

Book Reviews

Social Idioms

Kinship in Bali. HILDRED GEERTZ and CLIFFORD GEERTZ. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1975. xiv, 214 pp., illus. \$12.50.

The description and analysis of kinship systems occupy a somewhat privileged position in the history of ethnological thought. Kinship studies have the same mythical origin point as professional social anthropology: it all began with L. H. Morgan's *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family* (1871). Over a century later, the battle still rages over the most basic issue, the nature of the phenomenon itself: What is kinship all about?

Despite an apparent diversity of perspectives, two camps may be sorted out: the splitters and the synthesizers. To the splitters, kinship is divisible, for analytic purposes, into a series of discrete aspects—kinship nomenclatures, alliance (marriage) and descent systems, household and family organization. To the synthesizers, it is a kind of social idiom, a way of understanding social life that is inseparable from other ways of talking about life in society—in terms of economics, politics, or ritual. The splitters are, in most instances, formalists or ethnoscientists of one variety or another, whereas the synthesizers are often advocates of positions, such as symbolic anthropology or structuralism. Both camps are concerned with the descriptive foundations of social anthropology.

Kinship studies, then, are more than just one of a number of fields that constitute social anthropology: kinship is a kind of crucible for theories of description and analysis. To assess Hildred and Clifford Geertz's *Kinship in Bali* one must hold this brief *tour d'horizon* in mind: in presenting a work of ethnographic synthesis and as advocates of symbolic anthropology, the Geertzes play counterpoint to cognitive, normative, and affective views of what kinship is about.

The Geertzes' theoretical concern is to discern the underlying principles that will account for the high degree of variability in Balinese kinship practices. Their central analytic strategy involves a distinction between a cultural dimension of kinship—ideas, values, and beliefs, a group of signif-

icant cultural symbols—and a social structural dimension, the use of these symbols in the organization of both domestic and public life, or in other words the work that kinship must do. Their more particular concerns are to provide accounts of three interrelated matters: (i) the formation and operation of social groups and networks; (ii) the relationships between power and influence in Bali; (iii) the various strategies employed by both persons and groups to defend and, if possible, enhance their social position in Balinese public life. With this statement of purpose, the stage is set for a confrontation, explicit in the conclusion though somewhat muted in the text, with more formal approaches that treat kinship as if it were either a discrete institution or an internalized set of intellectual categories. By defining the issue in this manner, the Geertzes are inevitably led to a consideration of status rivalry, the recruitment and organization of work groups, religious style, and related matters. Kinship, from the perspective of symbolic anthropology, is neither more nor less basic or derivative than other aspects of human concern and experience. The problem is to derive a language that makes intelligible the conditions through which apparently discontinuous aspects of social life are translatable into one another. In this sense, the Geertzes' descriptive goal is not too different from Lévi-Strauss's program for structuralism, which is to define the conditions through which apparently distinctive truth systems become convertible into one another.

The *dadia*, a particularly problematic Balinese social institution that will not fit into the traditional categories of kinship analysis, is the focus of the ethnography, and the Geertzes describe its symbolic attributes and operations in the private and public domains, among commoners and gentry. A significant feature of the *dadia* is its contingent character. What are the conditions that precipitate—or prevent—its emergence from particular pools of kinsmen? By what name should it be called: a kin group, a religious group, a microcaste, or a local faction? We learn straight off a few of the differences between gentry and commoner *dadia*: among the gentry the *dadia* is a nonlocalized corporate group; among the commoners it is a spatially re-

stricted one. The search for an understanding of the *dadia*, of the diverse roles that it plays in Balinese private and public life and the ways in which it penetrates other institutions, is what this ethnographic synthesis is about.

The Geertzes give the reader, by way of introduction, a brief, incisive description of Balinese society: the temple system, the hamlet, the irrigation society (a kind of temple group), the title system, the uses of titles by gentry and commoners, and the kingdom, together with an introduction to the field sites. Here, as elsewhere in the book, reconstructions of the classical Balinese state, its internal dynamics and ritual faces, complement intensive ethnographic analysis. Two significant principles are formulated and subsequently subjected to empirical proof, quantitative and qualitative, in a wide range of contexts. (i) The overriding principle in Balinese social structure is functional specificity for each group. (ii) An enduring state of tension between the community (hamlet) and the kin group, manifested in a variety of ways, is fundamental to the operation of Balinese kinship. To achieve generality for their results the Geertzes selected for study field sites in Tabanan, on the western edge of the South Balinese heartland, where they worked primarily within gentry circles, and in Klungkung, in the eastern part of that heartland, where they lived and worked in a more conservative kingdom (principally in Tihingan), among village-dwelling commoners.

The formation of the commoner *dadia*, the emergence of a corporate group with an elected kin chief from houseyards and houseyard clusters, is inseparable from the transfer of a houseyard temple onto hamlet-owned land. This process of formation, the actualization of an origin group, sets the stage for the internal opposition between the *dadia* and communal integrity, which is set off by a feature-by-feature comparison of African segmentary systems and Balinese micropolitics (*dadia* formation). This description provides a proof that kinship, at least in Bali, is simply not a discrete institution. The *dadia* is an association of the same sort as a dancing club or an irrigation society and is at once a temple congregation and a local sector of a dispersed title group, as well as a hamlet political faction. It all depends upon the way you look at it, and the Geertzes' approach is systematically multidimensional. It leads them to an analytic dissection of *teknonymy*, which through time tends to blur genealogical relationships, as a means through which the organizational flexibility of Balinese kin groups is maintained, and to the elaboration of a marriage choice index, a measure of pref-

erences for or against dadia segments, which demonstrates that here, as in the Middle East, endogamy is the primary means for maintaining the internal solidarity of kin groups. Quantitative information on different villages, village social organizations, dadias, kin group positions, and distance measures provides support for relational propositions. The Geertz clearly demonstrate that marriage by capture, as an index of the intensity of hostility within communities, is a reflection of the degree of differentiation of the kinship system.

The world of the gentry dadia is a somewhat different matter: here the dadia emerges as the basic building block of the classical Balinese state, a medium of dynastic competition for men's allegiance. Through an intricate conjoining of historical reconstruction with social anthropology, the Geertz give us the flavor of a feudal-style order set in a Polynesian mold: core and cadet lineages, preferential endogamous marriage coupled with hypergamy, and the principle of sinking status. Among the gentry, in contrast to the commoners, titles are used rather than teknonymy, and there are different means for expressing differences of rank among houses within the royal dadia, having to do with styles of eating, address, the politics of marriage, and architectural discriminations. Once again, the central point comes across clearly: to speak of kinship in Bali as a distinct institution, a set of intellectual categories, or a residue of affective and normative constraints is at best to employ a convenient fiction and at worst to distort severely the experiential bases of what it means to be Balinese.

The book includes appendices on Balinese kinship terminology, a family history, and basic village regulations.

Hildred and Clifford Geertz do exactly what they say they are going to do: they illustrate that the institutionalized divisions of social anthropology have, at the outer limits, no more than pedagogic value, being a kind of fiction convenient for authors and users of textbooks. When it comes down to concrete, ethnographic cases, kinship is revealed to be a dialect that serves to communicate how things are and therefore how one must act in the world. This dialect cannot be understood as a thing apart from the other theaters of collective thought and activity. As a work of ethnographic synthesis, the Geertz' book gives a polyphonous rendering of Balinese culture and a proof of the intertranslatability of social idioms which transcends any particular culture.

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Roots of Technology

The Maze of Ingenuity. Ideas and Idealism in the Development of Technology. ARNOLD PACEY. Holmes and Meier, New York, 1975. 350 pp., illus. \$12.95.

In debates regarding social problems resulting from our technological ingenuity, surprisingly little attention has been paid to the development of technology from the standpoint of the technologist. If we are willing to accept the notion that men work only for the money they may earn, then the development of technology can be explained in a series of responses to economic incentives. If, on the other hand, we stand the economic explanation on its head and insist that economics tells us only how and not why technological change occurs, then we may begin to recognize important ways in which craftsmen and technologists have determined the shape of Western civilization. Pacey's "ideas and idealism" are concerned with the numerous non-economic incentives to technological development.

Not only during the Renaissance did technologists seek patrons to support their innovative work. In every age invention has been the mother of necessity and supply has caused demand. Ideas in the heads of technologists were the sparks that started the conflagration of Western technology. Pacey shows us in this book that the most important and far-reaching technical ideas were not economically motivated. For example, the men who devised mathematical procedures for the solution of real technical problems were much more interested in intellectual than in real problems. Yet their work had a staggering effect upon future technical capabilities and eventually on economic realities.

Pacey's narrative, which traces the history of technology from the age of cathedral building through the Industrial Revolution, is unfortunately pedestrian, and his arresting ideas are too often submerged in cautious, unprovocative paragraphs. This is doubly unfortunate, because this work contains many fresh insights and observations that are urgently needed in the current debates. Pacey believes that technological progress can take us in any one of several directions, and that we ought to decide in which direction we wish to go. He observes that the analytical methods used by engineers require problems to be broken down into manageable parts. This generally means that the technical parts of problems are separated from the social parts. The engineer sees the separation as a practical necessity, but the result is not so much a practical view of reality as a disconnected view. Numerical methods can

be used to solve the technical parts of problems; in the absence of numerical statements, the social parts of problems are often overlooked. Pacey suggests that a new and refined "systems" approach may bring back together the technical and social parts of problems, but that is a statement of his faith and is not supported by the history in his book.

Pacey's ideas are needed not only in current debates but also in the study of the history of technology. His ideas and insights, which are only sampled here, are of the kind that historians of technology should be arguing about. Pacey quotes Huizinga: "To discover economic causes is to some degree a craze with us, and sometimes leads us to forget a much simpler psychological explanation of the facts." Pacey does not pursue this argument as vigorously as I think he might. Rather than seek a technologist's motivation in "ideals and idealism," we might observe that technologists are obsessed by technical problems. They will do anything that will permit them to pursue their obsessions. The present state of Western technology attests to their success in finding patrons to support their work.

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Electrophilic Reactions

Cationic Polymerization of Olefins. A Critical Inventory. JOSEPH P. KENNEDY. Wiley-Interscience, New York, 1975. xiv, 338 pp., illus. \$22.50.

This detailed survey of the literature on all important aspects of cationic polymerization of olefin monomers is important to both the technologist and the scientist. The survey is said to be complete up to 1973 and, includes, for all olefins that research workers have attempted, successfully or unsuccessfully, to polymerize with cationic initiators, a description of polymerization behavior and of the physical properties of the polymers or oligomers obtained.

The book begins with a chapter on terminology that includes a treatment of the controversy over the term carbenium ion versus carbonium ion, a historical survey of all the important scientific and industrial developments in cationic polymerization dating back to 1839, and a general discussion of the types and behavior of monomers that polymerize by this mechanism. This 35-page introduction is followed by a tabulation of the structures of all of the monomers (including 296 different olefins) covered in the survey into two major (ali-