



## KINSHIP AND POWER RELATIONSHIPS IN COON'S *FLESH OF THE WILD OX AND THE RIFFIAN*

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### **Abstract:**

This study explores two novels titled *Flesh of the Wild Ox* (1932) and *The Riffian* (1933) written by Carleton S. Coon about the Moroccan Rif. These roughly unexplored novels are by an ethnographer and derive from an ethnography titled *Tribes of the Rif* (1931). Indeed, they “boast” themes usually seen as ethnographic in nature: kinship, marriage, polygyny, honour and shame, magic, subsistence pattern and inter-tribal warfare. This study is set within the convergence of literature and ethnography, striving to foreground the ethnographicity within the novels. It brings kinship into focus, notably investigating how kinship works in relation to power. It distinguishes twin kin power relationships: intra-kin and inter-kin. Intra-kin power relationships are domestic, involving individuals of a single kin group while inter-kin power relationships are transdomestic, involving individuals of different descent groups or the groups themselves. In both relationships, kinship operates inclusively as the Riffian characters strive to expand the number of individuals and groupings who, in Schweitzer's words, can be “made into relatives” (210). The Riffians use inclusive strategies, including polygyny, exogamy and shame compulsion, so they can extend kin ties to non-kin. Those kinship strategies validate the the elasticity of kin boundaries among the Riffians.

**Keywords:** Coon, *Flesh of the Wild Ox*, *The Riffian*, kinship, power, intra-kin and inter-kin relationships, exclusiveness, elasticity

### **1. Carleton Stevens Coon**

Born June 30, 1904 in Wakefield, Massachusetts, Coon went to Harvard with intent to studying Egyptology. But, guided by Earnest Albert Hooton—an American anthropologist, Coon shifted interest towards anthropology. In 1925, he graduated *magna cum laude*. Three years later, Coon attained a PhD degree from Harvard after extensive fieldwork in the Rif, Morocco. He taught at Harvard until the outbreak of World War II. He served in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), smuggling firearms and explosives to

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the French resistance groups in Morocco and gathering military intelligence (Coon, *A North* 137-38). On spying, Coon told Chtatou that “he was rendering a service to his country . . . [and] was an admirer of spy novels and their heroes, a kind of literature he finds “romantic” and quite rocambolesque” (275). In 1948, Coon left Harvard for the University of Pennsylvania to take up the job of an anthropology professor and museum curator. Serving the United States Air Force from 1954 to 1957, he travelled through then “enemy” countries, including Korea, Saudi Arabia, and the Philippines, to photo-graph areas where U.S. aircraft might be shot down. In June 1981, Coon died in Gloucester, Massachusetts, leaving a scholarly legacy worth studying. According to McCall, Coon was “a generalist who studied physical anthropology, archaeology, and ethnology together” (31). His *magnum opus* is *The Origin of Races* (1962). In it, Coon speculates that five *human erectus* species have evolved separately into the *human sapiens* stage, thus giving rise to a remarkable degree of civilization among the foremost races. His speculation has been dismissed as a racist theorisation which serves a segregationist cause. Another of Coon’s notable ethnographic works is *Caravan: The Story of the Middle East* (1958): it introduces the climate, geography, diversity, religion and politics of the peoples of Islam. Archeologically, while on a 1939 sabbatical leave in 1939, Coon excavated a cave in Tangier, unearthing deposits going back to Mousterian times. These are but noteworthy examples of Coon’s contribution to anthropology. The germane one to this study is *Tribes of the Rif*.

## 2. Coon’s Ethnography and Fiction on the Rif

Among Coon’s ethnographic studies stands out *Tribes of the Rif*, the ninth bulky volume in the Harvard African Studies series. His *Flesh of the Wild Ox* and *The Riffian* are its novelistic offshoots. *Tribes of the Rif* is grounded in ethnographic materials gathered by Coon in two field trips (1926 and 1928) with the valuable aid of his wife Mary Goodale and informant Mohammed Linnibby. It is Goodale’s and Linnibby’s help in collecting anthropometric and ethnological data, interpreting and taking notes which renders “the first ethnography by an American of an African people” possible (McCall 31). Still, it is not the only ethnographic investigation into the Riffian culture. Notable antecedents include Edward Westermarck’s *Marriage Ceremonies in Morocco* (1914) and *Ritual and Belief in Morocco* (1926), Samuel Biarnay’s *Etude sur les dialectes berbères* (1917) and Emile Laoust’s *Mots et Choses berbères* (1920). Coon notes that these ethnographies attend narrowly to the phonology of some texts in Berber dialects as well as to some magico-religious practices popularly prevalent among several Riffian tribes (7). His is wide-ranging, falling broadly into two parts: culture and race. It begins with an account of habitat; native traditions of the settlement of Ghomara, Senhaja and the Rif; and the recorded history of the Rif. It explores material culture, detailing the various subsistence patterns: hunting, fishing, farming, metal work, leatherwork, carpentry, pottery, basketry and textiles. Besides, it explores social organization which bears on kinship groups, political divisions and social classes. An apt description of government and warfare follows together with a cursory consideration of markets, public buildings, education and laws governing inheritance. It

throws illuminating light on the events or stages which individual Riffians undergo through their lives: birth, naming, first hair-cutting, circumcision, marriage, divorce and death), not to mention the immense importance which Riffians attach to religion and magic. Coon's ethnography proceeds with a discussion of race. Physical measurements of body, head and face are compiled; indices calculated; examinations of the pigmentation of hair, skin and eye performed; and observations of morphological traits made (hair texture, body thickness and facial hair). The ethnography closes with over thirty plates of superb photographs of Riffian subjects, both full-face and profile. In this study, frequent reference is made to the ethnography for insights into certain issues, objects, practices and terms peculiar to the Riffian culture.

In the novel's forward, Hooton reveals that *Flesh of the Wild Ox*, even though written in a story form, is "an authentic portrait of Riffian life, based upon oral tradition of the legendary history of the Rif" (Coon, *Flesh* 10). "This stark tale, shot through with grim humour," Hooton explains, "defines the Riffian character much more clearly than could any verbal description" (10). So does its companion novel, *The Riffian*, given their thematic interrelatedness. *Flesh of the Wild Ox* is mostly set in the Rif, and its storyline is twin-faceted. First, it narrates the settlement of the Iherrushen valley by the Ulad Abd el Mumen tribe and the Mumen-Tadmut dispute which breaks out there. Second, it narrates the Riffian-"Christian" war. By contrast, *The Riffian* is set in Fez, France and the Rif, and its storyline is single-faceted: it narrates the journey of a Mumenian descendant named Ali the Jackal, who stands up for the Ulad Abd el Mumen against the antagonistic Tadmut clan and the colonizing forces of France and Spain. While the novels' settings and storylines vary to certain degree, *Flesh of the Wild Ox* and *The Riffian* share an ethnographic quality evident in numerous themes usually seen as anthropological in character: kinship, marriage, polygyny, honour and shame, magic, subsistence pattern and inter-tribal war-fare. As Schmidt entitles one of her 1985 articles, Coon is a "Pioneer in Anthropological Literary Genres," *Anthropology and Humanism Quarterly*. Those ethno-literary themes invite an inter-disciplinary reading that derives its insight from anthropology. This study chooses and considers kinship on anthropological grounds. It explores kinship in relation to power. It discovers and distinguishes double kin power relationships. It is worth noting that, besides the ethnographic quality Coon's Riffian fiction displays, it discloses a striking anti-imperialist stance. It celebrates the Riffian resistance against the Franco-Spanish colonialism before and through the Rif War (1920-1926).

### 3. Kinship and Power

In "Anthropology and Literature: Of Bedfellows and Illegitimate Offspring," Mario Cesario argues that the anthropological-literary interdisciplinarity takes two shapes:

- 1) *functionalizing anthropological notions, themes, and metaphors, as tools that can deepen our understanding of literary texts – whereby the literary is rendered as a "text," while the anthropological is posited as a "concern"; and*

- 2) *highlighting anthropology's historical use of various literary texts as sources for its analysis.* (158)

This study falls within the first interdisciplinary sphere: it aims at “functionalizing” kinship as an anthropological tool to gain a close-up look into ethnographic themes, namely kinship, in Coon’s novels. Anthropologists like Bronislaw Malinowski, Alfred Radcliffe-Brown, Alfred Kroeber, George Murdock, Meyer Fortes, Edward Evans-Pritchard and Claude Lévi-Strauss maintain that “*the importance of kinship in ‘primitive’ [small-scale] societies largely resided in its role as an organizational framework for production and group decision making. They typically described these realms of traditional culture (generally glossed as economics and politics, respectively) as being embedded in kinship and dominated by men*” (*Britannica*). In both novels, kinship does not only concern decision making and means of production, but questions relating to culture and society such as honour and shame, matrimony, mode of subsistence, property transfer and inter-tribal feuds.

According to Robin Fox, “*Kinship is to anthropology what logic is to philosophy or the nude is to art; it is the basic discipline of the subject*” (10). Indeed, it is in the realm of kinship where the most anthropologically sophisticated discussions and controversies have taken place. It is thought to be the sphere of rigorous thought and technical expertise which has helped maintain the scientific reputability of anthropology. It has become the mainstay of grand paradigms within anthropology, including Morgan’s narrative of evolutionism in *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of Human Family* (1871), Malinowski’s functionalism in “Kinship” (1930), Radcliffe-Brown’s structural-functionalism in *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (1965), Lévi-Strauss’s structuralism in *Elementary Structures of Kinship* (1969) and Meillassoux’s structural-Marxism in *Maidens, Meal and Money: Capitalism and the Domestic Community* (1981) (Rapport 251). In the mid-twentieth century, its body of literature together with that of marriage might have accounted for over half of the total literature in anthropology (Holý 1). For Holý, “*if there was a subject which anthropologists could have rightly claimed to be their own, it was kinship*” (1). However, in the latter half of the twentieth century, kinship took a turn for the worse, turning from “*a position of theoretical centrality to one of marginality in the discipline of anthropology*” (Stone 1). After twenty years of neglect, it went through a revival of interest. Consider, for instance, Ladislav Holý’s *Anthropological Perspectives on Kinship* (1996), Robert Parkin’s *Kinship: An Introduction to Basic Concepts* (1997), Peter Schweitzer’s *Dividends of Kinship* (2000) and Linda Stone’s *New Directions in Anthropological Kinship* (2001). Kinship studies have become formalism-conscious and Eurocentrism-sensitive (Stone 2).

For years, kinship has gone without a concise definition. In the early 1960s, it was surrounded by controversy among Ernest Gellner, Rodney Needham and John Barnes. For Martin Ottenheimer, there have been two views on kinship: Gellner in “The Concept of Kinship” (1960) argues that it is contingent naturally and universally on the biological foundation of human reproduction while Needham in “Descent System and Ideal Language” (1960) and Barnes in “Physical and Social kinship” (1961) argue that it is

culturally-specific in that there exist non-Western societies where kinship relationships are dependent on non-physical connection: adoption, common residence or food sharing (201). Schneider singles out the biological construction for criticism, deeming it an ethnocentric construct based on a characteristically Eurocentric conceptualisation of procreation: “the study of kinship derives directly and practically unaltered from the ethnoepistemology of European culture” (175). For him, Western anthropologists impose their cultural conception of kinship on the communities they seek to study. Schneider’s criticism was welcomed by feminist anthropologists. Alongside others, Jane Collier, for instance, uphold Schneider’s critical account and deconstruct gender after him, holding that the cultural categories “male” and “female” are constructed in a given cultural context, not universally reliant on biologically sexual differences (48). At the turn of the twenty-first century, controversy over defining kinship built up due to the use of new productive technologies (NPTs). A man, for instance, can be genetically related to a child of a woman with whom he has had no intercourse. Kinship can come from birth, family life or attempts by geneticists and clinicians interested in fertility treatment or antenatal medicine (Carsten 6). In a word, “[a]nthropology cannot, even if it wished, arrive at a universal definition of kinship” (Rapport 257).

Not imposing Western terms, Coon approaches Riffian kinship in locally emic terms. No definition does he put forward in “Social Organization: Kinship Groups and Political Division,” *Tribes of the Rif*. Instead, as the section’s title suggests, he set several kinship groupings forth: *awar* (*iwaren* in the plural literally translated as “vein”), a large family group; *ighs* (*ikhshan* in the plural literally translated as “bone”), a body of interrelated “veins” or a politically independent section of a village; *arraba’* (*roboa’* in the plural literally translated as “canton”), a body of blood-related or –unrelated “bones”; *thakhemesth* (*thikemesin* in the plural literally translated as “fifth”), a larger division than a “canton”; and *thakabitich* (derived from the Arabic *qabila*), a tribe. This use of Riffian appellatives reveals Coon’s culturalism.

Pertinent to this study is not what kinship is, but what it does in relation to power. Power is used to narrow down the discussion of kinship to two kin power relationships because kinship is pretty nebulous alone. Power is a concept which permeates daily life: a man wields power over a woman, a political party rises to power and a country is a superpower (Newman 414). Self-evident as it may appear, power is an “essentially contested concept” (Lukes 35). This study does not offer a genealogy of power; it attends principally to its Foucauldian theorisation. Michel Foucault is the social theorist who has mostly framed the anthropologists’ recent discussion of power. According to Ann Kingsolver, “Foucault’s work [especially *The History of Sexuality* (1978), *Power/Knowledge* (1980) and *Discipline and Punish* (1977)] has drawn anthropological attention to the relational aspects of power, with a concentration on the contexts of actions and interpretations, and away from structural control of resources by individuals with fairly static institutional authority” (567). The Foucauldian approach to power differs from the Marxist and early feminist models which derive from what Foucault sees as the “repressive hypothesis,” the concentration of power in the hands of a dominating bourgeoisie or an oppressing patriarch. First, Foucault considers power to be existent only when it is exercised: there is no inexplicable

substance by the name of power which lies inactive. Second, power is relational, not individual or structural characterising a human being (sovereign) or a structure (the upper-class). It is not Power with a capital P, the supremacy of one individual or group over others; it is a mutual relationship among agents. Third, power involves certain freedom on the part of both agents. Slavery, Foucault argues, is not a relationship of power, for in no sense can the enslaved act but as oppressed slaves. Fourth, neither coercion nor consent, power necessitates resistance even in situations of supremacy (Newman 414). Foucault explains,

*Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. (Power/Knowledge 98)*

#### 4. Kin Power Relationships in Coon's Novels

Twin kin power relationships run through Coon's *Flesh of the Wild Ox* and *The Riffian*: intra-kin and inter-kin. Intra-kin power relationships are domestic, involving members of a single kin group. On the contrary, inter-kin power relationships are transdomestic, involving members of dissimilar descent groups or those groups themselves.

##### 4.1 Intra-kin Power Relationships

Intra-kin power relationships are mostly marital in Coon's novels. A classic example in the Mumenian kindred is Abd el Mumen's treatment of his wife, one which is revelatory of male domination. Coon depicts Abd el Mumen, the apical ancestor of the Ulad Abd el Mumen tribe, as the Adam of a male-controlled kinship, bringing to the fore intra-kin power relationships advantageous to men. Female subordination comes into notice at the very outset of Mumen's and his unnamed wife's journey to settle down. They depart from an unknown place because of water shortage and unfriendly neighbours, "*those Arabs who never washed and were content to make their holy ablutions with sand,*" in search of a haven not solely for themselves, but their offspring to come (Coon, *Flesh* 17). "My wife and I," Mumen tells Sidi Misaud—a godly man whom they come across in their dwelling-seeking journey, "*have set forth to find a new valley wherein we may toil in peace and amass fuller granaries and larders for those whom we shall beget there.*" (*Flesh* 18). Noteworthy is Coon's arguably intentional non-appellation of Mumen's wife which augurs for a male-controlled Mumenian kinship to come. The non-appellation of Mumen's wife and its patriarchal implication are followed by a telling portrait of Abd el Mumen.

*The face of Abd el Mumen was a striking one, with heavy brows over deep-set grey eyes, squinting a little from the glare, an arched nose with thin nostrils, and lips sheltered by an*

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*uncut Viking's moustache of yellow, over a patriarchal beard of reddish-brown. It was a face befitting the ancestor of the tribe which was to follow him. (Flesh 18).*

Coon's facial portrayal of Abd el Mumen reveals his inauguration of the Mumenian patriarchy: *"a face befitting the ancestor of the tribe which was to follow him."* He is the kinship ancestor or originator, not a nameless ancestress. Shifting from the implicit towards the explicit as concerns Mumen's patriarchy, Coon brings to the foreground a conversation at a nightly rest between Mumen and his wife which represents the former as an undisputed patriarch.

*"Abd el Mumen!" cried the woman, "give me your knife and I will spit the frog on it. Its legs are sweet." "Leave it," replied the husband. "Do you not know the difference between the unclean and the clean? The frog is fit food for Christian or for Jew, but our Lord Mohammed has said that it shall not enter the stomach of any who believes. Your father was tardy in his conversion and failed to learn the Book, so as to give instruction to his children." (Flesh p.20).*

Abd el Mumen bears an air of authority over his wife, commandingly showing her that the frog is inedible in Islam. Also, he dismisses his father-in-law as a late convert and a total stranger to the teachings of the Qur'an. Mumen's marital power over his wife is unambiguous. It seems to be traceable to his acquaintance with the permissible and the impermissible in the Qur'an. In this respect, Blood's and Wolfe's resource theory advances a satisfactory explanation: it suggests that power in marriage springs from the contribution of resources, notably education, income and the occupational status. The spouse who contributes most to matrimony wields the biggest decision-making power (Rodman 56). So does Abd el Mumen by virtue of the Islamic education which he might have received in a cantonal mosque during childhood. Blood's and Wolfe's resource theory is elaborated on by Hyman Rodman, who holds that the distribution of marital power does not only owe to unequal contribution of resources (education in Mumen's case), but, most importantly, to a larger cultural context, within which the spousal relationship exists (57). In the Riffian culture, gender norms shape the impact that education makes on the distribution of power between spouses: *"religion [in the Rif] is almost wholly a masculine concern"* (Coon, *Tribes* 145). It is only men in the Riffian culture who are supposedly versed in religion, thus building up male-specific learning as a source of power in matrimony. In no sense, therefore, does Mumen's marital power over the unlettered wife derive from his own religious education. In actuality, it drives from that Riffian gender convention which urges instructing boys, not girls, in Islamic teachings. Girls, when grown-up, resort merely to taking food to the tombs of saints as *"an outlet of religious energy"* (145). Marital power is not concentrated in Abd el Mumen's hands; it is *"something which circulates"* in line with certain age-old norms established and cherished by the Riffian community as regards intra-kin relationships which, as noted above, favour men to the detriment of women (*Power/Knowledge*, 98).

Coon highlights Abd el Mumen's yearning for patriarchy, stating: "He dreamed of a new land, untrodden by men, where he could establish himself as a patriarch" (*Flesh* 23). That is the Vale of Iherrushen, "a wondrous valley, narrow yet broad enough for terracing, with its sides thickly timbered in cedar and in pine" (25). Mumen and his wife settle down there, building a stone-and-timber house, caring for cattle and working in farming (sowing, watering, reaping and threshing). This shows Abd el Mumen as horticultural, a subsistence pattern which depends on planting and herding domesticated animals. Mumen's wife bears him first a son named Mohend and then a daughter named Tadmud. As the Mumens put down roots in Iherrushen, newcomers take up residence there: Mohend u Ali and Faras. To the former, a man of toil and virtue, Mumen gives Tadmud and another daughter to the latter. From the Mohend u Ali and Tadmud descend the Beni Tadmud tribe, whose name derives from the female line because Tadmud is older than her husband in the valley. On the other hand, Mohend's children, more seven sons of Abd el Mumen and Faras' children make up the Ulad Abd el Mumen tribe. Allowed by the ever-growing Abd el Mumen, new men move into the Vale of Iherrushen, including Aissa in Tarosht, a Christian named Yahya Telmest, Ali u Hend and Moh Muniud, the Red-headed. Peace and quiet settles over Iherrushen and over neighbouring mountains. But, it does not endure.

Abd el Mumen's marital power materializes as he goes polygynous, marrying three more wives and inaugurating a patrilineage which runs generations deep. "In polygynous societies, such as the Mormon Latter Day Saints or Arabic-speaking Muslim societies, polygyny is indicative of a man's wealth or heightened social status" (Keen 1882). It is associated with an appreciable rise in property and power. "Chief Kgagamanye, who was chief of the Kgatla from 1848-1875," for instance, "had 46 wives" (1884). Certainly, this applies unmistakably to the Riffian Abd el Mumen: "When he had prospered in his work, he took unto himself three other wives" (*Flesh* 28). Still, Mumen's polygyny does not only signal an increase in ascendancy, but portends the patrilineal descent which the succeeding Mumenian kindred would follow. Descent, an operational definition of which is indispensable here, is "a relationship defined by connection to an ancestor (or ancestress) through a culturally recognized sequence of parent-child links from father to son to son's son = patrilineal descent, from mother to daughter to daughter's daughter = matrilineal descent" (Keesing 148). Keesing gives a fourfold typology of descent: patrilineal, matrilineal, cognatic and double. Patrilineal, or agnatic, descent is traced exclusively through a line of ancestors, while matrilineal, or uterine, descent is traced exclusively through a line of ancestresses. Double descent is traced through both lines of ancestors and ancestresses while cognatic descent is traced through either a line of ancestors, ancestresses or any male-female combination (150). The descent group which Abd el Mumen initiates is patrilineal, owing to his patriarchy and polygyny: it comprises men and women, both of whom belong to their father's kin, not their unnamed mother's. Still, it is only men who can bestow their family line upon their children.

Tadmud's progeny are members of Mohend u Ali's patrilineage though the description of the Beni Tadmud is traceable to her name. "Since Riffian society is patrilineal and families are usually patronymic," Coon explains, "daughters who have married into another



*vein become affiliated with the group into which they have married, and offspring of these daughters are considered to belong to their father's veins" (Tribes 90).<sup>ii</sup>*

Abd el Mumen's substantial growth in marital power, which is conspicuously actualized in patriarchy and polygyny, not to mention the patrilineage he gives rise to, cannot be ascribable to prosperity in husbandry. In actuality, it can be ascribed to a cultural custom in the Rif which, in Coon's view, stresses that it is "[o]nly men of unusual wealth ordinarily marry more than one wife" (142). Power, Foucault argues, is "never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth . . . individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application" (*Power/Knowledge* 98). It follows that Abd el Mumen is not in possession of marital power. He is a mere medium of it. So, too, are his descendants, notably Mohend, a divinely-built mosque preceptor; Amar, a skilful planter; Moh, an accomplished councillor and carpenter; and Malim Hamidu, a gifted gunsmith. Faithfully, they follow in the footsteps of their ancestor's patriarchy and polygyny despite their diverse wealth-generating patterns. Marital power is identified with none of those Mumenian successors because it is, in Foucault's wording, "a machinery no one owns" (156).

#### 4.2 Inter-kin Power Relationships

Inter-kin power relationships develop among individuals or groups of different descent. A notable example which illustrates inter-kin individual-to-individual power relationships is that of Malim Hamidu of the Ulad Abd el Mumen and Hajj Bukkeish of the Ikhuanen. As for inter-kin group-to-group power relationships, there is no better instance than that of the Ulad Abd el Mumen and the Beni Tadmud, especially when the inter-tribal warfare between them breaks out. Given their narrative inextricability, the examples of inter-kin power relationships are examined in unison so as to avoid verbosity.

Both Malim Hamidu and Bukkeish are members of the Gzennaya council, the highest governing body in the Vale of Iherrushen. The council is made up of "the great" who are dictated by former councillors (Coon, *Tribes* 96). Succession to the council is to a large extent hereditary: an ex-councillor is likely to name one of his sons to take the office he once had (96). Hamidu's and Bukkeish's rise to power is markedly different. In the aftermath of Moh's death, Hamidu is left at the mercy of three stepmothers who ill-treat him and force him into leaving for Taghzuth, where he apprentices himself to a gunsmith. He masters the tricks of the trade and buys tools of Christian make, returning later to Iherrushen to settle down at a time of nonstop thronging and squabbling. Hamidu grows famous for making and repairing rifles mostly in exchange for land. He reclaims most of his own rightful heritage and more: "He bought a whole mountain from the Urriagghlis of Tafsest and covered it with grape vines. For this mountain he gave two flintlocks" (*Flesh* 38).

<sup>ii</sup> *Vein* is the literal translation of the Berber term *awar*, an appellation of a large family group in the Rif. Coon remarks that there is no sociological term in the English language that accurately corresponds to *awar* and has opted for a word-for-word translation, maintaining it consistently throughout *Tribes of the Rif*. "In describing a highly complex social organization such is found in the Rif clarity is of greater importance than philological exactitude" (90).

Hamidu's property increases, and so does the esteem in which the tribespeople hold him. As a token of appreciation, councillors in Iherrushen are recurrently in search for his wise counsel. This respect is substantially solidified by his pilgrimage to Mecca along with his off-spring: Amar the Scabhead, Mimun and Hamid, except Ali the Yellow-haired. *"That pilgrimage enhances the greatness of Malim Hamidu. His voice was the chief one in the council, and to him men came first for advice"* (39). By contrast, Bukkeish rises to leadership among the Ikhuanen despite his younger age. His rise owes greatly to an earlier struggle against Spaniards outside the wall of Melilla. Like Hamidu, Bukkeish spiritually bolsters his supremacy through pilgrimage to Mecca. *"He [Bukkeish] and Malim Hamidu were the two most important men in the council"* (96). The inter-kin power relationship between Hamidu and Bukkeish to unfold corroborates Foucault's view that power does not necessarily involve the suppression of the powerless by the powerful. Both tribesmen are in the ascendancy; none seeks to wrest power away from the other nor to dragoon him into relinquishing it. Neither Hamidu nor Bukkeish are in possession of power: it is more of a strategy than a possession (something which someone does in a specific context). This manifests itself as Bukkeish strategizes to strip the Mumenian kin of their long-running control over Iherrushen during and following the inter-tribal war between the Ulad Abd el Mumen and the Beni Tadmud tribes, a feud which causes the deaths of Malim Hamidu and Amar the Scabhead, not to mention Mimun's discreditable sacrilege in retaliation.

Once loyal allies, the Ulad Abd el Mumen and the Beni Tadmud get entangled in an inter-kin power relationship which takes the shape of an inter-tribal war. It turns out to be fraught with atrocities and cruelties arguably ascribable to Hamidu's exogamy. Characteristically, marriage is endogamous among Riffian kin groups. A kin group, by means of endogamy, strives to preserve its constitutive elements, including language, power, religion and wealth, and passes them on to future generations to perpetuate its existence (Velioti-Georgopoulos 813). *"Sometimes, however, an important man [in the Rif] takes a wife without payment, from outside group, as an honour to himself and as a protection to those who give her, since following the marriage the two clans become allied; and to refuse such a proffered wife would cause a great scandal"* (Coon, *Flesh* 87). A younger self-respecting and well-heeled man, Hamidu goes exogamous, getting married with a gorgeous and sagacious woman from the Asht Haddu n Mehend, a clan of the Beni Urriaghel. According to Lévi-Strauss, this exchange of women is motivated by the incest taboo and the principle of reciprocity: while the incest taboo marks an important shift away from the animal world of nature to the human world of culture by bringing incestuous relationships to an end, reciprocity imposes mutual obligations between the wife givers (the Asht Haddu n Mehend) and the wife takers (the Ulad Abd el Mumen) (24-25). Hamidu's exogamy forces him into standing up for his in-laws in time of warfare against their neighbours, the Ulad Amar u Aissa of Timarsga. Albeit grudgingly, the Beni Tadmud joins the Ulad Abd el Mumen to lend a helping hand to their kin against the Ulad Amar u Aissa. As fight erupts, Amar the Scabhead mistakenly shoots an allied Tadmuti; a Tadmuti rifle bullet subsequently strikes Si Bushtar, the schoolmaster of the Ulad Abd el Mumen, dead while seeking to secure peace. Hostilities break out. Peace talks get

underway only to break down later. The Beni Tadmud schoolmaster calls for sending the Asht Haddu n Mehend back to the Beni Urriaghel, disparaging them *"as ticks on a dog's neck"* and holding them accountable for the indiscriminate killings which have fallen out (Coon, *Flesh* 98). *"There are too many of them,"* the Tadmudi schoolmaster protests, *"and there is not land enough to support them. They will be taking our terraces, and stealing from our trees"* (98). No blood money and fine, the schoolmaster threatens, are to be paid unless the Asht Haddu n Mehend are sent to their own living quarters. To the schoolmaster's threat, the honour-bound Hamidu vehemently objects.

*"When I was young,"* said the Malim Hamidu, *"I was given a wife by the Asht Haddu n Mehend. She has given me no trouble, and her family have always been my friends. They have helped us, and we have helped them. We have been like brothers, and we have sworn oaths together. If we send them home now, they will be slaughtered. All the rest of Beni Urriaghel will destroy them; they have already burnt their houses, and cut down their trees. We will suffer great shame. We cannot send them back; it would be the act of swine."* (99)

This quote reveals Malim Hamidu's outright unwillingness to feed his own flesh and blood to the Urriagheli lion. It is a sign of the great respect Hamidu accords to an enduring Riffian marriage tradition of exogamy. For him, sending the Asht Haddu n Mehend to their dwelling does not only signal a departure from the tradition, but, most unashamedly, a despicable act of betraying his own kith and kin who have stuck up for him in delight and sorrow. Not yielding to the Tadmudi impositions to work out a truce, Hamidu turns out to be a man of great honour, not a kin back-stabber. This noble and heroic act results in Hamidu's killing in an ambush set up by the Tadmudi schoolmaster on the pretence of making a truce. *"Because tomorrow is the first Aid el Kebir. Nobody dares go to the mosque, and we cannot pray. We cannot feast and the schoolboys cannot put on their carnival"* (104). This is the flimsy peace pretext the ill-intentioned schoolmaster, with malice aforethought, provides Mimun and his son, Amar the Scabhead, seemingly willing to sacrifice a goat at the mosque door and swear oaths for a truce. By trickery, Amar is shot dead, and so is Hamidu while exacting revenge on the Tadmudi slayers of Amar.

The twin murder sparks off deep antipathies between the once allies, a mutual antagonism which climaxes in Mimun's sacrilege in the Aid el Kebir, resulting in four Tadmudi killings. This Mumenian sacrilege can be seen as a conscious act of resistance in the inter-kin Mumen-Tadmud power relationship. First, it is designed to wreak vengeance for the slaying of Malim Hamidu and Amar, *"the ablest fighters of the clan [the Ulad Abd el Mumen]"* (Coon, *The Riffian* 4) Second, it occurs in Aid el Kebir, during which *"fighting is strictly forbidden"* and *"murder which takes place on any one of the three days during which it lasts is a loathsome thing"* (Coon, *Flesh* 101). This sacrilegious resistance aligns with the fourth base of the above Foucauldian theorisation of power. In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault argues, *"Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in position of exteriority in relation to power"* (95). It suggests that the kin

power relationship between the Mumenians and Tadmuts does not depend on an executioner-victim model where the Beni Tadmuts victimizes the helpless Ulad Abd el Mumen or vice versa. Indeed, it cannot be a power relationship if it is resistance-free, for where there is no resistance, there is no power relationship.

For Foucault, power is “*a mode of action upon the actions of others*” (qtd. in O’Farrell 99). The Beni Tadmuts react adversely to Mimun’s desecration during Aid el Kebir. They bring the Mimun-murdered corpses in supplication and slaughter a bull at the door of Bukkeish. It is a solemn ritual meant to lay a shame compulsion upon Bukkeish to solicit solid support against the Ulad Abd el Mumen. Shame compulsion is integrally related to inter-tribal disputes. In *Tribes of The Rif*, Coon explains,

*“A bone hard pressed in a feud, wishing to ally itself to another bone, passes in toto men, women, and children, to the village mosque of the other bone, leading with them a bull if possible, otherwise a cow or a goat. The schoolmaster of the first bone, or one of its members who is a student at the cantonal mosque, slaughters the animal sacrificially in front of the mosque, in such a way that the blood will spurt out and hit the door. If this fails to happen, however, the shame-compulsion still holds. The bone upon it has been worked is forced to ally itself with the supplicating group, forming a liff [an alliance] with it.” (104-5)<sup>iii</sup>*

Bukkeish cannot reject the shame compulsion laid by the Beni Tadmuts. It is ritually thought that a big calamity will befall Bukkeish should he decline. He takes up the cause of the Beni Tadmuts, but it is not for the apparent reason. Bukkeish is driven by an ulterior motive: to the deceased Malim Hamidu, Bukkeish has been no equal. “*No one was left now to eclipse his own greatness [in the wake of Hamidu’s killing]. He would stamp out the Ulad Abd el Mumen. The people of Tiddest [his kin] would be the most powerful in the mountains*” (Coon, *Flesh* 119). This brings back to light the Hamidu-Bukkeish power relationship where power is seen as a strategy, not a property. Standing up for the Beni Tadmuts against the Ulad Abd el Mumen, Bukkeish strategizes to strip the Mumenian kinsmen of their own long-standing upper-hand over the Vale of Iherrushen. To all appearances, his bid for power is individual as it is designed to reinforce his own Bukkeishian takeover in the Gzennaya council after Malim Hamidu’s murder. For all practical purposes, it is very kin-centric since it is destined to smooth the path for the people of Ikhuanen to hold sway over the entire Iherrushen. Here comes up a conversion of an individual-to-individual power relationship into a group-to-group power relationship: the Hamidu-Bukkeish power relationship converts into a power relationship between the Ulad Abd el Mumen and the Ikhuanen.

The Beni Tadmuts strikes a pact with Bukkeish to wipe out the Mumenians or drive them out of the Rif. They continue laying more shame compulsions, gaining staunch

<sup>iii</sup> *Bone* is a literal translation of the Berber *ighs* (*ikhsan* in the plural). It designates a body of interrelated *veins* (a large family group). In sedentary regions, it takes the shape of a village or a politically independent segment of a village. It does not include *veins* descending from an apical ancestor of the *bone*, but also from strangers who have been adopted into the *bone*. Mohend u Ali and Faras are notable instances of strangers who have been adopted into the Ulad Abd el Mumen.

allies: Izgwawen, Tarosht, Bisnes and Telmst, the inhabitants of which are in with a once-in-a-lifetime chance to root out “the domination of the descendants of the valley’s first settler” (*Flesh* 119). On the other hand, the Ulad Abd el Mumen led by Mimun draw up their own defence schemes with the aid of their closest relations and loyalest allies, the people of Teliwin, Aghabal and Inhanahan besides the Asht Haddu n Mehend. Infighting unfolds: the Beni Tadmud and their allies assail while the Ulad Abd el Mumen and their allies defend. It goes for over three months: the death toll includes twenty-seven assailants, eighteen defenders and two tribal councillors, a telltale sign of a stiff Mumenian resistance. “There is no power, Foucault maintains, without potential refusal or revolt” (qtd. in O’Farrell 100). Besieged, the Mumenians, however, are forced to give in because of desperate food shortage and severe deficiency in weapons. Later, they are forced into exile and their ally into fines by the council of Gzennaya.

“Killing people on Mohammedan [sic] feast days or during the month of Ramadan is one of the strongest reasons for the expulsion of a bone” (*Tribes*, 105). Mimun’s sacrilegious act in Aid el Kebir constitutes a serious crime punished by exile to Lamta in the vicinity of Fez. This Gzennaya-delivered verdict results roughly in what Foucault describes as the “sovereign power” which antedated the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in European history: it entails obedience to a visible authority figure like a sovereign and is open to resistance given its concreteness (36).<sup>iv</sup> The sovereign-like Gzennaya power materializes visibly and invisibly. First, the council forces the Ulad Abd el Mumen tribe, when besieged by the Beni Tadmud and people of Tiddest, into semi-starvation and expulsion, thus depriving them of their homes and lands (material loss). Second, by exiling the Mumenians, the council deprives them of a memorably intangible legacy of their deceased ones in Iherrushen: Malim Hamidu, the Gunsmith who has bought a whole mountain for three flintlock rifles, and Amar the Scabhead, who has fed the uninvited Jebally visitors the flesh of their own mule for supper (immaterial loss).<sup>v</sup> The visibility of the sovereign-like power wielded by Gzennaya is captured at the beginning of *The Riffian*.

“They [the Mumenians] formed a sorry company, leaving their homes in permanent exile. Mimun, who dared not look back down his valley lest he, too, might weep [as do some women], was leading them forth in search of new fields to till and new pasturage for goats and cattle. A feud had been fought to the finish; and the Ulad Abd el Mumen, the clan which was now departing, had been defeated, after a desperate siege, by the many families allied against them.” (4)

<sup>iv</sup> Sovereign power is the opposite of disciplinary power, which is imperceptible but invasive, emanating from everywhere and impacting upon everyone, and is unopen to resistance seeing its indiscernibility.

<sup>v</sup> This intangible Mumenian legacy in the Iherrushen vale is nowhere brought to light than in the strongest words of Ali the Jackal, the grandson of Malim Hamidu and the lead character in *The Riffian*. Upon arrival in Iherrushen, the vale which he has never seen, Ali asks a small guarding boy about the Mumenian kin, “Did you ever hear of Abd el Mumen?” “Did you ever hear of Malim Hamidu, the maker of rifles and knapper of flints, who brought the first water mill to the Vale of Iherrushen?” “Did you ever hear of Amar the Scabhead, who fed the Jebally students on the rump of their own mule?” “Or of Mimun, who shot three men on Aid el Kebir?” “Or of Ali the Yellow-haired, who robbed the bank of the English and the palace of the Sultan of Pimps?” “Then I am his son. I am Ali the Jackal, the cousin of Moh Umzien.” (273)

The above quote reveals the mental torment through which the Ulad Abd el Mumen tribe goes in the aftermath of the Gzennaya verdict. It takes place in public, gladdening some villagers who exult over the departure of the "mischief-makers" while saddening others who befriend some of the Mumenian kinspeople. It takes place in the open to display the power which the Gzennaya council holds. Any would-be sacrilegious act is to be deterred.

As noted by Foucault in *The History of Sexuality*, wherever power is exerted, resistance is mounted. Solemnly, Mimun pledges to come back to the Iherrushenian cradle of the Mumenian kinship: "We will come back, even if it takes many years . . . We will leap to our valley with rifles in our hands, and then we will raise new roofs on our houses, and plant new trees to take the places of those that have been chopped down" (*The Riffian* 9). To this end, the Mumenians austere live twelve years of self-denial in Lamta, not buying unnecessary luxuries and saving money to buy fine repeating rifles and ample ammo. The Mumenian kin grow more and more high-spirited, notably youngsters who are to engage enthusiastically in fighting for the first time (Amar the Younger, the son of the deceased Amar the Scabhead, for instance). "Our enemies the Beni Tadmud and the men of Tiddest," Mimun speaks sternly, "have forgotten about us. They are walking carelessly up and down the valley, past our roofless houses. To them we are as dead as the heathen buried in the gorge of Aswil. It is time that we let them know that we still live" (30).

Propped up by their trustworthy allies, the Ulad Abd el Mumen carries out a retaliatory surprise attack against their arch adversaries, the Beni Tadmud and the people of Tiddest. They stage "a great show of offence" and cause "a considerable slaughter," killing seventy men of the enemy lines while losing thirty of their own (*Flesh* 153). Mimun has not allowed Moh Umzien to engage in the surprise attack: "You are my son and you will, if God gracious, be the chief one of the Ulad Abd el Mumen in your time" (*The Riffian* 31). This comes true in the fullness of time when the Mumenian exiles, headed by Mimun who is wholeheartedly backed by the Ulad Abd el Mumen schoolmaster Si Alush. They return to Iherrushen, seeking peace and wanting again to put down roots and distance themselves from further inter-tribal disputes. Treading the path of the least resistance, they drive a herd of cows, goats, sheep, and, most symbolic of all, a fat ram that is slaughtered by Si Alush on the doorstep of Bukkeish's house. "We have made a great shame-compulsion," Si Alush declares, "and you cannot refuse us. We will build up our houses and clear our terraces, rebuilding the walls that have fallen and carrying the soil back to its place. We will care for our vines and water our trees, and live at peace with our neighbours" (*Flesh* 171). Si Alush's declaration is an implied confession of Mimun's desecration because "a great shame-compulsion" cannot be laid unless an enormous sacrilege has already taken place. It also implies that the Ulad Abd el Mumen have learnt their lesson after their bitter eight-year exile as share-labourers for Arabs. Arguably, the Gzennaya decision to exile the Mumenian kindred as a punishment is not merely corrective, but curative, as well. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault argues that "in its function, the power to punish is not essentially different from that of curing or educating" (303). Consequently, the council of Gzennaya meet under the olive trees: councillors argue and curse while Si Alush pleads. The Mumenian exiles' longing for homecoming seems mightier than the entreaties of the

Gzennaya elders. It is decided that the Ulad Abd el Mumen tribe can stay on the condition that they swear solemn oaths not to bring about trouble. They rebuild their ramshackle homes, recarve their irrigation ditches and render their land ready for ploughing again. Mimun goes back to Fez alone, leaving Moh Umzien in the footsteps of his Mumenian ancestors. The Mumenian kindred resettles the Vale of Iherrushen, where they have once sprung into life.

Overall, this study has sought to address Coon's *Flesh of the Wild Ox* and *The Riffian* on anthropological grounds. It has explored how kinship and power operate or pervade both novels, distinguishing two kin power relationships: intra-kin and inter-kin. In both relationships, kinship operates inclusively in that characters strive to increase the number of individuals and groupings who can be "made into relatives" (Schweitzer 210). Indeed, the Riffians use inclusive strategies to extend their kin circle, even allowing non-kin inward access. One of these intra-kin strategies is polygyny embraced by Abd el Mumen and his offspring. They in-marry more than one wife to have more children, so they can increase in number. Besides increasing kin, polygyny indicates a strong growth in power and property, inspiring veneration among the Iherrushen people. It is this veneration which appeals to non-Mumenians who seek to secure strategic alliances through inter-kin relationships, notably exogamy. The Asht Haddu n Mehend, for instance, makes an alliance with the mighty Ulad Abd el Mumen; they offer their notable Malim Hamidu a pretty and politic woman without dowry in search for support over testing times. This reciprocity imposes mutual allegiances and obligations between the wife-givers and -takers: while the Ulad Abd el Mumen are duty-bound to stand by their in-laws when they engage in inter-tribal dispute with the Ulad Amar u Aissa of Timarsga, the Asht Haddu n Mehend are honour-bound to stand by the Ulad Abd el Mumen when the dispute turns into a Mumen-Tadmut fight. Malim Hamidu's exogamy is an inclusive inter-kin scheme because it helps strategically expand the size of the Mumenian and Mehendian kin groups. Another inclusive strategy is shame compulsion, a classic case of which is laid by the Beni Tadmut on the Bukkeish-led Ikhuanen in the wake of Mimun's Aid el Kebir desecration. The Tadmuti shame compulsion aims at securing strategic allies to stamp out the Mumenian kin in revenge. It turns out to be a sound strategy which expands the Tadmuti non-kin allies, forcing the Mumenians into surrender and ensuring the Gzennaya verdict to exile them. Kinship in Coon's novels about the Rif works inclusively on the grounds of polygyny, exogamy and shame compulsion, notably in times of inter-tribal disputes, extending kin ties to non-kin and evidencing the elasticity of kin boundaries among the Riffians.

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