biological, psychological or sociological to explain what he or she perceives to be illusory, and the theist '...seeks rather to understand the manner in which a people conceives of a reality and the relations to it' (1965:121). Both statements retain a Durkheimian form of expression. Neither of them is Durkheimian in content, and Evans-Pritchard seems in fact, to be juggling a very slippery notion. Finnegan and Horton note the apparent tension in their introduction to *Modes of Thought* (1973:45-46). Evans-Pritchard emphasises this very succinctly when he asserts that 'For the social anthropologist, religion is what religion does' (1965:120). *Nuer*

Religion is a study in exploring the notion of 'what religion does'. The tension does, however, seem to be irreconcilable.

Evans-Pritchard's introductory argument in *Theories of Primitive Religion* partly parallels the statement from the Preface to *Nuer Religion* and qualifies it. To begin with, he states that it is not necessary that an '...anthropologist *has* to have a religion of his own...' (1965:17) because 'He is not concerned, *qua* anthropologist, with the truth or falsity of religious thought' (1965:17). Beliefs, in his perspective, are sociological not theological facts, and the anthropologist's concern '...is with their relation to each other and to other social facts' (1965:17) Faced with scientific and not metaphysical or ontological problems the ethnographer employs a phenomenological method of analysis.This distinction appears circular, but it is not, because it highlights once again the strongly historical perspective adopted by Evans-Pritchard. It is one in which a comparative study of beliefs and rites is made, including such concepts as god, sacrament, and sacrifice, in order 'to determine their meaning and social significance' (1965:17).

This line of argument leads to two further statements, both of which challenge Morris' comments noted above about Evans-Pritchard's underlying orientation being neither idealist nor phenomenological. First, Evans-Pritchard asserts regarding anthropological research into religious beliefs; the '...validity of the belief lies in the domain of what may be broadly designated the philosophy of religion' (1965:17). He uses the concept of philosophy of religion in the concluding chapter to *Nuer Religion*. Through the study of a particular religious world-view,he seeks to make a contribution towards a larger scale comparison which would provide the basis for any general conclusion to be drawn regarding 'African philosophy' (1956a:314-315). Some of the confusion over the term phenomenology arises because Morris does not define his use of it, but Evans-Pritchard does suggest one from the context in which he uses it. He clearly means it to designate the historical and relational aspects of religious beliefs.

Secondly, Evans-Pritchard supports his historical, interpretative approach to religion on the ground that the use of theologically based analysis tends to seek '...an explanation of primitive religious phenomena in causal terms...' (1965:17), which seems to be going '...beyond the legitimate bounds of the subject' (1965:17.). As has already

been seen in regard to the Azande and Sanusi discourses, Evans-Pritchard does not accept the causal explanatory aspects of Durkheim's theory, although he makes widespread use of the historical and relational approaches to social facts. Religion is treated as being part of the complex social relational factors which help constitute a culture and it is this sense that the study of it may be referred to as phenomenological.

Evans-Pritchard argues that Nuer religion is very unlike other African religions, including those of their Nilotic neighbours, the Luo, the Shilluk and the Anuak. The Dinka religion possesses some affinities with that of the Nuer. Evans-Pritchard asserts that there are resemblances in the Nuer religion to the Hebrew religion of the pre-Christian era and for that reason sees no incongruity in using Old Testament concepts as a means of comparison with those of the Nuer. He argues that he finds it helpful, and thinks others may too, '...in trying to understand Nuer ideas to note this likeness to something with which we are familiar ourselves without being too intimately involved in it' (1956a:vii). Once again there is a degree of uncertainty in Evans-Pritchard's discourse that is created largely by his inclusive, common-room, 'we'. Another aspect of this statement which contributes to its problematic quality is the implicit comparative historical method that he uses. It is not a problem because it is historical or comparative, but because it appeals to a general and unspecified knowledge of the Hebrew Testament. We do not know to what exactly he is referring, and what inferences he expects us to draw from the comparison.

Two further dimensions of Evans-Pritchard's 'statement of intent' need considering. So far as his purpose is to provide a description and an interpretation of Nuer religion, I am trying to demonstrate that his interpretative process is Durkheimian in structure. First, Evans-Pritchard argues that his analysis is a study of religion as such and he contrasts this with the effects of the strong rationalist influence on anthropology. Under this influence, religious practices are

> '...often dismissed under the general heading of ritual together with a medley of rites of quite a different kind, all having in common only that the writer regards them as irrational; while religious thought tends to be inserted into a general discussion of values' (1956a:viii).

He concludes this statement asserting that his view of religion is as '...a subject of study *sui generis*...' (1956a:viii).

This creates some problems for an analysis of Evans-Pritchard's development as a thinker, since the views he expresses so summarily are those of people who played an important part in his development, and others to whom he gives acknowledgement in his earlier works. The compressed nature of the statement, however, does not do complete justice to those views.

The second aspect of Evans-Pritchard's statement of intent that we need to consider involves a statement made almost midway through his discourse which acts like a fulcrum for his overall discussion. It is a piece of complex parallelism, which as a dualistic statement, is clear evidence of the presence of Durkheimian theory and its effect on Evans-Pritchard's methodology.

Evans-Pritchard and Durkheim

Evans-Pritchard states that

'In relating the order of their society I am, of course, relating abstractions to one another by a method of sociological analysis. It is not suggested that the Nuer see their religion in this sort of way. Nevertheless, the structural configuration we abstract by this process is of the same design as the symbolic configuration in which they think of their various *kuth*. The various spirits in their symbolic configurations occupy the same positions in religion to each other as they do in the structural configuration we perceive through sociological analysis' (1956a:119).

Evans-Pritchard thereby summarises the complex interrelationship between the Nuer perception of the hierarchical array of *kuth* and his sociological perception of the same reality. Nuer religious thought, while an important aspect of reality, is not autonomous. The use of the term 'of the same design', clearly suggests Evans-Pritchard's determination to keep his analysis within a sociological framework. His statement that he considers religion to be 'a subject of study *sui generis'* does not sit harmoniously with this.

Evans-Pritchard discusses later the notion of religion as '...the reciprocal relations between God and man' (1956a:144). The study of Nuer religion is twofold. It concerns their conception of *kwoth*, God, and of *ran*, man, and, the relations between these . According to Evans-Pritchard, these stand as opposites to each other, in an

opposition that is '...symbolised in the opposites of sky and earth ... [which] ... is one of the salient contracts of Nuer thought' (1956a:144).

This question is examined more fully later, but the point here is to emphasise the structural, abstract, mode of interpretation used by Evans-Pritchard. Earlier in his discourse he argues that the hierarchy of spirits is an interrelationshp that is represented in the 'symbolism of height or space'. In this categorisation '...God is symbolised by the sky and the spirits of the air by the atmosphere, the clouds, and the breezes, the lesser ones being nearer to the earth than the greater ones...'. This perception of reality contains an implicit evaluation '...in terms of light and darkness, ranging from the celestial brightness to subterranean darkness' (1956a:120). Evans-Pritchard states that

> 'We see, and in their own way of looking at the matter Nuer see, degrees of immanence in this symbolic configuration. The cosmological representation of Spirit, and in particular the dichotomy between heaven and earth, the spirits of the above and those of the below, is further indicated by the mode and manner of appearance, the forms in which Spirit is manifested to humans' (1956a:120).

The statement has an air of cosy assurety. It also suggests that primitive as the Nuer may be, they have a refined and complex religious perception. The use of the term 'cosmological' highlights this. The Nuer do have a 'philosophy', that is, that they are able to relate entities to one another, and see them as parts of a perceptual framework.They are able to project a view of the world for themselves and are able to make sense of it.

Evans-Pritchard continues this discussion, arguing that '...an interpretation in terms of social structure merely shows us how the idea of Spirit takes various forms corresponding to departments of social life' (1956a:121). The intrinsic nature of this idea, however, is not understood any better (1956a:121). The notion of Spirit is variously perceived and sometimes is viewed '...intellectually and intuitively, as one, transcendental, pure Spirit...', and at other times is considered '...in relation to human affairs and interests, as one or other of a great number of figures through which it is made known, in varying degrees of materialisation, concretely to human intelligence' (1956a:121). Evans-Pritchard is careful to distinguish the notion of the 'purely structural interpretation' asserting that such a procedure does not just mean that we are dealing with a 'matter of social levels'. He states that '...God is also experienced unrefracted at all

levels, down to the individual...' (1956a:121). This point is considered more fully later in regard to the notion of popular religion and the relationship of personal piety to the collective expression of orthodox practice. The experience of God in an unrefracted fashion also suggests, especially for the individual, that that experience will be a variable one, even in the midst of collective ritual activity. Evans-Pritchard argues, in relation to this, '...that a structural interpretation explains only certain characteristics of the refractions and not the idea of Spirit itself' (1956a:121).

The limitations asserted here, regarding the 'structural interpretation' of religious phenomena, especially of personal religious experience, is a major aspect of Evans-Pritchard's critique of Durkheim's theoretical perspective. At the same time, the terminology is Durkheimian. The fundamental ambivalence is summed up, in Evans-Pritchard's own words,

> 'I have only tried to show that, and how, that idea [of Spirit] is broken up by the refracting surfaces of nature, of society, of culture, and of historical experience' (1956a:121).

The closing chapter of *Nuer Religion* brings this particular feature of Evans-Pritchard's thinking further into the open. On the one hand the literary assurance remains, but on the other, there is a type of doubt. Morris' brief account of this section of Evans-Pritchard's exploration of the concept of religion is quite critical. He is especially critical of Evans-Pritchard's conclusion that religion is ultimately an 'interior state', a conclusion which he considers to be 'inadequate and hardly enlightening...' (1987:203), and as an interpretation or explanation, a '...nonstarter' (1987:203). Morris earlier in his account applauds Evans-Pritchard's analysis. He states that Evans-Pritchard '...stressed that human thought and expression are inevitably constructed out of man's experience of the world around him...', which indicates to Morris an '...essentially materialist perspective' (1987:202).

Morris does not explain which variety of 'materialist perspective' he means, but Evans-Pritchard is clearly not promoting a marxist view of human thought and expression. His perspective remains grounded in Durkheim. Evans-Pritchard discusses the distinction in nature between the 'soul' of man and *kwoth*, Spirit. Soul is part of a human being and is created, whereas Spirit is extrinsic, invasive, operating from without' (1956a:158). The conception of spirit '...cannot be derived from a conception of the

soul', on the contrary, '...it is precisely because God and man are thought of as quite different sorts of being that Nuer can think of themselves in relation to God and that God can be represented in different ways to different persons and social groups (1956a:159).

This is a materialist expression of the relationship,and it adheres to Durkheim's relational principle because both sets of relationships are social facts which have an historical existence. This emerges clearly in Durkheim's early discussion of religious phenomena, first published in *L'Année Sociologique II* in 1899 (E.T. in Pickering, W.S.F.(ed.), *Durkheim on Religion,*1975), where he states

> 'The powers before which the believer prostrates himself are not simply physical force, such as are given to the senses and the imagination : they are social forces. They are the direct product of collective representation which have clothed themselves in a material covering' (1975:94).

This statement is founded on an earlier one where Durkheim asserts that '...it is quite natural for [the] collective mind to see reality in a different way from us ...It has its passions, its habits, and its needs, which are not those of the individual, and which leave their mark on everything it conceives' (1975:94). The same notion is repeated and elaborated in *The Elementary Forms of The Religious Life*. There he argues that 'Society is a reality *sui generis* ... [and] ... the representations which express it have a wholly different content from purely individual ones...' (1915:16).Of the human individual he states there

> '...are two beings in him...an individual being which had its foundation in the organism and the circle of whose activities is therefore strictly limited, and a social being which represents the highest reality in the intellectual and moral order that we can know by observation - I mean society' (1915:16).

While Evans-Pritchard asserts that religion can be studied *sui generis*, and while he maintains a Durkheimian structure and tone to his argument, he does not accept this subordination of the individual to society. We have examined this in detail previously.

The materialism involved is therefore one that exists in terms of the structural, relational nature of the various aspects which comprise society. Morris is correct about Evans-Pritchard's exposition of Nuer religion, to that degree. He misunderstands Evans-Pritchard's intention, however, which is not to define but to explore the mysteries of Nuer religion, using Durkheim's sociological principles. As has been seen in regard to the Azande, and more so concerning the Sanusiya and Bedouin, Evans-Pritchard

maintains a methodological tension between the values of those principles (almost as social facts) and the variant values emerging from the society under scrutiny. One of the issues to which I shall return is that of 'the relation of symbol to what it symbolises - for every new representation requires, if it is to acquire more than nominal distinctiveness, a visible, material symbol' (1956a:319). Evans-Pritchard comments, '...our difficulties are everywhere greatly increased by historical changes in Nuer religion' (1956a:319). That these changes are problematic reflects his continuing Durkheimian influenced outlook. The way in which Evans-Pritchard perceives history also works against Durkheim.

Thus it is that Evans-Pritchard utilises elements of Durkheim's conceptual framework to advance a view of the nature of religion which retains a definite materialist aspect. Evans-Pritchard suggests, in regard to the new conceptions of Spirit borrowed by the Nuer from their neighbours, that

> 'though they are always so presented in myths and traditions there is a difference between such personal experiences in stories which account for the relationship of a social group to a spiritual form and the personal experience each man has in the critical events of his own life and of the lives of those near to him' (1956a:319).

The particular social structural focus is on persons, to whom the new conceptions '...are thought of as having appeared at points of time...' (1956a:319) in certain events.

The personal aspect of religious experience is suggested as that which constitutes the fundamental character of religion. In Evans-Pritchard's view the personal aspect is more important than the collective aspect in understanding religion's fundamental character (1956a:320). He states that

> 'We learn from the collective expression of religion more about the social order than about what is specifically religious thought and practice, Its personal expression tells us more of what religion is in itself. If we recognise that the collective expression is only one form of religious activity we shall not make the mistake of trying to explain Nuer religion in terms of their social structure alone' (1956a:320).

The distinction that Evans-Pritchard is drawing here could be read as a truism, whether from the point of view of believers or non-believers. This is possible on the grounds that it could be argued that it is self-evident to some that the personal expression gives us a fuller picture of what religion is. To others, who seek only a rational system of

dogma, it may not be self-evident (1954d:11). On the other hand, Evans-Pritchard presents a complex analysis from which personal experience emerges with the status of a social fact akin to that of Durkheim's collective representation.

A further discussion of this question will come later. The present issue is the discernment of the grounds for this content in theoretical perspective between Evans-Pritchard and Durkheim. Evans-Pritchard summarises the various theories of religion, which we have outlined in the earlier chapters, and not in particularly flattering terms. The views of Tylor, Frazer, and Malinowski are commented on very tersely

> 'Faced with so complex and variable a problem, to speak of Nuer religion simply as one of fear or awe, or as a projection or as cathartic, and so forth, must be a distortion, and one that does not greatly help us to understand it' (1956a:313).

Evans-Pritchard refers specifically to the problem of the Nuer sense of guilt in relation to misfortunes. Guilt in such a context is not just a consequence of fear but is '...a complex psychological state' (1956a:313). The state arises because of the confluence of the activities of Spirit and the moral significance of some serious danger. A crisis ensues which is considered a moral one, rather than a natural one. The favourable resolution of such a crisis may not depend upon spiritual aid but '...on so delicate and indiscernible a factor as intention' (1956a:313). The picture Evans-Pritchard presents is not wholly different to Malinowski's position (1948:60-61). Malinowski certainly refers to the cathartic aspects of religion in relation to rites associated with dying and death. He argues that the '...line of ritual conduct opposes and contradicts some of the strongest emotions to which the dying man might become a prey' (1948:61). And in this way the 'whole conduct of the group ...expresses the hope of salvation and immortality ...it expresses only one among the conflicting emotions of the individual' (1948:61). Other aspects of the debate between Evans-Pritchard and Malinowski over the nature of religion will be discussed later. In the main, as was seen regarding the Azande, Evans-Pritchard does not have much sympathy for Malinowski's overall theoretical perspective, yet he makes surprising use of one or two of his key ideas.

The problem is Evans-Pritchard's intellectual relationship with Durkheim. Evans-Pritchard states that together with others such as Fustel de Coulanges, Robertson-Smith, Mauss and Hertz, Durkheim has been successful in showing '...that many features of these [primitive] religions can be understood only by sociological analysis, by

relating them to the social structure' (1956a:313). Similarly, he states that the complexity of Nuer religion may not be '...fully understood without a knowledge of the social order' (1956a:313). Evans-Pritchard states his basic opposition to Durkheim, 'his colleagues and pupils'. who were not content with regarding religions as being strongly influenced by the social structure. In their view primitive peoples' religious conceptions '...are nothing more than a symbolic representation of the social order' and it is society which human beings worship, pray and make sacrifice to (1956a:313). Evans-Pritchard's opposition culminates in a statement which requires much qualification. Once again, there is a touch which is reminiscent of Malinowski's rejection of Durkheim, when he states, on the ground that moral rules are only one part of humankind's traditional heritage, that

> '... since morality is not identified with the Power of Being from which it is believed to spring, since finally the metaphysical concept of "Collective Soul" is barren in anthropology, we have to reject the sociological theory of religion' (1948:59).

Evans-Pritchard asserts that to present society as the reality to which prayer, worship and sacrifice are directed is a '...postulate of sociologistic metaphysic...' for which it seems to him there is total lack of evidence (1956a:313).

Evans-Pritchard's critique rest on four principles. First, that the evolutionary, psychological and sociological theories of religion suffer from the common weakness of being based on inadequate and unreliable facts. Secondly, the 'wide generalisations' used as the data for the theories were '...in reality *a priori* assumptions posited on the facts rather than scientific conclusions derived from them ...' (1956a:314). Thirdly, that in focusing on religion as a general phenomenon based on the study of current primitive religions rather than the contemporaneous world religion, they used information that was uncertain, if not lacking rather than availing themselves of the latter's vast literatures and known histories. Fourthly, Evans-Pritchard takes up a theme which featured in *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica* that of the need to conduct research into what these religions mean '...to ordinary people rather than into how philosophers, theologians, lawyers, mystics, and others have presented them...'. (1956a:314). Had all been observed, then the religions of primitive people, would not have been treated '...as they so often were, as something so unlike the religions of civilisation that they appeared to require a special kind of interpretation and a special vocabulary' (1956a:314).

Evans-Pritchard proceeds to elaborate a theme touched on before. He argues that Nuer 'philosophy', or 'world-view', or belief system, '...is essentially of a religious kind, and is dominated by the idea of *kwoth*, Spirit. As Spirit cannot be directly experienced by the senses, what we are considering is a conception' (1956a:315). The crux of the problem that besets Evans-Pritchard in this analysis, especially as he attempts to maintain a Durkheimian approach, is that the aspect of religious experience which he seeks to delineate remains elusive. He sets up a basic contrast between *kwoth*, Spirit, and *cak*, creation, without which *kwoth* would remain 'entirely indeterminate and could not be thought of by Nuer at all (1956a:314). The contrast permits definition 'by reference to effects and relations and by the use of symbols and metaphors' (1956a:314). The Nuer, however, are unable to express what *kwoth* is like in itself, and, in fact, they do not claim to know (1956a:314). Evans-Pritchard's argument returns to the theme of the 'simple' and 'humble', this time involving the Nuer perception of themselves as *doar*, simple people.

Durkheim

The purpose of the following examination of aspects of Durkheim's theoretical structure is to illuminate more of Evans-Pritchard's equivocal attitude towards Durkheim. I have shown throughout this analysis that Evans-Pritchard makes extensive use of two of Durkheim's main ideas, that of 'social facts', and 'collective representations'. I will now examine two of Durkheim's works, to see to what degree Evans-Pritchard's criticism of Durkheim's view as 'sociologistic metaphysic' is valid, if in fact it is. It is also important to consider some of the evolutionary elements in Durkheim's perspective.

Durkheim published his paper *Individual and Collective Representations* in 1898 (E.T.:1953). There he argued that '...social facts are in a sense independent of individuals and exterior to individual minds...[and]...Society has for its substratum the mass of associated individuals' (1953:24). Durkheim's view as expressed here recurs throughout his discourse, and Evans-Pritchard makes good use of it. The major differentiation implied in his use is that he gives more prominence to individuals, as we have seen.

In the same way, Evans-Pritchard accepts and uses the following principle which Durkheim forged as a strong methodological instrument. Speaking of the 'mass of associated individuals', Durkheim states that

> 'The system which they form by uniting together, and which varies according to their geographical disposition and the nature and number of their channels of communication, is the base from which social life is raised. **The representations** which form the **network** of social life arise from the **relations** between the individuals thus combined or the secondary groups that are between the individuals and the total society' (1953:24)*

Durkheim presents this relationship, the system of ideas, as an entity which surpasses the individual minds that comprise society. There is a morphological element in this view as Durkheim unfolds his thoughts. He argues that the

> '...conception of the relationship which unites the social substratum and the social life is at every point analogous to that which undeniably exists between the physiological substratum and the psychic life of individuals...' (1953:25).

Evans-Pritchard, in his conclusion to *Nuer Religion*, takes issue implicitly with this perspective. It is not that an analogy may not be made, but that Durkheim puts the case too strongly, unilaterally, when he asserts that it 'holds at every point'. In regard to the matter of religious conceptions, beliefs and articulations of feelings, Evans-Pritchard emphasises the priority of the individual over the collective conceptions (1956a:320). Evans-Pritchard thereby changes the focus of the argument, because individual histories become the basis for analysis. Their importance is highlighted through the process of seeking the structural uniformities associated with them. The hermeneutic approach extends this concentration on the individual to the activities of Kwoth, for it cannot be reduced to the social order.In arguing so Evans-Pritchard rejects Durkheim's position completely.

Durkheim's argument continues

> 'While one might perhaps contest the statement that all social facts without exception impose themselves from without upon the individual, the doubt does not seem possible as regards religious beliefs and practices, the rules of morality...all the most characteristic manifestations of collective life' (Durkheim, 1953:25).

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*   emphasis added

Evans-Pritchard's ambivalence comes about, in part, because, while accepting this analytical instrument, that social facts are objective realities, he does not endorse the view that they impose themselves on individuals as absolutely as Durkheim suggests. Durkheim is even more explicit when he argues that

> 'private sentiments do not become social except by combination under the action of the *sui generis* forces developed in association . In such a combination, with mutual alterations involved, *they become something else*' (1953:26).

Thus the resultant social entity surpasses the individual, who has identity by being 'in the whole as it is by the whole' (1956a:26). Durkheim's view of society is in many respects a reflection of the notion of the physics of his era. This emerges when he states that it is inadmissable to contend 'that each aspect of life is embodied in a different group of atoms. Life cannot be thus divided; it is one, and consequently cannot be based on anything other than the living substance in its totality. It is in the whole, not in the parts' (1953:29). The holistic emphasis is good, but its univocal application to social reality creates uncertainties.

Durkheim adopts this position in opposition to 'individualistic sociology' which in his view is based on the '...principles of materialist metaphysics' (1953:29). According to this perception the complex is explained by the simpler 'superior by inferior', and 'whole by part'. Durkheim holds this approach to be a contradiction in terms. He also asserts that idealist and theological metaphysics are equally contradictory, so that the part cannot be derived from the whole '...since the whole is nothing without the parts which form it and cannot draw its vital necessities from the void' (1953:29). Durkheim argues further that phenomena are to be explained as '...the product of the whole by the characteristic properties of the whole, the complex by the complex, social facts by society, [and] vital material facts by the *sui generis* combinations from which they result' (1953:29).

Evans-Pritchard does not seek to contradict this approach in so far as it concerns the study of the structural relations which comprise a belief system, considered part of the social order (Evans-Pritchard, 1956a:320). His departure from the narrowness of this perspective emerges when he asks what religion is in itself. Durkheim's particular expression of the evolutionary process of society is evident when he states that '...the

flexibility, freedom and contingence of superior forms of reality show in comparison with the lower forms in which they are rooted' (Durkheim, 1953:30). The evolutionary nature of his thought regarding religion is still more clearly stated when he argues that once a basic number of representations has been created, they, because of their partial autonomy, have the power to attract and repel, to form syntheses. The syntheses are new representations, and are caused by other collective representations and '...not by this or that characteristic of the social structure' (1953:31).

Equivocal as Evans-Pritchard is about aspects of Durkheim's position, especially the evolutionary, he seems to place his view of the individual experience and expression of religion into a social category, analogous as it were, to those collective representations which are the outcome of a synthesis of other such representations. The evidence is only suggestive, but despite Evans-Pritchard's separation of the collective from the personal expression of religion, he does not suggest that the personal experience is any the less a social reality, and he allows religion to express non-social reality (e.g. personal feelings). Another aspect of his argument is the manner in which he distinguishes Nuer religious concepts. They are, he asserts, '...properly speaking not concepts but imaginative constructions' which have social expression through words and gestures which '...transport us to a realm of experience where what the eye sees and the ear hears is not the same as what the mind perceives' (Evans-Pritchard, 1956a:321). Unfortunately Evans-Pritchard does not explain this any further, but it makes sense in terms of the distinction that was seen earlier between first and second order language, between the largely intellectual apprehension of religion and the largely imaginative and experiential apprehension of it. Both modes of perception are, it is suggested, social realities and their consequences are experienced at the individual level. This idea is perhaps present, in an inchoate fashion, when Durkheim distinguishes the distinctive property of the individual representational life as *'spirituality'*, from that of the social life as *'hyper-spirituality'* (Durkheim, 1953:34). Durkheim uses the term 'spirituality' to denote the character of intellectual facts within a sociologically naturalistic view of reality, the purpose of which is to explain specific social facts '...while preserving a religious respect for their specificity' (1953:34.). Durkheim acknowledges that this account has a 'metaphysical appearance' but he argues that 'spirituality' '...designates nothing more than a body of natural facts which are explained by natural causes' (1953:34). He also states that the new field of study thus opened up may reveal new forces at work,the laws

of which '…may not be discovered by the methods of interior analysis alone' (1953:34). Evans-Pritchard seems to have something similar in mind when he argues the distinction between the collective and personal religious experience, so that it is 'natural' in this sense that the personal expression of religion reflects more of what religion is in itself.

Turning to another early paper of Durkheim's, that 'Concerning the Definition of Religious Phenomena' (1899 (E.T. in Pickering (ed.) *Durkheim on religion*, 1975:74-79), there is some interesting variation and development. Durkheim begins by defining religious facts as distinct from religion, since the latter is '…a totality of religious phenomena, and the whole can only be defined in terms of the part' (1975:74). Later he defines religious phenomena as '…the name given to obligatory beliefs as well as the practices relating to given objects in such beliefs' (1975:92). He argues that 'since religious practices and beliefs are so interdependent, they cannot be separated by science and must belong to a single study…The practices translates the beliefs into action and the beliefs are often only an interpretation of the practices' (1975:92).

Something of this perspective emerges in Evans-Pritchard's discussion of spear symbolism for the Nuer. He asserts that a spear expresses an ideal, that of filiation, even if the one received by a youth at his initiation is not actually inherited from his forefathers. The spear is regarded as representing that ideal, and serves as a symbol of affiliation (1956a:238). Evans-Pritchard states that 'The spear is thus a point at which two complex social representations meet, that of the person and that of the lineage' (1956a:238) What is significant here is the way in which Evans-Pritchard focuses on the 'person' as a social representation alongside that of the 'lineage'. This point emerges more emphatically in his discussion of '"the spear of cutting (initiation)"' which he describes as 'a symbol of a sacramental change as well as of a change in social status' (1956a:239).

> 'In both symbolic aspects it is an extension of, and stands for, the right arm and represents strength, strength of the soul as well as strength of the body of the person; and …in both the symbolism is also a representation of the collective strength of the lineage to which the person belongs' (1956a:239).

A further expression of this complex symbolism is found in relation to sacrifice. Evans-Pritchard argues that the manipulation of a spear, especially in piacular and personal sacrifices, expresses '…the throwing of the whole person into the intention of

the sacrifice. It is not said but also thought, desired, and felt' (1956a:239). Thus the spear 'stands for the whole person' (1956a:239-240).The use of the term 'sacramental' in a particularly apt fashion very clearly reflects the theological background to Evans-Pritchard's analysis. This parallels well the use made of the term in relation to such sacraments as baptism and confirmation, which relate directly to the notion of initiation. They too state both a qualitative inward change to the enhancement of the individual, and denote a specific evolution in social status - membership of a Christian community. Initiation is a very intense development in an individual's life, and it serves to incorporate the person into the social group through establishing full individual integrity.

Durkheim states that religion corresponds to a stage of social development where obligatory philosophy and practical discipline, thought and action, are considered as almost inseparable. It is this type of evolutionary view of which Evans-Pritchard is critical. He accepts the interrelationship between obligatory philosophy and practised discipline, thought and action, but not Durkheim's view that it is 'impossible to draw a clear line of demarcation' (Durkheim,1975:92). At one level Evans-Pritchard would separate them in terms of the collective and personal expressions of belief. On another level, Evans-Pritchard would agree that dogmas '...are not purely speculative states or simple phenomena of conceptualisation' (1975:92), as was seen when considering the formalised beliefs associated with spears in relation to initiation. Durkheim also argues that dogmas '...are always directly connected with definite practices' (1975:92). The degree to which Evans-Pritchard's ambivalence regarding his application of Durkheim's principles complicates an analysis of the development of his [Evans-Pritchard's] thought is evident in this use of contrasting ideas.. Underlying his presentation of the significance of the spear as a personal and collective representation is its importance as an essential part of the personal, social awareness of whom, as well as what, the spear symbolises.

Durkheim states that when religion is considered under the formality of a social force it becomes something 'natural and explicable to the human intelligence' (1975:94), whereas, if it is understood to emanate from the individual, "it constitutes an incomprehensible mystery'(1975:94). The difficulties the latter suggests disappear if religion is accepted as essentially a social thing (1975:95). Based on this, Durkheim argues that individuals have problems grasping the passions, habits, and needs of society, because these conceptions are not ours and are shrouded in a disturbing air of

mystery (1975:95). The way out of the difficulty is to discover 'the laws of collective conceptualisation...' (1975:95). Durkheim then introduces the distinction between the sacred and the profane.

Sacred things are defined as '...those whose representation society itself has fashioned' which includes 'all sorts of collective states, common tradition and emotions, feelings, which have a relationship to objects of general interest..., and all those elements are combined according to the appropriate laws of social mentality' (1975:95).

Profane things on the other hand 'are those which each of us constructs from our own sense data and experience...', and 'the ideas we have about them have as their subject matter unadulterated, individual impressions, and that is why they do not have the same prestige in our eyes as the preceding ones' (1975:95). Durkheim adds regarding the latter that we 'only put into them and see in them what empirical observation reveals to us' (1975). The contrast that he establishes is that between two kinds of intellectual phenomena, the one resulting from a single brain and mind, and the other from several acting in relationship to each other. Durkheim argues that this constitutes the duality of the temporal and the spiritual, which gives symbolic expression to 'the duality of the individual and the social', to what he nominates as 'psychology proper' and sociology.

Durkheim acknowledges that religious beliefs and practices are 'partly the result of individual spontaneity' (1975:96). He states that even though there are many instances of individual choice in regard to what beliefs and practices are adhered to in any given religion these individual forms require their distinction from the communal expression. Durkheim visualises the alternatives in terms of the individual manifestation of belief and practice, as being 'free, private, and optional', 'fashioned to one's own needs and understanding', and the communal as being handed down by tradition, formulated for the whole group and which is obligatory to practice' (1975:96). These two conceptions are of the one family (1975:96).

We are led to wonder here, because Durkheim seems to be ambivalent himself about the role of the individual in a sociological context. We have seen Evans-Pritchard's discussion of spear symbolism and how in that he tackles the same type of ambivalence.

Durkheim states, for example, that '...individual beliefs and practices have always been of little significance in comparison with collective beliefs and practices' (1975:97), and that private beliefs are derived from public. By definition, 'obligatory religion cannot have individual origins' (1975:97). Durkheim thus maintains the sociological superiority of the collective over the individual. However, he refrains from making that view absolute, because he argues that 'the individual is not present as a passive witness in the religious life which he shares with his group. He visualises it, thinks about it, seeks to understand it and, by that very fact, changes its nature' (1975:97). Durkheim, while conceding this, asserts that 'intimate and personal religion is then only the subjective aspect of the external, impersonal and public religion' (1975:97). Distinct as he claims them to be, Durkheim argues that they are 'successive historic phases'.

> 'Indeed the individual is affected by the social states which he helps to fashion at the very moment he is fashioning them. They influence him as they are being formed and he changes their nature as he is influenced by them' (1975:97).

In this way Durkheim asserts the continuing integrity of the individual, so that no matter to what extent 'he may be absorbed into society, he always retains some personality of his own' (1975:97). Durkheim argues that the 'social life to which he contributes becomes in him, at the moment of its coming into being, the germ of an interior and personal life which grows parallel to the first one' (1975:97). He adds that 'there are no forms of collective activity which do not become personalised in this way' (1975:97). It remains Durkheim's overall view that the personal, the profane, is secondary and ontologically separate from the sacred, the social. The influence the social may have on individual minds, which may be developed in them in an original manner, is secondary, since the forms such individual expressions have is that of an extension of the collective form (1975:98). The ambivalence of Durkheim's view is brought home to us in his addition to the definition of religious phenomena, of 'the optional beliefs and practices which concern similar objects or objects assimilated into the previous ones [which] will also be called religious phenomena' (1975:98). From what has been seen of Evans-Pritchard's discussions, of spear symbolism and the relationship of Spirit to the social order, he does not endorse the view that individual expressions of belief and practice are optional and secondary. He argues that they have a status of equivalent importance,

pointing as they do towards what religion is in itself, and that this is possible because of the structural background of the collective expression. The individual believer is not optional and secondary vis-a-vis the collective aspects of his expression of belief and practice, and the individual is not profane before the sacredness of society.The interior nature of Nuer religion '...is externalised in rites which we can observe...' (1956a:322). Ambiguity, from the sociological point of view remains, because the meaning of the rites '...depends finally on an awareness of God and that men are dependent on him and must be resigned to his will' (1956a:322). It is worth noting that Durkheim crafted his view of religion, from the securalist perspective. Evans-Pritchard, however, makes very much the same suggestion, that the individual is subordinate to the sacred. The major distinction, however, is Evans-Pritchard's portrayal of this as an inter-personal relationship between the creator spirit, *Kwoth*, and individual creatures, men and women.

In his later work, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1915), Durkheim maintains a line of argument generally similar to that which we have just reviewed. For example, he re-states his view that 'all known religious beliefs ...present one common characteristic : they presuppose a classification of all the things, real and ideal, of which men think, into two classes or opposed groups, generally designated...by the words *profane* and *sacred'* (1915:37). This distinction is between an 'ideal and transcendental world' and 'the material world', a contrast Durkheim asserts is universal (1915:39), and is maintained by a logical chasm (1915:40). Durkheim argues that the 'real characteristic of religious phenomena is that they always suppose a bipartite division of the whole universe, known and knowable, into two classes which embrace all that exists, but which radically exclude each other' (1915:40). It is to this type of assumption that Evans-Pritchard objects as 'sociologistic metaphysic'. This dismissal is especially disparaging given Evans-Pritchard's intellectual debt to Durkheim, but not a surprising one coming as it does from one who generally avoids univocal logic. The constant problem that arises in this discussion is Evans-Pritchard's evidently equivocal attitude to the idealised assumption Durkheim maintains about 'society'. The actual realities of daily life only partially approximate to the paradigm that Durkheim imposes, especially concerning religious beliefs.

Durkheim discusses the nature of religious beliefs and states that they are '…the representations which express the nature of sacred things and the relations which they sustain, either with each other or with profane things' (1915:41). Rites '…are the rules of conduct which prescribe how a man should comport himself in the presence of these sacred objects' (1915:41). On the basis of these views, Durkheim asserts that it is 'the totality of these beliefs and their corresponding rites [that] constitutes a religion'. He argues from this that

> 'a religion is not necessarily contained within one sole and single idea … it is rather a whole made up of distinct and relatively individualised parts … [and] … there is no religion … which does not recognise a plurality of sacred things' (1915:41).

Evans-Pritchard takes up, implicitly, these general ideas in his discussion of Nuer sacrifice, modifying Durkheim's notion of the sacred and profane with Hubert and Mauss' distinction between desacralising and sacralising sacrifices. The first refers to those sacrifices which remove Spirit from man, and the second, those which bring the Spirit from man. Evans-Pritchard also refers to these as having piacular and confirmatory intentions. The first type of sacrifice is personal, the second, collective (1956a:198). He states that the collective sacrifice's primary purpose and main function 'is to confirm, establish or to add strength to, a change in social status - boy to man, maiden to wife, living man to ghost, - or a new relationship between social groups…by making God and the ghosts, who are directly concerned with the change taking place, witnesses of it' (1956a:199). These sacrifices are important because they sacralise the social event and the new relationships brought about by it (1956a:199.). The changes wrought are thereby solemnised and given religious validation (1956a:199). Evans-Pritchard expresses this understanding in terms which are quite consistent with those we have just seen in Durkheim's analysis of religion.

Evans-Pritchard states that what is important in regard to personal sacrifice is that 'the essential acts of sacrifice be carried out', (something they hold in common with collective sacrifices), and that there be a right intention. Right intention is a 'matter of disposition not of emotion' (1956a:208), according to Evans-Pritchard, who asserts this against the explanations of primitive religions that are based on a psychological perception of what is enacted (1956a:207). Evans-Pritchard's attitude to the deficiencies

of psychological explanations has been discussed earlier. Here he draws attention to the degrees of involvement and interest on the part of most people present at a sacrifice, depending on the nature and purpose of the sacrifice, and the closeness of their relations to those responsible for it (1956a:20). Feelings and behaviour as such, do not relate to the constitution of religion (1956a:208). The view of personal involvement in sacrifice appears to take up Durkheim's ideas regarding religious phenomena. Evans-Pritchard, however, does not leave personal attitudes, involvement, feeling, and intention in the domain of what is optional and secondary. The central place that disposition and intention have in Nuer sacrifice emerges from Evans-Pritchard's comment that 'although it is better if the one falls well, it does not much matter if it does not' since the 'Nuer are more interested in purpose than in the details of procedure' (1956a:212).

It is also important that in order to overcome the terminological and conceptual gap in Durkheim's position Evans-Pritchard invokes the theological principle of *ex opere operato*. He does not say so, but introduces the ideas in his typically inclusive manner. The psychological is apparently irrelevant, even though a person intends and carries out a sacrifice, the very fact of the ritual's being enacted is sufficient for it to effect what is intended. Evans-Pritchard, contra Malinowski, therefore hints at a much different inward experience than highly charged emotion. The intention of the will generates more power than feeling does. The argument continues, 'An oblation must be made to validate a social status of relationship or so that people may be free from evil and danger - small details of ceremony do not matter' (1956a:212). Evans-Pritchard also asserts that in regard to sacrifice '...the central piacular idea is the substitution of lives of cattle for lives of men, and that this is what takes place on the surface' (1956a:230).

This interpretation of Nuer sacrifice, which considers both collective and personal aspects and forms, also stands on different if not wholly opposed ground to Durkheim's view of the origin of the ambiguity in religious forces. Evans-Pritchard has no problem with the notion that these forces are historical, physical and human, and moral and material (Durkheim, 1915:223).

Durkheim argues that they 'are moral powers because they are made up entirely of the impressions this moral being, the group, arouses in those other moral beings, its individual members...' (1915:223). These powers are also conceived of 'under material

forms', so that they 'could not fail to be regarded as closely related to material things ... [and] therefore ... dominate ... the collective and individual consciousness' (1915:223). Evans-Pritchard readily acknowledges though not without some ambiguity, the material aspects of religion, but will not endorse the view that the collective has an ascendancy over the personal. His description of the graduated response to and involvement in sacrifice suggests that the type of absolute relationship Durkheim believes to exist between collective and individual does not exist in reality.

Durkheim discusses the nature of the soul, and argues that it '...has always been considered a sacred thing ... [and] opposed to the body which is, in itself, profane' (1915:262). The notion of the soul is not illusory, and its existence is the outcome of another manifestation of society establishing itself in us in a durable form (1915:262). The individual soul, Durkheim states, 'is only a portion of the collective soul of the group' and 'it is the anonymous force at the basis of cult, but incarnated in an individual whose personality it espouses' (1915:264). Durkheim argues that the person is the product of the 'essentially impersonal spiritual principle', the soul of the group, which constitutes 'the very substance of individual souls' (1915:270), and an 'individualising factor', the body (1915:270). The historical, temporal, nature of bodies and their distinction from one another enables them to form '...a special centre about which the collective representations reflect and colour themselves differently' (1915:270).

Evans-Pritchard states that Nuer distinguish between human and divine, that *kwoth*, Spirit, is of a different nature from *tie*, soul. 'The soul is part of man a created thing' (1956a:158), whereas 'Spirit is extrinsic to man, operating on him from outside him, and invasive' (1956a:158). This difference is expressed in the way in which God and man and ghosts are perceived. God '... is a person of the above *(ran nhial)*, a man or a ghost is a person of the below *(ran piny)*' (1956a:159). Evans-Pritchard asserts that the 'difference, and the contrast, is clearly seen in the Nuer belief that the soul of a person struck by lightning is changed into Spirit' (1956a:159). His argument resembles Durkheim's notions of soul and the relationship of the individual's with the collective soul. At this point, however, Evans-Pritchard departs quite clearly from Durkheim. He argues that since Spirit and soul 'are conceived of as of different natures, the conception of Spirit cannot be derived from a development of the conception of the soul'

(1956a:159.). Durkheim argues the 'development' the other way round, it is true, but Evans-Pritchard's argument is still opposed to his view. Evans-Pritchard states that

> '...it is precisely because God and man are thought of as quite different sorts of being that Nuer can think of themselves in relation to God and God can be represented in different ways to different persons and social groups' (1956a:159).

The parallel with Durkheim is that he sees society and the individual as different sorts of being. The difference is that Nuer regard *Kwoth*, Spirit, as the creator, and as such as the source of being that humans possess. As distinct, *Kwoth* is also regarded as personal, and not impersonal, as society is in Durkheim's view. Evans-Pritchard's view is also evident when he states

> '...Nuer religious thought cannot be understood unless God's closeness to man is taken together with his separation from man, for its meaning lies precisely in this paradox' (1956a:4).

Durkheim clearly believed in the existence of this duality, and seems to be determined to produce a more manageable, less troublesome understanding of religion. He was deeply concerned about the development of a rationalised and secularised religion, one that would be subject to the criticism and control of science (1915:431, and Lukes' comments 1973:476-477). Evans-Pritchard, however, is prepared to use the paradox' the duality created to highlight the uniformities he inferred from the social facts that he observed.

Evans-Pritchard and His Use of Christian Theological Language

Mary Douglas (*Evans-Pritchard*, 1980:87-106) tackles some of the problematic aspects of Evans-Pritchard's analysis, particularly his use of theological terminology. The purpose of this section is to clarify the issue of the degree to which Evans-Pritchard's projection of his Catholic views and experience influenced him in his interpretation of Nuer religion.

The first general point I would like to make is that the use of biblical and theological examples and language may be read more simply as evidence of the existence of the 'British School' to which Geertz refers in *Works and Lives*. Both Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown use parallels from the Bible and Christian theological writing as explanatory tools.In doing so they appeal to a body of common knowledge and images

but not necessarily to their faith content. Malinowski uses the terms 'existence', 'substance' and 'attribute' in their theological and general philosophical meaning in relation to magic, and his explanation of what the Trobriand islanders understood they were effecting through their various types of magic (1948:33). He also uses the concept of the 'sacramental meal' as a means of expressing the complexities of the 'savage's relationship with his 'spirits or divinities' (1948:41-43). The same section in which Malinowski treats of this relationship of man with the world and with his spirits, is entitled 'Providence in Primitive Life' (1948:41). Radcliffe-Brown alludes to the Catholic practice of abstention from meat on Fridays and during Lent, as an example of taboo, and the infraction of it as the cause of an 'undesirable change of ritual status' (1952b:135). He also draws upon the Book of Leviticus for examples of religious sanction (1952b:172-173). The point being made is that theological and biblical terminology is part of a common literary tradition to which Malinowski (by adoption) and Radcliffe-Brown belonged.

Evans-Pritchard presents the Nuer conception of God and uses some standard Christian theological terms in an attempt to convey their particular insights. What I shall show in this section is that Evans-Pritchard employs an available methodological tool, and that his use of it, sophisticated as it may be, reflects both the nature of Nuer religion and the sense of the 'common-room "we"'. The fact that Evans-Pritchard was a Catholic is not irrelevant, but Malinowski was probably a Catholic too. Evans-Pritchard's use of the term is an appeal to a presumed common background and is necessarily largely by analogy. Thus it will be commented on only briefly. It is in this area that much of Mary Douglas' (1980) commentary misses the mark.

Evans-Pritchard argues that the Nuer regard God as father, *gwandong'* (which literally means 'ancestor'). This fatherhood is understood in two senses, 'creator' and 'protector' (1956a:7). The basic word for expressing the very complex notion of a divinity in all its levels of contact and influence with the creatures and the world it created is *kwoth*. This Evans-Pritchard translates as Spirit. He chooses the term Spirit, derived from the Latin, *spiritus*, and related to the Greek *pneuma*, because it 'suggests both the intangible quality of air and the breathing or blowing out of air' (1956a:1). Another reason for the use of the word 'Spirit', so derived and related is that all three words, 'spirit', 'spiritus' and 'pneuma', try to convey the particular content of the Hebrew word

ruah, an onamatope, denoting violent breathing out of air in contrast to ordinary breathing. *Kwoth,* Evans-Pritchard argues has a similar onomatopoeic relationship and is used to describe such things 'as blowing on the embers of a fire..., blowing into the uterus of a cow ... to make it give milk ...' (1956a:1). This carefully crafted statement leads the appropriately educated European (not necessarily a practising Christian) into a world very different from that whence he or she comes. As was seen in Geertz's discussion of the concept, 'Akobo Realism', some major cosmological leaps are made between the world of the outsider and the belief system of the insider, which, in this instance, is that of the Nuer.

The noun form of *kwoth,* Evans-Pritchard asserts, '...means only Spirit' in the sense of 'Spirit of the heavens or Spirit who is in the heavens' *(kwoth nhial, kwoth a nhial).* Nhial, it is said, basically means sky, but it may be combined with verbs which refer to various natural processes, for example, raining and thundering. The word may also be used to mean 'above' in a generic way. Evans-Pritchard is quick to point out that the implied spatial mataphor does not give to *kwoth* a local habitation 'equating the sky with God' (1956a:2). The wind, the air, the moon, and the rain all reveal God, but are not he. They are 'modes of God' but are not 'his essence'. since that is what 'Spirit' is. Evans-Pritchard argues that the polarity of heaven and earth symbolises the gulf between God and man 'helps us to understand Nuer religious thought and feeling and also sheds light on certain social features of their religion, for example, the greater prestige of prophets than of priests' (1956a:3).

This brief reference, taken in the context just examined, reveals the primary sociological intention of Evans-Pritchard's exploration of Nuer religion. The polarity of heaven and earth, in part, reflects Durkheim's dichotomy of the sacred and the profane. But Evans-Pritchard presents the fundamental meaning of Nuer religious thought in terms of the paradox, that it cannot be understood 'unless God's closeness to man is taken together with his separation from man' (1956a:4). Durkheim argues that the world is divided into two realms, one sacred, one profane (Durkheim, 1915:37). He also states that the distinction is not just to be understood simply in the sense that one thing is subordinated to another, that that which is regarded as superior is sacred in relation to the first (1915:37). Durkheim argues that, on the other hand, that there are 'sacred things of every degree, and there are some in relation to which a man feels himself relatively at his

ease' (1915:38). He remarks as well that the dependence of man on the gods is reciprocal (1915:38).

Evans-Pritchard's discussion of the concept of *cak*, creation, ex nihilo and in thought or imagination (1956a:5) suggests the same paradoxical relationship. Uncreated as *kwoth* may be, as Spirit and as creator, the fashioner of human kind, that very act of creating establishes social relations which bridge the chasm between the sacred and the profane. The complexity of Evans-Pritchard's perspective emerges more fully as he discusses further the Nuer conception of God as creative Spirit

> 'He is also a *ran*, a living person, whose *yiegh*, breath or life, sustains man. I have never heard Nuer suggest that he has a human form, but though he is himself ubiquitous and invisible, he sees and hears all that happens and he can be angry and can love (the Nuer word is *nhok*, and if we here translate it 'to love' it must be understood in the preferential sense of *agapo* or *diligo*: when Nuer say that God loves something they mean that he is partial to it' (1956a:7).

Theologically *agapo* attempts to encompass the notion of an unaffected, disinterested, and intense relation of friendship, believed to lie at the core of the divine activity of creating and sustaining life, and human life in particular. Evans-Pritchard's use of the term presumes that, but the point he makes is a sociological one, which also conforms to some of Durkheim's perception of the relationship between the sacred and the profane.

This view is revealed more clearly in the remarks Evans-Pritchard adds to those above,

> 'However, the anthropomorphic features of the Nuer conception of God are very weak and, …they do not act towards him as though he were a man. Indeed, such human features as are given to him barely suffice to satisfy the requirements of thought and speech. If he is to be spoken about, or to, he has to be given some human attribute. Man's relations to him is, as it is among other people, on the model of a human social relationship. He is father of man' (1956a:7).

Since even the term 'father' or 'ancestor' is analogical in this type of context, the Nuer use of anthropomorphic terms reveals their sense of the distinctness of God, but that shows their awareness of the very way in which he can be and is close to them. The awareness, as a belief, may be taken as a collective representation, which is representative in both religious and sociological terms of the basic order of things, cosmologically and socially.

Evans-Pritchard's treatment of the term *cuong* also illustrates this same thrust. The word's basic meaning is 'upright' in the sense of the way the supports of a cattle byre stand. Figuratively it may mean 'firmly established', as of a person, for example. The more common use is of being 'in the right', legally and morally (1956a:16). *Cuong* is used to describe the direct relationship of man with God in terms of his behaviour, and in an indirect way it is applied to God as the founder and guardian of morality (1956a:16). Implicit in this view of reality is the intertwining of the sociological and the religious. Evans-Pritchard argues that the sense of failure, of being at fault (*'devir'*, missing the mark, a fault which brings retribution'), underlies 'any failure to conform to the accepted norms of behaviour ...which may bring about evil consequences through either an expressed curse or a silent curse contained in anger and resentment...' (1956a:18). Nuer regard whatever misfortunes that ensue 'as coming ultimately from God' (1956a:18). God it is who supports those who are in the right, *cuong*, and who punishes those who are at fault, *devir* (1956a:18). That 'God alone is believed capable of making a curse operative reflects the dual perception of society, that of human beings in various forms of social relationship to each other, and that of the whole social order emanating, as it were, from God as the 'father of man' (1956a:18)

Mary Douglas' thesis, that Evans-Pritchard utilised Anders Nygrens' (mid-twentieth century Lutheran theologian) concept of the 'dominant motif', is correct (1956a:315). Evans-Pritchard, however, does not attempt to discern the 'basic idea or driving power' of Nuer religion as an explanation. *Kwoth*, Spirit, forms the motif (1956a:315), but, as Evans-Pritchard argues' it would remain 'entirely indeterminate and could not be thought of by Nuer at all if it were not that it so contrasted with the idea of *cak*, creation, in terms of which it can be defined by reference to effects and relations and by the use of symbols and metaphors' (1956a:315.).

Further evidence of this reluctance to commit himself to such a level of explanation occurs in the chapter entitled 'Soul and Ghost'. There Evans-Pritchard offers a definition of religion, as '...the reciprocal relation between God and man' (1956a:144), which we find is an almost direct quotation from Durkheim's initial remarks in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1915:38).

Evans-Pritchard, therefore, uses Christian theological terms to delineate the anthropomorphic elements in the Nuer belief-system. The polarity between *kwoth* and *ran*, Spirit and man, is the paradoxical representation of the utter separateness of the two orders of being at the same time, that polarity constitutes the social order (1956a:4). Evans-Pritchard's statement regarding sacrifice sheds further light on this issue. He argues that 'in Nuer sacrifice there are different shades of meaning. The pattern varies. There are shifts of emphasis' (1956a:284). The basic types of sacrifice are those which are concerned with social relations, 'changes in social status and the interaction of social groups' (1956a:272), and those concerned with the individual's moral and physical welfare. The latter are predominately piacular and are 'performed in situations of danger arising from the intervention of Spirit in human affairs... [and which are] ... often thought of as being brought about by some fault' (1956a:272). Evans-Pritchard asserts that the underlying reality in the process of 'formal presentation, consecration, invocation, and immolation', especially in regard to piacular sacrifices, is to 'establish communication with God rather in order to keep him away or get rid of him than to establish a union or fellowship with him' (1956a:275).

The paradoxical situation exists, is that what separates is also what unites God and man. Evans-Pritchard, however, argues that what is broken on the material plane, in terms of relationship, is re-formed on the moral plane in the moment of sacrifice (1956a:275). This resembles Durkheim's argument against the view that religion's purpose is not so much to make us think, or enrich our knowledge as 'to make us act, aid us to live' (Durkheim,1915:416). The believer 'who has communicated with his god is not merely a man who sees new truths of which the unbeliever is ignorant, he is a man who is stronger' (1915:416). Durkheim asserts, on the contrary, that society generates moral forces which awaken a range of protective and consoling sentiments that establish the individual. All this takes place within the context of active cooperation. In this way Durkheim agrees with the view he criticises, that action dominates religious life, but for him the origin of this action is society (1915:418).

Evans-Pritchard's appraisal of the paradox in Nuer beliefs is based on a rejection of Durkheim's view. His argument, however, that the Nuer distinction between the two levels of union is believed by them to be dissolved in an act of sacrifice is very

close in structure to Durkheim's view of the role of active cooperation in society. The difficulty with this type of exploration of an issue is that the notion of 'essential ambiguity' (1956a:275), does not provide an easy platform for further analysis. Evans-Pritchard does not accept Durkheim's view that religious forces are human and moral. The ambiguity of Nuer beliefs about God as a source of good and evil clearly suggests that religious forces cannot be viewed in human terms only. The point that Evans-Pritchard does not develop is that of the sociological consequences of anthropomorphic language concerning the divine. The existence of the paradox is clear to him but not to the Nuer.

The issue of sacrifice, therefore, brings into much clearer focus the paradoxical relation of Spirit and humankind. Evans-Pritchard argues that 'all gifts are symbols of inner states, and in this sense one can only give oneself, there is no other kind of giving' (1956a:279). The cattle offered in sacrifice are very intimate gifts of the people who offer them, and there is often a real sense of identification with the victim (1956a:279). But though sacrifice is important it forms 'only a part of the whole series of ritual and other activities, and a part in which the religious content is reduced to a minimum, the movements of the sacrifice being conducted in a perfunctory manner' (1956a:285). Sacrifices are used to sacralise secular rites and ceremonial acts (1956a:285). Thus religion's structural purpose is to regulate social life, but this is subsidiary 'to its role in the regulation of the individual's relation with God, its personal role' (1956a:286).

Mary Douglas asserts that Evans-Pritchard's overall argument involves a contradiction. This emerges in his handling of the issue of the one and the many. *Kwoth*, as Spirit, has many refractions that 'are not thought of as independent gods but in some way as hypostases of the modes and attributes of a single God' (1956a:49). Douglas criticises the use of the term 'hypostases', since its basic theological meaning has to do with a person of the godhead, (viz. the Trinity) (1980:111). Her argument is that this term has such a specific meaning that it does not serve any purpose in resolving the question of the relationship between the spirits of the air and Spirit. Evans-Pritchard does not appear to be interested in the theological implication of his argument, because he is making a sociological point. The issue therefore is clearly not whether the refractions of Spirit behave capriciously, but whether a term may be found which indicates a relationship between Spirit and spirits as if between different personal entities. Evans-

Pritchard's concern is to present what the Nuer take to be an established fact, that Spirit is one, but there are many refractions of this 'God', which, while having personal integrity, are not regarded as 'gods'. He argues that this is a way of portraying the concept of social order, and, therefore that 'Nuer religious conceptions are properly speaking not concepts but imaginative constructions' (1956a:321).This point is reinforced by the fact that 'hypostases' is used in an applied, imaginative fashion in Christian theology, where the term is employed in an attempt to talk about the composition of the Trinity (Father, Son, Spirit) in a way which maintains their oneness as God, but also asserts their personal, but not individual, specificity.

Evans-Pritchard's use of the term stresses the need for an understanding of the place and use of analogy in the process of anthropological interpretation. He applies an already complex analogical concept to an equivalently complicated notion. The recurrent use of such terms, beginning with that of 'Father' for God (in the sense of 'ancestor') implicitly reflect his own personal sensitivity. The term 'ancestor' is more than adequate for the sociological analysis that Evans-Pritchard proposes. Given the appropriate nuances, it could convey the sense of personal bond that he discerns in the Nuer perspective. It would also fit better with the fact that they have no personal name for *Kwoth* or *gwandong*. The use of 'Father' in the translation of the idea brings to the relationship a much sharper sense of intimacy. Perhaps there is even a further, poignant note, that it was Christians, who hold God as their father, who did so much damage to these equally spiritual people. The Nuer were still in the process of being 'pacified' when Evans-Pritchard carried out his initial fieldwork during 1930 (c.f. 1940a:11). This is supposition, but Evans-Pritchard's use of 'Father' at least suggests that he is in fact carrying out his hermeneutic task with a particular religious world-view acting as a methodological pattern.

Evans-Pritchard's focus on the individual experience of religion is an attempt to shed some light on its 'fundamental character'.It is, as we have seen, a view which departs from Durkheim's overall position. We have also seen, in Durkheim's discussion of the definition of religious phenomena, that he is ambivalent towards individual religious experience. Evans-Pritchard's handling of the Nuer material reflects a similar ambivalence from which emerges the subsidiary place of the structural role of religion in the 'regulation of the individual's relations with God, its personal role' (1956a:286).

The focus on the individual introduces another problematic aspect of Evans-Pritchard's anthropological methodology. Some of the discussion in the second chapter considered the lengths to which Evans-Pritchard goes to separate his perspectives from that of Malinowski. This he achieves, while at the same time maintaining some elements of Malinowski's functionalist approach. There is one facet of Malinowski's analytical method to which Evans-Pritchard's exploration of Nuer religion bears a striking similarity. Malinowski argues in regard to the study of religion, that, in relation to the ceremonies and rituals surrounding death, the 'whole conduct of the group - expresses the hope of salvation and immortality; that is, it expresses only one among the conflicting emotions of the individual' (1948b:61). Malinowski states further 'that the social share in religious enactment is a condition necessary but not sufficient, and that without the analysis of the individual mind, we cannot take one step in the understanding of religion' (1948b:69). It is crucial to remember that Evans-Pritchard never accepts the particular approach to individual psychology that is so much a part of Malinowski's analytical procedure. The point is that Evans-Pritchard, despite the way in which he tends to dismiss his intellectual mentors in regard to the study of religion, remains in a quite ambivalent relationship with them. The nature of this ambivalence and ambiguity reflects also the subject matter of the discipline, and the fact that in breaking new ground we only serve to highlight the sources which have influenced us.

CHAPTER 5 — CONCLUSION

This thesis has addressed some of the central issues in the development of Evans-Pritchard's approach to the anthropological analysis of religion. I have focused principally on the continuous, but largely implicit, debates that he conducted throughout his career with his leading intellectual influences and sources of inspiration.

Three important strands stand out in this analysis. First, Evans-Pritchard's gradual articulation of a strong historical perspective in his writings, which stands in contrast to the earliest stages of his development where he insisted on the deductive, scientific model of sociological exploration. Secondly, there is his career-long dialogue with Durkheim, and, much more covertly, with aspects of Malinowski's theoretical framework.

The third strand comprises the subtle development of Evans-Pritchard's attitude to religion. This operates on two levels, the first relating to Durkheim's views, from which he eventually parts company, the second involving the much less tangible shaping of his personal beliefs. The outcome of the latter is clear insofar as he became a Catholic in 1944, after some thirty years of awaiting the final dive (1973d:37). This personal belief is not so absolutely clear in his work, although in *Nuer Religion*, as has been seen, there are several very suggestive instances. They are suggestive because they are always embedded in a sociological context. Evans-Pritchard's 'Fragment of an Autobiography' *(New Blackfriars* 1973d(54):35-37) contains almost the whole range of his literary characteristics. We need to concern ourselves also with the following : (a) his re-iteration of the priority he gives to the question 'how?' over the question 'why?' (1973d:35), and (b) the description of his father as a '...simple, humble, pious man,...' (1973d:36). These repeat emphases that surface in each of the monographs that have been studied. He relates also that his father had '...a slightly stormy career at Oxford...' (1973d:36). Evans-Pritchard adds that he followed in his father's footsteps in that regard. His mother is portrayed as a '...sentimental kind of Christian' (1973d:36). The intricate set of counterpoised opposites extends to the farming stock from which his father came, even though Evans-Pritchard claims not to have known his paternal grandfather's occupation or religious affiliation.

The limpid ease of the 'Fragment' incorporates all the major stylistic idiosyncrasies of his principal works. The studied indifference about the past is offset by facts which make us wonder how seriously his remarks are to be taken and to what degree the metaphors act as defences of the truth he seeks to convey. So, for example, his mother's people had title to some long destroyed castle in Ireland (1973d:36). Its name 'Lea' means 'cow' in Hebrew. There seems to be at once a claim to prestige and perhaps, to a very humble, farming background. The same kind of problem arises when he speaks of 'conversion', although he appears candid enough about when he shows it to have been a long drawn out affair. He even suggests that its roots go right back to his father's 'strong leanings towards the *Unam Sanctam*' (1973d:36). Another feature, that of his distaste for some of the '...arid scholastic, theological and tortuous arguments...' (1973d:37) in the catechism, even though he was familiar with them, reveals the same kind of robust, individualistic scepticism which he highlights in his discussions of the Azande, the Sanusiya and Bedouin, and the Nuer. The discourse is richly coloured and detailed, and flows gracefully, but at its end questions remain.. Yet one is not left just where one was at the beginning, and the questions acquire a new and subtle quality, forcing one, as it were, to probe more carefully at what has been given. The 'Fragment' is very much an exercise in first order language under the guise of second order language.

The process of religious conversion is paralleled by Evans-Pritchard's gradual shift from a position close to the classical intellectualist view of Frazer and Tylor and the functionalism of Malinowski to an historical perspective very much influenced in its shape and content by Durkheim, but quite distinct from his generally static perception of society. This historical process is deductive, insofar as it is hermeneutical and comparative, but is based on rigorous studies of particular peoples in order to avoid making superficial linkages. It is also very much an analogical approach demanding a great deal of imagination in its construction of reality. The individual's role and integrity within society are taken out of the subordinate framework in which Durkheim generally places them.

Evans-Pritchard makes it clear at the start of *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande,* that he is quite aware of their recent history, both pre-colonial and

colonial. Throughout his exploration of their magical beliefs and practices he makes it clear that these take place in an historical context, both of an actual time in relation to a set of traditions. In one of his papers, published the same year (1937b), he appears to eschew the use of history. Social anthropology is an inductive science, Evans-Pritchard states, which must seek to establish cultural interdependencies 'through various methods of agreement, difference, concomitant variations...' (1937b:71).

One feature of his programme is quite clear, that comparative studies can most favourably be carried out when the societies studied share a high degree of cultural uniformity (1937b:71). Linked to this is his view that social anthropology and philosophy could not be fruitfully taught in the same department. The reason for this is that philosophy as ethics and morals and comparative religion cannot provide the required impetus and precision (1937b:67). Evans-Pritchard then argues that this is but the preliminary stage of anthropology. After discovering general tendencies and functional relationships, the last stage, where it will be possible to use the conclusions of other social sciences, may be entered upon (1937b:73). At the same time, he intrudes the possibility that functional interdependencies may not exist. This would make anthropology a humanistic study. Together with this he admits that, with others, he bases his belief in social interdependencies on faith rather than on achievement (1937b:73). The structure of these comments indicate that despite his then current adherence to functionalism and to the notion of anthropology as a natural science, he is obviously already establishing the forward camps of a new position. The way that he uses the term 'faith' is perhaps a precursor of the manner in which he treats of Nuer religion. It is also an important aspect of the context of success in Zande magic.

This enantiodrama, interaction between opposing values, occurs because he finds that both the classical intellectualist and functionalist views differ from a type of entropy. In Evans-Pritchard's paper, 'Social Anthropology' (1946c), for example, he still argues that social anthropology is a natural science. He does so, however, in a fashion very much modified from that just seen. The primary purpose is to add to the general knowledge of the human race, but he comments that social anthropology has limited practical application except to assist colonial administrators in their task (1946c:412). General conclusions derived from anthropological data may gradually assist anthropologists to formulate answers to their problems or to re-shape the questions

themselves (1946c:412). These conclusions are assumptions, which can have heuristic value even if they are fictions (1946c:412). This is not, however, the same natural science view of his 1937b paper. There is no clear boundary between them either, and this underscores Evans-Pritchard's reluctance to be categorised. Previously in the paper he stated his objection to Durkheim and *L'Année Sociologique* on the ground of their assumption of a particular philosophic heritage, which led them to perceive 'certain constant relations between social facts' (1946c:411). The purpose of science is the formulation of these interrelations as sociological laws (1946c:411). This portrayal of Durkheim, Hubert, Mauss and Hertz, in particular, places them between the classical anthropological approach, which Evans-Pritchard labels 'philosophic speculation', and that of scientific enquiry in the sense of a natural science approach (1946c:409). Yet Evans-Pritchard utilises the scientific approach of the *L'Année* to a high degree.

In the latter part of this paper he changes the whole picture. The same elements are present, but they are ordered differently. Evans-Pritchard explores very briefly the possibility of relating social anthropology, understood as a 'natural science', to moral philosophy. The reason for this apparent change of orientation is that while anthropologists, 'like other men', make moral judgements, they attempt in their professional capacity to avoid such evaluation (1946c:412). Their task is accomplished in the discovery of facts and the structural relations these have to other facts within a social system. Anything else could inhibit the philosopher's judgement (1946c:413). Evans-Pritchard pursues a similar course in his other paper entitled *Social Anthropology* (1948b), where he argues that the social anthropologist is an interpreter of facts through relating them to others 'within a framework of theory (1948b:12). Religious cults should be interpreted in the light of a general theory of religion (1948b:12). The general purpose of anthropology is the same, to shed light on general sociological problems and thereby to enhance the understanding of human society. Practical applications, as in the case of colonial problems, are only of transitory value. The major direction is in the '...building up of a general body of knowledge about the nature of human society' (1946c:14). The real issues facing social anthropology are those of general theoretical problems which arise in western society as well as in primitive societies. Anthropological knowledge's use emerges in clear philosophic terms, which serve to establish its validity.

The 1946 paper is explicit in stating that the social anthropologist should also be a moral philosopher, and accordingly be capable of making distinct judgements about the social significance of facts in relation to a particular theory and to their bearing on moral theory (1946c:414). This perception is re-stated again, but in still more explicit terms, when Evans-Pritchard asserts, while speaking of the academic background of students at the Institute, that people from the humanities are preferred because history, law, philosophy, and English literature give people '...a better critical judgement than do the natural sciences in the assessment of cultural and social phenomena' (1959:124). The influence of Durkheim's original ideal can be detected in the establishment of the L'Année in this portrayal of the study and the presentation of sociological analysis. It is another example of Evans-Pritchard's capacity to maintain the structure and thrust of a theoretical perspective from which he has parted company as regards much of its assumptions.

In 1950 he argued that social anthropology was a kind of historiography, since, like history, it was a reconstruction of facts (1950c:121). Societies are culturally intelligible, to those who belong to them, or who have learnt their mores and share in their life. They are sociologically intelligible to the degree that the structural order, the interrelated pattern of abstractions, is established. The anthropologist, as foreigner, lives over again the experience of his work among a people through a critical interpretation (hermeneutics) of that society in terms of '...the conceptual categories and values of his own culture, and in terms of the general body of knowledge of his discipline' (1950c:121). This is a process of translation from one culture to another (1950c:121). Underlying this development of his perspective there seems to have been a process which is explicable in terms of the distinction between first and second order language, especially in relation to the understanding of imagination acting as the mental power gathering things together, giving them a unity. It is more an analogical unity, however, than that deriving from a natural science perspective. Anthropology is a 'literary and impressionistic art' (1950c:121) because there is a rigorous application of the 'philosophic' principles articulated by Evans-Pritchard. He presented a paper to the Oxford University Anthropological Society in 1945, just prior to his becoming Professor at Oxford (in 1951b:123), in which his argument followed similar lines to the Marett Lecture (1950c). The view expressed (in 1951b), however, is closer to the position held by Radcliffe-Brown, who was not concerned with the historical dimension of

anthropological analysis. Evans-Pritchard at that stage was still talking of the need to construct typologies of social forms. The culmination of this view that anthropological analysis is a means, not an end, is found in his treatment of Nuer religion. The process of interpretation is to '... bring out the essential unity of the elements of social life' (1951b:123). It is also obvious, despite Evans-Pritchard's implicit disclaimers, that the analysis is deliberately impressionistic, inasmuch as it is an hermeneutical treatment of another world-view (philosophy). The use of Christian theological terms, and allusions to these, stresses the fact that this type of interpretative process is engaged in by the author.

Sperber (1983) argues that interpretative generalisations are usable or unusable tools (1983:28), and that they provide only '... a fragmentary answer to a simple single question: what is epistemologically feasible? ... what representation can be given of things?' (1983:28). He points out, quite validly, according to these terms, that Evans-Pritchard's interpretation of sacrifices does not corroborate the statement that all sacrifices are communions. Evans-Pritchard, however, does not present his answer entirely in second order language. His interpretation presents a notional apprehension and is a first order language grasp of the realities observed and discussed. This may lead to a notional apprehension on the part of the reader, provided he or she is willing to undergo his or her own process of reflection on the data. Evans-Pritchard's focus on the individual balances his interpretation, but given his inclusive manner, there is still the risk that the reader will be drawn in and not necessarily interpret the words and thoughts of the individual with 'great faithfulness' (1983:29). In *Nuer Religion* he only partly fulfils his own expectation. In that work there is a qualified use of the humanistic sciences, which he had suggested would become the major re-orientation in anthropology (1950c:124). Yet, as has been shown, the change is just as much a modification of his Durkheimian-inspired programme.

The philosophic influence that is new is but relatively so. He hints at a return to more serious consideration of a tradition older than the Enlightenment (1950c:123). This views societies, he asserts, as systems '...because social life must have a pattern of some kind, inasmuch as man, being a reasonable creature, has to live in a world in which his relations with those around him are ordered and intelligible' (1950c:123-4). Unfortunately this poses two difficulties, which counter his assumption that his approach

will naturally lead to a clearer understanding than others (195):`124). First, Durkheim made very similar claims, and secondly, Evans-Pritchard enlightens us no further as to how all this is possible.

The connection between Evans-Pritchard's own personal belief and the degree to which it influenced his scientific analysis is not easy to prove or disprove. It was noted in the last chapter that the major sources cited in relation to theological issues per se were not Catholic but were Anglican and Lutheran. In his paper, 'Some Features of Nuer Religion' (1952b), the only Catholic source referred to is M.J. Lagrange, a scripture scholar. This may also be another case of Evans-Pritchard's setting up a parallel with his own life. Lagrange, the founder of *L'École Biblique* in Jerusalem, spent some years in intellectual exile, teaching in a lycée because his methods and views of scriptural analysis were not quite in harmony with those of the Roman curial moderators (the Catholic Church's bureaucratic guardians of tradition and teaching). The strongest influences who are Catholics, namely Fathers Crazzolara, Schmidt and Kiggin, are only referred to concerning only specific ethnographic points. Evans-Pritchard stops short of the more overtly Christian characterisation that he criticises them for giving to the term *Kwoth* (1952b:3).

One of Evans-Pritchard's apparently more open discussions of the impact of personal belief upon anthropological research and analysis comes in a brief paper in which he suggests there is nothing about religious belief which could have either a positive or negative effect on such study (1947a:715). Of itself the paper produces little of serious use to this argument, apart from Evans-Pritchard's statements that anthropology is predominantly rationalist in outlook, because that was the academic background of many of its leading thinkers, and that most anthropologists, rationalist or not, would accept that religion is one of the most important factors in the maintenance of moral values '...on which the cohesion and persistence of human societies depend' (1947a:714). Part of Evans-Pritchard's programme is the rejection of universal assumptions which are not in harmony with actual practice. His study of Nuer religion illustrates the intense religious sensitivity that was so much a part of their lives. His argument is a critique of the secularising of religious reality. The faith of individual practitioners, more than the common rituals, reveals an aspect of the integrating function of religion that Durkheim had to by-pass because of the sacred/profane dichotomy.

At the conclusion of his paper on Nuer religion (1952b) Evans-Pritchard uses the terms 'mystical' and 'moral theology' in regard to their general religious feeling and practice. In a Catholic context they refer to very much the same aspects of reality that he describes and assesses in relation to Nuer experience. The mystical relates to those aspects of religion which are highly individual and personal and yet very much connected with the general framework of belief. It touches specifically the intimate relationship of creator and creature, and tends to use imaginatively charged language, which like the 'mystical representations' of Lévy-Bruhl, is not readily subject to falsification. Moral theology represents a more formal, communal awareness of appropriate human behaviour. It too rests on the deep core of the personal relationship between creator and creature. Evans-Pritchard therefore uses these terms analogically, just as he uses 'theology' in a later paper. There he argues that the study of primitive religious symbolism is important because '... it often conceals a theology which appears to be lacking altogether when one seeks only for a rational system of dogma' (1954d:10-11).

Evans-Pritchard reveals his own feelings about religion in a series of constant, but oblique, references. From *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande* through to *Nuer Religion* the imagination is confronted by a richly textured account of the individual dimension of the religious domain. As does his judgement of Durkheim, Evans-Pritchard's Catholicism seeps from the fissures of his overall argument. His appeal to Catholicism, insofar as it can be argued, is not to the formal doctrinal realm, but to the intensely human, individual and collective domain of the sacraments and to the ways those may be lived out. The human orientation of that ritual structure and behaviour provides a very similar rational and imaginative framework to that which he presents as existing among the Nuer. The aspect of Catholicism that seems crucial to his analysis is the human experience of God in history, for which it is difficult to establish fixed boundaries. Evans-Pritchard eschews a doctrinal, dogmatic analogy, because it would present him with the same methodological problems that he faced eventually with Durkheim. In each monograph studied I have shown that Evans-Pritchard struggles with the tension that exists between formal doctrines as rational systems, the popular practice of the content of those teachings, and the ramifications of this situation for the social order.

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