

these dances and was told by [informants] that often there were many more. This feast dance closes the cycle and there are no more dances in the homestead.

*We must therefore not think of the dance simply as a play activity, (italics added) but as forming part of an important social undertaking associated with religious ceremonial.*

This does not mean that the dancers take any part in the ceremonial relating to the spirits of the dead. These intimate functions are carried out by the kindred of the dead and by other persons bound to them by close social ties. The relatives do not take part in the festivities. Their activities are quite distinct from those of the friends and neighbours who have come to dance. These latter have come to enjoy themselves. The dance is an important local affair to them and no young person of either sex would care to miss it. They come in holiday mood. But the activities which form part of the intimate ritual of the spirits and the ceremonial exchange between relatives-in-law are not unrelated to the more boisterous and profane activities of the dance. Even if the emotions of the dead man's relatives and the emotions of the dancers are different, nevertheless the dance must be regarded as part of the whole ceremonial complex.

The beating of the drums attracts large numbers of neighbours to the homestead of the man who has made himself responsible for the carrying out of ritual duties to the dead. This crowd gives a background against which the rites are performed. Not only does it flatter the giver of the feast that a large number of persons should attend it, but their presence gives support to the more serious events of the occasion. The crowd gives social recognition to the carrying out of a sacred duty towards the dead and to the obligations of ceremonial exchange between the master of the feast and his relatives-in-law. A crowd makes the banal and unpleasant labour of carrying stones to the grave, the indecent wrangling over the number of spears and amount of beer which are exchanged, an impressive and memorable occasion. It raises the unwelcome labour in preparing for the feast and the irksome obligations of relatives into a dignified ceremony in honour of the spirits of the dead. Such I think is the function of the dance as part of the complex of [Azande] religious ceremonial.

E. E. Evans-Pritchard

### Review of the Azande essay

Given my background and the years-long, privately conducted search with reference to writings about the dance, it is easy to see why the first paragraph of E.P.'s essay was impressive:

In ethnological accounts the dance is usually given a place quite unworthy of its social importance. It is often viewed as an independent activity and is described without reference to its contextual setting in native life.<sup>12</sup> Such treatment leaves out many problems as to the composition and organization of the dance and hides from view its sociological function (p. 112).

Here was a writer who thought that dances were important to the study of social life. E.P. told me he had never seen dances solely as 'entertainments'. He

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<sup>12</sup> The important theoretical statement in the paragraph is the independent activity/context statement.

thought that the way some authors talked about dancing simply trivialized the activity. He did not therefore write from the standard assumptions about *why* people dance to which I was accustomed. Moreover, his approach was unique in that he saw "problems as to the *composition and organization* of the dance." That, perhaps more than anything else, attracted my attention.<sup>13</sup>

He did not (as I found out later) interpret "sociological function" in the same way that other social anthropologists did. Like many beginning students, I thought E. P. was in complete agreement with Radcliffe-Brown about the function of dances in society. He says, after all, that Radcliffe-Brown's treatment of the subject is "excellent" and he also says, "In the main our observations on the Zande beer dance are in agreement with Radcliffe Brown's analysis of dancing amongst the Andaman Islanders" (p. 120). However, I was told that (a) I did not read the passage well enough<sup>14</sup> and (b) I missed the key-point he had made about function; that is, E. P. was after a *general* question, whereas Radcliffe-Brown had confined himself to particulars.

The key point I missed is stated in the fifth paragraph on p. 120: "Such a question will give us a *general statement which covers all dancing in all communities* as distinct from the different *specific functions* of dances in different communities and on different occasions" (italics added). Moreover, I was told to read *Theories of Primitive Religion* (Evans-Pritchard 1965).

"For what?" I asked.

"You read it and tell me," he replied, and a couple of weeks later, I did.

In the dance, [Radcliffe-Brown] tells us, the personality of the individual submits to the action upon him by the community, and the harmonious concert of individual feelings and actions produces a maximum unity and concord of the community which is intensely felt by every individual member of it. That may, or may not, be the case among the Andamanese, but *in one of my earliest papers* I felt bound to protest against its acceptance as a generalization, for the dances I had observed in Central Africa were one of the most frequent occasions of disharmony, and my subsequent experience has confirmed my youthful scepticism" (Evans-Pritchard 1965: 74 - italics added).

When Evans-Pritchard speaks of "social function" or "sociological function" he referred mainly to *value* (see second paragraph from the bottom of p. 118) and to the *intentions* of the people to whom the dance belongs. These phrases aren't meant to be construed mechanically, as if describing part of a watch or some other machine (private communication, 1972).

I might add that E.P. used the term 'primitive' to refer *only* to the stage of technological advancement of the society in question. He did not hold with using the phrase "primitive dance." Then, too, his usage of the word 'socio-

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<sup>13</sup> I had long been interested in the organization of dance forms in terms of the vocabularies of movement they used, and, I was aware of the overall shapes of dances as choreographies -- a characteristic I was later to call the 'form-space' of a dance (or movement system).

<sup>14</sup> See in particular "*we should like to make further observations before committing ourselves to complete agreement.*" and "*Radcliffe Brown has not recognized the complexity of motives in the dance*" (page 121).

logy' is often confusing: read 'social anthropology' instead. The point he made is that a description of *any* form of dancing that puts sole emphasis on the movements, etc., leaving out its connections with the society in which it exists is inevitably inadequate. This is why we find, for example, the subsections, 'Pattern of the Dance' (p. 116) 'Leadership in the Dance' (p. 117), and 'Role of the Dance in Religious Ceremonies' (p. 121).

Very early on during the Diploma year, E.P.'s essay on Azande dancing became closely associated with *Theories of Primitive Religion*, in which there are many allusions to 'rites', for example,

Furthermore, as Radin (1932) observed, in an individual's experience the acquisition of rites and beliefs precedes the emotions which are said to accompany them later in adult life. He learns to participate in them before he experiences any emotion at all, so the emotional state, whatever it may be, and if there is one, can hardly be the genesis and explanation of them. A rite [and, we might add, a dance form] is part of the culture the individual is born into, and it imposes itself on him from the outside like the rest of his culture. It is a creation of society, not of individual reasoning or emotion, though it may satisfy both; and it is for this reason that Durkheim tells us that a psychological interpretation of a social fact is invariably a wrong interpretation (Evans-Pritchard 1965: 46).

It was because of what E.P. said about R. R. Marett's ideas in *Theories* that I discovered the role the latter assigned to dancing:

Primitive man, he claimed, was not at all like the philosopher *manqué* he had been made out to be. With early man it is not ideas which give rise to action, but action which gives rise to ideas: "savage religion is something not so much thought out as danced out" (1914: xxxi).

And this isn't all Marett said about dancing. He elaborates upon his theme:

Religion pipes to him [the primitive] and he dances . . . So far, however, as he achieves form in giving vent to his feelings, thereby acquiring in like degree self-mastery and self-direction, he does it in order, not of thoughts and words, but of sounds and gestures. Rhythm serves him in lieu of reasoning. His moods respond to cadences rather than to judgments. To put it somewhat broadly and somewhat figuratively, in primitive ritual the tune counts for a great deal more than the words (1932: 6-7, cited in Williams 1991: 52).

Today, I look at the dog-eared copy of *Theories* I purchased in 1970 and know it is as meaningful today as it was then. In fact,

The mode of classification that I use in these lectures follows very roughly a style of classification that Evans-Pritchard used in his *Theories of Primitive Religion*. I discussed a proposed work like this [i.e. *Ten Lectures*] concerning the dance with him about eighteen months before he died in 1973. He approved of my ideas, saying that he could not see, given the general intractability of the material and the confused state of the literature, plus the low status of the subject [i.e. the dance] in social anthropology, any other way I could go. . . (Williams 1991: 12).

I was indeed privileged to have had the benefit of E.P.'s support, advice and criticism during the last three years of his life, but his was not the only fine mind with which I came into direct prolonged contact at Oxford.

Rom Harré's work proved to be of great value to the formation of semasiology -- like 'semiotics', a word that I was unaware of in 1970 -- when I attended his lecture for the Anthropological Society of Oxford.

### The Shift to an Anthropomorphic Model of Man (1971)

Thanks to the work of Kuhn (1962), it is now possible to express radical movements in scientific thought in a general context. Deep changes in the sciences of Man have been taking place. There has been what Kuhn calls "a *paradigm shift*:" I will try to bring it into focus in this short paper.

The notion of 'paradigm' was introduced by Kuhn in an attempt to make clear the intellectual and social structure of scientific revolutions. By 'a paradigm' he can be interpreted to mean that complex of metaphysics [and] general theory of action and methodology which forms a coherent background to the science of a particular time, which is often given concrete expression in some admired archetype of scientific work, such as Newton's *Principia*. I believe that the present state of the sciences of Man as a social being is explicable as a transition from one paradigm to another, from what I shall call 'The Old Paradigm', to 'The New'. I shall try to articulate some features of the New Paradigm.

I have chosen to centre my exposition in this paper around social psychology. It is particularly in that field that conceptions of method and ideas about the nature of human beings and their modes of action come into the sharpest focus. But whenever a New Paradigm appears in a central area of a scientific field its effect is felt wherever a similar subject matter is studied, and so a New Paradigm in social psychology must have an effect in anthropology, encouraging some existing trends and inhibiting others.

The Old Paradigm involves the conception of scientific theory as a deductive structure from which the empirical ascertained laws are to be derived by strict logical inference. It conceives of the function of theory as confined to the bringing of order into the empirically ascertained laws. This positivistic view of theories has the important consequence that provided the theory performs well logically one may be fairly casual about the verisimilitude of its terms. Indeed in psychology generally positivistic ways have encouraged a kind of 'experimentalism', by which it is hoped that experimentation by itself will create an appropriate system of concepts.

In the Old Paradigm a law has the form  $F(x,y)$  where  $x$  and  $y$  are dependent and independent variables, and it is assumed that all properties of the system in which this 'law' is observed to hold can be treated as parameters, that are maintained constant without materially affecting the relationship between those allowed to vary. This assumption is thought to be justified in its turn by the general principle that the aim of science is to discover correlations between changes in the properties of systems. In the farthest background lies Hume's theory of causality according to which such correlations are causal laws. The Old Paradigm has been very clearly articulated for psychology by C. L. Hull (1952), and is particularly well exemplified in so-