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FLUIDS OF IDENTITY: MILK AND BLOOD IN KOLAM KINSHIP

SANTHY BALACHANDRAN

Introduction

In this article, I attempt to evolve a comprehensive understanding of the procreative ideology of the Kolams, a Dravidian-speaking tribe, by means of a comparison with Pushpesh Kumar's article entitled 'Gender and Procreative Ideologies among the Kolams of Maharashtra' (2006). Kumar's work was with the Kolams of Nanded District, Kinwat Tehsil, on the south-eastern border of Maharashtra bordering northern Andhra Pradesh. As he mentions in his paper, Kinwat was part of Adilabad District, Andhra Pradesh, before the State Re-organisation Act of 1956, and the cultural homogeneity of the Kolams of Kinwat and Adilabad continues to be preserved through kinship and ritual ties, the new politico-administrative boundary notwithstanding (Kumar 2006: 284). It is in the light of this statement that the conclusions arrived at by Kumar will be compared and contrasted with the results of my own fieldwork, conducted among the Kolams of Adilabad in December 2007.

Procreative ideologies are essentially people's notions of how conception occurs, with particular reference to the male and female contributions to the foetus. Every culture has its own unique way of conceptualizing the biological process of reproduction. As Malinowski noted years ago,

However primitive the community, the facts of conception, pregnancy and child-birth are not left to Nature alone, but they are reinterpreted by cultural tradition: in every community we have a theory as to the nature and causes of conception.... (1930: 23)

It is these theories of conception that are today termed procreative ideologies. The use of the word 'ideology' is indicative of the manner in which they serve as principles to justify, maintain and propagate forms of social organization. The works of many scholars in this area (Fruzzetti and Östör 1984, Dube 1986, Busby 2000, etc.) have shown how procreative ideologies influence and are in turn influenced by gender concepts, descent rules, cosmology and so on. Although theories of procreation are seldom as well articulated as anthropologists make them out to be, they do have ramifications for tangible spheres of life, as seen through their invocation in times of crisis as rules of thumb for decision-making.

Kolam social organization

The Kolams are a Dravidian-speaking tribe inhabiting the hilly regions of southern

Maharashtra and northern Andhra Pradesh in India. Once famed for their skill with bamboo, they have taken to cotton and wheat cultivation over the last fifty years. Collection of forest products, fishing and hunting are supplementary subsistence activities. The Kolams speak Hindi, Telugu and Marathi in addition to Kolami, their native tongue. A patrilineal community with clan organization, the Kolam consist of numerous clans (*paadi/kuum*) organized into four larger groupings (*kulam*) which may be termed phratries, as Kumar does, following Führer-Haimendorf's account of the neighbouring Gonds (1948). The phratries are distinguished from each other by the number of gods each worships: *edu deyyale kulam*, clans with seven gods; *aaru deyyale kulam*, clans with six gods; *aidu deyyale kulam*, clans with five gods; and *naalu deyyale kulam*, clans with four gods. Although the *kulam* with the greatest number of gods is considered ritually superior, this does not spill over to the other domains such as politics or economics. All Kolams worship Bheemaiyyak,¹ and the unity of all Kolams is a recurring motif in conversations. Village chieftainship, however, rests with the group that first settled the village and is hereditary, being passed down the male line.

Post-marital residence is usually virilocal, although it is not uncommon for men to stay with their in-laws and tend their land in a form of bride service known as *iltam*. Members of clans belonging to the same *kulam* (or *dev* according to Kumar) are prohibited from marrying each other. As the Kolam saying goes, *Amme kuumun thaane pelli kalengonth*: 'Except within our own clan, marriage can occur with the other clans'. However, although the word *kuum* is used here, meaning clan, it is the phratry which is actually being referred to. In essence, members of each phratry or *kulam* may marry individuals belonging to clans from the other three *kulams*. This is the marriage rule at the simplest level: the Kolams also practice bilateral cross cousin marriage, with the mother's brother's daughter being the preferred spouse for a male ego, and it is here that other, more sophisticated rules restricting marriage choices come into play. These rules are best understood in the light of the Kolam's procreative ideology.

Nettur and paal: descent, alliance and procreative ideology

Although they acknowledge that sexual intercourse is necessary for conception, to the Kolams the male's contribution to identity is greater than that of the female. Descent is patrilineal, and it is believed that the blood (*nettur*) of a child comes from the father. This is how Kolams rationalize the membership of progeny in the father's clan. A male Kolam's clan membership is ascribed at birth, and property is inherited down the male line. A woman's clan membership, however, shifts to that of the husband's clan on marriage. The mother in Kolam

1. Kolams trace their origin to Bheem, the second of the Pandava brothers featured in the Mahabharata, through his son Ghatotkacha, born of his union with the forest demoness Hidimbi.

society is seen as more of a nurturer than a genitor. Her main contribution to the child is in the form of the milk (*paal*) she provides. As will become clear later, the mother's contribution to the child, although seemingly less substantial, has important consequences, particularly at marriage negotiations.

In his 2006 article, Kumar takes Dube's (1986) and Ganesh's (2001) works on seed-earth images in agrarian societies as reference points. His objective is two-fold: to determine whether the fact that the Kolams are new to agriculture has restricted the impact of their procreative ideology on access to symbolic and material resources; and to consider the extent to which Kolam conception beliefs control and regulate the bodies and sexuality of women. Although he gives a nuanced account of the 'maleness' of Kolami blood, it is my contention that this focus on the patrilineality of Kolam procreative ideology leads Kumar to lose sight of some of the ways in which the mother's rights in relation to her child are asserted in Kolam society. Even though he says that the emphasis on *nettur* does not obliterate the significance of *paal* (milk), and he does make intermittent references to the role of the matrikin, the indigenous rationale for this is not sufficiently explored, with the result that Kolam procreative ideology is seen mostly in terms of its masculine elements.

The principle of the distinction of kin into cross and parallel categories may be clearly understood by following the substance concepts of the Kolams. As blood passes from father to children, siblings share the same blood. As only males are capable of transmitting blood, brothers who share the same blood also transmit the same blood, making the children of brothers parallel cousins akin to siblings. The children of sisters are also equated with siblings. Their 'siblingship', however, is determined not through blood but through the milk they have shared: women raised in the same clan transmit the clan milk to their children, and therefore the children of sisters who have been nurtured by the same milk are also siblings. The parallels to the scheme outlined by Busby in her work on the Mukkuvars of Kerala (2000: 83) are striking.

The same logic applies to step-children. Step-children having the same father share blood and are siblings. Step-children having the same mother are siblings because they have shared the same milk. Thus it may be said that, while blood determines group affiliation, both milk and blood are significant in establishing siblinghood and the possibilities for affinal alliance. The key point here is that, even if one of these substances is shared by two individuals, they become siblings and are therefore placed in the category of parallel kin, those with whom a union in terms of marriage would be incestuous and is therefore taboo.

The manner in which illegitimate children are assimilated into a society is often a telling guide to its descent ideology and norms of identity determination. As Kumar notes, whenever such a situation arises, whoever the woman names in front of the village council or *panchant* is recognized as the father (2006: 296). If a Kolam woman has illegitimate children by a non-Kolam, both mother and child are sent out of the village; they are no longer considered Kolams. If the genitor of a child born out of wedlock is identified to be a Kolam man, then the woman is married to him and the child is given his clan name. Norms and practices related to adoption provide another good index of descent organization. Kolams prefer to continue to pray and make offerings to Bheemdev for a child than to take in another's child, especially if the child's original clan is unknown. Adoption into a clan is not possible, as membership is completely ascribed at birth. Indeed, there are even reservations against breastfeeding the child of another clan. The importance of milk as a substance is clearly apparent here. An orphaned child is usually looked after by the patrikin, the paternal grandparents and the child's father's brothers being the first in line. The FZ may look after the child if none of the male patrikin is alive. Both Kumar's and my own field data contain numerous instances which show that, in cases of divorce, separation or even the remarriage of the mother, the child is ideally expected to remain with the husband's family. The matrikin may look after the children if the patrikin decline to do so. The crucial point here is that the child's clan membership does not change, regardless of who raised him or her.

When it comes to the reflection of the procreative ideology in the institution of marriage, it may be noted that all the rules applicable in establishing siblinghood are invoked to determine who is and is not a prospective spouse. To reiterate a point made earlier, both blood and milk are significant in determining siblinghood and hence alliance possibilities. An unambiguous indicator of this is the question '*ere paalundi?*', meaning 'Whose milk has he/she drunk?', which both the groom's and bride's sides ask each other by convention during the marriage negotiations. The answer signifies the natal clan of the mothers of the groom and the bride, for example, *atramle paalundan*, 'Has drunk the milk of Atram', or more generically, *aaru deyyale pillane paalundan*, indicating 'Has drunk the milk of a child of the six god *kulam*', here a reference to the mother's natal clan.

While Kumar does mention this custom, he devotes more attention to the public announcement of the bloodline as part of the marriage proceedings, seeing in the query '*ere paalundi?*' an affirmation of the importance of affines in Kolami kinship (2006: 294). He thus neglects the more direct reference this question contains to the importance of the female principle in Kolam procreative ideology. Kumar mentions *paal* with reference to the positive

rule that both men and women may marry persons belonging to their mother's natal clan, and he takes this as a mark of the consonance of Kolam kinship with the Dravidian kinship principle of re-establishing previous marriage ties. My data indicate that a proscriptive rule is also associated with *paal*, one that points to the more active role of the female substance in instituting alliances. The question and its answer essentially establish that the prospective spouses do not have mothers who were raised in the same natal clan (i.e. patriclan), for then the mothers would be classificatory siblings, and so too would their children. The marriage would thus be an irregular union. To generalize, a Kolam man can marry a woman from any other clan than his own so long as his mother and his prospective spouse's mother do not share their natal clan. As my informants put it, '*okka palundaar jod kalayer*', 'Those who've drunk the same milk cannot unite'. Thus the reference to milk is clearly more than a token acknowledgement of affines: it is an operational directive that ensures that kinship ties accord with Kolam ideas of substance transmission.

It must be noted here that the milk a person is raised on links him or her not to the natal clan, but to the mother's natal clan. This is because, while blood is transmitted through the father's natal clan, milk goes through the mother's natal-clan. Taking a male ego as the reference point, it may be said that he inherits his father's blood and is raised on the milk of his mother's father's clan, as that is where his mother was raised. The answer to the question '*ere paalundi?*', put during the marriage ceremony, therefore refers to the individual's mother's father's clan. A woman's clan membership shifts during the *nauri* ceremony at the time of the marriage. The bride and the groom pour water over each other, and it is at this point, when the water touches the *pothi* or marriage pendant, that the woman assumes her husband's clan membership. However, her link to her natal clan remains in the form of the milk she will transmit to her offspring. A woman inherits her father's blood, is raised on the milk of her mother's father's clan, assumes the membership of her husband's clan and transmits the milk of her own father's clan to her children. Thus while she has had the milk of her mother's patriclan, what she will transmit is the milk of her own patriclan. In essence, the link between ego and the grandparent's generation is through blood on the father's side and milk on the mother's side. The importance accorded to the affines, who are usually also the matrikin of a male ego, thus has a definite basis in the substance concepts of the community. The veiled bilateral tendency in Dravidian kinship could not be more apparent.

The practice of the remarriage of women affords a glimpse of the flexibility of a woman's clan identity and of the differential importance of blood to each gender. Kolam widows may continue to stay with the husband's family. Even if they go back to their natal

family, they may continue to carry the husband's clan name until remarriage. Widows who do not remarry are buried in their husband's land. However, once the *pothi* or marriage pendant is removed as a result of widowhood or divorce, a woman is technically no longer a member of the husband's clan.² Most importantly, she is free to marry from the same clan again. In other words, the same rules that applied during her first marriage hold good for any subsequent marriage too. The fact that women are never completely assimilated into the husband's clan is thrown into relief once again: if a woman's shift to her husband's clan were to be total and permanent, then a second marriage to someone belonging to the first husband's clan would logically be incestuous and tabooed. However, this is not the case. Therefore it may be said that, although a woman's membership shifts, her link to her natal clan is permanent (see also Tharakan 2007). The existence of terms for levirate (*vanna masa*) or remarriage to the brother of a deceased husband, as well as actual cases of such remarriage, indicate that a woman's clan membership is not a tangible fact linked to her body, but an external consideration associated with her relations with her male kin.

This discussion of the importance of milk as a substance in determining alliance patterns would be incomplete without any reference to the concept of *paal badal*. *Paal badal*, which literally means 'milk exchange', is definitely a validation, if not a Kolam equivalent, of the anthropological construct of delayed exchange. *Paal badal* requires that at least one of the daughters of a female ego be married into her natal clan. This, of course, is embedded in the institution of cross-cousin marriage. If the daughter marries the son of ego's brother, she will naturally be going to ego's natal clan. The idea is to make good the loss of a woman and her nurturing power to her natal group by ensuring that at least one of her daughters is brought back in marriage to that group. The importance of this institution becomes apparent when one considers the repercussions of a rejection of a proposal constituting a *paal badal*. To elaborate, if a family refuses to give their daughter in *paal badal*, then the clan of the boy places a restriction on anyone from that clan marrying the same girl. This prohibition is mandatory for close kin, even extending to members of the same clan living in other villages.³

To summarize, a woman transmits her patriclan's descent milk to her daughter. When

2. According to Kolam custom, when the husband dies, the widow's *pothi* is removed; she will wear it again only when she remarries.

3. In such circumstances, the clan elders make the following declaration to the marriage party:

Ivre pillane paal badol vel thaandamgani amung seeyether.

Neer velthir indi neer aa pillan velner.

Aa pillan nende kutumbantha kotekkathodh,

Marakutumbathar erenna kocchar.

They did not give their girl in *paal badal*, so you are not to take her either.

You came up to here, but do not ask them for her.

None of our clan may take her in marriage.

Let other clans do so.

the daughter marries into her mother's patriclan, she pays them back for the milk she was raised on by nurturing their next generation on her own patriclan's descent milk. This male quality of milk raises interesting questions regarding the 'femaleness' of milk, and whether milk can be considered a purely female substance by virtue of ontogeny. However, this is a question deserving in-depth analysis beyond the scope of this paper. What may be said without controversy is that there is an alternation in the transmission of milk from one generation to the next. *Paal* has without doubt both a synchronic and diachronic role to play in shaping Kolam kinship. The synchronic element comes into play in determining siblinghood, while the diachronic element is at work in ensuring the perpetuation of the institution of cross-cousin marriage by creating a sense of obligation and appealing to the ideal of reciprocity.

Conclusion

There are significant references to the female principle in Kolam theories and images of procreation that warrant further study and revision of our current male-oriented understanding of their concepts of substance. Kumar's observation regarding the maleness of blood in Kolam society is unambiguously true; however, it requires the qualification that its consequences for men and women are of different orders. While in agreement with his conclusion that the maleness of blood does not preclude the rights of Kolam women over their productive and reproductive capacities (2006: 308), I wish to stress that the manner in which the transmission of milk actively fashions and acknowledges these rights deserves more attention. Indeed, an analysis in the ethnosociological tradition of these bodily fluids and their role in constituting and concretizing Kolam identity offers much promise for a sophisticated understanding of Dravidian kinship as a whole.

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The Hill Madia of central India: early human kinship?¹

Ruth Manimekalai Vaz

Introduction

Allen has been developing a tetradic model of early human kinship over the course of twenty five years now (1986, 1989, 2000, 2011), the main features proposed for it being alternate generation merging and bilateral cross-cousin marriage. Dziebel disagreed with this model because he argued that superreciprocal terminologies and the bifurcate collateral pattern are the most archaic features of human kinship and that these are always associated with unilateral alliance rules and never found in a society with bilateral cross-cousin marriage (Dziebel 2007: 249). Others like Barnard (2011) have questioned the historical priority of tetradic structures. This paper has two aims: a) to present the FZD rule as a viable ethnographic fact and as the sole rationale for the kinship system of a central Indian tribe; b) to present a structural paradigm for the social organization of this people. The author hopes that this ethnographic case study will offer a new perspective on debates on early human kinship, or at least produce new questions.

Hill Madia Kinship

The Hill Madia are an endogamous ethnic group, conventionally called a tribe, belonging linguistically to the Central Dravidian group of central India. They are alternatively known in the literature as the Hill Maria, the Madia or Maria Gond or (from the range of hills from which they claim to originate) the Abujhmaria.² I present the Hill Madia kinship terminology in the table below and use it as the starting point for the discussion; I have included both reference and address terminologies and have followed the kinship notations listed by Parkin (1997: 9). I have provided the foci and sometimes the sub-foci for each kin type, following the example of

¹ I would like to thank N.J. Allen for his helpful comments on an early draft of this paper, Robert Parkin for help in refining my English and Sherwood Lingenfelter, my research advisor, for encouraging me to publish my findings.

² These are not terms that the Madia normally use for themselves. They prefer to call themselves the *Gaitha* or *Koithor*.

Scheffler and Lounsbury (1971). As the table shows, although all of the Madia kin types have address terms, not all of them have reference terms. The relatives in G +2 are the only grand-kin who have reference terms. All address terms have been given in quotation marks to distinguish them from the reference terms, even when they are formally identical to the latter.

The kin terms presented here were collected from the Bhamragad and Etapalli regions of Maharashtra State in 2008. Grigson had collected terms from the Orchha region in the Abujhmar Hills, adjacent to the Bhamragad region, in the present-day state of Chhattisgarh. His list provides thirty-four Hill Madia reference terms, though terms for HeB, EeZ and yZHws are missing (Grigson 1938: 308-9), and he questionably applies the term for eBW to FeBD, and the term for yB to yZws. While Grigson's list does show the presence of the cross dimension in the terms for grandkin, which is a uniquely Madia feature, it does so only for the terms used by male speakers for their G-2 relatives, whereas the female speakers use the identical term *wandõ* for SS, SD, DS and DD. This appears dubious since my own data show that female speakers too distinguish between parallel and cross grandkin. The only major difference between his list and mine is that I have included the address terms, which he did not collect. Besides, my system of transcription differs from his, having been devised in consultation with my linguist husband, Dr Chris Vaz (cf. Vaz 2005).

HILL MADIA KIN TERMINOLOGY

<i>jīva</i> (parallel)		<i>putul</i> (cross)		G
<i>male</i>	<i>female</i>	<i>male</i>	<i>female</i>	
FFF, MMF ‘ <i>pēpi</i> ’ EMFF, EFMF ‘ <i>pēpi</i> ’	FMM, MFM ‘ <i>ātho</i> ’ EFFM, EMMM ‘ <i>ātho</i> ’	FMF, MFF ‘ <i>māma</i> ’ EFFF,EMMF: ‘ <i>māma</i> ’	FFM, MMM ‘ <i>pēri</i> ’ EMFM, EFMM: ‘ <i>pēri</i> ’	+3
<i>thādho</i> (FF, EMF): ‘ <i>dhādha</i> ’	<i>kāko</i> (MM, EFM): ‘ <i>kāko/aka</i> ’	<i>ako</i> (MF, EFF) ‘ <i>ako</i> ’	<i>bāpi</i> (FM, EMM): ‘ <i>bāpi/sango</i> ’	+2
<i>thape</i> (F) ‘ <i>bāba</i> ’ <i>pēpi</i> (FeB) ‘ <i>pēpi</i> ’ <i>kākal</i> (FyB) ‘ <i>kāka</i> ’	<i>ātho</i> (FZ) ‘ <i>ātho</i> ’	<i>māmal</i> (MB) ‘ <i>māma</i> ’	<i>thalox</i> (M): ‘ <i>ava/yaya</i> ’ <i>pēri</i> (MeZ) ‘ <i>pēri</i> ’ <i>kūchi</i> (MyZ) ‘ <i>kūchi</i> ’	+1
EGO <i>dhādhal</i> (eB) ‘ <i>dhādha</i> ’ <i>thamox</i> (yB) ‘ <i>thamo</i> ’ <i>mūryal</i> (HeB) ‘ <i>dhādha</i> ’ <i>aglal</i> (WZHe) ‘ <i>dhādha</i> ’ <i>aglal</i> (WZHy) ‘ <i>thamo</i> ’	EGO <i>akal</i> (eZ) ‘ <i>aka</i> ’ <i>ēlaṛ</i> (yZ) ‘ <i>ēlo</i> ’ <i>pōraṛ</i> (HeZ, WeZ) ‘ <i>aka</i> ’ <i>exayaṛ</i> (HBWe) ‘ <i>aka</i> ’ <i>exayaṛ</i> (HBWy) ‘ <i>ēlo</i> ’	<i>maryox</i> (FZS/MBS): ‘ <i>sangi</i> ’	<i>mandari</i> (FZD/MBD) ‘ <i>sango</i> ’	0
<i>max</i> (S/BSms): ‘ <i>bāba/pēpi/kāka/pēdu</i> ³ ’ <i>anemax</i> (BSws): ‘ <i>bāba/kāka/pēdu</i> ’	<i>mayar</i> (D/BDms): ‘ <i>ava/pēpi/ātho</i> ’ <i>anemayar</i> (BDws): ‘ <i>ātho</i> ’	<i>max</i> (S/ZSws): ‘ <i>bāba</i> ⁴ / <i>māma</i> ’ <i>anemax</i> (ZSms): ‘ <i>māma</i> ’	<i>mayar</i> (D/ZDws): ‘ <i>ava/pēri/kūchi/pēdi</i> ’ <i>anemayar</i> (ZDms): ‘ <i>māma/ava</i> ’	-1
(SSms) ‘ <i>thamo</i> ’ (DSws) ‘ <i>thamo</i> ’	(SDms) ‘ <i>ēlo</i> ’ (DDws) ‘ <i>ēlo</i> ’	DSms ‘ <i>ako/sangi</i> ’ SSws ‘ <i>pēka</i> ⁵ / <i>sangi</i> ’	DDms ‘ <i>sango/ako</i> ’ SDws ‘ <i>sango/bāpi</i> ’	-2
SSSms ‘ <i>pēpi</i> ’ DDSms ‘ <i>pēpi</i> ’ DSSws ‘ <i>kāka</i> ’ SDSws ‘ <i>kāka</i> ’	SSDms ‘ <i>pēpi</i> ’ DDDms ‘ <i>pēpi</i> ’ DSDws ‘ <i>ātho</i> ’ SDDws ‘ <i>ātho</i> ’	SSSws ‘ <i>māma</i> ’ DDSwms ‘ <i>māma</i> ’ DSSms ‘ <i>māma</i> ’ SDSms ‘ <i>māma</i> ’	SSDws ‘ <i>pēri</i> ’ DDDws ‘ <i>pēri</i> ’ DSDms ‘ <i>māma</i> ’ SDDms ‘ <i>māma</i> ’	-3

³ The terms *pēdi* and *pēdu* mean ‘little one’.

⁴ The terms *bāba* and *ava*, when applied to one’s children or any young man or woman, are used as terms of endearment.

⁵ The terms *pēka* and *pila* literally mean ‘boy’ and ‘girl’ respectively, but when these are used by and for affinal relatives, they are proper kin terms.

<i>eṛmi</i> (affinal)		G
<i>male</i>	<i>female</i>	
-	-	+3
-	-	+2
<i>māmal</i> (FZH,WF,HF) ‘ <i>māma</i> ’	<i>ātho</i> (MBW, EM) ‘ <i>ātho</i> ’	+1
<i>bāto</i> (eZH) ‘ <i>bāto</i> ’ <i>kōval</i> (yZHws) ‘ <i>lāmane/pēka</i> ’ <i>eṛmthox</i> (WeB, yZHms) ‘ <i>eṛmthox</i> ’ <i>exundi</i> (EyB) ‘ <i>pēka</i> ’ <i>mujo</i> (H) X ⁶ <i>pāri</i> (CEFms) <i>pāri</i> ’	<i>ange</i> (eBW) ‘ <i>ange</i> ’ <i>koyaṛ</i> (yBWms) ‘ <i>pila</i> ’ <i>kōkaṛ</i> (yBWws, EyZ) ‘ <i>pila</i> ’ <i>muthe</i> (W) X	0
<i>anemax</i> (HZS, WBS) ‘ <i>pēka</i> ’ <i>ane</i> (DH) ‘ <i>ane/lāmane</i> ’	<i>anemayaṛ</i> (HZD,WBD) ‘ <i>pila</i> ’ <i>koyaṛ</i> (SW) ‘ <i>pila</i> ’	-1
-	-	-2
-	-	-3

⁶ The kintypes H and W do not have address terms but only reference terms

Some observations about the Madia kinship terminology

(1) *The vocative nature of the Madia terminology.* Understanding the role of the address terminology as the indigenous way of classifying kin was the first significant breakthrough in my analysis of Madia kinship. While it is acceptable to address very young people by their first names, it is improper to do so with classificatory relatives who are closer in age. Using the personal names of older relatives and, generally, of married people is taboo unless the relative is one's own child or grandchild. Affinal relatives do not use each other's names even in reference. When one does not know the appropriate address term, age-appropriate parallel kin terms are safe to use. The Madia reference terms stand for the kin types (i.e. those based on genealogical positions), and the address terms stand for presumably wider social categories. The 37 kin types (with the exception of F, M, H, and W) are grouped together to form a lesser number (about twenty) of social categories. Seeing the rationale for such groupings became the key to understanding the Madia kin classification.

(2) *Three kin classes.* In the above table, the address terms (or social categories) are further grouped together into what are commonly known as kin classes, which in the Madia language are three: *jīva*, *putul*, and *er̥mi*. These terms correspond to the parallel, cross and affinal relatives respectively. Note that a few of the kin types that are generally classified as 'cross' in Dravidian kinship (Trautmann 1981) are classified in the Madia terminology as either parallel or affinal. The reason for the threefold classification is the distinction the Madia make between the cross relatives and affines. MB and FZH are equivalents terminologically but not structurally. The term *mām̐al* has primary and secondary meanings; MB is the focal type of this category and is distinguished in the Madia language as *putul mām̐al* or *nena mām̐al*, where *nena* means 'proper' and *putul* means 'place of origin or birth'. A man's sister's children are his *putuli*, meaning 'born of' or 'born from' their MB, and a man's sister's children refer to him as their '*putul mām̐al*'. The same is not true of FZH, who is essentially an affinal relative because he has taken ego's FZ as a wife. The distinction between MB and FZH is clearly shown in the Madia reciprocal terms used by each of them to address ego. Though ego addresses both MB and FZH as '*mām̐a*', in the case of the MB the term is self-reciprocal, a defining characteristic of consanguineal relationship terms. FZH, however, reciprocates with *pēka/pila*, 'young man/woman', *pēka* and *pila* being essentially

affinal terms used for affinal relatives (yZHws, EyB, yBWms, EyZ). Likewise HF and WF, who are also addressed as *māma*, reciprocate with terms like *ane* and *lāmane*, which are purely affinal terms. All these examples show that, from the perspective of ego, there are three kinds of men, as is shown in the three kin classes, *jīva*, *eṛmi* and *putul*. If in G +1 they are F, MB and FZH/EF, in ego's level they are B (*dhādha* or *thamo*), MBS/FZS (*sangi*) and ZH/WB (*eṛmthox*). The tripartite terminology is basic to the Madia kinship structure.

(3) *Sibling pairs*. It is the reciprocal terminology of address that helped me see that the sibling pairs (F & FZ and M & MB) belong together in the same kin class. For example, BSws = FyB = *kāka*, a parallel term.⁷ The position of FZ is entirely distinct from that of the other *ātho* (MBW and WM), who only address male ego as *lamane* or *ane* ('son-in-law') and never as *kāka* (FyB). The same argument goes for M and MZ, who are cross kin because they address their S or ZS as *māma*, the term for MB. Therefore it makes perfect sense in the Madia terminology that siblings belong together and that F and M belong to different kin classes, otherwise how could they marry?

(4) *Transgenerational crossness*. A unique feature that stands out in the above table of the Madia terminology is what I call transgenerational crossness, whereby relatives at all generational levels are distinguished for crossness, implying that this distinction remains a constant, that is, it applied in the eternal past and will do so in the eternal future, so to speak. The cross/parallel distinction for grandkin (like FF = EMF = MBWF ≠ MF = EFF = FZHF) seems to be an archaic feature because it is not found in any other Dravidian terminology (Trautmann 1981).

(5) *Superreciprocity*. The most striking feature is, of course, the merging of the address terms for alternate generations in the parallel- and cross-kin classes, and this too is most archaic (following Dzielbel). We see that relatives in alternate generations can use self-reciprocal address terms. Terms in G +1/-1 show relative-age distinction, but those in G +2/-2 and G +3/-3 generally do not. Terms such as *ako*, *māma* and *pēpi* are self-reciprocal even to the point of neutralizing the sex distinction because these male terms may be applied to females as well when used reciprocally. We see that the polar categories are perfect examples of superreciprocity.

⁷ Though the FZ 'refers' to her brother's children with terms that denote them as potential children-in-law, how she 'addresses' them shows that the FZ is really a parallel kin type.

The challenge of the prescriptive equation

The following are the equations and discriminations found in the Madia kin terminology (reference as well as address terms are taken into consideration here):

1. Superreciprocal equations (like $FFF = FeB = SSSms$)
2. Bifurcate collateral in G+1 level (like $F \neq FeB \neq FyB \neq MB$)
3. Bifurcate merging in G0 level (like $FBS = MZS \neq MBS = FZS$)
4. Sibling merging (like $BSms = BSws, ZSms = ZSws$).
5. Siblings through affinal equations (like $WZH = HBWB = B$)
6. Two anomalous sibling equations ($HeB = B, WeZ = Z$)

What is missing in this list is a prescriptive equation. What we find in the Madia terminology is simply this:

$$MBD = FZD \neq W.$$

But this is not a prescriptive equation equating spouse and cross-cousin. From my observations during the past decade of my life with this tribe I can say that FZD is the preferred bride among the Madia. Grigson was the first one to point this fact out, though he was misinterpreted by the few who referred to him later:

It has already been said (page 234) that a very high proportion of marriages are cross-cousin marriages, and that such unions formed 54 per cent. of the Hill Maria marriages into which I enquired. [...] Such marriages are considered the most seemly, both because the family which has given a daughter to another family in one generation should have this obligation repaid by getting her daughter back as a wife for a son of the next generation, and because such family arrangements obviate the necessity of paying the much heavier bride-price required for getting a bride from a new and unrelated family. Such marriages are known as *gudapal* or 'tribal-milk' marriages. The commonest form is marriage between a daughter and her mother's brother's son (brother being again used in the extended sense). But it has also been extended to cover marriages between a girl and her father's sister's son and a son and his mother's brother's daughter. (Grigson 1938: 247)

After stating that 54 percent of Madia alliances are cross-cousin marriages, Grigson clearly states that the ‘commonest form’ is the MBS-FZD alliance. The remaining 46 percent Grigson describes as ‘new affinities’, where the bride is neither FZD nor MBD: ‘Of 105 Hill Maria marriages investigated, fifty-seven were marriages between cross-cousins; it is not so easy to check the remaining 46 per cent. in which the marriage marked the start of new affinities’ (Grigson 1938: 234). The fact that nearly half of all marriages are ‘new’ alliances supports the existence of the FZD rule and is not in opposition to it. This is because it is in the very nature of FZD alliance that it can last for only two or three generations (for demographic reasons); but it is this very reality which necessitates that *newer affinities* be made in order to initiate other short cycles of FZD alliance. This explains why the FZD rule in Madia society cannot make up a large percentage of all marriages, and why there will be an equally large percentage of new alliances that cannot be described as either patri- or matrilateral. This is probably true of any society practicing the FZD alliance rule.

Furthermore, the presence of the MBD-FZS form of alliance in Hill Madia society, which Grigson detected and which I myself can testify to, does not in any way disprove the FZD rule. Madia men may take their MBD as wife, but they generally do so when no FZD is available. In any case, the preference for FZD as a bride involves mainly an avoidance of direct sister exchange (or bilateral alliance), but not necessarily of MBD alliance, as it is the former that would cause the FZD rule to become ineffective but not the latter⁸ (see point c in the section below). The occasional MBD (matrilateral) alliance is reoriented to an FZD alliance from the very next generation and thus reworked to fit the patrilateral rule. This, I believe, is exactly what Grigson meant when he described Madia MBD marriage as an *extension* of the FZD or ‘tribal milk’ rule (see the last sentence in the above quote).

Grigson’s text was misunderstood by later writers, who took it to mean that the Madia had a bilateral alliance rule (Trautmann 1981; Parkin 1988). This misunderstanding may be rooted in what seems to be a general idea that an FZD rule implies a ban on the MBD as a bride. Trautmann had found it incredible that in Madia society the classificatory relatives MF and DD could actually marry. (It is true that such marriages can take place when the two are close in age.) Nonetheless he got it almost right when he stated that ‘the peculiarities [i.e. alternate generation merging] of the Maria terminology are rendered intelligible by the

⁸ As can be expected, this is not the reason Madias quote for their reluctance to engage in bilateral exchanges. Rather, it is the belief about ill luck that is given as the reason; in direct sister exchanges, one of the two couples would suffer misfortune or death.

particular form that the Dravidian marriage rule takes among them: One shall marry an opposite-sex cross relative of one's own or of an alternate generation' (Trautmann 1981: 199). He did not see this marriageability between MF and DD as merely a corollary of the MBS-FZD rule. DD and MM belong to one and the same category and they are like sisters (see table above), and therefore if one of them is marriageable to ego, so is the other.

Evidence in Madia culture for MBS-FZD alliance

The following are some of the cultural clues to the existence of an FZD alliance rule among the Madia, but due to constraints of space, these can only be presented briefly:

(a) *The concept of putul, 'origin/source'*. This is a dominant cultural concept and the best clue to the society's FZD rule. When I ask a Madia the question, 'Where were you born?' he/she invariably refers to his/her MB and his clan, and never to the F or F's clan. The native way of asking the above question is 'whose milk did you drink?' It is believed that every person received life (*jīva*) from the father but the womb he/she originated from belongs to the MB. This is the reason why the MB and his clan is ego's *putul* or 'place of origin'. And if the mother's womb belongs to the MB, so does her milk. All of this points to the special ontological connection between ego and MB. This perception becomes the rationale for male ego to make a claim on his FZD (referred to as *putuli pila* 'the girl born from or unto' us), a claim he does not have on his MBD. This is also the reason why the MBS-FZD alliance is referred to as "tribal-milk" marriages' (Grigson 1938: 247).

(b) *Brideprice to the MB*. At a Madia non-MBS-FZD wedding, it is not only the bride's father who is given a brideprice but also the bride's MB, who receives it as *māma-vari*, a kind of tax or tribute given to him in compensation for taking what rightfully belongs to him.

(c) *Dislike of direct exchange and of FZS-MBD alliance*. Traditionally, sister-exchange is avoided because people are aware that it can confuse the *putul* principle. When two men exchange sisters, they both end up having the *putuli* right over each other's daughters, and it can become confusing as to who should be given priority in staking a claim to the FZD in situations where both have sons and daughters. In Madia weddings the MB, who takes his ZD as the bride for his son, plays the *putul* role, and the one who gives the bride remains the *ermi* (wife-giver), but sister exchange opens such role-play to men on both

sides, which leaves a space for potential disputes. There is also a general resistance to giving a girl as a bride to her FZS. Such alliance proposals brought by a girl's FZH are usually turned down with words to shame him: 'You had come to us asking for a wife, and now you come again to beg for a daughter-in-law too?'

(d) *Madia god-group system*. The whole of Madia society is divided into four god-groups, each group having a certain number of gods ranging from four to seven (Grigson 1938; von Fürer-Haimendorf 1979). The phratry structure is a symbolic representation of the MBS-FZD rule, which requires four exchange partners. Why the FZD rule requires four alliance partners is described in the next section.

The above are clues to the existence of a patrilateral cross-cousin marriage rule in Madia society. I now move on to showing that MBS-FZD alliance is the single rationale for every structural phenomenon observed in Madia kinship.

FZD alliance and Madia kinship terminology

The FZD rule is the single organizing principle of Madia kinship and social structure, as is proved by how the six terminological equations mentioned earlier in the paper are all based on or facilitate this single alliance rule.

First let us consider equations 2, 5 and 6, which are related. Madia FZD alliance requires four exchange partners. If A gives a wife to B but cannot take a wife from B because bilateral exchange is to be avoided, and if B gives wife to C, who must become a 'brother' to A as a wife-taker's wife-taker, then A can only take a wife from D. The quadrilateral partnership is illustrated in the diagram below, in which each letter can be taken to represent a lineage. The arrows mark the direction in which the brides move, and the parallel lines show the parallel kin connections that are created through the alliance exchange.

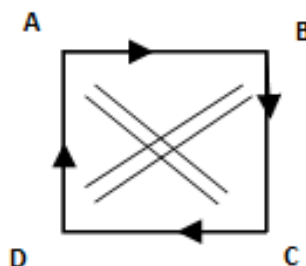


Fig. 1. The quadrilateral FZD alliance partnership

We see here that A and C as well as B and D are siblings through affinal alliances (equation 5). Thus every alliance relation creates a parallel relation. This kind of quadrilateral exchange explains the bifurcate collateral in equation 2. How? It is a stringent rule in this society that those who take a group's sisters or daughters as brides should never take the same group's widowed wives too, because of the principle that the alliance partners of one's alliance partners become one's parallel kin (an *er̥mi*'s *er̥mi* is a *jīva*). If a woman goes as a bride from group A to group B and becomes widowed in group B, she could not then marry into group C because she is like a sister to C (since A and C have become parallel kin through the quadrilateral alliance, even if they were not parallel kin already through the clan or cult-group organizations). But nor could the widowed woman marry into group D, as that would amount to a bilateral exchange, since group D is a wife-giver to group A and therefore could not also be A's wife-taker. Hence it is very important in Madia society that a widowed woman be inherited by a suitable man from within the same group that she had originally married into (if not the same family or lineage, at least the same clan.) Now, it is the wife of an older brother that is more likely to be widowed first, and hence the rule in Madia society that HyB is a joking relative and a marriageable category, while HeB is strictly an avoidance category, makes perfect sense. It is because of this that HeB and WeZ are tabooed in marriage, which is expressed in the anomalous sibling equation (6). I think the bifurcate collateral equation (2), namely $F \neq FeB \neq FyB \neq MB$, exists primarily to show the age distinction among siblings and to facilitate the appropriate practice of widow inheritance that serves to uphold the quadrilateral alliance partnership required by the society's FZD rule.

Let us now turn to the three remaining equations, 1, 3 and 4. Equation 3 (bifurcate merging in G0) is simply an expression of the dimension of crossness, in other words, PosGC are cross, and they must be distinguished from PssGC, who are parallel. But equation 4 (sibling merging like BSms = BSws, SSms = DSws) is there to facilitate the superreciprocal

terminology (equation 1). How and why this is so will become clear in the course of the following discussion.

The superreciprocal equations are one of the interesting features of this kinship system, and they have structural significance, but these too are simply an effect of the FZD rule. It is common knowledge that the FZD marriage rule involves a *reversal* in the direction of the alliance in every generation, which means that male and female ego are *repeating* the marriages of FF and MM respectively, thus *replicating* the kin relations two generations above them. This is how ego's adjacent generations are distinguished terminologically, but the generations that are two levels above and below are merged into ego's own. What causes or motivates the reversal in the direction of the alliance and thereby effects such equation and discrimination across the generational levels is the delay by a generation in the reciprocal alliance, which is the very essence of the FZD rule. The delayed reciprocity is perhaps the best explanation for the merger of relations in alternate generations. The assumption of a continuous working of the FZD rule is the very basis of the kinship system which has the superreciprocal terminology.

What has the above to do with equation 4 (sibling merger)? Cross-generational self-reciprocity means that the crossness dimension is maintained in all generational levels, as is shown in the four distinct types of grand-kin and great grand-kin in the Madia terminology. The alternate generation merging of all categories, including the G +3/-3 super categories, is what makes the Madia terminology superreciprocal. Superreciprocal equations (like FMM = FZ = BDws = DSDws = SDDws) would not have been possible if the sibling pairs (like F & FZ, M & MB) had not belonged in the same kin class.

In the light of all that has been said, I conclude that MBS-FZD alliance is the basis for all the equations and discriminations observable in the Madia kin terminology, even though this rule itself does not show up as a prescriptive spouse equation. Allen, working with the basic assumption of a bilateral alliance rule, realized that this marriage rule alone would not do for his model; he said that 'the rules of our simplest imaginable human society will need to cover not only "horizontal" relations (marriage) but also "vertical" relations, for which "recruitment" is a convenient general term' (2008: 99). But the Madia case shows that FZD alliance is the single rule that covers both the horizontal and vertical kin relations, as we shall see later in this paper. In Dziebel's case, it was mainly because he had tried to work with Allen's basic assumption of a bilateral rule for early human kinship that he was frustrated in

his attempt to build a proto-kinship model. The FZD rule was not considered in such model building because of the general assumption that it derived from the bilateral form and is a variant of the latter, and perhaps also because it had long been rejected as unviable.

Having established the FZD rule as a viable ethnographic fact and as the sole rationale for the Madia kinship system, I now turn to describing the social organization of Madia society based on kinship.

Madia social organization

The terminological merging of alternate generations can be illustrated with a double-helix. In

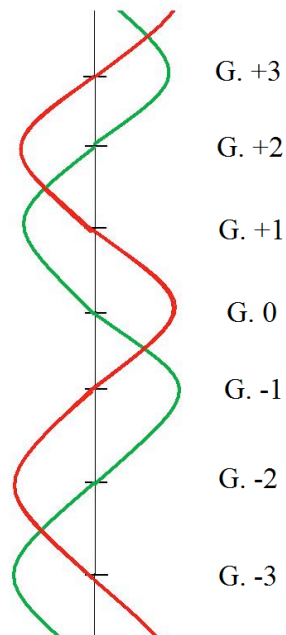


Fig. 2. Alternate generation merger

MBS-FZD alliance, the wife-taker (*putul*) in one generation must become the wife-giver (*eṛmi*) in the next. Because of this, the two practically become combined into a single class known generally as *eṛmi* to mean ‘alliance partners’. The two strands in the double-helix, the *jīva* and *eṛmi*, are depicted engaged in an FZD exchange showing the delay in reciprocity by a generation. This appears as the simplest dual structure, but the complex inner workings that create this helix are discussed in the following section.

Madia kinship in egocentric view

The figure below is a *kōlam*, the south Dravidian art that women in south India make in their front yard at dawn to welcome the new day and receive the blessings it brings.⁹ I have used the conventions of *kōlam* art here to illustrate the structure of Madia kinship which represents one that is built on FZD alliance.

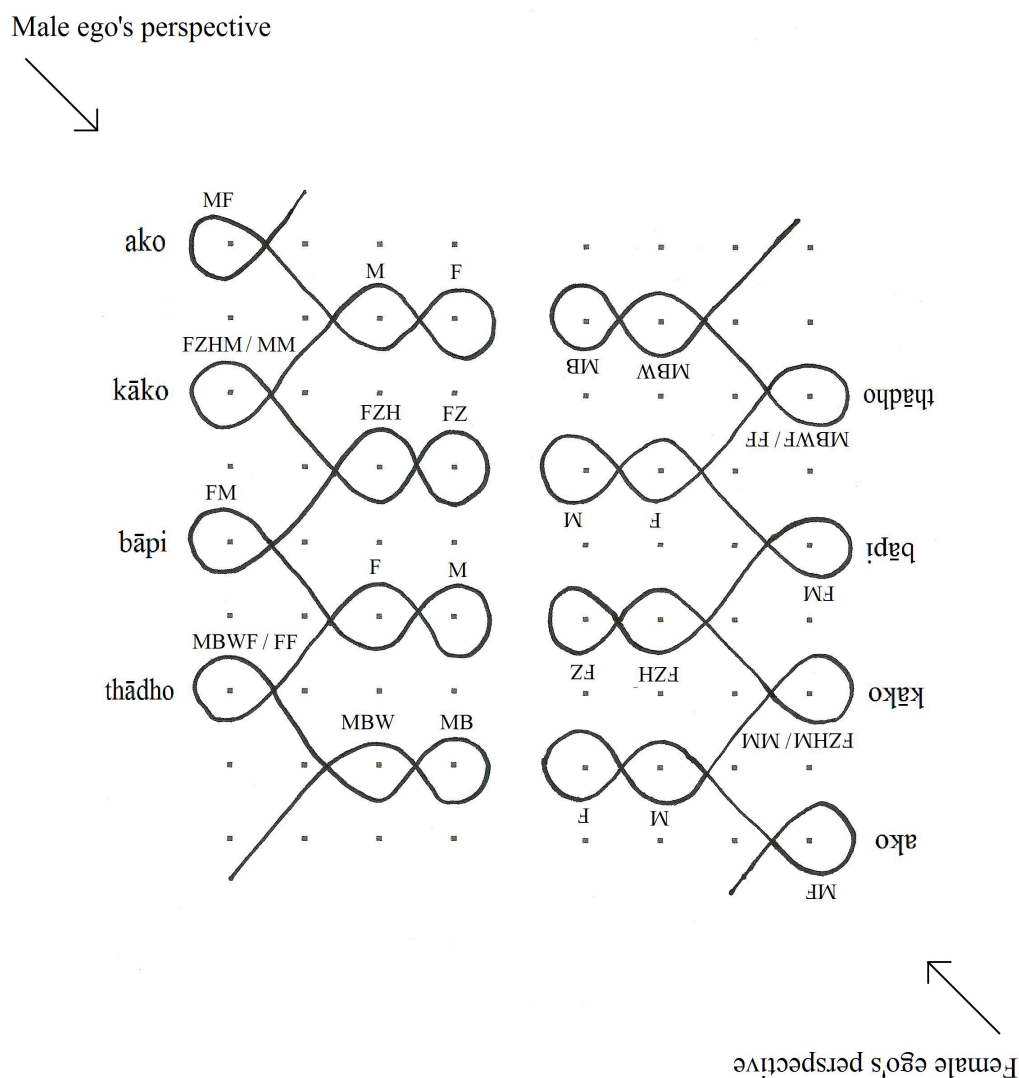


Fig. 3. A structural paradigm for kinship based on FZD alliance

⁹ I learnt this art as a child from my mother and sister.

The above *kōlam* represents the most basic functional unit of the Madia kinship system. It consists of two identical halves or ‘strands’, each of which has four ‘rungs’. Each rung is made up of three kin types, where two of them are spouses and the third one is a parent of one of the other two. The parent occupies a position at an elevated level from the child, showing the generational distance between them. We see that there are only two generational levels represented in this unit (egos’ parents and grandparents) and this is because of the superreciprocal quality of the Madia terminologically. If we construct a sequence of several units by replicating the one shown in the *kōlam*, which could represent a Madia lineage consisting of a few generations, then we would see that the polar categories *ako* and *thādho* alternate endlessly.

The four kin types basic to this unit are found stacked at the centre, namely F, FZ, M and MB (who are the parents of male ego and female ego, i.e. MBS and FZD, because it is kinship based on the MBS-FZD rule that is illustrated here) and these four kin types are connected, through their respective spouses, to the four polar social categories, namely MF, MM, FM and FF, or *ako*, *kāko*, *bāpi* and *thādho* respectively. These polar categories include not just the genealogical grandparents of the male and the female egos, but also the classificatory ones such as FZHF/EFF, FZHM/EFM, MBWM/EMM and MBWF/EMF; but I included only two of these in the illustration so as to keep the diagram from becoming too unwieldy.

Male and female ego themselves (MBS and FZD) are not shown in this diagram, but being the very rationale for the way in which the kin types are stacked and bonded, they are implicitly present. We see that the respective relatives of male and female ego (the two strands) are placed in juxtaposition, but they ‘run’ in opposite directions to so as to facilitate complementary bonding between them (I will return to this point shortly).

Overall, this paradigm serves as a fairly accurate illustration of the Madia kinship structure in the egocentric view. It presents the kinship structure from the perspectives of both male and female ego. Besides, it represents the female kin types FZ and M, and not merely their male counterparts F and MB, thus giving a more complete or truer picture by including both genders. Because the female kin types M and FZ are two of the four main bases, I decided that it is only right to represent MM and FM (*kako* and *bapi* respectively) in the polar categories alongside their spouses, MF and FF (*ako* and *thādho* respectively).

We see that in the egocentric view Madia kinship is quite an intricate structure. I mentioned that this framework is built on the FZD alliance. What are the pointers for that? One is the distinction between wife-giver and wife-taker. Ego has three male relatives from G+1 level represented in this diagram: F, FZH and MB (though there are four base-pairs in each strand, ego's F appears twice, and so the men are only three in total). These three 'men in the middle' represent the *jīva* (F), *er̥mi* (FZH) and *putul* (MB). But then, the matrilineal alliance system too is known for its distinction between wife-giver and wife-taker. The answer lies with the G+2 level relatives, the grandparents. The unmistakable pointer for an FZD alliance system is perhaps the distinction of the two grandfathers ($FF \neq MF$), something that does not seem to exist in other cross-cousin alliance systems.¹⁰ Transgenerational crossness is a unique feature of FZD alliance, and is therefore the second indicator here that this framework is built on this form of alliance.

Perhaps the most significant observation to be made about this structure is its density. There are two dozen relatives in this unit. (This is a stark contrast to Allen's simple quadripartite structure.) However, the relatives in each of the two strands are bonded in such a way that ultimately there are only two categories in ego's social world, represented by FF and MF respectively. What happens when the two egos' social worlds are brought together through marriage alliance and how could the two strands bond? These two strands are identical, and unless they run inversely they cannot bond. In FZD alliance, the cross/parallel distinction is extended to cover ego's spouse's relatives: one spouse's parallel relatives become the other spouse's cross relatives, and one spouse's cross relatives become the other's parallel relatives. This I would call the complementary bonding of categories on the horizontal level, and it works in such a way that it creates the twist in the double-helix structure. I explain this below.

Complementary bonding and the twist

The alternation of generation takes the form of a rather a simple and uniform merging of the vertical levels of relations leading to superreciprocity (this is equation #1 discussed above). But the merger at the horizontal level is a bit more complicated, as it is not uniform. In level G+2 we find only two categories:

¹⁰ Trautmann's (1981) samples show that this distinction is not found in any other Dravidian kinship system except in Gammu Koya, which is one of the Gond group of tribes.

$$FF = EMF = MBWF = 'dhādha' \neq MF = EFF = FZHF = 'ako'$$

In G+1 level the rules of complementary merger (or bonding) are applied only partially and to certain relatives:

$$EMB = FB = kākā \text{ or } pēpi \text{ (where spouse's cross relative becomes ego's parallel kin)}$$

$$EFB = MB = māmā \text{ (where spouse's parallel relative becomes ego's cross kin)}$$

But the same may or may not apply to the relative EFZH, who is ego's spouse's relative's spouse, and because it has to take into account more than one alliance, such an equation is contingent and not necessary. Therefore the complementary bonding at this level is not total as found in level G+2.

In ego's generation it applies even less because ego's cross kin and affines are kept distinct and the number of relations that merge are very few (as seen in equations #5 and #6). Thus the middle section of the lineage (G0) is the widest, with numerous categories, because the horizontal merger of relations is the least in this level and it becomes narrower towards the top and towards the bottom. This dissimilarity in size between the generational levels can be an explanation for the skewing in the double-helix structure.¹¹ This idea may be illustrated with a ribbon. If a ribbon is stretched leaving regular intervals, it would tend to twist at those intervals. This is to I suggest that the cognate-affine distinction in the three medial levels (or simply the tripartite terminology) is the rationale behind the twist in the double helix. Besides, the bonding of ego's FF and EMF would require some skewing too. The complementary bonds described above are so complex that they could not be shown as such in the *kolam* in Fig.3.

In summary, we see that the vertical relations in Madia kinship are merged through alternation, the horizontal relations are merged through the complementary bonding of relatives of ego's spouses.¹² The relations fold up, as it were, both ways: top to bottom and side to side. This collapsibility, so to speak, renders the Madia kinship a dense and compact structure.

¹¹ Allen has also presented a 'double-helix' model as one of his several approaches to conceptualizing a *tetradic* society (1989: 49). Our models are fundamentally different, not least because I am using the double-helix to exemplify a *dual* organization.

¹² In a bilateral alliance system, the horizontal merging of relations is possible, but not their vertical merging. If this system has a few terms that show alternation, these would be vestiges of an earlier stage in which there was FZD alliance.

Madia kinship in sociocentric view

If, in the egocentric view the Madia kinship system is a dual organization, what is it like in the sociocentric view? It follows that it should look like the end-on view of the double-helix. I present this structure again, using the conventions of Dravidian *kōlam* art.

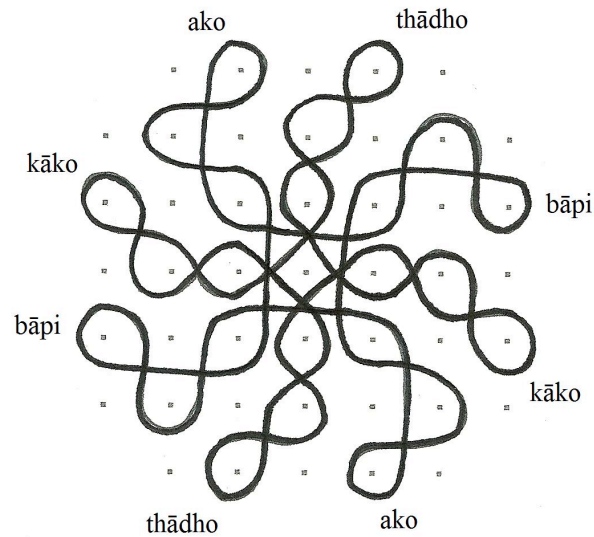


Fig. 4. FZD alliance in sociocentric view

The above structure resembles a snowflake. All the four polar categories belonging to the G+2 level are shown here, and if the gender criterion is ignored, there are only two social categories or two domains of relative: *thādho* and *ako*. Therefore we may conclude that the organization is dual in the sociocentric view too.¹³

What is striking about this illustration is its symmetry. The beauty of its form and structure is in the way it seems to hold in balance the binary oppositions such as male and female, parallel and cross, and, by implication, the very concepts of descent and alliance. I cannot but wonder at what I see – a single rule of delayed reciprocity in marriage alliance could create such exquisite structures! Is this not the one that is supposed to be a mere ‘procedure’ and not even worth calling a ‘system’? Is it not ‘self-destructive’ for a society to

¹³ That the Madia have a dual social organization (*ako-māma* versus *dhādha-thamo*) is attested in the previous literature both on the Hill Madia tribe and on the Gond tribes in general (Grigson 1938; von Fürer-Haimendorf 1979; Jay 1970; Deogaonkar 1982; Russell and Hiralal 1906).

have the FZD rule, as it would cause ‘sheer confusion’?¹⁴ Did we not hear that it is ‘mechanically unstable’ and ‘precarious’, ‘premature’ and ‘stunted’ as a cycle, ‘crude’ in application, ‘fragile’ in structure, ‘artificial’ in the unity it creates, ‘less ambitious’ and ‘less adventurous’ as a transaction, and so ‘Cheap-Jack’?¹⁵ Something that was never expected to achieve a total structure seems to be excelling in doing so.

Madia’s tetradic social structure

What is the connection between Madia kinship and Madia social structure? I have already mentioned that MBS-FZD alliance requires four exchange units. This quadrilateral alliance is the cultural ideal which is mirrored in the four god-group (or phratry) structure in Madia society (Grigson 1938; von Fürer-Haimendorf 1979). The god-group structure can be understood as a symbolic representation or an actualization of the tribe’s mental model of FZD exchange (following Lévi-Strauss and Needham). The Madia originally had a moiety structure (Vaz 2011), and their folklore refers to a time in the past when the cult of the four god-groups was instituted (or more exactly, expanded from the earlier two god-groups system) at a point of time in their history when they began dispersing from the Abujhmar hills¹⁶ down to the western plains. The historical primacy of the moiety system is also attested to by the presence of a small group who live north of the Madia region¹⁷ and who call themselves *Gaitha* (the same name by which the Madia call themselves), claim that they are the most original tribe of the region and live as a moiety society consisting of just two-god groups, with a preference for MBS-FZD alliance and with a kinship terminology very similar to that of the Madia. This fact, combined with the Madia’s own oral history, lead me to believe that this tribe was once a moiety society. Therefore the congruence between their kinship system and their social structure is a thing of the past. However, the original dual social organization based on FZD alliance continues just the same, even in the present-day tetradic social structure.

¹⁴ Needham 1962: 108-19.

¹⁵ Lévi-Strauss 1969: 445-52.

¹⁶ These hills are located in what is today Chhattisgarh state. As already noted, one of the names for this tribe, Abujhmaria, is associated with the name of these hills.

¹⁷ This people live in and around the Kurkheda *tehsil* of Gadchiroli District in Maharashtra, north of the Madia region.

The institution of the four god-groups structure and the god-group exogamy was probably meant to ensure the survival of the society's FZD exchange rule in the face of the pressures brought about by the dispersal, especially since the Madia were a small tribe (even today they are probably not more than 150,000). Adherence to the FZD rule with the original moiety exogamy would have become difficult owing to distance and poor communications, and a four-phratry system certainly allowed 'for a wider range of choice'¹⁸ for alliance partnership than was possible in a moiety system. Under the present tetradic structure, each and every one of the hundred or more Madia clans has a particular number of *pēnk* or 'gods' (4, 5, 6 or 7) and thus falls under one of the four phratries known as *pēnmul* or 'god-group'. By requiring that these four god-groups be exogamous, the *pēn* cult connects all the men of this patrilineal society through a 'fictive' kinship where those who have the same number of gods consider each other as *jīva* or 'brother', and all those with a different number of gods are considered potential alliance partners.

Summary

The Madia tribe has a tripartite terminology and a dual social organization. The tetradic social structure is a reflection of the ideal of quadrilateral alliance partnership between clans, and it was introduced to serve the dispersed clans by increasing the number of potential alliance partners. The FZD alliance rule generated the structures. FZD alliance creates the vertical and horizontal mergers of relations, making the kinship dense, compact and symmetrical. The Madia kinship clearly represents the earliest Dravidian system because the south Dravidian kinship systems that are based on bilateral and matrilinear forms of alliance evolved from the unfolding or diffusion of a dense and compact kinship system of which the Madia is an example (Vaz 2011). I have wondered if the Madia also represents the earliest human kinship system, or what Barnard calls the 'earliest full kinship' (2011: 240). And that leads to a few questions.

Should we require that the earliest kinship system be the simplest? If so, should that 'simplicity' be defined in terms of a minimum number of kin categories? Or, could it be defined on the basis of a minimum number of rules or principles needed to generate a system? We have seen in the Madia case how the entire system is generated by FZD alliance.

¹⁸ Grigson cites this as the reason for the origin of phratry system among the Bison-horn Madia (1938: 240).

Through a complex bonding or interlocking of numerous kin categories, a single rule created a dual social organization, and not a few analysts have proposed that dual structures are the simplest and the earliest. In the light of the Madia evidence, I suggest that the early human kinship system be defined in terms of, and identified by, its density and symmetry rather than simplicity. It is on the basis of an original density and symmetry that the idea of a 'Big Bang for human society'¹⁹ sounds logical.

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¹⁹ Allen 1986.

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WHY ARE THE BRITISH SO PECULIAR?
REFLECTIONS ON SPORT, NATIONALISM, AND HIERARCHY

DAVID N. GELLNER

What has made sport so uniquely effective a medium for inculcating national feelings, at all events for males, is the ease with which even the least political or public individuals can identify with the nation as symbolized by young persons excelling at what practically every man wants, or at one time in his life has wanted, to be good at. The imagined community of millions seems more real as a team of eleven named people. (Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and nationalism since 1780*, p. 143)

Sport and the modern nation

Sporting contests are the ideal way to carry on international competition in the modern world.¹ Orwell called serious sport ‘war minus the shooting’ (‘The Sporting Spirit’, 1945). That war may appear as ‘sport plus shooting’ can be seen from the response of my seven-year-old son to a description of the battle of Agincourt: ‘So which team won?’ It is therefore highly welcome and not before time that experts on sport should have begun to turn their attention to questions of nationalism. Certainly historians and sociologists of nationalism may be rebuked for not devoting enough effort to understanding sport. One of the few who has taken it seriously is Eric Hobsbawm. He identifies the period between the two world wars as the time when international sport stopped being the student and middle-class pastime of individuals, or an attempt to integrate multi-national empires, and became instead ‘the unending succession of gladiatorial contests between persons and teams symbolizing state-nations’ (Hobsbawm 1990: 142).²

In a world of legally equal nation states, matches or athletic competitions allow representatives of different nations to meet on equal terms and to achieve a definite result: either a win for one side, or a draw. Whatever the result, the key points are that (a) nations meet on equal terms and (b) there is a clear and unambiguous result. The result itself is not a matter of opinion, however much the justice of it may be debated. In those sports where

¹ This paper was originally written for a conference on ‘The Nation and Sport’ held in Brunel University in June 2001. For various reasons it was not published at the time and still bears the marks of the year in which it was written.

² Two other scholars of nationalism who mention the relationship are Kellas (1991) and Billig (1995). Scholarly work on sport, on the other hand, has dealt extensively with the relationship between it and various forms of belonging (among many possible references, see MacClancy 1996, Jarvie 1999, Bairner 2001).

graded judgements have to be made (skating, boxing), methods have been devised of providing official judges with the means to come up with clear and unambiguous results. Sports contests thus give full play to the pursuit of individual prowess,³ while simultaneously allowing international competition and systematic, on-going, never-ending comparison. Whatever the past, there is always hope for the future. Whatever the dire state of the national team in the present, there are usually proud memories somewhere in the past. Or for very small countries, there is simply the pleasure of being pitted occasionally against world-class opposition. The same logic can apply within nation states, between states within the USA, or between regions in Spain.

Even where large nations opt out of international competition there is a kind of logic to it. American exceptionalism – that is to say, the belief of many citizens of the USA that their country is qualitatively different from all others – is both symbolized and, perhaps, perpetuated by the fact that the two most important sports in the USA (baseball and American football) are predominantly played by US teams, and the USA has comparatively rarely and recently had the experience (which is normal for everyone else) of having its national team being beaten by other countries at its favourite sports.

Like all rituals, sports competitions are liable to be made use of politically. In fact, because they can involve beating foreigners, they are perhaps especially likely to be used in this way. David Kertzer (1988) has described and analysed the political uses of ritual in great detail. But unlike the choreography of great political rituals, there is relatively little scope for politicians actually to choreograph what happens in sports events. All politicians in France attempted to profit from the patriotic fervour surrounding the winning of the World Cup in 1998. But it was particularly difficult for Le Pen to make political capital out of it, given that so few of the players were white and that the captain and overall hero, Zinedine Zidane, though born in Marseille, is actually a Berber whose parents came from Kabylia in Algeria.

Anyone who has seen the wonderful ethnographic film, *Trobriand Cricket* (Leach and Kildea 1973), will immediately recognize the differences between modern and pre-modern attitudes to sport. The Trobrianders have taken the game introduced to them by missionaries and adapted it to their own worldview. In their form of the game, the number of participants on each side can be forty, fifty, or more. The focus is on the displays of dancing which precede the ‘match’. During the match the ball is bowled underarm and a ‘runner’ runs for the

³ And they permit the pursuit of excitement and aggression, in a cathartic way, within suitably genteel frameworks (Elias and Dunning 1986).

batsman. The convention is that the home side always wins by a small margin. After the game there are ceremonial exchanges of yams.⁴

It is, therefore, no coincidence that international sports competitions have grown and developed as the nation-state system has spread throughout the globe, nor that many, perhaps a majority, of modern sports can trace the origins of their modern form to the country that first experienced modernity, namely the UK. Today, having a national sports team and national representation at the Olympics is a key symbol of national identity, like having a flag, a national anthem, a national museum and a currency. For small nations, simply taking part or being recognized by FIFA is a crucial symbol of independence and existence. For large nations, prowess in one or other sports arena, measured by tangible success in international competition, is taken very seriously indeed.

The question of which individual could represent which national sports team took a surprisingly long time to be regulated. Between 1947 and 1962 Alfredo di Stefano played for Argentina, Colombia and Spain, before FIFA had imposed a worldwide set of regulations. The current rules for most sports are that once someone has represented one nation at senior level they are disqualified from representing any other, unless they change their nationality. The normal criterion is that one can represent any nation in which one is born oneself, or where one of one's four grandparents were born. Thus there is here an interesting compromise between reality and the 'one and only one national identity' model. The model is upheld once a choice of nation has been made: you are not allowed to represent a different nation unless you go through the process of naturalization. However, up to the moment of choice, the fact that people often have multiple identities and allegiances is acknowledged and given some considerable play.

Paradoxically, the nation that gave the world so many modern sports because it was the first nation to be modern is distinctly un-modern in its political and sporting organization. Such un-modern inconsistency has given rise to considerable confusion over English-British identity. This confusion is expressed in, and possibly exacerbated by, the number and overlapping constituencies of national teams in different prominent sports. In cricket, though it does have its own team, Wales is effectively part of England. In football (soccer) it is not, and in rugby it is most definitely independent. In football there are four national teams and no UK team; despite leading politicians expressing their personal support for the existence of a UK football team, there is no realistic prospect of one being set up or entered for the

⁴ The classic study of how the Japanese have remade baseball is Whiting (1989).

Olympics, for example. For some rugby purposes (selection for the British or Irish Lions) northern Ireland is part of the island of Ireland, even though this means that its players do not participate in the British rugby team made up of players from England, Wales and Scotland – and even strong Unionists have been able to live with this. In the Olympics, Northern Ireland is part of the UK (though some athletes from Northern Ireland have represented the Republic). In the Commonwealth Games, Northern Ireland is its own separate unit.

The closeness and interrelatedness of the four ‘home nations’ of the UK means that many individuals have a wide choice of which international team to play for, given the rules of eligibility outlined above. Individuals from the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man have a free choice over which of the four nations to represent. In March 2000 the papers were full of the case of Dave Hilton, who played rugby for Scotland 41 times before it came out that his supposedly Scottish grandfather actually came from Bristol. Jackie Charlton famously revived the Republic of Ireland football team by scouring the English and Scottish leagues for players with an Irish grandparent, one of whom, Tony Cascarino, admitted long afterwards that he had never had one at all. If Northern Ireland and Wales can have teams representing them in international competitions, why shouldn’t the Catalans and the Basques as well? The only answer is the historical accident that Northern Ireland and Wales got in first, before the international rules were written (even though at that time Ireland was one and undivided for football purposes, and Northern Ireland as it is today did not exist).

Models of the nation

Reflecting on national identity is not – or at least until recently *was* not – encouraged in England. Nationalism is something that other people have: foreigners with unpleasant and extreme political movements, or alternatively peripheral Celts with chips on their shoulders. For generations the English have been brought up to believe that theirs is the normal and natural way of being and behaving. The English believed themselves to have the best of all possible political systems: it had evolved while remaining true to itself, avoided violent political revolutions, conquered the globe, and provided progress and decency that were the envy of the world. To be born an Englishman was to have won first prize in the lottery of life – so thought Cecil Rhodes. It was an essential part of this view of English-Britishness that it was not analysed, not taught and not reduced to a catechism.⁵ British schoolchildren may learn the names of the kings and queens of England. They do not have ‘civics’. They are not

taught how the British Constitution works. English-British identity was formed very largely in opposition to the French. The French go back to first principles, argue deductively and have a totalitarian education system churning out citizens. The English see themselves as the opposite of this in every case: inductive, empiricist, liberal – and consequently more practical. The British education system was meant to be both more moral and more manly. Only very recently – astonishingly late for an industrialized country – has a national curriculum been imposed, more than a hundred years after the French, the Germans and the Italians.

For a model of what the modern nation and its state are supposed to be, we need to cross the Channel. The idea is simple enough. Every person is born into a particular nation and has one and only one national identity. The right and proper political arrangement is for everyone with that national identity to be united into one political unit: so that all French men, women and children live in one French state, with no one else. It may be possible to combine some kind of local identity with being French, but there should be no contradiction between that identity and one's national identity. This 'one and only one national identity' model is extremely pervasive and important, and is the baseline of my argument.

What is also crucial is that this model diverges from reality quite markedly (French-speakers in Belgium and Switzerland are not united with the motherland). And this generates the well-known paradox that nationalism as an ideology presumes that nations already exist, but nationalism as a social practice sets about creating them. In the French case, it is well established that at the beginning of the Third Republic in the 1870s less than half of the French spoke French: they had to be pushed hard to do so by generations of schoolmasters (the classic study of this process being Eugen Weber's *Peasants into Frenchmen*). In the case of the French, these schoolmasters and mistresses believed, and still believe, that by propagating French they are advancing the cause of civilization. They have succeeded in imparting this belief to their students, so that although Breton is currently the Celtic language with the largest number of speakers, in a generation or two it will be confined to a handful of enthusiasts (McDonald 1989: 352-3 n. 4). In the French case, the connection between a universal, modernizing and liberating ideology and propagating a specifically French national identity was very close, so much so that the French attempted to turn numerous peoples of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds into Frenchmen, sometimes with disastrous results, as in Algeria.

⁵ Jeremy Paxman has recently analysed the 'paucity of national symbols' for England (as opposed to Britain) in a witty and entertaining account (Paxman 1998).

The French example does not just show that nations have to be created. It also shows that the majority view in the age of nationalism has been that there are some nations which are more advanced, stronger and more worthy of being assimilated to than others. This was taken for granted in the nineteenth century and is probably still the commonsense view of many people in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. That is to say, the French schoolmasters took it for granted that their educative and civilizing mission, in weaning their students off various non-French dialects, was good for the students and good for the country. Likewise, the English middle class assumed that it was right and proper for Welsh-speakers to become English-speakers if they so wished. It was taken for granted in central Europe that German was the language of science and progress, which many migrants to the cities adopted in preference to the Slavonic or Yiddish dialects of their ancestors. The same process is going on today in many developing countries.

This view that some national identities are more evolved and more suitable for the modern world than others is no longer politically correct. It is no longer permissible to argue this out loud and in unequivocal terms, though the actions of millions of people around the world – the idioms in which they choose to educate their children – bear witness to the fact that many people still believe it.

Today the official view is that all cultures are to be treated equally.⁶ Within nation states all ethnic groups should be given equal treatment, and between nations all nations should be treated equally. This is notwithstanding the fact that nation states are patently not equal, whether in size, population, wealth, or anything else. The only respect in which they are equal is that each has one seat and one vote in the United Nations (though even here ideology has had to bow before *Realpolitik*, with the institution of the five permanent members of the Security Council).

So there are two models of national belonging: the nineteenth-century evolutionist and hierarchical model of the nation which presupposes the existence of ‘big’ nations and ‘little’ nations; and the more recent multiculturalist model which supposes that nations and cultures are all equal, or at least are to be treated as if they were equal, regardless of their size or antiquity. Both models presuppose that individuals are born as members of nations and that it is right and proper for nations to rule over their own territory. The hierarchical model allows perhaps for more individual movement – from one national identity to another – a detail that will be seen to be significant below; but both models take as their baseline the assumption that

individuals can have one and only one national identity: cases of migration, dual nationality and so on are treated as exceptions to the normal nature of things.

Britain as a pre-modern nation

There are many aspects of England-Britain (or 'Ukania' as Tom Nairn called it, 1994) which are odd in the light of the modern nationalist model, especially given the assumption of a unitary nation state in which all citizens have an equal and intersubstitutable status. The relationships of the four constituent parts of the UK to the centre are not, and never have been, symmetrical. With the devolution introduced after 1997, this inconsistency of treatment has become ever more obvious: Scotland has a parliament that can raise taxes; Wales and Northern Ireland have assemblies that can spend money but not raise it. London has an elected mayor, but most other cities do not. The regions of England have no representative assemblies; there is particular resentment about the fact that the Scots have more per head spent on public services and now pay their teachers substantially more than, say, those in the neighbouring north-east of England. As a legacy of Conservative reorganizations of local government in the 1990s, some towns and cities have no relationship to the counties, while others are part of two-tier authorities.

It is not just that, administratively, the UK is a jumble. The British Constitution is, famously, a non-constitution, a set of precedents and assumptions stretching back to Magna Carta. It is all ruled over by a monarch, who until 1992 was, if not above the law, at least above income tax (Nairn 1994: xv). George Orwell noted long ago in his essay 'The Lion and the Unicorn' that the plethora of names, and the confusing and overlapping way in which they are used, reflected this uncertainty.

Dumont and the notion of hierarchy

The world in which Britain emerged as the first modern nation was, by definition, non-modern. More precisely, it was hierarchical both in its values and its practice. By virtue of being the first industrialized and modern nation, Britain also remained significantly non-modern, as noted. Many of the seemingly contradictory and confusing organizational features described above can be understood by bearing these hierarchical presuppositions in mind.⁷

⁶ This view has attracted scorn in some circles, summed up in a remark attributed to Saul Bellow: 'When the Zulus produce a Tolstoy, we will read him' (cited in Taylor 1994: 42).

⁷ Many of my social anthropological colleagues are nowadays highly sceptical of dichotomies such as the modern and egalitarian vs. pre-modern and hierarchical. However, I would hold that, as long as they are used sensitively and not essentialized – i.e. providing they are not used as some kind of deductive master key which

The leading theorist of hierarchy within sociology and anthropology is undoubtedly Louis Dumont, in his great work, *Homo Hierarchicus: the caste system and its implications* (first published 1966, full revised English edition 1980). Dumont went to India as a kind of Alexis de Tocqueville in reverse. Just as de Tocqueville had gone to America to understand equality, the condition that represented the future of the world, so Dumont went to India to understand hierarchy, the world's past. He carried out extensive fieldwork both in south India and in the north; he wrote painstaking and detailed studies of caste, kinship, marriage and ritual. He worked hard to master an enormous ethnographic and historical literature. He concluded that India had worked out and theorized hierarchy to an extent unmatched elsewhere.⁸

In his 'Postface: toward a theory of hierarchy', Dumont wrote:

The hierarchical relation is, very generally, that between a whole (or a set) and an element of this whole (or set): the element belongs to the set and is in this sense consubstantial or identical with it; at the same time, the element is distinct from the set or stands in opposition to it. This is what I mean by the expression 'the encompassing of the contrary'. (Dumont 1980: 240)

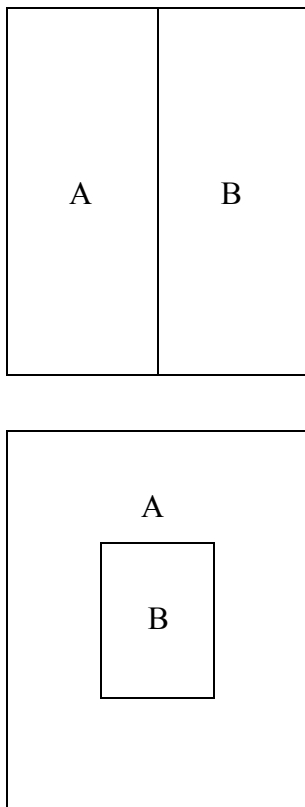
What this highly abstract statement means may become clear by considering an example and a diagram. The clearest example Dumont could think of, to illustrate the fact that the nature of hierarchy is not, as Westerners tend to think, a military-style chain of command or a taxonomic tree diagram, was the creation of Adam and Eve in Genesis. Adam is created first – as an undifferentiated Man. Then from Adam's rib comes Eve, and Man becomes both man and woman. The relationship of Adam and Eve is a perfect illustration of the ideology of hierarchy because:

- man and woman are opposed to each other; at one level they are equal and opposite;
- as complementary opposites, they constitute a whole;
- man is (in the model) superior to woman;
- man is simultaneously opposed to woman and at a higher level includes woman as part of his own substance; Adam is both Man and man.

explains everything – they cannot be avoided if the aim is to carry out some kind of comparison and analysis, rather than simply documenting particular cases.

⁸ In fact, Dumont rather wobbled in his analysis, never seeming entirely sure whether India was unique among pre-modern societies in the nature and degree of its hierarchical institutions, or whether it was typical.

The fact that the same word is used at both levels is not a coincidence, but illustrates the evaluative claim being made. Dumont illustrated the same relation diagrammatically. Egalitarian logic sees only A opposed to B (first diagram). Hierarchical logic sees that A is opposed to B at one level, while containing B within it when the whole is taken into account (second diagram).



Dumont was at pains to stress just how repugnant this ideology is to modern ideology, because of its anti-egalitarian implications. He insisted many times on how difficult it is for those brought up in the modern West or in Westernized milieus (which includes most people nowadays) to understand or appreciate hierarchy properly. And he has been roundly abused by several critics for even attempting to understand hierarchy ‘from the inside’.⁹

Much has been made of the supposed confusion between England and Britain (Paxman 1998: 44-5; Davies 2000: xxviii-xxxviii), but once the hierarchical point of view is properly understood, it can be seen that there is more than simple confusion at stake. In the diagram A and B can stand for England and Scotland or England and Wales. At one level they are separate and equal; from the hierarchical point of view, there is another superordinate level

⁹ For sympathetic (though not uncritical) presentations of Dumont’s ideas, see Quigley (1993) and Parkin (2003). For typical unsympathetic critiques, see Berreman (1971) and Appadurai (1986).

where England stands for Scotland and Wales and includes them within itself. The gendered reading of the diagram is also appropriate. Although women's national sports teams exist, they are very far from being popularly accepted as equally valid and worthy representatives of the nation.

The decline of hierarchical views of Britain

The hold and pervasiveness of the hierarchical view of British nationhood can be seen if one reads Norman Davies' acclaimed history of Britain, *The Isles: a history*. He decided that any name for the area he was describing begged too many questions: hence 'the Isles'. To have one's schoolboy history presented in a consciously un-hierarchical and anti-hierarchical way is both a pleasure and a shock. Each historical chapter includes a special historiographical section that reviews the way the period in question was treated by later historians and public opinion: the way, for example, in which nineteenth-century histories of Roman Britain were always written from the Roman point of view because of the affinity of one multinational imperial identity with another. The way in which history has been taught in England (perhaps Wales and Scotland have been different) has been deeply imbued with hierarchical assumptions. I would hazard a guess that in English secondary schools one is more likely to be taught Japanese or Sanskrit than Welsh, and more likely to have experimental sports lessons in Aikido than in Gaelic Football or Cornish Wrestling. Davies' history does not just show how history should be written, it is also a passionate polemic against the unthinking hierarchical presuppositions of English historians over so many years.¹⁰

How could and can so many metropolitan intellectuals be blind to Celtic history and literature for so long? Dumont's notion of hierarchy may help us to understand how many people were able to accept the unequal and unsystematic relationships between Wales and England, Scotland and England, for so many years. The fact that many people, even many people living in the UK (not just foreigners), continue to use 'England' to refer to Great Britain, or to the UK, doing so quite unthinkingly, illustrates the unconscious hierarchical model that they hold of the relationship of the nation's constituent parts.

For many years now the Scots have resented, resisted and contradicted this assumption whenever and wherever they could. But for those who did not venture to Scotland or the more assertive parts of Wales (it was always recognized that Northern Ireland was different), it was

¹⁰ It is also a pleasure to see that good historical method – interpreting the distinctions of each period in terms that made sense at that time and not reading back the present into the past – coincides with the precepts of anthropological method.

possible to continue in the old way. England football fans always used to carry the Union Jack. The England football team is still thought of by many as *the* national team. In cricket 'England' is indeed the name of the national team, as it is of the national bank. It was only during the Euro 1996 football tournament, hosted by England, that, for the first time, one saw more St George crosses than Union Jacks. The idea of England as a separate entity within Britain had arrived, partly as a reaction to the success of Scottish self-assertion, which itself was a reaction to rule by Thatcherism from London.¹¹

The old hierarchical assumptions – the facile understanding that 'British' and 'English' are the same thing and can be substituted for one another (an assumption that once was perfectly acceptable even to Scots [Davies 2000: 616]) – are no longer acceptable. As long as they were in place, the English, unlike the Scots, the Welsh or the Irish, did not need to think about who they were. But now they do. As columnist Mark Lawson observed (*The Guardian*, 25 March 2000), just as Dave Hilton had woken up one morning, like a character from Kafka, to find he was no longer Scottish, 'millions are rising to the realisation that they are no longer British, even if our grandparents were born there.' Sport, and in particular football (soccer), has arguably played a leading role in the perpetuation of nested 'imagined communities' within the British state and in the gradual break-up of those identities into four separate nations. The census, the map and the museum may have been the crucial tools in the formation of modern nations where there were none before (Anderson 1991); sport is surely the key symbol for nationhood today.

Conclusion

I hope to have shown that the basic nationalist model has been understood in two broadly contrasting ways, and that there has been a definite progression from one to the other as the dominant mode over the last hundred years or so. As the more egalitarian way of interpreting nationalist assumptions has become stronger, the UK has moved closer to a federal model of government – for all that the 'f' word has remained taboo within Britain's political class. Sports teams representing different, overlapping and conflicting geographical units could seem quite natural and acceptable from, say, 1870 to 1990, when the hierarchical mode was dominant. But it seems increasingly anachronistic in the egalitarian and federalist world of today. It may follow from this argument that establishing a UK football team – on the model of the British Lions rugby team – would be the single most effective move politicians in

¹¹ Clinton's, the card shop, only started selling St George's Day cards in 1995, but they quickly took off. See

Gellner, the British

Westminster could make to ensure that Scottish devolution does not lead to Scottish independence. On the other hand, it could provoke that very result.

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REVISITING SRINIVAS'S 'REMEMBERED VILLAGE'

JELLE J.P. WOUTERS AND TANKA B. SUBBA

Introduction

Srinivas had the rare opportunity to call both Radcliffe-Brown and Evans-Pritchard his supervisors. He arrived in Oxford, in the academic year 1945-46, Radcliffe-Brown's last at the university, after first completing his PhD at Bombay University, where he worked under Ghurye. It was Radcliffe-Brown who repeatedly suggested to him the scientific importance of making a field study of a multi-caste community in India (p. 1).¹ The existing body of writing was, he felt, mainly concerned with the institution of caste at the all-India or at least provincial level, and it did not reflect day-to-day social relations between members of different castes living in the same community. When Radcliffe-Brown retired from the Chair in July 1946, Srinivas was transferred to Evans-Pritchard, and in his own words, 'no two teachers were more different' (p. 2). Srinivas writes about Evans-Pritchard's highly personal and unorthodox but effective teaching methods and says that he was 'generous with his time and ideas' (p. 2). In the end it was Evans-Pritchard who offered Srinivas a University Lectureship in Indian Sociology and Anthropology, with the additional 'payment' of being allowed to spend his first year in post carrying out field research in India (p. 4). It was in this year – after finishing his doctorate in Oxford, in which he completed his analysis of the South Indian Coorgs, but before taking up his lectureship – that Srinivas carried out field research in a village in Karnataka, South India, which in 1948 he baptized 'Rampura'. This would result, almost thirty years later, in his monograph, *The remembered village* (1976).

This somewhat quaint title demands a brief explanation. In 1970 Srinivas joined the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University as a fellow, with the aim of completing a 'much-postponed' (p. xviii) monograph on his field study in Rampura in the late 1940s. On 24 April 1970 the Center was set on fire by an arsonist, and all three copies of his fieldwork notes were reduced to ashes. Modern technology enabled some fragments to be recovered, and luckily his original field diaries, though without the data being processed and analysed, were still intact in Delhi. Depressed by the loss of his precious notes, Srinivas decided to abandon his undertaking altogether. It was Professor Tax who deserves to

¹ Pages references are to Srinivas 1976 unless otherwise stated.

be thanked for reassuring Srinivas that the book was potentially of such value that it had to be written, albeit, due to the circumstances, largely based on memory: hence the title *The remembered village* (p. xiv).

Professor Tax's remark about the potential importance of Srinivas's pursuit proved correct. *The remembered village* has turned into a hallmark of post-colonial Indian sociology and anthropology. Through this book, Srinivas introduced, or at least popularized, what are now influential ideas and concepts like 'the dominant caste', 'sanskritization' and 'westernization' in the context of inter-caste relations. Generations of Indian sociologists and anthropologists have been educated with Kulle Gowda, Nadu Gowda and the headman, the three main figures in Srinivas's monograph. His book is still widely taught in universities in India and abroad and remains a 'must-read' for all social scientists studying the subcontinent in one way or the other.

The approximate location of Rampura can be guessed by the few directions Srinivas provides in his book: 'a few hours from Mysore', 'located on the Mysore-Hogur bus road', with 'an official population of 1519 people'; a small map added by Srinivas shows that the village is bounded to the west by a canal and is in the vicinity of a big tank. However, the real name of the village and where it was located were for long known only to a few individuals like A.M. Shah, who accompanied Srinivas during his second visit to the village in 1952, Srinivas's student and research assistant V.S. Parthasarathy, Srinivas's nephew and former Professor of Sociology at Jawaharlal Nehru University, Panini, and of course Srinivas himself. Many anthropologists from Mysore in the state of Karnataka reportedly asked Srinivas for the real name and exact location of the village, but they failed to obtain the necessary information from him. These details remained 'unknown' until a group of anthropologists working with the Department of Anthropology, Mysore University and the Anthropological Survey of India's Southern Regional Office in Mysore were finally able to identify the village.²

Not too sure yet about the 'discovery', one of the present co-authors travelled with a group of anthropologists from Mysore down to the 'discovered' village to see if it was really the village where Srinivas had done his fieldwork from January to November 1948. The

² There appears to be an element of heroism in the claims made by some anthropologists in Mysore. It is true that Srinivas was reluctant to divulge the real name of the village and its exact location for whatever personal or professional reasons, but his former assistant A. M. Shah, now a well-known professor of sociology at Delhi University who accompanied Srinivas to the village in 1952, or Professor Panini, Srinivas's nephew, could certainly have been contacted for this information too.

famous ‘pipal’ tree that Srinivas mentions nostalgically in his book did not exist anymore, but he was more than convinced that Kodagahalli was none other than Srinivas’s Rampura. The sketch maps of the village and the house where he lived inserted between pages 10 and 11 of his book were a great help in this regard. Srinivas’s house had not changed structurally, although the post office had moved out of the house, which itself had deteriorated considerably because no family was living there any longer. The area where bullocks were sheltered at night at the time Srinivas lived in the house was now used to store bamboo wickers used in the growing of silkworms, but the rooms occupied by Srinivas and his cook and the veranda where he received the villagers and interviewed them were still clearly identifiable. As if all this was not enough, an old man living next to the house remembered enough about Srinivas to confirm the village as the location of Rampura.

On 1 January 2008, a group of 29 students under the supervision of one of the co-authors boarded a train in Guwahati in India’s northeast to travel south to Kodagahalli, Srinivas’s Rampura, to carry out fieldwork as part of their MA or MSc degrees in anthropology. Three days in the train passed before a short two-hour bus ride dropped us off at the headman’s house, curiously right in front of the house Srinivas had stayed in during his period in the village. Our writing here will be ethnographically informed, comparing empirical observations of Srinivas’ with our own, rather than theoretically dense, as we aim to provide some insights about continuity and change in the village sixty years after Srinivas’s departure.

Re-studying monographs

Taking a group of students to a distant village and staying there for about a month or so for their fieldwork training as part of their master’s degree requirements in anthropology is a practice almost a century old in India, starting with the establishment of an Anthropology department in Calcutta University in 1918. Group fieldwork is also a central tool of the Anthropological Survey of India, the largest government research organization in the world, which has carried out several national projects like the *All India Anthropometric Survey* and *All India Material Trait Survey* after carefully training groups of field investigators on the tools and techniques of data collection and sending them in groups to different parts of the country for the purpose of collecting data. Such fieldwork undoubtedly has its disadvantages. It needs a lot more planning and preparation than fieldwork by an individual does. If the research unit is relatively small there may be researcher overkill, ‘the one commits, all suffer’

syndrome may be at work, and there is always the risk that researchers end up interacting more among themselves than with the people they are there to study. On the positive side, group fieldwork can accomplish a lot more work in less time and for less expenditure. When research activities like taking measurements and recording them or interviewing and audio-visual recording of interviews are done by many individuals instead of just one, it can lead to greater efficiency of work. Secondly, provided a research group consists of both male and female researchers, gender issues in fieldwork are largely overcome, as respondents of both sexes are equally approachable for the collection of data, something that an individual male or female anthropologist may not always be able to achieve (for more discussion of group fieldwork, see Subba 2009).

Anthropologists are often better known for the communities they have worked on than for their specific ethnographic and theoretical contributions. Malinowski is associated with the Trobrianders, Evans-Pritchard with the Nuer and Fortes with the Tallensi. In the context of India, Rivers is linked with the Todas, Radcliffe-Brown with the Andaman Islanders, Elwin with the Baigas and the Gonds, Burling with the Garos and Fürer-Haimendorf with the Apatanis and the Konyak Nagas. Indeed many anthropologists prefer to have their 'own' fieldwork site to which they may return, though often for shorter spells than their initial fieldwork, during the course of their professional careers. Re-studying a village has been a popular pursuit in the anthropological tradition, although an anthropologist re-studying his own field site is more common than an anthropologist re-studying someone else's. This is evident from the rather long and vibrant tradition of re-studies or diachronic studies, or as Firth called them, 'dual synchronic' studies in anthropology found in the works of Carstairs (1983) and Gowloog (1995). Their reflections on their own diachronic studies in anthropology clearly show that such studies differ not only in terms of who conducted the re-study and after how many years, but also in terms of the number of field trips made for the re-study. It is also apparent that there is no uniform method or technique followed in such studies, whether by the original anthropologist or by a new one.

Diachronic studies have some marked advantages (Sarana 1973, Epstein 1978). They provide us with ethnographic data, which, in comparison with the initial work, can be analysed diachronically and may therefore be a useful tool for investigating social change. Furthermore, a re-study may provide multiple perspectives on the same research unit. Especially in caste India, it makes quite a difference whether an anthropologist studies a village through the eyes of the Brahmans, the dominant caste, or, for example, a low caste. A re-study of the same village but from a different angle may provide illuminating additional

information. Of course, an embarrassing situation may arise if the re-studying anthropologist comes up with totally different conclusions to the original one, especially if the time-span between the two studies is not very great.

One factor a re-studying anthropologist may have to cope with is the image which his predecessor has left behind. In the case of our fieldwork, there were not many people who remembered Srinivas, and even fewer, if any, who had read his book on the village. Thus, we were not constrained by what Epstein writes – ‘wherever possible it is desirable to have the same researcher conduct the later restudy’ – because, according to her, a new investigator takes time ‘to develop full empathy for the society he studies’ (Epstein 1978: 128-9). Furthermore, Epstein writes that the new investigator should contact the original researcher and make use of his unpublished materials, but when we arrived in Rampura Srinivas had long been dead, and his unpublished materials had been consumed by the fire that broke out at Stanford University mentioned earlier in this essay.

On the other hand, if the time span between a study and a re-study is quite short, and if local people have been able to read what has been written about them, the re-studying anthropologist may end up carrying the burden of his or her predecessor’s behaviour and writings, especially if the former anthropologist was not that popular or if the locals do not agree with what has been written about them. In building rapport with the villagers, a re-studying anthropologist may have to mediate between existing memories and contributions of his predecessor, and his own unique background, personality and research interests.

Re-studying a monograph also appears somewhat like a flash-back. Although none of the students had been in the Indian state of Karnataka before, when our bus passed a big pond on the right of the road and a Hindu temple on the left we knew, having read about Srinivas’s arrival in the village, that we had arrived. Wandering through the village with every detail Srinivas had written carefully ordered at the back of our minds was indeed an extraordinary experience. We could name the various temples without asking the villagers, we knew how many acres of land the headman was supposed to have, or at least had in his possession in the past, and we already had some idea about which castes had settled in the village and their traditional occupations. Furthermore, we could tell when the school had shifted from the *panchayat* building to its present location, locate the mosque and the Urdu school, and easily identify the Harijan ward. Moreover, we already knew that *ragi* (a kind of millet) was the staple food and oxen a valuable possession.

A central question we asked ourselves was whether Rampura and Kodagahalli were indeed the same village. Geographically speaking, Kodagahalli and Rampura are the same

village, although as a settlement Kodagahalli is considerably bigger than was Rampura. The other methodologically important question was whether we were studying the same people that Srinivas had studied? Most people alive in the village today are the children, grandchildren and even great grandchildren of the people Srinivas writes about in his monograph. Although striking continuities may abound, we cannot fully assume that, six decades after the initial research took place, we are studying the same people. Furthermore, the village does not exist in isolation of wider developments, and indeed much has changed in India over the past sixty years or so. There are theories suggesting that the caste system is weakening if not dying out. Other voices suggest that processes of sanskritization, secularisation and modernisation have transformed the caste system. Furthermore, there are claims that Harijans, Untouchables, Dalits, Scheduled Castes or whatever other name be given to them have enjoyed upward mobility, or that caste is gradually being replaced by class. At the same time, there are counter-claims stating that caste rigidity is not declining but reinforcing itself, though perhaps in novel ways. All of this made it improbable that social relations in Kodagahalli have remained unchanged since Srinivas studied the village in 1948.

Arguing that Rampura and Kodagahalli are no longer the same, however, does not mean that we entered the field as if it had not been studied before. The ultimate purpose of our study is to compare present-day findings with those recorded by Srinivas sixty years earlier. Secondly, and perhaps somewhat debatably, Srinivas has set the agenda for our research: since we selected those aspects of village life which Srinivas extensively writes about as the focus of our own re-investigation, we may have missed some new phenomena in the village simply because they did not occur to or were not noted by Srinivas. One example might be the presence of labour migrants staying in make-shift camps in sugarcane fields a mile or so from the village settlement, who come to the village when local landowners are in need of labour and depart when their presence is no longer desired. However, we hope that, by focusing on the same topics that Srinivas did sixty years ago, we are able to provide some indications of continuity and change in the village.

Categorizing outsiders

Srinivas writes that without categorization social relations in the village are not possible (p. 165). He narrates how, during a visit of the Adult Literacy Council to the village, the castes of the two delegates were identified within seconds and food preparations arranged accordingly (p. 37). However, if social categorization was of such importance, then how should we cast Srinivas in the village? First of all he was a Brahman, and not one from a

distant, anonymous part of India: indeed, his ancestral village was less than ten miles from Kodagahalli (p. 8). Due to this spatial proximity, it did not take the villagers long to find out that Srinivas belonged to a landowning family. Together this made Srinivas a landowning Brahman, which elevated him straight into the highest socio-economic stratum of the village. The fact that he had spent many years in Bombay and abroad did not alter his caste position, at least not according to the villagers. It had affected Srinivas himself, however, and he defined himself as an ‘odd kind of Brahmin’ who did not perform daily rituals, did not uphold the custom of painting the *namam* (the caste-symbol of the Iyengars or Sri-Vaishnava Brahmins) on his forehead and had broken, while in England, the dietary rules of vegetarianism and teetotalism (p. 34). Srinivas had to deal with a sharp disjuncture between his perception of himself and the role of an orthodox landowning Brahman in which he was cast by the villagers. This disjuncture not only occasionally translated itself into Srinivas being laughed at and at times even reprimanded for his indifference to rules of purity and pollution (p. 35), but more seriously it prevented him from building a rapport with the Harijans³ and Muslims in the village, as this, Srinivas thought, might not be appreciated by the village establishment (p. 47).

In contrast with the rather straightforward way in which Srinivas could be categorized by the villagers, our own arrival in Kodagahalli created a problem of categorisation for them. Whereas Srinivas arrived with Nachcha, his personal cook, and twenty-six pieces of luggage (p. 11), we arrived in a group of thirty researchers and had arranged a whole bus and a van for the occasion. Our arrival must indeed have been a much more impactful event than when Srinivas quietly stepped off the Hogur-bound bus. Our group consisted almost entirely of Mongoloid tribes from northeast India, and we were all initially mistaken to be some of the Tibetan refugees who have been living in the Mundgod and Bylakuppe settlements in Karnataka since 1959, whom the villagers had seen before they met us and who very much resembled most of us. As we started to interact with the villagers, one of the first things they wanted to ascertain was our community backgrounds, but when they realized that they had not heard of names like Khasi, Mizo, Hmar, Ao and Tangkhul, they soon gave up and categorized us into Hindu and Christian only. They also soon came to know that several of us ate the meat of cow, dog, snake, pig and frog. The villagers may have taken this information

³ We are aware that the term ‘Harijan’ is regarded as somewhat old-fashioned these days, and over the years many other names have been coined to label the lowest ritual layer of the caste system. However, we have opted to use the term in this article for conceptual clarity, precisely because Srinivas consistently applied it in his monograph.

with a pinch of salt, but what really shocked them was their discovery that one of the female students smoked, as did the sight of the male students taking a bath in just their underclothes at the Kaveri River Canal that separates the settlement area of the village from its cultivation area or at the huge lake where Srinivas went to enjoy the beauty of the setting sun. One of the elderly villagers requested the professor in charge of the students to ask them to wear proper knee-length shorts while bathing. Whereas Srinivas was blamed for not behaving as a landowning Brahman ought to do, some of our habits and practices were ridiculed as not abiding with Hindu customs in the first place, despite the fact that we were there six decades after Srinivas first lived there. In a little while, however, the two sides became acquainted with each other, and as soon as the villagers realized that we had humble and good intentions, we were categorized as ‘respectable outsiders’ and treated as such.

The changing village

Srinivas devotes a whole chapter to ‘the changing village’ and reflects: ‘looking back, I find that I was lucky to have lived in Rampura at a crucial period in its history. In 1948, it still retained enough continuity with the past while the potential was building up for radical change’ (p. 232). It was indeed an eventful period. India had just won its independence, Gandhi had called upon all Hindus to embrace Harijans, and the state and politics had started to impact on villages in a big way. However, the discussion of what is traditional and what may be called modern, or in other words the mingling of forces of continuity and pressures for change, is not, of course, restricted to the first years of India’s independence. Riding a bicycle or listening to film music over the radio (p. 253) was considered modern in Srinivas’s time, but these activities are now associated with earlier times. Today it is motorcycles and cable TV that are judged modern. It is true that Srinivas lived in the village at a rather unique time in history, yet one could claim that, with market capitalism, identity politics, technological innovations, reservation policies and mass education all having entered the village on an unprecedented scale in recent years, the interplay between tradition and modernity is as ‘real’ now as it was during Srinivas’s time.

Srinivas observes that, although villager’s relations with the external environment were mediated through agriculture, relations with other human beings were mediated through caste (p. 164). It was not caste in the sense of the all-India category of *varna* that mattered in the village, but caste in the sense of *jati*, local endogamous groups. A stranger’s caste was immediately inquired about, and this little piece of information determined, to a large extent, how the villagers behaved towards him (p. 164). Knowing a person’s caste, Srinivas

continues, was enough to know about his occupation, diet and life-style. While not every caste member was able to make a living out of his traditional occupation, there was a general feeling in the village that fulfilling one's ascribed occupation was the proper, if not natural, thing for any person to do (p. 165). Further, Srinivas writes about the omnipresence of ideas of hierarchy. Each person belonged to a caste, which, in turn, formed part of a system of ranked castes, which together constituted a local hierarchy. Srinivas observes how cultural elements such as diet, occupation, custom and ritual were distinguished between higher and lower. There were thus higher and lower diets and superior and inferior occupations (p. 167). Contacts between castes were regulated by ideas of pollution and purity, the widest ritual distance being between an orthodox Brahman and a Harijan: for the former, even the presence of the latter was considered polluting. When castes occupied ritual positions relatively close to each other, the structural distance between them was usually emphasized less (p. 187). Although notions of purity and pollution were all-pervasive in the village and, to a large extent, determined the movements of the villagers, Srinivas notes that they were gradually relaxing. He discovers, for example, how inter-dining between Brahmans, Lingayats and Vokkaliga Gowdas on occasions such as weddings had become more frequent (p. 275) and how a few Brahmans had even developed a taste for meat, a departure from tradition that was not appreciated by their orthodox counterparts (p. 276). However, this relaxation primarily concerned the higher castes of the villages and not the Harijans, who were treated differently from every other caste group in the village (p. 198).

This division seems to hold still today, though an ethnography of a village teashop reveals how caste discriminations have been remapped. Whereas Harijans were earlier excluded by teashop owners, these days they are allowed to order tea in one of the stalls located on the Mysore–Hogur road. Some Harijans have grasped this opportunity and can be found near the tea stalls early in the morning. Caste discrimination is reproduced, however, in them not being allowed to sit on one of the wooden benches inside the teashop but being obliged to sip their tea standing outside. Further, the low castes are served in disposable plastic cups which are thrown away after use, as opposed to the high castes, who are served in glasses which are cleaned and reused. The compounds surrounding the tea stalls in the village are dirtied by an enormous amount of plastic waste, revealing an unexpected link between caste practices and environmental pollution.

Not all shopkeepers in the village follow caste practices, however. A few months before our arrival, a Keralite entrepreneur opened a bakery-cum-tea shop in the village. He has a keen eye for business opportunities as his *badam* (almond) milk and pastries have proved

very popular, and throughout the day a quite sizable crowd can be spotted around his shop. For commercial reasons – or perhaps, being an outsider, he did not know who was of high caste and who low – he serves all his customers in disposable plastic cups. Most villagers do not object to his indiscriminate service, yet for a few high-caste individuals the idea of being served in the same manner as the low castes is too radical a change. They demand special treatment, which the shopkeeper satisfies by rushing to a nearby teashop to borrow some glasses.

Talking about religion, Srinivas was confident that the villagers lived in a theistic universe in the sense that all the villagers had a deeply grounded belief that gods, deities and spirits existed. Faith in a particular deity might occasionally be shaken, for example, after prolonged misfortunes despite extensive ritual sacrifices, but that merely prompted individuals to worship another deity, not to abandon their beliefs altogether. Any atheistic argument in which deities were rejected did not make sense to the villagers (p. 323). In fact, Srinivas annoyed his friend Nadu Gowda by countering his religious inquiries with questions such as ‘Why should people believe in God?’ (p. 323). On the whole the theistic universe as Srinivas describes it appears to have remained generally unchallenged. However, a number of outspoken atheists have come to the village, among them a secondary school teacher who argues without hesitation that Hinduism is only meant to serve Brahmans in order to safeguard their authority and status at the expense of lower castes. Hence a lower caste person like himself, he argues, is better off without Hinduism. Keshavam, a self-proclaimed film-maker, may be regarded as another ‘odd’ figure in the village. He is outspoken in his detestation of village life and claims to live there only because he is financially broke, supposedly due to his having been cheated by a co-producer. For Keshavam there are only two castes: men and women. Existing caste boundaries in the village, he maintains, are no longer enforced upon Harijans: on the contrary, Harijans are placing restrictions on themselves by not interacting with higher caste villagers. Keshavam substantiates his rejection of caste discriminations by maintaining friendships with Harijans, including visiting their houses, although his views are not widely shared in the village.

Turning to technological changes, Srinivas mentions the establishment of two rice mills, the construction of a middle school (p. 233) and plans for a hospital (which has never materialized, a modest health centre having been built instead). He also talks about how the villagers were overawed when they saw a bulldozer levelling six acres of land belonging to the headman (p. 238). He further describes how motorized vehicles started to contest the monopoly of the ubiquitous bullock cart as a principal means of transportation. An increasing

number of bus lines had started linking rural and urban areas, and Srinivas writes with anticipation that ‘it looked as though the day was not far off when Rampura would be a dormitory of Mysore’ (p. 233). Srinivas’s prediction has turned out to be correct, and further technological innovations, despite the aggravating side effect of traffic jams, have reduced the distance from Kodagahalli to Mysore to just one and a half hours or so. Regular buses between the village and the city have further reduced the structural distance between them. For the bulk of villagers in Srinivas’s time, Mysore was seen as a faraway, unknown if not somewhat dangerous place. Srinivas narrates how a villager named Kulle Gowda had created a job for himself as a broker between the village and urban areas. Villagers entrusted him with buying city goods such as saris and jewellery, and it was Kulle Gowda who often accompanied them to Mysore if they wished to see a lawyer, doctor or government official. He calculated a commission for his work and made quite good money at it (p. 83). Brokers between the individual and the government still exist, yet someone like Kulle Gowda, personifying the extension of the rural into the urban, would be harder to conceive today. Students in Kodagahalli usually take a morning bus to their colleges or Mysore University to return by the late afternoon bus that arrives home just in time for dinner. The same goes for those villagers who are employed in Mysore or the other nearby urban centre called Bannur. Furthermore, housewives know where in Mysore the cheapest goods can be found and which sari-maker has the reputation for using fine materials for a reasonable price. If they are not going to the city for purposes of education or employment, many men in the village can tell you where the best meat is served or in which ‘teashop’ you can drop in for a cheap local brew. Knowing Mysore has ceased to be an opportunity for a privileged few. It has become a place next door, a place to roam around in one’s free time, a place from which new ideas and products filter down to the village.

Nor has agricultural mechanization passed Kodagahalli by. The declining utility of bullocks may be seen as an indicator of this process. Srinivas writes about the importance to the villagers of possessing a handsome pair of bullocks. Without bullocks, a man was just a labourer or a servant placed in the lowest category of the rural economic hierarchy. Possession of a pair of bullocks brought social prestige and was vital for an individual aiming to climb the social ladder (p. 131). Possessing a healthy and muscular pair of bullocks still brings social prestige and status in the village, but now more on the symbolic and ritual level. At the yearly Sankranti festival, bullocks are gaily decorated, paraded through the village and forced to walk over burning straw as a form of ritual cleansing, thus acknowledging their social and ritual significance. A good pair of oxen cost a fortune even today. Some small

farmers continue to use bullocks for ploughing and to transport materials from their fields to the village and vice versa. However, they are regularly pushed aside by motorbikes and cars, which are present in moderate numbers in the village. Also their agricultural utility is increasingly being taken over by tractors, while trucks arrive empty but leave the village crammed with sugarcane or other harvested crops.

However, not all technological innovations have been readily adopted by the villagers. Sanitation is one such area in which age-old habits are not being replaced by modern technology. Srinivas was told to answer calls of nature under the protective shade of a big tree about two hundred yards behind his house. This was therefore not meant to be a private affair, and Srinivas was rather astonished when villagers kept asking him at what time of the day he went to the toilet. This experience, among others, made him conclude that the human biological dimension of life characterized rural culture (p. 16). Today some houses have an attached bathroom, yet most of the men, though less so the women, continue to prefer to defecate in the open. Early morning at dawn you find men squatting down on either side of the highway with their lungis lifted up and a piece of cloth covering their heads, sitting side by side answering the calls of nature, as well as queries and jokes from one another. A World Bank development project provided free-standing bathrooms to a number of houses in the village some years ago, yet most of them are not used for their intended purpose but as storage rooms instead. Indeed, the World Bank has probably overlooked Srinivas's conclusion that the biological dimension of human life is an important aspect of rural culture in the region and treated the village as a model village instead.

The foot of the ritual hierarchy in Kodagahalli

Srinivas devotes a separate section of his book to the Harijans because they were treated differently from all other caste groups, particularly where ritual matters were concerned. At the same time, he was clearly aware that his was a high-caste view of the village. At different points in his monograph he admits his shortcomings in not having built enough rapport with the Harijans and Muslims of the village (pp. 49, 319), a lack he regrets but could not avoid, as he needed to preserve cordial relations with the headman and other high-caste villagers to ensure a smooth stay in the village (p. 49).

The headman may have been a source of technological innovation in the village. He was a conservative in social and religious matters and vehemently disapproved of Srinivas when the latter, upon being asked by the headman whether he thought Harijans should be allowed inside temples, replied in the affirmative (p. 65). Their eating of beef alone, the

headman argued, was already reason enough for excluding them from temples (p. 65). Since the Mysore Government had passed the Mysore Temple Entry Authorization Act in 1948, which legally granted Harijans access to any temple (p. 200), this was not just a random discussion: the headman's reaction may have reflected a widespread feeling of anxiety among upper-caste individuals.

Despised yet vital was how Srinivas saw the position of Harijans in the village. An aura of ascribed pollution floated around them, which made even their physical nearness inauspicious for the higher castes. From an economic point of view, their contribution to the village economy was important, if not crucial. Harijans provided an abundant supply of agricultural labour, while in the off-season they were employed in carrying out canal and road repairs and all other off-season chores (p. 199). Furthermore, they performed certain essential services during festivals such as whitewashing the outer face of the temple walls, beating the drum and removing the leaves on which the villagers had dined (p. 198). Their economic significance notwithstanding, it was their perceived polluted being that largely structured their movements in the village. Their polluting touch had to be controlled, which resulted in restrictions and prohibitions being placed upon them (p. 186).

Nor can the Muslim community in the village be excluded from this discussion. Srinivas notes how relations between Muslims and Hindus were intimate if not occasionally so close that Srinivas wondered how much Hinduism had gone into them (p. 204). Most of the Muslims were landless and made a living out of trade, which made them dependent on their primarily Hindu customers (p. 205). Not all was tranquil between them, however. Muslims were criticized for their indifference to pollution because of their willingness to visit the Harijan ward (p. 207). Although relations between individual Muslims and Hindus were ones of trust, relations between them as collective groups were occasionally marked by suspicion in light of the Indo-Pakistan conflict over Kashmir and the Indian army marching into the princely state of Hyderabad (p. 210).

Their separate Muslim identity was, and still is, partly reproduced by the enrolment of all Muslim children in the small Urdu primary school in the village. The right of Muslims to be taught in Urdu is recognized by the government, yet Srinivas notes that resources for such schools were often too meagre to provide satisfactory teaching. In 1948 the Urdu school had fewer than thirty children and only one teacher (p. 250). These days the number of teachers has doubled, from one to two, yet with classes one to five all taught at the same time in the same room, it is no secret that the quality of education is lower than in the general primary school in the village. The village Muslim community is aware of this, yet providing their

children with Urdu education is prioritised, even if that implies their children receiving a relatively lower standard of primary education. The location of the Urdu school, at the end of the Harijan ward, appears symbolic of their ritual status in the village. They are categorized as a caste, well below the Shudra artisan castes yet above the Harijans. The Muslims in the village seem to occupy a non-existent category in the all-India *varna* system, yet this is not something the villagers seem to be worried about. *Jati* hierarchies are sufficiently localized and flexible to incorporate any group, be they Hindu or non-Hindu. Srinivas's observation that the distinction between Muslims and Hindus is occasionally blurred holds true still today. When, during our brief farewell ceremony, a Hindu devotional song was performed, no villager was surprised that the singer was actually a Muslim. He was acknowledged as the best singer in the village, and this was, at least on this occasion, more important than his Muslim background. On the whole it seems that the mutual cordial relations noted by Srinivas may have declined somewhat. Though our time in the village was not long enough to make a profound judgment, on several occasions we heard Hindus talking in a negative, if not insulting terms about Muslims, we heard Hindu peasants saying that they do not appreciate their children hanging around with Muslim children, and we witnessed a Muslim boy being chased away by a Hindu peasant for playing in front of his house, whereas he did not object to a group of Hindu boys doing the same.

On the whole, Srinivas describes inter-caste relations in the village as cooperative, if not friendly (p. 245). Although we are not in a position to dispute his claim, the life-histories of elderly Harijans made us wonder whether the phrase 'cooperative relations' was not a euphemism for the practice of the higher castes in enforcing docility upon Harijans. Now in his eighties, Ramanma was a young man in the late 1940s. Like many other Harijans, he worked as a *jita* servant⁴ for a high-caste patron. For most of the time he was employed in the fields, but he also narrated how he had to clean his master's house, take care of the buffaloes, collect firewood and perform all other sorts of chores. Ramanma remembers the working conditions as harsh and recalls how he was beaten when he did not complete his allotted tasks in time. It was his patron's duty to give him food, yet it was usually 'yesterday's food', and

⁴ Srinivas defines *jita* servants as having a 'contractual' servanthip. 'Under it a poor man contracts to serve a wealthier man for one to three years. The terms of the service, including the wages to be paid by the master, are usually reduced to writing. His master advances, at the beginning of the service, a certain sum of money to the servant or his guardian and this is worked off by the servant. [...] Frequently, before the period of the service runs out, the servant or his guardian borrows another sum of money and thus prolongs the service. Formerly it was not unknown for a man to spend all his working life between ten and seventy years of age in the service of one master' (p. 13).

the portions bore no relationship to the drudgery of his labour. It is fair to say, however, that Srinivas was aware of the depressed working conditions of many Harijan *jita* servants: 'both Nachcha and I woke up to the headman giving instructions in the raspy tone reserved for them. Occasionally there was a burst of abuse including the usual obscenities' (p. 59); 'I could not help watching how they were being treated and the more I watched the more I realized how wretched their condition was' (p. 60). Turning our conversation to rules of purity and pollution, Ramanma calls to mind how he was obliged to squat with his head bowed almost to the ground in front of his patron. Furthermore, he was not allowed to wear sandals, was compelled to wear black clothes only, and was not allowed to use Gudi Street, the main road in the village. Reflecting back, Ramanma told us that, although untouchability was still an everyday reality in the village, changes for the better had taken place, and Harijan youngsters today, he felt, enjoyed certain freedoms which were beyond the imagination of their grandparents half a century ago.

Pressures for change, forces of continuity

Srinivas notes how the potential for radical change was building up in the late 1940s (p. 233), and not infrequently Harijans were the subjects of those changes. With the introduction of the adult franchise, politicians started to see Harijans as vote-banks, and voices for caste-equality grew louder. Progressive reformers were urging Harijans to refuse to remove the carcasses of dead animals, not to beat the drums during festivals and not to perform any other degrading tasks (p. 201). The by now independent government of India judged caste discrimination to be a problem, and efforts were made not only to abolish untouchability, but also to facilitate Harijans in improving their often poor economic conditions. These ideological changes, which manifested themselves in pro-Harijan policies on the part of the government, percolated all the way down to Rampura, but they were resented by upper-caste villagers, who felt their dominant position being threatened. Srinivas narrates how the headman manipulated a government scheme directed at the Harijans. The scheme was intended to fund Harijans in replacing their thatched roofs with tiles, and the budget was to be disbursed through the headman. Instead of providing the necessary budget at one go, however, the headman distributed only tiny sums of money at a time, which the Harijans used for their most pressing needs, and in a few instances for toddy (a local alcoholic brew). The government scheme did not deliver, and Srinivas reports the talk among the villagers that the Harijans had misused the money (p. 255). Caste foundations were seen as being shaken and

harbingers of change as abounding, yet the proposed reforms had not quite materialized in the village.

Pro-Harijan legislation and voluminous government schemes have continued ever since, yet legislative changes and public opinion on the state level still seem far ahead of the everyday practices and ideas held by most villagers in Kodagahalli. Upper-caste villagers, particularly the educated ones, are quick to assert that untouchability has retreated somewhat into the distant past. They explain it as something which took place in earlier times but which has been eradicated by the advancement of education and modernisation. A number of college students belonging to the locally dominant Vokkaliga Gowda caste supported their claim that this was an untouchable-free village by offering to assist us in collecting our census data from the Harijan ward, and, indeed, they did not seem to have any reluctance to enter lower-caste houses. This does mark a significant shift from earlier times, of which Srinivas writes that upper-caste villagers rarely if ever visited the Harijan ward, but rather used Muslim mediators if an important message, usually a call for labourers, needed to be conveyed there (p. 208). However, the fact that upper-caste individuals may today enter lower-caste houses should not come as too great a surprise because what was not possible in the past and still is largely not so even today is the entry of the lower castes into the houses, and even the tea shops, of the upper castes. If upper-caste members did not enter the houses of the Harijans, as Srinivas notes, it was not due to any restriction but was a choice they exercised. Srinivas's comment on the use of Muslim mediators thus seems to reflect a Brahmanical concern. Some visible changes notwithstanding, in more general terms there seems to be a disjuncture between public opinion as expressed and daily practice in the village. Most villagers condemn untouchability, and indeed it is punishable by law today, yet restrictions and prohibitions on the lower castes abound to the extent that, if the law were to be strictly enforced, the majority of the villagers would be convicted for practising it in some way or the other.

The most visible form of caste discrimination in the village is the spatial separation of the Harijan ward from those of all the other castes in the village. Located at the opposite side of the Mysore-Hogur road, the Harijan ward is situated on the outskirts of the village, where members of higher castes need not be and need not pass through. Indeed, the road seems to function as a line of pollution manifested in asphalt. True, the question is valid whether Harijans are still largely living separately together because caste rigidity requires them to do so or because people cannot easily move house, particularly where an ancestral house is concerned. Either way, the pervasiveness of spatial exclusion seems to have a rather

singularizing effect. When evening falls, all Harijans, regardless of their educational achievements, forms of employment and social status in the village, return to the same colony from which the stigma of inferiority and pollution has still not been removed.

In addition to the spatial division and the restrictions in the tea shops mentioned earlier, Harijans are prohibited from using the big tank a short way outside the village settlement or any well not located inside the Harijan ward. They are only allowed to wash their clothes downstream so that they do not pollute the higher castes, who wash upstream. Moreover, the village washerman and barber continue to refuse to render their services to Harijans, so that a haircut usually means a trip to Bannur, the closest urban centre, where anonymity allows them inside a barber's shop. One can occasionally also come across passionate caste orthodoxy in the village. A Harijan interpreter was once assisting a group of students during a village census, but when they approached a house which obviously belonged to an upper-caste family, he insisted on waiting outside on the veranda. The students went inside and left after obtaining their data, followed by the Harijan interpreter. Soon afterwards a lady marched out of the house with a bucket of water in order to purify the exact spot on the veranda where the Harijan had squatted. That caste rigidity is not merely in the past was also pointed out by the only Harijan shopkeeper in the village. Describing his business, he sadly admitted that his clientele was rather small: 'higher castes only occasionally buy some *beedies* (tobacco wrapped in leaves for smoking) here, but for all their other necessities they turn to shops owned by upper-caste villagers'. Yet another observation concerns the secondary school in the village. The headmaster claims that as soon as students enter the school compound they shed their caste identity and become equals. A look at the school register, however, revealed that two colours of pen are used to register the pupils: red for Harijans and blue for all others. The headmaster explained that the names of Harijan students need to be marked so that educational officials visiting the school can easily count the number of Harijans enrolled there and dispense grants meant for them. Although his explanation sounds practical enough, one should not forget that discrimination starts with identification and with openly marking the names of Harijan pupils, even though it is supposedly meant for their own benefit.

Significant continuities notwithstanding, some tangible changes in social relations seem to have taken place in the village. However, Harijan 'uplift' movements are patchy and affect individuals rather than the caste as a whole. The Indian Constitution treats all Harijans equally and has allocated benefits and reservations to them as a group. However, they have not all been able to grasp the benefits assigned to them. This is perhaps nothing unusual, as achievements are made by individuals, and a community receives its socio-economic status

depending on the number of such achieving individuals. Furthermore, not every member of a caste can benefit equally because people always outnumber the available resources, and the benefits allocated to a Scheduled Caste are no exception. What remains at the village level is that, although a number of Harijan individuals have been able to improve their social-economic status, as whole castes Harijans are still far behind their upper-caste counterparts. This is an important observation to keep in mind when discussing the multiple changes that may nonetheless have taken place at the lowest ritual layer of the village.

When looking at the question of Harijans and literacy, a trend is found in the village in which Harijan grandparents are illiterate, Harijan parents finished primary school and some of them a few classes higher, while a rather large number of the present generation have passed the SSLC (Secondary School Leaving Certificate) and have been, or presently are, enrolled in colleges or universities. Srinivas writes that prior to 1948 Rampura had produced four graduates (p. 250). Today a couple of dozen are enrolled in higher educational institutes, among them a sizeable number of Harijans. This boom in education, combined with reservation policies and other acts of positive discrimination, has resulted in a rising number of Kodagahalli Harijans holding government jobs, something largely reserved for the higher castes in earlier times. However, this does not necessarily mean that they hold high and influential posts. Most of them are employed in petty jobs at the lower levels of the bureaucracy. Nevertheless Srinivas was confident enough to write that Harijans were chiefly landless labourers (p. 169), whereas today we find them holding diverse jobs such as train conductors, teachers, forest rangers, office clerks and various other blue collar jobs, although a large number continue to hire themselves out as agricultural labourers as well.

Some Harijans in the village have visibly fared well. Having benefitted from the jobs and government schemes on offer to them, they have been able to use their newly earned financial resources in the acquisition of land. Hence the distinction between the upper castes as landowners and lower castes as landless labourers, noted by Srinivas, has become somewhat blurred, and occasionally even turned upside down. One or two Harijan families have even acquired more land than they can cultivate themselves, and during the agricultural peak season they need to employ people to get the work done. Labourers have to be hired, and these are not necessarily fellow Harijans but may include upper-caste individuals, something that would have been practically unheard of in Srinivas's time. This was not only because Harijans were predominantly landless, but also because it was considered natural that Harijans labour for the upper castes in what usually took the form of patron-client

relationships⁵ (p. 216), and certainly not the other way around. Nonetheless this changing economic reality does not entail the the blurring of caste boundaries as such. Although it is customary for a landowner to provide lunch for his employees, an upper-caste person working for a lower-caste one will generally not accept food from the latter but rather bring some 'clean' packed food from home. Indeed, the mingling of economic forces with the caste system is not to be equated with a proportional decrease in notions of purity and pollution.

Economic changes may not parallel changing perceptions of purity and pollution, yet socio-economic upward movement does not come in isolation. Rather, it provides achieving lower-caste individuals with proportionally more social space and prestige than those of their caste fellows who have remained largely impoverished. Srinivas already had this in mind when he wrote that landownership and wealth could occasionally mitigate if not overcome the effects of birth in a low caste (p. 111). Revanna, a Harijan college graduate, may illustrate the point Srinivas made, and we wish to follow it up here.

Having graduated, with Russian language as his major, Revanna is not only among the most highly educated Harijans, he also belongs to the upper intellectual layer of the village as a whole. With his family possessing a few acres of land and living in a concrete, well-furnished house, Revanna's educational achievements seem to match his economic position in the village. At the time of our field research he happened to be jobless, yet he was busy commuting back and forth to Mysore to apply for various government jobs and was quite confident that it would not take him long to find one. Despite his low inborn caste status, Revanna seems to enjoy a considerable amount of recognition and respect in the village, and his movements are not confined to the Harijan ward alone. He seems to be well acquainted with many villagers and in good standing with the headman, while he also maintains multiple inter-caste friendships. These observations are particularly relevant when one sees the opposite happening with 'un-achieving Harijans'. They do not enjoy the same social freedoms as are granted to Revanna, and Harijans employed as agricultural labourers largely move between the fields and the Harijan ward alone, hardly ever crossing over to the main village. Arguing that Harijans are restricted from entering the main village might perhaps be rather strong a statement, as the higher castes claim that Harijans are not prohibited from

⁵ Patron-client relations emerged out of the possession of differential rights in land, and although the client was inferior if not often subordinate to his patron, the latter did have obligations towards his clients. As Srinivas put it, 'a big patron attracted clients as a magnet attracted iron filings. The poor and the weak felt unsafe without a patron. The latter provided a source of livelihood as well as a sense of security. Forces in the local culture were such as to encourage the weak to seek protection from the strong' (p. 217).

doing so. Harijans may nonetheless hesitate to enter the main village because as a self-imposed restriction, a remnant of years of suppression.

A conclusion one may draw from the above is that Harijans are, contrary to Srinivas's observations in 1948, by no means homogeneous. Of course internal differences have always existed, yet these diversities were largely ignored or did not make any sense from the point of view of the upper castes, for whom the Harijans were, so to speak, principally a uniform labour force. This perception seems to have altered, and although as a caste group the latter are ritually looked down upon, room for individual recognition and upward socio-economic movement has opened up. For the achieving Harijans themselves this may not all be a matter of satisfaction, and they may actually find themselves in an ambivalent situation, but being the most educated, they may also be the most critical of caste practices. A number of them have not only abandoned beef-eating and drinking toddy, they are also urging their caste-fellows to do so, and they may blame them for 'backwardness' and 'stubbornness' when their pleas are not followed. Srinivas's concept of sanskritization applies here, and it is ambitious Harijans who attempt to set this process in motion. They may also resist existing caste practices by, for example, refusing to drink tea in one of the teashops or by using razors to shave themselves rather than travelling to the next urban centre to have it done for them. This is not the whole story, however, and we heard Harijans accusing the higher castes, though covertly, for being hypocrites by condemning Harijans for their habits of eating beef and pork and for drinking alcohol, while they themselves are supposedly at least as fond of meat, not to speak of their taste for alcohol. We noticed this when Raghunath, a dominant caste member living in front of the Rama temple and working in the alcohol factory in the village, actually drank alcohol manufactured in the factory every evening and sometimes even during the day sitting at his home and in full view of his wife and daughter. However, most upper-caste individuals, some Harijans argued, do not dare to drink or eat forbidden meat in the village, but travel to Mysore where they can satisfy their needs in anonymity. Being progressive, critical and eager to move upwards, achieving Harijans may find themselves in an 'in-between situation'. By criticizing, if not at times accusing, their own caste fellows, they may have disentangled themselves somewhat from their caste roots. Nonetheless, although upper-caste villagers may be quite willing to make some concessions to them here and there, they are still not quite ready to accept them on a totally equal footing.

Encapsulated change

Changes have taken place in the village, and, as mentioned above, certain technical innovations which the villagers in Srinivas's time considered modern are today thought of as traditional. Furthermore, caste restrictions seem to have loosened, and an individual's potential and achievements are bound less by his caste background today than they were during the late 1940s. On the whole, however, it was not the changes that struck us so much as the striking continuities, though some of them have been remapped between Srinivas's description of the village and 'our' village sixty years later. Local hierarchies and notions of purity, pollution and untouchability may now be reproduced differently, but they continue to shape the social landscape of the village. Nevertheless the reproduction of social boundaries today might not be as obvious and self-evident as it was in earlier times, when Srinivas could generalise the Harijans as impoverished, landless and generally immobile. Today the Harijans in Kodagahalli can no longer be seen as a homogeneous group: mass education, reservation policies and other government schemes have percolated down to the village, yet their effects are patchy, and only a privileged few have been able to grasp some of the benefits assigned to them as a group. Nonetheless individual achievements and merits can, to a certain extent, overcome one's birth in a low caste, and a number of achieving Harijans enjoy proportionally more social freedom and status in the village than their uneducated caste fellows

Yet socio-economic upward movement does not amount to the total abolition of caste practices. There seems to be a disjuncture between the public rhetoric of politicians and government officials, as well as of the villagers themselves, in which untouchability is condemned, and the everyday practices by which Kodagahalli Harijans still remain excluded from certain social spaces. It seems that the caste system, at least on the village level, has to a certain extent been able to absorb wider changes within Indian society. Changes in both the economic and social spheres are affecting the village, yet the path chosen, or more accurately perhaps the path into which these changes are being directed by the upper castes, is rather a long one. Being ranked at the foot of the ritual hierarchy in the village, the Harijans are not in a position to control the changes they desire themselves but still seem to be largely dependent on the social space that has been granted to them by higher castes. It may therefore take another few generations or more before the forces of ritual exclusion become negligible, or at least less effective, in governing the destinies of Harijans in the social and ritual structure of the village. Although greater social freedom has been granted to the Harijans of Kodagahalli, the changes taking place are encapsulated in an upper-caste framework that still does not

enable them to change their ritual position in accordance with their educational, economic and political achievements.

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OBSERVING EUROPE WITH JOHN CAMPBELL:
A LATE VIEW ON THE MEDITERRANEAN TRADITION

JOÃO DE PINA-CABRAL

In January 2010, St Antony's College held a meeting in honour of the late John K. Campbell, a distinguished anthropologist and historian of Greece who played a central role in developing the anthropology of Europe at Oxford from the late 1950s to the mid 1990s.¹ I was asked to discuss the experience of working with John in organizing and editing the volume *Europe Observed* (Pina-Cabral and Campbell eds. 1992). As I read the book again for the occasion, I became aware that it marks vividly the deep changes in the practice of ethnography in Europe that occurred in the course of the 1980s at the time of the foundation of the European Association of Social Anthropologists, in which some of us were directly involved. As the book was never widely distributed, some of the implications of what it discusses might deserve renewed attention.

I am fully aware of the dangers of what Merleau-Ponty called 'the retrospective illusion': attributing to the past a coherence that results from posterior events that might just as well have taken place otherwise. That said, I am convinced that much of what I will now proceed to tell you was implicit in our conversations at the time, even if it seldom emerged from them in an analytically explicit way.²

¹ I thank Michael Llewellyn-Smith and the College for having invited me to participate in this event.

² During the mid-1980s, I was working at the University of Southampton and I had a non-stipendiary association with St. Antony's College. For a while, therefore, John Campbell and I met even more often than had been the case during the five years I was a D.Phil. student under his supervision. At the time of the conference and the debates that followed it, Peter Loizos was very supportive, for which we both remained grateful.

In 1986, the then budding Portuguese community of social scientists came together to organize a conference of the European Association of Rural Sociology in Braga. I was asked to convene a workshop on fieldwork methodology and, in turn, I asked John to collaborate with me. He did help me during the planning stage, but ultimately his health did not allow him to go to Braga. As it turned out, the workshop was very stormy for reasons that we did not fully understand at the time. Colleagues from the US, England, Spain, France and Portugal were present, and the themes discussed turned out to be at the centre of the impending debates in the discipline.

Our Spanish colleagues were then deeply upset at the way North American anthropologists were treating them³ and used the event as a forum to air their grievances. As if that were not enough, there were assumptions in the air among the British-trained anthropologists present concerning what were then called ‘Oxford anthropologists’, which, in fact, did not correspond at all to our real opinions, leading to all sorts of misunderstandings among the participants. Immediately after the conference, the polemics spread on to the pages of *Critique of Anthropology* in what turned out to be a fundamentally pointless debate (Llobera 1986, Loizos 1987, Pina-Cabral 1987). Retrospectively, we can all see that we never even disagreed in essence and that we were all in fact responding to a confusion caused by the deep change in international hegemonies within the social sciences that was occurring at the time.

Over the next few years (1986-1990), as post-modern culturalism imposed itself as the status quo around the globe, John Campbell and I felt increasingly that there was a dire need for an explicit re-formulation of the methodological assumptions that had underpinned the British tradition of doing fieldwork in Europe and the Middle East. The label ‘Mediterraneanism’, which had once been consensual, no longer satisfied us due to what was

³ The principal grievance was the then routine practice of silencing any anthropological work that was not published in the United States or Great Britain.

then happening in Greece, the Iberian Peninsula and Central and Eastern Europe. Furthermore, we felt that these changes were not illuminated any further by the idealist implications of the post-modern re-reading of participant observation that was then all the rage.

Retrospectively, we can see that the problems we were confronting at the time of the fall of the Berlin Wall had been there potentially ever since the end of the Second World War, simmering deep within the Evans-Pritchard decades (1950s to 1970s). I do not remember if, in our conversations, we actually formulated it in precisely this way. Still, my paper for that book is called 'Against translation', explicitly challenging the major metaphor that had structured E-P's views on fieldwork (cf. Beidelman 1971). John Campbell knew the paper well and commented on it more than once, and indeed he also knew the paper I published in *Current Anthropology* challenging the notion of the 'Mediterranean' as a culture area (1989).

At the same time, after much discussion, we decided to call the book *Europe Observed*, a reference to Geertz's book *Islam Observed* that had come out in 1968 but was then acquiring a kind of cult following. We meant that Europe should be studied much like Islam – an explicit denial on our part of primitivist presuppositions. And, at the same time, we were stating that there was also an 'observance' in Europe that was part of the actual history of our practice as anthropologists. Whilst we emphatically rejected the idealist implications of American culturalism and the post-Schneiderian turn that Marilyn Strathern's oeuvre on kinship was consolidating at the time (1992), we welcomed with open arms the methodological reflexivity that was then giving rise to an explosion in rhetorical modes of ethnographic writing.⁴

Now, John Campbell was very sparing about his writing. His generation had not been exposed to the compulsion to publish feverishly that is the order of our day. For him to write something about his fieldwork experience, over forty years after the event, he had to feel that

⁴ I myself, during those final years of the 1980s, was writing *Aromas de Urze e de Lama*, a text on the margins between fiction and anthropology that was also published in 1993 and that has recently been re-issued in Portugal.

it was really necessary to do it. His paper in *Europe Observed*, while apparently a simple description, bears within it a heartfelt disclaimer of two forms of misunderstanding which he had to fight against throughout his life: on the one hand, the suspicions concerning his scientific motives with which he was so often confronted in Greece; and on the other hand, the suspicions of the validity of his fieldwork that were always present in Oxford itself.

Looking at it from a distance, we can now see that British Mediterraneanism ailed from three basic equivocations. First, while it was in Britain that fieldwork in Europe and the Middle East first arose in social and cultural anthropology, it was always viewed as a minor mode by the gatekeepers of the discipline. Evans-Pritchard in particular was very disparaging, and John Campbell's career suffered tremendously from this prejudice.

Secondly, while the Europeanist ethnological tradition and German sociological thinking in particular had had a deep influence among Oxford scholars in the early post-war years, this was kept strictly a private matter. The official theoretical genealogy was traced to Marcel Mauss and Emile Durkheim through Radcliffe-Brown. A lot of effort was spent in producing this genealogy through a number of brilliant translations of the *Année Sociologique* works from which we have all learnt so much (e.g. Hertz 1960; Durkheim and Mauss 1963; Hubert and Mauss 1967; Mauss 1967; Lévy-Bruhl 1975). Only in the late 1990s, through the valuable work of Richard Fardon, did we manage to confirm how important were the marks left in Oxford of Franz Baerman Steiner's teaching (see Fardon and Adler 1999).

Pitt-Rivers's work on Spain in the early 1950s had been supervised by Steiner, who even visited him in the field. But his discussion of German sociological theory had been cut out of *People of the Sierra* on the explicit recommendation of Evans-Pritchard, as Pitt-Rivers unwittingly tells us in the introduction to the American second edition of the work (1971). M.N. Srinivas, Mary Douglas, Laura Bohannan, Louis Dumont and so many more of the original members of the Oxford school were deeply marked by this influence, which we only started to suspect in the late 1980s, as we came to realize that there were serious misrepresentations in how notions such as 'honour and shame' were being read by our colleagues across the Atlantic.

Thirdly, while history had been accepted into anthropological research since Evans-Pritchard's famous formulations in 1950,⁵ a synchronicist methodological disposition had survived. That historical arguments should guide the steps of the fieldworker and of the writer of ethnographic monographs was still seen as vaguely innovative even in the 1980s, as we can see from many of the papers that we included in *Europe Observed*.

The notion that anthropology was defined by its study of peoples that were essentially 'Other' was rooted in an evolutionist notion of primitiveness, that is, the notion that, because the essential forms of human experience must be simple, they must also be anterior – thus instituting what Johannes Fabian called the 'denial of coevalness' (1983). Anthropology had rejected theoretical primitivism for many decades, even though, in the case of Evans-Pritchard, the concept continued to be used until the 1960s (e.g. 1965) – but it was very much slower to recognize the methodological implications of that rejection. Methodological primitivism as a background assumption has survived to this day, and it was because of it that Mediterranean anthropology was treated as a minor mode within the discipline.

For John Campbell, Julian Pitt-Rivers and the rest of the contributors to our volume, in the early 1990s Mediterraneanism as a sub-disciplinary field no longer seemed sustainable essentially for two reasons. On the one hand, the countries of southern Europe that we were working in were no longer so vividly outside the globalized world of the consumer society as they had been at mid-century. John Campbell in Greece, as much as myself in the Iberian Peninsula, were feeling that there was something deeply artificial about proposing a meaningful sociocultural region out of the simple proximity to the Mediterranean Sea. At the time, social history was undergoing a spurt of significant development, and many anthropologists were actively working with it, leading to a much greater sophistication in things like the understanding of variation in models of the family and of household

⁵ 'Social anthropology: past and present', Marett Lecture, Exeter College Hall, Oxford, 1950.

reproduction, or of patterns of village constitution. Comparativist preoccupations started imposing themselves and suggesting that we should look to other forms of historically informed regional comparison.

At the same time, we were deeply dissatisfied with the way in which many American colleagues had turned into ‘culture traits’ things like the ‘honour and shame’ complex, which had initially been conceived as part of a universalistic mode of understanding the relation between person and value. We were especially challenged by some of the more absurd simplifications in the field of local politics and of even more absurd generalizations of ill-conceived Freudian arguments.

Europe Observed was the coming together of three generations of British-trained anthropologists working in Europe with different national backgrounds and with professional affiliations in a number of different national contexts. We were held together by a deep respect for the tradition of fieldwork with participant observation in societies that could not possibly be described as ‘Other’.

While we were keen on salvaging the notion of fieldwork with participant observation that we felt was being threatened by culturalist reflexivism, we were also preoccupied with shedding the heritage of methodological primitivism that seemed to lie just below the surface of all the new post-modern rhetoric that was being thrown at us from all sides. Indeed, considering some of the debates that have been going on of late in the discipline, I ask myself whether anthropology really has managed to overcome those background assumptions that we inherited from our modernist ancestors, who first defined the discipline in the mid-nineteenth century. I must insist that, from my experience, neither John Campbell nor Julian Pitt-Rivers shared such a view, and the lessons they had to give us at the time are still worth reading nearly two decades later.

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JACK HERBERT DRIBERG (1888-1946)

RAY ABRAHAMS

In the course of writing an obituary of Aidan Southall, my attention was recently drawn back to Jack Driberg, his first teacher in social anthropology and an important source of inspiration and encouragement for him to take the subject up professionally.¹ Many anthropologists, especially younger ones, have scarcely heard of him. Information about him is widely scattered, and he is not an easy man to write about with confidence. He was clearly a remarkable character, who never fitted easily into the moulds that others tried to cast him in, and he was also the kind of person around whom anecdotes and myths, including some of his own production, readily accumulated.

As Evans-Pritchard, Southall and John Barnes have all testified, Driberg was almost single-handedly responsible for keeping academic social anthropology, and one might add the place of African research within it, alive in the small Archaeology and Anthropology Department in Cambridge in those otherwise rather barren days of the 1930s. After gaining a little teaching experience in London, the main intellectual centre of the subject in Britain at the time, he was first invited to lecture in Cambridge by Professor Hodson in 1931. He then became a University Lecturer from 1934 to 1942, when he left academic anthropology. He went on to work on Middle Eastern affairs, including war-time military operations, until his death in his late fifties in 1946. He first came to my notice in the 1960s when I began research among the Luo-speaking Labwor people of northern Uganda.

By 1934 he was already 46 years old and had enjoyed a colourfully eccentric life as a colonial administrator in Uganda and neighbouring areas of the Sudan until 1926, when he retired partly 'on medical grounds'. A 1949 history of the Acholi people written in the vernacular by V. Pellegrini, a Verona Father, notes how he was much respected by the local people and was given the nickname Bwana Tong (Sir Spear) because he always carried a spear with him on his walkabouts. I myself encountered older men who claimed to remember him. One told me that he spoke Luo fluently and was 'a real man'. If there was a killing on his beat,

¹ I would like to acknowledge the help I have received from many conversations with John Barnes, who also has much of interest to say in his autobiographical memoir, *Humping my drum* (2007); he also discusses Driberg with Jack Goody in a 1983 interview (www.alanmacfarlane.com/DO/filmshow/barnes). I also wish to acknowledge the help of Jane Hogan and her colleagues at the Durham University Sudan Archive in facilitating my access to

he didn't bother with the courts but simply dispatched the killer with his own spear. Such at least was his reputation, though I cannot vouch for the accuracy of the latter part of the account.²

It may be helpful to note that colonial 'administration' in these regions at the time in question varied typically along a scale from light to almost non-existent, and that the social and political organization of peoples of the area differed greatly from those of groups like the Baganda further south. There were no well-developed forms of authoritative chiefship, and especially in the north-eastern Karamoja area and adjoining parts of the Sudan, there were long-standing patterns of large-scale and violent cattle raiding between neighbouring peoples. Age-organization and a system of clans and lineages, plus varying forms of informal leadership, formed the main bases of order in the region.³ Moreover, firearms had begun to penetrate the area with the arrival of ivory hunters from Ethiopia and farther afield.

Notwithstanding the question of his health, Driberg is said to have left East Africa under a cloud. Characteristically, there is a wealth of oral tradition, as well as some detailed literature about this. I have variously heard that he neglected to send in regular reports to administrative headquarters in Khartoum under the pretext that his time was taken up with dealing with a tribal war. According to one story, a member of his staff went to Khartoum on leave and, when asked, professed total ignorance of the war in question. Another version describes how his claims about a war led to reinforcements being sent down to him which he led fruitlessly around the countryside till the truth came out. Yet another version, quoted by Glyn Daniel (1986) as current in the 1930s and mentioned in a short biography of his brother Tom, is that he disobeyed an order to burn a local village as an official punishment.⁴ He is then said to have concocted a report that he had carried out the order, but his deception was unmasked. Something close to this is also mentioned in the short obituary of him in *Nature* for April 1946.

Quite the most detailed published account is given by Robert Collins in his book *Shadows in the grass* (1983). Based largely on official papers, this reveals the anecdotes as not completely false and allows us to place them in the complexities of southern Sudanese

contemporary archival material, and of Douglas Johnson on a point of detail. There is a valuable account of Southall's links to Driberg in John Burton's interview with him (1992).

² Driberg was in fact quite interested in the development of 'Native Courts', and it is possible that this comment is ultimately connected to his own claims (see below) to have participated in inter-community fighting (rather than the handling of intra-community violence).

³ Cf. Gulliver (1955), Dyson-Hudson (1966), Thomas (1965) and Abrahams (1978) for further ethnographic information on this area.

⁴ In Watkins, *Brief lives* (1982, 20). Tom Driberg, later Baron Bradwell, was a well-known Labour politician.

‘administration’ of the time.⁵ After a successful period of several years among the Lango of northern Uganda, Driberg was moved in 1922 to the newly ‘pacified’ Didinga mountains on the Sudan border. When the area was formally taken back under the Sudan administration, he remained in charge there and transferred to the Sudan Political Service. As earlier among the Lango, he seems to have become strongly attached to the people – and also to their highland country – and he was especially keen to defend them against their enemies, the as yet unadministered Toposa pastoralists, who were apparently taking advantage of their weakened state and that of their closely related Longarim neighbours.⁶ Contrary to orders from above he led some forays against the Toposa, and he was keen to be sent some military reinforcements, which he hoped would persuade them to pay compensation for their raids and make peace through the threat of force. In pursuit of this he got caught up in a mire of deception, claiming falsely that the Toposa had carried out a particularly serious raid which he had repelled with local police support. It appears that at the time he was overworking and genuinely unwell, with symptoms of jaundice. In the end, faced with an imminent government strike force to punish the Toposa for this fictive raid, he confessed his fabrications and was allowed to resign, albeit it seems with a pension.

Collins presents a generally convincing picture of the very complex mixture of local and international considerations in this exceptionally remote area, the so-called Ilemi Triangle, situated near the Sudanese borders with Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia, and he also makes plain the tensions between the attitudes and concerns of officials in Khartoum and London on the one hand, and the locally situated, independent-minded ‘Bog (sc. South Sudan swamp area) Barons’, as they were known. These were largely ex-military men who tended to despise the distant, typically Oxbridge-educated bureaucrats who were nominally in charge of them but were usually quite ignorant of the local conditions in which they had to work. Despite his own Oxford education, Driberg clearly had much in common with these locally based colleagues. They too were keen on learning and working through the local languages in relative isolation from central government, though none of them could match Driberg’s own linguistic skills

⁵ I have recently been able to see some of these papers with the help of the Sudan Archive staff at Durham University.

⁶ Before Driberg was transferred to the Didinga, they had engaged in troublesome cross-border cattle raiding with the help of Swahili and Ethiopian ivory poachers, including a supply of firearms, against several groups in northern Uganda. Repeated requests for the Sudanese authorities to put an end to this were unsuccessful – they appear simply not to have had the resources to do so – and eventually, in 1921, the Ugandan Government sent a military expedition, lightly supported on the Sudan side, against them. This then tempted the Toposa, whom the Sudan government were equally unable to control, to engage further in their raiding against the Didinga and other groups, including the Turkana in Kenya.

and deep ethnographic knowledge, nor his quite remarkable degree of attachment to the people in his charge.

It is interesting in this regard that the Governor of Mongalla Province in which Driberg served criticised his actions but made several mitigating comments at the time. He noted that Driberg had always ‘taken the keenest interest in the welfare of the natives of his District and...spent a considerable part of his salary on the District.... While this does not place the Government under any pecuniary obligation, I hope that the Council dealing with the case will consider it as a reason for generous treatment of Mr Driberg in a pecuniary way’. He went on to say that he would feel justified in recommending him for ‘non-administrative work’ in anthropological research and linguistic studies if the Council felt disposed to offer him such employment, and that he considered that allowance should be made for his actions in view of the ‘peculiar type of life he has led’ in close intimacy with local people in the course of his researches.⁷

By this time, he was already interested in academic as well as ‘practical’ anthropology and had had some contact with the Seligmans in London. Before his retirement from Sudan, he published a large and impressively scholarly monograph on the Lango of Northern Uganda (1923).⁸ This was ethnographically of great help to me in my own research in the neighbouring Labwor area, and it demonstrates extraordinary linguistic skills and a very sharp observational eye, along with a generally warm appreciation of the people and their culture. He also shows a strong knowledge of the available ethnographic literature on neighbouring and related peoples and considerable reading beyond this, including Junod’s work on the Thonga and Rivers’ kinship theories, which he was probably introduced to by Brenda Seligman. In later works he reveals comparable familiarity with Didinga language and culture, and his book on the people, *The people of the small arrow*, takes a remarkable experimental novel-like form.⁹ In an article about anthropology and the colonial system (1927), he stresses

⁷ I understand that the ‘Council’ in question was the Council of Secretaries, the executive council in Khartoum presided over by the Governor-General of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium.

⁸ I write Lango following his orthography in the book. As he points out, however, the ‘ng’ sound in the area is almost always a ‘velar nasal’ often transcribed elsewhere as ŋ or ng’ and pronounced as in ‘sing’ in standard English as opposed to its counterpart in ‘finger’.

⁹ This book was beautifully illustrated by his then wife, Pearl Binder, later Lady Elwyn Jones. In a little known paper on Driberg’s approach to anthropology, Nancy Schmidt (1989) explores the ‘humanistic’ qualities of this book and much of his other work, along with his interests in poetry and song. She also pays strong tribute to his closeness to the peoples he writes about. Overall, she sees him as a little recognised precursor of later practitioners of ethnography as a creative enterprise. Despite diligent searches for relevant published material at the time of writing, I unfortunately only came across Schmidt’s article after the present paper had been ‘put to bed’. I have been relieved to find that it mainly complements my own, although I would take issue with its

the need for anthropologists to be separate actors, free from the restrictions necessarily imposed upon administrators. This no doubt reflects his then recent experiences. It is clear, however, that his rather special personality enabled him, both in Lango and Didinga country, to enjoy the deep intimacy of intensive participant observation for several years while at least to some degree continuing to administer, at any rate until the final crisis.

Upon leaving Africa Driberg decided to embark more formally on an anthropological career, and he studied for a time at the LSE with Seligman and Malinowski, as well as with Morris Ginsberg, Graham Wallas and Gordon Childe. Evans-Pritchard, Audrey Richards, Raymond Firth and Isaac Schapera were among his fellow students.¹⁰ In addition to the publications already noted, he went on to produce a wide range of writings on various aspects of African life and custom, including a general introduction to social anthropology and some translations of African poetry and song. In another book, dedicated to a twelve-year-old girl called Janet, he tells the story of Engato, a lion cub he reared and kept as a pet for several years. The book provides an interesting picture of his generally happy life of close contact with the Lango, and tells *inter alia* how he – and indeed later the lion – were ‘initiated’ at the instigation of the people into the local age-group system.¹¹ As with so much else in his life, it is once again not wholly clear where the border between fact and fiction lies in this charming work.

Evans-Pritchard was apparently his closest friend within anthropology and dedicated his 1940 LSE monograph on the Anuak to him, ‘with great affection’. Driberg is said to have given him support in his clashes with Malinowski.¹² Apparently through Evans-Pritchard, Gluckman also developed an attachment to him as a young blood in Oxford not long out of South Africa. Evans-Pritchard wrote a warm obituary of him (*Man*, January 1947) which evokes a sympathetic picture of a complex, Renaissance-type figure. He recalls his wide ranging interests as an Oxford student – music, poetry, the classics, heavyweight boxing – and

attempt to distance Driberg from the interests of the small community of his contemporaries in British anthropology. The article deserves to be better known.

¹⁰ It is extremely likely that he also came across the ideas of Radcliffe-Brown during this period, partly at least through Schapera and Evans-Pritchard, to whom the former showed his notes on Radcliffe-Brown’s Cape Town lectures (see Stocking, 1995: 337).

¹¹ There is a useful bibliography of Driberg’s numerous writings in Evans-Pritchard’s obituary of him. The list includes a co-authored book on poker (written under the pseudonym of Herbert Johnson). Barnes mentions his prowess in this game in *Humping my drum*. In addition to most of the works cited by Evans-Pritchard, Schmidt (1989) also lists several reviews both by Driberg and about his work, plus some other minor publications.

¹² Among other things, Driberg is said to have corresponded, with Evans-Pritchard’s knowledge and behind Malinowski’s back, with Alex Rentoul, a colonial magistrate in the Pacific who had disputed Malinowski’s

his affection among those he went on to administer. He also notes his great success as an exciting and inspiring teacher. This is clearly acknowledged by former students, including Aidan Southall, John Barnes and Glyn Daniel. Though not taken by him personally to the same degree, Monica Wilson (then Hunter) was another major figure in the discipline who acknowledged his undergraduate lecturing and his later help with her research.¹³ Barnes, in *Humping my drum* (2007), remarks that he learned more from Driberg than from any other Cambridge teacher. He also tells a remarkable story of one of Driberg's classes. Describing how local warriors would form opposing lines and throw spears at each other, he told how Driberg claimed that the ideal was to catch an enemy spear in the air and hurl it back before the thrower could throw another one. When Barnes expressed scepticism about this, Driberg commented that the man next to him in the line had done exactly that. Evans-Pritchard describes him as a man of *baraka*, and Barnes has talked to me of his 'charisma', and mused that, when together, he and Evans-Pritchard must have been a pretty formidable pair. Evans-Pritchard described his friend as a 'brilliant talker, at his best *splendide mendax*' ('untruthful in a noble cause'), which was presumably a veiled reference to the end of his administrative career.

Evans-Pritchard points out that Driberg made little individual contribution to theory, though he rightly asserts his important role as a powerful if lonely voice for academic social anthropology in Cambridge. He describes his teaching legacy as mainly important for subsequent colonial administrators who passed through his hands. Happily this underestimates the influence he had on Wilson, and later on men like Barnes and Southall who went on, albeit after his death, to become leading Africanist figures in the discipline. Here one should also mention Thomas Hayley, who worked under his supervision among the Lango and later became a well-known psychoanalyst.¹⁴

There is an interesting and paradoxical combination here: the long-serving ex-colonial official and first-class ethnographer, versed in standard theory but not developing it, who, through his flare and charm, keeps a flame burning which is only really brought to life in Cambridge in the vital decade of the 1950s, with Fortes' arrival as professor and his recruitment of Leach and Goody.¹⁵ It is possible that a little of this can be seen in the history

statements about Trobriand ideas of paternity. Cf. Goody (1995: 23) and Rentoul (1932) for further information on this and relevant sources.

¹³ See Bank (2009), and also Hunter's acknowledgment in *Reaction to conquest* (1936).

¹⁴ See Hayley's book *The anatomy of Lango religion and groups* (1947).

¹⁵ Fortes succeeded Hutton in 1950. Leach was appointed a Lecturer in 1953 and then as Reader in 1957. Goody was initially appointed an Assistant Lecturer in 1954 and then Lecturer in 1959. All three remained in Cambridge

of the succession to the William Wyse chair in Cambridge in 1937, though once again by no means everything is clear here. The episode has been briefly discussed by Stocking in his book *After Tylor* (1995: 430), and also, following him, by Tambiah (2002: 406) in his biography of Edmund Leach. When Hodson, the first William Wyse professor, was coming up to retirement, Gregory Bateson wrote to his former teacher Haddon, who still wielded some influence, to express his interest in the post. He acknowledged a debt to Ruth Benedict's work on culture and personality but, 'in the language of Radcliffe-Brown', he mainly professed an interest in the idea of social anthropology as a 'technical science' in which the academic study of disappearing cultures was of greater concern than the needs of a colonial administration. Haddon replied firmly that the needs of 'colonial cadets' and others who would not be taking up the subject professionally should be the prime concern of the holder of the chair. The eventual impressive list of candidates included Firth, Richards, Forde, Fortune and Hocart, as well as Driberg and Hutton, a recently appointed lecturer not long retired from the Indian civil service. It fits well with Haddon's comment that as a former colonial officer Driberg was the initial favourite, according to Stocking, and that Hutton was in the end appointed. This outcome is rather shocking to modern eyes, given the stellar intellectual quality of some of the other candidates, and it suggests that both men were seen as relatively safe bets to steer the desired course. It is hard to know what lay behind the final shift of preference to Hutton, who was reputedly a poor teacher with little interest in academic anthropology. It would not surprise me, however, if the local core of the electors – the external member was Seligman – were ultimately worried that Driberg was a less safe bet, given his flawed colonial service history and his undoubted ability to communicate his deeply engrained respect and romantic enthusiasm for the subject as an exciting discipline.¹⁶ Certainly Hutton appears to have posed no such threat.

It may be added that, even in death, Driberg's story has a 'larger than life' twist. He became a Muslim in his later years, and his body was sent for burial in the Muslim cemetery near Woking. Unfortunately, this is said to have nearly come to nothing when someone

as key figures until their retirement. Audrey Richards also returned to Cambridge during this period, being based in Newnham College and the new African Studies Centre. Before them, Evans-Pritchard came in 1944, but only for a couple of years, first as Lecturer and then as Reader.

¹⁶ There is yet another apocryphal story in this context. It has been said that the electors intended to elect Driberg but at the last declined because it emerged in their final discussions that he owed money to a number of them. They are said then to have elected Hutton, presumably because they worried that they might be seen to be appointing Driberg for their own financial benefit! This, if true, does not directly support my speculations, but it does not automatically negate them since I can well imagine a sigh of relief from some members of the

noticed that a brass cross had been thoughtlessly tacked on to the coffin by the undertakers. Like so much in his life, the details are unclear exactly where and when the offending symbol was removed – apparently with some violence – but once this had been done the funeral was allowed to proceed without further problems.

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committee. It appears that Evans-Pritchard had supported Driberg's application (see Goody, footnote 4, p.215, 1995) and had later commented that the electors had wanted 'an older man'.

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BOOK REVIEWS

S. Elizabeth Bird (ed.), *The anthropology of news and journalism: global perspectives*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press 2010, ix, 328 pp.

In introducing her ambitious and timely edited volume, Elizabeth Bird sets out the problem that the book is to address: although anthropologists have begun to take seriously the study of mass media, there remain a dearth of critical studies of journalism production and dissemination. In assembling the impressive *Anthropology of News and Journalism*, Bird seeks to remedy this by offering a broad exploration of the different ways in which news media have the ‘power to shape the reality experienced by readers and viewers’ (7). News media, according to Bird, are unique in that, in purporting to describe reality, they also obscure their own role in not only presenting but also re-imagining the world. The diverse slate of articles exploring news production and dissemination throughout the volume give the lie to the implicit neutrality of the news, for, as Bird herself suggests, ‘the texts themselves hold important, symbolic meaning and constitute significant cultural narratives’ (10).

Bird takes a purposefully broad view of what constitutes ‘the news,’ including work on obituary announcements, on-line journalism, tabloids, news agency photographers and politicized pop music in the volume. While the book places these disparate studies in fruitful juxtaposition, some further exploration of what demarcates the news genre would be welcome. Bird offers some explanation of what she means by ‘the news’ by underlining that the genre is personally and culturally inflected and that it is fundamentally about ‘process.’ She makes the point that although individual viewers cannot often recall specific news stories, the *process* of viewing contributes to individuals feeling ‘a part of the news world’ (12). Bird makes the decision to keep definitions vague in order to account for the different ways in which ‘news’ is produced and circulated in different cultural contexts. This strategy is successful in leaving room for a rich body of case studies to emerge, but it relies on the same sort of tacit ‘news values’ that Bird criticizes in journalists—something is ‘news’ because it seems it *should* be.

Following the introduction, the book is organized into three sections. While in the Introduction Bird argues for preserving the complexity between studies of production and dissemination, for simplicity’s sake the two substantive sections are broken down along those lines. The first section presents a grouping of ethnographic work on the production of news. In her exploration of vernacular newspapers in India, for example, Ursula Rao challenges the idea that news production is linear in moving from producers to audiences. According to Rao, vernacular newspapers provide a vital space for people to glean local information and to disseminate their concerns through a ‘news discourse.’ However, she is at pains to point out that the ‘cacophony of voices’ (ibid.) represented by vernacular newspapers is far from organized, but that it nonetheless ‘provoke[s] the political’ (103). In contrast to the locally created and consumed context of Rao’s work, Amahl Bishara’s chapter on the photographic

representation of a Palestinian protest against the construction of the separation barrier wall shows how the creation of news moves from intensely local spaces to dissemination in international spheres. Bishara describes how journalism provides an essential avenue through which protestors can ‘voice their views to outsiders’ (64).

Hasty’s article in this section is perhaps the most provocative. In it, she explores the premise that anthropologists have been slow to study journalism because journalistic practice is uncomfortably close to our own. Based on her own work as an anthropologist and journalist in Ghana, Hasty contrasts the different ‘regimes of knowledge production’ inherent in the two forms of engagement, writing, ‘there is something profoundly uncomfortable about the practices of news media, something vaguely reflective of our own discursive practices, more purely politicized but also more politically compromised than anthropology’ (133). Hasty’s contribution forces the reader to consider how the ‘codes’ of journalistic practice are disseminated, and whether these working practices mirror or challenge those of anthropologists. The overall contribution of this more lengthy section of the book is to expand the geographical scope of news production-studies, which have historically been centred on the production of news in Euro-America (Georgina Born’s work on the BBC has been widely influential in this regard).

The second section of the book centres on ‘news practices in everyday life’ and moves from the production of news to its reception and occasional contestation. Kerry McCallum’s chapter on representation of ‘indigenous violence’ in Australia contrasts news production with how news stories are re-articulated through the process of ‘local talk.’ In foregrounding the practice of face-to-face local communication, McCallum’s article demonstrates that the press both reflect and create ‘public opinion’, but she also notes the importance of social relationships in ‘negotiat[ing] and disput[ing] the meanings of issues of violence and deviance’ (152). Debra Spitulnik also examines the role of news in creating and maintaining social networks through her research on ‘personal announcements’ within Zambian news broadcasts. Spitulnik’s ethnography demonstrates how news processes are embedded within wider political economies—for instance, how news outlets’ decisions to charge for personal announcements challenged the wider rhetoric of Zambian humanism as the pre-eminent national political philosophy.

The third section of the book is the briefest, and the most limited in geographical scope. In the final section, three authors consider the ways in which journalistic practices change in response to the ‘new media.’ Of particular note is Boyer’s work on German journalists, which provides a series of illuminating anecdotes on the increasing incorporation of ‘new media’ into journalistic practice. Boyer’s research leads him to suggest that, rather than increasing news awareness, digital media have rather *hollowed* engagement with the news—sacrificing depth for breadth. The examples in this final section are limited to Europe and America, and for the most part to relatively well-known news outlets. The scope of the book is already quite wide, but it might have been worthwhile to include a chapter on blogging as news media beyond

Europe or America, to provide a counterpoint. However, these complaints are minor, and overall Bird's volume is an important contribution to the study of journalistic practice which is likely to be a source of key readings in media anthropology and media and communications studies in years to come.

ALICIA BLUM-ROSS

Zuzana Búriková and Daniel Miller, *Au Pair*, Cambridge and Malden: Polity Press 2010, viii, 209 pp.

This timely book is the result of two related ethnographic projects undertaken by Zuzana Búriková and Daniel Miller. It is the first book to be based on the ethnographic study of au pairs. The authors' shared interest in material culture is evident throughout. Búriková's ethnography began in 2004 and involved one year of participant observation with fifty Slovak au pairs around London. Miller conducted similar research over a shorter period of time with a smaller, unspecified number of host families. It is relevant to note that Miller has personally hosted au pairs in the past. The authors provide significant insights regarding the experiences and contexts of au pairs in London.

The central themes of the book are relationships and material culture. The world of the au pair is structured by social relationships with host families, kin, children, boyfriends and other au pairs. Motivations for becoming an au pair are diverse and may be more grounded in the dynamics of personal relationships and personal desires than acknowledged by models which prioritize economic factors. Slovak au pairs in London are more than simply economic migrants traversing between the core and periphery of Europe. The authors describe how au pairs' relationships are mediated through material things – including white melamine IKEA furniture, teddy bears, cleaning products, articles of London fashion and coffee.

References to material culture, for which the listing above provides examples, are ubiquitous throughout the book. In the second chapter, where the mediation of things is most apparent, the authors suggest that the white melamine IKEA furniture used to furnish many au pair rooms represents the cold relationships that are frequently formed between host families and au pairs. This example supports the authors' methodological argument that '...close attention to the material world gives us access to actual practices that complement research focused more on language and on interviews' (p. 196). The impersonal coldness revealed through the furniture directs attention to the vacuity in the normative ideal of the au pair's temporary integration within the host family.

The discourse of a 'pseudo-family' relationship between au pairs and host families is central to the ideology of the au pair institution and may be deployed to exploit the au pair through feelings of obligation. Au pairs and host families frequently experience an

‘embarrassment of co-presence’ with respect to one another (p. 46). Au pairs may respond by attempting to minimize their presence in the host family home, as in the example of Iveta. However, au pairs may strive for visibility in London outside the home. Au pairs go to London to shop, party, socialize, form relationships and escape the home. In the anomic environment of London, au pairs may experiment with behavioural transgression in domains such as dress and relationships.

Au pairing is a potentially transgressive ‘rite of passage’. It is a liminal period in which there are temporal tensions between the present and the future and between the stages of childhood and adulthood. The au pairs’ status is vague and is based on a dated notion of cultural exchange. The authors argue that UK law helps to create this ‘ambiguity and disorder’ (p. 171). Legal ideology characterizes au pairs in terms of transient residence, informal relations with host families and foreign origins. The au pair travels far from home and kin to provide domestic labour on a temporary basis, while being legally defined as a non-worker, in the context of an equivocal position within an unknown host family.

Acknowledgement is made in the preface that the textual layout of this book differs from academic norms by avoiding citation in most chapters. The authors vary between academic and literary writing styles to elucidate both humanistic subjectivity and structural context. They have achieved both of these goals. However, the book could have benefited from quotations drawn from the au pairs’ own descriptions. At times, the literary sections of the text lend a fictional generic quality to the depicted experiences, which are otherwise quite poignant. The chapters gradually transition from ethnographic understandings to structural and institutional contexts. This transition is most apparent in comparing the different writing styles of the literary first chapter and the contextual appendix.

The appendix concisely relates the book to the bodies of academic literature on domestic labour and migration studies. It makes several contributions to these literatures. Scholars interested in these fields may be most interested in this book. The authors note the paucity of publications explicitly concerning au pairs. They confront a partial lacuna in the literature by acknowledging personal relationships as the key motivations for au pairs. The authors direct attention to familial and lateral relationships, such as friendships between female au pairs and romantic ties, in addition to vertical relationships with host families. They eschew the reduction of individual au pairs to the labour they provide. Other contributions include the authors’ emphasis on material culture and their understanding of au pairing as a liminal period in the life cycle of some young people in Slovakia. They suggest that the institution may be transitioning to greater inequality as au pairs are increasingly drawn from Eastern Europe. The accession of Slovakia to the EU and the recent changes made to au pair regulations in the UK make this book quite timely and significant.

JAMES WHITAKER

Paul Connerton, *How modernity forgets*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2009.

On my first long-term visit to China, a friend apologised because the apartment I had been given was in such an old building. The building, in the south-western city of Chongqing (allegedly the fastest-growing urban centre on the planet), was five years old. Speed and obsolescence – of buildings, objects of consumption, and media production – in modern, urban societies are at the heart of Paul Connerton's latest analysis of memory and space: *How modernity forgets*. The book comes twenty years after the publication in 1989 of Connerton's *How societies remember*.

In the latter, the author complained of the 'relatively scant attention' given by academics to social memory, which he saw instead as 'pervasive [...] in the conduct of everyday life' (Connerton 1989: 21). Over the past twenty years, this supposed imbalance between the significance of memory in contemporary societies and its academic treatment has certainly been redressed: conferences, university courses, and specialized publications on the collective, social experience of memory have been sprouting up, turning memory into a veritable buzzword. Connerton's main argument in *How modernity forgets* is that, ironically, this obsession with memory – both in academia and in popular culture – is related to an increasing predisposition in contemporary societies towards cultural forgetting. Taking an openly Marxist standpoint, the author also claims that forgetting is a necessary product of modernity and the capitalist mode of production.

Connerton maintains, for instance, that in the nineteenth century a process of separation between social life and locality started to occur. After this breaking point, the labour process, consumption, and media production have all been speeding up, while career structures have since become more and more unstable. This increased speed has led modern societies towards growing alienation from place and locality, which, Connerton claims, are crucial in the production of social memory: 'Place [...] is less and less a determining factor of our lives', claims the author; 'locatedness has been superseded' (2009: 89).

In a chapter entitled 'Topographies of forgetting', Connerton describes this process by looking at the evolution of European cities since the fourteenth century. He focuses in particular on how changes in urban living might have contributed to social forgetting. Early modern European cities, for instance, consisted of rather small-scale settlements with a clearly demarcated perimeter: in 1400, Milan or Paris had a population of only around 100,000 (2009: 101). These cities were also normally oriented towards a single building: the cathedrals of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Florence and Milan or those of many French towns like Chartres. These buildings provided a nucleus around which urban life revolved and were thus conducive to socialization and the formation of significant collective memories.

One could say much the same of the structure of many Asian urban centres, but unfortunately Connerton does not. For instance, for many Tibetans, social and religious life in

Tibet's capital of Lhasa still revolves around a single sacred building dating back to the seventh century: the Tsuglagkhang temple. The confines of Lhasa's old Tibetan quarter are also still marked by the ritual circumambulation routes that concentrically encircle the Tsuglagkhang. Similarly, Tambiah famously described traditional kingdoms in Southeast Asia as 'galactic polities' (1976: 102), whose capital cities were representations of a *mandala*. In the case of the capital of the Thai kingdom of Sukhodaya, for example, the inner core was represented by the king's palace and by the major temple and monastery, which were in turn surrounded by three concentric circles of defensive walls (1976: 86). It is really rather regrettable that Connerton hardly ever discusses the evolution of urban forms in non-Western contexts, with the notable exception of the southern China metropolis discussed later.

Continuing in his argument, Connerton claims that, in the nineteenth century, European and North American 'bounded' cities with an identifiable perimeter gave way to more formless urban environments, or conurbations: the latter were not just bigger than their fourteenth-century counterparts, they were also characterised by a separation between place of residence and place of work (2009: 104). The process that led to the formation of nineteenth-century conurbations was, however, a slow one: in the British factory towns of the late nineteenth century, for example, dwelling and workplace were still a short distance from each other (ibid.: 105). Connerton's main point is that this mixing of functions (i.e. work, leisure and residence) in factory towns contributed to a heightened sense of community and to the consequent formation of durable memories.

This argument is hardly novel and echoes Jane Jacobs's famous claim that, in order for cities to flourish, urban districts should 'have a sufficiently dense concentration of people' and that urban dwellings should be complemented by other uses, such as work and leisure (1992[1961]: 200-1). In a similar fashion, Aidan Southall also maintained that the most defining characteristic of cities is 'the idea of concentration' (1998: 8), cities being places where people and social relationships are more highly concentrated.

By contrast, Connerton observes that in the twentieth century the multi-function city underwent a slow process of 'deconcentration' (2009: 107), leading to the formation of vast cities that are in fact more about dispersal than concentration. In a book that focuses mostly on the urban cultural history of Europe and North America and is otherwise devoid of in-depth cross-cultural comparisons, Connerton mentions as an example of this process the southern China metropolis consisting of the special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau and the cities of Shenzhen and Guangzhou in the south-eastern province of Guangdong (ibid.).

These cities of deconcentration are said to bring about a new mode of perception, closely linked to the means of transportation they make necessary. One does not look at these vast urban spaces directly, but through types of 'mechanical apparatus' (Connerton 2009: 109): cars, buses, train carriages. The city and its perceiver, then, no longer belong to the same space. In his 1989 historical ethnography of Brasilia, James Holston had already written of the death of the street in the modernist capital of Brazil and of how this runs counter to local notions of

urbanism (1989: 101). In a similar fashion, Connerton also sees in the creation of 'single-function' urban space the 'death' of the street as a gathering place: streets are no longer experienced at a pedestrian pace, but at the speeded-up pace of machines, which gives space a quality of 'evanescence' (2009: 117).

Alongside the increased pace of urban mobility, modernity is also said to be characterised by an increase in the speed of commodity consumption and media production: cars, television, and the internet all call for an 'accelerated metabolism of objects', images and spaces, which will inevitably lead to an 'attenuation of memory' (Connerton, 2009: 122). Connerton's views on the digital media seem to echo a recent debate around whether the use of the internet and of online search engines might lead to a loss of concentration and memory. This debate was most notably sparked by a 2008 article in *The Atlantic* magazine entitled 'Is Google making us stupid?' (Carr 2008). Easy access to virtually endless amounts of information, the argument goes, could lead to a gradual loss of the ability to focus and to increased forgetfulness.

Connerton also claims that the proliferation of computer memories and electronic images is leading to cultural forgetting by being 'non-things' in that they cannot be 'got hold of by the hands'; one literally cannot 'grasp' them (2009: 124). Here, Connerton's argument is at its most apocalyptic and fails to acknowledge possible links between technology, portability and solidity. Modern technology, for example, is moving increasingly towards handheld devices, such as so-called 'smart phones' and 'tablet computers', which encourage users to touch and modify images, sounds and text. What is more, increased portability allows people to share and distribute content more easily. This supposedly 'intangible' content can then be turned into more 'thing-like' objects, as Connerton would have it. During my fieldwork in Lhasa, for example, I saw savvy Han businessmen easily obtain digital copies of old, black-and-white photographs of pre-1951 Tibet, print them and sell them to Tibetan residents in the city. Tibetans would then have these pictures framed and put them up in their living rooms or in restaurants and teahouses as mementos of their city's past.

Although vitiated by a Eurocentric perspective and an overstated fear of technological alienation, Connerton's latest book still raises important questions about the pace of modern living, how cities have been developing and whether all this might lead to weaker communities that remember very little of their past. While Connerton's social historical approach represents an excellent starting point, these questions can only be tackled through a thorough cross-cultural comparison of historical and ethnographic data on the impact of contemporary dwelling, consumption and media practices on communities and their cultural memories.

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IVAN COSTANTINO

Anna Grimshaw and Amanda Ravetz, *Observations on observational cinema: anthropology, film, and the exploration of social life*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press 2009, 224 pp., 25 Illustrations.

Anna Grimshaw and Amanda Ravetz's collaborations routinely embody the respective backgrounds of the two authors. Weaving anthropological theory through a rooted respect for the arts, this academic team has proved once again the value of a true understanding of practice. Across visual anthropology's literary canon, high-minded theorists too often critique, comment on and criticise a form of art of which they have little or no practical understanding. *Observational Cinema: Anthropology, Film and the Exploration of Social Life* aggressively flirts with the notion that practice is the basis for all theory and that despite academia's protests, an informed experience-based examination of the abstractions at work within the mode of observational cinema produces an engagement with the filmic realm that eludes most of the discipline's armchair theorists.

Aimed at situating shifts in ethnographic film-making in a broader historical landscape, Grimshaw and Ravetz provide a detailed exploration of the origins of the genre of observational film through debates on the ethics of observation, film-making technologies and techniques. Recognizing the gaping hole in the ethnographic and documentary film debate, this work has obviously been produced with a healthy appreciation of the aesthetics of non-narrative film-making and thus artfully chronicles the underlying anthropological significance inherent in such developments. Embracing the existing lines of inquiry employed in film studies, *Observational Cinema* sets out to rediscover how observation-as-practice is manifested through the culturally informed experience of film-making itself. Focused on the process over the final product, Grimshaw and Ravetz reorient the conversation to include a more thorough debate on how film-makers cater to and portray socio-cultural actors, instead of simply

referencing which actors and why. The authors point to an array of recent phenomenological trends in anthropology and emphasize how the limited resurgence in both the material and the emotional, as experienced through the sensory as well as the body, has played a key formative role in the shaping of observational film-making as a platform for the lived experience.

Building on Sandall and Young's early essays and Bazinian origins, Grimshaw and Ravetz openly acknowledge their somewhat limited selection of films and film-makers throughout *Observational Cinema*, arguing that such examples embody the core transformations of the movement. Whereas I am sure that many critics will dissect the authors' collection of case studies with an eye towards their own personal ethnographic film libraries and preferences, I believe this retelling of observational history provides a much-needed framework and precedent for additional writings on the subject. Many will surely gripe at a handful of such seemingly obvious and overly used examples as *Primary* and *To Live With Herds*, but the absence of such classic portraits of the observational experience would undoubtedly raise more than a few questions. The genius throughout the work is the craftsmanship employed when pairing such films and the authors' ability to allow filmic juxtaposition to create a new space for critical comparison.

Observational Cinema tactfully avoids the somewhat expected marginalization of ethnographic film as a genre that operates outside the scope of all other film-making approaches by comparatively blurring the line between the documentary and the ethnographic. Whereas ethnographic film is often situated as some alien attempt at visual inquiry from some far-off secluded Pacific island, only to be embraced by the academic lecture hall, Grimshaw and Ravetz showcase the observational overlap between the two spheres through foundational debates on the processes involved in filming the Australian bush and the American countryside alike. However, a dangerous chapter-long tangent praising the life and work of David MacDougall seems to suffer directly from the authors' expectations of an anthropological academic audience. Of course MacDougall's films are of central importance to the development of observational film-making, but the devotion of over a fifth of the book's pages to such an icon of visual anthropology seems to imply an awareness of, and occasional pandering to, preconceived ideas of what anthropology thinks observational film-making should be.

But despite this brief encounter with such a slippery slope, I believe Grimshaw and Ravetz regain their footing through their informed and dynamic selection of MacDougall's films. Instead of simply chronologically listing the films that make up MacDougall's portfolio, the authors rightly situate the marathon of *The Doon School Series* as a web from which all his other works are suspended. Ultimately, by anchoring *Observational Cinema* in the range of works of Di Gioia, Hancock and MacDougall, the authors derive a cohesive narrative on the successes and frictions of observation-as-experimental film-making. While a bit predictable in its discussion of certain films, *Observational Cinema* brings together a wide range of debates on visual and social anthropology within a single text and re-imagines observational film as a

critical link between anthropology and film studies – surely a foundational starting point on which future cross-disciplinary works will be based.

COREY J. BOLING

Gopal Guru (ed.), *Humiliation: claims and contexts*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Edited by Professor Gopal Guru, a leading scholar on caste in modern India, the eleven articles presented in this noteworthy volume seek to draw our attention to a phenomenon which pervades social life, yet is often absent in our academic analysis: humiliation. The book claims three objectives. First, it seeks to expose ‘humiliation’ as a complex social phenomenon occurring in different forms, contexts and discourses. In doing so, it highlights our current lack of understanding and convinces us of the need to make ‘humiliation’ an object of academic inquiry. Secondly, it argues how humiliation rests at the heart of the major problems of modern Indian life: the tension between the private and the public; the national and the local; a state based on western ideas of self and society, and a culture based on inherent inequality. This makes understanding ‘humiliation’ not only interesting, but imperative. Thirdly, the volume claims to provide us with a new ‘conceptual language’ for identifying and understanding humiliation.

The first goal is immediately accomplished by Bhikhu Parekh. He gives us eleven scenarios of humiliation occurring at different levels of social life, featuring different actors, and having various outcomes. Parekh then systematically analyses these cases, generalising across their diversity and complexity to give us a definition of humiliation as a distinct concept. While his distinctions between humiliation, degradation and humbleness might not be final or exhaustive, Parekh succeeds in inviting critical thought on the notion of humiliation and provides us with an example of how to grapple meaningfully with the complex ways in which it manifests itself. In doing so, it constitutes an excellent introductory chapter. Nandy sees humiliation as a relationship which is realised only when both humiliator and humiliated understand and accept their relative positions (Chapter 2). She examines the ethics involved in the interference of a third party pointing out humiliation in a relationship where humiliation is not understood or accepted. Given that this ‘third party’ might well be the researcher, this text can be read as a text on reflexivity, ethics and epistemology. Similarly, Baxi cautions us against the use of existing academic discourses on humiliation. As these discourses are based on Western conceptions of the self and of society, carelessly imposing them on other cultures would then constitute an act of ‘etymological violence’ (Chapter 3). While the other chapters see humiliation as a ‘concept’ or a ‘relationship’, Sanjay Palshikar considers it to be a ‘claim’ that has an internal structure (Chapter 4). When humiliation is claimed, one is also essentially

1) creating or mobilising a victimised group, 2) throwing into relief a sharp or unjust hierarchy of power, 3) mustering a narrative of a lost past, and 4) outlining a way to respond to an oppressor. Rather than being a sign of defeat, the claim to humiliation imposes upon the world a moral way of looking at it. The strengths of this chapter are also its weak points. Because humiliation is a claim, the text is not bogged down by whether the claimants are 'truly' humiliated, or whether other parties recognise this claim. It also assumes that the humiliated can launch a claim in the first place.

Section 2 is more ethnographic in content. Geetha's contribution is interesting, for it examines Dalit humiliation from the point of view of the hegemonic Brahmanic discourse. In this discursive regime of myths, cosmologies and rituals, the Dalit are total subjects, helplessly part of someone else's world view. Here knowledge is indeed power. This chapter also implicitly asks an urgent question: why do the humiliators humiliate?' Chapter 4 provides an answer: humiliation is a claim that throws existing power structures into relief. This claim can be used not only by the subaltern, but also by the powerful.

Rodriguez argues how the refusal of the masses to clean public spaces is seen by the frustrated bourgeois leaders of India as the refusal of the archaic masses to accept their enlightened guidance and patronage (Chapter 6). Rather, Rodriguez argues, this 'refusal' comes from the bourgeois inability to understand fully the connection between filth and untouchability. The warning here is clear: it shows the ease with which one could fall into narratives which inadequately account for social life. This inadequacy leads first to frustration, then eventually to social disillusionment and distrust. Ronald deSouza gives us an interesting case of how the refusal by caste Hindus to allow Dalits to be cremated in a shared crematorium developed into a national drama. The author uses 'humiliation' as a window through which the complex relationship between the 'local' and the 'national' is analysed. In Chapter 8, Chandhoke asks some provoking questions about notions of equality and concludes that caste is a 'state of mind', not just a set of boundaries to be dismantled.

Section 3 shifts the action away from the symbolic to economics and politics. Chapter 9 is another highlight of the volume. Suhar Palshikar here describes a strike by mill workers in 1982. The strike failed so spectacularly that it left the previously strong, proud and organised industrial labour in disarray. The humiliation at the hands of the employers and the state that followed was so great that the workers then refused to speak of, or even remember, their ignominious past, neutralising the labour group entirely. As Maurice Halbwachs once suggested, a group with no memory is no group at all. Thomas Pantham (Chapter 10) compares Gandhi's and Ambedkar's discourses of untouchability. In doing so, he presents caste as a constantly negotiated reality. Professor Guru concludes the volume by encouraging us to reject rejection. He argues that this can only be achieved through self-respect and a strong moral courage to stand up to an oppressor. It could have been an outstanding follow up to Chapter 9, but this potential is left untapped.

While the book certainly succeeds in presenting humiliation as a complex phenomenon that needs to be urgently studied, I also think that it suffers from two problems. First, the volume seems to lack a definite conclusion. While it gives us many interesting perspectives and approaches to humiliation, they are explicitly linked together only through Professor Gupal's introduction. Superficially, I pointed out how some of the articles could have been connected. A concluding chapter highlighting these connections could have taken this already impressive study to a new level. Furthermore, as the articles are loosely informed by each other, one finds several occasions where different authors subtly contradict each other. For example, Parekh's effort to separate humiliation from other, similar concepts is ignored later on. More pressing is the slippage from humiliation to caste. The two, admittedly, are inextricably connected. However, in my view, they should remain conceptually separate, and this slippage hinders rather than contributes to a theory of 'humiliation'.

Despite these criticisms, the volume has many strong points. Its very existence is already a plus, and Professor Guru succeeds in showing us the dangers of taking humiliation for granted. Moreover, many authors are not satisfied by just giving us a description of the problems they are concerned with. Informed by their theoretical and ethnographic knowledge, they also offer solutions to the issues they describe. Finally, the individual articles are coherent and broad in their interests, making it relevant not only for scholars of India, but for anyone interested in power, discourse, human rights and statehood.

BRIAN CAMPBELL

Marianne Lemaire, *Les sillons de la souffrance: représentations du travail en pays senufo (Côte d'Ivoire)*, Paris: Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 253 pp.

This book is the result of the author's doctoral research on cultural representations of work among the Senufo of West Africa. Her findings are based on fieldwork conducted between 1992 and 1997 in three villages near Korhogo in northern Côte d'Ivoire (Nambognonkaha, Dihi and Zémongokaha), which are occupied by the Senufo sub-group known as the Tyebara.

Lemaire focuses on the Tyebara category of *faliwi*, which primarily designates agricultural work. Her principal argument is that, whereas Western cultures perceive and evaluate work from a functionalist perspective, as an instrumental activity leading to certain goals (e.g., the production of economic goods), the Tyebara, by contrast, value agricultural work intrinsically, as a paradigmatic activity to which one should devote all one's strength, both physical and moral. For the Tyebara, the cultural ramifications of two basic characteristics of agricultural work—suffering without permanent relief and rivalry without ultimate victory—elevate it to the status of a model human activity. According to Lemaire, the Tyebara have never felt any great esteem for war primarily because armed conflict usually ends with the total

elimination or submission of one of the warring parties; such events interrupt an otherwise normal state of cyclical and harmless rivalry which characterizes agricultural work. She argues that this absence of martial enthusiasm led French colonialists to conclude erroneously that the Senufo cultivators were pacifists (Chapter 1).

The characterization of endless rivalry as a basic component of agricultural work is further developed in Chapters 2 and 5, where Lemaire discusses the historical practice among the Tyebara of organizing highly institutionalized competitions between groups of cultivators, normally from different villages, which ended with the proclamation of agricultural champions known as *tegbanbele* (singular *tegbanwi*: 'the one who is good with the hoe'). However, the benefits of *tegbanwi* status were limited to pure prestige, and these champions did not enjoy any particular economic or political advantages over others. Moreover, it was not desirable that the same person remain *tegbanwi* for too long. In such cases, diviners normally proclaimed that a (female) spirit had fallen in love with the champion and demanded that he stop cultivating, thereby effectively placing a ritual prohibition on further agricultural work. Lemaire argues, however, that these two examples should not be interpreted as evidence of a cultural propensity for egalitarianism (a term she uses in the sense of 'not deviating from the mean' rather than of 'equal rights and opportunities for all'). Rather, the main purpose of agricultural rivalry was to mobilize all the physical and moral forces of the cultivators and thereby realize the agricultural work in all its dimensions.

Lemaire offers further support for her argument concerning the intrinsic value of agricultural work among the Senufo by demonstrating its paradigmatic status for all other activities, offering examples drawn from music, rituals and funeral ceremonies. The xylophone performances which accompanied agricultural competitions and the songs which accompanied the tamping down of the earthen floors of houses, for example, were intended to exalt such work, rather than to divert workers' attention from their activity or to alleviate their physical and moral suffering (Chapter 3). Moreover, the ritual initiation of young men into age-graded societies known as *poro* involves the cultivation by novices of a field in a secret forest which belongs to the 'old woman of the village' (*Katyelɛ ɛ wi*), as well as of the fields of the elder initiators (Chapter 6). The theme of agricultural work reappears, furthermore, in funeral ceremonies, where the 'digging and cultivating' of the grave by males evokes the physical dimension of suffering, while female mourning invokes above all the moral suffering of agricultural work, and of work in general (Chapter 3).

Lemaire's book is a very interesting study of Senufo representations of work, and she persuasively demonstrates how work (and agricultural work in particular) is highly valued among people of this ethnic group. The book is also a valuable source of information on other aspects of Senufo (Tyebara) society, as illuminated through the lens of *faliwi*—from music and rituals, to funeral and matrimonial practices, to the more general characteristics of social structure. What appears to be missing, however, is material that would add a more developed historical dimension to what is otherwise a rich ethnographic description. For example,

Lemaire admits that the term 'work' has not always been limited in Western discourse to its purely functionalist dimension (p. 238). More importantly, she states that, in general, the Tyebara no longer practise the highly institutionalized agricultural competitions mentioned above, and that it was in fact the colonial administration that allowed Senufo canton chiefs to demand that their villagers cultivate their fields and thus to organize the most prestigious competitions (pp. 49, 51). This implies that *faliwi* is as fluid and historically contingent as Western conceptualizations of work, and suggests that there is scope for a more elaborate exploration of the historical transformations of Senufo representations of work, as provoked by political and economic changes. I would be especially interested to see more about how such representations have been affected by the current Ivorian socio-political crisis, as well as by the fact that the northern part of Côte d'Ivoire (including the Senufo region) has been effectively under rebel control since a failed military coup in 2002. Such suggestions are meant simply to identify possible avenues for anchoring Lemaire's ethnographic research in the context of more recent history, however, and do nothing to discredit an otherwise commendable book.

MAJA BOVCON

Antonius C.G.M. Robben (ed.), *Iraq at a distance: what anthropology can teach us about the war*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 2010, 186 pp.

Iraq at a distance: what anthropology can teach us about the war is an edited volume critically examining various themes in the Iraq war. The editor, Antonius C.G.M. Robben, is joined by five other distinguished anthropologists, each of whom has considerable experience in the field of violent conflict. While the commentaries are not based on direct ethnographic field research in Iraq, the book serves to analyze the ongoing conflict by means of comparative analysis with other conflicts on which the contributing authors have conducted research, including Cambodia, Palestine, Northern Ireland, and Argentina. The volume offers a somewhat harsh criticism of US military policy and Coalition strategy, while highlighting issues that have been left out of the mainstream media discussion.

Written with the conviction that an anthropological perspective can inform current political debates, even in instances in which field sites are inaccessible, the book takes issue with key military policies in Iraq and Afghanistan, including the use of anthropologists in its Human Terrain System (HTS) program (which employs anthropologists within military units). As Robben points out in his introduction, historically, there has been an 'ethically questionable' (p. 1) relationship between anthropologists and the military. A dialogue highlighting this friction has now become crucial to the integrity of the field, as these types of affiliations endanger not only individual anthropologists working in the field, but also the discipline itself.

The chapters themselves are intellectually interesting and well informed. Alexander Laban Hinton's chapter, "'Night fell on a different world': dangerous visions and the War on Terror – a lesson from Cambodia", takes a philosophical approach to the subject, analyzing the mental and emotional framework that the US government and military have cultivated in their attempts to justify a 'war on terror' by any means. His analysis takes aim at the ways in which an 'us vs. them' mentality has served to distance soldiers, as well as ordinary Americans, from the reality of the death and destruction taking place on the ground. Hinton picks apart the inflammatory language used in both political speeches and the media to draw attention to the danger of polarizing rhetoric.

Nadje Al-Ali provides an alternative discussion to the debate about Iraqi women in her chapter, 'The War on Terror and women's rights in Iraq'. While examining violent events that are often passed over in the media, Al-Ali voices outrage at the many different forms of violence against women that have emerged as a result of the US invasion of Iraq. In a portrayal that opposes official reports regarding the positive effects of the US invasion of Iraq on women, the chapter documents the many forms of brutality and immobilization experienced by Iraqi women following the start of the war. In fact, Al-Ali points out that US military action actually reversed many of the positive legal gains previously made by Iraqi women.

In Julie Peteet's chapter, 'The War on Terror, dismantling, and the construction of place: an ethnographic perspective from Palestine', the author criticizes the deficiency of knowledge about Iraqi history, society and culture on the part of the US military prior to the invasion. She then makes a connection between historical and current events as seen through the eyes of the societies under assault, describing the ongoing conflict as the most recent in a long line of external occupations and western imperialisms in the region. Peteet draws insightful comparisons with Israel/Palestine and the ways in which both societies have been 'reterritorialized' at the hands of a foreign military. In her analysis, Peteet considers the similarities between the Israeli separation wall, constructed in a way that divides the population along religio-sectarian lines, with that of the Green Zone and the spatial enclavization of various sectarian groups in Baghdad.

For Jeffrey A. Sluka, in his chapter, 'Losing hearts and minds in the "War on Terrorism"', the Iraq war led to an increase in the risk of terrorism, rather than being a step towards its demise. In his chapter, the author argues that the blatant disregard for the lives and properties of Iraqi and Afghan civilians instigated greater levels of hatred among those affected. He argues that the US lost the popular support of civilian populations through its indiscriminate killing, use of torture, and considerable violations of human rights. Sluka makes use of historical research to argue that wars are won through diplomacy and popular support, rather than by brute force. The activities of the US and Coalition forces, rather than winning the hearts and minds of populations at home and abroad, have only served to alienate the public and harm their chances at 'success'.

In the final chapter, 'Mimesis in a war among the people: what Argentina's dirty war reveals about counterinsurgency in Iraq', Robben uses his own experiences in Argentina to examine the dubious ideology behind the war on terror, as well as to investigate the use of 'dirty' tactics on the part of the counterinsurgency. Describing the use of 'swarming' strategies and the price paid for these tactics by the civilian population, Robben follows with an analysis of the torture inflicted at Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib to make the point that current war strategies are not only largely ineffectual, but also morally condemnable.

Certain themes run throughout the book reinforcing key points, including the dichotomization of the world into a good vs. evil (us vs. them) framework, the indiscriminate use of violence by Coalition forces, and the debate over the role of anthropologists as advocates for marginalized groups. The book brings important new considerations and useful comparisons to the table and is a worthwhile read, in particular for those involved in the Iraq debate. At a time when anthropology departments are being downsized, Robben and the contributing authors offer a potent case as to the continued importance of anthropologists in today's globalized world and as crucial contributors to political discussions. And while the book provides little in terms of advice or solutions, it does serve as an important addition to the debates on both the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and the role of anthropology itself.

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