

briefly explained. The last and shortest part will include some avenues for tying kinship to other and more symbolic and bodily aspects of social reality.

## 9.2 Social Organization and Kinship: Two Distinct but Complementary Domains

The expression 'social organization', as used by anthropologists, may produce some misunderstanding. It does not cover all that is social and organized. The social universe is indeed organized, since reactions to individual behaviour would otherwise be unpredictable and 'living together' difficult. What the expression 'social organization' covers, generally speaking, are those elements that organize people into locally recognized groups, categories, or classes dividing the social body into more or less distinct entities.

One could have started describing social organization by discussing the notion of the 'family'. The family however, as it is understood in its Euro-American meaning, is neither universal nor inevitable. Among the Na of the Yongning region in China, to quote an extreme example, a mother lives with her brother, both raising the children of the genitor (note that I avoid using the term 'father' here), who himself lives with his own sister. Children most often don't even seem to know who their actual genitor is (Hua 2000).

Instead, the most classic and better-defined examples for the kinds of groups or categories that constitute a social organization are clans and lineages. The Baruya of the Papua New Guinea highlands, counting over 2,000 people living in 17 villages, for example, are organized in 15 clans. One of these clans gave the name to the entire society, the Baruya, which is also the name of an insect the Baruya clan members are not allowed to kill. The red wings of this insect are associated to the 'road of fire' the apical ancestor of the clan took in mythical times when he was sent by the sun down to earth to unite people and to establish the clan. Similar myths exist for each clan whose members recognize a link of kinship to their apical ancestor and each such clan is divided into several 'brother lineages' that refer to the same ancestral origins. Since members of one and the same clan share the same ancestor, it is considered incestuous to marry a spouse from within the clan. The clans of the Baruya society are thus linked to each other through ties of marriage (Godelier 1982; 2004).

p. 212 A society, tribe, or ethnic group may be divided into a number of groups that are called 'clans' if their apical ancestor is mythical, or 'lineages' if genealogical ↳ memory traces ancestry back to one single human being. In many cases, as with the Baruya, the clan with its mythical ancestor is itself divided into several lineages each with their human ancestor. These human ancestors themselves, however, link back to one and the same mythical ancestor. They are brother or sister lineages.

Importantly, membership of these clans or lineages is not determined by ambiguous criteria. It is not a club that you can join or leave as you wish. Membership is determined by explicit rules that belong to the realm of kinship. We may talk of 'patrilineal' clans or lineages if membership is defined through the male line, as is the case with the Baruya. In this case, a father, his sons, his sons' sons, etc. belong to the same clan or lineage. A man's daughter belongs to this clan as well, but since she will marry a man from another clan, her children will follow her husband's line of membership.

Less frequent are so-called 'matrilineal' clans or lineages. In this case, membership follows the female line. A well-known example are the Navajo of North America, who think of kinship in terms of *k'é*. 'My relatives', or *shik'éí*, are the particular ones with whom one shares intense enduring relationships: they are relatives through what is called clans. Birth affiliates a child with her or his mother and the mother's clan, those who came out of the same womb. Birth and clanship are located in space, and clan names derived most likely from place names. While Navajo clans do not hold property in common, members often visit and help each