

A F R I C A

JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE
OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

VOLUME VI

OCTOBER 1933

NUMBER 4

ZANDE BLOOD-BROTHERHOOD

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I

BLOOD-BROTHERHOOD is a pact or alliance formed between two persons by a ritual act in which each swallows the blood of the other. The pact is one of mutual assistance and is backed by powerful sanctions. It may bind only the two participants to certain obligations, or it may also involve the social groups of which they are members. Alliances based on exchange of blood have been recorded from many parts of the world, especially from Africa where they are exceedingly common. In some tribes the participants drink one another's blood directly from incisions made on their bodies, while in other tribes the blood is swallowed on a piece of meat or ground-nut or coffee-berry. But though the actual method of consumption varies in different cultures the purpose of the rite is always the same, and there is often much similarity between the ways in which it is carried out. Blood-brotherhood is not only widespread throughout Africa but it is also a ceremony which a European may inquire into easily and may even take part in without involving himself in social difficulties. It is the more surprising therefore that descriptive records of the ceremony by which the pact is formed and of the obligations which it entails are so scanty.

'Africa': the Journal of the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures is published by the Institute, but except where otherwise stated the writers of the articles are alone responsible for the opinions expressed.

The present essay is an account of blood-brotherhood among a Central African people, the Azande of the Nile-Uelle Divide.¹ No attempt is made to compare their customs with those of other African peoples. The data recorded here was collected during three expeditions to Central Africa. In its raw state it comprises descriptions by informants, including verbatim transcriptions in Zande text, and observations of one exchange of blood between two Azande and of one exchange of blood between a Zande chief and myself.

A European living among the Azande will soon come across blood-brotherhood and he will meet it again and again in following many lines of inquiry into different social activities. He will probably first encounter the custom when he is still struggling with the initial stages of the language, for he will often hear the word *bakurëmi*, my blood-brother, used as a term of address.² In its primary sense this term of address refers to the person who has drunk the speaker's blood, but it is extended in a secondary sense to embrace all members of this man's clan. Thus if you exchange blood with a member of the Akowe clan all other members of this clan rank as your blood-brothers and you may properly address them as *bakurëmi*, though whether you will actually address them by this term depends on a variety of individual factors such as the conditions under which you are speaking and the degree of intimacy which exists between you and the man whom you are addressing. It follows that a man stands in the position of blood-brother to clans with individual members of which his kin have exchanged blood. The word is commonly extended in a tertiary

¹ Acknowledgements for assistance in carrying out my field-work in Zandeland are made to the Government of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, the Royal Society, and the Trustees of the Laura Spellman Rockefeller Memorial Fund. Readers who wish to know more about the Azande are advised to read Lagae's *Les Azande*. References to other literature have been given in my previous papers in *Africa*. For some reason, doubtless for lack of space, Mgr. Lagae does not describe blood-brotherhood in his monograph on the Azande.

² The word for blood-brother is *bakure*. The possessive suffix of the first person singular is *mi* when speaking of a blood-brother instead of the more usual *re* suffix. Lagae and Plas give *gbakule* as the purer form (*Dictionnaire Zande-Français*, 1925), being derived from *gha*, to cut, and *kule*, blood. In the Sudan *bakure* is the more usual form and is the one which I shall employ in this essay. Gore's dictionary, compiled in the Sudan, gives *bakure* (*Zande and English Dictionary*, 1931). The term *nakurëmi*, my blood-sister, is occasionally used for the wife of a blood-brother.

sense as a term of address to persons with whom neither the speaker nor any of his kin have exchanged blood, a courtesy usage which implies friendly familiarity. These extensions are made in the same way as kinship terms are extended to embrace whole clans and even quite unrelated persons and, in my opinion, the sociological and psychological significance of these extensions is the same in both cases. The extension of the obligations of blood-brotherhood from a blood-brother to members of his clan and the use of blood as the material link between the two partners have given rise to theories which stress the collective nature of the pact as an alliance between two blood-groups. These theories will be treated at the end of this essay.

In pre-European days, when blood-brotherhood and its obligations were held in greater esteem than they are held to-day, a man could not enter into a pact solely on his own initiative, since its clauses bound also his kin, who became subject to its sanctions. He would therefore first consult his father and uncles and would only carry out the rite of blood-brotherhood after he had obtained their consent. It appears that in the past they frequently objected to the proposed alliance, generally on the grounds of some long-standing enmity between the two clans concerned. To-day people care less for the opinions of their kin and will often enter light-heartedly upon an alliance of blood-brotherhood without even informing their senior relatives about the matter beforehand. However, young men usually conform to traditions, and by consulting their family before making an exchange of blood they pay respect to their elders and show that they are taking the obligations and sanctions of the pact seriously. The extent to which custom has crumbled may be gathered from the case of a Zande whom I knew well. One day he told me that when scarcely more than a boy he had exchanged blood with another youth, and when I asked him to which clan his blood-brother belonged he was genuinely ignorant about the matter. I doubt whether it would be easy to discover a duplicate case, but even a single case would be inconceivable in the normal working of Zande society.

A man is also careful to consult the *benge* oracle before committing himself to an exchange of blood in order to ascertain if the proposed pact will be successful or will lead him into difficulties.

Men may enter into a pact for many reasons. In my experience the

motive has generally been to cement already existing bonds of comradeship by giving them a concrete organized form which is backed by sanctions. Friends will assist each other out of sentiment, but little social compulsion attaches to it. There is a pattern of behaviour between friends which is supported by social precept, but this pattern is faint. We may contrast its indistinctness with the clear prominent lines of the behaviour patterns which regulate behaviour between kin. Blood-brotherhood gives to the vague sentiment of friendship, with its indefinite obligations, a status comparable to that of close kin relationship. But, though I have observed that it is often friends of long standing who exchange blood with one another, I do not think that they are ever motivated by purely sentimental reasons. Each knows that the other can assist him in a number of ways. Some advantages which will accrue from the pact are quite specific: thus one partner possesses powerful medicines with which he can supply the other, who may be an efficient smith or hunter, so that he can make return in iron or meat.

Blood is often exchanged solely for commercial purposes. A man who is travelling in foreign countries will make blood-brotherhood with a native, who thereby becomes responsible for his safety since this is explicitly stated in the clauses of the pact. When a man is travelling through a strange district of his own country he will establish a contact which will ensure his safety by finding some one of his clan, or of his mother's clan, to whom he can introduce himself as a kinsman. In a foreign country this is impossible, and here blood-brotherhood takes the place of blood relationship as the traveller's passport. In old days the most frequent use of this kind of passport was to give protection to parties of Azande which sought to gather a magic wood, called *benge*, which is used for oracle consultations. This wood grows only in hostile regions occupied by such peoples as the Mangbetu and Abarambo, and before European occupation of the country its collection was a hazardous undertaking, though risks were considerably lessened by an exchange of blood with one of the natives of the country who, in return for various presents, conducted the travellers to the end of their journey. Exchange of blood in such situations sacralizes and endows with sanctions a politico-economic transaction. As the union of blood-brotherhood is considered sacred by a number of

adjacent tribes, it provides machinery through which trade can be carried on with a minimum assurance of protection for strangers. It is also common for men to make a blood-pact for purposes of trade in which there is no high degree of personal danger. A man living in the heart of Zande country finds difficulty in acquiring various luxuries which are plentiful in distant districts. Thus Azande sometimes make blood-brotherhood with the semi-Zandeized Mbegumba and Mberidi of the extreme north with the purpose of obtaining dried meats and vegetable oils. At the time of the year when these articles of food are abundant the Zande pays his blood-brother a visit and asks him for presents of oil and dried meats. He may bring some articles with him as return gifts or he may just demand them *gine kure*, 'in the path of blood'. In any case his blood-brother will have anticipated the visit and will have reserved part of his surplus oil and flesh to meet the occasion. When he feels inclined the northerner will pay a visit to the centre of Zande country where he will enjoy the hospitality of his blood-brother from whose home he will return laden with one or two spears, or some bark-cloth, or other such articles which are difficult to obtain in his far-off district. In travelling in a foreign country blood-brotherhood gives protection. In seeking an alliance with a man living in a distant part of Zandeland it is an assured base and favoured treatment in economic exchange which is aimed at.

Such exchanges of blood are, however, exceptional. Blood-brotherhood is generally made between neighbours, and while desire for protections and for favoured economic conditions are both factors in any pact, they are only two among other factors which form a complicated mesh of motives, varying with each individual case, as will be evident when I enumerate the clauses of a pact and describe how it works.

I have never come across an instance of a man making blood-brotherhood with a woman, though I have been told that rare alliances have been made between a man and a much loved and trusted wife. This is the only situation in which a pact between members of opposite sexes could occur since all other situations would involve an alliance either with some one else's wife, which would be an adulterous union, or with a female relative, which would be absurd, since they are already united by ties of kinship. It is necessary to say also that it is very

seldom that chiefs exchange blood with commoners, and hence it is seldom that they enter into an alliance of blood-brotherhood at all, since Zande society is divided into only two classes, commoners and chiefs, and the chiefs all belong to one clan and hence are of the same kin. A man cannot exchange blood with his own kin. I do not doubt that alliances between sons of chiefs and commoners occur, though I have not observed them. On the other hand, I have been told of several chiefs of two and three generations ago who made blood covenants with commoner subjects. It is, however, said that the powerful chief Gbudwe, who ruled over a vast area in the Sudan, avoided all such entanglements, and I do not know of any important princes among his sons who departed from this tradition. The reason for their abstinence is obvious and clearly expressed by Azande themselves. Chiefs have to settle cases and dispense justice and direct administration. An alliance of blood would militate against the fairness of their judgements and paralyse their execution. Put concisely, the position is this: the behaviour pattern between blood-brothers (social familiarity and mutual assistance) is incompatible with the behaviour pattern between commoners and chiefs (respect and obligations on the one hand and authority and privilege on the other). Moreover, many clauses of a blood-pact are especially framed with the purpose of circumventing justice, as will be seen in the spells which follow. It is well known to Azande that blood-brotherhood counts little with chiefs when it clashes with their personal and political aims, and there are illustrative cases which tell how chiefs have killed persons to whom they stood as blood-brothers, i.e. people belonging to clans with members of which a chief or some of his relatives have made a covenant of blood. The evidence suggests that in past times when the rule of chiefs was less autocratic and centralized than during the last two generations they made blood pacts with their subjects more frequently than when their political powers developed into untempered despotism.

II

I will now describe the manner in which blood is exchanged to-day as I have been told about the ceremony, have witnessed it, and have participated in it. Two men decide informally that they will meet on

a certain day in the homestead of one of them and will there perform the ceremony. Azande intensely dislike people knowing about their affairs, however innocent they may be, and the participants will inform only their closest relatives and friends about the proposed pact and they will try to avoid publicity in its ritual enactment. Slight preparation is needed, and when you enter the homestead you will see its daily work going on in uninterrupted routine, cooking, carrying of water, sweeping, and the dozen other tasks which women have to perform in order to maintain a homestead in working order. You will certainly find the men under the shelter of a granary if the sun is well up, or round a fire in the centre of the homestead if it is early morning or towards evening. Natives soon forget the presence of an often seen ethnologist and gossip freely among themselves upon every sort of subject. Sometimes the conversation will turn to blood-brotherhood, but you will not receive the impression that their minds are riveted on the ceremony which is about to take place, and you will observe this matter-of-fact attitude running cheek-by-jowl with ritual throughout the ceremony. It is relevant to mention that most Zande magical and religious ceremonies which I have witnessed are remarkable for the absence of that spiritual frame of mind which we Europeans consider appropriate to ritual events. On such occasions the Zande's behaviour, outside the stereotyped ritual acts of the ceremony, can in no way be thought of as sacred.

However, the men have come together for a special purpose and soon one of them will remark, 'Well, we had better get our business done', and his partner will assent and ask if everything is ready. In all probability nothing is ready. The owner of the homestead sends some one to cut some pieces of *banga* wood, or tells his little son to run and ask his mother for a few ground-nuts, and he shouts to his wife to bring some salt. The men continue to sit and talk about local and court news whilst the boy returns with ground-nuts and the wife brings salt and whilst a slight incision is made on the arms or chests of the two partners to the pact so that a few drops of blood ooze out. If the two men have brought relatives with them, these make the incisions and conduct the whole ceremony, but if they prefer to do so the partners make the incisions and conduct the rites themselves. One partner takes a small rectangular piece of *banga* wood, or several

ground-nuts, and soaks them in the blood which oozes from the body of the other. Often the two men consume each other's blood at the same time, each taking some ground-nuts, rubbing them in blood, and dipping them in salt. They eat the nuts with exaggerated relish. When the ground-nuts are used they consume nut and blood together, but when *banga* wood is used they chew the wood into pulp which they spit out after swallowing blood, salt, and wood juices.

One of the men, or his second, commences to address his blood in the body of the other and as he does so the hum of conversation ceases and all pay attention to what is being said. There are two recognized modes of action which may be employed by the speaker when addressing the blood. He takes some twisted *bingba* grass (or a piece of cord made from the bast of the *dakpwa* tree) and, standing behind his blood-brother, holds it with one hand in his hair while with the other hand he twists the other end of the cord round and round on top of his head, uttering a spell meanwhile. This dramatized action not only accompanies the spell, but is appropriate to its words. The address consists of a number of clauses, some of which refer to actions on the part of a blood-brother which will bring upon him vengeance of the blood, and others to actions which will absolve him from vengeance. When a man wrongs his blood-brother the blood is thought of as getting a grip on his vitals, so the former set of clauses are accompanied by a twisting of the cord in his hair. When a man assists his blood-brother the blood is thought of as loosening its grip, so as the latter set of clauses are spoken the knot, into which the cord has been wound, is untwisted. Instead of using a cord, the speaker sometimes takes the two knives with which incisions have been made and, standing in front of his seated blood-brother, beats them together over his head. Apparently the object of this action is to draw and keep the attention of the blood to what is being said. Whether the speaker uses the cord method or the knives method of accompanying his speech, he keeps up his action with these objects during the entire time in which he addresses the blood, a period of from five to ten minutes.

In the following paragraphs I give a verbatim account of what is said to the blood when it is addressed by each partner or by their seconds. It must be understood in this paper that when I speak of one of the partners acting in the rites his place may be taken by a

second who must be a relative of his. The addresses which I give here are texts which I took down from informants. The spell uttered by the first partner is a single text, whereas in the second spell I have combined in one address several textual fragments. As I have heard four such addresses pronounced, I can guarantee that my texts give an adequate summary of what is said at these ceremonies. I have slightly simplified the original texts in respect to personal pronouns, since an English translation tends to become unintelligible when there is constant change from sentence to sentence in the object addressed, sometimes the blood-brother being addressed directly as 'you', while at other times the blood is addressed as 'you' and the blood-brother is referred to as 'he'.

'You are blood', he says, 'which we exchange with the clan of the Akowe. If you see some one struggling with your blood-brother and you run and attack him also and strike him violently, may you not recover from the vengeance of the blood. If a child of mine is in danger of the law and he flies and hides in your hut and you give him away so that he gets into trouble, may you die from the blood. If I come to your house, my blood-brother, and I say to you that I have come to ask you for the gift of a spear and you go into your hut and see a spear there but do not give it to me, you will die from the blood. But if your spears are of unbeaten iron, the property of others, marriage spears,¹ and you send me away without them, may you not die from vengeance of the blood. May the blood untwist itself from you with respect to unbeaten iron.

'If I pay you a visit and you have beer in your hut and you do not draw it for me, but let me sit near it and then return home with this insult, may vengeance of the blood overtake you. If you see one of our wives on a path and you hear that it is the wife of those men with whom you have exchanged blood and you say to her "Friend, we will drink a gourdful", and then you make advances to the wife of your blood-brother, may you not escape vengeance of the blood.² If I pay

¹ i.e. Spears which have not been beaten into weapons, but are being stored by a man as bride-wealth for his son's marriage.

² i.e. If you meet the wife of your blood-brother carrying beer, it is correct to ask her to draw you a gourdful; but if you use this as a pretext to making advances to her, you will die from the vengeance of the blood.

you a visit and you possess some feast spears,¹ you must not refuse me a gift. If you refuse me those spears which are yours to exchange, may you not escape vengeance of the blood. If you kill an animal and we come and cut *bingba* grass and bind it round the beast's head and then you come and take it from us, may you die from the blood, for the head of an animal belongs to the blood.² When you have been on an expedition to collect *benge* and I come and say to you "My blood-brother, I have come to ask you to break off a little *benge* for me" and instead of giving me your good *benge* which you have gathered yourself you just give me the remains of some old *benge*, whilst all the time I am saying to myself "My blood-brother has given me good new *benge*", may you not escape the blood's vengeance.³ When I am pursued by avengers and I fly to my blood-brother and say to him, "I have come to ask you to give me spears since vengeance is hard on my heels"⁴ and you look at your spears and send me away empty-handed, may you die from the blood. I come to your homestead and I see a girl there, who is your daughter, and betrothed to none, and I ask you for her hand in marriage and you reply to me in an off-hand manner "Ai! you cannot marry her, she is betrothed", whereas as a matter of fact no one has espoused her and you are just deceiving me, then you will die from the blood.

'Blood, I address you; if his daughter is a man's wife, he need not give her to me in marriage; blood, do not kill my blood-brother on account of this, but entirely loosen yourself from him with respect to his daughter who is a man's wife. If we commit adultery with a woman of yours, do not kill us, but rather say "Ai! we must not kill our blood-brother". Instead we will pay you compensation in spears and you must accept them to escape vengeance from the

¹ i.e. Spears which you have received in ceremonial exchange at mortuary feasts. These are not generally of unbeaten iron and you cannot refuse one of them as a gift to your blood-brother.

² A man has the right to claim the head of an animal killed by his blood-brother and he establishes this claim by tying some grass round its head as soon as it has been killed.

³ He deceives his blood-brother by giving him the remains of old *benge* (strychnic poison used in oracle tests) instead of freshly gathered *benge*. It is not easy to tell the difference by looking at the *benge*.

⁴ i.e. He asks his blood-brother to give him some spears to compensate for the offence which is bringing vengeance on him.

blood.¹ If you do me ill, may the blood pursue all your wives, may it leap in their abdomens, let them not give birth properly. If the chief sends out a patrol to seize me and I escape from it and fly away and hide in your hut and you rescue me by closing the door after me, you will recover from the blood. If you give me away to the chief's patrol, then you will die from the blood. May not your wives cut meat with a knife and may not your relatives eat at the mouth of iron. Rather let all your wives cut their meat with a firelog and let this be an antidote to the blood by which you may escape its vengeance.² May none of your wives cut grass with a knife. When they arrange their grinding-stones in position may it drag them in hernia, may vengeance of the stone seize them on their knees, elbows, backs of necks, and tops of heads.³

When one of the two partners has finished his address he sits down and the other rises and commences a similar speech: 'You are blood which we exchange with you.'⁴ If you do me an injury, may you die from the blood. If you commit adultery with our wives or make advances to them, may you all perish, your fathers, your mothers, your mother's elder sisters, your mother's brothers, and all your kin will die. If there is beer in your house and you let me go away without partaking of it, your relatives will all perish. If I ask you for a spear and though you possess one you send me away empty-handed, may you not recover from the blood and may all your clan die. If your daughter is espoused to no one and I come to ask for her hand in marriage and you refuse to give me her hand in marriage, may you die from the blood, may all of your kin perish. But may you not die in respect to

¹ A man was sometimes killed or mutilated for adultery, but normally compensation in spears was accepted. Here the man tells his blood-brother that their clan must accept compensation in the event of such an offence committed by one of his kin.

² i.e. If you do me wrong, the only antidote by which you can escape vengeance of the blood is by cutting your meat with a firelog. This is a picturesque way of saying that there can be no escape from the blood.

³ Actually he says 'May vengeance seize them here and here and here and here' and taps various parts of his partner's body. The women will get keloids on these parts and will suffer from hernia. At the end of this address the speaker throws down a stone at his partner's feet, a dramatic act appropriate to his words.

⁴ This second 'you' refers to his partner's clan.

your daughter who is espoused. If you speak ill of me to the chiefs, may you die.

‘My blood-brother, we exchange blood with you, it is blood which we exchange. If you refuse me spears, iron, hens, beer, heads of animals, you will die from the blood. If you give me any fine gift that I ask of you when I come to your house and you cook porridge and give it to me in the path of blood, may you not die from the blood.’

If either of the two partners wants any special gift, he will mention it in his address to his blood. Thus when a Zande makes blood-brotherhood with a foreigner to facilitate his journey to collect *benge* he will state exactly what he wants from his blood-brother, namely that he is to act as a guide, protector, and surety for the party of travellers, while the foreigner, on his part, will mention in his spell various objects of wealth which he knows Azande bring with them on such journeys for purposes of exchange. When two Azande are exchanging blood also they may mention some gift of value which they require from their blood-brothers. The ceremony concludes with a preliminary exchange of gifts. Each party throws down a gift, generally a large knife, which is taken by the party opposite. This is the concluding act of the rites.

Before making an analysis of the ceremony which I have just described, I will point out that it is subject to considerable variation in the order and composition of its rites. This is the case with all Azande ceremonial which I have witnessed and is also doubtless the case with most African ceremonial, though we are seldom informed of the fact. It can hardly be expected that an ethnologist shall describe every variation which he has noticed in a ceremony performed on different occasions, but he may fairly be expected to explain that in the society which he is investigating ritual is rigid and formulated or lax and variable. I have only twice witnessed the ceremony of blood-brotherhood among the Azande and I was surprised, accustomed as I was to the plasticity of their rites, to note how different were the ways in which it was carried out on each occasion. In the following columns I list only the main variations. In the ceremony recorded in the left-hand column I was myself one of the participants, but I have no reason to suppose that the rites were in any way altered on this account.

A.

B.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. X and Y sit facing one another on stools. 2. Each is accompanied by seconds. 3. Seconds make incisions on arms. 4. Blood smeared on piece of <i>banga</i> wood. 5. X's second hands wood to Y who dips it in salt and chews it. 6. Meanwhile X's second addresses the blood and twists <i>bingba</i> grass in Y's hair. 7. X swallows the blood while Y's second addresses it. Uses grass. 8. Exchange of presents. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> X and Y sit facing one another on stools. Neither is accompanied by seconds. Each makes an incision on the chest of the other. Blood smeared on ground-nuts. Both together dip ground-nuts in salt and eat them. X addresses his blood in Y's stomach while beating knives over his head. Also uses stone in ritual. Y addresses blood in X's stomach. Beats knives. Exchange of presents. |
|---|---|

Besides these variations in the order and composition of the rites as they occur in one area, there also appear to be regional differences. Thus Calonne-Beaufaict, speaking of the Azande of the Belgian Congo, says that one of the men spits on the forehead, the breast, the nape of the neck, the hands clasped in his own, and on the feet of his friend who returns this act of politeness.¹ Gayer-Anderson says that the Azande of the Meridi district of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan incise each other's foreheads, drink the outflow of blood, and smear a lock of hair in its residue. Afterwards they cut off this lock and keep it in a small cylinder of wood or in a neatly woven hair-bag as a charm.²

One informant told me that in the past Azande did not drink each other's blood, but made a pact by drinking water from a gourd which

¹ De Calonne-Beaufaict, *Les Azande*, 1921, pp. 204-205.

² Gayer-Anderson, 'Some tribal customs in their relation to medicine and morals of the Nyam-nyam and Gour people inhabiting the Eastern Bahr-el-Ghazel,' *Fourth Report of the Wellcome Tropical Research Laboratories*, vol. B, 1911, p. 253.

contained an iron arm-ring, though at the same time they addressed each other's blood. The statement of this man was unsupported by others present, but he himself belonged to the Amiangba people now absorbed by the Azande and I consider it probable that he was recording one of the customs of his ancestors of which there is still a faint tradition.¹

III

We can now proceed to analyse the main characteristics of Zande blood-brotherhood. The ceremony which I have just described has the configuration of a typical magic rite. The blood (*kure*) is the concrete nucleus of the rite, a substance charged with dynamic magical forces. It corresponds to the medicinal herbs and woods which form the concrete nuclei of most magic rites in Africa. It is admonished to act in certain ways in certain contingencies. The fact that it is more often the blood-brother who is directly addressed than the blood must not be interpreted incorrectly. It is a common feature in Zande ritual for a man to address persons directly in the midst of prayers to the spirits of the dead and in the midst of spells to medicines. Throughout the spell it is the blood which is the real object of address and which is thought to absorb every clause of the speech. The more pronounced the sociological nature of a Zande rite, the greater the tendency to speak directly to the persons whom it concerns rather than to the sacred object to which it is directed. In praying to the spirits a Zande will make a direct appeal to them in his opening sentence and will then proceed to harangue the bystanders in the same way as he here starts off with a direct invocation to the blood and then proceeds to talk to his blood-brother as though it was he and not the blood that he was addressing. In both of these cases the final object of the rites is to compel people to fulfil their obligations and it is understandable that the Zande soon begins to talk to them, when he is speaking about them, since they are present. The spell is typical of Zande spells.

¹ Pacts of friendship are made in other ways among the Azande. Each of two people eat one of the ground-nuts contained in a single pod. This rite is sometimes performed between a man and his bride or love. Calonne-Beaufaict mentions other rites such as two people eating together a kind of yam or placing burning brands into the same water. Women also make pacts between one another by sharing a head of maize, but these are not discussed in this paper.

It is a long unformulated rambling speech, adorned with imagery, and delivered in much the same manner as those made to oracle magic, *benge*, or magic of revenge, *bagbuduma*, or hunting magic, *bingiya*. As in every magic ceremony, the spell accompanies various actions, which we speak of as the rite, drinking of blood on ground-nuts or *banga* wood, beating of knives or twisting of cord in hair, throwing stone on ground and tapping of partner's body, making opening gifts, and so on. The attitude of the speaker, his behaviour, his manner of speaking, the form of his address, are all typical of Zande magic.

As I wish at the end of this paper to bring the Zande data of blood-brotherhood into line with anthropological theories about the nature of blood-covenants among primitive peoples, I desire in this place to emphasize the fact that to me, saturated as I was with Zande magical practices, exchange of blood appeared as a typical magic rite, since the point at issue between scholars has really been whether the blood represents the unity of a clan and its exchange the means by which a stranger enters into a psycho-physical kinship with the clansmen of his blood-brother, or whether the blood creates merely a magical bond between them. Also, since among those who consider that the blood creates merely a magical bond there is a difference of opinion about the manner in which it forms such a bond, whether through the sacred nature of blood itself, or through a belief that what was once part of a man continues to remain part of him though materially separated from him, or whether the blood is no more than a vehicle for a conditional curse, I wish to draw particular attention to the fact that the blood is a magical substance when it figures in this rite and has quite a different sociological meaning from ordinary blood, in the same way as a stone placed in the fork of a tree to prevent the sun from sinking ceases to be an ordinary stone and becomes a ritual artifact.

In every magical ceremony sanctions derive their force from a proper carrying out of the whole rite. Each partner must drink the blood of the other and must do so in a traditional manner while suitable words are being spoken to it. If the rite is performed according to custom, it is valid, its obligations are binding, and its sanctions are operative; but if it is not properly conducted, it has no potency whatsoever. Owing to the facts that no taboos are observed preliminary

to exchange of blood and that the extreme plasticity of Zande ceremonial allows wide variation in rite and spell, the only invalidating circumstance is likely to be the failure of one participant to drink the blood of the other. It might appear impossible for such a thing to happen and I do not suppose that it ever does happen between Azande themselves, but an omission of this kind may occur when a Zande is exchanging blood with a foreigner and when he has no intention of carrying out his obligations, but merely wishes to obtain some privilege from his partner or to lull him into a false sense of security. In such a situation the Zande does not make mental reservations which would profit him little if he had once drunk his partner's blood, but he omits to drink the blood itself and thus renders the spell worthless verbiage. For the spell has no virtue in itself. It can act only through the blood. I only know of one instance of a man cheating in this manner, but I was told that it was not unique. A Zande chief went through the ceremony of blood-brotherhood with a *mamur* (Egyptian or Sudanese official) to whom he was bitterly hostile. When the *banga* wood is the medium on which the blood is eaten it is usual, before putting it in one's mouth, to break it in two, placing the half which is smeared with blood in one's mouth, and letting the half which one has held between one's fingers, when scraping blood from one's partner's body, fall to the ground. On this occasion the chief let the blood-soaked half fall to the ground and chewed the bloodless half. As he had not consumed any of the *mamur's* blood, none of the obligations of blood-brotherhood were binding on him and he felt quite free to act against the interests of the *mamur* and made full use of this freedom. The one absolute essential is that each partner shall swallow the blood of the other if the contract is to be valid. Little matters the exact words which are uttered or the precise actions performed so long as the blood of each is in the stomach of the other. On one of the occasions upon which I witnessed the ceremony one of the participants swallowed his own blood by mistake. He did this by picking up and eating some of the ground-nuts which had been soaked in his own blood and laid on the ground beside those soaked in his partner's blood. This was done quite inadvertently and those present laughed. Nobody minded the mistake, which was at once rectified by smearing new nuts in the blood.

But once you have performed the ceremony and your stomach contains your blood-brother's blood the sanctions of the pact work automatically without your partner having to set them in motion. The ceremony of alliance initiates what Westermarck calls a 'Conditional curse'. For example, if you have relations with your blood-brother's wife, the blood will act of itself to destroy you and your kin while your blood-brother is still ignorant of your misconduct. You and they will die *be kure*, from the blood. Azande say that the blood goes down into the stomach¹ of a man and from there sees all that he does, and when a man betrays his blood-brother it avenges itself on him. The blood knows exactly what is required of the blood-brother because it has heard the address made to it when it was swallowed. 'The blood hears like *benge*' people say, and this is the highest compliment which a Zande can pay to its attention and foresight. In the case of some misfortune it is not always possible, without consulting the oracles first, to know whether a man is suffering from vengeance of blood or from some other cause such as witchcraft or bad magic. It is very seldom that misfortunes are thought to be due to the action of blood and doubtless this is largely due to the fact that people are careful to fulfil their major obligations. Most Azande can, however, quote cases in which there has been no doubt that the blood has taken a terrible toll of a family for a breach of one of the obligations of the pact, for the action of the blood differs from the actions of witchcraft and bad magic in that it does not attack a single individual but also wreaks havoc among his family and kin. Hence, when several members of the same family suffer consecutive misfortunes, as when several deaths occur in the same family at about the same time, people say, 'surely it is blood which is pursuing them'. I will give a single instance of blood working in this manner. There is a man, called Bitarangba, who used to be one of my closest neighbours, who, when still a boy, was mutilated for having made advances to another man's wife. He denies that he was guilty of the offence, but whether his denial is true or not there can be no doubt that mutilation was carried out

¹ It is difficult to decide whether the blood is thought to remain in the stomach or to reside in some other part of the body. I think that the Zande does not feel sure about its residence. He only knows that it is somewhere inside his blood-brother.

with undue haste and brutality. As a result, according to Bitaranga, a series of misfortunes overtook the husband and his family. His brothers and sons died one after the other, and he himself died an exile without leaving children to carry on his name. He suffered these misfortunes because Bitaranga's clan was bound to his clan by ties of blood. I am not certain of the exact relationship of the two original blood-brothers to the two principals in the tragedy, but it was certainly a distant one. Nevertheless the blood took its toll because the two clans were united by blood-exchange. In such an instance as this, when relatives die one after the other, the survivors will suspect that it is blood which is at the root of the matter and they will cast their thoughts around to consider who among them can have done an injury to his blood-brother, and will then ask the oracles whether it is this offence which has brought vengeance upon them.

Although the blood is thought to act on its own initiative, its action is sometimes fortified by a special rite. A man injured by his blood-brother takes the piece of cord which was twisted in his partner's hair during the ceremony and which he has carefully preserved, and he winds it into a knot while uttering a spell to his blood in the body of his blood-brother. He calls upon the blood to avenge the injury and exterminate his blood-brother and his kith and kin. He tells it what offence has been committed and directs it to scatter the clan of his blood-brother, against whom he utters an anathema of curses which will bring upon him and his relatives leopards, lions, snakes, thunder, dysentery, leprosy, European justice, and a host of all possible evils. While addressing the blood in this manner he winds the cord into a little ball which he wraps in leaves and hides in the roof of his hut. Here again he performs a typical magic rite with the blood as its agent. It is believed that misfortune will soon overtake a blood-brother who is the object of such a rite and that the oracles will inform him of the cause of his loss or sickness. It is said that he will then go to his aggrieved blood-brother who can be appeased by gifts and persuaded to give to the sick man *ziga kule*, an antidote to the action of the blood. This consists of a medicine which is cooked in oil while a spell is spoken over it and is afterwards eaten. He will also take down the ball of cord from the roof of his hut and unwind it while addressing his blood in order to release his blood-brother from

its grip. Every one is aware of this additional sanction of blood-brotherhood, though I do not know of any particular case in which it has been brought into operation. Once more may we notice how the blood is regarded as an ordinary magical agent, for, like many Zande medicines, it has its *ziga* or antidote.

A further sanction is that of public opinion. Open failure to fulfil the obligations of the pact brings upon a man not only magical retribution but also public censure. He becomes an object of contempt to his neighbours and a shame to his kinsmen. If, for instance, a man is travelling in a distant district and he appeals to one of the clansmen of his blood-brother for hospitality and is refused it, this refusal shames his blood-brother and his relatives, who feel themselves responsible for the conduct of their clansman. Another important sanction of a blood-pact springs from the reciprocal nature of its obligations. If you do not carry out your obligations towards your blood-brother, neither will he carry out his obligations towards you. One asks for a gift or a service in the name of the blood, but it is well understood that one's blood-brother in presenting the one or performing the other will demand an equivalent return in the future. It thus happens that each partner keeps a mental tally of the various ways in which he has assisted the other from time to time and he expects that the tally of the other shall be approximately as long as his own. If his partner is generous, he will be generous; if his partner is mean, he will be mean. The reciprocal nature of blood-brotherhood thus provides an integral system of sanctions by the very mode in which it functions. Social systems invariably generate their own sanctions by their mechanism of mutuality.

These reciprocal duties incumbent on a man who has made blood-brotherhood with another are clearly enunciated in the spells which I have cited. A man must act always as a generous friend towards his blood-brother; he must give him food and beer when he visits his homestead; he must refrain from making advances to his women; he must not refuse spears or other gifts, which he is free to part with, on the request of his blood-brother; he must grant the hand of his daughter in marriage, if she is not already espoused; he must not speak evil of his blood-brother to the chiefs; he must render him assistance in quarrels; he must do his best to protect him against

vengeance and justice; he must give his blood-brother the head of any animals which he has killed in hunting, if he asks for them. Generally speaking, a man must always support his blood-brother when he is in difficulties, especially when he is in legal difficulties. In the old days when a man was caught in adultery or accused of murder by witchcraft it was essential for his relatives to collect a sufficient amount of wealth to compensate for his offence without delay or he might be mutilated or killed. As he lay bound at the chief's court his relatives and relatives-in-law and blood-brothers brought spears and placed them beside him until they were of sufficient number to protect him against immediate execution. This was perhaps the main function of a blood-brother in the old days. He was a supplementary ally who could be relied upon to assist a man in conjunction with his kin and relatives-in-law on those occasions when the solidarity and relationship by blood and by marriage were most in evidence. When speaking of blood-brotherhood a Zande never neglects to mention among its foremost duties that of giving warning to a man upon whom his chief's displeasure has fallen. One of the main incentives to forming a pact was to have a friend at court who was acquainted with the designs of his chief. Such a man would hear, as a member of the confidential circle of courtiers, the intention of his chief to kill his blood-brother or to deliver him into the hands of avengers. It was his imperative duty to inform his blood-brother of the plot against him, and he had to contrive to do so without involving himself at the same time in open breach of confidence. If he could send word to his blood-brother's residence, he would do so, but often enough he would only hear of the plot while his blood-brother was already on his way to court to answer his chief's summons. In this case he would contrive, by making signs with his face, or by scratching his partner's hand as he shook hands with him, to convey a warning which would allow his partner to escape from court before he was seized. Another duty incumbent on a blood-brother in past times was to cut open the corpses of his partners when called upon to do so, in order that the dead man's kin might ascertain whether he was a witch or had been falsely accused of witchcraft during his lifetime. None of these last three duties has prominence to-day, since summary executions by chiefs are not allowed, and ample time is given

for a man to collect fines, in default of which he suffers only imprisonment and not mutilation or death; and since corpses are no longer slit open to discover witchcraft. There are two further obligations of the pact which are in full force to-day. A man must assist in digging the grave of members of his blood-brother's family and kin. It is not so essential for blood-brothers to perform this task as for relatives-in-law, but it is nevertheless considered most reprehensible for a blood-brother to absent himself on such an occasion if he lives in the vicinity. He must also attend mortuary feasts prepared for his blood-brothers and bring spears to exchange with them for beer. Here, again, what is an essential duty for relatives-in-law is more in the nature of an act of courtesy and good faith for blood-brothers.

The obligations which I have enumerated come into force on occasions when special social conditions show up vividly the nature of blood-covenant duties. The pact functions in a less spectacular but more continuous manner from day to day in the ordinary routine of social life. A man constantly eats meals at his blood-brother's homestead and is invited there to beer parties. When a man kills a large beast his blood-brothers come to ask him for a share of the meat. They pay each other frequent visits, in which they are treated as favoured friends and given the best hospitality which the owner of the homestead can afford. Often one will find a man living adjacent to his blood-brother, to whose homestead he has free access since the danger of adultery is reduced to a minimum by the terms and sanctions of a blood-pact. Occasionally a man is largely dependent upon his blood-brothers for the necessities of life. Such a case is that of the mutilated man Bitarangba, to whom reference has already been made. He was not on good terms with his relatives, but lived with one of his blood-brothers, whose food he ate and whose household he assisted by making nets and by snaring guinea-fowl. Besides this man, whose home he shared, Bitarangba had exchanged blood with several other neighbours and was always a welcome guest at their meals. Being physically helpless, he had made a point of contracting alliances of blood with two or three influential men of the neighbourhood, who were able to assist him through their influence at court and by their authority in the locality.

One of the duties most strongly emphasized in the spells addressed

to the blood is that of making any gift which may be asked by a blood-brother, but it must not be thought that this leads to unlimited sponging. I was surprised that my blood-brother did not take advantage of my being a European to make extravagant requests for gifts and exercise of political influence. On the contrary, I received on the whole rather more than I gave during our partnership. Blood-brothers do not make unreasonable requests to each other among the Azande. Reciprocity of services makes this impossible since it is expected that there shall be an even balance in exchange of property.

IV

The pattern of behaviour between blood-brothers is one of intimacy and equality. One way in which intimacy and equality are expressed between the partners is by each publicly insulting the other, a custom commonly described by ethnologists as a 'Joking Relationship'. This is not the place to discuss the peculiar sociological problem posed by this custom, but a short example of the kind of insults which are bandied about between blood-brothers is desirable. Thus one will shout to the other:

'Ai friend! may they cut into your witchcraft! You are witches, you of the Akalinga clan!' To which the blood-brother replies:

'He! may some one spear you! who told you that we are witches, my friend? You've just had a good meal over there so you come on a full stomach to pick a quarrel with me without cause. That's a bad joke; you're a nasty sly fellow.'

Sometimes a man will play a practical joke on his blood-brother, sending him on a fool's errand. I have a good example of this type of joke in one of my Zande texts:

'A. "While you were coming here that elder brother of your father who lives over there has died of rupture, so they say."

'B. "Hm! I don't believe that, my friend; you have a poor sense of humour."

'A. "Very well, if you don't believe me, go and see for yourself."

'B. "All right, I'm just going."

'He picks up his spear and he goes away and walks on till he reaches the homestead of his father's elder brother (where he sees a child) and says to him, "Child, my blood-brother says that father's

dead, is that true?" The child replies, "Who is spreading that lie, if he spreads such baseless rumours perhaps he will peg out himself."

'He passes on to see this elder brother of his father and says to him: "Father, it is you I have come to see because that fellow over there, that blood-brother of mine, said yesterday that you were dead."

'To which the old man replies, rather offended: "Hm! so when you heard that you believed it, did you? The fellow is a fool to play such jokes. If he tells you something, just reply, 'Really, is that so?' Now, my son, what little thing is the matter with me that I should die from it, eh? So! if I were ill wouldn't your elder brother send some one to you to summon you to come and see the evil that was happening to your father? Jestings of this kind are no good, my son; if you don't know all about these jokes beforehand, you put your foot into the fire."

'It is thus they say about jestings of this kind: if some one with whom you are on joking terms comes with a long sad face to tell you some story about your relatives such as "Don't you know that your relative has died?" you should take care not to be caught. He is jesting about your relative saying that he is dead, and you must not be taken in. Blood-jestings, they say, are awful lies.

'Then when he meets him again in the path he says to him, "Ah, friend! You did play me a rotten trick. I went ever such a far distance. Friend, may some one spear you!" The man who has played the joke bursts with laughter and says, "Ho ho ho, so friend, ha ho ha ho, isn't he dead after all? Ha! while you were with this other father of yours have you heard this latest bit of news of mine, that father of yours who lives quite near here has been bitten by a snake. I saw that child of his, the girl, wailing the wail of death, *buba zoga re ooo, ako buba te, ako buba te.*"

'The man who has been fooled replies, "Ah! my friend, my blood-brother so! why can't you tell the truth?" He bursts out laughing again and goes on roaring with laughter.'

As the behaviour pattern between blood-brothers is extended to the members of their clans, an extension discussed in the following section, a 'Joking Relationship' may grow up between two clans who may insult one another with impunity. I do not think that this

is common in Zandeland, but it appears to happen sometimes, as, for example, between the Abāūura and the Abangombi, the Akalinga and the Agiti, and in one or two other instances, who jest in this manner without offence being taken by either party, a relationship which is said to have arisen from blood-brotherhood between members of the two clans.

V

The pattern of behaviour between blood-brothers is extended, like the term *bakulēmi*, which symbolizes the relationship, towards their clansmen. In theory a man owes the same duties to members of his blood-brother's clan as he owes to his blood-brother himself, but in practice the obligations are of different quality. The form of obligation is extended, but its content becomes progressively weaker the wider the extension. The Zande principle is that all clansmen of *bakurēmi*, my blood-brother, are *abakurēmi*, my blood-brothers, but it is well understood that the obligations recited in the spells have less force in their application to people the farther they are genealogically from one's actual partner. His brothers and sons are almost equivalent to the partner himself, but distant clansmen receive scanty recognition.

No Zande would explain the mode of extension in quite the way I have done, since it is a dogma that every member of your blood-brother's clan is equivalent to your blood-brother himself, and when I pointed out to them that, whatever they might say, people did not in fact treat the clansmen of a blood-brother as though he was a direct partner to a pact, they defended the dogma by asserting that since European occupation of their country people no longer carry out their obligations as conscientiously as they used to do. They say that in the past no one would dream of refusing the same help and hospitality to any member of his blood-brother's clan as to his actual blood-brother. The impression which I formed, however, was that this assertion is largely mythical, and that whilst people would give occasional hospitality to the clansmen of their blood-brothers, they would hardly expect to be asked for any substantial gift or service unless the relationship was a very close one. It must be borne in mind that the Zande clans are not cohesive localized groups, but are

spread loosely over the whole of Zandeland. The consequence is that those clansmen of a man's blood-brother with whom he comes into contact in normal circumstances are those who live in his blood-brother's neighbourhood and are closely related to him. A Zande has not the faintest notion of his full blood-brotherhood relationship, since he does not know either who are all the clansmen of the man whose blood he has drunk nor with what clans all his fellow clansmen have made blood-pacts. If one were able to make a complete statistical survey of Zande society, one would probably find that everybody was a remote blood-brother of everybody else. But when Azande talk of their clans they really mean their close paternal kin or those clansmen who live in their immediate vicinity and with whom they come into frequent contact. Clans function as small segments. A man knows the clans of his own blood-brothers and clans with which his fathers and grandfathers and uncles and brothers have made exchange of blood and he acts towards the members of these clans as his blood-brothers in so far as they come into his social milieu, that is to say, that he gives preferential treatment to the nearest relatives of the actual participants in the rites. Nevertheless there is always a difference between the bonds which unite the actual participants to a blood-pact and those which unite their respective kinsmen. The reciprocal obligations which compose the first exist only in an attenuated form in the second. Just as a pattern of behaviour towards a brother is extended with ever-decreasing vitality towards more and more distant members of his own clan and generation, so when the pattern of behaviour between blood-brothers is extended towards their clansmen it becomes less and less a functional relationship and more and more a formal one. In three or four generations all memory of a pact fades and it ceases to have any significance. Eventually it is entirely forgotten.

The obligations of blood-brotherhood also bind to some degree relatives of the mother's clan. In the spells one hears the blood admonished to destroy not only members of a false blood-brother's clan but also his 'mothers, mother's elder sisters, mother's brothers,' and so on. These people are included in the circle in which the sanctions of the pact are operative. I was told that a man would not exchange blood with a member of his maternal uncle's clan nor with

a member of his maternal grandfather's or grandmother's clan since the people are his kindred. I may add that on the occasion when I performed the rite myself the blood of the chief who was my partner was addressed by a member of his mother's kin.

It sometimes happens that one observes flagrant breaches of the obligations of blood-brotherhood. I came across one instance of a man who committed adultery with the wife of his blood-brother and an instance of another who tried to do so. But such cases are, I am convinced, rare, though less rare to-day than in past times. People are undoubtedly very frightened of the consequences of failure to carry out their duties and one constantly hears Azande remark that 'Blood is no joke, it is a very serious matter.' A man does not enter lightly into an alliance, and in my experience people have the best intentions to fulfil their obligations. It was not long, however, before I began to observe that the Zande often tries to avoid fulfilling his obligations towards his blood-brother if he finds them irksome in the same way as he tries to wriggle out of his obligations towards his relatives and to other persons to whom he is supposed to act in certain ways. At the same time he protests vigorously his good faith. He would not make a deliberate breach of the pact, but the idea of reciprocity on which it is based gives ample scope for grumbling and for withholding gifts on the grounds that one's partner has done the same. In this respect blood-brotherhood displays the same opposition of egoism to social duties which is characteristic of other groups and associations in human culture.

There can be no doubt of the general truth of the Zande contention that blood-brotherhood is no longer respected to-day as it used to be before European occupation of their country. All Azande with whom I have spoken about blood-brotherhood were unanimous in deploring the decay of the institution. They said that exchange of blood in the old days created a pact which was held as sacred by the two participants and their kin, while to-day people no longer regard their obligations seriously. Of necessity they feel that blood does not inevitably destroy a faithless blood-brother as it used to do. As in other departments of their life, custom has crumbled and blood-brotherhood is slowly losing its moral force. We must not attribute this phenomenon of social disintegration, as is often done, solely to

the negative and destructive influences of white men and their culture. We shall find it intelligible only if we view it as a process of social change. European intrusion has created new conditions to which Zande culture is adapting itself. Adaptation takes place just as much by the decay and disappearance of old social processes which no longer have a useful function as by the appearance and growth of new social processes. Many of the obligations of blood-brotherhood have ceased to function under modern conditions. No longer do people need protection from violence from chiefs, avengers, and foreigners. Money and the beginnings of trade enable Azande to dispense with circuitous means of acquiring various kinds of wealth through channels of blood-brotherhood. Marriage no longer presents its old difficulties to those not backed by kin or some other form of social relationship, such as blood-brotherhood or political patronage. Blood-brotherhood atrophies as it ceases to carry out its more important social actions, and it becomes more and more a mere formal acknowledgement of friendship between two individuals.

VI

Blood-brotherhood has long been a subject of scholarly enthusiasm and debate. Vast armies of facts, recruited from pre-history, contemporary European folk-lore, Biblical and classical literature, and accounts of savage tribes, have been marshalled for engagement. These mercenary armies were ready to serve one scholar to-day and his opponent to-morrow. Much of the controversy concerned questions which do not directly touch the institution of blood-brotherhood and posed problems which cannot be investigated by inductive methods, but in so far as they can be tested within our restricted range of data we must decide as briefly as possible on the relevance and validity of the main theories propounded to account for exchange of blood in primitive communities.

The main subject of controversy is the nature of the bond which unites blood-brothers, whether it is a bond of true kinship or whether it is based on homeopathic principles of magic or on the mechanism of the curse, and whether it is formed by change of status or by simple contract. A subsidiary question asks whether it is a collective alliance between groups or a personal pact between individuals.

Robertson Smith¹ argued as follows: (i) There is no kinship without community of blood. (ii) There are no obligations in primitive society except those of kinship. (iii) Therefore any one who wishes to enter into a reciprocal social relationship with another man who is not of his natural kin can do so only by an artificial creation of kinship. (iv) Since kinship is based on community of blood, it can be created artificially in one way only, by each of the two men partaking of the blood of the other. As clans are undifferentiated units, the bond between the two partners is also a collective bond between their respective clans.

In Robertson Smith's theory the God or fetish is also made a partner to the pact, and the argument given above is related by him to other social phenomena, namely, sacrifice and totemism, but these need not trouble us here, since we wish only to test his ideas about blood-exchange by reference to Zande practice. Davy² points a conclusion to Robertson Smith's line of argument. (v) Since alliances in primitive communities can only be made by a man entering into a kinship relationship with another we can say that contractual ties are assimilated to kinship ties, i.e. that contract is only possible through change of status. The contractual relation between blood-brothers imitates the status of kinship.

Frazer³ has discussed the facts of blood-brotherhood as part of a wide range of similar data. Blood-brotherhood is a bond created by men who wanted to institute a form of contract. It is a derivative from residual notions about the nature of substances. These elemental beliefs in homeopathic magic assert that in absorbing part of a man one absorbs his physical, moral, and intellectual qualities, and hence one's fate becomes identified with his. Davy accepts Frazer's views as complementary to those of Robertson Smith, since, according to Frazer, exchange of blood is only an application of homeopathic magic and kinship is based on a similar idea of physical and mystical unity. Davy will not admit, however, that blood-exchange is intelligible in

¹ W. Robertson Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, passim.

² *La Foi Jurée*, especially Chapter I. Sidney Hartland, *The Legend of Perseus*, vol. ii, pp. 237-258, takes the same view as Robertson Smith.

³ *The Golden Bough: Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, 3rd ed., 1911, p. 130, and *Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild*, vol. ii, chap. xiii.

terms of homeopathic magic alone because he considers that the bonds of blood-brotherhood are of the same nature as the more fundamental religious and social bonds which unite family and clan.

Westermarck¹ strongly opposes the theory of Robertson Smith and his colleagues. He maintains that their point of view supposes that members of the same clan consider themselves as being literally of one blood, as a physiological unity as well as a social unity, and criticizes them for seeing in blood-exchange a crude artificial transfusion of blood. In Westermarck's opinion the really important element in blood-brotherhood is the curse which is uttered over the partners, and he regards the blood as merely a suitable vehicle for the curse.²

The facts of Zande society undoubtedly support Westermarck's contentions rather than those of Robertson Smith and Davy. I do not consider that any of the arguments of Robertson Smith are true of Zande society. Manifold social obligations exist outside the boundaries of kinship. The Zande does not regard kinship as a community of blood, and hence there is no idea of artificially creating bonds of kinship by transfusion of blood. I cannot recall a single occasion during my residence in Zandeland on which I heard kinship spoken of in terms of blood. Azande speak of members of the same clan as having sprung from the same seed, but the filiation is not spoken of as one of blood. A Zande thinks of his clan rather in terms of sociological function than of physiological affinity. It is perfectly true that a man will not exchange blood with a fellow clansman, but I was never given as a reason for this abstention that they were of the same blood, but that they were kinsmen, i.e. that they were already bound to one another by the sociological ties of kinship. If kinship and common blood were synonymous in Zande thought their mode of reckoning descent would be matrilineal, since a child is formed out of its mother's blood.

No Zande ever thinks of a blood-brother as a member of his clan in any sense whatsoever. Not only is the idea of a man entering into

¹ *The Origin and Development of Moral Ideas* (quoted by Davy).

² The 'kinship theory' of blood-brotherhood is weakened by a comparative study of rites by which artificial brotherhood is created, for many of these make no use of blood. For a wide survey of evidence see P. J. Hamilton-Grierson, Art. 'Brotherhood (Artificial)' in *Hastings' Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 1909.

his blood-brother's clan, by consuming his blood, quite foreign to Zande thought, but also there is no notion of sociological identification between clan brothers and blood-brothers. It is true that many of the obligations of blood-brotherhood are the same as those of real brotherhood, but this appears to me to be due, not to an assimilation, through an idea of social identification, of new ties based on contract to old ones based on status of birth, but simply to what one may call the logic of social situations. There are only a limited number of ways in which people can assist one another, and as these modes of social assistance are in Zande society largely functions of kinship it is obvious that any pact of mutual assistance is likely to duplicate many of these functions. But the obligations of blood-brotherhood include behaviour which is directly opposed to the patterns of behaviour between kin. Thus, as I have already mentioned, a blood-brother must assist relatives-in-law to bury dead members of the clan with which he has exchanged blood and into which they have married. The dead's kin take no part in digging the grave and refrain from carrying the corpse. In ritual exchange at mortuary feasts blood-brothers and relatives-in-law form one party and exchange wealth with the kin who form the other party. Kin cannot exchange wealth with each other on these occasions. It is a blood-brother who cuts open a corpse to see if witchcraft is present. No kinsman can perform this task.

Another striking difference between brotherhood and blood-brotherhood is the fact that brothers are graded while blood-brothers are on an absolute equality. A man is not simply 'brother' to another, but he is either 'elder brother' or 'younger brother', and the younger always owes respect to the elder. Intercourse between brothers is always coloured by notions of seniority. We have seen, on the other hand, how blood-brothers have an egalitarian status and treat each other with open familiarity across the usual barriers of etiquette which Zande custom erects between members of society. Hence the behaviour pattern between a man and his brother is incompatible with the behaviour pattern between a man and his blood-brother and a man cannot therefore be a kinsman and a blood-brother. We have, moreover, seen that the sanctions of a pact involve members of the mother's kin, which is in direct opposition to the clan theory.

There is thus no identification of social function between blood-brothers and clansmen, any more than there is physiological identification through communion of blood. A man takes over none of the titles of clanship by exchange of blood. He does not adopt the clan-name of his blood-brother nor his totems. If he became in any sense a member of his blood-brother's clan, he would be subject to their rules of exogamy, whereas, on the contrary, we have seen that it is considered highly commendable for a man to marry his blood-brother's sister or daughter. No one would deny that the obligations of blood-brotherhood are coloured by the obligations of kinship and family, since all human groups are deeply affected by the fact that a man is born and grows up in his family and that his main social attitudes towards family and kin are built up long before he joins adult associations or forms new patterns of behaviour towards unrelated persons, such as chiefs and parents-in-law, but this is a very different notion from the idea of a blood-brother changing his status so that he becomes reckoned as kin to kin to his partner and his partner's clansmen.

It is quite common in fact for Azande to contrast blood-brotherhood with kinship, extolling the first in comparison with the second. They say that a blood-brother is a much better friend than a real brother. He will not commit adultery with your wife or refuse to help you in time of need, whereas your brothers are always trying to corrupt your wives and to escape from aiding you when you find yourself in difficulties. But talk of this kind does not really mean that the feeling towards blood-brothers is stronger than that towards family and kin. The apparent discrepancy between what Azande like to say and what they actually feel and do probably springs from the compulsive nature of family and kin sentiments, the universality but indefiniteness of their obligations, and the peculiar psychological character of their sanctions. Contrast this state of affairs with the relationship of blood-brotherhood, with its well-defined set of obligations detailed seriatim in the spell; with its direct magical sanctions destructive of the other party to the pact; with its bargain of balanced exchange of gifts and services; and with its basis a magical rite quite unsupported by the slow process of conditioning of sentiments in childhood which forms and explains the sentiments of kin. It is

true that the rite may give social recognition to any already strong friendship between two men, but the Zande knows as well as we do that friendship and kin are worlds apart. Friends change as contacts lessen or different interests draw them apart or quarrels rend them asunder, but kinship resists distance, occupation, and disputes, with a resilience all its own. The fundamental basis of kinship is sentiment expressing and vivifying itself in social obligations. The fundamental basis of blood-brotherhood is a legal contract. My obligations towards my blood-brother are more directly binding than my obligations towards my brother. I can elude my obligations to the latter more easily than to the former. Yet, though more directly binding, they are also more limited. Lastly, blood-brotherhood is a legal contract entered into by two men of their own accord. Real brotherhood is a circumstance into which men are born without any act of their own.

In my opinion to argue that kin are people with one blood and that therefore any one who drinks their blood becomes in any sense one of them, would be, so far as Zande society is concerned, a white man's interpretation of the facts based on his mode of thinking about kinship primarily in terms of blood relationship. This point of view also entirely fails to take count of the essential difference between the sociological links which bind a man to his brother and those which bind a man to his blood-brother. You are bound to your blood-brother not because you have become one of his kin by drinking his blood, but because his blood is a concrete magical substance impregnated with a spell embodying a 'conditional curse'. You are compelled to assist him, not because you are motivated towards him by the obligations of kinship, but because if you fail to help him in his need his blood will kill you in virtue of its magical power. A man does not become your blood-brother either by linguistic usage, or by physiological relationship, or by sociological status, or by the nature of the sanctions which back his obligations towards you. He becomes your blood-brother by ties of magic, ties involving him in a special set of duties, sometimes the same as, but often different, even opposed to, the duties of kinship, and backed by a typical magical sanction of the 'conditional curse'. If we seek for a reason to explain the extension of the pattern of behaviour between blood-brothers to members of their clans we must look for it in the

sociological nature of these reciprocal obligations which of necessity involve their kin.

It is abundantly clear from my description of the rite by which blood-brotherhood is instituted that it is a typical magical mechanism. It is impossible, however, to accept Frazer's interpretation, since no Zande would hold that by absorbing a man's blood you absorbed his physical and moral qualities. As far as I know, blood has no magical associations in Zande culture and is never thought to embody magical power *per se* any more than the hundred of herbs and trees which the Zande uses as medicines can be said to have any medicinal value in themselves when growing in the bush. They derive this value from the way in which men use them in ritual situations. On the whole, therefore, Westermarck's explanation appears to cover the Zande facts better than any other, though I do not entirely agree with the stress he lays on the verbal element in magic. The blood is not simply a vehicle for the spell or conditional curse. The blood itself is the 'medicine', the material element of the magical complex, and it becomes such through association with the spell and rite. The social action of magic is not always evident from accounts of primitive peoples, and one may stress that in many institutions the basic link between members is of a truly magical character. Zande blood-brotherhood is an example of such social action.

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