

Topic 6

Tuesday, March 14, 2023

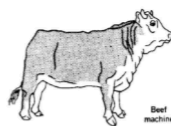
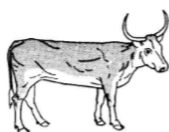
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African Cattle People

Social relic

According to American anthropologist Herskovits (1926)

- More for social and ritual purpose than for subsistence
- Treated as wealth objects and sources of prestige
- Exchange at marriage, to settle disputes, and use for sacrifice, rarely eaten
- Exaggerated and personal attachment
- Underweight and less productive
- Cause of desertification by overgrazing



	East African Cattle	North American Ranch Cattle
Existence	Domestic-scale cultures; tribal societies	Commercial-scale cultures; commercial societies
Appearance	Scrawny	Hefty
Input of Fossil Fuel Energy	Little	Enormous
Adaptation	Well adapted to survive seasonal drought and disease	Thrive on water pumped from deep wells; special food; expensive antibiotics, growth hormones, and appetite stimulants
Purpose	Subsistence (mostly)	Financial profit
Shareholders	Generally, producers = processors = consumers	Generally, producers ≠ processors ≠ consumers

According to British anthropologist Evans-Pritchard (1940)

- The Nuer: "pre eminently pastoral", and only resorted to farming when didn't have enough animals
- Cattle were ornamented and named, and their genealogies were remembered. Boys received an "OX-name" at birth, men were addressed by their favorite oxen's names, and women by the cows they milked

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- The "linguistic profusion" of cattle terminology
 - Based on color: 10 terms for describing cows of one solid color; hundreds of possible permutations of term based on combinations of white with various patterns and associations with natural objects
 - Based on horn shape
 - Based on age and sex categories
 - In all, the Nuer had thousands of ways of describing cattle

Material

Evans-Pritchard also recognized this extreme interest in cattle had a utilitarian basis

- Environment was deficient to grow crops
- The Nuer and their cattle depend on each other
- Extract an impressive array of material resources from cattle
 - Milk: consumed fresh or sour or processed as cheese
 - Blood: boiled or allowed to coagulate and roasted in a block
 - Dung: cooking fuel; drive off insects; construction plaster, etc
 - Urine: cheese making and tanning;
 - Skin and bones: manufacture of artifacts, containers or ornaments

Cattle as Bride-Wealth

"supreme value" of cattle: bride-wealth

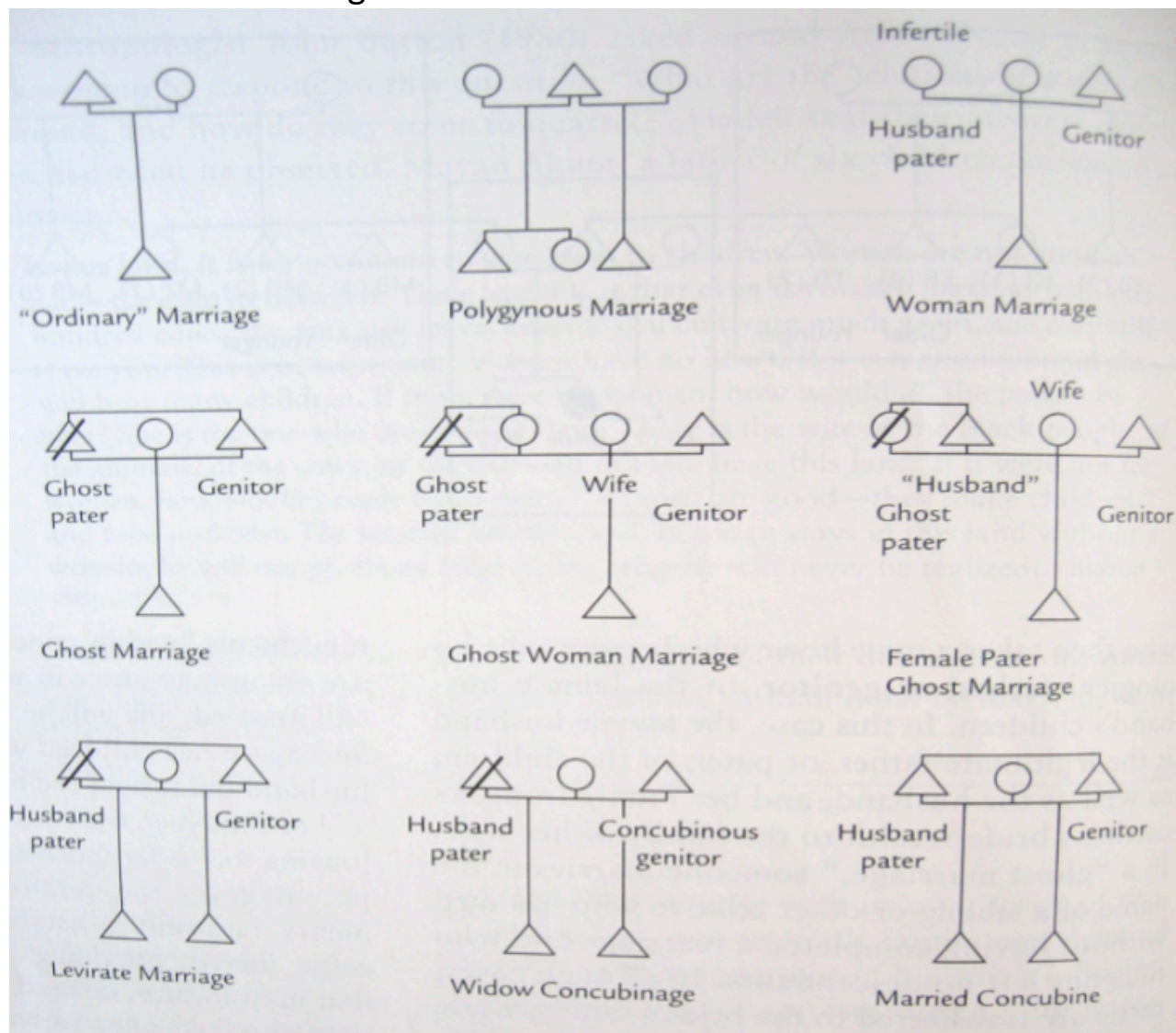
Bride-wealth: Goods, often livestock, that are transferred from the family of the groom to the family of the bride in order to legitimize the marriage and the children of the couple

The Process of Nuer Marriage

Stage	Function
Initiate Marriage	Preliminary talk; specify the animals to be transferred

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Betrothal Ceremony	Preliminary negotiation; the first installment of bride-wealth cattle transferred
Wedding Ceremony	Negotiations finalized; more cattle transferred
Consummation Ceremony	Officialize the transfer and marriage

Nuer forms of Marriage



- Genitor is the father of the child

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