

ACADEMICISM IN SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

by Eric O. Ayisi*

Academicism by definition is the reduplication of the achievements of accepted masters in the art. Most social anthropologists have fallen victims to the Aristotelian fallacy of regarding social systems as natural entities which could be classified according to certain ineluctable principles and features, and in this way, they are no less misguided than those artists who are firmly fixed in the orthodoxy of academicism.

The Aristotelian tradition was revived by Emile Durkheim from whom the early anthropologists drew their inspiration. Durkheim affirmed that social systems should be treated as 'things' and consistent with this idea Radcliffe-Brown laid a foundation for social anthropology which is mainly concerned with the description of social structure. Social structure, according to Radcliffe-Brown and his colleagues and followers, 'is like a living organism (whose entire existence would be spent in responding in an appropriate manner to external stimuli or to utilitarian needs)¹.

It is in this manner that Radcliffe-Brown approached his studies of primitive societies. He regarded primitive societies as consisting of natural entities, whose features were amenable to classification or typological arrangement. In morphology, certain characteristics are used as criteria for classification, and Radcliffe-Brown therefore selected arbitrarily certain obvious features of his society, the Andamans, as paradigms for all that he had to say in social anthropology and about primitive societies. Dr. Leach has discussed some aspects of the question I am about to raise in this paper. He says that "Radcliffe-Brown maintained that the objective of social anthropology was the comparison of social structures". In explaining this he asserted that when we distinguished and compared different types of

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1. Sociology and Philosophy: Emile Durkheim, p.1.

social structure we were doing the same thing as when we distinguished different kinds of sea shell according to their every structural type. According to Leach, "comparison is a matter of butterfly collecting ... of classification of the arrangement of things according to their types and sub-types. The followers of Radcliffe-Brown are anthropological butterfly collectors and their approach to their data has certain consequences. For example, according to Radcliffe-Brown's principles, we ought to think of Trobriand society as a society of a structural type. The classification might proceed thus:

MAIN TYPE:	societies composed of unilineal descent groups".
SUB-TYPE:	societies composed of matrilineal descent groups.
SUB-SUB-TYPE:	societies composed of matrilineal descent groups in which the married males of the matrilineage live together in one place and apart from the females of the matrilineage." ²

He went on to give examples of how this method was manipulated by Radcliffe-Brown and subsequently his followers. He quoted the case of Dr. Jack Goody's hypothesis of the two societies he studied in Northern Ghana, the LoWiili and the LoDagaba.³ This is not just a hypothesis. My colleague Dr. Jack Goody has gone to great pains to distinguish as types two adjacent societies in the Northern Gold Coast which he calls LoWiili and LoDagaba. A careful reader of Dr. Goody's works will discover, however, that these two 'societies' are simply the way that Dr. Goody has chosen to describe the fact that his field notes from two neighbouring communities show some curious discrepancies. If Dr. Goody's methods of analysis were pushed to the limit we should be able to show that

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1. Radcliffe-Brown - *An Appraisal of Anthropology Today*, Chicago 1953.
 2. E.R. Leach, *Rethinking Anthropology*, London, 1961 p.3.
 3. *Ibid* p.3.

every village community throughout the world constitutes a distinct society which is distinguishable as a type from any other." (Goody 1956b).¹

Leach's contention seems to be that the features which Goody uses as paradigms for distinguishing one society from the other are arbitrary and have no relevance to the social reality of the societies he studied; in fact, what Leach is trying to say is that there is no fundamental difference between the two neighbouring communities and that the difference so established is in Goody's mind and it is therefore artificial. I do not want to take sides in this dispute, but I doubt very much if Goody was treating this thesis as a social reality and not as a heuristic device to show certain dissimilarities in the two neighbouring communities, with a common typographical area. Of course the premise on which the whole thesis is erected is the issue at stake, and I cannot quarrel with Leach about this as I am not happy about the premise myself. But the pith of Leach's more devastating strictures lay in the following arguments: "Social anthropology is packed with frustrations of this kind. An obvious example is the category opposition patrilineal/matrilineal. Ever since Morgan began writing of the Iroquois, it has been customary for anthropologists to distinguish unilineal from non-unilineal descent systems, and among the former to distinguish patrilineal societies from matrilineal societies. These categories now seem to us so rudimentary and obvious that it is extremely difficult to break out from the straight-jacket of thought which the categories themselves impose."²

The opposing categories patrilineal/matrilineal have definite inevitable postulates in anthropology. There is no work in anthropology which does not embody these postulates, and there is no anthropologist who does not include these in his studies of any society. Anthropologists start by first and foremost determining the type of society they are about

1. The Social Organization of the LoWiili, London, 1956.

2. Ibid, Rethinking Anthropology, p.3.

to study and they fix the appropriate label, either matrilineal or patrilineal, and the rest is taken for granted. Here I agree with Leach's objection, "for the typology makers never explain why they choose one frame of reference rather than the other."

There are certain problems which confronted eminent anthropologists like Dr. A. Richards and Professor Fortes. These anthropologists were aware of the theoretical deficiency in using the typological method. Though Leach appears not to be fascinated by their efforts, at least I feel that they deserve some credit. Dr. Audrey Richards compared and described in her studies of Bemba the function of affinal ties as opposed to descent ties and she arrived at the conclusion that the apparent ambivalent situation created in the social system for individuals in relation to rights over children of a marriage in a matrilineal society, like the Bemba, is modified because of the fact that both the woman's husband and her brother possess rights in the woman's children.... This fact I should imagine was a - priori, only made insignificant because of the way anthropologists have chosen to look at primitive societies. Professor Fortes meets the problem in a different light. To him unilineality does not mean the same as Radcliffe-Brown's definition. He found that his two societies had certain features which do not permit him to label them barely matrilineal or patrilineal. He therefore devised a new concept, 'complementary filiation', to make up the obvious deficiency in the former and conventional way of looking at primitive societies. But in this case too, Leach did not see any merit in his efforts. He attacked these new concepts by saying:

"The case of Professor Fortes illustrates this same point in a rather a different way. His quest is not so much for types as for prototypes. It so happens that the two societies of which he has made a close study have certain similarities

of structural pattern for, while the Tallensi are patrilineal and the Ashanti matrilineal, both Tallensi and Ashanti come unusually close to having a system of double unilineal descent. Professor Fortes had devised a special concept, 'complementary filiation', which helps him to describe this double unilineal element in the Tallensi/Ashanti pattern while rejecting the notion that these societies actually possess double unilineal systems (Fortes, 1953, p.33; 1959b¹).

Fortes answered the strictures of Leach in an Essay on kinship which he contributed to a collection of other essays on kinship.²

"The second part of this hypothesis raises theoretical issues that are too large for discussion in the present context. But the empirical generalization advanced in the first part of it, has an immediate application to the Ashanti system. It gives a clue to the structural regularity that underlies what looks superficially like arbitrary and irregular practices, attitudes and manoeuvres of individuals. I have one reservation. Leach gives the impression that individual choice and initiative are in some way antithetical to institutionalization. In the Ashanti system, I think, they can be shown to be congruent with the institutional structure. In other words, they follow customary patterns and are kept in line with the norms and sanctions of the total system of kinship and descent. They are not at variance with institutional prescription but are contained by it; and this is brought about by a mechanism of complementary redress that is rooted in the complementary conjunction at the structural level of matrilineal and patrilineal principles in status definition, and at the juridical level of legal and moral sanctions."

1. Ibid, p.4.

2. Studies in Kinship and Marriage, p.61, ed. I. Schapera, 1963.

Fortes maintains in the above statement that the distinction is consistent with the customary practices and for this reason it is rooted in the structure of the society. This is to me another indication of Aristotelianism. We are not sure however whether the practices are the result of the social structure or vice versa. What the dichotomy, matrilineal/patrilineal, does is to tell us that a certain society is labelled "matrilineal" because members of this society place more premium on the relationship which exists between other members belonging to this group by virtue of common descent. It is a model-building exercise and the information one gets from this model is rather limited. "Matriliney confers status in the politico-jural domain, patrilineation only in the domestic domain." But Fortes with his wide knowledge of the Ashanti material at once realizes the inconclusiveness of this assertion and so enters in a caveat to modify this assertion, "A chief has responsibilities for sister's sons, but he does not trust them." "Sons," he continued, "are different. You desire sons above everything. They will be your most trusted supporters for they have no stake in your office and their well-being depends on you alone. That is why chiefs appoint sons and sons' sons to certain court offices that are intimately connected with their daily life and routine."¹ I want to illustrate this point by using my Akwapim material.

The Internal Structure of the Paramountcy - Akwapim, E. Ghana

There are three types of internal structures that go to make up the social structure of the paramountcy. I describe and distinguish them by the following terms: proximate, contiguous, and dispersed ... structures. This is so named in order to distinguish the various groups which make up the core of the paramountcy. The following are members of the dispersed internal structure:-

1. Ibid, p.62.

1. Aburi Mankrado or Asomanyaw, who is also the chief of the sons of chiefs dead and alive.
2. Ahwerease Mankrado
3. Ahenease Mankrado

I am not sure that the sole motive for appointing sons of chiefs to certain court offices as adumbrated in the above statement, is wholly correct. The object is exemplified by certain offices which are succeeded to through paternal line. In Aburi, Akwapim 'Ahenmahene' the chief of the sons of chiefs, both the current and the dead, should be the eldest son of a dead chief, and the relationship is complicated when the son who is the chief, combines this office with another derived from matrilineal connections. In fact this is the present situation in Aburi. The chief of the sons of chiefs is also the 'Amankrado' or 'Asomanyaw', he belongs to the 'Asona clan', and he is a member of the internal structure¹ of the paramountcy of the Akwapim state. His loyalty first and foremost rests with the clan and the members of the clan and this places him in an ambivalent position vis-a-vis his relationship with his father, the chief, in whose court he serves and the paramount chief at Akropong, with whom he has common clan. In all events, biological affinity creates an emotional attachment with de-facto obligations vis-a-vis parent - child relationship, which the individual can never extricate himself from even if the rules of descent impose on him a de jure obligation in respect of his sister's children, the emotional factors weigh heavily against the social forces. Therefore biological paternity, instead of receiving less attention in a matrilineal system, competes favourably for attention with social paternity. Elements of dual descent system seem to emerge therefore in societies, which have been labelled unilineal systems. This view reinforces Leach's assumptions.² Professor Fortes has devised a special concept, 'complementary filiation', which

1. Unpublished thesis. The basis of political authority of the Akwapims page 214, paragraph 2, p.216, paragraph 2.
2. Ibid, p.5.

helps him to describe this double unilineal element in Tallensi/Ashanti while rejecting that these societies actually possess double unilineal systems (Fortes 1953 p.33; 1959b). I propose to look more closely into this question of the conferment of politico-jural right on sons in matrilineal systems. Recent research reveals that in Ashanti since 1742 'patrilineal stools' have existed simultaneously with matrilineal stools.

I want to illustrate my thesis by giving an example of paternal succession in a matrilineal system. Akyeampim stool story history reveals that the office is succeeded by sons, and therefore, it is a patrilineal stool. The stool is called 'Sabin' and 'Afriye' stool because of its historical origins. Every occupant of this stool owes allegiance to the Golden Stool and for this reason, it is reputed to be one of the important stools in Ashanti. This special political status is exemplified in the type of sword that the chief uses when swearing to the Asantehene on special ceremonial occasions. The sword with which he swears allegiance to the Golden Stool is called 'Mponponsuo' Sword. This sword is used by all the important chiefs of the Ashanti-Union in swearing allegiance to the Asantehene. The occupant of the Akyeampim Stool is also the head Clan chief of the Kyidom and Domaikwa Division part of the Ashanti Area. According to Akyeampim Stool history, this stool was created by one of the Ashanti kings, King Obiri Yeboah. Obiri Yeboah had created Domaikwa Benkum Stool with a wide jurisdiction comprising:

Bote
Sewa
Amoako
Krapa
Akyereforom
Adense
Gyanyaase.

Obiri Yeboah insisted that the Akyeampim Stool which he subsequently created should have political pre-eminence over the whole of the Domaikwa Benkum Division, and therefore the original designation 'Domaikwa Benkum Stool' was changed into 'Akyeampim Stool', a patrilineal stool with many subordinate matrilineal stools. The story surrounding the creation of this stool is that Obiri Yeboah in his old age decided to give his son, Oheneba Sabin, a title and therefore created this stool for him. It is a patrilineal stool 'Mmamma Dwa'. It is exclusively for sons and grandsons of the Golden Stool, that is the Asantehene. Oheneba Sabin, it is believed, was given this title in recognition of his filial piety demonstrated during a critical time when his father was engaged in a fierce battle at Suntresu, a town in Ashanti. This battle is described as 'Dromaa War' in the historical records of Ashanti.

In the heat of this battle it is believed that all the important chiefs who were fighting for the king were routed, and the king sustained a fatal injury. Sabin was with his father at the time and when all the chiefs were vanquished, he alone struggled to stand by his wounded father, the king. After the death of Obiri Yeboah, Osei Tutu, his grand nephew, it is believed, was at Akwamu and the elders of the electoral college of the kingdom of Ashanti decided to appoint the Kenyasehene, Nana Fredua Agyeman, a nephew of the late King, Obiri Yeboah, because the heir-apparent, Osei Tutu, was a minor. The Kenyasehene however declined the offer to become the next king, so the nobles who constituted the electoral college sent for Osei Tutu to return to Kumasi to succeed his grand uncle, Obiri Yeboah. When Osei Tutu was returning to Kumasi, Ansah Sasraku, the Akwamuhene, provided the Asantehene designate with a body-guard, about thirty strong men. Other sources maintain that there were three hundred or more men.

When Osei Tutu came back to Kumasi he was formally installed Kumasihene. Oheneba Sabin, the Akyeampimhene, did homage to the new King along with other chiefs. As first generation

Akyeampimhene he had to be introduced to the new king and his status explained to the new king since this stool was a departure from the mainstream of descent and succession regulations in Ashanti.

Oheneba Sabin was killed in another war and he was succeeded by Oheneba Owusu Afriyie, the son of Osei Tutu. This means that the paternal succession to this stool was maintained by Osei Tutu. Oheneba Owusu Afriyie died as a result from battle wounds in the battle against the people of Techiman, and he was succeeded by Oheneba Osei Kuffuor.

There is not very much said about the period of Osei Kuffuor, but when he died he was succeeded by Oheneba Owusu Kuffuor. Oheneba Owusu Kuffuor died in a battle and he was succeeded by Oheneba Adu Sei Kra. When Oheneba Adu Sei Kra died he was succeeded by Oheneba Owusu Ansah. When Oheneba Owusu Ansah died he was succeeded by Oheneba Owusu Koko during the reign of Asantehene Bonsu Panyin, who was known as Nana Osei Tutu Kwame Asibe. He was one of the great kings of Ashanti. Oheneba Owusu Koko was a great warrior and he accompanied his father Nana Osei Tutu Asibe to both the Fanti and Gyaman wars. In the latter war the King of Gyaman was killed by the Ashantis. After a distinguished military service during the reigns of three kings he died and he was succeeded by Oheneba Subiri. This was during the reign of Asantehene Nana Mensah Bonsu. He remained on the stool at the time of the deportation of Nana Kwaku Duah, alias King Prempeh I, and he went to Seychelles with the King, in 1896. While Oheneba Subiri was in Seychelles with the King, Prempeh I, Oheneba Kwasi Adabo was installed in his place as the Akyeampimhene. He was followed by Oheneba Osei Tutu when Kwaku Adabo died an untimely death. Osei Tutu's period was one of the most peaceful periods in the Ashanti history, for there was cessation of hostilities between the Ashantis and the British at this time, however short-lived this state of affairs remained. When the King returned from the Seychelles in 1924,

Oheneba Kwaku Dua who succeeded Oheneba Osei Tutu was still on the Akyeampim stool. He saw part of the reign of the present Asantehene II, but he was destooled for an act of conspiracy against the present monarch. Owusu Afriyie II was appointed in his stead. Owusu Afriyie is a grandson of the stool in patrilineal line and he was also destooled for malpractices. When Oheneba Afriyie was destooled the present Akyeampimhene was installed in his stead, his name is Oheneba Boakye Dankwa This stool has consistently maintained paternal succession for such an important stool as the Akyeampimhene.

CHIEFS OF THE AKYEMPIM STOOL

1st Chief:	Oheneba Sabin Panyin
2nd Chief:	Oheneba Owusu Afriyie - entered Christianborg 1742
3rd Chief:	Oheneba Osei Kuffuor
4th Chief:	Oheneba Adu Osei Kra
5th Chief:	Oheneba Owusu Koko
6th Chief:	Oheneba Subire
7th Chief:	Oheneba Kwasi Adabo
8th Chief:	Oheneba Osei Tutu
9th Chief:	Oheneba Kwaku Duah (destooled)
10th Chief:	Oheneba Owusu Afriyie (destooled)
11th Chief:	Oheneba Boakye Dankwa (the present Akyeampimhene - enstooled 1947)

It is quite clear from the above stool history that in Ashanti sons, particularly in royal families, by virtue of biological paternity, occupy certain important court offices, in recognition, in the first instance, for service rendered as sons. The institution of such offices is not mainly the result of service rendered, but as Fortes himself states sons are the most trusted supporters (Cf. *Studies in Kinship and Marriage* p.62), and it is in the chief's own interest to appoint sons to such offices which deal with their intimate day-to-day matters. Fortes, however, was wrong in his interpretation of this practice, because the practice seems to dispose of one of the most important ingredients of the theory i.e. political and jurial rights. Every institution in the social structure has both functional and pragmatic implications and there is not one contributory factor. Even if one cause presents itself manifestly as the causal factor there may be several latent contributory factors. This is why Leach maintained that certain anthropologists are mere collectors of butterflies. I want to go on to one of the crucial hypothesis of typological analysis in social anthropology. The basic postulate of Matrilineal/Patrilineal categories is that primitive people recognise sociological and biological paternity. This is a logical result of the way in which social Anthropologists have elected to look at primitive societies. Among the Ashanti, two terms are used to describe parent-child relationship. Fortes uses these two terms to exemplify, in a most convincing manner, how primitive people differentiate between the two categories of relationship. (Cf.) "*African systems of kinship and marriage*" p.259). Fortes writes "The same term *Abusua* is used for the clan as for the lineage descendants of a single remote ancestress for whom a mythological emergence is generally claimed." Busia in his book "*The Position of Chief in the Modern Political System of Ashanti*", refers to the same question, and he does not add or take anything away from the Fortesian statement, he puts the idea explicitly by spelling it out fully. In Chapter I he writes, "The theory of procreation held in

Ashanti is that a human being is compounded of two principles: the 'blood' (mogya), which he inherits from the mother, and the other 'spirit' (ntoro) which is derived through his father. For political purposes the matrilineal bond is more significant ...". Taking the two, Fortes-Busia, statements together and juxtaposing them by evidence dealt with in connection with certain offices occupied by people whose links with these stools are patrilineal in content, and since there are many of such offices not only in Ashanti but even in Akropong and Aburi, Akwapim, both matrilineal societies, one begins to wonder whether the hypotheses put forward by Fortes and Busia are sustainable in all situations.

I now want to discuss these two concepts 'abusua' and 'ntoro' respectively. According to Busia the term 'abusua' refers to members of a matrilineage, and signifies common blood ties, and eponymous ancestress. He does not however tell us what term is used for agnates. I say this because similar situation is found to exist among the Nuer of the Eastern Sudan. Consistent with the tradition in vogue in anthropological studies at the time, Professor Evans-Pritchard distinguished and described two types of Kinship ties by the terms 'buth' and 'Mar'. 'Buth' is always an agnatic relationship between groups of persons, and only between persons by virtue of their membership of groups. 'Buth' agnation is to be distinguished from kinship in the sense of relationship between persons e.g. between a man and his father's brother and mother's brother. Cognation in this sense the Nuer call 'mar'. Any person to whom a man can trace any genealogical link whether through male or females is mar to him'.

"A man's mar are consequently all his father's kin and all his mother's kin, and we call this cognatic category his kindred. In normal usage the word refers to close relatives only. Therefore, as mar includes agnates, the word Buth is used only in reference to

distant agnates".¹ "Buth" then refers to only distant relatives who are agnates, and "mar" refers to both relatives either on the mother's or father's side.

Two terms have been devised to show the difference in this case. There is however a concealed attempt to distinguish between sociological paternity and biological paternity, the 'ghost' of typological modelling is seen manifesting itself even in his analysis. But I want to go back to the two terms used by both Fortes and Busia as basis of their classification matrilineal/patrilineal societies, Ashanti being matrilineal because of its descent system with its jural-politico and social concomitants. Mr. A.C. Denteh, an associate fellow of the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, has thrown a flood of light on these two concepts (cf. In the Research Review of 1967 Vol.3 Lent Term Issue, p.91). He writes as follows: "The two sociological terms, Ntoro and Nton in Akan, have been summarily treated as though they were one and the same thing. It has been suggested that 'synonymous terms for Ntoro are Nton, Sunsum, or bosom'; but a further study of Ntoro has revealed that Ntoro is not synonymous with Nton. The writer of the statement quoted above must have been led into that error by a previous writer whose definition of Ntoro was not explicit enough. In that definition, an example under one of the various meanings was given as follows: 'Me nton or me ntoro ni', and the meaning vaguely given was 'we are of the same ancient family, worshipping the same fetish.' This writer's difficulty can be appreciated as his informants must have confused him by stating that "in Akuapem, Ntoro is both patrilineal and matrilineal."²

Denteh maintained authoritatively that there had been great confusion surrounding these terms. He says further that the term refers to the spirit and other totemic spirits which are generally transmitted from father to son or daughter. The concept seems to me to be the way

1. Evans-Pritchard, E.E., *The Nuer*, Oxford 1956.
2. *Research Review*, Vol.3 1967, p.91.

the Akans describe their cosmological ideas. A close examination of available evidence reveals that the individual, instead of being compounded of blood and spirit which is interpreted 'ntoro' and 'mogya' according to Busia and Fortes, has also got other spirits which seem to be quite different constituents of the individual's personality. What we are never sure of is the use of such an exercise which involves the introduction of ideas into the social structure to make it look what it is not in reality. The Akans lay more emphasis on the part played by male partners in the procreation of children, and this is exemplified in the procedural arrangements preceding marriages.

Let me quote from unpublished thesis "The Basis of Political Authority of the Akwapims", page 163, E.O. Ayisi. "Marriage in every case is approached with great caution, and utilitarian motives. Parental consent is the prerequisite of every good marriage. Before parents give their consent to any marriage, case histories of suitor or future son-in-law are collected in a clandestine way by the woman's people. It is a common belief among the Akwapims that peculiarities and temperaments of the individual, particularly those of the male partner, are transmitted to the off-spring. This of course is consistent with scientific knowledge in genetics. Geneticists maintain that certain female genes produce certain peculiarities of the individual while the male genes are responsible for other peculiarities. By this same token the Akwapims believe that an individual is compounded of both genes from the parents. Any anti-social tendencies in any of the parents may manifest themselves in the off-spring, for this reason marriage should be carefully screened and vetted. According to Fortes the individual's destiny, and, in fact, whole life is dominated by his parental influences, and thus both the male and female partners are equally important. Fortes quotes Bascon in his book "West African Religion". "A person's luck and his success in economic and other affairs is also a matter of

destiny (ayunmope, ayanmo) or fate (iwa) which is also known as 'to kneel and choose' (akunleyan). Before a child is born its soul is said to kneel before a deity". He goes on to explain the spiritual forces which guide and direct the life of the individual in all matters. The point I want to make is that both parents are important in this matter.

In mortuary rites among the Akwapims, it is the children who provide the coffin and perform all the important rites. If the deceased is a chief the children are the first persons to know of this before anyone, even before the father's sister's children who have vested interest in the office in a matrilineally structured society.

Certain ideas about incest indicate that the Akans believe that the mother does not provide the blood exclusively, an important constituent of the individual. Incest is interpreted 'Mogyafra' mixing of the blood. Here if I understand it rightly, it may be presumed that semen is regarded as blood by the Akans.

There is a mixing of blood if sexual intercourse occurs between close relatives. The practices of the Akans in many ways are not consistent with these categories matrilineal/patrilineal. Some eminent social anthropologists are rather equivocal about this conceptual arrangement, and even Professor Raymond Firth in his book, 'We the Tikopia', page 298 writes: "The classification of societies into patrilineal and matrilineal would have no meaning if by that were implied an exclusive concentration in all social affairs on one or the other line to the total neglect or rigid repression in the other. It is now recognized that in all communities the kin of the mother and those of the father have each a role to play. They supplement each other, sometimes occupying reverse positions in different cases, but necessary integral part of the social mechanism". The designation of a community as patrilineal or matrilineal means no more, therefore, than that the most basic criterion of social status, membership of kinship group, is determined through the male or female line respectively". I am not sure that the meaning given to

this concept agrees with the connotation which the term has acquired over the years. I feel that Leach's position in this matter is gaining some support. I listened to Dr. E. Leach's lecture on this subject, one of the first series of the Malinowski's Memorial Lectures. At the time I thought Leach's lecture was thought-provoking, he was a bit heretical. Two days after I had heard him I revised my view and I wrote to ask him a few questions which I wanted clarified.

I had a long and an interesting letter from him. The substance of this letter was that the procedures of research and discussion of all anthropological problems necessarily entailed the setting up of categories and by this he meant classification, but he maintained that we must reject any tendency to think in Aristotelean terms. The categories are, according to Dr. Leach, temporary expedients, and they do not correspond to "natural entities". For this reason he urged that anthropologists must constantly go through 'the routine of questioning the value and utility of currently accepted categories. Orthodoxy, he further maintained, was nurtured when the vested interests of Professors were different and are now out of date and unless we reject the Professors' categories now we shall find it difficult to question the 'logic' of their argument which flows from the categories'. Leach has developed this thesis in his book 'Rethinking Anthropology'. The difficulty is how to break away from these categories without shaking the foundations of the whole discipline.

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