

theoreticians of modern science and is more characteristic of the last century.

The scientific attitudes which, in its earlier stages, were invaluable in bringing precision to social anthropology, in making it a discipline, bring with them questionable assumptions which hamper profitable discussion by ruling certain vital aspects of social life out of court.

Various anthropologists, chiefly in America, have been advancing doubts on this subject but Professor Evans-Pritchard's position is distinctive in that it is quite firmly related to the tradition of anthropology in this country which owes its form to the consistent guidance of Radcliffe-Browne, over a period of thirty years. It cannot be seen as a break-away but as a readjustment. While he recognizes societies as systems, he refuses to see them as natural systems:

'One has a right, I think, to ask those who assert that the aim of social anthropology is to formulate sociological laws similar to the laws formulated by natural scientists to produce formulations which resemble what are called laws in these sciences. Up to the present nothing . . . has been adduced—only rather naïve deterministic, teleological, and pragmatic assertions'. (p. 57).

In his opinion, societies are moral or symbolic systems to be studied ideally through time. Their history is essential to a proper understanding of them, and it is this understanding which is, after all, the purpose of social anthropology.

To many readers these propositions may seem obvious. It may seem strange that a view of social anthropology as a natural science was ever considered a profitable one. The present disagreement is rendered intelligible by the history of thought in the last century and in turn throws light on the strange infatuations of that era. The spirit of usurpation and arrogance which inspired what should be distinct sciences is typified by the thought of Comte and it is to him that sociology owes its name. In this sphere the word 'science' (in the sense that philosophy is a science) has lost its meaning; it can only be reclaimed when its connection with particular and slightly outmoded notions has been severed.

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CORRECTION: In the review of W. H. Clemen's *The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery* (*Scrutiny*, Vol. XVIII, No. 3) there was a reference to an essay on *Coriolanus* by Mr. Wilson Knight in *The Wheel of Fire*. The essay appears, of course, in *The Imperial Theme*. [By an oversight this correction was omitted from the last issue.]