2017 | Hau: *Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 7 (2): 351–375

Godfrey Lienhardt as a skeptic; or, Anthropology as conceptual puzzle-solving

Mario Schmidt, *University of Cologne*

This article revolves around the observation that ethnographic classics like Godfrey Lienhardt's *Divinity and experience: The religion of the Dinka* are conceived as ethnocentric and colonialist. Arguing against this verdict, the article attempts to rethink (and emancipate) Lienhardt as a Pyrrhonian skeptic. This sets the stage for an exploration of Lienhardt's life-long interest in realigning anthropology as an objective science with literature as a form of art. Poetry, fiction, Lienhardt's ethnography, as well as Pyrrhonian skepticism help us to explore the possibilities of conceptualizing creatively. They accomplish this by declining to offer definite answers about the world's constitution. By way of conclusion, I propose to understand cultural anthropology as a form of "fictive science," one that is primarily interested in solving conceptual puzzles that emerge during specific ethnographic encounters.

Keywords: British social anthropology, Dinka, Godfrey Lienhardt, history of anthropology, methodology, skepticism

A couple of semesters ago, I discussed Godfrey Lienhardt's *Divinity and experience: The religion of the Dinka* in an introductory seminar on East African cultures. My students' accusation that Lienhardt's prose was cumbersome and inaccessible surprised and irked me. It only added to my annoyance that my students perceived Lienhardt's argumentation as extremely "ethnocentric." Among the less abusive comments were these: "How can Lienhardt write that the Dinka have no mind?" "Why is he constantly switching between English and Dinka terms which are, as he claims, comparable to as well as different from one another?" "His argument is a mess. He starts in the middle, forwards to the end, rewinds back to the beginning, only to conclude before he is actually able to provide the reader with a properly deduced conclusion." Although unprepared for such a fierce dishonoring of one

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons | © Mario Schmidt.
ISSN 2049-1115 (Online). DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.14318/hau7.2.031

of my favorite ethnographies, I immediately started quoting some of the book's rhetorically most convincing parts in order to prove that Lienhardt's prose is clear and on point. I continued my plea by telling students that Lienhardt's argumentation remains close to the ethnographic data and exhibits the will to cope with the difficulties of analyzing Dinka thought and experience with reference to Dinka thought and experience itself. As the students remained unconvinced, I obliged them to read parts of *Divinity and experience* again until our next meeting. As rehearsing the Catechism makes good Catholics, rehearsing Lienhardt makes good Lienhardtians. That was the idea.

I began my "mission" to convince my students of the joyfulness of engaging with ethnographic classics (cf. Singh and Guyer 2016) by gathering some contemporary assessments of *Divinity and experience*, reaching out for help from fellow anthropologists. Although all reviews I consulted are full of praise—calling Lienhardt's attempt "skillful and exhaustive," applauding the "brilliance of the analysis" (Schneider 1962: 863), attesting that *Divinity and experience* is "lucidly written" (Meyerowitz 1962: 63), and diagnosing that Lienhardt's monograph "considerably advances the understanding of thought in prescientific cultures" (Horton 1962: 78)—I felt that they would not excite my ethno-decentered students. The students were—I was convinced—too deeply influenced by arguments brought forward during anthropology's crisis of representation (Clifford and Marcus 1986; cf. Lienhardt 1997a for a critique of Clifford and other "anthropologisants"). As a consequence, they overestimated the pitfalls of a form of anthropology characterized by the tendency to represent cultures as homogenous blocks residing outside of time and space (Fabian 1983). Michael Carrithers' more recent praise of Lienhardt's book as "a model of . . . anthropological philosophizing" (Carrithers 2014: 135) would not convince the students that they could benefit from reading ethnographic classics either. Most of them just do not share Carrithers' basic assumption that anthropology has something to do with *philosophy*, which—used in its adjectival form *philosophical*—circulates as a term of abuse among my students. Philosophy, for the majority of them, equals remoteness from everyday life and a blatant unawareness of political and moral injustices. One way to convince students would therefore be to prove that Lienhardt's *Divinity and experience* offers them a way out of their—from my perspective—paradoxical attempt to combine a strong moral impetus to change the world to the better with an epistemological position that denies them any access to the reality out there.

The endeavor to convert my students into Lienhardtians by demonstrating that he was neither epistemologically naïve nor to be accused of, wittingly or unwittingly, reproducing the colonial system, however, turned out to be more demanding and time-consuming than I had expected. During the course of writing this essay, and comparable to what happens with ethnographic informants, my students turned from individuals I met every week into imaginary interlocutors and, hopefully not comparable to what happens with ethnographic informants, somewhat stereotyped enemies. I nevertheless hope that they are going to be convinced by what the following sections outline: the contours and basic principles of a form of anthropology based on a redefinition of its object of study. Anthropologists, I argue

in close dialogue with Lienhardt's text and students' perception of it, should not necessarily feel compelled to study something that exists out there prior to and independently of the ethnographic encounter (other cultures, individuals, situations, etc.) but rather something that emerges in the encounter of the anthropologist and his indigenous interlocutors. Instead of analyzing the anthropologist's personal positionality in the field, however, I suggest to focus on conceptually fruitful puzzles that force anthropologists to creatively rethink the obvious and to stretch the borders of what they perceive of as thinkable. The aim of anthropology would no longer be to truthfully represent something out there, but to develop coherent "inflections" of both the anthropologists' and the natives' conceptual constructions in the course of solving conceptual puzzles (cf. Holbraad 2012).

A detailed discussion of Lienhardt's *Divinity and experience* will indeed show that in order to resolve one of these conceptual puzzles or, as Lienhardt calls them more conventionally, "serious difficulties of translation" (1964a: 4), he was forced to become skeptical toward both his own and the Dinka's fundamental assumptions about what holds the world together. Only by thus distancing himself from his own as well as the Dinka's fundamental conceptual assumptions, Lienhardt was able to stitch up an argument that offers a convincing answer to the conceptual puzzle he faced. Although a convincing demonstration of Lienhardt's skeptic disposition wards off the accusation that he is an epistemologically naïve defender of a direct access to reality, his political integrity and moral probity could, nevertheless, still be questioned. A discussion of Lienhardt's background in literature studies combined with an elaboration of the ethical side-effects of Pyrrhonian skepticism, however, leads me to the suggestion that Lienhardt's humility towards his "objects of study," which becomes palpable in pictures such as the ones below (see fig.1, fig.2) as well as in the friendships he had established with many Dinka (cf. Deng 1997: 119), should neither be understood as a result of his personal moral attitudes nor as a form of colonial patronage but rather as a necessary effect of his epistemological position as a skeptic who neither feels obliged to fully embrace the perspective of the other nor forces his own perspective upon the other.

By thus arguing that Lienhardt's skeptic position clears the ground for both a creative redefinition of his own concepts and for his personal friendship with the Dinka, I hope to offer a convincing example substantiating the more general assumption that the above-proposed redefinition of anthropology's object of study has also an impact on the ethical dimension of the relation between "anthropologist and native": it has the ability to transform it into a relation between coequals and is thus, by definition, not inherently political.

Re-reading Lienhardt's *Divinity and experience*

> *If we try to refine upon the nature of religious experiences, as distinct from the form which religious beliefs and practices take, . . . we are immediately in a region of uncertainty.*
> —Godfrey Lienhardt, "Religion and culture"

Figure 1: "I think I know who I would be if I were a Dinka" (Lienhardt, in Baumann 1997: 99). Lienhardt Collection, Pitt Rivers Museum, 2005.51.387.

Divinity and experience grapples with complications resulting from the fact that the Dinka, a group of South Sudanese cattle herders, divide the world into two kinds of beings: "Man and that which shares his terrestrial nature" on the one hand, and "Powers" that are "considered collectively as exhibiting a different nature" on the other. The latter are furthermore characterized as operating "beyond the categories of space and time" and as limiting "human actions" (Lienhardt 1961: 28). Against the background of this ontological bifurcation, Lienhardt's main goal is to decipher how "Dinka religious notion and practice define and regulate the relation between beings of these two different natures" (1961: 28). Lienhardt aims to scrutinize how the relation between Man and Powers, between the human and the "ultrahuman" is understood, enacted, and altered in myths (1961: chapter 5) and practices such as prayers (1961: chapter 6) and sacrifices (1961: chapter 7).

This short synopsis exemplifies that *Divinity and experience* stands in a direct relation to other contemporaneously published books that attempt to make sense

of the religious thoughts and practices of Africans: E. E. Evans-Pritchard's *Nuer religion* (1956), Meyer Fortes' *Oedipus and Job in West African religion* (1959), or Victor Turner's *The forest of symbols: Aspects of Ndembu ritual* (1967) among others. One could thus legitimately ask what is unique about *Divinity and experience*. Most anthropologists would probably refer to Lienhardt's conspicuously phenomenological approach that deliberately shifts the focus away from Durkheimian attempts to understand the religious as a function of the social. Instead of scrutinizing, for example, the relation between a culture's religious beliefs and its social structure, Lienhardt is concerned with a reconstruction of the ways in which Man and Powers are brought into relation with one another "in the single world of human experience" (1961: 28).[1]

This phenomenological approach, however, was not merely fueled by rational reasons. Interpreting and appreciating the religious experience of the Dinka, which seemingly connects the two separate spheres of Man and Powers effortlessly, rather promised to offer a solution for a problem that was bothering Lienhardt at least since 1944: "The ultimate vision is forgotten, or what is worse, sentimentalised. It is depressing to note how, as we increasingly isolate and consider what factors give life, coherence and importance not only to poetry but to the whole social organism, we are increasingly unable either to find them, or to supply them, in our own" (Lienhardt 1944: 140–41).

Lienhardt was probably influenced by his teacher F. R. Leavis, a literary critic based at Downing College, Cambridge, and his complaints about the loss of the "ultimate vision" signifies an increasing dissatisfaction with the ongoing bifurcation of the intellectual culture of "Western society" into the separate spheres of the natural sciences and the humanities (cf. Leavis [1962] 2013, a vigorous attack on Snow [1959] 2001). While the natural sciences are, to use Lienhardt's words, supposedly preoccupied with "Man and that which shares his terrestrial nature," the humanities deal with entities that "operate beyond the categories of space and time and limit human actions"—that is, morality, ethics, and art. If Lienhardt's suspicion that Dinka religious experience constitutes something akin to such an ultimate vision were to prove correct, however, understanding Dinka religious experience would indeed provide answers to a question discussed intensively not only by Leavis and Lienhardt but also by many of their contemporaries: how to realign the rational and the emotional, science and the arts?

Reading the chapter "Divinity and experience" (chapter 4)—in remembrance of Lienhardt's orthographic decision to distinguish between "Divinity" and "divinities," from now on called "*divinity and experience*"—one, however, realizes that Lienhardt implicitly confesses that in order to take the perceptibility of Dinka Powers seriously, he first had to overcome a serious methodological problem. Lienhardt, as a European, could not experience Dinka Powers (Lienhardt 1961: 104, 147). At first sight, this seems to be an example for an interpretational impasse emerging quite often during ethnographic fieldwork. A comparison between two

1. *Divinity and experience* probably marks the culmination point in Lienhardt's emancipation from the British anthropologists' focus on social structure. His PhD thesis, which he had handed in 1952, was called *The Dinka of the southern Sudan: Religion and social structure* (however, cf. Lienhardt 1949).

ethnographic statements dealing with entities that the anthropologist cannot perceive, however, helps us to understand what is unique about Lienhardt's handling of the "ethnographic invisible":

1. "No European actually encounters DENG, GARANG, or the other Powers" (Lienhardt 1961: 147).
2. "Witches, as the Azande conceive them, clearly cannot exist" (Evans-Pritchard 1937: 63).

As it is well known, Evans-Pritchard circumvents the question if witches really exist or not by analyzing the Azande discourse on witchcraft as an epistemological device unconsciously employed by the Azande to make sense of situations easily observable for the anthropologist as well as for his native interlocutors, namely the coincidence of two actually independently caused facts (for example, the collapse of a wooden granary caused by termites and the fact that some people had looked for shelter under that granary).[2] Witchcraft is not a description but an explanation of reality. In contrast to Evans-Pritchard's "De-Zandization" of the problem, Lienhardt stoically accepts that he is unable to experience Powers because he is not a Dinka. He furthermore remains impartial with regard to the question if Dinka Powers exist: "there is no way of proving that they do not objectively exist" (Lienhardt 1997b: 46). Lienhardt, it thus seems, had maneuvered himself into a problematic situation. He attempted to analyze something to which he had no access without taking the detour suggested by Evans-Pritchard, namely to assume that the object that he was supposed to analyze does not exist and actually means something else. In his discussion of the Dinka concept of the person, Lienhardt elaborates more clearly on his inability to experience Dinka Powers:

> There appears an experience into which foreigner cannot really enter, for while still living in the same political and social world, they do not belong to it by descent, and descent itself has a profoundly religious value. . . . The clans are religious corporations, and the Dinka themselves speak of clansmen as being related to, and through, their divinities, and of being "joined" or "united" in those divinities. . . . There appears a dimension of the Dinka self into which an outsider cannot really enter, excluded as he is from the intensely felt relationship of clanship . . . and perhaps only Dinka can tell us further what this entails. (Lienhardt 1985: 154–55; cf. 1961: 146, 246–47; and 1982: 85)

For an anthropologist educated in the Malinowskian tradition of "immerse and thereby understand," the assumption that only humans who are born as Dinka by way of agnatic descent can experience Powers the same way as Dinka poses a serious problem—maybe not for an ideological critique of Dinka's political system but definitely for Lienhardt's *phenomenological* attempt to understand Dinka *experience*. Lienhardt's problem was not methodological. It was not that Dinka did not allow Lienhardt to participate in their daily life or were not delighted to

2. It is important to note that Lienhardt had criticized such a form of analyzing religious beliefs as early as 1949: "Most anthropological accounts of religion in general . . . are written by people who suppose from the outset that the real ends of religion are others than those which are claimed, by believers, to be the ends" (1949: 69).

be interviewed by him as Evans-Pritchard famously complained about the Nuer (1940: 12–14). His problem was rather self-inflicted: he had accepted his inability to understand the Dinka due to a fact that he could not change, namely that he, born to a Swiss father and a British mother, was not a Dinka. According to the anthropological truism that "the native knows best," Lienhardt is supposed to stop analyzing Dinka religion at this point and stick to a mere description of what Dinka had told him about their experiences of Powers. According to the modernist dream that anthropologists, precisely because they are nonnatives, are always able to understand or even to explain social phenomena (in a positivistic sense, pace Durkheim), Lienhardt, however, is supposed to ignore that he had maneuvered himself into an ethnographic impasse. Instead, he should self-confidently claim that he is able to *understand* Dinka religious experiences *as* experiences although—or even because—he *cannot have* these experiences. My students had read the text as if Lienhardt proceeds according to the second option (the modernist dream and Evans-Pritchard's method). They assumed that Lienhardt had arrogantly assumed that he knows better than the Dinka.

Confronted with the students' harsh judgment, I had tried to argue that Lienhardt found a third way, although, in the heat of the seminar's discussion, I had not yet found out what that precisely could be. My situation was indeed intricate: in my defense of *Divinity and experience*, I had argued that Lienhardt was exclusively interested in *The religion of the Dinka* and the students had argued that Lienhardt was merely preoccupied with *Godfrey Lienhardt*. As one student had remarked remorselessly: "I wonder if Lienhardt has ever asked his Dinka informants about what they think of being accused of having no mind. Maybe it is his problem, I mean, having no mind." Reflecting on my discontent with the two alternatives of *modern hubris* (to ignore what the Dinka say and continue interpreting them) and *postcolonial humility* (to accept what the Dinka say and stop interpreting them), I began to think about a third option: What if Lienhardt accepted that the question between the two options cannot be answered ultimately? What if he subscribed neither to the first option (the proposition that he can understand Dinka in their own terms) nor to the second one (the proposition that he cannot understand Dinka in their own terms)?

In the following sections, I propose that Lienhardt accomplished to suspend an ultimate decision between the two options by bifurcating *Divinity and experience* into the book *Divinity and experience* and the chapter "*divinity and experience*." While *Divinity and experience* as a book reconstructs Dinka religion by "describing" what Dinka think and experience in their own terms (1961: 10), "*divinity and experience*" as a chapter presents an argument that makes Dinka religious thought and experience "analyzable" for Europeans.[3] Lienhardt accomplishes this translatability of Dinka religion into European thought by engaging in a huge methodological "as if." He attempts to understand himself *as if* he would be a Dinka in disguise or *as if* Dinka would be Lienhardts in disguise. In other words, "*divinity and experience*"

3. This assumption is substantiated by what Lienhardt writes on the last page of the chapter that precedes "*divinity and experience*." Here he explicitly confesses that within a "Dinka frame of reference" he had only been able to "describe" Dinka thought; he could not have "analyzed" it within such a frame (Lienhardt 1961: 146–47).

describes what Dinka would think if they were not only Dinka but also Europeans. It is important to note that Lienhardt thereby partly moves away from a description or analysis of actually existing entities. Similar to a science-fiction story that discusses contemporary social problems by constructing a universe populated by not-yet-existing entities (imagine a novel discussing social relations between humans against the background of a world where cyborgs exist),[4] Lienhardt circumvents the ethnographic impasse by inventing an epistemological subject who, although not existing in reality, is affected by and able to solve a conceptual puzzle that really exists: how do I have to understand the concept of experience if I want to remain impartial with regard to the question of the existence of Dinka Powers? How is it possible that something exists independently of humans, but I am—although in possession of the same sensory apparatus as the Dinka—unable to experience it?

Instead of following the method of Evans-Pritchard's *Witchcraft, oracles and magic among the Azande* by proclaiming that the Dinka's set of assumptions (including the claim that Lienhardt cannot experience Powers) is inferior to Lienhardt's set of assumptions (including the claim that he possesses the same sensory apparatus as the Dinka), Lienhardt attempts to reconcile the two contradictory sets of assumptions by way of imagining a fictional character who actually has the capacity to partly believe in both; a Lienhardt-Dinka if you want. In order to understand the ways in which the Dinka align the natural and the religious sphere with one another, Lienhardt, it seems, had to blur the differences between science and fiction, thereby following his former teacher F. R. Leavis' advice. Taking the perceptibility of Dinka Powers seriously at all costs and despite the fact that he could not experience them was therefore for Lienhardt what reading poetry was for his teacher: a practice that demanded from Lienhardt to take over what he—in the above quote and referencing a poem by T. S. Eliot—had called "the ultimate vision" and Leavis called "the third realm . . . of that which is neither merely private and personal nor public in the sense that it can be brought into the laboratory or pointed to. You cannot point to the poem; it is 'there' only in the re-creative response of individual minds to the black marks on the page. But—a necessary faith—it is something in which minds can meet" (Leavis [1962] 2013: 74). It is such a "necessary faith" that is signified by the ambitious and at the same time humble "I think" in a statement made by Lienhardt and already quoted above: "I think I know who I would be if I were a Dinka" (Lienhardt, in Baumann 1997: 99).

Maybe my students were thus as right (or wrong) as I was and Lienhardt understood the Dinka by being, to take up a nice wordplay of Rane Willerslev (2004), "not-not-interested" in *Godfrey Lienhardt* and "not-not-interested" in *The religion of the Dinka*—a rather confusing assumption elaborated in more detail in the next section, which explores the affinities between Lienhardt's approach and Sextus Empiricus' Pyrrhonian skepticism.

4. The history of how science fiction influenced anthropology and vice versa awaits to be written down in a monograph probably focusing on science fiction writers such as Ursula Le Guin, Alfred Kroeber's daughter, and Chad Oliver, twice chairman of the University of Texas' Department of Anthropology. The assumption that both disciplines use their material "as a foil against which to press genuine scientific puzzles" (Stover 1968) could be a fruitful starting point. However, see Stover (1973) and Collins (2003).

Figure 2: "On my right: Dhol Yuor, the little boy I had last year On my left—Duk, my present cook Both about 14—me smaller than [writing cut off] (on reverse of print)." Lienhardt Collection, Pitt Rivers Museum, 2005.51.467.

Lienhardt as a Pyrrhonian skeptic

> *It is not some mysterious "primitive philosophy" that we are exploring, but the further potentialities of our thought and language.*
> —Godfrey Lienhardt, "Modes of thought"

A comparison between Lienhardt's ethnographic work and Pyrrhonian skepticism might initially appear far-fetched. It is, however, undeniable that his work includes explicit references to skepticism: "On the whole, I have been talking about what primitive peoples are said to 'believe'; and generally, what may be regarded as their faith has received more publicity than their scepticism. Yet, scepticism and an ironical recognition of the ambiguities of human experience and knowledge are undoubtedly found among them."(Lienhardt 1954: 103).

Apart from such obvious references, Lienhardt repeatedly emphasizes Dinka's ability to endure, accept, and navigate in what he calls "real ambiguities," "clear oppositions," "paradoxes and contrarieties of experience" (1961: 54–55).[5] This endurance of ambiguity is a paradigmatic example of the skeptical ability to endure and accept opposing arguments for the sake of reaching "tranquility of the mind" (*ataraxia*, see Sextus Empiricus 2000: passim). However, Lienhardt's oeuvre also includes passages suggesting that he understands skepticism not only as an attitude characterizing Dinka's approach to life but also as a valuable anthropological method. For instance, he describes Evans-Pritchard appreciatively as a "kind of sceptical believer who became a great anthropologist by doing so" (Lienhardt 1997c: 77). For Lienhardt, apparently, being a skeptic helps one in becoming an anthropologist.

However, before I can convince the reader that a comparison between the methodology of Pyrrhonian Skepticism and Lienhardt's troublesome ethnographic situation among the Dinka is productive, the basic assumptions of the former have to be outlined. In order to ward off hastily made equations between skepticism and relativism, it is important to distinguish Pyrrhonian skepticism, mainly known through the works of Sextus Empiricus, from what is called Academic skepticism.[6] While the latter marks the proposition that we can have knowledge of something as false, the former finds good reasons for both the proposition that we can have knowledge of something and for the proposition that we cannot have knowledge of something. By ultimately suspending to choose between one of the two alternatives, a Pyrrhonian skeptic is able to continue investigating any problem of interest without being limited to either of two propositions mutually excluding each other. A Pyrrhonian skeptic perpetually suspends judgment about either $p\ (a)$ or $\neg\ p\ (a)$ and looks for further information about the question at hand (be it the question if we can have knowledge of something or any other question). The skeptic continues the attempt to find convincing arguments for both $p\ (a)$ and $\neg\ p\ (a)$ in order to bring $p\ (a)$ and $\neg\ p\ (a)$ into "equipollence" (Sextus Empiricus 2000: 47).[7] For

5. It is thus not a surprise that Douglas H. Johnson emphasized Lienhardt's "focused attention on scepticism and faith; and on the ironical recognition of the ambiguities of human experience, even among (or perhaps especially among) the religious experts of 'traditional' religions" (Johnson 1993).

6. The distinction between Academic and Pyrrhonian skepticism is part of Sextus Empiricus' strategic attempt to distinguish his own form of skepticism from the one of his predecessors and therefore has to be used carefully if one is interested in writing an accurate history of philosophy (which I am not). However, in Sextus' own words, the difference can be described as follows: "Those who are called Dogmatists . . . think that they have discovered the truth. . . . The schools of Clitomachus and Carneades, and other Academics, have asserted that things cannot be apprehended. And the Sceptics are still investigating" (2000: 3).

7. See Sextus Empiricus (2000: 51): "To every account I have scrutinized which purports to establish something in dogmatic fashion, there appears to me to be opposed another account, purporting to establish something in dogmatic fashion, equal to it in convincingness."

Pyrrhonian Skeptics, not establishing truth is thus the only way to continue searching for truth.[8]

Coming back to Lienhardt's methodological problem, the two propositions he is wrestling with can be summarized as follows:

1. Lienhardt has reasons to assume that he is able to understand Dinka better than they do and that he is able to objectively (read: better), more clearly, and impartially assess and analyze the problem at hand, because he, as a non-Dinka, can rely on the ethnographic encounters and ethnological theories of others. The understanding of the Dinka might be "imprisoned in actions" (Evans-Pritchard 1937: 82–83), but the anthropologist is capable of uncaging it. A task that the anthropologist can only achieve as an outsider: "No social phenomenon can be adequately studied merely in the language and categories of thought in which the people among whom it is found represent it to themselves" (Lienhardt 1964b: 123).
2. Lienhardt has reasons to assume that he is unable to understand the Dinka better than they do. As an outsider (a non-Dinka) he has never experienced a Dinka Power nor, at least if he trusts his informants, will he, as a non-Dinka, ever be able to do so.

Instead of arguing for one of the two reasonable options, I propose that Lienhardt embarked on a third way in the chapter "*divinity and experience*." Precisely because he had found good reasons for both options, he could withdraw from a decision and "remain in a state of noncommitment to any particular ontological option" (Candea 2013: 431). The idea of remaining in a "state of noncommitment to any particular ontological option" seems to imply the ability to take over a godlike transcendental position. What I rather want to refer to with Candea's phrase is the attempt to withdraw from embracing an "ontological option" *wholeheartedly* with all its moral, political, and epistemological consequences. The skeptical method of remaining in a "state of noncommitment to any *particular* ontological option" thus does not aim at bracketing *all* conceptual assumptions in order to catapult oneself to an epistemologically superior position. It rather renounces that we have to act or think according to either $p(a)$ or $\neg p(a)$ *and* all the consequences of $p(a)$ or $\neg p(a)$. In other words, a skeptic form of anthropological knowledge production accepts the possibility of acting and thinking despite, and therefore within, contradictions. It does not subscribe to the logical "principle of explosion" according to which contradictions necessarily lead to inconsistent and therefore false theories (for any statements p and q, if p and not $\neg p$ are both true, then q is true). Rather, a skeptic anthropology allows constructing what logicians currently call *paraconsistent theories*, that is, inconsistent but nontrivial theories. As the German philosopher Hans Vaihinger writes aptly in his book *The philosophy of "as if"*: "contradictions are

8. A detailed analytic introduction to Pyrrhonian skepticism as a form of continuous inquiry can be found in Perin (2010). See also Palmer (2000) and Machuca (2013) who offer alternative interpretations of Pyrrhonian skepticism. For an introduction to Ancient Skepticism in general, see Thorsrud (2009). Other accounts of the relation between skepticism and anthropology are given in Bubandt (2014); Candea (2013); Gable (2002); and Taussig (1998).

not only undeniable but are the very means by which advances have been made" (Vaihinger 1935: 61; cf. Wagner 1986: 9).

Transferred to the case at hand: a skeptical stance on the ethnographic impasse he had maneuvered himself into allows Lienhardt to move freely between the two mutually excluding options in order to find a solution for the problem at hand. I thus believe that Lienhardt's suspension of judgment (*epoché*[9])—his choice to follow "the chief constitutive principle of skepticism," i.e., "the claim that to every account an equal account is opposed" (Sextus Empiricus 2000: 6)—was the cause of the students' feeling that he is switching between European and Dinka assumptions, which are actually mutually exclusive. They therefore, and apparently rightly so, rejected Lienhardt's argumentation on the ground of its logical inconsistency. However, let us see what Lienhardt is doing. As already mentioned above, he starts "*divinity and experience*" with the following propositions:

1. Dinka say that Powers are entities they encounter ("Dinka claim that they encounter 'spirits' of various kinds," 1961: 28).
2. Dinka say that Europeans cannot encounter Powers because Europeans are not connected to Dinka by agnatic descent (1985: 154–55; 1961: 146, 246–47).

This has implications for Lienhardt's methodological approach:

1. As a European (a non-Dinka), Lienhardt cannot encounter Powers as entities.
2. As an anthropologist, Lienhardt still has and wants to understand Dinka's encounter with Powers as entities.

My students had identified the tension between these two assumptions as the main evidence for Lienhardt's ethnocentricity, his logical inconsistency, and his colonial hubris. One student, for instance, wrote in her midterm essay that Lienhardt should have merely tried to repeat how Dinka had described their experience with Powers to him. In other words, Lienhardt should not have written the chapter "*divinity and experience*." In contrast, I propose that by suspending any judgment about the possibility or impossibility to understand the other, Lienhardt deliberately took over a skeptic position concerning his ability to understand respectively to not understand Dinka experiences. He thereby embarked on the mission to portray the Dinka as if he could understand them and as if he could not understand them—that is, simultaneously as a non-Dinka and as a Dinka—and thereby attempted "to think and experience, at once, the thoughts and experiences of foreign cultures and of his own" (Lienhardt 1973: 63).

In this process of oscillating between investigating Dinka as a European and as a Dinka, an object of study emerged that can be adequately described as neither "the subject-matter of a Dinka theology" (Lienhardt 1961: 147) nor the subject-matter of an enlightened European science assuming that Powers do not exist. What does emerge could rather be called a "not-not-Dinka conceptual puzzle"; namely, the demand to understand Dinka Powers as something that cannot be experienced

9. It is important to note that Sextus Empiricus does not believe that the suspension of judgment is equivalent to "a withdrawal in silence or a stubborn refusal to articulate something meaningful." It rather has to be understood as "a response that reiterates a suspensive 'perhaps'" (Massie 2013: 22–25).

without "de-dinkarizing" them. In other, rather forthright, words: the demand and possibility to understand Dinka Powers simultaneously as experienceable entities and as nonexperienceable entities. It is illuminating for an understanding of Lienhardt's attempt to avoid any "de-Dinkarization" that he starts justifying his hypothesis that it is necessary to understand Dinka Powers as representations by indicating ethnographic evidence that points toward interpreting Powers as "shadows" or "reflections" (*atyep*), that is, as a specific type of representation: "It is not suggested, of course, that the Dinka apprehend their beliefs in this way; yet in their own language we find a parallel to our use of the word 'image,' and one which illustrated partly what I have intended to convey by that use. The Dinka word which would normally be translated as 'ghost' is *atyep*, which means a shadow and reflection" (1961: 153).

Lienhardt's use of the term *image* is remarkable for two related reasons. First, images, in contrast to other types of representations, visually resemble what they represent. It is a logical consequence of their visual resemblance with those entities they signify that images, second, stand in a commutative symbolic relation with the entities they represent: if *a* is an image of *b*, *b* is also an image of *a*. In other words, the entity that an image represents can always be used as an image of the image that represents the entity. While a heart as a symbol represents love, love as a concept does not necessarily have the potential to represent a heart. However, if a picture of a heart images a real heart, the real heart necessarily has the potential to image the picture of the heart. The assumption that the picture of the heart is the image of the heart and not vice versa is, in fact, merely a result of cultural conventions.

This commutative ability of images, which they share with religious symbols (Evans-Pritchard 1956: 134) and Peircean icons, allows Lienhardt to understand Dinka Powers simultaneously as religious entities (in *Divinity and experience*) and as representations of experiences (in "*divinity and experience*"). For Lienhardt as a European scholar, the experience—for example a headache—is what causes the Power to emerge (the Power is the image of the experience). For a Dinka, however, it is the Power that causes the experience to emerge (the experience is the image of the Power). Using the term *image* thus allows Lienhardt to understand Dinka Powers simultaneously as entities that represent and entities that are represented. The term *image* furthermore enables Lienhardt to mark the two alternatives as mere cultural conventions. In other words: using the term *image* is Lienhardt's way of suspending judgment about the question if Powers are experienceable entities or not while at the same time remaining faithful to the Dinka assumption that non-Dinka cannot experience Powers. Mary Douglas' complaint that Lienhardt "meant to write a book about experience, but what he wrote was about experience as pictures" (1994: 17) thus overlooks that Lienhardt could only accomplish the first through the latter.

As will be seen in the next section, Lienhardt furthermore conceptually exploits his decision to suspend judgment about p (powers are experienceable entities) and $\neg p$ (powers are not experienceable entities) in order to offer an ingenious solution to a problem that puzzled seventeenth- and eighteenth-century philosophers such as John Locke and Immanuel Kant: how we can account for the fact that human perception is coherent although the sense perception is split into a diversity of different perceptual data?

"One culture's problem is another culture's way of life"; or, How to "dinkarize" European philosophy

> *There is a reaching out for foreign worlds of experience, for their own sake, which eventually quite destroys the framework of ideas and values within and from which it first started.*
> —Godfrey Lienhardt, "Anthropology and contemporary literature"

While for empiricists, rationalists, and Kant every solution to the problem of the coherence of sensual perception depends on a precise account of what the human mind does, Lienhardt's analysis of Dinka religious experience allows for an altogether different answer that externalizes the mind's ability to offer a coherent perception by putting this ability in the hands of Powers. For the Dinka, the cause of a uniform experience is neither the mind that exists independently of the world and manipulates our perception of the world (rationalism) nor the world that is merely mimetically reproduced by our sensory apparatus (empiricism). Dinka thus neither "believe"[10] that the world exists independently of humans who "perceive" (literally, "take possession of") it nor that the world is merely reproduced by physical or—as assumed more commonly today—neurophysiological mechanisms. Rather, Powers are understood as autonomous agents that "act[s] upon" (1961: 170) humans and structure the experience of the latter. Lienhardt's argument can be summarized as follows: Dinka have no concept of a mind that orders experience (Lienhardt 1961: 149). Without a concept of a mind, the cause and fundament of the unity of experience as well as the cause and fundament of disintegrated experiences have to be externalized and thereby simultaneously naturalized as existing as an autonomous entity. Dinka are thus conceptually "forced" to choose Powers to act as these autonomous entities that order and disorder experience.

Analogously to the Western mind, Powers are therefore an explanation for the possibility of the unity of human experience as such. However, they can only serve as an answer to the problem of the congruency between the world and the mind if we assume that such a congruency *is* a problem to begin with, which we, due to our philosophical heritage, are inclined to do. Searching for a solution to the problem of an ontological gap between the world and the mind, we are tricked into understanding the Dinka experience with Powers precisely as such a solution. For the Dinka, in contrast, experience is not assumed to be a function of a detachment between world and mind. As much as a person philosophically brought up in the West cannot interpret Powers as entities (because "he has a mind" that

10. Lienhardt had difficulties with the usage of the term *belief*, which anticipate Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's rejection of it. While Lienhardt writes that "'beliefs,' as we call them, are often for those who hold them rather a kind of knowledge and theory" (1964b: 141; cf. Sextus Empiricus' answer of the question if "Skeptics hold beliefs," 2010: 6–7), Viveiros de Castro describes Amazonian animistic "beliefs" in a way that could be transferred one-to-one onto the Dinka "belief" in powers: "It is not the native's mental condition [i.e., it is not a belief], but a 'theory of the mind' applied by the native. Indeed, it is a manner of resolving—or better, dissolving—the eminently philosophical problem of 'other minds'" (Viveiros de Castro 2013: 490).

either predetermines or reproduces the world), Dinka cannot understand Powers as representations (because "they do not have a mind" but Powers that are the cause of experiences). For the Dinka, the unity of human experience is not a problem demanding a philosophical explanation but a fact immanent to being: "They do not make the kind of distinction between the psyche and the world that would make such interpretations significant for them" (1961: 149). In contrast to Evans-Pritchard's analysis of witchcraft as an implicit explanation for events perceivable by both himself and the Azande, Lienhardt's explanation of Dinka Powers as entities ordering human experience thus does not claim to explain a philosophical problem that Lienhardt shares with the Dinka *to* the Dinka. His analysis rather appears to be built upon an ironic but consequent reversal of the above-mentioned initial ethnographic impasse: because Lienhardt cannot experience Powers, Dinka cannot experience his solution.[11]

Dinka's conceptualization of Powers as "acting on" the individual and thereby structuring the individual's experience, however, also implies, as it is well known, a shift in how actors are, for instance, forced to deal with diseases caused by "ultra-human forces" (1961: 28). Instead of "actively changing" the Power that causes the disease, which is impossible because Powers are autonomous agents beyond immediate control, Dinka attempt to "passively redirect" the Power's intention toward a part of themselves that they can dispose of, namely cattle. Instead of directly influencing the Power who possesses a Dinka, Dinka sacrificial practice aims at a "victimization" of the sacrificial animal that enables a transfer of the "burden of human *passiones*" (Lienhardt 1961: 251) onto it. The simultaneity of the Powers' radical autonomy and their immediate influence upon humans thus forces Dinka who experience something bad to either transform themselves by praying and other ritual activities or by sacrificing cattle, which they understand as parts of themselves.

The next section proposes to understand a skeptical form of anthropological knowledge production as a practice resembling such forms of partial self-transformation and self-sacrifice (cf. Evens 2008: chapter 9). Instead of assuming either that our own concepts cannot account for the puzzling assumptions and actions of others or that the strange concepts of others can mechanically and without friction be translated into our own, I propose that one way to do justice to the strange habits, thoughts, and actions of others lies in sacrificing the consistency, universality, and tidiness of our own conceptual matrix and our own fundamental assumptions about the world's constitution. Fortunately, such a conceptual sacrifice does not have to include blood as it does in the sacrifice of the lives of humans or "quasi-humans" such as cattle (see Evens 1985)—an ironic distance toward oneself and the other coupled with what the romantic poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge has called the "willing suspension of disbelief" might as well do.

11. Playing around with the conceptually now disentangled notions of experience and representation, one could even conclude: if experiencing the world is not a representationalist problem, not being able to represent experiences could equally be considered unproblematic. *Divinity and experience* as an antiphenomenological phenomenology, if you want.

Figure 3: "Our most elaborate thoughts . . . are often, as I think, not really ours, but have on sudden come up, as it were, out of hell or down out of heaven" (W. B. Yeats, quoted in Lienhardt 1973: 65) Lienhardt Collection, Pitt Rivers Museum, 2005.51.19.1

Anthropology as fictive science; or, The art of solving conceptual puzzles

And with the break-down of that exclusiveness, with the imaginative attempt to enter into the experience of other lives and times, there goes the isolation of the thinking individual.
—Godfrey Lienhardt, "Anthropology and contemporary literature"

Before I describe the potential effects an approval of Pyrrhonian skepticism can have on the ethics of anthropological knowledge production, I want to summarize the similarities between Lienhardt and Sextus Empiricus. At a crucial moment of his elaboration of Pyrrhonian skepticism, Sextus claims that the skeptic does not inquire that which "is apparent, but what is said about what is apparent—and this is different from investigating what is apparent itself. For example, it appears to us

that honey sweetens (we concede this inasmuch as we are sweetened in a perceptual way); but whether (as far as the argument goes) it is actually sweet is something we investigate" (Sextus Empiricus 2000: 8).

Anthropology understood as a skeptic practice is thus not so much interested in "why something is what it is regardless of myself" (anthropology as a positivistic science) or "why it appears to me as it does" (self-reflexive anthropology), but what I, as an anthropologist, could say about (or "do with") an ethnographic experience regardless of why it appears as it appears—that is, what one can say about it if one brackets not only all perceptual commitments, as in the case of honey, but also all conceptual ones. While Sextus Empiricus is not interested in why honey appears to be sweet but merely in exploring arguments about if honey "really" is sweet or not, skeptical anthropologists are drawn toward ethnographic encounters that allow them to explore if, for instance, the experience of the world must necessarily be understood as a function of the human ability to represent it. By exploring the alternative that "the experience of the world is not necessarily a function of the human ability to represent it," Lienhardt, one could say, has brought the two contradictory propositions that p ("The experience of the world is necessarily a function of the human ability to represent it") and $\neg p$ ("The experience of the world is not necessarily a function of the human ability to represent it") into "equipollence" (Sextus Empiricus 2000: 47).[12] Comparable to what Coleridge demands of a writer of romantic fiction, a skeptic anthropologist should thus embody a "willing suspension of disbelief." While Coleridge advises any romantic novelist to "transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination [i.e., phantasmagorical beings such as vampires] that willing suspension of disbelief" (1907: 6), Lienhardt refused to follow Evans-Pritchard by not announcing that Dinka powers "clearly cannot exist." Instead of suspending his disbelief in vampires and other Gothic monsters, Lienhardt suspended his disbelief in Dinka Powers and thereby cleared the ground for an anthropology that is interested in creatively and imaginatively enriching our own conceptualizations.[13] By suspending his disbelief in Powers and subsequently arguing for $\neg p$ until it appears to be as true as p, Lienhardt arrives at the conclusion that experience can also be conceptualized as a process being immanent to the world.

The assumption that experiences are set in motion by entities that are simultaneously part of the world and beyond the control of humans—that is, by Powers—does not entail logical contradictions. As seen above, it even helps formulating an alternative solution for the problem of the unity of human experience and prevents

12. Carrithers' concept of irony understood as a way of taking into account all perspectives at once without considering any of them as "true [n]or false, but contributory" (2014: 127–28) comes very close to Sextus Empiricus' demand to reach "equipollence."

13. Lienhardt's inclination to suspend disbelief is carried to its ironic extreme in *Divinity and experience*'s last chapter titled and dealing with "burial alive"—a social practice whose existence Lienhardt cannot testify because no European observer, including Lienhardt, has ever described a burial alive as an eyewitness. Such a metacomment on his own methodological dogma—"I can understand the experience of things, because I cannot experience them"—can only be called ironic.

Lienhardt from repeating a mistake aptly portrayed by a statement from Coleridge quoted in Lienhardt's introductory book *Social anthropology*: "We have imprisoned our own conceptions, by the lines we have drawn in order to exclude the conceptions of others" (Lienhardt 1964b: 115). The assumption that experiences are set in motion by entities that are simultaneously part of the world and beyond human control furthermore releases Lienhardt from the ethnographic impasse described above. If Powers bring forth human experiences autonomously, it is not Lienhardt's problem that he cannot experience them. The Powers have merely chosen not to be present in him. His inability to experience Powers thus becomes a fact that Lienhardt has to accept: "there is no way of proving that they do not objectively exist" (Lienhardt 1997b: 46).

By attempting to push conceptual thinking to its—initially in-credible—limits, Lienhardt's "*divinity and experience*," one could conclude, resembles the skeptical attempts to exploit the conceptual potentials of challenging "obvious" assumption: Does honey not taste different depending on what I have eaten before? If I were an animal, how would honey taste? If I were a Dinka, what would it mean for me to experience? Trying to find an answer for a puzzling question like the last one blurs the distinctions between anthropology and literature in a way that radicalizes some of the assumptions of the Writing Culture debate. It is not only that ethnographies mimic the rhetorical or narrative strategy of novels in order to bolster the author's authoritative ability to represent the real world (Clifford 1983; Geertz 1988; Narayan 2012). Rather, ethnographic encounters force the anthropologists to make up fictive characters that "really" do not exist. While science fiction novels construct—to take up the distinction between outer and inner world that does not apply to Dinka philosophy—external worlds that do not exist, fictive science ethnographies construct inherently contradictory intensional worlds that result from the ethnographer's attempt to solve conceptual puzzles that take over the form of "What if I were a Dinka although I am not?"[14] One problem that evolves out of such a conceptualization of anthropology as the fictive science of conceptual puzzle-solving is that anthropological fieldwork in "faraway places" among "strange people" is no longer *necessary* to achieve anthropology's goals. We could as well be puzzled by, for instance, a science fiction novel, a poem, or an everyday observation at home.[15] Proper anthropological fieldwork that "puzzles" the ethnographer who dares to be surprised or even deliberately looks out for situations that are surprising (Guyer 2013) would, nevertheless, still be a *sufficient* and

14. It is important to note that such a form of anthropology does no longer aim at understanding *what it means to be a Dinka for the Dinka*. It rather attempts to imagine *what it means to be a Dinka for a non-Dinka*. By suspending judgment about the question if anthropologists can really put themselves into the position of the native without "going native"—which is, obviously, logically impossible—such a skeptic anthropology takes a leap of faith similar to the one required by the reader of science fiction: belief in something because it offers me something, not because I know that it really exists.

15. See the work of Italian philosopher Giorgio Colli, which scrutinizes the relation between the birth of philosophy in Ancient Greek and puzzles and paradoxes such as Zeno's ones (Colli 1975).

probably very adequate means to get one's hands on a conceptual puzzle worth trying to solve.[16]

The affinity between Lienhardt and Pyrrhonian skepticism is, however, not only relevant for an understanding of Lienhardt's epistemology. It also sheds new light on Lienhardt's agnostic assessment of anthropology's alleged ability to change intercultural relations to a better. His diagnosis that the "reality and consequences of radical conflict have tended to be played down, as anthropologists have turned moralists" and that "Autonomous peoples do not require our 'sympathy'" (1964b: 151–52) suggests that anthropology, for him, cannot be a substitute for actual political sovereignty and economic independence achieved outside and independently of the ethnographic encounter. Anthropologists do not need to become the main spokesperson of the people they study. Similar to the skeptic, an ethnographer should rather aim to discover what Leavis has called the "third realm" and what a Pyrrhonian skeptic would characterize as the "space that opens a distance between herself and the thoughts she entertains. It is because she can hold her thoughts at a distance that she is capable of engaging in their critical examination in the first place. . . . This is the point where epistemological, psychological, and ethical concerns coincide and it is in this space of play, in this leeway, that *ataraxia* can emerge" (Massie 2013: 232).

It is this "tranquility of the mind" (*ataraxia*), this relaxed attitude toward oneself and the other—according to Sextus Empiricus a direct effect of an accomplished conceptual equipollence (2010: 10–11)—that sets free both the anthropologist as well as the native from engaging in an implicit or explicit discourse about the question who is allowed to speak about whom.

If Lienhardt is neither exclusively talking about "the Dinka" nor about himself but about conceptual puzzles that emerge during ethnographic fieldwork peripherally, in a highly individualistic fashion and in-between the anthropologists and the native, some of the cases filed against anthropology as an intrinsically colonial science fall apart. Anthropologists have indeed long overlooked that symmetrizing the ethnographic relation could not only mean to take the other seriously. It could also mean to stop taking seriously both themselves and the other wholeheartedly and explore the conceptual affordances of all possible propositions without being influenced by any political or ontological commitment. Strangely enough, it is thus an extremely instrumentalistic attitude toward one's own as well as the other's conceptual assumptions (what could we conceptually gain from assuming that Dinka Powers exist?) coupled with an ironic distance to these assumptions (Do Dinka Powers exist? Maybe, maybe not . . .) that allows the anthropologist to resign from the alternative to either speak against or for the other. Maybe such a "political

16. Some questions remain, however. Is it morally appropriate to invade other people's privacy merely to find conceptual puzzles? Is it politically legitimate to ask our governments for money to do so? However, if we understand anthropology as puzzle-solving, these questions could at least be asked in a much more forceful manner compared to a situation where anthropologists pretend to give voice to the suppressed, arguing that they thereby become political by default. Furthermore, giving voice to the suppressed is not a genuine scientific endeavor, while thinking conceptually in a coherent and sufficiently complex way is.

Figure 4: "To find fresh pastures when they are required is, quite simply, to survive, and in this sense 'not to cross the river' is a euphemism for 'to die'" (Lienhardt 1961: 195). Lienhardt Collection, Pitt Rivers Museum, 2005.51.30.1

apoliticalness" (Schmidt 2015) that turns anthropology into an institutionalized ironic joke is one way how anthropology itself can continue to be taken seriously: anthropology, if you will, as the science that keeps the truth at arm's length in order to arrive at a truth.

Keeping the truth of my Lienhardt interpretation at arm's length, however, was also the attitude that my students adopted when I presented a first draft of my argument to them. After discussing Lienhardt's book again and subsequently comparing it with Evans-Pritchard's *Nuer religion* (1956), I asked them which of the two books they preferred. One student confessed that both books have a very ethnocentric flavor, which, as she—with an ironic smile—argued, would not be a coincidence as she had discovered in the two books' forewords that Lienhardt was *Nuer religion*'s main proofreader and that Evans-Pritchard was *Divinity and*

experience's main proofreader. The judgment of the students had thus not changed. Evans-Pritchard and Lienhardt were, for them, two fallen heroes of anthropology's golden age who, in a globalized and postmodern world, no longer meet the required intellectual and political standard of not being ethnocentric. However, as I hope to have shown in this essay and told my students: at least they and everybody else should grant Lienhardt (and probably Evans-Pritchard as well) the status of anthropological skeptics who have "tried to think with their own minds, and with the minds of others different from them" (1964b: 157). About what Lienhardt actually thought—the Dinka, Godfrey Lienhardt, or something in-between—remains debatable, but that he did so rather creatively is beyond doubt. Lienhardt should thus not be viewed as an opponent of the idea that anthropology and literature are comparable to one another. Instead of ranting about the problems stemming from similarities between anthropology and fiction, Lienhardt, however, explored the opportunities that arise out of those similarities. His *Divinity and experience* should therefore still serve as a model for anthropological knowledge production in the twenty-first century.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Martin Fotta, Martin Holbraad, Stefan Niklas, Johannes Schick, Jessica Schmidt, David Sittler, Philipp Steinkrüger, both Michael Lambek and Giovanni da Col as well as two anonymous reviewers for their honest critique and helpful comments. Furthermore, I am deeply indebted to Luděk Brož who invited me to the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Prague, where I presented a version of this essay and to Christopher Morton, Curator of Photograph and Manuscript Collections at the Pitt Rivers Museum, for granting me the permission to use Lienhardt's photographs.

References

Baumann, Gerd. 1997. "Presence perfected: Talking to Godfrey Lienhardt." *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford* 28 (1): 97–101.

Bubandt, Nils. 2014. *The empty seashell: Witchcraft and doubt on an Indonesian island*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Candea, Matei. 2013. "Suspending belief: Epoché in animal behavior science." *American Anthropologist* 115 (3): 423–36.

Carrithers, Michael. 2014. "Anthropology as irony and philosophy, or the knots in simple ethnographic projects." *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 4 (3): 117–42.

Clifford, James. 1983. "On ethnographic authority." *Representations* 2: 118–146.

Clifford, James, and George Marcus, eds. 1986. *Writing culture: The poetics and politics of ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. 1907. *Biographia literaria.* Vol. 2. London: Clarendon Press.

Colli, Giorgio. 1975. *La nascita della filosofia*. Milan: Adelphi.

Collins, Samuel Gerald. 2003. "Sail on! Sail on! Anthropology, science fiction, and the enticing future." *Science Fiction Studies* 30 (2): 180–98.

Deng, Zachariah Bol. 1997. "Thienydeng." *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford* 28 (1): 119.

Douglas, Mary. 1994. "Obituary: Godfrey Lienhardt." *Anthropology Today* 10 (1): 15–8.

Evans-Pritchard, E. E. 1937. *Witchcraft, oracles and magic among the Azande*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

———. 1940. *The Nuer: A description of the modes of livelihood and political institutions of a Nilotic people*. New York: Oxford University Press.

———. 1956. *Nuer religion*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Evens, T. M. S. 1985. "The paradox of Nuer feud and the leopard-skin chief: A 'creative' solution to the prisoner's dilemma." *American Ethnologist* 12 (1): 84–102.

———. 2008. *Anthropology as ethics: Nondualism and the conduct of sacrifice*. New York: Berghahn.

Fabian, Johannes. 1983. *Time and the other: How anthropology makes its object*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Fortes, Meyer. 1959. *Oedipus and Job in West African religion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gable, Eric. 2002. "Beyond belief? Play, scepticism, and religion in a West African village." *Social Anthropology* 10 (1): 41–56.

Geertz, Clifford. 1988. *Works and lives: The anthropologist as author.* London: Polity.

Guyer, Jane I. 2013. "'The quickening of the unknown': Epistemologies of surprise in anthropology." The Munro Lecture. *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 3 (3): 309–35.

Holbraad, Martin. 2012. *Truth in motion: The recursive anthropology of Cuban divination*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Horton, Robin. 1962. "Book review, 'Lienhardt 1961.'" *Africa* 32: 78.

James, Wendy. 2003. *The ceremonial animal: A new portrait of anthropology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Johnson, Douglas H. 1993. "Obituary: Godfrey Lienhardt." *Independent*, November 17. 1993. http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/obituary-godfrey-lienhardt-1504880.html.

Leavis, F. R. (1962) 2013. *Two cultures? The significance of C. P. Snow*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lienhardt, Godfrey. 1944. "The ultimate vision." *Scrutiny* 7 (2): 136–41.

———. 1949. "Religion and culture (Book review of Dawson, Christopher [1948], Religion and culture: Gifford Lectures delivered in the University of Edinburgh in the year 1947." *Blackfriars* 30: 69–72.

———. 1954. “Modes of thought.” In *The institutions of primitive society: A series of broadcast talks*, edited by E. E. Evans-Pritchard et al., 95–107. Oxford: Blackwell.

———. 1961. *Divinity and experience: The religion of the Dinka*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

———. 1964a. “On the concept of objectivity in social anthropology.” *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 94: 1–10.

———. 1964b. *Social anthropology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

———. 1973. “Anthropology and contemporary literature.” *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford* 4 (2): 59–67.

———. 1982. “The Dinka and Catholicism.” In *Religious organization and religious experience*, edited by John Davis, 81–96. London: Academic Press.

———. 1985. “Self: Public, private. Some African representations.” In *The category of the person*, edited by Michael Carrithers, Steve Collins, and Steven Lukes, 139–55. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. 1997a. “Anthropology and the view from afar.” *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford* 28 (1): 83–89.

———. 1997b. “‘High gods’ among some Nilotic peoples.” *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford* 28 (1): 40–49.

———. 1997c. “Two great British social anthropologists: Sir James Frazer and Sir Edward Evans-Pritchard.” *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford* 28 (1): 63–82.

Machuca, Diego E. 2013. “Pyrrhonism, inquiry, and rationality.“ *Elenchos* 34: 201–28.

Massie, Pascal. 2013. “Philosophy and ataraxia in Sextus Empiricus.” *Peitho Examina Antiqua* 1 (4): 211–34.

Meyerowitz, Eva L. R. 1962. “Book review, ‘Lienhardt 1961.’” *African Affairs* 61: 63.

Narayan, Kirin. 2012. *Alive in the writing: Crafting ethnography in the company of Chekhov*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Palmer, John A. 2000. “Skeptical investigation.” *Ancient Philosophy* 20: 351–75.

Perin, Casey. 2010. *The demands of reason: An essay on Pyrrhonian scepticism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Schmidt, Mario. 2015. “Critique as a paratopical joke: The political apoliticalness of anthropology.” In *Ends of critique (Global Dialogues 10)*, edited by Pol Bargués-Pedreny, Kai Koddenbrock, Mario Schmidt, and Jessica Schmidt, 12–17. Duisburg: Centre for Global Cooperation Research.

Schneider, Harold K. 1962. “Book review, ‘Lienhardt 1961.’” *American Anthropologist* 64: 862–64.

Sextus Empiricus. 2000. *Outlines of skepticism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Singh, Bhrigupati, and Jane I. Guyer. 2016. “Introduction: A joyful history of anthropology.” *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 6 (2): 197–211.

Snow, Charles Percy. (1959) 2001. *The two cultures*. London: Cambridge University Press.

Stover, Leon E. 1968. "Afterword." In *Apeman, spaceman: An anthology of anthropological science fiction*, edited by Leon E. Stover and Harry Harrison, 328–74. Garden City, NJ: Doubleday & Co.

———. 1973. "Anthropology and science fiction." *Current Anthropology* 14 (4): 471–74.

Taussig, Michael. 1998. "Viscerality, faith, and skepticism: Another theory of magic." In *In near ruins: Cultural theory at the end of the century*, edited by Nicholas B. Dirks, 221–56. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Thorsrud, Harald. 2009. *Ancient scepticism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Turner, Victor. 1967. *The forest of symbols*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Vaihinger, Hans. 1935. *The philosophy of "as if": A system of the theoretical, practical, and religious fictions of mankind.* New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co.

Viveiros de Castro, Eduardo. 2013. "The relative native." *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 3 (3): 473–502.

Wagner, Roy. 1986. *Symbols that stand for themselves*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Willerslev, Rane. 2004. "Not animal, not not-animal: Hunting, imitation and empathetic knowledge among the Siberian Yukaghirs." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 10 (3): 629–652.

Godfrey Lienhardt, un sceptique, ou: l'anthropologie comme la résolution d'énigmes conceptuelles

Le point de départ de cet article est le constat que des classiques de l'ethnographie tels que Divinity and experience: The religion of the Dinka de Godfrey Lienhardt sont souvent perçus comme ethnocentriques et colonialistes. Cet article tente de repenser (et d'émanciper) Lienhardt en le présentant comme un sceptique Pyrrhonien. Cela permet d'explorer la recherche que Lienhardt a mené tout au long de sa vie d'un réalignement de l'anthropologie, en tant que science objective, avec la littérature, comme mode d'expression artistique. La poésie, ainsi que d'autres formes de fiction, l'ethnographie de Lienhardt, et le scepticisme Pyrrhonien explorent tous la possibilité de conceptualiser de manière créative en s'éloignant de toute tentative de donner des réponses définitives au sujet de la composition du monde. Pour conclure, je propose de considérer l'anthropologie comme une forme de 'science fictive' qui entreprend de résoudre les énigmes conceptuelles qui émergent durant les rencontres en terrains ethnographiques.

Mario Schmidt received his PhD from Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main, and is a postdoctoral researcher at the a.r.t.e.s. Graduate School for the Humanities, University of Cologne. He conducted fieldwork in Western Kenya and Native North America and his research interests include the history of French and British

schools of anthropology, economic anthropology, food, corruption, and democracy. He has published in a number of disciplinary journals, including Africa and Ethnohistory.

Mario Schmidt
a.r.t.e.s. Graduate School for the Humanities, Cologne, Germany
Nidegger Straße 21
50937 Cologne
Germany
Mario.schmidt@uni-koeln.de