Marriage Practices in Lowland South America

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Dualisms as an Expression of Difference and Danger: Marriage Exchange and Reciprocity among the Piaroa of Venezuela

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In lowland South American thought we find a recurrent appeal to pairs of opposites of various sorts, in cosmological doctrines, in accounts of natural phenomena, and in the understanding of proper social ordering. In the complicated dual organizations of the Gê and Bororo societies of central Brazil such dichotomous classifications of reality are exhibited in their ceremonial life, and each village itself is bisected by a moiety system, or series of moiety systems, opposed by dyadic classification and between which relations of logical complementarity are ritually played out, made formal through ceremony in elaborate ways (see Lave 1977, 1979; da Matta 1979; Melatti 1979; J. Crocker 1979; Maybury-Lewis 1979). When compared with the highly ritualized social organization of these central Brazilian societies, the endogamous cognatic kinship groups of Guianese Amerindians appear fluid and amorphous in shape. While in Gê and Bororo societies, the Amerindian understanding of society as a process within a specific cosmological scheme of things is laid out spatially before our eyes—through ritual and in their circular or semicircular village layout—in the Guianas there exists no complex spatial configuration reflecting the order of social life: there are no naming groups, no moieties in ritual exchange with one another acting out ceremonially a particular vision of cosmological ordering, or expressing an eternal ordering of "another world" from the mythic past. In short, there exists no ritual to declare the elaborate interlocking of the units of which society is comprised.

A prescriptive marriage rule associated with variations on a Dravidian type of relationship terminology[1] is, to the best extent of our knowledge, universal to Guianese Amerindian groups (see, for example, Rivière on Carib organization, 1974; J. Kaplan on the Piaroa, 1973, 1975; Lizot on the Yanomam, 1971). Throughout the Guianas the privileged union, in Lévi-Strauss's sense of the term (1969:120), is within one's own local group, itself identified as a unit of close kinsmen (see Rivière 1969; Henley 1979; Albert on the Yanomam, in Ramos and Albert 1977; J. Kaplan 1975). The traditional local group usually dwells together within a large communal house as an endogamous cognatic kinship group; membership in the house is based upon a principle of affinity, for an adult should be married into the house, have affines within it, to join it. Its structure is one that I have previously classified as an "alliance-based kinship group" (1973, 1975), one which maintains itself as a unit of cognates by ideally restricting exchange to within itself, its unity as such a group being associated with the number of marital exchanges among men within the local group itself. It is ironic that in the very societies where the prescriptive marriage rule is of such overwhelming importance to the organization of local groups within them, there is no evidence of a dual organization through which ritual or, indeed, social life should be played out,[2] while in the organization of moiety relationships within Gê and Bororo societies, the exchange of women between moieties plays a relatively minor part in the Amerindian understanding of moiety interaction (Lave 1979, da Matta 1979, Melatti 1979, J. Crocker 1979, Maybury-Lewis 1979). Thus in lowland South America dual organization is often not associated with a prescriptive marriage rule; conversely, the presence of a prescriptive marriage rule by no means implies the presence of one. This is a topic to which I shall return below.

Despite the contrast between the organization of the central Brazilian societies noted above and those of the Guianas, underlying their very dissimilar social structures is a similar philosophy of society, one that is probably common to many Amerindians of tropical South America. As the Guianese example in this discussion, I shall focus on the Piaroa Indians of Venezuela,[3] for within Piaroa mythology and related cosmology we find expressed a very clear statement about the nature of society, the nature of social relationships within it, their proper and improper enactment, their dangers. On this level, the cosmological, we can more easily see a strong similarity between the organization of the Guianese society and the dual organizations of central Brazil, a similarity more difficult to grasp when the focus is upon social structure alone. Maybury-Lewis, in his introduction to the edited volume of articles on the Gê and the Bororo, states (1979:13) that these essays "show how each society strives to create a harmonious synthesis out of the antithetical ideas,

categories, and institutions that constitute its way of life . . . to create balance and harmony by opposing institutions"—hence the title of the collection, *Dialectical Societies.* For the Piaroa, as for the Gê and the Bororo, the universe exists, life exists, society exists only insofar as there is contact and proper mixing among things that are different from one another (see J. Kaplan on lowland South American social organization, 1977a). The Piaroa, and the Guianese Amerindians in general, do their best in local group organization to suppress such differences, while the Gê and the Bororo stress them. The recognition of such variation among Amerindians in their overt emphasis upon social differentiation—or its suppression—takes one a long way in understanding variation in the social structures of the Amerindian groups of lowland South America.

Below I shall discuss the relation between Piaroa social organization and cosmology. It is my stance that Piaroa social structure is not so much "reflected" or "replicated" in the cosmology: rather, the cosmology—and the philosophy of social life contained within it—informs with meaning social relationships which, although acted out in the idiom of kinship and affinity, are also metaphysically loaded relationships and, as such, entail far more than kinship obligation. In Piaroa mythic times the world began as an undifferentiated whole, where all of its differences were contained within one being, Ofo Da'ae, the supreme deity. The history of mythical beings tells of their separation, being made different, then being brought together again in interaction with one another. To a certain extent the Piaroa moiety system replicates this structure; the clans, each comprised of beings of one category distinct from all others, are spatially separate from one another both in pre-society time and in the afterworld. In contrast, society exists only through the interaction of the members of different clans. The interaction in mythic time of cultural heroes and in social time of members of different clans is consistently expressed not only as relationships of affinity but also as ones that entail danger. In general, one way the Piaroa do look at the relationship among things of different kind is in terms of affinality, and the danger forthcoming from such interaction is viewed as the result of unfulfilled reciprocity (J. Kaplan 1981).

After making a few remarks on Piaroa territorial organization, I shall begin the discussion with a description of the Piaroa moiety system, for in its structure we are given direct evidence of the Piaroa view of society as of necessity being comprised of beings within categories different in kind.

The Piaroa dwell along the relatively turbulent tributaries of the Middle Orinoco that flow from the Guiana Highlands. The characteristic residential unit of the Piaroa is the multiple-family and semiendoga-

mous kinship group (the *itso'de*), which normally is comprised of 14 to 60 members. Piaroa land itself was traditionally divided into 13 to 14 autonomous political territories, an organization that is now breaking down with the recent and continuous migrations of Piaroa to the lower reaches of their rivers.[4] Each territory was comprised of six to seven *itso'de* (houses), which were separated from one another within the territory by approximately a half-day's journey along a river or jungle path. The political organization of the territory is still based upon the loose and competitive ordering, hierarchical in nature, of *ruwatu* (religio-political leaders) within the territory (J. Kaplan 1973, 1975, n.d.). There is no kinship principle placing order on territorial organization; rather, political alliances among men within the territory give the territory its identity (J. Kaplan 1975, n.d.). The communal house, on the other hand, is a local residential unit that is kinship structured (J. Kaplan 1975).

The Piaroa Moiety System

In Piaroa cosmogony their social life had its beginnings in the intermarriages enacted between the members of the first Piaroa clans, in themselves infertile since comprised of brother and sister pairs. The classification of cosmic habitats that distinguishes the *iyaénawátu* (clans) of the Piaroa moiety system is one that opposes "those of the sky" (of *mariwéka*) and, not surprisingly, "those of the earth" (of *hu'tó'hu*). Within these moieties the different clans are named by the conjunction of *hakwáwa* ("within"), *yo'u* ("the lake of"), and the name of the physical or organic object to which the lake belongs. For the moiety of *mariwéka* the latter are land animals, inanimate objects, and insects; for *hu'tó'hu,* birds, the stars, and fruit that grows high on trees. For example, there are *hakwáwa ofóyo'u* ("within the lake of the tapir"), *hakwáwa ináekwayo'u* ("within the lake of the stone"), *yawíyo'u* ("the lake of the jaguar"), *chiríkoyo'u* ("the lake of the star"), and so on.

The names recount the places of creation for the Piaroa: the Piaroa's creations are unique from one another and recorded as such by the names of the different *iyáenawátu* (clans), which also specify the different localities of origin; in one of several versions of the myth of origin, Wahari, the culture hero, creates the first pairs of Piaroa men and women in separate acts of creation at each of the sacred lakes of *mariwéka* and *hu'tó'hu.* One's "place of creation" and the afterworld are conjoined in Piaroa thought: the human soul (*aweta*) returns to its "place of creation" after death, and the members of each clan (*iyáenawang*) live together in a settlement spatially separate from all other *iyáenawátu*—separate from affines, and also from animals, from all beings different from self. Just as

the human soul returns to its "place of origin" after death, so too, after it is killed, does the soul of the animal. The Piaroa afterworld, where like entities are departmentalized, represents nonsociety and, as we shall see, a state of nonfertility. Society, and thereby fecundity, can exist only by the interaction of entities that are on the contrary kept separate in the afterworld (M. Kaplan 1970, J. and M. Kaplan in press).

The *iyáenawang* to which the individual returns after death is also that of his father, in accordance with a principle of patrifiliation. There one passes time in the afterworld in infertile fornication with a sibling, and since both plant and animal kind are separated from self after death, one consumes one's own flesh for food, endocannibalism most literally observed. In describing death the Piaroa also describe in rather eloquent fashion their vision of society; in their view existence in the afterworld entails a state of being that is stripped of all that is necessary to social living. In social life beings significantly different from one another must mingle, while in death there is a separation of differences. The social "I" is separated from the social "other," and the eater "I" from the eaten "other": kin dwell in an abode set apart from affines; man has no contact with animal kind. At the same time, in death, there is the dissolution of uniqueness among beings, male and female, leader and follower, who do dwell together: the attributes characteristic of gender are lost, those that distinguish men as fertile beings from women in their fertility; so too are shed the critical powers of the shaman, or the fertility peculiar to his status—his voice, his songs, his *ta'kwa ruwang* (his "master of thoughts")—all traits that distinguish in social life the leader from the follower. For the individual there are no affines after death, no fertility, no animal food, no food from the gardens. In short, there are no dangers (M. Kaplan 1970, J. and M. Kaplan in press). Lévi-Strauss speaks at the conclusion of *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* of the "bliss of the hereafter" where women will no longer be exchanged, i.e. "removing to an equally unattainable past or future the joys, eternally denied to social man, of a world in which one might *keep to oneself*" (1969:497, italics in original). In the Piaroa view it is both past and future, but for man to live there must be entities, those of a different kind from self. Indeed, social life is defined by the Piaroa in terms of the necessary commingling of different entities in society and the immediate consequences thereof.

The spatial distinctions of the *iyáenawátu* afterworld make it in concept somewhat akin to the Bororo "land of *aroe*," where in the topography of the underworld all the dead members of a single clan live together in the geographical wedge allocated to it (J. Crocker 1979); it is also similar to the Northwest Amazonian Pirá-paraná "waking-up houses," the stone houses of the sibs that exist separate from another in the changeless and timeless state of *He*, and from where the souls of the new-born come

and to which go the souls of the dead (S. Hugh-Jones 1979, C. Hugh-Jones 1979). It is on the level of social action that the clan system of the Piaroa departs so radically from that of the Bororo and the Amerindians of the Northwest Amazon; in both of these societies the social life of the individual is to a large extent determined by one's membership within one's clan or sib and his interaction with others. In the Northwest Amazon, for instance, the distinction between major cosmic habitats—land, earth, and sky—underlying "Endogamous Groups" identification becomes a root distinction of sameness and difference in social relationships, and as such has a startling degree of classificatory strength in the ordering of Vaupés marriage exchanges (see C. Hugh-Jones 1979).

In contrast, the classification of cosmic habitats that distinguishes the clans of the Piaroa moiety system, one that opposes "those of the sky" and "those of the earth," is not a dualism projected back onto the marriage system: the Piaroa show litttle interest in their moiety system as a language for ordering their marriages, which they easily could do insofar as their marriage system is ostensibly one of "symmetric exchange." Moreover, the spatial distinctions of afterlife and of creation are pointedly not replicated in Piaroa social life, the former two being states quite contrary to earthly and social life where through intermingling the clans completely lose their spatial distinctiveness. Although the Piaroa place great emphasis upon the intermarriages of the first sets of Piaroa, for it is through these intermarriages that all Piaroa are cognates today, the individual's clan membership in no way obligates him in this life. The moiety system refers not to social groupings but to the sacred places of creation and, because after death one returns to his group of creation, to mortuary subgroups.

The Piaroa identify society with both difference and danger and, inversely, nonsociety with identity and safety. They very explicitly state in general the association of difference with danger—the danger of the strong for the weak, animals for humans, affines for oneself. However, it is also their belief that the association of like items (e.g., "kin" with "kin"), although safe, denotes a state of nonsociety: society itself is equated with affinity, the coming together of unlike items (affines). Throughout the remainder of this essay I shall discuss how the Piaroa handle the dilemma with which they are faced, i.e., that society must be comprised of the interaction of unlike entities which, potentially at least, are highly dangerous to one another.[5]

The *Itso'de* and the concept of *Chawáruwang*

The members of an *itso'de* (communal house) form a kinship-structured local group, and, by the Piaroa's view, it is a group of close kinsmen

cooperating as such (see J. Kaplan 1973, 1975). *Chawáruwang* ("my kinsman"),[6] a concept that carries with it the notion of consanguinity, is the principal and the most general term through which the Piaroa discuss and explain categories of kinsmen and the obligations associated with these categories of relatives (J. Kaplan 1972, 1975). Highly relevant to the understanding of this concept is the fact that the Piaroa believe an individual to be related equally to his mother and his father. As a physical entity created through sexuality, he partakes of the blood, the flesh, and the bones of both parents.

For any ego the term *chawáruwang* (pl. *chawáruwae*) has multiple references. Although the Piaroa lack interest in genealogies, they nevertheless believe and express the notion that they are all related to one another cognatically through common descent from the first men and women created in the mythic past. Thus all Piaroa are *tawáruwang* to one another. It is important to point out that the first people do not take on the character of focal ancestors: they remain vague in nature and assume no significance as the focus of an ideology of descent. Rather, the Piaroa emphasize the intermarriages of the first sets of Piaroa, and these intermarriages led to the intricate ties of kinship that hold today for their descendants. Here we are clearly introduced to the Piaroa notion that marriage and consanguinity are not to be separated conceptually, that marriage leads to kinship.

Second, the term *chawáruwang* is extended metaphorically to all individuals with whom one engages in peaceful social interaction, whether Piaroa or non-Piaroa. In this context the term takes on the meaning of "friend." Third, a Piaroa uses *chawáruwang* to signify those individuals who comprise a network of kinsmen with whom he interacts on a more or less regular basis: the members of his own territory or individuals in neighboring territories with whom he maintains social, economic, or political ties. Finally, in its most restricted sense *chawáruwang* is used for the members of a person's immediate kindred, *tük'ú chawáruwae* ("my close kinsmen"), as opposed to his *otomínae chawáruwae* ("my distant kinsmen"). Ideally, the members of one's immediate kindred, comprised of all close genealogical kinsmen related to ego through both parents extending to the first cousin level, should live with him and, indeed, comprise in total the population, with himself, of his *itso'de* (house). In short, the two elements of which the category *tük'ú chawáruwae* (close kinsmen) is comprised—close genealogical relatives and the members of one's house—are ideally isomorphic.

It is common usage for a Piaroa to apply the term *chawáruwang* in referring to his own house (*itso'de*) as a discrete grouping of kindred members or "one family,"[7] although some Piaroa tend to use the phrase *tüťáe itsóťu* ("my own family," "my own kind") to refer to one's own

house and its members. Likewise, *chawáruwang* in broader context can refer to the house of others: *chawáruwae ta'hu* signifies "two houses" and the two "families" of which they are comprised. We see, then, that the Piaroa conceive of the house and its inhabitants as a discrete kinship group, one whose membership is based on a principle of consanguinity, or *chawáruwang*ship. The Piaroa also share the common Amerindian belief that domestic intimacy—living, eating, and sleeping together within a confined space—leads to a sharing of physical essence, whether the relationships involved are genealogical ones or not (see for example W. Crocker 1977, Melatti 1979).[8]

The house (*itso'de*) is ideally endogamous: the preferred, or privileged, marriage is with a *tük'ú chawáruwang* of the house. One marries within one's close kindred and lives with its members as well: with one's parents and parents-in-law, with one's sisters and brothers, and their spouses. Thus membership in the *itso'de* implies conjugality as well as kinship, and in this model of close kindred endogamy one's kindred by birth and conjugal kindred should be identical. Here we see that the Piaroa picture of Piaroa land—where all Piaroa are kinsmen of one another through the initial intermarriages of the first people—is in macrocosm identical to the picture they have of their local group, the *itso'de.* Through intermarriages within it the house becomes a unit comprised of close cognates and, as such, reflects the idealized ordering of Piaroa land as a whole. The *itso'de* has a corporate identity that distinguishes it as a group of cognates who live together on a named site, to be contrasted with the membership of other houses, each of which is also located on its own named site.[9] The members of the *itso'de* believe "We are all one, *tük'ú tawáruwang* of one another," that is, a group of consanguineally related and intermarried kinsmen.

For many reasons, both demographic and political, individuals often do not *in fact* marry within their immediate kindred or house (see J. Kaplan 1973, 1975). Nevertheless, the Piaroa always act *as if* their marriages were endogamous to both the house and the close kindred of birth.[10] By marrying either into a house or into a person's personal kindred, one becomes incorporated as a close kinsman of that respective group and into alter's immediate kindred. Often enough, the parents of bride and groom become united in residence through the marriage of their children, and the *itso'de* thereby becomes after the fact an endogamous unit. Those who do not marry endogamously to their kindred of birth are replaced in practice—as far as group membership goes—by those who do marry in. In fact, one tends to slough off close collateral kinsmen with whom either self or spouse has no affinal tie within one's own generation: one can live with an affine, who may be distantly related genealogically, but not with a first cousin who has not married within

ego's close conjugal kindred. As mentioned above, the *itso'de* is an affinally structured group, for a principle of affinity is responsible for both group formation and group continuity. The Piaroa perceive the *itso'de* to be a group of cognates, and talk about it as such; yet at the same time it must, in accordance with their own understanding of society, be comprised of beings of categories different from one another, i.e. in-laws. With this understanding we can interpret their use of their relationship terminology as a device for classifying kinsmen both within the *itso'de* and outside it.

The Dravidian Relationship Terminology and the Prescriptive Marriage Rule

As I have argued elsewhere (1972, 1973, 1975; cf. Rivière 1969; Yalman 1967), the most sensible account of the Dravidian relationship terminology insofar as it is *used* by the Piaroa is that of Dumont on South Indian systems (see, for example, 1953a, 1953b, 1957, 1961, 1975; also see Good 1980). It might be noted that the analyses of Scheffler (see, for example, 1971, 1977, 1978; Scheffler and Lounsbury 1971) and his arguments against Dumont (Scheffler 1971, 1977, 1978) are not very persuasive to the South Americanist attempting to understand the Amerindian's classification of his social universe through the use of his relationship terminology as symbolic orientation. Although Scheffler claims that he wishes to show how Dravidian systems "really work" (1971:223), he falls far short of such a goal, for he is not a *social* anthropologist: his aim in formal analysis is to analyze "systems of kin classification rigorously and independently of the social contexts in which they are used" (1978:85). The question is not whether Scheffler is right or wrong in his attempt to uncover cultural universals, but simply that his results as he presents them are uninteresting to the social anthropologist.[11]

The Piaroa relationship nomenclature is a straightforward Dravidian-type terminology, and it is through the categories of the terminology, which differentiate in the three medial generations of ego's kinship universe "kin" and "affine," that marriage is regulated among the Piaroa (see Chart 1). Their prescriptive rule of marriage is that a man must marry a woman who is related to him, according to this relationship terminology, as *chirekwa* (a woman must marry a man who is related to her as *chirekwo*), a category of relationship that includes among others within his own generational level the genealogical specification of MBD or FZD. Chart 1 shows the structure of Piaroa marriage, and Chart 2 provides specifications for the terms (but see below). Since I have elsewhere presented a description of the Piaroa relationship terminology and the prescriptive marriage rule associated with it (Kaplan 1972, 1973,

<table>
<tr><td>+2</td><td colspan="4">(kin)
chad'o (*a*) (GF, GM)</td></tr>
<tr><td>+1</td><td colspan="2">(kin)
(F, M)
cha'o (*hu*)</td><td colspan="2">(affines)
(MB, FZ) (M-in-law, F-in-law)
chiminya (*hu*)</td></tr>
<tr><td>0</td><td>(kin)
chu'buo (eB)
ego
chihawa (yB)</td><td>(kin)
eZ (*a*)
yZ (*hu*)</td><td>(affines)
(MBS, FZS)
chisapo
(B-in-law)</td><td>(affines)
(MBD, FZD)
chirekwa
(spouse)</td></tr>
<tr><td>−1</td><td>(kin)
(S) (D)
chitti (*hu*)
(BCh)</td><td colspan="2">(affines)
(ZCh) (MBSCh, FZSCh)
(S-in-law, D-in-law) (S-in-law, D-in-law)
chuhöri (*hu*)</td><td>(kin)
(S, D) (MBDCh, FZDCh)
chitti (*hu*)</td></tr>
<tr><td>−2</td><td colspan="3">(kin)
chu'do (*a*) (GS,GD)</td></tr>
</table>

CHART 1A: MALE AND FEMALE TERMS (Male Ego) AND FILIATION. (Feminizing suffixes are *a* and *hu*.)

<table>
<tr><td>+2</td><td colspan="4">(kin)
cha'do (a)
(GF, FM)</td></tr>
<tr><td>+1</td><td colspan="2">(kin)
(F, M)
cha'o (hu)</td><td colspan="2">(affines)
(MB, FZ)
(M-in-law
F-in-law)
chiminya (hu)</td></tr>
<tr><td>0</td><td>(kin)
chú'buo (eB)

chihawa (yB)</td><td>(kin)
(eZ) (a)
ego
(yZ) (hu)</td><td>(affines)
(MBS,
FZS)
chirekwo
(spouse)</td><td>(affines)
(MBD,
FZD)
chóbiya
(Z-in-law)</td></tr>
<tr><td>−1</td><td>(affines)
chuhöri (hu)
(S-in-law,
D-in-law,BCh)</td><td colspan="2">(kin)
(S,D) chitti (hu)
(MBSch, FZSCh)
(Zch)</td><td>(affines)
chuhöri (hu)
(S-in-law, D-in-law,
(MBDCh, FZDCh)</td></tr>
<tr><td>−2</td><td colspan="4">(kin)
chu'do (a)
(GS,GD)</td></tr>
</table>

CHART 1B: MALE AND FEMALE TERMS (Female Ego) AND FILIATION.
(Feminizing suffixes are *a* and *hu*.)

CHART 2: PIAROA RELATIONSHIP TERMS.

Terms of Reference and Address for Male Ego:

1. *cha'do:* all males of second ascending generational level.
2. *cha'da:* all females of second ascending generational level.
3. *cha'o:* F, FB, MH, MZH, FFBS, MMBS, FMZS, MFZS, etc.
4. *cha'hu:* M, MZ, FW, FBW, FMBD, MFBD, MMZD, FFZD, etc.
5. *chiminya:* MB, WF, FZH, MMZS, MFBS, FMBS, FFZS, etc.
6. *chiminyahu:* FZ, MBW, WM, FFBD, MMBD, FMZD, MFZD, etc.
7. *chü'buo:* eB, FBSe, FFBSSe, MMBSSe, MZSe, all males of third ascending generational level, WZH, etc.
8. *chü'bua:* eZ, FBDe, FFBSDe, MMBSDe, MZDe, all females of third ascending generational level, WBW, ZHW, etc.
9. *chihawa:* yB, FBSy, FFBSSy, FMZSSy, MFZSSy, MZSy, all makes of third descending generational level, WZH, etc.
10. *chihawahu:* yZ, FBDy, FFBSDy, all females of third descending generational level, WBW, ZHW, etc.
11. *chisapo:* FZS, MBS, MMZSS, FMBSS, WB, ZH, DHF, SWF, etc.
12. *chirekwa:* FZD, MBD, MFBSD, FFZSD, W, BW, etc.
13. *chitti:* S, BS, FBSS, MZSS, FZDS, MBDS, WS, etc.
14. *chittihu:* D, BD, FBSD, MZSD, FZDD, WD, etc.
15. *chuhöri:* ZS, FZSS, MBSS, FBDS, MZDS, WBS, ZHS, DH, etc.
16. *chuhörihu:* ZD, FZSD, MBSD, FBDD, MZDD, WBD, ZHD, SW, etc.
17. *chu'do:* all males of second descending generational level.
18. *chu'da:* all females of second descending generational level.

Terms of Reference and Address for Female Ego (where they differ from those used by male ego):

1. *chirekwo:* FZS, MBS, MMZSS, FMBSS, H, ZH, HB, etc.
2. *chóbiya:* FZD, MBD, MFBSD, FFZSD, HZ, BW, etc.
3. *chitti:* S, ZS, FBDS, MZDS, FZSS, MBSS, HS, etc.
4. *chittihu:* D, ZD, FBDD, MZDD, FZSD, HD, etc.
5. *chuhöri:* BS, FBSS, MZSS, HZS, BWS, etc.
6. *chuhörihu:* BD, FBSD, MZSD, HZD, BWD, etc.
7. *chiminya:* Identical to terms used by male ego, except for spouse's parent: HF.
8. *chiminyahu:* Identical to terms used by male ego, except for spouse's parent: HM.
9. *chü'buo, chihawa:* Identical to male ego, except for sibling-in-law's spouse: HZW, BWH.
10. *chü'bua, chihawahu:* Identical to male ego, except for spouse's same-sex sibling's spouse: HBW.

1975), I shall here review only some of the more salient reasons for my insistence that the Piaroa marriage rule enjoins marriage not between

cross cousins but between "affines of the same generation" (see, of course, Dumont 1953a, 1953b, 1975).

In reckoning which of his relatives one can marry, ego distinguishes two classes of relatives within each of the three medial generations, the members of which, by Piaroa interpretation, are respectively "affines" to one another. The Piaroa frequently describe the prescribed marriage category (*chirekwa/chirekwo*) by reference to the first ascending generation: they state that one marries the child of a *chiminya* and/or *chiminyahu* ("affines of first generation," a category to which, of course, MB and FZ belong as parents' siblings-in-law) or—and this is more usual—the child of father's "brother-in-law" (father's *isapo*)[12] or mother's "sister-in-law" (her *kóbiya*). MBD is, by the marriage rule, the "child of father's brother-in-law," and the relationship is thereby traced through the father and not the mother. In contrast, FZD, by the marriage rule, is the "child of mother's sister-in-law"; the relationship is traced through the mother and not the father. That this is the case follows not only from the manner in which the Piaroa express the marriage alliance but also from their notions of correct and incorrect marriages. The Piaroa consider a marriage to be fully legitimate only if the father of the bride and the father of the groom classify each other as "brother-in-law" (*chisapo*) and/or the mother of the bride and the mother of the groom classify each other as "sister-in-law" (*chóbiya*) (see J. Kaplan 1975:Table 21, p. 136). A marriage with the child of a person classified as a "parental cross-sex sibling," one whom ego's mother classifies as "brother" or whom ego's father classifies as "sister," is considered slightly incorrect unless the former prerequisite also holds. On the other hand, marriage with one who is classified as "parent's affine's child"—the child of father's *isapo* or mother's *kobiya*—but not also categorized as the child of a parent's "cross sibling" is perfectly legitimate; a man whom ego's father classifies as "brother-in-law" often is not classified as "brother" by ego's mother; a woman whom ego's mother classifies as "sister-in-law" may not be classified as "sister" by ego's father (J. Kaplan 1975:Table 21). The point of this rather tedious digression is that for the Piaroa the fact that one marries into the category to which his "cross cousin" belongs is irrelevant to the prescriptive rule. The expression of marriage in terms of "parental affines," in particular in terms of father's "brother-in-law," coincides with the manner in which the Piaroa contract most marriage exchanges: two "brothers-in-law" arrange a marriage between their children.

All Piaroa informants were emphatic on the point that all marriages must be between the categories *chirekwo/chirekwa.* Clearly, however, in a small in-marrying population like that of the Piaroa, one is usually related to one's spouse in a number of ways. If one is related to a woman as both distant "sister" and as distant "potential spouse," the latter rela-

tionship is emphasized and claimed to be "the closest." When previous terms of address are not consistent with the marriage, ego corrects his relationship terms and thereafter addresses his wife and most of her kinsmen by terms appropriate to a marriage of the prescribed category. They likewise correct their terms of address for him and his close relatives. There is one type of "incorrect" marriage that the Piaroa very occasionally allow, that between a *chiminya* ("father-in-law") and his *chuhörihu* ("daughter-in-law"). Such marriages between "affines" of adjoining generations follow a specific pattern. In all three cases in my data of such marriages, they were extremely important politically, two of which drew large *itso'de* together into one house. They were all contracted as second marriages by powerful leaders; in each case not only was the marriage between generations distinguished terminologically, but physiological generations separated husband and wife as well: the husband was at least 20 years older than his bride. It is crucial to point out that such marriages are, as with normal marriages, arranged by two *chisapomu* ("brothers-in-law"), but instead of exchanging children, one man takes as wife the daughter of the other. The Piaroa refer to the marriage as one in which a man "marries his *isapo's* ('brother-in-law's') daughter." The Piaroa are highly ambivalent about the legitimacy of such marriages, and they rationalize their occurrence at great length. There is ambivalence as well over the degree to which terms of address are to be changed so as to coincide with the marriage: the husband and wife concerned always correct for the marriage, but for the two men involved in the marriage exchange and their close male relatives, both the terms of address used before the marriage and those appropriate to the marriage are considered to be legitimate. A certain degree of terminological confusion results, where choice of terms of address and reference become determined by social and political context.

It is no more appropriate to classify such marriages among the Piaroa as "ZD" marriage than it would be to classify their marriage into the prescriptive category of *chirekwo/chirekwa* as "bilateral cross-cousin marriage." In neither instance is the focus upon a consanguineal link; in both the marriage is reckoned through ties of affinity; in the proper marriage a man marries the child of his father's "brother-in-law" or his mother's "sister-in-law," while in the *chiminya/chuhörihu* marriage he marries the child of his "brother-in-law." It cannot be too greatly stressed that these glosses are in accordance with Piaroa description and, in the case of proper marriage, with jural rule. Moreover, unlike some of their neighbors, as with the Trio (Rivière 1969) and the Pemon (Thomas 1979), the Piaroa have no ideal or preference for marriage with the "ZD," whether she be near or distant in relationship. The Piaroa do not in fact marry into the category to which she belongs (*chuhörihu*), for

they correct for proper marriage. Also, unlike marriage with "ZD" among these neighboring Carib peoples where an age difference between spouses is negligible (Rivière 1966b, 1969; Thomas 1979), as similarly is the case among South Indians who are reported to practice elder sister's daughter's marriage (see, for example, Rao 1973, Beck 1972, Good 1980), marriages among the Piaroa that cross terminological generations involve partners who are widely separated in age, unusual for normal marriages with them. A marriage that crosses both terminological and physiological generations, as with the Piaroa *chiminya/chuhörihu* marriage, is a considerably different institution from the Carib and the South Indian cases of "ZD" marriage just noted.

One of the hallmarks of Piaroa marriage is a stress on marriage between age mates, while a hallmark of their social structure is a clear distinction between generations. It is the confusion of generational levels among male affines following in the wake of a *chiminya/chuhörihu* marriage that is bothersome to the Piaroa[13]—the fusion of brother-in-law and father-in-law into one person, and brother-in-law with son-in-law. The status relationships of relative inequality and equality that should hold between different types of affines, between whom a distinction of status is based to a certain extent upon a difference in status of age, have become muddled: the father-in-law and the son-in-law have become age mates, while brothers-in-law, who should be equal, have become separated by a physiological generation.[14] The jural and political focus of a house (*itso'de*) is in theory a set of brothers-in-law,[15] reflecting a notion of proper group ordering in keeping with the horizontal structure of jural relationships that in general holds among lowland tropical forest Amerindians (J. Kaplan 1977b; also see Lizot on the Yanomami concept of *mashi,* 1977; and Kensinger on the Cashinahua, 1977). The reason that such intergenerational marriages *are* allowed among the Piaroa is that they do fulfill, as I shall discuss below, the requirement of reciprocity within the group, an endogamous one where the emphasis is upon multiple ties of affinity among male affines within it. From the viewpoint of two male affines who are engaged in establishing a series of marriage exchanges with one another within a house, the *chiminya/chuhörihu* marriage can be seen as merely one more exchange possibility through which such affinal ties can be reaffirmed and/or initiated. The possibility that the oblique marriage might be disruptive to an ongoing "cycle of exchange" (Lévi-Strauss 1969:448) is irrelevant to the structure of reciprocity within the endogamous group, as too would be a concern for direction of exchange (see concluding section).

So far I have been speaking about the prescriptive marriage rule per se, and not the Piaroa preferred marriage choice. As indicated above, the privileged union among the Piaroa is marriage within the house with as

close a kinsman as possible; given the prescriptive marriage rule, this would be the MBCh/FZCh. As I have written elsewhere (1973, 1975), the Piaroa ideal of "marrying close" (marrying *tük'ú*) can be accomplished in a number of ways, by participating in an ongoing marital exchange (e.g. a man marrying the sister of his brother's wife) or by marrying a MBCh/FZCh. The latter union, though rare for demographic reasons, is the ideal marriage among the Piaroa, where ego is able to replicate in the closest manner possible the marriage of his parents (and stay home with them). As I have argued before (1973), we must not confuse the prescriptive marriage rule, which refers to category, with an ideal of marriage with a close kinsmen. While the one is obviously not mutually exclusive to the other, the logical consequences of each for group formation, and certainly for its interpretation, may vary considerably one from the other. By referring to one symbolic system or subsystem of classification at one moment, and to another the next, the Piaroa play with such logical consequences. In accord with such juggling they can stress the affinal nature of group relations—the differences within it—or its character as a group of cognates, as being comprised of beings of one kind with another. Indeed, it is only by understanding the dialectical interplay of the two—the prescriptive rule and the preference—that we can come to a satisfactory understanding of Piaroa social organization.[16]

The Piaroa can use in reference an optional lexical marker that distinguishes actual from distantly related kinsmen; the use of this marker reflects within its structure their preference for marriage with as close a kinsman as possible. The Piaroa do not distinguish between "true" and "false" relatives. Rather, if one wishes to distinguish between one's father and father's brother, the latter and more distantly related members of the category *cha'o* can be referred to as *cha'o paehkwaéwa,* while no lexical marker is used for ego's father; he is merely referred to as *cha'o. Paehkwaéwa* means "one over the other," or "next to each other," like leaves on a thatched house or building blocks. The expression *wüü paehkwaéwa* refers to sexual intercourse, literally "sex on top of one another." Thus *paehkwaéwa* is a particularly apt metaphor signifying kinship linkage, and one that is appropriate to a culture whose members talk of such ties not as being based on a concept of common substance but as marriage links. In reckoning close or distant kinship to another, a Piaroa usually discusses not a blood tie the two may share because of descent from a common ancestor but the number of marital links that separate his kinsman from himself. Through the use of the same marker, *paehkwaéwa,* siblings can be distinguished from classificatory siblings, children from classificatory children, and so on. However, no distinction can be made between parents' cross-sex siblings (or their siblings-in-law) and parents-in-law, between a man's male cross cousins and his brothers-

in-law, and so forth. None of the following denotata can be used with the lexical marker: MBS, FZS, WB, or ZH; each is always *chisapo* and never *chisapo paehkwaéwa.* The brother of a man's brother-in-law can be referred to as such.

Several comments are in order about the distinctions the Piaroa can make through such lexical markers. It is not clear from their use whether or not the foci of what are affinal categories by prescriptive rule are in this instance consanguines or affines; the meaning of the unmarked term remains ambiguous.[17] MB and FZ are after all respectively father's and mother's sibling-in-law. There is evidence that the Piaroa think of such relatives as both kin and affine, and whether or not the MB is considered as "kin" or "affine" is not really the question here. While the Piaroa do hesitate over classifying an actual cross cousin as a consanguine, they do view MB, FZ, ZCh (m. speaker) and BCh (f. speaker) as close kinsmen, indeed, as closer relatives than grandparents. A young man may well emphasize the kinship aspect of his relationship with his mother's brother; to verbalize his affection for and trust in him as such, he may address the elder relative as *cha'o,* the category to which his father belongs. However, if the young man should marry the daughter of his mother's brother, from that moment on he would address him as *chiminya* ("father-in-law"), the category in which the mother's brother is properly placed. He would be set firmly in mind as "affine," and the political aspect of the relationship—the mother's brother as brother-in-law of his father—which might be ignored and held inert before the marriage, would be activated with it.

There is no reason why the terms of a relationship system cannot at one and the same time be used to refer to biological family relationships and to social categories. Nevertheless, having said this, it makes little sense when discussing the manner in which the Piaroa use their terminology for the classification of all but the most immediate kinsmen to talk of such use as genealogical extensions from "primary" kinsmen. Although a Piaroa can give the "correct" category for any of the denotata comprising the genealogical chains presented in Chart 2, it does not mean that a particular relative so related to ego would be so classified. Alter is related to ego through a multiple of kinship ties, and the Piaroa man, for instance, tends to trace relationships past first cousin range through a number of different relatives, and often as not through marital and in-law links (as with WFBW or W"B"). Through inconsistent reckoning he is able to establish himself as affine—"father-in-law," "brother-in-law," or "son-in-law"—to most men within his territory, and can thereby potentially set into motion marriage negotiations for their children or siblings, both with respect to his own marriage and to the marriages of all other members of his family (J. Kaplan 1975). The

precise genealogical tie, to the extent it is even known or remembered, is not only overridden but also often irrelevant to the task of structuring marital and political alliances within the territory.[18]

The obvious point is that relationship terms are polysemic, but not necessarily in the sense Scheffler and Lounsbury see them to be. Each term has multiple referents, and its meaning depends upon which referents are being stressed for symbolic orientation in any given instance. Witherspoon (1977:94) notes that for Navaho terms there exists an exchange of meaning among all referents, and the meaning of any particular term can be viewed as a set of semantic elements analogically linked together.[19] I would argue that the same holds true for Piaroa terms: the significance of their cosmological referents informs the affinal content or biological familial meaning of a term, investing it with political, sacred, and metaphysical significance. The affine relationship as it existed in mythological times entailed unmitigated danger, acted out in power battles over elements of the universe and expressed through pointed nonreciprocity. As such, it is not a model of exchange to be copied in social life, but its content nevertheless provides a language that the Piaroa use for the discussion and understanding of both kin and affine relationships in their social world.

Dualisms in Mythic Time: Mythic Space and Mythic Affines

The supreme god of the Piaroa, Ofo Da'ae, Tapir/Anaconda—a chimerical being who still today dwells in his home beneath the earth—was genitor to two different sets of beings who are classified respectively with the domains of land and water. These two classes of beings, those of land and those of water, are related once again in mythic time through the affinal relationship of the masters of these domains: Wahari, the Tapir son-in-law, and Kuemoi, the Anaconda father-in-law. Much of mythic time was spent in the playing out of power battles between these two mythic beings for the control of the various domains of the universe and of all the elements of which they are comprised.

Wahari is the master (*ruwang*) of the land, the mountains, the rocks, and the sky. He is also called *Pihae Ruwang,* "Master of the World," for most of the earth's features are his creations. He also was the creator of the Piaroa. To acquire the power and the knowledge for the task, he was taught beneath the earth with the hallucinogens of Ofo Da'ae, his grandfather, Anaconda/Tapir supreme deity. During mythic time Wahari was *Ruwang Itso'de* ("Master of the House") of the jungle animals, and he gave both form and knowledge to them. Although master of land, Wahari was a fisherman: he fished from land, from the rocks of the

rapids he had created, and he ate from the domain that was not his, from the aquatic domain.

Kuemoi, Wahari's father-in-law, is fire and was born in water: he is the master of water. His mother is Isisiri, the dangerous "Mistress of the Lake," and his father is Ofo Da'ae, the Tapir/Anaconda (see Figure 1 depicting the kinship relationship between Kuemoi and Wahari). The crocodile, the cayman, and large fish are Kuemoi's family (*awáruwa*), as are the opossum and the vulture, the former an omen of death for, and the latter an eater of, jungle animals. Kuemoi is also grandfather of sleep and the master of darkness: he dwells in a house called "Night" (*Yo'dorei*). It was there that he created all the poisonous snakes of the world and the jaguar.[20] In brief, all dangerous and biting animals and all things poisonous in this world, for beings classified as "jungle animals" (*dea ruwa,* a category to which the Piaroa belong),[21] are his creations and classed together as "Kuemoi's thoughts." He poisoned all large rock formations and the streams; he is grandfather of boils, the father of biting and poisonous fish, and the creator of poisonous toads; the bat is his spirit (*a'kwáruwang*). He himself is anaconda, and he transforms himself at will into jaguar. Kuemoi is *Kwaewae Ruwang,* "Master of all edible fruits and vegetables in the world," their first owner, and father of the garden plants: maize, squash, yuca, and guamo.[22] And, as Wahari is a fisherman, Kuemoi is a hunter: he also eats from the domain that is not his and brings death to its beings.

Both Wahari and Kuemoi are great sorcerers, and as the respective masters of land and water, of day and night, and as the reincarnations of Tapir and Anaconda, they are in their distinctiveness a fractionalization of their primordial genitor,[23] the Tapir/Anaconda (Ofo Da'ae); as such they are earthly embodiments of the two opposing aspects of his nature, the united force of which remains beneath the earth. Wahari takes Kuemoi's daughter, Maize (*Kwaewáenyamu*) as wife, and through the intermarriage of these two aspects (see Figure 1), opposed through their association with distinct domains of the universe—their origin within

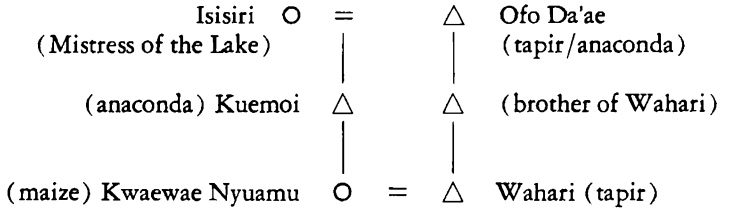

FIGURE 1. KINSHIP RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KUEMOI AND WAHARI. (See n. 23 for an explanation of why Wahari's genealogical father is also his brother.)

earth[24] and within water—social relations on earth and in mythic times came into existence. But the exchange relationship so established was highly precarious, for it was not reciprocated. Kuemoi, the father-in-law, received nothing, not even a grandchild, in return for the daughter he gave, nor for his gifts to his son-in-law of cooking fire, cultivation, and cultural artifacts. Thus Kuemoi spent most of mythic time trying to eat his son-in-law and other creatures of the jungle (*dea ruwa*) who were of the family of Wahari. In Kuemoi's attempts to turn the flesh of Wahari into meat to be eaten, it was food he saw as due to him on a number of accounts. If Wahari had reciprocated the gifts received from Kuemoi, he could have canceled out his own status as a being totally different from Kuemoi and, as such, his father-in-law's food.

The mythic message is a clear one, and the Piaroa understand it this way: the relationship between wife giver and wife receiver is an inherently dangerous one, since in-laws are strangers who may eat you. The safe exchange relationship is the reciprocated one, and it is only through such reciprocity that the peril intrinsic to the in-law relationship can be averted. In recognizing that society can only exist through the interaction of differences, of beings unlike one another, and in understanding that such mingling is very hazardous, the Piaroa expend a good deal of social structural energy in masking the principle of difference toward the end of achieving safety. But here caution is in order, for this observation by no means holds for all Piaroa behavior: within the communal house (*itso'de*) certain affinal relationships are veiled, while in relationships between houses within a political territory they are stressed.

Politics, Affinity, and Mythic Classification

In keeping with the view that society can come into being only through the coming together of unlike beings, the jural relationship in Piaroa society is with in-laws, and political relationships within the territory are acted out in the idiom of affinity. One competes politically with one in an affine category but never with one classed as a "father," "brother," or "son." In political battles one's opponent—a *chisapo* ("brother-in-law"), *chiminya* ("father-in-law"), or *chuhöri* ("son-in-law")—is given the attributes of Kuemoi: his power is power out of control, he is a user of too powerful hallucinogens, he transforms himself into anaconda, becoming Kuemoi in so doing. He is a sorcerer who sends fatal disease, becoming in this action a cannibal, for disease is always considered by the Piaroa to be a process of being eaten.[25]

We see, then, that the Piaroa use mythic categories—where "I" am Wahari, power in control, and "you" are Kuemoi, power out of control—to structure political battles between houses within a territory. Such use

of mythic classification does not imply an ordering that is metaphoric in nature but, rather, speaks of specific metaphysical states: in one's drugged state under the influence of hallucinogens, one sees oneself as the beautiful Wahari and one's opponent as Kuemoi. The use of such categories emphasizing essential differences of being as exist between political competitors structures relationships between those classed as affines of different local groups, and their use relates to the hierarchical ordering of shamans within the political territory. We see that the classification of mythic beings, where distinctions of essential difference are made through distinctions of separate origin, are used for talking about and understanding aspects of social distance, of the distinction between kin and affine. Hence the mythic in-law relationship, where the affine can be both anaconda and cannibal, informs the postmythic in-law relationship, thereby actively structuring experiences in the social world.

Such language, taken from the classification of the elements within the cosmos, must not be used to structure relationships within the house (*itso'de*): one must never stress the essential difference to oneself of affines living with one. If political competition within the house becomes serious, the house immediately fissions. Thus it is the *potential* affine who is Kuemoi the cannibal, that is, one with whom no marriage exchange has been contracted or with whom one's ties of actual affinity are weak. The giver of disease, the cannibal, is one with whom one's relationship is unfulfilled reciprocity or, indeed, negative reciprocity. The relationship between actual affines who live together within the *itso'de* must not be modeled upon the relationship that held in mythic society between the two archetypical affines who were enemies of one another, Kuemoi, the guardian of water, and Wahari, the guardian of land. Safety with the actual affine is partially achieved through proper reciprocity, and it is for this reason that the marriage exchange among the Piaroa is firmly based upon a principle of reciprocity carried out through the serial and multiple repetition of affinal ties.

The Endogamous Marriage and Multiple Affinity

For the Piaroa, society itself comes into being through the dangerous association of dissimilar elements: both mythological history and cosmological ordering give this message. It is this understanding about the nature of things in the social world that the Piaroa do their best to ignore in their relationships within the *itso'de*. If the Piaroa were to use the mythic classification of the domains of land and water as the language for ordering their marriage exchange—as is the case in my earlier example of Northwest Amazon Indians—or, indeed, the distinction of "above" and "below" underlying their own moiety system, they would also be

making the overt statement that actual affines are creatures who are essentially different from one another and as such liable to devour each other. Thus, to ignore such divisions is one method of overriding the dangers of difference, of masking the very elements of which society consists, or, if you will, masking any dualism of which it must be comprised. The Piaroa are not willing to accept the implications forthcoming from the assumption of essential difference, and it is through their very strong ideal of endogamous marriage that they manage to understate the necessity of essential difference to social life within the local group. The most obvious device they use in ignoring difference toward the end of safety is marriage with a close or at least well-known relative within the house. This ideal of local group endogamy, so strongly stressed by most Guianese Amerindians, is but the other side of the coin of their equally emphasized fear of the stranger (see, for example, Rivière 1969, Henley 1979).

As noted in the section on *chawáruwang* ("my kinsman") and close *chawáruwang* marriage, close consanguines who do not marry into one's close kindred of birth are replaced by actual affines. It is through the application of a system of teknonymy that affines are transformed into close kinsmen, and all marriages thereby become endogamous ones; the empirical world is transformed to make it agree with the ideal (J. Kaplan 1972, 1975). The teknonym declares the father-in-law a consanguine to his son-in-law through their relationship to one another as traced through the younger man's child: they become respectively in relationship "grandfather of my child" and "father of my grandchild," while a spouse becomes related as "parent of my child."[26] The Piaroa themselves interpret their use of the teknonym system within the house as being a symbolic statement on its unity as a group of consanguines. Through it they are able to legitimize on a kinship basis, so as to make it congruent with their ideal model of endogamous marriage, any group composition founded upon a specific set of marriage exchanges, no matter how fleeting these alliances may be. Thus the larger houses among the Piaroa, within which dwell almost all of each member's conjugal kindred, frequently do at least on an ideological level approximate the ideal. The great fiction is, of course, that society as the isolated endogamous group that replicates itself through time (J. Kaplan 1972, 1973, 1975) becomes comprised of the association of "like" items, consanguines who are safe to one another, and not of dangerous "unlike" affines. Here we have with the Piaroa an interesting dialectic between society as an ideal world of endogamous kindreds and society that includes the wider whole: potential affines and political opponents.

The teknonym system, however, only proclaims kinship among same-sex affines when of different generations; in keeping with the horizontal

structuring of jural relationships within the house, a system based upon sets of same-generational affines, it still retains within it the same generational in-law relationship. "Brother-in-law" of male ego and "sister-in-law" of female ego become through the use of teknonyms "fathers-in-law" and "mothers-in-law" of ego's child.[27] The teknonym system thereby retains within it the crucial "marriage alliance" by focusing upon the marriage of ego's children rather than upon ego's own marriage, which was dealt with by the primary relationship terminology.[28] Because it retains within it elements of affinity, the teknonym system alone in its use as a classificatory device is not sufficient to the task of maintaining safety among affines of one's own generation: multiple marriage exchanges among such affines do make their relationship a safe one.

The endogamous marriage not only implies safety both by keeping everyone home with close relatives and by making fuzzy the distinction between "kin" and "affine" but also is the marriage reciprocated, for through it previous affinal ties within the group are reaffirmed. In Piaroa theory the more marriage exchanges enacted between two affines, the safer the relationship and the more unified the group as a unit of cognates. It is a type of marriage exchange found throughout the Guianas (Rivière 1969, Henley 1979, Arvelo-Jimenez 1971), where the viability of the affinal relationship, the political alliance, and the unity of the group are correlated with the number of marital exchanges established among men within the local group. In making such exchanges, all unmarried, dependent relatives of the men involved are fair game. A man may arrange the marriages of younger brothers and sisters, his daughters and sons, and young widowed relatives who dwell with him. In the process kinship ties are often re-reckoned, and as a result the marriages within the house become highly complex.

In theory, the reduplication of any affinal tie within the group—as when a set of brothers marries a set of sisters, a common Guianese practice—is a marriage both replicated and reciprocated, from the point of view of the group as a whole. Within an endogamous group a marriage tie does not need to be directly reciprocated as in brother/sister exchange: any marriage within the group is at least indirectly reciprocated, as in indirect exchange, insofar as every man within the group ideally receives a wife from within it. In one sense, through endogamous marriage, the very notion of marriage exchange, and not only its dangers, has been erased. Ironically, it is through the marriage exchange, especially the one re-enacted time and time again within the house, the gift continually returned, that differences are annulled and safety achieved. If one views reciprocity, as does Lévi-Strauss (1969:84), as the most immediate means of integrating the opposition between the self and

others, the Piaroa have through the endogamous marriage, where self and others are not only unified but become of a kind with one another, carried this principle to its logical extreme.

In that society itself for the Piaroa is equated with affinity, the coming together of unlike items (affines), endogamy becomes a philosophy of society for them, a "half-way point" that overcomes to a certain extent the dangers of the social state and the dictum that says that society can only exist by the coming together of different and dangerous elements (J. Kaplan 1981). In short, endogamy as an ideal expresses the Piaroa fear of the social state, thereby becoming a principle underlying a society suspicious of its own social nature.

Conclusion: Elementary Structures of Reciprocity

I think it possible to say in general of tropical forest Amerindians that their notions of proper and improper reciprocity entail a philosophy of the relationship of things that are the same and the relationship of things that are different;[29] from this perspective we can come to a clearer understanding of the proliferation of dualisms within these cultures, no matter what their content or how they are played out. We have among the Piaroa the cosmological expression of the conundrum, which I think very general to lowland South American Indians and of considerable importance to an understanding of certain ambiguities in the ordering of their social universes, that states the necessity of differences to social life in a world where the coming together of differences implies danger, while the conjoining of like elements implies safety and nonsociety, or antilife.

Both the Bororo and the Gê avert the dangers of social differentiation through elaborate ritual transactions between moieties, through which "ritual roads" are established between name sets (see, for example, J. Crocker 1979, da Matta 1979, Lave 1979, Melatti 1979). Through the ritual inversions common to these systems, where "I" becomes "other" and "other" becomes "I"—where the chief of one moiety is chosen from the other or the ritual representation of the totems of one moiety is acted out by the other—identity and difference between social categories become as blurred as through the endogamous marriage of the Guianas. In each of these societies the principles of exchange are to some extent principles of metaphysics, where the emphasis is not so much upon the attainment of a particular type of group formation but upon the achievement of proper relationships among beings of categories that are viewed as significantly different, but necessary to one another for society to exist. Whether these distinctions relate to the classificatory logic of names, to symbolic attributes of male and female, or as in the classic case, to

"kin" and "affines" or to the "marriageable" and the "unmarriageable" as implied by a prescriptive marriage rule, in each example such contrasts are employed in the elaboration of exchanges that are clearly "elementary" in form. As J. Crocker comments (1979:296-97) on the elaboration of structures among the Gê and the Bororo, categories founded on other sources of distinctions than those forthcoming from a prescriptive marriage rule "can possess precisely the same inexorable implications for social interaction which must express a logical model as the most rigidly prescriptive 'elementary structure.' " Instead of "elementary systems of kinship and marriage," we can speak more generally of "elementary structures of reciprocity," and thereby treat both Guianese Amerindian societies and those of central Brazil as so many examples of one basic structure.

The implications for Amerindian social life of the elementary structure of reciprocity ordering it is that society itself becomes a logic for maintaining a balance, a proper relationship among items in the universe that allows society to perpetuate itself. Reciprocity itself can thus be equally viewed as a particular mode of self-perpetuation. Finally, it can be added that for the individual the acting out of life as a social person within such a society is acting as well on a philosophical plane. Among Amerindians of lowland South America, society as social rules—or as social structure—cannot be clearly distinguished from cosmological rules and cosmological structure. For them the cosmological and the social form one multidimensional system, and whereas no one ordering can possibly unravel such a system, each aspect of it tends to give meaning to the next.

NOTES

1. See, for example, Dumont (1953a, 1953b). Also see Lounsbury (1968: n. 134) and Scheffler (1971, 1977), but see comments below.

2. Lounsbury (1968:n. 134) remarks that Dravidian-type systems are not generally "founded" on clan or moiety reckoning, and Scheffler (1971:233-34) comments that moieties or sections are not invariant structural features of societies with Dravidian-type kinship terminologies. Although Scheffler is quite correct in his insistence that such terminologies are not dependent upon dual organizations, he is incorrect in assuming that they are inconsistent with one. His reason is that male and female ego classify their joint offspring by the same term, but if a principle of patri- or matrifiliation or unilineality were *superimposed* upon the system, it would work perfectly well within the context of a moiety system; see, for example, below on the Piaroa mortuary clans, where husband and wife are separated after death, and siblings remain together. As Scheffler himself insists, the terminology is a flexible one with respect to jural rule. Needham (1973) makes the same point.

3. My research among the Piaroa throughout 1968 was financed by a grant from NIMH given to my husband, M. R. Kaplan. For six months of fieldwork with the Piaroa in 1977, my research was financed by several sources: SSRC grant HR5028; Central Research Funds of the University of London; London School of Economics Research Funds; Institute of Latin American Studies travel funds. The SSRC has also given me a research grant (HRP 6753) that has allowed me to rewrite and update this article. I warmly thank all of these institutions for their aid.

4. In 1968 the Piaroa political organization was intact; the migrations down to concentrated settlements along the lower reaches of their rivers began, with government encouragement, in the early 1970s.

5. Much of Piaroa ritual and taboo structure can be understood as an integral part of such a view of society. All ritual, such as the chants protecting against the diseases of the animals, eating ritual and food taboos, and hunting magic, is an attempt to maintain such balance through the prevention of the dangers to humans resulting from the interaction of categories—plants and animals, man and animals, kin and affines, humans and gods—that differ "essentially" one from the next.

6. In previous publications I have written *chawáruwang* as *chuwaruwang* (1972, 1973, 1975). After detailed work with dialect differences in 1977, I have decided that *chawáruwang* is preferable. As with most Piaroa nouns, *chawáruwang* is a possessed noun:

tü chawáruwang—my kinsman
uku kwawáruwang—your kinsman
chu awáruwang—his kinsman
yahu kwawáruwang—her kinsman
uhutü tawáruwang—our kinsman
ukutu kwawáruwang—your kinsman
hitu tawáruwang—their kinsman

There are three pronouns signifying "they": *nitu,* signifying men and women; *naetu,* signifying all women; and *unmaetu,* signifying all men. The suffix *ae* pluralizes *chawáruwang: chawáruwae.*

7. See Henley (1979:152-3) on the Panare term *Piyaka* ("another of the same kind"), which is very similar in use to the neighboring Piaroa's term *chawáruwang.* Its meaning is dependent upon context; it can refer to all who live within the same settlement as ego, or to primary kin. It is used in opposition to *tungonan,* "those of a different kind," e.g. those of other settlements or in-laws and potential spouses.

8. W. Crocker (1977) notes that the Eastern Timbira say that, over time and through physical contact, a husband and wife become more closely related in blood composition than either with their respective siblings. Many of the food restrictions and couvade practices of Amerindians, where parents must not eat certain foods for fear of harming the child, are explained by a belief in the physical and not necessarily jural or spiritual unity of those who share a common residence.

9. It should be stressed that in lowland South America corporate group structure is rarely based upon the ownership of scarce resources such as land or domesticated animals: the "corporate group" has no perpetuity over time as a property-holding unit. See J. Kaplan (1977a) and J. Crocker (1977).

10. See J. Kaplan (1972, 1975) on the Piaroa teknonym system, a relationship system that converts all affines, save the sibling-in-law, within the house into "kin."

11. Keesing (1972) also stresses the importance of context to the meaning of relationship terms, and makes the observation, with which I agree, that because formal analysis does not take into account such context, it is not speaking of "emic" meaning.

12. *Isapo* is third-person singular. All kinship terms are possessed nouns; the terms listed in Charts 1 and 2 are for first-person singular. The declension of *cha'o* ("my father") is as follows:

tü cha'o—my father
uku kuwae'o—your father
chu hae'o—his father
yahu kae'o—her father
uhutu tae'o—our father
ukutu kuwae'o—your father
hitü tae'o—their father

13. As various authors have noted (Rao 1973; Rivière 1966a, 1966b, 1969; Good 1980), "ZD" marriage and cross-cousin marriage are often enough associated, and with no terminological confusion; indeed, the former can well be congruent with a "symmetric prescriptive marriage rule."

14. Among the Trio (Rivière 1969) and the Pemon (Thomas 1979), where age difference between spouses is negligible, the "ZD" marriage is viewed with favor; with it, one sheds a "father-in-law" (WF = ZH), or at least the asymmetry of the father-in-law/son-in-law relationship that age difference between affines imply.

15. Such a focus is reflected in the teknonym system. Through its use ego converts affines of first ascending and first descending generations into kin; in contrast, by applying a teknonym to his sibling-in-law, ego stresses the affinal nature of his relationship to him (see J. Kaplan 1972 and the discussion of teknonyms below).

16. It might be added that far too little attention has been paid to the structural consequences of specific preferences associated with particular prescriptive rules (see J. Kaplan 1977a). Scheffler in his discussion of variation in preferences associated with Dravidian-type systems (1971:237) in effect dismisses the problem: having noted such variation, he states that it in itself "suggests that the presence of Dravidian-type systems of kin classification is not in the least dependent on the presence of any sort of marriage rule. . . ." What he is doing is confusing the rule with the preference. Needham (1973) states clearly that we must distinguish among terminological structure, prescriptive rule (jural rule), and behavior. It is equally clear that

we must differentiate between different types of jural rules (prescriptive and preferences), and then understand both the interplay among them and the interplay between jural rules and behavior (also see Keesing 1972).

17. Certainly it is the case that in many kinship systems consanguinity and affinity imply one another (see Dumont 1961:6, where he says for South Indians that kinship equals consanguinity plus affinity); thus one can use as base either to produce the other. See Wordick's reanalysis (1975) of the Siriono kinship terminology. Contrary to Scheffler's insistence that the use of lexical markers as described above for the Piaroa is proof of a structural "primary meaning" (Scheffler 1971:236; 1972:314-15), their use can just as well provide evidence that individuals think both ways; mother's brother is also father's affine. If one wishes to view the classification of distant relatives as "an extension out" from close relatives, the Piaroa "extend out" the terms *chisapo* and *chiminya* because the distant relatives are "affine-like," not because they are MBCh-like or MB-like.

18. As I have already noted, affine links are traced not through cross-sex sibling links but through same-sex affines; the former can just as well be seen, then, as epiphenomenal to the latter.

19. Keesing (1972:18) talks in a similar manner by suggesting that we understand the relations among kinship terms as having a "family resemblance . . . such that the relational pattern among features is preserved through a series of topological transformations."

20. Neither jaguar nor poisonous snakes are classified by the Piaroa as *dea ruwa,* or "jungle animals," the category to which the Piaroa themselves belong and a label of self-denomination used by them.

21. In other words, Kuemoi created all creatures and things dangerous to *dea ruwa,* creatures over whom Wahari is master.

22. It would be interesting to compare the inversions of this system—where Wahari and Kuemoi eat from domains that are not their own—with the inversions so characteristic of Gê and Bororo moiety systems (see especially Lave 1979, J. Crocker 1979).

23. Wahari is both son and grandson to the tapir/anaconda. Wahari's elder brother, Buok'a, was born within the crystal womb box of Ofo Da'ae and later withdrew his younger brother from his right eye with the help of Ofo Da'ae (see Figure 1).

24. Wahari grew up and, as already noted, was given knowledge within the earth in the land of Ofo Da'ae.

25. When a Piaroa is ill, the modern-day, as opposed to the mythic, master of animals is within him eating, as is the grandfather of the disease. Sorcery also is a process of eating: within the quartz stone the sorcerer shoots into the body of an enemy is an animal or an insect that eats the victim.

26. The teknonyms are always used in address for individuals within the house who have children, whether they are actual or classificatory affines.

27. Also in keeping with the emphasis upon the affinal nature of jural relationships of those in the same generation within the house, individuals related to male ego at WZH, who by the relationship terminology should be

within the category of "brother," are consistently addressed, if not an actual brother of ego's, as "brother-in-law." All other relationships are made congruent with the marriage (see J. Kaplan 1975). I wish to thank Jonathan Parry for discussing with me the analysis of the structure of affinity within Piaroa communal houses.

28. See J. Kaplan (1972, 1975).

29. See J. Kaplan (1981) for a similar discussion of "elementary structures of reciprocity."