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OF GOD AND DEATH: MUSIC IN RITUAL AND EVERYDAY LIFE
A MUSICAL ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE KOTAS
OF SOUTH INDIA

BY

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B.A., Oberlin College, 1984

M.Mus., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1989

THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Music
in the Graduate College of the
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1997

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WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS BY

RICHARD KENT WOLF

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A MUSICAL ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE KOTAS
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THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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THIS WORK IS DEDICATED TO THE KOTAS

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SYSTEMS OF TRANSLITERATION

Major Indian languages, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Hindi and Sanskrit, are transliterated according to Library of Congress systems. The most common symbols for Tamil are reproduced to the left below. Symbols adopted for tribal/subregional languages follow those adopted by linguists and anthropologists for those languages. Kota symbols draw on the work of Emeneau (with slight variations, see comparison with Tamil below); Irulas, on the work of Zvelebil, Kurumba language material draws from Kapp, Badaga, or Hockings, etc. These latter languages possess no indigenous orthography.

Tamil	Kota	Additional Kota sounds
அ — a	a	
ஆ — ā	ā	
இ — i	i	
ஈ — ī	ī	
உ — u	u	
ஊ — ū	ū	
எ — e	e	
ஏ — ē	ē	
ஐ — ai	—	
ஓ — o	o	
ஔ — ō	ō	
ஔ — au	—	
க — ka	ka	ga
ங — ŋa	ŋ	
ச — ca	ca	
ஜ — ċa	ñ	
ட — ta	ta	da
ண — na	na	
த — ta	ta	da
ந — na	na	
ப — pa	pa	ba
ம — ma	ma	
ய — ya	y	
ர — ra	ra	ra (flap)
ல — la	la	
வ — va	va	
ழ — ʎa	—	
ள — la	la	
ற — ra	—	
ள — ṇa	ṇa (alveolar)	ṭa ḍa (alveolar)
ஜ — ja	ja	
ஸ — śa	—	
ச — sa	—	
ஸ — sa	—	
ஹ — ha	—	

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE

DESCRIPTIVE INTRODUCTION

This study is based on my 1990-92 fieldwork in the Nilgiri hills, a section of India's Western Ghats near the junction of the three south Indian states, Tamilnadu, Kerala, and Karnataka. During my research I devoted considerable time to attending public and private rituals and festivals among a variety of communities, including the Todas, Irulas, Kurumbas, Badagas and surrounding Tamil, Malayali and Kanadiga populations. My fieldwork, however, focused on the Kotas, the traditional musicians, blacksmiths and artisans in system of economic and ritual exchange sustained until the early 20th century.

The introduction that follows falls into three sections: the first provides a culturally and historically descriptive background for the study; the second considers two theoretical concepts, "ritual" and "tribe," and leads the reader through the arguments of each dissertation chapter. The third discusses my fieldwork and methodology and concludes with historical consideration of fieldwork conducted by David G. Mandelbaum and Murray B. Emeneau, whose data and insights I have attempted to incorporate in my own analysis throughout.

I have felt compelled to be eclectic in my choices of approach and data in this work. This may seem ironic, for (unfashionable as it may seem to choose such an ethnographic subject) the boundaries of the Kota community as it exists today are not difficult to define. The Kotas are not an elusive, nor an imagined community: they possess a single, agreed-upon name, have been, in recent history, continuous inhabitants of a fixed number of locales; they speak a common and distinct language, and have maintained for the last several hundred years a steady population in the range of 1,000-1,500 persons. By a particular accident of history, Kota society has been cast as if it were ethnically isolated, but it probably never was to any significant degree.

Misapprehension occurred because the colonial label "tribe" was applied to the Kotas, implying, in part, that this was a community somehow ancient and pre-Hindu; and because the Kotas live in a hilly region, the Nilgiris of south India, which lay-people, and until recently, scholars thought was a geographic and subcultural enclave.¹

¹The archaeologist Allen Zagarell has been one of the recent scholars to explicitly counter the notion that Nilgiri tribes were "autonomous communities which have broadly shaped their own histories in the confines of their isolated, forest-covered mountain," arguing instead on the basis of inscriptions, rock paintings and oral histories that "the communities and their relationships to one another are the consequence of long-term interaction with centralized

Although Kotas undoubtedly possess socio-cultural identities of their own, as a society they are also squarely situated among the congeries of polities forming south Asian civilization.² It has been one of my intentions in this work, through sets of carefully drawn comparisons, to demystify the tribal appellation as it is applied to the Kotas; also, to explore what the notion of “tribe” means to the Kotas as they view themselves and as they are viewed, in a multi-ethnic, agrarian (and emerging industrial), environmentally unique (though ecologically raped through deforestation and agricultural and industrial pollution), post-colonial region periodically flooded with south Asian tourists.

My other intention in this work, as indicated by the title, is to show how notions of divinity and death strongly inform and are generated by the ways the Kotas subjectively constitute themselves as a people. Cultural and historical details of these identities are worked out, in part, through the performance and interpretation of music and rituals, and the process of deciding what and how rituals are to be performed. Musical performance, and the classification of musical pieces and sounds, mediate between highly bracketed, formalized treatments of divinity and death (rituals), and the treatment of these themes, and others, in everyday life. The organization of this dissertation roughly reproduces the components of this argument: much of part one considers aspects of “everyday life,” part two concerns “rituals” and part three focuses on “musical classification.”

Although this is ostensibly a work of “ethnomusicology,” I define my object of inquiry as something slightly broader than what might be termed “musical culture.” The emphasis in parts one and two has been on analyzing realms of life in which music sometimes occurs, lives of musicians and religious rituals, rather than musical forms and concepts, musicianship and musical behavior, or aesthetics as so-called “windows” into Kota culture. Following the first two heavily contextualized treatments of music in parts one and two, I begin in part three to define my units of inquiry more musically, by genre and style. This approach is justifiable on the grounds that, although music is extremely important to certain kinds of activities, it is not a central, life-defining activity for most Kotas. As I will explore in part one, Kota musicians cannot be studied subculturally as one might study jazz musicians, or even Karnatak musicians, who are apt to frame and represent their lives in richly musical terms. This does not mean Kota musical life does not exist, is not rich, or is not worthy of ethnomusicological study, it simply means that it must be approached from several angles:

complex societies” (Zagarell 1994, 183).

²I use the term “polity” here, after the historian Ronald Inden (1990, 28), who follows Collingwood, because the nature of the social entities, as agents and patients, that can be described throughout the sub-continent are heterogeneous and complex. I will adopt the terms “society” and “culture” at a local level to describe particular kinds of entities in specific situations, but will make no further attempt to theorize these terms.

the focus of each approach, the vertex of each angle, may not be strictly musical.³

It will be useful now to introduce the Kotas, and provide additional background as regards their language, kinship, physical environment, religion, history and political relations.

THE KOTAS

The Kotas, numbering about 1,500 by their own estimates in 1990-92, inhabit seven villages covering a rather surprising expanse in the Nilgiri hills of south India. The Nilgiri hills are one of the most widely visited and written about places in India, especially near the tourist haven and former British hill station Ootacamund (the administrative headquarters of the district), and have been host to a variety of peoples—indigenous and non-indigenous. Now a center of Anglo-Indian, elite culture and schooling, “Ooty” is also a favorite vacation spot and a popular site for shooting Indian films.

The origin of the name *Kota*,⁴ or its various spellings and variants in Tamil and Badaga reproduced in early British accounts as *Cohatur*, *Kohatur*, *Kotar*, *Kothur* is obscure,⁵ but is close to the name Kotas use for themselves: *ko·v*. *Ko·v* refers to a Kota man or men, and women. *Ko·yt* is the term for a Kota woman. In this dissertation I retain the English language terms *Kota* (*sing.*) and *Kotas* (*pl.*). Kotas speak their own Kota language, or *ko·v ma·nt* a Dravidian language of the south Dravidian sub-group (Emeneau 1967) closely related to the neighboring tribal language of the Todas. *Ma·nt* is a term that encompasses English meanings of language, proverb, saying, dialect, word, meaning, and speech style depending on context.⁶

Throughout this dissertation I will attempt to provide etymologies for Kota words. Let me state at the outset that I do not believe the historical derivation of a term necessarily bears upon the way present-day

³This recalls for me a recent critique in the pages of *Ethnomusicology* in which Bonnie Wade takes Christopher Waterman to task for arguing that “the irreducible object of ethnomusicological interest is not the music itself, a somewhat animistic notion, but the historically situated human subjects who perceive, learn, interpret, evaluate, produce and respond to music” (1991, 66). Wade counters that music is the departure for all ethnomusicologists, or else “we would all be called anthropologists” (1994, 172), but offers the more conciliatory if unsurprising comment that “we all study what interests us most and for what we are best prepared.” I would contribute to this dialogue that we do and should choose as a focus in our studies the objects which may be most appropriate as independent, cohesive, or internally represented units in the cultures we choose to study and that indeed, “music” or “musical culture” may not be central to such units. One can study the musical culture of American public sports, but I believe it is not too hazardous to assert that one needs to know far more about the sports events, rules, fans, and sports history than about the content of the music or the musicianship of the performers to produce an effective ethnomusicological analysis.

⁴The “t” in the word *Kota* is sometimes pronounced retroflex and sometimes dental by non-Kotas. The town of Kotagiri (‘Kota hill,’ the Tamil name for the town occupying the site of the Kota village Porga·r) is written in Tamil with a dental “t.”

⁵Derogatory folk-etymologies for the term provided by non-Kotas will be left out of this account.

⁶There is no problem with ambiguity in this term, but the fluid classification the term reflects is important to note.

language speakers conceptualize or make sense of a term. For the purposes of this work, creative or “folk” etymologies constructed by Kotas are as useful as those carefully puzzled out according to the principles of Dravidian linguistics; however, they serve different purposes: the former betoken a form of consciousness, the latter form components of historical processes whose details can only be inferred. Most Sanskrit and other foreign terms, it should be noted, probably entered the Kota language through Tamil. The finding that a Kota term derives from Sanskrit is never intended in this work to imply that the concept associated with that term is foreign. An anecdote cogently illustrates the irrelevance of “objective” linguistic history to understanding subjective attachment to language as an identity marker: Mathi, the mother of my friend and assistant Duryodana once explained to me that while Tamils used the Tamil term *ṭampḷar* (i.e. tumbler) for the metal, lipped glass commonly used in India, the Kotas used the Kota term *gila·cu* (glass)!

Kota villages are organized in rows of houses, or sets of rows of houses, called *ke·rs*. These ideally correspond with exogamous village clans although there are some exceptions. This means that there are acceptable marriage partners for any Kota both within and outside his or her natal village.⁷

KOTA VILLAGES IN THE NILGIRIS

The Nilgiri district of Tamilnadu state is a 927 square mile, triangle-shaped hilly region bordering Kerala and Karnataka to the west and north and lying at the juncture of the Western and Eastern Ghats (the two most prominent mountain ranges of Peninsular India). Forty percent of this region lies above 5,900 feet, and at Dodabetta (“Big Peak”), the second highest peak in Peninsular India, the elevation reaches 8,650 feet above mean sea level (Lengerke and Blasco 1989). Six of the Kota villages lie on the Nilgiri plateau.

Kota villages are called *ko·ka·l*, a term for which my Kota friends and guides have presented several etymologies. Mr. Sivan of Me·na·r village explained to me in 1990 that the *ka·l* in *ko·ka·l* means in this context, ‘leg.’ The *ko·ka·l* is where the Kotas (*ko·v*; the *v* disappears in this folk etymology) planted their leg (*ka·l*). The ‘leg’ may also refer to a story of origin in the Nilgiris the Kotas maintain: the Kotas believe a black cow (*ka·r a·v*) led them through the Nilgiris and indicated, by standing and spontaneously issuing milk, or by pointing its leg, the sites on which villages should be built.⁸ Duryodana and his father, the musician S. Raman, and later others, indicated that *ka·l* in this context was a morpheme meaning ‘place’ or ‘area.’ It is clear, however, that the term conjures up in the minds of Kotas the notion of a place subjectively constituted

⁷Many Indian communities, in contrast, practice village exogamy.

⁸A version of this story, justifying the location of all Nilgiri tribal villages, is provided by Emeneau in *Kota Texts* (1944 I:45). In this version, the cow spontaneously issues milk, a theme widespread throughout the Indic region.

as “home” for the Kotas. The importance of place in Kota ritual and musical life will emerge as a recurrent theme in the three parts of this work.

Although there is no intervillage consensus, some consider the first village to have been Me-na-r, (‘High land’), known in Tamil and spelled in English as Kundah Kotagiri.⁹ It is the furthest south among Ko-ka-ls (about thirty kilometers south-southwest of Ootacamund) and also closest to the Kota land of the dead. A second village is Kolme-l (known in Tamil and Badaga as Kollimalai), where I conducted most of my fieldwork. Traveling north and slightly east toward the city of Ooty, one may look down to the right from Manjur-Ooty road, and view the large Hindu temple built for Raṅgayno-r (also called *rankanātar* in Tamil and *raṅgayno-r* in Kota) which lies at the edge of Kolme-l village.

About twenty-five kilometers to the northwest of Ooty lies the Kota village of Kurgo-j, known in Tamil as Shōlūr Kōkāl. The Kurgo-j people are known for ruggedness, earthiness, their preservation of traditional crafts and hunting, and their vigorous, if infrequent, celebrations of the secondary mortuary ritual, *varlḍa-v* ‘dry death’ or ‘dry funeral’. These villagers still carry on a tradition of tending and milking semi-wild mountain buffaloes and maintain some degree of ritual relations—and more importantly, perhaps, social relations—with the Todas. Kurgo-j is the most populated of Kota villages (I would estimate 450 people). Continuing northwest towards Mysore, roughly fifty kilometers from Ooty, the elevation drops to about 3500 feet, temperature rises, and vegetation changes. Gudalur town hosts a variety of immigrants from surrounding states,¹⁰ But before Gudalur became the busy (though small) town it is today, the entire city was encompassed by what Kotas considered to be their own land. What was once the largest Kota village, Kala-c, has been almost completely decimated in the last few generations. Only a few families remain and too few people remain to facilitate the performance of religious ceremonies. A few documents exist to substantiate Kota claims of ownership of nearby lands (though I have not seen them personally) and court battles have been initiated—but no hope remains for reconstituting the village as a functioning unit.

About fifteen kilometers northeast of Ooty lies the village of Ticga-r, or, in Tamil and Badaga, Trichygady.¹¹ The women of this village are known for their exceptional abilities as dancers and singers. It is one of the few villages that still maintains the traditional female occupation of pottery-making. Like in Kurgo-j, Ticga-r villagers tend buffalo herds that provide milk, curds and clarified butter; cattle are also are

⁹Kundah is a nearby Badaga village which is currently important as the site of a major hydroelectric power station. Kotagiri is a Badaga term meaning “Kota hill.”

¹⁰For a study of the relationship between individuals and social groups among the variety of the inhabitants of Gudalur, “a community at a crossroads,” see Adams (1985).

¹¹The etymology of the village name is obscure—Kota sometimes joke and invent etymologies—but no one claims to know or has presented a serious story about the name Ticga-r. As the name stands it could mean ‘fire’ (*tic*) ‘field’ (*ka-r*).

periodically slaughtered for meat.

Thirty kilometers east of Ooty lies the city of Kotagiri. A park, once the site of a *ko·ka·l*, lies in the center of the city. Nearby was the second site of Porga·r village, a place now called Aga·l, said to have been damaged by an earthquake. The present site of Porga·r village is a hill on the western outskirts of the city. Porga-to·r (residents of Porga·r village) are the most cosmopolitan of the Kotas—many are well educated and speak English. They are also known both for their ritual conservatism (concerning their own deities) and for their worship of non-Kota, Hindu deities.

Northeast another twenty-five kilometers from Kotagiri is the seventh Kota village, Kina·r (“lowland”)—called Kil Kōtagiri in Tamil and Badaga. The village is quite small (perhaps 60 inhabitants—some of whom reside elsewhere most of the year). Ticga·r, Porga·r and Kina·r form a subcultural unit in that they are geographically proximate, share certain ritual practices with one another that are not shared with the other four villages, and maintain frequent marriage ties.

VILLAGE GODS AND RITUAL SPECIALISTS

Hindus maintain a large pantheon of deities, some local, some pan-Indic, some described in the most ancient texts, some newly appearing. Although Kotas participate in Hindu worship, and some Kotas would label themselves as *Hindus* as well as *tribals*, they possess a distinctive set of gods which are entirely their own. These gods, like Hindu gods, may be known under more than one name and under different names in different villages. Unlike some Hindu gods, however, Kota gods are not highly differentiated in terms of function and are not associated with elaborate and distinctive mythologies. As a consequence of this, Kotas do not generally speak of praying to or invoking a *particular* god (except in specific contexts, such as the part of a ritual in which a particular temple is involved),¹² they refer to the general concept of god, either using the term *devr*, a term of Sanskrit origin (*deva*, Indo-Aryan cognate of *deity*, DBIA 219), *de·r*, a Dravidian term that is often used in reference to a temple chariot or a spirit medium (DEDR 3459), or *co·ym*, from the Sanskrit

¹²The linguist M. B. Emeneau's informant Sulli seems to imply in the *Kota texts* (1944) he dictated to Emeneau that there was in fact a pantheon differentiated by function: a rain god, sun god, wind god, etc. These pantheistic notions were most certainly adopted from Hinduism. Kotas may speak of such associations in a general sense, but all gods are involved in all of these functions. When I asked the ritual leader (*mundka·no·n*) Caln of Kurgo·j village which god they pray to during the rain ceremony, he responded (in Kota) “there is no specific god, we just pray to Bhagvān [a Hindu term for the godhead] saying ‘God, let rains come!’ [*co·yme· may vako·tk*]; ‘God, today let rain come, let the crops rise, let good results come; all in one *vara·r*, saying “god” [i.e. concentrating only on god],’ we make a request.” The *vara·r* is the traditional Kota striped shawl worn especially on ritual occasions and by certain ritual specialists. “All in one *vara·r*” is a performative utterance of unity—by saying “we all share one cloak,” the prayer pronounces that the village is speaking in one unified voice.

svāmin, which does not originally mean god, but rather “owner, proprietor, master, lord or owner” (Monier-Williams 1990, 1284; DBIA 162).

Nevertheless, for sake of completeness it will be useful to catalogue the names of the gods associated with each village, and, to the extent it is useful, their attributes. Me-na-r village gods are named according to the most simple nomenclature Kotas employ. Male deities are “father gods” and the female deity is a “mother.” Temples for the father and mother deities are quite simple: formerly of thatch and now of cement they are rectangular, twenty to thirty-five square meters; the shorter sides of the rectangle comprise the structure’s front and back, the front usually facing east. The gabled roof is often decorated with metonymic signs of the deity, especially metal bows and arrows. Inside the temple are pillars or stones which were at one time used for making this dwelling for the god a temporary blacksmith shop; precious metal offerings would be refashioned into decorative ornaments in symbolic shapes, which included the aforementioned hunting implements, and the trident [*cu-la-yi*], disk [*cakram*], and conch [*caṅg*] (some of these must have been adopted from neighboring Hindus). The front of the temple is made of stone pillars; sometimes additional stone pillars are erected in front of the temples. The pillars are permanent and may be the oldest architectural artifacts still in use in these villages.

There are two father gods in Me-na-r, one called *ayno-r* (father god), one called *kunayno-r* (little father god), and the mother deity called *amno-r*. Virtually any male Kota deity is a form of *ayno-r* and any female deity a form of *amno-r*. Kotas further equate these deities with the Hindu deities Śiva and his consort Pārvatī.¹³ Each village, in addition, maintains nearby temple(s) for one or more Hindu deities. There are stories associated with the introduction of each of these deities, all of which need not be related here.

Me-na-r village maintains a temple for the goddess Māriyamman, a goddess associated with rain, fertility, and diseases such as small pox, believed to be cause by excess heat in the body, and for the goddess Badrakāliyamman, a form of the pan-Indic goddess Kāli, who is associated both with destructive power and creative power/fertility.

Kolme-l village also maintains three temples for the gods *ayno-r* (sometimes called *dodayno-r*, i.e. big *ayno-r*), *kunayno-r* and *amno-r*. In Kolme-l and some of the other villages, but not Me-na-r, Kurgo-j or Kala-c.

¹³Śiva is a pan-Indic deity associated with mountains, water, primeval energy (one of the names for his consort is Śakti, a term which denotes this energy aspect most directly) and dance, among other things. Śiva is also thought of as a particularly south Indian god by many non-Brahmin south Indians. Although it is not surprising that Kotas equate their own deities with Śiva, not all Nilgiri tribals have adopted him as their primary reference deity. Irulas worship and serve as priests for a form of Visnu, the other major Hindu pan-Indic male deity.

the forms of *ayno·r* are also called *kamaṭrayṇ* (Kamatr father), or *kamaṭra·ya* (Kamatr ruler).¹⁴ This name for god is the same as that for first-born males (in the villages where this name is employed for the god), *kamaṭṇ* (the form employed in reference to the god contains an honorific suffix [r] followed by a morpheme meaning *father* [ayṇ]), an equation between humans and the divine that is quite common in India. Kolme-l also celebrates an annual festival for the god *raṅgrayṇ* (or *raṅgayno·r*) in a temple at the western border of the residential part of the village. This deity is a form of Viṣṇu known in Tamil as Ranga or Ranganathar (*iraṅkanātar*); this particular version of the deity originated in the plains village of Karamadai (*kāramatai*) near the foothills of the Nilgiris along the road to Coimbatore. Several tribes in the area claim allegiance to the deity. It was incorporated into the Kolme-l pantheon in the 1930s, not without local objection, after a serious blight threatened the lives of the entire village.¹⁵ Outside of the village lies a shrine for the goddess Māriyamman; although it is not a Kota temple, Kolme-l Kotas worship there, and participate by performing music in the yearly festival.

Kurgo·j village has three gods, *ayno·r*, *kunayno·r* and *amno·r*, although according to legend, these were introduced later from other villages. The original god, made of stone (*kal de·r*), was stolen.¹⁶ A Malayāli (a person from Kerala state), who was having an affair with a Kota girl, apparently brought another god from Kerala, hid it in the village, and worshiped it. Kala·c village and Kurgo·j village traditionally took turns holding the god ceremony in each others' villages. The two villages shared a great deal ritually and two of the exogamous clans of Kala·c originated in Kurgo·j (the third originated in Me·na·r). The village pantheons should thus be considered parts of one larger, subregional pantheon. Kotas from these two villages also

¹⁴In Tamil, Badaga, and English the name is rendered with a *b* following the nasal, and additional vowels, Kambattarayan, etc.

¹⁵Mandelbaum's article, "Social trends and personal pressures," describes this 1924 "epidemic of relapsing fever" in Kolme-l, which caused the death of all the ritual leaders and diviners for the three temples (*ayno·r* and *amno·r*), as well as many others. In 1925 the Kotas began their yearly god ceremony without any ritual specialists; when the villagers prayed to the gods to indicate successors for these men, "as had not happened before in the memory of the people, no man was supernaturally propelled to the temple pillar to be diviner, none was seized as priest" (Mandelbaum 1960, 226). A rather irresponsible and untrustworthy man by the name of Kucvayn became possessed by what he claimed was the god Ranganathar of Karamadai. Although Kotas had long standing involvement with worship of this deity the community was slow to accept a new addition to the village pantheon. But in 1926, when new priests were still not chosen, the community heeded the words of Kucvayn when Ranganathar spoke through him demanding a temple be built. Only then, he claimed, would diviners for the old temples be chosen. Two other men were possessed by Rāma (an *avatār* of Viṣṇu) and Beṭdamn (mountain "peak" goddess) respectively and Kucvayn chose a priest for the three new gods (Mandelbaum 1941). The following year, as prophesied by Kucvayn, all 5 vacant posts were filled, yet ambivalence over the new temples was still not erased. Two factions in the village remained bitterly opposed until around 1960 (pers. com. S. Raman).

¹⁶It is not clear from my notes whether the god was stolen and removed from Kurgo·j, or whether, as Emeneau has recorded, the god was taken from Kala·c and brought to Kurgo·j (1944 I: 55).

participate in the worship of *vetka-r ayn*, or “hunting father,” in a Malayāli temple on the outskirts of Gudalur. The Kotas consider the god to be tribal, and their participation as musicians and dancers is required in order for the temple festival to begin.¹⁷ The Kotas possess one story justifying their association with the god; the Malayālis justify the Kota participation with a different story, which is demeaning to the Kotas. Kurgo-j village also maintains two temples for versions of the Tamil Māriyamman, U-ke-ramn and Cikamn.

Kala-c temples are no longer in use because there are not enough families in the village to provide ritual specialists. The two temples are surrounded with overgrowth, the orange-pink hued paint fading and chipping off. One temple is devoted to *ayno-r*. The other, dedicated to a god called *karprayn*, is hidden in such a way that it cannot not be seen from a distance and the god cannot see out—this by the order of the god. One other peculiarity of this god: it is considered so powerful that it could not speak through the diviner in Kala-c village; the diviner would have to go to a neighboring village. There the Kala-c Kotas would have to pose questions in the Kannada language (of neighboring Karnataka state) and the god would answer in Malayālam (the language of neighboring Kerala state).

Ticga-r village has only two temples, one for *ayno-r* and one for *amno-r*, but they also call these deities *kambaṭi-cvaran* and *kambaṭi-cvari*; these are Tamilized names that include in their endings names for Śiva and his consort. The Kota god unique to Ticga-r is called *kaṇa-ṭrayn* and takes the visible form of a rectangular stone, lying just across the road from the residential area of the village. It is believed periodically to transform into a snake, slither to a nearby stream to drink, and return. This is said to account for the fact that the stone appears in a different location from time to time. Kota have also erected temples for and annually worship Krisna, Raṅgrayn and Ma-ga-li (a form of Kāli) in the vicinity of the village.¹⁸ Porga-r village hosts one *ayno-r* and one *amno-r* temple; nearby the villagers built temples for Ma-ga-li amn, Krisna and Raṅgayno-r.

In Kina-r there are temples for *ayno-r*, *amno-r*, Ma-ga-li amn, Raṅgayno-r and Muni-cvara (a non-vegetarian Dravidian god associated with the protection of village borders and connected somehow with Māriyamman).

The primary ritual specialists for the gods among the Kotas are the *mundka-no-n* and *te-rka-rn*. The *mundka-no-n* leads all divine rituals; his name derives from a term meaning “first” or “front.” The *te-rka-rn* is a medium through whom god speaks and his name derives from a term meaning “god,” or “temple chariot.” Each belongs to a particular family (*kuyt*) from a particular street (*ke-r*) which is also an exogamous clan and which is associated with a particular (indigenous) deity in the village. The *te-rka-rn* is supposed to be

¹⁷There are two other local deities for which Kota participation as musicians is required: *magguy amn* and *atira-r de-r*.

¹⁸Oral histories of these temples are provided in Verghese (1969, 155-7)

selected directly by god in that he becomes possessed at a certain time and place during the annual festival, the “god ceremony,” when all the men are praying for a new *te-rka·rn*. The *mundka·no·n*, in turn, is selected by the possessed *te-rka·rn*. Each of these officiants must not only belong to a certain family, but must also be married (or get married) to his first wife, and that first wife must be alive. The wives of these officiants (*mundka·no·l* and *te-rka·rc* respectively) lead the women in women’s rituals, but they never get possessed, never lead men, and never enter the temples. Kota men only enter the temple briefly once a year.

There are other ritual specialists. The *kolyta·l* is no longer a ritual office in most villages, but the male officiant by this name once was in charge of fire lighting at the god ceremony and sacrificing the cow at funerals.¹⁹ The *gotga·rn* is a village treasurer, in charge of the precious ornaments and coins offered to the gods, and a sort of political headman, who convenes village council meetings (*ku·tm*). There are ritual specialists associated with funerals as well, the most important of whom is the *tic pac mog*, the child who is in charge of, among other things, symbolically (not actually) lighting the funeral pyre. Certain rituals require more specialized officiants who may be temporarily appointed. I refer to the *mundka·no·n* at times as the “ritual leader” and to the *te-rka·rn* as the diviner. When on occasion I need to refer to, as a collective, all those who are perform a named ritual role, I use *ritualists*, *ritual officiants*, or *ritual specialists*.

KINSHIP

Kota kinship terminology follows the Dravidian system: kin are classified as either consanguineal or affinal. Men of the same age group, if they are of the same generation, are either older or younger brothers (*an* or *kara·l*) or brother’s-in-law (*ayl*), even if the blood or marriage tie is not literally in the immediate family (a parallel pattern obtains for women). The relationship between men and women is either sister-brother or classificatory husband and wife. Ascending in generation, one’s mother and her sisters are all varieties of “mother” (*av*) father’s sisters are all “aunts” (*me·ym*). Father and his brothers are all “fathers” (*ayn*) and mothers’ brothers are all “uncles” (*ma·mn*). As in Tamil society, marriages are preferred between close cross-cousins, especially between a boy and his own mother’s brother’s daughter.²⁰ As Dumont points out, affinity and consanguinity in Dravidian systems have equal status and are passed on from one generation to the next; in “our” European/Anglo/American system, affinity “fades into consanguinity for the next

¹⁹One of my unfinished tasks was to interview the *kolyta·l* of *Me·na·r*, who is still active as a ritualist. I understand his role is different than that of ritualists of the same name in other villages.

²⁰Kota ritual in light of kinship deserves a separate study in and of itself. For further ethnographic and terminological analysis of Dravidian kinship, see, e.g. Trawick’s chapter on “Desire in kinship” (1992, 117-86), Dumont’s collection of essays *Affinity as a value* (1983) and, of course, Trautmann’s *Dravidian kinship* (1981).

generation” (1983, 32). My mother’s sister-in-law and my mother’s own sister are, to me, both “aunts.”

The classification of kin becomes important in the understand of Kota rituals. In funerals of married persons, each side of the family is engendered to make prestations. The reckoning of funeral obligations is based often not on the identity of the deceased as a man or a woman, but on the married couple as a unit—the female’s family provides certain things or performs particular duties, the man’s provides others, at times regardless of whether the husband or wife died. This provides a strong ritual-symbolic support to Dumont’s theory, i.e. that Dravidian kinship terminology reflects the importance of south Indian affinity as a cultural value.²¹

The relationships of affinity and consanguinity are passed on to the next generation through other aspects of the funeral: for example, through the ritual role of the child who performs the bier-lighting (*tic pac mog*) who seems to function as a surrogate or structural replica of the deceased. This is significant in the Indic context, where the “chief mourner” of a male is ideally his own son.

Dumont connects his analysis to the institution of marriage, rather weakly, noting at the conclusion of one study that “the analysis of kinship leads us to emphasize an institution which is of the highest importance of caste. That marriage is crucial on both levels of caste and kinship, and that it constitutes in a sense their articulation, is quite in accordance with the obvious and well-known stress that Indian society lays upon it” (1983, 104). At least two questions can be generated from this conclusion: Is the importance of marriage as an institution related to the importance of affinity as reflected in kinship terminology? And, does “stress” on and ritual elaboration of marriage reflect the strength of the marriage bond? The Kota case provides an interesting problem in this regard. Kota kinship terminology reflects Dumont’s binary analysis of Dravidian kinship terms in almost ideal detail. Yet the institution of marriage could be said in some ways to be very weak: Kota men and women can marry and divorce at will, with no special ceremony or social sanctions whatsoever.²² Furthermore, there are many ritual occasions, from a young age, in which the kinship categories of “husband” and “wife” are called into play without necessarily binding the two agents into a lasting relationship. If the importance of marriage as an institution can be judged by the ease with which it is invoked and violated, than the answer to question one is no. On the other hand, if importance of affinity can

²¹“What the crystalline form of the south Indian vocabulary enshrines is, with the transmission of affinity from parents to children, the assertion of affinity as a value equal to that of consanguinity, the assertion, that is, of identity and relation as indissoluble solidarity. This solidarity, itself a (second order) relation, is thus substituted for what we call substance. No trivial lesson, I should think” (1983, 170).

²²This is not to say a man might not be regarded as callous for treating his wife badly, or a woman irresponsible for abandoning her children. But no social sanction is institutionally leveled at either the husband or wife for terminating a marriage.

be accounted for in terms of ritual roles in, for example, a funeral, or in the roles of principle religious specialists (who must function as a married couple), then the answer might be yes. As for question two, whether the emphasis and elaboration of the marriage is related to the strength of the bond or commitment (culturally, not personally defined) between the husband and wife, it turns out that Kota marriages are simple affairs. Traditionally there was no music, no feast, and no detailed rituals. Given the importance of music in Kota funerals and god ceremonies, the absence of music at weddings is significant; and, given the importance of music in Hindu weddings (and the correlation between sanctity of the marriage tie and the desire to celebrate a wedding lavishly), the absence of music at Kota weddings is even more significant.

With the provisional assumption that rituals and ritual complexes that are highly elaborated are somehow more enduring, far-reaching, and community defining than are those that are brief, perfunctory, and individual, and because the rituals associated with these former complexes tend more often to include music, I focus on rituals of divinity and death in this dissertation (the former), not on life cycle ceremonies (the latter). This is not to say that childbirth, puberty rites, and marriage are not interesting or important, but simply that they are not analyzed here.

INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE VILLAGE COUNCIL

Rituals are scheduled and negotiated, and disputes settled through an institution called the *kuṭm*, deriving from a Dravidian verbal root meaning “gather, come together, join.” Kotas translate the term as Panchāyat, which literally means “a group or council of five” in Hindi (Mandelbaum 1970, 278), but which in this case is not fixed in number,

In village usage it refers not only to the group that convenes but also to a set of processes [“panchāyat system”] for resolving conflict, for redressing transgression, and for launching group enterprises. . . The pattern of panchāyat action is triggered by a problem that people feel must be tackled and cannot be handled by individuals acting singly. . . The responsible men of the group gather to discuss the issue. Their number, the timing of the meetings, and the sanctions that may be imposed, all depend on the nature of the problem rather than on any fixed specifications of schedule (Mandelbaum 1970, 278).

There are two levels of *kuṭms* among the Kotas: that of the village, which is convened and mediated by the village headman/treasurer (*goṭgaṃ*), and that of the corporate group, the all-tribal level, which is convened by the headman of all the Kota villages. *Me-naṛ* is sometimes called *talnaṛ* (head-land) because the tribal headman is drawn from one lineage in this village. Examples of local issues handled in the *kuṭm* of Kolme-l while I was in the Nilgiris included: attempting to reclaim Kota lands that the recently deceased diviner had sold to the neighboring Badaga community; and deciding whether or not to hold an untouchable laborer responsible for a piece of agricultural machinery stolen while under his care. An all-village *kuṭm* was

convened to discuss the gaining popularity of elaborate, expensive Kota weddings. The meeting decided that according to tradition the wedding was supposed to be simple, and therefore it was not proper for wealthy Kotas to conduct Hindu-like festive weddings. Wealthy Kotas ignored the rule and a later *kuṭm* turned over the ruling.

The village level *kuṭm* is of two kinds, one, *ad hoc*, settles ordinary disputes and plans dates for rituals. The other is institutionally incorporated into the annual celebration for the gods, (*devr*, literally “god,” often called “the god ceremony”) and is conducted on three consecutive nights. If one or more *teṛkaṛms* (diviners) are active in the village, they will be induced to possession (in some villages through music, in Kolme-l, without music), questioned about various matters pertaining to the village, and their words (which are ostensibly god’s words) interpreted for the community at large. The god ceremony *kuṭm* also decides who will do what when, during the ceremony that year (within the constraints that are already dictated by kinship), and how much money, grain, and clarified butter each household must contribute. Finally, if there have been major community transgressions, the *kuṭm* may decide to disinclude the family of the guilty party. This occurred in 1992.²³

KOTA MUSICAL GENRES AND INSTRUMENTS

Kota instrumental music is performed by men and accompanies rituals associated with death and worship of Kota and Hindu deities, and both men’s and women’s circles dances. The primary melodic instrument is a six-holed shawm called the *kol*. Accompanying two *kol*s in an ensemble are the *tabatk*, a frame drum, and two cylinder drums, *dobar* and *kiṇvar*. The *eṛtabatk* is a conical drum about 2.5-3 feet in diameter. Although it is now made of sheet metal and covered with the hide of a buffalo, it used to be made from the wood of the *vag* tree (*Solix tetrasperma*, EVS). It serves no musical function, in that its beat is not meant to correspond with the rhythm of other drums which may be beaten in time to the melody of the *kol* (on other occasions), but is important ceremonially in funerals and in worship. The *kob* is a large brass horn, curved in a C shape in all villages save for Me-naṛ where it is S shaped. Two *kobs* are included in the performance for purposes of signaling ritually important moments, or for adding an element of excitement in contexts of dancing. This instrumental ensemble produces significant volume and always performs out of doors in the village context.²⁴ The *pulaṅg*, a simple idioglottal clarinet with down cut reed, and the *bugiṛ*, a five-holed

²³See outline of god ceremony, VIIB and corresponding event on video at 17’55”, where one house is deliberately skipped as each family is formally called to attend the temple opening.

²⁴Kotas occasionally perform for demonstrations or national celebrations outside of the village, and in those situations they may be asked to perform either indoors or outdoors.

bamboo trumpet, are instruments producing more subdued tones. Although the repertoire of the three melodic instruments is largely the same, only the latter two are ordinarily performed *ad hoc* as domestic instruments. A chart provided in the appendix shows how these instrument types are distributed among the different tribal peoples of the Nilgiri hills.

Kota vocal music is performed ritually by women, though men sing Kota songs for their own enjoyment. The most important indigenous community song-type is called the “god song” (*devr pa:t*); god songs are usually sung at the conclusion of important segments of ritual. In communal performance, god songs are always performed by women while they dance around in a circle, stepping and clapping in time to the music. Women are also the primary carriers of the mourning song tradition. Mourning songs (*a:!!*) are not performed during funerals or during any other rituals, and they are seldom performed by more than one woman at a time. Women do not traditionally play musical instruments, although there is no rule that they may not. Formerly, however, women used to perform on a bamboo jews-harp called *pjil*; I could not find any players of this instrument in 1990-92, and could only locate one specimen. For women the *pjil* and for the men the *bugi-r* were somehow closely associated with the identity and person of the player (unlike the *kol*, for some reason); when a performer of one of these instruments died, he or she was cremated along with these instruments and other personal possessions.

I found few stories relating to musical instruments²⁵ or to the origin of music. Typically, when I would ask questions regarding the origin of music I would receive responses such as this:

God created us. It's not like learning Hindi, Tamil, and Urdu. When god created us he just taught us to talk. We don't even have script. So we don't know what has actually taken place. Now I tell my son Gundan, and Gundan tells his son. Only in this way we know things. Other than this there isn't anything we can tell. . . . How people learn to play the *kol* is a grandfather says “you learn *kol*!” and teaches a boy. One man who knows *tabatk* will call his son and say “learn *tabatk*.” This is how we learned. It must be god's *śakti* [divine power]. Other than this we don't know anything. There is no historical record that we can relate. We are not qualified. Only with the help of Brahma's [the Hindu creator god's] *śakti* we do this. But we can't say how it happened. Generation after generation the same thing happens and nobody knows how it originated. How is the *kol* played? Only with the help of god. We don't know how music originated. If god had told us in a dream, then we would know. No god came and told us. We only know through our ancestors. Likewise there are blacksmiths. Nobody knows who taught smithing. That too came with god's help. In the same way for the Kota people there are no gurus or masters who guided them. Only through god we know everything. We follow what our great grandfathers and grandmothers said. They don't know how to cheat anybody, or rob, or kill. We live according to *śakti* and law (*ni-di*). (Interview 11 Aug 91 with Caln, age 72, a *mundka·no·n* of Kurgoj for twelve years; translated from the Kota with the help of L. Gunasekaran).

Important for this dissertation in the quoted passage is the awareness of tradition and the assumption that

²⁵One exception, a story in which musical instruments speak, is presented as the epigraph to part three.

all Kota community-defining knowledge (the most important are mentioned in this passage: language, music and blacksmithing) is god given. This creates a special relationship between the Kotas and the divinity who could be said to have given them an identity. The passage also reveals a central value about the past: the ancestors were closer to god because they passed god's knowledge from generation to generation. Their intimate relationship to god, and their power, derived from righteous living, and from a childlike innocence in which they "don't know how to cheat anybody, or rob, or kill." This theme appears again and again in, for example the role of a "lucky" child in a funeral, who is considered innocent and untainted by the evils of the world. Music is one of the symbolic means through which Kotas associate themselves on the one hand with the righteousness of divinity and on the other with that of the ancestors.

THE NILGIRI ENVIRONMENT: FLORA AND RAINFALL

The Kotas are situated in a physical environment that is rather unique in south India; the climate is wetter and colder than that of the plains, so people dress and eat differently. Plant life is different, so the floral elements of ritual are different. The Nilgiris is affected by the monsoons from the west and from east; on the plains, the range effectively blocks the western plains (Kerala) from eastern monsoon in Tamilnadu and vice-versa.

The environment is also rapidly changing: the dimensions of environmental impact by such industries as Hindustani Photo Films, Needles Industry, and the Cordite Factory has not yet fully been realized; the widespread farming of Eucalyptus trees, it is said, has had a dramatic impact on the watertable; tea plantations appear to be doused with so much fertilizer and pesticides that the mere scent of them in the United States would cause an inspector from the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency with in a carcinogenic fit.

There are two distinct types of plants in the hills, those below 5,900', which thrive in tropical temperatures, and those above this altitude, which require cooler temperatures. The region below 5,900' was once covered with moist evergreen forests but most of these forests have been decimated to make way for tea cultivation. The evergreen forest gradually converts to dry deciduous forest as the elevation drops in the area to the north, the Mysore plateau.

The montane zone, above 5,900', possesses a special kind of evergreen forest, called a "shola," which is located in areas of continuous water supply, such as along streams and hollows between hills fed by mountain springs. Much of the plateau is covered by grassland and savannah and this has led to speculation of human intervention in the evolution of the landscape predating European arrival in the region, but this remains a matter for speculation. Few herbaceous species cover the soil, the most important including "a harmless

nettle” (Lengerke and Blasco 58). Many European and other non-Nilgiri species (about 400) have been introduced to the upper region, but there are more than eighty subvarieties of plant species that are unique to the Nilgiri plateau (see Lengerke and Blasco 47-50).

The introduced species, especially tea, Eucalyptus and edibles such as potatoes, have made entrepreneurial immigrants and local populations such as the Badagas and some Kotas quite prosperous. The unique plant life of the Nilgiris has formed the basis of several local systems of ethnobotany/ethnomedicine which are still being explored. The Kotas use local flora for a variety of symbolic purposes, the color and gender of a given plant species in some cases providing the relevant ritual differentia for a particular function. Knowledge of traditional healing practices using plant species is rapidly dying out, however, as more and more Kotas turn to European medicine; health care of relatively high quality in the Indian context is readily available.

RAINFALL AND THE SEASONS

Rainfall in south India is concentrated in four periods, the Northeast monsoon (December-March), the first intermonsoon period (April-May), the Southwest Monsoon (June-September) and the second intermonsoon period (October-November). The Northeast Monsoon affects primarily the eastern slopes of the Nilgiris; elsewhere, on the Nilgiri plateau and western regions the weather conditions are cold and dry, with night frost occurring commonly in December-January. This proves trying for the Kotas because it is during this period that they celebrate their two most lengthy and involved ritual complexes, which entail all night dancing, outdoor sleeping, and sartorial rules (such as a restriction from wearing shoes and extra undergarments) that make it difficult to combat the cold.

Rains return during April and signal the beginning of the planting season. Kotas and Badagas plant their rainfed potatoes (Nilgiri potatoes are the most prized and tasty variety in south India) and many other vegetables, such as cauliflower, beet-root, lettuce, and cabbage. Tea grows furiously during this period, creating significant temporary employment for day laborers (many of them Sri Lankan Tamil immigrants; Kotas grow tea and also work for day wages on tea plantations of others); coffee yields depend on the “amount and rhythm of ‘blossom showers’” (Lengerke and Blasco, 38).

Daytime weather is moderate, the temperature seldom exceeding 80°F, and the nights remain brisk. This period is the hot season on the plains; Tamilians and tourists from throughout India flock to the Nilgiris.

Ooty's botanical garden explodes with color, and a season of summer concerts and performances begins.²⁶ Hotels and tourist homes are booked solidly at inflated rates; some entrepreneurs lease rooms or homes for two months and in that period procure a profit that may exceed what could reasonably be expected through yearlong leases to Nilgiri residents. If rainfall in the "catchment areas" (reservoirs, some man-made, in the western Nilgiris) has been insufficient over the previous year, the influx of tourists creates a serious hardship for urban dwellers. Even when water is available, the water pipes, installed in British times, are not sufficient in circumference to handle the load of water required during this period.²⁷

Significant rainfall is accompanied by high winds, especially in the western but also in the central Nilgiri regions (Ooty lies in the center of the plateau) beginning in the month of June. Kotas, who generally spend a great deal of time outdoors, are compelled to remain indoors during much of this period. The rain penetrates the walls of every house, seeps through every crack in every floor, and so fills the air with moisture that porous materials, from books to bed frames (in modern homes), are subject to the onslaught of mold. The continuous dampness makes the climate appear far colder than it actually is. The coziest spot in a Nilgiri village home during this period is next to the hearth, where a modest fire heats water for tea, or embers left over from cooking the last meal continue to smolder, heating the room around, and adding smokey highlights to the musty odor of recently washed clothes, which may take several days to dry during this season. After a brief hiatus in September, a lighter period of rainfall may resume during October-November, especially in the eastern part of the Nilgiris.

THE TRIBES OF THE NILGIRIS

In addition to the Kotas, the Nilgiri plateau hosts the pastoral Toda tribe (population roughly 1,200) and the far more numerous Badagas (145,000 in 1991), an immigrant cluster of castes who began arriving in the Nilgiris after Muslim invasions defeated the Vijayanagar rulers of Mysore in 1565. Seven (largely exogamous) tribes of gardeners and hunter-gatherers collectively called Kurumbas live on the edges of the plateau, on the steep slopes of the Nilgiris, and along the foothills in the Wynād area of Kerala to the west (they also extend into Kerala and Karnataka). Irulas (agriculturalists and gatherers) also fall into several subgroups that inhabit different parts of the Nilgiris and speak different dialects of what is considered to be a

²⁶Almost none of these events draw upon local talents or serve local interests (other than the pecuniary interests of local politicians and merchants, many of whom are immigrants). The tribes of the area are sometimes called upon, however, to march in procession, dance, or make music on National holidays or to welcome a visiting dignitary.

²⁷ During the summer of 1991, I lived just beyond the center of town in Ooty and had to rely on water delivered by lorry or collected from my rooftop for two months.

single language; but unlike the Kurumba tribes, there is some intermarriage between Irulas of different regions, and they share the same clan system. In the Wynād region of the Nilgiri foothills and to the west in Kerala live the Paniya tribe who remain in abject poverty as agrestic serfs for landowning Badagas and the Chetti trader community.

The above-mentioned Nilgiri communities until the 1930s interacted according to a pattern of traditional exchange relationships that has been called *jajmāni* in the anthropological literature on Hinduism, after Wisner's 1936 study. *Jajmāni* is a local (Hindi) form of the Sanskrit word *yajamāna*, which means "sacrificing, worshipping. . . the person paying the cost of a sacrifice, the institutor of a sacrifice (who to perform it employs a priest or priests, who are often hereditary functionaries in a family). . . any patron, host, rich man, head of a family or tribe" (Monier-Williams, 839). Like the words *totem* and *kula* for studies of other parts of the world, *jajmāni* has been adopted as a technical anthropological term in studies of south Asia. At its core the term refers to the relationships between "a food-producing family and the families that supply them with goods and services" (Mandelbaum 1970, 161); not all economic relationships among Indian peoples were *jajmāni* relationships—some appear always to have been contractual or based on cash payments.

In the Nilgiri system, which according to Harold Gould must have been "inherited from Hindu society on the plains" (Gould 1987, 132), families of Kotas called *mutgarin* provided goods and services to the other communities. In exchange they received: grain from the economically dominant food-producers, the Badagas; clarified butter, sacrificial buffaloes and sometimes raw foods from the pastoral Todas; and forest produce and services as watchmen from Kurumbas (mainly Ālu and Pālu Kurumbas). To the Badagas, the Kotas were essential providers of funeral and festival music, pottery, carpentry, thatching, leather and metal goods. Kota music, along with a number of ceremonial items, were also indispensable at Toda funerals. Although Todas considered Kotas defiling, they accepted from them pottery (for use in the home and the less-pure Toda dairies), and depended upon them for axes, knives and jewelry.

It is not possible to detail all of the exchange permutations of this complex system; further details will emerge from specific discussion in the pages that follow. Here it is important to note that the Badagas and the Todas considered themselves to be at the pinnacle of a hierarchical system: the Badagas were socio-economically dominant and the Todas ritually dominant. The Todas at one time maintained a complex ritual dairy system: each dairy was a temple, ranked according to degree of purity. Unlike in Hindu society, where clarified butter is the most pure substance extracted from a cow, in Toda society the milk itself is the pure substance. Clarified butter could be distributed to Kotas and other communities in exchange for goods and services because it was less sanctified. The dairy-system has deteriorated significantly and the most exalted of dairy-temples are no longer in operation.

The Kurumbas were feared by Todas, Kotas and Badagas alike as sorcerers; in the late 19th century, this fear inspired the Badagas to conduct periodic massacres of Kurumba families and villages (Hockings 1980, 122-24). The association with “black magic” led Gould to refer to the Kurumbas as “contrapriests” in their structural relationship to Todas, whose Brahman-like rules for purity suggested the title “priests” (Gould 1987); yet neither community really served in a priestly role for other communities. Todas certainly never officiated at Kota ceremonies, although they were required to bring certain ritual objects. Kurumbas served as watchmen in Kota and Badaga villages, protecting the members of these villages, in part, from the sorcery of other Kurumbas. On occasion it was said an individual Kota, Badaga or Toda might hire a Kurumba to perform sorcery on another individual, but the Kurumba did not perform an institutional role as a ritual officiant. Kurumbas did, however, provide ritually important objects (such as the long pole, *pardac*, for the dry funeral) that could only be obtained from the forest areas they inhabited.

In the old scheme of things the Kotas did not apparently fear the spirits of the recently deceased, even those who met an early or violent death. The fear of wandering ghosts (*pica-c*) seems to be more prevalent among plains Hindus.²⁸ It may be that in the Nilgiris, the need to blame malevolent or dissatisfied supernatural beings for illness, bad luck, or death was displaced by the existence of a concrete, human “other,” the Kurumbas, who could be blamed for these same phenomena. Kota oral literature is richly endowed with Kurumba lore—all of it negative. The Kurumbas may have developed the reputation for sorcery and evil because they managed to survive in a harsh forest climate among wild animals and snakes. They were true jungle people, the tribals among tribals (if one may say). Somehow they had genetically adapted so as to survive the malaria that was once rampant in lower elevations of the Nilgiris. Their appearance too was different: in contrast to the tall, somewhat light skinned, reddish complexioned Kotas and Todas, the Kurumbas were short and dark with curly hair and sometimes almost negroid features. Yet although Kurumbas were universally feared, they were not ranked by Todas and Badagas to be as low as the Kotas (the Kotas regarded and regard the Kurumbas as lower than themselves).

The Kotas were treated with disdain throughout the period documented by British writers (beginning in the turn of the 19th century in the work of Francis Buchanon), largely because they were observed to consume the meat of cows and at times carrion; this, by the code of Hindu caste, was a signifier of low status.²⁹ Kotas

²⁸ David Mandelbaum’s informant Sulli commented a great deal on the *pica-c*, but I believe his views on the matter were strongly conditioned by those of surrounding Hindus.

²⁹As I will discuss in part II, chapter 4, in a section entitled “symbolism of and identification with bovine species,” the high caste Hindu interpretation of the practice of consuming cow flesh (i.e. that it is a marker of extremely low status) may not always have been operative in the Nilgiris. Kotas did not always consider the practice degrading, though some do now. We simply have no way of knowing what values characterized Nilgiri relationships among the tribes before the

claim now not to have accepted the position of inferiority that was thrust upon them and deny ever having consumed carrion. Kotas (at least ones capable of a benevolent mytho-historical outlook) look upon the traditional system of exchange as an ideal one that was not originally laden with implications of hierarchy. It also did not originally include the Badagas; the Badagas migrated from Mysore to the north (hence their name, which means "northerners").

According to one Kota origin myth, Kotas, Todas and Kurumbas descended from three brothers, each a drop of sweat from the brow of a common divine being.³⁰ This and other myths of common origin serve as charters for sentiments of tribal solidarity that underlie the competitiveness and rancor which characterize the relationships among these communities today.

Kotas in the 1930s began refusing to provide services for the Todas and Badagas because they felt mistreated: the Nilgiris was increasingly modernizing, but the Kotas were being denied admission to schools and even barred from tea stalls frequented by Badagas. The change to a monetary and market economy also rendered Kota services less essential; Kotas could only hold sway with their services as musicians and this they refused. As the Badaga population grew out of proportion to those of the other communities of the hills it was also no longer possible to maintain traditional relationships of exchange based on hereditary agreements between pairs of families.

RIVALRY OVER TRIBAL STATUS AND BASES FOR LEGITIMACY

Although the Todas, Kotas and Kurumbas maintain mythological traditions according to which they are related as brothers, when push comes to shove, there is considerable rivalry over access to resources, notions of traditionality, morality, and tribalness. A leading Kota musician, K. Pucan, recounted an event which, according to him, led the Kotas to abandon performing music for the Todas.³¹

When Queen Victoria came to Madras she asked all the *ādivāsīs* to come. The Todas went but we could not since we were celebrating our God Festival. At that time it was recorded that we were immigrants [i.e. the Todas told the British]. Later, in 1952, when we went to admit our children into school, while looking through the library we saw what the Todas had said. . . In 1956, during Kamraj's rule, Jawharlal

coming of the British (with their preconceptions of caste), let alone before the arrival of the Badagas, who were, after all, Hindu.

³⁰An alternative Kota story is provided in Emeneau (1944 I:38-41). Emeneau (1984, 212) provides a Toda version in which the goddess Tō-kisy struck the ground three times to create in turn the first Toda, Kurumba and Kota. In the Kota versions, the Kota brother is, of course, mentioned first and is considered to be the elder.

³¹I have relied on this consultant for the chronology of the event. The actual reasons for Kota refusal to perform musical services for the Todas are many and complex; the point here is not historical accuracy or the literal consequences of events, but the style of ethnic representation.

Nehru came here. Where? To Āvati's station. We also went, taking all our 'things' [instruments, traditional implements]. As many *ādivāsi* 'things' there were, we took and showed to him. We asked, "before we came, what were they [Todas] doing? Where was the churning staff for the milk? . . . there is a big stick of bamboo from Bokkapuram which they'd use to milk their buffaloes--without knives how did they cut the bamboo?"³²

He [Nehru] saw everything: the fire starting [i.e. by friction using tree roots], our 'dress,' 'dance' [using the English words]. Taking everything where did we go? At that time Sri Prakash was the governor in the Madras Raj Bhavan. One person helped us file a suit against the Todas. In the Sessions court there was a judicial enquiry. Four or five Todas came and said that they did not know their ancestors.

He passed a judgement, who? Nehruji, "you [Todas] are not *ādivāsis*, you only are the immigrants. They [Kotas] are the *ādivāsis*"

Deepak: Now do the Todas play anything for themselves?

Pucan: No they don't know how

Deepak: Didn't they learn with you?

Pucan: No, they didn't learn. They're idiots (*muṭṭāḷ*), jungle idiots (*kāṭṭumuṭṭāḷ*). Where would the ones who live in the jungles learn?³³

The Kota participating in this interchange strategically deployed several locally relevant ideas of tribe as proof of indigenous status in the region. Clearly, here, Kota tribalness is encoded in items of indigenous manufacture and in the performance of music and dance. What is in some ways more interesting, however, is how the nobler characteristics of tribal identity (self-sufficiency as evidenced by tool making; artistic prowess and creativity as evidenced by the ability to perform unique musics and dances) are embraced while the negative, primitive stereotypes are projected onto the Todas (in this representation, the Nilgiri equivalent of the country bumpkin).³⁴ Despite the historical placement of this story in newly independent India, the political and moral context for this entire sequence of events is really colonial India, where the British (or administration, or census officials, or government) decided what category a given community was to occupy.

The next segment of the introduction will move from cultural and contextual description to theoretical issues of "ritual" and "tribe" and a discussion of the arguments in each chapter of this work.

³²Note that this consultant hits to heart of Toda culture, the dairy, in his first reference to dependence on the Kotas.

³³The interchange at the end of this quote took place between my interpreter and assistant Deepak Albert and the musician K. Pucan, whose speech at the time I had a difficulty understanding.

³⁴This is truly a subalternist reversal, since for centuries the Todas have been respected and admired by outsiders, while until recently, the Kotas were treated as outcastes.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL INTRODUCTION

The second part of this introduction provides theoretical anchoring for two concepts explored in the pages that follow, *ritual* and *tribe*, and guides the reader through the arguments of each chapter.

RITUAL

Since the term *ritual* appears in the title of this work, and since a significant number of pages are devoted to the analysis of things called rituals in part two, it seems prudent to include in this introduction some discussion of what I mean by the term and a brief consideration of issues historically raised regarding definition of and understanding ritual as a human phenomenon.

For the purposes of this work, ritual is roughly a translation of what Kotas term a *ca·trm*. This term derives from the Sanskrit term *śāstra*, meaning literally “an order, command, precept, rule. . . teaching, instruction, direction, advice, good counsel. . . any instrument of teaching, any manual or compendium of rules, any book or treatise, (esp.) any religious or scientific treatise, any sacred book or composition of divine authority” (Monier-Williams 1069). In Tamil and Kota the derivative terms commonly refer to the practice specified by the rule, rather than, or in addition to, the rule or rule book.

The shift from the meaning of “rule” or “prescription” to the act which is prescribed should be familiar to students of religion because the same shift occurred in the historical development of the English term *ritual*. As early as the ninth century, *rituals* in the context of monasteries were books “directing the way rites should be performed,” but it was not until the mid-seventeenth century that the *Oxford English Dictionary* conveyed a meaning for ritual as either “the prescribed order of performing religious services or of the book containing such prescriptions” (Asad 1993, 58; Sigler 1967). Talal Asad suggests that the later shift in meaning from script to behavior was connected with other historical changes in Europe, among them “the nineteenth-century view that ritual is more primitive than myth—a view that neatly historicizes and secularizes the Reformation doctrine that correct belief must be more highly valued than correct practice” (Asad 1993, 58). I am not prepared to suggest why a similar shift occurred in India, but the fact that it has makes the use of the English term *ritual* as a term of reference for activities Kotas label as *ca·trm*, if not entirely appropriate, at

least reasonable.

I do not use the term ritual merely for behaviors that are repeated over and over again, such as brushing the teeth, or even for “non-purposive” repeated actions, except perhaps in a metaphorical sense (in which case I make the distinction clear), unless Kotas consider the behavior in question to be a *ca·trm*. The Kota term *ca·trm* is not narrower than the English term ritual, loosely applied; rather, it occupies a slightly different semantic band-width. In Kota and Tamil it is common to say “for *sāstra*” (*ca·trik*, *cāctrattukku*), which means “for the sake of ritual” but also “for formality’s sake.” I have attempted to avoid preconceiving what is ritual behavior; indeed, in some cases what is or is not considered a ritual (*ca·trm*) serves as a useful point for discussion. Generally I refer to a series of rituals that are related to one another or conducted over a series of days as a “complex,” or, if it is a named, individual unit, as a “ceremony.”¹

In this work I do not attempt to formulate a new theory of ritual, or emend old ones. At this point to review all the significant literature on ritual would require a commitment of space that is simply not feasible. I feel compelled, however, to address the basic issues in at least a cross-section of the literature in ritual studies. The definitional issue implicated above is one I may appear to have evaded by deferring to a translation of a Kota concept. Although I avoided defining ritual by citing a list of widespread features, such a list may be necessary for any comparative consideration of the phenomenon.

One such list may be drawn from the work of Stanley Tambiah, who characterized rituals as “culturally constructed systems] of symbolic communication,” exhibiting features of “formality (conventionality), stereotypy (rigidity), condensation (fusion), and redundancy (repetition)” (Tambiah 1981).

RITUAL COMMUNICATION

With regard to the centrality of first part of this definition, until recently, to the majority of anthropological interest in ritual, the “symbolic” or “communicative,” Sir Edmund Leach went so far as to write, “Although I do not claim that anthropologists are always in a position to interpret such symbolism, I hold nevertheless that the main task of social anthropology is to attempt such interpretation” (Leach 1954, 14). Since rituals are, to Leach, meaningful, this meaning must be communicated; Leach has become associated with the view that rituals are a form of *communication* (Leach 1968).

¹I differ here from Firth who expressed the view of ceremony as “a species of ritual in which the emphasis is more upon the symbolic acknowledgment and demonstration of a social situation than upon the efficacy of the procedures modifying that situation. . . . Whereas other ritual procedures are believed to have a validity of their own, ceremonial procedures, while formal in character, are not believed in themselves to sustain the situation or effect a change in it” (1967, 12; cited in Lewis 1980, 21)

The question then became, what is communicated and how is it communicated? Ritual, unlike verbal language, seldom denotes or signifies one primary meaning. Victor Turner and others have shown the potential for rituals to communicate many meanings at the same time—that is, ritual symbols are “condensed” and “multivocalic.” Leach demonstrated further that this phenomenon of condensation may be responsible for that of ritual redundancy: if a symbol is packed with many meanings, the import of that symbol in a given ritual context may become ambiguous; so it is repeated many times with minute variations (Leach 1979, 233).²

Nancy Munn further refines a communicative theory of ritual. Enriched with the theoretical potentials of her ethnographic subjects in Australia and Papua New Guinea, Munn’s work provides some of the most convincing analyses of relationships between ritual and everyday life. She found that the Australian Walbiri people, for instance, practice a form graphic representation whose meaning,

lies not simply in the ceremonial and ‘sacred’ uses of designs, but more fundamentally in the casual use of graphic forms in conversation and storytelling. In these latter contexts meaning referring to daily experience and tradition are regularly pumped into the graphs, and so graphic forms enter into the Walbiri imagination as a kind of visual language for ordering meanings in general, rather than simply as a fixed set of forms for representing or referring to totemic ancestors (1986, 212).

In more rarified form, for Munn, rituals communicate through “messages,” which are made up of “iconic symbols (acts, words or things).” The acts, words or things: 1) take a *form* that is intrinsic to the message communicated, and 2) *convert* the complex meanings of social-cultural life into concrete units (“communication currency”) that can be performed by and for people (“transacted”). This allows participants to “circulate” and “synthesize” many aspects of a complex world-view in an immediate context and with a limited number of symbolic means (“tokens or vehicles”). “Ritual action can provide structures for expressing or ‘modeling’ the qualities of life situations while at the same time converting them into the level of symbolic objectification” (Munn 1974, 580). This formulation reveals traces of Munn’s Walbiri work; it also appeared at the time Munn was beginning her work in Papua New Guinea, where the ritual exchange of shells among islands would seem to have invited a theory of ritual communication as a form of “transaction.” My analyses of ritual space and time in part two are strongly informed by Munn’s analyses, although I feel that at this stage my own knowledge and understanding of the totality of Kota life is not yet sufficient to draw connections between Kota ritual and everyday-life with the depth and sophistication of

²The same argument applies to drum signaling in Africa, where a given tone sequence could refer to more than one verbal equivalent. Ambiguity is reduced by repetition and recontextualization. Kota instrumental melodies, as the penultimate chapter shows, are also characterized by significant redundancy. The communication this enables is not so much a referential meaning (although the melodies themselves have referential meanings), but communication for the purposes of reproduction in an oral tradition of transmission.

Munn's work.³

RITUAL FUNCTION AND REVERSAL

Early functionalists argued that ritual fulfilled particular needs of a society, or fulfilled discoverable "functions," such as controlling the environment (Malinowski's *magic*), maintaining the continuity of social structures over time (e.g. Radcliffe-Brown), or describing the social order (Leach 1979, 233). Gradually analyses shifted from emphasis on status in society, and how ritual served to ensure that stasis, to emphasis on the mechanisms of societal rebellion, subversion, and/or escape from the normative. Turner's classic development of Van Gennep's work demonstrated that rituals of transition sustain and emphasize social structure in part by also temporarily suspending, reversing or transforming them at structural interludes called the "liminal."

In the 1970s a new flurry of interest in ritual play and symbolic reversal emerged, inspired in part by Turner's work (see, e.g. Babcock ed. 1978 and works by Turner and Schechner on the anthropology of play). The discovery of conflicting meanings in rituals, including reversals of and challenges to the status quo, widened the range of interpretive options. As long as ritual was not viewed as a singular kind of symbolic phenomenon, it was possible to interpret a ritual as, for example, reinforcing or challenging the social order, depending on how the observer defined the social order and perceived the symbolic import of the rituals concerned. Of course, without a consistent set of criteria which would connect a particular cultural formation with a particular ritual semiotic, there was always the risk that the two (culture and ritual) would be asserted, by the anthropologist, to be related according to methodological convenience: if a ritual did not challenge the power structure, well, perhaps it reinforced it.

QUESTIONING THE SYMBOLIC

Some have questioned the "symbolic" and even "communicative" import of rituals, however; one of the most extreme views was espoused by the Sanskritist, Frits Staal, who argued, "ritual is pure activity, without meaning or goal" (Staal 1996[1979], 487). Staal's data derived from study of Vedic ritual and one cannot assume that what he found to be the case in conducting research with Brahmin priests in the latter half of the twentieth century will be true for comparable phenomena in other eras or other parts of the world. He does draw attention to the problem of meaning: does ritual have meaning and if so, what constitutes that meaning?

³My interests in time and space as cultural constructs were strongly stimulated and given direction in an anthropological seminar I attended, which Munn taught at the University of Chicago in 1990.

Staal in effect argues that ritual has no *referential* meaning.

Postcolonial anthropologist and critic Talal Asad would agree with this assessment, adding to it, however, that the discipline of learning to enact rituals generates and reproduces cultures' dominant power structures as they are embodied in religious institutions,

If there are prescribed ways of performing liturgical services, then we can assume that there exists a requirement to master the proper performance of these services. Ritual is therefore directed as the apt performance of what is prescribed, something that depends on intellectual and practical disciplines but does not itself require decoding. In other words, apt performance involves not symbols to be interpreted but abilities to be acquired according to rules that are sanctioned by those in authority: it presupposes no obscure meanings, but rather the formation of physical and linguistic skills (Asad 1993, 62).

Stanley Tambiah treats meaning, pure form, and power, somewhat more even-handedly. He suggests that scholars need to account for both the tension and interplay between ossification of ritual performance (i.e. what happens when Vedic ritual is practiced simply for itself, any symbolic meaning once possibly attached to the items or actions now entirely lost), which often serves to intensify issues of power and conservatism (i.e. Brahman hegemony) while emptying ritual content of contemporary meaning (what Tambiah, drawing on Peirce, calls "indexical iconicity"), and revivalist movements (the *bhakti* movements in India, or the ghost dance in the United States), which seek intensification of experience and semantic meaning in ritual content (indexical symbolism).

Tambiah's formulation brings analytical and interpretive subtlety to questions of 'traditionalism and modernity' and 'structure and change'—the binarisms inherent in which Western scholars, at least, have been attempting to transcend. This tension is worth highlighting because it seems central to long standing liturgical conflicts in Hindu India, such as those between proponents of loving devotion to god (*bhakti*) versus those supporting Brahman-dominated rituals based in the Vedas⁴—it is no surprise, of course, that Tambiah is himself south Asian.

In a critique of Staal, Hans Penner granted that ritual may not carry referential meaning, but argued that "a well-formed theory of meaning must include reference but cannot be based upon reference as a theory of meaning" (1985, 2). Staal had attempted to argue that ritual contained only syntax, and that this syntax was prelinguistic (a rather unverifiable theory). Penner countered with the argument that syntax carries with it a sort of meaning: Rules underlie syntax, as do ways of circumventing rules, and coping with mistakes. As Lewis puts it, "what is always explicit about ritual, and recognised by those who perform it, is that aspect of

⁴*Vedic* ritual relies on the proper performance of ritual and its magical efficaciousness without consciousness on the part of participants as to what each ritual gesture or item means. *Bhakti*, on the other hand, is a mode of worship that depends on the conscious, emotional, loving expression of devotion to god. Inden went so far as to translate *bhakti* as "conscious participation" (Inden 1990, 114).

it which states who should do what when," that is, "what to do is clearer than what it means" (1980, 11: 14). Penner compares ritual to kinship as semiotic systems. Both are meaningful as systems, but do not necessarily *refer* to specific realms of the lived-in world (he then suggests Levi-Strauss may provide the answers we seek, an aspect of Penner's argument I will not pursue).

A similar argument is commonly made for music; in contemporary musical theory of the West, meaning often derives from the functional relationships, in harmony, melody and rhythm, among the components of a work. Although some scholars expend a great deal of effort decoding referential *meanings* of particular kinds of cadences and so forth in specific contexts, all of these meanings rest on a bedrock system that could perhaps be labeled pre-referential. Functional harmony must exist as a system before particular instances of it can be employed, with verbal or other clues, to *refer* to something in the real world.

RITUAL IN THIS WORK

The treatment of ritual in the present work revolves around both syntactical and referential meanings. The notion that, for example, the way in which a corpse is treated in the Kota funeral and secondary ceremony is also a non-verbal statement about what Kota believe happens when a person dies is to say that not only do certain Kota ritual actions *refer* to ideas, they also *constitute* theories. Any given component of a ceremony, however, is not fixed in meaning; it may have no referential meaning at all to some participants; to others it may have conflicting meanings. I will show that ritual symbols such as the cow and actions such as tying the toes of the corpse have been interpreted differently in different historical periods and by different actors; these changes in *conscious* meanings are conditioned by changing cultural and historical circumstances. But there is no single determinant of meaning: not the form of a ritual, not a surface similarity with a Hindu ritual (rituals that may be defined as "meaningful" according to one text or another, one local tradition or another), and not the opinion of the most powerful man in a village.

The finding that certain ritual configurations idealize Kota social relationships in the lived-in world (such as male hegemony in village politics and the treatment of things divine) does not preclude the finding that certain kinds of rituals are in the nature of play, and that one (and apparently only one) ritually performed god song presents a reversal of behavioral norms. Kota rituals do many things, but they do not provide a coherent basis for a new theory of ritual.

Syntax in Kota rituals is also key. Syntax is not only the order in which rituals occur, but what parts of a ritual are related to what other parts; what are the conditionalities, how flexible is the order, how close in time must two ostensibly "simultaneous" acts actually be (the lighting of the bier and the tune associated with lighting the bier, for example). Syntax is the basis of indexicality (in the Peircian sense of two co-occurring

events), and provides the basis for musical meanings: the fact that one tune, the “funeral finishing tune,” represents a final farewell to the deceased in one context, helps us understand why a similar sounding tune, the “millet pouring tune,” is capable of sparking off (or at least helping to spark off) significant expression of mournful emotion in another. This is not to say that all so called “expressive” rituals actually call forth the desirable mental state in the participants (Lewis 1980, 26), but that the form and syntax of rituals, and the way music is incorporated into that syntax, may help explain why the formalization of a particular emotion occupies a particular position within that ritual sequence. The above example suggests that similarity and difference in musical pieces, and more generally, similarity and difference in ritual items or actions, may provide a simple metacommentary on a ritual system. Take for example the appearance of a ball of dung with an odd number of grass blades, which appears in several different Kota ritual contexts (birth and death for instance). I suggest it may *signal* moments of significant subjective transformation (along with serving as an amulet to ward off forces of evil); but all one can confidently assert is that it draws a concrete connection between the associated rituals. The connections themselves (i.e. what they mean, if anything) may be a matter of debate; the *form* provides a seductive basis for cogitation. As Lewis states in a somewhat different context, “it may be a device of ritual to isolate some familiar object or action as though within a frame, by means of those special features which alert the attention of the spectator, and so invite him to discover relations or aspects of the object or action which he would not otherwise or ordinarily see” (Lewis 1980, 30).

Lewis’s quote is relevant to the discussion above in its attention to frames, and what the same action framed in different contexts “invites” the “spectator” (and also, I would suggest, the participant) to reflect upon. It also draws attention to the question of how ritual relates to everyday life—a question which perforce cycles back to definitional issues. How does ritual relate to the everyday? There are many conventional answers to this question: ritual has no purpose, ritual is repetitive, ritual is determined collectively by society, not defined by one person (as individual utterances in day-to-day communication might be) and so forth. One might argue that ritual action must bear some relationship to everyday activity, otherwise how could it be recognized as somehow bracketed off from it? That is, in order to be different from everyday activity, ritual needs to comment on, occupy the spaces between, or reinterpret everyday activity, otherwise ritual would merely be a different kind of everyday practice (is it possible for a society to have two distinct systems of “everyday behavior”?). The question then becomes, in what ways might rituals negotiate between actions and behaviors that constitute peoples’ everyday experiences, and those that are bracketed off in time and space as something special?

In a recent study purporting to “rethink” religion, scholar of comparative religion, E. Thomas Lawson and philosopher of science Robert McCauley provide one approach to this question, formulating the problem

somewhat differently: “the roles of superhuman *agents* in religious rituals is the pivotal factor in determining a wide variety of properties which human participants attribute to those rituals and. . . religious ritual form is largely the product of a compromise between religions’ commitment to superhuman agents and everyday views of human action” (1990, 8) .

Although there are problems with this formulation (for instance, in religions where “superhuman agents” do not exist, or in rituals, such as marriages, that may or may not be classified as “religious”), it can be usefully applied to a variety of Kota rituals. By this formulation, for example, the fact that the Kotas wish, during their god ceremonies, to receive positive divine counsel (*olyd va·km*) through their *te·rka·m* accounts to an extent for the ritual on the preceding day in which men purify themselves through bathing. But the bathing is accomplished in conjunction with the very instrumental task of cleaning the water channel. Cleaning the water channel does not turn out to be a matter taken lightly: a ring and a prayer are offered to the river goddess (named in this instance by the Hindu name, *gāṅgama*)—an act which hopefully ensures not only the efficaciousness of the next day’s attempts to induce possession, but also the continuity of water from perennial mountain springs, and from rain.

The properties the participants attribute to these rituals have to do with what they believe the divine “agents” can do (provide water, advise and protect the community); the form of these rituals can be accounted for on the basis of everyday views of human action: it is customary not only on special ritual occasions to take a bath, but before prayers on an everyday basis; in order to bathe, it is necessary to obtain water; in order to obtain water, the channel must be clear, and so forth.⁵

Not all Kota rituals are centrally connected with the gods or the spirits of the dead; however, those that are extensively elaborated, both in depth of ritual detail and in the variety of music and dance, are, as noted earlier, centrally connected with divinity or death. Lawson and McCauley’s thesis could be restated in musical terms to arrive at one of my own ethnographically specific theses: The role of musical classification in Kota rituals is a pivotal factor in expressing the wide variety of properties which human participants attribute to those rituals; the structure of Kota musical repertoires is largely the product of a compromise between Kotas’ commitment to superhuman agents and everyday views of human action.

My dissertation title reflects the aforementioned statements, and describes, in brief, the variety of materials that compose its contents: *Of god and death: Music in ritual and everyday life. A musical ethnography of the Kotas*. To review the organization of this work in a new way: Part I, a look at the lives

⁵These rituals will be described in more detail in part II; see also the outlines and descriptions of the god ceremonies in the appendices. It should be mentioned that the channel cleaning is no longer “instrumental” to the same extent, because pipes now carry water to the village most of the way.

of musicians through life histories and personal narratives, is in part an attempt to evoke “everyday life” and the role of music in the lives of some well-known music-makers. Part II, Music and Symbols in a Ritual System, focuses on the form of rituals and, in part, what this tells us about Kota “commitment to superhuman agents” (i.e. the importance of soteriology and theology). Part III reveals, in part, how Kota “commitment to superhuman agents” (Part II) and “everyday views of human action” (Part I) are projected upon, or give meaning to their system of musical classification, and in some cases, to individual items in the repertoire.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS WORK

The parts of this dissertation reflect three ways of approaching musical culture generally, through 1) persons (musicianship); 2) rituals (music as a ritual symbol); and, 3) musical systems. The first part, entitled “Musicians and Lives,”⁶ serves as an introduction to Kota culture through the lives of individuals: the chapters are loosely framed to address the question of what it means to be a musician in Kota society. After an initial chapter on fieldwork, I introduce my primary musical consultants and attempt to situate their musical activities within the broader frame of Kota and south Indian musical life. The units of inquiry in chapters three and four are individuals, not concepts, and thus my writing proceeds inductively, leading from one person to the next.

Chapter four takes an analytic turn, reflecting back on the life histories and personal narratives and probing new data (contemporary and historical), to consider in turn how musicians learn music, what are the kinds of musical competence an individual can possess and what this competence entails. Issues of musical specialization are then considered: specifically, how is musical specialization registered at the level of the individual and at the level of Kota culture as a whole? Who creates these identities and in what contexts are they created? How do views on musicianship shift as one moves from within to outside Kota society? I then proceed to questions of musical behavior, considering specifically whether the model of “musician as deviant,” as represented, for example, in Alan Merriam’s classic article on the Basongye (1979), can be fruitfully applied to the Kota case.

Ultimately I argue that some forms of music-making require specialized skills, but that possessing these skills is neither determined by birth into a musical family (as it is preconditioned to be in the world of Indian classical music), or into a special subclan or lineage of musicians (as among untouchable caste musicians).

⁶The reference to Geertz’s *Works and Lives* (1988) is intended: just as this book considers issues of writing and narrative style in the production of anthropological texts and knowledge, these chapters employ personal narratives to discuss issues of Kota cultural knowledge and musicianship.

Rather, like the Kota artisan skills of pottery-making, blacksmithing and carpentry, musical capabilities are learned and adopted according to a combination of factors, not the least of which are personal commitment, talent and individual interest.

Roles as an artisan or musician are ritualized in certain contexts. However, ritual roles of Kotas as determined by membership in a particular lineage or family (*kuḃt*), by virtue of divine selection (in the case of the ritual leader, *mundka-no-n* or diviner, *te-rka-rn*), or by community election (headman/treasurer, *go-tka-rn*) are quite distinct from these artisan or musical roles. Thus the collection of individuals who are “musicians” or “potters,” even though they fulfill a specialized and central role in a ritual context, are far more random a set of persons than are the “rice servers” (*ku-murco-r*), or the “fire-lighters” (*nic iḃo-r*), or those who perform any of the other ritual tasks that require belonging to a particular family or lineage. The category of “musician” is not as clear cut as some of these other ritual categories and this would suggest that associating any particular behavior or attribute to musicians as if they were a distinct category is therefore a problematic move.

The focus of Part II is Kota ritual life and the musical purpose in this investigation is to discover how music operates in a ritual system, in what ways it is like other ritual symbols and in what ways it is different. The more specific focus of chapters in part two is one kind of Kota mortuary practice, the *pac da-v*, the “green death” or “green funeral”—that is, the set of rituals leading up to and including the cremation of the corpse after death. It is called the “green funeral” on the analogy with freshly-cut wood—no longer alive, but still fresh, imbued with the colors and fluids of life.

A secondary mortuary practice, called the *varl da-v*, “dry death” or “dry funeral,” may follow some months or years after the green funeral. The corpse at this point survives only as a few bone fragments preserved after the first cremation: the bone fragments are dry; other ritual symbolism reinforces this dryness. This secondary rite serves a variety of purposes, many of which have been examined in the classic work of Hertz and revived for analysis recently in *Celebrations of Death* (Huntington and Metcalf 1991): sending the soul or spirit (*a-yv*) of the dead to the land of the dead, communally terminating the lasting effects of death (*ke-r*) in the village, and providing a context for regenerative processes (such as blessing of children, coupling of the sexes, and remarriage of widows and widowers); the late David G. Mandelbaum, a social-cultural anthropologist who worked with the Kotas beginning in the 1930s, wrote an expansive article on the Kota dry funeral entitled “Form, Variation and Meaning in a Ceremony”; some of the details omitted in my discussion of the dry funeral may be gleaned from this earlier article.

Huntington and Metcalf expand upon an important theme in Hertz’s work: the close association between the treatment of the corpse and beliefs about what happens to people when they die. In the latter half of this

century, under the pressure of moral standards imposed from without (Hindu morality in combination with and probably also conditioned by Victorian morality), Kotas have been made to feel that some of their rituals (such as bovine sacrifice) and customs (dancing and sexuality in a funeral context) are primitive or uncivilized. By changing rituals connected with both the dry and green funerals they have also been forced to reconsider their soteriology. But change in rituals and philosophies has not been uniform or unilateral: a certain degree of ambivalence remains. I trace this ambivalence to a number of symbolic possibilities in Kota ritual and expressive forms that probably predate the reconsideration of ritual appropriateness engendered by non-Kota public opinion. These symbolic possibilities include crossover between notions of the ancestors (i.e. inhabitants of the land of the dead) and the gods, the dual sentiments of celebrating or commemorating the lives of the deceased and mourning their loss, and the construction of space, both through ritual and song. Divinity, death and evil, for example, are sometimes separated in their association with the landscape, and sometimes occupy the same physical/conceptual spaces.

If the issues connected with Kota mortuary practices have been partially prefigured in the work of Hertz, those connected with Kota rituals for their gods strongly remind us of Durkheim's work on religion: for the Kotas, maintenance of viable divinity in the village is predicated on the formal demonstration of unity or solidarity in the village. "Unity" and "solidarity" are somewhat problematic as regards the whole village because they are defined somewhat more in terms of men than women; they also require formal characteristics that are interpreted by the participants as representing these concepts. I subdivide *solidarity* (loosely following Durkheim's organic and mechanical distinction) into specifically Kota ritual configurations in order to show how the symbolism of funerals differs from that of divine rituals: in short, funeral symbolism draws upon a solidarity of complements, men with woman, Kota village with Kota village; divine symbolism draws upon a solidarity of like entities, men with men, women with women, members of a single village with one another. Just as the treatment of the corpse (and its surrogates in the dry funeral) is related to Kota soteriology, so is the way in which Kotas worship their gods illustrative and indeed constitutive of Kota theology.

The major annual event during which Kotas celebrate and worship their indigenous gods is called *devr*, which means, literally, god. Following Mandelbaum, the linguist Emeneau, and before them, Breeks (a civil service officer) and others who have described Kota culture, I refer to this ceremony (usually of ten or more days) as the God Ceremony. The way in which Kotas express the idea of celebrating the God Ceremony is *devr gicd*, that is, "doing god" or "making god." The expression should not be taken over literally (in some ways the verb parallels the French *faire*), but in important ways the enacting of the god ceremony is also a form of *making* divinity. Kota divinity is not embodied in permanent, fixed forms and neither is it entirely

abstract. Kota divinity is in particular contexts embodied in fire; during the God Ceremony, this divine fire is *made* by friction. God is embodied in icons of Kota traditional occupations: the bow and arrow and the blacksmith shop. During the God Ceremony a secretly-stowed bow and arrow is cleaned and refurbished: the temple, which is in some ways an apotheosized blacksmith shop, is rebuilt (now only symbolically rebuilt, since the structure is made of cement), and a collection of precious coins and in some cases tool-shaped ornaments are affixed with cow dung on the temple as offerings to the god, as an icon of beauty for the aesthetic pleasure of the god, and figuratively in the shape of the face of the god.

Soteriology and theology are important not only as components in articulated forms of cultural philosophy or belief, but also as components of Kota identity complex(es). How is this so? *Soteriology* and *eschatology* dictate what happens and what the Kotas become after they die. Are they still Kotas? According to the old theory, yes, they live on in a distinct afterworld and communicate with the living. According to a new, Hindu influenced theory, the spirit of the dead person merges with a vague and generalized godhead which is not specifically Kota, but generically Hindu.⁷

Theology is usually that component of identity through which a society configures itself in relation to a supreme being or otherwise greater-than-human force. Kotas believe, on the one hand, that they have a unique creator-god who taught them all the skills (such as music, hunting, and blacksmithing) that make them unique; they also believe they share the creator god with the other tribes of the area; and they also believe that at some level, their own god is equatable with the Hindu supreme being, *bhagvān* or *brahman*.

Given the constitutive nature of ritual in the formations of these theories about the soul and about divinity it should not be surprising that rituals of god and death reveal a great deal about Kota cultural values in general. One of the important ways these rituals embody cultural values is articulated through the structure of musical repertoires. Part II reveals some of the signficatory power of music as it forges relationships among particular ritual activities or as it touches, and alternately heightens and mutes, those charged relationships.

⁷The theory probably trickled down from a philosophical school called "non-dualist," *advaita* or *advaita vedānta*: it denies the distinction between the true self (*ātman*) and the absolute, undifferentiated, all-pervading, self existing power (*brahman*). "The fundamental thought of Advaita Vedānta is that the life monad of embodied soul (*jīva*) is in essence the Self (*ātman*), which, being beyond the changing, transient, phenomenal apparitions of our empirical experience, is none other than Brahman, the sole and universal Eternal Reality, which is beyond change, self-effulgent and ever free, and defined as 'one-without-a-second' (*a-dvītīya*), 'really existing' (*sat*), 'purely spiritual' (*cit*) and 'sheer bliss' (*ānanda*)." (Zimmer 1951, 456). Advaita Vedānta "gave to the Supreme Essence (*paramātman*), Viṣṇu and Śiva the common, all-inclusive designation, 'Īśvara'. But the Vedānta theory of existence as the first-without—a-second-principle, has defied all attempts to define it in universally acceptable terminology, possibly because of the number of dogmas which have become attached to it. That Vedānta is the corner-stone of modern Hinduism can hardly be denied, but the dogma of *advaita*, and the paradox of its notion of absolute indivisibility and its intuitive cognition by the individual constitute an unsolved philosophical problem" (Stutley and Stutley 1984, 330).

Kota musical classification, like ritual classification, is based on a primary opposition between divinity and death. Many rituals are accompanied, and partially constituted by particular instrumental pieces (often named after these rituals); in some cases, as I illustrate in Part II and elaborate upon analytically in Part three, the relationships of melodic similarity between two pieces are directly and significantly correlated with relationships of ritual similarity (similarity in ritual function or meaning). Music is strongly constitutive not only of the content and syntax of certain kinds of Kota rituals, such as the sequence of rituals transporting the corpse from the house to the cremation ground, but also of the symbolic import of these rituals, the metaphysical relatedness of memorial millet to the corpse of the deceased.

Part three moves from the discussion of music as embedded in a ritual system to music as a system in and of itself. The title “Culture as a Musical System” is meant as a playful reversal (but not one without meaning) of Geertz’s essay titles in which religion, art, etc. are explained to be cultural systems. I flip the word order to emphasize that although musical classification may certainly be constituted by that amorphous anthropological entity called “culture,” musical classification and enduring musical objects, once established, effectively condition the further production of music and serve to give meaning to the contexts in which they (i.e. the musical pieces and system of classification by which they are organized) are found.⁸ For example, a number of melodies in the “god” category sound very much like one another. The creation of new melodies seems to have been governed by a logic based on the existence of pre-constituted categories (“god tunes” *devr ko!*) and on already existing melodic material. The performance of funeral melodies on the *ko!* (or melodies that *sound* like well known funeral tunes) outside the context of a funeral would provoke strong and angry reactions in the village, in part because the listener would be moved to believe someone has died. The constitutive role of music (betokened by the phrase “culture as a musical system”) is central in these rituals: neither the god ceremony nor a funeral could effectively be enacted in Kolme-l without music.

The first two chapters of part III consider Kota musical classification in light of literary genre theory in order to probe possibly significant “relationships between the study of ethnomusicology and studies in the humanities and social sciences in general” (Merriam 1964, 15). I employ a working definition of genre as *a culturally recognized category for a group of compositions or a style of performance*, and proceed to explain how the characteristics of a musical genre—as evidenced by the relationships among and attributes of its constituent pieces—stantiate the same sorts of structural properties and cultural values as do its

⁸The process implied is much like that described by Bourdieu in his discussion of the *habitus*. The *habitus* has been criticized as a “mystical” construct that must be, by definition, “unverifiable, invisible”; it creates a “dogmatic place,” a “‘reality’ which the discourse needs in order to be totalizing” (de Certeau 1984, 58-9). One need not invoke or accept Bourdieu’s theory of practice simply to argue that the structure of cultural products feeds back into cultural processes. Simpler and perhaps more apt here is Geertz’s “models of” and “models for.”

associated systems of rituals and/or other contexts. I experiment with several ways of looking at this problem. The primary parameters for discussing genre relationships are melodic content, speed of rendition, broadness or limitedness of potential performance context, association with a particular rhythmic pattern, and vocal/instrumental stylistic affinities. Noting that one genre (the god tunes) does not draw musically from, or provide melodic material to, any others, and that certain genres seem to be more fluid than others in their acceptance or distribution of musical material, I briefly flirt with a method developed for the study of caste interaction (certain castes accept and give certain kinds of foods and services to one another and this establishes a multidimensional ranking among them); it was a system of cultural analysis prevalent in the 1950s and broadened in scope by McKim Marriott. Though the entities and therefore the nature of agency in the system I describe and the far more complex system approached by Marriott are significantly different, I believe the “transactional” analogy does illustrate modestly the idea of culture as a musical system.

I then move in chapters three and four to a discussion of a different system of musical signification, the *narrative system*. The narrative system refers to the process by which melodies (whether sung or played on an instrument) are potentially made meaningful through reference to stories or lyrics with which they are or have been associated. Kota god tunes of Kolme-l village are particularly interesting examples of pieces with narrative significance because they require a parallel tradition of storytelling in order for their significance to be conveyed. When examining the kinds of stories associated with the god tunes, we discover that the themes of these stories reinforce values and concepts of divinity articulated in rituals of the same *god* category. They are moral themes: the village must act and maintain the sentiment of being as one; the vitality and continuity of the village depends on right-contact; the gods of the Kotas are primeval and rooted physically to the landscape.

Kota mourning songs are also of narrative significance. They are not performed during rituals, but do convey values and sentiments associated with Kota cultural manners of processing and thinking about death: the moral ambiguity of empty, extra-village spaces, fear and power associated with cultural others (especially the Kurumba tribe), the tension between memory of the dead and the pain of separation. Although mourning songs have texts, the texts are frequently fragmentary and require, like the god tunes, a paramusical storytelling tradition to elucidate their meanings. One might imagine that the songs were once longer and more explicit, the fragmentary condition now being the result of decline.

Although this may be the case, it appears that in the 1930s, when the genre was more widely known and practiced than it is today, the genre was actually incorporated into a storytelling context (nowadays the songs are elucidated by the telling of the story, but the story/song is not a unit of performance in the way the following example seems to suggest it formerly was). The genre is today sung primarily by middle-aged and

older women. In the 1930s, according to a female informant of Mandelbaum's, Pu-cgi-n, "This song [a popular mourning song] is generally sung when we go to bed, when young women are together at night. First the story is told, and then the song is sung at the proper point. If the song is sung first it can't be properly understood, so we tell the story first." (Mandelbaum n.d. 3.26.38). Mourning songs and god tunes, though widely different in function and style, are semiotically related in their reliance on non-musical verbal exegesis.

Chapter five analyzes in musical detail "Mathi," the song Pu-cgi-n described. A number of versions of the song and versions of other songs which are related in melody or text are compared. In so comparing I address general processes of Kota musical transmission and style. I also compare the mourning song genre with ritualized crying at Kota funerals, compare these forms with analogous forms practiced by other tribes in the area and Tamils on the plains, and consider the characteristics of these forms in light of contemporary lament studies in ethnomusicology. Finally, I consider the ways in which the mourning song genre can be considered stylistically similar to instrumental music by comparing two instrumental versions of the "Mathi" melody. In chapter six I probe further the style of instrumental music, using recorded examples of the god tunes from the 1930s, 1970s, 1980s and 1990s to examine issues of stability and change. I show that the percussion ostinatos and rhythmic organization of Kota instrumental music are largely in keeping with the rhythmic practices and ensemble types of folk music in Tamilnadu generally. The tonal content and style of melody seem to be peculiar to Nilgiri instrumental music, making a case for a local, pan-tribal, Nilgiri musical area. I conclude that Kota vocal and instrumental music are, by and large, two musical subsystems, the vocal remaining largely in keeping with south Indian devotional song.

The final section of part three examines Kota music not only in comparison with that of other tribes in the Nilgiris and Tamil music on the plains, but also with other musics in India practiced by communities who have been designated as tribes. The discussion probes the *idea* of tribe and what, if anything, results musically from regarding the tribe as an entity, whether historically deep or recently constructed. In the final analysis, I suggest that the organizational features that the musics of India's tribes seem to share may without a great deal of further abstraction be seen to correspond with organizational features of many Indian musics, including but not limited to the classical traditions. As a result, I argue that if south Asian musics are to be regarded or represented as in any way unified, tribal music should be central and not marginal to such a representation.

To adumbrate this argument, and provide a backdrop for references to the notion of tribe throughout this work, I turn finally to a historical consideration of the concept, and what the term "tribe" conjures up in the minds of modern Indians.

TRIBE

Popular ideas of tribe in India grow out of 18th and 19th century notions of the "natural man" and are articulated administratively through the bureaucratic residue of the Colonial census. These ideas of tribe associate tribals with "nature" and "the primitive," infantilize them, and consider tribals the raw primeval base from which arose certain practices and strains within those religious aspects of Indian civilization now called Hindu and Jain. The history of the term tribe in India is different from that in its colonial counterpart and model (Cohn 1987, 201-23), Africa. However, the term as applied in both places shared significant colonial origins, not as a technical term originally, but among social anthropologists "as a heuristic category for the convenience of analysis, with only intuitive meanings attached to it" (Ekeh 1990, 662). Attempts to define the "notion of tribe" led to realizations that it "has been a confused and ambiguous one from its earliest period of utterance" (Fried 1975, 5). Nonetheless "controversial though the matter is, the most generally acceptable characteristics of a tribal society are perhaps that it is a whole society, with a high degree of self-sufficiency at a near subsistence level, based on a relatively simple technology without writing or literature, culture and sense of identity, tribal religion being also coterminous with tribal society" (Southall 1970, 28).

The utility to the colonizers of such categories has oft been noted,

In order to establish law and order and to collect taxes there were a number of pre-requisites in addition to monopolization of military power. The colonial rulers needed units with boundaries and they needed people who could be made responsible for the maintenance of law and order as well as for the regular collection of taxes on they were assessed. The units which British officials found or created which had these characteristics were villages, estates and properties in India, and hamlets, lineages, clans and tribes in Africa. (Cohn 1987, 206)

In Africa, tribalism came initially to mean the maintenance of a way of life based on ethnicity and membership in a kin-based community (a *tribe*); later it came to mean "obnoxious modes of behavior in multiethnic circumstances that threaten and endanger normal coexistence among persons from different ethnic groups" (Ekeh 1990, 688). Tribe is now politically incorrect as a term for African "ethnic groups," signaling as it does for African and Africanist scholars the persistence of a category once used to justify and facilitate colonial rule.

The concept equivalent to "tribalism" in modern India is "communalism," an "ism" illustrated in events which took place while the first words of this dissertation were committed to computer memory: Hindu-Muslim riots over the destruction of a mosque in Ayodhya. As Gyanendra Pandey argues, communalism is "a form of colonialist knowledge" (Pandey 1990, 6) because it emphasizes the puerile and primitive character of colonized peoples in a way that Europeans would never characterize people in the histories of their own lands.

Tribe was abandoned in African scholarship because of its pejorative connotations, but although “it is difficult to say when ‘tribe’ began to acquire pejorative shading. . . the addition to the term of an invidious quality did not lead to its abandonment in nondisparaging usage” (Fried 7). In India, the category is one assumed with pride by those communities who receive special treatment by virtue of this designation; but it is also a term about which the government of India is sensitive when it comes to use of the term by foreigners.

“Tribalism” and “communalism” and the old conventional-wisdom notion of tribe as an observable social unit, usually based on kinship, do not accurately or at least entirely reflect what the term tribe means in India today. Before British times, tribal beliefs and behavior had not before been defined as Pan-Indic phenomena: perhaps as a relic of the classification process itself, tribal religion appeared to be distinct from what was defined as Hinduism. The definition of what was tribal also came about through missionary activity (Mehta, 1991). Since the Hindus were cast as heathens, writ large, it was in the best interest of those communities whose practices least resembled high caste models or widespread cults associated with mainstream Hinduism to identify themselves as “tribal” (and from the missionary point of view, to prepare for conversion).

Tribals were and still are defined economically and politically: culturally marginal and politically under represented, they have often been exploited by wealthy landowners. British and later Indian governments sought to identify such peoples for economic and other assistance. The line of distinction between tribe and castes of the lowest strata, however, has frequently been a thin one. Judgements have usually rested on the distinctiveness of cultural practices, geographic isolation, uniqueness of language and the nature of interaction between the “tribal” community in question and outsiders.

Even if ideas of tribe in India today are not entirely a product of the Colonial era, they have at least evolved through the conjuncture of contemporaneous British and pre-existing Indian social representations and ideas associated with different segments of society.⁹ Exactly how this conjuncture was played out in specific regions is beyond the scope of this dissertation. But it is possible to illustrate how these representations and ideas *could* conjoin, and *why* such a conjunction might be important to consider in this context. Let us consider one set of Indian texts, from one period in time and in one region: the *Māhātmyas* of the Rivers of the Deccan.

Forest-dwelling hunters and low caste peoples were, in some of these *Māhātmya* stories, cast according to what we would recognized now as negative, primitivist stereotypes such as “violent or dangerous” and some individual hunters were pictured as “cruel killers of numerous animals.” In other stories, however, “the low caste or tribal person” was “portrayed as morally corrigible, or as superior in moral devotional (*bhakti*) terms

⁹ The term “pre-existing” Indian categories, rather than indigenous, is important here because no social representation is original or authentic; each is historical and each is regionally specific.

to a king or a Brahman” (Feldhaus 1990, 95). The dual values expressed by these texts are homologous with an enduring attraction in the history of Western thought (especially post-industrial) to the simplicity of subsistence living and the complementary, though not necessarily contradictory revulsion over what might be regarded as violent or uncivilized behavior.

Evidence from one set of ancient texts (or even one hundred texts, for that matter) cannot prove that social categories in India remained homogeneous and stable from time immemorial until the coming of the British, and such an argument would hardly be worth constructing; rather it suggests that any study of tribal ethnic identity in India, and certainly any study of tribal music, must take into account representations of various sectors of society in different times and places throughout the subcontinent, as well as modern values which may have been adopted during the colonial period and spread as India became part of the modern world system.¹⁰

A second site in which primordialist conceptions of the tribal are inscribed is that of ethnic politics in Tamilnadu. Although the theory that Indian culture can be explained in terms of an ancient indigenous cultural stratum overlaid and dominated by an Aryan one has been called into question, complexified, and largely debunked in academia,¹¹ there exists in India and particularly in Tamilnadu a strong contingent who support this theory. Some consider the Dravidians to be the true representatives of this ancient cultural

¹⁰By “modern world system,” I mean the complex networks of cultural, social, economic and political relationships engendered by such things as industrialism, tourism, and development. Discovering that “interests of some within a world system readily determined the destinies of others” (Gewertz and Errington 1991, 21) social theorists and ethnographers have been in recent years compelled to represent “the ways in which closely observed cultural worlds are embedded in larger, more impersonal systems” (Marcus 1986, 166). This has led some to criticize and even abandon anthropological attempts to represent distinguishable cultural systems. As Sahlins argues, “This is a confusion between an open system and a lack of a system. And it leaves us unable to account for the diversity of local responses to the world system—persisting, moreover, in its wake. World-system theory itself allows for the preservation of satellite cultures, as the means of reproduction of capital in the dominant European order. But if so, from the alternate vantage of the so-called dominated people, European wealth is harnessed to the reproduction and even the creative transformation of their own cultural order.” (Sahlins 1985, viii)

¹¹The strongest argument for the Aryan invasion theory (or congeries of theories) remains in the realm of historical linguistics. Some archaeologists now argue that “current archaeological data do not support the existence of an Indo-Aryan or European invasion into South Asia at any time in the pre- or proto historical periods. Instead, it is possible to document archaeologically a series of cultural changes reflecting indigenous cultural development from prehistoric to historic periods” (Shaffer 1984, 88). The linguistic evidence, which suggests that Dravidian speaking people knew Old Indo Aryan as a second language (Emeneau 1962; 1974), has not been satisfactorily accounted for, or corroboratively dated, by archaeological evidence because linguistic evidence is not necessarily preserved in material culture (Erdosy 1995, 23). For recent scholarship on the Indo-Aryan question see Erdosy (ed. 1995), especially articles by Erdosy, Kenoyer and Sharma. Opposition to theories of Aryan invasions have arisen on numerous Indian fronts—see for example, the work of Sethna (1992), which follows from that of Sri Aurobindo.

stratum,¹² and Tamil chauvinists consider themselves to be the purest representation of Dravidians (cf. Irschick 1969).¹³

In order to support various theories of invasion, diffusion, migration and culture change, linguists and archaeologists have long sought to identify, interpret and date what they thought to be Dravidian elements in the cultural and linguistic composition of Indian civilization. Linguistically, for example, it has been convincingly argued that ancient Dravidian languages were the original source of retroflex consonants in all south Asian languages.¹⁴ Although few scholars would support such a proposition today, earlier scholars proposed that Dravidian (as opposed to Aryan) religion provided the origin of goddess worship and Shaivism in India.¹⁵ This belief derives substantially from the predominance of Shaivite and Goddess worship in South India.

The association with Shaivism was also enhanced as a result of a religious revivalist movement, strong from the 1880s to the 1920s, and led by reformers such as J. M. Nallasami Pillai (1864-1920) and Maraimalai Adigal (1876-1950) (Ramaswamy 1993, 693-4). The movement characterized the authentic

¹²While I was writing this paper I chanced to meet a noted Orissi poet. When he learned that I had lived in Tamilnadu he remarked, "the south, that's the *real* India." The term Dravidian became a technical term only after considerable advances in historical linguistics. Elmore in 1913 wrote, "the term Dravidian is commonly used to refer to all of the non-Aryan population in the peninsula of India. The Dravidians are considered to be the aboriginal inhabitants of the land. They predominate in the southern and eastern parts of India, but form a considerable part of the population in the northwestern part where the Aryans predominate" (1913, 1). It is understandable that one idea of "Dravidian" as "aboriginal" and "south Indian" may have developed and been maintained in traditions of Indian conventional knowledge while another more specific idea of Dravidian was developed in a much narrower world of linguists, archaeologists and anthropologists.

¹³"Nineteenth-century philological inscription of Tamil as a language belonging to a south Indian Dravidian family of languages distinct from the Indo-European 'Aryan' languages of the north, and especially from Sanskrit, has had major sociopolitical consequences. . . . It helped to fuel revivalist attempt to establish the distinctiveness of a Tamil/Dravidian Self, which was projected as being essentially different from, and irrevocably antithetical to, a non-Tamil Other (generally marked as north Indian, Sanskritic, Aryan and Brahmanical)" (Ramaswamy 1993, 687).

¹⁴Retroflexes are formed by curling the tongue back against the roof of the mouth. The frequency of retroflexes in the Tamil language has led its detractors to compare Tamil speakers with people talking with marbles in their mouths. It has been recently argued, again counter the Aryan invasion theory, that "to account for retroflexion in Indo-Aryan, it is necessary to assume that a large number of speakers of Indo-Aryan were native Dravidians, rather than Aryans influenced by Dravidians. . ." (Deshpande 1995, 76).

¹⁵See, for example, Elmore's *Dravidian gods in modern Hinduism*, containing such passages as "Siva worship is a marked illustration of the adoption of aboriginal gods. Siva is a god of the Puranas, and in connection with his worship there is much that is opposed to Brahmanism. he appears to be a deified chief. His wife, Parvati, is more strikingly aboriginal than Siva himself. She appears in many different forms. As Kali she is a bloodthirsty goddess, wearing a necklace of skulls, and dancing on the bodies of her fallen enemies. . . . The goddesses of the Dravidians are commonly said to be incarnations of Kali or Durga, and so the wives of Siva" (1913, 5-6); "In many ways an artificial connection has been found between the original Dravidian worship and Hinduism, and the people are classified as Hindus, but the connection is to a great extent in name only. The same strange rites, the same basal beliefs and ideas, which these Dravidians possessed tens of centuries ago, seem no less powerful today" (1913, 7)

religion of the south “Tamil” or “Dravidian” and drew its philosophy from that of Shaiva Siddhanta, based on Tamil texts to Śiva composed beginning in the 7th century (although remaining hidden until they were revived in the tenth century).¹⁶ “In the nineteenth century the aspects of this philosophy which were stressed were the belief, first, that it was a product purely of the Tamil mind, free of the Vedas and Sanskrit, and second its bias against Brahmans” (Irschick 1986, 18). Shaivism and Goddess worship became associated with, although not exclusively, ecstatic cults, blood sacrifices, wild animals, jungles, long matted hair, water, nature and primal, carnal energy¹⁷—practices which appear to conflict with what were recognized as central to Brahmanical religion.¹⁸ The association of these fantastic, primeval forms of Hinduism with an indigenous substratum and the refined, philosophical forms of worship with a later, Aryan influenced form of Hinduism suggested a series of dichotomies which have been played out in popular consciousness: tribals, for example, become remnants of the raw social base from which ecstatic forms of Hinduism ultimately grew and Brahmans become the elite residue of the Aryans, who introduced a form of high religion.

In examining the following the popular Indian representations of tribe and their roots (or branches) in European thought, I will focus on aspects touched upon above which dwell on the romantic attachment to simplicity and the notion of cultural exoticism or otherness. We will discover that in the Tamil region, the notion that the tribe is an entity distinct from mainstream society is not supported in literature of the ancients.

Let us begin with colonialism as it was registered in relation to Nilgiri tribals. We have seen that the tribal designation was, in British times, an administrative one, which, like caste, was useful for classification

¹⁶It is a dualistic philosophy which argues that the soul retains its individual consciousness but attains knowledge only by the free grace of god. A soul, according to Saiva Siddhanta, is intelligent or unintelligent depending on whether divine irradiation is given or withheld. It is also based on a set of books called the *Agamas* which were available to those (such as the Sudra Varna) who could not listen to the Sanskrit Vedas” (Irschick 1986, 18).

¹⁷According to the Ramaswamy, the revivalists were responding to a form of nineteenth century Hinduism “especially as it was popularized through the agencies of the colonial state [which] denigrated pre-Aryan/Dravidian traditions. . . as aboriginal, animistic, and prone to devil-worship” (1993, 694).

¹⁸K. S. Singh notes that many of these aspects of modern Hinduism had been fully incorporated by the early medieval period. Particularly the elements of Tantra, often associated with tribal origins, “do not belong to the religion of the present-day tribals” (1993, 3).

Doniger has devoted an entire book to what she calls “the central paradox of śaiva mythology,” (Doniger O’Flaherty 1973, 4) as Zaehner put it, Śiva as, “permanently ithyphallic, yet perpetually chaste: how is one to explain such a phenomenon” (Zaehner 1962, 113 cited in Doniger 1973, 5). According to Doniger, “Failure to connect him [Śiva] with the Vedic gods Indra, Prajāpati, and Agni led to the assumption that the sexual elements of his cult were ‘non-Aryan’ or at least non-Vedic, and obvious correspondences between Śaiva myths and Tantric cult led some scholars to seek the origins of Śiva’s sexual ambiguity in this comparatively late development” (1973, 5)

and enumeration.¹⁹ If the categories were not strongly enough drawn through administration and missionary moral doctrine, they were certainly bolstered by the imagination of travelers, administrators, and even scholars. The Reverend John Hough provided in 1829 one of the first prosodic descriptions of the Todas from the Colonial period,

in appearance, a noble race of men, their visages presenting all the features of the Roman countenance very strongly marked, and their tall athletic figures corresponding with the lineaments of the face. . . I cannot but think that they may be found to be the remains of an ancient Roman colony. (1829, 63-4)

Others have argued that the Todas are descendants of such diverse peoples as the ancient Greeks, lost tribes of Israelites and Scythians; even in 1991 a customs officer at Madras airport assured me that the Todas were actually ancient Greeks—a piece of information, I gratefully assured him, I would use in my dissertation.

The colonial imagination was not, of course, unitary, and neither were its objects of scrutiny: not all the entities labeled tribes were imagined in the same ways. The Nilgiris alone boasted tribal peoples of various types—the noble, light skinned, leisurely Todas, the expert hunter Kotas, and the wild and magical Kurumbas and Irulas. But even though colonial observers recognized tribal peoples to be diverse, they also presumed these peoples to share a set of practices and beliefs that transcended historical time. Nineteenth century European views of human evolution were projected onto tribal culture: tribal culture was “simple” because it preserved a stage of early man. A culture was authentically tribal only if it maintained pre-industrial techniques of subsistence such as hunting and gathering. Tribal ritual practices were usually interpreted as “animistic” and “magical” rather than respectable manifestations of developed religious systems. Even now, some Indian scholars describe tribal cultures as displaying, in quasi-Durkheimian fashion, the elementary forms of religious life.

The “elementary form” assumption continues to inform some of the scant Indian musicological work on tribal music. Onkar Prasad, for example, in one of the few books devoted to the music of Indian tribal people, attempted to analyze all Santal music in terms of characteristic four-note motives. Finding one motive dominant in 37 of 51 examples, he reported,

So far the examination of the Santal melodies has revealed that there exists an ‘invariant structure’ in them. Apart from this, other dependent structures or class-motifs. . . have also been found appearing independently in some specimens. . . *which are unlikely to be so in a primitive music like the Santal one*

¹⁹As Cohn argues in his classic essay “The census, social structure and objectification in south Asia,” this enumeration and classification was achieved through the census. Not only did this attempt to fix community boundaries that were, before, “fuzzy” at best (Chatterjee 1993, 223-4), but it also “provided an arena for Indians to ask questions about themselves, and Indians utilized the fact that the British census commissioners tried to order tables on caste in terms of social precedence” (Cohn 1987, 230).

where there is a tendency to concentrate on a single class-motif. (Prasad 1985, 117 [my emphasis]).

To Prasad, anomalies were the result of outside influence. The implied logic in Prasad's model was that since all music must have evolved from simple and repetitive music, tribal music, a survival of the oldest kind of music, must also be simple and repetitive. This evolutionary assumption is expressed even more transparently by the award winning radio broadcaster and musicologist Amalendu Bikash Kar Choudhury, who wrote in a sympathetic if musicologically thin book, the *Tribal songs of northeast India*

According to our modern ideas tribal life may not be rich in their performing arts like dances and music, it is also true that tribal music is lacking in modern musical accompaniments but at the same time it is true that *we can have a glimpse at the past still living in the tribal areas, in their music with simple and easy tuneful songs and with easy and simple unskilled dances.* (Kar Choudhury 1984, 46 [my emphasis])

Indians writing on Indian society are not the only modern writers who continue to find in the "primitive" the essential components of early man. Generations of European thought gave rise to such ideas. In America, a similar romantic fascination with Pygmy culture led Alan Lomax to write,

Among the Mbuti the support comes unbidden to everyone present in the form of tuned-in, interlocked synchrony of voice, of outstretched hand with food, and with naked, dancing, frolicsome, bodily synchrony. *In the Pygmy culture we find social solidarity in its earliest and purest form in playful, affect-filled, mirror behavior.* When we reflect that the peak in mirror interaction is sexual intercourse, the act of love itself, we may surmise that social solidarity is a generalization of the act of generation. (1968, 203 [my emphasis])

In the Lomaxian scheme, Indian tribals are living examples of the "Early Agriculturalists." who follow, on the human evolutionary scale, the "African Gatherers" of which the Pygmies are an example. The idealized portrayal of Indian tribals in popular Indian literature and media often shares much with imaginative images of the Pygmy in parts of the Western world: both are innocent children, unaware of the cheating and deceit of the outside world, both societies are egalitarian; gender roles in both societies are weakly differentiated and sexuality is unrepressed. Indian tribals, like Pygmies, are representatives of Rousseau's natural man. As the late Tamil anthropologist Pilu Irudayanath wrote of the Nilgiri tribals,

Forest and mountain-dwelling tribals who know nothing of the civilized world live better than city bred men and are more honest and straightforward. These tribals know nothing about Ouvai or Tiruvalluvar, and yet they live in the manner suggested by these great poets (1989, 84).²⁰

These nature-children, though pure and honest, appear to be tainted by a concomitant lack of civility or propriety. Such ideas of tribe in south India are also represented in regional vernacular performance genres. Consider for example, the *Kuravan kuratti āṭṭam*, a Tamil folk dance that presents two "hill tribal" or

²⁰ . . . kātukalilum malaikalilum vāḷum nākarikamaṛṇa ātivācikalō pattanattāṇaivitaṇṇa paṇpōtu vāḷkiṛārkaḷ. nērmaiyoṭu natakkīṛārkaḷ. āṭi param porulaiyum nīṭiyaiyyum nampukiṛārkaḷ. ouvaiyāraiyo valluvaraiyo paṇṇi aṇṇiyāta kāttuvācikal apperiyārkaḷ vakuttuṇṇa vaḷiyil vāḷum vintaiyai eṇṇvenṇu colvatu!

“gypsy”²¹ characters, male and female. Typically, the man questions the woman about where she has been; as she makes excuses it becomes clear that she is attempting to cover up an romantic affair with another man. The scene ends with a song and dance of reconciliation. The following description of the *Kuravan kuratti āṭam*, by Dr. N. Radhakrishnan, reveals not only the now-familiar popular discourse on tribe, but also suggests that this dance itself might constitute, for its Tamil audiences, another representation of a “romantic” tribal ideal-type,²²

The joyous and uninhibited dance of a half-naked mountain lass and her husband or lover is one of the most entertaining items in which the tribal instinct and unsophisticated dance movements abound. The girl wearing a mini skirt and a very tight jacket exposing the remaining portion of her body to the delight of the rural audience moves about in measured steps with violent jerks of her body and dances boisterously keeping in tune with the accompanying music. . .

At times the Kurathi would adorn her braid with flowers or leaves she had gathered from the mountain. The mountain lass with tattoo on the biceps and on her face and moving joyously tilting her body and making the most provoking movements to the delight of the rural audience and dancing in consonance with the music and going an rubbing her body against an almost nude tribal youth who is her partner in the dance can only be the gypsy dance variety (Radhakrishnan 1982, 51).

In part out of concern that the foreign media will represent Indian culture with the same prurient fascination, or emphasize the “primitive” or “underdeveloped” segments of the population, and in part out of a genuine concern for public safety,²³ the Indian government has tended to shield the foreign eye from India’s

²¹The appellation, *kuravan*, denotes the following, according to the *Tamil Lexicon*: “1. Inhabitant of the hilly tract. . . 2. Inhabitant of the desert tract. . . 3. Kurava, a caste of fowlers, snake catchers, basket makers and fortune tellers. . . 4. Pretender, cringing hypocrite. . . 5. Mercury, quicksilver.” *kuratti*, the feminine form of *kuravan*, means “Woman of the *kurava* tribe.” The fact that the *Lexicon* refers to this community both as a caste and a tribe underscores the difficulty in categorizing certain marginal communities; in this case, it is possible that these categorizations describe two subdivisions of the *kuravas* (Thurston 1909, 3:453-4), one dwelling in the foothills, the other in the jungles. See further bibliographic references in the entry, “*Korava*” in the *Encyclopedia of World Cultures* (Hockings ed. 1992), “a peripatetic tribe of basket makers, fortune-tellers, and thieves, found throughout India and Sri Lanka.” The connection between these people and the forests has also occasioned an association with kingship in the story of Manikkuravan (Hart 1986, 253). Trawick analyzes the song of one *kuratti*, and notes that even some *paraiyars* (Tamil untouchables) “seemed to romanticize the Kuravars, seemingly admiring their evident freedom, resourcefulness, and creativity, and occasionally singing for me, with evident enjoyment, rather raunchy songs which they said they had heard from Kuravars. On the other hand, they avoided contact with the Kuravars, despised them for their dirtiness, and sang songs mocking them for lawlessness and brother-sister incest.” (Trawick 1991, 227). For a commercial cassette of songs recorded by a member of the *kurava* community, see *kirānattu vāṇṇai* (“scent of the village”) sung by Paravai Muṇiyammā (Ramji 072 WMD 99413; marketed by Babu Electronics, Madurai, Tamilnadu).

²²The typical audience for such a dance in a village would consist primarily of non-Brahmins, including untouchables (*paraiyars*).

²³Tense political situations in regions where tribals are attempting to achieve political autonomy present immediate physical dangers: in some areas, I am told, visitors may expect to be greeted by a flurry of angry arrows.

Scheduled Tribes.²⁴ It is therefore somewhat ironic that Indian government has allowed its own tribal populations to be portrayed according to simplistic and primitivist stereotypes in films produced for local consumption.

Just prior to the introductory scene in one Indian documentary, the narrator describes how Madhya Pradesh tribal society continues to flourish in its original, aboriginal state.²⁵ The first scene depicts waterfalls, birds, and other beautiful panoramic views of nature—clearly designed to evoke ideas of pristine, natural living. Next, as the film reveals men and bare-breasted Gondi tribal women dancing in a circle, the narrator again verbalizes the image iterated throughout the film,

Without exposure to the tormenting problems and complications of life, unaware of the worries, disorder and agitation, unacquainted with golden dreams of excitement and luxury, how carefree, healthy and simple is the life of these adivasis.²⁶

The romantic attachment to a tribal ideal in this film is by no means special or unusual—particularly because mass media, in India and probably in general, tends to exaggerate the exotic. The preceding quotes from anthropologists and musicologists indicate that this romanticism is also registered in some strains of scholarship. There can be no denying that such discourse reflects the historical influence of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European thought.²⁷ As suggested earlier, however, it will require more detailed and careful study to understand not the one, but the many cultural and social classifications that predate British

²⁴The official English term for tribal groups in India is Scheduled Tribe; untouchable castes are similarly known as Scheduled Castes. Peoples belonging to either of these government categories are entitled to special benefits.

²⁵The title and credits did not appear on the private print of the film I viewed. It is unlikely that the government of India was not involved in the production of this film at some level; they most likely commissioned the film.

²⁶Transcribed from film and translated by Amy Bard:

“jīvan ke virādh samasyāom aur ulajanom se andhik us kī cintā vygraha [?] aur ākultā se anjān, vāvelā [?] aur vilās ke sumhere sapnom se aparacit in ādivāsi kitne svasth aur saral haim”

²⁷It must be recognized that there are other discourses on tribe, both in the media and in the scholarly community. Noteworthy is the work of K.S. Singh (1985; 1993) and many of the scholars whose work is represented in Singh's edited collections (Singh ed. 1982; 1972). Journalists such as V. Suresh (1991; Prabhu and Suresh 1989) write with a critical awareness of popular and Orientalist constructions of tribals, providing what I believe is a more forceful political message in communicating the plight of contemporary tribals, avoiding the vacuous romanticism invoked by less reflective and critical writers.

Some scholars have spoken out angrily on the persistence of the term tribe in popular and academic discourse. Jaganath Pathy concludes his “The idea of tribe and the Indian scene,” with the following polemic:

In sum it is argued that the notion of tribe is in a theoretical dead end and politically manipulated. Its indicators, assumptions, and meanings are embroiled in politics and extremely confusing. In the Indian context, its irrelevance and moribundity is abundantly demonstrated, and alternative terms like ethnic minority, are considered more appropriate than the pejorative term tribe. It would however be premature to expect that owing to the exposure of political use and scientific irrelevance the term would be removed from academic discourse. As long as it remains useful to the powers that be to manipulate divisions and rule over the subjects and legitimise domination, the term would survive like the unscientific concept of race. But critical reflections do carry professional and political implications as well. (1989, 356).

arrival in India: the critical questions concern not only the classification schemes extant in the ancient literatures of India, but also how these and other classification schemes were applied in different regions and at different points in history. In discussing the history of ideas of tribe in the Nilgiri hills, it may be useful briefly to consider the classification of peoples in the literature of ancient Tamil. In so considering, I wish to use one period in early history as a sounding board for understanding the present, not as a reference point for "pure" Tamil culture.

AN ANCIENT TAMIL SOCIAL CLASSIFICATION SCHEME

The earliest Tamil literature, called Sangam literature, has been dated between the first and third centuries A.D. Linguistic evidence suggests that the languages of the Todas and Kotas of the Nilgiris separated from old Tamil sometime before Tamil and Malayalam became separate languages, about 2,000 years ago (Emeneau 1989, 135). That is, the earliest Tamil literature provides a *terminus ante quem* for dating these tribal languages. We may take this to mean that the Kotas and the Todas were probably, by the Sangam period, isolated sufficiently as a people from speakers of the mainstream language, preserved in the earliest written Tamil literature, to develop independent languages. Although linguistic evidence would suggest that Todas and Kotas were distinct cultural entities in the Sangam age, it cannot tell us whether these peoples were residing in the Nilgiris.²⁸ However, if it is probable that the people we now identify as tribal existed during the Sangam age (though the names Toda and Kota do not appear in the literature), it would be of interest, in tracing the history of social representations in India, to discover how society was divided in this literature of two millennia ago.

Sangam literary conventions divide the land into five tracts, each named for a characteristic flower and associated with a landscape, time, season, type of flora or fauna, water source, occupation, music and social category. The images associated with these categories, possibly less literal than poetic, were part of the symbolic vocabulary used for the portrayal of love. What some scholars of Tamil literature now loosely term "hill tribes" were simply the inhabitants of the hilly regions. Nothing is peculiar or exotic about these people in the context of Tamil literature: just as each region was qualitatively different so were its inhabitants. From a modern standpoint, the fact that the hill peoples were hunters, liked to drink, and dressed largely in leaves and flowers might lead us, whiggishly,²⁹ to apply to them the English label "tribe."

²⁸The first known inscription mentioning the Todas dates from 1117, although we do not know whether they yet resided in the Nilgiri hills (Walker 1986, 41n.4)

²⁹"The whig historian reduces the mediating processes by which the totality of an historical past produces the totality of its consequent future to a search for the origins of certain present phenomena" (Stocking 1982, 3).

The imaginative portrayals of peoples and places in Sangam poetry, though they were perhaps limited by and generated from a historical reality, cannot be regarded as ethnographic descriptions. Important, however, are not the details of descriptions themselves so much as a world-view, which may perhaps be more telling, that was expressed through a single, integrated socio-poetic system. In the Tamil world of Sangam poetry, there was no exclusion, no systematic difference constructed between a mainstream (what we now might call popular Hindu) civilization, and a marginal, more ancient people living at its fringes (the tribes).

THE TRIBE AS A UNIFIED IDENTITY CATEGORY TODAY

Only in modern times have peoples throughout India, communicating not only in different languages but also in languages from vastly different language families, been grouped together into a single category, in English, the tribe, in Hindi, *ādivāsi* (original inhabitants) or, in Tamil, *paḷankuṭi makka!* (ancient race people).³⁰ Since many of these communities face similar problems, and since the governmental designation, Scheduled Tribe, allows regional governments to single communities out for special treatment, it is not surprising that these tribes have mobilized themselves politically.

Political mobilization and governmental labeling does not mean, however, that tribal communities share substantial features of their cultures and it certainly does not mean these communities were historically related. It would be presumptuous to assume that the peoples inhabiting the Indian subcontinent thousands of years ago were more homogeneous culturally than they are now—if for no other reason, the technology of travel would have tended to isolate regions from one another in ancient times to a greater extent than in the modern age.³¹ Even if Indo-Aryans, Austro-Asiatic peoples and Dravidian peoples once shared a great deal culturally, in what form could we expect these similarities to survive in different regions under differing historical conditions?

Yet from an outside perspective there do, in fact, appear to be similarities among the cultures of many Indian tribal groups. For example, it is widely recognized that tribal communities tend to maintain among their members an ideology of egalitarianism; this is by no means true of all entities called tribes and often is

³⁰I do not believe that the adoption of Indian language terms after the English “tribe” changes the idea behind the concept, nor does it make the concept more indigenous. For this reason I use the Hindi and English terms interchangeably.

³¹Although most regions were not literally isolated from one another, it is certainly true that individuals and groups could not traverse great distances rapidly. It may be argued, quite rightly, that some aspects of cultural diffusion occur not by the displacement of people, but by the transfer of ideas—somewhat akin to the movement of a wave in the ocean. This form of diffusion would be relatively unaffected by the technology of travel.

not the case in the relationship among different tribes.³² The phenomenon of youth dormitories, famously represented in the ethnographic literature as the institution of the Ghotul, is also widespread among some Indian tribes, as is the comparative ease with which the genders may interact socially. Sociolinguistically, the phenomenon whereby communities refer to themselves as “men” or “human beings” as against various kinds of outsiders is found among certain tribes—although in the Nilgiris, this is only true of the Todas.³³

I know of no study attempting to compare the distribution of characteristics thought to be tribal among the tribes according to their population in India today, and it would be difficult to measure qualities such as egalitarianism,³⁴ but such a study might allow us to know the degree to which stereotypically tribal cultural features are actually present in those cultures which are officially called tribes, and the degree to which they are absent in other Indian cultures.

From the standpoint of understanding contemporary tribal identity, however, it may be argued that such statistics are not important. It is important, however, that tribes use features such as egalitarianism, presence of youth dormitories, and special repertoires of music and dance for self-identification; in some cases these tribes revitalize their cultures by reviving dying institutions³⁵ and invent new rituals that conform to emerging

³²See, e.g. Ghanshyam Shah's study of stratification among Gujarati tribes (1986) as well as any account of the Nilgiri tribes.

³³c.f. Mandelbaum 1989, 189.

³⁴Extending the work of Murdoch, Alan Lomax has attempted to scale social and musical qualities according to a set of principles he developed; the samples for his studies, however, are taken to represent entire civilizations. “Tribal India” is a single category.

³⁵For example, in a solidarity movement among the Khasis of Meghalaya (speaking language of Mon-Khmer language family), “certain basic elements of Khasi culture and tradition [have] brought together the different sub-groups of Khasi, tribal or otherwise”; notable was the participation of unmarried girls along with both married and unmarried men in communal dance, which was “symbolic of the special responsibility shouldered by the young in forging solidarity,” and the revitalization of the Senghkasi “socio-cultural religious organization.” (Mathur 1982a, 184-5).

Some tribal groups, such as the Padams, Miniyongs, Gallongs and Pasi of the Siang District in Arunachal Pradesh, noticing “many similarities their dress, hair-style, material culture and . . . language,” choose to identify themselves as a larger entity, in this case the Adi (Sarkar 1982, 233).

In the Chotanagpur area, cultural movements for solidarity have been organized around the ancient and widely shared ritual complex associated with the “sacred grove” (*sarna*), which “imparts a new orientation to the tribal's concept of cosmology and a cognizance pattern which set the tribals apart from the non-tribals” (Bhowmick 1982, 88). Religious leaders like Raghunath Murmu invoked shared “symbolic traits” which “drive home the point that all tribals are alike.” These included “the concept of *bonga* or use of various material traits like *simsandi* (a particular kind of fowl sacrificed to the *bonga*), *sagunthili* (holy pitcher) and common ecology *hariat ratang* or *sakam* (green colour or foliage)” (Bhowmick 1982, 89). As one Santal internalized this movement, “we should not leave our religion: we should continue to use rice beer, we should have our worship at the Sacred Grove; also we should not stop eating beef” (Orans 1965, 106).

ways which have been identified as tribal.³⁶ Music, dance, traditional crafts and vocations such as hunting are important in such revitalization movements, although the specific styles and characteristics of these activities are generally local. Surface similarities among tribal groups may have led to a general confusion: applying a single descriptive category name, “tribe,” to several different peoples does not mean that the people to which it refers actually constitute a historically or culturally meaningful entity.

The importance of these issues associated with the idea of tribe will resurface in each section of this dissertation. Part I: musicians consider themselves not merely musicians, but *ādivāsi* musicians, and they know that visiting government officials will be interested in listening to their music both because they enjoy it and because it is *ādivāsi* music. Part II: Both rituals of god and rituals of death contain within them several analytically distinguishable modes of representing and viewing the past. Each look at the past implicates issues of aboriginality: the history of Kota relationships to the places they inhabit, to their occupations, and to their perceived “traditional” way of life, which is gradually passing. Part III: Kota musical systems raise issues related to the question of tribe: music is used to differentiate contexts understood to be indigenous from those borrowed or adopted in the recent past; and the fact that the musical system itself seems to share features with other those of so-called tribal musics also calls for discussion and explanation. Before turning to a discussion of fieldwork in the next chapter, it will be useful to conclude this discussion of tribe with a note on Kota concepts of traditionality

CONCEPTS OF THE TRADITIONAL

Once such concept is associated with the word, *ma·mu·l*, a term (ironically) of Arabic origin, meaning for the Kotas “the old way,” or “tradition, custom.”³⁷ Its opposite, *ocmu·l*, has connotations of foreignness and inauthenticity on one hand, and progressiveness, modernity and vitality on the other. The term results from a “folk” etymology: *ma·mu·l* is interpreted as a combination of the prefix *ma·*, from the Tamilization of the Sanskrit *mahā*, great, with the Kota word *mu·l*, “direction” (metaphorically extended to “way or manner”). *Oc* is a Kota prefix meaning “new”—but the connotation, often negative, is foreign or forbidden. “*oca! cet*,” in one song, for example, refers to the stench of a “new” (i.e. non-Kota) man.

The Kota word *ma·mu·l* frequently refers to practices of the past—both the everyday variety and those

³⁶An example of this among the tribes of the Nilgiris and Kerala’s Wynad is a ritual at the beginning of each year’s intertribal festival, organized by the *ādivāsi munnēra canikam*. Representatives from each tribe participate in a communal ritual of worshiping with fire, enacted on a stage. For earlier movements towards solidarity in this area see Mathur (1982b).

³⁷The word probably entered Kota through Tamil, see the *Tamil Lexicon*.

formalized ritually: games, rituals, songs, dances, language, dress and ways of threshing can all be discussed in terms of their *ma·mu·l*-ness. The term is also applied to people who support the old ways or who are themselves very old.³⁸ A related term is *ka!* (DEDR 1147), which means knot, and by extension custom—that which has been tied, or established firmly.

Ocmu·l practices are regarded ambivalently—at times enthusiastically by those striving to re-form rituals and instill contemporary meaning; and at times skeptically by those who regard new practices as somehow inauthentic, or threatening to the integrity of the Kotas. Those who introduce new practices are sometimes regarded with suspicion as well (e.g., see Mandelbaum 1961; 1941)—especially if these people are seen to benefit personally from such new practices.

It seems reasonable to speculate that as the primevalist view of the tribal became increasingly disseminated in popular media, and as it seems to have grown into one of the informal philosophical bases of public policy, tribes like the Kotas became increasingly self-reflexive about themselves not only as a distinctive ethnic group, but also as a tribal ethnic group. This reflexivity, at least currently, is expressed in the relationship between and the values assigned to *ma·mu·l* and *ocmu·l*.³⁹ This all becomes relevant to Kota rituals because their form and content of point to a conscious awareness of tradition, and the past, that calls for some explanation. *Ma·mu·l* and *ocmu·l* are of course very close to what English speakers call tradition and modernity and indeed the issues involved with the tensions between them may be recognized across many cultures.

This concludes the theoretical segment of the introduction. The next section moves from concept to practice, discussing issues of fieldwork in the Nilgiris now and in the 1930s.

³⁸See Mandelbaum (1960; 1941) on village factionalism based on attitudes towards *ma mu l*.

³⁹What may seem even more obvious, at least on the surface, is that since both terms are not Dravidian, the concepts themselves may not be indigenous. The assignment of such social-cultural meanings to linguistic phenomena is very tricky, however, and would warrant consideration of a kind I am not equipped to carry out.

CHAPTER THREE

ETHNOGRAPHIC CONSULTANTS AND FIELDWORK

Since the relative success or failure of my fieldwork is predicated on the negotiation of problems associated with the ethnographic encounter, it seems worthwhile to preface the first substantive chapters of this dissertation with a discussion of them. I have grouped a few issues associated with fieldwork into three categories: payment and reciprocity, rapport, and representativeness. Following this, I provide background information gleaned from archival sources and interviews on fieldwork in the time of David G. Mandelbaum and Murray B. Emeneau, on whose notes and publications I have relied for a historical perspective in this work.

PAYING INFORMANTS AND TRADITIONAL AND MODERN FORMS OF RECIPROCITY

What can we give in return for the time our friends and consultants devote to our research? I had naively thought that members of any community would assent to and perhaps even assist in being studied if they were convinced of my sincerity, honesty and willingness to work. I chose the Kotas, in part, because they seemed affluent enough and familiar enough with the ways of the “modern world” to separate, in their relationship with me, my role as researcher, from their relationships with other kinds of outsiders, such as development officers, doctors, tourists, or government employees. Characteristic, almost habitual, modes of interaction with these latter involved the expectation of money, photographs, or services. In some cases, these relationships lack mutual trust. Many members of Indian tribal communities, for example, distrust government organizations because, although they are promised such things as electricity, schools, or buildings, they seldom receive them. Funding obtained in the name of tribal development is frequently siphoned off until little if any reaches the people for whom it is intended. This is a common problem indeed. Why should anyone trust me, particularly if I have nothing concrete to offer?

Many researchers approach problems of compensation on an individual basis, providing monetary compensation for individual “informants.” The appropriateness of paying informants depends, as Jackson points out (1987, 71; 267-69), on local custom and the exigencies of the particular field situation. From my experience in studying Indian classical music, for example, I learned that nowadays almost everybody pays for “lessons,” even though in the traditional *gurukula* systems, no money exchanged hands: the student would

live with and provide services for the master.¹ In North India, I am told, it is still possible to learn music while compensating the teacher somewhat informally (monetarily, when necessary, but not by contract; also by favors, service etc.), although according to Kippen, the arrangement between beginning tabla students and their teachers is, at the beginning at least, “purely pecuniary” (1988, 113).

The obvious question, vis-à-vis informants, is whether or not, or to what degree an individual is simply feeding the researcher information indiscriminately, if not falsely, simply because he or she is being paid. Far be it from me to suggest a simple way of coping with this problem. In this respect, the learning of classical music would, at first glance, appear very different; but in fact, there is the belief, romantic perhaps, that “true knowledge” or the “deep secrets” of an Indian music tradition cannot be bought or sold.² Among the Kotas, there is no evidence to suggest that compensation was ever sought in connection with the teaching of music. This is hardly surprising given the fluidity of contexts for instruction. Since I never adopted a regular schedule for music lessons among the Kotas, I did not establish a context that might have required “paying for music,” so to speak. But elsewhere in the Nilgiris I was called upon, at times, to pay for performances arranged for audio and videotaping.

For the most part, and especially among the Kotas, I avoided setting up performances for recording—except for the personal renditions of songs or demonstrations of single instruments, which could not otherwise be obtained. But when I did arrange performances of ensembles, monetary compensation was usually required—along with the provision of food and drink. I was never asked to pay for documenting an event—although I usually provided village representatives copies of cassette tapes, photos, and/or made small monetary donations to local temples or shrines.

Since my Kota consultants ranged from people I would call friends, to those I would call teachers or respected elders, to children who were more or less like siblings or nieces and nephews, to those who were in a more formal sense “consultants” or “informants,” the ways in which I compensated them varied considerably. I did not regularly pay Pucan and Raman, for example, for the help they rendered me—nor was it appropriate to do so. Raman habitually requested small amounts of money for day-to-day needs and I also gave him money to purchase things for me, such as silver for parts of the *kol*. Often the money would

¹Srivastava (1992), who conducted research in Western Rajasthan, argued that while it might be inappropriate to compensate individuals for knowledge widely shared throughout a culture, it is quite appropriate—often necessary in fact—to compensate individuals for specialist knowledge. He concludes as do I that the *guru daksina* (an offering a disciple makes to a teacher) model could be said to apply rather well in the field situation. In general, compensation can be granted in many forms, “but if money is an expected category in the local exchange system, the ethnographer should have no moral hesitation in using it” (1992, 19).

²The notion of “levels” and secret knowledge is associated more with the North than with the South.

disappear and the goods would never arrive. Money was indeed transacted, but not by contract. Occasionally I felt taken advantage of, and because of this I do not wish to portray this as some sort of “ideal” research situation in which monetary tensions did not exist.

Both my needs and my financial support would have to some extent altered the economic functioning of Raman’s family. Shortly after moving into the village I began eating my meals at Raman’s house, and I employed his son as my research assistant (I paid him a wage roughly equal to a lower grade government position—not overly generous, yet by no means insufficient or unfair). The money I contributed towards meals, either directly or by buying groceries, generally bypassed Raman, but my presence and support undoubtedly relieved him of some of the burden of supporting the family (which he never seemed to take seriously anyway). I was concerned that my presence gave the family a false and fleeting means of security; Raman’s family, aware of my generosity, seldom asked for anything. Although Duryodana was not employed in a regular job, he engaged in part-time employment as a carpenter when the opportunity or financial situation required it. Because he was planning to marry in coming years, he realized he would have to find more steady employment. Although he enjoyed working for me, he was beginning to become concerned about what he could do to develop a career. During my employ, he began training as a mechanic under the support of a government grant.

Pucan, my other senior musical consultant, needed no money and would undoubtedly have been offended if I offered him money. But such was not the case with others in the village. In general, I tried to avoid giving or lending money to people in the village because individuals started to regard me as a bank. Once in a while I would give a small amount of money to an individual as a sign of respect—such as five rupees to the late *te-rka-rn* when he told me some stories—but never as payment for services as such. Tea, snacks, cigarettes or alcohol were commonly the means through which I repaid people. At times I felt ambivalent about supporting addictive habits with my gifts and in some cases my decisions were wrong (in two instances, for example, musicians with whom I shared alcoholic beverages became too intoxicated to perform competently. But in general, I did not feel my role in the village was one of a social worker and I certainly did not want to be regarded as one.

In other villages, and outside the Nilgiris (I sometimes made trips to the plains to record or witness events) I would base my payments on the pay an individual would have received as a daily wage—particularly if he or she took a day off to help me, or, if the musicians were professional, the pay they would have received for performing in another context.

MUSICAL RECIPROCITY IN PRE-EXISTING SOCIAL-CULTURAL ORDERS

Returning to the Kotas, I should note that there was an earlier tradition of collecting money for performance embedded within the system of reciprocal exchange itself. Sulli described the scenario at Badaga funerals as one in which the *mutgarin* acted as a sort of musical broker. After a given number of tunes were played as a matter of formality, Badagas would request particular tunes and the *mutgarin* would demand such-and-such an amount of money for one tune or another.

Maintaining the system required a certain degree of mutual respect: the Kotas were proud to play for the Badagas, and the Badagas felt their funerals were not proper without the Kotas. Although an aura of mutual respect played a role in maintaining the system at the macro level, it is interesting to note, then, that these pecuniary negotiations controlled the quality and duration of performances at the micro level. Nowadays the Kotas generally distinguish between performances for which they will not accept money, and those which they do. For example, they maintain a relationship with the Adikiri (Badaga) community in Sokkatorai, whom they claim to have given land sometime in the distant past. Each year a member of this community comes to Kolme:l and bows before an elder³ asking that an ensemble be sent to their village for their yearly temple festival.

The Kotas send a group every year; in 1992 they sent a group even though one their own festivals was on the same day. The musicians were willing to put up with a long day of performance. But aside from receiving tokens of respect, such as food, the Kotas accept no compensation for their services. The Adikiris recognize that the Kolme:l Kotas helped to found the Adikiri settlement. The Kotas feel gratified that the Adikiris continue to honor them in this way and feel betrayed that other Badaga communities seem to have forgotten, or denied, that the Kotas provided them assistance when they first came to the hills. The Sokkatorai festival I witnessed involved no bargaining for tunes.

Kotas do not expect to be compensated monetarily when they go to perform at intertribal festivals, although the sponsoring organizations will try provide funds or means for transportation. When the national or state government or municipality call upon the Kotas to perform, they do so as a matter of pride. Although the Kotas are usually promised money in these contexts, they do not always receive it and generally do not make a fuss.

As a rule, then, the "rules" for payment involving myself or others in relation to Kotas, particularly as musicians, were quite complicated and somewhat flexible. For the most part I was able to discover the protocol either by asking or by relying on those close to me to find out or assess the situation. As generally

³ I saw them bow before Pucan, but I do not know if this respect was given to him as a musician, an elder, or both.

happens in field settings, certain friends will look out for the potentially bumbling fieldworker, and my situation was no different. Pucan, Duryodana and Raman often told me whom I should pay and how, whose information, services or abilities, were worth seeking, and to exercise caution among certain people who had, for example, cheated others out of money. I had to maintain a careful balance between finding things out on my own and taking the advice of those who cared for me. Undoubtedly there were those in the village who felt that my closest associates were benefitting from me monetarily and, as a result, were jealous.

I was in a way fortunate to be able to help the village, at least for a short time, by suggesting to some Badaga friends of mine who ran a small electronics manufacturing firm, *Finesse*, that Kolme-l be the site of an experiment to set up a solar power station for battery powered lights. *Finesse* and a small development organization specializing in environmentally safe, appropriate technology,⁴ with the collaboration of two Swedish engineering students, set up a solar power station and made twenty small florescent lamps available to families who had no electricity. Families were selected who could not afford electricity and had school age children. Even though I explained that I had not provided these lights, I was still given credit for bringing the lights to the village; some considered it god's grace that a white man had come to the village and brought them free electricity. This was perhaps the most significant way in which I was seen to have compensated the village for putting up with me; but I was lucky in this regard.

The issue of reciprocity leads to the more general issue of rapport and how informants are selected.

RAPPORT

Despite my attempts to collect information from a wide variety of peoples, in the end what I have made of this information has depended on my more intimate and regular contact with a small number of Kotas. Since the dynamics of the fieldwork encounter are intrinsically related to the information conveyed and interpreted,⁵ it seems relevant to highlight a few themes concerning my relationship with the individuals who provided the

⁴I have forgotten the name of this company; the names and addresses of people associated with this project were in an address book that was stolen with some of my other belongings after I returned home to Chicago.

⁵This point has been made explicitly or through example numerous times over the last few decades. In a specific historical case study illustrating this point, anthropologist Ira Bashkow concludes, "[David] Schneider's move toward defining kinship—'real' kinship—as a biological relationship was a way of negating the reality of his troubling bond with Tannengin [a village chief and ethnological consultant]. . . [and] his later critique of the biological definition of kinship was a retrospective legitimation of that same bond. . . . But from whatever perspective it may be offered, no interpretation of Schneider's ethnography can ignore the dynamics of rapport in the particular colonial situation he faced on the islands of Yap" (1991, 234). For first hand reflections on the fieldwork encounter, see Gottlieb and Graham (1993).

bulk of my information.

Most fieldworkers must grapple with the problem of self-selection of informants: why does an individual agree or wish to work with a fieldworker? Too often the only people who have the time or inclination to do so are themselves marginal people. James Freeman's experience with Muli, the untouchable whose life history he so eloquently documented, was paradigmatic:

I had wondered what sort of untouchable would tell his story. I now realized with dismay that not only had I selected him, but he had selected me as a way to earn easy money and possibly involve me with his prostitutes. Clearly by his own account, he was a deviant in his culture, a weak, sickly man unable to do men's work, often living entirely on his wife's earnings, constantly embroiled in scandals, a self-confessed liar and scoundrel whose schemes often brought disaster not only to himself but to everybody associated with him (1979, 20).

What kind of people did I end up spending time with? In some ways my field for selection of musical consultants was limited: in each village there were few "experts," and it seemed that the scope for studying the musical universe of the "average" person was rather limited—at least from the standpoint of what was culturally unique. After all, I had not come all the way to the Nilgiris just to limit myself to the study of south Indian popular musical culture.

I spent a great deal of time collecting stories and descriptions of rituals as well as music; and for the most part, I was restricted to speaking with those people who were willing and had the time for me. There were a number of highly educated men in Porga-r village, for example, who knew an enormous amount of ritual detail and possessed extensive and highly reflective understandings of their culture which they could effectively communicate in English. But these people were very busy, and although I was grateful for what help they could provide, I was often disappointed that I could not plan or rely on working with such people on a regular basis.

So in a sense, my contact with a certain age group, those of working age whose careers were established (roughly late thirties to mid fifties), was limited to individuals who had either chosen to remain outside or somewhat removed from the world of modern employment, or who were unable to succeed in it. That is not to say I did not learn from these people: Dr. Varadharajan and his brother, for example, taught me a great deal. But my day-to-day contact with such people was considerably less than that with their father, with Raman, Duryodana, and others who spent more time in the village. Both kinds of knowledge are valuable, but the study would have been entirely different if, for example, I had been studying the Kotas from the vantage point of co-workers at Hindustani Photo Films or the head Post office—each of which has its own small community of Kotas from each of the seven villages.

Besides these Kotas of middle working age, my pool of consultants was drawn from boys and men in their teens and twenties, no longer in school, but not yet employed in 9-5 jobs (if they ever intended to be),

elderly men and women like Pucan and Pa. Mathi, and wives or widows like R. Mathi and Cindamani (both age 48 in 1992). Young unmarried women seldom felt comfortable talking to me for a long time in public, and meeting in private would have raised eyebrows. Besides, they did not know much about the kinds of information I was interested in (details of rituals, texts of songs more than 5-10 years old and the meaning of the language employed, stories passed down from generation to generation). Most of the young, unmarried women I knew with any degree of familiarity were the daughters of families with whom I had become friendly—like those of Cindamani or of Mr. Bellan of Me-naṛ (one of my first hosts). Whatever the advantages or disadvantages may have been in my methods, it turned out that young women more often, in my research, provided or rather embodied “raw” data (as a singer of songs or participant in a ritual), rather than reflected upon or interpreted it.⁶

To the degree I reflected upon this problem, I consider this lack a partial product of my own social proclivities during fieldwork rather than any bias I might maintain concerning the validity of young women’s understandings of their own culture. However I probably could have obtained well-formed cultural understandings of younger women had I formulated clever enough questions that, given social access to women in public situations, I could have posed without suggesting impropriety. In some ways, in fact, I spent more informal time with women than with men. But these women belonged to an older age group, usually above 45.

⁶ In an oft cited article, “belief and the problem of women,” Edward Ardener suggested “models of society that women can provide are not of the kind acceptable at first sight to men or to ethnographers, and specifically that, unlike either these sets of professionals, they do not so readily see society bounded from nature” (1972, 3). While I agree that models of women and other “muted groups” (S. Ardener 1993, 7) continue to require further attention—particularly to reach beyond what seems to be articulated nominally in terms of a dominant discursive tradition—I see no reason to reify the sexes in terms of such dichotomies as culture/nature, bounded/unbounded, and analytic/intuitive. Ortner argued effectively that the association of nature with the female grows out of “various aspects of woman’s situation (physical, social, psychological)” that feed back into “institutional forms which reproduce her situation” (1974, 87). It seems wrong to appropriate the phenomenology of female daily life (in the Kota case, the amount of time a woman spends out of doors collecting firewood, for example) to show that women tend not to separate society from nature, or construct boundaries. The general point is, of course, that members of any well-defined sector of society (such as women) may conceptualize their own identity (“construct models,” “draw boundaries”), and the identities of other societal units (encompassed or encompassing) differently from members of other sectors. The “problem of women” crops up because in many societies, such as that of the Kotas, men’s views and representations are reproduced at many societal levels as if they were “the whole”; it would be difficult to evoke coherent “women’s models” if such models were entirely absent from the institutional structure of society. As Griffiths puts it “Even when the subaltern appears to ‘speak’ there is a real concern as to whether what we are listening to is really a subaltern voice, or the subaltern being spoken by the subject position they occupy within the larger discursive economy” (Griffiths 1995, 240).

RAPPORT WITH WOMEN OVER FORTY-FIVE YEARS OF AGE

The majority of time I spent with these women took place as I sat the kitchen while they made tea or food. My leisure time with men differed from that with women in this way: I seldom went to a tea shop or sat around outside with women; their time was always divided between working and socializing. Until reaching a rather advanced age, women did not appear to have much time for relaxing: their workload often prevented women from engaging in leisurely activities until they reached an age that their daughters or daughter's-in-law could share some of the burden.

My own social experiences in the United States and in India probably conditioned the degree to which I was comfortable with Kota women. My siblings and most of my cousins were female, for example, and I tend to have more female friends than male friends. In my study of Indian classical music, it turned out that the *v̄ṁṁā* style I studied was primarily carried by women—and in a broader sense, the *v̄ṁṁā* is itself associated with the female principle (see Wolf 1989, 79-87); perhaps related to this symbolic aspect of the *v̄ṁṁā*, is that, although the majority of successful professional *v̄ṁṁā* players are men, by far the majority of amateurs are women. Consequently, my interest in the *v̄ṁṁā* and, in addition, an avid interest in cooking (and consuming) south Indian food, led me to spend a great deal of time learning from and conversing with Indian women. These experiences transferred easily to my work with the Kotas, despite the considerable cultural differences between them and the Brahman musicians I knew.

Just as had I earned some degree of respect from Pucan through my knowledge of Indian classical music, I made modest headway into the world of Kota women's knowledge through cooking. On a few occasions I cooked meals for the families of Cindamani and R. Mathi. Both women were sufficiently intrigued by my methods to try new variations in their own cooking. They also took the effort to teach me about the different kinds of Kota edibles, and to obtain rare foodstuffs for me to sample. Duryodana and his father also joined in the food hunt, combing the lands for tasty and healthy greens native to the hills.

Since so much of my time was spent recording the music of elderly women, I eventually attained a modest proficiency in Kota mourning songs. By the end of my stay I could playfully compose new texts in an idiomatic manner to existing tune types (of the mourning song variety); in some ways I was more proficient in this limited use of the Kota language than I was in everyday speech. But once again reflecting my experience with and interest in the music of older Kota women rather than that of younger women, I never began to compose new Kota songs to cinema tunes, as did many women under the age of 45. My rapport with Kota women does seem to parallel in many ways that I maintained with my music teachers on the plains, and can probably be accounted for in large part by my preunderstandings of south Indian culture.

As for men my age, I felt little affinity with Kotas whose interests lay primarily outside of Kota culture.

Some young men would continually disparage Indian goods, Indian culture, and so forth, always trying to find ways of purchasing foreign goods, listening to English music, or attending English language films. I often found it fascinating to observe how such people integrated these interests into their Kota identities—because all of them remained committed in some way to their community; but as for my personal preferences, my choices of whom to spend time with socially, these people were not high on my list. At the same time, it was often easier for me to communicate with such modern Kotas because of their educated Tamil and often at least moderate command of English, and because they already knew enough about American culture to cross the cultural bridge rather effortlessly.

ROLE OF THE CULTURAL OUTSIDER

The very existence of this cultural bridge raises the question of what my role as a cultural outsider really was in Kolme-l village. In one sense I was further removed from the ways of Kota life than were any of the Indians who lived in the region, and yet by virtue of my interest, status, and probably since I was only one person, I was embraced by the community in a manner that non-Kota locals would never be. It was scarcely surprising that some people tried to capitalize on my presence in subtle and not-so-subtle ways. My landlord, who was considered to be eccentric, to put it mildly, went so far as to physically lead passers-by to my door and show them the *durai* (foreigner) living in his house.

My presence forced people to renegotiate their own customs vis-à-vis village members. I was allowed to live in the village, and therefore became part of the village. No other non-Kota has been considered “part” of the village—even if they lived near or within the village boundaries. And yet, I was expected not to marry in to the Kota community, and certainly not to become romantically involved with a Kota woman. It was appreciated when I participated in Kota activities and dressed in the appropriate Kota attire in appropriate situations, but I was not to enter the temples (this privilege was reserved for Kota males who were in good standing with the community, and then only once a year). And although I was accorded a great deal of freedom in the village, each other village had to decide individually the extent to which I was to be allowed to enter sacred ground, be present during certain rituals, or interact with certain people.

The fact that Kolme-l village adjusted their rules to accommodate me had repercussions in other villages. It was by no means a precedent by which other villages felt it necessary to abide. I had the distinct impression that some villages considered themselves in some sense more orthodox, and by implication, morally superior to Kolme-l (Porga-r villagers were proud that, unlike those of Kolme-l, they had never allowed a non-Kota to attend the high, central days of the annual god ceremony); Kolme-l’s acceptance of me seemed to provide them further proof of this fact. So my own identity as a sort of half-breed Kota was

closely tied to an association with Kolme-l village. Some people nicknamed me “Kolme-l Kamatr.” Kamatr is a generic Kota name, given to all first born males of certain Kota villages; Kolme-l Kamatr signified that I was a “generic Kota” of Kolme-l village. There was of course some irony in this designation; to be a nameless (i.e. without a distinctive name), faceless Kota is to be no Kota at all, but rather an idealized representation of one. My interest in ritual and traditional forms, no doubt, rendered me more akin to an *essentialized* Kota than to any Kota of my age who could actually exist.

My identity came to be associated with the people I spent time with: Duryodana, Raman, Pucan, Cindamani, and so forth; and my acquaintances extended through extended kinship relations of my friends. My rapport with other villages, therefore, came to be mediated not only through me as an American, but as an American who accumulated a number of Kota identities with which members of other villages may or may not have had an affinity.

I have no doubt that some members of the village did not like me for one reason or another;⁷ and negative representations of my presence would have traveled within the village and from village to village along the same conduits as positive ones. The net effect of all this was that the more I became accepted in Kolme-l village, and the more certain people became my friends, the less opportunity I had to obtain really fresh views on Kota society and culture. I could no longer approach a village as an entirely unknown quantity; I could no longer meet somebody new by showing up in a village and meeting somebody by chance, spending time with that person, and learning about the rest of the village through his or her eyes. In a limited sense, the lines of force became established as I became enculturated. The deeper my knowledge of Kota culture became, the more it was limited; the more friends I made, the more I limited the possibility of future friendships.

The “conduits” of my social relationships, as I have called them, were also preconditioned by certain sorts of shared interests. Music of certain kinds, as we have seen, was one of these. Another one was the history and type of contacts with Europeans. The life histories of Cindamani and Rangan illustrate just how much impact these experiences can have. I was not permitted to attend certain parts of the god festival at Porgaṛ because of precedents established with other white foreigners. For about forty years the Ādivāsi Welfare Association had been helping the Kotas of that village in a variety of ways. The current director, an English lady of eighty years known as “Miss Armstrong,” had been asking to attend the festival for at least a decade but was not permitted to attend. Even though the two of us were very different in our involvement in

⁷I cannot be certain what may have stimulated animosity towards me. Perhaps my close friendships with Duryodana and others created jealousy among others in whom, for whatever reason, I expressed less personal interest. Some suspected I was conducting illicit romantic affairs with Kota women with whom I was friendly. I received an anonymous note and threat suggesting this was the case, but nothing ever became of it and I was advised simply to ignore it.

Kota culture and Indian culture generally (she had not in all those years learned to converse even in Tamil), I was not permitted to attend because they had never allowed her to attend. The Kotas of Porga-r village had an enormous amount of respect for Armstrong, but allowing her to be present at their most holy of events was not among the sanctioned means for demonstrating this respect.

As for me, I had some support in the village and certainly was trusted to maintain the taboos and so forth associated with participating in the ceremony; it is possible that I might in other circumstances have been allowed to attend. In the end, they did make an exception for me and I attended one of the less restrictive night events—one in which the *te-rka-rn* was not to get possessed. In Ticga-r village I had a bit more pull because my Kota friend Mr. Lakshmanan (whose son Gunasekaran was later to become a close friend and field assistant) personally went out on a limb for me; the god ceremony in Ticga-r in 1990 was the first and only opportunity for me to witness the possession of a *te-rka-rn* during a god ceremony. Kotas do not usually wish to have non-Kotas present when their *te-rka-rn* gets possessed out of concern that their presence may interfere with the proceedings, or perhaps anger the gods (though many will simply say “that [excluding outsiders] is our custom”). As will be explored in more detail, worship of the Kota gods is constituted by strong symbolic instantiation of unity. Part of this performance appears always to have meant the exclusion of outsiders from the most intense moments of ritual. No such restriction obtains in Kota rituals for deities that are not originally Kota.

I found that the more I wanted to learn about, participate in and observe the status quo, the more I had to find Kotas who would collaborate in an attempt to bend or renegotiate the rules upon which it was based—a veritable Heisenbergian paradox of fieldwork.

The problem of things changing as they are observed is in one sense a false one; putting the perspective in reverse, one may ask what is the authentic *it* that one wishes to observe, and at what distilled moment, free from inauthentic influence, can this be accomplished? Reducing the problem to an absurdity does not make it vanish, of course, but rather alerts one to the fact that any culture can only be glimpsed and experienced through a series of fuzzy approximations—or rather that nothing really represents the whole. Or perhaps more radically, there is no singular object to be represented.⁸

This aspect of the authenticity question leads to the third issue of fieldwork which arises in the life

⁸ As Moore puts it in a related context “it is useful to conceive an underlying, theoretically absolute cultural and social indeterminacy, which is only partially done away with by culture and organized social life, the patterned aspects of which are temporary, incomplete, and contain elements of inconsistency, ambiguity, discontinuity, contradiction, paradox and conflict”; the usefulness of postulating indeterminacy is that it allows interpretation of behaviors trying to struggle against indeterminacy, on the one hand, and to exploit indeterminacy on the other (Moore 1975, 232-234).

history narratives, that of the representativeness of individual “informants.”

REPRESENTATIVENESS

One of the most tenacious problems in ethnographic fieldwork is how to deal with the indigenous intellectual—the informant who is able to provide a holistic, detailed representation of his or her culture in a convincing and plausible way. In ethnomusicological fieldwork there is an additional problem; one may be interested in the way music is articulated in the total social-cultural fabric, but one is also interested in how the music, as a subsystem in itself, operates. As Nettl noted (1983, 255-58), the utility in consulting those who are considered “the best” in a musical culture versus those who, for the most part, “have it right,” depends not only on what the objects of fieldwork are but also on the indigenous value placed on these kinds of information.

I was directed to Pucan because most Kotas whom I asked considered him to be the best example of Kota musicianship the culture had to offer—never mind that his knowledge was not widely shared. In this sense there was a sharp divide between producers and consumers of music in Kota culture. The community at large was proud of and benefitted socially, culturally, emotionally, spiritually, and perhaps even financially from Pucan’s performance ability. They understood the music as dancers, drummers or participants in rituals, but could not create the melodies or remember all the stories connected with them. I was supposed to learn from Pucan and trust what he had to say because his knowledge was sanctioned. And I suspect this sanctioning was not purely musical: it is clear that his general stature in the community was also a function of his age, economic standing, professional success of his children, and history of responsibility to the community. He also represented a merger of the traditional and modern, Kota and Hindu, which most of the community seemed to find admirable.

So Pucan seemed to be representative of a certain kind of cultural ideal. This ideal was consonant even with the kind of musicianship for which he was famous. His expertise in all types of *ko/s* was highly regarded, but he was particularly known for his knowledge of god *ko/s*. An idea I will later develop more fully is that the notion of “god” and all the ritual themes associated with it point towards a particularly optimistic, integrative, almost utopian view of Kota culture; this can be contrasted with the conflicted, ambivalent, and inauspicious associations with death and funerary rituals. Pucan’s personal association with the repertoire of god tunes thus reinforces a set of positive cultural and personal values.

Raman does not seem to be in any way representative of a cultural ideal. Quite the contrary, judging from Raman and others like him one would begin to suspect deviance was associated with musicians.

Although his father sided with the faction supporting the introduction of new deities into the village, Raman has become somewhat of a neotraditionalist—supporting beef eating and dry-funeral ceremonies despite the stigmas attached to these practices. So it is an odd reversal: Raman is interested in maintaining longstanding religious practices and eschewing encroachment of Hinduism, and yet is considered deviant; Pucan, who throughout his life seems to have taken the middle road (supporting fully neither Sulli nor the conservative traditionalist faction), is mainstream.

Raman's deviance stems less perhaps from his adherence to beliefs of earlier times than from his behavior, which seems to lack regularity, responsibility, diligence, and so forth. Furthermore, his obsession with Christianity tends to make Kotas a bit nervous, if not disregard him altogether.

Each musician whose life and personality I will sketch in the forthcoming chapters tends to become singular and unique as the camera lens begins to focus, and this should hardly be surprising. Although the question of representativeness cannot be discarded, I would like to make it clear that it is perhaps less relevant here than in a situation aimed at the discovery of norms or based on interviews of a question-and-answer variety.

To some extent I have considered how these individuals may be said to represent personality, role, age-group or gender "types" among the Kotas or within particular villages; but it is perhaps more important to understand how this account of the Kotas and their ritual and musical culture has emerged from a set of circumstances, a group of people, a place and time, which were contingent and unique. What I hope will be accomplished in this account is both a plausible representation of Kota culture, and a partially reconstructible trace: a set of connections between theory and practice, between individuals and their symbolic activities, which in some sense anchors these contingencies in more enduring dynamics of Kota culture.

ANTHROPOLOGISTS AMONG THE KOTAS: DR. DAVID G. MANDELBAUM AND DR. MURRAY B. EMENEAU

It is often difficult to evaluate in anything but general terms the dynamics of influence between communities in contact (let alone broad entities like Hindu and tribal, Indian and English), the specific ways in which particular communities have responded to Colonial and other rulership, or the impact of individuals (writers, administrators, scholars, or cultural leaders) on the history of a community, without considering suggestive historical moments—periods in which persons, places and events intersect in ways that impress upon the cultural history of a community a configuration that appears unique and lasting. Here I wish to consider one such consequential period—both because this consideration will facilitate a critical assessment of the data I have attempted to use from this period and because it will help situate the history of the rituals that were

invented or altered during it.

In the period beginning some ten years after a disease decimated Kolme:l village, two scholars arrived to study the Kotas: The Canadian linguist Dr. Murray E. Emeneau (b. 1904), who had by then (early fall of 1935) already earned a Ph.D. in Latin, Greek and Sanskrit (1931) and studied ethnological linguistics with Edward Sapir;⁹ and the late Dr. David Mandelbaum (1911-1987), who had written a doctoral thesis (1936) on the Plains Cree, under the direction of Sapir. Mandelbaum arrived in the Nilgiris in April of 1937 after a brief stint in Kerala among the tribes of Travancore and the Jews of Cochin (Mandelbaum 1939a; 1939b).

Emeneau was the first philologically trained American scholar to take an anthropological interest in Indian culture, and certainly the first to apply philological methods to unwritten Indian languages. Mandelbaum was the first American cultural anthropologist to conduct fieldwork in India. By virtue of these circumstances alone, both scholars were staking out new ground for American anthropology.

But significantly new events were taking place among the Kotas as well. The 1930s was a time of stress for the Kotas of Kolme:l because after the blight struck, the village was left without ritual specialists (*ca:trɪŋga:rm*) to conduct ceremonies in the traditional fashion. Partly in response to this devastating event, which was believed to be evidence that the Kotas were committing some terrible wrong, and partly to improve their social status in relation to their Hindu and other tribal neighbors, a movement arose to advocate worshipping a new set of deities and another movement arose attempting to modernize Kota ways—particularly as regarded the slaughtering of bovine, the seclusion of women during menstruation, and the male style of wearing the hair long.¹⁰

Leading in some of the reforms was a Kota school teacher, K. Sulli,¹¹ a man schooled by missionaries and who, as a child, even wished to convert to Christianity; although prevented from doing so by his father, Sulli maintained a life long interest in Christianity and belief in Jesus Christ.¹² Sulli's decision to cut his hair, apparently the last straw in a series of community breaches, led him to be outcasted (*tay!rɪ u:yrko*, from a

*Although over his three years in Nilgiris Dr. Emeneau worked primarily on the Toda language, he also made the first significant contributions to the study of Kota, Kodagu and Kolami languages.

¹⁰Long hair apparently looked "uncivilized" or "primitive," but was ritually considered necessary in order for men to tie up in the hair symbolic items during the god ceremony. The broader significance of bodily "binding" is considered in part two in connection with the tying of the toes during a funeral.

¹¹Sulli's life is discussed at length in Mandelbaum's article, "A reformer of his people" (1960).

¹²Very few Kotas have converted to Christianity and those who have are effectively separated from the community. Reverend Metz's disparaging account of Kota attitudes toward missionaries in 1864 captures the spirit, if not behavior, of Kotas today: "When I endeavour to address them they drown my voice with their dreadful music, or compel me to retire by abusing me in the most obscene and offensive language or barking at me in the style of their own half-wild dogs. Thus I have often had to leave their villages, with a heavy heart at their apparently hopeless condition" (Metz 1864, 134).

verbal root meaning “push away”)—although he was not physically ejected from the village, he was barred from joining in communal worship, the god ceremony, etc.¹³ In extreme cases, villagers are not permitted to speak with outcasted Kotas or enter their houses, a stricture enforced by fines (I observed this in 1992).

When Emeneau arrived in the Nilgiris, his contacts in Ooty summoned Sulli to facilitate his study of the Kota language; Sulli was the only English speaking Kota at the time. Emeneau had established a routine and style of working with Sulli before Mandelbaum arrived; later Mandelbaum seized upon Sulli as an informant. Originally for a rupee a day, Sulli would come to Emeneau’s room in Ooty and dictate stories; this employment allowed Sulli eventually to take leave of his teaching job throughout the period of the Americans’ fieldwork.

Mandelbaum arrived in the Nilgiris after 3 months” of exasperating fieldwork with Urali and Pullavan tribals (in Travancore) whom he felt to be singularly unvoluble.

Somehow it seems to me that I rarely put in an honest day’s work when I am writing for so few papers get done. If informants do come chairs are placed outside the door, a mat pulled out for them to sit on and I begin. Either they are damned inarticulate or I am a lousy ethnographer for they just will not speak directly and I have to gouge the information out of them. With none have I yet established any real rapport (3.21.37).

Sulli seemed to harbor a change in luck, but his knowledge of English did not always make the going smoother: “With Sulli on preparation of barley. His volubility is so tangled that it isn’t made faster going with him than through an interpreter” (Mandelbaum n.d., journal entry 11.28.37). Having attempted myself to plow through Mandelbaum’s verbatim transcripts of Sulli’s speech, and through the Kota texts he so carefully narrated to Emeneau (1944), I must concur that although Sulli was a fount of information, it was often difficult to make sense of that information, or to verify its consistency even in two accounts regarding the same phenomenon. Soon Mandelbaum became frustrated with Sulli’s unfocused loquacity: Sulli was a faucet that could not be turned off, wandering from topic to topic, tangent to tangent, and embellishing stories and events with elaborate detail. It is difficult to ascertain whether it was Sulli’s confusing style of explanation or some other personal trait that led Mandelbaum early on to feel some resentment towards him.

June 19 [1937]. These last two weeks I have been practising touch typing and haven’t progressed very far. Have spent a lot of time reading Rivers—of which but little sticks. Have read desultorily in DuBois and Linnart on Indian caste, have typed some of my notes and today am going over others preparatory to starting afresh with an informant on Monday. But the purpose of the log-off to get rid of the resentment against Sulli has not been accomplished. Though I don’t know just where I have wasted the time. . .

Whatever that resentment was, Mandelbaum seemed to overcome it sufficiently to continue working with

¹³ A few of his supporters were also outcasted. The composer Rangan, Sulli’s nephew, speaks of this period in his life in part one.

Sulli for years to come. Mandelbaum's reliance on Sulli was not uncritical, however, as this account illustrates:

One is that his recollection tends to be neater and more integrated than was the historical actuality. His narrative artistry is apt to gloss over inconsistencies or irregularities and to make one episode follow another in logical, abstracted sequences that may have more aesthetic symmetry than historical exactness. Sulli has the kind of integrating, abstracting mind which one may consider to be more properly the prerogative of the ethnological theorist than of the ethnologist's informant.

Secondly, he is like any gifted narrator of events in which he took part and of which he finds reason to be proud. He tends to figure much larger in his account than he may have in the event. *But when he gives an impersonal account of, say, ceremonies, these traits do not prevail.*

Sulli, in turn, was influenced by his work with the linguist and the anthropologist. In the first instance, the association with whom he called "our Europeans" added to his prestige. It is not unlikely that this association gave him the final impetus, in 1937, to take the decisive step of cutting his hair. [My emphasis added] (Mandelbaum 1960, 307).

I emphasized the sentence concerning Sulli's accounts of ceremonies to make the point that informants, or "native collaborators" (Clifford 1988, 49), may position themselves (or may be viewed by others) in different ways as regards what they describe, teach, or interpret (a ceremony, an incident, a song). Sulli figures himself prominently in village events but not in ritual. Sulli's absence from the rituals he describes is not a sign of altruism, however, and this must be borne in mind as we consider ritual gestures and interpretations Sulli offers us in the analysis of the green funeral in part two. Sulli described to Mandelbaum many rituals in which he had not taken part for many years; it could well be that Sulli's memory became muddled, or that his descriptions reflected a practice that predated Mandelbaum's arrival by some years.

Neither Emeneau nor Mandelbaum knew or learned Tamil while they were in India¹⁴ and neither of them actually learned to speak the Kota language with any fluency.¹⁵ In fact it might even appear from Mandelbaum's publications that he relied almost entirely on Sulli. Although he was probably the only Kota with whom Mandelbaum could communicate directly, Sulli was by no means his only informant.¹⁶

¹⁴Dr. Emeneau feels that his lack of familiarity with Tamil allowed him to learn the structures of Kota and Toda without a Tamil bias (1993 pers. com.).

¹⁵One of Mandelbaum's field entries (2.25.38) concerns a funeral in Kurgo:j village, where one of his finest informants, Ka-ka-kamatn was drunk enough to feel comfortable carrying on a conversation directly with Mandelbaum, in the Kota language. Mandelbaum made a note to himself, "how I wish I could speak the damn language."

¹⁶Intensive learning from a few knowledgeable informants is a common, pragmatic, and perhaps necessary component of fieldwork. The problems engendered by relying on a small number of informants are not so much those of "getting it wrong" or creating lacunae, since completeness is a fiction anyway, as they are the silencing of the dialogic process which ultimately informs an ethnography. Some recent ethnographies still explore the possibilities of understanding culture through the individual (e.g. Crapanzano 1980; Shostak 1981). But the significance of these ethnographies, Clifford notes, is the 'transformation of "cultural" text (ritual, an institution, a life history, or any unit of typical behavior to be described and interpreted) into a speaking subject, who sees as well as is seen, who evades,

Mandelbaum worked with other Kota informants with the help of Christian Badaga interpreters. And he was careful to collect alternative interpretations and points of view from non-Kotas.¹⁷ Perhaps the most cogent statement on informants committed to paper by Mandelbaum while he was still in the field appeared in notes of July 1937 (spelling standardized, abbreviations spelled out).

Notes on informants: from Kolme-I, Sulli, English speaking, verbose, exasperatingly given to circling round and round a point with a great flow of language. Information perhaps deficient because of long separation from the intimate life of the tribe although he lives among them. His father-in-law Jamakamaten was a fair informant although he seemed reticent to give too much information. From Shōlūr, Ke-Veln, intelligent but too young to be an A-I informant. Seems eager to work and is reliable. His half-brother Ve-ry, with a grin behind his mustachios all the time, seems sure of his ground, which Ke-Veln not always is, less prone to be influenced by Tamil traits, since Ke-Veln was educated up to the fourth standard in Tamil. But Ve-ry has stomach trouble accompanied by a virulent flatulence that gets in the eyes. The diviner from Shōlūr is willing to talk and able to do so, but his working day is limited because of the burden of his office which requires him to be on duty at the village morning and evening. The woman of whom I took a snap seems very palsy walsy with Timothy and may make a good informant. She volunteered the information that only at Shōlūr and Kala-c, the priests [i.e. *mundka·no·n* and *te·rka·rn*] are not allowed even to trim their beards. At the other villages they may use scissors or even shave (?). She has a beautiful tatoo.

Ke-Veln turned out to be one of the best informants from Kurgoj village, and many of the ritual details he provided are included in my comparative analysis of the funeral in part two. Mandelbaum started working with Ke-Veln on 23 June 1937 with a Christian Badaga interpreter named Timothy (The role of a Badaga, Christian or otherwise, as an interpreter or an informant in research about the Kotas is a precarious one, given the distrust some Kotas have and do harbor towards them).¹⁸ Comments on this date were “not too bad” but by July fifth Mandelbaum was already dissatisfied, “this interpreter is lousy but I don’t know what to do about it.” By the twenty-fourth of that month Mandelbaum had found a new interpreter, John Wilson, “a Tamilian Christian of about 20, a natty youth—on the smart aleck side—with a good command of English.” He continued to work with Veln until September 1, 1937, shortly after which Mandelbaum left the Nilgiris briefly to attend Rosh Hashonah and Simhat Torah celebrations with his Cochin Jewish friends in Kerala.¹⁹

argues, probes back.” This is effected by ‘staging dialogues or narrating interpersonal confrontations’ (Clifford and Marcus 1986, 14). Mandelbaum represented Sulli in such interactive settings—although seldom with the anthropologist in broad view.

¹⁷Particularly from the Badaga M. N. Thesingh—a man who served as an informant to subsequent scholars, including Dr. Paul Hockings.

¹⁸Timothy was available for employment having been “cashiered from his job of sixteen years because madame caught him out lying with one of the coolie women.” (30 June 1937, journal).

¹⁹In a letter to his parents dated 29 September 1937 Mandelbaum revealed his deep attachment to these people, “yesterday was Simhat Torah—and a great Simha it was too. I don’t think I will ever forget that day, for it and all the time I have spent with the Jews have been thrilling as no other experience has been. Not in Mexico, not among the Apaches, nor with my beloved Cree in Canada, nor here in India, have I ever felt so much at one with the people I was

When he returned and Veln did not show up, Mandelbaum discovered Veln had died of the plague. In letters of November 10 and 24, he refers to Veln as his "prize informant."

Along in September a mild epidemic of bubonic plague hit this district. When it first broke out, I and the interpreter, and the boy, and a miscellaneous retinue marched up to the inoculation depot to be jabbed with serum. At the time I was working with one of my prize Kota informants, a handsome fellow with a thick black beard. I tried to persuade him to be inoculated also, but he wasn't having any. "For you, yes. You know the proper incantations and if you forget them you can read them in a book. But I don't know the incantations that go with this doctor-work and so if it's all the same to you, I won't have it." (Letter to anthropologist Ben Paul, 14 November 1937).

Since the Kotas, like many Indians, did not at that time attribute death to diseases but to evil intentions on the part of powerful personages (such as Kurumba sorcerers) or to contra-traditional activities on the part of the community, Mandelbaum justifiably became worried that his own position might become compromised.

The curious thing is that most of the men whom I have used as informants in that village have gone west. One of them was a diviner (a guy who becomes possessed at certain periods), and his whole family, two wives, four kids, one brother, has been wiped out. I am hoping the other diviners won't get a special delivery from the gods one fine day, and their trance tell the gaping populace that the plague and I have some sinister connection. If it happens at all, it is sure to happen at the ceremony which comes off in about two weeks. I'll try to grease the diviners' souls with oblations of ghee, so maybe they won't talk, huh (ibid).

Fortunately, the worst never occurred.

Ka·ka·kamatn of Kolme:l was another consultant whose descriptions appear prominently in Mandelbaum's fieldnotes and whose testimony proves relevant to the ritual analyses of part two. Although Sulli generally seems to have overestimated his own knowledge of ritual details and their interpretation (filling in gaps in his own knowledge with speculation perhaps), he admitted that, in fact, only Ka·ka·kamatn and a few others knew all the death rituals and how to do them (Mandelbaum n.d. 2.8.38, p.5). At first, however, the value of Ka·ka· was not apparent. On March 10, 1938, the following was entered in Mandelbaum's field notebook, "this informant is not going to be any good, although if he were a bit more intelligent and articulate it would be swell because he is the antithesis of Sulli. Perhaps some of the fault is due to the interpreter who is none to quick on the trigger." The corresponding journal entry that day: "With Ka·ka· Kamatn, Frederick interpreting. Lousy informant, lousy interpreter";²⁰ but on March 18 Ka·ka· began

observing.

Yesterday I came to the synagogue a little late because I wanted to type up my notes... I had some colored movies taken of this procession, but since it was a cloudy day I doubt whether they will come out well." [n.b. black and white movies of this procession survive and are stored either with Mandelbaum's collection at the Bancroft Library or at the Lowie library, where it was moved for copying].

²⁰A propos of nothing, Mandelbaum remained in touch with the goings-on at Yale during this time. On March 8 he entered in his journal, "received a cable from Al Hudson this morning—asking me to protest Murdoch's appointment as chairman of the department. So I sent 6/12 worth of protest reading "Protest Love, Mandelbaum.""

to open up, providing the bulk of the information that proved useful for my historical consideration of the funeral in Kolme-l: "informant suddenly broke into a mass of rich stuff—how he stood for the *ma-mu-l* [traditional faction in the village during the period of reform] and how he had smacked down a woman who had become possessed. Interpreter still bad. Tennis in morning."

"TENNIS IN MORNING, MOVIE AT NIGHT": DIVERSIONS IN LAND OF NILGIRI

Notes as to Mandelbaum's social diversions tend to appear at the end of his journal entries. These notes reveal a bit what it was like to live in the Nilgiris during the British period and is thus useful here as contextually descriptive, first-person information. Not surprisingly, entertainment, music, and the commonplace rules for social interaction were all English. Typical journal entries, in May 1937, for instance, read "to Speights for tea ... Murray Emeneau—myself—Dr. Yusuf—de Chapel. . . . He sang, Mrs. Piel played the Beethoven moonlight nicely. Pretty good time in all. Piel told story of shooting panther from bed . . . : May 24 With Sulli. Bridge at Houstons in evening. . ." Emeneau described to me a music shop in town where all the foreigners would go to listen to and purchase records of European classical music.

Several of Mandelbaum's letters (not reproduced here) humorously reflect attempts at finding female companionship. One entry referred to an Anglo-Indian dance Mandelbaum attended "June 1. With Sulli. To prom tried to dance with Indian girls—failed."

The summer tourist season proved socially promising and Mandelbaum apparently established some sort of relationship,

June 8. Sent note to I. P. Moyer and while boy was gone received one from her saying that she was ill. Dance in afternoon. Tea at Anandagiri. Movies at night. . .

Wednesday. Last day with her. Walked up Elk Hall after tea. Saturday: propositioned. She didn't say yes—she didn't say no. Anyway she is damned worth having—if I ever have her.

Thursday, June 10. She left today. . .

It may have been noted that Mandelbaum's journal and fieldnote entries cited above often reflected self-deprecation at not accomplishing enough—an ironic finding in my estimation because he managed to produce five to eight legal-sized pages, double spaced, of field notes each day. Mandelbaum blamed some of his failure to produce on his surroundings,

Then there are the multiple distractions here: Movies (about 2 a week), bridge (one a week about), library (about 4 hours a week) and most of all the damn system of meals in the house. Usually the boy brings in bed tea at 7:00—I sip of it and relapse into slumber until 7:30 when he arrives in to announce that bath is ready. Whereupon I turn over on the other side and sleep until 8:15 or so and by the time I bathe and shower (there almost never is time for exercise also) it is 8:45 and breakfast. By the time the ½ hour or so of breakfast has been [?] the informants have come and I get started with him (or them). So [on] until

lunch at 1:00 except for a short break at 11:00 when the boy brings me coffee. At 2:00 I start with the informant again until tea time 4:30. So usually I . . . [?] put in about 6 hours of work. After tea very little, in fact practically no real work gets done. It is either movies or library or a walk- and some reading, usually in magazines from home. Dinner at 8:00 means sitting by the fire until 9:30 and then I read in bed until about 12. So the good hours before 9 am and 4:30 pm are really sterile [?] as far as the work goes—so what can you expect from a 6 hour working day? (Journal, 30 June 1937).

Hardships imposed by rather leisurely servants and the distractions of a popular hill resort notwithstanding, Mandelbaum produced a rich body of research material that he never in his lifetime satisfactorily processed or published. Only a handful of articles were produced. Though Mandelbaum outlined chapters and cut-and-pasted notes and references, the book he planned never came to fruition.

The impression I formed by combing his fieldnotes, lecture notes, and correspondence was that Mandelbaum felt the need to learn more about the society and culture of India more generally before he was prepared to return to his Kota research.²¹ His interest in Indian civilization and his pedagogical impact on the field led others, such as Milton Singer, to develop paradigms for the study of Indian civilization (such as Great Tradition, Little Tradition)—especially theoretical ways to cope with the relationship between the textual tradition that had been studied for so long by Western-trained philologists and the cultural traditions newly being discovered by anthropologists. Mandelbaum himself set out to write his own magnum opus in a period (1950s and 60s) of flourishing interest in these broad, civilizational questions, but the two-part book *Society in India* did not appear until 1970—somewhat after its time. Although Mandelbaum continued to visit the Kotas every decade until his death, his interests turned late in life to the Todas. My eventual decision to study the Kotas, of all the possible musical communities in the Nilgiris, was partly determined by the promise of the potential for historical enrichment via Mandelbaum's copious records, and the special interpretive challenges these presented.

I now proceed to part one, an introduction to Kota life through stories and personal narratives of my principle consultants, most of whom were, not coincidentally, adept musicians as well.

²¹Toda scholar Anthony Walker independently arrived at the same conclusion, expressing this to me in a conversation in 1996

PART I

Musicians and Lives

“All our history is story”—Magali Kambaten, Ticgar village.

INTRODUCTION

“Brother, brother...,” called Duryodana, my field assistant and close companion, knocking at my door at about 8:00 in the morning. Dragging myself away from my morning exercises, I answered the door. Duryodana’s early appearance, I thought, probably meant that he had urgent responsibilities and wouldn’t be able to work with me. “Brother, Jayalalitha [the Tamilnadu Chief Minister] is coming to Ooty and the Collector has asked us to welcome her [with music and dance].” The Collector [principal government official] of the Nilgiris would summon the Kotas and Todas whenever an important government official came to town, or whenever an important national holiday was celebrated.

“I’m sorry brother, I don’t want to go, but what to do? they’ve called us. . . the seven villages got together and held a meeting. . . they’re sending dad and me.” Kolme-l instrumentalists, and especially *ko!* players, have long been considered to be among the most talented Kota musicians. Because of their musical competence (and possibly because of their proximity to Ooty) they are often responsible for representing the Kotas in important public functions. They are seldom remunerated.

The “Kota tribesman” in municipal celebrations, somewhat like a float in an American parade, instills specific, local meanings in forms of celebrations which are themselves quite general. The “tribesman” and the float are baldly emblematic not only of “identities” but also of interest groups (advocacy of tribal welfare, or in America, displaying the economic or demographic power of an ethnic constituency, or advertising a business). And both are meaningful inasmuch as participants and observers in the events understand and interpret the histories of these groups and their emblems.

Lloyd Warner, in analyzing Memorial Day in “Yankee City,” was one of the first to compare the rites of a major American celebration to the kinds of Australian and African systems anthropologists had traditionally studied (Warner 1959; Singer 1982). He argued that, for example, different religious groups expressed autonomy by performing separate ceremonies, and yet emphasized the oneness of the group by performing these ceremonies simultaneously. Such an analysis would certainly seem to apply to one of the most important official ideologies in India, captured in the slogan ‘unity in diversity—but although such an interpretation may help explain the role of Kota music and dance in a municipal celebration, it is of little use in understanding its role in village ritual.

We may take for granted that music and musicianship will be highly fragmented in the late twentieth century—if not everywhere (and if not always), certainly in regions (like the Nilgiris in the 1990s) where

small scale societies coexist with and interact closely in a nearby, culturally and economically accessible urban, industrial environment. In this chapter I would like to consider what it means to be a Kota musician in the 1990s. But to do this I find myself constantly returning to a discussion of individuals. Whether this is a function of the fragmentary “postmodern predicament” or in the nature of a kind research in which many of my “informants” truly became my friends, or because I am unwilling to abstract qualities which may indeed be “typical,” in some sense, from the lived experience of the persons involved, will have to remain to some extent unresolved.

So my strategy for discussing what it means to be a “musician” among the Kotas will be to provide personal glimpses into the lives of some instrumentalists, composers and singers. Each portrait contains within it, both in style and content, the peculiar relationship I maintained with a particular individual. The portrait also serves as an introduction to a character, who, as this analysis of Kota performance unfolds, will provide descriptions or interpretations of various social-cultural phenomena—and/or participate in their creation; as such we will want to know who is speaking and why.

As an overall observation it should be noted that musicians are no different than other Kotas—musical ability is a skill, like pottery, cooking, blacksmithing or carpentry. The following narratives, therefore, speak as much to the routines, humor, and life issues in Kota society generally as to the specific circumstances of musical life.

CHAPTER FOUR

MALE MUSICAL LEADERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

RAMAN, DURYODANA, AND MATHI

Duryodana's family treated me in some ways like an honored guest and in some ways like an eldest son (these two categories are closely interwoven in India). S. Raman, who was in his late fifties in 1992, was Duryodana's father. I met him during my second month of fieldwork, the first time I visited Kolmel village (October, 1990). On this visit I was without an interpreter, since the man I wished to meet, Mr. K. Pucan, considered by many the foremost authority on Kota music and the top performer of the *kol*, was, like most Kota men, comfortable speaking Tamil. Due to my own inadequacies in speaking Tamil, and because Mr. Pucan himself spoke in a manner difficult to understand, I found communication difficult. Fortunately, while I was awkwardly trying to initiate conversation with Pucan in his home, we were joined by his neighbor Mr. Raman. His clear, almost bookish Tamil, and slow, didactic manner of speech enabled me to communicate with Mr. Pucan. Since Raman, too, was a *kol* player he could explain musical matters. On subsequent visits, whether alone or with an interpreter, I usually contacted Raman.

During these early visits I was generally invited into Pucan's house, offered tea and cookies, or a full meal of rice and bean stew. A crowd of young boys would gather, eagerly showing me musical instruments and teaching me Kota words. On these occasions I spent time with Raman sitting out on the grassy area in the center of the village or in tea shops. I was not invited into his home—perhaps he felt he could not entertain me properly in his rather simple house.

I soon came to know his son, R. Kamatn (Kambattan, Kamaten, Kambatn etc.; pronounced *kamaṭn*), whom most Kotas called "Duryodana" (Tamil: *tūriyōṭanaṅ*). Kamatn is a Kota god's name given to all first born males in some villages. Outside the village, a Kota male might call himself "Kamatn" or some other traditional name, but in order to be distinguished from others with the same name within the village, he may be given a nickname or a Tamil name for use among Kotas.¹ Raman picked the name Duryodana (a name from the Hindu epic Mahābhārata) because it was unusual.

¹Women are also given nicknames and non-Kota names, but the issue of using a given name within or outside the village is less prevalent among women since few of them hold urban jobs. Sometimes names are used in the opposite manner—a Tamil name might be adopted for use in school while the Kota name is retained at home.

Duryodana was a much less experienced *ko!* player than either his father or Pucan, but compared to the rest of the village he was considered a skillful musician and all the younger boys looked up to him. Although Duryodana studied up to only the tenth standard, he was quite bright. He was also a community leader of sorts, at least among men and boys of his age group (early 20s): as one of the best Kota soccer players, he led the Kolme-l team (villages would play against one another); when the pipe connecting water from the mountain stream to the village reservoir would rupture, Duryodana usually took the initiative to fix it; whenever special plants were required for puberty ceremonies, or medicinal plants were needed for healing, Duryodana was one of the few in his age group who knew where to find them.

When, in July 1991, I moved into a large room in the 'bungalow' at the edge of the village Duryodana put himself at my disposal. He constructed simple furniture for me, a room partition made of cane and green posts cut from local thickets, and a tiny shack for bathing, leaning against the southern wall of the bungalow outside. His mother, R. Mathi, insisted I eat with their family until I was settled. This eventually became a permanent arrangement.

Duryodana's constant companionship and his mother's generosity endeared me to the family, but I was concerned about my role in reciprocating their generosity. I told Duryodana that I would like to work with him on a regular basis, but that I would also have to be able to rely on him. Although he initially refused money, I eventually compelled him to accept a salary of 3,000 rupees per month (one hundred dollars) so he would not have to seek other employment. As for food, we made no formal arrangement. On occasion I would provide monetary help for the family but more often I would contribute by purchasing vegetables and staples.

I spent a fair amount of time in Raman's house—at least an hour or two a day for my three meals. The house was a fairly old, wattle and daub building covered with ceramic tiles, whose front entrance consisted of a four-foot high wooden door that must have been at least a century old. The front two rooms covered about sixteen square meters: a front room with a cot and a small kitchen with another cot. The panels of teak wood separating the front room from the kitchen, blackened by smoke and age, were marked by several curious round holes. I discovered that, from time to time, Raman, frustrated with his hand drill's inefficiency in tunneling through a dense, green piece of wood (when he was making a *ko!* for instance), would derive momentary satisfaction by drilling into and easily penetrating the teak. I provide these personal details because much of what I learned living in Kolme-l emerged from discussions with Raman, and much of what I synthesized from other discussions and observations came into focus as I sat for long hours in this house, watching Raman work.

MATHI

Mathi spent most of her days keeping the house in order, collecting firewood from the family's patch of land a few kilometers away, and occasionally working for day-wages on a tea plantation (15-25 rupees). Seldom sitting or lying down, she was, like her son Duryodana, always active, always talking, never still. Squatting in front of the hearth, she would arrange just enough firewood in the small wood stove (which she had made herself) to maintain heat for the task at hand. Meanwhile, she would winnow grain, look after her friend's children, or talk with Cindamani—a close friend who was for all intents and purposes part of the family.

Mathi was a competent singer and composer, but the creative component of her "musical life" was so private that even Duryodana did not know of her abilities. Six or eight months into our relationship she confided to me that she had composed a few songs and was willing to sing them for the tape recorder when I had the time. One of the most moving songs was one mourning the death of her only daughter, Elizabeth. Although she seemed to be a natural, if infrequent, singer of songs, Mathi was awkward as a dancer. For one thing, she was relatively inexperienced. She felt the only appropriate time for her, herself, to dance was during the central few days of the god ceremony. This was the one time of the year that community would be conducted on the temple grounds (*guryval*).

Like many devout women in India, or at least Hindu women in south India, many of Mathi's quotidian activities were accompanied by habitual gestures of deference to god. Before cooking food, before serving food, before lighting the oil lamp (fire is also a form of god), before eating, and before virtually any significant activity (except for defecating, I assume), she would clasp her hands together and say "co-mi" ("god"—generically, but understood as the Kota gods). Her religious devotion, her emotional sincerity, and the privacy she associated with her singing and dancing seemed somehow interrelated in her general way of approaching life—with meticulous care and driven, sometimes moralistic consideration.

Mathi and Raman were each married and divorced about four times before they married each other. Multiple marriages were not uncommon because Kotas do not place the degree of emphasis on marriage that Hindus do.² Mathi's first marriages were conducted while she was still quite young. Following each of these early marriages she cried and cried until she could return home. In contrast, Raman apparently compelled his first wives to leave. Even while married to Mathi, he was prone to violent outbursts. Although Kota women are free to leave their husbands on the smallest pretext, and frequently do, Mathi remained with

² Several small rituals may be said to constitute "marriage." One of these, for example, called "mouth doing" (*vay-gica*), merely consists of paying a bride price (*kat param*, literally "knot money") of at least (for formality's sake) 1¼ rupees. Usually, however, a marriage involves a series of three small rituals which may take place in one day or may be spread out over weeks or years. In the end the bride goes to live with the groom in his village or house.

Raman—partly to provide a proper home for their son.

Since Raman was one of my primary Kota consultants, it will be instructive to consider his life and personality in considerable detail.

S. RAMAN

Raman [Kota: Ra·mn] was one of the more unusual characters in the village. Considering himself somewhat of an intellectual and a free thinker, he spent his evenings crouching on his raised plank reading Tamil translations of the Bible by candlelight and creatively imagining relationships between Kota religion and history, and world religions and civilizations. These inspirations, which he would modestly compare to the revelations of early Christian saints, tended to inform his personal life philosophies. Very few Kotas have left the community or converted to Christianity; I have heard about fewer than five, and in all of these cases the converts left the community and joined with those of their Christian Tamil or Malayalam spouses. But a few, like Raman, have maintained a belief in Christ and an interest in the Bible while at the same time believing in the power of the Kota gods. Raman encountered Christianity from a young age through wandering missionaries and through the unavoidable residue of colonial society and educational structures already well-established in the Nilgiris before he was born. Raman kept with meticulous care a journal, in neat Tamil handwriting, by the side of his bed. In addition to biblical interpretation and neo-Kota theology, his journal recorded dreams and his interpretations of them.

The significance of dreaming in Raman's life may be illustrated in the following example, which he narrated to me:

One afternoon I dreamt that I was walking across the village. I was happy to see that grains and potatoes were growing well for *mundka·no·n* Kulan. I noticed Kulan's clanmate Kaman carrying a coconut, which he broke open. Finding only water inside, no coconut, he said "why should I keep this," and tossed it away. Kaman walked towards the *gagva·l* [one of the dancing grounds that lies in front of a line of houses], near the place where they play *pu!* [a ritual game], and struck up a conversation with his brother's wife. Just then a herd of buffaloes stampeded by them, chasing a small buffalo calf towards *me·pta·l* [a higher elevation just south of the village proper]. Kaman asked the woman "sister,³ why is it going that way?" She said the calf is being chased because it ate gold.

The herd came around and headed back towards where I was sitting. Nearby there was a one year old boy. When I saw the herd coming, I took the boy and jumped into a pit 3 feet deep, then brought him home. One woman of the Cakkiliyar caste was standing there [near the row of houses] and said "a corpse is coming, a corpse is coming, close the door." I peered out and noticed that Kaman was coming again. "Why is Kaman coming when she says a corpse is coming?" I asked, then left without saying another

³ "Sister" is not technically the correct kinship term, a brother's wife is also one's own "wife" terminologically speaking (See Dumont 1983); but kinship terms are not always applied in a technical sense.

word. The dream ended.

At the time of this dream (in 1989), Raman was maintaining a close friendship with the other village *mundka·no·n*, Saravanan. Unbeknownst to Raman, Saravanan had been secretly stealing the precious metals which had been collected for the gods, and selling them in the bazaar. This had happened three times. On the fourth time, a man from Tigga·r village discovered the crime, finding the jewelry in a Marwari (Gujarati merchant caste) shop.

The men of Kolme·l held a council meeting (*ku·tm*) to discuss what was to be done. Raman and Duryodana were accused of being accessories to the crime because they were friends of Saravanan—although neither took part in or profited from stealing the jewels. Raman simply ignored their accusations and left. The village men canceled Saravanan's position as *mundka·no·n* and held a meeting to elect a new one (through the traditional method of allowing god to speak through the diviner). Raman objected, saying, "Only god should select a *mundka·no·n*, why should you do it? Can you go on selecting new *mundka·no·ns* every year?" The village selected one young man named Gundan to fill this post, and he promptly ran off to Me·na·r village to avoid the responsibility.

After these events, one day while Raman was sitting at home he heard the voice of god saying, "Can those who consumed seven rings manage this village?" After the jewelry was lost, the village took 14,000 rupees from the temple and made small coins of gold. Raman suddenly realized what the phrase meant. In each of the seven villages a ring is offered in payment of a vow (*ka·nyk*) to god. The 14,000 rupees, Raman thought, represented these seven rings.

Some days later an incident occurred which led Raman to further interpret his dream. Periodically, the municipality would poison all the stray dogs when their number begins to pose a health hazard. On one such occasion a poisoned dog dragged itself into Raman's neighbor, Meena's house and began vomiting blood. Meena called Raman, who dragged the dog into the *kava·l* (open area in front of a row of houses) and put it out of its misery with two sharp blows of a hammer. Saravanan later came to know of Raman's action and began to quarrel with him—saying it was his own dog (which it was not). Then Saravanan's wife and mother also began to quarrel with him. Raman then understood Saravanan to be the 'corpse' from the dream, because Raman's door would always be closed to him—i.e. their friendship had ended.

It is instructive to consider stories such as this because it allows one to examine the way Raman's mind works. Raman provided many bits of historical and ritual information which he had acquired over the years of his life, but in many cases he attempted to interpret and synthesize this information—often in creative and convincing ways, but also in obviously contrived ways. I have a reasonable degree of trust in Raman's memory for details because many of his descriptions match those collected by Mandelbaum, from other

informants, in the 1930s and '40s. Although I do not assign a greater "truth" value to such corroborated data, they are examples of knowledge which seem to have been accurately transmitted from one generation to the next.

Let us consider other aspects of Raman's persona. Despite a vigorous intellect, Raman was considered to be rather lazy. Having quit several government jobs (railroad and postal service) which other Indians would covet, Raman was content to live in the village and be with his family (Mathi and Duryodana)—a master of his own time. He derived a modest income from freelance carpentry and blacksmithing whenever the mood struck him to work. Most of the time he would sleep, hang out in one of the five local tea shops, and play cards.

Part of Raman's laziness seems to stem from a general arrogance—an arrogance which is not, however, entirely unfounded since he did seem to be a rather brilliant and creative man. Although he was never taught to make a *kol*, or the drums, (*par* and *tabak*), he produced truly admirable specimens of these musical instruments the very first time he attempted to fashion them. On virtually any project, I watched him develop his own style of working, usually in creative bursts scattered throughout long periods of inactivity.

If Raman's qualities of intelligence and laziness made him appear to be a bit of an oddball, his physical appearance and mannerisms made him all the more so. He was eating very little in 1992 (after overcoming an opium addiction) and as a consequence he weighed about ninety pounds (he's about five feet tall). His face was rather pock marked and his hair was usually in a state of disarray. Speaking in a distinctive nasal voice, he called everybody "*co-ym*" 'god'—a polite form of address that sounded ridiculous to some when he directed it towards a child. Any Kota of Kolme-l with a sense of humor had worked up a reasonable imitation of Raman's voice.

Raman was considered musically talented, both in Kota music and in Hindi and Tamil music (film songs). His singing voice, like his speaking voice, was unusual: kind of thick and a bit nasal—certainly not beautiful in the manner of mellifluous 'filmy' voices. But his control over pitch, rhythm, and his ability to ornament a melody were impressive. Nothing was particularly 'Kota' about his musical idiolect, except, perhaps, for his use of Kota words and an occasional Kota pronunciation of a Tamil or other non-Kota word. Beyond his seldom realized ability as perhaps the most able drummer in the village, his ability on the *kol*, which occupied most of his time in public music making, was second only to that of Pucan. But like other aspects of Raman's natural potential which remain unrealized, Raman's *kol* technique suffered from lack of practice. His playing would improve tremendously at the end of a long festival. His natural intellectual and technical abilities have in many ways allowed him to get on in the world without working very hard.

Some of Raman's personality characteristics seem to have been shared by his father, K. Tuj, according to

Mandelbaum's village census of in 1937. Tuj was considered lazy and irresponsible, but was also a respected musician—one of Pucan's musical teachers.⁴ Raman commanded a certain degree of musical authority by virtue of his father's superior skill. Since the death of Pucan's musical contemporaries and seniors, Raman has been Pucan's partner (*jo:ry*) in musical performance. When Raman was unable to follow Pucan's lead, he would in some cases claim he knew a different version of a particular *ko!*, when it might otherwise simply have appeared that he was incompetent. Pucan used tell me that Raman was simply unable to follow his playing—not having sufficient “service” (using the English word), i.e. experience. Raman would, face to face, defer to Pucan's authority—as is proper for a classificatory younger brother to a classificatory older brother (their actual age difference is about 25 years). But privately, to me and to others, he would boast about his own abilities and claim that Pucan, being forgetful in his old age, would make things up as he went along.

Raman as a Type of Song Composer

Composers among the Kotas may be conveniently described in terms of three categories: individuals who have composed one or two songs which have caught on (but may or may not have composed other songs); individuals who compose many songs, but whose compositions remain unknown (perhaps because the songs are personal or private, or because the singer is by nature reserved); and composers who seem to be very popular, and whose compositions catch on and last. Although these categories are ideal types which might be considered in relation to one another as sorts of continua—for example Mathi composed only a few songs and they are personal—individuals tend to cluster into a specific category.

Raman exemplifies the first category of composers. He was well known for one composition in particular, which he sang quite elaborately and played on the *ko!* as well. The song text describes, in a rather didactic tone, normative behavior during the god festival:

*Father, older brother, younger brother, listen!
Under the ceremonial tent, don't sleep!*

⁴Pucan names Tu:j (his Badaga name, Sulli) as one of his *gurus*, using the word Hindus use for teacher. Generally, Kotas do not learn music formally or have teachers they regard as *gurus*. See the discussion that follows about Pucan's association with classical music and Hinduism.

Mandelbaum's genealogical entry for Tu:j appears on a paper slip from 18 November, 1937 (spelling standardized, abbreviations written out): 8 a-ke-r me-ke-r no.8 [the location of the house in the ke-r where it lies today]. Tu:j, age 27, husband of Ma:dy, [owns] 15 acres. Debt 500 rupees. Knows blacksmithing a little. If he works one day, he sleeps in open for next two. Always goes to Badaga funerals. Good player. Lazy. Always wants to sleep [Note on subsequent visit: deceased]. Daughter Rangmady, age 8 [see song about the controversy surrounding her death]. Daughter Puyi age 6. Son Ra-mn age 2. [Note on subsequent visit: now working as peon-postman- at Bhavani Sagar].

*Saying [the holy syllables] "o-ly o-ly" dance!
Communities who don't know the sound of Kota instrumental music all clap their hands saying "god"
From where does this sleep come to our community?*

Father, older brother. . .

*These dances are not danced for our sake,
the ritual meals are not cooked for our sake*

Change the music for the sake of the dancers, their legs hurt while dancing

Father, older brother. . .

*Don't sit there like senseless people!
Amnor and Aynor are listening
Saying "we are the Kota community," let's celebrate!*

Father, older brother..

The text is held together by a loose rhyme scheme—mostly based on correspondences between parallel endings such as “let us...” (do the verb), emphatic endings, “e,” or imperatives (and polite versions of imperatives). The melody, too, tends to resolve at points where each rhyming segment ends. The relationship between melody and text is somewhat unpredictable, although most of the piece consists of a single melody whose constituent phrases are divided up and rearranged differently depending on whether a particular verse or the refrain (Father, older brother...) is being sung. I have only a single recording of Raman singing this piece, but I suspect he would sing it slightly differently on other occasions—both in the order of the text and in the manner in which the words fit each melodic segment. Recordings of others (like his wife Mathi) singing this song are slightly different. Like the *sthāyi-antara* form of much Indian folk music and classical music, this song too contains a contrasting section centering around the upper octave—but this section is omitted in some versions.

What makes the piece musically ‘Kota’ or at least generically Indian, is the rhythm. Characteristic of much south Indian folk music is a pervading duple-triple cross rhythm which is either articulated in the percussion parts or in a melodic hemiola. In Western terms the piece could be analyzed in 12/16 with passages in 6/8. In Kota rhythmic terms, this is classified as a quick rendering of *ca·da· da·k*—or “ordinary variety,” in instrumental music.⁵ Songs like this, classified in the “god song” category, are usually strophic (or nearly so, as in this composition) and correspond to a simple repeating metrical pattern. One reason for

⁵The slow variety, paradoxically, is ten beats long. Further musical details of Kota classification schemes will be provided in part III.

this is that, during certain festivals, god songs are sung by women while clapping their hands and dancing in a circle (the steps correspond to some forms of *kummi*).

Not all Kota pieces, new or old, are strictly metrical, but Raman, as an instrumentalist, is particularly concerned with metrical regularity, and I have seen him attempt to “correct” other people’s compositions which do not conform to instrumental rhythmic patterns.

I do not know if Raman ever composed other songs, but in 1992 this was the only composition particularly associated with him. More importantly, the song has caught on in the village and is now recognized by Kotas outside of Kolme:l village as a “Kolme:l *pa:l*” (Kolme:l song). Most songs are associated with particular villages and are transmitted to other villages usually through women, when they marry and move to their husbands’ homes.

Raman’s father Tu:j was, like Raman, a composer as well as a *ko!* player. His most well-known (or perhaps only) song mourns the death of a young girl named Rangumathi. Rangumathi was the daughter of one K. Paym, the older brother of the K. Pucan of this chapter.

My mother⁶ Rangumathi, what will I say Rangumathi?
Kolme:l village, village in which an umbrella cannot move freely⁷
“the middle-street people’s cremation site we want,” they say, Rangumathi!⁸
My mother Rangumathi, what will I say Rangumathi?
“that-street people’s cremation site we don’t want,” they say, Rangumathi!
My mother Rangumathi, what will I say Rangumathi?
Kolme:l village, village in which an umbrella cannot move freely
My mother Rangumathi, what will I say Rangumathi?

Paym angered the *ma·mu:l* people (“traditionalist” faction who did not support the new gods) of his own exogamous division, which occupied one segment of the village (*a·ke·r* or “that street”), by agreeing to fill a ritual position for another exogamous division (occupying *na·ry·ke·r*, “middle street”). The vacancy was left by a man who became a diviner for one of the new deities. When Paym’s daughter Rangumathi died, a quarrel arose in the village as to where the daughter should be cremated—in the site reserved for the “middle-street” people, or the site used for the rest of the people.

Raman’s father supported the modernist faction. This piece, also strophic, is uncharacteristically short

⁶Term of affection for girl.

⁷Duryodana translated this passage as “where there is no movement of logs,” referring to the scarcity of firewood brought on by the diminished forest land. The word under question, *ko:*, is an archaic form of *ke:*, not *ko:r* (log) as Duryodana heard it. The term appears idiomatically only in this context, referring to a golden age in which the village was more populated. “The houses at Kolme:l were so many and so closely spaced that the old-style leaf umbrella, which cannot be folded, could not be carried through the village.” (Emeneau 1944 I, 81)

⁸The streets or *ke·rs* correspond to exogamous units in the village. The “middle street” people use a cremation site separate from that used jointly by the other two exogamous divisions.

for a mourning song. But like other mourning songs, the piece is slow and each stanza is articulated with glottal stops. The metrical pattern, like that of the previous piece, is the “ordinary variety” (*ca-da da-k*) The text is much to the point—the poor girl couldn’t even get a proper funeral because opposing factions were arguing over where she should be cremated. Although Raman grew up in an era of modernization and in an atmosphere in which Hindu syncretic practices were gaining wide acceptance, he gradually withdrew from the practice of worshipping Hindu gods. From what he indicated in 1990-92 he participates in the worship of the Ko-jka-l gods or deities outside the village through his role as a musician.

Thus Raman’s theological propensities were somewhat paradoxical—he seemed to be interested in what was “authentically” (*ma-mu-l*) Kota in religious terms, i.e. as opposed to what was Hindu, and yet was quite taken by Christianity and ways of Europeans and Americans. An interest in identifying with Americans was, according to a number of Kotas, however, a widespread component of modern Kota identity. Raman and Duryodana denied this interest was related in any way with the fact that Mandelbaum had come to study the Kotas. Instead, they implied that the similarity was inherent in Kota culture. For example, Kotas may, like Americans, marry and divorce freely and behave relatively informally. In this way, many Kotas have told me. Kotas are more like Americans than like British (whom many Indians consider to be formal and stuffy).⁹

Americanness is a symbolic essence through which Kotas mediate their relationship with Tamils. Duryodana and Raman were, at a time prior to my arrival, labeled “America” (this usage did not represent a hypostasis, but rather an inability to use the proper form of the word *Americans*) because they were informal with one another in ways which were considered to be inappropriate among other south Indians. Among Tamils it was considered disrespectful for a son to smoke a cigarette in front of his father, but Duryodana would do so and Raman would not object. This interest in identifying with Americans is so strong among some Kotas that they seemed surprised that, from an American point of view, the Kotas appear to be quite Tamil.

Although Raman’s intellectual propensity and interest in Christianity were considered rather extreme, if not positively bizarre, in the Kota context, they were not entirely without parallel. Some of these traits were shared by another man of Kolme-l, Mr. A. K. Rangan. Since Rangan was one of the most important song composers in the village (type three of my descriptive categories), some consideration of his life too, is called for.

⁹Mandelbaum’s journal entry, 25 February 1938, documents a similar sentiment among Kotas of that period “The headman [of Kurgo-j] wanted to know if Europeans made friends with a woman before they married her—and when I said yes—he was gratified to learn that Kotas and whites share the same customs as against upper class Indians.”

A. K. RANGAN

I heard Rangan's songs long before I met the man himself. Rangan composed a number of rather complicated, melodically intricate songs mostly based on melodies from Tamil and Hindi films. These songs caught on in the village and were widely sung—although few people could manage to maintain the tonic pitch throughout, or to reach the high tessituras of some of the songs.¹⁰ Although Rangan was the only permanent outcaste of Kolme:l village, he nevertheless continued to reside there. Until Dec. 1991 I had not had the opportunity to meet Rangan; he refused to participate in any community activity during which I might have met him. Even though most of the villagers regarded him with disdain, they evidently took great pleasure in singing his songs. Although I had heard about Rangan, I came across him only by chance on the last day of the God Festival, 1992. Rangan was half-drunk, observing the final set of dances from a distance.

I was able to speak with Rangan on a number of occasions because Duryodana had befriended him. But Rangan distrusted me—partly, I suspect, because I was Jewish, since he had come to believe strongly in Christianity. I asked him to tell me about his life. At first he refused, saying, "To understand my life you have to study the Bible, the Koran, and the Upanishads." Eventually Duryodana and I convinced him to sit and narrate his life history to Duryodana, while I monitored the videotapes and audio tapes. Later I sat with Duryodana and translated each sentence, asking Rangan to explain, on occasion, what he meant. Overall, Rangan presented a clear, cogent picture of a period in his life he considered to be important. I could not convince him to speak any more about it however—once again he became distrustful of me (he was worried that I wanted to write about how he became a Christian). The following is a relatively literal translation of how he presented himself, which tries to capture the flavor of Kota speech:

My name is Rangan, my father's name, Keydn, my mother's, Mathi. It happened that my mother was without a son for 15 years. Then my father, what'd he do? He made a [unspecified] vow to the Karamadai god, saying, "give me one son."¹¹ Then what'd he do? Having listened to the wise words of the traditional ones, he took his wife and nullified the "mouth doing" [i.e. he divorced her—undoing the "mouth doing" ceremony]. Then, for name's sake, his brother did the "mouth doing" [i.e. married] with

¹⁰Inability to maintain a tonic pitch is not an aspect of Kota musicality; the point here is that Rangan composed songs based on melodies which were more elaborate than those found in typical Kota genres. It is not surprising that some singers would lose their sense of tonic pitch.

¹¹There are many reasons why it is important for a Kota man to have a son: among other things, a son inherits the house of his father, provides for parts of his funeral, and maintains the continuity of the exogamous group residing on a "street" (*ke-r*). In some cases, the son takes over important ritual duties which are appropriate only for certain families in the village to perform. The most common reason for a Kota man to divorce his wife or take a second wife is the inability of the first wife to bear a male child.

my mother. That's our custom.¹² Then a son was born. It wasn't necessary for mother to lie with his younger brother. If one "takes back the mouth," and switches husbands by "doing the mouth" with another man, a son will be born—that's been our custom from the very beginning.

Father Kotpi-r, the one who begat Nakal, 'did the mouth' after my father 'mouth divorced.' Then the next month my mother became pregnant. Then she bore a son, me. When I was born my father said "when my son reaches his thirtieth year we'll fulfill the vow." Then, they [i.e. third parties commenting on the situation] say, they went carrying me, doing Pūja [Hindu worship] and Gija [rhyme word]. They thought they should pierce my ears, but the piercing instrument got stuck, they say, and I became unconscious. So becoming afraid they brought me back without being able to pierce my ears.

I became bigger and bigger, then when I was five or six my father cropped his hair. At that time Kota men were supposed to wear a tuft¹³; that is, they were supposed to leave a little hair in the middle of the scalp. [Duryodana: And all the rest should be shaved]. Must be shaved. Then because he was wearing the "crop" like this the people of our village were punching him and grabbing him, saying "you are like a tuftless Tamil, like a Christian you wear a crop." Fighting a great fight they outcasted him. Then tricking them, my father said "tomorrow or the next day I'll do like that" [i.e. shave the entire head except for a small patch in the middle].

Then I became ten. Tu-j teacher [Mandelbaum's informant, Sulli] cropped his own son's hair. This caused a great deal of trouble. The village, saying we must be caste aside, kept us separate—"do not join our god, do not join our festival, do not join our dry funeral." Afterwards as I moved into my teens my father began to wear a shirt and coat [emulating the English]—causing more trouble [because Kotas at that time were supposed to dress in the traditional shawl and waistcloth]. Then the men of this village, what'd they do, they outcasted us further, saying it is not suitable for us to enter the temple area. In 1944-45, teacher had so much money he got the police, registered a court case and won.

The English "Circle Inspector" asked, "why do you people who follow the new ways [*ocmu-l nardo-r*] come with them [the traditionalists]? Do it separately." Taking their guns they firmly stopped us [our quarrel]. That's how it was, see? Then, as I grew older I went to school. I studied in Palada school up to the eighth class and then I went to Joseph's High School in Ooty. All this time we didn't join with the rest of the people, we were all by ourselves. When we would pass the front yard of Kota houses Kota women would hit us with stones and broom handles saying "he's coming wearing a shirt, he's wearing a crop." Making do we reached the age of sixteen or seventeen. I, one, my younger brother Raman, two, teacher's son San, three, *naryke-r* Kajmal four, older brother Kul, five. All five of us became youths and we thought we would beat the villagers and kill them. They feared us and things began to calm down.

Then at seventeen or nineteen I went to Me-na-r and got myself a girl, named Mic, and made her my wife. Then she bore a boy. Three months after my son was born, it was as if a demon [*pica-c*] or something entered my house. I lost my senses. My father sent me to Ooty to get change for 100 rupees. While I was going to make change, I don't know what came over me, there was a Mysore bus and 'zoom zoom'

¹²In other words, according to custom, if a woman does not bear a son, her husband will ritually (not actually) divorce her and marry her to his younger brother. In earlier times, a man's brothers would have had access to his wife or wives (Mandelbaum 1938). The idea is that if the woman were considered a different man's wife she might conceive—not necessarily because one man is unable to biologically conceive (although one cannot rule out this motivation) but because the woman may not be able to conceive as a particular man's "wife."

¹³This was a ritual necessity as well as a tribal identity marker. For the god ceremony, men were required to keep traces of precious metals and cow dung in their hair. Now many Kotas keep these materials in a small thread ball (*cerud*) suspended around the neck.

[brr brnn] I got on it. Why I got on like that I didn't know then and I don't know now. When I got to Mysore I got off that bus, stayed over one night, and got on a Bangalore bus. After staying there 8 days I used up all the money. I thought I'd have to join the military to avoid dying [of starvation]. I went to sleep on the platform of the city railway station. That night, about midnight, 5 or 6 soldiers who were on leave came and sat on the bench. I asked them where the recruiting office was. What'd one of them say? "You might as well die here or anywhere; in a river or giver [rhyme word] fall and die. Why go and die? That shouldn't happen, just be patient," one man scolded me.

A sick man, about 75 years old, was lying face down near me covering his face, "Hey Man, little brother. com'ere." He asked me why I wanted to go and die in the military and I told him I was poor and had no other way. "OK you fool, what work do you know?" I told him I knew blacksmithing and carpentry. "Man," he said, "if you're not going into the military come work for me. I'm a carpenter, you can be my assistant." The next morning he took me to a place called Jalari, about 12 miles from Bangalore, to build military barracks. For a month or two I worked there and they provided us food. When the work was finished he kept me on. I didn't know how to measure correctly and one day the overseer came and said "you made a mistake." The carpenter got scared and ran away, leaving me alone.

Another man came along and I was with him for five or six days. I didn't have a house or anything. I just took a tattered straw mat and stayed in the Coolie quarters. I'd take a discarded pot and for a rupee I could cook some gruel. I had nothing to throw over my shoulder [i.e. a shawl], I just slept on the ground. [Duryodana: who provided you with rice?]. Raw rice I managed about ½ a liter a day, living with a little bit of help.

Then one Tamil boy came and said, "what are you doing sleeping here, didn't you get bitten by a snake?" I said I wouldn't know what a snake looks like because we don't have them in our village. The boy took me to a European Captain who was giving two rupees each for queen ants. We took pick axes and chopped at the anthill. The queens were this big (shows with finger). Each of us grabbed one one of those egg layers, gave it to the Captain, and got two two rupees. Like that we ate seven or eight days by the work of our own hands, went to town to see a movie, stayed there. . . . We lived like this.

On our walking path there were many many (*ekacekam*) military personnel walking between town and Jalary camp. Old ladies used to beg by the side of the road holding a small child, saying "this child's mother is dead, it doesn't even have a father, please give some silver to buy milk." They would get a handful of coins by the end of the day. We would carry the children back to their mothers. The mothers and old ladies would split the profits [D: didn't they give you anything?] They gave us money for carrying the baby. I've been telling you all this for the fun of it!

Then we here passed the time collecting queen ants and eating. I thought, "if the world operates like this. full of deception, what chance is there for me?" Thinking "god" I went, and what did I see one man do? There was a man lying dead under a Gum Benzoin wood gate. People were standing around. His face was covered, and his wife, face also covered, was bent over, thinking, with her face to her knee. One stylishly dressed fellow was telling the story of this family, trying to raise some money. I threw them four annas and stepped into an alley. Some people cleared away and the "dead" man lifted the cloth and said "It's hot in here, get me some soda"; the other said, "ok ok, cover your head, people are coming."

I saw all this. Terrible things I saw. I couldn't bear it. I went without food for 5 mealtimes. 2 ½ days I went hungry and finally I went to the recruiting office. I stayed at the "rest camp" for fifteen or sixteen days and then went to Jalna (Maharashtra), where I stayed for 3 months. Then I underwent training in Jhansi (Madhya Pradesh?) for three months, and then went to Bangladesh, a place called Chittagong, a sparsely inhabited place near the border of Nagaland. It was only after remaining there for 9 months that I returned here. Still then I didn't join with the temple area [i.e. wasn't allowed to participate in the god

ceremony with the other Kotas]. I thought, “after I came, after I became older, if they are not joining with me, let them go.” We [the outcaste group] separately “made god” [celebrated the god festival] and cooking in different pots. Like that time passed. I had seen all these things, the military, those lands and factories and all, the railroad tunnel... When I saw the rail tunnel I thought, “who built this?” “It is those who hold this country, the English people.” After seeing these roads, these buildings, these multiple stories, these palaces, I decided to conduct research on the world.

I studied all the world’s books, the Rāmāyana, the Mahābhārata, the Purānas, the Vikramāditan, the Tirukkural, the Puranānūra, the Koran, and the Bible. For 30 years, only research. Some kind of madness happened to me. I had no desire to eat or work. Then after thirty years, in my thirty fifth year of studying this world’s books, a book of Kota history became available to me. It was this big [shows with hands] like a Billy Goat. [Duryodana: where father?] in Ooty, one woman was keeping it. I read that book without missing one ‘pin.’ Then you know all those ancient Tamil things? I searched for all the stone inscriptions, coins, and palm leaf manuscripts. Our history is in one book called the Puranānūra. I culled out details of our history from temple inscriptions. I completed it two years ago. Now I’m waiting for ten thousand rupees so I can publish it.

Kotas consider Rangan to be, as it is put in Indian English, a bit “loose.” But as with S. Raman, not all of Rangan’s accounts arose from visions of grandeur nor did they all represent creative speculations. In some cases he demonstrated detailed knowledge of Kota ritual and oral history. This fact is surprising considering that Rangan had been living in the village as an outcaste for much of his early life and as a relative outsider for the remainder. Rangan appears to have gathered information by observing others and by listening to the words of his elders. I found that Rangan’s descriptions of “traditional” Kota practices corresponded with some of the material Mandelbaum collected in the 1930s, ‘40s and ‘50s, because both Mandelbaum and Rangan learned a great deal from Sulli.

In 1960 Rangan published a history of the Nilgiris in Tamil, adopting the pseudonym “Hill Fox” to protect himself from Badagas, who he was afraid might dispute his positions and possibly harm him.¹⁴ Most of this short book narrates well-known historical situations, such as important battles led by Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan. Rangan managed to weave the Kotas into the tale—drawing on some mixture of oral tradition and what he appears to have read elsewhere (references are not, of course, provided).¹⁵ I could not coax Rangan into providing sources for any of the details of his account, but I would speculate he read about communities whose names were either unspecified or resembled *ko-v* or *Kota*, and imaginatively equated

¹⁴This no longer appeared to be a concern of Rangan’s in 1990-92, probably because the Kotas have achieved some degree of social status vis-à-vis Indian society generally and no longer fear Badaga reprisals for their actions.

¹⁵One detail in Rangan’s book, worthy of note if it can be corroborated, is his claim that the Kotas once ran a weaving center near Dhana Kottai (probably Dhananayakkan Kottai) called Mūla Turai—inhabited mostly by Thevarga Chettiars. I have found no mention of Kota weaving practices, either in aural tradition or in writing, since all cloth has been purchased from the market or from the Chettiars for many decades. It is unclear whether this cloth, which was said to be different from ordinary cloth, was of the ancient type made from fibers of the *pobit* plant, or whether other fibers were used. The historical period around which his description centered was late in the 18th century.

these peoples with his own community.

Rangan indeed had a penchant for speculative etymology. When I was first making his acquaintance, Rangan provided a list of “facts” which he had gleaned over his years of research. The Kota word *mandu·v*, he informed me, was actually derived from English. He pointed out the following words in an English dictionary: “man” + “tow” (“short coarse fibers of flax or hemp, used for making yarn etc.”). *mandu·v*, a plant which Kota women tie in their hair, is of central symbolic importance in both ritual and everyday activities: it stands, unambiguously, for adult Kota womanhood. The probably etymology of the word is *mand* ‘head’ + *pu·v* ‘flower’.¹⁶ Rangan should not be considered particularly unusual in regard to his interest in etymology. Kotas delight, as do many Indians, in constructing elaborate etymologies, both to set up elaborate puns and to substantiate, usually self-interested, claims. Rangan, like Raman, wishes unmistakably to link Kota culture with European traditions.

But Rangan’s interest in words extended beyond etymology. He was a poet of sorts, in the way he constructed song texts. From what I gather, Rangan composed most of his songs in the 1950s and 1960s—during what appears to be a relatively stable period of his life (although the life history he dictated makes it difficult to ascertain what was occurring at that time). Rangan was decidedly uninterested in discussing his compositions and I was unwilling to test his patience. He told me his mind was not “OK,” partly as a result of alcohol use,¹⁷ and he just could not remember. He had forgotten all the words and felt completely incapable of singing—though he knew the words well enough to tell Duryodana and me that certain versions of his songs were incorrect.

The tunes to these songs are not particularly significant from the standpoint of Kota musical culture as a whole, but a few points are noteworthy. Among songs that are currently sung and widely recognized, Rangan’s songs are probably the earliest examples of Kota language texts set to cinema tunes. Some of the songs, like *araca·yr ucite* (“born as Kings”) draw their tunes from movies that were popular all over India. Since many of the original songs themselves were translated into and sung in a number of regional languages, the Kota examples can be seen, in these instances, as part of a broad national (and nationalizing) process. Other songs seem to fit styles of Hindi film song of the 1940s. I have been able to have some of these songs identified. Others, both to my ears and to ears of Indians for whom I have played these songs, simply *sound* like songs of 1950s Hindi cinema—although I am not sufficiently familiar with the range of styles to provide

¹⁶Prof. Emeneau found this etymology plausible when I suggested it to him. In Emeneau’s unpublished vocabulary notes, *mandu·v* is identified as *Crotoria formosa*.

¹⁷Alcoholism is common among the Kotas; however I have no data to compare the prevalence of alcoholism among Kotas to that among other tribal peoples, peasants in a similar socio-economic category, or to others of the Nilgiri or Tamil region.

a stronger, analytical statement. Suffice it to note that Rangan's compositions draw upon a historical and linguistic variety of cinema songs.

Because songs like those of Rangan's continue to be sung as new songs are composed (also based upon or in the style of changing styles of cinema songs), Kota popular (i.e. ad hoc, non-ritual) songs provide a curious historical and geographic, musical snapshot of India: they represent a spectrum of old styles, new styles, Hindi styles, and Tamil styles of cinema songs.

Rangan, at least in Kolme-l, seems to have spearheaded a new style of setting Kota words to existing tunes, which drew upon a distinctive alliterative and rhyming technique—a technique that recalls the writings of former Chief Minister of Tamilnadu, Karunanidhi, but which can be found in early Tamil grammar as well. Anadurai and Karunanidhi contributed to the development of this new style of Tamil writing and used it to propagate the platforms of the DMK, the political party they founded. The similarity between the new DMK style of Tamil and Rangan's style of setting Kota words to existing melodies is unmistakable. No such precedent exists in the "traditional" categories of song (mourning songs and god songs). A good example of alliteration and rhyming may be found in a song lamenting the sparsity of the Kota population and the death of children:

pate digle pati-me ka-tite pace mogne a-ciyo

for ten months¹⁸ you observed dietary restrictions and gave birth to a baby

katle vergume takulle mogume ta-vna-tke ke-ypiyo

firewood from the wood pile and the child from your lap [i.e. a young child] you sent to the cremation ground

duvle ticne kadte neycne tacir a-na-to-ri artego

seeing the fire in the cremation ground the souls of the dead beat their foreheads and cry¹⁹

In the first line, "*pate*" "*pati-me*" and "*pace*," create an alliterative effect with the repeating "p" sound. The two halves of the phrase are balanced by the resemblance between "*digle*" and "*mogne*" (sung each as three syllables, first syllable ending in "g" and the third in the emphatic particle "e"), and the long "a" vowels in "*ka-tite*" and "*a-ciyo*." The next line is also clever in reversing the order of the sounds "k" "a" and "t" for words that provide parallel functions in the sentence: the firewood "in the wood pile" (*katle*) and the

¹⁸Kota months, like Tamil months, are calculated according to a lunar calendar. They are as follows: *ku-ri* (December-January); *a-la-yr* (January-February); *nala-yr* (February-March); *a-yr* (March-April); *a-yr* (April-May); *a-dr* (May-June); *a-vayr* (June-July); *perayd* (July-August); *doddidl* (August-September); *kuddidl* (September-October); *ta-* (October-November); *pemyt* (November-December). Both in Tamil and in Kota the expression "ten months" for a term of pregnancy is idiomatic; I have not ascertained from where the expression originated.

¹⁹Kota philosophies concerning the afterlife will be considered in part II.

baby “in the lap” (*takulle*). The words “*tic*” and “*neyc*” set up a pattern of rhyme in the first half of the next line; this is offset in the second half of the phrase, where the rhyming “c” sound occurs in the first word. “*tacir*.” In all, the way the words hang together defies any simple scheme, and yet they hold together in a balanced and clear manner. Many Kotas of Kolme-l, both men and women, have composed in a similar fashion, but none possess Rangan’s poetic flair.

Just as Rangan was estranged from the village through a pattern set by his father (i.e. his decision to band together with Sulli, cut his hair, etc.), Rangan’s son Gundapucan too has remained somewhat of an outsider—first his father Rangan abandoned him, and later, after Rangan returned, his mother left (presumably fed up with Rangan’s bizarre and irresponsible behavior). Gundapucan appears in the village occasionally for the wedding of a relative or other social occasion—but he is not socially or ritually bound to the village to the same extent as other Kotas. Gundapucan, now in his fifties, married and with children, lives in a small Nilgiri town away from other Kotas and works as a janitor in a school. He shaves, wears his hair short, and presents a rather robust, tall, and handsome appearance. He is clearly quite Tamilized and Christianized, and is, like his father, somewhat of an alcoholic. He too has composed a number of songs, and his compositional ability seems to equal that of his father. It will be interesting to observe whether his children exhibit propensities toward musical composition as they mature.

I was able to record his singing on one occasion. He preceded a number of his songs by a rapid pseudo-theological incantation in Tamil. I made the mistake of providing him with alcohol and in short course I could not find a way to politely part company. His singing abilities were, overall, widely admired by Kotas and his control over pitch was considerable. His vocal timbre, however, was as unusual as he was—a high pitched nasal drone, produced with tensed lips and tongue.

ROLE OF TRAVEL

Although nowadays many Kotas have lived and do live in other parts of India, including Bombay, Delhi, and Rajasthan, and work in modern occupations that put them in contact with a variety of Indians and foreigners, this was not common in the 1940s and 1950s. Rangan’s uncle Sulli was an exception. He made a name for himself, becoming wealthy by selling potatoes in Calcutta; few others, from what I gather, ventured beyond the vicinity of the Nilgiris. One reason for this was the difficulty of transportation—if a Kota needed to attend a funeral or a wedding it would be difficult to reach the village in time from another part of the country. Language was also a problem, since Tamil was only useful in the Madras Presidency and to some extent in other parts of India (in the south, where cognate languages are spoken, and elsewhere, only among

Tamil immigrants). Rangan learned a bit of Hindi and a bit of English and got by.²⁰

As a rule, Kotas maintain close emotional as well as obligational ties to their home villages—on some occasions, such as during *devr*, attendance is mandatory. For Rangan this did not pose a problem—he was already estranged. Rangan's experiences away from the Kota community would certainly seem to have influenced his musical creativity, as well as his lifelong intellectual interests. Although his activities as part of Sulli's reformer group in the 1940s and 1950s have had lasting impact in the village, his apparent influence (and certainly the only influence to which other Kotas would admit) has been in the realm of non-ritual song. Intellectually, he finds modest parallel only in S. Raman, and S. Raman's son Duryodana was one of his few friends in the village in 1990-92.

Raman and Rangan were musical forces in the village who lay at the social and religious fringes of Kota society. Let us turn now to K. Pucan, a representative of what could be considered a Kota conservatism of recent decades. I term this *a* conservatism because his attitudes adhere to religious values developed during his youth—religious values that anthropologists of the 1950s-70s would have glossed as “Sanskritized,” but whose nuances deserve careful attention.

K. PUCAN

My knowledge of Pucan's life has been gleaned from several sources—bits and pieces he told me, Raman's and Rangan's comments (sometimes via Duryodana), information provided by Pucan's sons and other relatives, and a few comments in Mandelbaum's notes and in Sulli's diary. Let me return to my first encounters with Pucan in Kolme-l.

Before my first trip to Kolme-l I was directed by one of my Tamil friends to meet Dr. Varadharajan, a son of Pucan who worked at the Hindustani Photo Films' health clinic. The doctor was himself a good drummer, but since he had not learned to play the *kol*, he thought his father would be better able to teach me about Kota music. Dr. Varadharajan kindly acted as an intermediary between myself and Kolme-l villagers during my early visits—a somewhat uncomfortable intermediary I might add, because whatever trouble I might unwittingly have caused in conducting my research might ultimately have been blamed on him. Later, as I became better acquainted with the villagers, he argued and intervened on my behalf that I be permitted to

²⁰All Kotas speak some Tamil and many are also literate in Tamil. Some Kotas have learned Hindi by living or traveling in other parts of India, or by working alongside north Indians in Ooty (at Hindustani Photo Films, for instance). Most Kotas do not know Hindi, however. Most south Indians are exposed to a significant amount of English, both in school and at work. Some Kotas attend English medium schools and are fluent in English. Others know a few English words.

witness and participate in community events that non-Kotas never had (or were never supposed to have) participated in.

I introduced my relationship with Pucan by considering his son because I believe his introduction facilitated my ability to gain Pucan's trust. I tape recorded my first meeting with Pucan, during which, it may be recalled, Raman was also present. Since I had difficulty in understanding some of what transpired, I later translated that tape with the help of my first field assistant. A few weeks later I returned to Kolme-l, with my assistant this time, intent on learning something more about Pucan's life. In particular, since I had learned in my first visit that Pucan knew David Mandelbaum, I wanted to see what I could discover about Mandelbaum's relationship with him and with the Kotas.

Unfortunately, I was quite inexperienced at collecting oral history, and Pucan, I believe, was accustomed to interacting with researchers or government employees who would ask him simple questions—questions which he could answer in a sentence or two. I suggested that he recount experiences he considered to be significant in his life. His response was not encouraging, indicating in effect, "Nothing was special. every day was like every other day." Later I could probably have collected his life history more systematically, but since he was continuously providing me many other kinds of information (ritual, musical, historical, political), I never seemed to find time to return to this project.

The focus of this initial interview gradually shifted to the description of ritual and music, partly at my instigation. Early in the interview Pucan began narrating the details of *devr*, the "god ceremony." Kotas tend to verbalize their cultural identity through reference to rituals, particularly the God ceremony. Most of the events of the god ceremony may be safely described to outsiders, although outsiders should not witness some parts of it.

Although Pucan included little personal detail in his account, he did discuss his experiences in learning music. In his characteristic manner of allying himself with the practices of Indian classical music, Pucan characterized himself as having undergone training with particular teachers (he used the pan-Indic term *guru*). Other Kotas, in contrast, tend to learn music on their own, receiving guidance on occasion from those with more experience. At the age of twelve Pucan started playing the *pula-ŋg*, an idioglottal aerophone whose single reed is a slit cut into a short piece of bamboo. Kota males, who pass the time playing this instrument in the village, may use it to practice the ritual and dance repertoire; after mastering the repertoire on the *pula-ŋg* some may attempt to learn the much more difficult *kol*. When Pucan experienced difficulty in learning a new piece he would consult his uncle Surimukakamatn (nickname which probably means 'twisted nose' Kamatn), whom he considered to be his primary *guru*. His uncle provided instruction either by humming the melody or by demonstrating it on the *pula-ŋg*. Once having mastered the *pula-ŋg* Pucan

claimed to have required only eight days to learn the *kol*.²¹ Because the *kol* should not be played in the village unless it is called for ceremonially, Pucan and his older brother used to practice it in a forest below the village. When they needed additional instruction back in the village, *pula-ŋg* or voice remained the media for instruction.

Pucan did not discuss in much depth his experiences playing for Badaga and Toda funerals, except that on those occasions the Kotas would not enter Badaga or Toda houses and would prepare their own food (interdining would have signified equal status; Badagas and Todas considered Kotas to be ritually below themselves). The tunes played for Badagas and Todas, he said, were different from each other and were composed by Kotas. In actuality, I suspect at least some of the tunes were held in common for use in funerals of Kotas, Badagas and Todas—particularly certain dance tunes. What he meant, I gather, was that some tunes were used exclusively for Badaga funerals or Toda funerals; but not that all the tunes were separate.

Pucan is now one of the wealthier members of the community, a landowner who is secure in his knowledge that his two sons (one a doctor and the other also drawing a steady salary) will look after him well. But he suffered considerable hardships growing up. He told me little about his childhood, except that his father died when he was about a year old. His mother and father were walking back to the village when his father was suddenly stricken with a heart attack. His mother had to walk back to the village all alone at night; the next day a party was organized to retrieve the body. She composed a mourning song for her husband, and from it Pucan crafted an instrumental tune.²² Since Pucan was not much of a singer, he seldom remembered the words to songs. I eventually found a few people who knew the song—both of whom learned it from Pucan's elder sister, Boylac Nic.

At present, Pucan and his immediate family abstain from the consumption of beef. Many wealthy, urban employed, or Hindu-inclined Kotas tend to shun beef eating explaining that the cow is their god. Young Kotas, especially in Porga-r (Kotagiri) and Kolme-l where the dry funeral has not been conducted in many years, are unaware (or refuse to believe) that cows were, in former times (until the 1930s), sacrificed at Kota funerals. Pucan never discussed this aspect of Kota culture with me—carefully avoiding any mention of cow sacrifice when describing rituals of the old days. I have been told that Pucan used to consume beef as a young man, but that now he has changed his ways as a result of his newfound wealth and desire to command respect. Pucan is apparently not unusual in this respect—Kotas, I was told, commonly shun beef eating when they

²¹This may have been an exaggeration. However, once the circular breathing and fingering techniques were mastered, switching from one instrument to the other would have been relatively straightforward.

²²Any Kota can compose a mourning song for any other. It is not mandatory. Although more women compose and sing mourning songs than do men, not all do.

become wealthy. In this respect, the means for obtaining prestige in Kota society accord with those found throughout Hindu India. But from this one should not assume that all forms of “Sanskritization” are morally equivalent. Beef eating is shunned, but the use of funeral music, another contentious practice vis-à-vis caste hierarchy, is highly valued. In most parts of India communities of low ritual prestige are associated with the performance of music at funerals. Though Kotas have discontinued the performance of music at the funerals of other communities, they proudly continue to perform music for their own.

Puccan would have been in his early to middle twenties when Sulli began rebelling against traditional norms in his quest to raise Kota prestige (and his own as well). He belonged to the last generation of Kotas to be treated as untouchables—prevented from sitting in tea stalls with Badagas and other non-Kotas, prevented from attending schools, and otherwise treated with contempt. During that period, Sulli’s reforms were firmly rejected by his peers and Sulli himself was badly treated. But Sulli was also desperately needed for his ability to mediate between the Kotas and the British. Sulli sent letters to the Governor of Madras state complaining of their ill treatment by the Badagas. Later, Sulli and a number of Kotas, including K. Pucan, signed a notice proclaiming that Kotas deserved equal treatment according to law (citing particular cases and Government order numbers).

Although Pucan acted along with Sulli in concerted efforts on behalf of the village as a whole. Sulli recounted, in his autobiography (Sulli n.d.) an event in which Pucan led a village attempt to cheat him. According to Sulli, Pucan needed three bags of rice to provide food for all those who attended his mother’s funeral. Sulli was running a ration shop at the time and agreed to supply the rice—thinking he would replace the rice with his own harvest at a later date. After the feast was over, Pucan and others called the District Ration Officers to Sulli’s shop, telling them that he had not accounted for three bags of rice. Upon Sulli’s questioning him later, Pucan said that the village had been waiting for an opportunity to exact revenge upon him for foiling their attempts to make him abide by Kota rules.

Since I never asked Pucan about this story his version may have been entirely different. But it is fair to conclude that Sulli considered Pucan and himself to occupy different camps vis-à-vis the village—at least in 1947. Pucan, even in 1992, did not express a great deal of respect for Sulli; he told me on a number of occasions that Sulli would fabricate stories for Mandelbaum (a tendency about which Mandelbaum became painfully aware). And yet, as an old man, Pucan embodied a form of cultural conservatism that *did* subsume, in small part, the reforms Sulli instigated. Pucan wore his hair somewhat long, but did not expect his sons to follow suit. He wore a bushy mustache, but considered a beard, which, like wearing the long hair was once a mandatory Kota convention for men, appropriate only for ritual specialists (he would, consequently, question

me, not without a hint of humor, as to why I wore a beard²³).

He opposed the dry funeral and rejected many of the Kota theories concerning the dead. I asked him what he thought happened when people died. He laughed and said, “What do you think happens?” Then he uttered something vague about the soul merging with Brahma—an *advaita-vedānta* explanation that is common in India. Trying a new tactic I asked him what “the Kotas” think, and, disclaiming any belief himself, told me about the Kota land of the dead and other Kota-specific beliefs and rituals concerning death. I discovered that, in general, rejection of the dry funeral necessitated rejection of the soteriology that underlay it.

But Pucan had no objection to playing the instrumental repertoire associated with the dry funeral, during the green funeral—even the tunes formerly associated with catching and killing buffaloes. Music as a cultural artifact could not be tainted, so it seemed, with the practices with which it was formerly associated.²⁴ And yet *auspicious* associations between musical pieces and Kota cultural practice or putative history were ever a source of discussion for Pucan.

After I moved to Kolme I would spend many hours in the late morning talking with Pucan in front of his house, where he would invariably sit, soaking up rays of the intense Nilgiri sun. Duryodana would compare him to my rechargeable batteries, and later to the small, experimental solar power station that was installed in the village, saying that Pucan, like other Kotas, liked to get “charged” in the sun. I would sit with my hand shielding my eyes, or occasionally with an umbrella over my head, during these discussions. During the winter months I would usually find my face and scalp sunburned after an hour or two.

Pucan and I developed a surprisingly informal relationship considering the respect he was due as an elder in the community. There was never any doubt about who held the power between us (he did), but he allowed me to ask questions and behave in a way that no one else my age would have been permitted. At one point he said that I held his power in my hand—a statement which I still do not understand literally, but by which he meant I could take unusually broad liberties with him in my questioning and social interaction. Pucan was one of the few members of the community who possessed such wealth and stature that he did not need anything I could provide; and he did not appear to want anything from me but my affection. This is not to imply, however, that less affluent people may have had duplicitous motives for my friendship. I could show my affection for him in small ways, sneaking him some whiskey behind his wife’s back, holding his arm to

²³I wore a beard for reasons of personal vanity. Also, since I tend to look very young without a beard, I hoped my beard would also earn me the respect accorded to an adult. A few Kota youths were so convinced by my beard of my “age,” they thought I was sixty! Towards the end of my stay I shaved my beard and my own neighbors in the village could not recognize me. One remarked, “Oh! that foreigner left and this one has come?”

²⁴The question of what does and what does not “stick” to music is considered in more depth in part III.

help him walk across the village, bringing him tapes of Karnatak music to listen to, or playing the *vṇā* for him. He felt duty bound to help me (and other researchers, some friends and colleagues, others Indian students from the plains, who would visit every so often) but he also genuinely enjoyed teaching music and telling stories.

He also took great pleasure in teasing me. At first I found it difficult to understand his Tamil, and even more difficult to explain my ideas to him (others seemed to be able to fill in the gaps when I spoke with them). He used to say, “you speak Tamil as if you are climbing a steep grade.” When we would walk together we would constantly have to stop so he could bless a younger Kota man or woman who was walking by (elders must do this). He would remove his chappals and gently put his right hand on the other person’s head. One day he began bopping me on the head following each such action of blessing.

We developed this close relationship in part because he had a degree of respect for me that extended beyond the unearned respect all white people seem to command. I knew south Indian classical music—a system of music for which Pucan had tremendous regard. Only after he heard me play the *vṇā* did he believe I could possibly come to understand anything worthwhile about Kota music. He and one or two other Kota men had studied Karnatak vocal music in the early 1950s, and one man (a maternal uncle of Duryodana) even learned to play the *mṛdaṅgam*. Even though Pucan had studied Karnatak music for only a few months, his interest and musical memory was such that in 1992 he could still sing a few compositions fairly well and recognize a few *rāgas*.

Even though my knowledge of Karnatak music was potentially useful in establishing some respect, I was ambivalent about stressing my knowledge of and interest in India as gained in my two years’ living in Madurai. My *vṇā* teachers were Brahmin, and consequently vegetarian, and my knowledge of Hinduism was colored by my daily experiences with them. I was afraid that my knowledge might be perceived by Kotas as my *values*, and thus encourage some Kotas to wear the same cultural mask for me as they might for certain Indian outsiders.

As for music, I was afraid that some Kotas might disparage or refuse to share their own musical traditions with me, thinking, perhaps, that I was only interested comparing their music to Indian classical music. For Pucan there was no conflict. In fact he had become accustomed to explaining Kota music in technical terms that are, properly speaking, appropriate only for discussing Karnatak music. In Tamil he would refer to instrumental melodies, or *koḷs*, as *rāgas*, which they were not. He named the various phrases of the *koḷ* using the names of the three parts of Karnatak musical compositions, the *pallavi*, *anupallavi*, and *caranam*. In some ways the parts were indeed comparable, but it was also clear that he was using the terminology of the classical system to lend prestige to his own music.

Pucan also took pride in the fact that his talent was recognized by a Karnatak musician. In the late 1950s a leading *nāgasvaram* player (possibly Karukurichi Arunachalam) selected Pucan for an award recognizing his excellence in playing the double-reeded aerophone (I am unclear as to the geographical or cultural scope of the competition). On the occasion of receiving this award Pucan and a troupe of Kota musicians were evidently called to perform in Delhi.

Pucan has occupied several worlds in his lifetime: growing up in an atmosphere of impoverishment, he has become wealthy; rising from a position of little distinction in the village he has achieved positions of great distinction; outside the village too, he became well known as he grew older; and finally, he lived through a period in which the Kotas themselves moved from a position of little status to a relatively privileged position, taking full advantage of government provisions for Scheduled Tribes. He grew up fatherless, in an impoverished household. In his younger days he was a talented blacksmith and carpenter, spent long hours in the fields tending cattle, and managed extra meals and drink when called to Badaga and Toda villages to provide music.

Pucan does not appear to have been considered a particularly exceptional musician when he was a young man. Mandelbaum asked one *naryke-r* Kamatn²⁵ the names of the best *ko!* players of the village: Pucan's name was mentioned as one of the "other" *ko!* players, but among the best were his teachers Metvayn and Surimukn (Mandelbaum 5.11.38). Mandelbaum's journal entry on the same day mentions a recording session with Metvayn, but Pucan led me to believe that he himself performed all the music on Mandelbaum's cylinder tapes. Pucan's present-day stature as a musician, arbiter and village elder (*doda!*) has been achieved over the years. Apparently, one need not be a brilliant, born musician, to be respected.

Pucan was involved in promoting the worship of Rangrayn, the new Hindu deity whose voice was heard through one Kusvayn in Kolme:l in 1925 (Mandelbaum 1960 [1941]). Sometime prior to December 1958, Pucan, Va. Kamatn (*ex. mundka·no·n* who died in 1992), and Motakamatn went to Dindigal and returned to Kolme:l bringing an idol for the deity (Mandelbaum 12.31.58; Pucan's involvement confirmed by Pucan himself). Va. Kamatn later provided much of the financial support for building a modest sized temple for the deity, fashioned in a traditional south Indian style, complete with Gopuram (south Indian temple pillar, usually covered with carvings of deities and mythological scenes). It is probably no coincidence that in 1991-92 these three men were the wealthiest and most influential men of Kolme:l village. These men who supported the new gods, new customs, and who achieved economic success, each maintained credibility in the village through firm commitment to old values as well as new ones. Radical figures such as Sulli and Rangan

²⁵ This musician is probably one of Pucan's *ko!* teachers, also known as Metvaykamatn.

were marginalized, and overly conservative individuals eventually lost their influence. Today Pucan is the Pūjāri for the *Ko-jka-l* temple; when he is physically unable to fulfill his duty, or when he has to play *ko!*, the role is assumed by his youngest son, Rajendran.

Pucan and his family appear to be a strongly integrative component in the village—representing both community and individual capacities for improving one’s condition in life. Pucan exemplifies the successful negotiation of modernity as well as integration with non-Kotas (especially Hindus), without losing a sense of identity in the process. His son Varadharajan became the first doctor in the community; and although he has in recent years lived outside the village, he has continually demonstrated his commitment to it and recently constructed a house in Kolme-l for his retirement. Neither son made the time to master the *ko!*, but recently they have begun to practice it out of concern that a great tradition of *ko!* performance (exemplified by their father alone) would die out. They consider Raman’s and Duryodana’s playing vastly inferior to that of their father.

Although neither Varadharajan nor Rajendran is a *ko!* player, they *are* otherwise artistically talented. Varadharajan is considered a highly competent *dobar* player (his massive physique and large hands lend a powerful, booming quality to his drumming) and Rajendran is among the best male dancers. Both claim a great deal of musical knowledge, even if they cannot actually perform the *ko!*. Varadharajan used to attempt to explain to me subtle aspects of *ko!* playing, but had difficulty articulating such things verbally. For the most part it was clear that he had very definite ideas about correct and incorrect playing, and his father’s playing (a few years earlier, before he had begun to show signs of weakness from age) represented a singular model of excellence.

CHAPTER FIVE

FEMALE MUSICAL LEADERS AND OTHER COMPOSERS AND SINGERS

Pucan, Raman and Duryodana are highly valued musicians because they played the *kol*. The role of women as musical leaders seems to be less central because they are not soloists as such, but when women sing and dance together at important ritual junctures there are generally a few elderly women who lead. One such woman in Kolme-l was Pa. Mathi.

PA. MATHI

I met Mathi at her daughter's house in Kurgoj village on the occasion of a funeral. I had been searching for someone in Kolme-l who knew old songs, for until that time I had only heard recent compositions (such as those of Rangan). Mathi, in her eighties at the time but claiming she was sixty, became a willing musical consultant and a source for all sorts of other cultural information as well. It was after recording Mathi's songs that I became aware of what Kotas called *ma·mu·l ma·nt*—that is, "traditional language" or language of the old days. Duryodana could not understand many of the words of her songs and together we began to learn some of the specialized vocabulary associated both with the old days and with certain kinds of songs.

On this first encounter with Mathi she had me sit in her daughter's house and fed me *pit*, a combination of rice and *a·mnj* (*rāgi* in Tamil)—a type of millet (*Eleusine coracana*) the Kotas associate with the old days. I discovered that many Kotas considered Pa. Mathi to be a bit crazy. She would wander from house to house with a bag of herbs, betel leaf, and tobacco, cursing men or women who contradicted her. She felt she had been given the short end of the stick in life (for reasons to be explored below) and refused to be treated with disrespect. Despite her age and ill temper, her memory appeared to be quite intact, and back in Kolme-l she used to show up at my door willing to sing, tell stories or just hang out—although she was extremely impatient with Duryodana's attempts to decode her songs.

I would compensate her for her time with tea and snacks, or occasionally some brandy or *bo·cka·y*, a broth made from boiling dried poppy pods from which opium had already been extracted (these were available legally in ration shops)—although we had no contractual agreement. She was one of the first people to insist upon speaking with me in Kota, not Tamil. Although she knew Tamil (not as well, perhaps, as men

of the same generation, or as younger women who had gone to school), either out of obstinacy or perhaps out of a desire to teach me Kota, Pa. Mathi did not initially converse with me in Tamil. I had a difficult enough time speaking with elderly Kotas in Tamil; I felt entirely helpless during my first few months in the village speaking with Pa. Mathi because I could not understand her when Duryodana was not present.

Over the course of a few months I recorded her entire repertoire of mourning songs, a smaller number of god songs, including a few that she had composed, and most of those sung for ritual purposes. I noticed that she led most of the singing, which was responsorial, so it seemed reasonable to assume that she could provide most of the texts which are actually used in performance (even if the order was slightly different in each performance).

As I got to know her better she began to tell us a bit more about her life (at our prompting). On some days she would appear at my door, pull out her small plastic or cloth sack, give me some fresh mint or wild fruit, and make herself at home. Being a bit absent minded she used to disrupt the order of my household: once I had been looking for my *pulayy* for a few weeks and finally discovered it under the bed, inside one of Pa. Mathi's herb bags.

Mathi's account of herself centered around accounts of magical or clairvoyant powers. This theme was not peculiar to Mathi, but was rather generally the theme of stories that old ladies used to like to tell. The stories of Kurumbas, the "dreaded sorcerer tribe" of the Nilgiris, are cultural equivalents of ghost stories in America, or stories of imps in the Jewish tales of Isaac Bashevis Singer.

Pa. Mathi was born in Kolme:l and lived in a thatched house in the cluster of houses (*ke-r*) associated with the clan to which Pucan belonged. Since her parents died while she was still young she was sent off to Me-na-r village to be raised by her mother's younger sister, but at the age of 15 she returned to live with her brother. She was married three times before marrying S. Payrn, a member of the diviner family who himself became a diviner. She gave birth to 7 daughters and 3 sons, all of whom died, and finally to one daughter and son who survived. Mathi blamed the deaths of her children on Sulli, who she said befriended a Kurumba from Manjakombai. The Kurumba allegedly resided for a period in Sulli's attic, where he worked black magic using human figures carved in wood and stone, bells, and items associated with Hindu pūja.

Mathi also accused Sulli of causing the death of other people, including her brother. Mathi was convinced of these causes because she considered herself particularly sensitive to the workings of black magic. She recounted several episodes which illustrated such powers. One evening Mathi met a woman from Kala-c village who was walking towards the tea shops just above the village; Mathi advised her not to go to Sulli's son's house that evening. Ignoring Mathi's advice she went anyway and along the way someone mysteriously tugged on her dress and disappeared. She thought nothing of it at the time. "After 8 or 15 days

she was dead, she didn't listen to me!" exclaimed Mathi.

There had been a drought and the sun had been beating down with unceasing intensity in the villages of Ticga-r, Porga-r and Kurgo-j. Mathi was convinced that this drought was a result of the refusal on the part of Porga-r villagers to conduct the dry funeral. She bet her granddaughter's husband 100 rupees that it would rain if she prayed; she made it rain, she said, but the man refused to pay her.

Mathi was generally kind to me and to Duryodana, but often behaved viciously with women. On one occasion, Mathi made noise and ridiculed several women who had gathered in my room to sing; eventually they stopped singing and shyly retreated from the room. When singing along with others she insisted on being the leader—and since she was older than others who came to sing for me, she got her way.

Although many aspects of Mathi's life and personality may be considered relatively unique, her abilities as a musician are to some extent generalizable. Each village could boast 3-10 women between the ages of sixty and eighty who were known for some aspect of their singing ability. Some of these women possessed fine voices but were unsure of or knew only limited song texts, others sang in a rather unadorned fashion, but knew many many song texts, and others knew many of one type of song and little of another type. Younger women tended to know more cinema songs and songs in languages other than Kota. Older women knew Kota and Badaga songs as well as a few in Tamil.

Mourning songs are known primarily by women of this older age group. I initially thought that the tradition of singing mourning songs was dying out, that young people were not learning them. But this may not be the case. Apparently, singing of mourning songs has, at least in the recent past, always been the prerogative of middle aged and elderly women. They pass the time gathering with other old women in the houses of their children and grandchildren, telling stories and gossiping, and occasionally remembering friends and family members who died. Since the performance of mourning songs is not generally associated with funerals, the primary social context for rendering these mourning songs indeed seems to be these informal gatherings.

Women begin to learn different kinds of songs as they get older. Singing Kota songs begins as soon as a girl is old enough to dance in yearly celebrations of the god ceremony (if not earlier at home).¹ At least three songs must be sung "as per custom" (*ca-trtk*) during major ceremonies. In Kolme-l these three songs were usually *baca-na bacvani-ro*, a song praising the divine cow called Bacvan,² *velke-velke*, a song about a sacred flame that disappeared and was rediscovered, and *narja-yne* a playful song filled with contradictions

¹There is no specific age, to my knowledge; a child must obviously be old enough to walk in order to be able to dance!

²The significance of the cow in Kota culture is discussed in chapter ten.

and lines poking fun both at men and at women.³ The texts of the first two songs are easy to remember. The first varies line by line through the increment of a number and the substitution of a name; the second varies through the substitution of the names of holy places in the village—but almost any natural feature in the village seems to serve the purpose. But the text of the third song, *naraja-yne*, which involves some word play, is more difficult. Few women are competent enough to render the song on their own. Three or four women together are likely to remember much of the text. But the performance is most effective when women such as Pa. Mathi lead.

In Indian schools singing is also part of formal education, but to my knowledge no attempt has been made in the Nilgiris to include local languages in the curriculum. Public schools provide the opportunity for Kota children to learn songs in Tamil and even in English. Many children also learn cinema songs from the radio and from loudspeakers which are set up during weddings, festivals, and other celebrations. Aside from rituals in which singing requires the participation of all the Kota women, no formal mechanism or institutionalized social pressure exists for women to learn to sing. Those who become adept at singing do so out of their own interest. But the interest in singing and the ability to do so tends, as it does among instrumentalists, to be perpetuated within families. Daughters, as one might expect, learn songs from their mothers, grandmothers and sisters. Sons may also learn from their mothers—or from their fathers. But nowadays a male member of the family will more likely be interested in tape recording the music of the previous generation than it is that he will actually learn to perform it.

Pa. Mathi was not atypical in her peregrinations around the village. Women of her age, if they are still able to get around and particularly if they are not wealthy (in which case people will visit them), tend to spend their time socializing out of doors or in other people's houses. Kotas in general do not like to be alone; and women who have a knack for singing and storytelling tend to be particularly social. Many of these women, each in her own way, are real characters.

Although deep knowledge of mourning songs, and ability to compose within their peculiar style, seems generally to be found among older women, some younger women have mastered their style as well. One such woman, S. Cindamani, was virtually a member of Duryodana's family and became a trusted friend of mine.

S. CINDAMANI

Duryodana's house sheltered not only himself and his parents, but very often two families. When Cindamani's first husband died she was left alone with three daughters to raise. She found herself constantly

³The texts of the two latter songs are discussed in chapter sixteen.

harassed by Kota men who wished to take advantage of her unmarried status, and felt uncomfortable staying alone at night in her husband's empty house. She spent many nights in Raman's small dwelling, raising her three children. Eventually she got remarried, to a younger man, Singan, who lived in the house adjacent to that of Raman. Her youngest daughter, Meena, was also widowed at a young age (she was married to Sulli's grandson, Ravana). Left with three daughters and a son to raise she too slept at Raman's house, cooking and keeping house in her late husband's house a few doors away. I came to know Cindamani and her family through their relationship to Duryodana and Cindamani, in turn, introduced me to her home village, Kurgoj, and helped me collect songs and stories there.

Cindamani was a single daughter among ten sons of one Kaba-l of Kurgoj village. Although Kota women of Cindamani's generation (she was 48 in 1992) had access to some degree of formal education, her mother did not force her to attend school, saying, "she's our only daughter, let her not go to school." Presumably influenced by her brothers, Cindamani apparently became somewhat of a tom boy, hanging out in the village and causing trouble—never learning to cook or perform "women's work." I recorded about three hours of stories from her life and it is perhaps significant that she chose to begin her narration with the following account of her childhood pranks:

I was coming from "this street" to "that street" and saw Mathi grandmother sitting on the stones surrounding Sakol's house. "What should I say to her," I thought. She called out to me, "Hey, Kaba-l's daughter!," "what grandma?" I answered. She asked me how Sorn's wife was doing. I said "ayayo, grandma grandma didn't you know? it's a serious matter!" "What, what? Tell me, tell me!" she said. "that crazy lady, at 10:00 last night she died grandma." Then what'd that old lady do? crying "nya nya nya" she said "where did she go, my friend, what will we do now?" [these are the ways people wail and the kinds of words one finds in a mourning song]. She asked me to carry her to that street because she couldn't walk, stricken with such grief. I carried her part of the way and put her down. She wailed "Oh Sorn's wife, my friend, from today you have gone and forgotten us, from today you have gone and forgotten us!" She asked me to carry her a little further and I said "I can't, cry here." Then silently I sidled off and hid. Meanwhile people began coming out of their houses, thinking she was a singer or something, wondering what had happened. The villagers went searching for me thinking "Kaba-l raised this girl, making her like a free-roaming bull (*guly*), simply feeding her food. While going along like this she caused trouble, such an old lady, a 100 year old lady she carried; 'poor Sorn, Sorn's wife died' she lied."

Since she never learned to do "women's work," Cindamani's first husband had to teach her to cook and keep the house in order. Cindamani thus seemed to have exceptionally few responsibilities before her marriage. My impression is that her experiences hanging around the village as a child gave her the opportunity to participate in the informal social aspect of village life to a greater extent than did other children of her generation. In the process she became quite adept at storytelling and singing.

Cindamani narrated the great difficulties her parents were experiencing around the time of their marriage and as they began raising children. Their luck changed when they met an Englishman who had purchased a

plantation nearby. The Englishman (whose name Cindamani did not know) recognized Cindamani's father's talents at hunting; the two of them began to go out together on hunting expeditions. Kaba-l explained their family's hardships and managed to secure a position working on his new friend's plantation. From numerous conversations with Cindamani and with her brothers it appears the British were on friendly terms with the Kotas of Kurgoj village (as they appeared to be with those of Kolme-l as well)—and hunting was frequently the interest they shared, Kotas with their age-old techniques of tracking, and Englishmen with their firearms and spirit for adventure.

Cindamani struck up a friendship with the plantation owner's children. The plantation owner himself expressed a great fondness for the family. One day he proposed to rename Kaba-l's daughter Cindamani. Cindamani's given name had been Ponik, the name of a holy spot in Kolme-l; but from what I gather, Ponik was an unusual personal name. The Englishman said, "That's not a nice name for a cute little girl," and renamed her with the Hindu name Cintāmani (literally "thought gem," a mythical gem believed to yield to its possessor everything that is desired).

Cindamani and her family used fondly to reminisce about their friendship with this plantation owner (who eventually left India and was never heard from again). Their openness to me would certainly seem to have been conditioned by the strong bonds established with him. Considering for a moment the dynamics of this interaction, however, one cannot help feeling disturbed at the insidious pattern of dependance which underlies this apparently happy scene.

During the colonial period Kotas were placed in a position of hardship through taxation (although taxation was certainly known in the Nilgiris before British times) and state control over land ownership. One way to cope with this state of affairs was to work for wages—a pattern of behavior of relatively recent origin in the Nilgiris. Kotas felt proud of their reciprocal relationships with other Nilgiri communities, in which goods and services were never really quantified in monetary terms (though grain and tools could, of course, be counted). However, with the coming of the British and the onset of a monetary economy they were forced into relationships in which employers, who, by virtue of their wealth alone (not talents or ritual position), could engage their services.

There were certainly positive as well as negative consequences for the Kotas in these situations. The British appeared to have, in some cases, paid more respect to the Kotas than did the Nilgiri societies (perhaps because they could benefit from the Kotas' knowledge of hunting?)—at least in the first half of the twentieth century. In any case, some aspects of British policy, especially those for which Henry Maine (a legal member in the Viceroy's council 1862-69) was responsible, gave communities such as the Kotas certain rights as individuals in a "modern" state, rather than confining them to roles based on their membership in a particular

community. Maine's *Ancient Law* "sent a straightforward message to the politicians" (Kuper 1988, 33). Believing that the principles of Greek law were universal, Maine and his followers set out to transform India from a stagnated patriarchal despotic state to one characterized by modern principles of individual land rights and free contract.

But what does it mean for an affluent foreigner to deem it appropriate to rename the child of one of his Kota employees? And what are the implications of giving her not a Kota name, but a Sanskritic name, because *he* considered it more "beautiful"? How would that affect Kota self-respect?

Although Cindamani's experiences with a benevolent Englishman undoubtedly smoothed the way for our friendship, she never asked or expected monetary help from me. But just as I would occasionally help out Duryodana's family, I would occasionally buy groceries or small gifts for Cindamani or her grandchildren. She herself justified her willingness to accept my help, when other villagers challenged her about it, by saying, "You accept money and food from Americans you do not even know [charitable organizations with contractual relationships with various development organizations in India]; at least the person who is helping me is a friend." I never felt entirely comfortable with her justification; but neither did I feel comfortable with any kind of formal arrangement which would have involved my paying her to be an informant (or in some cases an interpreter). My trust in her was equal to that for Duryodana's family: I knew that if I ran out of money, she would share her last meal with me. Her trust in me was such that although she never asked for help, she knew I was there if she needed it.

Cindamani's life, like those in most narrations I collected, was fraught with hardship. A recurring theme in her narrations of these hardships were the attribution of particular causes of misfortune—things did not seem to just happen. When life took a turn for the worse, either the ill doings of one man or the mischief of a wandering spirit or the magic of a Kurumba were allegedly responsible. Cindamani's father was alleged to have died, for example, as a result of the ill feeling in the village following a series of factional disputes. He was compelled, by one faction, to conduct the celebration for the goddess (*u-ke-ramn*, a goddess associated with Māriyamman) even though he had become weakened through illness.⁴ Then, on the second day, he died. The village had to celebrate the goddess festival ("make god") and perform a funeral on consecutive days.

Further pursuing this theme of hardship, Cindamani narrated the story of her first husband, Jambakamatn. Since his wealthy parents died while he was still young, his sister and brother-in-law looked after him and were in charge of his inheritance. They allegedly refused to give Jambakamatn any money and intervened on a number of occasions when he tried to get married, fearing he would have children who would

⁴Although Cindamani's narration is not explicit on this point, I think her father was acting as the priest for this goddess.

inherit (thus preventing their own hoarding of the wealth). Jambakamatn went to Coimbatore to attend college, and when he returned to the village he expressed an interest in marrying a “modern girl.” He became interested in Cindamani when, at a dry funeral in Ticgar, Cindamani whistled at him (an excessively forward act for women of most communities in India). Although he came to the village seven or eight times by car and cleverly tried to find ways to meet her (to accomplish a marriage by capture—sometimes considered an acceptable approach), Cindamani avoided him. My impression was that she distrusted him, at least in retrospect; I also sensed a hint of coquettishness. Finally, Jambukamatn’s other sister pleaded with Cindamani’s father to give her in marriage, for Jambukamatn was threatening to marry a non-Kota.

She eventually agreed to go with him for three days, bringing her friend along for moral support. Eventually he enticed her into marrying him. As soon as his new wife became pregnant Jambakamatn began traveling to Coimbatore every few days, leaving Cindamani in the house with some friends (like S. Raman) to play cards. After the first son was born, Cindamani explained, her husband’s personality changed. Someone, she said, performed sorcery on him. He became like a crazy man, treating her badly, not looking at her, scolding her for everything. Then she began a series of visits back to her village, Kurgoj. She would return home, where she could enjoy herself, being treated affectionately as she had been as a child. Her husband would then come and beg her to return, which she eventually would do.

After bearing this son, Cindamani bore a girl (who died soon after) and when she was pregnant with her third child there was another major quarrel. Jambakamatn, who had become weakened with illness, was unbearably cruel. She felt there was no reason to live. Her narration at this point took on the dramatic cast of a Tamil movie.

I thought, “Let me die in a ‘waterfall.’”⁵ At six in the evening, in the rain, I ran off straight through to the waterfall. It was so dark that only objects nearby were visible. Going, going, going, straight through to Arkandy (literally “boulder-high-flat-place”), where truly, with god as my witness, I saw my mother’s corpse and bier come before my eyes. Then the bier disappeared and somehow I ended up at our vow offering place (Ponic in Kolme-l), where, like in a movie, I saw many many huge *tav!* (hill guava) fruits. During this time the village people were looking all over the world for me. Then Raj’s mother Mathi and Cat Eyes (nickname for her husband) went to the grassy area in the center of the village and prostrated to god saying, “wherever she is, keep her in your place, god!” Then they brought various offerings from their houses and kept them there. Then my leg, I couldn’t even move it like that, couldn’t even move it like that. Then your uncle, Emaciated Garlic Clove (nickname for Duryodana’s mother’s brother, whose face is long and drawn-in at the cheeks) came along. He thought he would steal some firewood from that area. I was standing there, in the place where offerings are given to god. This way and that way I tried to move my leg but I couldn’t. I was like a stone tree, without thought. Cries from the village “Ka! Go!” (“Older sister! Girl!”) didn’t reach my ears (i.e. they were audible but she could not hear them).

⁵She used the English word “waterfall” here, although she probably meant jumping off a cliff during a rainstorm. The scene is one typical in Indian movies, and she undoubtedly learned the word from there as well.

Emaciated Garlic Clove stood spying me from below thinking “who is that?” For one hour he watched, and my body remained motionless. He decided to find out who was up there. Until then it was as if my foot was nailed to the ground; then as soon as he touched me by body took human form again.

Her problems with her husband continued. One day her young son accidentally cut himself with a small ax while she was away. Afraid of being scolded he didn't tell anyone. Within a few days it became infected and he died of tetanus. Disasters continued in the family: arguments over the inheritance, attempts on the part of other villagers to frame Jambakamatn for illegal activities, and finally Jambakamatn's death. In the midst of these tumultuous times, a group of men came to Cindamani's door to (sexually) taunt her, singing a Tamil cinema song “Mirrored nosering Rakkamma, my heart trembles” (*kaṇṇāṭi mukkuṭṭi rākkamma en neṅju kuḷunkutaṅi*).

Her troubles continued after she remarried. Singan, her new husband, became a drunkard, often refusing to give her money even to buy food. What I observed of them in 1992 resembles Cindamani's description of her previous marriage. Although she repeatedly threatened and attempted to divorce Singan, she continued, for some reason, to return to him. From what I infer, Singan did not physically abuse Cindamani; and even if he were to, Cindamani could (and probably would) easily defend herself. Her youngest daughter Meena suffered in the hands of a similarly irresponsible husband (the son of Jambakamatn's sister and Sulli's son) who eventually died of alcoholism. Meena now suffers many of the same difficulties her mother suffered as a young, attractive widow with four children to raise.

This account of Cindamani's life illustrates aspects of daily life and principles of behavior characteristic not only of Kotas but also of many Indian villagers. One of the most striking aspects of village life is the prolonged contact, day in day out, with the same small group of people. In a Kota village the situation is comparatively extreme: all the villagers belong not only to one community (unlike caste villages, which usually contain many castes), but to only a few families who are themselves related through blood or marriage. The factionalism Mandelbaum described in the 1930s was but one example of what seems to be a perennial state of affairs. Two or three factions organize over a particular issue—sometimes father against son or brother against brother. Animosity may be bitter, and yet people manage to live together and cooperate. Eventually the conflict gets old and the tension seems to be hidden away, only to be refueled in another incident. Tales of Cindamani's attempts to break away from the village, from her marriage, or from life itself, find analogues in the many stories that recall how Kota villages were potentially to disintegrate. Somehow the worst never occurs. People do divorce, people are outcasted and beaten, families and individuals break away from the community never to be seen again; but by and large tensions are resolved through bitter argument, some degree of compromise, and some degree of willingness to live within unsatisfactory conditions.

When untoward events occur, explanations are sought. Cindamani seemed always to be able to explain situations that might otherwise seem to be unexplainable. One is tempted to allow this example of fatalism to dissolve into the ocean of similar customs in India. But an institutional model for a belief in ultimate cause may be found in the custom of consulting the diviner. The *te-rka-rn*, the Kota medium through whom men communicate with the gods, is consulted not only at ritually specified times but also whenever negative circumstances arise. “Why is there no rain? Why are the cattle dying?” The men will consult the diviner and seek a remedy. Although the Kotas are extremely practical on a day to day basis, the gods play an active role in Kota belief systems. Thus Cindamani recounts her story in such a way that the gods responded to others’ prayers, brought her to a sacred locality, presented her with visions of abundant and large fruits amidst an ocean of darkness, and held her in one place until she was rescued.

Tamil cinema entered into her narration in a variety of ways. Cindamani’s use of English, and even of Tamil, were conditioned by movie usage, particularly since she was illiterate, never having learned English or Tamil in school. The dramatic manner in which parts of her story were narrated were particularly “filmy” (an Indian English term referring to styles of acting and singing characteristic of Indian movies), and she herself at one point added that her experiences were “like in the cinema.” Finally, a miscellaneous example, but not particularly unusual, illustrated how cinema songs are sometimes recontextualized into everyday life and used strategically. The popularity of the songs and the original cinema contexts make them particularly powerful vehicles—especially for teasing women (for more on film music reception theory see Manuel 1993, 17-18 and *passim*).

Cindamani’s abundant life experiences seem to have provided a great deal of creative material for composing songs, embellishing stories, and coping with ongoing crises. Her good humor always seemed to mask any sign of distress or depression. Her lack of formal education prevented her from being able to compete for jobs or recognition in modern, urban sectors of the Nilgiris, but her intelligence and leadership abilities, not to mention a winning personality, allowed her nonetheless to be elected as head of Kolme-l’s women’s organization.⁶

I have described the lives of 3 Kolme-l women, each unique, and yet each enough like those of other Kota women to evoke a reasonable, though partial, representation of Kota women’s lives in general. Compared to most women, Pa. Mathi and Cindamani are exceptionally talented in music; and Cindamani is unusually outgoing and among the best dancers. By contrast R. Mathi is particularly reserved and perhaps one of the

⁶Each week on a Tuesday women would meet and contribute 2.25 rupees. Two rupees would be invested in a postal savings fund. Each month they would split the interest. The remaining 25 paisa would be used *ad hoc*. In April 1992, for example, they used the extra money to send a few women to Coonoor for sewing classes.

women least comfortable and familiar with dancing. The conflict and hardships all three have experienced—with deaths in the family, difficulty with spouses or other family members, or property—were shared as widely among the Kotas as they appear to be among other, particularly low status and/or low income communities in India, even though on the whole the community appears to be a well functioning, prospering unit.

Since I have gone into a great deal of detail on the lives of a few well known musicians and composers of Kolme-l it may be useful simply to mention comparable men and women from other Kota villages.

MUSICIANS AND COMPOSERS OF TICGA·R VILLAGE

The women of Ticga·r village were particularly renowned for their abilities in singing and dancing. V. Mathi (born c. 1927) was known for her storytelling and her renderings of long mourning songs, Badaga songs, and songs from Tamil drama. She divided her time between her village and her daughters' houses in Kolme-l and Kurgoj. Although she sang with a great deal of feeling, and often accompanied her singing with hand gestures (as many women of her generation do), her renderings were not melodically elaborate. This combined with her deep, nasal style of sound production led Cindamani to refer to her as "bugi·r"—the five-holed bamboo trumpet.

Perhaps the most famous of all Kota women singers was Rajammal. Herself the daughter of a respected *ko!* player, the late Velkar Kamatn, she composed many Kota as well as Tamil songs that caught on in all the Tamil villages. All of her songs were composed in a popular Bhajan style and contain catchy tunes. Subjects were usually Hindu and Kota gods and all could be easily sung in the context of the traditional *kummi*-like dances women perform. Rajammal's upbringing and musical life provide a nice counterpoint to those of Cindamani. Although she was only five to seven years younger than Cindamani, Rajammal was, from a young age, considerably more involved with non-Kota society than was Cindamani. She studied up to the sixth standard, joined an all India women's organization (*maka!r mandalam*) at the age of twenty-one. She was among the women involved making handicrafts in the toy-making center which used to be in Ticga·r village (established by the Women's Welfare Department in 1958); and she had been a council member in the Panchayat Union. When I asked her about her life she responded as if I were conducting a job interview; clearly accustomed to characterizing herself in a professional manner, she provided a sort of verbal resume.

Unlike Cindamani, who spent a great deal of time in the village and picked up a considerable degree of knowledge of old stories and songs, Rajammal began attending movies from the age of "ten or sixteen" and visited Hindu temples. The first song she learned was a Kota lullaby composed for her by her father, but only

after attending films and temples did she learn other songs, such as *bhajans* (Hindu devotional song genre, usually sung by a group of devotees), drama songs and cinema songs. She was typical of women of her generation in Ticga·r village. Very few knew mourning songs or any but the most common god songs from the old days. But many women sang Tamil songs and most knew literally dozens of newly composed songs—many by Rajammal herself. Rajammal considered herself too young to know any of the old stories about Ticga·r village; for this she referred me to the older villagers.

There were also other women who compose songs in Ticga·r. Some of them composed in a simple, catchy style, like that of Rajammal. But one woman, named Candrammal, composed songs that others had a difficult time following (partly because the texts are not simple and repetitive). She was content to sing these songs alone—and seemed almost proud that her songs were too difficult for others to sing. Her songs spanned a variety of topics—including one about her “clever cat,” composed in a highly idiomatic *kummi* melodic and rhythmic style. Candrammal lived alone, after having been abandoned by her husband.

One man from Ticga·r village, B. K. Krishnan, was also known for his singing and compositional abilities. Of the composer typology I outlined, he represented type one: composers whose output is small but significant. The refrain of his well known composition (text reproduced in chapter seven of part three) was “*aginikonḍa·rbe·m*,” or “we celebrate fire.”⁷ The melody was unremarkable with respect to musical features that might have marked it as particularly “Kota.” But the text was replete with references to Kota religious practices, such as the “milk ceremony,”⁸ and to the Kota gods, identifying them as givers of Kota names, fire, and the bow and arrow. The song was marked as a Ticga·r song through the mention of Kana·traya, a deity residing at the village border which was believed to change between forms of a snake and a stone. B. K. Krishnan sang this song during sessions of *bhajan* singing in the village; eventually others began to sing it as well.

B. K. Krishnan credited his ability to sing and compose with a general lifelong interest in singing and propensity for *bhakti*. As early as the age of eighteen he went to the temple at Rameswaram and Madurai. He later returned to Madurai to study the performance of Tamil drama. For some years he remained in the village, tending after his land. Eventually he managed to get a job at HPF as an unskilled assistant of some sort and worked his way up to section officer. I suspect his ability to get this job was influenced by one Mr.

⁷A segment of this song text is transcribed and discussed in chapter nineteen.

⁸An annual set of Kota rituals in which the power of the Kota gods is affirmed through a spontaneous overflowing of milk. The *mundka·no·n* milks a special cow and keeps the milk in a special vessel in the sacredmost back-room (*kakui*) of the house. “May milk overflow,” or “*pa·l poṅṅum*” is a redolent image in many Kota prayers; it means “let our population increase” and instantiates community vitality. For an account of the milk ceremony, see Emeneau (1944, IV: 300-9).

Verghese. Verghese, who was formerly a researcher for the Anthropological Survey of India, used Krishnan as his primary informant during his period of fieldwork with the Kotas in the 1960s.

Krishnan's songs were all devotional. As of 1991 he had composed four songs in Kota and another four or five in Tamil. Like other Kota singers with a particularly outward-looking world view, Krishnan did not seem to know any Kota songs which were not of recent origin. In addition to singing, he used to lead bhajan singing sessions by playing the harmonium, while another member of the village, Mr. Mundayan, would play the *mridaṅgam*.

PORGA·R (KOTAGIRI) AND KINA·R

The two villages of Porga·r and Kina·r are situated near Ticga·r and are those most closely associated with it in terms of ritual practice and marriage alliances. Many women from Ticga·r have married into these villages and vice-versa, and consequently a great deal of the female-centered musical culture is shared among them. One of Porga·r's most exceptional *ko!* players was Mr. Jaychandran. Although he was, in 1991-2, working as an Assistant Manager for the State Bank of India in Jolarpettai (near Madras), he used to return to Kotagiri for important village functions. He represented the first of what may become a new trend in Kota musicianship—learning to play *ko!* from cassette tapes. What was particularly unique was that Jaychandran had not learned tunes from musicians of his own village, but from Pucan of Kolme·l, his father-in-law. Tunes in Porga·r that were formerly associated only with Kolme·l village may now come to replace, in Kotagiri, those tunes that have been forgotten, or to become parts of rituals that did not formerly require special music.

Jaychandran's was also an interesting case study in new methods of transmission in that he had adopted a reflective stance toward his tradition which has translated into an act of preservation. This attitude of protection and preservation, particularly in his village, seemed to be common among the younger, more urban-oriented, Hindu syncretized, wealthy and educated Kota men than among the ritual specialists themselves or the older generations.

ME·NA·R

Not all men who were modern and successful in the urban sector were interested merely in preserving musical products. Some also participated in creating new music. Two prominent examples were Mr. Sivan and his parallel cousin Mr. Bellan of Me·na·r. Both have composed a number of god songs and these are sung by women of their village. Mr. Sivan, who was working for the electricity board in nearby Manjur, was recently the village *gotga·rn*. In this capacity he was not only in charge of the village treasury but also somewhat of a

village headman and ritual leader, particularly since the gods had not in recent years nominated a new *te-rka-rn* or *mundka-no-n*. Sivan's was a personality of great vigor and pride; he was very much a leader. As perhaps the best *tabak* player I have observed, he would stand erect, flicking his wrist with powerful and precise strokes, and rise from his ankles over so slightly in time with the music. His son was an aspiring *kol* player with similar propensities for leadership. His daughter, who was overall rather bold, was not at all shy about singing either although her ability to carry a tune was limited.

T. Bellan's personality was quite different. Being extremely reserved, he never flaunted his success and intelligence. Although he was clearly respected in the village, he never seemed to wish to take charge. He was one of my first Kota hosts—taking me in one day when I had nowhere else to go. Although he invited me into his house, fed me, and put me in contact with men more knowledgeable than himself in the village about ritual, it took me several months to discover he himself was a composer of songs. In late 1991 he was appointed as Head Postmaster of the Coonoor post office and had to reside there most of the week: during my residence in Kolme-l village I saw him infrequently—as often in Kolme-l (his wife's home village) as in Me-na-r.

It is not necessary to mention every musician of note among the Kotas, nor do I claim to have met each of them. Indeed the range of economic conditions, experiences with “traditional” and modern life, and kinds of education among the musicians I have discussed suggests that generalizations concerning the life of a musician are difficult to make. It will be useful, however, to outline the major themes and issues that have been raised in these narratives—i.e. to make explicit that which has remained implicit, and carry forward these issues with further data.

CHAPTER SIX

MUSICAL ISSUES

For analytical purposes I have divided my discussion into two sections, entitled “musical issues,” and other “cultural issues,” respectively, but the two are closely interrelated. The life histories presented in this chapter have raised musical issues in four broad areas of inquiry: musical education, specialization, character of musicians, and musical identity.

MUSICAL EDUCATION

Kotas generally learn instrumental music through episodic exposure rather than through concentrated instruction, although instruments like the *ko!* generally require practice and some degree of critical feedback. Rigorous training under a *guru* has not been, in recent generations at least, a characteristic form of musical education among the Kotas, although individuals like Pucan may liken their instruction to such classical models. The number of skilled *ko!* players is decreasing and the contexts for musical performance are becoming abbreviated. Thus, there are fewer chances for young Kotas to learn music informally. It may be that individualized, conservative methods of transmission will be necessary if the Kotas wish to maintain the technical standards and repertoire of today’s best *ko!* players. Similar processes of consolidation are occurring in the teaching of Indian classical music, and presumably in musical education in other parts of the world as well.¹ One response to the changing circumstances of Kota musical culture has been the use of cassette tapes for musical transmission. Although learning *ko!*s from cassette tapes is not currently widespread, it may have the effect of decreasing musical diversity and objectifying “authenticity,” by adjusting norms to a fixed collection of recorded objects.²

Many of today’s competent composers, singers and instrumentalists in Kolme-l and Ticga-r learned music from other members of their family (Pucan learned from his brother and uncle, S. Raman from his father)—or at least had musicians as role models. Thus we may say that membership in a family of musicians probably

¹For an example of such a process in the transmission of *vāṇī* style see Wolf (1989, 113); for contrastive examples from Iran, see Nettl (1985, 40-43).

²Regarding the social and musical effects of cassette learning in the transmission of Indian classical music see, e.g. Manuel (1993, 79-80) and Wolf (1989, 131-2, 135, 212-14); and more generally, see Nettl (1985, 61-4).

plays a role in Kota musical learning (i.e. it is not confined to classical musical culture as described in Neuman [1980], Wolf [1989], and Kippen [1988]), even though the “musical family” is not a strongly articulated Kota cultural category and thus does not occupy a position in Kota social organization.

As for composition, I have not dealt with the composition of instrumental pieces because the most important of these are said to have divine or other superhuman origins, but songs in the Kota language are composed both by men and by women. The styles in which these songs are composed—*bhajan*, “filmy,” or idiomatically Kota (especially as reflected in the style of *a!l*, or mourning songs)—reflect, not surprisingly, the life experiences, ages, and genders of their composers. Ciudamani, for example, although only forty-seven years old, was competent in singing and composing in a style generally associated with elderly women. There were several reasons for this: she spent more time in the village than did her contemporaries and she did not attend school. Furthermore, since her village was one of the more culturally conservative among the seven villages, there was presumably more opportunity to learn archaic styles there than there was in the more modernized villages. Rajammal (age about forty in 1991), on the other hand, belonged to a more modernized, urban-oriented village, went to school, and was, from an early age, involved in government organizations. Consequently, her compositional style corresponds to models that are not exclusively or characteristically Kota, such as cinema songs, Tamil *bhajans*, etc.

SPECIALIZATION I: ARENAS OF COMPETENCE

The category of “musician” is too broad to usefully group the kinds of people who play instruments and sing. As we have seen, *kol* players are accorded special recognition because the instrument requires a great deal of practice and skill. Thus Pucan, Raman, and Duryodana occupy roles of particular significance in the village: they are in some sense a group. Drummers and players of the *kob* are more widespread than these latter and thus may not be said to constitute musical specialists in the same way or to the same degree. Among them, the *tabatk* player is the most crucial, the *par* players second in importance, and the *kob* players, in certain respects, are of very little importance—or rather of a very different kind of importance. Although the sound quality of the *kob* is judged aesthetically, it plays no role in the performance of musical tunes *per se*. That is to say, the quality of the *kob* playing will have no effect on the systematic interrelationship between the drummers and *kol* players. Although poor playing would distract and annoy the other musicians, a man who is competent on the *kob*, and no other instrument, would hardly be regarded as a musician.

There is no necessary correlation between ability to play any of these instruments and the ability to sing. Male singers such as A. K. Rangan and his son were not able to play any instruments: and many

instrumentalists, Pucan and Duryodana for example, were not particularly adept at singing. Women, of course, are the primary singers among the Kotas, but they have never been encouraged to play instruments.³ The lack of correlation is not merely statistical. It seems likely that the variability in competence is related to the idea that, in the Kota ritual scheme of things, men are the instrumentalists and women are the singers. Thus, even though men may sing, the ability to sing may be regarded as inherently different from the ability to play an instrument.

SPECIALIZATION II: MUSICIANS AS “SPECIALISTS” OR “PROFESSIONALS”

We may shed further light on the question of what constitutes a musician among the Kotas by considering the ideas of specialization or professionalism. Although it may appear that I am trying to explain one problematic Western concept with two others that are even more problematic, I will argue that these two concepts, in a very limited way, have Kota conceptual analogues.

Alan Merriam pointed out that musicians are always specialists of a sort, particularly in societies in which music making constitutes one of the units in a division of labor; he also noted that the musical abilities of some of a society's members will be considered to be greater than those of others. Merriam suggested that the notion of professionalism could perhaps be defined not in relation to whether or not musicians are paid, for in some societies they are not, but whether the musician is a “social specialist”—that is, whether the musician occupies a well defined role and assumes a particular status in society (Merriam 1964, 124-25).

It seems there are at least two senses in which the idea of specialization applies in the Kota context. One is the notion that certain kinds of musicianship require *special* skills. In this sense we have seen that Kotas regard *ko!* players as specialists, and to lesser extents, drummers, *kob* players and singers. Another sense in which one may be regarded as a *specialist* is as one who is so focused on a particular task that the larger whole is not in view. Most villagers accord Pucan authority in ritual, social and musical domains—perhaps due more to his age and exceptional ability in music alone than to any demonstration of wider knowledge or competence (although he was a fine blacksmith in his earlier years). Raman acquiesces to Pucan's authority as an elder but disputes his knowledge of ritual, claiming Pucan is a *specialist* in the second sense of the term. He once remarked, for example, that Pucan's recollection of Kolme-l's dry funeral ceremony was

³There is no sense that instruments would be defiled if women touched them—except perhaps if they were menstruating (I have not had the opportunity to test this assumption). Although it is uncommon, I have seen one woman pick up a *tabak* and play it—taunting the men to dance faster and faster as they had just done for the women. To my knowledge no woman has ever made it a point to try to learn an instrument and play it with the men during significant moments of a ritual.

incomplete because, while playing the *kol*, he would not have noticed or participated in the many other activities occurring at the same time.

The fact that “professional musician” is not a Kota social category should not be taken to imply that particular individuals do not repeatedly perform the same musical functions on each occasion. Certain musicians are absolutely needed: a *kol* player who knows the relevant tunes, and drummers who can provide reasonably accurate accompaniment. Among singers, someone like Pa. Mathi is desirable for leading the group, but not essential. But these are responsibilities, not services. Special compensation is never offered to musicians within the community—except perhaps certain ritual honors to men, such as being served food along with ritual specialists, before food is served to others. Like the notion of musician itself, the notion of professional does not make much sense, or help understand the role instrumentalists or singers play *within* the Kota community.

SPECIALIZATION III: KOTAS IN RELATION TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD

The notion of specialization and professionalism may be more relevant as we consider outsiders’ views of the Kotas and the ways the Kotas view themselves vis-à-vis outsiders. As we have seen, there is a division of labor and ritual function within Kota society based on membership in clans (*kuty*), but musicianship does not constitute one of these divisions. As participants in the *ajmāni*-like system of relations that once operated in the Nilgiris, the Kotas were considered to be specialists in a number of activities, including instrumental musicianship, basket making, smithing and pottery. Individual Badaga, Toda, and Kurumba families maintained reciprocal economic ties with Kotas for the provision of these services. It is in this sense that certain Kotas could have been considered professional musicians of a sort and in this sense that a category of musician existed within an institutional framework.

It may be useful to digress at this point to discuss ways in which instrumental musicianship fits into categories established as Kotas interacted with the outside world. Mandelbaum collected data from Sulli concerning the categories of musicians required at a Badaga funeral. Although I was unable to confirm any of the following information with Pucan, there were, according to Sulli, four kinds of Kotas who played at funerals of rich Badagas and two who played at funerals of poor Badagas. A standard band of 6 was called a *jaṭ* (*jaṭu* in Badaga, see BED 266) and comprised two *kol* players, two *tabaṭk* players, and two *par* players. The *tabaṭk* players were also responsible for playing the *kob*. The four bands played consecutively, relieving each other, and each performed the kinds of instrumental pieces appropriate to a particular segment of the funeral. The traditional Kota partner, or *muṭgarṁ*, of the deceased was responsible for arranging for most of

these performers. The first group was the night shift (*iriva·nm ka·rn*), which apparently played the role of night watchmen as well, then the morning shift (*u·nk ko·v*), which consisted of only four men.⁴ A special group of players, the *pe·rnko·v*, was summoned by the *mutga·rn* of the son-in-law of the deceased to accompany the ritual of bringing rice, on the back of a horse, to the funeral.⁵ Finally, there were the *vilko·v*, or “bow Kotas,” numbering “twelve to twenty” (this seems unlikely), who accompanied with mourning tunes the ritual in which the *mutga·rn* (again, of the family of the deceased) would have given his Badaga associate a newly crafted axe and bow and arrows.

I was unable to find comparable information concerning Kotas who performed for Toda funerals. Today Kotas will occasionally play for temple festivals of other communities, including Badagas, but there is no terminological or ritual classification system which subdivides and assigns particular groups of musicians particular functions. Kota musicianship could almost be said to have been *ascribed* from a point of view exogenous to the tribe. But within the community, particularly since the concept of musical family does not exist among the Kotas, musicianship is an achieved social category. Kotas consider themselves musical specialists inasmuch as they define themselves ethnically. No Kota, to my knowledge, has ever supported himself solely through the performance of music.

Although the personal narratives of this chapter have provided insight into how Kotas learn instrumental and vocal music as well as into the specialized skill that may be required to be considered competent in these areas, considerable discussion has been necessary to bring the broader issues into focus. The narratives have provided considerably more data concerning the psychological and social character of a few selected singers and *ko!* players. These data raise more compelling issues concerning the generalizability of status and behavior.

THE CHARACTER OF “MUSICIANS”: STATUS, ROLES AND BEHAVIOR

In presenting subjective accounts of the individual, there is always the danger that what may be of particular interest in understanding the individual as he or she reflects upon his or her relationship with society at large may not correspond with the reflexiveness embedded in such collective representations as rituals (including music), codes of behavior, and verbal arts. These accounts are certainly not exempted from this danger. But

⁴The notes indicate one *ko!*, two *tabak!*, and one *par*, but I suspect this is an error—two *par* and one *tabak!* is more likely. This shift does not bring any additional *kob*.

⁵If there is no son-in-law, the following kin in order of availability fulfilled the role for a man's death: daughter-in-law's father, brother-in-law, father-in-law. For a woman's death, son-in-law, daughter-in-law's father, daughter-in-law's brother, or own brother.

what is lost in the way of statistical norms, or structural categories, is perhaps gained in the potential for analytic subtlety.

A fundamental question in ethnomusicology has concerned the behavior of musicians: other than the ability to sing, compose, or play an instrument, what distinguishes a musician from any other member of society?

One cannot help reading about the lives of Raman and Rangan without thinking about the stereotype, not limited to the Western world, of the musician as deviant. The classic discussion of this question in Merriam's article, "Basongye musicians and institutionalized social deviance" (1979), was meant to be more a suggestive case study than a study of human universals. He argued that the role of four male "professional" (in Merriam's special definition of professional) musicians of one village as highly valued, indeed essential, in society was functionally linked with the fact that their behavior was scorned and their status low. The role of musician, he argued, turned on the skillful negotiation of indulgence in breaking or challenging society's strictures, and at the same time reinforcing those strictures by, 1) not "deviating" beyond a certain point, and 2) fulfilling the role of deviant—i.e. suggesting by negation what proper behavior is in society.

The systematic contribution of Merriam's argument was in showing the interdependence of low status and high importance. Throughout the article Merriam focused on the "as if" in society, carefully and explicitly avoiding psychological and personal questions. However, one may question the validity of an argument about institutionalized social deviance among musicians where only four musicians count as "professionals," and where the musical activities of women are excluded. What makes Merriam's argument compelling is not a question of sampling, however, but two factors. Most importantly, some musicians in Western societies are conventionally associated with social deviance. I believe it is this stereotype that, like a phantom, weighs upon on and tends to imply something more universal, even though Merriam was actually making a more limited argument. A second factor lending Merriam's argument strength is the idea that musicianship of a certain kind is, among the Basongye, a cultural category that encompasses or subsumes within its definition certain behavioral norms—here glossed as types of "deviance." Within this view, the number of musicians that occupy this category is irrelevant.

Although "it is important to remember that deviance is a cultural category" (Bohlman 1988, 84), deviance is also the controlled disregard for categorical boundaries. In any case, it is culturally specific. There is no reason why deviance should itself be considered a cross-culturally valid reference category (sociological arguments notwithstanding), any more than musicianship is. For these reasons I would question Nettl's gentle speculation that,

This concept of the musician as an unconventional character is so widespread that if we look at the issue

in the broadest possible terms, the questions arise whether this may not be related to the universal and ancient role of music as a mediator between humans and the supernatural. Certainly the special role of minorities in the musical life of dominant cultures seems to be a part of a larger picture involving various components of the role of music and musicians in society (1983, 342).

I have already suggested that the unified concept of musician is a problematic one in viewing Kota society. But even if we were to adopt Merriam's strategy of examining one particular culturally recognized category of music makers, we would not find a social role that depends upon or involves the process of social "othering" that the concept of deviance implies.

But the problem should not be dismissed too easily. I would like to suggest several ways in which the question of deviance, or that of status and role, may have a more general relevance in regard to understanding musical culture among the Kotas. We must consider, first of all, the meanings of the various categories of musicians as they have changed in time and as particular social actors may have manipulated these categories. Secondly, as I have indicated, there may be a difference between how a given *kol* player, for example, perceives his role in society and how his role is collectively *expressed*. And third, we must consider again the difference between the collective views of "the musician in society" (however defined) from within Kota society, and the views of Kota musicians (or Kotas *as* musicians and other cultural specialists) from the points of view of various cultural outsiders—once again in historical perspective.

CATEGORIES OF MUSICIANS IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Unfortunately, we do not have much in the way of documentation concerning the changing status of *kol* players or other musicians in Kota society. Nonetheless, a few tentative observations are in order concerning factors that could potentially have affected issues of status. One of the major ways in which the lives of all Kota men have changed over the last half a century, including those of *kol* players, has been in the domain of economics. There has been a shift from village or local agriculturally based production to urban wage-earning contexts. The fact that not all men work in such non-traditional (or what we should more properly call "newly traditional") jobs means that urban-rural, modern time schedule-seasonal or volitional schedule, regular income-variable income types of contrasts may be said to have created a significant spatio-temporal dimension of cleavage in the village. Those who are tied down to jobs outside the village, despite their attempts to get leave time for community functions, are significantly limited in their abilities to play roles of musicians—either within the village or for external functions. Furthermore, men who successfully maintain professions and their concomitant time schedules are not likely to be stereotypical "deviants," like

“drunkards, drug addicts, keepers of odd hours, lazybones, temperamental figures...” (Nettl 1983, 342).⁶

Now it may well be that many able bodied, adult *ko!* players who have chosen to avoid or been unable to compete in modern occupations are “deviants” of this sort (like S. Raman and others). But unless one wishes to argue that these residual deviants represent some sort of eroded remainder of a previous social order (i.e. in which all musicians were once deviants and now some of them have “cleaned up their acts” and gotten “real” jobs) it would be difficult to argue that social deviants who are musicians have ever been in any categorical way different from other misfits.

If there was any reason to suspect the status of *ko!* players has in any way changed over the years, what may have brought about this change? Without indulging in excessive speculation, one might consider Pucan’s interest in identifying Kota music with Indian classical music as something more than a personal statement. Why would a Kota represent his music in such a way, and for whom? Certainly not for Kotas, at least not nowadays. The issue of musical status, and by implication that of the Kota musician, is perhaps more trenchant outside the Kota community than within it. One may also wonder whether the recognition of Kota music as an emblem of authentic “tribal” society from the point of view of such modern consumers (in the extended sense of this term) as governmental or development organizations, tourists, corporations, or political movements had any effect on the perception of music or the musician from within. These questions hinge not only on how views of musicians have changed, the answers for which will depend on the possibility of obtaining more data, but also on whether various kinds of musicianship could ever have been said to represent a status category at all.

Keil’s discussion of the self-interested “typical composer” vis-à-vis other male members of Tiv society suggests exercising a similar caution in assigning the character of musicians in a society to any sociological category:

One would not have to spend long in Tivland to know that the differences in personality and behavior Ikpamkor describes are very much differences in degree rather than in kind. Many Tiv are exceptionally stubborn, forthright about asking for gifts and favors, prone to take tips on slight pretexts, quickly married and quickly divorced. Every compound has its “hunter” or “gambler” or “composer,” prodigal sons that may fill one or more of these roles and have trouble keeping a wife or tending to a farm. . . . Tiv composers like other part-time specialists, watch their careers rise and fall in something that resembles a free market (Keil 1979, 120).

What we would like to know, of course, is whether the Kotas themselves associate any particular

⁶ Notwithstanding the fact that “tribals” are given special preference in being chosen for government jobs in India, and that it is difficult if not impossible to be fired from such jobs, I am speaking of situations in which people are effectively and responsibly carrying out their jobs—something that logically conflicts with the image of irresponsibility associated with the stereotype.

behavior with musicians. Once again, I will consider this question in relation to *ko!* players. I have never asked direct questions such as “What are *ko!* players like?” or, “What are their habits?” And in all the musical discussions I was involved in, I found no tendency among Kotas to characterize the behavior of these musicians as a group; nor was there a tendency to characterize potters, blacksmiths, or carpenters—or bankers or income tax officers. More often there was a tendency to characterize individuals, families, or members of particular villages: “the members of [such and such a family] are haughty,” or “the members of [such and such a village] will ask you if you have eaten, but won’t offer you a meal.”

FACTORS WHICH OPPOSE DEVIANCE

Among musicians there are good reasons why socially effective musicianship would interfere with certain kinds of antisocial behavior. For one thing, during god ceremonies, musicians, like everybody else, must be sober or risk heavy fines if not out casting. Fulfilling the role of musician is a responsibility. A musician does not have the choice to sleep late, refuse to perform, demand money, or exercise virtually any form of resistance, at least not on a *personal* basis. Occasionally the village may be divided over a particular issue (such as the dry funeral) and the musicians of the opposing faction may refuse to participate in a given context—but this represents collective, not individual action.

Ko! players must in fact be available at a moment’s notice, at a funeral for example, and be able to play off and on, day and night, sometimes for several days at a time. During funerals it may be acceptable to drink and consume *bo·cka·y*, and for musicians this is considered helpful for maintaining stamina, but excessive indulgence is scorned. It may be missing the point to insist that musicians cannot be derelict *while they are being musicians*. But what is important is that, in my experience, Kota views of musicians, qua musicianship, have more to do with the normative behavior musicians must exercise at musical contexts themselves, than any shared behavior in the rest of their lives.

There is another reason that musicians or virtually any other specially recognized group of individuals are not given a separate social status or allowed to behave differently from others: the “official” ideology is that all Kotas—or at least Kota men—are equal (men are in most cases symbolically and, in everyday practice, physically situated “above” women).⁷

⁷ Only a few Kotas are put in positions of relative authority: the *mundka·no·n* and *te·rka·m*, who cannot achieve their status but must be divinely selected, and the *gotga·m*, who is elected (depending on the village and the context there may be other ritual specialists). Each of these individuals may have to maintain behavioral restrictions throughout his lifetime or term in office. Seldom is the personal character of these officials an issue (except, one would think, for the *gotga·m*) until they take office.

WOMEN AS “MUSICIANS” AND WOMEN AS “DEVIANTS”

It would be difficult to discuss women as a special category of musicians in their ritual roles of singing and dancing. But there is some reason for considering what we might call “the granny” as a culturally recognized category. As mentioned in the discussion of Pa. Mathi’s life, women above the age of sixty or so tend to share certain kinds of knowledge, acquaintance with people, social experiences, interlocking kinship networks and so forth. They are seen to fulfill certain positive roles in the village such as the caring for children (while parents work in the fields etc.), the passing on of traditional knowledge through song and story, and other aspects of social reproduction enabled through their age and experience. As in many cultures, these older women are also freed from some of the strictures by which young Kota women must abide. They are more likely to drink or smoke, use *bo-cka-y*, or speak irreverently; they may sometimes depend on others for their welfare, and they have little to worry about their reputation. I often wondered whether these represent “roles” of a particular age group of women, or whether in fact the range of behavioral patterns and social norms these women exhibit is simply a reflection of changing values and circumstances (maybe a little of both). It certainly appears from the stories Emeneau collected and social life of the 1930s, as Sulli represented it to Mandelbaum, that younger women of that period enjoyed more sexual freedom, in some aspects of their lives, than they do now. Stories in *Kota Texts* describe women deceiving their husbands in order to sleep with other men; these stories do not sanction the practice, but make it appear more common than appears to be the case today. But the relationship of these stories to actual practice is suspect because *all* the stories are narrated by a man—and not an “average” man (as if there were one!), but a very special one, Sulli. Emeneau worked with no Kota women and Mandelbaum with very few.⁸

Consequently, as we assess the status and roles of “the granny” in Kota society, several overlapping factors must be considered. Musicianship is not the defining feature of this social category, nor is age alone. There seem to be a congeries of features including age, musicianship, storytelling ability, strong character, sociability (although often not affability), and yes, deviance in comparison with women of younger generations.

I have suggested that the categories of musicians themselves may have shifted over the years, as may have the status and roles of musicians occupying these categories. Whereas we can only speculate about the

⁸Although Sulli represented women of his time to have had more sexual license and boldness than women appear to have been or are represented to have been nowadays, they were apparently not particularly comfortable with outsiders. Mandelbaum had some difficulty, at first, getting to watch women dance during certain functions, due to their shyness, and had little opportunity to film their dance. His films include a detailed documentation of women’s dances as demonstrated by a man.

changing status of male musicians, especially *kol* players, we can observe a few recent movements among women that seem to mark something of importance.

I mentioned that the women of Ticga-r village, and the villages with which they have strong ritual and kinship ties, Porga-r and Kina-r, are particularly noted for their dancing and singing ability—largely in the realm of recently composed dance songs rather than for mourning songs. Some years back a group of Kota men traveled to Delhi to compete in some sort of All-India folk music festival and contest. Rajammal wished to lead a group of women from Ticga-r and she was given support for this idea by at least one important Ticga-r man. The Kolme-l man who was leading the troupe refused to allow her to accompany the men because he felt the men could not take the responsibility of looking after the women—i.e. he felt they would get into trouble, presumably have sexual encounters which the men could neither control nor discover, and so forth. There was apparently a great deal of ill feeling created through this affair—both between the villages of Ticga-r and Kolme-l, who could be said to have been vying for a musical status of sorts among the seven villages, and between the men involved, two prominent, educated, representatives of these villages, and, of course, between the sexes. The special abilities of these women is a source of pride in the villages concerned and is widely recognized among the Kotas, but there is some unwillingness or ambivalence on the part of the men to allow women to display their talents outside the village. Even in local functions, in Ooty and nearby areas, it is considered to be within the bounds of propriety for only married women over the age of forty or so to participate—not because of their ability, but because they are not young, unmarried, or virginal.

The growing importance of women as educated, urban, social motivators and a concomitant cultural value placed on women's performing arts seems therefore to have led to an attempt to change the status and roles of Ticga-r women from merely functioning within a ritual context to representing the Kotas as a whole and furthering their autonomy as agents in the outside world. That one particular instance failed is perhaps less important than the more important fact that more and more women are interacting competitively in the modern world and making creative use of their Kota musical identities.

SUBJECTIVE AND COLLECTIVE REPRESENTATIONS OF MUSICIANS

Let us now consider a second issue with respect to the status and behavior of musicians: the possibility of difference between the subjective views of *kol* players or singers themselves and collective representations of musicianship. For collective representations, let us begin by considering broad issues of form. When instrumentalists play for dancers they usually sit or stand off center within the dance circle—off center because a fire is usually lit near the center. This seems a logical arrangement, but it is not the only possible

arrangement. I have seen other tribes with similar ensembles play outside of the circle of dancers. Performance inside or outside the circle may have more to do with the size of the circle or the number of circles than with any normative arrangement.⁹ Still, the musicians can be said to have a certain structural prominence by being placed in the circle, near the fire. The fire is, after all, a manifestation of divinity.

By contrast, women who lead singing will always dance along with the group. This is probably by necessity if nothing else because leading in the singing also entails leading in the dance that is associated with it. Men sometimes keep time with two hand cymbals (*ja-lra-v*) while dancing with the women, but again the instrumental significance of stepping along with the women may outweigh the potential symbolic significance of remaining separate. That is to say, if it were important for *ja-lra-v* player, either in the role of male or rhythm keeper, to remain separate from the women for some reason, the physical arrangement (inside the circle or outside, facing a particular direction, etc.) might be important. But nothing can be inferred about the status or significance of the rhythm keeper merely through his inclusion in the group. It might also be mentioned here that it would certainly be *possible* to perform all the instruments while stepping in a circle with the dancers, but it is never done.

Within the village the dancers always dance in the same place each time, i.e. there are specific dance grounds for specific occasions, and the musicians and the fire are generally situated the same way in relation to the dancers. There are no other consistent spatial factors that would tend to differentiate the status of musicians—such as if the musicians were on higher ground, or consistently to the West (which is “up” in Dravidian languages), or facing the temples.

From this discussion it does not appear that form provides a particularly clear representation of the status of instrumentalists in Kota society, but at best the analysis of form tells us that the processes of drumming, playing the *kol*, and blowing the *kob* are separated, in practice, from the processes of dancing to a greater extent than are singing or playing of cymbals.

Musicians are accorded some degree of special status by virtue of their roles as cultural emblems outside the community—as in the scenario with which I began this chapter. A village is proud of its musicians, if they are talented, and the village as a whole derives a certain degree of status through the status of its musicians.

The gods are also said to recognize musicianship. The “little father god” (*kunayno-r*) of Kolme-l village is said to have come from the village of Porga-r because the Kolme-l music was better. Some individuals may also feel a special affinity to their gods by virtue of musicianship. During the god ceremony in 1992, S.

⁹Among members of the Paniya tribe, sometimes men and women dance simultaneously in two separate circles.

Raman was not participating in the ritual in which the god was to seize one of the men, thus selecting him to be a diviner. Although Raman was eligible, he said, "God won't pick me, he knows I have that special power to play *ko!*, he won't pick me." The notion that ability to play the *ko!* is a god given talent as well as a skill seems to be widespread. Raman and Duryodana tended to use the English word "power" in this context, whereas Pucan used to stress his experience, or in his words "service."¹⁰

As for other subjective views on the part of musicians themselves, there is some tendency among *ko!* players, as there is almost universally, to exaggerate a sense of self-importance and musical ability. But I have never observed the opposite. It would be fair to conclude that on the whole, individual musicians consider themselves to be more talented than other musicians or non-musicians consider them to be. Whether or not this tendency to avoid excessive praise of the individual is a result of general egalitarian tendencies, or whether, aside from Pucan, there are no exceptional *ko!* players, would be difficult to state conclusively. Probably both explanations have some degree of validity.¹¹

Clearly some musicians consider themselves to be something special—Raman and Rangan as intellectuals whose musical abilities are but one of a number of ways in which they consider themselves to be clever, perceptive, and one step ahead of the rest; Rajammal and B. K. Krishnan, as singers and composers whose experiences and successes in the modern world are simultaneously expressed in and enable a popular composition style that is simultaneously Kota, in language and textual theme, generically Hindu in outlook, and broadly Indian in musical style; Cindamani, whose unusual upbringing and hardships, suffered with infectious humor, have given her an inner strength and a humility that cause her to be admired, and a dynamic base for composition anchored strongly in archaic song forms injected with new, sometimes unusual content; and Pa. Mathi, a woman of an older generation who feels she doesn't get the respect she deserves, rich in knowledge of stories and songs, crotchety and unkempt on the surface.

Overall, both the subject positions of individual *ko!* players and some of the ways these musicians are articulated in cultural structures make it clear that the issue of status, respect, etc. in relation to musicians of many sorts is relevant in Kota society, and that perhaps there is a tension between the tendency towards egalitarianism in ritual and other expressions of ideal structures (as in when people begin sentences "among our people...") and the tendency to identify certain individuals as particularly talented or special. None of

¹⁰ I do not think there is anything significant about the fact that they used English words here, except that they knew I would understand them, and the ability to use English words correctly (within the Indian English context) is "hip."

¹¹ In one of the quintessentially "egalitarian" societies, Richard Lee found that the !Kung positively insult a successful hunter so that the hunter does not become arrogant. A man who has returned after a successful hunt says, "Ah. I'm no good for hunting. I saw nothing [pause] just a tiny one." The man to whom the hunter speaks smiles to himself, knowing "he has killed something big" (Lee 1994[1969], 33).

these personal or normative representations suggests, however, that musicians can be regarded as institutionally deviant.

THE STATUS OF MUSICIANS: EXOGENOUS VIEWS

Just as the possibility for objectifying the category of musician opens up when we shift the layer of analysis from within the community to outside the community, so does the possibility for discussing the status of musicians. It is reasonable to assume that Badagas or Todas have considered musicians to be of "low status and high importance" because in their traditional world view, we are told, the Kotas were their musicians; and as we know, at least in the recent past, the Kotas were treated by the Todas and Badagas as if they were very low even if they themselves did not consider themselves to be so. Since "Kotaness" was associated with musicianship as well as a number of other skills, as well as certain practices such as the eating of carrion and the sacrifice of cattle, we cannot specify musicianship itself as being uniquely determinate of status or behavior, but rather that it indexed social status because of its association with a number of other negatively valued roles and practices.

There is at least one other reason that Kota musicians in particular may have been viewed differently from outside the community than within it. In his discussion of Kota musicians who play for Badagas, Mandelbaum's informant, Sulli, noted that individuals could refuse to perform at a funeral because of illness or some other responsibility, and that "it is the poorer Kotas who go because they are fed for two or three days and get measures of flour and eight annas" (Mandelbaum 5.28.37). So although these Kotas would not necessarily behave in a manner deemed less socially acceptable to Badagas, they certainly would have appeared to have less economic standing than other Kotas.

BEHAVIOR OF MUSICIANS: CONCLUDING COMMENTS

I have suggested that although the musician is not a unitary category either in Kota language, ritual and social practice or, probably, in cognition, similar issues are involved in understanding questions of status and role. The narratives raise several other questions of behavior that can be separated, for the purposes of discussion, from the status/role questions.

One question concerns the models for musical ability. Apparently both the model or image of the "hardworking musician," whose ability is a result of practice, experience, and prolonged attention, and that of the "natural musician," whose talents are god-given and inspirational, seem to operate in Kota society. To a

degree these models are exemplified in the personalities and self-representations of Pucan and Raman respectively. This is not to say that Pucan does not consider himself to be “gifted,” or that Raman did not “learn” to be a musician; rather, each of them seemed to emphasize these different aspects of the concept of musical competence.¹²

A second question concerns the relationship between self-image as a musician and the process of enculturation. That is to say, does an individual consider the learning of music to be functionally connected with other kinds of cultural learning, and does this bear significantly on personal identity? Although instrumentalists “pick up” music informally, we have seen that *ko!* players in particular may also credit their knowledge to individual teachers. Pucan even called these teachers *gurus*. It may be instructive to compare the kind of enculturation involved in the classical model of instruction (musical or otherwise) embodied in the *guru-śiṣya* relationship with the kind of enculturation involved when Kotas learn music.

First we must consider that *gurukulavāsa* is a system of learning music in which two elements are transmitted,

neither of which is available through any other medium of instruction: a body of knowledge which is both secret and esoteric, and the way a musician must lead his life. This total musical life provides important evidence that social relations between musicians are indeed systematic. It comprehends a subculture in India which cuts across the boundaries of sex, religion, age, caste, territory, language, as well as time, yet includes all these as internal categorical distinctions (Neuman 1980, 50).

Kota musical education certainly entails receiving relatively esoteric knowledge and internalizing societal norms. But musical training among the Kotas does not train an individual to be “a musician” as distinct from any other kind of human being. Classical music instruction involves musical as well as social enculturation not only into being a musician, but a musician of a particular kind, North or South Indian classical music, and of a particular stylistic school or family, *gharāna* in the North or *bāni* in the South. In short, training of this sort tends to create and maintain categories of difference—both among musicians and between musicians and non-musicians. Kota musical training is holistic only in the sense that it is embedded within the fabric of social life, not in that it is a separate set of activities called “musical training” that would constitute a sort of cultural microcosm.

Knowledge about Kota culture is embedded in the verbal texts to songs, the stories behind instrumental tunes, and the contextual performance of pieces during ceremonies or at other times. Much of the present work will revolve around bringing out these musical meanings. For our present purposes it is sufficient to note that one aspect of enculturation involved in musical transmission is the communication of these other

¹²I lack of significant data in the way of direct statements from musicians regarding the origin and basis of musical competence. I plan to ask further questions in future field visits.

kinds of knowledge. When Pucan learned to play a special *kol*, his teacher would tell him the story associated with that piece. Pucan then assumes the role of cultural transmitter when, occasionally when performing a piece or teaching it, he repeats the story. Many of these stories teach what it means to be a Kota, not merely what it means to be a musician. Musicianship among the Kotas can be said to be integrative rather than divisive.

We saw in Raman's composition that songs too can teach. In this way composers may assume the role of teachers, and may even instigate social change. One of Sulli's attempts to reform the Kota community, for instance, involved composing and singing a song which condemned the killing of buffaloes.¹³ There is no record of how this song was received in the Kota community. The song itself is no longer sung, although members of the oldest living generation in Kolme-l recognized Sulli's voice when I played them a recording. The gradual discontinuation of buffalo sacrifice was part of a larger modernizing social trend; it cannot be traced to this song. Rather, the song was an expression of this modernizing trend from one of its early spokesmen.

We may say, then, that one aspect of behavior available to musicians, whether they be *kol* players, singers or composers, *by virtue of their musicianship* is that of educator—whether that education be reinforcing traditional values and practices or, arguing and acting as a voice for change.

I have now moved from a discussion of questions of status and role in the various categories of musicians, to particular kinds of behavior connected with musicianship and the role of individuals in representing themselves as musicians. This leads us to consider how the narratives of this chapter bear on questions of personal and musical identities.

IDENTITY ISSUES

The individual can be said to derive a sense of identity musically in a number of ways. Perhaps the most obvious way is through the ability to perform in some way; not surprisingly, the degree to which an individual claims musicianship as an important part of his or her identity depends upon the degree of specialization with which that ability is associated. A man would incorporate the idea of himself as a *kol* player into his self-definition, but a *kob* player would not. Similarly, both male and female singers who have composed many songs or who have distinguished themselves in public would probably incorporate "I am a singer and

¹³Two historical recordings of this song are available. One was recorded on cylinder by David Mandelbaum and can be found in the Indiana University Archive for Traditional Music. The other is among Arnold Bake's Kota recordings.

composer” into their self-definitions, but all women who sing and dance would not. All this is probably self-evident, and it may not move this discussion forward to launch into an analysis of what “self-definition” means in this context. Let it stand, in a very non-technical sense, for the comparative positioning an individual would assume if asked to portray himself by an outsider, if called upon to fulfill a particular musical role within or outside the village, or in assessing the abilities of other musicians.

This sort of musical identity becomes further refined when we consider the relationship of the individual to the village. Here the style and content of performance references both the village and the individual within the village. Thus Jaychandran’s identity as a *ko!* player is rather unique. On the one hand he is a Porgar musician: all Kota would regard him as such because, for men, the natal village remains the lifelong “home”—even if residence changes for some reason. On the other hand, the special god *ko!*s he plays are, properly speaking, Kolme-l *ko!*s. To an extent one might say he has incorporated his affinal relationship into his music. Part of the ease through which Jaychandran could record and imitate Pucan’s music derived from their close kinship ties: a man’s father-in-law occupies the same kinship category as the mother’s brother (*ma·mn*), who is ritually in some ways more important than the father.

Musical identity is often tied to the age of the music performer, or in this case the consumer. Older generation Kotas are less likely to identify with cinema music, for example, than are younger Kotas. Furthermore, the sorts of cinema songs an individual likes, sings, uses as the basis of composition, and so forth is also an index of age. As we have seen, Rangan’s compositions allow moments in the history of Tamil and Hindi cinema to be frozen in their new incarnations as Kota songs. Cinema music indexes much more than age, of course. The most prominent index we have seen from the narratives is the relative modernity or urban experience of the individual.

Just as individual instrumental tunes are associated with particular villages, so, we have seen, are songs. Songs are tied to villages in a number of ways. At the most trivial level, a song is associated with the village of the composer. But there are other ways in which the village may be indexed: geographical features or gods of regional significance, dialects of the Kota language, and events that derive from the unique history of a place.

Gender can be indexed through the language of a song as well: dance songs may contain sentences with particles meaning “girl!” at the end and so forth. Songs themselves are not so much “men’s songs” or “women’s songs,” but their texts would seem to indicate a gendered speaker and receiver. Just because men do not sing ritually does not mean they do not or cannot sing. Rangan, for instance, composed a love song directed toward a woman named Dele—thus clearly marking the song as having a male vantage point. Mourning songs too, as we will examine in detail, can be narrated from a male or female perspective. At least

one song recreates a conversation between a brother and sister.¹⁴

There is another level of gender identification in music making: the role of men as instrumentalists and women as singers, as embedded in ritual structure. From another perspective, women, especially in the role of “the granny,” are the transmitters of songs and cultural knowledge through stories (notwithstanding the role of the *ko!* player as transmitter of stories concerning individual tunes), whereas the men are the regulators—those who mark and/or constitute the temporal and spatial organization of rituals through the structured performance of particular tunes at particular times and places; and also regulate as time-keepers for the women. This latter is less ritually obligatory than it is an indicator of a general cultural sense that time keeping is a male role, and that women cannot keep time without them. Recall in this regard Raman’s tendency to correct rhythms that did not conform to Kota patterns and Cindamani’s acceptance of Raman’s authority on rhythm—not trusting her own inner sense of rhythm. There are broader implications of this ideology too: for example, men men decide when festivals are to occur and perform the rituals that signify the beginning of festivals.

The conflicting feelings people have toward Rangan and his music illustrate that the affective associations with a piece of music can be separated from that of its composer. This brings up the broader issue of what “sticks” to music. I began to suggest that positive associations with instrumental tunes, like stories of divine activities, tend to stick with and be used strategically in creating meaning in ritual performance. But negative attributes, like the association of certain tunes with the practice of catching and killing a buffalo, do not stick with the musical piece. The tune is kept, but its previous contexts remain rather hidden from view—that is, those who are embarrassed about these bygone practices will not tell their children or outsiders what the piece used to be associated with. But the piece itself, unlike the practice, will live on.

Finally the identity of a musician, or the attributes of the music he or she performs or listens to, derives some of its meaning in relation to other kinds of music. Rajammal’s musical identity has much more to do with her attitude towards and involvement in Tamil cinema and drama, Hindu *bhakti* (intense, loving devotion) and its associated *bhajans* (devotional songs), and identity in wide circles of relationships—like the all India women’s organization—than it does with old fashioned or “traditional” Kota musics like mourning songs. Pucan’s musical identity is derived in part from his love for classical music and his belief that Kota music is parallel to it in some respects.

These observations on identity should be considered not so much as conclusions, as an introduction to the dimensions of musical identity. The piece, the place, the individual and kin, the urban-rural, modern-

¹⁴This, song recorded in the series of *Gramophone records of the languages and dialects of the Madras Presidency*, published in 1927, is discussed in chapter seventeen.

traditional dynamics, age, gender, and language all contribute to the ways music and Kotas come to be related to one another and through which Kotas identify themselves as unique people.

This chapter has considered some of the musical issues raised in the biographical sketches of Kota musicians. Taking the data from these sketches and extending these to include broader observations on the Kotas, today and in the past, I have discussed issues of education, specialization, roles and status of musicians and comments on the question of “character,” and the dimensions of what we might call musical identity. Once again, these represent preliminary discussion of some of these issues in order that certain terms and concepts can be employed in the development of arguments concerning more specific meanings of Kota rituals and music.

The next section concerns other cultural issues raised by the life histories and personal narratives of the preceding chapters.

OTHER CULTURAL ISSUES

The personal histories presented in chapters four and five raised issues concerning musical culture in particular, and concerning their manner of collection. What were the broad cultural issues at stake? A good many of them can be summarized under the headings of Modernity, Authority, Conflict, and Identity.

For this brief recapitulation I will use “modernity” in a loose, conventional sense, leaving it otherwise undefined. As particular ethnographic points are developed, I will differentiate among the many kinds of “modernities” there may be, and the many problems in dichotomizing the “traditional” and the “modern” too strongly (see part II for more rigorous explanations of modernity and constructions of the past). Various questions of modernity concern the kinds of conservatism that can be discerned among the Kotas: Pucan as a representative of a “new” conservatism; others wishing to return to old customs represent an almost avant-garde of Kota society. This raises further the issue of the non-Kota preserving Kotaness—i.e. deviants like Raman and Rangan may preserve and retain knowledge of the old ways even though they themselves are removed from the mainstream values of today’s Kotas.

Modernity also points towards certain kinds of ambivalence. It is in some ways blamed for the collapse of traditional values and the otiosity of the gods; and yet modernity also brings with it many things that are needed to cope in the new economic and even physical order of the Nilgiris. Thus those who successfully balance their identity as Kotas, their adherence to something valuable in the vicissitudes of tradition, with identity as a modern Indian, are respected and serve in leadership roles in the further negotiation of Kota cultural life.

Modernity brings with it new models for and modes of (cf. Geertz 1973, 93) behavior—both to be emulated and shunned. Much of this is mediated through cinema and schools. The symbolic role of the English language, and to a lesser extent Tamil, reflects and communicates, to some extent, these new ways of living.

As for authority, several domains seem relevant in an ongoing set of dialectics between that which “should be” and that which “is.” That is to say, in an extended sense I think that certain aspects of authority are related to what Victor Turner has called the “subjunctive mood” in culture; that is, “the world of ‘as if,’ ranging from scientific hypothesis to festive fantasy. It is ‘if it *were* so,’ not ‘it *is* so.’” (1982, 83). Turner had in mind rituals and performances when he developed this concept. But I think the ways in which certain kinds of authority are dealt with fall into a similar category. Consider for example Raman’s interpretation of his own dream. From what I gather, dreams do and have played significant roles in directing the course of human events among the Kotas. But it is not an unmediated or self-evident authority, it involves a creative projection of the self into an ongoing set of events that may otherwise be disconnected.

Divinity plays a similar integrative role, also authoritative in a “subjunctive” mood—subjunctive because the presence of divinity is made to be felt in specialized ritual contexts, or it is narrated from experiences in dreams or stories from the past; experience with spirits of the dead are similar here.

Individual human authority does play some role in Kota society—certainly on a moment-to-moment, mundane basis. But at the societal level, individual authority is discouraged and the collectivity emphasized. Those positions that command the greatest respect are indeed supposed to be filled through divine selection. And individuals who attempt to usurp control can, in some cases, be reprimanded by the gods through the *te·rka·rn*. I was told that the late *te·rka·rn* of Kolme·l once, while possessed, gave Pucan a handful of hot coals to indicate the gods’ displeasure over the discontinuance of the dry funeral.

This leads us to the other kinds of authority that exist. The world does not only function in the subjunctive mode; individuals *do* take charge and certain individuals *are* invested with more authority than others. I have mentioned wealth, age, and ability to balance tradition and modernity as some of the bases for individual authority. The effective leader must somehow be able to bridge or obfuscate the gap between the “as if” and the “as is” in order to maintain legitimacy. Pucan’s roles as a musician and a great “integrator,” as I have called him, have served him well in this regard.

Authority is not entirely positive and auspicious, however. On the down side, sorcery seems to have played an enduring role in the maintenance of the social-cultural order. Sometimes the fear of sorcery has played into the hands of the gendered authorities in the village, the men. Women feared to go out at night alone because Kurumbas might rape them (Kurumba men were and are probably no more a threat than any

other non-Kota man); men thus were able to keep track of their wives. Those who commanded a great deal of power (such as Sulli, who was educated and relatively wealthy) were often accused of hiring sorcerers. And the sorcerer tribes (Irula and Kurumba) themselves maintained autonomy and their own place in the former Nilgiri system through the powers they were seen to possess.

The narratives presented examples of certain conflict types. Husband and wife conflicts were and are some of the most common; these conflicts sometimes extend into conflicts of allegiance between natal village and husband's village in cases where a woman has married a man of another village. Conflicts among in-laws often concerned property and children.

The issues concerning modernity all involve structural conflicts—the tension between old and new ritual practices; the compatibility of Kota, Hindu and sometimes Christian practices and philosophies, and the temporal authority conferred upon the individual who has attained prestige outside the village versus the traditional authority embodied in Kota cultural institutions.

Finally, the narratives suggested a number of factors that contribute to notions of identity among the Kotas. We have seen that music is related to and yet separable from notions of "self" among the Kotas, that differences in the nature and quality of musical and dance performance serve as bases for the establishment of different village identities, and that the tribe as a whole uses music as one of its unifying emblems. Attachment to the landscape in a variety of symbolic and instrumental ways represents another means through which identity is constructed, and this theme will be central to the spatial analysis of ritual in the next chapter.

Identity issues were at stake in the various ways Kotas interacted with outsiders: Cindamani's childhood relationship with Europeans is but one example of a whole set of interactions which led the Kotas to define themselves positively with respect to Europeans, and particularly with respect to Americans. Kota relationships with Badagas and Todas set up other meaningful sets of "us-them" dialectics which have conditioned modern Kota self-definition. And finally, all the complex changes I have reluctantly glossed as Sanskritization are certainly relevant to ongoing Kota attempts to decide what it is that constitutes their *own* tradition.

The four sets of issues I have summarized, involving modernity, authority, conflict, and identity, by no means exhaust the possibilities for analyzing the narratives. Some of them quite obviously apply to many village studies; but perhaps this is what makes the narratives as evocative documents in themselves more valuable than the regularities they exhibit.

PART II

Music and Symbols in a Ritual System

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE AMBIVALENCE OF TRADITION: FUNERALS

In this part I argue that crucial issues of modernity, particularly those relating to the Hindu-Kota religious nexus, are played out in Kota creations, re-creations and enactments of customs concerning death. Funerals are important for the Kotas in many ways: they give expression to fundamental feelings of affection for the recently departed, and provide socially prescribed routines by which Kotas can move beyond the changes death brings (widowhood, "pollution," etc.). Funerals are important for this as a musical study because particular instrumental pieces, *ta-v kol*, help constitute the ritual structure and may be analyzed along with other ritual symbols. The unfolding of a given ritual at a given time can be analyzed in any number of ways, symbolically, socially, or politically. It is a different matter to analyze how a ritual comes into existence or is altered from previous forms. I will consider here both the form and meaning of the funeral rituals as they are interpreted by Kotas in particular times and places, and the discourse of change, and what implications ritual change have for Kota society as a whole.

The memory of dead people in any society is likely to constitute a special kind of memory, and a special kind of past that people incorporate into the understanding of their society and themselves. The degree to which this realm of the dead is separable from other realms of experience or belief (such as those of divinity or other kinds of supernatural powers, of pollution or evil, or of "nature" in its various cultural formulations, for example), or is acknowledged as such either explicitly, through philosophical or theological texts, or implicitly through rituals, will, of course, vary cross-culturally. The relationship, or changing relationships, between the living and the dead in any culture could be said to embody a particular set of relationships with this special kind of past—the human past of a culture.

I begin this chapter with this rather universalizing statement because the particular problems of Kota society, and the particular categories of action through which they are worked out (or not worked out), should not in themselves be regarded as unique. I believe that my methodology will have some validity in the analysis of other cultures as well. Studies of ethnohistory, communal memory, and multiple pasts are becoming increasingly subtle. There is likely to be a category in every culture that subsumes death, and notions of the past that deal specifically with the memory of human life, and that carries within it certain emotional ties that express fundamental aspects of identity.

As for the manner in which Kotas of today deal with their funerary ceremonies, I argue that this plays out a fundamental ambivalence about their relationship with what I will call a “human” past—that is, the past as it is associated with the ancestors, or more specifically, deceased Kotas; in contrast, god ceremonies play out Kota relationships “divine” past, about which the Kotas are far less ambivalent. The ambivalence surrounding funerals involves modernity because it has been brought about through critical self reflection as the Kotas have come in contact with both Victorian ideals from the West (especially England), and *Ahimsa* (non-violence) and *Advaita-Vedānta*¹ principles from Hinduism.

The chapters of part II will be organized as follows. First I will provide a description of funerals as I witnessed and experienced them in the years 1990-92. Second I will discuss the folklore of death, including descriptions and location of the land of the dead, philosophies of reincarnation, and female spirit mediums. Third I will discuss the major cultural issues at stake as funerals are examined historically, briefly drawing contrasts between worship and mortuary practices. Finally I will examine in more systematic fashion accounts of funerals collected from Kotas of today, filled in with data collected by Mandelbaum and others in earlier times. Two purposes will be served in doing this. One, we can consider the significant points of divergence among accounts, and consider these divergences in light of broader historical changes in the Kota community. Two, we can compare the elements of these Kota funerary rituals to comparable elements in other Indian, primarily Hindu, funerals; this should provide a paradigmatic perspective to complement the syntagmatic approach to the symbolic analysis of the ritual process.

I begin with a personalized account of a funeral in Kurgoj. The purpose for this is to quickly *represent* a funeral, with all of its idiosyncracies, temporal and local contingencies, and incompleteness from the standpoint of any particular observers. The remaining chapters will be concerned with relationships between *as if* accounts of funerals and other rituals, historically disparate, and rituals as they have been described. This self-contained description is meant as a simplified point of reference. I also include this description as a literary strategy, providing a transition between part I of this work, characterized by the storytelling quality of personalized narratives, and part II, description and analysis of ritual practice.

¹*Advaita-vedānta* is the name for the Hindu philosophical school which denies the distinction between the true self (*ātman*) and the absolute, undifferentiated, all-pervading, self existing power (*brahman*). It also “gave to the Supreme Essence (*paramāman*), Visnu and Śiva the common, all-inclusive designation, ‘Īśvara’.” (Zimmer 1951).

A GREEN FUNERAL IN KURGO-J

As of December 27th 1991 the power had been out in Kolme-l village for five days and it was (selfishly) a relief to me to discover that someone had died in Kurgo-j village—giving me an excuse to conduct research outside the village. I set out with Duryodana to Kurgo-j, hoping to accomplish there a number of other tasks, including the sketching of a map. Upon arriving we discovered that a second person had died. The villagers had decided to delay the funeral until the arrival of relatives of the newly deceased. Duryodana procured for me a colored bed sheet; out of respect for the deceased, I was to don this as a shawl.²

Duryodana found a key to the house of Manoharan, a son of the deceased man, Kayntn. I was to sleep there for the night. Until then I had not really become friendly with anyone of that village, so I welcomed the opportunity that night to initiate a friendship with the grief-stricken Manonaran. In the spare hours of the day before the funeral rituals got underway, Manoharan led Duryodana and me to the green and dry funeral grounds and identified the places of significance. I began sketching them, but eventually stopped as a chilly wind picked up and made it difficult to work, blowing off my loosely hanging shawl and waist cloth. Manoharan also told me a few Kurgo-j village stories that I was later to follow up in more detail with other villagers.

At funerals and rituals in general I found myself during much of the time waiting around for things to happen. During these times, Kotas or interested outsiders would come and speak with me; sometimes I would be invited to accompany them for tea in their homes or in nearby shops. Sometimes I would try to track down a Kota known for his or her knowledge of rituals, storytelling ability, or musical ability. But invariably, my attempts to fill in slack hours with productive activity would threaten my ability to witness important ritual moments. Fortunately on that first day there were no public rituals that I knew of.

At night I had my first opportunity to witness what goes on during the night of a funeral. The musicians were somewhat intoxicated, having consumed alcohol and opium, and consequently the quality of playing began to degenerate over the course of the evening. At first it seemed there was not going to be music at all in the night because women were complaining that the noise would disturb their children. They told me several children were inflicted with “small pox” (using the English words)—by which I assume they meant chicken pox or some other minor virus because the prognosis was not serious.

Until midnight or so I was left alone by the light of a lamp in Manoharan’s house as Duryodana went

²At green funerals men will usually wear colored cotton bed sheets (*kadar*) rather than the white cloaks (*vara:r*) required for most formal Kota rituals. We also wore colored waist cloths (*mund*). I was told that colored cloths could be used in order to keep the white waist cloths and cloaks clean for other occasions. Most of the men, women and children performing important ritual tasks wore white, however.

from house to house discharging his duties to visit his own relatives and certain relatives of the deceased. fighting off offers for food in some houses, and politely accepting meals in others. I was not well enough known in Kurgo-j to be taken to all the houses. Besides, the villagers of Kurgo-j had, in general, a reputation for poor hospitality. Duryodana did not want to make the situation awkward. The women were also less accustomed than most Kotas to interacting with outsiders. They were a bit afraid of me, as I later discovered. Duryodana came around every hour or so with updated news on the ongoing dispute over music that night; he also brought me food.

Finally, one of the better kol players, Udayakumar, went to sleep because he had duty at Hindustani Photo Films the next day. I thought that was the end of the affair, but then I began hearing the haunting tune to one of the most common mourning songs (listed as the “song of Mathi” in the Madras Government Museum Recordings) from a distance. I joined the group and set up my tape recorder. At first we were on the verandah of the house of one of the deceased; from there I was having trouble plugging in my tape recorder (the rechargeable batteries were run down since the power had been out for so long in Kolme-l). They all decided to move to another verandah where there was power—despite my entreaties not to bother.

I played along on drums tolerably well on a couple of numbers and eventually the music stopped; people started going to sleep around 3:30 A.M. A small group of us sat up by the fire throughout most of the night; fagged out by the events of the day, I uncharacteristically smoked a *bidi* (a kind of leaf-rolled Indian cigarette). The young men around me began to tell uncharitable jokes about the Badagas, and some other jokes based on Tamil-Kota puns. I tried out some of my jokes using English-Tamil puns, but these were lost on them!

After sleeping a bit, I awoke at about 7:30 to the sound of music—getting up hastily because I did not want to miss the ritual in which the corpse is brought out of the house. Inside the house of Manoharan’s family, the women were wailing “*ayo*” over the corpse. One woman, probably his daughter, was kneeling directly over the right side of the corpse, cupping her right hand over his face and loudly crying and speaking to him. Duryodana later said that she was saying things like, “last week you brought me a new half-sari, now you’ve left me”; these are typical utterances, and we shall consider them in more detail in conjunction with mourning songs. At this point the forehead was tied in a small *vara-r* (traditional Kota shawl). But as I was videotaping the scene one man apparently noticed the absence of the coin which was ordinarily plastered to the forehead of the deceased. Amidst the clatter of wailing, he motioned across the room, indicating with his fingers in a circular motion on his own forehead that the coin was missing from the forehead of the deceased. Lying loosely over the sheet covering the corpse were several loosely woven cloths of several colors. We will later have occasion to discuss these cloths in systematic fashion.

The men wore their bed sheets or *varars* so as to expose their right shoulders—a ritual sign of respect on these occasions. Women were clustered close to the head of the deceased, and a small number of men were near the lower part of the body. On the right was a frightened-looking boy known as the *tic pac mog* (“fire holding boy”) who was put in charge of leading the rituals for the dead man. An older man clad in white stood to his right, clutching the boy’s right hand, in which was held a ball of cow dung with a sprig of *nakarg* grass in it. As soon as the corpse was removed from the house, the boy was supposed to perform a brief ritual: using the dung ball, he was to touch each place in which the corpse had come in contact (thus cleaning it) and then throw the grass and dung away from the house. In the commotion surrounding the removal of the corpse I missed witnessing this action. On this occasion, since there were two deaths, there were two *tic pac mogs*. The one for the dead woman was a young girl.

While inside the women were wailing and the men paying their respects with comparatively less emotional display, outside, several men were constructing *gurykats* (catafalques) for the corpses to be placed when they were brought outside.

Gurykats are generally a single canopy or a series of canopies set on top of four poles about 5 feet in height. The canopies that day were constructed from frames of four freshly cut trees about two inches in diameter, set in squares of about one and a half square meters. Four more poles joined above at the center extended to each corner of the squares, forming pavilion frames. On one of the structures, an aquamarine colored cloth was stretched around the pyramidal section, while a bordering cloth of maroon hung about 10 cms. below. Directly above this peaked canopy was a sort of cloth ball, called a *pujgor*.³ Several more poles extended from just below the ball, on which were hung colorful towels in the manner of flags. The flagpoles appeared to be separate from the structural poles in the canopy, but extended inside the structure and attached to the frame. Directly above the whole structure was an umbrella⁴ with colorful balloons attached to each end of the wire frame.

³The etymology of this is “tiger-umbrella.” According to Hockings (n.d.), in the Badaga catafalque, no stick must have its ends bare. The large ball in the Badaga case is called *kirimoguda* and consists of cloth or hay.

⁴The umbrella is an almost universal symbol of prestige. In India it is found in conjunction not only with the dead but also with the gods; in this latter context, the umbrella is one of a number of items with which the devotee may be seen to pamper the deity—to protect it, in effect, from sun and rain. Umbrellas are even more prominent in the dry funeral, where they are erected on poles reaching far into the sky. In some cases the umbrellas are still made of forest products by Urali tribesman of the Gudalur area. The prestige associated with umbrellas, even isolated from their ritual use, is illustrated in Hockings’ description of the Badaga funeral. The Badagas would give the pennants from the *gurykat* of their deceased to the Kota associate, but not the umbrellas, “which are generally a mark of status” (Hockings n.d., 17). Umbrellas are also important symbols of prestige in other parts of the world, especially in West Africa among Akan, Yoruba and other groups, where umbrellas are royal shields.

In Kurgoj a special tune called the *guryka! atca kol*⁵ was supposed to accompany the placement of the *guryka!* on top of the stand of four poles. I had asked several Kurgoj residents to list the names of each special *kol* to be performed. It turned out that the same tune was played for the erecting of the canopy as for the carrying of the corpse out of the house, even though separate names were given for these tunes. Several possibilities suggest themselves. Either there are several names for a single tune—which is often the case since a given tune might be used in more than one context; or the musicians did not know the special tune for erecting the canopy—again a reasonable possibility.⁶

After the structure was erected outside, the men began to remove the corpse from the house. Underneath the corpse at this point was a straw mat. As the corpse was lifted, someone by the door signaled to the musicians and the *kobs* were sounded, and the *ta-v poraynj karytd kol* “corpse make-to-come-out tune” was played.⁷ Special tunes accompany the movement of the corpse in funerals of all the Kota villages; and according to the informants of Hockings and Mandelbaum, Kota music accompanied each movement of the corpse at Badaga funerals as well.

Tightly surrounded by the male mourners and those carrying the corpse, the corpse was placed first on a cot directly in front of the door. Then the cot was placed under the colorful canopy erected next to it, with the head of the deceased closest to the house (west). The rituals are conducted over the deceased and the canopies are placed only on particular streets of the village. In Kurgoj, the street corresponded with that on which dancing was normally conducted (*a-ʔa-c kava-l*). If the death had occurred on a street in which the biers were not to be kept, they would have been transported to the proper street.

After the corpse has been successfully transported from the house to the structure on the proper *kava-l*, a ritual dance was danced. In some villages this dancing has been discontinued, but in Kurgoj the ritual is still maintained. The men danced counterclockwise around the bier, but without particular enthusiasm or

⁵Meaning literally “catafalque making-to-hold-together tune.”

⁶ I did not have the opportunity to replay the videotape and ask such questions at the time. In a way, the details do not matter if we accept Nettl’s adaptation of Merriam’s famous model, in which he suggests that the conceptual part of musical culture is in some sense more important than the actual behavior or sound in his words, it “is first and governs” (Nettl 1989, 2). So the idea that Kotas think there is a special tune for the process of erecting the catafalque is in itself significant, even if there is no such tune, or nobody knows it.

It might be useful to know, however, if there has been impoverishment in the repertoire, or whether a single tune is multipurpose. In this case I do not have a definite answer. Both possibilities exist in other contexts: some tunes are multipurpose and some tunes have been forgotten.

⁷ I was also told there was a separate tune for some action involving the people coming out of the house afterwards (*paylo-r poraynj vadvaik i-ta kol*), but I am not sure I understood the distinction. Once again, as far as I could tell there was a single tune played for the canopy erecting, the carrying of the corpse out, and the people of the house coming outside to mourn.

participation of many people.⁸ Then the second corpse, that of the woman Mic, was taken out of the house and placed in a separate, colorful *gurykaŕ*, as elaborate as that for Kaytn. The relocation of both corpses and all the dancing was completed just before 9:00 A.M. For about ½ hour the band played mourning songs while relatives, mostly women, mourned over the corpses.

Then cloths were hung from the frame of Kaytn's canopy to hide from view the ritual washing of the corpse (*ta-vk ni-r acd*), an activity that women perform. Although mourning tunes may be played during this process, they were not considered to be integral to the cleansing ritual in the way that the tunes were integral to the movement of the corpse. After both corpses were cleaned, fresh plantain stalks were tied to the posts holding the overhead canopy. This is one of the most prominent signs of a "green" funeral. Less noticeable were some green ferns, and oddly enough, a few dried ferns, tied to the legs of the bier. At some point a few other decorations were added, including short, colorful umbrellas on the east side of the canopies.

At about 1:00 P.M. the band led a series of men, then women, carrying grain as ritual gifts to the deceased. Each procession began just beyond the stone-lined border of the dancing area. This ritual, called *pe·m*, is in some villages accompanied by a special *kol*, but if this was the case in Kurgoj, they failed to mention it. The tune, in *tirugana·ŕ da·k* (eight beats), was distinct from that used to carry the corpse out of the house, although the accompanying rhythmic pattern was the same. A man carried a saddle bag of rice over his shoulder, following behind the musicians and circling the corpse counterclockwise. This was repeated several times with different men and for each corpse. Udayakumar told me this was for the deceased to use "on the way going up"—i.e. to a sort of "heaven" as he conceived of it. The gifts of rice in general help defray the costs of feeding all the relatives who come for a funeral. The saddle bags themselves were probably quite old—in form if not in actuality. Early descriptions of Kota funerals mention the use of a pony for circling the corpse.⁹

Following this I looked at the items which had been thus far collected under the biers. Under that of the man there were three baskets of slightly different sizes and shapes—each having a capacity, I would estimate, of four to six liters. From what I could see, one of the baskets contained white puffed grain and another contained brown puffed grain; in both, chunks of jaggery (*kaŕ*; raw lumps of cane sugar) were mixed in on top. Ordinarily these grains include puffed millet (*pacayk*), puffed barley (*kajayk*), and puffed amaranth

⁸Mandelbaum's 1937-38 films of a funeral in Kurgoj showed a similar lack of participation and enthusiasm on the part of the dancers. We cannot easily conclude that such behavior characterized most funerals of the period, however, because we have no information on the social status, age or gender of the deceased.

⁹This would also support the use of the word *pe·m* as "bullock load" in Emeneau's vocabulary notes. But he also mentions *pe·r* as a nominal payment, especially as regards a bride.

(*ki·r*), but without looking closely it was difficult to make out which was which. There was also a clay pot next to the baskets. The clay pot was not mentioned among those in my elicited descriptions of the required items. I suspect this was the pot later to be filled with water, which the *tic pac mog* would use to perform rituals over the corpse.

There was only one other use of a clay pot in the funeral—also involving the *tic pac mog*. Before the corpse was brought out, some coal was supposed to be taken from the kitchen fireplace (*elka·l*) of the deceased's house and used to start a fire on or nearby the *kava·l*. These same coals, or perhaps fresh ones, are taken from the village to the *pac ta·v na·r*, or green funeral ground, where new fires are started. Because the pot becomes very hot, a wooden pole is lashed onto the rim of the pot and used as a handle. This fire pot was probably not the one under the bier.

Other items under the dead man's bier included a model of a wooden ax (*marri*) and a machete (*kayr*)—both symbols of manhood. I also noticed a plastic bread wrapper lying prominently next to the other items. Although I did not ask at the time, I strongly suspect that in his lifetime the man preferred this particular brand of bread—or liked bread generally. The items underneath the bier, especially the personalized ones, generally reflect the tastes or habits of the deceased. Men used to be burned with their *bugiris* (bamboo trumpets) and walking sticks, and women with their sewing needles. I could not get a good look under the woman's bier that day. All I could see clearly were a pounding stick and an agricultural implement. Ordinarily, women would be cremated with baskets of grain (as are men), and with a winnowing basket (*morm*) as well.

After the men, one by one, circled with bags of rice. Women lined up to lay under the bier puffed amaranth (*ki·r*), the grain, more than any other, ritually associated with a funeral. Each woman held a basket on her head using her right hand. These women were each dressed in their traditional white attire for this ceremony. As I recall, some of them changed their clothing specifically for this ritual; the musicians and the men carrying the rice wore no such special attire. There were two processions, one to each bier; each consisted of female relatives of deceased (the particular relationships of which I was not told at the time), so there may have been overlap in the two groups. Although the band circled around each bier counterclockwise as before, the women in one case went directly to the left side of the bier, put the grain baskets underneath, and began mourning over the corpse again. I only caught a small portion of the first procession of women on videotape; the melody and rhythm (*tirugana·t*) of the first was distinct from that of the second procession; but I think the first melody was the same as that for the men (which was consistently one tune set to one rhythmic pattern).

I was told that these processions, placing of objects to be burned, and actions of mourning, would

continue until about 3:00 when more relatives were expected to arrive by bus from other villages. By that time the funeral had been going on for several days and people were getting anxious to finish things off. The bus was late, so the villagers (probably a group of male elders) decided to make their way to the cremation ground without the other relatives.

As one group of men began taking the structure apart I saw a young man come out of the house with the fire pot, which was still smoking. Two such men, holding fire pots in their right hands, guided under their left arms the two *tic pac mogs*. These two children, heads covered with a shawl (*mandar*) as a sign of mourning, led along with their respective older guides in the procession that was to follow. The *gurykaṭ* was disassembled and carried separately, in front of each bier.¹⁰ At first the men carried the biers with the feet of the deceased facing forward. The procession of what I would estimate to have been 250-300 people began, rather quickly, to walk northward towards the cremation ground. The same *koḷ* as had been rendered before in conjunction with assembling the *gurykaṭ* and placing the corpse within it was played while the structure was being disassembled and the biers lifted. But as soon as the procession began to move, the *koḷ* changed. This was in keeping with what was described as appropriate by *koḷ* players in Kolme-l. Interestingly, the new *koḷ* was very much like the old one—it contained the same opening phrase, but did not continue to spin out as long a melody. It was also distinguished rhythmically—set to a ten-beat percussion pattern rather than an eight-beat one.

The ritual distinction between preparing to leave and actually beginning the procession was articulated in other ways as well. A man waved for the music to stop and for the *tic pac mog* to wait. Then a man standing between the procession and the boy blew loudly and decisively on the *kob*. The music began and the procession started to move. A few loud firecrackers were set off next to the water tap just to the east of the front of the procession.

Behind the *tic pac mog*, the musicians and ritual specialists for the gods who were healthy enough to walk led the procession. Falling behind in the back were small children, lame or old people, and what appeared to be some Tamils. I noticed the presence of a single Badaga man and no Badaga women, but did not think to ask what his relationship was to the deceased.

The thick crowd of people, with their subdued but colorful clothing, and brightly colored, stately looking catafalques, made for a grand sight weaving through the green, thickly cultivated fields. The sun was quickly falling on the horizon, casting long shadows and exacerbating the discomfort of the mourners' already irritated eyes. Some distance before reaching the actual cremation ground, the procession stopped at the *ta-v*

¹⁰The order seemed to be important because at first both structures were carried one after the other, followed by the corpses. Then one man ran up scolding them and directed that the corpses be interleaved.

vecd va ʔm (“corpse-keeping-place”) where a number of rituals were completed.

The men carrying the biers turned them around so that the deceased’s feet were facing northwest—possibly to make them closer to the small stream nearby. Acting for the two *tic pac mogs*, a young man used his hands to scoop water out of the stream and into two clay pots. One by one the *tic pac mogs* and their older helpers made their way to the corpses, squeezing by the wailing women who were clustered closely around the bier. I noticed that one woman had her shawl draped over her head like that of the *tic pac mog*; this was most likely the widow. Led by an older man this time, who was dressed in white, wore a long white beard, and donned the traditional knot of hair at the back of the head (*kojgoʔ*), the first *tic pac mog*, head still cloaked and right hand held by that of the elder, touched water from the pot to each finger and toe of the deceased in the following manner: to the thumb and successively to each finger on the left hand of the corpse, a total of three times; then in similar fashion on the right foot (starting with the big toe), then left foot, then right hand. I gather the right hand at the end was an afterthought—it should have been first.

After this, the first *tic pac mog* tied together the big toes of the deceased. This was supposed to be tied three times.¹¹ Now beginning properly with the right hand of the deceased he was made to touch the point of a “pen-knife” (*pe-na·kayt*) to the thumb and fingers of each hand and toes of each foot, three times as before. After finishing the toes of the left foot he cut the string binding the toes.

According to the *mundka·no·n*, Caln, of Kurgo·j¹² this action was completed with the intention that the “sins” and “religious merits” of the deceased be allowed to reach the abode of the gods (*pa·vm punyam ... de·r lo·km ce·rvadk idt*); that is, that the deceased become separated from what he or she did in life, and be allowed to join with god. The separation of worldly deeds from the spirit of the deceased is thus analogously represented in the cutting of the string. As we shall see, this custom is widespread in Hindu India and thus should not be construed as something uniquely or characteristically Kota—nor should it be considered “inauthentic.”

The young girl acting as *tic pac mog* performed the same actions as her male counterpart, guided by the same old man, this time in the correct order, beginning with the right hand. All this time the musicians were sitting on the path just ahead of the rest of the crowd. They were playing a number of different *ko/s* as there was no special *ko!* associated with this ritual in Kurgo·j (there were, I was told, in Kolme·l). Also at the same

¹¹The *mundka·no·n* of Kurgo·j gave me this information. In Kolme·l the toes are to be lashed together in three figure eight knots. The way I saw them tied in Kurgo·j was a knot near each toe and a single strand between them—but this could well have been an approximation in the confusion of the moment.

¹²To contextualize the information he provides us it may be noted he is the older brother of the S. Cindamani who narrated parts of her life history in a previous chapter. The reader will recall that his family had considerable contact with Western outsiders and, one could reasonably assume, Hindus as well.

time some men were carrying wood to the cremation ground and preparing it. Others were carefully disassembling the *gurykaŕ* and carefully folding up the colorful cloths that were covering it.

As soon as the *tic pac mogs* finished cutting the threads they were brought to the cremation ground and, by actually rehearsing the event, instructed as to how to light the funeral pyre. They were led around the burning spot, as before, first the boy and then the girl; first to the east side, where they were to face east and throw the fire brand behind them; then to the west side, where they were to face west and throw the fire brand behind them. Someone had come earlier (presumably not the *tic pac mogs*) and used the coals brought from the houses of the deceased to light a small fire on a raised earthen platform, surrounded by boulders, off to the West of the actual cremation spot.¹³

Back at the biers, several people were removing the jewelry of the grieving widow and placing them in the cupped hands of a young girl who sat opposite her.¹⁴ They displayed her necklace of small black beads for me, and realizing I did not have a camera with me, explained to the widow that I could not take a photograph. The widow looked small and meek, thoroughly drained by all that had transpired over the past few days. But this was by no means a “revolting ceremony” as Thurston put it in his rather colorful description of a Kota funeral:

Supported by females, the exhausted widow of the dead man was dragged up to the corpse, and, lying back beside it, had to submit to the ordeal of removal of all her jewelry, the heavy brass bangle being hammered off the wrist,¹⁵ supported on a wooden roller, by oft repeated blows with mallet and chisel delivered by a village blacksmith assisted by a besotten individual noted as a consumer of twelve grains of opium daily (Thurston 1909:IV, 27).

Just on the left (West) of the entrance of the cremation ground was a special place where the long wooden logs were kept; large bundles of long, fine branches were kept separately. Some men arranged the heavy logs alongside one another on the cremation spot and on top of and parallel to them placed the bier. Beyond the *ta-v vecd va:rm* females were not to go.

The biers were lifted and carried, to the accompaniment of a tune which was different from the previous bier-moving tunes, to a place just before (south of) the burning spot and set down on the right. As a last gesture of respect to the dead, some men bowed and touched their heads (some covered some uncovered) to the colored cloth lying on the chest of the corpse. The head was exposed for a moment and now the large coin plastered to the forehead was visible. Just before moving the biers again, a watch was removed from the left

¹³Mr. Cain told me that the *tic pac mog* was supposed to bring the coals and spread them in four places around the cremation site; I did not see this happen, nor do I know to which four places he referred.

¹⁴Usually the widow is carried for this ritual, but I did not notice if she was. In Kolme-l the place set aside for all these rituals is just on the edge of the village, and thus carrying the widow is a simple task.

¹⁵I have never seen Kota bangles fit so tightly as to require this procedure.

wrist of the deceased.

Finally about thirteen men carried the first bier and placed it upon and parallel to the bed of firewood, with the heads of deceased pointed south.¹⁶ In general an odd number of men must carry the bier, making "pairs" which include the deceased.¹⁷ The bier was not simply set down, but as according to custom, was raised and lowered three times; the *kob* players let the sound of their horns resound for this moment and then stopped. On the right sat the musicians, *tic pac mogs* and other onlookers.

Before the second bier was brought and set down parallel to the first, the straw mat was removed from under the corpse and the legs of the bier were broken in order for it to rest firmly on the wood. After both biers were in place, large logs were laid against the side of the biers, and later longer ones reached over the corpses and joined at the top like a tipi. As always, they were careful that the wood not crush the corpse. Finally, the bundles of kindling (each about one to three feet in diameter and four to seven feet long) were placed around the outside and in the cracks between the logs.¹⁸

The *tic pac mogs* were led one by one around the pyre and each threw a firebrand backwards into the fire as they had been instructed. Usually the firebrands are put by the head and foot of the deceased; I suspect that the orientation of the cots was different since it was a double funeral. At the end of this ritual—which did not actually accomplish the lighting of the pyre since the firebrands constituted a couple of smoking sticks—I asked Duryodana whether they had been playing the "fire putting tune." He asked Udayakumar, the *ko!* player, who replied "now, now." This was when the actual lighting of the fire occurred.¹⁹ A few men lit small bundles of kindling on the already burning fire to the west of the burning area, and set them in what appears to have been four places. The flames quickly consumed the wood and we had to move away because of the heat.

The last component of this funeral which I witnessed was the washing of hands and feet in a stream on the way back to the village. Mr. Caln called this water "Ganges" water, as Kotas sometimes call ritually important water. All Kotas present were then supposed to go to their houses and pray to god. Exhausted

¹⁶South is associated with death and inauspiciousness throughout Hindu India; here there may be a variety of reasons for the direction: the village was south of the cremation ground (the reverse orientation from many Hindu settlements), and the land of the dead was roughly southwest.

¹⁷A preference for odd numbers is found in Indian rituals generally—at least in south India. There is no one explanation for this.

¹⁸For both god ceremonies and funerals these bundles of kindling are usually collected by each house in the village. I do not know whether the large logs were collected in the same way.

¹⁹I thought it interesting that the children lit the fire "for ritual's sake" (*ca-trtk*); but the playing of the special tune for lighting the fire was reserved for the actual lighting of the fire. I have no idea whether this is consistently the case.

from a few days in an unfamiliar place, and feeling awkward about taking advantage of the hospitality in this village, where, since there were two deaths, an unusually high number of visitors had to be accommodated. I decided to leave before the second day of rituals. On this day they were supposed to perform rituals over the remaining embers in the cremation ground, take a ritual bath, and eat a special meal. I will discuss the details of these later rites in conjunction with my more systematic description in the chapter that follows.

DISCUSSION

I have presented a detailed description of one funeral as I witnessed it in order to reflect on features which are embedded in the particularities of performance, rather than on the general rules for conducting rituals. As much as one might elicit descriptions of how a ritual should be performed given alternative circumstances (what if there wasn't enough firewood? what if it was a baby who died? what if someone died outside of their own village?), there are always conditions that must be negotiated on the spot, moment by moment. Just as one cannot foresee all the possibilities for variation within the ritual, one cannot also describe every detail in an actual event. My description has been reconstructed from notes, memory, and a great deal from combining these with my record on videotape. The details I chose to include tend either to evoke the overall experience, essentially a writing strategy, or to bring to light something interesting about the performance itself.

I used this particular funeral because, setting aside the fact that there were two deaths, it was among those I had seen the most representative of what a good funeral should be. Each of the deceased had lived a full life and had many friends and family members to carry out the funeral. The deceased were to the best of my knowledge in good standing in the community, but were not unusual or special—as current or former diviners or ritual leaders would have been.

A number of practical matters come up in the performance of a funeral, which call for kinds of action that the Kotas would not label as “rituals” (*ca·trm*) per se, but which are nonetheless called for. How do they deal with all of the relatives who come? My place was somewhat ambiguous because I was not at that time seen to be a particular person's responsibility. Ordinarily, in any major event involving other villagers, a list is made of all the houses and all the guests. They are divided up evenly throughout the village—when appropriate, with close kin residing together.

Music is normally called for, on a continuous basis until the funeral pyre is lit. But as we saw, the mothers of sick children were vociferously urging that the music end early that night. The outcome of such conflicts are not predetermined—although in this case, the prescription that there must be music won out.

The division of the sexes was important in the performance of the funeral. Malinowski wrote that “the direct emotional forces created by contact with death and with the corpse. . . primarily and most powerfully

determine the behavior of the survivors” but also pointed out the dual tendencies to break and maintain ties with the deceased (Malinowski 1954, 50). In a general sense, this public performance of this duality is gendered. Although men certainly grieve, and in private may cry, it is the women who mourn formally and publicly in a funeral.²⁰ And although women perform a few ritual tasks, such as making offerings of grain and washing the corpse, the men build the funeral car, play the music, transport the corpse, and burn it.

The fact that a man and a woman were cremated at the same time allowed for the possibility of watching a male and female *tic pac mog* perform their duties side by side. A young child is somehow impervious to the ill effects of death, and is therefore required in the funeral. The child’s immunity seems to be associated in some way with his or her naiveté.

Since women are generally excluded from the actual cremation, a young girl acting as *tic pac mog* is permitted to take part in a ritual to which no other females may bear witness. In the typical Kota ritual order, as in that of the Hindus, actions involving men precede those involving women. Rituals involving the male deceased and his *tic pac mog* thus preceded those of the female deceased. In this case I think the man also died first, but most likely in a joint funeral such as this the rituals over the deceased male would still have been conducted first.

Ritual education is in a sense built in to the funeral. An older man guided the *tic pac mog* through each action; and in cases where there was an opportunity they even rehearsed the processes.

Despite the formality and prescribed nature of the event, there were memory lapses and errors along the way: delay in putting the coin on the head of the deceased, mistake in the order of putting water on the fingers of the deceased. These were different from the more general discrepancies between the funeral as described and the funeral as acted: the statement that there were separately named tunes for particular rituals, and the observed fact that many of these tunes were identical. My experience in other situations was that these tunes would not be considered “different” just because they accompanied different activities; they may simply be referred to by different names.

Finally, my presence was one of the special features of this funeral as performed. I would be overestimating my importance to claim that my presence affected the proceedings in any substantial way; but the very fact that my presence was treated matter-of-factly suggests that much of what went on was in some way routine—that is, as opposed to sacrosanct. In my own family, and I suspect in many American or European families, it would be highly inappropriate for an outsider to witness and videotape a funeral. To most, it would be considered in poor taste at least, horrible or revolting more likely, to photograph a widow in

²⁰I have not as yet satisfactorily determined why this is the case.

the throws of mourning. My impression is that Kota women *desire* to have their photograph taken after they have been stripped of jewelry; the comment that I did not have a camera with me was not one indicating that I was not a threat to them, but rather that I could not take a photograph *for* them.

This completes the preliminary remarks I would like to offer regarding the Kurgo-j funeral. Bearing in mind the general structure of the event, I would like now to consider historical and systematic issues in considerable depth.

CHAPTER EIGHT

KOTA GREEN FUNERALS: A HISTORICAL AMALGAM

This section is an amalgamation of first-hand and normative descriptions of Kota green funerals. Drawing from my own fieldnotes and Mandelbaum's publications and fieldnotes, I have attempted to present what is currently known about Kota funerary practices and contextualize the Kota material within South Asia.

Tacitly included are those matters of ritual detail that I know or suspect are relatively stable, historically and regionally. I provide more careful documentation for unusual or uncorroborated material, however, and focus on significant differences of detail when they illustrate possible reasons for divergent interpretations or cast new light (or create new shadows) on the dynamics of culture change.

The sources for my first-hand descriptions are five Kota funerals. I knew two of the deceased. My assistants and I videotaped three of the funerals. The funerals I witnessed spanned many of the possibilities for contextual variation: One funeral was for a small child (Kolme-l), one was a double funeral, for a man and woman who died one after the other (Kurgo-j); a third was for an elderly and impoverished bachelor with little family or friends (Me-na-r); a fourth was held for the ex *mundka-no-n* of Kolme-l; and one funeral was held in Kolme-l for a man who died there, away from his home village, Kurgo-j. Although I was not able to attend funerals at Kina-r, Ticga-r, Kala-c, or Porga-r, I collected normative descriptions of their ritual content and recorded their music. Mandelbaum's data pertains to funerals in Kolme-l and Kurgo-j.

I will contextualize the funeral rituals themselves with a discussion of three issues: 1) the ambivalence regarding the afterlife; 2) the land of the dead; 3) how knowledge about the spirits of the dead is transmitted.

AMBIVALENCE REGARDING THE AFTERLIFE

The green funeral formally marks and in a sense defines the initial separation of the individual deceased from the society of the living. The separation is defined in the sense that the funeral, as an institution, provides a set of rules for dealing with death—both in a gross material way (disposing of the body), and in the procedure for mourning. Behind these rules (or in some cases, to explain the rules after the fact) there are belief systems concerning what happens after a person dies. As it happens, Kotas disagree about what happens to the spirit

or soul of the dead (*a-yv*).¹ Much of the historical and cultural significance of change in Kota funerary practice hinges on this eschatological ambivalence.

Kotas of today are uncomfortable with their forefathers' idea of a "land of the dead" where the souls of Kotas congregate after death. Now many espouse the popular Hindu belief, associated with *advaita-vedānta*, that the souls of the dead join the gods. The dead are either presumed to meet with the divine in a "heaven" of sorts (i.e. in the sky), or to encounter divinity before their arrival in the land of the dead.² The land of the dead is not seen in and of itself to be the land of the gods. The omission of the dry funeral and the addition of a ritual at the end of the dry funeral bring philosophy and practice into congruence. This issue will be treated in greater detail as the rituals themselves are considered.

THE LAND OF THE DEAD

TERMINOLOGY

Raman referred to the land of the dead as *a-ke-rmand*. *ke-r* refers in ordinary speech to the "street" or set of rows of houses that represents an exogamous division in the village. *a-ke-r* means "that" street—indicating distance rather than proximity to the speaker. *mand* refers generically to a village (*esp.* Toda hamlet) or place of gathering, but also to special spots where men and women sleep in the dry funeral ground. The linguistic resonance of the term is that, therefore, of a distinct and conceptually removed place, inhabited by people who are in some way related to one another.

The term by which Mandelbaum's informants most frequently referred to the land of the dead literally translates as the 'motherland' (*amo-na-r* or *amavna-r*). I have only heard this term used in songs.³ The scarcity of the term may be a function of the waning relevance of the afterlife in the lives of modern Kotas. But we must not forget that even in the 1930s Mandelbaum noted among the Kotas "little interest in the other world and only hazy ideas about its nature" (1954). Rather, the Kotas, then as today, place a great deal of

¹The Kota word for spirit, *a-yv*, also means steam or vapor (DEDR 393)—this may conjure up for Americans a rather Halloween-like image of a ghost. Although the Tamil equivalent, *āvi*, sometimes refers to a ghost, a potentially harmful entity, the term in Kota does not, to my knowledge, possess negative connotations. The other Kota term for soul, *a-tma-yv*, has Sanskritic origins. I will use the term "soul" for this entity until it reaches the land of the dead, at which time it becomes an *a-na-jo-n*, "one of that land." I retain the word *soul*, even though its connotations in the Western world are misleading, to cut down on the density of foreign language terms appearing in this work.

²See, for example, Sulli's elaborate account of the journey to the land of the dead in Emeneau 1944, II: 194-7.

³The preservation of archaic forms of speech and vocabulary in songs, expressions, or compound words is, of course, a widespread phenomenon.

emphasis on the ritual process of preparing the dead for departure for the other world. It would seem that interest in the other world has further waned since Mandelbaum's time.

I have collected other terms from song texts, including *civa-lo-gm* "Śiva's world",⁴ *ebe-ri-ṅ na-r* "our grandfather's land," *ebe-rav na-r* "our grandmother's land," and *na-r* "land"—in this case a conventionalized abbreviation for the land of dead. In the context of discussing the dwelling places of spirits of the dead, I will also consider the term *me-lo-gm* "upper-world."

Some laments refer to the land of the dead as "that land," *a-na-r*—the word from which *a-na-to-r* is derived. Meaning literally "ones from that world," the term *a-na-to-r* is used synonymously with what we would term "spirits of the dead." But the spatial anchoring of the term implies that this entity is more permanent than a spirit in the sense of *a-yv* "ghost"—ancestor might be a closer English approximation to the Kota concept.

NATURE OF THE LAND OF THE DEAD

The Kota land of the dead appears in some descriptions to be somewhat of a utopia, a tribal world which does not include Hindus, Badagas or Europeans. The Kotas, Todas, and Kurumbas live there without anxiety (*arklamn ila-d*) and with plenty to eat. The Kotas are said to live there as they do on earth, although they obey very strict rules.

The spirits of the dead are rather like other worldly police in the way they interact with the living. Their words uphold the status quo. As exemplars of quintessential Kotas, they intervene in order to help Kotas remain Kota—fulfilling a *dharma* of sorts. This exemplary function is one of the resources in the land of the dead concept from which the Kotas may draw in constructing their identity.

Sulli, unprompted by Mandelbaum, once commented that the Kotas "live like Todas" in the afterworld. This may have been a reference to the fact that they would have to tend the buffaloes sent with them to the other world. It may also be a reference to the life of leisure the Todas lead—in the view of some Kotas. Sulli compares many Kota practices to those of the Todas. An uncharitable interpretation of this tendency would be that Sulli wished to identify with the Todas because they were perceived to rank higher in the local hierarchy. But there is also a sense that the Todas, like the Kotas, are the original inhabitants of the region—in fact that they are brothers—and thus return to an earlier state of brotherhood in the land of the dead. If the funerals cast death as a form of rebirth, then ontogeny indeed recapitulates cosmogony.

⁴The term is credited, in Monier Monier-Williams (1990[1899]), to the Pañcarātra, the sacred book of (oddly enough) a Vaisnava cult of the same name, c. A.D. 100.

It is interesting to contrast this idealized picture of the other world with the fears and values associated with everyday life. In popular Hinduism, malevolent forces which cause illness are sometimes associated with disquieted spirits of the dead. I will suggest that in Kota cosmology the demonic aspect of the roaming spirits has been projected onto the Kurumbas, who are ethnic rather than supernatural others. The spirits of the dead thus remain benign. Yet *in* the land of the dead, the Kurumbas appear to be fellow tribals, not feared cultural others.

DISTINCTNESS OF THE LAND OF THE DEAD FROM THE RESIDENCE OF THE GODS

From what Sulli reported about conceptions of the land of the dead in the 1930s, inhabitants in the land of the dead were subject to divine influence and guidance. Spirits would encounter God before entering the land of the dead. The notion that a distinct land of the dead existed, however, presupposed its separateness from the dwelling of the gods. Sulli, even in his most Christian and Hindu moments, maintained this distinction. In several instances, Sulli explained that gods lived in the sky (*parlo·gm*) and spirits of the dead lived in a place separate from both the world of the living and the gods (Mandelbaum 12.11.37; 12.14.37).

ASSOCIATION WITH OTHER PLACE NAMES

Kotas of today who adhere to the soul-goes-to-god theory of death do know about the land of the dead, although not in much detail. The reader will recall my humorous interchange with Pucan regarding what happens after death; he returned my question, after a drawn-out pause, with the question, “What do you think?” Although espousing disbelief, Pucan said that some other Kotas thought the land of the dead was at a location called *kana·r te·l*. This term simply means “hidden forest,” a forest where no one lives, or that nobody has seen.⁵

On the other hand, when I pressed Raman to give me a geographic location for the land of the dead, mentioned two places, *doḍdevr veṭm* and *talko·r*. It was not clear whether these were, in his mind, two names for the same location, or whether he was responding to my question by thinking out loud. What was

⁵Emeneau relates the etymology of *kana·r* to the Tamil root *kali*, producing the sense of abandoned, expired land. I have recorded two versions of the word, one with *kaṇ* (eye) and one with *kan*. Although Emeneau’s explanation is probably correct historically, the shift in pronunciation to a compound that signifies “eye land” is interesting and possibly explainable. The sense is negative, i.e. the “eye land” is a land that is *not* seen—one that is far away, hidden, and inaccessible. This negative structure (which I believe was invented to explain a phonological shift) might have been understood as analogous to structures in song contexts where a series of place nouns are modified by negative verbal stems. It is possible that *kaṇ* represents an earlier negative stem in Kota, but I have no evidence to substantiate this idea. One would also have to test the co-occurrence of *ṛn* in *kaṛṇa·r* in speech. The absence of a doubled nasal in song could be explained as a musical alteration. We would need a linguistic rule to explain away a doubled nasal in speech.

interesting to me from a methodological standpoint was not so much *the* correct answer from *the* Kota point of view; but rather, what process of identification occurs, what associations are conjured up between places of significance. We run the risk of methodological individualism, to be sure, but we also witness a process of cultural reconstruction not wholly unlike that which occurs when culture is transmitted generally.

In other accounts the place names refer to separate locations. *Talko-r*, associated with the culture hero Kote-rveyki-n, is visited during the dry funeral at Me-na-r. It is considered to be along the route to the land of the dead, but not generally considered to be the land of the dead in itself. *Doddevr veṭm*, according to one description, is located on the Kurgo-j route to the land of the dead. The term, which means “big-god-peak,” references again the conceptual linkage between the land of the dead and the gods.

SOURCES FOR LOCATING THE LAND OF THE DEAD

I have been told by Pucan and others that the physical location of the land of the dead is somewhere near Mukurthy peak (Kota: *mukurc*), possibly at the adjacent Nilgiri Peak, just beside the Toda land of the dead, but it appears from Sulli’s descriptions and from the references of my other consultants that it is further south, closer to the village of Me-na-r.

People do not now talk much about the land of the dead or where it is located. But principle social relationships among villages, which are in a sense spatially coded, are related to current funerary practices. These practices, especially those specifying the places in which people may be cremated (discussed below), seem to depend on the proximity of a given village to the land of the dead. As a result, soteriological folklore can, with some caution, be deduced from the structure of today’s rituals. But there are earlier, fully descriptive, sources regarding the route to the land of the dead.

Sulli provided for Emeneau as well as Mandelbaum detailed accounts of the journey to the land of the dead (Emeneau 1944, II: 194-7; Mandelbaum n.d. 5.11.37). The contents of the two accounts are in their broad outlines consistent, but Sulli elaborates upon them in two different ways. The difference in emphasis and detail arises in part because each description serves as a backdrop to a different set of stories (although some subplots are the same). Since both accounts seem to meander significantly, it is difficult to distinguish common knowledge from esoteric knowledge—and either of these from spontaneous fables. Since I have found few other accounts of any detail it is difficult to ascribe the information to widely held cultural traditions. In some details the accounts seems to be amalgams of the traditions of Todas and Christians, not to mention those of the Hindus.

Sulli initially couched his description of the other world in the words of a *pe-npaco-l*, a female medium for the spirits of the dead. “Listen,” she said, “I want to tell you how our dead people are living in that

world.”⁶ In his account for Emeneau, as published in *Kota Texts*, Sulli related the story explaining the origin of the “dry funeral.” The female mediums of the dead and the male mediums of the gods instructed the Kotas to perform the “dry funeral” so that the spirits could make the journey to the land of the dead. Without the dry funeral, so the story goes, the spirits had taken to wandering about the green funeral ground, becoming demons (*pe-y* and *pica-c*), and “troubling” the women (presumably tormenting them sexually, though the account does not specify).⁷

An account provided by Ka·ka· Kamatn of Kolme:l (hereafter, K. K.), amplifies some aspects and contradicts other aspects of Sulli’s account.⁸ According to Sulli (2.8.38), K. K. was an acknowledged authority on funeral rituals in the 1930s. Mandelbaum apparently questioned K. K. point by point about Sulli’s account after dispassionately recording K. K.’s own version. Then Mandelbaum returned to Sulli for comments on discrepancies.

THE JOURNEY

After the body was cremated the soul was believed to bathe in the nearby stream, *kargaṇ ni-r*.⁹ Ritually, this was accomplished by sprinkling water from this stream on the bone relics and then throwing the creeper that bound the bones into the water.¹⁰ For nourishment during the journey, the soul consumed (unspecified) food left for it during the dry funeral, the *varlda-v*.¹¹ The spirit traversed through the *ke-rva-y*, directly northwest of the village (southwest from the *kargaṇ ni-r*), to a *kubiṭkandy*¹² at the Badaga village of Ba:kola,¹³ roughly four kilometers west-southwest of Kolme:l. From there, the soul continued to De:vaso:le (literally “God

⁶Mandelbaum first recorded this on May 11th, 1937 and rechecked the information Feb 13th, 1938.

⁷The belief that under certain circumstances the spirits of the dead may turn into malevolent or capriciously powerful beings is a widespread feature of popular south Indian Hinduism. But as I explain elsewhere, the “malevolent spirit” concept appears more often in Kota culture in association with Kurumbas and their black magic.

⁸Mandelbaum (4.9.38)

⁹The term means, literally, “black-eye-water,” that is, “pupil water.” It is considered to be extremely pure.

¹⁰According to K. K., throwing the binding creeper into the water meant, “I am going to *amo-na-r*” (the motherland or land of the dead)

¹¹The idea of souls eating food offerings during a funeral is common in Hindu traditions. I have not heard Kotas interpret this act as the transferral of sin, as is found as a central concept of *Karma* in Hindu traditions (Doniger ed. 1980, xv and *passim*). This interpretation is offered by some of Mandelbaum’s informants, however, for some of the food transactions during the green funeral.

¹²*kubiṭkandy*s “worship places” are significant in that they are the last places from which the village can be seen when leaving and the first places from which the village can be seen when returning (Emeneau 1944, II:245).

¹³Called *va-ykol* in Kota.

forest,” now the name of a mountain and of a nearby tea estate extending about six kilometers south of Ba:kola).¹⁴ A place whose name Mandelbaum recorded as Terdalvetm (probably *te-rdlvetm* “dawning mountain”) was also along the route, possibly before, possibly after De:vasole.¹⁵ The route continued south-southwest another six kilometers above the Bədaga village Edeka:du (see *BEDR*, 80: “middle forest”; in Kota, *Erka-r*) and passed another *kubitgandy*, a hill called Kidl.¹⁶ The spirit would traverse the route and arrive at *talko-r*—the place Raman mentioned above.¹⁷ Nearby was a large flat rock called *Kacar*.¹⁸

According to two of Sulli’s accounts (although unconfirmed by K. K.), the spirits of the dead would, upon reaching *Kacar*, eat forest fruits and collect plants; the men would help make hair buns for the women.¹⁹ After eating their fill and spending the night, the souls of the dead would walk through the Ama:nga:l forest and attempt to cross a bridge of thread—beyond which lay the land of the dead.

Lying beyond the boulder, *Kacar*, was, according to K. K. a hill called Tervetm (probably *De-rvetm* “god-peak,” and possibly the *doddevrvetm* mentioned by Raman) which may be the modern Devarmalai. Just beyond this point, according to Kaka, lay *amavna-r*. Each village had its own route to *amavna-r*, but sometimes they overlapped with one another, and all led to the same place. K. K. provided each of these routes in his description. They need not be repeated here.

¹⁴In Emeneau (1944 III, 75) a man claiming to have visited the land of the dead traces the route according to slightly different landmarks. First he went from the green funeral ground to the dry funeral ground, then to Pajar valley, to O-tga:l, to Talkavr.

¹⁵K. K.’s account.

¹⁶The last place from which the village of Me-na:r can be seen when traveling to the land of the dead (Emeneau 1944 II, 375).

¹⁷Alternate pronunciations of the same word are *talkavr* and *talku-r*.

¹⁸Emeneau and Rivers record that *Kocar* (Rivers: Katchâr) is one of the sites that, after death, certain subdivisions of the Todas must pass on their way to the other world. (Rivers 398; Emeneau 318) The site may be the same. Its etymology is “funeral cloth stone.” According to Emeneau’s informant, the stone was large and flat with a corpse like bulge on it that suggests a funeral cloth. The etymology may also hold for the Kota place name. For the Kotas, the large flat rock was the site at which *koṭe-rviky* pushed in his thumb to release a spring. Most certainly the *Kacar* from this story (Emeneau 1944 I: 137) is the same as the *Kacr* from the story of the afterworld. It was “the custom for all people on the song day [of the Me-na:r *varida-v*] to come to the *Kacar* flat rock, looking at Talkavr, and to drink that water and to look at the districts and the lands and to return” (ibid: 139). I am told this occurs occasionally even today, although if it formed part of the ritual activities of the two *varlida-vs* I witnessed at Me-na:r, I was not informed of it. Sometimes Kotas will visit the place simply for the sake of an outing and a picnic.

¹⁹As an unprompted spinoff to an entirely different story, Pa. Mathi and Kanymathi of Kolme:l painted a similar scenario (11 Feb 92). They also call the place *talko-r*. Note the idealized portrayal of Kota life. Men nowadays will at times bring *manḍa-v* plants home for women of the household to use in their traditional hair buns—especially when the plant is scarce locally, and the men come across it while visiting another village or traveling elsewhere. Pa. Mathi and Kanymathi also said that women put on jewelry in this resting place on the route to the land of the dead.

JUDGEMENT DAY

The Kota account of crossing the thread bridge was much like that of the Todas, in that one's soul would successfully reach the land of the dead only if he or she had behaved righteously when alive (Emeneau 1984, 318-20; Walker 1986, 235-38; Rivers 397-400). Sulli revealed the misogynistic attitudes that characterized many of his accounts in his example of what constituted a sin, and how it was punished. If a man chose to submit to his wife's will instead of his parents', god would send a cat to cut the bridge of thread and the unfortunate man would fall into a pit below. Many tortures awaited him there: A fire that burned without consuming, a seemingly Christian image, was salient among them.²⁰ Sulli relished describing how bedbugs, snakes, ants and so forth would bite the sinner.

The belief in the existence of these tortures was not limited to Sulli and did not end in the 1930s. During my fieldwork, the aged singer Pa. Mathi, in an entirely different context, remarked that after death, sinners would be left on the ground to be bitten by ants while those who lived righteously would be near god.²¹

Although Hindu and tribal traditions of India include many soteriologies that include elaborate classifications of "hells" and involve punishments for wrongdoing, no other Indian theories of what happens to the dead, to my knowledge, employ the symbolic vehicle of a thread bridge.²² The more general idea of a journey after death is widespread, however, both within and outside of India.

Continuing the description, Sulli explained that after a period of torture the "sorrow" of the sinner would reach God's feet; God, taking pity, would then arrange for the soul's safe passage to the land of the dead. Good people are taken to God's feet, and bad people are reborn as men.²³ All the souls, it appears, eventually reach *amavna:r*. K. K. initially reasoned that since the souls reach god, they must remain there forever. But

²⁰The fire burns one side of the body; then, when the body turns to the other side, the first side heals, and so forth, ad infinitum. Then a species of crocodile, which chews without biting off flesh, eats each leg up to the groin and each arm up to the shoulder. Each time the limb reappears healed, only to be subject to the same torture over and over again. In Kaka's account, there are, in addition, a series of pillars. The first is fire, and corresponds to Sulli's fire (Sulli was questioned on this later), then second and third respectively are silver and gold, for the purification of extreme sinners. Finally there are two gates that, depending on the sins of the sinner, may immediately or after a period open the way to *amavna:r*.

²¹She offered these comments for reasons which are still a bit unclear to me, after rendering the song *narajane* in a recording session at my home in Kolme-l, Feb. 1991. The song was a god song sung at the end of the festivals, playfully using paired opposites, mentioning activities of individuals which are against the rules, lazy, or impolite—recalling in some ways the *gāi* songs of North India (Henry 1975; 1988; Raheja and Gold 1994)

²²The closest analogue I could find was suggested to me by Isabelle Nabokov. In her work in Tamilnadu the spirits are called back from the other world from water in a well by means of a "thread ladder" into a *karagam* pot.

²³In Mandelbaum's account, Sulli said "If he is a big sinner, he is reborn, if he is not such a big sinner he is allowed to go up and cross over the thread bridge." (6.11.37)

later, upon further interrogation, he said that some people think if sinners have not undergone enough suffering they will be reborn as animals, or as impoverished or physically impaired humans.²⁴

HOW KNOWLEDGE OF THE OTHER WORLD IS TRANSMITTED

The Kotas learn about the land of the dead in three ways: through stories, dreams or visions, and songs. Using these as basic texts for understanding Kota eschatology is problematic. For one, how do we decide which texts are most important? How do we deal with historical change, if the original story cannot be dated and we do not know how it has been altered in successive tellings? What do we really know about the process of transmission? How are the texts received? I have attempted to contextualize the individual accounts within a framework that addresses these problems, however, I am for the most part limiting this discussion to the manner in which the land of the dead is represented in the products of performance.

Beyond these problems we may find also that there is little that marks the texts as uniquely Kota—i.e. many cultures share similar notions of “heaven.” Do we doubt the authenticity, the cultural sharedness (among Kotas), or the historical depth of these philosophies simply because they share elements with those of three, at that time dominant, societies (Toda, Hindu, European)? If so, do we risk casting the Kota tribe as essentially *other* by saying in effect, that the only authentically Kota cultural traits are unique ones? Could the very idea that the view of death (what should be done, what it means, where the dead go) is highly mutable, if not contested, be an important and persisting cultural theme in Kota society? I believe it is, but to pursue this theme it will be necessary to plunge back into field data and to consider the significance of a few stories collected in the 1930s.

STORIES OF THE AFTERLIFE

As in many cultures, some Kota stories about the afterlife originate from those who have claim to have visited the other world.

Other Worlds of the Dead

According to Sulli, the inhabitants of *amavna:r* would eventually die and go to *imavna:r*, a place in which the Todas, Kotas, and Kurumbas inhabited separate worlds, because “if they live in one place they will certain

²⁴Mandelbaum made a note to himself on this wavering of opinion here which is pertinent: “This is after a possibility of getting a clue from Sulli. Note that there is an element on which there is no concordance in the culture and so one of the easiest to be influenced by extraneous forces” (4.6.38).

not obey [god] and [will] fear one another” (Emeneau 1944 III, 75). A man named Cakol was said to have described this second world of the dead, *imavna·r* “female buffalo mother land.” In all probability, the idea of *imavna·r* originated in one man’s vision and was elaborated over time, filtered through further visions and narrative embellishments of other Kotas. Sulli’s discussions of *imavna·r* appear in Mandelbaum’s as well as Emeneau’s work. K. K. indicated that this secondary land of the dead, which he called *imogna·r* (“this child land”), existed within *amavna·r*. Both Sulli and K. K. agreed that it was better to be in this secondary land of the dead (though they disagreed on its location and name).

K. K. related his own story and the story of one other Kolme-l man, Angarn, who had visited the land of the dead during a severe illness. Although it would seem that the theme of the land of the dead would be an arena for endless speculation, some stories receive a greater degree of cultural validation than others. Sulli’s explanations took on the character of variations upon a theme: he went on to speak of another subdivision of the other world, calling it *amna·r* (our world) and another place called *pica·cna·r* (demon-land). According to K. K. there were no such places in the Kota belief system. I think the “variations on a theme” idea colors most Kota descriptions and interpretations of ritual. The journey to the land of the dead seems to be a topic most easily subject to creative variation because no one person can claim absolute authority in the matter, and no council can vote on what the route *should* be, prescriptively!

Dwelling Places of the Dead vis-à-vis the Gods

Just as the gods’ relationship to the dead is ambiguous, so is the nature of their dwelling places. Raman dreamt, for example, of meeting the spirits of the dead in the sky (see below) and a similar story appears in Emeneau (1944 II, 201-5). The idea that the spirits of the dead reside in the heavens is also implicit in one Kota euphemism for death, “reaching the upper world,” which is found in everyday speech and in mourning songs.

Let us examine the text of one such song, as sung by Mrs. V. Mathi of Ticga·r on 8 Feb. 1992. The song was composed by a man named Mu·kva·ype·ri·n (“Nose-mouth grandfather”). In it he laments the loss of his daughter who died in the forest while going to collect firewood.²⁵

ayo mo·l enav ayo mo·l ma·yde	Oh! daughter, my mother, daughter Mathi
ka·kvay gundk ve·rke·ne ama·, oye·ne ama· tati· ama·	having gone to “Crow’s nest boulder” ²⁶ for wood [you] died

²⁵I have transliterated the song text as if it conformed to normative speech patterns. For musical reasons, the sung version contained alterations in vowel-length and changes in other aspects of pronunciation not normally encountered in ordinary speech. These phonetic changes are not relevant for the present context and would make the translation confusing.

²⁶A large boulder near Ticga·r with a concave section that resembles a crow’s nest.

va·lk karva·d va·l
 jo·gi mo·l
 ayo mo·l ma·yde
 oḍ mog vecṭ i·ndṭ ama·, en gicṭ, a·de·n ama·
 ka·kvay gundk oyt tati· ama·
 enav ma·yde, ayo mo·l ma·yde iḍr
 oḍ mogn a·dve·n ama·
 ke·rk karva·d ke·r
 jo·gi mo·l
 ayo mo·l ma·yde
 indk ama·, aynne·ne taylrk
 me·lo·gme·ne ce·di·go aydd va·k
 ena·yr o·be· ayo mo·l
 ninavme·re tata·ligo, nine·ne naymbe·nigo
 ma·ntke·la·d o·ga·di·d avro·r ce·ydr o·ni·go
 ka·vay gundk oyt kala·yre·ne mardiyō mo·l

door whose threshold was not crossed²⁷
 Jogi's daughter²⁸
 Oh! daughter Mathi
 Having begat one child, what to do?, I raised [you]
 Having gone to "Crow's nest boulder" you died
 My mother Mathi, oh! daughter named Mathi
 [who is] one child [whom] I raised
 never leaving the street²⁹
 Jogi's daughter
 Oh! daughter Mathi!
 Today, having pushed [your] father aside
 You reached the upper world, said [God's] words³⁰
 However will I go on! Oh daughter!
 Your mother also died, [but] I trusted in only you
 Though I told you not to go you went along with them
 You went to "Crow's nest boulder" and turned over
 like a stone daughter!³¹

²⁷This was explained to mean that the girl's family was so well off that she did not have to leave the house to do work.

²⁸The Badaga Jogi had a beautiful daughter who looked like the deceased. It is common to call the deceased various nicknames, including those that draw upon non-Kota identities.

²⁹I.e. houses in one of three exogamous divisions in the village. Both of these passages involving reference to the connection between sheltering and beauty may be construed in several ways. First of all it is not clear whether Mathi, who works like any other Kota woman, is being compared to the beautiful daughter of Jogi, who is sheltered; or whether it is Mathi, whose family is so well off that she need not work, is beautiful like the daughter of Jogi. The reference to the Badaga seems to be an attempt to claim status through identification with this economically advanced and socially powerful community.

Another fruitful venue for interpretation involves the post-coloniality of the position of women portrayed in this song. Can we historicize the valorization of the Kota woman as one who can be beautiful and confined to the house? Kalpana Ram (1991) has discussed the problems of "attributing women's subordination to the development of private property" and adds "materialism of this kind has left us with a troubling legacy in our depiction of the lives of women in the poor non-propertied classes. Cultural control of female sexuality and, in a sense, the problem of culture itself, become the province of the upper classes."

³⁰The reference is not clear here. *va·km* refers to the words of the Gods spoken through the voice of the *te·rka·rn*, and it also refers to the prayers spoken by the ritual specialists. The reference may be to words spoken at the funeral wishing the spirit a successful journey to the other world.

³¹"Like a stone" is used in similes for death in Kota as well as in Tamil; in all probability, the expression is found also in other Dravidian languages.

ayo mo:l enava:na ayo mo:l ma-yde
a-re-ne mo:l gi-be-
enma-yr a-n ibe:n ama-

Oh daughter! who is my mother, oh daughter Mathi!³²
Who will I make [to be my] daughter?
However will I live?

This mourning song is rich in cultural information of many kinds (relegated to footnotes here for the sake of narrative continuity). The purpose for including the entire text in this discussion is to provide a complete context for the term *me-lo-gm* “upper world,” and to offer it as an example of how linguistic codings of knowledge about the other world are transmitted through formulae in song.

The idea that this upper world is where spirits and gods both reside is made explicit in another mourning song in which the deceased is addressed with the formulaic phrase, “you reached the upper world; you went with god” (*me-lo-gm ce-ydi-ya de-rvitk o-ni-ya*).

Reincarnation Theories

Are there alternatives to the type of reincarnation Sulli describes, which is substantially Hindu, or the eschatological scenario that Pucan and others espouse, that the soul merges with god after the body dies? In Toda cosmology, for example, souls live on in the land of the dead just as they do in the land of the living: However, when Todas of the other world walk, their legs wear down; when their legs wear down to the knees, the soul is reborn (Rivers 1986 [1906], 398). Among the Kotas there is no such theory.³³

According to K. K., Kotas believed that a baby resembling an ancestor was actually his or her reincarnation. K. K., like Pucan fifty-five years later, presented himself in opposition to the traditionalists—knowing but not sharing certain beliefs about death. In 1992, Raman, notwithstanding his proclivity for philosophizing, had formed no theory concerning the continuing existence of the dead; he speculated that under some circumstances souls might return as crows or other animals, but this appeared to be an offhand attempt at answering my question rather than a considered theory.³⁴

Although reincarnation does not constitute a clearly or unilaterally formulated concept among the Kotas, it is nonetheless ubiquitous—as one might be led to expect in the Indic context. Raman mentioned an instance of reincarnation in connection with an event that convinced him of the necessity of a *varlda-v*, an

³²The melody changes slightly here, as if indicating the end.

³³According to Tamil scholar George Hart, the Tamils had no theory of reincarnation prior to the coming of the so called Aryans (Hart 1980, 116). If ancient Tamil literature indeed suggests this as Hart claims it does, it may also be that Kota beliefs in reincarnation are post-Aryan (it may be that Kota culture was not as distinct from Tamil society in the period of ancient Tamil literature [2,000 years ago] as it is now, and it is possible that the Kota language broke off from Tamil at that time).

³⁴Crows are considered lowly and unclean creatures, thus their possible association with death.

instance in which the power of *na·r*³⁵ proved itself.

In the early 1970s the *dodayno·r te·rka·rn*, Pu·gan Pucan, died. It was felt by some that the dry funeral should be celebrated for this ritually important man, but others, including the wealthy and influential *mundka·no·n* Va·lmand Kamatn, argued against it. At first the anti-dry-funeral faction appeared to acquiesce but when the time came to conduct the ceremonies they participated only half-heartedly. There was a big rain storm, and because it was inconvenient, all the music and rituals were done away with. Because the dry funeral was not conducted in the manner of the forefathers, Raman explained, would not the *te·rka·rn*'s soul [he used the Sanskrit-derived term *a·tma·v*] stay at the *pacda·v*?

So one day at about 8 a.m., according to one Te·gi, late wife of "head-older brother," the dead *te·rka·rn* came straight into the house yard. "Tegi, Tegi," he called, "without feeling shame [they] did not perform my *varlda·v*. I have not gone to "that side," I have not reached Ayno·r's feet, nor have I reached the land of our grandfathers.³⁶ I have no idea what to do. Because the ceremony was not properly conducted, I remain here."

"Now what have I come to say? I will be born as a boy, as my son's wife, Ra·jamn's child. When I am born as that boy, perform the *varlda·v* in a dignified manner. Then if a path for me comes into existence, I will go and reach [the other world]." With that sound he disappeared.

Then Older Sister became fearful. Her relatives thought she might have been telling them a story, "like this, one who has died comes, speaks and goes, what is the certainty? We shall see." Then Ra·jamn had to "do the forest" (i.e. go to the seclusion hut). She became pregnant and a boy was born. I came to ensure that the *varlda·v* was performed with dignity. Then the child died and we conducted the *varlda·v* again. It was celebrated lavishly, happily. We informed Me·na·r, Kurgo·j and Porga·r about it. After that I had belief in *na·r*. I realized that our god Ayno·r is in the land (of the dead).

This story identifies reincarnation as a cultural potential in Kota culture, but only as an undesirable one. Rebirth, in this story, is not a consequence of actions during one's lifetime, but rather a consequence of failure to perform funerary rituals. These Kota beliefs do share with popular South Indian Hinduism the notion that the spirits of the dead roam in some unfulfilled or undesirable state if their death rituals are not properly conducted. Some Kotas also share the Hindu belief that unnatural or violent deaths may cause the soul to roam unhappily, becoming a demon or other troublesome entity. But unlike those among Hindus, there are no special rituals for these individuals, and none of these dead, in the recent past at least, have been apotheosized.

³⁵Literally "country," figuratively, the land of the dead. See above regarding terms for land of the dead.

³⁶Note these references to the land of the dead in the context of the above discussion.

DREAMS AND ORACLES

The power of *na·r* is also communicated through dreams and spirit possession. Female mediums (*pe·npaco·!* “spirit-seized-female”) are now rare; even in 1937, according to Sulli, only one or two were active. Pucan indicated much the same thing; he had witnessed the possessed *pe·npaco·!*s only once or twice—and then only during the *varlda·v* in Me·na·r. Few people claimed knowledge about the *pe·npaco·!* and only the *te·rka·rn* of Me·na·r was able to recall a particular instance from his childhood: a woman, speaking from the other world, said she was sewing with the needle with which she had been cremated.

Although the *pe·npaco·!* may simply have provided, for some, a sense of psychic connection with dead friends or relatives, their words were sometimes important and consequential for the community, as for instance when they established new ritual or social rules (as in Sulli’s account of the putative origins of the *varlda·v*), or attempted to prevent the living from committing ritual faults. Since the tradition of female mediums has all but died out among the Kotas, it will be useful from an analytical and archival point of view to collect, list and discuss the extant accounts of *pe·npaco·!* activity. The references in Mandelbaum’s fieldnotes appeared infrequently and in rather varied contexts.

The age of *pe·npaco·!*s was at least 30, but usually more than 50. Three or four days after a death, the spirit of the deceased might possess one of these women and speak about the future. Possession was not only spontaneous, but could also be induced. *Pe·npaco·!*s would be consulted, like *te·rka·rns*, about matters of importance. Whether one consulted a *te·rka·rn* or a *pe·npaco·!* depended on one’s personal relationship with the medium rather than upon the nature of the problem itself.³⁷ In keeping with the dispensation of other ritual roles in Kota society (like musicianship), the *pe·npaco·!* was not paid, although as a token of respect, she might be given food.

The following are examples of ritual stipulations concerning funerals that were communicated through the *pe·npaco·!*.

- 1) In order for the soul of the deceased to reach *amavna·r*, the height of the *guryka!* should not exceed that of the deceased’s father.
- 2) Women must be tattooed in order to reach *amavna·r*.
- 3) The sequence of rituals in a funeral was once corrected by a woman’s spontaneous possession, “you made a mistake, formerly the buffaloes were brought and cut on the back, and only when the cow was killed, then the buffalo was.”

It was also on the advice of the *pe·npaco·!*s that the people of Kotagiri left their ancestral village. The

³⁷Sulli frequently prefaced his description of an event or ritual with an authorizing story that involved intervention from supernaturals. Often, *te·rka·rns* and *pe·npaco·!*s were summoned as a group to solve some community problem (e.g. Emeneau 1944 I, 71).

spirits of the dead complained that the gods were offended by the smell of the latrines that the British had installed in their village.³⁸ This story implies that the gods and the spirits of the dead remain in some sort of communication with one another. It reveals a theory of the afterlife different from the modern spirit-merges-with-god theory and provides further evidence that divine beings and spirits of the dead were at one time, at least in some cases, considered to be separate entities.

But this separation/identity question is not so easily resolved. In *Kota Texts* (II, 377-9; 387), a woman possessed by the spirits of the dead foretold that a tiger would eat the son of one couple. Later, another woman became possessed by a spirit of the dead, but *spoke in the first person singular in the words of god*.³⁹ She said that the gods had the power to give life and to take it away; out of pity, the gods would give them more children.

In all these examples, the words of the spirits of the dead seemed to uphold the status quo—in the first instance, the respect for one's father; in the second, inscribing the body with the traditional marks of a Kota female (certain kinds of tatooes); and third, the distinction between cow and buffalo in relation to Kota eschatology and tribal identity (the buffalo is a Toda marker, the cow, Kota).

Dreams

The other principle means through which the living receive communications from the dead is dreaming. The stories recorded in *Kota Texts* suggest that Kotas took seriously the interpretation of dreams. Sulli records in his own "history" an instance in which both husband and wife dreamt the same dream, in which the Hindu Gods Śiva and Parvati appeared sitting on golden thrones on a mountain, and spoke in the Kota language. That the practice of dream interpretation continues, at least among some, is suggested by Raman's careful consideration of his own dreams. We have already encountered the supposed influence of God in connection with Raman's dream about the dishonest ritual specialist. Raman also related a dream about visiting his dead ancestors—a type of dream, or visionary experience, which is probably common. Raman's vision, like those of Kaka and Angarn, was apparently brought on by illness.

The dream, as Raman recorded it in his notebooks, came after he fell asleep in the middle of the day. Someone was trying to organize the performance of a drama (*vēlikumāran nāṭakam*); Raman opted out of it, complaining of pain in his legs. He went into a room and fell into a deep sleep. He saw clouds all around, up

³⁸Some people doubted their words, thinking that perhaps a demon had possessed the women, and stayed behind (Mandelbaum 5.19.37).

³⁹This degree of identification between the gods and the spirits of the dead is apparently rare: a woman claiming to actually be speaking the words of a Kota god would be chastised.

in the sky. Then there was a mountain that rose above it all and an old man with a big mustache, wearing a *varaṛ*, beckoned him. He was led up the mountain and at a certain point had to pay some money to use a particular path.⁴⁰ He was then led through a series of arches, meeting first his father's father (whom he never knew), then his father, then his father's older brother; finally he met his grandmother and her children. From this experience he became convinced that the spirits of the dead continue to exist.

SONGS

Knowledge about the other world gained through dreams is a rather individual matter, even if the bare outlines may be consistent with the stories Kotas tell from one generation to the next. One of the more lasting forms in which beliefs concerning the spirits of the dead are transmitted is song.

The Power of *Naṛ*

The stories and dreams outlined above share thematically a concern with the power of *naṛ*. *Naṛ*, variously an abbreviation for green and dry funeral cremation grounds, the ceremonies, and the afterworld, is manifest as powerful in many ways. The inevitability of death itself is one such power: all Kotas must eventually go to *naṛ*.

A rather unusual song, provided below, expresses this inevitability. The song is unusual because the emphasis on communal equality and the celebration of sacred places are textual conceits of god songs—yet this song discusses death. The composer is an unusual man: Donan, the priest for the Badrakāliyamman cult in Me-naṛ. The language of this song shares with other recent compositions the liberal use of Tamil words and expressions. Me-naṛ, among all the villages, is particularly known for its celebration of the dry funeral since, in recent decades, the gods have not come forth to “select” ritual leaders or diviners to perform god ceremonies. It may be that since Me-naṛ is the village lying closest to the land of the dead, and was, until recently, the primary site for *pe-npaco!* activity, Me-naṛ Kotas embrace the funerary side of Kota identity to a greater extent than do residents of other villages. What is puzzling about the following song, therefore, is that the exclusively Kota nature of the afterworld seems to be called into question. This version was sung by B. Ca-nti,⁴¹ age 23, 25 July 1992.

⁴⁰Although Raman did not draw attention to this particular point, it would seem that he was traveling as if a spirit to the land of the dead—along the way paying the money that is ordinarily swallowed by the deceased at the time of death.

⁴¹Ca-nti is the daughter of Me-naṛ Sivan, composer, expert *tabak* player, and community leader discussed in chapter five. Like her affable and musically able brother, Ca-nti was ready to volunteer her services. She had heard that I was recording songs and wanted to participate. As a singer she was mediocre, but her enthusiasm was genuine and

[Refrain] amd condm na·rge narl ta·na·rge
poy pitla·tm i·la·de na·rge ta·na·rge

our own “country,” in “country”⁴² the funeral ground
without lies or deception, country, funeral ground

[Refrain]

vakvo·rela·m va·m iro vadvo·m o·g ina·
e·lay panaka·m i·la·ro

It says “come” to those who come, “go” is not said⁴³

elo·rkum ode· erm i·ye odu·ro

“There are no poor or rich men

for all there is only one place, here,” it says

poy pitla·tm i·la·de ... [refrain]

kolaya·ylim i·kne kutrava·liyum i·kne

“Killers, here, criminals too, only here

nerbara·ydm i·kne nelayolo·m i·kne

innocents, here, long-lived ones too, only here

ja·dy madam be·dam i·la·ro

there is no segregation on the basis of caste or religion

elo·rukum ode· erm i·ye odu·ro

for all, only one place, here” it says.

[Refrain]

Although the beginning of the song identifies the Kota-ness inherent in the funeral ground/land of the dead, “our own country,” its end hints at an ecumenism not present in the lore of this motherland—where not all people go, just Kotas, Todas, and Kurumbas, and where those who do go, remain separate from one another. It is likely that the text is a partial reflection of Donan’s personal views. As a diviner for a Hindu goddess, Donan embraces a view of Kota religion in which the supernatural or spiritual boundaries are permeable. In this view, the all-consuming force of death, common to all of humanity, would be a strong argument for the basic unity of human experience.

More conventional notions are expressed within songs that fit conventional Kota genres. With respect to death and sadness, we may consider examples from the genre of mourning songs, *a·!l*, which provide further information about the power of *na·r*.

The Confluence of Supernatural Forces

I recorded several versions of a song in which the spirits of the dead spoke to a Me·na·r man in a dream. He thought he was dying. The following version was sung by Pa. Mathi (March 4 1992?)

well appreciated.

⁴²Although the translation for *na·r* was in this case given as “country” or “land,” i.e. a geographical area, the meaning is still ambiguous. Both could be referring to the funeral ceremony, within which there is the funeral ground. I retain the literal translation here, but the metaphorical implications must be kept in mind.

⁴³The funeral ground is personified here. It welcomes all.

eni·na·na malo inako·mige mala	Malo, my father, what to say? Malo ⁴⁴
mumbalk nerdi·ko, angvalk nerva·	[Your] front teeth have grown in, [your] molars haven't ⁴⁵
mumbalk aya, piga·lk ce·ra·	To the front teeth father, haven't reached to the back
ceril mull cenda·rkvd ja·me·n aya ayko	There is indeed time, father, to play ball with thorny plants ⁴⁶
ambe·rav na·rn anja·ydige malo	Don't be afraid of our grandmother's land ⁴⁷
eni·na·na malo	Malo, my father.

In this song we find that the spirits of the dead possess the power of knowing the future, in particular, the proper time for a person to die.⁴⁸ As always, their influence is benign. Pa Mathi sang this song for me on two other occasions, each time including more details. As is typical of mourning songs, each rendering was slightly different, and none presented the complete story. Pa. Mathi's renditions of *a·t!s* were generally brief, unlike those of V. Mathi for example, which were rather elaborate. It was never clear where a song began or ended. The open endedness of the form was revealed to me when I played back a recording of the song for purposes of transliteration. At the end of the recording, Pa. Mathi continued to sing new texts. This was the story behind the song, as she told it.

Due to the evil magic of a Kurumba a Kota man fell ill while grazing buffaloes. While in this state of affliction he heard the voices of four *a·na·to·r* singing to him, "Don't worry, nothing will happen. There is still time for you to play with balls of thorny plants." After this vision he felt slightly better, but was still too sick to leave the grazing area, which was some distance above the village. The next day a Kota named Anga·rn found him there and brought him to a place where "river medicine" (*pey mad*) was available. He put down twenty *paisu* as *ka·nyk* (offering to God) and prayed. Then he took a piece of the medicinal plant and brought it home to pound it. On the way back he collected three stones from the river (*peve·r kal*), which were heated in the fire along with the iron tip of a hand plow (*kov*). The pulverized essence of the "river medicine" was placed in a pot. The man was made to lean over the pot and was covered with blankets. Then the heated stones and plow were placed in the water, making the steam rise. After sweating for a bit the medicine made him better.

⁴⁴As in other songs, kinship terms are not necessarily literal. "My father" is an expression of affection; the speaker is one of the *a·na·to·r*, spirits of the dead. "What to say?" is a formula in mourning songs; its role in this song is not literal.

⁴⁵That is, you have not lived a full life yet; it is not time for you to die.

⁴⁶Synecdoche for enjoying life in general.

⁴⁷*empe·rav na·r* is the same as *amavna·r*, the land of the dead.

⁴⁸I have recorded one other song in which the spirits of the dead speak to a man who thinks he is dying, saying "You are sleeping as if thinking 'I'll die.' I have come from that land as your mother, as your grandmother. You leave those thoughts there. You're like the head man among ten men." That is, "you are still strong, abandon your thoughts of death."

This is apparently a very old remedy for ridding the body of an evil spirit.⁴⁹ What is of interest in this context is the juxtaposition of three kinds of “supernatural”⁵⁰ forces: the gods, spirits of the dead, and the malevolent sorcerers. The gods here appear not as direct agents but as the recipients of prayers for healing. The spirits of the dead themselves function as oracles. We do not know whether these spirits actually influence the future, but it does appear that they are in touch with the vicissitudes of fate. The malevolent forces that cause illness are not associated with spirits of the dead, however, but with members of the Kurumba tribe. Elsewhere in South India, spirits of the dead are seen to possess both benevolent and malevolent aspects. Of potential harm to the living, the spirits of the dead must be appeased. I would suggest that in Kota cosmology the demonic aspect of the roaming spirits has been projected onto the Kurumbas, who are ethnic, rather than supernatural others. The spirits of the dead thus remain benign.

Our understanding of songs must of course consider the singer as well as the performance context. The singer of these songs was, Pa. Mathi, who, it will be recalled, was particularly interested in, and believed she possessed, otherworldly powers. As a “granny” in Kota culture she enculturates children, telling stories about Kurumbas, spirits of the dead and so forth, and by so doing, teaches them to respect traditional Kota practices and rules.

Malevolence and Gender Relations

The following song, also a version by Pa. Mathi, involves the spirits of the dead in a more active role.

kal ka·r mul ka·r kanmayyo	stone field thorn field ⁵¹ Kanaman father
eni·na· eni·na· ponayyo	my father my father Ponan father
ala·d na·rk vadvi·me· kanmayyo	you came to a bad land Kanaman father

⁴⁹ Sulli described the process to Mandelbaum on more than one occasion, as a remedy for illness caused by the fear-instilled shock of accidentally meeting a Kurumba (5.11.37; 5.21.37). I myself underwent this healing for persistent bronchial discomfort (a purely medical condition in my case, but one that Mathi and Cindamani suspected might be spirit induced!). Pa. Mathi’s description omits important parts of the cure. Along with the river medicine is placed in the pot dirt from a cross roads—the cross roads being associated in South India, as in many parts of the world, with capricious or malevolent forces (see, e.g. Thurston 1912, 114, 184, 243, 244, 252; Stevenson, 146).

There is a persistent tendency to characterize Black American culture as “African” by noting that such figures as the trickster and such symbolic resources as the crossroads appear in the folklore of both continents. The tendency to locate capricious forces at crossroads is clearly more widespread than Africa and the Americas.

⁵⁰I put the term in inverted commas because Western notions of what is “natural” and what is somehow beyond the forces of nature are inappropriate here.

⁵¹The word *ka·r* can mean field, thicket, or forest (but not a *shola*, the thick patch of jungle found between hills). Here the sense is “the bush,” away from the village, rather than controlled, cultivated land near the village. This rhyming phrase resembles those in most mourning songs, in that it sets the scene in a place conceptually opposed to the village.

eni·ne·eni·ne· ponayyo	my father my father Ponan father
ala·d ka·rk vadi·me· ponayyo	you came to a bad bushland Ponan father
mandde·cil oda·c kanmayyo	by your head ⁵² one woman, Kanaman father
ka·lde·cil oda·c kanmayyo	by your feet one woman, Kanaman father
amd ke·r ami·r ke·r ke·r	in our street, “Amirker” ⁵³
ta·v a·cr vadege kanmayyo	deaths keep on happening
eni·na· eni·ne· ponayyo	my father, my father, Ponan father
irk inde·l ano·r eyra·l	tonight two brothers, two men
orkna·ntl orga·di kanmayyo	don't sleep deeply ⁵⁴ Kanaman father
avl odalk mark mad acve·nde· ponayyo	I fed her sleeping potion, ⁵⁵ Ponan father

The scene is set, as in most laments, in a threatening environment: a thorny place in the bush, far from the village. Two brothers, Kanaman and Ponan, meet two Irula women. The women make a rāgi and rice mixture, called *pit*, for the two brothers and put them to sleep. While the men sleep, the two women sit next to them, one at the head and one at the feet. They are apparently contemplating how to ensorcell the brothers to become their husbands. While the men sleep, the spirits of the dead appear in their dreams to warn of the danger. They sing, “someone has died in the *ami·rke·r* exogamous division, go back to your village. We have given the Irula women medicine to make them unconscious.”

The setting in an inhospitable place with malevolent forces lurking about is characteristic of the genre. The particulars of the story are interesting. The malevolent forces are represented by otherness of two kinds (with respect to the Kota men): ethnicity and gender. Although Kotas do not fear Irulas to the same extent as Kurumbas, they do believe the Irulas know black magic and possess supernatural power over the forest. The idea of women taking domestic and sexual possession of Kota men reverses the thematic of Kurumba stories, where Kurumba men try to sexually molest Kota women. In all of these stories, fear of evil is connected with the fear of miscegenation.

Once again we see a split between what would in Tamil society be seen as two sides of the same coin. Malevolent spirits of the dead in Tamil society can become *pēy* or *picācu* (demons) which may, among other

⁵²*mand de·cil* means literally “in head country.” It refers idiomatically to the area near the head when one is lying down.

⁵³From this point onwards in the song the words appear to be forced into the pattern of the song. Here redundancy seems to have occurred by mistake.

⁵⁴The form *orkna·ntl* is puzzling. *ork* means sleep and I was told that the second part of the compound means “memory,” to which a locative suffix is added. I suspect the word is *na·nm* from Skt. *jñāna* (borrowed through Tamil *nānam*) “wisdom.” The compound meaning literally “in sleep wisdom” could conceivably come to mean in a deep or trance like sleep.

⁵⁵Literally, “I poured unconsciousness medicine into her body.”

things, be attracted to the odor of female sexual activity; men, however, are not subject to the same danger (Ram 1991, 90). Among the Kotas, it is the libidinous qualities of other peoples, especially those who possess supernatural powers, that are potentially harmful. The spirits of the dead are still Kotas, in a sense, and thus are protective.

Role of the Spirits of the Dead

In these two songs we have seen the spirits of the dead as speaking subjects, or rather as singing subjects, appearing to men who are unconscious. They have the power to foresee the future, to advise, and to some extent to use their powers on non-Kotas. They appear to have interest in controlling Kota biological, social and cultural reproduction. Their realm of action is primarily in association with the threat of death or with the enactment of funerals. Kotas do not seem to speculate on what the spirits of the dead do, feel, or think, and perhaps there is no reason they should. Since the spirits console and protect the living it would appear that they care for them. In Rangan's song "You who are Kota daughters" mentioned in chapter four, Rangan goes so far as to say that the spirits of the dead beat their foreheads and cry when they witness a cremation. In other words, the spirits of the dead are not trying to recruit the living into their midst.

Power of *Na·r* as a Generalized Force

Let us now move to a third song, one in which the spirits of the dead do not appear as actors. Here the powers of the ancestors, in a general sense, are called upon to help the living. The Kotas ascribe this song to one Pulovaj, the mother of Pucka·rkamatn (the *gotka·rn* of Kolme·l in 1991). She sang the song at the *varlda·v* of her father, Bortn. I have collected six versions of the song on tape, and heard many other versions, both instrumental and vocal. The following version, sung by Pa. Mathi, 19 Feb. 1992, is textually one of the most rich.

enava·na ta·da·je· enko·mgo ne·ra·ge·	"Fat leg," who is my mother, Nerag! what to say? ⁵⁶
Ciru·r ko·bl tina·d pul tidi·mo	In the river valley of Sirur you grazed on virgin grass ⁵⁷
una·d ni·r udi·mo	You drank virgin water
ticga·to·n a·ravat pay	The people of Trichygady, 60 houses
ebe·ri·no·rn otkcgo	were jealous of our grandfather

⁵⁶ "Fat leg" is a nickname for the Buffalo. "My mother" is a term of affection found in most laments—although usually referring to the deceased. *Ne·ra·g* is another name for the buffalo.

⁵⁷The classic mourning song style of using negative verbal stems is employed here. Literally, "not eaten grass" is used to mean grass that is very fine, or rare.

Ka·rga·la·r o·ra·d o·t o·ra·di·go karaja·le· enava·na ne·ra·ge·	In Kargal, ⁵⁸ don't run as no other has run girl! Karajal! ⁵⁹ My mother, Nerag
ebe·rav cayte·v itme·l karga·l enava·na ne·ra·ge· mumbat ka·l pibate· itre·ne· vakvo·ro enava·na karaja·le·	Kargal, if our grandmother is real ⁶⁰ Nerag, who is my mother front legs, while keeping them in the back you should come, Karajale, my mother
enako·mgo ne·ra·ge·	What to say, Nerag?
tigga·to·n a·ravat pay nimdn no·tge·te toyn ama terda·ro	The people of Trichygady, 60 houses saying "I will examine yours" opened the buffalo pen, mother

In preparation for the dry funeral for Bortn, a large female buffalo was placed in the cattle pen. Some men saw the size of the buffalo and became jealous (*oikc*), so the night before the buffalo catching ritual was to be conducted, they opened the pen and the buffalo ran away "as no buffalo had run." The next morning the daughter of the deceased sat down in front of the pen, on top of a *vara·r*, and sang this song. "If the ancestors are effectual, if the land of the dead is genuine, let *Karaja·le* return to us from the other world, front legs back." As the story goes, the buffalo returned to the pen walking backwards. The event is used as evidence of the power of the other world, as well as of the righteousness by which Kotas of the past once lived.

The style and theme of this song resembles those of the "god song" (*devr pa·r*) genre in several ways. It is sung in brisk tempo and contains none of the glottal articulation syllables that many of the mourning songs contain (closely resembling the style of instrumental music; see chapters seventeen and eighteen). The general theme, of supernatural forces coming to the rescue of the Kotas, also resembles themes associated with the god tunes—a subject which will be explored in chapter fifteen. It is particularly like the theme of stories behind the god tunes because it involves the ramifications of village disunity. The features that identify this song as belonging to the *a·!!* category are origins at a *varlda·v*, its textual association with the spirits of the dead, and possibly, its object: a sacrificial buffalo (god songs sometimes address the cow—especially the black cow, founder of the village of Kolme·l).

This chapter has provided sources for and problems arising out of Kota belief systems concerning death. The fundamental issue is Kota ambivalence surrounding death, the afterlife, and related ritual practices. Do the deceased merge with or dwell in close proximity to the gods, or do they live on in the Kota land of the

⁵⁸*Karga·l* is a place near Tigga·r, mentioned, e.g. in *Kota Texts* (III, 181. n.4) as "a small open place in the forest near the village Tigga·r," and in a number of mourning songs.

⁵⁹*Karaja·l* is another name for the buffalo. The phrase once again builds upon the negative stem of a verb, to run, reading literally, "running, which is not running, don't run"; the negative stem means in a sense, like no buffalo has ever run before—that is, exceedingly fast.

⁶⁰*Karga·l* is yet another name for the buffalo. The word for "real" derives from the Sanskrit *satya*.

dead and possess their own powers? This chapter has focused primarily on the nature of the land of the dead.

Terminology for the land of the dead indicates an association with ancestry, reproduction and the female (“our mother’s land,” “our grandfather’s land”), settled life at a physical remove (*a-ke-rmand*), an abode in the sky, possibly that of the gods (“Shiva’s world” or “upper world”). It is a world where the three Nilgiri tribes, Kotas, Kurumbas and Todas, function according to traditional rules as they are imagined to have in the past. The role of the Kota inhabitants of that land in the present life is to advise, and even exert pressure, so as to keep the present in line with what is understood to be the traditions of the past.

The vision of the land of the dead is not at all clear cut, partly because it conflicts with the idea that souls of the dead merge with an all encompassing god-head. Reincarnation, though present as a possibility in Kota culture, has not been accepted into a coherent, communally reinforced belief system. Kotas have transmitted knowledge about the world of the dead through stories and songs; they have gained new insights, over the years, through dreams and experiences of personal revelation—often brought on through illness.

CHAPTER NINE

RITUAL THEMES: TIME AND SPACE

This is a theoretical introduction to Kota ritual culture and to the detailed, historical description of the funeral that follows. For clarity of presentation I have divided my discussion into four sections:

(Chapter Nine: Time and Space)

- I. The many pasts
- II. Spatial practice and history

(Chapter Ten: Symbolism and Social Structure)

- III. Multiplicity of ritual meanings
- IV. Sociality, ritual and cultural change

I. THE MANY PASTS

Anthropologists since Durkheim have argued that concepts of time are themselves social-cultural variables. The definition and nature of what constitutes “the past” is but a subset of this culture of time. Cohn (1987c), Geertz (1966), Erdman (1985) and others have found it useful to analytically distinguish several sorts of past, each associated with specific cultural realms. Appadurai (1981) rightfully argued that the debate over the past itself has a cultural form, thereby imposing limits on how the past can be marshaled as a “resource” in contemporary agendas. What I would like to consider here are the salient types of “pastness” articulated in Kota ritual and discourse, and the affective relationships Kotas maintain with these pasts. I will argue that the God ceremonies deal predominantly with one set of pasts and affective ties, and Funerals, another.

MODERN MODALITIES

Understanding and self-consciously representing the mere fact that the present is distinct from the past is certainly one of the preconditions, if not one of the most essential components, of what we may call “modernity.” I would like to define a “modern modality” as *an affective manner or mode of viewing or representing this past/present disjuncture.*

To take a simple example, a Badaga man once explained to me that Badaga music recently recorded on cassette had been “improved.” He meant here, technological production, addition of musical instruments, and the south Indian cinema style of rendition. The “modern modality” represented in this example refers to, but is not in itself, the type of culture change Nettl and others define as modernization, “the incidental movement of a system or its components in the direction of Western music and musical life, without, however, requiring major changes in those aspects of the non-Western tradition that are central and essential.” Putting this definition into operation involves deciding what is essential, what is not, and what “essential” means as we examine the points of view of different actors.

In this Badaga example, the “modality of modernity” is a *positive* response to the technological fiddling which differentiates contemporary from past Badaga music. However, the idea of modality allows for significant intercultural variation; we may find that other Badagas regard such technological change as bad or cheap.¹ This would constitute a different “modern modality” regarding the same phenomenon.

“Modern modalities” comment not only on the predicament of music in this technological age, but also inform our understandings of religion and ritual.

1) THE PAST AS EMBODIED IN THE NOTION OF CULTURE CHANGE IN THE TRIBE AS A WHOLE (ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, AND SOCIAL)

Analyzing Kota ritual and discourse regarding one construction of the past, that which is “embodied in the notion of cultural change in the tribe as a whole” we can discern at least two modalities of modernity: In the first, which I will call the “embracement of tribal symbols” modality, primordial symbols of tribal culture are incorporated into rituals, either as marginal survivals or through a modified form of “vicarious ritualization” (Singer 1972, 331). In this modality, Kota maintain a positive affective relationship with the past, as it is selectively defined: *The past is a good thing*. My purpose of defining such a modality is to provide an analytic basis for discussing competing and contrasting modalities, and to distinguish “modern modalities” from various types of memory.

¹I have not come across such an attitude, but that is because I did not conduct research on the topic. I would be very surprised if all Badagas supported the recent commercial movement.

Modern Modality I: The Embracement of Tribal Symbols

Frequently, Kotas will use the discourse of the divine in discussing practices, artifacts and icons of pre-industrial Kota life, saying such things as “this millet is what our God Kamatrayn gave us; this is the art of Blacksmithing that our God taught us,” and so forth. Sometimes a practice or artifact recalls an earlier, more “natural” existence. We have no way to trace how what appear to be 19th century European romantic ideas of the natural came into Kota discourse about themselves, but the history of colonialism in India and the close contact between tribals (primarily Todas and Kotas) and British in the Nilgiris certainly provided the opportunity for direct cultural influence. In any case, what we are left with is a modern “embracement of tribal symbols” modality within the discourse of Kota ritual as it exists today. This modality is perhaps more characteristic of God ceremonies than of funerary ceremonies, but it must be recognized in both.

The power of this modality is that it recognizes a disjuncture between past and present within the structure of ritual action and it argues in effect that the invocation of the tribal past, as contained in particular symbols, is a means of power. In God ceremonies the invocation of this romanticized tribal past is integral to worship. In funerals, the “embracement” modality is part of the ideology of efficaciousness, through which ritual is seen to enable the soul to reach the motherland.

Regarding ritual examples in which this modality operates we may first consider fundamental Kota notions of divinity. Where is god located? Throughout the year, gods are seen to reside in the houses of the *mundka·no·ns*. During this time the temples are locked and off limits. Temples are temporary abodes of divinity, made active during the yearly God festival. During the rest of the year, god is in the form of a bow and arrow, wrapped up in twine (the fiber itself made from forest plants in the old fashioned Kota manner) and hidden from view in the holy inner chamber (*kakuy*) of the *mundka·no·ns* house (*doḍvay* “big house”).² Although never displayed, the bow and arrow are on occasion secretly taken out, washed, and repaired. The bow and arrow embody the divine in the way that Hindu *mūrtis* do: not as symbols or representations of god but as themselves “divine.” This bow and arrow are in a sense “originals.” Bows and arrows in actual use are replications or copies of these primeval hunting icons.³

God is also contained in the special fire the *mundka·no·ns* create by churning a stick in a block of wood.

²In Kinaṛ, no one professes to know what is contained in the wrapped-up twine (*pobit nar*). Ordinarily they tie a new piece of this homemade plant fiber around it each year. Four generations ago, it is said, a man tried to untie the thread one night. In the morning, just as he finished unwinding it there was a big flash of light and he was blinded.

³In my understanding there are as many of these bows and arrows as there are *mundka·no·ns* and these obviously must be repaired from time to time, and parts replaced. The sense in which these are “original” is virtual, not actual.

In fact, bows and arrows are seldom used at all—very few Kotas hunt, and those who do almost always use a gun. When they use a bow and arrow it is only to deceive forest officers who would be alerted by the sound of a gun.

The primordial reference is twofold here: The attribution of divinity to fire, clearly a powerful natural force, has a long history in India that hardly needs reiteration; the other, less obvious and possibly less widespread, is the idea that fire must be created *without the help of modern technology* in order to be appropriate for God ceremonies (perhaps we could say it makes the fire more “divine”) and for the final cremation at the dry funeral (but not for the green funeral—this fire originates from the dead man’s hearth). That is, many rituals require fire, but *only certain rituals require fire by friction*. The reliance on preindustrial, indigenous technology is evident in those rituals which are in some way the most important.

The “embracement of tribal symbols” appears also in rituals which invoke earlier, more elaborate processes. The most developed example of this is the process of temple rebuilding. Nowadays upkeep is simple because temples are made of cement. A hundred years ago the temples required yearly rethatching. The *mundka-no-ns* index this earlier practice today by throwing handfuls of thatch (*kankpul*) on the roofs of the temples at key moments.⁴ The process of collecting plants for the rethatching is similarly ritualized. Three elders, each carrying a branch of cane and bamboo (*vet* and *vedyr*) are ushered into the village with music. Then all bow and pray before the plants in conventional order.

Where do we find this modality in funerals? Millet, used “for the sake ritual” (*ca-trik*) at key moments in many contexts (such as when the *tic pac mog* and others return from cleaning the cremation area), is *always* understood to be a historical index to the ancient food of the Kotas.⁵ During the God ceremony, Kotas restrict their diet to one type of millet (*vatm*) and to a bean stew flavored only with salt (*upudk*).⁶ Those present at a funeral fill up on rice and spiced stew, some consuming millet in small quantities as a token: but the use of millet in both ceremonies represents an embracement of Kota tribal heritage. The preparation of millet in some cases inflects its ritual meaning, an aspect which will be considered separately below.

Perhaps more important than millet as a sign of the past in funerals is cloth, or synecdochical of cloth, thread. *Toyr nu-l* (from the plant *Urtica heterophylla*, DEDR 2865), the traditional bark fiber Kotas manufactured and wove before they began trading for cloth with the *ceṁiyār* (a mercantile caste), was once

⁴ The significance of these moments is signaled musically by a register shift to the highest note the *kol* produces.

⁵ This interpretation does not preclude other sorts of ritually specific meanings, but rather exists in polysemic polyphony (or is it heterophony? dissonance?) with them

⁶ My initial impression was that chillies were not indigenous to the Nilgiris and thus they were not consumed during the God ceremony. Duryodana insisted, however, that there were forest varieties of chilli which Kotas consumed from ancient times. One of Sulli’s interpretations was that the Gods did not like chillies—an interpretation that sounds suspiciously Brahmanic, stressing the *sattva gūṇa*. The same Brahmanic ideology could be used to explain the God ceremonial prohibitions against meat, sex, and intoxicating substances, but there is no traceable historical basis for such an explanation.

used to make the black cloth (*a-rkm*) placed on the corpse and on the cow.⁷ Some other black cotton cloth, or the thread alone, is placed on the corpse for the funeral today. Nevertheless, bark fiber itself remains a powerful ritual symbol of Kota self-sufficiency, a former, nearly symbiotic relationship with the forest, and claims of indigenesness to the region.

Let these examples serve to introduce what I mean by the “embracement of tribal symbols” modality: the prevalence of such a modality will become clear as the more detailed descriptions of ritual unfold. The “embracement” modality is one of acceptance of the past, a celebration of the past, and in some cases, a sacralization of the past. In the embracement modality, the Kotas use the past to define something essential to themselves about their identity. They create an optimistic historical subjectivity. There is also a modern modality in the funeral which runs counter to this “embracement.” That is what I will call the “revisionist” modern modality.

Modern Modality II: Revisionist

In the “revisionist” modality of modernity, practices of the past are called into question, often reinterpreted or revised. It is this modern modality that gives rise to cultural ambivalence, particularly when its object is identical to that considered by the “embracement” modality. The “revisionist” modality is found most prominently in green and dry funerals and almost not at all in the God ceremony.

What are the objects of revisionist thinking? Primarily those practices which have been looked down upon by members of high Hindu castes and which run counter to Victorian values. The most important of these has been the sacrifice of bovine species—most importantly the cow, but recently also the buffalo. Kotas who approach certain aspects of their past in this modality often use such words as “shame” (sometimes using the English word, even if they do not normally speak English) to describe their feelings about sacrifice. Now this is not a feeling of shame about hunting, which is still considered an honorable and divine enterprise in its own way. It is specifically the public slaughter of cows and buffaloes at funerals that Kotas now consider “primitive.”⁸ The significance of cows and buffaloes in Kota culture, and just how they are treated ritually will be considered below. What is important here is their sacrifice. Most Kotas do not believe in sacrificing buffaloes, and cow sacrifice was expunged so thoroughly, about 50 years ago, that many

⁷Kotas still remember how to prepare fiber from this plant, although it is done very rarely because little of it is needed for ritual purposes. According to Pucan, pieces of the plant about 6' long were, along with another “medicinal plant” soaked in water in a trench of that length, about 2' deep and 1' wide. After about 8 days the medicinal plant causes the bark to peel off of the *toyv*. The bark is beaten with a stone until a white fiber is obtained.

⁸*ka-gayd*—literally “forest caste,” but “primitive” is distinctly implied.

of the younger generation genuinely do not know it ever occurred; older people profess ignorance or refuse to discuss it.

The relationship between the sexes is a second object of revisionist thinking. It was once common practice for widows, forbidden from sexual conduct after the green funeral, once again to engage in intercourse at the end of the dry funeral. The dry funeral was also an intervillage event during which males and females from different villages could meet one another, arrange trysts, and experiment sexually.⁹ Although the god ceremony restricts ingestion of intoxicating substances and sexual activity, the dry funeral does not. Dry funerals are famous for drunken brawls and all sorts of unruly intoxicated behavior. Those who oppose the dry funeral do so not only because of the animal sacrifice, but also because of the behavior it promotes, which they feel reflects badly on the Kota community as a whole. Presumably, similar “revisionist” modalities regarding the relationship between the sexes has resulted in the abandonment of the “dormitory” institution among the Kotas. According to Emeneau (1944 III, 25) and Mandelbaum there used to be *ert pay*, or “place houses” in Kota villages where young married and unmarried men and women would meet, play games, tell stories, sing and experiment sexually. These disappeared without a trace sometime between the 1930s and today.¹⁰

This modality for viewing the disjuncture between practices of today and those of earlier days is “revisionist” not so much because it changes “what really happened,” but rather because reflection on the past has brought about changes in practice and values. Revisionist thinking concerns aspects of the past Kotas do not wish to embrace in their present self-conception. Revisionist and embracement modalities have come into conflict over the years—most prominently with regard to the dry funeral.

It should be understood that the two modalities of modernity I have outlined do not have to be products of the “modern age.” I use the word “modern” because it implies a meaningful distinction from what came before, as is implied by the Latin root *modus* “measure.” Modern is always *measured* from the point of view of the present in relation to the past. What I refer to as a modern modality is a peculiar sort of historical self-reflection which may, logically, occur in any geographic location and at any point in time.¹¹ It appears that at

⁹ In the villages where the dry funeral is still celebrated today, young men will still explain that they go to the dry funeral to meet women.

¹⁰I was absolutely unable to get anyone to acknowledge that these dormitories once existed, let alone talk about them. I thought Pa. Mathi was the most likely person for information. Duryodana and I couldn't interpret her impatient response to our queries—she either didn't understand what we were asking about, or she was angry the Duryodana brought up the subject and refused to comment.

¹¹The question that should follow from this is not one that I can consider here: what sort of event or circumstances would create a past/present disjuncture, or a sense of one, such that reflection is called for? I consider this question to a limited extent in my discussion of the Kota rain ceremony (Wolf, in press).

the present time, much of the meaning Kotas derive from the ritual symbols of the God and Funerary ceremonies arise from historical reflection; this may be a recent phenomenon, but it also may be that these ceremonies *always* embodied historical reflection. One might expect the objects of reflection and their interpretations to have changed historically, particularly after the onset of the industrial age. But the fact of technological modernity alone is not enough to explain the phenomenon of historical referentiality.

The issue of memory is, related to, but ultimately different from what I have called modalities of modernity. Memory is not so much how a society reflects on the disjuncture between past and present, but rather, *that process of recall which mentally constitutes that past in the present*. So for example, memory of temple rebuilding might include such things as the manner of construction, one's grandfather's explanations of the difficulty of obtaining materials, and so forth.¹² The modern modality of "embracement" is not only the incorporation of a ritual that represents the temple building but the formulation of a discourse about this ritual in which temple building is seen to be a sacred and community defining activity. There are, of course, many sorts of memory and it is not my purpose to create an extensive catalogue, but to articulate the differences which bear upon our understanding of Kota ritual and music. In this regard I would like to limit my discussion to two of the most important, and contextually specific, kinds of memory we find in Kota funerals. The first is "individual social memory"—the mourner's immediate memory of the deceased.

2) THE PAST AS IMMEDIATE AND INDIVIDUAL MEMORY, IN REFERENCE TO THE RECENTLY TERMINATED LIFE OF THE DECEASED

By individual memory I mean the memory *by* individuals *of* individuals. Yet this necessarily takes the form of collective memory. As Halbwachs pointed out nearly a half-century ago,

... individual memory is nevertheless a part of or an aspect of group memory, since each impression and each fact, even if it apparently concerns a particular person exclusively, leaves a lasting memory only to the extent that one has thought it over—to the extent that it is connected with the thoughts that come to us from the social milieu. . . the framework of collective memory confines and binds our most intimate remembrances to each other. it is not necessary that the group be familiar with them. It suffices that we cannot consider them except from the outside—that is, by putting ourselves in the position of others—and that in order to retrieve these remembrances we must tread the same path that others would

¹²Connerton (1989, 22-3) outlines three kinds of memory, extending Bergson's twofold distinction between "habit memory" and "memory *par excellence*." He distinguishes between *personal*, *cognitive* memory claims, and memory of how to "reproduce a certain performance." Connerton also draws an analytic distinction between social memory and historical reconstruction, noting that the former may draw upon the latter but the latter can sometimes exist independently from the former (1989, 13). Memory of the temple reconstruction is an example of social memory (the *cognitive* kind) combined with historical reconstruction, based on physical and ritual traces. Halbwachs was perhaps the first to argue that collective memory is *always* reconstructive, "the past does not recur as such. . . the past is not preserved but is reconstructed on the basis of the present" (1992, 40).

have followed had they been in our position (1992, 53).

I am interested here in the *form* this individual memory takes within ritual practice. Among the Sora of Andhra Pradesh, for example, one of the forms in which memory is maintained is dialogue with the deceased. Piers Vitebsky went so far as to suggest that among the Sora, what we might call the “soul” of the dead person (before it becomes an ancestor) is “Memory,” albeit different from Western ideas of memory or the soul. “A sonum (Memory) has the locus of its existence outside the minds of any of the people whom it affects.” He contrasts this with Western “memory” which is “located firmly in the mind even when it is said to be ‘eating up’ its rememberer” (1993, 14).

Memory of the deceased calls forth multiple and complex emotions, not the least of which are Malinowski’s “dominant elements”: “love of the dead and loathing of the corpse, passionate attachment to the personality still lingering about the body and a shattering fear of the gruesome thing that has been left over. . . two elements [which] seem to mingle and play into each other” (1954, 48). Some have argued that mourners temporarily ease their pain by attempting to erase this individual memory: avoiding activities, objects, foods and other sorts of things that remind them of the deceased.¹³

What I refer to as individual memory among the Kotas are those things that not only *remind* people of the deceased, but also *individuate* the deceased from other members of the family and from other members of the community; individual memory articulated in ritual, I argue, instantiates an expressive pattern of individuation: one family from another, one village from another, and one tribe from another. That is, memorial practices are one of several kinds of funerary practices that exhibit patterning of individuation. The patterning is typical of funerals, I would suggest, because death itself singles out the individual from society. One could say that in funerals, social disjuncture is created by temporal disjuncture (the occasion of death).¹⁴

¹³Beth Conklin describes how the Wari' of the Brazilian rain forest emphasize “the need to remove reminders in order to help mourners stop dwelling on thoughts of the dead” (1995, 87) and provides cross-cultural, psychological evidence that this may be a universal aspect of mourning (Rosenblatt et al. 1976). The Kaluli would also seem to provide a parallel example: they place items used by the deceased along with the corpse not to be used in the afterlife (as among the Kotas), but to “preserve the integrity of the dead. . . the more grief-stricken and angry the next of kin. . . the more of the dead man’s possessions. . .” Voluntary taboos are maintained until the responsible witch has died “or at least until the pain of death has receded from memory” (Schieffelin 1976, 159-60). Yet it is difficult to ascertain whether reminders of the deceased are removed in order to remove memories, or in fact to intensify those memories. Schieffelin suggests that voluntary food taboos are “memorial[s] to [one’s] relationship with the one who has died.” (1976, 160).

¹⁴This Durkheimian theme of social rupture has, of course, been explored extensively in the literature on funerals and mourning. My use of the term disjuncture is not meant to evoke the phenomenon described by Malinowski, who, approaching the question from the standpoint of group psychology, suggested that “by setting in motion one part of the deep forces of the instinct of self-preservation, [death] threatens the very cohesion and solidarity of the group, and upon this depends the organization of that society, its tradition, and finally the whole culture” (1954, 53).

Recent studies suggest, however, that some societies view death not as rupture, “but as essential to the continuity of

Both of these disjunctures require cultural treatment different from that of temporal perspectives associated with Kota worship.

Transtemporal unity is important in the God ceremony. A (long durational) disjuncture between past and present is recognized in God ceremonies (as outlined above), but it is not a social disjuncture. The “argument of images” (cf. Fernandez 1986) characteristic of God ceremonies is that throughout time the Kota tribe has been “as one”; this unity, along with ritual communion with a romantic tribal past, is the symbolic basis for performances designed to ensure divine efficacy. During the God ceremony everyone wears white so as to temporarily obfuscate social differences; the sociality of the past and present are brought into congruence.

What are the practices that articulate individual memory? I will group them into three types. One is the creation of a symbolic link between hearth and pyre, linking domestic life with the afterlife. Another is the recall of the personality of the deceased through material media, burnt with the corpse. A third is the singing of mourning songs, of which there are several memorial themes. The link between hearth and pyre is created by a child, the *tic pac mog*, who I will suggest is in many ways a generational replicate of the deceased. This child carries the fire from the deceased’s household to the cremation ground, and in a formal sense, lights the fire.

The recall of the deceased through material media includes the placing under the bier and later burning objects the deceased actually used in life, and objects *conventionally* associated with Kota men and/or women (i.e. there is individuation at the level of person, gender, and tribe). Later, if the dry funeral is to be celebrated, bone relics from the cremation are saved and labeled. At the dry funeral, the relics are once again burned with symbols of the deceased, as well as a greater array of “tribal symbols” (reflecting the “embracement” modality). If the dry funeral is not practiced, the practice of individuation ends after the cremation: the bones of the deceased are treated in Hindu fashion, floated down a stream identified with the Ganges. The individuation process ends with the embracement of an *advaita-vedānta* ideology: the soul merges with God.

Mourning songs (*a:!*) recall individuality of the deceased in several ways: 1) They are usually patterned on actual lamentation, and thus recall the *fact* of mourning 2) Some focus on images from the deceased’s life. Some images are positive and others recount the tragedy of the death. 3) They employ kinship terms and

social life” (Conklin 1995, 91). Vitebsky similarly shows life and death among the Sora to be “phases of a person’s total existence” (1993, 4).

other terms of affection that establish the relationship between the mourner and the deceased.¹⁵ 4) Finally, the melodies themselves may in some cases recall the songs from which they originated, and thus the individual mourned.¹⁶

3) THE PAST AS *COLLECTIVE MEMORY*, EMBODIED IN THE WISDOM OF THE ANCESTORS, WHO PLAY A ROLE AMONG THE LIVING AS THEY "SPEAK" FROM THE LAND OF THE DEAD

This is a special kind of collective memory, not merely the form memory takes because it is socially constructed. One aspect of what I refer to here is the *idea* of the ancestors, as distinct from a particular, remembered person. That is, ancestors become generic entities, rather than individually mourned people, "because nothing remains of the group in which they passed their lives" (Halbwachs 1992, 73).¹⁷ More broadly, "collective memory, embodied in the wisdom of the ancestors" is a special form of collective memory because it is in a sense an idea about the past of the collective. As I suggest, the land of the dead is conceived as a sort of primeval utopia where the original inhabitants of the Nilgiris live in harmony, according to the old way, according to the rules. It is frozen in time and outside of time.

The memory is also collective, in part, because the inhabitants of the land of the dead represent in a generic way, the whole tribe. From time to time (less so now than in the recent past) the ancestors make themselves known through female mediums, or through dreams, and attempt, among other things, to enforce rules of the past. That is, this collective memory is seen to have agency.

This collective memory also has a place: the land of the dead. This spatial displacement of time is perhaps one of its most important features. "Ancestors" or "sould" are the closest English equivalents we have, but it must be remembered that Kotas call these entities *a-na-ŋo-r* "those of that land." The land of the dead is a geographical repository for a particular kind of identity resource: that which is essentially or originally Kota. Although this sounds suspiciously like the ideology of divinity among the Kotas, we must

¹⁵The kinship terms are not as precise as those used in actually describing kinship relationships. There are two reasons for this: one is that terms of address are different from descriptive terms in the Kota system. The other is that there are a range of kinship terms that reflect affection rather than relationship. Daughters could be called "mother" for example.

¹⁶I write "in some cases" because some melodies exist in several versions and are used for different songs. Some melodies are also rendered on the *kol* and thus evoke the original song. Music individuates to a greater extent among the Sora, summoning ancestors by "characteristic signature tune" (Vitebsky 1993, 154).

¹⁷Among the Sora, the soul remains an ancestor until its name is passed on to a child. "There remains a final, vestigial residue of the deceased which continues its trajectory ever onwards, away from the awareness of the living. Eventually, this attenuated Memory dies a second death in the Underworld, at which point it becomes a butterfly beyond the reach of any communication with the living" (Vitebsky 1993, 15).

remember that the collective creation of divinity ("making god") explicitly rules out some of the practices which ensure the safe passage of the soul to the land of the dead (such as the performance of funeral tunes, for instance). It is the realm of the ancestors that is rejected when cow and buffalo slaughter is forbidden and the dry funeral deemed unnecessary. This is why modalities of "embracement" and "revision" come into conflict within the ritual category of death, not of god.

II. SPATIAL PRACTICE AND HISTORY

In this section I discuss how stories and practices link spatial constructions with social and temporal constructions. Kota relationships with one another have spatial analogues—not only in the boundaries of villages, but also in the layout of each village. Village places and the spaces between them also provide important points of reference for our understandings of "pastness."

VILLAGE, FIELD AND FOREST

First it will be useful to lay out the broad classification of space at the extra-village level. The simplest characterization is three part: village-field-forest. Village, or *ko·ka·l*, includes the areas in which Kotas live and go about their everyday business (except, usually, of defecating); it includes all the Kota houses, the *ke·rs*, the paths between them, the temples, and most of the sites of divinity. Usually, sacred stones or trees are construed as village borders unless they lie clearly beyond the confines of domestic space. Within the village, a section is marked off as "outside" (*poranjik*) or "forest" (*te·l*); this is the area in which menstruating women must confine themselves and was formerly the place in which women gave birth (now Kota women give birth in hospitals). Small gardens next to the house, containing such things as *ki·r* (amaranth), are contained within the village; so are the cow sheds (*a·lva·l*) and the cow pens (*to·y*) belonging to the *mundka·no·ns*. Other cow pens (some no longer in use) and temporary shelters are located outside the village.

The fields, or *ka·r*, are conceptually the intermediate regions between the village and the forest. Kotas and non-Kotas use this space to grow food and trees for wood, graze animals, and so forth. Not all of the land is cultivated, but neither is it dense jungle. In the past, Kotas divided the land around their villages amongst themselves. The pattern in which the land was divided replicated the spatial pattern of houses in the *ke·rs*, and thus the pattern of kinship. A single house run by a male head of household became several houses in a row during the next generation as brothers built adjoining houses. In the following generation, children built further houses in the patrilineal row, or began new rows, still classified in the same *ke·r*. As for land,

space was divided rather than added since the total space available was not infinite. Thus a given plot was divided equally among sons of a father, and subdivided among their sons.¹⁸ Although actual practice was never as neat as this, one can envision the system from the center of a pie, looking outward to equally subdivided sectors.

Inheritance is handled in the same manner today. Kotas of most villages were granted significant *parra* lands (property rights granted by the government) surrounding their villages. Some Kotas have become wealthy, purchasing land from Kotas and other land owners. Others have sold their lands; many have also been cheated out of their lands. There are still regions, however, in which the replication of kinship relations is visible in the boundaries between cultivated lands. The division is particularly visible through the alternation of crops, fallow lands, and so forth. Cultivated land does, in fact, extend into the village as constituted by sacred places and the odd house or two, but it does not extend into the region of what appear to be the original *ke-r* divisions.

Some village rituals and behavioral codes extend into the *ka-r* regions. For example, Kotas will pray before beginning work in the fields. Others are different. One must not wear footgear in the village but one may while working in the fields, except while performing rituals for agricultural ceremonies, or when collecting millet for the god ceremony. Fields are also the site of important rituals, such as the husking of millet used as an offering (*paryk*) to the gods, and the elaborate cleaning of the water channel before temple-opening day (see outline and chart of god ceremonial events in the appendices).

The fields are among the regions in which Kotas and others defecate. As far as Kota sanitary practices go, this does not create a problem of defilement, because the appropriate regions are recognized and set off from regions which are used for water and ritual. With the changes in land ownership and usage by non-Kotas, certain areas have become polluted, both from the standpoints of ritual and sanitation. In some cases, Kotas have altered their ritual practices in response to these changes. Men instead of women, for example, now collect clay during the god ceremony in Kina-r. I also received the distinct impression that the increased presence of outsiders near the Kota village was considered by men a threat to female chastity, leading to the consequent takeover in ritual roles.¹⁹

The forest is a space associated with wild animals, hunting, unpredictable forces of nature, the powers of

¹⁸ There are cases in which women inherit land, and in which a man moves to the house of his wife but this is not normative.

¹⁹The question is not a simple one, however. I would be surprised if individual women were actually discouraged from working on or passing through the region traversed ritually during the clay-collecting. Perhaps as group acting collectively, Kota women would attract a, possibly harmful, "male gaze" from non-Kotas that would otherwise be absent or less harmful during the course of ordinary, day-to-day activities.

the gods and the sorcery of the Kurumbas. It is associated in different ways with both divinity and death. The forest is also the source of ritual items crucial for the celebration of funerals and god ceremony. In an important way, the forest is a source of the naturalistic, primeval identity complex Kotas have developed and which I have alluded to above. I will consider below the ways in which the forest plays into dual constructions of divinity and death.

Forest, field and village are certainly not the only categories of space, but ritually they are some of the primary. Others include "town"; for example, during the god ceremony, Kotas must not go to the city of Ooty for fear of defilement. It is also the locale of technological modernity, a modernity which is in some ways opposed to the naturalistic ideology of Kotas concerning divinity.²⁰ Badaga and Toda villages, and now villages of Hindu castes, certainly occupy categories in Kota constructions of space. But I would argue that the three I have outlined provide the primary building blocks for extra-village ritual space as defined in ceremonies Kotas conduct *for themselves*.

BIG AND SMALL

Kota terms for size, like their English counterparts, are sometimes used metaphorically. "Big" and "small," and "high" and "low," for example, are not only spatial terms, but terms for relative importance or status as well. Thus the *doḍḍu*, the "big" cremation spot is actually the small fire from which is drawn the flame for the actual pyre, the "small" cremation spot (*kundu*), which is actually much larger. Similarly, the canopy under which the ritual specialists sleep during the god ceremony is called the "big" canopy (*doḍḍarcay!*) even though it is smaller than the "small" canopy under which the rest of the men sleep. The *doḍḍic*, "big flame," (sometimes called *devr* "god") is the fire in front of the "big" canopy and is brought to this spot from each of the *mundka·no·n*'s houses²¹; it is smaller than the enormous fire that is lit in the central area for dancing.

We may fruitfully employ Dumont's notion of hierarchy as encompassment (Dumont 1970, 65) to understand some of these metaphors of size. For example, at the cremation ground, the smaller fire lit to one side (using coals from the hearth of the deceased) is ritually bigger than that of the funeral pyre because it is the source of its flame—i.e. it encompasses that fire. Vessels for holding liquids are hierarchized in Kota culture, as in south Indian culture generally, according to size. A small tumbler is used to drink out of directly. It is thus ritually less pure than a larger vessel from which liquid is poured into that tumbler. This is

²⁰The opposition is not consistent. Electric lights are, for example, incorporated into the late night activities during the God ceremonies, but stitched cloths are not.

²¹Via two intermediate raised circular spots of ritual importance called *tondaḍ*.

turn is less pure than the water pot used to fill the smaller vessel. One of the ways in which the *mundka·no·n* is “bigger” than ordinary people is that he must drink only out of these larger, encompassing vessels—never out of a tumbler.

There are many other examples of this principle. Funerals for older people must be more elaborate than funerals for younger people. The height of a father’s *gurykaṭ* must not be smaller than that of his sons. Ritually more important *koḷs* are longer than ritually less important ones—and sometimes they literally encompass them (one may be a shorter version of the other). The height and thickness of the umbrella pole *pardac* at the dry funeral is proportional to the age and status of the deceased (for women, a pole of Eucalyptus or some other ordinary tree is used).

HIGH AND LOW

Height or elevation is a metaphor in its own right. Terminology is sometimes confusing, however, because the prefix *me·* (*me·l*) in Kota as in other Dravidian languages signifies height as well as the direction West. In Tamilnadu this makes some sense because the tallest mountains of the state are on its western border. But this does not make sense in Kerala, where these mountains are to the east. “*ki·*” means low, but it also means East (*ki·gotmu·l*), providing a similar problem.

High-low social distinctions are applied to gender. Men must in most activities be situated literally above, that is, higher in elevation than women. Women should not, for example, sit on a stool if men are sitting on the floor. Whether at home or in ritual situations such as the dry funeral where men and women sleep near one another, men have to sleep physically above women.²² Men even defecate and urinate in regions higher in elevation than women do. This is explained as a courtesy to women, who sometimes need to urinate more immediately than men, and thus going downhill from the village is easier than trudging uphill.²³

THE KOTA HOUSE

The orientation of Kota houses illustrates further uses of “high” vs. “low” and their ambiguities. Ordinarily, Kota houses face east. The half of the front room (*kudl*) which is closest to the front door is called the *ki·ko·!* not because it is normally to the east, or because it is physically lower, but because it is ritually lower. The

²² The place for men to sleep lies in the center of the dry funeral ground near Kolme-l and is called *mand*. The women’s section is directly below it and to the east. It is called *por mand* “outside” *mand*.

²³ The separation of men’s and women’s places is of course useful for purposes of privacy, such as it exists. One generally avoids the areas in which the opposite sex relieves him or herself during peak times—such as first thing in the morning.

side next to the door is considered to be less clean than the far side; although Kotas tend to keep their floors well-swept, small piles of dust are sometimes left temporarily against the front wall before they are disposed of. The far half of the front room is called the *me·ko·l*, again because of its ritual status, not because of its physical height or westerly orientation. If men and women are sitting in the front room, men are supposed to occupy the “higher” half. Within the *me·ko·l* the ritually most important spot is that to the north, next to the kitchen and the *velk*, the oil lamp whose flame is one form of divinity. The *me·ko·l* figures, for instance, in *pabm*, where each household keeps the plate off of which each Kota must eat. In the child naming ceremony, the elder who utters the child’s name while feeding millet into its mouth must sit in the northwestern part of the room mentioned above.

To the north of the *kuḍl* is the kitchen, *uli·l* (lit. “in inside”).²⁴ The *velk* is usually kept in a crevice, about shoulder height, on the north side of the doorway between the kitchen and the front room. The hearth is called the *elka·l*.²⁵ To the right of the hearth is the traditional place in which men must sit, the *gaṅcati*.²⁶ Note that this ritually higher place is traditionally east, the word for which means “low”; thus although the terms for east and west, physical height, and ritual stature are sometimes the same, their referents are not always congruent with one another. The opposite side is the woman’s side. Women rarely merely sit in this spot, as do the men on the other side; they squat and briskly move around, feeding wood to the fire, stirring food, cutting vegetables, grinding spices and cleaning. The name for this spot is the *pemokarti*; the first syllable means woman and the second is derived from the verb “to enter” or “cross over,” possibly indicating that this is not a fixed spot where women sit, but rather a place through which women constantly pass as they perform various tasks inside the house.

The top of the *elka·l* on the right side, next to the men’s side, is called the *tale·l*, the “head” of the hearth. This is perhaps the most ritually important spot in the house and a site of divinity. Kotas worship this spot during the god festival and for harvest festivals. During *Pabm*, first the *mundka·no·ns* and then the rest of the village light their oil lamps, make a pancake out of *a·mnj* (*Eleusine coracana*, or *rāgi*, a kind of millet) and offer it to the deity on the *tale·l*, and bow down before it. Finally, on the *elka·l* there are two openings for placing cooking vessels. That which is next to the man’s side (*gaṅcati*) is called the *me·kuṛic*, “me” again signifying ritual “height” because it is on the man’s side (it is east, not west, and level with, not above, the

²⁴Kotas who have enlarged their houses sometimes move the kitchen to the back of the house. In these cases, the ritual orientation of the room is calculated according to the location of the hearth.

²⁵Emeneau records this as “fire-place between two stones,” the form in which the hearth once existed. Now it is usually fashioned out of mud.

²⁶Sometimes a platform used as a bed is placed just to the right of this spot, thus making the area physically raised as well.

other opening) and on the side of the *tale·l*.

In the household many of these spatial terms are most firmly grounded in day to day experience. Divinity is located not only on the hearth, but also in the rafters of the house directly above or near the kitchen. In this place, called *att*, pots and dried straw are stored for use in the god festival. When sounds issue from that region which are not attributable to wind or movement within the house, Kotas say “*devr erygo*” (lit. “god descends”).

PHYSICAL HEIGHT AND RITUAL PRIORITY

Physical height sometimes corresponds with ritual height, but not always so. It makes sense that in a culture like ours where “height” is a metaphor for status that divinity in some degree would be associated with upper regions. The term *me·lo·gm* “upper world” which we find in songs and for which there are other Indian equivalents can be understood perhaps not only as a literal land of the dead or heaven in the sky, but as an upper world in a metaphorical sense as well. Much as height has positive connotations, that which is low may be used metaphorically as negative. Kotas refer, for instance, to a bad or negative thing as *ki·pata·l*, literally “low grass area.” This slang term used among the younger generation is roughly equivalent to “thumbs down.”

“Height” is a musical metaphor among the Kotas, much as it is in the west. Ranges on the *ko!* which we recognize as “higher” in tessitura are recognized as such by the Kotas as well. The topmost pitches on the *ko!* are used to signal and constitute important ritual moments (often reinforcing the function of the *kob*). Thus when the *mundka·no·ns* throw thatch on the temple roofs to symbolize the former process of rethatching, the “temple opening tune” briefly shifts to the highest notes on the instrument—“high” signifying both “important” and actual “height” as the thatch is ejected into the air. Instrumentalists will signal to male dancers to raise their arms and turn, exclaiming “o”, by shifting into the upper register during a dance tune as well.

Regions in which temples stand, where dancing traditionally takes place, and which are ritually pure are generally higher in altitude than other spots in the village. But this principle is not uniformly applicable. It turns out the most important dancing spot nearby the houses in Kolme·l, the *gagva·l*, is not physically the highest. Rather it lies in front of the spot on which the first house (*kab itd pay*) was built. The temple area is higher than this spot, and the corresponding musical pieces which can be played in the corresponding areas reflect this hierarchy as well—a longer, more complicated pieces as well as the simpler pieces may be played in the temple area. Only the shorter dance pieces may be performed in the *gagva·l*.

The *ke·rs* are hierarchized for the most part according to height, with the exception of the *gagva·l*. On

ordinary days the *mundka·no·n* can only walk on the ritually purer *ke·rs*: *gagva·l*, *koryke·r*, *naryke·r*, and *talke·r*. Although the spatial metaphor for ritual purity is height here, women's menstrual practices reinforce this classification, and as we will find below, so do funerary practices. Women who live in these *ke·rs* must go to the *te·lva·l*, or seclusion hut, at the onset of menarche and stay there for at least two days.²⁷ After this period they may wash and return to the verandah (*payva·l* or *tinva·l*) of the house and sleep there for one night. The next day they may wash and return as far as the main room of the house (*kuḍḍ*), unless bleeding recurs, in which case they must return to the verandah. Finally, women of these *ke·rs* may return to the kitchen after a final bath, providing the bleeding has ceased. Women in the "lower" *ke·rs* need not follow these practices assiduously, and may omit sleeping on the verandah.²⁸

PLACE, SPACE AND HISTORICAL MEMORY

The reasons for which areas are considered "high" or "low" are often difficult to determine. While I was mapping the temple area in Porga·r I learned that the western portion was called the *me·kolva·l* and the eastern portion, the *ki·kolva·l*. It so happened that the temples themselves stood in the section called *ki·kolva·l*, and the ground appeared to be level. I reasoned that the spaces were so named according to cardinal direction, for why would temple areas be considered "lower" than any other spot? I suggested this to the *mundka·no·n* who was kindly assisting us. He replied in Tamil, "Oh, is that how you figure it? We figure it according to the way the old temple area was configured." The village has been moved twice. Each time the spatial layout of the village and the terms to describe it were retained. So it appears that in the first site of the village, the region in which the temples were built was lower in elevation than the rest of the compound. I did not record the etymology of the term *kolva·l*. In Kolme·l the temple area is called *guryva·l*; *kol* here probably means smithy (see DEDR 2133), since Kota temples are blacksmith shops *par excellence*.

The Porga·r anecdote illustrates the importance of spatial configuration in preserving Kota identity in

²⁷The are, set off by drainage ditches, is off limits to men. Women will sit outside together during the day, cooking and washing for themselves. At night they will retire into the small house. The term *te·lva·l* means literally "forest entrance," thus invoking the association between women and other forces of nature associated with the forest. More literally, the term may recall a former practice in which women literally went to the forest while menstruating, although no other evidence points to this conclusion.

²⁸During the god ceremony, *mundka·no·ns* may not walk on any of the conventional paths within the village, but must rather travel around the edges of the village. In order to participate in the God ceremony, all women perform monthly seclusion practices, for ritual's sake, at a predetermined point before the temple opening. Having performed this purifying ritual, women whose menstruation begins during the height of the God ceremony do not have to separate themselves from the rest of the village, though they are not supposed to dance. The ideology of village unity appears to override that of purity/pollution when it comes to menstrual pollution; no such compromise is ritually incorporated into the God ceremony with regards to death pollution, however.

situations of change. The members of this village not only preserve the configuration, however, but also memorialize the physical *place* in which they once dwelled. The park in the center of Kotagiri town is the site they once inhabited before the British forced them to vacate the area. They return to this site each year during the God ceremony, forming a musical procession. Spatial configurations under conditions of change are preserved in other villages as well. In Kurgoj, for example, as the village expanded the temples were moved to a new location above the lines of houses. In place of the old temples, stone monuments were erected and the regions are still treated with the reverence of temple areas.

It is probably a universal feature of so-called “sacred” sites that they preserve or encode some aspect of a culture’s perspective on its past. The ways in which such places are incorporated into ritual often provide new layers of meaning. In Kolme-l for instance, an annual ceremony for bringing rain incorporates major sites of divinity that surround the village, and in a sense constitute its borders. By including these sites in one ceremony, the Kotas bring them into logical relationship with one another—in this situation, a relationship that creates a spatial wholeness in the village and at the same time insures the efficacy of village deities.²⁹ The significance of sites usually begins with some sort of miraculous occurrence. Then personal experiences at the spot provide variegated meanings through time; stories are added to stories; stories about one spot are transferred to other spots, to other villages, and so forth.³⁰ These sites become geographical focal points for significant activity. We already encountered Cindamani’s experience at *ponic* (the site where monetary offerings are placed during the rain ceremony), in which she became paralyzed (presumably through the force of god) and was unable to commit suicide.

PLAY

There are many sorts of ritualized activity that reinforce the significance of certain spots. The most common of these include offering money to the gods, praying, dancing, chanting *ho·ko·*, performing particular instrumental tunes (sometimes linked specifically with the spot), singing, and respecting sartorial conventions or ritual restrictions—often involving purity. Ritual forms of play and games also reinforce the significance of sacred spaces in the village.³¹ Games, frequently staged between different *ke·rs*, create fields for interaction between exogamous groupings of the village. In so doing they not only act out a form of organic

²⁹I discuss this at length in my article “Rain, god and unity among the Kotas” (Wolf i.p.).

³⁰Several villages have a sacred site called the *toḍpa-l*, for example, where a divine bison was believed to repeatedly appear.

³¹The significance of play has been examined a great length by a number of authors. The classic study is Huizinga’s *Homo ludens* (1950); Turner (1982) considers the relationship between play and ritual.

solidarity but also mark out the space on which the game is played as socially significant.³² The scope of this section does not permit an elaborate discussion of how spatial relationships in the village are literally “played out” in ritual games, but brief mention of a few of these are in order.

At the peak of the god ceremony, when the temples have been opened and the all-village feasts have begun, considerable ritual attention is focused on the temple area. This is the time at which men must sleep together under the canopy and during which day and night vigil must be kept over “god,” embodied in a continuously burning fire. At one point, boys and young men walk briskly back and forth from a set of upright stones (*naṭkal*) used to mark the spot where the village council meets, to another spot in which stones are stacked for the game of *pul*, played during Pabm. Then the younger boys race from the Kunayno-r temple to the meeting stones. No denotational significance is attached to this practice other than its importance as a *ca-trm*, a ritual.

During Ticga-r rain ceremony, attention is focused on a number of significant places, including the site of a divine stone, called *kana-traya*. It is said that this stone used to take a monthly bath in a well, returning each time to a new location. Nowadays it seldom moves, they say, because “people from outside have polluted the area.” Men worship (offering coins, bowing down and saying “god”) at the site of this divine stone, attempt to consult god through the possessed *te-rka-rm*, and engage in several forms of ritualized play before proceeding to the next site.³³

For the most part, play appears to be one of the kinds of activities that constitute a place as holy, and that contributes to the process of worship. Sometimes what would appear to be play can also turn into an activity invoking the divine. In Me-na-r, the Kotas used to perform temple dramas. On one occasion, Mr. Donan³⁴ donned the Kannaki (a heroine whose rage is said to have caused the city of Madurai to burst into flames) costume to enact a scene from the Tamil epic Cilappatikāram and became possessed by a goddess who later revealed herself to be Badrakāliyamman. For eleven years Donan performed pūjā for the goddess. One day the goddess expressed the desire (via Donan) that a temple be built for her. It was eventually built, but characteristically, the villagers were divided in their support of this goddess and the authority of Donan, the

³²Compare to ritualized forms of rivalry in Kerala in which “such a rivalry between factions refers more or less explicitly to a superior unity (of which factions are but temporary parts)” (Tarabout 1993, 96).

³³The games are *cika-ṭ* (called elsewhere in Tamilnadu *kapaṭi kapaṭi*) in which two exogamous clans line up and compete against one another, *ma-nige ko-nige*, and *dirdirvaṭle* (men hold hands and spin faster and faster until they break apart, all along exclaiming “*dirdirvaṭle*”).

³⁴Donan was mentioned earlier in connection with his musical compositions.

pūjāri.³⁵

These examples of crossover between playful and serious religious activity are not at all unusual in south Asia. In the Hindu world, these phenomena are familiar forms of *māyā* (see e.g. Doniger 1984, 119 and *passim*) and participation in god's "play" (*līlā*) constitutes an important form of *bhakti*. This is not to say that Kotas interpret such play in terms of Hindu models, but merely that in play, as in other ritual activities, there are formal correspondences throughout many south Asian traditions.

CREMATION LOCALES

We may also understand Kota constructions of space by considering the relationships between village orientation and cremation practices. In Me·na·r there are seven cremation places (*du·*) in the dry funeral ground, one for each village. Kotas from any village who happen to die in Me·na·r can be assured a proper green and dry funeral there. Me·na·r is considered the "head" village (*talna·r*) and its name means "high land." Perhaps this constitutes the qualification for hosting a funeral for any Kota. It would also make soteriological sense to hold the funeral in Me·na·r, because it is closer than any other village to the land of the dead. That is, so to say, the souls would have to pass through Me·na·r anyway. This may be a rather crude and over literal superimposition of ritual on the folklore of the afterlife, but it bears out as we examine other rules.

Although the funeral for any Kota may be conducted in Me·na·r, such is not the case in other villages. If, for instance, a Me·na·r man dies in Kina·r, the body must be transported back for a proper funeral in his home village. A Kurgo·j man died in Kolme·l and a funeral was held for him while I was living there. If my hypothesis is correct, his corpse was not transported back to Kurgo·j because Kolme·l is closer to the land of the dead. I did not at the time collect all the permutations concerning who may be cremated where and under what circumstances, but it is clear that such information could be used to establish a ranking. More questions need to be asked in order to determine whether or not the basis of this ranking is spatial proximity to the land

³⁵ I witnessed the consecration of this temple in June of 1991. The cult for this goddess appears to be entirely unrelated to that described by Knipe (1989). The rules for worship were apparently derived from Donan's private visions, which he wrote down in inchoate Tamil notes and reconstructed after each fit of possession. The form of worship was partly Kota in style in that Donan and his wife undertook their priestly roles jointly. There was considerable divisiveness in the village concerning worship of this goddess. One of the concerns involved the temple location, the *cūykanḍy*. This place was the site of a sacred cattle pen where ritually prepared clay pots were once kept for a jointly celebrated Badaga-Kota festival. The relationship with the Badagas is no longer maintained but the place is ritually off-limits to women. In the 1920s the Kotas were going to build a Mariamma temple on this site, but one Kota named Ve·ry became possessed by the father god, *ayno·r*, and said "I won't give you this place for a temple, Mariamma! I won't give you a place within my boundary. . . If you want to stay, go beyond that river." Some Kotas are concerned that the recent introduction of the Badrakāliyamma temple to that site will provoke their god's wrath.

of the dead. One should not assume that Kotas calculate according to a single overarching principle. These practices may exist as a discrete set of rules, whose one-time purpose is no longer remembered.

PLACEMENT OF BIERS³⁶

Duryodana's mother first brought the selective placement of biers to my attention, explaining that in the *ke·r* of her husband Raman's exogamous division (*a·ke·r*), the corpse would be placed in the upper of the two streets, and within that, the "head street" (*talke·r*), which is slightly elevated and to the east of the rest of that line of houses.³⁷

In the *a·ke·r* exogamous division, *talke·r* is ritually the purer section of the *ke·r*, and during the *varlda·v*, is one of the locations on which dancing may take place. As I pointed out earlier, women's menstrual rituals must be followed more assiduously among women who live in *talke·r* houses. The reasons for placing the corpse in this *ke·r* seem consistent: it is the dancing place, ritually the most pure, and in metaphoric geographical terms, the highest.

For deaths occurring in the middle *ke·r* (*naryke·r*) the corpse is not moved to a different level but in *i·ke·r* the corpse must be kept in a part of the *ke·r* known as *gagē·r*. I am unsure how consistent is the terminology for and what is the breadth of the area which comprises this section of the *ke·r*. In 1990 *i·ke·r* comprised two rows of houses along an axis which was more-or-less north-south. Below these houses, to the east, were houses on an axis more or less east-west, with a few crossing perpendicular to them. All of them form one exogamous division, but there is also a conceptual division between them, based on a quarrel over property between brothers, resolved through an incestual marriage through which brothers became "brothers-in-law" (*ay!ba·vn*).³⁸ Since the principle spatial categories of the village are named according to these divisions of family housing, it seems appropriate to recount the historical events that are used to justify these divisions.

KE·R ORIGINS IN KOLME·L

Before the village was divided into *ke·rs* the village consisted of descendants in one patriline, who traced their ancestry back to the village founder. The original house in the village, the "house for which the [foundation] post is stuck" (*kab itd pay*), was at that time the house for the *mundka·no·n*. In front of it then, as now, was

³⁶I am not confident about my data regarding the placement of biers in Kolme-l and Mandelbaum's notes have not clarified the issue; nonetheless, a discussion of what appears to be the case is illustrative of the symbolism of Kota spatial practice.

³⁷ This was the area where Pucan's house was located.

³⁸A version of this story is provided in Emeneau's *Kota Texts* (1944, I:44-55).

the area in which the first fire was transferred and the first dance danced at the god festival. This place is called the *gagva-l*. The term *gage-r* refers to the part of *i-ke-r* in which the *gagva-l* lies, that is, the lower of the upper two north-south lines; but it can also refer to both upper lines, as it does in the map Mandelbaum sketched for his village census. Emeneau also notes it is the "top street of *i-ke-r* at Kolme-l." Nowadays the very top street (i.e. above the *gagva-l*) is distinguished from the street below it by the term *koryke-r* (prob. "little" *ke-r*, i.e. DEDR 1851) but this term does not appear in either Mandelbaum's or Emeneau's notes.

The following is a summary of the origin story for *a-ke-r* in Kolme-l.³⁹

Long ago there were three sons of one father; two were born to one woman and one to another. There was a quarrel over property. The son of one mother thought the property should be divided in two: one part to the sons of one mother and one part to the son of the other. The two sons of the other mother thought the property should be divided equally into three parts. In the end, there was a fight and the lone brother was beaten and chased out of the village. He started his own village somewhere near Gudalur. Generations later his descendants were coaxed back into the village and married to daughters from the descendants of his step-brothers. The descendants of this returned family came to form the *a-ke-r* division, and lived in the house next to Pucan's.

The older of the original two brothers was *mundka-no-n* and lived in his father's house, the *kab itd pay*. His descendants are those living in *gage-r* and represent the family from which the *dodayno-r/amno-r mundka-no-n* can be selected; the descendants of the younger brother live in the upper line, *koryke-r*, and are those from whom the *te-rka-rn* (for *dodayno-r*?) can be selected. From *a-ke-r* are also selected *te-rka-rns*.⁴⁰

Now the houses of the *mundka-no-ns* are along the northern end of *koryke-r* even though the men who fill these positions belong to descendants of the *gage-r* (lower street) people—the older brother. The complications are further compounded as families extend into areas which are not clearly classified in the *ke-r* system, or which conflict with that system. What remains, however, is the significance of the places as abstract entities, distinct in a sense from those who occupy them now.

³⁹The versions of the origin stories for *a-ke-r* in Kolme-l (recorded by Mandelbaum and Emeneau from Sulli, and two versions Pucan told me) agree in general structure, although Pucan's version seems more plausible because it involves a dispute over land. The version in *Kota Texts* concerns a dispute over meat—hardly a reason for the long standing family split that ensued.

⁴⁰ Although the upper line is considered ritually the purer, for some reason the house of the recently deceased *te-rka-rn* Matr was on the lower.

THE DIVISION OF KE·RS ARTICULATED RITUALLY

The nominal distinctions between *ke·rs* is articulated in the dry funeral, where each of four sectors, *naryke·r*, *a·ke·r*, and two in *i·ke·r*, have separate spots in which *koṭanm* millet, and later biers, are kept. At the beginning of the dry funeral, before the *koṭanm* is poured, a set of musicians drawn from each of these *ke·rs* would perform funerals tunes while standing in their respective places.⁴¹ The number of *ke·rs* represented depended on whether members of the associated families had died in the period between that and the previous dry funeral. Here we see an explicit difference in the kind of solidarity expressed at a dry funeral and a god ceremony, and it is encoded in the structure of musical performance. The beginning of the God ceremony is marked by a gathering of the men at the site of the first house of the village, all the musicians play together loudly. In Porga·r they went so far as to *represent* musicians from each of the clans. During the dry funeral, the simultaneity and representation are enacted, but with spatial separation articulating clan differences. The dry funeral begins with the idea of unity of complementary individuals, families, and clans. The god ceremony begins with a unity of similarity.

During the green funeral there are separate cremation spots for groups of exogamous divisions. In Kolme·l, corpses from *a·ke·r* and *i·ke·r* are burned in one spot, and *naryke·r* burned in another; in Kurgo·j and Kala·c, those of *naryke·r* who have died are also cremated in special spots. This spatial practice also reflects the historical kinship of these exogamous divisions. The *naryke·rs* of both Kolme·l and Kurgo·j originated through miscegenation with the Telugu speaking *golla* caste.⁴² Further kinship distinctions and village spatial practices are reflected in the cremation areas of the *varlda·v*. In Me·na·r, there are cremation areas for each of the seven villages. Important here are the relations of similarity and difference articulated through the use of space and how these relations are refined at each ritual juncture. The broad notion that a separate identity for the Kotas lives on after death—now apparently a disputed notion—should be understood in the context of spatially created, more fractional identities emerging out of ritual.

SPATIOTEMPORAL TRANSFORMATION: CENTRIPETAL AND CENTRIFUGAL MOVEMENT IN RITUAL

Up to this point I have considered how space is divided up inside and outside the village, what kinds of ritual behavior are appropriate to these spaces, and how categories of space articulate with gender and kinship. I

⁴¹Ka·ka· Kamatn described this practice in Kolme·l. The same is practiced in Me·na·r today—although the divisions themselves are of course different.

⁴²Kala·c *naryke·r* people originated in Kurgo·j

have also suggested that crucial sources of information about village history are encoded in these spatial divisions. What I have not considered is how rituals trace out meaningful movement *through* space and how these movements relate to questions of time, communal memory and modalities of the modern. As Nancy Munn has argued, “sociocultural practices ‘do not simply go on *in* or *through* time and space, but [they also] . . . constitute (create) the spacetime . . . in which they “go on.”” (Munn 1986, 11; 1983, 280). I would like to employ a modified version of Munn’s concept of *intersubjective spacetime* to discuss one aspect of the processes of spatiotemporal transformation which occur during ceremonies for God and of death.

The study of time and space as cultural variables has a long history in anthropology. More recently, a combined analytical concept of spacetime has proved to be useful in analyzing certain kinds of phenomena (cf. Munn 1986, 274-5n.6). Despite Regula Qureshi’s argument that linking of time and space is a Western analytical framework, inappropriate for such religious communities as the Sufis, I would argue that for most of south Asia, and particularly in musics of south Asia, time and space are represented through parallel if not identical metaphors.⁴³ One need only examine the practice of *tālā* and its terminology to discover how time is spatialized in music.

Among the Kotas, the spatiality of time is evident in simple terms of reference, like *er* and *nar* “middle,” which can, as in English, refer to intervals of space or time. As in other Dravidian languages, proximity in space or time is indicated with prefixes of short or long *i* vowels, distance in space and time with *a* vowels. The verbal root *karv-* is generally used in the context of crossing a boundary, spatial or temporal: cross a river, a threshold (leaving), or a new year. The same verb is used for the process of walking *narv-*, that is, proceeding in space, as is used for an action or event “proceeding” or “happening” in time. None of these spatial-temporal terms appear particularly profound to speakers of European languages because, as Qureshi argues, Europeans spatialize time and temporalize space. But Kota language use indicates a predilection for conceptions of time in terms of space and vice-versa. This does not give me license to represent my analytic of Kota spacetime as one the Kotas have verbally devised, but it does provide a basis for suggesting that concepts of space and time may be linked at levels of practice, parallel to the ways they are in language.

⁴³Qureshi writes, “Western time studies are informed by—albeit implicitly—a conception of time as an objective grid which is reflected and altered in music. An unsuccessful attempt to locate such a grid appropriate to Sufi music—first in time-related terminology of Urdu and second in the locally relevant literature on Sufism—reveals more than anything else the limitation of such a venture typical of Western analytical thinking which fragments its objects and is founded on the disarticulation of concepts from their context. For time as an objective dimension of reality, along with space, and now in conjunction with it, as Space-time, is a constrain simply not embodied in the Indo-Muslim, Sufi cultural matrix” (1994, 500-501)

Let me begin by reviewing very briefly Munn's concept of intersubjective spacetime.⁴⁴ Gawans trade shells with men on other islands and in the process of these journeys receive hospitality for which reciprocal expectations are generated. One aspect of what Munn terms "intersubjective spacetime" are the connections between persons and places, which are repeatedly although irregularly sustained and transformed through trading expeditions. "Fame" in Gawa is created by the degree to which one can "extend" or "expand" one's intersubjective spacetime by exchanging goods and hospitality of increasing "value" over greater and greater distances. Shells themselves are subjectively valued for such things as size, distance traveled (therefore age, and number of hands through which it has passed), and name (famous shells are named). Munn defines intersubjective spacetime as

a multidimensional, symbolic order and process—a spacetime of self-other relations constituted in terms of and by means of specific types of practice. A given type of act or practice forms a spatiotemporal process, a particular *mode* of spacetime. Defined abstractly, the specifically spatiotemporal features of this process consist of relations, such as those of distance, location (including geographical domains of space), and directionality; duration or continuance, succession, timing (including temporal coordination and relative speed of activities), and so forth. (1986, 10)

Kota ritual processes can be said to constitute particular *modes* of spacetime, using Munn's terminology. Intersubjectivity is vastly different from the Gawan case, and perhaps the term must be abandoned for the case at hand. I am not concerned here with the transactions enacted between communities, villages, affines or family members, but rather the relations set up between categories of Kota social formations (villages, families) and non-living entities with which they subjectively identify themselves—that is, their gods and their ancestors.

We have already seen that divine entities and ancestors are associated with different sorts of constructions of the past. We may now ask what sorts of spacetimes are created in the ritual processes of incorporating these constructions. The core of my argument is that in god ceremonies spacetime is centripetal and in death ceremonies it is centrifugal. How does this work? First we must consider the nature of spatial movement: what is moving and how is it moving through space and time? For both sets of ceremonies I am concerned at the broad level with movements of Kota men and women within a defined framework of ritual action. Secondly I am concerned with metaphysical movement: hitting right at the core of these ceremonies, the movement of "god" (*devr*) and the movement of three aspects of death, the contagious, evil influences of death, "pollution" (*ke·p*), the corpse, which is also hypostatized as "death" itself (*ta·v*), and that which remains of the deceased in metaphysical form, the spirit (*a·yv*) which is transformed in course of time into a

⁴⁴Since Munn devoted a book (1986) and several articles to developing this theoretical framework for understanding the kula in Gawa, my summary here should be understood as only a partial representation of a complex set of ideas.

“resident of that world” (*a-na-to-n*).⁴⁵

Centripetality in the God Ceremony⁴⁶

Let us first consider the god ceremony. The ceremony commences with the lighting of divine fires in the houses of the *mundka-no-ns*. These houses are necessarily separated from one another because they belong to different *ke-rs*. In Kolme-l the fires are transferred to special raised, circular mounds (*tonda!*) which are located near the *mundka-no-ns*' houses, but still within the *ke-rs* of the village, where people move about and pass every day.⁴⁷ Everybody must clean their houses and take a burning torch from these fires to their own hearths, and then light and worship them.⁴⁸ In all the villages the fires are later transferred to a special spot in the temple area, usually in the center of the village. As we have already seen, this is one of god's forms during the temple. God's other forms, such as the marble shaped *ceñd*, the mysterious wrapped thread and the bow and arrow, all issue from the “big houses” (*dodpay*) of the *mundka-no-ns*. Thus as the ceremony proceeds, the locus of divinity moves from the houses of these two ritualists to the central area of the village. The ceremony proper begins on the seventh day, a Sunday, when the temple is opened for the first and only time during the year. The divine attributes of the temples and their region adhere to the space at all time, but only through ritual action during the god ceremony, what is called “doing” or “making god” (*devr gicd*), is divinity actually created within the central region of the village.

Various sorts of purificatory and mundane activities take place during the days that separate the first day of the ceremony from the temple opening day. From the standpoint of spatiotemporal practice we may note that during these intervening days, dancing takes place every night in a special *ke-r* (in Kolme-l, the *gagva-l*), not yet in the center of the village. Recall that shorter, less elaborate and important dance tunes are

⁴⁵ In the reformist ideology, as I have explained, this last transformation is omitted and instead the soul merges with god.

⁴⁶ Exegesis of this ceremony would require a lengthy chapter in its own right. Here I have extracted aspects of the ceremony that serve to illustrate my argument. That which is not included does not contradict what I have to say: some details would, however, provide further refinement of these ideas. I collected extremely detailed descriptions of these ceremonies in Kolme-l, Porgar and Ticgar, less detailed descriptions from the other villages. Mandelbaum's fieldnotes also provide substantial descriptions of god ceremonies, although Mandelbaum does not appear to have been permitted to attend any but the last “dance day”, when outsiders are invited. The appendix provides a comparative analysis of god ceremonies in chart form, and one relatively complete narrative description, collected from a *mundka-no-n* from one village.

⁴⁷ Although the spaces are in common areas, Kotas are supposed to remove shoes and wear only waist cloths and shawls when sitting there—just like in the temple areas. The places often serve as meeting grounds for playing board games and the like. Some of these game boards are scratched into the stones that lie there.

⁴⁸ In other villages, the fires are temporarily shifted to the *munka-no-ns*' hearths and the other villagers collect fire from those places.

performed at this stage of the ceremony. It used to be that Kotas were forbidden from leaving the village after the first day of the festival. Now provisions are made for those who must work in town. But during the central days of the festival, after the temple has been opened, restrictions are maintained more rigorously. The reasons for avoiding outside regions, particularly Ooty, the city, are that one might inadvertently come into contact with menstruation or death and these would pollute the entire process.⁴⁹ Whatever the reasons for avoiding outside spaces, the practical consequence of these restrictions are that activity is gradually concentrated into the village and contacts with outsiders are gradually, and temporarily suspended.

By this time, the *mundka·no·ns* have changed their spatial practices as well, now avoiding the common areas of the village and only walking in divine spaces or peripheral areas of the village which are not everyday walkways. While this in a sense reverses the pattern of behavior followed by other Kotas, it also serves to articulate the manner in which divinity is transformed, and transforms, through spatial practice. When the temple opening day has finally arrived, the men, as we have seen, must sleep under a canopy in the middle of the village. Other significant sorts of activity on these central days include cooking (in special cooking areas which replicate *ke·r* divisions), sharing in communal feasts, a large number of special musical tunes, both for rituals and for dancing, the creation of a number of special fires, and the placement of a form of god in a hairknot on each *mundka·no·n*'s forehead. Despite the fact that women return to their houses every night, the focus of male and female activity is the center of the village.

I have already suggested that dancing, play, and music are, along with other sorts of ritual, ways of iterating the significance of the space. Thus as activity is centrally concentrated, the space itself becomes sacrally charged. It is not insignificant that this movement toward the center coincides with the movement of divinity, and not just movement to the center, but the symbolic *merging* of nominally and physically separate deities into one deity through the medium of fire. The temples themselves remain separate entities, but worship at each one is conducted in an identical manner. The temples themselves, usually two or three of them, mark out a region, a two dimensional space, which a single temple could not. Within the space marked out by the temples (though not strictly so, the space is larger), the symbolic rituals of village unity are enacted with solemnity and fastidious care.

Centripetality is not confined to movement of gods and people toward the village center, but also to the incorporation of things outside the village, into the village. For instance, when the temple rethatching is memorialized, a group of men go to the forest, select the appropriate flora, and carry it into the village. They

⁴⁹The Kotas in my village were not concerned with my comings and goings, I was told, because such pollution would not stick to me. Only Kotas could be conduits of such pollution in these circumstances. Other non-Kotas were not at issue because they were forbidden from entering the village anyway.

are ushered back into the village with a special instrumental melody. Important here is the process through which “forest” products are culturally processed so as to emphasize their divine content. Any piece of wood could be carried into the village. But when important icons which constitute and serve as building blocks in the “making” of god are brought into the village, the act is ritualized.

When the millet *vam* is brought into the village from the fields during the harvesting ceremony, the ritual of incorporation involves, among other things, drawing encircled “x”s at each intersection between the house and the field.⁵⁰ The millet which is used for divine offerings cannot be simply brought into the village, but must be prepared for cooking before it is actually brought into the village.⁵¹ Again, the point here is that the process of *incorporation* is highlighted in connection with god ceremonies. The making and worshiping of divinity involves a centripetal process, a moving to the center, accompanied at each stage with various kinds of purificatory or refining activities. It is a guarded process of incorporation that ends in a rarified identification between the Kotas and their gods.

What are the temporal processes involved in god ceremonies? When Nancy Munn discussed the spacetime of the Kula, one of the important temporal dimensions was the set of possibilities for reciprocal trading expeditions set in motion by any given expedition. The temporal dimension is not quantified in this case, but is nonetheless regular. God ceremonies are different in that they ideally recur at the same time each year, in each village. God ceremonies are not conducted if there are no *mundka·no·ns*, or in some villages, if a dry funeral has not been conducted (and deaths have occurred). The dry funeral and the god ceremony form complementary processes in Kota spacetime.

The God ceremony reproduces primordial time (the association of divinity with selected practices of the past) while at the same time acknowledging the disjuncture between past and present. The spatial pattern of moving to the center, traced out in God ceremonial rituals, is analogous to the return to this return to primordial time in two ways. In one, the movement to the center and the return to the past are both attempts to circumscribe, objectify, control, or capture the essence of divinity. At the same time Kotas search for means to define and celebrate a timeless essence of identity. Converging at the center is a logical spatial strategy just as returning to perceived origins is a temporal strategy. This “time-binding” (cf. Fernandez 1966) and reaffirmation of village solidarity is a return to an original sense of cultural order, not made messy by such things as death, birth, menstruation or other human markers of temporal change.

⁵⁰This may protect against the forces of evil which are believed in many cultures to reside at crossroads. See chapter eight, fn.49.

⁵¹I am not sure whether this is done at the time of harvesting or whether later, at the time of the god ceremony, the necessary portion is brought outside of the village and husked.

After the god ceremony, the cosmic order gradually declines—the gods go back to the *mundka·no·ns*' houses, the temples are closed and the temple area fenced off, people return to their daily activities, their meat-eating, drinking and lovemaking, and people die. The village can be suspended in this state of order, of ideal Kota-hood, for only a brief moment during the year. This is why every member of the village, even if living in Bombay, must return to the village and literally be counted.

Centrifugality in Funerals

Again at the broad level, funerals can be seen, in contrast to God ceremonies, as processes of centrifugal spatiotemporal transformation. The metaphysical substances moved towards the center in God ceremonies are forms of divinity, materials for the process of worship, and Kotas themselves. That which moves outwards during funerals is the spirit of the dead person and the detrimental effects of death. From the moment the body is removed from the house, when the *tic pac mog* rubs the ground with grass and cow dung, each movement of the corpse is highlighted through elaborate rituals, the most prominent of which are the implementation of special musical pieces for each stage.

The corpse is initially brought to the funeral ground and cremated. One wave of centrifugal movement ends here and with it the funeral music. The next day, the entire village and all the visitors must return to a place near the funeral ground to bathe. This constitutes a second wave of movement away from the village. The first wave removes the corpse and reestablishes the soul's presence outside the village, presumed by some to now be located near the cremation area. The second wave removes the immediate polluting effects of death, although it does not free-up the month from death "pollution": certain god-related rituals must be postponed to another month if a death occurs after the new moon.

Only through the dry funeral is the village truly made free of death. Here new biers are constructed, the final bone relics of the corpse are collected, and finally re-cremated at a second funeral ground, always further removed from the village than the first. As in the initial cremation, each movement of the bier is highly ritualized. The enactment of spatiotemporal transformations are more pronounced in the dry funeral. The first is the establishment of the deceased's presence in the memorial millet and the performance of music which recalls the green funeral. This time *all* of the funerals are invoked; thus when death is pushed out of the village the second time, it is in a sense *Death, writ large*.

Before the procession, dancing takes place only on the *ke·rs*, never in the center of the village by the temples. Attention is focused on the individual biers on each *ke·r*—it is diffuse, not centralized. Emotion is differentiated among participants, depending largely on the personal relationship with the deceased.

The procession in the dry funeral is far more elaborate than in the green funeral: there are more biers, and

these are more decorated, with taller umbrellas. There are far more visitors present. There are also more boundaries to cross as the procession proceeds from the village to the dry funeral ground. The ritual specialist, again a child, performs special rites when the bone relics of the deceased are placed on the bier, and later when the cots cross a small stream (*kar gaṅ ni·r*). Finally the biers are cremated, again in separate cremation spots according to *ke·r*, or village (if in Me-na·r). After the cremation in the dry funeral, like in the green funeral, crying is supposed to stop. Women (except for the spouses of the deceased) and some of the men return to the village briefly and bring food and bedding to the dry funeral ground.

Early in the morning at the sight of Venus, the special *na·r kavcd kol* “funeral finishing tune” named after the “morning star” is performed. In Kolme-l there are four funeral finishing tunes, one of which is almost identical to and slightly longer than the *koṭanm* tune. The relationship among melodies highlights the parallel spatiotemporal transformations at each point. Here the tune constitutes a structural ending point in the dry funeral. It is important to understand that this is not the last ritual connected with the dry funeral, rather it creates one kind of an ending. As S. Raman figured it,

na·rkavcd kol means . . . something special has occurred (*oḍ viśe·śma·yr narydo*). When the *na·rkavcd kol* is rendered, everyone listens silently, with tranquility, peace of mind (*amaidiya·yr*). For the dead it is a form of respect, a *vaṅakkam*.

It has also been explained to me as a form of sendoff for the soul of the dead person. That is, once that tune has been played, the deceased are no longer present, they have left dry funeral ground and have begun their journey to (or perhaps arrived at?) the mother land.

At dawn several dances are danced for ritual’s sake at the dry funeral ground, then all prepare for a day of dancing and ritual meals. A second structural ending point occurs after this dance day: the young ritualists must circumambulate the cremation spots three times, spilling clarified butter from a special clay vessel, and smashing it on the ground. All return to the village and dance in their respective *ke·rs*.

This return to the village is a return to normalcy—now the village has been cleared of the inauspiciousness of death and is fit to host a God ceremony. This is the only ritualized return to the village in any funeral ceremony, and it is accompanied by a special melody. The following day is devoted to women’s songs and games, a female-centered type of structural ending shared by all Kota ritual units. The God ceremony too ends with a final ritual of return to normalcy—in this case effected through movement in the opposite direction (centrifugal). A final set of dances is danced in the *gagva·l*.

The predominant phenomenological motion in both types of funeral is centrifugal. What sorts of spacetime are created here? Following the analysis of the God ceremony, our first level of consideration involves the regularity of the event. Spacetime in the green funeral is irregular: rarely can the date of a death be predicted or prepared for. However, deaths occur on the average of once every few months in each village.

The inevitability and frequency of funerals contrast the stability and control of God ceremony.

The timing of the dry funeral creates a regularity to what is otherwise beyond human control. God ceremonies and dry funerals, as we know, form a complementary pair. This complementarity is achieved through time reckoning as well: the former is calculated according to the new moon, and the latter to the full moon. During the course of the God ceremony the amount of light reflected by the moon at night increases, peaking on the last few nights. During the dry funeral, just the reverse occurs.

During the God ceremony, the entire community joins and partakes of a “timeless” unity, joining practices of the past with those of the present. In the dry funeral, the souls of the deceased join in their final journey to the motherland—a place considered to be at the Western edge of the Nilgiris. The metaphysical movement away from the village is matched by the entry into a *different* spacetime—that of the ancestors. Some Kotas believe the ancestors live in a state of traditional observance *all the time*. The journey to the motherland is a journey to communal memory as it is embodied in the notion of ancestors: real, individual Kotas who have died. It is a notion of temporal remove different from that associated with the gods, and it is different from the god ceremonial notions of primeval beginnings.

Music is crucial in creating both kinds of phenomenological motion: instrumental pieces welcome the gods, transform ordinary substances into those worthy for “making god”, and differentiate outer spaces from inner spaces; they provide emotional and symbolic support for the movement of the corpse, and later its dry funeral representation, over each boundary from the village to the cremation site, and from physical to metaphysical form. It also provides melodic differentiation of village space from extra-village space.

CHAPTER TEN

SYMBOLISM AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

I have included local and comparative detail in my description of the funeral in order to illustrate how meanings of rituals shift according to regional context, historical situation, and in many cases, according to the individual interpreter; far less elaborate are my descriptions of the god ceremony and dry funeral—in part because they are not as comparable, step by step, with rituals throughout India, and partly because a detailed discussion of one ritual in particular will illustrate this general point.¹ I have isolated for discussion here two sets of ritual elements, grains and the combination of dung and grass, one ritual process, binding of the limbs (in particular, the tying of the toes), ritual offices (for funerals and god ceremonies) and the significance of bovine species. Less elaborate comments are included within the context of ritual description proper.

III. THE MULTIPLICITY OF RITUAL MEANINGS

Individual Kota rationalizations for rituals must be taken seriously but the content of funeral rituals (i.e. considered as pure gesture, devoid of meaning) and the social relationships they entail are also, nearly, pan-Indian; their local meanings often vary. The outward appearance of symbols, the forms and gestures of ritual and the technology of tools frequently travel between cultures without contextual meaning attached. This is in the nature of diffusion, as the Boasians demonstrated long ago.² Thus, although we must recognize widespread Brahmanical and other interpretations of rituals, we must not award them essential or epistemologically anterior status. We need not belabor the general point: a civilizational perspective on South Asia may cloud the subtleties of regional meaning.

The other general point I wish to make is a related one: just as apparently identical ritual elements may accrue new meanings as they diffuse through different cultures, apparently identical ritual elements in different contexts within a single culture may also mean different things. In other words I am not sure that it

¹For an elaborate analysis of the dry funeral see Mandelbaum's article "Form, variation, and meaning of a ceremony" (1954). Schematics of the dry funeral and the god ceremony appear in the appendices of this work.

²Boas' interest in this issue is documented from as early as 1889, when in a letter to Tylor he wrote of his concern "with the psychological problem of how 'foreign material taken up by a people [is] modified by preexisting ideas and customs.'" (Stocking 1982, 207)

would serve much use to engage in the kind of reductive analysis that Radcliffe-Brown once espoused:

when, in a single society, the same symbol is used in different contexts or on different kinds of occasions there is some common element of meaning, that by comparing the various uses of the symbol we may be able to discover what the common element is (1952, 146).

What Radcliffe-Brown suggests is not altogether unreasonable however: assuming that context overrides content in all cases would result in error in the other direction. I would like to suggest something far less extreme: the appearance of the same or similar ritual elements in different contexts serves to articulate cultural relationships between those contexts—relationships of similarity and difference, relationships of form and function, and relationships of time and space. Thus the nature of the relationship remains a question to be answered, rather than simply a commonality to be discovered.

THE MEANINGS OF GRAIN

We have already seen that the general and most overarching significance of millet among the Kotas is its ability to reference ancient tribal life, since millet, not rice, was the traditional staple.³ Kotas are quite conscious of millet as a symbol of tradition and a sign of respect for their forbears. Millet, particularly *vam* (*Panicum miliare*), is food *par excellence* (in the way rice is *food* for south Indians living on the plains): thus an analysis of millet consumption is an analysis of ritual eating *per se*.

Kotas ritually *feed* a person a minute quantity of boiled, husked millet (*ta-yamayk*) at two prominent moments of the life cycle—the moment of death, and the moment a baby is given a name. The identity of the ritual substratum in both contexts highlights the social-cultural function accomplished at both of these moments of transition—the first, the departure from the social world (of the living), and the second, the creation of a Kota social identity for what was merely a biological being, still culturally inchoate. Cultural and social identity formation, as many writers have demonstrated,⁴ is frequently conditioned by such bodily practices. The inscription of identity at death, we have seen, operates at a number of levels of individuation. Here the ritual concerns not a remembrance of the deceased *per se* (as a song might, for instance), but prepares the deceased for entry into the world of the ancestors; it is both a reference to and a foreshadowing

³ It was the staple of ancient south India, generally. It is not clear, however, the extent to which this fact is preserved in communal memory elsewhere in south India. In Kala-c and Kurgo-j villages the traditional grain is called Kala-c *vam*, a type of rice. Kala-c, located at a lower altitude (at the town of Gudalur), “traditionally” cultivated rice—or, in other words, made the transition to rice consumption with the rest of south India much earlier than did the hill cultures, for whom rice had to be imported. Kotas living in the other villages, at a higher altitude, could not cultivate rice.

⁴ “From birth to mourning after death, law ‘takes hold of’ bodies in order to make them its text” (Certeau 1988, 139). See also Comaroff and Comaroff 1992, 76.

of entrance into ancestral “collective memory” (type number three above). The action also draws the connection between the birth and death by ritual analogy, a connection that ought not be surprising: it is perhaps a fundamental human phenomenon that death is culturally negotiated through rituals of rebirth.

A slightly larger quantity of cooked millet is included, again for ritual’s sake (*ca-trtk*), in culturally significant meals of virtually every sort. Sharing meals off of the same plate is particularly important in Kota society, as it signifies the strength of interpersonal bonds. Conjugal unity and reproduction is gastronomically coded in the wedding: the bride and bridegroom eat off of the same plate, leaving the remains for children to eat.⁵ Intervillage unity is cemented during the dry funeral: Men and women from the seven villages pair off in symbolically married couples and eat off of the same leaf on the “dance day” of the dry funeral.⁶ Intra village solidarity is performed through the act of eating on the night of *pu! pabm* (a festival on which ritual games are played⁷), during which each member of the village shares food from one plate.⁸

The god ceremony is the only context during which millet, and no other grain but millet, must be eaten. It is no accident that food *par excellence* is made to be the staple food of the god ceremony. The tribal past to which it refers is the idealized tribal past; the modern modality of embracement is typical of the god ceremony, but it, like millet, can be found in most Kota rituals (i.e. funerals too). God too, is worshiped explicitly and elaborately in certain rituals, but simple prayer, uttering the name of god and so forth, are ubiquitous. That is, the presence of divine themes in rituals that are not ordinarily classified as “god” rituals should not lead one to conclude that categorical distinction does not exist. It is necessary to hierarchize the presence of divine and funerary themes. With regard to the consumption of millet, I would suggest that the sheer quantity of millet consumed, and its exclusivity, at the god ceremony, is sufficient grounds to consider boiled, husked millet, a food primarily associated with the divine.⁹

The purpose of making this association explicit is to allow for examples of contrast. What food is explicitly funerary?

⁵So that the bride may have “116” children.

⁶On that day each person eats a small quantity of millet along with a more generous helping of rice.

⁷See Emeneau (1937-38, 118-21) for a description of this festival and ritual games associated with other festivals.

⁸The millet, with stew, is kept on one central plate in each house and a small quantity of this is consumed by each visitor. Then, depending on the familial closeness, an additional quantity of food will be eaten off of a few community plates by whatever number of visitors happen to be in the house at that time. Emeneau records only the necessity of every man visiting every house. My recollection is that both men and women participated in this.

⁹The *mundka-no-n* of Porgar village explained in elaborate detail the manner in which millets are prepared for consumption by the ritual specialists and the gods (see appendix). This involves matters of ritual purity, roles of particular exogamous divisions, and mixtures of millets. The scope of this section does not permit an analysis of this elaborate process, but its existence alerts us further to the value of millet as ritual capital.

On the first day of the dry funeral, millet that has not yet been husked or cooked is poured on each of the three *ke-rs* of the village.¹⁰ This millet, called *koṭanm*,¹¹ is considered literally to be the corpse of the deceased. The meaning is created through the ritual of pouring, which includes the performance of a special “millet pouring tune.” As soon as this tune is performed, female mourners begin to cry over the “corpses.” In traditional order, each member of the village touches the millet to his or her head. In Kolme-l this tune has a particular significance because it is melodically related to the “funeral finishing tune” one of the longest and most emotive melodies, which is intended to effect the final sendoff of the soul of the dead to the motherland. According to Raman, it is the emotiveness of this tune that makes it appropriate for the *koṭanm* ritual. I.e., when the millet is poured, the music must evoke sorrow; it must recall the green funeral and create the idea that what is lying on the ground is not a heap of grain, but the deceased, who lay on a bier in that spot some months before. One cannot ignore the fact that the two tunes also index moments of spatiotemporal transformation: the funeral finishing tune, the transformation of the deceased to a being in the other world; the *koṭanm* tune, the transformation of the wandering soul (still present at the cremation ground) to a concrete, edible form.

After this ritual is completed, the millet is redistributed to each of the households, where the women must dry-roast a portion of it (causing it to pop) for later consumption at the dry funeral ground (some of it is also burned with the bone relics of the corpse). This puffed millet (other grains as well), *pace-k*, is the quintessential funeral food in the same way that boiled millet with salt-stew is god ceremony food. A small amount of puffed grains are included under the biers of the deceased in a green funeral. In the dry funeral, large amounts of puffed grain are produced (some of which is put under the dry funeral “bier”) and distributed for everyone to eat.

There seems to be an explicit process of ritual analogy in the preparation of grain.¹² During the green funeral, the corpse is still wet, or “fresh” (the implication of green); after the cremation only bones remain. The dry funeral (lit. “dry death” or “dry corpse”) culminates in the cremation of a “dry” corpse, in the form of bones. When the corpse is reconstituted as millet in the beginning of the dry funeral, it is fresh millet, wet

¹⁰In the ritually, and frequently physically “higher” part of the *ke-r* where corpses are placed during the green funeral.

¹¹The etymology of this word is probably “food that is given,” deriving from the root *kor-* “give.” *anm* derives from the Sanskrit *anna*, “rice” or “food,” especially in the context of a ritual meal. Monier-Williams provides the following, “food or victuals, especially boiled rice; bread corn; food in a mystical sense (or the lowest form in which the supreme soul is manifested, the coarsest envelope of the Supreme Spirit).” *koṭanm* thus comes to mean ritual food that is donated. Whether or not this is historically the etymology of the word, this is indeed how the Kotas conceptualize it today.

¹²For analogies between processes of food transformation, manufacturing, and treatment of the corpse in funerals, see, e.g. Metcalf and Huntington (1991, 72) and references therein.

millet, unprepared millet. The process of transforming the millet into puffed millet is like the transformation of the corpse from its fresh, wet corporeal form, to dry bones. As the participants eat the puffed millet, they perform what is virtually an act of mortuary cannibalism—although I am quite sure Kotas would be appalled at my expressing it in these terms.

In the context of the funeral proper I will also consider the ritual use of *ki·r*, a type of amaranth the Kotas used to cultivate widely. Unlike *vam*, which is used in multiple ritual contexts, its preparation inflecting its meaning, *ki·r* is used ritually only in the dry and green funerals.¹³ There again, it is dry-roasted and puffed. A small quantity of *ki·r* must be kept in all houses in the event that there is a death. During the green funeral, women line up, and to the accompaniment of a special tune, carry small baskets of this grain on their heads and place them under the bier. Other foodstuffs, including millet, barley and jaggery, are placed under the bier with less ceremony. *ki·r* and rice are distinguished from other grains in today's funerals because they are part of the funeral prestations.¹⁴ Thus they not only reference the particular ceremony and practices of the past, they also encode kinship relations (i.e. between the grain-givers and the deceased).

Finally boiled, husked millet and rice are offered to the gods. The two most important times for these offerings are in the god ceremony and in the dry funeral. The ritual in both is called *er vecd* ("placing of *er*"—prob. > Skt. *idā*, "offering" [Emeneau VS]). The two rituals are distinct, of course, in terms of time and place. The musical tunes that are integral to the rituals, in Kolme'l, both link the two rituals together and separate them: the two melodies are substantially the same, thus drawing attention to the fact that both rituals fulfill the same function; but the melodies are also slightly different, as they must be because one is a god tune and the other is a funeral tune.

The fact that multiple meanings are attached to grain in Kota society is not at all unique in the South Asian context. What may be less common is the combination of methods of grain preparation, manners of eating and instrumental melodies that inflect and create the meanings of grain in each ritual context.

¹³As far as I know, any grain can be consumed on ordinary occasions. *vam* and *ki·r* are not consumed on a regular basis by most families because they are not available. Few Kotas cultivate enough of these grains even to serve ritual purposes. Kotas snack on *ki·r* and barley (*kaj*). A favorite traditional preparation is called *kajuym*: dry-roasted barley is ground into flour and mixed with a small amount of water and jaggery. A few balls of this food is enough to satisfy one's hunger for quite some time.

¹⁴I have decided not to expand this section into a comparative discussion of grain as an object of prestation in rituals of South Asia, as it would probably require a chapter, if not itself an entire monograph to explicate.

COMPARATIVE SIGNIFICANCE OF DUNG AND GRASS

At the beginning of the green funeral we find that the *tic pac mog* touches the areas in the house where the corpse lay with a ball of dung, out of which stick an odd number of blades of grass. The ritual combination of dung and grass is deeply ramified into the ritual traditions of India, although, as elsewhere, we should not assume the meanings are the same in each context, nor should we search for a single, preconscious, "deep" meaning through these different traditions. The following are some of the uses of these substances.

The dung of a cow or buffalo and certain kinds of grass play a purificatory roles in many Hindu rituals, including funerals. In Brahmanical ceremonies especially, a grass called *darbha* (usually "Kusha," *Poa cynosuroides*, a grass with long pointed stalks) is put underneath the corpse.¹⁵ A cursory glance through any set of descriptions of Brahmin rituals (e.g. Stevenson 1920, *passim*) will turn up numerous references to this grass. Moffatt has noted that in South India the grass is in various contexts a seat for the gods, a representation of the gods, a vehicle for temporal power and wisdom, and a sign for cosmic fertility (1968, 37).

Among the Kotas, the grass stuck in cow dung is found in three contexts: the funeral, the naming of a child, and the offering of salt water to cattle (especially cows). It would not be particularly useful to note that each of these contexts requires "ritual purity" because such is the case with all rituals.¹⁶ It might be possible to arrange this item along with other items in some sort of a purity "scale," based on the people involved and kinds of transactions allowed in particular rituals, but this would imply that some consistent system is in operation, built on a set of purity/pollution oppositions.¹⁷ Such an approach might be appropriate for caste society but it seems inappropriate for Kota society because although ritual purity is an issue (as it is in many cultures, not just Indian), it is not culturally elaborated to the same extent. Furthermore, there is no permanent social hierarchy within Kota society based on these oppositions.

Another plausible interpretation in the south Indian context is that dung as a divine and pure substance

¹⁵For *rg vedic* references to this practice, see Doniger (1988, 125-8). The ground near the mattress of a dying man (Brahman, Gujarat) is reported to be sprinkled with *darbha* grass and other grains after being purified with cow dung and Ganges water (Stevenson 1920, 142). Dubois reports that "Brahmins can do nothing without it [*darbha* grass]" because it "purifies everything it touches" and is the most efficacious component of the *pavitra*, a ring/amulet whose object is "to scare away giants, evil spirits, or devils, whose mission it is to bring disasters upon men and mar the ceremonies of the Brahmins" (1986 [1906], 150-1).

¹⁶"Almost every rite in Hinduism can be said to purify somebody or something. Or, to put it another way, purification is itself one of the parts of the ritual that requires explanation. Merely to invoke it does not address the wide varieties of forms, enactments, and articles used in these ['early medieval' Hindu] ceremonies" (Inden 1990, 236).

¹⁷I refer here to the studies of rank and scaling in the 1960s (Mahar 1959; Hiebert 1969) and the more elaborate constructions of "ethnosociological" systems of McKim Marriott (e.g. 1976).

could provide protection against malevolent spirits—spirits that might be attracted to such things as funerals and child naming. It is not clear what interest spirits might evince in the process of offering salt water to cattle. Other than indirectly satisfying the gods through one of their primeval forms (a divine cow is said to have led the Kotas to settle in the Nilgiris), the salt giving ceremony is probably connected in some way to fertility. This seems particularly so in that it is timed (at least in Kolme-l) one week before the annual “rain ceremony” (*may ca-trm*) (Wolf i.p.). It is certainly possible that the Kotas wish to protect the cattle from harm—particularly as harm to the cattle would metonymically represent dysfunction in Kota society as a whole.

I suggested that the appearance of one symbol in different contexts would, if nothing else, signal a set of relationships among those contexts. Perhaps here what we find is a set of relationships between life, death, and fundamental notions of Kota identity. We have already seen parallel symbolic action regarding death and child naming in the feeding of a small quantity of millet. A child is not really a Kota until it is named: it remains a Kota until death, at which time it may attain a new (posmortem?) cultural identity as an ancestor. These are crucial moments of Kota personhood, although what is accomplished at each moment of transition is very different. What about the salt-giving? Virtually any ritual action involving cows is conceptualized, in the broad sense, as in some way involving “the cow” as a primeval Kota symbol. The Kotas closely identify themselves with the cow, they sing about the cow, they even etymologize the word for “village” as “cow leg.”¹⁸

It would seem therefore that the three rituals each involve important moments of social and cultural identity transformation or reinforcement. Perhaps this could be considered a “common element”—although the concept is a bit abstract to be articulated as such.

At the gross level of practice, the threefold presence of the dung balls sets up relationships between the rituals. One must consider the possibility that the dung and cow grass do not signify “deeper” levels of convergence. Important from an anthropologist’s viewpoint may simply be the cultural form itself. I failed to uncover interpretations of these usages of cow dung and grass that went beyond a vague reference to purity. But the fact is, people recognize when a given element appears in different contexts and sometimes they *do* think about it. Perhaps what is most important is what people actually *make* out of a set of formal relations.

After analyzing what I had observed about the ritual presence of cow dung and grass, I discovered the following in the notes of David Mandelbaum, dated April 6, 1938. The informant is one of his more reliable ones, Ka·ka· Kamatn of Kolme-l. The context is a description of the measuring of rice for the feast at the end

¹⁸The divine cow indicated with its leg where Kotas should found their villages.

of the *varīda-v*:

Then I go to the heap of rice, measure it with a bamboo measure and estimate if it will be enough. Beside the pile I place a ball of dung with three grasses. I do that because some man from my family must do it. Even on ordinary day[s] when we measure a pile of grain, the ball of dung and three grasses must be put on the heap first. The reason for this is *ma·mu·!* [tradition], but according to my idea the heap will grow large if the dung ball is put atop of it. And yes, perhaps it is also to ward off the evil eye. This is also done when grains are measured at sowing or at harvesting—at any time when a heap is measured.¹⁹

More Kota interpretation is available in the following consideration of the toe-tying ritual in the Kota funeral. Tying of the limbs is not only common in Hindu India, but appears to be a widespread cultural practice (Malinowski 1954, 48).

TOE TYING

A ritual of tying the big toes together, of cutting the thread, and of ritually cleaning the hands and feet is conducted during the funeral, in some instances before and in some instances after the mourning widower or widow is made to remove his/her jewelry. Sometimes it occurs in a special “Corpse keeping place” and sometimes in another designated area. As the toe-tying ritual is described in detail earlier, it will suffice to discuss here its variations and comparative significance.

Rather than surveying the many prescriptions for and descriptions of Hindu funerals, let us initially rely on Moffatt’s finding that, although the rite of tying the limbs “is almost universal in the South,” none of the descriptions make explicit its reason.²⁰ The few instances that are explained suggest the existence of a variety of meanings.²¹ In the Vedic funeral, for example, the limbs of the corpse were evidently tied together to prevent death from returning to the house (Dumont and Pocock 1959, 17, cited in Moffatt 1968, 43).²²

¹⁹This is copied verbatim from Mandelbaum’s notes. One must in some cases imagine what questions were asked. “And yes, perhaps it is also to ward off the evil eye” may have been phrased in response to Mandelbaum’s suggestion, or as I have often found, in response to either the interpreter’s own queries, or comments of bystanders. It is not clear in this portion of the text.

²⁰The practice is found in many tribal and caste funerals, probably among more communities than are actually mentioned in the published literature. In addition to those mentioned below, toe tying is mentioned in connection with funerals of such tribal communities as the Gonds of Andhra Pradesh (Fürer-Haimendorf 1979, 373), and “scheduled” communities like the Izhuvans of Kerala (Anantha Krishna Iyer 1909, I:324-5).

²¹It need hardly be mentioned that the practice is not merely instrumental: tying toes, or toes and thumbs together is not the most efficient way to keep the limbs from moving around. In many cases the binding of the toes and the subsequent cutting of the thread occur over a period of a few minutes, during which the corpse is not moved at all.

²²*Śāstric* references [*Satyāsāthasrauta-sūtra* 28.1.22 and *Gautama-pitṛmedha-sūtra* I. 10-14], cited by Kane (1973 IV: 204), indicate the use of a white thread or the fringe of a garment to tie together the toes and thumbs of the corpse. Kane does not make it clear whether this practice is only followed for the corpse of an *āhitāgni* (a Brahmin who keeps, for a family, the sacrificial fire burning perpetually, cf. Monier-Williams), or for others as well.

Among the Mala Ulladan, a Kerala tribe of the Western Ghats south of the Nilgiris, the toes and thumbs are tied, a lamp is lit, and incense burned “for the fear that a tramp spirit may enter the body and the corpse may spring to life” (Nandi et. al. 1971, 88).

Information regarding the significance of toe-tying in funerals of other Nilgiri tribes is scant. Rivers and Walker make no mention of a toe-tying ritual in the Toda funeral, but I did notice in the one Toda funeral I attended, the two big toes of the corpse (an old woman), tied together with a black thread. Unlike among the Kotas, the toe-tying had been completed while the corpse was still in the house. Later, when the toes of the deceased were touched to the nose of a sacrificed buffalo, I noticed that the toes were no longer bound together; however, I do not know whether the knot was severed with any ceremony.

Among the Irulas,²³ as among the Kotas, the eldest son of the deceased ties together the big toes of the deceased. The roles of ritual officiant (often a barber) and chief mourner (eldest son) are separated among Hindus, whereas among the Kotas and other tribes who serve as their own ritual specialists, these roles are not separate. Thus, in Good’s account of a Tamil funeral for example, it is the Barber (not the son of the deceased) who binds the limbs of the corpse. Here the action, performed with strips off of a new, white *vēṅṅ*, does not seem to have been marked as significant (1991, 133).²⁴

Let us now examine Kotas contexts for and comments on the practice. The toe-tying and thread-cutting do not occur in isolation, but in conjunction with washing the fingers and toes, and passing a knife under the nails of each digit.²⁵ Although the order and direction of this cleaning is strictly specified, mistakes are sometimes made and these seem to be of little real consequence. The transparent meaning of these actions, taken as a whole, is ritual purification. Indeed Raman commented that this action “probably means we have made [the corpse] clean” (*cutm gice-m ird artm inapuro*), but said that he knew of no other meaning for the action. Sulli discusses separately the sprinkling of water on the corpse and washing the fingers and toes of the corpse, also indicating that these are for purificatory purposes: i.e. for making the deceased feel fresh before going to the other world. Velu indicated that the entire complex (water and knife touching, thread tying and cutting) was a ritualized relic of a practice of thorough washing that would have once occurred at that juncture; but since the corpse may have been around for several days by then, it would have stank, and no

²³In Garkiyur, according to my Irula consultant B. Raju (Jan. 14, 1991).

²⁴The orientation of the corpse was also very different in his *ścāri* example from that among castes who keep the corpse laying flat on its back. Here the corpse was sitting upright with legs crossed. In Dumont’s Tamil example, it is not clear who ties the thumbs and toes, though they are indeed tied (1986, 273)

²⁵The use of a knife for rituals of purification has been reported for Nambudri Brahmins of Kerala (Anantha Krishna Iyer 1981 [1909], II:266-7), and one might expect to find it elsewhere.

one would have wanted to wash it.²⁶

For the most part, the toe tying is shrouded in the mystery of the past, a *tabula rasa* ready to take on whatever meanings are assigned to it. We have already seen Kurgo-j Caln's interpretation of the thread cutting, during which the *tic pac mog* must say "with this let the sins and merits of the deceased reach the world of the gods." This interpretation may have been transferred to this ritual after the cow sacrifice (for which a similar interpretation was offered) was abandoned. Let us consider the other major interpretation of the toe tying ritual.

In one instance, Sulli situated the performance of the ritual after the bier had already been moved to a place adjacent to the cremation site.²⁷ Here not one, but seven threads taken from the *vara-r* of the deceased were used to tie the toes together. Each thread was tied by a representative of one of the seven villages. In the home village of the deceased, the representative was supposed to be the "headman" (probably *gotka-rn* or an elder) and from a *ke-r* other than that of the deceased. In accordance with this, the thread was called *nanm nu-l*,²⁸ which Sulli translated as "brother-in-law thread."²⁹

Sulli interpreted this ritual as equivalent to the giving of a cloak to the deceased, which is interpreted, in turn, as equivalent to giving a wife to the deceased. Although the same ritual is performed for a man and for a woman, Sulli did not stipulate what the ritual represented in the case of a deceased woman. He also did not stipulate whether the ritual would be performed by a woman's own brothers (who would constitute her *nanms*), rather than by those who would be, in fact, classificatory husbands. The toes themselves were equated, in this ritual, with the husband and wife pair: the right toe representing the husband, and the left, the wife. Mandelbaum evidently questioned Sulli as to the degree that these interpretations were shared. Sulli insisted that all this was common knowledge.

It is curious that surrogate marriages would have been included in the funerals of all people. It seems more likely that such a ritual would have been conducted only in the case of a person who was unmarried: this

²⁶This explanation may have applied to Kurgo-j funerals at the time, but at present, when the period between death and cremation is less than two days, the corpse washing ritual and the digit binding, cleaning, and separating ritual is separated by about 6 hours.

²⁷The order of the whole complex of tying, washing, cutting exhibited variation even among descriptions I obtained and funerals I witnessed. In the funeral of Va. Kamatn, only the final cutting of the thread was completed adjacent to the cremation ground—probably in the place to which Sulli refers.

²⁸I am assuming that this was the intended term. Mandelbaum actually recorded "nautnele," which is not a word at all.

²⁹The translation is correct, but we must remember that the *nanms* are the wife's family—in this case, representatives of potential categories of wife. Although one's sister's husband is also drawn from the same pool of potential affines, the term for brother-in-law is a different one: *ay!*

practice seems to be confined to the Nilgiris.³⁰ Elsewhere in India, funerals for those who have never married are simply not as elaborate as for those who have married. There is also general concern in India over the lingering attachments of young people who die before marriage, without offspring, or otherwise before their time.³¹ A focus on relationships between the affines (especially in the case of a man) highlights not only the importance of cross-cousin marriage ideology in the south (cf. Dumont 1983, 93-104; Moffatt 1968, 75), but also the thematic connection between death and the regeneration of life (Parry 1982, 81 and *passim*)—a theme we have now found in three rituals connected with the symbols discussed in this section: the feeding of millet, the purification with cow dung and grass, and the affinal symbolism of toe-tying.

The affinal bond is also used to signify solidarity among all the Kota villages. As we have begun to see, the symbolic activities at green and dry funerals tend generally to strengthen these intervillage bonds, and god ceremonies, in contrast, tend to promote solidarity within the village. The meaning of this version of the ritual, in which representatives of the seven villages participate, sets up an important pattern of redundancy when considered in conjunction with two rituals during the dry funeral: the *ja-dykupa-c* (“caste”—i.e. all community—“costume”) in which representatives from each village must dress up in the fancy dancing costume and dance a few ritual dances; and the *ja-dyku* (“caste-cooked-grain”), mentioned earlier, in which unmarried male and female representatives from each village must line up in symbolic husband and wife pairs and eat food off of the same leaf.

We have considered three possible areas of Kota meaning for the toe tying ritual: in one the toes are tied and when the knot is severed, this in effect detaches the worldly deeds from the doer and allows the soul to travel unencumbered, to the other world (heaven, land of dead, whatever); in the second, the tying and severing are parts of a larger ritual of purification; and in the third the ritual strengthens the affinal ties and cements intervillage solidarity.

There is another way in which the toe tying ritual can be analyzed, not from informants' statements, but

³⁰The Todas perform two rituals whose structural relationships are condensed into this single Kota ritual. Sulli's first level interpretation, that the threads represent cloths, suggests the necessity of a particular kind of affinal prestation. Among the Todas, the equivalent of the *nanm*, or “each man who has taken a wife from the patriclan of the deceased,” along with his wife, ceremonially offers a cloth to the corpse. Then, in a separate ritual for the death of a female “who never performed the pregnancy rituals” (that is, the closest thing Todas have to a “marriage”), a symbolic marriage is enacted, often by a small boy, by the giving of a (toy) bow and arrow (Walker 1986, 224-5).

The Badagas perform a surrogate marriage ritual for the death of a man, in cases where he impregnated a woman but died before completing the marriage rituals. This was necessary to make the child legitimate (Thurston 1975 [1907], 196).

³¹There are, for example, cults involving the deification of children (Knipe 1989), ongoing offerings to the ancestors to appease their needy spirits (Gold 1989, 64 and *passim*), ongoing communication with those spirits (Vitebsky 1993) and special rites connected with the funerals of young people (Raheja 1988, 150).

from a larger corpus of bodily practices in South India whose form, it may be argued, is the same. I am referring to the literature on the role of “binding” in Tamil culture (cf. David 1980). In particular, the theme of binding in the life cycle of Tamil women appears as a means for controlling her potentially dangerous, female energy. As Ram puts it,

The key emphasis is on covering and binding the parts of the female body that are focal points of *sakti* and sexuality: the breasts and loins, but also the head and more specifically the hair on one’s head. The degree of binding varies in direct proportion to the maturation of women (Ram 1991, 87).

David analyzes in detail sequences of shaving and binding in the female maturation process. Rituals of shaving mark the end of “newborn” status, as well as the beginning of widowhood, and thus “bracket the period of social personhood in a woman’s life.” This social personhood is then characterized by successively increasing forms of ritual binding, ending finally with the marriage *tāli*.

Does this analysis of binding hold for Kota society? To a great extent it does: haircutting is an important puberty ceremony for both boys and girls (the two hairstyles are different however), and a great deal of ritual care is focused on the traditional hairstyle of Kota women. An elaborate ritual in which adult women tie their hair is bracketed off in conjunction with the ceremony of making clay pots, during the god ceremony in Kinar; there is also a special musical tune connected with these rituals. The themes of containment run hand-in-hand with themes of purity and purification.

But the significance of binding should not perhaps be restricted to the analysis of women’s rituals—even though in Tamil society it appears most importantly in those contexts. In former times all adult men were required to wear their hair long and tie it into a tuft (*kojgoṭ*). Currently this practice is only demanded of ritual specialists, or for ordinary men at particular times.³² At particular moments the tying and untying of hair by Kota ritualists is highly significant. The *mundka-noṅs* tie “god” into a tuft of hair at the forehead for the most sacred days of the god ceremony.³³ The diviners become possessed in a fit of shaking which must free the hair and cause the *ceṇḍ* to drop from the tuft. Only by this un-binding is the diviner able to free himself from ordinary Kota personhood to become the mouthpiece of the divine.

For both men and women, rituals of tying and untying the hair appear within a complex of actions that always involve purification of one sort or another. Seen within the Kota as well as wider Tamil context, it is not difficult to understand why toe-tying, as a form of bodily containment, might appear in a cluster of rituals

³²In place of the tuft, men must now wear around their necks (particularly during the god ceremony) a “thread ball” (*ceṇḍaṅṅal*) containing cow dung, *nakarg* grass, sacred ash (*puyal*), gold, silver, brass, and iron. Ordinarily these items would have been kept in the tuft. Thus the hair both contained and was contained.

³³At the moment this occurs, their wives (the *mundka-noṅs*) must perform a ritual of sexual binding. Although ordinarily not permitted to wear undergarments, they must, at the moment of their husband’s hair tying ritual, tie a special black cloth over the genitals.

aimed also at bodily purification. It is also easy to understand how binding and releasing parts of the body could be understood as metaphors for the life cycle, for control and release of sexual, divine, and procreative energy.

The notion that one is bound to an earthly existence by the weight of one's deeds certainly sounds like a Hindu idea, but one so widespread that we need not seek textual sources to support its existence as an ideology even among Indian communities whose members may be ambivalent about their relationship to Hinduism. It is not at all surprising that the interpretation offered by the Kurgo-j *mundka-no-n*, and the prayer, have been attached to the practice.

I would like to end this section with a musical analogy. Containing, restricting, and physically binding the body of a woman, we have seen, has been interpreted in Tamil culture to be a means of controlling female energy, or *śakti*. Could music also "bind"? George Hart has argued that south Indians use music for such things as funerals and festivals for goddesses because the ensuing structural disorder threatens the onslaught of malevolent forces. Since music *is* ordered, he argues, music brings order. It is powerful as an exemplar. Music in this view, is not only like toe-tying, but also tying of the turban (for men), tattooing (for women), and the tying of the mouth.

THE RITUAL SPECIALIST

The function, training, and negotiation of who may be involved as a ritual specialist in the funeral allows us to discuss some of the generative bases for differences between god ceremonies and funerals.

Ritualist

The child who is in charge of conducting rituals at a funeral is called the *тисрачмог* "child who grasps the fire." He or she is in some ways the structural equivalent of what is in Hindu funerals usually, and ideally, a son of the deceased,³⁴ called in the literature the "chief mourner." In Dumont's account of the Pramalai Kallars, he is sometimes called "he who puts the firestick" (Dumont 1986, 274)—even for burials, among the Kallar, the chief mourner conducts a ritual which signifies cremation (1986, 275). But in Hindu funerals the sons incur pollution which must be removed through a complex of rituals (e.g. Dubois 1906, 484). Among

³⁴In Dumont's description, the youngest son of a man or the oldest son of a woman. Alternate rules apply in the absence of sons (1986, 274). The chief mourner appears to stand for a whole class of mourners. In Srinivas' account of the Coorgs, two classes of mourners are distinguished, active mourners ("standing for bathing") among whom the sons and sometimes daughters of the deceased belong, and the mourners of the second grade ("standing apart") (Srinivas 1952, 112).

these is the ritual shaving conducted by the *ambattan*, or barber, who is considered to be the equivalent of a “priest” at a Hindu funeral—or what Gould terms, perhaps more appropriately, contrapriest (Gould 1987, 115).

Despite the structural analogues, the Kota and Hindu roles are conceptually different. Any Kota will explain that the *ticipacmog* is the *ca-trnga-m*, literally “ritualist” for the funeral, just as the *mundka-no-n* is the ritualist for the god ceremonies. Although the *ticipacmog* is not shaved at the end of the funerary proceedings, he performs an act structurally equivalent to it in the logic of Hindu ritual, rubbing his head with clarified butter. To emphasize, if simplify, the contrast: it is the “purified” boy, not an “impure” barber, who is considered of primary importance.

All Kotas agree that the reason a separate person, usually a young child, is chosen for role is that the other ritualists (specifically the *mundka-no-n* and *te-rka-m*) would become defiled from coming in contact with the corpse or entering the cremation ground.³⁵ It is important to note in this regard that the *ticipacmog* is *conceptually* a child, even if the person filling the role is actually the age of an adult. Children are seen to be inherently clean, ritually pure, and morally virtuous—semantically, the overlapping meanings of the word *cuḍv* “pure” in Kota, as well as its cognates in other South Indian languages (like *cuttam* in Tamil, probably the language through which the term entered Kota) which ultimately derive from the Sanskrit word for ritual purity, *śuddha*. Children, I was told, are “pure,” they do not deceive or cheat.³⁶

Ticipacmog as a Temporary Surrogate of the Deceased

Who is this ritualist and how is he or she selected? Usually the *ticipacmog* will be a classificatory son or daughter, simply because the person is chosen from the same exogamous division as and is usually younger than the deceased. Several of my consultants told me the individual should be *ra-ci* “lucky,” but did not specify what that luck entailed. Raman stated specifically that the *ticipacmog* should not have been born on the same day of the week as the deceased, but on some other day.³⁷ Sulli stated just the opposite, i.e. that the

³⁵The *ex-te-rka-m* used the word *ti-t* for pollution or defilement in this context, although this is probably a Tamilization. Kotas usually reserve *ti-t* for pollution associated with menstruation and *ke-r* for that associated with death.

³⁶In Me-na-r, those who participate directly in the funeral rituals must put a special leaf behind their ears before reaching the village. This is intended to prevent the spread of evil spirits to the young children in the village. I have not quite reconciled why on one hand, the *ticipacmog* must be a child *because* children are impervious to the evil influences of death, and on the other hand, small children are the only ones who might be affected by the lingering spirits after a death. It may be that relative age, kinship relationship, or the fact that the *ticipacmog* must be “lucky” may account for this apparent inconsistency.

³⁷A “condition *i-la-d na-l*,” or a day without “condition,” i.e. a restrictive condition.

ticpacmog must be born on the same day of the week as the deceased; Veln indicated that ideally the youngest son of a deceased man, or the daughter of a woman, fulfills this role.

It seems as if the *ticpacmog* is a generational replication of the deceased, formally alike in some ways and different in others. The day of birth is apparently significant, although there appears to be more than one version of what are its ritual consequences. In any case, something adheres to the day of the week on which someone is born. If the birthdates should indeed not match, it may be that the *ticpacmog* should be like the deceased in the manner of a son or family member, but perhaps sharing the date of birth is simply too close a relationship. If the birthdays must coincide, it would appear that formal equivalence between the deceased and the *ticpacmog* is quite important. Social and cultural reproduction is almost literal, if, in order for the deceased to safely travel to the other world, the closest equivalent of the deceased him/herself must conduct the rituals.

Respect and Separation

I have extracted examples from the description of the funeral proper to highlight three ways in which the *ticpacmog* is given formal respect or differentiated from the other villagers during the funeral.

- 1) *Formal ordering*: After the cremation, all sit in the verandah of the deceased's house and wait for the *ticpacmog* to return: he should be first to enter. The manner of enacting ritual precedence invokes the precedence of divinity: leaving right shoulder bare in formal ritual fashion the *ticpacmog* utters the name of god and enters the house, right foot first; others may enter only after they see a lamp burning in their own houses (thus indicating god's presence in their own homes).
- 2) *Residence in the death house*: It used to be that many of the villagers used to sleep in the death house. Now, I was informed in Me-na-r, only the *tic pac mog* must sleep in the death house. This is in one sense a relic of the earlier practice, but it also reflects the temporary condition of the *ticpacmog* as both pure and contaminated by death, both a villager and a close equivalent of the deceased.
- 3) *Precedence in communal eating*: the others who have helped clean the cremation ground must finish the food from the plate of the *ticpacmog*. Generally, saliva is not considered a polluting substance among Kotas. Here, however, it does seem to be a significant element in determining ritual rank, at least. It may further function to prevent any leftovers from the plate of the *ticpacmog* from reaching others, or from remaining after the funeral. The food itself, before it is touched by the *ticpacmog*, is not tinged by death: the ritual specialists for the gods eat this food too, although not in the death house but in their own homes, served by relatives of the deceased.

These three kinds of ritual separation are evident in practices surrounding the *mundka·no·n* and *te·rka·rn* during the god ceremony and other contexts of worship. These ritual specialists always lead in ritual—in fact it appears that the etymology of the word *mundka·no·n* itself implies this function: the first morpheme means “first.” Kotas have explained the function of the *mundka·no·n* as one of leading the Kotas in all their rituals of worship.

The practice of sleeping in the death house is paralleled in the god ceremony, where the ritual specialists for the gods must sleep under a separate canopy. Separate and precedent dining are also evident in a number of rituals, the most important of which occur during the height of the god ceremony.

Role of Priests

In former times, according to S. Raman, the *mundka·no·n* was required to touch his forehead to the deceased's chest at the *nela·go·r* as soon as the bier was set down. The *te·rka·m* was not required to bow before the corpse in this place, but could do so in the *kava·l*. Neither ritual specialist was permitted to accompany the funeral procession beyond the *nela·go·r*.³⁸ The implication here is that some quality of the *nela·go·r*, or perhaps of the corpse itself once it had reached this stage in the ritual proceedings, or both, *allowed for* as well as required the *mundka·no·ns*' signs of respect. This is important because both ritual specialists are required to uphold rigorous standards of purity and conduct (the requirement that they walk in designated parts of the village is but a simple example of these standards).

It is not simply that the pollution of death and menstruation make these cultural categories abominable to the gods—although this is not totally inaccurate. We have already seen that the conception of death and divinity are in some ways intertwined; the relationship among these categories, in Kota society as among Hindus, is complex. It is therefore interesting that in recent times the role of the *mundka·no·n* has been in a sense clarified, that is, expunged of what are in modern times considered compromising associations with death: the *mundka·no·n* in Kolme·l today is not supposed to bow before the corpse.

This change in priestly role was introduced by the late Va. Kamatn after he was chosen to become *mundka·no·n*. It was an interesting move because it suggests that "death pollution" became an overriding concern for a priest. At the same time, Va. Kamatn was staunchly opposed to the dry funeral. When he died, the bones remaining after his cremation were treated in a Hindu manner: floated in a stream that was metaphorically equated with the Ganges. That is, he supported the "soul reaches god" eschatology. If at all we are to interpret a modern Hindu set of beliefs and practices concerning death which are in some way different from those of premodern Kotas, it could be the strict compartmentalization of the "pollution" side of death from the whole notion of transmigration or reaching the divine.³⁹

³⁸ Apparently, however, Mandelbaum saw a funeral in Kolme·l in which the ritualists were present in a now abandoned ritual at another intermediate point, the *ete·rcd va·m*.

³⁹ The modern-premodern division should not be strictly correlated with Hindu-Kota oppositions, however. For example, Dubois (1906, 486) described the 19th century Brahman funeral practice in which the "chief mourner plac[es] his lips successively to all the apertures of the deceased's body, address[es] to each a *mantram* appropriate to it, kiss[es] it, and drop[s] on it a little ghee." The categories of pollution and purity as represented in today's practices may

What can we learn from earlier accounts concerning the role of the priests? Veln's statements are not entirely consistent. In one account he indicates that the *mundka·no·n* (who will on that day perform his ordinary morning prayers) must not enter the death house, but that he goes directly to the edge of the cremation site. Veln was probably mistaken in saying that the *mundka·no·n* makes fire with fire sticks there; elsewhere, as in every other account, he says that the *ticpacmog* brings fire to the spot from the house of the deceased. In another account, Veln indicates that the *mundka·no·n* does not go directly to the *du·* (cremation spot) but to the corpse-keeping-place (CKP), where his presence as well as that of the *te·rka·rn* is required.⁴⁰ In 1937, in Kolme·l, the *mundka·no·n* and *te·rka·rn* did not return to the village until the final ritual of circling with oxen and spreading millet was completed (beyond the corpse-keeping-place and before the cremation spot).

According to Veln's descriptions of funerals in Kurgo·j, the adult ritual specialists used to bow before the corpse while it was still in the house. His two descriptions conflicted, in the first, which was prescriptive, the *mundka·no·n* and *te·rka·rn* were required to bow before the corpse; afterwards, the *kolyta·l*, *gotka·rn*, and the rest of the men were to do so. In the second, a description of a particular funeral, only the latter two ritual specialists bowed before the corpse.

The roles of religious practitioners have changed significantly. The *kolyta·l* survives as a ritual office today only in the village of Me·na·r. In today's funerals, the roles of the *mundka·no·n* and *te·rka·rn* are extremely limited. In Kolme·l they may not enter the death house at all, and there are some who will argue that it is not appropriate for these ritualists to bow to the corpse at any time.

SYMBOLISM OF AND IDENTIFICATION WITH BOVINE SPECIES

Kota ritual and song serve to project species classifications onto ethnic classifications, in a fashion that may very loosely be compared to the anthropological concept of *totem*. Broadly, Kotas identify themselves closely with the cow, and the Todas, with the buffalo.⁴¹

The use of clarified butter, particularly of the buffalo, in many rituals is an artifact of close Kota-Toda relations because Todas were its traditional purveyors. Since Kurgo·j is the village in which Kota

themselves result from Victorian influence—for that matter, in reaction to such disdainful descriptions as are found in Dubois.

⁴⁰Only if the death occurs within fifteen days of the seed sowing ritual (*velet*) are the ritual specialists barred from the "corpse keeping place." The reason the ritualists cannot go there after the seed sowing ritual is that the ritual involves cow milk; for this reason they must remain pure for fifteen days.

⁴¹The Todas maintain the same species identification.

relationships with the Todas have been the most enduring in recent years, and where some Kota claim consanguineal kinship ties with Toda families, it is not surprising that practices associated with the Todas, such as the use of clarified butter, is evident to a greater extent in rituals of Kurgo-j than those of other villages. This Toda link constitutes one of the ritual identity markers of Kurgo-j village.⁴²

The cow is not only a marker of difference from the Todas, but is also associated with Kota notions of divinity and origination. In the stories Kotas tell of village origins, for example, a divine black cow led them through the Nilgiris, indicating with its leg the sites upon which villages should be founded.⁴³ Thus the physical location of Kota villages is connected closely with the divinity of the cow.⁴⁴ Spatial practice in sacrifice also served to articulate the centrality of the cow. Quite literally, the cow was sacrificed centrally, near the corpse at the corpse-keeping-place. The place in which the buffalo was sacrificed was not particularly important, and was generally some short distance away.

Practices of eating also differentiated the cow from the buffalo. Sacrificial cow meat was not consumed at the funeral (containing, so it seems, the *pa·pm* “sin” of the deceased) but sacrificial buffalo meat was. Both meats could and can be consumed on ordinary occasions by ordinary Kotas. According to Raman, the currently-practiced gastronomic differentiation is *mundka·no·ns* may drink the milk of the cow, but not the buffalo, and may eat the meat of the buffalo, but not the cow.

Cows and buffaloes were used sacrificially in funerals and played roles in theories of the afterlife. The identity between Kotas and cows was symbolically construed as the stronger. Sacrificed cows were believed to travel alongside the deceased to *amavna·r* (the “motherland”), while the buffaloes would follow behind or even lead the way.⁴⁵

The reasons for sacrifice and the manner in which they were accomplished are also different. The cow is made to go to *amavna·r* only if the funeral participants place the requisite cloths on its belly and bow down (Mandelbaum 2.8.38); no such cloths were necessary for the sacrifice of a buffalo. Buffaloes were believed

⁴²The use of clarified butter is sometimes symbolically inflected, however, providing a Kota, rather than Toda, association: cow butter, not buffalo butter, is used on the coin placed in the dying person’s mouth

⁴³This story led to one of the folk-etymologies for the Kota term for their villages: *ko·ka·l*. Mr. Sivan from Me·na·r explained that the word meant “cow leg” (*ko·*, prob. < Skt. *go* “cow” and *ka·l* “leg”). Others insist its derivation is *ko·* (oblique form of *ko·v*, Kota man) and *ka·l*, place in which something exists.

⁴⁴Emeneau (1944 III, 2-22) reports the story of a cow raising a man’s children at the sacred spot *to·pa·l* (itself named after a divine bison). The common folkloric themes of the story (Stith Thompson’s story type 403 “the black and the white bride”) and the mention of non-Kota customs such as the blindfolding of the woman giving birth reveals an external source for the story. But the life and identity-giving qualities of the cow are consonant with Kota values, as is the Kotaization of the story through incorporation of divine locales.

⁴⁵This account was provided for Mandelbaum by Ka·ka· Kamatn.

to be necessary in the other world as a source of wealth—the more buffaloes, the wealthier the individual. Cows were not valued for their numbers, but for their symbolic value. One was enough.

Etymology of the Sacrificial Cow

The special name for the cow sacrificed at a funeral has been variously recorded as *koṭgi-t a-v* (Raman's pronunciation), *koṭgat a-v* (Emeneau 1944, IV, 278-9), *koṭgaty a-v* (Velu),⁴⁶ and *koṭkaty a-v* (Sulli 2.8.38). Emeneau found the analysis of *koṭgat* "entirely obscure." Velu and Sulli provided interesting interpretations. According to Velu, the name derived from the special sickle shaped bell, called *koṭkaty many*, which was placed around the neck of the sacrificial cow.⁴⁷ There was only one such bell in the village, was believed to be very old, and was kept in the house of the *gotka-rn*. Sulli offered what appears to be a very forced interpretation, "topknot tied cow" (*koṭ* "tuft" plus *kat* "that which is tied"), because the deceased ties the cow in his hair and takes it along to the mother land. This interpretation combines the idea of the divinity of the cow with the idea that the *mundka-no-n* keeps the deity tied in his hair during the god ceremony. None of the other descriptions of the journey to the mother land indicate the cow is transported this way—it always walks alongside the deceased

Cow and Buffalo Sacrifice

The stated purpose of the cow sacrifice was to remove the sins of the deceased. It was also believed that the cow would accompany the dead to the other world; since the cow was the primary animal with which the Kotas identified themselves, it was necessary in this world as in the other to have them around. Kota ideas concerning their relationship with the cow have changed over the years.

The significance and form of the cow as a religious symbol in Kota culture in some ways parallels and in some ways reverses its significance in Hindu society. For example, in modern high-caste Hindu society, beef eating is scorned because the cow is revered. Until the Kotas began to accept this ideology, the cow was sacrificed *because* it was revered.⁴⁸ In Hindu and tribal societies there are numerous stories in which a sacred

⁴⁶This pronunciation is compatible with that of Raman given the pattern of variation found in other Kota words.

⁴⁷This interpretation does not unravel the etymology. *katy*, (sickle shaped knife) may refer to the sickle shape of the bell, but *koṭ* is left unexplained.

⁴⁸The idea that sacrificing an animal is a form of violence (rather than an act of reverence, worship, or ritually necessary prestation) should not be construed as a "natural" one; clearly a shift in ideology had to take place. Although the precise mechanism of this shift may be difficult to trace, it seems likely that Hindu nationalism, particularly as embodied in Gandhian reforms (including the eschewal of cow slaughter for any purpose) played an important role—the historical period was certainly correct.

place is discovered where a white cow stands on a spot and spontaneously issues milk. Kotas retain an aspect of this South Asian pattern in their legend of a divine black cow leading them through the Nilgiris. In an almost poetic way, Kota culture, as a "tribal" culture within a congeries of societies increasingly becoming reified as "Hindu," shared the outward form of Pan-Indic symbols but reversed their polarity (color and edibility). Later (over the last half-century), they have attempted to reconcile their "cow" with the Hindu "cow" as part of a broader effort at assimilation.

Mourning Practices

Despite the principle of male-female complementarity in divine ritual offices, it is Kota men who speak for, and in a formal sense, stand for, the totality of Kota culture. Since the cow was central in the symbolic construction of Kota identity (even though the construct itself changes), it was ritually a prominent focus for mourning for men. The buffalo, on the other hand, was connected with subsistence, with daily life, and represented, symbolically and actually, a form of relationship with the Toda tribe. Kota women mourned the buffalo, perhaps since the buffalo belonged to the domestic realm. The cow could of course be a domestic animal, but its symbolic significance extended to a level that encompassed the whole tribe.

Why were buffaloes sacrificed? Although the buffaloes are a sign of wealth and are believed to accompany the dead to the other world, many Kotas thought of the sacrifice, primarily, as an important source of food for the funeral. Since the buffalo sacrifice provided the opportunity for a contest among the men, it may also be considered an important site of expressive culture--in this case, the peculiar, almost Saturnalian joy that is inspired alongside the sadness in a funeral. In addition to serving practical and expressive functions, the buffaloes were media for the enactment of kinship relations through the process of exchange. Buffaloes were like cloth in this regard.

One anomaly in the ritual differentiation of cow and buffalo is that music played no part in it. Music was used, rather, to attract buffaloes and cows generically. I offer no explanation for this, save for the idea that identity and difference in ritual practice operate at multiple levels and there may be no systematic reason why one set of practices (food taboos for example) operates at one level of generality and others (music) operate at another.

IV. SOCIALITY, RITUAL, AND CULTURAL CHANGE

In this section I outline analytic categories for examining relationships between ritual and social structure. It is scarcely surprising that Kota relationships with one another and with outsiders are encoded in ritual. Kota

ritual may also effect changes in, or control social relationships.⁴⁹ The purpose of this section is to document the ways in which relationships are encoded in ritual and consider the manners in which these formal expressions change. I would also like to consider how these changes impact upon the Kotas' own views about culture change and identity. As Kotas represent themselves to others and to themselves, they participate in an ongoing dialectic construction of tribalness that not only leaves ritual traces but also sometimes grows out of ritual concerns.

I would like to make clear my usage of concept of "solidarity" since it has been used in such a variety of ways in the history of anthropology. Its generality makes the concept useful but also renders it somewhat vague until tied to a specific ethnographic context (cf. Needham 1963, xlii). A few classic formulations will serve as convenient reference points.

Durkheim distinguished between "mechanical solidarity," which he took to be ancient on the evolutionary scale, and "organic solidarity," which overlapped with and eventually supplanted the former as societies developed. The cohesion between members of society in the former was based on similarities in intention and the latter based upon the interdependence brought about by the division of labor (Harris 1968, 466; Durkheim 1933).⁵⁰

Talcott Parsons used the term solidarity to signify a *systematic* orientation towards supporting the integrity of the collectivity. The expectations associated with actors' roles are "institutionalized obligations." (1951, 96-98). That is, solidarity exists where societal integration is institutionalized (77). In Parsons' formulation, expressive symbolism of the collectivity and solidarity are of three types. In the first, "different sub-units of the social system" share common symbols—such as elements of style in house furnishing. This implies sharing of a common culture, but does not signify the bonds of the collectivity in and of itself. The other two ways symbolize the collectivity as such. One is acting out the "feeling of solidarity" without the "direct involvement of morally evaluative considerations." In this class are grouped such family observances as Thanksgiving and Christmas. Parsons distinguishes from this more "serious" types of observance, collective "rituals," which manifest and regulate "the common moral sentiments or need-dispositions of the members of the collectivity." Parsons goes beyond Durkheim here to argue that not all such serious rituals should be labeled religious (395-6).⁵¹

⁴⁹See, for example, my discussion of the rain ceremony of Kolme-l (Wolf i.p.), to which a new sacred site was added in order to prevent encroachment by the *bo-yar* caste.

⁵⁰My intention here is to use Durkheim's analytical distinctions but not his evolutionary conclusions or the idea that social forms are prior to and the basis for other forms of representation.

⁵¹Independence day or university commencement ceremonies are examples of evaluative collective solidarity symbolisms which are not legitimated in terms of a supernatural order.

Since this discussion is not a typology of solidarity *per se* but rather an attempt to relate a set of ritual activities to one another, it shall suffice to discuss the kinds of phenomena among the Kotas which produce and/or symbolize solidarity of one sort or another. All the rituals under discussion involve solidarity of Parsons' third type in that they involve moral evaluation.⁵² Each type I have listed below makes reference to Durkheim's "mechanical" versus. "organic" distinction. These are taken here in simplified form as types of logical relationship: cohesiveness through sameness and cohesiveness through difference (like two poles of a magnet).

- 1) The *sharing of responsibility* in a ritual.
- 2) The *sharing of substances*—food, tobacco, etc.
- 3) *Representation of participants* in a ritual, each performing the same task.⁵³
- 4) *Performative utterances and discourse* [of unity].

1) THE SHARING OF RESPONSIBILITY IN A RITUAL

This microcosmic form of "organic solidarity" involves division of ritual labor, usually along the lines of gender, family, clan and village. The *mundka·no·n* and *te·rka·rn* are each, for example, drawn from particular families (*kuty*) in the village. One family also provides the traditional "grain-mixers" (*ku·murco·r*), that is, those who are in charge of offering the grain to the gods and redistributing communal grain to the village during the god ceremony. The ritual sacrificers of cows used to be drawn from a particular family. In the enactment of their institutionalized roles, representatives from these families create a temporary "organic" unity by fulfilling complementary ritual functions.

A trivial musical example of this form of organic solidarity is the division of musical responsibility in an instrumental ensemble—trivial because each member does not stand for a wider cultural category as they do in the above example. Slightly more consequential is the division of labor in which those who can play music are expected to do so, while others must fulfill other responsibilities according to their age, clan membership, gender or office. There are no examples, to my knowledge, of members of one *ke·r* (exogamous division living in a row of houses) being obliged to provide musicians in the way that particular *ke·rs* provide other sorts of ritualists. This is a sense in which musicianship differs from other ritual specializations.

Unlike dividing up a corpus of functionally differentiated tasks or rituals, sharing the responsibility of

⁵²There are other forms of solidarity in Kota culture which I do not consider here.

⁵³Representative involvement in a ritual (by exogamous clan, *ke·r* (Ke), family, *kuty* (Ku), or village), is noted, in a general sense, in the god ceremony and dry funeral charts in the appendix, by means of the summation symbol, Σ .

hosting guests may be construed as a form of “mechanical” solidarity because all participants share the same intentions and perform the same task. Similar to this is the practice in which equal shares of rice are collected from each household and redistributed according to the number of people residing in each house. The women of the houses then cook the reapportioned rice.

2) **THE SHARING OF SUBSTANCES—FOOD, TOBACCO, ETC.**

The sharing of substances is ritualized in several ways.

- a) The process of sharing off one plate as symbolic of “marriage.” An emphasis on gender and clan complementarity in which differences merge to create a larger whole (organic).
- b) The process of sharing off one plate as a ritual and an everyday practice, by Kotas *because* they are Kota or because they belong to one family (mechanical).
- c) The division of foodstuffs into equal portions (such as each organ of the sacrificial buffalo), signifying equality through the similarity of participation (mechanical).

3) **REPRESENTATION OF PARTICIPANTS IN A RITUAL, EACH PERFORMING THE SAME TASK**

The whole is represented by key figures from each village, clan, family, or household. Solidarity here is “mechanical” in the sense that all fulfill similar roles and “organic” in the sense that it is structural *difference* that brings the participants together to create a whole. Examples include the rain ceremony in Kolme-l, where two *mundka·no·ns* (each associated with different clans and gods) jointly place a monetary offering under a sacred bush; and the god ceremony in Ticga·r, where 7 men each place one finger under a boulder and lift it.⁵⁴ A musical example of this form of solidarity occurs at the beginning of the god ceremony in Porga·r, in which a *kol* player from *naryke·r*, *kike·r*, and either one from *me·ke·r* or another from *kike·r* must play simultaneously.

Another example of this type of musical solidarity is the singing of god songs, where women sing while dancing together in a circle and clapping their hands. The “representativeness” of the participants is not conscious, as in the other examples, but implicit. The natal villages of women living in any one village are likely to include all or most of the other villages. Thus the gathering of women for collective rituals instantiates the collectivity of all the villages.

⁵⁴The success of the lifting is taken as a sign that the gods are happy and the community is living righteously.

4) PERFORMATIVE UTTERANCES AND OTHER DISCOURSE

Austin (1989, 235) coined the term “performative utterance” to refer to statements such as “I apologize” or “I name this ship as . . .” which do not report actions, but actualize them. Social solidarity of a mechanical type is created in god ceremonies through verbalization of this type. While standing before a temple or before making an offering, the *mundka-no·ns* will ask, “Are we all joined?” to which the men present will reply “We’re joined!”

Another kind of discursive practice which formalizes a form of solidarity occurs during the god ceremony. The elders take attendance, calling off the names of all the men in the village, thus ensuring that all the men are physically gathered to sleep together under the canopy in the center of the village.

To my knowledge there are no ritual discursive practices dealing with the solidarity of women, however many of the recently composed god songs textualize actions of worship: “we joyfully gaze at you,” “with turmeric water we dance,” “we worship you by singing,” “with affection we celebrate.” These appear to be textual conceits shared by south Indian women’s devotional songs in general. Some of these performatives truly exist only in textual form, such as the phrase “with turmeric water we dance”—worship of the Hindu goddess Mariamman involves turmeric water and Kota women may indeed use it at times, but in the context of the song, dancing with turmeric water is evoked, verbally rather than physically performed.

SOLIDARITY IN GOD CEREMONIES AND FUNERALS

In the broadest possible view I would argue that the social construction of “divinity” among the Kotas depends to a greater extent on forms of mechanical solidarity than on forms of organic solidarity; organic solidarity appears to be more prevalent in funerals. In taking this view I must make value judgements about what is most important in a complex set of rituals, and for this I open myself up to reasonable criticism. Nevertheless I offer the following argument: one of the most fundamental ideas and perhaps *the* most fundamental idea behind the god ceremony is that the Kotas are unified—this is a unity of sameness, not a unity of opposites. It is also a unity that defies time while at the same time trying to represent it (as in section I, types of “pastness”). It attempts to deny time in that it argues the Kota people are and always have been “as one.” The efficacy of the divine depends on all being of “one mind.”

Although principles of affinal complementarity, for example, are stressed in the division of labor to enact the god ceremony, principles that ordinarily articulate these differences are erased. To take two examples: All the men sleep together in one shelter, not in their respective clusters of houses which are organized into exogamous clans. Although the men are separated from the women (who do sleep in their houses), the two

sexes are forbidden from sexual contact (sex could be construed as the fundamental practice which defines their *generic* [gender] difference).

Funerals are more fundamentally based on the idea that social bonds are being broken and reformed. Funerals are endings and beginnings. Reproduction and rebirth are far more central than social similarity. The whole theme of *individuation* I introduced earlier predicates that of complementarity. The sequence of prestations at a funeral depends not on static responsibilities based on clan membership in a village, but rather on the nature of the relationship to the deceased. The deceased is not symbolically construed as *like* everyone else (as are participants in the god ceremony) in every respect, but as having variable degrees and kinds of social status and identity. The following are a few of the ways in which such differentiation is marked in the funeral:

- 1) Funerals for aged people are more elaborate than those for young people—elaborateness measured by the presence of music and dance and the number of people attending
- 2) Biers and catafalques are constructed differently for wealthy people, poor people, infants, children, and ritual specialists.
- 3) Items burned along with the deceased reflect his or her habits, hobbies, tastes, ritual status, and gender

Funerals code not only the participants' statuses, but also their relationships with the deceased. Some relationships appear in the very names of ritual items, such as the *ma-lmund*, which seems to be named after the male ceremonial friend, *ma-l*,⁵⁵ and the *nanm nu-l*, "brothers-in-law" thread, used to bind the toes of the deceased. Others relationships are manifest in the order and manner of mourning over the corpse, observation of mourning restrictions (including whether or not one should perform music) and the processional order.⁵⁶

The idea of the married couple as a functional unit appears in both god ceremonies and funerals. For example, in order for men to become the ritual specialists, *te-rka-rn* and *mundka-no-n*, they must be married and their first wives must be alive. These first wives serve as ritual leaders for the women.

In the funeral, the functional unity of the married couple (i.e. one of whom is the deceased) extends to both sides of the family. A recurring theme in the way responsibilities for the death of a man or a woman are divided up is on one hand, the affirmation of natal ties for the woman, and on the other, the reckoning of kinship based on the married couple as a unit. The following practices illustrate that there is no one single

⁵⁵A formal ritual procedure is conducted to establish the relationship of *ma-l*. The relationship is so close between two *ma-ls*, according to Raman, that they must share everything with one another—including their wives. To my knowledge, no such institution exists for women.

⁵⁶Ceremonially important male roles (playing the music, carrying the bier) precede those of the women (carrying the objects).

way in which these principles operate.

- 1) In the ritual restoration of jewelry, for a widow, the *nanims* (male relatives) formally assist her in putting on the jewels, and for a widower, his wife's brothers (*ay!ba-vngu-l*). Whether the husband or the wife dies, the same people perform this ritual. In this sense, the marital unit is the operative base.
- 2) The gifts of cows and buffaloes, according to Raman's account, are reciprocal affinal gifts.
- 3) According to Sulli and Velu only the buffalo is given as a reciprocal affinal gift. The cow is provided by the natal line (by the estate of the deceased if a man dies, by the male relatives of a deceased woman). With the gift of a cow, according to this practice, it appears to be irrelevant whether or not the deceased was married. The gift of a cow thus draws upon the identity of the deceased in terms of consanguinity, rather than affinity.
- 4) The *tic pac mog* is supposed to be served food by the *antamic* of the deceased (wife of deceased man's younger brother; I am not sure of the relationship if the deceased is a woman). The relationship of *antamic* would ensure that the food-server would remain in the classificatory relationship of "wife" of deceased (without being the *tic pac mog*'s actual mother if the widow herself were serving and if the son of the deceased was the *tic pac mog*).

A note on the societal level of solidarity expressed in funerals (intervillage) and god ceremonies (Intra village) is in order here. It is a symbolic fact that god ceremonies are concerned primarily with *Intra village* solidarity; but it is also a consequence of the fact that god ceremonies of each village are scheduled almost simultaneously, thus making it impossible to attend one ceremony without missing another. It is a symbolic fact that green and dry funerals involve relationships among villages; but it is also a consequence of the fact that family ties extend throughout the entire tribe. If a Kota dies, her or his relatives from every village have an obligation to participate in both green and dry funerals, by proxy if not in person. Dates of dry funerals of the villages are staggered.

Intervillage solidarity in green and dry funerals is manifest primarily in the form of "representation of participants" (type three above). In principle examples of this form, representatives of the seven villages participate in the following:

- 1) Cleaning the funeral ground and preserving the bones.
- 2) Toe-tying rituals
- 3) *ja-dyku* (also a "sharing of substance": eating in classificatory husband-wife pairs)
- 4) *ja-dykupa-c* (village representatives dancing together in costume)
- 5) Tribal council meetings (*ku:m*)⁵⁷

Intra village solidarity in the god ceremonies is manifested in performatives utterances such as "Are we

⁵⁷I do not discuss these meetings in detail. Although the god ceremony provides an institutionalized place for meeting of the village council, there is no ceremony or ritual that calls for all the seven villages to gather. The meeting is called for its own sake when a problem must be settled between villages or when rules are being decided that concern the entire community.

all joined,” through “representation of participants” and “sharing responsibility” of exogamous divisions at the village level, and sharing of substances such as tobacco.

CULTURE CHANGE

Some of the major differences between god ceremonies and funerals of today and those of earlier times are the ritual roles of other Nilgiri peoples. Todas used to supply clarified butter for Kota god ceremonies, Badagas used to provide financial assistance for the ordination of a priest and were expected to witness and dance at the god ceremony (Mandelbaum 1989, 155). Kurumbas provided important ritual symbols it would appear, only for the dry funeral. They provided the *pardac* (pole on which leaf umbrella was erected, also used for purification of houses at the end of the dry funeral) and *volker* (leaf umbrella).

To a green funeral, each Badaga partner (*mutgar*) of the deceased was required to bring, according to 1937-38 accounts, five rupees and one male or female buffalo. In previous times (i.e. previous to the 1930s accounts), the Badaga partners would also supply a one rupee coin that was placed on the forehead of the deceased. The economic relationship between Kotas and Badagas was thus inscribed on the body in a quite literal way, just at the time the worldly existence of body itself was brought to an end.

More than a century ago, according to Breeks, the Toda and Badaga partners (Breeks used the term “masters”) each brought “two or three male buffalo calves for slaughter, or a cloth or two” (1873, 46). The calves were eaten during the funeral, or could be sold by members of the deceased’s household. Cloths are a typical medium of gift transfer in India, and their presence as funeral prestation, to and from the house of the deceased, is well documented.⁵⁸ Veln indicated that the Toda partner (*kelka·rnton*) would provide a barren buffalo (*mayim*) for a rich Kota because it was fat; a male buffalo was considered less valuable and would be given to a Kota of less wealth and stature. In Sulli’s account, Cettiyyar (merchant) caste people donated the *a·rakm* and, in addition, a *pu·koc*, to place on the cow’s belly.⁵⁹

Both in god ceremonies and in funerals in recent years, Kotas have significantly decreased the degree of ritual interaction they maintain with outsiders—following what Marriott calls a “minimizing strategy” (Marriott 1976, 126) characteristic of artisan castes. But this particular minimizing strategy appears to be a

⁵⁸See for example, the discussions of ceremonies and prestations in Dumont’s ethnography of the Pramalai Kallar (1986, 272-92). For a Brahman funeral, cloth is also among the ten ritual gifts to Brahmans on behalf of the deceased (Dubois, 483; Stevenson 1920, 173-4). Sometimes the cloth is substitutable with money (Stevenson 174), and in some prestations, the quality of cloth as a bodily covering is important symbolically (Narayan Aiyangar 1913, 48).

⁵⁹Compare also with the Toda funeral. The buffalo donated by affines must have a multicolored cloth called *koc* (most likely related to Kota *pu·koc*) placed on its back before sacrifice. The cloth is transferred to the corpse after the buffalo is sacrificed (Walker 1986, 224)

recent phenomenon, brought on in part by changing demography and a strong rejection of the pollution ideology that in the early parts of the century, at least, was associated with the Nilgiri system of reciprocal exchange. The central musical example of this change is Kota refusal any longer to perform at Toda or Badaga funerals.

They have also curtailed certain kinds of ritual interaction between ritual categories and categories of people *within* Kota society. As alluded to, the degree to which the *mundka-no-n* and *te-rka-rn* are involved in the funeral has been reduced. This, I would argue, tends to reinforce the categorical opposition between divinity and death which, it would seem, was once more fluid and complex. By avoiding the dry funeral, the Kotas also reinforce the idea of death as a polluting moment rather than a moment that initiates an extended period of transition. The dry funeral provided transition between death and the afterlife, a transition during which significant rituals involving divinity were introduced; it reinforced the idea that ancestors lived on in another world, provided symbolism of rebirth, and so forth. Sexual activity (ritual interaction between genders) and sacrifice of the cow (ritual interaction between "divinity" and "death") can both be interpreted as forms of ritual interaction which have been expunged from ritual life.

The god ceremony required very little revamping. Its central metaphors of unity, equality, and oneness of mind remained strong even as surface features of ritual changed slightly, or such things as temple rebuilding became enacted as reconstituted memories rather than instrumental necessities. The changes in the god ceremony, by and large, never required a major change in philosophy in order to justify it.⁶⁰ The omission of the dry funeral did, however, require considerable justification, as did the discontinuation of animal sacrifice. Its central metaphors of social individuality, temporal disjuncture, and conflicting emotions provided a conceptual arena for cultural remodeling.

⁶⁰The introduction of new Hindu deities into Kota villages, however, have caused considerable uproar. The religious strife Mandelbaum described in Kolme-l regarding the Rangrayn temple (Mandelbaum 1960) has been replicated in one way or another in each Kota village.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

HISTORICAL AND REGIONAL VARIATION IN THE GREEN FUNERAL

I have divided my discussion of green funerals into nine sections, each marked by significant physical, musical or ritual events.

- I) Preparations at the moment of death
- II) Preparations immediately following death.
- III) Announcing the death and interacting with visitors.
- IV) Bringing the corpse out of the house.
- V) Rituals conducted on the *kava-l* (yard).
- VI) Moving the corpse to the "corpse keeping place" and performing rituals there.
- VII) Moving to the cremation ground and lighting the pyre.
- VIII) Leaving the cremation ground, bathing, and returning to the house of the deceased.
- IX) Consuming ritual meals and cleaning the funeral ground.

I. PREPARATIONS AT THE MOMENT OF DEATH

PLACEMENT OF THE CORPSE

Since the place in which one dies is apparently important, friends and family members of a dying person will try to move him or her to the central room of the house (*kud!*). If someone dies in the kitchen, the kitchen will be defiled and must be purified with cow dung. The corpse must still be brought to the *kud!*. The bodies of those dying out of doors will be brought only to the verandah of the house, for fear of allowing *pica-es* (demons) to enter along with the corpse (Mandelbaum 6.28.37).

COMPARATIVE REMARKS

For funerals in much of India the corpse must be placed on a mat or clean cloth which has been spread with a few blades of *darbha* grass (a holy and purifying substance),¹ itself spread on a patch of earth in the house which has been smeared with cow dung.² Among the Kotas, I have seen the corpse laid on a mat with a pillow under the head. The use of a special room for the deceased has been reported for other local tribes,³ and among the Badagas, the sick person is usually kept in the “inner, more sacrosanct room (*o:ga mane*) of the house” (Hockings, n.d., 3).

Todas customs regarding the initial placement of the corpse depend on the membership of the deceased in a particular clan (Rivers 1986 [1906], 337-44). Todas keep the corpse not on the floor, but on the “sleeping couch” (Walker 1986, 214). Notwithstanding the Toda counter example, it is unusual for tribal communities, among whom we might expect practices that differ from Hindus’, to keep the corpse in a raised position. Even among the ethnically distinct Hill Marias, for example, a dying man is placed on the ground (Grigson 1991 [1949], 271).

MOUTH MONEY

A man⁴ must place a small gold coin, called “mouth money,”⁵ and a small amount of husked millet (*ta·ym ayk*) in the mouth of the dying person. In Kurgoj the coin was also smeared with clarified butter from the cow.⁶ One rationalization for the use of “mouth money” was that the coin might be required for purchase of

¹Among the Irulas the corpse must be placed on grass from the thatched roof of the house. If the roof is tile, some grass will be kept on the roof for this purpose.

² See, for example, Moffatt (1968, 36; Dubois 1986 [1906], 482-3; Dumont 1986, 272; Stevenson 1920, 142). Gold (1988, 81 n.) provides rationalizations for this practice.

³Regarding the Mulu Kurumbas, for example, see Misra (1971, 83).

⁴It may be that special kin must put these items into the mouth of the dying person, but I failed to collect sufficient data on this question. According Veln, the *goikarm*, a big man, must perform these actions, and also dress the corpse (as described below), in order to ensure village prosperity and vitality and to prevent other deaths. At the funeral of the ex. *mundkano·n*, Va. Kamatn, Mr. R. Lakshmanan was called on to perform the function. Va. Kamatn was Lakshmanan’s *ma·mn* (classificatory mother’s brother) and Lakshmanan was the eldest male relative of the appropriate relationship.

⁵*va·y parṁ* (“mouth money”) is but one of the terms. It may also be called “one money” (*ony parṁ*) or *vi·raṅy parṁ*. Raman insisted this term is a Kota-ization and contraction of Victoria Ra·ni Parṁ (Queen Victoria money), but Emeneau (DEDR 5457) demonstrates etymologies with Kodagu and Toda as well. Sulli, as one might expect, offered yet another explanation, attributing it to one Kota named Vi·m who established the custom.

⁶Badagas also smear clarified butter on the coin (Hockings n.d. 5).

things in the other world.⁷ Some believe it is required for passage to the land of the dead: Raman dreamt of visiting his ancestors, and was apparently required to pay a toll.

Among Brahmins and non-Brahmins, sons or close relatives generally place grain, usually rice, in the deceased's mouth. Among the Gonds of Andhra Pradesh, the chief mourner (usually the son) inserts a silver rupee coin between the deceased's teeth (Fürer Haimendorf 1979, 373). Although a coin is not usually "fed" to the corpse, it is at least placed on its mouth or chest.⁸ Moffatt implies that the purificatory properties of gold may help explain its use in the funeral, although this interpretation must remain speculative. In general, the ceremony of putting grain and a coin in the mouth of the deceased appears to be the *last* prestation, the last gesture of reciprocity (Moffatt 1968, 50), between the deceased and his or her family.

Among the Kotas, this "feeding" is not the last gesture tying the family and friends to the deceased, but the *first*. Nor should it be regarded, first and foremost, as a prestation.⁹ It seems rather to be an act that deals directly with the process of transition. It is structurally analogous to the practice of feeding Ganges water and Tulsi to dying Hindus; perhaps, for comparative purposes, the timing of the event (the moment of death) is more important than the substance transacted (coins and grain vs. tulsi and water). Viewing the action as an aid in the transition from life to death, the rationalization that the coin might be necessary to pay for items on the way to the land of the dead seems less a secondary rationalization than at first glance. Moreover, the timing of the event to the moment of death makes the ritual not only a marker of death, but as the *mundka·no·n* of Kurgoj, Mr. Caln, put it, "must cause life to go" (*jiv o·kcrbo·ro*).

II. PREPARATIONS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING DEATH

After the millet and coin feeding ritually mark and effect the transformation from life to death, the villagers must begin to prepare the corpse for removal from the house. The eyes of the corpse are shut, hands and

⁷A similar rationalization is provided in Gover (1871, 66) for the Badaga practice.

⁸It is possible that the gold coin and grain ritual is found more often in south Indian practice. If the origin of the ritual is Brahmanical, this phenomenon would parallel the other examples of marginal survival of Sanskrit practices in the south. Ganges water and a basil leaf are among the items offered to the sick person in parts of north India. Although coins and grain are not mentioned in such accounts as Gold (1988), Minturn and Hitchcock (1966), Raheja (1988) this should not be taken to indicate they are not present. In Dubois' account of the Brahmin funeral, only *pañcagavya* (5 substances from the cow) are fed to the dying man to purify him. Coins are connected with these last rites, but do not apparently touch the corpse and are eventually distributed to the involved Brahmins (1986 [1906], 482-3); only much later in the rite are gold coins and rice put into the mouth of the deceased (1986 [1906], 486), the gold coin by the chief mourner, and soaked rice by all the mourners.

⁹Among the Badagas also, the coin must be placed in the mouth of the deceased *before* the body is removed from the house (Hockings n.d., 5).

arms stretched straight alongside the body, and a string is tied over the head and under the chin, thus keeping the mouth shut.

According to Sulli (Mandelbaum 4.19.37), the Kotas used to use *toyr nu'l* for this purpose, but even in his own time they had begun using cotton thread. *Toyr* thread is still ritually incorporated into some of the green and dry funerals. This thread, like millet, references practices of the ancestors and recalls tradition in a manner that seems appropriate: after all, the soul is about to depart on a journey to the land of the dead that will unite him/her with the ancestors.

Usually, the villagers will ritually clean the corpse after removing it from the house; however, in Veln's description they rubbed the body with clarified cow or buffalo butter before dressing it and do not apparently perform any other cleaning of the corpse later.¹⁰

DRESSING

The manner of dressing the corpse has varied regionally and historically.¹¹ In Kolme'l, 1990-92, the male corpse was dressed in a waistcloth (*munḍ*) (and possibly a shirt); in Kurgo:j a small edge-embroidered piece of cloth was tied around the head of the deceased.¹²

From both the Kurgo:j and Kolme'l descriptions we learn that the male corpse used to be dressed not only in a turban, but also in the fancy skirt used for special dances (*a:tkupa:c*, "dance costume"), both made of silk.¹³ Due to the expense of the fancy dress, even this practice was waning in the 1930s. In ancient times, and as recently as the 1930s for the death of an important man, the Kotas would dress their corpses in a *porv* (cognate with the Tamil word for sari), a shirtlike costume, frilled at the top and wide at the bottom. In all

¹⁰As with the use of clarified butter on the "mouth money," this practice points to the closeness of the relationship at that time between Kurgo:j Kotas and Todas, who were the contractual providers of clarified butter. It is not clear why cow butter is used in one case and cow or buffalo butter is used in the other.

¹¹Although one account indicates that the *gotka:rn* must dress the body of the male corpse, another specifies the task is to be accomplished by the deceased's brothers, or in their absence, his sister's husbands. It may be that the presence of a rule concerning who dresses the corpse may be more important than who fills the role.

¹²The cloth was tied simply, leaving the top of the head uncovered, unlike a turban which is generally wrapped more elaborately.

It was difficult to make out what clothes were on the corpse in the funerals I witnessed because covering the whole body were the large cloak and smaller pieces of cloth discussed below. I did not think to ask what was worn underneath; however, descriptions of the recent past provide this information.

¹³Regarding the funeral of a Gujarati Brāhman described by Margaret Stevenson, "a dead body is holy, so cannot be touched by anyone who is unbathed, nor can it be wrapped save in a silk cloth, or, if that is not forthcoming, in a newly washed or still wet one" (1920, 144). She goes on to describe other restrictions concerning the clothing of the corpse. In India, as elsewhere, the manner in which the corpse is dressed is an abiding concern.

probability the word *porv* is an older, or alternate name for the *a-ikupa-c*, which could be described in similar terms.

OTHER APPAREL

In former times Kotas did not wear shirts and thus shirts were not used on the corpse either. Typical of the cultural lag represented in the funeral, even after Kotas began to sport shirts, it was apparently some time before shirts were adopted into the funeral dress. Sulli mentioned that the corpse was dressed in a coat (his accounts conflict concerning the presence of a shirt in addition to the coat); in Porga-r at the turn of the century, Thurston also noted a “gaudy coat” (1987 [1909] IV, 25) and a colored turban. Sometimes sunglasses or other accessories are dressed on the corpse as well.

In keeping with decorative spirit, we also learn from Sulli that brass rattles were tied to the ankles of a male corpse. So too was the corpse adorned with traditional jewelry, even if he did not wear jewelry when alive: earrings (sometimes piercing the ears for the occasion), rings, silver waist string. According to Veln, ornaments for a poor man were borrowed and the cost reimbursed, or returned after given to the goldsmith to ritually clean with fire and salt. Coins called “head change” (*talka-c*) were and still are also pasted to the forehead.¹⁴ The practice of adorning the corpse with jewelry continues today, although brass rattles, like the dancing gown, have fallen into disuse.

Female corpses, according to Sulli, were not adorned with ankle rattles. A cloth was bound loosely about the head, but not in the manner of a turban. This description fits the contemporary practice I observed in Kurgo-j for the funeral of a man. Unlike men who were left bare chested or wore modern Western attire, female corpses were dressed in cloth tied under the armpits (presumably as they wear when alive). The most striking difference between the corpses of men and women, was the necessity of women wearing tattoos. If they were not wearing tattoos when cremated, they would not, according to the mediums of the dead and the gods, go to *amavna-r*. To compensate, if a woman had not been tattooed during her lifetime, three charcoal circles were drawn on her forehead and three dots on her temples (it may be that these first were done in any

¹⁴The number and arrangement of coins varies. Raman mentioned the use of “eight monies” (*et parim*), or 2 rupees. Thurston (1987 [1909] IV, 25) notes “two rupees, a half rupee, and a sovereign.”

Sulli said that the white gum of the *kaback* plant was used to make the coins stick to the head (probably *Euphorbia rothiana* according to notes of Emeneau and Mandelbaum). Among the Todas, a silver coin is pasted to the forehead with the wax of the black bee (Walker 1986, 215). One wonders what role color symbolism may have played in the selection of these adhesives.

The pasting of coins on the forehead seems related not only to decorating the corpse but also to making the dying person swallow a small coin—an action interpreted variously as prestation, purification, or provision of money for the other world.

case), three charcoal lines were drawn from shoulder to shoulder, and charcoal lines on the ankles.

SIGNIFICANCE OF DRESSING

Velu drew the connection between three important functions, the wedding, god ceremony, and death, signified by the use of the turban in all of these. I do not recall the use of the turban at any time by the groom during a wedding at the time of my fieldwork.¹⁵ As for the god ceremony, the turban, along with the *aṅkupaṅc*, is donned in a few dances, by only a few men, as part of a burlesque during the dancing day. During the dry funeral, the turban is part of the costume men wear during the *jaḍyḍkupaṅc* ritual (representatives of each village dress up to participate in a dance).

The turban draws attention to the festive aspect of an affair—the corpse is dressed up for his/her going away party, the dancers dress up as part of a larger occasion of “letting loose” after a long and arduous period of ritual observance. In all likelihood the turban was imported from outside.¹⁶ In any case, the meaning of the Kota turban has been inflected significantly by the fact that Badagas don the turban as part of their emblematic dress. If a Kota were to wear a turban now, on an ordinary occasion, only his fellow Kotas would make a fuss. But in earlier times, he most certainly would have been beaten or otherwise abused by local Badagas, just as were Kotas on other occasions when they adopted customs which “symbolized unduly high aspiration” (Mandelbaum 1989, 171; 1960 [1941], 245).

CARE OF THE CORPSE VERSUS TREATMENT OF A GOD

The care with which the corpse is cleaned and adorned in preparation for cremation finds wide parallel throughout India. In some areas the analogy is drawn between the corpse and a god. This presents a bit of an interpretive problem, according to Moffatt because “a god could never be impure to the extent that the corpse is impure.” But I think he is right in emphasizing the “double nature” of the funeral (Brahmanic in his analysis, but I believe the principle extends beyond the Brahmins), in which “the spirit of the deceased is both pure and impure, both destined for a divine state and immediately polluted by the fact of death” (Moffatt 1968).

¹⁵The turban could have been one of the items adopted and discarded over the years. During the period of my fieldwork there was some disagreement over the degree of festivity that should take place during a wedding. There was a movement toward simplicity, as it is seen to have been in the old days. If the turban was used in the 1930s, it could easily have been omitted recently.

¹⁶Tying a cloth around the head while working out of doors, or while going to defecate, has probably, however, been a long time habit throughout south India.

It may be appropriate to separate the purity-pollution question, aspects of which I will consider shortly, from the question of ritual forms of respect and honor, which involve the amount and form of gift giving and the elaborateness of the celebration. What are the contexts in which, through ritual or through discourse, the identity between divinity and corpse is drawn? In Stevenson's description, for example, as Moffatt has noted, "Whilst the body is in the house, it is looked on as a god" (Stevenson 1920, 145; Moffatt 1968, 41). But this is in a sense temporary, for after reverence is paid to the corpse, "the body is looked on as an offering to Agni" (Stevenson 1920, 145)¹⁷; and it is also one modality in which humans are viewed generally: "every woman, living or dead, is the incarnation of Laksmi, but especially after death" (1920, 144).¹⁸

Drawing from descriptions of Monier-Williams (1885), Dubois, and an unpublished description from Beck, Moffatt notes the offering to the corpse of "gifts appropriate to a god," and in Ramnad, the treatment of the body "like a god while it remains in the house." Thus the parallels between the corpse and the deity are strongest at particular ritual moments. The dressing and bathing of the corpse in the manner of a god could be seen as a ritual enactment of one of "four different types of 'liberation'," propounded, according to Parry, by "the most knowledgeable pandits," namely, *sarīpya*, or acquiring the form of god (Parry 1988, 352).

The literature on funerals in India does not contain many explicit references to the analogy between corpse (while in the house) and deity, and particularly few are those made by indigenous informants. Thus we should view these analogies as just that, analogies. There are areas of overlap between the symbolic vocabulary of funeral ceremonies and of worship. This does not necessarily mean corpses and gods share anything, substantively.

Among the Kotas we will have occasion to find other areas of correspondence between deity and corpse (see the description of the funeral canopy below), but while the corpse remains in the house, the analogy obtains only between Kota and Hindu treatments of Hindu gods, not Kota treatment of Kota gods since these are not anthropomorphic and thus cannot be "dressed."

PLACEMENT OF CLOTH

After dressing the corpse, men will place several kinds of cloth on top of it: First a new white cloak (*varaṛ*), second a colored shawl called *vaṇm* (lit. "color," <Skt. *varṇa*) which can be either red or green, sometimes

¹⁷See also Nicholas (1988, 373) for a discussion of this.

¹⁸This is mentioned in connection with a woman dying at night and her body being kept in the house. Although it may be that the man is also considered an incarnation of Visnu while living, his death at night, if he is a father, is considered to be dangerous (Stevenson 1920, 144).

with figures printed on it¹⁹; third, a smaller piece of cloth, loosely woven, called *pu·kac* (as Emeneau recorded it in 1937-38) or *pu·koc* (as I recorded it in 1990-92)²⁰; four, a cloth called *a·rk̄m*, black with white stripes and about one span square.²¹

Only after men dress and prepare the corpse do they formally announce the death. Then the men come to bow one by one over the corpse while it lies in state in the house.²²

III. ANNOUNCING THE DEATH

In Thurston's description of a funeral in Porga·r at the turn of the century, a red flag was hoisted to signal the death. In a 1937 funeral in Kurgo·j a man fired off a gun as soon as the *mundka·no·n* entered the death house.²³ In Kolme·l now, and presumably according to longer standing tradition, the death is first announced by the beating of the *e·rtabaṭk*, a kettle drum.

Facing towards the sun, a man (of no special qualification) would beat the drum holding two thin wooden sticks. Since the sound does not carry far, this drumming serves more a ceremonial than instrumental function. After the drum is sounded, a man brings a firebrand from the hearth of the kitchen of the deceased and makes a fire in the yard in front of the death house. This fire serves to warm those present and to heat and tighten heads of the *par* and *tabaṭk*. At about this time, two men sound the *kob*, which can be heard for

¹⁹Among the Irulas, a cloth called *varṃa* is used on the catafalque (*gud̄r* or *gud̄kēṭṭu*). *Varṃa* is also the name of the traditional Irula female dress (Zvelebil 1988, 75; 101).

²⁰Emeneau does not provide an etymology for this word. The first syllable, *pu·*, or flower, may reference a connection between the cloth and flowers: the practice of placing a garland on the corpse is widespread in India. The final syllable may be *koc*, which means "funeral cloth" in Toda; I have not heard the term in Kota, but it is common for archaic terms to be retained in compounds, and Toda and Kota languages are closely connected historically. Thus the term may have originally meant "flower-funeral-cloth," perhaps a cloth in lieu of a garland. In Badaga the term for the analogous cloth is *pu·ka:su* or *puka:s̄* (Hockings, BED; n.d. 13), probably borrowed from the Kota term.

In a Me·na·r funeral, only a white *vara·r*, *a·rk̄m* and flowers were laid on the corpse—perhaps supporting the idea that the *pu·kac* is a surrogate garland (it would not explain the absence of the *varṃa*). It could well be that the deceased did not have the means, nor supporting relatives, to pay for the additional cloths; he was an unmarried, adult male with few living, close kin.

²¹According to Thurston, the corpse was covered with cloths offered to it as presents (1987 [1909] IV, 25). These may be different cloths.

²²See section on ritual specialists regarding historical variation in their participation in the ritual of bowing before the corpse.

²³This variation fits with the woodsy identity of Kurgo·j villagers, and their close association with British hunters. Kotas who were themselves hunters were given a twenty gun salute at this point.

several miles and more effectively announces the death.²⁴

COMMENCEMENT OF THE MUSIC

According to Velu, the *gotka-m* used to summon and organize the band members in Kurgoj. Judging from contemporary practice this would seem to be unnecessary, since the musicians know it is their responsibility to contribute their skills.²⁵ The need for somebody to arrange for the band may have arisen in earlier times if there were a multiplicity of qualified players.

A gun shot used to signal the commencement of music in Kurgoj, although, in my experience the musicians have simply assembled themselves and started playing. The gun shot may have been that used to announce the death, in which case it was not merely a signal to begin the music, but rather a formal recognition that the funerary process had begun—a process that requires continuous performance of music until the pyre is lit.

The performers sit in the verandah of the death house. Only in this sitting position might the *par* players play both sides of the drums; ordinarily only one side of the drum is struck with both hands. Since many Kotas have now expanded their houses, filling in the verandah, the musicians may sometimes play in the verandah of a neighbor's house, or outside in the yard.

INFORMING OTHER VILLAGES

After the music begins, a number of young men are commissioned to inform the other villages. Relatives and friends of the deceased will come, but if there are no close relations in a particular village, at least four people will attend from that village for the sake of formality. The character of the deceased has no bearing on this formality, they must attend. The number of people attending a funeral depends on the wealth and size of the deceased's family. Beyond these general guidelines, there is currently little formality concerning how the other villages are informed of a death. Badaga and Tamil friends of the deceased may attend the funeral, but there is no formal mechanism for the attendance or participation of non-Kotas.

Sulli and Velu provide considerably more in the way of details concerning protocol: which villages are informed under what circumstances, how many men sent out and where, the amount of money given to each

²⁴According to Velu, the horn was sounded every twenty minutes to ensure that it be heard at great distances, although I was never told of this practice. Nowadays travel is easier, and telephones can supplement the commissioning of men to travel to distant villages.

²⁵Recall, however, that situations arise in which the appropriateness of music must be decided upon—as in the case of a young child's death.

for snacks along the way. Some of these details are worth recounting for what they tell us concerning social practices in respect for the dead.

The messengers go directly to the *gotka·rn* of each village. He in turn must feed them and provide water for washing. The *gotka·rn* then calls an assembly at the central meeting stones of the village. After all have assembled (it is not clear whether “all” includes women or children), someone of age equal or greater than that of the *gotka·rn* must ask what the meeting is about, and only then will he provide the information. If a young person has died there will be a silence of fifteen to twenty minutes. If an older person has died there will be no such silence and people may comment that the deceased’s time has come. This accords with other practices in the Kota funeral, where the death of a young person is seen as a tragedy and the death of an older person taken in stride, even celebrated.

Veln indicated that a man from each house would be sent to the funeral; if he refused he would be fined three rupees and the money would go to the *amno·r* temple. It seems unlikely that so many people would actually attend a funeral. This may have been a practice, limited to Kurgo·j, designed to bring more money to the temple, or perhaps to make the responsibility to attend a funeral equally incumbent upon each household. The fine was double for a relative of the deceased, the extra money going to the deceased’s household.

Sulli indicated that only Tigga·r and Me·na·r would be informed of the death of an unimportant Kolme·l person. Even the relatives of a very poor man might not be informed if his estate could not support the cost of feeding the visitors. If we are to assume that there is some degree of compatibility between Veln’s and Sulli’s accounts, despite their association with different villages, we may speculate that Veln’s account applied to the death of an important and wealthy person, in which the attendance of Kurgo·j people would have been a matter of prestige as well as a token of respect.

THE ARRIVAL OF MOURNERS

If the villagers were conducting a funeral for an important person, they would have in the past waited sometimes as long as three days for mourners from the other villages to arrive. During this time, according to Veln, a lamp fueled with clarified butter, and lit by the deceased’s daughter, would be kept at the corpse’s head.²⁶ Although a fire was also kept burning in the death house, no one would cook or eat there. The family would eat out of doors.

Thurston noticed that Kota visitors from other villages arrived men in front, women in back—a typical

²⁶I know no explicit reason for this. Among the Mala Ulladan the sister’s son of the deceased would light a coconut oil lamp to prevent a “tramp spirit” from inhabiting the body (Nandi et. al. 1971, 88).

ceremonial order, hardly noticeable nowadays, however, when villagers step off a bus—and the Kota band met and ushered in each group of arriving visitors.²⁷

Some of the major differences between funerals of today and those of earlier times are the ritual roles of non-Kota visitors. In earlier times, for example, the Badagas and Todas were required to supply buffaloes and cloth. Earlier in this century, Badaga partners would also supply the one rupee placed on the forehead of the deceased, thus inscribing on the body in a literal way the economic relationship between Kotas and Badagas. After some of the guests have arrived a few men bring the corpse out of the house. The significance of this moment is reinforced by a special instrumental piece.

IV. BRINGING THE CORPSE OUT OF THE HOUSE

Vein listed restrictions regarding when a corpse is brought out of the house. Men must remove the corpse during the day to enable them to see while performing the other rituals. They were not supposed to remove the corpse on a Tuesday or a Friday for another death, they feared, would occur within eight or ten days. If restrictions as to the day of the week were at one time stringent, they seem no longer to be so.²⁸ Even at that time there were ways to get around the ritual restrictions. They could, for example, carry the body out of the house at the moment Venus (*velymi-n*) was sighted, that is, the moment at which it was neither day nor night. It may be useful to consider briefly how days of the week are treated in other Kota contexts and more broadly in South India. Although customs vary societally and regionally, each day of the week appears to be appropriate for some activities and inappropriate for others.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DAYS OF THE WEEK

Tuesdays and Fridays are among the days which are inappropriate for certain activities in other parts of Tamilnadu (Lakshmanan Chettiar 1980, 56-57). Such appears to be the case in neighboring Karnataka as well: "Some classes in Mysore," Thurston writes, believe that if a death occurs on a Tuesday or a Friday another will soon follow unless a fowl is tied to one corner of the bier (1912, 69); this refers to the time of death, however, not to the time of removing the body from the house. Among the Tamils, he writes, burial of a corpse on a Saturday should be accompanied by the burial or burning of a fowl or another death in the

²⁷I have not noted this precise use of music in modern funerals, however, the pattern is a general one: music is used in other contexts to welcome visitors and accompany processions.

²⁸The funeral I witnessed in Kurgoj was postponed from a Friday to a Saturday, not because of the inauspiciousness of the day, but, ostensibly, because a second person had died and they wanted to wait for the other mourners to arrive. The funeral of Va. Kamatn, ex. *mundka-no-n*, was held on February fourth, 1992, a Tuesday.

family will shortly follow (*ibid*). Such beliefs can be taken to quite an extreme, as in Kerala where “ashes from the burial-ground on which an ass has been rolling on a Saturday or Sunday, if thrown into the house of an enemy, are said to produce severe illness, if the house is not vacated” (Thurston 1912, 242).

In other sectors of Kota ritual life, we find that the sowing ceremony (*e-r iṭḍ pabm*) is celebrated on a Tuesday or a Friday (Thurston 1912, 301). The harvesting ceremony is also held on a Tuesday.²⁹ Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays are also special days of ritual leave calculated into the Kota year following ceremonies for rain, in some villages, or sowing, in others. These are distinct from the days that are holy every week, Monday and Saturday.

In short, it is difficult to find sufficient correlation either between Kota beliefs about Tuesdays and Fridays and other rituals or between Kota and other south Indian beliefs, to formulate a theory concerning why these two days were once avoided for taking the corpse out of the house.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE BIER AND CATAFALQUE

Before the corpse is moved a bier and *gurykaṭ* must be constructed outside, its elaborateness proportional to the age and status of the deceased. *Gurykaṭ* appears to be a modern pronunciation of what may have originally been *gurykaṭ* (DEDR 1786)³⁰; this modern pronunciation makes an explicit link between the bier and a *gury*, or temple. In Kurgoj they also call this structure a *gu·ḍa·rm*—a term either borrowed from Tamil or closely related to words in other Dravidian languages which mean a tent, a conical covering for a bed or a hood for a cart (DEDR 1881).³¹

Kotas used to prepare their own elaborately carved funeral biers, or “cots” (*kaṭ!*). These old fashioned cots, some still found in Kota houses, are slightly wider and shorter than standard sized bed frames. have

²⁹Verghese records a rationalization for why the harvesting ceremony, *ve! eyṭḍ*, in honor of “Kambatiswari . . . the goddess of crops,” is held on a Tuesday. “Though Tuesday is considered inauspicious, the Kota justify the observance of the ritual on this day saying that women, as a whole are unclean, and so they give importance to a female deity only next to a male deity” (Verghese 1974, 154-55). This explanation seems forced, and it is unclear from this account for whom or under what circumstances Tuesday is considered inauspicious. The cultural attitudes towards women must certainly remain distinct from those regarding the goddess—despite their shared gender.

³⁰Emeneau first recorded the term *gurykaṭ* and demonstrated its etymological links to Kannada and Tulu words for temporary shelters for idols, brides or bridegrooms, or ancestral offerings.

³¹Among the Badagas, a *gu·ḍa·ra* is an incomplete catafalque; a “simple frame of long sticks. . . covered in cloth” (BED 248; DEDR 1881). Although Kotas may also make this distinction, the terms were suggested to me as synonymous alternatives at the time.

raised sides, and are fashioned with short posts made on a lathe.³²

Veln described a bier decorated with old coins and festooned with strings of cowry shells. The cowry shells in the green funerals of the past are echoed in the umbrella decorations of Me-na-r dry funerals today (I have not seen cowry shells in green funerals). Although in the 1930s, cowry shells were considered "modern" replacements for "white stone" (*velgal*), it is my impression that cowry shells are today viewed as traditional.

Kotas in Veln's time, for an elaborate funeral, placed the corpse on a cotton mattress, with a pillow. Today, men keep the corpse on the same straw mat on which it was placed inside the house. This appears to be a return to the simplicity which once obtained with the use of a reed mat (*cubur-m* sp. *Juncus* according to Emeneau's notes) and a wooden pillow.

At the turn of the century, the funeral and the bier were both elaborate:

The car, when completed, was an elaborate structure, about eighteen feet in height, made of wood and bamboo, it four tiers,³³ each with a canopy of turkey red and yellow cloth, and an upper canopy of white cloth trimmed with red, surmounted by a black umbrella of European manufacture, decorated with red ribbands. The car was profusely adorned with red flags and long white streamers, and with young plantain trees at the base. Tied to the car were a calabash and a bell (Thurston 1987 [1909] IV, 24-5).

Like the cowry shells, the calabash and bell survive today only in the dry funeral. One of the reasons for the absence of multistoried catafalques today, I am told, is the danger of interference with electrical lines. Since all Kota villages are at least partly electrified, this would pose a definite hazard.

SPECIAL CASES

Special arrangements are made if the deceased is a ritual specialist or young child. For the funerals of men who were at any time in their lives *mundka-no-ns* or *te-rka-rns*, the *gurykas* must be white.³⁴ The color white provides symbolic continuity with the white clothing these ritualists have to wear when alive. White is also a lack of color, which accords with the more general simplicity of the catafalques of the *mundka-no-ns* and *te-rka-rns*. The simplicity of the structure would provide evidence against the idea that elaborateness of the

³²I found two such cots in the small empty room behind mine but my aged landlord (over 90 years old by most calculations), Sakole, would not allow anyone to sleep in them. After reading that Veln's father did not allow anyone to sleep in the funeral cot he had prepared, I realized that Sakole was probably saving cots for his funeral and his wife's. It seemed a shame, since the cot was a finely carved specimen of teak, probably over one hundred years old. Woodwork is not fashioned with such care today, and experience at operating the traditional Kota lathe is rare.

³³This is unlike the Badaga catafalque, which should not have an even number of stages (Hockings n.d. 16)

³⁴Although I have not been told so explicitly, I think that the female counterparts of these ritual specialists also require white *gurykas*.

funeral was connected in some way with the divinity of the corpse. Since ritual specialists are treated as in some way more “divine” (or at least more ritually pure) than ordinary people, one might be led to conclude that their corpses would be treated more elaborately than those of ordinary people.

If a three or four day old infant dies before it has been named, it is taken to a place just outside the village, called the *potkuy* (premature baby pit) and buried. For this there are no rituals, music or special meals. It is as if the infant has not become a child. For a baby that has been named but has not yet begun to walk, no bier is necessary. If the baby has begun to walk, a bier with legs must be constructed and the rituals properly performed. The wood used for such a bier should be green, suggesting the prematurity of the death.³⁵

PARTS OF THE GURŪKAṬ

My Kota consultants provided few technical terms for parts of the *gurūkaṭ*. Mandelbaum recorded a richer array of terms, some strictly descriptive, others qualitative and metaphorical.³⁶ The cloths hung from the *gurūkaṭ* included two kinds according to Veln (Mandelbaum 6.28.37). One, the colored cloth called *vanm*, was apparently manufactured in Banares. It is not clear whether this was the same *vanm* placed on the corpse. The other cloth, the *ma·lmund*, was rough and white. The name suggests this cloth may have been donated by the ceremonial male friend (*ma·l*) of a deceased man, but no information was provided about its significance.

Each story of the structure is called a *ko·l* (as it is in Badaga), meaning literally “stick,” but whose etymological derivation probably relates to the Tamil verb, *kōlu*, whose meanings include “to enclose, envelop, encompass; to stretch around” (*Tamil Lexicon*).

Stories were also called “nests” (*gu·r*), probably in reference to the structure’s appearance after it was covered with cloth. The upper was the “head nest,” the next, the “middle nest,” and the canopy directly above the bier was called the “corpse nest” (*ta·gu·r*).

Men constructed each story from four, four cubit long (*mo!m*) sticks, notched and tied into a square frame called an *aḍce!*. This latter term may be a mistranscription of *arca·y!*, the word for the temporary shed used during the god ceremony, and is possibly derived from a root meaning to “take refuge.”

The builders then attached eight sticks, each eight cubits long, to the corners of the frame and the center

³⁵Nowadays most biers are made from relatively green wood anyway because seasoned wood is not available in India; biers are constructed quickly out of cheap wood.

³⁶The following etymological remarks must remain tentative because I had to reconstruct, without the benefit of Kota input, what was phonetically intended by Mandelbaum’s transcriptions.

of each side, making them criss-cross in the center. This pyramidal section is called the *erçe*³⁷ and the vertex is called the “neck” (*kart*).

Mandelbaum, like Thurston, observed four stories on a large *guryka*. To connect one stage to the next several men would place the square base of one on top of the eight poles projecting beyond the vertex of the one below. These eight poles would be cut off two cubits above the place where the two stories meet, and flags (*ko-l mund*, “stick cloth”) tied to their ends. They would also tie four poles between the vertices.

As in the *guryka* I described, the multistoried *gurykas* were topped with a cloth ball over the upper vertex, apparently stuffed with rattan straw. The name I recorded was *pujgor*, meaning “Tiger umbrella,” although the term may have actually been “Tiger ball” (*pujgud*) or “Tiger’s nest” (*pujgu-r*). Mandelbaum recorded something closer to the latter, “Leopard’s nest” (*kirbngu-r*), which is analogous to the Badaga term for the same part of the structure, *irimogudu*.³⁸

Flags were placed on top of the whole structure.³⁹ Small umbrellas, *kun ker*, were placed on top and a large one, *dođer*, was attached above the upper vertex on a stick called the “trunk arm” (*duđkay*).

The terminology for parts of the *guryka* are based upon descriptions of animal life and points to the natural environment as primary in early Kota symbolic thinking—a fact hardly surprising given the Kotas’ hunting past. Naming parts of any construction using terms for body parts is certainly common in English, especially words such as “body” and “neck.” But the images also fit with other Kota associations of death with places in opposition to the village, places connected with wild animals, places where the corporeal is challenged by the metaphysical.

REMOVING THE CORPSE FROM THE HOUSE

The *guryka* is assembled before the corpse is brought out of the house. Veln described the firing of guns and the shouting of “*ho-ko*” (sacred syllables usually uttered while dancing in a circle, *edykd* lit. “jumping”) at the moment the canopy portion of the structure was put on the four poles. Then, while the musicians perform the *ta-v kartd kol*, a group of men hoist the corpse, still on the straw mat, and carry it to the bier, which is at this point either on the verandah or in the yard next to the *guryka*. After placing the corpse on the bier, they position the bier under the canopy of the *guryka*. As the corpse is being brought out, the

³⁷Possibly *erçe* (“middle”) *ce!* or *eyrçe* (“second”) *ce!*

³⁸With the short *u* this should mean “leopard ball.” Hockings’ etymology in BED, “whirling eminence,” is probably mistaken.

³⁹In Mandelbaum’s notes, *ka:tade* possibly refers to *ka:td*, wind one, or *ka:t kory*, wind flag.

ticpacmog takes grass called *nakarg* (*tigkarg* or *garyk* in Kurgoj; *Andropogon foulkesii*)⁴⁰ stuck in a piece of cow dung (*ko ba ṛm*) and brushes the area where the corpse touched. This is said to make the area clean, or ritually pure (*cudv* <Skt. *śuddha*). In keeping with the numerology of other Kota funerary practices, any odd number of grass blades could be used in the dung.⁴¹

It is the *ticpacmog*, in name if not in actual practice, who must bring coals from the hearth of the death house to the yard, and later from the yard to the cremation ground for lighting the funeral pyre. If we may accept my analysis of the *ticpacmog* as a temporary surrogate of the deceased (see chapter ten), he can be seen to *extend* through the medium of fire the spatial compass of the domestic realm first to the village and then to the funeral ground. Memory of life, provided by the continuity of the hearth from before the death occurred, is thus projected onto village space. The *ticpacmog* becomes the means through which life is inscribed onto death.

Emeneau reports (presumably Sulli's information) that the *ticpacmog* must circle the corpse counterclockwise while still inside the death house, holding not only the dung and grass but also charcoal and any flower in his right hand. In another account, Sulli mentions that the *ticpacmog* circles the corpse on the verandah, holding a pot of coals which also contains incense. To my knowledge, the *ticpacmog* performs no such circumambulations today but the idea is of course in keeping with Hindu and Kota funerary practices generally. Flowers and incense suggest Hindu *ārti*, in which lighted camphor is waved in front of a *mūrti*, married couple, or important personage. The dead are thus honored through the same symbolic vocabulary.

The specifically funerary twist to this circumambulation is its counterclockwise direction—Hindus generally circle an object of veneration clockwise, that is, with their right side closest to the center. At funerals the opposite is the case. There are many exceptions to this rule however,⁴² and as we shall see, the Kotas do not follow these customs assiduously. If these liminal circumambulations have been omitted in recent years, the omission was probably tacit.⁴³

⁴⁰In other Dravidian languages, variants of the term refer to various species of grass. In Malayalam, the cognate refers to a grass used for Sudra funerals (DEDR 1397).

⁴¹For comparative significance of grass and dung see chapter ten. The broader Indic significance of odd numbers is not limited to funerals. Hindus in south India require an odd number of participants for a wide assortment of religious rituals.

⁴²I recall, for example, a goddess festival in an untouchable village just above Tigga ṛ in which circumambulation was counterclockwise. One may suspect that among lower castes or for festivals involving goddesses and possession, circumambulation is conducted in a direction in reverse to that involving Sanskritic deities and Brahmins. The general point is that there is no one correct way to circumambulate for all funerals or temple festivals, and not all communities assign meaning to the direction of the movement.

⁴³We must also consider the possibility that Sulli invented this ritual, since no other description confirms its existence, and his own accounts are inconsistent as to its details.

After the *nicpacmog* ritually cleans the inside of the house, two women (among whom the widow may not be included), according to Sulli, wash the inside of the house with manure water. This action is probably not what Kotas would consider part of the funeral ritual proper; it is merely a thorough way of cleaning up after guests. But it points up the role of the ritual leader, which is to complete actions more or less in name, for formality's sake, while others actually go through the process of doing the work. Such is not only true for the *nicpacmog* (as examples in the description of lighting the fire at the Kurgo-j funeral illustrate, for example), but also, in other contexts, for the ritualists for the gods.

Women engage in other sorts of preparatory activities at this time, the most important of which is the process of dry frying grains. They later place baskets of these grains under the bier so that the soul of the deceased has something to eat as it journeys to the other world.⁴⁴

As discussed in the context of spatial practice, the corpse is not always placed in the yard directly in front of the house, but rather there is a place in each *ke-r* where the *gurykat* is kept. These places correspond roughly to village regions which are the most ritually pure, as well as those which are historically important—i.e. relating to places in which village, clan, or family founders were said to have lived. The ritual of pouring memorial millet during the dry funeral reiterates the significance of these places.

This concludes what I have termed the fourth major section of the funeral. The next set of important events occur while the corpse lies in state under the canopy in the appropriate yard.

V. RITUALS CONDUCTED ON THE *KAVA-L* (YARD)

Aside from the now abandoned practice of sacrificing cows at a funeral, the most controversial ritual at Kota funerals is dancing around the corpse. Thurston was probably exaggerating when he wrote of a funeral from the turn of the century:

Around the car the male members of the community executed a wild step-dance, keeping time with the music in the execution of various fantastic movements of the arms and legs (1987 [1909] IV, 25).

Elsewhere Thurston implies that the corpse was kept outside overnight while inebriated men continued dancing until morning. Nowadays the corpse is brought to the cremation ground on the afternoon of the day it is brought into the yard. Although the dance appears to have been a major affair at one time, it is now de-emphasized—appearing in only some villages for the sake of ritual. The dances reflect in various ways the

⁴⁴ "They prepare to pestle the wheat for the loaf" is what appears in Mandelbaum's notes (4.19.37). Wheat may be among the grains used, but is certainly not the most important. It is not at all clear what is meant by the "loaf"; perhaps it is the fried cake called *pi-tar*.

conflicting emotions of sadness and gladness in the funeral.⁴⁵

THE SELECTION OF BUFFALOES

Sometime after the dancing has begun the buffaloes must be selected for sacrifice. Veln spelled out in detail what this selection involved—a ritual which, it should be remembered, may well be historically limited to the 1930s and geographically limited to Kurgo-j village. Its existence as another example of ritual for ritual's sake, and its incorporation of music warrants discussion here.

Here the herdsman of the deceased's (probably assuming the deceased is male) herd plays a central role. It is not clear who this herdsman was, or even whether the herdsman must be a Kota. Nowadays there are special herdsmen in Kurgo-j who for the most part live in the highlands in huts, milk the semi-wild buffaloes, and return to the village every so often with milk. To my knowledge there are neither such herdsman, nor such herds, in the other Kota villages.

The herdsman would take a lump of buffalo butter and walk with a group of musicians and ritual specialists to the herd of the deceased. Butter is symbolic in obvious respects, but it is also a way to make people smell like buffaloes (an old hunter's trick: dung or other animal products, when rubbed on the body, masks the hunter's human smell).

When the party arrives at the herd, the musicians would play the "buffalo calling tune" (*ima·tko!*) which was believed to hold the attention of the buffaloes and keep them in place. The music would continue until the herdsman asked (for ritual's sake, since in actuality he would already know) the names of the buffaloes to be sacrificed, and the *gotka·rn* provided the names. At some point in the proceedings the *munka·no·n* would pray to *ayno·r* and *amno·r* to keep the family line from dying out and make it prosper. Apparently the herdsman called the buffalo by name and it would come; butter was placed on the horns.⁴⁶ In similar fashion the husband of the deceased's sister would tell the herdsman to mark one of his buffaloes, as would the younger paternal uncle (*kuna·layn*), and the Toda and Badaga economic partners.

After the selection was complete, the party would lead the buffaloes to a special place near the green funeral ground, all the while chanting "ho·ko" and playing music. Although the name of the tune was not mentioned, it was in all likelihood the same "buffalo calling tune." Afterwards all would return to the village and eat at home. Meanwhile others would eat and dance continuously while villagers arrived from outside.

⁴⁵This is further discussed in the context of "genre" in chapter fourteen.

⁴⁶The Todas mark the horns of the buffaloes for sacrifice in a similar fashion, although the principles for selection are quite complicated (Walker 1986, 216-18).

WASHING THE CORPSE

After the initial dance (if it is danced) the corpse is washed (*ta-vk ni-r aco*). This ritual is not mentioned in Veln's account, possibly an error of omission, or possibly obviated by the earlier rubbing of the corpse with clarified butter. Nowadays, in any case, the ritual cleaning does occur, in Kurgoj as well, in the *kava-l* after the dancing takes place.

A curtain is hung from the canopy to shield the corpse from sight as it is being washed. I have never looked inside while the cleaning was taking place, nor have I asked exactly how it is cleaned. It is the job of women to wash the corpse at this time. Although I was told in Kurgoj that any musical piece could accompany the ritual, I have noticed in reviewing my videotapes that no music at all was played, at least for the duration of the documented segment in two funerals.

Washer as Surrogate "Wife" or Structural Replicate of Deceased

Sulli indicated that, in the case of an adult male, the deceased's brother's wife would boil water and wash the arms, legs and forehead of the corpse using suds obtained by pounding the *veky* plant (*Pouzolzia Bennettiana* DEDR 5501); this is the "soap" of the old days, now retained only in ritual cleaning. For a young boy, the wife of his younger paternal uncle would perform the task. Sulli rationalized that closer female relatives such as mother, sister or daughter did not execute the washing because they would dislike seeing the genitals of the deceased. For women, any female relative could wash the corpse. To the extent that one could abstract a principle of kinship at work, it would seem that closest approximation of the relationship of "wife" in the married pair is stressed. It is consistent inasmuch as the performer of the ritual must be a woman in this relationship to the "husband" (living or dead). The deceased's own wife does not complete the washing, but his closest classificatory wife, that of his brother, does. The younger paternal uncle's wife serves in a similar capacity for the death of a boy.

Sulli's rationalization may be taken seriously to the extent that a particular relationship of opposition in kinship is set up between the washer and the male (widower or corpse)—and this is based on the appropriateness of sexual relations (among other things) between the two. As for the death of a woman, it is her own relatives who wash the corpse—i.e. the identity between herself and her relatives is stressed. The washer of the body is still in a relationship of "wife" to the living husband. This kinship abstraction is not contained in any one term, although it is quite close to the meaning of *nanm*, the term a groom's family uses to refer to that of the bride. It is worthwhile noting this parallel because the importance of the *nanm* relationship is explicit in a number of rituals involving the widow.

BREAKING OF THE CLAY PLATE

One such ritual occurs at about the same time as that of the corpse-washing (in the instance I witnessed, the two rituals occurred simultaneously). Inside the death house, the widow is fed freshly prepared rice by her female relatives (female *nanṭis*), off of a plate made of clay. They assist her in walking out of the house, where she washes herself, and breaks the plate, leaving it there.⁴⁷ After this ritual she can eat whatever she wants. This ritual, which signals the end of dietary mourning restrictions, was not mentioned by Mandelbaum's informants. Its absence may follow from the fact that periods of mourning were longer and more restrictive at the time. Nevertheless, I have not come across evidence to suggest that the ritual has been introduced in recent years.

SOCIAL RANK AND MOURNING OVER THE CORPSE

Throughout the funeral, mourners come to pay respect to the deceased by bowing before the corpse, heads touching the colored cloths placed upon it. This is called *ta-v kubiṭo*, "corpse bow-down"—using the same word, it may be noted, used for bowing down, i.e. "praying," to god. It is by and large after the corpse has been removed from the house, the dancing and washing completed, that the majority of persons come to briefly bow, or sometimes to engage in an extended weep. It is at this time, as well as in the house, that women will huddle over the corpse and wail in a tuneful manner.

I have noticed no strict protocol in mourning, except that women tend to cry a great deal more than do men. Mandelbaum noted also the silence of the men while women wailed in the Kurgo-j funeral he witnessed (2.25.38). Breeks noted, "all relations assemble and salute the body, the elder putting their foreheads to the dead man's forehead, the younger to his feet" (1873, 46). Veln, in his description, suggested a ranking system based on kinship proximity and gender, where close relatives would bow and wail by the head, while women would bow by the chest and wail sitting at the foot of the cot (Mandelbaum 6.28.37). This ranking system was apparent to me only when a group of mourners were assembled. I did not notice lone mourners come and salute the feet—for all, the center of attention was the cloth on the solar plexus of the corpse or the face.

⁴⁷It was S. Raman who brought this ritual to my attention and indicated that the food be served by *nanṭis*. At the funeral of Va. Kamatn, three women accompanied Puy, his widow, in the plate breaking ceremony. According to my reckoning (observing from the videotape and reconstructing the relationships using my census data), the precise kinship relationships were *anṭamic* (husband's classificatory brother's wife), *meyved* (son's daughter), and, depending on generational relationships about which I am uncertain, either *mo'l* ("daughter," in this case, husband's classificatory brother's daughter) or *naṭuny* (husband's classificatory sister). In any case, the actual persons who fulfilled the roles included, but apparently extended beyond, the widow's *nanṭis*.

Thurston remarked that "those Kotas who were younger than the dead man prostrated themselves, while those who were older touched the head of the corpse and bowed to it" (1987 [1909] IV, 25). The pattern emerging from these earlier accounts is the association between the age of the mourner and the degree of humility demonstrated towards the corpse. But behavior at a funeral is not so easily circumscribed, as the following observations illustrate.

Pucan was equal or senior in age to his friend Va. Kamatn. In a moving moment during Va. Kamatn's funeral, all others cleared away and Pucan gave way to a brief expression of emotion. He touched his right hand to his own forehead, to the chest of his dead friend, and back to his own forehead. Beginning to cry, he said "father, will you not forget?" (*aya marva-d ibi-ya*); he removed his glasses and bowed, touching his forehead to the colored cloths. Then he regained composure and walked away, with the assistance of Ponnar from Me-nar. Just after him, S. Raman, who was generationally equal to but about 25 years younger than Pucan, also bowed, saying nothing. The point here is not that general principles of gender and age rank do not apply, but that their application is rather fluid. Pucan showed more humility and more emotion not because of his age or rank, but because of his personal connection to the deceased. Raman's lesser emotional display was possibly due to his ambivalent feelings about Va. Kamatn—owing in part to the latter's reformative activities. But in general, relatives and women tend to cry longer; elders tend to remain closer to the head of the corpse. The words of grief are formulaic, spoken by men and intoned by women.

Veln mentioned that each group of visitors is greeted by music and ushered into the village with the chanting of "*ho ko*." Such exuberance is not expressed in the funerals I have attended, nor is it probably characteristic of modern-day Kota funerals for reasons I have already mentioned. The welcoming of visitors with music is common elsewhere, and welcoming a party with "*ho ko*" is quite common at weddings.

BUFFALO SACRIFICE

At some point while the corpse is still on the *kava-l* one or more buffaloes are sacrificed to provide food for the mourners. There was apparently no rule for where the buffalo should be sacrificed because, unlike among the Todas, the cow, not the buffalo, was and is of primary importance. The ceremonial capture apparently occurred at a later time, and involved female buffaloes. It is this earlier slaughter to which Thurston must have referred in his description, "a young buffalo was slaughtered as a matter of routine form, with no special ceremonial, in a pen outside the village, by blows on the back and neck administered with the keen edge of an

adze” (1987 [1909] IV, 25-6).⁴⁸

In those days, rice purchased from Ooty by the estate of the deceased and the meat of the above mentioned male buffalo(s) was used to feed the guests after they danced. They cooked and consumed the food in a nearby house, not the death house.

The buffaloes were but one of several kinds of gifts transacted during the funeral. The gift of a buffalo is called *telac*. Another kind of gift, grain, is offered in a ritual called *pe·rn*.

THE *PE·RN* RITUAL AND OTHER OFFERINGS

In the *pe·rn* ritual, men circumambulate the corpse with bags of rice, and women, immediately following, with small baskets of traditional grains.⁴⁹ Two aspects of this ritual are salient: the gender of the performers and the types of grain they carry.

As for the grain, rice is not grown on the Nilgiri plateau, and the form in which it is purchased requires little processing before use—this is significant because it is women who process foodstuffs. Millets required boiling, drying, pounding and winnowing. Purchased rice only requires cleaning. Rice is a pragmatic option, ideal for immediate use, to feed many guests at a funeral. It was also, according to Raman, added relatively recently to the sequence of funeral prestations. Whereas in earlier times the estate of the deceased was burdened with providing all the food, the *pe·rn* ritual obviated the necessity of providing rice. The death house now needs only to provide *udk* (stew).⁵⁰

The gender differentiation is both pragmatic and symbolic. Pragmatically, men may have been expected to carry the bags of rice because they were heavy; although, in former time this did not pose such a problem because the bags were carried around on the back of a pony. Still it was men, not women, who would have had experience obtaining, borrowing and handling these animals.

Symbolically, the male contribution instantiates at least two kinds of modernity: a post-“self sufficient tribal” modernity referenced through the use of rice (rather than the grains once grown in the Nilgiris) and an economic modernity (association with the marketplace); the ritual circumambulation with rice is also “modern” in the sense that it was introduced to correct a “traditional” practice that is no longer deemed

⁴⁸Two accounts indicated which of the many buffaloes were involved in this preliminary slaughter: in one account the buffalo was a gift from the Badaga economic partner and in the other it was given by the widow’s brother.

⁴⁹ The details of these circumambulations are provided in my description of a Kurgo·j funeral. It is not clear to me whether the *pe·rn* ritual also includes the circumambulation of women, who carry baskets of grain on their heads.

⁵⁰The sacrificial buffaloes, some of which were gifts, provided the meat for the stew. These gifts also alleviated some of the deceased’s family’s financial burden.

appropriate: making the family of the deceased bear more cost than they are able.

What about the woman's ritual? Women carry small portions of *ki·r*, a kind of amaranth the Kotas once cultivated widely but now only use in funerals. It is one of the grains, like the millets in other contexts, that recalls for Kotas their former self-sufficiency and tribal heritage. Unlike the millet called *vātm*, whose preparation in a sense inflects its ritual meaning (wet for the God ceremony, dry for the funerals), the ritual use of *ki·r* is unambiguously funerary (although people still eat it outside of ritual occasions). It is women who must be sure to keep a stock of *ki·r* in the house at all times in case of a death in the family; they also must prepare the *ki·r* for consumption (as they do all grains). In many cases it is women who will grow the grain as well, although I know of no such rule. This grain cannot be purchased in the bazaar—it is virtually unknown elsewhere, or at least that is what the Kotas think.

The *ki·r* is thus a primary icon of Kota uniqueness and synecdochical of funerals. *ki·r* must be ready before a funeral (as opposed to rice which may be purchased at a moment's notice) and its domain is domestic (again, as opposed to rice which is grown in large fields in many regions and is available for purchase). Put another way, *ki·r* is an icon of permanence: it represents continuity in the Kota way of life, it is a means through which the afterlife is linked with the premodern. Since it must always be in the house, it is an ingredient in ideal and enduring domesticity. The role of woman as cultural reproducer is given prominence here through the medium of food.

If the male-is-to-female as modern-is-to-domestic dichotomies seem to fit suspiciously well, it is perhaps because in rituals such as the funeral (and in the god ceremony), roles of men and women tend to be stereotyped. Victor Turner has shown that ritual generally stresses certain norms of social organization over others, and social reality may be something quite different (1967, 40).

ITEMS KEPT UNDER THE BIER

Items kept under the biers of both men and women are believed to be useful to the deceased in and on the way to the other world—as such they reinforce the *idea* of the motherland. Some of these (grains which are now seldom consumed, for example) also reinforce the association between the ancestors (or more specifically, in this case, the process of becoming an ancestor) and traditional “tribal” practices; here the motherland is a static Kota culture preserved at spatial and temporal remove. The items include two kinds of barley (*kajayk* and *bi·r kaj*), amaranth (*ki·r*), jaggery (*kaḷ*), fried, sweet cakes of wheat (*piṭa·r*), and other favorite foods.

Later, puffed millet (*pacayk*) is tied into the right corner of the *vara-r*.⁵¹

It is always possible to ascertain the gender of the deceased, as well as his or her habits and tastes, by observing the other items under the bier. For a man, items such as a walking stick (*tac*), ax (*mar*), knife (*kayr*), cattle driving stick (*imatkuḍ*), an umbrella, handkerchief, cigars (*curut*), a bamboo trumpet (*bugi-r*) and single-reed pipe (*pula-ṅg*), (but never a *kol*) are kept under the bier. Samples of the deceased's crops (e.g. coffee, tea or potatoes) are also tied onto the cot. For smokers (male or female), a pipe filled with tobacco is placed to the deceased's right hand side. The guns owned by hunters were in the past tied upright to the bier, and burned with him were horns of the animals he killed. It is quite common to see Milk Bikis (a popular brand of sweet biscuits) or other favorite snacks included among the foodstuffs set under the biers of both sexes.

Under the bier of a woman are placed items such as a pestle (*elk*), a winnowing basket (*morm*), a rice measure (*olk*), a sickle, umbrella, and her everyday jewelry and clothing. Other items may be included according to the woman's favored activities in life—recall the knitting needle cremated with the lady from Me-nar, which she, speaking through a *pe-npaco-l*, described using in *amavna-r*.

Leaving aside the idea that these items are useful to the soul after metempsychosis, the overall effect of constructing and decorating the biers, surrounding them with objects, placing them in particular places, and paying respect to the dead in differential manners, is to *reinforce the unique identity of the deceased*. Age, reputation, wealth, habits, achievements, kinship and relationships of friendship, as well as identity as a Kota are all indexed in the funeral.⁵² R. Mathi used to tell me, what's the use of arguing with one another, hurting one another, acting petty? When we die, we are all the same, we have nothing. This is all certainly true when considering the end result, death. But the funeral viewed as an expressive form argues against this philosophy. It is in fact during the god ceremony, where all dress in white, where it does not matter how wealthy one is, that the ideology of equality is matched by the ritual symbolism.

⁵¹Mandelbaum noted the presence of *veky* in a clay pot under a bier (at a Kurgō-j funeral); this suggests to me that it may have also been the contents of the clay pot that I saw in Kurgō-j. This soap plant may have been that used to clean the corpse during the funeral rather than something which was intended to accompany the deceased to the other world.

⁵²Compare Metcalf and Huntington (1991, 105) who draw on Elizabeth Traube's Indonesian research. Among the Mambai of Timor, betel nut bags used by the deceased in life are used to represent the deceased in a metaphorical second burial.

CHAPTER TWELVE

CREMATION AND MOURNING

Two primary moments of musical/sonic activity mark out the beginning and ending of the fifth section of the funeral—that is, each time the corpse is moved. The next set of rituals takes place in a different location, called in some villages the *ta·v vecd va·r̄m* (the “corpse-placing-level ground,” which I will call the corpse-keeping-place) and in Kolme·l only, the *nela·go·r*.¹

VI. MOVING THE CORPSE TO THE “CORPSE-KEEPING-PLACE”

The corpse is taken out of the village by about three or four o’clock in the afternoon in order to leave enough time to complete all the rituals and return home by nightfall, and ensure that the corpses will be completely burned in time to complete the rituals the next day. It will be recalled that an odd number of men must carry the corpse, and, according to Veln, these must not be [close] relatives. When there is disagreement concerning when the body must finally be removed from the *kava·l*, it is the *gotga·r̄m* who finally decides when to proceed.

According to my own observations the order maintained in the processions remains relatively consistent. Veln and Mandelbaum, however, provided accounts of the processional order that conflict in some details:

6.28.37 account (prescriptive): gunman, music, *gurykaṭ*, corpse, women carrying items on head (baskets of grain, knives, etc. which had been kept under the bier).

7.26.37 account (descriptive): music, corpse, *gurykaṭ*, women carrying items, widow (carried by her brothers), all others (including men carrying axes).

Mandelbaum’s eyewitness account from 8.11.37 is yet different: *gurykaṭ*, corpse, music, women, widow. The differences among these accounts (which may of course result from errors rather than factual

¹Sulli etymologized this word for Mandelbaum as *nel + go·r*, “true wall,” because “the dead truly come and sit there” (4.19.37). Although this rationalization is informative in and of itself, the historical origin of the term is probably different. I suspect that the *nela·* morpheme is related to the Kota word *nelm* (usually referring to bones), and its Dravidian cognates (DEDR 3676) which mean ground or earth. The place is by a tree next to a steep drop in land, just at the edge of the village. “Earthen wall” would be an apt description for it. This word appears in Emeneau (1944 IV: 280-81) as *nela·lgo·r*, but the variant does not add much to the etymology. *a·l* (possibly a shortening of *ka·l*) appears in many Kota compounds meaning “place” or “area”—i.e. *paca·l* means “green area.”

discrepancies) hinge on the placement of the *gurykaŕ* and music relative to the corpse.² My impression from the Kurgoj double funeral, where some purposeful rearrangement took place, was that each corpse must directly follow its own *gurykaŕ*.³ In most Kota processions the band leads. If Mandelbaum's observation of the band trailing along behind the corpse is accurate, it is certainly not normative.

Despite these discrepancies, the processional order maintains the order of ritual precedence found in all Kota rituals: the ceremonially important male roles (playing the music, carrying the bier) precede those of the women (carrying the objects). Men carry the widow, if the deceased is a married man; but the objects in front of her take logical precedence: they are to be burned in the pyre in order to accompany the deceased to the other world.⁴

Again highlighting the role of the *nanŕns*, male relatives, usually brothers, should carry the widow. A widower is expected to walk. This ritual (and literal) support by the natal kin of the widow is replicated the next day when the entire village must take a purificatory bath.

THE "CORPSE-KEEPING-PLACE"

Kotas place the corpse at the "corpse-keeping-place," located near the village, and perform interim rituals (I will call this the "corpse-keeping-place" when I discuss it systematically, the *nela-go:r* referring to Kolme:l only); in some villages, such as Kurgoj, the place lies along the path to and just before the cremation ground. In some places, such as Me:nar, it is a short distance from the village border. In Kolme:l the *nela-go:r* is just north of *a-ke:r* proper (the northwestern-most *ke:r*), yet some Kota houses lie between it and the cremation ground.⁵

For women, the "corpse-keeping-place" is the last place in which the deceased can be seen; they must there bid their final farewells. It is therefore significant that the spatial location is neither in the village nor in

²I noted that the corpse was carried feet first, consistently. Other accounts have not shed light on the significance of this practice.

³If the structure erected above the bier is small, however, it need not be separated from the bier until the procession reaches the *nela-go:r*.

⁴That the men carrying axes, and later, bundles of wood, are not mentioned as primary figures in the procession probably reflects their instrumental rather than efficacious role in the proceedings. They take care of the work that needs to be done, but do not represent particular kinship relations to the deceased, nor are the items they carry believed to accompany the deceased to the other world.

⁵This was not always so; as the story goes, the *nela-go:r* used to be next to the cremation ground. But on one occasion, a widow committed suicide on the funeral pyre of her husband. *sati* is not a sanctioned Kota practice. After that the *nela-go:r* was moved to a location close to the village and women were henceforth forbidden to follow the funeral procession beyond it.

the cremation ground. It is in an intermediary space; although it is not a Turnerian "liminal" space,⁶ it does possess a neither-here-nor-there quality. It is perhaps this spatial quality of the place that has allowed for intervillage and historical variation, if not ambivalence, concerning the rituals that are allowed to occur within it, as well as to the nature and degree of its "sacredness." These issues have included the degree of (adult) priestly involvement with the funeral at the "corpse-keeping-place" and the more general problem of animal sacrifice. Not only was the *mundka·no·n* once required to bow down to the corpse at the *nela·go·r* in Kolme:l. in Kurgoj the adult ritual specialists used to lead in placing their foreheads to the horns of the sacrificed buffalo in the same manner, and in the same order of precedence as they would in rituals for the gods: *mundka·no·n*, *te·rka·rn*, *kolyta·l*, and then the rest of the men (the *gotka·rn* was for some reason not mentioned in Veln's account). Many Kotas would object to this practice today because realms of "god" and "death" are more rigidly dichotomized than they once were, and because many of them are ashamed to sacrifice buffaloes.

The content of rituals at the "corpse-keeping-place", other than jewelry removal, has been subject to change over the years. It appears also that the practices of music and dance have been less clear cut, less place and ritual-specific, in this intermediate space than either in the village or in the cremation ground. For example, according to Raman, if the deceased was an important person, the men would continue to dance around the corpse at the *nela·go·r*.⁷ That is, the *nela·go·r* provided a place in which a practice properly located elsewhere was elaborated upon.

In theory, there is in Kolme:l a special *kol* for keeping the corpse at the *nela·go·r*, but it is not named for any of the rituals that occur at that time (other than for the placement itself). I recorded a version of the tune out of context, and a version exists in the Mandelbaum cylinder collection. My recordings from an actual funeral in Kolme:l were too fragmentary for me to determine aurally if the *nela·go·r* tune was among those performed on that spot. In Kurgoj the men performed a whole sequence of tunes at the "corpse-keeping-place", no one of which was apparently featured. Although it is possible that I did not witness enough funerals to make a definitive statement, it appears that the musical specificity of practices at the "corpse-keeping-place" is far less than those begun in the village (lifting and carrying the corpse) or those in the cremation ground (lighting the pyre).

The ritual of toe-tying, described and analyzed at length earlier, is also less place-specific than many of the rituals: it sometimes occurs at the "corpse-keeping-place", sometimes elsewhere, sometimes before the

⁶No elaborate rituals of transition are accomplished here; participants do not temporarily lose their social statuses; rules for behavior do not break down or reverse themselves, etc.

⁷ I have not come across evidence to corroborate or contradict this.

jewelry removal, sometimes afterwards. Its meaning is also widely open to interpretation: in one the toes are tied and when the knot is severed, this in effect detaches the worldly deeds from the doer and allows the soul to travel unencumbered, to the other world (heaven, land of dead, whatever); in the second, the tying and severing are parts of a larger ritual of purification; and in the third the ritual strengthens the affinal ties and cements intervillage solidarity. Finally, the toe-tying can be regarded within the expressive realm of ritual “binding.”

By the time the corpse reaches the “corpse-keeping-place”, it has been carefully clothed and washed, saluted, gifted, and transported, and after the toe-tying ritual, symbolically bound and released. The grieving spouse undergoes an “unbinding” as she is stripped of her jewelry. For the woman, the jewelry which she donned as marks of womanhood and as a married adult, are taken off; her hair is left untied. This signals an important stage in her released from marriage.

REMOVAL OF JEWELRY (*O-LGAVCD CA-TRM*) AND FORMALIZED EXPRESSION OF EMOTION

Although men also wear jewelry (especially earrings), and although they too are supposed to remove it at their wives’ funerals, I do not know and have not seen how elaborately this removal is ritualized. For the widow this is truly a moving and grief filled moment, but it is also a context in which the display of grief is conventionalized. Thurston may have been cynical, but was perceptive in his description,

The cot was then set down, and, seated at some distance from it, the women continued to mourn until the funeral procession was out of sight, those who could not cry spontaneously mimicking the expression of woe by contortion of the grief muscles (1987 [1909] IV, 26).

The formalization of emotion is a theme upon which we will later return, as it is often connected with music.⁸

Before the jewelry is removed, the canopy (of whatever size) must first be separated from the bier. Then the widow sits by the head of the corpse, surrounded by friends and relatives for physical as well as moral support. The brother of the deceased was once supposed to use the right hand of the corpse to touch the jewelry as it was being removed, as if he were reclaiming the wedding jewelry.⁹ Although the widow keeps her head covered as a sign of mourning, the head is uncovered while the jewelry is being removed. After it

⁸see Nabokov (1995, 266-7) for description of comparable Tamil rite, “the most dramatic disjunction to be found in Tamil society,” which brings “especially female onlookers, to wailing and tears.”

⁹All her jewelry is removed. Traditionally this included: *karmayn* (black bead necklace), *belmayn* (white bead necklace), *carpeylg* (silver neck chain), *me-kayval* (bangle worn above elbow), *tebval* (copper bracelet), *o:rcal* (solid silver bangle, sometimes with design on clasp), *vela:k* (white bead bracelet—first put on a girl by her paternal aunt, at the “first-first,” a coming of age ceremony [*minmindal*]).

has all been removed, someone recovers her head, the widow holds out her cupped hands, and a man returns her jewelry. She places it on the black cloth (*a·rkṁ*) spread over the corpse and bows, head still covered (*maṇḍa·r itit̄ kubito*). The jewelry is then removed from the corpse and the widow or widower taken home.

In Kolme:l the jewelry is tied with a strip of cloth into the right corner of the *vara·r* covering the corpse. The jewelry is not burned, but removed and given back to the widow the next day after someone purifies it by exposure to fire. For a widow, the *naṇṇms* (male relatives) formally assist her in putting on the jewels,¹⁰ and for a widower, his wife's brothers (*aylba·vngu·l*, i.e. the same people)—again, the kinship relationship in this process appears to be reckoned according to the married couple as a unit and not according to the gender of the deceased: in both cases men from the wife's side of the family perform the action. After the jewelry is returned the widow is sent forth, judging that she has become "ordinary" once again (*vere·m a·ypi·de·rd kaṅk ke·piṭo*). In the old days, and in villages where the *varlda·v* is still performed, she may not remarry until the *varlda·v* has been completed.¹¹

Along with the jewels, a small quantity of husked millet (*ta·ymayk*) is also tied in the right corner of the *vara·r*.¹² This is burned along with the corpse, another snack, perhaps, for the arduous journey to the other world. Its special ritual use indexes, once again, the contexts to which I referred above: the moment of death, and the occasion of child naming. Its consumption (ingestion or fire) thus corresponds with significant metaphysical transformation.

In former times it was necessary to sacrifice a cow at the Corpse-Keeping-Place: sometimes one or more buffaloes would also be sacrificed here, but there was no particular rule concerning them—they could be sacrificed almost anywhere and at any time (usually early on). Although some accounts suggest the cow sacrifice used to occur before the ceremonial removal of jewelry (Brecks 1873, 46), accounts by Mandelbaum and his informants place the cow sacrifice afterwards.

COW SACRIFICE

First a group of eight or ten men not closely related to the deceased were sent to get the cow. The musical band accompanying them played the "buffalo calling tune." It is noteworthy that the cow and buffalo distinction, so important for identity and cosmology, was not musically marked.

¹⁰Among Tamils it is often the widow's brother who cuts the *tāi* (marriage necklace) (Nabokov 1995, 267n.).

¹¹It is probable that the jewelry was not restored until the *varlda·v* or some other specified time, but I have not come across adequate data in this regard.

¹²According to Raman the millet should be kept in a layer separate from that in which the jewelry is placed. I have seen them placed together, however.

The men fetched the cow, first bowing before the pen, roped the animal, and while returning, shouted “*ho·ko·*.” Back at the *ta·v vecd va·rm*, the *gotga·rm* once again led the *tic pac mog* through the rituals. First he touched the hand of the child to the hand of the corpse, then, together, they made the hand of the hand of the corpse touch the horn of the cow. This process was repeated three times while all those present (men) uttered words to the effect “let all of the sins of the deceased be transferred to the cow and let his now liberated soul safely reach the other world.”¹³ After the cow sacrifice was expunged from the Kota funeral, as I suggested earlier, its function of creating a “scapegoat” may have been preserved as a layer of meaning in the toe-tying ritual.¹⁴

After the sins were ritually transferred to the cow, the *tic pac mog* took the special ax kept under the cot and in a formalistic sense “killed” the animal by touching its butt between the horns of the cow and saying “*co·mi*.” Then an older person, a non-relative from the same village, turned to the east, said “*co·mi*,” and completed the actual killing. The cow fell or was made to fall on its right side. Then in a ritual that further signified the parallel between the cow and the deceased, the *ticpacmog* placed an *a·rkm* on the belly of the cow. This square of black cloth, the reader will recall, was among the kinds of cloth initially placed upon the corpse and upon which the jewels were placed in the preceding ceremony. The cloth seems to possess some sort of transformational power—perhaps gained through reference to primordality: the *a·rkm* was made of *toyr nu·l*—the traditional “bark” fiber of early Kota cloth. In traditional order, the ritual specialists and the rest of the men, the wives of the ritual specialists, and the rest of the women, all bowed silently over the cloth.

¹³One version of the prayer is *amona·r imna·r pa·pm karm ti·ro·tk*—“Let the sins and karma [of the deceased] end [through this cow, and let the soul go to] the land of the dead.” As in many Kota ritual utterances, as in laments, the meaning is not evident from the words alone.

In a similar ritual, the Badagas recite a list of all “possible sins the deceased might have committed” (Hockings n.d., 32).

¹⁴Mention of the scapegoat calls into play a number of comparative issues—issues discussed at length by Frazer and Eliade (Eliade 1959, 53). It is worth quoting Eliade’s discussion of the meanings of ceremonies involving the scapegoat, and a congeries of other rites.

On the occasion of the division of times into independent units, “years,” we witness not only the effectual cessation of a certain temporal interval and the beginning of another, but also the abolition of the past year and past time. And this is the meaning of ritual purifications: a combustion, an annulling of the sins and faults of the individual and of those of the community as a whole—not a mere “purifying.” Regeneration, as its name indicates, is a new birth. . . this annual expulsion of sins diseases, and demons is basically an attempt to restore—if only momentarily—mythical and primordial time, “pure” time, the time of the “instant” of the Creation. Every New Year is a resumption of time from the beginning, that is, a repetition of the cosmogony (Eliade 1959, 54).

The green funeral is not an annual event, and the meaning of the scapegoat within it is not so grandiose. However, the dry funeral, during which another cow sacrifice used to take place, is a symbolic end of the year. The idea that the dry funeral might restore “primordial time” is an intriguing one, for the god ceremony that follows it is a celebration of this very primordality.

The cow sacrifice was symbolically differentiated from the buffalo sacrifice, even though we have seen that this difference was not also musically marked. Not only was the function and method of the sacrifice quite different, the carcass was itself treated differently as well. Whereas buffalo meat was consumed during the funeral, the cow meat was not. In the 1930s, the Kotas would give the carcass to nearby untouchables (*paraiyars*) in return for services rendered, much as Todas used to give the buffalo carcasses to the Kotas.¹⁵ Kotas still consider important this difference in treatment between buffaloes and cows: that is, although few Kotas of today ever were actually present at the sacrifice of a cow, those who are aware of and willing to discuss the practice emphasize that Kotas were barred from consuming its flesh.

The details and purpose of the cow sacrifice seem fairly consistent throughout the accounts, but the accounts of rituals involving buffaloes and oxen are more varied in terms of where, when and how they were accomplished.

RITUALS INVOLVING OTHER CATTLE

Two other bovine-related rituals were performed before cremation. In one, Kota men led bulls around the corpse, one with a bag of millet tied to its back and leaving millet on the ground as it circled. In the other, men competed to catch and wrestle buffaloes, and sacrifice them. It is not always clear from the accounts where and when these rituals occurred. Consequently, my attempts to spatially and temporally locate these rituals in the following discussion may poorly reflect actual practice.

Both Sulli's and Raman's accounts concur that in Kolme-l, buffaloes were not slaughtered in a special place; they stipulated only that the special place for cow sacrifice was the *nela-gor*. In Kurgo-j, the buffaloes were apparently killed some distance from the corpse-keeping-place, in a place called the *imtadpa-rm* "buffalo-sacrificing level-ground." The difference in spatial practice once again indexes the difference in how Kotas valued (and value) the cow and buffalo. The centrality of the cow sacrifice, occurring, as it did, near the corpse, iterates the general importance of the cow in Kota culture.

Like in the butter smearing ritual, the buffaloes were initially approached and herded into an open area

¹⁵One might be tempted to argue that this represents an early stage of Sanskritization—i.e. that the Kotas once ate the sacrificial cows; later, when plains *Paraiyars* came to inhabit the hills, the Kotas perhaps attempted to establish hierarchical predominance over the *Paraiyars* by refusing to eat their own sacrificial cows. We have no evidence to support such a supposition, nor would it explain why beef consumption continued in other contexts. It is, however, important to remember that these practices are historically conditioned as well as ritually inflected. The buffalo/cow and consumable/not consumable oppositions are important variables in the structure of rituals as they were performed in the 1930s and as they are understood now, but are not necessarily immutable ones.

with the buffalo calling tune.¹⁶ Then the music stopped, the buffalo catchers lined up, and the *gotga·rn* signaled the men to race for the buffaloes. The musicians refrained from playing while the men actually raced and attempted to catch the animal, resuming only after the buffalo was actually caught.

The men grabbed the buffalo by its horns, head, and tail and after wrestling with it for a considerable period of time—an hour or more—managed to drag the beast up to the corpse and touch its right horn to the hand of the deceased in the manner it was accomplished with the cow. They then dragged the buffalo a short distance off and struck it between the horns with the butt of an ax—this time without prayer. Killing the animal would often require repeated blows, although I have witnessed Todas do away with a large mountain buffalo with a single blow to the head. It required a number of men to subdue the animal, but the first man to catch hold of the animal was considered to be the strongest and bravest. The man who caught the barren buffalo (*mayim*), the fattest, was honored by standing in front of the others as they awaited their tokens of respect.

Each buffalo donor had to supply a special brass bell (*imkacdmayn*, “buffalo-tying-bell”) which was tied around the neck of the sacrificed animal. The barren buffalo was singled out with a special round silver ornament, hung from the horns and foreword over the head.¹⁷ The relatives of the deceased donated waistcloths to the brave young men who caught the buffaloes, the elaborateness of the cloth proportionate to the wealth of the deceased. The *gotga·rn* ritually placed these cloths around the necks of the men, and they themselves tied the cloths around their waists.

After the buffaloes and men were thus adorned, the men put their foreheads to the horns of the animals. This was once again completed in proper ritual order, beginning with the *mundka·no·ns*. It is not clear what sort of rules governed the movement of the *mundka·no·n* and *te·rka·rn* with regards to the corpse at this point—although this whole sacrificial procedure was conducted some distance from the corpse. Apparently, after this salutation the Kota buffalo donors (i.e. presumably a smaller set of people than those who donated the cloth) placed their own gold or silver coin necklaces around the necks of the men who caught their buffaloes; the Badagas garlanded their respective buffalo catchers.

All the men danced after receiving their laurels and shouted “*ho·ko*” at the buffalo striking place. The successful buffalo catchers further differentiated themselves from the others by dancing together in one segment of the circle. The music consisted of “buffalo-dance-tunes” (*ima·tko!s*), a variety of *ke·r kol*,

¹⁶The details of the following account are drawn primarily from Mandelbaum's interviews with Velu.

¹⁷Called *ka·vij* (spelling, and therefore etymology, uncertain) in Kurgo·j.

performed by the band.¹⁸ The same rules of propriety regarding participation in music making applied to also to catching buffaloes: close male relatives of the deceased were not supposed to participate. It is important therefore to remember that the variety of funeral emotions, psychological states, behaviors, and obligations were not all simultaneous and evenly distributed, but rather, *differentiated* among the participants, sometimes out of ritual appropriateness (as a *mundka·no·n, ticpacmog* etc.) and sometimes out of social or personal appropriateness (kinship or friendship).

According to most accounts, the men returned at this juncture to move the corpse,¹⁹ the women publicly mourning, one last time, before they returned to the village. Veln adds, in his 7.26.37 account, that women touched their foreheads to their own buffaloes and cried; it does not appear that the men actually mourned over their buffaloes, as among the Todas.²⁰

PROCESSION FROM THE CORPSE-KEEPING-PLACE TO THE FUNERAL GROUND

The ritual of leading oxen around the corpse appears to have taken place after the procession left the corpse-keeping-place and before it arrived at the funeral ground. The ritual, which is only reported to have taken place in Kolme-l village, was conducted, according to S. Raman, in a place about 85 meters southeast of the green funeral ground called *etercava·rm*. The meaning of this place-name, "bull-slaughtering-place," suggests that it may once have been a sacrificial site.

Mandelbaum witnessed, in 1937, "three bullocks" led around the corpse—probably in this same area. Sulli described, more elaborately, men from the seven villages competing to catch a total of 8 bulls. They tied one to a pole and led it to the corpse, making its horn to touch the deceased's hand: this, they believed, made the bull follow the deceased to the other world. The seven other animals were similarly led around the corpse, horns touched to its hand, and allowed to go free.²¹ What Mandelbaum witnessed in 1937 may represent a

¹⁸Mandelbaum's notes (6.30.37) are unclear as to whether "ho·ko" is being exclaimed while the music is playing or not. According to my observations, either Kotas dance while saying these syllables, or while music is playing—but not both. Sometimes they will shout "ho·ko" while walking from place to place during a ritual, and this may also be accompanied by instrumental music.

¹⁹It appears that the toe-tying ritual and the jewelry-removing ritual may at times occur after the buffaloes are sacrificed. In Kolme-l the toes are tied at the *nela·go·r*, but not severed until the bier is set down just north of the cremation ground.

²⁰Among the Todas, men do not begin to formally lament until the buffalo has been sacrificed. The laments include the name of the sacrificed buffalo and the kinship relationship to the deceased; women will mourn only over their domestic buffaloes (Walker 1986, 223).

²¹The number seven probably fulfills a symbolic function similar to that in the toe-tying ritual as Sulli described it—i.e. representing the seven Kota villages.

vestige of the larger ritual Sulli described.

The men secured a bag of millet (either *vam* or *koy!*) to the back of the roped bull; as the bull circled, the grain spilled along the ground. One of the rationalizations for this practice was that this grain, called *da-n vam* (gift millet), would be consumed during the deceased's arduous journey to *amavna-r*.²²

After finishing this ritual, an odd number of men once again lifted the bier, depositing it near the cremation spot. Providing further evidence that priestly involvement in the funerals of Kolme-l has decreased over the years, we find that in 1937 the *mundka-no-n* and *te-rka-rn* did not return to the village until this final circling ritual was completed. Nowadays the *mundka-no-n* and *te-rka-rn* do not accompany the procession at all.

VII. MOVING TO THE CREMATION GROUND AND LIGHTING THE PYRE

In the following description, I use present-day practice as a basic text, inserting prescriptive and historical material where available. There are no rules for entering the funeral ground (*ta-v na-r*) except that, out of respect, shoes should be removed and traditional attire worn (that is, waistcloth and shawl). Some will bow and pray before entering the and expose their right shoulders, but this practice is only required, in Kolme-l at least, when leaving the area.

After men set down the bier, parts of the toe-tying and cutting ritual are completed if they were not completed earlier; meanwhile, wood is prepared for the bier. Generally there are two kinds of wood: bundles of kindling, 2-3 feet in diameter and 4-8 feet long; and larger logs. Generally the former are supplied by the women, one from each house, and the latter by the men.²³ Before the wood is actually arranged on the ground, an experienced man will lead the *ticpacmog* around the cremation site in rehearsal for the actual pyre-lighting ritual.

The wood is then piled on the cremation spot (*du-*) with no special ceremony. There are separate cremation spots for groups of exogamous divisions. In Kolme-l, corpses from *a-ke-r* and *i-ke-r* are burned in one spot, and *naryke-r* burned in another; in Kurgo-j and Kala-c, those of *naryke-r* who have died are also cremated in special spots—a spatial practice which reflects the historical kinship of these exogamous

²²Since, in fact, it is poor people from the area that take the millet, one wonders whether the ritual is historically related to rituals in other parts of India where *dān* is given to remove the inauspiciousness of death (e.g. Raheja 1988)—or more generally related to the problem of Karma transfer (O'Flaherty 1983). I.e., it is once again as if all that is negative is siphoned off to be consumed in the form of food by others—in the case of the cow, by *paraiyars*, in the case of grain, by poor people.

²³That is, adult males. In the 1930s this was still indicated by the convention of wearing a tuft (*kojgo:t*).

divisions.

The funeral ground is laid out with fixed locations for rituals, objects and people. The bier is consistently kept in one place, the large firewood in another, the small in another. The first fire, made by the *ticpacmog* with fire from the deceased's home, is kept to the west of the *du* in Kurgo-j and to the east in Kolme-l. According to Raman, the place for this fire is called the "big cremation spot" (*doḍdu·v*), due to its importance rather than its size. The actual cremation spot, which is in reality larger, is called the "small cremation spot" (*kundu·v*). In both villages the instrumental ensemble sits to the east of the cremation spot. The directional orientation of each area of fixed purpose does not appear to be consistent or important—except perhaps for ritual convenience. However, it appears from prescriptive accounts that the head of the corpse is supposed to face east.²⁴

As always, the transport of the corpse to the cremation spot is conducted with instrumental music. Raman indicated that the *ta·v kaytd kol*, that for carrying the corpse out of the house, was supposed to be played in Kolme-l at this juncture. However, in the funeral I recorded at Kolme-l, the musicians played the "corpse-carrying-tune," and not the former.

Men remove all items from the bier—jewelry, mat, pillow, etc., except for the deceased's clothing. Then an odd number of men lift the bier and place it upon the pile of wood—never touching the ground. They lift the cot three times, uttering a prayer. According to Veln, the prayer in Kurgo-j in 1937 was that recited before slaughtering the cow, "may all sins and karma be finished [and the soul safely reach] the land of the dead."

Taking care not to injure the corpse, the men place the long logs upright against the bier, surrounding it and making sort of a tipi. Bundles of kindling are then wedged between the logs and placed around the entire funeral pyre.

As before, the *ticpacmog* is guided by an older man while he performs the ritual of lighting the fire. The fire is drawn from the *doḍdu·*, thus establishing continuity between fire as cooker-of-food and fire as medium for transforming the corporeal.²⁵ First, facing east, away from the pyre, he throws a fire brand behind him into

²⁴The deviation from this in the Kurgo-j funeral I described may be, as I suggested, a result of the presence of two corpses instead of one.

²⁵In Veln's 6.30.37 account, the *mundka·no·n* made the fire, just outside the cremation area, by rubbing two sticks. This conflicts with Veln's other accounts and with my understanding of practices today. Making fire by friction is a necessary ritual component only of the dry funeral and the god ceremony. Perhaps fire by friction is or was employed in the green funeral only for particular people, under particular circumstances—if, for instance, no fire was burning at home. Making fire by friction is like other elements of Kota ritual in that it references the past. But this particular reference to the past seems to be connected more with the power of divinity, with the auspicious association with the past in a general sense, than with reference to Kota ancestors or actual events of the past. The green funeral tends to

the pyre (i.e. by the head of the corpse); then, again facing away from the pyre, he throws another smouldering stick by the side of the pyre nearest the feet. In some accounts, the *ticpacmog* invokes god, “*co·mi*,” while completing this formalized “lighting.”

Then one or more other men actually light the fire, rather unceremoniously. Despite my observation at Kurgoj that the *ticit kol* was played only during the actual lighting of the fire, I suspect that the practice is flexible—the tune must be played at about that time, but in the commotion it might start a few seconds late.

All the items placed under the bier, foodstuffs, materials hand-crafted or used by the deceased, *bugi-r* (but not *kol*), etc. are burned. Some of the *ki-r* and jaggery is apparently given to the *ticpacmog* to eat, and the remainder poured into the flames, or given to local low-caste Tamils to eat.²⁶ To aid the burning, according to Velu, one may not blow or use oil, but a leaf umbrella may be used to fan it.²⁷

VIII. LEAVING THE CREMATION GROUND, BATHING, AND RETURNING TO THE HOUSE OF THE DECEASED

After the pyre is lit the men begin to leave the cremation area; by the time the entire pyre is aflame, the heat prevents anyone from remaining in the immediate area. A few men return every so often to check on the progress of the fire, particularly if it is raining. The music stops once the pyre is lit and the men generally return without crying or making any particular kind of sound.²⁸ The silence is but one marker that the first important stage of the funeral process has now been completed.

As the men leave, they ensure that their right shoulders are exposed (*por kayk itk*) in proper ritual fashion, bow to the ground, “worshipping” the cremation ground so to speak, and purify themselves by scrubbing their legs, hands, and face with water, using soap made by pounding the bark of the *veky* plant (*Pouzolzia Bennettiana*). This ritual bathing occurs in a special place in each village.

It is not clear to me whether this water has a particular name. The important named waters in the funeral are the *no·mbni-r* (mourning-water), in which the bathers purify themselves the day after the funeral, and the

reference immediate associations with the individual deceased; the dry funeral provides the link with divinity.

²⁶Again, the structural parallels Hindu rituals designed, in part, to transfer away, through food, the inauspiciousness of death. The child, to reiterate, is impervious to this inauspiciousness.

²⁷Emeneau recorded a Kota saying to the effect that a funeral pyre will burn properly only if the appointed time of death has come (1944 I, 163). Feeding the fire with oil etc. would presumably preclude this divinatory function.

²⁸According to Sulli, people cried *after* the pyre was lit, expressing things to the effect of “take all these things with you to *amavna-r*, we will join you when god calls.” This, it seems, was an embellishment—probably designed to reinforce the overall sentiments of the funeral, rather than to accurately describe ritual practice. Velu consistently mentioned the *silence* after the pyre was lit, and I observed the same.

kargaṅ ni-r, a stream of which the dry funeral procession, and relics of the deceased, must cross.²⁹ The third ritually constituted body of water is the “*ganga*”—a name in keeping with Hindu identification of local streams with the Holy water of the Ganges. The water used directly after the funeral may in fact constitute one of these waters *materially*, but it seems that these waters are not conceived of entirely in terms of their *place*, but also in terms of their temporal and ritual *context*.

The washing represents a formal cleansing, not only of the pollution of death (as it is broadly understood in Hindu India), but also of the evil effects of death—i.e. the association with malevolent spirits. In Me-na-r, the men will complete their ritual washing by placing leaves of the *kakadg* plant (*Pogostemon speciosum*) behind their ears. This leaf, I was told, would prevent malevolent spirits (*pey pica e*) from returning to the village along with the men, possibly affecting young children. The ritual inclusion of leaves in this segment of the funeral in Kolme:l appears to be unrelated to the Me-na-r practice: men used carry leaves of the *vala-ry* plant (*Dodonea viscosa*) back with them to the village to use later as disposable plates for meat.³⁰

Nowadays there are no other rituals on the day of cremation; the final rituals occur on the next day. Sometimes villagers visiting from outside will leave after the pyre is lit, but at some point, each village member and visitor will enter the death house and console the grieving family members. There is no formal procedure for this.

Velu provides a detailed account of funeral protocol following the cremation. All sit in the verandah of the deceased’s house and wait for the *ticpacmog* to return from the cremation ground: he should be first to enter. Leaving right shoulder bare in formal ritual fashion he utters the name of god and enters the house, right foot first; others may enter only after they see a lamp burning in their own houses.³¹ Presumably all present eat at this point, although the accounts do not mention it. Other men and boys return to the scene of ritual slaughter and dispose of the carcasses—either by giving them to the *paṛaiyars* (in the case of cows and sometimes some of the buffaloes) or butchering them and storing the meat in a vacant house for the next day.

Sulli, in accounts recorded by Mandelbaum and Emeneau, places emphasis on the process of consoling the family of the deceased through story and song: the gathering of people also provided the opportunity for

²⁹Recall also that the soul crosses this pure water in order to reach the other world.

³⁰ Many rituals in both funerary and divine categories involve collecting plants for one purpose or another. Often the apparent purpose is instrumental, but often times the plant is one that in other contexts serves a symbolic function. *vala-ry* is collected during the god ceremony, for example, when men return from making an offering of a ring to the water goddess and bathing themselves in preparation for the next day’s rituals. The women use the *vala-ry* to spread cow dung water in front of the houses, thus making them acceptable to the gods.

³¹The stipulation that a lamp be burning in one’s own home is found in conjunction with other non-funerary rituals as well. The implication is that the evening domestic rituals are completed and god is present (in the flame)—probably serving in an auspicious, protective capacity.

sexual intercourse. Playing the *bugi-r*, all night wakes after the cremation, and possession of the *pe-npaco-l*, if one time common, are no longer recognized to have been so. Now, I was informed in Me-na-r, only the *tic pac mog* must sleep in the death house.

IX. CONSUMING RITUAL MEALS AND CLEANING THE FUNERAL GROUND

Early in the morning a few men will check on the progress of the fire and others will begin preparing food from the meat of the buffaloes killed the day before. Nowadays *udk* (stew) is prepared from beans. All men may participate in the cooking process (except perhaps immediate relatives) but the responsibility of cooking is particularly incumbent upon *ke-r* mates of the deceased.

The theme of sharing, both in responsibility and in benefit, occurs in the process of preparing and consuming the meal. Recall that the responsibility for hosting visitors has already been distributed evenly to all the households of the village. According to Veln, each organ of one of the buffaloes would be divided into equal shares and distributed to the entire village; the rest would be cooked as part of the ritual meal. Equal shares of rice are collected from each household; then the headman redistributes the rice according to the number of people residing in each house. The woman of the house cooks the reapportioned rice and once again all the rice is brought to the death house and heaped up on the *vala-ry* leaves on the verandah of an adjacent house.

While the food preparation is underway, the *ticpacmog* and a group of other men must return to the cremation ground to clean up and perform additional rituals; the rituals are collectively called *karmi-td* (charcoal-clearing).³² Someone by that time has already determined that the cremation is complete. The men walk silently (i.e. no music or ritual utterances) and take along with them a clay pot (nowadays a large watering can), a hoe and some other tools.

Before entering the cremation ground, all will generally bow to the ground. In the following, I have added details from a Me-na-r funeral I witnessed to the descriptions of rituals provided by Mandelbaum's and my informants. As elsewhere, an older man leads, the *ticpacmog* and others follow in each of the constituent rituals. First the *ticpacmog* touched the ashes of the *doddu* with his right hand, then touched the ashes to his forehead. Recall, this was not the actual cremation site, it was the place of the source fire, drawn from the hearth of the deceased's house. Taking from nearby bushes the clay pot that remained from carrying coals on

³²Veln implies that representatives of the seven villages should be present—this reinforces other gestures of intervillage solidarity we have seen. My consultants told me that friendship with the deceased was the primary means of selection for the task.

the previous day, one man collects water and douses the *doddu*.

A man also douses the actual cremation site (the "little" one, *kundu*) and then each of the men puts the pot of water to his head saying *co·ymn*, "god"—as if by so doing each has taken part in dousing the cremation site. Then each of them once again touches his hand to the *doddu*. The pot is placed by the *doddu* and a few men finish dousing and cleaning the *kundu*.

At one time the jewelry was burned along with the corpse. If the metal was not entirely destroyed, the gold or silver was either retrieved and refashioned or given to local *paraiyars*. In my experience, only *mundka·no·ns* (that is, those who had been *mundka·no·ns* at any time during their lives) are cremated with any such metal on their person—but these precious metals are not in the form of jewelry but a sacramental chain associated with this ritual office.³³

What is most important in this ritual is the collection of bones for the dry funeral. First, all but a piece of skull bone (*calverium*) are put in clay pots and deposited in the bushy area surrounding the cremation ground. Then the *ticpacmog* or his instructor selects the bone to be preserved and places it on a piece of *ta·yv* fern. He places three handfuls of water on the bone and "worships" (*elk kumbird*) by touching the bone to his forehead. All the men present pour and bow before the bones in similar fashion. Then in some villages the bone, wrapped in fern, is tied with a bit of creeper (*kargoc*) between two potsherds. The bones are saved in a special place called an *al* (cave)—a hole in the ground, niche in a tree, or crevice in a boulder. It is necessary to distinguish among the number of relics which are kept in the same place. Before leaving, the men will either etch a piece of tin with the name of the deceased, or enclose a ring or other small possession.

In Me·na·r, the *ticpacmog* touched the bones to his head and placed them in a hole in the ground. Then he took a handful of dirt and after touching it to his head, threw it into the hole. A boulder was rolled over the hole, and from the pot of water the *ticpacmog* took a handful of water three times and poured it over the boulder; then he "worshiped" three times by touching the boulder with his right hand and touching his head. The men followed in like fashion, pouring water and worshipping.

RETURNING TO THE VILLAGE

On the way back, all must wash face, hands, arms, legs and feet. In Me·na·r, they wash with *veky* at a special stone with a small concavity in it. As a further symbol of a new beginning, in Me·na·r, the men cut a new path through the bush from the cremation site to the washing site.

After washing, the men return to the death house and are the first to partake of the special ritual meal that

³³I recall that after Va Kamatn was cremated, his nephew collected the chain and kept it as a memento

follows, called the “charcoal-clearing-grain” (*karymi-t ku*, that is, the food eaten after the charcoal has been cleared from the cremation spot). For sake of ritual, nowadays, the cremation-ground crew eats a small quantity of food upon returning to the village. It consists of *vam ku* (millet) and stew seasoned only with salt (*upudk*)—this is the special food reserved for highly charged ritual occasions, particularly during the god ceremony. Later the *ticpacmog* and the rest of the village eat ordinary rice and spiced stew. At one time the estate of the deceased supplied clarified butter, chilli and salt. Meat was available from the ritual slaying from the day before. Now inexpensive beans like black-eyed-peas (*targi-n*) are served.

After the *tic pac mog* eats, the men who accompanied him finish the small portion remaining. According to Raman, they literally have to eat the leftover food from his plate (*ecl gicl camvo-ro*). The ritual specialists for the gods may not enter the death house, but according to Veln, they partake of the ritual meal in their own homes, served by relatives of the deceased.

It appears that the person who serves the food is significant, much as is who eats the food, and where and when it is eaten. The *tic pac mog* is supposed to be served food by the *antamic* of the deceased (wife of deceased man’s younger brother; I am not sure of the relationship if the deceased is a woman). This woman is selected according to her reputation, age, and degree of experience with rituals. She is called the “basket-putting-woman” (*kik itd pemog*). The relationship may be significant in that we have seen the *tic pac mog* as a sort of surrogate for the deceased; the relationship of *antamic* would ensure that the food-server would remain in the classificatory relationship of “wife” to the surrogate deceased—without being his actual mother (if the widow were serving and the son of the deceased were the *ticpacmog*).

In some cases the village headman was also accorded special ritual status in that the rest of the village was not supposed to eat until he had completed his meal. The rest of the villagers are served food by young men—in some cases the same young men who have been preparing the food. Finally, the spouse of the deceased may eat.

COLLECTIVE BATHING

After the *karmi-t ku*, nowadays, the villagers will collectively go to a special place near the cremation ground and bathe. This is called *no-mbni-r*. In earlier times the occupants of the deceased’s house and other close relatives observed mourning restrictions for a week or until the next new moon; until that time they were permitted only to wash their hands, face and feet and were supposed to keep a cloth over their heads. The mourning restrictions varied depending on the village, historical period, and kinship relationship. Diversity and elaboration on this ritual theme is common throughout India.

Nowadays the *tic pac mog* (and his instructor) leads the village to the stream. Behind him directly

follows the widow, carried by her *nanms*. The *tic pac mog* bathes (or is bathed) first, washing head and clothes. Then the widow, aided by women, washes her hair and the rest of her body. A temporary enclosure is set up for the women, downhill from the *da·vna·r* and from the men; the men and women bathe using different streams of water.³⁴ All are supposed to bathe in cold water using the suds of the *veky* plant.³⁵ The funeral is over when the *tic pac mog* rubs clarified butter into his hair.³⁶

The jewelry is purified by exposure to fire. Nowadays the widow and widower can wear their jewelry after the *no·mbni·r*. The widow is, as earlier, aided by her *nanms*. In former times, jewelry was not restored until after the dry funeral.

PRACTICES RELATING TO THE DRY FUNERAL

Since the dry funeral is no longer celebrated in some villages, or by some members of some villages, there is a ritual alteration that occurs during the bone collection ritual. Instead of storing the bones in the *al*, the men place the bones with lit camphor, sacred ash, milk and betel leaf into a stream (conceptually equated with the Ganges) and set them afloat. Then all bathe themselves thoroughly. This ritual is in accord with widespread Hindu practice and represents an amalgam of Kota and Hindu religious beliefs.

The reader will recall that the Kotas began to abandon ceremonies such as the dry funeral and rituals such as cattle slaughter because of their seeming inappropriateness in a modern Hindu context. Kota dancing, sexual license (especially pervasive during the dry funeral) and intoxication at funerals were all reasons for which Indians aspiring to status in Hindu and British worlds would look down upon the Kotas. What started initially as an apparent attempt to reform Kota society—a change in practice—eventually required a more developed ideology and new rituals to become established within the logic of tradition.

The dry funeral existed for a number of reasons—some consciously articulated, others functionally implicit (Mandelbaum 1954). One of the reasons for the dry funeral was to effect the final transformation of the deceased into an ancestor. The deceased became a being who lived on, happily it would seem, in the other world—a Kota “motherland.” As we have seen, there was some notion of divinity connected with this motherland, but the motherland was seen, nonetheless, as an abode separate from that (or those) inhabited by

³⁴In Vein’s description, the widow, men, and women wash their heads in one place and bathe fully in another place, downstream.

³⁵ If some people are too tired or sick to attend, water and *veky* are brought to them outside of their houses.

³⁶Vein provides two differing accounts. In one, a son of the deceased gives clarified butter to the *tic pac mog*, who holds it to his forehead, says “*co·mi*,” and rubs it into his hair. In another, the wife of the deceased’s younger brother provides clarified butter to the *ticpacmog*, widow and all others, who rub it onto their bodies.

the gods.

It was also necessary to hold a dry funeral to purify the entire village and make everything suitable for the gods, so that, after the following new moon, the god ceremony could be performed. The dry funeral and the gods ceremony were, and in some villages, still are linked in the ritually constituted year. In various ways “time” itself was made pure, as was the village space, and each individual participant.

To do away with this elaborate ceremony and all of its purificatory implications, the Kotas had to reformulate their eschatology and soteriology. It is not possible through the evidence available to closely trace this process of rationalized reformulation. All we can observe are the actual changes in practice and how Kotas now articulate their views on death. As for eschatology, the “end” was moved up, so to speak. The death ended in cremation, not in the final journey to the mother land. As for soteriology, the Kota soul did not reach final peace as a member of a Kota afterlife, but instead merged with a generalized *advaita-vedānta* godhead—losing its identity as a Kota and as an individual.

This took care of a number of things. First of all, it took care of the need for a dry funeral and all of the repugnant, expensive, and time consuming things it came to represent to modern, Hinduized Kotas. Secondly, it removed the associations of temporary impurity occasioned by the funeral, since the transition from death to divinity was taken care of in one quick ritual the day following the cremation.

Hindus possess involved and diverse manners of dealing with periods of inauspiciousness, “incapacity,” and impurity after death. The anthropologist Diane Mines provides a subtle analysis of these periods and suggests that, contrary to earlier analyses, funerary practices are less involved with removing “spiritual and/or emotional paralysis” and more for “reconstructing bodies and reviving bodily relations” (1989, 127) Stating it succinctly, “death is made into several kinds of birth” (123). This analysis works well for the Kotas, particularly in considering the dry funeral.

Rebirth is particularly evident in the way fatherhood was dealt with in former times. Until the dry funeral, the widow could not remarry. Thus, up until her first menstrual period following the dry funeral, any pregnancy was attributed to her deceased husband. In fact, she was enjoined from engaging in sexual intercourse until the dry funeral (the widower was not), at which time she might try to get pregnant, so as to have another son by her deceased husband (Mandelbaum 1954, 62).

The whole process whereby death is transformed into birth and through which the gap between categories of death and divinity are mediated is obviated through the truncated ritual of floating the bones of the deceased in the river.

It used to be that in all the villages (now only in Kurgo-j and Me-na-r) the god ceremony would have to be skipped during a year in which there were deaths but no dry funeral. In a sense the ritual marking of

calendrical time depended on the balance between death and god ceremonies. For years it would be as if life were on hold, if the dry funeral were not celebrated. None of the important godly ritual functions could be carried out—no harvest or planting rituals, no selection of new priests or consultation of the diviners, no rain ceremonies, and no god ceremony. Only the Hindu celebrations and small Kota rituals, like marriages, could be conducted.

Before closing this discussion, I would like to reemphasize the categorical opposition between divinity and death by considering what happens when a person dies *during* a god ceremony. In this case a boundary is set up in the village around the house of the deceased and no one may enter who participates in the god ceremony, interacts with the participants, or enters other parts of the village. No funeral music is performed. The sounds of funeral music are opposed to the proceedings of the god ceremony in the same way that are the other negative influences of death. The influences are transmitted temporally—usually a new moon signals the beginning of a new, potentially unaffected period. Space within the village is a conduit for death “pollution.” That is why a boundary is erected during the god ceremony, why certain areas are reserved for particular parts of the green and dry deaths, and why the places in which the corpse has passed must be treated in special ways. And, as elsewhere in India, the influence of death is transmitted through food or touch. Unlike among many Hindu communities, the idea that the defilement of death is transmitted through kinship relations is not highly developed among the Kotas. Entering the boundaries of a village before the new moon of a month in which a funeral has been conducted is more polluting than being a relative of someone who has died.

For a death during the god ceremony, four men will take care of all the rituals, carrying the body to the funeral ground, and so forth. There will be no ritual meal and no community purification. The others will watch the proceedings from the other side of the boundary. It is a terrible burden on the grieving spouse because he or she has nobody for consolation, no elaborate ritual catharsis, and no prolonged social distraction. In fact the emotional burden is magnified because the spouse becomes, temporarily, an outcaste and cannot participate in the most joyous collective village event of the year.

PART III

Culture as a Musical System

INTRODUCTION

In the old days, there was a King in Vēdkal, near Ticga-r, whose youthful daughter used to talk, here and there, with the Kotas. One day she announced her desire to marry a Kota, but her father refused. She was adamant. Finally her father pretended to agree and invited the entire village of Ticga-r to a party. As the Kotas prepared to leave, they kept the musical instruments in the verandah of one of the houses. Because the Kotas were righteous people, the kob and kol spoke to them, "it's dangerous, don't trust that senseless uncle." Ignoring the voice of the instruments, the whole village went anyway. The King mixed poison into the rice and killed them all.

The first lines of this Ticga-r story¹ poetically introduce part III of this work, in which we listen, so to speak, to what the music has to tell us; the story is also thematically appropriate as an introduction to the religious and cultural values associated with Kota music. In listening what music has to say, in part III, I use categories, styles, uses and descriptions of music as points of departure for understanding Kota society—completing here my tripartite approach (people, ritual, music) to Kota musical culture.

In the first several chapters of part III I consider two systems for representing and generating musical meaning: what I will call the generic system and the narrative system. I approach these systems by combining broad statements about musical characteristics and ritual form with specific examples which illustrate the system either through 1) paradigm, or 2) boundaries. Paradigm and boundary will serve as methodological shorthand for a number of loosely complementary principles: center/periphery, genera/differentia, stasis/transition, etc. Some of the most interesting phenomena occur at the boundaries of indigenous categories, where basic categories are defied, or in transition from one place or time to another.

By generic system I mean both the idea of "genre" as the term has been developed in one branch of recent humanistic theoretical literature, and "genres" as types articulated through Kota cultural classification. My intention here is to address in some small part, as Alan Merriam put it, "the relationships between the study of ethnomusicology and studies in the humanities and social sciences in general" (1964, 15). The crux of the issue for this study is to discover the extent to which humanistic generic analyses can be usefully applied to

¹Told to me by V. Mathi, 16 July 1992.

indigenous classification systems; at what levels of detail do these two systems operate? Where do genre studies and studies of classification overlap? Where will it be useful to keep social science and humanistic discourses separate?

By narrative system I mean a paramusical tradition of storytelling through which particular meanings are assigned to particular Kota musical pieces. The narrative system can be considered a subset of genre in that it provides some of the central symbols, or paradigms, of what it means for a particular piece to have a particular cultural meaning. That is, narrative helps provide genre definition. I will present here as data all of the stories about musical pieces I have been able to collect. Song texts have already been considered to an extent, but they will be further considered here.

CONCEPTS OF GENRE

When we speak of a genre we are speaking of a genus, a “kind” or “sort” of a thing; that is, a set of objects that are recognized as alike in some respect. In the study of most European music, we are speaking of one type of musical unit—usually a unit that is broader in conception than “the piece” and more narrow in conception than an entire repertoire (although the repertoire can be of a genre as well); in the study of painting or poetry a similar set of distinctions can be drawn. Usually a musical genre in the history of Western art music is defined by a set of easily recognizable musical features—a minuet is in triple meter with characteristic patterns of accentuation and a binary form; and often by a context—dance, opera, liturgy, etc.

In order to use the term genre cross culturally it is of course necessary to recognize alternative forms of definition. Thus in musical cultures such as that of the Kotas in which certain categories of musical pieces are grouped together by performance context, media, and text and not by (or only minimally or secondarily by) musical features, it is either not true that “a minimal set of stable musical features is necessary for the identification of a genre” (Micznik122), or we must narrow our definition of musical genre to fit categories of thought associated with the history of Western music. I would like to leave open discussion of genre to comparative possibilities, and thus reject the latter option. For the purposes of this study I would like to define genre as a *culturally recognized category for a group of compositions or a style of performance*. Thus for the Kotas (as in the West), instrumental music is a genre, as is vocal music. Within each of these categories are genres for “god” and for “death,” and so forth.

One must distinguish between a commonplace use of the term genre, which refers to virtually any sort of classification (by anyone), and critical or theoretical applications of genre. The former provides a simple way of referring to collectivities, general ideas, etc. (simple labelling), the latter is employed in attempts to extract

new meaning or value through understanding the cultural, intellectual, and/or historical process of category formation. It is this process of category formation (or transformation) that is interesting to the historian, critic, or anthropologist, and to me, as an ethnomusicologist. Recent criticism has focused on how genres are constituted:

The characteristic treatment. . . has been either to naturalize or historicize the genre by retrospectively “finding” it in the literary text or to hypostatize it, making it “theoretical.” But this treatment, which is in either case representational, is neither necessary nor ultimately persuasive, for both historicized and hypostatized genres similarly lose credibility as their unacknowledged definitional nature becomes increasingly obvious with increasing use. Whereas in either case the critic presents himself as describing or representing what antecedes his text—the historical genre being derived from observation of preexisting literary facts, the theoretical genre being deduced from a preexisting theory of literature—in both cases the genre is actually conceptualized, textualized and justified by the critic’s present-tense act, by his writing of the genre’s definition (26).

The problem of genre constitution becomes important to the critic, in part, because of what is at stake: the *value* of the object in aesthetic, technical, or intellectual terms. Thus for Rosemarin a genre “is most usefully defined as a tool of critical explanation, as our most powerful and reasoned way of justifying the value we place or would place on a literary text” (49). To evaluate an object, one must compare it with other like objects; to find other like objects, one must have a set of criteria in mind—a theory or at least a set of premises. Rosemarin suggests that although a genre may seem to “exist” in some form historically (either as a collection of items or as a theory of similarity), the critic, by virtue of the act of criticism, must actually constitute it. To Rosemarin, criticism is a deductive act and one must consciously choose and make explicit the premises of an investigation.

To what extent is this useful in an ethnomusicological inquiry? It seems almost by definition that ethnomusicologists must shy away from any discussion of “value” which involves positioning themselves as artistic critics (of a culture that is not their own), deferring instead to indigenous discourse about artistic value—if there is one. Yet it is still necessary to demonstrate how value is indigenously conceived, to make choices regarding the authority of voices (respected musician; authority on ritual, etc.—post-modern multivocality notwithstanding), and to explicate classification systems. Here the ethnological analogues of “historical” and “theoretical” genres are, respectively, the apparently (deceptively so) “preconstituted” set of objects or practices that belong to a named cultural category (tying the toes together is a “death” practice: the fire lighting tune is a “death” tune) and the “theory” that holds them together (everything associated with a funeral belongs to a “genre”; or, everything at a funeral helps the dead to reach the other world).

The Rosemarinian critical turn, if it be translated to ethnomusicology in one way, would not be all that different from the approaches many anthropologists take to symbolic classification. Rosemarin’s argues for the “explanatory power of genre” (25) just as the anthropologist argues for the explanatory power of

indigenous categories; she argues, “not only is perfect repetition impossible—to repeat is always also to differ—but. . . similarity or the general becomes convincing only when embedded in difference or the particular. . . explanatory power, like affective, power, tends to be greatest when the affinities are surprising, when the yokings unite seemingly incongruous matter across seemingly unbridgeable gaps.” Genre here slips into metaphor, which we have learned through the work of such anthropologists as James Fernandez, “accomplish a kind of synesthesia in respect to continua in different domains” (1986, 41). In fact, I would argue genres are metaphors because they are labels for sets of objects with no absolute criteria for inclusion, like Wittgenstein’s “games” and the set of social scientific concepts Needham has criticized (like “belief”); genres invite chains of relationships, concatenating like and unlike things into new formations, variations on variations on themes.

But is it valid to treat a system of cultural categories only as “a critics explanatory tool” and not (as in Rosemarin’s critique of the majority of genre studies), “as a hypothesis, a probable stab at the truth, something whose inherence in a particular literary text [read: set of cultural practices] or whose independent existence as a schema is potentially verifiable or, at least, refutable” (26-6)? My answer is, no. This is where humanistic and social scientific (even the “softest” variety) approaches must part company. It would be disingenuous for an ethnomusicologist or an anthropologist to employ indigenous cultural categories merely for his or her own scholarly purposes of explanation without believing that at some level what is being explained is in fact “true,” at some level, for the members of the culture under investigation—notwithstanding the fact that there may be many truths.

With the understanding that approaches to ideas of genre in different disciplines cannot be methodologically (or perhaps even morally) equivalent, I would like to proceed in analyzing what I have called Kota genres through a set of concepts I believe to be of a more general nature. Three recent kinds of genre studies from disciplines and fields closely related to those of this study will focus my questions: historical musicology, anthropology/folklore, and Indic literature/folklore: I do not wish to claim, however, that the ideas I have extracted from these studies have been invented by their authors. Quite the opposite: the general ideas are ubiquitous.

The first is a recent article in the *Journal of Musicology* by Vera Micznik entitled “Mahler and ‘the power of genre.’” Focusing on the dance genres, Ländler, Waltz, and Menuet in the Ninth Symphony, Micznik demonstrates how tempo, instrumentation, register, melody and conventional generic affiliation play off one another in complex and sometimes contradictory ways. She suggests that it is in particular, *extramusical* connotations of these genres that provide a basis for examining the commonground between the two middle movements. Micznik’s approach is representative of what I will label the “context sticks to the

genre" type.²

A similar kind of study revolves around gender discourse, historically, once again with attention to how the musical comes to refer to the non-musical. Gender, of course, has been perhaps the most omnipresent attribute, in the history of Western art music, which has been seen to be metaphorically attached to genres and particular techniques.³ What has been interesting in terms of semiotic musical analysis has been the mixing of genres, the cultural resonances of genre bricolage. The study of such phenomena in American popular musics seems to be gaining considerable inertia.⁴

In a second type of study, Donald Brenneis, an anthropologist, folklorist and sociolinguist compares how Indian immigrants in Trinidad and their counterparts in one region of India perform a shared corpus of texts. From a textual standpoint the two traditions represent performances of a single genre, but the manner in which the two communities musically perform the texts reflect different sets of values. The choral, antiphonal style of Indian performance reinforces a personal-transformative function: to bring on ecstatic intoxication, a feeling of situated equality. In Fiji, a solo performance style reinforces a didactic function, brought on, in part, by the special concerns of an immigrant community. This article exemplifies what I will call the "meaning is encoded in the structure of musical performance" approach. One again, the general approach has been widely applied in the history of ethnomusicology, both to broadly conceived societal units (in the work of Alan Lomax for instance), and very localized cultural settings (Feld's Kaluli work, for example). Brenneis's article may be considered as an example of a more general approach, applied to the transformation of a genre under the pressure of migration.

The third study, or rather set of studies, by the late A. K. Ramanujan, involves questions of indigenous classification and has had a great impact on Indian folkloristics. Ramanujan revived a poetic classificatory

²Although, strictly speaking, Micznik may be right in noting "most studies written during the last twenty years that attempt to define and classify musical genres have been more concerned with historical evolution and transformation than with the role played by genre as a generator of meaning in a musical work" (121), the method of such analysis—that is, by locating in the musical, the reference to the non-musical—is grounded firmly in the history of Western musical criticism.

³Studies of gender and music are far too numerous to mention here. Increasingly sophisticated studies of gender discourse on music have approached not only questions of musical history, but more broadly of social history; Head points out, for instance, that Northern-German discourse on music as "effeminate" was not a reflection of what Northern-Germans associated with women during the period, but with what they associated with effeminate men. Genre criticism of the period "drew upon and entered into the contemporary discourse on the characteristics of the sexes" (Head 1995, 166).

⁴Walser shows, for example, how rap rhythm tracks build up "samples of earlier African American music. . . While the rapping combines. . . the rhetoric of black preaching and the rhythms of black music." But there are no quick and easy analyses: "to trace the origins of a stylistic features is not to account for its attractions and functions in later contexts, which requires attention to specific uses and performances (1995, 208).

scheme from classical Tamil, *akam* and *puram*. *Akam* genres are domestic or interior; they are usually told by women or involve women and familial relationships. Renderings are generally short, unelaborate, personal and draw on conventionalized settings and schemes that fit with the performance context. *Puram* genres, by contrast, are male, public, contain personal names, are communal and contain historical themes. The same stories may be told in *akam* or *puram* contexts—the narrative style and textual conventions changing accordingly. One of Ramanujan’s last published articles argued that South Indian women’s tales provide an alternative set of attitudes and values to those in mainstream Sanskrit Hinduism. He went so far as to suggest genders are themselves genres. I will call Ramanujan’s approach the “emic genre as central cultural category” approach.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE GENERIC SYSTEM

At the most basic emic level, Kota cultural classification is bipartite and based on a ritual classification of ceremonies into those concerned with God and those concerned with Death. I would like first to consider the implications of the cultural categories as broadly construed, and then consider residual categories, cultural practices, and musical pieces which may not be given a Kota name (an example of a named genre is that of "god songs" *devr pa:t*) but which nevertheless may be grouped for analytical purposes into categories.

INSTRUMENTAL MELODIES IN MUSICAL CLASSIFICATION

A broad genre division may be drawn between instrumental music and song (i.e. vocal music with meaningful text). The word for instrumental piece, we have already seen, is derived from the most important melody producing instrument in Kota festivals, the *kol*. Pieces are not classified differently if they are played on other instruments, such as the *pula-ngg* or *bugi-r*, although some pieces are better suited to performance on the *kol* than on these other instruments. The *bugi-r* for instance, generally has five holes and thus is not capable of the full tonal range of the *kol*.⁵ The *pula-ngg*, while technically capable of producing the correct pitches because it has six holes (*kan* "eye"), is not suitable for the subtle pitch inflections and ornamentation possible on the *kol*, as rendered by an advanced musician. Pucan found it difficult to play certain pieces and for any length of time on the *pula-ngg* because it lacks a pirouhette (*cutu-rm*): as he grew older his lips could not withstand the continuous pressure required for circular breathing.

THE PRIMACY OF MELODY

The name of the instrumental genre reflects the fact that melody is primary in determining the identity of a musical entity. This genre nomenclature (i.e. by name of primary melody producing instrument—a double reed) is shared by all of the Nilgiri tribes who play cognate musical ensembles (these include all the tribes classified as "Iruilas" or "Kurumbas," except the Mullu Kurumbas). The melodic identity of pieces

⁵Jairazbhoy found a specimen of *bugi-r* with six holes in the village of Tieg-a-r, but this appears to be an aberration. Historical data from Mandelbaum's fieldnotes also indicate that the 5 holed *bugi-r* was the norm in the 1930s.

distinguishes the musical cultures of Nilgiri tribals from those of low caste musicians on the plains who perform for ritual occasions. The identity of musical pieces in such ensembles as the *naiyāṅṅi mēlam* on the plains is partly rhythmic—because of the close association between musical items and specialized dances. My observations and analyses of plains folk drumming are supported by the work of Zoe Sherinian, who has been conducting work on the music of Tamil *dalit* (untouchable) Christians. According to her, *dalits* strongly privileged rhythm and drumming in their own musical self-definition. Thus although there may be strong continuities between Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in terms of their political and economic status; and although in some arenas (such as field labor) tribes and castes interact considerably; in Tamilnadu, there is a sharp differentiation between what we might call the musical identity complexes of Scheduled Castes and Nilgiri Tribes.

The melodic emphasis in Kota instrumental is further supported by terms for the ensemble. Kotas refer to an ensemble of musicians as *koḷvar*, which is a contraction of the instrument names *koḷ*, *par*, *tabaḷk*, emphasizing the melodic element by placing the melody producing instrument first. The brass horn, *kob*, is usually included in the ensemble, but is not included in the generic term of reference for an ensemble. Since the *kob* provides neither a distinctive melody nor a distinctive organizing rhythmic pattern for the rest of the ensemble, the sonic contribution of the *kob*, i.e. in terms of a distinct pattern, is entirely irrelevant in the definition of instrumental musical genre. However, the placement of horn blasts is meaningful within the flow of performance and in ritual contexts. The *e-rtabaḷk* is included in fewer contexts than the *kob*, and, like the *kob*, does not contribute to the definition of a genre (the rhythm performed on it is wholly unrelated to the musical rhythms articulated by the *par* and *tabaḷk*), although it is ritually important. A pair of *koḷ* players, as mentioned in part one, is called a *joḷ*, or pair, and can be considered the minimum operating unit for defining the identity of a piece.

I have emphasized the melody-focus of Kota musical culture here because I believe the definition of genre is also melody-based, as is the primary locus of contextual signification in Kota instrumental music.

DISTINCTION BETWEEN A "SONG" AND A "TUNE"

Instrumental pieces can be rendered vocally in one of two ways: certain genres can be sung with words; others can be vocalized with the syllables "gag," "gil" etc. The relationship between vocalized, sung, and instrumentally performed pieces will be analyzed musically in chapters seventeen and eighteen. Here what is important is the relationship between instrumental genre and potential type of vocal rendition. Any instrumental melody can be sung to vocables; in this form it can still be called a *koḷ*. Cognates of the Tamil verb *pāṇu* "sing" refer in most Dravidian languages to singing or other styles of verbal utterance; more

broadly the term may refer to music (i.e. instrumental music); and still more broadly the term may refer to other kinds of sound making (ringing, for example). The more limited use of the term, however, refers to singing with lexical text. The Kota noun *pa:t*, like the Tamil *pāṭtu*, means primarily a song, with words. Thus although an instrumental melody sung to vocables could be called a *pa:t*, this would not be normative usage; similarly, a song with words could be called a *kol*, but this also would not be normative usage.

For the purposes of genre description, and to avoid confusion as to what I am referring, I have been using the term “tune” throughout this work as a translation of *kol* “instrumental melody”—whether sung with vocables, or played on the *kol*, *bugi-r*, or *pula-ṅg*—and “song” to refer to *pa:t*, a melody sung with words. The term melody is retained to describe the tonal contour of either a song or a tune. The reason for this is to preserve the precision of the term “tune” in reference to an instrumental musical item. If I refer to the “tune” associated with a “song” I do not mean its melody, but the transformation of the melody when it is rendered instrumentally.

The simplest division of “tunes” among the Kotas is tripartite: there are “god tunes” (*devr kol*), “death tunes” (*ta-v kol*), and “dance tunes” (*a:t kol*). The simplest division of “songs” among the Kotas is bipartite. “god songs” (*devr pa:t*) and “mourning songs” (*dukt pa:t* or *a:t!*). There are residual categories of songs, but hardly any of tunes. These will be dealt with separately.

RHYTHM IN MUSICAL CLASSIFICATION

Although the identity of a musical piece is defined melodically, there are cyclical rhythmic components seen to be inherent in any melody and these are made explicit in the performance of instrumental music through drumming and sometimes the performance of cymbals. For purposes of analysis we can speak of five different types of rhythmic pattern, based on subdivisions of a rhythmic cycle into twelve beats, ten beats, eight beats, seven beats and six beats. Analysis of the rhythms themselves will be taken up in chapter eighteen. For the purposes of understanding genres I consider here the manner in which these rhythms are classified and the genres in which they are the most prevalent.

The five ostinato patterns are divided most broadly, by musicians of Kolme-l, into three types:⁶ *ko!a!* *da-k* (twelve beats), *ca-da da-k* (ten, seven or six beats), and *tirugana:t da-k* (eight beats). *da-k* has been

⁶These rhythmic classifications were taught to me by Pucan and Raman, who are recognized as authorities in music throughout Kota society. However, just as dialects differ from village to village I suspect nomenclature also varies. I did not succeed in collection detailed nomenclature for music in each village. As I recorded selections from each village, however, I did occasionally encounter slight variations in nomenclature; it will require an additional field visit to determine whether nomenclature variation is significant.

explained to me as meaning “type” or “kind” rather than referring to any notion of drumming, rhythm, or cycle.

This meaning of *da·k* most likely links the word etymologically with a common term for similarity or likeness, *da·kl*. In this general sense *da·k* is used in other villages to refer to phrases of a tune (there are tunes called “twelve *da·k* tune” in Kina·r and Kurgo·j) or its melodic identity (*ad ve·r da·k* “that’s a different melody”). The generic quality of this term in musical discourse clearly provided potential for confusion. It is possible that the derivation for *da·k* as a term for musical rhythmic cycle may represent a convergent evolution, here deriving from a Dravidian root meaning to beat, attack or strike (T: *tākku*-² *Tamil Lexicon*; DEDR 3150); Tamil meanings for the noun form include also “drum stick”; or a “beat” in the sense of a blow. In Tamil one may use the term *aṇi*, which is synonymous with “beat” or “blow” above, to mean “beat” in the sense of a drum stroke, or more broadly to mean rhythmic pattern. Tamil *paraiyars* and Telugu speaking *cakkiliyars*, as well as Kotas, when speaking Tamil, use terms like “one beat” (*or aṇi*) “two beats” (*reṇṭaṇi*) to refer to particular rhythmic patterns on the drums. The phonetic transformation of *tākku* to *da·k* seems to be rather straightforward, as does the analogy between the meanings of *tākku* and *aṇi*. It may be that the word *da·k* was used more specifically in Kota to mean rhythmic beat and only later reinterpreted to mean “type” on the model of *da·kl*. Kotas will also use the term from Indian classical music, which is also in general popular use, *tālam*—a term that can refer to the system of rhythmic reference in classical music, or more generally to “rhythm” or the maintenance of a steady beat.

All instrumental pieces are supposed to be fit to one of these rhythmic patterns. To an extent, the vocal repertoire is also seen to or made to fit these rhythmic patterns as well, but my impression is that interest in such fitting is a male preoccupation. I earlier mentioned how Cintamani came to Raman with a song she was in the process of composing to make sure the rhythm was correct—i.e. that it would fit one of the Kota rhythmic types; I doubt that this sort of collaboration is common. Unless a song is being sung by a group of women, the degree to which a song does or does not fit the *da·k* system is irrelevant—solo songs (especially, as we shall see below, mourning songs) are not generally sung to any continuous rhythmic background (like hand clapping). However, when women sing together (generally the repertoire of “god songs”) men sometimes take it upon themselves to play cymbals or drums (sometimes articulating a particular *da·k*)—even though the women are perfectly capable of maintaining a steady beat by clapping their hands and executing dance steps. Since all the traditional (*ma·mu·l*) god songs are either some form of duple or triple meter it is not difficult to fit one of the *da·ks* to any of these compositions.

From the perspective of genre divisions, suffice it to note that *da·k* is an explicit and necessary component of musical performance in instrumental genres. We can now use *da·k* as a window into

understanding the relationships between genres. All of the instrumental genres include pieces set to the eight beat *tiruganaṭ da-k*. The name of this rhythm is derived from a dance, meaning simply “turning dance.” In fact, most of the men’s dances include elements of spinning, so the distinctive feature of the name of the dance is not the distinctive feature of the dance. All of the instrumental genres also include pieces set to what is called *ca-da da-k*, however, what is meant by *ca-da da-k* changes according to genre. For dance tunes, *ca-da da-k* means a rhythmic cycle which can be described as either 6/8 or 7/8 time. For god tunes or death tunes, *ca-da da-k* can be described as marking out a form of 10/8 time. Kotas in Kolme-l consider the 6/8 and 7/8 varieties to be faster versions of the 10/8 variety (why this might be will be considered analytically in chapter nineteen).

It is not only the difference between varieties of *ca-da da-k* that is based on tempo; tempo is a general basis for discerning between the genres of “god” and “death” tunes and that of “dance”: dance tunes are generally faster. Tempo is also a parameter for distinguishing between dances of men and those of women: Women’s dances are slower than those of men. In some cases women’s dance tunes and men’s dance tunes are identical melodically, differing only in speed of rendition. Kotas recognize this, but will identify a particular piece upon hearing it as a women’s or men’s dance tune, depending on tempo, even if the melody could be used for either.

The term *ca-da da-k* can be used to refer to the rhythmic pattern accompanying a number of differently named dances. The first set of ritual dances are called *ka-lgu-c a-ṭ*, *tiruganaṭ*, and *koynaṭ*. These are the important named dances; other names for dances are employed for various reasons—some referring to origin, some descriptive. For example, a dance called *temaṅg* is danced to a particular melody or set of melodies that is said to resemble a kind of Tamil folk song called *temaṅg*; *kavric a-ṭ* (Kurumba woman dance) is applied to a dance believed to be Kurumba in origin. This latter dance also has a descriptive name, “back and forth dance” (*piba-l mundl a-ṭ*). Some of the dance names seem to be applied inconsistently—possibly due to variations in knowledge. Pucan probably knew little about individual dances because he was usually involved performing on the *koḷ*. To him, all dances were generally identified (when the two of us sat down to listen to recordings) as one of the three ritual dances mentioned above, or they were *ca-da*—that is “ordinary” or “plain,” also set to *ca-da da-k*. Raman seemed to identify dances in slightly greater detail, but could not explain to me the basis for his nomenclature. Pucan’s son was one of the best dancers, and identified the dances as he demonstrated them for me on videotape.

My impression was that within the category of *ca-da* dances, there are a number of other kinds of dances which may or may not have names. The rhythmic patterns for the dances *ka-lgu-c a-ṭ* and *koynaṭ* have been identified for men as varieties of *ca-da da-k*; sometimes the rhythmic pattern for the former is called

ka-lguca-t da-k and the latter *koyna-t da-k*. I have observed that the *ka-lguca-t* tends to be in 6/8 and the *koyna-t* in 7/8, but I am not confident that rhythmic pattern is the only defining feature of these dance types: clearly there are a limited number of melodies for each of these dances also, and one comes to recognize them.

The word *ca-da*, which is applied to so many of these dances and rhythmic patterns, is Urdu in origin (*sādā* “plain,” “unadorned”), entering Kota presumably through Tamil. The Kota word for “ordinary” is *ver* (DEDR 5513), related to other Dravidian words meaning “emptiness,” “ordinary,” “unmixed” or “mere”: the Tamil *ca-da* (that is, what Kotas would recognize to be Tamil; they would have no way of knowing the term was originally Urdu) and the Kota *ver* are used interchangeably in everyday conversation, word choice depending on a number of factors which have less to do with the object than the person speaking and in what context. It is probable that the term Mandelbaum’s 1930s informants used, *vera-t*, has been Tamilized over the past half century as *ca-da a-t*. Although it requires an additional step in logic to argue that the dances Mandelbaum’s informants called *vera-t* are the same dances Pucan now calls *ca-da a-t*, it is reasonable to assume the objects of these terms at least overlap considerably—particularly when considering the terms cover a residual category and not a particular, specialized dance.

The third broad category for rhythmic cycles is *ko-la-t da-k*. This is a pattern Kotas say they have adopted from the rhythmic practice of *Cakkiliyars*. As far as I know, only god tunes and possibly some dance tunes are set to *ko-la-t da-k*. Generally, tunes set to this rhythmic pattern are used in the context of festivals for deities that have recently been introduced to the Kota pantheon from Hinduism. These gods include great tradition deities like Krishna and local, folk deities, often associated with lower castes. These latter include Munisvara, Badrakāliyamma and Māriyamma (in local forms and with differing names). Although other rhythms can also be used in festivals for non-Kota deities, it is noteworthy that none of the god tunes associated exclusively with Kota gods employ *ko-la-t da-k*. Kotas consciously recognize that they distinguish Kota festivals for the gods of the old days from festivals for the new gods through rhythm.

GENRE CHARACTERISTICS, RELATIONSHIPS AND RITUAL CORRELATIONS

The case of *ko-la-t da-k* raises a much broader issue in Kota musical culture, one that was encountered in the detailed ritual consideration of part II, and that is the musical differentiation of ritual occasions. I would like to consider here the elements of ritual differentiation that can be described at the level of genre. As we have seen, the melody of an instrumental piece is its primary identifying characteristic. In the same way, the identification of a particular ritual with a particular instrumental piece is again a question primarily of melody. The major exception to this rule is *ko-la-t da-k*: unless Kotas choose at some point to alter the

musical system, one can always distinguish a ceremony—that is, a set of rituals, activities, at the broadest level—as indigenously Kota (as Kotas see it) or as Hindu in origin (introduced at most within a century or so), based on the corpus of *da·ks* used throughout the affair.

Another level of correlation between genre, *da·k*, and ritual can be observed by considering the kinds of activities or actions that are common during the performance of certain kinds of tune (see last column of table “Characteristics and Relationships among Genres” in appendix). God tunes and death tunes are accompanied by the same general sorts of potential activities: sitting and listening, performing rituals, or walking in procession; in addition, death tunes can move people to tears. Crying is both the correct response (particularly of women) to the occasion of death—at certain times and places—and the emotional response to well-played death tunes. However, even the seemingly “natural” response of crying is in some cases ritually confined.⁷ In this sense, crying can be considered one variety of ritual activity associated with certain kinds of music.

Dance tunes are in most cases associated only with dance steps and not with other ritual activities: there are a few exceptions, however, which will be considered below. Dance tunes are never performed as general background music to fill the slack time between rituals—as funeral tunes, for example are—or as highly charged repertoire items to be listened to, with performers and audience seated (as god tunes are and funeral tunes sometimes are); however, since dance tunes are ritually rather neutral, young boys may practice these tunes outside during the god festival and generally at any non-ritual time on the *pula·ngg*.

Returning to the ritual association of particular rhythmic patterns, *da·ks*, it would seem obvious that most ritual activity would be confined to ten beat or eight beat rhythms (because six and seven beat rhythms are associated with dance tunes, and dance tunes are not usually performed during other rituals) and this is indeed the case. Furthermore, it turns out that most ritual activities that involve processions, or any sort of significant movement from one location to another, generally involve a tune set to ten beats (this includes rituals that involve stationary activities in addition to processions); rituals that are more stationary involve eight beat rhythms. I have observed ritual association at this level of rhythmic distinction not only among the Kotas, but among Irulas and Kurumbas as well. To my knowledge this is not a rule of any sort; it happens to be a statistical correlation. It may turn out that if all the variations of every tune for every ritual in every tribe are examined, the correlation may not be absolute; but in my considerable experience among the Kotas, the

⁷It must occur at the pouring of millet during the dry funeral, for example, but only the female relatives of the deceased need cry. Crying must not occur in the green funeral after the pyre is lit.

The phenomenon of crying in ritual as culturally, and not necessarily emotionally, driven has been treated by a number of scholars—perhaps first by Radcliffe-Brown in his study of the Andaman Islanders (1964). See also Huntington and Metcalf (1991, 44-48).

correlation is strong.

There is a further correlation between the length of a piece, the speed of a piece, and its general ritual profundity. The length and speed of a piece are of course far more measurable than the profundity of a piece. Here the ritually profound can be defined as those melodies that are associated with central activities or emotions of a ritual complex. The most ritually profound activities during the god ceremony are the instantiating of divinity in the center of the village, signified by the opening of the temple and all the activities associated with it (making fire, fasting, decorating the temple), and the removal of god from the center of the village, signified by removing of precious metal ornaments and coins from the temple pillars. The most emotive death tunes are those associated with the final farewell of the spirit to the land of the dead. It is not possible to create a more variegated ranking of tunes according to profundity: i.e. to suggest that bier lighting is more important than removal of the corpse from the house. But the broad correlations remain valid; they illustrate an example of “meaning encoded in the structure of musical performance” by way of what appears to be a type of iconicity: rituals which are long and greatly elaborated (thus “profound”) are associated with tunes that are long and elaborate. There is also an association, common in the West as well, between pieces that are slow and what we would call “grand” or “stately.” It would seem that these correlations are almost “natural” and it may be that these cultural correlates are widespread around the world. Yet even within the Kota metaphorical system in non-musical realms we find aniconicity that reminds us that even what appear to be “natural” correlations require cultural indexes to render them meaningful. Chapter nine, section two outlined examples where physically small fires are called “big” because of their ritual significance.

Generally speaking the three repertoires of god, death and dance tunes are distinct from one another. As I suggested at the beginning of this chapter, however, the boundaries of the genres—where one genre could theoretically or actually overlap with another—provide interesting phenomena. There is one tune, called the “coin removing tune,” which is a god tune, a dance tune, and a “sad tune” (in some cases an alternative name for, and in others a subset of the “death tune” genre); it is performed once a year just after the peak of the god ceremony, at about 2:00 a.m.. The piece is called the “coin removing tune” because it accompanies the ritual removal of gold and silver coins and ornaments from the front of each of the three Kota temples.

The pasting of ornaments on the temple (performed earlier as an act of offering) is an important aesthetic component of the god ceremony; it is one example of what is called “making god” (*devr gica*): now, and from time to time in the past (but not in all villages), coins and ornaments have been fashioned in the form of a face—this constituting the closest approximation to an anthropomorphic representation of the divine. But more generally (since the fashioning of a face is recognized to be a modern innovation—what might be recognized in Indic terms as *līla*, a form of divine play), the presentation of beauty is part of the larger

process of “making god” in the god ceremony. Thus at the moment when the ornaments are removed from the temple, the ritual elaboration, the beauty, the making of god has begun a process of reversal: Kotas feel sad. Kotas thus classify the piece performed both as a god tune and as a sad tune. In fact, this is the only piece classified as a sad tune which is not also potentially a funeral tune.

The combination of the two most opposed genres and the cultural categories with which they are associated is itself enough to signal a poignant ritual moment. Traditional genres are further transgressed in that the ritual is accompanied by women’s dance. This stretches the classification system to new extremes: no other god tune or sad tune is ever associated with a dance, and only one involves any ritual action by women. Furthermore, dance tunes are almost never associated with a separate ritual. The significance of the moment is signalled by the mixing of genre attributes and classifications that are ordinarily separate. As one might expect, gender and ritual profundity are marked by the comparative length of the tune and its slow tempo. The presence of women’s dance also makes sense within the Kota cultural system, in which men begin things and women finish them. The end is appropriately marked by women’s dance, after which women must sing at least three god songs. The three genres have potential musical common ground, the eight-beat pattern, *tiruganaṭ* and indeed, the coin removing tune is set to this pattern.

Before continuing to discuss the relationships among instrumental genres and their significance beyond the purely musical realm, it will be necessary to make the genre divisions more subtle; I began this process musically by suggesting that dance tunes can be divided into melodies or ways of performance associated with men and those associated with women; and that each genre can be subdivided according to the types of rhythms employed.

SUBDIVISIONS OF THE GOD TUNES

The god tunes can be subdivided into a miscellaneous collection of tunes used in conjunction with particular ritual activities, and a special collection of twelve tunes (some of which are also included in the former category) which are played as a set in an effort to “call god.” The performance of the twelve god tunes is a highlight of the god ceremony in Kolmeḷ. All the men and many of the women of the village gather around a small fire and quietly listen as each tune is played, in order. Although the ostensible ritual purpose of these tunes is to call god, Kotas also enjoy these pieces for their purely musical value—it is this aspect that I stress in the table of “Characteristics and Relationships” where “quiet sitting and listening” is one of the “accompanying actions.”

The process of performing the twelve god tunes is repeated several times on different days; if time is

short for some reason, the first three alone may be played; sometimes more than twelve tunes are played (in which case some of the other god tunes associated with rituals might be added)—there are often omissions or repetitions because it is difficult to keep track (I discovered this only by tape recording the *kol/s* and writing down which ones had been played as I listened back). However many tunes may actually be played on a given occasion, there exists an *idea* that there are twelve special god tunes. The number twelve is not significant, I am told; rather it happens to be the number of tunes which have been passed down to the present generation. Previously there were more. I looked for discussion of these god tunes in Mandelbaum's field notes and discovered that at one time at least, there were reportedly only nine tunes—three for each deity, he was told. My suspicion is that this recorded information reflected Sulli's lack of musical knowledge, and tendency to tie up ritual details into neat, logical bundles. Yet still, the idea of a special repertoire, with a specifiable number of items, has existed since at least the 1930s.

In other villages these tunes are called *arcay!* tunes—that is, tunes which are played as the Kotas sit under the sleeping tent—in Kolme-l only a few are given this name: those for which no other special name has been devised. None of the other villages have as many god tunes as in Kolme-l, and for this reason in other villages the performance of *arcay!* tunes is not as long or as grand.

In the Kota genre of twelve god tunes, the *arcay!* tunes can be considered one named subdivision; other such subdivisions are a set of supplication tunes (*moyr patd*) for individual deities, a set of tunes named for particular ritual activities they accompany, a set of tunes named for ritual activities they no longer accompany (the music now existing as an index of these bygone practices), and a set of tunes named in reference to their story of origin. The significance of the god tunes will be further explored as I review the stories associated with them. Here suffice it to note that in Kolme-l, twelve god tunes are singled out for performance as music—that is, not to help constitute a composite ritual event that may include other activities, but to constitute a significant event in and of itself. The twelve god tunes are also performed in Kolme-l for the festival of the adopted Rangayno-r deity; on this occasion two additional god tunes for this deity are added. A third occasion for the god tunes in most villages is the rain ceremony (see Wolf i.p.).

SUBDIVISIONS OF FUNERAL TUNES

The subdivisions of music associated with funerals is slightly more complicated. Nowadays the melodies played at funerals have several names. *ta-v kol!* is the most generic appellation, meaning “funeral tune” or “death tune.” Within the category of *ta-v kol/s* are a number of individual melodies which are appropriate for individual rituals. The majority of the tunes are not individually named and are for inducing sorrow. These

are referred to as *dukt ko!* (<Skt. *duḥkha* sorrow). Theoretically *dukt ko!* are a subset of *ta-v ko!* because the latter is larger and includes all of the former that appear in a funeral. However, there is one anomaly, and that is the “coin removing tune” from the god ceremony. It is not of course a funeral tune, because it cannot be actually performed at a funeral (at least not to my knowledge), but it is considered a *dukt ko!* because of the sad emotional association.

Analytically one may distinguish between *dukt ko!*s that are merely performed throughout the funeral—ones without particular names, rituals or stories attached; those which are attached to particular rituals—such as bier lifting, fire lighting, etc.; and those which are associated with particular stories or events (the latter are considered in the “narrative system,” chapter sixteen).

The *ta-v ko!*s that are not *dukt ko!*s are called *ke-r ko!*s. Variations of the Kota word *ke-r* mean in Dravidian languages evil, destruction, or death. In Kota the word connotes not only evil, but also the lasting influences of death, what has been called “pollution.”⁸ The distinction in name is a subtle one: whereas *dukt ko!* are the “sorrow” tunes, the *ke-r ko!*s are the *ko!*s ritually connected with death—specifically, the rituals involved in catching and slaughtering buffaloes, rituals which are no longer followed in Kolme-l. Duryodana explained the difference between *dukt ko!*s and *ke-r ko!*s to me in Pucan’s presence—thus although I have not been able to widely confirm (or find denials of) Duryodana’s analysis, it has at least the tacit approval of one of the major authorities on the matter. Whereas *dukt ko!*s evoke “full feeling” (Duryodana used the English terms), *ke-r ko!*s, he explained, capture the mixture of sadness and energetic excitement associated with catching buffaloes for sacrifice. Thus, more generally, *ke-r ko!*s as a genre contribute to one of the distinctive and complex emotional modes of the Kota funeral: the optimism, the celebratory sentiment, and the pragmatic attitude of energetically and decisively completing the necessary rituals.

*Ke-r ko!*s are a unique repertoire not only because of abstract emotional associations, or former ritual associations, but also because of their intimate connection with songs of grief (*a-!*). We have already encountered examples of this sort of composition in the discussion of how knowledge of the other world is transmitted. Separate discussion of *a-!* types by text and style will be undertaken below in the context of song genres.

I have a suspicion that the subclassification of funeral tunes into *ke-r* and *dukt* would not be represented by musicians from all villages in the way Duryodana represented it to me. Although there was significant

⁸I have repeatedly avoided using the term “pollution” because it has been traditionally used (in a variety of discourses) in reference to both death and menstruation. Although the effects of both can be deleterious to the well being of the community depending on when, and how particular people under particular ritual circumstances may come in contact with them, death and menstruation are not two varieties of the same thing.

mention of special music for buffalo catching in Mandelbaum's fieldnotes, I recall no discussion of these pieces as constituting a genre which has the particular name *ke·r kol* (there seems to be agreement that buffalo catching tunes do represent a special category of funeral music, however). The significance of the genre explication as I received it is, I believe, in the realm of Kolme-l Kota musical consciousness.

I would like to leave the realm of consciousness momentarily, however, and speculate on the origin of the term—that is, taking as a premise my suspicion that the *ke·r* term has recently been applied to the category of buffalo catching tunes. Toda dry funerals are called *ke·r*, and music for Toda dry funerals would have been called *ke·r kol*. I suspect the melodies that were at one time used in Toda funerals gradually became incorporated into the repertoires for Kota funerals; the repertoires may always have overlapped, but my impression is that there used to be tunes used for Toda funerals in particular. Referring to their previous context in Toda funerals, particularly in the central role of accompanying the contest of catching buffaloes, the name *ke·r kol* may have been retained. Furthermore, specific songs were composed in honor of particular buffaloes, either those of the Kotas or those of the Todas, and the melodies from these songs were transformed instrumentally into tunes for catching the buffaloes. In recent times, music that was once played for Toda funerals would not necessarily be identified as such—somehow it would be less Kota, even though Kotas were always the performers of this music.

This speculation is supported by the fact that a number of tunes that Mandelbaum had been told were used for Toda funerals, were identified by Pucan as appropriate for Kota and *not* Toda funerals.

ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN GENRE, AND VILLAGE¹ AND COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Mr. K. Mundan, who played several *ke·r kols* for me on the bamboo trumpet, *bugi·r*, tried to obscure the sacrificial function by saying a tune was for “going to high country,” or for “keeping watch over the herds.” Other Kotas present (including Duryodana, and Mundan's sister, Cindamani) laughed on hearing this and told me that these *kols* were used in conjunction with buffalo sacrifice. Many Kotas express “shame” (even Kotas who do not know English know this term) regarding buffalo sacrifice, and as I indicated in part II this has contributed to a general ambivalence over funerary practices in Kota society. However, although the former association of the *ke·r kols* could be said to “stick” to the genre in terms of ritual memory, the *kols* themselves are not tainted by this shame. That is, both *dukt kols* and *ke·r kols* are performed as ambient, sad music during both green and (if still practiced) dry funerals.

Why does this shame not remain attached to musical pieces? I would suggest the most simple reason is that no outsider would know what the music was once used for. Just as Bharatanatyam was bowdlerized of

many overtly erotic and mundanely sexual lyrics beginning in the 1930s, placed on a proscenium, and touted as a National treasure, a great and ancient classical dance of India, I would suggest that more and more. Kotas are appreciating their own music as worthy objects of aesthetic appreciation, no longer requiring a ritual association if that association does not fit well with their current self-image.

A similar kind of pride is expressed by Kotas concerning their god tunes; several of these have also been removed from previous ritual contexts which were in this case not in any way embarrassing, but simply no longer necessary. If Kolme:l villagers take pride in their large number of god tunes, the Kurgo:j villagers of today pride themselves on the quality and range of their *dukt kołs*—and their funeral tunes in general. Other ritual practices parallel this musical identity marker. In Kolme:l the god ceremony is, nowadays, privileged as the quintessential corporate community affair, as well as a necessary period of worship—no matter what happened (i.e. deaths) during the previous year. The dry funeral was abandoned (or at least has not yet reemerged) and thus it was felt that there was no longer a need to end the influences of death that were once seen to remain in the village after the green funeral—and to render the performance of the god ceremony inappropriate. Without the dry funeral, a great deal of the ritual elaboration of the death theme was removed from Kolme:l Kota culture. On the other hand, Kurgo:j god Ceremonies have for many years been infrequent and shorter than those of Kolme:l; Kurgo:j villagers used to alternate celebrating the god ceremony in their own village and in the closely related village of Kala:c⁹; furthermore, they would not celebrate the god ceremony unless a dry funeral had been observed. The dry funerals of Kurgo:j were historically more elaborate than those of other villages; this is indicated not only by my own research into the matter, but also the contemporary descriptions provided by Mandelbaum in the 1930s. The elaboration of death ceremonies in Kurgo:j can thus be seen as a generating force for the vigorous musical repertoire of death tunes in this village.¹⁰

In Me:na:r, the god ceremony is not celebrated as such (there are other, shorter, thematically related ceremonies), and the dry funeral is the only large scale ceremony from the old days that the members of this village still celebrate. As far as I know there are no god tunes in Me:na:r. In fact, they distinguish themselves in worship of the gods through simplicity rather than elaboration. In Me:na:r, it is the absence of music in the context of worship (only of traditional Kota gods) that indicates profound love of god (*bhakti*).

⁹the two villages have close kinship ties. Now the village of Kala:c has no ritual officers and only contains a few families.

¹⁰Given this, it is surprising that Mandelbaum's favorite Kurgo:j informant mentioned that funeral tunes were of 3 or 4 kinds, and called *dukt koł*, or "sad" tunes. Unless he was referring to 3 or 4 subdivisions of *dukt kołs* (such as those connected with specific ritual actions), he must have been only loosely referring to the number of melodies that existed, since then, as now, there were dozens. It may also be that Veln did not know a great deal about music.

The association between the degree to which a particular village favors or elaborates a ritual complex and the predominance of a particular genre extends to some extent to song genres as well, although the correspondence is limited. That is, villages in which the death complex is celebrated elaborately tend also to have a rich musical tradition associated with death; villages in which the god complex is strong, tend, similarly, to maintain a strong god-related musical tradition. Each village has its own repertoire of god songs and mourning songs; a few of the god songs are present in all the villages (I think). One of the songs which I believe is sung in all the villages is *baca-na basavani-ro*. Associated with carrying bundles, possibly during a harvest, it is in a sense a remnant of a former practice of women singing while working. The names mentioned in the song are generic women's names, and the "god" mentioned in the song is the black cow that led the Kotas to the Nilgiris. The god songs that are village specific involve local deities, local place names, and often, local stories—such as we encountered in the song *velke velke*. The textual features that identify a mourning song as belonging to one village or another are analogous to those in god songs. Place names and events are important; but instead of the name of a god, the name of the deceased serves to locate the song—at least to some extent. Kotas do sing about people of other villages or even about the deaths of non-Kotas. Thus the identifying feature is not so much the village of the subject of a mourning song, but the village of the singer. Usually the story accompanying the mourning song, or the mourning song itself, will make it clear who is doing the singing ("like that the girl's brother sang").

In contemporary musical life, my impression is that Kurgoj women know the largest number of mourning songs and continue to compose compositions in that style. It is not surprising, therefore, that Cintamani, who married into Kolmel village from Kurgoj, is so comfortable with the genre. The older women of Kolmel and Ticgar sing some mourning songs (especially Pa. Mathi and V. Mathi), but younger women, particularly those of Ticgar, actively compose and sing god songs and know virtually no mourning songs. Ticgar continues to celebrate the dry funeral, but only very infrequently, and unlike Kurgoj does not avoid celebrating the god ceremony if the dry funeral has not been performed. Porgar village, which seems to have completely abandoned the dry funeral ceremony (I could not even persuade anyone to recall how it was performed), has a thriving tradition of god songs.¹¹

Kinar and Kalac are difficult to generalize about because their populations are small. Kinar is strongly allied in kinship and ritual terms to Porgar; I found them slightly less "Brahmanical" in their protection of

¹¹The Porgar woman who sang mourning songs for me, Rangamathi, had lived for many years outside of the village proper and was not really representative of the musical life of the village. A wealthy woman, well integrated into the cosmopolitan small town of Kotagiri (that the British founded on the earlier site of Porgar village), she sang many songs in Tamil and Tamilized Kota.

the “purity” of their god ceremonies—this is a subjective assessment, based partially on the degree I was allowed to be present during rituals; it is also based on the relative adoption of Hindu practices, Kina-r adopting the low caste, folk deity Muniswara as a village deity, one that requires blood sacrifice; Porga-rs pantheon includes Krishna, a so-called “Great Tradition” deity which does not, to my knowledge, require blood offerings. The villages of Kina-r, like those of Ticga-r, perform the dry funeral occasionally. Kina-r’s ritual practices and patterns of marriage exchange also overlap strongly with Ticga-r. Thus the women in Kina-r who actively lead in god songs and dance are mainly women from Ticga-r. I was able to collect mourning songs from Kina-r as well, sung in the old style.

SUBDIVISIONS OF SONG GENRES

The questions of how villages specialize in particular song genres, the extent to which examples of a genre are typical, and from where songs originate raises the question of what are the varieties of song that exist within the broad emic categorizations of “god” and “mourning.”

God songs, for example, can be divided into those that address primarily Kota deities and those that address non-Kota deities (or some combination thereof). This division is not entirely simple, because even Kota deities, in villages such as Ticga-r, have Hinduized names. Thus what is called Kambatrayn in Kolme-l (as an alternative name to ayno-r) is called Kambati-cvara in Ticga-r—the addition of *i-cvara* making explicit an identification between the Kota traditional deity and the Great Tradition Hindu god Shiva. There are also songs in Tamil and Badaga languages addressed to non-Kota gods. It appears that the performance of any of these god songs is appropriate during the dance and song days of god ceremonies and dry funerals, providing that the first three songs are (from a contemporary standpoint) of a more traditional (*ma-mu-l*) variety (in Kolme-l, for instance, *baca-na bacavn*, *velke· velke·* and *naraja·yne·*).

Just as one may note textual distinctions between old songs to Kota deities and new songs to a variety of deities, there are musical differences too. The older songs tend to have a limited range—usually only 4 notes: newer songs include songs of older style, but also include those of wider range, sometimes split into parallel sections centering on tonal ranges separated by a perfect fifth—a style of contrast present in much Indian folk, classical and cinema music. The variety of textual, melodic and rhythmic variation in Kota songs can be gleaned through the notated examples in the appendix, and the cassette recordings accompanying it. Here I wish to continue discussing genre in relatively broad terms.

Mourning songs can be divided textually into those that actually mention or meaningfully involve the deceased, and those that involve other events, tangentially related to a funeral, the dead, or grief. The former

category can be divided into those that describe the events leading to a death and those that celebrate aspects of the deceased life—although sometimes these textual styles are combined.¹² The latter can be divided into those that tell a story involving the spirits of the dead, those that are addressed to or involve a particular sacrificial buffalo (there were more of these in the past), and those sung that involve fear and grief (see complete typology in chapter fifteen).

There are many kinds of songs that Kotas (especially women) sing that may involve topics unrelated to the gods (although gods are often mentioned anyway) or the dead. Still, the tendency is to categorize songs into one of these traditional categories. The *a:ʔ!* category (which I gloss, not entirely inclusively, as that of mourning songs) seems to be the most flexible, because it includes songs that do not actually express grief, but which are composed in a typical style, and songs which do express grief, which are not.

The word *a:ʔ!* is a noun form of a verb which means variously, in all Dravidian languages, to move, dance, sing, speak, act, or play. The closest equivalent seems to be the Malayalam word *ātal*, which means “shaking” or “trembling.” A mourning song can be “played” (*et-* DEDR 5156 from the Tamil word for the ancient South Indian harp, the *yāl*), the same verb used for the performance of pieces on the *kol*) or “moved” (*a:r-* to dance, speak or move, as above). A god song can be “played” (*et-*) as well as sung (*pa:r-*). I do not recall hearing women say they “dance,” “speak” or “move” (*a:r-*) a god song, even though they in fact do usually dance when performing a god song communally. The verb to “move” or “dance” (*a:r-*) tends to be used in the alternative sense of “speaking” when used in reference to vocal production. Thus, to speak in the Kota language is to “move [Kota] words” (*mant a:rd*). The affinity between speaking, singing, and the movement associated with the trembling of grief, all underscore the difference between rendering a song of grief and singing a god song.

The style of rendering a song of mourning reflects to some extent the verb for “movement” associated with it. I do not wish to examine the typical musical style of mourning songs in this chapter, but a few characteristics, mentioned in passing earlier, may be repeated here: again, a limited tonal range; a tendency to stop abruptly and decisively between lines of a song; the tendency to use particular vowels (usually “a”) to intone the pitch of the musical phrases which follow it, or between phrases with a glottal stop; and the use of textual formulae (“my father” “my mother”; “one who doesn’t listen”; “sleep that knows know sleep” etc.) in conjunction with melodic refrains. Emotional rendering of a mourning song may result in the performer crying, trembling and shaking.

The old style of singing mourning songs tends to be particularly instrumental—this instrumentality is

¹²These textual themes parallel in some respects the topical segments of Russian laments, which “contain descriptions of family life or how the death occurred, or they may depict the lamenter’s grief” (Mazo 1994, 168)

possible, in part, because the ambitus is limited (the central three holes on the *kol* can be manipulated to produce the rough combination of whole and half steps present in singing); also, the punctuation of passages with intoned vowels resembles the manner in which the lowest tone on the *kol* is used to punctuate instrumental phrases. The simpler god songs can also be played on an instrument because the diatonicism is not complex. Before further consideration of the relationships between vocal and instrumental genres, it will be useful to consider another genre—one that lies at the intersection of speech, song, and crying.

Wailing at funerals, which is simply called crying (*agl*), is not considered a form of singing *per se*, but its musical qualities are nonetheless recognized. Usually it is women rather than men who wail loudly and continuously next to a corpse, sometimes physically touching it or even pinching the face. Such wailing is different from a Kota child's crying (and from what many Americans would think of as the sound of a child crying). Wailing involves some degree of tunefulness, a singing quality interspersed with momentary interruptions caused by tears, sniffing, and other physical manifestations of grief which punctuate the flow of vocalized emotion. Musicians have told me that funeral tunes and mourning songs are often melodically based on the melody of a crying person during the funeral. I have never witnessed a *kol* player attempting to musically emulate a particular person crying during a funeral, but this is apparently what happens. Mourning songs as such are not sung during a funeral. Rather the mourner composes a song sometime after the funeral (or other inspirational event), sometimes basing the melody on the contours of wailing. Wailing at funerals also shares textual characteristics with mourning songs: both use the same formulaic phrases, such as those mentioned above, and both may involve reference to happy times in the deceased's life which will no longer be possible.

It is this sort of wailing, rather than the comparatively tuneful and melodically organized mourning song *a'!!*, that scholars such as Margarita Mazo term the "lament". Certain sonic and physical characteristics of the lament, as here defined, suggest that it may serve as a useful category of performance to observe cross-culturally:

What makes lamenting recognizable across regional borders is apparently not determined solely by form, poetic text, and melody. If we consider lamenting as a performance process evolving and unfolding over time, expressive factors are as significant in defining individual laments as their poetic and melodic patterns. . . I call the total process of producing the sound utterances in lament and the general sonic procedures through which a performance unfolds intoning.

In addition to regular singing, the fabric of intoning in laments is made up of a variety of procedures and vocal gestures similar to natural sounds of weeping and crying: excited speech and exclamations, the apocope, trembling voice, audible breathing, rests filled with sobs, sighs, gasps, and so on. These vocal gestures are not considered musical features outside the context of lamenting; they are regular sonic properties of certain nonverbal, paralinguistic utterances characteristic of spontaneous expressions of emotion in everyday life. Lament intoning combines both verbal and nonverbal features of singing.

speaking, and crying, although it does not belong exclusively to any of these utterances

Some of the specific features of Kota “intoning” will be considered in a later chapter, a case study of a particular mourning song and its relationship to instrumental versions and examples of wailing. For the present purposes, I wish to note that Kotas do not, to my knowledge, give a special name to funeral wailing, but they do recognize its close affinity with the singing of mourning songs, other sorts of crying, and speaking. I would thus argue that there is a cultural category for this type of verbal performance, even if it is not linguistically marked in a simple way, and that this type of performance may be pragmatically, if cautiously described in genre terms that have universalistic overtones, as a “lament”.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

CULTURAL CORRELATES OF GENRE RELATIONSHIPS

The general question of how instrumental genres relate to vocal genres is an important one. I will address the musical specifics of these relationships in chapters seventeen and eighteen; here I will suggest that the special character of a particular genre derives, in part, from the genre's relationships in melody and performance practice to other genres. First I will address the central systematic difference between instrumental and vocal music: the apparent difference in tonal system.

THE QUESTION OF NON-DIATONICISM

Instrumental melodies are limited to some extent to the tones which may be produced on the six holed *kol*. Instrument construction is performed by sight and by reference to previous instruments; the conical bore is also fashioned by sight and by testing out the sound of the instrument. I will refer to the pitches produced by fingers over the holes beginning with that furthest from the bell (*kancar*) with the symbol π . π^0 indicates all six holes are open; π^1 indicates one finger is placed on the first hole; π^6 indicates all six holes are covered. The interval between π^6 and π^5 is usually about a minor third (hereafter the interval between π^y and π^x will be represented as π^{y-x}) but can approach as wide as a perfect fourth; often this note is given a great deal of emphasis through a strong blast of air against the reeds; consequently there is a rising (sometimes followed by falling) of pitch proportional to this blast, what I will call a "tonal envelope," ϵ . Rather than referring to the distance between the two lowest pitches as a minor or major third, I will simply call it an initial *kol* third, π_3 . The interval between any other two holes will be varieties of *kol* seconds, π_2 ; the interval created by removing two fingers will be simply called a *kol* third, π_3 ; removing three, a *kol* fourth, π_4 , and so on. Further specification of pitch relations will draw upon the combination of tablature notation and with Western fixed intervals.

The interval π^{5-3} is generally close to either a major third or a minor third. I am still unsure whether this variation depends on particular melody, instrument, genre, or village because I have not been able to adequately test these variables. When the interval is close to a minor third, the interval π^{5-4} approaches a minor second very closely, but sometimes the pitch produced by π^4 seems to lie midway between π^5 and π^3 . The minor third interval effect is produced, in part, and sometimes, by tonal envelope on π^5 . When the

interval is a major third, the intervening intervals sound much like major seconds. The interval \mathbb{H}^{3-2} tends toward a minor second when \mathbb{H}^{5-3} approaches a major third, and tends toward a slightly flat major second when \mathbb{H}^{5-3} approaches a minor third. \mathbb{H}^{2-1} and \mathbb{H}^{1-0} vary between an extremely flat minor second and a major second depending on context—but usually the intervals are very small thus giving the impression of a collapsed upper range. All varieties of *ko!* seconds tend to be smaller when the upper note acts as a neighboring tone in what appears to be an ornament. The purpose for introducing the basic system in this context is to illustrate that the *ko!* does not produce a pitch set that, as a whole, can be described as ‘diatonic’. To a certain extent the pitch set can be viewed as a “natural” product of the acoustics of the *ko!*, but, the variations in home-made reeds (and the degree of air pressure to which they are subjected), the size and fitting of bells (*kancar*) to holed pipe (*taq*), and expansion and contraction due to climate, degree of warmup, and character of the wood suggest that the regularities we find are also based on cognitive models of what the instrument should sound like.

The non-diatonicism thus stressed, it must also be noted that, particularly between \mathbb{H}^5 and \mathbb{H}^2 , a simple diatonic effect can be created without a great deal of difficulty. Why is it that I am concerned here with reference to a Western system of tonal division and representation? Because most Indian classical and folk music, theories of *srutis* and complex ornamentation notwithstanding, share with Western music concepts of consonance (like octaves, perfect fifths, perfect fourths) and a baseline division of the octave into 12 intervals (equality is not particularly necessary since all intervals are conceived in relation to a single tonic drone). This is not to say the musical systems are the same, but it does explain why the harmonium can be incorporated into varieties of Hindustani music without changing the entire tonal system, and why most melodies in Indian musics (tribal music and some forms of religious chant excluded) can be approximated with reference to static pitch places (*svara sthāna*).

Kota vocal music is roughly diatonic, nowadays. It is not possible to discover whether this diatonicism represents a historic process of slippage from a regionally based tonal system (perhaps modeled on the *ko!*) to one closely aligned with the kind of Indian music heard on the radio, in movies, and on the streets, or whether the Kotas always maintained two tonal systems, one diatonic, and one instrumentally articulated. To an extent one could argue that the two systems were not particularly distinguishable in the past, based on the fact that the pieces in both vocal repertoires that are believed to be the oldest are usually composed of, at most, four tones. As noted above, diatonic melodies of such limited ambitus fall within the range of tonal possibilities of the *ko!* without much difficulty. The more florid, modally complex, and tonally wide-ranging melodies introduced through such forms as the cinema have been incorporated into the range of Kota vocal repertoire. It is these kind of melodies that are difficult if not impossible to play on the *ko!* and which

emphasize the differences in tonal system represented by vocal and instrumental music.

Given these limitations on how vocal and instrumental repertoires can possibly relate to one another, let us examine the ways in which they actually do, and attempt to extract contextual meaning from these culturally delimited possibilities. The following points refer to the table entitled Characteristics and Relationships among Genres. My hypothesis is that melodic and stylistic aspects of genre relationships tend to underscore the contextual conditions with which they are associated.

CORRELATES OF MELODIC ISOLATION OF THE GOD TUNES

Evidence from recordings of mine (1990-92), Mandelbaum (1938), Bake (1920s), and Jairazbhoy (1970s-80s) suggest that the melodies of “god tunes” are entirely unlike Kota song melodies. God tune melodies were never derived from songs and song melodies were not based on melodies of god tunes: this fact does not merely reflect a lack of coincidence, but a lack of stylistic compatibility. God tunes tend to be longer, less symmetric, and more idiomatically instrumental than songs. But god tunes (with only a few exceptions—exceptions which prove the rule) are also melodically distinct from any other category of instrumental music.

Why might this be significant? Intergenre isolation would seem to be related to the more general set of god ceremonial ritual restrictions regarding movement, behavior, contact with outsiders, purity, and temporal control. My immediate reaction upon discovering this was to draw a comparison with the set of purity/pollution oppositions which serve as building blocks in the generation of ritual hierarchy (i.e. in the caste system, theistic pantheons, significant places) in Hinduism and related Indic religions: the god tunes can be considered the most “pure” and the funeral tunes the most “polluted”—that is, in the most general sense, the genre categories articulate fundamental oppositions in both Kota and Hindu society. The terms “purity” and “pollution” are, however, vague without reference to the varieties of activity that constitute people and substances as pure and polluted. Yet the fact that the fundamental cultural basis of genre differentiation within each medium is analogous to one of the most important set of ritual oppositions in Hinduism led me to wonder whether the analogy holds at further levels of differentiation. And if not, why not?

A TRANSACTIONAL SYSTEMS APPROACH

To address further levels of differentiation in the genre system, I would like to consider relationships of melody that are more subtle than just those that cut across parallel subgenres in god or death categories. Regarding more subtle analysis of caste as a system, I turn to transactional analysis as elaborated and

systematized by McKim Marriott. Despite the criticisms leveled at Marriott for reducing the complexity of social life and limits of human agency to what is essentially an algebra, the system does provide an alternative to the rather linear system of oppositions propounded by Dumont—one that relies heavily on the purity-pollution distinction. Marriott's system is based on the analysis of just what is transacted between members of different castes: how much, which direction, what are the moral qualities of the substances transacted (and what is their relationship with the "substance code" of the transactors), and what is the motivation behind the transactions. He poses a system, then, with four ideal relationships based on the permutations of maximum and minimum giving and receiving (++, +-, —, -+), each mapped onto one corner of a square, and argues that each of these ideal types is characteristic of one of the four varnas. Based on this transactional topology, he is able to map the transactional strategies of each caste or community in relation to the others and make further comments on aspects of rank and to an extent predict behavior.

Here I simply wish to adopt the matrix idea, in which, musically, "giving" means providing melodies for other genres and "receiving" means adopting melodies from other genres. The purpose of utilizing this particular algebra lies in the possibility of comparing the system of melodic relationships with social, temporal and spatial relationships enacted in the ritual complexes with which each genre is associated. Adopting Marriott's system simply as an algebra is of course well and good: taking the further step, however, of relating the two algebras would imply levels of relationship so abstract as to be of limited tenability. The relationship I intend is at least metaphoric; at best, I hope to show that the system as applied at an intracultural level, using a different set of variables, provides different results. That is the metaphorical application of transactional analysis is meant to illustrate a set of formal relationships which parallel those associated with caste relationships, but, in a formal and practical sense, mean something different—after all, the agents are not only people in my application of the system (or at least not directly so), but categories of practices (god ceremonial and funeral) and cultural products (melodies) as well.

I will begin by considering the melodies of the god tunes. These melodies appear to stand by themselves, neither providing the basis for melodies in other instrumental or song genres, nor borrowing significantly from them; interestingly however, the melodies of the god tunes have a degree of internal coherence—certain tunes sound very similar. Given the status of these tunes in Kota society, one might expect their social correlate to be Brahmanical. In purity/pollution terms this correlation would work. In transactional terms, however, the community which tends to minimize and tightly control both giving and receiving, adopting what Marriott calls a minimal strategy, "symmetrical non-exchange," is the Vaiśya varna. In caste relationships of exchange, sacerdotal authority is achieved through an "optimal" strategy, asymmetrical exchange through which substances are received in whole or perfect form (land, money, whole grain) and

knowledge and ceremonial blessing are distributed; temporal authority is achieved through a “maximizing” strategy, in which exchanges are many and symmetrical (foods eaten and exchanged, range of marital ties, number of deities worships).

Here, I would suggest that the “minimal” exchange of melodic content signifies the fact that the god tunes stand on their own; they occupy a rather unparalleled and exalted status in Kota society as abstract distillations of the god ceremony itself. The minimal strategies of transaction are characteristic of the god ceremony as a whole, in domains such as food consumption (limited types of food and ritual controlled means of reception, preparation and distribution), personal interaction (within the village and outside it), and use of space. The possibility of the god tunes providing melodic resources for other genres would be ritually dangerous. Indeed, I was told that even to play a tape recording of god tunes in the context of a funeral could cause blindness; Pucan expressed discontent with the fact that the Indiana University archivists copied onto a single cassette god tunes and funeral tunes from the Mandelbaum cylinder collection.

BOUNDARY STRICTURES IN PRACTICES RELATING TO "GOD" RELATED CEREMONIES

What are the limitations surrounding the performance of god tunes? God tunes are strictly limited to performance during the God ceremony and other god-related ceremonies; their performance is also limited to particular times and places during the festival: that is, their ability to cross ritual boundaries is extremely limited; more so, I will argue, than funeral tunes. During the god ceremony, the quintessential place for the performance of god tunes is the center of the village, near the temples; this spatial centrality is mirrored temporally: the density of performance of these tunes is the greatest during the middle of the ceremony. When god tunes are played outside of that central area they are either played at the site of another temple (such as the Ko-jka-l temple to Rangayno-r), or they accompany a procession or movement of a small number significant people; the procession itself either moves away from the village accompanied by instrumental music and also returns with music, or merely returns with music. God tunes never accompany the departure of people who do not then return with musical accompaniment. That is, the association between Kota villagers, their movement, the village, and god tunes provides for the maintenance of a spatially contiguous intersubjective unity.

God tunes also accompany the ritual binding of village borders during the rain ceremony. Men pray and make monetary offerings at each of the places in which god is seen to reside around the village; at each place two or three of the twelve god tunes are performed. In so doing, the Kotas ensure that the gods remain in the village and protect it; as a result of musically as well as otherwise ritually defining the sacred geography of the village, the gods are believed to provide rain. Thus it can be argued that in this ceremony too, the

performance of god tunes is associated with defining centrality, inwardness, a spatial village core.

The definition of a central spatial center is related to the more general aim in god ceremonies of several kinds of social solidarity. These have been discussed in an earlier chapter. Here, in transactional terms, I would like to stress the fact that during the god ceremony there is minimal interaction with people outside of the village—i.e. non-Kotas. Even in earlier days when Badagas and Todas used to participate in God ceremonies, their participation was extremely ritualized and controlled; no-outsider could move as freely within the village as on other days. Within the village, despite the emphasis in ritual terms on the strength of the community (especially at the village level), the way people interact that could biologically be regarded as unifying—the sexual act—is forbidden and men and women are isolated from one another. As village activity becomes ritually focused on the central temple region (thus bringing people physically closer together) the spatial and interactional practices of the *mundka-no·ns* and *munka-no·ls* become further limited and serve to isolate them from the other villagers. The *mundka-no·n* must remain apart from the others (in sleeping for instance) and for certain periods of time must not speak. The *mundka-no·l*, in villages where she must lead in the preparation of clay pots, observes similar restrictions on speaking.

Yet minimal transactions are not characteristic of the relationships between individuals of a given category. That is, among men and among women there is a significant degree of performed unity—especially through dance and collective rituals performed by all the members of a particular gender. In general, differences among individuals are played down, whereas, as in many ritual processes, the idea of categories is heightened, or as Turner put it, “*communitas* emerges where social structure is not” (1969, 126). The ritual heightening of social structure (as embodied in gender, age, status as a ritualist) is an aspect of what Turner calls “plural reflexivity” (1988, 103-6), in that by enacting processes of association and avoidance through selected media, Kota society acts as an agent upon itself, indicating internally “the identity of subject and object” (1988, 103). It is “an immense orchestration of genres in all available sensory codes” (1988, 106).

But to bring this Turnerian generalizing discussion of ritual down to a discussion of particular kinds of ritual, we may note that in the god ceremony, only particular kinds of social structural relationships are ritually heightened and only certain kinds of unity and forms of *communitas* are ritually enacted. Similarly, only certain kinds of musical genre structures are emphasized and only certain kinds of internal relationships are privileged. The isolation of melodies in the god tune genre can be compared to the limitations on social intercourse (of particular kinds) between the major divisions of Kota society: the ritual specialists and ordinary people; men and women; Kota and non-Kota. The solidarity within each of these categories, village, gender, ritual specialist, is also mirrored within the god tune genre, where, as we shall see, the tunes within the genre tend to share melodic material with one another.

CORRELATES OF MELODIC SHARING: FUNERAL TUNES

Unlike the god tune genre which is melodically isolated from all other forms of Kota music, the genre of funeral tunes overlaps melodically both with the song genre of *a-ʔ!* (mourning songs) and with the relatively spontaneous genre of lamenting. In both cases, where there is overlap, my impression is that the vocal genres are prior. In formal terms, the exchange of melodies can be described as “pessimal,” asymmetrical exchange weighted toward the receiving end. The analogy of receiving versus giving can be only to a limited extent applied at this level of detail. The more general point is that funeral tune genre boundaries are more permeable than those of god tunes, and this boundary permeability can be contrasted with god ceremony boundary maintenance in several domains of ritual practice.

It will be recalled that during the god ceremony, villagers are not supposed to leave the village, come in contact with outsiders, drink, etc. Visitors from other villages are rare and those that do come must not have come in contact with a corpse or a funeral during that month. During funerals of either type there is no restriction regarding who may be physically present and it is generally the case that outsiders attend.¹ Furthermore, relationships between the sexes are emphasized, both through the formal process of interdining and ritual sexual intercourse at the end of the dry funeral, and through the informal aspect of funerals which involves “scoping” for members of the opposite sex from other villages. To the extent an asymmetrical exchange metaphor can be applied to social activity of this kind, one may say that, in funerals, social relationships are “received” more than “given” in the sense that people arrive from other villages: traditional relationships with affinally related Kotas and economically related non-Kotas are enacted through the village’s and deceased’s family “receiving” of the traditional gifts that must be offered on the occasion of a death. These gifts are reciprocated during other funerals, but there is also a ritual meal at both green and dry funerals, which is for the benefit of all.

More generally though, I wish to emphasize the greater fluidity and array of temporal and spatial boundaries, degree and kinds of interpersonal interactions, and the categories of people who are involved in funerals, and suggest that, in contrast to the god tunes, funeral tunes, like funerals, have more fluid boundaries (here, boundaries of performance and musical content).

The funeral tunes themselves vary in their contextual restrictions, and this calls for making more subtle the genre and subgenre divisions. I will begin at a broad level, with the performance of the macro genre.

¹Any restriction on attendance remains on the part of the attendee—i.e. if an individual must attend another function that requires not having come into contact with a corpse or funeral proceedings, that person will avoid crossing the village border where a funeral has taken place.

TA·V KOLŠ

Within the macro category, any funeral tune may be played virtually at any time from the moment when the death is made known until after the funeral pyre is lit; during the dry funeral, the performance of particular funeral tunes continues after the pyre is lit, although the general ambient funeral music ends after the first night is spent sleeping at the dry funeral ground and the *na-r gu-c kol* is played. Thus funeral tunes are less specifically time-bound within a funerary context than are god tunes. Unlike the association between god tunes and a spatio-temporal focus on centrality in the god ceremony, the performance of funeral tunes spans the duration of a funeral: performance of funeral tunes begins earlier in the proceedings (than do god tunes in the god ceremony) and continues until an action constitutes a sort of ending (such as lighting the funeral pyre during the green funeral).

Both god and funeral tunes are of course limited contextually to their respectively named contexts, but the temporal occurrence of both of these kinds of ceremonies is qualitatively different in the way they divide up the year. Green funerals occur, obviously, whenever someone dies. Thus the performance of funeral music can take place a variable number of days during the year: the dates on which funeral music may be heard or performed cannot be predicted. The only times funeral tunes will not be performed, on the occasions of the death of an adult, are during the god ceremony.² The god ceremony and related ceremonies such as that for rain occur at roughly the same time each year and are calculated in relation to natural signs—phases of the moon. The only conditional aspect of god ceremonies is the previous performance of the dry funeral that year (if there had been deaths that year)—and that, after all, is not an uncontrollable conditionality. The dry funeral is of course an example of a funeral context which is planned and which does occur at the same time of the year each year it is performed, but its performance is predicated on the fact that there were deaths in that particular year. To reiterate the general point, the god ceremonies, and thus the music associated with them, are more carefully and consistently delimited with respect to the times they occur during the year: within the respective ceremonies, the performance of god tunes is more carefully delimited than the performance of funeral tunes.

Combining both the notions of calendrical cycle and internal differentiation of ritual duration, one could say that god ceremonies constitute a “god” temporality characterized by regularity, boundedness, and precise delimitation. Green funerals constitute a “death” temporality characterized by irregularity, loose boundedness, and expansion or bleeding (on the analogy of the manner in which a colored liquid seeps

²The funeral will be attenuated, music will not be performed, and only a few people will participate. See, for example, the description of the Poga-r god ceremony as narrated by a *mundka-no-n* in the appendix.

outward into a white cotton cloth). Dry funerals constitute a temporality that draws upon both god and death temporalities.

KE-R KOŁS AND SPECIFIC RITUAL TUNES

Within the genre of funeral tunes there are, as I have mentioned, general ambient tunes and tunes associated with particular rituals. It turns out that the most important tunes associated with carrying a corpse from one place to another, lighting the bier, and so forth tend to be quite similar in most of the villages. These particular ritual tunes are not based on song melodies, although one phrase of the fire lighting tune does resemble a phrase of “Mathi,” a popular mourning song. The ambient tunes, which may include *ke-r kołs*, are those which may be based on or inspired by the melody of a mourning song or actual lamentation.³ A *ke-r koł* may travel from village to village, but its association with a particular village may remain strong—particularly if it is based on a song about a particular buffalo or a particular deceased Kota. In general, the melodies of funeral tunes travel from village to village more freely, or rather more commonly, than those of god tunes—and they tend to remain attached to the same activities or the same songs or stories. This is to be expected because funerals are intervillage events and god ceremonies generally are not.

Another important correlate should be noted here, one that may perhaps attenuate my characterization of god tune isolation as a result of their “godness”: tunes attached to particular rituals or stories (that are not narrated through singing) tend not to be related melodically to particular songs; thus god tunes, which are statistically more ritual-specific or story-specific than funeral tunes would logically be more isolated from songs than would funeral tunes, many of which are not attached to particular rituals or particular performance times. Yet this correlation supports another hypothesis, that melodic isolation of a tune is related to a greater degree of performance isolation—i.e. stronger association between particular time and place.

CORRELATES OF MELODY AND CONTEXT IN SONG GENRES

One important question raised by the correlation of god ceremonies and funerals with musical characteristics and performance practices of their respective instrumental genres is why does the same close correlation not hold with respect to song genres. Beyond this, why do god tunes not draw upon melodies from god songs while funeral tunes do draw upon melodies of mourning songs?

I believe we may extend the contextual argument I began to develop above to explain this apparent

³Incidentally, the lamentation or mourning song need not be Kota in origin. At least one mourning song is believed to be Toda in origin and there are mourning songs sung in the Badaga language.

paradox—now reintroducing the idea of the context “sticking” to the genre as an explanatory tool. The contexts and performance practices of god songs differ from god tunes in several ways. First, god tunes are sung by women; god songs are performed by men. Second, performances of god songs constitute symbolic completions of ritual units rather than symbolic centers, as do god tunes. Third, god songs may be performed during god ceremonies and dry funerals, both near the temples (during god ceremonies and dry funerals) and on the *kava-lis* (during the dry funerals). Their performance combines both music and dance and seldom involves other non-dance rituals. And, unlike god tunes, which belong to a particular village and are performed by men, all of whom were born into a patrilineage rooted in a particular village (one of the characteristics of god ceremony “unity”), god songs involve women who may have married into the village from different villages; god song performance instantiates a unity through participation of family ties to other villages

The performance of god songs is not limited to particular times and places, except within the confines of a particular Kota ceremony—that is, there is no restriction on singing god songs at non-Kota temples or at municipal or other functions where tribal performance is “on display.”⁴ The style of god songs and the manner in which they are performed closely resembles the style of women’s singing associated with devotion and entertainment among plains Hindus—a genre called *kummi*. Although the god song genre comprises all songs that are textually in some way devoted to god, the god songs *par excellence* are those performed communally in conjunction with these circle dances. The tonal system associated with these songs is diatonic.

In short, the god songs do what the god tunes do not or should not: they cross boundaries of god and death ritual categories; more broadly speaking, they are not as fixed temporally or spatially, and they do not strongly point to particular activities which are non-musical. Exclusive contextual associations (i.e. those aspects or qualities of “god” and “death” which are mutually exclusive) do not stick to god songs to the extent they stick to funeral or god tunes. Thus I would suggest that a melodic similarity between god songs and god tunes does not exist because such a relationship would provide a conduit for the melodic conveyance of god tune ritual associations into a funerary context and into non-ritual contexts in which the variables of

⁴God tunes are performed only for specific non-Kota temples; outside the Kota village, however, the subrepertoire of god tunes would be limited to pieces set to *kola! da-k*. Kotas do not ordinarily play god tunes for secular occasions; but of course they have played them for me informally, and for Mandelbaum and Jairazbhoy for the purposes of recording. If, hypothetically, Kotas were asked to play god tunes for a celebration in Ooty, it is possible that they would agree; but before that, without a doubt, a council meeting would be held, and significant debate would ensue. The question is moot, however, because outsiders would not know to ask for such pieces, and, since god tunes do not accompany dance pieces they would be less festive in the context of public display. The point is, given the complexity of actual situations in which Kota music is performed, both inside and outside the village, Kotas choose to confine the performance of god tunes to particular times and places and choose to perform dance tunes and god songs in a greater variety of contexts.

purity and pollution, insider-outsider, time-place and gender could not be controlled.

MEANING ENCODED IN THE STRUCTURE OF PERFORMANCE

But the mere fact that god songs do not encode the same qualities of 'godness' as do god tunes does not mean the god songs are not still thematically related to the Kota cultural category of divinity: God songs encode a divine theme in their performance—one that extends beyond the textual—and this is traced out in the form of a circle, and through the simultaneous performance of like activities (the dance) among all women; that is, I suggest that some of the contextual significance of the genre lies in the structure of musical performance. Simultaneity and circular dancing cannot be said to mean anything in isolation, but only in contrast to other categories and styles of performance. We find such contrast in the performance of mourning songs, and in lamentation.

Just as god ceremonies efface individual differences within a category of people (here, women) and emphasize differences between categories of people (men and women, ritualists and ordinary people), funeral ceremonies, we have seen, thematically articulate the individual identity of the deceased (as well as categories of people). Such individual identity is further supported by the performance of mourning songs or lamentation by an individual mourner about an individual mourned. God song performances enact perfect forms: circles, a few simple dance movements, rhythmic coordination. Mourning song performance involves idiosyncratic aspects of paramusical expression: crying, trembling, bodily expressions of grief, non-metric or loosely metered melodic phrases.

WHY ARE MELODIES OF MOURNING SONGS RELATED TO THOSE OF FUNERAL TUNES?

To continue now, why are melodies of mourning songs and laments related to funeral tunes given that god songs and god tunes are not melodically related? I would suggest that the interrelationship ties in with the funerary emphasis on two kinds of memory: the memory of the individual deceased and collective memory as embodied in the notion of "ancestors." The performance of a particular tune whose melody is drawn from a particular song can have several effects on the listener. To a person who knows the original song (if there is a single origin of the melody), the tune may recall the text of the song, and the scene created by that text (which may include reference to yet another deceased, or to the ancestors, etc.), as well as, possibly, the funeral with which the song was originally associated (either through a lament, or through reference after the funeral was completed and the song composed). To a person who may not know the original song, *per se*, the melody is likely to be familiar at some level and thus to evoke a response of recognition and generalized association

with the event of death. In general, the fact that melodies float from lament to mourning song, mourning song to mourning song and mourning song to death tune, provides, through a sort of inter-referentiality, a general appearance of wholeness and compactness to the realm of funeral-related music.

Just as the performance of god songs is less rigorously delimited than that of god tunes, so too is the performance of mourning songs less restricted than that of funeral tunes. The ways in which these lack of limitations work are significantly different. God songs, in ritual contexts, fulfill specific ritual roles and are temporally specified—although these roles and times are different from those of god tunes, their regulation in this way is in keeping with “god temporality”; outside of ritual contexts they are virtually unrestricted—i.e. they cannot do any harm by virtue of their ritual connotations. Mourning songs, *a:tl*, on the other hand, have no ritual context. They appear to be entirely non-ritual in nature, except in their cathartic role perhaps in helping an individual work through his or her grief. Apparently the mourning songs were one of the genres sung when young unmarried and married men and women would gather at the “place house” (*ert pay*)—comparable to the youth dormitory of other Indian tribal societies—to sing songs, tell stories, experiment sexually, and so forth. No doubt these songs were associated with a variety of informal story-telling contexts, contexts which have substantially died out nowadays (as institutions at least). Now, as I have mentioned, mourning songs are sung predominantly (but not exclusively) by women over the age of sixty in informal social gatherings, at the houses of family or friends. Note that the lack of temporal specificity in performance is also matched by lack of spatial prescription: God songs, though they may be performed almost anywhere, are still associated with conventional places, the most important of which is the temple area (*paca:l*).

*a:tl*s have an entertainment function and aesthetic value in addition to a memorial function of reminding people of the deceased; the entertainment aspect is primary with regard to very old songs referring to deceased people no living person could possibly have known; memory and woeful emotion is obviously more important in songs that refer to relatively recent deaths. In any case, mourning songs partake of “death temporality” in their lack of spatiotemporal fixidity and in their tendency in fact to stretch out the associations of death to times and places which are wholly unrelated to funerals or death. This is one aspect of what I called “bleeding” above. Bleeding is somewhat like “the context sticks to the genre” but it goes beyond this. Part of the bleeding associated with the temporality of death is *ke:r*, the lasting effects of death—on the village, the period between two crescent moons, and Kota people. The extension of mourning restrictions on spouse and kin beyond the funeral itself, as well as the incapacity of the entire village which once called for the celebration of the dry funeral, all are examples of how the time of death bleeds into other times without the green funeral or dry funeral actually encompassing those times. Memory of the deceased is an aspect of

death which is for the most part unrelated to the notion of defilement by the corpse; memory can also be something sweet, something beautiful. The performance of mourning songs does not call forth the funeral as a ritual, as does the performance of funeral tunes; it recalls the person named in the song and the process of lamentation.

One may argue that god songs also “bleed” the quality of god ceremonies or divinity into other activities. This argument does in one sense militate against the temporality definitions I have devised. Yet two points must be mentioned, one regarding the immanence of divinity and the other regarding the ritual function of god songs. God is recognized in everyday activities: recall, for example, the descriptions of R. Mathi’s mentioning the name of god before serving food; implicitly the presence of god is also recognized during the practice of death ceremonies. Each time a Kota bows down or prostrates in deference there is some resonance of divine worship involved, even when the object of such deference is a corpse or the funeral ground.

One must distinguish between a tacit worshipful attitude, which is embodied in everyday practice and in all types of rituals (funerals, marriages, coming of age ceremonies), and the times and places set aside for major rituals classified in the “god” category (*devr, pabm, may ca:tm* [rain ceremony]). These times and places are ritually bound. Everyday activities which involve reference to god are regular, that is, they form part of a diurnal cycle, but they are not bundled together and carefully set aside within a calendrical cycle. God songs, as sung on an everyday or anyday informal basis constitute part of everyday practice involving god. God songs as parts of rituals constitute part of the actual binding process in setting apart ritual units from one another. Thus god songs, inasmuch as they “function” primarily as anything, can be said to function as “binders” and not “bleeders.”

A final observation on a quality of mourning songs which makes them distinct from god songs: the singing of mourning songs is a type of vocal performance which Kotas recognize to be very old and characteristically Kota in style. Although Kotas claim god songs to be their “own,” in the sense that these are indigenous and not copied, they also recognize a strong continuity between their god songs and *bhajan* and *kummi* songs sung by Tamil people on the plains. In practice, *bhajans* of all kinds are god songs; Kota, Tamil and other language songs can be sung in the same god-song singing sessions.

In a sense, then, the vocal genre of mourning songs is stylistically marked as ‘Kota’ to a greater extent than is that of god songs.. Mourning songs are also more instrumental sounding; this is in keeping with the uniquely Kota (or more broadly, Nilgiri tribal) style of instrumental music-making and the emphasis on instrumental music Kotas place in their self-construction as a community and as a tribe, distinct from plains people.

To summarize why mourning songs and death tunes may share melodies we note three points: 1) The

relationship is in accordance with the general associations of death to bleed beyond the funeral context; in this case, mourning songs and related funeral tunes serve as performative units to encode individual memory 2) Mourning songs, because of their vocal medium, do not carry death pollution or the constitute the announcement of death *per se*, as do funeral tunes 3) The degree to which mourning songs' associations with death might not be appropriate for festive occasions is mitigated by the fact that mourning songs are not associated with any fixed ritual occasions; that is, god tunes are required in god ceremonies and dry funerals and thus are comparatively neutral, ritually speaking; mourning songs do not form a part of god ceremonies, so the compatibility is not an issue—although it would be considered inappropriate to sing mourning songs during the god ceremony.

DANCE TUNES

The one genre I have not yet considered is that of dance tunes. Thus far I have been developing a theory of melodic interrelationship based on the nature of the ritual residue that attaches to musical items within a genre. I suggested that god tunes and funeral tunes are associated with significant enough qualities of “god” and “death” that they should not be performed in rituals classified in the opposing category. Songs, however, do not bear the burden of carrying dangerously divine or pollutingly funereal qualities, and are thus less limited in their potential and actual performance contexts. Dance tunes fit well within the system of relations I have outlined. Since they are performed in all three major context types, god, green funeral, and dry funeral, one would expect that dance tune melodies should not overlap with those of funeral tunes or god tunes; this is of course the case; the distinctness of the repertoires is also heightened by factors such as tempo, *da·k*, and the presence of dance itself.

Because dance tunes can be performed outside the confines of a Kota village, for virtually any function at any time (although controversy would ensue as to their suitability for a funeral), one would expect that significant qualities do not attach to dance tunes. This appears to be true, although the argument must be made on a slightly more subtle level. There are a set of dance tunes associated exclusively with the god ceremony, “god dances,” which must be performed in conjunction with dance in the central temple area; certain of these have specific moments in which they must be played (see appendices), but they may be also repeated at will at other times while dancing takes place on the *paca·l* (the grassy area near the temple). Those dance pieces which may be played for the dances in the *gagva·l* are of more generic quality, and as mentioned before, are less elaborate than the god dance tunes. *Gagva·l* dance tunes are also those played for funerals or for miscellaneous functions outside the Kota community. God dance tunes, like god tunes, are

reserved. Velu mentioned to Mandelbaum that dances around the bier were “sad dances” but it is not clear whether there was ever a sub-repertoire of funeral dances comparable to the subrepertoire of god dances; my understanding of the system at present is that there is not.

Dance tunes share melodic content with two sources: god songs and dance tunes of other tribes. In the case of god songs, the sharing of melody appears to go in both directions (maximal, symmetric exchange). A dance tune may be created based on the melody of an existing or newly created god song, providing the melody is simple enough; songs may also be composed on the melodies of dance tunes, which are often simple and short, well suited to simple metrical and strophic structure of god songs. I know of two acknowledged instances in which dance tunes have been adopted from non-Kota tribal sources; in both cases, the communities that provided the source material (Kurumbas and Uralis) are generally feared and avoided. Thus the negative qualities that are ordinarily associated with these communities (lustfulness, evil, black magic) are clearly not seen to adhere to their musical products, or at least to their dance tunes. Nor is the performance of these tunes dangerous even in the most sacred and protected moments of the god ceremony—the evening dances when outsiders are generally forbidden.

God songs are a compatible source for dance tune melodies on a number of fronts: contextually, they, like dance tunes, cross the boundaries of god and dry funeral ceremonies, thus the presence of melodies from one context is not going to be inappropriate in an abstract sense in either type of ceremony; also like dance tunes, god songs may be performed in a variety of non-Kota or extravillage contexts. Both god songs and dance tunes also draw material from and are closely related to non-Kota musical forms and melodies: god songs are stylistically related to a wide range of South Indian song traditions; dance tunes and the dances which they accompany are related in style with other Nilgiri tribal traditions. On the musical front, god songs and dance tunes share an emphasis on simple, short tunes in simple meters, and the kinetic element of dance. It would not be impossible for some examples of *a:!!* to be rendered as a dance tune, nor would it be impossible for some *a:!!s* to be rendered collectively by a group of dancing women, because the genre category encompasses a variety of musical possibilities; however, such performance would certainly be unseemly and I have never observed anyone try to do such a thing, even playfully.

BOUNDARIES, RULES, AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF PRACTICE

These two chapters have characterized central features of musical and ritual performance categories and drawn attention to the treatment of boundaries. I chose to call the categories of musical pieces *genres* to highlight the ways in which questions of coherence and meaning in Kota music may find parallel in other

musical and cultural traditions. Through this naming strategy I have also attempted to draw an analogy between a literary critical methodology for genre analysis—one that follows, in part, from Rosemarin's argument that genre definition is not an ontological given—and a set of methodologies from anthropology, musicology and folkloristics, all of which attempt to use cultural categories and collections of actual practices to mutually inform and challenge one another as coherent formations.

An important variable in these analyses has been the nature of agency. When Micznik or Rosemarin discuss the expressive or connotative use of genre to extend or broaden the understanding of a work of art, they refer to the artist's intention, the critic's insight at historical remove, or both. When Ramanujan refers to *akam* and *puram*, he does not assume these ancient genre appellations are conscious in the minds of storytellers, but rather suggests that a set of coherent associations historically remains within the broadly construed categories of domestic performances and public performances, and that the analytical categories (or "theoretical genres") of *akam* and *puram* developed in ancient Tamil literature can be fruitfully employed to explain the ways in which performance style, narrative imagery, gender, and story line tend to hang together in modern-day performances.

Marriott uses classical categories of people, value, and substance in a system of Hindu moral-economic order to create a matrix of possibilities, actual and potential, through which the regularity of relationships between categories, as they are enacted, can be observed and explained. Agency here appears to reside with the actors in that each *varṇa* is shown to adopt a particular "strategy"; and yet, it is Marriott himself who must choose a set of categories, and a methodology of metaphoric interpretation of these categories, that makes the metasystem appear to "work."

I have attempted to take a set of broad categories that Kotas apply most consistently to ritual behavior, "god" and "death"—the simplest application of which are observable in the names of the most culturally elaborated ceremonies in Kota culture, literally "god," "green death," and "dry death"—and discover what happens when we consider the constituent activities as meaningfully patterned, and the named categories of musical pieces as coherent "genres" whose definition may not be purely musical.

Beginning with the genres as already constituted culturally, I attempted to discover all the ways in which each genre could be considered similar to and different from all the others. What were the distinctions based on rules (e.g. god tunes should not be played at funerals) and what were those that were articulated clearly in practice (e.g. melodic relationships)? To what extent, then, could the relationships of musical genre be considered particular manifestations of the relationships of patterned practice associated with the ritual categories from which they derived?

It has been my intention to show that, in fact, musical practice and named ("god ceremony") or

contextual (i.e. defined by such things as time or place) categories for ritual performance operate together in fairly consistent ways; as such, musical systems provide a significant and unique window into some of the formal aspects of the relationship between cognition and practice in Kota culture.

The question of agency is complex in Kota musical and ritual systems. The interplay of musical genres, through the medium of melody for instance, depends on will of an individual composer. However, certain kinds of musical pieces are not attributed to “composers” in the Western sense. God tunes, for instance, are believed to have issued spontaneously from the mouths of possessed *te-rka-rms*, or to have been divinely inspired through dreams. Some funeral tunes are believed to have been taught to the Kotas by ancestors. Many of the tunes simply exist as artifacts passed down from the misty past. Agency may be more fruitfully noted not only in the individuals who composed pieces, but in the present-day enactors and interpreters of rituals and music; in this study, Pucan and Raman have been important agents in the creation of genre meaning.

I began this discussion by observing that one of the more interesting areas of analysis lies at boundaries of genres and rituals. One approach to these boundaries has been to consider what the boundaries can possibly be. God tunes, for example, do not seamlessly merge with other genres through, for example, the sharing of melody. However, there is one special tune, the coin removing tune, which not only crosses the boundary, but actually recognizes no boundary: that is, it is no less a god tune by virtue of association with dancing and with sadness. The coin removing tune is no less a dance tune, even though it is associated with sadness and a ritual. There are other pieces which exhibit such characteristics: in all cases, the exception proves the rule, the violation of boundaries indicates a special case; the “specialness” always points to the system of signification from which it is exceptional.

Another boundary crossing is worthy of mention here. I mentioned that god tunes and funeral tunes should never mix: yet one piece in *Kolme-l* is almost identical in both repertoires. One of the names of this piece is the “sacrificial grain keeping tune;” during one of the most important nights of the god ceremony, millet and stew are offered first to the gods and then distributed to the rest of the people; a similar ritual is conducted at the dry funeral ground. The similarity in melody signifies at least two things: one is that the ritual is conceptualized in unitary terms (there is some question in my mind still whether the food is offered to the ancestors, the gods, or both at the dry funeral)—that is, the “food offeringness” as a quality attaches abstractly to the melody; the other is that the dry funeral represents a transition from an annual time cycle which is characterized by *ke-r*, the influence of death that bleeds into time and space, to one that ends death, signals rebirth, and is suitable for the celebration of divinity; in many ways, as we have seen and as can be observed in viewing the outlines and charts summarizing the ritual activities of the dry funeral, the dry funeral

partakes of both funerary and divine themes in its performance, the divine increasing in importance as the ceremony unfolds. That is, the partially divine quality of the dry funeral, particularly with regard to final public feast, is signified musically through reference to melodic material of the “god tune” genre.

Knowledge of the system and of subtle melodic details is necessary in order for a musician to carry out his ritual role properly. I was not able to observe a god ceremony and a dry funeral celebrated in the same village so it was not possible for me to observe whether the system in practice operates in the manner it was described. Pucan told me that musicians with relative inexperience or ability would perform one and the same food offering tune, whether for the dry funeral or the god ceremony. But according to Pucan, the two tunes are supposed to be slightly different because one belongs to the funeral category and one belongs to the god category. Through observing practice, the god ceremony in Kolme-l and the dry funeral in Me-na-r, I was at least able to confirm that the tunes were melodically close to one another.

What does this indicate regarding genre definition? It tells us that the idea of a context “sticking” to a musical product operates at more than one level and that the degree to which one level or the other (or both) comes forth musically (or interpretively) depends on the depth of knowledge the agents in this semiotic system possess. The two levels here are those of the genre, “funeral” or “god,” and individual melody; corresponding to this are the levels of ceremony as a whole and individual ritual component. These two chapters have focused primarily on genre level musical signification; ritual-level signification will be addressed analytically in the musical discussion of instrumental pieces in chapter eighteen.

I have focused primarily on two of the three approaches to genre outlined in the introduction to part III: the “concept sticks to the genre approach” and the “emic genre as central cultural category.” This focus is result of the nature and diversity of data represented in Kota musical culture. The ‘meaning’ as encoded in the structure of musical performance requires a special kind of differentiation which is not widely exhibited in Kota culture. In chapter six, I considered the degree to which the structure of musical performance could be said to articulate significant differences in status among musicians or performers and concluded that largely it could not.

In the preceding two chapters I have suggested that the structure of musical performance is only relevant in underscoring contextual meaning if contrastive structures exist and underscore contrastive meanings. The principle is of course a simple one, and forms the basis of phonemics as distinct from phonetics in linguistics. For the most part, the structure of musical performance of god tunes and funeral tunes is not significantly different—the same ensembles are involved; whether the musicians are sitting, standing, walking, or performing at a particular moment is dependent on the individual rituals or performance settings rather than the macro category of god and death or even the microcategories of particular ceremonies.

I have found only one historical example which suggests that the structure of instrumental musical performance can be contextually significant in any more than a trivial way (i.e. the structure of circle dancing associated with the performance of dance music). Sulli mentioned a practice of dancing in concentric circles during the Kolme-l performance of the festival *pabm*. I mentioned *pabm* earlier as a ceremony participants consciously interpret as demonstrating the unity of the Kota tribe—it is in a sense a rarified form of one aspect of the god ceremony. All day the men play a ritual game called *pu!*, and at night, all Kotas eat a small amount of food off the same plate in every one of each others' houses in the village. For all other festivals, dancing takes place men first, women second. Only on this occasion, Sulli explained, did men and women dance in concentric circles, simultaneously. The symbolism of unity through simultaneous dancing, in contrast with the usual practice of dancing in sequence seems fairly transparent given the other activities that occur during the festival. I did not, unfortunately, witness the dancing portion of *pabm* at Kolme-l and am therefore unable to confirm the existence of concentric circular dancing today, or to solicit an interpretation of it. In Me-na-r, where I was present for *pabm*, no such concentric dancing took place; no one in Kolme-l informed me that dancing would be different for *pabm*. Since Duryodana was indefatigable in drawing my attention to important or unusual cultural phenomena, I would expect him to have told me about this unusual performance style. At best (i.e. without assessing the truth value of Sulli's description), Sulli's description may serve as an example of a cultural possibility in which elaboration of a ritual theme extends into the structure of musical/dance performance.

Unlike instrumental music, at least in most cases, god songs and mourning songs are significantly contrastive in virtually all aspects of performance; furthermore, the ways in which the performances contrast in formal descriptive terms are iconic of the abstract moral/cosmological principles I have been arguing for in relation to the cultural categories of god and death. To review: the enaction of perfect forms—the performance of circular dances in synchrony accompanied by metrical hand clapping—emphasizes the sense of wholeness and unity characteristic of god ceremonies in general. The solo performance style of mourning songs, idiosyncratic, metrically irregular, and halting, underscores the “death” ritual emphasis on individuals: mourners of various categories, and especially, the deceased.

As elements in a semiotic system, instrumental and vocal genres signify through different means, with different emphases, and in different styles. Context “attaches” in various ways more rigorously to instrumental music than to vocal music, to “god” and “death” tunes more than to dance tunes. The structure of musical performance is meaningful only at a very general and simple level, and is relatively more important in vocal genres than in instrumental genres. The value of emic genre as central cultural category is important in all of the genres I have discussed. The one genre that exists outside the ceremonial nomenclature is that of

dance tunes; but within the dance tune genre, we have seen, there is a level of differentiation which serves to distinguish and privilege the category of “god”: the longer, rarer, and more “interesting” dance melodies are reserved for performance in front of the temples and are explicitly forbidden for performance at other festivals, funerals, or the less divinely charged ground of the gagva-l.

The following chapters will further serve to define and contrast the generic affiliation and character of musical pieces. Explicit associations will be addressed in the next chapter, “the narrative system,” through an examination of stories.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE NARRATIVE SYSTEM

In this chapter I analyze the content of narratives that contribute to creating meaning in Kota musical traditions. The most important narrative contributions in the realm of instrumental music are those connected with the twelve *devr kol*s “god tunes.” Since many god tunes are associated with origin stories or rituals (sometimes moribund ones), the performance of god tunes calls forth these extramusical associations in the minds of knowledgeable listeners. Musicians such as Pucan teach musical pieces in conjunction with the relevant narratives; musicians and non-musicians tell the stories, either in the context of performing the tunes, or in other, less formalized contexts. Paramusical storytelling, it will be recalled, is also necessary to the complete transmission of mourning songs, *a:tl*, because the texts of these songs are often too fragmentary to present an entire story.

Names are one of the means through which each *devr kol* comes to recall a particular context, story or bit of Kota history—or a deity—especially when the original practice which gave rise to an association has been lost. Knowledge of these *kol*s and their stories is rather esoteric and for this reason it was difficult to cross-check some details; the details are probably not as important as the overall story or theme—the same basic themes reappear in different stories (sometimes connected with music, sometimes not) in each village. Mandelbaum collected stories associated with musical pieces as well; these are related either in theme or content to the stories I collected. Some of Mandelbaum’s stories appear to be recombinations of story fragments that appear elsewhere (in my notes and in Emeneau’s *Kota Texts*) separately from one another, and sometimes unconnected with musical pieces. Such variation suggests that the thematic significance of the god tunes is not limited to a fixed set of stories that happen to appear related, but is rather based on a set of cultural ideas of what sort of meanings should be associated with god tunes—a set of ideas that is generative rather than delimiting.

God tunes are “meaningful” to Kotas in different degrees—not so much in different ways. A few Kota men and probably even fewer, if any, Kota women recognize each tune, know one or more alternate names for it, and know whatever story may be connected with it. More Kotas know that the tunes have names, and know some of the names, but do not know which tune is which—they may or may not know any extramusical associations. Finally some people may or may not recognize that tunes are god tunes by listening, but know

that such a repertoire exists and know, because of the performance context, when the tunes are being performed. To them, the tunes are simply associated in some way with the gods.

I will focus here on the specific stories connected with particular musical pieces, first tunes in the god category, and then Kota songs of all genres; Kota death tunes have narrative significance primarily in connection with the songs (if any) from which they derive. What I have called the “narrative system” allows particular pieces to “encode” not only particular stories, but a set of moral qualities—qualities which emerge when all the stories associated with a given genre are examined. Put in another way, the content of a particular narrative “sticks” to a particular musical piece; the meaning, however, emerges when individual stories are viewed in relationship to the others associated with the genre as a whole.

Summaries of the god ceremony, and the dry funeral were presented in chapter nine, section two as were the arguments concerning centripetal and centrifugal ritual movement. Connected to the idea of centripetal movement in the god ceremony is a more general notion of “returning to the whole” as James Fernandez put it (1986, 188-213); like revitalization movements and “perhaps all religions” god ceremonies in Kota culture appear to be “fundamentally interested in restoring the relatedness of things” (1986, 191). I have been arguing that the Kota cultural categories of god and death are based on ritual complexes, or “ceremonies.” Here I would like to reiterate that practical groupings (a set of ritual practices in a ceremony, a set of ritual sites in a procession, a sequential set of musical pieces) are classificatory systems articulated in practice: by virtue of such grouping, the constituent elements are brought into meaningful relation with one another. This is one reason we may call the god tunes a “genre” even though they share much stylistically (although not in specific melodic content) with funeral tunes.

DEVĀ KOLĀ #1

The longest and decidedly most important god tune is called the *o-la-gu-c kol* or *gury terdd kol* “temple opening” tune. It is used during the annual ceremony of opening the three Kota temples and during other rituals associated with this act. Although the opening of the temple remains one of the central features of the god ceremony, many activities that once accompanied it have been abbreviated. For example, the *mundka-no-n*s throw grass onto the roof of the temple to suggest symbolically the ancient practice of rebuilding the temple each year. The “temple opening tune,” which is performed to call god regardless of whether or not the temple is directly involved, is in a sense the hypostasis of divine music. As such, this tune also constitutes a necessary beginning of several kinds and sections of god ceremonies (the god ceremony proper, the ceremony for the god Rangayno-r, and the rain ceremony).

DEVĀ KOL#2

Some of the *devr kol*s “god tunes” can be characterized as such because they are literally named after deities. The origin of the shortest such tune, the *ni-lgiri co-yṁ kol* “Nilgiri god tune” is obscure—as is knowledge concerning the deity. According to the late Mr. Valmand Kamatn of Kolme-l, a former *mundka-no-n*, the “Nilgiri god” is a primordial Nilgiri divinity who resides in a place called *talko-r*¹ at the top of a hill where buffaloes were tended (*mala-r impayṭ*). After some unspecified conflict or ritual misconduct the deity moved to Rangasami Peak.

The *ayno-r mundka-no-n* (the ritual leader for worship of the “father god”) of Kina-r village recalled a legend in which the Nilgiri *co-yṁ* revealed himself to a Kota and an Irula who were walking together. Both Kotas and Irulas began to worship the Nilgiri god in that same spot until some quarrel separated them—the Irulas began to worship on Rangasami Peak and the Kotas near their village—both at the same time of year (May). The Irulas are priests for “Nilgiri Ranga,” the deity of Rangasami peak.²

It appears there is some identity between “Rangasami” worshiped by the Irulas and “Nilgiri God” of the

¹ *talko-r* (also *talkavr* and *talkur*) is a place near Me-na-r village that lies along the route to the Kota land of the dead (located near the Toda land of the dead, near Mukurthy Peak; See Emeneau 1944, II:195). It is the site at which the culture hero *Koṭe-rveyki-n* was said to have shot an arrow into a stone and released a spring. A version of this story, recorded by Emeneau in the 1930s (1944, I:137) is also told today, and is preserved in a well known mourning song.

² Zvelebil provides an account in which two Irula brothers quarreled and parted. The next day when they met, the older brother asked what the younger had eaten. Both claimed to have eaten fruit and milk, but in fact the older had eaten meat. They quarreled again and vomited to prove what they had eaten. Through magic of the older brother, the younger vomited meat. He was sent to settle in Karamadai on the plains and the older brother went to settle on Rangasami peak. The account continues to relate how the divinity of each brother was discovered. What is significant here is the association of the Karamadai deity and Rangasami as brothers (Zvelebil 1988 137-38).

The Karamadai temple is now considered Tamil Vaisnava (i.e. Hindu), but an Irula priest also plays a role in *pūja*, the details of which I do not know. Zvelebil reports, misinterpreting Emeneau somewhat, “Kotas worship the god at Karamadai in the Vaisnava temple there including him in a prayer which is said by the Kota priest and the diviner in the field before they begin to plow. . . .” At the time of Emeneau’s research, the prayers including the names of older Kota gods were apparently extended to include the newly arrived Karamadai gods. The Kotas used to visit Karamadai and participate in the festival there—after bringing the god(s) to Kolme-l they no longer actually went to Karamadai. Zvelebil identifies *Beṭdamn* “peak goddess,” the goddess included in the “new” Kolme-l trinity, with *Raṅgamma boṭu* “Ranga mother peak.” Although there was reluctance to admit the Karamadai gods into Kolme-l village, there was and is a belief that the deity in Karamadai was originally a tribal one. A Kota origin story for the temple (provided by K. Pucan) is similar to the one reported by Zvelebil (1979 III:137)—but the protagonists are a Kota and a Kurumba.

If the Irula story of two brothers seems merely a transformation of the Kota story of a Kota and an Irula (the Kina-r *mundka-no-n*’s story) the Kota Nilgiri *co-yṁ* may actually be the deity now called Rangasami (or Rangasvami, Ranganathan, etc.). This conjecture is also supported by Emeneau’s story of *koṭe-rveyk* and *maṭe-rveyk*, culture heroes and best friends who have been memorialized (and apotheosized) in stones on hills near Kina-r village and Me-na-r village (*talko-r*—see previous footnote) respectively. A variation on this story, found today, maintains that both sites are parts of the same deified man—the head near Me-na-r (thus justifying the *tal* morpheme of *talko-r*, meaning head) and the rest of the body near Kina-r.

Kotas.³ Though Kotas from Kina-r village and Porga-r village worship at and attend Rangasami festivals it is doubtful that the deity is popularly identified with their own Nilgiri co-ym. The location of the “original” Nilgiri God (i.e. of the origin stories) was probably the environs of Kina-r village (rather than near other Kota villages) because this village is relatively near Rangasami Peak. Today a small shrine for Nilgiri God stands just at the border of Kina-r village, where a festival honoring it is held each March.⁴

Kol players say they play the Nilgiri God tune while walking to and from places of worship during the rain ceremony because it is short and easy; it will be recalled also that tunes such as this that are associated with processions tend to be set to the ten beat *ca-da da-k*. In Kolme-l, since no shrine exists for Nilgiri God, the performance of the tune is not associated with any particular place. But inclusion of the Nilgiri God tune in the divine repertoire also marks the deity itself as a Kota one. Incorporating the Nilgiri God in the Kota pantheon is a gesture tying the Kotas of all seven villages to the land they inhabit—that is, the Nilgiri God is somehow seen to be, as its name suggests, a primordial divinity connected with the physical place of the Nilgiris. To the extent that the tune itself recalls stories of the god—in this case fairly unlikely because detailed knowledge of this deity is rare—the tune recalls a former relationship between Kotas and Irulas that was broken, resulting in worship of the same deity in different places. In a sense, then, the Nilgiri god is associated with both a pan-Nilgiri tribal identity and the division into different tribes, each in its locality, and each with its styles of worship.

DEVIR KOL #3

The theme of resolved divisiveness appears in a new guise in the story associate with the next god tune, whose melody resembles that of Nilgiri God tune, called the *Ki-rputm meyn gublk oygd kol*, “tune for going to the herd of Ki-rputm’s son.” I recount the story below including details of Pucan’s narrative voice:

Previously, in this village, they owned many cows. At that time a disease came to the cows, that is, by disease I mean throat disease...to the cows...throat disease and diarrhea, cow diarrhea. All the cattle died here.

What’d they do? They looked to god, asking the diviner “why are our cows dying”? Then the diviner for “big father god” shook. God possessed him, saying “disease came to the cattle because you are not in a state of oneness. . . From now on, after this diarrhea goddess leaves the village not even one of those cows will die. Not even one. Not even one.” The diviner sang this tune as he spoke.

³See previous footnote for an extended discussion of this identity.

⁴ Although the people from Kina-r village also have (or had) a Nilgiri God tune I was unable to hear or record an example to compare with that of Kolme-l.

The diviner continued, “In a Badaga village near the Kota village of Me-na-r there is a Badaga named Ki-rputn meyn [son of Ki-rputn] who keeps many thousand cattle. . . He is very cruel to these cows and buffalos. If even one cow strays near his herd, he’ll take his seal, heat it, and make the cow his own.” [Pucan grins broadly and laughs] He went on deceiving like this, Ki-rputn meyn. Where? In the Me-na-r area. Like that he acted unjustly.

[Pucan speaks again in the voice of the diviner] “today I’ll go enter his herd, I’ll send this goddess there. The goddess is coming, she is now crossing the river, now she’s going to kurmu-r, now she’s going to Canda-ny stone. . .” [he mentions other villages and geographical features along the way to the southwest, towards Ki-rputn meyn’s village]. “Along the entire route I am taking this goddess and going. She has entered his herd.” That very day the disease entered Ki-rputn meyn’s herd. As soon as it entered, within eight, fifteen days that thousand cattle died.⁵

This story exemplifies how divine favor depends on community solidarity. The story teaches, by example, that villagers should value the interests of the community over the interests of the individual: disunity caused the cows to become ill. It further establishes the Badagas as an “out” group and reinforces certain negative stereotypes of Badagas some Kotas hold. The tune, ostensibly composed by *ayno-r* himself, is significant both as a divine “product,” and as the aural reminder of a story—and the cultural values that story encodes.

DEV R KOŁ #4

The name of the fourth tune, the *padneŕ devr a-td ko!* “eighteen god calling tune,” is a bit puzzling. Thus far I have found reference to “eighteen gods” only in Emeneau’s *Kota Texts* (1944, III:17), but the eighteen gods were not named. Mr. Pucan suggested that eighteen refers not to gods but to feast days (*u:tm*) of the god festival. Nowadays the Kotas of Kolme-l alternate one-day and three-day feasts each year—although it is widely known that the feasts have been shortened over the years.⁶ Whether the tune is named after eighteen gods, or eighteen feasts—or both—the tune seems to have previously had further significance or extrinsic association. Nowadays, to the extent that Kotas reflect at all upon the meaning of the tune, the eighteen god tune is tied to vague notions of divinity, bygone practice, and tradition (*ma-mu-l*)—but not to a particular story.

The lengthy feasting may have been connected, in a rather instrumental way, with the arduous process of

⁵This is a version told by K. Pucan. I found two other versions of the same story in Mandelbaum’s 1937-38 fieldnotes—one by a musician and one by Sulli. Sulli’s version did not mention that a musical tune was associated with the story.

⁶The “eighteen songs” to which Sulli refers in Mandelbaum’s notes might also have some connection with this. See also Emeneau’s *Kota Texts* (1944, II:337 n.5), where eighteen days of the god festival are mentioned, and eighteen gods are also mentioned (1944, III:17).

temple reconstruction. Cane and bamboo collected from the forest were fashioned into a thatched enclosure. Supporting beams for the temples were collected from a “milk tree” (*pa-l marm*, unidentified botanically, see DEDR 4100) in the shola forest⁷ called *kuy te-l* “hole forest” about four kilometers southwest of Kolme-l on the route to Me-nar village.

DEVK KOL #5

The *kab ercd kol* “post cutting tune” originated in an event connected with collecting this “milk tree.” Because somebody committed a ritual fault during the god ceremony one year, the Kotas could not locate a milk tree from which to cut a pillar for the temple. The diviner, consulted on this matter, put his wrists together behind his back (the characteristic posture for possession among the Kotas), shook and hopped backwards to the shola and revealed a milk tree.

As he hopped, he hummed a tune which the *kol* players memorized and subsequently adopted as the “post cutting tune.”⁸ Like the *Ki-rputm meyn kol* this tune was ostensibly composed by god himself. Also like the *Ki-rputm meyn kol*, this tune is a metonym for Kota religious values. Proper worship cannot be conducted without the cooperation of all Kotas—if one Kota violates a taboo, it constitutes an obstacle for the whole village. In subsequent years the musicians played the post-cutting tune at some time during the actual process of gathering posts. I have found that in practice nowadays, however, the tune is not performed during symbolic actions connected with rethatching; it is included only when the twelve god tunes are performed together as a set

In modern times when a permanent structure was erected the post-cutting ritual was unnecessary. But the post cutting tune remains a nod to the past—whether understood as a reference to building the temple (a reference perceived by all because the name itself gives a clue), or whether understood in terms of the story (a less accessible reference because not all Kotas know the story).

⁷ “A ‘shola’ is . . . an evergreen forest of the elevated Nilgiri Plateau, located along stream banks or in hollows and surrounded by large tracts of savanna” (Lengerke and Blasco 1989, 54)

⁸Mandelbaum collected a version of the same story from Kurgo-j village; the story is in a broad sense thematically related to that of Kolme-l, but the local details differ. I recorded a version of the *kab ercd kol* in Kurgo-j, played on the *bugir* (a five-holed bamboo trumpet, not a “flute” as in DEDR 4239) by K. Mundan (elder brother of S. Cindamanu). His version of the tune is quite different from that of S. Raman and K. Pucan.

DEVĀ KOLĀS #6-8

The stories associated with the *Ki-rpum meyn* tune and the post cutting tune suggest that the Kota gods respond favorably to Kota pleas for help. At one time, music was itself used for supplication. Each of three tunes, called *moyr paḍ kolṣ* (complaint experiencing tunes), were used to petition a deity “big father god” (*doḍayṇo-r*), “little father god” (*kunayṇo-r*),⁹ and “mother goddess” (*amno-r*). Among these, the *kunayṇo-r moyr paḍ kolṣ* bears a strong melodic resemblance to the 18 god calling tune but is supported by a different rhythmic pattern. Although these tunes are no longer used individually to petition particular deities they retain a sacral potency as part of the *devr kolṣ* repertoire. They are, like several of the *devr kolṣ*, sonic components of bygone rituals which have come to be preserved in a new context.

DEVĀ KOLĀ #9

Kotas “make god” when they enact the god ceremony and part of this creative act used to include rebuilding the temples. But a more literal “making” includes the fashioning of the faces of the gods by pasting gold coins and silver ornaments (which were offerings to the god) on patties of cow dung. One man from each of three families (*kuyts*) is responsible for arranging these coins in the manner of a face on the right entrance-pillar of each of the three temples (one man per temple). Some Kotas think this practice is of recent origin and thus consider it inauthentic (*ocmu-l*). This sentiment is of some consequence since some Kotas define themselves differently from Hindus (not all do) by emphasizing the idea that Kotas do not represent their deities anthropomorphically. To diffuse the significance of the face as something comparable to a Hindu idol, they explain that coins and ornaments had long been pasted on the temples as offerings to the gods, but over the years people had begun arranging the many ornaments into a decorative pattern—a face. For many of the Kotas who consider themselves Hindu, the face *is* an anthropomorphic representation of the god and, in this sense, *is* like a Hindu idol. For these Kotas the age of the practice is not the issue—new or old it is a practice culturally valid—and the responsibility of fashioning the face is also an honor. The two perspectives on making the god’s face are but a simple illustration of how politically charged and open to interpretation the concepts of *ma-mu-l* “tradition” and *ocmu-l* “new rule” themselves are.

Leaving aside the question of how the ornaments are arranged, and what that means, we should recognize that the practice of offering money or precious metals to a deity is itself a widespread and ancient religious

⁹Since *kunayṇo-r*, according to one story, is said to have come to Kolme-l from Porgar village out of attraction for the music, the last day of the Kolme-l god festival, “dance day,” is celebrated in honor of him.

practice in India. Among the Kotas, the coins used to be heated in a smithy within the temple premises and fashioned into small bows and arrows and other tools associated with the Kota gods.¹⁰ Since these quintessential Kota skills, blacksmithing and hunting, were said to have been taught to the Kotas by their gods, icons of these practices are also considered holy. Forging these icons was thus another way of “making god.”¹¹

Before the faces are fashioned during the god ceremony, the first three coins must be placed on each of the three temples by the two ritual leaders (*mundka-no-ns*). It is this initializing process which is elaborated ritually, rather than the subsequent arranging of the coins. While the ritual leaders paste the coins, the brass horns, *kob*, are sounded and the *paṭm paḍ kol*,¹² or coin placing tune, is played.¹³ We have already seen that the removal of the coins is similarly ritualized; the fact that the coin removal tune is not included in the subrepertoire of twelve god tunes may be explained in part by its sad associations and its special ritual function as a sign of completion.

Before discussing the next *devr kol*, let us further consider the significance of blacksmithing and hunting. Recall for a moment that tribals in India are “sons of the soil” in the popular imagination and that Indians attribute the tribal with a pre-modern self-sufficiency—all part of the more general idea that tribes are “at one with nature.” The Kotas quite consciously think of their gods as having something to do with nature (write large—in the Western sense): the gods are embodied in fire, water, stones, special bows and arrows, and in the blacksmith shop. During the god ceremony diet is restricted to what used to grow in the Nilgiris (even if it was cultivated) and no intoxicating substances are supposed to be ingested.

But the idea of “nature” is itself culturally constructed (cf. Schneider 1968) and to my knowledge there is no Kota word for “nature” as an abstract concept. Kotas use the English word as well as the Tamil equivalent

¹⁰Before the lamp was introduced, the only objects in the temple were a few large stones within which the fire was built. Ornaments are no longer forged within the temple. A stock of ornaments and coins is kept with the ritual leader or another trusted member of the community.

¹¹Here the question of how Kota “icons” relate to Hindu “icons” is relevant—modern Hindu gods often look like people. Kota icons like the bow and arrow are different in that they embody divine practice. In a way this is comparable to the way the musical instrument, the *viṇā*, or any book, is the goddess Sarasvati.

¹²Also called *paṭm kaḍ kol* “coin offering tune.” The tune is rhythmically different from but melodically similar to the *amno-r moyr paḍ kol*. These observations of similarity and difference are Pucan’s—he thinks about the tunes in this way to keep track of which ones he has played and which ones he has yet to play at a given time.

¹³The period during which Dr. Varadharajan and the other two men arrange the coins into faces is one of the loosely structured periods during which young boys can practice playing the musical instruments without fear of reprisal. The instruments are loud and should not be played in the village at other times unless a particular occasion calls for it.

iyarkai.¹⁴ I strongly suspect that the Kota tendency to associate Kota-ness and Kota gods with nature is tied up in a modern self-reflexivity that comprehends the general way tribals are viewed in India. I am not claiming a modern origin for the *practices*, but rather for the *interpretation*. It is in part this interpretation, I believe, that allows the Kotas to think of diverse cultural and religious practices as belonging to a whole.

DEVIR KOL #10

Hunting is associated not only in a general way with the Kota "father god," but also in a specific way with a deity named *veṭkar coṣym* "hunting god," worshiped just outside Gudalur town (near the Kota village of Kala-c) by several Nilgiri and Wynad tribes and castes. The origin stories of this god vary depending on the community telling the story (see appendix). Kotas of Kurgoṭ and Kala-c villages still attend the yearly festival for *veṭkar coṣym* (sometime around October each year), and the men play instruments and dance.¹⁵ Several Kota villages have god tunes named after the hunting god.

In Kolme-l the hunting god tune was once used in a god ceremony ritual (it has since been abandoned). At the end of the god ceremony the ritual leaders used to lead a procession to the sacred place called *toḍba-l* and shoot an arrow—symbolically to kill a bison believed to be connected with their gods. This bison had repeatedly disturbed the Kotas during worship.¹⁶ It is believed that, for many years, a bison would come to that place at the end of the god ceremony. More recently, after a bison no longer appeared every year, the practice was formalized into a ritual of renewal called *devir kayir* "god washing." Except during the god ceremony, the deities are believed to reside in the back rooms (*kakuy*) of the two ritual leaders' houses (*doḍvay* "big house") in the form of a bow and arrow. For the "god washing" ritual, the bow and arrow were

¹⁴It is difficult to determine when the Tamil word *iyarkai* began to take on Rousseauistic meanings. The word is derived from the verb *iyal* meaning to be possible. *iyal* as a noun means "nature" in the sense of "property" or "quality." The abstract noun *iyarkai* has meant not only "nature, disposition, inherent quality" but also "that which is natural"—as opposed to that which is made (*ceyarkai*). This latter meaning has been traced to the *Puṛaṇānūra* (written circa 1st century B.C. - 1st century A.D.) (cf. *Tamil Lexicon*). But even in this opposition we should not read "nature" versus "culture."

The absence of a Kota word for nature is not conclusive evidence that the concept is foreign—but neither is the presence of a word for nature in modern Tamil usage evidence that the concept is ancient. It seems likely that the modern *iyarkai*, when it is used in the sense of Nature, with all the romantic connotations, is the result of syncretism—but how, when and if this occurred really cannot be traced. I thank Dr. James Lindholm for providing insight into some of these points.

¹⁵ A god of the same name is important to the Todas as well and I have found this deity mentioned in one Toda song I recorded. Vasumalli, a Toda woman who translated the song for me, commented predictably "they [the Kotas] copied it [worshiping the hunting deity] from us."

¹⁶Several other villages have a site of divinity called *toḍba-l* and an associated origin story similar to that told in Kolme-l.

brought to *toḍba-l* under tight security—if women or non-Kotas were to see the deity, the consequences, it is said, would be deadly. Along the way an arrow was shot toward Dodabetta (a mountain peak, to the north, near Ooty town) and to the west. When they reached *toḍba-l*, the silver points of arrows were washed, new bamboo was collected for the bow, *tavṛ* (Hill guava, DEDR 3112) wood for the shaft of the arrow and new twine (*pobit na-rṛ*) was extracted from tree bark for the bow string.¹⁷ The hunting god tune, which was part of this (now abandoned) god washing ritual, is now performed more generically as part of the god tune repertoire.

My impression is that the “hunting god” is known to most Kotas as a deity in some way connected with their hunting past. As one of the god tunes, it evokes a history and self-identity congruent with the lore of the other god tunes—a history that valorizes a tribal way of life (hunting) in an environment that is substantially their own (the Nilgiris) where divinity is associated with and evident in nature (the bison, the forest materials from which the bow and arrow are created)—as well as in the capacity to control the environment (success in hunting, the use of fire to forge metal arrowheads).

DEVṚ KOḶS #11-12

The last two god tunes are *arca-yṛ koḶs*—tunes played while men sit under the rough-hewn hut (*arca-yṛ*) erected in the temple area during the god festival. All the other god tunes are also known generically as *arca-yṛ koḶs* by those who do not know the individual names or stories.

THE TWELVE GOD TUNES AS AN APOTHEOSIS

In part II, I introduced the notion of “embracement of tribal symbols” as a type of “modern modality” characteristic of god ceremonies. The extramusical associations of the twelve god tunes reinforce the construction of this modality. Beyond the significance of each tune in isolation, however, is the significance of the twelve tunes as a subrepertoire. Why are they grouped together?

Since the tunes did not come into existence all at once (at least so the origin stories would suggest) they must have been collected together by Kotas at some particular time in somewhat of a self-conscious way. This collecting is inherently “modern” even though it may have occurred centuries ago. The god tunes recall

¹⁷This is the description S. Raman (age 57 in 1992) recalls hearing when he was a thirteen year old boy. A village diviner described the ritual to him. Even at the turn of the century when Thurston was collecting information on the Kotas the shooting of the bison was a bygone practice, but “what takes place at the present day is said to be unknown to the villagers, who are forbidden to leave their houses during the absence of the hunting party” (1909, IV:16).

periods in the Kota past in which the gods responded favorably to Kota prayers and expressions of unity. They memorialize effervescent ritual traditions that cannot or need not be performed in a modern India (i.e. where cement temples are possible and additional eighteen day vacations from urban professions are not). They reaffirm a modern, self-reflective, and certainly romantic notion of tribe that locates identity in the forest, hunting and traditional crafts, and reinforces stories that gods taught the Kotas how to live with nature.

Bringing these diverse god-related (whether in ritual, origin story, or merely in name) tunes together is a gesture that establishes “the relatedness of things”—the relatedness of different divinities, the unity of the Nilgiris as a region, the importance of right-conduct and social harmony, and so-forth. One effect of this grouping is what James Fernandez has called “time binding”—bringing the past and present into coexistence. Moreover, it binds the notion of divinity with community values, identity and geography. In this sense, the establishment of the god tunes as a distinct repertoire is what I have called an “apotheosis of a musical repertoire.” It would be interesting to find out when and why the god tunes were established. Was it a response to some sort of community threat?—like the role of “time binding” in the Buiti revitalization movement of the Fang? At this point these questions are unanswerable.

The cultural themes of the god tunes are not separate from but rather relate with, in a familial way, and mutually reinforce other “god making” ritual themes. By “making god,” Kotas argue for themselves alone that community identity is bound up in the strategic maintenance of communal memories and the immutability and efficacy of Kota deities. Kota “god tunes,” which are much more than mere emblems of identity, argue the same.

NARRATIVE MEANING IN KOTA SONGS 1: THE GOD SONGS

I collected about 145 different songs that Kota sing (although I have many versions of some of them). For the most part I attempted to collect only songs in the Kota language; since Kotas sing and compose songs in other languages as well, my collection is statistically representative of only Kota language songs.¹⁸ Out of these 145, 22 are in languages other than Kota: 8 Tamil, 8 Badaga, and 6 of which I am not sure; one recording is a melody that B. Mari had composed and was in the process of composing an *a!?* text to fit it. Some of the twenty-two non-Kota language songs remain untranslated or untranscribed and a small number of the Kota language songs are still inadequately translated or transcribed. Of the total of 145 songs, about

¹⁸I focused primarily on Kota language songs because I wanted to learn how Kotas expressed themselves in their own language. As a practical matter, song translation was one of the principle means through which I learned the Kota language.

50 fit fairly well in the Kota category of *a:!* and 60 in the category of *devr*, or god song. The others do not fit these categories either because I do not know enough about them to assign traditional categories (and Kotas did not, in performance, name these songs in genre terms), or because their themes are somehow unique. The song Chandrammal composed about her cat, for example, is in some ways singular. However, if, like other playful songs, it was performed by a group of women during the god ceremony it could be considered a “god song”; its triple meter *kummi* style would certainly place it stylistically in the god song category as well. But because the song is neither performed in conjunction with god songs nor involves worship of god I would not classify it as such.

Of the god songs, I collected two to three versions of nine songs, and five to eight versions of eight songs; in the *a:!* category I collected two to four versions of twelve songs and five to nine versions of eight songs. I seldom requested a singer to sing a particular song, so to some extent, the statistics in my catalogue reflect wider patterns of repertorial knowledge. Kota generally consider two songs the “same” if they have the same story associated with their texts and derive from the same village; the question of sameness and difference is somewhat unclear when a similar story and melody appear in two different villages (ref. #22 & 44); in such a case, performers may consider two songs to be different versions rather than different songs.

Sometimes two apparently different melodies are used for the rendition of versions of a single text, but this is relatively rare. In such cases, the identity of the song as a single song is not, in my experience, challenged. I suspect that in some cases the original melodies of songs have been forgotten and the texts remodelled to fit other, more well known or favored melodies. I have seen this happen on several occasions (see, e.g. Cindamani’s renditions of ref. #39); usually the singer realizes that something does not sound right and begins again. The fact that a single text can be sung to more than one melody tempers our understanding of the judgement, on the part of several women I interviewed, that the melody is the most important part of a song.¹⁹ Several singers spoke of the difficulty of setting the Kota language to melodies. Melody is important because of the aesthetic value it lends the song, while accomodating a text; it is not, however, the lone factor that differentiates one song from another.

Although versions of texts vary, they generally tend to remain attached to the same melody. A couple of melodies, however, reappear in conjunction with several different texts. The most common *a:!* melodies, for examples, are reference #22 (examined in chapter eighteen) and #35; the melodies of god songs, both old (ref. #s 1 & 2) and new (ref. #8), tend to be reused as well, although there is no one dominating melody.

We have seen that the primary Kota musical genre names derive from a combination of factors:

¹⁹I asked several women what they considered to be the most important element in a song; they replied, the melody.

contextual (god ceremonies, funerals, dances), textual (formulaic phrases, subjects), and formal (instrumental, vocal). Using only emic criteria, the set of genres is quite limited: god songs, god tunes, funeral tunes, mourning songs, and dance tunes. These genre categories demonstrate how Kotas conceive of musical classification in relation to other classifications (ritual, spatial, temporal), but they do not adequately describe all the kinds of songs and melodies that actually exist.

To provide another perspective on genre, I have attempted below to classify the roughly one hundred forty-five different songs represented in my collection according to what appears to be dominant in terms of either subject, style, or character. Certainly there are many ways in which this could have been done. In certain cases I made a judgement concerning the dominance of one characteristic versus another; in such cases I can only hope to have achieved a relative degree of subjective consistency. The numbering of categories in the outline below are intended to indicate not only vertically, but also (to the extent possible) horizontally the degree to which subclassifications are related. Sometimes, for instance, a song describing and lamenting the events leading to the death of the deceased may also include reference to pleasant memories in the life of the deceased.

Although some of the categories presented below may be merely residual, I do believe that some of them reflect compositional styles that have been developed by one composer and adopted by others (e.g. VB1: many examples from VD) or broader cultural patterns, more deeply seated historically, for composing about and representing a phenomenon (e.g. IIIA1 & IIIA2). Such patterns cannot be extracted from Kota classification systems alone, but must be inferred from the regularity of practice. I will discuss only a few textual examples in this chapter, however the full songs texts and/or plot summaries are available for reference in the appendix. Reference numbers of songs are provided in parentheses.

KOTA SONG TYPES

I. Songs devoted to Hindu deities

- A. Murugan (6,13,96,97,107,111, 129, 132)
- B. Krishna/Gopala/Rajagopala (7,112,12)
- C. Mariamma and related (8,11,12,14,16,18,108,117,122, 131)
 - 1. Virabadra-Kali (135)
 - 2. Adi Parasakti (139)
- D. Siva (9)
 - 1. Kota deities often equated with Siva-Parvati (126)
- E. Ayappa (15)
- F. Munisvara (127)

II: Songs devoted to Kota deities, focusing on traditional activities, especially from the past, and the special

character of Kota worship or Kota gods

- A. Black cow, working, what god gave to or did for the Kotas when they came to the Nilgiris (2, 63, 74, 109)
- B. Characteristics of Kota god (10)
- C. Proper behavior at the god ceremony (42, 53, 60, 66, 68)
- D. Ways of worshipping god and performative utterances of worship (86, 110, 120, 136)
- E. Sacred geography of village (1, 93, 126)

III. Songs about a person or people

- A. Recounting events leading to or surrounding event of death (89)
 - 1. Chastizing self or deceased for not taking care (20, 34, 79)
 - a. Story involves a girl's marriage, either leaving one husband for another, refusing to marry one husband, a death following a new marriage, or marriage into a bad family (19, 35, 36, 38)
 - b. Jealously between women; insult resulting in suicide (37)
 - 2. One or more persons go into forest; one dies
 - a. Meet omens along way (augury of Kurumba sorcery)
 - i. Man and Woman. Woman is vulnerable due to pregnancy, menstruation, or because she goes away alone to defecate (22, 43, 123)
 - ii. Women killed by Kurumba (40)
 - iii. Man alone (83)
 - b. Two men go to forest, one gored by bison because ritual purity not maintained (27)
 - c. Three Todas hit by lightning, Kota revives two, one dies (39)
 - d. Woman killed by tiger in the forest (26, 57)
 - e. Man and woman, man dies (48)
 - f. Three men go, one man dies of cholera while returning (77)
 - 3. Despite all the devout things a man did, he died (59, 62[?], 75, 81)
 - a. Gods not watching over a person (80)
- B. Recounting, mourning or celebrating exploits, heroism, or everyday life
 - 1. Subject is a dead person (focusing on life rather than dwelling on the events leading to death) (29, 41, 84, 90, 98, 99, 100, 101)
 - a. What a girl would have done, had she lived (58)
 - b. Describes deceased's offspring (70)
 - c. In honor of Jawaharlal Nehru (133)
 - 2. Subject is a living person
 - a. Toda woman cleverly avoids advances of a Kurumba man (45) (reportedly a Toda language song, originally)
 - b. Wife for her husband (47)
 - c. Worry, longing or concern over (46, 61, 71, 87)
 - i. Lullaby to daughter out of grief for dying husband (82)
 - ii. Woman wants to marry different man; brother has no offspring (125)
- C. Using place names as vehicle for advancing story plot (33)
- D. Miscellaneous, not transcribed/translated (140)
 - 1. Badaga language (64, 76, 78, 124)
 - 2. Kota language (102)

IV. Song involving ancestors or land of dead (na-r)

- A. Ancestors appear in a dream (24, 44)
- B. Miraculous occurrence (30)

C. Land of dead as not recognizing differences among people (56)

V. Other

A. Songs organized around place names (5)

B. Play

1. Plays on words (69, 116, 134)

a. Incorporates as technique (85)

2. Plays on words and reversal (3)

3. Song composed for clever cat (119)

C. Childhood or youth

1. Child asks for trinkets (4)

2. Advice to a young girl (52, 73)

3. Baby cajoled out of crying for her dead father (65)

4. Youthful friendships between boys and girls (72)

D. Moralistic, chastizing kota for bad practices, lamenting a sorry state of affairs (socially, culturally, religiously, etc) (21, 32, 49, 50, 51, 55, 67, 94)

E. Songs to Kota gods drawing upon lovesong and bhakti imagery; often cinema or other popular Indian melodies (54, 113, 114, 138)

F. Lullabies, general (92, 115, 118, 137)

G. Self conscious songs about Kotas as a community or as adivasis (95)

1. Composed by Kotas in the Tamil language (128, 130)

H. Miscellaneous songs, not transcribed/translated (144)

1. God songs (17, 103-6)

2. Harvest songs, prob. Badaga (141, 142, 143)

3. Marriage songs, prob. Badaga (145)

GOD SONGS

Kotas call all the songs in categories I and II god songs. Some god songs are also in category V, "other": these include some of the play songs, miscellaneous songs, songs organized around place names, and childhood or youth songs, and those which are by subject concerned with god. Of the more than 60 god songs, a little more than one third are directed to non-Kota deities; most of these songs were composed by women from the village of Tiggar. Generally these songs address a god (usually Murugan or Krishna) or goddess (a form of Māriyamman) asking him or her to come, give boons, blessings, divine vision, etc. The personae of the speakers in the songs are female, almost always in the first person plural. Lines of text usually end with the suffix *go*, which marks the call of one woman to another. Songs tend to refer to mythical physical, sartorial, or iconographic features of the deity as represented in contemporary south Indian Hindu traditions. They describe processes of worship, both Hindu, Kota and syncretic. The process of dancing and singing is almost always mentioned in the songs. Place names are generally included, either famous temples or pilgrimage sites outside of the Nilgiris, or temples in particular Kota villages.

One of the most popular songs is directed to the south Indian goddess Māriyamman, and cognate goddesses sometimes considered to be her sisters (see, e.g., Whitehead 1921, 29). Māriyamman, when she is appeased, is traditionally credited with bringing rain, and thus crops, fertility, etc.; when she is unhappy, she causes diseases related to heat (according to certain traditions of Indian ethnomedicine), such as small-pox, cholera and dysentery.²⁰ The most important Māriyamman temple in the Nilgiri region is located in the town of Bokkapuram, on the Mysore side of the foothills of the Nilgiris. Each year a large festival is celebrated in Bokkapuram, and related ones in six other nearby areas. For these, Irula tribespeople officiate as priests and provide music; Badagas acts as sponsors and to an extent control the proceedings; other tribal and Hindu participants joining in a variety of religious, economic, and social ways (see Heidemann, forthcoming).

Kotas have adopted Māriyamman as a village deity, worshipping her in a typically south Indian style by, for example, decorating water pots (called *karakam* in Tamil, believed to contain Māriyamman's power, or Sakti), performing pūjā, and offering sacrifices of goats and chickens; they also add their own Kota styles of worship, celebrating her musically through Kota language songs and special Māriyamman tunes. Since goats and chickens should not be slaughtered on the ritually constituted ground of Kota traditional gods (they are vegetarian), the local Māriyamman temples must be built outside of the village boundaries. There are stories in which the traditional Kota gods have objected (through divine actions and words spoken through the diviner) to the erection of Māriyamman temples on their rightful grounds.²¹ But there is no controversy concerning the appropriateness of worshipping Māriyamman *per se*; behaving much like any south Indian ethnic, religious or voluntary group (caste, club, or even Christian family), Kotas attend Māriyamman festivals throughout the Nilgiris area, beginning in about February and continuing up until the rainy season (June). From Kurgoj, Kotas need only to walk downhill for a few hours to reach the Bokkapuram temple.

²⁰For a local ethnographic account of Māriyamman worship, its relationship with broader Hindu themes and the dimensions of Māriyamman's power and symbolism as a goddess, see Beck (1981).

²¹In Me-na-r, according to Mr. Sivan (17 August 91), in 1924, one hundred thirteen people died within a week. Sivan's father, Ve-ry, was a devotee of Śiva (Śiva in most Kota villages is equated with ayno-r). A Muslim man told him, "you see Ve-ry, if Māriyamman were present I think the deaths would stop." The village discussed building a temple in the place called *cu-hykanḍy*; they began worshipping a big boulder in that area, performing pūjā to it as if it were Māriyamman. Ve-ry's brother Kipa-c became possessed and was chosen as the diviner for Māriyamman. Speaking the words of Māriyamman he demanded that a temple be built in that place. Then Ve-ry got possessed and said "I won't given you this place for a temple, Mariamma; I won't give you a place within my boundary. If you want to stay, go beyond that river." In the end, the temple was built beyond Śiva's boundary—that is, beyond the sacred geography of the village as associated with ayno-r. In 1992 a temple for Vi-rabadraka-li ama was built in the *cu-hykanḍy*. As it is, the Kotas have been unable to communicate with ayno-r through a diviner for many years: as a result, the priesthood has died out and the Me-na-r temple opening ceremony has not been performed. Now that the village boundaries have been further encroached by deities introduced from without, some Kotas of Me-na-r are worried whether they will ever be able to resume their traditional forms of worship.

Ticgar villagers, many of whom actively participate in the Bokkapuram festival, sometimes hire a lorry to transport them to the area. Rajammal's song to Māriyamman has become quite popular in all the Kota villages, and people have begun reappropriating the melody to sing other texts. The following version was sung in Ticgar (26 April 91) by Mathi (age 32) and Anita (age 26)

Macani ²² ama· macani ama· ma·yaka·ri macani ama·	Macani Mother [goddess], creator of illusion ²³
Bokkapu·re· amanike· pavala te·re kacuve·me·	We build a coral red float for Bokkapur Mother
Cikkami·ne ve· <u>ndu</u> ve·me cinadeke·re va·me ama·	We prayed to Cikkamman, come with a little umbrella ²⁴
Uke·rama· u·ke·rama unaci·re·ne pa·cuve·me·	Ukeramn, emotionally we sing
Pace· pandile· ituve·me· baktio·re pa·cuve·me·	We erect a leaf canopy ²⁵ and sing with bhakti ²⁶
Ko·vekolatile· ka·tuvo·le· kungama· ka·ri· Ma·ga·lyama·	Magali Mother who wears vermilion is the one who protects the Kota people
Karme· ninuke· ka·cumve·me· karunaio·re va·me ama·	We show a <i>karakam</i> pot to you. come to us with mercy, Mother
U·rgo·lume· vadi· ama· ula·cuma·yre no·ce·m ama·	Coming in procession, we joyfully gaze at you Mother
Mañjal ni·ro·re a·cuve·memandarako·lo·re va·me ama·	We dance with turmeric water. ²⁷ please come with your magic wand ²⁸
Ve·palaka·ri ama· nine· ve· <u>ndi</u> ra·me· pa·cuve·me	We worship you by singing, Mother. who carries neem leaves ²⁹
Manaco·re pa·cuve·me· maligepu·vo·re va·me· ama	We sing with our hearts, please come with Jasmine flowers mother!

²²Macani amn, Cikkamn, Bokkapuramn, Uke·ramn, Ma·ga·lyamn are all forms of the goddess—some associated with specific places or towns.

²³The Hindu concept of *māya* has been adopted in Kota discourse on Hindu deities, but has not been used, in my experience, in discourse about Kota gods or religions.

²⁴A small umbrella is one of the emblems of Marimman and her sisters.

²⁵The green leaf canopy is associated with coolness, rain, and the flourishing of crops. Although the erection of this structure is a Hindu practice in this context, Kotas also use such a structure, called an *arāy!* in the Kota language, during their own god ceremony.

²⁶Loving devotion for god, a form of Hindu worship which began in a series of religious movements in south India. the first around the 7th century, C.E.

²⁷A cooling substance. The color yellow is also associated with Māriyamman worship in south India; the color red, in contrast, is associated with Kali (here Ma·ga·lyamn) and “by being associated with heat, is an auspicious color with respect to fertility, procreation, and motherhood—and consequently marriage. . .” (Daniel 1984, 189)

²⁸Another emblem of this goddess.

²⁹These leaves from the Margosa tree are believed to be cooling and purifying. Neem twigs are often used as tooth brushes in India.

Ve-yi na-le· amaneke· virideme-ne· ka-tuve-me·
 Tayne-ne-le amaniye· ta-marepu-vo-re va-me ama·
 A-cuva-rume· na-le ama· arumai a-yre konda-rubo·

We fast for Mother on Friday³⁰
 On Saturday, please come with Lotus
 flowers, Mother
 On Sunday we exhalt celebrating you,
 Mother

Nothing marks this text as Kota in any way;³¹ the text could easily be a Tamil one, and indeed, many of the words are Tamil or Tamil derived. The following is a Tamil Māriyamman song, collected by M. N. Srinivas in the 1940s,³² which I have picked at random for the sake of comparison. Three similarities between the two songs are among those characteristic of the larger tradition that encompasses them both (i.e. modes of south Indian Māriyamman worship and its verbalization) 1) The process of worship is described, and in a sense, verbally performed 2) The pot appears as a central symbol of Māriamma 2) Specific foods, flowers and plants are mentioned as symbols of or offerings to the goddess.

Orān karakamati māriyamman tāyē
 ōtivaram pūnkarakam knniyamman tāyē
 ānemēle sāambarāni māriyamman tāye
 amartivakkirē enre nōti, māriyamman tāyē
 ottai mēle sāambarāni māriyamman tāye
 otti vakkire innārōti māriyamman tāyē
 kottu kottai vāḷapaḷam māriyamman tāye
 kontu patakire innārēti māriyamman tāyē
 koleyōte tēnkāykalam māriyamman tāyē
 kontu patekire innārōti māriyamman tāyē
 kottōte vettilayām māriyamman tāyē
 kontu patekire innārōti māriyamman tāyē
 kuntōte śakkareyām māriyamman tāyē
 kontu patekire innārōti māriyamman tāyē

It is a pot, O, Māri mother
 the beautiful pot will come running (to you). O
 Māri, mother,
 frankincense³³ on elephant's back. O. Māri.
 mother
 did I say I would keep, O Māri, mother?
 frankincense on a camel, O. Māri, mother
 did I say I would paste, O, Māri, mother
 bunches of plantains, O, Māri, mother
 did I say I would bring (and) offer, O, Māri.
 mother
 bunches of coconuts, O, Māri, mother
 did I say I would bring (and) offer. O, Māri.
 mother
 packet of betel, O, Māri, mother
 did I say I would bring (and) offer. O, Māri.
 mother
 basketful of sugar, O, Māri, mother
 did I say I would bring (and) offer. O. Māri.
 mother?

³⁰Fridays are associated with goddess worship.

³¹ With the possible exception of the inclusion of Uke-ramn, a form of the Māriyamman worshipped in Kurgoj village; I do not know if the goddess appears with this name elsewhere.

³²I have converted the transliteration of Tamil words to the Library of Congress System and tacitly corrected typographical errors; other idiosyncracies were present in the original (Srinivas 1943, 54-5).

³³Gum-benzoine, the same substance Kota burn and wave around their temples during the god ceremony.

KOTA LOCALIZING STRATEGIES³⁴

God songs for Kota gods are often similar in style to those composed for Hindu gods; however, the special characteristics of Kota gods (such as invisibility, embodiment in the bow and arrow, or a stone [the god kana-trayn in Ticgar]), Kota origin stories, or activities Kotas identify as central to their identity, give these songs a special Kota character. Emeneau notes that many of the stories and folkloric themes in the Kota texts he collected are found in Hindu folklore generally. "Kotaization" he explains, is the "naturalization into the Kota milieu of characters and actions in the motifs, and casting the narrative in the favored stylistic forms." In god songs, the stylistic forms vary, and, as I discussed in the previous chapters, are subject to influence from other south Indian song traditions; "naturalization into the Kota mileu" operates primarily at the level of content; the greatest level of naturalization occurs with songs directed exclusively to Kota gods; the least, in songs directed exclusively to Hindu gods; some songs involve both, or involve the strong identification of Kota gods with gods of Hindu name.

The following example (ref# 120) exhibits the idea of Kotaization quite neatly. The melody and textual style is derived from Rajammal's Māriyamman song presented above, but the composer, M. Be·bi, infuses it with a distinctly Kota character. It almost appears that the song criticizes Kota worship of Hindu deities, a critique that appears all the more strong when set to the melody of Rajammal's Māriyamman song: one may imagine that a song which melodically sets up an expectation for Māriyamman imagery, verbally introduces, in parallel verses, distinctly Kota imagery, and ends with "don't forget your religion" may create somewhat of an agonistic relationship with its musical model. My only reservation with this interpretation (i.e. that the melody is used as a vehicle for critique) is that Bebi also composes songs for Hindu deities.³⁵

Ayno·r aya· amno·r ama· a·ci·rva·dume· ta·ge· aya·	Aynor father, Amnor mother, please give us blessings
Kambatera·yine ve·ndiṭa·me· ka·la·tume·ne· a·cuve·me	While worshipping Kamatr father, we move our legs and dance
Amno·r amne· ve·ndiṭa·me· a·nandamo·re a·cuve·me	While worshipping Amnor goddess, we dance blissfully
Pacce pandile ituve·me· baktiyo·re a·cuve·me	We erect a green leaf canopy and dance

³⁴I borrow the phrase from the recent collection of essays edited by Richard Fardon (1990) which deals with a parallel issue in the construction of ethnographies: that is, how are anthropology's theoretical and methodological concerns and analytical concepts shaped by specific ethnographies in specific regions; and, how do specific ethnographic situations come to be viewed as particular examples of human cultural phenomena of particular (generic) types.

³⁵I translated the song weeks after it was originally sung, and it is only after reflecting upon the song text years later that I have realized its possible significance. I hope to learn more about Bebi's intention in composing this song when I return to the Nilgiris for further fieldwork.

Va·mugama va·mugama a·ta·rubo· va·mugama	with bhakti ³⁶
Ka·le ka·kuje idumugo karekaruge katemugo	Come girl! come let's dance!
Karevara·re kacitama· kadagacite a·rumugo	Put on toe rings girl! wear a black bead necklace girl! ³⁷
o·ridaya· o·ridama naraja·yne pa·te pa·cuvo·rede	Having put on a striped shawl, affix earrings and dance, girl! ³⁸
ma·yde naraja·yne pa·te·n aya magamaya·yre pa·cuvo·lde	Listen father, listen mother, they are singing the song naraja·yne
ko·ve·kolateke ta·du·vi·re kole tabatke o·ridaya	Mathi is singing the song naraja·yne excellently ³⁹
o·riduaya o·ridama kole tabatke o·ridege	Listen to the kol and tabatk [i.e. instrumental music] which you gave to the Kota people!
amno·r amne ta·duvi·re· magamayule mandu·v ama	Listen father, listen mother, listen to the kol and tabatk
marava·di·me ma·ra·di·me· manduve·ni·me· marava·di·me·	The mandu·v ⁴⁰ you gave us. Amnor mother, is excellent
marava·di·me· ma·ra·di·me· madum e·ni·me· ma·ra·di·me·	Don't forget, don't change, don't forget mandu·v
	Don't forget, don't change, don't forget religious beliefs!

I recorded this song in Ticga·r while several female singers and composers were present, taking turns singing. After Bebi sang this song, Devaki, the grandmother of my close friend and assistant at the time,⁴¹ remarked “right, right.” It was unclear to me whether she was voicing approval at the quality of Bebi’s singing, or the message of her song, but I am inclined to think the latter.⁴²

The “naturalization” of this song into a Kota cultural context is accomplished in a manner characteristic of all relatively recently composed god songs and follows some of the textual conventions of

³⁶This line is identical with one in Rajammal’s Māriyamman song save the substitution of “dance” for “sing.”

³⁷These are among the items of jewelry woman with which women adorn themselves to please god during the god ceremony.

³⁸Although the suffix *go·* indicates speech directed to a female, the reference to striped shawl and earrings is most likely describing the actions of Kota men.

³⁹Mathi does not refer here to a specific woman, but as in many songs, a generic Kota woman. Just as each first born male in most villages is named Kamatn, each first born female is named Mathi.

⁴⁰The plant Kota women tie in their hair buns.

⁴¹L. Gunasekaran, a Kota from Ticga·r who spent most of his time growing up outside of the village, assisted me in transcribing and translating all the songs we recorded that day.

⁴²There are two reasons for this inclination. One was Devaki’s adherence to the traditional style of rendering an *a·!!* on an occasion in which she was challenged to render a song in a more modern, mellifluous cinema style—thus manifesting her pride and her belief in the value of Kota ways. The other was the general support for the old ways most women of her generation tend to express.

older god songs as well. Instead of merely mentioning the singing of songs, or bhajans (devotional songs), the song mentions one of the oldest and most unique god songs, naraja-yne. Every song that includes in its own text the singing of a particular god song, uses naraja-yne as the archetypal song. Naraja-yne is to the god song repertoire as the name Kamatn is to Kota men and Mathi is to Kota women.

Reference to instrumental music specifies Kota musical instruments; reference to bodily adornment (for the pleasure of god) specifies Kota jewelry, clothing, and plants for hair buns. Yet other formulaic phrases are shared with songs to Hindu gods, “we erect a green leaf canopy,” or, “we dance blissfully,” “give us your blessings.” Although these phrases are not out of keeping with Kota worship, the terms themselves, and thus the style in which they are employed, have been borrowed from Sanskrit and Tamil quite recently. Older songs and texts employ different vocabularies.

Songs such as these may be said to have a variety of functions; perhaps the most obvious one is educational. Children hear and sing these songs, ask questions about them, and thereby learn about or reinforce their understanding about Kota religion, sacred geography, and the “embrace of tribal symbols” mode of reflection on the past.

As meaningful activity in and of itself, singing of god songs provides a ritual way of verbally articulating the “embrace of tribal symbols” modality, that I have argued is fundamental to the cultural construction of divinity (both as a process of worship and as an object of worship) in Kota society. The songs themselves often include literal calls for unity and social harmony; at the same time, the process of performing music and dance articulates these community values. We considered in part I Raman’s song, which calls for all Kotas to participate in the god ceremony, to think and act with god and community in mind, rather than the individual. Other songs include calls to dance unflinchingly, sing and dance without self-consciousness, and keep ritually pure. All of these songs I group into a single category because they underscore fundamental religious values, and because all of these themes are interwoven in various proportions in all sixteen songs.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE NARRATIVE SYSTEM CONTINUED: SONG THEMES AND STORIES

PLACE NAMES

What do names of places contribute textually to Kota god songs and mourning songs? They, like other “Kotaizing” textual devices, provide means metaphorically to predicate Kota identities onto otherwise stylistically unmarked songs (or even onto cinema or Tamil style songs).¹ Listing the names of significant places also serves as a strategy in composition and performance, moving a song forward in a logical direction (i.e. the direction of movement from place to place, or in the consecutive listing of items in a logical series), linking the temporal unfolding of a song with the spatio-temporal movement in a story (for mourning songs) or the visiting of sacred sites (in god songs—either through pilgrimage or procession, depending on the geographic scope of the song).

A simple and paradigmatic example of a god song employing place names, *velke velke*, is provided below; the text invokes god at significant locales, which are either at village borders or the sites of significant flora.²

Song 1: *velke velke*

(Version sung by Kolme-l Kota women on the Song Day [*pa-ʔ na-ʔ*] of the god ceremony, 15 January 92)

velke velke e-y o-li-ro va· co-y-me	Lamp lamp where are you? Come god!
tavt marka-l o-li-ro va· co-y-me (Refrain)	You're at the foot of the tavt tree, come god!
viky marka-l o-li-ro va· co-y-me (Refrain)	You're at the foot of the viky tree, come god!
ne-rl marka-l o-li-ro va· co-y-me (Refrain)	You're at the foot of the ne-rl tree, come god!
(?) vagatil o-li-ro va· co-y-me	You're at the foot of the vag tree, come god!

In the story behind this song, a *mundka-no-n* committed a ritual fault (in some versions an act of adultery). Then, while still in a ritually ill-conditioned state, he prayed before the sacred lamp, the *velk*. This act offended the god of the lamp (which is just one manifestation of a general divine principle in Kota religion, not a particular god in a pantheon) and caused the flame to disappear. Out of grief the *mundka-no-!*

¹My phraseology is intended to invoke Fernandez's definition of metaphor, “the predication of a sign-image upon an inchoate subject” (1986 [1974], 31)

²*Velke velke* appears to have served as a model for several other songs: textually, ref. #93 and melodically, ref #86.

(or in some versions of the story the *mundka·no·n*) went around the village crying “lamp, lamp, where are you? Come god!” As the version of the song text presented above illustrates, she searched for god at the foot of particular trees (each noted for some sacred quality); other versions include, in addition to tree names,³ “god places” (*devr erm*) which are not named for the flora which exist there, but either have names of obscure etymological origin (such as *ponic*) or names based on stories of mythological or historical events associated with the site (*toḍba·l*). Eventually, the *mundka·no·!* found the flame at the sacred place called *ponic*.⁴ Like the morals of the god-tune stories in the previous chapter, the story behind *velke velke* links the absence of god with improper behavior and the presence of god with pious devotion and features of the landscape.

Singing the names of significant places (in god songs) may be considered a verbal means of retracing and instantiating village geography; as I have repeatedly argued, the focus of devotional activity inward, toward the center of the village, across the village grounds, and around the village, is the spatial mapping of divinity onto community (and vice-versa) and is crucial to the process of “making god” during the god ceremonies.

The connection between the naming of places and ritual process was brought to my attention through one of my interviews with Pucan, in which he had finally agreed to sing for me a few songs. After singing and telling me the story behind the song, *velke velke*, Pucan began to describe the rain ceremony, which, by my good fortune, was going to be celebrated the following week. I discovered that what appeared to be a tangent in Pucan’s exegesis turned out to be an explanation of how the song and the rain ceremony were conceptually linked: both drew their meaning from divine significance of particular places in and around the village. Singing the song can be understood as an act of worship not only as singing, qua singing (which is by definition a ritual form of worship when performed at particular times and places during the god ceremony, etc.), but also through invoking god, referring to a divine story (as in some of the god tune stories above), and naming divine places. A similar process is undertaken ritually in the rain ceremony, in which each site is visited, prayers and offerings made, and god tunes performed.⁵ In doing this, the ritual borders of the village are reconstituted, the divine power present in the center affirmed, and village unity performed (see chapter ten, section four); when this is properly accomplished, rain falls.

³Some variations of the song will include names of fruit bearing trees, like the orange tree, which are not only absent from the village, but also unable to grow in the Nilgiris.

⁴*Ponic* as a site of significance has appeared in this dissertation in several guises: 1) as the original name of Cindamani, before she was given a new name by her European neighbor 2) the spot at which Cindamani stood unable to move when she was about to commit suicide and 3) as one of the places in which monetary offerings are placed during the rain ceremony.

⁵The significance of the rain ceremony is explained in greater detail in my “Rain, god, and unity among the Kotas” (Wolf, In Press).

Two other god songs are dominantly organized around the naming of divine village places (ref. #s 93 & 126). Other place names are incorporated into God songs of a more general category (category II), which tend to mention or focus on traditional activities, often associated with the Kota past (e.g., hunting, blacksmithing, founding of the village; women's work such as the collection of firewood, or practices of tying *maṇḍu-v* in the hair), the special character of Kota worship (e.g., women singing the song *naraja-yne*, or men playing instrumental music and performing the milk-placing ceremony), or Kota gods (e.g. their names, invisibility, and association with fire). In the context of these kinds of god songs, place names are one way of localizing a song, not only as Nilgiri Kota, but also as belonging to a particular village.

PLACE NAMES AND THE ENCODING OF MYTHO-HISTORY

Place names also function like god tunes in that they recall stories of significant activity that may be connected with a particular place. In considering the significance of bovine species (see Part II, ch 4 section 3) in Kota self definition, I explained how Kota identification with the cow and Toda with the buffalo can be considered a projection of ethnic distinction onto an observed species distinction in the animal world: yet at another level, Kotas include the buffalo in their symbolic and instrumental worlds (in a more general way), and thus the distinction between cows and buffaloes as important emblematic beasts (the difference between them used in a symbolic system, the identity of one not possible without the contrast of the other) becomes a unity at the higher level of "bovine" just as the distinction between Todas and Kotas at the ethnic level, is merged at the higher level of "Nilgiri tribal," where Todas, Kotas and Kurumbas are conceived of as brothers.

We have seen that the rules for funeral rituals specify and to a certain degree differentiate the times and places in which cows and buffaloes are sacrificed; certain place names reflect these rules or the former existence of such rules or practices.⁶ In the god ceremony, a sacred place is associated with and named for yet another bovine species, the bison. Now only found near the Nilgiri slopes and reserved forestlands,⁷ these enormous and dangerous animals used to roam the Nilgiri plateau. In Kolme-l, the *toḍba-l* ("bison place") is located about seven hundred meters west of the central temple area, outside the village. A *ne-ri* tree (probably *Eugenia arnottiana* [DEDR 2917]), mentioned in the version of *velke velke* above, lies at this site. The special status of this place and the role of the bison were considered briefly above in connection with the

⁶The cow sacrifice, it will be recalled, is more carefully delimited in terms of time and place than is that of the buffalo—a distinction vis-a-vis importance that may be compared with that between ritually specific instrumental tunes (the cows) during the funeral and ambient tunes (the buffaloes).

⁷I saw one as I sat atop an elephant in Mudumalai, the reserved forest that lies on the Tamilnadu side of the border with Karnataka and Kerala.

ve-ṭka-r co-ym kol. The significance of the site is not constituted by a single, historical event; it is compounded in layers, through many events, mythical, ritual, historical, and through daily practice.

Several miraculous events were said to have taken place at *toḍba-l* and since the events demonstrate the power of their gods, Kotas consider it a “god’s place” (*devrd eṛm*); they worship at the *ne-rl* tree at the *toḍba-l* whenever they pass by. But the *toḍba-l* is not a mythically constituted place in only one village. It is found in at least four Kota villages: Me-na-r, Kolme-l, Ticga-r and Kurgo-j. In each village the *toḍba-l* (or cognate term) originated with the presence of a bison (*toḍ*), disturbing worship (i.e. running by, startling the people and causing them to scatter). In some cases the bison was shot, and in other cases it ran away. Because the bison reappeared at the same time each year, the place was thought to be divine.⁸

To illustrate the many kinds of activities and stories that continually reinscribe the place as significant, I will briefly list a few more examples: The role of play in constituting spatio-temporal significance (discussed in chapter nine) is evidenced at Kolme-l’s *toḍba-l*, which used to provide a point of reference and boundary in ritual games (Emeneau 1944, IV:319). The role of stories and the combined significance of cows and bisons as members of symbolic species is highlighted in a story Emeneau reports of a cow who raises the children of a man at *toḍba-l* (1944, III:2-23).

Mandelbaum recorded a story in which two boys, in secret, fashioned a statue of god in clay and kept it at *toḍba-l* (May 2, 1937), feeding it rice. Later they brought the statue to the temple and fed it meat. This angered the villagers because the Kota gods are vegetarians. The boys entered the temple and disappeared along with the image. Mandelbaum also recorded a practice of ritual stone lifting at *toḍba-l* (6 June 37). The practice was discontinued when the stones disappeared—according to Sulli, when menstruating women went to the place.

The stones of *toḍba-l* were also significant in the founding of the new temples (*ko-jka-l*) to the gods introduced from Kāramatai, near Mettupalayam on the plains (see I:I:3). A man named Kucvayn became possessed, and acting as the god, indicated where a new temple should be built (see Mandelbaum 1941) by placing a stone from *toḍba-l* on the spot (Mandelbaum n.d., 10-23-49). K. Pucan tells a story in which his ancestor, Kanmi-rve-ri-n (“Eye-hair grandfather”) prophesied his own death—predicting that he and his three brothers, after dying, would grow as four connected trunks of the *ne-rl* tree at *toḍba-l* (the manner in which it indeed grows today).

The place clearly has a history of significant activity surrounding it. Consequently, it is no wonder the rain ceremony includes *toḍba-l* and that the ritual leader who sang “lamp lamp” looked there for the god.

⁸Further details concerning this legend can be found in Mandelbaum’s fieldnotes, e.g. his Feb. 11 1938 annotations to notes of April 24, 1937.

What is true for the *toḍba-l* specifically is generally true about “god’s places” in and around Kota villages: they are associated with several versions of a story (or several stories), sometimes involving the gods; and they are incorporated into a variety of activities, spanning periods of formalized worship (as in the god ceremony) and play (as during *pabm*), as well as everyday life.

Regarding processes of musical signification, the performance of musical tunes and songs which index places and evoke their stories serves to reproduce in another medium a form of worship, quite widespread in India (and no less Kota for that fact), which involves the formal recognition and reconsecration of particular geographic locales. The two major physical institutions in which this is embodied are those of procession and pilgrimage. Music refers to place through at least three means, each of which involve the mediation of lexical text to different degrees and in different ways: 1) Contextual specificity of performance: a tune or song which is highly delimited as to where and when it is performed creates a stronger association between piece and place than one which can be played virtually anywhere and anytime. Textual mediation is tacit here, maintained in the instructions that might be required if a performer forgets how a ritual was performed in a previous year, or if new rules for the time and place of performance are devised in a council (*kuṭm*) meeting; 2) Reference to place within a song, especially when the cultural associations of the place are relevant to the genre or plot of the song. Here one kind of textual mediation is sung, and another provides an interpretation, through storytelling, of the song and the place ; and 3) Associations, maintained through a paramusical storytelling tradition, between instrumental tunes and important events that occurred in a particular places.

PLACE IN MOURNING SONGS (Aṭṭs)

The general points I have raised above also pertain to the texts of mourning songs, although the cultural resonances of significant places are, of course, quite different. I briefly laid out the macro-conceptions of space in Kota cultural geography (II:3:2), the village, or *ko-ka-l*, the intermediate regions in which agricultural and everyday activities take place, the *ka-r*, and the forest, or *re-l*, associated with wild animals, magic, and death, as well as with life giving forces and romantic ideas about the Kota tribal past.⁹ We have already considered a few songs in which the ancestors appear to Kota men in dreams, while they lie in apparently mortal danger sleeping in the forest. Let us now consider the rather more common theme of *aṭṭs*, in which

⁹Sanskrit literature provides parallel terminologies for these three conceptions; the most common opposition is drawn between forest and village, but the intermediary space, called the *vana* in the oldest texts, is represented as well, as “the forest or woods closer to the village, comfortable rather than threatening, and useful as a source of wood for houses, carts, sacrifices, and so on” (Feldhaus 1990, 93). The ambivalence regarding the forest as both threatening and beneficent is also present; in texts such as the *Māhātmyas*, positive associations with the forest outweigh the negative (Feldhaus 1990, 99).

the text recounts events leading to or surrounding a death (represented as the primary textual feature in about twenty five. roughly half the songs which can be classified in this genre). Although in my classification scheme I have listed only one song whose primary stylistic device is the use of place names for advancing the story plot (IVC), this device is used in many of the songs that are based on the story of a person's death (IVA).

The song I have singled out as primarily using the stylistic device of naming places does not, however, tell the story of how a person died. Rather, it recounts autobiographically the experience of a man named Mukva-y Grandfather when he discovers that his mother's sister (who raised him) has died. The singer comes running to a Ficus tree where he thinks people are gathered (possibly the funeral party, or perhaps the place in which the lady died); along the way he comes halfway, and then he comes to a viewpoint (*kandy*) called "little chicken" near Tigga-r.¹⁰ Finally Mukva-y reaches the place in which his aunt lies and addresses her, "did you think of your son?", "from today forward you are forgetting [us] and are sleeping without knowing sleep [a euphemism for death]." These are formulaic phrases used to address the corpse both in actual funerals and in mourning songs.¹¹

Song 33: "Enavve Ma-damma," as sung by V. Mathi, 8 February 92

enavve ma-damma· enavve	my mother Ma-damma mother
enavve ni-lamma enavve	my mother Ni-lamma mother
u-gamne kaneve·no u-gamma	I will never again see U-gamma, U-gamma
indo-reyamma mardiyō enavve	From today you have forgotten [me] my mother
ko-ka-litre atyka-lla-re olo-r idre	From the village, thinking [lit. "saying"] they are by the Ficus tree
o-cre-ne vade-na· ma-damma·	I came running Ma-damma
ergatke ode ka-le ma-damma	Halfway one leg [or area] Ma-damma
kunḡoy kandye i-re ka-le ma-damma	Little Chicken Viewpoint two legs [or places] Ma-damma
enavve ni-lamma enavve	my mother Ni-lamma mother
veceḡde moge ke-rti-yo ¹² meyne idre	the son which was given birth to
neneḡi-yo enavve ma-damma	Did you think of, my mother Ma-damma?
enavve ma-damma	
indeke nine-ne mardite	From today, having forgotten [me], you
ork aca-de oryḡi-yo enavve	sleep not knowing sleep, my mother

¹⁰It is not clear whether the term for place, *ka-l*, is meant in literal terms as "leg" (in which case the place names refer to how big his steps were in running to see his aunt) or whether these are places along the way where people are gathered, in connection with the funeral; or finally, whether these are simply places mentioned to localize the action and evoke the motion of running.

¹¹Recall Pucan's remark as he cried, bowing over the corpse of his friend Va. Kamatn "father, will you not forget us? [literally, will you exist without forgetting]"

¹²I was unable to translate this word, and since the singer also did not know its meaning, it is possible that the pronunciation as well as transcription do not accurately reflect the phonemic content of the word. The part of speech is a probably verb, conjugated for the second person, past tense.

Although the use of place names is but one of several stylistic devices used in the song, the place names themselves serve as points of reference which may distinguish one song from another in a way that is not possible with other kinds of formulaic devices.

To create textual variation, another device is to refer to the deceased as “mother,” “little sister,” or “father” and to include several different names, sometimes pet names, as terms of reference. Here the names are Ma·damma, Ni·lamma, and U·gamma. Since most Kota names are quite common, personal names alone do not always serve as adequate song identifiers (see, for example, all the songs which refer to Mathi); place names, though they may appear in different songs, tend to provide village-specific information and thus to localize a song in time and place. In this instance, the place called “Little Chicken Viewpoint” probably lies in the region called *ka·r*, that is, field rather than forest; it may also lie at the border where the village meets the fields. Place is not used to evoke otherness or death, as some songs do, but rather to establish movement and village locality.

The use of place names to locate the mourner, as in the above song, appears to be unusual, although the expression of grief and mourning as a process of self-reflection is a general feature of these songs. A more common use of place names in *a·!* comes in the description of an excursion (usually for work or to travel from one village to another) undertaken by one or more people (usually two), usually into or passing through a forest or otherwise uninhabited place, and returning. Animals appear en route, and the places in which they appear are named; the animals are variously interpreted as bad omens and/or magically transformed Kurumbas who are stalking the Kotas (a female is usually the target). The most common mourning song in the Kota repertoire, both in text and tune, recounts the story of a brother and sister going into the forest to collect baby bamboo plants (a delicacy, eaten raw or put in a stew); along the way animals appear; the girl goes off into the woods to defecate and she dies. The earliest example of this song appears in a collection compiled by the Madras government museum in 1927. Close analogues of the story are found in versions of *Ticga·r*, ref #22 (most likely where the 1920s recording originated) and *Kurgo·j* (ref #43); the tune is attached to a different story in ref. #s 57, 27. Textual and musical variants of the song will be examined in chapter seventeen. Here I wish to examine one textual version as representative of an important type:

Song 43, “Enavva Ma·yde,” as sung by Kambi of *Kurgo·j*, 7 June 92

enavva ma·yde eneke·nego ma·yde enavva ma·yde	My mother Mathi, what to say?
ta·rgamblnego pi·ce·ne adagadado enavva ma·yde	At the door threshold a cat crossed, my mother Mathi
ve·ra· ve·ra· <u>ide·no·</u> ma·ntke·lo·le ma·yde vakve <u>idi</u> ma·yde	I said “don’t don’t,” Mathi, one who doesn’t listen, “I’ll come” you said

kaleva·leke oygi·le kayrvikye·ne adagadado

ide·nego Mathi

vera· ide·no ma·nteke·lo·le ma·yde vakve ane idi

ayrko·tk oygi·le pa·be·ne adagadado ide·nego ama

ma·nteke·lo·le ma·yde enavva·na ma·yde enavva ma·yde

tonaditke·ne oygi·le molme·ne adagadado ido·ma ama

ma·nteke·lo·le ma·yde enavva·na ma·yde enavva ma·yde

e·rtapke·ne oygi·le e·re·ne erci enavva ma·yde

kipa·ce·ne ukve ane idre·ne parydi du·rtke·ne u·va·di

idre·ne paryde·no enavva·na ma·yde

poraynj k a·ype ane idre·ne parydi enava ma·yde

te·lva·lke o·niyo enavva·na ma·yde enavva ama

titva·lke vadite va·le·ne tervi enke idre·ne

a·te·nego ama me·ki·a·de iti enavva ma·yde

ma·nteke·lole ma·yde, la la la . . .

“While going to the Kalva-1¹³ a black bird crossed,”

I said, Mathi

“Don’t”, I said, Mathi, one who doesn’t listen to words [i.e. advice]. “I’ll come, brother.” you said.

“While going, at Arygo-r, a snake crossed our path,” I said.

One who doesn’t listen to words, my mother Mathi

“At Tondit,¹⁴ a rabbit crossed our path.” we said

One who doesn’t listen to words, my mother Mathi

My mother Mathi, you went to the bamboo place and cut bamboo

When you said, “I’ll go defecate, brother.” “don’t go far!”

I said, my mother, Mathi

“I have become outside [i.e. I have begun to menstruate], brother,” you said, my mother Mathi

You went to the forest door [i.e. the menstrual seclusion house], my mother Mathi

Having gone into the pollution door [the menstrual seclusion house] why didn’t you open the door?, thusly

I called. You were not getting up. my mother Mathi

Mathi, one who doesn’t listen . . .

This version of the song relates the story relatively clearly; other versions may be more vague about some details and more explicit about others. For example, one version states directly that the animals crossing are bad omens; some versions do not provide clues that both a brother and a sister are speaking in the song; some versions do not include the final episode in which the girl begins to menstruate and drops dead after reaching the segregated area near the menstrual seclusion house. No versions, to my knowledge, mention the Kurumba explicitly, but as Duryodana once told me, “we know.” The appearance of animals, the brief separation of the girl, subsequent blood issuing from her uterus and death is a formula, almost redundant in detail, for a story

¹³The entrance to the back of the house, usually where one bathes.

¹⁴In Kolme-1 two places called *tondit* are slightly raised circular areas surrounded by stones; the fires from the *mundka·no·n*’s houses are transferred there at the beginning of the God ceremony. I am not sure what the area(s) with this name signify in Kurgo-j (the location of the song); it is possible that this is the slightly raised ground (*tit*) at which Kotas ritually met with Todas (*ton*). This was an interpretation offered to me by S. Raman, though if I have recorded the pronunciation correctly I cannot figure out how the phonetic shift from *ton* to *ton* would have come about.

of Kurumba black magic.

Other typical devices in the song are words of scolding, such as “one who doesn’t listen to advice”: such phrases are included in any song in which a person who dies can be blamed for something they might have done to bring about the death, or anything dangerous or socially ill-advised they might have done while living.¹⁵ Also, like the expression “to sleep not knowing sleep,” “to be without getting up” is a euphemism for death found in many songs.

The final type of song involving the evocation of place (to be discussed here) draws more specifically on images of the forest. The first song above was essentially village-based, with mention of regions possibly lying just outside the village. The second song mentioned places inside the village and along what are presumably well-known routes, although straying off the path alone, it is made clear (by the brother’s admonition, “don’t go far”), is not advisable for a lone woman. The following song uses a formulaic phrase that indicates the far-off, uninhabited quality of forest areas.

Song 123: “A-la-ra-de aravanga-yre,” as sung by M. Ma-ga-ly, *mundka-no!* of Kina-r village

a-l a-ra-de aravanaka-yre ama kanavi-tace kannu-ra keto	Uninhabited place where people do not move around Woman in her late months of pregnancy, being with child, is helpless
ođe mi-ŋge ni-r e-ydego yema kanavi-tace kannu-ra keto	Take one gulp of water, mother Woman in her late months of pregnancy, being with child, is helpless
a-l a-ra-de aravanaka-yre ama a-l a-ra-de aravanaka-yre ane kanavi-tace kannu-ra keto	Uninhabited place where people do not move around Uninhabited place where people do not move around, brother Woman in her late months of pregnancy, being with child, is helpless
ođe mi-ŋge ni-re ta-ge ane	Give me one gulp of water, brother

As in the second song above, a brother and sister set out together; deep in the forest, the sister apparently feels discomfort from her pregnancy and becomes thirsty. Her brother gives her water. This song originates from the village of Me-na-r and is probably connected with the story of the culture hero Kote-rve-yki-n, who pushed his thumb into a rock at talko-r and created a spring in order for his sister to drink. In another story, a brother shoots an arrow into a boulder to draw water for his sister. The phrase “a-la-ra-d aravanga-r” (pronounced somewhat differently in the context of the song above) “uninhabited place where people do not move around” and several others like it appear to be included in some *a-!s* essentially to create the proper atmosphere; stories like these would not be interesting if the atmosphere was, for example, “a bright shiny

¹⁵Kunkayn of Kurgo-j composed an *a-!s* for her husband whom she had warned not to go to an area of the Nilgiris where many Kurumbas lived. She addressed her husband as “one who doesn’t listen to words” even though he was still alive, and eventually returned home unharmed. (Ref# 87).

day in the meadow surrounded by a virgin forest, butterflies in the air.” The song above is a short one, the essential events summarized in three lines of text. Other songs may describe the forest (or distant uninhabited brushland, which could also be called *ka·r*) in more detail, using alternative conventional names: sometimes, for instance, instead of or in addition to saying “place where men do not move about [i.e. live or work in],” the foreignness of the place is further emphasized by including “place where crows don’t move about [i.e. fly]” (*ka·k a·ra·d*).

PLACE NAMES IN RITUAL AND GENRE PERSPECTIVES

Having considered the significance of place names in god songs and mourning songs, we may attempt to relate textual concepts of place both to concepts of place and space as constituted ritually and to ideas of genre that cross over into several cultural domains. I will deal briefly with four topics: geographic locale; boundedness; emotional value; intersubjective constitution.

1) The ritual aims of maintaining the presence of divinity within the community and carefully removing death (both the corpse and the defilement) from the village contribute to a mapping of divinity onto the village and to a projection of death (by simple opposition) onto places which are not, first and foremost, village or god places. The geographic location of places in god songs are therefore either within a particular village or within the sacred geography of Kota worship. The geographic location of places in mourning songs may include those within the village, but most of the significant activity in these songs occurs outside the village.

2) God songs, like the stories of god tunes and the rituals associated with god ceremonies, incorporate into themselves places with specific geographic boundaries, usually, as mentioned above, contained within or constituting a larger boundary—that of the village. Mourning songs include places with fluid boundaries (a particular forest tract), that lack geographical specificity (an uninhabited place), or that transcend boundaries of village, field and forest within a single story.¹⁶

The parameters of boundary function similarly in musical genre relationships, particularly those involving melody, where the more bounded a given genre or piece was, in the spatio-temporal context of ritual performance, the longer, the more associated with the divine, and the more unique melodically it was: funeral genres in general tended to share more in the way of melodic material and tended to be less strictly limited in terms of performance times and places (within limits, of course: i.e. funeral tunes are only

¹⁶Although funeral grounds and the land of the dead, sometimes mentioned in song texts, are specific geographical places (the former always with boundaries well defined), they are in a way exceptional as specific places involved in funerary ritual and soteriology.

performed during funerals).

3) The emotional value of places included in god songs is one of loving devotion for god. God's places evoke feeling of community, sense of home (divine locales mentioned in a song may remind one of one's home village), personal transformative experiences (like *ponic* for Cindamani). God's places provide focal points through which people perform their relationships with one another (by gathering together in various configurations, in circles, men separated from women, according to ritual rank, etc.) and with god (by praying, dressing in particular ways, abstaining from certain kinds of activities, etc). Singing the names of divine places incorporates the emotional value of place into the very activity of performance, which is itself communal and directed toward god.

The emotional associations with places mentioned in mourning songs are variable, but generally involve fear, loneliness, uncertainty or ambivalence, dread, and sadness. All places mentioned in mourning songs need not be negatively valued; rather, places outside the village must be contextually valued, depending on the events that, in a given location, are reported to have taken place. Divine sites within the village are virtually a part of the people who live within the village. Dark forests, far from the village, are not: they can be the source of Kurumba sorcery or they can be the generative source of things crucial to Kota constructions of themselves as a tribe or community—things such as animals (like the bison), medicinal plants, materials for building houses, temples and so on. The emotional value accorded to extra-village locations is thus ambivalent, much like the ambivalence Kota express towards many aspects of death and the funeral discussed in part II.

4) The intersubjective constitution of a place is the manner in which the significance of a particular locale comes about through the activities of people with one another in that locale. For example, *toḍba·l* is a place where, during the rain ceremony, a group of men will stand, facing the *ne·rl* tree, and pray together: at other times, men or women, together or separately, will remove their shoes, face the tree, and pray. It is not a place where men and women will meet to have sexual intercourse and it is not a place that, during the day at least, people would fear to be alone. Forests and fields, in contrast, are places where men and women may conduct assignations; they are also places where Kotas meet non-Kotas and where customs normally observed within the village may be relaxed. Except for special sites of divinity that may be located physically outside the village (but conceptually within the sacred geography of the village), extra-village places are not usually the site of concerted Kota behavior.¹⁷ Finally, we may relate the lonely, solitary places described in

¹⁷ Green funeral and dry funeral grounds, are, of course, special places in which Kotas join together, and we have considered aspects of funerary social behavior which are like (dancing, singing, praying) and unlike (sexual intercourse, symbolic marriages) god ceremonial social behavior.

the most typical of songs telling the story of death to the personal and solitary nature of individual loss (though communally articulated), to the performance technique of mourning songs, which is individual rather than communal (though in a culturally patterned style), and to the voiced expression of grief at a funeral, which is at once communal (many people are wailing at once) and individual (each person wails differently, with different words and different tunes).

In this discussion of place names I have attempted to show how the significance of places in the social, cultural and religious realms is brought into the musical realm through song texts in a manner parallel with, if more explicit than, the implications of musical-place associations implied by ritual practice. But the semiotic works in both directions. Musical texts also project meanings onto places by naming events, people, and place names in particular, memorable configurations (a tiger attacking a person in a desolate jungle; a brother helping a suffering sister get water at talko-r; animals crossing the path of travelers in particular places, thus adumbrating one of their tragic deaths).

Related to the musical representation of place is play, the activity of a seemingly recreational nature at a given location which serves to reinscribe its ritual significance at a particular time. Play is not only acted out physically, but also verbally through the texts of songs.

PLAY

I have suggested that one of the effects of ritual play (the word "function" may not be accurate here) is to reinforce other kinds of activity that draw attention to the significance of a particular place and time. For example, as the god ceremony builds to an emotional and devotional climax, the focus of activity shifts to the center of the village. On the last night of the god ceremony in Kolme-l, amidst the din of activity surrounding food preparation, the sound of worshipers chanting "o-ly" as they pray before each temple, and the sound of god tunes, at one point boys and young men begin traversing the length of the temple area, one set of times while chanting "ho-ko-," and another, by racing [see outline and chart of Kolme-l god ceremony in appendix].

Rain ceremonies in all villages are also concerned with instantiating the divine significance of places. During the rain ceremony of Ticga-r, one of the processional sites at which Kota men stop, worship, and perform a set of rituals is the that of the god Kanatrayn, which takes the form of a stone.¹⁸ A tune is performed to induce the possession of the te-rka-rn, questions are asked about various ills in the village and

¹⁸It is believed that this stone transforms into a snake, slithers to a river for a drink, and returns to a new spot in the general vicinity, in the form of that same stone. Stories recount attempts by men to move the stone, and recriminations of the god for polluting or otherwise disrespecting his domain.

whether the god will bring rain, and after the possession is completed, the men perform a series of physical games.¹⁹

Although play may intensify the effect of ritual in marking a particular time and place as special, it may also diffuse the imposition of rules, seriousness, and often the physical hardship of proper ritual performance. Play may occupy a special position in the unfolding of a ritual process, or it may occur alongside other, more seemingly rigid, structured activities (e.g. Turner 1982, 84-5). At least nine different Kota songs involve play of one form or another (listed in my outline under III. Other, B. Play and C. Childhood or youth); three of these are classified by Kotas as god songs (3, 4, 116, 134), even though the texts themselves do not all refer to the gods. One of the nine songs is an *a-!*, in this case, what we would call a lullaby (a grandmother tries to distract a crying baby from asking for its deceased father by telling it to go and play, etc.) rather than a song of mourning. Five songs have been classified under “play” because they are playful in form and content—plays on words, rhymes, puns, or are directed in lighthearted fashion to young people (69, 119, 52, 73, 72). Play is infused, through puns etc., into many Kota songs (which have been classified according to other dominant themes in my typology) and thus should be viewed as much a technique as a type.

In everyday life, play songs like other sorts of songs may be sung simply for enjoyment, privately, either by one person to others, or in a group; lullabies, sung by a mother to her child, also tend to include an element of play. The function of play in god songs is perhaps epitomized in the song *naraja-yne*; mentioned above in the context of reflexive songs (songs which mention singing), *naraja-yne* appears to be a quintessential god song. What is the text and why is it sung?

Song 3: “Naraja-yne,” as sung by Pa. Mathi, 11 February 91

talan ni-re tirka-vo-ne naraja-yne naraja-yne	The one who doesn't clear the head channel. ²⁰
talpepe tirka-vo-ne naraja-yne naraja-yne	“naraja-yne” ²¹
aynade-re ora-vo-ne naraja-yne naraja-yne	is the one who doesn't reserve curds [for the next day's yoghurt]
avede-re ora-vo-ne naraja-yne	The one who does not follow his father's god,
	is the one who does not follow his mother's god,

¹⁹The games are *cika-!* (same as Tamil *kapaṭi kapaṭi*, men line up in two teams and challenge each other to cross over into the others' territory without being caught), *ma-ṛige ko-ṛige* (I have no data on this) and *dirdirvaṭṭe* (men hold hands in a circle and spin, saying “*dirdirvaṭṭe*” until the centrifugal forces causes them to separate. The team sports/games are divided along clan lines (*ke-r* residents)—that is, potential or actual brothers-in-law compete.

²⁰The day before the temple opening, in Kolme-l all able bodied men are supposed to pray at and help clean the water channel, where it begins at the confluence of seven streams from seven springs. On ordinary days, when the channel gets clogged, men may also be called upon to clear the channel. A man who does not participate in these activities has shirked his responsibility.

²¹The term *naraja-yne* is obscure; I cannot find the reference in my notes, but recall one interpretation of the term to be an onomatopoeic representation of the sound of the anklets jingling as the women dance.

[avkode] aynk ode ukte ci-le naraja-yne
 avke ode packar vara-re naraja-yne
 nikorm ga-le ni-javdoyne naraja-yne
 ta-demoge tade-ga-ra naraja-yne
 ve-demoge vile-ga-ra naraja-yne
 nikormga-le ni-javdoyne naraja-yne naraja-yne
 me-ke-ro-ne me-vitgala- naraja-yne

ki-ke-ro-ne ki-vitgala- naraja-yne

koryke-ro-ne kucelega-ra naraja-yne
 mandeka-no-ne mane-ga-ra naraja-yne
 tujve-ra-le cube-ga-ra naraja-yne
 kanmo-da-rme kajmlaya naraja-yne naraja-yne

du-lyga-le dubice ga-le naraja-yne naraja-yne
 ga-yliga-le kabac ga-le naraja-yne naraja-yne
 karganni-re karva-vo-ne naraja-yne naraja-yne
 e-ikuruva-le e-ra-vo-ne naraja-yne naraja-yne

amayneke ayneke aya- dakudamane da-yre
 ardi-ko naraja-yne

[For mother one],²² for father one, [good kind of] sari.
 For mother one green bordered [men's] shawl,
 In the water pot area, Niji's mother Doyne,²³
 The boy [named] Tad is one who says "give me"²⁴
 The boy [named] Vil is the one who says "I want it"
 In the water pot area, Niji's mother Doyne
 The man from the top line of houses is the one who
 steals from the top of the ragi-lump
 The man from the bottom line of houses is the one
 who steals from the bottom of the ragi-lump
 The man from koryke-r is an arrogant person
 The tax collector is the one without a tuft,
 Old man Tuj is a captain
 Kajmel [wears an] eyering [a particular kind of ring
 with raised center]²⁵
 The cremation area is a big area
 The way en route [is called] Kabackala
 The one who will not cross over the kargan ni-r²⁶
 is the one who does not go to the e-ikuruva-l [a god
 place in the dry funeral ground]
 The route to Dakudaman is blocked²⁷

The text to this song appears rather fragmented and confusing until one realizes that, unlike in mourning songs for instance, the references are not literal. Each line or set of lines pokes fun at villagers, accusing them of laziness (Niji's mother sits around and doesn't carry water; one man doesn't take responsibility to clean the channel or prepare curds) or selfishness (the boy who says "give me" and "I want"; the man who grabs the choicest parts of the ragi lump); some lines state the opposite of what is the case (men wearing saris and women wearing *varas*; the cremation area being large rather than small); some lines draw parallels through what I would regard as fairly obscure alliteration (koryke-ro-ne kucelega-ra, "the one from koryke-r is arrogant"; the morpheme "kory" might mean here diminutive or deficient [DEDR 1851] or sheepish [DEDR 2165], and thus the attribution of arrogance would evoke an irony consistent with the rest of the song) and

²²Mistake in singing.

²³That is, Niji's mother simply sits around near the water pots without bothering to get up and carry water or do any work.

²⁴There is a play on words, the boy's name, Tad, sounds like the words that mean "who says give me," ta-de.

²⁵This and the next line are structured in opposites, Kajmel does not wear a ring and the cremation area is not large.

²⁶The kargan ni-r is the very pure water the soul must cross over on the way to the motherland. It also plays a role in the dry funeral ritual.

²⁷This passage is obscure to me. It is implied that god has blocked the path to a place called Dakudamane because the rituals were not performed correctly.

some draw parallels with alliteration coupled with irony (*mandeka·no·ne mane·ga·ra*, “the tax collector is without a tuft”—traditionally a tuft is a sign of manhood and mature ritual status; someone in an official office within the village should therefore wear a tuft; *tujve·ra·le cube·ga·ra*, “old man Tu·j is a captain”—an old, enfeebled man could hardly lead an army).

Taken out of context, the song *naraja·yne* might be viewed as a humorous song and nothing more. But since this song is a god song, even though it does not propitiate god, we may be led to ask, what makes this a god song? One answer, perhaps trivial, is that it is performed by women in god-song contexts and is stylistically suited to be so performed. But there is more: not only is *naraja·yne* a god song, but it is one of the handful of Kota language god songs Kotas consider to be old and traditional (*ma·mu·l*); and within this handful, it is the song mentioned in other songs as metonymic for god songs in general. What in an everyday context might be considered a casual example of cultural reversal for the sake of play must be considered a more formal icon of symbolic reversal in the context of ritual. Such reversal should not be unexpected, especially in the Kota ritual system, which, like many other ritual systems, is classificatory at a variety of levels and in a variety of domains. “The symbolic classification is given an intensified application by reversing the signs, as it were, on the values of its categories” (Needham 1979, 41).

The musical domain, as I have demonstrated in copious detail, is one of the most classificatory, and it is thus not surprising to find reversal expressed through this medium. James Peacock has written, and the present case confirms, “the classificatory world view, which emphasizes the subsuming of symbols within a frame, nourishes and is nourished by symbols of reversal.” (Peacock 1978, 221-2). The representation of laziness, selfishness, cross-dressing and so on within the frame of a song, and the song within the frame of well articulated ritual junctures, clarifies the structure—it reflexively defines the frame (Babcock 1978, 24-5). Acting out these representations in real life, outside the frame of ritual, would obstruct, not clarify, the structure of everyday life: “the instrumental world view, which emphasizes the sequential harnessing of means to an end, threatens and is threatened by such symbols” (Peacock 1978, 221-2).

What do Kotas say about the song? My impression is that in general, the women who sing these songs do not reflect deeply on why they sing them; in a general sense, performers view the singing of *naraja·yne* as part of the process of worship—albeit one of the more enjoyable ones—and nothing more. Furthermore, the text to this particular song, despite its ubiquitousness, is not well-known by all singers; most Kota women of Kolme·l performing the song simply “get by” by singing the refrain “*naraja·yne naraja·yne*,” while a more experienced singer like Pa. Mathi leads with the verses. I mentioned in my discussion of punishment and sin in the afterworld a comment Pa. Mathi offered after singing the above version of *naraja·yne*, “when bad people die god sends the soul to a place on the ground where ants will bite them. Good people are sent next

to god.” The last line in this version of the song refers to god blocking the passage of men to a place called Dakudaman because rituals were not performed properly. Taking the comment along with the last line, I suspect that Dakudaman is another name for, or is a particular part of the land of the dead. In this view, the song appears to express in reverse the ritual messages of the entire god ceremony: “we the Kotas [as it were] are unified, respect the old ways, differentiate gender roles, etc.”

Yet the element of play in this song should not be ignored. Indeed, in my field notes I summarized Duryodana’s explanation of the meaning of this song as “it is very sad at the end of the main function when the *patm eri-kd kol* [coin removing tune] is played. To counteract this sadness the song *naraja-yne* is sung on the *pa-! na-!* [song day].” The song is not only sung on the song day, but is also sung immediately following the removal of the coins from the temple. After the dancing and singing at the end of the god ceremony and the dry funeral, a special day or section of a day, in some villages, is also devoted to play—women’s sports, dressing up in costumes, men’s burlesque of a Toda funeral (reported in the 1930s). All of these activities can be viewed as variations on a type.

Anthropologists, literary theorists, semioticians and others have long speculated on the functions and meanings of play, sport, reversal and so forth, both in the context of ritual and in everyday life, in so-called “tribal” societies and post-industrial, multicultural societies (e.g. Turner 1978, 276 and *passim*). Reversal, according to some analysts of “play,” provides an emotional, psychological, or physical outlet for a society, or people, *from something*: an established social order (cf. Gluckman), stress (an extension, in the American popular consciousness, at least, of the Aristotelian concept of catharsis), or the strain and seriousness of ritual (an implication of Duryodana’s explanation and one that I believe most Kotas would be comfortable with). While these kinds of explanations may oversimplify the phenomenon of reversal in some societies (Babcock 1978, 24 and *passim* in volume), I believe they do ring true to an extent in Kota society, and Kotas would agree.

But even in the limited contexts for ritual play, we have encountered several layers of meaning: one, the “safety valve,” diffusing the tension and work of ceremonial performance, two, the activity of play in divine space as a form of worship, three, play as activity which tends to further demarcate an area as special,²⁸ and four, play as irony, communicating its opposite (the idea that the text of *naraja-yne* as moralistic: if you do x.

²⁸“In many societies and circumstances. . . symbolic inversion or reversal is resorted to constantly in order to ascribe to an event, a boundary in time or space, a status, a quality, etc., some special, abnormal or perturbing significance” (Needham 1979, 41).

y, and z yo i will not live a happy afterlife, near god).²⁹

NARRATIVE MEANING IN GOD SONGS AND THE DEATH REPERTOIRE

Unlike those associated with some God tunes, extramusical meanings associated with *ke-r ko!s* (one subdivision of the death of funeral tune repertoire) seldom derive directly from stories. The significance of *ke-r ko!s* is mediated through the *a-!l* (mourning song) tradition. A particular *ke-r ko!* may remind the listener of a mourning song, the text of that song, and finally the story that contextualizes that text. God songs, however, do not provide meaning to god tunes—and they also do not tell a story. Since god songs sometimes share melodies with dance tunes, however, some dance tunes may evoke the text of a god song in the minds of listeners.

Other ritual meanings associated with funeral tunes, like those associated with god tunes, arise from the conjunction of a particular tune in a particular time and place with a particular ritual (e.g. bier lighting); unlike in the god ceremony, however, there is no significant recontextualization in which former events or rituals are memorialized through the performance of a specially constructed sub-genre (i.e. the twelve god tunes).

Combing my collection of Kota funeral tunes, I discovered only three (all from Kurgo-j village) which appeared to retain extramusical associations without the mediation of a song. Only one significant story is attached to two of these tunes. Although I failed to collect a detailed version of that story, the essential “sad” element was an event in which for some reason the *mundka·no·n* of the village was jailed. The Kotas formed a musical procession accompanying the *mundka·no·n* to jail; another musical procession accompanied this ritualist’s return to the village later when he was released. The two tunes, composed one for each of these processions, are now included in the repertoire of ambient funeral tunes.³⁰ Although the story of the

²⁹This is Burke’s “aesthetic negative,” “whereby any moralistic thou-shalt-not provides material for our entertainment, as we pay to follow imaginary accounts of ‘deviants’ who in all sorts of ingenious ways are represented as violating these very Don’ts” (Burke 1968, 13 [cited in Babcock 1978, 19])

³⁰Note that the ushering of the *mundka·no·n* out of and then back into the village with music is a typical ritual use of music associated with the god ceremonies; in funerals, the central procession escorts the corpse out of the village and all return silently. Only at the end of the dry funeral does instrumental music accompany processions returning from the dry funeral ground—and that music is named after the primary ritualist for the dry funeral, *mel pac mog*, who must rush back to the village after breaking a clay cup of clarified butter on a stone in the cremation area. It is both in keeping with the honor and respect for a *mundka·no·n* and the ritual pattern associated with divinely associated personages that a musical procession escorts the *mundka·no·n* out of and back into the village. The event itself is sad, and thus the music is considered not god music, but funeral music. It is thus in some ways akin to a mourning song, which may have positive reminiscences of the deceased; it is also similar in its mixed attributes to the coin removing tune, which is a sad god tune.

mundka·no·n's jailing could easily be the subject of an *a·t!*, as far as I know it is not. The two tunes in this case come to refer to the story directly, not by reproducing the melody of a mourning song, but by indexical reference because instrumental music was involved in the original event. The other tune that memorializes an event, apparently without a mourning song attached, is that which was composed for the death of Indira Gandhi.³¹

Most ambient funeral tunes can be considered meaningful only through reference to the text of a mourning song. In the next chapter I will analyze variants of one such mourning song and illustrate what happens musically when the song is rendered on instruments.

³¹The Kotas feel a strong attachment to the Indian nation and its primary political party, the Congress Party. A Kota song mourns the death of Nehru, and Kotas sometimes name (or nickname) their children Gandhi or Nehru.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

VARIATION, TRANSMISSION AND INSTRUMENTALITY IN KOTA SONGS OF MOURNING: A CASE STUDY OF “MATHI”

In many parts of the world there are culturally recognized performance forms whereby mourners give texted and melodic expression to their grief. In a broad sense, these can all be termed “laments,” although many scholars prefer to limit the term to those forms in which stylized or actual physical crying form an intrinsic part of the performance style. Sonic ways of expressing grief, however, frequently lie on a continuum of forms which would appear to the observer to be, on one end, spontaneous crying, and on the other, composed song. The contexts in which these forms appear also vary widely. Some may be found only in the context of a funeral or a wedding (wedding laments are sung by Russians, Karelians and North Indians, for example [Mazo 1994; Tolbert 1994; Henry 1988]); others may be forbidden in these contexts: others may be sung at will. Some laments are personal and private, like R. Mathi’s song about her dead child, a song unknown even by her son; some lamentation is so public that every member of the community feels (or is supposed to demonstrate grief as if he or she is) equally attached to the focus of the lament—as in Shi’i *majlis-e ‘azā* (mourning assemblies) when men and women render *marsiyah*, beat themselves about the body, and commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Husain. Although both men and women may cry and mourn in particular contexts, it appears that in many cultures it is women who perform the stylized crying with both text and melody (Tolbert 1994, 180).

We saw in the genre boundaries chapters at the beginning of part III that Kotas distinguish between singing and crying: the tuneful weeping at a funeral is crying (*agl*, DEDR 282), the mourning song is generally composed afterward and is considered singing. The crucial question, in considering the Kota *a:tl* in a comparative context, is what is the relationship between crying and singing? We know what Kotas tell us: mourning songs (and instrumental funeral tunes) may be inspired by actual lamenting. The stories of the songs themselves often describe such and such a man singing and crying a particular song for his daughter (etc.), but this must be taken with a grain of salt because an utterance of grief changes and becomes more formalized when it is repeated. It is necessary to examine the unique features of the *a:tl*, in the Kota context, in order to understand to what extent it is stylistically similar to or different from a funeral lament.

I have considered Kota music in specific contextual terms but only in broad stylistic terms. Examining

the song “Mathi” as a case study in this chapter, I hope to shed light on the entire repertoire of Kota mourning songs (*a:ʔ!*). “Mathi,” which exists in more variants than any other Kota mourning song, is likely to exemplify many of the important musical processes that occur as a piece is transformed in time and across space (from village to village). I will ask specifically: 1) What is the relationship between mourning songs and funeral wailing; how does the genre compare with Tamil genres of mourning and lamenting elsewhere in the world; 2) What are the stylistic differences between mourning songs as rendered vocally and instrumentally; and 3) What are the mechanics of musical variation and what distinguishes one mourning song from another.

HISTORY AND CONTEXTS OF RECORDED EXAMPLES

The earliest recorded example of “Mathi” appeared on a 1922 recording as part of the Madras Government Museum’s study of “Languages and Dialects of the Madras Presidency.”¹ This *a:ʔ!* is not only the most widely known and textually and melodically varied one throughout Kota society, it is also an example of a mourning song melody that musicians perform on the *ko!* during a funeral. Since the story, characters and melodic details in each village version differ, villagers attending a funeral and hearing the instrumental melody will be prompted to remember the sad story of a death specific to their villages.

The 1922 rendition provides a baseline for this study since it is the oldest linking a particular story to the well-known melody. My field recordings of songs are catalogued in the appendix. The song numbers and their lettered variants refer to this catalogue; the numbers do not refer to particular musical relationships (i.e. song number 23 is not more similar to song 22 than is song 27), but rather to branches of a family of melodies and texts which are linked to one another (sometimes tenuously) through melody, text, or theme. A branch is defined in this analysis as a song associated with a particular story in a particular village; this analytical choice is based on my understandings of Kota definitions of song. Though many Kota women have told me that the melody is the component of a song most important in terms of its aesthetic value, it is not the feature which defines a song. Thus songs composing a “branch” are based on a single story and have similar texts, but are sometimes set to different melodies. Variants within a particular branch are labeled with small-case letters. All songs which link the story of a brother and sister going to the forest (usually to collect baby bamboo; see chapter sixteen) and which use place names connected with the village of Ticgar are labeled song type 22; number 22a is the Madras Government Museum recording. Subsequent lettered

¹I thank the Anthropology division of the Madras Government Museum for kindly allowing me to make an audio reproduction of the Song of Mathi.

sublabels were assigned according to the order in which I compiled the list, not according to similarity.

Very closely related is song type 43, the variant of “Mathi” which villagers of Kurgoj claim to be their own. It is the identity between song and village that provide the basis for distinction between 22 and 43, since the story outlines are identical and the melodies are only slightly different. The differences between branches 22 and 43 are further complicated by the fact that in the 1922 recording a linguistic form is employed (for the word “I said” *pardge·n*) which Kotas now associate with Kurgoj dialect; yet the place names in 22a belong to Ticgar. This form of the conjugated verb was apparently a more common variant in earlier days, according to Emeneau’s data.

Furthermore, the song sounds as if it may have been sung by Sulli, Emeneau’s informant. I infer this because, 1) Sulli recorded a song for the musicologist Arnold Bake during the same period and the voice quality is similar; and 2) Sulli was the most Westernized, educated and outgoing Kota of his time and thus it is likely that the Government researchers and the Gramophone Company technicians would have been led first to Sulli; 3) I played the song for Sulli’s widow Rangamathi and she seemed to believe also that it was Sulli.² If Sulli was indeed the singer it would have been a confusing task to locate the song geographically anyway, since the place names would have been from Ticgar, but the dialect or accent might have revealed the singer’s Kolme-l village origin. On the other hand, dialectical details could have been altered by the singer. This variant is unusual also because it was sung by a man. Only a few of the versions I recorded were sung by a man, B. Kamatn, and each of these versions is somewhat more standardized than the women’s versions. Finally, the 1922 version was almost certainly rehearsed because it was to be recorded directly to disk. In a sense, the printed version could be said to be yet another variant, because the it differs from that which was actually sung.

I did not find examples of “Mathi” on Mandelbaum’s 1938 field recordings, although I did discover one song whose story is identical to one of the branches of the melody (song 27; Mandelbaum cylinder no. 22): the text is undecipherable from the cylinder recording, but the story can be found in Mandelbaum’s field notes and his diary confirms that the song recorded corresponds to the story (put text in appendix). Mandelbaum’s recorded version is included here because I might offer clues about the nature of musical transmission in this genre. Two branch variants were recorded by Nazir Jairazbhoy, one in Kurgoj in 1975 (43d) and one in Ticgar in 1984 (22f); Jairazbhoy also recorded an instrumental version of the melody in

²I do not consider this a reliable indicator in and of itself, for she had no other recordings from that period to compare with her memory, but it should be mentioned in conjunction with my other observations. The Museum publication provided no clue to the identity of the singer, although a “Parable of the Prodigal Son” was collected from a Kota named Kipas (Shit) and this same man may have also been the singer.

1975.

I recorded the remaining sixteen sung examples between 1990-92 in the villages of Ticga-r, Kolme-l, Kurgo-j and Kina-r, and one instrumental version from a funeral in Kurgo-j in 1991. The branches represented are associated with (and the home villages of the singers are) Ticga-r, Kolme-l, Kurgo-j and Me-na-r.³ Version 57b was the first version of the melody I heard, and alerted me to the existence of the genre. I did not elicit most of the versions of the song. In some cases I requested a singer to perform *a-t/s* because I had already collected a large number of god songs, and idiosyncratic pieces based on either original or film tunes, and felt that I needed to diversify my song sample. After transliterating and translating the 1922 recording for myself I became interested in recording versions of that particular branch and asked one lady, Penij, Duryodana's maternal aunt, to sing it. The request, not entirely successful, resulted in several partial versions beginning with the song text fragment with which Duryodana and I had prompted her: "Ka-rga-la-re Ma-yde"—*ka-rga-l* being a place name that identified the song as a Ticga-r song. Since Penij was an aging lady from Kolme-l who had married a man in Ticga-r we thought she might know the song. Her version is useful only from the standpoint of melody and its relationship to a brief textual fragment. No other versions were specifically requested from any singer.

THE STORIES

A chart summarizing and providing reference to the field tapes, notes/transliterations and subjects of every Kota song I collected is included in the appendix. I will reproduce here the summaries of the stories associated with the branches to be discussed in this chapter.

No. 22: In Ticga-r, a brother and sister go to the forest to collect baby bamboo, meet with omens in the form of animals along the way. Girl separates from her brother briefly to defecate. A Kurumba performs sorcery upon her and she dies after reaching home.

No 27: Me-na-r story of two brothers who set out to hunt for bison. One brother, who happens to be a *mundka-no-n*, came out to pray early in the morning and saw his older brother return from the menstrual seclusion hut where he was visiting his "other wife" (having an affair?). He told his older brother he should not go hunting because he had become defiled. The older brother ignored his advice. The two went hunting with bows and arrows (these were the days before guns) and shot a male bison (*tode-r*). The bison did not die immediately but first gored the older brother. Since the *mundka-no-n* could not, for fear of more severe defilement (since he was a priest), go near his brother if he died he had to ask his older brother whether he was alive. The song mentions each place they reached as the younger brother carried his wounded brother. The elder managed to stay alive until his

³The differences between these two lists of villages does not derive so much from the phenomenon of a woman singing a song that originated in a different village so much as that women sometimes move to a new village after they marry and would therefore know songs both from their natal villages and from their husband's villages.

younger brother deposited him in an abandoned house in the village.

No 35: Somewhat more recent song composed by one Mukva-y-pe-ri-n of Ticga-r over the death of his younger sister, Mathi. She had been warned not to marry into a Porga-r village family. Her husband was lazy and worked her to death.

No 40: Kolme-l song of a girl named Mathi who went to work in a *rāgi* (millet) field and was confronted by a Kurumba who appeared in the guise of various animals. The Kurumba man performed black magic on a leaf (*veky*) with which Kotas obtain suds for bathing, and planted it in an area he knew she would bathe. The girl died.

No. 43: Similar to story associated with no. 22. Additional details: the woman feels pain in her womb and dies. It appears from the song text that the Kurumba may have performed the trick of replacing the woman's insides with stones.

No 57: A girl from Ticga-r leads a calf through a forest on her way to Kolme-l. A tiger attacks and kills both of them.

MOURNING SONGS, CRYING, AND LAMENTING

People of many cultures lament over the dead tunefully, but many of these, like the Kotas, make a distinction between crying and singing. The most apt comparison in the present context would be the society culturally and linguistically most similar to that of the Kotas, the Toda:

37. A relative of the dead person may, at any time from the death to the second funeral, lament of the body using words of the song technique.⁴ Such real laments are probably in most cases fragmentary . . .

A regular composer often composes an *o:tyfoy* ('which [he/she/they] lamented'), a song in which one relative, or more than one, or a friend or friends, is represented as lamenting at length for the dead person or persons. . . Occasionally it was said that a real lament of the first kind suggested to a composer an *o:tyfoy*. . . Occasionally an *o:tyfoy* is a *po:t* [a genre of song which employs a certain class of melodies], i.e. has a tune of that kind. . . The *o:tyfoy* and the dance-song (*kon*)⁵ are often of much the same form, and sometimes the informants identified an *o:tyfoy* as being also *kon*. . . (Emeneau 1971, xl)

An example of Toda wailing (with a small clarinet and drum band audible in the background) followed by an example of Todas singing about star crossed lovers who met a tragic end will illustrate the difference between what Emeneau calls a "real" lament, and a song which could take a tragic story as its basis (see examples four and five on the "Lamenting in South India" cassette). Toda and Kota cases are similar: both recognize singing and crying to be two different processes, although, both textually and melodically, one may inform the other.

Margarita Mazo found that Russian villagers also distinguish between crying and singing. Lamenting, in

⁴Toda song composition employs pair-words in a distinctive and complex poetic technique. The details of this compositional technique need not be discussed here.

⁵A shouting/chanting style similar to that of the Kotas, which among the latter consists of the syllables "ho: ko:"

Mazo's usage, is "an open process that, in its natural context, often lacks both a clear-cut beginning and ending, because there is no clear demarcation between weeping, lamenting, and other sounds that make up the event. Lamenting often emerges gradually from sobbing or the drawing out of exclamatory syllables" (1994, 164). Examples of Kotas tunefully crying at a funeral, which can be heard on the accompanying cassette ("Kota women wailing"), fall clearly into this category of performance: people talk, musicians warm up, Pucan whistles the *ko!* he is about to play, bangles clatter, and several women intone their crying. Speech tones and song tones vary in their frequency from singer to singer, as do the degrees of melodic development among those styles that approach song.

While ethnomusicologists have noted that laments typically consist of "short phrases, descending melodic contour within a limited range, lack of melismas, extensive use of microintervals and microrhythm." Mazo also notes that laments are distinguished by their timbral quality and modulation, and the temporal fluctuation of pitch and articulation (Mazo 173). One style of Kota wailing can be heard at the beginning of the first example. The melodic activity is conjunct and confined to three tones: tone two is an interval of a major second from tone one and tone three is an extremely narrow second (less than a half-tone) from tone two. As in many examples of wailing, the woman sings/intones forcefully until she is out of breath: the tone ends abruptly and distinctly, and then the wailer inhales deeply before beginning again. Another style is closer to speaking: the mourner utters a few or even a large string of words on a single recited tone (or nearby micro-tones) or shouted semi-pitch. A sustained note follows, again until the griever is almost out of breath: finally the wailer emits a either descending glissando, or creates a discontinuity in the sound by intermittent sobs.

The second example illustrates some of the same long, drawn out tones of the first example, and also a style in which speech seems to be intoned, but pitch values are less definite. Some rhythmic and speech-melody regularity is provided by the recurrent "Woe! Uncle!" (*ayo· ma·mo·*). As the wailing increases in intensity, the voice quality sometimes becomes, within a single phrase, thinner and higher in pitch: here the contour is arch-shaped rather than descending. As the wailers approach the bottoms of their vocal ranges, the tones becomes harmonically thick and somewhat less continuous. This difference in continuity is probably a result of the difference in pressure on the vocal chords required for high and low pitched sounds. I would guess that shrill sounds are less likely to be affected by the infirm feeling created by sadness than are lower pitched vocal sounds.

One woman momentarily cries in a several undulating waves of an interval sometimes as large as an octave "*ayo· ma·mo· . . . ka·ŋ a·yko·*" ("Woe Uncle, You are Gone!" [lit: become not seen]). Towards the end of the selection a more texted, less tuneful style is heard: many words are strung together, again followed by a

sustained tone. There is no significant melodic descent, possibly since this is in the middle range of the mourners voice. The third example covers some of the same time period as the second, but was recorded closer to the scene on videotape and ends with crying combined with the sound of Pucan and Raman playing *dukt kol*.

LAMENT VERSUS “SONG”

Mazo’s reference to the “natural context” of a lament raises a crucial issue in any attempt to discuss this genre cross culturally: the very fact of stylization may bring about a more general aestheticization, which could potentially move the form out of a clearly functional context and into the realm of entertainment. Stylization and aestheticization may also lead singers to develop professional skills in lamenting. Karelians (Tolbert 1994), Russians, and Indians, for example, hire professional lamenters to establish and sustain the emotional tenor of a grievous occasion. The second process (professionalization), but not the first, is evident among Tamils: professional lamenters may be hired for funerals. Although Tamil laments (*oppāri*) do not, to my knowledge, serve as important forms of entertainment, they are sometimes performed in the *context* of entertainment, such as a drama or story-songs (*kataippāṭṭu*), to evoke mourning in a scene depicting a funeral. The first process (defunctionalization), not the second, is apparent among the Kotas: funeral lamenting is sometimes formalized into a song type, called *aṭṭi*, a form in which mourning is only a subset of the possible themes. Though some women may be particularly talented at singing *aṭṭi*s, there are no “professionals” as such, and even if there were, singing such songs is never a formal part of a Kota funeral.

Listening now to almost any version of the song “Mathi” one might understand why scholars wish to analytically distinguish between something called “lament,” which is a way of crying that may *sound* musical to some ears, and a particular “song,” however mournful, which has a clear and repetitive structure and which can be recognized as the “same” no matter who sings it. “Mathi” has three or four phrases. The first always ascends from a final reciting tone or tonic pitch to a perfect fourth, descends slightly and then culminates on the fifth degree. The next phrase begins on the fourth degree, ascends to the fifth degree and descends to the tonic. The third (and fourth, if there is one) phrase remains in the tonic region, sometimes dipping below, seldom reaching up beyond a partially-flatted third degree. Tonally, “Mathi” like other Kota *aṭṭi*s, is more like song than like speech or wailing. The third degree tends to fluctuate in its intonation, however, and this may be related to the fluid intonation of wailing, but it is also characteristic of instrumental music, and to a lesser extent (impressionistically speaking), of the older god songs as well. More recently-composed god songs are diatonic and often resemble popular *bhajan* styles, and sometimes cinema songs.

KOTA MOURNING SONGS, BALLADS, TAMIL *OPPĀRI*, AND IRULA MOURNING SONGS

Kota *a-!s* occupy the singing side of the crying-singing continuum and as we shall see, Tamil laments occupy the crying, but both share textual features. The Tamil term for funeral lament is *oppāri*, which derives from a root meaning to agree with or compare. The etymology of the term could be based on either of these meanings: The singer “agrees with” the mourners in the sense that she commiserates with them (though in many cases she may be the primary mourner); the singer “compares” by drawing out memories of the deceased’s life and comparing the deceased with great people and things. In Kota songs, comparison of the deceased with national heroes, such as Indira Gandhi (song 101), and locally known, admired individuals is common. Recall for example (Chapter eight, section three) the *a-!* in which a dead Kota girl is addressed as “Jogi’s daughter”, because she looked like this beautiful Badaga girl. M. N. Srinivas translated a string of *oppāris* connected with a Tamil rain bringing ceremony which illustrates this style of comparison (Srinivas 1944, 52-53):

<p>11. vatakke purakanarā ē en ācca vairamē! arupatati kampamē, tēkku palakamē anke vācalellā pūñcatiya, vāri erikkym tannīr, inta kotumpāvi tēcattile, ival vācal vantu kiitaleyo!</p> <p>(drummed interlude)</p> <p>12. mānattu vandtē, matiyēlanta ival pūcentē! kānattu vantē, ival manam kaliyāta pudento!</p> <p>(drummed interlude)</p> <p>14 pacca mañcal tattilēyam, pātacaram mējaiyile, en pāntiyanam pātaiyilai, pātacaram aniyavanta, pacankiliyāl mūlaiyile</p>	<p>(There is) a well to the north⁽⁵⁾ O, my beautiful diamond core (of wood), My sixty-foot tall pillar, my teak plank Flower plants are before their doors, (and) water overflows in the kotumpāvi village, she has come to our doors</p> <p>O bee (flying in the) sky, this woman’s intoxicated flower-ball⁽¹⁾ O forest bee, is her flower-knot (do hard that it) won’t melt?</p> <p>The fresh turmeric⁽³⁾ is on the plate alone, (and) the anklet on the table my husband⁽⁴⁾ is on the bier, (they) came to remove the anklet (and) the parrot (self) is in the corner (weeping)⁽⁵⁾</p>
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5 The widow is mourning her husband, and praising his great strength. She compares him to the hard core of a mature tree, which is said to be strong and hard as a diamond.

1 The bee is compared to the lover and the flowers in the hair-kot to the beloved

3 Turmeric freshly dug up from the earth rubbed over the body, and it is considered to be the sacred symbol of woman’s earthly happiness.

4 The husband is frequently addressed as “my pāndya,” comparing him to the Rājās of Madurai.

5 This pathetic song deals with the harrowing theme of the jewels, etc., being removed from the widow's person on the tenth day.

Oppāris generally express a sentiment of loss: those things that can no longer be obtained or accomplished due to the death of the subject tend to be sung in rapid succession, in long lists. The Tamil scholar Kabaliswaran (pers. com. 1996) cleverly noted that the *oppāri* is a “negative lullaby,” because it lists in the negative what Tamil lullabies present in the positive: what will be given to the baby, lists of what wonderful things the infant can hope to accomplish. It will be recalled that one of the primary stylistic devices in the Kota *a:!* is to use words based on a negative verbal stem to describe qualities of people and places. The framing of concepts in the negative in Kota mourning songs would seem to fit into this larger scheme. Below is another Tamil *oppāri* collected by M. N. Srinivas (1944, 61) which illustrates this characteristic negation. The song refers to the funeral bier as a (temple) chariot without axle which “stays without moving.” The sense of loss (and perhaps the inauspiciousness) in the death-house seems to be referenced in the lines concerning the absence of the peacock and the cuckoo:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. cōlam pori porittu,
cokkattān tērkatti,
cullāni illāde,
cuyalutē pontēru | 1. Parching maize
build a clean chariot, ⁽⁴⁾
(but) without axle,
the gold chariot stays without moving |
| 2. pūntērukku ullāle,
punnyare ēttivittu,
antu punniyarum pōna nēram,
pulati peralutē. | 2. Inside the god chariot
seated the merited one, ⁽⁵⁾
(and) in the wake of the merited one's departure.
(I) roll in the street-dust! |
| 3. kampu pori porittu,
kākattān tēru katti,
oru kateyāni illāde,
kaḷalutē pantēru. | 3. Parching millet
build a chariot with <i>kākattān</i> flowers,
(but) without the axle,
the wheel of the gold-chariot loosens away |
| 4. mātatte kattiyallō,
maiyl eḷativittu,
mātam muruntutenna?
anta maiyilu pōna māyamennā? | 4. (You) built a house,
(you) had a peacock drawn (on the wall)
the house is there (no doubt),
but how did the peacock manage to disappear? |
| 5. kūtatte kattiyallō,
kuyile eḷadivittu,
kūtdam irantutenna?
anta kuyilu pōna māya mennā? | 5. (You) built a nest,
(you) had a cuckoo painted,
the nest is there (no doubt),
but what is the magic of the cuckoo's disappearance? |

4 *Tē* literally means a juggernaut. Here it refers to the bamboo bier in which the dead husband is seated.

5. Husband is referred to in these terms.

Although the *oppāri* shares textual themes with the Kota *a:!*, the performance style is distinctly different.

Example three on the “Lamenting in South India tape” is a typical *oppāri*, here sung by a professional lamenter. Each phrase usually ascends quickly to a perfect fifth and descends through a perfect fourth; some emphasis is placed on the minor third/augmented second before descending to the tonic. This pitch area is rendered with a gentle, microtonal drop in pitch followed by an equally subtle rise before descent to the tonic; the ensuing effect reminds one of that produced by the striking augmented second interval in Karnatak *nāṭṭai rāga*. The singer then continues to sing/speak text rapidly using the tonic as a reciting tone, occasionally giving emphasis by rising to varying types of second scale degree. He continues to utter text until nearly out of breath, sobs a bit and then sometimes sings/speaks a glissando to an indefinite lower pitch, takes a deep breath, and begins the next phrase.

Clearly the *oppāri* lies closer to the crying side of the crying-singing continuum than does the Kota *aṭṭi*, however it does appear to be more regular and structured than Kota wailing at funerals and this is probably because, as a genre, *oppāri* is both an icon of wailing and a recognized art which is associated with a recognizable form, style and almost literary conventions (alliteration for example).

The Tamil example indicates that there are formalized performance genres which include within them the physical manifestation of grief; but examining tuneful crying versus singing in Toda society, which is cultural more akin to that of the Kotas, we found a more distinct separation between these kinds of activities. It will be useful to consider one more Nilgiri tribal society, the Irula, to round out our picture of how these performances styles are mapped cognitively by different peoples in the region.

The first two examples on the “lamentation” tape are Irula mourning songs. The first is sung by an aged (seventy to eighty year old) woman named Masani from the village of Siriur; the subject of the song was her mother. Duryodana and I recorded this piece while we were in her village for a festival. After translating many Kota mourning songs we became interested in recording the equivalent genre, if it existed, among other tribes. Until we met Masani, no Irula women claimed to know any such songs and Masani confirmed that younger women did not know how to sing this style; in this case, neither could anybody else in the village. We were both struck by the intensity of emotion expressed in her performance—an intensity which is extremely rare in Kota songs of mourning because the singer may or may not actually have known the deceased.

I later recorded another Irula mourning song, this time sung by a man. The context was far less conducive for what could be an extremely personal emotional expression. Just prior to leaving the Nilgiris I had arranged for Irulas and several Kurumba groups to perform characteristic pieces in each major genre so that I could audio and video tape them. All the performances took place in a large room in the village of Ānakkatti. The man, Rēsa, performed the lament into the microphone and for the tape recorder. Others

around laughed at first—presumably because the context was so odd. I was surprised to discover later that both Masani and Rēsa sang the same melody type. It remains to be seen whether there are other melodies for laments. It would not necessarily be surprising if only one melody prevailed, because unlike the Kotas who have a large instrumental repertoire connected with the funeral, the Irulas (or at least each Irula subgroup) have only a single instrumental tune.

The Irula song occupied roughly the same tonal range as the Tamil example, but was more melodic and less speech like. The melodic contour was similar: an ascent to a fifth (occasionally to a major sixth) followed by a descent to a perfect fourth and a minor third, but unlike the Tamil example the Irula song included a major second. Following that were phrases built on smaller ascents (fourth, minor third, second etc.). Also similar was the inclusion of sobs at the end of a long, breathless descending phrase, and a deep breath before the beginning of the next phrase. I was not able, unfortunately, to obtain a translation of the Irula songs, although it is apparent that like the Kota mourning songs, they employ as a refrain terms of kinship to and names for the deceased.

One may provisionally suggest that Irula mourning song style is somewhere between Kota mourning song and Tamil *oppāri* styles. Irula songs employ more crying within the form and are possibly more limited in style and tune than those of the Kotas; they are tonally similar to but appear to be more melodic than at least one type of Tamil *oppāri*. The Irula style of uttering text in a rapid succession of syllables parallels that of the Tamil lament (and is absent in the *a:!!*), but the melodic refrain on the name and kinship relationship to the deceased provides a strong parallel with the Kota mourning song. Although it is difficult to ascertain whether all the peoples in Tamilnadu, Kerala, and Karnataka who are called “Irulas” are really the same peoples (particularly whether those who live near Madras are closely related to the ones who live in the Nilgiri region) it is certainly true that Irula peoples, who live on the slopes and foothills of the Nilgiris, “are in many ways similar to their nearby caste neighbors” (Noble and Jebadhas 1992, 104) because they live and work side by side with them. Kotas were in earlier times comparatively (but by no means entirely) isolated from Tamil plainspeople because they live on the Nilgiri plateau. While Irulas participated in the cultural economies of both hill and plains cultures, the Kotas were primarily hill people.

Having compared Kota mourning songs with Tamil and Nilgiri tribal lament types and discovered that, although they share significant features, Kota *a:!!*s are also stylistically distinct, it may be useful to draw brief comparisons with another category of south Indian performance, the ballad. In Tamil, local stories of heroes were preserved in ballads, some of them probably short, which later became epic tales when the “hero’s tale [took] on an organizing role in a whole tapestry of story. . . and such expanded legends [got] woven into still wider cloth” (Beck 1982, 3).

Ballad is not a Tamil term—terms for this form of sung story vary widely, but one of the most generic terms is simply “story song” (*kataippāṭu*). A word deriving from the same Sanskrit root (*kathā*) exists in Badaga, *kade*, but it refers to a song in general. The term for epic ballad in Badaga (a genre that is now virtually obsolete) is *pa·me*, from a Dravidian verbal root meaning to say or tell (BEDR, 371; DEDR 4085). As previously noted, the Kota term *a·!l* derives from a verbal root which in most instances refers to bodily movement, but also in some instances to speaking or telling.⁶ Since these songs generally refer to a story, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the genre originated as part of a tradition comparable to what developed into more of an epic tradition in Badaga and Tamil societies, rather than as part of a tradition comparable to the lament traditions of Tamilnadu.

The relationship between the *a·!l* and the *pa·me* is further supported by the style of rendering: slowly rendered, brief melodies which are repeated, and the intoning on a vowel of a pitch preceding a set of phrases (see more on this, below). Yet the Badagas also have a separate genre of laments, and these are considerably shorter. Although Hockings recorded ballads of five and more hours long, he found that laments lasted ten minutes or fewer.

It is not necessary to categorize the *a·!l* (which is also short) either/or, as a ballad or a lament, but it is important to note that the genre fits to some extent in both categories. This would make sense also in light of Kota death rituals, which mourn the loss of the dead, but also commemorate and even celebrate their lives. Epic ballads about a hero may dwell more on deeds and exploits, a lament on the tragedy of death and the suffering of the mourners, yet both can be seen as part of a unified process of culturally incorporating figures from the past into the present (the influence of the figure and the historical remove of the past are the major variables here: the hero is significant and possibly many generations dead; the average son or daughter, father or mother may be forgotten in the next generation).⁷

Having noted that Kota mourning songs are in some ways like and some ways unlike comparable genres among other peoples of Tamilnadu, and that these similarities and differences pertain to manners of textual rendition and ways in which “a texted melody is infused with. . . ‘icons of crying’” (Tolbert 1994, 180; Urban 1988, 389) we are now prepared to examine the style of Kota mourning songs and its relationship to funeral wailing in greater detail.

⁶As in the Kota phrase “ma·nt a·ra·de,” “don’t speak!”

⁷It is not uncommon for laments to be included within Tamil ballads (e.g., the *aṇṇam̄ṛ katai* see Beck 1982, 38-46).

THE PROBLEM OF RHYTHM

Mazo suggests that not only the tones themselves, but also timbre and fluctuation in time of pitch and articulation make laments distinctive. These “paramusical” features are also those which make the Irula and Tamil lament examples sound different from the Kota mourning song. Yet within the universe of Kota songs, mourning songs do possess a unique style: they differ from god songs most observably in their rhythm and articulation. The sections I have transcribed of each version of the melody related to those of branch 22, exhibit minute variations in initial parts of phrases, and quite a bit of variation in durational values allotted to the ends of phrases. The first phrase, for example, varies from as few as six beats (43d) to as many as ten (22a, 22b, etc.). Such variation occurs within a single rendition, and it is not limited to regular divisions of beats—sometimes phrases end on the half-beat. The final phrase varies in length to an even greater extent, from seven beats (27a) to fourteen (40). The 1922 version is more regular than most of the modern versions,⁸ but it still exhibits this sort of variation of phrase length. This relative regularity may represent a change over time, but it is impossible to stake such a claim without further evidence. As noted above, the performance may have been rehearsed and was performed by a man. If the singer was a drummer or a *kol* player, he could well have tried to maintain some degree of metrical regularity in his rendition.

I would attribute the differences in phrase length to a different musical sense as to how this type of song should be rendered. The melody is fit around the words. Since each verbal phrase varies in length and number of syllables, so does each musical phrase. If each musical phrase is also considered to be like a clause of a sentence, one would expect the length of phrases to vary. Each phrase may also be likened to a wave, a swelling of emotion in funeral lamentation: the mourner wails and utters pitifully to the end of her breath, stops, inhales and begins again.

Furthermore, although there is observable regularity, there is no absolute correlation between a particular, commonly-found segment of text and a particular segment of tune. For example, in version 40, line three, the sequence of text across three phrases usually would proceed. “*payva·le kaṛdire ma·yde / pi·cadala·co ma·yde / enava·na ma·yde*” (crossing the verandah, Mathi / a cat crossed the path, Mathi / Mathi, the one who is my mother). Instead, the singer renders the line “*payva·lle kaṛdi·yo / enava·na ma·yde / pi·ce·ne aḍal a·cego ma·yde*” (You crossed the verandah / Mathi who is my mother / a cat moved across, Mathi). For a long time I assumed these were imprecisions and errors on the parts of the singers. To some Kotas, these would indeed

⁸It is also faster, but it is difficult to ascertain the original speed of the recording device. Though the man’s voice is higher in pitch than Kota men’s voices usually are, it is also apparent that the singer is singing with a great deal of force, possibly at the request of the recording engineer, and this too would result in a result of higher pitch. The speed of rendition may also have been related to the space available on the record.

be regarded as musical flaws. In example 22e, the *kol* player B. Kamatn attempts to correct a version of the song two women of his village sang together for me. They did not sing together and varied three and four phrase lines; he felt the whole song should be rendered in four phrase lines with continuity, rather than the characteristic breaks, between phrases. To my ears, the song could easily be sung in either three or four eight-beat phrases, and this would make sense in a Western European or American context. It would also suit a Kota god song context, where women clap and step while singing, fitting the words and phrases in regularly recurring relationships with the dance steps.⁹ However, since not a single rendition of “Mathi” in all the versions I recorded or listened to were entirely regular, I began to doubt my own sense of what was normative and decided to consider what Kota men viewed to be normative as in fact alternative, because men are not the primary carriers of the tradition.

Not only are some of what appeared to me to be “irregularities” in meter not considered flaws by women singers, they are in some cases definitive of a regional version or branch. The Kurgo:j branch (43) is characterized by a rise to the fifth scale degree one beat earlier than in many of the other branch versions. This variation is somewhat textually determined, in that “*enava ma·yde*” (five syllables) rather than “*enava·na mayde*” (six syllables) is the common opening line in this version. In version 43b this textual difference is overcome by sustaining the vowel “*va*” for two beats. Cindamani announced, after hearing a few Kolme:l and Ticga:r versions of “Mathi” sung for my benefit, that she was going to sing the Kurgo:j version. I noted the early appearance of the fifth scale degree, and how it often preconditioned a seven-beat phrase length (rather than eight); I thought it was her own idiosyncrasy and tried to explain what I thought was normative, but she insisted this was a feature of the Kurgo:j version of the song, and indeed it is a common type of variation found in Kurgo:j versions—though it does not appear in every first phrase of every line.

ARTICULATION

Features of articulation in the Kota *a:!!* provide a means of comparing this genre not only to crying at a funeral, but also to instrumental music. There are three techniques of articulation that are distinctive, and which, based on my observation, I would suggest remain from an older style of singing associated with this genre. One technique consists of an abrupt stop after a sustained note at the end of a phrase. This is particularly characteristic of V. Mathi’s personal style of *a:!!* rendition, but it is also evident in the styles of

⁹It would further suit the way in which the song is rendered instrumentally, as I will consider below. Note, however, that the melody is altered in the instrumental version, particularly at the end.

most elderly women. Younger women, and especially those who are not steeped in the *a:tl* rendition style, tend to make smoother phrase transitions. I employed a special notational device for V. Mathi's rendition, a downward curving mark underneath a rest, to indicate this emphatic stop. Elsewhere, and in other renditions, I inserted a "B" after a rest to indicate an audible and often emphatic breath. As noted, singers often finish a phrase at the end of a long single breath. This technique resembles that employed by mourners at a funeral. It is most evident in the three-tone example at the beginning of the lament tape, but is also found elsewhere. Although one might be tempted to construct a physiological argument that this effect somehow follows "naturally" from the way grief flows forth from the body, causing the mourner to gasp and so forth, one may also argue that the musical effect works in the opposite direction. It is certainly possible that *a:tl* rendition subtly conditions the way in which women wail at a funeral.¹⁰

A second technique, related to the first, is a glottal stop inserted between two repeated notes. This technique in the mourning song can perhaps be related impressionistically to the gulping, gasping, and tear-filled choking which interrupts a tuneful wail, but I do not believe that it derives from this physiological articulation. This, and the third technique, derive, I believe, from instrumental musical style. Technique three is an intoning of a vowel just prior to the beginning of a phrase or part of a phrase. The tone is usually the tonic, or is in unison with, or a second or minor third below the note that is to follow. I placed a dot over sections in which the second and third techniques were employed. Both often appear together, and at times the stop and vowel appear in one phrase where an intoning vowel alone appears in another, for these reasons. I used a single notational device for both. The glottal stop is indicated in some places by parentheses around a rest. Both the stop and the intoned vowel vary in length and my attempts in some cases to quantify them are but rough approximations.

Although there is no way to verify the origin of these two latter techniques in instrumental music, the plausibility of this hypothesis may be argued on the following bases: 1) The techniques are more idiomatic of *kol*, *pula:ng* and *bugi:r* performance style in general, whereas they appear only in the mourning song repertoire of vocal music; 2) As outlined in chapters thirteen and fourteen, the mourning style repertoire is more than that of god songs, likely to be closely allied to the analogous category of instrumental music. The styles may be similar because they are practiced together—and may have been more-so in the past, when mourning songs were rendered vocally while men played them on the *bugi:r* at all-night wakes in the death

¹⁰I did not inquire about this possibility when I was in the field and therefore cannot offer a stronger statement than this.

house.¹¹ 3) Finally, some of examples found on Mandelbaum's cylinder recordings would suggest that mourning songs were formerly even more instrumental in style than they now are. First I must consider in more detail why these techniques appear to be instrumental and in what contexts they appear. Then I will consider other ways in which vocal music can be instrumental, and to what extent it is or is not.

INSTRUMENTAL STYLE

The most striking features of Kota instrumental style (to an average Western or Indian ear, if I may be so bold as to assert) include 1) Repetitive drumming pattern and melody, 2) Thick double reed timbre, 3) Minute variations in pitch and variance from diatonic intervals such that melodies are difficult to sing, 4) Rhythmically and tonally complex ornamentation of melody that makes the relationship between melody and percussion pattern difficult to understand at times, and 5) A distinctive honking sound produced by the lowest pitch on the *ko!*, *bugi-r*, or *pula-ngg*, which is usually sits a minor or major third (the interval I referred to as π^{6-5} or an initial *ko!* third, $\pi\kappa 3$) below the tone above it; this sound is vocalized as the syllable "gag." This *gag* sound is perhaps the most important type of phrase and melody articulation and is I believe the key to understanding the relationship between mourning song and instrumental styles. The initial *ko!* third interval seldom fits logically in an instrumental melodic line because it is usually the only disjunct component: its musical logic seems rather to be rhythmic.

The other type of articulation is a kind of stop: not one governed by breath, because performers practice circular breathing, but, by the way in which the components of a melody can be broken up into sections. This effect can be heard most clearly on dance tunes, where the relationship between melody and rhythm is generally the most explicit and precise. The tape entitled, "Example of phrase articulation on *ko!*, using stop" provides a short example of this technique. To briefly make a comparison with Karnatak music,¹² the articulatory stop can be compared to that which occurs on a long melismatic passage on a single vowel in vocal music, particularly in sections such as *tānam*, *svara kalpana* and *niraval svaram* where rhythmic relationships between phrases predominate; the equivalent technique is also performed on instruments such as the *vīnai* and *nāgasvaram*. Another analogy is the technique of emphasizing a repeated note by

¹¹Recall, however, that this was an assertion of Sulli's that I have not been able to strongly confirm. Singing can accompany *bugi-r* playing, as it did on the occasion I had to observe one of the few Kotas who still performs the instrument, and as it did on some of Mandelbaum's recordings.

¹²The purpose of this comparison is not to show that Kota music is related to Karnatak music, but to prevent any suggestion that all components of Kota musical style are uniquely "tribal" and to related the technique to a south Indian musical style with which readers might be familiar.

approaching it from a neighboring tone (as in *janṭa varisai*); the neighboring tone is touched upon so briefly as to be indistinct and the effect therefore is a somewhat neutral articulation, somewhat akin to staccato, between two of the same notes. In public performance on the *ko!*, with drummed accompaniment and the other sounds accompanying an event, the effect is not dramatic. Rather the presence of such articulations make the melodic phrases and rhythmic organization appear clear. Another apt comparison would be to Western European choral singing, in which certain melodic sections (melismas, for example, on "hallelujah" in the Hallelujah chorus of Handel) must be rendered in exaggerated staccato by singers in order to be heard clearly at a distance.

The stop and the *gag* sound are in some instances interchangeable. The stop is usually accomplished by loosely covering all or several holes on the instrument lightly and briefly, and relaxing the air pressure. Depending on the degree, continuity and duration of air pressure, a note, honk or squeak will be heard. On the second example of a dance tune, Pucan plays the *pula-gg* unaccompanied. Two distinct articulatory notes can be heard, the lower *gag* and the note a major third above it. Each of these is given significant weight and enough duration that they can be heard as pitches. Other articulations within the melody, however, are passed over quickly and appear as squeaks or extraneous sounds.

In the notated examples of instrumental versions of "Mathi," the stops can be heard where I have inserted parenthetical rests. I have notated the *gag* sound as an *A*.¹³ The two instrumental renditions are identical save for the last percussion ostinato cycles in Jairazbhoy's 1975 recording which have been shortened to one cycle and simplified in the version I recorded in 1991. The stops occur exclusively between repeated notes, and particularly between repeated tonic notes (C). The stop is in this context one of three ways in which a note can be repeated: 1) Repetition without a break; 2) Repetition with an upper neighbor appearing just prior to the second note; 3) Repetition with a stop between the two notes. The various ways of repeating a note could be viewed as types of "ornaments" applied, as in Renaissance and Baroque music, to melodic lines according to the imagination and ability of the performer, and to the relative floridness of the melody. Just as some of these ornaments were sometimes notated by the composer, in lute tablature for example, to occur regularly in certain parts of the melody, contrasting ornaments to appear on others, so too do the techniques of varied repetition appear regularly on each repetition of the *ko!*. Though the 1975 and 1991 versions of the melody differ in their final sections, the placement of upper neighbor and stop techniques between repeated notes is virtually identical.

Since the two instrumental versions differ from one another at the end, the placement of *gag* tones also

¹³All the notations of "Mathi" are standardized on C for facility of comparison.

differs. Many tunes end with a sequence of *gag* tones. In some long melodies, such as the *ola-gu-c kol*, there are many *gag* tones, sometimes varying in number from repetition to repetition—they are strung out in a sequence that cuts across the rhythmic pattern and provide melodic momentum for a return to the beginning. This phenomenon will be reconsidered in the next section. What concerns us here is the instrumental phenomenon of the *gag* tone, and its relative regularity in most *kol*s. In these examples, for instance, the *gag* appears at the end of the fourth ostinato cycle—the end of the second of three phrases.

Turning now to the sung versions of “Mathi,” we find that one of the most regular places in the melody where an intoned vowel preceding a phrase occurs is the same place at which the *gag* tone occurs: the end of the second phrase. The intoned vowel usually takes the pitch of the following tone, but we find in Kembli’s Kurgo-j version (43c) a replication of the *gag* tone in pitch as well, a minor third below the tonic. The first phrase is almost always preceded by an intoned vowel (or the last phrase followed by one, depending on one’s viewpoint) and this is also maintained analogously in the instrumental versions. However vocal and instrumental versions generally differ in their uses of intoned vowel/*gag* techniques. The *gag* serves as an essential rhythmic driver for instrumental pieces, often helping the performer anchor a sometimes rhythmically fluid melody to a percussion ostinato pattern. The significant *gag* activity at the end of melodies serves in part this realignment process, but is also an important aesthetic part of the style. Mourning songs are not rhythmically rigid and significant rhythmic play is not part of the style as it exists today. This may explain why although the intoned vocal may be related to the *gag* technique structurally (and possibly historically, although one cannot say with certainty that one was modeled upon the other), its use is somewhat different.

There are many other details of rendition shared throughout the instrumental and many of the vocal versions. Note for example the glottal stop between the first two tonic notes in lines of vocalizations (on syllables “la la” etc.) in versions 43b, 40, 22c, and the corresponding stop in the instrumental versions. And as for the other neighboring tone technique, for example, it appears consistently between the two Gs in phrase two of almost all versions.

HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

If the relationship between instrumental and vocal music in this genre evolved historically from a period in the past when the two traditions were closer together to the present when they are drifting apart—perhaps because the instrument of communication between these genres, the *bugi-r*, is no longer played, or perhaps because of broader changes in Kota vocal musical practice in the direction of popular *bhajan* styles—we

would hope to get a clue of this previous relationship from early recordings. Recordings suggest that this might be the case. In song 27b, for example, the melody is entirely different from that of “Mathi” (save, perhaps, for the P4 rise from C to F in the first measure) although a song associated with the same story is currently sung to that melody (27a). This example is interesting for several reasons. For one, the intoned vowels (notated as Bb, but somewhat indistinct), which appear in other mourning songs only occasionally, appear here frequently and in rapid succession. In this song they truly sound as if they were rendered as *gag* syllables on the *kol*. The piece is also more rapid than most mourning songs of today, though, like the Madras Government Museum recording, it is difficult to ascertain the correct speed.

A further feature relating to the instrumentality of version 27b is the metrical framework. We observed a great deal of variation in phrase length between each line of and among all vocal renditions of “Mathi”; here each phrase is repeated almost exactly the same way each time. Examining the number of beats in the melody, the phrases seem to divide logically into divisions of five or ten beats, not three or four as is characteristic of most Kota vocal music sung today. In fact, the piece could comfortably be accompanied by the ten beat percussion ostinato called *ca-da da-k* (the slow version). This suits well the Kota claim that all songs are in one or another of their rhythmic cycles, but it is a surprise to me in that maintaining a strict ten-beat cycle while singing, in the absence of any percussion, is quite difficult. Even *kol* players have trouble playing a tune in this rhythmic cycle without accompaniment. The instrumentality of 27b lies as much in the (what is for vocal music) unusual metrical framework as it does in the use of intoned vowels/*gag* tones. These two features are related, of course, because the *gag* tones always help define the metrical structure in instrumental music; here they serve that function in vocal music to an extent greater than in any example I heard performed in 1990-92. It may be that the difficulty of rendering this melody properly eventually led to its demise. In its place, I would guess, the “Mathi” melody was inserted.

The other *a-t/s* on Mandelbaum’s recordings are stylistically similar either to the relatively leisurely paced, metrically flexible *a-t/s* of today (like “Mathi”) or to this highly syllabic style, characterized by metric regularity and successions of intoned vowels (Indiana University Cylinder numbers 1661 and 1662, Mandelbaum’s cylinder numbers 28 and 29 respectively). Some of the metrically flexible songs are still sung today but I was unable to find examples of the latter style. I have the impression that this represents a style the Badagas once shared with the Kotas, but I do not currently possess data that supports this impression.

DIFFERENT MELODY, SAME TEXT

I suggested that song 27 exists in versions with two different melodies because one of the melodies may have been an archaic, difficult and now moribund style. There are at least two other reasons why a text might be sung with additional melodies. 1) Variation by Recombination: The singer experiments with a new melody (either drawn from another piece, or newly composed) out of creative interest or because he/she finds that it better accommodates the text; or 2) Variation by Confusion: The singer sings a melody from another song by mistake, often because the two songs share something in common.

Although I would be surprised if “Variation by Recombination” does not occur, I have not in fact documented any specific examples of this process. I have observed “Variation by Confusion” quite often, however. Such variation is not necessarily a result of inferior musicianship. The knowledgeable and respected singer, Cindamani, for example, once sang the mourning song “Kunaga-ra” (song 39) to the melody of “Puy Avo” (song 41). I had the audacity to point this out to her (having heard what I thought was the original melody); she sang it again to the “correct” (or at least more standard) melody,¹⁴ asked “is it alright like that”?, and we all had a good laugh. Hearing the way she sang the song the second time helped me understand why she sang the other melody the first time: her version of the “Kunaga-ra” begins with ornamentation identical to employed in “Puy Avo”; this may have led Cindamani, without realizing it, to slip into this latter melody. The remainder of the “Puy Avo” melody is quite different, however, and there can be no confusing the two (compare V. Mathi’s version of “Kunaga-ra”; it is clearly the same melody as that Cindamani sang the second time, but the ornaments and intonation are different).

Variation by Confusion accounts for version 35 as sung by B. Kamatn of Ticgar. Kamatn is well-known and active as a musician, but is considered by some to be mediocre.¹⁵ Recall, this was the musician who

¹⁴Of course there was nothing wrong, *per se*, with singing a song to another melody, I suspected that she intended to sing it to the melody with which it is most associated. The melody she “accidentally” sang was one of her favorites, however, I have never heard it used to render a different text. Not all mourning song melodies are like “Mathi” and travel widely from text to text, version to version.

¹⁵On one occasion I played a recording from Ticgar for Pucan and some Kolme:l boys, asking them to identify the pieces and comment upon them. Pucan had little regard for the quality of playing on the tape. This was a result of village chauvinism, in part, no doubt, but also based on specific features the performances: 1) the relative brevity of *kols* 2) lack of clarity and 3) the tendency to mix parts of *kols* with one another. One of the boys remarked disdainfully, upon hearing the sound of B. Kamatn’s instrument, in a high pitched, mocking voice characteristic of prepubescent boys “Pu-kali!” (a nickname).

Although I argued in part I that the “musician as deviant” model does not work in observing Kota society as a whole, it does apply in specific cases such as this: Pu-kali is barely tolerated but does fulfill his responsibility as a Kota during festivals, when he performs for long hours on the *kol*; I would hesitate to say he is indispensable, however. He has a reputation as an opium addict and has frequently cheated or conned fellow Kotas out of money.

B. Kamatn was kind enough to make a *kol* for me and I was initially quite satisfied with the result. Later I showed

“corrected” a version of “Mathi” sung by two women of his village. On this occasion, Kamatn told me that the same song could be sung using a different melody. It was not until I had collected and translated other versions of song 35 that I realized it was based on an entirely different story and shared only the name of the subject, “Mathi” with song 22 (and the formulaic phrases that can be attached to any female name in any mourning song). When Kamatn sang his version, it became clear that he did not just sing the text of “Mathi” version 22 to the melody of another song, he combined characteristic textual phrases from one story/song, for example, “a cat crossed the path” (from song 22), with those from the other, “you ate spoiled roots” (song 35). These could conceivably be formulaic phrases that move from song to song, but not to *every* song. Song 22 is of the type I labeled IIIA2a and song 35 is of the type IIIA 1a; within these song types, the respective phrases would make sense in some cases if they were transferred from one song to another. In this instance, however, the combination is inappropriate. Given this singer’s well known predilection for deception, I would as easily believe he was trying to “pull a fast one” as that he was confused. But it is not hard to imagine how the new version Kamatn has created, be it denigrated it as an error or privileged as an innovation, could be perpetuated as a new variant by other singers. Indeed this process of convergence has been demonstrated in other song repertoires.¹⁶

A more general conclusion suggested by the two above examples is that textual or melodic similarity between two songs or two stories may provide a common basis for sharing additional content.

AUGMENTATION, DIMINUTION, ADDITION AND SUBTRACTION OF PHRASES

Each version of the basic “Mathi” melody remains relatively compact as regards musical phrases and subphrase level motives. I would like to briefly note, version by version, ways in irregular phrase lengths and numbers of phrases are generated from existing melodic ideas

22a: Variation is extremely subtle, created by holding notes by a beat more or a beat less at the ends of phrases. Other differences are created by the singer’s attempt to fit many syllables into a beat; one words such as *pardge·n*, this results in triplets (ln. 11).

22b: Much slower and more rubato. Allows for greater subtlety in rhythmic organization and comparatively complex ornamentation. Lines three and four include additional text that does not add significantly new information to the song (“crossing” becomes “while crossing and going”); the point

the *kol* to Pucan and Raman, who proceeded to show me how a good *kol* is constructed. Raman offered to and eventually proceeded to make two *kols* for me because I had said I might deposit one instrument in a museum or instrument archives in the U. S.; both Pucan and Raman were concerned that the Kotas not get a “bad name” from Pu-kali’s instrument.

¹⁶See type IV of Nettl’s “types of song histories”, which is evident in “the wandering lines of Czech folk songs and American Indian Peyote songs” (1983, 194, fig. 6; 193).

at which the text is inserted becomes melodically redundant. Unlike 22a, where additional syllables were subsumed rhythmically within the overall flow, the additional text and melody here add length to the phrases. In line seven the third phrase is omitted and a new melodic phrase is inserted. This new phrase is repeated until the end of the song. Although it is not common for the song "Mathi" to end with a completely different melody, V. Mathi does sometimes end her renditions of long *a://s* with contrastive material. Other singers do this to a lesser extent.

22c: A fourth phrase is added based on the melodic material of the third phrase. The two last phrases are linked in an antecedent-consequent relationship created by the sustained second degree at the end of the third phrase (this link between phrases also parallels that between the second and third).

22d&e: Both illustrate principles of variation explicated above, especially the four phrase structure created from three.

22f: Consistently four square structure. Recorded by Jairazbhoy in 1984.

27a: Third phrase somewhat simpler melodically; sustained second degree provides melodic tension.

40: In the first phrase, beat 5 before ascent to "g", tone is "e" (third tone); there is some variation on this structural tone from version to version. Sometimes the second, the third or the fourth appear in this position.

43abc: In addition to the early ascent to the fifth, these versions share a common variant of the third phrase, stressing the sustained second tone within the phrase, followed by a melodic cadence using the glottal stop and intoned vowel technique.

57a: Contains a new, rhythmically animated variant of the third phrase as the fourth phrase. Once again phrases three and four are linked by a second scale degree.

57b: Phrases three and four are rhythmically animated and melodically slightly more embellished than 57a.

SUMMARY

In this chapter I used the mourning song "Mathi" to examine musical questions relating to content, style and transmission of the genre more generally. It was noted that Kota mourning songs are considered to be distinct from funeral wailing, but that they do share similar formulaic phrases in reference to the deceased. Wailing is not distinctly as melodic as mourning songs, and tends to be highly individual. Mourning song melodies such as the primary one associated with "Mathi" are sung with considerable consistency despite differences in texts, association with a particular village, and periods of time since the 1920s.¹⁷

The strongest relationship we can draw between Kota mourning songs and wailing is based on Kota statements that the former is inspired by the latter. Analytically it does not seem to be possible to isolate a distinctive enough compositional/improvisational process, or a particular melody type, characteristic of

¹⁷Although it is true that we lack data linking the 1922 example with the next example, fifty years later, the consistency in rendition could lead one to reasonably suggest that equally consistent versions existed in the intervening years. It does not indicate to us, however, the nature of the variants during this period.

wailing that would allow us to connect wailing with mourning songs at a deep or generative level. We must consider only the unique features of mourning songs—i.e. those not shared by the other major category of songs, god songs. Only very general statements can be made: the flexibility of phrase lengths seems to be connected to the flow and interpretation of the text; this is a characteristic of speaking and of texted wailing. The singer tends to sing to the end of his or her breath at the ends of phrases and to inhale deeply before the next phrase. Again, this is typical of lamenting not only in the Kota examples, but more generally in Tamilnadu and probably elsewhere. Finally, phrases in both mourning songs and wailing are sometimes concluded with a distinct stop rather than a gradual trailing off.

Kota mourning songs are more melodic or “songlike” than their counterparts among Tamils or Irulas and could perhaps also be classified as ballads. This is further supported by the Badaga case: Badagas, who live alongside the Kotas, possess distinct ballad and lament genres. The musical style of the ballad genre is in important ways similar to that of the Kota mourning song. The distinction between a wailing style and a singing style which commemorates the dead and stylizes or represents the process of mourning is maintained among the Todas as well as the Kotas and this suggests it represents an important more general classificatory feature of musical culture on the Nilgiri plateau. On the slopes and foothills, among the Irulas, we find a style of lamenting which appears truly to be lamenting—i.e. it is actually performed during funerals and incorporates crying. Limited evidence suggests that this genre may be based on one or a small number of melodies. Irula lament style appears to be intermediate between Kota *a:ʔ!* and Tamil *oppāri* styles and this would be supported by their patterns of travel and habitation which spans the hills and the plains.

The Kota genre of *a:ʔ!* appears to be linked to instrumental music in unique ways: the articulatory techniques of glottal stop and intoning a vowel at the ends (before beginnings) of phrases are analogous to and occur in contextually the same places as techniques of articulatory stopping and *gag*-sounding on the *kol*. It appears that an additional style of *a:ʔ!* rendition once existed which also shared rhythmic features with instrumental music—including the use of the ten beat rhythmic cycle associated only with god and death tunes, not for dance tunes. The ten beat cycle appears to be absent in god songs also. The third degree of the scale in “Mathi” and other mourning songs tends to vary from a minor to a major third and various microtonal values between these intervals depending both on context within a song and the version or branch as a whole. The variation in this scale degree is also common in instrumental music. All the similarities between mourning song and instrumental tune styles may be a result of the formerly more common practice of singing along with the *bugi-r*, both for entertainment generally and during all-night wakes.

Kotas distinguish one mourning song from another on the basis of story line. Text alone does not distinguish one song from another because textual content is recombined from a series of formulaic and story-

specific fragments each time a song is sung. Nor is the way the text is fit to the melody absolutely fixed—though regular patterns do emerge. Association with a particular village also distinguishes one song from another. Usually the variants from a particular village will contain specific, regular features that make them identifiable: local dialect, local place names, a specific melodic or rhythmic motive, intonation,¹⁸ local stories, and subjects who are known individuals or their relatives.

Melodic variation is closely based on material from three phrases; although branch 22 was taken as paradigmatic, one may begin by examining almost any branch of the melody and reach the same conclusion. Additional or redundant textual material is incorporated into the melody through redundant phrases or motives in the melody. Occasionally the end of a song will contain new melodic material and this is recognized to create a dramatic effect and to signal conclusion. When an entire song is set to a different melody—i.e. when the story and repertoire of textual fragments is the same but the melody is different—there may be an explanation for this based upon more than simply that of individual creativity (“Variation by Recombination”). Sometimes it occurs as an accident because two pieces share melodic or textual features: it may also occur if a particular melody is forgotten (perhaps because it was complex or difficult) but the text is remembered and reset to a more well-known melody.

CONCLUSION: SONG AND RITUAL VARIATION

We saw in part II that musical pieces function as symbols within a ritual structure that are in some ways like and in some ways unlike other ritual symbols. In part III we have been concerned with ways in which music forms a system in and of itself. But these two Parts can be related to one another as two manifestations of a more general culture process through which Kotas generate and reproduce self-defining activities.¹⁹ The mourning song sub-system is, for example, patterned by processes of variation which resemble those associate with Kota ritual systems. New rituals within larger ceremonial frameworks, like musical phrases or motives inserted into songs, are frequently based on pre-existing patterns. For example, in the rain ceremony, men undertake a musical procession to sites of divine significance along the border of the village and make offerings. In 1991 a new divine site was incorporated into the ritual in order to ward off an encroaching

¹⁸This aspect was not discussed in this chapter. I mention it here for sake of completeness but I am not currently prepared to construct an argument based on local consistency of intonation.

¹⁹The processes themselves are probably more universal than this sentence might suggest, but I wish to make specific comparisons which are in fact local.

community (see Wolf i.p.). The new divine site was named the “little” version of an existing divine site²⁰ already included in the ritual, and a similarly-constructed stone circle was erected in the new location.

The maintenance of a song text/story and the replacement of a more general melody is also analogous to ritual processes: ritual actions and items often endure in time but their meanings change. Ritual meanings float from action to action in the ways that melodies float from text to text. We saw that the function of cow killing to release the sins of the deceased appears to have been transferred to (or was made redundant by) the practice of tying the toes together and cutting the string.

The association of a particular song with a particular village are based on localizing devices some of which are in fact localizing (such as place names and quasi historical stories) and others of which are subjectively valued and arbitrary (a rhythmic variation or melodic motive). Rituals too are made village-specific by the consecration and ritual incorporation of locally important places and gods, most of whose importance were established through mytho-historical events, and through particular configurations of commonly patterned rituals, which are subjectively associated with one ritual rather than another in a particular village. For example, the chewing of tobacco by each male adult of the community is a typical god-ceremony style expression of solidarity. In Kolme-l this ritual is confined to the rain ceremony, but in Porgar the ritual occurs on the last day of the god ceremony proper (see appendix). There is nothing particularly significant in the fact that the ritual occurs in one village in one ceremony and in another village in a different but related ceremony: both rituals are of the same “god” category and both mean the same thing. They are, however, forms of bricolage which give a regional identity to the respective ceremonies, just as a particular turn of phrase gives regional identity to a song.

In the next chapter we will consider a different musical subsystem, that of Kota instrumental music, and different kinds of analogues with the ritual system.

²⁰The creation of a new divine entity as a smaller version of an existing one is itself modeled on the big and little versions of the father god in the village.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

THE INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC SYSTEM: *KOL* (TUNE) AND *DA · K* (PERCUSSION OSTINATO)

In the previous chapter I approached the study of a vocal subgenre (mourning songs) by examining many variations of one piece; in the process, I introduced the topic of instrumental music and explained in that instance how it related to vocal music. In this chapter I wish to examine instrumental music in greater detail. Although I will primarily analyze *kol*s of the “god” variety, the general stylistic features (save for those, such as speed, length and complexity, discussed in the genre discussion, chapters thirteen and fourteen) are characteristic of all Kota instrumental music. I also wish, by brief comparisons with other Tamilnadu musics, to place Kota instrumental music in a broader areal context. This contextualization in some ways adumbrates the argument of chapter nineteen, where Nilgiri tribal music is considered in relation to the music of the rest of tribal India.

HISTORY OF RECORDED EXAMPLES

Most of the specific examples discussed in this chapter, as well as additional examples supporting the discussion as a whole, can be found on the “God Tunes Comparison Tape, Kolme:l village” #1 and #2: “Kota Dance Tunes”; “Rhythms for Comparison”; and “Kota Tunes for Hindu Deities and Kota God Tunes/Sounds.” The “God Tunes Comparison Tape” is a compilation of every version of every Kolme:l god tune I could obtain. They include examples I recorded 1990-92 at Kolme:l god ceremonies and examples elicited at other times on voice, *kol*, and *pula·ṅg*; recordings made by R. Lakshmanan (a Kota from Tigga:r village) in 1991 at the Rangayno:r (Ko:jka:l) temple in Kolme:l; recordings made by Dr. P. Varadharajan (Pucan’s son) in the 1970s at Kolme:l god ceremonies; and recordings made by David Mandelbaum in 1938.

The comparative recordings I have consulted for other Nilgiri tribals and Tamilnadu derive for the most part from brief exploratory field visits throughout 1990-92. I had the opportunity to visit Irula settlements, record and observe festivals in South-Central, Eastern and Northern parts of the Nilgiris, and a few Ālu-Kurumba settlements in the Eastern Nilgiris. I also attended some five or more intertribal functions in the Northwestern part of the Nilgiris, an area called the Wynad where Tamilnadu and Kerala meet. There I recorded and videotaped the music and dance of Paniya, Betta Kurumba, Kāttu Nāyaka, and Mullu Kurumba tribes. Towards the end of my stay in 1992 I arranged two recording sessions, one with the help of the

development organization ACCORD (Action for Community Organization, Rehabilitation and Development) in Gudalur, and one with the help of N. M. Noor, a freelance research assistant residing near Masinagudi. These two sessions allowed me to obtain examples of most of the genres practiced by the various Irula, Kurumba and Nāyaka tribes of the Northern and Northwestern Nilgiris.

For comparative examples on the plains I traveled to Salem and Dharmapuri districts with my colleague and friend A. Rajaram and the anthropologist Tamizholi. In these two regions I recorded a variety of untouchable (*Paraiyar* and *Cakkiliyar*) drumming ensembles and attended two goddess festivals. Later I traveled to Madurai to record the music of the popular entertainment ensemble, *naiyāṅṅi mēlam*, and two young professional singers. The *oyilāṅṅam* example is drawn from field recordings I made in Madurai during 1982-83.

The Varadharajan Kota recordings are noteworthy because they contain the performances of Pucan when he was younger and more vigorous, and those of his playing partner, who died before I reached the Nilgiris in 1990. Pucan's family (primarily his two sons) looks to this period as the last in which there was high-caliber instrumental music in Kolme-l village; because Pucan still is the finest Kota musician, many others would not dispute this view. Pucan is not able to play as long as he was once able, and his lips cannot as confidently remain sealed against the pirouette. Raman, his new partner, does not play the same tunes in exactly the same way, and is somewhat inconsistent. Although Pucan's family's assessment can be regarded as somewhat of a self-interested value judgement, it must be conceded that the recordings of this period document an extremely consistent and unified *ko!* style.

As I attempted to transcribe each god tune, I found it easiest to refer to Varadharajan's recording for a consistent, baseline rendering, and to consult my recordings for variants: it was difficult to extract a single consistent version from some of my recordings because Pucan and Raman did not always remain together. For the most part, however, there was remarkable consistency. Some differences were due to Raman's inconsistency or playing of an alternate version; others were due to the elaborate ornamentation of Pucan's playing, which at times added confusion against Raman's simpler versions. Several versions I recorded privately with Raman were clearly mismatched with the rhythmic ostinato.

The quality of the Mandelbaum cylinder recordings is on the whole quite poor. Drum beats occasionally cut through the distorted morass and one is sometimes able to follow the beat sufficiently to ascertain whether what is audible melodically more-or-less corresponds to a transcription of the same piece from another recording. Still, the fact that the recordings exist at all is of some use in assessing the continuity of tradition over the last half-century. It will be of some use here to review what is known about these recordings and how they have been utilized in the past.

MANDELBAUM CYLINDER RECORDINGS

Although Mandelbaum kept detailed records on virtually every aspect of his life and fieldwork, he left little in the way of documentation on the field recordings or the equipment he used. Mandelbaum expressed some interest in the ethnographic study of music and, in 1933-34, had taken a course in "Primitive Music" with George Herzog. Apparently George Herzog sent the equipment to him by sea and it took considerable time to arrive.

The first mention of the equipment appears in a journal entry dated 13 August 1937, "At 10:40 this morning I sent a cable to Herzog 'Awaiting Apparatus.'" In a letter to "Ed" (probably his lifelong friend anthropologist/Rabbi Edward Siskin) dated July 17, 1937, Mandelbaum wrote:

These people act as professional musicians to the other tribes of the plateau and so their music is one of the most highly developed phases of the culture. When the recording apparatus which George Herzog is supposed to be sending, arrives I am going to go into the ethnographic aspects of the musical lore as intensively as possible.

And still later, in a letter to "Sam and Tillie," 24 November 1937, he noted that the recording equipment had still not arrived, but that "the queries in your letter will make a valuable catechism for the subject and when I get enough dope on the musical culture I'll write it up for your suggestions and corrections." After that, I could find no journal entry or letter confirming the arrival of the equipment. Finally, May 6, 1938, a single journal entry appeared: "Recorded Konyvatc and Ma-dy's voices." From that day forward Mandelbaum recorded on a regular basis until his departure three weeks later on May 26.

The May 11 journal entry and field notes indicate that he recorded with the *ko!* player Naryke-r Kamatn, alias Metva-y Kamatn, but does not mention who else participated in the recording. If Pucan has correctly claimed to have performed for these recordings, he would have probably participated as a second *ko!* player along with Metva-y. According to Metva-y, Pucan was among the competent *ko!* players of the time, but was not among the four best. It is possible that Pucan was the "mediocre player" recorded on cylinder 39; the mediocrity would have been assessed in relation to the more "skilled" Metva-y. Pucan, however, did not recognize the example of "mediocre" playing to be his own (and he also did not know the selection was labeled in this way). He appeared to discern by listening which recordings he participated in and which ones he did not. In one instance I asked him to play an example which was quite clear and simple on the Mandelbaum recording. When Pucan played the piece for me, the meter was somewhat lost in a flurry of ornaments and heavy vibrato. I asked why the versions sounded different, and he told me that he had learned something over the years!

It is not clear what happened to the recordings after Mandelbaum returned to the United States. They ended up in the possession of George Herzog, who deposited them in the Indiana Archives of Traditional

Music and constructed a list of their contents based on Mandelbaum's notes. Until I noted the contrary in 1990, the collection was presumed to belong to Murray B. Emeneau, who had for some reason signed the release form for the collection. Mandelbaum's later correspondence made little reference to any tape recordings. He recorded one interview with Sulli in the 1950s, which is preserved on reel-to-reel tape. He also shot movie footage of Kota funeral dancing, games, musicians, potters, blacksmiths and lathe workers. No date is given on this footage, but the segments from a Simhas Torah celebration in Cochin (which he attended in 1937) suggest the film dates from the first field trip. Emeneau recalled having a movie camera in his own possession, which he presumes to have lent Mandelbaum. Emeneau's movies were stored in his home for many years and have now been lost or destroyed.

At some point Mandelbaum tried to find a musicologist to analyze his field recordings; the young John Blacking was recommended for the job. Just as Blacking was to set in to the task, he received a grant to conduct fieldwork (in Malaysia?) and was forced to abandon the project. I presume the recordings in question were copies of the cylinders, though it is possible that other recordings were made and have since been lost.

Mandelbaum's carefully preserved letters and detailed fieldnotes provide little clue as to what Mandelbaum himself thought about the music he was hearing, but it would appear from a brief publication of the University of Minnesota Gallery that his interest was more intellectual than aesthetic.

art is very often symbolic. A work of art may stand for a whole complex of ideas and behavior. A Kota tribesman of South India once played a series of native tunes for me on an aboriginal clarinet. During one of the melodies I happened to look up from the recording apparatus to see tears starting from his eyes and threatening to water his mustachios. He later explained that the tune was one heard only at funeral ceremonies; the poignancy of the melody and the recollections it stirred in him made it impossible to stay his tears. The record played here sounds to most of us like a minor variation on the general cater-wauling that is Kota music. (1940, 5)

The tone of this brief article suggests it may be a transcribed lecture. Mandelbaum may have used the Kota recordings in some of his public lectures, or even in his series of general lectures on anthropology that were broadcast on the radio while he was still in Minnesota.

Background on our pool of recorded examples now provided, it is now possible to move directly into matters musical. The rhythmic cycle as articulated by percussion instruments is the feature of all Nilgiri tribal music most easily circumscribed with regard to content and is therefore a logical topic on which to begin.

DA·K OR PERCUSSION OSTINATO

All Kota instrumental music adheres to one of five percussion cycles: six beats, seven beats, eight beats, ten beats and twelve beats.

TEMPO

The ten beat ostinato (slow *ca·da da·k*), limited to god and death tunes, is performed at a rate averaging 300 beats/minute, but it is perceived to be slow because the pattern is felt and articulated as a gestalt, not as ten discrete beats. The slow version of *tirugana·ṭ da·k* (turning dance), also used for these contexts, is eight beats rendered at about 176 beats/minute. The faster versions of *ca·da da·k* range in speed from the slower, six-beat version for women's dances (reckoned in threes at about one hundred sets of three beats per minute) to the faster seven-beat version for men's dances (three beats=m.m.144). The twelve-beat rhythm Kotas play for Hindu deities, *kola·ḷ da·k* ("Cakkiliyar [caste] rhythm"), is sometimes as rapid as m.m. 168 for three beats (i.e. it can be reckoned as four beats with triple subdivisions). In general, all the aforementioned ostinatos are articulated rapidly enough that one may question whether the performers are really aware of the number of beats in a given "da·k"; nevertheless, within each kind of ostinato, in a particular speed, the number of beats is consistent and we may for analytical purposes describe these patterns in terms of constituent beats. Kotas appear to reckon these patterns as gestalts and it is in fact difficult for a performer to play a complex *koḷ* while showing with the foot, for example, where the main beats fall; rather the entire structure comes about in performance. Simple *koḷs* and the basic percussion patterns, however, can be demonstrated in isolation.

NOTATION

The accompanying notations illustrate 1) how the basic patterns are articulated on the three Kota drums, *tabaḷk*, *kiṇvar* and *dobar*, and 2) examples of equivalent patterns among Irulas and Kurumbas in various parts of the Nilgiris. Much of what the notation tells us need not be reiterated in words, save for a note of caution: each notation provides a snapshot of what I perceived to have occurred at a particular musical moment. Each of the variations notated could occur with each of the others, and many other permutations of the possibilities implied by those variations are also explored. I made no attempt to collect every variation; although such an enterprise might be possible, one would then have to check with performers as to the suitability of the variation and as to one's representation of it. I have provided some of the most readily perceivable types of rhythmic variation.

In some cases I attempted to notate which hand played which side of the drum and the stroke employed. This was accomplished primarily by watching my own video tapes and in some cases recalling how I had been taught to play the drums. Since the drumming occurs so rapidly, many of the details I have so systematically attempted to represent could not possibly have been played with such accuracy (this becomes clear when the recordings are slowed down). The notation can be viewed better as an approximate visual analog of drum strokes as they occurred in time, not a precisely measured one. Of the overall rhythmic structures, however, I am confident.

I collected a variety of other examples from the Nilgiris and from the plains in which cycles, primarily of six, seven, and eight beats, are articulated in ways similar to those among the Kotas. These can be found on the "Rhythms for Comparison Tape." I have not notated all these examples and do not intend here to treat each in detail, but two observations can be drawn: the percussion patterns commonly practiced among Nilgiri tribals are unified and distinctive, but they appear in some cases (all but the ten-beat cycle) to be a specialized and limited subset of rhythmic possibilities explored by other south Indian percussion ensembles. They are made distinct in part by the instruments on which they are played.

ORCHESTRATION

Each ensemble contains one instrument whose primary purpose is to provide an ostinato framework for the entire ensemble. The rhythm of the frame drum (*tabak*, *tambate*, etc.) is placed at the top of the notations because among most Nilgiri tribes and in the drumming ensembles of the lowest castes this drum is the leader of the ensemble and serves this function. On the plains, a version of this frame drum covered with cow hide is also called the *parai*, the drum whose name forms the morpheme defining the name of the untouchable group the *paraiyars* (ones [who play] the *parai*). I have heard plains drummers refer to the frame drum as the King, because of its leading role in the ensemble. Only in the village of Ānaippālam in the South-Central Nilgiris did I find an ensemble with the frame drum absent. Since I was not aware at the time that its absence was significant, I did not ask whether the frame drum is ever used, but in asking other questions about the composition of musical ensembles, definition of musical pieces and repertoire and other aspects of musical culture, I did not come across any mention of such a drum.

The other drums in each ensemble are distinguished from one another by size, shape and/or pitch: two drums of like size and construction can be made to sound different pitches according to how long the skin has been exposed to fire and thus tightened. Each drum is capable of two or three of several possible basic sounds: ringing (i.e. a resonance of relatively high pitch), booming (i.e. deeper pitched resonance), damped.

loud thwacking (with a stick on the frame drum), and gentle striking (with stick or hand).¹ These sounds are not to my knowledge vocalized, although I have not explored the drumming traditions outside of Kota society to any depth. The most I have encountered along these lines among the Kotas is the statement that the *kinvar* gets its name from the high pitched sound “*kin kin*” and the *dobar* or *gumbar* get their names from the deep sounds “*do do*” or “*gum gum*.” Despite the lack of specialized nomenclature, however, the distinctions in sound quality produced by different strokes and different drums are important: each sound marks time in a different way and their combination creates an almost melody-like hocketing.

Kota drumming does not contain a great deal of improvisation, but the main instruments on which improvisation/variation are accomplished are the *tablaḱ* and the *dobar*. Even on these two instruments, there appear to be a small number of standard variations which can be implemented at will. Improvisation on the frame drum might seem surprising since it provides the fundamental beat for the entire band; there is no contradiction, however, because the improvisations are limited to the number and style of strokes that can be inserted between the main beats. I have drawn vertical lines to indicate the primary beats of the cycle: it will be noted that while the frame drum always articulates these beats strongly (except in the *kola! da-k* example, which may be taken as an exception since the rhythm is said to be borrowed), the *dobar* need not. Performing on the *tablaḱ* takes a great deal of skill and responsibility. Ability to render variations without losing the beats requires still more skill.

The *dobar* seems to be the instrument on which the most interesting sequences of patterns can be strung together or improvised. The prevalence of variations on the deep-sounding clay barrel drum of the Irulas (*kaḱime* and *davil*) would suggest that, Nilgiri-wide, improvisation/variation is concentrated in the bass range of a percussion ensemble.

THE ARTICULATION OF FIXED-BEAT CYCLES

The six- and seven-beat Kota *da-ks* are organized in similar manners. Here it will be useful to outline verbally what I believe to be the hierarchy of beat articulation. Most simply, the first, and fourth beat are emphasized in each cycle. Slightly more complex, the third beat is also emphasized, as is the beat that falls in the center between the fourth and the last beat: in the six-beat cycle this involves converting a triple division into a duple one, in the seven-beat cycle this is accomplished more simply (the sixth beat falls evenly in between the fourth and the seventh). The two cycles are conceived as one and the same *ca-da da-k* played at

¹The reader must excuse the impressionistic vocabulary I have employed here. No indigenous terminology exists for these sounds, to my knowledge, and if specialized descriptive vocabulary exists for the sounds of these strokes in the field of European percussion I am not yet aware of it.

different speeds, at least in Kolme:l village.² I have provided a single notated example of a seven-beat cycle performed by the Irulas of the Eastern Nilgiris and it should be clear that the main outlines of articulation between the Kota and Irula examples are shared. This is not a lone example: all the instrument-playing Nilgiri tribes share this rhythm.³ The Kotas also recognize this musical commonality. Irula percussion ensembles and rhythmic improvisation tends to be more multipart and complex than that of the Kotas, and I have heard Pucan's son Varadharajan and other Kotas admit that as far as drumming goes, Irulas and Kurumbas are fine musicians.⁴

More complex variations involve bifurcating the three-beat section, articulating both triple and duple at the same time in the first half of the pattern, and in the case of the six-beat cycle, in the second also.⁵ This duple-triple hemiola/polyrhythm (depending on whether the divisions are performed horizontally or vertically) is also characteristic of much Tamil folk music. The pattern of accompaniment by the clay pot in "Gunta Malai," a *oyilāṭṭam* song (a Tamil folk song and dance style) provided in the accompanying notation is one illustration: the pot rhythm briefly converts into triple meter the final four beats of an eight-beat structure.

Examples of continuous drumming in triple and duple meter of the kind found in the three-beat subsections of six- and seven-beat Kota *ca-da da-k* examples, are found on the "Rhythms for Comparison Tape": beats one and three are emphasized and an additional beat divides the three beats in half. Example one was recorded at a Tamil/Kannada Māriyamman festival in Ooty, but the widespread rhythm appears to be associated with goddess-worship in Tamilnadu generally; the instruments here are the shallow kettle drum called the *tāsa*, two hourglass drums with snare called *kōṭāṅiki*, the *tappattai* frame drum and a sistrum, the name for which I am uncertain. Example two is the same rhythm played on *tappattai* and *kōṭāṅiki* alone (with singing).

Shifting between or superimposing duple and triple is not confined to rhythmic accompaniment or instrumental music, it is also common in the rhythmic organization of many dance and folksong melodies—especially women's *kummi*, men's *oyilāṭṭam*, *karakam* music (dancing with a pot on the head both in ritual and professional entertainment contexts), and *cintus* (a category containing several folk song genres

²The significance of this equation will be treated in a different context in the next chapter.

³See on the "Rhythms for Comparison Tape" examples 5, 12, 14, 17, and 23.

⁴I believe they refrain from saying that the Irulas and Kurumbas are *better* drummers, but are quick to point out that Kotas are the best *koḷ* players.

⁵Irula pieces exemplifying the equivalent of six-beat *ca-da da-k* are found on examples eight and nine on the "Rhythms for Comparison Tape"

connected with various ritual and entertainment activities).

The second *oyilāṅṅam* example exemplifies duple-triple subdivisions horizontally—the verse is sung in compound-duple meter and the vocalized chorus, on the syllables “ta na na” (a technique called *candīcai*, or metric music), in simple duple. That is, for every three beats articulated in the verse two are sung in the refrain. It will be noted in the third *oyilāṅṅam* example that a seven-beat meter is employed and that the way it is outlined on the clay pot shares much with the Nilgiri examples: the first half of the cycle is triple, superimposed upon duple every second repetition, the second half is four beats, subdivided in half.

Moving on to the eight-beat Kota *da-k* called *tiruganaṅṅ* we find a particular way of dividing up the count into a pattern of 3+2+3 that is by no means typical of all octuple/quadruple-meter music of Tamilnadu, but that can be found fleetingly in some of it. Far more common is the 3+3+2 pattern of the first *oyilāṅṅam* example, “Gunta Malai.” The same pattern is found on examples three and six of the “Rhythms for Comparison Tape.” The drum is an *urumi*, a waisted drum in which the left side is rubbed with a stick to produce the characteristic “*urrr urrrr*” sound for which the drum is named.⁶ The right hand strikes the drum with a stick on beats one, two, four, five, and six; the “*urrr*” sound occupies the second two beats of the first two three-beat pairs and the last beat is a (damped) stroke on the left head. One may argue that 3+3+2 is the same as 3+2+3 because the rhythmic ostinatos are circular and certainly this is in one sense true. However, one must also consider the ways in which the rhythms articulate with the beginning of a melody and the ways in which the “beginning” of a percussion pattern are conceived. The melodic phrase structure of the three vocal and instrumental Tamil examples and the way the rhythms are performed suggests that the patterns are conceived as 3+3+2 and not 3+2+3. Kota melodies do not always begin at the beginning of the rhythmic cycle, but the rhythmic cycles do have a beginning and an end: *tiruganaṅṅ* is conceptualized as 3+2+3.

Returning to a tribal Nilgiri piece in example four, we are again reminded that the Irula and Kota musical styles are quite similar, not only with regard to instrumentation and general style, but also to the articulation of specific rhythms. The 3+2+3 structure is clear in this example, and many of the variations Kota place on their *tiruganaṅṅ* are evident here as well.⁷ The Irulas of Ānaippālam (South Central Nilgiris) seem to be somewhat of a musical exception, not only in their lack of a frame drum but also in some of the varieties of

⁶This is an example of a larger version of the *urumi*, 1-1.5' in diameter, which may be characteristic of Northwestern Tamilnadu and Karnataka. A smaller version of the instrument is more common in other parts of Tamilnadu.

⁷Nilgiri examples of this rhythms can also be found on selections eleven, fifteen and twenty-two. The Kurumba selection, fifteen, is slightly more complex. One half of the ostinato is related to the Kota *tiruganaṅṅ*, the other half is articulated differently—the most notable difference being the emphasis on beats three and five. Selection twenty-two (Betta Kurumba) is significant in that it show the rhythm is practiced in the same way among tribes stretching at least to the Kerala border.

rhythm they employ. Example ten on the “Rhythms” tape shows a four-beat pattern quite distinct from *tirugana:t*. Example twenty of the Northern-Nilgiri Irulas of Bokkapuram, interestingly, illustrates a change from *tirugana:t* to another duple pattern (1+2+2+3—I am not certain of the “beginning” of this pattern) which accompanies a procession from the village to the river where the idol and paraphernalia of the goddess Māriyamman is washed.⁸ Tamil examples do not seem to illustrate the *tirugana:t* pattern as clearly, consistently or as distinctly as do Nilgiri tribal examples. The example I discovered which appeared to be the most *tirugana:t*-like occurred within a sequence of rhythmic variations performed by an ensemble of Cakkiliyar drummers at a temple festival in Dharmapuri district. Example twenty-one on the “Rhythms” tape illustrates the 3+2+3 rhythm clearly on the frame drum, *tappaṭṭai*. The other drums are *mattalam* (clay barrel drums of the same type as the Irula *kaḍime*), three in number, and *tāsa* (kettle drums) five in number.

The most distinctive Nilgiri rhythm is the ten-beat pattern Kotas used exclusively for god tunes and funeral tunes and it will be noticed that an equivalent Ālu Kurumba example is notated and recorded on item sixteen of the “Rhythms” tape. Although I have recorded virtually the entire rhythmic repertoires of several low-caste drumming ensembles different parts of Tamilnadu, I have not yet encountered examples which resemble the Nilgiri versions of this rhythm. Still, much remains to be examined, for I have also not found specific plains correlates to the Kota *koḷa! da-k*, which was purportedly borrowed from the *Cakkiliyars*. I did, however, find a similar rhythm among the Irulas of Ānaippālam: the two rhythms are juxtaposed in the accompanying notations.

As a whole, the percussion-ostinato patterns of the Nilgiri tribes form a tightly-related set, each tribe possessing its own minor variants and/or additional, distinct patterns. Each pattern or parts of each pattern are found abstractly in some non-tribal musical ensembles of Tamilnadu, and thus the rhythmic systems could be said to be related in a broad sense. But the close similarities among the rhythmic patterns of the Nilgiri tribals suggest that “Nilgiri tribal music” could be analytically isolated as an entity distinct from but related to other kinds of south Indian folk musics.

Having established the place of Kota instrumental music within the congeries of south Indian folk and tribal musics, I turn to a more focused and localized discussion of melodic organization. I wish to ask how Kota *koḷs* hold together melodically.

⁸Notice also the sound of a brass gong which appears to be struck for ritual and not musical reasons as the procession proceeds. The rhythm of the gong seems to bear no relationship to the drum rhythms.

KOL NOTATION

The notation of melodic examples presents problems which go beyond the aforementioned ones of rhythm. *kol* melodies are not composed entirely of fixed-pitch units and those pitches that remain relatively stable are not always diatonic. The problems of the tonal system were addressed in the beginning of part III and need not to be related in detail here. It will suffice to note here that the notations are an attempt to fuse the idea of a tablature with that of staff notation. Rather than a clef, I provide an ideograph of a *kol*, with the closed holes (and at the top, one open one) aligned with lines and spaces on the staff. Each "note," then, is a sound produced on the *kol* with a particular finger position. Again, the vertical lines represent main beats of the *da-k*; there are no measures as such, but ostinato units. The staff aspect of the notation is of course the form and rhythmic notation; beyond that, however, I have attempted to approximate the more regular tonal values of the *kol* "notes": the clef is implicitly a treble clef, though each melody is transposed to a convenient common pitch. As noted earlier, the upper range tends to be compressed and the initial *kol* third varies in value, thus causing other notes in the melodies to fall in relationships with one another that sound to Western ears in some instances "major" and in other instances "minor." To my knowledge, the Kotas have no notion of musical mode or scale; these apparent differences in tonality are, I believe, differences arising from specific instrument construction, condition of the reed, and contextual articulation of tones within a given melodic line. I have attempted to represent the relative values of notes by a key signature, but I have not discerned enough regularity in the differences between kinds of pieces, repertoires, or village styles to come up with a definitive set of contextually definable key signatures. Though I have been working with the tonal system for six years now, I still regard my "key signatures" and occasional attempts to note "accidentals" as primitive approximations.⁹

I have tried to use a minimal number of special symbols so as not to excessively clutter the notation. As noted in the previous chapter, the apparent "stopped" note on the *kol* is often accomplished by briefly touching the lower neighbor. What I have notated as "b" in the notations to be discussed is usually a lower neighbor ornament but is sometimes also a stopped tone. Rests are used only for definitive stops. "a" indicates an upper neighbor that is touched very lightly. I cannot claim to be entirely consistent in my use of written-out details (such as the use of upper neighboring tones to prolong a particular pitch) and symbols (such as "a" or "b") but my intention was to use symbols for more subtle details and discrete notes for more explicit ones. If all the details I heard were written out explicitly, the notations would be extremely difficult

⁹My initial attempts to use electronic means for recording and representing tonal inflection have not been fruitful, though I am confident that further research along these lines will eventually be useful.

to follow and the structure of the melodies would be difficult to capture at a glance. The most important notation for pitch fluctuation are two symbols: an eyebrow shape indicating the “tonal envelope” described in part III, ch. I (a raising of pitch produced by sudden and forceful air pressure on the reed, followed by a descending return in the direction of the pitch as it would have been rendered with standard, unmarked blowing technique) and a stylized “T,” representing a continuous tonal envelope, a kind of wide vibrato or tremolo (encompassing an interval of at least a *ko!* second), over several beats. Sometimes this technique fades indistinguishably into or follows from an actual alternation of two tones; I distinguish an alternation between tones from this tremolo technique in my notation, but the distinction is artificial in places.

Frequently the rhythm is notated as if it were more precise than it actually is. I discuss aspects of this problem in the next chapter and suggest how performers conceptualize melodic rhythm. Here I wish to point out that the notation is designed to represent certain kinds rhythmic variation—the triangle, in particular, represents a repetition of the *gag* syllables a variable number of times within a given period, never quite corresponding with the beat. The triangle modified with a stem represents a more-or-less fixed number of *gag* syllables (as notated), more-or-less corresponding with the notated values some of the time. In other cases I have bracketed the regions in which the melodic rhythm seems to be significantly fluid, and where my attempt to give the notes fixed rhythmic values seems to be hopelessly flawed. The alternation between duple and triple in melodic details may be related to the more general rhythmic interplay between these metrical configurations, but often in the notation they represent compromise rhythmic values: the melodies are executed so rapidly that, like in the drumming examples, minute rhythmic values between beats should not be taken too literally.

THE MELODIC ORGANIZATION OF KOTA *KO!*S

One of the most notable features of Kota *ko!* organization is the use of sparse motivic material in many variations, each variation, however, minute, repeated almost exactly each time the *ko!* is repeated. Some motives tend to give more of a unique identity to a *ko!* melody than do others, and when such an identifying motive or sequence of motives are found together in more than one *ko!*, they bring the two *ko!*s into relationships with one another. I have mentioned the relationship among *ko!*s in a ritual context, noting that *ko!*s with similar melodic material often correspond with rituals containing similar thematic content. Here I will discuss basic features of *ko!* structure and provide a few examples of the ways in which *ko!*s perceived to be related by Kotas can be shown to be related from a musical-analytical perspective.

It will be illustrative to focus on one repertoire in some detail and for this I have selected the god tunes

(from the special subset of twelve discussed in the “narrative system” chapter) because they are the musical specialty of Kolme-l village and because Pucan made frequent mention of melodic inter-relationships among the repertoire’s constituent pieces.

The most important god tune is the temple opening tune. We have seen that it is used in the largest number of ritual events within the god ceremony, including the most important ones, and that it is the longest melody of the twelve special god tunes. I have used lettered brackets to analyze its form and have lined up vertically certain sections that resemble one another. I will refer to each vertically aligned set of phrases as a “line,” numbered consecutively from one to seven in the notation for this *kol*.

In line one, the longish opening phrase, labeled “A,” ascends from π^5 to π^1 followed by a prolongation of π^2 labeled A_1 . The motivic cluster B is given a separate letter because it functions cadentially and is developed elaborately at the end of the tune. A is repeated exactly and what I have labeled B' is a prolongation of π^4 with heavy tonal envelope. I label this section B' even though it does not technically *sound* like B at all because it performs an analogous function at the end of phrase A—here instead of the temporary closure provided in the *gag* tones of B (the submotive labeled B_1) the prolongation provides a transition into the next section. The relationship between B and B' is a typical one in *kol*s, which I will characterize as “replacement of phrase with envelope tone.”

Following this rather straightforward ABAB' section are phrases which I have chosen to describe and label at the motivic level. The three-note rise from π^3 to π^1 is labeled D, although it is clearly related to the ascension in section A. The motive E reaches the highest note on the instrument and frames, along with E'. a prolongation of π^2 consisting of a motive deriving from A_1 and a sustained tonal envelope, B', two steps higher than that at the end of the previous line. The end of this line begins to illustrate some of the complexity of *kol* construction: E' is repeated sequentially one scale degree lower, $(E')^{-1}$ and what appears to be a variant of E' overlaps one scale degree below this, but the same motive could also be interpreted as another variant of B which combines the penultimate cadential motive $\pi^4 - \pi^3 - \pi^1$ with the prolongation of π^4 . The next line begins with D', a variation of the three note ascending motive, and then we encounter the “replacement of phrase with envelope tone” phenomenon again as π^1 is prolonged in the same structural location where E was present in the previous line (again, this can also be related to B', and I think the Western ear would tend to do so). E' appears and leads back to a new rhythmic variant of D, up one pitch-level, in the beginning of line four.

Line four proceeds in a manner analogous to the end of line two: cascading variants of E followed by a phrase that can be interpreted either as a form of E or of B and that interlocks both with the phrase that precedes and follows it. Unlike the end of line two which leads to another ascent in line three, line four

prolongs the sense of closure provided by the cadential phrase B and its variants. B2 is a new stable version of B, with a submotive B2₁, a descent from H^6 to H^5 . Line four ends with B2 and the *gag* tones related to the B₁ subphrase of B.

Lines five through seven are elaborate extensions of cadential B phrases built primarily on the B2 variant and its subphrase B2₁. Each of these lines ends on a long series of *gag* tones (B₁) which are not fixed in number but which create tension with the main beats of the ostinato. Note the submotive of B2, B2₁, and its variants in the penultimate position of lines five through seven. The cadence makes use of a dramatic leap from H^5 to H^1 and a dramatic drop from H^1 to H^6 . This kind of cadence is typical of slower, longer and/or more complex *kol*s, usually those in the god tune or funeral tune categories. I will call this a “leap cadence” for reference when I return to discussion of melodic structure later in this chapter.

Although the temple opening tune is played almost exactly the same each repetition there are two kinds of variations: errors of omission and the replacement of the first two lines with a series of sustained envelope tones. These latter begin on the highest note the *kol* can produce, H^0 , connect conjunctly with three descending tones to H^2 , and continue with a motive similar to B" from the end of line two to conjoin with line three. This variation is one of the few contextually specific variations in all of Kota musical culture and is therefore significant: it is supposed to be played at the moment the *mundka-no-n*s throw thatch and other greenery symbolic of rethatching upon the roof of the temples during the god ceremony. Besides drawing attention to the moment in the ways changing the *kol* and/or sonic signaling generally do (when lifting the funeral bier, for example), the musical phrase is obviously iconic of the throwing action and the upward motion of the thatch.

Errors of omission would not be surprising in a *kol* as long and as complicated as this but there are generally few. A further complication is added, however, by the existence of a second *kol*, called the *anvirca kol*, that is, the *kol* played when men go to offer a ring to the water goddess, clean the channel which brings spring water to the village (now symbolic since pipes are used) and bathe in preparation for the temple opening. Women later carry firewood in a highly ceremonial fashion to this same *kol*. This second *kol* is exactly like the temple opening tune, except it lacks the third line beginning with D' and the first three sections of line four (varieties of D, E and E)—i.e. the central portion of the *kol* in which elaboration in the highest range occurs. Since the differences between the temple opening tune and the tune for going to the channel are so subtly different, it is not uncommon for a *kol* player to omit phrases from the former or add them to the latter out of a brief memory lapse during all the confusion a festival brings—particularly if the musician is not accompanied by a more experienced partner. Another possibility for error in a tune as

complicated as this is a misalignment of the melody with the ostinato.¹⁰

THE MEANING OF MELODIC SIMILARITY

The relationship between the temple opening tune and the channel-cleaning tune recalls a phenomenon addressed in chapters thirteen and fourteen, namely the significance of shared material. These earlier chapters considered genre-level signification. Here we find signification at the level of ritual and individual tune. The issue at stake is once again “what sticks to music.” Reviewing the outline of the Kolme-l God ceremony (see appendix) and viewing the edited video will reveal that the men’s and women’s rituals associated with the channel-cleaning tune closely surround one of the most important activities of the god ceremony, the temple-opening itself (for which the temple-opening tune is named). The men’s and women’s rituals are central gender-defining ones in the context of the god ceremony: men perform the “instrumental” role of ensuring the abundance of water by cleaning the channel¹¹ and a spiritual role, ritually cleansing themselves so as to be suitable for god (this is particularly important if a new *te-rka-rn* or *mundka-no-n* must be selected); women perform an instrumental role as providers of firewood for the sacred meal (and synecdochically, for their roles as nourishers-cum-nurturers at hearthside) and a spiritual role, decorating themselves abundantly for a special dance specifically intended for the aesthetic pleasure of the gods. But these rituals are not the central defining rituals for the entire god ceremony and for the entire community. The fact that the men’s and women’s rituals are closely related to the temple-opening and the next day’s feasting are in some sense subsidiary or harbored under the aegis of the latter, more central features of the ceremony, seems to be signified musically in a rather literal way.

This interpretation might seem far-fetched if it were not supported by other similar sorts of relationships among melodies: recall the tunes for offering grain to the gods are almost identical for the god ceremony and the dry funeral. In Me-na-r the tune for carrying the corpse out of the house and placing it on the *kava-l* (yard in front of the house) is identical to that used when the *ko-anm* (memorial millet) is poured on the *kava-l* during the dry funeral. This is the Me-na-r method of using musical identity to create a metaphysical identity between grain and corpse. I have mentioned both in the context of discussing the meaning of grain (chapter

¹⁰The last two examples of the temple opening tune, eight and nine on the “God Tunes Comparison Tape,” were recorded out of context with Raman. In example eight, the drummers play the wrong *da-k*, in example nine, the drummers play the right *da-k* but start it at the wrong part of the melody and Raman does not seem to notice. Since this varies from every other recording and does not seem to make musical sense, I am relatively confident that this alignment was in error and not merely another equally-valid manner of rendition.

¹¹This is also abstractly connected with bringing rain, but here I refer to the physical-labor aspect of the job which at one time would have been considerable.

ten, section three) and spatiotemporal transformation (chapter nine, section two) that a different kind of signification is accomplished in Kolme-l. The *koṣanm* tune there is related to one of the four “funeral finishing tunes” (*narguc ko!*)—the longest and most emotive of the funeral repertoire. These are tunes that help send the souls of the dead to the land of the dead and provide a context for a final emotional display after the last night at the funeral ground during the dry funeral. Mandelbaum’s notes from August 8, 1937 are instructive on this point:

When the morning star is seen in the sky about an hour or so before dawn, na:d gujkol is played. This music is to honor the deceased and when it is played the widows and the widowers must wail. If they have cried before or not is no matter, but if anyone of them does not cry at this time, they are fined. Any other relations may cry then but it is not compulsory (Mandelbaum n.d. 8.8.37 p. 2)¹²

The morning star tune (*vely mi-n ko!*) is the one of the four *narguc ko!*s which shares an opening phrase with the Kolme-l *koṣanm ko!*. It is generally associated with the dry funeral, but can be performed as an ambient tune at any time during the funeral, and will be performed at dawn during the green funeral if the cremation is for some reason delayed overnight. The melodic similarity between these tunes creates, I suggested, a metaphysical link between the release of the soul at the end of the funeral and the manifestation of it in the millet at the beginning of the dry funeral. It also serves like an electrical switch: as soon as the *koṣanm* tune is played all the widows and widowers (and others close to the dead) begin to wail. This is not merely an “as if” scenario. When I attended my first dry funeral in Me-na-r I was told that when the music began, widows would begin to cry and indeed this is what occurred.

I have not provided notation of these two *ko!*s but they are juxtaposed on the funeral tune comparison tape. It will be noted that the similarity between the funeral-finishing and the grain-pouring tunes is less exact or detailed than that between the temple-opening and the channel-cleaning tunes. In fact it was Pucan who brought the relationship to my attention. The ritual explanation for the relationship between the melodies was my own; Raman felt that the relationship between the melodies did not signify ritual relationships on any detailed or symbolic level but on a general emotional level. This would certainly make sense given the fact that both tunes require ritual crying.

Melodic similarity does not always correlate with specific ritual or symbolic relationships between the activities two tunes accompany. Particularly in cases of motivic similarity (as in the funeral-finishing tune case above) as opposed to similarity of an entire piece or part of a piece (as in the grain-placing tunes, temple-opening and channel-cleaning tunes, and corpse-carrying and grain-pouring tunes), the relationship tends to signify a wholeness in an entire repertoire rather than a set of one-to-one correlations within an otherwise disparate repertoire. I would like to explore these motivic relationships further by examining additional examples from the sequence of twelve god tunes.

¹²Note however that this statement conflicts with Raman’s description of a sort of silent awe with which the mourners regard the dead at this final farewell.

STRUCTURE AND MOTIVIC SIMILARITY AMONG GOD TUNES

The temple opening tune is always the first to be rendered when Kolme:l Kota musicians sit down to play the suite of tunes called the twelve god tunes. If time is limited, only three tunes are played and they are usually the first three: the temple opening tune, the eighteen-god-calling tune and the *kunayno·r* tune. The remaining tunes tend to proceed in a typical order (this order is preserved in the organization of the God Tunes Comparison Tape); this order is not, apparently, maintained for its own sake or because it is ritually significant, rather it helps the musicians keep track of which tunes have been played and which ones have not. Pucan keeps track of some of the tunes by their remembering their similarities and differences: motivic similarity and differences in *da·k*. The *kunayno·r* tune and the eighteen god calling tune form one such pair.

The eighteen-god-calling tune (*padne! devr a·td ko!*), notated on a separate sheet of *tirugana:t ko!s*, a short tune of only five rhythmic cycles. The piece is composed primarily of variations of two phrases which are themselves made up of the same motivic material. Phrase A is made up of π^5 and three repetitions of π^4 , separated by two upper and one lower neighbors. B is π^4 , π^5 , and two π^4 's. The phrases leading up to the *gag* tone cadence on C sound to me like two versions of linked phrases A and B which overlap with one another. The musical interest in the *ko!* such as this lies in the way simple sets of motives are strung together in differing relationships both with each other and in relation to the percussion ostinato. A version of section A does not return to the original relationship with the ostinato until the beginning of the fourth ostinato cycle.

The tune can be divided into two parts, each ending with the *gag* tone cadence. The first part we saw was of the form of overlapping AB AB phrases. The second half can be divided into two parallel but unequally long sections A"D and AA"B". A" is simply A with the initial π^5 prolonged with a tremolo/envelope. D is a two note motive forming the climax of this piece, whose tonal range is quite limited. π^3 occurs at almost the center of the melody. A" consists of a heavy tonal envelope on π^5 , perhaps a "replacement" of phrase A, or perhaps an entity onto itself (which should have received a new letter in my analysis) providing a counterbalance to the climax not in D. At the end of A" is a gentle rise to π^4 in the section labeled B" (again, perhaps this should have been given an independent letter); this rise parallels one step lower that in D. It may also be regarded as the beginning of a subtle "leap cadence"; here "leap" is the wrong term, but the contrary motion is in this case indicative of the cadence. It will be noted that almost the entire tune is composed of pitches π^5 and π^4 ; the remaining two pitches are either the climax or one of the two cadences. What appears to be occurring musically is not melodic variation as variation in rhythm, motive, and ornament.

I have provided below the notation Pucan's vocalization of the melody. Although there is not a one-to-one correlation between notes and sung syllables in all songs, there are localized regularities. In short simple

melodies such as this the regularities are clear: π^6 is rendered with the syllable *gag*, as we would expect; π^5 is rendered with the syllable *gil* at the beginning of some phrases. Notes preceded by an upper neighbor tend to be rendered with the syllable *lil*, as do the tremoloed intermediate notes on a sustained envelope tone. The syllable *le* appears after a lower neighbor/stopped note in some cases, and as the rising tones in D and B". The syllable *e* serves as a contrasting vocalization sound for repeated phrases in the first half of the melody.

The manner of employing syllables is never entirely consistent, but in this case a few patterns emerge: whenever π^5 is preceded by a *gag* sound from below it is rendered as *gil*. Whenever π^4 is preceded by a *gil* sound from below it is rendered as *lil*. Whenever a pitch is preceded by a lower pitch on the syllable *gil* (whether the lower pitch is a neighboring tone ornament or tone proper) it is rendered as *le*.

The *kunayno-r* tune, set to ten-beat *ca·da da·k* and occurring over six ostinato cycles, bears some resemblance to the eighteen-god-calling tune; this is a culturally recognized resemblance, pointed out to me by Pucan. The melodic material is based on three motives, A, B, and C, and a prolonged tonal envelope, D. A, an opening motive, is simply a one-step rise from π^5 to π^4 . The motive is almost identical to the A section of the eighteen-god-calling tune, save for different rhythmic values and the absence of one iteration of π^4 preceded by an upper neighbor. The similarity of the opening motives, and the way variations unfold in each of the two tunes are what make these tunes sound similar to Pucan. They also, incidentally, sometimes confuse inexperienced drummers, causing them to play the wrong *da·k*.

B begins from below and culminates with an upper-neighbor figure on π^4 ; the π^4 - π^3 - π^4 portion of the figure is labeled submotive B₁. C is a *gag* tone cadence. The musical interest in this *kol* seems to lie in the subtle elaborations of the B and B submotives. Although the form is not as complex as that of the temple opening tune, it is more intricate than the eighteen-god-calling tune. It builds cumulatively (omitting the details of variants: AB AABBBC ABBCDC) to a climax in section D through tricky permutations of the motives in alternative places within the rhythmic cycle. D could be interpreted as a "replacement of phrase with envelope tone" for A but the structure of this *kol* is not repetitive enough to warrant such an analysis. D ends with only a gradual rise before the final cadence—no dramatic leap, but the rise falls within the same category of contrary melodic movement that signals the end of a *kol* or a section thereof. It is also paralleled strongly in the B" section of the eighteen-god-calling tune.

It will not be necessary to verbally lead the reader through the structure of each god tune. The recordings provide numerous examples of the basic principles I have already described: conservative use of a small number of melodic and rhythmic motives; transformation and overlapping of phrases and motives; cadential formulae often making use of a gentle or dramatic rise or leap; contrastive sections through the use of sustained envelope tones. The god tunes of Kolme-l tend to avoid simple repetitive structures such as

variations of ABAB, but some funeral tunes and dance tunes of Kolme-l and god tunes of other villages do employ simpler structures. The Nilgiri god tune (*ni-lgiri co-ym kol!*) is one exception; its simple structure lends itself to performance during a procession. During the rain ceremony, this tune is usually performed as the men walk from one sacred site to another. The simplicity of the tune makes it possible for less-experienced *kol!* players to assume the responsibility of ritual musicianship in this context. It would be far more difficult to play the temple-opening tune, for example, while climbing the hill to *ponic*.

I will briefly point out in some of the remaining notations the ways in which tunes Pucan identified as similar can be understood as similar in the context of the above discussion. The two tunes “coin-offering tune” (*paṭm kacd kol!*) and the goddess *amno-r* tune are usually played in positions four and five in the sequence. They are linked to each other, and different from each other, in ways analogous to tunes two and three above. Both share a characteristic motive but are differentiated by *da-k*. The motive is quite distinctive, a leap from \mathfrak{H}^5 to \mathfrak{H}^2 and back to \mathfrak{H}^5 in the *paṭm kacd kol!* and \mathfrak{H}^5 to \mathfrak{H}^1 and back in the *amno-r kol!*. The remainder of both *kol!*s are centered in variations on the two tones \mathfrak{H}^5 and \mathfrak{H}^4 ; the leap motive is what stands out in both and is what makes both sound related to one another even though their length, *da-k* and internal details differ.

As suggested above, the significance of these similarities among tunes is not of the same order as that between the temple-opening and channel-cleaning tunes. Of the rituals that might have been associated with the latter four tunes (eighteen-god-calling tune, *kunayno-r* tune, coin-offering tune and *amno-r* tune) only one is practiced today in conjunction with the performance of the tune, the coin-offering. The performance of a ritual associated with worship of god would immediately create an association between the accompanying tune and the category of “god.” I would suggest that some tunes which are not already (or regularly) associated with a ritual activity in the “god” category come to sound like god tunes by their melodic similarity with other god tunes (which are mutually constituting, with their accompanying rituals, as belonging to the “god” category), and by their performance in a sequence of pieces which are labeled god tunes.

Funeral tunes also share motivic material although in a less specific and well-defined context. The most obvious melodic similarity to my ears (this was not one pointed out to me by musicians, although I am confident they would agree with my assessment) is between the melody of the *kol!* version of “Mathi,” discussed in the previous chapter, and the first half of the fire lighting tune (see funeral tune comparison tape, examples 23-29). The motivic material from “Mathi” is presented in the same order in the first half of the fire lighting tune, though the rhythmic values and internal repetitions of motives vary somewhat.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has been concerned with the musical subsystem of *koḷs* and, in particular, the elements of structure in rhythmic ostinatos and melodies of ritually important pieces. It was possible to compare ostinato structure within the Nilgiri and wider south Indian environment because “structure” in this case was also content. We discovered that the rhythmic ostinatos of the Kotas, and the way they are elaborated, form part of a local musical system that is specific to Nilgiri tribal peoples. At the same time, structures of six, seven, eight, and twelve beats are common on the plains, as are characteristic ways of superimposing duple and triple meters in sections of or throughout a given rhythmic cycle. The ten-beat ostinato is not yet shown to have direct analogues on the plains. The Nilgiri system has a local identity, but it appears to be a local “dialect” of a rhythmic system whose grammar is widespread in the South.¹³

Just as subjective valuation accounts for the association of a particular version of Mathi with a particular village (and for that matter, a particular version of any song or tune melody) so too does the association of *ca·da da·k* and *tirugana·ḷ* with traditional Kota activities, gods, etc. and *koḷa·ḷ da·k* with Hindu deities depend upon the assignment of arbitrary meaning. Although it may be that there is a particular *Cakkiliyar* rhythm which can still be observed upon which the Kotas based their *koḷa·ḷ da·k*, the ostinato pattern is not radically outside the range of musical possibilities in the “traditional” ostinatos. The assignment of *koḷa·ḷ da·k* to contexts in which Hindu gods are worshiped signals a musical-historical moment which coincided in some way with the formal adoption of Hindu deities into Kota cultural landscapes. Because the use of these ostinato patterns is so consistent, we have seen that the system of ostinatos forms a simple semiotic system in which Kotas reference for themselves what is ancient (*ma·mu·ḷ*) and what is recent (*ocmu·ḷ*), without, however, valuatively judging either practice. Kota practices of worshipping Hindu deities sometimes operate along Kota indigenous lines: husband and wife priests, for instance, or the erection of a temporary canopy. But they also enact Hindu modes of worship, employing Hindu icons (*mūrttis*), coconuts and incense, which are never borrowed and used in worship of Kota indigenous gods. In the same way, Kota musical style is maintained in performing music for Hindu-style worship, but specific content of the music is confined to the Hindu context alone.

The structure of *koḷ* melodies cannot be defined in a manner as simple or consistent as that of rhythmic ostinato. Simple structures exist, especially in dance tunes, but by and large when any *koḷ* melody is examined in detail it will be discovered that a small number of motives form the basis of entire melodies.

¹³I make no claims about the South-Indian specificity of the described rhythmic processes; Tamilnadu happens to be the state in which I was able to make the most extensive and diverse observations.

Outside of these motives, which are usually introduced at the beginning of the melody, are several kinds of things that may happen in the course of the melody, depending often on its length, complexity and speed: final cadences or internal points of articulation will consist of *gag* tones. These tones sometimes coincide quite exactly with the articulation of the ostinato by the *tabatk* and at other times vary in number and explicitly remain in tension with these main beats. Movement is generally conjunct, but when major disjunctions occur this either signals an upcoming cadence (as in the “leap cadence”) or represents a significant melodic motive which would tend to lend a separate identity to a particular *kol* (the coin-offering tune and the *amno-r kol* for instance). Ornamentation tends to be fairly consistent and parts of melodies are often a single tone prolonged with rhythmically recurring approaches from above and below.

Similarity among *kols* sometimes has a specific ritual meaning and sometimes it does not. The significance of similarity is the most intense when two *kols* resemble each other almost exactly throughout. Similarities in motives are somewhat common among pieces in a given genre (god tunes, death tunes, dance tunes) and this tends to give the genre a quality of wholeness, just as ritual themes (ways of representing unity within a village for god ceremonies and among villages in the dry funeral, for example) give a quality of wholeness to the ritual complexes which correspond with the genres. There are probably similarities in motives between tunes both in the god and death repertoires; it seems inevitable because the styles of these genres are not separate. However, since the two genres are kept apart *by definition*, the aural effect of hearing similarities among pieces is locally confined to a particular context. I would argue that when one listens to the eighteen-god-calling tune followed immediately by the *kunayno-r kol*, one perceives a continuity between these pieces, not a continuity with a piece which will not be heard in this context.

The phenomenon of meaningful similarity raises a bit of an issue with regard to musical agency: if the most sacred of God tunes were given by “god” and some of the ritually important funeral tunes given by the spirits of the dead, is it appropriate to infer any kind of semiotic intentionality? If the Kotas told us that, yes, a clever fellow sat down and composed the temple-opening tune and then composed a related tune for cleaning the channel we could then assign motivation to a human agent, maintaining a consistent system of musical and ritual correlation. But if we take seriously Kota cultural claims to the supernatural invention of important musical items we cannot really examine intentions or motivation in specific human, historical terms (as we could, for example, in part I, examining the life of Rangan and the kinds of songs he composed). The best one can do is examine the context in which musical material is supernaturally transmitted: through spirit possession or dreams. There is an undeniably human element that enters in when a somewhat inchoate melody is heard for the first time, perhaps in the hazy context of a dream, perhaps mumbled from the toothless mouth of a ninety-year old diviner, memorized by musicians, and reproduced later as a fixed and

consistent “piece.” It seems fairly understandable that as new pieces are memorized, bits of pre-existing material creep in. It also makes sense that, as new pieces are learned or composed, musicians will be careful not to allow a particular god tune to sound too much like a particular funeral tune and vice-versa. Checks and balances are provided in the stabilization of a version of a tune in a genre and in its transmission. Perhaps the paucity of musical material developed in *kol/s* allows for the possibility of hearing a “piece” for the first time and memorizing it. That is, maybe what is heard in a dream or from the mouth of a diviner is a kind of improvisation on a musical kernel, which is then developed and stabilized by musicians afterwards. It is not difficult to memorize the basic musical idea, but even a melody as short as the eighteen-god-calling tune would be extremely difficult to memorize on first hearing because a simple motive is repeated in such subtly varying, overlapping, and irregular ways.¹⁴

Part III has been concerned with ways of approaching Kota music as a system in and of itself: a classificatory system of genres, collections of pieces with related meanings assigned verbally through stories, ways of transmitting and varying vocal and instrumental pieces, and sets of structural features, both tonal and rhythmic, which cohere in the Nilgiri region and relate in important ways with comparable structures outside it. The final chapter will continue to consider issues of the Nilgiris as a tribal musical region and proceed to examine the question of what “tribal music” means in the Indian context.

¹⁴Nettl is instructive on this point, “. . . certain structural limitations are necessary if a piece is to be transmitted aurally. Dividing music into elements, I hypothesize the need for some of these to remain simple, repetitive, stable so that others may vary. There is probably some point beyond which it is impossible for any sizeable population of musicians to remember material. If these limitations are not observed in the original composition, they will be instituted through the process of communal re-creation. Recurring events or sign posts such as motifs or rhythmic patterns, conciseness of form, brevity or systematic variation may, as it were, hold an aurally transmitted piece intact” (Nettl 1984, 192).

MUSIC AND THE IDEA OF *TRIBE* IN INDIA

Social and cultural theory of the last twenty years has taught us that to name and delineate a social-cultural category is also in some sense to construct it, frequently to objectify it, and sometimes, in time, to essentialize it. *Tribe* is one such category in India.¹ What then does *tribal music* mean in the Indian context? In an attempt to clarify some of the issues involved in carving out an ethnomusicological discourse on Indian tribal music, I consider and critique in this chapter two possible approaches to the idea of tribe in India. In my concluding discussion, I advocate local ethnography combined with broad comparative analyses and suggest that, if it makes sense at all to speak of an ethnomusicological entity called "South Asian Musics," which is, at some level of generalization, unified, then the musics of India's tribes should be considered central and not marginal to such a representation.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first examines possible views of tribe generated from specific Nilgiri multi-ethnic scenarios and articulated, in part, through musical processes. The second section turns to perspectives on tribe that can only be generated by an observer from without. To what degree, I ask, can the musics of communities called tribes throughout India be said to share aspects of sonic organization? The purpose of such questioning is to address possibilities for and problems of constructing descriptive definitions for Indian tribal music as a whole.

In the introduction to this thesis I discussed the commonplace construction of the term *tribe* in India. It appears that *tribe* exists only as an idea, as an ideal type, independent of the people to whom the designation applies. If tribe is an external construction with no other ontological basis, does this mean that approaching an ethnographic subject as a *tribe* is by definition flawed? Not necessarily: one way around the problem would be to shift the focus from what specific communities share because they are tribes (an essentialist approach) to what they use to show that they are tribal (an agentive or constructivist approach). Studying the role of music in various constructions of tribe makes it unnecessary to evaluate unverifiable, emotional arguments as to whether tribals really are the oldest living representatives of south Asian cultures, and so forth.

¹Parts of this chapter, and the discussion of *tribe* in the introduction, have been proposed for inclusion in a special volume of *Asian Music* entitled "Music and the Idea of Tribe in India."

One may ask what and how music is used in Indian popular films during tribal dance scenes; or, identify the musical choices tribal musicians make when representing themselves as “tribals” *per se*, rather than as a particular ethnic group, in a particular political, economic, or other cultural arena. Textual examples appropriate for the second category of analysis are not hard to find. The Kotas, for example, compose songs that celebrate their tribal aboriginal identity (see song reproduced below by B. K. Krishnan) and educate others about what it means to be a Kota tribesperson (the most explicit example of this is song 128, composed in Tamil, listed in the appendix). Examples based on musical context falling into this category are more difficult to identify: tribes of India have not selected and emphasized a single, unified musical core, in the manner of Native Americans, for example, who emphasize (and exaggerate) a Plains Indian musical style in intertribal performance contexts such as the Pow Wow (cf. Nettl 1983, 33-36).

THE APPROPRIATION OF MUSICAL EMBLEMS

Carol Babiracki (1990) has presented us with one of the most rich and complex manifestations of musical appropriation from the tribal side of the equation: the *karam* repertoire of the Mundas, which is based on musical material borrowed from the musical culture of local Hindu castes and transformed into a uniquely Munda cultural expression, both in style and in function. I would like to present two examples from the Nilgiris in which the appropriation is reversed: here, Hindu castes draw upon the local authenticity of tribal music in their attempts to function ritually and economically in the Nilgiri hills. The first example is an appropriation of musical content, a particular rhythmic style, associated with Nilgiri tribal music. The second is an appropriation of tribalness *per se*, because Kotas and Irulas are recognized as tribal peoples and their musics are believed to be preferred by the local manifestation of the goddess Māriyamman. Both of these examples illustrate how the idea of tribe is constructed and maintained dialectically, in one region, through musical performance.

For reasons examined in the introduction and in part one, Todas, and in most contexts Badagas, do not hire Kotas to play for their festivals and funerals, and instead rely on one of a variety of other tribal, folk, and syncretic Western bands (Walker 1986: 31, 33, 216, 219, 230, 231, pl.28). However, the Kotas of Kolmel village continue to perform for one Badaga temple festival every year, in Sokkathorai. The Badagas of that village continue to acknowledge the fact that the Kotas of Kolmel granted them the land on which they reside and provided food and shelter for the village founder. As a result of this acknowledgment, the two villages have maintained close ties over the years. Even in Sokkathorai, however, an additional band is hired to add to

the festivity—probably because Sokkathorai Badagas consider themselves “advanced” and “modern.”²

I had the opportunity to visit the Sokkathorai festival and discovered that the syncretic Western band, featuring clarinet and drums, employed one of the rhythms the Kotas consider to be characteristic of Nilgiri tribal music. Indeed, in the music of the Kotas, Kurumbas and Irulas I had often heard this rhythm, a particular set of variations³ on the seven-beat cycle analyzed in the previous chapter (articulated 3 + 2 + 2). This particular pattern was in all but a schematic sense, absent from other, non-tribal folk drumming examples I had heard (but see previous chapter for ways in which the generalized 3 + 2 + 2 pattern appears in *oyilāṭṭam*). Kotas call the pattern *ca-da da-k*, “ordinary variety.”

Badagas dances are similar to Kotas dances, probably because Badagas developed their style of dancing in the Nilgiris according to the rhythms of Kota music and for centuries, the Kotas and Badagas would have witnessed each others’ dances. Perhaps the band that day used the typical seven-beat pattern because it fit well with Badaga dancing. I did not have an appropriate opportunity to determine whether the band was trying to emulate the Kotas, or whether they were consciously aware that the rhythm was typically tribal; neither did Kotas who were present point out to me that their rhythms had been “stolen.” Intentionality notwithstanding, I am reasonably confident that local musical models strongly informed the musical choices made in the composition of this syncretic music.

TRIBAL MUSIC FOR MĀRIYAMMAN

Moving from the nominally “objective” musical features of musical content to the subjective realm of dialectically constructed notions of tribe, consider the following example in which tribal musicians were invited to perform for a goddess festival simply because they were tribal. Every year, Hindu and Tribal residents in the Nilgiris propitiate the goddess Māriyamman for rain and healthy crops. Māriyamman is known throughout in South India under a variety of names and her cosmogony varies according to region and local mythological tradition. She has been described as a “split” figure—cool in her association with rain (when she has been propitiated successfully), hot in her manifestation as skin diseases, particularly the

²This suspicion derives from the fact that the tradition of Badaga epic singing has almost completely died out. In its place is a thriving tradition of contemporary-style Hindu bhajan singing, accompanied by harmonium, and the beginnings of a cassette industry. By the time I left in 1992 there were at least five Badaga music cassettes released, each Badaga in language but south Indian popular/devotional in style, accompanied by acoustic and synthesized instruments and orchestrated in a manner patterned on the music of Indian cinema. A Badaga living in a village next to Kolme:l referred to the new style of musical performance represented on cassette as an “improvement.”

³It was not the stress pattern alone, but the manner of rhythmic elaboration that makes the rhythm distinctive.

pustules of small pox.⁴

In her stories she has been described both as the wife of the great god Śiva, and as that of a demon: in one well-known story, she is a Brahmin woman whose head has been mistakenly replaced on the head of an untouchable woman (Whitehead 116-17). It has been argued that the attributes of the gods and goddesses in Tamilnadu have direct social correlates, such that, for example, “a conflicted woman may be devoted to Māriyamman” (Trawick 1992, 252). The unification of opposites (or, better in the Indian context, her ability to subsume diverse attributes under a single ruling divine identity) may perhaps be one reason why Māri worship remains so popular in south India for a variety of castes and tribes.⁵

Some Tamil and Kannada-speaking residents of Ooty worship Cikkamman, understood to be one of Māriyamman’s “sisters,” in a temple on the outskirts of the city of Ooty.⁶ The year I witnessed the festival, the goddess, possessing the temple priest, a Tamilian, indicated to her devotees that she wished to be propitiated with Nilgiri *ādivāsi* music.⁷ The Hindus who worshiped at this temple were not themselves particularly interested in tribal music as a musical phenomenon *per se*, although like others in the region, they

⁴The word *māri* means death or small pox in Tamil. Since the time of Whitehead (1921, 115) scholars have reported one meaning of *māri* in the context of the goddess as “changed.” It is possible that illiterate villagers have drawn a connection between some of the stories of Māriyamman, in which she changes from “murderous to benevolent, from horrible to beautiful, or the other way round” (Trawick 1992, 38), and the Tamil verb *māru-*, the intransitive verbal stem for “to change”—but the connection is etymologically erroneous. Historically the word *māri* (death/small pox) and the past participle *māri-* (changed) are unrelated.

The pustules are considered, on the one hand, a sign of the goddess’s anger and heat; yet, to be physically affected by the goddess is to be considered in a state of divine grace—the skin lesions may be thus referred to as “kisses” or “pearls” (Trawick 1984, 26 in Nabokov 1995, 62).

⁵Beck reports a major Māri festival in Coimbatore district is held in conjunction with a cattle fair in which “thousands of people” are “drawn to the locale regularly from all over the State. But the focus of the crowds is on the fair, while the festival proceedings at the temple are left mainly to local residents” (Beck 1981, 84). On the foothills of the Nilgiris, in Masinagudi and nearby temple sites, similar large, integrative festivals take place. Bokkapur is the largest and most “fair”-like of these festivals—replete with human-driven ferris wheels, circuses, puppet shows and gambling.

⁶The practice of worshipping Māri sister deities extends into Karnataka (cf. Whitehead 1921, 29; see also Elmore 1913, 12-26). Heidemann argues that the Māri complex, which links the religious practices of the Nilgiri plateau with those of the lowland, represents for the Badagas a ritual means of establishing a political claim over the territory to the north of the hills (i.e. from where their forefathers migrated) and allows the Badagas to maintain an institutionalized form of relationship with the Irula peoples who reside in these intervening areas (Heidemann 1994). More broadly, “She [the Goddess] appears in single or multiple forms; and all across India, in the north and south as well, we find the recurring theme of seven sisters, who are grouped together in a single place or who distribute their roles across several different villages. . . . What is absolutely characteristic of this form of the Goddess is that her place of worship is always located on the limits of a populated area. As the protectress of a site, she should in fact be found on the border, prepared to challenge the enemy” (Biardeau 1989, 131-2).

⁷Particular deities have particular needs and/or preferences for divine offerings (Harman 1989, 145). They will commonly demand, through a spirit medium of some sort, what they need. In some cases, deities may even promise to help devotees fulfill their own vows (see the excellent case study, “the unfulfilled vow of Kuppu,” in Nabokov 1995, 67-76)

accepted the tribals' aboriginal claims on the land and participated in the construction of tribals as exotic, mystical and supernaturally powerful.⁸

The musical selection for this festival ultimately included hiring two tribal groups, one Irula and one Kota, to provide music that the goddess would appreciate. Meanwhile, the temple committee hired a Kanadiga (people from the state of Karnataka) band to play the kind of music conventionally performed at this sort of a festival on the plains—a kind of music which Hindu participants would understand and to which they would respond. This band consisted of double-reed *nāyanams*, and a kind of rubbed membranophone called *urumi*. While these three bands played simultaneously, standing next to one another, a technological layer of sound was added to this sonic melée in the form of devotional cinema music.

Without imposing an externally conceived notion of rationality on this situation it is difficult to decide who is the agent in this construction of “tribe.” From the point of view of the temple organizing committee, it was the goddess herself who deemed tribal music appropriate for a goddess living in the hills. From the Kota point of view, this was simply a paying gig. In fact, the music they performed was Māriyamman music, already marked rhythmically as Hindu and not as Kota—i.e. the ethnic reflections here worked in both directions.

Lending authority to the Tamil interpretation of this situation, i.e. that the goddess was the agent in this decision, I think it is also worthwhile to review what goddesses, south Indian tribals and Dravidians signify in what we might call popular Orientalism in India. It will be recalled that the Tamil or Dravidian religious revival of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries raised its banner under the auspices of the god Śiva, whom they claimed was originally and authentically Dravidian. They may, as some have argued, have been attempting to counter colonial representations of Dravidians as “aboriginal, animistic, and prone to devil-worship” (Ramaswamy 1993, 694), and indeed, Dravidianism was projected as a “female” and “‘natural’ religion of cosmic forces” by such ethnologists as Oppert (Inden 1990, 119-20). Elmore wrote, for instance, in his *Dravidian gods in modern Hinduism*.

Siva worship is a marked illustration of the adoption of aboriginal gods. Siva is a god of the Puranas, and in connection with his worship there is much that is opposed to Brahmanism. he appears to be a deified chief. His wife, Parvati, is more strikingly aboriginal than Siva himself. She appears in many different forms. As Kali she is a bloodthirsty goddess, wearing a necklace of skulls, and dancing on the bodies of her fallen enemies. . . . The goddesses of the Dravidians are commonly said to be incarnations of Kali or Durga, and so the wives of Siva (1913, 5-6).

Even if the association of goddess worship with the south was originally conjured up by colonial

⁸This may be considered one aspect of the broader phenomenon K. S. Singh has called “tribalization,” “the acceptance of tribal mores, rituals and beliefs by in-coming communities. . . [and] tribals’ participation in coronation ceremonies and their role as custodians and priests at Hindu shrines.” (1985, 87).

scholars, that association, like many other beliefs about “Aryan” and “Dravidian,” probably trickled down into everyday religious practice. In this situation it would appear that the goddess Cikkammaṅ was buying into this ideology herself by insisting that she be propitiated with the music of the “true sons of the soil” in the Nilgiris, the *ādivāsis*.

Māriyamman, as a goddess, has been portrayed as combining, in her associated mythologies and forms of worship, Aryan with Dravidian, “great” with “little” traditions, and Brahmanical with low-caste.⁹ The simultaneous orchestration of tribal and Hindu festival music for Māriyamman worship thus reproduced in a sonic and musical-social medium the supposed dual nature of this goddess.¹⁰

Having considered here how the idea of tribe is constructed within a local setting, by communities in contact, it may also be helpful to recall how *tribe* may be constructed from within a particular community. After all, some *ādivāsis* have as much as anyone else accepted the idea that they have tribal brethren all over India with a set of belief systems that are somehow related. In the introduction I reproduced a narrative of K. Pucan in which he explained to me why Kotas no longer perform for Toda funerals. I noted that he “strategically deployed several locally relevant ideas of tribe as proof of indigenous status in the region.” While embracing the nobler characteristics of tribal identity—self-sufficiency as evidenced by tool making; artistic prowess and creativity as evidenced by the ability to perform unique musics and dances—he projected onto the Todas primitive stereotypes: “They’re idiots (*muṅṅāḷ*), jungle idiots (*kāṅṅumuṅṅāḷ*). Where would the ones who live in the jungles learn [music, toolmaking, etc.]?”

We have seen in the analysis of funerals and god ceremonies (and in the god tunes as well) how the Kotas have incorporated their own self-image as tribals into the interpretation of their ritual systems. The whole notion of divinity in Kota society is predicated on the maintenance of practices, memories, and beliefs that are believed to be essentially tribal and more specifically, Kota. These include egalitarianism of various kinds, the apotheosis of tools and physical sites associated with hunting, pottery, and blacksmithing, the association of tribal gods with certain features of the landscape and the ritual attachment to ancient foods and preindustrial technology. Thus the specific handles Kotas employ in their claims of indigenesness in the Nilgiris are precisely those which serve as charged symbols for their religious system. Kota-language songs

⁹ (Ramanujan 1973, 24; Whitehead 1921, 116-17). See also theories of Māriyamman’s “split” attributes reviewed in Craddock (1994, 38-114).

¹⁰The Hindu musicians may well have been low-caste or untouchable, but the ensemble was not the kind normally associated with funerals. The music was auspicious, festival music associated with mainstream Hinduism. The Aryan-Dravidian and other dichotomies are thus reproduced in an approximate way.

such as the following, composed by Mr. B. K. Krishnan of Ticga-r,¹¹ reinforce this primordialist component of Kota identity,

agini· konda·rube·m ama·	we celebrate fire ¹²
ayno·r ama·	father god, mother
agini· konda·rube·m ama·	we celebrate fire
vilamb co·yme· ve·tuka·r aya ve·yndir eto·ma	We continue praying to Bow-and-Arrow God, Hunter Father
vegomadine· tadi·ra·	You give us a reward
ka·laga·latile· ka·tire· iti·ra·	You have been protecting us for ages and ages
kamato ma·yde· idre pe·re·ne· veci·ra·	You name us Kamato and Ma·yde ¹³
pa·le· pu·jme· patume·ne· ka·te·ma·	We keep vigil over the vessel for the milk worship ¹⁴
pace·maratile· tice·ne· tadi·ra·	You give us fire from a live tree
kanakaduvaduco·yme· kana·teraya	God who was seen, Kana·traya
kala·yre ma·ri·ra karata·yre ka·ti·ra·	You changed into a stone and carefully guarded us ¹⁵
e·ye·y ko·ka·le· katurire payti·ra·	You told us to build seven villages
nimete ba·ramila·m emeke·ne· tadi·ra·	You gave all your burdens to us ¹⁶
a·di·va·yca·yme· a·na·yra·yr oluve·me·	We <i>ādvāsīs</i> are living in the manner of orphans ¹⁷
a·daruve· ila·mo· ca·vurume· kanama·	without protection, a tribe of one thousand

Each stanza self-reflexively identifies the song as “Kota” and/or “tribal.” The essential terms, ideas, or themes are, 1) fire, 2) hunting, 3) ritualized naming, 4) the power of Kota gods to transform natural materials. 5) the ever-presence of Kota gods, and 6) the identification of Kotas as tribals who need protection with the

¹¹This version was sung by Ra·jamma·l and Cinta·mani of Ticga·r village 27 April 1991. Mr. Krishnan began singing the song on festival days. Eventually others in the village learned to sing the song and it has now become one of the most well known pieces in the village.

¹²The term used here is fire apotheosized as the Vedic deity Agni.

¹³These are the prototypical Kota names for men and women respectively (except in certain villages). Each first born man in Kolme·l village, for example, is named Kamato (Kamatn, Kambattan, etc.) for ritual’s sake, and may then be given an additional Tamil name or Kota nickname. One name of the Kota Father God is Kamatraya; among Kotas, as among Hindus, personal names may also be names for deities.

¹⁴The milk ritual is one of the most important Kota religious events. After a great deal of ritual purity and austerity on the part of the villagers and the ritual leaders, a vessel of milk is placed in the inner room of the “big house” (the house of the leading village ritualist). If the Kotas have been acting righteously, the gods show their power by causing the milk to spontaneously rise and foam over. See description in Emeneau (1944 IV: 300-09).

¹⁵Kana·trayn is the name of a god who is believed to reside in a boulder across the road from Ticga·r village. He is propitiated for rain and other community or individual needs.

¹⁶According to Kota mytho-history, a divine black cow led them through the Nilgiris and pointed with its hoof the places where each village should be founded. The phrase “you gave us all your burdens” is obscure. It could refer to the difficulty Kotas experience in fulfilling their gods’ requirements.

¹⁷This phrase appears repeatedly in modern Kota songs. It has been adopted from Tamil bhakti songs, in which the devotee is cast as an orphan, alone and in need of love and protection from “parents” (i.e. the gods).

idea of the devotee who longs for god. Kota rituals, discourse about rituals, and songs such as this characteristically associate divinity with permanence, immortality, the continuance of community and what we would call the natural. Such an association is common in the history of religions (e.g. Eliade 1959, 34-7): here, the Kota identification of the “natural” with divinity and community is also significant because it fits in with ideas of tribe that operate on an India-wide level.

This section has been concerned with constructions of tribe that operate on a local level but which point at broader processes in south Asia. Some of these constructions came about through specific kinds of interactions among individual communities (tribal-tribal, tribal-non-tribal) and others have emerged in the expression of a particular community looking inward. It has been shown that certain aspects of ethnic differentiation in the Nilgiris reveal specific deployments of ideas of “tribal” and “non-tribal” (such as when the goddess requested “tribal” music and the Kotas performed a Hindu goddess melody). In the next section I will consider the possibility of identifying musical features which link up local manifestations of tribal music with other South Asian musics.

SYNTHETIC ETHNOMUSICOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE IDEA OF TRIBE: TRIBAL MUSIC AS A PAN-INDIC PHENOMENON

Carol Babiracki has brought our attention to broad musical characteristics shared by some of the few Indian tribal cultures thus-far documented. These include parallel harmonies and bitonal responsorial singing, asymmetrical rhythmic divisions, and perhaps most characteristic, a slightly off-beat or out-of-phase quality between the melody and drum rhythm.¹⁸ Since Nilgiri tribal instrumental music also would appear to conform to some of these descriptions, we must consider the extent to which these similarities can be regarded as significant.

Evidence that the category of tribe in India is a recent invention, a residual slot in a bureaucratic society, and a social *tabula rasa* upon which India can project selective imaginings about its past, would certainly seem to mitigate against any nomothetic representation of Indian tribal music. These arguments notwithstanding, I thought it worthwhile, as an exercise in devil’s advocacy if nothing else, to approach the question of Indian tribal music as if it were an entity. Is it possible to find coherence in the existing musicological observations about tribal music in India? Could an attempt to articulate such a hypothetical coherence eventually lead, as more recorded and descriptive evidence becomes available, to a useful descriptive model? If so, I believe that this model would be useful for considering other kinds of Indian

¹⁸Babiracki (1991, 75-6) cites Wade (1980), Knight (1983; 1987), Parmar (1977), Bhattacharya (1970).

music as well; and it might also highlight systematic features in the area of practice which are obscured by the wealth of Indian musicological theory. I will use following set of observations as a point of departure for formulating such a model:

Frequently, in the music belonging to Indian communities called tribal, melodic patterns, patterns of stressed and unstressed beats, numbers of beats in a cycle (either percussively or melodically articulated) and patterns of movement appear to be distinct and to an extent separable entities. Performance, composition, improvisation and so forth thus become, to various extents, matters of negotiating the conjuncture of these entities.

What I mean here by “separable” is not so much that these entities can stand alone, but that they can function independently, either within a given musical context or in alternate musical contexts. Sometimes, but not always, the entities are also independently named.

These observations appear to describe the apparently distinctive features of tribal musical organization as documented in the few recordings now available. Genevieve Dournon summarized one of the characteristic rhythmic examples of this general idea in the liner notes to her recording of Gonds, Dravidian speaking tribes in Bastar, “as for the rhythm, its most striking characteristic can be found in some of the dances for both boys and girls: it is a superimposition of different rhythmic systems which do not depend on a shared time unit.” Rod Knight, working with these same Muria and Maria Gond tribes, found the rhythms to be slightly less independent in some examples, noting “all elements are synchronized rhythmically but they are out of phase with each other in different ways.” In another example, Knight noted how a song and its accompanying dance are continuously out of phase, the former based on a cycle of twenty-one beats and the latter consisting of only twelve (1983, 3).

In Madhya Pradesh Knight also worked with the Baiga, a tribe whose language belongs to the Austro-Asiatic family, not the Dravidian. There Knight found something that might be regarded as similar to the rhythmic practice of the Gonds—what appeared to be a comparatively casual asynchrony in the *karma* dance: while the male dancers played the *thiski*, or wooden clappers, in time with their dance steps, the women dancers would gradually begin to move according to their own time unit, which was slightly different from that articulated by the wooden clappers. Although this was not considered a flaw in the performance, it remains to be learned if synchronized dancing of men and women *would* be considered a flaw in the performance.

In keeping with the sorts of complex rhythmic coordination observed by Dournon and Knight, Carol Babiracki identified among the Mundas a pervasive non-coincidence between *tāl*, song and dance steps, both in traditional repertoire and in the *karam* dance (1990, 267), and a preference for metrical rhythms.

Is it possible to generate these features of so-called tribal musics from a more general model? I might

suggest, for example, that there exists among these cultures a stylistic preference for rhythmic practices that emphasizes independence and difference between parts rather than the obvious aspects of their relationships of similarity. This principle can be observed both vertically, where independence is exhibited in simultaneously performed rhythmic patterns, and horizontally, where difference is articulated sequentially—as in asymmetry, where a given rhythm is not organized in like parts.

Tonal aspects of musical practice would seem to operate in parallel ways. A model for generating the phenomena of parallel harmonies and bitonal singing may be constructed along lines analogous to that for asynchronous and asymmetrical rhythms. Just as some Gondi rhythmic practices involve the simultaneous performance of rhythms which do not depend on a shared time unit, singing may involve simultaneous or serial performance of melodies that are not based on a shared tonic. Knight notes, in Baiga songs, that,

The complete melody (that is, the men's part followed by the women's part) can appear to be based on a single scale. . . . But more often than not, the effect is instead one of bitonality, such as the men singing G-A-B, followed by the women's C-D-Eb. What appears at first to be two different melodies in these examples turns out to be the men's and women's versions of a single melody, sung at different pitch levels (1993, 8)

Before considering the significance of these apparent structural similarities, it will be useful to discuss in some detail a few specific examples from the Nilgiri hills, for the cultures in this region are markedly different from those in Madhya Pradesh and Chotanagpur, and their musics too sound very different. Despite the geographical and cultural remove, there does appear to be something in the way elements are combined in performance that reminds us of these musics.

I will illustrate types of independence in three combinations of elements in a performance: the relationship between melody and percussion pattern; between dance and percussion pattern; and the classification of percussion patterns vis-à-vis the number of beats they contain.

FLEXIBILITY IN THE FIT BETWEEN MELODY AND PERCUSSION PATTERN

Nilgiri instrumental music is frequently characterized by a fluid interrelationship between melody and rhythmic pattern. This fluidity is evident in several ways. 1) There seems to be no clear relationship between the rhythmic subdivisions articulated on the drums and the rhythmic subdivisions implied by the melody. This is particularly but not exclusively evident in some of the long and complex melodies. The overall effect is one of a melody in free rhythm with occasional, although normatively consistent, points of coincidence which keep the melody at all times in phase with the percussion pattern. 2) Another level of fluidity must be observed at the level of practice: keeping the melody in phase is in some cases extremely difficult. Although

melodies are supposed to remain in phase and lock in to the rhythmic framework in particular ways,¹⁹ they sometimes do not. Although among the Kotas this would indeed be regarded as a flaw by those who know the music well enough,²⁰ it is often the case that listeners and even drummers do not notice exactly why something does not sound right. This may be analogous with what I paraphrased as “casual asynchrony” from Knight’s description.²¹

I have observed on a number of occasions the drummers playing, for example, an eight-beat pattern for a piece usually played against a ten-beat pattern. Among less experienced performers it may take a few cycles before they recognize the error, and sometimes they do not recognize it at all. Possibly as a consequence of the fluidity implied by the frequency of errors in matching the rhythm with the melody, and the free rhythmic character of the melody itself, it turns out that there are multiple interpretations of how the melody should fit with the rhythmic framework. Normatively, several such interpretations should not exist within a single performance because the ideal is to sound as one instrument. Performers in a given village sometimes play together for many years. Even if their versions of melodies differ slightly from those of previous generations in certain details, they come eventually to match one another’s almost perfectly. But in two different villages, one may find two versions of what appear to be the same melody. The clearest points of divergence can be demonstrated in figure 1 on those beats in which the melody and percussion pattern, in each case, regularly line up. The melody in figure 1 belongs to the Kota genre of god tunes. The upper staff in each system of three was recorded in Kolme-l village and is known as the “hunting god tune.”²² The transcription represents the version of K. Pucan, which is fairly consistent in the four performances I recorded. The middle staff shows the percussion pattern. The third staff is a version of the melody in staff 1 and was recorded by Nazir Jairazbhoy and Amy Catlin in Shōlūr (Kurgoj) village in 1975.

¹⁹This is certainly the case among the Kotas; I believe it is also true among the Irulas and Kurumbas, although my fieldwork among these communities is insufficient to substantiate this belief with any rigor.

²⁰Dr. P. Varadharajan, a respected drummer and son of one of the most well-regarded performers of the *kol*, pointed out to me on several occasions the musical ineptitude of some of the young drummers and *kol* players. He identified as a model of proper musicianship performances of the 1970s which he had captured on tape, in which his father performed with his longtime musical partner, now deceased, and other able percussionists. On these recordings, every repetition of the melody is aligned in consistently the same way with the percussion ostinato. Although it is not possible to ascertain with certainty whether the same values pertained in times past, it appears from what is audible in the mostly rather poor-quality recordings of the 1920s and 30s that a similar consistency was valued.

²¹ It may be that various degrees of casual asynchrony exist within the performance traditions of any one community, depending on such factors as musicianship (locally defined), emphasis placed on technical execution, willingness to criticize, and leadership in performance. This idea needs further examination.

²²*ve-tkar coym kol*. For stories concerning this melody and its meaning in ritual contexts see Rain, god and unity among the Kotas (Wolf, In Press).

FIGURE 1

Coordination between melody and percussion ostinato: A comparison of similar Kota God Tunes (*devr kol*) in two Kota villages. Kolme:l version recorded by Richard Wolf, 1991; Kurgo:j version recorded by Prof. Nazir Jairazbhoy 1975.

1 Kolme:l version

2 1 1 1

3 1 1

Percussion ostinato

Kurgo:j version

4 1

5 1

6 1 1 1

7 1 1 1

8 1

Key to tablature cum Staff notation system

The upward pointing arrows indicate points at which the respective melodies may be said in some sense

to begin within the cycle.²³ It may be inappropriate to fix beginning and ending points in a Kota melody in a manner identical to, for example, Euro-American or Indian classical music, but musicians do tend to begin and end a sequence of repetitions of a melody in relatively consistent places. Usually the *ko!* player will start the melody a phrase or two before the beginning just to alert the other performers what tune is about to be played, sometimes indicating with a nod of the head where the drum beats should line up. All join together at approximately the place I have indicated as the beginning of the piece (since the performance is cyclical, it ends just before the beginning). The starting points for each version, as I have represented them, are not only separated with respect to their relative alignment with percussion ostinato, but they are also at different pitch levels. In the Kolme:l version, the point analogous to the first “c” in the Kurgo:j version is not reached until the fourth beat of the “measure”²⁴ as I have notated it.

The downward pointing arrows indicate beats where the melody and drum beats most frequently come into congruence. Usually if the melody is a bit ahead of or behind the rhythmic framework it will be realigned at these points. Notice the points of congruence are different for the Kolme:l and Kurgo:j versions. Notice also the way in which the lowest pitch, notated here as *e*, punctuates the melody, providing articulation of phrase sections as well as rhythm. Although both versions contain these articulations in analogous points within the melody, they do not occur on the same structural beats within the percussion ostinato.

A great deal more can be said about structure, cadential formulae, ornamentation and contour both in this piece and as this piece relates to others of this and other genres (as in the previous chapter). For the purposes of this discussion, however, suffice it to note that the tension between melodic fluidity, that is, tendency toward free rhythm, and the tendency toward rhythmic coordination with the drum beat is a pervasive one in Kota instrumental practice. This is one of the reasons it is very difficult for two *ko!* players to sound as one. There may be several reasons why the melodic and rhythmic components of a performance are contingently dependent. One reason is that *ko!* players do not articulate the drum pattern either in the process of learning or while playing the melody, in the way, for instance, the *tāla* is articulated by performers of classical music. Keeping in phase is truly a negotiation and many performers are not up to the task without the help of a more experienced player.

Another factor that may contribute to the apparent independence of melody and percussion is the limited number of rhythmic ostinato patterns. Any melody must be fit to one of these patterns, regardless of how

²³Some of the notational irregularities result from limitations imposed by the music software.

²⁴A “measure” here is simply one cycle of the ostinato. Western terminology is employed here as a convenience—with no implication, however, that Kota rhythmic systems are the same as the metrical systems implied in staff notation.

many beats it may seem to imply when played without drummed accompaniment. Melodies are not usually composed in the context of performance, rather they are either composed during private practice or (are said to) issue spontaneously (vocally) from the mouth of a possessed person.²⁵ In either case, the melody comes into existence in a raw form: it must subsequently be memorized and or refined, and fit with a percussive pattern.

DRUMMED AND DANCED RHYTHMIC PATTERNS

Figure two and the accompanying video excerpt illustrates the fluidity of relationship between rhythm as articulated on the drums and that articulated through dance steps. Just as melodies must be set to a limited number of rhythmic patterns, so must the dances. This sometimes creates three different kinds of cycles: one articulated by the drums, another articulated by a full performance of a melody (this is usually an integer multiple of the number of beats in the rhythmic ostinato cycle), and another articulated by a complete set of dance steps. When there are no instruments, women's singing provides a similar set of cyclical relationships: melody, dance pattern and hand-clap pattern.

Among the Kotas the relationships among these types of patterns are generally straightforward—there

²⁵The role of possessed person as composer/performer appears to be cross-culturally uncommon. According to Rouget "there is a kind of incompatibility, total or partial depending on the case, between the state of possession and the act of making music" (1985, 110). Even where the possessed person does make music, he or she only "musicates," to use Rouget's coinage, "to make music only episodically, or accessorially, or secondarily" (1985, 103). Examples are given in which officiants perform a minor musical role after being induced into possession by music performed by others; in one instance he then "begins to sing, limiting himself to intoning the first words of a song known to all and that everyone takes over in chorus" (107). The phenomenon in which a medium induces himself into possession through music has, in fact, been reported in Tamilnadu (Nabokov 1995, 42).

Freeman has shown in his study of the Teyyam complex in Kerala that the "attributed state of possession and the beliefs and behaviors surrounding it exhibit a high degree of culturally structured determinacy" (1993, 130); in particular, "divine speech" (speech of the dancer while he is possessed by a deity) is based on rote recitations. This recalls what is implied in Rouget's argument—that even if possessed people sing or play an instrument while possessed, the musical result is likely to be highly stereotyped; or as Freeman writes, this "should caution us against the assumption that their words [or music] are therefore emerging from some 'deeper' than normal, spontaneous psychological state" (130). The difference between Teyyam possession and that among the Kotas is that the former involves a "heightened sense of consciousness and performative acuity with regard to rituals" and the possessee remembers what has occurred. Among the Kotas, the *te-rka-rn* (diviner) remembers nothing of the event, despite the stereotypical activities associated with Kota possession.

In the context of these comparative examples, we may understand the fact that *te-rka-rns* sang "god tunes" (*devr koḷ*) while possessed does not mean that, acting as the mouthpiece of the god, they composed musical material previously unknown to the Kotas. Many of these god tunes were not only stylistically but also melodically similar to one another. The stereotype is reinforced at two levels: first, the possessee sings melodies which conform to a particular Kota style; second, the final piece is not translated directly from this vocal model, but from a memory of this divine performance, preserved musically adept listeners. This memory is then articulated within an existing system of instrumental music.

may appear to be a minor degree of phase-shifting but everything cycles back fairly quickly. Among the Irulas, however, one of the women's dances suggests a kind of independence among dance/percussion rhythmic patterns that parallels in some ways the melody/rhythmic ostinato relationships exemplified in figure 1 by the two ways of manipulating a melody to make it fit an ostinato. Here, against a fast seven-beat rhythmic pattern that sounds rather like a limping 6/8, the dance steps look as if they are rendered in a graceful waltz rhythm, with a small kinetic "hiccup" at the end to keep the dance in phase with the percussion pattern.²⁶

An idealized representation of the way dance and percussion line up is as follows:

FIGURE 2

Coordination Between Percussion Ostinato and Dance (Irula Tribe, Nilgiri Hills).

Stressed beats in percussion ostinato

Approximate alignment with dance steps

The cycle of dance steps more-or-less lines up with the percussion, but not exactly. It appears as if there are three relatively evenly timed steps followed by a brief interval for realignment, so the dance steps are always in phase in a general sense with any three repetitions of the drummed ostinato. The drummed ostinato and danced cycles are themselves somewhat independent of the melody—this dance/percussion relationship is maintained for many different melodies, some of them an odd number, and some an even number, of ostinato patterns long.

²⁶See also later in this essay the discussion of how, in Karnātak music, melodies set to six beat rhythmic cycles can easily be accommodated to seven beat cycles.

INSTRUMENTAL AND VOCAL MUSIC

Irulas may transform a song rhythmically when they render it instrumentally; Babiracki has noted similar practices among the Mundas (1990, 269).²⁷ During my brief field expeditions to Irula villages during the Hindu festival of Pongal I requested performers to sing the pieces they were rendering instrumentally for the dance. I found, for instance, that a song sung in what sounded like 12/8 was rendered instrumentally in the 7/8 rhythmic pattern described in the context of the dance example in figure two above (see Rhythms for Comparison tape, examples 13 and 14).

Thus far I have considered relative independence and/or asynchrony and flexibility between elements of a performance as it may actually unfold—that is, as music is articulated practice rather than how it may be described ideally. The next example, illustrated in figure three, is cognitive rather than performative and pertains to the musical terminology employed in Kolme-l village. There may be variations in the way terminology is conceived and employed partly because dialects of the Kota language vary from village to village and because Kota do not generally discuss music analytically or use speech as an important vehicle for teaching music.

COGNITIVE ASPECTS OF RHYTHMIC PATTERNING

It will be recalled that only a limited number of rhythmic patterns are employed in Nilgiri tribal music. Kotas refer to most of their rhythms with the two names, *tirugana-t da-k* and *ca-da da-k*. *Tirugana-t da-k* means “turning dance variety” after the dances with which it is associated, in which dancers spin in one direction and then the other; although most Kota dances can be described in these general terms, the one called *tirugana-t* is accompanied by an eight-beat rhythmic cycle in which the first, fourth and sixth beats are emphasized. *Ca-da da-k*, “ordinary variety,” refers to the other rhythms used in Kota music (except for the aforementioned *Cakkiliyar* rhythm). *Tirugana-t* and *ca-da da-k* may be used to describe the rhythmic patterns of all instrumental performances, whether or not there are actually dances associated with them.²⁸

Ca-da da-k, which refers to rhythms in six beats, seven beats and ten beats, generated for me some initial

²⁷Babiracki discusses rhythmic alteration when a tune is borrowed from a non-Munda source.

²⁸I have never understood why one rhythm should be called “turning dance” and all the others be called “ordinary.” The value judgement that seems to be implied by the term is to an extent borne out in musical discussions. Pucan would sometimes refer dismissively to performances in another village, or by another tribe, saying that most of their dances were *ca-da da-k*, or the number or quality of their *tirugana-t* tunes was fewer or inferior to that of Kolme-l. Rhythmically it seemed to me that the ordinary varieties were far more involved than the turning dance varieties and some of the most important and involved pieces were set to “ordinary variety” rhythms. Although there are musical and ritual reasons why *tirugana-t* pieces are important dances, these lie beyond the scope of the present discussion.

confusion, since I was told that these were faster and slower versions of the same rhythm. Without counting, I could follow the patterns and play along tolerably well on the drums. But whenever I tried to play one rhythm as a faster or slow variety of the other I would get off the beat. Only after an embarrassingly long interval, and some close listening to taped examples at half speed, did I realize that the rhythms were not related by the number of beats in a cycle, but by the patterns of stressed and unstressed, relatively long and short beats. That the six beat version was a faster version of the ten beat version did not mean that it was doubled, but that it was played faster and that its internally articulated subdivisions displayed some of the same structural features.

FIGURE THREE

Structure of three *da-ks* compared: note analogous patterns of stressed beats

Varieties of ca-da da-k

<p>Slow 10 beat Used for Rituals</p>	<p>X x / x</p>
<p>Six beat Used for Dance</p>	
<p>Seven beat Used for Dance</p>	

STRUCTURAL FEATURES OF TRIBAL MUSICS CONSIDERED IN A BROADER SOUTH ASIAN MUSICAL CONTEXT

In part III I have tried to demonstrate that some of the organizational principles that make Nilgiri tribal musics (particularly the instrumental) distinctive are analogous to those principles which make Gond and Munda music distinctive: they all exhibit a significant degree of independence among tonal and rhythmic elements. These structural similarities do not result in musics that actually resemble one another, but they do appear initially to signal to an informed listener that these tribal musics are different, on the whole, from

varieties of non-tribal folk and classical musics. But are the principles I have singled out truly alien in the wider south Asian musical world? Could the descriptive model I have developed in this section be applied to other south Asian musics? A few phenomena would suggest that it might. The following is a brief review of scholarship combined with my own observations on decidedly non-tribal Indian musics which would allow us to take the analytic framework developed in this section and apply it to a wider array of south Asian examples.

1) The Independence of Rhythmic Structure from the Conception of Counted Beats

Peter Manuel has found in north Indian *thumrī*, “loose and inconsistent nomenclature of light-classical *tālas* and the tendency to identify them not by their theoretical *mātrā*-count, but instead by less formal criteria like accent patterns” (1989, 145).²⁹ Richard Frasca found, similarly, in the rhythmic practice of Tamil street theatre, *terukūtu*, “performers’ metrical expertise, like their handling of ragas, is functional and primarily nonanalytical. Most informants, although sometimes unable even to recall the number of counts a particular *tālam* had, were able invariably to beat this *tālam* out correctly on their hand cymbals using sets of *terukkūtu kriyas* [patterns of claps]” (Frasca 1990, 87).

2) The Independence of Melodic Entities

Matthew Allen discusses at length the *varṇameṭtu*, literally “color melody,” which, he argues, refers in an extended sense to “a virtually identical melodic setting found in several songs within one *rāga*” (1992, 386). The presence of the same melody in different songs, Allen found, sometimes resulted in a transformation of the metrical framework. Statistically, this metrical alteration most frequently occurred between six-beat and seven-beat cycles; emically within the Karnātak tradition, the ability to “modify *rūpaka* (three or six counts) to and from *cāpu* (seven counts)” was also recognized by one of Allen’s consultants (1992, 410). Such transformations can easily be accomplished through the addition or subtraction of a count somewhere within the melody. This process of augmentation and diminution of internal, localized time values within a melody is quite similar to the kinds of adjustments Kota musicians make to melodies as they fit them within a

²⁹Manuel argument was critiqued by a scholar who noted the same principle in the conception of Karnatak *sulādi tālas*. I would have to disagree with him. Though the Karnatak *tālas* are classified with respect to abstract structural frameworks, they are also subclassified with respect to *mātra* (*jāris*) counts of 3, 4, 5, 7 or 9 beats and subdivisions (*nadaī*) as well. To apply a terminological system loosely on the basis of viscerally perceived relationships of structure is different from theorizing a system for the creation of different *tālas*. The former is a process of applying names in practice, the latter is really a form of algebra.

particular rhythmic framework,³⁰ and to those made by the Irula musician who sang a melody in 12/8 and played it against a fast seven-beat percussion ostinato.

A *varṇamettu*, which is larger than a *rāga* phrase (*prayōgam*) but only represents one of the many possible melodies a *rāga* may contain (albeit an extremely characteristic one), is of course different from a song in an Irula or Munda context, because the former is a subset of a larger abstract, theoretical entity and the latter is a complete unit in and of itself. Yet the process of using a particular melody in different settings—to different texts, metrical frameworks, and instruments/voice with differing tonal characteristics—is in some ways very similar. The Kota word *kol* and the Tamil word *meṭṭu* (melody)³¹ both betoken the notion that *melodies* can be identified as fixed entities outside the broader construct of *rāga*. However, the processes of subtly altering and reshaping such melodies may result in sets of familiarly-related musical objects that might be more accurately (when they are many and diverse) labeled tune-types.

The musical processes associated with Allen's discussion of *meṭṭu* may be placed within a still broader musical context. In Tamil theatre traditions such as *terukūttu*, and in some instances in Karnātak music, melodies are named according to their association with famous songs: instructions for rendition may read "sung to the tune of [such and such famous song]" (Allen 1992, 403-4; Frasca 1990, 87-88). This phenomenon is of course common in the history of European and American music, as evidenced, for example, in the tradition of broadside ballads in the 16th-19th centuries; one might expect similar traditions in other societies, particularly where musical transmission relies on a combination of oral and written forms.

3) The Juxtaposition of Free-Rhythmic or Alternatively-Conceived Rhythmic With Metrically Precise Elements in a Performance

The manner in which Kota musicians must manage to align a melody that is rhythmically flexible, in many places non-metric or what musicologists loosely term "free-rhythmic," with an ostinato pattern articulated on the drums finds many parallels in other Indian musics. In Hindustani music, for instance, *bara khyāl*

³⁰The concept of "adjustment" is only necessary when one performance is compared to another; the discrepancies between the two versions of the hunting god tune notated above illustrates a similar process, although one is not "adjusted"; relatively inexperienced musicians will have to constantly adjust the internal time values so that the overall framework is maintained. Experienced players must also constantly adjust as they insert complex ornaments within the melodic flow.

³¹It is not clear whether this Tamil term for melody, *meṭṭu*, is a homonymous with those for footstep and fret on a musical instrument (which are spelled and pronounced the same), or whether they share a common origin. My inclination is to suggest these three meanings are related—the idea being that the unfolding of a melody, note by note (or *svara* by *svara*), is like walking, step by step, or playing the *vīṇā*, articulating each note by pressing the string against the *meṭṭu*. The *Tamil Lexicon* locates the "melody" meaning with those of "honour" and "fashion, style" and suggests the root to be *maṭṭu* (measure). See *Tamil Lexicon* (1982, 33015, 3334) and DEDR [5057].

improvisation exhibits a comparable juxtaposition, in which “although the tāla is kept by the tablā player, who repeats and repeats the theka, and although the singer certainly knows where (s)he is in the tāla cycle, the rhythm seems free and floating, as in unmetred ālāp” (Wade 1979, 173).

In Karnātak music, there is a continuum of forms, ranging from free-rhythmic to metrical renditions of melody, in which a melodic entity may be rendered alone or against percussion patterns articulating the *tāla*. *Ālāpāna*, an exploration of a *rāga* which is not governed by pulse or meter, is performed without percussive accompaniment on all instruments except the *nāgasvaram*, which is accompanied by the *tavil* drum throughout a performance.³² A more commonly encountered form of free-rhythmic elaboration of *rāga* accompanied by percussive articulation of the *tāla* in Karnātak music occurs at the conclusion of formal musical sections of a composition (*pallavi*, *anupallavi* etc.). Sometimes these transitional phrases appear to be improvisational because they are free-rhythmic; in fact, it is not uncommon for the same or similar set of transitional phrases to be used every time a particular composition is performed by a given artist.³³

The improvisational form *tānam*, which is rhythmically in some ways an intermediate form between the free-rhythmic *ālāpāna* and *tāla*-based improvisational forms such as *svara kalpana* and *niraval svara*, utilizes an underlying pulse which is not, however, organized by an overarching metrical framework. Furthermore, sequences of *tānam* phrases are connected by *ālāpāna* phrases and brief moments of silence. The pulse continues in the listeners mind, but the connecting phrases obfuscate any melodic articulation of the pulse initiated by the *tānam*. The continuity of this pulse was in earlier times made explicit by the gentle accompaniment of the *mridanigam* throughout the *tānam* section (this can rarely be heard today).

The rendition of compositions in Karnātak music varies in the extent to which strictly subdivided units of the *tāla* correspond in obvious ways to the articulation of the melody. Compositions rendered in a fast tempo or those with the greatest density of syllables per unit of time, generally speaking, tend to exhibit a greater degree of rhythmic fixidity and regularity in relation to the articulation of the *tāla* than do slow, melismatic

³²See Terada (1992, 51) for a description of this interplay.

³³In the course of learning the *vīnā* with Smt. Ranganayaki Rajagopalan I observed a basic set of fixed phrases that would be inserted between sections; these phrases might be extended or elaborated upon during a performance depending the length and context of a concert or the extent to which the piece as a whole was filled out with extensive improvisation. Jon Higgins describes the fixity of these transitional phrases in the *padam* performances of T. Balasaraswati,

It is possible to argue that the [transitional phrases] should be separated from the formal body of the *padam*, in that they resemble the sort of improvised *rāga* phrases that one might typically sing at the end of practically any karnatak composition. nevertheless, Balasaraswati sings basically the same material every time, in more or less the same relation to the *tāla*. it is probably more accurate therefore to describe the ending as a portion of the composition which may be treated with less than the usual precise coordination of *rāga* and *tāla*. In view of earlier examples of deliberate imprecision and flexibility, the ending would appear to be an appropriate reflection of the *padam*'s open and fluid character (Higgins 1973, 232).

pieces. The type of composition also bears upon this question. *Tāna varṇams* are sung with explicit articulation of *tāla* subdivisions, even though the syllables may be widely spaced, largely because they are repeated in multiple speeds and therefore the precise internal relationships of duration are extremely important. *Padams* tend to be metrically less determinate, depending more on the rhythms of *rāga* rendition and textual interpretation. This is particularly true of Telugu *padams*, which are textually more sparse than those in the Tamil language. As Jon Higgins explains,

. . . *padams* seem to require. . . [a] unique style of singing. . . a singer must allow himself to be governed by the ebb and flow of *svaras* and *gamakas*, anticipating here, pulling back there, “leaning” somewhat more heavily upon one portion of a phrase than another. The difficulty herein lies in accomplishing all this without ever losing grip on the *tāla*. The South Indian *tāla* (unlike its counterpart in Hindusthani music) is supposed to be immutable, absolutely fixed in the unswerving procession of its *āvartas*. Yet the actual tempo of a performance is never precisely metronomical, allowing as it does for subtle variations in the process of phrasing and interpretation (Higgins 1973, 211).

The idea of free-rhythm in music can be transferred, perhaps, to the expressive elements of dance: in *bharata nāṭyam*, for instance, *abhinaya* (gestural expression of poetic meaning) is not meant to mark out the *tāla* explicitly, rather “the rhythmic coordination of music and gesture depend heavily upon the dancer’s ability to ‘sense’ the *tāla* without becoming a slave to it” (Higgins 1973, 200). Even in the strictly measured elements of dance, one leading dancer maintains that dancers have an inner sense of timing which is different from that of a musician³⁴—thus arguing implicitly that a dance performance *always* involves a negotiation between what we might call “music time” and “dance time.”

Taken in the context of these brief comparative notes, my initial attempts at describing in some overarching, coherent manner some of the distinctive characteristics of tribal musical organization, serve also to place tribal music within a context of south Asian musical processes in general. I would like to move now from specific musical forms to a discussion of structural principles in Indian classical music theory and seek to discover what, if anything, the study of tribal musics might suggest.

TRIBAL MUSICAL PRACTICES AND THE FORMAL ORGANIZATION OF INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSICS: TWO QUESTIONS

Question one: Can what appears to be tacit phasing in the rhythmic cycles of some tribal music and dance be considered *of a kind* with the more controlled phasing found in the rhythmic tension of Indian classical music? Insight into this question might be provided by a historical inquiry into when and how *tāla* evolved as

³⁴I owe this interesting piece of information to a recent conversation Rustom Bharucha, who was reporting what he had discovered in the course of his research on the dancer Chandralekha. Bharucha recently published a book on this innovative and thoughtful dancer (Bharucha 1995).

an abstract regulatory principle—information that I am not at present equipped to provide. To reconfigure the question, could the evidence from India's tribal music suggest a new way to conceptualize the historical role of *tāla*? Could *tāla* be regarded as a historically evolved and systematic solution to what might be called the south Asian problem of rhythmic asynchrony among elements in a performance? The paradox in this speculation is that synchrony is neither a problem nor an appropriate analytical term for musical cultures in which synchrony is not perceived and valued for its role in establishing stasis or closure. In other words, *tāla* and the forms of metarhythmic control contained within its theory and practice are appropriate for south Asian expressive forms whose aesthetics demand precise, consistent, and ultimately resolving relationships among such things as the number of beats in a percussion cycle, a set of dance steps, or a repeating melodic phrase. The same relationships may be at issue in tribal musical performances, but the degree to which and manner in which these relationships are regulated appear to be different from both the classical and the many folk and popular forms that draw upon classical forms of musical organization.

A parallel set of questions may be raised concerning the evolution of melodic practice. It has been suggested that the fixed tonic in Indian classical music, the entity referred to by the solfa syllable "sa," did not exist from time immemorial but came about as a result of changing preferences for lute-type rather than harp-type musical instruments.

Question two: Without a common point of reference, the drone, is it possible that, at one time, multiple singers or instrumentalists would occasionally have lapsed into parallel harmonies or bitonality? More to the point, could the practice of bitonal or parallel harmonic singing have come to be regarded as a lapse in one musical system/culture (i.e. classical and a variety of mainstream vernacular musics), as it developed in one particular direction, and as a normative feature of practice in a minority of others (now called tribal), which developed in another direction?³⁵

Of course, trying finally to pin down Indian tribal music by either delineating these alternative regulatory principles or even suggesting that such relationships are at issue, I risk objectifying the idea of tribe in no less noble a manner than the Victorian paternalists quoted in the introduction (well, maybe slightly nobler). For systematic musical relationships it may be necessary to focus on regional cultural complexes with clear and strong historical ties. And yet, it is this very regionalism which would prevent incorporating tribal music into a broader understanding of south Asian musics.

³⁵ Powers suggests the evolution of movable tonic to fixed tonic corresponded with an organological change, and thus a changed focus of reference from an open stringed instrument to a stopped stringed instrument (1980, 79). That is, change from one scale type to another was effected by changing the emphasized pitch in a fixed collection of pitches—as in the modern jazz interpretations of "modes" modeled on successive degrees of the diatonic scale, D for Dorian, etc. The question then is, did harp players tune to one another?

Lest also this appear as another attempt to cast tribal music as an earlier form of Indian classical music, let me simply suggest that some of the *systematic differences* between what we now call Indian classical music and tribal music may have evolved historically. Certain Indian musics must have *become* classical as its practitioners began to codify forms of musical instruction and invent methods for its description and documentation. Early practitioners and writers worked to perfect music as an abstract cognitive system and to relate it to other cultural and cosmological systems described in ancient texts. This is not to say the many forms of music now associated with tribes in India have not also changed, but simply to present the possibility that, in the past, ancestors of today's "tribals" may have performed a type of music which was not as markedly different from the other musics which existed at that time, some of which evolved into India's classical and other musical traditions. It is also possible that these same musics were far more different from one another and from other traditions in the past as well; I am not sure, however, what sort of evidence would drive us to put forth this negative hypothesis.

These speculations cannot, unfortunately, be responsibly addressed with the musical evidence we now possess. The earliest portions of the oldest treatise on music, the *nāṭya śāstra*, were written probably no earlier than the fourth century C.E.³⁶ We have already seen that the isolation of Toda and Kota languages from Tamil was established at least 400 years before that. Munda languages would have separated from their presumed south-east Asian relatives centuries if not millennia before that. We simply do not have sufficient evidence or even the analytical tools that will allow us to reconstruct proto-musical systems in a manner analogous to proto-languages.

Historical reconstruction of musical systems also fails to address what historical linguistics fails to explain, namely, synchronic diversity. Historical linguists search for the small number of consistent linguistic phenomena in early literature/inscriptions that may substantiate relationships of similarity between diverse languages of today. In doing so, it is necessary to maintain the analytical fiction that languages were once more homogeneous than they are today. Yet linguists have also discovered that languages tend to borrow from one another, not only lexical items but even elements of structure (cf. Emeneau 1962). This way, languages that may have once been more distinct from one another gradually became similar and these similarities are the bases for what linguistics term the South Asian linguistic area.

Musical cultures borrow from each other in similar ways. Babiracki, for example, has argued that Mundari-Sadani interaction resulted in a process of "musical-approximation," whereby their musical cultures

³⁶To my knowledge, there has not been published in English a detailed technical discussion of music as described in the Tolkappiyam and other Tamil texts from the Sangam period. I have not yet had the opportunity to consult the work of V. P. K. Sundaram, who has written on the music of the Sangam age in Tamil.

began to appear very similar; although the Mundas themselves may “see only the differences,” the similarities would be obvious to an outside observer. Can much of south Asia be regarded as possessing a degree of musical unity, a result of “musical approximations” extending as far back historically as must have the linguistic?

CONCLUSION

Indian popular views of tribe grew out of the colonial period and are fraught with European ideas of evolution and the primitive. Even if characterizations of particular communities we now call “tribes” share a great deal with characterizations in ancient texts, and even if these particular communities have been individually named in these texts, the notion that a tribe, or *ādivāsi*, is an entity—i.e. partakes of a tribal “essence” as the historian Ronald Inden might put it—found in different parts of the Indian subcontinent is certainly a modern one. Once we accept this, it seems unreasonable to create a special subdivision of ethnomusicological discourse devoted to Indian tribal music, at least as a historical phenomenon.

If the category is a modern construction, it would seem incumbent upon us to treat “music and the idea of tribe” as how music is either used by people called “tribes” in the construction of their own identities, or how non-tribal peoples create the category of tribe using selected musical features as grist for their (political, societal) mills. That is, by arguing for a focus on the construction of the category of tribe, one must implicitly argue against what I have done in the second part of this chapter, attempting to create a model for describing the sound structural features of tribal music. If the Mundas and Kotas have absolutely nothing to do with one another, one might as well compare Toda music with that of the Yap islanders.

The approach adopted in the first part of this chapter, a local areal study of tribal music, would seem to be an alternative to such reification. Certainly the self-identification of tribe is important in the maintenance of identities in the Nilgiris. Both tribal musical sound and tribal music-making *per se* are traded as cultural capital in the Nilgiris; Nilgiri tribal music can only exist as an entity because there is a holistic musical-cultural system that seems to be shared in many details only among the *ādivāsis* of the region. It does not matter how this entity is named since there is a clear historical and geographical basis for discussing the music of the, let us call them, premodern inhabitants of the Nilgiris.³⁷ In this sense it does not matter whether the members of the clarinet band borrowed a “tribal” rhythm or not, they borrowed a widely recognized sonic

³⁷The Todas can be included in this Nilgiri musical culture, not through the sound structure of their singing, which is rather unique, but through their participation as patrons for and enactors of ritual systems parallel to those of the Kotas and other tribes.

feature of local music so as to fit a pre-existing musical cultural context. Likewise, it does not matter whether the goddess called for “tribal” music, or whether she called for any music associated with the people rooted to the region. The connection between local deities, especially those associated with a feature of the landscape, and the people traditionally and ritually tied to a particular locality is almost always a strong one in India.³⁸ For this reason, in a general sense, it does not matter whether the people in question are called “tribals” or by some other name.

In what direction may one then proceed? It has been the distinct contribution of scholars such as Anthony Walker to show that so called “tribes” like the Todas are not so different from other Indian peoples, or as Walker puts it, that they are “essentially within, not outside, the Hindu world of south India” (1986, 8). Such work might suggest that we overlook some of the surface differences (overt sound) among tribal and non-tribal musics and instead consider the musical cultures of the Nilgiris to be situated broadly within an array of south Indian musical cultures—particularly because the uses and functions of music in Nilgiri and Tamil societies are not significantly distinct.

A synthetic ethnomusicological approach, as I have called it in the second half of this chapter, would seem to have little empirical ground to stand on. The constructivist approach adopted in the introduction encourages us to study how people talk about tribes and use music to support this discourse; the data are abundant and it is also epistemologically safe because one need not consider whether or not tribes *really are* the descendants of the earliest inhabitants of India or whether tribal societies *do* preserve remnants of ancient Indian social orders that have been overrun by waves of foreign invasions. The study of tribe in a local ethnographic setting, exemplified in part one above, is also rather safe in that clear geographic and social boundaries provide neat limits for generalizations. But in what way can the approach of part two possibly represent a critique on the first two approaches?

First, the discovery of widespread musical organizational principles shared by *ādivāsis* and by no other communities would mean, of course, that tribes need not only be described negatively, by what they lack in comparison with caste societies, but also in positive terms, by what they assert as a whole (regardless of how or on what basis one may argue for their wholeness: modern or ancient, constructed or historically related, political or economic). Second, it is only through the critical examination of such things as music in so-called tribal societies that one may assess the degree to which south Asia can be regarded as possessing some degree of musical unity. By attempting to incorporate tribal musics in an analytical framework which also includes the more well-known musics of south Asia, we are invited to move beyond some of the convenient,

³⁸For discussions of these relationships in Tamilnadu, see, for example, Daniel (1984), Trawick (1991) and Mines (1995).

misleadingly “emic,” set of perspectives provided by the multitude of South Asian texts on music in ancient and modern languages. As Regula Qureshi has written,

... the broad outlines of a descriptive analytical framework have now largely been worked out for Indian classical music on the basis of musicians’ own verbalized theory and amplified, as well as standardized, with reference to classical Indian scholarship. . . .

This theoretical framework of Indic musicology constitutes an appropriate tool for analysing the music of particular South Asian performing traditions. At the same time, such music must be considered as a distinct idiom, not to be subsumed within Indian art music which generated the theoretical framework (Qureshi 1987, 60).

Unfortunately, in the study of Indian tribal musics, unlike that of the Sufi musical tradition so thoroughly undertaken by Qureshi, one finds that musicians are not usually “hereditary performers with a tradition of teaching and talking about their music in terms compatible with art music”³⁹ and “most musical conceptions” are not, in the same way, “available literally for the asking” (Qureshi 1987, 60).

Of course, by arguing for a more inclusive conception of south Asian music I would seem to invite the kinds of problems encountered by the early ethnomusicologists of African music, who were striving to create a vocabulary and analytic framework for understanding that viscerally-felt but difficult-to-pin-down idea of what makes African music African.⁴⁰ It has not been my intention in the conclusion of this chapter to articulate a new “theory of south Asian music” that encompasses and describes all musics in this diverse area. Such an attempt would be an example of scholarly atavism at best, racism at worst. Indian classical music theories have thus far, for better or worse, provided analytical tools for the study of those musical traditions in south Asia without explicit or distinct musical theories. It is my hope here, in contrast, that the processes of creating and critiquing descriptive models for the music of India’s designated tribes may lead to new kinds of inquiries about many of the other musics and musical cultures of south Asia.

³⁹One of my primary musical consultants, Mr. K. Pucan, was in fact familiar with Karnātak music and did borrow some of its terminology in describing Kota music. Such knowledge in my experience was rare, however, and in any case was not analytically deep. The terminology neither elucidated much in regard to Kota musical concepts nor did it reflect similarities between Kota aesthetics and the fine points of classical musical appreciation.

⁴⁰Christopher Waterman provides a useful overview of these attempts and rightfully argues for an approach which incorporates “African musical values and concepts” in a “theoretical dialogue” and which provide an “interpretation of the relationship of facts to theoretical premises and cultural values” (Waterman 1991, 180-81).

CHAPTER TWENTY

CONCLUSIONS: MUSIC IN RITUAL AND EVERYDAY LIFE

This dissertation has been organized around two major processes and the ways in which music generates, reflects, is implemented within, articulates and gives special meaning to components of these processes: the construction of *tribe* and the constitution of a ritual system. These two processes converge in a larger process: Kota subjective construction of themselves as a people, that is, the process by which Kotas forge and represent their *identity(s)*. It is in this convergence, in this higher unity, I believe, that a second intention of this work is articulated: the relationship between ritual and everyday life, or more abstractly, between culture as a set of performed categories and culture as a larger way of life.

I have not dealt with the concept of the *everyday* in a rigorous way in this dissertation, and I do not wish here to retheorize the concept or attempt to delimit it with strict boundaries. Certeau's (1988) discussions of everyday practice are the most well-known; Certeau was concerned with the ways in which people operate, often in contradistinction to the way they are supposed to operate, according to the "rules"; and, how images, products, societal constraints are received and interpreted in the lives of actors. In some ways, Certeau's work appears to have been prefigured by German "Reception History" studies of the 1970s.

My own use of the everyday is related to that of Certeau. I denote by the everyday the kinds of activities and behavior not strictly delimited by time or place—that is, ways of articulating and creating Kota culture that are not strictly mapped out, dictated explicitly, or decided by the village council. The everyday is where music as *ad hoc* performance is found, and where musicians may experiment, practice and improvise quietly without fear of recrimination. Sometimes the everyday is virtually scheduled in to rituals, such as times during the god ceremony devoted to play, and other times where space is left for children to bang on instruments.

We must remember that ritual performance is not *only* about rules, for people practice ritual and in the process reinterpret ritual meanings, find ways around rules, and use ritual formal structures for their own ends. Certeau's everyday thus creeps into the enactment of ritual. At the same time, activity outside the realm of bracketed-off times and spaces is not "free-for-all" either. Rules and custom structure and inform all activities to some extent; and through ordinary activities an individual or group must sometimes find ways of circumventing these strictures. One of the major differences, perhaps, is that during "ritual" the whole

society is watching, so to speak.

In the concluding discussion that follows I want to keep two aspects of the everyday clearly in focus: 1) the *everyday* as practices that are least delimited by time and space and 2) the *everyday* that fills the spaces between societal structures, that gets around the rules, that subtly registers individual identity or resistance in the avoidance of exact conformity. The former kind of everyday practice can be located along a continuum, from the most individual and variable kind of behavior on the one hand, to its opposite, the ideal structure of the most bounded, protected rituals, on the other. Although two forms of everyday practice outline above are related, I will distinguish them when necessary by numbers: the former, everyday (1) and the latter everyday (2).

EVERYDAY (1): A DANCE EXAMPLE

The practice of Kota dance is semiotically interesting, in part, because although it is bracketed off spatially and temporally, this bracketing depends on the indigenous reckoning of the “everydayness” of an occasion. Kotas may dance in the center of the village near the temples only on the central days of the *devr*, the god ceremony—the most ritually restrictive days of the year (in terms of what Kotas may do and where they must be at certain times). However, on other, less restrictive days of the god ceremony, during *pabm*, and during funerals, Kotas dance in other areas, areas which are traversed and used on ordinary occasions, areas which are not protected or fenced off: the *kava-ls* and the grassy areas away from the temples.

Corresponding to the spatial ordinariness, the melodies that are played outside of the *guryva-l* (temple area) contexts are also considered “ordinary” (*ca-da*); both practices reflect the relative ordinariness (relative “everyday”-ness) of an occasion in comparison with the central days of *devr*. These same dance pieces and dances could be performed outside the village, *ad hoc*, according to externally defined occasions (religious, political, municipal, etc.). Here we see in the characteristics of a single genre—where it is performed, when it is performed, what are the features of the accompanying melody—ways of drawing attention to the divine or funerary character of an occasion, or to the epistemological proximity of an event to the ordinary goings-on of village life.

EVERYDAY (2)

Kota musical culture occasionally empowers individuals to subtly undermine or get around larger structures imposed by society(s) that be. In Certeau’s words, music may form the basis for *tactics*, “art[s] of the weak” (37), “procedures that gain validity in relation to the pertinence they lend to time—to the circumstances which

the precise instant of an intervention transforms into a favorable situation, to the rapidity of the movements that change the organization of a space, the relations among successive moments in an action, to the possible intersections of durations and heterogeneous rhythms, etc.” (1988, 38).

Catchy song melodies as vehicles for countercultural or subversive texts, in many cultures, have served this function and we have seen historically in part one the role of such melodies and texts in Kota culture: Sulli’s song decrying buffalo sacrifice, Raman’s father’s song lamenting the death of Rangma·dy, but at the same time casting a critique at the fractionalism in the village, and Be·bi’s song admonishing Kotas not to forget their own religion (#120) [the latter is subversive in the sense that it seems to deny the validity of a commonly accepted Hindu ritual practice].

Even the roles of musicians provide bases for tactics: Raman used the excuse of being a musician for failing to participate (or to avoid participating) in the ritual of praying for a *re·rka·rn*, “god won’t pick me, he knows I’m a musician.” Almost any everyday responsibility can be temporarily suspended by recourse to musical duties: a celebration in Ooty, or even Madras, calling for Kota musicians; a funeral in one’s own village or in that of another, where additional musicians are required.

On the other hand, being a musician is not just a way to avoid other responsibilities: musicianship too is a responsibility (being one of the few capable of playing the *kol* does have its advantages vis-à-vis non-musical obligations, however). Still, the fact that musicians may be summoned and individual musicians may be sent at the decision of the village council does not mean that the musicians have no *tactical* response: Kotas show their disinterest in performing for an occasion by sending an incomplete ensemble and performing only the most ordinary of pieces. Even in the days of traditional exchange with the Badagas and Todas, the Kotas sent only small ensembles of the poorest musicians for most occasions.

The subversive potential of song texts and the tactical potential of musicianship lie in a sense beyond the classification process or the structure of rituals. Part one was in part an attempt to understand aspects of the everyday (senses 1 and 2) through individuals and their musical lives. But the classification system too may be tactical, in part because it is a semiotic system only Kotas understand. The most ironic (and the only strongly suggestive) example I can cite was that described in the previous chapter, where the Kotas were hired as “tribals” to play music for the enjoyment of the goddess *Māriyamman*’s sister *Cikkamman*; the rhythm employed, however, was one that marked the occasion as non-Kota and in that sense, non-tribal.

Another example in which ritual structure is used as the basis of intercommunity symbolic mediation occurred during the rain ceremony of 1992. Here the everyday practice employed was what Certeau called *strategic*, because Kotas implemented it from a position of power and landed property. A *strategy* is “the calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and

power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated. It postulates a *place* that can be delimited as its *own* and serve as the base from which relations with an *exteriority* composed of targets or threats (customers or competitors, enemies, the country surrounding the city, objectives and objects of research, etc.) can be managed” (1988, 36).

Let us review the details of this event (see also Wolf i.p.). The Kotas of Kolme-I had allowed an itinerant caste of traditional quarry workers, the *bo-yars*, to live on the outskirts of the residential area of the village, where they chipped away at large areas of stone settled in the earth and sold the stone for their livelihood. This ultimately served the Kotas through the creation of cultivatable land. But the living space of the *bo-yars* was expanding beyond what the Kotas considered appropriate. To curtail further expansion, the Kotas incorporated a new sacred site in the sequence of sites visited during the rain ceremony. The *strategic* expansion of Kota sacred space served in the world of everyday life to block the expansion of *bo-yar* settlement.¹

In each of the examples cited above, musical culture tied the structures imposed by ritual form or cultural rules to commonplace behaviors of everyday life. In each, identity issues at the level of individual or tribe are set into play.

PASTS, MODERNITIES, AND MEMORIES

To further synthesize the notions of ritual, everyday life, the construction of tribe and Kota identity it may be useful here to return to concepts of space and time developed in part two. I discerned for analytical purposes three kinds of past: one concerned with the notion of change in the community (the “culture change model”), one concerned with memories of deceased loved-ones (the “individual memory” model), and a collective memory that in a sense lives on through the lives of “those of that land,” the *a-na-to-r*, who are spirits, souls of the dead, or ancestors (the “collective memory” model).

The first kind of past is, in a general sense, quite conventional: we know something is in the past because we perceive change, either through something as simple as the ticking of a clock, through representations of something that has occurred (like a newspaper), or more generically through the awareness of difference. How is change perceived/conceptualized and dealt with? Where does the perceiver stand in relation to that *past*? These are what I have termed *modalities*. The modalities I have been interested in are what I have

¹This was not a particularly *musical* strategy, although musical performance was one of the means by which the procession from site to site was imbued with thematic continuity. The twelve god tunes are performed for this ceremony, indexically linking the rain ceremony with the larger and more elaborate god ceremony.

called modalities of modernity, *affective manners or modes of viewing or representing disjuncture between the present and the past.*

MODERN MODALITIES

I found it useful to discuss two possible, and I believe prominent, modalities of modernity contained within the notion of the past of the tribe (the culture change model). The first is the “embrace of tribal symbols modality,” which “recognizes a disjuncture between past and present within the structure of ritual action and it argues in effect that the invocation of the tribal past, as contained in particular symbols, is a means of power.” That is, Kotas claim legitimacy for themselves as an aboriginal, tribal, authentic, son-of-the-soil Indian people because they are hunters, blacksmiths, musicians, fire worshippers and so forth. But this claim, this realization, can only be possible in a modern context in which the idealization of this lifestyle is possible, but the living of it (or some aspects of it) is not. The fact that this self-consciously and colonially constructed-as-tribal way of life is embraced and represented in ritual contexts (primarily god ceremonies) gives it a sort of legitimacy and reality.

So, one of the ways in which the Kotas construct themselves as a people is by including in the various arenas of cultural practice symbolic forms which articulate and celebrate a selected set of practices or objects from the past. The most obvious and elaborated arena is that of ritual, and within that, the god ceremony (although we see traces of it in the funerals, especially the dry funeral, as well). Why? Because it turns out that divinity itself is embodied in those practices and the process of worship is largely one of identifying “authentically” (in a *ma-mu-l* sort of way) with those practices.

But the god ceremony, the complex of rituals involving divinity *par excellence*, is by its nature bracketed off from everyday life. So too are the most central and semiotically charged musical pieces, the god tunes, which we have seen index stories of the power of the gods and past ritual practices. How is this modality carried over into the rest of Kota existence? One way is through the telling of stories and describing of past rituals, which, unlike the performance of god tunes, can take place at any time. But at a systematic level I have suggested that this carry-over into everyday life is accomplished in part through the structure of the musical genre system: although god tunes are isolated from other kinds of musical, ritual and non-ritual activity, god songs are not. God songs (especially those composed recently) textually encode Kota values embracing the past, i.e. “traditional” ways of life. B. K. Krishnan’s song from the previous chapter was exemplary of this type of song.

God songs register the modern modality of embrace in everyday life in at least four distinguishable ways:

- 1) *Composition*: They can be composed by anyone (not just by god or by a person chosen by god) at any time;
- 2) *Content*: They can draw upon melodies and styles from (and serve as models for, in some cases) “everyday” sorts of genres, including Kota dance tunes, cinema songs, Hindu *bhajans*, etc.
- 3) *Context*: They can be performed, individually, at virtually any time outside of ritual occasions
- 4) *Ritual Syntax*: During ritual occasions they delimit structural boundaries rather than being contained within them. Since they appear at the *end* of ritual segments, they *almost always* signal a change in ritual theme from the strictly rule-bound to the everyday.

If the “embracement of tribal symbols” modality is based on the incorporation of “traditional” modes of tribal existence into a symbolic system, we should also perhaps turn briefly to those modes, those occupations, that are still practiced in some form and consider the ways in which they form a part of contemporary life. Blacksmithing, for example, is apotheosized in symbolic forms such as song and god ceremony rituals. On the other hand, the actual blacksmith shop is treated on a day-to-day basis somewhat akin to a temple: shoes must be removed before entering it (even more so than in a house) and non-vegetarian food must not be consumed within it. Although behavior in the smithy is rule-bound, the persons who participate in this activity are not selected according to rules: any man can work in the smithy.

This is important, I believe, because it reveals the difference between cultural-religious roles performed complementarily by members of the village in ritual (where many roles are determined by membership in a family and/or by election), and culturally significant, Kota-defining activities that can be accomplished by individuals outside the stricture of rituals (that is, in their everyday lives). Blacksmithing is only one example, of course: the same is true for musicianship (male instrumentalists and women singers), pottery (women), and hunting.

In the second, or *revisionist* modern modality we saw that practices of the past are called into question, often reinterpreted or revised. That is, rather than embracing the past of the tribe through celebrations of primordial symbols, in this modality the practices of the past that no longer fit modern ways Kotas wish to represent themselves are repressed or reinterpreted. In this modality, the practice of everyday (2) subverts and rewrites history. For example: the cow, a symbol of Kota primordialism, and also an animal that once had to be slaughtered in death rituals, has been refigured and come to be revered in a modern Hindu sense. Now it is not and should not be slaughtered; and now many Kotas will not even eat cow flesh.

I suggested that in a broad sense, Kota funerals are infused with this second modern modality because there have been so many arguments and disagreements on what constitutes a proper funeral. The omission of the dry funeral and the substitution of the new floating-the-bones-in-the-ganges ritual, we saw, was justified by a new soteriology: the soul of the dead merges with a generalized godhead.

Nothing in the structure of musical repertoire or the notion of musicianship articulates revisionism of this sort. Instead, revisionism is registered in the ways in which musical pieces are preserved and incorporated into ongoing practice without negative associations “sticking” to them. For example, all the melodies once associated with the slaughter of buffaloes continue to be included as musical, aesthetic items in a funeral. Although at present many Kotas know that buffaloes were sacrificed in the past, it seems unlikely that the memory of these activities is going to be emphasized as the instrumental melodies are transmitted—provided, of course, that the practice of bovine slaughter is not revived. The stories and rituals behind god tunes, in contrast, will be taught to successive generations because the rituals and stories are consonant with and reinforce positive self-imagery. Similarly, even though the dry funeral has been discontinued (perhaps not permanently, however) in Kolme-l, revisionist agents such as Pucan experience no ambivalence in playing dry funeral pieces in a green funeral context.

MEMORY REVISITED

I proceed now from modalities of modernity, affective ways of representing the disjuncture between past and present, to *memory*, which I defined here to mean the *process of recall which mentally constitutes [a particular] past in the present*. First I specified an individual memory, a special kind of memory: a griever maintains for specific people who have died. I suggested this form of memory, which focuses on the individual, is related to the process of individuation in a funerary ritual: objects placed under the bier that pertain to the deceased’s habits in life; the deceased as a focal point for kinship structures enacted in a sequence of prestations; and the ritual focus on preparing and transporting the corpse itself.

Green funerals, I pointed out, create their own sort of “death spacetime” characterized by: 1) *temporal unpredictability* (although sometimes the imminent death of a village member might be expected); and 2) *centrifugal movement* from the village of the corpse, items associated with the corpse, processions of people, and the metaphysical effects of “death” itself. The event of a death is far more connected with the “everyday” experiences of a Kota because it may come without warning and must take precedence over other activities—sometimes rendering those involved unfit for god-related activities. Funeral spacetime extends outward and encompasses more villages than that associated with the god ceremony: visitors and relatives arrive from each of the Kota villages for the funeral, and their lives are emotionally as well as ritually touched by the effects of death. In these senses I made the point that death spacetime, by its nature, *bleeds* into other times and spaces; whereas, god spacetime is severely bounded and controlled.

The structure of musical repertoire reinforces this phenomenology of death: mourning songs (*a-!!*) may bring individual memory of the deceased into virtually any time and any place. Not only is the performance

of mourning songs virtually unrestricted (although it would be unsuitable to sing one during a god ceremony). There is not even a special time or place where the mourning song is *supposed* to be performed (unlike god songs, which can be highly contextualized in a ritual setting, or sung casually, outside of any fixed setting). Mourning songs also serve as conduits of memory to successive generations—long after those who actually remember the deceased have died. And the textual *form* of mourning songs (formulaic phrases, formulaic kinds of content) serves as a pattern for encoding memory.

The relationship of god songs to god tunes, we saw, was one of *contrast* in musical style. Singing god songs out of a ritual context does not evoke god tunes. Mourning songs, however, in style and melody evoke both funeral tunes (they are sometimes modeled on each other, as in the song “Mathi”) and the process of lamenting at a funeral. In a sense, then, the internal stylistic relationship of performance forms associated with death provide a continuity between the experience of death and the practice of everyday life. This continuity is, I believe, related to the broader spacetime of death which is expansive or centrifugal.

The articulation of individual memory, as important as it may be for micro-level issues of identity, does not register strongly at the macro-level for understanding the self-construction of Kotas as a tribe. For this we must turn to the recollection of the past through a kind of *collective memory*. This *memory* is spatially projected onto the land of the dead. After individual deceased Kotas are no longer remembered as individuals, they become *anaʔo-r*, members of an idealized Kota community of the dead, frozen in time. This memory is a past constituted in the present through ritual (at one time, through the *pe-npaco-l*, female spirit medium of the dead), through customs (which were supposedly sanctioned or dictated by spirits of the dead), through dreams, through stories of the *anaʔo-r*'s powers, and through songs (often pertaining to these dreams and stories). The construction of the *anaʔo-r* realm is a construction both of a past—Kotas who formerly lived now form a utopian community, “living” according to traditional ways of the distant past in a timeless world—and a future, because all Kotas will eventually return to this world.

The experience of Kotas living in the present is formed by two models of the everyday provided by the ideologies of divinity and death: the *way* the gods taught Kotas to live in the hoary past and the *exemplar* of the lives of the *anaʔo-r* in the land of the dead. These two models are essentially the same, contentwise. Morally they are also similar: if the Kotas live according to the ways of god, with righteousness, they will be powerful, like the spirits of the dead.

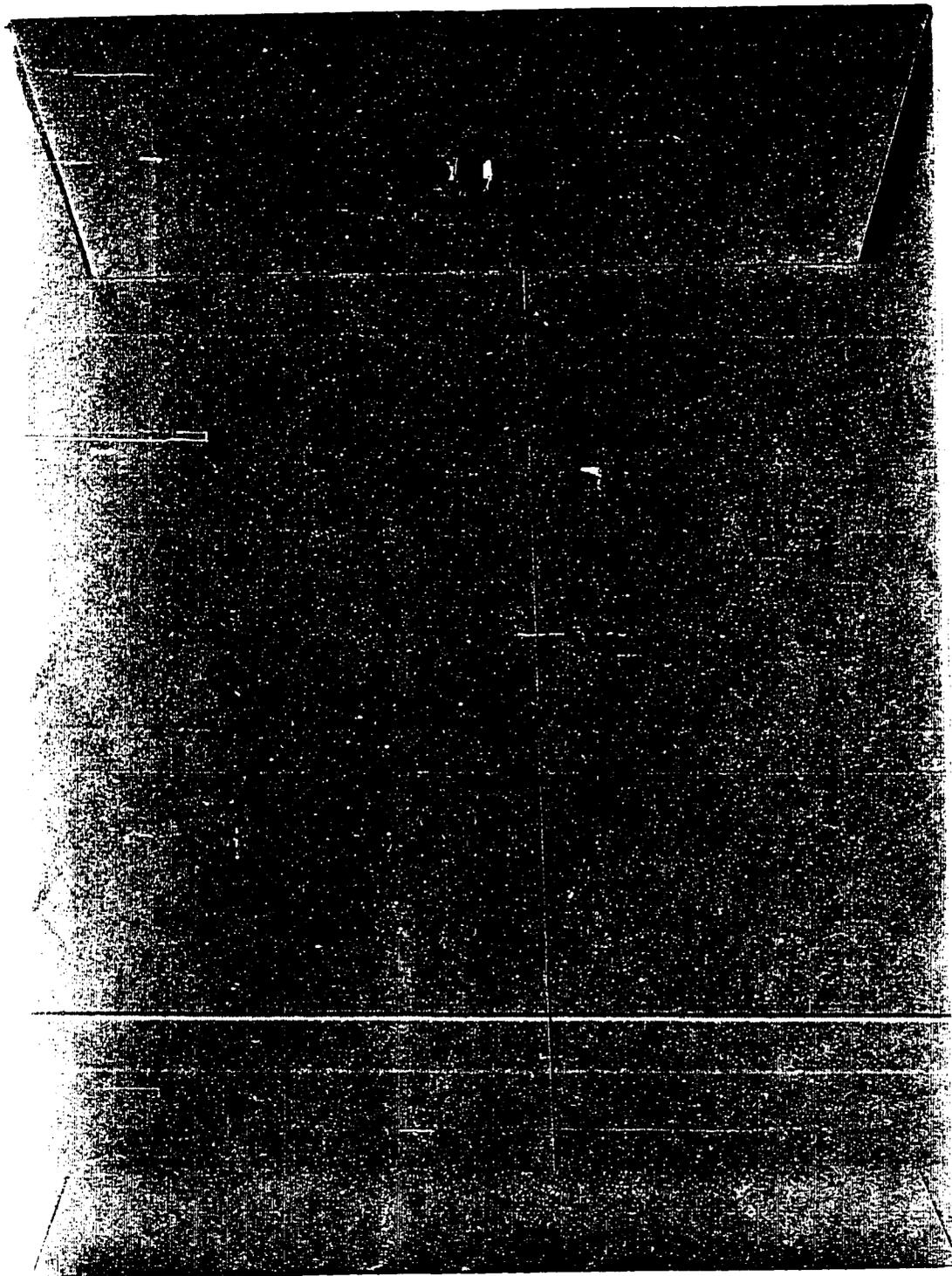
The denial of the validity of the dry funeral rites in the end amounts to denying the validity of this special Kota tribal world of the dead. It does not, however, amount to denying the Kota ideology of god, nor the “tribal past” constituted through that ideology. The replacement of a “soul merges with god” soteriology is a broader philosophical strategy of assimilating unique Kota beliefs and ways of life with that of Hindus

throughout India. This seems appropriate in some ways for the Kotas who identify themselves as tribals *and* Hindus; but, those who continue to define themselves largely as separate from Hindus will likely continue to support the celebration of the dry funeral. Arguments over the celebration of the dry funeral continue in Kolme-I; it seems likely the practice will be revived within a generation. With a hiatus of more than half a century, it will be of great interest to observe how the ceremony is reconstructed and the components of it justified and/or interpreted.

Musical performance, like the proper practice of other “traditional” activities, embodies righteousness for the Kotas. V. Mathi’s story quoted in the epigraph to part three depicted Kota tribal life as turning a moral corner from a golden age of righteousness to a modern age of death and decline. Musical instruments, primeval symbols embodying the power and protective force of tradition, spoke to the Kotas. The instruments warned the villagers of Tiggar of the evil intentions of the King. But those Kotas, already operating within a modernity of revisionism, did not embrace the words of the instruments as *truth*. All were killed.

APPENDIX ONE

**TRANSCRIPTIONS FOR CHAPTER SEVENTEEN:
A CASE STUDY OF MATHI**



443-446

Part

la
 i di ni ma yde o ke de me le ma yde
 ni di ke ma yde o ke de me le ma yde
 a yo eg ga ma yde i ne ke ne ga ma yde
 o ke de me le ma yde ka ka da la yde
 i ni ke ne ga ma yde an eg ga ne ma yde
 ma nde ag ne ca ba nem ne
 id de me le ke ma yde ni ya ne ma yde
 a na ne ma yde o j ja le ma yde
 va ke ne ga ma yde id i la ma yde
 id u ma le ke ma yde a no ri da la ma yde
 i fa la re na ma yde e ri di re ma yde
 ko ka i ke ma yde va ke de me le ma yde
 pa ri j ke an na a ype an na
 pa ra de ge ni d in ma ma yde a yo eg ga ma yde

M. 1
 V. A. 1
 226
 slow

2

1 = repetition of note with force, like "accent" in Cornetto music
 ~ = pulsing effect created by slow decreasing glissando or curved bow stroke
 following an ascending gliss. to some pitch for next note
 x = deliberate stop followed by breath

16 Staff Oblong
 Piccolino Pad 31

en ag ga ne ma y de

pi-c a-dalo y la ma y de

en ag ga na ma y de

no.

5-5 SHARP VIBRATION

[>] - place marker in staff for longer measures. Do not count time value
 with vowel as indication for longer notes & phrases

1/. somewhere between 2 and .
 x - particular rhythm

Melhi" *f* *acc* *tr*

Ka. r ga. la. re - ma. yde — Ka. ka. da. la. co ma yde —

la a la le la le la le la le la le

Ka. r ga. la. re - ma. yde Ka. ka. da. la. co ma yde

la a la le la le la le la le la le

next time the first phrase. last is vocalization. these are the first three. But more they are not

mf

la — la la la la la la

22d *f* *acc* *tr*

Ka. r ga. la. ma. yde Ka. ka. da. la. co ma yde

next set of "la la"s melodically same, next voice 3 measures, 2nd measure 2 notes, next voice

22e *f* *acc* *tr*

Ka. r ga. la. re ma yde Ka. ka. da. la. co ma yde

pi. ca. da. la. co ma. yde Ka. r ga. la. re. ma. yde

The below is a form of the phrase structure. It is composed of two phrases before reaching the

13d *f* *acc* *tr*

en av va. ma. yde ena ke. no. ma. yde

la la la le la la la la la le la la

one singer does this on line 3

one singer takes rest

3

16 stave Oblong
Resonance Pad 31

+ a slightly sharp

observed, not by and large, even when the 1st phrase of each is sung to 7
 create a other versions for 7 beat meter in 2nd & 3rd measures some kind
 The 7 beat one is probably - kurg's variant

Handwritten musical score on five staves. The lyrics are: "le a la-la", "on ne en on ne on ne", "lo lo in", "ex vad voim", and "vade di re ay di ya".

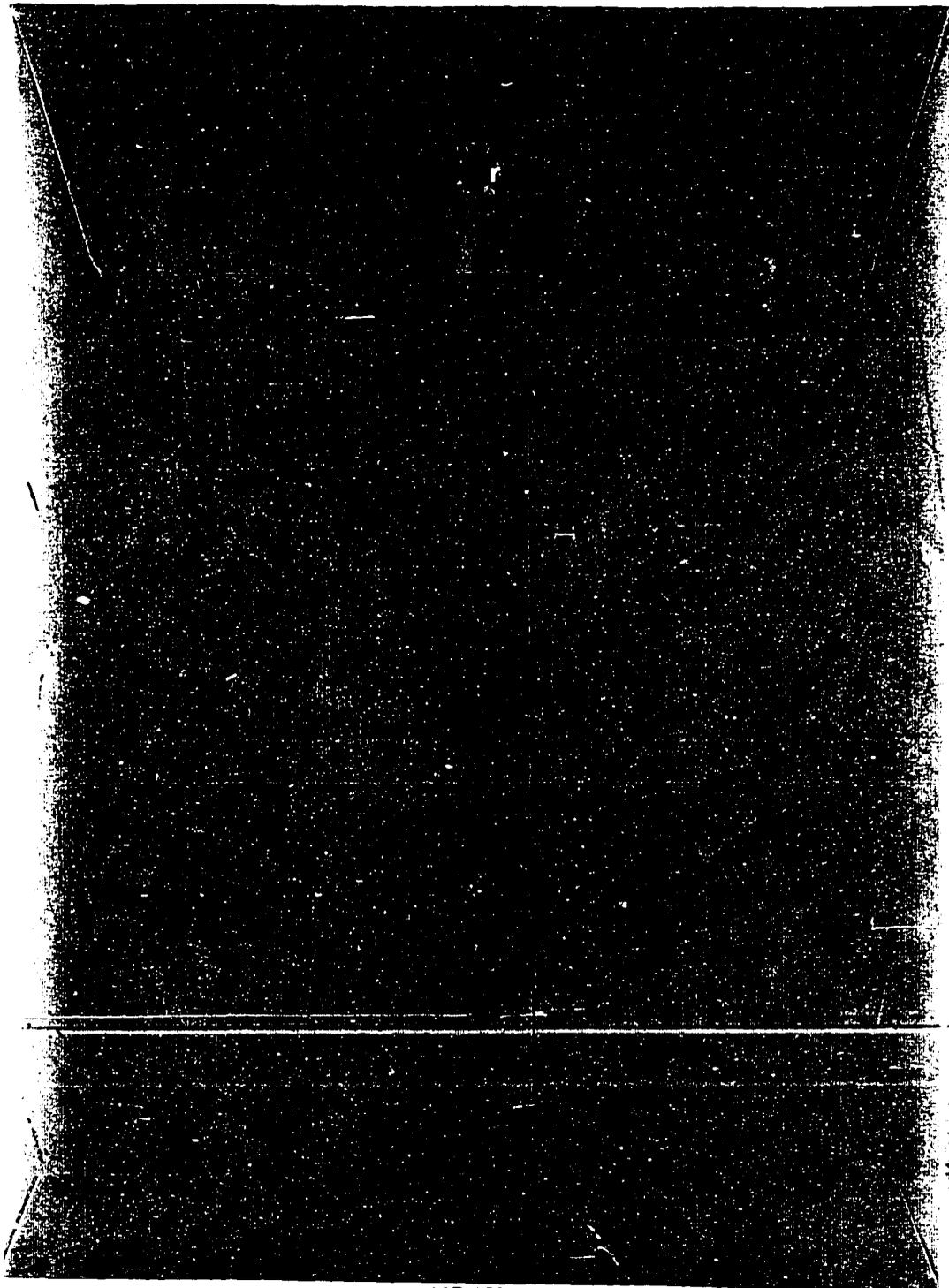
There is a second variable between major & sharp minor
 that in each repetition. No change of out. No extraneous:

Handwritten musical score on five staves. The lyrics are: "L'ordre de l'écriture".

6

Handwritten musical score on five staves. The lyrics are: "Ke-ti-ti ma yde", "po re ga: te-ne jo yde la", "i di re ray de ne go", and "ma yde".

Handwritten musical score on five staves. The lyrics are: "ta pice kif ti yo" and "ca-dal co en in on a k".



447-450

Modhi
1. 2. 3.

35c
Rangmali
ringgi

35d la

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff. The notes are mostly eighth and sixteenth notes. Below the staff, there are two lines of lyrics: "la la la la la la" and "la la la la la la".

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff. Above the staff are notes labeled D, E, A', B', A', B. Below the staff are two lines of lyrics: "le la la-ke la le A la le gi-oo la A lo li la c's" and "en au va en au non ma ya - o yo 39".

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff. Above the staff are notes labeled D, F', A'. Below the staff are two lines of lyrics: "ma ya o rakke na ca de- o rakke na ma ya ora gi ya".

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff. Below the staff is a line of lyrics: "(la ma sals + rous, ma sals C, C, C, C, C, C)".

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff. The notes are mostly eighth and sixteenth notes with some triplets. Below the staff are two lines of lyrics: "ma ya o rakke na ca de- o rakke na ma ya ora gi ya" and "ma ya o rakke na ca de- o rakke na ma ya ora gi ya".

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff. Above the staff are notes labeled 1, 2, 3. Below the staff are two lines of lyrics: "la la la la la la la la la la" and "en au di ne ma ya in ni leo mi gu mi ya".

Pakari
le...

Pa
Modhi (ringgi)
yo



5

16 stave Oblong
Esportino Pad 31

ways - 1. only for extra beat longer notes repetition / notes, repetition of phrase or...

and, thus, with a, making it a variation of the first

A' B A' .

li la c's "

yo o' 39-

FB

B''' m'ny

A' B''' A' B' A'

ora gi yo ma yd

na-hu fil la re en au e ac m' yd

o re gi yo ma yd

FB

A

3/4

FB

major third for lower parallel. upper part suitable. Orchest. in E-flat

what thing you a li chupka

la la la la la la

yo - mo re - mo yd

pic e a a a a ce go ma yd

3/4

and, repetition of phrase or sub phrase, both new

"Nabi"
H&S, c/s

43a
C. Andaman
(Sings)
Kurgon's
version

en nau iai me uatg e no ke. ne mo. iia
 tara gag de ka. ra. bi. la pi. ce. ne
 ve. fa. de ma. ya ma. ne. ke. lo. la e ma. ya

more signified variation towards middle end, repetition of sections within

43b
(Bibi)
(Sings)
Kurgon's

la
 en nau ve ma. ya era. ke. ai. go ma. ya
 va. ra. di. id. de. ne (a) ma. ne. ke. lo. la e ma. ya (a)

more variation, one section for vocal part

43c
Kendi
(Sings)
(Kurgon's)

en au va ma. ya (a) en ne ke. ne go ma. ya
 tara gam bi. la re go pi. ce. ne ada ta. ra go
 ve. ra. ve. fa. i. de. no (a) ma. ne. ke. lo. la ma. ya (a)
 kala va li ka ay gi. le ka. ra. vi. ke. ne ada ka. ra. do

6

lots of gradual steps in 43a

...

Handwritten musical score on ten systems of five-line staves. The notation includes notes, rests, and various musical symbols such as clefs, time signatures, and dynamic markings. The lyrics are written in a non-Latin script, likely Tamil, and are placed below the corresponding staves. The score is divided into several sections by horizontal lines. Some staves have handwritten annotations above them, such as "adha kaja do" and "en nau va". The notation is dense and appears to be a working draft or a personal manuscript.

430

Mulu
di. S

57a

S. Rangsani

a yo vei de ma-ya
 a. li la ke ma-ya
 a. li la ke ma-ya
 er av e e ma-ya
 ka ja ka la te. le ma-ya
 ke na ra ve ma-ya

in ma — ve ma-ya
 od de gude vere ge- ma-ya
 od de gude kora ke- ma-ya
 a yo vei de- ma-ya
 pa ji ti la- ma-ya
 (The more ...)

57b

wil msh
Makayji
mandak...

la ka la le la le
 a yo ved de- ma-ya
 a. la la e. se ma-ya

la le la re la le
 ene ka ne ge- ma-ya
 e de gude vere ge- ma-ya

22p

Juarez
to 184

ka. ga. la re ma-ya
 poy vi-te ka fa dire ma-ya
 poy va-l ka fa dire ma-ya
 ki. la na ka-ir ka fa ma-ya

ka. ka-de la. co ma-ya
 pi. ca dal a co ma-ya
 na. ya de la. co ma-ya
 pi. ca dal a co ma-ya

7

Ko! Versions of Muthi

M.A.
1973

43
99
Vafaz
K. Muthi
1973

43
86
W.M.
Kings
1991

Handwritten musical notation on four staves. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The second staff has a bass clef. The third staff has a treble clef and a '3' above it. The fourth staff has a bass clef. Vertical lines connect the staves at specific points.

Vertical lines indicate main beats of 8 beat structure

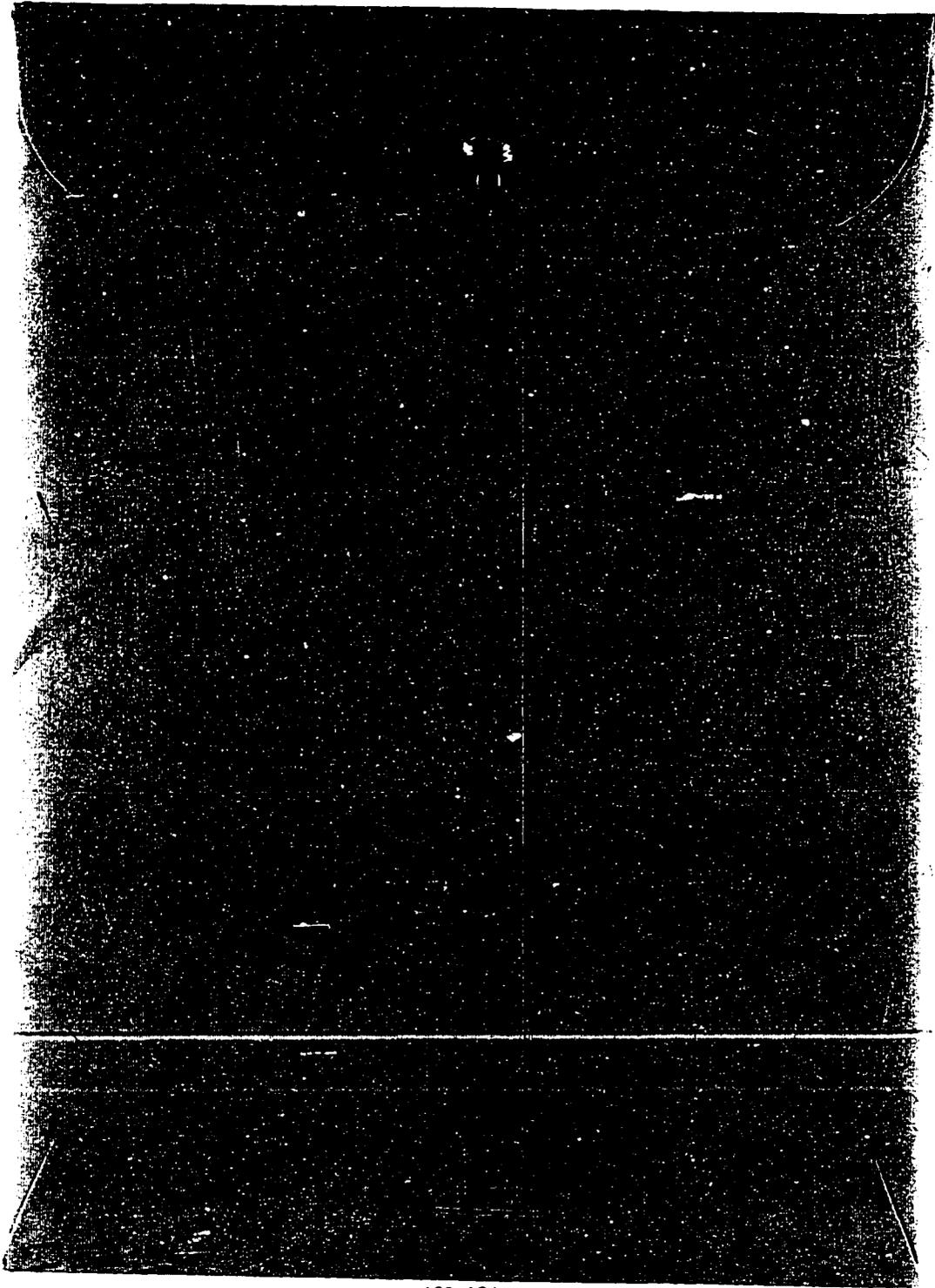
A single staff with numbers 1 through 8 and a dot above the 8, indicating a beat structure.

8

The image shows a page of handwritten musical notation on ten staves. The top staff contains a melody with various note values, including quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, and rests. The second staff is empty. The third staff contains a bass line with triplets and other notes. The remaining seven staves are empty.

APPENDIX TWO

**TRANSCRIPTIONS FOR CHAPTER EIGHTEEN:
KOŁ (TUNE) AND *DA -K* (PERCUSSION OSTINATO)**



452-454

Part III, ch 6

travé patterns

7

ca-da da-ic (slow) ||: ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ||

8

ti-ruga-na-t da-ic ||: ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ||

Part Composer tags (24-26)

tan nē nan nē tu na to na nā nē ey!

pā sa va. li mē la van tē sun ka (ōfi!)

na nē nē na na tē na na na na nē na na na nē

tan nās n. sale ru sen ni sa ca la va ai kat tum am

na nē nē na nē

yam pāt ti ta lām

na nē nē na nē

Vertikal
caym lal
(Kaimal)
Pacani
version

Kutan
Canda da. l.c (slow)

tabala
tabala
(cont version)
Kanan
Dobor
(cont version)
Dobor
(cont version)
Dobor
(cont version)

Men Chanting

2

Handwritten musical notation on a single staff. It includes notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Annotations include "C" above the staff, "(x)" above notes, and "Same as →" with an arrow pointing to a section of the music. Below the staff, there are markings for "pizz." and "ritin".

Alta Karamban equivalent of
 Kota Canda danc (slow)
 Wedding piece for accompanying arrival
 of bride from village
 Eastern Nilgiris

pizz. dec
 ritin

Tambate

Handwritten musical notation for Tambate, consisting of a series of notes and rests on a staff.

upbeat

ace
 (small
 drum)

Handwritten musical notation for ace (small drum), showing rhythmic patterns with vertical stems and flags.

comparatively flat, high pitch, ringing

ace
 (large
 shallow
 snoring
 drum)

Handwritten musical notation for ace (large shallow snoring drum), showing rhythmic patterns with vertical stems and flags.

comparatively flat, deep, deep

Milohi

Kondu
 (Saxophone)

Handwritten musical notation for Kondu (Saxophone), featuring notes and rests on a staff.

2nd ending

Men Chanting

"Ho ko"

"Ho ko"

Handwritten musical notation for Men Chanting, consisting of a few notes on a staff.

Kota TIRUGANA.T

Handwritten musical notation on a 16-staff system. The notation is organized into five systems, each with a right and left hand part. The notes are represented by vertical stems with various flags and beams. The systems are labeled on the left as (1), (2), (3), (4), and (5).

System 1: Right hand, big stick; Left hand, small stick.

System 2: Right hand: (j) = soft stroke in center of drum, somewhat cupped; Left hand: (k) = soft stroke in center. Includes note: (j) = soft stroke in center of drum, somewhat cupped; (j) = ringing stroke on edge of drum.

System 3: Right hand; Left hand.

System 4: Right hand: (j) = damped stroke; Left hand: (k) = center stroke. Includes notes: (j) = damped stroke; (j) = fingers spread apart, stroke near center of drum; (k) = center stroke, finger spread apart.

System 5: Right hand: (j) = fingers together, near edge of drum; (k) = center stroke, damped.

On the right side of the page, there are vertical labels: To, (cin, kin, dolo, dolo, dolo.

part III
ch 6 p. 13

3

Tabak

Handwritten note: (may be written on edge of drum)

kinvar (slow version)

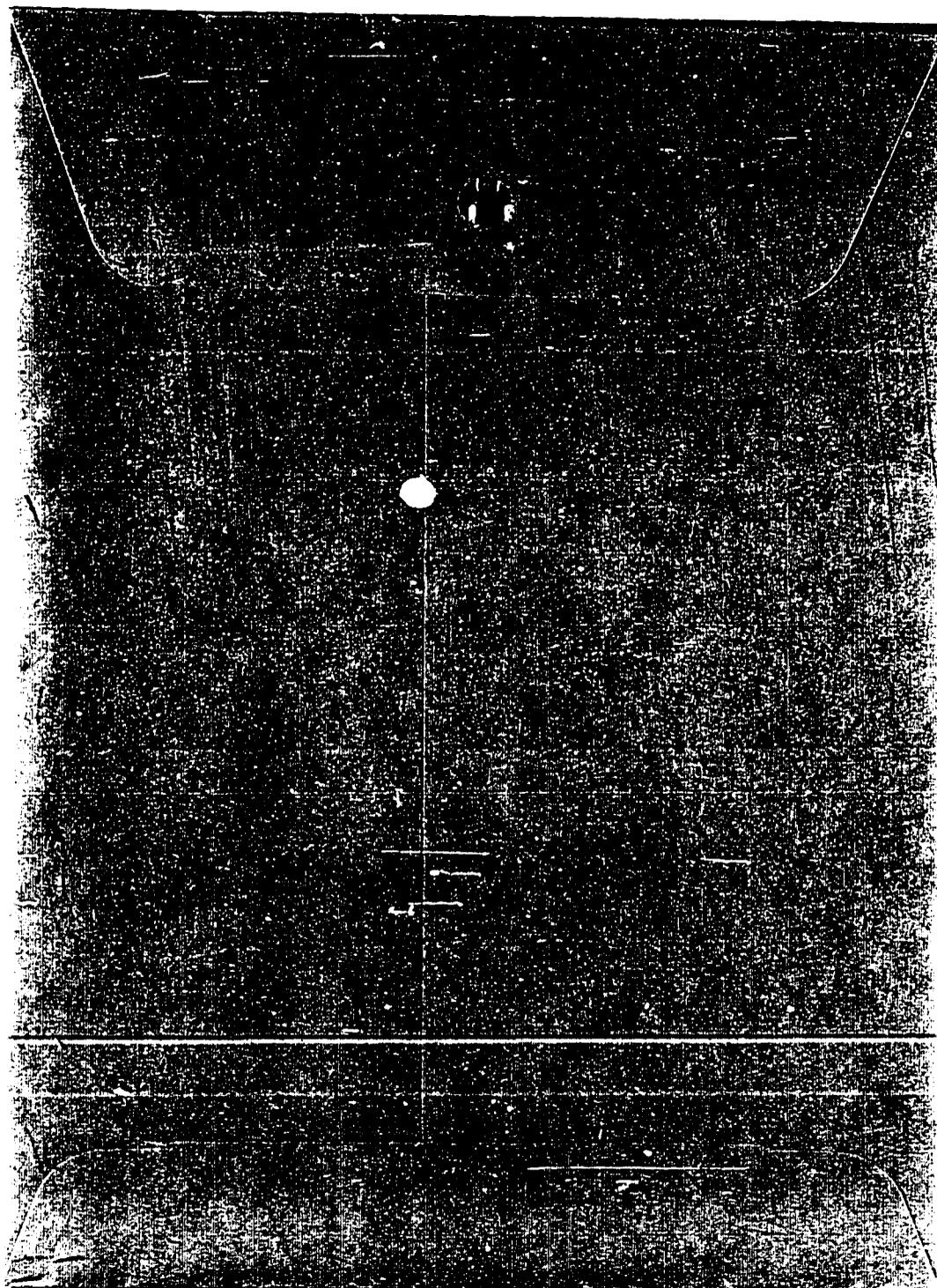
kinvar (fast version)

Handwritten note: (may be written on edge of drum)

dobar (slow)

dobar (slow, variable)

dobar (simple or fast)



455-457

♩ = 160-168
 Mariyamma
 cal (karga-)
 kala! da.k

IRALA RHYTHM COLLECTED IN ANAIPPALAM VILL
 South-Central Mysore

Big stick
 L. Hand stick
 Left hand
 Right hand

6 Beat Carda da.k, kala
 p. 22, ch. 6
 see p. 11

4

C D C B C B

♩ = 2:00

CD in ANAIPPAN VILLAGES

Pec (Cylindrical drum)

L(?) dawl (Clay barrel drum)

R(?) variation

7 Beat Canda da k - kela

Equivalent of 7 beat Canda da k by J. S. Rangaswami, Bangalore, Eastern Mysore

Composite of some variations

Right hand (high pitched)

Left

Right

Left (top edge of drum, mrg)

variations

parsi (cylinder)

Kudam (clay barrel drum)

variations (Cylindrical drum)

variations

Sample Irula tune in this meter

♩ = 1:52

Olo-5uc kol.
 (Kempt opening p. 19-16 p. 19-)

Kunayor kol.
 p. 27-6

Pat m Kach kol.
 p. 29

Kripah may kol.

Nigani comp kol.

5

16 stave Oblong
 Resonating Pad 31

Symbols: TT = heavy, new tremolo/vibrato on non TT = total envelope (similar to TT but shorter)
 TT =

▽ shows which finger is lifted
 ▽ corresponds with covered holes on flute
 □ indicates first hole open
 for indicates relative fingerings
 pitch relatively. Notation staff - only
 approximate. d + e are sometimes only
 mechanical notes

a - insertion of upper neighbor
 b - insertion of lower neighbor

let's say it's

▽ - "guy" sounds vary in relative beat or notated
 ▽ — repetition of note a varying number of times
 within a given time framework. Articulation goes

X - supradia of X
 X' - variant of X
 X2 - new stable variant of X

Phenomenon: $\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{1}{8}$ $\frac{1}{16}$
 non-constant
 varies \uparrow
 \downarrow - possible
 errors

pedal
decr
a. 11. 101

p. 11
p. 26

Amno. r
101
p. 29

ar. 101

elaborate
for piano

as preceded by upper register, roughly 1/2 or 3/4 note
or Semibreve
D = 1/2 note
E = 3/4 note
F = possible ending point

(6)

The image shows a handwritten musical score on a page with a vertical margin on the left. The score consists of several staves of music. The top staff is a vocal line with lyrics: "gil li le li e" and "9-9 9-9 9-9". Above the notes are markings A, B, C, A', B', and A''. The second staff is a piano accompaniment with markings A, A', A'', A1, A2, (A1'), and (A2'). Below the notes are markings (1) and (2). The third staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The fourth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The fifth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The sixth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The seventh staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The eighth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The ninth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The tenth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The eleventh staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The twelfth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The thirteenth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The fourteenth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The fifteenth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The sixteenth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The seventeenth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The eighteenth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The nineteenth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The twentieth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The twenty-first staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The twenty-second staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The twenty-third staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The twenty-fourth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The twenty-fifth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The twenty-sixth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The twenty-seventh staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The twenty-eighth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The twenty-ninth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The thirtieth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The thirty-first staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The thirty-second staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The thirty-third staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The thirty-fourth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The thirty-fifth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The thirty-sixth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The thirty-seventh staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The thirty-eighth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The thirty-ninth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The fortieth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The forty-first staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The forty-second staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The forty-third staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The forty-fourth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The forty-fifth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The forty-sixth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The forty-seventh staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The forty-eighth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The forty-ninth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2). The fiftieth staff is a piano accompaniment with markings (1) and (2).

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff. The notes are mostly quarter and eighth notes. Above the staff, there are handwritten labels: "A", "A¹", "A¹¹", and "B¹". Below the staff, there are some illegible handwritten markings.

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff. It includes a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. Above the staff, there are labels: "A₂", "(A₁)¹", and "(A₂)¹". Below the staff, there are some illegible handwritten markings.

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff. It includes a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The notation consists of several measures of music with various note values and rests.

.

APPENDIX THREE

NILGIRI TRIBAL MUSICAL INSTRUMENT TYPES

Instrument Type	Kota	Toda	Mele Nādu Irula	Ānapā lam Irulas	Bokka-pūram Irulas	Urāli Irulas	Irula SW	Vettu kādu Irulas	Ālu Kuru-mbas
Shawm; number of holes	kol; 6	--- <i>kwe:l</i>	kwālu	kokāl	kolal	kogalu etc.	pēki	kogālu kogalu, kogal	koalu
Simple idio-glottal clarinet with down-cut reed	pulaṅg or pi-ke; 6	---		X					
End-blown bamboo trumpet	bugi-r; 5/6	pux-ury	bugari 6 turuli ?, 5 (Z. "flute")	X	bugiriya			bogari	buguri
Brass horn	kob	---	X		X				
Frame Drum	tabatk	---	tambate	---?	tambate		?	tambate	tampate
Cylindrical drum (generic: small; large)	par; kin-var; gum-bar/dobar	---	poṛai; cim-ula poṛai; gumpoṛai	per	pare	madalu	X	davilu (quite long?)	are (bare) [Kapp]
Conical drums	e-rtabatk	---							
Barrel drums	---	---	kadime	tavil				poṛe	
Cymbals	ja-lra-v	---	tāla		X				
Other	pijl [jew's harp, obs.]	---	conch; dried gourd idiophone	tamb-ourine: ganjira					

Key:

X = Exists but name not known

--- = Not found

[] = English description, indigenous name not known

blank = Information regarding presence or absence not available

ital. = Toda name for instrument played by the Kotas

Instrument Type	Pālu Kurumbas	Kāṭṭa Nāyakas	Betta Kurumbas	Soligas	Paniyas
Shawm; number of holes	kugalu	kolal	kalalu	koralu	kuḷal 7
Simple idioglottal clarinet with downcut reed		X 6/5	(prob.)		
End-blown bamboo trumpet	bugiri	X	X	pīnasi(?) ("a kind of panpipe")	
Brass horn				kombu	
Frame Drum	[prob]	X	tambate	halage	
Cylindrical drum (generic; small; large)	davulu	X	davl [Biderkād]	?	
Conical drums					
Barrel drums					
Cymbals				tāla	
Other					urumi tudt (long) tudi maram (small) [hourglass pressure drums?]

Key:

X = Exists but name not known

--- = Not found

[] = English description, indigenous name not known

ital. = Toda name for instrument played by the Kotas

blank = Information regarding presence or absence not available

Notes:

Mele Nādu ("High Land") Irulas are located in the Eastern Nilgiris. Data from villages of Garikkuyūr and Bangalapadikai

Ānapālam (village) Irulas are located in the South-Central Nilgiris

Bokkapūram (village) Irulas (also called Kasabas) are located in the Northern Nilgiris

Urālī Irulas are located in Tamilnadu, Kerala and Karnataka. Source for terms: Zvelebil (1979-1982)

Irulas SW are located in the South-Western Nilgiris in the town of Marudamala. Source for terms: Kuckertz (1973)

Kurumba terms are supplemented by Kapp (1982)

Paniya terms are provided by Aiyappan (1992)

Vettu kādu Irulas live in Eastern Kerala and along the Western borders of the Nilgiris. Attapādi village. Terms provided by Zvelebil (1979-82)

Ālu Kurumba terms collected by Wolf from Kumāramudi village

Pālu Kurumba terms supplemented by Zvelebil (1979-82)

Kāṭṭa Nāyakas (also called Jēnu Kurumbas) live in the Northern and Western Nilgiris, in Karnataka and Kerala

Soligas live in the Bilgiri Rangana hills of Karnataka (north of the Nilgiris). Terms provided by Morab.

APPENDIX FOUR

COMPARISON OF MUSICAL AND SELECTED RITUAL ACTIVITIES DURING THE KOTA GOD CEREMONY

	Fire lighting from kab it pay (site of 1st house in village)	②possession	Pot making	Dance on intervening days	Women's symbolic menstrual seclusion	Temple (△) Opening
Kolme:l	W: ♪ indicates beginning of festival. & alerts Badagas etc.; OLY; ♂ ♪ in gagva:l [includes ♂: cloak around chest; ① cannot ♪ in gagva:l ¹	ø	---	♀ join ♪ Th. onward gagva:l ♪ ♂ simpler than those associated w/ paca:l	F: Older ♀; S: younger ♀ w/ ♀① & ♀② S 4pm: ♪ (associated w/ ♂ cleaning channel) also signals end of seclusion; ♀ actually menstruating do not ♪ near △.	ø during actual opening; ♪; then, ε (B,RO,E) ♪ ;⊃: o-la-guc
Porgar	M: ♪ ∑Ke; OLY; ♂ ♪ in gagva:l: ♂: cloak around chest 3 nights; ② & ① join ♪ after ② poss.; @ ♂ ka:l-gu: ♂ ♪; ♀ ♪ after oracle interp.	?	∑ (ku) ♀; ♂; ♪; ♪; ♀ ② lead; ♀ va-ranm;	W: ♪; ♀② leads ♀ ♪; Th.: ♪; ♀① once again leads	[possible that since taking va-ranm makes ♀ "clean" it is not necessary]	♪ ♪ (?) H-K to old △ ♪; ♪ (in) ♪ (?) H-K; new △ :
Kina:r	1st fire, competition between ①s and ②; 2nd: ② possession & ♪ naryke:r kava:l	⊃	above; ⊃; ♀① silent; ♀ ♪	M-F; 3 koyn ♂ ♪ high note for ki: & OLY	[above?]	♪
Ticgar	M: ♪ [possibly @ all say "tic idume!" & ② possession] ⊃	⊃	⊃[♪ & H-K assoc. w/ ⊃?][♪]	① & ♀ ① no ♪;	[?]	OLY & brush △ w/ thorns ♪; ⊃ o-la-guc
Kurgo:j	Sa: fire from house at a-ta:c kava:l; ♪; ① no ♪;		⊃ [♪]	@ per others can't enter 15 days ²	♪(in) cross 7 thorny ♪e	♪[⊃ayno:r & amno:r ;when?]
Kala:c	[Most rituals same as Kurgo:j]	on ¹ u:tm night	⊃[♪] ♀① lead			above

	Coin pasting	Entering Δ	Bringing cane & bamboo	Women bringing fire-wood	Throwing thatch on temple roof	Special rituals	\circ during moments of	Δ opening night	M. after Δ open
Kolme-l	\exists patkac & o-l-a-guc; \rightarrow (Δ to Δ) OLY	\exists o-la-guc kol; \rightarrow (Δ to Δ) OLY	$\sigma \rightarrow$ (in) \exists anvirc d; [??] previous association w/ \exists kaberc ⁴ 1st σ Δ in Δ area; \clubsuit	\sum (ku) σ \rightarrow (in) \exists anvirc d; 1st σ Δ in Δ area \clubsuit : waist tight; jewelry	M: \exists o-l-a-guc; @ high tessitura; \clubsuit	S: σ Channel cleaning: 3-12 devr σ , μ \rightarrow (to channel) \exists : anvirc d; \square offering of ring to goddess; OLY; μ \rightarrow (in) H-K; σ Δ gagva-l. S: boys practice μ while face of coins made; S. evening young boys collect firewood \rightarrow from \sum house & play μ	fire lighting; Δ opening; mumury; offering to gangamn and to Δ ; putting up canopies; σ go for seclusion; ritual cleaning other than Δ	12 devr σ ; 1st Δ area; \clubsuit standard ritual dress style; former limited participation of Badagas and Todas	μ 5:00 a.m.; $\textcircled{1}$ should n't speak: \exists 1st ka-lguc σ Δ ; thatch throwing; coin pasting
Por-gar	M. or T.: μ (?) σ ; \rightarrow (Δ to Δ)	\in (B, RO?) then enter new Δ	$\sigma \rightarrow$ (in) μ (?) σ ; \clubsuit	\sum (ku) σ \rightarrow (in) μ (?) σ	Su: μ (?) σ [not mentioned but probably] M. or T.: μ (?) σ ; \clubsuit	S: \rightarrow to old village; tobacco; purification of musical instruments after mumury	fire lighting; mumury;	Δ in kikolva-l	
Kinna-r	?		Sa: \exists (same as tune for grass & clay)		Sa: \exists pulk oybd/ vetk e-rytd /man (3 names)	σ basket making; \clubsuit milk ritual conducted simultaneously. Sa-M	mumury; milk rituals	σ ; [probably Δ near Δ] Δ σ ;	
Tic-gar	σ ?		\exists same for stone lifting	\sum (ku) σ \rightarrow (in)		Ritual for munico-ym at very end;	mumury	μ (?) \sum fire \rightarrow to gagva-l & Δ area.	
Kurgo-j	[?] ⁵		$\sigma \rightarrow$ (in) H-K; μ (?) ; \clubsuit σ ; \exists kaberc		@ after cleaning Δ ; μ (?) ; H-K	Collecting nay OLY \rightarrow (house); 15 days after per can resume daily activity; cleaning of channel \rightarrow ⁷	mumury	Δ near Δ [not $\textcircled{1}$]	Toda exchange nay for vatm ⁸
Ka-la-c	OLY [on u-tm night] ⁹					No cleaning of channel ¹⁰	mumury		

	Food offering	Other night activities	Other last night	Dance day	Song day	Symbolic hunting
Kolme:l	∃; ∑ (ku)	→ (natkal, pul a·cd erm) Young & old boys, walking & running; H-K	∃ coin removing (pat kac kol) & @ ♀♣; then ♀ songs ♂	For Kunayno·r, 3 or 12 devr ♂ kols; regular ritual, ordinary street, and special ♂; outsiders included; Badagas → (in) ∃ ♂ pe·rn kols; women's songs ♀ ♂; ∃ dis-mantling arca·yl; kob & H-K; ♂ in gagva:l	♀ songs ♂; and games	∃ Secret washing of bow & arrow; symbolic or actual bison shooting; ve·tkar co·ym
Porgar	∃; ∑(ku)	[stone lifting--not every year?]	coin & mumury removing in secret ⓪ (?)	∑ (ku) & (all ♂) tobacco rituals. ♂ ⌘: street, ritual, & special ♂; outsiders included	called "little dance day"	?
Kinar	∃	M: 5 ♂ stone lifting (milk ritual)		♣ Kike·r; ∃ ♂ ⌘ ⌘; night: god returned secretly	above	[? god is washed]
Ticgar	∃	⓪ no ⌘; ♀ ⓪ ⌘ only Amnor ⓪; ♂; ∃ stone lifting	god → ⓪ to ⓪ OLY; ⓪ ⓪ va·km; coin removing ∑ (ke)	W: ⓪ ♂ ⌘; ♀ ⓪ ♀ ⌘; ♂ ⌘ ⌘;	abv. ♀ songs, games ⓪ ♂ ⌘; ♀ ⓪ ♀ ⌘; ⌘	→ god, bow&ar-row to ⓪; va·km; hunting 2 times ¹¹
Kurgoj	M: ∑(ku) ∃; ♀ (?) ¹² →leaves	[stone lifting only at dry funeral]		T: ⓪ & ⓪ ⌘	---	F: ritna:l fire in gulm →gu·rgal
Kalac	rice			T: ⌘; ⌘; ♀ songs; tobacco [∑]		

Key:

♫ There is music associated with this activity, although no special tune, or if so, not known (?)

--- = This activity is absent

♫ All the instruments play at once, as loudly as possible (called *o·mayn*)

∃ There exists a special tune for this activity

♣ Dancing by men and women, unless preceded by ♀ or ♂

⓪ There is no music associated with this activity

⌘ Special form of dress associated with this activity

⓪ There is a distinct pause in the music for this activity to take place; music may resume afterwards

⓪ Temple involved in this activity

♣ There is a special musical genre associated with this activity

H-K Activity involves uttering sacred sound "ho·ko"

@ At this time (the following activity)

OLY Activity involves uttering sacred sound "o·hy"

∑ Representative involvement in this activity by exogamous clan, *ke·r* (Ke), family, *kuty* (Ku), or village, *kokat* (Ko)

[Either inclusive or exclusive: i.e. if only one family is responsible for activity, or if all have to divide up the work]

M,T,W,Th,F,S,Su Days of week

☛ Special type(s) of plants, leaves, or flowers involved in this activity

① Mundka·no·n

→ Activity involves procession, either from place to place within the village (X-Y), ushering or coming into the village (in), or heading out of the village (out)

② Te·rka·rn

♀ Women only or, if preceding ① or ②, Mundka·no·l or Te·rka·rc

♂ Men only

€ ertabatk is involved in this activity; beaten at the beginning of this activity (B), Simply included in ensemble (E);
beaten in ritual order (RO)

w/ With

Notes:

1.Sulli told Mandelbaum 12/31/58, that Mundka·no·n and Te·rka·rn dance this night only [presumably, meaning in the gagva·l this night only]

2.Mandelbaum 11.49. No dance on Friday, only on Sunday. In general for more details on Kurgo·j god ceremonies, see Mandelbaum's notes 11.49 and 7.37.

3.According to Munka·ln of Kala·c, the god Karpra·yn (the other is called Ayno·r) is so powerful that the Te·rka·rn could only speak two or three words in Kota while possessed by him. The god says "how are you all"; those present answer "we are fine." If more needs to be asked, the god says he will tell them in the next village. In the next village, the Kala·c Kotas will ask questions in Kannada language and the god answers them (through the te·rka·rn) in Malayalam!
Apparently no music

4.Mandelbaum 2.11.49 confirms "kaberckol, post cutting tune formerly played when we went to get the planks to replace in the templ. Now we play that when we bring fuel." It is not clear what this refers to, since women bring fuel to the accompaniment of a different tune, "evidently a variation of the o·la·guc kol"--as it is today.

5.God resides in metal bow, arrow, trident, conch, silver cakra; it is not clear whether these are stuck in the dung on the pillars or not. These are Shiva's form. Duryodana asked, you mean Ayno·r? and Tetn affirmed.

6.marp: DEDR 4418, *marap*, covering shoulders with cloak and holding it in front with both hands [Duryodana asked if there was a special dress, probably because there is in Kolme·l]

7.Mandelbaum 11.26.49, "In Kurgo·j the channel is cleaned some days before, but not during the days of hte ceremony. it is done on the Monday when we clean our houses. Yes we go with music and put a coin offering under a tree." Kala·c people bathe in the Paikara.

8.Ta·rna·r and mut·na·r mands. This is just for ritual's sake, recalling a former partnership. The clarified butter is not actually that used to light the lamp. The Todas consider it an offering in fulfillment of a vow to god (*ko·ryk*).

9.Mandelbaum 7.7.37 recorded that one group of men would chant "o·h" three times and the other would answer "a u" three times while the *devr kols* were being played.

10.Mandelbaum 7.37, apparently in alternate years the villagers of Kurgo·j and Kala·c would celebrate together at each other's villages beginning on Saturday.

11.Vergheze (1969, 154) elaborates, "on the final day the Kota, being traditional hunters also, invoke their deity to obtain more skill in hunting. In the morning priests followed by the eldermen of the village go to a nearby hill Okkanad, where their forefathers were believed to hunt for wild games [sic]. There the *munthakannan*, following their common prayer, utters another prayer which means "Lord of bow and arrow and God of all hunter (Kambatravn), we offer prayers and offerings toyou. Oh son of Kammala (who is the) son of Pammala (who is the) son of Vellala, we have come here for hunting. Give us a good hunt, oh God."

12.The food serving is divided up according to family obligation, but the food preparation is not (unlike Kolme·l and Porga·r for instance)

APPENDIX FIVE

THE GOD CEREMONY IN KOLME-L: AN OUTLINE OF EVENTS KEYED TO A SEVENTY MINUTE VIDEO TAPE (RECORDED 1990-92 BY RICHARD WOLF)

Time on Video	Outline of Events
	I. [Day according to moon] Sighting of crescent moon (<i>per</i>) Dec.-Jan [Kota month of Ku-dl] A. If on a Friday, temple worship begins next day on Saturday--6 a.m. B. If on a Saturday, temple worship begins Monday
1:20	II. [Monday] Crescent Moon Passing Day (<i>perkaycna-l</i>) Lighting Fire A. Entire village goes to temple Monday 5:00 B. <i>mundka-no</i> -ns make fire by friction in their houses (<i>dodvay</i>) He lights by churning stick (using <i>vagve r</i> [root of <i>Solix tetrasperma</i> plant]; another way is by striking stone against metal
2:47	1. Bring fire to raised circles of stones (<i>tondat</i>) in 2 respective house lines (<i>ke-r</i>) and light fire
3:09	2. Bring fire back from <i>tondat</i> and light hearth a. Worship top of stove (<i>tale-l</i>) b. Later cook using this flame c. Former <i>mundka-no</i> -ns do same.
3:15	C. <i>Mundka-no</i> -ns clean and sanctify house
3:40	a. Collect water (<i>perni r</i>) from tap (previously the channel, <i>peva y</i>) in clay pot ¹ b. Mix with dung and sprinkle water around house c. Collect thorny plant called <i>tak mul</i> from tree near temple d. Dust and touch parts of inside and outside of house--to drive away evil spirits etc. e. Throw branch on roof so it will not touch any foot f. At some point the women of the house (here the <i>mundka-no</i> -ls) clean the house thoroughly, dig new mud to plaster the walls (in two colors); fix ruts in floor; cover with cow dung.
4:18	D. Ordinary people do same as 2C above (e.g. collect <i>tak mul</i>)
4:21	(e.g. carry firebrand from <i>tondat</i> to household hearth) E. From this night onwards: ritual absention from meat, sex, and intoxicants
	[Tuesday: Rest, collect provisions from Ooty, etc.; Formerly on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday or Saturday, Kotas would make iron ornaments for the temple; long ago in the temple itself; in 1958 in smithy (Mandelbaum 12.31.58) ²
	III. [Wednesday Evening] Lighting fires, possession [In other villages this happens on Monday night] From this night onwards, the men cannot clean their own plates--the women must [i.e. reinforcement of gender roles]
	A. Lighting fire 1. Men assemble at 8 p.m. in <i>gagva-l</i> (the dancing ground in front of the site of the first

- house)
2. Man living in *kabitpay* (site of first house) makes fire (it is ok to use matches)
 - a. Brings from house to *gagva:l* (or makes it in *gagva:l*)
 - b. Lights fire on side somewhere, not in center where dancing fire is put
- B. Same man transfers fire to temple area near *tak* tree with stick called *kadaku:c* (Sp? forest stick?)
1. This fire is called the *kuntic* (small fire) or the *kabit tic* (first foundation fire)
- C. All the men go to the house of the *dodmundka:no:n* (in *a:ke:r.W.* part of village)
1. Collect flame with thin hollow highly inflammable bundles of twigs (*kank pul*)³
 2. Transfer this flame and make new fire in front of what will be the *kunarcay:l* ("small"⁴ tent)
 - a. This is called *dodtic* (big fire) or *devr* (god)
 - i. Fire should not be unattended
 - ii. [Shot of priests keeping vigil over this fire appears later]
 - b. Women should not see it being transferred here from *mundka:no:n*'s houses
 - c. *mundka:no:n* walks around village, not through it, with the firebrand--just as he does on all days of the god ceremony
- D. Three *te:rka:rn*s (or as many as there are) come to the temple area, one for each god (*dodayno:r*, *kunayno:r* and *amno:r*).
1. Others stand and pray to god
 2. *te:rka:rn*s (hopefully) get possessed and give advice, act as oracles, etc.⁵
- E. Men return to the *gagva:l*
- F. Specially selected man brings fire from the *kuntic* (the fire near the *tak* tree) and lights a fire in the *gagva:l*
- G. All the instruments, including *e:rtabat*k and *kob*, play together as loudly as possible (called *o:mayn*)
1. This signals the beginning of the festival and warns outsiders not to enter the village at night until festival is over.
 2. Also signals to the Badagas that they should come to *Kolme:l* to dance on the dance day on Tuesday or Thursday
 3. **Only men dance** this first night
(*mundka:no:ns* not allowed to dance in *gagva:l*; *te:rka:rn* can)
- H. Village council of men (*ku:tm*)
1. Discussion of major issues and division of expenses
 2. In 1992, 15 rs. each house for clarified butter and oil
- IV. [Thursday evening] Fire taken from *kun mundka:no:n*'s house [in *naryke:r*] and added to *dodtic*
- A. Worship and *te:rka:rn* possession
 - B. *Kuntic* used to make fire in *gagva:l*
 - C. Men and women dance in *gagva:l*
 1. These dances are simpler than the ones which will be performed in the *paca:l*. For men there will be *kalguca:t*, *tirugana:t* and *koyna:t*.
 2. To make god come to the *te:rka:rn*, *tema:ng a:t* may be danced with the *vara:r*t tied around the waist of the male dancers
 3. For women, according to Pucan, only *tirugana:t* and three or four *ca:da ko:s* are danced in *kava:l*
(In video there are more varieties: *ka:lguca:t*, *tirugana:t*, *ca:da*, *piga:lmudal a:f*)
 - D. *Mundka:no:ns* are responsible from this point onwards to keep watch over the *dodtic*. Meanwhile their wives, the *mundka:no:ls*, are responsible for keeping the lamp (*velk*) in their houses lit. [Mandelbaum n.d.]
- V. [Friday] Dance as above (possession too?)
- A. Women stay outside of house in special place at lower end of village (*naryke:r* area), *kike:r*, for ritual observation of menstrual seclusion. Older women [40 and above] only, this night

1. This is a formality so that all can participate in the god festival
2. Those who are actually menstruating during the festival will unobtrusively exclude themselves from dancing on the *paca:l*

VI. [Saturday] Worship

- A. Younger women, led by the *mundka·no·ls*, stay outside all day (from 6am) for ritual observance of menstrual seclusion at a place below the village (*kike·r*). They cook and eat there
1. At 4:00 or so the sound of the *kob* indicates that the men have left to clean the channel and the women can return to the village.
- B. Clean channel upstream (*talán*)
- 12:00 1. First men meet at *natkal* and play *devr kols*; then *anvircd kol*
2. **Playing music, beating *ertabak*, playing *kob***, men go
- a. They take with them knives and, in the old days, spades and pitchforks
 - b. Along the way, stop and pray at sacred place, *todpa:l*
- 13:00 3. Arrive at channel, music still playing, ritualists wash feet
- 13:50 4. Say prayers and offer ring to river goddess (*gaggamn*)
- 15:00
 - a. All prostrate and then stand up and say "*o·ly*"
 - b. Prayer "tomorrow we are opening our temple *ganga de·vi*; we want you to come to our festival"
- 15:15 5. Upon completing ritual all shout "*ho· ko·*"
- 15:20 6. All men who are eligible to be *te·rka·m* bathe in channel
- a. Use cold water and traditional soap plant, *veky*
 - b. Ritualists upstream; the rest, up or downstream
7. Return (**with music**), fixing any damage to the water channel, saying *ho· ko·*
8. Carry with them bundles of *vale·ry* plant (*dodnea viscosa* DEDR 5410a) for cleaning the *kava·ls* of the houses later.
- [15:13] [vale·ry was collected in between the other rituals, while bathing, etc. was going on]
- 16:00 C. **Men dance in *gagva:l***--three dances for sake of ritual
[Note *mundka·no·ns* sitting on side because they are not supposed to dance in *gagva:l*]
- D. All eat dinner at around 7 p.m.
- E. **Return for men's and women's dance late into night**
- VII. [Sunday] Temple opening day (*gury terdd na:l*)
- 17:40 A. All clean yard in front of house (*kava:l*) with cow dung water, using *vale·ry*
1. Order: *dodmundka·no·n*, *kunmundka·no·n*, then others
 2. Women boil millet (*vam* [*Panicum miliare*]) while the following men's activities take place
- B. Formal call at each house for all to gather at temple and make offerings
[Note: persona non grata in village are purposely excluded from this formal calling]
- 17:55 C. Men and children assemble near temple to make offerings
1. In descending rank, each *Kota* ritually washes feet and coin offerings at tap by temples
 - 18:28 2. *gotka·m* (treasurer/headman) unwraps sacred wallet and puts all temple offerings on the
 - 19:15 piece of dung which sits on a silver plate
 3. Individual offerings are made of "three moneys" (*munpanm*)--three four anna coins or three of any monetary unit.
 4. As offerings are made the *mundka·no·ns* repeat together prayers of offering to the gods
 - 19:54 5. Outsiders also offer monetary offerings. (All finish by 10:00 am)
- D. Men go to *peva·y* (**no music**)
- 20:12 1. *mundka·no·ns* tie forehead knot of hair, supposed to contain god
 - 20:30
 - a. This action is called taking *va·ranm* or *mumury*
 - b. They call out before doing it "shall I take *va·ranm*?" and others affirm "do it"
 - c. At same time, the wives of the *mundka·no·ns* put on black loin cloth to symbolize chastity [ordinarily they wear no underwear]

- E. Temple is *opened--dodayno·r, kunayno·r*, then *amno·r*
1. Pray in front of each temple that the god come and speak through a man (elected or to be elected as *terka·rn*)
 2. *mundka·no·ns* ask "*elm sedvi·ma*"? (are we all here); men affirm "we are"
 3. New fire is made by friction on temple grounds,
 - a. Transferred by *kankpul* to a place just southeast of the *dodayno·r* temple
 - b. Big bonfire made with three kinds of wood ()
- 20:58
23:10
- F. *mundka·no·ns* ask if they should, and receiving positive response, **beat the *ertabaḅk***
1. *o·la·guc koḷ* played and the following done simultaneously
 2. *ertabaḅk* struck by all men, beginning with most senior
 3. *Kob* is played loudly, in cascading pairs
 4. *Mundka·no·ns* light *ca·mra·yn* (gum benzoin) on big fire and wave smoke around temples
 5. [Priests make fire by churning wood and light stone lamp inside with ground nut oil] (?)
- 24:08
- F. *mundka·no·ns* put dung on pillar and then place coins on dung
1. Dung comes from *munka·no·n*'s special cow, "given by god," called *karpoy* (possibly black pen--referring to the primordial black cow of the Kotas)
 2. *paḅac koḷ* is supposed to be played [*o·la·guc koḷ* actually played in video]
 3. Coins: gold for two forms of *ayno·r*, gold or silver for *amno·r*
 4. Both *mundka·no·ns* place for *amno·r*--others?
- 25:34
- G. Going from temple to temple *o·la·guc koḷ* is played
1. All men chant "*o·ty*"
 2. One by one they enter temple for a moment (*gury uyk*)
 3. Order: *dodayno·r, kunayno·r, amno·r*
- 20:36
- H. Music stops, younger generations clean coins and symbols of god made of gold and silver, and fashion a face out of these on the same patch of dung as above.
1. Particular families are hereditarily in charge of doing this for (and other upkeep of offerings to) each of the temples
 - a. *Pucan*'s family takes care of *Amno·r* temple
 - b. *M.K. Bellan*'s family takes care of *Dodayno·r* temple
 - c. *Mo·tn*'s family (?) takes care of *Kunayno·r* temple
 2. Young boys may practice playing musical instruments at this time
 3. Sometime around now the women begin to spread out boiled millet to dry
- 29:22
- I. Up until 1:00 no food has been consumed. At 1:00 all may eat
- 29:27
- J. Put up sleeping tents (*arcayl*)
1. For priests small tent called big tent (*dodarçayl*)
 2. For rest of men big tent called small tent (*kunarcayl*)
- 29:45
- K. A few selected men go to the forest to collect *vet* and *vedyr* (cane and bamboo)
1. *anvirc koḷ* performed to usher into the village the men bringing cane and bamboo.
 - a. *kaberc koḷ* according to legend was associated with getting wood from the milk tree: It is possible that it was later played for this ritual
 2. These are the materials with which the temple was once constructed (*vet* was used to tie the poles of the temple together); at this time the temple no longer needs to be rebuilt
 - a. Three men bring these materials into the village, put them on the grass --About 5 p.m.
 - b. Then all worship each of three bundles, in descending seniority
 3. **First men's dance in *guryva·l*** (temple area) with *mundka·no·ns* and *terka·rns*
 - a. at least 3 special dance kols for this occasion
- 30:27
- L. Women's *vergu·tca·trm* (wood pouring ritual)
1. Men and band party go, playing the *anvirc koḷ*, to meet the women
 2. Women dress in traditional white garb wearing gold and silver ornaments
 - a. Special way of tying mund with shoulder knot and waist tight
- 31:09
32:30

- 33:40
3. Walk in procession carrying headloads of firewood for the feasts (*u:tm*) 1 or 3 days
 4. Deposit loads (with men's help) just behind two temples
 5. **First Women's dance in *guryva-l*** [no sound on original video]
 - a. At least three *kols* are played; special dance tunes for this occasion
 - b. Women tie dress in special way for this dance: knot on shoulder and waist tied tight
 6. dance till 6 or 7, around time it gets dark, then home for food
 - M. 12-16 year old boys go to each house to collect firewood
 1. Banging on instruments, playing any kol (virtually)--this is their chance to practice
 2. Each household must give minimum of five bundles of easily inflammable firewood
 - a. types: *vale-ry*, *kark*, *pu-gudu*.⁷
 - N. All assemble near *kunarcay!* at 9:00 p.m.; **twelve *devr kols* performed** to welcome god
 - O. From the flame already burning (*dodtic?*) flame is taken and a big fire started in center dancing area
 1. Men's dance at about 9:30
 2. Women's dance, with new way of tying dress--waist loose. Dancing goes on until 1 or 2 o'clock a.m.
 3. According to Raman, the Badagas (specifically members of the Adikiri and the Kanakka clan; Odayers asked for a chance 300 years ago) used to dance starting either this or the next night. In the time preceding Raman he heard that the Todas too would dance then.
 - P. Women return to homes, men sleep outside under tent, ritual leaders sleep under separate tent

VIII. [Monday]

- 44:50
- 49:30
- A. At 5 a.m. all instruments play at once (*o-mayn*) and *o-la-guc kol* played
 1. After this *mundka-no·ns* should not speak
 - B. Men dance with ritualists; then women with female ritualists.
 1. The first *ka-lgu-c a:t* played this morning is different from all others
 - [C Sullis account of Todas bringing clarified butter (4.23.37) in return for grain
 1. 3 Todas from nadimand come each with a pany of clarified butter
 - a. Sit at Toda stone (*ta-dykal*) near two trees a few furlongs from temple
 - b. Toda of tad moiety at one tree; of Pedad moiety under the other
 2. Each Kota puts three scoops of *vam* into cloak, meets at temple area, and go led by *mundka-no·n* to place where Todas sit
 - a. *mundka-no·n* says "brothers have you come"; they answer "yes, I have come"
 - b. *Dodmundka-no·n* scoops three measures of *vam* (millet) into Toda bag
 - c. Each touch other's left knee with both hands (gesture of equality)
 - d. Each *munka-no·n* gets one pany of clarified butter for own use
 3. Other Todas same, with other Kotas]
 - 53:09 C. *mundka-no·ns* go to each temple and throw *kankpul* on top of each temple and fix another coin on the dung along with the others.
 1. *o-la-guc kol* played while pul is thrown on roof. At the moment the pul is thrown, the kol players play the highest notes on the instruments (Pucan described practice, but no longer participates)
 - 53:07 2. Go from *dodayno·r* temple to *kunayno·r*, to *annor* temples, with *ertabtk* and *kob* blowing, women on northeast side, men on southeast
 - 55:46 3. *patkac kol* played while further coins are placed
 - 56:09 D. Special meals prepared all day.
 1. Each *ke·r* has own separate cooking area
 2. Ritual specialists have own special cooking area
 - 56:31 E. *mundka-no·ns* lead men from temple to temple at night
 1. Men follow loudly intoning "*o-hy*"
 2. *mundka-no·ns* wave burning *ca·mra·ny* at temple
 3. *mundka-no·ns* light lamp inside temple [This time with clarified butter? when? (ney

pu:jm]

- F. *o-la-guc kol* played
1. [Another coin possibly placed]
 2. *mundka·no·ns* circumambulate temple, sprinkling water
 3. Worship in front of temples
- 57:08
- 57:58 G. All men intone “*o·h*” again going to each temple and pray for *te·rka·rn* to be possessed or chosen by god
- H. For one or three days eat special meal (*u tm*) of ‘salt stew’ (*upudk*--millet and beans with salt, no other flavoring)
- 59:05
1. Ritualists, elders and other important people eat first, with *mundka·no·ns* (this ritual first eating is called *pandyku*)
 2. All the millets brought together to small tent set up next to *doda·ra·y!*
- 59:18
3. This cooked millet is broken up, mixed, and redistributed to line of women, one from each household, lined up with baskets waiting.
 4. This is done while the grain mixing tune, *ku·murcd kol*, is played
- 59:25
- 59:38
- a. This tune is also called the sacrificial grain keeping tune, *ervec kol*, because the grain is an offering to the deity. First serving goes to deity: on banana leaf
 - b. The person who mixes and distributes the grain belongs to a special family (*ku·murc kzyt*)
 - i. In Kolme-l, the family is that of Balan and Mo·tn in *koryke·r*
 - ii. Father begins action as elder, for ritual purposes; son continues
- 59:55
5. All who have not eaten eat (women and some others at home)
- 58:08 I. Ritual games⁸
1. Boys walk back and forth three times between *natgal* and *pu! a·cd e·m* (“*pu!*-playing-place”), chanting *ho· ko*
Younger ones around the clump of stones used to keep score in game of *pu!*, older ones to rock further on.
 2. Younger boys race from *kunayno·r* temple to *naikal*
- 58:30 J. Offerings to god through *mundka·no·ns*; worshippers bow; *munka·no·ns* utter prayers
1. All who own buffaloes and cows offer clarified butter to the gods
 - a. The *mundka·no·ns* eat this clarified butter to the extent they can
 - b. The rest is used on the last feast night to anoint the pillar upon which the dung and coins were placed (after removing them)
 2. Others may offer salt, millet, beans, etc.
 3. Worshipers apparently make offerings with specific requests for gods
- K. Fire is made and men, then women, dance
- L. Men sleep in *kunayno·r*, ritualists in *doda·ra·y!*, women at home
- 58:42 [view of sleeping tents]
- J. Watch is kept over the *dodtic*
- IX. [Monday night if one *u·tm*, otherwise Wednesday night after three days of feasting on *upudk*]
- A. Dancing, 12 *devr kol*s and eating as above
- 1:01:00 B. *paqm eytd kol*, performed as women dance and coins removed from pillar, clarified butter put on pillar
1. This is a sad time, and lights are supposed to be out [it is said to prevent theft]
- C. Women’s singing for sake of ritual--three songs
- 1:03:00
1. [on video: *narajayne*, *baca·na bacavni·ro*, *velke velke*; Pa. Mathi is central in frame for first song--she is the older and shorter one; when scene changes, Cinatamani is shown]
- X. [Tuesday or Thursday] Dance Day (*a·ke·r paca·l a·t*)
This day was introduced to honor *kunayno·r*, whose original name, according to Raman, was *onikal ayno·r* (one stone father god?). This god possessed a *te·rka·rn* and said he wanted to come to Kolme-l village from the village of Poga·r because the music was better. Apparently the god wasn’t interested in complex and difficult ritual restrictions and practices; he just wanted a

- special "style" of dance devoted to him. The proceedings on the dance day provided that.
- 1:04:50 A. Men and women assemble in the eastern a-ke-r ground
 - 1:07:05 B. **Twelve devr kols** (sometimes abbreviated to three).
 - 1:09:02 C. Men then women dance
 - 1:10:18 D. Musicians welcome Badagas from Sokkathorai with *pe-rn kol*
 - E. Then dancing ground is open to others, esp. Badagas.
 - F. Kota men dance with *a-ṭupa-c* (dance costume)
 - G. Kota change to street cloths
 - 1:12:00 E. Women's songs
 - 1:13:50 F. Demolishing arca-yls to several *arca-y! piṛcd kols*
 - 1. *kob* and "*ho-ko*"
 - 1:14:20 G. Dancing in *gagva-l*
- XI. [Wednesday or Friday] Song day
- A. Women sings songs and play games
- XII. Formerly after (or on?) Dance day
- A. *devr kaytd ca-trm* [god washing ritual]
 - 1. It appears that the two gods, one in each *mundka-no-n* house would be switched
 - B. Raman learned this from *te-rka-rm* when he was thirteen years old; some details provided by Pucan; general event also appears in Mandelbaum--some of the ritual survived in 1930s
 - C. bow and arrow of silver (embodiment of god)
 - 1. *vedyr* (bamboo)
 - 2. *pobit* (plant fiber string)
 - D. "Gods" (in bow and arrow form) brought to center stones (*naṭkal*) from *kakuy* (sacred place in *mundka-no-n*'s house)
 - 1. Four guards watch to make sure no woman or outsider sees
 - E. Together all go (still secretly) to Todba-l
 - 1. 1 arrow shot towards dodbeta (and another to the west?)
 - 2. At Todba-l a trench would be made, filled with water, and the bow and arrow cleaned, repaired, and returned to the sacred rooms of the ritualists' houses.
 - F. The shooting of arrows recalls the original practice of shooting a divine bison which kept coming to that spot each year
 - 1. The tune that was supposed to accompany this ritual was the hunting god tune *ve-ṭka-r co-ym kol*

Notes

1. Pot, called *pergaycd kurm* in Porga-r village, is specially made by the Kotas
2. In other villages, such as Ticga-r, Porga-r and Kina-r, women begin to prepare clay pots on this day. The rituals are complex and involve a special kol for the process of collecting the required types of soil.
3. "Through this fire," Kotas say, "god comes"
4. "Small" in the sense of ritually less important than the "big" tent which hosts the ritualists. Physically the small tent is larger than the big one.
5. See detailed description of equivalent at Porga-r
6. This latter dance is also called *kavaric a-ṭ!* ("Kurumba woman dance") because it is said to be Kurumba in origin.
7. These are also medicinal plants; the first heals fractures, the juice of the leaf of the third is used to stop bleeding.
8. Note during the game of *pu!* a similar action. After the ritual games for the day, while waiting for the first star, the younger people walk three times between the main *naṭkal* and the *pu! a-cd erm* saying *ho-ko*, then say *ho-ko* while dancing together in a circle in a place between the *naṭkal* and the *gagva-l*.

APPENDIX SIX

PORGA-R DEVR (THE GOD CEREMONY OF KOTAGIRI VILLAGE) AS NARRATED BY THE MUNDKA-NO-N PUCAT KANAKARA-JAN, AGE 46, 17 AUG. 1991

Translated with assistance of L. Gunasekaran.
Original Kota text on cassette In12, In7, and In20

Parenthetical numbers refer to cross reference with Kolme-l outline

Day 1:

We do the ayno-r amno-r festival during ku-dl month [I]. It comes at the end of December, at the crescent moon, or the first crescent moon in January. Two days before the *per* (new moon), the village women clean their houses, men white wash the walls outside, etc. That evening a man from each *kuyt* (family) or each house comes with a mud pot (*mankorm*) called the "passing of the crescent moon pot" (*pergaycd korm*) and all of the village goes to the channel (*peva-y*) to wash their face and hands.¹ They bring with them thorn branches (*tak mul*) and cow dung (*ko-ba-rm*). Using these things, first the *munka-no-n*s bathe, then the *te-rka-rn*, then the *gotka-rn*, then the rest of the people. The ritual (*ca-trm*) ends with that. This is called a *na-rga-l ca-trm* sastram (four-man ritual) [II].

Next the men collect water from the channel: First the *mundka-no-n*, then the *ex-mundka-no-n*s if there are any, then *te-rka-rn*, then *gotka-rn*, then the rest of the people collect water. They come to their respective houses and brush the whole house with the thorny branch and the dung: they also put dung into the clay pot they used for water to wash. They bring the water mixed with dung and sprinkle on all the water storing vessels. With that the house is considered clean [IIC].

Then the two *mundka-no-n*s from the upper and the lower house lines (*me-ke-r* and *kike-r*) produce fire in the verandah (*payva-l*) of their houses, using the root of the *vag* tree (*vagve-r*). The *vag* is stored in house before hand. After producing fire they light their stove (*elka-l*), transferring the flame with a piece of cloth [IIB2]. Then the people from the respective *ke-rs* go to their respective *mundka-no-n*s to get fire for their own houses. The house and the water in the house became clean, now the fire is also clean. All is new. In the middle house-row (*naryke-r*) there is not a *mundka-no-n*, only a *te-rka-rn*, so the residents of those houses can take fire from either *mundka-no-n*. Both the *mundka-no-n*s, all the elders, and the other ritualist (*ca-trrgga-rm*) go to the special fire area (*gulm*) in the temple area (*kolva-l*). (Before that, others in the village have collected firewood from every house and kept it ready there). The *mundka-no-n*s take fire from each of their houses, using long thin twigs (*kank*) and light a fire in the special area (*gulm*) [IIIC1; IIIC2].

After making fire they pray to god [in traditional order, as above]. If anybody comes late to that function they should also pray when they come. Then all sit around the fire spot (*gulm*) and discuss matters (*e-hv manco*). With that the festival starts. From that time onwards if anything wrong happens it has to be eradicated, if anyone dies, the body should be disposed of.

Treatment of Dead after first day

The body should not be inside the village, it must be taken to the *kunpay* (the menstrual seclusion hut); doing this is called putting "by the side" (*otala-r*). Otherwise it is put in a house a bit away from the village. The relations of the dead have to be in that house. Since they have been in a place contaminated by death (*ke-r uyko*) they should not go inside the village until the ceremonies have finished. Only a few close relations to the dead person, if they do not want to

¹All the rituals that call for representatives of all families (*kuyt*) are called *kuyt ca-trm* (family rituals)

attend the festival, should go there. They take care of the business themselves.² If they want wood for cremating it, the people of the village help carry wood to the cremation ground (*ta·v na·r*) but they don't go near the body. After the cremation the charcoal cleaning, consuming of a ritual meal and bathing (*karmi·t ca·trm*) is done just among those close relatives. Only during the last day they can come into the village. They also do not allow any outsiders into the village. If a Kota goes into town and sees a corpse he/she can not return to the village during the festival. In case someone dies outside noone should go and participate in the funeral. This is the starting stage of the festival.

Day 2: Monday

Before the new moon all the above is finished. After the night in which there is no moon (*mutm*), on the first monday they make fire. In Kolme·l they make fire on a wednesday, in other villages on a monday, and we do it on a Monday [III]. On that first monday they clean the whole house, wash all the clothes, or at least put the clothes in water. From that day till the end they have to be very clean. and people who drink all the time should abstain till the end of the festival [II]. That day by 6 pm the mundka·no·ns go to light the lamp (*velk*) in both the temples and on the pillar in front of the temple (*kalkab*). They produce fire inside the temple [using friction]. From that day onwards, having lit the lamp, one of the mundka·no·ns should always be in the temple area near the fire spot (*gulm*) in the evenings from lighting the lamp at 6 until the dance is finished [IV]. After the dance is over people usually pray, so the mundka·no·ns have to be there at that time. If a mundka·no·n wants to eat, one has to wait while the other goes to eat. At 6 when they light the lamp, the ayno·r mundka·no·n has to go to his house and light a lamp in the sacred back room (*kakuy*); until he returns the amno·r mundka·no·n has to stay in the temple area. Then he also goes home and lights a lamp in the back room.

After that they both come to the fire area (*gulm*). After some time others also come and by late in the evening most of the people come and talk there. At dinner time the people all eat and then the mundka·no·ns also have their food. After that, they strike a gong three times to call people to assemble. All come to the temple area, including musicians with the band set (*par, tabatk, jo·r "set"*); drums are made tight by exposing them to a [a separately made] fire. They should keep everything ready. Noone is supposed to make noise during that time: all should keep silent. This is the day when they produce fire in the *gagva·l* (dancing area in area of houses).

There is a house called the big house (*dodpay*), the fire getting house (*tici·t pay*) or the ritual house (*ca·trm pay*) in the middle house row (*naryke·r*) where they collect fire. It is not like an ordinary house, it is also like a mundka·no·n's house. In this house also they do not use a matchbox for lighting the fire, they use *vag* root to make fire by friction. If there is no fire they come to the mundka·no·n's house and take fire to their house. In the house of that family (*kuyt*) there are people called "fire getting people" (*tici·to·r*). On this day only these people are ritualists (*ca·trngga·rm*). On that day, one of the men of the family (*kuyt*) brings firewood and another man brings fire to the *gulm*. They then ask "shall we light the fire brothers-in-law?" ("*tic idbo·mo· an tama*"). The others answer, "light it" ("*tic idume*"), and they light the fire. They have to wait for the big bundle of twigs to catch so it does not go out. When the fire starts burning well in the *gulm* they take it to the dancing area (*gagva·l*) by the houses.

During that time, there is ritual in which one man from the middle line (*naryke·r*), one man from the bottom line (*kike·r*), and a third man either from the middle or upper line (*me·ke·r*), are supposed to play kol [at the same time]. Before playing, the man from the middle line is supposed to ask "shall we make the music happen" ("*ta·l me·l arcbe·ma·?*"). Saying that he starts playing kol and others start with him. They play very strongly and people around say "o·ly o·ly" so it would reach the gods' ears. From there they take the fire to the *gagva·l* and put two or three bundles of firewood and make the fire bigger. While this is happening, the *te·rka·rn* gets possessed—this takes place in the *gulm* where the fire was lit earlier. Due to the intensity of the *te·rka·rn*'s shaking during possession, his hair-knot (*kol*) gets untied and a small ball *cend* or *cendna·r* (made of thread) falls out. When it falls, the mundka·no·ns should pick it up: noone else may touch it.

During this time dance is going on in the *gagva·l*. There is no ritual that the *munka·no·ns* should participate in the first dance because they are involved in the possession ritual—they don't get a chance to dance at this time. The *te·rka·rn* gets possessed and goes to the *gagva·l* and the others keep playing and dancing. The *gotka·rn* starts the dance since the *munka·no·ns* and *te·rka·rns* are not there. For three nights, from small boy to big man, they don't tie the *vara·r* (cloak) the usual way with the right shoulder exposed (*vara·r porkay ito*), they tie it around their chest (*od cuyto*)

²According to my notes, funerals during the time of the god festival sometimes involve burial rather than cremation—in Ticga·r, 1991, there was apparently a burial. This needs to be confirmed.

[IVC2] and dance. After the *te-rka-ran* comes to the *gagva-l*, all of the ritualists, including *munka-no-n*s dance. As soon as the ritualists join in, the musicians must switch to a tune that accompanies *ka-lgu-ca-t* [the first dance in any ritual sequence], and all dance this dance. There are three kols, *ka-lgu-ca-t tirugana-t* and *koyna-t*. These three are the ritual melodies (*ca-trm kol*) that must be played.

While they are dancing, the possessed *te-rka-rn* will carry hot coals, walk in the fire, or kick the coals. He will do this three times. After he is satisfied he goes to the temple, and crosses the *gulm*. He also stands in the center of the *gulm* fire. Since the fire in the *gagva-l* is a big one he just walks on the side, takes coals and throws them. Since the *gulm* is small he stands inside the fire and dances. Then he goes to the *ayno-r* temple; he does not go to the *amno-r* temple area (*guryva-l*). The dancers and ritualists follow him to hear what he has to say. Then the *te-rka-rn* speaks god's words. When he comes to his senses the *munka-no-n* gives him the ball and he ties it into his hair again. Until he comes to his senses the rest of the people in the *gagva-l* keep on dancing. After the *terkaran* finishes speaking the divine words (*va-km*) all the people go to the *gagva-l* and only then they finish the dance. After that, the women and girls start dancing, but not before the ritualists relate [and interpret] what the *te-rka-rn* said while he was possessed. After the women finish dancing all go home.

After the dances, the *munka-no-n*s, *te-rka-rn*, *gotka-rn*, former *munka-no-n*s and *te-rka-rn*s all do the *kaymu-dd* ritual [putting hands together in an *anjali* and praying] in the *gulm* and pray to god, then disperse. Until then, one of the *munka-no-n*s should have been in the *gulm* at all times. After that they both can go home.

For three nights (i.e. Monday-Wednesday) the same things are done: the *te-rka-rn* speaks divine words (*va-km*); men dance with cloak tied around their chests; women dance in their usual dress; and the night ends with praying. On the fourth day, the men dance in ordinary dress.

Until the next crescent moon, the fire must be kept continuously in the *gulm*, and people must pray there everyday. If people pass by on their way home, they must first pray there. Every day during this month people gather together at the *gulm* informally to talk.

Day 3: Tuesday

After Monday, the fire lighting day, sixteen women selected one from each family (*kayt*), called female ritualists (*ca-trggari*) go to dig up special mud (*man*) for making pots. The families are not individually named, but each woman is aware of her role as a representative of the family. There are a total of 16 women even though there are only 12 families (*kayt*)

The two *munka-no-n*s, the *te-rka-rn* and *gotka-rn* are not considered as representatives of particular families (*kayt*). In some other rituals, the wives of the *munka-no-n*s (*mundka-no-l*) lead everything. On this particular day the *te-rka-rn*'s wife (*te-rka-rc*) guides them; it is believed that this will protect them from bad omens like a cat crossing. Behind her follow the wives of the *munka-no-n*s and the *gotka-rn* (*gotka-rc*). They also sprinkle dung and touch thorny branches (*takmul*) on themselves. After collecting clay they return. In *Porga-r* they do not go very far away and thus the musicians do not go along; in other villages [i.e. *Kina-r*] the musicians go along and play a special tune.

When the women are returning with clay (in these other villages), someone from a distance informs the village people that they are coming. The villagers usher the women into the village with music. Then the women take the mud to their respective houses and the *munka-no-l*s go to their houses. The *mundka-no-l*s bring cowdung and *tak* and clean the mud-throwing-stone (*manku-rk kal*), near the temple, by stroking around it three times. Then they bring the mud and keep it on the stone. Then they bring the iron pestle for pounding clay (*e-rl*). Both the *mundka-no-l*s hold it and ask, "shall we pound, brother-in-law? [i.e. elders]" ("*kurubo-ma antma?*"). The others say, "o-kurume," and they start to pound. After pounding it three times for the sake of ritual they take a little bit of clay on their fingers and go away. The *mundka-no-l*s mix the mud they have taken with the mud in their houses and make a kind of pot called *a-va-t* (medium-sized, open spherical cooking pot). After that the people who were at the temple pray to the clay; the people who came late also pray. All should wear only traditional dress: white waistcloth (*mund*) and cloak (*vara-r*). With this the ritual ends.

While the women are out collecting clay, they take *va-ramam*—a ritual which involves tying of the hair. In doing this they make themselves clean, and they should not go away from their houses or speak to strangers from outside.³

³See video of this process in *Kina-r* village.

Day 4: Wednesday

Wednesday the mundka·no·ls prepare the clay pots (*a·ra·t*) and keep watch over them, lest a cat or person break them by accident; since the mundka·no·ls are occupied, the *te·rca·rc* must lead the dancing on this night. The next day the mundka·no·ls once again lead and join the dance.

Day 5: Thursday

Nothing special occurs; dancing as described above.

Day 6: Friday

Friday night is "grain contribution night" (*aykvardd i·rl*) [IIIH]. After the dance, all males, even the youngest named child, have to go to the *kolva·l* (temple area) and sit around the *gulm*. Women sit in the house verandahs. During the day one bundle of firewood (*gud·verg*) is collected from each house (in Kolme·l, according to this mundka·no·n, they collect a bundle for each kojgot—i.e. for each adult male) for the fire in the *gagva·l*. For the *gulm* they collect firewood from each house, but only a small quantity. For the *gagva·l* they use *pu·gur·verg* [a medicinal plant that burns well when dried]. The mundka·no·ns do not ordinarily contribute firewood, but on this day they do. Someone else from the house carries the wood from the mundka·no·ns house to the proper place at the *gagva·l*—my cousin or brother can bring my firewood to the *gagva·l*. They dance before this takes place; then the mundka·no·n goes to his house.

The mundka·no·l comes and makes fire in the house; the mundka·no·n brings his elder or younger brother from the *gagva·l* to his house. The brother has to carry the firewood to the *gagva·l*. The mundka·no·ns each light a bundle of fagots (*kark*) from his fire and bring them to the *gulm*. The mundka·no·n walks in front and the relative who carries the firewood follows behind. When they reach the *gulm*, the mundka·no·ns ask "shall we light the fire?" (*tic ido·ma·?*) and the people say "light it" (*"idume·"*). Both of the mundka·no·ns light the fire together in the *gulm*. They would have already finished praying before going to collect firewood from the house. Now, having lit the *gulm*, the mundkanons sit and ask "shall we discuss the contribution of grain" (*ayk varu·bo·ma·?*). Other people standing around answer "*varu·bo·mge·*" and they decide how much they have to collect. If there is one day of ritual meals (*u·tm*) they must collect five medium vessels (*pa·my*); if there are two days, 15 vessels. The decision making is called "*ayk varudd·*" they calculate what provisions must be purchased: how much clarified butter (*na·y*), black eyed-peas (*targi·n*) or beans (*avr*), and coarse flour (*ve·l*).

They don't take the grain to their houses, they have it in the temple area on leaves. First the mundkanons give contributions of grain or money (*varv*) to the gotka·ran, then everyone else does; they also give the next day. After giving contributions all go home. The mundka·no·ns pray at the temple, putting their hands together, and go home.

Day 7: Saturday

In the morning the mundka·no·ns' wives, the mundka·no·ls, collect water from the water collection place, boil millet in it, set it out to dry, and then pound it (to husk it). In traditional order follow the former mundka·no·ls, the *te·rka·rc*, the gotka·rc and then the others.

Men build the main sleeping tent (*arclayl*), out of *vale·ry* on the western portion of the temple area (*me·kolva·l*). Then men conduct the "ritual of going for cane and bamboo" (*vervedyrk oygd ca·trm*) [VIK]. In the old days the temple was made of grass and bamboo; so they had to build it every year; now it is a ritual. One man from each family (*kuyt*) should participate by going off to collect cane and bamboo. In the evening while they are returning, the band members (*kolvar*) escort the cane and bamboo collectors into the village. The loads are placed near the temple. The mundka·no·ns touch the cane and bamboo and pray, followed by the former mundka·no·ns, the *te·rka·m*, and gotka·m, then the rest of the people. If somebody has not prayed and comes late, that person also prays. All must wear cloak (*varar*) and waistcloth (*mund*). That night the participants in the ritual collection have to stay awake throughout the night, keeping vigil for the temple and the cane and bamboo. Others may be away or asleep under the canopy. That night the mundka·no·ns and other ritualists must sleep under the canopy [the mundka·no·ns have a separate one on the easter side of the temple area]. If there is not sufficient room for others they may sleep in the verandas of their houses.

Day 8: Sunday

Sunday is “going inside the temple day” (*gury uykd na:l*). The next morning the men go inside the temples. In other villages they merely go inside the temple, but here there is a temple in the old village (*payd ko:ka:l*)⁴ also. Since it our forefather’s temple they first go inside that temple and only then do the entering ceremony in the new village. Likewise they also go to the old Ma:ga:liyamn (i.e. the goddess Mahā Kāli) temple first on the Ma:ga:liyamn festival. Thus they go to the old temple, all dressed in white, from large to small, chanting “ho: ko:” (*edykr edykr oygo*) and musicians playing music. After reaching the old temple the mundka-no:ns have to make fire. A member of a family (*kayt*) from the middle line (*naryke:r*) must perform the *ticvi:kd* ritual—that is, must help the mundka-no:ns produce fire. As soon as they succeed in producing a flame the mundka-no:ns light the lamp in the village. The rest of the people light the pillar (*tu:n*) in front of the temple and dance there. The mundkanons say prayers (*va:km eyto*) and make offerings (*parykm*).

After finishing prayer they return to the new village, accompanied by music. Then the mundka-no:ns eat, wash hands and face, and come to the temple. After everyone has eaten, they observe the custom of striking the gong three times so everyone will come to the temple. When all the men arrive the mundka-no:ns ask “shall I tie the forehead knot?” (“*mumury etbe-na?*”); the others respond “*etge*” and they tie the forehead knots (this action is also called “taking” *va:raim*⁵ [VIID1]). After the mundka-no:ns take *mumury*, like before, at least one mundka-no:n at least should be near the *gulm* at all times: most of the time the mundka-no:ns stay in the *kolva:l*, going home only to eat.

All the musical instruments have been placed in front of the temple and now the mundka-no:ns perform *du:pm* (waving smoke of *ca:mrā:ni*—gum benzoine) around them, using the iron implement *va:km*. Since the instruments had previously been used for funerals etc. they have to be made clean; after this ritual the instruments should not be played [immediately]. First the mundka-no:ns, then former mundka-no:ns, *te:rka:rn*, *gotka:rn* and then the other people all do *du:pm* for the instruments. Then the large conical drum, *e:rtaba:k*, is placed in front of the *ayno:r* temple. Each mundka-no:n takes a stick and asks “*ta:l me:l arcbe-ma*” (“shall we play the instruments”), receiving affirmation, the mundka-no:ns strike the *e:rtaba:k*; then they go to the temple area, pray and go inside to clean up the clutter. In the old days they took down the whole temple and rebuilt it. This is the *gury uykd ca:trm*; first they do it in the *ayno:r* temple and then in the *annor* temple. After that they go to collect a type of grass (*pul*), the mundka-no:ns leading the rest of the men: this is because in the olden days the temple was made of grass. To represent the temple reconstruction the mundka-no:ns throw the grass on the roof of each temple,⁶ coming around the side of the temple, and praying with hands together [VIIC]; after the mundka-no:ns perform this ritual, the rest of the men follow in traditional order [it is not clear whether they simply pray, or whether all throw grass on the roof], the people who collected cane and bamboo preceding the general population and following the *gotka:rn*. With this the *gury uykd ca:trm* ends.

Then the women perform the “going for firewood ritual” (*verg uyrd ca:trm*). With the female ritualists leading, one woman from each family (*kayt*) collects and brings fresh firewood from the forest. The musicians meet the women halfway and escort them into the village with music: this is the first time in which women enter the temple grounds during this festival. The firewood is to be used for cooking the next day’s ritual meal (*u:pm*).

After finishing everything that evening the mundka-no:ns come home and eat. The mundka-no:ns and other ritualists eat, bathe and then shouldn’t eat anything more. If they want food they must use separate vessels for eating, so their wives have to cook for them in special separate vessels and keep the food separately. Before the wives cook for themselves and the children they have to cook for the mundka-no:ns. Their wives shouldn’t serve them or sit opposite to them; they must serve themselves, eat, and go away. Wives can eat any leftover food but the children should not; if a mundka-no:n’s wife eats some of his leftover food, he should not then resume eating it—whatever is then leftover should be thrown away.

Earlier the men had constructed a sleeping canopy (*arclay:l*) in the upper temple area (*me:kolva:l*) near the *gulm*. After the *gury uykd ca:trm* the men build a canopy by the lower temple area (*kikolva:l*). That night there is no dance in

⁴The Kotas of Po:rga:r originally lived in the center of what is now Kotagiri town. The British compelled them to evacuate to a second location; this second location proved to be unsuitable due to a fault in the land; their present location was allotted by the Indian government.

⁵Word probably derives from Sanskrit *vāraṇa*, “warding off”; refers to same thing as *mumury*, “front tuft.”

⁶First they ask to do so, “*ciligr cegbe-me*” (these words are unclear on the interview tape and I was unable to discover their literal meaning); the others answer “*ce:ge*”

the *gagva:l*; they come to the lower *kolva:l* and dance that night [VII01;2]. After dancing women sleep at home and men outside under the canopy.

Day 9: Monday [or Monday and Tuesday]

If there is only one ritual meal (*u:pm*) day it is held on Monday; if there are two, they are held on Monday and Tuesday. If there is one day of ritual meals, they have food on Monday evening and then come to the *gagva:l*. If there are two, on Monday they will eat (the special meal of millet and beans flavored with salt), dance in the temple area, and [men] stay there for the night.

On Monday morning the *mundka-no:ns* produce fire at about 11 o'clock in the traditional way; they make a big bonfire [VIIIE3]. Then the *mundka-no:ns* go to their houses to bring the various types of clay pots the women had made; they also bring husked millet in a basket [also Kota made]; the *mundka-no:ns* can ask one of their older or younger brothers to help them with this task. After taking *munury* (tying the hair knot), at times such as these when each *mundka-no:n* must go to his house, someone should accompany him in each direction to keep people at a distance. The man who leads will yell "to one side, to one side!" ("*otilgme otilgme*"). After returning to the temple each *mundka-no:n* has to mix dung water in a small clay pot called a *kuck*, and using the water, he cleans the area around the cooking place [action called "*celing vi-do*"]. Then the *mundka-no:ns* place one type of pot (*payrv*) into the cooking area. Then representatives of the middle line (*kike:r*) have to bring a pot (*a:cvayrv*) for cooking the bean stew (*uak*). (The pot for rice is called *ku:payrv*; they bring the *a:cvayrv* first).

The members of the lower line ritually bring the stew-pot first because their families are the ones who first built the village and have therefore lived in it the longest. (The people of the middle line originate in the village of *Kina:r*; the people of the upper line came from another place). It is the *mundka-no:n*'s family (*kuyt*) in the lower line that is responsible for this ritual. Only after the people of the lower line bring their pots to the other people bring theirs. There are limitations on the number of stew-pots: the lower line has four families so there are four stew-pots; the middle line has two families so there are two stew-pots; the upper line, two families, two pots. All together there are eight pots.

The story behind the number eight goes back to the olden days, when we had to pay tax (*kandi:g*). Those who payed the revenue to the government considered themselves superior; they were also supposed to contribute *ve:l* [DEDR 4444 "badly ground coarse flour"; probably pulse flour to thicken stew] for the stew-pot for that family. Now they collect *a:c* money every house now, but in the old days each person who paid high taxes to the government contributed enough beans to fill an entire pot. Since there were four brothers in the lower line who were paying high taxes, they had four cooking pots. For the same reason there were two stew-pots for each of the other two lines. Now individuals are not responsible for the provisions; all contribute equally.

Before cooking the ritualists sprinkle dung water around the cooking area. Then the *mundka-no:ns* transfer fire from the place they had made it earlier to the cooking place. Asking and receiving affirmation in the traditional way they light the fire in the cooking place, both holding the torch. Then they perform the ritual of bringing the first water for cooking; afterwards some other boys can help to bring water for the rest of the village. After bringing the water they ask "shall I place *a:c*" ("*a:c e:ibe-na?*") and receive the answer "*e:l*."

Then the *mundka-no:ns* bring husked millet and barley (*vamayk*, *amkacl* [prob. *kaj*]) since that is what we used in the old days. Taking a little bit of each, the *mundka-no:ns* ask "*a:c e:ibe-na?*" again and put a pinch of each in the pot three times; then they add either beans or black eyed peas. The correct amount of each had been calculated and collected earlier. Now the provisions are brought to the temple and a man divides the correct quantity into each stew-pot—starting with the pots of the ritualist. The ritualist then performs the same ritual, starting with the dung water, for the pots of the lower line. Following that the rest of the people perform the ritual for their own pots. The people who do the cooking must come from the *kuyt* associated with the particular cooking pot. The ritualists have a special cooking pit called the "high cooking pit" (*me:arguy*); the place where the others cook is called the "low cooking pit" (*ki:arguy*). The food is ready to eat by evening, at which time the gong is struck three times.

The ritualists have to do the *ervecd ca:trm*—offering food for the gods—for both temples. The food is placed on

⁷Probably <Skt. *āya*, clarified butter; in Kurgo:j they say *a:c* and *ve:l* are the other things put in the stew—but it is not clear if they are two words for the same thing; both probably refer generally to all the things that are added as in the contexts below. Another note in my Kurgo:j translation indicates that *a:c* refers both to the beans added to the stew, and to the action of adding them.

special leaves called *givind el* which young boys would have collected early in the morning. The musicians meet these boys half way and usher them into the village, just as they did with the others. An odd number of leaves should be used for placing food for the gods. Amnor should have one unit fewer leaves than Ayno-r (if latter has 21 leaves, former should have 19); likewise the male ritualists should have two leaves fewer and for the female ritualists, two leaves fewer than that. The food from the mundka-no-n's' cooking area is kept on these leaves. The leaves for the ritualists are not arranged in the same way as those for the gods.

Only the millet of the mundka-no-ls is brought to the upper cooking area; the rest goes to the lower cooking area. Each of the lines, upper, lower and middle, have their own cooking area. After cooking the food they mix the cooked grain (*ku murco*). The grain which was parboiled indoors (*puykvd*) by others should not go to the upper cooking area, only that which was parboiled in the mundka-no-n's' houses. The remaining millet in the upper cooking area is not parboiled (*puka-va*) and is called "vefydayk" ("pure" or "clean unhusked grain"). The people from the lower line dry and pound this grain to remove the husks, keeping it very clean, and then give the grain to the mundka-no-n's.

After the mundka-no-n's receive their share of grain the rest of the people bring their grain to the cooking place. The mundka-no-n's cook their grain in a different vessel from the one they use for the grain given to them by the people of the lower line: they do this to make sure that some of this latter grain is included in the communal meal. After the grain is cooked, some of the parboiled millet and the "raw" boiled millet are mixed together in a basket, thus mixing the millets of the lower and upper cooking areas. This mixed millet is used only for offering to the deity.

To the accompaniment of musical instruments, the mundka-no-n's bring water to the temple, mix it with cow dung, and sprinkle it around; they also wave smoke of burning gum benzoine and clean the temples. Once again they gather grass (*pul*) and toss some on top of the temple. Before offering food, first at the Ayno-r and then at the Amno-r temples, they ask "shall I offer the millet" ("*erbe-na?*") and receive an affirmative "e:". The mundka-no-n's both take some boiled millet and put it on the leaf, asking "shall I put the millet," then both hold one large ladle of bean stew and pour it three times, asking first "shall I pour the *udk*." They also put clarified butter on the pillar and ask "shall I pour clarified butter?" ("*nay atbe-na?*"). When the people answer they also add clarified butter to the offering. Then the ritualists kneel down and pray, saying "we offered food god; you take it." The mundka-no-n's put their hands together to pray (*kaymur-va*) and the other men and women also worship. The same process is repeated at the Amnor temple.

Third they go to the lower cooking area and have the *a-cvairv* ritual (?). They have a ritual for dumping all the millet in one place: first the lower line people's millet is dumped after the mundka-no-n's ask "*ku myrbo-ma*." Then the other baskets of rice are also dumped there. The two people who break up (*murcd*) the big clumps and mix the cooked grain come from particular families (*kayr*)—one from the upper line and one from the lower line. They bring a plate (their own—the same each year) and, both holding it, ask "*ku myrbe-na*" ("shall I break") and the others say "yes break/mix." Then all the men come and throw/crumble bits of the dumped rice three times. (Maybe in the old days there was a large heap of rice; since it wasn't an easy job maybe they assigned such and such people for such and such work [mundka-no-n suggests this]. If nobody allotted these positions maybe people wouldn't show up, so perhaps they created these positions. For serving rice, one family, for serving stew, another family, like that).

They send baskets full of millet for serving. From the dumping place they put millet in three times [for ritual's sake] and then fill it for serving. The one who holds the basket who the other serves is also from a particular family. First they go to the place in which they offered grain earlier near the lower cooking area. The man who serves the grain asks "shall I offer the grain" and then serves it on the plate of leaves—the number of which, this time, must equal that of the plate of the munda-no-n. Then the stew server has to transfer the stew from the *a-cpayrv* to another pot called the *urypayrv* ("hanging pot," a brass pot with two handles). Only then does he ask "shall I pour the stew." The two men who carry the *urypayrv* are from two families and the man who pours the stew is from another family. There are also two men from two families who serve clarified butter.

All except the munda-no-n's go and pray to god. During this time and from the time the grain offering began, the musicians were performing the "grain breaking/mixing tune" (*ku murcd kol*). After the grain offering all the people come to the temples and pray; those who wish to, give offerings (*ka-ri-k* and *parykm*). First the mundka-no-n's do the "coin sticking" (*parmpacd*); if they put seven coins on a patch of cow dung by the ayno-r temple, they should put only five by the amno-r temple—these coins are brought from the mundka-no-n's inner room (*kakuy*). The offerings of the other people are also stuck on that dung.

Then the munda-no-n's and other ritualists (such as the ones who went to get cane and bamboo) go to the upper cooking area, spread their leaves out for eating, sit in traditional sequence, and are served in traditional sequence: after the gotka-rn come the people who put on the roof of the Ayno-r temple, then those who worked on the Amnor temple roof

[no description of this ritual; it is now no doubt defunct, but does this refer to the collecting of grass for rethatching?], then the collectors of cane and bamboo, and then the female ritualists in conventional order. Finally the boys who collected leaves are served.

The people who supply food eat a food called *paynd ku*. These people all sit around and spread a bunch of leaves and eat from the same place. They can use banana leaves, since there is no ritual for them as such. The *te-rka-rc* and former *munka-no-ls* also use banana leaves, though one *givind el* is used for the *te-rka-rc* for the sake of formality. Before serving the rest of the people food, a small amount of cooked millet from the upper cooking area is distributed to everyone to eat. Those who serve food have their food first then serve others, starting with the men. Then they serve the boys, then the women and girls.

In the old days they divided the leftover millet into baskets and provided equal amounts to all the houses. The millet which was parboiled by the *te-rka-rc* was cooked in the lower cooking area, not the upper one, so when there is surplus millet it should first go to her—it is as if the grain is her grain. Only after giving the excess grain to her can it be distributed to other people.

After the *mundka-no-ls* have food they go home and they open their houses; then the *mundka-no-ns* bring the coins back to their inner rooms—no one should see this. In the inner the the *mundka-no-ns* wave smoke of gum benzoine and then untie their hair.

If there are two feast days, the coin ritual and hair untying is conducted on Tuesday. After eating, people will clean the temple area. The *mundka-no-ns* wait until late at night to return to the inner room, “taking the god” [it is not clear in what form the god is seen to reside—probably the hair—but it only seems to be important that the *mundka-no-ns* not be seen after they have removed the coins from the temple; no mention here of god in the form of bow and arrow]. Everyone else stays inside that night, and if they have a dog or cat that keep that inside too.

Day 10 or 11: Tuesday or Wednesday

This day, called big dance day (*doḍaḥ na-l*), is when outsiders come to the village. Before dancing begins there is a ritual called the “family tobacco ritual” (*kaḥt kaba-l ca-trm*): one person from each family goes and sits on the verandah of a house in the lower line. A man from the “fire putting family” has to get tobacco and leaves from the *gotka-m*, who has purchased it in some shop. This man spreads out a cloak and places on it the tobacco and leaves. Since the tobacco is long and bundled up, it needs to be broken up; the man asks “shall I break the bundle?” (*kaba-l oḍvebe-no-?*) and the others answer, “break it.” He then gives two leaves [probably betel leaves] and two pieces of tobacco (*pog*) to the *mundka-no-ns* (prob. betel leaves), and for the rest of the people one piece of tobacco and one leaf.

All chew a bit of the tobacco and leaf while they are sitting together. From the day when the fire was first lit no one was allowed to give anything to anyone. The tobacco is the first thing that may now be given; after all present have received a share, it may be given to others. After that, things can generally be given again. In the evening there is another distribution of tobacco called “big tobacco” (*doḍkaba-l*) or “community tobacco” (*ja-ty kaba-l*). Every man should take part in this ritual, which takes place in the temple grounds: if someone is missing his relatives should collect his share and give it to him. The first distribution occurs at around 11:00 a.m. and the second around 5:00 p.m. Outsiders can be invited on that day and the next day. Dancing begins at about 10:00 or 10:30 a.m.

Day 11 or 12: Wednesday or Thursday

This day is called little dance day (*kana-ma-l*) and features women’s singing and dancing. There is also singing in the lower temple area. They also dress up, and put on costumes and disguises (ladies dress up like men).

Later that day [or is it the next?] the *mundka-no-ns* go to do a special ritual at a place near the Pandian Park. There they cross a river, wash their hands and face and drink some water. Only after this does the god festival end and only after this can the *mundka-no-n* eat food outside of his home.

APPENDIX SEVEN

THE KOTA DRY FUNERAL (*VARLDA-V*): A COMPARATIVE OUTLINE

Unless otherwise marked, information pertains to Kolme-l village. Information is inserted from the 1930s—primarily Mandelbaum's informants Kakakamatn of Kolme-l and Veln of Kurgo-j. Me-na-r data derives from two eyewitness accounts, recorded on videotape, interviews with the Me-na-r ex-Te-ka-rn (K. Ponnai), the headman/treasurer (Sivan), and miscellaneous others during the proceedings; in Kurgo-j, interviews were conducted with a musician (Te-tu, elder brother of Cintamani), and his brother the mundka-no-n (Caln). In Kolme-l data derives primarily from an extensive interview with Raman. Pucan provides sketchy outlines. The accounts vary in some details, but overall the structure of the ceremonies and their symbolic content are consistent.

I. Calculating the Date¹

- A. Calculated in relation to the full moon; different months so that villages may visit one another's festivals. Nearby villages will celebrate in the same month.
 1. Ticga-r
 2. Me-na-r
 3. Porga-r and Kina-r
 4. Kurgo-j and Kala-c
 5. Kolme-l
- B. Used to be every year. Now relatives must call a meeting (*ta-v ku-m*) to decide whether or not to have a celebration.
 1. A small celebration is called a *man ta-v*
 2. A large celebration involving all the villages is called an *u-r ta-v*
- C. Kolme-l has all but abandoned it, though there has been talk of revival over the last few years. Porga-r appears to have abandoned the practice entirely.
- D. The *varlda-v* must be completed before *devr* time—and in the old days, the village was not seen to be fit to celebrate *devr* if a death had occurred over the year and a *varldav* was not performed.
- E. The first day of the *varlda-v* is called *kojanm* (lit: "the grain which is given") day.
 1. This is held three days or eight days before the full moon (*una-v*), so that the cremation day will fall on a full moon night.
 2. Three or eight days after *kojanm* the "death" (*ta-v*) is celebrated—i.e. the relics are cremated.

II. The Chief Mourner(s)²

- A. The oldest male relative (usually son) of the oldest male deceased is called the "big death one" (*doḍa-vka-rn*). This status is bestowed by seniority, not by ritual authority; i.e. it does not matter whether the deceased was a *mundka-no-n*.
- B. Saying "I entrust the funeral to the village" (*u-rk a-n ta-v opice-nde-dt*), the *doḍa-vka-rn* prostrates before the gods, then to the grassy area by the temple (*pata-l*), and then to the council (*ku-m*). The next day they pour the *kojanm*
- C. At some point the boy ritualists, called *melpacmog* are selected, one from each *ke-r*.

III. *Kojanm* Day: Pouring the Millet

- A. 8:00 All meet, with a set of musicians, at the "big yard" (*doḍkava-l*)—the *kava-l* where the corpses would have been kept during the green funeral for the particular *ke-r*.
 1. In a-ker it is talke-r

2. I·ke·r it is gage·r
 3. naryke·r stays in naryke·r
- B. The “big yard” is cleaned
1. Beforehand someone collects leafy branches (*tu·r*) of the red flower *gandpi* (male variety of *Cassia tomentosa*).
 2. A women⁴ brings a brass or copper pot (*cepkur̄m*) of water
 3. A man cleans the yard (*kava·l*) in front of the house by using the leafy branches and dung water (the woman pours the water, the man cleans).
- C. When the cleaning is completed, a man⁵ pours a basket full of *kotanm vatm* (millet) onto the spot.
1. His vara·r is tied so as to leave the right shoulder exposed (*por kay i·t oytk*)
 2. He worships/bows before (*kubir·*) god and the sun.
 3. Then he asks “shall I pour”? (*toyrkve·na·?*)
 4. While he pour the musicians play thunderingly (*koḥvar gaṇum gaṇum gaṇum ir koḥvar i·to*).
 - a. *e·rtabaṭk* and *kob* participate
 - b. The tune accompanying this action (in Kome·l) is the *kotanm i·td kol*, whose tune resembles the long and mournful *na·rgu·c kol*; in Me·na·r the tune is the same as the *ta·v i·td kol*
 - c. In Kolme·l the millet was put in up to 4 spots (i·ke·r [i.e. koryke·r probably], gage·r, naryke·r and a·ker) depending on which people had died in a particular year, so there were 4 sets of musicians, one for each, waiting with *e·rtabaṭk kob* etc. (Mandelbaum 4.2.38)
 - d. In Me·na·r the practice was consistent with this: one set of musicians for each ke·r where millet was placed.
 5. The men surrounding move their right hand up and down vigorously⁶
 6. The name of the deceased it uttered (Pucan 12/92) while 4 and 5 take place.
 - a. In Me·na·r the boy who pours says “with this, let death end”
 7. The millet is supplied by the house of the deceased.
 8. This process (including F, below) is repeated for each of the deceased, in descending order according to age, men before women.
 9. The ranking by seniority is marked not only by order and placement in a line on each ke·r, but also in the amount of millet poured.
- D. After the millet is poured, music stops, then the ritualists (and then the others?) take a pinch of the millet and touch it to their heads, while they worship/bow before it (*kubir·*).
1. While going to do this all shout “ho· ko·” (*edykd o·ro*)
 2. This process (pouring, music etc.) is repeated for each of the piles of millet, even if there were 20 deaths.
 3. After all the other men have finished paying their respects to the millet, the musicians put down their instruments and do the same.
 4. This millet is considered to be the corpse.
 5. It is believed by some that the deceased will not go to the motherland (*amavna·r*) unless the grain is touched (Mandelbaum 4.6.38)
 6. Women begin to cry after the millet is poured

IV. *Kotanm* Day: Calculating and Dividing Up Provisions

- A. A council meeting (*ku·ṭm*) is held to decide on each family’s contribution (*varv*)
1. A vara·r is spread out on the *tondat*.
 2. They decide how much to give and how much work should be done (i.e. how elaborate).
 3. Each family contributes an equal amount, but for the expenses at the dry funeral ground (*varlda·v na·r*), like the stew (*udk*) and the buffaloes, the families of the deceased must provide.
- B. The *e·ra·cmurd* (“buffalo-cooking provisions-breaking up”) ritual is performed to publicly divide and redistribute the the grain (and meat). (It appears to occurs on the same day as *kotanm* [in 1991 and as it was described by Raman], and on the day before the cremation [as it was in 1992—where the grain includes a great deal of rice; three dried red chillies appear next to the dung ball. This second one must be done outside because the ritualists cannot go indoors (Sivan) to eat at the cremation ground] Both recorded by Mandelbaum [4.6.38]).

1. The following instrumental and symbolic objects are placed on and near the place of redistribution. A man with right shoulder exposed fills each basket.
 - a. Winnowing basket (*morm*)
 - b. Ball with odd number of blades of grass stuck in it (*koba·rm* with *nakarg*)⁷
 - c. Pestle (*elk*)
 - d. Implement for pulling quantities of grain (semi-circular plank of wood attached perpendicularly to a stick)
 - e. A knife (*kayt*)
2. The millet is taken off to individual houses to be pounded; some of it is puffed and some of it is cooked.⁸
 - a. In the old days when *koyl vatm* was used they had to prepare the grain earlier and boil it twice because it was so oily.
3. A buffalo (provided by the Badaga partner of the eldest deceased Kota) is killed and the meat divided (Mandelbaum 4.6.38)

V. Cleaning, Mourning, and Dancing

- A. Cleaning of the burning place at the dry funeral ground (*mand a·kicd*)⁹
 1. The *mundka·no·n*, *te·rka·m*, the musicians and other men go to the burning place, (and led by the *mundka·no·n*) clean it, and prostrate (*admug-*)
 - a. The prayer for this in *Me·na·r* is *na·r oycgotk de·r eyjgotk* “let death ceremonies end, [let us forget about the cremation ground, etc.], let “god” increase (i.e. temples, devotees)
 - b. Ten people join for this and then do the ritual.
 2. There is a special tune for this activity, called the burning-place-cleaning-tune (*mand a·kicd kol*). In *Me·na·r*, Gundan reports that the tune is similar to a god tune used in *Kolme·l* for cleaning the channel.
 3. Men pray at a special “god stone” (*devrka!*) at a sacred cattle pen before returning.
 4. After saying “shall we go” they return chanting “ho· ko·”
 5. They return through *i·ke·r* and continue to *a·ke·r*, where the *e·rtabaṭk* is briefly put down, in recognition of the fact that on the cremation day, the biers from this *ke·r* will be transported first (Mandelbaum 4.6.38)
 6. The man who carries the *e·rtabaṭk* used to be selected to fulfill this role in all the rituals of the year (Mandelbaum 4.6.38).
 - a. He had to be strong and from a family with enough men to fulfill their other family ritual duties.
 - b. In return he was given the meat of the foreshoulder of every buffalo that was killed
- B. Relatives and friends who may have come in from other villages may return to their villages, but close relations of the deceased will observe mourning restrictions (*no·m ka·to*): they can only eat during daylight hours (water is not counted) until the bones relics of the deceased are recremented.¹⁰
 1. According to *Te·tn* of *Kurgo·j*, the mourning restrictions for brothers of the deceased were strictly maintained for three months after the *varlda·v*: they could not eat *veḷ pāk* (betel nut), *pitar* (a type of fried sweet) with oil, or chicken.
 2. They also could not cut hair, beard or nails; could not bathe; could only wash face in cold water.
- C. Nightly dancing for at least one hour until the recrementation day.
 1. Fire is taken from the house which is built on the site of the first house (*kab it pay*).
 - a. *Kurgo·j*, from *dodvay* (Mandelbaum 8.3.37)
 2. A small fire is made on the dancing ground in front of this house (*gagva·l*)
 3. A bigger fire is made using this smaller fire and all dance around it.
 4. The dance tunes are for the most part the same as those used during the god ceremony for the dance in this area—but not the same as those special ones used in the temple area.
 - a. *Kurgo·j*, 1937, names of dances given for Saturday night
 - b. Men: *ka·lgu·ca·t* and *vera·t*
 - c. Women: *ka·lgu·ca·t*, *tirla·t* (i.e. *tirugana·t*), *vera·t*
 5. Although it appears that in *Kolme·l* and *Me·na·r* the dancing takes place in the same places that the millet was poured, in *Kurgo·j* dancing takes place in a different place (*kike·r*)

VI. (Me-na-r) Preparation of New Clay Pots

(Technique recorded on video tape). Is there a special tune for collecting clay in Me-na-r?

VII. Day of Cremation (*ta-vna-l*)—Preparation of the bier

A. Materials made or collected

1. Wood carved into a rough arrow (*ambkuḍ*)
2. Bow (*vil*)
3. Gourd (*kim*)
4. Cowry shells
5. *pitelmayn* (?) [translated for me as “aluminum chain”]
6. Basket of popped barley (*kajayk*), amaranth (*ki-r*), and jaggery (*kal*)

B. Placed in association with the bier of a “big death” (elderly person—male)(Raman)

1. Bow and arrow of *tavḷ* wood and silver wire with a silver arrow
2. Long stick called *pardac* collected from the steep slopes and borders of the Nilgiris
 - a. Decorated with cowry shells and *pitelmayn*
 - b. Kurumbas used to supply these
 - c. In Me-na-r, 1992, Kotas collected the pole from a forest 10-15 kms. distance, called *ne-vrteḷ* in Kota (Belrūm Shōlai)
 - d. Ordinary Western-type umbrella put on top in Me-na-r (colored).
 - e. Height and thickness of pole is proportional to the age of the deceased
 - f. In Me-na-r 1992, basket was tied part of the way up the pole
 - g. Placed near bier after a buffalo is killed (Mandelbaum 4.6.38).

C. Biers lined up facing the houses, in each *ke-r*, ordered from right to left, oldest to youngest and male to female
Underneath for men are kept

1. Baskets with grains and jaggery: special kinds of baskets
 - a. *kotankik*—basket for dry popped *kotanm* grain
 - b. Special kind of jaggery called *kola-vikal*.¹¹
 - c. Smaller basket called *mayrkik*—sometimes has three small baskets attached to the sides (does this vary by gender?).
2. Clarified butter (Mandelbaum 4.6.38)
3. A special kind of bell called *kotkaty* (Mandelbaum 4.6.38)
 - a. There are only two of these
 - b. Each year one is kept in house of that year’s eldest deceased
 - c. One in *naryke-r* and one in *i-ke-r* or *a-ke-r*
 - d. The bell is kept blocked during the year and is taken out only during a green funeral, at which time it is rung by a boy, or during the dry funeral (M.K. Bellan, Me-na-r 1.1991)
4. A special knife of which there is only one in the village (Mandelbaum 4.6.38)
5. Dry flammable twigs (*kank*) for starting the cremation fire later (these are long and kept upright near the biers. other things in this list are small symbolic versions of things that are eventually burned)
6. Cylinder (*ma-nb*) used for measuring or keeping milk
7. Axe (*mart*)
8. Manual planing device (*va-yi-c*)
9. Clay pot (*mo-g*) for water used in rituals on way to cremation ground
10. Wood for making fires (possibly different than that kept for women)
11. Small clay cup (*kuḍck*) for clarified butter, shattered on final night at cremation ground.

D. Degree of decoration depends to an extent on financial means of the family, gender and age of deceased.

E. Women’s biers

1. Not (or less?) decorated than those of the men
2. Women’s biers have stick with leaf umbrella (*o-l keḷ*) attached
 - a. Frame is made from bamboo (*e-rgal*)
 - b. Leaves of palm
 - c. Malayalam speaking Irulas or Kurumbas now provide these umbrellas to the Kotas of Me-na-r.

- d. Placed on pole made of Eucalyptus or some other wood
- 3. Examples of what was in a basket under one woman's bier in 1991, Me-na-r
 - a. Small symbolic pestle (*elk*)
 - b. Winnowing basket (*morm*)
 - c. Gourd (*kim*) which women used to use for liquids
 - d. Spatula (*caṅko-l*) for serving ragi
 - e. *ma-nb*—used in the old days for drinking or measuring milk (Tamil: *paṭi*)
 - f. Two pieces of wood for starting fire (*kidmarm*)
 - g. Broom (*ki-l*)
 - h. Peg for tethering animals (*guṭl*)
 - i. Bolts (*a-ṇṇ*) that were used to hold together the deceased's bedframe¹²
 - j. Tied to another basket was a cane woven box used in the old days by women for money and odds and ends (*peḷyḡ*)
 - i. In 1992 I was told the cane basket in which all the above were kept was called *peḷyḡ* and the straw wallet inside was called *a-lmenyc*. Other things inside included, in 1992
 - ii. A comb (*marmpanḡe*)
 - iii. Steel, copper, iron (*ṇuc*)
 - iv. Thread made from plant fiber (*pubiṇa-rl*) as in the old days
 - v. Stem (*mukac*) tied to the *peḷyḡ* for decoration
 - k. baskets as above
- F. Ritual of placing things under the cot comparable to that at green funeral. Me-na-r informant said Kota word for this was *pace-k iḷd* (putting puffed millet [in the baskets]), but the Tamil equivalent was "rice for the mouth" (*vaṅkarici*) (see Dumont 1986, 275).—question: is a kol associated with this as it seems to be during the green funeral?
- G. On each bier (which is nowadays a chair decorated with balloons and crepe paper) there are a number of items: the bones will be added later
 - 1. *pu-kac* (red cloth)
 - 2. *a-ṛkm* (black cloth)
 - 3. special cloak for the *varḷda-v* (*varḷda-v vara-r*)—smaller than ordinary and lacking the fringe threads at each end.
 - 4. colored cloth (*vaṛm*) (Mandelbaum 4.6.38)

VIII. Day of Cremation—Buffalo Catching (until about 4:00 p.m.)

- A. Raman mentions the shouting of "ho-ko" and performance of *keṛ koḷs* during the buffalo catching particularly if the buffaloes are difficult to subdue.
- B. It is said that the *kol* players used to compose a special melody for each buffalo (*oḍ oḍ imk oḍ oḍ koḷ kaco-ṛd*).
- C. At least one of the buffaloes would have to be brought with music to a special place above the house of the *mundka-no-n*, called the *paḡa-c* or *va-ṇiyga-c* (Are these the names given the sacrificial buffaloes or the place they are slaughtered?). (Mandelbaum 4.6.38)
 - 1. Other buffaloes could be killed elsewhere. No signal or special ritual (Mandelbaum 4.6.38).
 - 2. Raman states that there is no rule (*caṭm*) that (or concerning) the buffaloes must be killed. The meat is called *keṛ po-t*, as is the meat of any cow killed on the village side of the stream (*kargaṇi-r*)
- D. The catchers and killers of buffalo get to eat the portion of meat along the buffalo's spine.
- E. The whole business of choosing and catching buffaloes appears to have been more elaborate in Kurgo-j than in Kolme-l even in the 1930s (cf. Mandelbaum 8.3.37 *passim*).
 - 1. A striking feature of oral performance involves Todas and Kotas together. "The Kota and Toda singers join hands, dance as do the Todas when composing in a circle" (Mandelbaum 8.3.38 p.2)
 - 2. These songs/chants will be performed before the buffalo catching, teasing and suggesting that a particular person might be able to catch the *mayim* (barren buffalo—big and difficult to catch); they will also sing about particular buffaloes, naming them and who will catch them; and later again about the people who actually did catch the buffaloes. There were three Todas and two Kotas at that time who knew how to

compose such songs. Others just joined in.

3. Though Todas sing with, help catch buffaloes, and help with other work on the dry funeral, they will not eat inside the Kota village; those Todas who have participated are given some money to eat elsewhere.

IX. Day of Cremation—Procession

- A. First someone says "*kaḷ enubo*," the others affirm "*a a et*" then the *a-ke-r* biers should be separated from the decorations and then those of *naryke-r*
- B. Then both *a-ke-r* and *naryke-r* biers should be brought together to the *gagva-l* where the *i-ke-r* biers have been kept.
- C. Then the biers, the sticks, ornaments and everything are carried out of the village in the direction of the *pacda-vna-r* (green funeral ground)
- D. The ones carrying the biers wear *vara-rs* on their head in the fashion of mourners, and with right shoulder exposed in proper ritual fashion.
- E. They go past the *nela-gor* to the flat area before the green funeral ground called *etarcvam*.
 1. The cots are put down for "show" and all look
 2. The onlookers stay put and later continue to the *varḷ-v na-r*
 3. Once in a while, for no reason in particular (*enmo*) a sacrificial cow (*koḷci-t a-v*) is slaughtered here. The meat from this is also called *ke-r po-t*, and can be taken to the house and eaten or to the dry funeral ground. This is not "counted."
- F. From there, the cot carriers go to the *pacda-v na-r*
 1. The cot carriers collect the bones of the deceased from the crevice (*al*)
 2. Tied up with ferns and broken pieces of clay pot, they are identifiable by a ring, an engraved tin plate, or some other sign.
- G. The cots are placed in order of seniority, then the bones are tied up with bark thread and placed inside each *vara-r*.
 1. Buffaloes are caught near the *pacda-v na-r* and brought near the biers (Mandelbaum 4.6.38).
 2. All bow in ritual order, *mundka-no-n*, *te-rka-rn*, *melpac mog*, elders, rest.
 3. Only after this does the *melpac mog* cover his head in the manner of a mourner (Mandelbaum 4.6.38)
 - a. After bowing he takes a knife in his left hand
 - b. Rings bell in right hand
 4. If there were no cows killed for the original funeral of one of the deceased (because the death coincided with some god-related ritual day or month) cows are now caught. (Mandelbaum 4.6.38)
 - a. One cow is collected for each of the deceased.
 - b. The cow is touched to the corresponding bier before it is killed
 5. After all touch the bier, someone asks if the touching is finished ("*ta-v muc camdi-ku?*"), "should we lift?," "lift." Then the men carry the cots to a small creek (*peyve-r*) called *kargan ni-r* (pupil water), believed to be very pure.
- H. At the small creek the *melpac mogs*
 1. Wrap up silver coins in two kinds of thorny plant, a male variety and female variety (*gaṇḍmulp* and *permulp*)
 - a. The male variety is used for the male deceased and the female variety for the female deceased (Mandelbaum 4.6.38)
 2. Sprinkle them with water
 - a. Three times, sideways (Mandelbaum 4.6.38)
 - b. Leaves thrown away
 - c. There used to be one coin for all the *ke-rs*; it was hammered into a bowl shape (Mandelbaum).
 3. Place them on the biers
 4. Bow down over the bier, followed by the others
 5. Some of the *melpacmogs* ring bells during this procedure
 - a. In *Kurgo-j* the bell ringing only begins after this ritual is completed
- I. The cots are carried across the small creek—this is believed to be a significant moment in the ritual process.

- X. Day of Cremation—Rituals Near and in the Dry Funeral Ground
- A. Before entering the dry funeral ground, in Kolme'l, the cots are lined up in order of age at a place near a boulder called the *ka-rykal*.
1. The cot legs are made to touch the stone
 2. Then the cots are taken to a cattle pen (*toyva-l*) where there is a "god stone" (*devrkal*).
 3. Then the cot is returned to the *ka-rykal*
 4. Mandelbaum (4.6.38) records similar action, though differently named stones
 - a. Two stones on other side of stream at the cow killing stone (*a-viacd kal*) and the horn placing stone (*kob veed kal*),¹³
 - b. Then the biers are brought to a buffalo pen called *ka-rgal*, and the cots are touched to a stone inside it.
 - c. For naryke r the biers are touched to different stones, bearing the same names.
- B. Representatives of the six other villages leave the *varlda-vna-r* and reenter for the sake of ritual. (Mandelbaum 4.6.38 & Raman variation later)
1. One man (presumably representing the people of Kolme'l) welcome them, taking their walking sticks and umbrellas
 2. The six men bow before the biers
- C. Slaughtering of the three *koyki-t a-v* (cows—possibly those mentioned above)
1. Cots are lined up in the dry funeral ground
 2. Special family (*kayt*) for slaughtering cows, called *adika-ry* (Raman)
 - a. Mandelbaum is told the man is the "fire-brand taking man" (*koyta-l*) from the respective ke-rs.
 3. They have to ask the elders "shall I slaughter the cow" and they answer "yes, slaughter"
 4. Significance of the cows
 - a. These cows ritually stand for the cow purified during the milk placing ceremony earlier in the year, using the *ne-rl* plant.
 - b. That is, the cow the *mundka-no-n* used to milk
 - c. The cows are an offering (*parykm*) to the deceased
 5. So first they say "can I call this the cow which was driven with the *ne-rl* plant?"
 6. Then they say, having received an affirmative answer, "may I slaughter it?, and after receiving confirmation, procede to slaughter it.
 7. "The big men pray for god and for *amo-na-r*" (Mandelbaum 4.6.38)
 8. The heads of the cows are severed and put with the horns on three stones.
 - a. Mandelbaum's account mentions two cows, one for naryke-r, one for a-ke-r and i-ke-r.
 - b. The head of each cow is placed on the respective ke-r's *a-viacd kal* (cow killing stone)
 9. According to Raman, putting the heads and horns on the stones indicates they gave offered the cows in sacrifice.
 - a. Then, according to Raman, the *koyki-t* is handed over to the melpac mog. Raman does not explain what the *koyki-t* is (could it really be the whole cow?), but it may be a special bell, as Veln suggested (see chapter ten) and as is suggest by b. below.
 - b. After the *koyki-t* is handed over to the melpac mog, he should ring the bell—apparently to alert everyone (including the deceased) that the cows have been sacrificed.
 10. The meat is given off to low caste plains people (*ko-na-to-n*)—Kotas should not eat it.
 11. Now (Me-na-r 1991) in what appears to be a relic of this past practice, a calf is sprinkled with water just before the biers are burned.
- D. Several other rituals occur at about the same time
1. The man of the eldest deceased's house (*doḡa-vka-rm*) makes a hole in the gourd (*kim*) with the arrow (*amb*) and fills it with clarified butter (*nay*).
 - a. Clarified butter smeared on bones (Mandelbaum 4.6.38)
 - b. Clarified butter supplied by Todas from milk of special buffaloes
 - i. Only the *peda-d*, not *ta-d*, Todas can milk them (it is not clear which Todas these Kota terms refer to—the *Pedad* milk the *ti* buffaloes). *varlda-v* clarified butter is called *nanjnay* (heart clarified butter); that for the god ceremony is called *tadnay*
 - ii. Ka-nig mand Todas maintained a traditional relationship with the people of naryke-r, nec with

i·ke·r and a·ke·r, karigad with all ke·rs.

2. Other people make fire using a stone
 - a. According to Mandelbaum (4.6.38), this was the stone cleaned during the ritual cleaning done earlier.
 - b. Possibly this is the stone Raman referred to as the god stone above.
3. The spouses of the deceased do the jewelry removing ceremony as it was done in the green funeral. They restore the jewelry on the dance day (*a·ma·l*)
 - a. *Narṇ*'s of widows carry them to cremation ground

XI. Day of Cremation—Cremation

- A. The biers are burned in two places (*du·v*), one for *naryke·r* and one for *a·ke·r* and *i·ke·r*
- B. The fires are lit to the accompaniment of the fire lighting tune (*tic it kol*)
 1. According the Mandelbaum (4.7.38) after the others produce fire, the melpac mogs of the respective ke·rs make small fires and each take three firebrands of *kidmarm* and throw them backwards into the respective pyres. Then others go ahead and actually get the pyres burning.
 2. For the funeral of an old man (Raman) or for all men (Mandelbaum) a single arrow is shot as the biers are placed for burning.
 - a. Raman: arrow shot in northerly direction
 - b. In Me·na·r the arrow shooting practice continues
 3. Baskets of grain, symbolic objects, etc. placed on pyre (nowadays some of the special baskets are saved)
- C. The *karku·cd ca·trm* (border joining ritual) is mentioned by Raman, who cannot remember all the details. Most certainly it is the ritual described as follows by Mandelbaum's informant (4.7.38)
 1. Some men are instructed to take one thread from each cloth on every bier (does this mean the *vara·r*, *a·rakam*, *pu·kac* etc.?)
 2. Then one man rolls up all the threads into one skein
 3. Six other men are called, one from each other village, and parts of the skein are distributed to them
 4. They are told to separate and then they are called back together "*ja·ti va·*"—"community members, come!"
 5. Are we all joined? ("*a·l elm cedvi·ra·?*"), "we're joined" ("*cedve·m*")
 6. "This here is the seven village border [i.e. edge of cloth]" ("*ide·ne, ey ko·ka·l kar*"); "Those there are the dead who died" ("*ade·ne, tati·pd tarv*")
 7. Three of the parts are thrown on the *naryke·r* pyre and three on the pyre for *a·ke·r* and *i·ke·r*.
- D. There is a significant amount of crying, but as soon as the biers are burned it is no longer suitable to cry and the women should return to the village.
- E. The jewels removed during the green funeral (now melted) are shown to the fire or are touched with a fire brand (Mandelbaum 4.7.38)
- F. Mourners (*no·mka·to·r*) must stay in the dry funeral ground without eating; others return to the village, eat, and return with dried and popped grain, and warm clothes and bedding.
 1. Grains are those prepared earlier: *pacayk* (popped millet), *ki·r* (amaranth), *kajayk* (popped barley); jaggery is also eaten.
 2. Eating of the popped grain now indicates that all can eat food after dark from this point onward (Mandelbaum 4.7.38)
 3. Mandelbaum's informant mentions use of cigar and tobacco; Raman indicates their use the next day.
 4. In Me·na·r the popped millet is distributed from an iron vessel (*pa·ym*) in a cup (*mu·g*) first to the melpacmog and then to the other ritualists.
- G. All are supposed to stay up the entire night (though they generally do not); sad tunes (*dukt kol*) are performed all night, people talk of sorrow, tell stories.
 1. *pe·npaco·l* gets possessed (Mandelbaum 4.7.38): she "shakes and tells if the ceremony has been done properly or not. The shaking comes when the woman is lying down and she rocks and rolls and then a man asks her, who are you? [she answers] 'I am so and so,' naming one of the deceased. She does not name females or one who has just been burnt. If she says something has been done wrong, we must ask to be excused and we will make it right. If all is well then we pray."
 2. According to other accounts, deceased women will sometimes possess these mediums.
 3. In Me·na·r possession did take place at this time, however, the possessed woman was not taken seriously.

- H. There are two places for sleeping (*mand*), one for men, one for women.
1. That for the men is just uphill from that for the women.
 2. Still further up is the place where the melpacmog sits ringing the bell for the entire night.
 - a. Noone should go near him
 3. According to Sulli (Mandelbaum 4.7.38 p.4v), there is a boundary in Kome-l and a raised place in other villages where the melpacmog, widows and widowers, and headman sit.
 - a. Those who have had sex, smoked bidis, or drunk alcohol cannot come there.
 - b. Others are "just waiting for the light to go out" to "connect" (Sulli's euphemism for sexual intercourse)
 - c. Kakakamatn refused to admit to this sexual activity, but it was apparently common knowledge, Mandelbaum having confirmed it with others.
- I. At dawn when Venus is sighted (*vehmi-n*) the *narguc kols* are played.
1. The naryke-r *kohyta!* chops off the horns of the head of the sacrificed a-ke-r/i-ke-r cow and places them on the *kob vecd kal* to which the biers of that ke-r were touched. The i-ke-r/a-ke-r *kohyta!* performs the complementary task on the other cow head. (Mandelbaum 4.7.38)
 2. According to Raman people should not cry when this is played, because the biers would already have been cremated.
 3. My experience in Me-na-r bears this out
 4. Cintamani said that (in Kurgo-j) there is more crying when these tunes are played.
 - a. This is confirmed in Velns description of 1937 (Mandelbaum 8.8.37 p.2)
 "When the morning star is seen in the sky about an hour or so before dawn, *na-r gu-cko!* is played. This music is to honor the deceased and when it is played the widows and widowers must wail. If they have cried before or not is no matter, but if any one of them does not cry at this time, they are fined"

XII. Cooked Grain Day (*ku-na-f*): Morning and Early Afternoon Rituals

- A. 7:00 a.m. dance in the *varlda-vna-r*, a few rounds for men then women
1. Mandelbaum's account: dance till sunrise
- B. Another buffalo, a big male buffalo called the "head of the morning buffalo" was slaughtered and consumed in the morning by the people who had done the majority of the work over the previous few days.
1. Anyone except those in the munkano-n's group (*gub*) can do the slaughtering (Kurgo-j)
 2. After the slaughtering occurs in Kurgo-j (1937), all are called and come in procession with music, ritual specialists in order, those of Kurgo-j preceding each of the equivalent from Kala-c. Tune performed is "nagerkol" (?) (Mandelbaum 8.6.37)
- C. They say "shall we go"?, then return to the village
1. While coming they shout "ho-ko"
 2. Play the "pot taking tune" (*payrv i-ta kol*) (confirmed also by Mandelbaum)
 - a. Pot contains the ashes sluiced from the cremation spot by the eldest men of the respective ke-rs (Mandelbaum 4.7.38)
 - b. In Me-na-r, the melpacmog does the sluicing (Me-na-r ex-Te-rka-m)
 - c. This is one of the pots (*manytai*) made after the *kotanmday*.
 3. Melpacmogs and mourners (*no-mkato-r*) stay behind
 4. At the village, still with the music playing, one pot is collected from each house. later to be brought back to the dry funeral ground for cooking
- D. In Kurgo-j (1930s) the Toda and Badaga partners would supply further buffaloes at this time and they would be sacrificed at the *imercdpa-mi* (female buffalo slaughtering level ground) (Mandelbaum 8.6.37)
1. Eight musicians are sent to get the Todas and Badagas who were participating
 2. Four get the Badagas, beginning with those from Kadana:du
 3. Four get the Todas
 4. The tune is called *madkol!*—this is quite confusing; it could be *maivdkol!*, i.e. tune for the Badagas; or, *mandkol!*, tune for dry funeral ground (or for Toda hamlet!); *madvko!*—tune for a wedding (tunes for the rituals of which are not supposed to exist); or *madkol!*—medicine tune. The only interpretation that makes sense given the repertoire of Kota melodies thus far uncovered is that the *madvko!*, or wedding tunes, are

used. What is referred to are the melodies used for welcoming the groom's party arriving for a wedding. The general sense of "welcoming" is conveyed by this kind of tune and such a tune is probably used in a variety of contexts to bestow honor. There are also tunes for Badagas beginning with their Kota name, mayv, on the Mandelbaum cylinder recordings.

5. Note is made by informant (Velu) that the Kolme-l and other non-Kurgo-j Kotas, and the Badagas, do not shout "ho-ko" in the same way as those of Kurgo-j Kotas. It is less "interesting." (Mandelbaum 8.5.37 p.5)
- E. At around noon, the guests from other villages (*vidar*) return to the dry funeral ground carrying from every house puffed rice and millet and jaggery; other villagers also return
1. Accompanying them are the musicians
 - a. In Me-na-r the procession returning to the village accompanied also by chanting "ho-ko"
 - b. In Kurgo-j, the musicians accompanying the visitors play the "wo:nad" *kol* (?) (Mandelbaum 8.14.37 p.1)
 2. While coming the visitors carry a cane (*tac*) or at least a small stick for the sake of ritual.
 3. When they arrive at the *varldav*, the Kolme-l host villagers "forget" that these people had been to their houses, and their arrival is treated as new (*puḍ kank*). The Kolme-l people welcome them by collecting their canes and umbrellas
 - a. This appears to be a variation of what Mandelbaum recorded (above); it probably does not happen twice. In any case, the welcoming of visitors appears to be important in the dry funeral, just as it was in the green funeral.
 - b. Question: what tune is played? Is it one of the welcoming tunes?
 4. For the ritual meal, *ta-ymayk* (husked millet) also called *tato:n ayk* (deceased's millet) is brought along with 3 sticks of *kadmarm* wood for the friction fire. (Kurgo-j Cain 1991)
 - a. Four bags of *pacayk* were formerly loaded on the back of two horses by the head of the eldest male deceased's household, and brought to the dry funeral ground, with musicians playing the *pe:rn kol* (returning to village and coming again) after the visitors had been ushered there earlier with a different tune; goes back again (no music) and returns again (with music) with tins of clarified butter (Mandelbaum 8.14.37 p.1)

XIII. Cokked Grain Day: Afternoon Food Preparations, Rituals, Eating

- A. The *mundka-no:ns* and *te:rkarns*, and their wives, from all the villages attending, come to a special part of the *varldavna:r* to prepare their food. Supplies were brought to them earlier.
 1. The widows widowers and *melpac mog* can only eat the food prepared by these ritualists (Mandelbaum 4.7.38)
 2. The first food, which is prepared by the ritualists and eaten by selected ritualists and mourners, is called *panḍyku*—as it is during the god ceremony.
- B. The children who are coming the cremation ground for the first time are dressed up nicely given water by the *mundka-no:n*. In Me-na-r this involves crossing the small stream that separates the ritualists' section of the dry funeral ground from that of the general population. The ritual is called the *mand e:ri:gd ca:rm*.
- C. Men then women dancing (event observed as occurring at this time, Me-na-r)
 1. In Kolme-l the last dance must be danced by Kolme-l man, so as to indicate the end of this ritual (Mandelbaum 4.7.38)
- D. Ritual bathing (*no:mni:r*). The ones observing mourning restrictions have to bathe using the *veky* plant at about 12 noon
 1. Wife of brother in law of deceased women, or wife's borthor of deceased man supplies the plant soap
- E. In Kurgo-j, after bathing is completed, seven men must lift a boulder [3 times], each contributing one pinky finger, all the while saying "o:h." (Te-m)]
 1. Tune played is *kaltuyk kol* (stone lifting tune) (Mandelbaum 8.14.37)¹⁴
 2. *Mundka-no:n* says prayer first, music begins, *te:rkarn* gets possessed after ½ hour and runs back and forth between two lines of men, then indicates when men can lift stone (Mandelbaum 8.14.37)
 - a. Middle finger is used, not pinky (Mandelbaum 8.14.37)
 - b. It appears bathing occurred after this lifting; but before bathing, the seven men and the rest of the men

of Kurgoj had to dance three times around the central bonfire in the dry funeral ground to the stone lifting tune.

- F. Ritual meals (These begin while the dancing goes on)
1. First cooked grain, stew and clarified butter are put on a leaf as an offering to the land of the dead (*na:rk e:rveco*).
 - a. There is a special tune performed for this which (in Kolme-l) is close to that associated with the same ritual during the god ceremony
 2. Then the *mundka-no-ns*, *te-rkaa-rns*, *melpacmogs* eat in ritual order (*pandyku:*)
 - a. In Me-na-r the melpac mogs eat first
 3. Then popped grain is passed around for all to eat except the ritualists (because it was prepared indoors) (Mandelbaum 4.7.38)
 4. Then rice is offered once again on a leaf
 - a. Mandelbaum (4.7.38) indicates that the music stops for this ritual
 - b. In Me-na-r the music only pauses, then amidst blowing of the horns etc. rice and stew (?) is offered.
 5. Before the clarified butter is served to all, a bit of it is heated and poured on the "clarified butter pouring stone" (*nay acd kal*) (mandelbaum 4.7.38)
 6. *ja:dyku:* From each village a man and woman are chosen to represent husband and wife for "name's sake" (*pe-rk*) and line up to eat off a single leaf (per pair). They eat after the ritualists and before the general population.
- G. Those who have come from other villages where the *varlda-v* has not yet been celebrated must eat at a special place on the other side of the creek, from a basket, not from leaves like the others.
1. The place outside the dry funeral ground is called "outside gathering place" (*pormanđ*).
 2. The place where the others eat is called the "inside gathering place" (*ulmanđ*)
- H. At this time a cigar made of traditional tobacco (*ma-mu-l pog*) collected from the forest is given to the widows and widowers but not to the melpac mog. The leaf in which it is rolled is called *baytel*. (Raman)
- I. Women sing god songs (at least three for ritual's sake)

XIV. Day After Cremation: Dashing the Cup of Clarified Butter

- A. The melpac mog returns to the cremation spot (*du-v*), fills a small clay cup (*kuck*) with "heart" clarified butter (*nanjnay*), circles the spot clockwise pouring it out, and dashes the cup to the ground—all led by an elder of the appropriate ke-r.
1. Raman says that he dashes on the god stone (*de-rkal*)
 - a. Stone to the right of the entrance of the *du-v* (Mandelbaum 4.7.38)
 2. In Me-na-r it is thrown onto a stone in the cremation spot
 - a. Some sort of prayer is uttered at this time
 - b. Before leaving, those present bow to the cremation site
 3. The musicians accompany this action with a special tune called the *melpacmog kol* or the *potguy mog kol*.
 - a. The music stops while the cup is being thrown down; then it resumes
 4. In Me-na-r, the corresponding ke-r's musical ensemble performs music for this action at the respective burning spot (I think).
 5. Then all must hurry back to the village without looking back.
 - a. Widows and widowers, who should not be present at the clarified butter ritual, return along a different path.
- B. There the melpac mogs (Me-na-r) or ritually pure, strong man (Kolme-l) make fire by friction
1. In Me-na-r this becomes a contest to see who can finish it first
 2. Three stones are put together to symbolize the stove of the old days
 3. A small clay cup (*kuck*) is put on the fire with water and husked millet (*ta:ymayk*).
 4. This is then tossed out some distance away
 - a. In Kurgoj the place where it is tossed away is called *i-d*
 5. Raman interprets this as a miniature *karmi-tku:* ritual (the feast observed at the end of a funeral, the "charcoal-moving-cooked-grain" performed for the benefit of fetuses, infants, or otherwise young unnamed children who were buried and not given a proper funeral because they had not become social

beings. These children are called *potkary mog*. Cintamani, who was present when Raman gave this interpretation, had not heard this, but accepted it.

- C. As soon as the melpacmog finishes the miniature cooking ritual for a particular ke-r, dancing begins in that ke-r
 - 1. Dancing features *ja-tykupa-c*—dancing in costume, one representative person from each village.
 - 2. In Kolme-l, dancing occurs only in i-ke-r if the eldest deceased was from this ke-r; if the eldest deceased was from a-ke-r they can dance (in both?) (Mandelbaum 4.7.38)
 - 3. Melpacmog sleeps in house of eldest deceased that night and is given a hot bath early in the morning when Venus is sighted (Mandelbaum 4.7.38)
- D. Leftover meat is brought from the dry funeral ground and kept in a field or an abandoned house where people do not go.
 - 1. It is kept in a round bamboo-woven storage basket (*valm*) or in a *pipay* (a woven mat which is probably in some way polluted, but probably not literally an “excrement mat”)
 - 2. The meat should not be brought anywhere near the blacksmith’s shop (*kole-l*)
 - 3. The next day people will eat it for breakfast—it is considered particularly delicious the second day.

XV. Dance Day (*a-t na-t*)

- A. Restoring status of widows and widowers (Mandelbaum 4.8.38)
 - 1. Widows jewels again showed to fire, this time in the blacksmith’s shop
 - 2. Antamn (i.e. in-laws) of widow put the jewels back on her
 - 3. Widow’s brother in law’s wife provides new plants for the widow’s hair (*man-urv*); her own male relative (*nanm*) and rubs clarified butter into her hair
 - 4. The widower’s antamn (i.e. his own brothers) restores widower’s jewels. Widower himself restores *ce-nd* in hair and applies clarified butter.
- B. First death dances (*ta-v a-t*) are danced by the eldest males: ka-lgu-c, tirugana-t and koyna-t
 - 1. Then follow the widowers with them
 - 2. Then the women with the widows
- C. Costume dance is danced
 - 1. First by the consumers of *pan-tyku* from the day before (Mandelbaum 4.8.38)
 - 2. Then by representatives of the six other villages
- D. Horseplay by young men
- E. Young men and others return to dry funeral ground with musicians playing *payrvadikkol* [pot arranging tune] (Mandelbaum 4.8.38)
 - 1. They eat food which they left in a pot there for this purpose the day before
 - 2. They clean up, arrange the pots, etc.
- F. They return to the village and with the *pardac* touch roof of each house in the village, except those of the *mundka-no-n*s.
 - 1. Start with a-ke-r (Kolme-l) (Mandelbaum 4.8.38)
 - 2. This is to purify/ensure that there will be no more deaths in these houses
 - 3. “Ho-ko-” while doing it (Me-na-r, now)
 - 4. Same pot tune as above is played
 - a. In Kurgo-j it was the “ku:t kol” (probably *ku- id kol*—i.e. that used for the ceremony of offering and serving food) (Mandelbaum 8.14.37)
 - 5. After done music stops, stick thrown off, and all bow in direction of dry funeral ground
 - 6. This abandoned at one point in Kolme-l (Mandelbaum 1954, 86)
- G. Dinner is eaten
- H. Widows sleep with late husband’s brother; Widowers sleep with own brother’s wife (Mandelbaum 4.8.38)

XVI. Song Day

Women sing and dance

Notes

1. There are discrepancies in the accounts of Mandelbaum, Pucan and Raman which I will not attempt to reconcile here. Important here is the full moon in calculating the date (in contrast to the crescent moon used as the nearest point of reference for the god ceremony). Mandelbaum's account (4.2.38) and those I collected in Me-na-r agree that the day is the Monday or Thursday after the full moon.
2. According to Mandelbaum, this is the *melpacmog*, the boy who rings the bell and completes other rituals during the dry funeral.
3. See chapter nine. Sulli indicates these places are calculated according to the age of the house, i.e. deceased (Mandelbaum 4.2.38).
4. According to the Terka-m of Me-na-r, this women should reside in one of the houses of the line of houses (*ke-r*) where the eldest deceased lived.
5. In Me-na-r this man/boy has a particular ritual name "the millet putting man" and must observe a number of ritual purity and dietary rules throughout the *varlda-v*. In Kolme-l (Mandelbaum 4.2.38) the boy who cleans is also the one who acts as the primary ritualist throughout the ceremony and is called the *melpacmog*.
6. According to Emeneau (DEDR 4893), this action (*movc-*) means "(priest) prays to god for someone else, moving right hand up and down."
7. As discussed earlier, this dung and grass ball is used in a number of rituals, including the green funeral, child naming, feeding salt water to the cows; also "whenever grain is measured. . .so that the heap will grow high" (Mandelbaum 4.6.38)
8. According to Kakakamatn, in Kolme-l the woman who poured the water for the kava-l cleaning was in charge later of going to each of the houses of the deceased for that year and preparing the popped millet (*pacayk*). In Me-na-r it is now done in several if not all the houses by the women of the house.
9. It appears that this may occur (also or instead) on the day before the re-cremation.
10. Mandelbaum's informant adds that the men must not wear the ritual ball, *ceṅḍ* and women must not tie their hair with the customary pant, *maṅḍu-v* (4.6.38)—except the munc'ka-no-ns and their wives, unless one of them dies.
11. *kola-v* means "hat"; this may refer to the shape of the raw sugar lump, but it also may be a reference to the Kurumbas. Kotas of Me-na-r were so afraid of Kurumbas that they would not even use the direct reference term for them, but rather a euphemism "those who come with hats." It is not clear whether the Kurumbas supply or are otherwise associated with this jaggery.
12. Probably a relic of the practice of burning the deceased's bedframe during cremation
13. In Me-na-r there is a stone meant for placing the horns of slaughtered bovine that lies in the center of the village, uphill from the large and ancient tree.
14. This is item 48b. on the Mandelbaum cylinder recordings

APPENDIX EIGHT

THE KOTA DRY FUNERAL (*VARLDA-V*): A CHART ILLUSTRATING THE CO-OCCURRENCE OF MUSICAL AND RITUAL EVENTS

(Outline numbers correspond with comparative outline of dry funeral in appendix seven)

Out-line #	Event	Individuals involved	Melody (kol)	Ho-Ko	O-ly	Other sonic	Dance	Song	Significant space	Movement (Spatial & Physical)
IIA, C	Selecting ritualists	dodta·v ka·rn ⊙ ka·lplmog vatmi·to·n							ke·r of deceased	
IIB	Praying	dodta·v-ka·rn				prayer			△ & council meeting areas	⌋ at 3 places
IIIA	Meeting	Musicians	ta·v ♮						dodkava·ls	
IIIB	Cleaning	Woman Man	ta·v ♮			kob & ε			dodkava·ls	From ke·r to ke·r by seniority
IIIC	Pouring millet	vatmi·to·n	kotan m i·t			kob & ε; ♀ crying ιρ			" "	" " Rt. hands up & down
IIID	Salute millet	Men, then women	⊠	X		♀ crying			millet pile	£, touch millet to head
IVA	Meeting	Village men	ø						X	
Continued	Identity relationships	Flora	Foodstuffs	Comments						
IIA,C	ke·r of eldest deceased			Ritualist names, differentiation, and initial actions vary						
IIB	" "			Precursory praying on behalf of village						
IIIA	∑ ke·r			8:00 a.m.; ambient music						
IIIB	ck·er of deceased	Cassia Tomentosa		Dung water to clean each spot before millet poured						
IIIC			raw millet (<i>Panicum Miliare</i>)	The millet is considered to be the corpse: status indicated by quantity of millet						
IIID			" "	Equiv. to saluting corpse at funeral: ∞						
IVA	∑ household		For ritual meal	Dividing of expenses & work						

	Event	Individuals involved	Melody (kol)	Ho· Ko·	O·ly	Other sonic	Dance
IVB	Division	A ritualist	ta·v Ǿ				
VA	Cleaning	①②③ musicians & others	mand a·kicd	→ (in)		ǰp ∈ (kob)	
VB	Mourning	Relatives				(crying)	
VC	Fire & Dance	X	X				gagva·l Ǿ
VI	pot making	Women	(x)				[gag·va·l Ǿ]
VII	Bier preparation		ta·v Ǿ			(crying)	
VIII	Buffalo Catching	Men; Todas (Kuro·j)	ke·r Ǿ	X		signal & general merriment	w/ H-K & chant
	Song	Significant space	Movement (Spatial & Physical)	Identity relationships	Flora	Food-stuffs	Comments
IVB		dodkava·l		" "	Andropogen foulkesii	millet, rice; buffalo meat	Dividing food-stuffs among houses. 4 ㄩ
VA		VDN & god stone	From & to village; ㄩ		X (?)		∈ touched to ke·r where procession will begin
VB				∑ (ku) deceas.		Eat before dark	Bathing restrictions; ㄩ
VC		gagva·l	house; gagva·l side; center		X [fire transfer]		Nightly until day of cremation
VI		X			X		Day 2
VII	wailing pos. w/ tune or text	dodkava·ls of deceased		⊂deceased's family	X	millet, barley, amaranth jaggery	individuation of deceased through ㄩㄩㄩ; special kinds of cloth
VIII	(chant about buf. or men)	(sometimes special, sometimes not)	In circle for HK; chasing buf.			meat called ke·r port	Elaborate in old days, esp. Kurgo·j. Catchers & musicians, best meat

	Event	Individuals involved	Melody (kol)	Ho·Ko·	O·ly	Other sonic	Dance
IX A-D	Procession	Bier carriers ☞	ta·v tuykr	(?)		¿ € kob	
DXE	Pause	" "	(☐ ?) ta·v tuykr				
IX F-G	Bone Collection	" " & ☉	(☐ ?) ta·v tuykr			bell ringing (after)	
IX G5-I	Coins at creek ritual	☉	(☐ ?) ta·v tuykr			bell ringing	
XA	Stone touching	Bier carriers & ☉	(?)				
XB;X I-IE 1- 3	Ritual reentry	visitors from other villages	X (☉?)	(X)			
	Song	Significant space	Movement (Spatial & Physical)	Identity relatio- nships	Flora	Food- stuffs	Comments
IX A-D		dodkava·ls of deceased	to etarc- va·rm or other place				All the biers are carried w/ assoc. ritual items
DXE		etarcva·rm (Kolme·l)					biers on display; opt- ional buffalo sacrifice
IX F-G		pacda·vna·r (green funeral ground)	from previous site to pac- da·vna·r; £	represe- ntation of individual	ferns; plant thread ☉		Bone relics put on biers; biers touched to Sacrificial cows & buffaloes
IX G5-I		kargan ni·r	¿ pacda·v na·r to creek & across to VDN; £	representa- tion of deceased's gender	ganmulp & penmulp		Crossing water is significant mom-ent in journey ∞; purification symbolism
XA		ka·rykal in VDN	between significant stones	cows, god, ke·r			Legs of biers touched to various stones
XB;X I-IE 1- 3		VDN	entering VDN; £ before biers	guests			walking sticks & um- brellas ☞ collected; it's a formalized welcome

	Event	Individuals involved	Melody (kol)	Ho· Ko·	O·ly	Other sonic	Dance
XC	Cow (kotki-t a·v) sacrifice	kolyta·l/ adika·ry	(?)			bell ringing (after, by ③)	
XD1	Offerings	dodta·vka·rn					
XD3	Jewelry removal	spouses of dcd.& select relatives					
XD2	Fire making	① or other ♂, ② nearby					
XI A-B	Pyre lighting	② & other ♂	tic it			bell while burning; [kob?]	
XIC	Fringe joining	7 ♂	tic it			.. "	
	Song	Significant space	Movement (Spatial & Physical)	Identity relationships	Flora	Food-stuffs	Comments
XC		ka·rykal in VDN	¿; placing heads on stones; (dousing of calf ②?)	⊂ kuty; cows ∑ decsd's ker	(indexical of ne·rl; assoc. w/ ①)	(carcass given off to plains people)	∞; cows are offering to decea-sed; relationship symbolized by touching of stones
XD1		VDN	fill gourd w/ clarified butter	⊂ house eldest decsd	gourd	clarified butter	∞; Also encodes relationship w/ Toda who supply
XD3		VDN	carry widow to VDN	⊂ for ♀: nantn; for ♂: antamn			Jewelry removal performed as in green funeral
XD2		Special stone: nay-tievikd kal or de·rkal	friction fire; then → to cremation spot	ritualist or ♂ of some sort	vagver		
XI A-B		each du·v	③ throws wood in for ritual's sake	du·vs ∑ ke·r	3 sticks kud marm	clarified butter on bones	thrown in w/biers: grains R & X; arrow shot for ♂
XIC		.. "	¿ joining & separating thread from cloths on each bier,	biers ∑ house of de-ceased; <7 Ko.			Occurs at about same time as pyre building, lighting, arrow shooting, etc.

	Event	Individuals involved	Mclogy (kol)	Ho· Ko·	O·ly	Other sonic	Dance
XI D,F	Pyres burned					crying ends	
XIG	possession	pe·npaco·l	ta·v ǣ			oracle speaking	
XIH	Settling down for night	all	ta·v ǣ			story telling: bell ringing	
XI I	Sighting of Venus	Musicians; mourners	na·rguc na·rterd			Kob: crying or silence	
XII A	Morning dance	all	dance ǣ			Kob	ǣ gag·va·l ?
XII B	Buffalo sacrifice	Main wor·kers;	Kurgoj: na·r terd				
	Song	Significant space	Movement (Spatial & Physical)	Identity relatio· nships	Flora	Food·stuffs	Comments
XI D,F		VDN	mourners remain, others → (in) to get food & warm clothes	∑ houses of deceased		popped grains, tobacco	
XIG		VDN	rolling, shaking; ı	ı ǣ; spi·rits of past dead			Rare or given little value nowadays
XIH		VDN: sepa· rate places for ǣ ǣ	possible sexual rendevvous	∑ by gender or ritual role		consume popped grain, jaggery etc	Some sleep, some stay awake
XI I		sleeping pl· aces, VDN		∑ fam·ily of deceased			Signifies final farewell: spirit reaches other side
XII A		VDN dance ground	mand to dance ground				At least a few rounds for ritual's sake; ǣ ǣ in order
XII B		VDN	→ mand to slaughter place	ǣku sh· ouldn't sacrif.		Buffalo meat; rice etc.	Called unktale·r "head of morning buffalo"

	Event	Individuals involved	Melody (kol)	Ho· Ko·	O·ly	Other sonic	Dance
XII C	Clean du·v & return to village	⊙ mourners, musicians others,	payrv i·td	X			
XII D	Buffalo sacrifice	Todas & Badagas provide buf's	madv	X			
XII E	Return to VDN	All & guests	X; o·n-ad?; pe·m	X			
XIIA	Food preparation	ritualists separately					
XII B	Blessing children	⊙ & children	dance ♂				[gagv-a·l ♂?]
XIII C	Dancing	all	dance ♂				[gagv-a·l ♂?]
XIII D	no·mni·r (bathing)	spouses of deceased					
	Song	Significant space	Movement (Spatial & Physical)	Identity relationships	Flora	Food-stuffs	Comments
XII C		VDN: du·v	Sluice du·v; return to village	⊙ & mourners remain			Collect pots from each house in village
XII D		[Kurgo·j: imercd-pa·m]	From Ko. to welcome T's & B's	1 band each for Ts&Bs		Buffalo meat	Toda & Badaga traditional partners of deceased
XII E		path to VDN	village to VDN	∑ ko	kid marm	for ritual meal	see also XB
XIIA		VDN; separate places across stream					Note increasing involvement of ⊙, but still separate
XII B		VDN; ritualist's side	cross from general side to ritualists'; ⊙ sprinkle water	children who never attended a varlda·v			Note theme of regeneration
XIII C		VDN dancing area					w/ other activities simultaneously
XIII D		VDN	relatives bring water	antamn ayl help	veky		Around noon

	Event	Individuals involved	Melody (kol)	Ho·Ko·	O·ly	Other sonic	Dance
XIII E	Stone lifting	7 men	dance ♂ & kaltryk		X		[gagv-a:l ♂?]
XIII F1,4	Food Offerings		varlda·v e·rvecd			kob	
XIII F2, 3,6; G	Eating ritual meals	all					
XIVA	dashing cup of clarified butter	③ & elder guide	melpac mog; potguy mog			kob	
XIV B	cooking millet at village	③	.. "				
XVA-D	Dance day		dance ♂				gag·va:l ♂ ☞
XVE	Cleanup/purification	young ♂	payrvadikd/ku· itd	X			
	Song	Significant space	Movement (Spatial & Physical)	Identity relationships	Flora	Food-stuffs	Comments
XIII E		VDN at Kurgo·j only	② get possessed; runs between ♂				♂ must be ritually pure; note incr. themes of god
XIII F1,4		Food offer-ing place	to ritualist's side		leaf	grain, rice, stew	2 times? one to dead one to god?
XIII F2, 3,6; G	god ♂ after eating	ritualists l place; others another		∑ ko & hsb·wfe pairs	leaves	.. "	clarified butter poured on nayacd kal before serving
XIVA		each du·v	circles du·v 3 times & breaks kuck on stone	∑ ke·r for du·v & ense·mble		clarified butter	All return without looking back; an·other symbolic end of the death
XIV B		at edge of village	kuck tossed to i·d	∑ ke·r	vag ve·r	husked millet	fire by friction, 3 stone stove Ⓔ
XVA-D	god ♂ (at end?)	gagva·l		∑ ke,ko,ku of dcsd.	mandu·v		status of mourners restored;all dance & play
XVE		VDN & village	→VDN, clean pots, eat;→ (in) ㄥ		pardac	previous day's food	use pardac to purify houses & pre·vent more death

	Event	Individuals involved	Melody (kol)	Ho·Ko·	O·ly	Other sonic	Dance
XVH	Spouse intercourse	spouses of deceased					
XVI	Song day	women					
	Song	Significant space	Movement (Spatial & Physical)	Identity relationships	Flora	Food-stuffs	Comments
XVH		in homes	sexual intercourse	bro's wife; hsb's bro			Status as unmarried now fully restored; widow's offspring considered late hsbd's
XVI	god ♂	gagva-l					also games

Key:

- ∃ There exists a special tune for this activity
- ¿ Action involves a question, i.e. "shall I x" and a response "do x"
- ∅ There is no music associated with this activity
- ☞ Special form of dress associated with this activity
- ▣ There is a distinct pause in the music for this activity to take place; music may resume afterwards
- △ Temple involved in this activity
- ♂ There is a special musical genre associated with this activity
- H-K Activity involves uttering sacred sound "ho·ko·"
- @ At this time (the following activity)
- OLY Activity involves uttering sacred sound "o·ly"
- ∑ Representative involvement in this activity by exogamous clan, *ke·r* (Ke) , family, *kury* (Ku), or village.
- ① Mundka·no·n *koka·l* (Ko) [Either inclusive or exclusive: i.e. if only one family is responsible for activity, or if all have to divide up the work]
- ② Te·rka·m
- ③ Melpac mog
- c_y Performer of action belongs to a particular category (y) such as family, household etc.
- ⌊ prayer by prostration (*adnug-*)
- Activity involves procession, either from place to place within the village (X-Y), ushering or coming into the village (in), or heading out of the village (out)
- £ Prayer by bowing (*kubir-*)
- ♀ Women only or, if preceding ① or ②, Mundka·no·l or Te·rka·rc
- ε e·rtabtk is involved in this activity; beaten at the beginning of this activity (B), Simply included in ensemble (E); beaten in ritual order (RO)
- ♂ Men only
- w/ With
- ρ Action involves a prayer or other ritual utterance (not including a question)
- VDN *varlda·vna·r*
- ∞ Event or action has been interpreted as necessary for deceased to reach the land of the dead, or objects to be of use there
- X Indicates the presence of the variable, though the exact description varies, is not known, or would involve too much space to fit on chart
- R Indicates the presence items such as tools which have everyday uses but which are present here simply for the sake of ritual
- ⊗ Indicates the presence of ritual items that are conscious representations of a past way of life

APPENDIX NINE

COMPARISONS OF AND RELATIONSHIPS AMONG GENRES

	Shared Musical Content	Shared stylistic features and tempo	Associated Ritual Complex	Spatio-Temporal Limitations	Pitch Set	Ensemble Makeup	Accompanying actions
God Songs <i>devr pa:t</i>	Dance Tunes	S. India General (Bhajans, Kummi, etc.) Medium	God Ceremonies, Pabm, Dry Funeral, General devotional	Few limitations. Special times and places within ritual complexes	Diatonic	Women, occas. male percussionists (drums, cymbals)	Dancing in a circle, clapping hands, hand gestures
God Tunes <i>devr kol</i>	None	Nilgiri instrumental Slow	God ceremonies, Rain ceremony	Limited to God ceremonial contexts	Instrumentally derived	Standard instrumental ensemble W/ optional cymbals	Quiet sitting and listening; walking in procession, rituals
Dance Tunes <i>a:t kol</i>	God Songs, Dance tunes of Irulas & Kurumbas	Nilgiri instrumental Medium and Fast	God ceremonies, Pabm, Green and Dry funerals, Variety of modern contexts	Some pieces are limited to a particular place and time within God ceremony	Instrumentally derived	Standard instrumental ensemble	Dancing, rarely other ritual activities
Sad Tunes <i>dukt kol</i>	Sad Songs	Nilgiri Instrumental Slow	Green and Dry Funerals	Strictly limited to funerary contexts	Instrumentally derived	Standard instrumental ensemble (cymbals?)	Crying, sitting performance of rituals, walking in procession
Sad Songs <i>a:tl</i>	Sad Tunes, wailing at funerals	Somewhat unique in style as a vocal genre; close parallels with instrumental style. Slow	No ritual context. Formerly associated with youth dormitories, or "ert pay"	Few limitations, although inappropriate in festive contexts like God ceremonies and weddings	Diatonic; pitch inflection may change when sung w/ bugi:r or pula:ng	Solo, frequently women, sometimes men	Crying (rarely), occasional hand gestures

APPENDIX TEN

COMPARATIVE NAMES, FUNCTIONS AND MELODIC CONTENT OF KOTA KOLS

Read left to right for indication of similarity in name or function. See chart relating to rituals involving a given genre to determine the specific function, or ritual association, of a given *kol*. Some *kols* have more than one name; all names are listed in entry and entry is repeated if there is more than one function. Similarities in melodies will be indicated with superscripts. Numbers refer to numbers of tunes demonstrated as such for recording—not the number counted from actual performances. “#” indicates item number on compilation tape “Kota tunes for Hindu deities and Kota god tunes/sounds.” “%” Indicates numbers of selections on “Kota funeral tunes comparison tape”

Kolme:l kols	Tiegar	Kinar	Kurgoj	Kalac	Menar	Porgar	Genre
o:la:guc	o:la:guc/ gury uykd ¹	devr (ca:da)					devr
padnet devr a:td							devr
kunayno:r							devr
patn kacd							devr
amno:r			amno:r	amno:r [compare with vetkar]*			devr
kirputn meyn							devr
ni:lgury co:ym							devr
vetkar co:ym	(= 13) (listed below)		vetkar co:ym & (= 14) & actual	vetkar ayn oygd			devr
arcayl (tgnt)							devr
dodayno:r moyr patd (ca:da)			ayno:r	ayno:r			devr
ayno:r arcayl (tgnt)		ayno:r arcayl (tgnt)					devr

kaberc		man rkvrd: pulk oybd: vet erykd	kaberc	kaberc			devr
dodarcavl pircd (ca-da)							devr
kunarcavl pircd (tgnt)							devr
ku-mured	ku-mured	ku-tored ²	ku-mured	u-td			devr (ritual enaction)
	other god: 3 (Jair) #11- 13						
	gury ka-td #10						
anvired (3 contexts: vet vedyr/verg oybd/anvired)	[prob. bet vedyr/wood/ stone]#5-7	man rkvrd: pulk oybd: vet erykd					devr (ritual enaction)
	kanatrayn (2)	gura-nm kaytd					devr
	[possession of terka-rn] #2	devr (ca-da) [same as cell 1]					devr
	<i>mank oybd</i>	man rkvrd: pulk oybd: vet erykd	<i>mank oybd</i> [man eytr vadd]	<i>mank oybd</i> [compare w/ tiegar & kirputn]*			devr
		a-t kupa-c					devr a-t
pe-m (inviting Badagas) 3-4							devr a-t ³
guryva-l a-t							devr a-t
patm e-td							devr. a-t. duk-m
		muni-cvara (kola-l)					
		muni-cvara ³ (koyna-t)					

raṅgrayn		raṅgrayn pu-ṅm (tirugana-t)					
raṅgrayn		raṅgrayn oybd					
		raṅgrayn pu-ṅm (koyna-t)					
	ma-ga-lyamn (2)	ma-ga-ly- amn (koyna-t)	u-ke-ramn	ma-ryamn	ma-ry- amn (2) #26-7	ma-ga-ly amn ¹	ma-ryamn ¹
	Kṛishna co-ym						
	ca-da a-t based on song ⁷						
	tirugana-t based on harvest song ⁷						a-t
	tirugana-t based on harvest song ⁸						a-t
koyna-t	koyna-t (ca-trm kol)	koyna-t (3)					a-t
koyna-t (#)	koyna-t (3)	koyna-t (1)					devr a-t
ka-lgu-e a-t morning of u-trm							devr a-t
ka-lgu-e a-t (other: # M W)	ka-lgu-e a-t (M W)	ka-lgu-e a-t (other: # M W)	ka-lgu-e a-t (other: # M W)	ka-lgu-e a-t (other: # M W)			devr a-t
ka-lgu-e a-t (plain: # M W)	ka-lgu-e a-t (M1W1)	ka-lgu-e a-t (M3W2)	ka-lgu-e a-t (plain: # M W)	ka-lgu-e a-t (plain: # M W)			a-t
tirugana-t (M W)	tirugana-t (M W)	tirugana-t (M1 W2/3)	tirugana-t (M W)	tirugana-t (M W)			devr a-t

tirugana:t (plain: M W)	tirugana:t (plain: M 3W3)	tirugana:t (plain: M W)	tirugana:t (plain: M W)	tirugana:t (plain: M W)			a:t
women's 1st 3 at pacal							
gagva:l a:t							a:t
tema:ng (cloak around chest)							a:t
piga:lmundal or kavarac	bibarmara:t						a:t (Kurumba origin)
				u-ra:yl kumi			a:t (Urah origin)
na:ngmu:ga:t				l			a:t (women)
				padn:r da:k			a:t (women)
	Welcoming wedding party? ² (2)						Welcoming 'kind of pe:rn kol ³)
							dukt kol
<i>dukt</i> [1 step less: check Munkal]			<i>dukt</i>	<i>dukt</i>	<i>dukt</i>		
varlda:v ku:mured [comp. devr]							dukt-- varlda:v
					pe:rn (ca:da)		varlda:v
tic it %52	tic it		tic it %58		tic it (tgnt) %8 (bier lighting)		dukt (ritual enaction)
ta:v i:t kol (tgnt) ta:v kartd (bier lifting) %17	ta:v kaytd kol %28		ta:v kartd %26	kotanm/va rlda:v ta:v piled %23	kotanm/t a:v i:td lifting bier (tgnt)tic it %4		dukt (ritual enaction)

ta-v r-tr oybd (ca-da) % 30 (bier carrying)	ta-v r-tr oybd % 36		ta-v r-tr oybd (ca-da) % 32 (bier carrying) % 34		carrying bier (ca-da) %6		
pe:m			pe:m %16		women's pe:m (ca-da) %2		
nela:gott er:ki:kd %42					%48 ca:tm at Me:na:r		
					er:veed (2) %64, 66		varl:da:v
payv:rd %68 (ca-da)							varl:da:v
melpac mog %75					melpac mog %35		varl:da:v
[a:ked kol]					[a:ked] Gundan claims it's same as Kolme:l anvired		varl:da:v
na:rgu:c kol (3)							
r:m taed (many)							
	dukt based on ref#35 ¹⁰						
	dukt based on ref#36 ¹¹						
			2 buffalo slaughterin g tunes M55:4; M56:11				
			unkta:e:r				

(song based)							
	dukt based on ref#140 ^{1,2}						
			dukt based on song en an caio M55.6				
			dukt based on mathi song Jairaz .75&D5				

Notes

1. Pucan's comment on Tiegār Gury uykd kol: it is different from that of Kolme:l and repeats only 1-4 of the tune. Aug. 26 1991, while listening to tape K5. Probably he was referring to the tune used for Terka:rn possession, so compare both with Kolme:l o:la:gue kol.
2. Also called kob me:l na:l payl parvd vadd kol, lit. "horn up (or band) [i.e. music] day in house praying and coming".
3. Devr et a-ra:d kol--played after the terka:rn gets possessed by Muni:cvara
4. Mandelbaum, 47a
5. Sivan said that Kipa:c got possessed by Māriyamman and sang a song "cinda: de:vi ma:riama:, cirere kori pa:riyama a:ndavale: ma:riama: makal kuraye: ti:rama" (probably a Tamil translation of rather than the original song), they play this song as a kol. During puja.
6. koyl ule nu:l cande, ref #105. K14.4, 98 [badly done]
7. Badaga harvest song, o:ni o:ni, ref #141. K14A.21, 735
8. Badaga harvest song, āri cundarā, ref #142. K14A.23, 770.
9. At least one of these based on a song, probably Badaga language. Ku:vana kake, K14B.8, 204
10. Enanga:na ma:yde. B Kamatn (Pukali). K14:12, 586.
11. Ma:niko: B Kamatn (Pukali) K14:15, 635
12. A:ro:ge aravate malume to:yumba:. Probably Badaga language. K14A:16&18, 656

APPENDIX ELEVEN

A CATALOGUE OF KOTA SONGS, KEYED TO FIELD RECORDINGS AND TEXT COMPILATIONS

M=Main collection of song texts

B=Blue folder with song texts from 1990-91

(Copies of field recordings and songs texts available in the Richard Wolf Collection at the Archives and Research Center for Ethnomusicology, Delhi)

Re- f#	Title/ first words	Genre	Plot or subject	Village of Origin	Textual Source	Cassette Source	Singer(s)
1	Velke velke	God	Mundka-no:l searches for sacred flame which disappeared due to ritual fault on part of mundka-no:n	Kolme:l	M1 1. M9 2. M35 45:? K11log 2. Jairaz. '84. 66:6	Kolme:l part na:l 1.DAT 9:2.DAT9 4 5. DAT3 9. K11 2.Jair- az '84, 66:?	Many: Pa Mathi & Kanymathi. B Mari. Many: K. Pucan:?
2	Baca:na	God	Holy black cow that led Kotas into Nilgiris: appears to have originally been a work song: refers to bundles		M1:2:/B25: 28; K11log:1: Jairaz. '84. 65:8:66 5: Mand.34a	KPN:2:DA T 23 2:K8B19 (28).K11 1. Jairaz. '84.6 5:06 ? Mand.34a	Many. many: Savitri. K. Pucan.???
3	Naraja:ne	God	Joking song poking fun at villagers: Pa. Mathi said when bad people die, god sends the souls to a place on the ground where ants will bite them: good pe- ople are sent next to god.		M1 3.M10: 3.M14&15: 15.M50& 51 10:?	KPN 3.DA T 9 3DA [9 1 5: Pa. Mathi song text clarif. B [text only]: DAT23 1	Many: Pa Mathi & Kanymathi. Pa. Mathi. Pa. Mathi. many
4	Cu:vala:re ma:citama	God	Chettiar merchant comes to town and Kota girl asks mother for various trinkets, a chain, etc.		M1:4: M10:4: M15:16:Ma nd.36h	KPN:4 DAT9:4: DAT9 16: Mand.36.h	Many: Pa. Mathi&Ka nymathi. Pa.Mathi:?
5	Ce:le ce:le	God	Song about fig tree (Badaga Language)		M1 5	KPN 5	Many

6	Aragar- ane civa- civa-ne	God	Song to Murugan com- posed by Tiegarr Rajam- mal: supplication: pro- mises to visit temples, etc.	Tiegarr	M1.6:B4- 6.4:B15& 16-18	KPN 6: K8 A:4:K8B: 9(18)	Many:Math i & Anita: B. Kamatr (Pukali)
7	Raje- gopa:la	God	Tamil devotional song to Rajagopalan		M1 7:	KPN 7: DAT23-17	Many: Many
8	Macam- amma/ Mariam- ma	God	In honor of Bokkapur Masiniamma, composed by Rajammal	Tiegarr	M1.8:M55 & 56.7: B3&4 3: B24.26.7:	KPN 8:DA T11.7:DAT 23:14:K8A: 3:K8B17(2 6):K15A:1	Many:Kun- yayn:Ma- ny: Mathi & Anita:Sa- vitr: Many
9	Civa- cambo	God	In honor of Siva: composed by Rajammal	Tiegarr	M1.9:/B1.1 /Jairaz:75 10:Jairaz: 84.65.7:	KPN 9:DA T 23:16: K8 A:1, K7 A:7[modal shift]:Jairaz 75#1 2:Jair az:84.65.7:	Many: Many: Mathi & Anita, S Mangr: 12 women. 1:
10	Tana:na	God	In honor of the invisible Kamatraya of seven villages, describes his powers and characteristics.	Pogarr	M2:10	KPN 10	Many
11	Vet- vermbe	God	Supplication to Ma:riamma	Pogarr	M2:11	KPN:11	Many
12	Va:go ama	God	Song to Ma:ga-liamma	Pogarr	M2&4:12	KPN 12	Many
13	Anbaneke	God	Song to Shanmugam (Tamil)		M3&4:14	KPN 14	Many
14	Ve:lume ce:lume	God	To Bokkapur Ma:riamma: mentions each village singing & playing instruments for goddess	Pogarr	M4:13	KPN 13	Many
15	Ayyappa	God	Ayyappa song, prob. in Tamil, not transcribed		M4:15	KPN 15	Many
16	Mariam- ma	God	Song to Marimma, not transcribed, mostly Tamil: composed by Donan	Me:nar	M4:16	KPN 16	Many
17	Kurgo:dur madil lec ma:da	God	Unsure of words,: commonly sung now too, but can't locate		Mand. 35a	Mand. 35a	
18	Peve:r katle	God	Mariamamma song	Pogarr	M4:18	KPN:18	Many

19	Ida-re ka-ynge	atl	Recounts life events of Ka-ynge; uses multiple names for same person; proverbs		M5	Bake Tefi 48.11. Mand.23b	'
20	Do-ne ayo-	atl	Mourns death of Do-nan; possibly by mother or father; reference to not putting up a fence and not looking after him well		M6.2	Bake Tefi 49.1	'
21	Ima-va co-ke-ne	atl	Mourns the death of buffaloes and cows chastizes Kotas for sacrificing them	Kolme-l	M6&7.3. Mand.51-3	Bake Tefi 49.3. Mand. 51-3	Sulli. Sulli
22	Song of Mathi (E-tk o-ko-me)	atl	Brother and sister go to forest to collect bamboo. meet with omens along way; girl dies		M8.M21.23 .M84.9(text forgotten). M88.19& 89.21-3 (all partial).B15 15(partial). B15.16 (partial).Jair az.84. 65.6.	Mds Govt Museum.11 .DAT9.23. DAT12.9.D AT12.19&2 1-23.K8B 6(15).K8B 7(16)(smo o-th style). Jairaz.84. 65.2.	P.V. Mathi. Penij. Penij (all partial). Chandra- mmal and Devaki. B Kamatn (Pukali).?
23	Muttalanta	Teruk kūttu	Tamil invocation song sung at beginning of drama	[Kol- me-l]	M9:1	DAT9:1	Pa. Mathi
24	Kala ka-re [kanmayo ponmayo]; en-na kanmayo; en-na ponayo	atl	Two Urali women try to make two Kota brothers their husbands; spirits of dead appear to Kotas in dream and sing this song. saying "go back, there have been too many deaths in the village, we've given sleeping potions to the Urali women"	Me-na-r	M10: 5 [& M51&52 11]; M25 27. M72.35	DAT9:5; DAT9:27 DAT10:35	Pa. Mathi; Mic & S Mangr. Bebi
25	Kala ka-re	story	story associated with above atl		M10.6. M52.12	DAT9.6	Pa. Mathi

26	Do-yne: enanganana na do-yne	a-tl	Story of beautiful pregnant girl, the naryke-r mundka-no-l, killed in the forest by a tiger. Her brother, the a-ke-r Mundka-no-n sings this song. [Some version of this song exhibit good examples of instrumental 'gag' like sounds]		M10&11.7; M15&16.1 7; M47.2; M48.4. & 5. story; Jairaz 75:8; Mand 21 ² .	DAT9.7; DAT9.17; DAT5.2; 'Pa. Mathi. song text clarif'. Jairaz 75#1. Mand.21 ² .	Kanymathi & Pa Mathi; Pa Mathi; Pa Mathi; Pa Mathi (ad- dit lyrics & story). ²
27	Enane ane	a-tl	Two brothers go hunting for bison; one is a mundka-no-n; he has become polluted by going near the menstrual hut and shouldn't go hunting; one brother is killed; story same as Todve-tk oybd a-tl, though melody on Mand.'s recording is different. Kanymathi's melody same as song of Mathi (ref#22).	Me-nar	M11&12.8.	DAT9.8; Mand.22 (diff. melody)	Kanymathi
28	Enane ane	story	Story of above; Mentions shooting of buffalo with bow and arrow and butchering it for the meat; if this is done with purity and righteousness, rain will come to the village. Also some mention of Kote-rve-ki-n and the place where Kotas rest on their way to the land of the dead; they stop and rest; women put on mandu-v and jewelry; they sleep; then go; see ref. by Sulli too.	Me-nar	M12&13.9; Mandel- baum 5.22.38, p2.: M164- 70	DAT9.9; Tigar V Mathi song ex. cont. 2	Kanymathi
29	Cutekal cube-ka-ra Calcutave ve-yv- arm ga-ra	a-tl	Composed by widow, S Rangamathi, recounting the exploits of her husband Sulli	Kolme-l	M31.36 M39.6	DAT9.36 DAT10.6	K. Mangr. S Ranga- mathi
30	Eni-na-na karaja-le: enava-na ta-do-je: enava-na karja-le	a-tl	Big Tigar varlda-v buffalo let out of pen by jealous people; daughter of deceased for whom buffalo was to be sacrificed sang this song; buffalo returned because of the power and righteousness of the ancestors	Tigar	M13.12; M16-17.18; M27&28; 30; M28.31 M31.37	DAT9.12; DAT9.18; DAT9.30; DAT9.31; DAT9.37.K 7A.9	Kanymathi. Pa. Mathi; Pu. Mathi; S Mangr. K. Mangr. S. Mangr

31	Enr-nana karajale:	story	Story associated with above a-tl	Ticgar	M14 12	DAT9 12: K7 8	Kanyamathi. S Mangi
32	Enave ranguma-d y: Kolme-l ko-ka-le	a-tl	S Raman's father sang this for his (?) daughter Rangamathi who died. There was a quarrel as to which cremation ground to cremate her in. [good example of 'gag'-like syllables]	Kolme-l	M14 13. M73 37. M88 18	DAT9 13. DAT10 37. DAT 12. 18	Kanyamathi. Kemb. S Raman
33	Enave ma-d- amma:	a-tl	A man from Ticgar named Mukva-yep-ri-n sang this song for his mother's elder sister, who had raised him: references to places might have to do with how he found out there was a death--i.e. seeing people gathered at various places near the village, knowing there was a funeral, he ran	Ticgar	M17&18: 19	DAT9 19	V Mathi
34	Ayo mor-le nave ma-yde	a-tl	Mukva-yep-ri-n sang this song about his daughter, who died after she went into the forest to collect firewood	Ticgar	M18&19: 20	DAT9 20	V Mathi
35	Ayo enga ma-yde	a-tl	Mukva-yep-ri-n sang for death of his younger sister: she had been warned not to marry into her to-be hus- bands family; he was lazy and worked her to death: Pukali uses this melody to sing other Mathi song. "song of Mathi" (ref.#22); Rangamathi's version gives additional details: The is a kol set to this melody	Ticgar	M19&20. 21: B15:17 M37& 39:57.	DAT9 21. K8B: 8(17)[me- lody only same]. DAT10 5. K14 10&11	V Mathi; Pukali: S. Ranga- mathi. ? 'Devaki')
35a	Ayo enga ma-yde	story	Story associated with above			K14 13	'(Devaki)'

36	Potr-kai ke-rle (Maniko)	a-tl	Song about Maniko In Mand's notes 5.22.38 'Kinar a-tl told to Murray': probably recounting events in life of girl, recalled how she asked for a mund for 3-4-anna coins to cover her arm; a mund for 6-4 anna coins to cover her foot; recalls smell of plaintain from smithy; acc. to Kuip, father sends daughter to marry someone in Kiker; she dies; father sings song for her. There is a kol based on this melody	Kinar	M21:23. M39:7. B14:14. B18:20. B28:4 (short). B29&30:7. Jairaz:84. 65:5.	DAT9:23. Mand.20a& 24.DAT 10:7. K8B 5(14). K8 B11(20). K9A4. K9A7 K14:14.Jair az:84#2...	V Mathi. S Rang- amathi. R. Devaki. M. Berbi. Kuip. (buli) devaki). Rajammal &?
37	Enave decma-yng e	a-tl	Two girls go to collect clay together. Decma-yng e is told she should only go with male friends, not female friends because of jealousy; girl tells her she smells like a non-Kota man; Decmange commits suicide out of shame		M22:24. M89:24	DAT9:24. DAT12:24	Mic. Penij
37a	Enave decma-yng e	story	Story associated with above; more detail; slightly diff. than above; song composed by dead girl's father		M89-91:25	DAT12:25	Penij
38	Ava enave Ma-ga-yle	a-tl	About a woman named Magali who left her husband Malan and married someone in Kinar		M22:25	DAT9:25	Mic
39	Eni-na-na eni-ne kunaga-re. Ka-rga-le marka-le ka-tle Kunaga-re	a-tl	[First ex. no text; use tune for comparison] .Song about a Toda from Viky vet mand who was hit by lightning; he was known as a welcher/beggar and others wished him to be struck by lightning; all sorts of nasty things he did or said are mentioned; yet ends with 'it is not good in the world that Kunaga-ra died'	Tiega-r	M13:11. M23-5:26. M58:14. M58:15. M88&89: 20	DAT9:11. DAT9:26. DAT11: 14 (wrong melody). DAT11:15 (Right melody). DAT12:20	Kanvmathi. V Mathi. Cindamani. Cindamani. Penij

40	Enava-na ma-yde	a-tl	Girl went out to ragi fields: a Kurumba appeared in various animal forms and finally killed her by magic, plaining a veky leaf near where he knew she would go. This is sung to the 'song of mathi' melody (ref.#22)	Ticgar	M26.28	DAT9 28	Pu. Mathi
41	Enava-na Piyavo	a-tl	Song about life of Puy her beauty etc. Composed by her older brother Mungan (also older brother of Pa. Mathi)	Kolme-l	M27 29; M 40&41 10.7.	DAT9 29; DAT10 10; DAT 22.20	Cindamani &S Mangi. R. Mathi. Cindamani
42	Aya ana kara-le	God	S. Raman's song about the god ceremony dancing, playing music, not sleeping, etc.	Kolme-l	M28&29 32; M43. 13; M88 17	DAT9 32 DAT10 13. DAT 12 17	S Mangi. R Mathi. S Raman
43	Enava Ma-yde	a-tl	Sung for younger sister by brother: girl goes to forest, animals cross path: she feels pain in her womb and dies: sung to tune of 'song of mathi' (ref #22) though rhythmic relationships are changed; check text of Jairaz. version, also Kurgoj; Bebi's version seems to link Cindamani's version with the collecting bamboo version of ref#22. 'kal ito' appears in lyrics. does this refer to the belief that Kurumbas can fill the body with rocks?; Kembi's version links even more closely with old recording-- conversation between brother and sister, bamboo collecting, goes to defecate, etc.	Kurgoj	M29&30 33. Jairaz 175 7. M70 32. M73&74 38	DAT9 33. Jairaz 175 #1 2. DAT10 32. DAT10 38	Cindamani. 3 women. Bebi. Kembi

44	Eni-na-na Malo: A-la-ra-de a-la-ra-de aravanga-r e eni-ne malo	a:tl	Man gets sick, goes to sleep, souls of dead appear in dream and sing this song, saying 'you haven't grown back teeth yet and there's still time to play ball with a clump of thorny branches'. Man named Maln goes to an uninhabited forest and lies down to sleep, thinking he'll die. Soul of dead appears to him in a dream and says 'I am like your mother, your grand-mother, you're the headman of ten men, you won't die'		M30:34, M48:6 (story), M49:7, M49:8 (addit. words), M69:28	DAT9:34, Pa. Mathi song text clarif., DAT 5:16, Pa mathi song text clarif., DAT10:28	Pa. Mathi, Pa. Mathi, Pa. Mathi, Pa. Mathi, V. Mathi
45	Eni-na-na Kurbayo	a:tl	Kurumba man attempts to rape/seduce Toda woman, she sings this song to him, feeds him, rubs him with clarified butter, puts him to sleep, bolts the door and sets fire to the hut. There is a kol to this melody	Kurgoj/	M30&31 35, M74 39, M74:40	DAT9:35, DAT10:39, DAT10:40	Pa. Mathi, Kembu, Cindamani
46	Oda-le caleke	-- [a:tl?]	B. Mari composed this song for her sullen and reclusive brother Ka-man, who people say bad things about and god does not watch over.	Kolme:l	M31&32: 38	DAT9:38	B. Mari
47	Neynje karygo aya	--	B. Mari composed this in praise of her husband. M. K. Bellan: tune taken from Tamil bhakti song <i>ullam urukuta:ya</i>	Kolme:l	M32&33 39	DAT9:39	B. Mari
48	Eni-na- Kavdayo	a:tl	Composed by Pucan's mother for the death of her husband; he died while they were walking through the forest; she had to return alone and call someone to bring the body; There is a kol to this melody	Kolme:l	M33:40, M40:9	DAT9:40, DAT10:9	B. Mari R Mathi

49	Ko-veke mol-a-niyo	-- [a-tl]	Composed by A.K. Rangan. 'Kota daughters, stop crying for the dead: the souls of the dead beat their foreheads out of grief: it is dodayno-r's curse: tell kunayno-r, he will end that curse': note highest tessitura on 'kolme:l paca:l': Shanta Ranga Rao recognized the melody, possibly from film Devadas; see ref.#94 for same melody; Raman's version says 'pin od ayno-r' instead of kunayno-r.	Kolme:l	M33&34 41. M64 19: M87& 88. 16: K11log4...	DAT9 41. DAT10: 19: DAT 12.16. K11B2:K7 A.6	B. Mari. P Kamatn: S. Raman: L. Ranga- mathi. Duryodana
50	Kando-ne d'akle	[God]	Composed by B. Mari, directed to the god Kamatraya, 'why are you like an outsider, not keeping watch over us, plains people filling up our village?' Describes his lack of satisfaction with the temple and practitioners. 'without god the village is not beautiful, god'	Kolme:l	M34 42	DAT9 42	B Mari

51	Aracayr ucce	-- [a:tl]	Composed by A. K. Rangan; describes why the population of the Kotas has decreased 'listen, hill kings who have become ruined! Tamil plains people who don't even have a sitting room have increased in population!' animal populations increase: the one's who give cows as an offering are not from madurai (or, 'aren't they'); the ones who go around wearing white cloths and asking for others' wives are not Europeans. Kamatr and Mathi, why has our population died out? Figure it out! [The meaning is still not clear to me; M63 gives further info]; Shanta Ranga Rao said the melody was from the 1950s movie <i>pāṇāle bhairavi</i> : the same song was sung in many Indian languages	Kolme:l	M34&35: 43. M45:17. M63:18. K11log3...	DAT9:43. DAT10:17. DAT10:18. K11B. K7A:10	B. Man; R. Mathi; P. Kamatn. I. Ranga- mathi; S. Mangi
52	Ka:l eyure karadir aṭe	-- [God]	Composed by A. K. Rangan; about a young bride, telling her to put charcoal on her face to protect her from the evil eye of outsiders. telling her that her husband Kamatr wil be like a father to her. bringng her up	Kolme:l	M35:44	DAT9:44	B Man

53	Murndger e ko-ytelm	God	Composed by Gundapucan (A. K. Rangan's son) about the god festival: 3 keers of women throw 3 bundles of firewood, having done that they dance to 3 kols, don't avoid dancing and singing because outsiders and married men watch you: let us dance unflatteringly [legs like branches]: while pounding the millet, without touching even a brahmin girl, let us make beautiful husked millet	Kolme:l	M36 1. M44 16.M9 3 (text not transcribed)	DAT10.1: DAT10 16. DAT 12 28	B Mari: R Mathi: Gunda- pucan
54	Ayno:re nine	God	Composed by B. Mari to tune of Tamil film song <i>rācātti unne kānāta neñcu</i> : Without seeing you my heart trembles like a half pot of water. . . we are suffering like orphans, come god and give us a boon	Kolme:l	M36&7 2	DAT10 2	B Mari
55	Oreggo ama	Lulla by	Composed by B. Mari: tells sleeping girl of all her troubles with the Kota community: ends with conduct yourself lovingly and don't fear	Kolme:l	M37.3& M38	DAT10 3	B. Mari
56	Amede conde na-rego	[God]	Composed by Donan. Speaks of the universality of the land of the dead, which does not recognize differences in religion [tune from cinema song]	Me:na:r	M37 4. M82 4	DAT10 4. DAT 12 4	B Mari: B Ca:ntu
57	Ayo vede mayde	a:tl	A girl takes calf into kajakard forest between Tiega:r and Kolme:l . tiger kills them both: singing laments for all the people on bundle of firewood is calculated: for you, two bundles: melody same as 'song of mathi' ref #22, though story is different	Tiega:r	M40 8. B26&27 1	DAT10 8. K9A!	S Ranga- mathi: K. Maga:li

58	Ama c-andgo ama Elicabete	a-tl	Composed by R. Mathi for her daughter Elizabeth, who died when she was 3. Talks about god plucking her away and what everyday things she would have done if she had grown up. One odd image is that of cloths she would have washed becoming orphans- -common song image, stretched here.	Kolme:l	M41&42. 11	DAT10 11	R. Mathi
59	Enane Ma-gayle	a-tl	Composed for R. Mathi's grandmother's younger sister's husband by his first wife. 'one without child, you did all things connected with worshipping ayno:r, then you made a vow and visited Mettupalayam. Kunjappanai, etc.' (might be related to ref. #98)	Porgar (?)	M42&43 12	DAT10 12	R. Mathi
60	Ko-ka-le ko-ytelm	God	Composed by Gundpucan: says what to sing and do and not do during the god ceremony	Kolme:l	M43&44 14. M82& 83.6; M93: 29 (not tran- scribed)/:Ja iraz. 75:6	DAT10 14. DAT 12:6. DAT 2: 29. DAT 23:7. Jaraz. 75 #1?	R. Mathi. B. Ca-nti. Gunda- pucan: Many: 2 women.
61	Ardege tgle	--	Composed by Rangan. 'Tell me moon, shining moon, my husband has left without telling me where he was going: is that strange?' For the sake of my uncle and aunt's worries, go quickly [and find out]!'. P. Kamatn's rendition, text different: Shanta Ranga Rao thought the song might be from a 1930s or 40s film song	Kolme:l	M44-15. M64-20	DAT10 15. DAT 10-20	R. Mathi. P. Kamatn
62	vilave-ti-n e iti-re aman va-yeke	a-tl	Appears to be about life of Tuj, who died	[Kol- me:l]	M46&47-1	DAT5-13	Pa. Mathi

63	paca:layno re ka-ra:vo:re	God	Pa. Mathi's composition: mentions place name (paca:layno:r): black cow, erecting the foundation house, work, all taught by god.	Kolme:l	M48:3	DAT5:15	Pa. Mathi
64	Bikri:va mara	a:tl (Ba- daga)	Me:na:r Sivan's mother heard a Badaga woman singing/crying this song over her uncle's death; she started singing it and Pa. mathi learned it from her	[Me- na:r area]	M50:9	DAT5:17	Pa. Mathi
65	Agadi ama	Lulla by:a:tl	Kunyka:n composed this song for her daughter's daughter who kept on asking for her deceased father. Calls child by different names, and in reference to different kind, tells her to go play etc., that her grandmother is there, not to be afraid. Does not contain lullaby syllables "jo jo"	Kurgo:j	M57:13	DAT11 13	Kunyka:n
66	A:rgo ama pa:rgo	God	Mari's composition: calls girls to dance and sing beautifully in the paca:l; names village trees, the song naraja:yne, gold umbrella, gathering of all gods	Kolme:l	M58:15	DAT11 15	Mari
67	Ko:ka:le gandelm	--	Mari's composition about drunkards; inspired by her brother Singan. Mentions times of day: 7:00 leave for the shops area; 8 go to Sam's shop for idlies; 12 to arrack shop; 6 pm return staggering; 8 you don't know where you are; you give our grandfathers' wealth to others	Kolme:l	M59:17	DAT11:17	Mari

68	Kay tatume	God	Mari's composition: clapping hands, saying naraja-yne, clap hands with desire and bliss for anyone and anyone, without making mistakes, stepping, wearing manduv and black beads, etc.	Kolme:l	M59&60: 18	DAT:11 18	Mari
69	A:n kaba:lin mo:le	-- [a:tl singin g style]	Cindamani's composition about herself, using her father's and brothers' names and their kinship relationship as basis for rhymes: plays on words descriptive of herself (see similar technique in ref.#85): "in 7 villages there are not 8 men for one woman" that is, there are no other Kota families where so many brothers have only one sister	Kurgo:y Kol- me:l	M60&61 19	DAT:11 19	Cindamani

70	Enava- enako-mo ma-dy	a:tl	Cinda-manu composed this about her drunkard husband Singan's mother. Singan had been complaining that Cindamani was singing a:tl's about everyone except his mother and begged her to compose one. It describes Singan's mother raising her three children and what they have done. Singan's sister is B. Mari (see ref#67) and brother is Ka-man (ref # 46); describes Singan (nickname 'dirt mouth') as like Sivaji Ganesan the way he wears a suit and walks. Singan wanted a younger sister so they made an offering at the mariamman temple, that's why B. Mari is named Mari; it ends with the question, why is your son sngan without sense or wealth drinking arrack and wandering the streets? why is Ka-man's wife to one side without sense (seh left him); without brothers, why does Mari not talk to me?	Kolme:l	M61&62: 20	DAT11 20	Cindamani
71	Ey oli-vo enave de-le	-- [love song/ a:tl]	Rangan's composition about a girl named dele not clear whether she died; she was probably a Kota, since she is called dele mathi at one point; tune probably from cinema; style of rendition typical warbling cinema style	Kolme:l	M65 21	DAT10 21	P Kamatn
72	Ko-ta-le ko-ta-ce- ka-yre	-- [love song]	Rangan's composition, school is for male and female friends; 'you are queen, I am king'; probably a cinema melody	Kolme:l	M65 22	DAT10 22	P Kamatn

73	Va:natl itre maligde	--	Rangan's composition: 'quickly go, you, sun from the sky, moving like the shaking of flowers: those who provided food for you on that day are watching you and worrying: go, go!' Melody from Hindi film song <i>mera lāl dupṭa mal mal kā</i>	Kolme:l	M66&67 23	DAT10: 23	P Kamatn
74	Kolme:l paca:lle	God	Rangan's song 'those who celebrate in kolme:l paca:l, ayno:r, when we came empty handed to the Vili mountain area, you looked after us and gave us the bow and arrow'	Kolme:l	M67:24	DAT10: 24	P Kamatn
75	Enana:na ane enake:na ane mundka:n o:n a:ye:ne	a:tl	During the god ceremony, after the first ritual meal and before the second the mundka:n o:n died: his brother, crying, sang this song. Melody same as ref#35.	Tiega:r	M67:25	DAT10: 25	V Mathu
76	Bilakam- ba:mana: ma:t-agayi bi:tahe:na ga:mama: ka:naia- ka:n	Ba- daga song	The melody of this slightly resembles the much faster melody on Bake's tape of Bugiri with voice 46.6/7. Also resembles slightly the Badaga song sung by Pa. Mathu, ref. #64. I may have asked V. mathu to sing the song on the Bake tape, because we were listening to others on it & transcribing the words. She said on the tape she would do the best she could, suggesting I might have requested it. This leads to a story of another Tiega:r woman who sang "bi a:ta" instead of "bi:ta"	Tiega:r area	M68:26 (text not transcribed)	DAT10: 26	V Mathu

77	Enana-na ane ka'nd- i'ge'be katbe	a-tl	Tells story of Mane-ga-rar who went to Dhanayakan Kottai to pay taxes; while returning he dropped dead from Cholera; describes mourning, funeral ritual, etc. Melody same as ref. #35	Ticga-r prob	M68&69 27	DAT10 27	V Mathi
78	Cirmogal e ba:siti a:re	Ba- daga song	Possibly a song of heroism	Koda- mudi	M69 29	DAT10 29	V Mathi
79	Eni'na eni'na Maylo	a-tl	Sung about man named Maylan "I told you not to go to the Toda dry funeral ground, you said your stomach pricks with hunger, you went to Madnkai without medicine, without sense, at the time of a dry funeral; having married the wife you desired but without a chance to enjoy that desire, if one goes to Kajal and hears Pulang playing, he will ask 'who is playing pulang'; having gone to Nerd-i plantation and climbed a boulder you said 'I'll play Pulang'"	Kurgo:j	M69&70 30	DAT10 30	Kembi
80	Eni'na Ni'lama	a-tl	"my father Ni'lm, where did the god of Manjam Na-r go? where did ayo-r go? where did the god of Kala-c go?" [good example of gag- like sounds]	Kurgo:j	M70 31	DAT10 31	Kembi
81	Eni'na-na eni'na ma'mo	a-tl	Bebi composed this for her 'uncle' (probably husband's father); she describes how he gave various offerings to the gods, but the gods did not give him a good blessing [because he died]	Kurgo:j	M70&71 33	DAT10 33	Bebi
82	Jo jo . orgigo	ta-l- a-ttu	Bebi composed this lullaby for her granddaughter out of grief while her own husband was slowly dying	Kurgo:j	M71&72, 34	DAT10 34	Bebi

83	Eni-na-na Anada-co	a-tl	Describes Kurumba coming in the form of various animals and crossing Anadasan's path	Kurgoj (prob)	M72&73 36	DAT10: 36	Bebi
84	Enan Calo	a-tl	Man from Kurgoj died in Kala-c, his younger sistern cried, singing this song as the body was carried back to his village; mentions events of everyday life; places he went, etc.; a dukt kol based on this song was played by Mundan, M55:6. The instrumental version sounds surprisingly like a god tune, in Kolme:l called Ve-tka-r co-ym kol.	Kurgoj	M74&75 41	DAT10: 41	Cindaman
85	Ayno:m amno:m ve:nd- ko-me	[God]	Asks for blessing from Kota gods and mariamman; mentions court case fighting an ejection order; singer starts shaking after singing this, becoming possessed by God (she was also feeling ill that day); last section of the song addresses the person involved in the court case as the son of various grandfathers, and uses plays on words (i.e. on the grandfathers' names) to describe his character. (See ref.#69 for similar technique)	Kurgoj	M75&76 42	DAT10: 42	Kunvkavn
86	Ayno:r amno:r ve:nd- ko-me	God	Describes worshipping god, calls god, and mentions places where god is Tune is same as that for velke velke, ref#1	Kurgoj	M76:43	DAT10: 43	Kunvkavn

87	Eni-na-na ma-nte- ke-lo-ne kayti-ne-ne	a-tl	Kunykayn composed this song when her husband went to Deval plantation to drive buffaloes and collect wages: she was afraid because that was a Kurumba area: he returned unharmed and still lived at the day of this recording: text reflects a-tl style: clear triple meter unlike a-tls (though sometimes the rhythm is not strictly maintained)	Kurgoj	M77-44	DAT10-44	Kunykayn
88	Eni-na-na	story	Story associated with above a-tl, told by composer	Kurgoj	M77&78 44a	DAT10-44	Kunykayn
89	Anne naymbite	a-tl	Sung to an older brother who went away and died: song describes grief of the family, searching for him, crying etc.	Tiegar prob	M79&80-1	DAT12-1	V Mathi
90	Garedede mo-tene	a-tl	Mourns death of a woman named Cindamani, discusses events in her life, marriage etc., mentions jasmine flowers in connection with her	Tiegar prob	M80&81-2	DAT12-2	V Mathi
91	--	a-tl	Melody of a-tl Mari plans to compose	Kolme-l	M82-3	DAT12-3	B Mari
92	Jo Jo ra-me	ta-lat	Lullaby composed by T Bellan, Ca-nti's uncle	Me-nar	M82-5	DAT12-5	B Ca-nti
93	Aynegu-le amnegu-le va-co-yme. la la la...va co-ymu	God	Calls god and names various places where god resides: composed by Me-nar Sivan:	Me-nar	M83 7, 11 M4-17	DAT12-7, DAT23-6, K12A-1 (followed by explanation, not transe.) .KPN-17	B Ca-nti, Many, Sivan, Many

94	Kitle marme da:ke	--	Composed by Do-nan 'our women are like rotting wood, not sturdy: drinking opium dregs and forgetting to eat is not ok: why should and opium drinking aged women give such problems to her daughter-in-law?'. For what reason are youthfully, red complexioned women's faces withered?' same melody as ref# 49, 'ko-vk mo-la-niyo'	Me-na-r	M83.8	DAT12.8	B. Carntu
95	Ko-tagiri male-	God	Song composed by Rangamathi of Kotagiri about the Kotas as adivasis, and how Shiva-Sakti created and protects them, erects pandal, takes bath, descends into the fire etc. Don't give protection to the other surrounding communities. Melody and style meander and slow, more like an a-tl, though this clearly is not one	Porga-r	M84.10	DAT12.10	M. Ranga-mathi
96	Ulama uyge:ne aya Kandaya	God	M. Rangamathi's song, asking Murugan to look after her sons Raman and Lakshmanan, again, not a hand clapping style god song.	Porga-r	M84&85. 11	DAT12.11	M. Ranga-mathi
97	Ulam urygi kanir	God [Ta- mil]	Tamil bhakti song on Murugan; typical Tamil style, viruttam-like		M85.12	DAT12.11	M. Ranga-mathi
98	Porga-re ko-ka-le aya mayd- a-nme	a-tl	Mourning song for Magali, mentions things he did in his life: signs of modernity: english words and repeated use of term adivasi; melody and style very similar to ref #95 and 96 above: might refer to same person as ref#59: strong cinema flavor of modern Tamil cinema	Porga-r	M85&86 13	DAT12.13	M. Ranga-mathi

99	Lakshman a- kapat kana	a-tl	M. Rangamathi's song, mourning for her son Lakshmanan's death: he was a cinema actors who drank himself to death. describes events in his life, attributes etc.	Porga-r	M86.14	DAT12.14	M. Ranga- mathi
100	Cinema-vk oypone	a-tl	Another mourning song of Rangamathi's for Lakshmanan	Porga-r	M86&87 15	DAT12.15	M. Ranga- mathi
101	Enava- puy avo	a-tl	Cinda-mani's composition for her own mother./ note text similarities with #41	Kolme:l / Kurgo-j	M91-93.26	DAT12.26	Cinda-mani
102	Ko-vd ja-ydiki va-ra-ypid e ce-re vaduko	a-tl	Composed by Gundpucan for his dead wife. Badness that has never come to a Kota has come, my thinking of it never ends. [cinema melody, prob	Kolme:l	M93.27 (text not transcribed)	DAT12 27(32)	Gunda- pucan
103	Ma-gavan e e kol e kol enna	God	?	?	?	DAT23.3	Many
104	Koñjen- etira bom- baya-td	God	?	?	/?	DAT23.4	Many
105	Koyl ule nu:l cande kolika-ya ka: cande .koli koli	God	? [can also be rendered on kol] [noted in Mand. as kolikai kai sunde]	?	/? Mand.35e	DAT23.5, K14B 3.Ma nd. 35e	Many; Bulij
106	Tan na-ne li lo li lo	God	? mostly syllables	?	?	DAT23.8	Many
107	Palani vetatil olu	God	Song for Murugan composed by Velka-ra Karnan (Rajammal's father)	Tiega-r	B2.2	K8A.2	Mathi & Anita
108	E-y ace ano-rent	God	Song to Ma-ga-lyamma etc.. we adivasis are living like orphans, lighting incense, singing bhajans, etc.. composed by M. Bebi	Tiega-r	B6&7.5	K8A.5	Mathi & Anita

109	Agiru- kond- a-rube-m ama	God	B. K. Krishnan's song to god as fire, you gave our names, milk puja, fire from live tree, god kanatrava etc. we are living like orphans. ... Krishnan sang it over and over on festival days and eventually other picked it up.	Ticgar	B7&8.6. B38&39.5.	K8A.6. In13.5. K14A.1	Mathu & Anita. Raja-mmal & Cindamani. B K Krish- nan
110	E-y-ey u-ri oluvore	God	K. Chandrammal's goddess song calling seven sisters to the seven villages: mentions danieng, holy places, naraja-yne song	Ticgar	B8&9.7	K8A.7	K. Chan- drammal
111	Palani malayle oluvore	God	K. Chandrammal's song to Murugan of the Palani hills	Ticgar	B9.8	K8A.8	K. Chan- drammal
112	Guruva-vu r-ile oluvore	God	K. Chandrammal's song on Gopala of the kerala Guruvayur temple: melody strongly resembles Raghupati Rāghava Rājarām	Ticgar	B10.9	K8A.9	K. Chan- drammal
113	E-y-ey u-reke dodadu-re trucangay re	God	K. Chandrammal's song on Ticgar village, biggest village, kanatrayan god, come sisters, dance, etc. Melody similar to ref#112	Ticgar	B11:10	K8B.1(10)	K. Chan- drammal
114	E-ya-ee amine	God	K. Chandrammal's song: calling gods and goddesses with singing and dancing to bring rain etc.	Ticgar	B11&12. 11	K8B.2(11)	K. Chan- drammal
115	Candiram ma va:go. Raj- amma va:go	ta-la-t	Velkar Kamatin composed this song for his daughter Rajamma, for K. Chandrammal and Tangamma.	Ticgar	B12&13 12: B35.1. Jairaz. 175.9:	K8B.3(12). In13.1. Jairaz. 175#1.2.	K. Chan- drammal. Rajamma. Rajamma & 1 other.
116	Mur-vate payr-ke mumuyrty co:yne	God	K. Chandrammal's song: 30 house, 40 houses, etc. number or names of gods which are plays on words: 7 villages, Kotas shouldn't quarrel, should be like the kings we are: 7 villages seven dialects: come to our house	Ticgar	B13&14: 13	K8B.4(13)	K. Chan- drammal

117	Va-go ama va-go ama	God	M. Be-bi's song calling goddesses, mentioning sacred places, days of worship, ofrms of worship, dancing, laughing	Tiegar	B16-18:19	K8B10 (19)	M. Be-bi
118	Emo-lne- dare	ta-la-t	Composed by Nirjyama, Chandrammal's mother	Tiegar	B18&19 21	K8B12 (21)	K. Chan- drammal
119	Va-va- buddi pice	Kum mi style	Composed by Chandrammal for her clever cat	Tiegar	B19&20- 22	K8B13 (22)	K. Chan- drammal
120	Ayno-r aya- amno-r ama-	God	Composed by Be-bi, call gods and goddesses, singing naraja-yne, dancing, wearing jewelry, playing kols, ends with 'don't change religion' and Devaki voices her approval, tune same as Rajammai's Masiniamman song, ref#8. could this be a message--i.e. too much mariamma? Be-bi also composes songs on non-Kota gods	Tiegar	B20&21 23	K8B14 (23)	M. Be-bi
121	Aya-aya- kirunaya- ki-rtunaiye	God	Composed by Be-bi for Krishna; mentions different names of krishna, qualities, forms, etc., asks for divine vision	Tiegar	B21&22: 24	K8B15 (24)	M. Be-bi
122	Va-go ama va-go ama	God	Composed by Be-bi for goddess Cikkamman; describes worship, karagam, kol playing; attributes and exploits of goddess; mention of Kurgoj	Tiegar	B23&24 25	K8B16 (25)	M. Be-bi
123	A-la-ra-de aravaᅇ- ga-yre	a-tl	Story of pregnant girl in an uninhabited forest; wants drink; possibly related to story of brother and sister (and kote-rkve-ki-n) in which brother sticks thumb into or shoots arrow into rock to get water for his pregnant sister	Me-na-r	B27&28.2	K9A.2	K. Ma-ga-li

124	O:riya: dasa:	a-tl [Ba- daga]	Mourning song composed in late 1960s by Tamil woman for her Kota male friend who died falling off a lorry. Badaga language		B28:3 [not transcribed]	K9A3	K. Maga:li
125	En ana-na Mocal ano	a-tl	A brother has no child. The younger sister is married to a man she doesn't like. She wants to marry another man. She sings this song saying, 'my brother, you have only a vara:r, I have one cow at my feet and one cow at my head, shall I kill it?'		B28&29:6	K9A6	Kuvp
126	Ki:pava:y a-la:ra:re	God	Cubatra's composition, describes the beauty of Kina:r, sacred sites, calls to dance and sing, pray, ask for blessings	Kina:r	B31&32:8	K9A8	K. Cubatra
127	Munipa co:yne mutetile	God	Cubatra's song to Munisvaram: describes rituals etc in the Munisvara festival	Kina:r	B33&34:9	K9A9	K. Cubatra
128	Kamatarāy a kula tēyvamē	God	Cubatra's Tamil composition sung to let others know about the Kotas	Kina:r	B33&34: 10	K9A10	K. Cubatra
129	Civayne- m:ne	God	Cindamani's (Tiegar) song for Murugan composed after she visited 6 temples and he answered her calls. song mentions worship in different places, calls for boons, light, etc., worshipping through dance and bhajans	Tiegar	B35&36:2	In13:2	Rajammal & Cinda- mani (Tie)
130	Orrumaiyā y vālvatālē onru nammayē	--	Rajammal's composition in Tamil based on a Tamil melody: for the integration of the adivasis 'we will be as one if we live in solidarity'	Tiegar	B37:3 (not transcribed)	In13:3	Rajammal & Cinda- mani (Tie)

131	Va-me- ama- ma-yaka-n macani ama-	God	Rajammal and Cindamani's composition for Mariamma; described her, her activities, singing and playing musical instruments to worship; ends with a series of calls to forms of goddess	Tiegar	B37&38-4	In13-4	Rajammal & Cindamani (Tie)
132	Aro-garo- garo- aro-garo- muruga-	God	Song to Murugan by Gopalan who lives in Kodaikanal; described Murugan worship and characteristics; tune probably borrowed; first words play on permutations and rhythm in a manner characteristic of other Indian music, esp. classical. Ends with various arōkaras	Tiegar	B40&41-6	In13-6	Rajammal & Cindamani (Tie)
133	Fāratat tiyin talai raakan	a-tl [Tamil]	Song composed by the late ake-r mundka-no-n. I-cvaran, in honor of Nehru when he died. "India mother's head son, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehruji"	Tiegar	B41-7 (not transcribed)	In13-7	Rajammal & Cindamani (Tie)
134	Pu- idam pu- ala	God	Composed by T. Bellan; plays on words, pu- (flower) has another meaning, kambu- (eyebrow), etc.	Tiegar	B53&54	V7&DAT2 3:15	Many
135	Vi-rabadra ka-li	God	Composed by Rajammal for Virabadra Kali on the occasions of the Me-nar Kumbabhisekam	Tiegar- Me-nar		K15A-2	Many
136	Cara-num pa-ee- ve-me	God	Composed by S. Mangi's child (classificatory?); for ayno-r, amnor & other Kota gods. Set to baca-na bacavani-ro tune ref#2.	Tiegar?		K7A5	S. Mangy
137	O-ridama ra-ny o-ridigo ra-ny	Lulla- by?	Listen Queen! Sung with hand clapping, suggesting god song style (along with some mention of gods, paca-l etc.), but directed perhaps to child		/	K7A-8	S. Mangy

138	Oḡe oḡe ka'ce' tarage' aya	God	Compsed by Mena'r Sivan. Give me one (divine) vision! Set to cinema melody	Mena'r	.	K12A2	Sivan
139	Macakann a ka'tiḡ ma'yama'r i ka'tira	God	B.K. Krishnan's song calling Adi Parasakti; mentions all the places people wait, talk, etc. for the goddess	Tiegar	.	K14A 2	B K Krishnan
140	A-ro'ge' aravate malume to'yumba'	[a-tl]	Mourning song, probably Badaga in origin. There is a kol set to this melody			K14 17	(Buli)' Devaki? Tiegar)
141	O-ni o-ni o-nayakav a'	har- vest [Ba- daga]	Harvesting song in Badaga language, sung while harvesting Ragi; also played as a women's tirugana't dance. o-ni o-ni o-naya kava' munda murva aykyne'da e'ragara	[Tie- gar]	/	K14A 22	Buli and B Kamatn
142	Ān cundarā	har- vest [lang?]	Harvesting song. Also tirugana't dance melody		/	K14A 23	Buli and B Kamatn
143	Kakamalin e ma'ydiye ene' mardiyo	har- vest [lang ?]			/	K14B 1	Buli
144	Āndi ane mānuka	Ba- daga song			.	K14B 2	Buli
145	Kuvanaka kē	Mar- riage song	Probably Badaga language. a wedding kol is based on this melody (for welcoming the wedding party)			K14B 8	B Kamatn

GLOSSARY

a·c	woman
a·l	man
admug-/admu·v- (admurt-)	“to bow to the ground before a god or godlike person” [DEDR 5123]
advaita-vedānta	name for Hindu philosophical school which denies the distinction between the true self (<i>ātman</i>) and the absolute, undifferentiated, all-pervading, self-existing power (<i>brahman</i>). It also “gave to the Supreme Essence (<i>paramātman</i>), Viṣṇu and Śiva the common, all-inclusive designation, ‘Īśvara’” (Zimmer 1951).
ahimsa	doctrine of non-violence
akn	elder sister
amavna·r/amo·na·r/ ambe·ravna·r etc.	our motherland, grandmother’s land, etc., land of the dead, where the souls of the dead go
a·mṅj	rāgi, a type of millet (<i>Eleusine coracana</i>)
amno·r	Kota “mother” deity
an	elder brother
an	water channel
a·na·r	“that land”—i.e. land of the dead
a·na·to·r	“those of that land”—i.e. the spirits or souls of the dead, the ancestors
anna	former unity of Indian currency equally 1/16 of a rupee
antamic	man’s younger brother’s wife
an vircd kol	tune for cleaning the water channel
a·r- (a·c-)	“to move, move violently, dance, play, speak, have sexual intercourse” [DEDR 347]; to argue, do actions associated with or fight (a court case).
a·rakm	black piece of cloth laid on solar plexus of corpse at funeral
arca·yl	tent or canopy under which Kotas sleep during god ceremony or dry funeral
a·t/a·tm	(n.) dance
a·tl	song of mourning or grief
att	divine spot in rafters of Kota house where god is said sometimes to reside
av	mother
ayk	husked grain
ayl	male’s classificatory brother-in-law (i.e. any male in the same generation as ego who is not his classificatory brother)
ayn	father
ayno·r	Kota “father” deity
babu·r	Bokkapuram
baja·rm	“bazaar,” Kota word for Ootacamund city
bhajan	a Hindu devotional song genre, usually sung by a group of devotees with a leader and accompanied by musical instruments
bhakti	worship through loving devotion for god
bo·cka·y	a bitter intoxicating decoction made from the spent, dry pods of the opium poppy
Bokkapuram	Irula village to north of Nilgiris where annual Māriyamman festival takes place.
bugi·r	Bugiri, bamboo trumpet
ca·da·da·k	“ordinary variety”; Kolme-l Kota term for rhythmic ostinato in ten, seven or six beats

ca-trm	(>Skt: sāstra) ritual
cadm	sound (of reed and drum ensemble, etc.) [DEDR 2352c]
cankam	Sangam. Period of the first Tamil literature, roughly the 1st century C E
ce-d-/ce-dy- (ce-dy)	“to arrive, join, gather (intr.)” [DEDR 2814]
cend	a ball made of cow dung, nakarg grass. paca-l pu-dy (ash from dodtic at devr), gold, copper, iron, brass and silver; any ordinary ball
ceremony	here: a named sequence of rituals occurring over one or more days
cettiyār	Chettiar, a Tamil mercantile caste who used to act as intermediaries of trade between Nilgiri hill communities and peoples of the plains
Chief Minister	the leading governmental official of a state
Collector	the leading governmental official of a city
co-mi/co-ym	term of address or reference for god
corv- (cord-)	milk flows freely from udder (or by itself); to salivate under the tongue
cudv	pure (cf. suddha)
da-k	kind, type; rhythmic patten; melody
da-kl	similar to
da-ni-m	grains (rice, millet, wheat etc.) [Skt. dhānya]
darbha	an important type of grass in Vedic rituals
devr	“god” or the annual celebration for god, “the god ceremony”
dod	physically big or ritually important
doda-l	village elder or respected man
dodvay	“big house,” house of mundka-no-n
dormitories, youth	Institutions common among so-called tribal peoples of India in which girls and boys sleep separately from their parents, and have the opportunity to choose sexual partners. These may or in some cases explicitly may not lead to future marriages. The “dormitory” is an anthropological term for institutions which appear similar among Munda and Dravidian speaking peoples. Frequently, youth activity in the dormitories centers around music, dance and storytelling.
Dravidian	One of the major language families of India, including languages of Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayālam. Different from Indo-Aryan language family of Sanskrit and most north Indian languages
Dry Funeral	varlda-v
du/du-v	cremation area of funeral ground
elka-l	hearth, woodfire stove in kitchen for cooking
e-ng- (e-ngy-)	“to grieve” [DEDR 878]; to worry
erm	place [DEDR 434]
ert pay	“place house”; building that used to exist in Kota villages where young married and unmarried men and women would meet, play games, tell stories, sing and experiment sexually. See “dormitories, youth”
e-rtabatk	Large conical drum used for ritual signalling
er vecd	offering of grain to the gods
et	bull [DEDR 815]
et- (eyt-)	“to take (by picking up and carrying), take off (cloak), raise (as legs tot he sky when one is knocked down), join (hands in salutation), open (eyes in amazement), build (house)” [DEDR 796]; heed (words), render (song instrumentally or vocally) [often pronounced i-t-]
eyr- (erc-)	“to cut, kill, slaughter (animal), (head) aches” [DEDR 859]; to pain from the sun beating down

gagva-l	special kava-l in front of the site of the first house in Kolme-l village: dancing takes place here at the beginning of devr. as does possession of the te-rka-m
ganaceti	place in kitchen to right of hearth. where men sit
God Ceremony	Three to thirteen day long annual celebration in honor of the Kota gods. Words in Kota mean literally "god" (devr, de-r, kamatrayn, etc.)
gotga-rn	treasurer/headman
Green Funeral	pacda-v
gub/gubl/gubl	"a division or group of people [gub]: crowd, herd [gubl]" [DEDR 1741]. patriline (gub)
Gudalur	Town in northwestern Nilgiris: land originally belonged to Kotas of Kala-c village
gu-da-rn	same as gurykat
guru	teacher, preceptor
gurukulavāsa	system for transmitting knowledge in Hindu society where a disciple lives in the house of a teacher, works for the teacher, and is instructed.
gury	temple
gurykat	catafalque canopy erected above bier in Kota funerals
guryva-l	protected area around Kota temples
ho-ko-	sacred chant men utter in divine ritual contexts either while walking on procession or performing circle dance
id- (it-)	"to put, fix" [DEDR 443]. plant (seeds or larger items): shoot with bow and arrow or gun
im	female buffalo [DEDR 816]
in- (id-), -n- (-d-)	"to say (so-and-so), to be said to be (so-and-so)" [DEDR 868]. (ie quotative marker)
java-yn	youth, 16-25 years of age
ja-lra-v	hand cymbals [Skt. jha]
jat	obsolete term for band of Kota musicians (possibly only used in reference to performances for Badagas)
jāti	caste or division
ja-yd/ja-dy	Kota term for jāti
ja-dykupa-c	"caste costume": a ritual in which a representative from each village dons a fancy dance costume and participates in a communal dance
ja-dyku-	a ritual in which representatives from each village, male and female, line up in classificatory husband and wife pairs and share a meal off the same leaf
jo-r	musical ensemble of doubly reed instruments and drums
jo-ry-	pair
kab itd pay	"foundation-post-erected-house": house on the site of the first house in the village. Important ritually as that in which certain ceremonies, such as the god ceremony, begin.
kada-c	younger sister
kaj	barley
kakuy	sanctified inner chamber of mundka-no-n's house
Kala-c	Kota village
ka-l at- (ac-)/ it- (ic-)/et-	to worship/pay obeisance at feet of another [DEDR 4034/-]
kamatrayn	Name for ayno-r, or for the celebration of the Kota gods (the god ceremony) in some villages. Also Kambati-cvaran, Kambatara-ya, etc.
kan-/ka-n- (kad-)	to see: to consult god through diviner (te-rka-m devr kan-) [DEDR 1443]

kanar	“distant place where noone lives” [DEDR 1356]
ka-myk	offering of money or precious item for a deity
kara-l	younger brother
ka-r	“jungle without trees, uncultivated ground, unfenced field” [DEDR 1438]; (jungle or not) place without people
kargan ni-r	Pure water associated with funeral rituals
Karnatak	South Indian classical music
kat	“knot: caste custom” [DEDR 1147]
katl	cot, bedframe, bier
katvijñ	Paraiyar caste people
kava-l	grassless yard, area of tightly packed earth or cement in front of a house or row of houses
kava-l condm	Members of family who share line of houses (i.e. smaller division than <i>ker</i> , determined by space as well as by <i>kuyt</i>); non-blood relatives may become “street relations” by moving next door
kave- (kave-)	“to cover with a garment” [DEDR 1221]
kave- (kave-)	“to finish (ceremony)” [DEDR 1356]
kavl	kind of wild tuber (<i>Ceropegia pusilla</i>) on which Kotas believe they survived in the earliest days [DEDR 1343]
kavr	Kota name for Kurumba tribe
kaymi-dku-	ritual meal served the day after a cremation
kelka-mton	Toda partner of Kota in traditional exchange system
ker- (ket-)	“to die, be ruined, lost” [DEDR 1942]
ke-r	line(s) of houses corresponding to a patrilineal exogamous clan in a village
Kinar	Kota village
ki-r	a type of amaranth dry roasted and offered as Kota funeral prestation
ki-r	Kota women’s traditional dress (“loose bosom and waist of woman’s clothes when tied at waist fro working” [DEDR 1616])
kob	brass horn, C or S shaped
ko-ba-rm	cow dung [>Skt]
ko-ka-l	Kota village
kol	Kota shawm-type: double-reed, conical bore, six holed wind instrument made of wood [DEDR 1818]; melody produced on this instrument (in this work, translated as “tune”)
ko-l	“stick: story of funeral car” [DEDR 2237]
kola-l	Cakkiliyar (Telugu speaking untouchable) caste person
ko-v	Kota name for themselves
Kolme-l	Kota village
kotanm	millet used during the dry funeral that is constituted to <i>be</i> the corpse
kotgi-t a-v	sacrificial cow
koylt a-l	“man who carries new fire round at ceremonies” [DEDR 2158]; also man who used to sacrifice buffaloes
ku-	cooked rice or grain
kummi	circle dance form practiced by women of Tamilnadu and Kerala which resembles that practiced by Kotas. Involves singing, clapping the hands and stepping rhythmically.
kunvay	“little house.” menstrual seclusion house
Kurgo:j	Kota village

kurjI/kurju:l	back room (used for bathing etc.): small room [DEDR 1655]
ku:mu:co:r	“grain mixers”: the family responsible for mixing and serving the cooked grain during the god ceremony
ku:tm	village council meeting [DEDR 1882]
kuyt	family (defined patrilineally, but the boundaries of this unit have never been satisfactorily explained to me)
mand	“head” [DEDR 4682]: hair at back of head
mandpa:	cloth tied around head of corpse
ma:l	“ceremonial friend”: formally instituted type of friendship between men in which each is required to share everything with the other—including wives
ma:mn	maternal uncle
mand	area in dry funeral ground where men and women sleep
mand	Toda hamlet
mandu:v	plant Kota women roll into hair for traditional hair bun. <i>Crototoria formosa</i> [EVS]
ma:nt	Kota language, saying, proverb, word, phrase
may	rain
mayim	barren, large buffalo
mayv	one who knows no skill: Kota term for Badagas
me:lo:gm	“upper world”: land of dead as a sort of heaven
memory	a process of recall which mentally constitutes a particular past in the present
Me:na:r	Kota village
me:ym	paternal aunt
milk ceremony	an annual set of Kota rituals in which the power of the Kota gods is affirmed through a spontaneous overflowing of milk. The <i>mundka:no:n</i> milks a special cow and keeps the milk in a special vessel in the sacredmost back-room (<i>kakui</i>) of the house. “May milk overflow,” or “ <i>pa:l pongum</i> ” is a redolent image in many Kota prayers: it means “let our population increase” and instantiates community vitality. For an account of the milk ceremony, see Emeneau (1944, IV: 300-9).
modern modality	an affective manner or mode of viewing or representing a perceived disjuncture between past and present
mog	child [DEDR 4616]
mo:l	daughter [DEDR 4616]
mridangam	double-headed barrel drum used in Kārnātak music
muka:r	cloth covering face when mourning or anxiety-ridden
mund	waistcloth
mundka:no:l	wife of <i>mundka:no:n</i> : leads women in god-related ritual activities
mundka:no:n	leader in all village rituals relating to the god
mutga:rn	partner in traditional intercommunity system of ritual and economic cooperation in the Nilgiris
nakarg	“ <i>Andropogon foulkesii</i> ” [DEDR 1397]: a species of grass used with cow dung in child naming, funerary, and rituals of giving salt to buffaloes
na:nm	memory [Skt. <i>jnāpaka</i>]
nant	groom [DEDR 3588]
nantn	kinship term groom’s family uses to refer to bride’s family [DEDR 3588]
nāgasvaram	shawm-type used in Karnatak music
na:r	“country, settled area (opposite to jungle), place where dead go” [DEDR 3638]
nay:l- (nalc-)	to play [DEDR 3612]
nela:go:r	place in Kolme:l where corpse is kept while spouse removes jewelry at funeral (see

	ta·v veed va·rm)
nelm	bones
nelmpac mog	boy in dry funeral responsible for holding/collecting bones
Nilgiris	"Blue mountains." The district in western Tamilnadu where the Kotas live
ni·r water	
oc	new
oca·l	"new" man—i.e. non-Kota
ocmu·l	new custom
o·j	sound, echo [DEDR 1036]
oly/olyd	good [DEDR 1017]
o·ly	sacred sound Kota men utter during central moments of the god ceremony
o·mayn	sound of all musical instruments playing at once
Ooty	Ootacamund, the administrative headquarters of the Nilgiri district of Tamilnadu
orv· (ort·)	diviner shakes, i.e. gets possessed; to decide, pronounce (judgement)
otkic	grudging envy, jealousy; impatience
oy· (oc·)	"to beat (percussion instrument)" [DEDR 4534]
pac green, fresh	
pacda·v	"green death": funerary rituals and cremation following shortly after a death
paisa	unit of Indian currency equal to 1/100 of a rupee.
pa·ny	a measure; the metal vessel of this measure [DEDR 4124]
pa·t	song
pa·bm	"festival" a ceremony connected with agriculture in which the ritual game pul is played and each Kota eats in every other Kota's home. Said to show the unity of the Kotas as a people.
pacayk/pacc·k	dry roasted, puffed millet
pa·l pu·jm	see "milk ceremony"
par	Kota cylinder drum (dobar, gumbar, kinvar)
pardac	long pole for umbrellas and purifying houses at dry funeral; contributed by Kurumbas
parc· (parc·)	"to pray" [DEDR 3951]; to worship
pary·km	offering to the gods
pay	house
paykm	story [DEDR 4003]
payt	Badaga village [DEDR 3868]
payva·l	verandah (see also tinva·l)
pemogartil	place in kitchen, left of hearth, where women sit or work
pe·npaco·l	female medium of spirits of the dead
pe·m	ritual of circumambulating and offering rice to corpse at funeral
pica·c	demon, malevolent spirit
pijl	jew's harp (obsolete)
pobi·t na·rl	plant fiber once extracted and used by Kotas for cloth, now used memorially in dry funerals
ponic	sacred site to south of and elevated in height from Kolme·l
poranj	outside (also euphemistically refers to menstrual "pollution" or seclusion hut) [DEDR 4333]
Porga·r	Kota village
pu·dy	ash; holy ash [DEDR 4316]
pu·koc	colored piece of cloth laid on corpse and on belly of sacrificial cow at Kota funeral

pul	grass
pul	a ritual game played during <i>pahm</i>
pulaṅg	Kota bamboo idioglottal clarinet with downcut reed
pūja	Hindu worship
puṅm	Kota word
rupee	Unit of Indian currency (smallest paper denomination) worth about 1.30 of a dollar in 1992.
Sanskrit	Ancient Indo-Aryan language of India
Skt	Abbreviation for Sanskrit
sthāyī-ārtara	Hindustani term referring to formal characteristic of much Indian music in which sections of a piece are distinguished by register. Often, the first section centers around the tonic, and the second, around the fifth or upper tonic.
suddha	pure
tabak	Kota frame drum
tac	stick [DEDR 3089]
tak	a purple ellipsoidal berry that grows on a thorny stem (Berberis tinctoria [DEDR3096])
tal	“head, top, above, superior” [DEDR 3103]
tale-l	ritually most important spot on the hearth, to the right of the area used for cooking. Divine offerings are placed here.
tat- (tac-)	“to pat, strike, kill [buffalo], curse, affects, disregard (words)” [DEDR 3039]
taṅv	death, funeral, corpse
taṅvaṅr	funeral/cremation ground (pactdaṅvaṅr and varldaṅvaṅr)
taṅv veed vaṅm	“Corpse keeping place” place where corpse is kept while spouse removes jewelry at funeral.
taṅmayk	husked millet
te-l	“forest, menstrual blood” [DEDR 2891]
te-l ul	menstrual house [DEDR 2891]
teṅkaṅm	diviner
teṅkaṅc	wife of diviner
tic	fire [DEDR 1514]
Ticgaṅr	Kota village
tic pac mog	“fire-holding-boy”, child who symbolically lights funeral pyre and acts as ritual officiant at funeral
tinva-l	verandah (see also payva-l)
tiruganaṅt daṅk	“turning dance variety”, Kota term for eight-beat rhythmic ostinato
tod	bison
ton	Kota term for Toda tribe
tondit	raised circular areas surrounded by stones in Kolme-l village where first fire is placed at the commencement of the god ceremony.
toṅr nu-l	thread from the plant <i>Urtica heterophylla</i> [DEDR 2865] which, like <i>pobit</i> , was formerly used by Kotas to make cloth
Tune	In this work, a melody played on the <i>kol</i> . A translation of one meaning of the term <i>kol</i> .
tur- (tut-)	“to roast, bake (pots), burn (corpses)” [DEDR 2654]; deep fry
udk	stew of beans and potatoes typical of Kota diet
Upanisad	Hindu sacred texts, post Vedic.
upudk	“salt stew,” a kind of spiceless bean stew consumed during the god ceremony

ūr/u·r	village, town, city
vara·r	white striped shawl
varīda·v	“dry death”: secondary mortuary ceremony
vatm	Panicum miliare, a type of millet
Veda	Hindu sacred texts
velk	oil lamp
ver	merely, only, ordinary [DEDR 5513]
vetm	mountain [DEDR 5474]
veyl	silver [DEDR 5496]
vi·d	open area at the end of a line of houses

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Independent Karnatic music study (India and U.S.), 1980-1996.

Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai, Tamilnadu, India. Tamil "Diploma," 1985.

American College (University of Wisconsin Year in India Program), Madurai, Tamilnadu, India. Tamil "Certificate,"

Univ. of Wisconsin at Madison. Tamil, 6/82-8/82

Oberlin College. B.A. Mathematics, 5/84.

Languages: Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, Kota (Dravidian tribal language), French, German.

Teaching, Research and other Professional Positions

Director, Folk Arts Program, Brooklyn Arts Council. 1/96-10/96

Vice-President, Society for Ethnomusicology, Middle Atlantic Chapter. 3/95-9/96; Program Chair '96

Office Manager and Project Consultant, Association for Cultural Equity (Alan Lomax, President). 1994-96

Visiting Scholar, Columbia University: S. Asian Institute (6/95-5/97) Dept. of Music (Spring 1995).

Lecturer, Northwestern University School of Music, Fall 1994.

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Visiting Lecturer, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, School of Music. Fall, 1993.

Major Fellowships

American Institute of Pakistan Studies: Postdoctoral Research in Pakistan (1997)

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Foreign Language Enhancement Program: Telugu, 6/87-8/87, Univ. of WI, Madison.

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Forthcoming Publications

"Three perspectives on music and the idea of tribe in India."

"Mourning songs and human pasts among the Kotas."

"Life Cycle and Seasonal Rituals," and "Tamilnadu," *Gariand Encyclopedia of World Music, Vol 5, South Asia*, ed. Alison Arnold. Garland Pub., Inc. (Commissioned; Tamilnadu article submitted)

"Tribal Music (Nilgiris)" and "Tribal Communities (Southern India)," *South Asian Folklore: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Peter J. Claus. Garland Pub., Inc. (Commissioned and submitted)

"Rain, God and Unity among the Kotas." In *Blue mountains revisited*, ed. Paul Hockings. Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press. (In Press)

Publications

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- 1989 Review of *Classical music of South India*, by Kanthimathi Kumar and Jean Stackhouse, *Ethnomusicology* 33(1): 175-77.
[Unpublished] Master of Music thesis: "Innovation, interpretation and the maintenance of tradition in the Karaikkudi style of *vīṇā* playing," Univ. of IL at Urbana-Champaign.
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- 1990 University of Chicago (spring).
Rāga-māla Performing Arts of Canada, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan (spring).
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