

Definition of Marriage  
Anthropology 308  
Dr. Siemens

“Notes and Queries on Anthropology” defines marriage as follows (Kottak 2002: 214):

“Marriage is a union between a man and a woman such that the children born to the woman are recognized as legitimate offspring of both partners” (Royal Anthropological Institute 1951: 111).

According to Leach (1955:183), marriage can serve to establish any of the following

- “
- A. To establish the legal father of a woman’s children.
  - B. To establish the legal mother of a man’s children.
  - C. To give the husband a monopoly in the wife’s sexuality.<sup>2</sup>
  - D. To give the wife a monopoly in the husband’s sexuality.
  - E. To give the husband partial or monopolistic rights to the wife’s domestic and other labour services.
  - F. To give the wife partial or monopolistic rights to the husband’s labour services.
  - G. To give the husband partial or total rights over property belonging or potentially accruing to the wife.
  - H. To give the wife partial or total rights over property belonging or potentially accruing to the husband.
  - I. To establish a joint fund of property—a partnership—for the benefit of the children of the marriage.
  - J. To establish a socially significant ‘relationship of affinity’ between the husband and his wife’s brothers. “

Information on the Nayar is available from Shivaram (1996) and Gough (1955; 1959).

Note: Articles by Leach and Gough are available through the Jstor database if you access it through the CSUN library page.

#### References Cited

Gough, Kathleen E.

1955 [Female Initiation Rites on the Malabar Coast](#). Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland 85:45-80.

1959 [The Nayars and the Definition of Marriage](#). Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute 89:23-34.

Kottak, Conrad Phillip

2002 Cultural Anthropology. Ninth edition. New York: McGraw Hill.

Leach, Edmund

1955 [Polyandry, Inheritance and the Definition of Marriage](#). Man 55:182-186.

Royal Anthropological Institute

1951 Notes and Queries on Anthropology. 6th edition. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

References Cited (continued)

Shivaram, C.

1996 Where Women Wear the Crown: Kerala's Dissolving Matriarchies Leave a Rich Legacy of Compassionate Family Culture. *Hinduism Today* 96(02), <http://www.hinduismtoday.com/1996/2/1996-2-03.html>, accessed 3-1-04.