INTERNATIONAL AFRICAN INSTITUTE

MEMORANDUM XV

# METHODS OF STUDY OF CULTURE CONTACT IN AFRICA

*Reprinted from* AFRICA, *Vols.* VII, VIII, *and* IX

*With an Introductory Essay by*

B. MALINOWSKI



*ed by the* OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS *for the*
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*Price* 15*s.*

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*Oxford University Press, Amen House, London E.C.4*

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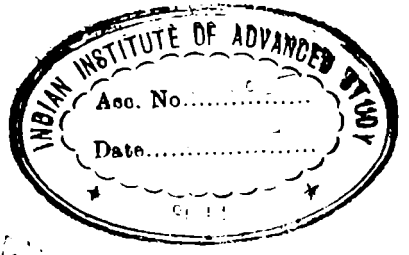


FIRST PUBLISHED 193:
REPRINTED 1959, 196:



Printed by STONE & COX LTD., London and Watford.

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# PREFACE

THE Five Year Plan of the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures has given an immense impetus to the study of culture change in modern times, a branch of anthropological field-work which at the time when the Institute was founded was still in its infancy. The seminars held at the London School of Economics, which have been attended by the Institute's Fellows as part of their training, have accordingly become a centre for the discussion of this subject, and it was as the outcome of one of these discussions that the preparation of this series of essays was suggested. It was felt, as some of the contributors to the series assert, that the study of a type of phenomena which had previously received little attention from anthropologists might call for new techniques and new concepts, and it was decided to obtain the views on this point of anthropologists who had worked on the subject in Africa. All the contributors to the series have at some time been members of the London School of Economics seminar, with the exception of Mr. and Mrs. Culwick, whose general approach to anthropology, as shown in their writings, might perhaps be held to qualify them as honorary members. The choice of areas to which the essays refer results from the chronological accident that southern and eastern Africa were the earliest field in the continent for the study of culture contact. In accordance with the recognized procedure of seminar discussion, the presiding genius, Professor Malinowski, has kindly contributed his commentary and summing-up of the views expressed.

LONDON,
*April*, 1938

L. P. MAIR

# INTRODUCTORY ESSAY
# ON
# THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF CHANGING AFRICAN CULTURES

SPEED is perhaps our greatest enemy to-day. It has set the machine above the human being; it has provided us with weapons so dangerous as to turn our future into a nightmare and a farce combined; and it entails adjustments to mechanical progress which are almost beyond the possibilities of organic adaptation.

If man suffers from speed, however, so also does the science of man. Anthropology, which used to be the study of beings and things retarded, gradual, and backward, is now faced with the difficult task of recording how the 'savage' becomes an active participant in modern civilization, how the African and the Asiatic are being rapidly drawn into partnership with the European in world-wide co-operation and conflict. As Dr. Richards says in one of these articles, '. . . the whole picture of African society has altered more rapidly than the anthropologist's technique.' Moreover it is not only the technique which lags behind, but also the problems and scope of anthropology, and the place of its contribution in the statesmanship of this changing world.

## I. A Bird's-Eye View of Africa To-day

In order to make our arguments concrete, let us glance at what Africa looks like to-day. A passenger flying over the inland route of the Imperial Airways can obtain what is almost literally a bird's-eye view of the cultural situation. After you have followed the green ribbon of the Nile, the landmark of one of the world's oldest civilizations, running up towards the heart of the continent, you receive the first impression of black Africa in the swamps of the Upper Nile. The circular villages built on the old pattern without a single touch of European architecture; the natives in their old clothes—or lack of them, moving among the cattle penned in the inner enclosure; the obvious isolation of each settlement in what appear to be almost inaccessible swamps—all this gives at least a surface effect of old

untouched Africa. And there is no doubt that we still have here one of the extensive strongholds of indigenous culture.

As soon as the 'plane crosses the border between Nilotic and Bantu peoples, it becomes obvious that it is a transformed Africa over which we are moving. Among the Baganda the houses are new, square, built on the European pattern; even from above, the dress and equipment of the natives spell Manchester and Birmingham. Roads and churches, motor-cars and lorries, proclaim that we are in a world of change in which two factors are working together and producing a new type of culture, related both to Europe and Africa, yet not a mere copy of either. When the 'plane descends in Kisumu we are in a small town largely controlled by the gold-mining interests of the region. Part of it looks almost European. Some streets remind us of India. But the whole is a compound product with an existence of its own, determined by the proximity of several African tribes, by the activities of the Europeans who live and trade there, and the fact of Indian immigration. It is an important centre of gold export and trade; as such, it must be studied by the sociologist in relation to world markets, overseas industrial centres and banking organizations, as well as to African labour and natural resources.

In Nairobi we enter a world where natives and things African seem to play but the role of mutes and properties respectively. The place is dominated by large European administrative buildings, banks, churches, and stores. The white inhabitants go about their European business and live in a world almost untouched, on its surface, by Africa. In reality it rests on African foundations. It would be a grave sociological misconception to take the favourite local slogan, the description of the East African Highlands as ' White Man's Country ', in its full and literal meaning. The European culture of East Africa, though largely imported from Europe, has become adapted to the African physical environment, and remains dependent on the African human milieu.

We meet this tri-partite division—old Africa, imported Europe, and the New Composite Culture—all along the route of 'plane, railway, and motor road. You come upon native reserves, where you can still listen to African music, watch African dances, see African ceremonies, speak to Africans dressed in their old attire, ignorant of

any European language, and living almost completely their old tribal life.

And then not far away, in a settler's bungalow or in a small European community, you listen to music from England on the short wave, and enjoy ' purely European ' songs all about ' Alabama ' and the ' Baby ' and the ' Coon crooning with the crickets '; you can read the latest *Tatler* or *Sketch*, and enjoy a discussion on sport, local or overseas, or English party politics. This world the African enters only as a shadowy figure: the servant bringing the tray with ' sundowner ' drinks; snatches of African songs drifting in from the plantation compound. Otherwise the European lives in complete oblivion of indigenous African life. A funny anecdote now and then; questions of labour, administrative queries, or missionary difficulties are at times discussed by those professionally concerned with the control of one or the other indigenous problem. But this does not lead to a full interest in native life for its own sake.

The colour bar in the social and cultural, as well as in the economic sense, largely determines the relations between Europeans and Africans. To regard these relations either as a ' well-integrated area of common existence ', or as a simple ' mixture' based on direct ' borrowing', ignores the real driving forces of the impact and reaction, and takes no count of the strong mutual resistances and antagonisms of the two races and cultures.

Yet there is give and take. There is live contact and co-operation. There are activities where Europeans must rely on African labour, and Africans are at times willing to serve, or can be induced into signing a contract. There are processes and events in which whole groups of Europeans spontaneously and generously offer what they regard as best in European culture to the Africans. The Africans, again, appreciating the value and the advantages of European religion, education, and technology—or startled by the novelty thereof—begin often by adopting Western ways eagerly and wholeheartedly. Quite often they end by reacting in movements completely uncontrolled and uncontrollable by the missionary or administrator, and at times directly hostile to the Whites.

Everywhere in Africa we now meet places and institutions where culture contact is made as in a workshop. Education is given in

schools and evangelizing is carried on in churches and mission stations. A mixture of customary and alien law is administered in native courts supervised by Europeans; or again by European magistrates more or less acquainted with native codes and customs.

Thus even from a purely superficial survey we can conclude that changing Africa is not a single subject-matter, but one composed of three phases. It would be almost possible to take a piece of chalk, and on the face of the continent to map out spatially the areas of each type: predominantly European, genuinely African, and those covered by the processes of change.

## II. The New Tasks of Cultural Anthropology

All this imposes new tasks on the anthropologist. So far he has remained within the limited tribal horizon of an undeveloped culture. Now he is faced with the necessity of understanding questions of world economics and finance, of colonial policy, of overseas education, and of missionary aims, plans, and outlook. Since culture change means the entry of native societies into the arena of world politics and economics, the anthropologist, who wants to study the totality of his problem, cannot remain completely ignorant of that half which pertains to Western civilization. On the other hand he still has to carry out his old *métier* first and foremost; the core of the process of culture change can be studied only by the specially trained field-worker. For it is the native who is primarily affected by culture change, and who still remains the protagonist of the drama.

Yet the anthropologist with all his highly vaunted technique of field-work, his scientific acumen, and his humanistic outlook, has so far kept aloof from the fierce battle of opinions about the future and the welfare of native races. In the heated arguments between those who want to 'keep the native in his place' and those who want to 'secure him a place in the sun', the anthropologist has so far taken no active part. Does this mean that knowledge serves merely to blind us to the reality of human interests and vital issues? The science which claims to understand culture and to have the clue to racial problems must not remain silent on the drama of culture conflict and of racial clash.

Anthropology must become an applied science. Every student of

scientific history knows that science is born with its applications. The seven essays which follow are unanimous in their attempt to formulate criteria of practical guidance, to define indices of maladjustment, and to show the way in which sound knowledge can be translated into useful practice. In all this, the essays prove that the task which the African Institute has imposed on its collaborators can be successfully accomplished.[1]

The writers concentrate on the problem of culture change. In this they face the actual situation with which the student is confronted now in Africa as elsewhere.

Scientific observation can only be directed on what is; not on what might have been, or has been, even if this had vanished but yesterday. The scientific field-worker cannot study figments, and to-day an untouched native culture is only a figment. What presents itself for study nowadays—so much we have gathered from our bird's-eye survey—is change, at times occurring with surprising ease and rapidity, at times even more surprisingly retarded by strong resistances in the indigenous society.

In Africa, as we have seen, we are faced everywhere with the mixture of old and new, of indigenous modes of life with new ideals, interests, and emotions. The man of science must take his stand on what he can observe and record. From such material, if his interest be primarily antiquarian, he can effect a reconstruction of the past. But in order to make his picture of the old traditional culture scientifically correct, he should not depict it as if it were still a living reality. He must lay before us the real data of his observation, his methods of reconstructing the past, and then only proceed to give an outline of the past thus reconstructed.

But the phase of world history through which we are now passing imposes on the anthropologist, as has already been said, a new task. He has to study the processes of culture change in their own right. These are a historical phase of first-rate importance, theoretically as

[1] Cf. 'The Five-Year Plan of Research', in *Africa*, vol. v, no. 1, 1932; also the articles by the present writer on 'Practical Anthropology' (*Africa*, vol. ii, no. 1, 1929) and 'The Rationalization of Anthropology and Administration' (*Africa*, vol. iii, no. 4, 1931); also D. Westermann's *The African To-day*, published by the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures in 1934.

well as practically. Thus, in his scientific capacity, the field-worker has to observe and put on record the modern diffusion of culture, a process as relevant and instructive as any diffusion which might have taken place two or three thousand years ago. As an historian, he has to recognize that he is chronicling one of the most dramatic and far-reaching crises in the evolution of mankind. As a humanist, he ought to be aware that in the process there are involved human interests and values which must be brought to light and translated into rules of action.

The present writers are also correct in insisting that the 'detribalized' native must become as much the subject of scientific study as the one who walks about in cow-hide or leopard-skin; and that even the white settler, missionary, or administrator is as essentially a part of the modern cultural problem as the most deeply pigmented African. The anthropologist is now faced with the tragic situation which has often been bewailed in lecture-rooms and in print, even by the present writer. Just as we have reached a certain academic status and developed our methods and theories, our subject-matter threatens to disappear. In some parts of the world it has been wiped out—as in Tasmania, the eastern states of America, and certain islands of the Pacific. Instead, however, of lamenting the inevitable, we must face the new, more complex and more difficult task which history has set before us, the task that is of building new methods and new principles of research in order to reclaim the 'anthropological no-man's-land' and take up the 'new branch of anthropology . . . the anthropology of the changing native'. This was but a pious wish when expressed by the present writer a few years ago.[1]

The work of the seven writers and of their colleagues in Africa and elsewhere has since then made it into a reality.

## III. The Contact Situation as an Integral Whole

Three main problems clearly arise from the new tasks, theoretical and practical, by which the ethnographer is nowadays faced in Africa:

1. What is the *nature* of culture contact and change?
2. What *empirical methods of field-work* are best suited to the problem?
3. In what manner can the theoretical results of contact studies be

[1] *Africa*, vol. ii, no. 1, 1929.

best translated into *practical rules of conduct* for the administrator, the missionary, the entrepreneur, or teacher?

The writers of the seven essays do not present a united front on these issues. It will be best, therefore, to take up the several views one after the other.

One simple solution presents itself naturally to the ethnographer accustomed to deal with native tribes but little affected by Western influence, or those which have reached a condition of temporary equilibrium-in-contact. In such cases culture contact produces a situation in which Natives and Europeans, witch-doctors and missionaries, chiefs and administrators, live, work, and co-operate side by side. The missionary has converted part of the community, while the rest happily remain heathen. The administrator has taught the tribesmen what they must do and what not to do, otherwise he leaves them alone. The trader has his customers, with whom a routine of give and take has been established. All of them together form as it were a tribe, enlarged and somewhat complicated, but yet sufficiently well-integrated for the time being to be studied by the old methods of field-work.

This is the picture which Drs. Fortes and Schapera seem to envisage when discussing the nature of culture contact and the technique of field research. ' The first essential in any modern field-work study is to obtain as full an account as possible of *the existing tribal culture*. In this *due prominence must be given* to elements taken over from or introduced by the Europeans ' (Schapera. The italics are mine). The writer speaks as if we were faced by *one* existing tribal culture, and proposes to treat the Europeans present and the Western elements adopted as if they were an integral part of it. We are specifically told, indeed, that ' the missionary, administrator, trader and labour recruiter must be regarded as factors in the tribal life *in the same way as are* the chief and the magician ' (my italics). The writer throughout makes it clear that the new contact situation should be treated as if it were one homogeneous cultural totality composed of well-adjusted elements, European and African alike. Dr. Fortes finds himself in agreement: 'In such studies contact agents (i.e. resident Europeans) can be treated as integrally part of the community. . . .' While Dr. Schapera affirms that ' There is no special technique required for investigations of this

kind', Dr. Fortes tells us that culture contact can be studied 'in every type of African society by the same field techniques as are customary in other branches of functional sociology'. This view, as will be shown directly, cannot be left unchallenged.

The emphasis which Dr. Fortes lays upon the dynamic character of the processes; his protest against the conception of change as 'a mechanical pitch-forking of elements of culture'; and the whole context of the statements just criticized largely justify his insistence on the functional analysis of culture contact as an integral whole. But if we try to avoid the assumption that contact is a mere mechanical shifting of elements, we need not yet adopt the equally incorrect view that the contact and interpenetration of two cultures at any historical moment presents us with a self-contained, well-balanced type of society. In fact culture contact in its essence does lead to change. Change as a rule means at least temporary maladjustment. The very nature of the phenomenon consists in the interaction of two different cultural worlds, which are not only separated by a wide evolutionary span, but face each other across the gulf of race prejudice and differential policy.

We can, of course, when dealing with the above-mentioned type of field-work in a small community, stationary, stagnant, or very little affected, agree to treat it as if it were in a state of equilibrium. In such a case, there is not much harm in forgetting the slow change which may still be going on, or in overlooking the germs of conflict and disruption. What assumption, however, were we compelled to make in order to achieve this convenient simplification, and treat the impact of two cultures and the ensuing processes of change as one stationary, well-integrated whole? We had to agree for the moment to forget the fact of change. When we set out to study change it is obviously inadmissible to forget change, to leave change out of account. When the main theme is the dynamic aspect of the impact of two cultures, it is entirely beside the point to forget that European influences constitute everywhere the main drive; that they are the determining factor as regards initiative and planning; and that in this character they are definitely not like the African institutions which resist the drive, or submit to change. When the contact of two cultures and its mechanism have to be defined and studied, it is not admissible to

simplify matters by the assumption that there is only one culture instead of two. The neglect of the third cultural reality, that of the new, mixed institutions resulting from this interaction is equally incorrect. In fact, in every situation of culture contact we have not one, nor even two, but three coexisting cultural phases.

The concept of Africans and Europeans, missionaries and witch-doctors, recruiters and indented labourers, leading a contented tribal existence suffers from a taint of smugness and sense of unreality. Listen to Dr. Mair's warning: '. . . native societies are now undergoing a process of rapid and forcible transformation comparable only to violent changes of a revolution.' She rightly insists that 'the changes in social organization are often patently disadvantageous to the natives', and speaks of the 'more or less serious maladjustment'. A society obviously cannot be 'well-integrated' and 'undergoing a revolution' at one and the same time! A glance at the role of European culture agents will show where the concept of a well-integrated whole breaks down.

Take the missionary. He cannot be 'regarded in the same way as the magician' or the officiating priest in ancestor cult. The missionary is the initiator and centre of the religious revolution now taking place in Africa. He would not be true to his vocation if he ever agreed to act on the principle that Christianity is as 'any other form of cult'. As a matter of fact, his brief is to regard all the other forms of cult as misguided, fit only for destruction, and to regard Christianity as entirely different, the only true religion to be implanted. Far from leaving other cults side by side in juxtaposition with the message of the Gospels, the missionary is actively engaged in superseding them.

The administrator, again, far from ever becoming an equivalent of the old chief; far from representing tribal authority, in any sense of being an integral part of it, must always remain over and above the tribe, and must control it from without. He is part of the imperial machinery, with its centres in London or Paris, Brussels or Rome. He has to safeguard the interests of the empire first and foremost. He has to watch over European interests in the colony, as well as to maintain the balance of these interests against native claims. To conceive of the part played by European political agents in Africa in terms of a fictitious 'well-integrated' community would blind us to the

very definition of the tasks, nature, and implications of colonial administration.

Nor can industrial enterprise be regarded as part of a tribal unit. It would be a strange African tribe which would embrace the gold mines of the Rand, with their gigantic plant; the stock exchange of Johannesburg, and the banking system stretching from Cape to Cairo. The communication systems; railroads and planes of the Imperial Airways Company; the system of motor routes, with the cars and lorries which run over them—all this is part of culture contact. But the concept of an extended African tribe into which all this could be squeezed in order to produce a unified tribal horizon falls to the ground as soon as it is stated.

All the typical phenomena of culture change: the administration of natives by Europeans; the African converts under missionary guidance or in autonomous churches; the courts which embody a compromise between European and native codes; African schools and industrial enterprise in Africa—lead us to an analysis in which three cultural phases have to be distinguished, defined, studied separately, and then related to each other. It is obvious that each phase, European, African, and that of change, presents different problems and has to be studied each by its own methods.

As regards the European side we have to consider the home Government, its colonial policies, and administrative systems. We have the Christian missionary world, based on ideals of Western zeal for universal uplift; we have the educational systems, the settler communities, and the industrial enterprises run by Western capital and catering for world markets. The study of this imposes, as we know already, a new outlook on the modern ethnographer, and the need of becoming acquainted with the sociology of Western enterprise, political, economic, and educational.

It is clear that here, for instance, such advice as that given by Dr. Schapera, to ' treat local Europeans as expert sources of information ' is not enough. Local Europeans can give us only very scanty information even on the European side of contact problems. They obviously are not ' expert sources ' on the whole background of European expansion on lines of the White Man's Manifest Destiny. Documentary evidence, acquaintance with policies and their carriers,

the study of missionary aims, and at least a limited knowledge of modern imperial economics is necessary to supplement the field-work on whites *in situ*. It is in the study of how the various paper policies or slogans, 'Indirect Rule' or 'Segregation'; 'Grondwet' or 'Native Rights', are related to the actual practice of contact carriers that one of the tasks and difficulties of contact studies consists—as well as its interest and importance.

The modern ethnographer cannot ignore the European outlook of settler and pro-native. He must know the home foundations of European institutions and movements. And this general knowledge he must then check by field-work on Europeans in Africa.[1]

The African side obviously has to be studied by different methods. Here the main task of the contact student is the assessment of what still survives from the old traditional outfit of an African tribe—a task essentially different from any 'reconstruction of pre-European conditions'. For only what survives is relevant in present-day contact, is still capable of development or of resistance to change.

But beside the old traditional institutions still surviving, apart from the new European communities, there are the institutions of contact and interpenetration. These draw upon the resources of both Europe and Africa. They incorporate members of the White race and the Black. They use elements from the two cultural reservoirs. In this they transform the elements borrowed, and incorporate them into an entirely new and independent cultural reality. This leads us immediately to the next point.

## IV. The Product of Change as a Mechanical Mixture of Elements

We have seen throughout that action and reaction, mutual dependence, and a flow of give and take are characteristic of contact. We

[1] This seems to impose a formidable task on the modern ethnographer. In the present recrystallization of his aims and methods, however, the anthropologist has to specialize. Some of the old skills and knowledge: anthropometry, detailed technology, the burdensome task of collecting and labelling specimens, has been largely given up by such contact students as the seven writers of these essays. In lieu of this, the contact student must become acquainted with a dozen or so of books on native policies, education, economics, and on missionary programmes, in addition to his training in the specialized branch of anthropology, that relating to social structure, primitive economics, customary law, and indigenous religion.

have also recognized clearly that there are phenomena in modern Africa which belong to neither the African nor the European side completely and exclusively, but are a ' compound ', ' mixture ', or ' fusion ' of two cultural influences. It will be necessary now to define more precisely what is the nature of this ' cultural compound '. Dr. Monica Hunter devotes the better part of her article to this problem. She recognizes that in the areas studied nowadays in Africa ' the culture is not a homogeneous one '; it is ' a *mixture* of *partially fused elements* which can only be understood in terms of the parent cultures '. (Italics are mine.)

The question immediately arises: what sort of ' mixture ' is the new African culture? What do we mean by ' partially fused ' elements? Above all, why should we be able to ' understand ' them only ' in terms of the parent cultures '? The reader who follows Dr. Hunter's argument closely, especially in her application of the ' mixture ' concept to concrete examples, will soon discover that her main aim is ' as far as possible to distinguish elements borrowed from European culture from those which were a part of (the native) culture before the coming of Europeans '. She is able to ' grasp the significance ' of mixed ritual, partly Christian partly African, only after ' ancestor cult took coherent form ' for her and she was able to disentangle the Christian from the heathen and to replace each of these elements within their previous cultural settings. In another example, in which she discusses the ceremonial killing over a plough, she finds that it is ' significant to know that the plough was introduced by Europeans, that formerly women did most of the cultivation . . . that the ritual of the plough is new '. Contact study thus becomes a process of disentangling elements out of the ' mixture ', and putting them back into their respective pigeon-holes, that is, their ' parent cultures '.

This procedure, which runs right through her article and affects one or two others, must be queried. Is it true that we cannot understand a contact phenomenon, a new co-operative institution, such as the new plough agriculture or African Christianity, except by pulling it to pieces and invoicing back the elements? This obviously would mean that new tendencies of change are lifeless and insignificant in themselves. What is real and significant to Dr. Hunter are the ' parent cultures '. To press her simile, we could almost say that the

parents gave birth to a still-born child. In my opinion the processes of culture change and the formation of new cultural realities cannot be regarded as a mechanical mixture. It is not a conglomerate of elements taken at random from one or other of the two parent cultures. To understand any elements in the new reality of Westernized Africa, we have indeed to study it as it works in its actual new setting, by its own mechanisms, under drives and incentives, not 'borrowed', but engendered within the new institutions. To tear parts of any new African reality out of their context is usually impossible and inevitably obscures the significance of the parts and the whole alike.

In writing this I am endorsing the clear criticisms given by Dr. Fortes who insists that culture contact is 'a dynamic process and not a mechanical pitch-forking of elements of culture like bundles of hay from one culture to another'. He further insists that 'culture contact has to be regarded, not as a transference of elements of one culture to another, but as a continuous process of interaction between groups of different culture'. Here Dr. Fortes comes very near to the only correct treatment of the whole problem: the conception of culture change as a process *sui generis*, engendered by contact and the dynamic interaction of the European and African cultures respectively, with a third 'culture of Westernized Africa' produced by the contact. The same conception is also at the basis of the treatment advocated by Dr. Wagner. It will be best to reach our decision as to the value of the concept of mechanical mixture as against that of a new autonomous entity, by applying each to one or two actual cases.

Take a typical product of change: a big industrial concern, such as an African gold or copper mine, a large plantation or a factory. Can we envisage it in terms of a 'mixture', a 'juxtaposition' or 'assortment' of 'partially fused elements' from Europe and Africa? Obviously not. It is a new type of enterprise, organized by Western capital and European initiative, but working in exotic surroundings and with African labour. Imagine an assortment of elements 'borrowed' from the Western civilization: the factory or mining plant; the tools, trucks, and rails; the motors and machinery for pounding ore or ginning cotton; the various engineering appliances—all this

dumped on the veldt or in the jungle. Imagine whole regiments of African labour driven towards it, as well as a contingent of skilled European workmen and engineers planted there. All this juxtaposed, mechanically put together, does not yet constitute a mine or a factory —not by a wide margin. It can only be regarded as the set of conditions necessary but not sufficient for the creation of industry. Where 'borrowing' ends, culture change begins.

The translation of financial and engineering plans into an organization of African labour for the exploiting of African resources is a new phenomenon, a genuine process of contact and change. Once the new industrial venture is organized, we have a new cultural reality, neither African nor European. It is organized by European enterprise, essentially dependent upon African labour and resources, a phenomenon which cannot be dissected into bits African and European. It cannot be understood either as a whole, nor yet in any of its component parts, in terms of European or African prototypes.

There is no European prototype for colour-bar legislation or practice; for recruiting on reserves; for the method of unemployment insurance by throwing back superfluous labour on to the tribal areas in times of slump. The remuneration of labour, based on differential discrimination between the races, the type of contract with unilateral criminal sanctions current in Africa, the inducements to sign on—all this is new to both Europe and Africa. It is determined by the fact that we have two races and two cultures influencing each other. The concept of the mechanical incorporation of elements from one culture into the other does not lead us beyond the initial preparatory stages, and even then on subtler analysis breaks down. What really takes place is an interplay of specific contact forces: race prejudice, political and economic imperialism, the demand for segregation, the safeguarding of a European standard of living, and the African reaction to all this. To approach any one of the large autonomous industrial enterprises in Africa with the conception of a 'mixture' would lead us to give up the study of the process at the very point where it really becomes significant.

African labour, again, knows no collective bargaining: it is a commodity which is not allowed to conform to the laws of supply and demand; it differs from European labour legally, economically,

and socially. At the same time this labour cannot be related in any way to African tribal economics. The scale of payment, criminal sanctions for contracts, pass laws, diet problems, cannot be understood in terms of the European, nor yet of the African parent cultures. No sorting of elements is possible; no invoicing back to a parent culture. We here have to deal with a vast phenomenon which in its essence is defined by a set of economic, legal, and social arrangements which have arisen in response to a new need: the large scale exploitation of African resources by Europeans, for Western ends, and by means of African labour. The fallacy of regarding such a phenomenon as a heap of fragments 'borrowed' from black and white parent cultures is evident.

The task of the field-worker cannot consist in disengaging and re-assorting the black and white elements of the fictitious conglomerate, for the reality of culture change is not a conglomerate, nor a mixture, nor yet a juxtaposition of partially fused elements.

Take another example. The slum yards of Johannesburg, themselves a product of culture contact, would supply us with yet another 'mixture'—one symptomatic and symbolic of culture change—*skokian*, the famous concoction brewed, retailed, and consumed in the notorious slum yards of native South African locations. The modern girl looking for a cocktail novelty—a real shaker-shocker—could find a recipe in the Report of the Native Economic Commission [1930/32, U.G. 22, 1932 (p. 110, par. 751)]. 'Appallingly noxious drinks were invented. Anything which quickly increased the alcoholic content was added; calcium carbide, methylated spirits, tobacco, molasses and sugar, blue stone, are only a few examples.' The ingredients of this mixture have never figured in any mixed drinks party in Bloomsbury or Greenwich Village. As elements of a 'cocktail' they were not 'borrowed' but readapted by African genius to a new function. And obviously the African parent culture supplies no 'precedents' for any use of calcium carbide, blue stone, or methylated spirits. *Skokian* is a legitimate offspring of the slum yard by European moral intentions. Read the accompanying paragraphs in the report, and you will find that *skokian* arose in response to 'the problem . . . of inventing a drink which could be made and stored in small quantities, easy to hide, which could be matured in a few hours, and could

have its alcoholic effect quickly'. For in the general puritanic drive against native beer—itself an entirely innocuous drink—and the police control by which it was enforced, the native was driven to invent *skokian* and its peers.

Are such phenomena as native townships or mining compounds, African small-holdings or agricultural co-operatives, a mixture? Hardly. They are one and all entirely new products of conditions which are the outgrowth of the impact of European civilization on archaic Africa. The school in the Bush has no antecedents in Europe, nor yet in African tribalism. The question of educating men and women to professions from the practice of which they are then legally debarred occurs neither in Europe nor yet Bantu Africa. Take the educated African as a final product of the process. I would like to meet the ethnographer who could accomplish the task of sorting out a Westernized African into his component parts without destroying the one thing in him which matters—his personality.

The nature of culture change is determined by factors and circumstances which cannot be assessed by the study of either culture alone, nor of both of them as lumber-rooms of elements. The clash and interplay of the two cultures produce new things. Even a material object, a tool or an instrument like money, changes in the very process of culture contact. The anthropologist has to correlate European good intentions with the necessities of the situation; the inspired liberalism and goodwill of the missionary with the hard calculating designs of the financier, entrepreneur, and settler.

The whole concept of European culture as a cornucopia from which things are freely given is misleading. It does not take a specialist in anthropology to see that the European 'give' is always highly selective. We never give any native people under our control—and we never shall, for it would be sheer folly as long as we stand on the basis of our present Realpolitik—the following elements of our culture:

1. The instruments of physical power: fire-arms, bombing planes, poison gas, and all that makes effective defence or aggression possible.

2. We do not give our instruments of political mastery. Sovereignty remains always in the British or Belgian crown, French Republic, or Italian or Portuguese Dictatorship. The natives, except for an

insignificant minority, have no votes. They are not equal citizens of the Empire, Republic, or Dictatorship. Even when they are given Indirect Rule, this is done under control.

3. We do not share with them the substance of economic wealth and advantages. The metal which comes from the gold or copper mines does not flow into African channels, except the inadequate wage. Even when under indirect economic exploitation, as in West Africa and Uganda, we allow the natives a share of profits, the full control of economic organization remains in the hands of Western enterprise.

4. We do not admit them as equals to Church Assembly, school, or drawing-room. Under some Colonial systems, notably the French, African individuals can climb high in the political hierarchy. In British West Africa, race discrimination is less sharp than in the East or South. But full political, social, and even religious equality is nowhere granted.

In fact, from all the points here enumerated, it would be easy to see that it is not a matter of ' give ', nor yet a matter of generous ' offering ', but usually a matter of ' take '. Lands have been alienated from Africans to a large extent, and usually in the most fruitful regions. Tribal sovereignty and the indulgence in warfare, which the African valued even as we seem to value it, has been taken away from him. He is being taxed, but the disposal of the funds thus provided is not always under his control, and never completely so. The labour which he has to give is voluntary only in name.

There is no doubt that, as against this, another long list could be drafted, including all that Europeans had done for the African in goodwill, self-sacrifice, and disinterested purpose. The Europeans have given schools and they have also done much to evangelize the natives. They have given the African a more effective administration; they have opened up the continent with a set of roads, railways, and airways. The African is to a certain extent allowed to benefit by some of these advantages of a more highly developed civilization. But in assessing the value of the things given as against those taken away, we must not forget that, when it comes to spiritual gifts, it is easy to give but difficult to accept. Material gifts, on the other hand, are easily accepted but only with reluctance parted with. Yet it is just the spiritual gifts

with which we are most generous, while we withhold wealth, power, independence, and social equality. This is not an indictment nor a piece of pro-native pleading. It is simply a warning that any approach which eliminates from the study of change the real driving forces remains onesided.

It is necessary, I think, to make it plain once and for all that to treat the process of acculturation as a static product, in which Europeans and Africans have arrived at a state of temporary integration or of harmonized unity, is unprofitable. Equally unprofitable is it to treat the process as a mechanical 'mixture' where the main problem consists in the sorting out and invoicing back of elements. The phenomena of culture change are entirely new cultural realities which have to be studied in their own right. Moreover, all the typical phenomena of change—schools and mines, African churches and native courts, the trader's stores and the plantation compound—are contingent upon two cultural influences which flank them, as it were, on either side. They depend on the intentions, interests, and impact of the Western culture. They are also determined by the cultural reality of African reserves. We see therefore once more that we have here to deal with at least three phases in constant interaction. The processes of change resulting from the interaction between European and African cultures cannot be assessed by any scrutiny however careful of the ingredients in the two original 'parent' cultures. Even when we know all the 'ingredients' which go to make up a mine or a school, an African church or a native court, we cannot foretell or foresee what the development of such a new institution will be. For the forces brought into being and determining the course of growth and development are not 'borrowed' but have been born within the new institution. Starting from the analysis of what the contact reality is, we are brought again to the same concept to which we were led in the previous section.

The study of culture change must take into account three orders of reality: the impact of the higher culture; the substance of native life on which it is directed; and the phenomenon of autonomous change resulting from the reaction between the two cultures. Only by analysing each problem under these three headings, and then confronting the column of European influences with that of native

response, and of the resulting change, can we arrive at the most useful instrument of research. Far from being a mere mechanical joining of the two original influences, European and African, the two impinge on each other. The impact produces conflict, co-operation, or leads to compromise.

## V. The Search for Zero-point

We have to discuss one more view as to the nature of contact, the methods of study, and the practical conclusions. Change is a deviation from the original conditions of tribal equilibrium and adjustment. Change also generally implies maladjustment, deterioration, social strain, and confusion in legal and moral principles. Is it not therefore natural to assume that culture change is essentially an aberration, a fall from grace, as it were? Can we not regard it as a departure from the normal conditions of original tribalism?

This view is both plausible and tempting. In order to assess the degree of change, the knowledge of the zero-point of culture contact seems to be necessary.[1]

In order to account for the 'causes' of change, it seems inevitable to turn to its starting-point. The memories of your old informants, especially trustworthy in all matters of traditional lore, depict the old times as the Golden Age of human existence. The natural bias of every ethnographer leads him also to regard the untainted native culture, not merely as the *terminus ab quo*, but as the *terminus ad quem* of normalcy, as the only legitimate standard of comparison between the pathology of change and the healthy conditions of tribalism. Indeed, all scientific work demands a fixed system of co-ordinates, a definite set of bearings, and the zero-point of contact and change seems at first sight to offer the best framework for the assessment of any deviation from the normal. Such comparison could then provide, in the words of Dr. Mair, 'an objective basis for the determination of policy'.

On careful scrutiny, however, this view has to be rejected. It not only proves to be useless, but leads us into serious fallacies. The reconstruction of pre-European tribal conditions will, as has already

[1] Dr. Richards has introduced the apposite expression 'Zero-point of Culture Change' to designate the conditions of pre-European tribal equilibrium. She herself, however, does not adopt the view here stated and criticized.

been stated, remain the principal task of descriptive ethnography in its old and legitimate role: the portraying of native life in its entirety as it once existed, unaffected by European influences. But here we are defining the new aims and methods, as well as the practical value of the ethnography of contact. In this we have to insist that reconstruction, legitimate as it is in antiquarian anthropology, must be rigorously kept out of contact studies.

To place reconstruction in the forefront of such studies would obscure the fact that the vital forces of tradition, which still survive to-day, are not identical with that past which has to be laboriously and carefully built up from fragmentary data. The confusion between the subjective, highly emotional vision of the past as it lives in present-day mythology of the pre-European Golden Age; and the real and objective picture of those times is equally misleading. The gravest short-coming of this approach, however, lies in the confusion which it introduces into practical problems. What was 'normal' in the past is not any longer normal, after all the changes, the progress and the deterioration, the new achievements and the maladjustments, have been introduced by European contact. The anthropologist of change has to train his vision forward rather than backward.

Dr. Fortes and Dr. Wagner are well aware of the dangers and pitfalls of this approach. The former tells us that 'history of the "before the deluge" kind does not . . . illuminate the real problem, . . . what are the causes of social change'. He is equally clear that in his area 'no feat of skill or imagination would suffice to establish a reliable zero-point of culture contact'. He tells us that 'the anthropologist using the method of Dr. Hunter and Dr. Mair becomes a social historian registering the end results of a period of contact, and contrasting them with an hypothetical, uncontaminated tribal life. The method is not without its dangers for the unwary'. The dangers which Dr. Fortes here implies will have to be stated more fully. Some of these are pointed out by Dr. Wagner. He sees clearly the practical irrelevancy of the zero-point in any advice which might be tendered by the anthropologist. 'In present-day Africa . . . a particular contact phenomenon can no longer be judged against the old background but only against the shifting background of the changing culture. The aims of a practical policy cannot . . . be set upon a

restoration of the cultural *status quo*, and the criterion in weighing the merits of a change cannot simply be the degree to which it conforms to or deviates from the traditional patterns of native culture.' With this analysis I am in full agreement.

I think that Dr. Fortes is right in assuming that both Dr. Mair and Dr. Hunter still seem inclined to regard reconstruction as essential to contact studies. In their opinion the comparison of present-day with old conditions throws the only relevant light on the phenomenon of change, and can even yield practical indications of policy.

I do not think that Professor Schapera either escapes the passion for reconstructing. He tells us, for instance, that ' successful interpretation calls in the first place for some knowledge both of the original tribal culture and of the new forces which have borne and are still bearing upon it '. Under the sub-heading *Reconstruction of the Tribal Culture*, he tells us that in the study of culture contact and change the field-worker's ' first task is to reconstruct as far as possible a picture of the old tribal culture as it was in the days before the Europeans came into the scene '. This writer is, however, aware of the difficulties of the task. The ethnographer's ' reconstruction will at best be highly formalized and sketchy, lacking the detail and, above all, the living reality derived from personal observation. But it should provide at least some sort of starting-point for tracing out the nature, direction, and causes of the changes that have taken place '. In what way, however, the reconstructed past can teach us about the nature and causes of change, I, like Drs. Fortes and Wagner, am unable to see.

Let me substantiate this point of view and first insist on the distinction between the past reconstructed and tribal tradition still alive in institutions or in memory and legend. For it is clear, indeed a truism, that an African institution that still lives and functions does not need to be ' reconstructed '; it can and must be observed in the ethnographer's own field-work. The form in which it now exists and works is not identical with the one which is past and dead. Some cultural elements have disappeared from native life completely without yet seriously affecting its fundamental institutions. In many tribes native dress—or the absence thereof—cannot be seen any longer. In some areas indigenous sports or games have been largely superseded by football or cricket. Some rites and ceremonies of ancestor-worship

have been abandoned, even where the cult and belief still survive substantially.

There are cultural elements which are not allowed to continue because they are repugnant to the Whites. European administration does not allow cannibalism, inter-tribal warfare, mutilation as legal punishment or the chief's pastime. Head-hunting, witchcraft, ritual obscenities are generally discountenanced. Slavery is a thing of the past, and the traffic in human beings has been abolished right through the continent.

Yet it is important to realize that from all such cultural factors a more or less substantial residue still survives. War has left behind a military organization which among such nations or tribes as the Ashanti, Masai, the Ngoni, Zulu, or Swazi, to mention only a few, still forms the backbone of the social order. War survives as one of the most powerful traditional elements in the prestige of certain tribes, their national pride in their relation to their neighbours, and even as a serious handicap in their economic attitudes.[1]

Slavery, apart from some remnants of a domestic form, survives in the discrimination of status and legal differences between descendants of slaves and freemen. Dr. Richards tells me that many of the Rhodesian tribes on the mines use some of the old categories surviving from slavery to distinguish between recruited and voluntary labour.

Some of the things prohibited and persecuted disappear, but only from the surface of tribal life. They are practised in secret, and exercise an enormous influence on modern African culture. Typical of these is witchcraft. Neither is ancestor-worship completely dead in the Christian section of the community. In Dr. Hunter's book on the Pondo (*Reaction to Conquest*, 1936) we find innumerable examples of such survivals, partly incorporated into Christian ritual, but even to a greater extent influencing the behaviour of Christians in unorthodox ways. The psycho-analyst would say that ancestor-worship survives in the ' collective unconscious ' of the Christianized African. But we need not adopt mystical concepts of European origin to describe African mysticisms. Through continued contact with heathen, and also because the tradition of ancestor-worship is still strong and

[1] Cf. the article on ' Tradition and Prestige among the Ngoni ', by Dr. Margaret Read (*Africa*, vol. ix, no. 4, 1936).

firmly rooted in the structure of the family, every nominally Christian child learns a great deal about the influence which the ancestral ghosts exercise and the cult by which they can be propitiated. Under the stress of emotional crisis the indigenous belief becomes stronger than the alien creed.

The legal conceptions which vest criminal retribution in the clan, and enjoin the rule of vendetta or *lex talionis*, are also apt to outlast any official prohibitions. Sex customs and sex taboos discouraged by some European influences, notably by Christianity, very often are carried out *sub rosa*. Dr. Hunter gives an amusing example of this in quoting the universal belief of Christian natives that white missionaries also conform to the custom of *Ukumetsha*, which closely corresponds to the Central European institution of *Fensterln*.

The points which I am trying to make here are: first, that the vitality of African institutions has made many of them survive right into the present time; secondly, and what is even more important for us, that the present-day residue of old African tribalism is and must be substantially different from what these institutions were in the past. Now, two realities which are equally relevant must be kept by the man of science distinct in theory if they are distinct in fact. In point of method that quota of indigenous culture which is still alive cannot be discovered in any other way than by field-work. What still lives and works in the open or driven underground can be found only by present-day observation of the actual reality. There is only one way of discovering what institutions flourish even if partly mulcted, suppressed, or neglected, and that is to go among the Africans of to-day; learn what they feel and think; how they act and organize their life in workaday concerns, in the crises of life, and in dramatic circumstances.

It is equally important to realize that the ' past remembered '—that is, its vision in man's memory—need not, in fact cannot, be reconstructed. It must be studied simply by tapping the memories of the tribesmen. And here we come to the second confusion above mentioned, that between the mythological vision of the past as entertained by the natives, and the sober picture thereof which would emerge from scientific reconstruction. To some Africans who are still true to their own culture the past becomes in retrospect the Paradise lost

for ever. To the progressives or the renegades, who often substantially gain by the change, the past is the time of unmitigated evil. To trust to the memories of old men or to the current accounts of what used to be, would, for purposes of reconstruction, be futile. ' . . . The anthropologist who optimistically sets out to recover a picture of the pre-European . . . organization', we are told by Dr. Fortes, 'from the reminiscences of old men . . . soon becomes inextricably entangled in the mesh of their . . . lies.' Mr. and Mrs. Culwick also insist that 'the accounts of the old men must be rejected, for these are inclined to give the inquirer two distinct, irreconcilable, and equally erroneous pictures, one of a black Utopia and the other of a bloody reign of terror'.

It is quite true that, if we are out to reconstruct, little value can be attached to such accounts, unless they be carefully checked, weighed against each other, and corrected. But to the student of culture change what really matters is not the objectively true past, scientifically reconstructed and all-important to the antiquarian, but the psychological reality of to-day. The former is an order of events dead and buried, even to the length of having disappeared from men's memories; the latter a powerful psychological force determining the present-day behaviour of the native African. People are swayed by the errors they feel, and not by the truth which they ignore.

The distinction between the two anthropologies is plain and fundamental. To the antiquarian what really matters is the past, true and objective, with all the retrospective glorification and obloquy carefully removed. To the student of culture change, the bias, the contrast, and the false colours are all-important, because they are the forces which foster change or retard it respectively.

We see thus that the reconstructed past is something entirely different from the living institutions of to-day, and also that the vision of the past in human memory and tribal legend is something which has to be studied for its own sake as a psychological influence active in present-day African society. For any practical considerations of policy, full familiarity with African tradition alive and at work does matter; knowledge of the reconstructed past does not.

Many African tribes before European contact throve on cannibalism, grew prosperous on slavery or cattle-raiding, and developed

their political power by inter-tribal warfare. Would any anthropologist therefore advocate a return to a human flesh diet, or to slavery, warfare, and expeditions for loot and booty? Hardly. But does even the fact that his great-grandfathers were accustomed to gorge themselves on human flesh affect in any way, direct or indirect, the desirable diet for a small child in an urban location; or that of a mine labourer; or a member of a tribe who have to devise a new economy because their territory has been cut down, their pastures eroded, and their taxation increased? These questions supply their own answers.

The economic resources of African tribes have changed; African enterprise has grown in some districts, and in many respects out of all proportion to old conditions; while some of their pursuits have been rendered completely obsolete. In political matters the chief can no longer use his armed forces to increase his revenue, nor yet to enforce his whims and wishes; he cannot be allowed to use forced labour, still less to indulge in the capture and trade of slaves; his religious power has been affected by new beliefs and undermined by new scepticisms. If we were to take one institution after another; if we were to survey the various aspects of culture: economic, legal, educational, or political—we would find everywhere that part at least of the 'zero conditions' of the historical past, as it existed before the advent of Europeans, is dead and buried, and as such irrelevant.

What, therefore, is relevant from the practical point of view? Obviously, the still surviving quota of culture and tradition observable in present-day field-work. It seems almost unnecessary to emphasize that only what still lives can give any guidance to those who have to control a living native society. Only forces of tradition actively influencing the sentiments of living men and women matter for them and those who have to deal with their destiny.

The distinction between live history and a reconstructed zero-point is thus relevant for theory, method of field-work, and practical applications alike. Indeed, the ethnographer intent on contact problems must be ever on guard against confusing the products of his own reconstruction, or data culled from an old record of field-work, with the existing residues of the old culture. The processes of history act always as an automatic sieve. They separate the enduring and the

resistant from the weak and transient in human institutions. History thus furnishes us with a natural clue to what is vital and capable of readjustment as against the factors and forces which are readily shed or had to be suppressed.

The contact ethnographer's own field-work is sufficient for all he needs to know.[1] The analysis which he has to carry out on his field-material would again make him distinguish the vital residues: the European side and the phases of change. But on this point sufficient stress has already been laid.

## VI. Concluding Remarks

I have made a rapid survey of the problems inherent in culture contact and change with direct reference to the contributions of the seven writers. If here and there it was necessary to take sides in the disagreement between them or to join issue with one or the other, the criticisms do not in any way diminish the value of the joint achievement, nor yet of the individual quotas. After all, even the exploring of a blind alley here and there is a contribution to the advancement of science. Let us remember, too, that the concept of culture change as a 'mixture' of elements borrowed from parent cultures is suggested to every ethnographer by the dominant school of to-day, that of Graebner and Pater Schmidt, and most American anthropologists. Again, the search for zero-point is nothing but the obvious course to be taken by every field ethnographer, whose task up till now has been the portraying of cultures as they were in their undisturbed state. The method of studying a contact situation as an 'integral whole' is one which naturally would appeal to a functionalist. As long as we do not specifically focus our attention on change as a dynamic and historical process, this approach is, within limits, legitimate.

Due recognition was given from the start to the integral achievement of the present joint effort. The seven articles are a substantial contribution to the theoretical problem of what contact means, the methods of field-work, and the possibilities of practical application.

[1] I need not repeat here that a contact field-worker may, and probably will, be at the same time true to his role of reconstructive anthropologist.

The pose of academic detachment and persistent blindness to the fact that theoretical anthropology can learn quite as much from practical issues as it can teach in return, have considerably handicapped modern developments in the Science of Man. As against this, Dr. Hunter is right when she tells us plainly and directly that her interest in culture contact is primarily practical. ' I want to know for practical ends what effect European activities, European administration, education, and Christian teaching are having upon a Bantu community.' Dr. Mair, too, affirms that the study of contact has ' a severely and urgently practical importance '. In my opinion there is no doubt that whole-hearted concern with practical matters will more directly lead the theoretical student into the understanding of the dynamic aspect of culture change than any other avenue of research. What is practically urgent to man, whether it be desirable or detestable, whether inspiring or galling, soon becomes a collective drive, that is a relevant social force.

It was perhaps not possible to do full justice in this essay to the individual value of each article. Thus, for instance, the most substantial and lasting contribution to the method and technique of field-work is contained in Dr. Richards's article, which was hardly mentioned in the course of these discussions. Her essay raises no contentious issues, and, recommending as it does a new and valuable device for contact field-work, it does not lend itself to a debate on principles or points of view. The concrete approach through individual case-study over a large number of samples will be found useful in any ethnographic survey. It is indispensable in the study of contact. This the expert will clearly recognize, and it is for him that the article is primarily written. The practical man, however, who wishes to acquire the technique of anthropological field-work will also do well to study and to assimilate the gist of this article. For by adopting her methods he will obtain a convenient short-cut to the expert's skill and knowledge. I should like to add that the first attempt to define the problems of culture contact is really contained in an earlier article by Dr. Richards on ' Anthropological Problems in North-Eastern Rhodesia ' (*Africa*, vol. v, no. 2, 1932), which it was not possible to reprint in this series. That essay is an able exposition of the differential, monographic analysis of areas under specific types of contact: those near White

settlements; in the vicinity of missionary stations; under the influence of industrial concerns; and those relatively untouched. She demonstrates how, by subsequent comparative analysis, such a study allows us to determine the forces of contact, and to assess and show their differential influences. Many of the constructive arguments found in the present articles have already been anticipated in that early attempt of Dr. Richards.

Mr. and Mrs. Culwick, from whom I was only once able to quote, give us a very competent and illuminating analysis of problems in their area. Their contribution is throughout inspired by an all-round grip of method and principle, founded on common sense, sound knowledge, and the practical outlook which comes from having to handle affairs and not only to discourse about them. It is especially valuable to have an article from an experienced administrator, who at the same time is an anthropologist by the Grace of God.

The Editor's leading article is excellent as an introduction to the series. It indicates the relevant questions; lays down some of the main principles, without dogmatically imposing any specific solutions. Here again it must not be forgotten that Dr. Mair is not only writing round culture contact, but that in her two books she has proved that she is well able to work on the subject at first hand. Her monograph on the Baganda is an admirable account of an African community in transition. Her theoretical analysis of native policies in Africa should be read by every contact anthropologist as a first introduction to the wider European setting of the whole question.[1]

Although I had to disagree with Dr. Hunter's arguments on several points, I have learnt a great deal in the act of disagreeing. If I was able to refute some of her theses, it was because, from her own book —in my opinion the best extensive study in contact and change—I had become familiar with the nature of culture change and the methods for its study.[2]

Professor Schapera's comprehensive eclecticism apparent in the present article allows him to make a number of excellent points, as well as a few on which I had to join issue. The introductory pages

[1] Cf. *An African People in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1934); and *Native Policies in Africa* (London, 1936).

[2] *Reaction to Conquest* (London, 1936).

of his analysis lay down the real factors of the problem in a manner which he might have developed into the view of culture change here advocated: the analysis of each contact problem into three phases and their correlation on the issue of the common factor between African and European interests. When he tells us, however, after his sound introductory remarks that, 'for the purposes of this paper . . . it will be assumed that our special problem is to study the effects of Western civilization upon the life of the natives', I have to enter my caveat. Impact, after all, is a relation. In the study of this, we cannot cut out one side and study what remains a mere fragment. Impact and change are action and reaction. They are a mutual interpenetration. It is not legitimate to choose one side and to forget that the process consists in the constant interaction of both sides. This illegitimate surgery leads Professor Schapera to fall back on the 'integrated whole' simile. Professor Schapera is not clear either on the place of historical reconstruction in modern contact studies, or on the relation between the ethnographic and psychological aspects of the problem.

There is one more argument from the contribution of Professor Schapera that I would like to challenge, coming as it does from an experienced and competent student of African cultures. His insistence on 'personalities' as opposed to 'institutions' is puzzling. It leads him to such an assertion: 'to the native . . . there is no such thing as Western civilization in general.' This I frankly cannot quite understand. Does the educated Bantu have no idea of 'Western civilization in general'? Is not the essence of tribal reaction to White contact, of Bantu nationalism, and of the various Pan-African movements, a public opinion in which the Western world as a whole is made the object of violent views and strong sentiments? That the views are not scientifically founded and the sentiments not without bias and counterprejudice, we cannot wonder. The point is that an integral appreciation of Western culture does exist among the Africans. This side of the contact problem, the new African type of nationalism, of racial feeling, and of collective opposition to Western culture, is one on which I cannot enlarge in this short essay, but which in my opinion is of the greatest importance for all studies in contact and change. Its recognition forces us to train our mental vision towards the future without yet ignoring the past. African nationalism is as much a

conservative sentiment on the rebound as the taking up and translating into local and tribal life of some of the new European tendencies and ideas. With all this, Professor Schapera's article is of the greatest value quite as much in provoking thought and even dissent as in the many excellent remarks scattered throughout.

As is only natural, the articles make headway as they follow one another. I have not much to disagree with in Dr. Fortes's contribution, and hardly anything in that of Dr. Wagner. I only wish this latter had developed the constructive arguments of his last few paragraphs more fully and perhaps omitted some of the points already made by others, which he excellently restates in the earlier part of his essay.

As the Arch-Functionalist I am naturally in sympathy with Dr. Fortes when he advocates the exploitation ' to the full of the resources of the functional method '. This method, however, has been worked out with the purpose of describing and analysing one culture, and a culture at that, which through age-long historical development has reached a state of well-balanced equilibrium. These two main presuppositions of functionalism in its simple form break down in contact studies. We have to deal not with one culture alone, but with two cultures and a *tertium quid*.

These three cultural phases largely obey each its own cultural determinism. Each has its own type of organization, political institutions, economic values, and religious ideals. The European culture in Africa is closely linked up with its matrix at home which still continues to influence and inspire its African offshoot. Europeans never enter as integral members into full citizenship of an African tribe. They play their own cultural game in Africa. The Africans have still their own tribal strongholds. They are not allowed to amalgamate with the Whites even if they wanted to. By the various barriers, legal, racial, and social, they are kept apart. This segregation and not any integral union is the main characteristic of the African-White relationship.

The third phase, consisting as it does of the new institutions brought into existence by contact, is a new cultural phenomenon with a determinism of its own. The contact situation does not produce one new tribe; it is not a ' mixture ' of elements, nor is it profitable to regard it as a deviation from or distortion of an original Golden Age product. The essence of contact institutions is not equilibrium, but

change, with compromise, conflict, or co-operation. The three phases are not symmetrical. They consist of the impact of European interests, spiritual and economic, self-centred or altruistic, upon the African cultural resources. This impact produces phenomena of change such as the educated African, the converted African, the mixed and at times tangled justice, and the joint industrial ventures.

I am not, however, advocating the abandonment of functionalism in contact studies. On the contrary it is a more complicated type of the same method, in which the mutual relations and the functional variations of the dependent factors is studied, not within one culture, but with regard to three mutually dependent phases. In this study the search for the Common Measure is essentially a functional analysis. For the Common Measure between old beliefs and new, between indigenous justice and European legal principles, between tribal economics and world-wide industrialism, consists always in the discovery of the nature and function of surviving institutions, and of how they are adapted to meet the new strains put upon them by European influences. It is also through a functional study of new contact institutions—the mines and factories, the courts of justice, and the schools—that we can assess their character and study their cultural determinism. In stating this, however, I am going beyond my present task of critical assessment of the arguments contained in the seven essays. I hope shortly to present a more positive view of the subject of how culture contact ought to be studied in the field and worked out in theoretical analysis.

The picture of Africa in transition has been briefly outlined in the opening section of this article. It does not appear, nor is it in its nature a perfect continuum. It is divided by the line of segregation on the one hand; and on the other, by that boundary behind which the African withdraws to carry on his tribal economic concerns, his ancestor-worship, his loyal duties to the chief; to obey his own laws, and to achieve his own values.

All the problems of contact and change centre around the interaction between the European and African cultural phases, from which there emerges the third one, wherein the two worlds interpenetrate, achieve a co-operation or a compromise, or remain in the grip of conflict.

The anthropologist is the only expert who can competently study the three phases. Through such comparative study he can discover and define the Common Factor of European intentions and of African response. He can lay bare the sources of maladjustment. These, at times, he will find are due to real intrinsic conflict of interests; at times they may arise from faulty assessment of African realities, or again, from almost adventitious misunderstandings. His advice may be sometimes a clear warning, sometimes a definite piece of constructive planning. Knowledge gives foresight, and foresight is indispensable to the statesman and to local adminstrator, to educationalist, welfare worker, and missionary alike. The discovery of long-run tendencies; the capacity of foreseeing and forecasting the future in the light of the full knowledge of all the factors involved; competent advice on specific questions—these are the tasks of the contact ethnographer as a practical expert.

B. MALINOWSKI.

# I. THE PLACE OF HISTORY IN THE STUDY OF CULTURE CONTACT

*L. P. MAIR*

THE special branch of social anthropology which deals with peoples whose culture is undergoing rapid change as the result of contact with more highly developed societies is of interest from a number of different points of view. On the one hand there is the purely theoretic approach, which is concerned to discover rules governing this process—to find reasons for the assimilation of some elements of the alien culture and the rejection of others, or explanations of the fact that the dominant civilization has sometimes succeeded in imposing changes in social organization which analysis shows to be patently disadvantageous, while in other directions it may be powerless; perhaps to trace the basic human motives which come sharply into prominence when liberated by the breakdown of traditional standards of conduct and values. On the other hand this study has a severely and urgently practical importance. A recent American writer has suggested that in British colonies these problems are only considered relevant in their bearing on the maintenance of the labour supply.[1] Such a view would appear to conflict with the fact that, as far as Africa is concerned, it is mainly in colonies governed under the system of Indirect Rule, where the economic policy is to encourage independent native production, that the study of social anthropology receives official encouragement. Actually it is being more and more clearly recognized by administrators directly concerned in moulding the development of the African peoples that this 'sacred trust' cannot be executed until the bases of a sound development are laid down; until it is known in each separate case how far the native social organization has been already rendered obsolete by changed conditions, how far it is capable of readjustment, what are the existing foundations on which the new institutions that the new needs require can be securely built. Experience is constantly bringing home to the man on the spot the need for some more practical criterion

[1] Cf. Mead, *The Changing Culture of an Indian Tribe*, p. 3.

of policy than that inherent desirability of everything 'civilized', which the facts so plainly contradict.

It is from this practical point of view that I propose to approach the subject in this short paper. To me the question of primary interest is: How should we study an African society in order to lay down lines of policy which would be orientated not towards some necessarily vague ultimate ideal, but towards the solution of specific problems of adaptation which have arisen or may be expected to arise in the near future? The suggestions which I shall make are based on my own experience of a people—the Baganda—in whom contact has produced very great transformations which are nevertheless relatively recent, so that it is not very difficult to find people who can remember the traditional social organization. Conditions vary so much from one area to another that I would not claim general applicability for them. Other methods might be more satisfactory, for instance, in an area where communications are poor, so that one can actually observe marked differences in the extent of European influence on different sections of the same community; while in towns and industrial areas, where the native population is heterogeneous and has grown up with no inheritance of tradition, the approach would necessarily be entirely different.

The central object of the inquiry seemed to be to find out how a working system of social co-operation had been affected by the various European influences to which it had been subjected for some fifty years, and in particular to discover the respects in which there was more or less serious maladjustment. This required as its starting-point a reconstruction of the system, which would on the one hand present a basis of comparison with native life as I was able to observe it, and on the other, by showing how the various social institutions were internally organized, maintained, and related to one another, would give some indication of the directions in which to look for signs of strain.

It is obvious that such a reconstruction can never have the same factual value as the results of direct observation. It will be of the same abstract, generalized type as all field-work results obtained by relying solely on the statements of informants and not checking them against data taken from actual practice. It will be lacking in the everyday

detail which is an essential element of satisfactory field-work, and it will be subject not only to the inevitable distortion of memory but to that of prejudice, sometimes in favour of the old order and sometimes against it. It will not give an accurate, a complete, or a dynamic picture of native life, and if such a reconstruction was presented as the sole result of a field study it would have little value.

Nevertheless it seems to me essential for this type of inquiry. The functional theory of anthropology in general stresses the importance of studying native life as it is actually lived, and rejects the appeal to historical origins to explain peculiarities of social configuration. In a native society which has not recently suffered violent disturbance such explanations are unnecessary, and since they usually attempt to follow out a hypothetical process of evolution, they nearly always mislead. Even in a European society, where we have trustworthy records stretching back over centuries, and where the historian can sometimes lay his finger on the moment at which some institution came into being and trace the causes which led to its creation, this information has little sociological importance, because once the institution is firmly established it adds little to the analysis of its working. But in the period of transition, when the innovation had not yet crystallized into its place, when its existence was not taken for granted but resented and opposed, when the subsidiary modifications in the social structure which its creation required had not yet been made, the contrast of past with present would have been of great significance. For example, if a study of French culture on modern sociological lines could have been made during the generation following the Revolution, its author would have had to be constantly drawing such comparisons; but a similar study made to-day would not be much enhanced by the enumeration of events of the Revolution to which existing aspects of French society could be traced.

Most native societies are now undergoing a process of rapid and forcible transformation comparable only to the violent changes of a revolution, and entirely distinct from the gradual, almost imperceptible, process of adaptation in which the normal evolution of human cultures consists. For this reason a straightforward description of such a society as the ethnologist finds it would not do justice to the crucial problems of the existing situation, which arise just where the

traditional system has been forcibly wrenched away. Moreover, unless he was content to present a picture of a society whose institutions were in many respects hopelessly inadequate to its needs, and thus do violence to the whole theory that it is these social needs which call institutions into being, he would have to be constantly referring to such dislocations to explain his statements. To illustrate the point by an analogy, a culture which is undergoing the process of contact on the scale that can be observed in Africa at the present time is in a pathological condition, which can only be understood in terms of contrast with the normal.

This does not mean that it is necessary to look for the 'original' native culture. Clearly all such cultures have changed in the past, not only by a process of internal evolution but through the influence of external forces. Invasions and conquests are established facts of the history of many African peoples. Sometimes, as in West Africa, such conquests are relatively recent, and it may well be that policy should seek, instead of consolidating their results simply because they are 'native', to save the conquered society from dissolution—in other words, here we are faced with conditions that are already pathological, and we have to remedy ills not of our own making. This might prove to be the case, for example, in some of the powerful Fulani Emirates. In the kingdoms of Uganda, on the other hand, European penetration found a condition of stable equilibrium in which the cultures of conquerors and subjects had been fused, not everywhere indistinguishably, but at any rate to a degree which makes it possible to regard the result as an organic whole. The same might be true of a culture which had successfully assimilated some European element. If Abyssinia had been a colony, for example, the most ardent believer in the preservation of native culture would not have advocated the recreation of the pre-Christian religion.

These considerations apply to the study of culture contacts as well as to the application of its results. What we are seeking is to discover where a working mechanism has been thrown out of gear by the destruction of some of its parts, and the insertion into the machine of others not designed with any consideration of their relation to the existing system, and to find in the answer the basis for constructive adaptation. We are not entitled to assume that the pre-

European organization was ideal in its practical working, for the whole development of human society must have consisted in a series of adjustments at one point after another where dissatisfaction was felt; but, except in the cases I have quoted where there is some evidence to the contrary, we can assume that such disharmony, injustice, discontent as existed in the cultures which we have set ourselves to transform did not prevent the essential purposes of social co-operation from being carried out with a reasonable degree of general satisfaction.

We must start, then, with our reconstruction, incomplete though it must be, of the state of affairs prior to the period of intensive and forcible tranformation, if we are to understand the real meaning of the changes that have been made during that period. Otherwise it is very possible that where a change has not produced any obvious and crying dislocation its full effects may be missed. For example, when the problem of sorcery is being considered, it is of considerable significance to know to what extent the circumstances in which the natives regard sorcery as justifiable, and believe that it is used, have been created by the refusal of European law to recognize rights which native law formerly enforced. A very obvious example from Buganda is that of a husband whose wife leaves him; he cannot demand the return of the bride-price in the native courts, and it is widely believed that instead he will probably further his just claim by the use of black magic.

I do not believe, however, that a study of culture contact can gain much from an enumeration in historical order of successive measures taken by a colonizing power or by missionary authorities, because it is no longer possible to correlate them with the development of the native culture in a way that would throw any real light on the process of change. When one is studying a society where innovations that must have been quite revolutionary at their first introduction have been so thoroughly assimilated that it would mean a further cultural revolution to remove them, one constantly regrets the absence of records that would explain the actual way in which the early opposition was overcome. Unless there happens to be an anthropologist on the spot next time a gold rush takes place in the heart of a native reserve, there is probably no hope of our ever obtaining a really

scientific analysis of that most important and dramatic phase of contact in which violent resistance has given way, at any rate as regards certain aspects of the new order, first to acquiescence and then sometimes even to contentment. There will almost certainly never be another opportunity to analyse a process of such profound importance as the penetration of the use of money into a community in whose traditional economy it played no part.

In Buganda we know that there was resistance to Christianity, to the poll-tax, to the introduction of cotton-growing. We do not really know from whom it came, how it was manifested—apart from the persecution of Christians by the king, how and when it ceased. We do not know what degree of persuasion or compulsion, or what indirect incentives, were necessary to make these and other innovations acceptable, and we never shall know, for an analysis of this kind would require to be based on detailed knowledge such as memories of the past cannot supply.

Consequently the history of Buganda or of any other colony as it can be traced in the official Gazette and as it is summarized in the text-books can give us little assistance. The date at which cotton-growing was introduced, subtracted from that of the first year in which its export reached a fairly high level, might be taken as giving some indication of the length of time that was necessary for the youth and manhood of Buganda to accept the substitution of this new occupation for intertribal warfare and attendance at the councils of their chiefs. But an account of the series of forms which have been taken, at different times, by the landlord's claims over their tenants—first a proportion of the crop itself, then a money payment, then an option to give labour in lieu of rent—only begins to be significant for our problem if these changes can be correlated with other changes in the social structure, such as the general relation between chiefs and peasants, the popularization of the use of money and the demand for trade goods, changing conceptions of the advantages to be derived from the ownership of land, and if the whole complex of circumstances which lead to a change concretely expressed in legislation can be traced out. Moreover, it would always be important, in the case of an administrative measure, to know how far this was dictated by a full comprehension of the existing situation, and, if this was imperfect, to

see what accommodation was made between the requirements of Government and the pull of motives in conflict with them.

Such knowledge is no longer available, and it therefore seems best to concentrate on the sum total of change measured from the zero point of what can be discovered of the independent native system. One might even find that an innovation introduced by the European authorities, and then discarded, could be left out of account altogether if no permanent modifications in the native society could be traced to it.

An example from my own area is the Kasanvu labour system, by which natives were called up under the Native Authority Ordinance for unpaid labour on Government work of all kinds. This system was abolished in 1923 and replaced by another which limited the obligation to local work on road maintenance and provided for its commutation. Europeans now speak of it sometimes as if it was part of the traditional native system, and when I asked questions based on this supposition I was surprised to find that informants denied its existence. Later I realized that it was a European institution designed to adapt to modern needs the traditional duty of subjects to work for their chiefs and the king. After that I occasionally got people to discuss it. But, though its abolition was due to the recognition that it gave rise to serious abuses, and though the one or two people who spoke of it to me described its hardships with gusto, I was not able to connect it with any specific shift in the equilibrium of native economic life, or with the changing relations of the peasants to the landlord on the one hand and the administrative chief on the other. Nor was it possible to trace the relation of this system to the separation between political authority and the ownership of land which was being deliberately carried out all through this period. Although its abolition is so recent, there is no feature of modern Ganda society which I could identify as its product.

All these correlations could have been made if there had been an anthropologist on the spot at the time, but the necessary data for them is now out of reach. It is only possible now to examine the existing system of political and economic obligations which the Ganda has to meet, and follow out the effect which they produce on his economic activity and the general way in which he organizes his life.

In conclusion, then, I suggest that such a comparison, rough and ready as it must be, can provide an objective basis for the determination of policy. It can explain why well-intentioned attempts to improve native life have sometimes failed and sometimes produced consequences other than those anticipated; and while its results will not make it possible to predict with certainty the chances of a contemplated measure, it will at least indicate where it will be necessary to take into account considerations more serious than the native stupidity or 'innate conservatism' which is so readily blamed by impatient progressives. While a really thorough theoretical study of the problem as a sociological process would ideally require the periodical re-examination of the same culture at intervals of ten years or so, by means of which the relative influence of different factors of contact could be worked out, the sequence of events leading up to some particular recrystallization followed up, and comparisons based on scientifically observed and recorded facts instead of the vague memories of untrained minds, it will be a long time before we can hope that the funds and personnel for such work will be available. In the meantime a series of comparisons on the lines that I have indicated, which start from the conception of native society as a mechanism in relatively good working order and show how innovations have become integrated into it, have failed to do so, have led to subsidiary readjustments, or call for such readjustments, can be of considerable practical value.

L. P. MAIR

# II. CONTACT BETWEEN EUROPEAN AND NATIVE IN SOUTH AFRICA

## 1. IN PONDOLAND

*MONICA HUNTER*

DISCUSSIONS on culture contact are liable to be unprofitable because there is no general agreement as to what culture contact is. I have used the fashionable label, but do not wish to delay over definitions. In my field-work I was chiefly concerned with one aspect of culture contact in Africa—the changes taking place in a Bantu community as the result of its contact with Europeans, and it is my methods of studying that aspect which are described here. My interest in culture contact is primarily practical. I want to know for practical ends what effect European economic activities, European administration, education, and Christian teaching are having upon a Bantu community. The nature and extent of the changes taking place in the Bantu community are my first concern, the mechanism of change a secondary one.

I began field-work in 1930 in Auckland, a village of 583 inhabitants, in the eastern half of the Cape Province, just on the border between the old Cape Colony and what was Kaffirland. It is occupied by Fingoes, refugees from Natal driven south by Chaka about 1830, and Xosa who were living in the district when Europeans first encountered Bantu in S. Africa. Auckland is surrounded on three sides by European farms, the inhabitants are a mixed people cut off from the bulk of their own tribes, and under the authority of no chief other than their petty headman. There is serious land shortage, and a large percentage of men and women go for periods to labour centres to earn money to supplement the food they produce, pay their taxes, and buy the European-made goods they desire. Missionary activities have been carried on in Auckland for nearly a hundred years.

I took a room in the village store kept by Europeans, and began in the orthodox fashion to make geographical and genealogical plans of the village. A number of the people I had known since childhood—my home was near—and I spent days chatting in their huts, and visiting others in the company of the local schoolmistress, a Fingo girl of my own age. I played with the children, sat through their all-night

concerts in the school house, joined the women when they went to build the hut for the boys to be circumcised that year. The people were friendly, and contacts easily made.

It was possible to make a study of this community as it is to-day greatly affected by European influences, but there was no adequate data on the life of Fingo or Xosa before contact with Europeans, and so I had no means of gauging the changes resulting from the contact which was what I had set out to discover. What written documents exist give only very sketchy accounts of Xosa and Fingo as they were when the first contact took place, and of course there are no persons living who were born before the coming of the Europeans. Further, although a functional study of the community was possible, it was extraordinarily difficult, for the culture is not a homogeneous one, but a mixture of partially fused elements which can only be understood in terms of the parent cultures, and about one of the parent cultures I had practically no data. For example, I found that the Christians made a feast on the day on which a child was baptized, and for that feast they usually killed a sheep or goat which they said was ' just for meat '. A few bought meat from a butcher instead of killing. For a wedding feast, and on the day of a funeral a sheep or goat was killed, and sometimes when an elderly man or his wife died a beast called *inkomo yokumkape*—the beast to accompany him (the deceased)—was killed some months later. In each case the killing and the feast was combined with the ceremonial ordained by the church for the occasion.

I learned from old men that their pagan fathers had made ritual killings for the ancestors at birth, marriage, death, and in sickness, but I could not witness any of these killings, and it was impossible to discover the full significance of them. Rightly or wrongly I believed that I could not fully understand the ceremonial practised by the Christians without understanding the customs of their pagan fathers. The attitude of the present generation towards their ceremonial was conditioned by the behaviour of their fathers in a way in which I could never fully understand from their piecemeal descriptions of pagan ritual. The unwillingness of most church members to speak of the religious ritual of their fathers, and in any way to connect it with their own ritual, added to the difficulty of understanding their attitude. I have given this very obvious example of the impossibility of understanding

existing institutions without a knowledge of the past. It might be paralleled by examples from every aspect of the culture. Any culture can only be fully understood in its historical context, and when the culture under consideration has undergone revolutionary changes within a generation the relative importance of the historical context is very much greater than when the culture has been comparatively static.

After three preliminary months in Auckland, therefore, I decided that (*a*) since no adequate data on the people whom I was studying before their contact with Europeans was available, the most possible method of gauging the changes resulting from the contact was to compare areas subject to different contact influences, and that (*b*) the study would be simplified if I began in the most conservative area, that is, the one least affected by contact influences. I chose as representative areas for study Pondoland, a reserve which has had less contact with Europeans than any other in the Cape Province, a block of European farms on which there are Bantu who have lived for two or three generations on European farms as servants, and who have no stake in any reserve, and the Native quarters of two European towns, East London a seaport and Grahamstown an inland town. Auckland, as a reserve which has been in long and close contact with Europeans, represents a fourth type of area. Each area chosen is typical of contact conditions widely spread in the Union of South Africa.

The Pondo live in a block of territory in which the only Europeans are administrators, missionaries, traders, and their families. The territory is administered through European magistrates, but Pondo chiefs and headmen are recognized, and have limited powers, as local officials. Most of the able-bodied men, and a few women go to labour centres for periods to earn money to pay taxes and buy the European manufactured goods they desire. Stores owned and kept by European traders are scattered through the country at an average distance of about five miles apart. There are 244 schools, an average of one in every 16 square miles, and rather more churches than schools. Among the Pondo themselves are two groups, the *amaqaba*, those who smear themselves with red clay, and the *amaggoboka*, those who have been pierced through, that is converted. The groups roughly correspond to pagan and Christian, but with the *amaggoboka* (converts) are included those who after attending school or working for Europeans have

retained European clothes, and to some extent European ways, irrespective of whether they are or are not Church members or adherents. The leaders of the *amaggoboka* group are the Native pastors, teachers, clerks, agricultural demonstrators and interpreters. They are influential as disseminators of European culture.

Conditions in Auckland differ from those in Pondoland in that Auckland is an isolated piece of Native territory surrounded on three sides by European farms, the headman has very little authority, and no superior chief is recognized, economic pressure is keener than in Pondoland, and consequently a much higher percentage of men and women are away at one time working for Europeans. The proportion of *amaggoboka* is much higher than in Pondoland.

Bantu living on European farms are broken up into small groups averaging about half a dozen families on each farm. Intercourse between families on different farms is discouraged and sometimes prevented by the farmers. There is some visiting and intermarriage between Bantu on farms and in the reserves, and communication through doctor diviners and herbalists—doctors from the reserves tour farms, and sick persons on farms go to consult doctors in the reserves. Some from farms go to work at labour centres, and whether they return again to their homes on farms, or remain permanently in town, they form a link between farm and town communities. The great majority of Bantu on farms have no stake in any reserve, own no land, and are under the control of no chief. All the men and many of the women and children are regularly employed as servants. They are thus in close contact with Europeans as masters, and most of them learn some Afrikaans or English, but schools are scarce, mission churches few, and wages insufficient for parents to send their children away to be educated. The activities of farm hands are considerably restricted by their masters. The performance of the customary ritual killings is made difficult or impossible, membership of any church except one controlled by Europeans is forbidden on a number of farms, and membership of a trade union on practically all.

In towns we find Bantu living in slums. Practically all are wage-earners getting a bare living wage. About half the community are permanent town dwellers, the rest temporary workers coming to town for periods varying from six months to two or three years, and often

returning again and again after visiting their homes in the reserves. The Native quarters of the town are administered by the European town council through a European 'location officer'. No chiefs or headmen are recognized. The Bantu are segregated into special quarters of the town but come into close contact with Europeans as servants. They go about the European town, buy in European shops, attend European cinemas, watch European horse-races and football matches. In East London over 50 per cent. of the children between 7 and 16 years of age attend school, and there are 57 sects, nominally Christian, at work in the community of 20,400 souls.

The communities in each of these areas, Pondoland, Auckland, farms and towns are distinct, and subject to different contact influences, but they are not cut off from one another. From all the rural communities men and some women go to town for periods, then return again to their homes, and there is some coming and going between Auckland, Pondoland, and farms. Doctors go on tour, patients travel to seek doctors, relatives visit one another. Papers printed in town are read in all the rural areas. Thus each community reacts upon the others.

The four communities are not an evolutionary series, for the nature as well as the degree of contact in each varies—there is no likelihood of Pondoland coming under contact influences similar to those on farms, or in towns—but they all have a common background. The grandfathers of those in Pondoland, Auckland, on farms, and in towns all lived under similar conditions. We study *A*, *B*, *C*, and *D*, communities which have sprung from one community *X*, which is unknown except by hearsay. A comparison of *A*, *B*, *C*, and *D* shows the different results produced by different contact influences. This comparison is the main interest of my study. However, one of the areas, Pondoland, has been very much less affected by contact with Europeans than any of the others, and there are still living in Pondoland old persons who remember conditions before the territory was annexed, when missions, schools, and stores were few, and none went to work at labour centres, so having myself an incurable desire to get some picture of the sum of changes resulting from contact with Europeans, I have included in my thesis a chapter on general tendencies, using the material on the Pondo community, supplemented by the evidence of ancients, and such records as exist, to deduce *X*.

Present conditions in Auckland, on farms and in towns are contrasted with former conditions in Pondoland. This, let me repeat in self-defence, is only one chapter in a lengthy thesis. We shall return later to this question of a double comparison, of *A*, *B*, *C*, and *D* with each other, and with *X*.

Each community was studied as a going concern. My aim was to make a functional study of each of the four communities which were to be compared. For one person to make four such studies in two years is of course impossible, but because I was primarily interested in the changes taking place I thought it worth while to attempt a survey of the four areas rather than to limit myself to one area, and to make a more detailed study of it. What actually happened was that I got so interested in Pondoland that I spent more time than I should have done there, and the studies of the other areas are very scamped.

Experience in Auckland having convinced me that the simplest study would be that of the area least affected by contact, I settled down, after the first preliminary three months, in a conservative district of Pondoland. There problems which had puzzled me in Auckland were quickly solved. Instead of having to depend for information on the significance of ritual killings in a pagan community upon the answers of unwilling informants, I was able to attend the series of ritual killings in person, observe the ritual, note the persons present, and their behaviour, share in the feast, and get from the participants and neighbours comments on ceremonial, and an account of their beliefs regarding the ancestral spirits. The ancestor cult took coherent form, and knowing something of it I could grasp the significance of the ritual at Christian births, weddings, and funerals, and began to understand better the attitude of the church member towards the teaching of his missionary.

Later when I came to study town and farm communities I found the knowledge of life in Pondoland invaluable. Knowing how institutions functioned in Pondoland I knew what were likely to be the crucial points when Pondo went to live under other conditions. Understanding the ancestor cult in Pondoland I could make the relevant inquiries as to the extent of observance of it, and its influence, on farms, and in towns.

In Pondoland I worked from a store. The Pondo live in kraals

(*imizi*) averaging four to five adult inhabitants, scattered at irregular distances of anything from a hundred yards to a mile or more through the country. The local store, which is also often a recruiting office, is a meeting place for the people of the area surrounding it. They collect there to gossip and flirt, beg tobacco, inquire about the whereabouts, amount and quality, of beer or meat, and barter grain or hides for cotton sheeting, blankets, beads, tea, tobacco, sugar, saddlery and what not. At the store at which I first stayed the trader's wife made the flared cotton skirts which Pondo women wear. Women arrived in the morning, ordered a skirt, and waited until it was made. I listened to conversations in the store, and in the sewing room, and joining in turned them on to matters in which I was particularly interested. Women might be discussing a forthcoming girls' initiation dance. Inquiries as to the details of initiation produced an account of the ceremony and cross-comments between various women present. A girl would bring a hide for sale, and I could inquire about the circumstances under which it was killed. Often a ritual killing had been made. Hearing of forthcoming festivals in the store I was free to attend them, and so I went to beer drinks, weddings, pleasure dances, doctors' initiation ceremonies, girls' initiation ceremonies, and ritual killings. Usually I accompanied some woman who lived near the store. We would chat on the road, pick up friends as we went along, and stop for ablutions as we crossed a river, if we were bound for an important dance. I visited the local school, attended the mission services, and rode with the Native minister on his pastoral round, three days at a stretch. Constantly I was travelling from the store in which I lived to a kraal five or ten miles or more distant, at which there was a beer drink, ritual killing, dance, or other gathering, or visiting a chief's court, or an ancient reputed to be versed in law and tribal history. I found it profitable to move about, for one observed many things as the path wound from kraal to kraal. I seldom travelled alone, and journeys whether on foot or on horseback are conducive to conversation.

On my first visit to Pondoland I lived for seven months at one store, concentrating on becoming intimate with my immediate neighbours, but attending festivals, and visiting people of special interest within a radius of ten miles, and making a few longer expeditions. On my

second visit I worked from five centres—four stores and a mission station, not spending more than six weeks at any. My object in working from a number of centres in different parts of Pondoland was that I might discover what were general customs, and what local peculiarities. Moving from centre to centre meant that one was able to tap a number of able informants—always in a district there are one or two old men known to be expert upon law and custom—but by staying for longer periods one gained much in intimacy, and avoided delay in quelling suspicion.

Wherever possible statistics were collected. By discovering the number of children each woman has borne, the ages of the eldest and youngest and the number which died before maturity, it is possible to work out figures on birth and survival rates. I noted the number of men who provided their own *ikazi*,[1] the number who were helped by their father's brothers, the number helped by their mother's brothers, the percentage of cases in which money formed part of the *ikazi*, the percentage of cases in which it formed the whole of the *ikazi*, the percentage of arranged matches, the percentage of elopements, the percentage of families which had milk during the winter months, the number of diviners and herbalists within a given area, the percentage of women who made their own baskets, and thatched their own huts. Dipping returns showed the number of cattle which had been killed, and had died each month, and so indicated the meat consumption, and the number of ritual killings made each month. I collected the statistical data incidentally when visiting a kraal to study family life, or attend some ceremony, and when talking to customers in the store. The work is laborious, and the figures hardly deserve the name of statistics, for often not more than twenty cases can be investigated, but they are useful as data with which to check general impressions.

I found the Pondo interested in European life, and time was profitably spent discussing it with them, for their questions and comments threw light on their attitude towards Europeans, and also upon their own customs. One woman, after answering questions on ritual killings, said, 'Now I want to ask you a question, why is it that you Europeans say that we ought not to make ritual killings, yet you yourselves are always so careful to have blood in your houses? You are *lumkile* (full

[1] The cattle which pass from the groom's group to that of the bride on marriage.

of guile), you Europeans, there is never a time that you do not have meat in the house.' A man discussing European legal procedure asked, 'Why is it that you Europeans always say that we must speak the truth, and yet you keep professional perverters, *amaggweta* (i.e. lawyers) in your villages? You even build houses for them and treat them well, yet it is their business to lie.' Another said, 'Why is it that you Europeans say that you have no *amasiko* (customs, meaning here ritual observances), and yet you always take your children to the sea after they have been ill? There is never a child that is ill but it is not taken to the sea.'[1] I have quoted elsewhere the women who in commenting on our marriage customs said, 'What, is no *ikazi* given for you? What then do you do when your husbands ill-treat you?'[2]

To observe and analyse Pondo culture as it is to-day was my task in Pondoland. I studied the working institutions. I also made special inquiries from old people regarding the changes in life which they themselves had observed taking place. Such investigation is justifiable even from the point of view of the strict functionalist, since it is part of the living culture. An old man's memory of what the chieftainship was like in his boyhood modifies his own, and his son's attitude towards the present chief, and towards European authorities. His knowledge of what were the reciprocal obligations and rights of kinsmen before many men went to work for Europeans determines his idea of what a young man should do with the money he earns at the mines. But since I am primarily interested in the changes resulting from contact with Europeans I have also used the information given by old men and women as data to show the changes taking place. An old man's account of the chieftainship as it was both reveals attitudes which modify present-day behaviour, and when compared with the present institution of chieftainship shows what changes have taken place in the system of administration. The statements of old people have been checked by such written records—journals of early missionaries and travellers—as exist.

This use of the statements of ancients and of old journals as data on past conditions implies a second method of study of change. Besides the comparison of four areas subject to different contact influences, we

[1] Most Europeans in Pondoland have camps on the coast to which they go for holidays.

[2] *Africa*, vol. vi, no. 3, 1933.

are observing change within the one community by comparing present with past conditions. The utilization of this second method complicates the study, and is in many ways objectionable, but if Pondo culture is studied only as a going concern, and the statements of ancients and old journals are not drawn upon to show former conditions, well-verified facts such as that Christianity, schools, European-owned stores, the European system of administration, and going to work at the mines, are new phenomena in the culture, are necessarily neglected, or at the most referred to incidentally. I am not concerned with origins as such, or with tracing the spread of particular elements of culture whether material elements like tobacco, or soap, or a complex of beliefs, but I am concerned to discover the reactions of Pondo culture to European culture, and to discover these reactions it is necessary as far as possible to distinguish elements borrowed from European culture from those which were a part of Pondo culture before the coming of Europeans.

For example, we find in Pondoland to-day that the plough is in general use for cultivation, that men plough, and that there is a special ritual killing made when a new plough is bought to prevent it from breaking. The gall of the animal killed is poured over the share, and a strip of the hide tied to the handles of the plough.[1] Since we are attempting to discover the changes in Bantu culture resulting from contact with Europeans it is significant to know that the plough was introduced by Europeans, that formerly women did most of the cultivation, and that there is no such ritual killing as that made for the plough connected with any other implements, that much more land is cultivated than formerly, and that consequently more beer is drunk than formerly. These reactions of the community to the contact influence, in this case the plough, are exactly what we are trying to discover. But as far as I could see the fact that the ritual of the plough is new, did not modify the performance of it, or the attitude of people towards it. Therefore the fact that it is new is irrelevant from a strictly functional point of view.

Or, again, we know from the statements of old men, and from records, that the local group, the kraal or *umzi*, has decreased in size.

[1] When a ritual killing is made for a sick person the gall is sometimes poured over them, and a strip of hide tied round their necks.

Formerly as many as twenty married men, with their wives and children, might live together in one kraal, now it is rare to find more than three living together. Such a change in the local group reacts upon social relations and economic organization. The change would be referred to in a purely functional study as modifying the present ideal, but in a contact study it must be also considered specifically as one of the social changes due to European influence.

The method of investigation is straightforward. I observed old and new institutions working side by side. I attended the ritual killings of the ancestor cult, and the Christian church services and prayer meeting, pagan girls' initiation ceremonies, and mission schools, I studied the trade of the medicine man and potteress, and that of the European-owned store. Old people were encouraged to talk about life in their young days—it is a subject on which they are usually expansive—and thus a considerable amount of information concerning changes taking place during the lifetime of the last generation was collected.

So much for the investigation. The method of presenting the material is more difficult, and I have not myself reached any satisfactory solution. To attempt a reconstruction of the past from the material collected from old people, and to try to describe the culture as it was, and then as it is, is obviously objectionable. On the other hand, where there have been very great changes within a generation it is difficult to write a clear account of any institution when to explain every detail a reference to the past is necessary. Miss Mair has also found this difficulty. I myself have attempted a hybrid between two methods. When dealing with an aspect of culture revolutionized by contact, such as administration, I give the account of the old men of the chieftainship as it was, then discuss the present system of administration, but when dealing with magical and religious beliefs where old cults continue to function alongside the new, I describe the existing cults—the ancestor cult, the various types of magic, and Christianity, as I have seen them working, but note the fact that Christianity, and certain elements of the other cults have been introduced since contact with Europeans, and that certain other elements in the old cults have been dropped. I regard my own presentation of the material as unsatisfactory, and am searching for a better principle on which to organize it. The one thing I am certain about is that when our object

is to discover the changes resulting from European contact it is not sufficient only to compare areas subject to different contact influences, and to use data provided by ancients to throw light on present attitudes, but that the fact that Christianity, and ploughs, money and European stores, prisons, and poll tax, are all new phenomena in the culture must be taken into account. I want to make a point of the fact that a ritual killing for a plough is a new piece of ceremonial directly resulting from contact, and not merely to describe the ritual killing as it operates to-day.

On farms and in towns the same sort of study was made as in Pondoland. The survey of farms was complicated by the fact that European farmers were suspicious of an attempt to inquire into the condition of their servants. If one went to a farm without permission one was liable to be run in for trespassing, and servants who gave information to an inquirer not approved by their employer might get into trouble. I could only get on to farms through personal introductions, and was always a guest and able to spend only a few days on each farm, so investigation was somewhat hampered, but during a two-months' tour I visited twenty-seven farms, and got information on the economic condition of farm hands in the districts visited, saw the degree to which the tribal social system functioned on farms, and found what magical and religious rites were practised. The fact that the fathers and grandfathers of the farm hands had lived under conditions very similar to those I had seen in Pondoland made it possible to get some understanding of their community even in the hasty visits I made.

In towns the aspect of culture studied in greatest detail was again the economic. The material basis of culture bulks large when practically the whole community consists of wage-earners earning bare living wages. The anti-European feeling in East London, the first town in which I worked, was strong, but by getting the backing of both the leading Native ministers, and the president of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union I overcame suspicion, and found people fairly ready to give information. I worked by house-to-house visits, collecting by detailed inquiry in each household data on economic condition, social grouping, and magical and religious practices. Specific questions asked in each household were an excuse to enter the house, and often it was possible to stay and converse for a

couple of hours or more with one or other member of the household. The older men I found eager to discuss tribal custom, when I showed an interest in, and some knowledge of it. Their faces glowed as they talked of the customs of their fathers, and from their conversation it was possible to gauge the extent of their belief in the magical and religious practices of their fathers, and the extent to which the practices are observed in town. Men would also give vent to their views on existing economic, political, and social conditions. I attended the community activities—trade-union meetings, church services, socials, committee meetings of social workers, tea parties, and beer drinks. The knowledge of tribal life gained in Pondoland was a key to understanding the jumble of ritual observances and taboos retained in town.

My primary object was to gauge the changes in Bantu society resulting from contact with Europeans, but in observing the working institutions in each area we may also study the mechanism of contact. When describing the areas chosen for study I referred to the conditions of contact in each. A careful analysis of the conditions of contact in each area gives us the tale of contact agents. In Pondoland we have the various European residents, trader, missionary, magistrate, lawyer, district surgeon, and stock inspector, with their wives and families. There are Pondo men, and a few women, going for periods to European towns to work and returning influenced by the things they have seen and heard, and the conditions under which they have worked. There are Native teachers, agricultural demonstrators, ministers, many who have attended mission schools, and others who have become Church members and adherents. All these are disseminators of contact influences. Observing the functioning institutions we see the mechanism of contact. In every aspect of culture there is fusion and interaction of old and new elements. Pagan myths reflect Christian influence, prayer meetings the influence of the doctors' initiation ceremonies, Christian marriage ceremonies that of the pagan girls' initiation ceremonies. I attended a ritual killing of thanksgiving made by a man who had recovered from a serious illness in a mission hospital in which he had heard Christian teaching. In the thanksgiving spoken while the beast was being killed he coupled the name of God (*uTixo*) with that of his parents and grandfather. Barter with specialists, and with the European trader, goes on contemporaneously

with trade in money, but all wares are now being assessed in their money value—the potteress has a fixed cash price for her pots, *6d.* for a milk bowl, *2s.* for a water-pot. She may be paid in kind, but the value is reckoned in money. People selling grain and hides in the store prefer being paid in money rather than in goods. In the courts the same fusion and interaction is observable. Native customary law is applied in the magistrate's court; European legal procedure is modifying procedure in the chief's court.

In town also it is possible to trace the mechanism of transference of culture by observing the conditions of contact, and the changes taking place. The men and girls of the Native location are employed as servants in the houses of Europeans. They walk about the streets of the European town, shop in European stores, attend European cinemas. European fashions are quickly reflected in the location—berets, golf socks, 'Oxford bags', and orange blossom for a bride, are all borrowed. Many men are employed as jobbing gardeners, and in the Native location it is fashionable to have some pot plants, or a flower-border in front of the house. Those who have worked as housemaids are particular to have lace doilies on their cake plates when they give a tea party. Transfers of material objects are the easiest to trace, but attitudes towards property and persons, ideas as to the rights of wage-earners, and theories of administration are similarly taken over. There are appearing new classes of property regarded as personal possessions, and trade unions, a communist party, and a National Congress have been formed.

The study of the mechanism of culture transference raises the problem of selective conservatism, and selective borrowing. Elements which fit in with the existing culture, and which do not raise any direct opposition in it, are quickly taken over. Those which do not find any point of contact with something in the old culture are left. For example, at Ntibane in Pondoland my hostess grew very fine maize. Her land was well manured, and tilled, and she planted selected seed. Her crop was the talk of the district. When I went about inquiries were made concerning it. How high was the maize now? Were there any signs of flower yet? What kind of cobs would they be, white or yellow? Women came to beg seed and inquire about her methods of cultivation. When the crop was partially destroyed by hail every one

was full of sympathy. In the same garden very lovely roses were grown, but they excited no interest at all among the Pondo. The element which was selected from European culture was that which fitted in with something already existing in the Pondo culture, something which 'enhanced previous methods and served methods fully congruous with the old order'.[1]

Some customs are quickly dropped, while others are clung to in the face of all opposition. For example, among the Xosa, girls' initiation is disappearing, but the initiation of boys is still generally practised, in spite of the opposition of administrators and missionaries. The study of the conditions governing selective conservatism and selective borrowing leads one far into a study of psychological attitudes. Incidentally it throws considerable light on the function of certain institutions in the society. The energy with which Pondo and Xosa have defended the rights of a woman over her *inkomo yobulunga*, the sacred cow given to her by her father, when she leaves home to be married, resisting the attempt of European courts to treat it as part of her husband's property attachable for his debts, shows how strong is the belief in the importance of the cow to her well-being.

The mechanism of culture transference must be studied in great detail, because personality and individual taste play a great part in determining selection. Christianity may spread quickly in one district because the missionary is liked, and the chief well disposed towards his teaching, in another where the chief opposes the new teaching, and the missionary is personally unpopular, his preaching may have little influence. I have seen a co-operative society flourish in one district because two or three influential men supported it, while in a neighbouring district with apparently similar conditions all attempts to start a society failed. I stress this obvious point because in studies of culture transference the importance of personality tends to be overlooked. To assess it close and laborious investigation is necessary. Only by such detailed study of mechanisms are the different reactions of areas occupied by similar communities, subject to apparently similar contact influences, to be explained. There is a marked difference in Bantu communities on different farms, which although not yet fully investigated is, I believe, to be explained in terms of personalities.

[1] Bartlett, *Psychology and Primitive Culture.*

I was asked to write on methodology, and the discussion of method has left me no space to do more than give disconnected examples of change in institutions in different communities, but the aim of this method is to study communities as working wholes. There is much talk of what is vaguely called ' detribalization ', or ' the disintegration of Native society '. What administrator, missionary, and commercial man alike are really concerned to discover is what were the sanctions for social behaviour under tribal conditions, and how these sanctions are being affected by contact with Europeans. The social sanctions, the bonds integrating the society, are only to be understood by studying the working and interrelation of the institutions of the society, and it is the change in the working and interrelation of institutions resulting from European contact which we must discover.

MONICA HUNTER

# CONTACT BETWEEN EUROPEAN AND NATIVE IN SOUTH AFRICA (*contd.*)

## 2. IN BECHUANALAND

*I. SCHAPERA*

PREVIOUS contributors to this symposium have described in some detail the problem of culture contact as it appeared to them in their own fields, and the methods they employed in studying it there. I do not propose here to cover similar ground, particularly as I have already published a short statement of the lines along which I have been attempting during the last five years to inquire into the present-day culture of the Kxatla in Bechuanaland Protectorate.[1] My purpose is rather to set down briefly what appear to me as the essential elements to be considered in any field study of modern culture contacts, as reflected, shall we say, in the relations between the European and Native inhabitants of South Africa.

The problems of culture contact as they appear in such a country assume a diversity of forms. We may be concerned on the one hand with the changes produced in the cultures of the Native peoples through the impact of Western civilization. The political conquest of South Africa by the Europeans, accompanied by missionary effort, education, administrative action, and, above all, the introduction of a new economic system, has inevitably affected the traditional manners and customs of the Natives. Some have changed very considerably indeed. They have become divorced from tribal rule and tradition, and approximate to the Europeans in standard of life, occupations and outlook. Others, still the great majority, retain many of their old cultural characteristics, while participating to an increasing extent in the new civilization. But even in the most 'backward' tribal areas one generally finds European magistrates, missionaries, traders and labour recruiters, all symptoms of the new order; and although the influence they have exercised in the direction of cultural transformation

[1] 'The BaKxatla baxaKxafêla: Preliminary Report of Field Investigations', *Africa*, vol. vi (1933), pp. 402–414.

may at times be small, it is nevertheless everywhere perceptible. Moreover, there now exist several distinct forms of Native society. We have urban Native communities, embracing people from many different tribal groups, engaged for the most part in industrial or domestic service for the White manufacturers, mine-owners and city-dwellers; we have small groups of Native families employed as farm-hands in the rural districts on land owned and occupied by Europeans; and we have homogeneous tribal groups still leading an organized communal life in their own tribal areas. Each of these forms of society presents special problems of its own, arising directly from the manner and extent to which it has come under European influence.

It is equally possible to devote attention to the modifications taking place in the cultural life of the Europeans owing to their contact with the Natives. We find, to mention first but a few minor illustrations, that both the official languages of the Union have enriched their vocabularies through the incorporation of Native words; a great deal of what passes as Afrikaans folklore consists in fables and beliefs taken over wholesale from Bushman, Hottentot and Bantu, and much of our rural folk-medicine is indebted to the same sources; while European farmers in the backveld, if we may believe occasional press reports, are as credulous of Native 'superstitions' and as liable to be duped by Native diviners as are the Natives themselves. In a sense one may even speak of the development of a specifically South African culture, shared in by both Black and White, and presenting certain peculiarities based directly upon the fact of their juxtaposition —a culture in which the Europeans occupy the position of a race-proud and privileged aristocracy, while the Natives, although economically indispensable, are confined to a menial status from which few of them are able to emerge with success. There has developed among the Europeans an ideal of race purity and race dominance, according to which the integrity of White blood and of White civilization must be maintained at all costs. And so we find special legislation and usages of social intercourse directed, on the one hand against miscegenation, and on the other erecting artificial barriers against the cultural advancement of the Blaeks. This ideology and its practical manifestations are a local development, the direct product of race relations in South Africa, and as such they also provide material for

studies in culture contact. For the purposes of this paper, however, it will be assumed that our special problem is to study the effects of Western civilization upon the life of the Natives.

## Basic Investigations

The first essential in any modern fieldwork study is to obtain as full an account as possible of the existing tribal culture. In this due prominence must be given to elements taken over from or introduced by the Europeans. The missionary, administrator, trader and labour recruiter must be regarded as factors in the tribal life in the same way as are the chief and the magician. Christianity, in so far as it has been accepted, must be studied like any other form of cult, in its organization, doctrines, ritual, manifestations in tribal life, attitudes towards it of individual Natives, and so on. So, too, the trading store, the labour recruiter and the agricultural demonstrator must be considered integral parts of the modern economic life, the school as part of the routine educational development of the children, and the Administration as part of the existing political system.

This is easy enough to say. In practice it is sometimes difficult to apply, not so much because of technical obstacles as because of the outlook engendered by the training that most anthropologists receive before going into the field. If I may refer to my own experience, I found it difficult, when actually in the field, not to feel disappointed at having to study the religion of the Kxatla by sitting through an ordinary Dutch Reformed Church service, instead of watching a heathen sacrifice to the ancestral spirits; and I remember vividly how eagerly I tried to find traces of a worship that was in fact no longer being performed. And it seems so silly to record the details of a Christian wedding or confirmation ceremony with the same fidelity, let alone enthusiasm, with which one would note down the 'doctoring' of a garden or a new hut.

There is no special technique required for investigations of this kind. The range of inquiry and observation must be extended considerably more than would have sufficed for fieldwork of the older kind, but the methods employed are essentially the same. Just as one discusses tribal organization and law with the chief and the old men, magical practices with the magicians and their clients, cattle-herding

and hunting with the men and the boys, household activities with the women, and games with the children, so one must look upon the local Europeans as expert sources of information and use them for this purpose in the same way as one would use Native informants. The trader can describe the economic life of the people and his impressions of the Native as a customer; the missionary how he goes about his work, what he teaches the Natives, what his attitude is towards the traditional customs of the people, and what his difficulties are; the supervisor of education can describe the policy he is attempting to pursue and how he puts it into practice; while Government officials may be drawn into discussing their political and other dealings with the tribe. And just as one goes about the village or district, entering homesteads, attending tribal gatherings and lawsuits, feasts and beer-drinks, visiting the home of the chief, watching men and women at work, talking with them all and noting what is happening generally, so one must frequent churches, schools, trading stores and Government offices, observing what brings the Natives there and how they conduct themselves; take part in Church festivals and ceremonies of all kinds; make inventories of the stock carried by the traders, record purchases by the Natives, and listen to them debate the relative merits of various goods; inspect the schools and methods of teaching, and make use of both teachers and pupils as informants regarding their reactions to education. Literate Natives, themselves products of the new order, can be employed to write down texts in the vernacular on every conceivable variety of topic, thus multiplying greatly the information that can be obtained by personal questioning and observation; Native evangelists, artisans, domestic servants and store assistants can be used as specialist informants on their particular occupations; and men who have returned from working abroad must be questioned about their experiences and impressions, earnings and expenditure.

It will soon become evident that the culture of the people is by no means uniform. This is, of course, true of any culture at any moment of its history, but the range of variation is perhaps more conspicuous than anywhere else or at any other time in a culture undergoing extensive modification through the relatively sudden infiltration of many different aspects of alien influence. Much more will appear of

the old Native culture than may have been imagined, or even hoped for, at first sight; but while some members or sections of the tribe are very conservative, others will have discarded many of the traditional customs and beliefs. The distribution of European features, again, may vary considerably, from an almost universal acceptance of certain material goods to an almost negligible adoption of European standards of life and conduct in general. Here, then, is the first direct problem in fieldwork. How far do the traditional Native institutions persist, not only in memory but also in practice? How widespread is the adoption of European elements of different kinds? What sections of the community have been most affected through contact with the Europeans? To what extent have European practices and beliefs become substitutions or merely additions?

To investigate questions such as these, it is not sufficient merely to obtain general statements from a few informants or to rely upon personal observation. Both techniques have to be employed, for without them no information at all can be obtained. But it is obvious that the more informants one can use, the greater the possibility of providing some sort of reliable answer. For culture is not merely a system of formal practices and beliefs. It is made up essentially of individual reactions to and variations from a traditionally standardized pattern; and indeed no culture can ever be understood unless special attention is paid to this range of individual manifestations. And so, in dealing with culture contact, we need to know also what is the attitude of the Natives, considered as living men and women with individual characteristics and not as machines built along identical lines, to the traditional elements of their culture on the one hand and to the new elements in their culture on the other. The more people one can get to discuss a specific topic within this general term of reference the more feasible it will be for us to decide what the present-day culture of the Natives really is. To understand fully the nature of Christianity in tribal life, we must discuss it with church members and with heathens, with men and with women, with church elders and with magicians, with the missionary, the administrator and the traders. Each will have his own comments to make, and their opinions considered together will give us the only really satisfactory review of the position. We may consider in the same way any other aspect of

tribal life, whether it be polygyny or labour migration, education or the levirate, agricultural magic or stock-dipping, the chieftainship or tea-drinking. The full understanding of each calls for a study, not only of what is ' generally ' done or maintained, but of what different social classes, and individual persons within a class, do and maintain.

It is accordingly necessary also to devise some method of quantitative analysis, not so much in the hope that statistics of this kind will indicate absolutely the relative distribution of European and Native elements, as because they will provide a concrete background against which we can assess the validity of statements and observations professing to have general relevance. When we are told 'the rule is' for bride-wealth to be transferred at the time of marriage, it is a useful corrective to find that out of 60 married men questioned only 19 had actually followed the rule; or when a trader complains that ' all men returning from work must give £1 to the chief ', it is again refreshing to discover by similar methods that only 32 of 73 men liable for this payment had actually made it. By making inventories of household possessions and other forms of property, one can obtain some idea again of the distribution of wealth and of the range of goods taken over from the Europeans. By getting informants who can write to note down daily all the food that they eat, one can observe changes in diet, including the utilization of European foodstuffs. Collecting data of this sort is apt to be tiring, and at times one may be sceptical of its value; but all in all this ' statistical method ' will be found a most useful instrument for giving more precise indications than can be obtained from the normal methods of investigation.

## Analysis and Explanation

Mere description, however, is not enough, even if full justice is done to the new elements in tribal life. The ethnographer must also be interpreter. He must analyse the situation as he finds it, and determine why contact with the Europeans has modified the traditional culture of the Natives along certain lines, and why the Natives have reacted in certain ways to the new influences bearing upon them. He must explain why some Native institutions seem to have either disappeared completely or lost their vitality, while others still flourish.

He must decide whether the new elements in Native life are superficial or firmly incorporated, and why the various European agencies differ in the effects they have produced. He must consider how far there has been blending, or adaptation, and how far there is mere parallelism, co-existence of the old and the new.

To obtain all the information that will enable him to deal satisfactorily with questions such as these, he must still further extend and supplement the lines of investigation hitherto employed in studying a 'raw' Native culture. Successful interpretation calls in the first place for some knowledge both of the original tribal culture and of the new forces which have borne and are still bearing upon it. They are in fact the indispensable data upon which all explanations of cultural change must be based. And since the ethnographer cannot here rely solely upon his own observations of the existing tribal culture, he must fall back upon the use of historical method.

*Reconstruction of the Tribal Culture.* His first task is to reconstruct as far as possible a picture of the old tribal culture as it was in the days before the Europeans came into the scene. That he will be unable to do so completely is evident, especially where the changes have been profound; but in so far as he is able to obtain any information at all about the former habits and customs of the tribe, he must do so. His reconstruction will at best be highly formalized and sketchy, lacking the detail and, above all, the living reality derived from personal observation. But it should provide at least some sort of starting-point for tracing out the nature, direction and causes of the changes that have taken place.[1]

Various possible lines of approach offer themselves. The interrogation of informants is the most important, though their statements can obviously not be accepted without qualification. The long-resident missionary or trader may also be a helpful assistant in work of this sort. A second line of approach is to consult the relevant literature for early references to the culture of the tribe. The value of this source depends very considerably upon the tribe with which one is dealing. For the Xhosa tribes of the Eastern Cape, for instance, we have quite

[1] The difficulties and limitations of such reconstructions have been admirably discussed by Dr. L. P. Mair in her contribution to this series ('The Place of History in the Study of Culture Contact', pp. 1–8).

an extensive literature of a sociologically relevant nature, while that relating to the Kxatla is very scanty indeed.

As a last resort, one may fall back upon the comparative data provided by written accounts of tribes of a similar culture. The Kxatla, for instance, belong to the Sotho cluster of Southern Bantu peoples, and culturally must therefore have had much in common, as they still have, with the other Transvaal Sotho and Tswana tribes among whom they live. Ethnographical descriptions of these tribes can accordingly be used to throw light upon the former beliefs and customs of the Kxatla. Information of this sort, it need hardly be remarked, must, of course, be used with great discretion. Because one tribe practises a particular custom, there is no reason to suppose that another tribe, even of the same cultural group or historical origin, will have had the same custom in exactly the same form. The broad outlines will almost certainly have been the same, but that does not imply identity of detail. Still, by the use of a little common sense and caution data of this sort will be found in most cases to provide a reasonably good supplement to the information derived from the first two sources.

*History and Nature of Contact.* Having now learnt as much as we can about the traditional culture of the tribe, we must investigate fully the foreign agencies which were brought to bear upon it, and which must therefore have contributed materially towards its modification into its present state. It is not enough to take for granted the fact of contact with Western civilization: we must discover in detail just what elements of Western civilization were brought to the Native, the conditions under which he came into contact with them, the scale on which they were brought to him, and the duration of their influence. We must, in other words, study carefully all the mechanisms by which Western civilization was introduced to and pressed upon the Native. This involves a detailed study of the recent history of the tribe, in which special attention must be directed towards the progress of evangelization and education, the extension of political control, the force of economic pressure from without due to the demand for labour and from within due to the establishment of trading stores and the imposition of taxes, the establishment of European settlements within or near to the tribal area, the opening up of

lines of communication, and so on. In each case we must learn the circumstances of contact, the means by which the new agency came into the life of the tribe, the extent to which it was introduced, and its subsequent career within the tribe.

This is very largely a matter of straightforward historical reconstruction, for which the materials will probably be more abundant and more readily accessible than in the case of reconstructing the tribal culture of old. But a chronological sequence of agencies and events is not sufficient. We must also know the various motives and interests which have driven each of these agencies to encroach upon the Natives, for only in this way can we hope to explain the direction taken by its activities, and consequently the lines along which it tended to modify the culture of the tribe. This involves a study of policy as well as of occurrences. In the case of the Mission, for instance, we need to know also what is the general principle actuating the sending church in its work among the Natives, along what lines it operates, what attitude it adopts towards indigenous customs, what sort of church it aims at building up among the Natives. So, too, with the Administration which has imposed its rule upon the Natives: what policy has governed its relations with the tribe, both generally and in specific instances; what attitude does it adopt towards Native political institutions, customs and laws; how has this attitude been expressed in legislation and translated into practice; what future does it plan for the Natives? Similar investigations must be made with regard to economic life, education, and other aspects of culture.

It is impossible in such an investigation to omit considerations of personality. A general line of policy may be laid down by Church or by State, but the application of that policy rests largely with the local representative. The Native's idea of Christianity does not really come from the Bible or from the official creed of the Church: it comes, above all, from the missionary who preaches to him and who works in his area; and he judges the life of a Christian by the impressions he forms of the missionary's conduct and attitude. So, too, the Administration to the Native is primarily the District Commissioner or Resident Magistrate with whom he mostly comes into contact, and his ideas of European government and justice are based upon his

dealings with this man. To the Native, in brief, there is no such thing as Western civilization in general: there are only Europeans who work among him or with whom he comes into contact abroad, and it is they as individuals rather than as a system who affect his life. Obviously the ethnographer who attempts to assess, and in his writings express, at their just value influences of this kind may sometimes run the risk of a libel action if he makes an honest use of the information he receives. But no one who has ever heard Natives discussing the Europeans with whom they have had to deal can remain blind to the tremendous importance of personalities, as opposed to institutions, in the process of cultural change. Similarly, of course, the personal characters of the chief and other tribal authorities are often decisive factors in determining the extent to which European influences succeed in making an impression upon the tribe.

*Explanations of Change.* Having obtained some account of the traditional Native culture, of its contact with European agencies, and of the ways in which these agencies acted upon it, we can now proceed to try and explain the changes that have taken place. A comparison of the existing tribal culture with what has been learnt of the past will show that certain elements of culture formerly present have disappeared or are suffering decay, others have been much or only slightly modified, while, on the other hand, still other features have been taken over either wholly or in part from Western civilization. We should, on the basis of the data now in our possession, be able to explain why these changes have taken place, and why they have varied so much in their nature and effects.

The procedure to be adopted in seeking these explanations is somewhat difficult to describe in general terms. Roughly speaking, however, we may approach the problem in two ways. We may take specific aspects or elements of the tribal culture, such as bride-wealth, religion, sex relations, or the powers of the chief, and trace out in such detail as is possible their development from the traditional form to their present manifestations, so as to bring out not only what changes have actually taken place, but when and under what conditions they occurred, and what were the contributing factors in each case. This is what I attempted to do, for instance, in a paper on the changing attitude of the Kxatla towards premarital sex relations. I showed

there[1] that through the convergent action of such influences as labour migration, which drew away many of the men for long periods of time; the abolition of the old initiation-ceremonies, which removed a powerful disciplinary force; the spread of education, which has given the younger generation a greater sense of freedom; and the Mission ban against polygyny, which deprived some women at least of the prospects of early marriage, premarital sex relations have become almost a matter of course, with the result that the people have been led to regard the impregnation of unmarried women as much less reprehensible than it was in the olden days. Similarly, the growing autocracy of the Kxatla chief can be attributed largely to the strong protection accorded to him as a matter of policy by the Administration, this in turn making him relatively free of the tribal sanctions which formerly acted as a check upon his behaviour.

We may, on the other hand, take specific elements or agencies of Western civilization which have acted upon the life of the Natives, and trace out the ramifications of their influence. With the adoption of European clothing, for instance, there have come into existence among the Kxatla not only new standards of decency with regard to dress, but also a new material necessity, as well as the craft of dressmaking, practised only by certain women. The erection of dwellings after the European style, and the more widespread adoption of European methods of thatching, have given scope for specially-trained masons, carpenters and thatchers. Education has created a small class of teachers, while the presence of Europeans in the Kxatla Reserve has led to the employment of Native men and women as domestic servants, store assistants and yard boys. Christianity, to take a more elaborate example, has not only added a new form of religious belief to the tribal culture: the organization of the Mission has led to the erection of churches, to new vocations for evangelists and elders, to the establishment of church councils which supervise the behaviour of its adherents. It has introduced baptism and confirmation

[1] 'Premarital Pregnancy and Native Opinion: a Note on Social Change', *Africa*, vol. vi (1933), pp. 59–89. Most of the other illustrations quoted in this paper are more fully discussed in my sketch of modern Kxatla culture, 'Present-day Life in the Native Reserves', in *Western Civilization and the Natives of South Africa* (ed. Schapera; London: Routledge, 1934), pp. 39–62.

classes and ceremonies, and has left its mark upon marriage, initiation and death ceremonies. Its hymns have profoundly affected the nature of Kxatla music. It has provided new sanctions for its members in the form of censure for moral lapses, and expulsion for grave or repeated delinquency. It has ostensibly replaced the old rainmaking rites by an annual day of prayer for rain, and the old harvest festival by a Church day of thanksgiving. It has made Sunday a compulsory day of rest for Christian and heathen alike, for man and for beast. It was for many years responsible for all the educational work in the tribe; it put up a small hospital and provided for the medical treatment of the people; and it recently also started a small bi-monthly journal in the vernacular. The missionary himself has become not only the tribal priest, thereby depriving the chief of certain of his ancient functions, but also the confidential adviser and guide of the people in many spheres of tribal life as remote from religion as politics. In the same way, one may consider the Administration, following up the manifestations of its activity in the different aspects of tribal life, such as government and law, economics, education, health and hygiene; or the neighbouring European settlers; or the traders, who in Bechuanaland often also act as labour recruiters.

Only by combining these two approaches will it be possible to obtain really adequate explanations of change. Most of the changes that have taken place will appear as the resultant, not of single factors, but of various factors acting in co-operation or competing with one another. The wholesale acceptance of Christianity by the Kxatla in place of ancestor-worship was due, not only to the general activities of the Mission, but more specifically to the conversion of the chief, whose example was a compulsory guide to the rest of the people. Extensive changes may be due to great pressure on the part of such authorities as the Church, or the Administration, or the chief, as in the decay of polygyny or the enforced abolition of many of the old tribal ceremonies; or to the cumulative effects of the various elements involved in such a complex process as labour migration, which has greatly affected many different aspects of tribal life. The persistence of ancient forms and usages, with perhaps but slight modifications, may on the other hand appear to be due to the absence of such pressure, as in the case of social organization and customary juris-

diction among the Kxatla. Internal variations and conflicts may be due to the Church forbidding a custom which the Administration continues to recognize, as with initiation ceremonies in some parts of Bechuanaland or bride-wealth in many parts of South Africa as a whole. The morality preached by the Church may conflict with the conventional standards accepted by the tribe at large, thus giving rise to new forms of social differentiation, as well as to cases of back-sliding or hypocrisy. The Administration may forbid the traditional modes of punishing sorcerers, and thus force the people to develop and practise surreptitiously new methods of coping with an offence which they still regard as most serious.

Specific illustrations of this kind may be multiplied indefinitely. They all serve to emphasize the fact that explanations of change can be found only through a careful and thorough analysis of the way in which European agencies were brought to bear upon the tribe, and of the concrete applications of their various aims and policies to the tribal situation. The extent to which these agencies have actually succeeded in effecting changes will depend upon a large variety of factors, such as the forms and conditions of contact, the social and political organization of the tribe concerned, the aspects of its culture most directly invaded by the new agencies, the sanctions introduced, and the personalities involved. Each aspect of culture and every new agency must first be considered by itself, and then by correlating the results obtained it will be possible to trace out the general nature of the changes in the tribal culture as a whole.

I. SCHAPERA.

# III. CULTURE CONTACT ON THE FRINGE OF CIVILIZATION

*A. T. AND G. M. CULWICK*

IT is natural that the urgent need for systematic study of culture contact should first and most forcibly be felt with regard to areas where the process of 'civilization' or modernization is already comparatively far advanced, whether it be in the form of detribalization in urban and industrial districts or of the adaptation of the tribal system among an important and powerful people like the Baganda. In the first place, those areas present the most pressing practical problems and exhibit the most acute symptoms of social, economic, and political strain. In the second place, as a corollary of their accessibility to exotic influences, they are the areas most easily accessible to observers trained and untrained, and their troubles often force themselves on the attention of the civilized world. They have, however, certain disadvantages from the point of view of the student of culture contact, in that, as Miss Mair has shown,[1] the opportunity to study the stages in their development has gone for ever. By careful investigation a useful and reliable, if incomplete, picture can be drawn of the working of the social order just before the torrent of modern civilization broke in upon it, and the comparison between past and present which such a reconstruction makes possible provides us with knowledge which is both necessary for the explanation of existing phenomena and also of the greatest practical value. But just as one cannot tell by looking at the finished product whether a pot has been fashioned from the lump or by the coil method, so, in the absence of proper observation at the time, we cannot reconstruct a picture of the intermediate stages in the creation of the present situation, or ever know the details of the processes whereby native society adjusted itself to some innovations and was dislocated by others.

If, however, we look farther afield into little-known and compara-

[1] 'The Place of History in the Study of Culture Contact', pp. 1–8.

tively inaccessible areas, we shall find that opportunities for such study still exist, though every year brings change, and they must be seized with expedition if they are to be seized at all. The writers have lived for the last few years in just such an area,[1] where the method of study outlined here has been put into practice, and where the accelerated rate of economic development bids fair to provide an object lesson in the need for dispatch, if valuable material is not to be irretrievably lost.

Where communications are poor and the population is scattered, exotic influences spread slowly, and their progress can usually be traced along certain well-defined routes. The points of entry into the area are probably limited in number, and within it the new influences are most noticeable along a road or a much-used foot-path, sometimes along a navigable river. They tend to flow along the arteries of trade and then slowly permeate the surrounding countryside. It is therefore possible to find a modernized, perhaps detribalized, native society living within a short distance of a community as yet comparatively lightly touched by the outside world, a condition somewhat akin to 'ribbon development' along the arterial roads in England. Plainly there is much in such an area to interest the student of culture contact, for he is presented with a number of culturally related groups, whose social and economic order was once identical in principle, if not in every detail, but which have been subjected in varying degrees to external influences.

The ideal conditions from the observer's point of view would, of course, be found where such a series of groups ranged through every possible degree of modification; where the first group was not affected at all by the outside world, the last group profoundly so, and the intervening groups were nicely graded from one extreme to the other. But this continuous type of series is the prerogative of the mathematical and physical sciences, and the sociologist never hopes to be so favoured. The first and most important group is very unlikely to be found, and the whole series, though providing us with much valuable information, will most certainly also leave us with many gaps and unanswered questions. A study of the most backward groups will go far, however, towards the reconstruction of a picture of society in

[1] The Ulanga Valley, Tanganyika Territory.

the barbarous past. It will also enable us to check the accounts of the old men, from whom our knowledge of that past must mainly be derived, and to restrain their wilder flights of fancy, for they are inclined to give the inquirer two distinct, irreconcilable, and equally erroneous pictures, one of a black Utopia and the other of a bloody reign of terror.

The district in which the writers are studying culture contact along these lines is a broad valley with the surrounding foothills, an area of some 7,000 square miles inhabited by only 53,000 people, among whom the writers only two years ago met adult women who had never previously seen a white face. It is a district of swampy plains, fertile alluvial fens, and broken hill-country, and for half the year what roads there are become impassable for cars by reason of rain and floods, so that transport is obviously a difficult problem. The principal routes whereby influences from the outside world penetrate into the valley are easily noted, and so too are the main lines of communication within the district. The former are the main road running from the railway (which is about a hundred miles to the north) through the lower end of the valley, and a few well-known paths leading up into the highlands to the west and south. The latter consist at the moment of the main road mentioned above, a branch road round one side of the valley, a foot-path round the other, and a river system navigable by canoes at all times of the year. The transport situation is changing very rapidly, but it is at present true to say that the main road is used by European and Indian traders coming from the railway to buy rice at a market town, which is the commercial centre of the valley and where the influence of the outer world is most marked; the branch road, built for administrative purposes, was until recently chiefly used by Wangoni from a district farther south, travelling on foot to and from plantations in the north; the track round the other side of the valley is the route taken by the native agents of European and Indian rice-buyers to bring in rice to the road; while the rivers are used almost exclusively by the canoe traffic of the local natives. There are also certain mission stations in different parts of the valley.

The conditions are, therefore, favourable for the formation of different zones of influence, in which we may observe not only differing degrees of contact with the modern world but also in some cases

the effects of different types of influence. We shall return to this latter point presently. With regard to the former, we may, for example, trace the social and economic changes flowing from the introduction of a coin currency in place of one in which cloth, hoes, goats, and other perishable articles played the principal roles. In one group we find people with loads of rice going to *buy* money with which to pay their tax. Coin is to them not a medium of exchange but a new commodity, which may be bought like any other commodity and which happens to be the only form in which tax is payable. On the other hand, where the contact of cultures is most pronounced, we shall discover natives with Post Office Savings Bank accounts, wage-earners who are buying their food for cash. Again, we can follow the progress of labour from the tribal system of mutual help within the kin or other social group, through labour for beer, to the system of wage-labour, which the natives in the more advanced groups use even among themselves.

In some of this work, moreover, it is possible to obtain statistics for the various groups studied, so that the results obtained have a backing of actual figures which renders them doubly valuable. Statistics relating to certain subjects can be found in the records in the District Office. For instance, three years ago one of the writers applied this method of study to the effects of culture contact on native marriage in the area described above. The Native Census (1931), the Hut and Poll Tax Register, and the Native Courts' Records respectively supplied the numbers of adult men and women, the numbers of married and unmarried men and of married women, and the number of divorces granted by the native courts. From these it was possible to calculate figures showing the proportions of the sexes, the number of married and unmarried men and women per thousand adults, the number of plural wives per thousand adults, and the number of divorces granted in the native courts in 1931 per thousand marriages; and a table was prepared showing these figures for each of the groups studied. It was found not only that conclusions to be drawn from them agreed with results obtained by independent observation and inquiry, but that they suggested certain very profitable lines of inquiry whose possibilities would otherwise have been missed.

Thus far we have discussed the advantages of this method of study in a suitable locality. It is now time to consider the difficulties with which its user has to contend. The first and most obvious is the question of change. Even as we work our material is slipping from us, and while this in itself offers us a wonderful opportunity for study of the process of adaptation, we are not in a position to make the most of it if we have not managed to obtain our picture of the *status quo*. With the improvement of communications and the economic development which follows, the barriers between our groups begin to break down, so that, in so far as this particular method of study is concerned, prompt action is required to record data whose rapid disappearance is certain, as the area slowly but surely opens its gates to the outside world. Communities on the fringe of civilization are susceptible to swift and far-reaching change when the gates that held back the modernizing forces are gradually opened. A few miles of new road, a few energetic traders, or a zealous missionary may in an amazingly short time produce revolutionary changes in their social and economic condition. The modern world bursts in upon their primitive seclusion with its gifts, both good and ill, and all its disturbing influences.

In the district we have taken to illustrate our paper, the establishment of a cotton ginnery and the introduction of cotton-planting among the natives, together with other administrative, economic, and missionary activities, have wrought many changes in the last three years, while in 1935 it is probable that motor transport will be able to go right round the valley in the dry weather, bringing many of the backward groups into close touch with the economic activities of the outer world. It seems likely, then, that the conditions requisite for the use of this method of study will in a year or two no longer exist in the Ulanga Valley, and the area will have passed on to a stage at which other methods are more appropriate. Even now one very rarely finds a man ' buying ' money to pay his tax; the hoe-and-goat standard is disappearing in the more backward parts of the district as it has already done in those more advanced. Money is rapidly coming to be considered the standard of wealth and is being used in transactions between natives to an ever increasing extent.

The second most striking difficulty is that, in our study of groups

influenced by the outside world in differing degrees, we are dealing not only with a matter of degree but also with the effects of different influences. This we have already cited as a point in favour of our method. It is indeed both an advantage and a disadvantage, and while it frequently makes our task harder, it equally often supplies us with illuminating information. These influences may be classified in several ways. In the area described here, they obviously fall into the two broad classes of native and non-native, which categories may be divided into natives from other localities, travelled or semi-educated local natives, Asiatics and Europeans, and yet further subdivision is, of course, possible. Or we may find it more suitable to the particular aspect of culture contact under examination to use some other basis of classification, such as profession—e.g. official, missionary, trader, planter, hunter—or religion, and then within these categories to draw the distinction between native and non-native agents. The effect of the travelled and semi-educated native on tribal life deserves close study, especially the influence of the man employed by a European or Asiatic, for he is at least partially independent of the tribal economic system and the sanctions it imposes in social and domestic life.

We have also to consider the effect of the particular combination of external influences in an area, for the mere fact of their combination may itself be directly responsible for some of the results we see. For instance, the conflict resulting from disharmony between one type of influence and another may be productive of effects at least equally as important as those wrought by either independently.

We must remember, too, that the impact of cultures produces strain on both sides, and that, in the case of the non-native agents of civilization whose normal environment is culturally so different from that in which they now find themselves, the effects of prolonged contact with a primitive society may have to be taken into account.

The difficulties arising from the number of forces at work are not, however, peculiar to the method of study under review, and in fact they are probably more readily surmountable by this method than by any other. It postulates an area of bad communications, and it should not be hard in such an area to determine the types of influence reaching any given locality by the few routes available. The inaccessibility of most of the groups thus enables us the more easily to discover

what particular influences are present in any one of them, and by comparison how those different influences are affecting them.

In conclusion, a word about the personal factor should be added. The problems arising from the contact of cultures are pressing, and the administrator looks to the research worker to discover principles governing changes in primitive societies which are in contact with a more highly developed culture, to produce something which will be of service in the formation of policy, giving clues to promising lines of advance and marking probable danger-points. Up to a point these expectations are reasonable, and it is to be hoped that they will be more than fulfilled. But there is a definite limit to what may fairly be expected. Though it may be possible with some success to formulate rules of fairly general application, they are always liable to be swept aside by the personal factor upsetting all expectations.

It is a fact easily verified by observation in the field that the same influences introduced into two communities culturally similar may have entirely different effects, and that within the same community at different times their results may also be dissimilar, not by reason of any change in social or economic conditions, but simply because of the rise of a new leader or of a change in the attitude of a man whom the people follow. For the same reason—the personality of a leader—a locality where one would have every right to expect extreme backwardness may in fact be farther advanced, and be suffering less from the difficulties arising from the contact of cultures than one apparently far more favourably situated. These things could be illustrated over and over again from the Ulanga Valley, but then this paper would outrun all decent limits.

The writers, as anthropologists who spend far more time in the field than in the study, and who read in the field a good deal of work on anthropological theory and method, are constantly and forcibly reminded of the danger of forgetting the personality of the individual, the source of the surprise element in all human affairs, and of overstressing the reactions of a vast machine called ' Society '. Therefore let this plea for balance be made, a plea for the allowance of due weight to both. No set of rules can take such a highly variable factor, such an elusive quantity, into account. The anthropologist can help the administrator by outlining the general principles of social change in certain

conditions and by showing where strain and disintegration are likely to occur, but it is only the administrator with his local knowledge who can weigh up the personalities and gauge the effect of the human factor in any given case.

A. T. AND G. M. CULWICK.

# IV. THE VILLAGE CENSUS IN THE STUDY OF CULTURE CONTACT

*AUDREY I. RICHARDS*

ANY anthropologist working in Africa at the moment is really experimenting with a new technique. Anthropological theory was evolved very largely in Oceania, where the relative isolation of small island communities provided something like ' typical ' primitive social groups. Most of Rivers's hypotheses were based on Melanesian material, and Malinowski's functional method, the inspiration of most modern field work in all parts of the world, originated on an island off New Guinea with only 8,000 inhabitants. The anthropologist who embarks for Africa has obviously to modify and adapt the guiding principles of field work from the start. He has probably to work in a much larger and more scattered tribal area, and with a people that are increasing in numbers rather than diminishing. He has to exchange his remote island for a territory where the natives are in constant contact with other tribes and races. More important still, he has arrived at a moment of dramatic and unprecedented change in tribal history. Melanesian societies, it is true, are having to adapt themselves slowly to contact with white civilization, but most of the tribes in Africa are facing a social situation which is, in effect, a revolution. In fact, the whole picture of African society has altered more rapidly than the anthropologist's technique.

HISTORICAL RECONSTRUCTION IN MODERN FIELD-WORK. It seems only yesterday that anthropology was fighting to free itself from the shackles of a false antiquarianism that forbade it to look at the African of modern times. In an article published in *Africa* as recently as 1929, Malinowski urged the study of primitive institutions as living, functioning realities, of interest in their own right, and not ' by the circular route via classical antiquity '.[1] He pleaded for a new type of anthropology that should describe primitive law, kinship, and political

[1] B. Malinowski, ' Practical Anthropology ', *Africa*, vol. vii, no. 1.

institutions as they actually exist before us, and not in terms of fanciful reconstructions of previous imagined stages in the history of man.

But what, in concrete terms, does it mean to study a society as it 'actually functions'? In most parts of Africa cultural changes are taking place so rapidly that the anthropologist cannot study what is, without studying what was. As Miss Hunter writes in a previous article in this series: 'Any culture can only be fully understood in its historical context, and when the culture under consideration has undergone revolutionary changes within a generation the relative importance of the historical context is very much greater than when the culture has been comparatively static.'[1] Thus, paradoxically enough, it is just those anthropologists who have turned their backs most resolutely on 'antiquarianism', to whom 'history' of some kind or other is of greatest value.

This is in fact the chief problem facing the writers of the present series of articles on the study of culture contact. All these articles have been written from a definitely functional and practical point of view. Each community described was studied, in the words of one of the writers, as 'a going concern', without, moreover, giving preference to the savage and the obsolete. The facts that had to be recorded were those of present-day life, yet in each area the most pronounced phenomenon before the observer was culture change, change which *ipso facto* cannot be observed without some process of reconstruction of the past. Thus the functional anthropologist seems to have thrown one type of history overboard, only to find himself searching for another. The practical problem before us is what type of reconstruction of past events the modern ethnologist working in the special conditions of African society can and should make.

The problem has been faced differently in different areas. Thus, for instance, Dr. Mair did her work among the Baganda in an area where contact with white civilization, although comparatively recent, had yet produced an almost complete reorganization of native society.[2] Besides the universal acceptance of Christianity by the native, the

[1] Monica Hunter, 'Contact between European and Native in South Africa. 1. In Pondoland', pp. 9–24.

[2] *Vide* L. P. Mair, 'The Place of History in the Study of Culture Contact', pp. 1–8; also *An African People in the Twentieth Century*, London: Routledge, 1934.

introduction of cotton as an economic crop for native agriculturalists has revolutionized their economic values, and legislation has completely altered the system of land-tenure and the position of the chief. The new and the old elements in the Baganda culture have been indissolubly fused, and in these circumstances Dr. Mair claims that the only possible line of approach for the student of culture change is to get from the older generation as complete an account of tribal life in the pre-European days as possible, and to use this reconstruction as a sort of 'zero point' from which the anthropologist can measure subsequent changes in the form and function of different social institutions.

Professor Schapera, in his study of the BaKxatla natives of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, has made another interesting experiment in the study of culture change by selecting a sample social unit—the village of Mochudi, numbering some 8,000 natives—and visiting the group at regular intervals over a period of some years. Besides such a reconstruction of past events as he was able to make from the narratives of the old men of the tribe, he was thus able to add his personal observations of the actual process of cultural change over a period of years—work from which we should get valuable results, both practical and theoretical.[1]

A third experiment in technique has been made by Miss Monica Hunter in the case of the Fingo and Xosa natives, who are scattered widely over a large area and facing European contact of various different types. In this case the investigator divided her time between four separate communities: those living in a reserve in the most primitive conditions; those in a part of the reserve long in contact with European civilization; those settled on European farms; and the urban population of two towns, East London and Grahamstown. She was thus able to make a reconstruction of the vanished society X by studying the four communities A, B, C, and D, directly derived from it These communities, as Miss Hunter makes clear, could not be arranged in any evolutionary series, but yet she found it impossible to understand the customs of the natives of D—the urban area—without her knowledge of those of A in the more primitive reserve.

This method of studying culture contact by means of observations made in different geographical areas would, of course, only be useful

[1] *South African Journal of Science*, vol. xxx, October 1933.

where the changes in tribal life were not homogeneous throughout the territory. It is interesting to me personally, as working independently in North-Eastern Rhodesia in 1930–1 and 1933–4 I developed a very similar method of approach.

CULTURE CONTACT IN NORTH-EASTERN RHODESIA. The Babemba, the people I had selected for study, live in conditions very different from those just described. Here, as among the Baganda, European contact has been comparatively recent. The British South Africa Company established its first station near the district in 1897, and various missionary societies built posts in 1898, 1900, and 1913 respectively. But as neither the type of soil nor the methods of transport offer prospects to the white planter, direct contact with the white man within the tribal territory has been limited, for the most part, to the visits of the government official or the missionary.

Yet it is obvious that, even in this relatively speaking isolated area, the problem of culture contact cannot be thus lightly dismissed. Since no suitable economic crop has been discovered for native development within this district, the Babemba are unable to make money to pay their tax and to satisfy their rapidly increasing material needs unless they sell their labour outside. Thus, besides those changes introduced into the society by the prohibition of war and slavery, the introduction of Christianity and education, the enforcement of a money currency, and the payment of the government tax, the anthropologist has to study a tribal system shaken to its foundations by the absence of the adult male population as wage-labourers far afield. The opening up of the Northern Rhodesian copper belt during recent years has made huge demands on native labour, and during my first visit to this area in 1930 the percentage of men away at work varied from 40 to 60 per cent. at different times of the year. We are dealing, in fact, with a typical native labour reservoir, and therefore inevitably with a process of varying adaptation of the old elements of tribal society to the new.

In these special circumstances, I determined, on my first visit to the country, to make a preliminary study of cultural change by the following method: first, to get as good an account as possible of the main structure of the tribal society before the coming of the white man; and, second, to make a comparative study of different types of community

throughout the area in order to show the extent of the whole process of change. I have already described in this journal my method of selecting typical villages—those in the most isolated part of the country where white contact was very limited; those on the main road where a good deal of traffic passed by; chiefs' villages with their concentration of the conservative elements in the society; those near mission stations, and the small population round such a white station as Kasama, where most of the adult males were living on wage labour for the white man.[1] But when I returned to the area in 1933 for a further eighteen months' study, I felt the need for a greater elaboration of technique.

CONCRETE CASES OF CULTURE CHANGE. It is one of the tenets of modern field-work method that every social fact recorded must be supported by concrete documentation. Tribal morality and law can be formally stated by the native. It exists enshrined in proverb and myth. But the actual decision reached in any concrete case is usually a compromise between tribal ethics and the individual's human passions and needs—often, too, an adaptation of a traditional institution to the constantly changing needs of the day. In other words, the anthropologist may, and does, inscribe in his note-book, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery', but he cannot understand the whole tribal attitude to marital fidelity until he has haunted the native courts, analysed the divorce and marriage rates, and, better still, in concrete cases, listened to excited comments shouted from hut to hut. Such a statement may seem obvious, but it must be remembered that most of the existing accounts of African society are based on narratives dictated to the anthropologist at the tent door.

Now if this type of concrete documentation is valuable in a society in which conditions are relatively speaking static, it is quite imperative in a community in which culture change has been very rapid. We often speak of the 'changed African society' as though this process were now complete, and the native himself to be classified as either a 'blanket kafir' or else a 'detribalized' town-dweller. In actual fact, of course, where the effects of European contact have been drastic

[1] A. I. Richards, 'Anthropological Problems in N.E. Rhodesia', *Africa*, vol. v, no. 2.

and disruptive, what we are really studying is a process of differential adaptation to the new culture as between tribe and tribe, group and group, individual and individual. To the anthropologist the urban native and the bush villager are opposite extremes of one serial process of change, though the series is not a direct evolutionary one. In a tribal area such as that of the Babemba, where individuals are oscillating between the village and the railway-line, nothing but the analysis of the greatest possible number of individual case-histories can give the anthropologist an idea of the extent and variation of the adaptation that is taking place, and hence its main trend.

A further difficulty of the African anthropologist is the deceptive appearances with which he is constantly faced, and here again nothing but concrete documentation can help him. Unlike parts of Australia and North America, where the natives resisted Europeanism bitterly, and clung tenaciously to their old customs and beliefs, most African peoples have rushed out with enthusiasm to welcome the foreign culture, and try to approximate as closely as possible to the habits and appearance of the white conqueror. It is difficult in this case to distinguish apparent changes from real—form from function—and the outside observer is constantly misjudging the native as a result. The government official praises such and such a chief as being ' go-ahead and intelligent ' because he has a court-house built of brick. The anthropologist who has listened to cases heard by the neighbouring chief in the old style on his mud-and-wattle verandah may realize that the latter has approached far more nearly to the mental attitude of the white man. But even the anthropologist, with his much vaunted perspicacity, is deceived again and again by surface appearance in this way. The native in the lounge suit whom he had not thought of questioning turns out to be the most competent diviner in the neighbourhood. A fellow villager clad in a bunch of rags refuses his medicine, saying politely, ' You white people always give us Epsoms. I would like, please, two tablets of aspirin! ' It is for this reason that the method of question and answer is particularly dangerous in dealing with an African tribe. The old man will give you a statement of formal tribal morality before the coming of the white man, but the young man will mislead you equally by recounting customs that he believes to be European and therefore ' smart '. It is

not until a sufficient number of actual cases have been analysed that the difference between real and apparent change is made clear.

To get a systematic type of documentation I therefore adopted the following method on my second visit to the field. I listed very roughly those aspects of the social organization of the Babemba in which culture contact seemed to have produced the maximum change. Among these were of course prominent such questions as the structure of the village community and the authority of headman and chief; the types of marriage contract, the divorce rates, and the position of women; the exercise of mutual legal obligations within the kinship group; the whole problem of economic value among the natives and the organization of their agricultural life. Under these headings I made a sort of sociological census in the different types of village I have already described. The material collected was of two different types:

(*a*) *Village questionnaires*. In each village I lived in or passed through, I collected facts as to the history of that particular group: the length of time it had existed as a unit and the number of years the people had remained on a given spot;[1] the method of appointment of the headman (whether hereditary or by the chief's nomination) and his relationship to those under him. The composition of the village was revealed by figures as to the number of males away, and the means by which their relatives were supported in their absence. In about ten of the villages where I stayed longest I took genealogies of every native, so as to get a thorough knowledge of the kinship structure of the group, both in an isolated village, and in one of the newer type where unrelated natives are living together for the sake of opportunities for wage-labour.

The relation of villagers to chief is also an important issue, and I therefore collected concrete instances of the amount of *mulasa* or tribute labour done for the chief each year, and the amount of dues in the form of beer, fish, meat, or millet paid to him. I stayed in thirteen chiefs' villages also, and in one case was able to get a clerk to record the amount of labour done for the Paramount Chief during a full year.

I made notes of the history and structure of the village unit[2] of the

[1] Of practical interest, since the shifting village is one of the great bugbears of the educationist. Cf. J. Merle Davis, *Modern Industry and the African*, Macmillan, 1933, Rec. 21, p. 380.

[2] Villages of the Babemba number on an average forty huts.

type described above in the case of forty-nine ordinary villages, seven European compounds for natives, and six villages within the township area of Kasama, where the most marked effects of European contact were noted. By examining the lists of villages in the territories of the four biggest chiefs I was also able to get notes on the appointment of headmen in the case of 318 villages which I did not visit, this list itself providing enough interesting, and sometimes sensational, examples of tribal usage to furnish an important anthropological document in its own right.

In the village notes I had also to include plans of houses and gardens, though these I completed in the case of only seventeen villages. To make such garden plans each owner was questioned, when possible, as to the exact procedure he had adopted in his garden during the previous years—the only way to investigate the native agricultural system and rather complicated method of rotation of crops.

(*b*) *Individual case-records.* To these village records I added as many individual case-histories as I could collect, all inquiries being focused on this problem of culture change. During my first expedition I had formed the habit of collecting notes of individual cases which had struck me as dramatic and interesting—cases of witchcraft, violent family quarrels, or sensational events which broke the even surface of village life. But these hundred or so cases, dramatic as many of them are, do not take the place of a systematic record of facts concerning each member of some given social group. The advantages of using some form of questionnaire are numerous. First of all, this method of questioning brings the anthropologist into individual contact with each member of a village for perhaps half an hour in the solitude of his or her own hut,[1] and the individuals interviewed are thus a representative collection and not merely a set of the most voluble informants who are only too ready to haunt the tent door. Invariably, too, one or other of them will turn out to be a man or woman with that particular descriptive gift that can catch the essence of some tribal custom in a vivid phrase. I tried to take down such sentences always, besides the bare outline of the sociological inquiry, and it never happened to me to make a village census of this sort

[1] As distinct from the more summary questions asked in the village notes described above.

without stumbling on some such illuminating or 'quotable' phrase, or indeed some new custom or kinship usage. Besides collecting facts, the anthropologist is all the time educating himself linguistically and otherwise and improving his own powers of interrogation.

Secondly, information collected on a regular form of this sort is, owing to the frailty of the observer, always more complete. I found in practice that I nearly doubled the information I had previously obtained by the mere pious resolution to 'ask as many people as I could'. The blank column stares at the anthropologist accusingly!

Thirdly, such information is obviously specially valuable if it is collected from the members of any one social group instead of a number of isolated individuals. For instance, though I find I have taken down the clans, maternal and paternal, of nearly a thousand natives, such information would be of little relevance unless the individuals questioned had been grouped into villages or areas, and thus the local grouping of clans could be investigated. It will be clear, in fact, that any set of village case-histories can be used in two ways—to give information about individual types, if the entries are read horizontally; and to throw light on the structure of the group by comparing the entries in any one column vertically. For instance, the marriage and divorce rates of one village could be compared with those of another in a different part of the area, or the customs of two different generations in a village could be compared by examining the histories of the old men with those of the middle-aged men and boys.

To make my meaning clearer I have given here a copy of one of the forms I used, although I must emphasize that this type of questionnaire could not be useful universally, nor did I always employ it myself.[1] It requires a good deal of experimentation in each area before the anthropologist can decide which problems can best be dealt with in this manner, for of course such collection of case-histories is only one part of field-work technique.

In the cases actually cited I have chosen men of three generations living near Kasama, a government station. It will be seen that Column 1 gives the name of the informant and any scraps of information as to

[1] The examples given have been necessarily abbreviated. The letters F and M stand for 'Father' and 'Mother' respectively: ♂ and ♀ for male and female child.

| 1. *Name* | 2. *Clan* | 3. *Parents* | 4. *History* | 5. *Marriage* | 6. *Children* | 7. *Economic* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. Shikulu Mulenga Funga Funga<br><br>(Old man about 60. Brother to village headman.) | Elephant (M)<br>Porridge (F)<br><br>Gives local centre of each clan and traces lineage to original ancestress on M's side. | M formerly wife of chief, given by latter to F because she bore him twins and therefore became tabooed to a member of the royal clan.<br>F a courtier of chief; followed him in raid on Bisa country about 200 miles off; was left to hold district; returned to own country in old age when given village by new chief. | Born in Bisa country; went back to chief's court to be brought up by maternal uncle. Given wife by chief. Fled when latter died, and went to live with F among BaBisa. Returned later to succeed mat. uncle. Then lived with F on latter's return to a village of his own. Recently joined brother, now given a village near Kasama, 'to lick salt', i.e. be near white stores. | (*a*) Granddaughter of chief, who gave her to him, and paid for initiation ceremony. He was working for chief. Now dead.<br><br>(*b*) Cross-cousin (F). Married her in Bisa country. Worked 4 years for m.-in-l. and paid two bark cloths. Still living.<br><br>(*c*) Wife inherited from mat. uncle. Now dead but succeeded by her sister (classificatory) whom he supports still.<br><br>(*d*) Pat. niece of (*a*) given him by her in her old age (Mpokeleshi). Divorced her for adultery. | (*a*) 3 ♂ (one in village), 1 ♀ (in village—deserted by husband at mines).<br><br>(*b*) 3 ♀ (2 in village with husbands; 1 at mines).<br><br>(*c*) None by him.<br><br>(*d*) 1 ♂ living with his mat. grandmother. | Too old to pay tax. Makes a little by sale of baskets and beer. Bought a cloth last year this way, and received one from daughter at mines.<br><br>Made gardens for *b*, *c*, and daughter with aid of sons-in-law. |
| B. Shichilufya Shillingi.<br>(About 40. Casual labourer in Kasama. Son of A.) | Mushroom (M)<br>Elephant (F)<br><br>First gives F's clan only because thinks this European custom. But shows he can trace lineage three generations back. | F is A (above) by first wife. Left behind with mat. grandmother when parents fled to Bisa country (cf. *supra*)—joined them later. Has just come to live with father here. | Went to live at Mpika as engaged to Messenger's daughter there. Went to Wankie to get money, but left after 3 months because bewitched. Walked to Broken Hill and worked 2 years there. Came back for 2 years. Left for Congo to get tax; was there 1 year and then walked to Nkana. Came back because wants to live in village with F now. | (*a*) Betrothed to small girl—gave 6*d*. and went to work 2 yrs. for f.-in-l. Didn't come back to her after mines trip.<br><br>(*b*) Married Kasama girl on first return. Paid £1 and worked for f.-in-l. She ran away in his next absence and went down to mines.<br><br>(*c*) Married a Mubemba in Congo. Gave 10*s*. She refused to come back with him, wanting 'to stay where there are clothes'.<br><br>(*d*) Returned to find widowed cross-cousin and married her: thinks she won't leave him because she is deserted herself and because she is a cross-cousin. | (*a*) None.<br><br>(*b*) None. Thinks she 'slept with too many men'.<br><br>(*c*) 1 ♀ sent to him to be brought up.<br><br>(*d*) 2 ♀ by former husband. | Just returned from mines. Living on F and on new wife's granary.<br>Made 7*s*. 6*d*. last month and gave 4*s*. 6*d*. to new wife.<br>Has a bicycle. |
| C. Jackie Biltong.<br>(Young, smartly dressed.) | Fish clan (F)<br>Doesn't know M's clan. Laughs, and says hasn't seen her for ages. | F a cook in Kasama sacked for theft. In trouble in village too. Escapes to mines taking son then about 10 years old. M an Mporokoso woman (about 200 miles away) who went back to own family there. Says he will go to see her 'one day'. | F took him to mines, and women he lived with brought him up. Worked for a white woman. Turned on gramophone records. Tried mine work but found it 'too hard'. Caught for pilfering. Came home with friend who was returning and offered him shelter and a wife. | None (women say he is 'marrying all over the place'). | None. | Living on food cooked by friend's mother and relative of his mother. Made 10*s*. last month by digging garden for woman who had money (a local prostitute). Spent it on clothes and beer. Will pay back friend and look for tax 'later on'.<br><br>NOTE. Case of man doing woman's work and paid by her in money. |

his appearance or age which will enable the anthropologist to classify him as to type or generation. Column 2 gives the clan, and it is interesting to note that during my first visit I entirely missed many of the functions of the clan among the Babemba, and only stumbled on them by accident by this case-history method. In these three cases there is a clear contrast between the older and younger generation. It must be admitted that it was exceedingly rare to find a native like C who did not know his mother's clan, although the change in emphasis from matrilineal to patrilineal, as shown in B, was very pronounced. The informant's knowledge of and interest in his lineage was a useful indication to record in this column. Column 3 was designed to elicit facts as to the history of the generation now dead, the relation of the different generations to their parents, the change in the balance of power in the family as between father and maternal uncle, the methods of guardianship of children, etc. Case A shows typically the power of the chief to alter a man's destinies in the old days, to send him on journeys, find him wives, and bring up his sons at court. It is interesting to note the relatively speaking long journeys natives did before the coming of the white man, and the strength of family ties kept up over long distances.

Column 4 gives the salient facts of the individual's own history, particularly by way of comparison between the generations. As will be seen from the cases given, the middle-aged and young men were questioned about their journeys to various white centres of employment, their motives for going, and their opinions of conditions there, if they were willing to give them. Once a native had become confident in the course of such an interview, I was amazed at his lack of reticence as to past affairs. 'Why did you go down to the mines again?' I asked one man. 'Because I had murdered my wife with an axe', he replied, without a shadow of confusion. It was far more difficult to make him admit the amount of the marriage payment he had made the day before.

Column 5 gave interesting contrasts between the old and the new type of marriage both as regards choice of mate—infant betrothal, cross-cousin marriages, inheritance of wives (cf. Case A); the type of ceremony performed, varying from the full *cisungu*, or girl's initiation-ceremony rite of old days, to Christian marriage, or temporary liaison

for a trifling sum without ceremonial enactment. Matrilocal marriage with a period of service for the father-in-law (cf. Case A) and the payment of bark-cloths is rapidly changing to more or less patrilocal marriage with money payments, as the analysis of 800 cases of actual marriage payments showed.[1] All such information on marriage contracts was of course doubly checked, since the woman's answers could be compared with the man's.

Column 6 gave me a good deal of extraneous information about children's diseases and upbringing, but I have not much confidence in the accuracy of such figures from the point of view of vital statistics as to birth and infant mortality rates. Column 7 was difficult to fill in, since I was endeavouring to get some idea of native 'income', and to this end have listed at various times such items as the number of gardens, the number of relatives being supported, the contents of granaries, the amount of beer brewed each year for sale or consumption, and the methods by which tax was paid, or eluded. But I found it difficult to get valuable material, since the native could rarely be persuaded to describe his assets and liabilities with reference to any given time-interval, and I often found myself patiently inscribing debts or earnings which turned out to be pre-war. Besides which, the financial arrangements of any native who has lived in contact with Europeanism are such a complicated network of borrowing, pooling, and giving that a single column of a questionnaire would hardly render justice to them.

This, then, was one type of questionnaire which seemed to me a useful weapon in the study of culture change, and I have given it here merely as an example of method, not as a form that could be universally applied. Remains the question as to whether such case-histories can be used to furnish sociological statistics. I think personally only to a very small extent. It would obviously be possible, for instance, to extract from the information in Column 5 marriage and divorce rates as obtaining between two different generations and to express these statistically. But any one who has collected figures or attempted a census in an African village will understand my hesitation to express

[1] In the collection of these, as with many other branches of my work, I was much helped by Miss H. Eastland, Government Welfare Officer at Kasam at that time.

my results in this way. Such figures as are obtained are to be regarded as general indications rather than as accurate quantitative statements. Nor, on a special point, do I think the collection of vital statistics throughout a tribal area is a job which the anthropologist should undertake as well as his own sociological inquiries. He has neither the time nor the qualifications for such work. His aim, as I have tried to indicate, is to study a process of adaptation of one culture to another, or a rate of change, and it is this reason which leads him to collect case-histories. The student of a static society tries to get concrete documentation to support a general tribal rule. In a rapidly changing culture he is collecting exceptions.

In conclusion, therefore, in a tribal area such as that of the Babemba I adopted, as a result of experiments, a certain technique of observing and recording culture change. This process I have described in concrete detail. It can be roughly divided into three stages:

(*a*) The making of a rough reconstruction of tribal life in pre-European days by comparing the narratives of the old men of the tribe with the facts of daily life actually observed.

(*b*) The comparison of different communities, in this case villages, in which contact with Europeanism has been more or less extensive —the method of geographical sampling, in fact.

(*c*) The collection of facts in the form of case-histories to show the extent and the variety of contact change.

I should not advocate any reversal of this order, since without the main outline of a tribal structure in your mind it would be a waste of time to collect concrete cases or examine actual problems. Nor is this work which could be successfully done by a novice, or even a new-comer in any one area. It needs a good knowledge of the language, and experience in dealing with each particular tribal type, as well as experimentation with the problems suitable for examination in this way. I would prophesy that the first sociological censuses undertaken by the anthropologist would be found to be completely worthless after a few weeks' further work. But it must be remembered that besides the collection of material for scientific purposes, a village census of this type is a quick and useful method of educating the observer, and if a government official or missionary could find a range

of inquiries which would not arouse the suspicion of the natives, a house-to-house visitation of this sort in even one community would probably furnish him with more anthropological material for thought and study than two or three years' mere residence in an area. The collection of life-histories of the boys or girls in a boarding school would be an interesting experiment of this sort too, and any such undertaking would provide a useful sphere of co-operation between the anthropologist and the 'practical man'.

AUDREY I. RICHARDS.

# V. CULTURE CONTACT AS A DYNAMIC PROCESS

## AN INVESTIGATION IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORIES OF THE GOLD COAST

*M. FORTES*

IN considering the effects of the contact between African societies and European civilization, one is apt to forget that the exploitation of Africa by Europeans began more than five centuries ago. To trace the consequences of this long intercourse between Africa and Europe is a legitimate and worthwhile task. But is it a task for the social anthropologist? Previous contributors to the present symposium have emphasized the necessity of historical reconstruction in order to understand the effects of contact with European civilization upon a particular culture. They have been fortunate in dealing with cultures where the initial impact of the white man is recent enough to be within living memory. On the West Coast of Africa no feat of skill or imagination would suffice to establish a reliable zero point of culture contact. One would presumably have to be content with the construction of an 'ideal type' based on the scanty literature and on descriptions of cognate cultures. But must we therefore abandon every hope of investigating the influence of European civilization in these areas, and confine ourselves to the regions of recent contact where the procedure sponsored by Dr. Hunter[1] and Dr. Mair[2] can be successfully employed? I do not think so; and I shall endeavour to describe an approach which is, I believe, equally applicable both in societies which have recently come under the influence of culture contact, and those which have reached an advanced stage of Europeanization.

The anthropologist using the method of Dr. Hunter and Dr. Mair becomes a social historian registering the end results of a period of contact, and contrasting them with an hypothetical, uncontaminated tribal life. The method is not without its dangers for the unwary. It

[1] 'Contact between European and Native in South Africa. 1. In Pondoland', pp. 9–24.

[2] 'The Place of History in the Study of Culture Contact', pp. 1–8.

is difficult enough to avoid a valuational bias in the most humdrum activities of social science, as Max Weber pointed out long ago. How much more difficult it is to do so in such studies of culture contact can be judged from the readiness with which writers on the subject employ terms like 'pathological', 'disintegrated', 'detribalized', 'demoralized', in a pejorative or deprecatory sense. I do not wish to enter into a criticism of the use of such epithets in so far as they are not applied in a purely descriptive sense. They are, perhaps, inevitable when contrasts or comparisons are drawn between a conjectured previous state of a culture and its visible present state. But it should be noted that every society, not even excepting Western European societies, can be described as pathological or disintegrated from certain points of view; for where is the society to be found in which crime is unknown, in which conflicts leading often to war or fratricide never occur, in which every institution functions with complete smoothness and inevitability? And, on the other hand, it would be equally plausible to regard the symptoms of 'disintegration', and so forth, often discovered in contact research as indicative of the remarkable adaptability of Africans to new conditions.

To record the results of culture contact is an essential step, but only a first step, to my mind. The social anthropologist as sociologist can and ought to go farther. He can go farther if he exploits to the full the resources of the functional method; and he ought to go farther if he intends to satisfy the practical desideratum of putting into the hands of the administrator, the missionary, the schoolmaster, the educated leader of African opinion, such information as will enable them to control and direct change in Africa and not merely to sit still and lament the passing of the Golden Age.[1] He must tell them, if he can, how culture contact works as well as what results it produces. He must, if he can, give a better explanation of 'selective conservatism', to use Dr. Hunter's admirable phrase, than the lame tautology that a culture rejects what does not 'fit in' with it; or he may be challenged to show why, if this is true, Christian teaching gains converts despite bitter opposition in many parts of Africa, or why labour migration rapidly becomes a habit among a sedentary agricultural people unaccustomed to wage labour, as has happened in the hinterland of the Gold Coast.

[1] Cf. B. Malinowski, 'Practical Anthropology', *Africa*, vol. ii, no. 1.

Culture contact is a dynamic process and not a mechanical pitchforking of elements of culture, like bundles of hay, from one culture to another. It is a process of the same order as other processes of social interaction, both in the literate societies of Europe, America, and Asia, and in the pre-literate societies of other parts of the world. It is going on all the time both in those parts of Africa which have been familiar with the white man for centuries, and in those which have but yesterday been drawn into his orbit of attention. It should, therefore, be susceptible of investigation in every type of African society by the same field techniques as are customary in other branches of functional sociology. I emphasize the approach to the problem rather than the particular devices a field worker may decide to employ when actually engaged in research, because the latter will be sterile in the long run without the former.

Again, to study culture contact as a dynamic process the anthropologist must work with communities rather than customs. His unit of observation must be a unit of life and not of custom—a village, a town, a settlement, a unit of common participation in the everyday political, economic, and social life. This was a point I had to keep constantly in mind during my field-work in the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast.[1] In the district with which I am most familiar, an area of over 300 sq. miles, a very considerable uniformity of custom prevails.[2] But the population falls into a large number of discrete communities, the social boundaries between which do not become apparent to an ethnographer bent upon tracing this uniformity of custom. On the other hand, the towns of the Gold Coast can compare with those of the United States of America for heterogeneity of ethnic and cultural constitution; but they are, nevertheless, communities, in which an important contact process, that of mutual adjustment between groups of diverse cultural origin, is manifested. Individuals and communities react under contact; and not customs. In such studies contact agents can be treated as integrally part of the community,

[1] I shall, in the rest of this paper, refer to the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast as the ' Northern Territories ' for the sake of brevity.

[2] Indeed, the same uniformity of custom prevails over an area of about 1,000 sq. miles inhabited by several tribes, to speak only of the area known to me personally; for the same type of culture extends right into the French Haute Volta.

and the mechanisms by and through which they react upon the community can be observed, as Professor Schapera has shown.[1]

*Plan of Paper.* In presenting my approach, I shall first give some factual material from which, I hope, my methods of field-work will be immediately apparent. I shall offer the interpretations which emerge in the course of applying these methods; and I shall conclude by commenting on the strictly methodological import of the argument.

## Contact Agents in the Northern Territories

1. *The District Commissioner.* Among the Tallensi,[2] the tribe with whom I spent over a year, the most powerful and important contact agent is the District Commissioner—not the 'Government', but the concrete presence of the District Commissioner or his representative. Nor is he regarded as an imposition upon the traditional constitution from without. With all that he stands for, he is a corporate part of native life in this area, 6 miles from a police station, and some 30 miles from a permanent administrative headquarters.[3] The political and legal behaviour of the Tallensi, both commoner and chief, is as strongly conditioned by the ever-felt presence of the District Commissioner as by their own traditions. I made case-records, in considerable detail, of all political and legal events which I was able to witness. In these one gets a glimpse of the concrete reaction of person upon person, the play of loyalties and hostilities, intrigues and counter-intrigues, intelligence and passion which constitute the reality of native institutions. And always, the District Commissioner, whether actually present or not, was one of the principal sanctions determining the outcome of events.

The District Commissioner's power as a sanction of political conduct does not depend upon some mysterious awe of the white man. There are, indeed, elements of fear in the attitude of the native towards him due to recollections of the military pacification of the country less than a generation ago which forms a constant topic of conversation and anecdote. What keeps this sanction live and effective

[1] Schapera, I., 'Labour Migration from a Bechuanaland Reserve'. *J.A.S.*, Oct. 1933 and Jan. 1934.

[2] Tallensi (sing. Talena) is the native name. It should be translated 'Tale people'. I shall hereafter use the root form Tale as the adjective corresponding to Tallensi.

[3] Until 1931 a District Commissioner was stationed at Zuarungu, 6 miles away.

is the direct intercourse between the District Commissioner and the native community, either in person or through deputies, by the fact that he is known to be an all-powerful dispenser of impartial justice whose vigilance never abates. The manner in which he functions as a sanction, directly or indirectly, may be compared with the way in which a force applied at a point is transmitted by a system of levers; except that the analogy is imperfect because the levers are human beings, and the system a society and not a machine. The District Commissioner is in direct communication with the chiefs. To them he gives his orders and states his opinions. They are the organs by which he acts upon the rest of the community, and conversely, by which the community reacts to him. This, of course, is an over-simplified statement of a complex network of relationships which does not always work smoothly in both directions. For one thing, the chief, like a piece of iron which has been in contact with a magnet, gains prestige and self-confidence from his connexion with the District Commissioner, which are constantly operative in the institutions—not necessarily political in form though political in function—linking him to his people. There are bad chiefs who do not hesitate to exploit their prestige for purposes of extortion, and there are others who value the trust of the District Commissioner too highly to abuse it. But this is a matter of individual differences in personality. For all, however, this prestige and self-confidence reinforce the sanctions which gain acquiescence in the chief's legal judgements and political control.

I cannot here follow up the influence of this sanction in the political institutions and conduct of the tribe: how the social definition of the chief in terms of this sanction is extended to his brothers and his other henchmen; or how it may clash with traditional loyalties and thus precipitate a network of intrigue or a latent resentment, so skilfully hidden behind the formalities of co-operation, etiquette, and complaisance that I discovered it only after months of inquiry; finally, how it often acts adversely, blocking the road from commoner to chief or, above all, from an individual or a group to the District Commissioner himself, and thus tearing at the very vitals of that tribal cohesion of which it should be the mainstay. To follow this influence up in detail I should have to present the whole body of my case records; but this must await later publication.

2. *The Dispensary.* I have attempted to sketch a functional analysis of the influence of one contact agent. One could do the same with other contact agents. At Zuarungu, 6 miles from my headquarters at Tongo, there is a Government dispensary run by an African dispenser. It has been there for more than 15 years and was at one time under the supervision of a resident Medical Officer. The name, settlement, and ailment of every patient treated are recorded. The steady increase in the number of patients treated, until to-day they often number 200 to 300 per month, is an index of the degree to which the dispensary has become institutionalized.[1] But a further examination of the records shows that it is an institution of much more limited scope than, say, a hospital in one of the towns of the Gold Coast. The selection of diseases for which treatment is sought proves this. Yaws, tapeworm, rheumatic ailments, these constitute over 75 per cent. of the sicknesses recorded, yaws accounting for 50 per cent. of all cases treated. One can check this by observing that the social definition of the dispensary for the native was principally 'the place where you get medicine for yaws or tapeworm'. One of my boys injured his hand so severely that he was unable to use it for a month. He pestered me for medicine all the time, but simply took no notice of my advice to go to the dispensary, retreating instead to native household remedies. On the other hand, Sayamiohug's wife walked the 8 miles from her home to the dispensary every week for about two months in order to receive injections for yaws. The dispensary has in fact completely displaced the native treatment for yaws which was lengthy, expensive, and unreliable. But it has not, for obvious reasons, influenced the rest of native medicine, which is based on magical principles, either in its technique or in its pharmacopoeia.

It can also be shown from the returns that the dispensary has a limited radius of efficacy. The majority of cases come from within 3 or 4 miles, but there are some who come from a distance of as much as 20 miles. By interviewing a sample of patients it is possible to discover

[1] The records go back to 1920. From 1920–4, 200–300 new patients were treated per annum, practically all being prisoners or policemen and their families. It was not till 1928–9 that large numbers of yaws patients began to come from the population at large. This was due in part to the energetic propaganda of the Resident Medical Officer.

some of the factors which determine the response of the native population to the dispensary. The situation of the dispensary on the main motor road is one such factor. People will come from a greater distance along the road than along bush paths, and in greater numbers from nearby places on the road, sometimes even travelling by lorry, than from equidistant places off the road. In yaws, a nasty and distressing disease, in tapeworm, a painful condition which may interfere with normal working life, the purely physiological factors of pain and discomfort will drive a patient to the dispensary. There is the high prestige of the 'white man's medicine', reputed to be infallible, a very important fact in a country where yaws is widely prevalent and where native medicine is pure magic. The dispensary fills an acutely felt gap. There is the fact that nothing in the native system of medical beliefs and practices conflicts with the type of treatment given at the dispensary. Nobody has to renounce his magical ideas and habits in order to qualify for treatment. The dispenser is regarded as simply another and superior specialist in a country where every household owns medicines. There is, finally, the co-operation of the regular institutions of native life. Information about the dispensary spreads by the ordinary channels of social intercourse, especially within the family and kinship groups.

3. *The Mission.* A functional analysis on the same lines could be made of the influence of a mission station or a school, though it would be a far more difficult task. The time factor would, I think, be a decisive consideration, both in posing the problems and in devising a suitable field technique; and an essential preliminary would be a thorough knowledge of the religious and social institutions of the community in which the mission is at work. The time factor is significant because a mission just beginning work in a pagan area always employs different methods and makes different demands upon converts from one of long standing backed by a Christian and perhaps literate congregation. Dr. Richards'[1] adaptation of the method of 'control groups'—studying several communities of the same tribe at different stages of contact with missions—would be the obvious procedure.

Missions have not yet begun work among the Tallensi. There is a

[1] Richards, A. I., 'Anthropological problems in N.E. Rhodesia.' *Africa*, vol. v, no. 2.

station of the White Fathers' Mission some seven miles from Tongo, in a neighbouring tribal and linguistic (Nankanni) area. I made only superficial acquaintance with their work. But I have had the opportunity of discussing the problems of mission activity in Africa with several missionaries, both from the Gold Coast and elsewhere. I venture, therefore, to offer only tentative suggestions.

Two broad problems, both of exceptional difficulty, offer themselves for sociological inquiry. Firstly, how does a Christian congregation come into being—concretely stated, how does a mission get and keep converts? And secondly, how does a Christian church (mission plus congregation) generally influence the community of which it forms a part at different stages of its growth?

The principal difficulty arises from the fact that a mission is less dissociable from the larger context of contact influence than, for example, the type of contact agent represented by a dispensary. As Livingstone said: 'Neither civilization nor Christianity can be promoted alone. In fact they are inseparable.' And again: 'Wherever a missionary lives, traders are sure to come, they are mutually dependent, and each aids the other.'[1] This is true in a much wider sense. Roads, Government, European currency, hospitals, schools—all help to prepare the ground for the missionary, and vice versa. The conversion of an individual or a group is often, therefore, the culmination of a process induced by the entire complex of contact influences of which the mission forms only a single component. Only a comprehensive study on the lines of Dr. Richards' previously mentioned method of 'control groups' would enable one to distinguish the relative weight of each variable in this complex.

Apart from this, a missionary in Africa is seldom merely 'a man going about with a Bible under his arm'. I leave aside the question of the missionary's personality, a very important factor upon which, however, I have not been in a position to make observations. He generally offers essential and much desired services to the community, a school, or a hospital, or even so apparently trivial a thing as a football at the disposal of idle youth. Such services create links of dependence and a context of prestige which ensure a tolerant hearing for his specifically Christian teaching. The polyvalency of functions is a

[1] *Travels*, p. 24; p. 28.

well-established attribute of primitive institutions, witness the ancestor cult with its religious functions, its social and political functions, and its economic functions. This principle of social behaviour is extended in due course to the missionary: 'He plays with our children, talks with the old men, cures the sick, helps the poor—he means well by us', argue the natives, who would otherwise turn from him in fear or hostility. Genetically speaking, they establish also the foundation of a fraternity, a group of people united by the common satisfactions of which the missionary is the source, and by the recurrence of situations in their lives in which their conduct is determined by the missionary himself, his injunction, or his teaching. This is a matter of long training, as missionaries express in practice when they devote their energies principally to children and adolescents. Finally, they provide a nucleus for that most essential instrument of intercourse with a preliterate society—a direct channel of communication through individuals.

Up to this stage of the problem the investigator would not meet with insuperable obstacles. It is easy enough to make a list of all the activities of a particular mission station, and to record the response of the community. One could distinguish which activities attract children, which the men, which the women; one could by simple counting find out how many people are in touch with the mission, and from this estimate the amount of interest shown by the community in it; one could from such data determine which of the services offered by the mission has the greatest relative 'pull'; one could establish the influence of distance as a barrier to response; and so on.

But the real problem lies beyond this. Not every one who avails himself of the mission in one way or another is a potential convert. What then are the specific forces which on the one hand lead to conversion, and on the other resist conversion? To answer this question the anthropologist will have to make case studies of a large sample of converts and the families from which they come; but he will have to know the community context and its cultural idiom very well to interpret his case studies correctly. To begin with, certain factors of social selection may emerge. In the patrilineal and patripotestal communities of the Northern Territories, young men generally seem to respond most rapidly to mission teaching.[1] It is not merely a question

[1] This, I find from inquiries, holds also in Nigeria and other parts of Africa.

of youth. The ancestor cult is the dominant religious institution there. Now young men, though always participating freely in rites and ceremonies and often as fully conversant with details of ritual as their fathers, seldom have direct ritual responsibility. It is the old men who carry out the sacrifices often on behalf of the family or kin. In such communities where religion is more a matter of doing than of thinking, a young man often has no religious obligations to renounce by conversion. On the other hand, to take an extreme case, it would be almost inconceivable for the Chief of Tongo to become a practising Christian. Upon him rests the ritual responsibility, not only for himself and his family, but for a whole community and for a traditional office which is the pride of a large clan and which is defined and sanctioned by the ancestor cult.

It is not a question of the plasticity of youth versus the rigid conservatism of age. The Chief of Tongo is a man of considerable intelligence and critical judgement. When recently the prospect of a school being opened nearby was broached, he was jubilant. Even in matters of tradition he is no stickler for the old for its own sake. Thus, some 15 years ago he introduced an entirely new dance borrowed from the Mamprussi. He is equally far from being a conservative in administrative matters. But the social consequences of a fundamental religious change would be as catastrophic from his point of view, as they would be in this country if the King of England suddenly declared himself a republican.

Some such factor of social selection may be evident in the early years of missionary activity in a pagan area. Previous contact with Europeans, as domestic servants in particular, seems to be another predisposing factor. To become a Christian is another way of ' following the white man ', and often when there is no material advantage to be gained, much personal gratification and social glamour are attached to it. In other cases a family conflict may be traceable. Clashes of parental authority and prerogative with the impulses and desires of youth occur frequently, quite independently of the effects of culture contact. In such situations the parent usually wins. But sometimes the boy or more rarely the girl escapes, literally, from the intolerable situation. He may find refuge with a relative, or take the road to Kumasi, or if he has been in contact with the mission, go there.

Family solidarity, where it is as strong as in the Northern Territories, may play a part: a convert brings his younger brothers, and sometimes even his parents or his maternal relatives into the missionary fold. Indeed, a combination of these factors may produce queer and apparently contradictory results, as in the case of a boy I knew. He became a convert and drew his younger brothers and his mother's brother into the church. His father, a patriarchal old man, however, remained firmly wedded to his pagan ancestor cult, but encouraged his sons in their Christian leanings. Each of these people came into connexion with the mission for different motives, the eldest boy as a sincere convert; the younger sons because they wanted to 'learn book'; while the old man encouraged them quite openly for motives of gain. Christianity was a 'white man's affair' and must therefore be materially profitable, he argued. As for his sons' adherence to the church, this did not interfere with the practice of his ancestor cult; for even sacrifices on their behalf were his duty and he would carry them out without so much as telling his sons, if he wished.

Factors of a more recondite nature, both psychological and sociological, also enter. Individual differences in intelligence, in temperament, and in personality are as obvious behind the common patterns of behaviour in a preliterate African society as among ourselves and condition the response of an individual to missionary teaching. While I was at Tongo, two men whom I knew very well were initiated as diviners. Zaŋ, a lean, bony, hatchet-faced asthenic, self-centred, obstinately opinionated, with a marked streak of jealousy and suspicion, was a complete contrast to Deaso, stocky in build, ebullient, trustful, suggestible, and easily influenced. Both gave the same conventional reasons for seeking initiation as diviners, but with absolutely different nuances of psychological emphasis. For Zaŋ it was a partial solution of a personal conflict centring round his elder brother, the head of the family; for Deaso it was primarily a magical means of acquiring wealth. Of the two, Deaso would be an easier but probably less stable convert.

Even more important is the sociology of the ancestor cult. The theology of the ancestor cult with its ascription of immortality to the ancestor spirits and of the ultimate power for good or ill, over life and death to them, does not as far as I could judge offer a serious obstacle

to Christian doctrine. It is possible, indeed, that the filial attitudes of acquiescence in patriarchal authority, found from childhood onwards in a patriarchal, ancestor-worshipping society, facilitate a rapid and easy transference of allegiance to a church. The ritual side of the ancestor cult with its frequent magical intent would be more difficult to dislodge. But it is the social functions of the ancestor cult that matter most in this connexion. Primitive religion is, as Professor Malinowski has said,[1] the 'cement of the social fabric'. Translated into the context of an individual life, the ancestor cult is the lexicon by which a man defines and regulates his own conduct and that of his fellows in the family and kinship situations which occur every day, readjusts the equilibrium of social relationships upset by critical events like death, and masters the difficult problem of responsibility, when the unpredictable issue of chance affects his life. The rules of exogamy are defined in terms of the ancestor cult—'we sacrifice together, therefore we cannot marry', they say. No crop can be sown, or harvest consumed, no child can be born, or brought up, without sacrifices to the ancestors. The cult of the common ancestor is one of the main sanctions of patrilineal family and clan cohesion, and, on the other hand, the foundation of a solidarity between matrilineal kindred which breaks down the exclusiveness of the patrilineal group. Among my case records is that of a combative and rebellious man who was rapidly brought to heel by the head of his family, by the simple expedient of refusing to sacrifice on his behalf.

Here lies the crucial obstacle with which a mission may have to contend, and here we enter upon the problem of the general influence of a Christian church upon the community. Until the whole community becomes christianized, rival definitions of social situations exist side by side and may lead to conflict. While, for example, a missionary could fall in with the prohibition of marriages between converts which natives would regard as incestuous (such as, in the Northern Territories, a marriage between a man and his father's brother's daughter in the classificatory sense), it would be illogical for him to disapprove of marriages between members of clans forbidden to intermarry because they 'sacrifice together'. Such cases of conflicts arising over

[1] Malinowski, B., 'Magic, Science and Religion', in *Science, Religion and Reality*. Ed. J. Needham. 1925.

the breach of exogamy rules occur quite often in Ashanti, I have been told. In the Northern Territories the Christian congregations are still very small and I have not heard of such cases.

I have indicated only a few of the problems which a student of missionary contact in Africa may have to reckon with. They refer chiefly to the early stages of missionary activity in a pagan area. At later stages new problems arise. Thus, at a certain stage in the growth of some Christian congregations, elders and leaders of the community begin to join the church. Impressed by the beneficent moral and social influence of the Christian congregation, they accept Christianity often at great personal sacrifice, with the deliberate intention of working through it to improve the life of the community. I have heard of many such instances in Ashanti, but was not able to observe this stage of development in the infant congregations of the Northern Territories. In such cases the relative weights of personal and social factors would probably be different from what they appear to be in young converts to a mission in a completely pagan community.

## The Contact Milieu and Labour Migration

I now turn to a different type of contact phenomena observable in the Northern Territories, those engendered by contact relationships with the territories to the South. The traveller from Kumasi, the capital of Ashanti, to Bawku, the northernmost outpost of British Administration, is struck by the stream of migrants, on foot or in tightly packed lorries, singly or in groups, moving in both directions. They come, not only from the Gold Coast hinterland, but in large numbers from French West Africa. Some go to seek work in Ashanti or the Colony, others carry chickens or dried fish for sale in the markets of the South, others go merely to visit relatives or friends, many go to buy kola nuts. Every town of some size in the Gold Coast has its *zongo*, a section reserved for the foreign labour immigrants and for the Hausa and Yoruba traders who are to be found all over the country. According to the census of 1931, there were then living in Ashanti and the Colony about 120,000 people from French West Africa, 42,400 from the Northern Territories, about 57,400 from Nigeria. From the census figures it would appear that the total indigenous population of the Northern Territories, including those then living in Ashanti and

the Colony was about 704,000. The emigrants from the Northern Territories thus come to about 6 per cent. of the total population. As they come mainly from the Northern Province of the Northern Territories, they constitute a higher percentage of the population of that province, and, as they are mainly adult and able-bodied males, a still larger proportion of the adult male population of the Northern Province. Census material to make these estimates is not available in the published returns.

The range of sociological problems arising in this connexion is enormous, but knowledge of them is, alas, conspicuously lacking. One series of problems concerns the fate of immigrants from the Northern Territories and elsewhere in the towns of Ashanti and the Colony. How has the tide of immigration fluctuated during the past twenty years? How are these fluctuations correlated with economic changes in Ashanti and the Colony? What occupations and employments do the immigrants enter? How long do they generally remain away from home? How do they adjust themselves to the novel conditions of urban life? What new institutions and habits are being developed in these conditions of urban proximity? Even the basic statistical data necessary to answer these and a hundred other similar questions have not been ascertained.

The other series of problems relates to the reactions of the natal communities of these immigrants under contact conditions. I was only able to commence investigating these problems among the Tallensi. My observations were confined principally to the reactions of one community, that of Tongo, comprising between six and seven thousand souls, concentrated within a radius of about two miles.

Unlike those parts of Africa where gross maladjustments—revolt against the tribal authorities, collapse of sexual morality, neglect of family obligations, and so forth—immediately focus the anthropologist's attention, the area in which I worked seemed at first sight to be affected only on the surface. Moreover, the only contact agent of the type described in the earlier part of this paper operating in the immediate tribal area is the District Commissioner. The most conspicuous symbols of contact with the more Europeanized territories to the South are the European garments to be seen now and then, and printed cloths produced in Europe for the Ashanti and Coast market.

Many households possess battered enamel basins or other utensils of European manufacture, sometimes a chair of sorts, or a hurricane lamp, very rarely a European implement or tool other than needles or knives. But such articles either of apparel or of hardware are rare in proportion to the native commodities. Mossi cloth imported from French West Africa or woven in the Mossi settlements of the Northern Territories, and sold by Mossi traders in the markets, is the staple material for the loin-cloths, gowns, and 'togas' of the men. And women dispense with clothes, other than a perineal belt, for the most part.[1] Similarly, the housewife's pottery utensils and calabashes have not yet yielded perceptibly to imported enamel or ironware. Indeed, the expense of imported domestic utensils would be prohibitive for the ordinary Tale household. Many other articles of European manufacture, such as locks and keys, hinges, staples, nails, scissors, cheap pipes, cigarettes, beads and ear-rings, &c., are regularly sold by Hausa and Yoruba traders from the *zongo* at Zuarungu. But as far as I could judge from market observations conducted over a period of several months, the demand for these articles is very low.

European currency is firmly established both as a medium of exchange and as a standard of value, and bids fair to oust the cumbrous native cowrie currency in the near future. While money is, and from all acounts always was, freely used in all economic transactions, and all legal and contractual relationships involving the transfer of property (e.g. payment of bride-wealth), it has not acquired the significance of wealth. The social stereotype of a wealthy man is one who has many wives and cattle, and food and clothes in abundance. Money in fact is extremely liquid. Above all, money has hardly affected the native subsistence economy. Even the few professional native traders grow most of their own food; and conversely, an able-bodied man who does not cultivate his farm would be scoffed at, unless he is magically prohibited from agricultural work.[2]

I ascertained these facts not by a frontal attack upon the contact

[1] Most women, especially the younger ones, have, however, a gaudy cloth or two for festive occasions.

[2] This applies strictly to the Tallensi. Their neighbours, the Nankanni of Zuarungu and Bolga, have been more radically affected owing to the proximity of contact factors, such as the motor road and missions.

phenomena *per se*, but in the course of routine study of economic, social, and ritual situations. I found that while European clothes or printed cloths were sometimes, though infrequently, bought locally for their own sake, these were generally, and other imported articles almost always, acquired through a member of the family who had been away working in Ashanti or the Colony, or had been there on a visit.

I was, of course, aware of the drift of people from the Northern Territories to and from the economically richer and more advanced territories to the South, and one of the first tasks I set myself was to try to determine the extent of this drift at Tongo. I found, among a random gathering of over 200 adult males (i.e. estimated to be over 15 years of age) who chanced to assemble at the rest house which I occupied, that about 40 per cent. had, during the past 10 years, been to Ashanti or the Colony either to work there or to visit friends or relatives; and of those who were thus familiar with the territories to the South, 90 per cent. were men whom I estimated to be between 20 and 45 years of age, i.e. the able-bodied adults. Again, I made a sociological census of over a dozen lineage groups (a lineage group consists of a number of joint families descended from a single recent male ancestor).[1] Taking three of these lineage groups and a part each of four others, at random, I find that among the 103 adult males thus comprised, there were, in February 1935, when I brought the lists up to date, 10 away working in Dagomba, Ashanti, or the Colony, and 5 away farming in the Mamprussi country. Thus, roughly, 15 per cent. of adult males were away gaining their livelihood outside the Tallensi

[1] I subsequently discovered (in March 1935, when I was preparing to leave the field) that a similar device had been satisfactorily employed by Dr. Richards among the Babemba. My experiences coincided with those of Dr. Richards in regard to the value of this instrument of field technique, not only as providing the reassuring check of numbers upon sociological interpretations one might be inclined to advance upon the strength of a unique instance, but also as a specially useful means of opening up new lines of inquiry. It is perhaps worth noting as an example of how a common source of methodological inspiration can independently lead to the use of similar field techniques. I should add that I found that a random sample of individuals, however conformable to the best statistical canons, gave me much more meagre sociological information than a sample of social units, families, lineages, &c., which constitute the determining context of an individual life-history in a preliterate African society. (See Richards, A. I., ' The Village Census in the Study of Culture Contact ', pp. 46–59.)

country. Again, 28 (34 per cent.) of those at home had been abroad for shorter or longer periods, some for only a few days, others for as long as 10 to 12 years.[1] At one time or another between December 1934 and February 1935, about a dozen of the younger males of this group paid visits to various parts of Dagomba, Ashanti, and the Coast. They were absent for periods varying from a fortnight to nearly three months. Several of them carried fowls to sell at Tamale or Kumasi, returning with clothes and a little money. Others simply went to visit relatives or friends; and they, too, seldom returned empty-handed.

We have here a problem of interaction with a contact milieu in both the geographical and social sense. The normal limit of a young man's mobility is no longer, as in the days of his father's youth, the territory inhabited by the group of tribes speaking languages related to his own and sharing a common cultural substrate; nor is his economic and social horizon bounded by the structure of the tribe. A variegated range of economic and social experiences lying beyond the boundaries of the tribe are accessible to him.

The brief summary given above of some of the figures which emerged from my sociological census suffices to show that intercourse between the tribal community and its contact milieu is fairly widespread and intensive. The people[2] who sustain this intercourse fall into three categories:

(*a*) Those who go to work and often stay away for many years. The essential point, in regard to these, is that while their return, either temporarily or permanently, is always hoped for, it can never be accurately predicted. The astonishing thing is how frequently they do return, often after years of service in the Regiment, the police, or as domestic servants. The most dramatic case of this sort occurred just before I left Tongo, when Noŋdemzuya, alias Adamu, after an absence of over 12 years as a policeman, unexpectedly returned with his

[1] Two months earlier, in December 1934, the number of men permanently away, i.e. whose date of return could not be predicted, was 21. During these two months 1 absentee died, and 5 returned home, 2 after an absence of 12 years, and completely unexpectedly.

[2] I speak of men all the time, to simplify the succinct exposition necessary here; but women, too, participate in the drift to the towns and back, though, of course, far less numerously than men.

younger brother[1] to their father's house, to settle down and live there. The case was remarkable because these two men had both become Moslems during their absence abroad, had for years been completely out of touch with their brothers (classificatory) in Tongo, had obviously become thoroughly urbanized in tastes and interests, and had enough money to settle down to a trader's life in one of the towns. Indeed, Adamu brought home with him a foreign wife, who might have been an additional inducement to remain in the town. In fine, then, of no absentee is it ever said 'he will never return'; and such cases justify this faith.

(*b*) Those who go temporarily during the dry season. It has become a habit among young men still socially dependent upon a father or a brother, that is, not yet in possession of their own compounds, to go to the Mamprussi market towns such as Langwinsi, or Wale-Wale; to Tamale, to Kumasi, or beyond, during the dry season. They usually return just before the rains begin, in March or April, in time for the planting season. They often carry chickens which fetch higher prices south of Tamale than in the Northern Province, to sell. And they always visit relatives and countrymen in the towns. They thus form an important link between the absentees and their people at home, bringing back not only messages and information, but sometimes a letter, money, clothes, or other things for relatives of absentees. The essential points about these temporary migrants are that they go only during the dry season when agricultural activities are at a standstill, and that they generally return within a couple of months. Before 1931, I was told, a fair proportion of these temporary guests in the towns found work there and thus joined the body of the permanent absentees. Since the slump, however, this happens more rarely. Work is less plentiful and wages low, they explained to me, perplexed at this change during the past four or five years. Even the remote interior of a colony like the Gold Coast is not immune from the effects of world economic conditions.

(*c*) The third category consists of people who have gone to live in the sparsely inhabited Mamprussi country, just beyond the White Volta, 20–30 miles from Tongo. They have taken up land there and

[1] This boy is an extreme example of that solidarity between brothers which will be referred to later as one of the main motives of emigration.

built compounds for themselves and have their families with them. Public opinion regards these as temporary emigrants. Indeed, it would be more accurate to say that they are looked upon less as emigrants than as settlers on the tribal frontier. They maintain regular and constant communication with the natal community. They exchange visits and gifts with their homes, come to seek wives there, and above all, come to participate in the rites and ceremonies of the ancestor cult, in tribal festivities, and in funeral celebrations.

This type of emigration is, in fact, a straightforward development of the tendency to expand towards the unoccupied periphery of tribal settlement due to the great density (about 170 to the sq. mile) of a population barely able to support itself upon the available land. The rules of land tenure and the texture of family relationships, together with the principles of domestic economy, and of agricultural technology place a dependent young man, especially an eldest son, at a great economic disadvantage. Hence he will often 'go out' to farm for himself, preferably as near to his natal settlement as he can find land. The Pax Britannica, by extinguishing pillage and slave raiding, has extended the economic frontiers of the tribe to the Mamprussi country, so that young men now have no hesitation in going to farm there. That this is a purely economic expedient compatible with the institutional fabric of the community, is shown by the fact that a settler will always eventually return to claim his patrimony and his ritual prerogatives when he succeeds his father; and this in spite of the greater ease and higher profits of farming in Mamprussi.

Every type of migration from the tribal area is immensely facilitated by the motor road which connects Kumasi with the North. Those who have the money travel down by lorry; and those who must walk are assured of shelter and food in the numerous towns and villages which have sprung up, like 'ribbon' suburbs in England, alongside the road.

Such then, translated into terms of human actors, is the nature of the contact between the tribal community and what I have described as its contact milieu. But the problem is far from being exhausted. A question which suggests itself immediately is what causes this migration from the tribal area to the towns of Ashanti or the Colony? I discussed it with many people, both those who had been away, and those who had never crossed the White Volta in their lives. I made several

men whom I knew well give me an account of how and why they set out for the South, what they did there, how they lived there, why they returned, and what they brought back. I found that in spite of the complete illiteracy of the tribe,[1] many people knew that one could communicate with one's relatives abroad by letter if one could find some one to write it and could send it to the Post Office. People were constantly coming to me with letters they had received, generally by hand, or with the request to write letters for them; and in this way I learnt more about the causes of migration and the kind of relations maintained between migrants and their people at home. I began to accumulate a file of individual case histories. To yield conclusive evidence such records should run into scores, an impossible ideal for an anthropologist coming for the first time to an almost unknown culture. Moreover, an informant's statement of his own motives and behaviour can no more be accepted at its face value in Africa than it can in Europe. I found that where I knew something about a man's character, and especially, when I had a record of his family history and environment, I could interpret his statement with some accuracy; but a bare and conventional account from an unknown informant was of small value.

I cannot, therefore, state any definite conclusions. What has emerged from these inquiries I regard as working hypotheses to be checked by further research.

To begin with, there is a stereotyped, generally current, rationalization of the motives which prompt young men to emigrate to the towns. It is alleged that they go for the sake of money only. Every Talenja, young and old, desires money; and since the social differentiation of labour is extremely rudimentary, and few people have a sufficient surplus of food products for sale to any marked extent, money is not easy to come by. The older men, therefore, while deploring the migration of the young men, at the same time condone it on the grounds that they go merely 'to get money', of which they are quite as desirous as their sons! This theory is partly an expression of the native valuation of the contact milieu, and partly derived from the observation that people who return from abroad always bring back money

[1] There are, I think, about half a dozen Tallensi boys at school and the only literate member of the tribe at home was in my employment.

and 'things'—clothes, utensils, &c. It holds for half of the dry season migrants, those who take fowls to sell and return quickly; but it covers only a few cases of men who stay a long time. The other half of the seasonal migrants go for a variety of reasons. When there is nothing to do at home, a young man's fancy turns to Kumasi, especially if a close relative, such as a brother, a father's brother, a father's sister, is living there. He finds a couple of companions who likewise feel the urge to go to Kumasi, and they set out together. It becomes a combined sight-seeing trip and visit to relatives abroad, but with the avowed intention of bringing back gifts of clothes and other articles from the more fortunate townsmen.

As for those who return after a long period of work in Ashanti or the Colony, it is not so easy to discover what prompted their departure. It must be remembered that labour migration is wholly voluntary in the Gold Coast. Direct taxation has not yet been introduced, and obligatory labour either for the Government or the chief is not so exacting as to cause young men to abscond. Extraneous pressure of this type can therefore be discounted.

My most significant clue emerged from the sociological family censuses. I found that labour migration appears to have a selective family incidence. At one extreme are families, counting many adult males among their members, which have suffered not a single loss by migration; at the other are similar families which are completely dispersed abroad. And these two types of families often belong to a single lineage. This selection is no fortuitous consequence of the kinship structure, but acts specifically on the biological family, the nuclear unit of kinship organization.

To trace the nature of the selective process or processes, I turned to my individual case histories. Briefly, it appeared that labour migration was usually a flight from home. This confirms public opinion on the matter, according to which labour emigrants always steal away by night or abscond on some pretext. The flight again, sometimes appears to be precipitated by a crisis in the family which upsets or destroys the configuration of personalities, habits, and sentiments to which the boy is accustomed. This happens, for example, when a boy's mother dies and he falls under the direct domination of a harsh father, or cannot get on with the co-wife who, in accordance with

custom, takes his mother's place. Or by contrast, it happens when a boy's father dies and he comes under the control of his father's half-brother, who then discriminates in favour of his own children against him. At any rate, the returned emigrant, reflecting upon his life, represents the situation thus. The parent or substitute parent concerned naturally rejects this aspersion and protests that the boy was always an unruly scamp; which merely confirms the objective fact of the conflict between them.

These examples are offered in order to illustrate the kind of selective process which I came across in my material. They cannot be interpreted in the sense of a statistical mode; for, as I have previously stated, my case records are too few to permit of statistically valid deductions. They only serve to point the direction in which further inquiry must proceed.

Once such an avenue of escape has been exploited by a single member of a family, a new term enters into the configuration of family relationships—'having a brother (or son, &c.) in Kumasi (or Tamale, &c.)'. Whatever the circumstances of his flight, the runaway is never disowned, nor, on his part, does he sever his bonds with his family. After a time he may try to get into touch with them through some homeward-bound fellow countryman. He may even, though far more rarely, attempt to send home a gift. In any case, both parties take it for granted that he still belongs to the family in every sense.

In this context, normal family sentiments lead to the migration of other members of the family. A boy runs away to join his brother in Kumasi, and may be followed in turn by another brother. Indeed, the pattern of family relationships almost dictates such a course, under certain circumstances. Thus the most intimate mutual attachment and social partnership to be found among the Tallensi is that between a man and his brother by the same mother (his *pit soog*). If one of them, and he would most likely be the elder, runs off to Kumasi, the other will in due course almost inevitably follow. A boy may, similarly, go to join a sister in one of the towns, or a relative on his mother's side.

This brings us to the women who migrate to the towns. With few exceptions, women migrate in connexion with marriage. Some go openly and legally to join an absent husband. Others accompany their husbands when, as often happens, a man who has been away a

considerable time returns on a visit to find a wife, and departs for the town again—this time in plain daylight! But there is a small proportion of women and girls who decamp to the towns, again, as a rule, owing to matrimonial complications. A girl will elope with a lover who has been turned down by her father; or a woman may flee thus from an intolerable husband who has paid up the full bride-wealth and therefore has the support of her paternal family.

These illustrations will, I hope, suffice to show how a sociological census and individual case histories can be used complementarily to elucidate the mechanism of contact with a contact milieu.

Of the remaining problems arising out of this type of contact phenomena I shall select only one for comment: What is the influence of the contact milieu on the institutional life, the social practices, habits, and beliefs of the tribal community? I am not concerned here with a comparison of the society as it is to-day with what it was like in the hypothetical ' past ', before the white man came a generation or so ago. Setting aside its questionable validity, such a procedure could not, to my mind, add anything to our understanding of the processes of social change unless records of the intermediate stages by which the present state of affairs developed out of the past are available. Such records do not exist in the Northern Territories; and without them one is liable to attribute to the sole influence of culture contact changes due to tendencies inherent in the social structure (cf. what was said above about migration to the Mamprussi country). There is no doubt, for example, that the political and legal machinery of the country has been completely revolutionized by the European Government. But the anthropologist who optimistically sets out to recover a picture of the pre-European political organization from the reminiscences of old men, or the declarations of political personalities, soon becomes inextricably entangled in the mesh of their mutually denigrating lies. On the other hand, whenever the political institutions of to-day clash with traditionally inherent patterns the anthropologist can soon detect the friction which results.

I wish, therefore, to consider contact influences in the tribal society only in so far as they are susceptible to direct observation to-day.

Among the Tallensi these influences are so diffuse and pervasive that one has to take account of them in every routine observation of

social practices, situations, and institutions. It is the concurrent influence of the contact milieu as represented by the word 'Kumasi' used, not only for the town of that name, but as a symbol for Ashanti and the Colony and everything found there; of the Government as the embodiment of certain restrictions, certain liberties, certain legal and political techniques; of the motor road; of contact agents like the mission and the dispensary in the neighbouring tribal area; and of European money.

Just as it is, therefore, impossible to isolate this contact influence for study in the field by any special methods, so it is impossible to abstract it for description apart from the situational contexts in which it is disclosed. Generalizing approximately, however, one might say that contact influence enters as a coefficient of personal conduct and of institutional process in respect to such factors as their variability, elasticity, tempo, and inevitability; as a modifier, as it were, of the categoric imperative in social relations.

Illustrations will, I hope, make clear what I mean. In the tribal area the bulk of tilled land is family property. Most of the land a man farms has been transmitted to him by his father according to the laws of inheritance. In a closed system the rightful heir would automatically assume possession of his lands as soon as the funeral ceremonies of his predecessor have been completed. Under present-day conditions the rightful heir may be away in Ashanti or elsewhere and delay his return to claim his patrimony. In the meanwhile a younger brother will cultivate the land as if he were the true owner. But it is understood that whenever the rightful owner returns to claim his land it must be surrendered to him at once. Such cases are fairly numerous. They do not transgress the laws of land tenure or disrupt the legal relationships between the various members of a family, but merely introduce a greater elasticity into the working of these laws. On the other hand, such temporary arrangements may well give rise to permanent modification in the laws of land tenure when the labour migrant becomes a settled town dweller, as is bound to happen on an increasing scale in the future.

Money, again, enters into the normal course of institutional events as a modifying agency. A marriage among the Tallensi can only be contracted by the transfer of four cows or their equivalent in other

animals or money from the bridegroom's family to the bride's. Marriage is usually a long-drawn-out process, since it involves negotiations about the cattle payment, not only between the bride's family and the bridegroom's family but between the latter and a series of other families, their marriage debtors, from whom they hope to obtain the cows necessary for the newly projected marriage. If the prospective bridegroom has any money the process is speeded up enormously. For these inter-family negotiations between his family and their debtors are avoided, and he can always pay an instalment of money as an earnest of his bona fides.

In this connexion it is worth noting that fathers, even when they are elders of high ritual and social responsibility, are not always scrupulous in observing their economic obligations to their sons. One of the principal obligations of a man is to find the cows for his son's first marriage. If a boy has any money the father in many cases deliberately repudiates his obligation. In this way the tribal elders themselves engender that disrespect for paternal authority which one is so apt to attribute to the demoralizing influence of migration to the towns. The ' individualism ' of a grey-headed elder who has never been outside the tribal territory in his life often, in my experience, far surpasses that of a returned labour migrant who has been away for years. Culture contact is not the cause of ' individualism ', but merely provides new channels of expression for that kind of behaviour which is commonly labelled ' individualistic '.

Most difficult of all to grasp and examine in the field is the influence of the contact milieu on social attitudes. I was constantly amazed, for instance, by the great tolerance shown to strangers or to foreign ways and ideas without any apparent desire to imitate. The most convincing instance of this was the case of Noŋdemzuya or Adamu, whom I have referred to previously. Of all the hundreds of young men who had been to ' Kumasi ', he and his brother alone returned Mohammedans. He was accepted by the chief, the community, and his own family without criticism or contempt, although he himself made no secret of his scorn for the pagan ' fetish palaver ' practised by his family, even of the very rites celebrated to mark his safe homecoming. ' Perhaps he has learnt wisdom in Kumasi ', said the chief in explanation—quite unapologetic—of the cordial welcome he had given Adamu; and con-

tinued, ' in any case, he is my son [in the extended sense in which he always applied this term to his subjects]. No one can turn him off his fathers' land.' Nevertheless, everybody was emphatically agreed that Adamu would never gain a single convert for Mohammedanism at Tongo. This opinion is well justified. For the partly mohammedanized Dagomba and Mamprussi peoples with whom the people of Tongo claim kinship are greatly admired. Dagomba Moslems have been frequent visitors and even sojourners at the Chief's house, yet have never made a convert at Tongo.

Knowledge about the contact milieu is widespread though superficial. Men of intelligence above the ordinary show keen interest in descriptions of life in the towns, and know a good deal about it, in spite of never having travelled beyond the tribal boundaries. Even children have vague ideas about ' Kumasi '. Events such as the annual rebuilding of the drift at Pwalagu, on the White Volta, to which half the adult men are called out, are a topic of general comment and discussion among men, women, and children; while the District Commissioner's movements, when he is on trek in the vicinity, are watched by everybody with curiosity. Public interest in emigrants who return is high. Any one who comes back from a visit abroad displays himself in the market-place at the first opportunity and recounts his experiences to his friends. Public opinion, one might say, is well attuned to a scheme of things in which contact has an established place. It is the psychological counterpart of the economic relationship between the tribal community and its contact milieu.

I shall not here refer to the extreme effects of culture contact observable in the obsolescence of some social practices, and the complete neglect into which others have fallen. They can be more appropriately dealt with in descriptions of the institutional contexts to which the disappearing or discarded practices belong. It is more significant to note that the fundamental institutions, practices, and beliefs of the community seem to be sufficiently vigorous to countervail the intrusion of contact influences.[1] Apart from political dissension due to culture contact, symptoms of social conflict, family discord, and moral

[1] Some years ago the Administration fixed the bride-wealth at two cows instead of four. Needless to say I did not come across one single case of a marriage contracted with two cows.

disorganization of the kind recorded by Professor Schapera[1] and associated by him with the effects of labour migration, appear to be inconspicuous among the Tallensi. Professor Schapera describes how the young men of the Kxatla who return to the reserve from the towns become politically restive, flout paternal authority, grow lazy and sexually dissolute; and he attributes this mainly to the deleterious influence of their experiences of urban life. At Tongo conditions were entirely different. While elders frequently inveigh against the fashion of running away to work in Ashanti or the Colony, they seldom complain that those who return become disloyal or refractory. The one serious case of defiance of the Chief which I witnessed in the course of over a year was on the part of a notoriously stupid and mentally unbalanced man. Men who had been abroad as labour migrants, soldiers, or policemen were, I found, among the most loyal members of the community. Criticism of the Chief, confided in strict secrecy, came as often from responsible elders as from these men.

Family conflicts—between parent and child, husband and wife, a woman and her co-wife, the head of a lineage group and the head of a constituent family, and many more—occur every day. But these are neither due to culture contact in its general influence, nor do they occur more frequently with those who have been abroad than amongst the rest of the community. Indeed, as I have previously indicated, such conflicts appear to be the cause of emigration rather than its consequence.

Sexual immorality, looked at from the point of view of Tallensi values, and in relation to the institution of marriage as it functions among them, is no serious problem. They regard premarital sexual relations with indifference; and premarital pregnancy is a rare occurrence owing to the youthful age at which girls are married. Adultery is a serious offence, though so common as to be treated with indulgence by those not directly implicated. My records do not suggest that men who have been away are more prone to it than those who have never left home.

Finally, the men who have been away are every whit as devoted in the practice and belief of their religious cults as their relations who have stayed at home. This was impressively shown in the secret

[1] Loc. cit. *J.A.S.*; and his articles in *Western Civilization and the Natives of South Africa*, ed. by I. Schapera, Routledge, 1934.

initiation rites of one group, when I discovered two ex-soldiers among the chief officiants, and several returned migrants among the rank and file of the congregation. It was one of the ex-soldiers, moreover, who most strenuously objected to my presence—in pidgin English!

The labour migrant, it would appear, is rapidly reabsorbed by the community upon his return, and becomes a conforming citizen in every respect. The explanation of this apparent discrepancy with Professor Schapera's findings lies, I think, in the different conditions and stages of contact met with in our respective areas. The Tale migrant does not, judging from accounts given to me, lead either an abstemious or continent life in the towns. A man may return after two or three years abroad with no more than £5 in cash, explaining sadly that he spent most of his earnings on food, clothes, women, and 'play'. He learns the techniques, the skills, and the manners of town life. There he becomes familiar with trains, discovers all about letter-writing and the post office, learns to wield a spade and pickaxe, to use a public latrine, to speak Hausa and pidgin English. But all this drops off like an old coat when he returns. One of my boys, for instance, had been a gardener in Kumasi for several years, learning to grow vegetables and use a spade. Nevertheless, when he returned, he reverted absolutely to the native hoe and native methods of agriculture.

The explanation I would suggest is that these skills and ideas cannot function independently of the proper material apparatus, the relevant social context, and the recurrent situations in which they are appropriate. All these are lacking in the tribal community, hence there can be no 'transfer of training'. In the tribal community you must accept the prevailing norms of conduct and manner of life, in the last resort for want of alternative. If you do not, you will never find a wife—for you can only marry by paying the bride-price—and automatically cut yourself off from most of the normal forms of social intercourse.

Among the Kxatla, by contrast, there appears to be no such marked antinomy of tribal life and urban life. Economically, the reserve seems to have been drawn completely into the field of force of the towns. The economic structure of society includes the towns as a recognized outlet for labour and as an established source of the means of living. The provision of a considerable part of the material apparatus of social life depends upon income derived from labour in the towns

and spent in an identical way in the stores of Johannesburg and in that of the reserve. The socially disciplinary functions of the traditional closed system of tribal economics have atrophied. Again, contact agents working from within have brought about the suppression or transformation of some of the fundamental traditional institutions and values. Instead of unequivocal norms of conduct and morality, embedded in well-defined practices and institutions which clearly indicate the bounds of conformity, the tribesman is faced with conflicting standards and inexplicit definitions of the boundary between conformity and transgression. To choose the path of least resistance and greatest gratification becomes the guiding principle of conduct where effective social sanctions are absent. The morality of the towns can be transferred to the reserve with impunity. Such are the lines along which I would attempt to interpret the differences in conditions observed among the Tallensi, and those recorded for the Kxatla by Schapera.

In connexion with this one may ask why does the migrant ever abandon the pleasures of the town and return to the tribal community? My case records suggest that the most frequent surface motive is the desire to find a wife. The transient sexual unions of the towns are not regarded as a substitute for marriage by the young men. They preserve the tribal attitude that marriage must be a lasting relationship entered into by a prescribed procedure, for the purpose of having children. It appears to be extremely difficult for them to find a wife among the cosmopolitan populations of the towns; and it is, in any case, emotionally more satisfying to marry a woman of their own speech and habits of life. Hence they come home to marry. But besides this, family sentiments and sheer home-sickness for their accustomed manner of life lead men to return.

## Conclusions

I have, in this paper, endeavoured to outline some of the problems of culture contact met with in the Northern Territories. Reference to many other problems facing an investigator in those parts has perforce had to be omitted. I have said nothing about the cosmopolitan towns, those most active foci of contact influence in the Gold Coast, since I was not able to conduct observations in them for any length of time; nor have I mentioned the *Toŋnaab* fertility cult of the Tallensi living

in the Tong Hills, which attracts thousands of pilgrims annually from all over the Gold Coast. Without a lengthy account of the cult itself and of the life of the community who are its custodians, the influence of these pilgrims could not be defined. My main concern has been with certain principles of method, and I have adduced factual material only to illustrate the argument. The problem of method in social research is twofold. There is, on the one hand, the problem of method in the sense of how to set about an investigation—what practical devices to use, what precautions to take, what type of information to obtain. Dr. Richards confined herself to this issue in her paper; and I have, in this paper, indicated some of the instruments of field-technique employed by me which are familiar to every functional sociologist.

On the other hand, there is the correlative problem of method in the sense in which it was raised by Dr. Mair: the formulation of an approach, the *Problemstellung*, as German methodologists term it. Following Dr. Mair and Dr. Hunter, I have stressed this aspect. I have indicated what I consider to be the limitations of a retrospective approach which treats the present state of affairs as an accomplished fact standing in contrast to a hypothetical ' untouched ' tribal culture. This is not rejecting history as a source of sociological data. Verifiable history, documenting the whole period of change, is indispensable to the student of social change. But history of the ' before the deluge ' kind does not, to my mind, illuminate the real problem, of which the problems raised by culture contact form but a part, namely, what are the causes of social change? Admittedly, it is a question as yet beyond the infant powers of social science; but we need not hesitate to erect it as a beacon for research.

Bearing this in mind, I have argued that the emphasis in current research should be placed upon the investigation of the dynamics of culture contact as this is actually observable in the field. It must be remembered that nowhere in Africa do we find the whole of European civilization in contact with the whole of a particular African culture, assuming that such a state of affairs is conceivable at all. Translated into terms of concrete field-work this means that culture contact has to be regarded, not as a transference of elements of one culture to another, but as a continuous process of interaction between groups of different culture. In the Northern Territories these groups are, on the

one hand, tribal communities, and on the other, those representatives of Western European society active in their midst—contact agents,[1] as I have called them—or influencing tribal life through the medium of a changed social environment—the contact milieu. I have tried to show how it is possible to analyse the response of a tribal community to the activity of contact agents and to the influence of a contact milieu. I have also compared some of my findings with those of Professor Schapera, from an entirely different part of Africa. These comparisons are of very limited significance, but they demonstrate that the method of field-work advocated here provides a basis for a comparative sociology of culture contact without which we can never hope to perceive the causes of social change.

Ideally, this method requires a temporal extension, continuous observation over a period of years, or repeated observations at intervals, to yield definitive information on the causes of social change. But few anthropologists are likely to be in the position to satisfy this ideal; and this is where accurate history can step into the breach.

I have said nothing of contact problems in Ashanti or the Colony, as my acquaintance with these parts of the Gold Coast is too cursory. But I do not doubt that the method of approach adopted in this paper could be applied in the more advanced contact conditions of the territories mentioned. An historical and sociological study of the influence of the cocoa industry, for example, on Ashanti social and economic life along these lines would produce incomparable material both for science and for practical ends.

Finally, I have given no attention to the deeper problems of contact in this paper. Why, to mention one, is the influence of African contact agents (e.g. Hausa, Mossi, and Dagomba in the Gold Coast) so much less than that of European contact agents, in spite of the more intimate social intercourse of the former with the tribal communities? This problem, like that of 'selective conservatism', cannot be solved *ex cathedra*, but must await the advance of comparative researches, which should include studies of the influence of non-European dominant

[1] It should be noted that the contact agents are not by any means 'free'. They are, to a considerable extent, socially stereotyped characters, both from the native point of view and from the point of view of the organs of European civilization whose instruments they are.

cultural groups like the Fulani of Northern Nigeria. The response of tribal communities to contact cannot be explained solely in terms of the tribal culture. It must be remembered that European governments, missions, economic enterprises, &c., are not passive purveyors of Western civilization, leaving the choice to the natives. They are deliberately and energetically active in transforming native society. The extraordinary thing is not that native society changes, but that any of its traditional forms of social life survive the process of civilization. Again, European contact agents pre-select the native institutions they wish to change. Agricultural officers, for instance, endeavour to introduce better methods of farming or new crops; but they do not crusade against the magical aspects of agricultural activities. In short, it is obvious that contact agents must receive as much attention as the tribal culture in such studies.[1]

M. FORTES.

[1] I am indebted to Dr. L. P. Mair and Miss Margery Perham for helpful criticism of the first draft of this paper.

# VI. THE STUDY OF CULTURE CONTACT IN ITS PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

*GÜNTER WAGNER*

ALTHOUGH the term culture contact implies the existence of several cultures in mutual contact with one another, the African anthropologist is primarily interested in the one-sided effect of European or Asiatic culture upon native African culture. The opposite influence of Africa on Europe and Asia in Africa he can for his purposes discard with a brief survey of those factors that in turn affect the native contact situation, such as the influence of native labour on the system of European farming, or the specific social and economic attitude which the existence of a large native majority calls forth among the European and Indian minorities.

With this definition of the problem an approach along three lines seems indicated: First it is necessary to obtain as concise a picture as possible of native culture prior to the contact. Secondly the nature of the various contact agencies must be determined. The third problem will be the functional analysis of the present stage of the cultural process that is resulting from the contact. A knowledge of the contact process as a whole, and thereby a basis for the determination of policy, can only be gained by following all three approaches. An analysis dealing merely with the phase of the process in evidence at the time of investigation, which disregarded the basis from which it started and the variety of causes that set it in motion and still keep it going, would be suspended in the air. It would miss the very essence of the problem which is to give an insight into the response of a culture to foreign influences. It is obvious that one cannot study the response alone without knowing in some detail what is responding and what it is that provokes the response.

I. THE PAST. The difficulties of studying the traditional native culture which has largely become a thing of the past and therefore is

no longer accessible to first-hand observation have been discussed at length by previous contributors to this series. Nevertheless it may be justifiable if I review this problem with reference to my particular field of study, the Bantu tribes of North Kavirondo.

Kavirondo was opened up to European influence during the last four or five years of the last century, but it was not until about ten years later that the first missions began their real work and that the administration had become effective throughout the area. The present situation is therefore the result of about thirty years of effective contact during which the pace of change has steadily increased. Nevertheless many aspects of the old order are still in existence side by side with new developments. There are still scores of homesteads far from Missions, roads, or trading-centres where one would search in vain for objects of European manufacture or even for native-made improvements due to foreign teaching. A study of the daily round of activities in such places will therefore still reveal a fairly accurate idea of the traditional mode of life.

It is mainly those native activities which require co-operation on a wider scale that no longer permit a first-hand study of pre-contact conditions. Public rites and ceremonies, even though they may outwardly still follow the traditional pattern, no longer have their old significance as the public attitude towards them is no longer uniform. This was very evident at a pagan celebration of the birth of twins which I attended recently. The essential feature of the feast was a sexual dance which, in spite of its far-going liberties, is fully sanctioned by the special nature of the occasion. Although the dance was performed in the traditional fashion the younger boys and girls showed great unwillingness to conform to the spirit of the occasion and had to be forced by frequent beatings to overcome their shame and to join in the dance. But in spite of the constant efforts of the old women to get the dance into full swing a large number of the dancers remained reluctant and were finally driven away with the comment that they ' spoiled the custom '.

Sometimes also it appears that traditional ceremonies are performed by pagans for the deliberate purpose of defying the Mission and provoking the Christian community, a fact which of course lends them an entirely new meaning. Likewise, in the administration of

native law, in native political life, and other spheres of tribal concern, contact conditions have affected the whole community and not merely the progressive section.

Fortunately, even here the contrast between the old order and the recent changes is still conscious in the minds of the people. Although one must make ample allowance for the probable tendency of informants to colour their accounts of traditional institutions in the light of their own attitude towards them, the ' points of fact ' can usually still be elucidated with much accuracy and be clearly distinguished from contact developments. It is, however, far more difficult to determine the traditional attitude towards these points of fact, the degree of conformity and the relative strength of institutionalized sentiments. Thus I feel confident of having obtained reliable accounts of the traditional laws of inheritance, such as the right of a widow to remarry a man from another clan than that of her deceased husband or the right of a man to favour certain children and disfavour others in making his will. But I did not find it possible to determine with certainty how often such rights were resorted to, what the public reaction would have been, and what was the relative strength of the sanctions that encouraged one kind of behaviour and discouraged another.

Sometimes the questioning of informants with widely different backgrounds supplies a fairly reliable answer as to the real significance of customs that are no longer observed. I received my first information on the traditional attitude towards pre-marital sex-relations from native Mission-teachers. But only when I was given much the same information by pagans and both by old and by young people did I regard it as reliable, especially as it was corroborated by the legal status of illegitimate children, by the details of marriage custom, and by a number of proverbs and songs.

The method of studying various stages in the process of change by observing the same institution in several geographical zones is of somewhat limited value in places like Kavirondo where the cultural diversity throughout the area is so great that a present-day account of the most ' backward zone ' does not permit of far-reaching conclusions as to the pre-contact life in the more advanced zones. Nevertheless, the method can be usefully employed within a certain range of problems. Thus it appears from many sources that the significance of

clanship was very much the same throughout the whole of Bantu-Kavirondo. In Maragoli (the area where culture change has gone farthest) traditional clanship has broken down to such an extent that the traditional sentiments between two clans linked by marriage can no longer be ascertained even by the study of pagan weddings. The traditional mutual behaviour has been superseded by new ideas of hospitality which have made an understanding of the former attitude very difficult and made the sparse ceremonial appear unintelligible. When I later attended a pagan wedding in Kitosh (one of the more remote areas) I saw the traditional clan-sentiments displayed without any disturbing modern notions. The wedding there consists of a series of feasts taking place in turn at the groom's and at the bride's place during which the visiting clan asserts its own superiority by insulting its hosts in song and deed. This observation furnished the clue to the otherwise quite different wedding ceremonial in Maragoli which, when re-examined in this new light, indicated the same basic attitude between the two clans.

To determine the basis from which the contact process started it is not always necessary or even desirable to go back to the beginning of the contact process as a whole—that is in Kavirondo the time before 1900—but only to the situation before a particular set of contact influences became effective. The institution of Local Native Councils, for instance, which for the first time introduced a political and administrative co-operation of all North-Kavirondo chiefs, was started in 1926. To understand the resultant changes in the political outlook and ambitions of the various North-Kavirondo tribes it would obviously be more important to know the stage which the tribal political development and inter-tribal relations had reached just before 1926 than to know the political organization prior to the first beginnings of European contact. Unfortunately, the lack of detailed historical documents and the inability of informants to give concise information on a definite and limited phase of the past, render it even more difficult to determine such intermediate stages than the pre-contact conditions. Nevertheless it seems necessary to make use of whatever knowledge can be gained, as even an outline of the history of the process will throw considerable light on present-day conditions. If it can be gleaned from official documents for how many years

inter-tribal feuds had ceased in 1926, how many inter-tribal markets and Indian trade-centres had then been established and since when, to what extent mission central schools were supported by different and formerly hostile tribes, how far there had been tribal co-operation in road- and bridge-building, how much interpenetration had gone on among the population of different tribes and so on, then these data will be definitely valuable when estimating the achievements of the Local Native Council and the nature of its influence on the development of inter-tribal relations. The statistical records of tax returns from different tribal locations over the last twenty years, read in conjunction with data on the economic developments and political changes in each of these locations, will show whether there is a correlation between the attitude towards taxation and the increase of wealth, and the answer will contribute towards an understanding of present-day problems of taxation. Annual mission reports on the growth and attendance at out-schools, the number of conversions and excommunications and reasons for the latter, the various difficulties encountered in the establishment of Christian villages, &c.—sketchy though these reports may be—will yield indispensable information for the study and evaluation of present-day tendencies in the process of christianization. Moreover, such records will often indicate the existence of problems which may be altogether overlooked if the anthropologist focuses his attention merely on what he can personally observe during the time of his stay in the country.

II. The Contact Agencies. In areas such as Kavirondo where, in spite of the short span of contact history, both Government and Mission have passed the pioneer stage and are fully engaged in the carrying out of specialized programmes with the aim of profoundly transforming native life, the study of these aims has become a problem in itself. The anthropologist has to acquaint himself not merely with the principal Government ordinances and a broad outline of Mission policy, but he must know what particular reforms are under way at the time of his study and which methods are being employed to attain them.

A few examples will illustrate the problem. When I began to study the present-day system of agriculture in Maragoli, I constantly came

up against recent innovations in the system of crop-rotation, in the methods of manuring, in measures to prevent soil-erosion, in technical details of planting, weeding, seed-storage, &c. Most of these innovations called forth diverse comments among my informants on their economic value, the obstacles in the way of their widespread adoption, and the ulterior motives behind their propagation by Government. I listened to their worries regarding the difficulties of marketing their produce, and heard them discuss distributions of seed-material, possibilities of obtaining loans, withdrawals of trade-licences, and many other issues which were entirely beyond my appreciation without a precise knowledge of the actual data on which these comments were based and of the kind of teaching and propaganda employed by the agricultural department.

Similarly the discovery of gold in North Kavirondo and the era of prospecting and mining which followed have produced a wide range of contact problems, mainly in regard to land, of which it is impossible to gain a clear picture and a balanced view by consulting native opinion alone. To understand the native reaction and to draw conclusions from it, it is not sufficient to know the terms of the land compensation ordinance, but it is necessary to know the channels through which it has been made known, the way in which native complaints have been dealt with, and the detailed procedure by which titles to land have been determined and the value of land has been assessed.

One might reply that the aims and methods pursued by the contact agencies are relevant to the anthropologist only in so far as they have become effective and are understood by the native population, and that therefore a sufficient knowledge for his purposes could be gained by consulting native sources of information. To make the comparison between the efforts to effect changes and their actual results would then be left to the practical authorities. It seems to me, however, that just the contrast between the actual aims and methods employed and the degree to which they are understood and reacted upon by the native community reveals the nature of the contact problems and guides the anthropologist towards further research. It follows, then, that a close collaboration between Government authorities and missions on the one hand and anthropologists on the other is strongly called for. To elaborate the most practicable technique of such collaboration,

with due regard to the conditions prevailing in the particular area of research, is an important task which has to be dealt with in the early stages of each anthropological field investigation.

III. THE PRESENT PHASE OF THE CONTACT PROCESS. The determination of the dynamic forces in tribal life is one of the chief difficulties of anthropological fieldwork even in the study of a balanced culture. The recognized norms can be ascertained by merely asking for them; the forces that tend to break away from the norm to establish new norms of behaviour can only be discovered by an observation of tribal culture as it is actually lived. In cultures that are undergoing revolutionary changes the need for observation on the widest possible scale sets the paramount problems of fieldwork technique. In such cultures there are no longer norms that are followed on anything approaching a tribal scale, but only tendencies working in different directions and representing different sections of the native community.

The mere existence of these tendencies and their extreme limits in the complex picture of a present-day tribal community can be easily discovered merely by living in the area and displaying a balanced interest towards all native activities, towards the secret tributes that are paid to the officially dethroned rain-maker as well as towards the meetings of the 'Chamber of Commerce' or the political intrigues of the 'Central Association'. But an adequate study of the contact situation involves more than that. We must try to discover (*a*) the extent to which the various tendencies prevail (both in terms of intensity and number of supporters), (*b*) the degree to which particular tendencies characterize particular sections of the community, and (*c*) their underlying causes and the attitude taken towards them by all sections of the community. Satisfactory answers to these three questions require a large amount of quantitative evidence and comparative information from all quarters of native opinion. Unfortunately such evidence is as yet almost completely lacking in the files and documents kept by the missions, the various Government departments, and the native authorities. With the exception of one or two sub-districts there exist no vital statistics in the whole of Kenya. The staff in mission hospitals and maternity wards is often so limited and overworked that satisfactory records are not even kept on such important points

as the proportion of male and female births, the still-birth rate, or the intervals between births and maternal mortality. As marriage registration in North Kavirondo is still voluntary and subject to the payment of a fee it is so irregular as to be quite useless to the anthropologist. Records of the agricultural production and the volume of exported goods relate to large territorial units only and moreover do not include inter-tribal trade. Similar shortcomings will be discovered in the perusal of nearly all other documents. Nevertheless, the anthropologist must patiently search for all the statistical records that he can obtain, even if they should carry him no further than to help him formulate his problems. For the remainder he has to rely upon his own resources and will have to do so even in the future as the majority of his problems are of such a kind that they will never be answered by official files and documents. But the anthropologist also encounters numerous obstacles in the collection of quantitative and comparable evidence. The greatest of these is the limited amount of time at his disposal, and he must therefore search for methods that will be efficient and at the same time will yield reliable and relevant information.

What then are the major lines of approach which have suggested themselves for the study of present-day tendencies in North Kavirondo? In my first approach I followed the method of house-to-house visits, armed with a flexible questionnaire to be used as a guide in making inquiries. My experience was that to visit only fifty native homes and to ask questions in each concerning a few points only would take the better part of three months, as the visits must appear casual and as many houses require one or several preliminary visits before any valuable information will be forthcoming. When making inquiries among the educated and Christian sections of the community the time-factor counts even more than among the pagans. In some cases it took more preliminary correspondence and arrangements to meet a busy Maragoli trader or teacher at his home than it would have taken to arrange an interview with a prominent Government official. Again, to restrict one's inquiries to houses where one meets with hospitality and willing response would obviously not be advisable as it would render the conclusions drawn from the collected evidence less representative. A major drawback of house-to-house

visits is the unreliability of information which one cannot check and which, moreover, is often given with suspicion. Data concerning the size of shambas or the number of cattle owned, concerning the age of children or even their number I found to be almost useless, except in those few families who had become fully convinced that my questions would not lead to the imposition of new taxes or other undesirable consequences. In my experience, therefore, the value of extensive house-to-house visits was practically limited to the collection of more or less visible evidence and to the occasional discovery of informants whom I might otherwise have overlooked.

A method which proved more successful was to take a few genealogies comprising the names of all relatives by blood and by marriage which my informant could give and then to discuss each individual's life-story in as much detail as possible. The genealogy itself answered such questions as the number of living and dead children of each person named (at least up to the second generation), the clans that intermarry, the number of wives, &c. The subsequent discussion of each person's life concerned his residence, his economic status and occupation, the major events in his 'life-cycle' (especially bride-wealth and inheritance), and data on his education and Church membership. As some of these genealogies comprise over one hundred persons of whom often more than half are personally known to the informant, even a small number of genealogies yield data on a large number of people. The major advantages of this method are that one can gather the information from a few reliable informants in whose company one can then visit the various relatives for more detailed inquiries; that one can check the information by questioning different people of the genealogical group; and that the persons comprised in one group are not detached individuals or families but members of one kinship-group.[1]

A fruitful method of determining the types of social and economic conflicts is the study of court-cases, provided that a sufficiently large number of cases are collected and that not only the Chief's court is considered but also the arbitration courts of the various Church communities. The North-Kavirondo courts are nowadays used to such an

[1] As most of the North-Kavirondo tribes do not live in villages but in isolated family-homesteads, a house-to-house survey would not comprise a kin-group.

extent that it seems no exaggeration to say that no quarrels or disputes occur, however slight, that would be settled out of court. A classified collection of court-cases, therefore, reflects not only the types but also the frequency of conflicts prevalent during the time of the investigation. The judgements given and the comments made on the cases both by elders and the general public during the hearing reveal, moreover, the diversity and change of attitude towards various legal situations. Out of thirty-five cases which I wrote down during a month's stay in Kitosh nearly one-half concerned the kinship obligations between the maternal uncle and nephew; it appears that these obligations are the first to break down in the process of individualization.

The upper standards of mission and Government schools, finally, offer to the anthropologist a valuable opportunity to study the reactions of the younger generation to various contact issues. I have so far experimented with three methods. The first was to draw up questionnaires which inquired both into points of fact and attitude and could be answered by short written statements. The second was to give topics for papers, to be written in English or the vernacular, on such questions as the bride-price, the meaning of clanship, agriculture, the school curriculum, &c. The third was to arrange informal group discussions on various issues which were conducted either independently from or in connexion with the questionnaires and papers but subsequent to them. The experiment has not yet been carried far enough to permit of any final conclusions as to the absolute and relative value of the three methods. It has shown, however, that the response is eager and that there is a greater diversity of attitudes and ideas—even if crudely expressed—than one would expect to find in a place where the continuous influence of teaching and preaching would tend to create a widespread uniformity of opinion.

IV. The Determination of Policy. After we have thus analysed the traditional native culture, the contact agencies, and the present phase of the contact process, we should be in a position to give a coherent picture of the contact process as a whole. That is, we should be able to show in what ways and to what degree the indigenous culture has responded to the outside influences, which aspects of the old culture have broken down, what new ideas and social relationships

have come into being, and, finally, what conflicts have arisen and where they tend to lead.

However, will such a presentation of the contact process be sufficient to provide the practical authorities with a concrete basis for the determination of policy? A decision on any lines of policy, if it is to be guided by anthropological knowledge, requires a normative interpretation of the changes, a weighing of the significance both of wider tendencies and of particular phenomena, and also a prediction of the probable results that any efforts to control the change and guide it in a certain direction may have. Although implicitly contained in the analysis of the contact process, an explicit elaboration of these problems seems necessary to avoid misunderstandings or subjective interpretations. What, then, are the objective criteria which we must apply to determine the 'significance' of a change? From what points of view must we look at it to decide whether it should be accepted or whether 'something should be done about it'?

People who are anxious to preserve the indigenous culture frequently adopt the point of view that, if a certain innovation can be shown to have upset the structure of a traditional institution, it is of a harmful nature, and that the resulting disturbance should be prevented or at least cushioned by fitting the innovation carefully into the traditional structure. This point of view is based on the tacit assumption that the particular innovation affects an otherwise undisturbed culture. It may have been adequate in times when contact phenomena formed isolated cases. In present-day Africa, however, native cultures are undergoing such manifold and rapid changes that a particular contact phenomenon can no longer be judged against the old background but only against the shifting background of the changing culture. The aims of a practical policy cannot therefore be set upon a restoration of the cultural *status quo*, and the criterion in weighing the merits of a change cannot simply be the degree to which it conforms to or deviates from the traditional pattern of native culture.

In other quarters where it is realized that the profound change of African cultures is an irrevocable fact it is often suggested that only what is 'good' in indigenous African life should be encouraged and preserved from a wilful destruction by the imposition of European standards and values. This point of view is strongly expressed by the

Rev. E. W. Smith, who writes in *The Golden Stool*: 'The Africans must be enabled to build something new upon the sound elements in their individual character and social system . . . we should not attempt to press the African into our European mould, but should respect whatever there is of good in the African's heritage.'[1] But according to what standards are we to determine what is sound and good in the African's cultural heritage? And, what is more important, what criteria do we possess to enable us to decide whether it is still sound and good under present-day conditions and the conditions that are likely to prevail in the near future? Is it sufficient to discover that the continuation of an old custom or the spread of a European innovation have led to obvious conflicts or impasses to condemn them and replace them by something different? Or should we decide the question by applying our own standards of evaluation, in which case we should come dangerously near to 'pressing the African into our European mould'? Questions like these will come up at every turn in the attempt to translate the mere account of the contact situation into action.

The only criteria which the anthropologist can apply in weighing the 'merits' of the change and in suggesting lines of action must be based upon the facts inherent in the contact process. Only if he can prove that such criteria do exist has he any right in his capacity as an anthropologist to make such suggestions. Now it appears that criteria based on facts will emerge from the study of the relative strength of all the forces that help to mould the native culture. Once the influence of these forces has been determined it becomes possible to weigh the significance of the effects which these forces have produced and thereby their 'value' in terms of the practical attitude that should be taken towards them. This approach seems also the only possible one to predict the probable results that any innovations may have.

To determine the forces and to assess their relative strength of influence we must review the entire contact process and try to discover what kinds of influences are responsible for each tendency that we can observe in native life of to-day. It is mainly for this purpose that a knowledge of the past and of the various contact agencies be-

[1] E. W. Smith: *The Golden Stool: some aspects of the conflict of cultures in modern Africa*, p. 97 (Edinburgh House Press, 1926).

comes of practical importance. A knowledge of the extent to which the past is still alive in present native culture will reveal the strength of traditional institutions and will ultimately lead to what may be called a ' theory of cultural drives', provided that we secure this knowledge by a study of culture change on a wide comparative basis. For only after we have frequently tested the various traditional institutions by observing them under changing conditions can we determine how fundamental they are, i.e. how great their power of resistance, their capacity of adaptation, and the amount of repercussion in case of their forcible destruction.[1] A knowledge, on the other hand, of the amount of change that has been wrought by the contact influences and of the variety and intensity of these influences will reveal how deep the changes have already gone and how readily the traditional culture has given way. Any conclusions, however, that are drawn from such data must take due regard of the tendency for the ready acceptance of the first influx of new customs and ideas to be followed by reaction. Thus in some parts of North Kavirondo where Missions were first established and where Christianity has made sweeping advances one can now observe a considerable decrease in the number of Christians and a growing tendency to revive abandoned customs and institutions.[2]

Any attempt to control and guide the contact process must obviously be directed towards a control of the outside forces, the contact agencies, that make for change. For this purpose one must not only know the variety and intensity of the effects that they have produced, but one must also determine to what extent the forces themselves can be controlled and to what extent they must be taken for granted. The detached control of a particular contact force will remain useless or even may lead to new conflicts unless it can be co-

[1] Such a theory of cultural drives must, of course, not remain a mere classification of customs and institutions according to their degree of resistance to outside influences, but its aim must be to discover a few leading principles that furnish the deeper explanation for the specific reaction of native institutions to contact influences.

[2] In Maragoli the semi-annual sacrifice to the Sky-God which had been discontinued for nearly ten years was revived some years ago, and many of the wealthier natives have resumed polygamy as they found monogamous marriage too burdensome an innovation in the long run.

ordinated with the total effect of those forces that cannot be controlled.[1] For the purposes of a first approach there may be distinguished two major types of contact forces: there are the essentially rigid forces which more or less automatically arise out of the first decision to colonize or christianize native peoples. On the part of the administration they have effected the abolition of inter-tribal warfare, the introduction of certain fundamental rules of hygiene, and the imposition of at least that minimum of regulations that ensures peaceful relations between the native community and the colonizing power. On the part of Christian teaching the extent of the rigid changes depends on the fundamental religious convictions of the Church at work. On the part, finally, of the 'unofficial' white population of each African colony the rigid forces bring about phenomena such as labour recruiting, economic competition, &c. But there are also other forces which are of a far more flexible nature. They result from the efforts of missionary, educational, and administrative bodies to implant new standards, material and moral, in the native communities. It is mainly in this field that the course of action permits of a wide range of possibilities.

The criteria, then, which will indicate possible lines of policy result from the consideration of (*a*) the relative amount of influence exercised by the different forces that mould the present culture, the contact agencies as well as the inherent cultural drives, and (*b*) the limits that are set by the rigidity of the outside forces. Only if both these considerations are taken together and made the basis of a broad and co-ordinated policy will it be possible to control the contact process and guide it in a definite direction.

This is as far as the anthropologist can go. His task is done when he has made his suggestions and given the criteria on which they are based. It is then left to the practical authorities to make use of his suggestions or to modify them in the light of practical expediency or official policy.

GÜNTER WAGNER.

[1] It would be unwise, for instance, to advise missionaries to use their influence to discourage the replacement of cattle by money in the fulfilment of institutionalized kinship obligations if the other contact agencies continue to use all their influence to propagate the use and circulation of money.

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