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Flesh, *Freundschaft*, and Fellowship: Towards a Holistic Model of the Amish Kinship System

VLATKA ŠKENDER

*Independent researcher**

Düsseldorf, Germany

Abstract: Kinship as a social anthropological category, with its three fundamentals – affinity, descent, and siblingship – denotes an orderly system of social relationships past, present, and future, through which a social system is composed and reproduced. What rules, if any, regulate marriage alliance among the Amish? Why are both affinal and consanguineal relationships structurally subordinated to that of fictive kinship? Building on and reexamining the extant anthropological discourse concerning the Amish kinship organization, a comparative-diachronic analysis of courtship, marriage, descent, inheritance, and residential patterns in a holistic and alliance-focused social system is provided. The article contributes an analysis of social-cosmological precepts governing the Amish kinship structure and reaffirms Mook and Hostetler's (1957) premise on patrilineal ultimogeniture, Hurd's (1985b) assertion on the absence of prescriptive marriage rules, and Huntington's (1988) argument on preferential affinal alliance. [Abstract by author]

Keywords: Amish social organization; kinship; affinity; descent; inheritance system; cosmology; ethnography; holism; structuralism; Louis Dumont

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***Note:** A substantial portion of this research was completed while the author was a doctoral candidate in the anthropology department at the University of Münster.

Address correspondence to: Vlatka Škender; vlatka.skender@uni-muenster.de

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THE BENUMBED KINSHIP STUDIES

Few topics within the social-anthropological discourse have seen their allure so steadily diminish as kinship studies. After the golden age of kinship analysis in the 1950s up to the 1970s – its apex being the brilliant debates between the French structuralist giants, such as Claude Lévi-Strauss or Louis Dumont, advocating alliance theory, and British functionalists such as Radcliffe-Brown or the “arch-descent theorist Fortes” – the study of kinship, as Parkin notes, declines and gives way to other “topics of prominence, such as gender, personhood and the body” (Parkin, in Dumont 2006[1971], ix; Cf. Johnson 2000, 623-25). During the (unspectacular) renaissance of kinship analysis in the latter half of the 1990s, a synthesis of the functionalist and structuralist approaches, as well as an interdisciplinary consideration of kinship – combining its traditional conceptualization as a social category with the paradigm of natural sciences – were advocated.

In Amish kinship studies, such a “biosocial” approach (Hurd 1981, iii) was with much success employed by James P. Hurd, an anthropologist whose consideration of the “Nebraska” Amish kinship properties (1981, 1985a, 1985b, 1997) represents a convincing synthesis of demographic and genetic data with Lévi-Strauss’ kinship theory (Hurd 1985b). Hurd’s inquiry, however, remains largely dependent upon the biological model, asserting that the “primary reason” for “economic organization, religious ritual, subsistence activity, and division of labor” in a given social system is “the regulation of mating and reproductive behavior” (Hurd 1985a, 49) rather than vice versa: that the primary reason for reproductive regulation is the preservation and procreation of the established economic, social-religious, and exchange patterns – in short, the reproduction of the system of values in a given society. In the latter paradigm, which is at the heart of the Paris-Leiden-Münster structuralist tradition, examining how social actors “move away from [the] biological given and the various ways in which they do so” (Parkin, in Dumont 2006[1971], xiv) transcends the study of reproductive mores *stricto sensu* and reveals the systemic configuration of idea-values (Cf. Dumont 1992[1986]) of a society. Though this was not Hurd’s primary concern, his two contributions in *Social Biology* and *Ethology and Sociobiology*

(1985a; 1985b) represent an unparalleled précis of the Amish kinshipscape.

The other two prominent anthropologists in Amish studies, John Hostetler and Gertrude Huntington, have contributed descriptive accounts concerning the quotidian manifestations of kin (or, rather, *family*) relationships but have abstained from configuring a model of the Amish kinship structure (Cf. Hostetler 1961; 1993; Huntington 1956; 1988). Apart from asserting ultimogeniture, Hostetler and Huntington had left us a heritage of “cursory [...] scattered references” (Nagata 1968: 144) – and a troublesome task of (re)constructing the Amish kinship system with considerable anxiety. Why has Hostetler, “the best chronicler of the Amish to date,” as Nagata (*Ibid.*) compliments him, displayed such disinterest in kinship domain?

Perhaps he and Huntington were apprehensive about providing an encompassing kinship model of “the Amish” which at once encapsulates and transcends divergent local practices of a plural social body. After David M. Schneider (1968) wrote his “American Kinship: A Cultural Account,” Maurice Bloch (1972) criticized his *totum pro parte* approach, arguing that “Schneider is writing about America as a whole, irrespective of class, ethnic origin or geographical location,” presupposing “certain basic cultural symbols [...] and these symbols Schneider assures us are shared by all Americans” (p. 655). It is redundant, I think, to elaborate on the apparent fallacy of such homogenous presumptions, and, *a fortiori*, to reproduce them in the Amish case. Yet, if we are to progress toward a holistic analysis of the Amish kinshipscape, we must build upon the hypothesis that there exist some *kinship properties* which can be considered pan-Amish, while asserting the idiosyncratic variability in *kinship practices*, which, as in any other social system, undeniably exist.¹

¹ Be it kinship related ritual practices or quotidian manifestations of kin relationships, the local *modus operandi* is best grasped through an extensive (and intensive) ethnographic research in each *Gemeinde*. Such methodological luxury, however, is virtually unattainable for scholars lacking fellowship, kinship, or friendship connections in Amish communities (Cf. Olshan 1988, 143). Still, we are not sentenced to cognitive darkness: Amish archival materials represent a viable, versatile and – in terms of informant assortment – superior source of relevant ethnographic information. The present elaboration rests on content and discourse analyses of the “Family Life” chronicle and extant anthropological literature performed from 2014 to 2017.

What we cannot afford is to be kinship-indifferent.²

But it is my impression that Hostetler's and Huntington's kinship-indifference had less to do with the fear of Schneider's syndrome and more with their projection of modern ideology onto the Amish system of idea-values.³ The great anthropological duo – analytically deceived by “superficial” similarities between the Amish and the broader “Anglo-American” kin system, such as bilateral organization (Nagata 1968, 144) – had, perhaps involuntary but implicitly, considered them *equiponderate*. The consequences of this vista – looking at the Amish with individualistic, egalitarian eyes – are the disregard of the structural importance of marriage alliance for the social reproduction of Amish society, negligence of the hierarchical cosmological constellation governing the kinship rules, and lastly, inattention to the topic of kinship itself. Dumont had oftentimes cautioned against the occidental, individualistic-egalitarian bias, arguing that its universalistic propensity towards “progressive levelling of all cultures” (Dumont 1986, 25) and the “tendency to reduce kinship to an aspect of individual relations” leads to miscomprehensions of hierarchical (traditional, holistic) systems of thought whose *ideologemé* is the “Durkheimian irreducibility of the social to anything outside itself” (Parkin, in Dumont 2006[1971], xv).

In his “From Mandeville to Marx: The Genesis and Triumph of Economic Ideology,” Dumont (1977, 185) asserts that the ideology of a certain

society – viewed as a particular form of historical discontinuity and heterogeneity – becomes intelligible upon its critical contextualization against the referential frame of a posited historical continuity. The singularity of a social and, for our present purposes, kinship system is thus both revealed and attested through the method of comparison and by acknowledging its relations within the broader schemata of pre- and co-existing ideologies and societies (Cf. Dumont 1977, 27).⁴ Elaborating the “Perspectives on American Kinship in the Later 1990s,” Johnson (2000, 623ss) provides some characteristics of the “American” kinship, which, as she aptly notes, did not come into existence *ex nihilo*; rather, they have transpired from, and are embedded in, the modern-individualistic ideological constellation. Its quintessential cosmological principle – to invert Parkin's assertion – is the *irreducibility of the individual to anything outside itself*. How does this manifest itself on the kinship level? Johnson summarizes:

personal choices rather than *social conventions* [influence] decisions on whether to marry, become a parent, live alone or with others, and accept or reject family responsibilities. At the same time, the nuclear family consisting of a married couple and dependent children is no longer the dominant form in the United States, as one-person and one-parent households increase in number. [emphasis added]

If the modern-universalistic paradigm affirms the *individual* as an independent, normative, and essentially “non-social *moral* being,” the holistic-particularistic one argues the contrary: the individual as an “empirical subject” (Dumont 1977, 8; 1992[1986], 25 and 62) or “raw” social matter (Dumont 1980[1966], 9) is subordinated in a hierarchical classificatory system of idea-values in which the social whole ranks as the primordial one (Dumont 1992[1986], 279; Dumont 1977, 5 and 105). Placed beside one another, the “egocentric and individualistic” *idées-valeurs*, as Johnson (2000, 624) describes them, shine a light upon the co-existing antithetical sociocentric and holistic

² We recall Malinowski's (2010[1922], 11) methodological warning: “An Ethnographer who sets out to study only religion, or only technology, or only social organization cuts out an artificial field of inquiry, and he will be seriously handicapped in his work.”

³ The modern configuration, which is *de facto* an “individualistic configuration” (Dumont 1986, 27; 1992[1986], 268), acknowledges the primacy of the relations “between *man* (in the singular) and things” over “relations between men” (1977, 105; 1986, 27), asserts an absolute distinction between subjects and objects, values and facts (1992[1986], 243s; Cf. Mauss 2011[1954], 46), as well as the partition of knowledge into separate and autarchic niches. In this paradigm, the individual figures as the “cardinal value” (Dumont 1986, 33; Cf. 1977, 118) and the locus of all subsequent truths and values which he manipulates according to his independent volition (Cf. Dumont 1980[1966], 9). This is, as Dumont had convincingly maintained, the habitus of the modern Western world.

⁴ This represents an elaboration of the proverbial scholastic – and social-anthropological – axiom: “Everything is known the more for being compared with its contrary, because when contraries are placed beside one another they become more conspicuous” (Aquinas, ST III, Suppl., Q. 94, A. 1).

ideologies, cosmologies, and corresponding kinship configurations, of which the Amish are a fine example. Encompassed by a hierarchical cosmology – gently steering all customary laws concerning marriage, descent, siblingship, and fellowship – “whatever a man does in such a society he does as a kinsman of one kind or another” (Schneider 1968, vii).

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology included ethnographic field research in 2014 among the Amish in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, archival research of the decennial editions (1980-2010) of the “Family Life” periodical, and other relevant Amish related secondary sources from the 1980s onwards (2014-2016). The “Family Life” magazine, a publication of Old Order Amish *Pathway Publishers* inaugurated in 1968 with the objective of affirming and conveying Amish ideas and values (Cf. Igou 1999, 19), was utilized as primary ethnographic source for the present text. Consisting of contributions of Amish correspondents, the latter represents an ideological arena where relevant current and past social themes (Cf. Olshan 1988, 144) are unveiled and elaborated by the scribes and the editors. Thus, “Family Life” is a journal, a newsletter, and a manual for the upkeep of social identity for all the actors involved, “encouraging and [...] gently guiding its readers” (“Family Life,” December 1980, 40) to uphold and preserve the Amish *Weltanschauung*. Simultaneously, as Olshan (1988, 147) notes, it is a “manifesto” of the Amish system of values and meaning to the “world” they separate from (Cf. “Family Life,” June 2000, 29). For reasons of legibility, economization, and consistency, the bibliographic data is used as a single identification key referring to the written content involved. The publication year, the magazine’s monthly edition, and the page on which the designated content is to be found is indicated in parentheses following the citation or reference in the main body of text or footnotes (Example: [“Family Life,” June 1990, 29], in further text in abbreviated form: [FL, June 1990, 29]).

MARRYING IN THE LORD

Though socially conceptualized as a brotherhood (FL, May 2000, 27; Cf. FL, July 2010, 6; FL, August/September 2000, 7), cosmologically, the Amish church is female: conceived as the bride of Jesus, “the Heavenly Groom” (FL, July 1990, 19) will claim her in the eschatological climax of his second coming, when the “head” will reunite with the “body.” Upon Parousia, Jesus Christ is going to “look for a pure bride” (FL, January 1990, 11); for this reason, the Amish church is to avoid “flirting” and marriage alliance with the impure “world.”⁵ Presupposing the irreconcilable disjunction of social-cosmological identity of the “world” from that of “God’s covenant people” (FL, August/September 2000, 8 and 11; Cf. Enninger 1986, 126), as well as the hierarchical alignment according to relative social-cosmological purity among the Amish communities, the affiliation represents the “primary endogamous unit” in Amish society (Hurd 1985a, 51; Cf. Hurd 1997, 21).⁶

⁵ The glorious church-bride must not have a “spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but [...] should be holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:27). In order to sustain its purity, the Amish church is not to be “unequally yoked together with unbelievers” (2 Corinthians 6:14; Cf. FL, October 2010, 9). Prior to “the marriage of the Lamb”, the church-bride will have “made herself ready. [...] she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints” (Revelation 19:7-8; Cf. FL, April 2010, 20). This and all subsequent biblical citations stem from the King James Version (KJV) (Aitken 1872); second to Martin Luther’s German version, the KJV is customarily found in Amish homes.

⁶ The concept of purity permeates the Amish system of thought as its central *ideologemé* (Cf. Dumont 1977, 35), marking the (social-historical) beginning and the (cosmological) end of the Amish church. From its outset, the saintly people – charged by the God-father to be “separated, pure and untainted” (FL, May 2010, 40) – have kept the church “without blemish” (Ephesians 5:27; Cf. FL, January 1990, 11) by distinguishing “that which is pure from the impure” and “cleansing” it “from such spots” (van Braght 2012[1660], 43). Purity is multifaceted and layered, encompassing the orderliness and cleanness of the “Christian home” (FL, October 2000, 14) and each inhabitant, the perfection and transcendence of the holy church-nation, the proper interpretation and enactment of biblical principles, the genealogical and ideological detachment from the impure, inimical “world,” and the compliance of each Amish member with the congregational *Ordnung*. Differentiation according to relative purity – encompassing social worlds, churches, settlements, districts, doctrines, lineages, and in-

The spotlessness viz. purity of the church is a matter of both spirit and blood; the unadulterated sanguine fluid connects the contemporary Amish herd with the sacrificial blood of the divine apical ancestor and martyred progenitors (FL, August/September 1990, 6; FL, November 2000, 8). As ordained by the Dordrecht Confession of Faith, the Amish are to marry “in the Lord” (van Braght 2012[1660], 42; Cf. Huntington 1988, 374):

In this manner the Apostle Paul also taught and permitted matrimony in the church, and left it free for every one to be married, according to the original order, in the Lord, to whomsoever one may get to consent. By these words, *in the Lord*, there is to be understood, we think, that even as the patriarchs had to marry among their kindred or generation, so the believers of the New Testament have likewise no other liberty than to marry among the chosen generation and spiritual kindred of Christ, namely, such, and no others, who have previously become united with the church as one heart and soul, have received one baptism, and stand in one communion, faith, doctrine and practice, before they may unite with one another by marriage. Such are then joined by God in His church according to the original order; and this is called, marrying in the Lord.

dividual members – introduces a “hierarchical field” (Dumont 1992[1986], 35), the pinnacle of which is the distinction between two social orders: the Amish and the “worldly” one (Cf. Enninger 1986, 126). This primordial purity-differentiation is embodied in the precepts of “separation from worldliness” (FL, January 2000, 3) and nonconformity to the “world,” the two social-cosmological imperatives which condition the “citizenship in heaven” (FL, July 2010, 20). Among the congregations and affiliations, the mutual purity-differentiation is dependent on the *Ordnung* of a *Gemeinde* which is attributed a corresponding position on the “low” and “high” (*Demut* and *Hoffart*) continuum (Cf. FL, July 1980, 10; FL, January 1990, 13). The “low” congregations – implementing strict discipline, deferring mechanization, and presumably epitomizing the principle of humility – are contrasted with the “high” ones, which may be described as comparatively technologically and disciplinary permissive. However, the emphasis on sexual purity among the adolescent populace in the technologically permissive “liberal” Amish churches is oftentimes superior to that in the “conservative” ones (FL, May 2000, 4; FL, March 2000, 26). In the archival *Ordnung*-related discussions, the scribes belonging to “high” churches often emphasize that being “backward materially” does not necessarily correlate to the level of “Christianity” and “scripturality” of a *Gemeinde* (FL, February 1990, 36).

As follows, marriage alliance is temporally subsequent to, and conditioned by, the baptismal vow (initiation) of the conjugal parties (Cf. Huntington 1988, 382). The ideal “affiliation endogamy” (Hurd 1981, 70) – its essence being “the refusal to recognize the possibility of marriage beyond the limits of the human community” (Lévi-Strauss 1969[1949], 46; Cf. Radcliffe-Brown 1950, 68) – and matrimony with “whomsoever one may get to consent” (van Braght 2012[1660], 42) indicate a complex kinship system (Lévi-Strauss 1969[1949]; Cf. Hurd 1985b, 82) confined to a relatively limited pool of potential conjugal partners within the affiliation and, at first sight, exert no exogamous rule pertaining to it.⁷ This, naturally, is not the case. The preeminent category of fellowship which permeates the Amish social system and connects all affiliates as spiritual kin is contrasted with kin “in the flesh” (FL, March 1980, 4). The consanguineal extension of the “flesh”-kin encompasses and ends with first cousins in Ego’s generation and Ego’s parental and descendants’ generation (Cf. Long 2003, 61).⁸ The genealogi-

⁷ According to Maurice Godelier (2011[2004], 158), “combining the word ‘complex’ with the word ‘structure’ is not the best solution” in kinship analysis. “What is complex,” maintains the author, “is the variety of criteria other than kinship that determine the spouse and eventually the marriage strategies these various criteria can inspire in certain social strata or classes.” As we shall see, among the Amish, as a “homogeneous group within which social class has no meaning” (Huntington 1988, 380), the chief criterion governing the marriage strategies is the relative purity of the potential spouse. However, the relative purity of the spouse is inalienable from that of his or her kindred, for it is “groups, and not individuals which carry on exchange [...]; the persons represented in the contracts are moral persons” and what is exchanged are not mere “things of economic value,” but rather ideologies embedded in “courtesies, entertainments, ritual, [...] women [and] children” (Mauss 2011[1954], 3).

⁸ As Radcliffe-Brown notes (1950, 67), “among the Lozi, with a cognatic kinship system, the regulation of marriage takes the form that marriage is forbidden between any two persons who are cognatically related within a certain degree; for this purpose, genealogical relationships are not traced farther back than the fourth generation [...]” Though a similar regulation governs the Amish choice of a spouse, the genealogical memory stretches far beyond the fourth generation and is likewise recorded in numerous genealogies linking the present with apical ancestors on the American soil. As Enninger (1986, 127) notes, “the procreational chain” is “the predominant category in which historical continuity is perceived” and “linear time” is measured and encompassed by cosmological time through the social reproduction of the

cal position of the second cousin, designated as *Swartz* or *Schwartz* cousin, differentiates relationships “in the flesh” from non-kin ones, and while forbidden to marry among the Amish in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania (Hostetler 1993, 146), the “black” cousin is an allowed and “common” conjugal connection in some other Amish communities (Huntington 1988, 374; Cf. Hurd 1985b, 85; FL, February 2010, 35).⁹

Though the “circle of reciprocity” (Hurd 1985a, 54) *ex hypothesi* includes all initiated members in all affiliated Amish communities, the preferred marriage partners are those confined within the congregation, not among them (*Ibid.*; Nagata 1968, 145; Huntington 1988, 374; Hostetler 1993, 145). According to Hurd, the intra-communal mate-exchange corresponds with economic benefits for the marriage partners, particularly the acquisition and inheritance of the farm property. In support of this hypothesis Khoury, Cohen, Diamond, Chase, and McKusick (1987, 457) note a relatively “higher proportion of consanguineous marriages and higher mean kinship coefficients” among the farming Amish. In the overall Old Order Amish population, the mean kinship coefficient “is slightly less than a second cousin marriage” and, add the authors, nearly “all individuals [...] are now inbred, with 98 percent of the marriages after 1960 having kinship coefficient larger than zero” (p. 459). In his analysis of the Pennsylvanian Nebraska Amish, Hurd (1997,

22; Cf. 1985a, 52s) had found that 58% of marriages were between parties of the same district and 85% of the same affiliation and settlement.¹⁰ The closest genealogic connection between spouses was the second cousin; 86.3% of all marriages were between second (47.4%) and third cousin (38.9%), and only 5% of them “between unrelated individuals” (Hurd 1985b, 86 and 1997, 23).

KEEPING TRACK OF *FREUNDSCHAFT*

Being that the district, in all practicality, figures as the preferred unit of matrimonial (and any other) exchange (Cf. Hurd 1985a, 54; Nagata 1968, 148) – a unit in which every Amishman acts as a “borrower and lender” among “like-minded in matters of faith, and [...] way of doing things” (FL, January 1990, 30) – we might hypothesize that the model would recognize genealogic connections closer than *Schwartz* cousin as suitable for marriage. When faced with mate scarcity within the district,¹¹ as Hurd (1997, 24) asserts with the Nebraska Amish of central Pennsylvania, the Amish “could marry closer than second cousin,” but adds that “this would have to be done informally without the benefit of a Pennsylvania marriage license, and the bishops would probably not allow it.” Nagata (1968, 150) reports of the Arthur, IL, Amish that no church proscriptions apply to the cross or parallel first-cousin marriage, but the practice is “growing rarer” due to “a greater awareness [...] of the genetic disadvantages of inbreeding.”

The Amish chronicles indeed mention marriages “within the family” (FL, November 1980, 2) but, regrettably, fail to specify the kin relations

“endogamous church” (Enninger 1988, 236). On a quotidian level, this “common ancestry” is a reason for an impromptu connectedness between the Amish members – “even if they are complete strangers” (FL, July 1980, 8).

⁹ The perception of “Swartz” cousin(s) as kin clearly varies across the communities. Hurd’s Pennsylvanian informants assert that they “feel related to them” (Hurd 1985b, 85) while an Ohio Amish informant lacks such a conceptualization. Among the first, it seems that people who marry a “black” cousin always live “[u]p the valley” (Hurd 1985b, 85), in another settlement (*Ibid.*), and in another time (Cf. Hostetler 1993, 146); among those for whom the “black” cousin constitutes a potential marriage partner, those who marry *closer* live in another period and, indeed, on a different continent. The idiom “Swartz cousin,” maintains Hostetler, derives from a surname of an Amish man who married his “first cousin once removed” back in the 1830s; per Hurd’s informants the culprit was a female by the same name. According to an Ohio informant, the “black” cousin designates “any connection closer related than 2nd cousin,” while the term itself originates from “people by name of Schwartz (from Europe)” who disregarded this prohibition.

¹⁰ Cross and McKusick (1970, 86) report an even higher percentage of intermarriage within the Holmes County Amish community; a total of 86.1% of marriages were between partners of the same district.

¹¹ Hurd (1997, 24) illustrates: “Imagine a (hypothetical) person named Salome, who was a member of the “Christ” affiliation in 1980, looking for a spouse. The affiliation has about 335 people total, men, women, and children with 142 of these people already married. About 150 of the people were children, too young to marry. Only half of the remaining adults would be male. This leaves 12 unmarried males. However, perhaps only six would be of the appropriate age. Finally, Salome would probably be related to half of these closer than second cousin, leaving perhaps only two or three individuals as potential mates. This gives a new meaning to the idea of freedom of choice.”

involved. Marriages among those sharing the same “flesh” are usually set in the past, involving bygone times, before the Amish “realized what harm it causes” (*Ibid.*). Presently, the people are informed of such “harm” by Amish-appointed physicians – in the examined archives through the column “Your Health” – who report on hereditary defects such as dwarfism, albinism, anemia, or hemophilia (Cf. FL, July 1980, 32) occurring among Amish couples with common ancestors “many times over” (FL, July 1980, 8; Cf. Nagata 1968, 145) and which can be alleviated by keeping track of *Freundschaft*.¹²

The physicians advise the Amish “to shy away from second cousin marriages” and perform “genetic testing” prior to matrimony; simultaneously, they report that, even when cognizant of the “definite risk” of facing recessive “genetic disorder” in their offspring, the Amish, for whom such defects are a matter of God’s providence (Cf. Huntington 1956, 862), proceed with marriage nonetheless (FL, February 2010, 35). Congregations which continuously reproduce the same *Freundschaft* are urged to introduce “new bloodlines” and establish the community, not the family, as the primary exogamous unit (Cf. FL, June 1980, 10). Abiding to the biosocial paradigm and the divergent state civil laws affecting first-cousin matrimony, the Amish are therefore to engage in “[s]pouse-hunting” (Hurd 1997, 24) outside their home congregation. However, even when opting to do so, marriage alliance is again constituted among “communities with close social and genealogical ties” (Cross and McKusick 1970, 100; Huntington 1988, 378). We see, then, that the principle of “affiliation endogamy” (Hurd 1981, 70) *de facto* translates as “community endogamy,” though the cluster of affiliated congregations arguably serves as perimeter and reservoir of potential mates.

In disparate cases when the permeability of this endogamous boundary is tested, the model supports marrying up the relative purity axis (Cf. Fn.7). As Hostetler (1993, 146) reports, it is “always permissible to marry into a more orthodox

affiliation,” providing “the more liberal party joins the conservative group.”¹³ Given that residence is predominately patrivirilocal (Cf. Hurd 1985a and 1985b), the incoming party is primarily the female (Cf. Hurd 1985b, 89; Cross and McKusick 1970, 86). To be incorporated as a life-giver in the social-biological reproduction system, the female is hence to adopt a more conservative ideology. Assuming this qualitative leap is made, the incoming female is converted into kin: through marital conjugation and the hierarchical encompassment by the “purer” spouse, she is considered a relation “in the flesh” (FL, March 1980, 4) and is fused in fellowship with the receiving community.

If such conjugal mergers, however rare (Cf. FL, July 1980, 20) and “discouraged” (Huntington 1988, 374), transform the “less-pure” Amish party into “as-pure,” marriage alliance with an “English” outsider achieves precisely the opposite. An epitome of cosmological defilement, such conjugation transforms the Amish person into a “non-Amish” one (*Ibid.*) and s/he is permanently disjoined from the sacred herd.¹⁴ The “very sinful” exogamous marriage (FL, August/September 1990, 20) represents a perpetual danger for the “holy nation”; especially at risk are the young unmarried Amish females engaged in market exchange of goods or labor – usually related to food production and distribution – in or with the impure “worldly” domain (Cf. FL, August/September 1990, 20; FL, June 2000, 15; Cf. FL, July 2000, 12). To prevent “slipping” into the “fire” of exogamy (FL, August/September 1990, 20s) and church apostasy, the female is “safeguard[ed]” by “a long, loosely-fitting dress and cape, and a large cap, covering most of her [...] hair,” thus sparing “men lustful thoughts” (FL, August/September 1990, 21). This covering of humility, along with reserved, modest, and

¹² “[...] if God sees fit to let this world stand much longer, there will be quite a number of bleeders among the Amish simply because we believe in large families. [...] The question concerning intermarriage must be discussed.” The scribe adds that “Holmes County, Ohio probably has more hemophiliacs than any other Amish community” (FL, March 1990, 15s).

¹³ “In some groups,” writes Hurd (1981, 75), “marriage into another Amish church, especially a more liberal [one], means that the whole church membership socially shuns the individual for life.” Other congregations, such as Nebraska Amish, do not shun the members who breach the affiliation margin, even if a liberal church is joined, but only those members who “have left the Amish faith altogether.”

¹⁴ The formative period of the Amish society, notwithstanding Amman’s social paradigm, had included exogamous marriage alliance; this was, however, controlled and suppressed by the secular government through means of deportation (Nolt 2003, 59) which had likely accelerated the affirmation of the endogamous rule.

God-fearing behavior, summons the “angel of the Lord” which protects the “pure, white rose in full bloom” (*Ibid.*) so that it glorifies “The Maker of Roses” (FL, June 2010, 7).

KINSHIP ORGANIZATION AND TERMINOLOGY

The kinship system is characterized by bilateral descent, insoluble monogamous marriage with no lateral marriage preference (Cf. Hurd 1985b, 82 and 88), preferred marriages with respect to relative purity of the social group providing the affinal candidate (Huntington 1988, 374), levirate (Cf. Hurd 1985b, 85), patrivirilocal residence (Cf. Hurd 1985a, 55), patrilineal inheritance of the family name, patrilineal ultimogeniture (Mook and Hostetler 1957, 27), stem family structure (Cf. Parkin 1997, 28), and Eskimo-type kinship nomenclature (Cf. Figure 1). The Amish kinship system, complementary to that of the broader American society, “combines a family exogamy, which is rigid for the first degree but flexible for the second or third degrees onwards” (Lévi-Strauss 1969[1949], 46; Cf. Hurd 1985b, 82).

Despite the similarities with the “American” kinship system as summarized by Parsons (1943) and Schneider and Homans (1955) – such as bilateral descent, nuclear family as the basic kin group, and monogamous marriage – Amish kinship is intimately connected to institutions such as the “occupational system, [...] economics and technology,” much in contrast to its “narrow” range in the mainstream American society (Schneider and Homans 1955, 1194; Schneider 1968, vii). Furthermore, the extended family structure in Amish society, most notably its vertical extension (Cf. Parkin 1997, 29), sharply contrasts the “home segregated” and “economically independent” American conjugal family for which the joint transgenerational cohabitation represents an undesired “expression of dependency” (Parsons 1943, 27 and 37; Cumming and Schneider 1961, 499). Whereas the American individual and the conjugal family have “a duty to break away” and “the right to independence” (Parsons 1943, 37; Cf. Schneider and Homans 1955, 1204), the Amish analogs are envired by and contingent upon the patrilineal kindred. The nuclear family, consisting of a married couple (E) and their offspring (E-1), is structurally embedded into the natal family of

the husband; male Ego’s parents (E+1) and, ideally, grandparents (E+2) will preferably live on the same property or proximate to the conjugal family (Cf. FL, November 1990, 40). As Long (2003, 61) notes, “fictive kinship bonds commonly occur” among the Amish. A person with neither consanguineal nor affinal ties to the members of a family unit may be incorporated “as *Freundschaft*” on grounds of one’s enduring labor assistance to the family and obtain the privilege of participating in the rituals of the fictive kin (FL, November 1990, 30s).¹⁵

The kinship terminology reveals conspicuous features of the Eskimo type classification, and I shall follow Parsons’ (1943) and Schneider and Homans’ (1955) elaboration in providing its brief outline. We note the absence of distinctive nomenclature pertaining to the paternal and maternal side of the family, the apparent differentiation between F and FB, M and MZ, the lack of collateral distinction between parents’ siblings, the joint classification of cross and parallel cousins and their differentiation from Ego’s siblings, as well as the terminological distinction between Ego’s children and the children of Ego’s siblings (Cf. Parsons 1943, 25; Schneider and Homans 1955, 1194). No differentiation is made between Ego’s younger or older siblings, who are grouped together and distinguished only according to sex. Sibling’s spouse and offspring are, as Parsons puts it, “terminologically assimilated to sibling status” (*Id.* 26) through the addition *durch Ehe*, with no collateral distinction and irrespective of Ego’s sex.

The terms of address presented in the archival material reveal a completely relational system, confirming Huntington’s assessment that Amish individuals are primarily identified with respect to their “kinship groups” (Huntington 1988, 377) and respective kin type. Conjugal parties are usu-

¹⁵ When the extent of labor tasks exceeds the short-term voluntary assistance and availability of fellow members, the Amish resort to hired help (Cf. FL, November 1990, 28-31). An adolescent boy is hired out as manpower by his family to work on a co-member’s property, thus contributing to the family income (FL, June 1990, 7). His work assignments (for which he receives a fee amounting to some \$10 per day, in FL, November 1990, 30), include cornhusking, woodcutting, repairing, or animal care. *Mutatis mutandis*, the duties of an adolescent female “sent out” as a “hired girl” include clothes-washing, dishwashing, cleaning, or babysitting (Cf. FL, November 2010, 12; FL, August/September 1980, 17).

FIGURE 1: KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

KIN TYPE		KIN TERM		GEN.
FFF, MFF FMM, MMM	} ggP	<i>Grosz Daudy/Doddy</i> <i>Grosz Mommy</i>	} <i>Grosz Doddys/</i> <i>Grosz Mommy and Daudy</i>	+3
FF, MF FM, MM	} gP	<i>Daudy/Doddy</i> <i>Mommy</i>	} <i>Doddys/</i> <i>Mommy and Daudy</i>	+2
F M	} P	<i>Dät</i> <i>Maem/Maemm</i>	} <i>Eldera</i>	+1
SpF SpM		<i>Schwieger Vater</i> <i>Schwieger Mutter</i>	} <i>Schwieger Eldera/</i> <i>Schwieger Mutter and Vater</i>	
FZ, MZ FBW, MBW		<i>Aunt</i> <i>Aunt durch Ehe</i>		
FB, MB FZH, MZH		<i>Uncle</i> <i>Uncle durch Ehe</i>		
e/y(Z)	} Sb	<i>elder/eldsta - jungste/kleine</i> <i>Schuester/Schwester</i>	} <i>Guishtert/Kshwistert</i>	0
e/y(B)		<i>elder/eldsta - jungster/kleiner</i> <i>Brüder/Bruder</i>		
FZS, FZD, FBS, FBD, MZS, MZD, MBS, MBD	} C	<i>Cousin</i>	} <i>Cousins</i>	
W		<i>Frau</i>		0
H		<i>Mann</i>		
WZ, WBW HZ, HBW		<i>Schwieger Schwester</i>		
WB, WZH HB, HZH		<i>Schwieger Brüder</i>		
S D	} Ch	<i>Sohn</i> <i>Maydel</i>	} <i>Kind(er)</i>	-1
BS, ZS WZS, WBS		<i>Nephew</i> <i>Nephew durch Ehe</i>	} <i>Nephews</i> <i>Nieces</i>	-1
BD, ZS WZD, WBD		<i>Niece</i> <i>Niece durch Ehe</i>		
ChS, ChD		<i>Kins Kind</i>		-2
gChS, gChD		<i>Grosz Kins Kind</i>		-3

ally addressed as an indivisible set and, being that the male hierarchically encompasses the female, the set is structurally equated with the male Ego.¹⁶ In the generation of Ego's grandparents (E+2), the male and female are referred to as "Grandpas" (FL, June 2000, 16) and the maternal and paternal set are mutually distinguished by adjoining the family name ("grandpa Troyers," in FL, October 1980, 3). More frequently they are designated by the collective term "Daudies" or "Doddies" (FL, February 1990, 5; FL, March 1990, 22), the grandmother diminutively referred to as "Mommy" and grandfather as "Doddy" (FL, March 1990, 22; FL, December 1990, 31) by their children, children's spouses, and grandchildren, irrespective of sex. The hierarchical conjugal encompassment by the male extends to all subsequent members of the nuclear family: envired by the husband-father, they are cumulatively designated by the plural form of the family unit head's given name ("Bens," in FL, March 1990, 19; "Marlins," in FL, March 2000, 14; "Hermans," in FL, June 1990, 15) or by the possessive form, specifying the Ego's relationship to the principal male ("Uncle John's," in FL, October 1990, 20). When referring to one party of the conjugal set, the wife is often designated by her husband's given name and vice versa: "Sam-Susie" (FL, May 2010, 19) indicates "Susie, the

wife of Sam"; "Susie Sam" referring to "Sam, the husband of Susie" (Cf. Huntington 1988, 377).

The family name is transmitted patrilineally. As Huntington (1988, 377) reports, in "the central Ohio Amish settlement 12 [family] names account for 85% of the families"; Cross (1976, 19) notes eight prevalent surnames among the Lancaster Amish, from a total of twenty family names pertaining to the Amish of that region (Smith 1968, 105). Perpetuating the biblical nomenclature – per Mook's (1968, 20) estimation in "90 to 95 per cent" of the cases – the most frequent given names are John, Amos, Jacob, David, and Samuel for males, and Mary, Sarah, Annie, Katie, or Rebecca for females (Smith 1968, 107). The names of apical ancestors, Menno (Menno Simons) or Ammon (Jacob Amman) are likewise recurrent (*Ibid.*). Apart from receiving the paternal surname, a mother's maiden name is incorporated as a child's middle name in some communities (Smith 1968, 108; Huntington 1988, 377); in addition to this inconsistent bilaterally oriented nomenclature, Smith notes the custom of giving the firstborn son the first and middle names of the paternal grandfather.¹⁷ As given names and surnames are often insufficient to clearly distinguish the Amish members, cognomina serve as an instrument of further identification (Cf. Enninger 1985); aside from first name abbreviations and matronymic/patronymic bynames (Mook 1968, 21), these derive from a prominent feature of one's character, physique, residence, occupation, or biography (Cf. Smith 1968, 109s; Mook 1968, 20s; Hostetler 1993, 246).¹⁸

"Preferential mating on a kinship basis," writes Parsons in his analysis of the "American kinship system" (1943, 26), "is completely without struc-

¹⁶ Both in the family unit and the community, the males are hierarchically superordinate to the females as per "God's order of headship" (FL, April 2000, 34). Preceding the female counterpart chronologically and ontologically (Genesis 2:7,18), the husband-father as "the lord of the house" is "a free man"; the wife-mother a "helper – only a rib of [his] side" (FL, July 1990, 19; Cf. Dumont 1980[1966], 239s). Both sexes attain a higher social rank upon fulfilling their reproductive assignment; thus, the relative social-cosmological status of the husband or wife is superior to that of an unmarried man or woman, and the status of the husband-father viz. wife-mother superior to husband or wife *per se*. The archives provide a general model of "God's order of creation" (FL, March 2010, 34), manifesting the hierarchical encompassment of each category by its precedent: God → church → husband-father → wife-mother → child (FL, February 1980, 3). Because the husband-father represents the "prototype of 'mankind'," he is the "whole" to which the female "part" is assigned (Dumont 1980[1966], 240) as the identical-*cum*-distinct element of the "hierarchical unit" (Barraud 2015, 234). Hierarchy, it must be reiterated, does not imply "a chain of beings of decreasing dignity [...]" but a relation that can succinctly be called "the encompassing of the contrary" (Dumont 1980[1966], 239).

¹⁷ Mook (1968, 20) reports another variation: "In some Amish communities, as for example in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, the practice is to use the first letter of the mother's last name as the middle initial for all of her children, while in other communities, for example in eastern Ohio and in Crawford and Mercer Counties, Pennsylvania, the middle initial is the first letter of the father's first name."

¹⁸ "A rural mailman in the Amish country of southeastern Pennsylvania has been described as 'holding one of the most frustrating jobs in the United States postal system,'" writes Smith (1968, 105), for "his rural delivery route serves 437 persons who have the surname Stoltzfus". In such circumstances, anthroponomastic ingenuity is imperative (Cf. Enninger 1985).

tural significance, and every marriage in founding a new conjugal family brings together (in the type case) two completely unrelated kinship groups which are articulated on a kinship basis *only* in this one particular marriage.” Bearing in mind the aforementioned community endogamy, it is apparent that such a model is unattainable in Amish society where all members are “inextricably intertwined” (Smith 1968, 105) by a positive rule of maintaining “the purity of the original gene pool” (Cross 1976, 19). If exogamy “is part of the machinery for establishing and maintaining a wide-range kinship system,” as Radcliffe-Brown (1950, 67s) maintains, then the community endogamy achieves the inverse, its goal being to “circumscribe the range of relationships.” The sacrosanct genus is reproduced by means of consanguineal continuity (Cf. Cross 1976, 19) and the notion of a constricted and undiluted genealogy perpetuates the Amish social identity. The cosmologically induced high procreation rate – the mean number of pregnancies, reports Greksa (2002, 195) in his study of the Geauga Amish settlement in Ohio, being 7.7 (Cf. Cross and McKusick 1970, 91; Cooksey and Donnermeyer 2013, 114s) – is coterminous with maximizing the number of progeny as an offering to the divinity and the multiplication of God’s chosen people (Cf. Genesis 1:28).¹⁹ Not all children will remain in the Amish faith and a “farmer will have crop failure once in a while” – but there is “always another chance for a better crop the next year” (FL, February 1980, 18). Such “crops” may indeed be bountiful, as one example in the chronicles illustrates: when the eighty-five-year-old “Mrs. Peter L. (Sarah Zook) Schwartz died on December 6, 1988 at Seymour, Missouri, she left behind a total of 685 living descendants: 13 children, 175 grandchildren, 477 great-grandchildren, and 20 great-great-grandchildren” (FL, June 1990, 9). The whole system, as we can see, is impregnated with the social reproduction of saints. In this, the first step is to find a mate.

¹⁹ Only 3% of married couples in the studied population were childless, a result which, given the proscriptions on birth control, Greksa (2002, 198) attributes to “primary sterility.” Cooksey and Donnermeyer’s (2013, 113) study of the Iowa Amish shows that 75% of Amish females procreate in the first postmarital year. Bearing ten or more children is not uncommon for a reproductively healthy Amish female (Cf. FL, August/September 2010, 16; FL, February 2010, 12; FL, December 2010, 14).

THE CHRISTIAN COURTSHIP AND THE DOCTRINE OF PURITY

Around the age of sixteen the Amish person enters the proverbial *rumspringa* (Lit. “jumping around”) period. During this “most individualistic” and “most dangerous” (Huntington 1988, 386) interval in the life of an Amish, the adolescent youth – apart from indulging in probation of the “worldly” ways and settings²⁰ – are to decide whether to join the Amish church, and, if so, they will look for a marriage partner (*Id.* 387).²¹ Church initiation and marital conjugation are, in a structurally normal case, inextricably coupled and climax in reproductive productivity. Thus, the growth of the church is chiefly related to “number of weddings, not number of baptisms” (*Id.* 376). Though potential mates encounter each other during the various communal social events and devotional meetings, a formal platform supporting the search for a spouse is the Sunday evening singing meeting (FL, October 1990, 21; FL, December 2010, 29; FL, August/September 2000, 33). Attended by the “youngies” from several districts, the customary site of youth group gatherings is the homestead of the Amish family hosting the bi-weekly church service (Hostetler 1993, 146; Cf. FL, December 2010, 29s).

In some Amish communities and among some affiliations, the youth groups are subject to adult supervision. Supported by the parochial ministry, acting as an advisory board for the parental committee, the parents-custodians ensure that the disciplinary guidelines based on the local church *Ordnung* are observed by the young (FL,

²⁰ Examples include consorting with modern technology (FL, June 2010, 2), wearing “English” clothes, or consuming tobacco and alcohol (FL, April 1980, 25). The young Amish males might purchase and drive an automobile or disparately test the calm patience of the initiated members by way of petty vandalism on their property – spilling the cattle feed, damaging the farm equipment (FL, October 2010, 4; FL, July 2010, 17), buggies (FL, November 1990, 9), or items in the youth group hosting home (FL, May 2000, 28). Not yet members of the church, the youth demonstratively invert the learned principles of orderliness and obedience which the parents and fellow members later conjoin to reestablish (*Ibid.*).

²¹ If, however, the young Amish person allies with “English” ways and “alien peer group,” suggests Huntington (1988, 387), he or she “will probably leave the Amish [...], never to return” (Cf. Hostetler 1993, 260).

December 2010, 29; Cf. FL, May 2000, 28). The itinerary of many superintended youth group meetings consists of spending Sunday afternoons in fellowship-emphasizing sporting activities such as volleyball or croquet or engaging in “whole-some discussion[s]” (FL, December 2010, 30). The evening singing typically begins around 7 PM and lasts an hour; thereafter, the young gather around the table and converse during food consummation (FL, December 2010, 29; FL, October 2010, 4). The after-singing visiting is to end shortly and, subsequent to a joint prayer, the youth prepare to depart for their respective homes (FL, December 2010, 30). In communities implementing high courtship standards, the adolescent females are proscribed from “being outside until they are ready to leave for home” (FL, December 2010, 29). The influence of parental authority in assuring premarital sexual purity in supervised youth groups is criticized by some Amish as contrary to the proper hierarchy and conflicting with God’s providence (FL, December 2010, 29 and 31).²²

In communities with large adolescent populace, there exist numerous youth groups conforming to different “dress and moral standards” (FL, March 2000, 26; FL, May 2000, 6). Analogous to the scaling of districts according to relative purity, these likewise assume a corresponding place on the “conservative-liberal,” “low-high,” and “slow-fast” continuum (Cf. Gallagher 1981, 48). Thus, a youth group is designated as “fast” (FL, May 2000, 6) inasmuch the practices of the participating young approximate “worldly” behavior.²³

²² The Lancaster County Sunday evening supper gathering is usually unattended by parents (FL, May 2000, 28). To preserve the holiness of the Lord’s day, the youth group singings may alternatively be organized on Saturday evenings, after which the “dating couples” continue their courting sessions (FL, December 2010, 30s). Archives also report of Saturday night outdoor “sleepouts” occurring in some youth groups, which extend up to Sunday evening. The experience of “smoking, music and [...] strong drink” accompanying such nocturnal socializing, as some correspondents argue, helps them to become “better Christians once they repent” (FL, October 2010, 33).

²³ In “liberal” youth groups, one encounters the “evils of the flesh” such as “drinking and smoking, vulgar language and low courtship standards” (FL, March 2000, 26s). While not uncommon among the Old Orders, rowdy youth groups are comparatively uncommon among the technologically permissive Amish groups (Cf. FL, March 2000, 26). The latter, insisting on abstinence and “high courtship standards,” are

With regards to conjugality, the opposite-sex affinal candidates are preferably derived from a group with reciprocal moral standards (FL, March 2000, 28). Although the decision on joining a “fast” or a “slow” group ultimately rests with the “youngie” (FL, May 2000, 6), the parents will encourage marriage alliance between two families of similar purity rank (Huntington 1988, 374) and “a mutual desire to live according to God’s will and follow the standards of the church the way [their] parents and grandparents have lived them” (FL, March 2000, 28).

The role of the unmarried female in the mate-finding process is a passive one. She is careful to permanently display an image of purity and chastity and is therefore primarily a recipient of male interest. As migration of a spouseless female to other communities for mate-finding purposes is anathema – for “no girl wants to be accused of looking for a husband!” (FL, December 2000, 32) – the predicament is somewhat circumvented by sending her “out” to assume a teaching post or work as a hired help. Due to the uneven ratio of unmarried males and females in some communities, finding a suitable mate for females of high courting age – that is, “above the age of twenty” (*Ibid.*) – is a competitive endeavor, notwithstanding its passive manifestation. The courting male might declare his interest for “companionship” either verbally or in writing (FL, March 2000, 11); the female typically discusses the matter with the same-sex kin (M, Z, BW in FL, May 2000, 20; Cf. FL, June 2000, 16)²⁴ and communicates her acceptance of the offer to the suitor. However strong the bonds of trust and confidence among the same-sex siblings, close friends, and God may be (Cf. FL, December 2010, 14; FL, October 1980, 33), parents – particularly the father – surpass them all in evaluating and authorizing the courting partner, steering the progeny “into preferred marriages” (Huntington 1988, 374; Cf. FL, May 2000, 20).

In many churches, both sexes refer to the courting partner as a “special friend” (FL, April 1990, 15; FL, December 2000, 32) and to the

often accused of having a “holier than thou” attitude by the *Alt Amisch* who allow the young a period of “sewing wild oats” (Cf. FL, August/September 2000, 11; FL, July 2010, 17).

²⁴ In some churches, she would also seek approval from the parental set (Cf. FL, October 1980, 8).

courting session, similar to any social gathering, as “visiting.” The purity of the courtship phase communicates intimately with the purity of the congregation as a whole and instructions concerning this liminal period might be included in the congregational *Ordnung* (Cf. FL, October 1980, 7s). A church with “high” courtship standards administers proscriptions to the coming of age period and the courtship phase according to the “Scriptural” model (FL, October 1980, 7). Among these, the most vital concerns the proper way to “keep company” so that the courting parties should not regret any sinful behavior (*Ibid.*) pertaining to the “works of the flesh” (Galatians 5:19). Those engaged in “[a]dultery, fornication, uncleanness [and] lasciviousness [...] shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:19,21) so the courting couple, “as becometh saints” (Ephesians 5:3), is to refrain from frequent and, above all, inappropriate visiting.

Strict adherence to the doctrine of purity (FL, October 1980, 8) has severely reduced the traditional practice of bundling or “bed courtship” (Hostetler 1993, 375; Stoltzfus 1994, 88) among the Amish. Originating in Europe (Hostetler 1993, 148; Stiles 1871, 13ss) and transplanted to the United States in the 17th and 18th centuries by “the Welsh, the English, the Dutch [and] Germans” (Umble 1953), the near-extinct custom presently perseveres in Swartzentruber and some Andy Weaver churches (Cf. Kraybill, Johnson-Weiner and Nolt 2013, 222s). This courtship ritual involves a fully clothed courting couple sharing a bed, often prevented from physical contact by a wooden board; among the Amish, as Umble (1953) suggests, only feet are meant to be disclosed.²⁵ The archetypal biblical reference on bundling pertains to the Old Testament Book of Ruth (Ruth 3: 1-14; Cf. Aurand 1938, 14): the latter lies

with her “near kinsman” Boaz with the intention of sexual intercourse connoted in the gesture of revealing his feet [sic!], but, as befit the honorable protagonists, the night passes with no further advancements and she rises up “before one could know another” (Ruth 3:9,14). Another variation of this practice is the “rocking chair courtship” (FL, October 1980, 8). Among the Amish, courting is uxorilocal: the courting sessions take place at female’s parental house and usually in the female’s sleeping quarters (Kraybill *et al.* 2013, 223). Alternatively – most notably if it involves “chair courtship” – the visiting takes place in the living or kitchen area during the late hours of the weekend. In such case, the female might sit on the courting male’s lap, again, connoting (the absent) sexual intimacy. Upon the public announcement of courtship to the community at large – referred to as being “published” (Cf. FL, April 1990, 29) – which usually predates the marriage ceremony some two to four weeks (Hostetler 1993, 192), the courting male begins formal visiting with the female on Sunday afternoons (FL, March 2000, 14). The length of the courtship period is rather fluid but on average a year passes before contemplations of matrimony arise (FL, March 1990, 28). The young unmarried female had begun to fill her “hope chest” – abundant with quilted linen produced by her mother – well before the courting phase was initiated (FL, November 2000, 13).

Archival data suggest that the Amish courtship practices are increasingly influenced by the broader American mores, resulting in “too much courtship before marriage, and not nearly enough after [it]” (FL, October 1980, 8). Parental authority concerning affinal unions is likewise affected by the individualistic paradigm (*Ibid.*): it aims to transform the traditional conceptualization of marriage as an alliance between families (Cf. FL, March 2000, 28) into that between two “perfect partner[s]” (FL, May 2000, 21) inspired by “shallow romantic feelings.” The latter, however, are no viable reason for matrimony (FL, March 2000, 13; Cf. FL, October 2000, 29). A countermeasure to these inimical “worldly” ideas is the reinforcement of teachings on sexual purity and the necessity of “council, knowledge and approval of both sets of parents” regarding the affinal candidate (FL, October 1980, 8). As per biblical model, each set of “loving parents,” mindful of both personal inclinations and the social-cosmological benefit

²⁵ Grose (1796) argues that the custom of a “man and woman sleeping in the same bed, he with his small clothes, and she with her petticoats on” was “an expedient practised in America on a scarcity of beds, where, on such occasion, husbands and parents frequently permitted travelers to bundle with their wives and daughters.” Hostetler (1993, 148) advances a similar argument, attributing the custom among the Amish to the inconvenient setting of “large, unheated houses.” Kraybill *et al.* (2013, 222) maintain that the practice which was prevalent among the Amish up to the mid-20th century and had spurred the New Order Amish movement advocating high courtship standards is now found “in fewer than 10 percent of Amish groups.”

of the child, are to assume the “final authority and responsibility” for a marriage alliance (FL, October 1980, 8). Courting should imminently precede one’s voluntary decision of baptism and be embedded in a process of prayer and introspection (FL, May 2000, 7). Parents are to actively participate in maintaining the purity of thought and action of their offspring during the “Christian courtship” period (FL, May 2000, 7); by restricting the mutual accessibility of the courting parties, the duration of nighttime visiting, and by “burning a light” in the courtship setting (FL, April 1990, 15; FL, October 1980, 8), the spirit of chastity and modesty is assured.²⁶

The “Christian marriage” following the “Christian courtship” is an insoluble and laborious sacrificial institution (FL, October 1980, 8) mirroring the conjugal relationship between Christ and the church (Cf. Huntington 1956, 858). As the epicenter of the hierarchical expiatory servitude to God (FL, May 2000, 7), to which courtship is assigned as *probatio*, seeking a “perfect partner” (FL, May 2000, 21) directly contravenes the primordial sacrificial axiom. The Amish marry not for their “own pleasure” (FL, August/September 1990, 21) but for atonement, subjugating one’s life in service to one’s spouse (Cf. FL, January 1990, 15). This, argue the scribes, is the opposite of the “English” standard: “[i]f we judge the merits of a dating system by the strength of marriage it produces there is perhaps no culture in history with such a dismal record as the American way” (FL, October 1980, 8).

THE WEDDING CHURCH

While matrimony in late teen years is disapproved of (FL, August/September 1990, 4), that in early twenties is deemed acceptable, and it is desirable that the male spouse exceeds the female in relative age (Cf. FL, March 2000, 11). After the courting couple had been “published” during a

preaching service, the prospective husband immediately moves into the bridal home and “remains [there] until the wedding day,” reports Hostetler (1993, 194) in his analysis of the wedding customs among the Amish in central Pennsylvania. In other Amish communities this prenuptial cohabitation is either of shorter time span – encompassing the week prior to the marriage ritual – or absent (Cf. Huntington 1956, 871). The wedding ceremony and celebration follow the uxorilocal configuration of the courting phase (*Ibid.*; Aurand 1938, 21) and are attended by several hundred co-members, friends, and kin from different communities (Cf. FL, January 2000, 2).²⁷ The “wedding church” (FL, December 1990, 13) resembles the regular biweekly Sunday church gathering, but typically takes place on a weekday. The first matrimony is thus formally differentiated from the second one of widowed members; the second marriage ritual lacks comparable “elaborate preparations” and is incorporated at the end of the regular Sunday service (Hostetler 1993, 193; Cf. Huntington 1956, 867).

The wedding church formally begins around 9 AM with the opening hymn “Wohlauf, Wohlauf, du Gottes G’mein” (FL, December 1990, 13; Cf. FL, December 2000, 11; Cf. Hostetler 1993, 195).²⁸ The service further involves a *Zeugnis* – a moral testimony *sui generis* provided by the bridegroom’s father, bride’s father and maternal grandfather (in FL, December 1990, 13): the future affines are reminded of their obedience to God and church and admonished not to sow in darkness what later must be reaped “in the light before all men.” Following the sermon, the couple formally exchange marital vows before the com-

²⁶ Believing that “today’s seeds are tomorrow’s flowers”, the reinforcement of proper behavioral patterns sustaining sexual purity commences in early childhood (FL, February 2010: 12). Female children are instructed to cover their bodies well below the knee level and to avoid excessive physical contact (“tussling”) or affectionate conduct (“hugging”) with their male siblings and cousins; in this way, they are preserved as “unblemished” as the church is (*Ibid.*; Cf. FL, February 2000: 29).

²⁷ A detailed description of Amish wedding customs is given in Huntington (1956, 856-902). Cf. Hostetler (1993, 192-200) and Stoltzfus (1994, 34-38).

²⁸ This is the 97th hymn of the “Ausbund” – the Amish hymnbook authored by the Anabaptists imprisoned in Passau, Bavaria from 1535 (Cf. Hostetler 1993, 228). The first of its eleven stanzas reads: “Wohlauf, Wohlauf, du Gottes G’mein, / Heilig und rein, / In diesen letzten Zeiten, / Die du ein’r Mann erwählet bist, / Heißt Jesus Christ, / Thu dich ihm zubereiten. / Leg an dein Zier, dann er kommt schier, / Darum bereit das Hochzeit-Kleid, / Dann er wird schon, die Hochzeit hon, / Dich ewig nicht mehr von ihm lohn” (Cf. Ausbund, 1970, 508). Hymns “So will ich’s aber heben an” (FL, December 2000, 10) and “Loblied” (FL, May 2010, 18; Cf. Hostetler 1993, 195) are likewise sung during the wedding church.

munity and the bishop, who, after a reference to the Book of Tobit, proclaims them joined in marriage (Cf. Tobit 7:12-14; Beiler 2010[1860], 7s). Around noon, the closing hymn “Gelobt sei Gott im höchsten Thron” marks the ending of the marriage service (FL, December 1990, 13; FL, December 2000, 10).

The subsequent wedding dinner, albeit focused on the newly married couple, is principally directed towards the “young folks” (FL, December 1990, 13) who are hereby given the opportunity to socialize and contemplate their own marriage. As Huntington reports, during the wedding celebration the young are permitted to “eat at the first serving, unlike church services and funerals where they are served last” (Huntington 1956, 897). They will typically form a large singing group, animating the festivity until the midnight hours (*Id.* 899). Wedding gifts commonly include kitchenware (FL, October 1990, 23; FL, August/September 2010, 15) and work or buggy equipment for the married female and male respectively (Huntington 1956, 896; Hostetler 1993, 199). The couple will spend their first wedding night at the bride’s parental homestead (Huntington 1956, 900) and settle in their new residence after that: the bridegroom’s father had either obtained a new or had adapted “a vacant dwelling” on his own property (Hostetler 1993, 192; FL, December 1990, 13).²⁹

The years of “jumping around” have herewith reached their ceremonial finis and the newlyweds manifest this metamorphosis with explicit indicia: the Amish husband grows a hitherto absent beard; in some churches, the wife now wears a white head cover instead of black (Huntington 1956, 901).³⁰ Such insignia communicate the transposition of social identity; herein marriage surpasses baptism, for the initiatory ritual does not expound comparable visual alternations. Yet, to be fully incorporated into the ancestral domain, the couple is to swiftly procreate. The eyes of the community are on the female, “watching her for any sign that

she might be pregnant” (Huntington 1956, 901). Within the next months, this will be the case (Cf. Cooksey and Donnermeyer 2013, 113): transformed into a husband-father and a wife-mother, they will have finally reached “full membership” in the sacred community (Huntington 1956, 901).

PATTERNS OF RESIDENCE AND INHERITANCE

“In any system that approximates to the cognatic type,” writes Radcliffe-Brown (1950, 81),

there is a tendency to treat the father’s brother and the mother’s brother as relatives of the same kind, and similarly with father’s sister and mother’s sister; but the assimilation may be less complete where there is some recognition, even though it be slight, of unilineal relationships.

Such “slight” unilineal bias is encountered and materialized among the Amish through the residence and inheritance system, the common characteristics of which are patrivirilocality and patrilineal ultimogeniture (Mook and Hostetler 1957, 27; Hostetler 1993, 129 and 192) with disparate occurrence of partible inheritance.

Land acquisition and succession follows the patrilocal pattern; married sons will ideally settle either on (FL, August/September 2010, 15), or proximate to, their father’s property, occupying conglomerated parcels of land in relative continuum (FL, April 1980, 15). Patrilineal ultimogeniture is the ideal model of the Amish land inheritance system, presupposing a sequential appropriation of distinct properties by male descendants who marry according to seniority. Land insufficiency in populous communities and the occupational shift to non-agrarian industries (Cf. Hostetler 1993, 363) exert a considerable influence on the residential configuration. Until the married male is able to acquire a property of his own – and in case of postremogeniture – multiple family units share the home place; the general rule being that the family unit of the male who farms the land occupies the primary housing structure (*Ibid.*; FL, February 2000, 17). Other parties are accommodated in the vernacular subordinate housing unit, the *dawdyhouse* (FL, January 2000, 14); “doddyhouse” (FL, January 1990, 24); and “dahdy” house (FL, October 1980, 35), which is built as an addition to the main house, an exten-

²⁹ In Lancaster County, the practice of “infair” – in which the parents of the groom receive the parents of the bride along with “all their married and unmarried children” some weeks after the wedding – “formally recognizes the relationships formed between two new kinship systems” (Hostetler 1993, 200).

³⁰ The chronicles inform us that the Lancaster County Amish males wore beards even prior to marriage, a custom which is now extinct (FL, June 1980, 8).

sion of the “shop” (FL, November 1990, 39) or as a separate architectural component on the property (FL, January 1990, 24). Additional auxiliary dwellings may have to be built to house an adult unmarried sister, a widowed mother, or both (FL, February 2000, 17). Such composite architecture gives the Amish domicile its characteristic appearance: the primary and largest housing structure is surrounded by smaller adjacent buildings which participate on the epicenter of patrilineal reproduction. Inasmuch, the system gravitates towards the preservation and continuation of the imperiled agricultural *modus vivendi*, the cosmological imperative of land husbandry may surpass the kinship-oriented land inheritance constellation. Thus, the Amishman may sell his farm although there are sons to inherit it, motivated by financial difficulties or the occupational shift among his descendants, to a farming co-member. However, his family unit retains the possibility of occupying the *dawdyhouse* while the new farming custodian inhabits the main house (Cf. FL, July 1980, 15).

Though uxorilocal residence infrequently occurs (Cf. FL, May 1980, 25), the archival data confirm the predominance of patrivirilocality both for the first and second marriages providing there is available land to settle on (FL, January 1980, 18; FL, April 1980, 15; FL, December 1990, 13; FL, June 2000, 12; FL, November 2010, 17; FL, November 2010, 23). Assuming residency on a homestead bought by the husband’s father may involve a payment of a fee (FL, December 1990, 13); *mutatis mutandis*, should the son assume responsibility of accommodating and caring for his aged parents, a comparable fee – for “rent and board” (FL, June 1990, 16) – is paid to him. If not gifted by his father, the married male ideally acquires a property of his own within the first years of marriage (Huntington 1988, 378). As land is “more readily available on the fringes of the settlement” than in its core, property acquisition and residence “tend to move centrifugally” (Cross and McKusick 1970, 84). When confronted with acute land scarcity in densely populated areas (FL, June 1980, 10), the Amish male may engage in land-seeking outside his father’s settlement. Herein, the dominant patrilocal residential pattern gives way to neolocal settlement, which temporarily diversifies the kinship and residential systems, only to re-establish the patrilocal principle and patrilineal land transmission in a short

time. Neolocality is further incited by the notion of permanent pilgrimage of the Amish; often a family unit, upon discussing the matter with the parochial leaders, embarks on a quest for a new, suitable, rural habitat. Land scouting is chiefly a kinship-based and patrilineally-oriented enterprise (FL, February 1980, 19; FL, October 1980, 19; Cf. Hurd 1985a, 54), particularly appealing to unmarried males.³¹ The neolocal configuration stimulates sibling solidarity (Cf. Cumming and Schneider 1961): if a senior brother had already acquired a property, the junior one may transiently settle there until he obtains a domicile of his own (FL, November 2000, 26). The older brother’s homestead is not yet architecturally elaborate as a long-standing Amish one is, lacking subordinate buildings adjacent to the main house. The younger brother thus occupies a mobile trailer and labors on his senior brother’s farm or business (*Ibid.*; FL, March 2000, 12; Cf. FL, March 1990, 9). If the older brother is temporarily unable to perform his duties as primary property custodian, the younger one will act as his substitute (FL, November 2000, 28).

The (occasional) unmarried sister of mature age may continue living on her parents’ property (FL, November 2000, 14) and, upon their death, “in a small house on [her] brother’s property” (FL, January 2000, 13).³² Alternatively, the spinster sister, or a number of them, aided by her/their father and brother(s), may purchase a homestead of her/their own and, in latter case, establish a

³¹ Such was the case of the first Amish settler in Holmes County, Ohio who in 1809, at the age of 21, emigrated from the Pennsylvania Somerset County, accompanying the family unit of his FZH (FL, February 1980, 19). The latter settled in Tuscarawas County while the unmarried nephew acquired land some five miles farther in Holmes County and subsequently (1812) married a female from the adjacent Stark County, Ohio. Prior to the full acknowledgement of Ego’s adult status, the relationship between Ego and FZ/MZ appears especially vital and is more frequently mentioned than that between Ego and MB/FB. Particularly if they are unmarried, parents’ sisters act as a “second mother” (FL, October 1990, 21) or “an extra grandparent” (FL, July 1990, 31), assuming custodianship over the Ego. Upon adulthood, the male Ego reciprocates this custodianship (Cf. FL, October 1980, 19).

³² Irrespective of the origin of her brother’s property (inheritance or individual purchase), the unmarried sister inhabits the *dawdyhouse* (Cf. FL, January 2000, 14).

joint tenancy (FL, July 2000, 12).³³ The sporadic adult spouseless male, writes Huntington, “will have a sister or perhaps a married nephew who lives in his household and helps out” (Huntington 1988, 374). As mentioned, the neolocal residence, rather than being an explicit feature of the social organization, serves the purpose of perpetuating the patrilocal configuration; the latter *in effect* shapes the community into discrete patrilineal descent groups which intermarry and form marriage alliances with patrilineages in other communities (only) to facilitate cognatic exogamy and maintain the social stability of the system (Cf. FL, August/September 2010, 17).

Though the husband-father is the head of the home place, it is not uncommon that a property is formally jointly owned by the husband and wife so “to ensure legal ownership in case of the death of the husband” (Hostetler 1993, 152; Huntington 1988, 379). Instructions affecting the sole and, contingently, partible inheritance are provided in a testament drafted by the father (FL, June 1990, 15). Should frictions among the devisees arise, the church elders will act as counselors and mediators, the eldest minister likely assuming the principal role in dispute resolution (FL, June 1990, 16). Difference of opinion regarding the optimal solution may also arise between the elders; in such case, the whole *Gemeinde* will provide advice on the matter, unanimous in the objective of hampering the infectious and transverse nature of strife (*Ibid.*).

Sharing of all “worldly goods” generally applies to both the first and second marriages (Cf. FL, April 1990, 30), though the latter is not without predicaments pertaining to post-marital residence and inheritance rights (FL, April 1990, 29s).³⁴ The

³³ Older unmarried female(s) may migrate to a *Gemeinde* in which a multitude of “singles” are present. Their shared social condition mobilizes group activities such as food consummation, quilting, or singing sessions (FL, February 2000, 12; FL, February 2000, 18). These are likewise organized among the childless married women (FL, February 2000, 17).

³⁴ The second marriage of widowers is socially encouraged but far more prone to scrutinizing than the first one (FL, April 1990, 29). Before deciding on a second marriage, one should “spend more time in prayer than ever before” (*Ibid.*). Widowed males, indicate the archives, are more likely to choose an “older [single]” (FL, January 2000, 10) than a widowed female as a second wife (FL, December 2000, 3). The female’s moral performance and sacrificial inclination

example deliberated in the archives pertains to the second marriage of a male Ego and I shall use it as a model to reconstruct some structural patterns. Upon the death of the first spouse, data suggest some two years should pass before the second marriage occurs (Cf. FL, October 1990, 21). During this transitory phase and presuming the first marriage was reproductive, the oldest same-sex child assumes the domestic role and the hierarchical position of the deceased same-sex parent (*Ibid.*).³⁵ The widowed parent may either notify his progeny on the impending remarriage directly (FL, October 1990, 21; FL, March 2000, 11; FL, August/September 2000, 32) or such intention is revealed to them in the act of “publishing” (Cf. FL, April 1990, 29). Prior to the marriage ritual, the soon to be second wife – aided by the widower’s offspring and their FZ/MZ (FL, October 1990, 21) – cleans the widower’s home in preparation for her forthcoming virilocal residency. The female offspring may select certain items belonging to their deceased biological mother as memorabilia and future bride wealth (FL, October 1990, 21). In the example described in the chronicles, the deceased mother’s remaining possessions, such as furniture, are “sold to the family in a family-oriented auction.” The reporting scribe attributes this household purging to the lack of storage space, as the married couple had ultimately decided to settle uxorilocally in a comparatively smaller dwelling.³⁶ Uxorilocal residence was further propelled by the fact that the husband-to-be had no male offspring to continue farming on his property; instead, it

towards her fellow brethren – caring for the sick and aged being decisive – increases her prospects of being chosen as a second wife (Cf. FL, January 2000, 10).

³⁵ After the death of a female spouse, the Amish man searches for the necessary substitution of children’s mother; though the father’s role in child rearing is indispensable – especially in “disciplining” the progeny – it is nonetheless supplementary to that of the mother. Moreover, marriage is a symbol of social-ontological completeness; in Genesis 2:18, we read that “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.” Indeed, this “help” is constitutive for the Amish man’s existence (FL, April 1990, 29).

³⁶ A comparable substitution of possessions in the main house also occurs upon the arrival of the first wife; then the furniture of the mother-in-law will be replaced with her own – some acquired as wedding gifts, some inherited from her mother as bride wealth, others newly bought. The mother-in-law will transplant her possessions and dwelling to the “retirement quarters,” the *dawdyhouse* (FL, June 2000, 12).

is his brother's married son who takes over the farmstead (*Ibid.*). Although the system functionally equates biological mothers, step-mothers, and mothers-in-law (FL, December 2000, 21; Cf. FL, January 1990, 27; FL, June 2000, 15), the terms of address for the second wife – “step-mother,” “mother [first name],” “[first name],” (Cf. FL, October 1990, 21; FL, January 1990, 27) – suggest that the full identification of the biological and adoptive mother, as well as the equiponderate value of the first and second marriage, is absent. The following property-related excerpt (FL, April 1990, 30) illustrates this disjuncture:

When the second marriage took place, all the first wife's things were given to the children, where they belonged. But when the second wife died, her things were put on sale. When the children from the second wife tried to buy things, they were run up real high, leaving her children and grandchildren with nothing. The grandchildren of the first wife each got something, and the rest of the things they ran up for the antique dealer to make money on. When my mother used to invite all the children home, they would stand whispering and talking over Mother and her children's mistakes. [...] it would [...] make some of the children feel inferior.

Be it a first or a second marriage, its cardinal feature remains the same: the affinal commitment, notwithstanding its prominent value, is secondary to the encompassing service to Christ (FL, August/September 1990, 21; FL, May 2000, 13). As the “flesh” is surpassed by the spirit, so the affinal and consanguineal relationships are outranked by bonds of fellowship; the community always structurally preceding the family unit and, still more, the singular member.³⁷ Excommunication and its corollary, social avoidance – inflicted upon the morally erring member – do not dissolve the marriage regardless of the number of years these might be in effect (FL, May 2000, 13). However, if required, the spouse must stand with the congregation in socially shunning his or her marriage partner, faithfully conforming to the proscribed

separation *a mensa et thoro* – even if it lasts a lifetime (Cf. Huntington 1988, 383).³⁸

THE ENCOMPASSING BOND OF FELLOWSHIP

The “prime principle [...] in man's constitution is the social,” writes Marcus Aurelius and, paraphrasing Plato, suggests,

he who is discoursing about men should look [...] at earthly things as if he viewed them from some higher place; should look at them in their assemblies, [...] labours, marriages, treaties, births, deaths, [...] feasts, lamentations, markets, a mixture of all things and an orderly combination of contraries” (2014[c.167], 41).

In the Amish social and kinship system, as I have argued, this “mixture of all things” is governed by the primordial value of the social whole and the encompassment of the inimical “egocentric and individualistic” (Johnson 2000, 624) conceptualizations of social relationships.

Any discernment of social phenomena requires foresight on the part of the researcher not to exaggerate or diminish the properties impressed upon his speculum by the logic which governs his analysis. “Once we form a certain mental image of how things are, we view everything from that perspective,” write the Amish (FL, July 2000, 6), and Dumont similarly maintains (and cautions) that “our system of values determines our entire mental landscape” (1992[1986], 7), steering our appraisal of social facts. The present elaboration is thus by no means exhaustive; it is as much a recapitulation and elaboration of the extant emic and etic perspectives and literature concerning the Amish kinship organization as it is an incentive for further panoptic explorations on a long-neglected topic. The latter, I hope, will utilize the holistic axiom and the encompassing bond of fellowship among Amish scholars: a synergy of positivist

³⁷ Galatians 6:8, “For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

³⁸ The archives provide an example of an Amish wife who “was dismayed when [her husband] made known his desire to leave the Amish church. She stood her ground and refused to go with him to the Mennonites. He went anyhow but she remained a faithful member in the church in which she was. After twenty some years of this kind of marriage, her [...] husband died and she then remained a widow for the rest of her life” (FL, May 2000, 13).

and interpretative paradigms, discourses, and corresponding methodologies can surely generate research results surpassing in scope and quality either one singularly.

*The more ambitious the outlook,
the more meticulous the detail must be,
and the humbler the craftsman.*

Louis Dumont

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