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LÉVI-STRAUSS'S THEORY  
ON KINSHIP AND MARRIAGE

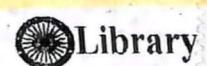
by

J. P. B. DE JOSSELIN DE JONG



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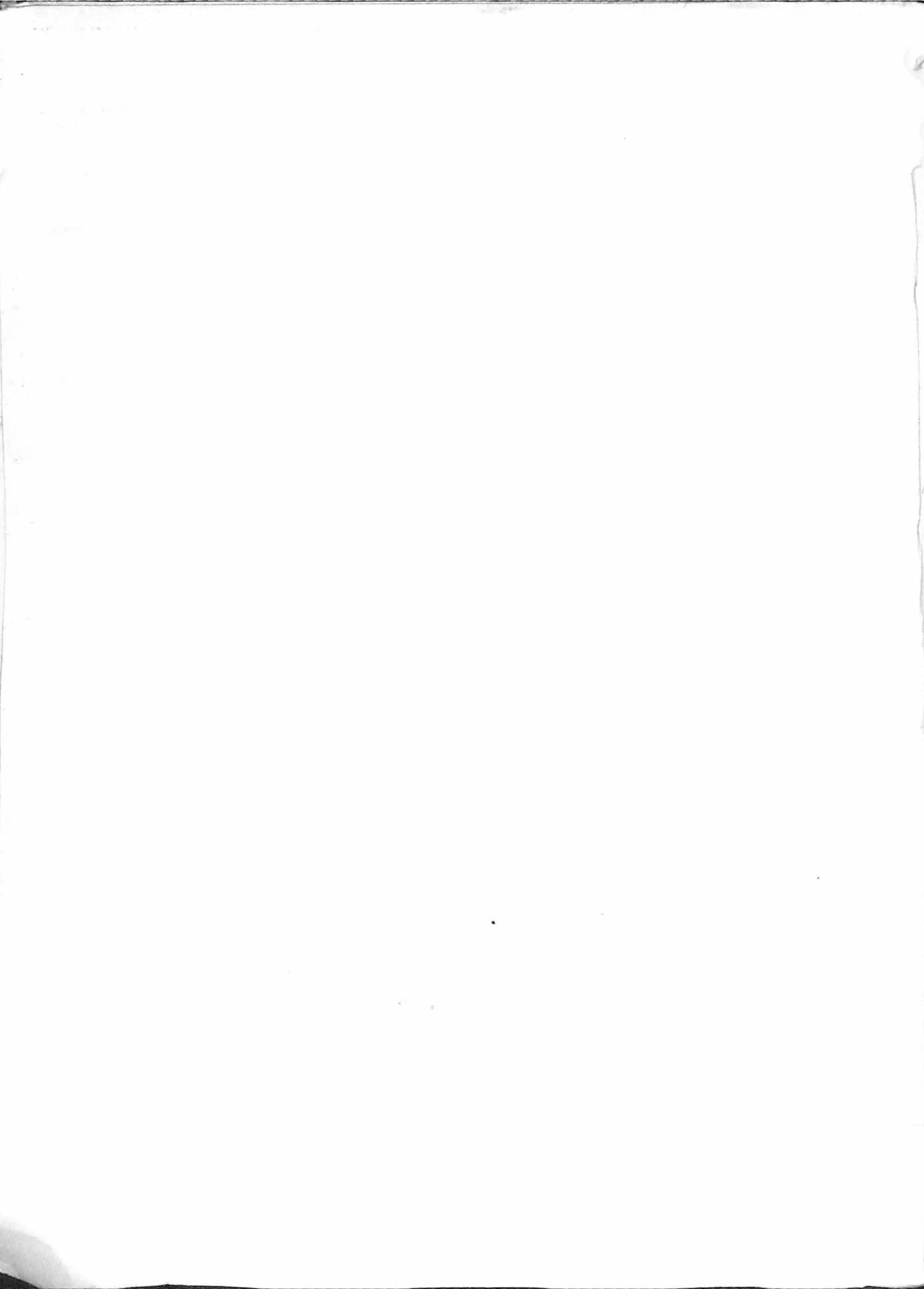
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## LEVI-STRAUSS'S THEORY ON KINSHIP AND MARRIAGE

BY

J. P. B. DE JOSSELIN DE JONG

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Ever since MORGAN the relation between kinship and marriage has remained one of the crucial problems of anthropology. On the one side, the very variety of kinship systems kept baffling all attempts at reducing them to a conclusively established set of principles, on the other hand, the connections between the equally multiform marriage rules and the ideas about kinship were found increasingly elusive as research proceeded and theory after theory emerged. It became more and more evident that the road to a complete understanding would remain barred as long as our views about the prohibition of "incest" and its relation to "exogamy" were largely based either on feeling or on a predominatingly analytic view of culture in general. Also, we believe, it was felt that, unless we resolutely broke away from our overrating historical chance as an ever-present obscuring factor, we would have to abandon all hope of a new and truly illuminating insight. This growing awareness of the necessity of a new approach really implied confessing ourselves to the assumption—axiomatic for the time being—that there must have been motivating principles of universal validity, strong enough to outlive historical vicissitudes through the ages, and that it must be possible to discover them. It implied, for example, the conviction that whether kindred is classified bilaterally, unilineally or bilineally is neither simply a matter of arbitrary choice between "limited possibilities" nor merely a product of historical coincidence, but must depend on local, circumstantially conditioned, application of universally predominant principles. It implied—to take another example—the understanding that treating unilineal descent, exogamy, and the prohibition of incest as separate problems can only lead to hopeless confusion. As to general methodology it implied that culture-historical reconstructions, far from being superfluous or even senseless, are, on the contrary, indispensable because the operation of universal forces or principles is sure to manifest itself more clearly

through time than in synchronic situations. However, from being ready to launch upon new ways of approach to realizing our expectations in a new comprehensive theory was a far cry indeed. Until very recently, attempts at summarizing the data posterior to FRAZER's *Totemism and Exogamy* were only to be found in anthropological textbooks and introductions, which, naturally, were restricted in scope and preponderantly traditional, that is conservative, in outlook. Consequently, what we needed was, firstly, a cross-cultural survey, as exhaustive as possible, of the relevant phenomena, and secondly, an entirely new synthesis of this mass of data, based on culturological principles of admittedly universal applicability. Both these tasks have lately been undertaken, one by G. P. MURDOCK, whose *Social Structure* is the first synthetic cross-cultural survey after MORGAN's preliminary classification, and the other by CLAUDE LÉVI-STRAUSS, whose *Les structures élémentaires de la parenté* will be the subject of the following essay.

For clearness' sake we shall first give a synopsis of the author's demonstration (I), reserving our critical comments for a separate section (II).

## I

What L.-STR. wants to inquire into is the socio-familial systems characterized by preferential marriage based on definite kinship relations in contrast to those ("complex structures") which as far as marriage is concerned are based on transfer of wealth or on free choice. His book is divided into two parts. The first part (chapters 1-10) mainly deals with general principles, illustrated by means of examples taken from widely different cultures. The second part (chapters 11-26) is devoted to more or less monographical expositions of the marriage systems of Australia, Southern Asia, China, and India. Chapter 14 is a mathematical intermezzo composed by A. WEIL, and chapters 27-29 contain the conclusions and generalizations which the author holds to be warranted by his demonstration.

Where does nature end; where does culture begin? No methods have as yet been discovered which enable us to answer this question conclusively. However, the careful observer of anthropoid behaviour is struck by a quality which seems to throw light upon the basic difference between natural and cultural procedure, namely its amazing irregularity and arbitrariness. The precision of instinctive behaviour which apparently has been lost has not been replaced by anything else. It would seem that this absence of rules may provide us with a criterion whereby natural and cultural processes may be distinguished. We should not look for an imaginary continuity between nature, in which biological heredity prevails, and

culture, which is dominated by institutional rules, made possible by language. Consequently, although it is impossible to grasp the precise point of transition between nature and culture, our criterion has a distinct positive value: rules, norms, with all the variety proper to them, belong to culture; what is universal must belong to nature, its very universality proving that it is not dependent on variable norms. This formulation implies that the institutional complex, called "the prohibition of incest" is both natural and cultural, natural as it is universal, cultural as it constitutes a rule. So we are dealing with the exceptional (apparently the only) case of a universal rule of variable applicability. For what this prohibition really comes to is the interdiction of absolute freedom in the domain of marriage and sex. The prohibition of incest in the narrowest sense of the term is only one of the innumerable applications of this universal interdiction, as universal as innate tendencies and instincts. How are we to interpret this self-contradictory phenomenon. And how are we to explain the dread and horror evoked by violation of this rule as well as the peculiar diffidence manifested in anthropological discussions of the problem?

The rule is pre-social (pre-cultural) not only in so far as it is universal, but also on account of the type of relations which it dominates. In two respects, in fact, sexual life is alien to the group as such. It gives expression to an animal instinct in humanity and it aims at satisfying needs of the individual and of the biological species. At the same time, however, it is part and parcel of social life, for the sexual instinct cannot operate but inter-individually. So we may state not only that the prohibition of incest is on the threshold of culture and *in culture simultaneously*, but even that—in a certain sense—it *is culture itself* (pp. 1—14).

Now, instead of trying to explain this ambiguity, most anthropologists have been intent upon minimizing it. The relevant theories may be divided into three groups: 1. those which, while maintaining the dual character of the rule, derive it from two different stages of development (thus MORGAN and MAINE); 2. those which reject the cultural element (WESTERMARCK, HAVELOCK ELLIS a.o.); 3. those which reject the natural element (MCLENNAN, SPENCER, LUBBOCK, DURKHEIM). The author easily demonstrates that the theories of the first group are altogether absurd; that those of the second group are contradicted by the ethnographic data and by the findings of psychoanalysis as well as by the solemn and sacral character of the interdiction; and that those of the third category are unacceptable because they derive a universal rule from particular local-historical events. In reality, the prohibition is the connecting link between nature and culture; its institution

means the decisive step by means of which man the animal, rising above nature, humanized himself (pp. 14—31).

In its quality of social rule the prohibition of incest is characterized by extreme diversity, both as to its form and its sphere of application. As a matter of fact, it means the intervention of culture concerning whatever is left undetermined by nature, not only, that is, concerning the modalities of sexual relations, but concerning the distribution of essential values in general. Thus connubial and economic exchanges are looked upon as an integral part of a fundamental system of reciprocity: both are regulated with equal precision. And as one of the most important values is food, it is no wonder that quite a system of real and symbolic relations are found to connect food with women.

Owing to the polygamic tendencies of the male sex and the unequal desirableness (in different respects) of females there is always a certain scarcity of women. There is always maladjustment and tension in this respect, the more so, as in "primitive" societies marriage is of vital importance mainly on account of its economic implications. The abnormal and mostly pitiable position of the bachelor in such societies is highly significant in this connection (pp. 35-51).

In its most elementary form the prohibition of incest merely expresses the group's rule that no man is entitled to claim for himself the women who are placed at his disposal by biological relationship, that is, his sisters and his daughters. So far, consequently, the rule only demands the distribution of all available women, no *natural* claims being acknowledged. In its positive and more developed form, however, it also defines the dirigent principles of this distribution. In trying to analyse these principles and the ensuing system, we should in the first place distinguish between *true* endogamy, which is always found in connection with exogamy, but not as its result, and another type of endogamy which is nothing but the reverse aspect of exogamy. True endogamy, which is met with in all societies, merely forbids marrying outside the limits of what, to the particular society concerned, constitutes the human community, for instance the tribe itself, a racial group, a religious community and so on. The other type of endogamy, which may be called "functional" or "complementary" endogamy, directly results from exogamy. Thus, with cross-cousin marriage, the endogamic character of the c.c. group results from the fact that marriage with other close relatives, in casu the parallel cousins, is prohibited. That the c.c. group is not truly endogamous is for instance evident from the fact that, when no c.c. is available, a more distant relative may be taken instead. With preferential

marriage the category of potential spouses is never rigorously closed. What is not expressly prohibited is allowed, apart from the restrictions imposed by the exchange mechanism. The functional relation between exogamy and (complementary) endogamy results from the fundamental demand that for any woman ceded another woman must be returned. So the prohibition of incest, as well as its widened expression, exogamy, is essentially a rule of reciprocity (pp. 52-65).

The tremendous importance of reciprocity as manifested by the exchange of gifts has been conclusively demonstrated by MARCEL MAUSS in his famous *Essai sur le Don*. This inquiry has also shown that the phenomenon is a "total social fact", being interwoven with all aspects of culture. It should be emphasized, however, that it is by no means in clear-cut local institutions only that the ideas and sentiments concerning the transmission of goods manifest themselves. Proofs of the purpose of gift exchange not or not essentially being economic advantage are continuously met with in every-day life. It often happens that the commodities exchanged are quite similar. It has become evident, indeed, that it is not so much the nature or quality of the exchanged goods as the act of exchange itself which is considered to be of paramount significance. Moreover, we very often find that definite sorts of goods, worthless for practical purposes, but highly valued nevertheless, are exclusively used in ceremonial exchange and that, where economic goods are included, the better specimens or kinds are reserved for exchange purposes, the remainder being kept for private use or consumption. And, as the author suggestively points out, phenomena of the same order, though not in the form of coercive institutions, are clearly discernible in modern societies as well.

It may seem hazardous to connect the exchange of gifts, which, aside from superficial vestiges, has been entirely superseded by barter in modern societies, with an institution like the prohibition of incest, which is not less general and important in our culture than it is anywhere else. It may also be objected that the positive aspect of reciprocity, observable, it is true, in exogamic systems (and particularly in dual organizations), is wanting in the prohibition of incest as it functions in our society. However, in our culture, too, acquiring a wife means that some other man renounces his sister or his daughter although there is no organized exchange, the classes or individuals concerned not being defined. And as regards the vestigial character of the exchange of gifts in our culture it is not to be doubted that the vestiges under discussion, far from being mere incidental survivals, owe their continuing to exist to the fundamental character of the institution in which they are rooted.

Innumerable examples may be cited to show that women are always included in the mutual gifts and services of the exchange system, and that as a rule they constitute the most valued goods by far. They also illustrate the "total" character of marriage, which frequently concludes a series of reciprocal services and other prestations.

Exchange of gifts and hostile relations by no means exclude each other, the former meaning a peacefully ended war, the latter resulting from unfortunate transactions, either directly passing into the other. Lastly, durable peaceful relations may be established by means of the institution of artificial kinship relationships implying corresponding matrimonial possibilities (pp. 66-86).

The basic nature of marriage as a form of exchange comes distinctly to the front in dual organizations. Notwithstanding a great diversity of forms these structures have a number of traits in common. Besides being often exogamous and mostly matrilineal, the two moieties stand in a relation of rivalry and cooperation which is reflected by various customs, e.g. ritual games, as well as by cosmological myths, the two moieties being associated with the two opposite and at the same time complementary halves of the Cosmos, in which all beings and things are classed and ranked. Authority is often divided between two officials, as a civil and a religious or a military chief. Lastly, the moieties are not only connected by exchange of women but by reciprocal prestations of an economic, a social, and a ceremonial nature. The distribution of dual systems is very significant. They occur in all parts of the world and they flourish especially in the simpler cultures. This would seem to suggest that they express a functional character proper to these cultures, the more so, since vestigial forms are so often encountered in less archaic cultural contexts.

The close relation between the dual organization and the "classificatory" conception of kinship made TYLOR and FRAZER conjecture that the latter has sprung from the former. And as the classificatory idea of kinship is practically universal their view implied the primeval and universal character of the dual organization. It is much more probable, however, that the correlation between the two phenomena results from both having sprung from the principle of reciprocity, the classificatory kinship system as a non-institutionalized manifestation, the dual organization as a kind of codification.

The discussions regarding the single or multiple origin of the dual organization are really meaningless since their starting-point is wrong. They pivot upon subjective views about the dual organization as an institution. Thus R. L. OLSON, while holding all sorts of dualistic traits to be vestiges of a

complete dual organization according to his conception of it, argued for a single origin, whereas LOWIE, pointing out the formal and functional diversity of dualistic phenomena, maintained that they have really nothing in common but the number two and, consequently, rejected the idea of common origin. The dual organization, however, is not one definite precisely definable institution. What it really constitutes is a variety of applications of the ever-active principle of reciprocity.

As the author points out, dualistic institutions or customs are seen coming into existence, surviving crises, and affecting social systems in demonstrable ways. Occasionally, dualistic procedures are found cropping up even in clan systems without any positive implications, that is, without anything like preferential marriage. Thus, among the Ifugao of North Luzon (Philippines) exceptional marriages of second or third cousins require a ritual dispute in which the pretender's group acts as creditor and which is concluded with a mock battle.

It is evident that the complex of phenomena indicated by the term "dual organization" cannot be explained on the strength of historical or geographic considerations, but that we shall have to inquire into certain fundamental structures of the human mind in which they may be rooted (pp. 87-108).

The mental structures which the author has in mind are three: 1. the requirement of Rules as Rules; 2. the conception of reciprocity as the most direct form in which the opposition self—other may be neutralized; 3. the synthetic character of the Gift, i.e. the fact that the voluntary exchange of values transforms the individuals concerned into partners and adds a new quality to the values themselves.

The reality of these structures urges itself upon us when we study infantile behaviour and thinking, which, even more than cultural phenomena do, reveals mental mechanisms corresponding to basic needs and activities rooted in the deepest recesses of the human mind. According to SUSAN ISAAC's penetrating analysis all young children, in response to their imperative desire of exclusive possession conflicting with the claims of others, ultimately discover the concept of equality as being "the least common multiple of all these contradictory desires and fears". This psychological evolution is made possible by the fact that the desire of possession is not an instinct and is not based on an objective relation between subject and object. It is one's relation to somebody else which makes an object valuable. So the desire of possession is, primarily, a social response. And this response, explainable from the dilemma power—impotence, is really prompted by one single primitive need, the need of security, the train of thought being: "I want to own because if I do not, it may not be there when I need it, and my need will go

unsatisfied. If another has it, he may keep it for ever." (SUSAN ISÄACS, *Social development in young children* (repr. 1946), p. 225, cited in free French translation by LÉVI-STRAUSS, p. 110). We may state, then, that the aptitude to share, to wait for one's turn, is a function of a progressive sentiment of reciprocity.

Also, young children are grateful for presents not on account of the objects themselves but because being given a present means to them being loved, being not hated; the Gift, in fact, means love and security. This also explains their desire to give magnificent presents, for being able to give valuable things means independence, power, security. We should not lose sight, however, of the underlying rivalry, the perpetual wavering between friendship and hate: "it is hostility which nourishes drama in the life of young children just as it does in the life of adults" (LÉVI-STRAUSS, p. 112).

The similarity between these infantile attitudes with regard to gifts and corresponding phenomena in simple cultures all over the world is so striking that it may easily be misinterpreted, as, in fact, has often been done. Cultural behaviour wheresoever is adult behaviour, and when it reminds us of infantile behaviour—just as our own cultural behaviour impresses people conditioned by a culture widely different from ours as being infantile—this is to be explained from the fact that the ways of behaviour of very young children are universally human. Their mental structure really comprises the totality of cultural potentialities, enabling them to assimilate any type of cultural conditioning with equal facility, just as it enables them to learn any language, i.e. to select the sound-material, the phonological distinctions, and the structural rules of any language equally easily. As enculturation advances, these unlimited possibilities diminish accordingly, the raw materials being sorted and what is selected acquiring functional value. If this interpretation is correct we have to admit that "infantile thinking represents some sort of 'common denominator' of all thinking and all cultures". The author proposes to call this the "polymorphism" of infantile thinking. And in view of the relation between infantile social attitudes and the various types of organization realized by human societies the anthropologist will have to regard the young child as a "polymorphous social being".

The author illustrates his exposition with the remarkable case of a 4 years old boy who imagined a classic dual organization even including a hint of exogamy. If this child, the author remarks, had been an Australian native he would later have recognized this infantile model in the dualism of his group and he would not have been ashamed of it, as he actually was a few years afterwards, his imagined model of antagonism and reciprocity being in contradiction with the culturally selected model.

It is easy to understand, the author concludes, that anthropologists and psychologists as well as psychiatrists have been tempted, each from his own particular point of view, to establish parallels between primitive thinking, infantile thinking, and pathological thinking. The latter resembles infantile thinking in that it is individual thinking—though owing to quite different causes in either case. Like primitive thinking, it differs from infantile thinking in that it is adult thinking. It is not, however, a "regression" to an archaic stage of the intellectual evolution of man, but it means recovering some such situation as obtains at the beginnings of individual thinking (pp. 108-125).

Reverting to the dual organization in its most explicit form the author expounds more in detail his view that the relation between this system and c.c. marriage is not be explained in terms of direct interdependence and temporal sequence. Either phenomenon derives from fundamental structures in which culture itself is rooted, the dual organization being the outcome of a higher degree of awareness of these structures than is manifested by the phenomenon of c.c. marriage. Merely from this psychological point of view, then, the two phenomena may be called two stages of structural consciousness.

The two phenomena are not regularly co-existent, c.c. marriage occurring much more frequently than the dual organization. In order to explain this difference in frequency, the author argues, we should compare the two systems from a functional point of view. It appears that c.c. marriage, while defining a relation between individuals, does not clearly define the group of individuals concerned, whereas the dual organization sharply outlines the intermarrying groups, but leaves the individual relations uncertain. So the dual organization is a system which embraces the total community, whereas c.c. marriage is a kind of special procedure, constituting rather a tendency than a system. Even a clear-cut dual organization with a kinship system hinging upon the dichotomy of cousins does not necessarily prescribe c.c. marriage, a situation which e.g. obtains with the Hottentots and in South America. So we find that the two institutions respectively represent a crystallized and a more flexible expression of the underlying system of reciprocity. The question of chronological priority is entirely irrelevant to this distinction.

These considerations regarding dualism and c.c. marriage lead the author on to a discussion of the subject of kinship reckoning in general. Since SWANTON's well-known article of 1905 there seems to be some confusion about the character of bilateralism as opposed to unilateralism (unilinealism). As RADCLIFFE-BROWN has already pointed out in 1935, true bilateralism, i.e. functional interchangeability or even intermingling of the male and female lines of descent is, in its explicit form at least, extremely rare. It

should be sharply distinguished, however, from the systems in which either line of descent has its own specific function. For these true double descent systems the author wishes to reserve the term "bilateral descent" ("filiation bilatérale"), whereas he coins another term for what is usually called "bilateralism", viz. "indiscriminate descent" ("filiation indifférenciée"). However, since the term "bilateral" is also used in a different sense (e.g. in "bilateral c.c. marriage") we prefer to use the term "bilineal(ism)" when we are dealing with double descent and to keep on the term "bilateral(ism)" when the phenomena under discussion neither are based on nor imply the distinction of the two lines.

Now, TYLOR's theory of the dualistic origin of c.c. marriage has lately been renovated by some anthropologists who argue that the phenomenon is more satisfactorily explained by double dualism, i.e. a four section system resulting from the intersecting of patrilineal and matrilineal dual organizations, since single dualism, although it implies the dichotomy of cousins into (real and potential) spouses and (real and potential) siblings, does not explain obliged or preferential c.c. marriage, whereas a four section system, excluding any marriage between people belonging to two successive generations, does restrict the group of possible spouses to the real and potential cross-cousins.

While admitting that this explanation of c.c. marriage may hit it in some cases, the author rejects the view that a phenomenon of such generality as c.c. marriage is, may thus be explained by inference from a few particular cases. Moreover, even where clear-cut bilineal systems obtain, as in Australia, the question arises, whether such systems do not confront us with secondary rationalizations, by means of which native consciousness formulates its own problems, rather than with forms which reveal their true character. Since social phenomena are elaborated unconsciously it is certainly not admissible to take native ways of formulating their behaviour patterns at their face value. The procedures used in genetics and also in phonology, whereby individual characteristics are derived from combinations of differential elements the objective existence of which is conclusively demonstrated, are not applicable in the social sciences unless there, too, the alleged elementary units have been proved to exist.

In the author's opinion this methodological principle has been neglected by such anthropologists as venture to explain c.c. marriage as automatically resulting from a bilineal class system, accepting bilinealism as the basic factor underlying Australian kinship systems in general. As regards c.c. marriage in particular he points out that we know different communities, bilineally organized in some way, without preferential or obliged c.c. mar-

riage. With regard to Australian bilinealism in general he draws our attention to facts which suggest that the intermarrying sections are not conceived as groups of individuals indicated by their objective nature, but as a system of positions in which the individuals may move and even exchange their positions as long as their relations are maintained, the structure itself only remaining constant. Thus it may happen that, e.g. in celebration of the settlement of a debt, men of opposite moieties temporarily exchange their wives, in which case, consequently, sexual relations between men and women of the same moiety become permissible. Moiety antagonism, too, is not based on any intrinsic quality of either group, but merely on the fact, that the moieties are two. And a female member of either group, as soon as she has been given to a man of the opposite group, thereby acquires the exchange status of the women of her husband's moiety. Just as the same kind of food may be exchanged the same women may be offered and returned, as long as the prohibition of family incest is respected.

However, the fact that the relations in such systems of reciprocity prevail over the natural qualities of the entities which they connect should not make us forget that these entities are human beings of opposite sex and that the relations between the sexes are never symmetric. They constitute one aspect of total prestations ("prestations totales") bearing on social values, such as privileges, rights, and obligations, and on women. In marriage, which is one of the expressions of the exchange relations between groups, the spouses are not equal partners, but women function as objects of exchange between men. It follows that there is no strict parallelism between patrilineal and matrilineal regulations. In fact, matrilineal descent is almost everywhere attended with patrilocal residence, a situation which obviously results from the permanent conflict between the bride-giving and the bride-taking groups. For also with matrilineal descent "it is the hand of the woman's father or brother which reaches the son-in-law's or the brother-in-law's village". Therefore it is not acceptable to treat patrilineal and matrilineal descent or residence like abstract elements which may be combined in various ways in consideration of probabilities.

The difficulties and conflicts arising from the asymmetry of male and female status may perhaps explain the circumstance that dual organizations are more often matrilineal than patrilineal. A matrilineal community may neutralize these conflicts to a certain extent when it manages to keep the exchanging units near each other. This may be effected by a dual organization intersecting the ancient clans or villages for thus residence may remain patrilocal or even matrilocal without the perpetual breaking up of the conjugal family (pp. 126-152).

The results of the author's demonstration so far may be summarized as follows. Exogamy, including the prohibition of family incest, is an integral part of a total exchange system rooted in the principle of reciprocity. Initially, the realization of this principle may be effected in two ways, viz. by means of clear-cut institutions, like the dual organization, or by establishing connubial relations between definite individuals on the basis of kinship, as in c.c. marriage. The status of the sexes in these exchange proceedings are not equivalent, the men being the actors and the women functioning as exchange values.

However, the author continues, it has also become evident that c.c. marriage is not simply one of many types of preferential marriages, as most anthropologists are inclined to consider it. For it is the only type which, normally and exclusively, enables every man to find a spouse whenever kinship terminology divides all individuals of the same generation into (real and classificatory) cross-cousins and (real and classificatory) siblings (real siblings and parallel-cousins). Other types, such as levirate, sororate, avuncular marriage, are never exclusive or primary, being always based on and added to pre-existing other types. They should not be called "preferential" but "prerogative" marriages ("unions privilégiées").

Besides occupying a unique position at the "cross roads of matrimonial institutions", c.c. marriage is the one fundamental phenomenon which not only proves the purely social origin of the prohibition of incest, but also gives us a start towards finding out its true nature. For if we succeed in laying open the motives which have prompted the dichotomy of cousins we shall have discovered the origin of the prohibition of incest as well. We shall not succeed, however, unless we are prepared to look for these motives in the institution itself instead of accepting off-hand its secondary character in consideration of its arbitrariness from a biological point of view or its multiple origin on account of its local variety.

For all its diversity, c.c. marriage, which most closely approximates universality next to the prohibition of incest, must be "interpreted as a phenomenon of structure and not as the result of a simple juxtaposition of terms and customs". This idea, for that matter, is by no means new. GOLDENWEISER has already expressed it as early as 1911, and SPIER, in his *Yuman tribes of the Gila River* of 1933, demonstrated that these natives themselves conceived the whole of kinship terms as a system the coherence of which, indeed, appeared to be well understood. More significant still were STANNER's experiences with the Murinbata in Australia and DEACON's with communities on Ambrym and on Malekula, who not only perfectly understood their intricate systems but even were able to explain them lucidly by means

of a kind of diagrams. BATESON, too, was impressed by the theoretical reasoning of the Naven people, whose kinship terminology shows that, to their mind, the phenomenon of kinship constitutes a system of relations rather than a system of positions. And when RADCLIFFE-BROWN interpreted the Australian kinship systems by means of an analysis the basic elements of which were not terms but relations ("pairs", "cycles", and "couples") some such thing had already been done by the Kanak of New Caledonia (husband and wife (pair): *duawē*; father and son (couple): *duanoro*; mother and daughter (cycle): *duaduwe*), who, besides, had terms for grandfather and grandson (alternating generations): *duaeri*, and for maternal uncle and nephew (avuncular relation): *duaduwe*, as has been discovered by LEENHARDT.

Although such structural distinctions are often attended with exogamy, which, indeed, they usually imply, they should not be considered to result automatically from exogamy. Thus we meet with the distinction of collateral relatives of the same degree according to whether or not the connecting individuals are of the same sex, in other words the conception that the relations brother-sister and sister-brother are identical, whereas both are different from the relations brother-brother and sister-sister, which likewise are conceived as being identical. This principle of considerable status differences attaching to the structures of collateral relatives according to their symmetric or asymmetric character with regard to the arrangement of the sexes is encountered in many systems without clans or dual organization. In order to understand this structural difference between parallel-cousin and cross-cousin relationship we should look for one principle explaining both at the same time. The solution of this problem presents itself when we recognize in c.c. marriage the elementary formula of marriage by exchange, and in exchange the origin of the system of oppositions the structural character of which has been insisted upon. Starting from two nuclear families A and B as exchanging groups and keeping in mind that any woman given by A means acquiring a claim for A and contracting a debt for B and vice versa, both in the first and in the next generation, we find that only by means of c.c. marriage the exchange relation can be consistently maintained, any marriage between parallel-cousins bringing about a disturbance of the balance between creditor and debtor positions. For, if two male parallel-cousins, although both are in a creditor position towards their father's group and in a debtor's position towards their mother's group or vice versa, exchanged their sisters, either would acquire a woman from a man not in a debtor's position towards himself and, consequently, some other man—that is, the opposite exchange group—would be the worse for it. Continued

matrimonial exchange between the two groups implies of course that all cousins of the same generation will be either parallel- or cross-cousins in both the male and the female line. It does not make any difference to the system, however, whether or not a definite reckoning of descent prevails, and whether or not definite rules of residence are observed. The author's view of the initial situation merely presupposes the conception that women are values and the apperception by individual consciousness of the relations of reciprocity expounded. The ultimate origin of this structural apperception is a psychological problem to which the author is to revert later (153-171).

After a thorough criticism of FRAZER's attempt to explain the dichotomy of cousins and concomitant phenomena partly from a primordial prohibition of (family) incest, as yet unexplained, and partly from various conceptions supposed to be characteristic of definite phases of cultural evolution the author concludes part I of his book with a lucid summary of the fundamentals of his own approach. His view of c.c. marriage does not imply any considerations about historical sequence. His conception of exchange is not concerned with the technical form of "marriage by exchange" as an economic transaction, as FRAZER's was, but with the phenomenon of reciprocity in its general aspect and the *universal* exchange aspect of marriage, c.c. marriage being a privileged case enabling us to discern with exceptional clarity the omnipresence of reciprocity behind marriage. This view has been justified by his demonstration of the dichotomy of cousins resulting directly from a structure of reciprocity embracing the exchanging families. But this statement should neither be held to imply that this privileged case has appeared first of all nor that, at some time or other, it has appeared everywhere. His theory merely implies a frequent and very pure expression of the universal social law of reciprocity. The principle of reciprocity does not only explain the dichotomy of cousins but, operating in three generations simultaneously, it determines the structural creditor and debtor positions of all of Ego's uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews and nieces considered from his standpoint (pp. 172-187).

#### AUSTRALIA

Most Australian systems are based on restricted exchange. While the basic socio-political unit is the patrilineal local group, a number of which may constitute a patrilineal clan, matrimonial exchange is functionally connected with patrilineal or matrilineal moieties or with sections resulting from double descent. Besides, there are a number of systems without explicit divisions, especially in outlying regions, the actual marriage rules of which,

however, are not fundamentally different from those of the section systems in the interior.

Although the forms of many Australian systems are well-known, especially since the brilliant pioneer work of RADCLIFFE-BROWN and later researches inspired by it, there is still some difference of opinion regarding the true nature of the relations between sections and actual marriage rules as well as between the various systems themselves. Some moot questions may be formulated as follows. Firstly: how are we to interpret the fact that there is much less difference between the section systems than between the actual marriage rules with which they are found to be attended? Thus there is practically no difference between a simple moiety system and the Kariera four section system (two explicit matrilineal moieties intersected by two implicit patrilineal ones) as far as the dichotomy of cousins is concerned. Moreover, the Kariera strongly recommend matrilineal c.c. marriage (mo. bro. da. marriage), although according to the section system matrilateral and patrilateral cross-cousins are equivalent, being, for that matter, identical as a rule. The Dieri, with an explicit matrilineal dual organization, have the same marriage prohibitions as the Aranda with an eight section system. On the other hand, the eight section system of the Murngin (tribes of Arnhem Land) is attended with exclusive matrilateral c.c. marriage, no exchange of sisters being possible. With a view to such discrepancies (of which we have mentioned only a few examples) and to the fundamental character of the local group some authors hold the phenomena of section and descent to be largely or entirely secondary. Thus RADCLIFFE-BROWN considers the marriage rules to be essentially based on individual kinship relations in connection with rules of residence, the latter being anterior to rules of descent. KROEBER even denies all functional significance to divisions based on descent unless every one of them (moiety, section, subsection) is undoubtedly explicit. So, in his opinion, the implicit moieties of a four section system should be regarded as mere historical vestiges without any real function. And exogamy, dual organizations, clans, and totemism are secondary formations with regard to basic structures like the rules of residence. LÉVI-STRAUSS, too, holds the institutions concerned to be secondary but, as we have already seen, in a quite different sense, viz. in so far as the dual organization and suchlike are rooted in certain logical structures which are fundamental as well as universal. Secondly: are the differences between the systems explainable in terms of historical development? Is it acceptable for instance, to consider all systems to have developed from original four section systems, as DURKHEIM has done? This is not a merely theoretical question the answer to which does not affect our view of the actual situation.

It comes to this that we have to choose between a historical and a functional interpretation. To the author the answer cannot be dubious. If his view of the underlying universal reciprocity structure is correct, the different systems are variable institutions by means of which the implications of that structure have been realized. As we have seen, this realization may also be effected without any moieties or sections at all, as in the sectionless tribes. The question of factual historical sequences is quite irrelevant from this point of view. We know, for that matter, that developments in various directions have taken place in Australia. Tribes with eight sections have been found to return to four section systems, others with two sections appear to have adopted a regulation of marriage between clans of the same moiety. And a rapid diffusion of marriage systems from one group to another with concomitant attempts at adjustment have often been observed in recent times. As a matter of fact, the simple system of relations underlying all systems allows of all kinds of transitions and adaptations.

However, these facts do not warrant the conclusion that the sections are entirely useless. Their very existence proves that the system of individual genealogical relationships and the section system must be equivalent to a certain degree at least. Although the sections do not determine the choice of a spouse, they do have the function of limiting the choice to a definite group. The four section system is particularly satisfactory in that it selects as potential spouses the same relatives as are indicated on the ground of individual kinship relations. On the other hand, the eight section system, while excluding twice as many potential spouses as is done by the four section system, is less precise than the latter in its positive aspect.

The author then points out that the two intersecting lines of descent operating in four and eight section systems (two matrilineal moieties intersected by two, respectively four, patrilineal groups) are not equivalent. Whereas the matrilineal moieties are real descent groups, i.e. are exclusively dependent on descent, the patrilineal groups are primarily local groups, in other words, any individual's position in the system is determined by matrilineal descent and patrilocal provenance.

Although the functional difference between the section system and the kinship system has become clear, their exact relation still remains to be ascertained. Whereas the systems mentioned so far (moieties, 4 sections, 8 subsections) do effect dichotomies of cousins into cross-cousins and parents' cross-cousins' children, none of them produces a dichotomy of cross-cousins into patrilateral and matrilateral ones, the four section system adding no new dichotomy to the one effected by the two moiety system (pp. 189-215).

Now, this gap in the series of dichotomies appears to be filled by the Murngin system, which, though it is a bilineal system with eight subsections, is attended with exclusive matrilateral c.c. marriage. There are four patrilineal groups, arranged in two explicit exogamous moieties, intersected by unnamed matrilineal moieties. According to T. TH. WEBB, a man is not restricted for the choice of a spouse to one subsection of the opposite moiety, but has the choice between two subsections together forming one section. WEBB calls these two types "normal" and "alternate" marriages respectively. However, it appears that both the "normal" and the "alternate" marriages considered as separated systems imply exchange of sisters and, consequently, equivalence of cross-cousins, whereas the actual marriage regulation excludes both. As the author points out, this contradiction is eliminated when we assume that the two types are practised alternately by brother and sister and by father and son, either, for that matter, resulting automatically from the other. The result is a system which has in common with a four section system that it permits mo. bro. da. marriage and with an eight section system of the Aranda type that it excludes fa. si. da. marriage.

As this system cannot well derive either from a four section system (via duplication of the two patrilocal, patrilineal moieties) or, as the author argues, from an eight section system of the Aranda type (via simplification and a subsequent duplication attended with exclusive matrilateral c.c. marriage), he assumes that it results from some sort of compromise between a pre-existing marriage rule and a full-fledged section system introduced from outside. The fact that most peoples with whom c.c. marriage prevails have a preference for its matrilateral form suggests that the latter has been the simple rule of marriage on the base of which the actual Murngin system has been elaborated. So the author assumes that originally there were four intermarrying groups, divided between two (implicit or explicit) patrilineal moieties but without matrilineal moieties, the connubial relations being unilateral (asymmetric) and a son belonging to the group of his mother's brother's wife, as illustrated by fig. 1.

By means of a complicated argumentation the author then arrives at the conclusion that the Murngin ultimately acquired their actual asymmetric eight section system by subsequently taking into account the matrilineal relationships, that is, by having the four initial groups intersected by matrilineal moieties. We shall have to revert to this problem in the critical part of our essay, as the author's view of the development of the Murngin system is very closely connected, as we shall see, with a crucial point in his general theory (pp. 216-246).

Besides the Murngin there are several other groups with kinship and

marriage regulations which are not explainable on the basis of "classic" 4 and 8 section systems. All of them distinguish between patrilateral and matrilateral c.c. marriage, and this distinction is frequently attended with the grouping of alternating generations into endogamous units. This grouping is also the basis of ritual and exchange achievements. As the author points out, this grouping of alternating generations, which is a regular characteristic of bilineal systems, may also result from the practice of exclusive patrilateral c.c. marriage, vestiges of which, indeed, are encountered in several of the systems concerned. In general, however, mo. bro. da. marriage appears to predominate.

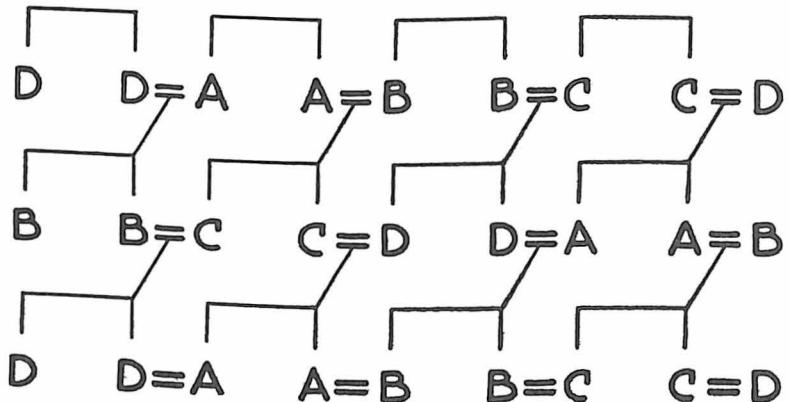


Fig. 1 (after LÉVI-STRAUSS, fig. 28, p. 232).  
(≡ means: marries; □ means: brother and sister)

The author even ventures upon an intricate hypothesis purporting that the Dieri system (matrilineal moieties, no other explicit divisions, marriage regulation as with the Aranda) originates from a system of 4 matrilineal matrilocal groups with exclusive mo. bro. da. marriage. This attempt was prompted by the Dieri kinship terminology, which in some respects differs from the Aranda's. To this question, too, we shall revert later.

The author's discussion of Australian systems shows that they may be classified according to two principles, viz. the type of exchange and the relation between rule of residence and rule of descent. Exchange may be "restricted" ("échange restreint"), i.e. symmetric (bilateral) between two definite groups, as in a dual organization and in bilineal class systems comprising a number of dual organizations, or "general" ("échange généralisé"), i.e. asymmetric (unilateral), each group being a link in a closed series of exchanging units. It is evident that restricted exchange implies exchange of sisters and some sort of bilateral c.c. marriage, whereas general

exchange excludes exchange of sisters and implies matrilateral c.c. marriage, exchange based on patrilateral c.c. marriage being, as we shall see, not really "general" although asymmetric. As regards the other principle, the relation between rule of residence and rule of descent may be "harmonic" ("harmonique"), i.e. concordant: matrilocal + matrilineal or patrilocal + patrilineal, or "disharmonic" ("dysharmonique"), i.e. contrasting. In practice this distinction is identical with the distinction between unilineal and bilineal descent, although in the author's opinion, as we saw, rules of residence are only derivatively so to speak rules of descent as well.

Now the author argues that either type of exchange is functionally connected with a definite relation between descent and residence, systems of general exchange being naturally harmonic, i.a.w. unilineal, whereas restricted exchange, unless there are no more than two groups, is often attended with contrasting rules of residence or descent, that is, with a

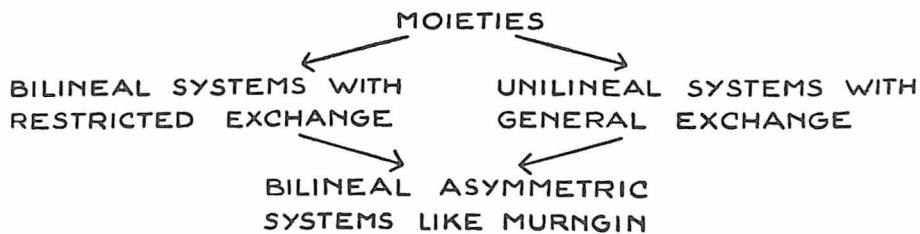


Fig. 2 (cp. LÉVI-STRAUSS, fig. 44, p. 273).

bilineal kinship system. A harmonic system with restricted exchange, he reasons, can never rise above a dual organization or a combination of separate dual organizations, that is, can never embrace the whole community in a total exchange system, unless it becomes either asymmetric or disharmonic. The former may be effected by dividing either moiety into two halves and connecting the ensuing semi-moieties by exclusive matrilateral c.c. marriage. Most systems with unilateral c.c. marriage are, in fact, found to be harmonic (unilineal). Fairly frequently, however, harmonic asymmetric systems have become disharmonic under the influence of neighbouring tribes with bilineal section systems. The author presumes that the harmonic systems are "more archaic" than the bilineal systems in consideration of their being largely found in outlying regions. If this presumption is correct, it seems likely that also the disharmonic systems formerly have been harmonic. From this point of view, the frequent occurrence of the alternating generation grouping is of particular interest, since it is trait which disharmonic structures and systems with patrilateral marriage have in common (pp. 247-277).

It will be clear that the author's classification of Australian systems, which is meant to be a functional classification of "elementary kinship structures" in general, includes a view of diachronic relations between the main types, as indicated by fig. 2.

THE FAR EAST (SOUTH AND NORTH)

In the Far East we meet with two characteristic forms of general exchange: one is found with the Katchin of Burma and with some tribes of Assam (Naga, Garo), the other with the Gilyak of East Siberia.

The Katchin organization is essentially based on an ancient patrilocal clan system with mo. bro. da. marriage and a corresponding kinship nomenclature. There is, however, no strict generation endogamy; so mo. bro. da. really stands for mother's brother's lineage. Recently the clan system is still alive among the common people, but the clans are not strictly local

BRIDE - TAKING   EGO   BRIDE - GIVING

C, E	A	B, D
D, A	B	C, E
E, B	C	D, A
A, C	D	E, B
B, D	E	A, C

Fig. 3 (see LÉVI-STRAUSS, p. 303-304).

units any more. They are spread over 5 large more or less local groups, politically unorganized, each of which comprises a number of sharply distinguished feudal units ("seigniories") consisting in groups of villages. The dominating lineages of the 5 groups form the nobility. They are named after the groups to which they belong, whereas the commoners have clan or lineage names. Asymmetric connubial relations obtain between the principal groups as well as between the clans or lineages. However, the noble lineages of each principal group have connubial relations with two other principal groups. If we call the 5 groups A-E the situation is as indicated by fig. 3.

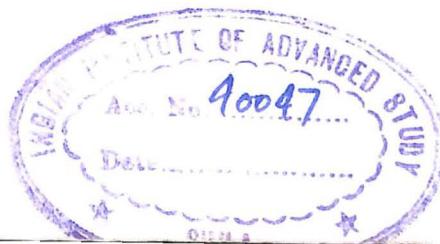
In contrast to the nobility, commoners always marry in one principal group according to the cyclic (asymmetric) system, but they are free to choose between different bride-giving lineages within that group.

Now the act of marriage sets going an extremely complicated purchase

and exchange system notwithstanding the simplicity of the governing principle. Also, in contrast to a small number of kinship terms of reference there are numerous terms of address, especially in connection with order of birth. The author explains these two contrasts from the gambling element inherent in asymmetric connubium. As exchange is not direct (strictly reciprocal) one tries to safeguard his interests by means of additional exchange partners and polygamy. This may easily give rise to feudalistic tendencies and, via accumulation of women at certain points of the exchange cycle, to hypergamy. There are, in fact, two more social classes besides the nobility, viz. the class consisting of children of free commoners and slave women and the class of slaves. Furthermore, marriages between nobles and commoners also occur.

Another peculiarity of the Katchin system is that also the bride's mo. bro. and his wife are concerned in the marriage and profit by payments. And, finally, there is a hint at least of alternating generations in that a child may be named after grandparents but not after parents.

With a number of tribes in S.E. Asia (Naga, Garo) we find a curious mixture of symmetric and asymmetric features. We meet, for instance, with kinship terminologies which are suggestive partly of symmetric, and partly of asymmetric connubium. However, mo. bro. da. marriage is preferential practically everywhere. We also find that choice, no more than with the Katchin, is restricted to one's own generation. Thus, with the Garo, a man has to marry his mother-in-law when she becomes a widow, so that in that case he is married with mother and daughter at the same time. The combination of restricted and general exchange also underlies the terminological distinction of older and younger in the same generation. Among the Lhota Naga, for example, elder and younger brother have to contract a symmetric and an asymmetric marriage respectively. So we are confronted with the problem of the relation between the symmetric and the asymmetric aspects of these systems. A characteristic feature is the vitality of dualism. Whereas only traces are occasionally left of asymmetry, dual organizations are found springing up like mushrooms so to speak, and these organizations subsequently keep splitting up into smaller and still smaller units which are exogamous, the larger units then becoming endogamous. The most recent exogamous units are villages. Considered historically, the author presumes, this dualism may be very old, but functionally, that is, as a predominant factor in the marriage systems, it is probably quite recent. It is not precisely the dual organization in itself by which the ancient asymmetric system is gradually reduced to a minimum, but rather the continuous splitting up owing to which an ever-increasing number of groups are not exogamous any



more. Another disintegrating factor is the growing social differentiation, the struggle for prestige and wealth overgrowing everything. This process shows us the "external limits of general exchange", as the author formulates it.

The Gilyak system is closely related to the Katchin system, but there are significant differences. The patrilocal patrilineal clans are allied by asymmetric connubium, and the kinship terminology is in accordance with mo. bro. da. marriage and shows the well-known distinction of father-in-law clan and son-in-law clan. However, the asymmetric rule is valid for two generations only; with the third generation the relationship may be ended or reversed. This phenomenon of a rule of exogamy being valid for a limited number of generations is widely spread in the Far East.

The system requires 5 groups at least as each clan is allied not only to one bride-giving and one bride-taking clan, but also to one more clan at

**BRIDE - TAKING    EGO    BRIDE - GIVING**

D, E	A	B, C
E, A	B	C, D
A, B	C	D, E
B, C	D	E, A
C, D	E	A, B

Fig. 4. (see LÉVI-STRAUSS, p. 361 ff.).

least in either direction. This immediately reminds us of the system in use with the Katchin nobility (see above, p. 20), but there is an important difference, as may be understood from fig. 4.

In connection with this system of connubial relations the bride's mo. bro. is intimately involved in the marriage and receives the larger part of the marriage gift. Occasionally, a younger sister of the bride, too, is allotted to him. And if the bride's mother has more than one brother, and the bridegroom has more than one sister, either of these uncles of the bride receives one of her sisters. These customs obviously clash with the principle of asymmetry. With most tribes in S. Asia they are co-existent with special positions of father's sister (and her husband's clan) with regard to her brother's son's marriage. The author considers these customs to give evidence of a more or less latent antagonism between the women's lineages and the men's lineages concerned. This antagonism is also clearly manifested in Gilyak mythology. In the author's opinion it has a deep structural significance. All these systems

prohibit patrilateral c.c. marriage and prescribe its matrilateral counterpart. Now it is precisely these two types of marriage which are represented by the two antagonistic relatives: the matrilateral uncle of the bride and the patrilateral aunt of the bridegroom. The antagonism between these two reflects as it were the rivalry between the two types of marriage in the system. This ever-present element of wavering between two forms of asymmetric marriage, owing to which the normal exchange relations proper to the system are endangered, may become so strong that the system itself is near breaking down altogether, the "internal limits" of general exchange having been reached (pp. 291-380).

## CHINA

Here we are confronted with a situation of such bewildering complexity—a wealth of suggestive but fragmentary and often contradictory data extending over millenia—that it is impossible to do justice to the author's penetrating analysis in the narrow compass of this essay. We shall have to confine ourselves to a brief and naturally selective résumé of his exposition.

Chinese kinship terminology is based on two principles: distinction of direct and collateral lines of descent and stratification of generations. This twofold distinction is expressed by means of some 23 ancient "elementary" terms and some 10 "determinants" ("basic modifiers") by means of which the ancient nomenclature has been subsequently elaborated, the determinants being prefixed or suffixed to the elementary terms according to whether they relate to collateral descent or to sex. The perfect precision of this system, which allows of expressing accurately almost any relationship in two terms, proves that it must have been consciously fabricated for a definite purpose. The researches of Han Yi Feng in particular have demonstrated that this purpose was a precise classification of all relatives with regard to their obligations in the mourning-cult as described in the ritual books *I Li* and *Li Ki*. The duration of mourning for clan members depends on the degree of kinship determined by the intersecting of the two above-mentioned modes of segmentation, the mourning-cult ceasing beyond the fourth ascending and descending generations and the fourth collateral line of descent. If the ancient kinship terminology really has been consciously elaborated for this purpose, it is dangerous to use the result of this elaboration as a base for reconstructing the kinship and marriage system of the archaic period. This is what GRANET has done. Accepting DURKHEIM's thesis that the Australian 4 section system of the Kariera type is the most primitive and presuming that this obtains for China as well, he found his view to tally with the alternating generation grouping (the *tchao-mou* order) in the an-

cestral temples and also with the ancient tradition according to which the personal name comes from the mother and the lineage name from the father. However, among the nobility, not the first and third, but the first and fifth generations are classed together in the temples. Moreover, kinship nomenclature proves to be ambiguous, some features being in accordance with exchange of sisters but others being strongly suggestive of exclusive matrilateral c.c. marriage. In order to explain these facts, GRANET ventured to construe, as a transitional stage between the hypothetical 4 section system and the relative freedom in matrimonial matters of modern times, an asymmetric 8 section system of 4 matrilocal matrilineal groups, intersected by 2 patrilineal moieties, implying exclusive mo. bro. da. marriage. L.-STR. argues that this very hypothetical construction of two successive stages of development characterized by two so widely different systems is both unnecessary and highly improbable. The terminological traits which GRANET ascribed to a 4 section system may quite as well be based on a simple dual system. Further, dualism may well be attended with a unilineal asymmetric four group system, in which case a certain combination of symmetric and asymmetric traits in kinship nomenclature is to be expected. Nor is it admissible—with a view to the artificial and secondary character of the elaborated kinship terminology—to connect the alternating generations with a four section system. While they *may* be due to bilineal descent, they may also result from patrilateral c.c. marriage.

As the author demonstrates, it is certain that bilateral c.c. marriage has been customary in parts of China at least before our era. So there must have been either dual organizations or population groups divided into pairs of bilaterally allied clans. In more recent times, however, mo. bro. da. marriage appears to be most common in many regions, whereas patrilateral c.c. marriage is strongly disapproved of. In North China, for instance, fa. si. da. marriage is condemned as being equivalent to "a returning of bone and flesh". The author presumes that, during a certain period, symmetric and asymmetric systems based, both of them, on a unilineal dual organization, have been co-existing, and that symmetric exchange has subsequently disappeared. Theoretically, the dual organization may have been matrilineal; there are, however, no data pointing to an ancient matrilineal system. There are also terminological indications of the existence during a certain period of marriages between members of successive generations, e.g. the equations: mo. bro. = wi. bro.; mo. si. = wi. si.; fa. eld. bro. = husb. eld. bro. and so on. In earlier times, however, these relationships were distinguished and their equations are mostly datable. Most likely there have been two systems simultaneously: symmetric exchange among the peasantry and connubial

relations between members of successive generations among the feudal nobility. Ancient feudal custom knew of marriage with wi. bro. da. This type of marriage disappeared in the 3rd century before our era, and all marriages between members of successive generations were officially prohibited some thousand years later.

An instructive parallel of the combination of mo. bro. da. marriage and wi. bro. da. marriage is known from the Miwok Indians in California. When GIFFORD studied this tribe for the first time he did not discover any explicit kinship groups save moieties, so he failed to give a conclusive interpretation. As the terminological equations only reflected wi. bro. da. and not mo. bro. da. marriage he concluded that the latter type of marriage was a later addition to the former, fathers occasionally ceding their right in this respect to their sons, and that this custom had not yet found expression in the terminology. As L.-STR. points out, however, mo. bro. da. marriage is always a manifestation of general (asymmetric) exchange. In the Miwok case, therefore, one should expect a system of general exchange in which difference of generation is not an impediment to marriage. This situation is realized when the groups connected by asymmetric connubium are not classes (sections) but lineages. Ten years after his first investigation GIFFORD in fact discovered such units: patrilocal patrilineal groups. And L.-STR. shows the 12 equations reflecting wi. bro. da. marriage to be fully explainable from a cyclic connubium between patrilineal lineages. Such systems may be more or less *rational*, he remarks, according to whether a man of the bride-taking lineage lays claim to *any woman whomsoever* or to a *definite woman* of the bride-giving lineage, they may be more or less *reasonable* according to whether he claims *one* or *several* women.

After discussing a number of outlying systems ("systèmes périphériques") in East Asia, jointly designated by the name of Manchu-Tungus, the author summarizes the situation in this part of the Asiatic continent as follows: "In the extreme South and in the extreme North, the Katchin and Gilyak systems are counterparts as two simple forms of general exchange. Another parallelism is represented by the Naga and the Tungus-Mandchu systems, which are characterized by the same mixture of restricted and general exchange . . . . In the centre, finally, we have the Chinese system, the ancient traits of which suggest restricted exchange, scarcely covering indisputable traces of general exchange. If this distribution were to be explained in terms of diffusion it would suggest that general exchange has been the most archaic form from Siberia down to Burma, and that restricted exchange, having made its appearance later, has not yet been able to affect the outlying situations." (p. 481). However, the author argues, such an interpretation is

not acceptable: in the first place, because a functional system, being intimately bound up with the whole structure of society, must of necessity derive its nature from the most essential characteristics of that society. Diffusion, in these circumstances, would mean that the whole society has diffused, a supposition by which the problem would be merely displaced. In the second place, there are two facts of fundamental importance which are not accounted for by diffusionistic hypotheses: the fact that mo. bro. da. marriage has recently been encountered as a vital institution in various parts of China, and the circumstance that even the simplest forms of general exchange, as we saw, show certain peculiarities (rôle of the bride's mo. bro. and, sometimes, of the bridegroom's fa. si.), too persistent to be regarded as survivals of former matriliney, which must be connected with a "reality of another order". Consequently, we have to conclude that the three types of systems encountered: Katchin-Gilyak with general exchange, Manchu-Naga with general and restricted exchange intermingled, and China with restricted exchange, are three different modalities of the same structure rather than three stages of the same cultural migration. "And", continues the author, "all the characteristics which are to develop later on are found to be present in the form which we consider to be the simplest one". (p. 485). It seems quite evident that the author is referring here to his hypothetical primordial exchange system from which both types of exchange as well as a combination of the two (in the form of a dual system with asymmetrically allied clans) may have developed.

However, the author adds, this interpretation does not fully account for the fact that even the simple systems of general exchange always show a feature alien to its nature, which in a certain phase of development makes itself felt as a factor of restricted exchange. This peculiarity confronts us with the problem whether the restricting element has been connected with general exchange from the very beginning, the latter having never existed in its pure form, or whether the similarity between the alien element and the factor of restricted exchange is a result of convergence, the former having its own specific character by which the aspect of restricted exchange has been changed.

Having thus formulated the problem of the relations between the basic systems in its various aspects, the author goes on to analyse the available data from India (pp. 381-485).

#### INDIA

Here, as in China, we meet with the distinction of "bone" and "flesh" as originating from father and mother respectively. In the author's opinion,

this distinction, wheresoever it occurs, gives proof of the existence of a cyclic system. He sees another distinction of the same purport in the idea that when a woman is not given spontaneously but at a pretender's request, the marriage is degraded thereby: in a cyclic system, he argues, marriages are in fact like gifts because no *direct* exchange takes place.

In general, there is a close parallelism between the Indian and the Chinese systems. Like the Chinese *tchao-mou* system, the Indian *sapinda* system is primarily a cult organization. Its character of kinship and marriage group must be secondary, the restriction of the rule of exogamy to a certain number of generations being based upon the sacrificial rules having been applied to the regulation of marriage. The author mentions more parallels and concludes that the Chinese and Indian systems are practically identical. Although admitting that India "furnishes us with an example of exceptional development of bilinealism" (in his terminology: "bilatéralité"), he absolutely rejects HELD's tentative supposition that there may have been a bilineal cyclic system, because he is convinced that bilineal systems generally are secondary elaborations and that reckoning of descent as a decisive factor is an illusion of traditional anthropology. He adduces the argument that in India, as in many other regions, individual genealogical relationships often preclude marriage although they do not clash with clan exogamy. When we find, for instance, that with a patrilineal tribe connubial relations with mother's patrilineal clan are prohibited with exception of the matrilateral c.c., it would be absurd, he thinks, to explain this from a hypothetical section system, when no sections have been actually found. Indian bilinealism, he states, is not what HELD considers it to be, but it simply means that either line of descent has a definite function. In this sense "bilinealism is latent in every system of general exchange . . . bone and flesh together are needed for making a human being".

As to the difficult problem of the relationship between castes and clans in India, the author comes to the conclusion that the castes (*jati*) have originally been clans, and that the *gotra* (which HELD presumed to be ancient matrilineal clans) are really subdivisions of clans, i.e. lineages, patrilineal or matrilineal as the case may be. The castes multiplied owing to hypergamy and the increase of *gotra* was caused by the demands of clan exogamy. There may have been patrilineal and matrilineal clans (and *gotra*), but the author is not prepared to lance a general hypothesis concerning this point. In the *sapinda* group he sees the functional equivalent of the *gotra* within the endogamous caste. The historical development in India cannot be reconstructed with some accuracy. At any rate, however, the concept of caste has a functional value apart from its historical origin.

The continuous differentiation of status brought about two divergent evolutions: the aristocratic clans (whether aristocratic by descent or through social rivalry) evolved, synthetically, through hypergamy to endogamy, the *sapinda* constituting exogamous groups within the castes; the subservient clans, on the other hand, underwent an analytic evolution: they splitted up into small *gotra* or still smaller units tending to restricted exchange as the growing exclusivism of caste shut them out from the great cycles of exchange. In the long run there has been some mutual functional adjustment between the two processes of development.

As regards the relations between the 3 types of c.c. marriage (bilateral, patrilateral, matrilateral), which are found to be co-existing in Southern India, the author argues that the two unilateral types cannot be due to a simple splitting up of the bilateral form since the matrilateral type is more frequent by far than the patrilineal one. Furthermore, we meet here once more with the significant fact that an important rôle in matrimonial affairs is filled by the bride's mother's brother. This rôle of the bride's matrilateral group clearly and systematically expresses itself in two connubial types, viz. marriage with si. da. and that with fa. si. da. (pp. 486-543).

At this point of the author's argumentation we are well prepared for the conclusive discussion of the functional relationship between the two types of asymmetric marriage which follows.

Fa. si. da. marriage fits in well with an initial formulation of the problem of reciprocity with regard to connubium between members of successive generations ("oblique marriage"). From this point of view it may be plausibly interpreted as the marriage resulting from the fact that a man who has given away his sister claims, in exchange for her, her future daughter, either for himself or for his son. This situation has actually been met with in Southern India where the two forms of marriage are found to occur jointly. Among some Telugu-speaking tribes marriage with the cousin is even a substitute for marriage with the niece.

The essential difference between matrilateral and patrilateral c.c. marriage is that the latter is based upon discontinued exchange, the exchange cycle being prematurely broken off, so that instead of one all-embracing structure there are a number of closed systems by the side of each other. This type of exchange, which is not so much a real "system" as a "procedure", is also inferior to restricted exchange rendered "all-embracing" by means of a section system. However, although deficient as a total exchange system, it has the advantage of reducing the risk connected with a long-term credit as the cyclic exchange system undeniably entails. And now, the author states, we understand the puzzling extrinsic factor in so many simple

systems of general exchange: these systems have never got rid altogether of the "patrilateral formula", which offers none of the advantages of cyclic exchange but at the same does not entail the same risks. This also explains the peculiar status and rights of the bride's mother's brother, even among tribes with matrilateral marriage. If this interpretation is correct we may conclude:

1. that the elements suggestive of restricted exchange in the systems of India, Burma, Assam, China and so on really derive from this tendency, never fully repressed, towards a patrilateral marriage regulation;
2. that the problem of priority concerning the formulas of restricted and general exchange in India and in China is an imaginary problem. We may state that the two formulas are eternally co-existent as the two poles of the simple formula of reciprocity, patrilateral marriage constituting its most inferior form, its limit, just as incest represents the extreme opposite of reciprocity in general. Hence, in archaic texts like *Kojiki* and *Nihongi*, the horror of patrilateral marriage and the repudiation of incest are expressed in the same terms. On the other hand, we also encounter phenomena suggestive of tendencies in the opposite direction: structures of restricted exchange are found to be surrounded and partly overgrown by matrilateral and patrilateral systems.

Obviously the 3 types of marriage together comprise 4 oppositions:

1. bilateral < matrilateral and patrilateral (symmetric < asymmetric);
2. bilateral and patrilateral < matrilateral (alternating generations < non-alternating generations);
3. bilateral and matrilateral < patrilateral (all-embracing < non-all-embracing);
4. matrilateral < patrilateral (longest exchange cycle < shortest exchange cycle).

According to the author, all complex systems will be found to result from processes of development or combination of the elementary structures treated in this book. He adds a hasty preliminary sketch of the characteristic developments in Oceania and America on the one side and in Africa and Europa on the other, as will be set forth at length in his coming book on complex structures (pp. 544-591).

In a closing chapter the author summarizes what, to his mind, are the fundamental results of his inquiry. In all marriage systems the basic factor is exchange. And in exchange, what really matters is not the value of the goods exchanged but the functional value of exchange itself as creating and keeping up social ties. The prohibition of incest (including the whole of exogamy) is not so much a prohibition of marrying with definite relatives as the command to give them away to others. This view is amply confirmed by ethnographic facts. Thus the Arapesh (New Guinea) proved unconscious

of any prohibition of incest. The idea of marrying a sister struck them as just absurd because doing so would prevent them from acquiring a brother-in-law. There may be cited many more cases proving that not the sexual relations within the nuclear family themselves are dreaded and abhorred but their social result: isolation. Marriage means a meeting of nature and culture, a compromise brought about by the recognition of the principle of unilineal kinship and the institution of prohibited relations, the former being a concession to nature and the latter being a concession to culture. FREUD's discoveries get a new meaning now. The phenomena which according to him derive from a definite event in primeval times really are the expression of the ever-present unconscious longing for disorder or rather reverse of order ("contre-ordre"). FREUD himself, indeed, has suggested that certain psychic phenomena as anxiety, inhibition, may occasionally crop up spontaneously (without the help of cultural conditioning) because they are organically determined. Accordingly, there may be two forms of sublimation, one, a product of upbringing, being cultural, and the other, the "inferior" one, resulting from autonomous reaction. This hesitating attitude of psychoanalytic theory proves this branch of social science to be still wavering between the historical and the functional (the diachronic and the synchronic) methods of research and interpretation. In another social science, linguistics, particularly in phonology, the two methods intermingle, the diachronic one reconstructing the genesis of systems and the synchronic one throwing light upon their intrinsic logic and grasping the evolution which directs them towards a definite aim. Its methods, and its subject matter still more so, suggest that our inquiry into kinship systems is concerned with a similar reality and may, consequently, have the disposal of the same possibilities. The rules of kinship and marriage have been found to comprise all sorts of methods of assuring the integration of biologic families in the social group. It has also been found possible to reduce apparently complicated and arbitrary rules to three elementary structures derivable from two forms of exchange which proved to be ultimately determined by the relation between the rules of residence and descent, any disharmonic system engendering restricted exchange and any harmonic system being an indicant of general exchange. Besides, considering the positive function of exogamy, we may state that the two objects of study, too, are identical. As W. I. THOMAS rightly observed, exogamy and language have the same purpose: communication with others and integration of the group. They are equally universal and they have equal and similar coercive power. Man has always been aware of a certain connection between language and sexual relations. Anthropological and linguistic researches have brought to light that women are

treated like *signs*, which are misused when they are not employed in the proper way, that is, *communicated*. So language and exogamy seem to represent two solutions with regard to the same fundamental situation. They differ in degree of perfection, but this difference is counterbalanced by another: words, as they were degraded to common property, lost their quality of exchange *values*—they became mere *signs*—, whereas women, as *persons* in the world of men and, when looked upon as signs, as *producers of signs*, have always remained *values* as well.

“However, the hot and pathetic climate where symbolic thought and its collective form, social life, unfolded, still warms our dreams with its mirage. To this day humanity has been dreaming of grasping and retaining that elusive moment when it was not yet absurd to believe that it might be possible to outwit the law of exchange, to gain without losing, to enjoy without sharing. At the two ends of the earth, at the two extremities of the ages, the Sumerian myth of the Golden Age and the Andaman myth of Future Life coincide, the former associating the termination of primeval happiness with the moment when the confusion of tongues caused words to become the property of all, and the latter describing the bliss of the hereafter as a heaven where the women will not be exchanged anymore, thus jointly dismissing the delights, eternally denied to social man, of a world where families might live in privacy, to a future or to a past equally unaccessible”. (pp. 616-617, pp. 592-617).

## II

The above-cited passage, in which the author suggestively resumes his vision of the birth of culture and humanity in self-imposed but still rankling renunciation, takes us back to his basic proposition that the prohibition of incest—and exogamy in general—has not come into existence within the pre-existing nuclear family, but as the result of an exchange mechanism, rooted in the principle of reciprocity, whereby institutional marriage and the nuclear family themselves have been produced. The proposition also states that the fundamental exchange mechanism resulting in the dichotomy of cousins and c.c. marriage was not dependent on a definite kinship system as implied by its institutional form: the dual organization. Although the author declares that his view of the situation does not imply a definite historical sequence, his argumentation from the beginning and throughout his book consistently keeps suggesting that mode of reckoning of descent is a secondary phenomenon as compared with the organization of positions and relations which constitutes the system of exchange in which men are actors and women function as exchanged values. This needs not mean, it is true, that to the author considerations of descent are always and everywhere posterior to

motivating factors of another order, but it does mean that he regards them as more or less accidental or contingent, functionally. Therefore our evaluation of his theory as a whole will be considerably affected by our judgment of his hypothesis regarding the origin of c.c. marriage. He explains the dichotomy of cousins and concomitant c.c. marriage from two distinctions, conceived as "oppositions", viz. 1. the opposition siblings of the same sex < siblings of opposite sex, and 2. the opposition creditor < debtor according to the demands of a primeval exchange mechanism consistently observed. Theoretically, this may be correct. However, we are inclined to ask, why does he insist upon so tenuous a construction when there are other factors to be taken into account by which his basis of interpretation may be broadened? To the alleged oppositions within the primary exchange complex of two men and two women with their sons and daughters and their sisters and brothers three more at least should be added, viz. 1. father and children < mother and children; 2. father and son < mother and daughter; 3. father and daughter < mother and son. For, apart from the fact that these oppositions are logically implied by the dichotomy of cousins as the author sees it, we actually know—as the author indeed has pointed out himself—that they are explicitly recognized by many communities, as manifested by the distinction of "couples" and "cycles", by sex affiliation, by sex totemism and so on<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, when the author characterizes marriage as a compromise (between nature and culture) brought about by the recognition of unilineal kinship and the institution of prohibited relations, he himself is classing the former with the primeval motivating principles. It would seem, therefore, that his tendency to push rules of descent into the background must have been prompted by considerations extrinsic to his conception of the primeval situation. What these considerations may have been will become apparent in the course of this discussion.

When we express the opinion that the dichotomy of cousins and c.c. marriage, functionally connected with the initial exchange mechanism, become more intelligible if we regard recognition of the difference between patrilineal and matrilineal descent as a dynamic principle operating from the very beginning, we do not mean to assert that c.c. marriage automatically resulted from either the dual organization or a 4 section system. We

<sup>1</sup> Cp. LÉVI-STRAUSS, p. 61-62, 144, 163-164; A.R. RADCLIFFE-BROWN, *The social organization of Australian tribes*, Oceania, Vol. I (1930-1931), p. 431-432, 442. Significant indications may also be found in MEYER FORTES, *The structure of unilineal descent groups*, American Anthropologist, vol. 55 (1953), p. 17 ff., and in A.R. RADCLIFFE-BROWN and DARYLL FORDE, *African systems of kinship and marriage* (1950), although these authors have not formulated the relevant facts in terms of "oppositions".

only mean to say that this recognition should not a priori be rejected as a cooperating factor on a par with the principles suggested by the author.

As to the author's proposition that not the nuclear family, but a group of at least two men and their women, allied by rules of exchange, is the really primary unit, we are neither convinced that this question can ever be answered nor that it is a problem of such fundamental importance as the author considers it to be. When a man who has children by a certain woman has exchange relations with that woman's brother and his own sister's possessor and so on and so forth, it does not seem preposterous to call the three exchange units concerned "nuclear families", whether or not marriage has already become a fixed and clear-cut institution. Nor does it seem absurd to state that each of these units, whether or not we do call them "nuclear families", comprises the basic set of distinctions or "oppositions" which obviously underlies all more elaborated systems of kinship and marriage.

There is another point in the author's basic proposition which calls for our special attention. When demonstrating—convincingly in our opinion—the significance of the principle of reciprocity as a panchronic and universal dynamic factor in social life, he does not hesitate to adduce, as conclusive evidence, certain characteristics of infantile thinking and behaviour which he regards as universal, "polymorphous" and, consequently, partly pre-cultural. Likewise, after setting forth his view of the primeval exchange mechanism, he calls the question how man acquired this structural conception a psychological problem, thus alluding, once more, to some pre-cultural element in man's mental make-up. In view of his receptiveness to biological or partly biological interpretations in these instances, his resolutely—we might almost say indignantly—rejecting all psychological considerations with regard to the prohibition of incest, seems a little dogmatic to us. Although we agree with his criticism of all previous theories, we still believe that some specific psychic element—undefinable as yet—which may and often does obtain in closely-knit groups of relatives, and particularly in nuclear families, may always have been active, not as a primary cause of the prohibition, but as a co-existing factor by which the coming into existence of the primeval exchange complex was facilitated, just as the dichotomy of cousins was furthered by the recognition of unilineal and bilineal descent<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> It may be something different from what RADCLIFFE-BROWN means when he assumes that "the kind of emotional attitude existing in sexual intimacy, and the kinds of emotional attitude developed in the family towards nearest kin, are felt to be violently contrary, incapable of being combined or reconciled" (*Introduction* in A.R.

However this may be, the author's exposition of the dynamics of reciprocity in culture, surpassing all discussions of the subject after MAUSS's *Essai sur le don*<sup>3</sup> in depth of argument and breadth of outlook, certainly opens new vista in the field of psycho-cultural research.

The problem of the true relation between kinship *systems*, based on rules of descent, and the regulation of marriage, which appeared to remain more or less academic as well as disturbingly elusive when approached dialectically with reference to the author's basic propositions, presents itself as urgent and actual as soon as we turn our attention to the historically known systems of kinship and marriage in Australia. As research of the last 25 years has demonstrated, this field considered as a whole is characterized by certain significant features which any investigator should continuously keep in mind: 1. the basic social unit next to the nuclear family is the local group comprising one or more patrilineal cores with wives from elsewhere; 2. most, probably all, of these systems are, explicitly or implicitly, bilineal; 3. the rules of kinship and marriage, i. e. the arrangement of genealogical relationships and the prohibitions and prescriptions with regard to acquiring a mate, are seldom or never completely concordant with the system of explicit or implicit divisions, as moieties and "classes" (sections or subsections); 4. native groups have been found to see through their intricate systems and

RADCLIFFE-BROWN and DARYLL FORDE, *African systems of kinship and marriage* (1950), p. 70). It would seem to us that this formulation is based rather on introspective psychology, than on well-established ethnographic facts. To RADCLIFFE-BROWN, the prohibition of family incest and the institution of exogamy are different problems, the latter being inherent in the „general system of institutional relationships” to which certain marriages would be disruptive. So according to him exogamy is not an extension of the prohibition of incest, but the feelings about the latter have affected the attitudes towards prohibited marriages in the domain of social structure in general. In this respect his theory is a step towards LÉVI-STRAUSS's view. MURDOCK, on the other hand, although he states that "a complete and adequate theory emerges" when "specific contributions" from "psychoanalysis, sociology, cultural anthropology, and behavioristic psychology" are put together, still adheres to the extension-theory and does not seem to be worried by the consideration that a universal phenomenon in culture cannot well be explained from a combination of phenomena the universality of which has not been proved (G. P. MURDOCK, *Social structure* (1949), p. 285 ff.). The idea that the prohibition of incest and the establishment of marriage rules must be rooted in one dynamic principle is only met with in LESLIE WHITE's explanation, published in 1948, but obviously not known to LÉVI-STRAUSS at the time when he was writing his book. With his conception of the need of "cooperation" as the driving force, WHITE closely approaches LÉVI-STRAUSS's principle of reciprocity (LESLIE WHITE, *The definition and prohibition of incest*, *American Anthropologist* 50, p. 416 ff.).

<sup>3</sup> We may refer especially to B. MALINOWSKI, *Crime and custom in savage society* (1926) and his *Introduction* in H. J. HOGBIN, *Law and order in Polynesia. A study of primitive legal institutions* (1934), and to H. KELSEN, *Society and nature. A sociological inquiry* (1946), who, however, considers the principle of reciprocity to be a kind of by-product of the "law of retribution" (p. 58 ff.).

to be able to change them for the purpose of adjustment to systems of neighbouring groups.

On the basis of these facts both RADCLIFFE-BROWN and LÉVI-STRAUSS as we saw (see above, p. 10, 15) hold the section systems to be largely secondary expressions (systematizations) either of a pre-existing classification of personal genealogical relationship (R.-BR.) or of a pre-existing exchange system as conceived by native view (L.-STR.). At the same time, however, either of them appears to ascribe some functional value at least to these sections, for L.-STR. states that they indicate the group outside of which one is not allowed to marry<sup>4</sup>, and R.-BR. presumes that the function of the subsections is "to adapt the kinship system, with the classificatory terminology, to . . . (alternate) marriages", a person's position in the classificatory kinship system being "fixed solely by reference to his mother with no attention to his father"<sup>5</sup>. We shall have to return to this point later.

Whereas both authors profess not being concerned with problems of historical development, neither of them has succeeded in keeping his exposition entirely free from historical considerations. It seems impossible, indeed, to classify and describe these systems without any reference to time perspective since processes of diffusion and adaptation have been actually observed. In such cases one is confronted with the question whether certain types of development reveal general tendencies or should be regarded as incidental local events. In this respect LÉVI-STRAUSS's ideological scheme (see above, p. 19) not less pointedly suggests certain general trends of development than RADCLIFFE-BROWN's comparative analysis appears to do. "When we compare the integrative systems of the Kariera type and the Aranda type", the latter wrote some 24 years ago, "we see that the latter provides apparently a wider integration bringing a single individual into social relations with a wider circle. Secondly it also provides a close integration of the narrower groupings by giving new forms of expression to the solidarity of the family and the horde. It combines these two features, which would seem at first sight to be contrary to one another, by an increase in the complexity of the social structure. We are justified, I think, in regarding the Kariera and the Aranda systems as two terms in an evolutionary process, for evolution, as the term is here used, is a process by which stable integrations at a higher level are substituted for or replace integrations at a lower level. This does not involve the assumption that the Aranda system is derived

<sup>4</sup> LÉVI-STRAUSS, p. 206.

<sup>5</sup> A. R. RADCLIFFE-BROWN, *Murngin social organization*, American Anthropologist, 53 (1951), p. 50.

historically from one identical with the existing Kariera system" <sup>6</sup>). And at the end of his essay he stated: "In spite of the diversity of the various systems a careful comparison reveals them as being variations of a single type" <sup>7</sup>. When LÉVI-STRAUSS is apt to derive all systems from a primary dual organization, the "wider integration" having been effected either by symmetric bilineal or by asymmetric subdivision, his starting-point is not widely different from RADCLIFFE-BROWN's, for a system of two patrilineal moieties implies two latent matrilineal moieties (and vice versa) and, consequently, four latent sections. However, according to RADCLIFFE-BROWN the underlying system is an arrangement of personal genealogical relationships whereas in LÉVI-STRAUSS's theory it is an arrangement of positions and relations inherent in an exchange mechanism conceptually antecedent to the kinship system.

Another important point of difference concerns the relation between symmetric and asymmetric c.c. marriage. As RADCLIFFE-BROWN sees it, either type of marriage may be preferential in a Kariera as well as in an Aranda type of kinship organization, the two standard marriages not being exclusive by any means. Thus the Kariera have a preference for mo. bro. da. marriage although the kinship system identifies matrilateral and patrilateral cross-cousins. And in the Aranda as well as in many other tribes with similar kinship systems "alternate" marriages are frequently possible besides the standard types. To LÉVI-STRAUSS, on the other hand, the distinction of symmetry and asymmetry is fundamental on account of the basic difference between "restricted" and "general" exchange and at the same time between disharmonic (bilineal) and harmonic (unilineal) organization which it implies.

As we saw, the only argument which he adduces for his proposition that asymmetric systems—more particularly the all-embracing systems based on mo. bro. da. marriage—are inherently unilineal is the fact that they need not become bilineal in order to become all-embracing, whereas a symmetric unilineal system cannot become all-embracing unless it becomes either asymmetric or bilineal. We cannot help assuming that the author himself must be aware of the peculiar weakness of this argument and that he has only resorted to it, for lack of a better one, because the combination of asymmetry and unilineal descent fits in better with his conception of the primeval exchange mechanism. As we have tried to point out, however, the weak point in this conception precisely is its being based on the assumption

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<sup>6</sup> *Oceania*, I (1930-1931), p. 452.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 455.

that the distinction of matrilineal and patrilineal descent did not play any rôle whatever.

We shall now examine the Murngin system, which is bilineal as well as asymmetric, and the author's hypothesis concerning its origin. There are two named patrilineal moieties, intersected by two unnamed matrilineal

PATR. MOIETY I		PATR. MOIETY II	
MATR. MOIETY A	NGARIT	WARMUT	KARMARUNG
	BULAIN		
MATR. MOIETY B	BANGARDI	BALANG	BURALANG
	KAIJARK		

Fig. 5.

moieties. Each of the 4 resulting sections comprises 2 named subsections. The men and their children of one local group naturally belong to one of the 2 patrilineal moieties (fig. 5).

It is evident that men of section Ngarit + Bulain can only marry with

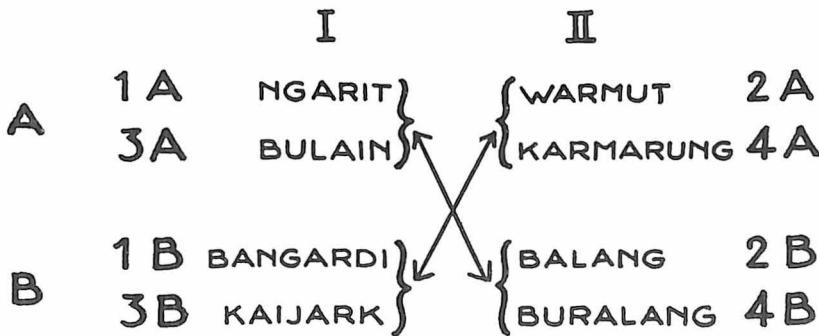


Fig. 6 (cp. LÉVI-STRAUSS, fig. 17, p. 218).

women of section Balang + Buralang and that men of section Warmut + Karmarung can only marry with women of section Bangardi + Kaijark and vice versa. When we call the patrilineal groups which form a patrilineal moiety 1 + 3 and 2 + 4 respectively, indicating the symmetric connubial relations between the sections by  $\longleftrightarrow$ , the section system is (fig. 6):

According to T. TH. WEBB, on whose description LÉVI-STRAUSS's expo-

sition is based, a Ngarit man "normally" marries a Balang woman and vice versa, but "under certain circumstances" may marry a Buralang woman and vice versa. Likewise, a Bulain man may marry either a Buralang woman (normal marriage) or a Balang woman (alternate marriage) and vice versa. The subsection of the children would seem to depend essentially on their mother's subsection seeing that a definite woman's children always belong to one subsection no matter whether they have been born from a normal or from an alternate marriage. The regulation in toto is as follows (fig. 7).

LÉVI-STRAUSS agrees with ELKIN's formulation of the descent of the subsections, viz. that "in the case of alternate marriage ... the children belong

FATHER	MOTHER	CHILDREN	FATHER	MOTHER	CHILDREN
1 A	2 B	1 B	1 A	4 B	3 B
3 A	4 B	3 B	3 A	2 B	1 B
1 B	4 A	3 A	1 B	2 A	1 A
3 B	2 A	1 A	3 B	4 A	3 A
2 B	1 A	4 A	2 B	3 A	2 A
4 B	3 A	2 A	4 B	1 A	4 A
2 A	3 B	2 B	2 A	1 B	4 B
4 A	1 B	4 B	4 A	3 B	2 B

Fig. 7.

to the subsection of the father's moiety to which they would have belonged had their *actual mother* been regularly married according to the strict subsection rule. Thus, the father is "thrown away" as far as the subsection is concerned<sup>8</sup>. However, this formulation is incomplete since it ignores the fact that in the "normal" (regular) system no less than in the alternate system in 4 of the 8 cases the children are not classed in the patrilineal semi-moiety of their father but in the complementary semi-moiety. The two systems are in fact perfectly parallel and they have exactly the same result with regard to the system of marriage, both being strictly symmetric, i.e. contrary to exclusive matrilateral c.c. marriage which, as we know from LLOYD WARNER's research, was the normal type of marriage in these tribes. It is not to be doubted therefore that LÉVI-STRAUSS hits the nail on the head in suggesting that the actual system is based on a regular alternation of

<sup>8</sup> A. P. ELKIN, *Marriage and descent in East Arnhem Land*, Oceania, III (1932-1933), p. 412.

"normal" and "alternate" marriages between father and son and between brother and sister. Thus if a man 1A (Ngarit) "normally" marries a woman 2B (Balang), his sister is "alternately" married to a man 4B (Buralang) and his son, likewise "alternately", marries a woman 2A (Warmut) and so on, as indicated by LÉVI-STRAUSS's diagram fig. 23 (p. 226) and by our diagram (fig. 8).

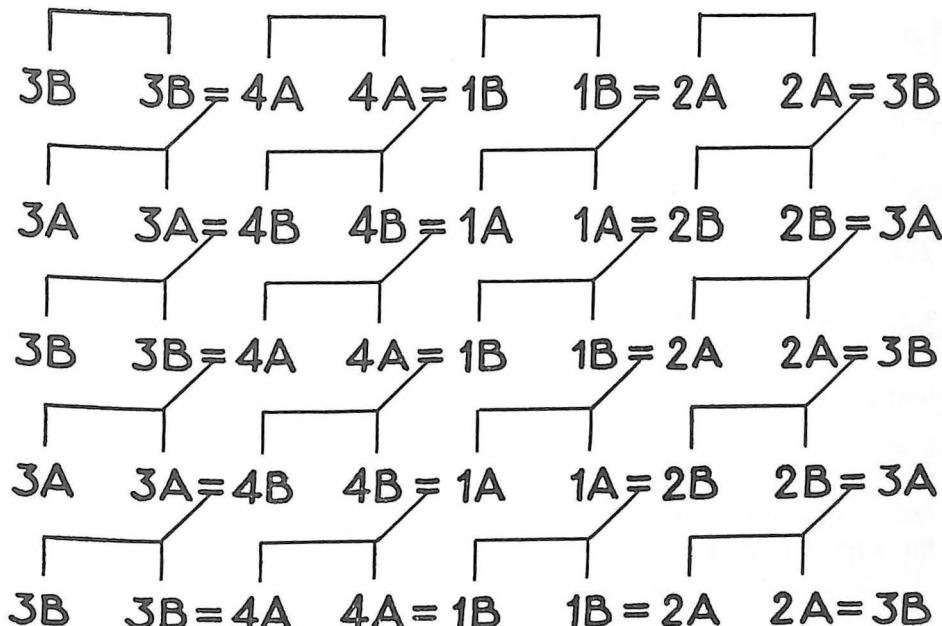


Fig. 8.

Now, if our author had contented himself with his having given a satisfactory interpretation of the system all would have been well. Being convinced, however, that it must be possible to derive a bilineal cyclic system from an originally unilineal organization (cyclic (asymmetric) systems being inherently unilineal in his opinion), he has tried to reconstruct a process of development concordant with this view. His reconstruction takes as starting-point, as we saw (see above, p. 17), a hypothetic system of 4 patrilineal groups connected by asymmetric connubium in which, however, children did not belong to their father's group but to the group of mother's brother's wife. The explanation of this strange arrangement may be found in the fact that it is possible to arrange the subsections of the Murngin system in such a way that we get a kind of 4 group system involving the classing of children with the mo.bro.wi. group (see fig. 9).

The author calls these groups p, q, r, and s and equates them with the groups A, B, C, and D of his fig. 28 (see above, p. 18). After thus introducing these 4 arbitrary divisions as 4 patrilineal groups he has them subdivided by subsequent matrilineal dichotomy (matrilineal moieties

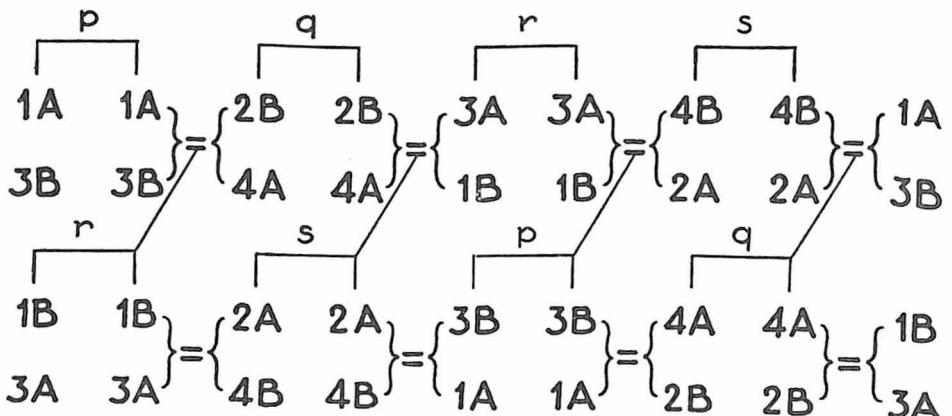


Fig. 9 (cp. LÉVI-STRAUSS, fig. 30, p. 238).

x and y), the result of this process being the actual 8 subsections of the Murngin system (fig. 10). Consequently, in this ultimate reconstruction father and son belong to different patrilineal semi-moieties and each of the 4 patrilineal symbols refers to one or the other of 2 semi-moieties alter-

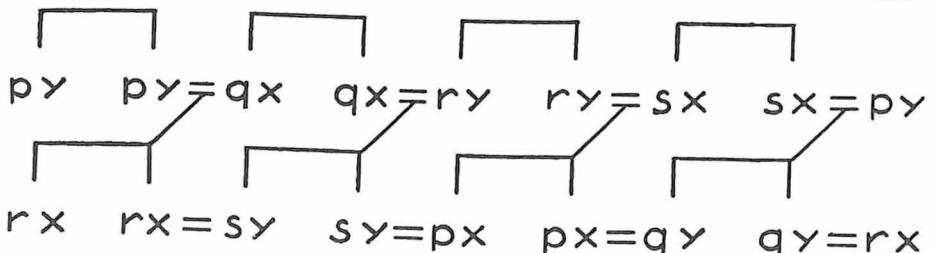


Fig. 10 (see LÉVI-STRAUSS, p. 239-241).

nately, children being classed with the patrilineal semi-moiety of mother's brother's wife (chart A). The author argues, it is true, that a cyclic system is not affected by the rule of descent provided that this rule is consistently applied, but, we should like to ask, whatever does mean the term "unilatéral" then, which the author himself uses for his hypothetical groups? <sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> He uses the term "classe" or "classe matrimoniale" for "groupements unilatéraux" (i.e. unilineal groups) implying definite positive marriage rules (p. 92).

Theoretically, it is quite possible of course that the Murngin 8 subsections derive from 4 patrilineal groups (children belonging, naturally, to father's group), subdivided later by matrilineal dichotomy, as may be seen from our diagram at a glance (fig. 8). It may be doubted, however, whether this has actually happened. RADCLIFFE-BROWN, too, presumes that the Murngin system has been influenced by systems of the Aranda type, but he obviously regards it as a modification of the Kariera type. We shall have to go into this question because it concerns one of LÉVI-STRAUSS's basic propositions.

From the researches of RADCLIFFE-BROWN and others it has become very likely that all Australian systems allow for certain "alternate" marriages, i.e. non-standard marriages, for the simple reason that strict adherence to the standard regulation is often impossible. A very common type of "alternate" or non-standard marriage appears to consist in marrying a woman belonging to the patrilineal semi-moiety complementary to the one from which one should normally obtain his wife. According to WEBB's description of the Murngin system, there, likewise, the distinction of "normal" and "alternate" marriages is a matter of choice between the semi-moities constituting the moiety different from one's own. If our interpretation of the actual standard system is correct (cp. above, fig. 8) this would mean that when e.g. a man 1A (Ngarit) marries a woman 4B (Buralang) instead of a woman 2B (Balang) this is an alternate marriage, and so on. And in such cases the normal functioning of the system is assured by means of the device of "throwing away the father", as the native phrase appears to be<sup>10</sup>. Thus, the children of 1A and 4B will not be 1B (Bangardi) but 3B (Kaijark). This wavering between two semi-moities in connection with marriage rules is also often reflected by inconsistencies in the kinship terminology, as e.g. in the Dieri system (two matrilineal moieties, intersected by implicit patrilineal moieties and semi-moities and a kinship system of the Aranda type) where most kinship terms refer to individuals in two complementary semi-moities. These inconsistencies involve differences between the Dieri system and the Aranda terminologies from which LÉVI-STRAUSS concludes that the Dieri system is really based on a previous system of 4 patrilineal groups with exclusive mo. bro. da. marriage which under the influence of a system of the Aranda type has got its actual ambiguous character. It seems much more probable, however, that the system has developed from a previous 4 section system of the Kariera type, the kinship terminology not having been fully adjusted to the subdivision of the moieties. It seems likely to us that the common phenomenon of alternate marriages in different semi-moities is functionally connected

<sup>10</sup> RADCLIFFE-BROWN, Oceania, I, p. 213.

KARIERA  
(2 kinds of local groups)

BANAKA  $1B = 2A$  BURUNG      BURUNG  $2A = 1B$  BANAKA  
AND  
KARIMERA  $1A = 2B$  PALDJERI      PALDJERI  $2B = 1A$  KARIMERA

Fig. 11 (see RADCLIFFE-BROWN, Oceania, I, p. 208-211; LÉVI-STRAUSS, p. 202-207, 209).

ARANDA  
(4 kinds of local groups)

MBITJANA  $1B = 2A$  PANGATA  
NGALA  $1A = 4B$  KNURAIA

KAMARA  $3B = 4A$  PALTARA      PANGATA  $2A = 1B$  MBITJANA  
PURULA  $3A = 2B$  PANANKA      PANANKA  $2B = 3A$  PURULA

PALTARA  $4A = 3B$  KAMARA  
KNURAIA  $4B = 1A$  NGALA

Fig. 12 (see B. SPENCER and F. J. GILLEN, *The Arunta*, I, p. 43-46; RADCLIFFE-BROWN, Oceania, I, p. 56-57).

MURNGIN  
(4 kinds of local groups)

BANGARDI  $1B = 2A$  WARMUT  
NGARIT  $1A = 2B$  BALANG

KAIJARK  $3B = 4A$  KARMARUNG      WARMUT  $2A = 3B$  KAIJARK  
BULAIN  $3A = 4B$  BURALANG      BALANG  $2B = 3A$  BULAIN

KARMARUNG  $4A = 1B$  BANGARDI  
BURALANG  $4B = 1A$  NGARIT

Fig. 13.

with the process of "wider integration" by means of subdividing patrilineal moieties into semi-moieties and that the differences between some basic types of systems are to be explained from the various ways in which the new possibilities have been utilized. We know that each "horde" or local group comprises at least the men belonging to two sections or subsections with their wives from other "hordes" representing two more sections or subsections. Consequently 4 section systems of the Kariera type imply that there are two kinds of local groups, and 8 subsection systems of the Aranda type or Murngin type involve four kinds of local groups. The various types of local groups and the concomitant standard marriages may

MARA  
(4 kinds of local groups)

MURUNGUN (2)  $1B = 4A$  PURDAL (1)

MURUNGUN (1)  $1A = 2B$  KUAL (2)

MUMBALI (2)  $3B = 2A$  KUAL (1) KUAL (1)  $2A = 1B$  MURUNGUN (2)

MUMBALI (1)  $3A = 4B$  PURDAL (2) KUAL (2)  $2B = 3A$  MUMBALI (1)

PURDAL (1)  $4A = 3B$  MUMBALI (2)

PURDAL (2)  $4B = 1A$  MURUNGUN (1)

Fig. 14 (see LÉVI-STRAUSS, p. 248-249).

be charted as indicated by fig. 11-13 (the names of sections, resp. subsections are added).

Two more interesting varieties which cannot be ignored are represented by the systems of the Mara<sup>11</sup> and the Karadjeri<sup>12</sup>. The Mara have 4 patrilineal groups, arranged in 2 moieties and 4 semi-moieties. Each of the latter, however, appears to be subdivided into 2 unnamed groups or subsections. Standard marriage is as among the Aranda (mo. mo. bro. da. da.), but bilateral c.c. marriage is permissible as "alternate" marriage. As LÉVI-STRAUSS points out—convincingly, we think—the Mara regulation of marriage is fully concordant with a system of 4 patrilineal groups with exclusive patrilateral c.c. marriage if we assume that the possibility of exchange of sisters is a later addition. In such a system in fact mo. mo. bro. da. da. = fa. si. da. The hypothetical Mara situation would be as shown by our chart

<sup>11</sup> LÉVI-STRAUSS, p. 248-251; RADCLIFFE-BROWN, *ibid.*, p. 40-41, 332-333.

<sup>12</sup> LÉVI-STRAUSS, p. 247; RADCLIFFE-BROWN, *ibid.*, p. 341, *American Anthropologist*, 53 (1951), p. 42.

(fig. 14) in which the latent matrilineal moieties are also indicated.

The Karadjeri have 4 sections, but recognize 3 patrilineal lines of descent: mo. mo. bro. is not identified with fa. fa., as in a real 4 section system of the Kariera type, and, on the other hand, fa. mo. bro. is not distinguished from mo. fa., as in a system of the Aranda type. Standard marriage is exclusively matrilateral (mo. bro. da.). This situation implies of course that 2 of the 4 sections are subdivided into 2 unnamed subsections, as demonstrated by our chart (fig. 15).

When we compare these 5 types we find that as far as the utilization of patrilineal moieties, resp. semi-moieties, is concerned their differences may be formulated as follows. Kariera: father and son marry in the same moiety,

KARADJERI  
(3 kinds of local groups)

BANAKA (1) **1B = 2A** BURUNG

KARIMBA (1) **1A = 2B** PALDJERI

BANAKA (2) **3B = 1A** KARIMBA (1) BURUNG **2A = 3B** BANAKA (2)

KARIMBA (2) **3A = 1B** BANAKA (1) PALDJERI **2B = 3A** KARIMBA (2)

Fig. 15 (see LÉVI-STRAUSS, p. 247-248; RADCLIFFE-BROWN, American Anthropologist, 53, p. 42).

brother and sister marry in the same moiety; Aranda: father and son marry in different semi-moieties, brother and sister marry in the same semi-moiety; Murngin: father and son marry in the same semi-moiety, brother and sister marry in different semi-moieties; Mara (probably): father and son marry in different semi-moieties, brother and sister marry in different semi-moieties; Karadjeri: father and son marry in the same moiety, c.q. in the same semi-moiety, brother and sister marry in different moieties, c.q. semi-moieties.

It seems quite evident that the Karadji system is in a phase of transition from a Kariera system to a Murngin system, and that the Aranda, Murngin and Mara systems, too, may be most satisfactorily be interpreted as modifications of a system of the Kariera type via moiety segmentation and adjustment of marriage rules to the new situation. As we saw, (see above, p. 15, 35), RADCLIFFE-BROWN regards the various divisions and subdivisions as secondary systematizations of kinship arrangements. However, if the latter really were absolutely primary, the numerous inconsistencies and contradictions in

the kinship nomenclature would be inexplicable, whereas most of them become quite understandable as the result of imperfect terminological adjustment to the segmentation. We do not mean to assert that the segmentation is the "cause" of the attendant rules of kinship and marriage. This

### KARIERA

FATH.-IN-LAW — SON-IN-LAW:  $1B \leftrightarrow 2B ; 1A \leftrightarrow 2A$   
 BROTHERS-IN-LAW:  $1B \leftrightarrow 2A ; 1A \leftrightarrow 2B$

### ARANDA

FATH.-IN-LAW — SON-IN-LAW:  $1B \rightarrow 4B \rightarrow 3B \rightarrow 2B \rightarrow 1B$   
 $1A \rightarrow 2A \rightarrow 3A \rightarrow 4A \rightarrow 1A$   
 BROTHERS-IN-LAW:  $1B \leftrightarrow 2A ; 3B \leftrightarrow 4A$   
 $1A \leftrightarrow 4B ; 3A \leftrightarrow 2B$

### MURNGIN

FATH.-IN-LAW — SON-IN-LAW:  $1B \rightarrow 4B \rightarrow 3B \rightarrow 2B \rightarrow 1B$   
 $1A \rightarrow 4A \rightarrow 3A \rightarrow 2A \rightarrow 1A$   
 BROTHERS-IN-LAW:  $1B \rightarrow 4A \rightarrow 3B \rightarrow 2A \rightarrow 1B$   
 $1A \rightarrow 4B \rightarrow 3A \rightarrow 2B \rightarrow 1A$

### KARADJERI

FATH.-IN-LAW — SON-IN-LAW:  $1B \rightarrow 3B \rightarrow 2B \rightarrow 1B$   
 $1A \rightarrow 3A \rightarrow 2A \rightarrow 1A$   
 BROTHERS-IN-LAW:  $1B \rightarrow 3A \rightarrow 2B \rightarrow 1A \rightarrow 3B \rightarrow 2A \rightarrow 1B$   
 $1A \rightarrow 3B \rightarrow 2A \rightarrow 1B \rightarrow 3A \rightarrow 2B \rightarrow 1A$

### MARA

FATH.-IN-LAW — SON-IN-LAW:  $1B \leftrightarrow 4B ; 2B \leftrightarrow 3B$   
 $1A \leftrightarrow 2A ; 3A \leftrightarrow 4A$   
 BROTHERS-IN-LAW:  $1B \rightarrow 2A \rightarrow 3B \rightarrow 4A \rightarrow 1B$   
 $1A \rightarrow 4B \rightarrow 3A \rightarrow 2B \rightarrow 1A$

Fig. 16.

would be absurd since, as we have demonstrated just now, similar segmentations are found to be attended with various genealogical arrangements and marriage regulations. We only mean to suggest that the need of wider and more solid integration has prompted segmentation as a helpful device in effecting an organization of marriage, and of exchange in general, corresponding to this need. The Australian natives have been trying to solve

this problem in various ways, as we saw, and the results of their attempts vary accordingly.

Our comparison of the charted systems is also instructive with a view to the character of the exchange mechanisms, viz. whether they are symmetric or asymmetric. According to LÉVI-STRAUSS the Aranda system is symmetric since it implies exchange of sisters, and the Murngin system is asymmetric since it does not. However, if we accept his view of the asymmetric relation between the sexes in the exchange system (men exchanging women, either directly or indirectly, and representing local patrilineal groups), we should look into the father-in-law—son-in-law series through the generations when we want to know whether exchange is symmetric or not. Thus, a Murngin man belonging to 1B gives his daughter to a man 4B, who in his turn gives his daughter to a man 3B and so on. We should also look into the brother-in-law series (man—sister's husband) in 2 successive generations. Thus when a Murngin man is 1B his sister's husband is 4A and the latter's sister's husband is 3B and so on. When we compare our 5 types from this point of view the result is as shown by fig. 16. We find that exchange of women is:

In the Kariera system: symmetric in the same generation as well as from generation to generation;

In the Aranda system: symmetric in the same generation; asymmetric from generation to generation, but in opposite directions in the implicit matrilineal moieties;

In the Mara system: asymmetric in the same generation, but in opposite directions in two successive generations; symmetric from generation to generation;

In the Murngin system: asymmetric in the same generation as well as from generation to generation and always in the same direction;

In the Karadjeri system: as in the Murngin system, but with two exchange cycles in each generation.

According to LÉVI-STRAUSS patrilateral c.c. marriage represents the most inferior type of exchange because it entails the interrupting of the exchange cycle after each generation, but has the advantage of short-term credit (see above, p. 28-29). From this point of view the Aranda system would seem to be even more "total" than the Murngin system since it combines direct (symmetric) exchange in the same generation with two "long cycles" in opposite directions from generation to generation. In other respects, too, the Aranda organization appears to be better integrated than any of the others. There are practically none of the usual discrepancies between kinship nomenclature, marriage rules, and subsection segmentation<sup>13</sup>. The Aranda "main

<sup>13</sup> Cp. RADCLIFFE-BROWN, Oceania, I, p. 322-324.

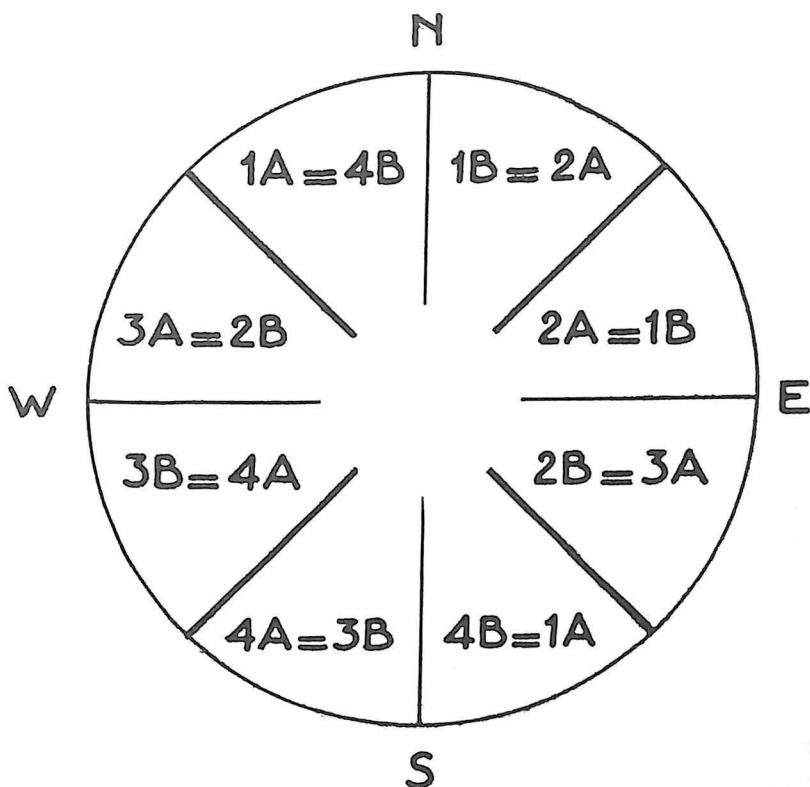


Fig. 17 (see B. SPENGER and F. J. GILLEN, *The Arunta*, II, fig. 148 (p. 501).

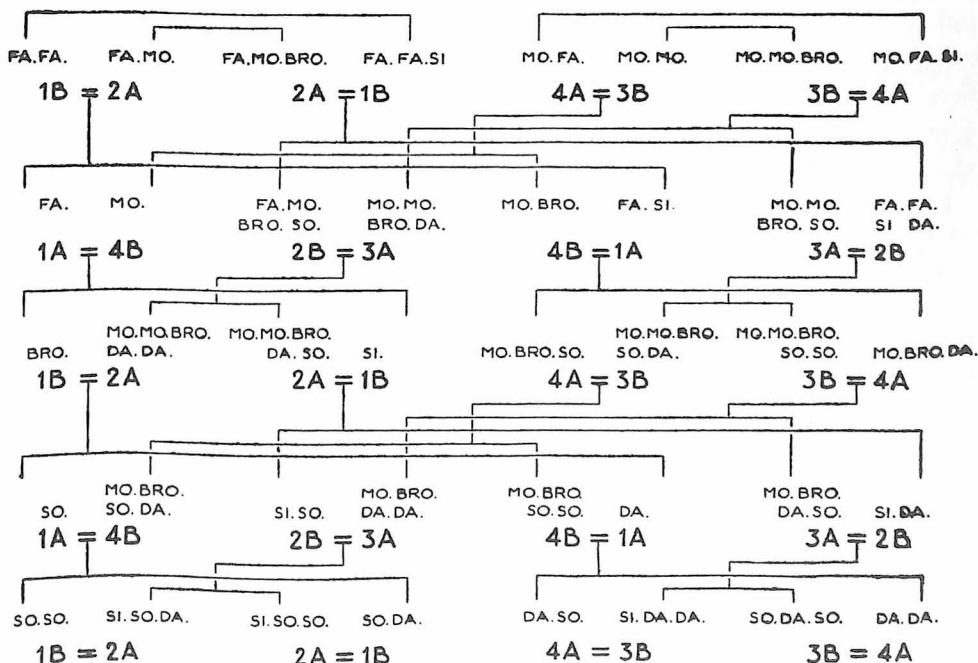


Fig. 18 (cp. RADCLIFFE-BROWN, Oceania, I, chart p. 50).

camp" as briefly described by SPENCER and GILLEN<sup>14</sup>, is a model of symbolic structure brought to logical perfection. It is divided into 4 main parts each of which is occupied by one local group in the narrower sense of the word, semi-moiety 1 being in the North, 3 in the West and so on (see fig. 17 and cp. fig. 18). Each of these 4 local groups has 2 camping-grounds. In each of the main divisions is a men's house on the outside and a women's house on the inside. An individual wishing to visit a men's or a women's house in another division must walk in a fixed direction, men on the outside and women on the inside of the circle. The rules which determine the direction are for each nuclear family as follows: the members who must walk in opposite directions are: husband-wife, father-son, mother-daughter, brother-sister, whereas father-daughter and mother-son walk in the same direction. These rules would seem to be based on two structural principles: the identification of alternate generations in the male line and the opposition between connubial groups. The former may explain that father and son have to walk in opposite directions, whereas the latter may involve the same for father and mother. The consequence would be that son and daughter walk in the same direction with mother and father respectively. Further, there are taboo relations between the men of definite subsections, i.e. they are not allowed to visit each other's camping-grounds. Likewise, the women of certain subsections have to avoid the camping-grounds of the women of certain other subsections. The taboos for the men may be summarized as follows. Taboo are the camping-grounds of: 1. brothers-in-law (for all subsections: 1A↔4B, 2A↔1B, 3A↔2B, 4A↔3B); 2. mo. bro. (for all subsections); 3. mo. mo. bro. (mutually for the subsections 1A↔3A and 2B↔4B); 4. mo. bro. so. (mutually for the subsections 2A↔3B and 1B↔4A). At first sight it seems strange that for group 3 the mo. bro. taboo goes together with the mo. mo. bro. taboo whereas for group 4 it goes together with the mo. bro. so. taboo. However, this discrepancy, too, may perhaps be explained from the structural oppositions father-son and husband-wife. Group 3 and group 4 are successive generations of men and a man's mo. mo. bro. and his mo. bro. so. belong to intermarrying subsections. The rule might be that father and son must not have symmetric taboo relations or taboo relations with the same semi-moiety and that a man must not have taboo relations with two intermarrying subsections (cp. fig. 19).

We have mentioned these few features of the Aranda system only to illustrate its perfect consistency and efficiency. In studying it one cannot escape the conclusion that it must be the result of a long process of conscious

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<sup>14</sup> B. SPENCER and F. J. GILLEN, *The Arunta* (1927), Vol. II, p. 501 ff.

elaboration in the course of which all possibilities of arrangement and their implications have been thoroughly thought out.

Our comparison of the Aranda and Murngin systems has led us to the conclusion that there is no fundamental difference of structure between them—as LÉVI-STRAUSS has it—but only a difference of degree of consistency in solving the problems ensuing from the attempt at improving the underlying 4 section system (Kariera type) by means of further segmentation. Another attempt is represented by systems based on patrilateral c.c. marriage. We fully agree with LÉVI-STRAUSS that it is the worst solution, because it does not really effect a "total" exchange system, as both other systems do.

Before leaving Australia it may be useful to discuss some interesting features of the Murngin system to which a good deal of attention has been given by LÉVI-STRAUSS himself as well as by other writers (the relevant

	MO. BRO.	MO. MO. BRO.	MO. BRO. SO.
		(si. da. so.)	(da. so.)
FATHER 1A:	2A	3A	2B
SON 1B:	4B	3B	4A
TABOO FOR 1A : 2A AND 3A		CONNUBIAL: 3A-2B	
TABOO FOR 1B : 4B AND 4A		CONNUBIAL: 3B-4A	

Fig. 19 (cp. fig. 18).

literature is mentioned by LÉVI-STRAUSS, p. 233 ff.; see also RADCLIFFE-BROWN, *American Anthropologist*, 53, p. 44 ff.).

Firstly, there is the fact that there are more kinship terms than the system would seem to require at first sight (cp. chart A). This phenomenon has given rise to discussions about the number of "lines of descent" in connection with the apparently superfluous terms. Secondly, we see that a number of terms obviously are derivatives of other terms, thus: *dumungur* from *due*; *marikmo* from *mari*; *natchiwalker* from *nati*; *momelker* from *momo*, and that in some cases the same term is applied to people belonging to different subsections, thus: *waku* (in subsections *Ngarit* and *Bulain*), *arndi* (likewise in subsections *Ngarit* and *Bulain*). In all these cases the 2 subsections concerned represent 2 complementary patrilineal semi-moieties.

As regards the first-named phenomenon it seems worth noting that the Murngin exchange system requires or at least accounts for a kinship terminology embracing 5 generations and 6 sibling groups in each generation. As we saw, there are 2 "general" exchange cycles, one in either matrilineal moiety (fig. 17). The practice of exchange is as follows: Ego (2A) acquires

his wife from and gives presents to his *gawel* (mo. bro. 3A), who in his turn acquires his wife from and gives presents to his own *gawel* (Ego's *mari*, mo. mo. bro. 4A). Moreover, Ego directly exchanges presents with his *mari*. The same type of relations connects Ego with his *waku* (si. so. 1A), to whom he gives his daughter and from whom he receives presents, and with his *kutara* (si. da. so. 4A), who obtains his wife from Ego's *waku* in exchange for presents and who directly exchanges presents with Ego (see LLOYD WARNER, "The Murngin type of kinship", *American Anthropologist* 33, p. 174, Chart 2). We see that Ego's exchange cycle requires a terminology extending over 5 generations and—when the ascendants and descendants of the exchanging parties are designated—over 5 sibling groups in each generation. It is evident that the other general exchange cycle (in matrilineal moiety B) will add one more group of siblings in each generation. Thus if we start from *natchiwalker* 1B in the 2nd ascending generation we ultimately arrive at *kaminyer* 1B in the 2nd descending generation and if we start from *momo* 3B we reach *dumungur* 3B. From this point of view the 7th terminological distinction only is superfluous. Of course the sibling groups appearing twice in one generation are identical; thus, in the 2nd ascending generation, *kutara* (4A) = *mari* (4A), *nati* (3B) = *dumungur* (3B), and so on. Consequently, what actually happens is that Ego uses 2 different terms for each of his relatives according to whether he considers them from a matrilateral or from a patrilateral point of view (see also LÉVI-STRAUSS, p. 243-244). Thus his male relatives 4B in the 1st ascending generation are called either *maretker* (when looked upon as mo. bro. wi. bro.) or *gurrong* (when looked upon as fa.si.hu.si.hu.). Our view would seem to be confirmed by the fact that the relatives in Ego's own subsection (2A) are *not* binomial. Obviously these relatives are exclusively looked upon as Ego's "brothers" and "sisters" in his own generation and as an extension of this group (according to the alternating generation principle) in the 2nd ascending and the 2nd descending generations. The additional 7th set of terms may be owing to a consciously felt need of completing the one-generation exchange cycles.

The other phenomenon (the lack of terminological consistency with regard to relatives belonging to complementary patrilineal semi-moieties) may be the result of imperfect adjustment of an earlier 4 section terminology to the later subdivision of either patrilineal moiety into 2 semi-moieties.

We have been discussing certain Australian data at some length, firstly, because we are dealing there with systems some of which at least have been fairly well studied and described, and secondly, because exactly the same problems which we meet there keep turning up again and again in

the other areas which our author has treated, viz. South and East Asia. Unfortunately, no RADCLIFFE-BROWN has been at work in any of the ethnographic areas concerned. Most of them, indeed, could not be treated like the fundamentally homogeneous Australian area because, as our author's preliminary survey demonstrates convincingly, the underlying basic structures have often been obscured by widely divergent trends of development. Notwithstanding these difficulties the author has succeeded in demonstrating that the area, considered as a whole, is characterized by structural contradictions and inconsistencies resulting from the intermingling of symmetric and asymmetric and of matrilateral and patrilateral rules of marriage and arrangement of kin. However, since he takes for granted that asymmetric systems are fundamentally unilineal he is strongly inclined not to consider the possibility of double descent as a structural factor unless it is so evident that it could not be ignored. We strongly suspect for instance that the peculiar Katchin and Gilyak systems (see above, p. 20, 22) with their double exchange cycles, and especially the Gilyak two generation rule, cannot be interpreted without reckoning with double descent. For the time being we agree with the author that no other interpretation seems possible than the easy hypothesis that there are two wholly separate exchange cycles, but the fact that there are 5 groups—supposing that the description is correct—would seem to suggest that we should study all the available data in connection with what is known of other 5 group systems in S.E. Asia, such as the ancient *montja-pat* arrangement in Java<sup>15</sup> and the 5-9 groups system in East Indonesia<sup>16</sup>. It is obvious of course that double descent is doomed as a structural factor as soon as the number of intermarrying groups has become unstable through continuous splitting-up (see above, p. 21), but this should not prevent us from remembering that some intermingling of symmetric and asymmetric features is inherent in consistent bilineal systems of the Aranda type.

On the other hand, the author's exposition concerning the structural relation between matrilateral and patrilateral marriage and the ensuing antagonisms, one of the leading threads running through his argumentation, seems quite convincing to us. His fascinating picture of the emotional sphere in which these rival forces manifest themselves may be unduly romanticized, but this does not alter the fact that his view is fully confirmed by conclusive evidence. It is worth noticing in this connection that even in the basically

<sup>15</sup> F. D. E. VAN OSSENBRUGGEN, *Oorsprong van het Javaansche begrip Montja-pat, in verband met primitieve classificaties*, Verslagen en Mededeelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afd. Letterkunde, 5e reeks, deel 3, (1917).

<sup>16</sup> J. PH. DUYVENDAK, *Het Kakean-genootschap van Seran* (1926).

symmetric system of the Kariera the antagonistic tendencies are active, since we know that, contrarily to the system, there is a decided preference for mo. bro. da. marriage. This can only mean that one wants to ignore the fact that marriage is structurally bilateral because the idea of patrilateral marriage is rejected.

In his discussion of the Chinese material the author once more gives proof of his prepossession against any attempts at interpretation on the basis of double descent. Thus, all facts adduced by GRANET in support of the bilineal character of his hypothetical archaic system are rejected either because they are the result of secondary conscious elaboration or because they might be the outcome of patrilateral marriage. On the other hand, whenever the author meets with asymmetric features he invariably takes it for granted that they are old, as old at least as the symmetric features with which, according to his view, they have been co-existent during a certain period. He is so firmly convinced that asymmetric marriage always presupposes unilineal descent that it never occurs to him that the expression "a returning of bone and flesh" for patrilateral marriage might refer to a rejected reversing of the normal relations between the two lines of descent in marriage and not simply to a reversing of the groups of husband and wife in successive generations. So he feels safe in stating that wherever this distinction of "bone and flesh" occurs, there must exist or have existed an asymmetric system, and he even asserts that the distinction is incompatible with a system of restricted (symmetric) exchange.

We do not want to dispute the author's criticism of GRANET's theory in so far as it is based on facts which contradict the theory or on the lacking of evidence supporting it. It seems to us that the latter part of the criticism is stronger than the former. The author's main argument, the secondary and artificial character of the kinship system, does not strike us as being conclusive. For the more or less artificial character of the system in its classic form does not imply that it cannot reveal the principle upon which its more "archaic" predecessor was based. It does not seem probable that the elaborated kinship system as well as the system of ancestor worship to which it has been adjusted are entirely new creations not structurally connected with any previous system. It seems fairly obvious for instance that the widely distributed phenomenon which may be designated as the "n generation principle", i.e. the rule that the system of exogamy remains valid for  $n$  generations after which the marriage prohibitions must or may be removed or changed, is functionally connected with double descent, and not with a transition from asymmetric to symmetric exchange as LÉVI-STRAUSS appears

to assume<sup>17</sup>. It is certainly a remarkable achievement that GRANET, solely on the base of Chinese data, has been able to reconstruct a system of the Murngin type without knowing of its existence in Australia as LÉVI-STRAUSS himself unreservedly admits<sup>18</sup>. The fact that he obtained this result by means of combining data from different times and various social contexts does not prove that it must be wrong. In our opinion the reconstruction is unacceptable, not on account of contradictory evidence, but because and as long as it is entirely theoretical, i.e. as long as nothing like it has been discovered anywhere in China. For the same reason his hypothetical 4 section system is no more than a theoretical possibility—but the same is true of LÉVI-STRAUSS's hypothetical unilineal dual organization out of which co-existent symmetric and asymmetric systems would have developed later. The only argument which might be advanced for giving preference to the latter hypothesis would seem to be the fact that the clear-cut dual organization is a frequent phenomenon in the world whereas the clear-cut 4 section system is not.

As regards LÉVI-STRAUSS's general conclusions concerning developments in China we do not feel competent to pronounce a definite opinion. Our impression is that a great deal of competent research work will have to be done before we can hope to find our way through the bewildering mass of ethnographic and literary data. In any case, however, we regard the author's exposition and analysis of the facts available to him at present as a highly valuable contribution, indispensable to anyone who is concerned with social systems in the amazing world that is China.

As might be expected, the author's basic views (and predilections) have also strongly influenced his exposition of the situation in India. We wish to express at once our sincere appreciation of his attempts at throwing new light on such intricate problems as the historical and functional relations between castes, clans and the *sapinda* grouping. His suggestion of a close parallelism between the latter and the Chinese *tchao-mou* system as well as between Indian and Chinese systems in general should be a valuable methodological hint for investigators in this field. However, he is distinctly biased again by his fixed idea that bilineal descent is not a structural factor worth reckoning with. Although he has to admit that India "furnishes us with an example of exceptional development of bilinealism" he ventures to adduce the distinction of "bone and flesh", which is also met with here, as a proof

<sup>17</sup> MARCEL GRANET, *Catégories matrimoniales et relations de proximité dans la Chine ancienne* (1939); LÉVI-STRAUSS, p. 383.

<sup>18</sup> LÉVI-STRAUSS, p. 482-483. For a competent critical discussion on the basis of significant Minangkabau data see P. E. DE JOSSELIN DE JONG, *Minangkabau and Negri Sembilan. Socio-political structure in Indonesia* (1951), p. 85-88.

of the existence of a cyclic system, which, to him, implies unilineal descent. As we saw, he accordingly rejects HELD's preliminary supposition that there may have been a bilineal cyclic system. Parenthetically it may be stated that he does not render HELD's ideas quite correctly, as a careful rereading of the relevant passages will no doubt show him. After his admitting the frequency of bilinealism in India and his statement that the Indian data are strongly suggestive of unilineal cyclic systems one wonders whether and how Indian bilinealism will come in at all in his exposition. The author's answer to this question, which we have already mentioned in our exposé, may be repeated here: "Indian bilinealism is not what Held considers it to be, but simply means that either line of descent has a definite function. *In this sense bilinealism is latent in every system of general exchange . . . bone and flesh together are needed for making a human being*" (italics are ours, d. J. d. J.).

This statement is truly amazing. If "either line of descent has a definite function"—what HELD would not dream of denying—bilinealism is certainly not "latent", even if there are no named moieties or sections. In Australia for instance each of the different types of systems may or may not be attended with various kinds of named subdivisions, and the author himself never distinguished between "latent" and "manifest" or "explicit" bilinealism when discussing those systems. It would seem that he has got badly entangled in his efforts to bring his bias against bilinealism into accord with contradictory facts.

However, we cannot leave it at that. There is more in the statement than meets the eye, viz. a "latent" sense, hiding itself behind "manifest" nonsense. In order to unravel this knot we have to go back to the author's fundamental view of exogamy as implied by the prohibition of incest. To his mind the prohibition itself is nothing but the negative implication of the positive demand, ensuing from the principle of reciprocity, to give away one's women in exchange for somebody else's women. Consequently he cannot agree with any interpretation of social systems which emphasizes the negative implications and minimizes or ignores the positive ones. This is done for instance by LAWRENCE and MURDOCK when they interpret the Australian sections and subsections as the automatic results of double descent<sup>19</sup>. HELD, too, is mainly concerned with exogamy based on descent, not with exogamy based on rules of exchange. Since, in the author's train of thought, descent alone never determines marriage rules, he concludes that HELD's view of its nature must be wrong. His own conception of the secondary character of descent groups with regard to rules of exchange

<sup>19</sup> W. E. LAWRENCE and G. P. MURDOCK, *Murngin social organization*, American Anthropologist, Vol. 51 (1949), p. 58 ff.

also explains his rejecting the possibility of cycling exchange going together with double descent except as the outcome of secondary developments due to outside influence. As the recognition of descent groups is really the result of systematization of a system of exchange groups, it will not come into being unless or in so far as the exchange system gives rise to it. Thus in systems of restricted exchange double descent groups (sections and subsections) systematize the system of exchange groups produced by segmentation for the purpose of making the exchange system all-embracing. But in systems which are already all-embracing, because they are cycling, no other systematization is required than the recognition of unilineal descent groups. Consequently, what the author really wants to say with his statement may be formulated as follows: The fact that either line of descent has a definite function does not imply true bilinealism, i.e. a system of named or unnamed sections or subsections. The distinction of "bone and flesh" does not refer to the two lines of descent, but to the fact that every individual has a father and a mother. Reformulated thus the statement, although still unacceptable in our opinion, cannot be qualified as being nonsense.

We need not expound our arguments against it. They will have become quite clear in our critical comments. There are two points, however, which we want to insist upon, viz. firstly the fact, generally admitted now, as far as we know, that everywhere some functional difference between the two lines of descent manifests itself in definite social and economic rules or norms; and secondly the fact that any system of a stable number of unilineal groups intermarrying according to fixed rules is latently bilineal. When there are e.g.  $n$  patrilineal clans with positive rules of marriage there are also  $n$  latent matrilineal groups intersecting the former. This has already been clearly demonstrated in 1935 by VAN WOUDEN in his book on types of social structure in East Indonesia<sup>20</sup>. These two facts together suffice to explain a phenomenon which seems perplexing at first sight, viz. the whimsical distribution of matriliney and patriliney in one culture area and among neighbouring tribes.

Conformably to the author's conception of Indian bilinealism, conformably also to his assumption that, generally speaking, asymmetric systems are as old at least as symmetric ones, he does not hold the two asymmetric marriage types, co-existent in India, to be derivable from the bilateral type. The only argument, however, which he expressly advances, viz. the unequal frequency of the two asymmetric types (see above, p. 28) seems rather far-fetched. The advantages of matrilateral marriage are so

<sup>20</sup> F. A. E. VAN WOUDEN, *Sociale structuurtypen in de Groote Oost* (1935), p. 95-99.

obvious—as the author himself has demonstrated at length—that its greater frequency would seem to be a matter of course. The essential structural difference between matrilateral and patrilateral marriage is also evident from the latter's "oblique" character—in India at least—as the author has lucidly set forth. We are not prepared to assert that his view is conclusively confuted by facts. For the time being, however, it seems more likely to us that his striking characterization of the two formulas as "the two poles of the simple formula of reciprocity" is fully compatible with our view that the two types represent widely divergent or even contrasting offshoots from a previous system, implicitly or explicitly bilineal, with restricted exchange.

The author's structural characterization in terms of oppositions (see above, p. 29) is obscured by some measure of inconsistency due to terminological confusion. In the first opposition, which obviously refers to type of marriage apart from descent, "bilateral" means "symmetric". In the second opposition, however, which really refers to two separate phenomena (the difference between patrilateral and matrilateral marriage and the difference between systems with and systems without alternating generations) "bilateral" means "bilineal", for alternating generations are based either on patrilateral marriage or on double descent, but not on symmetric marriage in general. In the third opposition, referring to the difference between all-embracing and non-all-embracing, "bilateral" likewise means "bilineal", for it is double descent again which makes some symmetric systems all-embracing. The term "lateral" in "patrilateral" and "matrilateral", on the other hand, does not mean "lineal" in any of the four oppositions. It must have been the spectre of bilinealism again which prompted the author to taboo the term "lineal" or "linear", and to replace it by "lateral" as it also induced him to use the term "class" for intermarrying groups while reserving the term "clan" for merely exogamous unilineal groups and avoiding the term "section" as much as possible.

There is still another comment we would like to make on the oppositions. As we pointed out (see above, p. 49) there is no wide gulf between systems of the Aranda type and systems with matrilateral marriage with regard to the exchange mechanism since the "longest cycle" of the latter is not lacking—from generation to generation at least—in the former. Therefore it seems to us that there is no reason to distinguish between the oppositions 3 and 4 from this point of view. If we want to maintain the opposition matrilateral < patrilateral we should base it on the opposition: unidirectional continuous cycle < bidirectional interrupted cycle.

If our comments are acceptable the formulation of the 4 oppositions would be: 1. bilateral < matrilateral and patrilateral (symmetric < asym-

metric); 2. bilineal and patrilateral < matrilateral (alternating generations < non-alternating generations); 3. bilineal and matrilateral < patrilateral (all-embracing < non-all-embracing); 4. matrilateral < patrilateral (unidirectional continuous exchange cycle < bidirectional interrupted exchange cycle).

One of the crucial points in LÉVI-STRAUSS's theory, which he repeatedly insists upon in the course of his argumentation and which is stressed once more in his final summary, is his view that exchange does not draw its significance from the nature of the goods exchanged but from the integrating effect of the act as such. He even goes so far as to intimate that women lose their identity so to speak in being exchanged, although he admits that this neutralization does not involve their becoming immune to the prohibition of family incest.

It would seem to us that this view needs some correction and amplification. In the first place it strikes us that the adduced cases of women being handled like neutralized goods concern ceremonial situations of a special kind. We do not believe that the author would be able to advance evidence of the same purport concerning exchange of women in general. Even in the *pirauru* alliance—if we are not mistaken—the attitude towards women does not support the view that the negative implications of exogamy are lost in the act of exchange. The very fact indeed that the prohibition of family incest remains valid in all such special exchange situations would seem to prove that the author stretches the evidence when he equates women with intrinsically neutral commodities.

In the second place, whether or not our first reservation is to the point, the author's qualification is at any rate incomplete. In stressing the irrelevancy of the intrinsic nature of exchanged goods he ignores an important category of exchange to which it is sure that his characterization does not apply, viz. the one which is based upon the distinction of "male" and "female" goods, conceived as representing the two lines of descent, the patrilineal and matrilineal principles<sup>21</sup>. In Indonesia, where this category has been well studied, the two kinds of goods are symbolized in the transaction of matrilateral marriage by definite objects belonging to the respective spheres of male and female activity. Thus the Toba-Batak in Sumatra use knife (*piso*) and woven fabric (*ulos*) for this purpose, and these terms

<sup>21</sup> See, besides VAN WOUDEN, op. cit., especially W. H. RASSERS, *On the Javanese kris*, Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde van Nederlandsch Indië, Deel 99 (1940), p. 501 ff., and P. E. DE JOSSELIN DE JONG, *Minangkabau and Negri Sembilan. Socio-political structure in Indonesia* (1951).

are also applied, as collective designations, to the male and the female goods in general which keep flowing to and fro between the two intermarrying groups, circulating consequently in opposite directions through the whole community <sup>22</sup>. It seems indisputable to us that in this category of "échange général" (all-embracing exchange) the intrinsic nature of the exchanged values is not by any means irrelevant. The functional value of the exchange in such cases results quite as much from the nature of the goods as from the act itself and the positions of the exchange partners in the whole system. It would seem therefore that we have to distinguish between two types of exchange which are probably co-existent in all communities with "elementary structures of exchange", viz. one in which the effect is felt to reside exclusively in the act itself and one in which it is conceived as resulting from specific goods being exchange by definite parties.

Now to which of these two types of exchange goods do women belong? Judging by the author's striking comparison of women with words to the effect that whereas words have become mere "signs", women have remained "values" as well as "signs", we would expect him to admit that this significant difference holds good also with regard to the relation between women and "neutral" goods in exchange and that women consequently belong to the second category. However, we may complete the comparison by pointing out that words, too, may be classed in either category according to whether they are used as mere copulative signs (as in talking for the sake of talking, "phatic communion", as MALINOWSKI was "tempted to call it") or as true "referential" symbols (as in purposeful exchange of thoughts) <sup>23</sup>.

Since the author does not circumstantially expound his views about the close relationship between anthropology and linguistics and the possibilities opened by the structural method in question we shall not go into this fascinating subject either. His leading methodological principles indeed will have become manifest to any anthropologist who is not wholly unacquainted with structural linguistics <sup>24</sup>. We would only like to point out that his structural view is strongly supported by the fact that many communities

<sup>22</sup> J. C. VERGOUWEN, *Het rechtsleven der Toba-Bataks* (1933); F. D. E. VAN OSSENBRUGGEN, *Het oeconomisch-magisch element in Tobasche verwantschapsverhoudingen*, Mededeelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afd. Letterkunde, Deel 80, Serie B, No. 3 (1935).

<sup>23</sup> C. K. OGDEN and I. A. RICHARDS, *The meaning of meaning. A study of the influence of language upon thought and the science of symbolism* (8th ed. 1948), *passim*; B. MALINOWSKI, *ibid.*, Supplement I, p. 296 ff., esp. p. 315.

<sup>24</sup> Cp. the author's striking article *L'analyse structurale en linguistique et en anthropologie*, *Word*, Vol. I, No. 2 (1945).

themselves appear to conceive their organizations of kinship and marriage as structural wholes. For this would seem to suggest that *structural consciousness* should be regarded as a dynamic factor in cultural patterning by the side of unconscious collective drives and motives. Viewed in this light, the author's arranging the various types of marriage in a coherent set of oppositions might have a deeper meaning than he himself would be prepared to ascribe to it at present. In attempting to apply the structural method as it is being applied in phonology we shall have to proceed very cautiously lest we lose ourselves in abstruse theoretical constructions unsupported by factual evidence. It is our opinion, however, that the specific risks which the method undoubtedly entails should not deter us from trying it.

In writing down the foregoing comments we have keenly felt that any attempt at doing full justice to a work like this in an essay of limited length is sure to fall sadly short of the mark. For one thing, the richness of contents compels the critic to make a selection which, for all his trying to bring out the main points in full relief, will always remain more or less arbitrary. For another, the critic's disagreeing with the author on some fairly important points in the latter's argumentation may easily give a wrong impression of the former's evaluation of the work as a whole since readers who themselves have not studied a book are apt to attach more value to criticism than to praise which may be—and often is—added for the sake of courtesy.

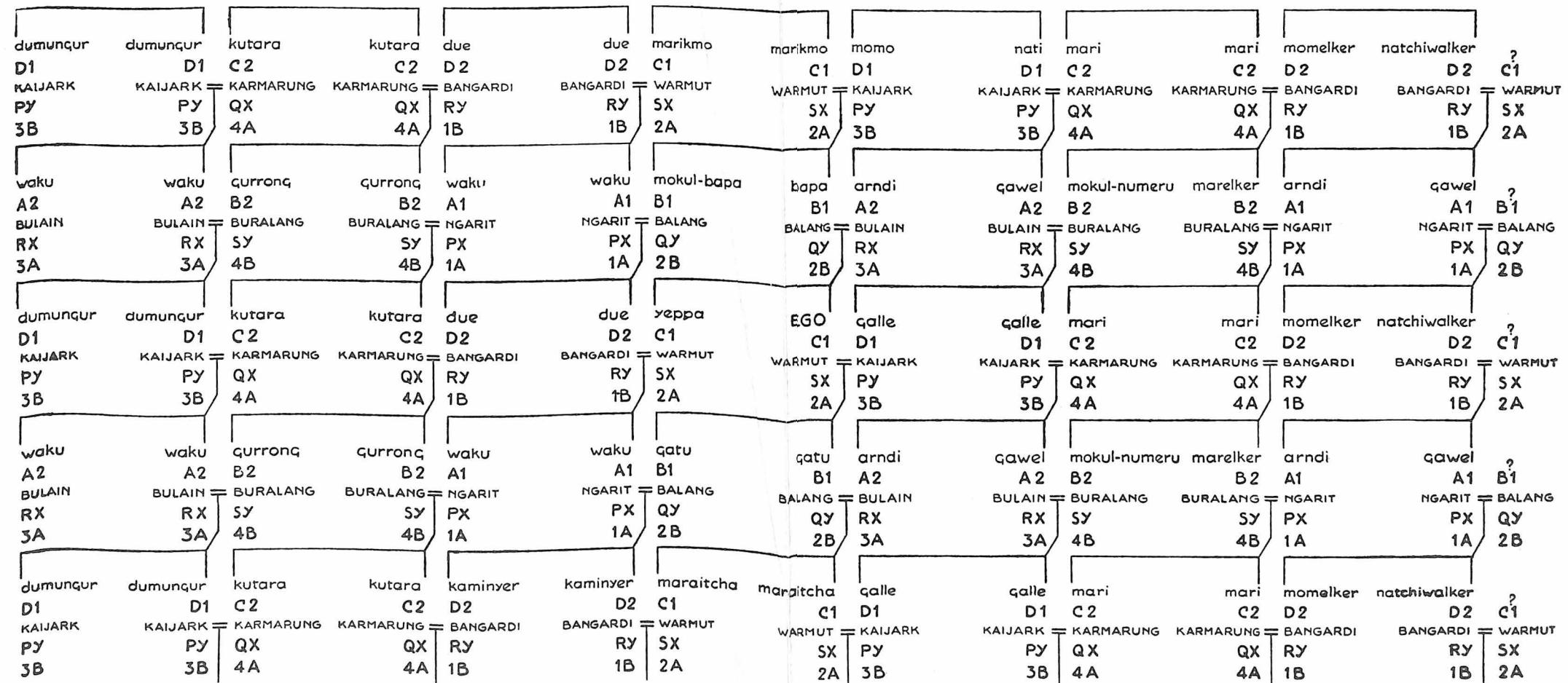
Therefore we are set on stating expressly that we ourselves do not hold our divergent interpretation of certain data to impair the value of the author's theory as such, which in our opinion is to be rated as one of the most important contributions to anthropological theory of the present century. Even if field research in the near future—the urgency of which cannot be too strongly insisted upon—would bring to light a number of interpretative errors owing to the deficiency of ethnographic descriptions, this would not materially affect our evaluation.

We sincerely hope that the author will not let himself be discouraged by a lack of positive reactions to his work so far, and that we shall not have to wait too long for his planned book on "Structures complexes", which many of us, we are sure, are eagerly looking forward to.

If our comments should prove to be of any help to him in further elaborating and perfecting his theory our essay would have fully answered the purpose for which it was written.



CHART A



This chart contains, from top to bottom, in each of 5 generations: 1. the kinship terms used by Ego (8th column, 3rd generation); 2. the subsection symbols used by LÉVI-STRAUSS, fig. 23, p. 226; 3. the subsection names; 4. the subsection symbols used by LÉVI-STRAUSS in his ultimate reconstruction (p. 239-241); 5. our subsection symbols, the 2 matrilineal moieties being indicated by A and B, the 4 patrilineal semi-moieties by 1, 2, 3, 4 (the patrilineal moieties being 1 + 3 and 2 + 4).