

9-1998

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Riles, Annelise, "Division within the Boundaries" (1998). *Cornell Law Faculty Publications*. Paper 1034.
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DIVISION WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES

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In the Part-European settlement of Kasavu, Fiji, land is divided in each generation into parallel plots of ever-decreasing width but identical form. Kinship as division, I argue, is knowledge which is not representative of social relations and which therefore does not effectuate 'change'. This is contrasted to an additive logic of kinship relations among urban Part-Europeans, a logic in which information is potentially infinite and thus always incomplete, and in which knowledge attaches to persons and changes through techniques of collective discovery.

Among the many legacies of Hocart's studies of Fiji are his reflections on the character of Fijian 'dualism' (1915; 1952; 1970: 262-90). At every level of social organization, Hocart observed, Fijians divided into halves, repeating each time a singular division of inner and outer or of land and sea. A chiefdom was internally divided into a 'noble state' and a 'border state', for example, and each of these was again divided according to the same logic.

Conceived before the notion of social structure, as a necessary abstraction from realities ultimately unknowable in their totality, had definitively conquered the study of ethnology (see Radcliffe-Brown 1952), Hocart's image of Fijian division is arrestingly concrete in its conception of a whole that was given and known from the start. Fijian chiefdoms, clans or chiefs in this view did not extend or expand, but rather divided known entities (chiefs, chiefdoms, villages, food, clans) according to an equally complete and known formula. Hocart's discovery of these given entities infinitely divided from within perhaps accounted for his ongoing frustration with the anthropological method of his day which 'has forced the customs of non-Europeans into the familiar categories of religion, state, family, medicine, and so on' (Radcliffe-Brown 1952: 25). When the work of dividing Fijian society into institutional parts had already been indigenously completed, the addition of further anthropological divisions seemed like analytical absurdity.

This article concerns the disjuncture between ways of thinking about 'family' and 'land' among members of a Part-European clan living in Fiji's capital city of Suva on the one hand, and among members of the same clan living in the rural settlement of Kasavu, Vanua Levu, on the other. Although the subject of this article differs from Hocart's – the Whippy clan is not a Fijian clan – Hocart's analysis has resonances here, for from the point of view of people in Kasavu, the Whippy clan, too, is an entity whose horizons are known from the start. The parcels of freehold land which the Whippys of Kasavu have divided in each successive generation are finite, bounded entities capable of infinite internal

partition, albeit according to a singular form. The corollary of the given and concretely delimited nature of the facts about land and kin is that for the Kasavu Whippys, as we shall see, knowledge is a question not of gathering or managing information as it is for their urban relations, but of dividing in spatial and numerical terms.

My initial interest in Part-European kinship, however, lay not in land but rather in the nature of change. Urban Whippys routinely lamented the changes in the rural way of life brought on by the fact that land had 'gone small' as a result of generations of partition. They chastised their 'family in the country' for failing to find new ways of making their land productive, such as forming agricultural co-operatives, mortgaging their land for development purposes, introducing new industries such as tourism or educating their children for employment in the waged economy, in short, for failing to find a strategy for survival in a changed world. In Kasavu, however, the Whippys repeatedly asserted that 'nothing changes', or 'nothing has happened', in their world. When confronted with questions concerning how the school, church or land had changed in his lifetime, for example, John Whippy,¹ a man in his fifties and the head of the household in which I stayed, seemed puzzled, and finally responded that nothing that he could think of really had changed. On the face of it, the claim seemed absurd: surely an increase in number, or a decrease in size with respect to clan members and shares of land, should constitute a change in his view. In Kasavu, however, the Whippys showed a stubborn lack of interest in, or anxiety about, such 'real changes', dismissing the promise of new hybrid forms of coconuts offered by overseas development programmes just as they dismissed the consequences of drastic reductions in the world price for their copra. Conversation among men and women gathered around the kava bowl in the evening turned instead again and again to events fifty or one hundred years earlier – to an ancestor's exploits, or a marriage several generations ago – recounted as effortlessly as if they had happened the week before, as if nothing had been *lost* of those events in the intervening time.

To understand how things fail to change in Kasavu requires an inquiry into how things are measured, or known. As we shall see, the disjuncture between conceptions of kin, land and their uses among urban and rural Whippys ultimately rests on a difference in understandings of the character of what exists prior to knowledge – of what is knowable before it is known – and of the social effects of such knowledge. The question of how things fail to change returns us, then, to Hocart's discovery of knowledge that takes a given and concrete form.

The family tree

Part-Europeans are the 'mixed race' descendants of Europeans who settled in Fiji from the early nineteenth century. At the last government census for which figures are available (1986) there were 10,297 Part-Europeans in Fiji, that is, approximately 2 per cent. of the total national population. They speak both English and Fijian with varying degrees of fluency, although both languages are patois of grammatical and vocabulary borrowings. Since the second generation, the 'old families' (those whose presence in Fiji dates to the mid-nineteenth century) have intermarried almost exclusively with one another, and have continued to do so to this day, although in the current generation Part-Europeans

have intermarried considerably with Fijians.² Over half of all Part-Europeans live on scattered freehold estates³ settled by their ancestors on the island of Ovalau, in the Rewa and Savusavu regions, as well as in Bua, Serua and Ra. For the most part, they cut and dry copra there as they have done for generations (cf. Kelly 1966; Whippy 1977). The remaining half of the population lives in the cities where Part-Europeans have specialized since colonial times in the trades.⁴

The members of the Whippy clan are descendants of David Whippy, an American seaman from Nantucket, Massachusetts, who arrived in Fiji somewhat by accident around 1822 (Brown 1886). As urban clan members routinely remarked with pride, the Whippy clan is one of the largest in Fiji and counts over 1,000 living kin. Clan members speak of themselves as a 'clan' or 'family' (using the English words and never Fijian kinship terms), headed by 'uncles' or 'leaders' who make decisions concerning the allocation of land and who represent the clan in negotiations with the government and in ceremonial contexts. The Whippy clan is internally subdivided into four subclans (referred to also as 'clans') which take their name from each of David Whippy Senior's sons.⁵

From the point of view of people in Kasavu whom I knew, the Whippys living in Suva were marginal figures: many were women now married into other urban families. Many had shown little interest in the clan until recently, orienting themselves more towards their professions or their personal connexions in Suva and overseas. Perhaps most importantly, all were landless – they had no rights to a share of the scattered plots of land acquired by their founding ancestor throughout Fiji – although some now sought to acquire shares of this land through purchase from landed relations. Contact between rural and urban Whippys was confined primarily to contributions for ceremonial contexts. Some clan members in the cities contributed money, kerosene, or other store-bought items for mortuary rites, fundraising, for the Kasavu school, or for presentations to Fijian chiefs with whom the clan maintained special ties. Funds were collected and relayed through several city persons, known as the 'doors' to Kasavu, who visited Kasavu on occasion. Urban clan members talked of their rural kin with a mixture of reverence for their perpetuation of dying family ways and pity for their lowly economic status.⁶

In 1993, together with relations living in Australia and New Zealand, some prominent Whippys working in Suva organized the first 'Descendants of David Whippy Reunion' aimed at 'discovering connexions' among unacquainted kin. The discovery of these connexions meant an acquisition of new knowledge for the organizers: it represented a change. For example, Albert, the chairman of the reunion-organizing committee, was a well-known journalist and public relations consultant in Suva. Albert's children lived and worked in Sydney where they were married to foreigners. Although he was personally close to many of his father's kin, he said, he knew little about the Whippy clan and its history, and never thought much about being a Whippy. It was only at the first family reunion that he discovered that so many of the people whom he *already* knew by other means in town 'were related'.

The objective was to extend personal networks, conceptualized in an idiom of genealogy. In the follow-up reunion planned for December 1996, organizers even hoped to attract 'our white relatives', descendants of their original ancestor's kin from Nantucket, Massachusetts, who since the early 1800s had had no contact with the Fijian Whippys, but who the organizers insisted were 'related'.

Although the reunion project was principally a hobby for organizers and participants, the new knowledge it generated could also generate pecuniary benefits. As one prominent Whippy put it to me, 'I know the connexions. I make it my business to know'. He went on to describe how, on the basis of his superior genealogical knowledge, he was able to demonstrate to a business associate that the associate should call him 'uncle', thus asserting a privilege of generational rank. For their part, the leadership, and most of the Whippys in Kasavu, refused to attend the reunion. If the purpose of the event made little sense to them, their confusion found expression in their vehement insistence that the event was literally misplaced: the Whippys were not from Suva but from Levuka, where David Whippy first landed and married, and from Wainunu, where he died and was buried, the 'uncles' of the Kasavu Whippy clans insisted. Any Whippy gathering would have to take place in one of those locations.

A principal focus of the reunion was a collective effort to produce a complete Whippy family tree.⁷ The Whippys, like other members of the old families living in Suva, devoted great efforts to the creation of bilaterally-reckoned genealogies for their clan. The Whippy family tree was kept at the home of a woman born in Kasavu who had left Kasavu at a young age. When she proudly unrolled the graph paper covered with the names of husbands, wives and their children in tiny script, it stretched from one end of her living room to the other. The idea, she explained, was that each person who visited her might know a different piece of the family history, and might add it to the chart. The family tree conferred a sense of cumulative accomplishment upon its makers, as they congratulated themselves for collecting this information before it was 'lost' with the passing of the older generation.

In the family tree, therefore, knowledge was collective and cumulative: each person brought new knowledge, based on his or her own position in the family and life experience, and could literally fill in a different gap in the tree. There was a *desire* to know the connexions both present and past, a new-found curiosity, about this project. Any singular point or name on the family tree entailed the possibility of seemingly infinite expansion through the addition of generations of ancestors and descendants. The quantity of information known, therefore, was a matter of productivity, not something given at the outset. It was also, if only implicitly, an outcome of choices made concerning which lines to research and which names to include – choices which in turn were experienced in the way they made all the more evident the gaps in what was known (cf. Strathern 1991). When I asked David, a middle-aged clan member who was busy making his own family tree, for example, why his tree was pruned to include only his own line, he explained that he simply did not know the 'connexions' for others, that he would rather not say anything about them for fear of making a mistake.

These information-gathering activities – the expansive possibilities, and also the limiting choices they demand – have a certain familiarity to social scientists, who have long taken the discovery and management of selective facts, from among the infinite depth and breadth of potential information, as a fundamental aspect of human experience. The genealogical model employed by urban Part-Europeans has been a standard tool of such management in anthropologists' own work, moreover. Indeed, the notion that potential information – the raw material of social knowledge – is infinite, and thus cumulatively gained or lost, is one of the implicit universals that render our conception of human differences mean-

ingful (e.g. Kant 1952). Yet, from the point of view of people in Kasavu, as we shall see, this effort to extend a network of kin across the globe is a strange project indeed. Information in their world is bounded, finite, within the boundaries.

Kinship within the boundaries

In marriage, as in all aspects of social life, the Whippys outside the cities repeat a given and inward-looking pattern. To think of the Whippys is to think also of the Simpsons, for as a Whippy would joke whenever he or she encountered a Simpson, 'If no Whippy, no Simpson', prompting the invariable retort that 'if no Simpson, no Whippy!' The relationship traces back to a commercial partnership between apical ancestors, when David Whippy and his friend William Simpson, a carpenter and ship builder from Poplar, England, jointly engaged in a plethora of small business ventures ranging from sugar mills to cargo. There are many stories about the friends' common exploits and about the complementary relations each maintained with alternative Fijian chieftainships. Each clan constitutes the most likely source of marriage partners for the other.⁸ Some phrased this to me as 'a *tabu* against marrying outside the family', while others simply said that it 'closes the circle', or 'renews the link', or 'blood looks for its own'. As one clan 'leader' explained to me:

Those two families, they complete each other. They always intermarry. You always see a Simpson and a Whippy together. It's best to marry *tavale*. It's good. I meet a married couple, and I'm related to both of them that way.

Simpsons and Whippys call one another by the Fijian term *tavale*,⁹ indicating that they are closely related and ideal marriage partners, and the joking, teasing character of the relationship between any Whippy and Simpson is similar to the *tavale* relationship among Fijians.¹⁰

People in Kasavu did not speak of this relationship in an idiom of exchange or reciprocity, however, as did their Fijian neighbours. Marriages, likewise, were not marked by any imperative exchange of mats or whale's teeth. There was no pattern of exchange to the marriages beyond a prohibition against marriage within the Whippy clan. Although marriages were arranged in a minority of cases, an arranged marriage denoted the weakness of a man who could not 'talk to a girl properly', rather than an opportunity for expanding relationships between clans. If 'blood finds its own', then blood did not serve as a particularly salient idiom for elaborating group relationships. Indeed, by Fijian standards, the Whippy and Simpson clans were hardly clans at all, for they had no ritual obligations towards one another and did not constitute salient groupings for the purpose of exchange (cf. Hocart 1952).¹¹

Rather than a medium for connexions, marriage between Whippys and Simpsons was most often discussed as a matter of the *division* of land. The two actions that were said to have founded the Whippy and Simpson clans – a partition of estates among David Whippy and William Simpson and the marriage of David Whippy's daughters to William Simpson's sons – were conceptualized in singular terms, as both land and people divided according to a shared logic. Since then, the inheritance that defined both land and people had followed the same pattern or form (cf. Crocombe & Marsters 1987).

The Kasavu Whippys, then, were not so much members of a group as a shared geometry, dictated by a series of divided parcels acquired by their ancestor. That marriage, for example, should be conceptualized as a spatial quality of land is reflected in the following account, given to me by one elder, of how the Part-Europeans acquired their land:

In those days, a Part-European would steal his wife from a Fijian chief. He couldn't just come calling at the chief's house, or he would get a hell of a hiding. And when the chief would finally hear that his daughter was safe and had been taken as a wife and would be cared for, he would say, '*vinaka!*' [good] and 'from here, to here, to there'. And that land would be given, for the future generations of children they would produce.

The settlement of Kasavu is located on a rectangular plot of freehold land once owned by their ancestor and known as Lovonisikeci, two miles by one mile in area bordering the sea (fig. 1).¹² In formal speeches and casual conversations around the kava bowl, men and women of all ages talked at length about the land, recounting how it was acquired and how it has been divided, and in private conversations they whispered about the many conflicts concerning its current division. This talk often addressed divisions among kin, but also emphasized the form of the place – its shape and boundaries and its internal partition – as people made their points concerning these divisions by tracing the partitions in the rectangular shape of Kasavu in the sand.

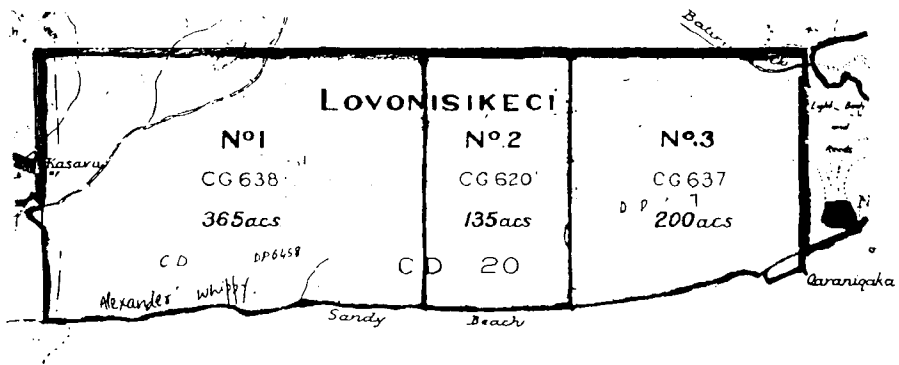


FIGURE 1. Early survey map of Lovonisikeci Estate, Cakaudrove Province, Vanua levu. Courtesy of Government of Fiji Lands Department.

Indeed, the history of Lovonisikeci was a pattern of division legally performed, and the passing of generations was etched in the divisions marked out in the land. Originally, the Whippys emphasized, Lovonisikeci was a square block of land two miles by two miles, later halved by the colonial government into a rectangular plot of two miles by one mile (Fiji Land Claims Commission 1880). The settlement of Lovonisikeci, also, was an act of initial partition. The brothers Samuel and Peter Whippy, Jacob Andrews (described, alternatively, as David Whippy's adopted son, or as his grantee), divided the land into three rectangular shares, each fronting on the sea and stretching inland towards the bush (fig. 1). Samuel took the 'bottom end', Peter took the 'upper end' and David Whippy's adopted son, Jacob Andrews, was given the middle portion. In each generation,

these internal plots were further divided in transactions of actual or approximated inheritance. To sell one's land to someone 'outside the family', all agreed, would be an unpardonable affront to one's kin.¹³

In each successive generation, the land was divided by tracing lines parallel to those the brothers drew in the first act of partition.¹⁴ These divisions created a series of parallel plots of an even length and of successively decreasing widths so that at the time of my fieldwork each plot constituted only a long thin strip of land not much wider than the dirt road that cut through Kasavu, but stretching from the beach to the bush for the entire mile that once constituted the width of the original estate (see fig. 2).¹⁵ The width and arrangement of parallel plots reflected the number of generations since the first act of partition and also the relationship among land-holders, since categorical brothers held proximate plots, while those belonging to separate subclans owned plots in separate parts of the original estate. The titular registration of these divisions was only achieved with considerable hardship. A group of siblings might work their land in common for an entire generation before saving enough money from copra sales to pay the surveyor's fee, and the magnitude of such fees eclipsed the amount of funds accumulated for funerals, marriages, fund-raising for the church or school, or the construction of new houses. This pattern of division was an unchallenged and irreversible generational process. People took my suggestion that the partition of land might proceed according to some other logic – a horizontal or diagonal partitioning of plots, for example – or that the thin strips might be recombined through purchase or some collective arrangement, as absurd.

When asked about inheritance matters, everyone in Kasavu insisted on a series

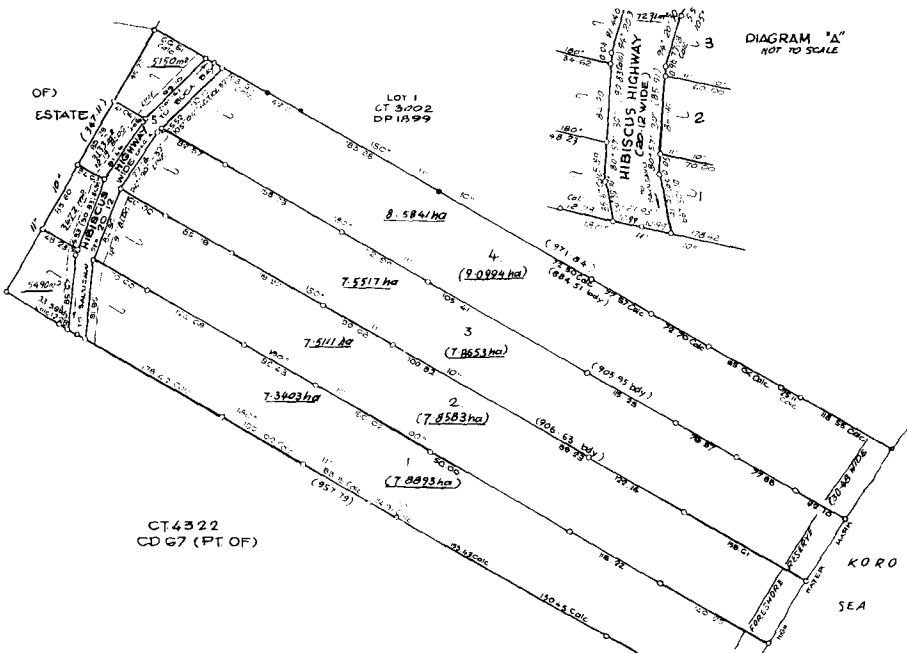


FIGURE 2. Survey map of a portion of Lovonisikeci Estate. CT 4321, lots 1-4. Property of John Whippy, Walter Whippy, Bertie Whippy and Eric Whippy. Courtesy of Government of Fiji Lands Department.

of rules concerning how land was to be divided. The mandate that land stay 'in the family' dictated that daughters should not share in their brothers' inheritances. Matthew Whippy, a leader of the Samuel Clan, spoke for most when he told me that his sons would inherit equal shares in his land, while his daughters could return to Kasavu to settle or draw an income from the land if at any point they had nowhere else to go. In any case, his daughter's children would have no rights in Kasavu, he insisted. In practice, however, at the time of my fieldwork, the actual distribution of shares defied these rules almost as often as it reflected them. Land was willed to daughters or wives in about one fourth of cases, and in considerably more cases Whippy women and their husbands and children lived on or drew income from the estate even if it was not the case that they had 'nowhere to go'. Likewise, it often happened that one or more brothers did not receive a share in their father's land, while a landowner sometimes willed land to the children of others with whom the owner, or his or her spouse, had a personal affinity. Although I was repeatedly told that only those present in Kasavu were entitled to take a share from the land, in practice, in a substantial minority of cases, copra was cut on behalf of brothers (and sisters) living temporarily in the cities and the proceeds were sent to them.¹⁶ Formal and informal 'adoption' of kin was pervasive and, as in the case of the original grant of land to Jacob Andrews, was largely synonymous with inheritance such that an insistence that only sons should inherit land became something of a tautology.

On the surface, this emphasis on residence and land ownership as an arbiter of kinship affiliation conforms with common observations concerning the function of residence and inheritance as a limiting device on otherwise infinitely expandable groups (e.g. Feinberg 1981; Tiffany 1975). However, to look at land as a solution to a 'problem' of how to define groups would be to analyse the situation backwards in this case, for what captivated the collective imagination were not groups and their relations but rather land and its divisions (cf. Myers 1986). The spatial blocks of land, rather than subclan groupings, served as the locus for all social activity in Kasavu. For example, the 'bottom' third of Lovonisikeci and the people living on it were further divided into the 'bottom end' and 'Na Yala Lutuvakati' (after the names of the latter portion's two homesteads). Each of these parcels had its own cemetery and its people had separate leaders, made common presentations at funerals and other exchanges¹⁷ and generally supported one another in the politics of village life. The mathematical calculation of fractions of land was a commonplace element of conversational rhetoric. Everyone knew the number of feet and chains of each parcel and divided fractions of past or present quantities with lightning speed. The reference numbers of each certificate of title, likewise, were known to all and at times the owners and the land merged in conversation into references to these numbers alone.

The division of quantities of land in Kasavu was also a division of quantities of money. Before brothers could muster the necessary costs of legal division, they took turns cutting the copra from the land, sharing equally in its returns.¹⁸ Copra is a crop to which humans add very little. Trees planted many generations ago bear fruit virtually without tending, and one collects the nuts from the ground once they have fallen from the tree. The quantity of nuts harvested is given, not a function of the addition of human energy or ingenuity, and it is largely uniform from one month to the next. Indeed, the only element of human influence on

the yield of the crops mentioned to me was that the trees must be evenly spaced, eight feet apart. Yet even this was a matter in which the present generation took no additional action for, like the initial divisions of land, the even rows of trees had been laid out generations before.

This uniformity in turn was what made division intelligible. The limited but standard cash income that copra planting from these divided parcels yielded was, in its monetary form, a divisible and measurable quantity that correlated with the divisions in the land. Little wonder, then, that the Whippys treated new varieties of coconut, or government admonitions to switch to more lucrative cash crops aimed at increasing their yield, with uninterest and even suspicion. The few who attempted to produce a variable quantity of wealth by planting profitable kava plants for sale in the market, for example, became the victims of sorcery or awoke to find their plants dug up from the soil. Any effort to accumulate resources of food or money would immediately be met with requests that could not be refused (*kerekere*), and people went to considerable lengths to convince others that they had no such resources to share.

The egalitarian character of political life, also, was a source of considerable debate and strife. The leadership of the Whippy clan was a matter of constant contest and uncertainty, and clan members often pointed to the absence of a given source of authority among brothers as a fundamental difference between themselves and their Fijian neighbours.¹⁹ The only clear differences in rank were generational, where generations were evidenced in past or future acts of division. I was told that the constant disputes among brothers over perceived inequalities in status or resources recurred in each generation, and were understood as inevitable until land could be formally divided.

Whatever conflicts there were, however, occurred within fixed parameters. The source of such conflicts was always the same. The disputants, likewise, were always persons arranged side by side as equals by virtue of past or future acts of division. Most of all, it was inconceivable that such disputes might alter the form or pattern of generational division. The latter was utterly beyond these disputes, not available for contest.

This was because there was no given truth in Kasavu, no fixed point in daily conflicts, but the boundaries of the land. The conflicts among those placed side by side within the finite and bounded land were never available as sources or arbiters of collective truth because all positions were equal, coexisting within the boundaries. Unlike societies in which some distinguish themselves through discursive prowess, for example, in Kasavu it was impossible to win a dispute; that is, to change the discursive landscape by convincing others of the truth of one's claim and the falsity of their own. Unlike elsewhere in Fiji, even the Christian church offered no outside source of truth which might stop interpretations (Miyazaki 1997). Indeed, the church too had divided into separate congregations according to the major divisions of land and in the absence of permanent ordained ministers the same clan leaders served as lay preachers. Holding onto the truth of one's claim in the face of parallel challenges, therefore, was as futile as attempting to hold onto resources in the face of others' demands.

In contrast to the fluidity of the truth in daily conflicts, the divisions of land and the outcomes these produced were concrete and preordained. The boundaries of the land existed independently of the perceptual faculties of any person (Gell 1985), and these served as their own points of reference so that space had a

definite shape irrespective of the persons located there. People in Kasavu I knew did not, for example, imagine their spatial world as forming outwardly extending concentric circles around the self (e.g. Munn 1996: 453-54), nor did they show any particular interest in the orientation of persons relative to these divisions (e.g. Danziger 1996). Division was understood as fixed in outside arbiters such as government registers of land titles, rather than in human experience.

Yet although division emerged – for myself as I sought the truth about Kasavu as much as for those living there – as a solution to the endless succession of alternative truths, it was not an *outcome* of that contest. Rather, division was an inevitable generational repetition independent of the identity and ambitions of those living on the land. This grounding of space in its own parameters would contradict a common anthropological assumption that ‘people in all societies ... order space into different spheres which convey a moral focus for acts and things associated with them’ (Beidelman 1986: 49). Spatial organization did not express or reflect (cf. Durkheim 1957) social realities. The divisions did not, for example, correspond to parts of a cosmology, nor did space serve as a ‘metaphor’ for personal or social relations. Division was not so much a shared basis of egalitarian politics as a given set of independent and outside principles, an exercise in the internal relational possibilities of a limited set of numerical and arithmetical rules which correlated with, and verified, the reproduction of generations. Division paralleled social life, just as each plot of divided land lay parallel to the next.

This fixed relationship of quantification is most palpable in the Whippys’ constitution of ‘truth’ or ‘reality’. One day, Matthew Whippy suggested that he show me something ‘real’. We walked along the beach until we reached a rocky point known as Qaraniqaka at the end of the Lovonisikeci estate. Matthew struggled onto the rock, then, standing solemnly, announced this to be the place where Tui Cakau, the high chief, had sailed along the coast and from his cutter had pointed out the boundaries of Lovonisikeci to his ancestor. Raising his arm to emulate the chief, he pointed them out once again: ‘From Qaraniqaka to the mouth of the Kasavu river, and two miles inland. So you see, this is *real* [*dina*]. There’s no question about it’.

I asked how he knew the story to be true. As it turned out, Matthew had learned this story twenty years earlier, when he had visited the National Archives in Suva and obtained a copy of the Land Claims Commission records concerning Lovonisikeci. The story was included in the record of evidence presented by his ancestors to the Commission. In reading the documented account, Matthew recognized its veracity, for it retraced the shape of the land that was so familiar to him and mentioned the name of the rock that he had known all his life.

The ‘real’ for Matthew was manifest in the identity of the physical and documentary geometry of the land, in the relational verification of fixed correspondences. It was something quite different from the real as outside grounding, whose vanishing has been widely celebrated and lamented (Baudrillard 1981; Strathern 1992). In Kasavu, as we saw, one could not hold onto one’s interpretations of disputes in the face of the equally true claims of equally situated kin in exactly the same way as one could not accumulate or hold onto wealth in the face of the demands of categorical brothers because there was no outside grounding for either kind of claim. Instead, like the recitational ‘reading’ of the Qu’ran among religious adherents (Baker 1992), for example, reality was encountered in the quotidian reconfirmation of what was already known. Each official land

survey performed in the course of division reconfirmed the true dimensions of the whole through the re-measurement of the part. Even when, as in Matthew's case, facts were obtained from sources outside of Kasavu, the truth was found not in the discovery or management of additional information that shifted one's point of view, but in its correlation with and reconfirmation of what was given from the start.²⁰ In this sense, division is an exercise in verification, a rehearsal of the given truth, as much as a principle of kinship or ownership.

We now might better understand the Whippys' insistence that things do not change in Kasavu. On the one hand, disputes did not change things because they could not be won, that is, they could not change what knowledge was already given. On the other hand, although the passing of time was marked by division nothing was added or taken away, in the endless repetition of this process, from the prefigured whole. Division, rather, verified what was always given and completely known. Everyone, everything was a fraction of a whole that existed in the past but still existed because nothing had been taken away. The past and the present were linked not only in the metaphorical terms of memory (Munn 1995), therefore, but in the spatial form of areas of land in turn locked into a fixed numerical relationship of identity to the replication of generations. Although one could not 'go back' in time to the point at which the Whippy clan was one estate and one ancestral figure, as the Suva Whippys sought to reassemble their family tree, it was not necessary to do so, for the entire estate was still there, in the same field. In both the divisions of land and the disputes among those who took the resulting shares, therefore, no new perspective, no changed position, could be individually or collectively attained.

The limits of models

As noted above, the correspondences that division rehearsed had a concrete form: the parallel tracts of land, generated according to European notions of ownership as the separation of one interest from another, but divorced from notions of alienability or profitability, of property as a means to social ends, served as the concrete conditions of egalitarianism, social and epistemological.

By concrete, I mean that it did not point to a further, greater, more complex reality beyond itself, as metaphors do (Wagner 1986). Land was not of a different order of magnitude from knowledge about land as, for the Suva Whippys for example, clan genealogy was of a different order from the family tree. As a result, land did not reflect any particular perspective (cf. Strathern 1991). The apparent irrationality of these divisions, from the point of view of urban clan members, then, might be understood as an exercise in the preservation of concreteness.

Rather than seek to interpret the division of land as a representation of social relations, therefore, it seems more fruitful to understand division as one example of knowledge in conditions where reality is concretely prefigured. What difference does it make that the 'facts' in Kasavu are fractions of chains of land rather than a given and closed cosmology, for example (Harrison 1989)? Since academic analysis calls for outside interpretation rather than division, I will violate the logic described to this point with an addition.

The first formal definition of number is attributed to the nineteenth-century German mathematician Frege. In Frege's view, although number did not have a spatial location, nor could it even be imagined, it nevertheless was not simply an

attribute of other objects but an independent object of its own (1983: 134). If number was an *object*, Frege argued, it was also a special *relationship*, one of equivalence between entities that ‘fall under’ that number. Equinumerosity, he noted, was a one-to-one correlation among elements in a set: a waiter who wished to place as many knives as plates on a table could ensure that this was done by placing one knife to the right of each plate such that plates and knives correlated in a one-to-one positional relationship, for example (1983: 141). Crucial to Frege’s definition was the understanding that the form of such a numerical relationship remained constant throughout: if the waiter were to begin in midcourse to place a knife to both the right and left of the plate it would no longer be possible to speak of a singular number of plates and knives. As real objects, Frege also argued, arithmetic truths existed *a priori* (1983: 159), even though they were also the objects of analysis. Number, in this view, then, might be understood as a relationality which takes a concrete, objectified form.

In the twentieth century, the discovery of new kinds of number altogether led to an abandonment of Frege’s conception of number as relational object in favour of an understanding of number as representation. In its old-fashioned quality, therefore, Frege’s conception aptly captures the logic of the curious practice of division in Kasavu that results in strips of land no wider than a road but a mile in length. In the product of parallel instances of a singular form, what the Whippys generated was pure commensurability,²¹ what Frege called number; that is, a literal analytical relationship that exists *a priori* even though it is also the object of their knowledge practices. Like Frege’s conception of number, division worked, as an analytical device, only because Lovonisikeci was an object whose boundaries were concretely defined. It would be impossible, for example, to divide a ‘society’ or a group in this way, for the rules of arithmetic would not apply to something that is not prefigured as a finite quantity with its own given rules of analysis.

The relationship of each part to each whole in Kasavu, in other words, could be known perfectly (not simply modelled) in numerical form – as a quantity of acres, a number of chains – and that relationship is an ‘object’, something *a priori* and fixed. Division was an *a priori* analytical form which proceeded according to a series of one-to-one correlations (boundaries) and which was deductive (rather than additive) in character, since the raw materials of information (quantity) and the method of analysis (arithmetic division) were given. Divided land was a finite object, not a resource for further growth. This is why it could not transform itself into wealth, despite the urgings of urban kin. It did not increase over time, but rather was partitioned away while also remaining concretely whole. It was inconceivable, for example, that the Whippys collectively might ‘amount’ to more (or less) land, wealth or prestige in present-day Fiji than did their ancestor David Whippy individually one hundred and fifty years ago.

Such a literally cartographic conception of space is bound to provoke a sense of incredulity among late modern social scientists not unlike the exasperation expressed by the Suva Whippys over the Kasavu Whippys’ irrational and self-defeating practices. The fixity of life in Kasavu is difficult to reconcile with the contributions made by twentieth-century ethnographies of space to the deconstruction of the assumption ‘[t]hat space is static and to be contrasted with the dynamism of time; that spatial boundaries are always fixed, relatively enduring forms marked off on the ground’ (Munn 1996: 465).²² Likewise, kinship, in this

case, would seem to make too literal the kinds of divisions or categorizations that anthropologists use only as models, tools for imposing limits on what is understood as a potentially infinite field of data. Anthropologists by now are accustomed to meeting such 'cartographic' modelling practices with the realist critique that such categories are only artefacts of one particular perspective, only 'a way of looking at things' (Hobart 1995: 52, emphasis in original).

This reminder of the indeterminacy of the real world behind the models is, of course, a standard step where knowledge takes its subject as potentially infinite. The inherent expansiveness of potential genealogical 'ties' for the Suva Whippys was depicted, for example, in the visual image of the genealogical tree (Bouquet 1996) whose possible lines extended outward indefinitely, into ever more numerous and distant connexions.²³ The faith in the infinite complexity of the realities out of which anthropologists and their subjects make models (Geertz 1973) in turn always anticipates the decomposition of such models into complexity. As such, kinship, the paradigmatic set of anthropological models, is routinely subjected to such critique (e.g. Schneider 1984). The limit of models is as fixed and given, in this view, as the boundaries of land in Kasavu.

Yet the impulse to liberate the 'real' complexity of life from its bounded categories (e.g. Foucault 1991) would fail to resonate with the aspirations or interests of people in Kasavu who showed little interest in either freedom or ambiguity. In Kasavu, of course, the limits were elsewhere. Ultimately, therefore, the difference between the Suva Whippys' family trees and the divisions in Kasavu was that division did not delineate, create, or represent groups and their land rights – it did not serve as any kind of 'model of' or 'model for' (Geertz 1973: 93) their reality. Hocart's well-known struggle to find a place for himself in the anthropological debates of his time suggests the challenge that will lie where the limits of our models are already indigenously realized.

NOTES

I thank Don Brenneis, John Comaroff, Simon Harrison, Hiro Miyazaki, Adam Reed, Jane Riles, Nicholas Thomas, Chris Tennant, Christina Toren and Marilyn Strathern for their challenging criticism. I thank the members of the Whippy clan in Kasavu and Suva for their friendship and generosity. This research was funded by grants from the Cambridge Commonwealth Livingstone and Overseas Trust, the Ford Foundation, the Smuts Fund, the William Wyse Fund and the American Bar Foundation.

This essay is written in remembrance of Arthur Whippy.

¹ The personal names in this article are pseudonyms. References to specific individuals have been omitted from the account where pseudonyms would not adequately protect anonymity.

² The only demographic study to include Part-Europeans as a separate category, conducted in 1966, found that over 50 per cent. of Part-Europeans married other Part-Europeans, while over 20 per cent. married 'Europeans' and 25 per cent. married Fijians (Kelly 1966: 5). Many Part-Europeans also trace their ancestry to newcomer Europeans, Tongans, Samoans and other Polynesians.

³ Over 83 per cent. of the land in Fiji is held in 'native trust' – allocated to specific Fijian clans, inalienable, and administered by the government. This is the result of a colonial policy, discussed extensively elsewhere (e.g. France 1969), to limit the alienation of Fijian land. As part of this policy, a Land Claims Commission was established immediately after Cession to investigate the validity of every 'European title'. On the Commission's recommendation, the Governor in Council issued Crown Grants to Europeans in only a minority of cases. For example, of the ten claims submitted to the Land Claims Commission by the heirs of David Whippy, only five of these ultimately were endorsed by the colonial administration. Except for a short period during the administration of Governor Im Thurn (1905-8), the sale of Fijian land has been prohibited by law since then and

continues to be prohibited today.

⁴ During the colonial period, Part-Europeans living in the urban areas formed a kind of artisan class specializing in carpentry, boat building and in machinery works for the sugar refining industry (cf. Kelly 1966). For example, until recently, members of the Whippy clan owned a shipyard in Suva where they built high quality small- and medium-sized vessels. The post-colonial period has seen the demise of the markets for these trades and few Part-Europeans alive at the time of my research still knew the skills of boat building, although those living in the cities worked in large numbers as mechanics and telephone or gas utilities employees in the case of men and in clerking and secretarial positions in the case of women.

⁵ A person born into a Part-European clan is a member of his or her father's clan. Women join their husbands' clans at marriage and residence is virilocal. However, a person also may choose to live with his or her mother's kin and to participate fully in kin affairs (albeit while retaining the father's surname, in the cases familiar to me). Some do this formally by presenting food and valuables to their mother's kin; more commonly, a person simply takes up residence on his or her mother's land, or is willed land by his or her mother and moves to that land to cut copra there.

⁶ Almost everyone in Kasavu had visited the cities on occasion, and about half of the men had worked in the shipyards or in other manual occupations for a period from several weeks to several years.

⁷ The organizer of the genealogy session at the family reunion, a senior member of the clan, was a bishop in the Church of Latter Day Saints, and his religion's approach to the collection of genealogical data directed the form in which genealogical data were collected at that reunion. However, other Whippys in Suva, most of whom were Methodists, privately expressed distaste for his use of their family tree for his own religious purposes and emphasized that their interest in family history was not influenced by his.

⁸ In this respect, the Whippys and Simpsons are typical of many of the original Part-European clans of Fiji. The Simpson clan is subdivided similarly to the Whippy clan. Each clan is undifferentiated from the point of view of the other, and members of both clans were only vaguely aware of the existence of the other's subclans and could not identify these with any particularity.

⁹ As Hocart observed, the term *tavale*, often translated as 'cross-cousin', actually refers more to a category of marriageable persons, persons in ego's generation from the opposing moiety, than to genealogical cross-cousins. Hocart (1952) insisted that this was not simply a case of the 'extension' of kin terms but rather a form of reckoning different from the European genealogical one. In practice, only a small number of marriages among Whippys and Simpsons, relative to the data reported for Fijians (e.g. Sahlins 1962: 161), involve actual or classificatory cross-cousins if these are reckoned in genealogical terms (cf. Quain 1948).

¹⁰ The practice of marrying *tavale* had waned among urban Whippys at the time of my fieldwork, although a preference for marrying *tavale* was expressed by urban and rural clan members alike.

¹¹ The ineffectuality of clan membership as a divisive principle was made particularly apparent to me when it was necessary to divide the population of Kasavu for the purposes of competitive fund-raising for the settlement primary school. The usual spatial divisions would not do since not all school alumni were associated with particular parcels of land. Rather than resort to clan membership, Kasavu leaders arbitrarily invented four 'houses' of different colours and invited people to choose at random which house to join.

¹² Kasavu was the name of the Fijian village that had been located on the land before Tui Cakau, the high chief of Cakaudrove, gave the land to David Whippy and moved the villagers further north. Modern-day Kasavu is not a village in official terms because there is no common land. The entirety of the land is subdivided into separately owned tracts of freehold land.

¹³ For example, the northernmost forty-acre strip of Lovonisikeci was owned by two Simpson brothers who purchased it from a member of the Peter Clan by virtue of the fact that their mother was a woman from the Samuel clan, married to a Simpson man who, in turn, was the son of a Whippy mother. The transaction thus was described as analogous to inheritance. The sole case of a sale of Lovonisikeci land to an 'outsider', an Indian shopkeeper, was explained to me as an act of complete and purposeful repudiation of membership in the Whippy clan owing to shame concerning certain actions of the seller's father a generation before.

¹⁴ This pattern of division accords with practices with respect to lands owned by other portions of the Whippy clan elsewhere in Fiji, as well as with the practices of other Part-European clans such as the Rounds and the Shutes.

¹⁵ For example, the plots shown in the plan in fig. 2 reflect the subdivision of one small portion

of land one generation ago. At the time of my fieldwork, each of these portions had been further subdivided informally into four or five shares by tracing the future line of division with a piece of string. Those living there hoped to register their division and obtain separate legal titles in the near future as some of the people sharing in these informally subdivided portions already wished to divide these again.

¹⁶ Typically, sons in Kasavu either lived and planted on their father's land along with their wives and children, or moved to the towns for a period of time to work as wage labourers.

¹⁷ When the Whippys participated in exchange with Fijians, they represented spatial groupings such as 'Whippy Kasavu' or 'bottom end' as if these were Fijian *mataqali* – kinship groupings organized for the purposes of exchange.

¹⁸ At the time of fieldwork, the land was divided into plots of approximately twenty-five acres yielding five to six tons of copra each year which the Whippys sold for around F\$350 (£160) a ton. As each plot usually was owned in common among several brothers, brothers took turns harvesting the copra in alternate months, thus sharing the annual income of the land evenly. Some also grew small quantities of kava on their land for sale in the market at Savusavu. In addition to copra, the Whippys planted taro, cassava and other root crops and fished for subsistence. A handful of people also drew some cash income from other sources such as contributions from relatives overseas, government disability assistance, or wages from serving as the settlement pre-school teacher or for working on a government ship.

¹⁹ Although many said that deference should be given to the oldest member of each generation, there was considerable debate about who was in fact the oldest.

²⁰ This identity of land and documents has a genealogy for the Whippys and other Part-Europeans that traces back to their early ancestors' eagerness to obtain deeds and other documentary proof of conveyance from Fijians long before such deeds had any legal enforceability. Early settlers placed great emphasis on the significance of their deeds, registered these meticulously with American and British agents and produced them for the captains of visiting warships to enforce. David Whippy's house in Levuka served as a repository for the deeds of American citizens in Fiji and many of these were lost in a succession of fires that, according to the Kasavu Whippys, were purposely started by neighbouring Fijians with the intent of destroying these documents.

²¹ Consider, for example, how the Whippy universe might differ if land were divided according to some other logic, thus generating plots of other geometrical forms that did not partake in this simple numerical correlation: Russell credits Pythagoras with the discovery of the concept of 'incommensurability' in the course of attempting to make numerical sense of the form of triangle. The triangle had a side length of one but a hypotenuse of a length of the square root of two 'which appeared not to be a number at all' (Russell 1993: 4).

²² For example, absent from the Whippys' ancestral stories are metaphors or actual experiences of travelling so often encountered among Fijians and other Austronesian peoples (e.g. Munn 1996).

²³ For example, in the Fijian case the problem addressed by kinship terminology concerns how to bring a potentially infinite field of persons into the fold of immediate kin (Sahlins 1962: 154).

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Division dans les lignes de démarcation

Résumé

Dans la colonie partiellement européenne de Kasavu à Fidji, à chaque génération la terre est divisée en parcelles dont la surface est continuellement décroissante mais dont la forme reste identique. La parenté conçue comme division est à mon avis une forme de connaissance qui n'est pas représentative des relations sociales et donc n'effectue pas de 'changement'. Cela contraste avec une logique additive de relations de parenté dans les populations urbaines partiellement européennes, logique selon laquelle l'information est potentiellement infinie et donc toujours incomplète, et la connaissance s'attache aux personnes et aux changements au moyen de techniques de découverte collective.

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