

CASTE AND RACE:

Comparative Approaches

A Ciba Foundation Volume

Edited by

ANTHONY de REUCK

and

JULIE KNIGHT



J. & A. CHURCHILL LTD.

104 GLOUCESTER PLACE

LONDON, W.1

1967

**CASTE AND RACE:
COMPARATIVE APPROACHES**

CASTE AND RACE:

Comparative Approaches

A Ciba Foundation Volume

Edited by

ANTHONY de REUCK

and

JULIE KNIGHT



J. & A. CHURCHILL LTD.

104 GLOUCESTER PLACE

LONDON, W.1

1967

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

This book may not be reproduced by any means, in whole or in part, without permission. Applications with regard to reproduction should be addressed to the Publishers.

Printed in Great Britain



THE Ciba Foundation, a unique international institution, owes its inception to the generosity of CIBA Limited, Basle. However, being established under British trust law, it enjoys complete independence in practice and policy.

Under the guidance of its distinguished Trustees, the Foundation offers accommodation to scientists from all over the world at its home in Portland Place. Foremost in its activities is the organization of small conferences, the proceedings of which are published in book form in the manner of the present volume. The Foundation convenes many other informal discussions between research workers of different disciplines and different nationalities and each year invites an outstanding authority to deliver a special lecture. An exchange programme between French and British postgraduates is conducted and a library service is available. Furthermore, the Ciba Foundation attempts in every other way possible to aid scientists, whether they be Nobel Laureates or young graduates making their first original contribution to research.

The purpose of the Ciba Foundation, which is to promote international co-operation in research, mainly in the biomedical and related sciences, is symbolized in the armorial bearings by five interlaced rings representing the continents, a black sacrificial cock (emblem of Aesculapius) holding a medical caduceus, and three regular hexagons for chemistry. Its domicile in London is indicated by the red sword of St. Paul and the British lion; the wyvern and the crozier, symbols associated with Basle, refer to the sponsoring firm located in this ancient Swiss town.

The Ciba Foundation

or the Promotion of International Co-operation in Medical and Chemical Research
41 PORTLAND PLACE, LONDON, W.1

Trustees Sir Eric Ashby, LL.D., F.R.S.
The Rt. Hon. Lord Brain, LL.D., D.C.L., F.R.S.
The Rt. Hon. Lord Florey, O.M., F.R.S.
The Hon. Sir George Lloyd-Jacob
The Rt. Hon. Lord Todd, F.R.S.

Executive Council Lord Brain, *Chairman*
Professor Dr. F. Gross
Professor Sir Alexander Haddow, F.R.S.
Sir Arthur Vere Harvey, C.B.E., M.P.
Sir George Lloyd-Jacob
Professor F. G. Young, F.R.S.

Director & Secretary to the Executive Council Dr. G. E. W. Wolstenholme, O.B.E., F.R.C.P.

Deputy Director Mr. A. V. S. de Reuck, M.Sc.

Assistant Secretary Miss Nadia Bland

Medical Assistant Miss Ruth Porter, M.R.C.P.

Editorial Assistants Miss Maeve O'Connor, B.A.
Miss Julie Knight, B.A.

Conference Assistant Mrs. Nancy G. Spufford

Librarian Mrs. Margarete Silverman

PREFACE

DURING the summer of 1964, Professor George De Vos visited the Ciba Foundation in connexion with plans for its recent symposium on *Conflict in Society* (1966. London: Churchill). In the course of discussion with the Deputy Director, Professor De Vos referred to his work with the Japanese pariah caste, since published in his book with Hiroshi Wagatsuma entitled *Japan's Invisible Race* (1966. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press), and in a few exhilarating minutes a complete outline for a further small international and interdisciplinary conference began to take shape. The essence of the plan was to bring together anthropologists, sociologists, social psychologists and social historians to discuss the general nature of caste segregation and racist ideologies on a comparative basis, not only drawing upon studies of Indian and Japanese societies, but also calling in aid scholars and material concerned with the American Negro and the European Jew.

For the whole of the programme that emerged from this ambitious conception we are indebted to Professor De Vos, whose personal warmth as well as his unstinting generosity with help and advice make him an ideal collaborator. In the extremely difficult and invidious task of selecting the membership, with all the world and many disciplines to choose from, much wise counsel was obtained from Professor Gerald Berreman and Professor Adrian Mayer, to both of whom we are deeply grateful.

Professor Gunnar Myrdal was persuaded to take the Chair at the symposium, and it was our additional good fortune that Ambassador Alva Myrdal was able to accompany him for his stay at the Ciba Foundation while she was conducting talks with members of the British Government.

PREFACE

Unfortunately, Dr. Edmund Leach was unable to attend the meeting through illness, and his paper was read and discussed in his absence. However, Dr. Leach has kindly provided comments on the discussion which have been incorporated in this volume.

For assistance in preparing these proceedings for the press the Editors are indebted to the Wiener Library of Jewish Literature and the Library of the Royal Anthropological Institute, and also to Dr. K. J. Collins of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, to whom our thanks are due.

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Preface	vii
Membership of symposium	xi
Chairman's introduction	G. Myrdal 1
1 Caste, class and slavery: the taxonomic problem	Edmund Leach 5
2 Characterization of caste and class systems	Discussion 17
3 Caste: a phenomenon of social structure or an aspect of Indian culture?	Louis Dumont 28
4 Place of comparison in the study of caste systems	Discussion 39
5 Stratification, pluralism and interaction: a comparative analysis of caste	Gerald D. Berreman 45
6 Analogues and homologues of caste systems	Discussion 74
7 Caste in India: its essential pattern of socio-cultural integration	Surajit Sinha 92
8 The historical approach to caste	Discussion 106
9 The pariah caste in Japan: history and present self-image	Hiroshi Wagatsuma 118
10 Pariah castes compared	Discussion 141
11 Slavery in classical antiquity	Keith Hopkins 166
12 Classical and American slavery compared	Discussion 178
13 Slavery and its aftermath in the western hemisphere	Stanley M. Elkins 192
14 Attitudes to slavery in the New World	Discussion 204
15 Racism in Europe	L. Poliakov 223
16 Positive functions of minority groups	Discussion 235

CONTENTS

17	The myth of the demonic conspiracy of Jews in medieval and modern Europe	Norman Cohn	. . . 240
18	Stereotyped images of despised groups	Discussion	. . . 255
19	Caste and race in the psychodynamics of acculturation	F. H. M. Raveau	. . . 266
20	Symbolic expression of racial tension	Discussion	. . . 276
21	Psychology of purity and pollution as related to social self-identity and caste	George De Vos	. . . 292
22	Status anxiety and "guilt" in caste and modern societies	Discussion	. . . 316
23	A comparative approach to caste and race	Discussion	. . . 327
	Index of contributors		. . . 333
	Index of authors cited		. . . 334
	Index of subjects		. . . 338

MEMBERSHIP

Symposium on Caste and Race: Comparative Approaches,
held 19th–21st April, 1966

- G. Myrdal** Institute for International Economic Studies, Wenner-Gren Center, Stockholm
(Chairman)
- G. D. Berreman** . . Dept. of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley, California
- N. Cohn** Centre for Research in Collective Psychopathology, University of Sussex, Brighton
- J. B. Cornell** . . . Fundação Escola de Sociologia e Política, São Paulo, Brazil
- N. Deakin** Survey of Race Relations in Britain, London
- A. V. S. de Reuck** . . Ciba Foundation, London
- G. De Vos** Dept. of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley, California
- L. Dumont** École Pratique des Hautes Études, Centre d'Études Indiennes, Paris
- S. M. Elkins** Dept. of History, Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts
- F. Henriques** . . . Research Unit for the Study of Multi-Racial Societies, University of Sussex, Brighton
- K. Hopkins** Dept. of Sociology, London School of Economics, London
- Pearl H. M. King** . . School of Social Sciences, Brunel University, London
- E. R. Leach** Faculty of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge
- A. C. Mayer** Dept. of Anthropology and Sociology, School of Oriental and African Studies, London
- S. W. Mintz** Dept. of Anthropology, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut
- H. Passin** Dept. of Sociology, East Asian Institute, Columbia University, New York
- L. Poliakov** École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris
- F. H. M. Raveau** . . École Pratique des Hautes Études, Centre Charles Richet, Paris
- S. Sinha** Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta
- A. P. Stirling** Dept. of Sociology, University of Kent, Canterbury
- S. J. Tambiah** . . . Faculty of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge
- H. Wagatsuma** . . . Social Science Research Institute, University of Hawaii, Honolulu

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

PROFESSOR G. MYRDAL

Unlike the distinguished members of this symposium, I am not an anthropologist with a focus of research on race and caste, nor an historian who has studied slavery minutely; when I accepted the Foundation's invitation to take the chair at this symposium it was because, like Oscar Wilde's Lord Darlington, I can resist everything except temptation! By way of explanation, I may also quote W. I. Thomas, the great sociologist of his generation, whom I knew when he was a very old man; among his four main human urges the desire for new experience was one. Nevertheless, let me here tell you, the specialists, what an ordinary citizen of the world and a social scientist who has travelled far from economics but who is nevertheless an economist at heart has experienced of the problems that you will be discussing.

A main experience has been my whole life as a Swede. In Sweden we have had in this century a more rapid breaking down of the social inequalities than probably anywhere else. In my childhood we stood about where England is now. I believe that part of the explanation for the rapidity of social change in recent times lies in the fact that Sweden very uniquely never developed a feudal system; the feudal system was nipped in the bud by the several "reductions", when from time to time the farmers and the king working together took back the land from the nobility. Of course Denmark, which had a feudal system with a peasantry in bondage right into the nineteenth century, now has a very egalitarian social structure; it was, at the same time, one of the earliest countries to legislate for popular compulsory education.

How these two things went together I have not studied, but I believe popular education was a dynamic force in the rapid development towards social equality. So far as popular education goes, of course, the Scandinavian countries were far ahead of England. England had excellent universities but in popular education was an undeveloped country almost up to the First World War. So this is one experience I have had, not of race and caste as such, but of the rapid liquidation of an inherited inegalitarian social stratification.

My second experience was my study of the Negro problem in America a quarter of a century ago. At that time the dominant place in the discussion of the Negro problem was taken by a quasi-Marxian conception, held by both the conservatives and the radicals, that fundamentally this was an economic problem. I could not agree with this simplification of a very much more complicated reality. At that time the anthropologists had begun to take interest in the problem; prominent among them was W. Lloyd Warner and his group. I found their approach superficial; they looked mostly at leisure-time activity and noted who spent their time together, which might be an indication of certain things, but is not very crucial for social relations. In *An American Dilemma* I had chapters on race and caste and on the social classes among whites and Negroes as a function of the caste system. The dividing line in America is not biological, as I think it is in some other parts of the world, but a social one. It is not race, but racial beliefs, which are fundamental to the rigid barrier. What are not rigid, however, are the relations over this rigid line. At that time the consensus of students was that race relations would improve very slowly if at all. I came to the conclusion that race relations, which have remained almost unchanged since the big compromise in the late seventies, were bound to change towards an upward movement of the Negroes' status and opportunities.

Another point stressed in *An American Dilemma* which at that time was considered strange, though after what happened recently

nobody questions it in America, was that the Negro problem was a moral question for white Americans and that this was an important part of social reality. I believe that their ideological commitment to equality, and consequent bad conscience at inequality, is one of the social forces determining the development. There is a tendency in America, as elsewhere, to believe that social institutions are conservative, but I believe that there are institutions which are radical—as, for instance, all that I comprehended in what I called “The American Creed”, which is also written into the Constitution—and that they play a large role in determining the development of society. So that was my second experience of these issues of social stratification.

For the past nine years I have been working on development problems in South Asia. In South Asia I am up against exactly these problems of race, caste and class which we are to discuss. Anthropologists have an established tradition of stressing the necessity of avoiding ethnocentricity, of avoiding looking on everything from the point of view of conditions in the rich countries. With this I agree. But this tradition has also meant (and here is my criticism of anthropologists) that their approach has mostly been what in economics we call static. Anthropologists have been interested in clarifying how other social systems function without paying much attention to the dynamics of these systems and how to engender development by planning induced changes. I am exaggerating, of course, because much work is now on dynamic lines in anthropology, but the old tradition lingers on. When I was working on the American Negro problem there was the beginning of what we now call surveys of villages or other communities. My contention was that these studies were too static; mostly they did not take into consideration even the population development. In Asia now I have the same criticism of the village studies; when anthropologists and sociologists are studying caste relations, the power groups and factions, they are usually not aware of the influence from the increase in population. Generally speaking, the income-levels mean very

much. I have the belief that it is in poor countries that social distinctions become important, while in a progressive society, where everyone is getting better off, there is more elbow-room. In South Asia there is a correlation between the severity, the rigidity of caste or semi-caste relations, and the economic level. That in the Western countries social equalization goes together with economic growth in circular causation, and with cumulative effects, is to me quite evident.

I have recounted some of my impressions of caste and race as a social scientist and economist; it is now the turn of specialists in these fields to tell us in detail about "Caste and Race".

I

CASTE, CLASS AND SLAVERY: THE TAXONOMIC PROBLEM

EDMUND LEACH

Faculty of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge

ONE might be forgiven for supposing, from the programme of this symposium, that underlying it is the assumption that any form of rigid social hierarchy is a form of oppression. "Racism"—that is, the exploitation of ethnic difference as a badge of social inferiority—is, by implication, a monstrous affair and "caste difference" belongs to the same order of social phenomena. Indeed, our chairman, Professor Myrdal, is one of those who have equated colour bar segregation in the Southern States of the United States with caste difference. And because colour bar segregation in the United States developed out of an institution of chattel slavery there is a tendency in some quarters to think that the words "caste", "race" and "slavery" are all very much of a muchness. If we add to this the Marxist notion of a class war, we have a whole series of words which are quite deplorably confused. I do not think we shall make matters any better if we try to establish artificial definitions, for the words "caste", "class", "slavery" and "race" all have a long history of ambiguity. In common parlance the meanings overlap. But at the beginning of a symposium such as this it may be useful to try to indicate some of the sources of this ambiguity. "Race" is a problem for others; my commission is to try to distinguish the three key words "caste", "class" and "slavery". I will discuss them one by one and then see how they fit together.

The most general of these words is "class", so let me take it first. Classification is an essential element of the thinking process as such. We are already conceptualizing human beings as belonging to social classes as soon as we distinguish males from females or parents from children. Of course this is *not* what we mean when we talk about social class but it shows that we need to be careful. Classes are not things which exist "out there", they are not a part of God's truth; they are mental configurations. But whose mental configurations? Are social classes invented by the Registrar General, by politicians, by social scientists or simply by general public opinion? It would take a month of Sundays to give a satisfactory answer to such a question . . . the only point I want to make here is that different kinds of people mean totally different things when they talk about social class and anyone who wants to understand sociological or political arguments on this theme needs to keep this ambiguity constantly in mind.

Three varieties of the concept of social class seem especially relevant. First there is what one might call the "degenerate Marxist view". Society as a whole is viewed as a battleground between the *haves* and the *have-nots*, the ruling class and the proletariat. Class membership depends upon the individual's position in the socio-economic scale, more particularly on whether he is an employer or a worker. Important aspects of this kind of model are: (a) it is taken for granted that members of a socio-economic class have an intrinsic tendency to act corporately in support of class interests; (b) the structure is presumed to be unstable—in due time the lower exploited class will inevitably overthrow its oppressors; (c) the class war thesis implies a two-tiered model: there is no room for a neutral middle class and everyone must take sides either with the oppressors or with the oppressed.

Secondly, I would distinguish a "degenerate Max Weber view". Here the two-tiered class war is replaced by an elaborate hierarchy of professional status groups. It is assumed that social class is determined by occupation rather than by control over economic

resources. It is again assumed that members of a class tend to act corporately in support of class interests. This scheme is an equilibrium model, not a self-destructive revolutionary model. The "Marxist" and the "Weberian" conceptions both suppose that classes are distinct without much cross-cutting of categories. In other words, each social class has a kind of sub-culture of its own within the wider whole. Up to a point, this last detail is empirically verifiable. In England, for example, we can readily distinguish social groups employing different verbal vocabularies with different accents and maintaining modes of life which are really quite distinct from those of other groups with which they are in close territorial contact. But how do these "sub-culture classes" fit into the concepts of the class war or the status hierarchy? It is very difficult to say. What is quite clear is that while the sub-culture groups certainly "exist", awareness of their existence is a very subjective matter. Their boundaries are *not* sharply defined and only very rarely can members of such a class be tricked into displaying corporate solidarity. Yet in some ways this third very ill-defined type of class concept, the "degenerate culture group view", has much more practical relevance than the highly artificial constructs of the politicians and the sociologists. Ask yourself the simple question: "How do I recognize others who are of the same class as myself?" You do not enquire about their finances or their occupation; you respond directly to the way they talk, the sort of standards of life they maintain, the interests they display. The Registrar General's class categories are based strictly on income and on the assumption that everyone who is in the same kind of job leads the same kind of life. This may be good enough as a rough and ready measure for the purposes of an advertising campaign, but it does not correspond to social reality. The people whom I recognize as "my social class" have an extremely wide range of incomes and engage in a very wide range of occupations, and conversely the people who have similar incomes to myself or who engage in similar occupations to myself are by no means necessarily "of the same social class" . . . *in the sub-culture sense.*

One reason why the sub-culture type of class is important is that members of the same sub-culture tend to intermarry and this means that any cultural attribute of such a class becomes hereditary. Consequently those sub-culture classes which have a traditional concern for the conservation of assets perpetuate themselves not merely as sub-cultures but also as units of political and economic power. It is here, of course, that we get a tie-up with the other models. In the Marxist scheme the landed gentry and the *bourgeoisie* both show a concern for the conservation of assets which is lacking among the proletariat. The decision as to whether a middle-class individual will choose to support the oppressors or the oppressed depends upon whether or not he possesses hereditary capital assets.

Let me sum up this section: A general way of life, a sub-culture, tends to be hereditary because (a) individuals from the same sub-culture tend to intermarry, and (b) parents bring up their children to imitate themselves. When politicians talk about social class they are not thinking of people who share a general way of life so much as corporate groups which have differing degrees of privilege and unequal access to productive resources. Where there exists a "sub-culture class" which possesses exclusive privileges it is certainly likely to act corporately in such a way as to make those privileges hereditary. There can thus be *some* situations in which the "economic-interest social class" of the politician is *also* "a sub-culture class". But the two types of social classification are intrinsically quite different and we need to remember this. Reference-group statements of the kind "X and Y are of the same social class" are often, perhaps usually, highly ambiguous. We should also remember that the Marxist concept of "the class war" has its Utopian counterpart "the classless society". The latter concept seems to me a purely religious idea comparable to the notion of "life after death". It may signify something for the devout but in strictly semantic terms it can mean nothing whatever.

Let me now say something about "caste". In contemporary

literature we meet with the word "caste" in two quite different contexts. On the one hand it is a word used without any particular geographical limitation to denote a type of class system in which hierarchy is very sharply defined and in which the boundaries between the different layers of the hierarchy are rigidly fixed. A "ruling class" may be described as a *caste* when the fact of class endogamy is strikingly obvious and when the inheritance of privilege has become narrowly restricted to members of that "caste" in perpetuity. This kind of situation is likely to arise when the ruling group is distinguished from the inferior group or groups by *wide* differences of standard of living or by other easily recognized labels. Obvious examples are the colour bar situation in the Southern States of the United States and in South Africa, where ideas of social class, hierarchy and privilege are conveniently supported by visible differences of skin colour in the population.

The *other* use of the word "caste" is to define the system of social organization found in traditional India and surviving to a large extent to the present day. I myself consider that, as sociologists, we shall be well advised to restrict the use of the term *caste* to the Indian phenomenon only. In what follows I shall therefore ignore the fact that some writers mean by caste only a special form of class hierarchy.

The endogamy of English social classes is a tendency only and the groups so formed are ill-defined and unnamed; in India, on the other hand, endogamy is a basic principle. This has the consequence that all members of "my sub-caste" (*jāti*) are my kinsmen and, *vice versa*, all my kinsmen are members of my sub-caste. The sub-caste groups thus formed are clearly defined. Each individual is born into a particular named group which is the same as that of both his parents and he or she remains a member of that group throughout life.

The terminology is tricky. In India these endogamous groups of kin which lead a distinctive way of life are usually known as *jāti*. But the word *jāti* is also used for other groups which are not of this

distinctive endogamous kind. English writers sometimes refer to the endogamous kin groups as castes and sometimes as sub-castes. I will here call them sub-castes. The membership of a single sub-caste is hardly likely to number more than a few thousand. All members will usually live within a restricted area and share a distinctive religious cult.

Within India as a whole there are a vast number of such sub-castes but within any one local area there are not likely to be more than about twenty. Within such a local area each individual will be able to identify members of his own sub-caste and to arrange all other sub-castes known to him in some kind of hierarchy. There is unlikely to be complete agreement between different informants on the details of this hierarchy, but there will be fairly general consensus in terms of two frames of reference. On the one hand sub-castes are ranked according to their ritual purity, with Brahmans at the top and "untouchables" at the bottom; on the other they are ranked according to their political-economic status in the local (traditional) feudal order, with landlords at the top, free tenants below, "tied" tenants below that and landless labourers at the bottom, with certain artisan groups such as blacksmiths somewhere in the middle.

The two frames are not entirely coincident and it is easier for a group to raise its economic status than to improve its ritual respectability, but nevertheless there is a broad correspondence. Landlords tend to be members of "clean" or "very clean" sub-castes; landless labourers tend to be members of "untouchable" sub-castes, as do also the "tied" tenants who are commonly required to fulfil ritual services (such as temple drumming) as part of their feudal duty. In order to justify this grading of sub-castes in terms of ritual purity informants will usually refer to the model provided by the four *varṇa* of ancient literature. This classical model is a binary scheme based on the following principles. Human beings are either within society or outside it; if they are within society they are either superior persons (twice-born) or ordinary persons; if they are twice-born they are either holy men (Brah-

mans) or secular men; if they are twice-born secular men they are either princes or merchants.

This ancient classification provided a five-layered model of Brahmans (priests), Kshatriya (princes), Vaishya (merchants), Shudra (ordinary people) and polluted outsiders. The advantages of education and political and economic power were an exclusive privilege of the top three grades—the twice-born.

In the classical literature this social system is presented to us as one of complete inflexibility. The first essential of moral duty is that of resignation and acceptance. The individual gains personal merit by fulfilling the tasks which are proper to the station into which he has been born. The humblest and most menial polluted individual can thus be just as virtuous as the most saintly Brahman priest: the rewards for virtue will come in the next life.

Even today Indian ethical theory declares that moral rules differ widely between different castes and sub-castes. There are no universal principles of right and wrong. A man has a duty to accept the rules of his own caste. It is a sin to imitate the behaviour of others even when the others rank high in the hierarchy of public esteem.

Since modern India does not have a feudal type of political structure one might suppose that the logic of the *varṇa* scheme has no relevance to present conditions, but in fact it is still used as an explanatory device to show why sub-castes are felt to stand in a hierarchy of intrinsic purity. In particular, sub-castes are allocated to one or other of three major divisions: (i) Brahmans (ii) clean non-Brahmans and (iii) polluted non-Brahmans, and these three categories are treated as approximately the equivalent of the *varṇa* types: twice-born Brahman, Shudra and “untouchable”. This classification is based principally on occupation. Each sub-caste is associated with a “traditional occupation” along with the theory that, in the ancient feudal system, the members of that sub-caste alone could (and must) fulfil the functions of that particular occupation. Such traditional occupations are felt to differ in their intrinsic purity. For example, it is polluting to touch carcasses of dead

creatures and in consequence all members of any sub-caste which is associated with this polluting activity, such as leather-workers or fishermen, are felt to be relatively impure as compared with, say, the members of a sub-caste of vegetarian rice farmers.

In former times sub-castes belonging to the Shudra and "outsider" groups were the feudal serfs of the twice-born landlords. But the servile status of the inferior groups was ambivalent. It carried rights as well as duties. The Shudra were (in general) persons of tenant status who held their land in return for an obligation to perform feudal services of an artisan type for the landlords. The "outsider" groups were feudal dependants of the landlords in a *more* servile status. The latter were seldom actual tenants of land but they had the right to employment as agricultural labourers in return for performing polluting menial services. They also had the *right* to receive support from their superior landlords in times of famine and these rights could be very important.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the British administrators tended to interpret the status of these servile outsiders as that of *slavery* and in the enthusiasm for abolishing slavery which prevailed in the 1820's, the *legal* rights of the feudal lords over their servile dependants were abolished. This "liberation" of the servile sub-castes did not in fact improve their economic status. It may indeed have made it much worse. It had consequences for the very poor rather similar to those of the enclosure acts in seventeenth and eighteenth century England.

This brings me to *slavery*. This is a term used in the most loose manner to describe all kinds of conditions of servile status. We get very confused about this because we have ideological reactions to the word "freedom", which we think of as something both desirable and attainable. What we really mean by *freedom* is debatable, but the concept came into European thought as an antithesis to that of *slavery*. Free men were those who were *not* slaves, though of course their "freedom" depended on the fact that there were slaves to do the dirty work! In reality social man can never be

absolutely free and the age-old core of all political arguments is the problem of how to decide just how much un-freedom he must be prepared to accept. "Slavery" tends to be a political propaganda word used by those who object to one form of un-freedom while tacitly accepting another.

It is possible to distinguish certain major types of un-free status which have at different times been labelled as "slavery".

At one extreme there is pure chattel slavery of the type which prevailed in colonial Latin America and also in the Southern States of the United States in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Here the rights of the master over his slave were indistinguishable from the rights he would exercise over a cow or a dog. It should be emphasized that *this* form of slavery has historically been somewhat unusual though it has cropped up in other situations, notably in ancient Athens and in other parts of the ancient classical world.

At the opposite extreme we meet with various institutions which are sometimes labelled debt-slavery or bond-slavery. In this system an individual mortgages his person as guarantee for a debt. The bond-slave remains a human being in the fullest sense and it is by no means clear to me why institutions of this kind should be considered objectionable; indeed they only become objectionable when Europeans for reasons of their own label them as "slavery". It is very significant that in a great many societies where institutions of this kind have been closely studied, it is found that the status of the "bond-slave" in respect of his master is very close indeed to that of a "son-in-law".

In between these two extremes of the chattel slave whose servility is quite involuntary and the bond-slave whose servility is optional, we meet with a whole range of variations, some of which are described in the literature as "slavery" and some as "serfdom". The most common features of such un-freedom are that the slave or serf is under an obligation to pursue a certain type of occupation in a particular place and that parts of the fruits of his labour accrue to the "owner" of the slave, and that his or her

marital arrangements are made under the control of the "owner". But within this limiting definition we meet with very great variation in the degree of free enterprise which the "slave" may undertake. Further, it is important to recognize that in the overall hierarchy, a slave is not necessarily at the bottom. In the seraglio of the Ottoman sultans all the women, and there were about 2,000 of them, were "slaves". Although the life prospects of some of these women were undoubtedly precarious, their status was certainly not low and one or other of them was destined to be the mother of the next Sultan! Likewise, all the administrative officers of the Turkish Empire were legally in the status of slave.

The ambiguities of this particular word are indeed so confusing that sociologists might be well advised to eliminate it from their discussions altogether. When one tries to understand the literature on this topic, two cross-cutting variables often prove to be relevant. Of anyone who is alleged to be a "slave" we need to ask not only "Is his position high or low in the total hierarchy?" but also "Does he have recognized kinship links with persons other than his master?" In many social systems a good working definition of a slave would be "a man or woman who has no recognized kin outside his owner's family (*familia*)".

Let me sum up. Class, Caste, Slavery . . . each of these words is liable to carry overtones which suggest the exploitation of the underprivileged by the overprivileged. In the context of this symposium we need to be on our guard against initial prejudices of this sort. Marxism has so infected our thinking that we not only take it for granted that it is in the nature of modern society that there should be a class struggle but we are also inclined to believe that unqualified equality, unqualified freedom and the utopia of a classless society are sensible political goals for all right-thinking men. May I urge you most strongly to draw a distinction between political slogans and sociological categories? Freedom and classlessness are political ideas; they have no place in sociological analysis, which must necessarily be concerned with social con-

straints and status differences. The word *slavery* (as we use it today) suggests that we can readily distinguish between social constraints which are morally justifiable and those which are not. I deny this. If we call a particular Soviet institution a "slave labour camp" we are saying it is bad; if we call a rather similar English institution an "open prison" we are saying it is good. This is simply prejudice. We need to analyse the forms of un-freedom but if we are to do this sensibly we should keep away from contentious labels. Likewise with *class*. *Of course* we think of society as made up of classes; we can even demonstrate that, up to a point, these classes have objective existence; but it is a mistake to think that such classes must *inevitably* be arranged as strata in a hierarchy. Because some very important social classes possess political and economic privilege it does not follow that this is the *only* principle in terms of which classes may be formed. And as an anthropologist I would urge my sociological colleagues to pay more attention to endogamy and less to economic factors when they are considering these matters.

Most members of this symposium share a common European liberal ethic. We assume that men are born equal. We must remember that this is a judgement and not a fact. Social systems different from our own rest on different assumptions. In particular, systems of the feudal type (taking feudal in a wide sense) have presupposed that men are born unequal and that the individual's prime moral duty is to fulfil the duties which are proper to his natural station. In such systems the Protestant ethic of self-improvement—the aspiration to rise from Private to Field Marshal—is tantamount to grievous sin. The traditional Indian caste order was a feudal system in this sense and we only invite confusion if we use the word *caste* in contexts where differential status is open to challenge.

In colour bar situations such as those found in South Africa and the southern United States the privileged whites assert that it is the "natural condition" of the Negroes that they should be in an inferior status, and this valuation, as well as the emphasis on status

group endogamy, is certainly reminiscent of Indian caste. But there are also great differences. In the South African and American situations members of the "inferior" group do *not* accept their inferiority and on that account the total situation becomes one of oppression, so much so that the dominant white group virtually has to take up arms to protect itself against the revolutionary ferment among the Negroes. Revolts of the underprivileged have occurred in India also, but to suggest that the Indian caste order is simply a complicated kind of colour bar situation with all its attendant forms of tyranny and exploitation is grossly misleading. The converse is likewise true. Within India itself the relation between the residue of the old caste order and the newly emergent class order is one of great complexity and great sociological importance. This relationship needs close analysis but we shall certainly fog the whole issue if we use our basic category words in such a way that *caste* appears to be nothing more than a peculiarly ossified form of *class*.