

Mukkuvar vannimai: Tamil caste and matriclan ideology in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka

Dennis B. McGilvray

1. INTRODUCTION

Hence it is true that the ideology in which we see the conscious centre of caste can be lacking here or there *within the Indian world*, and observation of these cases is of the greatest interest, to show us to what extent and in what conditions institutions of this kind can survive the weakening or disappearance of their ideological aspect.

(Louis Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus*, 1970: 46)

The question of caste ideology, that is, how caste systems are conceived and understood by the people who live their lives within them, is the focus of this essay. It is a tribute to Louis Dumont, and to his determined advocacy of a Hindu ideology of purity and pollution as the superordinate or 'encompassing' criterion of Indian caste society, that his work serves today as the standard reference point against which his colleagues in South Asian anthropology feel obliged to measure their own theoretical positions. However, at least one theoretical school now advocates a more radical interpretive framework based upon distinctive South Asian 'coded bodily substance' concepts said to be more ideological and culturally authentic than any proposed by Dumont (Marriott and Inden 1974; 1977; Marriott 1976a). While the work of Dumont, on the one hand, and the formulations of Marriott and Inden, on the other, represent the most clearly contrasting interpretations of caste as seen 'from the inside', mention will be made of a number of other writers who employ elements of both approaches. What is generally lacking, however, is sufficient attention to what Dumont himself, in the rare passage quoted above, admits to be an urgent research priority: the documentation and analysis of local caste systems in which the salient ideologies of rank are, from a South Asian comparative standpoint, atypical, disjunctive, or attenuated.

This essay describes a search for indigenous theories of caste and matriclan rank in the Tamil-speaking settlements of the Batticaloa region on the east coast of Sri Lanka. Contrary to expectation, the findings of this research throw doubt upon *both* the major theories. The ideology of caste

and matriclan rank here shows far less evidence of the Dumontian 'purity' symbolism, or of the post-Dumontian 'coded bodily substance' concepts, than one would expect, given the alleged ubiquity of these indigenous ideas throughout the Hindu world. Instead, one finds that a strong ideology of chiefly conquest, a system of matrilineal clan rights, and a traditional array of 'marks of honour' — all associated with ideals of the *Mukkuvar vannimai*, the regional chiefship of the Mukkuvar caste — pervade local thinking about social status and marriage alliance. Ideas of ritual purity, on the other hand, emerge mainly within domestic life-crisis contexts and are not articulated as a rationale for the collective status of caste groups. Theories of bodily substance are highly developed, but in the view of local people they clearly belong to the cultural domain of medicine and health, not to an 'ethnological' metaphysic of caste identity.

These findings are of some ethnographic interest in themselves, but they also serve to underwrite the strong critique of 'purity' and 'bio-moral substance' theories of caste with which this essay concludes. Rather than pursue single-mindedly a unique vision of the 'essence' of caste in all its manifestations, we should instead view South Asian symbols and theories of society in the light of the specific historical factors which gave rise to regional caste systems in the first place and which subsequently conditioned the tone and content of indigenous thinking about local caste hierarchies. In the Batticaloa area, as no doubt in other South Asian subregions, the 'symbolic language' of the caste system was shaped by the historical circumstances surrounding the establishment of the dominant caste, its ideological resources, and its specialist groups. Here, in fact, a heritage of warrior conquest by a formerly low-ranking Malabar fishing caste, combined with a distinctive non-Brahman Viraiva (Lingayat) priestly tradition, has produced a regional caste system with a markedly 'political' (or Hocartian) ideology of caste rank and caste honour. If we would give more recognition to historical discontinuities in the propagation, cultural transmission, and social reception of allegedly pan-Indic social and cosmological ideas, as well as to the precise ethnographic contexts in which these ideas are invoked, the usefulness of such concepts in comprehending specific caste systems would be considerably enhanced.

2. AN OVERVIEW OF CURRENT THEORY

2.1. Dumont and the 'substance and code' approach

A recent trend in the study of South Asian caste, kinship, and marriage

systems has been a greater attempt to utilize traditional Indic theories of society and indigenous beliefs about the unitary bio-moral quality of action and bodily substance in the analysis of fieldwork data. Dumont's insistence upon the ideological supremacy of status (purity) over power in Hindu caste systems (Dumont 1970: Chs. 2–3) must be taken as the most important stimulus to this renewed interest in what has been termed the 'ethnology of Hindu caste systems' (Marriott & Inden 1977). Dumont's position is by now well known: it can be summarized as the assertion that Hindu caste society is a reality *sui generis* built upon the ancient ideological foundation of a radical split between contingent secular power (embodied in the ideal of the Kshatriya *varna*) and absolute ritual purity or status (embodied in the ideal of the Brahman *varna*). Dumont insists upon a structuralist or holistic view of caste as an ideologically-governed system in which the ritual superiority of the Brahman subordinates or 'encompasses' secular power at the most general or abstract level of Hindu society, although particular social contingencies may temporarily reverse this relationship in certain regional and historical settings ('interstitial levels', 1970: 197). This hierarchical relationship between the priest and the king is the essential criterion of caste in the Dumontian sense of the term. On these grounds he has argued that society in Sri Lanka is built upon 'quasi-caste rather than caste proper', since Brahmins have never been numerous in Sri Lanka and the Buddhist concept of kingship rejects the Brahman–Kshatriya duality (Dumont 1970: 215–16; S.J. Tambiah 1976).

A number of 'post-Dumontian' formulations and reformulations have now emerged, seeking to trace intrinsically Indian patterns of thought more deeply and rigorously than Dumont himself had done. An additional inspiration for this trend has been the work of David Schneider, whose book on American kinship (1968) succinctly suggests that a 'cultural account' of American kinship, that is, an account of the defining features of kinship relationships from an indigenous actor's point of view, would stress the dual concepts of shared natural bodily substance, e.g. 'blood' ('relationship in nature'), and normative code for conduct ('relationship in law'). Kinship in this perspective is a fundamentally cultural construct which may include symbols of 'hard' biogenetic reality as well as moral injunctions or 'codes for conduct' specifying kinship relationships. Marriott and Inden (1974; 1977), following Barnett (1970), detect a striking contrast between this dualism which Schneider notes in American kinship ideology and what they interpret to be a universal monism in Hindu taxonomic thought, a philosophic tradition which does not dis-

tinguish two separate realms of 'natural' versus 'moral' phenomena. Instead, all substances, all actions, and all intangible influences are assumed to embody and convey essential qualities; they are all 'code-substances' or 'substance-codes', continuously interacting upon one another within a single transformative plasm or matrix of atom-like quality-particles which, in various combinations, are felt to constitute the ranked natural genera of inanimate, animate, and divine beings, including *varnas*, castes, clans, and other ranked human genera (Marriott 1976a; Inden 1976: 11–48).

Particular attention is thus directed toward indigenous views of the creation, composition, and behaviour of the human body, seen in this perspective as a locus of 'bio-moral substances' (e.g. blood) which embody both physiological properties pertaining to bodily states as well as moral properties pertaining to social rights and duties. A Hindu caste, from this point of view, is a group sharing a distinctive type of bio-moral substance which caste members preserve, even occasionally improve, through strict observance of caste rules governing key social transactions, such as marriage, food exchange, and occupational performance. Perhaps the most important aspect of this 'ethnological' interpretation for fieldwork in South Asia is the manner in which it bridges the gap between claims of intrinsic or attributional caste superiority on the one hand (Stevenson 1954), and the equally visible role which competitive inter-caste transactions play in generating and changing local caste rankings on the other (Marriott 1959; 1968a). By virtue of this highly developed Hindu metaphysical system, all types of inter-caste transactions and relationships, including withdrawal from interaction itself, can be seen to affect the coded-substance (and the rank) of the castes involved. This interpretation argues that 'purity' and 'power', the categories so assiduously separated by Dumont,¹ are in reality aspects of the same thing: 'a unitary Indian concept of superior value — power understood as vital energy, substance-code of subtle, homogeneous quality, and high, consistent transactional status or rank' (Marriott 1976a: 137).

Some of these concepts have recently been applied to ethnographic material from Bengal and Tamilnadu. Inden and Nicholas (1977) have sought to elucidate Bengali concepts of 'blood' and 'love' as linked elements which constitute the core symbols in the Bengali kinship system, and thus they consider their analysis to be a 'cultural account' of Bengali kinship in David Schneider's sense of the term. Inden (1976) has also produced a historical study of marriage transactions between the highest Bengali Brahman and Kayastha clans and clan grades ca. 1500–1850 A.D.

Dennis B. McGilvray

which relies heavily upon caste genealogical records (*kulaji*) as well as upon textual commentaries and published formulations of 'marriage theory' from the period. These documents are treated as authentic indigenous codifications of the ethnosociological perspective outlined by Marriott and Inden (1974; 1977).

Fruzzetti and Östör have also produced their own 'cultural account' of Bengali kinship, inspired by Schneider and Dumont, which they consider to be 'totally different in theory and method' from the approach of Marriott and Inden (Fruzzetti & Östör 1976: 100). One aspect of this difference is their rather greater concern with the categories of thought revealed in the actual statements Bengali villagers make about blood-linked kinsmen and about blood-transforming marriages, as opposed to Marriott and Inden's more textual or esoteric theory of monistic coded substance. A second aspect is their desire to retain the Dumontian concept of purity versus power, which they feel avoids the cultural solipsism of the Marriott and Inden approach (Barnett, Fruzzetti & Östör 1976: 631–6). However, additional Bengali evidence of the existence of a widespread transformational 'philosophy of rank' based upon combinations of three elemental 'qualities' (*gun*) has been provided by Davis, and this has been taken in support of Marriott and Inden's position (Davis 1976: 6, Marriott 1976b: 190n.).

Several other recent studies using natural substance as an explanatory tool have utilized data from Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka. Barnett's work on the high-ranking Koṅṭaikkattī Vēlālar (KV) caste in the Chingleput District of Tamilnadu (Barnett 1970; 1973a; 1973b; 1975; 1976), like that of Fruzzetti and Östör in Bengal, places great emphasis upon a local ideology of caste and kin-group 'purity' which is believed to reside in the blood. In the KV example, ranked endogamous kindreds (*vakaiyara*) within the caste preserve distinctions of blood purity, but this purity is susceptible to refinement or degradation as a result of conformity or non-conformity with the transactional rules of the caste or kindred with respect to such things as marriage choice, diet, and exchange of food. A further set of KV ideas deals with exogamous patrilineal *kōttiram* memberships and a bilateral theory of conception in which the father contributes the 'body' (*utampu*) and the mother the 'spirit' (*uyir*) of the foetus. Accounts of Tamil caste and kinship in the northern Jaffna peninsula of Sri Lanka (Banks 1957; 1960; David 1972; 1973b; Pfaffenberger 1977) differ in many respects from the Tamilnadu KV material, but the idea of blood purity and a version of the *utampu/uyir* distinction are said to be present there as well (David 1973a: 523; 1974: 53; 1977: 182).² Batticaloa is

located southeast of Jaffna, separated from it by 175 miles of sparsely populated Dry-Zone jungle. With regard to these and many other ideas, I hope to show how Batticaloa is quite distinct from Jaffna.

2.2. Yalman's Kandyan studies

Although anthropological interest in the exploration of indigenous theories of purity and bodily substance in South Asia has expanded greatly over the past ten years with the publication of major theoretical formulations by Dumont, Schneider, Marriott and Inden, and others, one of the most important contributions came earlier in the work of Nur Yalman on caste, kinship, and marriage in the Kandyan highlands of Sri Lanka (Yalman 1960; 1962; 1963; 1967; 1969). It was Yalman's work, above all else, which provided the suggestion and stimulus for my own research in eastern Sri Lanka, and so it is necessary to discuss some of his major findings in greater detail.

Yalman noted that Buddhist Sinhalese villagers in the Kandyan area discuss differences between castes, ideally endogamous bilateral kindreds (*pavula*), and aristocratic patrilineal (*wamsa*) all with reference to a common theory of 'good' (*honda*) and 'bad' (*naraka*) blood, and he interpreted the Kandyan tendency to maintain (at least in fiction, if not always in fact) the principle of endogamous boundaries as a functional correlate of the bilateral nature of caste and kindred ('micro-caste') affiliation. Such groups seek to protect their purity by restricting, or claiming to restrict, the source of reproductive fluids (distillations of the blood) to members of the group itself. Hypergamous marriage patterns, such as those of the Nayars and Nambudiri Brahmins of Kerala, are seen by Yalman as 'variants' on the basic bilateral endogamous caste model under the influence of strong unilineal descent principles. Unilineal descent ideas in the form of patrilineal 'aristocratic pedigrees' (*wamsa*) in certain elite Kandyan families are maintained despite the fact that they contradict the generally accepted Kandyan theories of bilateral purity of caste blood, and the principle of hypergamy is recognized between such *wamsa* (Yalman 1967: 138–49, 172–80). In general, argues Yalman, unilineal descent principles provide alternative ways to delineate social groups and, as such, they tend to reduce the need for caste endogamy. If one assumes that group status in South Asia is centred on the idea of ritual purity, and that purity is always protected and preserved through the women of the group (Yalman 1963; 1967: 177–80), hypergamy is the logical alternative to endogamy when unilineal descent rivals bilateral caste as a basic feature of

the social order (Yalman 1967: Chs. 12, 15, 16). Yalman's aim is to show that there is a 'general structure' of caste and kinship in South India and Sri Lanka which has at its core a Dravidian kinship classification with bilateral cross-cousin marriage, bilateral descent and inheritance, and certain South Asian cultural axioms about group hierarchy as a manifestation of ritual purity. Purity is conveyed in the blood and is preserved through special restrictions on the sexuality of women. This general structure is capable of many different empirical transformations in different areas under the influence of different descent principles. One of the empirical variants which Yalman tried to generate from this general structure is what he called 'the matrilineal hypergamous variant', which he identified among the Tamils and Muslims of the Batticaloa region and which is the ethnographic focus of this essay (Yalman 1967: Ch. 15).

3. AN ETHNOGRAPHIC SKETCH OF BATTICALOA

3.1. Castes and communities

Batticaloa, or *Maṭṭakkaḷappu* as it is known to the inhabitants, constitutes a distinctive region of Sri Lanka by all the major criteria: historical, linguistic, cultural, and social structural. For geographical and historical reasons, it must also be seen as a zone of relative isolation (Cohn 1967; 1971: 26–8). The first anthropological interpretation of this part of the island is contained in Yalman's monograph, *Under the Bo Tree* (1967: Chs. 14–15), and many of the ethnographic peculiarities noted by Yalman served equally well as starting points for my own research (McGilvray 1973; 1974; 1976). The data presented here were gathered primarily in two locations during two fieldwork trips to the east coast. These two locations, the town and vicinity of Akkaraipattu (Amparai District) and the village and vicinity of Kokkatticcōlai (Batticaloa District), typify respectively the two characteristic types of settlement patterns found along the east coast as a whole: densely packed semi-urban coastal settlements of Hindu and Muslim wet-rice cultivators and fishermen, on the one hand, and dispersed, mainly Hindu, villages situated inland and separated from the coastal settlements by extensive semi-saline lagoons, on the other (Ryan 1950: 10–12). Both the Hindus, who are officially termed Ceylon Tamils, and the Muslims, who are termed Ceylon Moors,³ speak Tamil (with minor dialectical variation) and live in adjacent ethnically compartmentalized villages (*kirāmam*) and government Headmen's Divisions (*kuricci*) along the coast. Neither the small groups of Tamil Christians

scattered throughout the region⁴ nor the Sinhalese Buddhists who occupy the lands further inland⁵ play any direct role in the situation I wish to describe. The local Eurasian 'Burghers' are discussed elsewhere (McGilvray, 1982b).

The Hindu Tamils in the town of Akkaraipattu provided an opinion-ranking of the main locally recognized Hindu castes which is summarized in Table 1. There are some other local groups which, for various reasons, Tamil informants insisted were incommensurate and impossible to rank alongside the Hindu castes. The Moors, constituting more than 60% of the population of the town, were the most important such exception: they consider themselves, and are considered by the Tamils, to be a separate 'race-cum-ethnic group' (*inam*), not merely adherents of a separate religion.⁶ It is difficult to know precisely where the Moors fitted into the social hierarchy, say, a hundred years ago, but there is no doubt that the high caste Tamils treated them as inferiors. They were once given a recognized place in regional Hindu temple festivals and were accorded the right to have the lowest castes serve them, but communal hostility and separatism between Tamils and Moors is now quite strong. In fact, the Moorish population in this region is largely the product of marriages with, and conversions from, the Hindu castes. They consequently share the kinship patterns, matrilineal clan organization, matrilocal marriage system, and many other customary practices of the Hindu Tamils, with the exception of the fact that they are not themselves divided into what could truly be called a Muslim caste system. There is a tiny, markedly inferior, and strictly endogamous group of Muslim Barber-Circumcisers (*Ostā*), a small semi-endogamous set of persons with the title of *maulānā* claiming patrilineal descent from the Prophet's family, and a small group of Sufi mystics (*Pāvā*, 'Bawa'; *Pakīr*, 'Fakir') whose recruitment is based upon a mixture of patrilineal descent and discipleship. The vast majority of Moors have no connection with these groups and are internally differentiated only by their matrilineal clan and mosque affiliations as well as by the standard socio-economic criteria of wealth, education, and occupational status. Aside from employing some Tamil agricultural labour, the Moorish community is primarily linked to the Tamils through its domestic reliance upon Tamil Washermen and its commercial relationships with Tamil Barbers, Smiths, and, until recently, Paraiyar Drummers.⁷

Four other groups were excluded by the informants who provided the caste ranking in Table 1, and again, their reasoning was based upon the claim that these groups were anomalous and incommensurate because of their race, religion, or recent origin.⁸ However, from the standpoint of this

Dennis B. McGilvray

Table 1. Tamil opinion-ranking of eight castes traditionally associated with the Hindu caste system in Akkaraipattu

High castes: 'Tamils' or 'Good/high/big people'	V	28 18							
	K		35½ 11½						
	M			46 0					
	T				45 1				
Artisan & professional castes	C				46 0				
	VN					46 0			
	N						46 0		
Kuṭimai Service Castes	N							44 2	
	P								43 3

Caste affiliation of respondents (N = 46)

- V Vēlālar Cultivator (15)
- K Vīracaiva Kurukkaḷ Priest (3)
- M Mukkuvar Cultivator (14)
- T Taṭṭār Smith (1)
- C Cāṭṭār Climber (4)
- VN Vaṇṇār Washerman (3)
- N Nāvitar Barber (1)
- P Paṛaiyar Drummer (5)

Note: The procedures follow those developed by Freed (1963), Marriott (1968a), Hiebert (1969; 1973) and others, but no statistical test of significance was applied. The matrix has been tilted upright for ease of viewing. To illustrate how the table is read, note that in the cell farthest to the right, 43 respondents ranked the Vēlālar caste above the Paṛaiyar caste, but three respondents expressed the opposite opinion, i.e., that Paṛaiyars rank above Vēlālars. In the event of an equal ranking of two castes, each caste was awarded a score of ½. Castes and blocs of castes differentiated and ranked by a consensus of at least 2:1 are delineated by a heavy black line.

essay, the most central questions concern neither the Moors nor the secondary Hindu and Christian groups but the traditional Hindu castes in Table 1. These are the castes which are seen to have an acknowledged position in the local social order historically instituted by ancient kings.

The basic features of caste rank in Akkaraipattu reveal a high-caste stratum of 'good (*nalla*)/big (*periya*)/high (*uyarnta*) people' incorporating three partially and equivocally ranked castes. This stratum is very often referred to simply as 'Tamils', in contrast to the clearly ranked inferior castes who are referred to by their caste names. The middle castes are generally producers of specialized goods and commodities, such as metalwork (here, Blacksmiths and Goldsmiths are one caste) or products of the coconut and palmyra palm (Climbers were formerly producers of fermented toddy and jaggary sugar). At the bottom are the three domestic service castes, the Washerman, Barber, and Drummer, who are termed collectively the *kuṭimai*, or hereditary household servants. There is no distinct set of agricultural serf (*aṭimai*) castes, such as the Pallar of Jaffna and Tanjore (Banks 1960; Béteille 1965), and, although the behavioural reality is probably quite similar, there is no verbal stress on the metaphor of the low castes being 'bound' (*kaṭṭuppāṭu*) as David reports from Jaffna (1973b and *passim*).⁹ However, the ritual services of some or all of the *kuṭimai* castes at both temple festivals and domestic life-crisis ceremonies is a highly coveted mark of honour (*varicai*) which the highest castes have traditionally guarded with jealousy (McGilvray, in press).

3.2. Matrilineal organization

Marital residence for all Hindu and Muslim groups in the Batticaloa region follows a sort of shifting matri-uxorilocal pattern. The wedding takes place in the bride's natal house, and the married couple continue to reside for a period (typically between 6 months and 2 years) with the bride's parents and unmarried siblings. After this, the married daughter takes full possession of the natal house in fulfilment of her dowry, while her parents and some or all of her unmarried siblings move to another house, which is usually new and smaller and is preferably situated in the same or an adjacent compound (*vaḷavu*). Virtually all wealth and immovable property is transferred, or at least pledged, as dowry, which thereby acts as a sort of pre-mortem matrilineal inheritance (Goody 1973) tending to provide greater shares for the elder daughters. Brothers must work to help dower their sisters before they are allowed to marry and leave the household. The kinship pattern is identical for both Tamils and Moors, with some lexical

substitutions. Both sets of terminology conform to the symmetrical Dravidian 'general structure' described by Yalman (1967: 216–21 and *passim*). Equal preference for matrilineal and patrilineal cross-cousin marriage is the stated norm, but statistically, MBD marriage seems to be more common than FZD marriage.¹⁰

From the point of view of social organization, no doubt the most distinctive feature of the entire east coast region, extending from Kottiyar Bay (Trincomalee) in the north to Arugam Bay (Pottuvil) in the south, is the system of dispersed named matrilineal groups which are known individually as *kuṭi*. With the exception of Christian groups in some places, notably the Portuguese Burghers and other Catholic inhabitants of the town of Batticaloa itself, some pattern of matrilineal affiliations is recognized within every Hindu caste and in every Moorish community in the region. The first feature of the *kuṭi* which local people cite is usually the rule of matriliney: *tāy vaḷi* or *peṇ vaḷi*, literally 'mother way' or 'woman way'. The *kuṭi* is also readily seen as exogamous by informants, and statistical evidence shows this to be remarkably true, except among some *kuṭimai* castes, particularly the Nāvitar Barbers.¹¹ The rule of *kuṭi* exogamy is coextensive with the logic of the Dravidian kinship structure which entails that no real or classificatory cross-cousin will ever belong to Ego's matrilineal. Members of a *kuṭi* are not likely to have any awareness of, or interest in, segmentary genealogical links between themselves and shared apical ancestors, and only occasionally is there evidence of explicit and rather shallow sub-lineages (known variously as *vairruvār*, *vakuttuvār*, *kūṭṭam*, *kattarai*). Some matrilineal groups are limited to specific localities while others, larger and usually more prestigious, are distributed here and there over a 60-mile length of the coast.

Among the Tamils, each caste is subdivided among a set of distinctively named constituent matrilineal groups, so that, apart from a few recurring *kuṭi* names and the anthropologically-elicited residue of unheard-of clans, it is usually possible to identify a person's caste indirectly by first ascertaining the name of his *kuṭi*. There is a widespread ideal model of seven *kuṭis* within every Tamil caste and of eighteen *kuṭis* amongst the Moors, but in fact their local number varies a great deal. In each locality, a certain number of Moorish *kuṭis* carry the same names as high caste Tamil *kuṭis*, but the majority are distinctively Moorish. The *kuṭi* names themselves are quite diverse and some of them are nearly inscrutable: among the high castes they range from the conspicuously kingly and martial *kuṭi* names found among the Mukkuvars (e.g. Kāliṅkā, an Orissan dynasty; Paṭaiyāṅṅa, leader of armies) to the more heterogeneous but more priestly *kuṭi* names

of the Vēḷāḷars (e.g. Kaṅṅan, Lord, one who saw; Attiyā or Attiyāyan, reader of scripture) and the clear sectarian markings of the Vīrasaiva Kurukkal *kuṭis* also sometimes referred to as *kōṭṭiram*-s (e.g. Caṅkamar, cognate with the Lingāyat Jangama priest of Mysore; Tēcāntira kurukkal, foreign kurukkal). In the middle of the caste hierarchy (Smiths, Fishermen, Climbers) *kuṭi* names occasionally borrow elements from those of higher castes, but they commonly show a wide mixture of vague honorifics (e.g. Cūriyatappan, solar chief; Vīramaṅkkan, heroic gem) and much more folksy names (e.g. Kaṅṅattakkanni, dark virgin; Cummāṭukkattū, wearing a head-pad for carrying loads). Among the service castes, *kuṭi* names are generally regional place-names which are said to designate the geographical origins of local sub-groups (e.g. Tāḷaṅkuṭā Vaṅṅān, Paṭṭimēṭu Paṭaiyan). Moorish *kuṭi* names may range from the kingly (e.g. Rācāmpillai, royal descent), to the geographical (e.g. Vaṭakkanā, northerner), to the occupational (e.g. Ōṭāvi, carpenter, not related to actual occupation), to the kintyped (e.g. māmanāppillai, 'MB's or FZH's child', i.e., cross-cousin) to the personal (e.g. Ammanācci, granny).

A detailed account of *kuṭi* names cannot be undertaken here (see McGilvray 1974), but despite their richness and diversity, it is evident that relatively few have any clear reference to ancestral females. There are no matrilineal personal names,¹² no revered clan origin-places, no jointly held houses or lands,¹³ no tutelary clan deities, and no ancestral cults. In these and other respects the contrasts with Nayar society in central Kerala are quite marked, while there are greater resemblances to northern Kerala Nayars, Tiyyars, and Mappillas (Gough 1961; Aiyappan 1944).

Today, *kuṭi* affiliation continues to have relevance in marriage choice and in the management of Hindu temples and Muslim mosques. Each *kuṭi* selects one or more representative elders, an office termed *Vannakkār* by the Tamils and *Maraikkār* by the Moors, to sit on the management committee of the caste temple or neighbourhood mosque. Frequently one or more *kuṭis* may assert traditional pre-eminence in temple or mosque affairs, a status typically dramatized and validated by some conspicuous prerogative of ritual or ceremonial which is denied to other *kuṭis*, such as the right to receive the first offerings from the deity or the right to erect a feasting enclosure (*kantūri pantal*) in front, rather than to the side, of the mosque. Yalman correctly saw evidence of this tendency in his brief visit to the east coast (Yalman 1967: 326), but my own research has revealed that considerable attention has also been traditionally paid to elaborately graded marks of honour (*varicat*) in the conduct of Tamil domestic rituals. The higher castes and their *kuṭis* were allotted specific numbers of sym-

bolic household decorations, such as decorated pots arrayed on the roof and cloths hung beside the doorway, as well as prescribed services from the *kuṭimai* service castes.

3.3. Ambiguities of caste and matriclan

Some striking contrasts with our standard picture of South Indian, particularly Tamil, caste systems are evident in this region. What Yalman first noted (1967: 329) in the statements of his informants from the Tamil village of Tambiluvil six miles south of Akkaraipattu, and what I quickly encountered in the initial stages of my own fieldwork, was the relative looseness and flexibility of statements about the conceptual boundary between a caste (*cāti*) and a matriclan (*kuṭi*). Both terms are, of course, highly polysemic and contextual: *cāti* (*jāti*) in the most general sense means 'genera, kind, type', and *kuṭi* can be traced back to the root-meanings of 'hut, house, household, family dependents' (Winslow 1862: 314). As Yalman reports, people may refer one moment to 'Mukkuvar *kuṭi*' or 'Vēḷāḷar *kuṭi*' and refer a moment later to specific matriclans within these categories. Yalman's tentative finding was that, among the higher groups, the expected clear endogamous boundaries between ranked bilaterally-constituted castes were absent on the east coast. Instead, the emphasis seemed to be on a ranked set of *kuṭis*, some sharing caste names, some having distinct names of their own, which blurred the lines between presumptive caste categories such as 'Vēḷāḷar', 'Kurukkaḷ', and 'Mukkuvar'. Yalman also reported that local informants described the marriage arrangements between the exogamous *kuṭis* as being explicitly hypergamous, with women of certain lower clans having enduring hypergamous marriage links with men of certain higher clans.

Given these assumptions, and noting his experience in the Kandyan highlands where villagers spoke clearly of endogamous and hypergamous marriage strategies which would ensure the protection and possible enhancement of 'good blood', Yalman suggested that social organization on the east coast could be interpreted as a further instance of how a unilineal descent principle coupled with hypergamy could render the principle of bilateral caste endogamy 'unnecessary'. The matrilineal *kuṭi* could be seen to carry all, or at least the largest share of, ritual status for its members, whose hierarchical resource was further protected by hypergamy, the 'second line of defense' (Yalman 1967: 179) even in bilateral caste situations. The model was applicable to the Malabar Coast as well. It even seemed to account for the fuzziness of local statements about social

groups, '... since the status-bearing unit can be a single lineage with hypergamous connections and it may be difficult in the continuous descending steps of status to say exactly where one "caste" category ends and the next begins' (1967: 366).

Yalman's interpretation was quite ingenious, and it naturally served as a starting framework for my own research in the region. At the same time, too, some of the writers discussed earlier were beginning to argue their case for 'coded natural substance' symbolism as the indigenous underlying rationale for all South Asian caste systems. There seemed good reason to think that Yalman's 'hypergamous-unilineal-purity' thesis would form the basis of a more detailed ethnographic analysis which would also detect a theory of coded natural substance, probably 'blood', as the carrier of intrinsic ritual status or purity. Ultimately, however, *neither* of these frameworks provided a satisfactory account of the data which emerged from fieldwork.

The first theory to be discarded was Yalman's, with its crucial postulate of hypergamy. It is inscrutable why his informants spoke of hypergamy, as no such pattern of hypergamous marriage, ideal or actual, was found to exist between castes or *kuṭis*. This finding is corroborated by Hiatt (1973: 235) and was cross-checked statistically against marriage samples (McGilvray 1974: 272) to eliminate the possibility of bias in informants' statements. Instead of hypergamy, one finds reciprocal marriage exchange (or 'alliance') between pairs of high-ranking matriclans in particular localities. The relationship between matriclans strongly linked by marriage is sometimes described as *maccān maccinan* (cross-cousins, i.e., brothers-in-law), *koṭṭān koṭuttān* (receiving and giving), or *cōṭi cōṭi* (paired up), just as the ensuing terminological restrictions on marriage between certain clans are expressed as *annan tampi* (elder and younger brother) or *akkā tankaicci* (elder and younger sister) relationships.¹⁴

Yet, despite the empirical inadequacy of Yalman's account of hypergamy, there was still reason to suppose that the observed symmetrical marriage exchange between prestigious local matriclans might reflect some underlying ideology of the conservation of purity or natural substance, as suggested by the work of Yalman, Dumont, and the 'substance-code' theorists, which would provide a key to some of the unusual aspects of culture and social structure in the Batticaloa region. The evidence from fieldwork in Akkaraipattu, reinforced by briefer visits to other parts of the region, pointed in particular to five seemingly anomalous, but interrelated, features. First, it was necessary to account for the fact that Tamils of the high caste stratum in Akkaraipattu unabashedly contracted marriages,

indeed even major kuṭi marriage exchange alliances, across putative caste boundaries, thus violating the expected rule of caste endogamy. The prevalence of this practice was found to vary significantly in different areas of the Batticaloa region, but when it occurred, it did not seem to diminish the sense of caste identity of the spouses or their offspring in the eyes of the local people. Second, informants consistently asserted that caste affiliation, like matriclan membership, descended strictly in the female line (*tāy vaḷi*, *peṇ vaḷi*), rather than bilaterally as one commonly finds in other South Asian caste systems. Third, there were vague and contradictory statements from local informants as to the genealogical 'path' or spread of ritual pollution following a death, in striking contrast to the role of the unilineal kin group as a community of mourners in many parts of South Asia. Fourth, it appeared that Hindu purity and pollution ideas were generally less pervasive and unitary, more varied and context-linked, than a reading of the South Asian ethnographic literature might lead one to expect. This fact helped to frame the fifth and final problem: namely, that despite considerable historical and ethnographic evidence of closely regulated symbols and privileges of caste and kuṭi hierarchy in domestic life, in marriage alliance, and in temple ritual, there seemed relatively few clearly defined caste and kuṭi 'interests' which could account for this concern.

4. BELIEFS ABOUT PURITY AND BODILY SUBSTANCE

4.1. Blood, sex and reproduction

In the hope of finding some indigenous conceptual basis for these atypical patterns, I turned, particularly in my second fieldwork trip, to the investigation of beliefs about bodily substances, ideologies of caste and matriclan descent, and theories of purity and pollution. Some of the information which follows was gleaned from casual remarks, but much of it comes from discussions with members of a non-random sample of 35 informants selected for their previously proven reliability and their likely familiarity with, and interest in, local ethnophysiological and medical theories.¹⁵ Judging from Yalman's data on the Kandyan Sinhalese, and from the recent 'cultural accounts' of caste and kinship in Bengal, Tamilnadu, and Jaffna mentioned previously, it seemed reasonable to expect that a theory and a symbolism of blood, more than that of any other natural substance, would dominate local discussions of descent and group status. However, when I attempted to raise this topic in conversations I found people were

both apathetic and embarrassed. The Tamil words for blood (*irattam*, *utaram*) in the Batticaloa region would appear to invite stronger initial cognitive associations with menstrual pollution and the butcher's shop than with descent and purity. It later became evident that blood played an important role in thinking about bodily health and vitality but that 'purity of blood' was *not* a basic symbol of social hierarchy in this region. Indeed, comments about blood and ethnophysiology were uniform in some ways, but strikingly varied in other respects (see also McGilvray 1982a).

Elements of the Ayurvedic medical tradition (e.g. Caraka 1949) continue to exert a strong effect upon common belief and curing practices here but, as in other areas of the island, some of these ideas have been subjected to local reinterpretation (Obeyesekere 1976). Blood is recognized to be the primary transformation of food within the body, the source of all bodily substance and strength. The basic understanding of this process can be outlined as follows: food, which in Sri Lanka is epitomized by boiled rice, is taken into the alimentary tract and converted to *annaracam* or chyle, which in turn is converted partially into blood and partially into waste (*malam*). It is the strength and quantity of the blood which accounts for the strength (*pelan*, *sakti*) and growth (*vaḷarcci*) of the body. The English word 'force' (*pōs*) has crept into the local Tamil vocabulary, and one often finds it used to characterize the state of the blood. In this context, the term *pōs* connotes the energy, the amount, and the pressure of the blood present in the body. The process of physiological maturation from infancy to adulthood is a concomitant of the increasing 'force' of the blood in the body, and the process of ageing and senescence is believed to be the direct consequence of the declining energy/quantity/pressure of the blood.¹⁶

Both the nature of one's diet and of one's physical environment have recognized effects upon the internal state of the body, and both are related, with varying degrees of sophistication by different informants, to the influence of the three Ayurvedic humours (*muppiṇi*): namely, *vātam* or *vāyvu* (wind, the source of motion), *pittam* (bile, the source of heat), and *cilērpanam* (phlegm, the connective or aqueous humour). One's daily regimen, the environment of one's work, and the components of one's diet all convey different proportions of the three humours, which are imperfectly associated in most ordinary thinking with heating (*cūtu*), cooling (*kuḷir*), and dermatologically eruptive (*kiranti*) qualities. As one might expect, the ideal of bodily health is based upon an elusive equilibrium of such qualities: not too much heat, not too much coolness, not too much eruptive quality.

Theories of conception in this region contend that a woman is fertilized when male semen (*cukkilam*, *intiriyam*, *vintu*, *kāmappāl*, etc.) mixes in the womb with female semen (*curōnitam*, *nātam*, but frequently unnamed). In accord with a widespread South Asian belief, male semen is described as a refined form, or distillation (*vatippu*), of the blood, following some traditional ratio, e.g. blood : semen = 40 : 1 or 60 : 1. There seems to be no specific organ of seminal production, except, perhaps, the brain itself, which is also the place where male semen is stored and conserved. Thick, white, unexpended semen, like the blood from which it is made, has 'force' (*pōs*) which makes for healthy children, and the loss of semen drains the body of blood, i.e., strength and substance. If semen can be retained, particularly during adolescence and young manhood, its vital qualities can be redirected internally toward greater physical, and ultimately spiritual, development. Informants were less certain about the nature of female semen; it was generally connected with blood and sometimes assumed to be quite similar to male semen. Some informants considered it to come from the chest or the womb; some felt it was less important in conception than male semen; and a few were unfamiliar with the concept altogether.

Conception occurs with the combination of the sexual fluids during that part of her monthly cycle when the woman's uterine 'flower' is open to admit them. In the man, the heat of sexual desire 'melts' the semi-solid reservoir of semen at the top of the head, and it then flows, in some accounts via an intermediate storage sac in the navel, to the penis. The testicles, although recognized as related to sexuality in some way (e.g. in the gelding of bullocks by crushing the testes), were never connected by informants with the sexual act.¹⁷ There was no corresponding account of the internal flow of female semen or of its physical properties. During orgasm, both the man and the woman ejaculate their sexual fluids into the womb, where they mix to produce the beginnings of an embryo in the form of a bubble (*kumīlī*), a lump (*kattī*), or a sprout (*mulai*). A few informants, mostly curing specialists, added that the three Ayurvedic humours, and particularly the *pirāna vāyvu* (wind of life), were also present at conception. If a specific source of *uyir* (life, spirit) was known, it was always said to be the *pirāna vāyvu*, an element which pervades the womb from the surrounding universe, not from either parent. Only four informants out of the sample of 35 denied any knowledge of a female substance involved in conception, and only one informant mentioned the idea of the male 'seed' implanted in the female 'field' as recorded in

Bengal and as described in the Laws of Manu (Manu IX, 31–56; Fruzzetti & Östör 1976; Dube 1978).

Some informants also cited an interesting assortment of additional factors which were conducive to successful impregnation, ranging from unity of mind, to simultaneous orgasm, to forceful seminal ejaculation. However, the important point is that conception is seen as fundamentally bilateral, involving substances from both parents. Few characteristics of the child are felt to be entirely determined by the conception itself, except for the sex of the child. Informants mentioned four different theories of how the sex of the child is determined at conception: whether intercourse takes place on even (male) versus odd (female) days following the end of menstrual pollution, whether the parents are breathing through the right (male) versus left (female) nostril at the moment of conception, whether the first sexual fluid to enter the womb is male or female, and whether relatively greater amounts of male or female semen is deposited in the womb. All subsequent gestation and development of the embryo draws solely upon the resources and bodily substance (blood) of the mother. Subsequent intercourse during the first part of the pregnancy is allowed, but it has no effect of nourishing or contributing to the embryo.¹⁸ The momentary quality of the paternal connection, as contrasted with the mother's intimate burden of carrying and nourishing the child through pregnancy, is recognized in the well-known proverb: *Aiyāvukku aintu nimisham, ammvukkup pattu mātam*, 'Five minutes for the father, ten months for the mother.'

Within the womb, the child receives a continuous, direct blood transfusion from the mother via the opening (*tuvāram*) all foetuses are believed to have at the top of the head.¹⁹ By the time the pregnancy is approaching term, the child is felt to be receiving liquified food (*annaracam*) via the umbilical cord, which is thought to develop late. Many informants identified the blood which assists and nourishes the foetus as the mother's menstrual blood, seen as clean and beneficial blood accumulating in her womb during the pregnancy, rather than flowing out as a notoriously polluting substance during normal menstruation. After childbirth, the mother nurses the infant with breast milk, another transformation of her own blood, and later she prepares and feeds the child solid food with her own hands.²⁰

As the child grows toward adulthood, nutrition from food supports the constant production of blood, from which all other bodily substances are produced. It is only when the body is nearing its adult size and form that

the production of blood begins to surpass the body's need for natural building material, and it is at this point that sexual maturation occurs. The onset of a girl's first menstruation is both a result and a proof of the fact that her body now has excess or waste blood (*kaḷivirattam*) to dispose of. A boy's seminal emissions are likewise a sign of nearing maturity and vitality of the blood, but he is strongly enjoined to conserve this blood (semen) and transmute it into greater bodily, intellectual, and spiritual power. This women cannot do, and for good (indigenous) reasons. While few informants were able to offer a complete explanation of the menstrual cycle, there was considerable agreement that, without it, women would have a dangerously high level of blood in their bodies, much higher than that of men. The monthly flow of menstrual blood from women is said to be a mechanism, instituted by Lord Civa, which insures that women's natural surplus of blood (and hence physical strength and vitality, including sexual desire) is regularly drained away, allowing males to retain control and mastery over women. 'If it were not for her monthly period,' said one local Hindu Ayurvedic practitioner, 'five men could not hold one woman down.'

In later life, the decline in the quantity, vitality, and 'force' of the blood begins to have deleterious effects upon health and sexual vigour. The menopause occurs when the female blood supply is no longer in excess, and the early death of some men is attributed to their reckless expenditure of semen in middle and old age. Age is also felt to be accompanied by changes in bodily heat, a factor which limits the acceptable age of marriage partners. Local thinking on this matter is not altogether uniform, but a five- to ten-year superiority in age is considered essential for the husband. A man between the ages of 20 and 30 is considered to be at the peak of his natural powers, and this enables him to exercise proper control over his bride, who will be between the ages of 15 and 20. Greater age in marriage also works to the advantage of the man, it is felt, because he benefits from the sexual relations he has with a strong-blooded young woman.²¹ Sexual relations with a woman who is older than her partner will prove extremely deleterious, even fatal, to the man. One explanation offered for this is that individuals, as they lose blood in ageing, simultaneously gain in bodily heat, 'just as a pressure-lamp becomes hotter and hotter as the fuel is used up'. A severe imbalance in bodily heat between sex partners is harmful to both, but a younger man is felt to be particularly vulnerable, it seems.

In an attempt to crystallize some of the ideas which had been put forth, I asked, 'Whose blood, the father's or the mother's, flows in the veins of

the child?' Opinion was sharply and fairly evenly divided three ways, and in retrospect it seems that the question in this form had scarcely occurred to many informants. Some, who had earlier stressed the potency of male semen in conception, said that semen was a concentrated form of the father's blood, hence the child shared the father's blood (see Banks 1957: 115, and David 1973a: 523, for the same view in Jaffna). But others vehemently opposed this view, saying that the tiny amount of father's semen was insignificant in comparison with the mother's massive transference of blood during pregnancy and lactation. The child's blood was definitely that of the mother, according to this second view. The third viewpoint was that both parents had contributed elements of bodily substance, making the blood of the child a bilateral composite of the mother's and the father's blood. Even in the latter case, no theory of paired paternal *utampu* (body) and maternal *uyir* (life, spirit) was articulated, although one person said that the father's semen governed the *uruvam* (form, shape) of the child.

My question about the child's blood was seen by some as rather obsessive and academic, for it left out of consideration the whole dimension of maternal emotional attachments (*anpu*, love; *pācam*, ties; *parru*, attachment). The maternal connection is actually paramount in all discussion of childhood attachments, it recurs in discussion of dowry and matrilocal residence, and it again emerges in discussion of the spread of death pollution. Although I never recorded the statement that the matrilocal residence rule made the in-marrying fathers and sons-in-law 'strangers' to the household (cf. Yalman 1967: 286-7),²² the obverse point of view, that the women in their natal/dowry houses in their natal villages form the stable conceptual core of the household, was frequently voiced by informants. The expression *tāy pācam* (maternal bonds) is probably something of a cliché everywhere in the Tamil-speaking world, but in the Batticaloa region, where the matrilocal household provides a kind of socio-spatial continuity, where dowry is the main channel of property transmission, and where the matrilineal clan plays a role in social identity, it seems to reflect a more substantive feature of the social structure. Reasoning about conception and sharing of parental blood can, and does, diverge along matrilineal, patrilineal, and bilateral lines, depending upon which elements of the ethno-reproductive theory are stressed. Yet, although local theories of bodily substance are not uniform, and the behavioural reality can vary a great deal, the child's connections and emotional bonds are typically said to be much stronger with the mother than with the father.

In fact, the notion that members of a single kinship category, matriclan,

or caste might actually think of themselves as 'sharers' or 'united' of unique blood or natural substance, as David (1973a) has argued for Jaffna, was untenable in the face of what informants said.²³ No one spoke of any qualities of the blood aside from the medical or diagnostic ones. Blood can be reduced, thinned, weakened, or have an imbalance of Ayurvedic humours, in which case the individual's health and vitality must suffer;²⁴ or blood can be copious, thick, strong, and in Ayurvedic equilibrium, in which case one's health must prosper. No one voiced a belief in the 'purity' of blood; in fact, as with the nonexistent institution of hypergamy, there is no readily recognized way to speak about such a concept in the local language. I asked whether the blood of particular matrilineal and castes could be said to have distinctive 'qualities' (*kunam*) but the reply was consistently negative: instead, informants said 'Blood is all the same' (*irattam onru t̃an*).²⁵ The stereotypic behavioural traits attributed to certain castes (e.g. Goldsmiths as dishonest, or Drummers as sorcerers) are often seen as the result of seizing opportunities associated with their caste-occupational milieu (e.g. tampering with weights, or access to human corpses). The public reputation of certain families for temperament or moral character is sometimes expressed in terms of good or bad 'quality' (*kunam*), e.g. in discussing possible marriage partners for one's son or daughter, but the exact locus of this 'quality' is never easy to disentangle. It arises from both environment and heredity in the broadest sense of the term, but it is not discussed or explained in the language of 'blood'. In other words, neither blood, nor any other indigenous category of natural bodily substance seems to operate as the conceptual focus of caste or matrilineal membership in the Batticaloa region.

4.2. States of purity and pollution

It is an assumption shared by Yalman (1963; 1967: 137–8) and Dumont (1970: Ch. 2; Dumont and Pocock 1959) that temporary states of individual pollution arising out of contact with birth, menstruation, death, and other such contaminating junctures with 'organic life' (Dumont 1970: 47) are assimilated to, and equated with, states of caste pollution, thus defining the essential purity/pollution continuum which underlies caste society. It is certainly true that high caste informants in the Batticaloa region will say that the *kuṭimai* castes (Barber, Washerman, Drummer) are immersed in the inescapable contamination associated with cutting hair, bleaching menstrual cloths, and conducting burials. But while there is a standard

term (*tutakku*) which refers to states of individual or group 'ritual impurity', including the polluted condition of the lowest castes, there is no corresponding vocabulary for 'ordinary' and 'enhanced' states of purity, such as described for Havik Brahmans, Coorgs, and Koṅṭaikkattī Vēlāḷars in India.²⁶

The Tamil dictionary lists a number of terms for 'purity', but only one or two words are in common use here. The most general word is *cuttam*, which may connote secular cleanliness, lack of admixture, or ritual fastidiousness, depending upon context. A second word is *tuppuravu*, which often connotes secular cleanliness and is more often heard in its negative form, *tuppuravillai* (uncleanliness). Actually, the vocabulary of purity in Batticaloa seems underdeveloped and under-utilized, while the ethno-semantic domain of uncleanliness and impurity is far more open-ended than most South Asian ethnographic sources might lead one to expect. Here, the most general word is *acuttam*, the opposite of *cuttam*, which must be similarly defined by context. Specific types of physical dirtiness include *aḷukku* and *ūttai* (filth, stain, contamination), *kuppai* (rubbish), and *narakal* (revolting substance, e.g. excrement, entrails). Occasionally one hears the word *tīṭṭu* or the expression *viṭṭukku tūram* ('away from the house'), referring specifically to states of menstrual pollution. The most universal word for 'ritual pollution', however, is *tutakku*, which refers to the varying degrees of metaphysical contamination resulting from sexual relations, menstruation, childbirth, and, especially, death. The removal of *tutakku* must invariably culminate in the bathing of the entire body, *talai mulukiratu* ('head bathing').²⁷ As noted in Jaffna (Ryan 1980: Ch. 4), the vocabulary of ritual pollution also tends to overlap with that of moral and spiritual defects, so that in Batticaloa, *tutakku* is sometimes called *kurram* (fault, blemish) or *tōsham* (malevolent influence).

Although the processes of conception and the nature of blood had not proven to be the key to local thinking about the identity and ranking of castes and kuṭis, it still seemed possible during fieldwork that an underlying theory of purity or bodily substance might inform local attitudes and behaviour in situations of severe ritual pollution, particularly death pollution. It is known from a number of South Asian ethnographic and shastric sources that patrilineally related kinsmen typically constitute a community of pollution when a member dies (e.g. Beck 1972: 4; Banks 1957: 117; the sapinda rule of Manu V, 59), and a corresponding matrilineal observance of death pollution is known to occur in the Nayar matrilineal, the *taravād* (Gough 1959; 1961: 323–4). In the Batticaloa

region, death pollution (*tutakku*) is observed for 31 days by all Hindu castes except the Viracaiva Kurukkals, who claim a shorter period (12 to 15 days) or none at all.

It seemed reasonable to expect a substantial regional consensus as to the spread of pollution at death, since bereavement is so universal a life experience and one so governed by cultural rules. Instead, as with the interpretation of the blood connection, there was a striking divergence of opinion, and many informants were as surprised as the anthropologist to discover that outlooks varied so greatly. A detailed analysis of the surprising variety of views on death pollution would require an essay in itself, but a general classification of responses is summarized in Table 2. Almost half of the informants made explicit reference to the principle of matriliney, *tāy vali* or *peṇ vali*, or the pollution diagrams which they drew showed obvious matrilineal reasoning. Many of the bilateral opinions stressed the idea that the most severe pollution affected the nuclear kin group (spouse, siblings, parents, and children), and especially the residents of the 'death house', *cāviṭu*, but approximately half of the bilateral opinions also gave secondary or partial acknowledgement of the matrilineal idea (e.g. effects upon daughters' but not sons' children, or sisters' but not brothers' children). The patrilineal principle, however, had a strong minority of defenders, a few of whom said that pollution follows the father's blood (semen), but most of whom could offer no theoretical justification commensurate with the force of their convictions. Several of the latter were forced into perplexed silence in public discussions instigated by the anthropologist, although their views remained unshaken. There was also a group of 'other' opinions which were idiosyncratic, including several statements that the principle of pollution must vary depending on the sex of the deceased.²⁸

There was no standard genealogical depth to the pollution, and no one viewed the matriclan, the sublineage, or any other specific grouping as the 'unit' of pollution. The justifications offered for the matrilineal spread of death pollution sometimes mentioned matrilineal ethnoreproductive ideas (e.g., uterine blood), but most often they appealed to an image of the matrilineal household and its linked mothers and daughters as a sort of enduring socio-spatial 'establishment' cemented by ties of matrifiliation and physical propinquity. Unlike the minority patrilineal view, the matrilineal theory of pollution made constant reference to the importance of emotional bonds (*anpu*, *pācam*, etc.) in defining who was susceptible to death pollution. Sometimes the matrilineal stress in these remarks was unduly formulaic, so that it occasionally became awkward to account for

Table 2. Opinions regarding the principle governing the spread of death pollution among kinsmen

Matrilineal	Bilateral	Patrilineal	Other	TOTAL
13	9	7	4	33

children's pollution on the death of the father. The father is unquestionably a source of pollution for the household when he dies. All are agreed that the chief mourner should be the eldest son, but the matrilineal theory of pollution stipulates that only the daughters' children observe *tutakku*. Ideas of sexual/commensal intimacy and emotional attachment are cited as reasons for the pollution of the spouse, who nonetheless remains fully susceptible to pollution from all deaths in his or her natal family. Not unsurprisingly in such a matrilineal society, there is no belief that the wife's bodily substance is metaphysically assimilated to that of her husband at marriage, nor is there any element of the marriage rite which could bear such an interpretation, such as David (1973a) describes for Jaffna (see also Barnett 1970; 1976; Fruzzetti & Östör 1976; Inden and Nicholas 1977). Pollution transmitted via affinal connections with a member of the matrilineal group is always intensified when there is a close reinforcing kinship link, as when a daughter's husband is also her true MBS or FZS. It is frequently said that, failing such kinship reinforcement, such in-laws need to observe only eight days of real pollution. Pollution is tacitly recognized in such varying degrees, although there is a countervailing concern to maintain a public image of greater propriety through seemingly stricter observance.

4.3. General implications

It will be useful to consider the implications of what has been presented so far. Fieldwork has revealed two major drawbacks to reliance upon the 'purity' and 'coded-substance' approaches in the Batticaloa region. The first problem is empirical: none of the key symbolic themes such as 'blood purity', 'hypergamy', or 'sharers of natural substance and code' suggested by various writers is found to be salient in local thinking about the nature of castes and *kuṭis*. Although a negative idea of 'caste impurity' can be directly observed in local attitudes toward the lowest castes, whose duty it is to remove polluting states and substances from the higher castes, the positive attribute of 'caste purity' is only indirectly evident in the actions

and statements of the higher castes. We shall see later that such an idea of 'caste purity', in the sense of ritual excellence or the right to perform certain special services for the deity, is only one component of the wider ideological field in which castes and *kuṭis* compete for rank. Complex indigenous theories about blood and reproduction are important in an ethnomedical framework, but they do not completely rationalize or clarify the nature of matrilineal descent. Instead, like local theories of the spread of ritual pollution, they are open to widely divergent interpretations. In general, local thinking about blood, descent, and pollution constitutes a more complex, more disjunct, more contextual, and more open-ended ethnosemantic field than the parsimonious theories of purity and natural substance would tend to imply.

The second type of drawback is heuristic: to assume the existence of a pervasive and coherent ideology of purity or substance underlying the behavioural reality simply leads to erroneous interpretations. Yalman's account of east coast matriclans as purity-conserving hypergamous units bears witness to the pitfalls of such assumptions. Many of the same assumptions impeded my own understanding of social organization in the Batticaloa region, and it is fair to say that a great deal of my time and effort has been consumed in examining these relatively unproductive hypotheses.

5. MUKKUVAR VANNIMAI

I now propose to formulate a more accurate and fruitful picture of caste and matriclan structure in the Batticaloa region, one which stresses the nature of political dominance within a regional frame of reference and which incorporates a historical component to explain some of the unusual features of culture and social organization which are found there. In this account, ideas of purity and natural substance will be treated, not as uniform, universal conceptions immanent in South Asian culture, but as historically contingent, socially transmitted ideas, the strength and configuration of which depends considerably upon competing interests and ideologies within a regional setting.

5.1. Mukkuvars

Let us consider first what is known of the major high caste groups. The politically dominant Tamil group throughout the Batticaloa region as a whole have been the Mukkuvars, also known by the more literary title,

Murkukar.²⁹ A similarly named caste is found in coastal areas of Puttalam, Mannar, Mullaittivu, and Jaffna (Casie Chitty 1834: 274–80; Raghavan 1971: 152–61),³⁰ as well as along the coasts of central and north Kerala, where they are recognized as hereditary fishermen (Anantha Krishna Iyer 1909: 266–76; Thurston 1909 vol. V: 106–17). They seem never to have considered themselves fishermen in Batticaloa, where they have settled in greater numbers than anywhere else in the island and have assumed the role of chiefs and powerful landlords (*pōṭiyār*). The Sinhalese historical chronicles mention numerous invasions of mercenary armies often including warriors from Kerala, particularly in the 12th and 13th centuries A.D. The earliest historical mention of the Mukkuvars is in the *Darṅbadēni-asna*, which lists them as soldiers for King Parakramabahu II between 1236 and 1270 A.D. (Indrapala 1965: 180). A collection of regional traditions from Batticaloa, the *Maṭṭakkalappu Mānmiyam* (Nadarajah 1962), celebrates the arrival of the Mukkuvars under the banner of the rapacious Māgha (*Mākōn*), who claimed Kalinga ancestry.³¹ Māgha is known to have seized Polonnaruwa and the northern centres of Sinhalese power with an army of 'Tamils and Keralas' in 1215 A.D. and to have held power for about 40 years (Indrapala 1965: 236ff.). After the 13th century, a number of rivalrous and recalcitrant regional chiefdoms claiming the title of *Vanniyār* arose on the margins of Sinhalese power in the North Central and Eastern Provinces, of which Batticaloa, under the Mukkuvars, was one. In the light of the available historical evidence, which is supported by folk traditions of the region, it seems likely that the Mukkuvars were granted lands and regional chiefships in Batticaloa as their reward for soldierly service in the armies of Māgha (Indrapala 1965: Ch. 5).

The oral and textual traditions of Batticaloa make constant reference to an ideal geographical model of seven constituent sub-chieftaincies (*vannipam*) within the region and to an ideal social model of seven constituent *kuṭis* within each caste. The origin of this pervasive model of 'seven' is clearly attributed to the ruling caste in one of its common epithets: *ēḷukkuṭi Mukkuvar*, the 'seven-*kuṭi* Mukkuvars'. Today the system of Mukkuvar sub-chieftaincies within the Batticaloa region has almost disappeared under the impact of 300 years of European colonial rule, yet the temple histories which are still recited and the symbols of the *Mukkuvar vannimai* (regional chiefship of the Mukkuvars) leave no doubt as to the traditions of conquest and warrior dominance which distinguish this group. We have seen earlier that the names of the Mukkuvar matriclans often celebrate kingly and martial honours, and the matrilineal succession to traditional political offices, such as the *Ūppōṭiyār* of Akkaraipattu, is a

recognized prerogative of certain Mukkuvar kuṭis. The relative status of these kuṭis varies within the region, and there is every likelihood that the Mukkuvar political system based on these clans was highly segmentary and fractious. Mukkuvars seldom make formal claim to membership of the Kshatriya *varna*, however, and it is significant that they share with all the castes of the region (except the Vīracaiya Kurukkals) the 31-day period of death pollution associated with Sudras (Manu V, 83). Solid historical evidence of how the Batticaloa region was colonized and settled is still quite meagre, but legendary accounts credit the Mukkuvars with expelling the Timilar fishing caste and establishing strict dominance, which was symbolized in many aspects of domestic and public ritual and was maintained by possession and control of the largest share of the land. The distinctive term for a large landowner in Batticaloa is *pōṭiyār*, and the late records of the Dutch East India Company show that the cooperation of the Mukkuvar 'Chief Podies' was very difficult to obtain (Burnand 1794).

5.2. Vēlāḷars

The major rivals of the Mukkuvars for social preeminence are the Vēlāḷars, the renowned high-status cultivating caste of Jaffna and Tamilnadu. There are certain clusters of Vēlāḷar villages which today claim never to have been subjected to traditional Mukkuvar chiefs, but this seems highly unlikely. It is true, however, that these Vēlāḷar centres have now largely succeeded in eliminating the tangible evidence of their political inferiority during the period of Mukkuvar rule. It is now known from both historical and ethnographic evidence that the Vēlāḷars of Tamilnadu have a strong tradition of association and alliance with the Brahman priesthood of South India (Stein 1968; 1969; Barnett 1970). This South Indian evidence of Vēlāḷar religious connections is consistent with the traditions of Vēlāḷar settlement in the Batticaloa region, which assert that Vēlāḷars were brought from India and installed as Saivite temple functionaries in perpetuity by local kings. They were not given ownership or control of the temples, but they were given responsibility for overseeing the conduct of temple ritual, and they cultivated a share of the temple lands as payment for their services. The songs and legends in the *Maṭṭakkaḷappu Mānmiyam* reiterate the theme that conquering kings brought seven groups of *Kōvaiciyar* ('Herding Vaishyas', one of the three kinds of Vaishyas which Vēlāḷars claim as their puranic ancestors: see Thurston 1909 vol. VII: 361–6; Winslow 1862: 967) to perform such essential domestic tasks for the deity as polishing the vessels, tending the lamps, storing the temple's

grain, and carrying the palanquin of the god. The names of these seven groups are among the most common matriclan names of the Batticaloa Vēlāḷars today (Nadarajah 1962: 70–1; Canagaratnam 1921: 35; Kandiah 1964: 435–6). The matrilineal clan organization of the Vēlāḷars is similar in every respect to that of the Mukkuvars, and the Vēlāḷars seem also to have followed the Mukkuvar law of inheritance and succession in every respect.³²

The Vēlāḷars are also believed to have been the first group to have brought with them an entourage of service castes. These are sometimes referred to as the '17 *ciraikal* (slaves, dependents)', but this is a stereotyped formula which greatly exceeds the number of service castes present today, i.e., the three *kuṭimai* castes of Barber, Washerman, and Drummer. The Mukkuvars, however, appropriated control of the service castes to themselves, though allowing the Vēlāḷars to share their services. We have already seen that neither Vēlāḷars nor Mukkuvars express an ideology of blood purity, but the Vēlāḷars do make a point of dissociating themselves from the violent warrior heritage of the Mukkuvars. As in South India, the Vēlāḷars cherish an image of being custodians and inheritors of the soil, peaceful and honourable.³³ In fact the present aura of the Vēlāḷar title is very strong, even in this region which has sometimes been called *Mukkuvatēcam* (country of the Mukkuvars: Denham 1912: 226). This shows through in the caste opinion-ranking (Table 1) as well as innumerable instances of 'borrowing' and 'attaching' the Vēlāḷar title to castes and kuṭis (Thurston 1909 vol. VII: 376–7; Yalman 1967: 329; McGilvray 1974: 29–33). Both Yalman and I experienced much initial befuddlement attributable not only to the fact that every landowner would like to consider himself a 'Vēlāḷar', on the spurious grounds that the name derives from *vēlāṇmai* (cultivation, especially of paddy), but also to the fact that the word 'Vēlāḷar' is a recognized component of certain kuṭi names not specifically associated with the Vēlāḷar caste, e.g. *Vēṭa Vēlāḷar kuṭi* ('Hunter' Vēlāḷar, i.e., Veddah Vēlāḷar). It is clear that 'Vēlāḷar' prestige is gaining ground in most parts of Batticaloa today.

It will soon be apparent that, although the idea of distinct Vēlāḷar and Mukkuvar castes is often invoked by informants (and it is useful here for the purposes of exposition to maintain this convention), there is in reality a wider universe of respectable matriclans ('good/big/high people'), some of which have explicit, textually-validated links to caste categories such as Vēlāḷar and Mukkuvar, and some of which are more free-floating and amenable to being assimilated to different 'castes', depending upon the circumstances in different localities. However, these ambiguities never blur

the line between the high caste stratum and the lower professional and service castes, so that, for example, the equivocal *Cinkala kuṭi* ('Sinhalese kuṭi') of the Mukkuvars and Vēlāḷars is never confused with separate kuṭis of the same name occurring in the Smith, Washerman, and Drummer castes.

It must also be added that the textually-specified duties of the Vēlāḷars to perform the often menial tasks of temple service have, in the course of time, been relegated to a professional temple servant group known as *Kōvilār* (people of the temple, *kōvil*). The historical facts are very difficult to disentangle, but at the present time the Vēlāḷars interpret their traditional mandate as amounting to supervision of the Kōvilārs, whom they prefer to treat as a separate and inferior caste. The Kōvilārs, however, maintain that they are themselves Vēlāḷars of separate but equal origin. Significant numbers of Kōvilārs are found today only in the vicinity of the major regional temples, e.g. at Kokkaṭṭiccōlai and at Tirukkōvil. They prefer to be historically identified as Kāraikkāl Vēlāḷars, as opposed to the others, who are given the contrasting designation of Maruṅkūr Vēlāḷars.

5.3. Vīraçaiva Kurukkaḷs

The third component of the high caste stratum are the Vīraçaiva Kurukkaḷs, who are non-Brahman priests affiliated with the Vīraçaiva or Lingāyat sect of South India, particularly Karnataka (Mysore). Yalman was the first to suggest such a connection (1967: 331), and although the historical steps are not yet clear, he was quite right in pointing to the symbols of Vīraçaiva identity. The group is only partially endogamous today, made up of three intermarrying matrilineal clans: Caṅkamar Kurukkaḷ, Tēcāntara Kurukkaḷ, and Canniyāci Kuṭi. There is conclusive evidence of a strong marriage exchange relationship between the first two kuṭis, which are the largest and most prestigious, although this endogamous tendency is much clearer in the genealogical record than in current practice. Today there are a great many marriages with members of the Vēlāḷar and Mukkuvar castes. The two main Kurukkaḷ matrilineal clans are associated with two of the five traditional Lingāyat preceptors, and both groups are said to have a vague historical connection with the Vīraçaiva religious 'throne' or centre at Mallikārcunapuram in South India.³⁴ The full name of the first kuṭi is Vīramakēvara Kuruliṅkacaṅkamar, a title which displays the major symbols of Vīraçaiva doctrine,³⁵ and it is this kuṭi which traditionally conducted an annual procession through the Akkaraipattu region (*pakuti*) to purify and protect the villages from malevolent forces in the damp and ghostly month of Mārkaḷi (December–January). For this reason,

the senior Kurukkaḷ in this matriline was sometimes called the *Pakuti Kurukkaḷ*. The second major kuṭi, the Tēcāntara ('foreign, wandering') Kurukkaḷs, seem to have been exclusively temple priests, and there is some evidence of rivalry in this ritual division of labour.

The Vīraçaiva Kurukkaḷs of Batticaloa stoutly maintain their superiority to Brahmans and the Brahmanical 'varna doctrines' (*varuṇa vētam*), reflecting an antipathy well known from South Indian ethnography (Parvathamma 1971). Their theory is that a truly desire-less (*parrillāta*) person, having received proper initiation (*tītcai, liṅkatāraṇam*), having performed the prescribed daily and preprandial worship of the personal lingam stone which is worn in a silver casket suspended on a chain from the neck, and having realized true spiritual union with Civa, is impervious to all forms of contamination, from whatever source. The title of Caṅkamar (Jangama) is recognized as referring to this ideal: the word derives from *caṅkamam*, which means both 'union', e.g. union with Civa, and 'moving', e.g. the priest as a living abode of Civa (Winslow 1862: 387; Enthoven 1922: 373; Ramanujan 1973).

Today in the Batticaloa region, the lingam is worn only by practising temple priests and a few independent Caṅkamar Kurukkaḷs, and many of the strict Vīraçaiva doctrines are abridged, qualified, or attenuated. Practically the entire group, or Kurukkaḷ *vamicam*,³⁶ as it is called, originates from a few small villages, and today its younger members are not taking up the priestly profession. Nonetheless, the long historical association of the Vīraçaiva Kurukkaḷs with villages and temples on the east coast has bequeathed an ideological legacy of great significance when compared with the usual Brahman tradition. Some of the important features to keep in mind are the Vīraçaiva belief in the universal prophylactic quality of initiation and wearing the personal lingam, the emphasis upon the Vīraçaiva priest's duty to protect and purify the village with his presence and his *pātōtakam* (water from washing his feet), and the injunction that the Vīraçaiva priest should eat ordinary cooked food offered at such life-crises as birth, female puberty, and death.

Within the past 40 years, some members of the Kurukkaḷ *vamicam* in the Akkaraipattu area have begun to resist the principle of commensality on potentially polluting occasions such as the 31st day *amutu* domestic food offerings to the departed soul, and the response of the high caste population has been indignant and vocal. Most everyone agrees, regardless of their attitude, that until recently all Kurukkaḷs shared the food at life-crisis rituals. Even in India, of course, the Lingāyat Jangama priest observes commensality only with other Lingāyat castes, whereas in Batticaloa there

are no such other groups with whom the Kurukkals might form a sectarian bloc. The Vīracaiya Kurukkals of the Batticaloa region found themselves in the puzzling situation of being patronized by the ruling castes in preference to Brahmans, yet being denied the underlying support of a true Vīracaiya sectarian social order. In this situation, the Kurukkals were able to maintain some of their own distinctive customs, such as burial in a seated posture with the lingam placed in the mouth of the corpse, but they were inevitably led to accommodate their Vīracaiya ideology to the realities of the local Mukkuvar and Vēlālar-dominated caste system. Ironically, some perceptive members of the Kurukkaḷ group, having come to a greater awareness of the theological and social implications of Vīracaiyism through exposure to modern South Indian religious literature, have become quite pessimistic about the laxity of their practices and the prospects for the maintenance of a Vīracaiya priesthood in the future. The alternative is the continued growth of a heterogeneous priesthood composed in large part of local caste members who officiate at their own caste-supported temples, but there are also indications that a Jaffna-based Brahmanical style, and in some cases Jaffna Brahman priests, may gradually supersede the Vīracaiya Kurukkals of Batticaloa.³⁷

5.4. The Mukkuvar—Vēlālar relationship

Part of the difficulty in comprehending the structure and the dynamic of caste and matriclan organization on the east coast arises out of one's initial temptation to mistake a particular constellation of local inter-caste and inter-clan relationships for a uniform regional pattern. The two high caste groups, Mukkuvar and Vēlālar, are the dominant elements in the social structure of the Batticaloa region, but there may be either tension or accommodation, either a greater or lesser degree of perceived distinctiveness between them, depending upon their relative strength in different sub-regions, the evolution of joint political and ritual institutions in certain areas, and the degree to which local communities have come to recognize a wider range of respectable kuṭis in the high caste stratum, that is, beyond the typical list of seven kuṭis attributable to each caste. The Vīracaiya Kurukkals, on the other hand, have provided a distinctive, and not so markedly hierarchical, priestly idiom which has been congenial to both groups.

A dynamic model of relationships within the high caste stratum, based on an analysis of sub-regional variation and reinforced by a reading of the local legendary-historical traditions contained in the *Maṭṭakkalappu*

Mānmiyam,³⁸ can now be sketched in outline. We must disregard for the moment the effects of social change during European colonial rule and the post-Independence period in order to delineate some of the important features of traditional inter-caste relations. It appears that the Mukkuvars came to exercise widespread control of the land in the Batticaloa region through some combination of conquest and colonization, probably following the invasion of Māgha (1215 A.D.), but certainly well before their political and economic dominance of the region is acknowledged in Dutch records of the 18th century (Burnand 1794). Whether there were some Vēlālars already present in the region whose social organization was transformed under Mukkuvar influence, or whether, as tradition attests, they all came from India after the Mukkuvar conquest is not presently known. In any event, the role allocated to the Vēlālars by the Mukkuvar rulers was, and in certain isolated areas until recent years remained, a politically subordinate one, although the grip of Mukkuvar domination was probably at times weakened by sub-regional and inter-clan rivalries and occasionally reduced to a kind of titular sovereignty over some of the more well-established Vēlālar villages. Today, even Vēlālar informants who are hostile to Mukkuvar status will acknowledge that the Mukkuvars were the rulers of Batticaloa by right of conquest; the disagreement is over how tangible this Mukkuvar dominance was at the level of Vēlālar village life.

The Mukkuvars, and possibly other warrior contingents which local tradition indicates amalgamated with the Mukkuvars to create the regional *vannimai*, had made themselves masters of the land, guardians of the temples, and arbiters of the social order. They claimed the status of heroic Saivite crusaders who had come to expunge alleged Vaishnava sympathies and to restore the Civa temples built during the era of Rāvaṇa, before his demise as recounted in the Rāmāyana epic. We know at least that this is the sort of mythic charter which their descendants have propagated. The social system in which such a vision of pious kingly glory could be actualized, however, required the presence of ritual specialists and menial service groups, ostensibly to serve the gods, but also to serve the rulers who built and protected the sacred shrines. All the legendary accounts stress the point that contingents of Vēlālars, with their own dependent service castes, were summoned by the kings to come from India and settle in the vicinity of certain famous 'regional' temples (*tēcattukkōvil*), such as Tirukkōvil, where they were enjoined, under threat of both kingly and divine sanction, to maintain the prescribed pūjas and festivals in perpetuity. In the texts they are not depicted as priests, but rather as devout, abject, hereditary servants of the temple (e.g. *aranakattoṇṭūliyar*). The Vēlālars

also cultivated the temple lands on behalf of the deity and retained a share of the crop for their own support. The priests in the textual sources are referred to as *Antanar* (Brahman), *Pūcurar* (performer of pūja), and *Tampattar* (apparently a reference to the Viracaiva Kurukkals, whose ancient village is named Tampattai). No specifically Brahman settlement is ever mentioned in the textual and oral traditions, nor is there any such Brahman settlement today. In fact, there is a strong tradition that the Brahmins (*Antanar*) were ousted from one particularly famous temple for their alleged selfishness and aloofness (Nadarajah 1962: 77, 99).

The Mukkuvar ruling group also required artisan castes, various other professional castes, and above all domestic service castes (*kuṭimai*), to staff the sort of hierarchical agrarian society they wanted. The origin of the middle range professional castes, such as Smiths and Climbers, is not emphasized in the regional traditions, and most informants today imagine these groups to have come and settled voluntarily. However, it is the *Vēlālars* who are usually credited with bringing and installing the *kuṭimai* castes, and it is clear that at some point the Mukkuvar rulers came to appropriate control of these low castes and to regulate their domestic and temple services as part of a widespread system of caste and *kuṭi* 'honours' (*varicai*).

The admittedly idealized circumstances I have described can be seen to have provided the basis for an ideological split between the Mukkuvars and the *Vēlālars*, the former strongly asserting their right to political and economic domination, and the latter circumspectly developing their claim to greater purity and spirituality as the non-violent servants of the temple deity (Nadarajah 1962: 77–80, 99–101). Although one can see in this familiar elements of the tension between temporal and spiritual power evinced in medieval European society as well as in Dumont's formulation of the Kshatriya–Brahman duality, the historical outcome in the Batticaloa region seems to have largely vindicated the martial caste, the Mukkuvars, and devalued the ideal of an aloof, non-reciprocating, and reclusive priesthood. The latter trend was in the interests of both the *Vēlālars* and the Mukkuvars, neither of whom cared to subordinate their status to Brahmins. The Mukkuvars, as chiefly guardians and overseers of the major temples, naturally sought to confine priestly charisma to its purely service aspect, the performance of pūja in the restricted sanctum of the temple. The same Mukkuvar overseers even today insist that the priest must first confer the blessed offerings of the deity upon them before distributing it to others. The *Vēlālars*, as the god's household staff within the temple, similarly resisted any priestly encroachments upon

their sacred duties and their day-to-day management of the temple economy.

With no independently endowed Brahman lands or villages in the entire region, and two landed castes vying keenly to demonstrate high rank through an accepted idiom of temple ritual which was largely predicated on the concept of command, there was really no prospect for widespread Brahman influence.³⁹ Conversely, it is likely that few Brahmins would have been attracted by the idea of serving warrior patrons who had originated from a coastal fishing caste in South India, who had fought with notable ferocity in Māgha's mercenary army, and whose social status was low in other parts of the island. The historical mixture of groups comprising the seven chiefdoms of the Vanni region of north-central and eastern Sri Lanka at the time of European contact is still not fully understood, but even assuming that Mukkuvar settlements in Batticaloa may have contained elements of other warrior groups, such as south Indian *Vānniyārs* (Indrapala 1965: Ch. 5), the general implication is that these ruling groups would not themselves have been likely carriers or patrons of a strongly Brahmanical world-view. It is easy to see how Viracaiva doctrines, which are also espoused in somewhat attenuated form by such lesser priestly groups as Paṅṭārams in Tamilnadu and Kerala (Thurston 1909 vol. VI: 45–52; Anantha Krishna Iyer 1912: 396–8), as well as by numerous lower caste South Indian groups, including various castes of weavers (*Dēvānga*, *Sēṇiyan*, *Padma Sālē*, and *Kaikōlan*) and fishermen (*Bestha*, *Sembadavan* – all references in Thurston 1909), would also prove compatible with the interests of the dominant groups in Batticaloa. And if Māgha himself held Viracaiva beliefs, this would naturally have provided further impetus to this development (Liyaganamage 1968: Ch. 4).

5.5. The matrilineal rule

A final, but crucial, element in the set of background factors which I wish to bring forward is the 'matrilineal principle' (*tāy vali*) and the specific role it plays in local thought and in local institutions. It is necessary to be especially careful here, since it is quite possible inadvertently to superimpose on the situation a set of assumptions or an image of matriliney derived from the anthropological literature which is quite different from the image the people themselves have of it. It is also necessary to recognize that many matrilineal institutions have vanished during the past 150 years under the impact of radically altered political and legal systems imposed at the national level. What remain today are mere traces of the

traditional Mukkuvar political and economic system, somewhat fuller vestiges of the caste and matrilineal basis of domestic and temple ceremonial, and a language, a rhetoric, of matrilineal identity and honour which draws upon the distinctive but somewhat jumbled corpus of oral/textual traditions represented in the *Maṭṭakkalappu Mānmiyam*.

It has already been shown that there is no consistent underlying reference to matrilineal purity or coded natural substance detectable in what informants say about castes and kuṭis, but that there is a pervasive belief in an idea of matrilineality arising out of a combination of more subtle factors: maternal nourishment and affection, matrilineal residence, and matrilineal transfer of property through dowry. To this must now be added the theme of matrilineal inheritance and succession which, despite its increasing irrelevance to modern life, is still seen as a firmly rooted, historically sanctioned, jural rule. There is a certain legalistic quality to the phenomenon which I immediately confronted in informants' responses to preliminary questioning about why people in Batticaloa recognized matrilineal descent and about what the 'meaning' of this custom might be. It is also this aspect which seemed so unsatisfying from the point of view of the operant purity and/or coded-substance assumptions which I was initially trying to apply. Informants eagerly volunteered that 'matrilineal kinship reckoning' (*tāy vali murai*) was the basic rule, but when pressed for further justification of this practice they simply asserted it was the 'custom' (*valakkam*) or 'law' (*caṭṭam*) of the Batticaloa region. Several more scholarly informants even referred me to a nineteenth-century codification of the Mukkuvar law written by a Colombo lawyer (Brito 1876). It was really only after the various 'symbolic' or crypto-cultural theories discussed at the beginning of this paper had been tested and been proven largely irrelevant that the explicit, formal, and 'legal' aspects of matrilineality could be seen as important in their own right. I hasten to acknowledge that indigenous concepts of received usage such as 'law' or 'custom' are also fundamentally symbolic, but it appears that anthropologists can sometimes be too clever, passing up such conventional symbols in the search for hidden meaning.

The basic tenets of the traditional system of inheritance and succession for the entire Batticaloa region, in the few extant formulations which have come to light, are explicitly attributed to the Mukkuvars. Brito writes of the 'Mukkuva Law' (1876). Burnand describes the matrilineal customs enforced by the Mukkuvar 'Head Podies' (1794), and a Tamil document (Anon.: n.d.) in the Sir Alexander Johnston Papers gathered in the early 19th century summarizes the *Mukkuvarin cātivalamai* (Mukkuvar caste

customs).⁴⁰ This set of Mukkuvar legal principles figured in some regional case law during the early British period, from which Brito extracted his codification, but the Mukkuvar law was ignored in the 1876 Matrimonial Rights and Inheritance Ordinance and thereafter ceased to have legal force (H.W. Tambiah 1954: 157; Nadaraja 1972).

The Mukkuvar law recognized the categories of *mutucom* which was ancestral property transmitted through females, *teṭiyateṭṭam*, which was acquired property of either spouse, and *cītanam*, which is dowry bestowed upon daughters. Similar terminology is found in the Jaffna legal code, the Thesawalamai, but the systems are not identical, most notably in the fact that in Jaffna the *mutucom* devolves upon sons (H.W. Tambiah 1950: Ch. 10; S.J. Tambiah 1973a: 111–27). A discussion of the detailed aspects of the Mukkuvar law and the Thesawalamai must not preoccupy us here. The essential thing to note is that the available evidence on the Mukkuvar law indicates that most property, especially land, was either classified as ancestral property (*mutucom*), which passed to one's sister's sons, or as dowry property (*cītanam*) which is passed to one's daughters. The historical significance of dowry is still a bit uncertain; the most detailed source, Brito's account, makes little reference to it, yet it is mentioned earlier (Anon. n.d.) and today it constitutes the primary mode of property transmission. A couple's acquired property (*teṭiyateṭṭam*) was disposable at the discretion of the husband, according to the sources, but it does not appear that traditional Mukkuvar society offered much practical scope for 'acquisition' apart from matrilineal inheritance and dowry. Burnand's description in particular stresses how the Mukkuvars jealously guarded their domination over a static agrarian order even, it seems, to the detriment of their own people.

The greater half of the Batticaloa fields still belong to the Mockuva families . . . & the remainder to their temples, to the Bellales or to other Casts as Accomodéssans [service tenures] & to the Maurmen.

All the great & petty Headmen of the Mockawass keep it as an ancient custom not to sell any of their lands to other Casts, nor even to alienate them out of their families, however they may be burthened with debts, and it is a further custom with them . . . to hypothecate their Lands for these Debts. The other Pagan Inhabitants in the Country as well as some Maurmen follow the same custom, to the great prejudice of Agriculture.

But as the headmen & inferior Mockawas podies [chiefs] possess

almost half of the Fields, this Cast (which consists of about 500 families) is the wealthiest, that is to say 40 or 50 of them, for all the rest being greatly indebted are in a state of insolvency.

(Jacob Burnand 1794: 57, 86, 138)

The extent to which Mukkuvar inheritance rules imply the former existence of a corporate land-holding matrilineal descent unit is also uncertain. Brito asserts that the eldest brother acted as chief manager of the matrilineal property, but today there is very little evidence of 'jointness' in household structure or cultivation patterns. It is possible that the estates of the wealthy ruling Mukkuvar *pōṭiyārs* were managed on collective matrilineal lines, while most Mukkuvar households were too poor to bother with such practices. There is no evidence, historical or contemporary, indicating the existence of joint matrilineal households, but there are a few examples of jointly held lands in scattered parts of the Batticaloa region today. These instances are extremely rare, and they do not conform to a single pattern. The principle of joint matrilineal management of land seems capable of being implemented in specific ways to serve particular material or civic interests.⁴¹ In a larger sense, of course, the general pattern of matrilineal inheritance would ensure that no land left the matrilineal (*kuṭi*), although distribution of land among members of the *kuṭi* might be quite unequal. Regardless of how land may have been distributed among effective management units within the *kuṭi*, the idea of local matrilineal members as corporate 'share-holders' in the management of temples and in the sponsorship of rituals presupposes an effective internal system for collecting the necessary tithes and donations. Although such fundraising today is sometimes transacted in money, the traditional medium was grain (paddy). It is easy to see how the liability of *kuṭi* members to such an agrarian tithe would have contributed to an image of the *kuṭi* (i.e., a local or sub-regional segment of the *kuṭi*) as having at least some material basis in land. Similar 'shares' in temple ritual are found among the middle and lower castes, who were allotted particular tracts of land by the Mukkuvars in return for their services (lands called *accomodessans* in the early colonial records). Some of the common features of *kuṭi* and caste 'shares' will soon become apparent.

5.6. Matrilineal rights, shares and honours

The language of Mukkuvar inheritance law says nothing about matrilineal blood or purity, but it says a great deal about the importance of matrilineal

rights. The same word (*urimai*) means both 'right' and 'inheritance', which is to be expected in a society where virtually all traditional rights were secured by reference to some aspect of birth-status, e.g. *peṇ vali urimai peṇ piḷḷai* may be translated as 'woman with matrilineal rights' or 'female heir from a female line' (Brito 1876: 12).⁴² The very same word, *urimai*, is encountered whenever political and ritual privileges are being discussed, along with the word *paṅku*, which means 'share', and the word *varicai*, meaning 'mark of honour'. The principle of matrilineal succession to office is largely irrelevant in the political sphere today, since the local and regional Mukkuvar chiefships and the councils of high caste village elders have no legal sanction. The traditional matrilineal rights to hold political office are nonetheless firmly linked to specific *kuṭis*, who have the 'right' to supply the incumbent. The succession to such office is said to pass from mother's brother to sister's son, but genealogical evidence shows that the adult male *kuṭi* membership is regularly called upon to decide the succession and ratify the outcome of the numerous disputes which arise. One of the few Mukkuvar political offices still in existence is that of the area chief (*Ūrppōṭiyār*) of Akkaraipattu, who must be drawn from Paṅikkanā *kuṭi*. It must be emphasized that it is not just the *Ūrppōṭiyār*'s own restricted kin group, but the *kuṭi* as a whole, which shares the honour and prestige associated with the right to this office.

In other Mukkuvar settlements where the more distinctly political offices have vanished, and in *Vēḷāḷar* and lower caste settlements where such offices either never existed or played a subordinate role in the Mukkuvar authority structure, the principle of matrilineal succession and formal *kuṭi* representation still operates in the selection of temple and mosque trustees. The actual mixture of *kuṭi* representation on temple and mosque boards varies greatly from locality to locality, but in every case it reflects a balance between two opposed tendencies: on the one hand, claims to individual *kuṭi* rights (*urimai*) to local preeminence backed by a local historical charter and force of numbers; on the other hand, aspirations for the local integration of all *kuṭis* as part of a single 'system' which would both reflect the larger political realities as well as fulfil the image of society as an organic instrument of collective worship. There are a number of different ways in which these two tendencies have been expressed in temples and mosques in different areas, and there has also been no lack of special pleading to demonstrate that the first tendency is merely a more concrete embodiment of the second.

For the Tamils in Batticaloa, as for Tamils elsewhere (Baker and Washbrook 1975; Appadurai and Breckenridge 1976; Pfaffenberger 1977; Stein

Dennis B. McGilvray

1978), the temple plays an extremely important organizing role in society. In informants' statements and in textual sources from Batticaloa, the existence of the temple is depicted as conceptually prior to the founding of the settlement. By no means all of the temples which exist today are viewed in this light, but it is clearly true of the major 'regional temples' (*tēcattukkōvil*) which figure prominently in regional history and legends. Some of these temples are seen as having been founded originally by epic figures such as Rāvaṇa, who, for all his faults, was a pillar of Saivism. Other temples are believed to have been built at the command of kings, who wished to insure the perpetual veneration of sacred icons (*lingams*, *vēl* weapons, *cilampu* anklets, etc.) either accidentally 'discovered' in the forest or brought to the region by wandering devotees. The warrior kings of the Vijayanagar period (14th–17th centuries A.D.) in South India have been noted for their consuming interest in temple construction and religious patronage which legitimated their systems of 'tributary overlordship' (Stein 1969: 188–96), and the historical legends of Batticaloa seem to reflect much the same ideology. It is the king who is depicted as having first appreciated the sacredness of a particular place; it is the king and his group who appropriate all subsequent glory by proclaiming themselves protectors of the shrine; and it is the king who colonizes the surrounding lands with the requisite functional castes. In the language of these idealized accounts, it is the provision of an elaborate system of hereditary services to the temple deity which is depicted as the central achievement, the creation of society merely an incidental byproduct. The whole scheme fits very well with Hocart's image of the caste system as a sacrificial organization instituted by the king (Hocart 1950). The tradition endures today, particularly at the *tēcattukkōvils* and proportionately so at lesser temples, that the overall constitution of society should be reflected and validated in temple rituals, especially in the annual temple festival (*tiruvilā*).

There is still today a language of 'rights' (*urimai*), 'shares' (*paṅku*), and 'honours' (*varicai*) which is expressed in the entire range of ritual display from grand temple and mosque festivals to humbler domestic life-crisis ceremonies. Among the Tamils, all participating groups, both castes and kuṭis, are said to have a 'share' in the affairs of the temple if they fulfil at least one of the minimal conditions: public sponsorship of some segment of the annual festival or provision of ritual services during the festival. It is the essence of such festivals, of course, that some shares are smaller or more servile than others, but at least the rhetoric of shares is uniform. The biggest shares include the sponsorship of specific 'nights' of the festival,

and the most glorious of these are usually the last few evenings before the morning *tīrttam* or bathing of the deity which closes the festival. This is perhaps one of the most dynamic arenas of kuṭi ranking, since sponsorship of the festival requires both manpower and financial resources which may fluctuate over time. The re-allocation of 'nights' to different castes and kuṭis, as well as the arrangement of joint sponsorship by several smaller groups on a single night, is a well-attested feature of the system. The display of a preeminent position in temple ritual, particularly one dramatized at the climax of the ceremony by receiving the god's garland and first offerings, is a recognized honour called *munnītu* (foremost position). On most evenings of the annual festival, this honour is given to one or more people called *tiruvilākkāran*, who are the designated leaders of the group(s) sponsoring the ritual that night. On the final night of the festival, the *munnītu* is typically accorded to the temple trustees (*Vaṇṇakkar*) representing the dominant local matrilineal clans. In colonial and pre-colonial times, however, it might have been claimed by a regional political chief.

The term *varicai*, on the other hand, is applied to the set of ritual privileges accorded to different castes and kuṭis during domestic observances such as weddings, female puberty celebrations, and funerals. The traditional consistency and rigour of the *varicai* system is difficult to judge today, as the lower castes and lower-ranking kuṭis have begun to seize honours which were never before accorded to them and the higher castes and kuṭis have consequently begun to regard *varicai* as a kind of debased currency which may be disregarded.⁴³ The list of *varicai* honours starts with entitlement to have domestic services from the Washerman, Barber, and Drummer. High caste groups have the services of all three, but middle-ranking castes such as Smiths and Climbers were traditionally accorded only the first two. Other *varicai* honours included the right to place specific numbers of decorated pots of water (*viṭtu muti-s*, 'house crowns') on the roof and to hang certain numbers of cloths beside the doorway. Certain high caste kuṭis also claim the honour of having the Washermen spread clean cloths on the path in front of the funeral procession (*nilappāvāṭai*). Each of the castes, and many of the high caste kuṭis as well, have recognized insignia (*virutu*) which are used primarily as cattle brands, and these are also considered to be a *varicai*. The list could be expanded. Most informants laboured mightily but were unable to give a fully standardized account of the '18 *varicai*', reflecting no doubt some potential for insinuating new *varicai* honours, as well as the present decay of this entire ritual idiom.

5.7. Matrilineal caste affiliation vs. bilateral status

All of the 'rights', 'shares', and 'honours' which have been described are acquired by virtue of membership in units constituted by the common rule of matriliney (*tāy vali, peṇ vali*). One of the most important of these is the kuṭi, with its shallow and unsystematically segmented sublineages, which, although not a 'classic' matrilineal descent group, can be seen to share certain features of matrilineal descent as a conventional anthropological category (Schneider 1961). However, it is just as true, if more difficult to accept from a conventional anthropological standpoint, that castes (*cāti, jāti*) are also matrilineal in the Batticaloa region, and that they are associated with much the same cultural imagery as kuṭis.⁴⁴ Castes differ from kuṭis chiefly in having a much stronger functional/occupational component.⁴⁵ The survey of ethnoreproductive and ethnophysiological beliefs revealed no underlying theory of distinctive caste purity or bio-moral substance, but it did reveal a consistent view that caste membership derives from the mother. This opinion was voiced by members of all castes, and it was supported by appeal to the same principles of intimate maternal care and affection, the same mixed factors of matrilineal residence, propinquity, and property, and the same jural rule of matrilineal 'rights' as one encounters in discussions of kuṭi membership. In both kuṭi and caste contexts, though without perhaps undue reflection in either instance, informants quoted a well-known proverb: *vērōṭi valartti mūlāittālum, tāy valit tappātu*, 'Although the root may grow out, develop, and sprout up, the maternal connection is never lost'.

Admittedly, the matrilineal rule of caste affiliation is largely hypothetical when considering cross-caste unions involving the lower castes, since the members of the high caste stratum advocate and enforce a rule of strict caste endogamy among these groups. Apart from the effects of the common Dravidian kinship terminology which encourages marriage within a close, localized kinship universe, members of low castes said they saw no intrinsic reason to refuse an opportunity for marriage with higher caste groups. They quickly pointed out, however, that the higher caste groups would never tolerate such unions and that, formerly at least, the traditional Mukkuvar political authority would have meted out swift punishment for such a violation of the social order. The high caste people, in turn, confirmed this. It is not a concern with protecting purity or with preventing the mixture of bio-moral substances, but an adamant refusal either to permit the erosion of their 'rights' and 'honours' or to acknowledge the equality implied by marriage in this culture, that motivates these

high caste restrictions. Other comments reflect the strong high caste image of society as a historically-instituted system of social differentiation, a functional division of labour laid down by kings 'in the time of the Cheras, Cholas, and Pandyans', deviation from which represents a breach of faith or the breaking of a commitment to the past. The function of low castes in such a social order is expressed as a 'duty' (*kaṭamai*) to perform 'service' (*ūliyam*) to the higher castes and to the deity of the temple. The high castes, ever willing to see evidence of an organic design in such arrangements, also refer to these obligatory low caste temple services as 'shares' (*paṅku*), in the formal sense that any group participation in temple ritual is a 'share', or as 'rights' (*urimai*), in the sense that these specific ritual responsibilities can never be usurped. In some cases, low caste groups which eagerly quit their demeaning and no longer legally-enforceable temple duties 40 years ago are still wistfully said to be welcome if ever they wish to resume their hallowed 'shares'. The ideology of the high castes vis-à-vis the lower castes is very strongly coloured by such traditions of historically-sanctioned political subordination, and as a consequence the theory of matrilineal caste affiliation is very seldom put to the test with members of these groups.

It is also true that overall birth status is never utterly and solely determined by the caste and kuṭi of the mother. Ethnoreproductive theories acknowledge, and genealogical research confirms, that the father plays a role with the mother in endowing the child with bodily substance, personal qualities, and social identity. While it is uniformly asserted that the child's formal affiliation is always with the caste and kuṭi of the mother, the personal standing of the child within his caste and kuṭi will be enhanced or diminished by the high or low caste origins of the father. In one documented example, the illegitimate offspring of a Barber woman by a high caste Mukkuvar landlord have gained prestige from the union and are fond of teasing the nephews and nieces of their Mukkuvar genitor as 'cross-cousins'. In another case, a respected Vēḷāḷar schoolteacher's daughter is married (matrilocally) to a Karaiyar Fisherman caste man, and although the children carry their mother's caste and kuṭi affiliation, the neighbours still talk. It is always understood that the class, occupational, and educational status of a man, as well as his appearance and character, can compensate for some shortcomings of caste and kuṭi when marriage is being considered.

The latent bilateral aspect of overall individual status poses much less of a problem, however, when both parties to a marriage are drawn from the high caste stratum of 'good people'. Status distinctions between the

categories of Vēlāḷar, Mukkuvar, and Kurukkaḷ, as well as between the constituent kuṭis of these groups and the residual 'free-floating' kuṭis of the high caste stratum, do not approach in magnitude the distinction between the high caste stratum as a whole and all of the lower castes. Marriage between the high caste people and any of the middle or lower castes, or between the middle and lower castes themselves, violates fundamental canons of ritual subordination and functional separation of low caste groups. On the other hand, marriage between kuṭis in the high caste stratum, some of which are historically 'tagged' to specific castes and others of which are more equivocal in caste identity, can be more general or more restricted depending upon local political, economic and demographic circumstances. The following discussion deals specifically with the relationships between elements in the high caste stratum.

The factor always to be kept in mind is that, here, marriage between groups implies equality between groups, even though the parties to any given match may exhibit different degrees of wealth, occupational prestige, education, and personal attractiveness.⁴⁶ The equality asserted in one marriage must sooner or later be reinforced by another marriage in the opposite direction, in accordance with the stated and behaviourally verified ideal of bilateral cross-cousin marriage. Perhaps no more vivid demonstration can be offered of the lack of asymmetrical marriage principles in this society than the acceptability of a double marriage between two brother-sister pairs, termed a *mārrukkaliyānam* ('exchange marriage'), which simplifies dowry negotiations and cements a strong bond between two families. The most visible evidence of the importance of connubial equality between groups is, however, to be seen in the recognized patterns of reciprocal marriage exchange between the leading high caste kuṭis in different localities, which have already been mentioned.

5.8. Patterns of local variation

An understanding of the regional dimension of high caste dominance, together with a recognition of how the basic assumptions of matrilineal rights and group affiliations operate in local thinking, makes it possible now to see a broad range of social structural variation within a single historical and analytic framework. The ambiguous listing of castes and kuṭis which Yalman recorded in Tambiluvil, and similarly jumbled accounts which I initially recorded in Akkaraipattu, reflect the distinctive similarities between castes and kuṭis in Batticaloa: they are both formally defined by a doctrine of matrilineal rights which is strongly sanctioned in

the traditional Mukkuvar law and which also makes sense to Batticaloa people in the context of their general matrilineal domestic pattern. The potential for *selective emphasis* on either kuṭi or caste identity is implicit in the nature of these categories and is clearly evident in actual fieldwork situations.

Indigenous theories of purity or bio-moral substance are undeveloped, equivocal, and context-restricted; they seem to have played, at most, a secondary role in organizing and justifying the traditional relationships between castes and matriclans in Batticaloa. Instead, an explicit, formal political symbolism of matrilineal honours, rights, offices, and shares, along with a highly static and authoritarian control of the land, was sufficient to sustain the traditional *Mukkuvar vannimai* in close, if not always harmonious, partnership with the Vēlāḷars. It is precisely the *formal quality* of these matrilineal connections that seems to allow for the selective emphasis in group identities noted above. At one extreme, it is possible to emphasize the historic and poetic ideal found throughout the Batticaloa region that every caste is comprised of seven specified kuṭis; and in smaller settlements where a set of such single-caste-linked matriclans forms the largest segment of the population, it is possible to maintain a claim to 'unmixed' Mukkuvar or Vēlāḷar caste identity. Strong marriage exchange alliances are found in such situations between the largest and most prestigious kuṭis within the designated caste category, and there tends to be an ideology of caste endogamy. At the opposite extreme, in the larger and more complex 'peasant towns' for which Batticaloa is noted (Ryan 1950: 10n.), it is common to stress the strictly matrilineal rule of caste and kuṭi affiliation regardless of which caste-linked matriclans form the marriage 'pool'. In such localities, the range of high caste kuṭis tends to be more heterogeneous, intermarriage between kuṭis 'tagged' to different castes is unrestricted, and there tends to be an ideology of Mukkuvar-Vēlāḷar alliance reinforced by an inter-caste marriage exchange relationship between the most powerful and prestigious kuṭis. The same principles apply to the third group in the high caste stratum, the Vīracaiya Kurukkaḷs, but the numbers and the resources of this group have always been tiny in comparison to those of the Mukkuvars and Vēlāḷars. Because of this, and because of their circumscribed role as priests and spiritual servants to the Mukkuvars and Vēlāḷars, the theme of equality through cross-caste marriage exchange with these dominant groups has never been fully developed.⁴⁷

All three high caste groups illustrate the fact that perceptions of the degree of authenticity of caste identity vary in proportion to the degree of

reinforcement available both from local demographic patterns and from the ideal, somewhat poetic, model of society enshrined in regional texts. When such reinforcements are weaker, the emphasis in most informants' comments is upon markers of kuṭi identity, rather than upon caste boundaries. In this case, it comes down to a question of how much meaning can be imputed to a matrilineal name, with all the local rights and symbolic associations that name evokes.⁴⁸ In more populous and heterogeneous settlements, like the town of Akkaraipattu, the kuṭi name is frequently taken as the basis for the inference of caste membership: a man is known to belong to Paṅikkanā kuṭi, which is one of the 'seven-kuṭi Mukkuvar' clans, therefore he must be a Mukkuvar. When kuṭi identities cannot find such clear textual validation, there is always respectability to be gained from appending the portmanteau 'Vēlāḷar' label to the names of the residual clans. In more traditional contexts, and in smaller scale settlements, on the other hand, rights to exercise a particular caste or kuṭi privilege, or to fill a matrilineal office, often carry the corollary stipulation that a man's father as well as his wife should belong to a traditionally allied matrilineal. That is, the exercise of such matrilineal rights and offices is fully legitimated by observance of a complementary marriage rule which, in effect, attaches a latent bilateral condition to a putatively matrilineal right. At this end of the sociological spectrum, not merely the kuṭi name, but reciprocal alliance obligations of a more multi-stranded sort, are taken into account in assessing finer degrees of entitlement to recognized matrilineal statuses.

Against the historical and ethnographic background which has already been sketched, there are at least four major 'tactical resources' which are mobilized in varying combinations to produce different configurations of caste and matrilineal relationships in different localities: (1) an assumption of high caste, especially Mukkuvar, control over the land and over the disposition of lower caste services, although this is growing weaker; (2) a fundamental implication of equality and alliance which is established and maintained by reciprocal marriage exchange; (3) a widely recognized principle of matrilineal descent and matrilineally transmitted rights defining both castes and matrilineal clans; and (4) a set of shared assumptions about the temple as a conceptual paradigm for society and as the setting for ceremonial transactions which validate the position of castes and matrilineal clans in the social order. The underlying continuum along which high caste, and high caste kuṭi, relationships may vary in different localities can be seen in a comparison of data from three separate settlements, one of which is in a strongly 'Mukkuvar' area, another of which is a strongly

'Vēlāḷar' village, and the last of which is a larger and more heterogeneous semi-urban settlement where a joint ideology of Mukkuvar and Vēlāḷar alliance and intermarriage is basic to local perceptions.

5.9. Mukkuvar dominance: the Kokkaṭṭiccōlai temple

In the isolated vicinity of Kokkaṭṭiccōlai, located on the *paṭuvān karai*, the western or 'sunset shore' of the Batticaloa lagoon, the patterns of Mukkuvar solidarity and dominance persist today in perhaps more traditional form than anywhere else in the region. The ancient Tāntōnrisvarar Kōvil (Temple of the Self-appearing Civa) at Kokkaṭṭiccōlai is still considered to be one of the most important of Batticaloa's 'regional temples' (*tēcattukkōvil*), and despite the inevitable erosion of their traditional power, the Mukkuvars here still cling strongly to the symbols and prerogatives of temple overlordship which validated the *Mukkuvar vannimai* or regional chiefship. The temple is governed by three trustees (*Vaṇṇakku* or *Vaṇṇakkar*) representing the three most prestigious kuṭis in the region (Uḷakippōṭi kuṭi, Kāliṅkā kuṭi, and Paṭaiyāṅṅa kuṭi), and the three temple priests claim to be Vīracaiya Kurukkaḷs. The lesser servants of the temple are members of the Kōvilār caste whose hereditary duties are differentiated among six named matrilineal. Direct 'supervision of the inner-duties' (*uṭkaṭampai atikāram*) of the temple staff was, until quite recently, delegated by the Mukkuvar trustees to a hereditary Vēlāḷar temple officer called the *Tēcattu Vannimai* (chief of the region), who acted as a sort of prestigious ritual factotum for the Mukkuvars. This Vēlāḷar temple chief was by right always a member of one of the two high-status kuṭis (Attaiyā kuṭi and Vaittinā kuṭi) which predominate in the Vēlāḷar village of Paḷukāmam about eight miles south of the temple. This office was seen as the joint prerogative of these two matrilineal clans, which are strongly allied in a reciprocal marriage exchange relationship. These two kuṭis also enjoyed specified prebendary rights over a large tract of temple land named after one of the clans, *Attaiyā munmāri*, in return for the ritual services they rendered to the temple, particularly during the annual festival. A special committee of elders, known as the *Kaṭukkeṅṅār*, representing all the major sub-lineages within Attaiyā and Vaittinā kuṭis had special responsibility for selecting each new Chief as well as for overseeing the management of the prebendary lands and the marshalling of revenue from these lands to fulfil the hereditary Vēlāḷar duties at the temple. At the time of the annual festival, the Vēlāḷar temple chief took up temporary residence near the temple and directed the conduct of the ritual, including the provision of

extra Vēlālar manpower (from Attiyā and Vaittinā kuṭis) to perform certain high-status tasks such as carrying of the deity's palanquin in procession and riding with the idol atop the temple car.

At the close of the festival, a ceremony is still performed which is called variously *kuṭukkai kūṛutal* or *kañci muṭṭi kūṛutal* ('calling out the pots' or 'calling out the rice-gruel pots') or *paṅku kūṛal* ('calling out the shares'). It was the Vēlālar temple chief who, until recently, called out in strict order a list of arcane titles identifying all the castes and kuṭis recognized as having a 'share' in the celebration of the temple festival. When the list was recited in 1975 by a respected Mukkuvar schoolmaster, it contained a total of 120 titles, some of which appeared to commemorate mythological figures, but most of which represented specific castes and kuṭis holding recognized positions in specific localities throughout the Batticaloa region. Three pots for members of the Moorish community were recited, but no one took them up. When a representative of a group stepped forward to receive a pot in front of the image of the god, the onlookers sometimes challenged the recipient to explain his qualification to receive that share. If necessary, this would have to be done by reciting from memory a passage from one of the recognized textual sources of Batticaloa tradition. The list of titles began with *Vētam* (Veda, or scripture in general) and ended with *Mūppan* (chief of the Paṛaiyar Drummers). In the middle of the list the elaboration of titles and sub-titles in the list bore scant relationship to present day realities. Ten different kinds of *Ceṭṭi* shares were called but not taken up, and in the end, only 36 pots were actually distributed. The principle behind the ritual is nevertheless clear: it is intended as a traditional recapitulation of the entire social order, validating group status in terms of rank-order as the shares are called. At the same time, the uniform size, shape, and content of all the pots reflects the principle that all share-holders, however humble their contribution, play a recognized role in support of the deity.⁴⁹

Much more could be said about inter-kuṭi and inter-caste relationships dramatized during the Kokkaṭṭiccōlai temple festival, but the important point here is to recognize the elements of a traditional, but unequal, balance between the clear kingly dominance of the Mukkuvars, expressed in overall control of the temple, and the competing claims of Vēlālar ritual excellence ambiguously sanctioned by their historical 'servitude' to the temple. The Vēlālars from the village of Paḷukāmam were given considerable recognition and status in the affairs of the temple, but the Mukkuvars always retained ultimate control. Tradition recalls that even when the Vēlālars were given the right to assume the former priestly duty of passing

out the *kañci muṭṭi* pots, they were required to cover the first pots, i.e. the Mukkuvars' pots, with a silk cloth, while their own pots and those of all other groups remained uncovered. The Mukkuvars, then and now, see the Vēlālars as the hereditary servants of 'their' temple and, within the context of temple ritual, as their delegated overseers of the lower service castes. As such, the Vēlālars are seen as liable to kingly Mukkuvar discipline whenever they betray their hereditary obligation to serve the deity. Temple history preserves the memory of one such misdemeanour, the complicity of the Vēlālar temple store-keeper in a theft of temple valuables. A public expiation of this sin was incorporated by the Mukkuvars into the annual temple rituals: at the end of each festival, a representative of the Vēlālars was symbolically tied and beaten by women of the Kōvilār caste at the order of the Mukkuvar trustees.

The Vēlālars have come to chafe increasingly under this symbolic domination by the Mukkuvars in recent years, and the ensuing intensification of hostility has been reflected in electoral politics within the local legislative constituency. An old antagonism seems also to have been exacerbated between the higher-status absentee 'Maruṅkūr Vēlālar' functionaries from Paḷukāmam, and the lower-status permanent Kōvilār temple servants resident in Kokkaṭṭiccōlai, who are now seeking recognition of their equal status as 'Kāraikkāl Vēlālars'. Several years ago the Vēlālars finally severed their service relationship to the Kokkaṭṭiccōlai temple entirely. They retained, however, *de facto* possession of the temple lands, which the Mukkuvars angrily claim had been given to the Vēlālars strictly on service-tenure. This claim has failed in the courts, and now the responsibility for 'supervision of the inner-duties' of the temple has fallen quite happily on the Kōvilārs, who were formerly in chronic friction with the Vēlālars over day-to-day running of the temple. Their recent promotion has also had the unforeseen effect of amplifying the Kōvilārs' claim to be considered genuine Vēlālars themselves, and, ironically, the same kinds of symbolic rights and disabilities which fuelled the Mukkuvar-Vēlālar dispute now figure prominently in Mukkuvar-Kōvilār tension.

The Kokkaṭṭiccōlai evidence is extremely useful in establishing a traditional base-line for judging data gathered elsewhere. The characteristic assumptions of matrilineal caste and kuṭi descent are found here, but the Mukkuvars of Kokkaṭṭiccōlai and the Vēlālars of Paḷukāmam also observe mutually exclusive endogamous caste boundaries and considerable residential segregation. There is a rather clear distinction between the two castes, not to mention, nowadays at least, considerable hard feeling. Vivid evidence of the Mukkuvar cultural ideal of political domination can be

seen in the temple ritual, and it is interesting to note that even where Vēlālar claims to caste precedence carry an implication of intrinsic religious superiority, these claims are given concrete expression in much the same metaphor of power, honour, and authority. Thus the Vēlālar temple chief, whose responsibility was ostensibly limited to the strictly religious conduct of the temple festival, nevertheless carried the full kingly title of *Pūpāla Kōttira Tēcattu Vannimai* ('regional chiefship of the earth-guarding lineage'). It is also 'supervision' (*atikāram*) of the rituals, rather than performance of historically recognized 'hereditary service' (*tonṭūḷiyam*) to the temple deity, which is emphasized in contemporary Vēlālar ideology. Although caste boundaries seem fairly strong in this region, there are still exceptions, notably in the considerable degree of intermarriage between Mukkuvars and Kōvilārs in the vicinity of the temple. Here, not only is the matrilineal rule invoked to distinguish the castes, it is still the basis for allocating specific categories of temple work among the different Kōvilār matrilineal lines. No doubt this Mukkuvar-Kōvilār connection has been an additional factor in the temple quarrels which have taken place over the privileges and responsibilities of the Vēlālars from Paḷukāmam.

5.10. Vēlālar dominance: Tambiluvil and Tirukkōvil

Forty miles south of Kōkkatticcōlai, it is the Vēlālars who dominate the affairs of an equally famous 'regional temple' to Lord Kantacuvāmi, known here as Cittiravēlāyutacuvāmi ('Lord of the Beautiful Lance') at Tirukkōvil. The nearby village of Tambiluvil, which has been discussed by at least three anthropologists including myself (Yalman 1967: Ch. 15; Hiatt 1973; McGilvray 1974: 130ff.), is typically described by its inhabitants as a 'Vēlālar village'. Two textually-attested Vēlālar matriclans share undoubted preeminence within the village, which is consolidated by an explicitly preferred pattern of reciprocal marriage exchange. One of the leading pair of matriclans, Kaṇṭan kuṭi, furnishes the single trustee (*Vannakkar*) of the Tirukkōvil temple by ancient matrilineal right, while the other leading clan, Kaṭṭappattān kuṭi, enjoys a similar right to appoint the single *Vannakkar* of the Kaṇṭakiyamman temple in Tambiluvil.

Many more features of the traditional temple organization and festival ritual have undergone change at Tirukkōvil than at Kōkkatticcōlai, but they are still remembered by local people. In fact, it was Yalman's informants from Tambiluvil who first mentioned the existence of the *kañci muṭṭi*, or as they expressed it, the 'kuṭi-calling', ritual which was still

being conducted at Tirukkōvil in 1955 (Yalman 1967: 326-7). There is no sign of the ritual today, nor is there much left of the Mukkuvar regional chiefship which formerly 'presided' over the annual festival. There is an acknowledged, but presently rather uninvolved, Mukkuvar *Talaivar* or *Vanniyār* (regional chief) whose title and office descends matrilineally in Paṇikkanā kuṭi, but his home is 20 miles away, and he works as an engineer in Colombo. Mukkuvar traditionalists argue that the Vēlālar *Vannakkar* of the temple was originally a rough equivalent of the Vēlālar temple chief at Kōkkatticcōlai: that is, a sort of domestic overseer of temple ritual appointed under a historic Mukkuvar mandate. The temple has been the subject of endless legal suits brought by leading Mukkuvars and others from outside the immediate vicinity, claiming mismanagement and arrogation of authority by the Vēlālar (Kaṇṭan kuṭi) trustee, but the truth is that wider Mukkuvar regional dominance can no longer be enforced over Tirukkōvil in the modern legal and social setting. The annual festival is still a major regional event, and there is still widespread sponsorship of nightly 'shares' of the ritual. However, along with the lapse of the *kañci muṭṭi* ritual, there has been an evident change of emphasis from the validation of fixed hereditary ranks in society to a more pragmatic and 'devotional' pattern of voluntary sponsorship by local settlement areas.⁵⁰

The local demographic concentration of Vēlālar matriclans in Tambiluvil has enabled the local population to maintain their sense of Vēlālar identity and to consolidate greater control over the 'regional temple' at Tirukkōvil as tangible Mukkuvar dominance has weakened. Inhabitants of the village are sometimes heard to say that they are 'unmixed' (*cutta, kalavillāta*) Vēlālars, but the strongest adherents to this claim are members of the two large, high status kuṭis who have a tradition of marriage exchange and who manage the two main temples. In fact, nearly half of the population of Tambiluvil belongs to one of these two leading matriclans (Hiatt 1973: 248), and succession to matrilineal office, e.g. temple *Vannakkar*-ship, is predicated on the assumption that the candidate's parentage has been restricted to members of these two allied kuṭis. The existence of two separately governed temple complexes in the village provides scope for some degree of 'friendly rivalry', but there is no evidence of hypergamy (Hiatt 1973: 237-8, 248). In the view of leading Vēlālars, the Viracaiya Kurukkals are merely a lesser matriclan within the Vēlālar category, and the Mukkuvars are a distinctly inferior group living in other settlements, such as Akkaraipattu.

The conceptually salient pattern of shared preeminence between Kaṇṭan kuṭi and Kaṭṭappattān kuṭi in Tambiluvil shows some of the

features of Yalman's Kandyan 'micro-caste' or ideally endogamous bilateral kindred (Yalman 1962; 1967: Ch. 9). From the remarks of some Vēlālar here, one might initially conclude that these two allied matriclans 'are' the village of Tambiluvil and virtually 'are' the Vēlālar caste. Such boastful implications are soon muddled, however, by readily available evidence that over 50% of Kaṇṭan kuṭi and Kattappattān kuṭi marriages are contracted with other, lower-prestige, matriclans (Hiatt 1973: 248). Some of these lesser kuṭis are unique to the village, but 20% of the inhabitants belong to kuṭis found also in the town of Akkaraipattu, a place which residents of Tambiluvil like to stigmatize as a 'Mukkuvar settlement'. There is little evidence of a Vēlālar ideology of intrinsic kuṭi substance or blood in Tambiluvil, but there is, once again, a strong ideology of matrilineal rights and honours which are heavily monopolized by the two dominant kuṭis. Vēlālar identity receives pronounced symbolic emphasis in Tambiluvil, but the actual degree of Vēlālar endogamy and caste separation is less than in the Kokkaṭṭiccōlai/Paḷukāmam area.

5.11. Mukkuvar-Vēlālar alliance: Akkaraipattu town

In Akkaraipattu, a mixed Tamil and Moorish town located about eight miles north of Tambiluvil on the main coastal road, the elements of a sort of sociological compromise can be seen, combining both Mukkuvar and Vēlālar caste affiliations within a stable framework of shared local prestige. The Tamil sector of the town was formerly the seat of Mukkuvar political hegemony over the surrounding district (*parru*, 'pattu'), including Tambiluvil and Tirukkōvil, an authority which was symbolized and implemented through the office of the Mukkuvar *Ūrppōṭiyār*. This office descended in the female line within Paṇikkanā kuṭi, but as in Tambiluvil, there was a clear preference and obligation to sustain a reciprocal marriage exchange relationship between a leading kuṭi and its 'traditional partners', in this case the people of Maḷuvaracan kuṭi. These two allied matriclans in Akkaraipattu account for about 36% of the total high caste Tamil population of the town, while the two dominant kuṭis in Tambiluvil account for about 48% of the population there. What is noteworthy in Akkaraipattu, however, is the fact that Paṇikkanā kuṭi retains its clear identity as a Mukkuvar matriclan, while its marriage ally, Maḷuvaracan kuṭi, is given a strong acknowledgement as a Vēlālar matriclan. In other words, the high caste kuṭis of Akkaraipattu stress the strictly matrilineal aspect of caste affiliation, and the high status marriage exchange alliance which unites

the two leading clans is seen as symbolic of a larger cross-caste alliance between the Mukkuvar and Vēlālar castes as a whole.

An interesting mythical charter, a variation on a more widespread regional legend, is perpetuated in Akkaraipattu, particularly by leading members of Paṇikkanā kuṭi. According to this story, the Mukkuvars, led by chiefs of the Paṇikkanā kuṭi, conquered and inhabited the Akkaraipattu region, but for many years they lacked any lower castes to perform domestic and ritual services for them. When a Vēlālar chief of Maḷuvaracan kuṭi moved into an uninhabited tract of land nearby with his accompanying retinue, including Washerman, Barber and Drummer castes, the local Mukkuvar Paṇikkanā kuṭi chief sought to marry one of the Vēlālar chief's sisters. He was refused but managed to abscond with the woman, who was later discovered and killed by the Vēlālars. The Mukkuvar, however, succeeded in abducting a second sister of the Vēlālar chief, and this time she became pregnant before she was located. By this time the Vēlālar chief had come to recognize that it was futile to resist the political domination of the Mukkuvars, so he gave his blessing to the marriage and relinquished his exclusive rights to control the service castes (*kuṭimai*). Henceforth, as the tale is told, the Mukkuvar chiefs of Paṇikkanā kuṭi assumed supreme power in the region, particularly with respect to the disposition of the service castes and the regulation of the system of caste and kuṭi honours (*varicai*). The Vēlālars, for their part, were given formal recognition of their high status, and their role in originally bringing the service castes, by the perpetuation of the marriage exchange alliance between Paṇikkanā and Maḷuvaracan kuṭis. While the latent rights of the Vēlālars are thus said to be enshrined in the rule that the father and the spouse of the *Ūrppōṭiyār* must always be of Maḷuvaracan kuṭi, it is surely just as important to note that the myth explicitly recognizes the Mukkuvar tactic of forced inter-marriage as a means of asserting caste equality.

In Akkaraipattu, and not merely among the two leading matriclans, the caste honours of the Mukkuvars and Vēlālars are reckoned strictly matrilineally. If a person's kuṭi is historically and textually tagged to the Mukkuvar caste, he is a Mukkuvar; if to the Vēlālar caste, he is a Vēlālar. When the kuṭi name is more vague or anomalous (accounting for approximately 28% of the high caste population in a relatively cosmopolitan settlement like Akkaraipattu), adding the charismatic 'Vēlālar' title to the matriclan name seems to be common practice, e.g. Vēṭa Vēlālar ('hunting Vēlālar'), Ciṅkaḷa Vēlālar ('Sinhalese Vēlālar'), Vīra Vēlālar ('Heroic or Martial Vēlālar'). The local high caste temple to Lord Piḷḷaiyār is admin-

istered by a board of 13 kuṭi trustees (*Vannakkar*) representing all the numerically significant matrilineal clans in the vicinity, but traditionally Paṅikkanā kuṭi and Maḷuvaracan kuṭi enjoy special preeminence in ritual. The temple priests are Vīraçaiva Kurukkals of the Tēcantira kuṭi. The membership of all the Kurukkaḷ matrilineal groups together constitute a group strong enough numerically in this area to have their own *Vannakkar* on the temple board and to be able also to share modestly in the sponsorship of their own festival 'share'. Both Mukkuvar and Vēḷāḷar kuṭis share similar rights to the display of *varicai* honours, and there is no evidence of any local Mukkuvar–Vēḷāḷar antagonism. The Vēḷāḷars of Tambiluvil admit that Maḷuvaracan kuṭi is a Vēḷāḷar matrilineal clan, but they deem it of lesser rank because it is not mentioned in the standard textual sources and because of its close intermarriage with Mukkuvar clans. Conversely, the Vēḷāḷars of Tambiluvil are seen by the people of Akkaraipattu as somewhat arrogant and exclusive, although some of the more 'reasonable' people of Tambiluvil have married and settled matrilocally in Akkaraipattu with no apparent problem. The caste and matrilineal system in Akkaraipattu, where much of my initial research took place, shows no dependence upon an ideology of ritual purity or coded bodily substance; rather it exhibits once again all the symbolism of political hierarchy which is characteristic of the Batticaloa region and which seems to have been codified and enforced under the reign of the Mukkuvars. In Akkaraipattu, it is not some anthropologically reified notion of ritual purity which the prominent Mukkuvar–Vēḷāḷar matrilineal alliance preserves, but the vestiges of real political condominium.

5.12. The Mukkuvar cultural paradigm

There are many aspects of social organization in Batticaloa which have been omitted from this summary account, as well as others requiring further research, but the importance of the cultural paradigm which was traditionally imposed throughout the region under the *Mukkuvar vannimai*, the chiefship of the Mukkuvars, deserves a final comment. Much of what has been described here relates specifically to the high caste stratum of Mukkuvars, Vēḷāḷars, and Kurukkals, but it should never be forgotten that the same complex of matrilineal caste affiliations, matrilineal rights, and matrilineal kinship institutions is shared across the entire Hindu caste hierarchy. Where certain caste groups have broken away from their subordinated roles in Mukkuvar- and Vēḷāḷar-controlled temple ritual, for example,

they have endowed their own matrilineal clans with responsibilities and honours in their own caste temples which replicate many of the patterns of the high caste kuṭis. Today some high caste informants are unaware of the intricacies of low caste matrilineal organization and disdain to enquire about them, but in fact the matrilineal clans of most of the lower castes are generally as viable today as those of the higher castes. Succession to the office of lower-caste headman, where such office still exists, is in many cases matrilineal. Numerous court cases, both past and present, attest to the strength of lower-caste feeling about preserving matrilineal temple honours, particularly among the Taṭṭār Smith caste. If economic resources permitted, it is likely that additional low caste disputes would surface in the courts. Under the traditional *Mukkuvar vannimai*, of course, such disputes would have been settled by the local Mukkuvar chief and his councillors.

The pervasive Mukkuvar cultural paradigm of seven sub-chiefdoms within Batticaloa, and seven kuṭis within each caste, is both elaborated in the local texts and sung in the songs of local informants. The circumstantial evidence, at any rate, suggests that the society of the Batticaloa coast was profoundly influenced by the ideas and the institutions of the Mukkuvars, who (it would appear) encouraged, perhaps even enforced, the structural replication of their matrilineal clan system in all of the lower castes.⁵¹ Whether any of the Vēḷāḷars or Vīraçaiva Kurukkals, or any of the lower castes, brought matrilineal institutions with them when they arrived in Batticaloa is presently unknown. Despite the likelihood of Mukkuvar origins in Kerala, the names of the remaining castes of the region nearly all correspond to well-known castes of Jaffna and Tamilnadu.⁵² Some names of matrilineal clans and some regional place-names show resemblances to those of Kerala, but the language spoken in Batticaloa has been identified simply as an archaic and rather literary dialect of Tamil (Zvelebil 1966).

Whatever the origins of the various castes, and whatever their mode and sequence of arrival in Batticaloa, it is clear that the dominant Mukkuvar political system sought to uphold a distinctive pattern of matrilineal rights and institutions throughout the entire population. Even the Moors, a major segment of the population who have presumably been present throughout the period of Mukkuvar rule, follow clearly derivative social institutions based upon matrilineal organization. In fact, it seems quite likely that the size of the Moorish population of Batticaloa (44% in the 1971 Census) is attributable in some measure to the voluntary conversion of both ordinary Mukkuvars and members of other castes under circumstances of harsh domination by Mukkuvar chiefs.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1. A critique of purity and bio-moral substance theories

It would scarcely be feasible to 'disprove' the highly encompassing purity theory of Dumont or the immanent transactional/bio-moral substance approaches advocated by Marriott and Inden and others, nor has this been my aim in this paper. I have sought instead to suggest in a more practical way, by considering some original ethnographic data, that these approaches are typically too condensed and reductionist, or too vague and universalizing, to be of heuristic value in field research.

One might, for example, wish to discount the absence of Brahmans from the Batticaloa region and see the local Vēļāļars as structurally filling the 'Brahman role'. In such a Dumontian recension, the Vīracaiya Kurukkaļs could be seen as a doctrinally weak embodiment of the hierarchical principle, posing no bar to the assertion of ritual purity by the Vēļāļars (surrogate Brahmans) in the context of Mukkuvar (surrogate Kshatriya) power in regional temple organization. What this paper has attempted to demonstrate, however, is that invoking a single, abstract, and highly condensed attribute such as 'ritual purity' in this context suggests a misleading identification of Batticaloa Vēļāļar thinking with some idealized form of Brahmanical theology presumed to exist in India. In fact, it has been found that Vēļāļars here do *not* tend to articulate their claim to high status in terms of an indigenous theory of blood purity or in a systematic vocabulary of purity/pollution; instead, they share the Mukkuvar ideology of authority and matrilineal rights and honours. So understated is the idea of caste purity in Batticaloa, and so pronounced is the kingly 'liturgy' of honour and authority (Hocart 1950; Dumont 1970: 216), that it is doubtful whether the concept of ritual purity would have occurred as a major focus of analysis if there were not already such a voluminous literature on the subject. With the decline of effective Mukkuvar political hegemony in modern times, the Vēļāļars have utilized this historically sanctioned politico-legal idiom to amplify and strengthen their latent claims to *both* religious *and* political eminence within localities having a strong Vēļāļar identity. This aggrandizing tendency seems to be a common feature of modern Vēļāļar ideology in Jaffna and in Tamilnadu (Banks 1957: 197–200; 1960: 66–9; David 1974: 51–63; Barnett 1970; 1973a: 183–5), and it is also in accord with recent research which indicates that in South Asia 'purity' and 'power' are, in certain contexts at

least, aspects of the same thing (O'Flaherty 1969; Wadley 1975; Marriott 1976a: 113).

It must be obvious, also, that Dumont's whole analytic strategy of restricting the meaning of the term 'caste' to situations in which the shastric ideal of the Brahman/Kshatriya relationship constitutes the fundamental model of inter-caste structure not only rules out facile Western comparisons in the sociological jargon of 'social stratification' (one of his explicit aims), it also hinders more culturally sympathetic comparisons within the larger Indic world itself. While, for example, data from some parts of Sri Lanka or Nepal which conforms to the Brahman/Kshatriya ideal can be taken as further confirmation of Dumont's viewpoint (as such doctrines are assumed to have their origins in Indian law and scripture), any discrepant finding can be dismissed either as the artifact of an insufficiently holistic pan-Indian point of view or as a sign of mere 'quasi-caste rather than caste proper' (Dumont 1970: 216). In either event, some of the more interesting questions about how regional social systems in South Asia actually operate are neglected. What, for example, should we make of the existence of Vīracaiya Kurukkaļs instead of Brahmans in Batticaloa? It might be taken as evidence of an 'incomplete' caste system, intelligible only as a segment of the larger Indian society; but that offers scant insight into the distinctive beliefs and attitudes of the local inhabitants, especially those of the Vīracaiya Kurukkaļs themselves. On the other hand, if we try to settle the question by designating Sri Lankan society as having 'quasi-caste', we immediately confront a whole series of bootless classificatory quibbles. Are Saivite Tamils with 'quasi-caste' really then only 'quasi-Hindus'?

The recent 'ethnosociological' approach to South Asian caste systems, which has been developed by Marriott and Inden to supersede such rigidities in Dumont's framework, seeks to account for an even greater degree of ethnographic diversity by arguing for a widely shared set of South Asian transactional strategies by means of which social genera (including castes and kinship groups) mix, preserve, and improve their intrinsic bio-moral substances and attributes. There are no prior restrictions in this approach which would rule out data from Sri Lanka; in fact, the authors are hopeful that it will clarify Buddhist, Islamic, and various sectarian social systems as well as orthodox Hindu caste systems. This ethnosociological theory is said to be a 'generative model' based upon shastric legal, medical, and philosophical theories as well as upon 'what we know of South Asian actors' pervasively monistic cognitions of reality'

of funerary ritual, and there only haphazardly, as the balls of rice flour which are sometimes offered to the souls of the departed. This is recognized to be a relatively new and by no means widespread feature of funeral and death commemoration rituals in the Batticaloa region: it is presently being introduced through the influence of Jaffna Brahman-trained officiants, and there is virtually no common appreciation of its etymology or symbolism. In the area of marriage alliance, which is a pronounced feature of matriclan relationships at the local level, there is likewise no ideology of conserving bodily substance, only the idea of sharing local rights to matrilineal offices and exercising the symbols of political dominance connected with matriclan titles.

Just as Batticaloa concepts of bodily substance are confined to the ethnosemantic domain of medicine, so the local concepts of 'code for conduct' are expressed in the domain of political authority and historical honour. Everyday extensions of the shastric notion of dharma as in-born, bio-moral family and caste duty are very rarely invoked by the people of Batticaloa. During the course of fieldwork, the word dharma (*tarumam*) was most often heard in the context of alms-giving (*tarumatānam*); it was never applied to the behaviour of castes (cf. 'jātidharma', Marriott and Inden 1973: 7). The term dharma in Batticaloa has the primary connotation of individual, particularly charitable, duty. In fact, it was striking to discover in fieldwork that such ideas as dharma (*tarumam*) and karma (*karumam*) and reincarnation were seldom mentioned even in discussions of religion. The popular religious aspiration, and apparently expectation, is that the soul should attain the heaven of Civa (*Civanāti*, 'the foot of Civa') after death. Souls of the dead linger about this world until the final food offerings are made on the 31st day, when the messenger of Yaman (god of death) conducts the soul to its judgement at the hands of Cittirai Puttiran, whose scales weigh its accumulated sin and merit (*pāvappuṇṇiyam*). Theoretically, punishments include consignment to various hells and/or rebirth at an appropriate level in the natural/social order. In practice, however, great hope is placed on the likelihood of at least a saintly (*tēvar*) incarnation, if not something better. Although one may elicit the orthodox theory of karmic rebirth, it is not typically invoked to explain the nature or ranking of castes. Many of these same tendencies have been noted in the popular beliefs of non-Brahman villagers in Tamilnadu (Maloney 1975; Moffatt 1979: 268, 296-7). Basic Vīraśaiva doctrines rejecting rebirth (Dubois 1906: 116) may also have influenced popular attitudes in Batticaloa.

The vocabulary of caste and matriclan behaviour, as we have seen

already, is one, not of transcendental dharma, but of historically instituted relationships of service, enforced obligation, respect, honour, chiefly sovereignty and the like. These 'codes for conduct', to borrow for a moment the Marriott and Inden terminology, are not conceived as immanent moral qualities of bodily substance but as rules in a geographically delimited political and legal system, sanctioned by historical precedent, and regulated by Mukkuvar and Vēlājar caste authorities in sub-regions of the district. Patterns of inter-caste transactions between high caste people and members of the middle and lower castes are *behaviourally similar* to those reported from other parts of South India: intermarriage is forbidden, cooked food is never passed upward, and a wide range of distancing behaviours are required of the lower castes. The *indigenous explanation* of this, however, stresses not the mixing of coded substances but the need to enforce and maintain the deference (*mariyātai*) and the respect (*matippu*) of the lower castes. The ultimate justification for caste differentiation is a religious goal, i.e., the maintenance and support of temple rituals instituted by kingly vows, and the more off-hand justifications elicited from informants were also couched in the metaphor of civic duty and functional division of labour. The lower castes, particularly the *kutimai* castes, are indeed polluted and polluting by virtue of their intimate contact with the *tutakku* which accompanies birth, death, menstruation, and their (assumed) exposure to various exuviae and putrefactions. The explanation of low caste status in terms of karmic retribution is not unknown, but it seems to be mainly a 'back-up' theory not well integrated with the more readily voiced ideology of an ancient kingly division of labour (see also Sharma 1973: 362). These castes might equally well be portrayed as polluted because they are low, as low because they are polluted or sinful.

It may be objected that all of the specifically mentioned interests, such as political authority, enforced servitude, caste respect, ritual preeminence, maternal affection, matrilineal attachments, even the legendary associations of matriclan names, while divorced from concepts of blood or bodily matter, can nevertheless be subsumed under much more liberal South Asian categories of gross versus subtle 'substances'. This is the clear implication in Marriott's discussion of transactions in 'coded influences that are thought of as subtler, but still substantial and powerful forms, such as perceived words, ideas, appearances, and so forth' (1976a: 111), as well as in his treatment of honour and violence as transactional media (1976a: 132-3). The data on 'worship' substances, 'territorial' substances, and 'occupational' substances in middle period Bengal (Inden 1976: 16ff.) and

(Marriott 1976a: 113). If such a thing were possible, it seeks to 'encompass' Dumont's theory, to show it to be unduly rigid and ethnocentric.

There are two fundamental components to the Marriott and Inden formulation: the first is the concept of monistic 'substance-code', said to correspond to commonsense indigenous perceptions of an intrinsic link between the composition of living bodily tissue ('substance') and the morally-regulated actions of the individual ('code'). The second component, recently elaborated by Marriott (1976a), is a transactional grammar or logic by which actors, in their capacity as individuals as well as members of kin-groups and castes, seek to protect and improve their substance-code by following one of four logical interaction strategies in competition with other individuals and groups. The theory has a strong impetus toward universality: every genera is defined by a substance-code, every action (even non-action) is some form of transaction, every conceivable mode of human accomplishment is a medium conveying substance-code between actors. The authors illustrate the applicability of the theory to an extremely wide range of South Asian textual and ethnographic material, and in fact there are some respects in which the theory fits the data from Batticaloa quite well.

It was found, for example, that there was no one single 'symbolic vector', such as blood, which represented to Batticaloa informants the essence of matriliney. The multiple sources of matrilineal ties, such as nourishment, affection, propinquity, matrilocal household and dowry property, can all be interpreted as mutually reinforcing transactional links to the women of the matriline. Although theories of the spread of death pollution showed sharp differences of opinion, those favouring a matrilineal interpretation reflected many of the same transactional concerns. In the realms of domestic ritual symbolism and public temple 'shares' and honours, the transactional nature of caste and matriclan competition is quite explicit and formalized. Group participation in the major regional temple festivals is perhaps traditionally the most definitive transaction of all. The formal properties of the 'transactional logic' elucidated by Marriott would appear to have great analytic usefulness in Batticaloa and throughout South Asia.

What fails to match the Marriott and Inden projection in Batticaloa is the indigenous belief system which explains or justifies these transactions. It has now become a canon of the 'ethnosociological' approach of Marriott and Inden, and at least a commonly accepted working hypothesis among other writers such as Barnett, David, Östör, and Fruzzetti, that there is a Protean concept of bodily 'substance-code' underlying and informing

South Asian kinship and caste transactions. The most clearly formulated versions of this concept are adduced from Ayurvedic medical texts and shastric law books, where a highly developed Sanskritic vocabulary of flowing atom-like particles (*pinḍa*) and in-born generic duties (*dharma*) serves to enunciate a unified theory of the world. These scholarly textual theories are said to be reflected today in 'the cognitive assumptions actually prevalent in South Asia' (Marriott and Inden 1974: 983), in the 'world of constituted things as conceived by most South Asians', and in what 'recent ethnography tells of the same sorts of cognitions among Hindus in rural areas' (Marriott 1976a: 110, 113). In the words of its authors, the ethnosociological theory 'borrows what now seems to be a repeated empirical finding — the cognitive nonduality of action and actor, code and substance — and uses it as a universal axiom for restating, through deduction, what we think we know about caste systems' (Marriott and Inden 1977: 229).

Research in Batticaloa does not support this universal axiom. Local thinking about the nature of the body is well developed, but it is seen as the domain of medicine and health (*vaittiyam, cukam*), not as an extension of moral philosophy and sociology. It is only within this context that informants feel at ease to discuss such impolite topics as blood, breast milk, and semen. The 'qualities' (*kuṇam*) which are attributed to the gestating foetus are usually morally neutral qualities such as appearance, stature, strength and intelligence, while propensity toward moral or immoral conduct is typically felt to develop in childhood and later life. The idea of the untainted innocence of the young child is, in fact, a very strong cultural theme, and for this reason young children often play an important role in Hindu rituals. It is evident that caste and kuṭi differences are not conceptualized in terms of bodily substance. In fact, I have already noted that questions about the possible intrinsic caste or matriclan-linked qualities of the body or of the blood met with the common reply that 'Blood is all the same'.

This finding is consistent with the lack of widespread inter-caste food exchange patterns at weddings and other domestic observances. It is also reflected in the absence of any belief in the transubstantiation of a bride's bodily substance or transfer of her descent group affiliation to that of her husband at the time of marriage (or vice versa). As for an indigenous theory of atomic particles, there is no formulation which local people cite aside from the theory of Ayurvedic humours, which is invoked in a specifically medical context. The word *pinḍa* (T. *pinṭam*), cited in shastric sources as the word for particles of matter, is known only in the context

the concept of 'love' as a bodily substance in Bengali kinship (Inden and Nicholas 1977: 21), exemplify some ethnographic applications of this omnibus concept. To the extent that such an exhaustively monistic concept of 'substance' is ethnographically documented and described among specific groups of people in a particular place and time, the finding is noteworthy and significant. As an *a priori* conceptual framework, however, or as a 'universal axiom', it seems likely to lead to a distorted re-definition of fieldwork experience. There is also the problem that where a popular culture of radical monism could be empirically shown to assimilate *everything* to relativized 'substance-code', the result would be a viewpoint analytically trivial and solipsistic. As a limiting case, radical monism begs the fundamental question of why individuals and groups choose particular transactional media or pursue particular transactional ends, since it is axiomatic that all substance-codes are mutually transformable. In order to anchor their substance-code theory and give it some firm reference points, the authors make their strongest appeal not to distinct, locally-situated, and ethnographically-attested models of social virtue and social status, but to 'Hindu macrosociology' (Marriott 1976a: 112), also known as 'The Theory of the Varna' (Dumont 1970: Ch. 3). Judging from the results of fieldwork in Batticaloa, the formal 'tactical' possibilities inherent in the two-dimensional matrix of transactional logic (Marriott 1976a: 114-23) may prove to have greater ethnographic usefulness in South Asia than a universal belief in miscible substance-codes.

It should be noted that Marriott and Inden have assessed the range of regional, historical, and sectarian variation in South Asian caste systems succinctly and informatively in several publications, devoting considerable attention to features of South Indian and Sri Lankan caste systems which are also found in Batticaloa (Marriott 1960; Marriott and Inden 1974). In the summary formulations of their 'ethnosociological' theory, however, they argue that regional variation and change in caste systems can be made intelligible 'as replications and deletions, as permutations and combinations, as negative and reciprocal transformations of coded substance according with the preceding cognitive repertory of kinds of nondual units, relationships, and processes'. They further state that 'deletions and replications are perhaps the commonest devices' (Marriott and Inden 1977: 236). The ideology of caste and matriclan organization in Batticaloa might seem a classic case of 'deletion', were this whole mode of interpretation not so unsatisfactory; not only does it assume what is yet unproven, i.e., the existence of a popular monistic theory of substance-codes, but it also enables the authors to bolster their case by appeal to

what is circumstantially disconfirming evidence ('deletions'). One fears that 'deletions' could be made to do for Marriott and Inden what the 'encompassing' relationship does for Dumont: that is, to explain away the awkward empirical anomalies (Lynch 1977: 262).

The more ethnographically-specific works of writers like Yalman, Barnett, David, Östör, and Fruzzetti, who wish to retain something of the holistic Dumontian purity versus power distinction but who have also detected various ideas of coded bodily substance in the indigenous cultural rationales offered to explain caste and kinship patterns, are also, in these particular respects, of little help in sorting out the Batticaloa caste and matriclan data. It is in fact the *non*-substance-linked aspects of these research studies, particularly Yalman's analyses of Sinhalese kinship categories and domestic organization, which have proven most useful to the understanding of society in Batticaloa. Although Yalman was, I believe, quite misled to suppose that ritual purity and hypergamy were basic features of matriclan structure on the eastern littoral, his consistent attention to the implications of marital residence and domestic patterns in other parts of the island has provided extremely useful insights which apply equally well to the matrilineal households of Batticaloa. His attention to the 'contradictions' of bilateral caste affiliation implied in aristocratic Kandyan patrilineal *wamsa* titles and his general emphasis upon the capacity of unilineal descent rules to produce dramatic regional variation in the degree of 'bilaterality' expressed in caste and kinship also suggest important parallels with Batticaloa. His concern with empirical flexibility and variation in both social organization and social ideology within the relatively small geographical compass of Sri Lanka and adjacent parts of South India suggests a more pragmatic and constructive orientation to the data of South Asian anthropology than the single-minded pursuit of pan-Indic varna dichotomies, or pan-Indic bodily substances, or pan-Indic monistic cognitions.

6.2. The social and historical context of caste ideologies

I have argued that the ideology of Mukkuvar dominance, emphasizing martial values and matrilineal rights, is not a thin kingly veneer but rather a pervasive cultural influence at all levels. However, it would not merely be sufficient to demonstrate that this ideology of Mukkuvar dominance deviates from the caste ideologies of Brahmanical purity or coded biomoral substance which are reported in other parts of Sri Lanka and India. In this highly compressed account, I have also tried to suggest some

plausible historical, cultural, and social structural *reasons why* this particular ideology occurs in this region and among these particular groups. It is this type of intellectual concern which seems lacking in much recent South Asian research into the cultural symbolism of caste.

The transactional substance-code approach of Marriott and Inden, although put forward as a more generally applicable and more culturally valid theory than that of Dumont, actually shares with the latter the same kind of theoretical goal: a single formula to explain all South Asian caste systems. Both of these approaches, if not ahistoric as a matter of principle, are predicated upon an assumption of the underlying uniformity of 'Indian thought' since Vedic times. Both of these approaches recognize the existence of regional and sectarian variation, but their true goal seems nevertheless to capture the essence of South Asian social thought as if by heroic application of Benedict's theory of 'cultural wholes' to the entire Subcontinent. Both of these approaches argue for the existence of a culturally-immanent and, at some level, uniform set of assumptions governing caste behaviour, but ambiguities about just *where* these postulated ideas reside and *how* they are empirically manifested in South Asian culture make it difficult to know exactly what should count as evidence. My approach in this essay has been to remain as empirical and as close to overt culture and behaviour as possible; if 'purity' or 'substance-codes' are meant instead to represent unconscious models, allegorical themes, or otherwise indirect formulations of reality, it is not apparent from what these authors have written.

The extent to which highly developed caste ideologies of purity or of bio-moral substance predominate in South Asia is an empirical question which we will no doubt know a great deal more about as ethnographic research proceeds, but it seems just as important to consider the origin and disposition of these cultural beliefs within historical and social structural settings. The need for this may seem more obvious with anomalous or recalcitrant data such as I have presented from Batticaloa, but it is really a basic concern of any anthropological study. A strictly 'cultural account' of symbol systems and indigenous classifications may have its uses (Schneider 1968), but it also prompts a whole range of behavioural and social structural questions. It is also relevant to consider, for example, (a) who generated, codified and transmitted the ideas and why; (b) who had exposure to the ideas and who did not; (c) what degree of selective emphasis, scepticism, apathy, or ignorance may have been entailed in this process; and (d) why these ideas may have been congenial to certain groups and not to others. The existence of an ancient literate tradition in

South Asia, and the historical role of Brahmans and other castes as professional scholars and scribes, suggests not only the wide distribution of indigenous South Asian theories of caste; it also points to the likelihood of some formal arbitrariness, discontinuity, and lack of fit between the elements of the received pan-Indian textual tradition and local socio-cultural systems (Goody and Watt 1963; Goody 1968). While literate religious traditions commonly feature the jealous preservation of orthodoxy and the adoption of an esoteric vocabulary among the professional literati, it is by no means certain that theoretical concepts and lexical fragments found in the everyday thinking and parlance of ordinary villagers will always reflect the textual definitions (*vide* the word 'dharma' in Batticaloa).

Even the most well-founded 'emic' approach to South Asian cultural materials cannot consist solely in the anthropological admiration of indigenous categories and their 'monistic' or 'dualistic' logic; it must also seek to understand the limits of cognition, the experience and social manipulation of symbolic forms (Geertz 1964; 1973), and the effects of both 'ideal and material interests' upon the content of indigenous reasoning (Weber in Gerth and Mills 1958: 280). Although it would add an element of plausibility to their interpretive schemes, both Dumont and the 'substance and code' writers seem indifferent to the need for a sociology of knowledge. Numerous precedents for such an approach to the study of South Asian civilization can be found in Max Weber's analysis of Hinduism (1958), in Robert Redfield's concept of the 'social organization of tradition' (1956), and in Milton Singer's work on the propagation of Sanskrit Hinduism in South India (1972). Indeed, these issues are central to Marriott's own earlier work on the interconnections between the Indian village and its civilizational matrix (1955) and on 'multiple reference' in Indian caste systems (1968b). Even the rare epigram I have chosen from Dumont's *Homo Hierarchicus* acknowledges the need for greater attention to variation and discontinuity in ideologies of caste. This essay has presented some data on Tamil caste and matriclan ideology in eastern Sri Lanka in the hope they will stimulate, if necessary resuscitate, these concerns in South Asian anthropology.

Mukkuvar vannimai: Tamil caste and matriclan ideology in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka

Initial fieldwork in the Batticaloa region was carried out for 18 months in 1969-71 while I was a doctoral candidate at the University of Chicago. Financial support for this research was provided by NIMH Pre-doctoral Fellowship No. MH38122 and NIMH Research Grant No. MH11765 awarded by the U.S. Public Health Service. Additional shorter (4 to 6 month) periods of fieldwork were undertaken in the same region in 1975 and in 1978, while on leave from teaching duties at Cambridge University. This recent research was funded by British SSRC Research Grants No. HR3276 and HR5549, and also by grants from the Smuts Memorial Fund and the University of Cambridge Travelling Expenses Fund. I am indebted to all the people of Batticaloa who assisted me in this research, and especially to K. Mahesvaralingam, Nilam Hamead, K. Kanthanathan, and V. Ratnam.

- 1 It has been pointed out that Dumont's formulations were less 'dualistic' in his earlier writings (Marriott 1976b: 190-2).
- 2 David (1977: 182) states that 'the classificatory term for the high castes (*uyirnda cāthul*) [sic] derives from the term for spirit (*uyir*)', and he cites this as evidence for the belief that 'spirit resides in the blood'. This is surely a lexical error deriving from the mis-transcription of colloquial dialect. The derivation of the expression is from *uyar*, meaning 'to rise, to become high' (Winslow 1862: 137), hence the phrase *uyarnta cātika!* (lit. 'high castes'). This expression is common also in Batticaloa, where it is sometimes colloquially pronounced '*ucanta cāti*'. See section 3.1.
- 3 The term 'Moor' dates from the Portuguese period (1505-1658 A.D.), but it has remained the official designation of the native Muslim population of the island for Census and other purposes. In the Batticaloa region they are all Sunni Muslims of the Shāfi legal school. The Tamil name for this community is *Cōnakar*, but in the present climate of pan-Islamic consciousness many prefer to be known simply as 'Muslims'.
- 4 The largest concentration of Christians is in the town of Batticaloa itself, where Roman Catholics, many of them Portuguese Burghers (*Parānkiyar*), are a very strong community. Methodists and Anglicans have established smaller congregations there. There are modest Christian groups in all of the major towns along the east coast, plus some tiny Christian groups inland. Roman Catholics are by far the largest denomination.
- 5 Starting in the early years of Independence (post-1947), the government of Sri Lanka sponsored a large-scale irrigation and land-settlement project in the Gal Oya Valley, approximately 15 or 20 miles inland from the Tamil and Moorish settlements along the coast. This has made some new lands available to Tamil and Moorish cultivators, but it has also brought an influx of landless Sinhalese

- colonists to what was formerly a sparsely populated area to the west (Farmer 1957). There has been very little mixing of the Tamil and Sinhalese populations and a good deal of communal friction. There is archaeological evidence of ancient Buddhist settlements in the Batticaloa region, but most of the present Sinhalese population is of recent origin.
- 6 To the casual observer, there is a great deal of physical resemblance between the Moors and the Tamils. This is acknowledged as the result of prior intermarriage. Some of the Moors, however, do have more noticeable Arab features.
 - 7 Until a few years ago, when local Muslim reformers decided that it was un-Islamic and undesirable to employ Paraiyars to provide music at mosque festivals, weddings, and circumcisions, these Drummers gained a substantial income from the Moorish sector. In other settlements in the region, either Paraiyars or higher-status Naṭṭuvar Musicians are still employed by Moors.
 - 8 The excluded local groups are (A) the Portuguese Burghers (*Parankiyar*), who are identified as Christian mixed-breeds linked to the European race (*Vellaikkārar*, 'White Men'); (B) the Kaṭaiyar Lime-burners, who are Christian newcomers during the past 40 years; (C) the Cakkiliyar Sweepers, who are seen as a tiny number of very recent 'Indian' newcomers; and (D) the Kuravar Gypsies, who are seen as forest-dwelling newly-Christianized semi-tribals. There are also settlements of other castes in other parts of the region which are only partially familiar to informants in Akkaraipattu: namely Kōvilār Temple Servants (ranked just beneath Mukkuvar), Karaiyār Fishermen (ranked roughly on a par with Taṭṭār Smiths), and Cīrpātam Cultivators (sometimes associated with Karaiyārs). For additional details on these groups see McGilvray 1974.
 - 9 The term *kaṭṭuppāṭu* in Batticaloa is not used to characterize the relationship between castes. It is, however, heard in the context of ritual rules and devotional austerities, where it means 'restriction' in the general sense of the term.
 - 10 As this inference is based on data gathered in a survey questionnaire, it is possible that some of the trend is an artifact of a tendency to think of the spouse's matrilineal kinship connection, e.g., MBD, rather than a patrilineal connection which might be equally valid, e.g., FZD. This could arise in the numerous instances when MB and FZ (real or classificatory) are husband and wife. A genealogical examination of each response to this question was not possible.
 - 11 The rates of *kuṭi* exogamy revealed in samples of marriages from each caste are as follows: Vēlālar + Kurukkaḷ + Mukkuvar - 97% (N = 261), Taṭṭār - 100% (N = 59), Cāṇṭār - 100% (N = 44), Vaṇṇār - 74% (N = 46), Nāvitar - 39% (N = 43), Paraiyar - 81% (N = 58).
 - 12 Offspring, regardless of sex, bear the personal name of their father, followed by their own sex-marked personal name, which is often chosen with the aid of astrological signs. There is some genealogical evidence of the Tamil custom of repeating names in alternate generations, but the practice seems much rarer in the present day.
 - 13 See note 42.
 - 14 Yalman recorded references to traditional marriage relationships between matriclans in Tambiluvil, but he did not appreciate the implication of isogamy which these expressions convey. His informants seem to have said nothing about the formal non-marriageable relationships between clans which are logically entailed (Yalman 1967: 289, 326).
 - 15 The views represented are primarily those of high caste Hindu males. A quarter (9/35) of these informants, including the only two Moors, were full or part-time non-Western curing practitioners: a handful (4/35) were Vīracaiva Kurukkaḷ temple priests, and a similar number (6/35) were low caste informants (1 Taṭṭār, 1 Vaṇṇār, 4 Paraiyars). Not every informant could answer all of the specialized questions I asked, but the sample consisted of the most knowledgeable people in these areas of enquiry. The data they supplied have the characteristic strengths and weaknesses of all intensive first-hand fieldwork material, but I think the most important potential sources of bias have been mentioned.
 - 16 It was interesting to observe some of the minor confrontations between traditional medical systems and Western medicine which arose during the research. There are a number of government hospitals in the region, as well as some Western-trained private practitioners, and Western medical concepts have entered the popular culture. There was an awkward moment during one interview on the topic of the beneficial effects of 'forceful' circulation of the blood. Someone present asked why, if this were true, so many older people today were said to die of 'high blood pressure'.
 - 17 This was a source of initial embarrassment to some local curing practitioners and other informants who had acquired a degree of awareness of Western theories of reproduction and who were afraid to contradict my presumed beliefs. Several informants knew that the testicles were considered to be very important in Western medicine, but all were relieved not to be held accountable for their function.
 - 18 Both among Kandyian Sinhalese (Yalman 1967: 137) and among Koṇṭaikkattī Vēlālar in Tamilnadu (Barnett 1976: 146) it is reported that repeated sexual intercourse is recommended during pregnancy to supply additional semen which will nourish or strengthen the foetus.
 - 19 Tangible evidence of the prior existence of this opening is seen in the fontanelle, the soft spot every newborn baby has at the top of the cranium.
 - 20 The similarity between seminal fluids and breast milk in this respect is reflected in the fact that one of the rarer terms for male semen is *kāmappāl*, 'milk of lust'.
 - 21 Some informants say that, just as a man's blood (semen) goes into the woman's body during sex, so some of the woman's blood (female

- semen) enters the man through his penis. This can have a beneficial effect upon the man if the woman is young and vigorous herself. Copulation between an elderly man and a very young woman has a potential payoff for the man in terms of his bodily reinvigoration, but, because of the simultaneous expenditure of the old man's weak and scarce blood, it is recognized to be a very risky business. This set of beliefs about reciprocal transfer of blood between sex partners seems more widespread among the Sinhalese population of the island (Kemper 1979: 489). Family planning officials in Colombo told me that some young Sinhalese men had objected strongly to the use of the condom because it threatened to block the reverse flow of beneficial female semen into their own bodies. The inverse of this belief is reflected in the Tamilnadu *Koṇṭaikkatti Vēlālars'* concern that polluted blood might enter a man's penis and mix with his own blood during intercourse with a low caste woman (Barnett 1976: 144).
- 22 In most ordinary marriages, the groom is rarely a 'stranger' in the sense of someone unknown, since he is usually a local person, frequently a cross-cousin of some sort. It is in wealthy, high-status families that the groom is most likely to be a true stranger to the bride's household, since these marriages are arranged to a greater extent according to a calculus of wealth, education, and occupational status, as opposed to kinship ties.
- 23 There is explicit evidence that Tamil kinship ideas in south India sometimes recognize the concept of 'share' (*panku*) or 'sharer' (*pankāli*) of patrilineal descent and inheritance (Beck 1972: 217; Barnett 1970: 58; 1976: 140-1). In his 'cultural account' of Jaffna Tamil kinship categories, David (1973a) divides the kinship domain under three headings, defining *cakōtarar* as 'sharers of natural bodily substance', *campantikkārar* as 'uniters of n.b.s.', and *cakalar* as 'non-uniters of n.b.s.', although these designations appear to have nothing to do with the etymology or denotative meaning of these words in Tamil. There is no way to know how Jaffna kinsmen really think about each other from an analysis which is framed in such alien jargon, nor is it possible to understand how these abstractions were generated. The only actual use of the Tamil word 'sharer' (*pankāli*) in Jaffna is said to be in the domain of inheritance, where it overlaps with David's category of 'non-sharing non-uniters', leaving the argument truly opaque.
- 24 One of the frequently mentioned ailments of the blood is *kotippu* ('boiling'), which is described as a kind of over-heated state of the blood which generates internal pressure leading to the rupture of blood vessels and haemorrhage. Today it is sometimes linked to the Western diagnosis of 'heart attack', which is assumed to consist of a physical bursting of the heart under the intense pressure of the 'boiling' blood.
- 25 Several informants argued against the idea of intrinsic differences in the blood of different castes and matriclans by reasoning that, if such differences existed, medications supplied either by traditional curing practitioners or by the government hospital would necessarily affect patients of different castes differently. The fact that medication (for a given ailment) was uniform supported the contention that blood was uniform.
- 26 States of pollution, ordinary purity, and enhanced purity are distinguished respectively among Havik Brahmans as *muttuchettu*, *mailigē*, and *maḍi* (Harper 1964: 152); among Coorgs as *polē*, *mailigē*, and *maḍi* (Srinivas 1952: Ch. 4), and among KV's as *tittu*, *satāranam*, and *maḍi* (Barnett 1976: 143).
- 27 The general word for ritual pollution among the Moors is *mulukku*, which is apparently derived from the same verb, *muluka*, 'to bathe completely'.
- 28 The explanation of alleged sex-specific differences in the spread of death pollution was linked to the theory that the sex of the child is determined by the relative amounts of maternal semen versus paternal semen which is deposited in the womb. This theory, which was adduced by only two informants, fits nicely with the idea that pollution is transmitted through shared bodily substance. It predicts that pollution will predominate on the father's side of the family if the deceased is a male, and on the mother's side if the deceased is a female. It was a surprisingly consistent interpretation of conception and pollution, but it was also highly idiosyncratic from the standpoint of the survey findings.
- 29 In areas of very strong Mukkuvar dominance, particularly in Manmunai Pattu, the more literary form is often heard, i.e., Murkukar or 'Mukkukar', meaning the 'foremost Kukans'. This literary form is given as the authentic name of the caste in the regional traditions of the *Maṭṭakkalappu Mānmiyam* (Nadarajah 1962), which also refers to the caste as Kukan Kulam. All of these titles represent claims of caste descent from the mythological Guha (T. Kukan), loyal ferryman of Lord Rama, whose noble qualities are particularly eulogized in the Rāmāyana of Kamban (Rajagopalachari 1961). This is not a unique puranic charter: it is shared by the Valan fishing caste of Kerala, the Maṭṭavar warriors of Ramnad, and the Sembadavan fishing caste of Tamilnadu (Anantha Krishna Iyer 1909 vol. I: 232; Thurston 1909 vol. V: 24; vol. VI: 352).
- 30 Mukkuvars in Batticaloa emphatically deny any connection between themselves and the 'Mukkiyar' fishing castes of Jaffna, and there appears to be no communication between these two groups today. However, there are legends in Jaffna that the Batticaloa Mukkuvars represent the descendants of fishermen expelled from Jaffna for defiling a temple with fish (Brito 1879).
- 31 There is considerable controversy over the interpretation of this alleged Kalinga ancestry (see Indrapala 1965: 246, for a summary of the arguments). It is, however, a living tradition in Batticaloa, where one of the foremost Mukkuvar matriclans is Kāliṅkā kuṭi.
- 32 H.W. Tambiah (1954: 89) has argued that the Vēlālars of Batticaloa were distinguished from the Mukkuvars and the rest of the population

- of the region by the fact that they followed the Thesawalamai legal code of Jaffna. His evidence for this is found in a few ambiguous passages in the Sir Alexander Johnston Papers (Public Record Office, London) which seem scarcely able to bear such a positive interpretation. I know of no ethnographic evidence to corroborate his view.
- 33 Vegetarianism is acknowledged to be an ideal form of behaviour for anyone who wishes to attain enhanced piety and spirituality, and some individuals do limit themselves to a vegetarian diet (*Caiva cāppātu*, 'Saivite food'). As a caste-wide rule of conduct, however, neither the Vēlālars nor any other caste, except the Vīraçaiva Kurukkals, enforce vegetarianism. It is much more common as a special religious austerity during periods of religious observance. Even among Vīraçaiva Kurukkals, vegetarianism may be limited primarily to active temple priests, who are the only persons who wear the personal lingam at the present time.
- 34 Tēcāntara Kurukkals are said to regard 'Akōrāmāyā Tēvar' as their ancestral preceptor, while Caṅkamar Kurukkals claim 'Paṅṭitārccuna Tēvar' or 'Paṅṭiyāttiriyāyā Tēvar' as their ancestral preceptor. These would correspond to Ekoramarādhyā and Panditarādhyā respectively, two of the standard Lingāyat sages (Anantha Krishna Iyer 1931 vol. IV: 114). *Mallikārccuna* (Mallikarjuna) is the form in which Civa is worshipped at the Vīraçaiva centre known commonly as Sri Salla in the Kurnool District of Andhra Pradesh (Shree Kumaraswamiji 1956: 99; Narahari Gopalakristnamah Chetty 1886: 182; Ramanujan 1973: 47).
- 35 The phrase 'Guru-Linga-Jangama' is a motto which commemorates the three cornerstones of Vīraçaiva doctrine: the religious preceptor, the iconic lingam stone, and the Jangama or priest (McCormack 1959: 119; Thurston 1909 vol. IV: 272). The term Makēsvara is a Saivite title sometimes applied to the Jangama priest (Enthoven 1922 vol. II: 355).
- 36 The term *vamicam* corresponds to the Sinhalese *wamsa* (Yalman 1967: 138), to the Bengali *ban̄sa* or *bongso* (Davis 1976: 14; Frutzetti & Östör 1976), and to cognate terms in other Indian languages which typically refer to patrilineally defined social units. However, the term is used in this instance to refer to a set of matrilineal descent units. The term also is used to refer to matrilineally defined groups among the North Kerala Nayars (Gough 1961: 388).
- 37 Brahman priests from Jaffna are presently employed in a number of larger urban temples in the vicinity of Batticaloa and Kalmunai towns, as well as at the ancient 'regional temple' of Tirukkōvil.
- 38 It should be emphasized that the histories, legends, and formulations of ancient customs contained in the *Maṭṭakkalappu Mānmiyam* are still part of the fragmentary oral culture of Batticaloa. Informants volunteered recitations from parts of this corpus before I was even aware of its existence. The common term for any discrete palmyra leaf inscription is *ētu*, while texts pertaining to historical tradition and custom are known by the general term *kalveṭṭu* ('stone inscription'), although this is merely a metaphorical term. The *Maṭṭakkalappu Mānmiyam* contains a number of these separately known *kalveṭṭus* but there are others which exist outside this compendium (e.g. Raghavan 1953).
- 39 According to Gunasingam (1974), there is epigraphical evidence of only two royally-endowed Brahman caste settlements (*brahmadeya*) in Sri Lanka during the Cōla period, one of which seems to have been located in the Trincomalee District at Kantalai. It appears to have been a sizeable settlement which conformed to the pattern of Brahman settlements in South India during that period (Stein 1968), and it was patronized by Sinhalese kings of Polonnaruwa after the demise of Cōla power in the island. There is no evidence of any such Brahman settlement having been founded in the Batticaloa region.
- 40 Several people had heard of an additional document, the *Mukkuvar ērpātu* ('Mukkuvar enactments'), but I was never able to locate it.
- 41 There are only three examples of collective management of agricultural lands on a matrilineal basis about which I have much information: (A) There was traditional cultivation of lands belonging to the Kokkaṭṭicōlai Civa temple by members of two specific Vēlālār caste *kuṭis* from the village of Paḷukāmam. This is discussed in section 5.9. (B) There is a more complex system of management of temple lands in the Cīrpātam caste village of Turainīlāvaṇai, whereby members of 13 recognized *kuṭis* are annually allocated the 88 standard shares of land in accordance with some principle of rotation. This allocation is in the hands of a special committee of land administrators (*Kāni Aṭappan*) who are in turn accountable to the 13 *kuṭi* representatives who constitute the temple committee. This is an indirect management system which involves many *kuṭis*, not just one, in the cultivation of temple lands. Court records over the past 25 years indicate that the probity of the special committee of *Kāni Aṭappans* has not been above question. (C) Four generations ago, a Vīraçaiva Kurukkal priest in Akkaraipattu, who had no children of his own, bequeathed about 50 acres of paddy land to his sisters and to his sisters' female descendants. His intention, according to informants, was to provide an endowment to be managed jointly and to be shared by succeeding generations of women of his priestly matriline. Today only 12 acres can be cultivated, due to unforeseen inundation from new irrigation projects. These 12 acres are presently leased to local Moors, and the revenue is shared by the living descendants. Joint management in this case involves a specific branch of the founder's matriclan, rather than the matriclan as a whole.
- In addition to these three examples, there is fragmentary evidence of the existence of some joint *kuṭi* lands (*kuṭi paṅku kāni*) in both Moorish as well as Tamil areas, but no one was able to locate them for me. The principle of *taṭṭumāru*, or rotating shares of land within a larger tract, is an old type of land tenure which has almost disappeared. Informants were not sure whether traditionally the shareholders within a given tract would have been members of a single *kuṭi*. In the few

- existing instances of *taṭṭumāru* in the Kokkaṭṭiccōlai area, the shareholders are said to be members of many different *kuṭis*. For other accounts of shareholding and joint cultivation see Leach 1961 and Obeyesekere 1967.
- 42 The expression *urimaip pen* may also mean a man's 'rightful marriage partner' in many Tamil areas (Beck 1972: 237; David 1973a: n. 15; for Sinhalese equivalent see Yalman 1967: 113n.), but this usage was not noted in Batticaloa.
- 43 My high caste Tamil landlord in Akkaraipattu, a man of the prestigious Maḷuvaracan kuṭi, summed up his disdain for the modern arrogation of *varicai* honours by saying, 'Only the little people bother with it nowadays'.
- 44 Stirrat (1975a: 592) reports another unilinear deviation from the model of bilaterally-ascribed caste in a Catholic Karāva caste fishing village in the bilingual (Sinhalese/Tamil) zone near Chilaw on the west coast of the island. There, however, the rule of caste ascription is strictly patrilineal. A patrilineal emphasis is reported in Beck's Koṅku data (1972: 235).
- 45 In the past there seems to have been a distinction between the ritual duties of the two main Kurukkaḷ matriclans (see section 5.3). There is still today a pattern of Kōvilār caste temple duties which allocates specific tasks to certain matrilineal within the caste. Moorish matriclan names include several titles referring to occupational categories, e.g. Ōṭāvi (carpenter) or Levvai (Lebbe, leader of mosque prayers), but these names bear no present relation to actual occupation.
- 46 Tamils in the Batticaloa region do not seem to bother with elaborate comparisons of the horoscopes of proposed marriage partners, in contrast with Sinhalese concern for these matters (Kemper 1979).
- 47 As an ideal characterization, marriage between Kurukkaḷs and Vēḷāḷars is said to be more common than marriage between Kurukkaḷs and Mukkuvars, but there is no empirical evidence for this in Akkaraipattu. In the Vēḷāḷar-dominated village of Tambiluvil, Kurukkaḷs seem to have married spouses of the highest ranking Vēḷāḷar clans no more than 25% of the time (Hiatt 1973: 248), yet Kurukkaḷ informants often told me that a Vēḷāḷar spouse was a very respectable 'second best'. The Vēḷāḷars in Tambiluvil, at any rate, often speak of the Kurukkaḷs as members of their caste, but they rank them below the most prestigious pair of Vēḷāḷar *kuṭis*.
- 48 Yalman (1960; 1967: 142) has discussed the importance of the possession and manipulation of hereditary names and titles in Sinhalese society. The manner in which even a conventional naming rule (e.g. patronymic) can encourage the development of a 'pseudo-unilinear' ideology with no empirical basis has been illustrated by Leach (1973), using material from the genealogies of eminent English Quaker families of the 19th century.
- 49 There are a number of functional similarities between this ritual and the annual Āsala Perahāra in Kandy, which 'enacted' the constitution of the Kandyan kingdom in visible form through a series of dramatic

- processions associated with the sacred Tooth Relic of the Buddha. Also like the Kokkaṭṭiccōlai temple, the Temple of the Tooth is organized around the distinction between the ritual duties of an 'inner group' (*āṭul kaṭṭalē*) of Goygama caste servants who assist the officiating Bhikkus and an 'outer group' (*piṭa kaṭṭalē*) of secular temple administrators. The chief of the 'inner group' is the Kāriya Karavana Rāla, who is also in charge of the temple store-room and who seems to occupy a role similar in many ways to that of the Vēḷāḷar temple chief at Kokkaṭṭiccōlai (Hocart 1931: 8–15; Seneviratne 1978: 26–37). The historical traditions of Batticaloa refer occasionally to the role of the Kandyan king as a patron of major temples, and it seems likely that there would have been some sharing of ritual conventions between the two regions.
- 50 Recent years have witnessed the development of patterns of sponsorship by new categories of participants, e.g. civil servants employed in government offices in the Akkaraipattu area. This corresponds to a trend noted also in Tamilnadu (Appadurai and Breckenridge 1976: 203–4).
- 51 Much more historical information is needed, however, before all the puzzles are solved. There remains the fact that the Timilar caste, which tradition recounts was driven out of the Batticaloa region in a war with the Mukkuvars, and which is found today in the vicinity of Verugal and Toppūr south of Trincomalee, follows a pattern of matrilineal clan organization substantially similar to that of the Mukkuvars, Vēḷāḷars, and other Hindu castes of present day Batticaloa.
- 52 Aside from the Viracaiva Kurukkaḷs, the only group which appears to be unique to Batticaloa is the Cīrpātam caste (Raghavan 1953; 1971: 109–12).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abeyasinghe, T.B.H. (1966). *Portuguese Rule in Ceylon 1594-1612*. Colombo: Lake House.
- Aiyappan, A. (1944). *Iravas and Culture Change*. Bulletin of the Madras Government Museum n.s., General Section, vol. 5, no. 1.
- Ambirajan, S. (1978). *Classical Political Economy and British Policy in India*. Cambridge University Press.
- Anantha Krishna Iyer, L.K. (1909). *The Cochin Tribes and Castes*, vol. I. Madras: Higginbotham & Co.
- (1912). Idem, vol. II.
- (1931). *The Mysore Tribes and Castes*, vol. IV. Mysore: Mysore University.
- Anonymous (n.d.). *Mukkuvarin Cātivalamai* (Caste Customs of the Mukkuvars). A Tamil ms in the Public Record Office, London. CO-54/123, pp. 186-7.
- Appadurai, Arjun and Carol Appadurai Breckenridge (1976). 'The South Indian Temple: Authority, Honour and Redistribution', *Contributions to Indian Sociology* n.s. 10: 187-211.
- Bailey, F.G. (1960). *Tribe, Caste and Nation*. Manchester University Press.
- (1963). 'Closed Social Stratification in India', *European Journal of Sociology* 5: 130-4.
- Baker, C.J. and D.A. Washbrook (1975). *South India: Political Institutions and Political Change, 1880-1940*. Delhi: Macmillan of India.
- Banks, Michael Y. (1957). 'The Social Organization of the Jaffna Tamils of North Ceylon, with Special Reference to Kinship, Marriage and Inheritance'. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge.
- (1960). 'Caste in Jaffna', in E.R. Leach, ed. (1960).
- Barnett, Stephen A. (1970). 'The Structural Position of a South Indian Caste: Koṅkaikkatti Vēlālars in Tamilnadu'. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Chicago.
- (1973a). 'The Process of Withdrawal in a South Indian Caste', in Milton Singer, ed., *Entrepreneurship and Modernization of Occupational Cultures in South Asia*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Program in Comparative Studies on Southern Asia, Monograph 12.
- (1973b). 'Urban Is as Urban Does: Two Incidents on One Street in Madras City, South India', *Urban Anthropology* 2: 129-60.
- (1975). 'Approaches to Changes in Caste Ideology in South India', in

Bibliography

- Burton Stein, ed.. *Essays on South India*. Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii.
- (1976). 'Cocoanuts and Gold: Relational Identity in a South Indian Caste', *Contributions to Indian Sociology* n.s. 10: 133-56.
- Barnett, Stephen A., Lina Fruzzetti, and Ákos Östör (1976). 'Hierarchy Purified: Notes on Dumont and His Critics', *Journal of Asian Studies* 35: 627-46.
- (1977). 'On a Comparative Sociology of India: A Reply to Marriott', *Journal of Asian Studies* 36: 599-601.
- Barth, Fredrik (1960). 'The System of Social Stratification in Swat, North Pakistan', in E.R. Leach, ed. (1960).
- Basham, A.L. (1963). 'Some Fundamental Political Ideas of Ancient India', in C.H. Philips, ed., *Politics and Society in India*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Beck, Brenda E.F. (1972). *Peasant Society in Koṅku: A Study of Right and Left Subcastes in South India*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- (1973). 'The Right-Left Division of S. Indian Society', in R. Needham, ed., *Right and Left*. University of Chicago Press.
- Béteille, André (1964). 'A Note on the Referents of Caste', *European Journal of Sociology* 5: 130-4.
- (1965). *Caste, Class, and Power: Changing Patterns of Stratification in a Tanjore Village*. University of California Press.
- (1969). *Castes: Old and New*. Bombay: Asia Publishing House.
- (1970). 'Caste and Political Group Formation in Tamilnad', in Kothari, ed. (1970b).
- (1974). *Six Essays in Comparative Sociology*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- (1977). *Inequality among Men*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Bloch, Maurice (1977). 'The Past and the Present in the Present', *Man* n.s. 12: 278-92.
- Brass, Paul R. (1965). *Factional Politics in an Indian State*. University of California Press.
- (1974). *Language, Religion and Politics in North India*. Cambridge University Press.
- Breman, Jan (1974). *Patronage and Exploitation: Changing Agrarian Relations in South Gujarat*. University of California Press.
- Bright, William and A.K. Ramanujan (1964). 'Sociolinguistic Variation and Linguistic Change', in Horace G. Lunt, ed., *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Linguists*. The Hague: Mouton.
- Brito, Christopher (1876). *The Mukkuva Law, or the Rules of Succession among the Mukkuvars of Ceylon*. Colombo: H.D. Gabriel.
- (1879). *The Yalpana-Vaipava-Malai, or the History of the Kingdom of Jaffna*. Colombo.
- Brown, Penelope and Stephen C. Levinson (1978). 'Universals in Language Usage: Politeness Phenomena', in Esther N. Goody, ed., *Questions and Politeness: Strategies in Social Interaction*. Cambridge Papers in Social Anthropology 8. Cambridge University Press.

Bibliography

- Brown, R. and A. Gilman (1960). 'The Pronouns of Power and Solidarity', in Thomas A. Sebeok, ed., *Style in Language*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press.
- Burnand, Jacob (1794). *Memorial Compiled by Mr. Jacob Burnand, Late Chief of Batticaloa, for his Successor, Mr. Johannes Philippus Wambeck*. Trans. unknown, ms in Colombo Museum Library, Sri Lanka. For more information on other copies of this document, see T. Nadaraja (1966).
- Canagaratnam, S.O. (1921). *Monograph of the Batticaloa District of the Eastern Province, Ceylon*. Colombo: H.R. Cottle, Government Printer.
- Caraka (1949). *The Caraka Samhita*. Jamnagar: Shree Gulabkunverba Ayurvedic Society.
- Carstairs, G. Morris (1957). *The Twice Born: A Study of a Community of High Caste Hindus*. London: Hogarth Press.
- Carter, Anthony T. (1974). *Elite Politics in Rural India: Political Stratification in Western Maharashtra*. Cambridge University Press.
- Casie Chitty, Simon (1834). *The Ceylon Gazetteer*. Ceylon: Cotta Church Mission Press.
- Clarkson, Stephen (1979). *The Soviet Theory of Development: India and the Third World in Marxist-Leninist Scholarship*. London: Macmillan.
- Cohn, Bernard S. (1961). 'From Indian Status to British Contract', *Journal of Economic History* 21: 613-28.
- (1967). 'Regions Subjective and Objective: Their Relation to the Study of Modern Indian History and Society', in Robert I. Crane, ed., *Regions and Regionalism in South Asian Studies: An Exploratory Study*. Durham NC: Duke University Program in Comparative Studies on Southern Asia, Monograph 5.
- (1971). *India: The Social Anthropology of a Civilization*. Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Cronin, Vincent (1959). *A Pearl to India: The Life of Roberto de Nobili*. New York: Dutton.
- David, Kenneth (1972). 'The Bound and the Unbound: Variations in Social and Cultural Structure in Rural Jaffna, Ceylon'. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Chicago.
- (1973a). 'Until Marriage Do Us Part: A Cultural Account of Jaffna Tamil Categories for Kinsmen', *Man* n.s. 8: 521-35.
- (1973b). 'Spatial Organization and Normative Schemes in Jaffna, Northern Sri Lanka', *Modern Ceylon Studies* 4: 21-52.
- (1974). 'And Never the Twain Shall Meet? Mediating the Structural Approaches to Caste Ranking', in Harry M. Buck and Glenn E. Yocum, eds., *Structural Approaches to South India Studies*. Chambersburg PA: Wilson Books.
- (1977). 'Hierarchy and Equivalence in Jaffna, North Ceylon: Normative Codes as Mediator', in Kenneth David, ed., *The New Wind: Changing Identities in South Asia*. The Hague & Paris: Mouton.
- Davis, Marvin (1976). 'A Philosophy of Hindu Rank from Rural West Bengal', *Journal of Asian Studies* 36: 5-24.

Bibliography

- Denham, E.B. (1912). *Ceylon at the Census of 1911*. Colombo: H.C. Cottle, Government Printer.
- Den Ouden, J.H.B. (1969). 'The Komutti Chettiyar: Position and Change of Position of a Merchant Caste in a South Indian Village', *Tropical Man* 2: 45-59.
- (1975). *De Onaanraakbaren van Konkunad*. Wageningen: H. Veenman & Zonen B.V.
- De Silva, C.R. (1972). *The Portuguese in Ceylon, 1617-1638*. Colombo: Cave & Co.
- Djurfeldt, G. and S. Lindberg (1975). *Behind Poverty: The Social Formation in a Tamil Village*. Lund: Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies.
- Don Peter, W.A. (1978). *Education in Sri Lanka under the Portuguese*. Colombo: Catholic Press.
- Dube, Leela (1978). 'The Seed and the Earth: Symbolism of Human Reproduction in India'. Paper presented at the Tenth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences. New Delhi, December 1978.
- Dubois, Abbé J.A. (1906). *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*. H.K. Beauchamp, trans., 3rd edition. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Dumont, Louis (1970). *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and its Implications*. Mark Sainsbury, trans. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson. Also University of Chicago Press.
- (1978). 'La Communauté Anthropologique et l'Idéologie', *L'Homme* 18: 83-110.
- (1979). *Homo Hierarchicus: le Système des Castes et ses Implications*. Paris: Gallimard (Collection Tel).
- Dumont, Louis and David F. Pocock (1959). 'Pure and Impure', *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 3: 9-39.
- Dunn, John (1978). 'Practising History and Social Science on "realist" Assumptions', in Christopher Hookway and Philip Pettit, eds., *Action and Interpretation: Studies in the Philosophy of the Social Sciences*. Cambridge University Press.
- Elliot, Carolyn M. (1970). 'Caste and Faction among the Dominant Caste: the Reddis and Kammass of Andhra', in Kothari, ed. (1970b).
- Enthoven, Reginald E. (1922). *The Tribes and Castes of Bombay*, vol. II. Bombay: Government Central Press.
- Farmer, B.H. (1957). *Pioneer Peasant Colonization in Ceylon*. Oxford University Press.
- Ferro-Luzzi, G.E. (1976). 'Indian Christians and Pollution', *Man* n.s. 11: 591-2.
- Flynn, Peter (1978). *Brazil: A Political Analysis*. London: Benn.
- Fox, Richard G. (1970). 'Avatars of Indian Research', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 12: 59-72.
- Freed, Stanley A. (1963). 'An Objective Method for Determining the Collective Caste Hierarchy of an Indian Village', *American Anthropologist* 65: 879-91.
- Fruzzetti, Lina and Akos Ostör (1976). 'Seed and Earth: A Cultural

Bibliography

- Analysis of Kinship in a Bengali Town', *Contributions to Indian Sociology* n.s. 10: 97-132.
- Fuller, C.J. (1975). 'Kerala Christians and the Caste System', *Man* n.s. 10: 53-70.
- (1976). *The Nayars Today*. Cambridge University Press.
- (1977). 'Indian Christians: Pollution and Origins', *Man* n.s. 12: 528-9.
- Fürer-Haimendorf, Christoph von (1963). 'Caste and Politics in South Asia', in C.H. Philips, ed., *Politics and Society in India*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Geertz, Clifford (1963). 'The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States', in Clifford Geertz, ed., *Old Societies and New States*. New York: Free Press.
- (1964). 'Ideology as a Cultural System', in David Apter, ed., *Ideology and Discontent*. New York: Free Press.
- (1973). 'Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture', in Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gellner, Ernest and John Waterbury, eds. (1977). *Patrons and Clients in Mediterranean Societies*. London: Duckworth.
- Gerth, H.H. and C. Wright Mills, trans. and eds. (1958). *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. New York: Galaxy Books, Oxford University Press.
- Gombrich, Richard F. (1971). *Precept and Practice: Traditional Buddhism in the Rural Highlands of Ceylon*. Oxford University Press.
- Goody, Jack (1968). 'Introduction', in Jack Goody, ed., *Literacy in Traditional Societies*. Cambridge University Press.
- (1973). 'Bridewealth and Dowry in Africa and Eurasia', in Jack Goody and S.J. Tambiah, *Bridewealth and Dowry*. Cambridge Papers in Social Anthropology 7. Cambridge University Press.
- Goody, Jack and Ian Watt (1963). 'The Consequences of Literacy', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 5: 304-45.
- Gough, Kathleen (1959). 'Cults of the Dead among the Nayars', in Milton Singer, ed., *Traditional India: Structure and Change*. Biographical and Special Series X. Philadelphia: American Folklore Society.
- (1961). 'Nayar: Central Kerala', 'Nayar: North Kerala', 'Tiyar: North Kerala', and 'Mappilla: North Kerala', in David M. Schneider and Kathleen Gough, eds. (1961).
- Gunasingam, S. (1974). 'Two Inscriptions of Cola Ilankesvara Deva', *Trincomalee Inscriptions Series*, no. 1. Peradeniya: University of Sri Lanka.
- Hardgrave, Robert L. Jr. (1969). *The Nadars of Tamil Nad: The Political Culture of a Community in Change*. University of California Press.
- Harper, Edward B. (1964). 'Ritual Pollution as an Integrator of Caste and Religion', *Journal of Asian Studies* 2: 151-97.
- Harris, Marvin (1968). *The Rise of Anthropological Theory: A History of Theories of Culture*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell.
- Harrison, Selig S. (1956). 'Caste and the Andhra Communists', *American Political Science Review* 50: 378-404.
- (1960). *India: The Most Dangerous Decades*. Princeton University Press.

Bibliography

- Hiatt, Lester R. (1973). 'The Pattini Cult of Ceylon: A Tamil Perspective', *Social Compass* 10: 231-49.
- Hiebert, Paul G. (1969). 'Caste and Personal Rank in an Indian Village: An Extension in Techniques', *American Anthropologist* 71: 434-53.
- (1971). *Kondura: Structure and Integration in a South Indian Village*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Hocart, A.M. (1931). *The Temple of the Tooth in Kandy*. Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of Ceylon, vol. IV. London: Luzac & Co.
- (1950). *Caste: A Comparative Study*. London: Methuen & Co.
- Holmström, Mark (1976). *South Indian Factory Workers*. Cambridge University Press.
- Inden, Ronald B. (1976). *Marriage and Rank in Bengali Culture: A History of Caste and Clan in Middle Period Bengal*. University of California Press.
- Inden, Ronald B. and Ralph Nicholas (1977). *Kinship in Bengali Culture*. University of Chicago Press.
- Indrapala, K. (1965). 'Dravidian Settlements in Ceylon and the Beginnings of the Kingdom of Jaffna'. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London.
- Kandiah, V.C. (1964). *Mattakkalapput Tamilakam* (Tamil Homeland of Batticaloa). Jaffna: Ilakēcari Ponnaiyā Ninaivu Veliyittu Manram (I. Ponniah Memorial Publication Association).
- Kemper, Stephen E.G. (1979). 'Sinhalese Astrology, South Asian Caste Systems, and the Notion of Individuality', *Journal of Asian Studies* 38: 477-97.
- Kothari, Rajni (1970a). *Politics in India*. Boston: Little Brown.
- (1970b), ed., *Caste in Indian Politics*. Delhi: Orient Longman.
- Kothari, Rajni and Rushikesh Maru (1970). 'Federating for Political Interests: The Kshatriyas of Gujarat', in Rajni Kothari, ed. (1970b).
- Laberge, S. (1976). 'Changement dans l'Usage des Clitiques Sujets dans le Français Montrealais'. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Université de Montréal.
- Leach, Edmund R. (1960). 'Introduction: What Should We Mean by Caste?' in E.R. Leach, ed., *Aspects of Caste in South India, Ceylon and North-West Pakistan*. Cambridge Papers in Social Anthropology 2. Cambridge University Press.
- (1961). *Pul Eliya, A Village in Ceylon*. Cambridge University Press.
- (1973). 'Complementary Filiation and Bilateral Kinship', in Jack Goody, ed., *The Character of Kinship*. Cambridge University Press.
- Levinson, Stephen C. (1977). 'Social Deixis in a Tamil Village'. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of California, Berkeley.
- (1978). 'Sociolinguistic Universals'. Unpublished manuscript, Cambridge University.
- (1979). 'Pragmatics and Social Deixis', in C. Chiarello et al., eds., *Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistic Society*. Berkeley: Berkeley Linguistic Society.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude (1949). *Les Structures Élémentaires de la Parenté*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Bibliography

- (1966). *The Savage Mind*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.
- Lichtheim, George (1963). 'Marx and "the Asiatic Mode of Production"', *Far Eastern Affairs* 3: 86-112.
- Liyanagamage, Amaradasa (1968). *The Decline of Polonnaruwa and the Rise of Dambadeniya (ca. 1180-1270 A.D.)*. Colombo: Department of Cultural Affairs.
- Luce, R.D. and H. Raiffa (1957). *Games and Decisions*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Lynch, Owen M. (1977). 'Method and Theory in the Sociology of Louis Dumont: A Reply', in Kenneth David, ed., *The New Wind: Changing Identities in South Asia*. The Hague & Paris: Mouton.
- Mahar, Pauline M. (1959). 'A Multiple Scaling Technique for Caste Ranking', *Man in India* 39: 127-47.
- Maloney, Clarence (1975). 'Religious Beliefs and Social Hierarchy in Tamil Nadu, India', *American Ethnologist* 2: 169-91.
- Manu (1886). *The Laws of Manu*, trans. Georg Bühler. Volume XXV of F. Max Muller, ed., *The Sacred Books of the East*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Marriott, McKim (1955). 'Little Communities in an Indigenous Civilization', in McKim Marriott, ed., *Village India: Studies in the Little Community*. University of Chicago Press.
- (1959). 'Interactional and Attributional Theories of Caste Ranking', *Man in India* 39: 92-107.
- (1960). *Caste Ranking and Community Structure in Five Regions of India and Pakistan*. Poona: Deccan College Monograph Series 23.
- (1968a). 'Caste Ranking and Food Transactions: A Matrix Analysis', in Milton Singer and Bernard S. Cohn, eds., *Structure and Change in Indian Society*. Chicago: Aldine.
- (1968b). 'Multiple Reference in Indian Caste Systems', in James Silverberg, ed., *Social Mobility in the Caste Systems in India: An Interdisciplinary Symposium*. Comparative Studies in Society and History, Supplement 3. The Hague: Mouton.
- (1976a). 'Hindu Transactions: Diversity without Dualism', in Bruce Kapferer, ed., *Transactions and Meaning: Directions in the Anthropology of Exchange and Symbolic Behavior*. ASA Essays in Social Anthropology 1. Philadelphia: ISHI.
- (1976b). 'Interpreting Indian Society: A Monistic Alternative to Dumont's Dualism', *Journal of Asian Studies* 36: 189-95.
- Marriott, McKim and Ronald B. Inden (1974). 'Caste Systems', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th Edition, vol. III: 982-91.
- (1977). 'Toward an Ethnosociology of South Asian Caste Systems', in Kenneth David, ed., *The New Wind: Changing Identities in South Asia*. The Hague & Paris: Mouton.
- Marx, Karl and Frederick Engels (n.d.). *On Colonialism*. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House.
- Mathur, K.S. (1964). *Caste and Ritual in a Malwa Village*. Bombay: Asia Publishing House.

Bibliography

- Mayer, Adrian C. (1960). *Caste and Kinship in Central India: A Village and its Region*. University of California Press.
- (1963). 'Municipal Elections: A Central Indian Case Study', in C.H. Philips, ed., *Politics and Society in India*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- (1967). 'Caste and Local Politics in India', in Philip Mason, ed., *India and Ceylon: Unity and Diversity*. London: Oxford University Press.
- McCormack, William (1959). 'The Forms of Communication in Virasaiva Religion', in Milton Singer, ed., *Traditional India: Structure and Change*. Biographical and Special Series X. Philadelphia: American Folklore Society.
- McGilvray, Dennis B. (1973). 'Caste and Matriclan Structure in Sri Lanka: A Preliminary Report on Fieldwork in Akkaraipattu', *Modern Ceylon Studies* 4: 5-20.
- (1974). 'Tamil and Moors: Caste and Matriclan Structure in Eastern Sri Lanka'. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Chicago.
- (1976). 'Caste, Matri-kinship, and Bodily Substance in Eastern Sri Lanka', *Papers Presented to the Fifth European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies*. Leiden.
- (1982a). 'Sexual Power and Fertility in Sri Lanka: Batticaloa Tamils and Moors', in Carol P. McCormack, ed., *Ethnography of Fertility and Birth*. London: Academic Press.
- (1982b). 'Dutch Burghers and Portuguese Mechanics: Eurasian Ethnicity in Sri Lanka', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 24: 235-63.
- (in press). 'Paraiyar Drummers of Sri Lanka: Consensus and Constraint in an Untouchable Caste', *American Ethnologist*.
- Meillassoux, Claude (1973). 'Are There Castes in India?', *Economy and Society* 2: 89-111.
- Mencher, Joan P. (1974). 'The Caste System Upside Down, or the Not-So-Mysterious East', *Current Anthropology* 15: 469-93.
- Miller, G. (1956). 'The Magical Number Seven Plus or Minus Two: Some Limits on our Capacity for Processing Information', *Psychological Review* 63: 81-97.
- Moffatt, Michael (1979). *An Untouchable Community in South India: Structure and Consensus*. Princeton University Press.
- Moore, Barrington (1966). *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- (1978). *Injustice: The Social Bases of Obedience and Revolt*. London: Macmillan.
- Morgenstern, A. (1968). 'Game Theory: Theoretical Aspects', in David Sills, ed., *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. VI: 62-8.
- Morris-Jones, W.H. (1964). *The Government and Politics of India*. London: Hutchinson.
- Musgrave, P.J. (1972). 'Landlords and Lords of the Land: Estate Management and Social Control in Uttar Pradesh 1860-1920', *Modern Asian Studies* 6: 257-75.

Bibliography

- Nadaraja, Tambyah (1966). 'New Light on Cleghorn's Minute on Justice and Revenue', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Ceylon Branch* n.s. 10: 1-28.
- (1972). *The Legal System of Ceylon in its Historical Setting*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.
- Nadarajah, F.X.C., ed. (1962). *Mattakkalappu Mānmiyan* (The Glory of Batticaloa). Colombo: Kalā Nilayam.
- Narahari Gopalakristnamah Chetty (1886). *A Manual of the Kurnool District*. Madras: Government Press.
- Obeyesekere, Gananath (1967). *Land Tenure in Village Ceylon*. Cambridge University Press.
- (1975). 'The Right-Left Subcastes in South India: A Critique', *Man* n.s. 10: 462-4.
- (1976). 'The Impact of Āyurvedic Ideas on the Culture and the Individual in Sri Lanka', in Charles Leslie, ed., *Asian Medical Systems: A Comparative Study*. University of California Press.
- O'Flaherty, Wendy D. (1969). 'Asceticism and Sexuality in the Mythology of Śiva', *History of Religions* 8: 300-37 and 9: 1-41.
- Orenstein, Henry (1965). *Gaon: Conflict and Cohesion in an Indian Village*. Princeton University Press.
- Parry, Jonathan P. (1974). 'Egalitarian Values in a Hierarchical Society', *South Asian Review* 7: 95-121.
- Parvathamma, C. (1971). *Politics and Religion: A Study of Historical Interaction between Socio-political Relationships in a Mysore Village*. New Delhi: Sterling.
- Percival, Robert (1805). *An Account of the Island of Ceylon*. London: C. & R. Baldwin.
- Pfaffenberger, Bryan L. (1977). 'Pilgrimage and Traditional Authority in Tamil Sri Lanka'. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of California, Berkeley.
- Pieris, Ralph (1956). *Sinhalese Social Organization*. Colombo: Ceylon University Press Board.
- Pitt-Rivers, Julian (1972). 'On the Word "Caste"', in Thomas Beidelman, ed., *The Translation of Culture*. London: Tavistock.
- Pocock, D.F. (1972). *Kanbi and Patidar*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Raghavan, M.D. (1953). 'A Kalvettu of the Seerpadam of the Eastern Province', *Ethnological Survey of Ceylon* 7, *Spolia Zeylanica* 27: 187-93.
- (1961). *The Karāva of Ceylon*. Colombo: K.V.G. De Silva.
- (1971). *Tamil Culture in Ceylon: A General Introduction*. Colombo: Kalai Nilayam.
- Rajagopalachari, C. (1961). *The Ayodhya Canto of the Ramayana as told by Kumban*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Ramanujan, A.K. (1968). 'The Structure of Variation: A Study in Caste Dialects', in Milton Singer and Bernard S. Cohn, eds., *Structure and Change in Indian Society*. Chicago: Aldine.
- (1973). *Speaking of Śiva*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Bibliography

- Redfield, Robert (1956). *Peasant Society and Culture*. University of Chicago Press.
- Reisman, K. (1974). 'Contrapuntal Conversations in an Antigua Village', in Richard Bauman and Joel Sherzer, eds., *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking*. Cambridge University Press.
- Roberts, Michael (1969). 'The Rise of the Karāvas', *Ceylon Studies Seminar* 1968-69 Series, no. 5. Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.
- Rorty, Richard (1979). *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Princeton University Press.
- Rudolph, Lloyd I. and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph (1967). *The Modernity of Tradition: Political Development in India*. University of Chicago Press.
- Ryan, Bryce (1950). 'Socio-Cultural Regions of Ceylon', *Rural Sociology* 15: 3-19.
- (1953). *Caste in Modern Ceylon: The Sinhalese System in Transition*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Ryan, Kathleen S. (1980). 'Pollution in Practice: Ritual, Structure, and Change in Tamil Sri Lanka'. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Cornell University.
- Sacks, H., E.A. Schegloff and G. Jefferson (1974). 'A Simplest Systematics for the Organization of Turn-Taking for Conversation', *Language* 50: 696-735.
- Schiffer, S.R. (1972). *Meaning*. Oxford University Press.
- Schlesinger, Lee I. (1977). 'The Emergency in an Indian Village', *Asian Survey* 17: 627-47.
- Schneider, David M. (1961). 'The Distinctive Features of Matrilineal Descent Groups', in David M. Schneider and Kathleen Gough, eds. (1961).
- (1968). *American Kinship: A Cultural Account*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
- Schneider, David M. and Kathleen Gough, eds. (1961). *Matrilineal Kinship*. University of California Press.
- Seneviratne, H.L. (1978). *Rituals of the Kandyan State*. Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology 22. Cambridge University Press.
- Sharma, Ursula (1973). 'Theodicy and the Doctrine of Karma', *Man* n.s. 8: 347-64.
- Shree Kumaraswamiji (1956). 'Virasaivism' in Haridas Bhattacharya, ed., *The Cultural Heritage of India*, vol. IV. Calcutta: Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture.
- Singer, Milton (1972). *When a Great Tradition Modernizes: An Anthropological Approach to Indian Civilization*. New York: Praeger.
- Skinner, Quentin (1978). *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought. I: The Renaissance*. Cambridge University Press.
- Srinivas, M.N. (1952). *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India*. New York: Asia Publishing House.
- (1959). 'The Dominant Caste in Rampura', *American Anthropologist* 61: 1-16.

- Stein, Burton (1968). 'Brahman and Peasant in Early South Indian History', *Adyar Library Bulletin* (1967-8) 31 & 32: 229-69.
- (1969). 'Integration of the Agrarian System of South India', in Robert E. Frykenberg, ed., *Land Control and Social Structure in Indian History*. University of Wisconsin Press.
- (1975). 'The State and the Agrarian Order in Medieval South India', in Burton Stein, ed., *Essays on South India*. Asian Studies at Hawaii 15. Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii.
- (1978) ed., *South Indian Temples: An Analytical Reconstruction*. New Delhi: Vikas.
- (1980). *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Stern, Henri (1971). 'Religion et Société en Inde selon Max Weber: Analyse Critique de *Hindouisme et Buddhismisme*', *Informations sur les Sciences Sociales* 10: 69-112.
- Stevenson, H.N.C. (1954). 'Status Evaluation in the Hindu Caste System', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 84: 45-65.
- Stirrat, R.L. (1975a). 'Compadrazgo in Catholic Sri Lanka', *Man* n.s. 10: 589-606.
- (1975b). 'The Social Organisation of Production in a Sinhalese Fishing Village', *Modern Ceylon Studies* 6: 140-62.
- (1977). 'Dravidian and Non-Dravidian Kinship Terminologies in Sri Lanka', *Contributions to Indian Sociology* n.s. 11: 271-93.
- Stokes, Eric (1978). *The Peasant and the Raj: Studies in Agrarian Society and Peasant Rebellion in Colonial India*. Cambridge University Press.
- Tambiah, H.W. (1950). *The Laws and Customs of the Tamils of Jaffna*. Colombo: The Times of Ceylon.
- (1954). *The Laws and Customs of the Tamils of Ceylon*. Ceylon: Tamil Cultural Society of Ceylon.
- (1968). *Sinhala Laws and Customs*. Colombo: Lake House.
- Tambiah, Stanley J. (1973a). 'Dowry and Bridewealth and the Property Rights of Women in South Asia', in Jack Goody and S.J. Tambiah, *Bridewealth and Dowry*. Cambridge Papers in Social Anthropology 7. Cambridge University Press.
- (1973b). 'From Varna to Caste through Mixed Unions', in Jack Goody, ed., *The Character of Kinship*. Cambridge University Press.
- (1976). *World Conqueror and World Renouncer: A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand*. Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology 15. Cambridge University Press.
- Taylor, Charles (1975). *Hegel*. Cambridge University Press.
- Tennent, James Emerson (1850). *Christianity in Ceylon*. London: John Murray.
- Thurston, Edgar (1909). *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*. 7 vols. Madras: Government Press.
- Wadley, Susan S. (1975). *Shakti: Power in the Conceptual Structure of Karimpur Religion*. University of Chicago Studies in Anthropology, Series in Social, Cultural, and Linguistic Anthropology 2. University of Chicago Department of Anthropology.
- Washbrook, David (1973). 'Country Politics: Madras 1880 to 1930', *Modern Asian Studies* 7: 475-531.
- (1975). 'The Development of Caste Organisation in South India 1880 to 1925', in Christopher J. Baker and David Washbrook, eds. (1975).
- (1979). 'Indigenous Racial Ideologies in Colonial India 1860-1940'. Unpublished paper, University of Warwick.
- Weber, Max (1958). *The Religion of India: The Sociology of Hinduism and Buddhism*. Hans H. Gerth and Don Martindale, trans. and eds. New York: Free Press.
- Williams, Bernard (1978). *Descartes*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Winslow, Deborah (1980). 'Rituals of First Menstruation in Sri Lanka', *Man* n.s. 15: 603-25.
- Winslow, Rev. Miron (1862). *A Comprehensive Tamil and English Dictionary of High and Low Tamil*. Madras: American Mission Press.
- Yalman, Nur (1960). 'The Flexibility of Caste Principles in a Kandyan Community', in E.R. Leach, ed., *Aspects of Caste in South India, Ceylon and North-West Pakistan*. Cambridge Papers in Social Anthropology 2. Cambridge University Press.
- (1962). 'The Structure of the Sinhalese Kindred: A Re-examination of the Dravidian Terminology', *American Anthropologist* 64: 548-75.
- (1963). 'On the Purity of Women in the Castes of Malabar and Ceylon', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 93: 25-58.
- (1967). *Under the Bo Tree: Studies in Caste, Kinship, and Marriage in the Interior of Ceylon*. University of California Press.
- (1969). 'The Semantics of Kinship in South India and Ceylon', in Thomas A. Sebeok, ed., *Current Trends in Linguistics*, vol. V, Linguistics in South Asia. The Hague: Mouton.
- Zelliot, Eleanor (1970). 'Learning the Use of Political Means: The Mahars of Maharashtra', in Rajni Kothari, ed. (1970b).
- Zvelebil, Kamil (1964). 'The Spoken Language of Tamilnad', *Archiv Orientalni* 32: 237-65.
- (1966). 'Some Features of Ceylon Tamil', *Indo-Iranian Journal* 9: 113-38.