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ACADEMICISM IN SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

by Eric O. Ayisi*

Academicism by definition is the reduplication of the achieve-
ments 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 Durhkeim from
whom the early anthropologists drew their inspiration. Durhkeim 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.[1]
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 conse-
quences. 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

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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 anthro-
pologists like Dr. A. Richards and Professor Fortes. These anthro-
pologists 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 unilinealty
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 patri-
> lineal 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, 'compleme tary 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; 1959b").[1]

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 institut-
ional 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 matrilateral and patrilateral princi-
ples in status definition, and at the jural level of legal and moral sanct-
ions."

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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. "Matriliny confers status in the politio-jural domain, patrifiliation 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:-

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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 structure[1] 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

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1.   Unpublished thesis. The basis of political authority of the Akwa-
      pims 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 matri-
lineal 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 Asante-
hene. 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-emince over the whole of the Domaikwa
Benkum Division, and therefore the original designation 'Domaikwa Ben-
kum 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 grand-
sons 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 sus-
tained 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 Asante-
hene 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 jural 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 pri-
mitive 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 Fortessian 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 typo-
logical 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 concomittants. 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, ayonmo) 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 any-
one, 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 cons-
tituent of the individual. Incest is interpretted '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 cons-
istent 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 exlusive 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 dif-
ferent 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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