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The Sibling Relationship in Lowland South America

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EDITOR'S FOREWORD

New developments in kinship theory have frequently occurred when ethnographers, frustrated by the inadequacies of standard theory for either analytical or descriptive purposes, go back to their data and ask what it is that causes the lack of fit between data and theory.

Lowland South Americanists have long been aware that the groups they studied differ greatly from those on which descent theory in its classical formulation or even in later incarnations was based. Most Amazonian peoples show little or no interest in kinsmen beyond the second ascending generation, and, although the literature is filled with descriptions of groups called lineages, clans, phratries, moieties, etc., all of which roughly seem to be organized by unilineal principles, these societies just do not look like those described in terms of standard theory. Furthermore, few of these "descent" groups are ratified by mythic charters; the Northwest Amazon is the major exception.

Alliance theory has suffered a similar fate. Although examples of marriage exchanges certainly abound within the Amazonian ethnographic literature, the modifications required by the data being analyzed fundamentally change the theory to the point of distortion. The composition of the exchanging groups and the relationship between them is in constant flux and flow and exchanges in one generation are frequently only loosely replicated in the following one.

The kinsmen which seem to be the primary focus of attention and interest to Amazonian peoples are their parents, their parents' siblings, their siblings, their parents' siblings' children, their spouses, their spouses' siblings, their children, their siblings' children, and their children's children. (Affines are frequently covered by the kin terms used for consanguines.) Previous analyses of group formation have been focused on entities based on the parent-child tie or on the marital tie. Little attention has been given to sibling ties, despite the fact that siblings seem to be the object of interest to these societies.

Stimulated by our colleagues from Oceania, particularly by Marshall (1981), Judith Shapiro and I decided that it might be useful to devote one of the annual Lowland South America symposia to an examination of whether or not siblingship was a more useful principle than descent and alliance for interpreting the social systems of Amazonian peoples. She agreed to organize the symposium. The results of her efforts appear in what follows.

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THE SIBLING RELATIONSHIP IN LOWLAND SOUTH AMERICA: GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

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The symposium on "Sibling Relationships in Lowland South America", which took place at the 1983 meetings of the American Anthropological Association in Chicago, marked the tenth anniversary of the seminars on lowland South America that have become a regular part of the annual AAA conference program. The papers presented at that symposium are being published here as an issue of the _Working Papers_, as have sets of papers from a number of the other sessions held over the past few years.

The subject of sibling relationships refers us back to issues explored in previous symposia. Of particular relevance are the ethnographic analyses and theoretical discussions presented in the sessions on marriage practices (1973, New Orleans), political leadership (1974, Mexico City), and descent (1975, San Francisco). Papers presented at the symposium on political leadership will appear as a future issue of the _Working Papers_. Contributions to the other sessions have been published elsewhere. The symposium on marriage, which inaugurated the series, was the point of departure for the recently published _Marriage Practices in Lowland South America_, edited by Kenneth Kensinger (University of Illinois Press, 1984). Contributions to the symposium on descent have been incorporated into publications that have appeared in various places (Jackson 1975; Goldman 1976; Murphy 1979; Seeger 1980; Shapiro in press).

In order to suggest some general approaches to be taken to sibling relationships in lowland South America, and also to note continuities in our on-going symposia, I will briefly outline three areas of inquiry that tie the study of siblingship to aspects of lowland South American society focused upon in the earlier seminars mentioned above. These are: (1) the relationships between sibling bonds and marriage practices, including the question of how sibling sets figure in patterns of marital exchange, as well as the issue of how the respective idioms of siblingship and affinity order the moral universe of social relations in various South American societies; (2) the articulation of siblingship with descent, and, more specifically, the significance of the male sibling bond in patrilineal descent constructs and in agnatically-based groups; (3) the importance of agnatic or fraternal factions in village politics, and the significance of the sibling relationship in idioms of political leadership.

Siblings and Marriage

The classification of social relationships and the patterns of marital exchange characteristic of Lowland South American societies reveals a complementarity between siblingship and affinity that makes any analysis of one inevitably an analysis of the other. The opposition between the two kinds of relationship

is basic to the "Dravidian-type" kin classificatory systems that generally characterize societies of the region. The various essays published in <u>Marriage Practices in Lowland South America</u> present variations on this common theme. They delve into the moral meanings of this opposition and consider the dynamic relationship between the categories.

The dichotomy may be viewed in a number of different ways, and plural models are commonly found within the same society. A sibling/sibling-in-law distinction may correspond to a conceptual opposition between two different types of social relationship: one based on identity and common interest, the other on reciprocity and exchange. Or, the distinction may express a we/they, self/other, friend/enemy opposition. Since siblingship commonly provides the dominant metaphor for solidarity and cooperation, relatives who are potential or actual affines may be viewed in different ways at different times - in some contexts, their distinctiveness from siblings is emphasized, but in others, the moral correlates of siblingship are generalized to the entire domain of kin relations, and the kin/affine opposition is transcended, or neutalized.

These issues have been explored in particular depth and detail in Basso's studies of the Kalapolo (Basso 1973, 1975) and Kaplan's work on the Piaroa (Kaplan 1972, 1975). Two of the articles in this volume, those by Kensinger and Pollack, provide further perspectives on the moral meanings of siblingship and affinity. Pollack makes an ethnographically and analytically compelling argument for the markedness relationship between the two in Culina social thought, in which affinity is viewed as a departure from a more fundamental state of social solidarity defined by the sibling bond. In taking a diachronic approach to the two types of relationship, Pollack shows how affinity constitutes a phase in the life cycle of kinship bonds, enclosed within parentheses of siblingship.

Kensinger also directs his attention to the contrast between siblingship and affinity as types of social relationship, situating his analysis within a more comprehensive account of how the Cashinahua morally evaluate social conduct. At the same time, he shows us, in his detailed and sensitive discussion of the various ways in which Cashinahua classify and talk about siblings, how siblingship serves as a general model for the social order as a whole, including relations of affinity: just as the sibling tie is viewed from the double perspective of equivalence and hierarchy (about which more will be said below), so the marriage system is similarly constructed of moieties whose relationship is symmetrical and sections that are likened to elder and younger siblings.

The relationship between sibling ties and affinity in lowland South American societies must also be viewed in terms of the role of sibling sets in marital exchanges. The ethnographic studies published in <u>Marriage Practices in Lowland South America</u> provide detailed information on this point. In more general theoretical terms, the sibling-centeredness of lowland South America marital exchange systems has led ethnographers of the region to note the limited applicability of perspectives on marital exchange found in the literature on "alliance theory"

which, by virtue of its complementary relationship to descent theory, came to focus on affinity as an enduring relationship between corporate kin groups - this despite the fact that insights derived from the study of lowland South American societies played an important role in Levi-Strauss' own understanding of the social organizational significance of affinity and exchange (Lévi-Strauss 1943).

The importance of direct exchange, including bilateral cross-cousin marriage, in lowland South American societies has particular implications for the cross-sex sibling bond, since the marital fates of brothers and sisters are closely linked in terms of how both marriage rules are formulated and actual unions negotiated. The effects of marriage practices on relationships between cross-sex siblings were explored in Goldman's (1963) monograph on the Cubeo, and are examined here in Chernela's study of siblingship among the Uanano, another Northwest Amazon group.[1]

Siblingship and Descent

The difficulties that ethnographers of lowland South America had for some time experienced in applying the analytic concepts of descent theory to societies of the region were brought into focus at the 1975 session of the AAA South Americanist symposium. Following a path taken earlier by ethnographers of Highland New Guinea, contributors to the session questioned the importation of models derived from research on African societies. Distinctions that played a central role in the social anthropological literature on descent - notably, emphasis on the corporate properties of descent groups, on genealogical reckoning, and on the analytic distinction between descent and patrifiliation - seemed of dubious relevance to societies of lowland South America. The general inappropriateness of the "lineage" concept in the South American context was discussed (Murphy 1979). At the same time, attention was given to variation within the region and to the greater significance of descent as a structural principle in societies of the Northwest Amazon (Jackson 1975).[2]

The encounter between the anthropological literature on descent and the forms of social/cultural organization characteristic of lowland South America prompted reflection on a variety of issues. The cosmological significance of patriliny was explored (Goldman 1976), and idioms of physical relatedness were analyzed (Seeger 1980). A general argument was made for understanding lowland South American patriliny (and it should be noted that when we speak of descent in lowland South America, what we are generally speaking of is patriliny) in terms of its role in systems of marital exchange and in the structuring of relationships between the sexes (Shapiro in press).

This set of papers on siblingship provides important additional perspectives on lowland South American patriliny. In particular, these studies point up the centrality of same-generation, as opposed to cross-generation, ties in the social and cultural structuring of descent. Kinship studies and kinship theory, as we know, were for some time skewed toward an emphasis on inter-generational relationships; descent theory both followed

and served to maintain this pattern. What emerges, however, from a consideration of patrilineal descent in lowland South America, and here we might focus on the Northwest Amazon area, where descent is most developed as a social/cosmological ordering principle, is that the brother relationship is the pivot of the descent system. This can be seen clearly from the accounts of patriliny presented in the major monographs on the region (Goldman 1963, C. Hugh-Jones 1979; S. Hugh-Jones 1979; Arhem 1981; Jackson 1983), and is brought out in the contributions to this volume by Hill and Chernela.

Groups of brothers appear as the founding ancestors of the societies in this region. The history that links the mythic past to the present is reckoned in terms of a succession of male sibling sets. Brother relationships provide the conceptual framework for social space, from the individual community to the wider articulation of descent groupings at various levels. Rituals, myths, and the general body of cultural knowledge relating to sib and phratric organization reveal that vertical, or temporal, reckoning is less concerned with the genealogical ordering of successive generations than with connecting living sibling groups to the ancestral siblings sets with which society originated. In his rich and detailed analysis of male initiation rites among the Barasana, Stephen Hugh-Jones notes how boys are brought into direct contact with their mythic ancestors, to be adopted by these ancestors in a way that "squashes the pile" of generations, as the Barasana put it (1979:249). The male sibling set in Northwest Amazon societies also provides the model for ranking groups with respect to one another, a topic discussed here in the papers by Chernela and Hill.

The emphasis on the sibling bond in those societies of lowland South America that have the most formally elaborated descent principles reflects a fundamental commonality between sib-organized and kindred-organized societies of the region, which we may compare to and contrast with the fundamental descent-based commonality among patrilineal, matrilineal, and duolineal societies of Africa. As South Americanists, we may find it appropriate to invert Radcliffe-Brown's original formulation of the relation between siblingship and descent, in which the significance of the sibling tie followed from the principle of unilineal descent, and see descent, where it appears, as being oriented around the bond between siblings.

Siblingship and Politics

Contributions to the 1974 symposium on leadership patterns in lowland South America explored the cosmological context of political organization and examined the modes of leadership characteristic of the region. The studies in the present volume address these subjects as well, this time in the context of the relationship between male siblings.

Particularly interesting material on this subject comes from the Northwest Amazon area, where we find the most explicit, culturally elaborated relationship between cosmology, male sibling bonds, and political organization. The male sibling set, solidary and yet internally differentiated by birth order,

provides the model for a socio-political system that merges egalitarianism with a formal system of ranking. The model of the sibling set operates at all levels of society, from the local community, which is ideally formed of a group of brothers, to wider units within the regional system. The hierarchal relationship of seniors and juniors is the basis for differences in rank among sibs, and reflects the order in which ancestral beings emerged to found the various human groups that people the world today. At the level of the local community, leadership ideally goes to the oldest brother in the sibling group, though an interesting reversal of this general norm of seniority is found among the Wakuenai, as described by Hill.

In some societies of the Northwest Amazon, the male sibling group is associated with a series of specialist roles, and hence serves as a microcosm of the society's repertoire of leadership positions. These specialist roles include those of "chief", or "headman", and include others that ethnographers have translated as "shaman", "dancer" or "chanter", "warrior", and "servant". The most extensive discussion of such a system is found in C. Hugh-Jones' study of the Barasana (1979). The division of political and ritual labor among brothers is discussed here in Hill's paper.

By delving more deeply into the norms governing sibling relationships, and seeing how these norms are related to patterns of authority and influence, we can contribute significantly to our understanding of political organization in lowland South America, which has tended to be characterized more in negative than in positive terms. One valuable recent source of information on this subject is Thomas' (1982) study of the Pemon of Venezuela. Thomas explores the connections between different kinds of kinship relation and different types of power, giving particular attention to concepts of siblingship. Within the sibling set, one finds what Thomas calls a "positive hierarchy of responsibility", associated with asymmetries of nurturance and dependence that reflect relative age distinctions. The sibling set, as viewed from the outside, however, is a unified group of equals linked to other similar groups through ties of marriage. The "balanced reciprocity" that characterizes the relationship between sibling sets is the ideal model for a headman's relationship to the community, and for the kind of power he should exercise. The more potent leadership exercised intermittently by prophets corresponds to the type of hierarchy found within the sibling set. Opposed to this hierarchy of responsibility is the "negative hierarchy of demands" that characterizes the relationship between a father-in-law and a son-in-law; according to Thomas, this relationship provides an idiom for a headman's abuse of power.[3]

In investigating the role of siblingship in the political systems of lowland South America, it is also important to inquire into the composition of factions and the ideological terms in which factional solidarity is expressed. Does a set of brothers generally form the core of a political faction? How do the respective idioms of brotherhood and affinity serve to express relations within and between factions? Good sources of

ethnographic data and analysis on these matters include what are perhaps the most famous accounts of politics in the region - Maybury-Lewis' Akwẽ-Shavante Society (1967) and Chagnon's Yanomamö: The Fierce People (1968). In this volume, the significance of a factional system based on the male sibling relationship is explored by Price.

The AAA symposium on siblingship in lowland South America included, in addition to the six papers published here, concluding comments by three discussants - Ellen Basso, Raymond Kelly, and Jane Goodale - all of whom have made significant contributions of their own to the study of sibling relationships. As has become customary in these sessions, comparative perspectives were provided from research in Melanesia.

Two of the three sets of comments, those by Basso and Kelly, appear in this volume. Basso's remarks include some particularly valuable and thought-provoking reflections on differentiation within the sibling group, bringing together cultural-symbolic and psychodynamic perspectives on birth order and relative age distinctions. Kelly, whose ethnographic research on siblingship in a Highland New Guinea society led to a re-examination of traditional social anthropological approaches to the study of kinship and descent (Kelly 1977), offers some general theoretical perspectives on the sibling relationship, particularly in terms of its significance in politically egalitarian societies.

Goodale's comments at the symposium focused on the cross-sex sibling bond, a subject that has been explored in considerable ethnographic detail in her own writings and in those of her students.[4] She noted, as does Kelly, that the brother/sister relationship receives relatively little attention in most of these papers. That this should be particularly striking to ethnographers familiar with societies of Oceania is not surprising; the social significance and cultural elaboration of the cross-sex sibling bond in that part of the world is clearly reflected in a recent collection of essays on siblingship in Oceania (Marshall, ed. 1981). While it is true, to be sure, that the subject of cross-sex sibling bonds merits a great deal more ethnographic and analytic attention in studies of lowland South American societies than it has been given to date, there is also a question of regional difference. One of the more striking results of recent research in Oceania is the general picture we are coming to have of how the brother/sister pair figures as a unit of social reproduction, replacing itself over time and providing a general model for the complementarity of relationships within the social order. That it should have taken ethnographers a while to recognize and appreciate this pattern is not surprising, given the extent to which the conjugal tie dominates European and American models of social reproduction and male/female relationships.

In lowland South America, it would seem particularly appropriate to approach cross-sex sibling bonds from the perspective of how they articulate with the marital exchange system, as noted above. Given the influence of the Levi-Straussian perspective on marital exchange and alliance, there has been a tendency to focus on the relationship between brothers-in-law, or between wider groups of males engaged in

exchanging women. While this perspective is not inappropriate, it needs to be supplemented by a recognition of the role of women, and of brother/sister ties, in the organization of marriage.

In general terms, these studies of sibling relationships in lowland South America, along with those that have been carried out in such other regions as Oceania, contribute to a new focus for comparative ethnography and theorizing within the field of kinship studies. They examine the social structural, political, cultural symbolic, and psychological dimensions of siblingship, shedding light on various reasons why the sibling tie is, to use the familiar and felicitous phase echoed here by Kelly, "good to think".

NOTES

1. A fuller discussion of some of these points concerning marriage in lowland South American societies can be found in Shapiro 1984.

2. These issues are discussed more fully in Shapiro in press, which includes a series of case studies and an attempt to arrive at some general characterizations of patriliny in lowland South America.

3. It is interesting to compare this account to Kracke's (1978) analysis of Kagwahiv leadership, in which the father-in-law, as a quintessential authority figure, serves, along with the father, as a model for the headman's position vis-a-vis his followers.

4. See, especially, the articles by Goodale, Huntsman, Smith and Rubinstein in Marshall (ed.) 1981, as well as Weiner 1979.

LOOKING FOR A SISTER:

CULINA SIBLINGSHIP AND AFFINITY

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Nearly ten years ago our session organizer Judith Shapiro proposed in effect that lowland South American Indian societies could be ordered along a continuum defined by the relative emphasis placed on siblingship and affinity as organizing principles of social solidarity (1974). More recently Arhem has elaborated this comparative analytic to identify what he terms a "fraternal model of solidarity" (1981:294) through which societies in this broad ethnographic region may be compared, in part, in terms of the extent to which affinal relationships are "ideologically concealed or symbolically transformed" into "consanguineal relationships" (ibid.). Indeed, whichever analytic constructs are employed, a striking feature of these and other analyses (e.g. Goldman 1963; Kaplan 1975; Basso 1970) is the consistent emphasis placed on siblingship as an organizing principle or metaphor in many South American Indian groups.

Among the Culina of western Amazonia the notion of siblingship similarly serves as a focal and pervasive metaphor for social solidarity. In this paper I will take up this issue of the articulation of Culina notions of siblingship and affinity, and in particular the question of how 'siblings' become affines, and vice-versa.

The Culina are an Arawak language speaking group of perhaps 2000 individuals living in villages scattered along the major rivers of the Purus-Jurua region of western Amazonia, the majority in Brazil, a few hundred in several villages in eastern Peru. This analysis is based on fieldwork conducted among the Culina living in the village called Maronaua, on the Brazilian upper Purus River near the Peruvian frontier. Culina villages vary in size from about 5 to nearly 250. Maronaua, with roughly 150 residents, is large by traditional standards, according to which villages ranged from about 20 to 50 individuals.[1]

Culina organize themselves into a number of named, localized groups called _madiha_, which may be translated for convenience as people.[2] _Madiha_ groups tend to take the names of animals; Maronaua, for example, is the village of the _kurubu madiha_, the _kurubu_ fish people, while a neighboring village downriver is that of the _pitsi madiha_, the _pitsi_ monkey people. Each _madiha_ is associated with a specific geographic locale; formerly the several small villages occupying an area comprised the _madiha_. As these smaller traditionally organized villages have coalesced into larger single villages, there has been a corresponding tendency to merge the _madiha_ category and group, and notably to assume that all residents of a village are members of the _madiha_ with which that village as a sociogeographic entity is associated.

The members of any _madiha_ consider themselves to be related by kinship, _wemekute_, to all others who share the _madiha_ identity, whether or not they reside in the same village.

Moreover, the madiha forms the boundary of the extension of kinship; members of other madiha, even those with whom one may use a kin term, are not considered to be kin in this sense. Indeed, 'other' madiha are usually considered barely human: either dirty, thieving, sexually loose, or hostile. Further, madiha are conceptually endogamous. A Dravidian-type kin terminology divides the madiha into kin and affines or potential affines, and it is from this latter category that an individual finds a lover or spouse. Although marriage with members of other madiha is not prohibited, there is a clear and expressed preference for marriage within the category.[3]

As a conceptually closed social system, the madiha presents the paradox, if I may put it that way, of simultaneously positing cognatic kinship among all its members while requiring that certain categories of these kin be treated as affines or potential affines rather than as kin.[4] The Culina situation thus resembles that described in the South American context for the Piaroa (Kaplan 1972; 1973; 1975) and the Kalapalo (Basso 1970; 1975), raising the question which Kaplan posed for the former: "What does it mean to be affines with those who are kinsmen?" (1972:284). The issue is appropriate in the context of this session, as the 'type' of kinship which Culina posit among these madiha co-members is siblingship, and it is through sibling metaphors that Culina speak of the nature of their social world. In this case, then, the question might be phrased most narrowly as: "What does it mean to be a spouse to one who is a sibling?"

Culina draw upon two models of madiha organization which focus, on the one hand, on the cognatic kindred character of madiha, and on the other, from the point of view of any individual, on a terminological bifurcation of the madiha into two groups, which I will call by the traditional terms kin and affines.

The first of these models draws upon the metaphor of siblingship to express the obligatory solidarity presumed among madiha members and village co-residents. The term for kinship in this broadest sense is wemekute, derived from the root -kute for 'sibling'. Culina do not in this sense conceive of the madiha as linked sets of siblings (cf. Basso 1970:408), but rather as a field of siblings, all of whom are related equally and in the same degree. This conception is underscored by statements such as iape ikka imekute dzaborakka, "we are all real siblings", to describe the madiha as an undifferentiated field of relations. In some contexts the concept of wemekute may be applied generationally, so that the members of ascending and descending generations form distinct sets of wemekute. But even this generational potential is normally submerged by the practice of addressing children as "older sibling", masking generational difference.

As a metaphor for social solidarity, the concept of wemekute expresses a complex set of assumptions about proper behavior between individual madiha members. These include obligations to provide political support and mutual assistance, to share food and possessions, and to be "mild" and passive in interaction, in contrast to the 'wildness', wadita'a, of jungle animals and

hostile non-Culina.[5] These obligations find their most complete exemplification in the person of the village headman, who is appropriately conceived to be the senior sibling of the field of siblings comprising the village. Within this wemekute framework no division between types of 'kin', or between kin and affines is accepted as a rationale for behavior which violates these norms (cf. Kaplan 1972:283). On the contrary, those who repeatedly fail to act as proper 'siblings' risk charges of witchcraft.

The harmonious social vista of siblingship is inevitably disrupted by the need to marry, in particular by the assumption that marriage will take place within the madiha. Culina kin terminology provides an alternative model of the organization of the social universe which encodes the possibility of marriage through a distinction between those whom ego considers kin, and all others, who are affines or, better, potential affines. This kin terminology establishes on ego's generation an opposition between okute, "my siblings", and the affinal categories owini, "spouse" or "potential spouses" and wabo and karade, who are owini's opposite sex 'siblings', male and female respectively. On the first ascending generation ego distinguishes parents' same sex siblings from parents' opposite sex siblings, yielding four categories: abi, which includes F and FB, ami, which includes M and MZ, koko, which includes MB, and atso, which includes FZ. These latter two categories are 'potential affines' and 'spouse givers', the parents of owini. On the first descending generation, ego again distinguishes own and same sex sibling's children, ohakama, from opposite sex sibling's children, ohidubade, (male) and ohinumadini (female), that is, ego's child's potential spouses.

The differentiation of these two models of madiha organization is also expressed in their cultural symbolization. As wemekute, 'siblings', all members of a madiha are linked by shared 'blood', emene, which remains undiluted, so to speak, by madiha endogamy. A further link to a sociogeographic locale is established by the assumption that all residents in the village of the madiha derive their souls, tabari, and flesh, ime, from the same source, the local jungle's white-lipped peccaries which are themselves the reincarnated souls of dead madiha members, and the consumption of which forms the flesh of human persons.

The differentiation of this field of 'siblings' linked by blood is rationalized according to a separate metaphor which refers to notions of conception and nurturance of children. For the Culina, conception and the growth of a fetus are the consequence of an accumulation of semen in a woman's womb, through repeated acts of sexual intercourse. A fetus is formed entirely of paternal semen, and the pregnant woman makes no such contribution to fetal development at this intrauterine stage. However, at birth the process of infant development becomes an exclusively female task as the baby nurses. The exclusivity of this maternal contribution is further underscored by the food prohibitions placed on the new parents, prohibitions which essentially restrict the consumption of male substances which would subvert the female nurturing process required for the baby to be formed properly. Milk, dzoho, and semen, idzowiri, are thus closely linked in Culina thought as comparable female and

male substances necessary to create and 'grow' a child; both terms derive from the same root, dzo, which serves as the root of a number of terms refering to digestive processes and products, and semen may even be called dzoho tsueni, "black milk", to relate it to the "white milk" of women.

Semen and milk do not symbolize simply the male and female contributions to the creation of new persons. In addition, semen and milk symbolize relations among kin, when these are opposed to relations with affines, and most narrowly relations with siblings as opposed to relations with spouses and spouses' siblings. Unlike the Kalapalo, who cannot say why some kin are potential spouses (Basso 1975:209), the Culina are fairly explicit, and the cultural logic of the system is simple: all persons with whom ego shares either semen or milk (or both), that is, all persons who are 'formed' of the same semen or milk, are "my siblings" (okute) in the kin terminological categorization. Those who have been formed of different semen and milk than ego are placed into the affinal categories of the kin terminology, or more precisely, members of affinal categories are presumed to have been formed of different substances than ego. The prohibition on sexual relations and marriage with a member of a 'kin' category is thus expressed as a "fear", nopine, of mixing the same substance which formed each partner. Ego's B and Z become unacceptable sexual partners and spouses in this logic because they are formed of the same paternal and maternal substances, while owini are acceptable because they are formed of different substances. Parenthetically, it is by reference to this substantial logic that members of other madiha may be classified as 'affines' (or even kin), but not wemekute.

Despite the reference to 'blood' as the metaphor of siblingship expressing madiha membership, I interpret this as a symbol for a code for conduct, in contrast to the substantial symbols distinguishing kin and affines. Siblingship in this sense is a mode of interaction among madiha members. In short, the lack of differentiation among wemekute derives from a generalized code for conduct symbolized by a concept of undifferentiated 'blood', while the opposition between kin and affines (as well as male and female) is symbolized by a concept of differentiated semen and milk. And, ideologically, in terms of the wemekute organization, marriage is preferentially endogamous with a 'sibling', while in terms of the terminological differentiation of kin and potential affines, marriage is prohibited with a 'sibling'.

The conceptual paradox is perhaps best summarized in the Culina expression matsi towi. The phrase is formed of two terms, the latter, towi, meaning 'to look for', and matsi, which may mean either 'younger sister' or 'vagina', The expression is normally a metaphor for "looking for sex", or as we might say, "on the make". The ambiguity is not lost on Culina: "looking for a sexual partner" is metaphorically "looking for a younger sister". The sexual behavior engaged in with owini is precisely the behavior prohibited by siblingship, and the two modes of categorizing relations are thus closely intertwined despite their otherwise neat separation vis-a-vis the contrasting metaphors of blood and semen/milk.

Arhem has recently noted that among the group of South American Indian societies he examined "it seems as if the affinal relationship has to be ideologically concealed or symbolically transformed into a consanguineal relationship" (1981:294). Basso and Kaplan have both proposed similarly that among the Kalapalo and Piaroa it is affines who are brought within the sphere of kin, for example by the use of teknonyms, and through marriage with 'distant' kin to bring them closer (e.g. Kaplan 1973:562; Basso 1975:221). My impression is that for Culina the conceptual task is reversed, that is, it is kin who must be transformed into affines, 'siblings' into spouses.

Phrasing of the Culina situation in this way is based on two considerations. First, the wemekute model of social organization which presumes 'sibling' ties among all madiha members is viewed sociocentrically as a fundamental precondition of relations within madiha. By contrast, affinal relations are viewed egocentrically and have a contingent quality; they emerge principally at marriage, and are only crystalized or objectified through specific marriage alliances. The model of social organization provided by the terminological bifurcation of the social universe into kin and affine encodes a potentiality, in Basso's phrase 'affinibility' (1970:410), which is actualized in varying configurations by marriages, but which remains largely submerged outside of specific alliances. This view is underscored by the claim mentioned earlier, that "we are all real siblings".

In terms of the behavioral correlates of relativity, this entails for Culina that all madiha members are subject to the same expectations in social interaction, those symbolized by the notion of wemekute or siblingship, until a specific marriage transforms, for the two spouses, potential affines into actual affines. This transformation of relations from wemekute to 'real' affines is primarily focused on husbands, who move into their wives' households at least until the birth of several children, when they and their wives build separate houses, normallynext to, or near, the wife's parents'house. Prior to marriage adolescents do not exhibit markedly different behavior toward their 'potential' affines or vice-versa. Of course, sexual liaisons are undertaken between those who classify each other as owini, but in these cases the pre-existing relationship between sexual partners is masked by speaking of lovers as those "who have come from afar", wahitani, as if to transform the metaphorical sibling relation into no relation at all, rather that to contradict it through sexual access. Indeed, an adolescent girl who becomes pregnant prior to marriage is said to have been "stolen by a stranger".

At marriage, relations with one's affines, - now one's 'actual affines' - become markedly transformed. Marriage ritual initiates these transformations, particularly in the now-disappearing practice of whipping affines, especially the immediate household members of the two new spouses. Townsend and Adams interpret this ritualized whipping as an expression of the hostility inherent between affines among the Peruvian Culina (1978), and indeed, whipping may well be a formalized and socially acceptable manner in which to express anger or tension.

In the present context it is significant as a behavior which would not be tolerated among 'kin', as opposed to affines, and thus at marriage it marks the transformation of these metaphorical 'siblings' into affines.

Again, the primary focus of these changes is in-marrying men, whose relations with their wives' household members undergo modification. Husbands must exhibit considerable 'shame', nahidzoti, in the presence of the WM. Prior to his marriage a man may have addressed his WM by name, but when he moves into her household he strictly avoids using her name when she is within earshot, and indeed, avoids whenever possible even looking at her. In-marrying men also become a major source of labor for the WF, and are obligated to assist him beyond the requirements of simple 'siblingship'. The WF 'orders' or 'demands' such assistance, most notably without the expectation of reciprocation. In the husband's own generation, he is expected to engage in lewd sexual joking with his WZ, emphasizing that they are no longer 'kin' but affines between whom sexual access is not prohibited.

Relations between a man and his WB are particularly significant in this regard. The wabo becomes a "friend", atori, in explicit contrast to a 'kinsman'. Rather than bringing the WB (or ZH) 'closer', marriage in a sense creates a formal distance between the two, who are bound by especially strict rules governing their behavior vis-a-vis one another. For the most part it is this WB who will whip his ZH if he fails to behave as a proper husband, again, a form of punishment which would never occur between siblings or 'kin'.

In this regard it may be understood why the Culina do not employ teknonyms for affines, as do the Kalapalo and Piaroa. Affinity is not masked or hidden among the Culina, but rather appears to be particularly stressed when 'potential' affines become actual affines. Teknonyms are not required when it is precisely the affinal nature of these transformed kin relations which is being marked. On the contrary, there is a distinct tendency to shift from names to affinal category terms when addressing 'actual affines'.

Following the birth of several children - Culina normally say three children - a husband and wife establish a new, separate household for their family. This move is particularly critical as it marks a re-transformation of affinal relations into 'kin' relations. Although the couple may continue to bear children after this move, in ideological terms their reproductive potential is exhausted or, better, their reproductive task is completed after the birth of these children and the creation of a new household. At this point the husband of the new household begins to relax the formal distance enjoined upon him in his relations with his wife's family members. He returns to using personal names for the WM and WF. He is no longer bound by the strong obligation to provide labor and economic assistance to the wife's natal household. He ceases sexual joking with his wife's sister. His wabo, his brother-in-law, is fully wemekute, no longer simply a "friend". In a sense, the 'distance' which characterized his relations to these affines while he resided in their household is, almost paradoxically, 'closed' by his move

into a separate household. Although the wife's natal household members remain categorized as 'affines', the quality of their relationship to her husband reverts to being determined by reference to the wemekute 'siblingship' model of social interaction.

The marriageable or 'potential' affine category owini includes both the FZC and the MBC. Yet there are few marriage alliances created between these true first cross cousins, and indeed there is a certain reluctance to establish marriages between first cross cousins. In the past, when marriages appear to have been arranged by the parents of the spouses with greater frequency than today, such marriages seem to have been more common but usually ended quickly.

Both the earlier and the current marriage patterns may be viewed in the context of this tension between siblingship and affinity. Arranged marriages between the children of brothers-in-law are an aspect of the Culina notion of manakoni, an "exchange" or "payment", a feature of the obligatory reciprocity which characterizes the relations between wabo, WB and ZH. But the fragility of such marriages in the past, and the rarity of such marriages in the present, derives in large measure from the pre-existing close relations between these cross-cousins. Marriage between these cross cousins inevitably creates a kind of affinal distance which disrupts the close kin-like relations they have enjoyed. Note also, that marriages in the past were arranged between young children, even between unborn children, that is, precisely at the stage of the domestic group developmental cycle when brothers-in-law were most strictly bound by the reciprocal obligations of manakoni. Now, marriages are contracted between prospective spouses themselves, at a point at which their fathers are no longer obligated to observe the reciprocity enjoined upon them as 'actual' affines.

It is also within this framework that the Culina tactical use of kin terms may be understood. Briefly, the multiple, overlapping kin relations existing within such an endogamous small scale group present the potential for a selection of alternate terms, normally differing along the axis of 'kin' and 'affine'. Culina most often elect to use the 'kin' term option whenever possible, both to underscore the closeness of such relations and to avoid the 'distance' implied as a potentiality witn 'affines'. The major and most interesting exception to this rule is the current village headman, who married a woman he had originally classified as 'younger sister', matsi. He was able to reclassify her as owini through another set of relationships, and made a marriage of considerable political expedience.

The interplay of these models of madiha organization emerges as a social process or dialectic which cannot be characterized adequately by simple static contrasts such as 'kin' and 'affine'. The two modes of conceptualizing relations with madiha members certainly coexist, to be referenced in appropriate contexts, as Kaplan suggests for the comparable models Piaroa hold of their social organization (e.g. 1973:564). But more importantly Culina social organization presents a dynamic in which a set of relations exemplifying (and evaluated in terms of) 'siblingship' as a code for conduct are transformed into affinal relations, and

which are finally re-transformed into metaphorical 'sibling' relations, one might say, when the social consequences of affinity are fulfilled. Townsend and Adams have described Culina marriage as a fragile institution, full of conflict (1978). Although I found greater stability in marriage among the Culina at Maronaua, it was obvious that the affinal relations actualized at marriage had this tense formality absent in relations between 'potential affines'. Affinity emerges for the Culina as an uncomfortable phase in a social process or developmental cycle, one which conceptually contradicts the norms of interaction which Culina presume to characterize 'kinship', or in a broader sense, humanness or personhood. Throughout, it is 'siblingship' which remains the constant, both as a general model of social interaction and as a field against which affinity becomes marked.

NOTES

1. See Adams (1962; 1963; 1976), Townsend and Adams (1978), and Ruf (1972) for information on the Peruvian Culina.

2. The term madiha may be used in a variety of marked senses to distinguish humans from non-humans, Indians from non-Indians, Culina from other Indians, and specific madiha 'groups'. In this paper I use the term in this latter, most narrow sense.

3. This situation does not obtain in the Peruvian village of San Bernardo, the site of Summer Institute of Linguistics activity with Culina for some 30 years. My impression is that with the migration of members of numerous madiha groups to that village, the preference for endogamy has been relaxed. See Townsend and Adams (1978) for a description of marriage in that village.

4. Ellen Basso, in a comment on this paper, notes that 'paradox' may misrepresent the ideology of siblingship and affinity in this system. I agree; its 'paradoxical' quality lies in my description rather than in the system itself, as I trust will become apparent in this analysis.

5. 'Other Culina' (madiha wa'a), other Indians, and non-Indians (as well as forest animals), are considered inherently dangerous and fear-provoking, opinata'i.

NAMBIQUARA BROTHERS

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Of all the relationships between primary kin, the one that has the widest ramifications in Nambiquara society is the relationship between brothers. What does this mean for Nambiquara social and political organization? And how did this situation come about? These are the questions that I will address in this paper.

There is a vast literature on societies that emphasize links between generations. In some, the link between father and son is projected onto other generations in a patrilineal ideology that is used for reckoning inheritance, succession, and descent. In others, the relationship between mother and daughter is projected in the same way. Much anthropological consideration has been given to societies in which unilineal descent confers the right to membership in groups. Differences between patrilineal and matrilineal systems have been investigated, and the implications of non-unilineal descent have been studied. But there has been relatively little interest in societies in which the most crucial link between primary kin involves people of the same generation.

The Nambiquara who live in the savannas of the Chapada dos Parecis, in west-central Brazil, have such a society. The typical village, which numbers about 25 people, is composed of a group of brothers, a few other men distributed among various kinship categories, and the wives and children of both brothers and hangers-on. The brothers, who constitute the largest group of men in the village who belong to the same kinship category, form a bloc whose interests usually predominate in decisions affecting the village as a whole. The special relationship between co-resident brothers is reflected in kinship terminology. Male consanguines of one's own generation are called wantâsú, regardless of where they live, but those who live together are called lôdnsú. The second term conveys a warmth and solidarity not connoted by the first.

The character of political leadership is consistent with the emphasis on brotherhood. The leader of a village is usually one of the brothers who form its political nucleus. He is called híkàdnt'isú, "the capable one", from a root used to describe the age relationship of siblings. The Nambiquara do not say that one brother is older than another, but rather, that he is "(more) capable". The term is a particularly appropriate designation for those leaders who are, in fact, the most capable of the brothers in the village nucleus, and it is also a fitting way to symbolize the relationship between leader and followers, which depends on influence more than authority. The leader is seen as strong, wise, and caring; a first-among-equals who leads through superior ability, rather than any acknowledged right to command (Price 1981b). If the parent-child link is a universally available symbol for relations of authority, the brother-brother link is an obvious way to symbolize equality.

Every few years, the Nambiquara abandon their village and settle in a new place. Sometimes the whole village moves; sometimes a few people stay behind, or go off to a different place. The reason they generally give for settling in a new location is the depletion of resources near the old village. But the move to a new village also seems to be correlated with the rise of a new leader. Aspiring leaders who want to found their own villages have to gather a group of followers, and the strongest support they can hope for is the company of their siblings, since few fathers live far into the adulthood of their sons. When I inquired about the founding of one village, I was told specifically that it had been settled by the leader and his brothers. Typically, then, new villages are founded by groups of brothers in search of a more productive environment.

The Dravidian-type kinship system assimilates half the men of one's own generation to the category of brothers, and makes the other half, who are "brothers" among themselves, into "brothers-in-law". One's "brothers" are the offspring of one's father's "brothers", and one's "brothers-in-law" are the offspring of one's father's "brothers-in-law". Ancestors are soon forgotten, and the distinction between consanguines and affines, which is crucial in the categorization of kinsmen in one's own and contiguous generations, is disregarded in the grandparent's and grandchildren's generations. There is no ideology of descent.

Without kin groups based on descent, corporations that survive the death of individual members do not form. Instead, each generation makes its own way in the world. One of the Nambiquara's most popular myths relates the adventures of four brothers known as "The Orphans". Having lost all their relatives to an evil, cannibalistic monster, the brothers are adopted by a man who feigns affection and tries to get them to accept him as their father. They realize that he is really the monster, and manage to kill him, through trickery. Thereafter, they confront many dangers together in the course of extensive wanderings, and finally, dissatisfied with this world, they go up into the heavens and become stars. One Nambiquara told me, "The Southern Cross is the Brazilians' constellation, but The Orphans is our constellation".

Because leadership is egalitarian, groups are fragile and ill-defined. Since people follow a particular leader because it appears to be in their own best interest, a loss of confidence in the leader prompts them to go elsewhere (Lévi-Strauss 1945:21). Leader and followers may be kin, but people also have kin in other villages. The way they interact depends more on the history of their personal relations than on the villages where they currently reside. Many young couples who come from different villages move back and forth frequently. Under these circumstances, people's identity does not depend very much on the village group they happen to be living with. Most of the time they do not interact as members of groups, but as individuals. They have what Mary Douglas would call a "low-group" society (1978).

In general, the character of Nambiquara social and political institutions suggests the label "egalitarian". Since the terms "primitive" and "tribal" have fallen into disfavor, there is a tendency for anthropologists to refer to a broad range of societies as eqalitarian. But really egalitarian societies seem to be quite rare. It behooves us, therefore, to consider the conditions under which they occur.

I supposed, at first, that the egalitarian character of Nambiquara society was an adaptation that maintained the people in a state of equilibrium with the productive capacities of their environment (Price 1981a). I tried to see Nambiquara institutions as promoting a harmony and stability that, barring catastrophic intrusion, might go on indefinitely. I contrasted the Nambiquara with other societies whose institutions could be maintained only through an ever greater drain on the environment: the Nuer, with their segmentary adaptation to "predatory expansion" (Sahlins 1961); and the Tupinambá, where no one could become a man until he had killed a person (Fernandes 1963:275-80).

The Nambiquara's habit of founding new villages all the time did not seem compatible with equilibrium, however. Nor did their propensity to chop down fruit trees in order to pick the fruit. I finally realized that the idea of Native American societies living in equilibrium with their environment was a popular stereotype to which I had fallen prey (cf. Seeger 1982). And available evidence suggests that the Nambiquara have not been living in a circumscribed area. Both documentary and ethnohistorical sources tend to indicate that, over the course of the last two centuries, the Nambiquara have been moving into new territory.

But the Nambiquara are not like the Nuer, who were expanding at the expense of the Dinka, because the Nambiquara were moving into virtually unoccupied territory. Early in the eighteenth century, the Portuguese discovered that the neighboring Pareci made rather good slaves. The Pareci were peaceful and hard-working, and they lived in large villages in the open savanna (Campos [1723?]1862), where they could easily-be captured by men on horseback. By 1797, the Pareci were nearly extinct (Sierra 1844:195). The Nambiquara, on the other hand, were scarcely known in the eighteenth century, perhaps suggesting that their dwelling places were less accessible. Then, in the nineteenth century, they came to be greatly feared, and Brazilians stayed out of the region. During this time they spread into a part of the area formerly inhabited by the Pareci (Price 1983).

The Nambiquara were neither encroaching on other people to satisfy their own appetites, nor living as part of a stable ecosystem. They were expanding into an almost uninhabited region. The egalitarian and individualistic character of the Nambiquara can be seen as a response to free land. For the whole of the nineteenth century, people who didn't like it where they were living could go and settle somewhere else. Young men who wanted a better life could set out in search of richer soil and more abundant game.

One of the great surprises of my fieldwork was the discovery that I felt more at ease with the Nambiquara than in the company

of Brazilians. I found it less taxing to play an acceptable role among the "primitive" Indians than among people who spoke an Indo-European language and shared in the Western tradition. Much of the reason for this is that with Brazilians I was expected to act in ways that were rigidly defined as appropriate to my class and gender, while the Nambiquara let me be myself and interact with other people on an equal footing. The Nambiquara, like the Americans among whom I had acquired my expectations, treated each other as individuals.

While Nambiquara and Americans differ in a great many respects, their histories are structurally similar. For more than a century, and at the very same time, both societies were expanding into what looked like unoccupied territory. The land taken by the Americans was not actually unoccupied, but technological and numerical superiority enabled them to advance as easily as the Nambiquara displaced the decimated Pareci. Frederick Jackson Turner attributed the rise of individualism and democracy in America to the influence of the frontier, with its promise of free land and a better life somewhere just a little further west. Here is his most succinct formulation:

> [T]he frontier is productive of individualism. Complex society is precipitated by the wilderness into a kind of primitive organization based on the family. The tendency is anti-social. It produces antipathy to control, and particularly to any direct control. ...[I]ndividual liberty [is] sometimes confused with absence of all effective government. [But] frontier individualism has from the beginning promoted democracy (Turner [1893]1938:219-20).

These words, written ninety years ago to account for the character of the American people, would apply with equal force to the Nambiquara.

And groups of brothers were not unknown on the American frontier. There were the James brothers and their cousins, the Younger brothers; the Ford brothers, who killed Jesse James for the reward; the Dalton brothers--who were betrayed by the Dunn brothers; the Earp brothers: Morgan, Virgil, and Wyatt; and the McLowery brothers, whom they faced at the OK Corral. It would seem that here, as with the Nambiquara, the prospect of open land favored the growth of individualism, egalitarian social and political institutions, and a reliance on the bond between brothers.

CASHINAHUA SIBLINGSHIP

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The Cashinahua of eastern Peru consider the relationship between siblings, particularly those between cross-sex siblings, to be the most significant and enduring of social relationships, more important than the relationship between parent and child or between husband and wife. This paper examines the ways in which sibling relationships are defined both linquistically and behaviorally.

In order for the discussion which follows to be intelligible a few comments about the structure of Cashinahua society are necessary. All Cashinahua consider themselves to be hunikuinbu "real people".[1] The second level of identity is by gender; all are either huni "male" or ainbu "female". Each gender is then divided by moiety membership; [males are either inubake or duabake, females are either inanibake or banubake.][2] The moieties are further subdivided into marriage sections based on the principle of alternating generations. [All inubake and inanibake are either awabake or kanabake, all duabake and banubake are either yawabake or dunubake.] All persons who are members of the same marriage section, whether male or female, are said to be xutabu "namesakes" or "siblings". Membership in moieties passes from F to S and from FZ to BD; membership in a marriage section passes from FF to SS and from MM to DD or FFZ to BSD. Membership in both the moieties and the marriage sections determines the choice of a proper spouse and to a lesser extent lovers. Apart from this, membership is for the most part only significant in the context of social rituals.

Of greater day-to-day significance is the individual's membership in a local community, mae. Ideally each mae consists of a single household composed of two focal males who are members of opposite moieties and of linked marriage sections and who have exchanged sisters in marriage, plus their male and female siblings, and the children of all of the above. In practice the only requirement seems to be that both focal males marry women whom the other classifies as sister. During his/her lifetime, each individual is identified as being a member of at least two groups called his/her nabibu, composed of his/her parents and siblings or, or his/her spouse and children. Because a person's primary economic obligations are to one's spouse and unmarried children, it is possible to view the nuclear family as the basic unit of production and consumption. It is equally plausible to view the mae as a production and consumption unit because of the obligations for economic cooperation and sharing due to both one's co-resident siblings and siblings-in-law.

Against this background let us turn our attention to the classification of sibling relationships.

Classification of Sibling Relationships

The Cashinahua use two sets of terms to talk about siblings, betsa/pui and huchi/chipi/ichu; the meaning of the terms varies

according to the particular obligatory linguistic frame in which the terms are embedded; the behavioral expectations associated with the terms vary according to the social context to which the behavior pertains. All kin terms in Cashinahua are used within an obligatory linguistic frame minimally composed of either a possessive pronoun or a generic or both.

Using the generic bu, the category betsabu includes all persons who are members of the same marriage section, same generation or two generations senior or junior if ego and alter are of the same sex. The category puibu includes all persons who are members of the same marriage section, same generation or two generations senior or junior if ego and alter are of opposite sex. The category huchibu includes all males of the same marriage section older than ego. The category chipibu includes all females of the same marriage section older than ego. The category ichubu includes all persons of the same marriage section younger than ego. All of these, betsa, puibu, huchibu, chipibu, and ichubu, are one's xutabu; the primary meaning of xuta is "namesake", but in this context a good argument can be made for translating it "my marriage section mates" or "my siblings".

Using a linguistic frame which incorporates the three binary contrasts which can be translated "real vs. unreal" or "close vs. distant" sets up the following sets of contrasts. (1) en betsakuinbu ki "he is my (ms) real brother" vs. en betsakuinman ki "he is my (ms) unreal brother" in which the latter term indicates that betsa is a member of the category betsa but not a member of the speaker's nabibu. Most informants also use betsakuin to designate half siblings particularly if they are both members of a single polygynous extended family. If the binary contrast kayabi vs. bemakia is used the contrast would be between those betsa who are members of ego's mae and those who are not, unless the local group is split into factions, in which case the contrast would be between those betsa who are members of ego's political faction and all others. Co-wives, if not actual sisters, always use the term betsakayabi to refer to each other. If the binary contrast kuin vs. bemakia is used the speaker is saying that alter is or is not his/her real sibling of the same sex because ego chooses at that time to classify in that way, whether or not alter is an actual same sex sibling. The motivation for ego's choice is based on his/her current economic, political, or affective strategies. Ego's classification of alter may change as his/her motives and strategies change.

Before turning to an examination of the behavioral expectations asssociated with siblingship, let me add a brief footnote regarding that hoary dispute between the extensionist and social categories theories of kinship terminology. Using the Cashinahua data, one could convincingly argue either position. Depending on which linguistic frame is used, the terms can be viewed either as social categories, including the actual siblings who by virtue of physical proximity interact more intensively with ego than others. Or, the actual siblings are the prototypes for the category to which others are added by metaphorical extension. My initial hunch was that the latter was the correct view, that in the socialization process the child learned first who were his/her siblings within the confines of his/her nabi,

then within his/her mae, and later by extension to all who were hunikuin. However, my observations of childcare convince me that from no later than the fourth or fifth month of age, infants often are cared for by or have frequent interactions with persons other than primary kin. For example, the person caring for an infant often holds the baby up to the face of another person to be nuzzled while repeatedly using the vocative kin term appropriate to the relationship between the infant and the other person. Thus, the child learns to identify all co-residents of the local group by the same terms as those who have primary responsibility for his/her care.

Expectations, Obligations, and Strategies of Siblingship

The behavioral expectations and obligations of siblingship vary both with reference to the specific relationship and the social context which is in focus, i.e., whether the relationship in question is between those who are xutabu or between those who are huchi/chipi and ichu and whether the context is ritual, economic, or political.

The Xutabu Relationship

The relationship between xutabu is seen as a relationship between equals, i.e., it is viewed as strongly egalitarian. Persons who are xutabu have the right to expect mutual respect, support, and cooperation between peers. The relationship between two groups of xutabu linked by the exchange of spouses likewise carries with it the expectation of mutual respect, support, and cooperation but adds the feature of a joking relationship. Siblings-in-law interactions, unlike interactions between siblings, are often characterized by boisterous verbal exchanges and/or practical jokes which frequently verge on hostility. Siblings are expected to live together in what is seen as the natural state of peace and harmony and are said to be "the same as us". In contrast, siblings-in-law, who are spoken of as "similar to us, but different", should live together in peace--a peace, however, which is created not natural. Within the context of social rituals, xutabu are enjoined to act as if the ideal obtains and hostilities and animosities between xutabu are for the most part suppressed both within and outside these ritual contexts. Hostility between siblings-in-law are ritually expressed within the ritual context whether or not they exist within non-ritual contexts. The extent to which the ideal behavior obtains between xutabu in non-ritual contexts tends to be directly proportional to the closeness of actual kinship.

All informants expressed a preference for living in close proximity with as many actual siblings as possible; half siblings, first parallel and cross cousins are clearly perceived as less desirable, but preferable to even more distant xutabu. The power of a focal male as a leader is directly related to the number of primary siblings and siblings-in-law coresident in his mae who support and accept his leadership.

The Huchi/Chipi and Ichu Relationship

The relationships between huchi/chipi and ichu, like all other kinship relationships other than the xutabu relationships, carries with it an implicit and explicit notion of hierarchy, of dominance and submission, which directly confronts egalitarianism implicit and explicit in xutabu and xutabu-in-law relationships (the model for the relationship between all who are Cashinahua).

In the relationships between huchi and ichu, between older brother and a younger sibling of either sex, there is the expectation that the elder brother will care for, economically support and assist, provide guidance and moral support for a younger sibling who in turn is expected to obey, cooperate with, and accept the leadership of the elder brother. To a large extent the ideal obtains during infancy, childhood, early adolescence, and after both are married and settled into their respective nabi. During the period of late adolescence and early adulthood, the relationship between older brother and younger sister may be strained particularly if he is attempting to arrange her marriage or regulate her sexual behavior to his political and economic advantage. She may be resentful, uncooperative, and on occasion openly defiant. During this same period, the relationship between younger and older brother is often strained because both are often in competition over the same women as wives and/or lovers or because the younger brother resents what he perceives as the excessive demands to work. Normally anger and resentment are suppressed and are expressed largely by a coolness and distance in the relationship. However, should they be in competition with another sibling set for a woman, they will join forces to assure that one of them, rather than someone from the other sibling set, can succeed. Sisters often join forces with their brothers in this pursuit.

The relationship between chipi and ichu is characterized by warmth and affection. Older sister often bears a heavy responsibility for the childcare of younger siblings during infancy and early childhood. The bonds of affection created during this period endure for life, whether the chipi is an actual older sister or an older parallel cousin. Given conflicting demands or expectations, one gives preference to the obligations due a chipi over those due another kinsman, including mother, father, spouse, child, or other siblings. The competition between brothers over women appears to be absent between sisters who often share a husband between them.

Discussion

What are the results of the confrontation between the ideology of the equivalence and amity between siblings and the hierarchal character of the relationship between older and younger siblings? And, what are the implications of this ideological clash for our understanding of the nature of Cashinahua siblingship?

First, if we focus on verbal behavior, the linguistic frame an individual chooses to use provides us clues to and rationalizations for his/her behavior. Thus, if the individual

chooses the frame using the binary contrast kuin vs. kuinman, we know that what are in focus are the moral and idealistic standards for behavior without reference to the realities of day-to-day life. If the informant uses the contrast kayabi vs, bemakia, we know that the individual is taking a principled stance fully cognizant of the present state of affairs, but one which would result in maximizing the chances for tranquility and harmony in social life. If, however, the individual uses the kuin vs. bemakia contrast, we can be certain that the focus is on accomplishing personal goals while actively using or ignoring the standards of Cashinahua culture in order to suit his/her purposes.

Second, the dialectic tension between hierarchy and equality provides the basis for the dynamics of Cashinahua emotional, social, economic, and political life. It provides both the stability and the flexibility which allows the Cashinahua to adapt to changing circumstances.

Third, the contradiction between the two types of sibling relationships provides the model for Cashinahua society. The relationship between the moieties is seen as the same as the relationship between two sets of xutabu, i.e., all members of the moiety are siblings, and thus the relationship between moiety mates is egalitarian. This directly confronts the relationship between the marriage sections within each moiety which is seen as the same as the relationship between elder and younger siblings, i.e., the marriage sections stand in relationship to each other as younger sibling to older sibling, and thus are hierarchal in character. Since the moieties and marriage sections encompass all kin roles, the conflict between hierarchy and equality characteristic of the contrasting pairs of sibling relationships becomes an implicit part of all of the kin relationships.

NOTES

1. Although this term is perhaps more accurately translated "real men" (huni male, kuin real, bu generic), I have chosen to translate it as "real people" because the term applies equally to males and females and is used by both sexes to designate their ethnic identity.

2. In previous publications I have indicated that the male moiety names are used to refer to both the males and females. Further examination of field notes reveals that only male informants used the terms inubake or duabake to include women who are inanibake or banubake respectively. I have no record of any female informant identifying herself as inubake or duabake.

AGNATIC SIBLING RELATIONS AND RANK
IN NORTHERN ARAWAKAN MYTH AND SOCIAL LIFE

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to explore mythical, ritual, and social dimensions of agnatic sibling ties as an idiom of hierarchal rank among the Northern Arawak-speaking Wakuénai peoples of the Northwest Amazon region. The data upon which I base my analysis is a result of two years' fieldwork with members of the Adzanéni, Dzáwinai, and Waríperídakéna phratries of the lower Guainía river in Venezuela.[1] These people, known to outsiders as Baniwa or Curripaco, refer to themselves as Wakuenai, or "People With Whom We Speak", and I will use this term as a gloss for the overall group of five Arawakan phratries of the Isana and Guainai basins in Venezuela, Colombia, and Brazil. Like the Eastern Tukanoan peoples of the neighboring Vaupés basin to the south and west, the Wakuénai organize themselves into exogamous phratries made up of several fraternal lines ranked according to the order of emergence of mythical ancestral spirits. The core of local communities is the male sibling group, and male sibling ties form the basis of a system of hierarchical rank according to relative age.

Among the Eastern Tukanoan peoples, the principle of rank according to relative age among male siblings is ideally expected to operate in the same way at the level of brothers within each sib and at the collective level of sibs within each phratry. In other words, accession to leadership roles at the individual level within the local community replicates the pattern of rank among sibs through the belief that the headman of each longhouse should ideally be the oldest of a group of brothers.[2] The Arawakan Wakuénai system of rank does not set up a similar expectation that status inequality at the individual level should ideally replicate the system of rank among sibs in each phratry. Like those of the Tukanoans, the Wakuénai myth of emergence acts as a mythic charter for ranking sibs in each phratry according to the rule that the first-born, or oldest, brother's descendants are the highest-ranking, whereas the last born, or youngest, brother's descendants are the lowest-ranking. However, at the individual level of brothers within a local sibling group, the Wakuénai invert the rule of rank at the collective level by setting up an expectation both in myth and social life that the youngest brother within the male sibling group will achieve the highest status and the oldest brother will remain at a lower status. This paradoxical juxtaposition of two contradictory rules for ranking ultimately derives from Wakuénai beliefs in the two parts of the human soul: 1) the collective, animal-shaped líwarúna soul shared by all members (male and female) of the local sib and manifested only at night when people sleep and 2) the individual, human body-shaped likáriwa soul, or the self that is presented in daily social interaction. Before entering into a

discussion of Wakuénai rank and male sibling groups, I will briefly describe some of the key contrasts between the Wakuénai and their Tukanoan neighbors, for the latter are more well-known through a growing literature of outstanding depth and quality (Chernela 1982, 1983; Goldman 1963, 1979; C. Hugh-Jones 1979; S. Hugh-Jones 1979; Jackson 1974, 1976, 1983; Reichel-Dolmatoff 1971, 1975; Sorenson 1967).

Arawakan and Tukanoan Sociolinguistics Compared

Language and social organization are inextricably intertwined throughout the Northwest Amazon region (Jackson 1974, 1983; Sorenson 1967), so there is little or no room for an approach that treats language and society as distinct categories of experience and that then tries to conflate the two into a single, coherent model. Accordingly, I will distinguish between Tukanoan and Arawakan peoples of the Northwest Amazon in terms of how they construct different sociolinquistic systems, each with a different configuration of spatial localization, phratric exogamy, and mythical origins. In general terms, there are three such systems.

1. The Eastern Tukanoan sociolinguistic system follows a rule of linguistic exogamy and demonstrates no clearly defined, spatially localized, named, exogamous group above the level of the sib. The concept of spatial placement of the male sibling group is highly significant for the Eastern Tukanoans at the local level (Chernela 1982) but not at the higher level of exogamy, or the phratry, since the latter is not spatially localized but only spatially oriented according to the rule that upstream = low-ranked and downstream = high-ranked. Also, the mythic charter of rank among these groups is open to variable interpretation such that different local sibs hold different views as to their relative rank and prestige (Chernela, personal communication; Goldman 1963:90; C. Hugh-Jones 1979:39).

2. The Cubeo sociolinguistic system does not follow a rule of linguistic exogamy, although marriages with other Tukanoan groups are considered acceptable. For the Cubeo, the higher level of exogamy, or the phratry, is an unnamed but spatially localized riverine-territorial unit. The Cubeo are thus a single Tukanoan language group who divide themselves into three intermarrying phratries. Like the other Tukano-speaking groups, the Cubeo concept of placement is most strongly expressed at the local sib level, and each sib points to its own site along the stretch of river that it controls as the place where its ancestral anaconda emerged (Goldman 1963:90). However, Cubeo phratries do exercise some degree of collective control over riverine territories insofar as they allow travelers to hunt and fish as they pass but "...not to put up fixed installations such as weirs or show other signs of residence such as fishing a particular spot with regularity without permission" (Goldman 1963:45).

3. In the Wakuénai, or Arawakan, sociolinguistic system, the rule of linguistic exogamy is absent and the higher level of exogamy, or phratry, is a named, spatially localized, riverine-territorial unit. Like the Cubeo phratries, those of the Wakuenai exercise political control over the exploitation of resources in their territory vis-a- vis one another and outside groups. This congruence between Wakuénai and Cubeo phratries implies a historical connection and, as Goldman has pointed out, "One of the Cubeo phratries was, in fact, once Arawakan" (1963:26).[3] Nevertheless, the Wakuénai sociolinguistic system sharply diverges from those of the Cubeo and other Eastern Tukanoans in two key respects: a) the degree to which the mythic charter of society is standardized and b) the use of phratric names as social markers of the rule of exogamy. These differences are summarized in Figure 1.

The Wakuénai myth of emergence is standardized insofar as not only sibs within each phratry but all five Wakuénai phratries agree that their mythical ancestors emerged from beneath the ground at the rapids near Hípana on the Aiary River. All Wakuénai consider this site to be the "Center of This World". The myth of sib ancestral spirits' emergence provides the basic ideology of hierarchal rank among male sibling groups at the collective level (i.e., as sibs making up a phratry). Hohódeni and Waríperídakéna versions of the sib emergence myth collected by Wright (1981:34-ff) in Brazil concur[4] with the Dzáwinai and Adzanéni versions which I collected in Venezuela on the basic principle of social ranking by order of birth. The first-born (or "emerged") brother is the ancestor of the highest-ranked sib and so forth down to the last-born brother, whose descendants are the lowest-ranked sib. The Dzáwinai version of the myth helps to clarify the native system of rank and naming. In this version, the trickster-creator pulled out a set of five brothers and gave them all the name Dzáwinai ("Jaguar-People") but distinguished the younger ones by giving each of them an additional sib name (see Figure 2). In short, the degree of standardization of the Wakuénai myth of emergence is in sharp contrast with those of the Tukanoan peoples. The Wakuénai myth refers to a single place in the earth from which all sib ancestors emerged, whereas the Tukanoan myths emphasize a much more mobile process of ancestral anaconda-spirits who swam up the rivers like giant canoes, dropping off the various sib ancestors in their respective places.

A second major difference between Wakuénai and Tukanoan sociolinguistic systems is that Wakuénai phratric names act as the primary linguistic markers for defining the rule of exogamy. Wakuénai phratric names are primary referents of social identity in everyday contexts and carry basic information about the geographical origins and social composition of each local group. The phratric name is equivalent to the name of the highest-ranked sib in the phratry. The sibs of the Dzáwinai phratry, for example, all refer to themselves as Dzáwinai in everyday social contexts. For the highest-ranked sib, or Dzáwinai, the only way to distinguish between the phratric and sib name is on the basis of social use. Whereas phratric names are commonly used in everyday speech (of which there are five mutually intelligible

Socio-linguistic system	**Spatial organization of phratry**	**Naming of phratry**	**Rule of exogamy**	**Mythic charter**
Eastern Tukanoan (Bará, Barasana, Desana, Tukano, et. al.)	non-localized	not named	language based	multiple sites (anaconda-canoes)
Cubeo (inter-mediate)	localized in riverine territory	not named	spatially -based	multiple sites (anaconda-canoes)
Wakuénai (Arawakan)	localized in riverine	named (after highest ranked sib)	spatially -based	single site (various animal, bird, and fish species)

Figure 1: Comparison of three sociolinguistic systems in the Northwest Amazon region

Mythical Order of emergence	**Phratic Name**	**Sib Name**
1	Dzáwinai	Dzáwinai ("Jaguar-People")
2	Dzáwinai	Kadáwpúrrirri (Fish-People")
3	Dzáwinai	Ádarudakéna ("Macaw-Grandchildren")
4	Dzáwinai	Kwíčidakéna ("Curassow-Grandchildren")
5	Dzáwinai	Hírridakéna ("Rat-Grandchildren") also referred to as the Makú, or slaves, of the Dzáwinai)

Figure 2: Phratric and sib names of the Dzáwinai Phratry

dialects), sib names are considered highly sacred and form part of a secret ritual language used in songs, chants, and prayers (malikái) in rites of passage and curing rituals. When members of two sibs in the same phratry meet in everyday social contexts, they avoid having to use sib names by referring to one another with terms for older and younger siblings. The only time I observed sib names being used outside of ritual contexts was when an elderly woman called out her son-in-law's name(s) as a form of verbal abuse or shaming.

Male Sibling Groups and Rank

The emergence myth acts as a charter for the collective ranking of sibs within each phratry and provides the Wakuénai with an organic model of social integration. Each person is born into a particular sib and retains a corresponding high or low rank for his or her lifetime. This unchanging identity is seen as the collective líwarúna soul that takes the form of a miniature replica of the totemic sib ancestral spirit when a person is sleeping at night. Women's líwarúna souls do not change after they marry and go to live in their husbands' villages. Men and women are equally aware of their rank in society according to the ascribed status of sibs within a phratry, and men of high-ranking sibs prefer to marry women of high-ranking sibs from another phratry (and vice-versa). In this respect, the Wakuénai and Tukanoan systems are alike:[5] collective rank is perpetuated by male and female preferences to seek spouses of equal rank.

The myth of sib ancestor spirits' emergence is transitional between the presexual, precultural past of the mythical trickster-creator (Iñápirríkuli) and the more recent, life-sized world of human beings. The myth cycle of Kuwái introduces the human physiological processes of conception, childbirth, and ensuing processes of growth, puberty, sickness, recovery, aging, and death. The Kuwái myth cycle provides a model for the human life cycle and, in doing so, opens the way for ranking of individuals with hierarchical sets of male sibling groups. At the level of individual identity with the sib, brothers are not ranked according to order of birth from oldest to youngest but according to differential control over sacred songs, chants, and prayers that are seen as having powers to define, transform, and coordinate vital life processes of individuals. The individual, human body-shaped likáriwa soul is constantly changing in the course of the life cycle, and male ritual specialists establish symbolic control over these changes through performances of Kuwái's music (malikái). The mythical model here contradicts the collective order of rank according to the equation of oldest brother and highest rank by setting up an expectation that the biologically younger brothers will display the necessary intellectual curiosity and physical stamina to master the esoteric, yet socially powerful, music of Kuwái. This inversion of biological age and cultural status is evident in the myth of the first initiation ritual when Dsúli and Hérri, two younger brothers of Iñápirríkuli, took on the all-important roles of chant-owner (malikái limínali) and first initiant (wálit'áki,

"newly-fasted one"), respectively. Ĩnápirríkuli, the first-born brother, was too enmeshed in the action sequence of the myth cycle to bother to memorize the sacred chants and songs of initiation or to pass through the ritual ordeal of fasting and whipping. The younger brothers, Dzúli and Hérri, came to represent the quintessence of fully sexual, human beings for the Wakuénai: the former through his ability to memorize Kuwái's music and the latter through his ability to endure the pain of hunger and whipping in initiation.

The ranking of male sibling according to reverse order of birth is an important feature of local group organization in villages where native ritual specialists continue to practice.[6] In the Dzáwinai/Waríperídakéna village where I stayed in 1981, the headman is the youngest of three Dzáwinai brothers of a high-ranked sib. This elderly gentleman is also an owner of sacred malikái chants and songs, and he controls the crucial rites of passage at childbirth and initiation. He is the grandfather who administers ritual advice and whippings to boys and girls in the village as they reach puberty. He also performs the counter-witchcraft songs of Kuwái and is the best performer of ceremonial music and dance in the village. His biologically older brothers are truly younger in the sense of cultural order and rank within the village. One of them is a shaman (malírri), a practice that the youngest brother had learned long ago en route to becoming a chant-owner (malikái limínali). The eldest of the three brothers (in a biological sense) is a relatively simple man of action with no taste for learning to perform the esoteric, yet powerful music of Kuwái[7]. Thus, the order of social statuses among the three brothers clearly inverts the biological order of their birth.

One final example of the way in which status inequality is constructed out of male sibling relations is the ritual equation of newborn infants with the mythical character of Kuwai at birth, Wámidzákai ipérrikána, or "The One Who Is Like Our Older Brother". The newborn infant, like Kuwái in myth, represents the transformation of raw, biological processes of birth and growth into a basis for cultural identity and rank. The childbirth ritual asserts the same message as the Kuwái myth cycle: the newborn infant is the last-born brother and yet embodies the "older brother" status. Thus, even at the very beginning of the life cycle, the younger brothers are ritually imbued with the higher status of older brothers.

Conclusions

The Wakuénai construct a collective order of ranked, fraternal sibs on the basis of a rule that first-born (or "emerged") to last-born equals highest- to lowest-ranked. This collective system of rank is purely ascriptive and applies equally to all members of Wakuénai society. Individual status within the local male sibling group contradicts this rule in two ways: 1) it is reckoned according to reverse order of birth and 2) it depends on achieved, demonstrated abilities (e.g., memorization and performance of sacred songs and chants). By keeping ritual offices open to the highest achievers within each male sibling group, collective rank is counter balanced by

achieved qualities of cultural knowledge and performance.

To conclude, I suggest that the Wakuénai have stronger reasons for counter-balancing the ascriptive rule of collective ranking than the Eastern Tukanoan peoples of the Northwest Amazon region. The Wakuénai system of phratries as named, localized, exogamous groups with a standardized myth of origins has a greater potential, in my view, for evolving into a fixed system of stratification according to inherited statuses[8]. That possibility does not appear to be as likely to emerge among the Tukanoans due to the dispersal of sibs making up each phratry, an origin myth that is more open to multiple interpretations at the local level, and the use of language instead of phratric names as social markers of the rule of exogamy.

NOTES

1. Fieldwork among the Arawakan peoples of the Upper Rio Negro (lower Guainai) region of Venezuela in 1980-81 was supported by grants from the SSRC/ACLS and Fulbright-Hays. I am very grateful to these institutions for their support of my research. However, the conclusions, opinions, and data in this paper are my own and do not necessarily reflect those of the supporting institutions.

2. The Eastern Tukanoan system of rank is only ideally replicated at the individual level due to denial mechanisms, flexibility, and ambiguity that enter into the application of ranking principles to specific individuals and groups (Jackson 1983:103-104). The succession of headmanship, for example, "...can involve a great deal of argument" and a headman must "...initially and continually prove himself worthy of the job" (Jackson 1983:104).

3. Another interesting parallel between the Wakuénai and the Cubeo is that "... a possible translation of the Cubeo self-name Pamíwa is 'people of the language'" (Jackson 1983:84). The self-name Wakuénai, or "People With Whom We Speak", can also be glossed as "People of Our Language".

4. Wright (1981:34-ff) mentions one variant of the Wakuénai myth of emergence in which rank is according to <u>reverse</u> order of birth. This anomaly may reflect the unique historical processes that have shaped the pattern of Wakuenai sibs and phratries in the area where Wright studies, including a tendency toward "Tukanoization" due to intermarriage and trade with the Uanano and Cubeo (Pamíwa). Like their Tukanoan affines, the Wakuénai of the Aiary River do not use phratric names and expect that the oldest brother will ideally become the village headman (Wright, personal communication).

5. Both the Wakuénai and the Cubeo systems of rank illustrate this preference for marriages between people from equivalently ranked sibs of different phratries. The Uanano, an Eastern Tukanoan group who are socially and geographically close to the Cubeo and the Wakuénai, also demonstrate a preference for

marriages between spouses from equivalently ranked sibs (Chernela, personal communication). On the other hand, Jackson did not find any evidence of this preference in her analysis of marriages among the Bara and other Eastern Tukanoan groups in the Papurí-Inambú drainage area in Colombia (1983:75) and, citing S. Hugh-Jones (1979:206), she writes that "...contemporary Barasana deny that this would happen" (Jackson 1983:75). Thus, the socio-geographic distribution of this preference strongly suggests that it is a feature of Wakuénai cultural origins, since only the Wakuénai and those Eastern Tukanoan groups who have had close ties of trade and intermarriage with them express and/or practice it.

6. In an Adzanéni ("Children of the Great Armadillo") village where I spent several months, the adult male unanimously asserted that one of the younger brothers was expected to display the personal characteristics expected of a headman. Social relations in this village have shifted to a core group of female kin who produce surplus manioc products for trade with the townspeople of San Carlos (see Hill and Moran 1983). Also, none of the adult males in the village was a practicing ritual specialist. These men still confidently assert that the younger brothers are expected to achieve leadership positions even though there is no longer a core group of adult brothers in the organization of their village and the positions of ritual leadership have been abandoned.

7. As pointed out by Dr. Jane Goodale in her comments on the papers, the biological process of aging tends to favor younger brothers for leadership positions when the male sibling set reaches the age of elders, or grandparents. The younger brothers are more likely to have the physical strength and health than their older brothers, especially if age differences within the male sibling set are large.

8. Another indication that the tendency toward hierarchy is perhaps stronger among the Arawakan groups of the region is the history of messianic movements (Wright 1981). These movements centered around shaman-Christ leaders and in essence carried the principle of ritual hierarchy to its logical extreme. The movements occurred on numerous occasions among the Wakuénai and other Arawak-speaking groups during the 19th Century and are still remembered in legends today. Such movements appear to have centered on the Arawakan peoples rather than their Tukanoan neighbors.

THE SIBLING RELATIONSHIP AMONG THE UANANO OF THE NORTHWEST AMAZON:

THE CASE OF NICHO

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In 1979, while conducting fieldwork in Brazil among the Uanano of the middle Uaupés, I met Nicho, a Uanano woman who had no siblings. In this paper I will use Nicho's case to illustrate the degree to which sibling principles organize society in the Northwest Amazon. It dramatizes the importance of parental siblings in the marriage of offspring, and the importance of relationships -- conceptualized as brotherhood -- among sibs and sib members as a source of personal and group identity.

Following the Uanano's own usage, I use the term "sibling" in several senses. Uanano terms for siblings (wamei and bu?u for brother, wamio and ba?o for sister) specify sex and hierarchal status in relation to speaker, but not genealogical distance. Thus, in saying "my brother" or "my sister", a Uanano may designate a child of his parents or any other Uanano speaker of his generation. The Uanano also apply these sibling terms to groups who, by virtue of descent from ancestral brothers, are perceived as fraternal.

Among the Uanano, the sibling relationship is invested with political symbolism and laden with economic and social significance. Individuals and groups in sibling relation are bound by social and economic relationships based on seniority. Fraternal groups form mutually-dependent pairs. In this paper I suggest that despite an ideology which purports that a group's status is fixed, in fact a group's identity hinges on the identity of the sibling group with which it is paired. A dyadic arrangement also characterizes relations between affines, but in this case the relationships are egalitarian, based on the ties between same-rank, opposite-sex siblings ("cousins"), whose children marry. The gap in status between paired groups of agnates -- and the mutual obligations implied by that difference -- distinguishes the agnatic, or sibling, relationship from the affinal.

To illustrate these points I take the unusual case of Nicho, a woman left with no siblings, indeed, the only remaining member of her sib. Because her sib is the highest in rank of all 25 Uanano sibs, the case of Nicho assumes particular importance. With her death the chiefly sib will become extinct. A political crisis has therefore taken shape. Since rank governs distribution, the decline of a senior, donor, group disrupts social and economic relations. The junior sib with which it is paired is now free to manipulate its status to the extent that other groups allow.

The drama is also played out on a personal level. Excerpts of songs improvised by Nicho and her son demonstrate the anguish that results when an individual has, as Nicho bemoans, "not even one brother".

Context: Uanano Social Organization

The Uanano are a linguistically-distinct group of the Eastern Tukanoan family, inhabiting the Uaupés basin in Brasil and Colombia. Numbering approximately 1,500, the Uanano group is one of 15-20 linguistically exogamous fishing and horticultural peoples who form an integrated, intermarrying system in the Northwest Amazon.

The most inclusive category in the Uanano social universe is the mahsa, which encompasses the autonomous language groups of the Uaupés basin. The constituent parts of the mahsa are the named, exogamous descent groups -- referred to in the literature as "tribes" or "language groups" -- whose villages ideally form a geographic unity. Membership in a language group is based on the sole criterion of patrilineal descent, and is exclusive. Membership is thus ancestor-oriented, although ancestors, called ancestral brothers, are designated rather than demonstrated. Each language group is in turn sub-divided into units called sibs in the literature.

These groupings, regardless of level of organization, are all known by the same Uanano terms, kurua or kuduri. Uanano refer to themselves as being one of kurua. Siblingship is the metaphor that describes relationships of members of one group; they view themselves as brothers, defined primarily by their unique language, name, and distinct ancestral history.

Marriage rules, preferences and prohibitions determine relations among the autonomous language groups of the Uaupés basin. Each language group stands in affinal or agnatic relation to every other. Affinal groups are further sub-divided into those with whom prescriptive cross-cousin marriage and sister exchange create on-going alliances and those who may best be described as "in-laws of in-laws" (see Jackson 1977, Hugh-Jones 1979, Chernela 1983a). Where marriage is prohibited between groups, siblingship is the metaphor that creates a sentiment of unity. Thus, for example, the Uanano are one of five autonomous language groups among whom agnatic kin terms are used and marriage is prohibited. This phratry-like grouping cannot be called a true descent group; they share no name and claim no common ancestor. Nevertheless, an ideology of brotherhood prevails. Even within the language group, which can be considered a true descent group, siblingship, rather than filiation, is the predominant metaphor.

The Uanano language group comprises 25 sibs. Each is a named descent group whose members view themselves as descendants of one of the language group's founding ancestral brothers. According to a central creation myth, they emerged from an anaconda canoe at distinct river locations which are considered to be each sib's birthplace. The Uanano conceive of the sib as a localized unit, established in its place by the ancestral emergence. However, the ideal of complete patrilocality is not fully realized and the degree to which the local group corresponds to the unilineal descent group varies.

The sib is the only social group in the Uaupés whose membership is conceptualized in terms of descent rather than siblingship. To the Uanano, a sib comprises "the grandchildren

of one man", the "man" being a putative ancestor. Each sib possesses a unique repertoire of oral traditions relating to its founding ancestor and bears his name plus the suffix -pona, meaning "children of". Genealogies are not maintained; rather, the naming system governs membership.

Rank

Rank is ascribed according to the principle of seniority by birth order. The children of a higher ranked man are senior to the children of a lower ranked man. The logic used to calculate individual rank is simple: "If my father called his father 'older brother,' then I call him 'older brother,'" regardless of age. Only for children of one man does chronological age determine seniority: otherwise the association between age and rank is metaphoric.

The bond of common descent prevails within the sib. Apart from the distinctiveness of the primogenitors' line, rank has minimal bearing on day-to-day social interaction, although in ritual it plays a crucial role. In relations between different sibs, however, rank becomes a determinant of personal identification and group interaction.

Sib Hierarchy

The 25 Uanano sibs are ranked ranked according to their order of emergence from the ancestral anaconda canoe. All descendants of a first-born ancestral brother are higher in rank than the descendants of a second-born brother, and so on, resulting in the relative ranking of all 25 sibs.

The first ten sibs are known collectively as "eldest brothers". Sibs 11 to 15 (and possibly additional sibs in Colombia) are collectively termed "younger brothers". The ten remaining sibs are known as Wiroa, meaning "perching birds", and are referred to as servants. Descendants of the first of the 25 ancestral brothers are called "our eldest brothers" or "the firsts" by the other sibs. Descendants of the youngest ancestral brothers have the lowest rank and are referred to as "younger brothers" or "the lasts". The "servant" sibs are ascribed with origins distinct from the mythical anaconda and are typically paired with the more senior sibs whom they serve. As the lowest ranked groups are perceived as "servers", so the highest ranked sibs are seen as "donors". Normally, chiefly sibs on the Middle Uaupés are paired with younger brother servant sibs who reside in or near their settlements.

Generational Classes

In addition to the agnatic kin terminology which is used within the language group, a second system of classification uses generational nomenclature to indicate hierarchical distance, both within and between language groups. I have called this a system of generational classes (Chernela 1983b). Generation class terminology is used to classify each of the sibs of a language group according to status as "grandchildren", "uncles", or

"grandparents" (with grandchildren holding the highest and grandparents the lowest rank); and to provide a system of reference and address in which five generation terms are applied reciprocally across the three strata. (Goldman 1981 describes similar nomenclature for the Cubeo)

Sibs are ranked from first to last and are classified according to generational class. According to this scheme every sib in the area has an absolute status so that any other sib might say, for example, "They are grandfathers", of "They are uncles".

The concept of generational class structures relationships both within and between language groups. It determines a broad range of behavior and expectations, both economic and symbolic. Marriage occurs, for example, between sibs of different language groups of the same generational class.

II. The Case of Nicho

Given the crucial role of siblingship in Uanano social organization, one might well ask what happens when an individual has no siblings in either the biological or the metaphorical sense.

During my fieldwork, the highest ranked Uanano sib was the Biari Pona, which resided at Bucacopa. In just two generations, the Biari Pona population had declined drastically due to disease and migration and was facing imminent extinction. No males were left at Bucacopa: only Nicho, a woman remained.

The Biari Pona were unique among the Uanano in being associated with three other groups: The Wari Yuturia, a "younger brother" servant sib; the Simi Paro Pona, in-law sib of the Desana language group; and a Makuan hunting sib. Each of these groups provided service for the Biari Pona and enabled them to sponsor large exchange ceremonies in keeping with their status as a sib of the first rank.

The Wari Yuturia, related agnatically to the Biari Pona, lived in a subordinate relationship to them. The Biari Pona had provided the Wari Yuturia with fish from the large platform weir whose harvest they controlled; the Wari Yuturia in turn rendered services, such as weir construction and maintenance, beer processing, and assistance in the collection of goods for exchange ceremonies.

The Makuan hunting sib provided meat, assisted in gardening and in beer preparation for festivities.

The Desana sib maintained an on-going marriage alliance with the Biari Pona, an alliance in keeping with the requirement of marriage between members of different language groups but of the same generational class. The Desana sib had moved to Bucacopa several generations earlier to live among their in-laws, an atypical arrangement. Yet, despite their long residence at Bucacopa, their importance as providers of spouses to the Biari Pona, and their tie to the last remaining Biari, the Desana were still considered "visitors" and had no legitimate authority at Bucacopa. They were "cousins", not "brothers".

Nicho, the last remaining Biari Pona, and consequently the highest ranked living Uanano, is married to a Desana. Her

children are Desana, since they belong to their father's sib. Nicho herself is the daughter of a Biari father and a Desana, Simi Para Pona, mother. Over the years her siblings died off until only she remained. Her father's brothers' sons emigrated during the revival of the rubber industry during World War II. Nicho is now without biological siblings, and without fellow sib members, who are conceptualized as siblings in the Uanano social universe. She consequently lacks the vital sense of identity, of a place in the social universe, which, for Uanano, inheres in the sibling relationship.

The Biari Pona's decline created a crisis at Bucacopa. In response to the imminent extinction of the senior sib it had served, the "younger brother" Wari Yuturia assumed the Biari name and the prerogatives of the senior sib. Claiming now to be of the Firsts, rather than of the Lasts, in an outbreak of violence they barred the Desana from access to the productive fish trap formerly controlled by the Biari Pona. Nicho sided with the Desana in the conflict.

Nicho's Songs

Nicho assumed that her brothers' deaths were the result of Wari Yuturia sorcery inspired by envy and resentment. Fearing for her own life, she fled Bucacopa to the second-ranked brother village, and there, at a dance, she improvised two songs from which the following is excerpted:

...Alone that I am
I have no brothers
I go
Sadly
Here, where the river widens at Badia Cusu
And there, at the stream of the Tucunare fish.

There, upriver,
On the branch of a tree
Like a bird that goes
Here and there,
Dragging her offspring with her,
Sons, who are Other people,
My oldest son says...
"Like a horsefly
With its eyes plucked out
You fly hither and yon
Alone,
Because you are alone",
He says...
"And like a horsefly with its eyes plucked,
Batting about
You will do the same...
There, in Badia Cusu, on top of a tree branch,
There my mother comes flying with me",
Says my son.

Nicho's song demonstrates the indivisibility of time and space in the Uanano concept of placement. As the last remaining member of the highest-ranking Uanano sib, the Biari Pona, Nicho has lost all temporal connection with her place. She sings the songs in flight from the settlement which her sib had once dominated, to seek the advice of a shaman. She is, in this way, both a literal and figurative wanderer.

Nicho compares herself to a horsefly with no eyes, flying hither and yon. This implies movement not only in space, but also _in time_. Nicho's song figuratively describes her futile attempt to connect with her ancestry.

Nicho does not directly express her own sense of impermanence; instead, she assumes her son's voice to say, as we shall see, "My mother has not even one brother...she will disappear like a piece of kindling wood, an ember that blazed momentarily, then turned to ash." The narrative shift dramatizes the break in the Biari lineage -- a break in time -- while foretelling the agony of her son who must eventually realize his own displacement. This shift in point of view dominates a second song performed by Nicho:

> I am one who drifts;
> I am one who mixes.
> I am moving among your brothers
> And I haven't even one brother.
>
> I yes, am grandaughter of the Biari ones...
> Biari woman,
> That wanders in your midst
> I am a person
> Raised on the bones of big fishes
> I am the daughter of one who spoke loudly, loudly.
> I am a Biari woman.
> "...My mother has not even one brother...
> She will disappear
> Like a piece of kindling wood,
> An ember that blazed momentarily,
> Then turned to ash: my mother,
> My mother that has no brothers..."
>
> "I was a grandson of Simi Paro Ponairo
> But they were a fine people!
> Dianumio was my uncle!
> But as they are no longer listening to these things,
> All is sad, all is heartache and loss..." says my son.
> After the deaths of my brothers
> I am going, going...
>
> "My grandfather, yes, he said to me,
> 'My grandchild, my grandchild
> I leave you in my place
> In my last moments...
>
> 'In my last hours, I leave you in my place!'"
> I am, yes, I am

The Dianumia Nicho
I am granddaughter of those who spoke loudly, loudly
Wife of a Desana, and you cannot tolerate me...
I am daughter...of the Firsts,
Daughter of my Fathers,
I am born of them.

Like the horsefly, the narrative moves forward through the generations, and backward. In her son's voice, Nicho says: "'My grandfather, yes, he said to me, 'My grandchild, my grandchild, in my last moments, I leave you in my place.'" The songs contain no more powerful image of diachronic placement: "I leave you in my place" is followed by, "I am, yes, I am the Dianumia Nicho". Here Nicho invokes her ancestral name. Her ancestor placed her in order that she could exist ("I am, yes I am"); but now she is lost, and in terms of social being -- decomposed.

The Uanano strongly prefer cross-cousin marriage between sibs of the same generational class. At Bucacopa, furthermore, tradition ordains marriage between the Desana sib Simi Para Pona and the Uanano Biari Pona. Nicho's lack of brothers affects her sons because their most appropriate marriage partners would be the Biari Pona daughters of her brothers, and, of course, there are none. Her son also sang a song, describing the situation of a man whose mother has no brothers:

Isn't it strange?
I have no cousins.
I am alone and I haven't any cousins.
Fortunately for me
I have fathers of my fathers,
But I have no cousin.

None of Nicho's three sons has married; the eldest has reached middle age. A male Biari would not share Nicho's plight, since his children would be Biari Pona.

Summary

The system of social organization found among the Uanano and other groups of the Northwest Amazon is coherent only to the degree that sibling principles are manifest in common sibhood and language, that named sib units remain functionally interdependent, and that exchange of women within generational classes continues.

The sibling relationship is at once affective, political, and economic. Among the Uanano, groups of widely disparate social positions form symbiotic but hierarchical pairs. As the above case illustrates, despite an ideology in which group status is fixed, in fact a group's social position depends at least in part on that of the fraternal group with which it is paired. When one group disappears, as it did in this case, the union dissolves, and with it the status of the surviving fraternal group.

III. Conclusion

An individual's social identity depends, in part, upon the integrity of his group. This, in turn, depends upon the perpetuation of a system of relations among groups, a system that organizes both production and marriage relations. Siblingship and its opposite, "cousinship", are the central metaphors which define group relationship and individual social identity in the Uaupés. Yet, sib groups are not static; they grow, disappear, and change vis-à-vis one another. In the Uanano case the structure that mediates intergroup relations remains intact while the articulation of groups is marked by tension, movement, and change. The songs of Nicho and her son express the consequences of such tensions in the personal sphere.

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SIBLING RELATIONS IN LOWLAND SOUTH AMERICA:

A COMMENTARY ON SYMPOSIUM PAPERS

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Let me begin by briefly noting some of the central features of siblingship and delineating the central position that siblingship occupies within a particular class of socio-cultural systems. This will provide a framework for commenting on the analysis of the specific cases presented in the foregoing papers.

A quick and simple way to isolate important features of siblingship is to envision a society without siblings and note the missing elements. The People's Republic of China will constitute such a society if they are successful in implementing their enunciated policy of restricting every family to a single child. The deducible consequences of such a policy provide the basis for my hypothetical model of a society without siblings. After several generations, ego would lack not only brothers and sisters but also father's brothers, father's sisters, mother's brothers, mother's sisters, cross and parallel cousins, sister's child, brother's child, and the descendants of all these kinsmen (such as second cousins). The only remaining consanguineal relations would be those between parent and child and grandparent and grandchild. Affinal relations would be restricted to those between ego and his or her spouse's parents and child's spouse's parents. Same-generation kin relations - either consanguineal or affinal - would be conspicuously absent (with the exception of the second order affinal relation between ego and his or her child's spouse's parents). Kin relations with symmetrical properties are likewise absent. No two individuals are reciprocally related to each other in precisely the same way and no two individuals share the same relationship to a third party.

This example illustrates received wisdom concerning the equivalence of siblings and the equally well-known fact that sibling relations are instrumental to all collateral kin relations. The latter constitute the greater part of what we recognize as a kinship system. An individual who lacks siblings and parental siblings - like Nicho in Chernela's paper - is indeed socially isolated.

The example also illustrates the unique symmetrical qualities of same-sex sibling relationships (and the kin relation contingent upon them, such as those between parallel cousins) The key point here is that the equivalence of siblings is the <u>only</u> locus of equivalent symmetrical relations within a kinship system (as a system of relational forms). While there are many kin relations that are capable of serving as a conceptual model for social asymmetry, only sibling relations can provide a kin-based model for egalitarian social relations. They need not, since siblingship is universal and egalitarian relations are not. But they can. In other words, cultural idioms and metaphors of equality that are grounded in kinship (and draw on its affective power) invoke only one type of kin relation: siblingship.

This linkage illuminates the centrality of siblingship in

egalitarian socio-cultural systems, a centrality noted by Shapiro in her introductory remarks. Siblingship is characteristically conceptualized in terms of a shared relation, or an ensemble of shared relations, to parents, ancestors, territory, spirits, or other medial elements. As such, siblingship is essentially co-extensive with mechanical solidarity. Moreover, the culturally specific medial elements that link siblings are characteristically the core symbols of a broader social solidarity. In other words, siblingship necessarily incorporates the core symbols of mechanical solidarity; this is integral to the formal structure of the relationship. In an egalitarian socio-cultural system, these core symbols of mechanical solidarity are also very likely to be key symbols within the meaning system as a whole.

Siblingship-as-key-symbol thus represents a productive approach to the subject, and one that is employed (at least in part) in several of the papers presented. Price notes that "the brother-brother link is an obvious way to symbolize equality". Pollock pursues this approach more extensively, noting at the onset that "siblingship serves as a focal and pervasive metaphor for social solidarity" among the Culina and many other lowland South American Indian tribes. Pollock's paper also provides an interesting analysis of the medial symbols through which siblingship and a more encompassing social solidarity are conceptualized among the Culina. Siblings share (and are linked by) blood (emene), and by souls (tabari) and flesh (ime) derived from the white-lipped peccaries that inhabit the territory of the local group and constitute the reincarnated souls of past members. Siblings also share, and are linked by, the semen and mother's milk that constitute the distinctive bio-genetic contributions of male and female parents respectively (and thus serve to differentiate among kin and conceptually partition the universe of kin relations). A symbolically encoded ensemble of shared relations to parents, ancestral forebears, territory and spirit (or soul) is clearly in evidence here. The symbols employed to configure these shared relations are manifestly important within the larger cultural system and the inter-relations among them are also clearly displayed.

In light of this, it may be suggested that siblingship represents an especially advantageous point of departure for the analysis of egalitarian socio-cultural systems. Every analysis must begin somewhere, and the point of departure elected generally shapes the analysis that follows in very important ways. The pivotal position of siblingship as a major point of articulation between key symbols and core social relations provides both an entree to two important levels of analysis and a strong interconnection between them (one that works against the analytic dismemberment of a coherent whole and the resultant concern with how the pieces fit together). This is particularly well-illustrated by the depth and comprehensiveness of the analysis Pollock succeeds in presenting in the short space of 8 pages.

The siblingship-as-key-symbol approach is complemented, in important ways, by a structuralist perspective that proceeds from consideration of the universe of kin relations and seeks to

elucidate siblingship in terms of the relations between kin relations. It is in the context of this form of analysis that the inter-relationship between same and cross-sex siblingship and between siblingship and affinal relations come into play. Of particular importance here is the relationship between siblingship and affinity that figures prominently in both Pollock's analysis and Shapiro's orienting discussion of social organization in lowland South America.

If one subscribes to the view that contrast and oppostion are integral to the shaping of cultural categories, then a highlighting of the symmetrical equivalence and egalitarian solidarity of same-sex siblings would require a contrastive counterpoint. The Culina fulfill this expectation. Affinal relationships clearly contrast with brother relationships in terms of an asymmetry expressed in non-reciprocal service to WF, an equally non-reciprocal deference to WM that has connotations glossed as "shame" (<u>nahidzoti</u>) and the occasional whipping of ZH by WB. However, Pollack makes it clear that this opposition between siblingship and affinity is overcome in the course of the developmental cycle. Siblingship prevails in the first instance as an overarching and encompassing relation within the community, while potential affinity represents an egocentric sub-reality that emerges in the context of marriage, persists through the reproductive phases and is ultimately transcended by the re-establishment of an enveloping siblingship that encompasses the WB/ZH relation. Thus egalitarian siblingship triumphs over asymetrical affinity in the end. In all, I find Pollock's interpretation along these lines to be both interesting and persuasive.

It is noteworthy that cross-sex sibling relations receive little attention in many of these papers (with the notable exception of Kensinger's). This may stem from a lack of elaboration of these relations within the cultural systems under consideration. I will venture the speculation that the brother-sister relation is often not particularly 'good to think' in social systems where patrilineal descent provides the basis of group definition. More specifically, cross-sex siblingship frequently fails to provide a conceptual model for other relations within the larger cultural system, lacks resonance and is consequently effaced rather than elaborated. In some instances the differences between same and cross-sex siblingship are minimized and the latter relation is assimilated to the former as pale reflection (thereby rendering it an unsuitable model for broader application). In other cases a sister is seen primarily as a <u>vehicle</u> through which one acquires a ZH, a wife (through exchange) and thus a WB as well. It is the sister as an instrumentality that receives the strongest emphasis here, not the brother-sister relation <u>per se</u>. (A sister is treasured, but as an important <u>thing</u>.) The Culina described by Pollock provide an interesting case of still another type, since there is a metaphorical equation of potential mate (or sexual partner) with younger sister. The implications of this for the brother-sister relationship are not explored, but it would seem that the reflexivity of the metaphor might potentially increase the perceived social distance between brother and sister as well as

decreasing the perceived social distance between ego and his affines. It would be useful to be enlightened on this and other points pertaining to cross sex sibling relations, and many of the analyses presented seem incomplete in this respect. It is difficult to appreciate the Culina metaphor that equates potential mate and younger sister without some elucidation of the brother-sister relationship.

Sibling relations not only provide the core symbols of a broader social solidarity in egalitarian systems but also offer a basis for conceptualizing social differentiation. Siblings are typically distinguished by gender and often by birth order as well. They are thus equivalent in some respects but not others. Siblingship can thus provide a conceptual model for hierarchal as well as egalitarian relations, as Chernela's, Hill's, and Kensinger's papers illustrate. However, I would argue that the form of hierarchy modeled by the birth order of siblings establishes differential rank among individuals who remain equivalent in other respects. The descendants of the eldest son of the eldest son and those of the youngest son of the youngest son typically share a common ancestor, despite their considerable difference in social status. This shared relation is intrinsic to the legitimization of differential rank with a conical clan and consequently must be accorded some cultural recognition, however attenuated. Hierarchy is thus constrained (and at least to some degree counter-balanced) by symmetrical features intrinsic to the sibling relationship in which it is grounded. It is noteworthy in this respect that the low-ranked "servant" sibs in the Uanano hierarchy are ascribed origins distinct from those of the "elder brother" and "younger brother" sibs and are collectively designated as "perching bird" sibs. The relations that are <u>most</u> asymetrical are not conceptually based on a shared relation to an ancestor (or other medial element) and are not phrased in terms of siblingship.

Hill's paper is also consistent with the general point that hierarchy based on the birth order of siblings is counter-balanced and contextually restricted rather than totalistic. While seniority of emergence ranks the sibs of a phratry, this system of ranking is inapplicable at the level of sibling sets, where status is achieved rather than ascribed by birth order and is expected to conform to a pattern that inverts birth order seniority. The fact that siblingship is capable of ordering social relations in quite different ways within various domains of a single socio-cultural system contributes to its capacity to serve as a key symbol. An intrinsic contradiction between symmetrical and asymetrical principles of social interaction can readily be represented as simply two aspects of a comprehensive whole, uniformly ordered by siblingship. (This was written before I received Kensinger's paper, but it perfectly mirrors his conclusion that "the contradiction between two types of sibling relations provides the model for Cashinahua Society".)

A degree of tension between symmetrical and asymetrical principles of relationship can be glimpsed in nearly all the cases discussed. The Nambiquara myth Price relates suggests that this tension is located in the relations of a set of brothers to their father. Among the Culina it pertains to the relationship

between siblingship and affinity (discussed earlier). In the case of the Wakuénai and Uanano, asymmetry governs relations between descent groups while those between individuals within local groups are largely symmetrical. The interplay between equivalence and hierarchy thus emerges as a common theme among cases that seem disparate in many other respects.

In summary and by way of conclusion, I would like to come back to the inter-related points that siblingship is central to many socio-cultural systems and that it represents a particularly advantageous point of departure in analysis. I have noted that siblingship is co-extensive with mechanical solidarity and that the things siblings share are invariably the core symbols of a broader social solidarity. Moreover, sibling relations not only provide a model for (and a symbol of) more encompassing social cohesiveness, but also offer a basis for conceptualizing hierarchal social differentiation within systems unified by mechanical solidarity. Secondly, siblingship is prominent in socio-cultural systems where there is either a dualistic contrast, or dialectic, between two modes of social relations. Symmetrical and equivalent siblingship typically anchors one side of the equation while the other side is variably cast in terms of affinity, patrifiliation or asymetrical relations defined by the birth order of ancestral siblings.

Shapiro's paper brings out another aspect of the centrality of siblingship - the fact that it has repeatedly come to the fore in past sessions on lowland South America concerning such major topics as marriage and affinity, descent, and political leadership. It is especially noteworthy that the significance of siblingship has emerged from consideration of specific topics and particular ethnographic cases - not from theoretical first principles. Siblingship has not been emphasized because ethnographers sought to employ pre-existing theoretical constructs, but because it is so ethnographically prominent that it is difficult to miss or avoid. While descent theory had been tied to a few "classic cases" (or ideal types) and has failed to receive widespread ethnographic confirmation, siblingship crops up everywhere but remains relatively underdeveloped theoretically. It seems to me that today's papers - and those of past symposia reviewed by Shapiro - show that siblingship is much more than a topic. My programmatic conclusion is that the ethnographic data clearly warrant the further development of siblingship as a theoretical construct.

COMMENT ON SIBLINGSHIP IN LOWLAND SOUTH AMERICA

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In my discussion, I'd like to focus upon two matters pertaining to siblingship, both of which refer to the various ways social and psychodynamic meanings might contribute to the functioning of the terminological systems that have been so nicely described in this session. My first point follows from the idea that language organizes experience by the particular process of discourse, which is, in Foucault's words, the "locus of the emergence of concepts". We've heard about the complexities of the words for siblings, how thesewords-- in conjunction with contrasting lexemes for other categories of kin-- construct alternative social orders. I would not, however, call these "paradoxical" orders, since they are so highly context specific in their usage, and their meanings can hardly be generalizable across all, or even many social contexts. I'd like to suggest also that the use of these lexical oppositions can assist in framing various kinds of discourse, thereby keying participants to particular ways of understanding expectations other people have about their behavior, thereby giving particular significance to how event itself is being defined as a culturally salient situation involving social activity. Kinship terms and terms for siblings (which isn't the same thing as sibling terminology) thus have a hidden strategic function. They not only classify, they are instrumental in motivating action and may, in Austin's terminology, be "performative". It would be interesting to look further (as Ken Kensinger has been doing) at actual situations of use from the point of view of such instrumental strategies. When does someone use a particular word, and why is it especially suitable for that particular speech situation? For example, in contexts of selecting a spouse for a child, in marriage deliberations, during disputes, or at feasts, funerals, and rituals and occasions for orator, which words are used, and why do we see the variation in usage from one event to another? When are terms used to redefine or reform situations, to assist for example in creating peace, in expressing grief, in avoiding a sexual encounter, or to persuade someone to give up a precious possession? The use of a sibling term to express (or to create) a feeling of affection and mutual support between people is an instance of how siblingship serves (in general) as a code for traditional, normative, expected or "normal" conduct.

But, as we've also heard, there are older and younger, male and female siblings, and these attributes make siblings always inherently different. Siblings are thus identical by virtue of their shared substance but different by virtue of birth order or relative age, and gender. Half-siblings, of course, raise other problems of identity, especially in societies with lineal structures. All of these matters make the developmental experiences of siblings inevitably different. I'd like to suggest, as the second matter for discussion, that these developmental differences serve as the source of the symbolic use

(in myth, ritual, politics) of the sibling to express complex ideas concerning the relations between knowledge, power, sexual and moral judgement. Both universal and cultural in its constitution, siblingship is especially fascinating psychodynamically, because "it" raises issues of relative age, the relation between birth order and parental ties, psychodynamic processes involving the construction of sexual awareness, the selection (or avoidance and repression) of sexual objects, the problems of sibling incest taboos and incestuous fantasies, and the persistence or sundering of ties with parents, to name but a few perennial concerns of both anthropology and psychology.

Siblings are in both a monological and a dialogical relationship. Siblings are monological in their solidarity and their metaphorical position vis-a-vis society at large, but they are dialogical in that their identities involve irreconcilable ideological positions: here is the source of their opposed and often highly antagonistic relationships. Attributes of the older sibling are capability, dignity, high rank, and knowledge that depends on instruction through words and observations of nature. On the other hand, trickster characteristics are those of the younger sibling: highly developed sexual feeling, magical, shamanistic insight and knowledge, intellectual curiosity and the developed capacity for play, physical strength that allows a person to endure pain, and to confront powerful beings. (Among the Kalapalo, the youngest sibling is considered the most beautiful and the most morally good of all a set of siblings.) The younger brother Wakuenai becomes a ritual instructor- or better- transformer- of the children, and the oldest, if he is a teacher at all, is a more prosaic kind of instructor.

I suggest that these ways of symbolizing siblings may have to do with aspects of development. The oldest (being the first-born) has an easier time breaking natal household and parental ties, establishing a separate identity. But the last-born is kept the longest, and his/her break with the parents is the most difficult (for the parents as well as the child). Since these passages involve establishing extra-familial relations of love, and forming ethical judgements beyond the context of family, the last-born seems to be in a special or marked kind of life situation, one that suggests how kinship ties represent restrictions on social values, hindering the application of those values to strangers or outsiders. Such an extension of values contextually represents a higher (because more encompassing) moral sensitivity. So we see in many South American myths the younger sibling doing just this: helping strangers as if they were kin.

The abruptness and difficulty of the break with parents may also suggest how contacts with powerful beings are made; I am thinking here of the image of the arduous journey, one involving long periods of travel through unknown and dangerous country and painful ordeals. Here is a narrative event of great importance in South American cultures. The ability to control physical processes (pain, hunger, weariness, sexual passion) allows the traveller to make a unique contribution to humanity, power given by supernatural beings, or to participate in a new exchange relation with formerly hostile foreigners. Again, there are

several moral points being made here. And in situations of changing productive relations, the younger sibling may represent strategies that are alternatives to traditional norms, although these alternatives may have dubious worth in traditional situations.

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