

AN EXERCISE IN APPLIED PERSONAL ANTHROPOLOGY*

Introduction

This paper represents an attempt to raise three points with regard to the study of dance and social anthropology. First, I have stressed the importance of an anthropological perspective in contrast to other perspectives in connection with ethnographies of dance. Second, I have briefly outlined a few ontological and epistemological implications of treating social anthropology itself as a language-based, rather than as a Behavioural¹ science. Third, I have only barely indicated the epistemological consequences involved in accepting the idea of a personal anthropology.

In fact, it is the latter point which suffers most from the following brief treatment, for while the subject matter for a deeper analysis is present in this essay (i.e. the parts of texts of articles written before I read anthropology), it has mainly been subjected to a fairly standard anthropological critique. There are those who might say that this could have been done without the benefit of the idea of a personal anthropology. It seems appropriate, therefore, to justify the approach I have taken, since I would not agree that a public criticism of one's own writing could be legitimately undertaken unless it was connected with the idea of a personal anthropology and the related notion of a different kind of objectivity. Thus, as an initial foray into the idea, I have chosen what I conceive to be a pragmatic approach, which explains the choice of title and why, out of many possibilities, I stress the notion of 'an exercise' and the application of these ideas.²

If one applies Pocock's idea to one's own writing retrospectively, as I have done, one of the consequences of doing so is that one subjects one's earlier writing to stringent anthropological criticism, assuming, of course, that the newly acquired criteria apply to one's own work as they do to the works of other authors. In other words, I have taken Pocock's 'counsel of perfection' to include a continuous process of destruction of cherished axioms and a perpetual coping with apparent paradox and contradiction. This has meant facing up to the vagueness of all that I previously took for granted. It further involved, on a more general level, the often painful collapse of long established, firmly believed-in parameters of social interaction, models of reality and the world, moral and behavioural 'laws', etc.

But, it is not unusual to discover, as I have done through gaining an anthropological perspective, that what were once thought to be 'laws'

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(or, more accurately, fixed ideas) about life and the world are merely rules for living in a state of mild neurosis -- mostly contained in that complex of bigotry, fears, prejudices, polarizations and dichotomies which anthropologists generally refer to as ethnocentrism -- which tends to remain unnoticed simply because it is shared by many of the people who happen to be around.

It seems to me that the idea of a personal anthropology requires seeing the world in itself and of itself in rather profound ways, rather than seeing it as a playground or a circus put there for egocentric purposes -- whatever those purposes may be. And this is why I develop the philosophers' metaphor of 'mental spectacles'. It has occurred to me that perceiving the world -- our own or that of others -- merely as something to be used or to be afraid of, defended, protected or otherwise reacted to, merely amounts to fitting it into pre-formed categories; to classifying ourselves and others in fallacious ways, hence the struggle mentioned below with received notions about 'primitive/civilized', 'developed/under-developed', and all the rest. In my view, perception is illusory if it tends to make everything look the same and if it leads to naive universalism, boredom, cynicism and familiarization based on the belief that our own needs, fears, etc. are the determinants of perception. This is a supremely egocentric and ethnocentric point of view which leaves out of account the human capacity to transcend both ego and societal values. The objectivity which the idea of a personal anthropology points to is, in my interpretation of it, connected with the general human capacity to be conscious of being conscious, and so on.

My interpretations of Pocock's ideas are surely not the only ones, nor does this essay draw out all of the consequences of adopting such a point of view. One could have written a paper on the relevance of the idea of a personal anthropology, or written an extended essay on the implications of a new kind of consensual objectivity. Numerous subjects come to mind, which merely serve to indicate the richness and power of the idea. However, in this essay, I proceed from the assumption that the ideas are relevant and have tried to show some of the practical consequences involved, as e.g. a far superior approach to the ethnography of dance and human actions than I was capable of producing without the anthropological perspective and without the kinds of disciplined approach to dance ethnography I would now advocate. The paper is mainly addressed to those who would venture into the field as I did, to do 'research' on their own: an interesting and instructive thing to do, but which in the end has little to offer a wider readership than one's friends and acquaintances.

Thus, in my writings since the year 1967 two distinct categories seem to appear, as follows:³

I. Pre-anthropology

1. The Ghanaian Dancer's Environment (1967)
2. The Dance of the Bedu Moon (1968)
3. Primordial Time and the Abafo Dance (1969)
4. Towards Understanding African and Western Dance Art Forms (1969)

Ia. Transition

1. Sokodae: a West African Dance (1971)

II. Post-anthropology

1. Social Anthropology and Dance, B.Litt. Thesis (1972)
2. Signs, Symptoms and Symbols (1972)
3. The Relevance of Anthropological Studies in Dance (1973)
4. The Human Action Sign and Semasiology (1974)
5. Reviews: (1974)
 - . Women in Between (JASO)
 - . Choreometrics (CORD)
 - . Dance in Society (CORD)
6. The Brides of Christ (1975)
7. A Note on Human Action and the Language Machine (CORD DRJ 1974-75)
8. Reviews: (1975)
 - . Method and Theory in Analyzing Dance Structure with an Analysis of Tongan Dance (CORD DRJ)
 - . Expression in Movement and the Arts: A Philosophical Enquiry (CORD DRJ)
9. The Role of Movement in Selected Symbolic Systems: D.Phil. Thesis (Michaelmas: 1976)
10. Deep Structures of the Dance (1976)

A few facts connected with the above categorical division seem relevant: I first came to anthropology six years ago. I was teaching western dance history and choreography at the University of Ghana and in 1969, I sent some articles to the late Professor Sir. E. E. Evans-Pritchard. It was thanks to his encouragement that I came to Oxford and it was initially owing to his good will and guidance (and subsequently to that of many others) that a gradual transformation from amateur to professional anthropologist has been taking place.

The desire to study social anthropology crystallized because, while in Ghana, I realized that what I did was amateur anthropology; that is, the study of dances on their own, conceived of as isolated social phenomena, or conceived of as special activities having a privileged place in the total scheme of things. Three and a half years in Ghana taught me much. I came from there an altered person, but one significant impression stands out as a result of the fieldwork done there. It consists of '...the daily experience of not knowing' (Ardener).⁴

While in Ghana my main concern was with learning some Ghanaian dances and attempting to absorb, insofar as I was then capable, elements of societies quite different from my own. The interest in West African dance had been awakened some years before, through intensive study with Pearl Primus and Percival Borde in New York City between 1956 and 1961. I arrived in Ghana having had extensive study and performing experience in four idioms of dance, three years of undergraduate philosophy and aesthetics, many years of teaching experience -- and boundless energy and enthusiasm.

It would be difficult to assess, now, which was the greater: the enthusiasm or my naiveté. Both, fortunately, were exceeded by the patience, generosity and hospitality of my many teachers of dancing in several parts of Ghana and the Ivory Coast. If truth in communication had depended entirely on their good will, there would be no need to write this essay. If the accuracy of verbal reports of dance events and experience depended solely on the desire to learn or the willingness to teach, there would be few, if any, problems of communication. But as I tried to learn from them and tried to record the dance events in which I had participated, I slowly realized that I did not know how to translate any of the experiences -- my own or theirs -- into any other terms or any other system or mode of expression.

This dissatisfaction was expressed obliquely in the article entitled 'Toward Understanding African and Western Dance Art Forms'. The chief value to be gained from that article, in my view, lies in the above insight and in the crude attempts made at that time to conceive of dances as systems; as body languages, which I tried to formalize in a kind of block diagram of the situational elements involved. This later provided the basis for a chapter in a B.Litt. thesis on the nature of communication through structured systems of meaningful actions.

On the whole, the writings produced between 1967-70 seem to reflect a genuine recognition of some of the important issues involved in the complex relations between dances and ordinary body languages of a people; between the body languages and their spoken languages; between the microcosmic world of 'a dance' and the macrocosm of the wider society in which it is embedded, but at that time, I did not possess a sufficiently sophisticated meta-language⁵ through which I could make, or express accurate connections among all the above-mentioned elements of a society. At that time, I possessed no systematic knowledge of a necessary kind which would have enabled me to write economically and concisely about the relations I saw and understood through my teachers' modes of specifications of what they were doing. Looked at in one way, it may be that such experience as I had, grappling with fieldwork problems prior to the study of anthropology, was valuable. It has encouraged a view of anthropological theory and method as something other than tiresome academic abstractions and it has developed an awareness of the inevitability of a personal anthropology.

From 'Objectification' Towards Objectivity

The writing done after the year 1971 reflects the above insights and the many I continue to gain from formal anthropological study, which I have consistently combined with a study of philosophy of science. Because of this, the writings listed under the heading 'post-anthropology' will not provide objects of discussion. The elements of personal anthropology in them have undergone many profound changes, mainly owing to the gradual development of a meta-language. This in turn stems from touching, through formal study, higher levels of conceptualization and awareness. In Vygotskian terms, this would be described as reaching higher orders of structuring capacity. In common parlance, we might say, 'an increase of understanding'; new and significantly different views of people and of the world.

For the remainder of this essay, I propose to comment on those articles of mine which are

...untrammelled by anthropological theory, or, for the most part, any experience of alternative ways of looking at the world... (Pocock: 1973:2.2).

The 'pre-anthropology' articles I wrote bear strong resemblances to the student writings Pocock examines in his essay, but with one major difference: the student essays are entitled 'Myself and My Society', where mine could all be effectively sub-titled 'Myself and Another Society' or 'Myself Between Societies'. It is slightly more difficult to tease out the elements of personal anthropology in these articles than in those Pocock comments upon, mainly because the relationship of the writer to the material is so different. In fact, I think of the relation as being disguised by the overt aim of writing about 'them'; about 'the other'.

On one level, there is evidence of an a priori assumption of a type of 'objectification' which Pocock rightly considers dangerous; that is, where the self of the enquirer is presumably excluded from the investigation and/or where the selves of the people being investigated are somehow isolated, 'cut-off', as it were, from the investigator and the rest of the world. The phrase "presumably excluded" is used for a specific reason, for as we shall see, the self of the investigator was not by any means excluded. The self of the writer is almost painfully evident in the form of

...a whole set of judgments about human nature, authority, sex, money, family, nation, etc. (Pocock: 1973:1.3).

An initial example, we will look at the following paragraphs from 'The Ghanaian Dancer's Environment':

Next we must consider certain factors pertaining to the dance itself which create radical differences in the Ghanaian dancer's milieu if compared to that of a Western dancer.

There are no Ghanaians who do not dance.

In the U.S., the dance belongs to informal aspects of the total culture, as recreations or entertainment; or to highly technical aspects, as in theatrical or educational dance. In these specialized areas, a high level of professional expertise, an academic degree or teacher training is the goal of long years of study. In Ghana the dance belongs first to the formal, traditional, ceremonial aspects of the total culture. Ghanaian dance has no highly organized technical structure. Ghana's dances are just now in the process of becoming theatrical phenomena and academic disciplines (Williams: 1967:34).

Here, the writer states what Pocock would call 'conscious pressures' explicitly, drawing attention to western classifications of dance and dancers. We are led to think of some of the social facts of western dancers, i.e. that they can be commercial entertainers, concert artists, or they can become professional dance educators -- all fairly low status, not to say marginal professions in the United States.

Following these comments, we find a somewhat appalling generalization, i.e. 'there are no Ghanaians who do not dance', for which the author could have produced no evidence whatsoever, and which also participated (N.B. past tense) in the 'Africans-have-such-a-wonderful-sense-of-rhythm' syndrome. But we may safely assume that such statements only disguise the real message in the above paragraphs. The writer's implicit judgment is quite clear: in her view, the United States compared unfavourably with Ghana because, in the latter country, people dance. The dance is part of everyday life; it has a role in the over-all pattern of life. It is not something 'special', different, or inherently demeaning or degrading socially or intellectually. Of course, the statements also assume that dancing represents a kind of universal 'good thing', which is, after all, a debatable point, too.

In the paragraph below, the author elaborates on the theme of general western categories of art, including the dance, noting with approval that the broad classifications of 'fine' vs. 'applied' art do not seem to hold in Ghana, yet, she perceives a problem here: her own awareness of this arbitrary, culture-specific distinction conflicts with the evident trend towards appropriation of these distinctions in urban areas of Ghana:

Much of what I have seen that is called 'art' in Ghana is a curious mixture indeed! It is some kind of adapted or adopted 'synthesis' of African form, concept or rhythms with an overseas overlay from a supposedly 'higher' civilization (Williams: 1967:34).

The author's struggle with and animosity towards received notions about such spurious, oversimplified oppositions as 'primitive/civilized', 'less complex/more complex', 'literate/illiterate' are not very well disguised, and it is also questionable as to whether the struggle did not amount to a rather romantic understatement of them; i.e. the pure untouched indigenous romanticism of early functionalism. The confusion becomes complete in, for example, the statement that 'Ghanaian dance has no highly organized technical structure', which must be taken by a reader to mean theatres and academies of dance, for the words 'technical' and 'structure' can be interpreted in at least a dozen different ways. Even if one makes charitable excuses for the author based on her obvious naiveté with reference to language-use, the ambiguities remain. They exist because there is no real comparison made between features that Ghanaian dance has or has not and features that forms of dancing in the U.S. have or have not.

Perhaps it is to the writer's credit that in later publications she stresses the internal complexity of structures in several Ghanaian dances, and that in later articles she writes in such a way that readers might perceive her dawning awareness that words have more than one meaning. However, the intense conflict the writer experiences regarding the confusion over a categorical 'fit' between western and Ghanaian classifications of dance is fully revealed in the following paragraph:

A significant feature of the Ghanaian dancer's psychological and intellectual environment is a confusion which often manifests itself in "intense personal conflict". The pressures to which they are (and have been) subjected which have produced this 'pseudo-art' are largely subliminal: the result of cant, colonization and economic underdevelopment. They find it difficult to advance the values and ideas which their dances represent. It is an understandable reticence: the fear is that they (and the dances) will be labelled 'primitive', 'uncivilized', 'simple', etc. ad nauseam (Ibid: 1967:34).

But, we may well ask, whose 'intense personal conflict' are we called upon to witness here? Whose reticence? Whose fears? And this is just the point.

The reader has lost the Ghanaians completely by the eleventh paragraph in an article consisting of nineteen-odd paragraphs. The author did not intend this to happen, nor at the time was she aware that such a thing could happen. And this too is just the point: lacking adequate training in and awareness of language and the complex process involved in making verbal accounts of others, the author simply managed to absorb the Ghanaian dancer's environment into her own set of received notions in ways which not only did dis-service to the Ghanaians' uniqueness and humanity, but to her own as well. The comments below are truly apposite here:

The recognition of unconscious operations in our communications is no alibi or excuse for irresponsibility. On the contrary it heightens the demand for responsibility; one aims simply to be as conscious as one possibly can recognizing the limitations built into the enterprise (Pocock: 1973:13.3).

Thus, one's unconsciousness gives rise to a mixture of reductionism, ethnocentrism and naiveté; not an 'error' in one sense, simply because one is unaware of any alternative structures, theories, models and what have you. Ignorance only becomes an error if one persists in maintaining it. But one of the most important points made by Pocock can be appropriately stated here:

This outside other becomes an object for my knowledge and understanding when I enter into relationship with it, and what I call my understanding is a report on that relationship not on the essential being of that other (underline is mine). I personally enter into this relationship and make my report upon it. It is this making of a report, the offering of my understanding of the relationship as true, having universal intent, and therefore open to the acceptance, modification or rejection of my colleagues that constitutes the difference between my subjective experience and my personal anthropology (1973: 13.4).

Objectivity Re-examined

It has been instructive to try to determine the nature of the pressures to which this writer was subject in 1967. It seems necessary to add that this exercise is very different from indulging in two-penny-halfpenny psychologizing, or an orgy of self-recrimination. Some of the unconscious pressures are summarized by Heisenberg when he questions,

To what extent, then, have we finally come to an objective description of the world, especially of the atomic world? In classical physics science started from the belief -- or should one say the illusion? -- that we could describe the world or at least parts of the world without any reference to ourselves... its success has led to the general ideal of an objective description of the world... This division is arbitrary and historically a direct consequence of our scientific method (1958:54-5).

But, not all the pressures were unconscious. Some of those which were not were the products of many experiences which any western dancer has (to a degree and with a frequency only vaguely understood by nondancers, I think) of what it is like to be 'the other' in relation to his or her own society. That is to say, in the United States, the dancer is often considered to be 'exotic', perhaps 'primitive', often 'illiterate' and all the rest, hence the explanation for the author's easily constructed identification with groups who are categorized in similar ways.

Notwithstanding how easily understood these particular elements are which contributed to the formation of an individual personal anthropology, they distract our attention from the issue of 'objectivity' in the human(e) sciences. For, if we reject cheap psychologizing or litanies of criticisms of our own or others' personal anthropologies, as Pocock advises, and turn to consider modification of our traditional notions of objectivity, where might we begin?

If we express dissatisfaction with the methodological divisions and patterns bequeathed to us by natural science and natural historians, then we may well ask what these notions are to be replaced by, or how they might be usefully modified? As is well known, many current developments in anthropology express acute dissatisfaction with some of the more dominant 'pure' social science outlooks, as e.g. a construal of 'the social' as an autonomous domain, or a construal of 'the social' as epiphenomena, determined by physiological or biological mechanisms of some kind. There seems to be a widespread, increasing emphasis on semantic aspects of the social which cannot be adequately accommodated in the traditional social science paradigms and there have been many useful guidelines and productive suggestions made; viz. Explorations in Language and Meaning. Towards a Semantic Anthropology. M. Crick, Malaby, London.

What might be said of anthropologists who deny themselves the security of the kinds of objectivity that many of their colleagues have, and nearly all their predecessors had? What would characterize an anthropology which has, as it were, '...cut the painters...' (Ardener: 1973) connecting it to natural or behavioural science paradigms? First, a semantic anthropology would be conceived of as a language-based science, in contrast, for example, to ethology, entomology, or biology, which are not. Second, to a working field anthropologist, a semantic anthropology would be characterized by a different ontological base from older styles of anthropology. That is, the nature of its subject matter would be defined differently, i.e. informants (whether from one's own or another society) would be looked upon as subjects in their own language, spoken or unspoken. They would not be seen as 'objects' divided from the rest of the world, or from the anthropologist. They would be conceived of as people, not as 'organisms' or 'mechanisms'; cf. Harré, R.: 1971.

An anthropology of this kind would have a different epistemology: the relations between investigator and subject, between investigator and data would differ. Winch (1958) discusses these relations at length, emphasizing these points. Harré (1970) discusses the relations between investigator and data at the meta-level of models and conceptual structures. Toulmin (1953) contrasts different kinds of relations between investigator and data with reference to physicists and natural historians, providing some valuable insights into conceptual problems in these sciences. Ardener (1973 and 1975) has effectively discussed such relations with regard to the analysis of events in anthropology. Pocock (1973) provides us with a new and wholly legitimate direction to take with reference to the notion of objectivity.

Theoretically and methodologically, the importance of such enquiries and relations cannot be over-estimated, for in my view, and in that of many of my colleagues, there is no such thing in anthropology, anyway, of simply 'telling it like it is'. Immediately that experiences or events are transposed into written language, they have had an order imposed upon them. The same thing is true, of course, of any type of human 'languaging' or notation system, whether in the realm of body languages or dances, music, mathematics, films, etc. Thus, following Pocock, we can quite readily see that the more conscious one is of one's own implicit, a priori judgments regarding events and experiences, then the more objective in a new and different sense one might hope to become. I am convinced that only thus can we aspire to approach truth in communication or accuracy in any 'languaged' formulations of any kind, whether they are about the world, others or ourselves.

An intriguing and wholly satisfying consequence of assuming Pocock's point of view and taking his 'counsel of perfection' (1973: 8.3:8.4) seriously is that it makes of the practise of anthropology a dynamic, living, open-ended process rather than a static, dead block of reified 'knowledge' of some kind; a transformation altogether compatible with an Einsteinian universe of genuine 'becoming' and the human world of languages and change which we presently inhabit. In fact, I would want to say that Pocock is too modest (or else he is merely a good tactician) in his assessment of the teaching practice of assigning initial essays to students of the kind he suggests. He refers to the exercise as a pedagogic device, which it undoubtedly is, but its value is far deeper than that, and its consequences are profound.

One is irresistibly reminded of Wittgenstein's and, later, Toulmin's and other philosophers' usage of the image of 'spectacles'. Toulmin remarks:

There is only one way of seeing one's own spectacles clearly; that is, to take them off. It is impossible to focus both on them and through them at the same time (1961:101).

The main thrust of Pocock's idea of a personal anthropology, if I understand and interpret his arguments rightly, is that it enables one, first to be aware of, and then to remove, one's mental spectacles. In the process of removing and examining them, one is not bound to throw them away, discard them or label them 'bad'. In fact, one may prefer another image of the matter -- one given to me by Pocock in a private communication: we can look at the soles of our feet, but not while walking. In either case, the crucial difference lies in our individual awareness of what we are doing.

There is, of course, a difficulty attached to the notion of mental spectacles which is, I think, a common human problem. Call the spectacles 'conditioning', 'socialization' or what you will, we all acquire at least one set of mental spectacles in virtue of the fact of being born

into a specific language, into a given society and all the complex network of systems of communications which that implies. Then too, other sets of spectacles may be acquired: the professional sets, as e.g. physics, architecture, engineering, literature, anthropology, music, psychology, etc. Here, too, the analogy applies: if we fail to recognize the conceptual elements of the academic discipline to which we are committed, we will fail to recognize the true character of our ideas and our intellectual, or other kinds of problems. This is equally true, of course, if we consider the intellectual problems of our predecessors, many of whom thought, felt and saw 'reality' and the world in very different ways. They did not, nor do we, 'float free' as Pocock puts it, of their historical selves, or of their personal anthropologies.

The main difficulty is that we are so used to viewing the world, ourselves and its other inhabitants through our particular sets of spectacles that we forget what it would be like to see without them. Our very identification of ourselves with one, or many, sets of mental spectacles tends to prevent us from seeing that other possibilities exist. Perhaps they also prevent us from realizing that having at least one pair of mental spectacles is fundamental to the common human estate. Unfortunately, there is no analogous image for the mental 'spectacles' in relation to the other senses, yet, we might imagine that we experience similar impediments in relation to them -- in our hearing, for example.

The Status of the Essays

On a basis of the reflections made thus far, it is appropriate to ask what status I would now assign to these pre-anthropology essays. The answer is: differing statuses to each, depending upon where the particular essay stood in relation to the process of discovery mentioned at the beginning of this writing, i.e. that is realizing I was doing amateur anthropology. It must also be remembered that although the articles are listed in their chronological order of publication, they were not necessarily written in that order, thus, the list does not reflect the process of realization. 'The Dance of the Bedu Moon' was written after the article on time and the Abafo dance, although they were published in the reverse of that order. The Bedu article is a much better article, simply because in it, the writing is confined mainly to reportage; to the best descriptive writing of which I was then capable. These remarks, by the way, should not be construed by students to mean that one should not attempt to fit ethnographic material into a larger societal or theoretical context -- far from it. Nor is the statement intended to mean that descriptive writing is better than some of the more technical kinds of languages I might use now. I would merely wish to draw attention to the fact that the Bedu article is better than the one on the Abafo dance because in it, I did not try to explain why or to give any reason for, the disparities between the Nafana year, the Muslim calendar and our own. I did not mention that the Nafana months appeared to be movable and to depend upon when 'the

right conditions' as defined by them were present for their purposes. I did not attempt to unravel the problems of why lunar months are not equal to or the same as those specified by the Christian calendar, as I had no desire to measure Nafana concepts of time against astronomical 'realities' of one sort or another.

I was aware, as nearly any serious dancer is aware, of the indeterminacy of time; that is to say, whether time is measured in days, seasons, rhythms, hours, events, dates, micro-seconds or occasions. Most of us are aware that one of our own dances, lasting approximately half an hour measured in clock time, can be the expansion of a moment in someone's life -- as in Antony Tudor's *Jardin aux Lilas* -- or that a dance lasting one hour might cover several years of 'historical time' and that 'time' in any case, can as easily be defined as rhythm as anything else, or the regular reoccurrence of accented beats, etc. Yet, time systems are of central anthropological interest, as the search for 'real' time and 'real' space has preoccupied western peoples for centuries; cf. Ardener: 1975. Some of these and similar points will be expanded later. Here, I should like to comment briefly on each of the essays in the order in which they were written.

In the first essay, the 'environment' article, the writer depended heavily upon one author, E. T. Hall (1966). Whether that fact is immediately apparent to others is not known, however, at the time, Hall's writing had little impact on the author beyond emphasizing the inadequacies of general American attitudes towards 'art', 'dance', 'space', 'non-verbal' communication, etc. And this is not in any way meant to be a criticism of Hall. The writer was prepared, albeit totally unconsciously, to use his work as a justification for the ill-concealed animosities which were noted as 'conflicts' earlier. In this observation, there is, we might imagine, a cautionary tale: many writers, students and others, seem to make the common mistake of using another author's work in a cavalier fashion, for they too seem to choose another's work to support the hidden message or to advance the implicit point of view. Doubtless they are also unconscious of the process, but the results are somewhat ludicrous. To an informed and/or careful reader, it is clear that no actual dialogue takes place between two positions or two arguments, just as no dialogue with Hall's thesis was undertaken in the 'environment' article. The upshot is simply a naive and undocumented appeal to vaguely defined 'authority' which is not only misguided, but irrelevant.

When the 'time and the Abafon dance' article was written, the author had recognized the need for some other kind of language or some other means of conveying the concepts of time to be found in different ethnicities from her own, but she again resorts to heavy dependence upon the authors for terms which seemed to be adequate. This is probably clear to a sophisticated reader through her adoption of the term 'primordial', a word used by many psychologists when discussing the differences they think they perceive between, say, the lived, experiential time of a people and the standard western concept of 'real' time.

Of the four earlier articles, the one on understanding African and Western dance is, from my present standpoint, the most important (although I would never use the words 'African' or 'art' in this context now). It was severely criticized by those who read it at the time, for it expressed dissatisfaction with many prevailing, and I might add, banal, notions of dance. It pointed to very awkward questions, such as, what is the basis for our generalizations about the universality of dance and human movements? By this time, the author had become relatively insecure in the face of different human systems of time, space, motion and meanings. She had begun to glimpse the patterns on her own mental spectacles and this recognition marked the turning point in her intellectual career, for the disillusionment was painful, but the message was clear: it read, 'you are not writing about 'the dance' or the Ghanaians, you are writing about yourself and what you think dance ought to be like in your own country, or what you wish it were like there'. It was a sobering thought, but it provided the energy for work in a new direction, and perhaps, interestingly, the means for pursuing a new career. It was the article on 'Dance and Krachi Tradition' which prompted Evans-Pritchard (or so he said) to suggest that social anthropology might provide useful lines of study -- and it has. Moreover, this article is sufficiently different from the rest that we might usefully examine it in more detail.

The Dance and Krachi Tradition⁶

The core of this article is to be found in an Appendix⁷ attached to the main body of the article, and in a glossary of terms at the end of it. Both reflect the radical changes in thinking mentioned above. I have included a shortened version of the Appendix at the end of this article and it might be helpful to the reader to have a look at it, for the ethnographic material to follow is taken from the chart, as it is a brief explanation of two person categories of the Krachi.

In the above mentioned essay, more is said about Krachi tradition than about any particular dance of those people. In fact, four dances were studied in the Krachi-Ntwumuru area: the Sokodae, the Abafon, the Tigari and Boame, a trance dance. They are all as different from each other as, say, pieces of literature of a people might be different. As individual items, their variety is as great as that which a student of English literature might perceive between a Shakespeare play, a comic book, an historical narrative of a war and an essay on psychology. The previous examples are meant to point up the variety. They are not meant to be analogues for the dances. My point is probably clear: to study any of these dances in isolation is as misguided as isolated studies of the examples of literature, and in the 'tradition' article, the author does not make that fundamental mistake.

The Krachi have many dances, many ceremonies and many rituals. It is true that some are more important than others; of those listed, the Sokodae is probably the most important of them all simply because it involves more people. It is in its way a commemoration of important events in the part of the Krachi which they value highly, and the dance is strongly tied up with Ntwumuru social identity and with Krachi religious identity. In contrast to this, Tigari is the least important because (i) it is an imported dance, (ii) it is connected with the figure of the Odunsini (lit., the root-man) and not with the religious hierarchy and (iii) Tigari is a special cult to which only a few Krachi belong. Moreover, its powers or its attributes are man-made in contrast to those associated with Boame, which is connected with a lesser divinity. The Abafo is not so important as it once was because this dance is a hunter's dance and the men hunt less today than they have done in the past.

The basis for these generalizations lies in the self-definitions of this people and in a constellation of roles, rules and meanings which define the place of men and women in the universe as they see it. Krachi reality is neither 'empiricist', 'idealist', nor can any other such term be legitimately applied. Krachi reality generates its own space/time and terminology, as does any world-structure, and in the Appendix to the 'tradition' article, part of this reality is sketched out in terms of seven person categories:

| Hierarchy connected with divinities (Ikisi) | | | | | Outside Hierarchy | |
|--|------------------|------|---------|----------|-------------------|-------|
| Dente- okisipo | Other Ikisipo | Ojya | Osuamfo | Okurafe' | Odunsini | Ɔkpe' |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

These words are, except in the cases of 4 and 6, Krachi words; numbers 4 and 6 are Twi, i.e. Akan language terms. If one were to travel to Ketekrachi now, one could ask to 'see' or 'meet' any of the above named people, and doubtless be conducted to their presence. That is, with the exception of number 7, the Ɔkpe, because this term defines one who possesses 'kékpé', i.e. an evil, destructive spirit.

None of the above person categories can be accurately defined without reference to the others. Meanings here are relational; that is, the terms map a certain conceptual territory, even though they also refer to real human beings who are known by the terms. We might usefully recall the Saussurian observation about the various pieces in a chess set: none have any meaning on their own, isolated from the rest of the set.

We will only briefly look at two of the categories so that we might grasp something of the relational character of the meanings and to further illustrate the changes in thinking experienced by the author which led, ultimately, to a transformation of what is sometimes referred to as a 'world-view'.

Ojya and Odunsini

The dances Boame and Tigari are associated with the persons of the Ojya and Odunsini and with their conceptual definitions. The outstanding characteristics of the Ojya, who can be either male or female, is that the role occupied in the religious hierarchy can only be acquired through possession by a divinity. In West Africa, someone may say, 'we have come to watch the gods dance' if they are asked about their presence at, say, an annual festival of some kind. The basis for such a statement lies in person categories such as that of Ojya. The dances in which trance occurs are called 'Njakoé' in Krachi, i.e. 'nja' = the person who is in trance, the Ojya; and 'akoé' = 'dance'. The dance to which I refer is thus properly called 'Njakoé Boame'; the trance dance of the Ojya of Boame. Similarly, one could say, 'Njakoé Yentumi'. Notice that on the attached chart, the Ojya is the only person defined by possession of a divinity. Read vertically, the chart is a brief, but fair definition of the person category as given by Krachi. Read horizontally, the chart is a concession to the propensity towards comparison characteristic of our own thinking. The Ojya, you will see, is the assistant to the Okisipo for the divinity and ranks third in the hierarchy. In Krachi, if the Okisi (a divinity) is a creation of Dente (as in Yentumi, known as one of the 'sons' of Dente), then both Yentumi's Okisipo and Ojya will be subject to the Denteokisipo, but they will not be assistants to the Denteokisipo, because Dente possesses no one, has no articles such as drums, bracelets, etc. which represent him, thus he requires no Ojya and no one to 'carry' (the meaning of Osuamfo) the shrine articles which represent him.

Anything which an Ojya does, directs, prescribes, or anything else, is done while in a trance state. It is through the Ojya that the divinity tells the people what is wanted by way of rituals, dances, carvings and all the rest. When an Ojya is in trance, according to the elders at Dadekro, it means that it is not the person's ordinary 'persona' or 'self' which is in ascendance or control. The Okisi takes possession of the Ojya's sunsum, and for the duration of the time of the trance, it is as if the Okisi were using the individual's body in order to manifest himself (or herself, for there are female divinities too) to the people.

Briefly, in order to comprehend the above statement, the Krachi man has three aspects which together make up his total 'self'. These are the **Okra**, the Sunsum and the Nyenkpsa. A Krachi woman has four

components: the above-named three, which she shares with the man, and a fourth called 'Kokoé', which distinguishes her unique power to bear children; 'to bring forth', as they say. The ordinary aspect of a person -- what we usually see, listen to, etc. -- is the Nyenkpasa, defined in the following way:

- (i) Nyenkpasa is the (mental) picture which you may have of another person,
- (ii) it is the Nyenkpasa which you remember about another person and it is Wuruboale's gift to that person (lit., 'wuru' = 'lord'; 'boale' = who made us).
- (iii) It is the general term used for all human beings.

The Nyenkpasa is the sum of the acquired characteristics of a person, including the mannerisms of speech and gesture, the shape of the body and face, etc. It dies at the same time the physical body dies, so I was told, but the ɔkra returns to Wuruboale and can come to earth again as another person.

Wuruboale has both 'good' and 'bad' Akra (plural of ɔkra). The old people used to say that there are certain periods during the day and night when a man and woman should not have sex, because during these times, there are bad Akra moving about who wish to come to earth as people. In the traditional belief the ɔkra enters the human being at the moment conception takes place. The ɔkra was defined as 'a little piece of Wuruboale in each person'.

The Sunsum amounts to 'the breath of Wuruboale' in people. There are many different kinds of sunsums; all the divinities have (or are) one, and so does Kisimen (explained later). Kékpé (an evil, destructive force) also has (or is) one. Just about anything which moves, or which lives has a sunsum. Sunsum is a major classificatory term for life as distinct from non-life. All persons have a sunsum and some are more powerful than others. When the body dies, the sunsum leaves the body, but it does not die. It is the sunsum of the ancestor which is invoked when, for instance, a libation is poured at an ancestral stool shrine.

During the Ojya's state of possession, the Nyenkpasa recedes; becomes, as it were, the out-of-focus background of the sunsum, for the divinity possesses the sunsum of the person. The ɔkra is not in any way involved in the possession. A real Ojya does not take any drink for example, because drink can affect the sunsum, and one would not want to be an inadequate vehicle for the divinity. Contrary to many opinions which attribute states of possession or trance to hysteria, drunkenness or drugs, the trance states of the Ojya are heightened states of awareness which are not induced by these kinds of external means. Extraordinary feats of physical prowess, balance and control are performed by Ojyas whom I have seen in trance; feats which by no means could be accomplished if they did not have perfect neuromuscular control, and no drug addict, hysteric or drunk has this.

When asked if anyone at all could be possessed, I was told that there are some people who cannot be. I, for example, was one of these. The reason given is that there are some people whose sunsum is so strong that possession cannot take place. Also, it is necessary for the Okisi to ask the person's sunsum before possessing them. It is at this point that the sunsum can refuse, and there is simply an end to the matter.

In contrast to the Ojya, the Odunsini is the only person out of the seven listed who maintains his title or who holds his position through personal volition. 'Odunsini' thus defines a profession; an occupation by which a man or woman can make a living. The term is potentially a confusing one for most westerners, for there are three distinct types of Odunsini in Krachi, and sometimes the same person will combine features of more than one of the categories designated by the term at the same time. An Odunsini can be

1. an herbalist; one who knows the healing properties of herbs, roots, etc.; who has learned the native pharmacopoeia, or
2. a nurse, a midwife, or a physician who administers or practises western medicine (note how foreigners are assimilated into the traditional lexicon), or
3. the creator and/or owner of Kisimen. Kisimen is a powerful object, man-made and man-owned from which power is derived with which to manipulate the world in some way.

Both the terms Odunsini and Kisimen have great density of meanings. Odunsini number 3, as listed above, always has Kisimen. This requires three elements: (i) an object, and theoretically, it can be any object, (ii) some herbs and (iii) the blood of a goat, sheep, or, usually, a chicken. These elements symbolically represent the 'power' or 'force' of whatever part of the natural human world from which they came. For example, if the object used for the Kisimen is a piece of rock from a certain hillside or cliff, the piece of rock will symbolically carry the strength of that hill or cliff. In other words, the piece of rock represents what the hill represents on the conceptual map of the territory. Plants and the vegetable world have a different kind of power and blood, of course, represents the life force itself.

The major difference between Ojya and Odunsini is fairly easy to see, even in the abbreviated account given above: the Ojya is acted upon by a divinity, one of many, all of which can ultimately be traced back to Wuruboale, hence the Ojya represents people in a universe of powers or forces (or what you will), some of which are of a higher nature having fewer limitations than human beings. The Odunsini, on the other hand, uses bits of the world and its forces to create power with which to act upon the world, and thus represents a certain ambivalence in human beings, because sometimes Kisimen can be protective and constructive to the human community, but in more cases, it is not. In fact, the latter is often expressed spatially in that the owner of Kisimen will frequently live 'in the bush', i.e. in nature, separated from the human community, although not too far away.

The distinction was made very clear when the elders said, "If a Kisimen is destroyed, then whatever power it contains is also destroyed and another one has to be made. But if, for example, the brass basin which represents Boame is destroyed, or the stool which represents Yentumi is destroyed, then neither Boame nor Yentumi is destroyed, because the power of Yentumi and Boame is not the stool or basin". The distinction between divinities and Kisimen is also made in these ways: Kisimen can be bought, sold, transferred, created or destroyed by people. The Kisimen created by an Odunsini has nothing to do with the divinities. Thus, when we see the dance, Njakoé Boame, and then we see the dance Tigari, done by an Odunsini, we may well ask, in what ways and in how far can we say we are seeing the same things?

The Written Accounts

I have indulged in this rather lengthy exposition of ethnographic detail to underline the kinds of insights to which I drew the reader's attention initially, and perhaps a summary is now in order. I began by stressing the transition made from amateur to professional anthropologist, which included a dawning awareness of the difficulties of making verbal reports of the kind Pocock suggests and an awareness of the general problems of language. The six essays written before 1971 document the process of grappling with fieldwork problems with inadequate, incomplete knowledges of many kinds on the part of their author. By the time 'Dance and Krachi Tradition' was written, I had, if nothing else, abandoned the notion that dances could be studied in isolation, or that they could in any way, as it were, 'stand on their own'. Moreover, I had to make up my own mind about (i) what the 'facts' of movement were, and (ii) what the relation of these were to myself and to the material I was trying to explain. I did not want to believe that the reports I made about dances, or any structured action systems in a society, were of the same genre as letters written home by a tourist.

It is from a basis of these insights that the question, 'in what ways and in how far can we say we are seeing the same things' is relevant. It is relevant when we consider two dances from the same geographical area in Ghana. It becomes even more relevant if we consider a cross-cultural comparison of, say, Ghanaian dances with other dance forms from different societies which possess different spoken and body languages. For me, the question encodes the changes in thinking which occurred to me between the years 1967 and 1970. The 'Dance and Krachi Tradition' article is very different indeed from the ones which preceded it. It even begins with a crude attempt to tackle the language problem in a section entitled 'The Problems of Terminology'. There are many changes I would make in it were I to re-write it and it is the only one of the pre-anthropology essays I would consider re-writing because in it are the seeds of the approach I would advocate now. I find it necessary to emphasize this because I have been dismayed to find that these articles are quoted by other authors, and I am continually perplexed about what to say when enthusiastic students or colleagues ask me where they might obtain reprints of them.

Perhaps it is needless to say that one does try to explain to them (i) that these articles were written at a specific time, under specific circumstances and (ii) if they would qualify the statements I made, keeping the historical perspectives in mind -- both mine and theirs -- or if they would be critical of the statements or question them in any way, then their usage of them might be mutually beneficial. However, one discovers that this is usually not the case. Instead, one finds one's works cited in bibliographies (as e.g. in the Dance Perspectives publication of Odette Blum's work on Ghana, which has at the very least all the faults of my own pre-anthropological work) without one being consulted and with no indication in the text to which the essays are attached, so that one does not know why one's work was listed in the first place. Or, one is asked for a 'research model', or told that somebody is going to take a five or ten-week course in 'African' dance (whatever that may be) and the articles are needed for 'reference material'.

Mercifully, most of the essays I have spoken about are nearly impossible to get hold of. I say this, not because they do not contain some valuable information, because they do. The trouble is that this information is, so to speak, wrapped up in packages which are incomplete, untidy and in some cases, just dead wrong. The process of extracting the contents from the wrappings would amount to a tedious process and I daresay that few if any students would care to undertake it. A concrete example might be helpful: in the 'environment' article, the bits about the forms of the Kobiné dance are, I think, fairly dependable but the comments about 'wholeness' being a value to this people are not to be taken seriously. Here, I imposed my own personal set of values onto the dance. I have absolutely no ideawhether 'wholeness' is a value in Lobi society: maybe it is and maybe it is not, but I would regret having unintentionally, through my unconsciousness, misled students who might quote such statements in good faith. In fact, the purpose for doing this exercise in applied personal anthropology has been to prevent, if I can, just such occurrences, which are a potential embarrassment both to students, colleagues, and to me.

I would not have engaged in this critique of my own writing if I believed it to be vulgar self-criticism or that I was peculiar in some way. An exercise of this kind is, to say the least, tedious, but I have publicly criticised the work of several colleagues; notably those who advocate statistical models, functional or Behavioural explanations of human actions and who insist (or so it seems to me) upon treating dance and human actions as 'instinctive behaviours' of some kind, rather than treating such material as linguistically oriented subjects. It seemed appropriate therefore to share the insights I have gained, for when I wrote the articles under discussion in the present essay, I had no idea what a 'statistical model' amounted to and I see no reason to believe that other dance researchers know any more than I did about these models or what their usage might mean. When I used the word 'function', as I used it several times in the essay on the Bedu dance, I had no idea that, to a sophisticated audience,

I committed myself to an entire school of thought, which comes complete with definitions of human beings, of what they are about, of the relative importance of their various activities and so on.

What, then, do we mean?

I have in front of me now an essay which I am asked to comment upon for publication. It is a fairly good essay, rather better written than most, by someone who obviously has excellent intentions and who is doing her best to say something about a West African people whose religion and beliefs are living, vibrant and real -- as her own probably are not. The author has tried very hard (and her efforts are plain to see) to be as faithful to her research and the people about whom she writes as she can, yet, the essay is sprinkled -- as with a pepper shaker -- with terms like 'dichotomy', 'kinetic', 'standardized', 'dutifully', 'deified', 'mythical' and many more. One's eyes, and mind, are irritated -- as by pepper -- with these terms. How would they translate, if indeed, they would at all, into the spoken language of the people concerned? Are they terms that most faithfully represent the space/time concepts they have? As with my own pre-anthropology essays, I have the curious experience, reading this writer's work, that sometimes I get rather large glimpses of 'them', but on the whole, I seem to see more of 'us', especially 'her', and it is this split, this severance, which is so worrying. Yet, I think I understand exactly why it is there and the essential elements of the author's dilemmas, for many of them are exactly the same as my own were in the past.

While I will endorse the publication of her work, I wonder how this author would characterize her relation with the society she writes about or the relation between herself and her own society? I wonder how many of her statements were made with universal intent,

...such that they are believed to be true of all selves in all societies (Pocock: 1973:13.3).

And one wonders, too, how many dance specialists, dance researchers, dance therapists, dance anthropologists and all the rest have committed themselves to the fullest extent possible to the implications for themselves and humanity of the views, theories and research models they advocate?

I would above all hope that these remarks will be received in the spirit in which they are offered: one which is rooted in deep concern for the future of dance ethnography, but which sees the specific problems of dance as a small part of a much wider contextual field; namely, the field of human actions in general, with all the richness and diversity of human structured systems of meaningful actions. Dancing is only one of the many forms of expression of human structured systems of actions. It is true that it is a potent form, because dances are among the most complex systems of actions, but the field

of dance per se is limited, as everything else is limited. While the battle to be heard may have been fought over the dance, and while the personal anthropologies of many of us are dominated by our experiences with the dance, we would be foolish if we failed to see the wider applications of our work. Perhaps my major argument is already clear: it is simply that we take so much for granted and we assume so much. These are dangerous attitudes to entertain when a field of research is so new and when so many basic questions remain unanswered chiefly because they remain unexamined, while the field ethnographies seem to proliferate.

We know very little about the relations of human movement to spoken languages, for example, and it is doubtful whether we understand why it is that gestures, no less than spoken words, are arbitrary, to use the Saussurian term (1966:67f). Different ethnicities have generated different values for the dimensions of right/left, up/down, front/back, inside/outside, to choose obvious instances of the conceptual fields in which dances (or any human actions) take place. These contrary oppositions do not mean the same things cross-culturally. No amount of ethnographies based upon naive assumptions of universality of movement is going to make them mean the same things. Of course, if we take the position that ultimately, these dance ethnographies are more properly looked upon as new additions to current ethological research, and that in any case, human dances are simply more complex manifestations of the same kinds of spatial organization displayed by birds and animals, then all the effort will doubtless 'prove' the universality of movement -- but from what and from whose point of view? I have protested against the tendency among dance researchers to leave all of 'the hard stuff', i.e. the theoretical frameworks in which their material is expressed, to someone else, and I will continue to do so, even if all the protests amount to is a cry in the wilderness, and here, I think, is where one of Pocock's main arguments and my position truly meet. He suggests careful examination of written texts, and he says,

I suppose there is one guiding assumption in the enquiry and that is that nothing is irrelevant to it. The use of this adjective rather than that, or the lack of adjectives is to be taken as significant...approach the text with the rule that every usage, turn of phrase, or cliché must be shown to be irrelevant before it can be discounted. Again, because this sort of analysis is time-consuming and tedious, this is a counsel of perfection (1973:8.4).

His remarks are equally applicable to one's own writing as they are to the writing of others.

Whether we like it or not, those of us who deal with so-called 'non-verbal' materials are faced at the outset with major problems of translation, transcription and transliteration; that of a space/time system, whether it is a dance, a rite, a ceremony, a system of greetings or what you will, into spoken, and more accurately, into

written language. We are all well aware that space/time systems occupy geographical spaces which are at once, (i) physical, (ii) social, (iii) semantic, (iv) conceptual. We must use written language to communicate to others about the system, as we use spoken language to express the system, but we also know that spoken or written language introduces other things into the system. As Ardener has pointed out, conventional language intrudes itself into the system (1975), and it is simply a nonsense to imagine that it does not.

"But", an uncharitable critic might say, "no one imagines that"; to which I would reply ('non-verbally' or 'paralinguistically' or whatever the current term may be) by silently pointing to our extant literature, including my own pre-anthropology essays. Such evidence is as overwhelming as it is undeniable. If some of my own experiences with these more intractable elements of the anthropology of dance are anything to go on with, I would want to say that I do not think I am unique in having taken 'language', and the whole idea of what language is, completely for granted in the past. In fact, until I lived in Ghana, language to me was a rather tasteless, colourless, odourless medium, much like water must be to a fish. And, like a fish, I only became aware of it when I was either deprived of it or when I found myself enslaved by it, as I was every time I sat down to write.

Conclusion

As I would now be prepared to defend the position that anthropology is a language-based science, I would also be prepared to say that, to me, all human 'culture' is a kind of language -- or 'linguaging' process, if you will, and there are two primary systems of human communication: speaking and moving. The latter is a human semiotic system of great logical complexity, no less than the former. Systems of human actions are kinds of languages too: they can be notated, they possess syntax, grammars and all the rest. They are reflexive, referential and relational. They structure space. Their 'vocabularies' and the degrees of freedom of their executants' bodies may be more or less articulate.

An immobile person is to a semantic space with regard to actions as a vocally inarticulate or impaired person is to a linguistic 'space'. The problems of translation, therefore, are much more complex than we have imagined in the past. If we can adopt the position that language-using is, among other things, a process of ordering our experiences, of structuring experience so that it is comprehensible to ourselves and to others, then we are in no difficulty at all with such notions as body languages. In fact, human beings express their world-structures through their body languages as much as they do with spoken languages. The two are inseparable, for human actions are indissolubly tied to the human capacity for language-use.

It is very, very difficult to visualize a location or an action in a complex, multi-dimensional space. A human dance is a very complex space indeed. This is what makes dances so important to any enquiry into human actions. Often, however, 'common' spoken language or 'ordinary' speech is not sufficiently sophisticated to express all the relational elements of that space. Here, we encounter an issue about which some have thought that Pocock and I might disagree: I have used the term 'meta-language', which implies that I regard the study of anthropology as (i) a way of acquiring a 'conceptual tool-bag', and (ii) as an 'emergence out of darkness into light'. I readily admit to using some 'high-powered' terminologies (as they are called): some of them come from linguistics, and some of my analytical language and notation consists of group and set theory: branches of non-metric mathematics. I also use the Laban system of movement notation as another element of the meta-language to which I referred. I justify the usage of these on the grounds of the complexity of the human semasiological body and the multi-dimensional spaces in which it moves. The nature of action material itself demands additional kinds of notations.

Second, I emphasized the transition from amateur to professional anthropologist at the outset and while I do in some sense conceive of the transition as analogous to 'an emergence out of darkness into light', I by no means look upon the history of social anthropology as that kind of emergence, thus I would want to say that while I might agree that '...anthropology is its history', I view that history (as I suppose I view everything else) as a multi-dimensional continuum wherein one always has a choice, so to speak, of different conceptual levels available to one at any given time.

As a rather trivial example of what I am trying to say, we might imagine a student in the past -- one who was genuinely interacting with the anthropologies of received authorities -- to have had a choice between, say, Hocart's or Rivers' views on kinship, insofar as they can be represented as two different conceptual frameworks from which to approach that very complicated subject. The notion of levels applies in this case, as it does with any aspect of our subject. At any time in the history of a discipline, there seem to be more and less sophisticated notions available about definition, analysis, method, etc. Some of these are advocated by more people, some by less. Certain kinds of theory and practice are favoured for a while, then replaced by others, which in their turn may be discredited, or shown to be inadequate while an older theory may be revived. In sum, I would wish to draw attention to the vertical dimension in history, if such an image can be allowed, and I would describe a passage from 'darkness' to 'light' more in terms of a 'quantum jump' rather than as an 'emergence'.

In any case, I share Pocock's beliefs in the value of consciousness, whether history is viewed in one, two, three or more dimensions, and I certainly agree that our consciousness is predicated on vast areas of knowledge, experience and belief of which we are unaware. As I have

tried to indicate in this essay, one's understanding is undeniably a relationship and it is contingent upon what one does not understand. This essay by no means exhausts the subject of the idea of a personal anthropology, indeed, it is hardly more than an initial foray into the subject, but I have so far lived with the idea to my great benefit, and I hope to the benefit of others as well.

Drid Williams

NOTES

1. The reader will notice a distinction, made throughout the essay with regard to the word 'behaviour' and its derivatives. When a high-case 'B' is used, the term is meant to refer to a school of thought in the natural and social sciences, i.e. 'Behaviourism'. Otherwise, the common usage is indicated. Further to the point of usage, it seems necessary to say that the style of punctuation, spelling and expression used in this paper are integral elements of the personal anthropology of the paper. The responsibility for the style is, therefore, entirely mine.
2. When this essay was first completed in July, 1975, it was intended to be read following a reading of David Pocock's paper (see bibliography). It became unnecessary to publish Prof. Pocock's paper, as there is now a book available which develops the idea of a personal anthropology in considerable detail which is entitled Understanding Social Anthropology, Hodder and Stoughton, St. Paul's House, Warwick Lane, London, EC4P 4AH.
3. I have chosen to refrain from including this list of articles in the bibliography because I wish to avoid possible inferences that an exercise in public criticism of my own pre-anthropological work hides a motive to encourage people to read those articles. No writer can control the use another might make of his or her ideas, but I would regret it if Pocock's ideas were misunderstood or trivialized through my attempts to apply them.
4. This quote is from a public communication in lectures, not from a book.
5. For a more complete definition of this term, see paragraph three under the sub-heading 'Conclusion'.
6. This section of the essay, while somewhat tedious, aims in a small way to indicate some of the kinds of information which are needed with reference to the translation of person categories from one culture to another. Such careful explanation of person categories can off-set, to some extent, a heavy-handed imposition of the ethnographer's own classifications and categories.

7. The chart (see Appendix) of the person categories of the Krachi religious and non-religious hierarchy in its original version is greatly extended. Space prevents inclusion of more detail here, yet there are enough points listed to serve the present purpose of this writing, which is to demonstrate the relational character of the meanings involved. Notice the derivation of semantic values, for example, from Wuruboale, who creates both 'good' and 'evil'.

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Appendix: Role/Rule Relations in Krachi
Traditional Religion.

APPENDIX: ROLE/RULE RELATIONS IN KRACHI TRADITIONAL RELIGION

| | Twi: Denteobosomfo Kr: <u>Denteokisipo</u> | Obosomfo <u>Okisipo</u> | Okomfo <u>Ojya</u> |
|--------------------|--|--|--|
| Role: | In religious matters is supreme over everyone in Krachi state. Holds special position in secular matters; is second to Krachiwuru. | Is the local head of the cult of one particular Okisi; is not involved (in office) in political affairs; is the local head of the Okisi's shrine. | Completely subject to Okisi, and is assistant to Okisipo. Is subject to authority of Denteokisipo if his/her Okisi was created by Dente. |
| Role transmission: | 1.Always taken from Dentewiaie clan. 2.Most senior male by age. 3.Must be clan member by ancestry, not by slavery. 4.Line can succeed through father or mother. | Both people of cult and Okisi must select or 'elect' him and he must agree; thus 3-party agreement. It could happen that he has to be member of dominant clan, but other would still hold. | Can only become Ojya (either male or female) through direct possession by the divinity. |
| Rules: | Physical reasons for disqualification: 1.More or less than 5 toes or fingers; 2.Leprosy; 3.Any history of imprisonment; 4.Insanity; 5.Circumcision. | Same as Denteokisipo. | Same. |
| Physical healing: | Does no physical healing of any kind. | Same as Denteokisipo | Does give prescriptions for all manner of ills, but these are by directions of the Okisi and given to the Ojya while in trance. |
| Semantic values: | Dente was created by Wuruboale (the lord who created us), therefore Dente's power is derived from Wuruboale. | Some Okisi were created by Dente, e.g. Yentumi (at request of the people); thus an Okisi's power is ultimately derived from Wuruboale. | Through extension, his power also derives from Wuruboale. |
| Economic Gains: | There is no remuneration for the role itself, so living is made otherwise. Traditionally, money gifts were made to the Dente shrine of the smallest possible denomination. If other gifts were brought, these were, together with the money, shared out to needy people. | This role is not an 'occupation' like the previous ones. If the shrine receives gifts, the same thing happens as in previous case. | This role is not an occupation, but the Ojya can receive free gifts. Money gifts are given to poor, along with other shrine offerings. |

| Osuafo <u>No Krachi Name</u> | No Twi name <u>Okarufé</u> | Odunsini <u>No Krachi Name</u> | Obayi <u>Okpé</u> |
|---|--|--|--|
| 'Osua' means carrier. Office is to carry objects which represent the divinity. Also acts as messenger for Ojya and Okisipo. | Assistant to Denteokisipo; only connected with Dente cult. There are several Akurafé; the term means 'holder of herbs'. | Means 'the root-man'; there are 3 categories of Odunsini: 1.an herbalist or native doctor; 2.a mid-wife; 3.a maker of Kisimen. | One who has kékpé, i.e. an evil destructive spirit. |
| Selected through election by community led by Okisipo and the Ojya. After election must be approved by Denta. | Selected through direct inheritance or by father choosing one of the sons. The position is obligatory and cannot be refused. | Becomes Odunsini through personal volition (may be either male or female). Undertaken as a life profession. | 1.(Rare) can become through own choice, i.e. through seeking for spirit; 2.Can have spirit put into individual without their knowledge; 3.Can be transferred through food or money; 4.A child can have kékpé put into him/her while still in womb. |
| Same. | Same. | No physical restrictions, but leprosy or insanity would be obvious deterrents. | None. |
| If Ojya is absent, then this may be taken over by Osuafo under direction of the Okisipo. Some Osuafo do private healing, but it is not part of official duty. | He will give medicines for common maladies, for which Dente has prescribed something. | No. 1 is equivalent to a doctor. These prescriptions are given on the basis of knowledge of the native pharmacopoeia. None of it comes from a divinity. No. 3 may be an herbalist. | None whatever. |
| Same as Ojya | Same as previous ones. | Nos. 1 and 2: their power comes from knowledge of herbs, etc. No. 3: power derives from object itself; from the amalgamation of elements of blood, object and herbs. | Power created by Wuruboale, who created both good and evil. "if there were no evil, then people would not understand what good is". |
| Same as Ojya. | Same as Ojya. | This role represents a full-time occupation and is how the person makes a living. | No economic value. |