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French Kinship

Structure and History

Chapters Three, Four, Five and Six

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Pierre Maranda

French Kinship
Structure and History.

This essay delineates a working hypothesis. Its framework rests on social anthropology, social history, philology, and semantics.

Two states of the kinship terminology – 9th to 13th, and 14th to 20th centuries – serve as a basis for diachronic structural analysis.

The model proposed for the measurement of meaning draws first on an Intension/Extension ratio; then it is developed in relation with variations in social organization. The working hypothesis is therefore twofold. Substantively, it proposes a synthetic approach to define problems; methodologically, it proposes a combination of diachronic and synchronic approaches, and is an attempt to relate formal to substantive semantic analysis.

FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This book was written in 1965 and slightly revised in the following year. Delays in publication have rendered some substantive parts obsolete. Yet, the formal approach and the model sketched in this essay, as well as the combined use of diachronic data and synchronic methods, seem to retain some interest. It is therefore proposed not so much as a modest stimulus for further studies of French kinship than as an equally modest contribution to anthropological and historical analyses.

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3. THE STRUCTURE OF THE FRENCH KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

3.1 SEMANTIC STRUCTURE AND HISTORY

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The preceding chapter consisted of a philological survey. The form and content of the standard French kinship terminology were summarily described diachronically through ten centuries. Some terms remained stable, both in form and content; others varied in form and/or content; finally, still others disappeared altogether from the domain of kinship. The object of this chapter is twofold: (1) to examine the modifications which took place, and (2) to try to understand them in a structural perspective by reference to the invariant elements of the system. This will be done by using the notation introduced in 2. 1, which will be developed into an elementary calculus in 3.2 below. The analytic apparatus may look more complicated than it is in fact. Its purpose is to map out the data, measure their variations, and investigate the latter's processes. As pointed out in the Introduction (0.3), the model allows for accurate replicability.

Semantic fields like kinship are usually assumed to be rather stable. They involve high coding costs — i.e., the long processes through which a term comes to acquire a denotation firm enough to persist through a long period of time and to gain sufficient acceptance to be used across sociological borders within a linguistic group. The hypothesis can be proposed that the most important constituents of collective representations will be coded early in the life of a society, and that they will remain relatively unchanged. Thus, the term for God in all Romance languages as well as those for large cosmical features are stable through time and can easily be traced back to original forms from which more recent ones were derived (cf. Boisacq [19501). The idea is not new (cf. Darmesteter [1885]); and glottochronology bears it out in several cases (e.g., Diebold [1964b]).

If the contentions of formal analysis of kinship are justified, the study of variant and invariant terms should reveal significant sociological features. This

chapter will be devoted to an enterprise of that order, to be correlated later with the actual development of French society as well attested in historical sources.

3.2 KINSHIP AS A SEMANTIC SYSTEM

3.2.1 The Universe of Kinship.

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Coding decisions, i.e., semantic shifts as accepted or rejected by linguistic usage (cf. Durkheim's *conscience collective*, Kroeber's concept of the superorganic and Boas' reflections on language), generally expand, constrict, or transform units of signification by modifying relationships between them.

The units of meaning of kinship systems are themselves relationships: to be a member of the class of kinsmen means essentially to be related to another member of the same class. Correlatively, the set of such relationships defines the class exhaustively. In other words, class membership in the case of kinship does not only mean that all class members have something in common — like the members of the class of human beings or English words or positive integers — but it means also that what the class members have in common is a type of bio-social relationships, i.e., the fact that they are relatives. It is possible to build up a combinatorial model of genealogical systems since these consist of combinations of elementary relationships. Appendix One shows that this is indeed the case for French: the system was so defined already in 1283, and the closure established at the “quint degré de lignage en montant et ... en avalant ... et ... de costé” (Beaumanoir [1690] Ch. XIX); a modern French dictionary or treatise of civil law gives evidence that the same genealogical principle persists until today. (For other Romance languages, see Tappolet [1895]; the Finnish terminology is also closed, i.e., genealogical).

The combinatorial model enables the analyst to establish the ratio of what might have been expressed within the combinatorial parameters of a system to what is expressed in the terminology. The range of the system — up to the fifth order in French must of course be taken into account to specify the order to which the model must be built. In this case, the model ranges up to the seventh order, i.e., it is based on the combinations of seven elementary relationships (two degrees higher than necessary) to give an idea of the possible differences in scope between genealogical terminologies expressing longer strings than French.

If the universe of kinship is broader than the cross-section of the linguistic lexicon where it is expressed, a lexicon is obviously, in turn, broader than the set of kinship terms which forms a class of the same lexicon. The problem is, therefore, one of class intersection, a number of universes (kinship, cosmology, toponymy, etc.) being partly expressed in a given language which, in turn, intersects a number of such universes.

More or less explicitly, intersections of possible and given cases have always been the concern of anthropologists. It has received different names according to different viewpoints. Durkheim and his followers refer to “collective representations”, Ullman, Levi-Strauss, etc., to “semantic fields”, Goodenough, Frake, etc., to “cognitive systems”, (on related notions, cf. Jay [1964]). By and large, however, the scholars engaged in such explorations are somewhat more occupied with single bodies of empirical cases, or with comparisons of discrete bodies of empirical cases, than with the universes underlying and determining those empirical cases. This implies that their treatment of intersections is rather incidental. On the other hand, the importance is felt more and more of formalizing transcendent classes and of mapping them out for the construction of operational grids. “The development of a satisfactory quantitative measure of denotative meaning appears to me to be one of the most important problems for contemporary psycholinguistics” (Osgood [1964] 198; cf Levi-Strauss [1955]) ¹.

Although anthropologists have long been devoting much work and ingenuity to the study of kinship, even the most recent “breakthrough”, componential analysis, still falls short of the pressing task outlined above. Murdock's inventory (1949) is more a summary of data than a systematic investigation of the universe of kinship. White's formalization (1962), on the other hand, deals with problems more specific than those prerequisite to a general semantic investigation. Actually, only Leach (1961), inspired in part by Levi-Strauss (1949), has really set the problem adequately. Ultimately, the contributions of componential analysts should amount to the description of a general system of kinship semantics ; for the time being, they are still following in the steps of their forerunners in that they take up one case after another, which they either reduce to, or generate from, a set of basic components as roughly related to the universe of kinship as their reduction or transformation rules are loosely connected to the sociological determinants of the collective representations idiosyncratic to the societies they examine.

¹ Actually, some attempts and/or programmatic statements can be found in the literature : the works of Durkheim in general, as well as those he wrote jointly with Mauss ; Hubert and Mauss (1897-1898, 1902-1903), Propp (1958), Levi-Strauss (1958, 1959, 1962, 1964), Köngäs and Maranda (1962), Dundes (1962), for ritual and/or folklore ; Levi-Strauss (1949), Goody (1958), and Leach (1961) for kinship. Granger (1958, 1960) reviews similar trends in structural linguistics, economics, etc.

In contrast, the procedure adopted in this essay has been first to sketch the general sociological background against which French kinship terms took shape. The lexical data were presented in the second chapter. It is now time to examine the universe coded in the kinship terminology in order to have guidelines to study its structure.

Kinship systems are comparable to myths, art, law, and other fields of the same order: ¹ They are institutions (above, 0.2); as contradistinguished from other systems of relationships, they have to do with biosocial facts and especially consanguinity and alliance.

Consanguineal relationships are biological at the outset, but this is not a rigid constraint in the sense that, for example, *pater* and *genitor* need not coincide in the same individual (Maine, Fustel de Coulanges, Robertson-Smith, etc.), ‘male mothers’ and ‘female fathers’ do occur, as well as mother's wife in African societies (Radcliffe Brown [1950] 4, 24-26). Kinship terminologies actually work out in the fashion of symbolic variations on the raw data of biological events which, in turn, they contribute to shape: a number of kinship relationships are more or less freely combined like factual events in mythology (cf. Beattie [1964]; Schneider [1964]).

The four elementary relationships G , G^{-1} , S , and A will be used hereafter for analytical purposes. They all stand for relationships of the first order, as is clear from Table 2.1 in 2.1. ²

By themselves, the terms expressing the elementary components of kinship are meaningless, i.e., their definition must be and is essentially relational — they express the state of relatives. Accordingly, a kinship term (w) is always the dependent variable of the independent variable x in $f_x(w)$ (see above, 2.1 and cf. Leach 1961] Ch. 1; Köngäs and Maranda [1962] 140-141, 189 ; Maranda [1963] 825-827). In the case of kinship analysis, x will be the relation R will have to be rewritten every time according to its specificity.

Thus

$$f_x \rightarrow f_R \rightarrow \begin{cases} f S[\text{iblings}] \\ f A[\text{lliance}] \\ f G[\text{eneration}] \end{cases}$$

¹ De Saussure (1916) 33-35; Lévi-Strauss (1945, 1949, 1958, 1962), etc.; Jakobson and Halle (1956) 17; Goodenough (1956, 1964) ; Maranda (1963) 826-827.

² The rest of this paragraph is a revision and enlargement of part II of Maranda (1964a).

and, for $x = 0$, w = unspecified man or woman.

A and S are synchronic and can be written on a horizontal axis; G is diachronic and can be written on a vertical axis with G^{-1} at the lower end. As G means “one generation above” and G^{-1} stands for “one generation below”, i.e., respectively, “parent of” and “child of”, which is the very nature of the relationship (Quine [1951] 208), A could be defined as S^{-1} , witness the designation of “brother-in-law” as “*pas frère*” in some French dialects (see above, 2.3.1). But this entails distortions and cannot be used without operational provisions which will not be discussed here (cf. White [1962]; Courrège [1966]).

Only simple relationships or relationships of the first order have been presented so far. MB illustrates a relationship of the second order, and can now be rewritten GS if we disregard, for the time being, sex specification. WBS, a relationship of the third order, can be rewritten ASG^{-1} ; FMZS, a relationship of the fourth order, can be rewritten G_2SG^{-1} . The basic set of kinship relationships which generates kinship terminologies was given in 2.1.

The number of possible relationships of a given order is finite : there are four possible relationships of the first order. The eleven possible relationships of the second order are AA , AG , AG^{-1} , AS , GA , G_2 , GS , $G^{-1}A$, G_2^{-1} , SA , SG^{-1} . The A relationship is not idempotent, since AA , AAA , and $AAAA$ hold true in polygamous systems¹. GG^{-1} and $G^{-1}G$ must each be reduced to two relationships of the first order ; $G^{-1}S$ must be reduced to one relationship of the first order, since any S of G^{-1} is included in G^{-1} ; SG is the converse of $G^{-1}S$, and thus $SG = G$; SS is idempotent and must be reduced to S . The number of possible relationships of the third order is 32, and that of fourth order relationships is 92, etc. The number of possible kinship relationships on the general level presented here can be computed as follows:

(1) Excluded cases: nA for $n \geq 5$

SS

SG

$G^{-1}S$

GG^{-1}

$G^{-1}G$

¹ For example, in the Marquesas of the eighteenth century, where polyandry and polygamy coexisted in some households (Maranda [1964b]), a man marrying two women keeping each her own *pekio* so that the $AAAA$ relationship of the fourth order was

Pekio H *pekio*

Murdock (1949: 95) gives the half-sibling relationship as a secondary relationship (= second-order relationship in the terminology adopted here after Radcliffe-Brown [1950]). This would make GG^{-1} possible. However, the half-sibling relationship is one of the third order, since FS , for instance, is the son born to father of a woman other than mother. Accordingly, the half-sibling relationship must be expressed as GAG^{-1} , and stepparent's child is $GAAG^{-1}$. Diagrammatically:

Fig. 3.1. The Half-Sibling Relationship

(2) Permissible cases:

Nature of relationship	Order of relationship						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
$G^{-1}AS$	1	2	6	17	49	141	406
$SGAG$	1	2	6	17	49	141	406
$G^{-1}AG$	1	3	9	26	75	216	622
$SGG^{-1}AA$	1	4	11	32	91	258	733
Possible Cases	4	11	32	92	264	756	2167

Of course, nobody would expect from any empirical kinship terminology that it express all the possible relationships. As a matter of fact, the idea is rather akin to the emphasis put by Osgood (1964: 198, quoted above, 3.2.1) on the quantification of denotative meaning. It indeed becomes possible, for comparative purposes, to rank different kinship terminologies in a non-arbitrary way according to the ratio actual/potential expressions. The result yields relative rates of concentration on different orders of relationships.

When the respective generative power of G , S , and A are compared through combinatorial analysis, G and A on the one hand, G^{-1} and S on the other appear to be inequally powerful, since the former are factors in two-thirds of the relationships, whereas G^{-1} and S figure in only one-third. Thus, the relationships G and A are more productive of terms than the two other elementary relationships (Maranda [1963, 1964a]).

The modern French kinship terminology may now be compared to what it might have been from the combinatorial standpoint. Table 3.1 shows to what extent it diverged from the abstract system. The ratios expressed in Table 3.1 are also represented graphically in Fig. 3.2. (For the historical dimension, see below, Table 3.9 and Fig. 3.5a.)

Table 3.1
*Respective Generative Power of the Four Elementary
Kinship Relations in the Combinatorial Model
and Modern French Society.*

Relationships	Model	French
A	0.333	0.157
G	0.333	0.333
G^{-1}	0.167	0.333
S	0.167	0.177

Here, a few words must be said on the model itself. Although this should be improved (e.g., it is vitiated by over-simplifications, for if SS is idempotent, as $SSSS$ and nS for n pair, for n odd, $nS = S$), it provides nonetheless a yardstick, and, as such, can be completely arbitrary without losing its operational value. Then, the model tells nothing more than the relative rate of concentration on given elementary relationships in a given kinship system.

3.2.2 The Analysis of the Dependent Variable.

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The combinatorial model presented in 3.2.1 belongs to the universe of kinship as described in 3.1, i.e., it deals with systemic possibilities. Accordingly, it is related to the independent variable of kinship (above, 2.1 and 3.1). The dependent variable must be approached from two different angles: form and content. Philology furnishes a description of both, but content must be measured more precisely than what philology can do. As linguistic analysis of forms can be carried further than it was above (Chapter Two) by the use of phonemics and morphemics, content analysis can also be refined. This type of

semantic investigation still lags behind (cf. Pool [1959]; Sebeok [1960]; Greimas [1966]).

Among devices to deal with paradigmatic sets (e.g., the terms for affines in French where the *beau*-prefix marks them as a class-cf. de Saussure [1916] Chapter Five and six), contrastive features are probably the most commonly used. Jakobson's phonological framework (1929, 1931, 1936, 1938) was extrapolated by quite a few anthropologists either under his direct inspiration (Levi-Strauss, Sebeok) or under that of other structural linguists who made theirs a similar approach (cf. Osgood and his associates; componential analysts). But earlier semantic explorations had drawn on the same principle. Durkheim and Mauss (1901-1902), Hubert and Mauss (1897-1898, 1902-1903); Davis and Warner (1937), to mention the best-known, tackled their objects of study along the same structural lines. The idea was definitely in the air at the turn of the century before de Saussure created structural linguistics (cf. his resort to binary oppositions, [1916] Chapter Two). Thus, after all, structuralism came originally from anthropology, to be borrowed by linguists who, in turn, influenced a younger generation of anthropologists who were apparently not too aware of their older colleagues' contributions.

Fig. 3.2. Modern French Kinship Terminology (broken line) as Mapped on the Combinatorial Model (solid Line). Consider the number 0.157 geometrically expressed by the distance from the origin 0 to the dotted boundary on the A axis of the parallelogram for Modern French. This number represents the proportion of A relationships, 13 in all (A , AG , $G^{-1}A$, GA , AG , AS , SA , ASG^{-1} , GSA , GAG^{-1} , ASG_2^{-1} , G_2SA , $G_2SAG_2^{-1}$) to the total number of elementary relationships in the French system (83-below, Table 3.4); the other numbers are computed in the same way. The solid parallelogram represents the combinatorial model. The two are reduced to a common ratio (2.000).

Among the critiques of the method, Leach (1961) is perhaps the one who suggested the most adequate improvements. Although a strong case can be made in favor of the polar approach¹ it does not provide tools refined enough to handle the content of kinship terms. The concepts of extension and intension are more valuable in this respect.

¹ Boole (1854); Köngäs and Maranda (1962) especially footnote 15; Levi-Strauss (1958, 1962, 1964), etc.

Intension is the degree of specification, or of constriction of meaning, of a term, or x in $f_x(w)$, i.e., the semantic nature of the independent variable. Thus, the intension of *beau-parent* is given by the two relationships which specify the meaning of the term viz., *AG* and *GA*, whereas that of its English equivalents, ‘parent-in-law’ + ‘stepparent’, is specified by only one relationship in each case, respectively *AG* and *GA*. The extension of a term is the whole set of its referents, or the range of the dependent variable w in $f_x(w)$: thus, the extension of *beau-parent* is given by the six referents for which the term stands, i.e., HF, HM, WF, WM, FW, and HM, whereas that of its English equivalents, ‘parent-in-law’ + ‘stepparent’, is given respectively by four and two referents. The difference between the English and French terms is due to the fact that the intension of the former is greater, and their extension narrower, than in the case of the French merging¹.

The ratio intension/extension is, therefore, the expression of a contrast, but it also measures it. As a ratio, it is the number of criterial attributes computed against the number of positions in extension: the greater the number of criterial attributes of a term, the lesser its precision (intension) and the greater its range (extension). The following example, taken from zoology, should show the bearing of the ratio. *Bovidae*, as the name of a family, has a low intension (specification) since it stands for any bovoid animal and, conversely, its extension is high since it covers all ruminants in the class. “Musk-ox”, on the other hand, has a high intension (specification) since it is restricted to a species of *Bovidae*, and a low extension since it stands only for *Bovidae* with a criterial horn morphology. Thus, the greater the number of criterial attributes included in a term, the lower its intension or precision and the higher its range since a great many things can satisfy its definition; conversely, the smaller the number of criterial attributes of a term, the fewer things it can designate since its greater precision excludes broader applicability. In other words, a term with low intension has a high extension because it lumps together, to the detriment of specification, several criterial attributes, whereas a term with a high intension has a low extension because it discriminates, to the detriment of range, between criterial attributes. Restriction of criterial attributes is the process by which intension is increased and extension correlatively decreased; the sociological bearing of such a process will be illustrated below (3.3.2).

The ratio intension/extension is therefore more precise than a mere all-or-nothing diagnosis. Thus, I/E may express a Boolean 1/0, but it may also express .5/.5, .0875/.9125, etc. I would propose the following formula to use

¹ So far, this says nothing more than when two “things” (*designata*) are called by the same name (*designans*), this *designans* is less precise than two different *designata* would be, one for each *designatum*.

these measures in the study of kinship, where I assign the arbitrary value 1 to I/E.

$$I + E = 1$$

$$I = 1 - E$$

and

$$I = 0.5^{R - (A+1)} \text{ where } R \text{ stands for any kinship relation.}$$

(The formula is demonstrated in Appendix II.)

These notions, if not their mathematical measurement, were already implied in Kroeber's paper (1909) of the concepts of classificatory and descriptive kinship terms. They also underlie Radcliffe-Brown's important statement (1950: 6): "The first determining factor of a kinship system is provided by the range over which these relationships are effectively recognized for social purposes of all kinds. The differences between wide-range and narrow-range systems are so important that it would be well to take this matter of range as the basis for any attempt at a systematic classification of kinship systems" (cf. Malinowski [1929] 524-536).

Relationships are essentially intensional since they form the independent variable x in $f_x(w)$; consequently, the array of kinship relationships presented above (2.1, 3.2.1) defines one dimension of the semantic field in question. The univocal statements which describe kinsmen with the help of abbreviations point out the actual referents of kinship terms; their number determines the extension of a term and thus marks the other dimension of the semantic field.

Figure 2.1 can now be supplemented as follows:

$K = RTr$, where K stands for a given kinship system, R for the transcendent class of relationships, T for the linguistic form of a kinship term, and r for the content, in referents, of the linguistic form. Thus

$$R = R_1, R_2, \dots, R_n$$

$$T = T_1, T_2, \dots, T_n$$

$$r = r_1, r_2, \dots, r_n \quad \text{i.e., F, M, S, D, B, Z, H, W and their possible combinations.}$$

Then $r * R \rightarrow T$, i.e., a kinship term is the result of the operation of predicating one or more relationships of one or more referents. Thus, in a "Dakota" system, if the R 'true and/or classificatory sibling' is predicated of 2 referents, it will be coded by a term glossed in English by 'true sibling'; if it is predicated of four referents, it will be coded by a term glossed in English by

‘cross-cousin’; if it is predicated of six referents, it will be coded by a term glossed in English by ‘classificatory sibling’; and if it is predicated of eight referents, it will be coded by a term glossed in English by cousin, both ‘cross-and parallel’, r_2, r_4, r_6, r_8 representing four different coding decisions.

More economically, we have, by using the formula

$$r * R \rightarrow T$$

$$n = 2(1 \dots 4) \text{ and}$$

where r_n for $n = 2(1, \dots, 4)$ and

R_n for $n = 1$ and $n = 3$:

$$r_2 * R_1 \rightarrow B, Z \text{ (‘true sibling’)}$$

$$r_4 * R_3 \rightarrow FZS, FZD, MBS, MBD \text{ (‘cross cousin’)}$$

$$r_6 * R_3 \rightarrow B, Z, FBS, FBD, MZS, MZD \text{ (‘classificatory sibling’)}$$

$$r_8 * R_3 \rightarrow FBS, FBD, FZS, FZD, MBS, MBD, MZS, MZD \text{ (‘cousin’)}$$

Similar operations enable to measure deviations from expected semantic values across systems as well as through time.

The I/E ratio makes it possible to divide each order of relationship into subclasses, which points out the mechanism behind merging. The principle is illustrated in Table 3.2, where second- and third-order relationships are listed according to their I/E ratio.

The mechanism in question consists in the automatic reduction of higher-to-lower order relationships. Thus, the first subclass of second- and third-order relationships has the same I/E ratio (.5/.5) as first-order relationships; similarly, the I/E ratio of the second subclass of second- and third-order relationships is the same (.25/.75), whereas the decrease/increase to .125/.875 is characteristic of third-order relationships. This shows why the reduction of spouse's sibling's spouse (*ASA*), for instance, to spouse's sibling (*AS*) is readily feasible within the system as such and therefore does not have to overcome any semantic obstacle. On the other hand, no special provision is available for the reduction of the same relationship (*ASA*) to sibling's spouse (*SA*), which must, therefore, be made at the expense of special coding operations.

Table 3.2

The Mathematics of Merging Relationships

Relationships	Intension/Extension	Referents
2nd order		
AA SA GA G ⁻¹ A	.5/.5	2
AG AG ⁻¹ G ₂ G ⁻¹ ₂ GS SG ⁻¹ AS	.25/.75	4
3rd order		
AAA GAA G ⁻¹ AA SAA	.5/.5	2
AAG AAG ⁻¹ AAS AGA AG ⁻¹ A ASA G ₂ A	25/.75	4
AG ₂ AGS ASG ⁻¹ etc.	.125/.875	8

A case in point is that of a shift on the one hand and of a merging on the other which took place in the development of French kinship terminology. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the terms *beau-frère* and *belle-soeur* designated $G^{-1}AG$ (child's spouse's parents)¹, and *AS* (spouse's sibling) had no

¹ May suggest a wife-giver/-taker relationship.

equally well established specific French name (cf. Lat. *sororius*); after the fifteenth century, the terms shifted down to the children's level, and $G^{-1}AG$ was not named any longer. This raised no problem, since both $G^{-1}AG$ and AS have the same I/E ratio (.25/75), and the term did not become equivocal. The merging of GA (stepparent) and AG (spouse's parent) in *beau-parent*, however, represents a more significant event because their I/E ratios are, respectively, .5/.5 and .25/75. First, it must be noted that GA was identified terminologically to AG as it lost its own name (*parastre* and *marastre* had by then come to mean indifferently bad parent or stepparent). Therefore, the equivalence $GA = AG$ was established by expressing the two component relationships A and G regardless of their order. Contrary to what happened in the case of $G^{-1}AG \rightarrow AS$, the merging did not involve a transformation¹. But, if the shift was more complex to operate structurally in the case of $G^{-1}AG \rightarrow AS$, it was facilitated by the fact that the number of referents remained constant and that no "entropy" was incurred. On the other hand, the merging of GA and AG posed only a minor structural problem, viz., the abrogation of the order rule, with the result that, as all mergings, it generated ambiguity. This is all the more interesting that the correlative and simpler either shift ($G^{-1}AG \rightarrow GAG^{-1}$) or merging $GAG^{-1} = AS$, which could have been expected, did not take place. In effect, it would have been easy for *beau-frère/belle-sœur* to shift from $G^{-1}AG$ to GAG^{-1} and for half-sibling and sibling-in-law to merge, since all have the same I/E ratio. The fact that it did not happen is probably due to the different positions of half-sibling and in-law relationships in French. Half-siblingship was traditionally a closer bond than siblingship-in-law: it took a special and explicit consideration to declare that armed conflict was legitimate between two uterine half brothers, a point which was never raised h propos of brothers-in-law who could lawfully fight each other (Beaumanoir [1690] Ch. LIX).

The merging principle built in the universe of kinship allows therefore for embedded relationships and constitutes an accordion structure providing for expansions and contractions like those shown to be at work by componential analysis.

The operational concepts introduced in this section will now be used in the formal analysis of the French kinship terminology. For the sake of commodity, the terms selected will be those of modern standard French. The historical dimension will be introduced afterwards (3.3.2).

¹ In effect, for $G^{-1}AG$ to become ASG_{-1} ... G must be transformed into S , whereas the passage from GA to AG is made by simply disregarding the order of the component relationships.

3.3.1 The Modern French Kinship Terminology.

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First, the scores assigned to the elementary relationships as constituents of the system (combinatorial model; cf. 3.2.1) will be discussed. Then, the modern forms of the French kinship terms of reference will be presented in Table 3.4. Tables 3.5 and, 3.6 will focus on referents and the I/E ratio, respectively. Finally, the discussion of Tables 3.7 and 3.8 will lead to a summary of the structure of the present-day system.

In the previous section, Table 3.1 has shown that if the elementary relationship G has exactly the same importance in the constitution of the combinatorial model and in French, alliance ranks definitely lower ($-.176$), to the benefit of G^{-1} ($+.166$) and siblingship ($+.010$). In point of fact, according to the combinatorial model and in terms of generative power,

$$G = A = G^{-1} + S, \text{ where } G^{-1} = S \text{ (both, score .166).}$$

In French, on the other hand,

$$G = G^{-1} = S + A, \text{ where } S > A \text{ (+.020)}$$

This suggests on the one hand that “descent” relationships have a higher generative power in the French system, whereas the role of alliance is restricted to a minimum. This strictly numerical evaluation indicates, therefore, that an idiosyncrasy of the French kinship terminology is its concern with progeniture and siblings as well as a reduction of the importance of affinal links. Whether this is borne out by other sociological facts will be examined in Chapters Four and Five.

Still in connection with the model, a comparison can be made between the possible number of relationships in the universe of kinship and those expressed in French. Table 3.3 gives the information (cf. 3.1 and 3.3.1).

As shown in Table 3.3, French kinship expresses (1) all the four atomic relationships of the first order; (2) all but one of the second-order relationships — a glance at Table 2.1 reveals that the lacking relationship is AA , not found in monogamous systems; (3) a smaller number of third-order relationships, which is not necessarily a feature common to all kinship systems; and (4) only a very few relationships of the fourth and fifth orders.

Table 3.3

Possible/Actual Kinship Relationships according to the Combinatorial Model and to the French System

Rank	Number of possible relationships universe of kinship	Number of relationships actually expressed in French	Ratio
1st Order	4	4	1.00
2nd Order	11	10	0.909
3rd Order	32	8	0.25
4th Order	92	6	0.065
5th Order	264	1	0.0042

Further interpretation of the mapping of the French terminology onto the model will come better after the content of the dependent variable is examined. The terminology will now be reviewed from the standpoint of its referents, which will be measured by the I/E ratio. Table 3.4 describes the terminology as such; Table 3.5 lists the referents of each relationship expressed in French, and Table 3.6 gives measures of content.

When Tables 3.3 and 3.5 are compared, it appears that among the ten second-order relationships which are expressed in French, six of them (all affinal) are lumped together under three terms only (see below, Table 3.8) and that two others are equivocally stated (avuncular and nibling) according to the merging option offered by the structure of the universe. Similarly, relationships of the third and higher orders are merely expanded replications of a few second-order relationships. Finally, the two affinal third-order relationships which figure in French are subsumed under categories historically cut for consanguines. Throughout the terminology, a segregating principle seems thus to be at work which does not tolerate affines as such beyond the level of second-order relationships; furthermore, systematic prescriptions are ignored for the designation of all affines except spouse.

Neither in Table 3.5 nor in Table 3.6 does the expression of first-order relationships raise any problem. They are stated in unambiguous terms, and they conform to the nature of elementary relationships, viz., they consist of a group of terms for consanguineal relatives and of another term for affines. The higher order relationships are treated in a slightly anomalous fashion. Table 3.6 shows that (1) the deviations from the combinatorial model found in French terminology are exclusive to relationships of the second order — they are the only ones not to conform to the expected I/E ratio (among relationships of the

third order, GAG^{-1} is not deviant since its extension conforms to the expected value of r in $r = 2^{R-(A+1)}$; (2) the deviations consist of decrease of intension and of a correlative increase of extension, whereby the terminology merges relatives of different definitions; (3) G_n and G_n^{-1} when they are not in composition with other relationships are the only relationships to be expressed univocally; (4) GS functions as a third order relationship, and two categories intermediary between third and fourth order relationships are created for in-laws and niblings; (5) on the whole, the intension decrease (i.e., loss of specification) occurs to the detriment of collaterals.

Table 3.4

The Modern French Kinship Terminology. The other degrees of kinship – twelve in all, according to French civil law – can be derived by operations of the same order as those given for 2nd and 3rd order relationships (cf. Maranda [1964a]).

Relationships of the 1st order		♂	♀
A	couple	mari, époux	femme, épouse
G^{-1}	enfants	fils	filles
G	parents	père	mère
S	Ø	frère	sœur
Relationships of the 2nd order			
AG^{-1}	beaux-enfant	beau-fils	belle-fille
$G^{-1}A$		beau-fils, gendre	belle-fille, bru
GA	beaux-parents	beau-père	belle-mère
AG			
G_2^{-1}	petits-enfants	petit-fils	petite-fille
G_2	grands-parents	grand-père (aïeul)	grand-mère (aïeule)
AS	Ø	beau-frère	belle-sœur
SA			
SG^{-1}	Ø	neveu	nièce
GS	Ø	oncle	tante
Relation of the 3rd order			
ASG^{-1}	Ø		$= SG^{-1}$
GSA	Ø		$= GS$
GSG^{-1}	cousinage	cousin	cousine
SG_2^{-1}	Ø	petit-neveu	petite-nièce
G_2S	Ø	grand-oncle	grand-tante
G_3^{-1}	arrière-petits-enfants	arrière petit-fils	arrière-petite-fille
G_3	arrière-grands-parents	arrière-grand-père (bisaïeul)	arrière-grand-mère (bisaïeule)
GAG^{-1}	Ø	demi-frère	demi-sœur
Relationships of the 4th order			
ASG_2^{-1}	Ø		$= SG_2^{-1}$
G_2SA	Ø		$= G_2S$
SG_3^{-1}	Ø	arrière-petit-neveu	arrière-petite-nièce
G_3S	Ø	arrière-grand-oncle	arrière-grand-tante
G_4^{-1}	arrière-arrière-petits-enfants	arrière-arrière-petit-fils	arrière-arrière-petite-fille
G_4	arrière-arrière-grand-parents	arrière-arrière-grand-père (trisaïeul)	arrière-arrière-grand-mère (trisaïeule)
Relationships of the 5th-6th order			
G_2SAG^{-1}	Ø	arrière-cousin	arrière-cousine
$G_2SG_2^{-1}$	Ø		

Deviant terms will now be grouped into two classes according to the type of information “entropy” peculiar to each. In effect, some are in competition and are accordingly unstable, on the one hand, and redundant on the other,

while the others are ambiguous. Table 3.7 lists the competing forms and Table 3.8 the equivocal ones.

Table 3.5
Relationships and Referents on French Kinship Terms

Relationships		Referents
1st order		
A	2	(H, W)
G	2	(S, D)
G^{-1}	2	(F, M)
S	2	(B, Z)
2nd order		
G	4	(SS, SD, DS, DD)
G_2^{-1}	4	(FF, FM, MF, MM)
$AG^{-1} + G^{-1}A$	6	(HS, HD, WS, WD, SW, DH)
$GA + AG$	6	(FW, MH, HF, HM, WF, WM)
$SA + AS$	6	(BW, ZH, HB, HZ, WB, WZ)
GS	8	(FB, FZ, MB, MZ [FBW, FZH, MBW, MZH])
SG_2^{-1}	12	(BS, BD, ZS, ZD [HBS, HBD, HZS, HZD, WBS, WBD, WZS, WZD])
3rd order		
GAG^{-1}	4	(FWS, FWD, MHS, MHD)
GSA	=	= GS , bracketed referents
ASG^{-1}	=	= SG^{-1} , bracketed referents
GSG^{-1}	8	(FBS, FBD, FZS, FZD, MBS, MBD, MZS, MZD)
SG^{-1}	8	(BSS, BSD, ZSS, ZSD, BDS, BDD, ZDS, ZDD)
G_2S	8	(FFB, FFZ, MMB, MMZ, FFBW, FFZH, MMBW, MMZH)
G_3	8	(FFF, FFM, FMF, FMM, MFF, MFM, MMF, MMM)
G_3^{-1}	8	(SSS, SSD, SDS, SDD, DSS, DSD, DDS, DDD)
4th order		
G_3S	16	(FFFB, FFFZ, FFMB, FFMZ, FMFB, FMFZ, FMMB, FMMZ, MMBB, MMMZ, MMFB, MMFZ, MFMB, MFMZ, MFFB, MFFZ)
SG_3^{-1}	16	(BSSS, BSSD, BSDS, BSDD, BDSS, BDDS, BDSD, BDDD, ZSSS, ZSSD, ZSDS, ZSDS, ZSDD, ZDSS, ZDDS, ZDSD, ZDDD)
G_4	16	(FFFF, FFFM, FFMF, FFMM, FMFF, FMFM, FMMM, etc.)
G_4^{-1}	16	(SSSS, SSSD, SSDS, SSDD, SDSS, SDSD, etc.)

Table 3.6

Intension-Extension Ratio of French Kinship Terminology

Relationship	I/E Ratio
1st Order	.5/.5
2nd Order	
G_2, G_2^{-1}	.25/.75
$AG^{-1} + G^{-1}A, GA + AG, SA + AS$	.167/.833
GD	.125/.875
SG^{-1}	.0833/.9167
3rd Order	
GAG^{-1}	.25/.75
$GSG^{-1}, SG_2^{-1}, G_2S, G_3, G_3^{-1}$	.125/.875
4th Order	.0625/.9375
5th Order	.03125/.96875

Table 3.7

Unstable and Redundant Forms in French Kinship

Relationships	Terms
A	époux/mari/homme ; épouse/femme
G_2	aïeul/grand-père ; aïeule/grand-mère
G_3	bisaïeul/arrière-grand-père ; bisaïeule/arrière-grand-mère
G_4	trisaïeul/arrière-arrière-grand-père ; trisaïeule/arrière-arrière-grand-mère
$G^{-1}A$	gendre/beau-fils ; bru/belle-fille

Aïeul and its expansions are now obsolete in spoken language; *époux/mari/homme* and *épouse/femme* are more or less in free variation, while *gendre/beau-fils* and *bru/belle-fille* are in competition. The redundancy of the latter forms is partly cancelled out, however, by the ambiguity of *beau-fils* and *belle-fille* (below, Table 3.8).

There is a loss of information in the cases listed in Table 3.8, where 14 relationships are expressed by only seven pairs of terms (against ten pairs of terms to express five relationships in Table 3.7).

As far as competing or redundant forms are concerned (Table 3.7), none of the converse of the relationships in question is to be found. In other words, the competition which exists between *aïeul* and *grand-père* is not replicated on the level of G_2^{-1} although such might very well have been the case if *neveu* and *petit-fils* had remained in competition (see above, 2.3.7). On the other hand, all the converses of the relationships appearing in Table 3.8 are expressed in the class of ambiguous terms. And since all the terms listed in Table 3.8 have to do with alliance relationships (either directly or as infiltrating terms which were originally consanguineal), collaterals are, therefore, those who are underrated on the plane of referents as they are on that of relationships (3.2.1 and 3.3.1). Thus, as there is an “inflation” in the terminology for the senior direct line, the treatment of collaterals is subject to information “deflation”.

Table 3.8
Equivocal Forms in French Kinship

Relationships	Terms
$AG^{-1} + G^{-1}A$	beau-fils, belle-fille
$GA + AG$	beau-père, belle-mère
$SA + AS$	beau-frère, belle-sœur
$SG^{-1} + ASG^{-1}$	neveu, nièce
$GS + GSA$	oncle, tante
$SG_2^{-1} + ASG_2^{-1}$	petit-neveu, petite-nièce
$G_2S + G_2SA$	grand-oncle, grand-tante

The fourteen relationships ambiguously expressed in seven pairs of terms are those whose I/E ratio is deviant (cf. Table 3.8 and 3.6), as was predictable. The relationships AS , SA , AG^{-1} , $G^{-1}A$, GA and AG form one subclass as indicated by the prefix *beau-* which they have in common. The distinctive structural feature of this subclass is that any second-order alliance relationship in French is interpreted in terms of degree and disregarding the kind. Accordingly, all are equally distant and equivalently “beaux-”: stepchildren and children-in-law, stepparents and parents-in-law, spouses' siblings and siblings' spouses. Instead of belonging to the primary set of relationships as they might have in virtue of the possibility offered by the system, step relatives

are merged with affines contrary to the usage adopted in other systems (e.g., English).

As to the four other pairs of relationships, the operator of their merging is also alliance. In effect, if SG_n^{-1} , and G_nS have a deviant I/E ratio, it is due to the fact that those consanguines are lumped together with affines (or the other way around). Terms to keep the two categories apart were available but were not retained: *bel-oncle* (GsA), for example, survives only in some rare dialectal areas.

Thus, whenever in an A context, G , G^{-1} and S are immediately contaminated, as it were, and lose their univocal I/E ratio. In other words, whenever present in a relationship, A blurs its contours and gives rise to ambiguity, thus restricting considerably the nucleus of pure consanguines. Along parallel lines, whenever G and S immediately follow each other in a relationship, they become ill-defined and take the function of quasi-categorical words, as was shown in Chapter Two (2.3.8).

So far, the diachronic structure of the modern French kinship terminology presents the aspect of a system strongly biased against affines and essentially organized around the expression of a small nucleus of consanguineal relatives — actually, the nuclear family. This conclusion was reached on the basis of the data produced in Table 3.4 and analyzed with the help of the combinatorial model (Tables 3.1 and 3.2., Figures 3.1, 3.3, Tables 3.3 and 3.5-3.8). The four elementary relationships at the basis of this semantic fact will now be examined in a diachronic way which will allow for further testing of a conclusion reached at this point.

3.3.2 Diachrony.

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The preceding section has supplied a general description of the structure of the French kinship terminology as it obtains in modern standard usage. Diachrony was already introduced in 3.2.2 when the case of a shift and that of a merging were presented to show the bearing of the concepts used in this analysis. Likewise, in 3.3.1, a historical option was mentioned in connection with G_n^{-1} and GsA . The combinatorial model tests will now be reviewed in a time perspective. G and its converse G^{-1} will be discussed first, followed by S and A .

As mentioned in Chapter Two, generation relationships were not the first ones to receive their modern French name: *frère* is the first attested form. The new terms for father and mother appeared soon after, though, and have a history of stability, as do those for son and daughter. Interestingly enough, although *fille* assumed a pejorative connotation (see 2.3.2), this did not modify

its denotation, contrary to what happened to *parastre* and *marastre* (2.3.17 and 3.2.2).

It is difficult to ascertain whether *grand-père* and *aïeul* were launched at the same time; the former can most likely be given temporal priority, at least in the meaning of G_2 , whereas *aïeul* was probably ambiguous in its eleventh century form which was so close to *auunculus* (see 2.3.8). This is in conformity with the fact that *cousin* may still express today, as it did originally, a general relationship, viz., “all relatives who do not have a proper name”. The term is specified by a marker like *germain* or *utérin* when a first cousin has to be designated unequivocally; *arrière-* will also be used when remote cousinage is to be referred to.

Along the same lines (see 3.3.1), SG^{-1} and G_2^{-1} were merged for approximately two hundred years before a twofold dichotomization restricted the extension — and, correlatively, increased the intension — of the original terms (*neveu*, *nièce*), thus calling for a new name for G_2^{-1} . In the eleventh century, only *neveu* (followed by *nièce* in the twelfth century) was available; in the fourteenth century, *petit-fils* appeared. The twofold dichotomy set apart levels of generation on the one hand by distinguishing the relationship implying G_2^{-1} from that implying only G^{-1} ; on the other, it differentiated between the relationship implying only G^{-1} and that implying both S and G^{-1} . The first relationship received its name by the addition of the prefix *petit-* to the word for son, which was well in conformity with the duplicated G expressed by the prefix *grand-* in *grand-père*. Then the old term for nibbling could become exclusive to SG^{-1} . The evolution of $G_n S(A) G_n^{-1}$ followed a similar path and poses no new semantic problems.

On the whole, the changes undergone by the terms for G relationships present the aspect of a progressive differentiation where extension is restricted and intension increased. In other words, the terminology refined and improved its coding of the lineal component as shown in Figure 3.4.

Fig. 3.4. Evolution of G and $G-1$. Relationship from the Eleventh to the Thirteenth Century; cf. below, Figure 3.5.

The terms for siblings remained as stable as those for father and mother. They are the most ancient terms of the system and the pejorative connotation which affected *filles* (2.3.2) did not touch *soeur*. Whenever in an A or G context, however, S soon loses its sharpness today as it did ten centuries ago, which is due to the blurring effect of A subsumed under GS relationships as shown above (3.3.1).

The history of alliance relationships is no longer that of stability and/or progressive clarification. Step relationships will be examined first. They are closer to consanguineal ones than any other, both according to the theoretical model and probably to general coding practices as well.

Parastre and *marastre* lost their original denotation because of the heavy, negative, connotation which became theirs. This is significant both as a semantic process in general and as a kinship fact in particular. The determinants of connotation are attitudes which will be the object of Chapter Four. *Fillaistre* stood first as a relationship term for both sexes, i.e., AG^{-1} . It disappeared when the relationship it expressed was merged with $G^{-1}A$ as shown in 3.2.2.

All affines who are not subsumed under consanguineal terms are singled out by the prefix *beau-*. This “alliance operator” was launched with *belle-mère* in the thirteenth century. The use of the prefix spread rapidly: it was most convenient to transform consanguines into affines on the one hand and, on the

other, to bring the latter into the consanguineal domain where they were “honored” (?) as *beau-* (see 2.3.17). The success of the new forms was so great that the earlier *gendre* and *bru* were renamed accordingly in the fifteenth century — if the latter are still in competition, it is probably due to the disappearance of *fillastre* (3.2.2).

The semantic evolution of the expression of alliance relationships in French is essentially a gradual loss of information. Contrary to what happened to the lineal component, relationships were merged and terms were eliminated instead of new names added to bring the terminology to a greater precision. Figure 3.5 epitomizes the process by showing the fate of all the alliance relationships not subsumed under consanguineal terms, viz., AG^{-1}/GA , $G^{-1}AG/AG$, and AS/SA (see 3.3.1, Table 3.8).

Thus, where distinctions were made originally, merging has blurred definitions; moreover, a shift of level has taken place, the term for $G^{-1}AG$ being displaced to express $AS + SA$ (see above, 3.2.2; cf. the case of *compère/commère* in 2.3.4 and, for comparative purposes, Friedrich [1964]).

Fig. 3.5. Evolution of A Relationships from the Fourteenth-Fifteenth Centuries to Present (female relationships; the term for male half-sibling probably remained constant in a form or another); cf. above, Fig. 3.4.

From what precedes and from the historical information contained in Table 2.3, it is legitimate to draw a line as a semantic threshold between the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries. Both sides can then be compared with the help of the combinatorial model.

Table 3.3a

Respective Generative Power of the Four Elementary Kinship Relationships in 9th-13th/14th-20th Century French.

Relationships	Model	9th-13 th	14th-20 th	Δ
<i>A</i>	0.333	0.222	0.157	– 0.65
<i>G</i>	0.333	0.278	0.333	+ 0.55
<i>G⁻¹</i>	0.167	0.222	0.333	+ 0.111
<i>S</i>	0.167	0.278	0.177	– 0.101

The shift of emphasis is thus from $S = G > G^{-1} = A$ to $G = G^{-1} = S + A$ (where $S > A$). A progressive differentiation through new coding processes discriminated further and further between relationships along the lineal component. In addition to the trend already active in the thirteenth century (see Figure 3.4), specific names were created in the sixteenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for G_3 , G_4 and their converses as well as for G_2S and G_3S and the converse of the former. They all followed the same pattern, analogous to that of the use of the prefix beau- as alliance operator: *arrière-* was then the operator which transformed available terms into expressions of more distant relatives along the lineal axis. Except for beaux-parents for AG in the nineteenth century, no new form was coined for affines, and the possibilities offered by the prefix beau- were either not used or discarded (e.g., *bel-oncle*). As evidenced by the data grouped in Figure 3.5, information “entropy” can be said to characterize the terminological treatment of affines. The sociological meaning of this process will be investigated in Chapter Five.

Fig. 3.5a. 9th- 13th (broken line) and 14th-20th (dotted line) French Kinship Terminology as Mapped onto the Combinatorial Model (solid line).

3.4 CATEGORICAL TERMS

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Before bringing this chapter to an end, a few words of comment are appropriate on the categorical meaning of French kinship terms. As pointed out in Chapter Two, a main dichotomy can be found between consanguines and affines. In this respect, French kinship might be viewed categorically in the general manner of the “we/they” opposition found in a great many societies. However, this is ruled out because the terminological contrast is immediately reduced by the facts that (1) *beau-* (and *grand-* *petit-*, and *arrière-*) has no independent existence since its meaning as substantive is not related to kinship at all, and (2) the terms for affines duplicate those for consanguines (the prefix *beau-* marking the difference) and are thus defined genealogically. In other words, affines are termed as consanguines to the *beau* degree, and are accordingly assimilated to primary relationships and singled out at the same time ¹.

The same holds true for the groups of lineals designated by the prefixes *grand-*, *petit-*, and *arrière-*: when independently used as substantives, these have meanings completely alien to kinship ; and then, like *beau-*, they are immediately reduced to genealogical positions by the term with which they must form compounds to have to do with kinship.

On the other hand, we know that already on the level of siblingship, *frère* denoted a relationship based on common residence as well as common biological descent (see above, 1.3.8 and 2.3.1). Likewise, *parrain/marraine*, *compère/commère*, *cousin/cousine*, and *oncle/tante* (see 2.3.4, 2.3.7, 2.3.8 and 2.3.10) stood for broad categories of members of the larger community as well as for specific kinship relationships. But this was due to extensions of meaning (vs. “constriction”), which is criterial in the identification of genealogical systems (Hocart [1953] 178-181). In point of fact, the mechanism underlying such extensions can be described as in Figure 3.6, where (a) and (b) are due to an enthymeme and (c) to a metaphorical process.

In Figure 3.6 (a) and (b), enthymemes generate extensions found only in groups with a strong hierarchic principle of authority; on the other hand, metaphorical processes (Fig. 3.6 [c]) generate extensions related to

¹ The prefix *beau-* (like *grand-*, *petit-*, and *arrière-*) multiplies extension, and reduces intension, by a factor 2.

friendliness. In other words, the meaning of the terms for siblings and cousins is extended where monarchical organization prevails, and that of the terms for *oncle*, *parrain*, etc., where permissiveness obtains: see the evidence on which this observation is based in 2.3.1, 2.3.12 and Proverb *6 in 4.2 on the one hand, and 2.3.8 and Proverbs *19, *20 in 4.2 on the other. Actually, the members of a social fraternity or of a religious order call themselves *frères* because of their commitment to abide by the strict rules which define their group and by the usually strong authority vested in their leaders (“fathers”). Enthymemes might thus correlate with duties, and metaphors with indulgence.

[A] = [C] so that

D = B' or B is in a Sibling Relationship with D.

(a) Extension of *frère* through the ellipsis of *G*

[E] = [C] so that

D = F or B is in a Cousinage Relationship with D.

(b) Extension of *cousin* through the ellipsis of GSG^{-1}

C = D so that

B is in a Nibling Relationship with D.

(c) Extension of *oncle* and *parrain* through a metaphorical process

Fig. 3.6. The Processes of Extension of S , GSG^{-1} and GS in French.

3.5 CONCLUSION

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The combinatorial model introduced for the analysis of genealogical systems made it possible to (1) map out the system of terms, and (2) to measure the differences between temporal states. The quantification was achieved in a thoroughly replicable way with the help of the formal procedure adopted. The data can now be summarized by the two contrasting ordered relationships $S = G > G^{-1} = A$ for the period before the thirteenth century, and $G = G^{-1} > S+A$ (where $S > A$) for the period after. This points out a shift of emphasis which is in accord with the diminution of the importance of the *freresche* as bourgeoisie gained ground: the parent/child relationship became more and more prominent as the new society focused on the “nuclear family”, and as lateral solidarity decreased. Alliance relationships did not gain by that, however; their loss was still greater than that of siblingship.

Then, the ratio intension/extension revealed which terms were on the borders of the system of primary relationships and it measured the processes implied in their semantic evolution. The segregation of some collaterals from the lineal nucleus by intensional increase pinpoints a counting-off process where degrees of kinship which cannot be negated are preserved. In contrast, the intensional decrease of affinal terms following the disappearance of specific names for step-relatives points out that the latter were eliminated by assimilation to a group already counted off.

On the whole, French kinship terminology gradually narrows its lineal dimension, and shows a diminishing concern with the group of affines, already segregated in the Middle Ages. The data examined in the following chapter suggest conclusions congruent with these. French *conscience collective* seems to resent kins, but to resent affines even more: “Être plus heureux qu'un enfant légitime, heureux comme un bâtard”, and “Nul ne se marie qui ne s'en repente” (below, 4.2. 1. 1, Proverbs *12 and *28).

4. KINSHIP RELATIONSHIPS IN FRENCH FOLK LITERATURE

4.1 STABLE MESSAGES

4.1.1 Paradigmatic Sets and Syntagms.

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The semantic field of kinship terms can be considered as a paradigmatic set in de Saussure's terms. In effect, coded and stored under the label “kinship” come a group of units which belong together as expressions of a special type of social relationships (cf. 2.1). Syntagms, or the linear interconnections between semantic units, are the other constituent of linguistic messages (Saussure [1916] Ch. 5). Such combinations vary between extreme standardization (“Pass me the salt”) and rare occurrences (“Green ideas sleep furiously”).

Paradigmatic sets and syntagmatic chains are also found on a higher linguistic level. Different *dramatis personae* can fulfill the paradigmatic slots of “hero”, “villain”, etc., in literature, and their interaction can conform to more or less stable syntagmatic patterns ¹.

The syntagmatic chains obtaining in stable messages, like those constituting folk literature, reiterate specific relationships between paradigmatic units. Everybody is familiar with the redundancy with which folktales emphasize their messages. In the West, the paradigmatic set of “underprivileged” consists of youngest brothers, poor and defenseless little girls, etc.; that of “villain” consists of animal and human monsters, etc. (cf. Thompson [1951, 1958]). In the same area, those *dramatis personae* are also connected in standard and typical syntagms: the youngest brother or the defenseless girl will be subject to tests, overcome obstacles thrown in their way by the villain, and be rewarded in a “capitalistic” fashion (for comparative

¹ Propp (1958); Levi-Strauss (1958) Ch. 11; (1959; 1962; 1964), etc.; Bremond (1964, 1966); Köngäs and Maranda (1962) and, in general, Maranda and Köngäs Maranda (1971).

data, see Thompson [1951] and Aarne-Thompson [1962] ; Maranda [1966c]). Such syntagms reveal underlying systems of attitudes, or the behavioral parameters coded in those formalized narratives. This chapter will examine the syntagmatic combinations of kinsmen in French folk literature, viz., in proverbs and folk tales; a last section will also report a few related folk customs ¹.

4.1.2 The Stability of Folk Literature.

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Oral tradition is made of a body of normalized and formalized messages. Resistance to time, i.e., to the distortions incurred by transmission from generation to generation, requires a *rodage* or normalization of language which results in a special coding. This will preserve the message from the accidents inherent in *la parole* by couching it in formulas whose function is at the same time mnemonic and normative. Similarly, redundancy ensures the transmission of the message with a maximum of fidelity. An equilibrium is reached between saturation and flexibility in all items of oral transmission which are stored in the “memory” of society, i.e., which are entrusted to successive carriers and maintained active through centuries. Thus, they reach an optimal form which can hardly be improved (cf. Flament [1965] 109-110).

Lomax's studies (1962, 1964, 1966) tend to demonstrate that folksongs are the most stable messages, but also the poorest in content for they maintain their doubly encoded (song and words) messages at the expense of elaboration. For practical reasons, their study will not be undertaken here: no general repertory is available yet which could measure against the high standards of *Le Conte populaire français* (Delarue [1957]; Delarue and Tenèze [1964]) ². Next to songs, with respect to stability, come proverbs, and their analysis will be the object of section 4.2. Finally, kinship relations in folktales will be treated in section 4.3.

¹ Kinship relations in written literature have not been included for the obvious reason that adequate treatment would require a lengthy study.

² Trébuc's observations (1912: I, 261) suggest that the message of folksongs is isomorphic to that of proverbs, folktales, and folk customs, at least as far as marriage is concerned: “Tel est le sombre aspect sous lequel la chanson populaire nous fait envisager le mariage et ses conséquences. Chose remarquable ! Elle n'a jamais une parole douce et attendrie pour peindre les joies de la maternité et le calme bonheur des gens heureux” (I, 261 ; see also Doncieux [1904] 174-184, 207-214, 269-279, 338-350, etc.).

4.1.3 The Documentary Value of Oral Literature.

An important device in the transmission of formalized oral traditions insures “negentropy”. Control over recitals is in effect exerted by the audience in a number of different ways (cf. the “law of self-correction” in Thompson [1951] 437; Vansina [1965] Ch. 3). In France, a remarkable fidelity seems to be the rule; tales collected in the last hundred years — many of which are still alive in the areas where medieval social organization has survived (see 1.3.3 and 1.3.4) — are true to their ancestral forms. The versions published by Basile, the Perraults, M^{lle} L’héritier, and M^{me} d’Aulnoy in the seventeenth century and M^{me} Le Prince de Beaumont in the eighteenth century have influenced some raconteurs but the tales were themselves based on widespread plots which the writers only put into literary prose (cf. Storer [1928], especially Ch. 15; [1934]; Ranke [1934]). Likewise the lays of Marie de France, remained manuscript until 1820, are so similar to the basic plots of folktales that they corroborate the theory of century-old continuity between medieval and seventeenth century narrative traditions.

In fact, folktales were told in salons as well as in manses: those which were published had been orally tested in the literate society before they were written down.

And the carriers who had handed the tales to the writers were their nurses (L’héritier [1695] 296-298; Storer [1928] Ch. 15). It is significant that the same type of control determined the fate of literary and oral versions: “Vous m'avouerez que les meilleurs contes que nous aïons, sont ceux qui imitent le plus le stile & la simplicité des Nourrices, & c'est pour cette raison que je vous ai vû assez content de ceux que l'on attribué au fils d'un celebre Academicien” (Villiers [1699] 108-109; see Storer [1928] 228). Internal criticism confirms that writers made it a point to be true to oral tradition; not only style and syntactic features, but also the repertory of episodes and their syntagmatic combinations into plots are those which bear the distinctive stamp of traditional tellers.

The written encoding of folktales met with a great and lasting success which replicated, as it were, the earlier pattern of the vast diffusion of local traditions throughout France. The *littérature de colportage* carried all over the country the written versions pooled in literary milieux. As mentioned above, these versions had been inspired by the nurses the writers had known in their childhood in different areas of France. What happened then is that *littérature de colportage* reactivated distribution channels somewhat analogous to earlier types: “Nous savons ... que les étudiants provinciaux et étrangers qui venaient en grand nombre à Paris faire leurs études à l'Université, lorsqu'ils rentraient dans leurs provinces ou dans leur pays lointain ... payaient souvent la maigre

hospitalité qu'on leur accordait sur leur route en histoires et en chansons, et ils ont certainement joué un rôle à cette époque [Middle Ages] dans la diffusion des contes” (Delarue [1957] 15).

European folktales look all alike to the cursory reader, and so they are in many respects. It is beyond the format of this essay to attempt to distinguish different European traditions. As far as the French corpus is concerned, it will suffice to recall that “a great power of inventiveness seems to be characteristic even of unlettered [French] story-tellers, for available evidence points to the development in France of some of our most important and widely accepted folktales. And when they have taken over stories from other cultures, they have imbued them with an unmistakably French style and spirit” (Thompson [1951] 18; cf. Storer [1928] 244-252). The fifteenth century was, apparently, a period where Indo-European variants were reworked in France (Ranke [1934]).

Folktales can, therefore, be relied upon to make manifest the traditional system of attitudes underlying and commanding the syntagmatic relationships between kinsmen in France. The study of oral literature has a drawback, though, which does not affect philological analyses to the same extent. They cannot easily be dated. Even if a number of most-useful monographs attempt to trace back a tale-type or another, only very rough estimates are possible. Nonetheless, the documentary interest of the documents warrants investigation (Storer [1928, 1934]; Ranke [1934]; Delarue [1957] especially 7-29, 34-46; Delarue and Tenèze [1964] especially XXI-XXV).

4.1.4 The Sociological Content of Folk Literature.

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To draw conclusions from folklore is a perilous task.

Psychoanalysts and many anthropologists have shifted the problems away from the natural or cosmological toward the sociological and psychological fields. But then the interpretation becomes too easy: if a given mythology confers prominence on a certain figure, let us say an evil grandmother, it will be claimed that in such a society grandmothers are actually evil and that mythology reflects the social structure or the social relations; but should the actual data be conflicting it, it would be as readily claimed that the purpose of mythology is to provide an outlet for repressed feelings. Whatever the situation, a clever dialectic will always find a way to pretend that a meaning has been found (Levi-Strauss [1958] 229, quoted here from the translation by Jakobson and Schoepf, 209. See also Simmons (1961) especially 126-127 for a summary of the discussions of the issue by Boas, Herskovitz, etc., and Parker [1962].)

Actually, the only safe assertion about the message of folklore on the basis of texts only is that this or that behavioral area appears to be crucial in a given society. Problematic relationships are stated, lines of solution are explored (cf. Maranda [1966a, 1966d]). But folklore will yield its sociological message only in context. The attitudes expressed in French proverbs and folktales are sharply

defined, however. Their congruence with the other aspect of the society is so striking that no epistemological caution need be voiced here.

4.2 PROVERBS

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The data to be analyzed in this section come from standard collections and sources (Mésangère [1821, 1823]; Leroux de Lincy [1841, 1842]; Quitard [1842, 1861]; Littré [1882]; Gottschalk [1930]; Robert [1954]; Maloux [1960]; Hassell [1963, 1964])¹. They will first be quoted according to types of relationship, dated whenever possible, and numbered for reference. The analysis proper will be conducted in 4.2.2.

4.2.1 The Data.

The following proverbs include most of those found on relatives in general (4.2.1.1), G/G⁻¹, parents and children (4.2.1.2), and on specific kinship relationships (4.2.1.3). Available proverbs on *A*, spouses (4.2.1.4) and women (4.2.1.5) as marital partners are too numerous to be quoted — they form by and large the largest class of French proverbs; they will, therefore, be represented by a random sample based on traditional classifications (cf. Quitard [1861]).

4.2.1.1 Relatives in General.

- (1) *Vilain oiseau celui salit son nid* (twelfth century).
'It is a bad bird that dirties its own nest'².
- (2) *Il n'est pire ennemi que ses proches* (fourteenth century).
'There is no worse enemy than one's relatives.'
- (3) *On n'est jamais trahi que par les siens* (fourteenth century).
'One is never betrayed except by one's own'.
- (4) *Plus sont de compères que d'amis* (fifteenth century).
'More are gossips (as a kinship term) than friends'.

¹ For a brief history of French proverb scholarship in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Pineaux (1956) 21-40.

² Cf. English version, "It is an ill bird that fouls its own nest" (Taylor [1952] 61).

- (5) *Le sort fait les parents, le choix fait les amis.*
'Fate makes relatives, choice makes friends'.
- (6) *Tous gentilshommes sont cousins, et compères tous les vilains.*
'All gentlemen are cousins, and gossips (see 2) all villains'.

4.2.1.2 Parents — Children.

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- (7) *Quand le père donne au fils, rit le père, rit le fils ; quand le fils donne au père, pleure le père, pleure le fils.*
'When the father gives to the son, the father laughs, the son laughs; when the son gives to the father, the father cries, the son cries.'
- (8) *Quand le rossignol a vu ses petits, il ne chante plus.*
'Since the nightingale has seen his little ones, he no longer sings'.
- (9) *L'amour des parents descend et ne remonte pas.*
'The love of parents descends and does not come back up'.
- (10) *Le cœur d'un père est dans son fils, le cœur d'un fils est dans la pierre.*
'The heart of a father is in his son, the heart of a son is in stone'.
- (11) *Tendresse maternelle toujours se renouvelle.*
'Maternal tenderness always renews itself'.
- (12) *Être plus heureux qu'un enfant légitime, heureux comme un bâtard.*
'To be happier than a legitimate child, happy like a bastard'.
- (13) *Pour une bonne fessée, le derrière ne tombe pas.*
'For a good spank on the buttocks, the fanny does not fall'.
- (14) *Fille honneste et morigénée est assez riche et bien dotée.*
'An honest and disciplined daughter is rich enough and well-endowed'.
- (15) *Tant que la tige a souche elle ne se fourche.*
'While the stem has roots it does not branch off'.
- (16) *Le mort saisit le vif.*
'The dead one grasps the living'.
- (17) *Il ne faut pas se dépouiller avant de se coucher.*
'One must not strip off before going to bed'.

4.2.1.3 Other Specific Kinship Relationships.

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- (18) *Courroux de frères, courroux de diables d'enfer* (before 1568).
'Anger of brothers, anger of devils of hell'.
- (19) *La vigne à mon oncle*.
'My uncle's vineyard'.
- (20) *Il est mon oncle, qui le ventre me comble*.
'He who fills my belly is my uncle'.

4.2.1.4 Marriage: Affinal Relationships

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- (21) *Morte la fille, mort le gendre*.
'Once the daughter dead, dead the son-in-law'.
- (22) *La fille n'est que pour enrichir les maisons estranges*.
'Daughters are only for enriching strange houses'.
- (23) *Qui a des filles est toujours berger*.
'He who has daughters is always a shepherd'.
- (24) *Qui trouve un bon gendre gagne un fils, qui en trouve un mauvais perd une fille*.
'Who finds a good son-in-law gains a son, who finds a bad one loses a daughter'.
- (25) *Marie ta fille et t'auras fait une grande affaire*.
'Marry your daughter and you will have made a good deal'.
- (26) *Marie ton fils quand tu voudras et ta fille quand tu pourras*.
'Marry your son when you will and your daughter when you can'.
- (27) *Quand la fille est mariée, viennent les gendres*.
'When the daughter is married, the sons-in-law come'.

Husband and Wife

- (28) *Nul se marie qui ne s'en repente* (Middle Ages).
'None marry who do not regret it'.
- (29) *Les meilleurs mariages se font entre pareils* (Middle Ages).

‘The best marriages are made between equals’.

(30) *La poule ne doit pas chanter devant le coq* (thirteenth century).
‘The hen should not sing before the cock’.

(31) *À qui Dieu veut aider, sa femme lui meurt* (probably earlier than the following one).
‘To whom God would give aid, he kills his wife’.

(32) *Maison faite et femme à faire*.
‘House built and wife to mold’.

(33) *Sers ton mari comme un maître, et t'en garde comme d'un traître* (fifteenth century).
‘Serve your husband like a master and beware of him like of a traitor’.

(34) *Les amours qui s'accomodent, par anneaux finissent par couteaux* (before 1540).
‘Loves that are arranged by rings end by knives’.

(35) *Qui monte la mule la ferre*.
‘Who rides the mule, shods her’.

(36) *Le fuseau doit suivre le hoyau* (before 1568).
‘The distaff must follow the hoe’.

(37) *Femme qui gagne et poule qui pond, ce n'est que bruit dans la maison* (before 1664).
‘Woman who earns and chicken that lays eggs, make only for noise in the house’.

(38) *La messe des épousailles est une extrême-onction*.
‘The wedding mass is an extreme-unction’.

(39) *Tout traité de mariage porte son testament*.
‘All marriage treaties carry their own will’.

(40) *Un mari doit se faire annoncer quand il rentre chez lui*.
‘A husband should announce himself when he returns home’.

(41) *Tous les maris contents danseraient sur les dos d'une assiette*.
‘All happy husbands would dance on the back of a plate’.

(42) *Mariage et pénitence ne font qu'un*.
‘Marriage and penance are but one’.

- (43) *En mariage, trompe qui peut.*
'In marriage, trick, who can'.
- (44) *Il n'y a si bon mariage que la corde ne rompe.*
'There is no marriage so good that it does not lead to the scaffold'.
- (45) *Le mariage est un enfer où le sacrement nous mène sans péché mortel.*
'Marriage is a hell where the sacrament leads us without mortal sin'.
- (46) *Aujourd'hui mari, demain marri.*
'Today married, tomorrow marred' ¹.
- (47) *Fiançailles chevauchent en selle, et repentirs en croupe.*
'Engagements ride in the saddle and regrets ride in pillion'.

4.2.1.5 Women as Marital Partners.

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- (48) *Avec la femme, le mensonge devient bientôt vérité et la vérité mensonge* (twelfth century).
'With women, lies soon become truths and truths, lies'.
- (49) *Une bonne femme est une mauvaise bête* (Middle Ages).
'A good woman is a bad beast'.
- (50) *Ce que diable ne peut, femme le fait* (Middle Ages).
'That which the devil cannot do, woman does'.
- (51) *La chèvre a sauté en la vigne, aussi y sautera la fille* (thirteenth century).
'The goat has jumped into the vineyard, also will the daughter jump'.
- (52) *Cœur de femme est tôt mué* (fourteenth century).
'The heart of a woman is soon changed'.
- (53) *Femme sait un art avant le diable* (fourteenth century).
'Woman knows an art before the devil'.
- (54) *Homme aime quand il veut, et femme quand elle peut* (fourteenth century).

¹ cf. English version, "A young man married is a young man marred" (Taylor [1962] 9).

‘Man loves when he will, and woman, when she can’.

(55) *Amour et seigneurie ne vont pas de compagnie* (fifteenth century).
‘Love and lordship do not mix’.

(56) *Le lierre meurt où il s'attache*.
‘Ivy dies where it clings’.

(57) *Ce n'est rien, c'est une femme qui se noie* (fifteenth century?).
‘It's nothing, it's a woman who is drowning’.
Cf. Spanish, *No es nada, sino que matan a mi marido*.
‘It's nothing, they are only killing my husband’.

(58) *Amour peut moult, argent peut tout*.
‘Love can do much, money can do all’.

(59) *Les hommes en [love] meurent et les femmes en vivent*.
‘Men die from love, women live on it’.

(60) *Un homme de paille vaut une femme d'or*.
‘A straw man is worth a woman of gold’.

(61) *Nul si fin que femme n'assote*.
‘Nobody is so clever that women do not make him stupid’.

(62) *Si les femmes étaient d'argent, elles ne vaudraient rien à faire de la monnaie*.
‘If women were made of silver, they would be worth nothing for making coins’.

(63) *Les femmes sont plus chastes des oreilles que de tout le reste du corps*.
‘Women are more chaste in the ears than in all the rest of the body’.

(64) *Les femmes ressemblent aux girouettes, elles ne se fixent que quand elles se rouillent*.
‘Women resemble weather-vanes; they stand still only when they rust’.

(65) *Fille qui prend se vend, fille qui donne s'abandonne*.
‘Girl who takes sells herself; girl who gives abandons herself’.

(66) *Il n'est attention que de vieille femme*.
‘There is no care except from an old woman’.

(67) *Les femmes sont toutes fausses comme des jetons*.
‘Women are all counterfeit like slugs’.

- (68) *La femme est le savon de l'homme.*
'Woman is the soap of man'.
- (69) *Qui femme a, noise a.*
'Who has a wife, has quarreling'.
- (70) *La femme est un mal nécessaire.*
'Woman is a necessary evil'.
- (71) *On peut compter sur la fidélité de son chien jusqu'au dernier moment, sur celle de sa femme jusqu'à la première occasion.*
'You can count on the faithfulness of your dog until the last moment, on that of your wife, until the first occasion'.
- (72) *Les femmes font et défont les maisons.*
'Women make and destroy homes'.
- (73) *L'eau gâte le vin, la charrette le chemin, et la femme l'homme.*
'Water spoils wine; chariot, the road; and woman, man'.
- (74) *La femme est un oiseau que l'on ne tient que par le bout de l'aile.*
'The woman is a bird that you can hold only by the tip of the wing'.
- (75) *Il faut craindre sa femme et le tonnerre.*
'One must fear one's wife and the thunder'.
- (76) *À qui perd sa femme et un denier, c'est un grand dommage de l'argent.*
'To him who loses his wife and a denier, it is a great loss of money'.
- (77) *Il est permis de battre sa femme, mais il ne faut pas l'assommer.*
'It is permissible to beat one's wife, but one must not crush her skull'.

4.2.2 Analysis.

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Needless to say, proverbs are amenable to different interpretations (for example, cf. Mésangère [1821, 1823] on the one hand, and Quitard [1842, 1861]). The point of this analysis, however, is not so much to investigate the exact meaning of a given proverb as to see what they imply in terms of kinship syntagms. In other words, what matters here is how kinsmen are *used* as *significanta* in proverbs, not what the proverbs themselves mean, i.e., not the *significata*. The heuristics of the enterprise will become evident as the section unfolds.

Proverbs have in common that they are often coded in an exceptional syntax; they are also highly formalized. These features insure greater message stability. Durkheim (1897: 170-171), perhaps better than any folklorist, has defined the genre:

... a proverb is a condensed statement of a collective idea or sentiment relative to a determined category of objects. It is, indeed, impossible that there be some beliefs and sentiments of this character without their being fixed in this form. As every thought tends towards an expression adequate to it, if it is common to a certain number of individuals, it necessarily ends by being enclosed in a formula which is equally common to them.

All the proverbs contained in 4.2.1 will not be analyzed in detail. A sample only will be fully discussed in order to show the bearing of these sentences “pronounced” by the French *conscience collective* on categories of relatives.

4.2.2.1 Relatives in General.

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*1 and *6 consists of definitions by relations of equivalence ($A = B$), and *3-*5 of oppositions: the structure of *3 (cf. *33 and *37) and *4 is that of comparative oppositions, and that of *5 a simple contrast.

A social dichotomy is posed in *6, where the consanguineal term is paired to the higher level while members of the lower class are all *compères* (see above, 2.3.4).

The latter term is contradistinguished from “friends” (*4), and also from relatives (*5) among whom one's betrayers and worst enemies are to be found (*2 and *3; cf. *33). All that notwithstanding, the fact that, in the twelfth century, folk literature had blamed those who “soil their nest” (*1).

4.2.2.2 G/G^{-1} , Parents/Children.

The structure of *7 can be diagrammed as follows:

or (b)

Thus, we have in (a) an intransitive relation where F is only giver and S only taker, i.e., as shown in (b) the relation giver-taker must be read from left to right for the system to work harmoniously. The message is coded in two contrasting statements, the first positive, the second negative, and the outcome is stated metonymically (effect for cause, viz., laughter for happiness, tears for sorrow).

In *8, the elliptic structure is that of contrast again. A first, implicit, positive statement is opposed to the second, negative and explicit. The stylistic function of the ellipsis of the first member is to strengthen the contrast (cf. Köngäs and Maranda [1962] 158-162), as does the metaphor *nightingale/little ones* = *human parents/children*.

or (b)

	Perception of children	Happiness
Nightingale	<div style="text-align: center;"> - + </div>	<div style="text-align: center;"> + - </div>

More could be said on the structural mechanisms at work in those and similar proverbs. For instance, the inversion of the order of the terms in *7 inverts the consequence stated in concrete terms, whereas the inversion of the state of the terms in *8 inverts the same consequence expressed in

abstract terms. Thus, both *7 and *8 stipulate conditions of happiness, but *7 describes a situation that one can command by ordering the terms properly while *8 states the inescapable consequence of a state once it is reached — so that its moral is “one had better not have children if one wishes to remain happy” (cf. *2, *3, *5, *9 and *10; see also 4.2.2.5).

Number *9 contradicts *8 on the one hand, and, on the other, asserts an intransitive relation of the same order as that stated in *7. Proverbs *7-*9 thus imply that the right order of things is that parents must devote themselves to their children, although this may very well entail that they will lose happiness (*7 vs. *8). Here too, the structure is that of ordered contrasting statements (+/-) in this case along a metaphorical vertical axis.

Proverb *13 is again a contrast: corporal punishment will not kill a child (cf. *77). The proverb is coded metonymically, one type of corporal punishment standing for all, and a part of the body for the whole. By justifying physical corrections, this proverb provides an outlet for parental aggressivity and correlates with *8 on the one hand and with the converse of *9 on the other.

Proverb *11 is the only completely “warm” attitude coded in the corpus.

The comparison which structures *12 voices the viewpoint of children; *14 shows the prevalent attitude toward daughters, which is well in agreement with the message of proverbs about women (see also below, 4.2.2.4).

Finally, *15-*17 are at the same time proverbs and legal aphorisms (see Chapter Five). Proverb *17 stresses children's ungratefulness, the point being not to entrust oneself to their care (cf. *7). This is once more an elliptic intransitive relation, time ordered this time:

The metaphor assimilates death to sleep and to give one's possessions away to undress. The semantic spectrum of these proverbs covers all the basic components of life. This makes such short and so few statements a compendium, as it were, of behavioral axioms. Giving, perception, happiness, love, punishment, choice, fate, birth and death constitute one dimension; another is made of references to a part of the body, clothing, sleep, birds (cf.

Ariès [1960] 63); a third one consists of spatial (vertical) and temporal (before/after) components.

Another dimension is added by standardized terms of address which, because of their strong connotation, belong with folklore more than with philology. Thus, widespread scatological terms of address in colloquial language apparently stress the “contempt” of parents for their children although the ironical and scornful connotation is somewhat abated by the tone of the voice. Thus Pauli (1919: 216-248) quotes, aside from dialectal forms, “*excrément*” to designate a small, sickly child, and more especially a newborn; “*bouse*” (‘cow-dung’) and its derivatives for small child — “*crotte*”, “*crottaille*” (‘dropping’), “*pet*” (‘breaking of wind’), “*merdeux*”, “*pisseuse*”, “*chiard*”, “*morveux*”, “*baveux*”, “*gaspilleur*” (another reference to money matters), “*niais*”, “*fou*”, etc., are all synonyms for ‘child’. Other metaphors underlie terms of reference or address for children, among which animal names would be worth investigating (Pauli [1919] 271, 297-354; cf. Sainéan [1920] 258-266, where animal names applied to prostitution are reviewed, and Bull [1902]).

4.2.2.3 Other Specific Kinship Relationships.

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Proverbs *18 and *20 are definitions by equivalence (cf. *1 and *6). The relationship between brothers comes up in connection with wrath, a state which makes them similar to devils of hell. The other relationship mentioned (avuncular) is coded in terms of permissiveness (*19) or generous gifts of food (*20). Proverb *19 is not really a proverb, though: it is rather a proverbial saying which is used to describe a badly protected or common property; this interpretation rests on uncles’ indulgence in the last analysis, since it refers to a ready-made reply at the disposal of boys caught on the spot stealing grapes in a vineyard.

This group of proverbs still relates to the apposition noted in 4.2.2.2: brothers can be as bad as parents (cf. *12), while uncles are indulgent and might, perhaps, be compared to mothers (cf. *11).

4.2.2.4 Marriage: Affinal Relationships.

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This group has to do with marriage strategies from the standpoint of the father. Proverbs *21-*27 all emphasize the inferior position of a man with daughters in the game of marriage. Female progeniture is difficult to invest and does not bring much return. Proverb *26 shows by a simple contrast the respective values of the pawns; proverb *23, a blunt, elliptic statement, draws

the economic consequences of the distribution it describes, and is corroborated by *22. Proverbs *21, *24 and *25 formulate their message as “if ... then” propositions which reflect the ponderation with which daughters should be moved on the “check board of alliances” (van Gennep's term).

Choice and fate are opposed in *26 as in *5 and *54, but the bad fate of having relatives in general is here narrowed down to having daughters only (*23). However, a clever father can turn the situation to his advantage (*25), even if only on a precarious basis (*21). Proverb *24 makes the point unambiguously clear by contrasting explicitly the two possible outcomes. Finally, *27 voices the pessimistic outlook of fathers.

This subclass is characterized by a minimum of symbolic terms: the messages are coded in unattenuated and undisguised referents and the imagery is that straightforward, of gain or loss; actually, only *23 resorts to a metonymic designation of the lower social position. Marital strategies are perhaps too important to be stated in other than clear and economic terms (cf. 4.2.1.5).

Husband and Wife. Contrary to the proverbs of the preceding subclass, none of those grouped here is coded in straightforward language: domestic or household imagery predominates.

Proverbs *28 and *29 can very well be prefaced to *30-*47 : the best thing to do is not to get married, but if one does, then let one marry on the same social level (however, cf. 4.3.2.4).

Proverb *32 is advice to men who contemplate getting married: they should already have a house, and the woman of their selection should be young enough to be molded to their taste. Proverb *34 is another warning: do not marry for love if you do not wish to end up in bloody fights.

In *30, the equivalence is negated between the respective rights of the wife and the husband to speak out equally “loudly” in the house. The apparent “if ... then” proposition (viz., “if $W > H \rightarrow$ upset household”), is actually a negation: – ($W = : > H$) and therefore a negative prescription addressed to wives. On the other hand, in *36, the prescription, addressed to wives again, is positive: a wife must perform her own duties as her husband performs his; the structure is also that of an equivalence, now positive as is the prescription. In other words, these structural aspects imply that if a woman is equal to her husband as far as duties are concerned, her rights are subordinate to his; furthermore, the latter may betray her at any time (*33, *37, *3).

Fate in the guise of God — but this time helpful — recurs in *31 (cf. *5, *26, and *54), and the equivalence stated is “a good turn = wife's death”.

The connection of marriage to death is stressed in *38 and *39 (actually, a reference to the contract of marriage which became a proverb). On the whole, marriage is far from bringing happiness or even mere satisfaction (*41, *42, *46 and *47); unfaithfulness is the rule (*40, *43), and being united to devils (cf. *51, *53) makes life a true hell where one is led by the sacrament which removes the sinful aspect of sexual relations (*45).

Both *43 and *44 refer to law. Economic and social aspects underlie *43: “Le dol commis à l’égard des biens, de l’âge, de la qualité, de la profession ou de la dignité de ceux qui se marient n’annule pas l’union” (Loisel, quoted in Quitard [1861] 316). Quitard relates marriage to what is now called strategies: “Ainsi notre formule proverbiale est l’expression d’une loi qui donne raison aux plus *habiles** dans ce grand *combat de ruses** entre les prétendus et les prétendues qui cherchent à faire ensemble, *aux dépens l’un de l’autre*,* un de ces traités de mariage dont la dissimulation est le lien et l’intérêt le fondement. Elle peut être regardée comme une sorte de *vae victis* prononcé contre les dupes” [*emphasis added]. And, he adds, not without humor: “Nous recommandons à ceux qui se marient de s’en souvenir, et à ceux qui sont mariés de l’oublier” (Quitard [1861] 316). According to *44, marriage leads to suicide by hanging:

Proverbe fondé sur une disposition de notre vieille jurisprudence, qui condamnait au supplice de la corde l’homme convaincu d’avoir séduit une fille, bien qu’il eût ensuite réparé sa faute en se mariant avec elle, du consentement de la famille à laquelle il l’avait ravie ; car la réparation ne désarmait pas la loi. Ce proverbe n’est point tombé en désuétude, malgré l’abrogation d’une loi si rigoureuse : les mauvais plaisants l’ont conservé, en lui donnant une acception nouvelle. Ils l’emploient quelquefois pour signifier que le meilleur mariage est fort sujet à tourner mal et que la joie dont les nouveaux époux s’enivrent finit par se changer en un violent désespoir qui les porte à se pendre (Quitard [1861] 314-315).

The proverbs concerning husband and wife are therefore mostly made of explicit prescriptions as shown in Table 4. 1. Those which establish other types of syntagms reiterate either the superiority of the husband or the misfortune inherent in his condition.

Table 4.1
Prescribed Attitudes to Husbands and Wives in French Proverbs

		Prescriptions			
		+		–	
To husband	*32	*35	*40		
To wife	*33	*36		*30	*37

As pointed out at the beginning of this paragraph in this section, the direct language used in the expression of strategies encountered in *Affinal*

Relationship yields here to a broad imagery. Except for the principles of strategy enunciated in *28 and *29, household symbols and religion are the two semantic fields broached in these proverbs. Hen, rooster, and egg-laying, house, rings and knives, female ass, distaff and grubbing-hoe, dish, horse and saddle on the one hand, God, death, mass, funeral rites, penance, hell, and sacrament on the other, they relate husbands and wives syntagmatically through verbs of action having to do mainly with movement.

Finally, it may be noted that metonymies predominate in this section, which means that husband and wife relationships cannot be as easily mediated as would be the case were they coded in metaphorical statements (cf. Jakobson and Halle [1956] 76; Levi-Strauss [1964] 345).

4.2.2.5 Women as Marital Partners.

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The message of the proverbs of this group is clear enough. Women are essentially devils who transform life into hell. Men should, therefore, keep away (cf. *28). Let the latter acquire money and they will be in a position to buy whatever they want from women.

Proverb *54 voices male boasting in the vein of *26: free choice regulates man's life, fate that of women. Proverbs *48-*53, *61-*74 all point out the evils which are due to women, among which only *68 can be amenable to a more favorable interpretation (in the case of hypergamy) (Quitard [1861] 86; cf. Bloch [1949] II: 65 on “savonette à vilains”, and also Giraudoux, *La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu* for the erotic meaning). Explicit comparisons between men and women are to the advantage of the former (*54, *60), except in the case of love (*59), which is, therefore, underrated.

Proverbs *48, *50, *61, *72 and *73 present the interesting structural feature that they all consist of short plots, as it were. In effect, the syntagms stage women as agents transforming an initially good situation into a bad one — they are essentially evil mediators. The cause of this fact is given by a description of the very nature of women, viz., that they are not worthy of trust (*52, *53, *64). Women ruin the whole substance of man's life: truth (*48), love (*52), authority (55), life itself (*59), mind (*61), whole being (*73) and security (*75). Related to this is the here predominant imagery of money: *58, *60, *62, *65, *67, *73 and *76, all connect women with economic facts. “Woman is a necessary evil” (*70) and so is marriage (*28): there is nothing surprising, therefore, to the pejorative connotation which became that of the kinship terms *fille* and *femme* as pointed out in Chapter Two. Colloquial expressions concur to emphasize the same view (cf. “*pisseuse*” for woman: Pauli [1919] 222). This is not common to Romance languages; in Italian, for

instance, males are not better treated than females (Pauli [1919] 201-202; see also Brunot and Bruneau [1933] 161; Gamillscheg [1951] 100).

4.2.3 Conclusion

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The syntagmatic connection established in French proverbs between paradigmatic relatives is, by and large, that of hostility. The attitudes between kinsmen in general, parents and children, and husbands and wives, are all tense, hostile, deprecatory. Except for three proverbs out of 77, i.e., those which refer to maternal and avuncular relationships, the message is overwhelmingly clear. Elementary kinship relations are thus those with which proverbs are concerned. These are the syntagms which pose problems. But none causes such and so much trouble as alliance. In effect, *A* relationships are underrated in the terminology (Chapter Three), and the legal definition of married women is far from being “generous” (below, 5.3.4 and 5.3.1). The uneasiness of the French kinship system when it faces “le beau sexe” turns quickly to ungallant syntagms.

4.3 FOLKTALES

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The hypothesis can be proposed that the syntagms concisely coded in proverbs will be developed along the same structural and connotative lines in folktales. Actually, we have noted earlier that some proverbs about women — those which describe their role as social beings — already have the form of short plots. This section will enable us to see to what extent the hypothesis is valid, while throwing additional light on the system of attitudes between French relatives.

4.3.1 The Data.

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Most valuable tools are available for the study of French folktales. *Le Conte populaire français* by Delarue (vol. I, 1957) and Delarue and Tenèze (vol. II, 1964) are works of the highest scholarly merit. Along with Delarue's earlier work (1956), they will provide the data for the present analysis.

Of course, there is not enough space here for the abstracts of the 84 tales surveyed from the standpoint of kinship relationships. The data will, therefore, be summarized in tables and discussed thereafter.

4.3.2 Analysis.

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The analytical framework will be that proposed by Köngäs and Maranda (1962; cf. Bremond [1964]; Köngäs Maranda [1965]; Maranda and Maranda [1971]). A folktale can be described in terms of (1) an initial situation where the problem is posed; (2) the action which takes place in the course of the plot, which is a mediation process, i.e., a series of concatenated actions which bring about a change in the initial situation; finally (3) the outcome relates the fate of the *dramatis personae* involved in the problem posed in the beginning. In order not to lengthen this study unduly, only the initial situation and the outcome will be taken into account. Actually, these will provide enough information for the present purpose, all the more that the type of mediation that prevails in French folktales is more or less standardized (it consists chiefly of obstacles to overcome with the help of a magical or supernatural agent, like in other European traditions). Whenever mediation has a special interest for kinship relationships, however, it will be pointed out.

Five tables will be built, one for each broad category of relatives which play an active role in the data. A short commentary will follow each table. The following symbols will be used: (1) abbreviations for relationships, as introduced in 2.1; (2) standard abbreviations for kin types as used elsewhere in this work; (3) the signs > and < : to mark, respectively, *r i v a l r y* or *p r i v i l e g e*, and its inverse; (4) the colon (:) to mean solidarity (e.g., B: B for solidarity between brothers); (5) parentheses, to mark that an opposition is not the result of wilfulness, but rather that of circumstances; (6) the Roman numerals IV and V, which refer to the two last models in Köngäs and Maranda (1962)¹. They stand, IV for “equilibrium reestablished”, i.e., what was lost or gained at the beginning is recovered or lost at the end of the plot, and V for “equilibrium reestablished with additional gain”. Thus, a story which narrates the loss of a wife and her recovery has a structure IV, whereas one where the husband not only recovers his wife but also finds a treasure by so doing has a structure V. The signs + and – added to IV and V indicate that the outcome depicts a favorable (+) or unfavorable (–) result to the *dramatis persona* given immediately after the sign between square brackets (e.g., V+ [D] means “outcome with gain in the advantage of Daughter”). These Roman numerals will be used when the outcome cannot be specified in terms of kinship

¹ See Appendix III.

relationships and when the type of “gain” or “loss” is not relevant to this study: they will merely designate a type of structural process. (7) The Arabic numbers (all three digits or more) are the international tale-type numbers according to which French folktales are classified and under which they can be found in Delarue (1956, 1957) and Delarue and Tenèze (1964). Some type numbers are repeated in the Tables: this is due to paradigmatic variations in different versions of the same tales; repetition of numbers means, therefore, that the same syntagm can recur with different but substitutable kinship relationships.

4.3.2.1 Relatives in General.

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Aside from parent/children, sibling, step-, and alliance relationships, the only ones to appear significantly in French folktales are those with godparents.

Table 4.2
Godparent Relationships

	Initial situation	Outcome
Boy's godfather	devil, 314 death, 332	hypergamy death
Girl's godmother	Virgin Mary, 652, 710	IV + [godD]

It will be noted that no cross-relationships are represented in these tales, and that only the devil's godparenthood has to do with kinship in the outcome, viz., the marriage of the hero with a woman socially higher than he.

4.3.2.2 G/G⁻¹, Parents/Children.

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This category counts seven classes, shown in Table 4.3. Parent/child solidarity does not occur across sexes, as in the case of god parent/godchild relationships. Mother/daughter solidarity, however (Type 522), is not rewarded very glamorously: the daughters of a poor woman get married to animals in order not to starve and they share with their mother what their husbands (fox, dog, etc.) can catch in their hunts. Hypergamy is the outcome of mother/child, as in father/son, but not father/daughter oppositions. In point of fact, mothers are often jealous, and sometimes the rivals, of their daughters; and their opposition to their sons is expressed by rejection or by attempts on each others' lives. Fathers, on the other hand, are generally systematically opposed to their daughters' marriages (it is a wide-spread trait of European folktales that whatever obstacles are thrown in the way of the suitor come from his prospective father-in-law who wants to test the former's courage, skill,

strength, etc.); they are not malevolent toward their sons, but can be compelled by circumstances to reject them.

Table 4.3

Parent/Child Relationships

	Initial situation	Outcome
Parents > Son	671	V + [S]
F > S	(316), (325), 502	S's hypergamy
F > D	706	D's hypergamy
	313	V+[D]
	510B F's incestuous desire	IV + [D]
	513 F opposes	
	D's marriage	IV + [D]
F : S	550	IV
M > D	310, 500, 501	D's hypergamy
	706	D's hypergamy, with M : D or M < D
	709	V + [D]
M > S	590, 675	S's hypergamy
	720	IV + [S]
M : D	552	V-

4.3.2.3. Relationships between Siblings.

These are the most numerous in folktales after alliance relationships. They fall into five classes, four of which are oppositions.

Table 4.4

Relationship between Siblings

	Initial situation	Outcome
B > Z	300, 315	B's hypergamy
B < Z	450, 451, 471	Z's hypergamy, with B : Z
Older B > Younger B	301, 303, 304, 328,570,571,590	Younger B's hypergamy
	460B	V + [Younger B] with older killed
	566, 567	V + with B : B
	550,676	V + [Younger B]
B : B	633, 654	V +
Z > Z	480	Good Z's hypergamy, with Bad Z eliminate
	510A	Good Z' hypergamy, with Z : Z

On the whole, hypergamy results from all these oppositions, in the proportion of 2/1 in favor of male hypergamy, i.e., a difference of fifty per cent with the scores found in the case of parent/child relationships where female hypergamy ranks equally with male hypergamy. If we sum up the scores of Tables 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4, we have:

male hypergamy	16
female hypergamy	10

Sisters seem to be more conciliatory than brothers: oppositions between them as between $Z > B$ result in solidarity in four cases out of seven, whereas $B > Z$ does not, nor does $B > B$ more than once. It is true, however, that $B : B$ is expressed in two tales against no case of $Z : Z$.

4.3.2.4 Alliance Relationships.

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This is the category best represented. Eight classes group the 45 cases and 20 syntagms of step and alliance relationships. Two tables will be used to distinguish these two types of relationships, although both are of the same order in French terminology (3.2.2). The tables are Table 4.5, Step Relationships, and Table 4.6, Alliance Relationships.

Two main points draw our attention in Tables 4.5 and 4.6. The first is the importance of hypergamy and the second is the liberation of one of the spouses by the other.

Table 4.5
Step Relationships

	Initial situation	Outcome
StepM > StepD	511	D's hypergamy
	706	D's Hypergamy with StepM : StepD or StepM < StepD
	327	IV + [StepD]
	403,432,709	V + [StepD]
StepM > StepS	675	S's hypergamy
	592	V + [StepS but in heaven only]
	720	IV + [StepS]

Female hypergamy occurs only in a context of kinship relationships, and mainly when M and D are in competition, whereas if male hypergamy occurs more often in similar contexts (8/5), here it appears when the man is isolated from his kinsmen. The lowly hero, in effect, pursues his quest without defining himself against a background of relatives. And he is always a man. The total

score of male hypergamy is thus carried to 36 against 11 cases of female hypergamy, and the ratio becomes 76.6 per cent in favor of males. Furthermore, two more cases could be added since in 569 and 570, the man could marry up if he wanted. It then means, concurrently, that women marry down in the majority of cases, and the story of the only man who attempts to do so deserves to be summarized. In 612, a man of high social rank marries a lowly girl. Sometime later, the wife dies and her husband resuscitates her. The latter is ungrateful and runs away with another man; they even manage to plant evidence so that her husband is put to death for a crime he has not committed. Thanks to his magical medicine, the husband is resuscitated by a faithful old friend, and, in turn resuscitates the king's daughter whom he marries. He then puts his first wife's lover to death. Now, this tale epitomizes the message reiterated 35 times in the corpus, that if a woman may marry down, a man should not. Of course, men do in ten cases, without incurring too painful consequences; nonetheless, the trend is firmly stated.

The other important point made by the stories resides in the fact that men free women from a bad fate and women do the same for men. The cases reviewed here are not numerous enough to permit the formulation of a significant ratio by sex. It must be mentioned, though, that in 400 and 401, a man loves a monstrous woman whom he delivers from the spell cast on her, whereas in 425 and 433, a woman performs the same type of deed in favor of a man. In both cases, therefore, the obstacles to be overcome are not extrinsic to the spouse to conquer — as are most tasks imposed on the hero by a king — but are his or her very essence. And then, men free women from extrinsic dangers, but the latter do not perform this type of action.

Table 4.6
Alliance Relationships

	Initial situation	Outcome
fiancés, ♂ > ♀	365	same
	410	IV – [♀]
Lowly hero	306, 307, 317, 326, 402, 461, 475, 531, 545, 554, 559, 560, 561, 562, 566, 650, 670, 825, 1655 569, 570	male hypergamy } opportunity for male hypergamy rejected by lowly hero who prefers his humble fiancée
Noble hero	593 402, 516, 621 612	marries on same level marries on same level marries down
H > W	311, 312 329 400, 401, 408, 506A	H < W thanks to WB Prince frees and marries princess H frees W
H > W	425, 433 449 1552	W frees H stupid H loses himself H : W
HZ > W	706	V + [W], with HZ : W or HZ > W

It may be concluded from this survey of alliance relationships in folktales that, to the Frenchman of folk narratives, marrying up is what counts. And the wedding will eventually transform one's monstrous partner into a prince or a princess, so that one can always hope that the “beast” (cf. above, 2.2.4 and 2.2.5) one is about to get married to will turn out to be a dream spouse.

At this point, the investigation must stop for lack of documents. The tales grouped under the heading “Stories about Married Couples” (Numbers 1350-1439 in the Type Index, Aarne-Thompson [1962]) are not yet available for France. There is no doubt that tales of that category, which belong under the major heading “Jokes and Anecdotes”, would cast a most interesting and valuable light on alliance relationships. The completion of the task must be postponed until the materials are made accessible.

4.3.3 Conclusion.

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Eleven proverbs deal with G/G^{-1} , relationships, and 57 with A . The main *dramatis personae* of 18 folktales are parents/children, those of 22 are siblings, and those of 49 are affines. These figures do not necessarily mean much. They are suggestive, nonetheless, especially when compared to the scores of the same relationships on the combinatorial model. There we had $G = G^{-1} = (S + A)$ where $S > A$, and here, $A > S > (G + G^{-1})$, i.e., the situation is roughly inverted. Everything happens as though underrated relationships on the denotative level (terminology) were overrated on the connotative level (folk literature). In other words, attitudes toward relatives ill-defined in the system (because of an outgrowth of extension to the detriment of intension) have to be handled at the expense of another coding procedure. Still in another way: what is not given on the level of terminological precision and stability has to be compensated for on that of the next stabler one, that of formalized oral tradition.

On the whole, folklore emphasizes the nuclear family. We see that in folktales mothers are opposed to sons and daughters more than fathers to sons; and the latter are opposed to daughters in a way which is congruent with the message of proverbs, viz., control over their choice of marital partners. The opposition between siblings is probably related to conflicts inherent in the administration of the *freresche* and to inheritance. In this respect, it is significant that what opposes sisters is not age, as in the case of brothers, but moral qualities. Step relationships involve both sexes on the children's level but only mothers on the parental one, and they are all tense (cf. the twelfth century proverb, "Qui a marâtre a diable en être"). This is most likely because a stepmother is eminently an affine, i.e., a "foreigner".

To some extent, the hypothesis put forward at the beginning of this section is verified. Folktales do indeed unfold along the same structural and connotative lines as proverbs, which points out the systemic character of folklore. Parents and children are opposed in both; marriage is viewed as a means to improve one's own situation (especially the males'). However, when wives contaminate their husbands, deceive them, ruin them in proverbs, no such aspect emerges in the tales. I surmise that the reason for this omission lies in that it was not possible to include the tales of the group "Stories about Married Couples", which are devoted to the description of what happens after marriage. When these are available for analysis, they should confirm the message of the proverbs without counterpart in the present state of information. The following section will give an idea of what can be expected of the rest of the tales.

4.4 FOLK CUSTOMS SURROUNDING MARRIAGE

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Folk customs are a correlate of oral tradition in many regards (cf. Roberts *et al.* [1963]). As far there as stability is concerned, they form a body of practices which are learned and transmitted much in the same way as purely verbal messages, i.e., by a sort of osmosis, and the control exerted upon them is that of the ceremonies in which they figure.

The folk customs gathered by van Gennep in his *Manuel de Folklore français contemporain* (vols. 1.1 and 1.2 [1943, 1947]) offer interesting cases of behavioral amplifications of the attitudes voiced in the folk literature. Predominant among those related to kinship and best documented are the sequences of ritualized actions which accompany courtship, and precede, accompany, and immediately follow marriage. Territoriality, sex, age, and blood solidarity impinge strongly upon the whole process. Actually, four basic, concentric, and dual categories serve as many discriminating levels facing prospective mates: the community as territorially defined and opposed to people from the outside world; men as opposed to women; older as opposed to younger people; and the two contracting families enacting a ritual hostility (van Gennep [1943] 267).

In folktales, territoriality is not emphasized and appears only in connection with the quest of special powers as is common in the genre. It is remarkable, though, that most heroes marry uxori locally, as if the overcoming of obstacles was equivalent to gaining rights in an alien community; but they still “marient en gendres”. Sex and age solidarity, on the other hand, are found in tales staging siblings, while kins and affines are generally at odds with each other. Obstacles to marriage have to be overcome by skill and/or psychological determination in the oral literature, and it is on these grounds that mates are tested. According to folk customs, the bridegroom has to give proof of his physical skills in sporting competitions and of his determination by affronting the ritual expressions of his prospective affines’ hostility.

The economic factors as well as the prestige which are involved in the transaction — van Gennep calls them “affaire” and “répartition des influences” — are set forward and felt as such by the community. Marriage is not a private affair but is, so to speak, administered and sanctioned by the group, i.e., by the sets of male and female bachelors of the village. Thus age and sex hold together, and both fiancés must redeem their right to leave the group they belong to by different types of prestations, the payment of which is enforced

by sometimes “cruel” (van Gennep) persecutions of the fiancé — especially in the male group — which take a still more hostile turn if the latter is from another commune. In other words, the bachelor groups will require compensation before they agree to the modification caused by marriage of the available sex (and land) resources in their community (van Gennep [1947] 308-326).

The prestations take the form of food and/or of cash, and the final agreement between the contracting families as well as between the fiancé/e and his/her age and sex group is symbolized by food-sharing in a manner which can be compared to the food-language in which the first tentative steps are taken when a woman thinks of marriage seriously (van Gennep [1947] 273-278, 308-326; cf. Levi-Strauss [1962] 139-141).

During the phase of courtship, the eventual partners and their families have to tame each other gradually, and the final rupture of the consanguineal bonds on the bride's side has to be marked ceremonially as well as her integration into her husband's family, which is opposed to? Similarly, the same obtains in the converse case of uxoriocal residence where the husband is looked down upon and said “se marier gendre”, “se marier en gendre”, “aller gendre” (‘marry to be son-in-law’), and where obstacles were also raised to the integration of the husband to his wife's household (van Gennep [1946] 414-416, 494-500).

On the whole, the establishment of alliance relationships in traditional French society was an achievement of a highly ceremonialized order which consisted of a negative tearing off first from sexual solidarity, then from senior authority, and finally from family ties which were not dissolved, however, but reorganized to incorporate the new member into the domestic group.

By nature, courtship was ordered to the ceremony of betrothal where “disparaissent les liens avec un état antérieur [membership in the class of bachelors in a given territory on the one hand, and in the consanguineal family on the other], alors que se forment d'autres liens avec un état nouveau [membership in the class of married people, which may or may not mark extraterritorial relocation, and which implies the passage from the state of “generated” to that of “generator”]. Socialement, l'individu se prépare pendant le stade des fiançailles à passer de la société restreinte des jeunes gens ou des jeunes filles dans la société restreinte des ménages légalement constitués ; puis, sinon toujours en pratique, du moins théoriquement, en droit et en possibilité, dans celles des pères et mères (van Gennep [1943] 226).

Competition and resistance within tightly closed social categories characterized the process leading to the opening of the family cell when it was enlarged by the addition of a spouse. Local factors — land ownership, succession rights, prestige components — are involved in kinship operations,

each move of the “men” being a community affair on the chess-board of the village.

The contribution of van Gennep, which is independent from folktale analysis — he was interested in *rites de passage* more than in narratives — agrees nonetheless with what can be inferred from the tales and proverbs. Sex and age solidarity and rivalry can be compared to sibling solidarity and rivalry; the carefully weighed transactions between the fiancés’ parents conforms to the idea of strategical moves; finally, the *rite de passage* through which both fiancés must pass is congruent with the representation of “obstacles” in tales.

4.5 CONCLUSION

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Much could be added to this chapter, with respect to both information and analysis. The customs of charivari, for instance; that of the initiation of men on the eve of their marriage to the order of cuckolds¹; the economic transactions — unfortunately not too-well documented — which were more or less part of the ceremonial context, all that would deserve full treatment and would yield significant information.

Nonetheless, two conclusions may be proposed. (1) It emerges from the juxtaposition of Chapters Two and Three to Chapter Four that alliance relationships, weakly expressed and defined in the French terminology, receive the strongest treatment in folklore. It is as if what is not adequately stated on

¹ See, for instance, this excerpt from a request addressed in 1770 to du Plessis d'Argentré, bishop of Limoges, to ask him to stop these initiations in his diocese: “Messieurs les bourgeois de l'endroit... auraient un grand bois de cerf et même de daim, avec quelques autres cornes de différentes espèces qu'ils attacheroient ensemble avec des rubans de diverses couleurs et les porteraient en grande cérémonie chez tous les nouveaux mariés pour les leur faire honorer de la manière suivante : On choisit ordinairement un homme dont la réputation soit hors d'équivoque sur cet article ; on le fait monter d'une manière ridicule sur un âne, encore plus ridiculement paré, et on le conduit avec un pompeux désordre à la porte du nouveau prosélyte qui vient les y recevoir en cérémonie ; il se met à genoux, les baise (les cornes) avec respect, les reçoit avec reconnaissance sur la tête et est agréé, dès lors, à cette honorable société des cornards dont il se fait gloire d'augmenter le nombre ; si, par principe d'honneur ou mieux encore de religion, il refuse de rendre à ces honteux et ridicules symboles de libertinage l'hommage humiliant qu'on leur rend dans le pays, les confrères se croient en droit d'entrer de force dans sa maison et d'y commettre toutes sortes d'abus, sans qu'il puisse s'en défendre ni se faire rendre justice des vexations injustes et odieuses qu'on y exerce contre ses meubles que l'on brise, et quelquefois contre sa propre personne” (Trébuc [1912] I, 255-256 ; the bishop did not succeed in dissolving the society which held until the Revolution).

the lexical plane had to be dramatized on the plane of institutionally verbalized behavior. Then (2) French folklore seems to be a system of quasi-norms derived from explorations along critical dimensions of social life (marital strategies, hypergamy, relations between spouses, relations between siblings, and parental authority, in this order of decreasing importance).

Chapter Five will bring in considerations of true (jural) norms. These will bear out the relevance of the present conclusions.

5. THE EVOLUTION OF DOMESTIC LAW AND THE FORMATION OF THE MODERN FAMILY

5.1 THE EVOLUTION OF DOMESTIC LAW

5.1.1 Law and Folklore.

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Like folk literature, law consists of relatively stable messages. In point of fact, it is difficult to distinguish between some proverbs and legal aphorisms (see 4.2.1.1, proverbs * 14-*17, *36, *39, *43, *44, *77). As shown above, proverbs often take the form of prescriptions. Folktales, then, explore the range of possibilities of action and show their respective outcomes, thus providing native models of behavior. On the other hand, law does not so much code attitudes as it promulgates norms. But the latter sanctions the former while assigning limits to their free expression. Both attitudes and norms depend on the axioms of a society (Hoebel [1959] 69, etc.); for example, it is assumed that if marriage frees partners from their previous conditions (4.3.2.4) it is nonetheless an evil and untrustfulness is its rule (4.2.1.4). Figure 5.1 proposes a sketch model of the sociological position of law and folklore.

The congruence between law and folklore could be demonstrated further (cf. Vansina [1965] 160-164). Suffice to mention here that both are coded at high cost and in a highly formalized language ¹.

¹ It is interesting to see that Medieval costumals were written up or modified when people gathered for folkloric feasts (Bloch [1949] I, 340-342).

Fig. 5. 1. Folklore and Law in Social Structure. Both folklore and law are related to the social order, the former as a scanning device to explore possibilities, the latter as a steering mechanism to enforce social control.

5.1.2 The Formation of French Civil Law.

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The geographical dichotomy of France between North and South pointed out earlier (1.1) was also that of the constituents of her law. In the North or “pays de droit oral”, the Germanic legal traditions were transmitted orally, whereas in the South or “pays de droit écrit”, the Roman influence was felt through written laws.

But an adaptive factor soon gave French law its own physiognomy and unified it on the level of operational principles: “un développement capital s'opère, en France, du sixième au dixième siècle : c'est, avec l'établissement d'une société féodale, la substitution, au principe de personnalité des lois, d'un principe nouveau de territorialité des coutumes” (David [1960] 5).

This new principle of territoriality, substituted for that of the law of persons, did not bring forth the uniformization of customs before several centuries. It began nonetheless to give specific features to French jurisprudence out of which customals arose and were revised. Thus, with respect, for example, to the transmission of property, traditional Germanic elements were upheld.

Il est à remarquer que l'esprit d'hérédité que l'on trouve dans la famille féodale se rattache aussi à la copropriété de famille des coutumes germaniques. L'idée ancienne qui fait de la terre une dotation de la famille entière, a persisté dans la famille féodale. Les fiefs devinrent de bonne heure héréditaires, et dès lors la famille descendue du tenancier eut le même droit que lui à la concession territoriale. Les contrats d'inféodation et d'accensement attribuaient la terre au tenancier ‘et aux hoirs de son corps’. Une autre trace de l'idée de copropriété de famille fut le retrait lignager ; la famille, ou lignage, comme on disait, avait le droit d'empêcher que la terre ne passât à une autre famille. Le parage amenait aussi la constitution d'une sorte de communauté de famille dirigée par l'aîné” (Regelsperger [n.d.] 1183; see also Olivier Martin [1946] 649-655).

Actually, what happened is that already in the tenth century customs were transformed into obligations in the advantage of the lords — *justitia* came to mean the whole of seigneurial powers, and the judges were the lords themselves (see above, 1.3.3 and 1.3.4, and Bloch [1949] II, 118).

At the beginning of the feudal era in France and Burgundy, written laws had been forgotten. Where old customals had persisted, they were no longer intelligible and the lords were too ignorant to resort to jurisprudence. Little by little, however, the latter fixed the “custom of the land” after preliminary tractations with their subjects; such customals were revised periodically at the gatherings mentioned earlier in this chapter (5.1.1).

The fusion of ethnic components being gradually achieved with the spread of a national language, the diverse local traditions underwent a similar process of unification. This had also been prepared by common “collective ideas” shared by European societies on a continental scale. The axioms underlying oral law began as early as in the tenth century to be formulated by specialists (*doctes dans les lois*) attached to higher barons. Italian jurists, who had kept a persistent interest in Roman law when such concerns were forgotten elsewhere in Europe with the replacement of Latin by national idioms, exerted a strong influence on this phase of the constitution of French law. In the twelfth century, for instance, the chairs of the law schools of Montpellier and Sens were occupied by Italian or Italy-trained jurists. In Southern France, whose oral tradition had been impregnated by Roman law, the Italian school had a relatively easier way than in the North. But the main effect of this formal teaching was to induce formulation and explicitation of local practices with the help of the intellectual tools newly introduced. This happened at the time when

le regroupement des éléments sociaux en grands États ou en grandes principautés favorisait non seulement la renaissance de la législation, mais encore, sur de vastes territoires, l'extension d'une jurisprudence unificatrice... Dans le royaume capétien, il est caractéristique qu'aux alentours de l'an 1200 on voit surgir, côte à côte avec la vieille mention de la coutume du lieu, au sens le plus étroit, les noms d'aires coutumières plus amples ; France autour de Paris, Normandie, Champagne. Par tous ces signes, une œuvre de cristallisation se préparait, dont le XII^e siècle finissant devait connaître, sinon l'accomplissement, du moins les prodromes... or un droit qui, dorénavant, était fixé, pour partie par la voie législative et, en totalité, s'enseignait et s'écrivait, comment n'eût-il pas perdu beaucoup de sa plasticité, en même temps que de sa diversité ?... À une période singulièrement mouvante, à un âge d'obscur et profonde gestation, va donc succéder, à partir de la seconde moitié du XII^e siècle, une ère où la société tendra désormais à organiser les relations humaines avec plus de rigueur, à établir entre les classes des limites plus nettes, à effacer beaucoup de variétés locales, à n'admettre enfin que de plus lentes transformations (Bloch [1949] I, 188-190 ; see also 81-85 on Normandy, 173-185, and, for details of political history, Lacroix [1963] 353-380).

At that time, proper names began to be used to code individuals for administrative purposes (see above, 1.3.2), and, by and large, a greater care for precision and specification emerged which was to prevail more and more in French intellectual history (cf. Maine [1861] 77-83, 88-92; Bloch [1949] I, 172). From the twelfth century onwards, the written document assumed a tremendous importance. Rural communities claimed for town charters of their own, which they wanted devised in the image of those of the new towns founded by the bourgeois. Lords had to agree because of the competition due to the clearing movement and to the formation of the privileged *villes neuves* (above, 1.3.4).

Then the bourgeois town “forme un territoire juridique distinct”. Here again, “Le principe de la territorialité du droit l'emporte... sur celui de la personnalité [but cf. below, 5.2.1. Soumis tous également au droit pénal, les bourgeois, fatalement, participeront tôt ou tard, au même droit civil” (Pirenne

[1939a] 413 ; cf. Olivier Martin [1951] 157-158 ; Lacroix [1963] 269-299, and above 1.3.7). The same axioms underlie urban and rural law, however: only their expression varies.

At the time when the core of French kinship terminology had been formed (thirteenth century), civil law had also taken most of the basic features which it was to retain in France until the Revolution and even afterwards. Its contents regarding kinship will now be reviewed briefly; section 5.3 will present post-Revolutionary changes.

5.2 THE CONTENTS OF MEDIEVAL DOMESTIC LAW

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It will be convenient to adopt the common headings of residence, land-ownership, inheritance, and marriage to review briefly Medieval French civil law.

5.2.1 Residence.

As mentioned above, territoriality was the determining factor of a person's rights: it gave an individual his socio-legal definition which could be altered only by moving to, and being integrated into, a new territory. The residents of a demesne were grouped by exploitation rights and common submission to the "custom of the manor". All non-residents were strangers, whether they were born in another country or in contiguous demesnes. They could acquire residence rights, however, if they avowed themselves the local lord's men within a year-and-a-day after their arrival; otherwise, they were reduced to the state of slaves if they stayed in the community (cf. 1.3.4). The same was also true of towns the important difference being that residence rights did not imply feudal submission to a lord and that bourgeois could not sever their ties to a commune simply by leaving it (above, 1.3.7).

The parents' residence marked their children in that the latter's age of legal majority — which varied from region to region — was not fixed by the custom of the demesne into which the parents might have moved and become integrated, but by that of the demesne where the children were born (*domaine d'origine*). But this was probably the only instance where *jus soli* outweighed *jus originis paternae*.

This should show that French Medieval society was not kinship-based if we could accept Maine's criterion, viz., that in such societies settlement in a territory is enough to give citizenship without resort to kinship by adoption or

by marriage or by some fictitious genealogical link (Maine [1861] 127-128; cf. Gluckman [1965] 86). However, the facts are not that simple. In effect, as was shown above (2.3.4, 2.3.8, etc.), kinship terms were indeed used to integrate strangers into the local group. Thus, everything happened as though kinship and residence functioned as redundant systems of social identification. This is perhaps best understood with reference to the *maisne* (above, 1.3.4). But that residence was more important than kinship in the last analysis appears clearly from the two following facts: (1) the *maisnie* was the only group unambiguously defined from the standpoint of exploitation rights and duties, and (2) an individual always belonged to two lineages, but to only one *maisnie* (Petot [1955] 10). Along the same lines — a phenomenon far from being exclusively French in Europe — “à la fois lignage et patrimoine, la ‘maison’ ... demeure, tandis que passent les générations qui la personnifient; elle porte un nom alors que ceux qui l’incarnent ne se distinguent souvent que par un prénom ... il arrive même que le nom demeure attaché à la maison, lors même qu’elle a cessé d’être habitée et qu’il soit donné aux nouveaux occupants” (Bourdieu [1962] 37).

Accordingly, territoriality was of paramount importance to the member of French Medieval society — as it still is in many respects today in rural communities where village endogamy is preferential (cf. above, 4.4, and below 5.2.4).

5.2.2 Land Ownership.

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In principle, all the land was ultimately owned by the chief of the Central State, and his vassals were his stewards, as *vavasseurs* were those of the latter, and as masters of the smallest holdings were those of *vavasseurs*. In practice, large fiefs and modest tenures became hereditary already in the reigns of the first Carolingians, for reasons of interest as pointed out above (1.3.4; cf. Bloch [1949] I, 293-301.) The real tenant of the land, however, was not the individual but his lineage, and any given master was only the historical expression of his kins' permanent rights (Pirenne [1937] 68; Malécot and Blin [n.d.] 145-146, 263-270, etc.).

Because of the influence of the Church which lived chiefly on, and enriched itself by, alms, donations, and legacies (above, 1.3.6), provisions were made to favor individual disposal of property (this was, in a way, a return to Roman law). But individuals could not alienate their holdings in the interest of the Church without first buying permission to do so from the hierarchy of their lords — which the Church encouraged them to do. Actually, higher lords did not lose in the transaction, since they only authorized a change of vassals. Nonetheless, the property of a lord to be taken upon his death by the Church

against his salvation always had to be offered first to close relatives, a stipulation enforced from 1055-1070 to the end of the twelfth century. From the beginning of the thirteenth century, “on se borna à reconnaître aux membres de la parenté dans un rayon et selon un ordre donnés, la faculté une fois la vente faite, de se substituer à l'acquéreur, moyennant reversement du prix déjà payé. Il n'y a guère eu, dans la société médiévale, d'institution plus universelle que ce ‘retrait lignager’ ... Ni, non plus, d'institution plus solidement ancrée : en France, il ne devait être aboli que par la Révolution” (Bloch [1949] I, 207; cf. 205-206, 321-324).

5.2.3 Inheritance.

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The will was first promoted by the Church in its own interest, in the twelfth century. It provided an easy satisfaction to both the legator and his ecclesiastical legatee: a worldly man could enjoy his riches without remorse as long as he lived and be assured of eternal salvation (to the detriment of his natural heirs) by leaving his property to the Church in his will. Those who would have inherited otherwise did not fail to oppose such holy intentions. The civil power supported their revendications and accorded them compensatory rights (as mentioned at the end of the last section), until the trend set in to include and, more and more, give precedence to natural heirs.

At first, fiefs could be transmitted along any path within the lineage. Women were excluded as a rule for they could not take arms and fight either to protect their own land or to participate in their lords' military actions. However, exceptions seem to have been relatively frequent, especially among higher-ranking families: lacking other close relatives, a woman could inherit and her husband could serve in her stead (Bloch [1949] I, 308-311). Evidently, this practice opened the way to marriage politics.

Throughout Europe, fiefs were mostly indivisible, hence the problem of establishing an order of priority between heirs equally close to the late vassal. Different traditions prevailed in different areas and depending on the kind of land. In several rural parts, an old custom favored the youngest son (cf. Ariès [1960] 402-402), or lords could decide to appoint the most capable son, or the heirs inherited collectively. In most of France, it happened that large principalities were divided because it was in the kings' interest to reduce the power of their great vassals, often rivals more than faithful servants. But the latter resisted such measures and reacted by adopting primogeniture in the twelfth century. The same trend prevailed also down the social hierarchy, with a special provision to save the rights of younger siblings. In some cases (e.g., Île-de-France), the *freresche* required these to pay homage to their oldest

brother, in others (e.g., Normandy, Anjou), the strength of blood ties rendered formal prestations superfluous (Bloch [1949] I, 308-317, 328).

As far as French feudal succession rights can be summarized, the general pattern was that the closest relative in the lineage was natural heir. In his legal absence, the land had to return to the lineage to which it had originally been entrusted according to the rule *paterna paternis, materna maternis* (Olivier Martin (1951] 273). But the Justinian principle of *successio in locum* could also apply (*représentation*), by which grandchildren and sometimes niblings could be entitled to inherit, priority being given to the direct line (cf. 2.4.1.1, Proverb *15). Representation conformed to the following model:

Fig. 5.2. Inheritance by Representation in French Medieval Law. Blackened kinship symbols stand for relatives entitled to succession rights; see text.

In figure 5.2, numbers 3 and 4 were generally excluded by custom (see below, 5.2.4 on dowry) or by renunciation. In the event numbers 1 and 2 were dead or legally absent, their children inherited by *souche* (*in stirpe* ‘stump’) and not by *tête* (*in capita*, ‘heads’). Thus, the share of number 8 was equal to that of numbers 5, 6 and 7 together. The rationale of *in stirpe* inheritance was to insure equality between the different lines of descent.

Representation was of two kinds, *intra*, and *extra terminos juris*. They differed according to the order of priority, that of the former being $SG^{-1} > S$, and that of the latter $S > SG^{-1} > G_2SG_2^{-1} > GS$.

Other relatives could also inherit in the following order: $G > S > G^{-1}_2 > A$ except when the land had been acquired by the deceased himself (*acquêts*): then the order was $S > SG^{-1} > G_2^{-1}$ which was not *in stirpe* but *in capita*.

Under the term *légitime*, French law adopted the Roman *jus pietatis* and restricted the father's freedom to dispose of the estate — counteracting the

other Roman tradition of the free will reactivated by the Church. Only children could inherit the family's property which was thus insured against its head itself whose rights exceeded those of the steward mentioned earlier (5.2.2) only with respect to *acquêts*. The *réserve* (or *légitime coutumière*) and *droit lignager* had the same function as the *légitime*, viz., to keep the land in the kin group as much as possible (Malécot and Blin [n.d.] 87-421; Olivier-Martin [1948] 273-275, etc.; Petot [1955a, 1955b] Ariès [1960] 394-396, 417-419).

The kin group, especially the *freresche* was, therefore, the concrete, visible expression as well as the product of French Medieval succession laws. In the *maisnie* (above, 1.3.4) there lived often between fifty and seventy people — younger siblings, married brothers' wives and children, collaterals, servants — under the authority of the oldest brother (or of the one who had assumed the responsibility of running the estate). The latter's duties towards his *cadets* entailed that he provided them with a dowry roughly equivalent to their share of the value of the land, which could be a serious drain on his own resources. Those who were not wealthy enough to meet such responsibilities had to borrow money in order not to divide the land, unless their siblings were willing to share a common life in their natal home. That this was quite often the case is exemplified by what was said earlier on the *freresche* (1.3.8, and below, next section; cf. Bloch [1949] I, 216; [1961] 187; Bourdieu [1962]).

The norms determining group allegiance in case of conflict (above, 1.3.9) were similar to those governing succession rights. It was also pointed out that a uterine half-brother was not a consanguineal relative but an affine (3.2.2). The position of avuncular relatives is more difficult to estimate. They ranked among consanguineal relatives with respect to inheritance by virtue of their siblingship with the parents (representation *extra terminos juris*). On the other hand, a “war” against an uncle was legitimate, as was that against uterine half-brothers. The ambiguous definition of avunculars in the kinship system was perhaps due to the fact that they sometimes left the *manse* to live uxorilocally and sometimes stayed there under the jurisdiction of their older brother (see below, next section). This brings up the topic of marital residence which will best be treated in the context of the spouses' rights.

5.2.4 Marriage.

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Domaine endogamy was preferential in the Middle Ages as it still was in quite a few French villages at the turn of the twentieth century. The expression “*mariage par échange*” was explained above (2.3.5); lords did indeed control

the choice of their men's spouses in order to obviate to the successoral complications which would have arisen otherwise ¹.

Expressions like *se marier gendre* ('marry to be son-in-law'), *aller faire gendre*, etc., are still common in French rural society. They reflect to our days the old traditional sentiment that uxori-local residence is undesirable (cf. Lefebvre [1955] 139). In effect, the ideal union is the one between a man who will take over his father's estate and a woman with a good dowry who will increase the property. Like village endogamy and succession laws, viri-patrilocal residence aims at keeping the patrimony intact and increasing it as much as possible. It also conforms to the axiom that the man is the master of the house (see Proverbs *30, *36, *37, etc. in 4.2.1.4 and 4.2.1.5).

The choice of a spouse will take into account all possible sources of information, and this will be carefully reviewed and weighed. A great deal of calculations, careful planning, and evaluation of clues will enter in the planification of strategies. On the basis of the data gathered by van Gennep, one can generalize Bourdieu's statements on the situation in Béarn. The families negotiating a marriage contract, or those with a child on the market, talk the language of stock-breeders (van Gennep [1943] 235).

Le choix de l'époux ou de l'épouse, de l'héritier ou de l'héritière a une importance capitale puisqu'il contribue à déterminer le montant de la dot que pourront recevoir les cadets, le mariage qu'ils pourront faire et s'ils pourront se marier, en retour, le nombre des cadettes et surtout de cadets à marier pèse fortement sur ce choix. Ainsi, à chaque génération, surgit devant l'héritier la menace du partage qu'il doit conjurer à tout prix, soit en épousant une cadette bien dotée, soit hypothéquant la terre pour se procurer de l'argent, soit en obtenant des délais. On comprend que, dans une telle logique, la naissance d'une fille ne soit pas accueillie avec enthousiasme [cf. 4.2.1.4, Proverbs * 21-* 27]... L'autorité des parents, gardiens du patrimoine qu'il faut sauvegarder et augmenter, s'exerce de façon absolue chaque fois qu'il s'agit d'imposer le sacrifice du sentiment à l'intérêt. Et il n'est pas rare que les parents fassent échouer les projets de mariage... Que le mariage fût l'affaire des familles plus que des individus, cela se voit encore dans le fait que la dot était versée normalement au père ou à la mère du conjoint et, par exception seulement, c'est-à-dire au cas où il n'avait plus ses parents, à l'héritier lui-même (Bourdieu [1962] 40-42).

Not only kin groups but also the whole village community considered marriage its business. Everybody was thus watching everybody's move in the community, and the more important the transaction, the sharper the interest.

¹ As a rule, marriage isolates in France have never been very large: in our time, they vary in size between less than 1,000 and 2,800 with the lower figures for the départements containing cities like Lyon, Bordeaux, and Paris (Pirenne [1936] 65; Bloch [1949] I, 91; van Gennep [1943] 232-236, etc.; Duby [1962] II, 446-451; Izard [1963] 92, etc.; Regelsperger [n.d.] 1183; Tardieu [1964] 199; Sutter and Tabah [1948, 1951]).

The understanding of the respective positions of spouses in French civil law before the Revolution requires a preliminary consideration of the wife's dowry¹. As in the Middle Ages, whose economy is characterized by Bloch as "*famine pécuniaire*", the lack of cash still is, in traditional rural France, a chief factor in the constitution of the dowry and in the evaluation of its sociological importance (cf. Bourdieu [1962] 39). Younger siblings often saw their share of the estate determined when their oldest brother took wife. In effect, the latter's wife's dowry had to be large enough to enable him to pay that of his younger siblings without dividing the estate. A family with a daughter to marry, therefore, contrary to receiving payment against the alienation of their child, the children she would procreate, and her services, had to disburse from their own assets so that she would not be a charge to her husband's group and would even contribute to consolidating their in-laws' welfare. Wife-givers were thus socially lower than wife-takers in every respect (cf. Leach [1961] 102). Proverbs and daughters state clearly enough the misfortune inherent in female progeniture; this was a basic feature of the social order and left deep marks on the legal position of women until recently (below, 5.3.1).

The dowry of the younger brother's leaving the *maisnie* to marry uxori-patrilocally put them in a slightly different position. Husband-givers were somewhat socially equal to husband-takers. The reason of this lack of symmetry between husband/wifegiver/taker seems to be the traditional conception of the role of man in French society as the only one who is able to carry the duties of protection and exploitation of the estate (cf. above, 5.2.3 and Bourdieu [1962] 45).

Folktales describe male hypergamy in accord with these data, and without restricting in any way the suitors' ambitions. Of course, as exploratory devices of models of behavior, they can stage their heroes in contexts of maximal contrast and bridge the largest social gaps without more hesitation than they multiply victories over fantastic obstacles. In actual practice, however, the social status of the eventual wife was taken into serious account, and if males did aim at marrying up, they also knew that they should curb their ambitions; and apparently most married on their own level. In point of fact, the integration to the domestic unit of the daughter of a too powerful household could generate much trouble — not the least of them being the conflict between the husband's mother and her son's wife². In general, a woman could marry down without being socially stigmatized, but a man was not allowed to do so for such a step would imply that he had no consideration for his family's survival.

¹ On the previous stage where the husband had to pay a "bride price", see Olivier Martin [1951] 276, and above, 2.3.6, on the *droit de veuve*.

² The "dramas" of the *armoires* of the house's women which displaced each other as their owners' positions changed are concrete materializations of such rivalries; see Petot (1955) 13; Bourdieu (1962) 43-58; Tardieu (1964) 198-203, 235-239.

The folktale 612 (above, 4.3.2.4) does indeed epitomize prevailing marriage strategies.

When an older brother cannot afford to endow younger siblings, the latter will often — still today — renounce marriage and devote their lives to the preservation of the integrity of the holding (Lambert and Costa-Pinto [1944] 131; Lefebvre [1955] 139). In the careful analysis conducted by Duplessis (1954), celibacy is shown to have ranked very high in the France of 1856 (date of the first analytical census, with data on female celibacy only). Women who had never married and were between the ages of fifteen and forty-nine formed from 27.5 per cent (Seine-et-Marne) to 56 per cent (Hautes-Pyrénées), with the average between 40 and 42 per cent of the total population. In 1911, the range of female celibacy had decreased to 22 per cent (Lot-et-Garonne), ranging up to 44.2 per cent (Lozère) ; that of male celibacy between the ages of eighteen and fifty-nine was, in the same year, 24.6 per cent (Creuse), ranging up to 52.1 per cent (Meuse). The figures for 1931 show a relative stability: female celibacy ranges between 22.9 per cent (Lot-et-Garonne) and 46 per cent (Lozère), and male between 22.5 per cent (Somme) and 40.8 per cent (Hautes-Alpes) (Duplessis [1954] 148-162).

The causes of this high rate of celibacy in modern France are factors that were already operant in the Middle Ages, and it is probably safe to extrapolate backwards and assume that celibacy was as frequent, if not more, in the past.

Although Duplessis minimizes the role of the division of the land as a determinant and prefers to invoke the ratio empty lands/manpower, he cannot help but point out the correlation between high rates of celibacy and the practice of endogamy (1954: 163-164). The compulsion to keep the patrimony intact was the chief motivation behind those two expressions of the solidarity between members of the family. Sutter and Tabah had already observed à propos of endogamy : “Il est indéniable que les questions d'intérêt sont fréquemment à la base des mariages de cette catégorie. Les frères et soeurs sont naturellement portés à marier entre eux leurs enfants pour éviter le morcellement du patrimoine” (1948: 618).

Labat does extrapolate and suggests that in Gasconne at the beginning of the nineteenth century celibacy rated as high as seventy per cent. His statement deserves to be quoted for the feeling it gives on the role of those avuncular relatives in the domestic unit.

Il y a cent ans [i.e., about 1814], quand la natalité était belle en Gasconne, le mariage des paysans était protégé par une véritable sélection. Tous les appelés par l'âge n'étaient pas élus et beaucoup restaient en dehors de la terre promise. Dans la plupart des familles — exactement sept fois sur dix — on trouvait des tantes et des oncles qu'on y chercherait vainement aujourd'hui : vieilles filles un peu boiteuses, ou mal tournées, ou trop laides ; vieux garçons, qui avaient été rhumatisants ou tousseurs de bonne heure, ou simplement timides ou lourdeaux, car

il faut avoir ici la langue alerte pour plaire aux amoureuses. Ils se résignaient au célibat, et l'organisation patriarcale de la famille leur rendait la résignation facile. En général, ils restaient avec l'aîné des frères, avec la *souche* ; ils travaillaient sans gages, pour la nourriture et l'entretien, acceptaient un rôle effacé, et même les tâches ingrates : quand toute la maisonnée était à la foire ou à la fête, les tantes veillent sur les berceaux, les oncles sur l'étable (Labat [1942] 92-93).

Such is still the case today in not-so-few départements, where I could see the “half-witted” brother working for his elder sibling in whose house he lived without other salary than his board and tobacco.

The husband is the chief of the domestic group; his unmarried siblings stand by as the silent, devoted supporters who sacrifice their own lives in the interest of the *maisnie*; and the mother of their nephews and nieces remains an outsider as long as their own mother has not passed away. In this light, the rights of the husband and the correlative lack of privileges of his wife are better understood.

The husband was traditionally the “lord and master” of his wife as well as, in his capacity of father, that of his children. This dominance relationship was already present in the Germanic tradition and it was reinforced by the Church. To castigate his wife was the husband's duty for he was legally responsible for her delicts (cf. above, 4.2.1.5, Proverb *77). A wife was not altogether incapable in terms of law, however, before the fourteenth century, after which her position became worse and worse until the Revolution. Wives gradually lost all rights to the extent of being assimilated to minors and mentally ill people. This evolution was due to the influence of Roman and Canon laws, although the Church seems to have attempted to alleviate it.

As to the children, their father had the right to sell them until the thirteenth century “in case of extreme poverty” (Malécot and Blin [n.d.] 31). Similarly, fathers could unquestionably and irrevocably determine the fate of their children upon their birth. Until the end of the eighteenth century, a boy was destined to the army, the Church, or put on the alliance market, and a girl destined to the convent or to become the wife of a man who would be old at her nubility, completely regardless of their wills (Petot [1955] 12-14; Malécot and Blin [n.d.] 31-33, 75-82, 376-401, etc.; Olivier-Martin [1948] 654-655; cf. Bloch [1949] I: 210-211 and above, 1.3.9).

On the whole, French domestic law and family life remained rather constant. Even today, the same patterns can be found in rural areas. But before any generalization can be attempted, the situation of the post-Revolution family must be reviewed briefly.

5.3 THE FAMILY AFTER THE REVOLUTION

5.3.1 The French Domestic Law since the Revolution.

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As a consequence of the Revolution, inequality within the family (in the modern sense of the term) was theoretically abolished.

Le décret des 15-28 mars 1790, qui faisait disparaître les droits féodaux, abolit les droits d'aînesse et de la masculinité et posa le principe du partage égal des successions ; celui des 19-23 juillet 1790 abolit le retrait lignager, celui des 22 nov.-1er déc. 1790 (art. 3 et 4) permit au conjoint survivant de succéder à défaut de parents. Le décret des 8-15 avril 1791 régla les successions *ab intestat* et supprima toute inégalité résultant entre héritiers *ab intestat* des qualités d'aîné et de puîné, de la distinction des sexes ou des exclusions coutumières, soit en ligne directe, soit en ligne collatérale (Regelsperger [n.d.] 1183).

Notwithstanding those normative transformations, the principle of modern French domestic law remained “the idea of collective family ownership” (Alglave [n.d.] 1183).

The persistence of uncoded but dynamic attitudes must also be mentioned.

Les lois modernes considèrent les fautes comme exclusivement individuelles. Cependant elles ne répudient pas absolument le vieux principe de solidarité familiale, puisqu'elles permettent aux fils de se plaindre des injures faites à la mémoire de leurs ancêtres comme les atteignant eux-mêmes. En sens inverse, la gloire des hommes de génie et des hommes héroïques... rejaillit sur tous les membres de leur famille et principalement leurs descendants.... Sans la [solidarité morale de la famille] consacrer d'une manière complète, la loi la reconnaît cependant puisqu'elle protège la propriété du nom, indépendamment de toute question de filiation ou d'intérêt pécuniaire” (Alglave [n.d.] 1184).

Similarly, the composition of the family was not revised otherwise than by extinguishing the religious character of its sanction: civil marriage took over the function of the sacrament. And if, in rights of succession, less attention was paid to the line of origin than in the past, “des traces de l'ancien droit subsistent avec la règle de la fente et avec celle du retour légal de l'ascendant donateur.” Again, much as before the Revolution, “La famille proche, composée des descendants et des ascendants est protégée contre les libéralités par l'existence d'une réserve héréditaire” (Rouast [1955] 20; cf. above, 5.2.3). Furthermore, parental authority was asserted as strongly as in the previous centuries: even after legal majority, a child could not marry without the consent of his parents unless he obtained a special dispensation.

Although the equality of the sexes had been proclaimed, the position of women did not improve. A married woman was still an incapable; she was obliged to follow her husband wherever he decided to settle, to obey him in all respects, and she could not do anything in civil life without his permission.

The rights of the father over his children were not softened either; only their expression was new. Thus, one could have one's child thrown into jail almost at will (Rouast [1955] 20-21; Alglave [n.d.] 1183-1184).

5.3.2 The Modern Family.

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The modern conception of the family is a merging of the old traditional pattern and of the bourgeois conception. Already in the fourteenth century in towns, the married couple and its children began to form *bande à part*, i.e., a close group whose interests were restricted to its own self. The slow transformation materialized in the types of town houses which became the normal home of urban families in the eighteenth century. Likewise, terms of address between husband and wife and mother and children became less distant: “*Madame*” is superseded by “*ma chère amie*”, “*ma chère maman*”, and the latter reciprocates by “*mon cher enfant*”, “*ma chère petite*”. Concern with their children's health and education came to the foreground of the parents' cares. Equal treatment of boys and girls, and of older and younger children, became a widespread preoccupation. One might perhaps go as far as Ariès:

Ce sont les mœurs, et non le code civil ni la Révolution, qui ont supprimé le droit d'aînesse. Les familles le refuseront quand les ultras de la Restauration le rendront possible, inspirés par une conception nouvelle de la famille, qu'ils attribuaient faussement à l'Ancien Régime : ‘Sur vingt familles aisées, écrit Villèle à Polignac le 31 octobre 1824, il n'y en a à peine une où l'on use de la faculté d'avantager l'aîné ou tout autre de ses enfants. Les liens de la subordination sont tellement relâchés partout que dans la famille, le père se croit obligé de ménager ses enfants.’) (Ariès [1960] 456-457, quoting Fourcassié [1954]).

The abrogation of the requirement of parental consent to marriage followed along the same lines as manifested by the series of laws which promulgated it from 1896 to 1933.

The tightening of the kinship unit around the nuclear family was a long, slow process. It was recognized only gradually: the law which sanctioned the fact by restricting to the sixth degree collateral successorial rights was promulgated as late as 1917. But an interesting return to the collective conception of the family shaken by the Revolution has begun to gain ground

since 1945 when family associations were recognized and given official functions by the ordinance of March 3.

The person of the spouse has not yet been integrated into the nuclear unit, however, as far as succession rights are concerned. Additionally, jurists' opinions are still in conflict as to how to define the married couple with respect to the management of its resources (Mazeaud [1965]). A wife is no longer legally incapable, though (laws of 1938 and 1942). Recognition emerged near the end of the last century and was established by the 1907 law allowing her to do whatever she pleased with her salary — provided she contributed to the maintenance of the family. But this did not do away with an important restriction: “lorsqu'il s'agit de la communauté ou du régime dotal, la réforme n'a eu pour effet que des assouplissements des règles anciennes, parce qu'il n'était pas possible de les transformer sans porter atteinte aux principes fondamentaux de ces régimes” (Rouast [1955] 23; cf. Catala [1960] 63-66).

To grant new rights to women is not easy even in today's France: it goes against popular feelings, even those of wives. Commenting on a new project of law to this effect, Mazeaud writes (1955: 94):

Le régime légal doit être celui qui répond le mieux au désir de la majorité. Or le voeu de la majorité des ménages n'est pas seulement de mettre en commun toutes les ressources des deux époux ; il est aussi que la gestion des biens puisse se faire sans exiger des formalités irritantes, et par suite sans qu'il faille établir si le bien sur lequel on veut accomplir un acte d'administration est propre ou commun. Ce qui ne serait pas le cas d'un régime de communauté dans lequel la femme administrerait ses propres. Ici encore, l'enquête de l'Institut français d'opinion publique est précieuse. À la question de savoir si la femme doit administrer ses propres, 64 p. 100 des personnes interrogées ont, il est vrai, répondu par l'affirmative ; mais la moitié, (51 p. 100) de ces partisans de l'administration des propres par la femme entend que celle-ci n'agisse dans ce domaine qu'avec le consentement du mari ; en réalité, c'est donc contre l'administration par la femme, telle que l'entendent les juristes, que s'est prononcée la majorité. Même observation quant aux résultats de la question posée sur la jouissance de ses propres par la femme : si 85 p. 100 envisagent de permettre à la femme de percevoir ses revenus, les trois quarts (76 p. 100) de ceux-là exigent le consentement du mari.

Concurrently with the emancipation of women, divorce rates have kept increasing. This had as consequences the multiplication of step relationships, which poses in France the same type of problem as elsewhere in Western societies. — There is no room to tackle this new phase here.

Like women, children were also emancipated, especially because parents did not show themselves worthy of the trust the Revolution had in them. Thus, abusive parental powers have been curbed (laws of 1889 and 1921 supplemented by those of 1912 and 1935). Until 1912, it had been forbidden by law for over one hundred years to look for the natural father of an illegitimate child. Since then, dual fatherhood has gained recognition in that natural families founded on concubinage can be instituted besides those

founded on legal marriage. This is also another feature of the most recent forms of the modern family and, like the multiplication of step relationships by divorce, raise the problem of successive (divorce) or simultaneous (concubinage) polygamy in modern societies. In the evolution of French domestic law, “il est impossible de ne pas noter cette indulgence pour l'adultère, qui est une des caractéristiques du droit moderne” (Rouast [1955] 25; Catala [1960] 63--64). Is it an historical accident, or is France returning to the conception of courtly love? In point of fact, has France ever loved in the bonds of marriage? Montaigne thought that the duties of procreation were too sacred to be merged with sexual satisfaction, and he considered the latter “a sort of incest” in marriage (Montaigne [1580] III, Ch. 5).

On the other hand, traditional attitudes are still strong, and approximately one third of old, retired parents lived in the home of one of their children in urban milieux in 1946. Whether this solidarity will survive to the new form of sophisticated polygamy emerging in this century remains to be seen (Ariès [1960] 406-407, 451-458, 462-467; Rouast [1955], Girard [1955]; Mazeaud [1965]).

5.4 CONCLUSION

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Folklore reveals and explores problematic areas in the self-definition of a social system. It does not necessarily “compensate” for a given attitude or another, but it may very well supplement fuzzy or underprivileged lexical dimensions (above, 4.2.3, 4.3.3, and 4.5). Complemehtarily, domestic law codifies and sanctions the self-definition of a social system in its vital areas.

The homology suggested between folklore and law in the previous chapter and at the beginning of this one can now be carried further in connection with terminological uneasiness. Table 5 shows the inversion/redundancy of the two systems of stable messages.

Table 5

Elementary Kinship Relationships in French Folklore and Domestic Law; See Text.

Folklore		<			<		>	
	parent			child	older sibling		H	
					younger sibling			W
Law		>			>		>	

That parents yield to children in folklore has appeared from Proverbs *7, *9, *10, etc. (above, 4.2-1.2) and from Table 4.3. In domestic law, the father's authority was strongly asserted, although curbed when the transmission of the estate was involved — but inheritance is beyond the scope of folkloric items dealing with parents/children relationships: except for Proverb *17, they focus on lack of solidarity and excess of parental authority (succession problems are faced in tales staging siblings). Older-younger siblings also receive opposed treatment in folklore and in law: Table 4.4 leaves no doubt that if sibling solidarity is commendable, the exploitation of *cadets* by their *aînés*, which was favored by rights of primogeniture, is reproved in folktales. Two sets of relationships, viz., those between parents-children and those between older-younger siblings, are therefore each other's converse in folklore and law; alliance relationships only are isomorphic in both, where the superiority of males over females is emphatically stated.

A tentative conclusion may be proposed at this point. In the lexical areas of the semantic field of kinship where the terminology is paradigmatically “strong” (above, 3.3.2), opposed syntagms can develop in different but related systems of stable messages for a broader dialectic of the rapports between the relationships involved. In contrast, where the terminology is paradigmatically “weak” (above, 3.3.2), two trends can be noted. First, terminological weakness is reinforced, as it were, by a proliferation of syntagms on the plane of non-normative stable messages (Chapter Four). And then, it may be that such weakness must be motivated on the level of both non-normative and normative stable messages. In other words, where the social taxonomy is refined, *la parole* can afford syntagmatic tensions from one system to another, but where the social taxonomy is underdeveloped, it is as though syntagmatic systems worked jointly to justify its “inadequacy” by a dialectic of repression. Thus, it is likely that *gendre* and *bru* will disappear altogether, which will entail a still greater entropy in the affinal terminology, but it is far from likely that the folklore of conflicts between spouses will lose its popularity.

A further and less speculative twofold consideration may help to account for the inversion/redundancy of folklore and law. First, syntagmatic relationships are inverted from one system to the other where relatives are opposed along the age dimension within the consanguineal field; then, syntagmatic relationships are redundant where the relatives are opposed as affines (Table 5), the age dimension remaining unspecified¹. This is nothing surprising. In point of fact, it is in conformity with what was observed *à propos* of lexical strength/weakness. In effect, the lineal dimension in French is more dynamic than either of the two segments of the horizontal one, as its

¹ Except in folksongs, where a young wife is usually in conflict with an old and jealous husband.

importance has been increasing since the thirteenth century, whereas that of the other dimensions lost more and more ground (see Fig. 3.5a). Lineal terminological strength is therefore congruent with the emphasis on the age dichotomy as lateral entropy, sanctioned by law and custom, is congruent with the basic opposition between the representative of the lineage, the husband, and his “foreign” wife.

6. CONCLUDING CHAPTER

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The following statement, written by an eminent ethnographer, summarizes the point of this essay: “A society is really a set of concepts, not an aggregate of people, and... the organizing principles behind society are stated in the symbols and their exegesis” (Turner [1966] 14).

The symbols of French kinship have here been examined in themselves (terminology and in the larger context of related institutions, social organization, folklore, and law). Historical documents have made it possible to add a diachronic dimension to the synchronic study. Of course, in a treatment of this kind, boldness of formalization had to override regional differences, which were deliberately ignored. Social anthropology was brought to bear on history, and vice versa, as the latter provided the diachronic depth necessary to test the formal approach. Two states of the terminology were focused on. Now, it may be that we know something about the modern state of the terminology, but the Medieval state escapes study in many respects. No one could assess whether or not we have most Medieval terms and referents; information is lacking on the social context, etc. Therefore, extrapolation from the modern state and projection towards the past is highly conjectural. I have no way of telling if it is done consistently, viz., on the same axis on which the modern terminology is read. The exegesis conducted on these sociological and semantic planes drew on social history, philology, formal analysis of meaning, folkloristics, and the history of domestic law. For the other areas, established methods were applied, but a quantitative method was proposed to deal with kinship terms as such, and proverbs were approached in a new manner.

The “organizing principles” behind French kinship thus appear to be the following: (1) the system is genealogically structured; (2) the changes it underwent through time consist in a gradual segregation in favor of the lineal nucleus; (3) the attitudes between relatives expressed in folklore are tense, and affinal relationships are troubled; and, finally (4) the system of jural norms emphasizes the rights of the lineal nucleus and minimizes those of collaterals and affines.

These conclusions will now be discussed in more detail.

The French kinship system is definitely “closed”, and as such, it belongs with genealogical types.

(1) On the semantic plane, the system is formed by extension of meaning rather than constriction (above, 3.4); then, all terms have been specified by contrasting genealogical positions since at least the eleventh century (Ch. Two).

(2) On the sociological plane, marriage rules, feuds, the unit of exploitation, and the transmission of property were defined in terms of a count of genealogical specifications. At points in history, quasi-“categories” accrued — the group of “siblings” in the *freresche*; *cousins* as marital partners — but in no case was the “class” defined in terms other than individual kin types (above, 1.3.2, 1.3.8, 2.3.1, 2.3.12, 5.2.3, 5.2.4, and below, Appendix One). In this respect, it is interesting to note that the basic dichotomy kins/affines, real in French kinship, never found a spelled-out expression: only the *lignage* was named, and even today one cannot say in French **mes beaux* to refer to the affines; this class is labelled by a locution, “*parents par alliance*”: (English is not as tightly closed or genealogical as French; for example, one can say in English, “my in-laws” to designate one's affines as a category, and the English term “cousin” is open-ended. This difference may be due to that between the French *freresche* and the English “joint-family”; cf. Homans [1957] 192.)

French would occupy the genealogical end of the spectrum on which (mainly) categorial/(mainly) genealogical systems are distributed. With the help of the model introduced in Chapter Three, and especially of the Intension/Extension ratio, it becomes possible to measure the degree of “genealogicality” of any system and to refine an eventual typology.

The lineal dimension of the French system became accentuated through time by segregative terminological refinements and by an increasing stability. The proliferation of terms for lineals does not imply that more positions were created, but that distinctions were added, whereby intension was raised and extension lowered. The affinal terminology itself is only a replication of the lineal lexicon to the “beau” degree, and the mergings which took place in the affinal sector of the terminology do not mean that positions disappeared (as they did in the case of shifts, above, 3.2.2), nor that the decrease in intension strengthened friendly interaction with the group of affines. These two complementary processes — lineal discrimination and collateral merging — both aimed at eliminating relatives from the lineal nucleus. What happened in the first case was naming in order to count off, and in the second, lumping together with those already counted off (see above, 0.2).

The principle of organization behind the terminology for affines is, indeed, revealed by their designation, their treatment in folklore, and their legal position.

Traditionally affines have been excluded from the realm of *parenté* as much as possible. It is still a common practice to bar a child's spouse or one's own spouse from participating in family councils where parents and children, or siblings, discuss their interests. The legal definition of women is significant, and the point needs no further elaboration. The socially accepted and transmitted attitudes towards affines which form the most important part of the folklore of kinship emphasize the same negative concern. In such a context, the semantic uneasiness of the terminology with respect to affines is easily intelligible. This uneasiness is epitomized in the semantic history of the prefix "beau-" (above 2.3.5, 2.3.17, 3.3-3.4, 4.2-4.3, 5.2-5.3).

The advent and progressive consolidation of the bourgeoisie was concomitant with the changes on the semantic plane. It is as if the gradual democratization of the French society were accompanied by a complementary process of regrouping around, and emphasizing, vertical solidarity. The family in the modern sense became more conscious of itself and more discriminative in order — as it were — to increase its strength in the new, urban economy (above, 1.3.7-1.3.9, 3.3.2, 3.4, and 5.3).

The interesting point is that when the hierarchical dimension of society lost its rigidity and its political power due to the development of trade and the advent of the bourgeoisie, the kinship terminology compensated, as it were, for the democratization of the social order. Authority still had to be expressed "vertically" (above, 1.2.9), whatever its locus. In effect, with the weakening of vassalage and the growth of bourgeoisie, the score of S decreased from 0.278 to 0.177 while that of G , formerly equal to that of S , increased to 0.333, and while A regressed from 0.222 to 0.157 and G^{-1} raised to the level of G by gaining 0.111 (above, Table 3.3a). Accordingly, the two vectors, kinship and social organization, behave as though in a closed system: what regressed along an axis was automatically redistributed on an isomorphic plane in a constant exchange between the group of kins and the political order. In other words, given a semantic structure, adjustments became mechanical. The system thus preserved its identity and behaved somewhat like a servo-mechanism maintaining the vertical and horizontal axes fairly constantly loaded regardless of the sociological definition of the isomorphic poles of the circuit (manse-vassalage/family-bourgeoisie). The working hypothesis delineated in this essay can now be restated in more concise terms. It is not original as far as social history is concerned. Homans wrote, "we have on the one hand [Old Saxon area of Germany] a strong village community linked with what Le Play called in *Les Ouvriers européens* a stem-family, and on the other hand [Frankish-Frisian area] a weak or non-existent village community linked with a joint-

family. Big village, small family or small village, big family — the contrast is over-simple, but not fantastically so” (1953: 35).

A similar contrast may be proposed to summarize ten centuries of French kinship semantics in its sociological context: Phase I, before bourgeoisie: social verticality, collateral solidarity and, Phase II, after bourgeoisie social laterality, lineal solidarity. Thus, the components in question may behave “topologically” as in a closed figure. In other words, what regresses along an axis seems to be redistributed on a connected plane in a constant exchange between the group of kins and the political community.

As far as pure semantic analysis is concerned (see Introduction), the case studied here suggests that it has only a limited validity when a single system of relationships is analyzed in isolation. In effect, if Chapters Two and Three by themselves do reveal some features of the French kinship system, the structure and dynamism of the latter cannot be interpreted without focusing on “regularities of pattern among neighbouring relationships” (Leach [1961] 7).

The covariation proposed in this essay between the structure of a society and its kinship system remains only a working hypothesis. It can now be tested further by more detailed and circumspect studies.

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APPENDIX I

FRENCH KINSHIP IN THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

The Lineage as Defined by Philippe de Beaumanoir, *Coutumes de Beauvaisis*, Ch. XIX

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Ci commence li dis et neuvismes chapitres de cest livre liques parole des degrés de lignage, par quoi chascuns puist savoir combien si parent li sont prochien ou loingtain.

Pour ce que chascuns sache en quel degré de lignage l'en li appartient pour plusieurs resons, — si comme pour ce que mariages ne se face en trop prochain degré de lignage, ou pour ce que l'en puist requerre son ami de soi aidier de sa guerre, ou pour ce que l'en puist demander le sien quant il eschiet par prochaineté, ou pour ce que l'en sache combien l'en est prochains quant l'en veut rescourre aucun eritage par la bourse, — nous traiterons ici endroit en un petit chapitre de la division des lignages et comment et en quel maniere lignages s'alonge.

Nous devons savoir que lignages se puet diviser en .IIII. parties : la premiere partie en montant si comme mes peres ou ma mere, la seconde partie en descendant si comme mes fuis ou ma fille, et ces .II. parties sont de lignage droit de descendement ; la tierce partie si est de lignage de costé en montant ; la quarte partie si est de lignage de costé en avalant.

Or veons des degrés de lignage : mes flus m'est ou premier point en avalant, mes peres ou premier point en montant, et mes freres m'est ou premier point de costé et mes oncles m'est ou premier point de costé en montant.

Mes aious si m'est ou secont degré de lignage en montant et li fuis de mon fil m'est ou secont degré de lignage en avalant ; et li fuis de mon frere m'est ou second degré de lignage de costé en avalant et l'apele l'en neveau ; et li fuis de mon oncle m'est ou secont degré de lignage en montant et l'apele l'en cousin germain.

Mes besaiious m'est ou tiers degré de lignage en montant et li fuis du fil mon fil m'est ou tiers degré de lignage en avalant ; et li fuis de mon cousin

germain m'est ou tiers degré de lignage de costé et commence de l'oncle en avalant et est dis fuis de cousin germain. En parce que je vieng en descendant de l'oncle, vous poués entendre le montant, car trop i avroit grant multitude de paroles en aconter, puis que lignages s'alonge, toutes les branches qui en issent en montant et en avalant. Et pour ce nous ne parlerons que des .IIII. seur quoi nous avons commencé tant seulement, que par la division de ces .IIII. pourra l'en entendre les autres. — Or dirons donques que li fuis de mon neveu si m'est ou tiers degré de lignage en descendant.

Li peres a mon besaiol m'est ou quart degré de lignage en montant, et li fuis du fil au fil mon fil m'est ou quart degré de lignage en avalant, et li fus du fil mon cousin germain m'est ou quart degré de lignage de costé en avalant de par mon oncle, et li fuis du fil mon neveu m'est ou quart degré de lignage en avalant de costé.

L'aious a mon besaiol m'est ou quint degré de lignage en montant et li quint enfant issu de moi me sont ou quint degré de lignage en avalant ; et li fuis du ... fil au fil mon cousin germain m'est ou quint degré de ... lignage de costé en avalant de par mon oncle ; et li fuis du fil au fil mon neveu m'est ou quint degré de lignage en avalant de costé. Et en tel degré de lignage se puet fere mariages puis qu'il eschape le quart et que lignages vient de costé ; car s'il pouoit estre que l'aious a mon besaiol vesquist, il m'est ja ou quint degré de lignage en montant, et li quint enfant issu de moi vesquissent et i eust une fille, ele li seroit en l'onzisme degré de lignage en descendant et si ne la pourroit avoir par mariage. Donques puet l'en veoir la disference qui entre descendement et lignage de costé, et des disferences qui i sont, il en parole ou chapitre de descendement et d'escheoite.

Nous avons dit dusques ou quint degré de lignage en montant et dusques ou quint degré en avalant, en laquele droite ligne mariages ne se puet fere, et si avons dit du lignage de costé jusques ou quint degré ou quel degré l'en fet bien mariage. Si puet l'en entendre par ce qui est dit, qui est plus lointains lignages, car a chascun remuement d'enfant lignages s'alonge .I. point. Si puet chascuns savoir par ce qui est dit en quel point de lignage chascuns li appartient ; si nous en souferrons a tant.

Ci fine li chapitres des degrés de lignage

(Texte critique publié avec une introduction, un glossaire et une table analytique par A. Salmon, Paris, 1899.)

APPENDIX II

$$I = 0.5^{R-(A+1)}$$

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$I = 0.5^R$ where R stands for the order of the relationship; the formula holds for all relationships implying a sex dichotomy either at the point of origin (speaker's sex) or at the terminal point (sex of relative). Thus, for $R = 1$, i.e., for relationships of the first order,

$$I = : 0.5, \text{ i.e., } \begin{array}{l} G = F, M \\ G^{-1} = S, D \\ S = B, Z \\ A = H, W \end{array}$$

Whenever A is its immediate successor in a context $R > 1$, and whenever $R = A$, then $R = 1$, and $I = 0.5$. Whenever A is its immediate successor, or that of another component $R > A$, $I = 0.5^{R-A}$ where A stands for the number of A in a successor position. Finally, whenever a relationship is already sex specified as designated by a non-italicized letter, 1 must be subtracted from R for each sex-specified relationship (i.e., for each Roman letter); the final, comprehensive formula is, therefore: $I = 0.5^{R-(A+1)}$.

The demonstration of $r = 2^{R-(A+1)}$ is done along the same lines.

APPENDIX III¹

UNITS

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Parting from Levi-Strauss' mythemes, gross constituent units, and bundles of relations as elementary units, we have used the more simple dichotomy of terms and functions which he himself sometimes uses similarly to Propp. Moreover, drawing from L. Tesnière and E. Richer, whose theory can be summarized approximately so that a grammatical function has to be discovered starting with the sentence as a whole, that it is an empty form which can be filled out by a certain number of interchangeable terms whatever they maybe contentually speaking, we thus consider the structure as a matricial form and the content as a repertoire of sociohistorically conditioned terms, capable of filling it².

¹ Reprinted from Elli Köngäs Maranda and Pierre Maranda, *Structural Models in Folklore and Transformational Essays* (= *Approaches to Semiotics* 10) (The Hague, Mouton, 1971), 31-37.

² Lucien Tesnière, *Éléments de syntaxe structurale* (Paris, 1959); Ernest Richer, "Un instrument de description formelle des langues: la théorie des lieux linguistiques", *Revue de l'Ass. Canadienne de Linguistique* VI: 3 (1961), 192-208; *Lieux linguistiques et latin classique* (Montréal, 1962). (Richer draws also from Hjelmslev, Togeby, Bally, Guiraud, Wagner, and Martinet.) "La fonction jouit d'une primauté absolue par rapport aux unités du langage... La leçon à tirer de cette observation des faits, c'est que chaque unité de langage tire sa valeur propre des rapports structuraux qui existent entre diverses suites sonores présentes simultanément dans une seule et même phrase. D'où, le dictionnaire, pour être exhaustif, devrait nous avertir que *femme*, suite sonore française, appartient de droit à trois des traditionnelles 'parties du discours': c'est un 'substantif' dans il *aime sa femme*, un 'adjectif' dans *une déléguée très femme*, et un 'adverbe' dans *réagir très femme*. Or, tous ces rapports entre suites sonores, rapports constitutifs de la phrase elle-même, sont des ROLES GRAMMATICaux.

"En conséquence, on voit que le phénomène linguistique se présente à nous très clairement sous l'aspect d'une immense totalité structurée dans laquelle un nombre variable de suites sonores reçoivent temporairement une fonction particulière, qu'on appelle un rôle grammatical. Le concours de tous les divers rôles grammaticaux édifie le système de la langue, et là réside en réalité le secret des communications rendues possibles entre les membres d'une communauté humaine." (E. Richer, *Lieux linguistiques*, pp. 30-31).

Similarly, but from a logical standpoint this time and following Wittgenstein, one can say that even the logical fact itself consists not of elements (or symbolic representations of

Terms. — Terms are symbols, furnished by the sociohistorical context; the terms can be *dramatis personae*, magical agents, cosmographic features, *i.e.*, any subjects capable of acting, that is, taking roles.

The terms are mutually opposed in that those belonging to the category of (a) are univocal, while terms belonging to the category of (b) are ambiguous.

The terms of a given narrative cannot be chosen arbitrarily, but are provided by the narrative itself. The first term can be found in the narrative by discovering the univocal element in its initial situation, *i.e.*, the situation before the solution of the crisis. The second term (mediator) can be found by discovering the ambiguous element in the situation before the solution of the crisis.

Terms consist of concrete embodiments, actualizations, while functions are more general and abstract expressions of conflicting forces.

Although Propp (Ch. VI of his monograph) strove to separate the levels of action and the “domains” of actors, he failed to be consistent in the last analysis. Witness the following circular definition: he proposes a class of actors called villains whose “sphere of action” is villainy, that is, a villain is an actor who commits villainy and villainy is the action of a villain; and similarly with donors and giving.

We have tentatively, especially Maranda in computerized studies, resorted to defining the main character of a narrative purely statistically — the main character is the one who is mentioned the greatest number of times ¹. In addition, European (and other) folktales usually stage an opponent and a number of actors who simply bring into relief, or make possible, the actions of the two; these can be named test-givers and, according to the actions of the hero (and the opponent) can become helpers or adversaries. But they are as a rule undefined because the motivation of their actions rests with the hero’s fate, not with their own selves. Thus we are inclined to see two ‘fronts’ in a folktale and a host of actors who can become allies of one or the other.

One can easily agree with Aristotle and Propp on the point that it is not actors that matter but actions. And one could probably find, in a statistical or other overall analysis of a corpus of narratives of one culture that all actors can

things, propositions, etc.) but of the very OPERATIONS which bear on those elements, such as negation, implication, addition, multiplication, identification, etc.

¹ Maranda, “Analyse qualitative et quantitative de mythes sur ordinateurs”, in *Calcul et formalisation dans les sciences de l’homme* (Paris, 1968, pp. 82-84); both frequency and contingency analysis must be combined.

be grouped according to their most common and consistent actions. That is, certain kinds of actors (youngest son or youngest daughter, Petit Jean, etc.) are bound for certain kinds of action and outcome. But the terms, their classification and placement into 'slots' in the narrative stock, in our opinion, is something that happens on the level of deep narrative structures, interconnected and part of the *weltanschauung* of the group, whereas the unfolding of the different functions is something on the level of the surface structures and constitutes the narrative line or plot. Seen in this fashion, the invariances and variances of folktales both become structural, but on different levels, taking part of different kinds of structure, both, however, culture-bound.

Functions. — Functions are roles held by symbols. They form the dynamic composition of underlying active strings which gives the terms their bearing, their impact. That is, if the terms are not determined by functions, they are only floating elements. Moreover, functions do not exist independently, but only as expressed in terms which give them their concrete figure.

The initial pair of opposite functions are only tendencies; in the final outcome, one of them prevails definitely, thus becoming a term according to the permutation mentioned above (1.1). This obtains, however, only in narratives with a certain type of ending; for more precise statements on that point, see the distinction between our different models.

The interplay of terms and functions. — Terms are variable; functions are constant. That is: in a given body of materials, terms which appear in one variant can be substituted for terms which appear in another, provided that they fulfill the same function (as already stated by Propp).

Summary of our analytic units. — Terms: (a) and (b), respectively members of two sets, A and B, forming paradigms defined by their respective typologies in given societies (e.g., dragon, devil, witch, ogre, etc. in Indo-European traditions; turtle, octopus, shark, lizard in North Malaitan traditions).

Functions: x and y, complementary verbal propositions which specify the terms (a) and (b).

Thus, with x = evil in Indo-European traditions, A will be the set of evil actors so that $A = \{a_1, a_2, a_3, \dots, a_n\}$ where, for example,

a_1 = dragon
 a_2 = devil
 a_3 = witch
 a_4 = ogre.

Given one verbal proposition, the other one is defined correlatively. This is because the formula rests on the assumption of an equilibrium axiom in human cultures to the effect that a ‘balance of power’ is postulated and that an increase in strength on one side of the equilibrium equation must be compensated. Strength is measured in terms of political, magical, economic, affective and other powers; it is expressed by “greater than” ($>$) and “less than” ($<$) signs in our formalizations.

The different operations performed in different items present regularities which are described by our different models.

Our models. — In the course of our work, we soon found that our modification of Levi-Strauss’ formula only suited a limited number of items, those in which the final outcome expresses an increase rather than a simple return to the initial state. Some items, although they show the initial opposition, do not even allude to the possibility of a mediating process, and in some cases the mediator is unsuccessful. On the basis of our materials, we arrive at the following set of models, presented in the order of increasing complexity.

Zero mediator (model I)
Failing mediator (model II)
Successful mediator: nullification of
the initial impact (model III)
Successful mediator: permutation of
the initial impact (model IV).

Another model could be proposed for still simpler structures. In the case of some incantations, songs, laments, and small children’s ‘narratives’ (Sect. 8), for example, no contrast is stated (or a contrast is implicit, but no change in the state develops and no mediation is attempted). The item unfolds as repetitious expressions of a single state. We will not discuss further this “model 0”.

The set of models can be represented by a tree structure which at once is also a decision model for the storyteller:

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