

visibly exist. But because of the intensification of national feeling and ambition, as well as of the spread of education among all peoples, the Missioner must act with clear appreciation of the aim and method which the Pope demands. This Missionary number of BLACKFRIARS is, consequently, well-conceived and merits the careful study of all who not only pray conventionally that the Kingdom of God may come upon the earth but are determined to help its coming effectively.

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S O C I A L A N T H R O P O L O G Y

THE subject matter of Social Anthropology, human societies, with special reference to primitive societies, has been a field of philosophic speculation from the earliest times. It has only very recently become a field of scientific inquiry; so recently that Sir Edward Tylor is sometimes spoken of as 'the father of anthropology'. Tylor defined the scope of his inquiry in his classical work, *Primitive Culture* (1871) as culture or civilization taken in its widest ethnographic sense, a definition which excludes what the rest of Europe calls anthropology and what in England is sometimes called physical anthropology: the study of racial characteristics, genetics, and so forth. But it covers what is generally called today in England social anthropology, or the sociology of primitive peoples. Tylor was himself the first occupant of a university post in the subject, from 1883 at Oxford.

Social anthropology is therefore still a very young discipline, hardly yet accepted as one of themselves by the august natural sciences. It has, however, taken the first step towards qualifying as a science by becoming inductive. The earlier social anthropologists were what are sometimes called 'arm-chair' anthropologists. When they wrote about primitive peoples they relied for the material from which they constructed their theories not on their own observations but on the reports of missionaries, administrative officers, and travellers. Sir James Frazer's monumental *The Golden Bough* is one of the best examples of this kind of work—polished, erudite, comprehensive, and occasionally profound. Such writings suffered, in the eyes of men of science, from a serious defect. The facts from which conclusions were drawn were gathered by men untrained to make observations and the interpretations were made by scholars who had no direct acquaintance with the facts. This was largely due to the social anthropologists of the time having come into the subject from the humanities, in which

they were used to speculating about what they had not, and could not, observe. There was a new orientation when students came into it from the biological sciences: Haddon from zoology, Rivers from physiology, and Seligman from pathology. These three men formed the nucleus of the first fieldwork expedition in the history of social anthropology, the Torres Straits Expedition of 1898, which started a new chapter in the development of the infant science. From this time it can be said that social anthropology has become more and more inductive. Theories are no longer accepted unless they are framed in such terms as allow verification in the field.

At this point it should be explained why social anthropologists study primitive peoples. The earlier anthropologists were interested in origins and believed that by a study of primitive peoples they could discover the beginnings of their own institutions. They regarded themselves as free-lance historians whose study was the history of civilization backwards from that point at which historical records vanish. We continue to study primitive peoples today, but for different reasons: partly because primitive societies are disappearing and must be studied now or never, and partly because primitive societies, unlike civilized societies, are small and have a simple social structure and can therefore be studied comprehensively. It must be emphasized, however, that we have no special interest in primitives as such, but only in primitive societies as varieties of human society. We study them in order to understand certain processes in every human society and certain features of social development generally. We are beginning to apply our methods to the study of more advanced societies, but the greater part of our work is likely for many years to be in the primitive field.

Another, and more fundamental, change in social anthropology since Tylor's time has been in its theory, in the kind of conclusions it draws from a study of primitive societies. It has been remarked that Victorian anthropologists were chiefly interested in origins. Their procedure was too often to place at one end of a scale social conditions of the 19th century and at the other end the antithesis of those conditions, and to arrange all human societies in between, allotting to each its place according to the degree of resemblance they found, or thought they found, of its institutions to those of their own country and time. If no society could be found with antithetical features it was assumed that they had nevertheless existed and that traces of them could still be discovered in what were called 'survivals' among present-day primitives. Thus it was postulated that all human societies have evolved from a state of primitive promiscuity through group-marriage and polygamy to monogamy, and from magic through reli-

gion to science, and so on. These reconstructions were very uncritical. They were also unscientific in that they could not be proved or disproved by observation. Moreover, in so far as they postulated an invariable sequence of social and cultural evolution they could be shown to be untrue. An illiterate people of Melanesia does not evolve or invent a written language. They borrow, or accept, it from some other people. The critics of what is sometimes called the evolutionary school of anthropology came largely from students, Graebner, Father Schmidt, Elliott-Smith and others who stressed the very great importance of the diffusion of culture. The reconstructions of this diffusionist school were just as uncritical and unscientific as those they attacked. Both schools were trying to reconstruct the history of primitive peoples in the absence of any real evidence. It is felt by all social anthropologists in England at the present time that such reconstructions may be a pleasant pastime but do not constitute science and can be of very limited value to mankind.

Social anthropologists of today, at any rate in this country and in the Dominions, have quite different methods and aims, deriving mainly from Durkheim and the *Année Sociologique* group of writers associated with him, and a heritage of philosophy. They assume that there are certain constant relations between social facts and that the discovery of these correlations and their formulation as sociological laws is the purpose of the science. Anthropologists no longer seek to explain a custom or institution found in some society in terms of hypothetical origins, whether evolutionary or diffusionist, for in their view it cannot be so explained; but in terms of its function in relation to that particular society as a whole. When the custom or institution is found in a range of societies the explanation must be in terms of its common function in all of them. When it is found in all societies the explanation must state what is its universal function in human society. Thus some features of the family, of war, or of religious cult may be found to exist in one particular society and not in others, and these features would then have to be explained by showing how they are related to other peculiar features in that society. Other features may be found to exist in a large number of primitive societies, but not in others, and they would then have to be explained by showing that they are functionally related to other social processes occurring in the one set of societies and not in the other. Yet other features may be found to exist in all human societies, primitive and civilized alike, and these would have to be explained in terms of uniform features of other universal institutions. Clearly, social anthropologists, once they call themselves natural scientists, can build up their body of theory in no other way, for this is the elementary procedure of all branches of

natural science. As clearly, their final aims, like their methods, must be the same as those of other natural scientists: to benefit, by adding to knowledge, the human race; it being assumed the new knowledge will benefit it. At the present time anthropological knowledge can have only a very limited application, but most anthropologists believe that it can at least be claimed that a study of a primitive people is of benefit to that particular people and to other peoples of the same social type, in that Europeans who are trying to change their customs may through it understand better what they are doing. For example, a colonial government wishing to alter a people's customary law relating to property rights in land should know to what extent the laws of land tenure are bound up with domestic and kinship organizations, religious cults, and moral norms, and how these will be affected by the proposed reform. Anthropologists believe also that any general conclusions they might be able to formulate about primitive peoples would assist in the solution of our own problems. If, for example, we were able to formulate the conditions in which primitive warfare occurs it would help us to know the more general conditions in which war occurs in all human societies, and hence in twentieth-century Europe. It would be of little use to discuss here these two assumptions, that there are general sociological laws to be discovered and that, if there are, it would be to the benefit of mankind to discover them. So long as social anthropologists recognize that they are assumptions no harm is done. Even if sociological laws may have to be regarded as fictions they have heuristic value.

It is of greater use to discuss shortly the relation of social anthropology, so regarded as a natural science, to moral philosophy. Anthropologists, like other men, are constantly making moral judgments, explicitly or implicitly, in accordance with whatever religion or philosophy they profess or have been unconsciously influenced by. But the social anthropologist speaking in his own scientific field avoids, or tries to avoid, evaluation. For example, he tries to describe as accurately as he can the nature of the polygamous family and to show how polygamy is related to other features of the social life of communities in which it is practised, such as certain forms of economic activity, a certain status of women, and so forth. He does not express any moral opinion about it. He does not say, whatever his feelings may be about the matter, that it is a good or bad institution. Clearly a moral judgment has to be made, but he does not think that it is his duty, speaking simply as an anthropologist, whose task it is only to describe and analyse phenomena on a scientific plane, to make it. The anthropologist's reluctance to evaluate is defended on the grounds that it is his task to provide the facts on which those better qualified to make moral

judgments can make them, and that were he to evaluate himself it would hinder him from performing that task efficiently, and hence, in the long run lead him to do a disservice to moral philosophers, because they would not have an unbiased statement of the facts and therefore not be able to make so perfect a judgment.

Most anthropologists would stand on this line. They would say that the validity of a judgment in any particular application of a moral principle must depend on a full and unbiased record of the facts about which a judgment is being made. The principle does not derive from the facts, but its application does. Most anthropologists feel that they have done their part towards the solution of a social problem when they have discovered the facts and shown their relation to other facts within the total social system. Nevertheless, they realise that their researches will seldom influence action, since this will depend neither on a knowledge of what human relations are, nor on what moral philosophers think they should be, but on what those empowered to decide on policy think they should be. In the end the value of the study of human society to its members must, therefore, depend less on its sociological discoveries than on the consciences of men, particularly of those men who have legislative and executive functions.

So stated the matter appears simple, and for the anthropologist convenient. The respective spheres of social science and moral philosophy are well defined and the anthropologist has the double advantage that he can pride himself on his single-minded pursuit of truth and can shift all responsibility from his own shoulders—for judgment on the moral philosopher and for action on the man of affairs. It is not so simple in reality, nor so convenient. When dealing with such practices as polygamy, the levirate, cannibalism, magic, and so on, which are remote from live issues in our own society, it is easy for anthropologists to be detached observers and recorders, but as soon as what they describe hinges on religious and political issues in modern Europe they are never entirely impartial, though, naturally, they refrain from deliberately distorting facts or drawing biased conclusions. It is therefore argued by some writers, including some anthropologists, that it is better for a social scientist to give a definite and explicit bias to his writings than to allow them, in the name of a spurious impartiality, to be deflected by unconscious and half-conscious attractions and repulsions. The argument is weak, for it is surely better to try to eliminate bias of every kind within the scientific field.

I have stated in this article the opinion held by most social anthropologists. I may, perhaps, be allowed to conclude by giving my own view, with special reference to Catholic apologetics. It is not a new

view, but has been frequently expressed, among others in recent times, by Hobhouse and Ginsberg. The field of social anthropology, unlike many fields of natural science, is common to the anthropologist and to the moral philosopher. It is unsatisfactory that the sociologist, in which term the social anthropologist is included, should often be the person who knows the facts best and yet should be self-debarred from making judgments on them. It is even more unsatisfactory that the moral philosopher, who is the person best fitted to make judgments, should do so, as often happens, without an adequate knowledge of social theory and fact. The answer would seem to be that the sociologist should also be a moral philosopher and that, as such, he should have a set of definite beliefs and values in terms of which he evaluates the facts he studies as a sociologist. He must make, and keep apart, two different kinds of judgment within the same field: a judgment on the significance of social facts to scientific theory and a judgment on their significance to moral theory. It is as important, perhaps more important, that the moral philosopher should be conversant with the conclusions of the social sciences, since, as I have already said, the validity of a judgment depends in part on a knowledge of the facts. Moral judgments which are couched in very general terms, and are not specific applications to particular cases, tend to be ineffective guides to conduct, and if specific judgments are to be made full knowledge of the particular cases is essential. As it is unlikely that social anthropologists, with one or two exceptions, will study Catholic moral philosophy, a bridge can only be built between the two disciplines by some Catholic moral philosophers studying social anthropology.

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MISSIOLOGY

ACCORDING to Father Rommerskirchen (*Guide des Missions Catholiques* 1937, p. 165) we owe the word 'missiology' to the French—the term 'missiologie' having been popularised by Père Charles, S.J. German Catholics, under the inspiration of Professor Schmidlin, have preferred to use the word 'Missionswissenschaft' and it is perhaps unfortunate that English speaking Catholics did not follow their example and talk of the study or science of missions, rather than the clumsy and pretentious 'missiology'.

Granted, however, that the term is in common use, the purpose of this essay is to attempt to explain its meaning. The explana-