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.2
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 hus-
band’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 belong-
ing 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
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