

SOME SYSTEMS OF MARRIAGE IN AFRICA

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INTRODUCTION

The line between biological and Sociological necessity of Man is not sharp, for animal groups have many of the same basic needs as human groups[1].

While Jack Goody asked the anthropologists to confine themselves to a specific field, namely kinship, he asked them also for essays dealing with more general themes rather than ethnographic conundrums or descriptive minutiae, as he said[2]: "... the study of lineage systems and prescriptive marriage have made progress, ...".

It is no innovation for anthropologists to give particular attention to the role of disease in the life of non-western peoples[3] especially in Africa. Illness is the lot of mankind everywhere[4]. Patrilineal, and to some distance maternal parallel cousin marriage is an essential

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(1) Wilson, Monica : *Religion and Transformation of Society; a study in social change in Africa*. Cambridge, At the Univ. Press, 1971, p. 3.

(2) Goody, Jack (ed.) : *The character of Kinship*. London, Cambridge Univ. 1973, p. IX.

(3) Fortes, Meyer : "Foreword" *In* : London, J.B. (ed.) : *Social Anthropology and Medicine (A.S.A. Monograph 13)*. London, Academic Press, 1976, p. XI.

(4) *Ibid*, p. XII.

factor in the structuring of Arab society and most of African communities and tribes[5].

In their broader meanings most of the personal problems of heredity and parenthood also concern the community, the nation, and ultimately, mankind as a whole; for the world of tomorrow and of the future stretching beyond can be no better than the potential quality of the children born into it. Thus the genetic problems of individuals, must be viewed as part of the larger problems of human reproduction to be discussed in the community.

It is the author's hope that this paper will be found useful by all who are interested in human development, whether they be anthropologists, or behavioral scientists, and that it supply the knowledge and encourage the inquiries which will lead to further discovery.

More general, but no less important, have the aid and stimulation the author received from the gentlemen mentioned.

METHOD AND MATERIALS

As an anthropologist we know that it is essential to examine any form of family or organization, traditional or in its setting in the larger social structure and in its context of norms and values and all their habits and even diseases; and this is the basis of our research design. This enable us to adapt the intensive field methods of anthropological enquiry to our needs and to keep track of distinctive cultural and structural variables[6].

As W.J. Goode notes[7], family systems in various areas of the world may be moving towards similar patterns, but they begin from different starting points. A question frequently discussed is whether kin relationships in matrilineal systems can survive the impact modern

(5) Shewika, F. A. Gaward : Some Biological results of the Endogamous Marriage with special reference to Africa. *Egyptian Yearbook of Sociology*. Vol. no. 2, Oct. 1981, p. 297—301, 543—575.

(6) Fortes, Meyer : "Foreword to Marriage Among a Matrilineal Elite" by Christine Oppong. Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1974, p. X.

(7) Goode, W.J. : World Revolution and Family patterns. Glencoe (Illinois), The Free Press, 1963, p. 2.

economic changes and the adaptations required by such innovations as labour migration and salaried employment[8].

Why is Marriage?

Marriage is one of the oldest institutions of human society, and may be defined as a union between a man and a woman such that the children borne by the woman are recognized as the legitimate offspring of both spouses[9]. Social anthropologists have yet to find a society without the institution of marriage, and indeed it is so fundamental that they are unlikely to do so[10].

Persons may not intermarry if there is between them a close relationship by blood (consanguinity) or by marriage (affinity). In general, a marriage is incestuous if one attempts to marry an ancestor, a descendant, an aunt (uncle), a sister (brother) of the whole or the half blood or any of their respective spouses.

Intercourse between close blood-relations as brother and sister, father and daughter, and mother and son is almost everywhere condemned.

Marriage is at one and the same time a biological and a social process; biologically it is the principal distributor of genes in populations, and socially it is the institutionalized means whereby new members are introduced into the social system. The manner in which people meet and marry is therefore of primary biological and social importance. Recognition of the biological mechanisms that govern the transmission of heritable characters is not sufficient in itself to chart the distribution of genes among humans and the survival of offspring must also be taken in account[11].

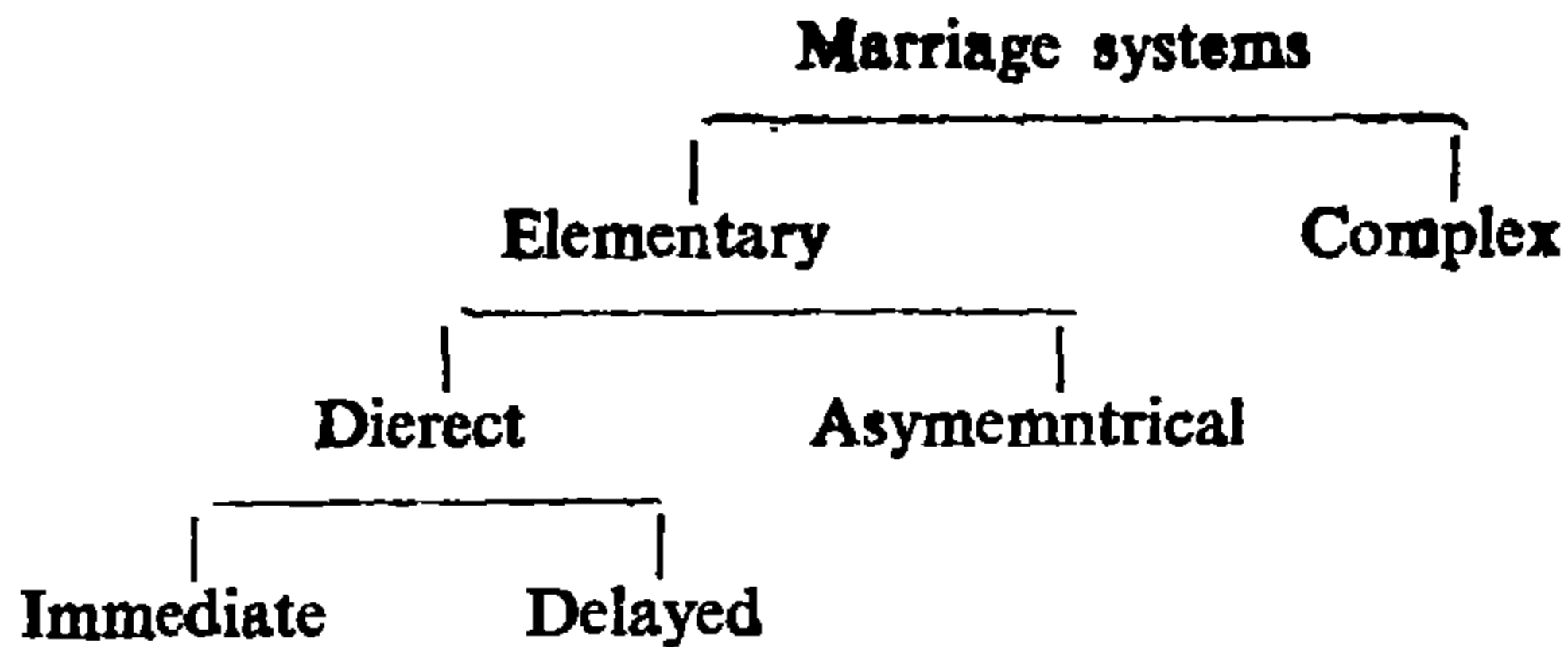
(8) Loc. cit.

(9) Folsom, J. K. : *The Family and Democratic Society*. London, Routledge, 1948, p. 210.

(10) Susser, M.W. and Watson, W. : *Sociology in Medicine*. London, Oxford Univ. Press, 1962, p.203.

(11) *Ebid.*, p. 22.

We have been working on an implicit classification of marriage systems [12]:



The law of endogamy prohibits the marriage of person outside his (her) social group or may be his (her) family or clan. Endogamy and exogamy are by no means mutually exclusive. In any community there may be one type of social group (the clan) which is an another type (the occupational class) which is endogamous.

Marriage is so closely bound up with other economic and social relations that an observed change in marital behaviour, for instance a change in the ages at which people marry, can only be analysed in respect of the interplay of many other social factors. Economic and social changes affect conjugal and familial relationships, and in turn such changes as age at marriage have repercussions throughout society(13).

Among most African peoples, as in all human societies, marriage and the family are the most fundamental institutions[14].

Marriage is stable after the birth of children and sometimes it would seem virtually indissoluble, but conjugal fidelity is not always rated high as among Ituri Pygmies. While genuine group marriage has been found only side by side with polyandry, there are peoples, such as the Herero in Namibia, the Massi and Akamba in East Africa, who have a kind of sex communism, in which several men have the right of access to several women, although none of the women is properly married to more than one of the men.

(12) Fox, Robin : *Kinship and Marriage; an anthropological perspective*, 4th. repr. Middlesex Penguin Books Ltd., 1973, p. 221—222.

(13) Susser, M. W. and Watson, W. : *Op. ci.*, p. 214.

(14) Evans-Pritchard, E. E. : *Kinship and Marriage among the Nuer*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969, p. V.

Despite the occurrence of what looks like the nuclear human family among primates and some lower species, it is now recognized that there is no instinctual basis univcrasally compelling human beings to form families or to rear their young. The long period of dependency of the human infant is now regarded as a necessary condition of its uniquely extreme malleability. The characteristic patterns of behaviour it acquires are learned rather than instinctual; their identity depends upon the local version of human culture to which it is exposed.

Kinship plays an important part in all human societies, both in the regulation of behaviour between persons and in the formation of social, political and territorial groups. In the simpler societies a wide range of activities are regulated by kinship and it is among them that kinship systems are seen in their most developed form.

It is a good discussion between Gellner E, [15] and Barnes, J.A.[16] about that the social antheropologist is not concerned with natural, biological aspects of kinskip in its physical sense proper. We agree to a big fare distance with Barnes, J.A.[*] that there is a different between the genitor (Gellner's (x) socially-physical father) and the genetic father (Gellner's "physical-father")[17].

We must agree also with him [18] about his distinction he made between the genetic father and the genitor, and agree again with him also, for that the culturally-defined physical father, is no more quible. So Needham's statement "that boilogy is one matter and descent is quite another, of a different order"[19], is true, provided by biology

(15) Gellner, Ernest A. : "Nature and society in social anthropology". *Philosophy of Science*. Vol. 30, 1963, p. 236—251.

(16) Barnes, J. A. : "Discussion : physical and social facts in anthropology". *Philosophy of Science*. Vol. 31, 1964, p. 294—297.

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(17) Barnes, J. A. : op. cit., p. 294.

(18) Barnes, J. A. : "Physical and Social Kinship". *Philosophy of Science*. Vol. 28, 1961, p. 296—299.

(19) Needham, Rodney : "Descent Systems and ideal Language". *Phytlosophy of Science*. Vol. 27, 1960, p. 96—101.

we mean, as we should mean, the scientific study of physical life, including the physiology of human reproduction, and not cultural, including popular and legal, notions of how babies come to be borne[20].

Descent and Marriage Reconsidered:

Both Darwin, C. and, more recently, Dobzhensky T.[21] point out that, while in principle sexual selection could occur in this way, in man as in other species there are numerous barriers to its operation. Marriage rules and other social mechanisms for the control of love are an exceedingly complex aspect of kinship systems[22], and leave little room for a biologically based choice of mate through simple interpersonal encounter. Furthermore, since in tribal societies virtually all women marry, the case for differential selection is poor because the less beautiful are not known to be less fecund than the more beautiful[23].

Incestuous marriage could be a biological disadvantage, for in experimental animals inbred strains show less vigour than hybrids, in respect of growth, fertility, and longevity. Psychological mechanisms, such as the Oedipus complex, also deter incest, although they do not prevent it occurring, but whether these responses are "built-in" or acquired remains a speculation; society enforces the ban[24].

Tylor, E.B. long ago pointed out the adaptive functions of exogamy for human societies (1988) [25]. Mankind, he remarked, was faced with the alternative of marrying out or being killed out. In-marriage on the other hand is a policy of isolation. One reason (and there are of course others) for such a policy is to preserve property where this is

(20) Barnes, J. A. : op. cit.

(21) Dobzhansky, T : *Mankind evolving*. New Haven, Yale Univ. Press, 1962, p. 201.

(22) Fox, R. : *Kinship and marriage*. London, Penguin Books, 1967, p. 159.

(23) Crook, J. H. : "Sexual selection, Dimorphism and Social Organization in the Primates", *In* : Campbell, B. (ed.) : *Sexual selection and the Descent of Man 1871—1971*. London, Heinemann, 1972, p. 231—281 (p. 248).

(24) Sussar, M.W. and Watson, W. : *Sociology in Medicine*, p. 203.

(25) Tylor, Edward B. : "On a method of investigating the development of institutions : applied to laws of marriage and descent." *Journal of Anthropological Instit.* Vol. 18, 1889, p. 245—269.

transmitted through both males and females, to encourage marriages with families of one's own kind and thus to maintain property and prestige. The positive control of marriage arrangements (exogamy is a negative control) is stricter where property is transmitted to women.

Spouses who are born and reared within a particular geographical area will share many common physical, psychological, cultural, and social characteristics. The geographical area may be a street, village, town, county, city or even country; the smaller area, the larger the number of shared characteristics. On the other hand, spouses reared in different areas are likely to share fewer common characteristics. Marriages between spouses both of whom were born and reared in the same geographical marriage isolate and in which they continue to reside as M.W. Susser and W.Watson called[26] "circumscribed marriages", as opposed to extraneous marriage(x) in which only one spouse was born and reared in the isolate, and the other was a stranger. This does not imply that all spouses in circumscribed marriage have a greater degree of concordance in characteristics than all spouses in extraneous marriages.

A more direct indication of a similarity in social and personal characteristics of spouses appears in the mortality rates of widowed persons which are higher than those of their married or single peers both in Britain[27], and the USA [28]. Among young widows and widowers between the ages of 20 and 35 in USA, certain causes of death are especially associated, for instance pneumonia, vascular diseases of the heart and central nervous system, and also suicide among the widowers. These associations can be interpreted in three ways; first, that there is "mutual selection of poor-rich mates", second, that both spouses shared

(26) Susser, M. W. and Watson, W.: op. cit. p. 208.

(+) In biology, individuals of the same or of different species who live together in the same territory are called "sympatric". Residents of different territories are called "allopatric".

(27) Registrar General : Decennial supplement for England and Wales 1931. Part 1. London, H.M.S.O., 1936. p. 12.

(28) Kraus, A. S. and Lilienfeld, A. M. : Some Epidemiologic Aspects of the High Mortality Rate in the Young Widowed Group. *Jour Chron. Dis.* Vol. 10, 10, 1959. 207—217.

similar unfavourable environments before and after marriage, that is, both were exposed to the same nutrition, infections and other risks in childhood or after marriage; and third, that the high rate is a direct result of the material social and psychological consequences of bereavement[29].

At the same time, marriage between close agnates, especially father's brother's children is preferred. Now imagine the following situation, exemplified in Pehrson's[30] field materials: The children (D,H) of three deceased brothers (A,B,C) form a minimal descent group. Marriage guardianship in the woman F is vested in her closest agnates, D,E,G, and H.G marries F in agreement with the preferred rule of marriage. The main thrust of the following argument is directed to show that this difference is not without effect on the meaning and relevance of descent, it affects the organizational potential of the descent, it affects the organization descent, structure, and the kinds of tasks and activities that are pursued by descent groups. Indeed, I shall try to show that this perspective can provide the basis for a comparative analysis of descent systems. This requires(a) concepts whereby one shows how descent rules & marriage networks produce structures with determinate organizational potentials. But despite such potentials one cannot deduce from first principles the behaviour which will actually be organized by the structure in each case.

The control of sister's daughters may seem puzzling in itself, but it is one of two alternatives open: a man controls the marital destiny either of his wife's children or of his sister's children. Likewise, in terms of the recruitment of kin to kinship groups, he can either recruit his wife's children, producing a patrilineal system, or his sister's children producing a matrilineal system[31].

(29) Susser, M.W. and Watson, W. : op. cit., p. 213.

(30) Pehrson, R.N.: The social organization of the Marri Baluch. Chicago, Wenner Green foundation for Anthropological Research, 1966, (Viking fund publications in Anthropology, No. 43).

(31) Fox, Robin : "Alliance and Constraint : Sexual Selection and the Evolution of Human Kinship Systems. "In : Campbell, Bernard (ed.) : Sexual Selection and the Descent of of Man 1871—1971, London, Heinemann, 1972, p. 282 331 (p. 322).

There are three types of prescriptive marriage system:[32]:

- 1 . Prescriptive matrilateral cross-cousin marriage (also known as MBD marriage).
- 2 . Prescriptive patrilateral cross-cousin marriage (also known as FZD marriage).
- 3 . Prescriptive bilateral cross-cousin marriage (also known as marriage with the MBD/FZD).

In the major Eurasian societies property tends to be distributed directly, from parents to children of both sexes (e.i. by diverging devolution); Africa property largely develops between persons of the same sex, laterally as well as lineally[33].

Jack Goody [34] put the figures of Murdock (1949[25]and 1957[36]) of the UDGs in new table (No.1) in percentages, the figures in the bottom row of his table indicate the percentages of systems in the total sample which occur in each of continental area, e.g., 20% or one-fifth, of the sample are located.

(32) Maybury-Lewis, David H.P. : Prescriptive Marriage Systems" *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* Vol. 21, 1965, p. 207—230.

(33) Goody, Jack : Inheritance, Property and Marriage in Africa and Eurasia. *Sociology* Vol. 3 No. 1, 1969 p. 56—76.

(34) Goody, J. : Classification of Double Descent systems. *Current Anthropology*. Vol. 2. No. 2, Feb. 1961, p. 3—25.

(35) Murdock, P. G. : Social Structure. New York, Macmillan Co., 1949.

(36) Murdock, P.G. : World ethnographic sample. *American Anthropologist*. Vol. 59, 1957, p. 664—687.

Table (1):
The percentage distribution of UDGs (×) by continents.

	Africa	Circum-Mediterranean	East Eurasia	Insular Pacific	North America	South America	TOTAL
UDGs absent							99%
(Bilateral)	5%	15%	7%	17%	32%	23%	(204)
Matrilineal							101%
UDGs only	21%	4	6	26	30	14	(81)
Patrilineal							99%
UDGs only	31	16	26	11	8	7	(243)
Both							99%
(Double)	41	0	3	52	0	3	(29)
% of total	20%	14%	15%	17%	20%	14%	100%
Sample	(116)	(73)	(84)	(98)	(98)	(76)	(557)

of the sample are located in Africa. The percentages in the four upper rows indicate the distribution of all societies with a given type of descent system among the continental areas. A comparison of any of the latter figures with the figure in the last row of the same column will show whether any particular type of system is over- or underrepresented relative to a hypothetical random distribution. For example, although 20% of the societies in the sample are drawn from Africa, only 5% of all those in which UDGs are absent are found on this continent.

Men usually belittled the influence of women upon the history of family and lineage relationships. They denied that women were ever important enough to be the cause of major quarrels between families. The men of a lineage were acutely conscious of the need to maintain unity, and they are together out of a common pot each evening[37].

(×) UDGs=Unilineal Descent Groups

(37) Douglas, M. : Purity and danger; an analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo. New York, Praeger, 1966, p. 206—207.

Genealogies are two kinds. In terms of known persons, genealogies chart the kinship status and living and dead individuals vis-à-vis others in such a way that antecedent marriages and births pinpoint the position of Ego in relation to others within and outside his community. This may be called a personal genealogy since it charts personal relations. Such genealogical reckoning is bilateral and the categories of kin it establishes order the social universe of individuals. Genealogical knowledge of this sort is used to prove the possibility of projected marriages or substantiate claims to assistance or gifts. In Africa, and indeed very generally, the depth of these genealogies rarely exceeds four to five generations, but the classificatory nature of such kinship systems allows for the inclusion of a large number of individuals.

The politically significant genealogy, what Jean La Fontaine[38] calls a descent genealogy, is that which relates groups by reference to a hierarchically ordered series of ancestors.

Both Sonangui and Karamoghou are of Malinke origin. At least one of the Karamoghou lineages traces its "isnàd", or transmission of scholarship. Sonangui society was politically unstable. In theory, each sonangui lineage owed obedience to the gurutigi, the oldest male of the earliest living generation. In practice, the gurutigi's sons apparently often resented having the leadership pass to their uncles, and they sometimes left to conquer new territories for themselves. Distance guaranteed the desired degree of autonomy.

Nevertheless, these men were in competition with one another for wives. Older, more powerful men could marry as many women as they could obtain and keep, younger men, thus, had difficulty finding wives. Because the preferred marriage was between second cousins, marriage woman had certain opportunities to play off one man against another, her father and brothers against her husband and her husband's family.

Mary Douglas[39] suggests a correlation between beliefs that women carry pollution and societies in which women have the opportunity to pit one man against another, challenging the masculine power structure. Dyala society is a case in point.

(38) La Fontaine, Jean : 'Descent in New Guinea'. In : Goody, J. T. of Kinship. London, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1973, p. 44—45.

(39) Douglas, M. : *Purity and danger; an analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo.* New York, Praeger, 1966, p. 141—145.

It seems that in every african village, members of each of it are all kin to one another, any villager can trace kinsphip to every other person in his village, either by a direct kinship to every other person in his village, either by a direct kinship tie or through a third person who is in different ways related both to himself and the other person.

Rivers, W.H.R.[40], confined the "descent" to the single feature of eligibility for membership in kingroups. Thus his characterization of a society as having "patrilineal descent" referred to the presence of unilineal descent groups (UDGs), eligibility to which was through males; likewise, his use of the phrase "matrilineal descent" indicated the presence of UDGs, eligibility to which was through females. If we accept Rivers definition, then the concept of "bilateral descent" becomes self-contradictory. Indeed, an examination of the so-called "bilateral" societies reveals little that is common to them apart from an absence of UDGs. In such societies, certain of the functions elsewhere carried out by persons as members of UDGs-blood vengeance, for example-may be performed by persons standing in specified degrees of kinship, in certain circumstances these ranges of kin may constitute "Kin-dreds", but such groupings always have overlapping memberships and cannot by themselves form mutually exclusive segments of the society in the manner of UDGs. These kindreds are of two main kinds: the personal kindred[41] and the descending kindred. The descending kindred consists of the descendants of a single individual, or of a marital pair, through both males and females, over a specified number of generations. The range of the former corresponds to what in English usage would be one's relatives; the latter to one's descendants[42].

The principle of kinship amity is undifferentiated in that it requires that a member of the group shall sacrifice himself for another, that kinsmen shall respect preferential rules of conduct towards one another regardless of their individual interests. Such reciprocity as there is comes from the fact that other kinsmen do likewise. Parents are expe-

(40) Rivers, W.H.R. : *Social organization*. London, K. Paul, Trench, Trunbner & Co., 1924, p. 86.

(41) Leach, E.R. : *Social science research in Sarawak*. (*Colonial Research Studies*, No. 1). London, Stationary London, Stationary office 1950, p. 201.

(42) Goody, J. : *Classification of Double Desecent Systems*. *Current Anthropology*: Vol. 2, No. 1, Feb. 1951, p. 3—26.

cted to sacrifice themselves for their children but they also expect that their children will do the same for theirs. The reciprocity alternates down the chain of generations, assuring that the grandparental generation will be repaid in the persons of the grandchildren to whom they are linked by that principle that Radcliffe-Brown first made clear[43].

Endogamy(*) and Exogamy Marriage in Africa:

The distinction between mating and marrying applies to even the most primitive human groups, as is shown in the universal prohibition of incest. There is no physiological bar to incest, but in all societies incest is forbidden and punished; sons are forbidden to marry their mothers, brothers their sisters, and fathers their daughters. A part of every social system is a set of rules which prohibit marriage between certain persons related by descent. This is the rule of exogamy, and it may be extended so that a man is forbidden to marry among a group of women more distantly related than his mother, sisters, or daughters [44]. The rule of exogamy gives recognition to the kinship bond between the man and the forbidden female relatives as an institution of society and as a corollary forces him to choose a wife from some other group, thereby producing a social tie and a common interest in the marriage and children. Endogamy is the rule whereby the choice of a spouse is circumscribed within a certain group, as in a caste system. This term is sometimes used loosely to describe an observed tendency for people to marry within certain social categories, for instance class endogamy[45]. In fact we can see that youngsters anywhere do not make entirely good free choices of their future spouses.[46]

(43) Pitt-Rivers, Julian : "The Kith and the Kin". In : Goody, J. (ed.) : The character of Kinship. London, Cambridge Univ. Press., 1973, p. 101.

(*) The term "endogamy" or "endogamous" – in fact – does not appear even in 1953, so Herskovits, in his "Man and his Works, 1948 : 289—309", discusses exogamy in some detail but says absolutely nothing about endogamy, and the same does Fortes in his paper : "The structure of Unilineal Descent Groups; *Amer. Antropol.* 1953: 17—41" in which Fortes refers repeatedly to the exogamy of the African societies south of the Sahara (e.g., p. 35, 37—38) and also to the Bedouin of Cyrenaica (e.g., p. 24—28, 38), nowhere does he even as much as hint that these Bedouin practice endogamy. }

(44) Sussar, M.W. and Watson, W. : *Sociology in Medicine*. London, Oxford Univ. Press, 1962, p. 203.

(45) Loc. cit.

(46) Goode : William J. : The Theoretical Importance of Love. *American Sociological Review*. Vol. 24, No. 1, Feb. 1959, p.38—47.

Typically parallel cousins (father's brother's children; mother's sister's children) are forbidden in marriage in some societies, while cross-cousins (father's sister's children; mother's brother's children) are preferred or prescribed. More esoteric relatives are sometimes involved for example a man may be required to marry a woman who is at once his mother's brother's daughter, his mother's mother's brother's daughter's daughter, and his father's sister's daughter's daughter's daughter. Let us start with perhaps the simplest case, where two men exchange sisters, or alternatively phrased, where two families exchange daughters (Figure 2). If this exchange is carried on over the generations we will get the result illustrated in Figure 3 [47].

It will be seen that a man is here marrying someone who is at once his father's sister's daughter and his mother's brother's daughter, but that for the exchange to be effective he cannot marry either of his parallel cousins - since his mother's sister and his father with his father's brother. If we use the symbols not to signify individuals, but "Men of groups A," "Women of group B," and so on, then we can see how this is simply a corollary of the rule that if group A gives to group B then group B must give in return. In general terms the nearest relative to qualify as a marriage partner will be the cross-cousin: the child of the marriage of mother's brother and father's sister.

The structure operates if men exchange not daughters but nieces, their sister's children, by giving the nieces to their sons.

The indirect rule can be observed by simply ruling out one of the cross-cousins as a marriage partner: the father's sister's daughter. The ideal model of such a system as it operates between patrilineal groups is shown on Figure (3). The same structure again would operate if the groups were based on matrilineal descent [48].

In a system like this where only the mother's brother's daughter is allowed as a marriage partner, it is obvious that three groups are a minimum; that more groups could join the chain there can be no direct return; and that this is a corollary of the rule that wife givers cannot be wife takers.

(47) Fox, R.: "Sexual Selection and Human kinship Systems." *In*: Cambele, B. (ed.): *Sexual Selection and Descent of Man 1871—1971*. London, Heinemann, 1972, p. 318.

(48) *Ibid*, p. 318.

The rules do not always apply to whole social groups in this way, and it is often the case that a society simply prefers that a man marry one or other of his cross cousins. Where the marriage preference is thus left open, it has been argued, there will be a tendency for the system to turn in an indirect or saymmetrical direction, that is, to have marriage to turn in an indriect or asymmetrical direction, that 's, to have marriage with the mother's brother's daughter preponderate[49].

While human societies avoid extreme inbreeding, they do not in general tend twoards ectreme excogamy. This may in turn be due to the fact that extreme exogamy or random mating is not compatible with a stable social organization. The numerically large societies of western civilization tend to favor positive assortative mating[50]. This has been thoroughly discussed by Ehrman, Lee, who whows that mating prefernces extend not only to national origin and socio-economic and educational status[51], but also to clearly genetic characters such as deafness. Different types of assortative matings frequently show different fertilities, and these may affect the genotypic constitution of the population.[52].

Allowed or preferred parallel cousin marriage creates an individuated network of kinsphip ties within and across segments, and th functions of different orders of segments depend on the variable limits of joint estates. These features have implications so that it is erroneous to regard arab patrilineages as typologically one with the more commonly encountered exogamic patrilineal descent systems, for endogamy not only changes completely the relations between lineal components but alter the very internal structure of these groups[53].

(49) Loc. cit.

(50) Caspari, Ernst : "Sexual Selection in Human Evolution". *In* : Campbell, Bernard (ed.) : *Sexual Selection and the Desecent of Man 1871—1971*, London, Heinemann, 1972, p. 332—356 (p. 341).

(51) Ehrman, L. and Petit, C. : Genotype frequency and mating success in the willistoni species group of *Drosophila*. *Evolution* Vol. 22, 1968, p. 649—658

(52) Caspari, E. : op cit., p. 342.

(53) Barth, Fredrik : "Descent and Marriage Reconsidered". *In* : Goody, Jack (ed.) : *The character of Kinship*. London, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1973, p. 4.

In the Middle Eastern communities in U.S.A. with patrilineal descent organization, the ordering effect of exogamy extends only to lineals and first order collaterals; thus no cousin is prohibited. A positive right, to marry FaBaDa has been reported from many areas; however, since refers to a specific genealogical relationship it should not be regarded as positive marriage rule. Whether the explicit right is formulated or not, the actual frequency of such marriages as a sub-category of desc, ent group and family endogamy, is high. Grude counts vary from around 10% and 30% up to 30% in some communities. However, in this paper we are concerned with the frequency of the event and its implications not its causes. These are only exacerbated by its association with rates of descent group endogamy of 40–80% and even higher rates of “family” and village endogamy. As a result of such marriages in the past, paternal and maternal ascendants merge, and numerous affinal relations obtain between fellow descent group members[54].

In Jack Goody opinion, the concepts of class, caste, and estate, derived as they are from Africa models which is, out marriage strengthens the social ties and cultural similarities within a society. As a consequence, “class conflict” was less significant in political system, although the situation is now changing in the “modern” sector. In Eurasian models, Goody said that are not wholly satisfactory when applied to Africa (Table 2). Homogamy and in-marriage are not characterized to encourage marriage between groups of different status, hence these groups tend not to develop in isolation with distinctive modes of live[56].

Roughly, one half of the continental of Africa is inhabited by peoples with endogamous unilineal descent groups (UDGs) [57].

(54) Ibid, p. 11—12.

(55) Goody, J. : , 'Class and Marriage in Africa and Eurasia.,' *American Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 76, No. 4, January 1971, p. 585—603.

(56) Loc. cit.

(57) Patai, Raphael The structure of endogamous unilineal descent groups. *Southeastern Journal of Anthropology*. Vol. 21, 1965, p. 325—350.

Table (2): Percentage of Endogamy marriage in some tribes of Africa (according to data from P.G.Murdock 1957): [58].

Area and Culture	%	Area and Culture	%
Pygmies & Khoisan	66.67	Southern Bantu	60
Central Bantu	90	Northeast Bantu	40
Equatorial Bantu	30	Guinea Coast	53
Western Sudan	76.92	Nigerian Plateau	66.67
Eastern Sudan	58.33	Upper Nile	33.33
Horn & Ethiopia	72.73	Northern Sudan	100
Sahara	80	North Africa	90

In March, 1966, Jack Goody had an opportunity to follow up the preliminary survey of marriage preferences in a rather more systematic way, helped by some University students from Gonja; the earlier questionnaire was administered by two Europeans, Whit Dagarti and Vagala assistants. I mention the identity of the interviewees (who were all well known in the community), since this is bound to affect the responses on so sensitive an issue.

The survey was carried out both in Western Gonja (Bole) and in Eastern Gonja (Kpembe-Salaga). The results are summarized in Tables 3, 4 and 5.

The data are largely consistent with the preliminary study. In Bole, the most rejected groups were: Fulani, Lobi, Dagarti, Hausa, and Yoruba. The Dagarti are less desirable as marriage partners than in the earlier survey, partly use of changes in the interviewing staff (who were now non-Dagarti); in any case, this figure is likely to fluctuate because of the difficulties in discriminating them from the Lobi (the problem of the 'LoDagarta continuum'). The Hausa also appear as more rejected, the Yoruba as less (59).

(58) Murdock, P. G. : World Ethnographic Sample. *American Anthropologist* Vol. 59, 1957, p. 664—687.

(59) Goody, Jack : "Marriage policy and incorporation in Northern Ghana." In : Cohen, Ronald and Middleton, John (ed.) : *From Tribe to Nation in Africa; studies in incorporation processes*. Scranton, Chandler Publishing Co., 1970, p. 139.

In Eastern Gonja, the results conform more closely to the original survey. It is the Yoruba who are most rejected, followed closely by the Fulani. Then come the Konkomba, who occupy the same structural position as the Lobi-Dagarti; they are the new, immigrant farmers from acephalous communities. After them come the "Grunshi" (exslaves) and the Ashanti (exconquerors).

Table (3) : Paternal preferences for daughters' marriages
(Bole, March 1966) :

Respondents		Tribe Preferred									For Total	
Tribe	Number	Ashanti	Dagarti	Dagomba	Fulani	Gonja	"Grunshi"	Hausa	Lobi	Yoruba	Love	Res- ponses
Ashanti	2	2	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	3
Gonja	7	5	1	5	—	7	3	5	—	3	—	29
Isala	3	1	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	4
Vagala	10	8	3	9	—	10	4	3	2	—	—	39
Yoruba	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	2	3
Total	25	16	4	14	—	21	7	8	2	4	2	78

Table (4) : Paternal rejections for daughters' marriages (Bole,
March 1966) :

Respondents		Tribe Rejected									For Total	
Tribe	Number	Ashanti	Dagarti	Dagomba	Fulani	Gonja	"Grunshi"	Hausa	Lobi	Yorub	Love	Res- ponses
Ashanti	2	—	1	1	1	—	1	1	1	1	1	8
Gonja	5	2	5	1	5	—	4	1	5	1	—	24
Isala	3	—	2	1	3	—	2	3	2	3	—	16
Vagala	8	1	4	1	7	—	3	2	5	1	1	25
Yoruba	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	3
Total	21	3	12	4	16	0	10	7	13	6	5	76

N.B. The preliminary survey asked about the respondent's own marriage, the later survey for his daughter's there seemed to be some advantages in a less direct approach.

Table (5) : Paternal rejections for daughter's marriages
(Kembe-Salaga, March 1966) :

Respondents		Tribe Rejected											Total Responses
Tribe	Number	Ashanti	Dagomba	Fulani	Gonja	"Grunshi"	Hausa	Nchumuru	Yoruba	Konkomba	No Rejects	Reject All	
Ashanti	4	—	1	3	1	2	2	—	3	3	1	—	16
Busanga	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	2
Dagomba	2	2	—	2	—	2	—	2	2	1	—	—	11
Ewe	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
Fulani	3	3	3	—	3	3	1	3	—	3	—	—	19
Gonja	27	7	1	13	—	10	6	9	14	13	3	—	76
"Grunshi"	4	1	—	3	—	—	1	2	3	2	1	—	13
Hausa	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	8*
Konkomba	5	4	4	5	—	4	4	4	5	—	—	—	30
Mossi	1	—	—	1	—	—	1	1	1	1	—	—	5
Nawuri	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
Nchumuru	1	1	1	1	—	1	—	—	1	1	—	—	6
Yoruba	4	1	1	—	1	1	1	1	—	1	—	3	31*
Total	56	19	11	28	5	23	16	22	29	25	9	4	219

(32)*

* Total possible rejections = 8 for each respondent. Thus each unit in the column "rejects all" stands for 8 "responses" and is included as such in the totals.

In Eastern Gonja, the results conform more closely to the original survey. It is the Yoruba who are most rejected, followed closely by the Fulani. Then come the Konkomba, who occupy the same structural position as the Lobi-Dagarti; they are the new, immigrant farmers from acephalous communities. After them come the "Grunshi" (exslaves) and the Ashanti (exconquerors).

In the Kpembe-Salaga material, the preferences were the mirror opposite of the rejections. Throughout the district, the politically dominant minority was held to be the most sought-after marriage partners, other than one's own group, except by the in-marrying partners, other than one's own group, except by the in-marrying Fulani and Yoruba; the Gonja are rejected only by the Yoruba, the Fulani, and by one Hausa and one Ashanti.

There is one figure out of keeping with the general picture, namely the Yoruba in Tables 3 and 4 who stress "marriage for love", an attitude that stands in contrast to the actuality of most Yoruba unions. The discrepancy can perhaps be explained by the fact that the respondents were relatively young and were not anxious to appear different (even though they behaved so), especially as foreigners at a time of political crisis: the Nkrumah government had just been overthrown.

The Yoruba are probably the most deliberately organized of the alien Africans living in Ghana; most part of the country, including Bole and Salaga, have been visited by Nigerian High Commission staff who have encouraged their nationals to take out passports[60].

The marriage restrictions between Muslims and non-Muslims in Kano were strictly enforced. Muslim men could marry non-Muslim women if the children were raised as Muslims. Non-Muslim men could not marry Muslim women under any circumstances. Serious legal problems were created if wives of non-Muslims were converted (as might occur if the woman's parent converted). However, in practice these problems occurred mainly in those rural areas with Maguzawa populations[61].

(60) Ibid, p. 142.

(61) Paden, John N. : 'Urban Pluralism, integration, and adaptation of communal identity in Kano Nigeria. "In : Cohen, Ronald and Middleton, John (eds.) From Tribe to Nation in Africa; studies in incorporation processes, Scranton, Chandler Publishing Co. 1970, p. 242-270 (p. 264).

The effect of these regulations on inter-ethnic marriage is obvious. Southern migrant Christian men in Kano New City were legally prevented from any form of intermarriage with Northern Kano women and had therefore to bring their wives from the "home" region. Conversely, inter-ethnic marriage between Muslim ethnic groups was legally sanctioned and required only social acceptance to be realized.

In other ways, religious factors discouraged Muslim-non-Muslim marriages. The custom of "wife-seclusion" (kulle) in Kano was probably a deterrent to non-Muslim women considering marriage with northern Muslims. The inequality in inheritance for a non-Muslim wife was another deterrent[62].

Nevertheless, incorporation is a continuous process which is beginning to take effect even among the newer migrants. In order to obtain a measure of assimilation, I examined the marriages of all residents in the Zongo ward of Bole (Ward 5) recorded in the tax registers of the Local Council and the results are listed in Table(6).

I have no precise figures that enable me to relate length of residence with degree of intermarriage, but in any case the differences which these tables bring out cannot be explained on the grounds of time alone. The significant variable seems to be the marriage policy of the groups themselves.

At one end of the scale, we have the Yoruba (locally known as Lagosians) who are here a completely in-marrying group. Their daughter's marriages are arranged with other Yoruba living at great distances. At Christmas, 1965, two of Moses's daughters were to be married to Yoruba husbands at Bolgatanga, some 190 miles away (63).

(62) *Loc. cit.*

(63) Goody, J. : "Marriage policy and incorporation in Northern Ghana", *In* : Cohen, Ronald and Middleton, John (eds.) : *From Tribe to nation in Africa; studies in incorporation processes*. Scranton, Chandler Publishing Co., 1970, p. 130

Table (6) : In-Marriages and out-marriages in Bole Zongo(64) :

Ethnic group of husband	In-marriage	out-marriage	Total
Ashanti	3	5	8
Dagarti	4	0	4
Dagomba	3	4	7
Ewe, and the like	2	1	3
Frafra	1	0	1
Gonia	23	3	26
Hausa	4	2	6
Isala	0	6	6
Lobi	1	1	2
Mossi	7	6	13
Songhai	2	8	10
Wala	6	2	8
"Wangara" (Smith)	0	1	1
Yoruba	19	0	19
Total	75	39	114

On the kinship level the structuring of the society into exogamous unilineal descent groups, the lineages (including the nuclear, compound, and extended families embedded within them), and clans achieved an organic solidarity, in the Durkheimian sense, through a "division of labor" that proscribed self-sufficiency in the reproductive function of the group. None of the groups could be allowed to be sufficient unto themselves in this matter and wives had to be sought from other, unrelated groups, thereby forging affinal bonds that ramified throughout the chiefdom. Tsolo Mpondomise material indicates that for this tribe at least, over 80 percent of marriages today are within the chiefdom (Table 7), and the percentage was probably higher in the past, when intertribal relations were often strained. From an analysis of 429 marriages in Zingeuka Location (65), Tsolo district, it was found that 28

(64) Ibid, p. 131.

(65) Hemmoad—Tooke. David; "Tribal Cohesion and the incorporative process the Transkei, South Africa". In : Cohen Ronald and Middleton, John (eds.): From Tribes to Nation in Africa, studies in incorporation processes. Seranton, Chandler Publishing Co., 1970, p. 224.

(9percent) had occurre between members of the same location section (neighborhood), 118 (27 percent) within the location itself, while by far the greatest number, 349 (80 percent), had been contracted within the chiefdom. At this point a critical sociospatial threshold is reached and the rate of intermarriage drops sharply. In the sample there were 32 (7 percent) marriages with non-Mpondomise but within the district of Tsolo, and 58 wives (13 percent) came from outside the district, from such places as mtata. Qumbu, Libode, Mqanduli, Mount Fletcher, and Ngqeleni. All these are Transkeian districts lying fairly close to Tsolo, but some wives came from areas much further afield such as Herschel, Lady Grey, Queenstown, and even Port Elizabeth, all in the Cape Preovince proper[66].

By Way of Conclusion

It will be seen from the above that, although the neighborhood tends to be exogamous, well over a quarter of all marriages occur within the location, an area of perhaps six or seven square miles. This ability to marry locally reflects the essentially nonkinship character of present-day locations and has implications for Professor Wilson's thesis that the highly sexual nature of Cape Nguni witch beliefs is correlated with limits on marriage choice due to the local concentration of exogamous kinship groups [67]. In fact, today the composition of locations is so heterogeneous that there seems little difficulty in finding a wife nearby.

Table (7) :

Spatial distribution of affinal links: provenance of wives (Zingcuka, Tsolo, 1963):

	Same Section	Same Location	Same Chiefdom	Same District	Extra-District	Total
All Marriages	28(6%)	90(23%)	221(51%)	32(7%)	58(13%)	429(100%)
Marriages of Household Heads Only	16(7%)	50(22%)	114(50%)	17(7%)	33(14%)	230(100%)

(66) Loc. cit.

(67) Wilson M : 'Witch beliefs, and social structure,' *American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 56, 1951, p. 307—313.

On the other hand, marriage into families too closely situated by the folk culture as undesirable. The proverb: *Induku igawulwa ezi-zweni* ("A good stick is gathered from another tribe") points up the possible tensions which can arise between in-laws. The close interaction between neighbors, with all its latent possibilities of conflict and rivalry (the other side of the coin from relations of cooperation and solidarity), does not accord well with the mutual respect demanded between affines. "It is embarrassing to live too close to your inlaws. They will see all that goes on at your home. If you meet at beerdrinks you may quarrel, or your cattle stray into their lands. The major relationship may be spoiled by petty quarrels". In view of these clearly expressed objections it is interesting that, in fact, so many men take wives from their own location[68].

It was expected that the marriage of a chief's great wife should be a political alliance, through marriage with the daughter of a foreign royal dynasty. Among the Xhosa there is a tradition that their chiefs should obtain wives from the Thembu royal house. Of thirty-seven instances of royal marriages collected from the histories of Xhosa, Thembu, Bhaca, and Mpondomise, well over half were contracted with other royal families, as indicated in Table(8). The comparatively large number of commoner marriages among the Xhosa is due to the fact that these figures include the relatively small Ciskeian tribes of the Xhosa cluster (for example, Ntinde, Gasela), among whom the chieftainship does not have the prestige it enjoys in the Transkei[69].

Table (8): Some Interdynastic Marriages in South Africa[70]:

Between	Xhosa	Thembu	Bhaca	Mpondomise	Mpondo	Xesibe	Bomvana	Commoner
Xhosa	1*	7	—	—	—	—	2	8
Thembu	2	—	1	1	2	—	—	—
Bhaca	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	3
Mpondomise	1	1	—	—	1	1	—	4

* With Gqunukhwebe part of Xhosa cluster but chiefs not of royal lineage (Soga, J.H.: *The South-eastern Bantu*. Johannesburg, 1930).

(68) Ibid p,252.

(69) Hammonid-Tooke, David : "Tribal cohesion and the incorporative process in the Transkeis South Africa". In : Coghen, Ronald and Middleton, John (eds.) : *From Tribe to Nation in Africa*, p. 228.

(70) Loc. cit.

Among the Nuer the clan is the exogamic unit and Nuer may not marry anyone with whom there is common patrilineal descent [71], such corporate ties preclude the stabilishment ties of affinity. Among the southern Somali[72], by contrast, as among many people of the North Africa and South Easter Asia, marriage with the patrilateral cousin, a close agnate, is a preferred pattern. Exogamy is a manifestation of jural identity among the Nuer but not among the Somali.

In Nuer society, marriage is not permitted between clansfolk, close cognates, close cognates close natual kinsfolk; close kinsfolk by adoption, close affines , and persons who stand to one another as fathers and daughters in the age system. A man may not marry a clanswoman and a "fortiori" a woman of his lineage. Agnatic kinship is recognized between some clans, but it does not constitute a bar to intermarriage.

The relationahip is considered to be very distand and, in any case, the ancestor of the fraternal clans is believed to have cut an ox in twain to permit intermarriage between the descendants of his sons. Nuer accept the hypothesis that maximal lineages of the larger clans might one day split apart and marriage be allowed between them, but at present they are too close. They say "cike diel", they have not yet reached ten generations (from their founder). They perceive that the limits of clan exogamy have been fixed arbitrarily and are not unalterable[73].

Aknowlodgment

The auther wish to offer his deeply thanks to his family, wherever they are, and to his friends in Egypt, England and Oman especially Lady Hujeijh AL Farsi.

(71) Evans-Pritchard, E.E. : Kinship and Marriage among the Nuer. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1969, p. 6.

(72) Lewis, I.M.: Problems in the Comparative study of unilineal descent., In: Banton.M(ed.). The Relevance of Modells of Social Anthropology London Tavistock Publications,1965, p. 103.

(73) Evans-Pritchard, E.E. Kinship and Marriage among the Nuer. Oxford, ClarendonPress, 1969, p30.

The Figurations

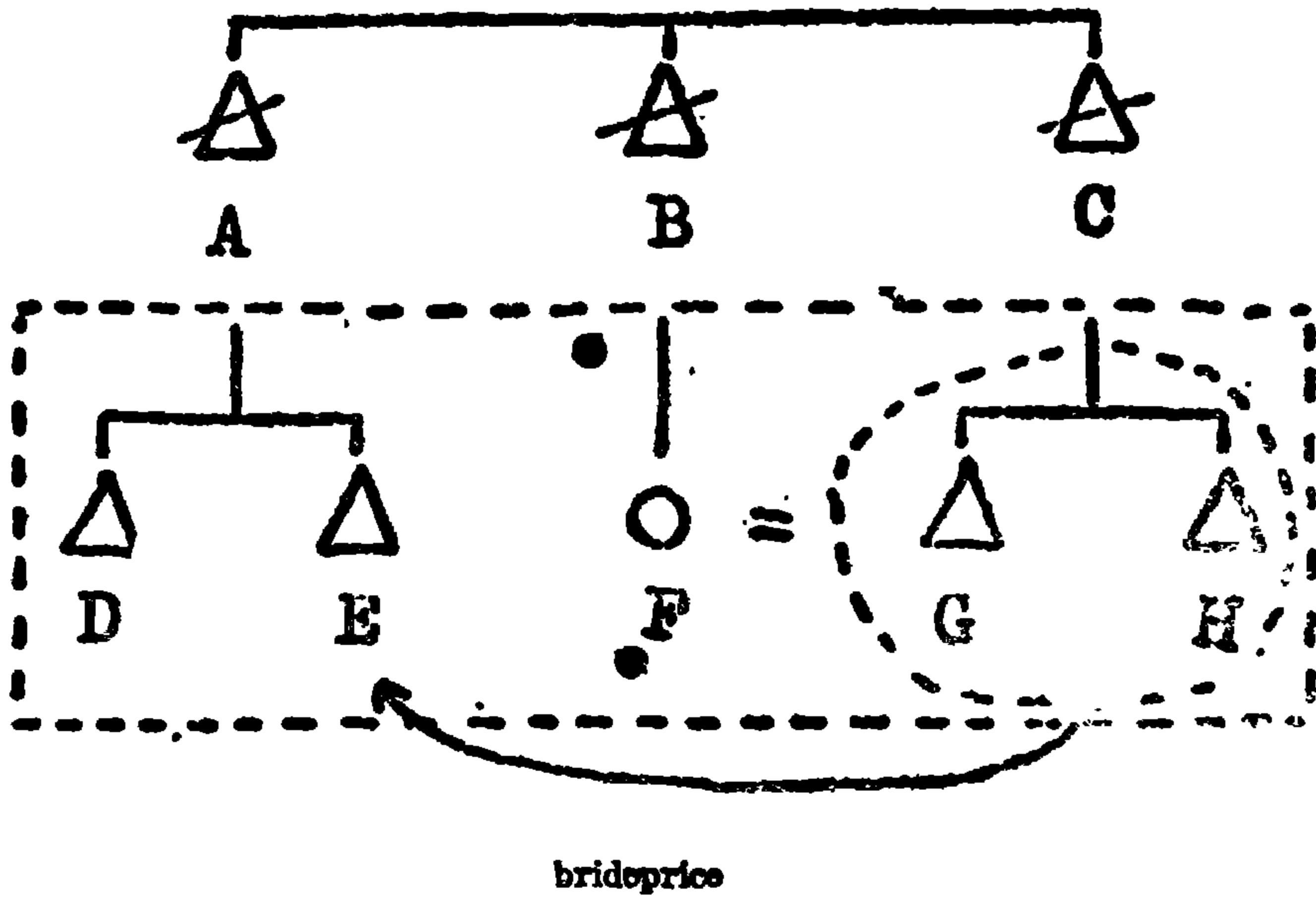


Fig. 1.— Simple system of marriage

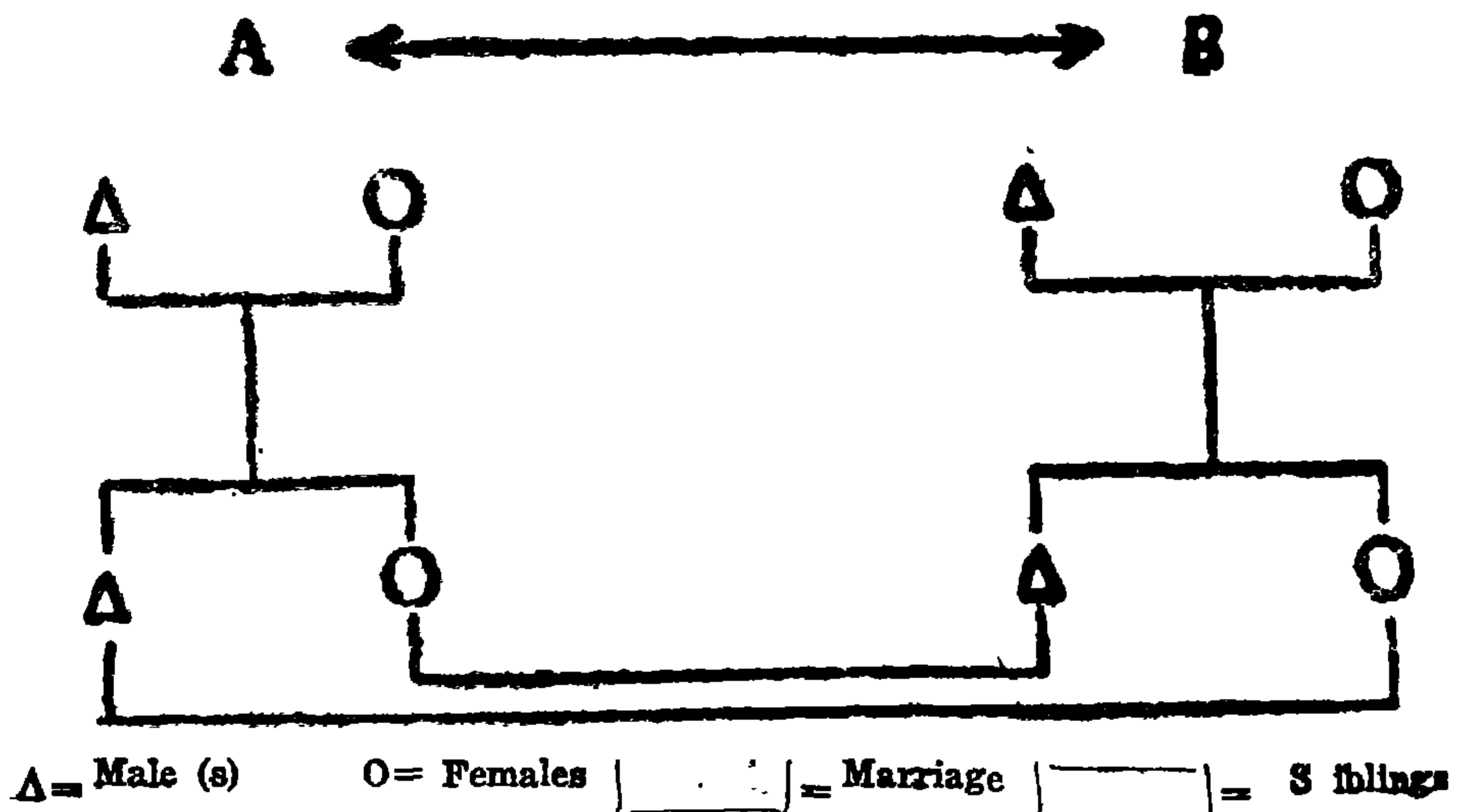


Fig. 2—Marriage between Parallel-Cousins

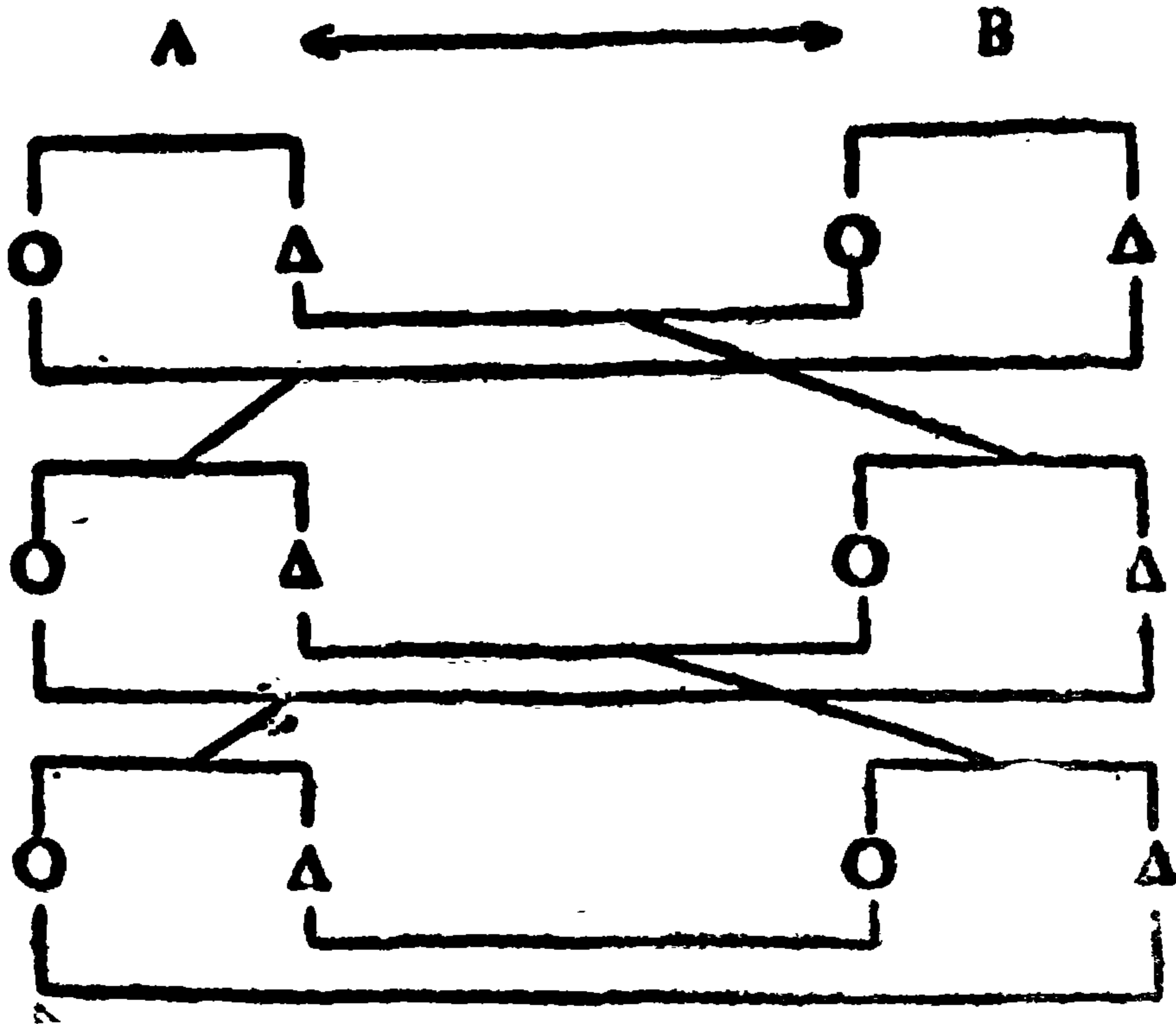


Fig. 3. Marriage Between Cross-Cousins

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مستخلص

بعض نظم الزواج في افريقيا دكتور فاروق عبد الجواد شويقة *

يعتبر موضوع الزواج وما يتعلق به من دراسات وبحوث من أهم المجالات التي تهتم بها الانثروبولوجيا ، وقد أخذ الانثروبولوجيون في الآونة الأخيرة يولون اهتماما كبيرا بأنماط الزواج المختلفة وما يتصل بها من عادات وتقاليد ، بل وما ينتج عنها من علاقات اجتماعية ونتائج بيولوجية ، في مختلف المجتمعات .

هذا وقد شهدت أنماط الزواج ، تغيرا كبيرا خاصة في افريقيا ، تلك القارة التي تتعدد وتتباين في مجتمعاتها أنماط الزواج ، بدرجة لا يتجاوزها الا عدد قبائلها وشعوبها ولغاتها .

لهذا كان اهتمام الانثروبولوجيين بدراسة هذا الموضوع الهام والحيوي والمتجدد ، ولهذا كتب هذا المقال ، كدراسة مكتبية ، لكنها معتمدة على دراسات ميدانية كثيرة ، بين قديمة وحديثة ومقارنة .

(*) استاذ ورئيس قسم الانثروبولوجيا بمعهد البحوث والدراسات
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