

Purity and Danger

In pursuing a last-ditch reduction of all behaviour to the personal preoccupations of individuals with their own bodies the psychologists are merely sticking to their last.

The derisive remark was once made against psychoanalysis that the unconscious sees a penis in every convex object and a vagina or anus in every concave one. I find that this sentence well characterises the facts.

(Ferenczi, *Sex in Psychoanalysis*, p. 227, quoted by Brown)

It is the duty of every craftsman to stick to his last. The sociologists have the duty of meeting one kind of reductionism with their own. Just as it is true that everything symbolises the body, so it is equally true (and all the more so for that reason) that the body symbolises everything else. Out of this symbolism, which in fold upon fold of interior meaning leads back to the experience of the self with its body, the sociologist is justified in trying to work in the other direction to draw out some layers of insight about the self's experience in society.

If anal eroticism is expressed at the cultural level we are not entitled to expect a population of anal erotics. We must look around for whatever it is that has made appropriate any cultural analogy with anal eroticism. The procedure in a modest way is like Freud's analysis of jokes. Trying to find a connection between the verbal form and the amusement derived from it he laboriously reduced joke interpretation to a few general rules. No comedian script-writer could use the rules for inventing jokes, but they help us to see some connections between laughter, the unconscious, and the structure of stories. The analogy is fair for pollution is like an inverted form of humour. It is not a joke for it does not amuse. But the structure of its symbolism uses comparison and double meaning like the structure of a joke.

Four kinds of social pollution seem worth distinguishing. The first is danger pressing on external boundaries; the second, danger from transgressing the internal lines of the system; the third, danger in the margins of the lines. The fourth is danger from internal contradiction, when some of the basic postulates are denied by other basic postulates, so that at certain points the system seems to be at war with itself. In this chapter I show how the symbolism of the body's boundaries is used in this kind of unfunny wit to express danger to community boundaries.

The ritual life of the Coorgs (Srinivas) gives the impression

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of a people obsessed by the fear of dangerous impurities entering their system. They treat the body as if it were a beleaguered town, every ingress and exit guarded for spies and traitors. Anything issuing from the body is never to be re-admitted, but strictly avoided. The most dangerous pollution is for anything which has once emerged gaining re-entry. A little myth, trivial by other standards, justifies so much of their behaviour and system of thought that the ethnographer has to refer to it three or four times. A Goddess in every trial of strength or cunning defeated her two brothers. Since future precedence depended on the outcome of these contests, they decided to defeat her by a ruse. She was tricked into taking out of her mouth the betel that she was chewing to see if it was redder than theirs and into popping it back again. Once she had realised she had eaten something which had once been in her own mouth and was therefore defiled by saliva, though she wept and bewailed she accepted the full justice of her downfall. The mistake cancelled all her previous victories, and her brothers' eternal precedence over her was established as of right.

X The Coorgs have a place within the system of Hindoo castes. There is good reason to regard them as not exceptional or aberrant in Hindoo India (Dumont and Pocock). Therefore they conceive status in terms of purity and impurity as these ideas are applied throughout the regime of castes. The lowest castes are the most impure and it is they whose humble services enable the higher castes to be free of bodily impurities. They wash clothes, cut hair, dress corpses and so on. The whole system represents a body in which by the division of labour the head does the thinking and praying and the most despised parts carry away waste matter. Each sub-caste community in a local region is conscious of its relative standing in the scale of purity. Seen from ego's position the system of caste purity is structured upwards. Those above him are more pure. All the positions below him, be they ever so intricately distinguished in relation to one another, are to him polluting. Thus for any ego within the system the threatening non-structure against which barriers must be erected lies below. The sad wit of pollution as it comments on bodily functions symbolises descent in the caste structure by contact with faeces, blood and corpses.

The Coorgs shared with other castes this fear of what is outside and below. But living in their mountain fastness they

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were also an isolated community, having only occasional and controllable contact with the world around. For them the model of the exits and entrances of the human body is a doubly apt symbolic focus of fears for their minority standing in the larger society. Here I am suggesting that when rituals express anxiety about the body's orifices the sociological counterpart of this anxiety is a care to protect the political and cultural unity of a minority group. The Israelites were always in their history a hard-pressed minority. In their beliefs all the bodily issues were polluting, blood, pus, excreta, semen, etc. The threatened boundaries of their body politic would be well mirrored in their care for the integrity, unity and purity of the physical body.

The Hindoo caste system, while embracing all minorities, embraces them each as a distinctive, cultural sub-unit. In any given locality, any sub-caste is likely to be a minority. The purer and higher its caste status, the more of a minority it must be. Therefore the revulsion from touching corpses and excreta does not merely express the order of caste in the system as a whole. The anxiety about bodily margins expresses danger to group survival.

That the sociological approach to caste pollution is much more convincing than a psychoanalytic approach is clear when we consider what the Indian's private attitudes to defecation are. In the ritual we know that to touch excrement is to be defiled and that the latrine cleaners stand in the lowest grade of the caste hierarchy. If this pollution rule expressed individual anxieties we would expect Hindoos to be controlled and secretive about the act of defecation. It comes as a considerable shock to read that slack disregard is their normal attitude, to such an extent that pavements, verandahs and public places are littered with faeces until the sweeper comes along.

'Indians defecate everywhere. They defecate, mostly beside the railway tracks. But they also defecate on the beaches; they defecate on the streets; they never look for cover. . . . These squatting figures—to the visitor, after a time, as eternal and emblematic as Rodin's Thinker—are never spoken of; they are never written about; they are not mentioned in novels or stories; they do not appear in feature films or documentaries. This might be regarded as part of a permissible prettifying intention. But the truth is that Indians do not see these squatters and might even, with complete sincerity, deny that they exist.'

(Naipaul, chapter 3)

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Rather than oral or anal eroticism it is more convincing to argue that caste pollution represents only what it claims to be. It is a symbolic system, based on the image of the body, whose primary concern is the ordering of a social hierarchy.

It is worth using the Indian example to ask why saliva and genital excretions are more pollution-worthy than tears. If I can fervently drink his tears, wrote Jean Genêt, why not the so limpid drop on the end of his nose? To this we can reply: first that nasal secretions are not so limpid as tears. They are more like treacle than water. When a thick rheum oozes from the eye it is no more apt for poetry than nasal rheum. But admittedly clear, fast-running tears are the stuff of romantic poetry: they do not defile. This is partly because tears are naturally preempted by the symbolism of washing. Tears are like rivers of moving water. They purify, cleanse, bathe the eyes, so how can they pollute? But more significantly tears are not related to the bodily functions of digestion or procreation. Therefore their scope for symbolising social relations and social processes is narrower. This is evident when we reflect on caste structure. Since place in the hierarchy of purity is biologically transmitted, sexual behaviour is important for preserving the purity of caste. For this reason, in higher castes, boundary pollution focusses particularly on sexuality. The caste membership of an individual is determined by his mother, for though she may have married into a higher caste, her children take their caste from her. Therefore women are the gates of entry to the caste. Female purity is carefully guarded and a woman who is known to have had sexual intercourse with a man of lower caste is brutally punished. Male sexual purity does not carry this responsibility. Hence male promiscuity is a lighter matter. A mere ritual bath is enough to cleanse a man from sexual contact with a low caste woman. But his sexuality does not entirely escape the burden of worry which boundary pollution attaches to the body. According to Hindoo belief a sacred quality inheres in semen, which should not be wasted. In a penetrating essay on female purity in India (1963) Yalman says:

'While caste purity must be protected in women and men may be allowed much greater freedom, it is, of course, better for the men not to waste the sacred quality contained in their semen. It is well-known that they are exhorted not merely to avoid low-caste women, but all women (Carstairs 1956, 1957;

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Gough 1956). For the loss of semen is the loss of this potent stuff . . . it is best never to sleep with women at all.'

Both male and female physiology lend themselves to the analogy with the vessel which must not pour away or dilute its vital fluids. Females are correctly seen as, literally, the entry by which the pure content may be adulterated. Males are treated as pores through which the precious stuff may ooze out and be lost, the whole system being thereby enfeebled.

A double moral standard is often applied to sexual offences. In a patrilineal system of descent wives are the door of entry to the group. In this they hold a place analogous to that of sisters in the Hindoo caste. Through the adultery of a wife impure blood is introduced to the lineage. So the symbolism of the imperfect vessel appropriately weighs more heavily on the women than on the men.

If we treat ritual protection of bodily orifices as a symbol of social preoccupations about exits and entrances, the purity of cooked food becomes important. I quote a passage on the capacity of cooked food to be polluted and to carry pollution (in an unsigned review article on Pure and Impure, *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, III, July 1959, p. 37)

'When a man uses an object it becomes part of him, participates in him. Then, no doubt, this appropriation is much closer in the case of food, and the point is that appropriation precedes absorption, as it accompanies the cooking. Cooking may be taken to imply a complete appropriation of the food by the household. It is almost as if, before being "internally absorbed" by the individual, food was, by cooking, collectively predigested. One cannot share the food prepared by people without sharing in their nature. This is one aspect of the situation. Another is that cooked food is extremely permeable to pollution.'

This reads like a correct transliteration of Indian pollution symbolism regarding cooked food. But what is gained by proffering a descriptive account as if it were explanatory? In India the cooking process is seen as the beginning of ingestion, and therefore cooking is susceptible to pollution, in the same way as eating. But why is this complex found in India and in parts of Polynesia and in Judaism and other places, but not wherever humans sit down to eat? I suggest that food is not likely to be polluting at all unless the external boundaries of the social sys-

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tem are under pressure. We can go further to explain why the actual cooking of the food in India must be ritually pure. The purity of the castes is correlated with an elaborate hereditary division of labour between castes. The work performed by each caste carries a symbolic load: it says something about the relatively pure status of the caste in question. Some kinds of labour correspond with the excretory functions of the body, for example that of washermen, barbers, sweepers, as we have seen. Some professions are involved with bloodshed or alcoholic liquor, such as tanners, warriors, toddy tappers. So they are low in the scale of purity in so far as their occupations are at variance with Brahminic ideals. But the point at which food is prepared for the table is the point at which the interrelation of the purity structure and the occupational structure needs to be set straight. For food is produced by the combined efforts of several castes of varying degrees of purity: the blacksmith, carpenter, ropemaker, the peasant. Before being admitted to the body some clear symbolic break is needed to express food's separation from necessary but impure contacts. The cooking process, entrusted to pure hands, provides this ritual break. Some such break we would expect to find whenever the production of food is in the hands of the relatively impure.

These are the general lines on which primitive rituals must be related to the social order and the culture in which they are found. The examples I have given are crude, intended to exemplify a broad objection to a certain current treatment of ritual themes. I add one more, even cruder, to underline my point. Much literature has been expended by psychologists on Yurok pollution ideas (Erikson, Posinsky). These North Californian Indians who lived by fishing for salmon in the Klamath river, would seem to have been obsessed by the behaviour of liquids, if their pollution rules can be said to express an obsession. They are careful not to mix good water with bad, not to urinate into rivers, not to mix sea and fresh water, and so on. I insist that these rules cannot imply obsessional neuroses, and they cannot be interpreted unless the fluid formlessness of their highly competitive social life be taken into account (Dubois).

To sum up. There is unquestionably a relation between individual preoccupations and primitive ritual. But the relation is not the simple one which some psychoanalysts have assumed. Primitive ritual draws upon individual experience, of course.

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This is a truism. But it draws upon it so selectively that it cannot be said to be primarily inspired by the need to solve individual problems common to the human race, still less explained by clinical research. Primitives are not trying to cure or prevent personal neuroses by their public rituals. Psychologists can tell us whether the public expression of individual anxieties is likely to solve personal problems or not. Certainly we must suppose that some interaction of the kind is probable. But that is not at issue. The analysis of ritual symbolism cannot begin until we recognise ritual as an attempt to create and maintain a particular culture, a particular set of assumptions by which experience is controlled.

Any culture is a series of related structures which comprise social forms, values, cosmology, the whole of knowledge and through which all experience is mediated. Certain cultural themes are expressed by rites of bodily manipulation. In this very general sense primitive culture can be said to be autoplasmic. But the objective of these rituals is not negative withdrawal from reality. The assertions they make are not usefully to be compared to the withdrawal of the infant into thumb-sucking and masturbation. The rituals enact the form of social relations and in giving these relations visible expression they enable people to know their own society. The rituals work upon the body politic through the symbolic medium of the physical body.

Internal Lines

IN THE BEGINNING of this century it was held that primitive ideas of contagion had nothing to do with ethics. This was how a special category of ritual called magic came to be instituted for scholarly discussion. If pollution ritual could be shown to have some connection with morals its place would have been squarely within the field of religion. To complete our survey of how early religion has fared at the hands of early anthropology, it remains to show that pollution has indeed much to do with morals.

It is true that pollution rules do not correspond closely to moral rules. Some kinds of behaviour may be judged wrong and yet not provoke pollution beliefs, while others not thought very reprehensible are held to be polluting and dangerous. Here and there we find that what is wrong is also polluting. Pollution rules only high-light a small aspect of morally disapproved behaviour. But we still need to ask whether pollution touches on morals in an arbitrary fashion or not.

To answer this we need to consider moral situations more closely and to think of the relation between conscience and social structure. By and large the private conscience and the public code of morals influence one another continually. As David Pole says:

'The public code that makes and moulds the private conscience is remade and moulded by it in turn. . . . In the real reciprocity of the process, public code and private conscience flow together: each springs from and contributes to the other, channels it and is channelled. Both alike are redirected and enlarged.' (pp. 91-2)

It is not usually necessary to make much distinction between the two. However, we find that we cannot understand this field of pollution unless we enter the sphere which lies between that behaviour which an individual approves for himself and what he approves for others; between what he approves as a matter of principle and what he vehemently desires for himself here and now in contradiction of the principle; between what he approves in the long term and what he approves in the short term. In all this there is scope for discrepancy.

We should start by recognising that moral situations are not easy to define. They are more usually obscure and contradictory than clear cut. It is the nature of a moral rule to be general, and its application to a particular context must be uncertain. For instance, the Nuer believe that homicide within the local community and incest are wrong. But a man may be led into breaking the homicide rule by following another rule of approved behaviour. Since Nuer are taught from boyhood to defend their rights by force, any man may unintentionally kill a fellow villager in a fight. Again the rules of prohibited sexual relationship are complicated and genealogical reckoning in some directions is rather sketchy. A man may easily not be sure whether a particular woman stands to him in a prohibited degree of relationship or not. So there can often be more than one view of what action is right, because of disagreement about what is relevant to the moral judgment and about the estimated consequence of an act. Pollution rules, by contrast with moral rules are unequivocal. They do not depend on intention or a nice balancing of rights and duties. The only material question is whether a forbidden contact has taken place or not. If pollution dangers were placed strategically along the crucial points in the moral code, they could theoretically reinforce it. However, such a strategic distribution of pollution rules is impossible, since the moral code by its nature can never be reduced to something simple, hard and fast.

However, as we look more closely at the relation between pollution and moral attitudes we shall discern something very like attempts to buttress a simplified moral code in this way. To stay with the same tribe, Nuer cannot always tell whether they have committed incest or not. But they believe that incest brings misfortune in the form of skin disease, which can be averted by sacrifice. If they know they have incurred the risk they can have

the sacrifice performed; if they reckon the degree of relationship was very distant, and the risk therefore slight, they can leave the matter to be settled *post hoc* by the appearance or non-appearance of the skin disease. Thus pollution rules can serve to settle uncertain moral issues.

Nuer attitudes to the contacts which they consider dangerous are not necessarily disapproving. They would be horrified at a case of incest between mother and son, but many of the relationships which are prohibited to them arouse no such condemnation. A 'little incest' is something which could happen between the best families at any time. Similarly, they regard the effects of adultery to be dangerous to the injured husband; he is liable to contract pains in his back when he subsequently has intercourse with his wife, and this can only be averted by a sacrifice for which the beast should be provided by the adulterer. But although an adulterer may be killed without compensation if caught red-handed, the Nuer do not seem to disapprove of adultery in itself. One gets the impression that pursuing other men's wives is seen as a risky sport in which any man may normally be tempted to indulge (Evans-Pritchard, 1951).

Now it is the same Nuer who have the pollution fears and make the moral judgments: the anthropologist does not believe that the often lethal punishments for incest and adultery are externally imposed on them by their severe god in the interests of maintaining the social structure. The integrity of the social structure is very much at issue when breaches of the adultery and incest rules are made, for the local structure consists entirely of categories of persons defined by incest regulations, marriage payments and marital status. To have produced such a society the Nuer have evidently needed to make complicated rules about incest and adultery, and to maintain it they have underpinned the rules by threats of the danger of forbidden contacts. These rules and sanctions express the public conscience, the Nuer when they are thinking in general terms. Any particular case of adultery or incest interests the Nuer in another way. Men seem to identify with adulterers more than with aggrieved husbands. Their feelings of moral disapproval are not very much engaged on behalf of matrimony and the social structure when confronted by a particular case. Hence one cause of the discrepancy between pollution rules and moral judgments. It suggests that pollution rules can have another socially useful function—that

of marshalling moral disapproval when it lags. The Nuer husband, disabled or even dying of adultery pollution, is recognised as the victim of the adulterer: unless the latter pays his fine and provides the sacrifice he will have a death on his hands.

Another general point is suggested by this example. We have given instances of behaviour which the Nuer often regard as morally neutral, and yet which they believe sets off dangerous manifestations of power. There are also types of behaviour which Nuer regard as thoroughly reprehensible, and which are not thought to incur automatic danger. For example, it is a positive duty for a son to honour his father, and acts of filial disrespect are thought to be very wrong. But unlike lack of respect towards parents-in-law, they are not visited with automatic punishment. The social difference between the two situations is that a man's own father as head of the joint family and controller of its herds is in a strong economic position for asserting his superior status, while the father-in-law or mother-in-law is not. This accords with the general principle that when the sense of outrage is adequately equipped with practical sanctions in the social order, pollution is not likely to arise. Where, humanly speaking, the outrage is likely to go unpunished, pollution beliefs tend to be called in to supplement the lack of other sanctions.

To sum up, if we could extract from the whole volume of Nuer behaviour certain kinds of behaviour which are condemned by them as wrong, we would have a map of their moral code. If we could make another map of their pollution beliefs, we would find that it touches the outline of morality here and there, but is by no means congruent with it. A large part of their pollution rules concern etiquette between husband and wife and between in-laws. The punishments which are thought to fall on those who break these rules can be accounted for by Radcliffe-Brown's formula of social value: the rules express the value of marriage in that society. They are specific pollution rules, such as one forbidding a wife to drink the milk of the cows which have been paid for her marriage. Such rules do not coincide with moral rules, though they may well express approval of general attitudes (such as respect towards one's husband's herds). These rules only relate indirectly to the moral code insofar as they draw attention to the value of behaviour which has some bearing on the structure of society, the code of morality being itself related to that same social structure.

Then there are other pollution rules which touch the moral code more closely, such as those forbidding incest or homicide within the local community. The fact that pollution beliefs provide a kind of impersonal punishment for wrongdoing affords a means of supporting the accepted system of morality. The Nuer examples suggest the following ways in which pollution beliefs can uphold the moral code:

- (i) When a situation is morally ill-defined, a pollution belief can provide a rule for determining *post hoc* whether infraction has taken place, or not.
- (ii) When moral principles come into conflict, a pollution rule can reduce confusion by giving a simple focus for concern.
- (iii) When action that is held to be morally wrong does not provoke moral indignation, belief in the harmful consequences of a pollution can have the effect of aggravating the seriousness of the offence, and so of marshalling public opinion on the side of the right.
- (iv) When moral indignation is not reinforced by practical sanctions, pollution beliefs can provide a deterrent to wrongdoers.

This last point can be expanded. In a small scale society the machinery of retribution is never likely to be very strong or very certain in its action. We find that pollution beliefs reinforce it in two distinct ways. Either the transgressor is himself held to be the victim of his own act, or some innocent victim takes the brunt of the danger. This we would expect to vary in a regular manner. In any social system there may be some strongly held moral norms whose breach cannot be punished. For example, when self-help is the only way of righting wrong, people are banded for protection into groups which pursue vengeance for their members. In such a system there can easily be no way of exacting vengeance when a murder has been committed within the group itself; deliberately to kill or even to outlaw a fellow-member would be to offend against the strongest principle of all. In such cases we commonly find that pollution danger is expected to fall on the head of the fratricide.

This is a very different problem from the pollution whose dangers fall, not on the head of the transgressor but on the innocent. We saw that the innocent Nuer husband is the one whose life is risked when his wife commits adultery. There are

many variations on this theme. Often it is the guilty wife, sometimes it is the injured husband, often it is his children whose lives are endangered. The adulterer himself is not often thought to risk danger, though the Ontong Javanese hold this belief (Hogbin, p. 153). In the case of the fratricide above, moral indignation is not lacking. The problem is a practical question of how to punish rather than one of how to arouse moral fervour against the crime. The danger replaces active human punishment. In the case of adultery pollution the belief that the innocent are in danger helps to brand the delinquent and to rouse moral fervour against him. So in this case pollution ideas strengthen the demand for active human punishment.

It is outside the scope of this study to collect and compare a large number of examples. But here is a field which it would be interesting to tackle by documentary research. What are the precise circumstances in which adultery pollution is thought to endanger the injured husband, the unborn or the living children, or the delinquent or innocent wife? Whenever danger follows secret adultery in a social system in which someone has the right to claim damages if adultery is known, the pollution belief acts as a *post hoc* detector of the crime. This fits the Nuer case above. Another example comes in a text given by a Nyak-yusa husband:

'If I have always been all right and strong and I find that I get tired walking and hoeing, I think: "What is it? See, always I was all right and now I am very tired." My friends say: "It is a woman, you have lain with one who was menstruating." And if I eat food and start diarrhoea, they say: "It is women, they have committed adultery!" My wives deny it. We go to divine and one is caught; if she agrees, that's that, but if she denied it, formerly we went to the poison ordeal. The woman drank alone not I. If she vomited then I was defeated, the woman was good, but if it caught her then her father paid me one cow.' (Wilson, p. 133)

Similarly, when it is believed that a woman will miscarry if she has committed adultery while pregnant, and that her infant will die if she commits adultery while suckling it, someone may have a case for blood-compensation for every confessed adultery. If girls are normally married before puberty and are expected to go from pregnancy to delivery and from delivery to a three or four year suckling period, and then to new pregnancy again, the

husband is theoretically insured against infidelity until her menopause. Furthermore, the behaviour of the wife herself is, in this way, very heavily sanctioned by risks for her children and for her own life in the hour of labour. All this makes good sense. Pollution beliefs here uphold marital relations. But we are still no nearer answering why it should be in some cases the husband who is the victim and in others the wife in child labour or the children, and in others again, as among the Bemba, the innocent party, whether the husband or the wife, who is automatically endangered.

The answer must lie in a minute examination of the distribution of rights and duties in marriage and the various interests and advantages of each party. The varying incidence of danger allows moral judgment to point to different individuals: if the wife herself is endangered, even to the point of risking her life in child labour, indignation is summoned against her seducer. This suggests a society in which the wife is less likely to get a beating for her misconduct. If the husband's life is endangered then blame presumably falls on the wife or her lover. As a long shot (more for the sake of making some suggestion that can be tested than with much confidence in its soundness), could it be that the danger falls on the wife when, for some reason or other she cannot be openly chastised? Perhaps because the presence of her kinsfolk in the village protects her? Then we might expect that in the opposite case, when the danger falls on the husband, this gives him an added excuse for giving her a good beating, or at least summons the opinion of the community against her loose behaviour. Here I suggest that a society where marriage is stable and where wives are kept in control may be one in which the danger of adultery may fall on the aggrieved husband.

So far we have discussed four ways in which pollution tends to support moral values. The fact that pollutions are easier to cancel than moral defects gives us another set of situations. Some pollutions are too grave for the offender to be allowed to survive. But most pollutions have a very simple remedy for undoing their effects. There are rites of reversing, untying, burying, washing, erasing, fumigating, and so on, which at a small cost of time and effort can satisfactorily expunge them. The cancelling of a moral offence depends on the state of mind of the offended party and on the sweetness of nursing revenge. The social con-

sequences of some offences ripple out in all directions and can never be reversed. Rites of reconciliation which enact the burial of the wrong have the creative effect of all ritual. They can help to erase memory of the wrong and encourage the growth of right feeling. There must be an advantage for society at large in attempting to reduce moral offences to pollution offences which can be instantly scrubbed out by ritual. Levy-Bruhl, who gave many examples of rituals of purification (1936, Chapter VIII), had the insight to note that the act of restitution itself takes on the status of a rite of annulment. He points out that the law of talion is misunderstood if it is seen merely as meeting a brutal need for vengeance:

'To the necessity of a counter-action equal to and like the action, is associated the law of talion . . . because he has suffered an attack, received a wound, undergone a wrong, he feels exposed to an evil influence. A threat of misfortune hangs over him. To reassure himself, to regain calm and security, the evil influence thus released must be stopped, neutralised. Now this result will not be obtained unless the act from which he suffers is annulled by a similar act in the opposite direction. This is precisely what retaliation procures for the primitive.'

(pp. 392-5)

Levy-Bruhl did not make the mistake of supposing that a purely external act is sufficient. He noticed, as anthropologists have continued to notice ever since, the strenuous efforts that are made to bring the inward heart and mind into line with the public act. The contradiction between external behaviour and secret emotions is a frequent source of anxiety and of expected misfortune. This is a new contradiction which can arise from the act of purification itself. We should therefore recognise it as an autonomous pollution in its own right. Levy-Bruhl gives many examples of what he calls the bewitching effects of ill-will (p. 186).

These pollutions, which lurk between the visible act and the invisible thought, are like witchcraft. They are dangers from the crevices of the structure, and like witchcraft their inherent power to harm does not depend either on external action or on any deliberate intention. They are dangerous in themselves.

There are two distinct ways of cancelling a pollution: one is the ritual which makes no enquiry into the cause of the pollution, and does not seek to place responsibility; the other is the

confessional rite. On the face of it one would expect these to apply in very different situations. Nuer sacrifice is an example of the first. Nuer associate misfortunes with offences which have brought them about, but they do not seek to relate a particular misfortune to a particular offence. The question is regarded as academic, since the only resource open to them in all cases is the same, sacrifice. An exception is the case of adultery we have mentioned. It is necessary to know the adulterer so that he can produce the beast for sacrifice, and also be mulcted of a fine. Reflecting on this instance, we can suppose that confession, since it always makes precise the nature of the offence and enables blame to be allocated, is a good basis for demanding compensation.

A new kind of relation between pollution and morals emerges when purification alone is taken to be an adequate treatment for moral wrongs. Then the whole complex of ideas including pollution and purification become a kind of safety net which allows people to perform what, in terms of social structure, could be like acrobatic feats on the high wire. The equilibrist dares the impossible and lightly defies the laws of gravity. Easy purification enables people to defy with impunity the hard realities of their social system. For example, the Bemba have such good confidence in their technique of purification from adultery that though they believe adultery has lethal dangers they give reign to their short term desires. This case I discuss in more detail in the next chapter. What is relevant here is the apparently contradictory fear of sex and pleasure in sex which Dr. Richards remarked (pp. 154-5), and the role of purification rites in overcoming the fears. She insists that no Bemba supposes that fear of adultery pollution deters anyone from adultery.

From this we are led to the last point relating pollution to morals. Any complex of symbols can take on a cultural life of its own and even acquire initiative in the development of social institutions. For example, among the Bemba their sex pollution rules would seem on the face of it to express approval of fidelity between husband and wife. In practice divorce is now common and one gets the impression (Richards, 1940) that they turn to divorce and remarriage as a means of avoiding the pollution of adultery. This radical deflection from once held objectives is only possible when other forces of disintegration are at work. We cannot suppose that pollution fears suddenly take the bit

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between their teeth and gallop off with the social system. But they can ironically provide independent grounds for breaking the moral code which at one time they worked to support.

Pollution ideas can distract from the social and moral aspects of a situation by focussing on a simple material matter. The Bemba believe that pollution of adultery is conveyed through fire. Therefore the careful housewife seems to be obsessed by the problem of protecting her hearth from adulterous and menstrual defilement and from homicides.

'It is difficult to exaggerate the strength of these beliefs or the extent to which they affect daily life. In a village at cooking time young children are sent here and there to fetch "new fire" from neighbours who are ritually pure.' (p. 33)

Why their anxieties about sex should have been transferred from bed to board belongs to the next chapter. But why fire needs to be protected depends on the configuration of powers which control their universe. Death, blood and coldness are confronted by their opposites, life, sex and fire. All six powers are dangerous. The three positive powers are dangerous unless separated from one another and are in danger from contact with death, blood or coldness. The act of sex is always to be separated from the rest of life by a rite of purification which only husband and wife can perform for each other. The adulterer is a public danger because his contact defiles all cooking hearths and he cannot be purified. From this we see that anxieties about their social life are only part of the explanation of Bemba sex pollution. To explain why fire (rather than, for instance, salt as among some of their neighbours) should convey pollution we would need to approach the systematic interrelation of the symbols themselves in more detail than is at present possible.

This cursory sketch is as far as I can go on the relation between pollution and morals. To have shown that the relation is far from straightforward is necessary before returning to the idea of society as a complex set of Chinese boxes, each sub-system having little sub-systems of its own, and so on indefinitely for as far as we care to apply the analysis. It is my belief that people really do think of their own social environment as consisting of other people joined or separated by lines which must be respected. Some of the lines are protected by firm physical sanctions. There are churches in which tramps do not sleep on the benches be-

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cause the vestry-man will call the police. Ultimately India's lower castes used to keep in their place because of similarly effective social sanctions, and all the way up the edifice of caste political and economic forces help to maintain the system. But wherever the lines are precarious we find pollution ideas come to their support. Physical crossing of the social barrier is treated as a dangerous pollution, with any of the consequences we have just examined. The polluter becomes a doubly wicked object of reprobation, first because he crossed the line and second because he endangered others.

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WHEN THE COMMUNITY is attacked from outside at least the external danger fosters solidarity within. When it is attacked from within by wanton individuals, they can be punished and the structure publicly reaffirmed. But it is possible for the structure to be self-defeating. This has long been a familiar theme for anthropologists (see Gluckman 1963). Perhaps all social systems are built on contradiction, in some sense at war with themselves. But in some cases the various ends which individuals are encouraged to pursue are more harmoniously related than in others.

Sexual collaboration is by nature fertile, constructive, the common basis of social life. But sometimes we find that instead of dependence and harmony, sexual institutions express rigid separation and violent antagonism. So far we have noted a kind of sex pollution which expresses a desire to keep the body (physical and social) intact. Its rules are phrased to control entrances and exits. Another kind of sex pollution arises from the desire to keep straight the internal lines of the social system. In the last chapter we noted how rules control individual contacts which destroy these lines, adulteries, incests and so forth. But these by no means exhaust the types of sexual pollution. A third type may arise from the conflict in the aims which can be proposed in the same culture.

In primitive cultures, almost by definition, the distinction of the sexes is the primary social distinction. This means that some important institutions always rest on the difference of sex. If the social structure were weakly organised, then men and women might still hope to follow their own fancies in choosing and discarding sexual partners, with no grievous consequences for society at large. But if the primitive social structure is strictly

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articulated, it is almost bound to impinge heavily on the relation between men and women. Then we find pollution ideas enlisted to bind men and women to their allotted roles, as we have shown in the last chapter.

There is one exception we should note at once. Sex is likely to be pollution-free in a society where sexual roles are enforced directly. In such a case anyone who threatened to deviate would be promptly punished with physical force. This supposes an administrative efficiency and consensus which are rare anywhere and specially in primitive societies. As an example we can consider the Walbiri of Central Australia, a people who unhesitatingly apply force to ensure that the sexual behaviour of individuals shall not undermine that part of the social structure which rests upon marital relations (Meggitt). As in the rest of Australia, a great part of the social system depends upon rules governing marriage. The Walbiri live in a hard desert environment. They are aware of the difficulty of community survival and their culture accepts as one of its objectives that all members of the community shall work and be cared for according to their ability and needs. This means that responsibility for the infirm and old falls upon the hale. A strict discipline is asserted throughout the community, young are subject to their seniors, and above all, women are subject to men. A married woman usually lives at a distance from her father and brothers. This means that though she has a theoretical claim to their protection, in practice it is null. She is in the control of her husband. As a general rule if the female sex were completely subject to the male, no problem would be posed by the principle of male dominance. It could be enforced ruthlessly and directly wherever it applied. This seems to be what happens among the Walbiri. For the least complaint or neglect of duty Walbiri women are beaten or speared. No blood compensation can be claimed for a wife killed by her husband, and no one has the right to intervene between husband and wife. Public opinion never reproaches the man who has violently, or even lethally, asserted his authority over his wife. Thus it is impossible for a woman to play off one man against another. However energetically they may try to seduce one another's wives the men are in perfect accord on one point. They are agreed that they should never allow their sexual desires to give an individual woman bargaining power or scope for intrigue. These people have no beliefs concerning sex pollution. Even

menstrual blood is not avoided, and there are no beliefs that contact with it brings danger. Although the definition of married status is important in their society it is protected by overt means. Here there is nothing precarious or contradictory about male dominance.

No constraints are imposed on individual Walbiri men. They seduce one another's women if they get a chance, without showing any special concern for the social structure based on marriage. The latter is preserved by the thorough-going subordination of women to men and by the recognised system of self-help. When a man poaches on another's sexual preserve he knows what he risks, a fight and possible death. The system is perfectly simple. There are conflicts between men, but not between principles. No moral judgment is evoked in one situation which is likely to be contradicted in another. People are held to these particular roles by the threat of physical violence. The previous chapter has suggested that when this threat is uninhibited we can expect the social system to persist without the support of pollution beliefs.

It is important to recognise that male dominance does not always flourish with such ruthless simplicity. In the last chapter we saw that when moral rules are obscure or contradictory there is a tendency for pollution beliefs to simplify or clarify the point at issue. The Walbiri case suggests a correlation. When male dominance is accepted as a central principle of social organisation and applied without inhibition and with full rights of physical coercion, beliefs in sex pollution are not likely to be highly developed. On the other hand, when the principle of male dominance is applied to the ordering of social life but is contradicted by other principles such as that of female independence, or the inherent right of women as the weaker sex to be more protected from violence than men, then sex pollution is likely to flourish. Before we take up this case there is another kind of exception to consider.

We find many societies in which individuals are not coerced or otherwise held strictly to their allotted sexual roles and yet the social structure is based upon the association of the sexes. In these cases a subtle, legalistic development of special institutions provides relief. Individuals can to some extent follow their personal whims, because the social structure is cushioned by fictions of one kind or another.

The political organisation of the Nuer is totally unformulated. They have no explicit institutions of government or administration. Such fluid and intangible political structure as they exhibit is a spontaneous, shifting expression of their conflicting loyalties. The only principle of any firmness which gives form to their tribal life is the principle of genealogy. By thinking of their territorial units as if they represented segments of a single genealogical structure, they impose some order on their political groupings. The Nuer afford a natural illustration of how people can create and maintain a social structure in the realm of ideas and not primarily, or at all, in the external, physical realm of ceremonial, palaces or courts of justice (Evans-Pritchard, 1940).

The genealogical principle which they apply to the political relations of a whole tribe is important to them in another context, at the intimate personal level of claims to cattle and wives. Thus, not only his place in the larger political scheme, but his personal inheritance is determined for a Nuer man by the allegiances defined through marriage. On rights of paternity their lineage structure and their whole political structure depend. Yet the Nuer do not take adultery and desertion so tragically as some other peoples with agnatic lineage systems in which paternity is established by marriage. True a Nuer husband can spear his wife's seducer if he catches him red-handed. But otherwise, if he learns of her infidelity, he can only demand two head of cattle, one for compensation and one for sacrifice—hardly a severe penalty compared with other peoples of whom we read that they used to banish adulterers (Meek, p. 218-9) or enslave them. Or compared with a Bedouin who would not be allowed to raise his head in society again until a dishonoured kinswoman had been killed (Salim, p. 61). The difference is that Nuer legal marriage is relatively invulnerable to the whims of individual partners. Husbands and wives can be allowed to separate and live apart without altering the legal status of their marriage, or of the wife's children (Evans-Pritchard, Chapter III, 1951). Nuer women enjoy a strikingly free and independent status. If one is widowed her husband's brothers have the right to take her in leviratic marriage, to raise seed to the dead man's name. But if she does not choose to accept this arrangement, they cannot force her. She is left free to choose her own lovers. The one security that is guaranteed to the dead man's lineage is that any off-

spring, begotten by whomsoever they may have been, count as affiliated to that lineage from which the original marriage cattle were paid. The rule that whoever paid cattle has the right to the children is the rule which distinguishes legal marriage, practically indefeasible, from conjugal relations. The social structure rests on the series of legal marriages, established by the transfer of cattle. Thus it is protected by practical institutional means from any uncertainty which may threaten from the free behaviour of men and women. By contrast with the stark, unstated simplicity of their political organisation, Nuer display astonishing legal subtlety in the definition of marriage, concubinage, divorce and conjugal separation.

It is this development, I suggest, which enables them to organise their social institutions without burdensome beliefs in sex pollution. It is true that they protect their cattle from menstruating women, but a man does not have to purify himself if he touches one. He should merely avoid sexual intercourse with his wife during her menstrual periods, a rule of respect which is said to express concern for his unborn children. This is a very much milder regulation than some rules of avoidance we shall mention later.

We have earlier noted another example of a legal fiction which lifts the weight of the social structure from sexual relations. This is Nur Yalman's discussion of female purity in South India and Ceylon (1963). Here the purity of women is protected as the gate of entry to the castes. The mother is the decisive parent for establishing caste membership. Through women the blood and purity of the caste is perpetuated. Therefore their sexual purity is all-important, and every possible whisper of threat to it is anticipated and barred against. This should lead us to expect an intolerable life of restriction for women. Indeed this is what we find for the highest and purest caste of all.

The Nambudiri Brahmins of Malabar are a small, rich, exclusive caste of priestly land-owners. They have remained so by observing a rule forbidding the division of their estates. In each family only the eldest son marries. The others can keep lower caste concubines, but never enter into marriage. As for their unfortunate womenfolk, strict seclusion is their lot. Few of them ever marry at all until on their deathbed a rite of marriage affirms their freedom from the control of their guardians. If they go out of their houses, their bodies are completely enveloped

in clothing and umbrellas hide their faces. When one of their brothers is married they can watch the celebration through chinks in the walls. Even at her own wedding a Nambudiri woman has to be replaced in the usual public appearance of the bride by a Nayar girl. Only a very rich group could afford to commit its women to a life sentence of barrenness for most and of seclusion for all. This kind of ruthlessness corresponds in its own way to the ruthlessness with which Walbiri men apply their principles.

But though similar ideas about purity of women prevail in the other castes, this hard solution has not been adopted. Orthodox Brahmins, who do not try to keep their patrimonial estates intact and allow their sons to marry, preserve the purity of their women by requiring girls to be married before puberty to suitable husbands. They put strong moral and religious pressures on one another to ensure that every Brahmin girl is properly married before her first menstruation. In other castes if they do not arrange a real marriage before puberty, then a substitute rite of marriage is absolutely required. In middle India she can first be married to an arrow or a wooden pounder. This counts as a first marriage and gives the girls married status so that any misdemeanours of hers can be dealt with in the caste or local courts on the model of a married woman.

Southern Nayar girls are renowned in India for the sexual licence they enjoy. No permanent husband is recognised; the women live at home and have loose relationships with a wide number of men. The caste position of these women and of their children is made ritually secure by a pre-puberty rite of substitute marriage. The man who takes the part of the ritual bridegroom is himself of appropriate caste status and he provides ritual paternity for the girl's future offspring. Should a Nayar girl at any time be thought to have had contact with a man of lower caste, she would be as brutally punished as a woman of the Nambudiri Brahmins. But, apart from guarding against such a lapse, her life is as free and uncontrolled as perhaps any woman's within the caste system, and a great contrast with her Nambudiri 'neighbours' secluded regime. The fiction of first marriage has lifted from her much of the burden of protecting the purity of the blood of the caste.

So much for the exceptions.

We should now look at some examples of social structures

which rest on grave paradox or contradiction. In these cases where no softening legal fictions intervene to protect the freedom of the sexes exaggerated avoidances develop around sexual relations.

In different cultures the accepted theories of cosmic power give more or less explicit place to sexual energy. In the cultures of Hindu India, for example, and of New Guinea, the symbolism of sex occupies a central place in the cosmology. But among African Nilotes, by contrast, the sexual analogy seems to be much less developed. It would be vain to pretend to relate the broad lines of these metaphysical variations to differences in the social organisation. But within any such a cultural region we find interesting minor variations on the theme of sexual symbolism and pollution. These we can and should try to correlate with other local variations.

New Guinea is an area where fear of sexual pollution is a cultural characteristic (Read, 1954). But within the same cultural idiom a great contrast separates the way the Arapesh of Sepik River and the Mae Enga of the Central Highlands handle the theme of sexual difference. The former, it seems, try to create a total symmetry between the sexes. All power is thought of on the model of sexual energy. Femininity is only dangerous to men as masculinity is to women. Females are life-giving and in pregnancy they nourish their children with their own blood; once the children are born males nourish them with life-giving blood drawn for the purpose from the penis. Margaret Mead emphasises that equal watchfulness is necessary from both sexes on their own dangerous powers. Each sex approaches the other with deliberate control (1940).

The Mae Enga, on the other hand, do not look for any symmetry. They fear female pollution for their males and for all male enterprises, and there is no question of a balance between two kinds of sexual danger and powers (Meggitt, 1964). For such differences we can tentatively look for sociological correlations.

The Mae Enga live in an area of dense population. Their local organisation is based on the clan, a compact, well-defined military and political unit. The men of the clan choose their wives from other clans. Thus they marry foreigners. The rule of clan exogamy is common enough. Whether it imports strain and difficulty into the marriage situation depends on how exclusive, localised and rivalrous are the intermarrying clans. In the Enga

case they are not only foreigners but traditional enemies. The Mae Enga men are individually involved in an intense competition for prestige. They fiercely compete to exchange pigs and valuables. Their wives are chosen from the very outsiders with whom they habitually exchange pigs and shells and with whom they habitually fight. So for each man his male affines are also likely to be his ceremonial exchange partners (a competitive relationship) and their clan is the military enemy of his own clan. Thus the marital relation has to bear the tensions of the strongly competitive social system. The Enga belief about sex pollution suggests that sexual relations take on the character of a conflict between enemies in which the man sees himself as endangered by his sexual partner, the intrusive member of the enemy clan. There is a strongly held belief that contacts with women weaken male strength. So preoccupied are they with avoiding female contact that the fear of sexual contamination effectively reduces the amount of commerce between the sexes. Meggitt has evidence that adultery used to be unknown, and divorces practically unheard of.

From early boyhood the Enga are taught to shun female company, and they go into periodic seclusion to purify themselves from female contact. The two dominant beliefs in their culture are the superiority of the male principle and its vulnerability to female influence. Only a married man can risk sexual intercourse because the special remedies for protecting virility are only available to married men. But even in marriage men fear sexual activity and would seem to reduce it to the minimum necessary for procreation. Above all they fear menstrual blood:

'They believe that contact with it or with a menstruating woman will, in the absence of appropriate counter-magic, sicken a man and cause persistent vomiting, "kill" his blood so that it turns black, corrupt his vital juices so that his skin darkens and hangs in folds as his flesh wastes, permanently dull his wits, and eventually lead to a slow decline and death.'

Dr. Meggitt's own view is that 'The Mae equation of femininity, sexuality and peril' is to be explained by the attempt to found marriage on an alliance which spans the most competitive relations in their highly competitive social system.

'Until recently clans fought constantly over scarce land resources, pig-thefts and failure to meet debts, and in any given

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clan most of the men lost in battle have been killed by its immediate neighbours. At the same time, because of the rugged mountainous terrain, propinquity has been a significant variable in determining actual marriage choices. Thus there is a relatively high correlation between interclan marriage and homicide frequencies with regard to the nearness of clans. The Mae recognise this concomitance in a crude way when they say: "We marry the people we fight".' (Meggitt, 1963)

We noted that the Mae Enga fear of female pollution contrasts with the belief in the balanced power and danger from both sexes that appears in the culture of the Mountain Arapesh. It is very interesting to note further that the Arapesh disapprove of local exogamy. If a man should marry a woman of the plains Arapesh he observes elaborate precautions to cool off her more dangerous sexuality.

'If he marries one, he should not marry her hastily but permit her to remain about the house for several months growing accustomed to him, cooling down the possible passion of slight acquaintance and strangeness. Then he may copulate with her, and watch. Do his yams prosper? Does he find game when he goes hunting? If so, all is well. If not, let him abstain from relationship with this dangerous, oversexed woman still many more moons, lest the part of his potency, his own physical strength, the ability to feed others, which he most cherishes, should be permanently injured.' (Mead, 1940, p. 345)

This example would seem to support Meggitt's view that local exogamy in the strained and competitive conditions of Enga life imports a heavy load of strain into their marriage. If this is so then the Enga could presumably be free of their very inconvenient beliefs if they could relieve their anxieties at source. But this is an utterly impractical suggestion. It would mean either giving up their violently competitive exchanges with rival clans, or their exogamous marriages—either stop fighting or stop marrying the sisters of the men they fight. Either choice would mean a major readjustment to their social system. In practice and in historical fact, when such an adjustment came from outside, with the coming of missionary preaching on sex and of the Australian administration's pax on fighting, the Enga gave up their beliefs in the danger of female sex quite easily.

The contradiction which the Enga strive to overcome by

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avoidance is the attempt to build marriage on enmity. But another difficulty perhaps more common in primitive societies arises from a contradiction in the phrasing of male and female roles. If the principle of male domination is elaborated absolutely consistently, it need not necessarily contradict any other basic principles. We have mentioned two very different instances in which male dominance is applied with ruthless simplicity. But the principle runs into trouble if there is any other principle which protects women from physical control. For this gives women scope to play off one man against another, and so to confound the principle of male dominance.

The whole society is especially likely to be founded on a contradiction if the system is one in which men define their status in terms of rights over women. If there is free competition between the men, this gives scope for a discontented woman to turn to her husband's or her guardian's rivals, gain new protectors and new allegiance, and so to dissolve into nothing the structure of rights and duties which had formerly been built around her. This sort of contradiction in the social system arises only if there is no *de facto* possibility of coercing women. For example, it does not appear if there is a centralised political system which throws the weight of its authority against women. Where the legal system can be exerted against women, they cannot make havoc of the system. But a centralised political system is not one in which male status is mainly phrased in terms of rights over women.

The Lele are an example of a social system which is continually liable to founder on the contradiction that female manoeuvring gives to male dominance. All male rivalries are expressed in the competition for wives. A man with no wife is below the bottom rung of the status ladder. With one wife he can get a start, by begetting and thus qualifying for entry to remunerative cult associations. With a daughter born to him he can start claiming the services of a son-in-law. With several daughters, as many betrothed sons-in-law and above all with granddaughters, he is high up on the ladder of privilege and esteem. This is because women whom he has engendered are women he can offer in marriage to other men. And so he builds up a following of men. Every mature man could hope to acquire two or three wives, and in the meanwhile young men had to wait in bachelorhood. Polygyny in itself made the competition

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for wives intense. But the various other ways in which male success in the men's sphere was hitched to the control of women would be complicated to relate here (see Douglas, 1963). Their whole social life was dominated by an institution for paying compensation by transferring rights over women. The net effect was that women were treated, from one aspect, as a kind of currency in which men claimed and settled debts against one another. Men's mutual indebtedness piled up so that they had staked out claims to unborn girls for generations ahead. A man with no rights over women to transfer was in as parlous a case as a modern business man with no bank account. From a man's point of view women were the most desirable objects their culture had to offer. Since all insults and obligations could be settled by the transfer of rights over women, it was perfectly true to say, as they did, that the only reason they ever went to war was about women.

A little Lele girl would grow up a coquette. From infancy she was the centre of affectionate, teasing, flirting attention. Her affianced husband never gained more than a very limited control over her. He had the right to chastise, certainly, but if he exerted it too violently, and above all if he lost her affection, she could find some pretext for persuading her brothers that her husband neglected her. Infant mortality was high and the miscarriage or death of a child brought the wife's kinsmen sternly to the husband's door asking for an explanation. Since men competed with one another for women there was scope for women to manoeuvre and intrigue. Hopeful seducers were never lacking and no woman doubted that she could get another husband if it suited her. The husband whose wives were faithful until middle age had to be very attentive, both to the wife and to her mother. Quite an elaborate etiquette governed marital relations, with many occasions on which big or small gifts were due from the husband. When the wife was pregnant or sick or newly delivered, he had to be assiduous in arranging proper medical care. A woman who was known to be dissatisfied with her life would soon be courted—and there were various ways open to her by which she could take initiative for ending her marriage.

I have said enough to show why Lele men should be anxious about their relations with women. Although in some contexts they thought of women as desirable treasures, they spoke of them also as worthless, worse than dogs, unmannerly, ignorant, fickle,

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unreliable. Socially, women were indeed all these things. They were not in the least interested in the men's world in which they and their daughters were swapped as pawns in men's games of prestige. They were cunning in exploiting the opportunities that came their way. If they connived, mother and daughter together could wreck any plans that they disliked. So ultimately men had to assert their vaunted dominance by charming, coaxing and flattering. There was a special wheedling tone of voice they used for women.

The Lele attitude to sex was compounded of enjoyment, desire for fertility and recognition of danger. They had every reason for desiring fertility, as I have shown, and their religious cults were directed towards this end. Sexual activity was held to be in itself dangerous, not for the partners to it, but dangerous for the weak and the sick. Anyone coming fresh from sexual intercourse should avoid the sick, lest by the indirect contact their fever should increase. New-born babies would be killed by such a contact. Consequently yellow raffia fronds were hung at the entrance of a compound to warn all responsible persons that a sick person or new born baby was within. This was a general danger. But there were special dangers for men. A wife had the duty of cleaning her husband after sexual intercourse and then of washing herself before she touched the cooking. Each married woman kept a little pot of water hidden in the grass outside the village where she could wash in secret. It should be well hidden and out of the way, for if a man were to trip on that pot by chance, his sexual vigour would be weakened. If she neglected her ablution and he were to eat food cooked by her, he would lose his virility. These are just the dangers following legitimate sexual intercourse. But a menstruating woman could not cook for her husband or poke the fire, lest he fall ill. She could prepare the food, but when it came to approaching the fire she had to call a friend in to help. These dangers were only risked by men, not by other women or children. Finally, a menstruating woman was a danger to the whole community if she entered the forest. Not only was her menstruation certain to wreck any enterprise in the forest that she might undertake, but it was thought to produce unfavourable conditions for men. Hunting would be difficult for a long time after, and rituals based on forest plants would have no efficacy. Women found these rules extremely irksome, specially as they were regularly

short-handed and late in their planting, weeding, harvesting and fishing.

The danger of sex was also controlled by rules which protected male enterprises from female pollution and female enterprises from male pollution. All ritual had to be protected from female pollution, the male officiants (women were generally excluded from cult affairs) abstaining from sexual intercourse the night before. The same for warfare, hunting, tapping palms for wine. Similarly women should abstain from sexual intercourse before planting ground nuts or maize, fishing, making salt or pottery. These fears were symmetrical for men and for women. The generally stipulated condition for handling any great ritual crisis was to call for sexual abstinence from the whole village. Thus when twins were born, or when a twin from another village entered for the first time, or in the course of important anti-sorcery or fertility rituals, the villagers would hear it announced night after night 'Each man his mat alone, each woman her mat alone'. At the same time they would hear it announced 'Let no one quarrel tonight. Or if you must quarrel, don't quarrel in secret. Let us hear the noise, so that we can impose a fine'. Quarrelling was, like sexual intercourse, regarded as being destructive of the proper ritual condition of the village. It spoiled ritual and hunting. But quarrelling was always bad, while sexual intercourse was only bad on certain (rather frequent) occasions.

The Lele anxiety about the ritual dangers of sex I attribute to the real disruptive role allotted to sex in their social system. Their men created a status ladder whose successive stages they mounted as they acquired control over more and more women. But they threw the whole system open to competition and so allowed women a double role, as passive pawns, and again as active intriguers. Individual men were right to fear that individual women would spoil their plans, and fears of the dangers of sex only too accurately reflect its working in their social structure.

Female pollution in a society of this type is largely related to the attempt to treat women simultaneously as persons and as the currency of male transactions. Males and females are set off as belonging to distinct, mutually hostile spheres. Sexual antagonism inevitably results and this is reflected in the idea that each sex constitutes a danger to the other. The particular dangers which female contact threatens to males express the contradiction of trying to use women as currency without reduc-

ing them to slavery. If ever it was felt in a commercial culture that money is the root of all evil, the feeling that women are the root of all evils to Lele men is more justified. Indeed the story of the Garden of Eden touched a deep chord of sympathy in Lele male breasts. Once told by the missionaries, it was told and retold round pagan hearths with smug relish.

The Yurok of Northern California have more than once interested anthropologists and psychologists by the radical nature of their ideas of purity and impurity as we have said. Theirs is a dying culture. When Professor Robins studied the Yurok language in 1951 there were only about six Yurok-speaking adults left alive. This seems to have been another example of a highly competitive, acquisitive culture. Men's minds were preoccupied with acquiring wealth in the form of prestige-carrying shell-money, rare feathers and pelts and imported obsidian blades. Apart from those who had access to the routes along which the foreign valuables were traded, the normal way of acquiring wealth was by being quick to avenge wrongs and by demanding compensation. Every insult had its price, more or less standardised. There was latitude for haggling since the price was finally agreed *ad hoc*, according to the value a man set on himself and the backing he could muster among his close kinsmen (Kroeber). Adulteries of wives and marriages of daughters were important sources of wealth. A man who pursued other men's wives would pour out his fortune in adultery compensation.

The Yurok so much believed that contact with women would destroy their powers of acquiring wealth that they held that women and money should never be brought into contact. Above all it was felt to be fatal to future prosperity for a man to have sexual intercourse in the house where he kept his strings of shell money. In the winter, when it was too cold to be out of doors, they seem to have abstained altogether. For Yurok babies tended to be born at the same time of year—nine months after the first warm weather. Such a rigorous separation of business and pleasure tempted Walter Goldschmidt to compare Yurok values with those of the Protestant ethic. The exercise involved him in a highly specious stretching of the notion of capitalist economy, so that it would embrace both the salmon-fishing Yurok and 16th century Europe. He showed that a high value on chastity, parsimony and pursuit of wealth characterised both societies. He

also laid great emphasis on the fact that the Yurok could be classed as primitive capitalists since they admitted private control of the means of production, unlike most other primitive peoples. Well, it is true that Yurok individuals laid claim to fishing and berry sites and that these could in the last resort be transferred from one individual to another in settlement of debts. But this is a very special pleading if it is to be the basis for classing the economy as capitalist. Such transfers only took place exceptionally as a kind of foreclosure when a man had no shell money or other movable wealth to pay big debts, and it is obvious that there was no regular market in real estate. The debts which Yurok normally incurred were not commercial debts but debts of honour. Cora Dubois has given an illuminating account of neighbouring peoples where the fierce competition for prestige was played in a sphere more or less insulated from the subsistence sphere of the economy. It is much more significant for understanding their idea of female pollution that for the Yurok men there was a real sense in which pursuit of wealth and of women were contradictory.

We have traced this Delilah complex, the belief that women weaken or betray, in various extreme forms among the New Guinea Mae Enga and among the Lele of the Congo and the Yurok Indians of California. Where it occurs we find that men's anxieties about women's behaviour are justified and that the situation of male/female relations is so biased that women are cast as betrayers from the start.

It is not always the men who are afraid of sex pollution. For the sake of symmetry we should look at one example where it is the women who behave as if sexual activity were highly dangerous. Audrey Richards says that the Bemba of Northern Rhodesia behave as if they were obsessed by fear of sexual impurity. But she notes that this is culturally standardised behaviour, and in fact no fears seem to check their individual freedom. At the cultural level the fear of sexual intercourse seems dominant to an extent 'which cannot be exaggerated'. At the personal level there is 'the open pleasure in sex relations which the Bemba express' (1956, p. 154).

In other places sexual pollution is incurred by direct contact, but here it is held to be mediated by contact with fire. There is no danger in seeing or touching a sexually active, unpurified person, someone hot with sex, as the Bemba say. But let such a

person come near a fire and any food cooked on those flames is dangerously contaminated.

It takes two to have sexual intercourse, but only one to cook a meal. By supposing the pollution to be transmitted through cooked food responsibility is firmly fixed on the Bemba women. A Bemba woman has to be continually alert to protect her cooking hearth from the contact of any adult who may have had sexual intercourse without ritual purification. The danger is lethal. Any child who eats food cooked on a contaminated fire may die. A Bemba mother is kept busy putting out suspect fires and lighting new, pure ones.

Although the Bemba believe that all sexual activity is dangerous, the bias of their beliefs points to adultery as the real, practical danger. A married couple are able to administer ritual purification, each for the other, after every sexual act. But an adulterer cannot be purified unless he can ask his wife to help, as it is not a solo rite.

Dr. Richards does not tell us how the impurity of adultery is ever cancelled or how, in the long term, the adulteress feeds her own children. These beliefs, she assures us, do not deter them from adultery. So dangerous adulterers are thought to be at large. Though they may try conscientiously not to touch hearths where infant food is being cooked, they always remain a potential public danger.

Notice that in this society the women are more anxious than the men about sexual pollution. If their children die (and the infant mortality rate is very high) they can be blamed for carelessness by the men. In Nyasaland among the Yao and Cewa a similar complex of beliefs is expressed concerning pollution of salt. All three tribes reckon descent in the female line, and in all three tribes the men are supposed to leave their natal village and join each the village of his wife. This gives a pattern of village structure by which a core of lineally related females attracts men from other villages to settle as their husbands. The future of the village as a political unit depends on keeping these male outsiders living there. But we would expect the men to have much less interest in building a stable marriage. The same rule of matrilineal succession turns their interest to their sisters' children. Though the village is built on the conjugal tie, the matrilineal lineage is not. The men are brought to the village by marriage, the women are born in it.

Throughout Central Africa the idea of the good village which grows and endures is a value strongly held by men and women. But the women have a double interest in keeping their husbands. A Bemba woman fulfils her most satisfying role when, in middle life, as a matriarch in her own village she can expect to grow old surrounded by her daughters and her daughters' daughters. But if a Bemba man finds the early years of marriage irksome, he will simply leave his wife and go home (Richards, p. 41). Moreover, if all the men go, or even half of them, the village is no longer viable as an economic unit. The division of labour puts Bemba women in a particularly dependent position. Indeed, in a region where it is now common for fifty per cent of the adult males to be absent on labour migration, Bemba villages suffered more disintegration than villages of other tribes in Northern Rhodesia (Watson).

The teaching of Bemba girls in their puberty ceremonies helps us to relate these aspects of social structure and of women's ambitions to their fears of sex pollution. Dr. Richards records that the girls are strictly indoctrinated with the need to behave submissively to their husbands; interesting since they are reputed to be particularly overbearing and difficult to manage. The candidates are humiliated while their husbands' virility is extolled. This makes good sense if we consider the Bemba husband's role as analogous, in a contrary way, to that of the Mae Enga wife. He is alone and an outsider in his wife's village. But he is a man and not a woman. If he is not happy he goes away and there is an end to it. He cannot be chastised like a runaway wife. There are no legal adjustments by which the fiction of a legal marriage can be preserved without insisting on the reality. His physical presence in his wife's village is more important to that village than the rights he gains in marriage are to himself, and he cannot be browbeaten into staying there. If the Enga wife is a Delilah, he is Samson in the camp of the Philistines. If he feels humiliated he can bring the pillars of society tumbling down, for if all the husbands were to rise up and go the village would be ruined. No wonder that the women are anxious to flatter and cajole him. No wonder they would like to protect against the effects of adultery. The husband appears not to be dangerous or sinister, but shy, liable to be frightened off, needing to be convinced of his own masculinity and of the dangers thereof. He needs to be assured that his wife is looking after

him, standing by to purify him, watching over the fire. He can do nothing without her, not even approach his own ancestral spirits. In her self-imposed anxieties about sex pollution the Bemba wife appears as the opposite number of the Mae Enga husband. Both find in the marriage situation anxieties concerning the structure of the wider society. If the Bemba woman did not want to stay at home and become an influential matron there, if she were prepared to follow her husband meekly to his village, she could relieve her anxiety about sexual pollution.

In all the examples quoted of this kind of pollution, the basic problem is a case of wanting to have your cake and eat it. The Enga want to fight their enemy clans but yet to marry with their clanswomen. The Lele want to use women as the pawns of men, and yet will take sides with individual women against other men. The Bemba women want to be free and independent and to behave in ways which threaten to wreck their marriages, and yet they want their husbands to stay with them. In each case the dangerous situation which has to be handled with washings and avoidances has in common with the others that the norms of behaviour are contradictory. The left hand is fighting the right hand, as in the Trickster myth of the Winnebago.

Is there any reason why all these examples of the social system at war with itself are drawn from sexual relations? There are many other contexts in which we are led into contradictory behaviour by the normal canons of our culture. National income policy is one modern field in which this sort of analysis could easily be applied. Yet pollution fears do not seem to cluster round contradictions which do not involve sex. The answer may be that no other social pressures are potentially so explosive as those which constrain sexual relations. We can come to sympathise with St. Paul's extraordinary demand that in the new Christian society there should be neither male nor female.

The cases we have considered may throw some light on the exaggerated importance attached to virginity in the early centuries of Christianity. The primitive church of the Acts in its treatment of women was setting a standard of freedom and equality which was against the traditional Jewish custom. The barrier of sex in the Middle East at that time was a barrier of oppression, as St. Paul's words imply:

'Baptised into Christ, you have put on Christ: there can be

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neither Jew, nor Greek, nor bond nor free, there can be neither male nor female, for you are all one man in Christ Jesus.'
(Gal. 3. 28)

In its effort to create a new society which would be free, unbounded and without coercion or contradiction, it was no doubt necessary to establish a new set of positive values. The idea that virginity had a special positive value was bound to fall on good soil in a small persecuted minority group. For we have seen that these social conditions lend themselves to beliefs which symbolise the body as an imperfect container which will only be perfect if it can be made impermeable. Further, the idea of the high value of virginity would be well-chosen for the project of changing the role of the sexes in marriage and in society at large (Wangermann). The idea of woman as the Old Eve, together with fears of sex pollution, belongs with a certain specific type of social organisation. If this social order has to be changed, the Second Eve, a virgin source of redemption crushing evil underfoot is a potent new symbol to present.

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NOW TO CONFRONT our opening question. Can there be any people who confound sacredness with uncleanness? We have seen how the idea of contagion is at work in religion and society. We have seen that powers are attributed to any structure of ideas, and that rules of avoidance make a visible public recognition of its boundaries. But this is not to say that the sacred is unclean. Each culture must have its own notions of dirt and defilement which are contrasted with its notions of the positive structure which must not be negated. To talk about a confused blending of the Sacred and the Unclean is outright nonsense. But it still remains true that religions often sacralise the very unclean things which have been rejected with abhorrence. We must, therefore, ask how dirt, which is normally destructive, sometimes becomes creative.

First, we note that not all unclean things are used constructively in ritual. It does not suffice for something to be unclean for it to be treated as potent for good. In Israel it was unthinkable that unclean things, such as corpses and excreta could be incorporated into the Temple ritual, but only blood, and only blood shed in sacrifice. Among the Oyo Yoruba where the left hand is used for unclean work and it is deeply insulting to proffer the left hand, normal rituals sacralise the precedence of the right side, especially dancing to the right. But in the ritual of the great Ogboni cult initiates must knot their garments on the left side and dance only to the left (Morton-Williams, p. 369). Incest is a pollution among the Bushong, but an act of ritual incest is part of the sacralisation of their king and he claims that

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he is the filth of the nation: 'Moi, ordure, nyec' (Vansina, p. 103). And so on. Though it is only specific individuals on specified occasions who can break the rules, it is still important to ask why these dangerous contacts are often required in rituals.

One answer lies in the nature of dirt itself. The other lies in the nature of metaphysical problems and of particular kinds of reflections which call for expression.

To deal with dirt first. In the course of any imposing of order, whether in the mind or in the external world, the attitude to rejected bits and pieces goes through two stages. First they are recognisably out of place, a threat to good order, and so are regarded as objectionable and vigorously brushed away. At this stage they have some identity: they can be seen to be unwanted bits of whatever it was they came from, hair or food or wrappings. This is the stage at which they are dangerous; their half-identity still clings to them and the clarity of the scene in which they obtrude is impaired by their presence. But a long process of pulverizing, dissolving and rotting awaits any physical things that have been recognised as dirt. In the end, all identity is gone. The origin of the various bits and pieces is lost and they have entered into the mass of common rubbish. It is unpleasant to poke about in the refuse to try to recover anything, for this revives identity. So long as identity is absent, rubbish is not dangerous. It does not even create ambiguous perceptions since it clearly belongs in a defined place, a rubbish heap of one kind or another. Even the bones of buried kings rouse little awe and the thought that the air is full of the dust of corpses of bygone races has no power to move. Where there is no differentiation there is no defilement.

'They outnumber the living, but where are all their bones?
For every man alive there are a million dead,
Has their dust gone into earth that it is never seen?
There should be no air to breathe, with it so thick,
No space for wind to blow or rain to fall:
Earth should be a cloud of dust, a soil of bones,
With no room even for our skeletons.
It is wasted time to think of it, to count its grains,
When all are alike and there is no difference in them.'

(S. Sitwell, Agamemnon's Tomb)

In this final stage of total disintegration, dirt is utterly un-

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differentiated. Thus a cycle has been completed. Dirt was created by the differentiating activity of mind, it was a by-product of the creation of order. So it started from a state of non-differentiation; all through the process of differentiating its role was to threaten the distinctions made; finally it returns to its true indiscriminable character. Formlessness is therefore an apt symbol of beginning and of growth as it is of decay.

On this argument everything that is said to explain the revivifying role of water in religious symbolism can also apply to dirt:

'In water everything is "dissolved", every "form" is broken up, everything that has happened ceases to exist; nothing that was before remains after immersion in water, not an outline, not a "sign", not an event. Immersion is the equivalent, at the human level, of death at the cosmic level, of the cataclysm (the Flood) which periodically dissolves the world into the primeval ocean. Breaking up all forms, doing away with the past, water possesses this power of purifying, of regenerating, of giving new birth. . . . Water purifies and regenerates because it nullifies the past, and restores—even if only for a moment—the integrity of the dawn of things.' (Eliade, 1958, p. 194)

In the same book Eliade goes on to assimilate with water two other symbols of renewal which we can, without labouring the point, equally associate with dust and corruption. One is symbolism of darkness and the other orgiastic celebration of the New Year (pp. 398-9).

In its last phase then, dirt shows itself as an apt symbol of creative formlessness. But it is from its first phase that it derives its force. The danger which is risked by boundary transgression is power. Those vulnerable margins and those attacking forces which threaten to destroy good order represent the powers inhering in the cosmos. Ritual which can harness these for good is harnessing power indeed.

So much for the aptness of the symbol itself. Now for the living situations to which it applies, and which are irremediably subject to paradox. The quest for purity is pursued by rejection. It follows that when purity is not a symbol but something lived, it must be poor and barren. It is part of our condition that the purity for which we strive and sacrifice so much turns out to be hard and dead as a stone when we get it. It is all very well for the poet to praise winter as the

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'Paragon of art,
That kills all forms of life and feeling
Save what is pure and will survive.'
(Roy Campbell)

It is another thing to try and make over our existence into an unchanging lapidary form. Purity is the enemy of change, of ambiguity and compromise. Most of us indeed would feel safer if our experience could be hard-set and fixed in form. As Sartre wrote so bitterly of the anti-semitic:

'How can anyone choose to reason falsely? It is simply the old yearning for impermeability . . . there are people who are attracted by the permanence of stone. They would like to be solid and impenetrable, they do not want change: for who knows what change might bring? . . . It is as if their own existence were perpetually in suspense. But they want to exist in all ways at once, and all in one instant. They have no wish to acquire ideas, they want them to be innate . . . they want to adopt a mode of life in which reasoning and the quest for truth play only a subordinate part, in which nothing is sought except what has already been found, in which one never becomes anything else but what one already was.' (1948)

This diatribe implies a division between ours and the rigid black and white thinking of the anti-semitic. Whereas, of course, the yearning for rigidity is in us all. It is part of our human condition to long for hard lines and clear concepts. When we have them we have to either face the fact that some realities elude them, or else blind ourselves to the inadequacy of the concepts.

The final paradox of the search for purity is that it is an attempt to force experience into logical categories of non-contradiction. But experience is not amenable and those who make the attempt find themselves led into contradiction.

Where sexual purity is concerned it is obvious that if it is to imply no contact between the sexes it is not only a denial of sex, but must be literally barren. It also leads to contradiction. To wish all women to be chaste at all times goes contrary to other wishes and if followed consistently leads to inconveniences of the kind to which Mae Enga men submit. High-born girls of 17th century Spain found themselves in a dilemma in which dishonour stood on either horn. St. Theresa of Avila was brought up in a society in which the seduction of a girl had to be avenged

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by her brother or father. So if she received a lover she risked dishonour and the lives of men. But her personal honour required her to be generous and not to withhold herself from her lover, as it was unthinkable to shun lovers altogether. There are many other examples of how the quest for purity creates problems and some curious solutions.

One solution is to enjoy purity at second hand. Something of a vicarious satisfaction gave its aura, no doubt, to the respect for virginity in early Christendom, gives extra zest to the Nambudiri Brahmins when they enclose their sisters, and enhances the prestige of Brahmins among lower castes in general. In certain chiefdoms the Pende of the Kasai expect their chiefs to live in sexual continence. Thus one man conserves the wellbeing of the chiefdom on behalf of his polygamous subjects. To ensure no lapse on the part of the chief, who is admittedly past his prime when installed, his subjects fix a penis sheath on him for life (de Sausberghe).

Sometimes the claim to superior purity is based on deceit. The adult men of the Chagga tribe used to pretend that at initiation their anus was blocked for life. Initiated men were supposed never to need to defecate, unlike women and children who remained subject to the exigency of their bodies (Raum). Imagine the complications into which this pretence led Chagga men. The moral of all this is that the facts of existence are a chaotic jumble. If we select from the body's image a few aspects which do not offend, we must be prepared to suffer for the distortion. The body is not a slightly porous jug. To switch the metaphor, a garden is not a tapestry; if all the weeds are removed, the soil is impoverished. Somehow the gardener must preserve fertility by returning what he has taken out. The special kind of treatment which some religions accord to anomalies and abominations to make them powerful for good is like turning weeds and lawn cuttings into compost.

This is the general outline for an answer to why pollutions are often used in renewal rites.

Whenever a strict pattern of purity is imposed on our lives it is either highly uncomfortable or it leads into contradiction if closely followed, or it leads to hypocrisy. That which is negated is not thereby removed. The rest of life, which does not tidily fit the accepted categories, is still there and demands attention. The body, as we have tried to show, provides a basic scheme for

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all symbolism. There is hardly any pollution which does not have some primary physiological reference. As life is in the body it cannot be rejected outright. And as life must be affirmed, the most complete philosophies, as William James put it, must find some ultimate way of affirming that which has been rejected.

'If we admit that evil is an essential part of our being and the key to the interpretation of our life, we load ourselves down with a difficulty that has always proved burdensome in philosophies of religion. Theism, wherever it has erected itself into a systematic philosophy of the universe, has shown a reluctance to let God be anything less than All-in-All . . . at variance with popular theism (is a philosophy) which is frankly pluralistic . . . the universe compounded of many original principles . . . God is not necessarily responsible for the existence of evil. The gospel of healthy-mindedness casts its vote distinctly for this pluralistic view. Whereas the monistic philosopher finds himself more or less bound to say, as Hegel said, that everything actual is rational, and that evil, as an element dialectically required must be pinned in, and kept and consecrated and have a function awarded to it in the final system of truth, healthy-mindedness refuses to say anything of the sort. Evil, it says, is emphatically irrational, and *not* to be pinned in, or preserved, or consecrated in any final system of truth. It is a pure abomination to the Lord, an alien unreality, a waste element, to be sloughed off and negated . . . the ideal, so far from being co-extensive with the actual, is a mere extract from the actual, marked by its deliverance from all contact with this diseased, inferior, excrementitious stuff.

Here we have the interesting notion . . . of there being elements of the universe which may make no rational whole in conjunction with the other elements, and which, from the point of view of any system which those elements make up, can only be considered so much irrelevance and accident—so much "dirt" as it were, and matter out of place.' (p. 129)

This splendid passage invites us to compare dirt-affirming with dirt-rejecting philosophies. If it were possible to make such a comparison between primitive cultures, what would we expect to find? Norman Brown has suggested (see Chapter 8) that primitive magic is an escape from reality, on a par with infantile sexual fantasies. If this were right we should expect to find the majority of primitive cultures lined up with Christian Science,

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the only example of healthy-mindedness which William James described. But instead of consistent dirt-rejecting, we find the extraordinary examples of dirt-affirmation with which this chapter started. In a given culture it seems that some kinds of behaviour or natural phenomena are recognised as utterly wrong by all the principles which govern the universe. There are different kinds of impossibilities, anomalies, bad mixings and abominations. Most of the items receive varying degrees of condemnation and avoidance. Then suddenly we find that one of the most abominable or impossible is singled out and put into a very special kind of ritual frame that marks it off from other experience. The frame ensures that the categories which the normal avoidances sustain are not threatened or affected in any way. Within the ritual frame the abomination is then handled as a source of tremendous power. On William James's terms, such ritual mixing up and composting of polluting things would provide the basis of 'more complete religion'.

'It may indeed be that no religious reconciliation with the absolute totality of things is possible. Some evils, indeed, are ministerial to higher forms of good, but it may be that there are forms of evil so extreme as to enter into no good system whatsoever, and that, in respect of such evil, dumb submission or neglect to notice is the only practical resource. . . . But . . . since the evil facts are as genuine parts of nature as the good ones, the philosophic presumption should be that they have some rational significance, and that systematic healthy-mindedness, failing as it does to accord to sorrow, pain and death any positive and active attention whatever, is formally less complete than systems that try at least to include these elements in their scope. The completest religions would therefore seem to be those in which the pessimistic elements are best developed . . .'

(p. 161)

Here we seem to have the outline of a programme for comparative religion. It would be to their own cost that anthropologists should neglect their duty of drawing up a taxonomy of tribal religions. But we find that it is not a simple matter to work out the best principles for distinguishing the 'incomplete and optimistic' religions from the 'more complete and pessimistic' ones. Problems of method loom large. Obviously one would have to be meticulously scrupulous in cataloguing all the ritual avoid-

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ances in any particular religion and in leaving nothing out. Beyond that, what other rules would objective scholarship need, to distinguish different kinds of religion according to these general criteria?

The answer is that the task is utterly beyond the scope of objective scholarship. This is not for the technical reason that the fieldwork is missing. Indeed, the scantier the field research the more practicable the comparative project appears. The reason lies in the nature of the material itself. All live religions are many things. The formal ritual of public occasions teaches one set of doctrine. There is no reason to suppose that its message is necessarily consistent with those taught in private rituals, or that all public rituals are consistent with one another, nor all private rituals. There is no guarantee that the ritual is homogeneous, and if it is not, only the subjective intuition of the observer can say whether the total effect is optimistic or pessimistic. He may follow some rules for arriving at his conclusion; he may decide to add up each side of a balance sheet of evil-rejecting and evil-affirming rites, scoring each one equally. Or he may weight the score according to the importance of the rites. But whatever rule he follows he is bound to be arbitrary. And even then he has only come to the end of the formal ritual. There are other beliefs which may not be ritualised at all, and which may altogether obscure the message of the rites. People do not necessarily listen to their preachers. Their real guiding beliefs may be cheerfully optimistic and dirt-rejecting while they appear to subscribe to a nobly pessimistic religion.

If I were to decide where the Lele culture should be classed on William James' scheme, I would be in a quandary. These are a people who are very pollution-conscious in secular and ritual affairs. Their habitual separating and classifying comes out nowhere so clearly as in their approach to animal food. Most of their cosmology and much of their social order is reflected in their animal categories. Certain animals and parts of animals are appropriate for men to eat, others for women, others for children, others for pregnant women. Others are regarded as totally inedible. One way or another the animals which they reject as unsuitable for human or female consumption turn out to be ambiguous according to their scheme of classification. Their animal taxonomy separates night from day animals; animals of the above (birds, squirrels and monkeys) from animals of

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the below: water animals and land animals. Those whose behaviour is ambiguous are treated as anomalies of one kind or another and are struck off someone's diet sheet. For instance, flying squirrels are not unambiguously birds nor animals, and so they are avoided by discriminating adults. Children might eat them. No woman worthy of the name would eat them, and men only when driven by hunger. No penalties sanction this attitude.

One can schematise their main divisions as two concentric circles. The circle of human society encloses men as hunters and diviners, women and children and also, anomalously, animals which live in human society. These non-humans in the village are either domesticated animals, dogs and chickens, or unwanted parasites, rats and lizards. It is unthinkable to eat dogs, rats or lizards. Human's meat should be the game brought in from the wild by the hunters' arrows and traps. Chickens present something of a problem in casuistry which the Lele solve by regarding it unseemly for women to eat chicken, though the meat is possible and even good food for men. Goats, which are recently introduced, they rear for exchange with other tribes and do not eat.

All this squeamishness and discrimination would, if consistently carried through, make their culture look like a dirt-rejecting one. But it is what happens in the final count that matters. For the main part, their formal rituals are based on discrimination of categories, human, animal, male, female, young, old, etc. But they lead through a series of cults which allow their initiates to eat what is normally dangerous and forbidden, carnivorous animals, chest of game and young animals. In an inner cult a hybrid monster, which in secular life one would expect them to abhor, is reverently eaten by initiates and taken to be the most powerful source of fertility. At this point one sees that this is, after all, to continue the gardening metaphor, a composting religion. That which is rejected is ploughed back for a renewal of life.

The two worlds, human and animal, are not at all independent. Most of the animals exist, as the Lele think, to be the quarry of Lele hunters. Some animals, burrowing or nocturnal, or water-loving, are spirit animals who have a special connection with the non-animal inhabitants of the animal world, the spirits. On these spirits humans depend for prosperity and fertility

and healing. The normal movement is for humans to go out and get what they need from the animal sphere. Animals and spirits characteristically are shy of humans and do not come out spontaneously into the human world. Men, as hunters and diviners, exploit both aspects of this other world, for meat and medicines. Women, as weak and vulnerable, are those who specially need male action in the other world. Women avoid spirit animals and do not eat their meat. Women are never hunters and only become diviners if they are born as, or bear, twins. In the interaction of the two worlds their role is passive, and yet they particularly need the help of the spirits, since women are prone to barrenness, or, if they conceive, to miscarriage, and the spirits can provide remedies.

Apart from this normal relation of male attack and male ritual on behalf of women and children, there are two kinds of mediating bridges between the humans and the wild. One is for evil and the other for good. The dangerous bridge is made by a wicked transfer of allegiance by humans who become sorcerers. They turn their back on their own kind and run with the hunted, fight against the hunters, work against diviners to achieve death instead of healing. They have moved across to the animal sphere and they have caused some animals to move in from the animal to the human sphere. These latter are their carnivorous familiars, who snatch chickens from the human village and do the sorcerers' work there.

The other ambiguous mode of being is concerned with fertility. It is the nature of humans to reproduce with pain and danger and their normal births are single. By contrast, it is thought that animals are naturally fecund; they reproduce without pain or danger and their normal births occur in couples or in larger litters. When a human couple produce twins or triplets they have been able to break through the normal human limitations. In a way they are anomalous, but in the most auspicious possible way. They have a counterpart in the animal world and this is the benign monster to which Lele pay formal cult, the pangolin or scaly ant-eater. Its being contradicts all the most obvious animal categories. It is scaly like a fish, but it climbs trees. It is more like an egg-laying lizard than a mammal, yet it suckles its young. And most significant of all, unlike other small mammals its young are born singly. Instead of running away or attacking, it curls in a modest ball and waits for the

hunter to pass. The human twin parents and the forest pangolin, both are ritualised as sources of fertility. Instead of being abhorred and utterly anomalous, the pangolin is eaten in solemn ceremony by its initiates who are thereby enabled to minister fertility to their kind.

This is a mystery of mediation from an animal sphere which parallels the many fascinating human mediators described by Eliade in his account of Shamanism. In their descriptions of the pangolin's behaviour and in their attitude to its cult, Lele say things which uncannily recall passages of the Old Testament, interpreted in the Christian tradition. Like Abraham's ram in the thicket and like Christ, the pangolin is spoken of as a voluntary victim. It is not caught, but rather it comes to the village. It is a kingly victim: the village treats its corpse as a living chief and requires the behaviour of respect for a chief on pain of future disaster. If its rituals are faithfully performed the women will conceive and animals will enter hunters' traps and fall to their arrows. The mysteries of the pangolin are sorrowful mysteries:

'Now I will enter the house of affliction,' they sing as initiates carry its corpse round the village. No more of its cult songs were told to me, except this tantalising line. This cult has obviously very many different kinds of significance. Here I limit myself to commenting on two aspects: One is the way it achieves a union of opposites which is a source of power for good; the other is the seemingly voluntary submission of the animal to its own death.

In Chapter 1, I explained why, for the purposes of studying pollution, I would need a broader approach to religion. Defining it as belief in spiritual beings is too narrow. Above all the subject of this chapter is impossible to discuss except in the light of men's common urge to make a unity of all their experience and to overcome distinctions and separations in acts of at-onement. The dramatic combination of opposites is a psychologically satisfying theme full of scope for interpretation at varying levels. But at the same time any ritual which expresses the happy union of opposites is also an apt vehicle for essentially religious themes. The Lele pangolin cult is only one example of which many more could be cited, of cults which invite their initiates to turn round and confront the categories on which their whole surrounding culture has been built up and to recognise them

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for the fictive, man-made, arbitrary creations that they are. Throughout their daily, and especially their ritual life the Lele are preoccupied with form. Endlessly they enact the discriminations by which their society and its cultural environment exist, and methodically they punish or attribute misfortune to breaches of avoidance rules. The burden of the rules may not be oppressive. But by a conscious effort they respond through them to the idea that creatures of the sky are different in nature from creatures of the earth, so that it is held dangerous for a pregnant woman to eat the latter and nourishing for her to eat the former, and so on. As they prepare to eat they visibly enact the central discriminations of their cosmos no less than the ancient Israelites enacted a liturgy of holiness.

Then comes the inner cult of all their ritual life, in which the initiates of the pangolin, immune to dangers that would kill uninitiated men, approach, hold, kill and eat the animal which in its own existence combines all the elements which Lele culture keeps apart. If they could choose among our philosophies the one most congenial to the moments of that rite, the pangolin initiates would be primitive existentialists. By the mystery of that rite they recognise something of the fortuitous and conventional nature of the categories in whose mould they have their experience. If they consistently shunned ambiguity they would commit themselves to division between ideal and reality. But they confront ambiguity in an extreme and concentrated form. They dare to grasp the pangolin and put it to ritual use, proclaiming that this has more power than any other rites. So the pangolin cult is capable of inspiring a profound meditation on the nature of purity and impurity and on the limitation on human contemplation of existence.

Not only does the pangolin overcome the distinctions in the universe. Its power for good is released by its dying and this it seems to take on itself deliberately. If their religion were all of a piece we might from the foregoing class the Lele as a dirt-affirming religion and expect them to face affliction with resignation, and to make death the occasion of comforting rituals of atonement and renewal. But the metaphysical notions which are all very well in the separate ritual frame of the pangolin cult are another matter when actual death has struck a member of the family. Then the Lele utterly reject the death that has occurred.

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It is often said that in this African tribe or that the people do not recognise the possibility of natural death. The Lele are not fools. They recognise that life must come to an end. But if matters were to take their natural course they would expect everyone to live out his natural span and to sink slowly from senility to the grave. When this happens they rejoice, for such an old man or woman has triumphed over all the pitfalls that lay in the way and achieved completion. But this rarely happens. Most people, according to Lele are struck down by sorcery long before they reach their goal. And sorcery does not belong in the natural order of things as Lele see it. Sorcery was a late-coming afterthought, more an accident in creation. In this aspect of their culture they are a good example of the healthy-mindedness which William James described. For the Lele evil is not to be included in the total system of the world, but to be expunged without compromise. All evil is caused by sorcery. They can clearly visualise what reality would be like without sorcery and they continually strive to achieve it by eliminating sorcerers.

A strong millennial tendency is implicit in the way of thinking of any people whose metaphysics push evil out of the world of reality. Among the Lele the millennial tendency bursts into flame in their recurrent anti-sorcery cults. When a new cult arrives it burns up for the time being the whole apparatus of their traditional religion. The elaborate system of anomalies rejected and affirmed which their cults present is regularly superseded by the latest anti-sorcery cult which is nothing less than an attempt to introduce the millenium at once (see Douglas in Middleton & Winter).

Thus we have to reckon with two tendencies in Lele religion: one ready to tear away even the veils imposed by the necessities of thought and to look at reality direct; the other a denial of necessity, a denial of the place of pain and even of death in reality. So William James' problem is turned into the question of which tendency is the stronger.

If the place of the pangolin cult in their world view is what I have described, one would expect it to be slightly orgiastic, a temporary destruction of apollonian form. Perhaps in its origin its feast of communion was a more dionysiac occasion. But there is nothing remotely uncontrolled about Lele rites. They make no use of drugs, dances, hypnosis or any of the arts by which

the conscious control of the body is relaxed. Even the one type of diviner who is supposed to be in direct trance communion with the spirits of the forest, and who sings to them all night when they visit him, sings in a staid, austere style. These people are much more concerned with what their religion can deliver in the way of fertility, cures and hunting success than in perfecting man and achieving religious union in the fullest sense. Most of their rites are truly magic rites, performed for the sake of a specific cure or on the eve of a particular hunt, and intended to yield an immediate tangible success. Most of the time the Lele diviners seem no better than a lot of Aladdins rubbing their magic lamps and expecting marvels to take shape. Only their initiation rites into this cult give a glimpse of another level of religious insight. But the teaching of these rites is overlain by the passionate absorption of the people in sorcery and anti-sorcery. Strong political and personal issues hang on the outcome of any sorcery accusation. The rites which detect sorcerers or acquit them, defend against them or restore what they have damaged, these are the rites which steal the public interest. Strong social pressures force people to blame each death on sorcery. Thus it is that whatever their formal religion may say about the nature of the universe and about the place of chaos, suffering and disintegration in reality, the Lele are socially committed to a different view. On this view evil belongs outside the normal scheme of things; it is not part of reality. So the Lele seem to wear the controlled smile of Christian Scientists. If they should be classified not according to their cultic practices, but according to the beliefs which periodically overthrow them, they appear to be frankly healthy-minded, dirt-rejecting, untouched by the lesson of the gentle pangolin.

It would be unfair to take the Lele as an example of a people who try to evade the whole subject of death. I cite their case mainly to show the difficulty of assessing a cultural attitude to such things. I learnt very little about their esoteric doctrines because they were carefully guarded secrets of male cult members. This esotericism in itself is relevant. Lele religious secretiveness is a clear contrast with the much more open rules of admission and publicity of the cultic ritual of the Ndembu, living to the south-east of them. If priests for various social reasons keep their doctrines secret, the anthropologist's misreporting is the least of the evils that can follow. Sorcery fears

are less likely to overlay religious teaching, if the religious doctrine is more widely published.

To the Lele, then, it seems that the main reflections to which deaths give rise are thoughts of revenge. Any particular death is treated as unnecessary, due to a wicked crime on the part of a depraved anti-social human being. Just as the focus of all pollution symbolism is the body, the final problem to which the perspective of pollution leads is bodily disintegration. Death presents a challenge to any metaphysical system, but the challenge need not be squarely met. I am suggesting that in treating each death as the outcome of an individual act of treachery and human malice the Lele are evading its metaphysical implications. Their pangolin cult suggests a meditation on the inadequacy of the categories of human thought, but only a few are invited to make it and it is not related explicitly to their experience of death.

It may well seem that I have made too much of the Lele pangolin cult. There are no Lele books of theology or philosophy to state the meaning of the cult. The metaphysical implications have not been expressed to me in so many words by Lele, nor did I even eavesdrop on a conversation between diviners covering this ground. Indeed I have recorded (1957) that I started on the cosmic patterning approach to Lele animal symbolism because I was frustrated in my direct enquiries seeking reasons for their food avoidances. They would never say, 'We avoid anomalous animals because in defying the categories of our universe they arouse deep feelings of disquiet.' But on each avoided animal they would launch into disquisitions on its natural history. The full list of anomalies made clear the simple taxonomic principles being used. But the pangolin was always spoken of as the most incredible monster of all. On first hearing it sounded such a fantastic beast that I could not believe in its existence. On asking why it should be the focus of a fertility cult, I was again frustrated: this was a mystery of the ancestors, way back long ago.

What kind of evidence for the meaning of this cult, or of any cult, can be sensibly demanded? It can have many different levels and kinds of meaning. But the one on which I ground my argument is the meaning which emerges out of a pattern in which the parts can incontestably be shown to be regularly related. No one member of the society is necessarily aware of

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the whole pattern, any more than speakers are able to be explicit about the linguistic patterns they employ. Luc de Heusch has analysed my material and shown that the pangolin concentrates in its being more of the discriminations central to Lele culture than I myself had realised. I can perhaps justify my interpretation of why they ritually kill and eat it by showing that in other primitive religions similar metaphysical perspectives are recorded. Furthermore, systems of belief are not likely to survive unless they offer reflections on a more profound plane than used to be credited to primitive cultures.

Most religions promise by their rites to make some changes in external events. Whatever promises they make, death must somehow be recognised as inevitable. It is usual to expect that the greatest metaphysical development goes with the most pessimism and contempt of the good things of this life. If religions such as Buddhism teach that individual life is a little thing and that its pleasures are transient and unsatisfying, then they are in a strong philosophical position for contemplating death in the context of the cosmic purpose of an all-pervading Existence. By and large primitive religions and the ordinary layman's acceptance of more elaborate religious philosophies coincide: they are less concerned with philosophy and more interested in the material benefits which ritual and moral conformity can bring. But it follows that those religions which have most emphasised the instrumental effects of their ritual are most vulnerable to disbelief. If the faithful have come to think of rites as means to health and prosperity, like so many magic lamps to be worked by rubbing, there comes a day when the whole ritual apparatus must seem an empty mockery. Somewhere the beliefs must be safeguarded against disappointment or they may not hold assent.

One way of protecting ritual from scepticism is to suppose that an enemy, within or without the community, is continually undoing its good effect. On these lines responsibility may be given to amoral demons or to witches and sorcerers. But this is only a feeble protection for it affirms that the faithful are right in treating ritual as an instrument of their desires, but confesses the weakness of the ritual for achieving its purpose. Thus religions which explain evil by reference to demonology or sorcery are failing to offer a way of comprehending the whole of existence. They come close to an optimistic, healthy-minded,

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pluralistic view of the universe. And curiously enough, the prototype of healthy-minded philosophies as William James described them, Christian Science, was prone to supplement its inadequate approach to evil by a kind of demonology invented *ad hoc*. I am grateful to Rosemary Harris for giving me the reference to Mary Baker Eddy's belief in 'malicious animal magnetism' which she held accountable for evils she could not ignore (Wilson, 1961, pp. 126-7).

Another way of protecting the belief that religion can deliver prosperity here and now is to make ritual efficacy depend on difficult conditions. On the one hand the rite may be very complicated and difficult to perform: if the least detail gets into the wrong order, the whole thing is invalid. This is a narrowly instrumental approach, magical in the most pejorative sense. On the other hand the success of the rite may depend on the moral conditions being correct: the performer and audience should be in a proper state of mind, free of guilt, free of ill-will and so on. A moral requirement for the efficacy of ritual can bind the believers to the highest purposes of their religion. The prophets of Israel, crying 'Doom, Doom, Doom!' did much more than provide an explanation of why the rituals failed to give peace and prosperity. No one who heard them could take a narrowly magical view of ritual.

The third way is for the religious teaching to change its tack. In most everyday contexts it tells the faithful that their fields will prosper and their families flourish if they obey the moral code and perform the proper ritual services. Then, in another context, all this pious effort is disparaged, contempt is thrown on right behaviour, materialistic objectives are suddenly despised. We cannot say that they suddenly become religions of non-attachment, promising only disillusionment in this life. But they travel some way along this path. Thus, for instance, the Ndembu initiates of Chihamba are made to kill the white spirit that they have learnt is their grandfather, source of all fertility and health. Having killed him, they are told they are innocent and must rejoice (Turner, 1962). Ndembu daily ritual is very intensively performed as the instrument for gaining good health and good hunting. Chihamba, their most important cult, is their moment of disillusion. By it their other cults do not achieve immunity from discredit. But Turner insists that the object of the Chihamba rituals is to use paradox and contradiction to express

truths which are inexpressible in any other terms. In Chihamba they confront a more profound reality and measure their objectives by a different standard.

I am tempted to suppose that very many primitive religions which offer material success with one hand, with the other protect themselves from crude experiment by extending their perspective in much the same way. For a narrow focus on material health and happiness makes a religion vulnerable to disbelief. And so we can suppose that the very logic of promises discreditably unfulfilled may lead cult officials to meditate on wider, profounder themes, such as the mystery of evil and of death. If this is true we would expect the most materialistic-seeming cults to stage at some central point in the ritual cycle a cult of the paradox of the ultimate unity of life and death. At such a point pollution of death, treated in a positive creative role, can help to close the metaphysical gap.

We can take for one illustration the death ritual of the Nyakyusa, who live north of Lake Nyasa. They explicitly associate dirt with madness; those who are mad eat filth. There are two kinds of madness, one is sent by God and the other comes from neglect of ritual. Thus they explicitly see ritual as the source of discrimination and of knowledge. Whatever the cause of madness, the symptoms are the same. The madman eats filth and throws off his clothes. Filth is listed as meaning excreta, mud, frogs: 'the eating of filth by madmen is like the filth of death, those faeces are the corpse' (Wilson, 1957, pp. 53, 80-1). So ritual conserves sanity and life: madness brings filth and is a kind of death. Ritual separates death from life: 'the dead, if not separated from the living bring madness on them'. This is a very perspicacious idea of how ritual functions, echoing what we have already seen in Chapter 4, p. 64. Now the Nyakyusa are not tolerant of filth but highly pollution-conscious. They observe elaborate restrictions to avoid contact with bodily rejects which they regard as very dangerous:

'UBANYALI, filth, is held to come from the sex fluids, menstruation and child-birth, as well as from a corpse, and the blood of a slain enemy. All are thought to be both disgusting and dangerous and the sex fluids are particularly dangerous for an infant.' (p. 131)

Contact with menstrual blood is dangerous to a man, specially

to a warrior, hence elaborate restrictions on cooking for a man during menstruation.

But in spite of this normal avoidance the central act in the ritual of mourning is actively to welcome filth. They sweep rubbish on to the mourners. 'The rubbish is the rubbish of death, it is dirt. "Let it come now," we say. "Let it not come later, may we never run mad . . ." It means "We have given you everything, we have eaten filth on the hearth." For if one runs mad one eats filth, faeces. . . .' (p. 53). We suspect that there is much more that could be said in the interpretation of this rite. But let us leave it at the point to which the brief remarks of the Nyakusa have taken it: a voluntary embrace of the symbols of death is a kind of prophylactic against the effects of death; the ritual enactment of death is a protection, not against death but against madness (pp. 48-9). On all other occasions they avoid faeces and filth and reckon it a sign of madness not to do so. But in the face of death itself they give up everything, they even claim to have eaten filth as madmen do, in order to keep their reason. Madness will come if they neglect the ritual of freely accepting the corruption of the body; sanity is assured if they perform the ritual.

Another example of death being softened by welcome, if we can put it that way, is the ritual murder by which the Dinka put to death their aged spearmasters. This is the central rite in Dinka religion. All their other rites and bloodily expressive sacrifices pale in significance besides this one which is not a sacrifice. The spearmasters are a hereditary clan of priests. Their divinity, *Flesh*, is a symbol of life, light and truth. Spearmasters may be possessed by the divinity; the sacrifices they perform and blessings they give are more efficacious than other men's. They mediate between their tribe and divinity. The doctrine underlying the ritual of their death is that the spearmaster's life should not be allowed to escape with his last breath from his dying body. By keeping his life in his body his life is preserved; and the spirit of the spearmaster is thus transmitted to his successor for the good of the community. The community can live on as a rational order because of the unafraid self-sacrifice of its priest.

By reputation among foreign travellers this rite was a brutal suffocation of a helpless old man. An intimate study of Dinka religious ideas reveals the central theme to be the old man's

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voluntary choosing of the time, manner and place of his death. The old man himself asks for the death to be prepared for him, he asks for it from his people and on their behalf. He is reverently carried to his grave, and lying in it says his last words to his grieving sons before his natural death is anticipated. By his free, deliberate decision he robs death of the uncertainty of its time and place of coming. His own willing death, ritually framed by the grave itself, is a communal victory for all his people (Lienhardt). By confronting death and grasping it firmly he has said something to his people about the nature of life.

The common element in these two examples of death ritual is the exercise of free, rational choice in undergoing death. Something of the same idea is in the self-immolation of the Lele pangolin, and also in the Ndembu ritual killing of Kavula, since this white spirit is not angry but even pleased to be slain. This is yet another theme which death pollution can express if its sign be reversed from bad to good.

Animal and vegetable life cannot help but play their role in the order of the universe. They have little choice but to live as it is their nature to behave. Occasionally the odd species or individual gets out of line and humans react by avoidance of one kind or another. The very reaction to ambiguous behaviour expresses the expectation that all things shall normally conform to the principles which govern the world. But in their own experience as men, people know that their personal conformity is not so certain. Punishments, moral pressures, rules about not touching and not eating, a firm ritual framework, all these can do something to bring man into harmony with the rest of being. But so long as free consent is withheld, so long is the fulfilment imperfect. Here again we can discern primitive existentialists whose escape from the chain of necessity lies only in the exercise of choice. When someone embraces freely the symbols of death, or death itself, then it is consistent with everything that we have seen so far, that a great release of power for good should be expected to follow.

The old spearmaster giving the sign for his own slaying makes a stiffly ritual act. It has none of the exuberance of St. Francis of Assisi rolling naked in the filth and welcoming his Sister Death. But his act touches the same mystery. If anyone held the idea that death and suffering are not an integral part of nature, the delusion is corrected. If there was a temptation to treat ritual

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as a magic lamp to be rubbed for gaining unlimited riches and power, ritual shows its other side. If the hierarchy of values was crudely material, it is dramatically undermined by paradox and contradiction. In painting such dark themes, pollution symbols are as necessary as the use of black in any depiction whatsoever. Therefore we find corruption enshrined in sacred places and times.

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