

Unilateral Descent Groups

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Lineage and Kin

In contrast to the bilateral family, lineages and kins ignore one side of the family. This does not mean that the peoples organized into unilateral descent groups take no cognizance of the other side, but merely that for specific purposes – say the transmission of names – only the matrilineal or the patrilineal kindred are significant. Conceptually, lineages and kins are alike and usually so figure in the native mind. But objectively there is a difference: the lineage is made up exclusively of provable blood relatives, i.e., all members are demonstrably descended from a common ancestor or ancestress; members of a kin may *believe* in such community of descent, they may conceivably be right in their belief, but it is impossible to prove it. The kin, then, is made up of two or more lineages.

It may happen that a tribe is divided into unilateral divisions some of which are by definition lineages, others clans. In the Hopi village of Mishongnovi, the Lizard, Eagle, and Squash people proved to be each composed wholly of persons related by blood; other groups included two or even three bodies of true kindred. From the native point of view, however, all ranked as equivalent types of unit.

Either lineages or kins are, like those of the Hopi, settled in pairs or larger numbers which jointly form a political entity, or each unilateral descent group owns a distinct tract of land and is politically autonomous. Of the latter type is

the core of an Australian horde or the Miwok *nena*, landowning patrilineal body of kindred who remembered their exact genealogical relationship to one another. As a consequence the territorial lineage cannot be *socially* independent of other groups, since incest taboos force its members to seek wives elsewhere. On the other hand, the Tongan *haa*, though *described* as lineages, are self-sufficient localized kins, for they embrace putative as well as true kindred and permit marriage except between close blood relatives.¹

The Clan

By convention most contemporary English-speaking scholars define the clan as a unilateral exogamous group; at one time totemism was added to its criteria, but being frequently absent in America, Africa, and Asia, this trait is best dropped as inessential. The definition adopted coincides with common French usage and is not unusual in Germany; in England, Tylor conformed to it in speaking of Chinese and Iroquois clans. On the other hand, the old Scotch clan corresponded more nearly to a tribe, though its core was doubtless composed of patrilineal kindred. In America, Major Powell restricted the term to what we call “matrilineal clans” and called patrilineal ones “gentes” (Latin *gens*, descendants of one ancestor; originally applied only to patricians). Powell’s nomenclature did not gain converts

beyond the United States, where it no longer predominates.

Because of the former conflict between British and American usage I suggested the Anglo-Saxon "sib" for unilateral groups irrespective of the rule of descent, but since the proposal was not generally adopted I have reverted to prevalent British and French terminology. Morgan originally spoke of Iroquois "tribes" in the sense of clans, later substituting "gens," not with Powell's restricted meaning, but to include any clan in modern parlance.

To turn to another terminological issue, is exogamy really important enough to distinguish one type of kin from another? It is tempting to answer negatively since genetically the two are often related. We know, for example, that under white influence ancient bars to marriage are often relaxed without the disappearance of the unilateral tie. But functionally the difference is considerable. For, if a sufficient number of persons were to marry within the kin, how could one continue to speak of matriliney or patriliney at all? The children of such a union are no longer able to draw that sharp distinction between maternal and paternal relatives which is so conspicuous in many societies. A Crow in such circumstances loses his bearings and perplexes his tribesmen. For he owes specific obligations to his father's relatives and others to his mother's, who are now hopelessly confounded. The sons of his father's clansmen ought to be his censors, whereas his mother's are bound to shield him from criticism; but now the very same persons are his joking-relatives and his clansmen! The dilemma affects others as well as himself.

Thus a clan is truly a distinct form of kin. On the other hand, Kirchhoff goes too far in casting doubt on the very existence of patrilinear or matrilinear agamy, for too many African and Polynesian societies have been authentically described in these terms. To be sure, they cannot be regarded as uncompromisingly unilateral; yet the reported rule of descent is evidently prevalent, whether the facts betoken a nascent or a decadent clan organization or some special obstacle in the way of complete consistency.

At all events, in view of terminological differences in the past, we must carefully scrutinize any reported "clan" system until we are

sure that the author's conception of one conforms to ours. It is equally important not to jump to the conclusion that some old source must refer to clans when it merely registers some phenomenon that might conceivably be so interpreted. Past construction of Spanish chronicles concerning American Indians is especially suspect and requires discriminating analysis. The Chibcha of Colombia, we learn, had a ruler or priest succeeded by his sister's eldest son. The fact evidently harmonizes with matriliney, it quite properly should make us alert to any further diagnostic criteria of matrilineal descent, but by itself it is not proof. As a matter of fact, the chronicles also tell us that sons inherited personal property, and nothing is said about the practices of the common herd. What is positively known thus admits of several interpretations. Conceivably the Chibcha were in a transitional stage toward patriliney, as older theorists would at once assume; conceivably the people were bilinear; conceivably the rulers had principles of descent and inheritance different from the commoners. In short, we do not know.

Again, the *ayllu* of early writers on Peru has often been conceived as a typical patrilineal clan. However, the unit at present so called by Aymara and Quechua Indians is definitely nothing of the sort, being an alliance of *unrelated* joint families, each claiming descent from a separate founder and with a strongly endogamous tendency. The old sources do, indeed, indicate a more or less patrilineal body, but one that also favored endogamy. There can thus be no question of clans. In Mexico the *calpulli* of the Aztecs remains an enigma, some specialists interpreting it as a clan, others as a military association. On the other hand, some of the western and southern Mexicans may really have had patrilineal clans; and the recent Lacandon of Yucatan are credited with preponderantly exogamous moieties, i.e., two major clans.²

Phratries

In ancient Athens a *phratría* was one of three political subdivisions of the tribe (*phyle*), kinship originally determining membership. Morgan conveniently applied the English form "phratry" to a group of two or more clans united for certain common objects.

Though most of the tribes he knew happened to group all their clans into two major units so that their phratries were moieties, he correctly spoke of the three phratries of the Mohegan. In the light of our present knowledge it is useful to retain the word for a union of kins, but to designate as "exogamous moieties" (French *moitié*, half) the two major kins, whether undivided or subdivided, that make up many tribes. This type of unit will presently receive separate discussion.

Phratries may or may not be exogamous. The thirteen Crow clans were grouped in six nameless major units, four of which certainly did not regulate marriage. On the other hand, in the Hopi village of Oraibi, the nine anonymous phratries, each embracing from two to six named clans that share ceremonial privileges, are the largest exogamous units known to these people.

Kin unions of different type may coexist in the same society. Of the sixteen Kansas clans, eight formed one exogamous moiety, the remainder the complementary moiety; and this dual division found spatial expression, the men of one half-tribe with their families camping on the left side, the men of the other half on the right side of the circle. But in addition "those who sang together" formed phratries, of which there were six.

When kins are localized within a settlement, the domiciliary arrangements may go with distinctive mutual relations between particular kins. Of the eight Sherente clans living each in a particular part of a semicircle, a clan on the north side is paired with its southern counterpart, so that four phratries result. Each member of a couple is charged with decorating and burying the deceased of the allied clan.

However, such obligations are not dependent on localization within a settlement. The four Lobi kins, too, are paired. At a funeral the mourners of one of the two linked kins are guarded by members of the other kin, who prevent suicidal attempts and comfort the bereaved, for which they receive a proper fee. Joking privileges obtain between the two groups, which also exercise the serious function of peacemakers in domestic quarrels and in armed brawls. In the latter emergency, a blacksmith, a xylophone player, or a diviner intervenes and, on pain of suspending his ser-

vices, orders the fighters of the kin allied to his own to desist. These phenomena correspond to some often typical of moieties, but though the Lobi phratries are half-tribes, the mutual obligations in this tribe obtain not between the moieties, but between the halves of each moiety.

An extremely ineffective alliance of clans, based on putative linguistic affinity or a common totem, occurs among the Murngin, but is of interest mainly as a groping toward major social units.

"Phratry" is evidently nothing but a convenient term for a kin linkage. The features covered by it do not by any means correspond to a single sociological phenomenon.³

Moieties

Etymologically, moieties are half-tribes. If exogamous, they are simply major clans, but this does not necessarily imply that the lesser clans comprised in a moiety bear a direct genetic relationship to it. Whether this holds in a given case is to be determined by special evidence.

The dual organization may be regarded from several points of view. We must consider the attributes of moieties; the relations of exogamous to agamous moieties; the unity or multiplicity of origin of moieties.

Attributes of moieties

Moieties may be exogamous, agamous, or (more rarely) endogamous. The Toda units, though subdivided into clans, are of the last category and one of the moieties ranks the other, so that they correspond to the castes found in other parts of India. Agamy may mean that a once exogamous dual organization has relaxed the rule preventing marriage within its fold; but it may also mean that for some reason the sense of kinship has never been extended, or not fully extended, to the moiety.

Exogamous moieties require special attention. They are widely distributed, occurring in most of Australia and parts of Melanesia; in India and neighboring parts of Asia; and in several parts of both Americas. Their complete or virtual absence in certain other vast regions is also noteworthy; except for a few dubious

exceptions they are wanting in Africa and seem to be found only in the westernmost part of Siberia, among the Ostyak and Vogul.

An exogamous dual organization differs from a multiple clan system in significant respects. For one thing, if the rule of descent and an individual's moiety are known, the moiety affiliation of all his relations can be logically deduced. For, given two matrilineal tribal halves called Wolf and Eagle, a Wolf individual's siblings are also Wolves since, by hypothesis, all children follow their mother; by exogamy his father and the father's siblings are Eagles, and for the same reason the father's sister's husband must be a Wolf. Thus we can go on indefinitely. But if there should be three clans, the relatives' affiliations are only partly determined, for any individual can choose a mate from *either* of the two clans to which he himself does not belong.

Any dichotomy brings about distinctive mutual attitudes that do not appear when there are several or more groups. The political system of the United States with its two major parties is quite different from that of France and Germany with their numerous discordant factions. Similarly, the dual organization of primitive tribes exhibits distinctive features: complementary moieties owe each other specified services, compete in games, use contrasted decorative paint, occupy separate parts of the camp or village, and may be associated in native consciousness with antithetical aspects of nature. A few illustrations will make this clearer.

Among the Tlingit (Alaska) a man never gives property to one of his own half-tribe or employs him for any services. A Raven always gets a Wolf to put up a house for him, to pierce his children's ears, to initiate the youngsters into secret societies, and vice versa. Feasts are given exclusively for the other half. There is great rivalry between the two parties, "and their endeavors to outdo each other sometimes almost resulted in bloodshed."

In the eastern United States, the Choctaw moieties performed funeral obsequies for each other and were associated with war and peace, respectively. The comparable Winnebago divisions are called "those above" and "those on earth," the former comprising clans named after birds, the latter called after land and

water animals. The moieties formerly occupied each a definite half of the village and, as in several other Eastern tribes, were pitted against each other in lacrosse.

Many Brazilian aborigines have corresponding features. The Bororo apportion the north side of a village to one half-tribe, the south side to the other; in one district there is an additional dichotomy, an axis perpendicular to the Vermelho River creating an Upstream and a Downstream moiety. The primary moieties have reciprocal duties: after a person's death members of the opposite half must kill a game animal, and the performers of a dance must be washed by their opposites. The Apinayé contrast their halves as "Lower" and "Upper," though they actually name them after two species of chestnut; they associate one with the sun and red paint, the other with the moon and black paint. The related Canella dichotomize the entire population according to two separate schemes, and males by two further principles of dual division. Moieties of one type are exogamous, matrilineal, and linked with the eastern and western half of the village. Membership in the second type of moiety hinges on a person's names. The resulting halves differ in decorative paint, use distinct battle cries, and run races against each other during the rainy season; they are further associated with complementary phenomena of nature – one moiety with the east, the sun, day, the dry season, fire, earth, and red; the other with the west, the moon, night, the wet season, firewood, water, and black. A third scheme sets off males according to their affiliation with one or the other of six groups, three of which are ranged as an eastern moiety, while the rest take up positions in the west. These half-tribes figure prominently at the boys' initiation ceremony and at another festival; in associated races the teams are recruited from the complementary moieties. Finally, the four athletically active age classes are localized in pairs, respectively, on the east and the west side of the village plaza, couples competing with each other in races held during the appropriate season.

To take still another example, Australian moieties, often nameless, in part bear such designations as Eaglehawk and Crow, in part names that cannot be translated. The Murngin system duplicates some of the conceptions

found in America. At the end of one ceremony the members of the two groups exchange food; at another the men of one half-tribe are privileged and obliged to construct a sacred emblem, for which their opposites compensate them; for ceremonial decoration, one moiety uses red feathers, the other opossum fur. Most interestingly, the Murngin scheme, like one of the four Canella systems, divides the universe between the two halves.

Reciprocity, complementary functions, conceptual antithesis, and rivalry obviously occur in widely distant regions of the globe. It is worth noting that where these functions go with exogamy, they may be nothing more than extensions of the behavior patterns connected with relatives of the paternal and maternal side. For in such an organization every tribesman must belong to either the paternal or the maternal moiety. On the other hand, the implied extension does not occur everywhere, and may be greatly attenuated, so that moiety solidarity is eclipsed by that within the lesser clan or the family.⁴

Exogamous and agamous moieties

Exogamy readily disappears and readily develops in connection with a dual organization. The Iroquois once regarded fellow members of a moiety as siblings and hence barred marriage among them; recently their restrictions held only within the clan. Nowadays, many Canella defy the traditional rule of moiety exogamy – to the chagrin of the older generation. According to the Angami of Assam, whose moieties will be reconsidered presently, the Pezoma and the Pepfuma were once intermarrying moieties, but for some time the taboo has been observed only within a lesser subdivision.

Agamy naturally develops as a sequel to exogamy in a dual organization. For one thing, a prosperous moiety grows so large that its members lose a sense of kinship or find it greatly weakened. Second, the usual difficulty of finding a mate would make a regulation very irksome that ruled out fully half the men or women of the tribe as sex partners.

But the undoubted loss of the exogamous feature in some instances does not prove that all agamous moieties observed must once have

prohibited marriage. Whether such a hypothesis is at all probable depends on the total context. To take the agamous moieties of the Apinayé, this tribe is of the Ge stock, which includes its closest relatives, the Canella to the east, the Northern Kayapo to the west. With both these groups they share matriliney, localization of the moieties within the settlement, their association with ceremonial and with the same form of sport. As among the Kayapo, the half-tribes are referred to as “upper” and “lower”; as among the Canella, red and black paint are the contrasting decorations used, and each moiety owns a set of personal names. Given the established linguistic affinity of the three tribes, the facts are best interpreted by the assumption of descent with modification. Each of the tribes in course of time developed specific features, the Apinayé dropping the restriction concerning sex relations.

On the other hand, the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico present a rather different condition of affairs. In the eastern villages dichotomy is conspicuous, the halves being connected with summer and winter, turquoise and squash, respectively, but in no case have they anything but ceremonial significance. At Santa Ana, persons of certain clans belong by that fact to the Squash ceremonial chamber, those born into the remaining clans to the Turquoise chamber, but the moiety has not developed any feelings of kinship among the several clans of a half-tribe, remaining a purely ceremonial association. In this area, then, evolution has not occurred from an exogamous to an agamous moiety pattern.

But there is another logical possibility. Instead of losing or never having had the marriage-regulating feature, a dual organization may acquire it secondarily. Continued association may ultimately produce a sense of kinship among fellow members of a ceremonial, sportive, or political moiety, this sentiment being reflected in aversion to marriage within the group. This hypothesis may perhaps be plausibly applied to South America. Olson has stressed the wide occurrence there of half-tribes designated as “lower” and “upper,” “east” and “west”; and since his paper additional instances have come to light. Some sort of diffusion is certainly indicated, but how is it to be conceived? The dual organizations now

known are in part exogamous, in part – as in Bolivia – they are emphatically not so; yet the agamous Uro-Čipaya divisions, precisely like their Canella counterparts, have their quarters in the east and west, respectively, of a village.

Since the higher Andean civilizations are credited with a dual organization, it is tempting to derive its samples among such simpler peoples as the Ge and Bororo from that source. Lévi-Strauss has suggested that the system arose on an intermediate level of culture, persisting both among the Peruvians and Bolivians as they advanced in material equipment and among the simpler tribes, whom he conceives to have fallen from a formerly somewhat higher estate. This is certainly possible, but the hypothesis requires amplification in order to do justice to the facts. For, oddly enough, it is the simpler peoples who have a highly elaborated dual organization with exogamy and other features not paralleled in the Andes so far as we know. Hence what persisted on this assumption was the bare notion of dichotomy plus spatial segregation of the two halves. This colorless scheme must then have been enriched by the decadent tribes to the extent observed, specifically, by attaching exogamy to a hitherto agamous arrangement.⁵

Moieties and clans

Moieties, exogamous or otherwise, commonly comprise lesser clans. What is the historical relation between the two? There are obvious abstract possibilities: a moiety may have several offshoots that retain a sense of kinship; multiple clans may group themselves into two large phratries; of several clans, some may die out, leaving only two; moieties and lesser clans may arise separately, but subsequently be joined in one consistent scheme. For all we know, every one of these events may have been realized in the course of history.

Morgan favored the first hypothesis. A basic clan, he explained, would grow larger and be segmented into several lesser clans; given two original clans both of which split up, yet retain solidarity, the end result is a typical dual organization. That clans have subdivided is a fact, historical instances being known from the Hopi and the Southern Bantu, though in these

particular cases moieties failed to develop. Segmentation is suggested by the very names of certain units, as when three independent Ojibwa clans are called, respectively, Mud Turtle, Snapping Turtle, Little Turtle. However, unless the primary clans number two, the resulting phratries cannot become moieties.

Sometimes the names of tribal halves suggest the contrary process. Such names as Four-clans and Three-clans among the Hidatsa indicate an alliance rather than segmentation. Hopi clans have repeatedly combined in phratries without achieving a dual organization, but illustrating the process which in some circumstances might yield that result. The same holds for South African tribes. That fusion of a different order, i.e., not involving lesser clans, may also result in a moiety system will be shown presently.

The third possibility is of great importance. In Europe, titles of nobility have constantly lapsed because they could be passed on only to sons. As Boas has pointed out, the unilateral groups of aboriginal societies present a parallel. Given a small number of persons in a clan, the time comes when one generation will comprise only males or only females, which means that in the former case the matrilineal, in the latter the patrilineal, group becomes extinct. If we start with only a few clans, they might thus easily be reduced to two. This actually happened in the Hopi village of Shipaulovi; in 1916 I found only two clans there, the Bears and the Suns, but informants recalled two others that had died out; in one case the male survivors had joined the Bears. Thus, a typical dual organization would have come about except for the fact that the Suns so greatly outnumbered the Bears that many had to seek mates outside the village.

Perhaps the virtual lack of a dual organization throughout Africa is in part due to the absence of the conditions just discussed. Negro tribes often have enormous populations compared to those of other natives, and their clans are likely to be numerous. Uganda had thirty-six clans in Roscoe's day and the number of inhabitants, even in a period of decline, was set at a million. Though some clans were absorbed by others, the chances of thirty-six being reduced to two were thus exceedingly slight. To take a less extreme case, the Lobi

proper, with only four matrilineal kins, numbered 69,484 in French territory (1931); on British soil a census of the tribe ten years earlier gave the figure of 32,140, said to embrace ten matrilineal kins. Such figures contrast sharply with the barely 100 inhabitants of Shipaulovi in 1916.

The fourth possibility seems to have been also realized in the southwestern United States. As E. C. Parsons has shown, the western Pueblos are organized into matrilineal clans, whereas the easternmost tribes of the region lack them, but have well-developed agamous ceremonial moieties. Where the two schemes came into contact, some adaptation of one to the other would be expectable and actually took place at Santa Ana.

Since in principle clan and lineage are the same, the data from southern California may be cited as relevant. The patrilineage is the fundamental unit in this area. To this some tribes added the moiety concept, probably modeled on the Pueblo pattern, without necessarily allowing it to alter the essence of their social life. Of the more than forty tribelets constituting the Yokuts stock, only a dozen or so had the dual organization with a tendency, but only a tendency, toward exogamy. The principal functions of the moieties were ceremonial and sportive. So many patrilineages were simply grouped together as one half, counterbalancing so many others.⁶

Unity or diversity of origin

The foregoing considerations support a multiple origin for the dual organizations of the world. Undoubtedly particular features of such systems have been borrowed and widely diffused, but this may happen without a diffusion of the structural basis of the system. The Pawnee (Nebraska) split up into a winter or northern moiety and a summer or southern one; and the dual arrangement pervades all their ceremonial. The association with antithetical seasons can hardly have sprung up independently of that found on the Rio Grande; but the most vital principle of all, filiation, did arise independently, for it is at least partly matrilineal among the Pawnee, patrilineal among the Pueblos. All other traits sit more or less loosely on a moiety scheme; hence it is

not surprising that a tribe, observing some sort of dichotomy in a neighbor, should adopt it along with such elements as contrasting ideas or paint. But until the *structure* of the dual divisions is traced to an outside source we have not explained the presence of the system.

Now, the distribution of moiety systems does permit the inference that systems themselves have spread, though not so frequently as, say, the mere idea of teaming some permanent unit of a tribe against another or setting off rival groups of whatsoever constitution by contrasting names and badges. On the other hand, there is positive evidence that moieties are constantly evolving, disappearing, and reappearing. To the example of Shipaulovi we can add a Brazilian and an Assamese instance.

In 1938 two dialectic subgroups of the Nambikuara (Matto Grosso), which had been diminished by feuds and disease, joined forces, but retained their identity and their respective headmen. The Nambikuara regard cross-cousins as ideal mates. In uniting, the adult men of the two units decided to consider one another "brothers-in-law," which automatically made any adult woman of group A the "sister" of the men in group B, and vice versa. In the following generation, then, the offspring of A would intermarry with the offspring of B in precisely the fashion characteristic of moieties. Cross-cousin marriage and the union of our tribelets without loss of identity created a veritable dual organization, even though not labeled as such. Obviously a moiety scheme caught in its hour of birth cannot yet manifest all the characteristics of the full-blown systems of long standing.

Assam, an area full of established moiety systems, illustrates all the same how fluid such systems are. To revert to the Angami Naga, their traditional moieties, *Pezoma* and *Pepfuma*, which are subdivided into clans, were once exogamous, but in recent times a village is sometimes made up wholly of either half-tribe and there is no objection to the marriage of fellow members. The inhabitants of Kohima, for instance, are all *Pepfuma*, but they freely intermarry unless of the same clan. According to the natives, there were only two clans here at one time, the *Cherama* and the *Pferonoma*. *In other words, this village had exogamous moieties.* But whereas *Cherama*

remained undivided, Pferonoma split up into six segments, making altogether seven clans at the time of Professor Hutton's researches. In other words, recently a Kohima might marry into any one of the six clans outside his own.

A pertinent observation was made by Rivers among the Toda. One clan had grown to such proportions there that in order to marry at all its members had to take spouses from all the other clans, leaving very few people of the other clans to intermarry among themselves. Thus, there was a close approach to a typical dual organization, the hypertrophied clan assuming the part of one moiety and all the small clans jointly forming its complement.

A moiety system, then, is not an abstruse intellectual creation, but a form of organization that naturally and, in some cases, inevitably arises from demographic conditions. In a multiple clan system the dying out of all but two clans establishes moieties; so does the extravagant growth of one clan at the expense of others. In the absence of clans, the union of two local units in Nambikuara fashion achieves the same end. Thus, even if we consider only exogamous moieties, a diverse origin seems clear. Dual organizations illustrate convergence.

From Lineage to Kin

The evolution of a kin out of a lineage presents no serious difficulty. It implies nothing but the very common primitive tendency to extend the notion of kinship to others than blood relatives. It is true that this tendency is far less pronounced with some peoples than with others; and in such cases the development may be inhibited. The Yokuts are so chary of admitting putative relationship that common totems do not suggest an ultimate bond of blood, and the offshoot of an established lineage quickly loses all solidarity with the parental group. This fact also explains the modest role played by the dual organization even among those tribelets of the stock that have adopted it. A detail of importance in this connection is the anonymity of the lineage: without the convenient label of a name, relationships beyond the third degree are lost sight of.

Contrast with this the Western Apache parallel. Any fellow clansman is *ipso facto* a sibling, mother, maternal uncle, sister's son. The

bond is weaker than with true blood relatives of the corresponding category, but it is real. "It is this which makes the clan function as it does." Here the name is an effective symbol of unity. There can be others: in the French Sudan the same taboos create solidarity, regardless of linguistic and religious differences. A pagan Mossi six hundred miles from home is aided and protected by a Moslem Wolof who learns that the stranger is under identical dietary restrictions.

It is not difficult to understand how a man feels toward a remotely or fictitiously related clansman. Except for special reasons the sentiments must resemble those in an extended or in a very large elementary family. The joint family of Polish peasants subordinates personal feeling to a diffuse sense of loyalty toward all. As soon as strictly personal emotions come to the fore, the fact indicates the decay of the larger solidarity. This latter, precisely because it implies little emotional attachment, demands overt expression: a Hopi woman learning of a clansman's death ostentatiously begins howling aloud to manifest a grief she does not experience, cannot possibly experience in a manner proportionate to her demonstration.

The extension of kinship terms, the inevitable dwindling away of numerically weak unilateral groups which join stronger units, conquest and deliberate absorption of alien groups lead from lineage to clans; similarly they may enlarge clans themselves, sometimes into phratries and even tribes. Some historical instances have already been cited, and others are available. Kazak kins repeatedly all but died out from warfare or natural causes, the survivors amalgamating with stronger kins. Hottentot tribes more than once entered a new district, crushed the occupants, and absorbed the remnants in the conquerors' clans. Similar events occurred frequently in Bantu history.

To repeat, the development of clans out of lineages is easily understood. The real problem lies in explaining the origin of the lineage, that is, of unilateral descent.⁷

The Evolution of Unilateral Descent

The nature of the problem

Morgan regarded the conception of unilateral descent as "essentially abstruse," a view more

recently entertained by Olson. What worries these writers is why primitive man should have gathered only part of his blood relatives into a unit, excluding the other half though it is biologically quite as close. For this reason Morgan assumed a single center for the origin of the idea; its artificiality, he argued, made "repeated reproduction in disconnected areas" very unlikely. If the unilateral alignment of kindred had been a deliberate and arbitrary affair, it would indeed be improbable that peoples in, say, India and North America should independently hit on the identical way of assigning certain relatives to a group and excluding others from it. But this intellectualistic approach is psychologically unjustifiable. The point is to lay bare conditions that would *spontaneously* yield the observed alignment of relatives.

Forty years ago Swanton clearly formulated the problem for America north of the Rio Grande. In this continent the simplest peoples have only the bilateral family and some local unit; the tribes somewhat more advanced in an economic way are patrilineal; those still more complex, by and large, tend toward matriliney. Swanton did not postulate a necessary sequence; he demanded, however, that we "show tendencies which might point towards an evolution into a social status like that of the Pueblo or Iroquois."

Following in his wake, but not restricting our survey to North America, we shall try to show tendencies toward (a) patriliney, (b) matriliney; and we shall further try to explain (c) the failure for the development of either. Before so doing, it is necessary to discuss the moot question of diffusion.

What is diffused in diffusion?

Several scholars have been greatly impressed by the fact that matrilineal and patrilineal systems adjoin each other. They infer that the unilateral principle which underlies both is the historically basic reality, which merely happens to develop in this or that direction. They support the position by citing many resemblances which usually characterize adjoining unilateral schemes of either order.

The view rests on an intellectualistic misconception. "Unilateral descent" is an abstraction,

useful for the sociologist, but nonexistent for the native. *He* knows only that for certain purposes his matrilineal relatives function differently from his patrilineal relatives. For him the two kinds of system are not varying embodiments of one idea, but utterly diverse, antithetical realities. Assuredly either kind of organization may influence the other, but as in the case of moieties we must ask wherein that influence can at bottom lie. Let us examine a feature of clan systems that has undoubtedly been transmitted from tribe to tribe regardless of principles of filiation.

East of the high Plains of the United States an overwhelming number of clans are totemic. This holds equally for the Iroquoian, Muskogean, Algonquian, and Siouan families. The very same animal species – Bear, Deer, Turtle, Wolf – serve as labels in all of them; and they figure no less among the matrilineal Seneca than among the patrilineal Omaha. The distribution of totems is largely continuous, so that the paths by which they traveled from tribe to tribe are clear. Their cropping up again and again is not due to some vague general psychological tendency, for in the high Plains a radically different scheme of clan nomenclature confronts us. It, too, has spread widely, at least from Alberta to Oklahoma. This area, like the East, harbors Algonquians and Siouans, but they name tribal subdivisions very differently from the custom of the eastern members of the same families.

The Crow actually resemble their fellow Siouans of Nebraska less in this respect than they do the Gros Ventre of Algonquian stock. Characteristic Crow names are Sore-lip lodge, Greasy-inside-the-mouth, Tied-in-a-knot, Kicked-in-their-bellies; and Gros Ventre parallels include Ugly-ones, Those-who-water-their-horses-once-a-day and Those-who-do-not-give-away. The Algonquian Blackfoot have subdivisions interpreted as clans by some writers; by others as loose bands. However that be, the problematical units are dubbed Solid-Topknots, Fat-roasters, Short-necks, Small-robos, Liars, and the like. Farther south, the Arapaho of Wyoming and Oklahoma have subdivisions that are unequivocally only bands; they are called Sagebrush men, Red-willow men, Blood-soup men, Ugly people, Ridiculous men.

In other words, the one area uses animal species as labels of tribal subdivisions; the other prefers sobriquets. Broadly speaking, adjoining tribes have similar or even identical nomenclature; the degree of resemblance varies with geographical nearness, which proves more significant than linguistic affinity. Undoubtedly, then, the systems of nomenclature have spread within their respective ranges by migration of peoples and borrowing.

But this undisputed fact has little bearing on the historical relations of the structural units themselves. The matrilineal clans of the Crow are not genetically related to either the Arapaho bands or the patrilineal Gros Ventre clans even though all three bear similar names. In the same way, the diffusion of the name Turtle from matrilineal Iroquois to, say, patrilineal Algonquians (or vice versa) does not prove a genetic tie between the units themselves. For how is such a relationship to be conceived? Assuming that Algonquians in a pre-clan condition become familiar with Iroquois matriliney, what is it they discover? Subdivisions bearing animal names. Noting and fancying the latter, they might readily enough introduce a corresponding nomenclature for their bands or whatever other units they had. But by no mechanism conceivable would an alien who observed a matrilineal alignment of kin be prompted to concoct a patrilineal one for his own people. Countersuggestion cannot operate here, for the supposed transmuter lacks the abstraction *we* call "unilateral rule of descent." He may approve and hence borrow a matrilineal arrangement observed by him; he cannot conceivably say to himself, "This is merely one sample of unilateral descent; I will try out its opposite."

In other words, matriliney and patriliney are to be treated as distinct realities. Whether one of them can evolve into the other, as was once generally assumed, will have to be discussed again later on. At present it is enough to state that their basis must lie in totally different cultural conditions.⁸

The origin of patriliney

Under this head fall two separate questions: How can patrilineal kindred be segregated as a distinct group? And how would this lead to the combination of two or more patrilineal

units into the usual form of patrilineal clan system?

As Tylor recognized long ago, coresidence is a potent factor; and Steward has plausibly suggested that where men dominate economically, patrilocalism would be the rule. But patrilocalism is not enough: it might produce merely a joint family with loss of females on marriage; whereas the essence of a patrilineal lineage or clan is that members of both sexes permanently remain in it. To be sure, in a few instances we learn of otherwise typical clan systems in which a wife assumes her husband's clan name, as is reported of the Reddi (Hyderabad). However, this tribe, despite its primitiveness, has been in some ways affected by the higher Hindu civilization; what is more significant, being a matter of direct observation, is that even here membership in the natal clan is preserved, though latent, for it governs the selection of a second husband.

Spier has reconstructed the possible evolution of a patrilineage. The Havasupai occupy one permanent village from April to October. A typical subgroup is a joint family made up of a man with his wife and children, and his adult sons with theirs, each elementary family in a separate but neighboring house. Temporarily there may also be a married daughter with her husband, since a son-in-law stays near his wife's father for a year or so before returning to his own father's camp. Farmlands belong to the subgroup, *daughters as well as sons retaining their rights to a share* without, however, having the males' privilege of transmitting it to their offspring. As Spier contends, this is the essence of patriliney. If those with common property rights came to feel as a distinct unit, they would form a patrilineage, whose existence might later be accentuated by a name or other emblem. Close blood relatives on either side would be barred from intermarriage from the start; as the patrilineal descent group crystallized, those bearing its label would fall under the exogamous rule even if only remotely related, whereas the kinship with corresponding persons on the mother's side would be forgotten. In short, patrilocal residence plus patrilineal inheritance would result in complete patriliney.

In this conjectural scheme the position of the daughters is all important. They, too, inherit

farming rights, and they retain contact with their natal group. Were it otherwise, there would merely be a parallel to the Yugoslav or ancient Roman joint family. In ancient Rome a daughter was on principle excluded from the inheritance, as she also ceased to take part in the paternal cult. That is precisely what the Havasupai arrangement prevents, so that the extended family can blossom into a lineage.

This likewise holds in Australia with its patrilineal hordes. Here also the females' tie is not ruptured. A married daughter travels fifty miles to visit her mother, her local patriotism is as strong as her brothers', and on dying she is buried in the territory of her birth.

The Ona case is less certain. The tribal area is split into thirty-nine named and sharply circumscribed hunting territories, exploited by patrilineally linked males. Exogamous sentiment is so strong that, for fear of possibly overlooking a remote relationship, men travel great distances in search of a wife. Are, then, these hordes clear-cut lineages? Perhaps, but we remain in doubt because it is not certain how definitely females remain associated with their native districts. They are evidently not compelled to lose the old affiliation in Roman fashion, for widows are known to have settled again in their old homes after their bereavement. Perhaps the data are best interpreted as a patrilineal system in the very process of taking shape. In another part of South America, the northwest Amazons country, the end goal has been reached. The consistently patrilineal Witoto of that region live in communal houses, sometimes assembling well over a hundred patrilineal kinsfolk. Since all those born into a settlement of this type share a patrilineally inherited name, they remain united by this common token.

When two or more lineages have crystallized in this fashion within the same district, their fusion into a village or tribe of intermarrying lineages is easily understood. As Gifford has shown, that has actually occurred in central and southern California. The Miwok once comprised eighty exogamous landowning patrilineages. Hard pressed by white settlers, they were driven out of their ancestral homes and came to amalgamate in villages, where they retained their individuality, thus assuming the part of several unilateral kins of a typical

clan system. Other Californians achieved the same result even before Caucasian contact.⁹

The origin of matriliney

As consistent patrilocal residence and patrilineal property interests foster the alignment of patrilineal relatives, so consistent matrilineal residence and matrilineal property interests tend to produce a matrilineal descent group. Obviously it would be necessary for the husband to remain with his wife's group for good, not merely in the initial stages of wedlock; otherwise the children would not become definitely attached to the maternal side of the family. Although information on relevant South American conditions is inadequate for a decisive conclusion, it is interesting that in the one Guiana tribe with matrilineal clans, the Arawak proper, the groom, after a visit to his mother's, "soon returns to his father-in-law's place where he takes up his permanent abode." These people are not unique in this respect, but there are not a few South American tribes which practice only temporary matrilocality and have remained clanless.

As it was necessary to explain how females could become attached to the male core of a patrilineage, so it is essential to suggest a way of aligning males with the female core of a matrilineage. Where matrilineal residence implies merely that the husband lives with his in-laws, but remains in his home village, he can easily keep up contacts with his own kinsfolk. A Hopi or Canella man thus pays constant visits to his mother's household. The failure of so many South American tribes to achieve matriliney despite matrilineal residence may be correlated with the frequent necessity of a groom's shifting his headquarters to another village. The strictly matrilineal Bororo and Canella, on the other hand, marry without change of settlement.

However, some matrilineal peoples are patrilineal, though not so many as once appeared to be the case. The Iroquois, for example, were described as patrilineal on nineteenth-century evidence, but Fenton has unearthed a source going back to 1644 which proves the Mohawk matrilineal at the time of white contact. Again, the matrilineal systems of northern British Columbia have been reckoned as patrilineal,

whereas at least one of them is now reported in association with matrilocality. Similarly, Rivers's categorical statement that all Melanesian couples live with the husband's people is refuted by Powdermaker's observations in New Ireland.

Nevertheless, the residual cases of matriliney among patrilocal peoples make it desirable to have recourse to a possible determinant besides residence. Here an Australian fact reported by Roth merits attention. In certain districts of Queensland, women individually own clumps of useful plants, their claims being inherited by their daughters. The phenomenon is exactly paralleled in one Paviotso region of eastern California, where pine-nut plots "were owned by women and inherited matrilineally." Since women so frequently are responsible for procuring wild vegetable food, it is not surprising that wherever a particular species had scarcity value the patch containing it should be claimed by the sex that alone would exploit it. Precisely as feminine dress is inherited by girls, not boys, so the tracts in question would automatically pass on to daughters, sisters, sisters' and daughters' daughters.

It would still be requisite to bring males into the scheme in order to achieve a matrilineage. If we assume that the woman and her offspring are linked with the plot she owns by a name defining the locality, this difficulty would be overcome. A somewhat analogously oblique connection of *females* with a group is known from the Colorado River region. In every Mohave clan all the women bear an identical name of totemic significance, the clans themselves being patrilineal and nameless. Among the related Maricopa, however, the clans bore names which often passed on to women, "but only after marriage" – perhaps, we may conjecture, as a safeguard against their losing solidarity with the natal clan. My suggestion concerning a possible origin of matriliney is that the women in an extended family acquire rights to a particular plot of seeds, trees, and so on; that this locality has a name borne by, or connected with, the owners; and that the connection comes to be shared by sons as well as daughters.

The factors proposed as effectively bringing about matriliney are, then, coresidence and coproprietorship by the core of a matrilineage,

with some mechanism for labeling male as well as female offspring of the women belonging to the nascent lineage.¹⁰

Impediments

If unilateral descent evolves so easily, why is it not universal? Because the conditions set forth above are lacking or only imperfectly developed. Offhand the patrilocal Yurok seem an ideal breeding ground for patriliney; yet clans never arose, and blood relationship alone counted. Looking at the facts more closely, we find that these people were not strictly patrilocal: a man unable to pay the full price for his bride had to live in her father's settlement and work under his direction, thereby losing status for himself and his children. Very nearly one quarter of all marriages – 85 out of 356 known cases – turn out to have been contrary to the norm. Failing consistency with respect to patrilocality, the Yurok were naturally unable to develop a strictly patrilineal scheme, while the aberrant cases were far too infrequent to set them on the road toward matriliney.

The Semang present somewhat different phenomena. These food gatherers live in minute settlements, which resemble the Yurok villages in being inhabited largely by blood kindred, but differ in being impermanent. The patrilineages have a definite territory to roam in, and within it adult males owned clumps of trees. How far the women continue belonging to their natal horde is not clear. Apart from an initial two years' period of service for his father-in-law, a husband takes his wife to his paternal horde. The population of a camp is often composite: one settlement of only fifty-four inmates living in seventeen windscreens turned out to include members of four distinct kindred groups, each spatially segregated within the camp. In another settlement fifteen windbreaks belonged to natives of the dialectic group called Jehai, while apart from them lay the dwellings of an old man and his sons, who spoke the Sabubn language. These had married Jehai wives and settled with their in-laws, but periodically went off on their own.

Since there is uncertainty about the permanent affiliation of the females, we cannot be sure whether the dominant group in a camp is a

lineage or only a joint family. If the former, the first settlement mentioned would parallel the amalgamation of Miwok lineages into a village community. But the Semang alliances seem to lack permanence. A small body of visitors turns up, is allowed to linger without being really welcomed, then flits away again.

Finally, economic conditions may militate against the assemblage of unilateral kindred beyond the elementary family. The Chukchi, the Eskimo, the Yaghan live so precariously that only a handful of persons can keep together for any length of time. Unless that condition is overbalanced, as in Australia, by connecting a larger company with a tract of land, there will be no sizable social unit.¹¹

Independent centers

No one asserts that all the recorded kin systems have originated independently of one another. To take the five tribes of the Iroquois Confederacy, all had matrilineal clans; the distribution of clan names was as follows:

<i>Seneca:</i>	Wolf, Bear, Turtle, Beaver, Deer, Snipe, Heron, Hawk
<i>Cayuga:</i>	Wolf, Bear, Turtle, Beaver, Deer, Snipe, Eel, Hawk
<i>Onondaga:</i>	Wolf, Bear, Turtle, Beaver, Deer, Snipe, Eel, Ball
<i>Oneida:</i>	Wolf, Bear, Turtle
<i>Mohawk:</i>	Wolf, Bear, Turtle

Add that the first three tribes certainly grouped their clans in moieties and that the last two in all probability likewise did so, and the evidence for a genetic connection becomes absolute. We are dealing with linguistically related tribes intimately associated with one another and sharing the same general mode of life. Either the basic social structure, then, existed in the tribe parental to all five and was carried away by the several offshoots to be modified by subsequent events, or one of the tribes after differentiating evolved the scheme, which later spread to the others, wholly or in part. Whether (as Morgan believed) the Mohawk and the Oneida lost the clans found among their fellows, or whether (as Fenton has it) the Seneca borrowed the Deer, Beaver, and Heron clans from the Huron, is a detail. Marriage with an alien woman from another matrilineal

people provides an easy mechanism for introducing a new clan; and the geographical position of the tribes favored borrowing. In short, any variant of the original pattern illustrates descent with modification.

The question is not whether evolution from a common pattern has taken place, but how far such a hypothesis can be reasonably extended. For instance, we have previously found that systems may travel freely not only among members of the same stock, but among utterly unrelated tribes. At the same time it became clear that diffusion of special features does not necessarily imply diffusion of the essential structural pattern. However, even that may be proved by specific evidence. The Menomini and the Winnebago are both residents of Wisconsin, but the former are of the Algonquian, the latter of Siouan stock. Both have a clan system characterized by (a) patrilineal descent; (b) totemic clan names, of which over half a dozen agree; (c) moieties linked with the upper and lower worlds, respectively; (d) the ownership of name-sets by clans. Where this pattern, much of which also occurs among the Eastern tribes, ultimately took shape need not concern us now; it evidently was not invented independently by our two tribes, whose observed systems are obviously only variants of a single scheme. That only diffusion across linguistic barriers can account for the resemblances further appears when we compare the Winnebago with their fellow Siouans, the Crow, who have a clan organization without a single feature on the Winnebago and Menomini roster.

But precisely how far must unilateral organizations agree to support the theory of a single origin? On this point scholars differ. Morgan, we saw, believed that unilateral descent originated only once in the history of mankind, spreading from a single center, but the archaic form would be uniformly matrilineal. He fully realized the chasm between matriliney and patriliney and explained how at a much later period the rule of descent might change. Kroeber seems to imply a corresponding evolution in the New World when he outlines the course of social developments among American Indians. Swanton had indicated the rudeness of patrilineal compared with matrilineal tribes north of Mexico, and the still greater simplicity

of those loosely organized. Building on this foundation, Kroeber assumes clanlessness as the archaic American condition. At some period Middle America, advancing in other phases of life, also evolved patriliney, he contends, and disseminated it in all directions, though without affecting such marginal peoples as the Eskimo and the Yaghan. Subsequently Middle America turned matrilineal and diffused the new principle, but less widely; and finally the central area dropped unilateral kinship altogether, achieving political integration.

This theory does not purport to explain why Middle Americans switched from patriliney to matriliney, a rather serious gap considering the traditional view that the reverse sequence is natural. Moreover, it assumes a minimum of spontaneous creativeness on the part of the simpler peoples: everything beyond the barest elements of culture is derived from a center of higher civilization. This approach has, indeed, much to recommend it if the trait in question involves a difficult technical accomplishment, such as metallurgy, or an extremely elaborate intellectual achievement, such as a calendar system. In the case of unilateral descent, neither of these assumptions holds: the conditions of residence and inheritance spontaneously screen out individuals who make up a unilateral descent group. This happens as easily in Tierra del Fuego as in Mexico, in Arnhem Land as in China. A multiple origin is therefore indicated both for patriliney and matriliney in the New World and a fortiori in the history of all mankind.

How frequently unilateral descent happened is of course hard to say, but diffusion must rest on the sort of evidence that demonstrates the unity of the Winnebago and the Menomini systems. To make the argument concrete, the matrilineal Crow and the Iroquois organizations are to be considered independent of each other until proof to the contrary appears. Of course, it is *metaphysically* conceivable that in some dim past a matrilineal scheme arose somewhere; and that its surviving offshoots diverged to such an extent as no longer to share anything but the bare rule of descent. All sorts of conjectures can be put forth to suggest the paths of transformation. But such fictions do not yield scientific proof.¹²

General Considerations

Relative chronology of kins

Though half a century ago scholars generally accepted the proposition that all patrilineal peoples had gone through an earlier, matrilineal stage, they did not put matriliney at the very beginning of human society. Morgan explicitly conceived matriliney as a reformatory development that swept away ruder arrangements. And Tylor, in the article on statistical method, declares: "It seems probable that this maternal system arose out of an earlier and less organized and regulated condition of human life." Modern investigators certainly concur in the view that unilateral descent groups arose out of a condition in which descent was not fixed, however different their picture of those early times may be from Morgan's. For reasons already explained, they place the elementary family before the kin, not at the very end of social evolution. Nowadays it seems an historical accident that Morgan laid down the well-nigh universal distribution of the clan at a certain level of culture: he was influenced by what he had observed among the Iroquois, whom he had studied first and most thoroughly; had he begun with the Ute or Paiute or the Andaman Islanders, he would not have scented clans everywhere.

As a matter of fact, it is not easy to correlate clans – rigidly unilateral exogamous kins – with any particular stage of development. They do not occur in Western industrialized nations, but they are still powerful in at least part of so civilized a country as China. On the other hand, the so-called clans of Japanese history do not conform to our definition. The Japanese word *be* that is so translated is, indeed, applied to hereditary groups, but also to corporations of weavers, fishermen, farmers, and the like; and, what is decisive, the oldest historical writings of the country, the *Kojiki* and the *Nihongi*, indicate the absence of exogamy. Again, the patrilineal Arab "clans" are proved not to be such by the constant marriage with a father's brother's daughter.

Near the opposite end of the scale, virtually all the Australians have clans, but these do not occur among many of the hunting peoples – the Andaman Islanders, the Eskimo, the Yaghan, the Chukchi. Some stockbreeders, such as the

Masai, have the system; others, like the Lapps, are without it; in still other cases, such as the Kazak, the question of the exogamous unit remains unclear. It is a striking phenomenon that tribes in adjoining areas and sharing the same general type of culture often differ radically in this respect. The Kwakiutl of Vancouver Island are roughly on a plane with the Tsimshian, but are without clans; the Arapaho and the Crow are both typical buffalo hunters, but present the same contrast; the Canella moieties are exogamous, those of the Apinayé agamous.

Undoubtedly an intensive study of such cases may reveal the reason for the difference, but a generalizing statement in broad terms seems impossible. At one time the correlation of clans with agriculture seemed promising, but it can no longer be maintained even for the New World, where it was once applied. In tropical South America, innumerable farming populations of various degrees of complexity are without clans; in northern British Columbia several fishing tribes have them; the eastern Pueblos are not exogamous nor were the Pawnee.

We are on safer ground if we drop exogamy in an attempted correlation. Kins of some sort are not the only means of consolidating groups exceeding the joint family, but they are one very effective means toward that end. Accordingly, we may reasonably expect them above a certain level in the absence of economic deterrents and of equivalent devices for integration. Thus, the clanless Arabs and Japanese certainly did have kins, and the same holds for the Polynesians. As the ideal of nationalism, whether in a dynastic or a popular form, grows in strength, the narrower loyalty must yield to the wider, either becoming subordinated or being wiped out. In southern Albania the people lost their clans in the first half of the nineteenth century as a result of the Turkish overlordship, but the system has lingered on in the isolated northern part of the country.

The utility of the kin thus falls mainly into the field of politics and will be reconsidered in connection with the rise of statehood. The clan, of course, shares this function. Its marriage-regulating attribute it shares with the elementary family: mere clan exogamy would not prevent a father from marrying his daughter among the Crow, or a mother from sex relations with her son among the Murngin.

To sum up, unilateral descent groups do not appear at the very beginning of social evolution; and they tend to be overshadowed or even eliminated when political organization is highly developed.¹³

Chronology of matriliney and patriliney

The earlier theorists considered it self-evident that matriliney must precede patriliney, because fatherhood would be uncertain in the dim past. Whether this premise is valid or not, the inference no longer holds. We now know that physiological fatherhood is a matter of supreme indifference to various primitive groups. Other supposed lines of evidence have also proved deceptive.

The occurrence of double descent in a fair minority of cases puts a new complexion on the problem. It would in each instance require a detailed analysis of the entire cultural setting before we could hazard even a probable guess which of the coexisting systems was prior. Eme-neau, the discoverer of the matrilineal Toda clans, has done just that. He finds that in South India patriliney predominates until we reach the Malabar coast with some fully evolved matrilineal clan organizations, but more generally there is a tendency, fluctuating in intensity, to bar unions with matrilineal relatives. Contrary to Rivers's assumption, there is no linguistic affinity between the Toda and the people of Malabar, and only generic or superficial resemblances exist between the two cultures. The Toda have apparently seized upon the moderate repugnance to marrying matrilineal kindred that is common in the whole area and have intensified it, the process culminating in a second exogamous scheme. Here, then, matrilineal clans followed patrilineal ones. It is a local development that need not have been duplicated anywhere else, though it explains how double descent *may* arise.

Apart from the complication introduced by the fact of bilinear peoples, the chronological relations of matriliney and patriliney remain a problem. We must distinguish among (a) the imposition of one of these systems by a dominant power; (b) change by borrowing; and (c) the internal evolution of one into the other. Our government tends to introduce our patrilineal rules of inheritance in place of aboriginal

matriliny, rules which might undermine the ancient system, though it is remarkable how long the Iroquois, Navaho, and Hopi have preserved ancient custom. Perhaps Islam might somewhat more effectively alter an earlier matrilineal scheme.

Diffusion has admittedly played a large part in the distribution of unilateral organizations. But we may reasonably doubt whether a people actually organized according to one rule of descent would borrow the opposite rule. Given the differential way of regarding relatives from the two sides, such borrowing would involve a total reorientation. A Crow, borrowing Gros Ventre patriliney, would have to drop his aversion from marrying a tenth or putative cousin through the mother and transfer his repugnance to the patrilineal counterparts; his defenders at all odds and his censors would change places unless, as is quite likely, there would be an utter loss of bearings in all social relations. It is rash to declare that anything is impossible, but the process seems highly improbable.

It is true that Boas reported an often-quoted shift from patriliney to matriliney on the north-west coast. What appears from his later description of the facts, however, is something rather different. The Kwakiutl were primarily without unilateral descent, though favoring the father's side, as many loosely organized tribes do. On coming into contact with matrilineal groups to the north, the northern Kwakiutl adopted this mode of reckoning. Matriliney, then, superseded not patriliney, but a loose bilateral system which, to be sure, might under favorable conditions have evolved true patriliney or, like the Yurok one, might not.

The objection that holds against borrowing of an antithetical rule of descent likewise holds against an internal evolution of either system into the other. Morgan suggested that as property accumulated men would not want to have it inherited by their nephews, but by their sons, and saw in this a motive "sufficiently general and commanding" to bring about the change to patriliney. The motive certainly is a real one: in West Africa and Melanesia, in British Columbia and northern South America, men demonstrably have tried to get around an existing matrilineal code for the material benefit of their sons. To be sure, new forms of wealth

have not been able to sweep away the inveterate matriliney of the Hopi, Navaho, or Iroquois, nor do we know how far the reported paternal efforts quoted just now would actually go toward altering the established system. On the other hand, no comparable motive has yet appeared that would favor an internal shift from patriliney to matriliney. We can, then, fairly state that, *if* a change in the rule of descent occurs, it is more likely to be in the patrilineal direction; but that a change is inherently improbable.

It is otherwise when no crystallized system of unilateral descent is involved, but only certain conditions that are favorable to the evolution of one. The statistics for the Yurok show a prevalence of patrilocalism, but a fair proportion of matrilocal marriages. If general impoverishment should make it necessary for most men to serve for their wives instead of paying the bride price, matrilocalism would, of course, become the norm and *might* set in motion a development toward matriliney.

The conclusion, then, is that a full-fledged matrilineal or patrilineal system does not evolve into its opposite. Contrary to early theories and to some diffusionist doctrines, the two have a distinct history.¹⁴

The matriarchate

Bachofen, who first treated matriliney in theoretical fashion, conceived it as part of a larger social system – a matriarchate (Latin *mater*, mother; Greek *archos*, ruler) or gynaeocracy (Greek, *gunē*, woman; *gunaikos*, of a woman; *kratein*, to rule). This implied rule of the family by the mother, not the father; control of government by women not men; and the supremacy of a female deity, the moon, not of the male sun. We are here concerned merely with the question whether matrilineal descent is actually correlated with the domestic and political superiority of women.

In the first place, no strictly matriarchal peoples are known ever to have existed. Sporadically, natives tell tales about the former ascendancy of women. The Fuegian form of the story explains petticoat rule as due to the men's ignorance of the masquerade costumes by means of which the women impersonated spirits and cowed their husbands. When men

by chance learnt the truth of the matter, a revolution followed that put men at the helm. This is the sort of myth often told by aborigines to account for present usage as the exact opposite of what was customary in the remote past. The historical value of such traditions is nil.

Recent accounts of matriarchal conditions boil down to the fact that some societies recognize certain prerogatives of women that are unusual or contrary to Western law. In this category belongs the Hopi notion that houses must belong to women regardless of how much labor men may have put into their erection or repair. However, we never hear of women as chiefs, and the all-important ceremonials are directed by men. The Khasi women similarly hold all real estate, as well as the family jewels, and at least locally the highest priestly office is held by a woman. Nevertheless, the husband may kill an adulteress, and within the house it is the wife's eldest brother who ranks as the head, not the house-owning wife herself. Again, Iroquois women impeach and nominate chiefs, but no woman is ever chosen for the office.

These are perhaps the most extreme cases recorded; their analysis explodes the notion of any true matriarchate. The sporadic occurrence of feminine rulers, is, of course, wholly beside the point: Queen Elizabeth, Queen Victoria, the Empress Catherine, and Maria Theresa reigned successfully, but without in the slightest degree affecting the status of their female subjects.

But for true perspective it is essential to compare the position of women in the distinctly patrilineal societies. As males are not the downtrodden drudges of termagant wives in matrilineal tribes, so females are by no means the mere toys and slaves of their husbands among patrilineal peoples. Here, too, apparently extreme instances actually refute popular prejudices and lay bare the contrast between theory and reality. Niebuhr, the eighteenth-century traveler previously quoted on Arab polygyny, could discern no great difference in the treatment of women by Moslems and by Europeans: "The women of that country seem to be as free and happy as those of Europe can possibly be." The theoretical right to take four wives was exercised only by "rich voluptuar-

ies" and "their conduct is blamed by all sober men." Legally entitled to divorce a wife at will, "the Arabians never exercise the right of repudiating a wife, unless urged by the strongest reasons." Women enjoyed great liberty "and often a great deal of power in their families." The wife retained control of her dowry, and a poor man might be wholly dependent on his spouse. Niebuhr dismisses as absurd the travelers' tale that all Mohammedan women are slaves. A century and a half later the Seligmans had much the same experience in the Sudan: the Kababish Arab women were anything but obsequious, felt in no way aggrieved, and rather pitied Mrs. Seligman for wearing no jewelry and being obliged to travel without a litter. They had complete disposal of their money and possessions and were often treated with marked respect.

Parallel observations apply to China. Ideologically, woman may be rated an inferior creature, but folk literature teems with tales of henpecked husbands, the Chinese mother is supreme in her household, and at various periods of history some women seem to have exerted a tremendous influence even on public life. It appears, then, that the question of correlation is not at all a simple one. Certainly it is false to accept either rule of descent as a token of unqualified dominance by the ostensibly favored sex.

The question is peculiarly difficult for several reasons. For one thing, there is the observer's personal equation. A naïve American traveler may be outraged by all sorts of things noted abroad. He winces at the arrangement of matches by French parents and is revolted by the sight of a female hod carrier in Austria. It never occurs to him that foreigners have many things to offer by way of counter criticism, and that the average European woman, like her Chinese sister, may be quite contented with her lot. Second, if the recorder has purged himself of his society's preconceptions, what objective criterion is there for deciding that woman's position in a particular community is better or worse than elsewhere? Third, granting that the criterion is known, how easy is it for a stranger to get a fair sampling of the life led by either sex? How much do we know of the intimate relations of our best friends?

To return to the question of patriliney versus matriliney as affecting the position of the sexes, the most promising line of inquiry would be to compare related peoples that differ in the rule of filiation. Further, where possible, we should eliminate the personal equation by considering the same observer's comments on different tribes.

Thus, Nimuendajú, intimately acquainted with a number of South American tribes, was greatly struck with the dominant part played by women among the Palikur, a patrilineal people of Brazilian Guiana. At adolescence the girls begin to put on airs, look down at young men, and henceforth pilfer catches of fish from incoming boats as a matter of privilege. Husbands are conspicuously uxorious, hunting and fishing according to their wives' demands, and a man will miss a chance for lucrative employment if his woman wants him to gather shrimps for her. Even in public affairs women are obviously not without authority, for about 1735 a missionary reports that a sorcerer who had aroused the women's suspicion was killed by them, not by their husbands. Nothing in the division of labor accounts for pronounced feminism: both sexes plant, weed, and harvest; and since fish are as a rule shot with bow and arrow, the task of getting them is a masculine one. Residence is not fixed, but the husband's status is naturally even worse when he lives at his mother-in-law's.

More enlightening than the Palikur case are the phenomena Nimuendajú recorded among the Canella and the Sherente. The Canella, as previously noted, are consistently matrilineal, with women owning dwellings and plantations. This puts the husband at a disadvantage; but since with wedlock he merely shifts dwellings, not settlements, he can in case of conflict return to his mother's and sisters' home, where he plays a significant role. All in all, "neither sex considers the other inferior; the sexes have distinct functions, not higher and lower ones." Only men are councilors and chiefs, but "except in warfare nothing is undertaken without feminine participation." In contrast to this situation, the Sherente husband is in sole control of the home and farm, residence being of course patrilocal, and his wishes prevail. Daughters are trained to be submissive. Yet

Nimuendajú saw no instance of a husband's systematically bullying his wife, and one man deceived by his wife, instead of beating her, hanged himself.

These observations among a matrilineal and a patrilineal people of the same stock, offered by the same investigator, are surely suggestive. But we must recall our earlier caution concerning causal connection. Matriliney is not *the* cause of the favorable position of Canella women, when that of their Palikur sisters is even more favorable in a patrilineal community. Matriliney is one descriptive trait that we have isolated from a complex, some other element of which—say mode of residence—may be more important. For a clearer insight into the significance of rules of descent we should require a large series of comparisons like those just indicated for South America. How do the matrilineal Northern Kwakiutl compare with the loosely organized Kwakiutl proper? Is the status of women noticeably better among the matrilineal Crow or Hidatsa than among patrilineal Siouans, such as the Omaha? among their patrilineal neighbors, the Gros Ventre? among loosely organized fellow-Plainsmen, such as the Western Cree or the Arapaho? Corresponding comparisons are necessary in Melanesia, Africa, and other regions. Pending such investigations, any conclusion is necessarily tentative. The indications are that the rule of descent is not highly and only indirectly correlated with the status of the sexes—probably only in so far as the rule is itself connected with the mode of residence. With complete assurance, however, we can assert that matriliney does not automatically involve a matriarchate nor patriliney a patriarchate.¹⁵

NOTES

- 1 Gifford 1929, 29–40; id. 1926.
- 2 Rivers 1924, 19 ff. Tylor 1865, 278, 282. Morgan 1871, 139; id. 1877, pt. II chap. 2. Lowie 1920, III. Powell, LV. Richards 1934. Kirchhoff 1931, 117. Kroeber in Steward ed. 1946, 2:903. J. H. Rowe, *ibid.*, 2:252–256, 262 f. B. Mishkin, *ibid.*, 2:441. H. Tschopik, *ibid.*, 2:539, 544. Beals, Tozzer, 26, 62 f., 99 f. Roys, 31–48. Soustelles, 325–344. Spinden, 186. Vaillant, 108.

- 3 Morgan, 1877, pt. II, chaps. 2 and 6. Titiev, 58. Dorsey 1897, 230 ff. Nimuendajú 1942, 17, 23. Labouret, 218 ff. Warner, 33 ff.
- 4 Steinitz. Swanton 1908, 430, 434 f.; id. 1946, 663. Colbacchini, 1–30. Lévi-Strauss 1936. Nimuendajú 1939, 21 f.; id. 1946, 79 et seq. Radcliffe-Brown 1931, 6 et seq. Warner, 29–33.
- 5 Barbeau. Hutton, 45, 109, 150 et seq., 193. Lowie 1943, 633 f. White, 142 ff. Lévi-Strauss 1944. Parsons 1924. Olson 1933. Métraux 1932, 192–196.
- 6 Morgan, 1877, pt. II, chaps. 2 and 6. Soga, 23 ff. Lowie 1929, 324 ff., 336. Strong 1929, et seq.; id. 1927. Gifford 1926. Gayton 1945. Boas 1940, 316–323. Roscoe 1911, 6, 138 ff. Labouret, 51. Rattray 1932, 425–451.
- 7 Murie in Wissler ed. 1912–1916, 549 et seq., 642. Lévi-Strauss 1943 (a); id. 1943 (b). Bose, 29. Hutton, 45, 109, 150 et seq., 193. Rivers 1906, 507. Gayton 1945. Goodwin, 119 f. Thomas and Znaniecki, 1:87 et seq. Delafosse, 3:105 f. Hudson, 13, 98–105. Hoernlé, 12. Soga, 18 f., 25.
- 8 Morgan 1877, pt. II, chap. 15. Olson 1933. Swanton 1906, 166–173; id. 1905; id. 1946, 654–661. Kroeber 1908, 147 f. Wissler 1911, 21. Kroeber 1902–1907, 7.
- 9 Steward 1936. Fürer-Haimendorf 1945, 161. Spier 1922. Westrup, 103 et seq. Fenton, 204 ff. Gifford 1926. Kaberry, 132, 176. Gusinde 1931, 302, 319, 419, 425. Kirchhoff 1931, 170–176.
- 10 Kirchhoff 1931, 149. Roth 1924, 669. Murdock 1934. Steward 1938, 52. Kroeber 1925, 741. Spier 1933, 187. Lowie 1919. Rivers 1914, 2:126. Powdermaker, 32. Fenton, 204. Bachofen.
- 11 Waterman and Kroeber. Schebesta, 59–69, 78 f., 92 f., 104–109, 225.
- 12 Morgan 1877, pt. II, chap. 2. Fenton, 204 f., 217 f., 227. Skinner 1921, 47 et seq., 372 f. Radin 1923, 190 et seq. Olson 1933. Schmidt and Koppers, 78 et seq. Kroeber 1923, 355–358.
- 13 Chamberlain, LI, 58 f., 173, 304, 312. Aston, 1:22, 43, 104, 324, 350, 375; 2:31.
- 14 Murdock 1940. Emeneau, 173–175. Boas 1940, 356–378. Morgan 1877, pt. II, chap. 14.
- 15 Bachofen. Gurdon, 66 et seq., 76 et seq., 82, 93. Goldenweiser 1912, 464–475. Niebuhr, 2:212 et seq. Seligman 1918, 150 f. Lin Yutang, 143–146. Nimuendajú 1926, 33 f., 78–82; id. 1946, 113, 125 f.; id. 1942, 32 f.

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