

INTERMARRIAGE IN CASTE SOCIETIES¹

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SOCIAL stratification, whatever its causes, hinges upon certain objective bases or marks—e.g., sex, age, birth, race, residence, achievement, and appearance—tangible pegs whereon are hung the more intangible realities of invidious discrimination. These same objective bases also serve as axes for marital selection, partly because they are directly connected with the structure and function of wedlock, partly because they are indirectly connected with wedlock through the master-basis of matrimonial choice, stratification. The present paper deals with marital selection only in this second sense, being primarily concerned with the interrelation between marriage and caste. Our interest does not arise solely from the fact that caste is an extreme form of stratification, but also from the rather strange circumstance that despite the intimate dependence of caste stratification upon caste endogamy, intermarriage often occurs in caste societies, sometimes in the highly regularized form of hypergamy.

RANK AND THE EQUALITARIAN PRINCIPLE IN MARRIAGE

A cardinal principle of every stratified social order is that the majority of those marrying shall marry equals. This rule can be called (according to the type of stratification involved) class, caste, or *ständische* endogamy.²

¹ The writer is indebted to Ralph Linton, Robert K. Merton, and George E. Simpson for helpful suggestions.

² The logic, or illogic, of terms such as *endogamy*, *exogamy*, and *intermarriage* seems never to have been explored. To understand them one must avoid the concreteness customarily given the terms, because marital restriction applies not to concrete groups in the sense of physical aggregates but rather to abstract collectivities—i.e., individuals viewed as possessing a particular quality in abstraction from the other qualities. Thus kinship, geographical proximity, and religious affiliation are attributes which, each according to its degree, may influence marriageability. Unfortunately the physical connotation of “endo” and “exo” hinders an analytic application of the terms, and their use has obscured the fact that the bases of marital selection are not only as numerous as the bases of social position but also as independently variable. Since persons marriageable on one basis may not be on another, it is impossible to speak of an “endogamous group” in any concrete sense. Endogamy and exogamy are correlated terms. The first indicates marriage into a class of persons of which I also am a member; the second, marriage into a class of which I am not a member. Thus compulsory marriage into my own village is endogamy; into a neighboring village, exogamy. If intermarriage be taken simply in the sense of marriage between two persons who are members of different groups, then every marriage is an intermarriage (between male and female, if nothing else) and the word is redundant. Therefore, intermarriage must be viewed as the violation of or deviation from an endogamous rule. Above all, it must not be confused with exogamy. Whereas intermarriage is a deviation from an endogamous rule, exogamy is not a deviation at all but a rule in itself. There is no

The empirical evidence for it is that stratification and endogamy develop concomitantly, and that the more rigid the stratification the more stringent the endogamy. The logical evidence consists in the structural-functional connections, abstractly considered, between marriage on the one hand and stratification on the other. The interconnections may be discussed in terms of two propositions: (1) that equality is required by the nature of the marriage bond; (2) that it is required by the nature, or dynamics, of descent, inheritance, and socialization in a stratified order.

(1) We know, empirically, that marriage usually implies equality of caste or class status between the parties, as shown by the symbolic identification of the mates (common name, common living quarters, common offspring); by the element of reciprocal exchange (cross-cousin marriage, sister exchange, gift exchange); by the anxiety of families to marry their children into families having at least as high a status as their own; by the use of marriage, like friendship, as an alliance mechanism and as a means of vertical mobility (the party marrying up would gain nothing if marriage did not imply equality); and by the role of marriage as both a criterion and an agency of assimilation (e.g., assimilation of the Dutch burghers and French Huguenots in South Africa).³ When we ask why this implication of equality

general term indicating a deviation from an exogamous rule, although *incest* has in some cases been broadened from its strictly kinship meaning for this purpose [as when Reo Fortune writes of "village incest" in *Sorcerers of Dobu* (New York, 1932), pp. 27-28.]

Since every concrete stratified structure utilizes more than one principle as a basis for assigning rank to individuals, and since some of these principles are mutually incompatible and therefore no one of them is exclusively effective, it follows that when we classify actual systems of stratification, we do so on the basis of which principle predominates, understanding that we never find pure concrete types. In *caste* structures the dominant principle is two fold: inheritance of the parental status at birth, and fixity of this status through life. In *class* structures there is a similar inheritance of the parental status at birth, but it does not necessarily remain fixed, achieved status being possible. In *ständische* or *estate* systems (terms suggested by Robert K. Merton) the dominant principle is the ascription of general status on the basis of a specific relation to another individual in a hierarchy, usually a feudal hierarchy, vertical mobility occurring when (under somewhat exceptional conditions, such as manumission) this specific relation is broken or altered.

³ The only kind of equality which marriage does not imply is sex equality. Between husband and wife there is generally an invidious difference based on sex, but this is not a caste difference. It resembles caste in that it is a fixed status acquired at birth, yet it differs from caste in two particulars: First, the status acquired at birth is not inherited from one or other of the parents but is acquired through genetic chance. Boys and girls *both* inherit their father's caste rank in a patrilineal system, for example, but they cannot both inherit their sex rank from him. Since in each stratum fathers procreate both males and females, there are women in all strata and men in all strata, and sex dichotomy cuts across the class-caste-stände plane of stratification. Second, sex differences are functionally integrated in a different manner from

is present, part of our answer lies in the kind of relation marriage is—above all, its intimate character. It is incompatible with the mechanisms of social distance ordinarily insulating members of different castes from one another. If some persons are “untouchable,” they must also be unmarriageable, and if food which they cook is “uneatable,” they must also be “unusable” in the kitchen.⁴ Not only does a primary or *Gemeinschaft* relation always tend to be equalitarian, but it is precisely the more intimate relations that a caste system publicly bans between strata. Conversely, when intimate relations do arise, they tend to mitigate the caste inequality, as seen for example in the better treatment of house slaves as against field slaves.⁵

(2) Since marriage is an institutional mechanism for procreating and rearing children, the requirements of status ascription in a caste order practically require the marriage of equals. A wife reared in a social stratum widely different from her husband's is apt to inculcate ideas and behavior incompatible with the position the children will inherit from their father, thus creating a hiatus between their status and their role. The family structure itself depends upon certain mutual attitudes, e.g., filial respect and parental authority; if the children follow the status of the upper-caste parent, their attitudes toward the other parent will be those of the higher caste toward the lower and therefore incompatible with the proper familial sentiments. Hence it can be seen that the integrity of the child's personality, of the family structure, and of the caste organization requires that the parents be roughly matched in social position—that, in short, there be caste

caste differences. The former are seized upon to distribute separate but complementary functions *within* the family. The family occupies a single niche within the class or caste hierarchy (necessarily, since this hierarchy depends, in the first instance, upon the *inheritance* of parental status); therefore, any distinction internal to the family cannot be at the same time a class or caste distinction. Caste and class involve a distribution of functions usually outside the activities specifically related to reproduction and status ascription. Therefore, because of the difference in principle and in functional integration, the discrimination between sexes, no matter how harsh, can never be coterminous with discrimination between castes. Cf. J. J. Nieboer's ingenious discussion of whether or not women, simply as women, ever constitute a slave stratum. He concludes that they never do, because if all women in society were enslaved, their character as women and wives would predominate over their character as slaves. *Slavery in an Industrial System* (The Hague, 1900), pp. 8-24.

⁴ To see this one should realize that the only reason the frequent menstrual taboo on food preparation is possible is that it does not disqualify a woman *permanently* from her womanly task and does not affect *all* women at the same time.

⁵ R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti Law and Constitution* (London, 1929), Ch. V; M. J. Herskovits, *Dahomey* (New York, 1938), II, pp. 99-100; R. E. Park, *Mentality of Racial Hybrids* (American Journal of Sociology, 36, January, 1931), pp. 546-557.

endogamy. Through endogamy the caste system so regulates its reproductive and status-ascriptive institution (the family) that caste distinctions remain clear rather than become blurred in the next generation. This is why in unsanctioned intercaste unions the offspring are illegitimate and either follow the status of the lower spouse or receive an intermediate position,⁶ while in sanctioned intercaste unions the mates are usually *made* equal at the time of marriage, the lower spouse and the subsequent offspring acquiring the status of the higher spouse.

Concretely, other variables than rank affect marital selection. One of these is unilateral kinship; for to the extent that each partner's allegiance attaches to his sib rather than his partner, the marriage is deprived of its ultimate importance both for him and for the child. If sib residence is combined with sib solidarity, the sib group may socialize the child and thus the social provenience of the outside mate have little to do with the adjustment of socialization to the needs of descent and inheritance. Hence we might expect in strong lineal systems a minimal emphasis upon the social equality of marriage partners. Yet this is not actually true, primarily because marriage is an alliance as well as a reproductive institution. A group would rather ally itself with a powerful than with a weak line. While it is true that since the status of the non-descent (usually outgoing) sex is generally raised at marriage to that of the descent-determining mate and that accordingly no hardship accrues to the latter from marrying a person socially beneath him, it is still plain that for outgoing members of the sib such marriages entail a definite loss of prestige which redounds to the discredit of the group. Consequently, the effort of each sib to insure that its outgoing members marry equals or better tends to produce rank endogamy. This is notably illustrated in patrilineal systems, e.g. the Chinese; but in matrilineal systems the addition of feminine descent, inheritance, and succession to the woman's usual importance in socialization may concentrate so much in the hands of the clan that the role of the outside mate (the father) is negligible and the significance of marriage as both an intimate union and an alliance mechanism mitigated. Though stratified matrilineal societies are few, and most of them endogamous, they do seem to permit with unusual liberality bona fide marriage between social disequals.⁷

Another influential variable is plural mating. The secondary wives may well come from an inferior stratum because they are generally subordinated

⁶ Kingsley Davis, *The Forms of Illegitimacy* (Social Forces, 18, October 1939), pp. 85-87.

⁷ The Natchez will presently be discussed. The Dobuans, an extreme instance of clan solidarity, possess (unfortunately for our purposes) no stratification. R. F. Fortune, *Sorcerers of Dobu* (New York, 1932), p. 128.

to the first wife. In such cases the first marriage is the true marriage (i.e., has the qualities generally regarded as intrinsic to this relation), while the others merge into concubinage, an institution quite different from marriage.

Concretely, then, there are forces that oppose rank endogamy. But the principle that stratification in itself necessitates such endogamy remains firm. Our explanation of this principle will become clearer when we explore actual caste societies and attempt to deal with glaring exceptions (such as hypergamy) which occur in them.

THE HINDU SYSTEM

Looking at the orthodox Hindu caste system, we find the rule of endogamy to be its most important feature.

Generally speaking, the marriage restrictions govern all other restrictions. If a man can marry another man's daughter, he can eat, drink, and smoke with him; and he can also meet him in *panchayat* (caste council).⁸

Since a Hindu enters his caste by birth, and since marriage is the institutional machinery through which birth legitimately occurs, it is to be expected (as indicated above) that caste distinctions in India can be maintained only through the proper regimentation of the marital bond, i.e., through the prohibition of intermarriage. This is why, in India, it is the relatives of the prospective mates, rather than the young persons themselves, who are the parties to the marriage contract, and why the preliminaries to marriage are prescribed rather than spontaneous, for in this way the endogamous rule is enforced without interference from the vagaries of romantic attraction.⁹ Child marriage, in which the marital decision results from the will of the parents thinking along caste lines rather than the will of the mates themselves, guarantees endogamous propriety. The prohibition against widow remarriage, a custom for which all Hindus at least have respect, can likewise be interpreted as part of the general regulation of matrimony in the interest of caste stratification; for it is apparently a symbolic expression of the strength of the caste order. By making marriage an eternal, indestructible union, the principle of caste itself is made eternal and indestructible, endogamous marriage being the heart of the caste order. This connection is affirmed by the fact that those caste groups which prohibit widow marriage are given a high status by virtue of this fact; i.e., those

⁸ E. A. H. Blunt, *The Caste System of Northern India* (London, 1931), p. 47.

⁹ Herbert Risley, *The People of India* (London, 1915), pp. 192-193. Rabindranath Tagore, *The Indian Ideal of Marriage in The Book of Marriage* (Hermann Keyserling, ed., New York, 1920).

groups which sanctify the caste principle by eternalizing endogamous marriage are rewarded commensurately. Hindu society thus turns out to be a system in which child marriage, widow celibacy, and endogamy are integral parts, functionally related to caste.¹⁰

HINDU HYPERGAMY

Yet, strangely enough, intermarriage does occur in Hindu society, though not so much between castes as between subcastes.

Caste endogamy is absolutely rigid and immutable, permitting no open evasion. Sometimes even high castes are compelled by a lack of women to make a practice of taking low caste women as wives: but in such cases both the husband and his caste connive at their own deception, and if they are willing to ignore custom, are very unwilling that the fact should be generally known. . . . Subcaste endogamy in most cases is as rigid as caste endogamy. Occasionally a breach of the endogamic law of a subcaste may be condoned by purificatory sacrifice . . . or by a fine . . . : but as a rule permanent excommunication is the penalty imposed. . . . Yet subcaste endogamy is not so immutable. It can be set aside altogether, even by Brahmans. . . . Furthermore, the marriage regulations of subcastes vary from place to place.¹¹

This greater looseness of subcaste endogamy permits a practice that almost invariably accompanies non-racial stratification—namely, hypergamy, a form of institutionalized intermarriage whereby the men of a higher caste-group may marry women of a lower group, but not vice versa. "Parents are obliged to marry their daughters into an equal or higher section, and if they fail to do so, are themselves reduced to the status of the section in which their daughter marries."¹² Highly developed among the Rajputs and Rarhi Brahmans, it is practiced by many other castes as well.

Indeed, amongst all Hindus there is probably a tendency towards hypergamy. A curious proof of this fact is provided by the statistics of birthplace in the United Provinces. In two successive census reports (1901 and 1911), it is shown clearly, firstly, that the bulk of persons living in districts other than that in which they were born are women; secondly, that the migration is from east to west. As the lower branches of a widespread caste, generally speaking, live in the east of the Provinces, and the higher in the west, the conclusion that hypergamy has something to do with the nature of this "marriage" migration appears sound.¹³

¹⁰ It is not intended that this is a full explanation of child marriage and widow agamy in India, but simply that one important factor in such full explanation would be the caste order and its internal necessity of endogamy.

¹¹ Blunt, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-49.

¹² Edward Westermarck, *History of Human Marriage* (New York, 1922), II, p. 59.

¹³ Blunt, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-47.

CASTE HYPERGAMY ELSEWHERE

India is not the sole area where hypergamy is found. Westermarck mentions several instances elsewhere, among them the following example:

In Madagascar the Antimerina or patrician caste was divided into six classes, each of which generally claimed descent from a royal ancestor and regarded itself as a group of blood-relations. These groups were endogamous in theory but a man of a higher class might marry a woman of a lower class. On the other hand, a woman of a higher rank was prohibited by strict taboo from marrying beneath her rank; and if she so far demeaned herself as to marry a commoner, she lost her title of nobility and was disowned by her family.¹⁴

In predominantly democratic North America the Natchez¹⁵ possessed a remarkable caste system which consisted of two major divisions, the common herd (called Stinkards) on the one hand, and the nobility on the other. The nobility embraced within itself three different ranks—the Suns at the top, the Nobles next, and the Honored People third—so that in the entire structure there were four strata. Social position descended in a peculiar manner. In the ruling Sun caste it was strictly matrilineal and primogenitary, the eldest son of the chief's eldest sister succeeding him to office, and membership in the caste being through females only.¹⁶ Three remarkable rules affected these matrilineal Suns: first, they were absolutely exogamous, for they had to marry Stinkards; second, the children of Sun women and Stinkard men were Suns, but the children of Sun men and Stinkard women were neither Suns nor Stinkards (as we might expect in a perfectly matrilineal society), but were Nobles, i.e., one grade below their fathers; third, the Stinkard husbands of the Sun women were not the equals but virtually the slaves of their aristocratic wives, and when the wives died the husbands were required to die with them by strangulation.¹⁷ These rules were apparently the keystone of a whole intercaste marriage system

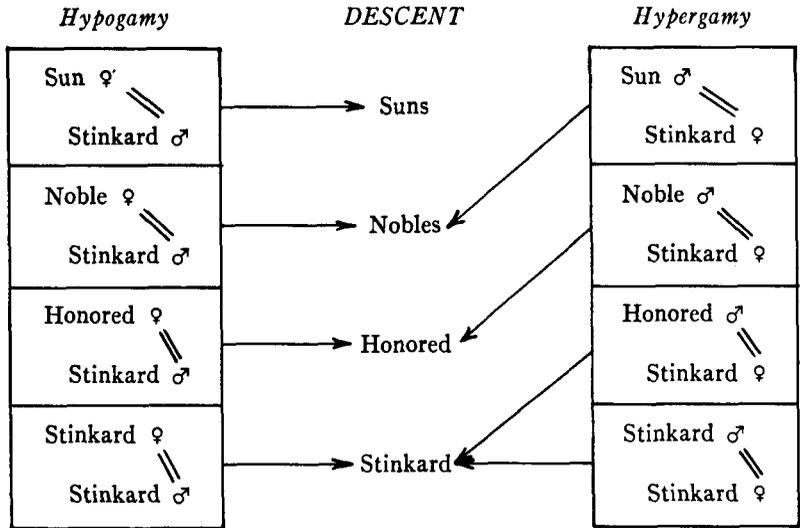
¹⁴ *History of Human Marriage*, II, p. 64. The same passage is contained in Risley, *op. cit.*, p. 180. The latter suggests, pp. 180–181, that there may have been a hypergamous relation between the patricians and plebeians in Rome before the Lex Canuleia.

¹⁵ John R. Swanton, *Indian Tribes of the Lower Mississippi Valley* (Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 43, Washington, D.C., 1911), pp. 45–256. W. C. McLeod, *Natchez Political Evolution*, (*American Anthropologist*, 24), pp. 201–229.

¹⁶ Swanton, *op. cit.*, pp. 100–108.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 104, 106; McLeod, *op. cit.*, pp. 221–227. Wives of Sun men were not so abject, but they also, at the death of their royal husbands, had to undergo suttee. It will be noticed that the Sun women, as well as the Sun men, married down. R. K. Merton has suggested the name *hypogamy* for the case when women marry down, reserving the term *hypergamy* for the case when women marry up. For an explanation of why these terms are apt to be confusing, however, see the latter part of the next section.

(see table below), in which descent was matrilineal when the mother ranked higher than the father and patrilineal when the father ranked higher (but with the child taking a status one step lower than the father in this latter case).¹⁸ The society was unusual in making exogamous marriage the norm rather than the exception for the upper castes and in knitting together on this basis a system of descent, government, and morality. It therefore demonstrates the malleability and strength of institutionalized intermarriage in caste societies.



The intercaste marriage and descent system of the Natchez Indians

THE THEORY OF HYPERGAMOUS INTERMARRIAGE

At first an explanation of sanctioned intermarriage in caste systems appears impossible to formulate. Caste, as we saw, depends upon birth and hence upon the regimentation of marital choice along caste lines, producing in every rigidly stratified system a pattern of caste endogamy. The question then arises, why is intermarriage ever permitted at all? What function does it subserve in a society which would seem to call for the opposite pattern? The answer lies, apparently, in four interrelated directions.

¹⁸ Information on the Natchez is scanty and controversial. The system may not have been so perfect as our attempt to distil the essence of it seems to indicate. For one thing, as McLeod has pointed out, some Stinkards, with their wives, were promoted to the Honored rank by virtue of deeds of valor or religious infanticide (McLeod, *op. cit.*, pp. 213-215). There is even a hint that promotion from this rank to that of Noble may have been possible (*ibid.*, p. 209).

(1) Despite the Natchez (see footnote 20), hypergamy occurs more frequently between ranks that are close together than between those that are far apart. This fact, which fits our hypothesis of the equalitarian principle in marriage, diminishes the scope of the required explanation. Indeed, since subcastes are hard to distinguish from classes, hypergamy is more of a class phenomenon than a caste phenomenon—though, of course, it is in many cases a pattern in which both class and caste are involved, one being played off against the other.

(2) We can assume that no social order, however stratified it may be, will operate efficiently if its component layers are utterly insulated from each other. Since marriage functions as an alliance mechanism,¹⁹ hypergamy may serve to produce vertical solidarity. Yet, despite this unifying power, intermarriage cannot become the rule; either it must remain the exception or stratification itself must disappear.²⁰

¹⁹ Intermarriage across caste lines for alliance purposes is most frequent when a small ruling caste wishes to solidify itself with lower ranks. This was seemingly the situation among the Natchez. It was also the case in Japan at one time. At the beginning of the Tokugawa dynasty "a lady of Tokugawa lineage was forbidden to marry a Court noble, but the shogun himself was expected to take a consort from one of the noble houses of the imperial capital. From the days of Iemitsu this latter custom was maintained. . . ." F. Brinkley and Baron Kikuchi, *A History of the Japanese People* (New York, 1915), p. 620. The converse of this principle is the desire to prevent alliances between equals to the disinterest of those of superior rank. Thus in Japan matrimonial alliances between barons of adjacent provinces were forbidden, and marriages between families with as little as three thousand *koku* required the Yedo's consent (*ibid.*, p. 575).

²⁰ The Natchez challenge both this and the previous generalizations, but further analysis illuminates rather than obscures our main points. In the first place, though probable, it is not certain that Nobles had to marry Stinkards (McLeod, *op. cit.*, pp. 204–205); and we do know that when a Stinkard rose to the Honored rank by religious or warlike deeds, his wife rose with him (Swanton, *op. cit.*, p. 104), so that here were unions (the percentage of which in the total we do not know) which were not intermarriages. Also, it is likely that because of the disproportionate number of Stinkards in the population, most of the marriages were Stinkard-Stinkard unions, thus making the majority of matings in the society endogamous rather than exogamous. In the second place, we must note the strong matrilineal emphasis in the Natchez aristocracy and recall in this connection our principle, previously stated, that a variable which may affect the usual equalitarian nature of marriage is matrilineal descent. Amongst the Natchez the marriages of the matrilineal Sun women were anything but equalitarian. The Stinkard husband in her house occupied the position of a domestic servant or slave; he could not commit adultery, while she (in contrast to most married women in the society) could; he could not eat with her, sit in her presence, or adopt a tone of equality toward her (Swanton, *op. cit.*, p. 102). In the absence of equality in Sun ♀ = Commoner ♂ marriages, therefore, it is not surprising that intermarriage could unite the top and bottom castes. It is interesting that this inequality was much greater in unions between Sun women and Stinkard men than in those between Sun men and Stinkard women. The reason for this is apparently that in the latter unions the ordinary dominance of the married Natchez male was compatible with the

(3) Since sex and romance are never completely inhibited by caste taboos, some de facto intercaste unions inevitably occur. One way of handling these unions is to give them the status of marriage. The less stringent the caste barriers, the greater is the number of such unions—another reason for the greater frequency of hypergamy between closely related strata.

(4) There is inherent in the class-caste-stände form of stratification a powerful motivation to hypergamy. To see this let us assume the familiar type of patrilineal caste order found among Hindus. Here, be it noted, the wife acquires the rank of her husband at marriage, no matter what her origin. Her position thus acquired, and the position of her children, naturally affect the social standing of her parents and siblings, who profit by having a daughter and grandchildren of high status. She and her family, then, have every reason to desire a marriage into a higher caste group, if permitted. Looking at it from the husband's side, one might think that the man would lose status by marrying a woman beneath him. Ordinarily he does, but if there is an institutionalized channel by which he can do so with impunity, the stigma is avoided. Given this channel the men of a high caste stand to profit from hypergamous marriage for three reasons: (a) it increases their area of selection, making it easier to find beautiful or otherwise attractive mates, (b) it enables them more economically to have several wives, and (c) it works to their profit, because the families of the lower strata will pay a groom-price in order to marry their daughters well.²¹ In

husband's caste dominance, whereas it was incompatible with the husband's caste abasement in the former, where the Sun women were the progenitors of the Sun chiefs. In the third place, the information about the Natchez indicates that the Suns probably constituted a small portion of the population, perhaps simply a ruling family (McLeod, p. 205). If so, then compulsory exogamy perhaps had a kinship basis, and as we shall see, it was typical rather than exceptional, bearing a striking resemblance to ruling matrilineal groups in West Africa where the royal women may choose mates from among the commoners, mates who have no equality in the marriage relation and may be dismissed at will (e.g., Loango, Dahomey). The Natchez were also typical in that the children of an aristocratic man and Stinkard wife took the status of neither one, but rather an intermediate status, which is a frequent pattern connected with intercaste unions. These considerations indicate, then, that the Natchez were probably no genuine exception to the theses so far advanced—namely that, unless influenced by a strong matrilineal emphasis, marriage implies social equality between the mates, that this equality necessitates the observance of rank endogamy in the preponderance of cases, and that when intermarriage does occur it tends to be between closely related rather than between widely separated ranks.

²¹ Since the women of higher castes, being unable to marry down, suffer a deadly competition from their lower-caste sisters, they too are forced to pay a bridegroom price to get husbands from their own level. This situation produces such practices as female infanticide and the commercial polygyny noted among the Brahmans of Bengal, where eligible men may make a profitable living by marrying as many as sixty to one hundred wives. (Risley, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-171.)

other words, while individual marriages may exhibit anomalous combinations, culturally defined patterns of selection always involve a trade, a reciprocity which insures a certain kind of equality by balancing between the two mates all the qualities which enter into the calculation of marital advantage. A most convenient type of bargain is that in which one party brings to the marriage the *same* social status as the other (e.g., caste endogamy). But there are other elements of status than sheer birth or caste. Above all, there are achievement, beauty, intelligence, youth, wealth (each giving a class position as distinct from birth). In the typical hypergamous pattern the upper-caste male enjoys the privilege of selecting a mate from his own caste without competition from lower males, while at the same time he may take from below a female whose other qualities offset her lower birth. He trades his caste position for other considerations. The phrase "marrying down" (or "marrying up"), therefore, is apt to be confusing, because this direction often manifests itself on only one basis of stratification, it being reversed on some other basis. When for example, the rich Jewish merchant of late Medieval Europe married his daughter to a poor but talented scholar from the Yeshiva, each of the parties was marrying "up" in one sense, "down" in another. It happens that caste is an extremely rigid mode of stratification tending to force everything else into its mold and thus to give each individual a general over-all station. Yet inevitably other principles manifest themselves, thereupon providing a motive for intermarriage. These considerations also explain why it is difficult to find any uniformity connecting sex with the direction of intermarriage. In one pattern, so far as birth is concerned, the women may be privileged to marry down—in exchange for wealth, perhaps, or goodwill. In another pattern, it may be the man who, with respect to birth, marries down. The direction depends on the role of the two sexes in the culture's particular configuration of status values.

In such terms as these the paradox of intermarriage in a predominantly endogamous caste system is resolved. Intermarriage may be an integral part of a stratified structure.

NO HYPERGAMY IN RACIAL CASTE SYSTEMS

Further clarification can be obtained from examining that type of caste system wherein hypergamy does not occur—namely, the racial type. In the literature on caste endogamy a fundamental distinction has been overlooked—that between non-racial and racial castes. A non-racial caste system, such as the Hindu, is one in which the criterion of caste status is primarily descent, symbolized in purely socio-economic terms; while a racial system is

one in which the criterion is primarily physiognomic, usually chromatic, with socio-economic differences implied.²² Only if this distinction is kept in mind will the facts of endogamy and intermarriage become intelligible. Turning now to the racial societies, our main problem is to explain why sanctioned intermarriage does not occur in them.

The main point is that *intercaste unions in a non-racial system do not create the problem of the hybrid in nearly so acute a form as in the racial caste system.*²³ To make this clear let us assume, in a patrilineal caste order, a union between upper-caste male and lower-caste female. If the stratification is *not* based on race, the offspring of the mixed marriage will bear no external mark of their mother's origin. Provided they are socialized properly for taking their father's status, no one will ever know the difference between them and children whose mothers and fathers both came from the same caste. But if the stratification *is* based on race, then the offspring will inevitably bear the mark of the lower caste. Furthermore, it will be impossible automatically to give the wife the status of the husband at marriage, because she too will bear the indelible stamp of the lower caste. In short, strata based on race are marriage-tight (i.e., strictly endogamous), and hypergamy is an absolutely incompatible pattern.²⁴

²² Actually the racial and the descent bases are close together, but their results somewhat divergent. The reason that race serves as an excellent basis of caste is that one gets one's racial traits by birth from parents having those traits, and one cannot change these traits during the rest of one's life. But it must be borne in mind that between parent and child there can be no hiatus in descent, by definition; whereas there can be such hiatus in racial traits. Consider the following instance: "Often, we are told, a family in which a light complexion predominates will bring into the world a child darker than its parents or the other children in the family. The child so unfortunate occupies a different position in the household. One father had a son much darker than himself. When he left the Creole community he passed his son off as his chauffeur, and so rose superior to the barriers of race in his own case." H. M. Bond, *Two Racial Islands in Alabama* (American Journal of Sociology, XXXVI, January 1931), p. 560. Furthermore, consider the prevalent phenomenon of "passing," which shifts an individual from the racial caste of his parents to that of his parents' superiors. See C. B. Day, *A Study of Some Negro-White Families in the United States* (Cambridge, Mass.: Peabody Museum, 1932), pp. 5, 11. Race thus adds another dimension to descent as a basis of caste. This dimension is biological, with its own mode of variation. The hypothesis that the Hindu system began on a racial basis is unproven. Even if true, however, it does not alter the fact that today this system is for the most part purely a matter of descent rather than race, symbolized *only* in socio-economic terms.

²³ The writings of R. E. Park, E. B. Reuter, E. V. Stonequist, and other specialists in race relations have abundantly shown the role of the hybrid to be crucial in any racial caste system.

²⁴ G. E. Simpson informs me that in so far as the relations between the elite and mass in Haiti are concerned, the conclusions here advanced concerning racio-caste endogamy hold true.

We are of course speaking of marriage rather than concubinage. The latter, since it does not imply equality between the mates or between upper-caste parent and his natural child, is a form of intercaste union perfectly suited to either type of caste system: It seems, however, that intercaste concubinage itself will ultimately break down a racial caste system by the simple process of distributing the racial traits of the upper caste so lavishly among the lower that there remains no actual difference of race on which to base caste distinctions. Furthermore, interracial concubinage is particularly apt to manifest itself when the upper caste is suffering from a shortage of women, and in this situation it tends to become a *de facto* marriage, because the father develops affection for his hybrid offspring and attempts to give them his social status. Unless this is prevented, the castes soon disappear or at least cease to be racial in character. We find, therefore, that in those societies which subsequently developed a racial caste system (e.g., South Africa, United States) interracial concubinage did not become a fixed institution; while in those which subsequently failed to develop such a system in spite of the juxtaposition of diverse racial elements (e.g., Brazil, Hawaii, Mexico) interracial concubinage and/or marriage took place freely at an early date.

MARRIAGE BETWEEN RACIAL CASTES IN THE UNITED STATES

In the southern part of the United States, where white and black constitute two distinct racial castes, no intermarriage is legally or morally permitted. The rationale of the prohibition is strikingly revealed in the usual legal definition of a Negro. A favorite legislative formula is that a Negro is anyone who has one-eighth or more of Negro blood in his veins.²⁵ Georgia

Hypergamy, usually spontaneous, may occur *within* a racial caste, but not between such castes. Since it is difficult to distinguish subcastes from classes, such hypergamy (similar to that in a non-racial system) represents a playing off of the caste as against the class principle, absence of pigment being bargained off against achievement. The following passage concerning the British West Indies in slave days illustrates the tendency: "Mulatto girls were very generally the willing or unwilling victims of illicit relations with white men. These they preferred to mulatto mates who were compelled to associate with black women, who, in turn, preferred them to the pure blacks. In fact, there seems to have been a growing desire among colored women to live with men a shade lighter than themselves and the ambition to have a 'fair chile' is still widespread in Jamaica." F. W. Pitman, *Slavery on British West India Plantations in the 18th Century* (Journal of Negro History, XI, October 1926), p. 634.

²⁵ Alabama has in its constitution that the legislature shall never pass any law to authorize or legalize any marriage between a white person and a Negro, or a descendant of a Negro to the third generation inclusive. *Alabama State Constitution*, Sec. 102; C. 1923, Secs. 5001-2; E. B. Reuter, *Race Mixture* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1931), p. 82.

bans marriage between a white person and persons having an "ascertainable trace of either Negro, African, West Indian, Asiatic Indian, Mongolian, Japanese or Chinese blood in their veins." Such laws indicate one thing: that the racial integrity of the upper caste is to be strictly maintained, to the degree that all persons of mixed racial qualities shall be placed unequivocally in the lower of the two castes. To permit intermarriage would be to give the hybrid offspring the legal status of its father, and would soon undermine the very basis of the caste order. Hence either intermarriage must be strictly forbidden or racial caste abandoned. Thirty states forbid intermarriage and thus align themselves legally on the side of racial caste.

Even in those states where intermarriage is legal it seldom occurs, being against custom. When it does occur, strangely, it fails to follow the hyper-gamous pattern. Instead of an upper-caste male marrying a lower-caste female, as we would expect, we find the Negro male usually espousing a white woman.²⁶ The reason apparently is that in a racio-caste system where the dominant philosophy and structure is not that of caste but of equalitarian democracy, the class achievement of certain Negro males enables them to bargain for females of the white caste who stand low in the class hierarchy. Such females can gain more by marrying a well-off or superior Negro than by marrying a white man of their own class. One could object that a similar advantage accrues to a low-class white man marrying a superior Negro woman, but in our culture it is not men (but women) who marry for economic support, so that a white man marrying a Negro woman is damaged precisely in his own sphere, i.e., economically, without receiving a compensatory advantage. Furthermore, if sex is the motive, caste inequality makes it easy for the white man to take sexual advantage of Negro women without marrying them; also, there is no shortage of white women for sexual satisfaction. Finally, because of the *racial* barrier, it is impossible for a Negro wife to acquire at marriage her white husband's caste status; instead her white husband tends to acquire *her* status in such case—thus violating not only the caste but also the patrilineal principle. If a white wife takes the

²⁶ "The New York State figures indicate that in 1929, 2.7 per cent of the Negro grooms and .8 per cent of the Negro brides married white consorts. Statistics in this state running back to 1916 indicate little trend in this respect." T. J. Woolter, *Races and Ethnic Groups in American Life* (New York, 1933), p. 208. E. B. Reuter affirms the same relationship in *The American Race Problem* (New York, 1938), p. 143. Julius Drachsler quotes figures from p. 50 of Ray Stannard Baker's *Following the Color Line* showing that in 1900 in Boston 32 out of a total of 35 mixed marriages were between Negro groom and white bride; in 1901 the ratio was 30 out of 31, in 1902 it was 25 out of 29, in 1903, 27 out of 29, in 1904, 27 out of 28, and in 1905 17 out of 19. *Intermarriage in New York City* (New York, 1921), p. 50. This tendency is therefore quite long-standing.

caste status of her Negro husband, that at least fits the patrilineal principle. Consequently, it is mainly white women who trade their caste status for class advantage by marrying Negroes.²⁷

INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE IN SOUTH AFRICA

The situation in South Africa resembles that in the United States, except that there the Negroes are in the majority and have retained more of their own culture. Most jurisdictions do not forbid white-colored marriages, but strongly condemn and practically eliminate them. When such marriages do occur they tend to follow, in contrast to those in the United States, a superficially hypergamous pattern, more brides than grooms being native. The numbers, however, are so small as to have little significance.²⁸

When the whites first entered South Africa, there existed no racial caste system and no ban on intermarriage. As caste feeling with respect to race gradually arose, so did the ban on intermarriage, the two being functionally related. In recent times a single case of white-black marriage by Christian rites will fill the newspapers with indignant protest, though illicit intercourse will pass unnoticed.²⁹

INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE IN BRAZIL AND HAWAII

The United States and South Africa demonstrate that where there is racial caste there is no institutionalized intermarriage but instead a drastic endogamy. We know, however, that the mere coexistence of different races in the same population does not produce a racio-caste system. Consequently,

²⁷ "In almost every case the white persons contracting mixed marriages are of the lower economic strata of the population." Reuter, *op. cit.*, p. 143. Often they are immigrant women who understand our class system but not our racial dichotomy.

²⁸ *The Negro Year Book* (Monroe N. Work, Ed., 1937-38), p. 426, gives the following table; for the Union of South Africa:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Bride Native</i>	<i>Groom Native</i>
1929	15	1
1930	16	1
1931	7	1
1932	6	-
1933	9	-
1934	7	-

The excess of native brides may be attributable to the preponderance of natives in South Africa and the still perceptible scarcity of white women, South Africa being a frontier country to a greater extent than the United States.

²⁹ D. A. Lane, *The Negro in British South Africa* (Journal of Negro History, VI, 1921), p. 305. See also the brilliant historical account of the rise of the Negro-White caste system contained in I. D. MacCrone's *Race Attitudes in South Africa* (London, 1937).

we must now discuss two outstanding examples (Brazil and Hawaii) of societies in which, despite racial heterogeneity, no caste organization exists.

The history of Brazil reveals that the Portuguese invaders mixed freely with the aborigines. The tropical climates made it inadvisable to bring over Portuguese women, hard to exterminate the indigenous population, and impossible to establish purely European agricultural communities.³⁰ Furthermore, the Portuguese possessed a traditional willingness, even in their own hemisphere,³¹ to miscegenate with colored peoples. The stage was thus set for varied racial crossings. Since the slave trade lasted fifty years longer and probably bulked larger than in the United States and since, with the abolition of slavery, diverse strains of European immigrants crowded into the country, multifarious mixtures made the nation a racial potpourri in which the drawing of racio-caste lines became practically impossible by virtue of the sheer multiplicity of the lines that would have to be drawn. Today Brazil is racially the most liberal of all countries colonized by white men, and though there may be some private disinclination toward intermarriage, there is no public resentment of it. Having no racial castes, it has no racial endogamy.³²

Hawaii, another polyracial region failing to develop a racio-caste system and therefore permitting miscegenation, owes its liberality, like Brazil, to certain historical factors.³³ Marriage between the first white settlers and the natives was initially encouraged by the loose family organization of the Hawaiians, their freedom from antagonism toward foreigners, the affiliation of the first settlers with the royal families on the Islands, the absence of white women, and the distance of Hawaii from the home countries and hence

³⁰ E. V. Stonequist, *Race Mixture and the Mulatto* (in *Race Relations and the Race Problem*, E. T. Thompson, Ed., Durham, N. C., 1939), pp. 246-247.

³¹ C. G. Woodson, *The Beginnings of the Miscegenation of the Whites and Blacks* (*Journal of Negro History*, III, October 1918), p. 336. Donald Pierson, *The Negro in Bahia, Brazil* (*American Sociological Review*, IV, August 1939), p. 526.

³² There is of course a class system in Brazil, and since the darker peoples are only recently released from slavery and servitude, they tend to be in the lower ranks of this class system. Moreover, these classes, like all classes, tend to be somewhat endogamous. This is what S. H. Lowrie has shown in his *Racial and National Intermarriage in a Brazilian City* (*American Journal of Sociology*, XLIV, March 1939), pp. 684-698, but he probably went too far in attributing the class endogamy to race, as suggested by Rüdiger Bilden's *Comments, loc. cit.*, pp. 698-701. Pierson, *op. cit.*, maintains that the dark person may rise to a high status not simply within his own color group but within the total group, thus enhancing his marriage-ability to persons of whatever color. Intermarriage is proceeding so fast that the Bahians, for example, look forward to the disappearance of the Negro as a separate racial type.

³³ See the brilliant work of Romanzo Adams, *Interracial Marriage in Hawaii* (New York, Macmillan, 1937), pp. 46-62, briefly summarized here.

the home prejudices of the settlers. Once started, this intermarriage made the formation of racial castes virtually impossible, for the white settlers who married native women developed a fatherly interest and affection for their halfbreed offspring and naturally wished to give them their high social status. It was therefore impossible for either the fathers or their children to identify Hawaiian racial traits with an inferior caste. Then with economic development of the Islands, varied racial strains migrated to the region and, for the same reasons, intermarried with natives and halfbreeds. In subsequent generations so many of the inhabitants were mixed and hence identified with more than one stock that no one race could publicly proclaim its superiority and retain the allegiance or goodwill of the majority. Therefore the situation continued in such a way as to prevent rigid racial stratification or a public taboo on intermarriage.

Brazil and Hawaii thus demonstrate the close connection between caste endogamy and the maintenance of a racio-caste structure. Given a historical situation which encourages racial intermarriage, racial castes cannot form.

NAZI GERMANY

It is interesting that in Nazi Germany an attempt has been made, in spite of previous miscegenation and the absence of clearcut racial groups, to *create* a racial caste system. The National Citizenship Law of September, 1935, which makes a distinction between a national and a citizen, accomplishes this, for only those can be citizens who are of German or allied blood, thus excluding the Jew.³⁴ The most fanatical rule associated with this new caste system is the taboo on intermarriage.

In the eyes of good Nazis believing in the omnipotence of the germ-plasm, the prevention of interbreeding between Aryan and non-Aryan and the separation of the alleged racial strains is more important than social segregation. The Nürnberg law of September 15, 1935, forbids the marriage between a Jew and a German national of German or allied blood. Such marriages in violation of the law may be declared invalid. Extramarital sex intercourse is forbidden and punishable. To prevent the seduction of Aryan maidens, their employment in Jewish households before reaching the age of forty-five is forbidden . . . the most minute specifications to prevent race mixture were worked out. For example, the marriage of a full Jew and a quarter-Jew is prohibited. . . . The marriage of quarter-Jew with quarter-Jew is forbidden. Even sexual intercourse between a Jew and a quarter-Jew is forbidden.³⁵

Nazi Germany therefore illustrates again the close connection between racial caste and absolute endogamy. If the difference between Jew and

³⁴ Clifford Kirkpatrick, *Nazi Germany: Its Women and Family Life* (Indianapolis, 1938), pp. 178-179.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

Aryan were not couched in racial terms, it would be quite possible to have a system of hypergamy by which Aryan men could marry Jewish women, with no reflection on the offspring. But having a racial conception of the caste difference, any form of intermixture becomes strictly forbidden. The fact that the racial element in the caste differentiation is a pure myth does not in the least lessen its strength. In fact, all racial caste systems possess a racial mythology; it is a part of the non-rational realm of thought which goes with this type of social organization, on a par with the non-rational philosophy which necessarily goes with any social organization. The only odd thing about the Nazi racial doctrine is its completely mythological character. It has less external fact to go on than any other racial delusion. One therefore wonders why the creation of a Jewish caste had to be rationalized in racial terms, since this requires such mental distortion. The answer lies, I think, in the proposition that a complex industrial society cannot conform to the caste pattern of stratification unless the latter is in racial terms. A non-racial caste system, fixing one's life status simply on the basis of descent, implies a degree of socio-economic stability which no industrial society can have. A racial caste system, on the other hand, places the basis of caste outside the economic system itself, in the obvious constitution of the individual. Only in this way, and then only by rigid enforcement, can a complex society maintain a caste division. Furthermore, racial castes cannot easily be maintained if there are more than two races. This is illustrated not only by Nazi Germany (which singles out the Jews as one "race" and lumps everybody else together in another "racial" group as "Aryans"), but also by South Africa and the United States, and in a negative way by Brazil and Hawaii. As it is, Nazi Germany has a difficult time defining who are Jews. It must maintain bureaus for "family research" in which genealogies are industriously catalogued. Actually the definition of who is a Jew and who is not depends upon ancestry rather than organic racial traits. Ancestry would serve equally as well to designate a non-racial caste as a racial one, but since Germany has a complex industrial system, and since in such a system too much can happen after birth to one's status, the myth of an unalterable racial basis has been adopted.

SUMMARY: THE THEORY OF INTERMARRIAGE IN CASTE SOCIETIES

We arrive at the conclusion that any discussion of caste endogamy and hypergamy must distinguish racial from non-racial caste systems. In the second kind of system the strata tend to be more numerous, intermarriage more permissible, because the hypergamous mate may be raised at marriage to the status of the non-hypergamous one, and the children, if socialized

properly, will bear no mark of their parents' dual origin. This does not mean that intermarriage is necessarily frequent. There are some non-racial caste systems which permit no intermarriage,³⁶ and in all of them intermarriage represents a minority of matings in the society. Generally, the closer two strata are to each other, the greater the amount of intermarriage; hence intermarriage occurs more often between class strata than between caste divisions, and often involves an interplay between class and caste factors. The strong tendency toward intermarriage arises both from the societal need for vertical as well as horizontal cohesion and from the individual's tendency to exercise the privilege of his caste position in the interest of class ends (e.g., economic and social advantage apart from birth) and sexual demands. Intermarriage is therefore a definite part of the system of non-racial stratification in most instances.

In racio-caste systems, however, the institution of hypergamy becomes totally incompatible with the very basis of the stratification. When race is made the basis, there is a double sense in which marriage is relevant to caste: first as the institutional mechanism through which descent and socialization are regulated, second as the genetic mechanism through which biological identity is maintained. Whereas in a plain caste system matrimony is relevant only in the first sense, it becomes, in a racial system, significant also in the second sense, and hence doubly endogamous. Therefore we find that in those societies wherein radical racial differences have *not* led to caste formation there was an early history of lax restrictions upon intermarriage and concubinage; whereas in those societies where racial castes *have* arisen there were strong currents against intermarriage from the start. The causes of laxity in the early history of settlement are usually the scarcity of women (resulting from long distance migration, tropical climate, and get-rich-quick aims), the presence of more than two racial types, a numerous native population plentifully supplied with women, and the early production of halfbreeds. Such conditions produce a powerful impulse on the part of the conquerors to settle down in purportedly concubinary but actually marital relations with the subordinate women, to rear the children as if they had the status of the father, and thus to lay the foundation either for the racial absorption of the upper group or for the necessity of importing new members of this group and redefining the caste boundaries from time

³⁶ E.g., the Masai who do not intermarry with the pariah smith caste in their communities. M. Merker, *Die Masai* (Berlin, 1904), 110-114. It should be noted that here there are only two castes, that the separation is extremely rigid, even to the extent of a separate language [A. C. Hollis, *The Masai* (London, 1905), pp. 330-331], yet racially the smiths are apparently identical with the rest of the Masai.

to time.³⁷ It would seem that racial castes arise more readily when there are only two races, when these are radically different in bodily features and culture, and when both possess a balanced sex ratio. The post-Columbian explorations set the stage for social contact between alien peoples—contact which could lead either to amalgamation or the formation of racial castes. In some cases conditions led to amalgamation, in other cases to caste. In either event, in making or avoiding a potential caste order, intermarriage played a determining role. It is, indeed, a crucial factor in caste structures of whatever type.

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³⁷ The history of the West Indies is enlightening on this point. Here the high rate of concubinage, if not downright intermarriage, would have absorbed the white population if the latter had not been replenished constantly by a steady stream of recruits from Europe. See C. H. Wesley, *The Negro in the West Indies, Slavery and Freedom* (Journal of Negro History, XVII, January 1932), pp. 51-56. Those countries which gained or for long retained their independence (Brazil, Hawaii, Mexico) tended, if they had large native populations, to tolerate amalgamation without the caste lines being re-drawn, while those which remained satellites of European nations tended to remain under caste auspices.