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TROBRIAND KINSHIP FROM ANOTHER VIEW: THE REPRODUCTIVE POWER OF WOMEN AND MEN

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This article, based on field research in Kiriwina, Trobriand Islands, focuses on a brother-sister sibling set as the primary unit of analysis. Viewing reproduction as a model for the organisation of a society, both women *and* men are analysed as reproductive agents. From this perspective, the processes of reproduction are examined as they relate to the reproduction of *dala*, the reproduction of human beings, and the regeneration of social relations. Using this model of reproduction, Trobriand kinship terminology is analysed and the problem of the meaning of the kinship term *tabu* is re-examined.

Introduction

In this article I argue that kinship studies traditionally have analysed the roles of women *and* men through *a priori* ethnocentrically constructed perspectives. In using biological reproduction as a first principle, women have been treated as reproductive agents (and usually nothing more) and men have been treated as non-reproductive agents (and everything else). Immediately one might respond that, after all, women give birth and men do not. This seems fair enough if biological reproduction is the axis on which all else turns. But the issues, I believe, are more complex.

Since Lewis Henry Morgan's *Systems of consanguinity and affinity of the human family* (1871), the central problem in kinship studies has been how to organise and define relationships created through ties of marriage and the family, and those created through ties of descent and ancestors. In his essay, 'What is kinship all about?' (1972), Schneider argues that, regardless of how Morgan's most recent followers (e.g. Lounsbury, Goodenough, Lévi-Strauss, Leach and Needham) 'revised, amended, altered, embellished, or tightened-up' Morgan's paradigm, they did not succeed in disengaging themselves from *a priori* biogenetic premisses about the nature of kinship (1972: 36-7). I suggest that the resiliency of Morgan's paradigm has much to do with the way anthropologists view authority and power, and therefore, the way the roles of women and men traditionally have been conceptualised.

My thesis is that we have examined reproduction in its biological context only, and in so doing we have reduced the affairs of kinship to their most narrow manifestations. I argued elsewhere (1978) that all societies make commitments to the reproduction of their most valued resources, i.e. resources that encompass human reproduction as well as the regeneration of

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social, material, and cosmological phenomena. In our Western tradition, however, the cyclical process of the regeneration of elements is not of central concern. Even the value of biological reproduction remains a secondary order of events in terms of power and immortality achieved through male domains (see e.g. de Beauvoir 1953). Yet in other societies, reproduction, in its most inclusive form, may be a basic principle through which other major societal structures are linked.

Using a model of reproduction (see Weiner 1978; n.d.a; n.d.b for a more detailed formulation of this model) with data from my field research in Kiriwina, I analyse certain aspects of Trobriand kinship focusing on women and their brothers as reproductive agents. Presenting Trobriand data in support of this perspective seems especially appropriate in light of the influence Trobriand ethnography has had on theoretical issues concerning kinship and descent (Fortes 1953; Homans & Schneider 1955; Leach 1951; 1958; Lévi-Strauss 1963; 1969; Lounsbury 1965; Needham 1962; Scheffler 1973).

Through Malinowski's seminal work in the Trobriand Islands (e.g. 1922; 1929; 1935a; 1935b), the Trobrianders became the classic example of a matrilineal society where 'father-love' was opposed to 'mother-right' (see especially 1929). According to Malinowski, his informants denied knowledge of physical paternity—they called their fathers *tomakava* ('stranger'), and each year men produced yams for their married sisters' husbands (see Weiner 1976 for new data and analyses of these points).

One significant ethnographic 'problem' for Malinowski was why men produced yams for their sisters rather than for their wives. A Trobriand man supplies love and nurturance to his own children, but according to Malinowski's scheme, a man's children very soon leave him to come under the control of his wife's brother (but cf. Weiner 1976). The yam production, for Malinowski, was a statement of the 'legal authority' men exercise over their sisters and their sisters' children—an authority which, in Malinowski's view, made man a partial figure in his own household with his own children (see especially Malinowski 1929: 129).

According to Malinowski, the avuncular relationship replaced the paternal, and the authority of descent superseded the primacy of the nuclear family (see also Malinowski 1930). Meyer Fortes (1957; 1959; 1969) and others have argued against this formulation. Fortes has continually emphasised that the formal organisation of clans and lineages cannot be understood as extensions of the family. I take up this same point, but whereas Fortes analysed lineages as part of the jural-political domain, I show that in Kiriwina the reproduction of lineage (i.e. *dala*) is an integral, complementary part of the processes of human reproduction and the reproduction of social relations.

But retaining Malinowski's analysis of the positive and negative valence created in a Trobriand child's respective relationships to its father and its mother's brother, Lévi-Strauss brings the avuncular relationship to a central position in his 'atom of kinship' (1963: 31–54). The relationship between brothers-in-law then becomes the 'axis' around which all other relationships turn. While this perspective takes us far from the morass of arguments over the

first principles of the nuclear family or descent, at base, Lévi-Strauss's structure remains embedded in *a priori* concepts of complete male authority over women and the cultural insignificance of women and reproduction. In Lévi-Strauss's elementary structure, men function as authority figures to reverse the disequilibrium created by the giving of a woman to another group of men; women are merely the object of the inequality which then causes the reversal of exchange, and children only serve to validate the perpetuation of the exchanges of women through generations (1963: 46–7). In other words, women and children represent balances and imbalances in the continuity of the authority relationships between men.

I very strongly emphasise that I am not countering the argument that men may have authority over women. My thesis is that men do more than exchange women, and that a focus on authority, in the traditional anthropological sense, disguises and distorts the full dimension of male pursuits as it also allows us to ignore women (see Weiner n.d.b). Further, the 'underlying structure' is not the exchange of women, but the *reproduction of social relations*, which requires an analysis from *both* female and male perspectives. In the Trobriands, a man does not exchange his sister (as I explain below). He is an agent of reproductive capacities in ways significantly different from, but complementary to, a woman's reproductive capacity.

These problems remain further complicated by the way brother–sister sibling sets have been traditionally conceptualised. For Lévi-Strauss, the prohibition of incest brings about a 'new order'—the *split* between a brother–sister sibling set (1969: 25). In the exogamous separation, a woman is reduced to little more than a sex symbol—a sign for her brother and others.

In this new case, [the emergence of alliance] indeed, this was the only means of overcoming the contradiction by which the same woman was seen under two incompatible aspects: on the one hand, as the object of personal desire, thus exciting sexual and proprietorial instincts; and, on the other, as the subject of the desire of others . . . as the means of binding others through alliance with them (Lévi-Strauss 1969: 496).

Malinowski, although developing his notions of kinship in a very different way, described the brother–sister relationship in similar terms.

Thus, to repeat, the sister remains for her brother the centre of all that is sexually forbidden—its very symbol; the prototype of all unlawful sexual tendencies within the same generation and the foundation of prohibited degrees of kinship and relationship . . . (1929: 522).

In either theoretical camp, culture is viewed as assigning power to men. Because women never escape from biology, that is, from nature, reproduction remains a premiss rather than an issue subject to cultural analysis. Whereas Malinowski reduced the brother–sister sibling set to male authority over children, Lévi-Strauss reduced the same relationship to male authority over women. In both approaches, notions of reproduction remain embedded in an amorphous domain—biology—and therefore, reproduction never becomes a cultural/symbolic form in its own right.¹

Following Schneider (1968; 1972), my analysis illustrates the necessity of discarding the approach begun by Morgan: an approach that was streng-

thened ethnographically by Malinowski's view of the Trobriands, and theoretically refitted with new trappings by Lévi-Strauss.

My methodological approach is to focus on a brother-sister sibling set without defining that set as conceptually or structurally split apart at marriage. Malinowski's emphasis on the nuclear family as (by definition) the minimal unit of kinship, excludes any value on a brother-sister set as an inclusive part of a reproductive unit. My argument is that the nuclear family cannot be conceptualised as an elementary unit if one is concerned with the process of the regeneration of relations through time. Further, by dismissing women as active agents, Lévi-Strauss's atom of kinship dismisses the significant cultural/symbolic reproductive roles that *both* women and men play in complementarity to each other. I argue that emphasis on any single unit, such as lineage, family, or marriage exchange, as *primary*, causes the complementary units to be given subordinate positions. A model of reproduction, based on a system which defines reproductive capabilities and limitations beyond the purely biological, must examine the nucleus of kinship relations through a woman and her brother, their respective spouses, and respective children (see fig. 1).

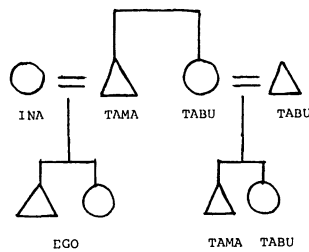


Diagram a

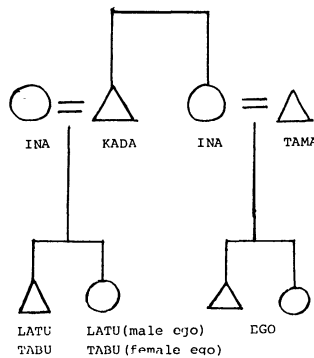


Diagram b

FIGURE 1. Brother-sister sibling set from the perspective of their respective children.

In this way, the complementarity between these female/male relationships may then be analysed as a reproductive whole. Thus the full range of reproductive activities for women and men can be plotted as they contribute to and define the processes of human reproduction and the reproduction and regeneration of social relations.

The basis of the reproduction of social relations: a woman and her brother

Although a range of taboos appears to separate a woman and her brother, the split occurs in public situations and revolves around matters of sexuality only. Viewing the separation from a different perspective, Malinowski wrote:

Brother and sister thus grow up in a strange sort of domestic proximity: in close contact, and yet without any personal or intimate communication; near to each other in space, near by rules of kinship and common interest, and yet, as regards personality, always hidden and mysterious. They must not even look at each other, they must never exchange any light remarks, never share their feelings and ideas. And as age advances and the other sex becomes more and more associated with love-making, the brother and sister taboo becomes increasingly stringent (1929: 522).

Explicit in these statements is the notion of permanent separation at all levels of a relationship. In fact, a relationship between the two does not seem to exist at all. The naiveté in Malinowski's view (and in many other views, from Morgan's thesis on the development of the Punaluan family unit to Lévi-Strauss's alliance theory) can be attributed to the treatment of women as sexual symbols—a perspective that conceives of women's roles as relative only to the negative or positive claims made on their sexuality. Such an assumption thus makes 'natural' the brother–sister sibling split, and in an *a priori* way, places analytical interest on the relationships created through marriage. The reproductive role of a woman is then equated with 'wife' rather than with the multiple roles of 'sister', 'mother', and 'wife'. Although Malinowski (especially 1935a) examined the economic relationship between a man and his sister (via yam exchanges), women's economic roles (via women's wealth) were never explored. Thus the yam transactions between a man and his sister represented a man's interest in his sister's children (but see Weiner 1976: chs 5 & 6). This view not only distorted the role of women, but equally distorted the role of men: very important yam exchanges also take place directly between men—especially between fathers and sons (Weiner 1976: 141–57). By analysing the sister–brother avoidance in its public context only, Malinowski emphasised separation rather than complementarity. What is being separated, however, are *different modes of reproduction* which must come together to recombine and exchange in complementarity to each other.

These modes of reproduction may be outlined through an examination of the processes of human reproduction and the reproduction of *dala* (i.e. lineage). I refer the reader to more detailed explanations of these modes in Weiner (1976; 1977; 1978). But I emphasise here that the basic reproductive process has two important facets: one accommodates the reproduction of *dala* identity (achieved through women and ancestral substance), while the other simultaneously augments *dala* by the continual accumulation of outside resources (initially the contributions a man makes to the growth of a foetus). In

this way, the autonomy of *dala* is tempered by the incorporation of outside resources gained through dependency on 'others' who are members of different *dala*. Men (as 'others') directly contribute to the procreative process, and remain significant contributors to the further growth and development of their children (see Weiner 1976; 1978; cf. Malinowski 1929). Further, the relationship between a man and his children may last beyond his own death, when his sons and daughters continue to support members of his *dala* as each person 'takes the place of her or his father' (see Weiner 1976 for details). The processes linking *dala* with 'others' result in the reproduction and regeneration of extensive networks of intergenerational relationships basically held together through the material transactions of yams and women's wealth. The relationships central to these networks are the recombinations and exchanges that occur in the complementary interaction between a brother-sister sibling set. (For a discussion of the relationship between my analytical model of reproduction and 'the native's point of view', see Weiner n.d.b).

In the Trobriands, the relationship (whether blood, classificatory, or fictive), between a man and his sister, gains greater significance after his sister's marriage, but the relationship remains one that unites the two directly to each other. Men do not have autonomous control over their sisters. Rather, a man and his sister must continuously negotiate their relationship to gain support from each other. A man works through his sister to reach her husband. But, in return, a woman's support comes to her directly from her husband. Briefly, a man works a yam garden each year for one sister.² In addition, at harvest, he also presents baskets of yams (supplemented through the year by taro plants) to other sisters. In this way, a man creates for himself an ego-centred network of sisters. The husband of each sister is obligated directly to his own wife and must expend his own wealth in order to accumulate women's wealth when his wife distributes these items of women's wealth in *sagali* 'mortuary ceremonies' (see Weiner 1976: ch. 7, for details of these transactions).

As I describe elsewhere (Weiner 1978), yams hold relationships between men and women in a special space-time framework. Yams given by a man to his sister reproduce through other exchanges the items of women's wealth for her. Yams are the symbol *par excellence* of the reproductiveness of social relations, as yams move from a man to his sister and then cross the boundary of *dala*, extracting resources from a woman's husband, who is a member of another *dala*. Thus through yams, a man secures a special relationship with his married sister (and as many other married 'sisters' as he can afford). In turn, each woman's husband is under direct obligation to her. For a woman, the pattern of these transactions is never reversed in that a woman never assumes any direct obligation to her husband or to his sisters in terms of women's wealth. A man must produce yams for his sister and women's wealth for his wife. A woman takes from both her husband (women's wealth) and from her brother (yams), and then distributes her own wealth as a member of her *dala*.³

Although women are the means whereby men may establish relationships with their brothers-in-law, they are not 'merely the object' of that relationship. Marriage allows a woman, through the use of objects, to begin to demonstrate the strength of *dala*, her own power as an individual, and the

power of the men who surround her. When a woman's brother starts a yam garden for her, her own power expands with the yam production. For as the yam production increases, a woman's wealth should similarly increase. Presentations of yams and women's wealth are the objects that in exchange, display (or speak the words of) the value of the set of relationships between a woman, her brother, and her husband. As a man gains, so does his wife. Her gain through 'others', both in children and material wealth, however, defines the strength of *dala* and, therefore, also defines the importance of her brother. This interaction does not develop, however, because a woman is an exchange object between men. In fact, if we shift the focus to a woman as mother rather than wife, we find that a woman and her brother decide on the woman's daughter's spouse, and a woman and her husband make a similar decision regarding their son's future spouse (see Weiner 1976: 174–6; cf. Malinowski 1929: 84–5; Robinson 1962).

Therefore, women are as instrumental as men in marriage arrangements.⁴ Although at marriage a woman physically goes to live with her husband, conceptually, she never moves out of her position in her own *dala* as its basic female reproductive agent. A man, too, remains a complementary male reproductive force for his own *dala*. In order to maintain a high level of production, a man works for his wife *and* for his sister. When he works for his wife, he is accumulating resource potential in his children; when he works for his sister, he is reproducing resource input for his sister through her husband, which also will eventually benefit himself. (During mortuary ceremonies, when women distribute their wealth, they demonstrate through specific exchanges, the status of their brothers. At the end of the formal distributions of women's wealth, a woman's brother cooks pig and taro pudding for her—thanking her for her work [see Weiner 1976: ch. 4].)

In order to effect the incorporation of 'others' (i.e. persons and material resources), a man remains dependent on abilities and areas which his sister controls. In other words, a man's capacity for social reproduction includes a measure of his sister's reproductive ability. A woman, entering into her brother's reproductive domain, performs rites of beautification for his children. At harvest, a time when the search for appropriate spouses is most intense, a man's sister adds to her brother's development of his children by performing beauty magic for them. In a similar way a man's sisters (blood, classificatory, or fictive) beautify the body of his deceased child, as well as performing appropriate mourning procedures. Further, women, using their own wealth objects, reclaim those *dala* elements (such as names, decorations, and even in some cases, land) which their brothers have given to their children to use (see Weiner 1976, for examples).⁵

Therefore, women regenerate those elements primary to the matrix of *dala*: internal, matrilineal identity conceived in the reproduction of children. By using women's wealth to reclaim certain kinds of elements that have been on loan to 'others', women also contribute to the regeneration of material resources identified as *dala*. Further, at the death of a *dala* member, women's wealth is distributed by women of the *dala* of the deceased to all 'others' from other clans who formerly were associated in some way with the deceased (see

Weiner 1976). In the women's mortuary distributions, women's innate reproductive power is transformed into objects—skirts and bundles—that identify not only the power of individual women (and men), but symbolise the reproductive power of *dala*. In the mortuary distributions, women disengage the deceased from former relationships with the living—paying back those 'others' who once contributed to the growth and development of the deceased (major payments are made to the father and the spouse of the deceased). Women's power is most public at the end and the beginning of the life cycle—maintaining the regeneration and reproductiveness of *dala* identity through time. Men engage in expanding the boundaries of *dala*—yet men ultimately must depend on women, their sisters, to reclaim and to conceive.

Another view of the sister–brother sibling set and the kin term tabu

At this point I summarise the significance of a brother–sister sibling set by analysing a limited range of kinship terms. Earlier I stressed that the units of kinship most essential to the cultural meaning of *dala* (as the autonomous state of *dala*, coupled with dependency on 'others') included the central kin relationships of sister and brother, their respective spouses, and most importantly, their children. In fig. 1, the kinship diagrams, a and b, are worked around a brother–sister sibling set as the key relations, rather than the more usual focus of husband/wife. Further, the diagrams are designed using as ego (a) a brother's children, and then (b) his sister's children. I emphasise that, in this analysis, ego merely plays the role of the centre, specifying which *dala* is under consideration. This is a departure from the argument up to this point in which I have stressed the role of ego *vis-à-vis* specific individuals.

This procedure has several important implications. First, it allows for a view of sister–brother relationships that includes the variety of the roles they play. Second, this view incorporates the full process of social reproduction by emphasising the primary attention accorded intergenerational relationships. By concentrating on a sister and brother, and their relationship to their own and each other's children, the primary kinship units and the processes involving the reproduction and regeneration of the units appear sharply delineated. In interpreting these diagrams, I analyse female/male kinship terms as pairs, rather than as individual terms. Given my thesis that a sister–brother sibling set must be understood as a unit of reproductive complementarity, and my larger thesis (Weiner 1976) that regardless of whether or not women have political power in a society, whatever domain women do control must be analysed as a structural feature in articulation with the male domain, it seems essential to carry this view through to the area of kinship terminology.

In my discussion of kinship terminology, however, I am not concerned in evaluating and taking sides with the oppositional approaches presented earlier by Leach (1958) and Lounsbury (1965). Rather, I want to present an analysis of Trobriand kinship terms from another view. I do not argue that my view is primary. I am concerned here with demonstrating that when the perspectives I suggest are used in viewing the full range of kinship terms, the modes of reproduction I already described may be associated with the meaning of basic kin terms. At the same time, I do not imply that polysemy should be ignored.

I am not interested in analysing here the various denotations of kinship terms because my aim is neither to demonstrate the specific relationships in different social contexts between an individual speaker and hearer, nor to discover the primary genealogical significata (cf., e.g., Scheffler 1973). Further, in analysing kinship terms from another view, I am not structuring my analysis only around the usual basic distinction between consanguines and affines. I believe that my analysis of kin terms indicates an allocation of cultural/symbolic features and functions regarding the reproduction of human beings, *dala*, and the reproduction and regeneration of social relations. These functions, as I already have shown, are intrinsic to the reproduction of the person and exist in the sibling pair. Therefore, parallel reproductive complementarities, rather than a more narrow view of consanguines/affines, form the basis of my analysis.

From this perspective that focuses on three major characteristics: (1) the complementarity of male/female relationships; (2) the primacy of the sister-brother sibling set; and (3) the processes related to intergenerational time and role differentiation, the following paired sets can be isolated. In fig. 1, diagram *a*, in which I use a man's children as ego, a man and his sister are, respectively, *tama/tabu*. In diagram *b*, using a woman's children as ego, a man and sister are *kada/ina*. In both diagrams, *tama/ina* represents each child's respective parent. The usual translation of these terms in their 'primary genealogical meaning' (see Malinowski 1929; Leach 1958; Lounsbury 1965) is as follows: *ina* 'mother'; *tama* 'father'; *kada* 'mother's brother'; *tabu* 'father's sister'. The entire range of Trobriand kinship terminology has been classified as Crow-type, common to many matrilineal societies (see especially Lounsbury 1964; 1965).

Trobriand kinship terminology has its own anthropological history. Most notable is the classic debate between Leach (1958) and Lounsbury (1965). Based on a re-analysis of Malinowski's data (which differs in each interpretation), Leach and Lounsbury present controversial views concerning the meaning of Trobriand kinship terminology and arguments supporting (Lounsbury) and refuting (Leach) Malinowski's theory of the genealogical source of meaning in kinship terminology and the extension of this meaning to include a secondary range of individuals (cf. Buchler & Selby 1968: 39-46). In important areas my data differ from Malinowski, and, by implication, from the data used in the analyses presented by Leach and Lounsbury. Although a re-evaluation of Trobriand kinship terminology, as set out by Leach and Lounsbury, is beyond my purposes here, my examples in fig. 1 illustrate certain concepts basic to the above controversy.

Leach argued that Malinowski was wrong in his assumption that kinship terms have primary meanings associated with particular individuals, and that these meanings are then extended to a secondary range of individuals. The process of 'extension' occurs as a child grows and comes to recognise similar patterns of behaviour in a wider range of people. Therefore, first a child learns to call its true mother *ina*, and gradually it learns that other women who show the same type of behaviour towards it are also to be called *ina*. By extension, *ina* means mother and mother's sister. Leach, objecting to Malinowski's

theory, argued that 'kinship terminologies are category terms rather than individualizing proper names' (1958: 124).

I do not repudiate the possibility of the 'extension' of meanings from narrow primary to wider secondary contexts, but I do not admit that words used as kinship terms must, *ipso facto*, derive their primary meaning exclusively from a kinship context, nor that the primary application is always to a particular individual rather than to a class of individuals (p. 123).

In his analysis, Leach used residence and economics rather than genealogy to formulate categories of meaning in Trobriand kinship terminology. My analyses (Weiner 1976) alter the sociological implications in the areas, for example, of *dala*, clan, residence, and *urigubu* 'affinal yam exchanges'. Further, as I indicated above, my interest lies in the connotation rather than the denotation of kinship terms, and therefore, I am not concerned with Leach's basic argument concerning a primary category of meaning.

Countering Leach's views, Lounsbury argued that Malinowski was correct in his notions of a primary genealogical referent and a secondary extension of meaning. In support of this perspective, Lounsbury presented a componential analysis of Trobriand kinship terminology. Although the controversy appeared to be about genealogy *v.* sociology, Lounsbury argued that the critical issues had to do with 'the precise nature of the jural rules of a society, and of the roles that family relationships have in the formulation of these' (1965: 147). For Lounsbury (following Malinowski) the nature of meaning in kinship terminology must relate

(1) to the fundamental importance of the nuclear family and of the roles within it, (2) to the origin of kinship meanings within the nuclear family and the extension of these out from that point of origin along specified paths of connection, and (3) to the basis for such extension that is provided by genealogy and by family law, i.e. by the recognition of legal rights that are *ascribed* in terms of relationships found in the nuclear family, and of various relative products of these (1965: 147, author's emphasis).

In my analysis I object to the unrelenting emphasis that Lounsbury places on the 'jural rules of the nuclear family'. As I have shown, at least for the Trobriands, the nuclear family, as we perceive it, remains too narrow and ethnocentric a concept in this regard. Inherent in the relationship between a woman and her husband is the configuration of the meaning and processes of *dala*, as defined through the Trobriand mode of human and social reproduction. From this perspective, the 'roles' of the nuclear family must incorporate the additional 'roles' pertaining to the modes of reproduction inherent in the three reproductive units of husband/wife, brother/sister, mother's brother/mother. Malinowski's error was his assumption that the nuclear family was a primary unit and that with time the clan, in the guise of the mother's brother, removed the child from that unit, making it cognisant that it belonged to a wider clan structure. Therefore, for Malinowski a separation existed between the primary family and the secondary clan structures. As Fortes (1957: 175) emphasised, Malinowski's view was psychologically oriented, based on the slow process of a child's awareness of primary persons and kin terms (a mother and father), and a secondary or metaphorical extension of these terms to other kin.

My argument is that this particular notion of extension does not pertain

because, inherent in the process of human reproduction (i.e. the procreative combination of a woman's blood and ancestral substance causing conception with the procreative ability of a man who provides for the growth and development of the foetus) are the distinctions and interrelationships between *dala* and 'others'. In this way I am contrasting timeless, collective identities (that elsewhere (Weiner 1976) I analyse as part of 'ahistorical' or cosmological time and space) with time-bound, individualised relationships ('historical' time and space) that must be worked at and attended to through exchange. In some ways my analysis of the relationship between a man and his children relates to Fortes's notions of 'complementary filiation'. Fortes, too, is concerned with the relationship between timeless identities and time-bound individual relationships. But our views differ in several significant ways. I emphasise the reproductive complementarity between women and men, and, in so doing, my analysis does not focus around jural rights and duties. Further, I am not viewing marriage and the nuclear family as the beginning and end point of a domestic cycle (see Fortes 1958). My concern is with death, and indeed with the full processes of birth, death, and rebirth. Rather than emphasising marriage to the exclusion of other relationships, I emphasise the reproductive significance of a brother-sister set.

From the perspective of this analysis, I argue that kinship terms are genealogically primary only in so far as they relate to the regeneration of *dala* in its autonomous state. The nuclear family is of significance only as it replicates the reproduction of pure *dala* (through women as *ina*, 'mother') in combination with the introduction of outside resources (through men as *tama*, 'father'). Kinship terms define relationships that either *cross dala boundaries*, and therefore serve as connectors for outside resources (i.e. human or material resources), or those relationships that *do not cross dala boundaries*. The basic process concerns the transmission rights or use rights only of *dala* property, and the nature of relationships in regard to regenerative and reproductive abilities.

Therefore, to return to fig. 1, I argue that the pair *tama/tabu* in diagram *a* defines the male and female processes of crossing *dala* boundaries. Thus, *tama/tabu* is a representation of the dependency side of the *dala* matrix which gives to others and then reclaims what has been given. In this way a man, as *tama* ('father'), and a woman, as *tabu* ('father's sister'), in relation to each other as brother and sister (a relationship which has been defined through yams), cross *dala* boundaries and function as connectors, creating additional kinship links which in time will turn back again and benefit or/and be reclaimed by the *tama/tabu* pair. Conversely, the *kada/ina* ('mother's brother'/'mother') pair represents the autonomous side of the *dala* matrix: *dala* blood (transmitted by *ina*) and *dala* land (transmitted by *kada*).⁶ The relationship, *kada* and *ina*, concerns the transmission of control and rights to future transmission of elements and resources defined as *dala*. Thus, a woman and her brother, in complementarity to each other, both play out two necessary roles as (1) *tama* and *tabu*, expanding *dala* resources through giving use rights, but not transmission rights, to *dala* property, and, as (2) *kada* and *ina*, representing the full strength and total accumulated power of *dala*.

Only from this perspective can the *tama/ina* pair be seen to represent the

processes that allow for Trobriand human reproduction: *dala*, represented by *ina*, and 'other', represented by *tama*. When a woman marries, her role as *ina* strengthens rather than diminishes her position within her own *dala*. She reproduces *dala* identity in the cosmological domain of *baloma* ('ancestral spirit') and *buyai* ('blood'). In the social domain she distributes her wealth as a member of her *dala*. *Ina* represents the reproduction of *dala* identity, which appears in its most autonomous state at conception and death. From the perspective of ego, all women in ego's first ascending generation play out this role of *ina* for their own *dala*, except for father's sister, who, in relation to ego, as *tabu*, plays a different role (see fig. 2). The fact that ego calls mother's brother's wife *ina* (see fig. 2) has often been cited as a Trobriand anomaly in Crow-type systems (Leach 1958; Lounsbury 1965). But when *ina* is analysed as above and viewed within the full range of basic kinship terms, the anomaly disappears. Women, regardless of their marriages, represent their own *dala*—as *ina*. Women, as *tabu* ('father's sister'), also represent their own *dala*, but the process of representation is activated not only at conception and death. Rather, *tabu* ('father's sister') signifies the attention given to the growth and development of ego and to the return of *dala* property (e.g. decorations, names) given to ego by her or his father. A woman, as *tabu*, cannot reproduce *dala* persons, but she contributes to her own *dala* through her attention to her brother's children in the above ways.

In the same way, a man, as *tama* ('father'), conceptually crosses his own *dala* boundary by supplying resources to his children, and thus gaining support for himself and for his *dala*; support that will last beyond *tama*'s own lifetime. All men, except *kada* in ego's first ascending generation, are involved in the same process for their own *dala*. From the perspective of *dala*, a man, as *tama*, produces support for his own *dala*, but he must go outside his own *dala* to do so. Therefore, his reproductive role is limited. As *tama* he cannot reclaim elements associated with *dala* identity that he has given to his children, nor can he make the full range of necessary payments to replace *dala* identity when a death occurs. *Tama* needs the counterpart found in *tabu*. Therefore, a woman, as *tabu* ('father's sister') relinquishes her innate sexuality to build up and assist in defining her brother's relationship to his children. (I discuss the exception of father's father's brother's son as *tama* to ego, below.)

But the kinship term *tabu* has a greater range of complexity. Malinowski defined the various meanings of *tabu* as (1) something forbidden, sacred, taboo; (2) grandparents, grandchildren, ancestors; and (3) father's sister, father's sister's daughter, and by 'extension', lawful woman. Malinowski believed that each set of meanings differed from the others and, therefore, the word *tabu* was in fact a set of several homonyms (Malinowski 1929: 515, 524, 528–36; 1935b: 28, 113). An examination of the use of the term *tabu* in its fullest dimension would require expanding certain features of Trobriand relationships that are beyond my purposes here.

Briefly, however, (1) the notion of taboo is not related in any way to *tabu* (see Chowning 1970); (2) ancestors called *tabu* refer to those individuals who founded land and established the domain of *dala*—individuals whom I call 'founders' and describe elsewhere (Weiner 1976: 39–43; 1977). Grandparents

and grandchildren mark the beginning of the use of *tabu* for further ascending and descending generations; and (3) *tabu* is used for father's sister's husband, father's sister's daughter, and is also the term used for any woman in ego's father's clan whom it is appropriate to marry.

The question now is whether the meanings in (2) and (3) are different, and therefore homonyms, as Malinowski thought, or whether they relate in some way to each other and to the way I have defined the use of *tabu* for father's sister. If we take my broadest explanation for *tabu* as a connector between *dala* (and clans), and at the same time as a marker of the limitations of the expansion of social reproduction, all these uses of *tabu* seem to contain this culturally defined meaning.

Tabu, as founder, marked out the original *dala* universe. In the original history of hamlet and garden lands, expansion was the basic principle (see Weiner 1976: 45–50), but finally, in the course of events, specific areas of gardens and hamlet lands were secured and limitations on further expansion were set. Today these original limitations still serve as boundaries of the autonomous *dala* matrix associated with land and origins (see Weiner 1976: 39–43; 157–67, on land disputes). In addition, the beliefs associated with origins describe the relationships between members of one *dala* and 'others' (members of different *dala* in the same and different clans). In the oral histories of the search for land, relationships with 'others' intruded upon (either negatively or positively) the choice of hamlet and garden sites. Therefore, the beliefs concerning *tabu* as the original founders are structured around the establishment of *dala* space, contingent upon the interaction of *tabu* with 'others' not members of an ego's own *dala*.

Similarly, the genealogical line of grandparents (*tabu*), and reciprocally, grandchildren (*tabu*), mark the boundaries between which active reproductive processes occur: ego's generation and ego's first ascending generation (see fig. 2). In this structural context, *tabu* sets off the limits (either genealogical or physical, as above) for the possibilities of expansion. *Tabu* also indicates the points where the boundaries between *dala* and 'others' must be crossed in order to reconstitute the appropriate reproductive modes through successive generations.

The points of articulation between *dala* and 'others' mark specific kinship sectors defining certain kinds of relationships between two contiguous generations (i.e. father's sister and father's sister's husband), and within one generation (i.e. father's sister's daughter, and from a female ego, mother's brother's son and mother's brother's daughter) (see fig. 1, *a* and *b*). But, in fact, the processes involved in the relationships at each of these sectors have significant intergenerational implications. Further, they also indicate female/male domains of organisation. I have already discussed the intergenerational implications of the kinship term *tabu* for father's sister. The same term for father's sister's husband indicates the collapse of the relationship between ego and father's sister's husband to that of father's sister. In a similar manner, kinship terms are also collapsed in the case of a male speaker who uses the same term for his brother and brother's wife and a female speaker using the same term for her sister and sister's husband. Therefore, excluding the more general

categories of the kinship term, *tabu*, that include men and women such as founders and grandparents/grandchildren, the precise points of articulation at the socially reproductive sectors in two contiguous generations refer to the female domain of reproduction.

If we again examine fig. 1, diagram *a*, we note that ego's father's sister's son and daughter are respectively called *tama* and *tabu*. *Tabu*, as father's sister's daughter, has been analysed either in sociological or genealogical terms (see Malinowski 1929; Leach 1958; Lounsbury 1965) in the context of a marriage rule. I argue that the *tama/tabu* pair in ego's own generation indicates the replacement for ego of the *tama/tabu* pair in the first ascending generation—father (*tabu*) and father's sister (*tama*). A man's children take his place even after he dies—his son using his land and his daughter performing mortuary distributions for members of his *dala*. For example, when a man's father dies he may continue to live in his father's hamlet which is now controlled by his father's sister's son—his *tama*. Therefore, when a man and his sister die, the relationship established between these two and a man's children continues with his sister's children as replacements for their mother and mother's brother. The importance of the *tama/tabu* pair is accentuated by its ability to succeed itself through another generation. The reciprocal kinship terms used by ego for mother's brother's children (see fig. 1, diagram *b*) illustrate the importance of analysing the significance of the *tamu/tabu* pair over two generations. A male ego calls his mother's brother's son (who may be living on his land) and daughter (who continues to distribute her women's wealth in the name of her father) *latu* (child), maintaining his father's earlier relationship of *tama* to his own children. A female ego calls her mother's brother's children *tabu*, for, as informants say, only she, as *tabu*, can perform beauty magic, mortuary rituals, and other necessary tasks for them—just as her own mother earlier performed these tasks.

Replacement is an important concept in Trobriand culture (see Weiner n.d.a). The word *kemapula* is used to signify that a person is 'taking the place' of someone else, indicating a logical scheme of succession relating to the process of social reproduction. The view I present of a *tama/tabu* pair in ego's own generation as a replacement for the *tama/tabu* pair in ego's first ascending generation supports Lounsbury's (1964; 1965) analysis of rules of succession found in the skewing rules for Crow and Omaha kinship systems. As Scheffler (1973: 773) explained, Lounsbury's equation of rules of terminological extension with rules of status succession does not indicate that all distant kin called by the same kin term designating succession are, therefore, subject to the rights of succession (see also Scheffler & Lounsbury 1971). But whereas Lounsbury is concerned with the extension of a specific kin term such as father's sister and father's sister's daughter, I am concerned with the reproductive unit of father and father's sister, as this unit operates through time in relationship to the other reproductive units of father/mother and mother's brother/mother. Further, the importance of understanding forms of succession, or in Trobriand terms, replacement, is not only based on replacement because of death, but replacement becomes a significant principle in understanding the meaning of *tabu* as a marriageable partner.

In examining the kinship term *tabu* as a single unit, the problem of biological premisses and rules of marriage reappears. In another part of his analysis of Trobriand kinship terms, Lounsbury pointed out that the terms did not reveal any inherent rule for marriage.

And finally, on a negative point, why is it that—in spite of what the Trobrianders are quoted as having told Malinowski ('To marry a *tabula* (cross-cousin) is right; the true *tabula* (the first cross-cousin) is the proper wife for us' (1929a: 101; 1932: 86))—that in spite of this, no rule expressing cross-cousin marriage, i.e., equating affinal with appropriate consanguineal relationships, is necessary in order to generate the referential structure of the Trobriand kinship terminology? (1965: 176.)

Nevertheless, Lounsbury follows Malinowski when he states that the Trobrianders do not have "prescriptive alliance", either in fact or in ideology' (1965: 180). Trobriand marriage according to Malinowski has to do with free choice, despite the fact that the stated preference is for father's sister's daughter (Malinowski 1929: 95).

When I directly asked informants if someone should marry his father's sister's daughter, I was told that 'such a marriage would be very good'. Malinowski was also told by his informants that this was a proper marriage. Neither of us was able to record examples of such marriages. When I did not ask directly about marriage, but asked why someone called their father's sister's daughter *tabu*, I always received answers about a woman's role in beauty magic and in mortuary practices and distributions. In other words, no informant ever voluntarily mentioned marriage with a father's sister's daughter unless I specifically asked about 'the rule'. What I was told (as was Susan Montague, pers. comm. (1975) on Kaileuna Island) emphasised the very great importance attached to a marriageable spouse for ego coming from the same clan (*kumila*) as ego's father.

In marrying someone from their father's clan, a man's children (both sons and daughters) increase the number of persons standing in a special relationship to him. The relatives of his children's spouses (provided they belong to his same clan) become *keyawa* to him and thus contribute wealth objects for him to use in mortuary distributions each time someone in his own *dala* dies.⁷

Although each man has his own individual network of *keyawa* relationships, the most important are produced through the marriages of his children with members of different *dala* in his own clan. If a man's children do not marry anyone who is a member of his clan (as is sometimes the case), then his children's affines will not be *keyawa* to him. They do not perform the obligations necessary when someone dies in his *dala*. Through mortuary exchanges with his *keyawa*, a man is able to accumulate enough wealth so that essential mortuary payments for land and other *dala* property can be made when someone in his *dala* dies. If these payments are not completed, property used by 'others' cannot be reclaimed (see Weiner n.d.a).

Thus, *tabu*, as marriageable woman or man in the clan of *tama*, operates as a connector, creating relationships within a clan that can only be activated through a spouse who is a member of another clan (see Weiner 1976: 55–60). *Tabu* here represents not only the connector between *dala* and 'others' for ego

(the spouse an ego may marry), but *tabu* also represents the connector between *dala* and 'others' (*keyawa*) for ego's father. But there is one other important dimension to the reproductive process inherent in these intergenerational relationships.

When I returned to Kiriwina in 1976, I gathered additional data on marriage patterns. In the course of this work, I was told (without my asking) that the best marriage for a man was 'to marry his father's *kada*' (see fig. 3).

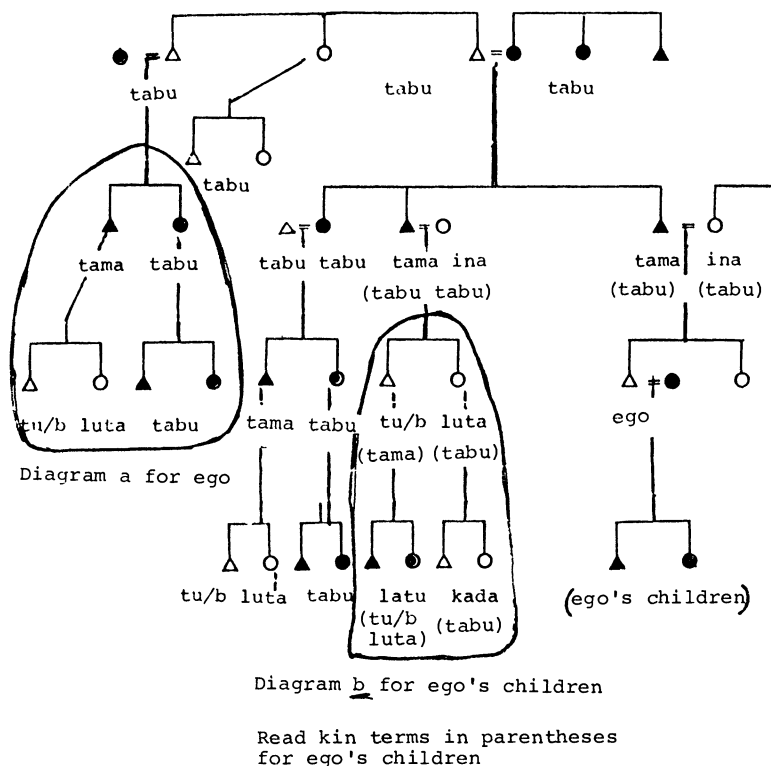


FIGURE 3. *Tabu* as 'marriageable partner' from the perspective of ego following diagram a, and from the perspective of ego's children following diagram b. The shaded symbols refer to Clan A and the unshaded symbols refer to Clan B.

I also found that this kind of marriage did occur often. In fig. 3, diagram a, an exception to my explanation of *tama* seems to occur in the case of father's father's brother's children, who are respectively *tama* and *tabu* to ego.

If, however, the analysis focuses on ego's children, as I show in fig. 3, diagram b, the *tama* exception is, in fact, a significant part of the whole regenerative cycle. From the perspective of ego's children, the *tama/tabu* sibling set are their father's father's brother's children. In this sibling set the children of *tabu* (who are *kada* to ego) are *tabu* to ego's children: the best individuals to marry. With the marriage of his children in this way, ego obtains his father's brother's children as *keyawa*. In a structural sense the *tama/tabu*

sibling set represents the closest link to ego's father's *dala* without actually being of that *dala*. It has been argued by Lévi-Strauss (1969) and others that patrilateral cross-cousin marriage results in a 'closed system' and does not produce any kind of organic solidarity (see also Needham 1962; Leach 1951; 1958; and counter arguments by Homans & Schneider 1955). But in Kiriwina, patrilateral cross-cousin marriage is by-passed in favour of patrilateral *second cousin* marriage, which does not produce such a 'closed system'. Rather, this kind of marriage represents an expansive, reproductive system in which networks of relationships are produced by the reproductive efforts of women and men that may be regenerated through patrilateral lines for generations. The *tama/tabu* sibling set, furthest removed genealogically from ego, crosses *dala* boundaries and establishes the closest and most important *keyawa* relationships for ego as it establishes marriage partners for ego's children.

Therefore, to return to the question of *tabu*, we find that each meaning of the word *tabu*, stemming from the *tama/tabu* pair, emphasises the same basic reproductive process of the possibilities for expansion across *dala* boundaries. There is a concomitant emphasis on the limited field in which expansion is possible, and on the absence of any automatic inherent regenerative process. When a death occurs, enormous effort and energy are expended in long-lasting and complex mortuary exchanges in an effort to regenerate *tabu* links for five, ten, or more years (see Weiner 1976; 1978).

But each primary kinship pair—*kada/ina*, *tama/tabu*, *tama/ina*—has a similar problem to solve. It attempts to expand within the limitations set by the reproductive system. *Kada/ina*, as the basis of the reproduction of the autonomous state of *dala*, reproduces itself through ahistorical (cosmological) and historical (social) time and space: i.e. *dala* blood and *dala* land. But *kada/ina* cannot reproduce the full development of persons internally identified as *dala* and externally strengthened by 'others'. *Tama/tabu* represents these 'others', who provide external resources to those outside their own *dala*. The *tama/tabu* pair reproduces relationships that link several generations through kinship. The *tama/tabu* pair must cross their own *dala* and clan boundaries in order to regenerate these links. The process of regeneration depends upon constant production of material resources (e.g. for mortuary distributions) and new marriages. In other words, these relationships must continually be 'fed' or they dissipate.

From this perspective, a woman and her brother operate on both sides of the descent/kinship line: *kada/ina*—reproducing autonomous *dala*, and *tama/tabu*—reproducing resources in 'others'. But a necessary part of this duality is the *tama/ina* pair—the basis of human reproduction. Only *tama/ina* supply the primary element in the system: children—conceived through women (as *ina*) and 'moulded' through men (as *tama*). But in the full perspective of Trobriand reproduction, *tama/ina* do not merely represent the 'nuclear family'. Sexually, the brother/sister pair is split apart. Conceptually, the *tama/ina* pair must also be split apart. The full range of reproductive factors must encompass not just husband/wife or husband, wife, and wife's brother, but the unit of *tama* with *tabu*, and the unit of *ina* with *kada*—brother/sister pairs.

Conclusion

The processes inherent in the Trobriand system of reproduction include the ability to reproduce human beings that are more than *dala*, and to regenerate social relationships through a dynamic culturally derived interchange between the complementary reproductive capabilities of women and men. Any attempt to describe this reproductive system either solely from the perspective of marriage, or solely from the perspective of descent, or solely from the perspective of jural rules of authority between men completely obfuscates the delicate balance in the nature of Trobriand reproduction and the cultural attention given to the complex sets of arrangements necessary for the maintenance of such a reproductive system. The system of reproduction is never in equilibrium. It is always in flux, in movement, containing points of limitation and points of possible expansion which demand continual attention. If there is no movement within a segment (e.g. a *dala*), that segment in the system withers through time and dies off. In microcosmic form, human death signifies a momentary halt in the process of reproduction. But the rituals of death exceed any other activity in the scope of the dramatic and long-lasting series of transactions that begin when a death occurs—a measure of the danger in fully short-circuiting the reproduction system.

My aim in this article has been to analyse cultural meaning through ethnographic interpretation. On one level of analysis I have been concerned with the logic underlying the Trobriand structure of kinship relations. But on another level I have argued for a re-evaluation of kinship studies that directly focusses on the cultural/symbolic meanings of reproduction, rather than on the traditional biological grid. In order to develop my interpretation I have had to reject many of the most fundamental assumptions about the 'natural' order of kinship and the 'natural' order of the relations between women and men. In concluding, I again question why marriage has had such an overriding effect on kinship studies to the exclusion of other relationships such as sibling sets. Why is kinship analysed only from a male perspective? Why is authority viewed as the only logical *modus operandi* for understanding either structure or organisation? Why does biology remain the grid from which all else springs? And finally, why do we arrange the roles of women and men in slots that correspond to our own view of sex roles and our own unimaginative perspective on the significance of reproduction?

NOTES

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¹ Although Marxist perspectives emphasise reproduction, the focus has been on the mode and means of production. For the most part, human reproduction remains a given rather than the model for the reproduction of other sectors of society.

² The production from this garden is what Malinowski incorrectly glossed *urigubu* (see Weiner 1976: on *urigubu* exchanges which include pork, coconuts, betel nuts, but not *taytu* yams). Following a woman's marriage, her father first usually works a yam garden for her. Several years later, her brother may take over the production (see Weiner 1976: 195–201; 1978).

³ Because women received the production of yam gardens from their fathers, they also distribute women's wealth when someone dies in their father's *dala* (see Weiner 1976: 198–9; 1978).

⁴ This procedure changes when a chief (especially a Tabalu) marries. A chief may marry a woman 'for love', but most of his wives are chosen for him by other men (see Weiner 1976: 201–2). However, the woman chosen may refuse, or her kin may refuse, and the woman's mother may take part in the decision.

⁵ In order to reclaim one's own land in which the use rights have been given to someone else, it is necessary to give stone or shell valuables to the leasee in order for the land to be returned to *dala* use. In some cases, men do not have the necessary valuables, or the men of the *dala* are too old or too young. Women then do *sagali* (present valuables and take the land back). In four cases I recorded, women saved the land in this way.

⁶ Only one man (in some cases, two brothers) controls hamlet and garden lands identified as *dala* land. This man has the right to give portions of the land to others to use, and to decide on who, among his kinsmen, will be his heir (see Weiner 1976: 156–67). But, as a result of a death in warfare or in individual fighting, plots of garden lands may be transferred by the guilty *dala* to the hamlet manager of the *dala* of the deceased. When land is given as a result of death, the plots never return to the original *dala*.

⁷ See Damon 1978 for a similar kind of relationship (*sinvalam*) on Woodlark Island.

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