



THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
LABORATORY
OF
COMPARATIVE
HUMAN COGNITION

Center for Human Information Processing
University of California, San Diego

Volume 9, Number 2

April 1987

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Introduction

Violence done to persons and groups seems common today. The first two articles in this issue consider the cultural beliefs and practices that contribute to or offset the effects of violence in human lives. Goody begins with a discussion of the German term, "herrschaft," which is often employed in such broad senses as "political domination." But it carries within it the more specific meaning which concerns Goody -- male (herr) power (schaft). Male violence toward women, like political-military violence is justified in moral terms that result in acceptance of the doctrine-in-practice that "Might is Right." Culture and ideology enter the picture in terms of how the participants formulate the existing structures of domination as natural, inevitable, and moral. As Goody shows, there are striking cross-cultural similarities in the myths and belief systems which justify male dominance and render socially necessary, *even to the women who are being dominated*, the existing systems of power. Goody offers her analysis of sexual herrschaft as a model for understanding the dynamic relation between biological constraints and cultural systems. In many countries, the growth of social concern about family violence is giving rise to new institutions where women's situation can be examined and acted upon. Consequently, the dynamic between biology, culture, and beliefs that Goody discusses will reveal itself in new ways offering challenges to both science and social policy. Whether cultural changes can bring about equality, or simply change the conditions of domination as they have in the past, remains to be seen.

A disturbingly large proportion of the world's children are growing up in disastrously dangerous environments of human design, characterized by violence, political repression, and war. Raija-Leena Punamäki reports on rare research involving such children. In the aftermath of World War II it was reported that while the stress of war is a major risk factor in children's development, war is often less harmful for child non-combatants than for their non-combatant parents (usually mothers). It is thought that the parents absorb the brunt of the pressure; so, children escape with less severe psychological consequences. The early research was speculative with respect to the mechanisms involved in the day to day processes of coping with military occupation, restricted mobility and freedom of expression, in addition to constant danger and fear.

Punamäki's article addresses this while reporting on family processes and children's development among Palestinians living under Israeli occupation. Her methodology represents several layers of the the social system at one time as a means of tracing causal influences within it. While some of the instruments used in the study can be questioned, the careful way in which they are assembled and interpreted lends authority to the conclusions. First, the classical conclusion that adults do indeed mediate the effects of conflict for children is substantiated, with a fuller picture of how difficult this. Second, there is evidence that an important cultural factor, ideology, can provide an intellectual framework that helps women to cope with conflict-induced social stress.

The third article by Elliott Mordkowitz and Herbert Ginsburg examines the cultural beliefs and practices that promote academic success among Asian-American students. A key anchor in the discussion comes from the work of Harold Stevenson and his colleagues claiming that there are no "basic advantages in cognitive aptitude" to be found among children of Asian background. From this starting point, Mordkowitz and Ginsburg probe into the socialization factors to conclude (a) that high achievement is *not* likely to be found as a consequence of specific parental teaching practices but (b) that an effective support system for academic achievement involves a combination of organizing massive amounts of practice, beliefs in the efficacy of hard work and the importance of school success. The conclusions of this kind of interview study are admittedly speculative. Remaining uncertainties should not be taken as criticism, but rather incitement to conduct more analytical comparative studies to get at the factors involved.

The three articles in this issue of the Newsletter offer a set of perspectives on the way that social/structural/political constraints and people's belief systems interact to maintain dominance, or to counteract it. One of the most sobering conclusions they suggest is that a central part of systems of domination is a set of beliefs in which the victims accept the characterization of them promulgated by the victimizers. Yet there is a hopeful side to the issue as well. The evidence suggests that where the belief systems and social organization of the home and community support development and excellence, it occurs. The crucial issue is to create contexts that support self-determination and foster their spread.

Why Must Might Be Right? Observations on Sexual Herrschaft

Esther Goody
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The politics of sexual herrschaft is about control. This is very complicated politics because it emerges from the interaction of the consequences of biological differences between males and females, the conceptualization of these differences including the myths and ideologies formed around the concepts, and from the constraints of social institutions, particularly those linked to domestic and political roles. Each of these frames effects the others, and it is within this multi-dimensional field that individual men and women live and contend for control. No one frame can "explain" the patterns of control which emerge, since these are a product of their interaction. This circumstance also makes analysis difficult; the selection of one element to discuss implies its greater importance when this is not intended. To comment on these issues is also difficult because of the large amount of unusually high quality work already published. It is neither possible to do justice to these studies in the space available, nor valid to ignore them. Of necessity major contributions and unresolved debates, proper subjects of essays in themselves, are here relegated to footnotes.

A basic learning mechanism for higher animals, including humans, is the reward/punishment complex studied by behavioural psychology.¹ Our behaviour is constantly shaped by this learning organized around seeking gratification and avoiding pain. While this has obvious implications for childrearing and education generally, it is in fact also fundamental to social institutions. It is through rewarding conformity and the threat of negative sanctions that norms are established and maintained. Such sanctions need not be formal such as those embodied in courts and police. Evans-Pritchard wrote of Nuer social order being maintained by the threat of the feud (Evans-Pritchard, 1940). Yanomamo villages retain their autonomy by being feared as fierce and ready to attack others (Chagnon, 1968). Relations between street gangs in modern cities follow much the same lines (Keiser, 1969). There is thus at a basic level an association between force and the normative order. The polemics of modern governments seeking to justify massive overkill capacity are always framed

in terms of defending the good (democracy/socialism) against the evil (capitalist/socialist) dictatorship. But of course this very relativity of who and what is right throws into high relief the danger of accepting the simple equation $\text{Might} = \text{Right}$. In simple societies there is generally a straightforward pattern: My people/descent group/village are right and we will fight to defend ourselves against your people/descent group/village who are our enemies because you are fighting us. Because you are our enemies you are wrong (and we are right).

Individuals with ties to two hostile groups often act as go-betweens and mediators; or they may be caught between the two and seen as potential enemies by both. The moral element in such conflicts is sometimes expressed in the idea of a duel, tournament or battle as an ordeal, with the victory going to those who have the Lord (i.e., morality) on their side. State systems have evolved a wide variety of institutions for constraining open contests of strength within their boundaries, and for separating right (law) from whether one individual or his group is stronger than another. Significantly, at the level of relations between states (or in a civil war, between the opposing sides) Might is still used as a measure of who is Right. A successful coup or revolution is followed, eventually if not immediately, by the recognition by other nations of the new government. Winning a war results in the redrawing of boundaries, and the re-design of constitutions. The side which wins gets to make the new rules.

However this paper is not about legal systems or national politics, but about the interaction between power and morality in relations between men and women. That these are not totally separate problems can be seen in the way in which many simple societies describe their origins in terms of the overthrow of the rule of women (see below).

Paradoxes of Herrschaft at the Level of Social Structure

Women, Levi-Strauss has shown, are objects of transactions by men (Levi-Strauss, 1969). In small traditional systems marriages were often based on the exchange of sisters between men, since because of incest conventions, men cannot marry their own sisters. In other societies, such exchanges were transformed to bridewealth transactions, in which a conventionally determined valuable was exchanged for rights to marry a kinswoman; the kinsman who received bridewealth could then exchange it with another family

for a bride for himself or his son. In more complex societies fathers sought prestigious suitors for their daughters with valuable dowries (Goody & Tambiah, 1973). In many places it was accepted that men could seize wives in raids, or as the prizes of war, or as the prerequisites of slave ownership. But always it was men who transacted the rights to marry women and not the women themselves (although they might have some influence behind the scenes). The obvious question would seem to be, why in these many, many independent systems didn't women use the fact that their sexual and reproductive capacities were a valued resource, to take control over their own bodies and transact on their own account? For according to exchange theory, the party to a transaction who holds the greater resources, commands the greater power (Blau, 1968; Homans, 1958). Yet women yield this resource to men, who use it to gain wives, establish alliances between kin groups -- and determine the domestic destiny of the women themselves. Societies vary in the extent to which marriages are arranged by one or another of these institutions, but in no society do women transact in the marriages of men.

The Marxist premise is that control over the means of production leads to economic power which is the ultimate basis for political power. Yet this equation does not seem to operate in the relationship between the sexual division of labour and economic and political power for women. In simple technology societies women tend to contribute heavily to subsistence: In most types of hunting and gathering systems it has been estimated that they provide well over 50% of subsistence consumption (Lee, 1968), while in the rudimentary agriculture of New Guinea, Amazonia, aboriginal North America, and much of Africa, women were cultivators, and often produced most or all of the staple food (Friedl, 1975). Yet it is rare for women to hold positions of either economic or political authority in these societies. In foraging systems it is men who are hunters, although the supply of meat they provide is irregular and often small. However, meat, unlike gathered foods, serves as the basis for gifts and exchange outside of the domestic group and may be built into claims for wives as among the Tiwi of Australia (Hart & Pilling, 1960), or into systems of prestige and even office (as in the potlatch system of the Indians of the northwest coast of North America). Even in those simple agricultural systems in which women do all the cultivating of staple foods (frequent in New Guinea, and in many societies in Africa and Amazonia) this gives them no claims on external economic roles or political

office. It is always men who initially clear the land, and who construct and hold social ownership of land which gives them claims on the crops it bears (Friedl, 1975). It thus cannot be argued that women hold less power and prestige *because* their absorption in bearing and rearing children has prevented them from contributing to subsistence production. On the contrary, they seem to be subordinate in many societies *in spite of* being the major subsistence producers (Kaberry, 1952). What seems to happen in these societies is that men's contribution to the division of labour is based on superior strength, and possibly on the greater risk of injury or death. Both hunting and clearing of land are the basis of political and economic transactions between men in which women do not participate. These transactions create a superstructure of power and authority roles that feeds back into the definition of male and female domestic roles, and the overall pattern of male dominance. As Rosaldo argued in her seminal paper (1974), the pre-occupation of women with childrearing and the domestic domain produces societal systems in which men hold legitimate authority and manage relations *between* domestic groups.

But the final paradox is that men, holding the dominant roles in the public sphere in virtually every society², should find it necessary to label women's power, when it does emerge, as illegitimate and wrong. For in cosmologies, myths of origin, and beliefs about causes of misfortune, one repeatedly finds that the subordination of women is their own fault; either women committed some original sin which doomed them to eternal inferiority, or it is in their nature as women to be in some way to blame, to be guilty, or evil, or simply stupid. This being so, men are "naturally" and "inevitably" dominant. Such a coincidence between *de facto* distribution of power and beliefs about the nature of the world both serves to reinforce the position of the dominant and argues to the subordinated that they cannot change their situation. But of course it is not a coincidence. Why does Might claim to be Right? And why is this claim accepted by those whom it blames for their own subordination?

In discussing the nature of social stratification, Beteille has argued (1983) that complex societies in which there is an ethic of equality are in fact faced with the reality of marked inequalities. They tend to respond by producing various rationalizations as to why some are better off and others disadvantaged, and these rationalizations tend to be based on some sort of supposed "natural order."³ This displaces the

responsibility for the reality of inequality from human beings to nature, which, since there is a very strong commitment to the ideal of equality, is more comfortable than having to accept that the contradiction has a human social basis. Beteille is concerned with social divisions, class and caste. But there are striking parallels in the ideological rationalizations of very diverse societies for the domination of men over women. The parallel occurs at two levels: First, in the elaborate ideologies which explain the origin and necessity for this dominance; and second, in the tracing of the cause to the "natural" attributes of women. There is also a third element which I suspect may appear in ideologies justifying socio-economic stratification. This is based on morality. Women are inferior because they have sinned, or are in essence sinful. This twist to the argument allows men to feel not only superior, but righteous. The women brought it on themselves, and deserve to be punished. So one is forced to ask why should these ideologies legitimating dominance make the weaker also be guilty of some form of immorality? Why must Might also be Right?

One could draw illustrative material for this pattern of the social construction of reality from a very wide range of historical and ethnographic examples. I shall consider just a few cases in sufficient detail to make clear the culturally specific patterns and then return to the question of the underlying dynamic.

South American Indians: Origin Myths and Control of Women

There are two strikingly similar complexes of South American Indian origin myths, both linked to male adolescent initiation, one from the extreme southeast of the continent, and the other from the tropical forest area of the northwest Amazon and central Brazil. Bamberger has described these as "myths of matriarchy" and "myths about the Rule of Women" for they focus on an account of how women in the beginning controlled sacred knowledge, and made men raise manioc, do the domestic work and take their orders (Bamberger, 1974). In other versions men originally were dominant, but women seized the sacred objects and took control. In both variants, the men attacked the women and gained (regained) control of the sacred objects, thus ensuring their control over women's labour and their subservience and establishing the natural order of dominance which continues today. The Ona myth (Tierra del Fuego) described by Bridges on the basis of his own initiation (early 20th century) contains the main features of the set:

In the days when all the forest was evergreen, ... in the days when the Sun and Moon walked the earth as man and wife ... in those far off days witchcraft was known only by the women of Ona-land. They kept their own particular lodge, which no man dared approach. The girls, as they neared womanhood, were instructed in the magic arts, learning how to bring sickness and even death to all those who displeased them.

The men lived in abject fear and subjection. Certainly they had bows and arrows with which to supply the camp with meat, yet, they asked, what use were such weapons against witchcraft and sickness? As this tyranny of the women became worse, the men decided to kill off all the women; 'and there ensued a great massacre, from which not one woman escaped in human form.' After this debacle the men were forced to wait to replace their wives until young girl children matured. Meanwhile the question arose: how could men keep the upper hand now they had got it? One day, when these girl children reached maturity, they might band together and regain their old ascendancy. To forestall this, the men inaugurated a secret society of their own and banished forever the women's Lodge in which so many wicked plots had been hatched against them. No woman was allowed to come near the Hain (men's Lodge) on penalty of death ... (Quoted from Bridges, 1948, pp. 412-413 in Bamberger, 1974, p. 270)

From the Amazon Barasana Indians of a quite distinct culture area, Stephen Hugh-Jones recorded the following myth:

1. Romi Kumu's father, Poison Anaconda, told his sons to get up early and go down to the river to bathe, vomit water and play the *He* (sacred flutes).
2. In the morning the sons stayed in bed but Romi Kumu got up early and went down to the river where she found the *He*.
3. (Variant: the women/woman did not know what to do with the Yurupary (flutes). They put them over all the orifices of their bodies but not in their mouths. Finally a fish, jacunda (*Crenicichla sp.*) showed them what to do by signaling with its big mouth.)
4. The father was at first pleased when he heard the noise of *He* but when he saw his sons still asleep he realized what had happened and was very angry.
5. The men ran down to the port but Romi Kumu had already gone, taking the *He* and all other sacred equipment of the men with her.

6. They chased after her, following the sound of the *He*, but each time they got near she ran off again. She walked along the rivers and one can still see her footprints (carved) on the rocks in the Pira-Pirana area. There the men caught up with her and took back the *He* and ritual equipment.

7. The men punished Romi Kumu and the other women by making them menstruate. (Variant: When the women stole the Yurupary they talked a lot and were drunk. The men attacked the women and rammed the instruments up their vaginas.)

8. When the women stole the *He* from the men, the men became like women: they worked in the manioc gardens producing manioc, they had a bend in their forearms like women, and they menstruated. (S. Hugh-Jones, 1979, pp. 265-266).

Hugh-Jones comments that the version he has given here is:

in some respects a 'weak' version: in most of the versions told to me it was stated that when the women were in possession of the *He*, the men did not merely cultivate manioc but were also subject to the political dominance of women. This theme of social revolution in which women overthrow the power of men is common to all the versions of the Yurupary myth from the Vaupes-Incana region and is also widespread amongst the Indian groups of lowland South America. (S. Hugh-Jones, 1979, p. 127)

Throughout the areas where these myths are the basis of the cosmology, explaining the power of the sacred flutes and providing the basis for male initiation, it is forbidden for women even to see the flutes, and transgression was punished by death. Whether this is accounted for by the women's original crimes (witchcraft, bringing disorder) or by the crime of usurping male power by stealing the ritual instruments and "contaminating their sacredness by viewing or touching them" (Bamberger, 1974, p. 274), women are shown to be dangerous and bad. Women are described as lazy, insatiably curious, greedy, promiscuous, and unable to keep secrets. They are "naturally" this way, and thus incapable of holding power effectively. Hugh-Jones says that the Barasana believe that if women did see the sacred flutes they would come to have the same ritual knowledge and power as men, and there would be a period of chaos when people fought each other. It is to avoid this that women are kept

away. In both the Amazonian and the Fuegian myths the theme of punishing the women is very clear. In the Ona myth all adult women are killed; in the Barasana myth they are subjected to gang rape and have the flutes rammed up their vaginas. And of course today punishment awaits any woman (or girl) who looks at the sacred flutes, or intrudes in the men's initiation rituals. The anchorage of this moral weakness in the natural order is also clear. The fact that women menstruate and that they are totally excluded from ritual knowledge "proves" that the myth is about the true relation between men and women. It is wrong for women to have either secular or ritual power; they were punished for taking it once and will be punished again should they attempt to assert equality with men. This much is clear from the texts, and from the threats ensuring the continued exclusion of women from the rituals that accompany recitation of the myths. However, Hugh-Jones does not consider that the Barasana see these as myths and rituals about morality:

Sin, to me, smacks of a universal morality which seems to be lacking in Amazonia. Morality is always contextually defined. I can think of no context in which women as a class are deemed sinful or immoral.... I don't really think that women's subordination is their own *fault* (except in the marginal sense of them failing to win a battle for supernatural power). (S. Hugh-Jones, 1985)

This highlights the need to distinguish between the actors' view (which Hugh-Jones expresses), and an analytical interpretation (on which he and I differ). For I would contend that at an analytical level the Barasana myth does describe punishment in the sense of "To afflict with pain, loss or suffering for a crime or fault" (Webster's Collegiate Dictionary) when it describes "failing to win a battle ..." as followed by "The men attacked the women and rammed the instruments (the sacred flutes) up their vaginas." (Hugh-Jones, 1979, p. 266). In the other version Hugh-Jones gives, his translation of the myth reads: "(7) The men punished Romi Kumu and the other women by making them menstruate" (p. 266). In the myth, then, the women's action in seizing the sacred flutes is explicitly judged as wrong in that the men are described as "punishing" the women by making them menstruate. This is a judgement on all women, as a class, since it is all women who must, forever afterwards, menstruate, and not just the few who seized the sacred flutes. Hugh-Jones' comment raises sharply the question of whether it is appropriate to speak of morality outside of the

framework of a universalistic ethic. His translation of the Barasana myth suggests that here, at least, it is necessary to find some way of expressing the idea of transgression and punishment. But this also raises another question: What defined the action of the women as meriting punishment? His comment suggests that if the women had won the battle for supernatural power instead of losing it, they would have not been in the wrong. At least they would not have been punished! It was winning, "Might" that defined who was "Right." Now an interesting common feature of both the Amazonian myths and the Ona myth is that when men decided to take the supernatural power away from women they were able to do so because they were stronger. This equation of dominant physical force and legitimacy is quite explicit, and it is further reinforced by the sanctions which maintain the now legitimate male dominance: If, today, women attempt to regain control over the supernatural sources of power, they will be raped or killed because the men are stronger and can do so. Significantly, here male force is linked to the normative social order. Men act together in defense of what (as the myths have demonstrated) is the correct distribution of power and authority.

The Amazonian myths are, however, too rich to be reduced to a two-dimensional silhouette of force and morality. Accounts of Barasana myths (Hugh-Jones, 1979, 1985) and Mundurucu myths (R. Murphy, 1958; Murphy & Murphy, 1974; Nadelson, 1981) emphasize that only women have the sacred power to reproduce humans. They are seen by men as full of uncontrolled power -- to menstruate and to make babies -- both of which are not open to human control. Men fear this mystical power of women, which is seen as linked to their power to grow vegetable food, and feel that it threatens their secular control over politics, community relations and the women themselves. "Men have a neurosis about the insecurity of their control and dominance over women" (Hugh-Jones, 1985). Sanday's probing study makes the same link between the reproductive powers of women, their critical influence over the growth of crops, and the fear and respect in which they are held by men (1981). And indeed, these myths are about this very fear: that women will cease to accept male domination and use their own kind of power to seize formal authority from men. In this connection Hugh-Jones writes: "I would read the myths as saying that it is only through their aggressive exertions that men came to have power" and of the Ona myth, "What the women did was to practice witchcraft (which men do today). What was amoral

was that *women* [my ital] used such power, not the power itself" (Hugh-Jones, 1985). Men's fear of women's non-formal power seems to be a key theme in the wider problem of relations between force, legitimacy and the denigration of women.

Australian Aborigines: Origin Myths and Male Initiation Rites

Extended male initiation at puberty is even more central to Aboriginal society than for the South American Indian peoples. It typically involves a period of several weeks or even longer during which youths are taken by the men apart from the women, their mothers, and ritually "killed," taught sacred lore, and finally "reborn" as men. The rituals are performed to a mythical score which gives symbolic, and sometimes explicit meaning to what is taking place. There seem to be two basic variants of these myths, both of which provide a model for the killing and rebirth of the youths. In the first, for which Warner's account of the Murngin myth serves as a paradigmatic example (Warner, 1937, pp. 250-259),⁴ two women, one pregnant, the other with a child, both by incestuous unions, wander over the earth giving names to plants, animals and natural features. The women pollute a sacred water hole with the blood of childbirth and menstruation, which insults the great Yurlunggur serpent who emerges to swallow the women and their sons. Later the serpent regurgitates them into an ants' nest where the stings revive them. In the second variant a woman (two) is entrusted with the care of (her/others') children but eats them. When the men discover what has happened they kill the women and find ritual means to revive their sons. The following Murinbata myth associated with the Punji rite (recorded by Stanner) provides an example:

The people said to Mutingga, the Old Woman: "We shall leave the children with you while we find honey; you look after them." She agreed, and the people went off to hunt. After the children had bathed, they settled down to sleep near her. Bringing one close on the pretext of looking for lice, she swallowed it. Then she swallowed the others, ten altogether, and left.

A man and his wife returned to the camp for water and realized what must have happened. They gave the alarm, and the others came back. Ten men set off in pursuit and eventually overtook Mutingga crawling along a river bed. A left-handed man speared her through the legs and a right-handed man broke her neck with a club. Then they cut her belly open and found the children still alive in her womb. They had

not gone where the excrement is. The men cleaned and adorned the children and took them back to the camp. Their mothers cried with joy on seeing them and hit themselves until the blood flowed. (Stanner, 1959-63, pp. 40-42, quoted in Hiatt, 1975, p. 151).

There are many themes in these myths and the associated initiation rituals.⁵ However, the one I wish to stress here is that in both forms of myth which provide charters for the adolescent initiation ceremonies, women are punished for abominable behaviour -- pollution of sacred sites, incest, cannibalism -- and in addition to the actual culprits being killed, all women are subsequently and forever deprived of control of their adult sons. That is (1) women are punished because they are/were evil; and (2) the initiation of their sons by men and the complete exclusion of women from this ritual which forms the basis of sacred knowledge serves to deprive women of the possibility of aligning their sons with them against their fathers. There is here a double sense in which women cause trouble, first by failing to respect the rules of decent society (against pollution, incest, cannibalism), and second by trying to seize power through their sons. Obviously, women can't be trusted (Hiatt, 1975, p. 156).

As further versions are recorded and analyzed the Wawilak myth emerges as even more rich and complex. Knight has recently argued that there are two different "messages" in this myth: In one the serpent represents the force of male dominance which controls women, and represents a phallus, male rule and possible rape. The two sisters pollute a male sacred site and are sexually punished as a result. "This is certainly the story which the women are supposed to swallow and it is also the message which most social anthropologists appear to have accepted more or less at face value" (1983, p. 25). However, there is another "inner" message according to Knight's analysis, for he contends that the myth conveys different messages to the uninitiated -- women and children -- and to the initiated -- men. The message for the initiated men is that the women have tremendous power, through menstruation and the ability to bear children, and that they must be kept in ignorance of this power, and under control by men. Women are doubly dangerous, because of the potency of their blood and reproductive activity as individual women, and because if they realized their power they might act together, as men do, seize men's ritual and secular power, and reverse the entire natural order of male dominance.

To return to herrschaft and the problem of evil, perhaps it is precisely because men fear this reproductive potency women have as a source of power greater than their own that myths portray women as unfit to hold socially significant power. This has been persuasively argued at the level of individual psychodynamics by B. and J. W. M. Whiting (1965, 1975) and Y. and R. F. Murphy (1974): Each male needs to deny his childhood dependence on an identification with his mother, i.e., her overwhelming power; myth and ritual support this denial and establish adult male identity on the basis of "natural" and supernatural dominance of men over women.

This combination of myths about the overthrow of women's power in which women are punished for wrong or dangerous behaviour, and where there is also evidence that men greatly fear and respect women's reproductive power, occurs widely in aboriginal South America and Australia, and both Hugh-Jones and Hiatt comment on the strong parallels with New Guinea material.⁶ Why should men in these societies particularly need to buttress their male identity and authority with myth and initiation ritual and the moral discrediting of women? La Fontaine suggests that these are societies in which there is very little institutionalized male hierarchy, but constant competition among men for pre-eminence (1985). In other words, control over women's power becomes the focus of fear, myth and ritual when dominance between men is unstructured, and therefore contested. This view parallels closely the picture which emerges from a consideration of witchcraft in Africa.

African Witchcraft

There are two main models for African witchcraft patterns. One is the evil witch who kills and injures relatives, including her own children, from malice, jealousy and greed, or because of blood debts to the coven. The second is the socially responsible witch who uses mystical powers in defense of the group, often to repel attacks by evil witches. Tiv elders, Azande princes and Gonja chiefs are all "known" to be "good" witches in this sense. Now clearly it is not possible to use (mystical) power on behalf of the community unless one is recognized as acting on behalf of the community. Thus Azande commoners were accused of witchcraft and required to renounce the attack on a particular victim, but princes were not accused in this way.⁷

In West African traditional societies, when serious illness, misfortune or death occurs, a diviner is consulted to discover the cause and what may be done. If the verdict was that an evil witch was responsible there were in pre-Colonial times several forms of counteraction possible. One was an ordeal which killed the guilty and exonerated the innocent. Another (still common) was to place the person under the control of a shrine believed to be mystically powerful enough to turn the attacks against the witch herself. Sometimes there was a form of judicial process followed by driving the witch out of the community, or by execution.⁸ Significantly, the forms of ordeal (throwing a bound witch into the river; reaching into boiling oil) and forms of execution (burning alive) resemble strongly medieval European practices. Few can have survived the ordeals and the manner of the witches' deaths clearly represents exaction of vengeance against a feared and hated enemy.

When I began fieldwork in Gonja (northern Ghana) I had no intention of studying witchcraft, but was forced to respond to the deep concern of the people themselves to what was for them a constant threat. The picture which emerged was of men who boasted of being witches -- and were therefore powerful and to be feared and given way to; and of women who were terrified of being accused of witchcraft, since it meant at best ostracism or flight from their home village, and possible death. These were not imaginary fears. I was involved, as bystander, witness, and in one case unwitting cause of a jealous attack, in many witchcraft incidents. All of those defined as evil (*libi*), in that they led to direct accusations and to counteraction, concerned women witches. I began to ask the women: "Why is it women who are bad witches?" (For women accuse each other, along with the men; bad witches are seen as a threat to all.) "Because," they said, "we are evil." And they went on to recount the various anti-social feelings which they knew themselves to have: jealousy of co-wives, and co-wives' children, resentment of neglectful husbands, anger against kin for favouring others or for not supporting them. The inevitable strains of social interdependency are here attributed to women, as part of their "nature"; women are likely to have evil feelings and motives, they are bad witches because of their feelings and motives, and the fact that they are identified in divination as responsible for illness and death "proves" them as evil. (See E. N. Goody, 1970)⁹

On the other hand, men in positions of political and often ritual power are "known" to be witches. They may boast of these powers in claiming rights to office, and competition for office may be carried out partly on the level of (assertions of) mystical attack and counterattack. Thus the Gonja say that no man can succeed in becoming chief unless he is a strong witch, and when a chief dies it is assumed that a rival's witchcraft overcame his own. My records of witchcraft episodes linked to men include attribution in gossip of specific deaths within the community to chiefs and to Muslim scholars. But no direct accusations were made, and no counteraction taken against them. These chiefly witches are not "evil." They are believed to need strong mystical powers to defend their people against the attacks of evil witches, both outside and within the community. Similarly, in Tiv society, which has no formal political offices, the elders are believed to meet at night as witches and may even sometimes kill and eat a member of their own lineage in order to maintain their powers of defense against outside attack (Bohannan & Bohannan, 1953). The striking thing about male witches in these societies is that there is no attempt to say that they do not use the same forms of mystical aggression (mystical poison, invisible arrows that travel many miles to seek their target,¹⁰ the power to change shape, etc.) as those for which evil witches are blamed and killed. But when these forms of mystical aggression are used, they are seen as attributes of office, or the struggle for office, and become a source of reputation and legitimate political power.

In these societies mystical aggressive powers used by men are proof of political authority; used by women they are frightening, dangerous, and so evil that they lead to the execution of the female witch by methods that are in many cases extremely sadistic.¹¹ There are also African societies in which male witches are feared and become the object of counteraction. In Azande, male commoners, i.e., those who do not hold legitimating positions in the political system, are required to blow on a chicken wing as proof that they will cease their attacks. However, it is striking that Azande male witches were not, apparently exiled or executed, even when they were thought responsible for a death. Rather, counter witchcraft was used against them -- the battle played out on the mystical plane.

There is another very interesting set of societies in which mystical powers are sometimes legitimate and sometimes not. These tend to be systems in which lineage office exists, but is weakly developed; lineage

heads are recognized, and they have quite specific powers over junior lineage members, including control over critical economic resources. However, the process of succession to these lineage offices is linked to lineage fission, and thus gives rise to regular succession crises (Cewa, Lugbara). Accusations of witchcraft tend to focus on competitors for lineage authority. Here, to accuse a man of witchcraft is to accuse him of illegitimate mystical attack, and thus to dispute his right to the contested office, and indeed, his right to split the lineage. Where mystical powers are considered legitimate, as in the invocation by the head of the Lugbara family cluster of the ghosts of his patrilineal ancestors, it is not categorized as witchcraft -- although Lugbara use the same word (*ole*) for both ghost invocation and witchcraft.¹² Significantly, the close followers of a man accused of witchcraft may not define his actions as witchcraft at all, and thus can continue to support their candidate (Lugbara). In these societies witchcraft itself is evil, and what is at issue is whether a given act is an expression of witchcraft powers (evil) or of legitimate authority (strong/good).

If we map the male/female dichotomy onto the distinction between evil and good mystical powers, and see these in relation to the holding of office, the model is roughly:

Women No offices;
 evil witchcraft;
 severe punishment.

Men (i) Succession to office weakly defined, linked to lineage fission. Mystical aggression used in competition for power is situationally defined; "witchcraft" is evil.

Men (ii) Clearly defined offices; political system not based on lineages. Male officials expect to use mystical power. Witchcraft in competition for office = fair fighting.

The underlying pattern here seems to be that holders of clearly legitimate authority can use dangerous powers safely because there is a structural assumption (the legitimacy of office) that they are acting in the public good. If those who are competing for power in a fluid system use dangerous (mystical) weapons, their allies will consider this evidence of strength, and fair, but their enemies will consider it wicked and anti-social. The position of women is particularly interesting here, because there are very few

situations in which anyone considers their use of dangerous (mystical) power as evidence of legitimate strength used for the social good. On the contrary, they risk being branded as evil witches, exile or execution.

Although Gonja obviously represents only one kind of African system, it is a particularly interesting case for the present problem because there are a few political and ritual offices for women. The model for the legitimacy of male mystical power suggests that women holding office should be either free to use mystical power legitimately or perhaps expected not to need it. However, case material shows clearly that office-holding women are sometimes thought to have killed with witchcraft. When this happened they were ostracized and terrified, but were not killed (though this was in the 1960s when executions for witchcraft had been prevented for 50 years). While their offices may have cushioned them from the full force of counteraction against evil witches, they clearly did not gain strength and political legitimacy from being recognized as witches, as male officials still do today.¹³ For women, then, the structural assumption of legitimacy provided by office does not work. In Gonja, women who use mystical power are evil, whatever their position in the politico-jural structure. It is as though men may use mystical power safely if they have the right position in a political structure that defines authority roles and succession to these clearly. It is dangerous for men to use mystical power (which is of course difficult to observe and control) where the political system itself is loosely structured and competition between men for power threatens the stability of constituent elements of the system. This leads to situational legitimacy: "The ancestors are acting for us. You are using witchcraft." But there are virtually no conditions of structural legitimacy that permit women to use mystical power. The same logic would argue that in some way for women to be allowed mystical power *always* is experienced as threatening to the stability of the society.

Most African societies seem not to have myths of origin which justify the subordination of women as do those of South America and the Australian aborigines. However, the reservation of the legitimate use of mystical power for men, and the hysteria surrounding the evil witchcraft of women, carries much the same underlying message. Women cannot hold legitimate power; women who try to exercise power are evil.¹⁴

The Judaeo-Christian Tradition

From the examples considered so far -- South American Indians, Australian aborigines, African tribes -- it might seem that it is only preliterate, small-scale societies in which the ideology of legitimate power was based on the premise that women are originally or fundamentally anti-social or evil, and therefore, necessarily excluded from authority outside of the domestic domain. Surely the most widely disseminated myth of this sort is that of the Judeo-Christian tradition. As it is set out in the Book of Genesis, on the sixth day of creation God made man in his own image, and put him in the garden of Eden to care for it, admonishing him not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Then seeing that the man was alone, he took one of his ribs and made a woman as "a helpmate for him." Man, who had named all the creatures God had created, then named his helpmate, "woman," because she was taken out of "man" (Heb. *ishshah*, from Heb. *ish*). But the serpent, who was more subtle than any other of the wild creatures God had made, told Eve that nothing bad would happen to her if she ate the forbidden fruit, but that if she ate she would become like God, knowing good and evil. So Eve was tempted, and she took the fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband and he ate. "Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons" (thus the beginning of culture). And God punished the serpent, and Eve and Adam.

Eve's punishment was that although she will bear children in suffering, yet "her desire shall be for her husband and he shall rule over her." Adam's punishment was perpetual toil to wrest daily food from the harsh soil, for God drove him from the garden of Eden "lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live forever." (Genesis 2: 3).

If this account is taken literally, Eve was the cause of all the later sufferings of men and women, because she listened to the subtle serpent, and then led her husband astray. Man explains his disobedience to God by saying, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." The issue between God and his creatures is control. Man is punished for disobedience by toil and expulsion from Eden. Eve is punished for being foolish and disobedient, and placed under the control of man. She was the cause of the original sin because she acted independently, under the control of neither man nor God.

God's reason for driving them from Eden is the fear that they may, having knowledge; also eat of the tree of life, thus gaining immortality as well. Since man was made in the image of God initially, with knowledge and immortality also there would be no difference between man and God, and no possibility for God to control man (or man/woman?).

But notice that in the text that has come down to us in the Bible, while God responds to this disobedience by driving man out of the garden of Eden, ("God") sent him forth from the garden of Eden, ... he drove out the man" ...) he places man firmly in control of women. As Sanday notes in her stimulating essay on the formation of the Christian tradition (1981, Epilogue) later Christian writers took up this theme and were more explicit. In a letter to Timothy, Paul admonishes:

Let a woman learn in silence with full submissiveness. I do not allow any woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; she is to remain silent, for Adam was formed first, and then Eve, and furthermore, Adam was not deceived, but the woman was utterly seduced into sin ... (2 Timothy 2: 11-14).

And Paul wrote the Corinthians: "But I want you to understand that in the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is her husband and the head of Christ is God" (1 Corinthians 11: 3), while elsewhere in the New Testament it is simply written, "Let the wife see that she fear her husband."

Research on recently discovered Gnostic texts suggests that this strong masculine dominance of the established New Testament was only achieved by suppressing other texts, and indeed demoting Mary Magdalene from the status of disciple to passive follower (the Gospel of Philip, the gospel of Mary, in Pagels, 1979). The relative egalitarianism of the Gnostics, who allowed women to read the scriptures and preach in religious services and to conduct rituals, was fiercely contested by the orthodox Christians. The North African theologian Tertullian (c. 190 AD) considered the religious activities of women among the Gnostics as actions of heretics. By the late second century, "Orthodox Christians came to accept the domination of men over women as the proper God-given order -- not only for the human race, but also for the (internal hierarchy) of the Christian churches." (Pagels, quoted in Sanday, 1981, p. 229).

Christianity, then, has taken the Genesis myth of Eve's foolishness, guile and original sin (she ate the apple first), as a charter for firmly legitimating the control of a wife by her husband, and of women by men (as in the organization of the churches). For a brief moment Eve had knowledge and power equal to God's but her possession of them was the supreme sin, and the cause of all subsequent human suffering. This absolves both man ("The woman whom thou gavest to me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat") and God ("Because you have listened to the voice of your wife ..."). But the early Christians seem to have reenacted the scenario, as the emerging orthodoxy and hierarchy of church authority excluded women from any role in the conduct of religious observances, and relegated them again to the authority of their husbands. From sharing in the conduct of the new religion, women became only objects of control, by conscience, by priests, and of course, by their husbands who conducted the family services (e.g., Morgan, 1944). It has been persuasively argued that the linking in Christian teachings through the centuries of legitimate authority of husband over wife to Eve's betrayal has formed the implicit basis for our attitudes today (Dobash & Dobash, 1979).

Interpreting the "Messages" of Ideology

There is a striking parallel in the nature of Eve's sin -- which gave humans knowledge that ought to have been reserved for God -- with the South American myths which tell of the time when women controlled ritual knowledge (which had to be rescued from them), and in a somewhat different way with the African premise that women who have mystical knowledge of witchcraft must be using it for evil. What is portrayed as dangerous is the possession of knowledge by those who ought to be subordinate. Clearly knowledge is power. And significantly, it is power which does not depend on physical strength, so that if women control knowledge this would challenge the physical advantage men hold.

In looking at the relationship between domination and ideology it is useful to distinguish between:

- the current function of ideology in relation to existing patterns of domination.
- how an ideology comes to be formulated. (Pre-literate cases must be treated separately from those in literate societies.)

- how an ideology comes to be institutionalized -- made "official" (i.e., encapsulated in myth, or made the basis for public justification of action).

Each of these is a separate, and major, problem. They are set out here, not because it is presumed to resolve them, but to avoid confusing the comments relevant to different ones.

The contemporary functions of this sort of ideology, once it is established, are clear. It serves to justify and to reinforce the domination of men in several ways: (1) It means that in a given relationship domination is not an individual, arbitrary control, nor, often, is it seen as the way of a particular community or society. It is pre-ordained, "natural," "the will of God" (Ortner, 1974; Ortner & Whitehead, 1981; Beteille, 1983); (2) It is thus impossible to conceive of altering the balance of power. This is so in a very literal sense -- it is impossible to *think* otherwise. The conceptual tools and premises preempt alternative formulations; (3) For those who are dominated it leads to acquiescence, to the acceptance of the inevitable, and quite possibly to less resentment and pain than if *de facto* domination were combined with an ideology of equality. This would be a clear example of what Beteille has called a disharmonic system (1983); (4) Very probably less actual power differential is necessary to maintain dominance where it is reinforced in this way by an ideology (harmonic system) than when it is not (disharmonic system); (5) Other, more specific functions can be worked out for particular cases. Bamburgher's paper on South American Indian "myths of matriarchy" sets out several (Bamburgher, 1974).

However, the very interesting questions of how such belief systems come into being, and how they come to be institutionalized as the "official view" of things are much more difficult. One problem is that it is impossible to watch the emergence and institutionalization of beliefs in any particular simple society. At a given time certain beliefs are already "official" and we don't really know how to identify emergent ones. Nor, if we look at contemporary societies and reason backwards as to how it might have been, can we do more than speculate? It is probably not fruitful to look for general answers. But in particular cases there may be hints from observing contemporary, but parallel, situations, particularly if this observation is combined with comparative analysis of the same phenomenon in many different societies. What general patterns have appeared in the cases so far considered?

- In these several sets of societies men are in fact dominant over women in the sense of managing political, religious and economic affairs outside the household, and in the sense of being "head of the household," -- the one who gives orders and is deferred to. In most (all?) of these societies men "chastise" their women physically when they deem it necessary.

- There is a belief system, cosmology, or set of ideas about causes of misfortune which defines women as at best weak and foolish, and in some cases as basically, naturally, sinful or evil.

- Men have legitimate authority roles, and women's power, where it is acknowledged, is frightening (Amazonia, Australia) or evil (African witchcraft). *De facto* male domination over women in these systems is thus justified morally.

The fact that this association of legitimate male power and the non-legitimacy, or even wickedness, of female power recurs so frequently suggests that it is generated by the interaction between men and women in widely different societies, independently of different cultural frames. Or rather, that the cultural frames emerge to give form to this aspect of the interaction. What are the dynamics here? Fortunately this is an instance in which detailed studies of a relevant contemporary phenomenon are available.

Power and Legitimacy in Conjugal Relations in Contemporary Western Society

Since the 1970s, both in England and in the United States, there has been a growing concern about cases of violence against women by the men they live with. In England this led to a Parliamentary Select Committee on Violence in Marriage whose report in 1975 laid the basis for national legislation specifically designed to provide legal protection for women who were victims of domestic violence. There has since then been considerable research on this problem in these countries, but the authors of a recent international study of family violence could find little data elsewhere except in Canada (Gelles & Cornell, 1983). There is anecdotal evidence that violence against wives has been an obvious occurrence since the early middle ages in Europe (Dobash & Dobash, 1979) and since the 18th century in the United States (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Moore, 1979). It is impossible to know whether the recent upsurge of interest is due to generally greater awareness of women's issues, or whether there has been an increase in domestic violence. It seems very

probable that growing emphasis on sexual equality makes conjugal violence more frequent (because of conflicting expectations of the two spouses) and less tolerable to the victim.

The question of the incidence of physical violence in current marriages is no less difficult. Research-based projections vary from 50-60% of all couples in the U.S. (Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980) to 21% of ever-married women based on a large California sample (Russell, 1982). Much of the difference between those two figures can be attributed to differences in definitions used, however both were based on random samples of the general population.¹⁵ These are figures for women beaten at least once by a husband or co-habitee. There is reason to believe that a single beating can permanently structure the nature of a conjugal relationship by establishing the husband's physical dominance, and thus the inevitable outcome of any future confrontation (Gelles, 1972). Within this context it is necessary to distinguish between couples who have experienced one or two episodes of violence and those in which violence has become an established pattern. In a few marriages the wife is subjected to frequent, or even daily, beatings -- which may escalate in severity (Dobash & Dobash, 1979); it is women subjected to repeated injury and who remain in this violent situation who are referred to in the literature, and by the media, as "battered wives." It is quite impossible to calculate the incidence of regularly violent marriages. The usual source of information is case material from victims which cannot be related to the wider population. Police reports can provide incidence of violence in relation to a given population, but the level of unreported cases is so high (the Dobash study estimated 2 out of 98 were reported to police) that they cannot be used reliably. There are clues: repeated physical violence is cited between 17% and 57% in various studies of women seeking divorce (Moore, 1979; Levinger, 1966). And both in Britain and the United States, refuges for battered wives seeking to leave the marriage are extremely overcrowded; newly opened refuges fill up immediately and often have waiting lists before they open their doors (Moore, 1979).

The definitions used in collecting and analysing data in one national American study suggested that wives also used violence against husbands frequently, leading to discussion of a "battered husband syndrome" (Straus, et al., 1980; Steinmetz, 1977, 1978). This has not proved a robust finding; the type of violence used by wives is significantly less severe; husbands do not