

REVIEW ARTICLE

RECENT BOOKS ON SOUTH AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGY

I

IRVING GOLDMAN, *The Cubeo: Indians of the Northwest Amazon*, Urbana etc.: University of Illinois Press 1979 (2nd edition). 307 pp., Bibliography, Index, Ills. £5.40 (Paper).

CHRISTINE HUGH-JONES, *From the Milk River: Spatial and Temporal Processes in Northwest Amazonia*, Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press 1979 [Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology, general editor Jack Goody, no. 26]. xx, 302 pp., Index. £12.50.

STEPHEN HUGH-JONES, *The Palm and the Pleiades: Initiation and Cosmology in Northwest Amazonia*, Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press 1979 [Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology, general editor Jack Goody, no. 24]. xvi, 332 pp., Bibliography, Index, Ills. £12.50.

There is hardly a single publication of Amazonian anthropology dating from before 1960 that one would consult nowadays for anything more than basic ethnographic facts. There are no Amazonian equivalents of *The Nuer* or *The Argonauts*, standing out from the early days of modern anthropology, which any contemporary social theorist would consider worth taking into account when formulating his own ideas. Amazonia lay outside the mainstream of all currents of anthropology, being little more than a source of anomalies that merely served to vex those concerned to establish universal principles of social organization. However, in the interim, the situation has been radically transformed. There is now a comparatively large body of basic texts that are at least known to specialists in other areas, even if one still cannot say that Amazonian material has been fully integrated into general theory. This efflorescence of Amazonian anthropology could not be attributed to many factors but two - one practical, the other theoretical - seem particularly important. First, since 1960 it has become progressively easier to get there and secondly, not long afterwards, the first volume of *Mythologies* was published.

Both factors, in their different ways, served to bring Amazonia to the attention of a wider audience of North American and European anthropologists than before.

The publication of the second edition of Goldman's now-classic monograph on the Cubeo, a couple of months before the appearance of the new books by Stephen and Christine Hugh-Jones (henceforth SHJ and CHJ respectively), dealing with the social and symbolic processes of the Barasana, was no doubt entirely accidental. Yet this fortuitous coincidence serves to highlight some of the developments that have taken place in Amazonian anthropology since the first edition of *The Cubeo* was published in 1963.

Although *The Cubeo* stands at the beginning of the modern period of Amazonian anthropology, it is nevertheless a retrospective work. Most simply, it refers to data collected during a relatively short fieldwork project in 1939-1940. Goldman explains that he had always hoped to carry out a further period of study but finally decided that this was unlikely, and so resolved to publish the first edition. However, it appears that he was able to revisit the Cubeo in 1970 and again in 1979 and some observations referring to these later visits form the basis of the Afterword, the only feature that distinguishes the second edition from the first. In the same section, the author refers to a new book that he is preparing on a different group of Cubeo from those he studied originally.

The Cubeo is also retrospective in a theoretical sense. In the Acknowledgements, Goldman identifies himself as a pupil of Franz Boas and Ruth Benedict and it is tempting to see their influence in the way in which he has chosen to organize *The Cubeo*. Some theoretical points are raised in the Introduction but the main thrust of his theoretical argument is reserved for the final chapter. This is entirely in line with the inductive method recommended by Boas: first present the data, then draw out the principles later.

It is not only the mode of theoretical presentation that seems anachronistic about *The Cubeo*: the same can also be said for the theoretical issues it deals with. One of the off-stage figures against whom the argument is directed (but who is never actually mentioned by name) is none other than Malinowski. Even the alternative view proposed by Goldman himself has an anachronistic ring: he suggests that Cubeo social structure can be derived from an elementary model'... based upon the solidarity of the male siblings [which] has been noted by Radcliffe-Brown as characteristic of primitive societies organized into patrilineages' (p. 284). Similarly,

If Cubeo social structure can be derived from an elementary model, so can its emotional structure, or ethos. The Cubeo ethos seems to be based upon the doctrine of harmonizing each particular mode of emotional expression with an appropriate social activity It is in ritual, as Ruth Benedict has demonstrated in *Patterns of Culture*, that the ethos of a culture is most vividly displayed (p.285).

To treat emotion in this way, as a sort of free-floating social variable, does not strike one now as at all convincing.

The approach of Christine and Stephen Hugh-Jones stands in total contrast to that of Goldman. Here the method is frankly hypothetico-deductive, as SHJ explains:

In carrying out field research ... we had two principal objectives in mind. The first was to make a general ethnographic study of a still relatively unacculturated Tukanoan-speaking Indian population. Our second objective was to examine some of Lévi-Strauss's ideas on mythology ... in the light of a detailed body of ethnographic data (SHJ, p. 14)

Both books are modified versions of the authors' PhD theses and are based on 22 months of fieldwork, most of it spent together in a community of about 30 Barasana on an affluent of the Pirá-Paraná. This river lies about 100 miles to the south of Mitú on the Colombian-Brazilian border, whilst the Cubeo live to the north and west of this frontier town. Although belonging to the same language-group and sharing many cultural attributes, the Barasana and the Cubeo are different in one major respect. Whilst the Barasana are integrated in the pan-Vaupés marriage system, involving several distinct groups, each speaking a different language, the Cubeo are linguistically endogamous.

The Hugh-Joneses present their books as complementary (as was the intention of Cambridge in publishing them simultaneously); in fact, each book could stand quite easily on its own, and there is surprisingly little overlap. Between them, the authors have managed a very effective division of labour. SHJ's book focuses on the inter-relationship of Barasana mythology and one particular ritual series concerned with male initiation. First, the rites are described with a minimum of analysis, then the meaning of the elements of which they are composed - the behaviour of the participants and the musical instruments, drugs and other material objects used - is systematically elucidated by reference to a substantial corpus of myths provided at the end of the book, and also to a diverse range of other types of evidence. This includes evidence culled from a long list of published works dealing with other Tukanoan societies. Throughout the book, the arguments of Lévi-Strauss stand in the wings; in the concluding chapter, however, he considers the relevance of the points raised by his study to the arguments, not only of Lévi-Strauss, but also, albeit briefly, to those of Victor Turner and Edmund Leach. The book is rounded off with an extensive bibliography of over a hundred sources of local ethnographic material.

In contrast to SHJ's book, CHJ's represents an attempt at a comprehensive account of Barasana society. On the other hand, it involves only a minimum of comparative reference. Even Lévi-Strauss receives mention only in the bibliography, though her intellectual debt to him is clearly very great. Instead, her argument is gradually built up by the most impressive marshalling of internal evidence relating to all spheres of Barasana life.

Every new item of information introduced, every interpretation proposed, takes her remorselessly closer to her final goal of isolating a formal model of the way in which the Barasana conceive of their social and physical universe, of their place in it and of their passage through it.

CHJ begins her analysis by confronting the paradox, noted also by Goldman, of the social organization of the Vaupés. The indigenous societies of this region are, in day-to-day practice, highly egalitarian; there is no division of labour apart from the fundamental one between men and women; chiefs enjoy very little coercive power; differences in productive capacity and hence of wealth are levelled out by a communal pattern of consumption. Yet the Indians' conception of their society is of one that is highly hierarchical in character.

The core of most Tukanoan settlements consists of a group of male siblings, members of an exogamous local descent group, living patrilocally. The relative seniority of these agnatic siblings is very important in the indigenous view and they are conceived of as being ordered in a hierarchy, consisting, ideally, of five roles: viz. chief, dancer/chanter, warrior, shaman, and servant. This model of internal relations between male siblings is also extrapolated to describe relations between residential groups. Thus the series of local descent-groups living along a river bank are conceived of as ordered into five similar categories and as making up a larger and also exogamous unit. CHJ describes this unit as a 'sib' and explains that its members believe themselves to be descended from an ancestral anaconda that first settled in the river at the beginning of time. These 'sibs' are thought of as being integrated into even larger entities, also structured according to the same quinquipartite principle. These CHJ refers to as 'Exogamous Groups', with an upper-case letter at the beginning of each word. Ideally, all the 'sibs' that make up an 'Exogamous Group' are to be found strung along the same river, with the most senior (i.e. that corresponding to the 'specialist role' of 'chief') nearest to the mouth of it.

Perhaps the most intriguing feature of the Vaupés social system is that these 'Exogamous Groups' are generally though not universally, 'language-bearing' groups. In other words, the rule of exogamy by which CHJ defines them, obliges the members of these 'Exogamous Groups' to marry someone who speaks a different language. But there is yet another, more general association, described by CHJ as a 'phratry'. The ranking of 'Exogamous Groups' within a 'phratry' is apparently rather loose and neither the ideal of geographical propinquity nor that of exogamy is strictly adhered to.

I must confess that I find the terminology that CHJ uses in this description rather unfortunate. She adopts the American usage 'sib' on the grounds that it is the term used by Goldman and Jean Jackson, who worked amongst the neighbouring Bará and who has published a number of articles on these people. I also find the use of the term 'Exogamous Group' (subdivided into Simple and Compound varieties) to describe an intermediate form of association standing between a 'sib' and a 'phratry', most confusing.

All the units involved in this discussion, from the smallest (the local descent group) to the largest (the phratry) are ideally exogamous, so I cannot understand why CHJ would want to reserve this term, in a special sense, for the intermediate form of association. The main difference between the units CHJ calls 'Exogamous Groups' and the units she calls 'phratries' appears to be that the latter are dispersed geographically and only vaguely recognized by the members. Perhaps therefore it would be appropriate to refer to these units as 'dispersed phratries' and use a term such as 'localized phratries' to describe the 'Exogamous Groups'. But this terminological awkwardness does not detract from the fundamental merit of this account, it being one of the most thorough, if not actually the first, discussion of this most interesting and puzzling social system.¹

Hand-in-hand with this account goes an attempt to explain the apparently paradoxical conflict between the hierarchical and egalitarian principles in the Vaupés social system. The specialist roles, it is argued, although hierarchical in one sense, are concentric in another, or to put it another way, are symmetrical in relation to the central role, that of 'warrior'. The warrior belongs to the 'externally oriented domain'; the roles on either side of him, the dancer/chanter role and the shaman role, belong to the 'metaphysical domain', whilst the chief and servant roles belong to the 'politico-economic domain'. CHJ claims that this balanced set of roles serves as a model, not only for relations within a residential group but also for relations between groups. She also points out a series of parallels between this model and the Indians' conception of the individual life-cycle. Finally after fifty pages of closely-argued text, she proposes that the hierarchical and egalitarian principles of the Vaupés social system should be treated as '... complementary aspects of the same structure - the five specialist roles - and thus they appear as transformations of one another' (p. 106). I must confess that I find it difficult to follow this argument, and I feel that this is because it is never exactly clear what the relationship between this ideal model of specialist roles and social reality is supposed to be, nor how the one is deemed to act upon the other.

The remainder of the book is dedicated to showing how the same formal model, combining the elements of concentricity and linearity, underlies indigenous conceptions of the human body and the spatial lay-out of the settlement, of the life cycle and its rites of passage, of the oscillation of the soul between life and death, and of the relations between the sexes and their respective

1. See also two papers by Jean Jackson, 'Language Identity of the Vaupés Indians', in R. Bauman & J. Sherzer (eds.), *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1974, pp. 50-64; and 'Vaupés Marriage: A Network System in the Northwest Amazon', in C.A. Smith (ed.), *Regional Analysis*, New York 1976, ii, pp. 65-93.

duties in economic production and consumption. In a final *tour de force*, CHJ draws all her earlier arguments together in an attempt to show the fundamental homology between the native models of all these various domains of experience and their conception of the structure of the universe. This cosmic order, which has both a vertical and a horizontal dimension, is thought to have been laid down at the beginning of time by ancestral beings, as recorded in their myths. The mythic era however continues to exist as an alternative aspect of the present and is the source of power that allows living beings to reproduce themselves socially and physically, generation after generation. Contact with this source of power is achieved through manipulation of the concrete physical and social world of the present during shamanic sessions or during ritual. Since this world is derived from the ancestral world, it also provides the way to it. Thus by moving through horizontal space and cumulative time in this world, the Indians believe they enter the ancestral world of vertical space and reversible time that is the source of being.

The image that emerges of the Barasana from CHJ's book is of a people whose lives - from the most banal physical process to the most embracing cosmological concept - are very tightly controlled by this underlying structure. The author is careful to point out that she is talking about 'ideal' models and that in reality people often act in ways that do not conform to them. Even so, this book will be more amenable to those who are accustomed to the structuralist style of argument than to those who are not.

This is not the place to discuss the merits or otherwise of the structuralist method. However one question of general theoretical concern is the psychological status of the model CHJ perceives to be underlying the reality she describes. The Indians themselves are unconscious of the model, at least to the extent that they are unable to articulate it in the formal and abstract terms that CHJ herself does. The binary oppositions that Lévi-Strauss identifies as the substratum of so much Amerindian thought are also apparently unconscious in exactly the same way. For his part, Lévi-Strauss appears to claim that these oppositions are a fundamental property of the human mind; thus all concrete manifestations of human thought from totemic taxonomies to marriage systems will reveal these fundamental oppositions. However, no such claim can readily be made for the quinquipartite schema that CHJ has identified, thus leaving the question of the relation between this model and social reality hanging in the air. Although it was a wise decision perhaps to avoid such a general issue in a book that is essentially a case-study, I feel that before one can be fully convinced by the conclusions that CHJ reaches, one would need to be satisfied with regard to the relationship between model and reality that her conclusions imply.

If CHJ's book is impressive for the marshalling of internal evidence, SHJ's is impressive for the marshalling of comparative evidence from other sources referring to the Vaupés region. Yet, once again, as with CHJ's work, one can admire SHJ's book as an exemplar of the structuralist method whilst remaining sceptical about the method itself. Skilful use of the Lévi-Straussian

style of analysis permits SHJ to identify a meaningful order underlying not only the seemingly random events of Barasana male initiation rituals but also the fantastical episodes of Barasana mythology. It is by indicating the relationship between the two that SHJ attempts to demonstrate the true meaning of each: taken on its own, he argues, neither Barasana ritual nor Barasana myth would be comprehensible.

However, anyone concerned about the canons of validation that should be applied to structuralist analyses will find plenty to think about here. It is noticeable, for example, that the quinquipartite schema that plays such a prominent part in CHJ's account of the Barasana is hardly present at all in SHJ. In fact, there is a certain lack of consistency between the two accounts with regard to the underlying model. Whereas the latter distinguishes five life stages and identifies them with the five specialist roles, SHJ distinguishes only four (cf. p. 148 in SHJ and p. 65f in CHJ on the analogy between specialist roles and life-cycle stages). Moreover, although SHJ cites his informants in support of his arguments on some occasions, he reserves the right to contradict them on others, on the grounds that 'all native explanations ... should be treated as part of the data to be explained and not as anthropological explanations in their own right, a point made long ago by Radcliffe-Brown' (p. 254). Although the book is ostensibly an examination of Lévi-Strauss's ideas in the light of the Barasana evidence, it is just as much an examination of the Barasana evidence in the light of Lévi-Strauss's ideas. It is somewhat disconcerting to discover that in a book in which Lévi-Strauss's ideas are supposedly to be put to the test, that they are invoked to confirm and sometimes even to establish certain symbolic associations.

From a methodological point of view, the Hugh-Jones' books are the antithesis of Goldman's. Whereas Goldman's book consists largely of innocent description with some theoretical discussion front and back, their books represent self-conscious attempts at cultural exegesis from a clearly 'privileged' theoretical perspective. As such, they both testify to the transformation that has taken place in Amazonian anthropology over the last decade and a half. In another sense though, CHJ's book, in aspiring to be comprehensive is an exception to the general trend. This has been to produce monographs, like SHJ's, in which one particular feature of the society is examined in great depth. We are fortunate in this case to have both perspectives on the Barasana. A comparative synthesis is rare. The most recent attempt to produce a concise but comprehensive account of the peoples of the Amazon Basin was Steward and Faron's *Native Peoples of South America*, published in 1959. Even this book however was little more than a *précis* of the *Handbook of South American Indians* produced in the late 1940s. Far from becoming more integrated into the mainstream of general anthropology, Amazonian anthropology seems to be breaking up into smaller and smaller parts. Not only is it difficult to accommodate Lévi-Strauss with Victor Turner, but it is even difficult to integrate one South Americanist's

work with another or even one area specialist's work with another. Yet perhaps the period demarcated by the books reviewed here represents the most fruitful period in the anthropology of aboriginal Amazonia so far. It may well turn out to be the most fruitful period ever - if the fecundity of a particular period is to be regarded as dependent on increasing quality in the information collected, rather than merely on the progressive elaboration of theoretical constructs on an already-established 'data-base'.

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II

DAVID MAYBURY-LEWIS (ed.), *Dialectical Societies: The Gê and Bororo of Central Brazil*, Cambridge, Mass. & London: Harvard University Press 1979 [Harvard Studies in Cultural Anthropology, general editors D. Maybury-Lewis *et al.*, no. 1]. xiv, 340 pp., Index. £15.00.

Dialectical Societies is a collection of essays by members of the Harvard-Central Brazil Project, a research programme conducted among six Central Brazilian societies in the 1960s. The volume is of interest both as documentation of an area of recent anthropological attention (it is the myths of these societies that form the foundation of Lévi-Strauss' *Mythologiques*) and as an illuminating illustration of 'comparative' anthropology at the present time. The book is fittingly dedicated to Curt Nimuendajú, a self-trained German-Brazilian Indianist and the authority on Central Brazilian societies during the first half of this century, who established the importance of comparative studies in the region. *Dialectical Societies* continues Nimuendajú's ambitions, though, in the intervening years, the study of a number of cultures from a general perspective by one individual has been replaced by the intensive study of facets of a single society by one or more specialists. As the stated ambitions of the volume are comparative - ethnography is reduced to the minimum necessary to sustain the theoretical arguments - I will devote my attention to the work as an exercise of comparative anthropology rather than attempt to assess individual contributions.

Within the large and varied region of Central Brazil, *Dialectical Societies* focuses on a group of societies speaking the Gê language. The term Gê refers to a language stock though, unfortunately, the details of this classification have not been totally resolved. The category has, however, tended to be associated with a culture area, particularly as cultural and language boundaries approximately coincide in this area of South America. As the first major work on this region since the description of the Gê in the

Handbook of South American Indians, compiled in the 1940s, it is unfortunate that *Dialectical Societies* does not include a reappraisal of the whole question of Central Brazilian culture and a re-examination of the utility of the Gê category. Thus, if we take the common features of Gê-speaking societies - matri-uxorilocal residence, an emphasised ideological and spatial separation of 'male' and 'female' categories, community-wide associations, village morphology etc. - then a number of non-Gê-speaking societies should also qualify; the Tapirape and the Caraja are two examples that spring to mind. The demarcation of a Gê-speaking culture appears to rest on two related assumptions. First, that all present Gê-speakers are the remnants of a society active in the unrecorded past and, secondly, that non-Gê speakers exhibiting Gê characteristics are explicable as a result of diffusion where the society in question has been in prolonged contact with Gê-speakers. Whilst both of these hypotheses may possibly be valid, it would have been interesting to have included an examination of a non-Gê-speaking society in the volume particularly as the Nambikwara, of an isolated language stock, were included at the research stage of the project. My point here is not that a comparative study need necessarily include all relevant societies but rather that the exercise is reduced in value if only those societies with a suspected common origin are included. If we are concerned with a common 'kind' of social structure, as the essays suggest, then surely it is more meaningful to include representatives of different language-groups inhabiting the same region, since, even if these examples support the theory of diffusion, we might be able to obtain wider and better-founded understanding of this particular form of social structure.

The philosophy behind *Dialectical Societies* appears to be that detailed analyses of specific societies will lead to the formulation of generalisations of comparative value. One result of this approach is that the individual interests and the methodological preferences of the contributors, together with the particular emphases of the society under study, produce analyses directed at the same question - the understanding of Gê social structure - but from distinct theoretical viewpoints and concerning distinct facets of the societies under discussion. Whilst this approach may not present critical problems for the informed specialist reader, a non-specialist may well have difficulty in following the often complex arguments. Moreover, the individualistic presentation often prevents the reader from pursuing leads of his own, or indeed those offered by the contributors, as vital material is often absent. To take one example: the volume is focused on the question of social structure yet there is no uniform presentation of relationship terminologies; comprehensive details are given for three societies, minimal information is given for two and incomplete data are given in the text for one (the Bororo). One notable and, perhaps, indicative exception to this is the apparent collaboration by the two Brazilian representatives of the project whose contributions permit the reader to draw direct comparisons between the two societies in question.

The individualistic form of presentation is mirrored by the conclusions and generalisations offered by the authors- for example, we find four separate 'explanations' for the prevalence of matri-uxorilocal residence among the Gê. The question is whether this is a reflection of the societies under study or of the anthropologists involved. These problems appear to rise from the very nature of the project in that specialisation and the intensive analysis of one society tends to obscure over-all comprehension. Thus each contributor tends to weight his generalisations in terms of his 'own' society. This bias is apparent in Terry Turner's otherwise extremely stimulating analysis of Gê and Bororo social structure - the only comprehensive attempt included in the volume to consider the social structure as an abstract system. Turner's argument that it is the dominance of the father-in-law over his son(s)-in-law that holds the key to an understanding of Gê and Bororo social structure (and in particular of matri-uxorilocal residence), appears to stem primarily from his own experience among the Kayapo where the role of the father-in-law is emphasised. David Maybury-Lewis points out in the concluding chapter that this generalisation is not supported by all Gê societies and, from my experience with the Panara (a Gê-speaking society contacted after the completion of the Harvard-Central Brazil Project) I have to concur. Even if we take 'dominance' at its widest meaning, Turner's suggestion cannot be supported by the Panara example, where it would be more accurate to consider both father-in-law and son-in-law as sharing the common dilemma of uxorilocal residence in the same household. Whilst such details need not detract from the general value of Turner's thesis - in particular his emphasis of intra- and inter-family relationships - it does illustrate the problems inherent in moving between the levels of intensive and personally-experienced knowledge of one society and that of generalised comment on a number of societies documented by other anthropologists.

The comparativist ambitions of this volume could possibly have been enhanced by a greater concentration on specific themes. All the contributors stress the importance of domestic households which form a ring around the periphery of Gê villages in conjunction with matri-uxorilocal residence, and this could provide a suitable focus as Turner's essays demonstrate. Peripheral households are a domestic and female domain, concerned with the production of 'raw materials' - children and food - in the processes of production and reproduction. It is also in this domain that the relationship terminology emerges as a dominant classificatory principle. The failure of the contributors fully to explore Gê relationship terminologies may in part result from the difficulty of applying the traditional 'tools' of 'kinship' to these societies, though this need not necessarily mean that the relationship terminologies are in some way peripheral to an understanding of social structure or, for that matter, to a general comprehension of the Gê. In this respect it is unfortunate that the volume does not contain a comparative examination of Gê relationship terminologies (or Central Brazilian relationship terminologies) although one contributor has advanced

a tentative scheme elsewhere.¹

In fact, rather than moving towards synthesis on this important question, the volume leaves the reader with a rather awkward picture where differences are emphasised. Thus a cursory reading of the chapters in the Northern Gê and that on the Central Gê may well result in the impression that the latter have a 'two-line' terminology (though referred to as a 'two-section' system), whereas the former patently do not. Does this imply that the presence of a 'two-line' terminology has little bearing on the social structure which, among other things, would question the possible significance (discussed elsewhere by Rivi re) of the distribution of such relationship terminologies in Lowland South America? A closer reading shows that the Central Gê do not in fact have a 'two-line' relationship terminology and that the categories are presented in a 'two-line' block-diagram for the purpose of emphasising the importance of an 'us'/'them' or 'kin'/'affine' distinction in the societies. This presentation tends to play down the fact that the Central Gê have distinct affinal terms for wife's mother and wife's father and also distinguish matrilineal relatives from within the general category of affines; in point of fact there is a prohibition on marriage into the latter category of relatives which makes the application of the term 'affines' rather obscure.

Rather than stressing the differences between the Central and Northern Gê, it would seem more in keeping with the general aims of the volume to emphasise the similarities and, more specifically, the fact that all Central Brazilian societies have what can best be termed a 'three-line' terminology, comprising distinct categories of patrilineal, matrilineal and affinal relationships. The pertinent question is why the Central Gê should lack a complete 'two-line' terminology when they have all the hallmarks of such a society: for example, an extension of relationship terms to the level of tribe, and a fundamental 'us'/'they' dichotomy. This question is too complex to pursue here though we can suggest that it has a bearing on why the Central Gê practise matri-uxorilocal residence in spite of an ideology that is frankly patri-virilocal.

A possibly significant feature of the 'three-line' terminology is an application of the principle of generation to the category of 'affine'. In effect ego distinguishes two categories of affines; through the first ascending generation those of one of his parents (in the case of the Central Gê this would be matrilineal relatives and in the case of the Bororo or Panara, patrilineal relatives), and through his own generation, his wife and her relatives. Each Central Brazilian society accords a different weighting to the relationships between these three categories; the matrilineal and patrilineal categories may be approximately balanced or may reflect 'patrilineal' or 'matrilineal' biases; the identification with a category focused on a parent may diminish in time and be

1. See Roberto Da Matta, *Um Mundo Dividido: A Estrutura Social dos Indios Apinay *, Petropolis: Editoria Vozes 1976.

replaced by identification with the wife's relatives, or the parental relationships may endure.

However, in all these societies we find a common ideology of the individual as comprising a social and a physical self with the distinction expressed through the ideology of matrilateral and patrilateral roles. This suggests that Turner's hypothesis regarding the dialectic between the identity of the family and the necessity of families to 'reproduce', deserves more extensive examination. Finally, the social structure of Central Brazilian societies can be interpreted as articulating a common ideological principle that is given diverse expression in the form of dichotomies.

My own view is that these societies appear to conceptualise productive processes as the alternate antithesis and synthesis of dyadic categories. To give an illustration, the life-cycle can be represented as a process involving the differentiation of 'male' and 'female' (for example, men's house residence, sex-determined economic roles etc.) alternating with the synthesis of 'male' and 'female' (as in marriage, procreation, economic cooperation etc.). The 'three-line' relationship terminology would appear to express the ongoing nature of this dialectic; i.e. that the individual should not contract a union with a spouse associated with either parent. Rather, the individual should marry a representative of the category 'male' or 'female' who is 'uncontaminated', so to speak, by previously-established relationships - who is, in other words, a distinct 'affine'. This contention is apparently supported by the general impression that the confusion of affinal roles with matrilateral or patrilateral roles - depending on which society we are considering - is undesirable. Interestingly, it is only among the Central Gê that we find a prohibition on marriage into one of these categories. As a more general comment we can also note that according to this ideology the initial phase of marriage at least should be considered as an essentially 'biological' union, between representatives of the 'male' and 'female' categories directed at reproduction, rather than as an alliance between two groups.

Many of the characteristics of the Gê appeared to be fairly anomalous before this series of studies. Certainly this volume has given us some insights into how these features fit together and in this respect the work is aptly titled. Regretfully the features have still not been accounted for in a comparative framework. The study of matrilateral, patrilateral and affinal categories offers one of the most intriguing aspects of the Gê and although reference is recurrently made to this distinction no attempt is made to discuss the significance of this anomalous feature either from the Gê or, for that matter, in social anthropology generally.

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