D. Turner

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DAVID H. TURNER

LEIDEN ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE REINTERPRETATION OF AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

In 1949 Claude Lévi-Strauss published *Les Structures Élémentaires de la Parenté* (reviewed by J. P. B. de Josselin de Jong in 1952), and in 1960 F. G. G. Rose published his *Classification of Kin, Age Structure and Marriage Amongst the Groote Eylandt Aborigines* (reviewed by P. E. de Josselin de Jong in 1962). To most observers these works seemed diametrically opposed in their respective assumptions and conclusions. While the first was alliance oriented, stressing the role of the circulation of women in strengthening both the links between men and society as a whole, the second was descent oriented, focussing more on the interrelation of kinship positions through marriage. And while Lévi-Strauss treated facts at the model level, Rose treated them at the level of observed behaviour. Despite this, however, P. E. de Josselin de Jong thought that, considered together, there might result one of those "chocs des opinions from which proverbially, truth results" (1962: 65). It is the implications of this insight that I would like to explore here.

Rose's arguments were based on his fieldwork on Groote Eylandt in Arnhem Land, Australia in 1940 and focussed on the relationship between sister-exchange, cousin marriage and gerontocracy or the marriage of older men to young women. His data showed that the actual age difference between spouses was, on the average, about

DAVID H. TURNER, who took his PhD at the University of Western Australia, Perth, is at present attached to the Department of Anthropology, University of Toronto. His interest is focused especially on social structure and symbolic representation. His two principal publications are *Australian Aboriginal Social Organization*, New York/Canberra: Humanities Press/Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1979, and *Dialectics in Tradition: myth and social structure in two hunter-gatherer societies*, Occasional Paper 36, Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, 1978. The present article was a paper given at the 50th Anniversary of W.D.O. Dr. Turner may be contacted at: Trinity College, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 1A1 Canada.

25 years. Between actual siblings the difference in age was from five to nine years. If sisters were to be exchanged on marriage, then a girl of nine would have to have a full brother of 34, and this as Rose could show, was extremely unlikely. Sister-exchange could not be a structural feature of marriage on Groote Eylandt, and theoretically elsewhere, since gerontocracy was an established feature of the Australian marriage systems. Having put his case here, Rose then proceeded to offer a theoretical interpretation of why, in asymmetrical cross-cousin marriage systems, marriage was more frequently with the mother's brother's, rather than the father's sister's, daughter. P. E. de Josselin de Jong summarized his argument:

"The age difference between husband and wife means that a father is about two female generations older than his children. If we combine this with the very slight difference in age between siblings, it is easy to see why a man cannot marry his FZD; he is so much younger, that when she reaches puberty, say 13/14, he probably on the average is still not born." (1962: 43)

What was puzzling about Rose's analysis, though, was that data presented in his ethnographic report indicated that the Groote Eylandt Aborigines did practice both sister-exchange and gerontocracy. According to the "rules" of "kin" classification given by Rose, WBWB was equated with brother, WBW was equated with sister and ZHZ was equated with wife. This seemed to undermine his central arguments. In an attempt to resolve the problem here, in his review article P. E. de Josselin de Jong offered an alternative explanation of the Groote Eylandters marriage system. They must have an asymmetrical exchange system with a base of three patrilineal local groups; the relationship term *dadingya*, which Rose had given as "wife", must mean "females of the bride-taking as well as bride-giving groups". While my own research on Groote Eylandt and eastern Arnhem Land between 1969 and 1974 does not support this interpretation, more importantly, neither does it support Rose's. There was, and still to some extent is, spouse exchange and gerontocracy (though both have declined with Mission influence); but the exchanges are not of brothers and sisters but of patrilineal local group members sharing certain characteristics in common — namely alliance histories. What I found was that the preferred marriage was an exchange between the same two patri-groups in alternate generations, with the preferred partners a man and a woman in the same patri-group whose cognates (within the Aboriginal definition of paternity and maternity) had married the same patri-

groups. If such partners were not available then exchange proceeded on a general patri-group basis. Once this is realized the problem of the incompatibility of gerontocracy and sister-exchange disappears; age ranges within patri-groups as such are broad enough to permit direct exchange. In one Groote Eylandt patri-group the range is 36 years to one, in another from 55 years to 10 and so on (Turner 1974; Chapter 3).

As P. E. de Josselin de Jong foresaw, the path to understanding here lay in an investigation of the patrilineal local group basis of marriage and an examination of the so-called "kin" terminology within the Aboriginal frame of reference. The meanings of Groote Eylandt relationship terms proved to combine culturally-defined genealogical features with group and alliance principles such that each term located a relationship between any two individuals through an intersection in their cognates' (F, FF, FM, M, MF, MM) respective alliance histories on a patri-group basis. The term *dadingya*, or wife, meant "a person in my FM's patri-group in my own generation whose Ms are in my MM's patri-group; whose MMs are in my M's patri-group; and whose FM's are in my patri-group". This reflects the ideal of an exchange relation between the same two patri-groups in alternate generations. Terminological usage in the case of alternate marriages follows a more complex logic of assignment which I have documented elsewhere (1974, Appendix B). What the Groote Eylandters were doing was mapping alliance relations over a cognatic grid as a means for arranging new alliances in the present and for the future from what they knew to be past alignments.

The model outlined above worked to understand observed relations in the field, and it worked to formally predict actual usages in the laboratory. A programme of this model was able to predict in 1,453 of 2,847 cases what term a person used in relation to another in a sample of 74 informants. The result is statistically significant at the .01 level, given that a random selection would result in a 25 % success rate. Incorrect predictions can be explained in terms of changes in patri-group membership over time, ideological manipulation of the past to suit present circumstances, the compounding of alternate marriages and occasional arbitrary adjustments. Another run using all of Rose's 1941 data achieved almost exactly the same success rate, indicating the persistence of patri-group alliance relations despite some 25 years of intensive contact in the interim period.

My overall conclusion was that so-called "kinship" terms in Groote

Eylandt society defined alliance relations between individuals as members of patri-groups and functioned to arrange people into marriageable and unmarriageable categories, as Lévi-Strauss had suggested for "prescriptive" alliance terminologies in general (1965: 14). This arrangement took place through a complex process of articulation of lines and categories as Needham (1971: 32) had thought. Following a general reinterpretation of the classic Australian systems as described by Elkin (1964) I have drawn similar conclusions about Australia as a whole (1979a).

Before proceeding to the more general findings and implications, however, two methodological points are in order, the first relating to the study of what anthropologists call "kinship" systems, the second to the reanalysis of data gathered within a certain framework, when the framework itself is at issue. In my field research in Arnhem Land and northern Canada among the Cree I hope to have demonstrated how the method of analysis suggested by Rose for the study of so-called "kinship" systems can be developed to further our understanding of social relations in those societies which have most interested anthropologists, and perhaps even in our own. In his Groote Eylandt ethnography, Rose suggested, and P. E. de Josselin de Jong in his review article later agreed, that instead of tracing out genealogical paths from informants to their immediate relatives, and from these relatives to their immediate relatives, recording the relationship term E/ego applied to each one in turn, we should instead ask all informants, or a sample of informants, what terms they actually use in relation to one another. We should leave open the question of what kind of relation the terms define. Now this, by itself, does not lead us very far, but it seems a better starting point than assuming that genealogical, or culturally defined genealogical, relationships are somehow *given* as structurally important in all human societies. But even Rose's method is not *entirely* outside this framework for some initial decision has to be made about the kind of terms that are at issue, and this decision almost always proceeds on the basis of *some* perceived connection to kinship. The advantage is that other factors than kinship *may* be located as an integral part of the classification process through following this procedure.

In my own work, and in collaboration with P. Wertman, after I had recorded actual terminological usages between informants I then compared, contrasted and experimented with the features of all people

classed by the same term until certain aspects emerged in common, whether of a relational or formal nature (e.g., membership in a particular group or a past relationship to a common group through cognatic links or through coproduction ties). With hypotheses formulated about the possible meanings of the terms under investigation, I undertook further experimentation until I could accurately predict the full range of actual relationships covered by a particular term. While this whole procedure is best carried out in the field, it is possible to work in the laboratory if sufficient quantitative data have been gathered and some insights gained into possible classifying principles. Beyond this general statement I must refer the reader to my two monographs of 1974 and 1977 (with P. Wertman).

The problem is that if you discover that the facts are not strictly genealogical, as I did in Australia and among the Cree, how are you to compare your findings with those of other researchers whose facts were structured by the genealogical method? This was the problem I faced when I attempted to reanalyse the classic Australian systems, particularly as I was proceeding from the structuralist precept that other societies must exist or have existed that represented different combinations of elements and relations found in Groote Eylandt society. My procedure here was to undertake a critical reading of the available Australian literature, and where inconsistencies and anomalies were apparent to suggest they could be resolved if the system in question represented one of my "deduced" configurations. I proceeded in this manner until I was satisfied that I had not left out any "facts" which did not fit my model, where fit seemed to be apparent. The results then suggested further fieldwork after new "facts", to fill in gaps in the ethnographic accounts and in my incomplete analyses. The concluding chapter of the book containing this analysis is presented in modified form in *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* Vol. 133, but covers only the stable configurations located.

I would now like to turn to J. P. B. de Josselin de Jong's thoughts on alliance theory and on the analyses of Lévi-Strauss in *The Elementary Structure of Kinship* and relate them to my general findings on Australian social organization and on social organization in general. To my mind, the most significant aspect of J. P. B. de Josselin de Jong's critical reading of Lévi-Strauss was his realization that he and Radcliffe-Brown did not differ in approach to the extent that Lévi-Strauss himself believed. This perspective seems to have been "inherited" by his nephew

P. E. de Josselin de Jong. As we can tell from his discussion of Rose's book, neither did Rose depart from Radcliffe-Brown or Lévi-Strauss to the extent that he himself believed. What Rose and Lévi-Strauss had in common was a critical perspective on the then prevalent "descent approach", but *within* the descent framework itself. What Rose was quibbling with was not the nature of social relations — he assumed them to be genealogically defined — but their internal inconsistency: how could sisters be exchanged in a gerontocratic society; how could a system be classified as a particular type based on the preference for marriage with a particular genealogically defined relative when the most frequent form of marriage in the society was with someone classed with a relative in a different genealogical position? On Groote Eylandt the preferred marriage was said to be with the MMBDD which, according to Radcliffe-Brown, made them Aranda in type. Yet only 40 % of marriages were actually with people called by the term that had been assigned this genealogical specification as its "primary meaning". Some 42 % of marriages were with people classed under the same term as was usually applied to the MBD, a defining feature of the Kariera type, and 30 % were with people classed under the same term as the MMBDD/MBD most often was, a feature of the Karadjeri type (Rose 1960: 153-157).

For Lévi-Strauss, Radcliffe-Brown's insistence that marriage was the negative effect of the incest taboo, varying in form with the range over which the taboo was extended (family, lineage, clan etc.) did not seem to fit with the ethnographic reports of sister exchange and of preferences for marriages with relatives of a certain kind. This seemed to suggest a more positive orientation. Lévi-Strauss favoured the view that descent principles, in fact, derived from alliance practices, the most elementary of which was an exchange of sisters between brothers and their families. Were such an exchange instituted and continued over time, the result would be bilateral cross-cousin marriage and patrilineal descent — in short, a system of dual organization.

Where both Lévi-Strauss and Rose departed from the then prevalent descent orientation was in their realization that in the societies investigated by them social relations could not be understood solely, or even primarily, through genealogical or culturally-posed genealogical ties; for Lévi-Strauss alliance relations were predominant while for Rose it was demography and ecology. But as J. P. B. de Josselin de Jong observed in the case of Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* was, indeed, an enquiry into "the socio-familial systems

characterized by preferential marriage based on definite *kinship* relations..." (1952/70: 2, italics mine). Whereas Radcliffe-Brown defined his first-order principles in terms of relations within the single nuclear family (husband-wife, parents-children, brother-sister), Lévi-Strauss's departure was to derive his elementary unit from relations within and between two exchanging families (husband-wife, father-son, mother's brother/sister's son). Rose's departure was to evaluate the actual against the ideal within the descent framework in order to be able to dismiss ideological data and reality as mere "superstructure". Population and resources were more important than kinship as organizing principles, however kinship was conceived. As I hope to demonstrate, Rose was partially correct but for the wrong reasons; Lévi-Strauss was also partially correct but offers only a more adequate model of what Radcliffe-Brown and others had begun to locate. In order to develop an adequate theory of social organization, standing outside the assumptions of Western society, more than genealogical kinship has to be taken as "given". As J. P. B. de Josselin de Jong observed in his evaluation of *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*,

... "the dichotomy of cousins and c.c. marriage, functionally connected with the initial exchange mechanism, become more intelligible if we regard recognition of the difference between patrilineal and matrilineal descent as a dynamic principle operating from the very beginning" (1952/70: 32).

If we take this a step further, realizing that adoption of a lineal principle of group formation is not necessarily a "descent" operation and even where it is must be separated out at level over and above kinship as simply "reproductive" ties, then we may be at least half way to formulating an adequate theory of "elementary structures". In the Australian case, for instance, a lineal principle was a means of culturalizing one's relation to the land such that planned organization was possible and continuity ensured. Here we begin to see how Rose was right for the wrong reasons: ideologies formulated out of elements from the kinship domain were there but they were a necessary, integral part of production group formation. They were utilized to form production groups internally divided by the estate affiliations of their members — at least those of their number who had been joined together through intermarriage. After marriage people gravitated between their own and their spouse's estates (minimally) as much because of ideological commitment to a homeland as out of economic necessity. At another level, however, spouse exchange, ritualized through formal

rules is a means of ensuring continuing relations among people despite economic and ecological fluctuations and personal and political animosities. That is, hunting and foraging ties continue to be formed even though it might be more advantageous in the short run, due to particular circumstances, to seek other partners. J. P. B. de Josselin de Jong was right, I think, to take Lévi-Strauss to task for overemphasizing the role of exchange as a binding force in and of itself, and for underplaying economic aspects of the process. As we have seen in the first case above, the effectiveness of spouse exchange as a binding force is dependent on a particular relation between people and land; in the second case, once in effect, the exchange relations force economic ties to be maintained. But, even more than this, an argument can be sustained using Australian data that formal affinal exchange rules derive, not only from a particular relation of people to land in an abstract cultural sense, but from a consciously formulated spacing policy in which people were established within their estates in such a way that no one group of them could be self-reproducing. In this way ties were "forced" between groups. Were these ties not institutionalized through prescriptive marriage rules, the consequence, given this procedure, would be competition for scarce resources, with the most powerful taking all. In other words, the "forced interaction" solution leads to a new, potential problem — how to ensure that the interaction is cooperative rather than competitive?

How, then, is cooperation ensured between patri-groups which do *not* intermarry both within and between connubia? Here the "forced interaction" mechanism also seems to apply, with cooperation achieved through an exchange relation joining people of different estate groups into trading, rather than foraging, groups in the context of common ceremonial participation. Exchange as exchange also operates here as a binding force but it is symbols that are exchanged rather than spouses. In Australia, totemic ties of "brotherhood" are duplicated in patri-groups, often widely separated in space, through the exchange of common symbols of identification, namely totems. Each patri-group has a corpus of species affiliations which can be related to those in other areas in order that a relation of "brotherhood" can be formed if one is not already in place. And where one patri-group forms a relation of brotherhood, its existing spouse groups will form a relation of spousehood.

During ceremonial occasions people travel across patri-group and connubial borders to interact with relative strangers and visit areas

they do not habitually frequent, thereby affording access to a wide range of resources and personnel. Trade of a practical nature occurs within a ceremonial context, and trade of ceremonial objects themselves seems to function as a form of artificially created demand — an elaboration of the “forced cooperation” mechanism. While the evidence for all this is by no means conclusive, what there is does point in some interesting directions (Turner 1980).

To summarize, the Australians, with their production group diversity systems utilize lineal principles of group formation from the kinship domain (with the qualifications listed above) to structure themselves into out-marrying estate groups which combine with other such groups through federational processes. These processes include an exchange of spouses on the one hand, and an exchange of symbols of identification on the other. As such the Australians are “kinline-confederalional” in logic of formation. To complete an adequate theory of elementary structures, however, another logic of formation must be added which I call “locality-incorporative”. Here, a residential principle may be selected from the locality (territorial) domain as a grouping principle and an incorporative rather than a confederalional operator utilized to define people’s relation to land and resources as well as to other people. Here, the jurisdiction forms around all the people living and working together within a certain area, and ideology defines those living and working together as a unity. It is in societies organized within such logic that co-production itself can come to be an organizing principle independently of locality or residence. The interest in this arrangement is in maximizing pragmatic associations and responses within a range of associations and resources; ties to insiders take precedence over those to outsiders. The elementary expression of this form of logic of association is found among the Cree of northern Canada, and here the evidence is that a sufficiently small population is spaced over a wide enough range and quantity of resources that reproduction — social and physical — can be achieved within a definite network of relations. People are born into pre-formed co-residential, co-production ties established through their parents’ same sex links and then establish their own networks through their own same sex links and the same sex links of those of their spouses. These ties cut across domestic and co-residential groups over a definite range and, insofar as they are reproduced in space over time, the level of the band is reached. Marriage is here a joining together in space — a merging of

people formerly separated in space into a new relationship which, in turn, brings together yet other people to form new spatial and co-production ties.

In the locality-incorporative framework, the cultural form taken by kinship over and above simple reproductive relations (within a cultural definition of the process) derives from residential and co-production realities; in the kinline-confederational framework the cultural form taken by locality over and above simple situation in space, derives from "descent" and alliance principles.

While I can only outline these ideas here, I want to stress that their elaboration follows a complex line of empirical and theoretical work stemming from an initial investigation and analysis of an Australian society. This enquiry owed much to a critical perspective on Rose's work and on Lévi-Strauss's alliance theory, the groundwork for which was laid by J. P. B. and P. E. de Josselin de Jong, as it owed much to both Rose's and Lévi-Strauss's works themselves.

In my view the "elementary structure" cannot be confined to one domain such as kinship but must be constituted from four — kinship, locality, production and ideology. Within the ideological I include the whole domain of symbolic representation, including the cultural principles of confederation and incorporation. I realize, however, that each of the other three domains must be constituted as ideas before they can be utilized (Turner 1978). With this "structure" established, I would now like to present my specific interpretations of Australian societies and compare them with the hypotheses of J. P. B. de Josselin de Jong, following Lévi-Strauss. I feel justified in omitting Rose's interpretations at this junction as he has published his agreement with my Groote Eylandt research (Rose 1975). In simplified form, my findings are as follows:

Stable Australian Configurations

1. Kariera

two 'brotherhood' groups; direct exchange renewable in consecutive generations; four sections in two couples formed by combining alternate generations in patri-groups at base two level.

2. Aranda

four 'brotherhood' groups; direct exchange renewable in alternate generations, institutionalized by loose links into two 'brotherhood' groups; eight sections in four couples formed by combining alternate generations at base four level.

3. Bardi
four 'brotherhood' groups; direct exchange renewable in alternate or every three generations.
4. Nyul-nyul
four 'brotherhood' groups (loose links into two as among Aranda); direct exchange preferred outside the patri-group family (own, M's, FM's and MM's patri-groups), but possible within.
5. Yaralde
four 'brotherhood' groups (perhaps loose links into two); direct exchange only outside the patri-group family.
6. Dieri I
one 'brotherhood' group; direct exchange only outside the patri-group family.
7. Dieri II
two 'brotherhood' groups; direct exchange only outside the patri-group family.

Unstable Configuration

1. Aluridja
one 'brotherhood' group; direct exchange outside patri-group family with a totemically linked 'brotherhood' mate; two sections in one couple formed by combining alternate generations in patri-groups at base one level.

Transitional Configurations

1. Western sector of Western Desert — Aluridja → Kariera: formation of two 'brotherhood' groups; no direct exchange; followed by direct exchange renewable in consecutive generations.
2. Daly River — Aluridja → Aranda: formation of two, three, then four 'brotherhood' groups; no direct exchange, then direct exchange renewable in alternate generations.
3. Murngin, Murinbata — Kariera → Aranda: formation of three 'brotherhood' groups; then four (retaining loose links into two); no direct exchange, then direct exchange renewable in alternate generations.
4. Karadjeri — Kariera → Nyul-nyul: formation of three 'brotherhood' groups (retaining loose links into two); no direct exchange, then direct exchange outside the patri-group family.

5. Gunwinggu — Kariera → Bardi: formation of three 'brotherhood' groups, then four (moiety links dropped); no direct exchange, then direct exchange renewable in alternate or every three generations.
6. Ungarinyin — Aranda → Kariera: formation of three 'brotherhood' groups, then two; no direct exchange, then direct exchange renewable in consecutive generations.
7. There is some evidence for a Bardi → Aranda-like transition in eastern Arnhem Land.

With the 'brotherhood' dimension included in the analysis we have avoided the temptation, so prevalent among Australianists, of arranging the various configurations located into an "evolutionary" sequence ranging from the less to the more well integrated. This "habit", as it really should be called, follows from an overemphasis on the marriage bond as a means of achieving social solidarity. Because the Aranda require at least four intermarrying clans to operate their system, it is generally assumed that they are a better integrated society than the Kariera, who require only two. The Kariera system has been generally assumed to be the prototype for further development in Australia and the base against which all other systems are evaluated, principally because the two-clan exchange system can be derived from what is regarded as the simplest form of social exchange — that of sisters between the brothers of two nuclear families. This model has plagued anthropology at least since Radcliffe-Brown, and neither Rose, nor Lévi-Strauss, nor Professor J. P. B. de Josselin de Jong has managed entirely to escape its clutches.

Accepting for the moment that it is the degree of social solidarity achieved by a particular arrangement of patri-groups that is at issue, we can see that by including the 'brotherhood' dimension of symbolic exchange, our measurements are altered considerably. The Aranda, for example, with their four groupings of totemically-linked clans, have social ties to a quarter of the people in their universe; the Kariera, with their dual organization, have ties to half in theirs. Thus, what an Aranda gains by way of more extensive marriage ties, s/he loses by way of a restricted totemic brotherhood network, relative to a Kariera; and what a Kariera gains through more extensive ties of brotherhood, s/he loses by way of a more restricted set of ties through marriage, relative to an Aranda. Here of course, I am using 'Aranda' as a model of a type of Australian formation — the Aranda people

do, in fact, link their clans at a higher level into a moiety division. This is merely to institutionalize something which follows from the rules of marriage, namely that one never marries the mother's mother's clan. Other "base-four" Australian societies like the Bardi do not do this and may permit marriage with the mother's mother's clan in addition to the father's mother's clan.

Lévi-Strauss (1968) grasped that the Australian systems might represent equivalent "adaptations" but without adequate data on the brotherhood dimension he was forced to base his analysis solely on marriage ties. For him the choice was between strong ties to a few groups or weak ties to many groups. Alternate generation exchange was, he thought, a weaker form of integration than consecutive-generation exchange. But with Australian marriage systems ranging in their preferences from a renewal of exchange every generation, to every second, every third and every fourth or more, to theoretically never, the point about their equivalence is difficult to sustain. With the "brotherhood" dimension added, however, gains and losses can be more accurately measured and more secure conclusions drawn.

My thesis is that in Australia the members of patri-groups are attempting to maintain a balance between foraging ties through marriage and trade ties through totemic "brotherhood", so as to ensure access to a wide variety of resources and personnel, and to allow for the reproduction of the patri-group as an estate group. One thus has the choice of a wide trading network and access to a restricted foraging range (the estates of the clans one's own marries), or a wide foraging range and a narrow trade network. At least in these terms the Aranda and Kariëra systems come to be seen as truly equivalent "adaptations", that is, interchangeable.

Many of the problems of interpretation of the Australian systems seem to derive from omitting an analysis of symbolic ties of totemic "brotherhood" and overemphasizing affinal exchange ties. That is, foraging ties were emphasized over trade ties. With this emphasis on marriage, the focus was on the connubium as a unit, analogous to a tribe, and use of this concept implied a more or less self-contained, self-reproducing, bounded grouping. This prevented most anthropologists from seeing the structural implications of patri-group ties across connubia, and where the ties were described, such as by Strehlow for the Aranda (1947; 1965), Stanner and Falkenberg for the Murinbata (1933 and 1962 respectively), and the Berndts for the Aluridja (1945), they were not elaborated at a theoretical level.

My own comparative research indicates that communication links run as much along totemic tracks of "brotherhood" alliance as through marriage links within the connubium. What this has meant is that under the influence of distant people, local patri-group members within a connubium may come to alter their ideas on the appropriate form of social organization, independently of those in other local patri-groups to whom they are tied by intermarriage. And should the new ways prove contradictory in relation to the old, there will result a period of confusion marked by asymmetrical marriage arrangements in which exchanges cannot be carried out along conventional lines between traditional marriage partners. In all of the configurations listed above, this in fact appears to be the case. Interestingly, these are the very "systems" that have given anthropologists so much trouble and are the ones used to demonstrate the existence of generalized systems of exchange on the Australian continent.

The notorious "Murungin", then, rather than possessing an asymmetrical cross-cousin marriage system were merely experiencing a temporary period in which some of their patri-groups had altered their conception of their own system from a Kariera-like to an Aranda-like model. The development appears to have proceeded along these lines: under influence from the south (itself another issue), some Murngin patri-groups began to prohibit marriage with a person in a patri-group to which their own had given women the previous generation (i.e., with a person with a cognate in own clan one generation ago such as the "FZD"). But their traditional partners, the still-Kariera-like people, continued to seek women from among people in their mother's/"FZH's" patri-group, expecting any arrangement to be reciprocal. However, they will not surrender women to the now Aranda-like people knowing they will not get women back in return — something they might well have learned only after actually surrendering, or agreeing to surrender, women to these groups. The part-Aranda people's advantage is that they are still able to take women from their mother's patri-group so long as an exchange had not been effected in her generation. All the initial Aranda prohibition prevents them from doing is giving women to some group whose members have a cognate in *their* own group a generation ago. At this point the "system" is likely to be based as much on politics as on principles as both sides experiment and negotiate a way out of the dilemma. Either the entire social order will be transformed (as actually happened among "Murngin" I worked with in southern Arnhem Land in 1974), the

old system will be re-established, or the connubium will split up and new exchange arrangements worked out with patri-groups in adjacent connubia who share marriage preferences and prohibitions (as occurred among the Murinbata).

What this example also points out is a different way of solving the problem of why the matrilateral rather than the patrilateral cross-cousin is preferred in asymmetrical marriage systems (although this itself may have to be rephrased): relationships may be conceived not as simply alliances between groups but as simultaneously genealogical and categorical but at different levels. The MBD is preferred because she is *not* (or was not when the system developed) a person with a cognate in own group a generation ago.

Now, while defining Australian societies as in transition is not new, failure to locate all dimensions of the transitions in question has led most anthropologists (including Radcliffe-Brown, Lévi-Strauss and J. P. B. de Josselin de Jong) to suppose that all transitional cases proceeded from a Kariera base (see J. P. B. de Josselin de Jong's treatment of Lévi-Strauss's treatment of the Aranda, Dieri, Karadjeri and Mara; 1952/62). It was precisely the success of this model in illuminating the Murngin situation which led to problems of analysis when applied to other societies exhibiting asymmetrical features. The extreme case is the Ungarinyin, analysed as a society moving from Kariera to Aranda even by their ethnographer Lucich (1968), when they are in fact a society moving in exactly the reverse direction — from Aranda to Kariera. At least this thesis appears to resolve most of the contradictions in the ethnographic accounts of them (see Turner 1979a).

Other apparently complex features of Australian societies, such as the four and eight section systems also become much easier to understand in the light of our model of social structure and transition. The "marriage classes" have been seen as either the product of intersecting patrilineal and matrilineal moieties (Radcliffe-Brown, Lévi-Strauss and J. P. B. de Josselin de Jong), or as formed on the basis of indirect patrilineal or matrilineal descent principles (Elkin, Berndt). Now, while these "observer models" do afford some measure of explanation by drawing connections where none exist in the data, there was always the perplexing fact that the Aborigines themselves rarely if ever recognized the cultural principles invented. This was something that bothered J. P. B. de Josselin de Jong in his review of Lévi-Strauss's interpretations and although he eventually opted for the intersecting

moieties solution, nevertheless he saw that something else was implicit in the data. The four section system of the Kariera type implied, he said, a distinction between two kinds of patrilineal local groups; the eight section system of the Aranda type implied four kinds. But two things stood in the way of developing this idea further — first, the “brotherhood” dimension was but vaguely defined and second, the eight section system (usually referred to as the subsection system) was seen, in typically evolutionary fashion, as a subdivision of the four section system. This follows from seeing the Aranda as a more complex form of integration than the Kariera.

Now that these systems are better understood, we can see that a division internal to one patri-group would occur within all other patri-groups to which it is totemically linked. Thus, within the Kariera framework of two “brotherhoods” and direct exchange between the same two patri-groups every generation, a four section system would be formed were the members of alternate generations to be grouped together into one category within the patri-group. The result would be two father-son *couples* of sections — one couple per patri-group — with each couple reproduced within totemically linked patri-groups (ideally). This is the four section system. Where the society’s base is four patri-groups, as among the Aranda, and the preferred marriage is between the same two patri-groups in alternate generations, operation of the same logic produces four father-son couples — one couple per each phratry of totemically linked patri-groups (see Appendix). And where the base is one as among the Aluridja, we find one “couple” alone reproduced throughout the entire cultural block. Among the Aluridja all patri-groups are directly or indirectly totemically linked.

The apparent complexities of section manipulation on alternate marriage also become easier to understand once the relation to, and nature of, social organization is realized. The aim is always to re-articulate the sections, as father-son couples with their own internal logic of marriage and brotherhood alliance rules, with actual patri-group-individual alliance practices and imbalances. For example, in an Aranda system with its eight sections of four father-son couples, the offspring of alternate marriages in which no direct exchange has been effected will be placed in one of the sections in the “couple” to which their mother’s correct husband *would have* belonged. Assuming an initial situation which fits the preferred arrangement (see Appendix), they will now be lined up for marriage with someone in the section couple associated with the patri-group into which their father should

have married but didn't. This is an attempt at ensuring that if the father's patri-group had already surrendered women to that patri-group in his generation, women would be returned in the next. In other words, the father is able to protect the interests of his own patri-group by manipulating the section affiliation of his children — his right in the context of his patri-group. In order for the children to re-affiliate themselves with his section couple, or for offspring of that patri-group in a later generation to do so, another alternate marriage will have to occur to remove them from the section couple to which they had become attached. The problem with interpretations of the Australian section systems was not the attempt to relate them to elements and relations at another level — even if these sometimes existed only in the anthropologist's mind: the "inventions" were necessary to fill in very real gaps in the ethnographic accounts. The problem was the description and analysis of these levels of organization themselves, stemming largely from preconceptions about the fundamental structuring principles of "primitive" society.

One of the interesting things to me, in this connection, is my own appearance at the W.D.O. Symposium at Leiden University, and the consistent interest of one of my "generation-mates", Ken Maddock of Macquarie University, Sydney, in Dutch Anthropology. It seems to me that many of the younger Australianists have turned, and are turning, to this tradition as a point of reference even if we are not always sure why this is so. Certainly we tired of the tradition inspired by Radcliffe-Brown — many of us finding it offered little insight into the societies we studied — and we *were* intrigued by Lévi-Strauss's analyses. But the connection seems to me something more than a link between Dutch and French Structuralism; it is more ethnographically based than that. There is something tantalizingly Australian about much of the Indonesian literature, but it is difficult to find a direct correspondence. One reads Van Wouden's *Types of Social Structure in Indonesia* with this feeling, and to me in particular, ethnographic sources on the Kayan seem very familiar. Could it be that the types of models and theories developed to handle the range of societies found in Indonesia by Dutch Anthropologists *without* the interference of another ethnographic tradition such as might be found in, say, Africa, provide more adequate points of reference for younger Australianists simply because societies in both regions sprang from a common foundation? I raise this merely as a possibility, and as an explanation for my own gravitation here. But one thing I do now

know — the Australians imagined caste-like structures through their myths in response to the Macassan visitors from Indonesia and it seems logical to me that caste developed historically from an Australian-like base, given the rather minimal number of transformations in that base, necessary to deduce caste in its Varna form (Turner 1979b). It might well be that parts of Indonesia — I am thinking of the Kayan again — represent transitional cases, theoretically sitting between these two polar situations. I would like to close by suggesting that *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* can be read as much as a history book as a book about structural principles. And even though its analyses must be qualified and in some cases abandoned, it is not as Leach has suggested “a magnificent failure”, but rather is one of the first relatively successful excursions out of the European mind, and the precursor to a history of a particular stream of development more or less isolated from our own.

APPENDIX

In the following diagramme, A, B, C, and D are four patri-groups; A_1a_1/A_2a_2 (upper case = male, lower case = female) is the section couple associated with patri-group A and so on. Ideally their inter-relations through marriage should be as follows:

If a_1 marries B_1 and c_1 marries D_1 but b_1 marries C_1 instead of A_1 this means that patri-group C has given women to patri-group D but cannot receive women back from patri-group D in return. If patri-group C defines the children of C_1b_1 as A_2a_2 instead of C_2c_2 then in the next generation, according to eight-section marriage rules, they (or at least the males) will marry D_2d_2 — the section couple associated with the patri-group to which patri-group C had surrendered women the previous generation. (I must assume, of course, that there

are actually more than four patri-groups in the connubium and that other exchanges, or at least marriages, have been effected in response to the "deviation" such that prohibited marriages have not been practiced. I must also assume that the D₂d₂ section couple is still attached to patri-group D.)

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