

**Symbols of Trobriand Kinship**

**Gilbert H. Herdt**

**University of Washington**

**1 December 1972**

## INTRODUCTION

Trobriand kinship is of continuing interest. This paper is concerned with a cultural description of the rules of how persons and groups are defined as kin, from non-kin, in the Trobriands. Such rules stem from the meanings of three rather pervasive symbols in Trobriand culture which I have chosen to study: 'blood', 'spirit', and 'land'.

Published analyses of Trobriand kinship have in large measure been models which were based upon whatever ideas the analyst happened to think "kinship" was all about. For Malinowski, for example, "kinship" was the "social recognition of biological facts" (Schneider 1972: 46). The "basic facts" of Trobriand kinship--the nuclear family, marriage, sexual intercourse, incest, and so forth--were experienced in the "initial situation" of the family. Certain feelings and psycho-biological meanings became attached to the persons who are called by kin terms used in the family and extended into a person's wider social world.

In Leach's case (1958), Trobriand "kinship" is all about social categories of persons and groups who are related through common residence, economic affiliation, and a kind of spatial-temporal ecological patterning. Though Leach states that residential grouping, and the meaning of such grouping, is just as important a factor as genealogical affiliation and descent, his primary emphasis is placed on the genealogical grid (Leach 1958: 143). Trobriand kinship classification, with an emphasis upon statistically significant concrete behaviors, instead of jural rules, is his preoccupation.

Lounsbury's model of Trobriand kinship is concerned with working out the dimensions of the referent "types" of genealogical kin classifications. For Lounsbury, working out the rules for determining how persons are placed on the genealogical grid, is his goal. One of the problems with

Lounsbury's approach is that he assumes that a kin term has only one meaning, i.e., that it denotes either a primary or secondary referent "type". Of course Lounsbury admits that there may be other referents. But he claims that these are non-genealogical, and that they thus constitute kinship, or quasi-kinship rules which are still explained through the use of the grid.

None of these writers, Malinowski, Leach, or Lounsbury, have been interested in the symbolic or cultural domain of kinship. Each has had an essential concern with the social and cultural biology of "kinship". The representation of the meanings of what comprises kin, versus, non-kin rules, have therefore been defined a priori in these studies of Trobriand "kinship". This is because each of the analysts has had a predominant concern with the "bio-genetic premises of a genealogical grid" (Schneider 1972: 37). Genealogical concerns are based, ultimately, on the belief that "kinship" is really about the facts of this single aspect of the system, and no others. Thus symbols, which may relate to definitions of persons and groups as kin, distinguished from non-kin, are ignored, for the most part.

The analysis of symbols which follows, is primarily intended to reveal how a cultural domain of "kinship" can be carved out of the vast complexity of material surrounding Trobriand culture as a whole. The level of analysis which is of concern in the description is, consequently, that of cultural rules or norms. Such rules are derived from, and represented in, the actual behavior of persons in interaction. But, actual behavior, defining the statistical instances of adherence to norms, is not the concern in this paper. The rules which stem from the meanings of symbols of various contexts, and usages, in Trobriand culture, are the focus of my account.

I claim that the construction of meaningful rules or

norms out of these pervasive symbols, can be demonstrated to culturally define certain persons, and groups of persons as kin, as distinguished from non-kin in the Trobriands. A Trobriand kinship construct is thus an adequate summary of how certain symbols combine from the widest context of Trobriand culture, to structure interaction, and produce meaning in terms of the "kinship factor" in relationships of groups, and persons.

## I. The symbol 'blood'

Blood is an important symbol in Trobriand culture. It represents a way in which people relate to each other as persons and as members of social groups. Consanguineally derived relations are spoken of in reference to one's mother (ina). A mother is said to feed an infant inside her body with blood. After it is born, she feeds the infant with the milk of her breasts. "The mother makes the child out of her blood." Thus it follows that "brothers and sisters are of the same flesh because they are of the same mothers" (malinowski 1929:4, 204; 1965: 36). "Same flesh" seems to mean therefore, that a mother feeding her children through her blood and milk creates the flesh of her offspring. They share in the same flesh.

The role which a father (tama) plays in the creation of children is believed to be much different than that of the mother. In certain contexts--particularly formal occasions when matters of land and other property are being discussed--the procreative power of the father is denied (Powell 1956: 277-8). Father is more properly defined as "husband of my mother" (Malinowski 1929: 6). The role of the father as genitor is consequently played down in formal situations, but as we shall see, a father is necessary in certain ways in order to legitimize relations based upon the symbol of blood.

Though a father supposedly, in the Trobriand view, plays no role as genitor in conception, the father does influence the development and growth of a foetus. A father is said to remove the physiological obstacle preventing the supernatural impregnation of a woman by a spirit (baloma). The father does this by opening and loosening the mother's vagina during intercourse. The idea seems to be that regular intercourse with a woman allows the supernatural impregnation to occur. Myth seems to symbolize this idea.

In the most important Trobriand myth, a woman, called Mitigis or Bolutukwa, mother of the legendary hero Tudava,

lives quite alone in a grotto on the seashore. One day she falls asleep in her rocky dwelling, reclining under a dripping stalactite. The drops of water pierce her vagina, and thus deprive her of virginity. Hence her second name, Bolutukwa: bo, female, prefix litukwa, dripping water. (Malinowski 1929: 182).

This myth seems to emphasize several ideas which are related to the beliefs surrounding intercourse and conception. One is that repeated actions, like dripping water, and intercourse, serve to allow for impregnation. The second idea is that men are not necessary for conception; a "natural" process--like dripping water--serves quite as well to "open the way" for the spirit.

The father also contributes to conception because repeated intercourse acts to stop-up the flow of menstrual blood, pushing it into the head of a woman. The stopping-action is performed by the repeated insertion and "pounding action" of the penis of a man in his wife. This action is compared by the Trobrianders to the pounding of betel nut with a mortar, producing a red decorative juice (Austin 1934: 102). Blood is stopped-up in the woman's head, whereupon a reincarnated spirit is placed in her head. Then an "effusion of blood" occurs, flowing in the head and down into the abdomen (Malinowski 1929: 174). It is the movement of blood which carries the spirit on its tide into the womb that represents impregnation. Blood therefore nourishes the child and builds its body, which is the reason why the stoppage of the menstrual flow tells a mother that she is pregnant: the foetus is "consuming" this blood, so to speak (Malinowski 1929: 174-5, Austin 1934: 109).

"Pregnancy is first diagnosed by the swelling of the breasts and the darkening of the nipples" (Malinowski 1929: 211). About mid-pregnancy, the abdomen becomes enlarged and a sexual taboo is imposed upon the woman and her husband. The taboo is rigorously observed since it is believed that the "penis would kill the child" (1929: 212, 228). A woman moves to the house of her parents or mother's brother, and her husband attends to her while

she is waiting to have the child. Trobrianders say that one of the reasons that a husband stays near his wife at this time is to keep her mind off of sexual relations with all men. We may speculate consequently, that one reason that an unwed mother is considered unfortunate is that she does not have a husband to keep her mind off of sexual thoughts. Some other man, perhaps her father or brother, must of necessity fill in, which creates difficulties, as we shall later see.

The birth of a child occurs after a woman has been living with her husband for some months, and a spirit enters her head. The child spirit (waywaya) is a reincarnated member of the same groups of blood kin as that of the mother.<sup>1</sup> The spirit who helps the child along however, is a spirit of either the mother or father of the pregnant woman. It is first seen in a dream of the expectant mother (Malinowski 1929: 211).

It is important to understand the role which spirits play in the birth of children. In making the transition from being spirits, to being child spirits, a rejuvenation process occurs. Spirits, all of whom live on the island of Tuma in its underground world, decide to join the world of the living once again. Thus it is believed that when spirits decide to return to the infant state, they must first bathe in sea water, and following this, they enter the sea and drift as spirit children to the shores of the Trobriands. These spirit children are often times spoken of as floating on logs, seaweed, and other debris on the ocean surface. Here is Malinowski's account of such beliefs:

Tomwaya Lakwabulo (an informant) says: 'At night I hear them wailing. Malinowski asks, 'What is it?' 'Oh children, the tide brings them in, they come.' Once here, "A spirit sees it (the child spirit) is good looking. She takes it. She is the spirit of the mother or father of the pregnant woman (nasusuma). Then she puts it on the head or in the hair of the pregnant woman, who suffers headache, vomits, and has an ache in the belly. Then the child comes down into the belly, and she is really pregnant. (Malinowski 1929: 172-3).

Since there are two spirits involved in the supernatural impregnation, it is reasonable to ask which is the "real cause" of

of childbirth, the spirit child or the spirit? According to Malinowski, a child born by a woman is said to be "given by the spirit (baloma). The spirit child is thought to have some will of its own in the process, but it does not seem possible, in my view, to say anything more about this on the basis of the available literature (Malinowski 1929: 174). It is possible to add a footnote however. It is clear that the spirit has a definite and active role in impregnating a woman. The spirit child is either not as autonomous or is more passive. A related belief confirms this idea. Spirit children can be "captured" sometimes. Wooden pales, which are filled with sea water, are sometimes placed overnight in the hut of a woman who wishes to conceive. The child spirit, if it happened to have been drifting on the water at the time, is thus "caught". But such water, it is important to note, is certain not to contain a child spirit unless it is fetched by either the woman's brother or mother's brother (Malinowski 1929: 176). Such an active intervention in the supernatural realm of a woman's conception, is directly opposed to any intervention or participation in her actual sexual affairs or marriage by either her brother or other maternal kin.

Thus far I have concentrated on the role of a woman in the formation of a child, and the contribution of the spirits in the impregnation. The role which the father plays in the development and maturation of the child must now be examined, to see in what terms the father is defined.

Though a father plays no formal role in creating the flesh and blood of the child, he does play a formal role in "moulding" the physique of the child. People say that the children of a man's wife should physically resemble him. (Malinowski 1929: 204). On the other hand it is considered to be unpardonable bad manners to tell a man he resembles his mother, sisters or brothers, and generally, any maternal kin. The principle explanation given in Trobriand formal dogma is that as a father lies with one's mother and the couple sit together, the child is "moulded" in the image



of the father. Again, it is believed that the child's body is "warmed by the father's body" (Austin 1934: 112). A father's repeated actions of copulating with the child's mother, and loving and caring for the child, are said to also "coagulate the face of the child" (Malinowski 1929: 204). The physical resemblance which develops between the child and its father is not transitory but permanent, just as the flesh and blood which the child is formed of remains a permanent part of the child.

Thus, after a man's death, his kinsmen and friends will come from time to time to visit his children in order to "see his face in theirs". They will give them presents, sit looking at them and wailing. (Malinowski 1929: 207)

Physical resemblance thus seems to be based upon the regular cohabitation of a man and a woman, in addition to the couple spending a great deal of time together. But physical resemblance derives from the fact that because a man holds an exclusive sexual relationship with a woman, he also holds definite obligations of loving and caring for her children. Such acts seem to physically mold the appearance of a child.

Though mother's blood is believed to unite siblings, and physical appearance derives from the mother's husband, it is insulting to link these two ideas together in reference to someone. For example, it is insulting to say of a man that he resembles his mother, brothers or sisters, or generally anyone related by blood to him through his mother, as previously stated. This is called "To-defile-by-comparing-a-kinsmen-to-his-face" (taputaki migila) (Malinowski 1929:205). It is considered both bad language and insulting to say, for example, "thy face thy sister's". Such an insult would have necessitated either a fight between the two men so involved, or suicide on the part of the insulted man (a woman would never be thus wronged) (Malinowski 1929: 486-7).

It is clear that Trobrianders place a great deal of importance in keeping strictly separated the ideas of shared flesh and blood, which are gained from one's mother, and physical resemblance, which is gained from one's father. In order to understand how these

ideas are used to differentiate kin from non kin on the basis of the symbol 'blood', it will be necessary to turn to the cohabitation of men and women in marriage. This will enable us to further define the roles of mother, father, son, and daughter, and the relationships between the persons occupying such roles.

A "legitimate union" of a man and a woman as husband and wife creates a cohabitation group in the Trobriands. "Legitimate union" means, in Trobriand culture, that two sweethearts or lovers (lubaygu) "sleep together" (imisiya) with each other enduringly and forever. Sleeping together is much different than having "mere intercourse" (kayta), or adulterous relations (Malinowski 1929: 68, 501). Malinowski's discussion of morality makes this clear:

The use of this verb ("to sleep together") also emphasizes the lawfulness of the relation, for it is used in talking of sexual intercourse between husband and wife or of such relations as the speaker wishes to discuss seriously and respectfully. An approximate equivalent in English would be "cohabit". (1929: 68)

Legitimate cohabitation based upon the symbol of sleeping together or having regular sexual relations, thus binds people together in a cohabitation group, which in anthropological terms may be glossed a conjugal-natal family. The sexual relations between a husband and wife are rather formally structured in Trobriand culture, in a sense. Before marriage, the sexual pleasure which a man receives from his lovers is on each occasion repaid with some small "gift". When the couple decide to marry, they receive the consent of each of their families, whereupon they cohabit for a night in the house of the man's father. After this act, the terms husband (mwala) and wife (kwava) are used by the cohabiting partners as reciprocal terms of address. Marriage changes their sexual relationship in that the sexual pleasures which a man receives are no longer repaid in small "gifts" but rather in terms of certain services which the husband performs for his wife and her children (latu).

What are the functions of marriage and cohabitation in défin-

ing the nature of what kind of persons wife and mother, and husband and father, are in the Trobriands? Marriage, first of all, legitimizes the adult statuses of men and women. For a man, marriage confers full adult status in three ways. It gives him exclusive sexual access to a woman; it establishes his household, and confers responsibilities, such as caring for his wife's children; and finally, it confers substantial material benefits (Malinowski 1929: 80, 93). In the case of a woman, her role as a mother and procreator of offspring is legitimized because she is the wife, or regular sexual partner, of her husband. Before marriage, despite having sexual freedom, a woman cannot bear children, for example, who would be accepted as her legitimate offspring in the same way that they would if she were cohabiting with a man. This raises the question of how legitimacy in children is defined.

Marriage legitimizes the status of the offspring of a woman. Legitimacy is a concern to Trobrianders, and a clear distinction is made between whether a boy is a "real young man" (to'ulatile), being the offspring of a cohabitation couple, or simply a bastard (tokubukwabuya) (Malinowski 1965: 202). The defining criteria for legitimacy seems to be first, the presence of a mother's husband, and second, the kinds of, and enduring nature of the services which the father carries out for the child. Marriage also legitimizes the status of children in an important manner which is linked to the presence of the father. A man and his wife receive "harvest gifts" (urigubu) of produce from the wife's brother. Such gifts are received by a woman's husband, and are the very basis for the provision of his household. He feeds his children and wife from this produce year around. Thus, if a child is born into a fatherless home, his mother cannot really have a household, nor can she formally be supplied with yams from a "harvest gift", since this is a contractual payment that legitimizes the marriage of a couple.

In very definite ways, the legitimacy of children is dependent upon the role which the father enacts in the household. In so

many contexts, the dogma that a man cares for his children seems to play a part in the definition of persons in the Trobriands. It is important to enquire, therefore, into the nature of the duties and rights which bind a father to his children in his own household, not forgetting that such social ties are said to stem from the fact of the sexual relationship between husband and wife: the husband performs his obligations to his wife's offspring as repayment for her sexual services.

A specific duty which a man holds in respect to his wife's children is nursing the baby (kopo'i) by holding it in his arms and loving it (Malinowski 1929: 20). Another duty is giving food to the children: "Always we give food from our hand to eat, we give fruit and dainties, we give betel nut. This makes the child as it is." (Malinowski 1929:208) A particularly burdensome duty, one considered repugnant in Trobriand culture, is the continuous handling of the child's excrement when it is small (Malinowski 1929: 201, 444; 1965:206).

A father commonly provides certain "gifts" to his children. The knowledge of certain magic is believed to be given by fathers to their sons, for example, even though such a transmission violates the rule that such knowledge should only be given to one's maternal nephew, or other blood kin. A father also provides some of the gifts of valuables which a boy gives to his wife's family at the time of their marriage. In respect to his daughter, a man has an obligation to monitor her sexual affairs, and to help in arranging her marriage.

To review the facts of legitimacy in children, the father's role is extremely important in **two areas**. In respect to the role of wife and mother, a husband's presence is crucial. In cohabitation, fertility is considered good. In unwed women, fertility is unwelcome (Malinowski 1929: 200). If a birth in a fiancé occurs before the act of sleeping together in a man's father's house, engagements are sometimes broken off. And men are known not to like to marry unwed mothers. If a woman does

become pregnant out of wedlock, the pregnancy ritual is confounded and shortened in some respects. (Malinowski 1929: 234). Second, in respect to children, a mother's husband is necessary to render specific services to them. He does so out of obligation to his wife, who extends sexual pleasures to him. Such services mold the physique of the child, in addition to helping him or her along in later social maturation.

It is important to note that although the cohabitation group is itself created by the sexual relationship of the husband and wife, no other members of the group may engage in sexual intercourse with one another. Such sexual intercourse would be considered very wrong, or supernaturally and legally wrong, or both. In the latter case, certain sexual relationships are said to violate "exogamous taboos" (suvasova), which are legally and supernaturally sanctioned, as we shall see.

There are actually two separate principles working to prohibit relationships of this kind within the cohabitation group, other than that of husband and wife.

One principle working to prohibit sexual relationships within the cohabitation group other than between husband and wife, stems from the rules which define "legitimate cohabitation". A rule of marriage pertains to sexual monogamy. Those who are married cannot legally or morally have intercourse with someone other than their spouse. Such sexual relationships would violate the exclusive sexual rights which each spouse holds over the other. Extra-marital relationships are thus "mere fornication", and they constitute adultery. The sexual relationship between a father, and his wife's daughter, is defined as the only kind of adultery which can occur in a cohabitation group of a husband and wife, and a son and daughter.

Sexual intercourse between a mother's husband and a mother's daughter is prohibited, therefore, for two reasons. The first is that such a liaison would violate the principle of cohabitation, since a man would be engaging in an extra-marital affair. A man is not related to his daughter through blood, but through

marriage, and the relationship is legally adulterous because it is extra-marital in nature. This holds whether the daughter is of a man's marriage, or a former marriage of his wife's. The second reasons makes the relationship not only illegal, but immoral as well. It has to do with the way in which the roles of father, and daughter are defined in cultural terms. A father has, above all, to care and love his wife's daughter when she is small, by taking her into his arms and nursing her, while when she is older, he must watch over her sexual and marital relationships. Thus it is very wrong for a man to become sexually involved with his wife's daughter, though such a relationship does not violate "exogamous taboos" (Malinowski 1929: 530; 1965: 206).

A second principle working to prohibit sexual relationships within the cohabitation group has to do with how ties of blood relate people. People who are actually related as blood kin--brother, sister, and mother in the cohabitation group--find it unnatural and "horrible" to have any sexual involvement with each other. This holds for both son and mother (latu and ina), as well as brother and sister (bwada, younger, tuwa, older, brother, luta, sister). However, a qualitative difference exists between prohibitions of sexual relationships between these persons. Between a sister and brother on the one hand, all mention of sex and any sexual experiences is regarded with "horror". One might almost say that this is the most structured, and monitored relationship in the Trobriands. A relationship of a sexual nature between brother and sister is certainly the most heinous and damnable crime known. On the other hand, mention of sex between a boy and his mother is not considered improper, and avoidance is not as strict in sexual matters as between a boy and his sister. Nonetheless, a strict prohibition exists which defines sexual union as less horrible, but still a crime, when it occurs between a boy and his mother. Both sister/brother, and mother/son, sexual relationships are violative of "exogamous taboos", in the very worst sense.

In sum, a man and woman who sleep together are married, and they form the nucleus of a cohabitation group. A woman and her children are tied by blood and flesh. A man and his wife's children are tied by the fact that their mother sleeps with her husband, who consequently has rights and duties regarding them. All other extra sexual relationships within the family are wrong, and also a breach of "exogamous taboos", in the case of those who share blood. Such prohibited sexual relationships comprise an inversion of norms therefore, violating either the discreetness of the cohabitation group, or the "cohabitation unit" of blood.

Thus far I have been discussing the importance of the symbol 'blood' for the relationships of a woman and her children, and the children and their mother's husband. Ties of blood and marriage link these people together as a group. But relationships are established beyond these which define persons as kin on the basis of 'blood', differentiating them from others. The idiom of relationship seems to stem from those relationships which are established in the cohabitation group on the basis of marriage, and blood. Such a wider category of blood relationships is denoted by the word veyola.

Veyola is best translated "true kinsmen", maternal kinsmen "with whom one is incorporated" (Malinowski 1929: 495; Powell 1969: 199). For our purposes, I shall use the discreet phrase, "true kin".

"True kin" are people who are related through the symbol of 'blood', in either a specific or diffuse sense. Such a category includes, first of all, the "cohabitation unit" of a woman, and her children, as these are defined by virtue of "same flesh and blood". These persons are part of the cohabitation group, but they share among themselves ties of blood, according to Trobriand belief, which are not shared with the wife's husband. Instead, a woman's brother, along with the woman and her children, form a unit which is a culturally defined entity. It is a unit based

on the cohabitation group. Both the brother and his sister share a tie of blood based on their relationship to their mother and her husband, while the sister shares a tie of blood with her own offspring in respect to her marriage. For the persons who are defined as part of this unit are not a group in that they do not reside together, and in fact must avoid each other in certain ways. But the unit is culturally meaningful, being a primary unit of the ways in which people relate, and symbolize, their kin of blood, their "true kin". The second group who are defined as "true kin" comprise the lineage. The third group of "true kin" is the dala. These last two groups will be discussed in terms of the symbol of "blood".

The first group of "true kin" is the lineage. By lineage I mean a group of people who can actually specify their blood relationships to one another through the female line to a specified ancestress; they recognize themselves as a discreet, property holding group. Such a group is a cultural and social reality, and it is what people refer to as "own village", or "simple village" (Powell 1956: 34; Malinowski 1929: 7). A lineage denotes a living compound where people are actually domiciled. It also denotes the place where rights, both of land ownership and tenure, and of "full citizenship" in a political sense, are held by a man. The idea of "full citizenship" is significant, since it probably means that a man is, for all seasons, a landed citizen and not a stranger (tomakava), as he is in his wife's village (Malinowski 1929: 7). Consequently, a lineage is comprised of one's "natural allies", and closest blood kin, i.e., those derived from the same mother or set of mothers. It is interesting to note that there exists both "senior" and "junior" lineages (Malinowski 1965: 345-6), although to my knowledge, no criteria have been specified as to how such "seniority" is defined.

The second group of "true kin", the dala, plays a primary role in differentiating kin from non-kin on a wider scale. Fol-



lowing Powell, Malinowski, Leach, and Fatheur, I shall gloss this term subclan. By subclan, I mean a group whose members are descended from a mythical ancestress through female lines of blood relationships, but who cannot actually specify their blood ties to one another beyond the generations of their grandfathers or great-grandfathers. Typically, persons are not very interested, it seems, in working out their actual blood connections to one another. They are usually content to identify themselves as "true kin" by saying, for example, that they are members of the Tabalu subclan.

The unity of a subclan is sometimes discussed in reference to the imagery of the body, or a tree. The members of a subclan hold the fertility of their women to be good, after these women are married. So for example, people say "The kinsmen rejoice, for their bodies become strong when one of their sisters or nieces has plenty of children." (Malinowski 1929: 200). At the death of a subclansman moreover, people are said to be hit in their "own persons"; "each one suffers because the whole subclan to which they belong has been maimed by the loss of one of its members. 'As if a limb were cut off, or a branch lopped from a tree'." (Malinowski 1929: 150) Here it seems that one of the things which is being expressed is a sameness of body, which in part at least derives from a shared relationship of blood with others of a subclan.

Let us examine a few of the main features of a subclan group which unites its members as "true kin".

First, a subclan is comprised of many cohabitation groups, and lineage groups. Though the husbands of the women of the cohabitation groups, for example, are very important in legitimizing the relationships, and nature of the cohabitation group, they are considered strangers in the subclan. The persons who comprise a subclan are thus related to each other, in some cases as being related through actual ties of flesh and blood, i.e., a mother and her offspring, while in others a tie of blood is held more diffusely, as when people might say "We of the Tabalu subclan." Such relationships, in the latter case, are those

of "true kin" in the widest sense.

Second, as I have already said, people share a subclan name. Along with such names attaches a certain rank, which becomes a part of the ascribed social status of the members of the subclan.

Third, people share in rights to lands which are corporately identified with the subclan group. The "charter" for such rights is established by myth. Such myths relate how a brother and sister--children of the subclan ancestress--emerged from an "origin hole" on the actual lands identified with the subclan.<sup>3</sup> Village sites, garden and forest lands, water holes, and beaches or lagoon waters are claimed through such "charters". What happens as a consequence is that many persons of the subclan group are localized in a single territory. If a man is a member of the subclan group however, he holds inalienable rights of use of its property, irrespective of where he may actually live. Such rights are based on his being a "true kinsmen" by blood.

The fourth feature of the subclan is the existence of some commonly held subclan responsibilities or obligations. One of these is the responsibility of providing land, and in some cases, yams, in order that the men of the subclan can meet their "harvest gift" obligations. (Powell 1969: 581, 586).

The fifth feature of the subclan, is that a common fund of what I shall call "magical resources" are shared. Such resources, in the form of magical knowledge of spells, chants, songs, esoteric knowledge of myth, and ritual, for example, is passed down in the line of one's mother, from mother's brother to maternal nephew. Such magic is intimately bound up in belief with the fertility of the lands, and control of their environment.

The sixth feature of the subclan is associated with adoption practices. Differences can be drawn, as we would expect, between whether a child is "real or true child", or "borne and brought forth", on the one hand, and "given" by some other

women, on the other hand (Powell 1969: 192). Adopted children remain within their subclan, and "No formal transference of rights or change of status in terms of subclan membership" seems to occur. Apparently children may be adopted by people who are classified in the category tabu to them, but here again changes in formal status, subclan membership, and rights to land use do not alter (Powell 1969: 192-5).

The final feature of the subclan possessing importance has to do with leadership. Leadership is based upon inheritance of certain offices, like that of a chief, which is based upon who is the eldest man of the senior lineage in a subclan (Malinowski 1965:346). The chief takes a leading role in uniting the subclan in war and feuds, and in organizing allocation of garden lands, and the funerals of subclan members. Other positions of leadership, as for example the garden magician, are quite dependent on the magical knowledge transmitted from a father to his son, and a maternal uncle to his nephew. Performance of ritual is a very important factor in being legitimized as a garden magician however, so it would seem that a tie of blood to one's maternal uncle, allowing one to be his apprentice in working on one's subclans lands, would be the most effective way of gaining entry into such a position.

At the level of the subclan, it is meaningful to discuss marriage and sexual prohibitions. A bond of "true kinship" unites members of a subclan, and actual ties of shared blood and flesh also unite persons belonging to lineages, and the composite membership of cohabitation units. I showed how persons who are members of cohabitation groups are prohibited from having sexual relationships, other than a husband and his wife. I further demonstrated that two principles, one of "legitimate cohabitation", and the other of blood relationships, makes such sexual unions either immoral, illegal, and a breach of "exogamous tabbos", or all three of these things.

The two principles of sexual and marriage prohibition which

were discovered to operate within the cohabitation group, can also be said to hold at the subclan level as well. This is because relationships of blood are defined, in terms of being "true kin", as encompassing everyone who by right of birth belongs to the subclan. Consequently, all marriages of subclan members necessarily involve the setting up of affinal relationships with everyone who is a blood kinsmen, a kinsmen who is "true", which means every subclan member. I can illustrate this point by examining how people refer to one another if they hold ties of blood or marriage.

All of the women belonging to one's subclan are denoted by the terms for either mother or sister or child, male speaking (see chart 1). In the generation of one's parents, all women are called mother (including the wife of one's maternal uncle, who is not a subclan member). Mother is also the term which is applied in respect to the women of father's generation in his subclan also, with one exception: father's sister, who is called tabu. The women of a man's own generation, in both his mother's and his father's subclans, are called either daughter or sister, with one exception. This is a man's father's sister's daughter, who is called tabu, just as her mother is called. The people of a man's children's generation are all called either child or mother's brother (sister's daughter's children). Finally, the people of his children's children's generation are all called tabu, except for his sister's son's children, who are called child.

Trobriand kinship terminology is therefore of the well known "Crow type". It possesses variations of rules which make it distinctively Trobriand, as for example the way in which the "merging rule" groups persons together. Consanguineals kin types are classified according to the rules of the "Crow system", in many parts of the world. But affinal kin types are not. A man's brother's wife is classified with his brother, instead of his own wife. And a woman's sisters husband is classified with her

sister instead of with her brother, as in other "Crow systems" (Lounsbury 1965: 160-1).

From a male ego's point of view, all women in his own subclan, except for "own" sister's daughter's daughter, and his maternal grandmother, are prohibited as legitimate sexual or marriage partners according to the kin terms which apply to them, and the rules of behavior which define the terms. Through the rules of "true kin", symbolized by shared blood, those held in the relationships of sister, both "own" and classificatory, are prohibited. The same holds for maternal uncle's wife, who is called by his same term of reference (kada). Women who are called mother, either "own" or classificatory, are also prohibited. Intercourse between a man and any of these women is considered a breach of "exogamous taboo", and certain kinds of sanctions are attached to violators. Thus, intercourse between a man and his mother's brother's daughter is strongly disapproved, and it is considered a serious breach of "exogamous taboos" since both of these persons would belong to the same lineage, subclan, and clan.<sup>4</sup> Intercourse with one's classificatory sister (luguta) is also considered a breach of "exogamous taboos", and supernatural penalties apply to violations, as in other cases of the breakage of such rules. (Supernatural sanctions are defined later.)

Again, from a male ego's point of view, certain relationships based upon the rules of the cohabitation group are considered wrong, and are strongly disapproved, although they are not considered a violation of "exogamous taboos". Women who are in the relationship of daughter to a man, for example, are prohibited as marriage or sexual partners within the cohabitation group. The rules which were found to exist earlier in defining such a relationship as disapproved, hold at the subclan level in any relationships where a man calls a woman daughter, either "own" daughter of his wife, or classificatory. To reaffirm the point made above about the relationships of a man and his wife's sister, they are considered strongly disapproved

and are prohibited, though supernatural sanctions are not applicable because "exogamous taboos" are not involved. Sexual relationships between a man and his wife's sister, are illegal and immoral, in one way in which a sexual relationship between a man and his wife's daughter are illegal and immoral: they violate the nature of the exclusive sexual relationship between a husband and wife, and therefore constitute adulterous relationships. (Lounsbury 1965: 160). Intercourse with one's mother-in-law is disapproved for similar reasons.

In an inverse way, the rules which define "exogamous taboos" specify that relationships with only one category, persons who are tabu, are right and legitimate. Women (+1, 0, -1, generations) who are called tabu, share neither blood ties, membership in any "true kin" groups, or cohabitation groups, with a man. In terms of marriage consequently, a right and "lawful" marriage is preferred, as a rule, between a man and his father's sister's daughter. Sexually speaking, both this woman, and her mother are both said to be legitimate partners, and a boy is said to first copulate with his father's sister. (Malinowski 1929: 534-5). Marriage or sexual relations with mother's brother's daughter on the other hand, are strongly immoral; and a breach of "exogamous taboos", for the before-given reasons.

In summary, the sexual and marital relationships which are legitimately right for a man to engage in are only with women of the category tabu. I shall therefore translate this term "eligible person".

Those relationships between persons which are prohibited, either morally and legally, and those which are in addition sanctioned by "exogamous taboos", define all relationships between persons who are "true kin". Thus all relationships of this nature are prohibited within a subclan, and its constituent lineages, and cohabitation groups, and units. Women within the subclan are prohibited as sexual partners (on +1, 0, and -1 generations). All others outside of it, not sharing a tie of

spirit, are eligible. But one's father's sister's daughter is most eligible, for reasons, which we shall later see, stem from land relationships.

Two categories of persons thus exist, those who are prohibited and those who are eligible. What mediates the rules governing the relationships between a man, and women of either of these categories are "exogamous taboos". Such "taboos" are in one way, derived from the symbol 'blood', because those who are related as "true kin" of blood, are expected to behave in ways which are culturally approved, or coded. Thus relations between persons, and groups are generated from the cultural premises of "who is who, and how do I act towards him?", in the sphere of kin defined relations based on blood.

## II. The symbol 'spirit'

A second fundamental symbol through which people differentiate kin from non-kin is spirit. In Trobriand culture, diffuse but enduring relationships of two kinds, between persons and groups, are based on the symbol of spirit. By spirit, I mean a recognized and meaningful bond of a mystical or supernatural origin. Such ties based upon the symbol of spirit also overlap with ties of blood, as these were defined in the last section. But this is not necessarily true, as we shall see.

The singular unit of Trobriand culture which is defined in terms of spirit, and nothing else, is the kumila. A kumila is best translated as clan, or matriclan. By clan, I mean a unit of people who maintain a fiction of common descent through females back to a mythical ancestress of totemic nature. Unlike subclans, clans do not constitute groups in a social sense, and property, particularly land, is not held in common. Clansmen do not reside together either.

In Trobriand culture, there exists four clans into which men and all of the cosmos are divided. The generality of clan units is such that newcomers into the Trobriand universe are expected

to classify themselves. Each clan is comprised of numerous subclans, lineages, and cohabitation groups, and the symbol of spirit unites all members of the same clan as kakaveyogu (Malinowski 1929: 495-6, 501). I will gloss this term "kin of spirit", or spirit kin.

Persons who share ties of spirit are culturally defined in several ways. One is through a totemic ancestress, and associated set of plant and animal totems inherited at birth thru one's mother (Malinowski 1965: 36). Another attribute, but of a rather vague nature (at least in the way it is discussed in the literature), is the rank which attaches to the names of clans which of course has a basis in myth. Such myth tells how the order of rank in clans is based on the order of emergence of the totem animals from the underworld (Malinowski 1948: 111-3).

In terms of the actual significance of clans in Trobriand culture, it appears that ties of spirit become most important at times of death. For example, those members of other clans who are participating in the mortuary ritual of a deceased clansmen, express "serious faces", do not publicly wail, nor show any other sign of mourning. All persons of other clans blacken their bodies, shave their heads, and publicly wail. The idea seems to be that clansmen of the deceased are so deeply affected by his loss, particularly his "true kin", that it touches the very substance of themselves, as if part of their bodies had died. On the other hand, the cultural fact that people are not supposed to resemble their kin, and should in fact play down public expressions of feeling for such persons, may be at work here. (Malinowski 1929: 347)

A term which seems to be used in referring to all persons with whom one shares ties of spirit is luguta. The term can be applied irrespective of the sex of the speaker to a member of the opposite sex in the same clan. Malinowski states that luguta, "In its widest and metaphorical sense is frequently used



in magical formulae when such things as a blight or a disease are to be exorcised". Thus, the widest metaphoric meaning of the term is "tabooed persons or things", and it becomes the defining character of relationships between these "brothers and sisters of spirit" (Malinowski 1929: 519).

The metaphorical definition of "tabooed person" brings into relief a pervasively opposing category, "eligible person" (tabu). Within the first category, all persons are "brothers and sisters of spirit" belonging to the same clan, and possibly the same "true kin" groups of blood. All sexual and marital relations between spirit kin are prohibited as a breach of "exogamous taboos". In the second category, as I pointed out in the previous section, there exists all "eligible persons", i.e., those whom one can marry or have sexual intercourse with.

The category of spirit kin, defining persons as "tabooed" to each other, is therefore comprised of two subcategories. And a clear distinction is made in terms of how one relates to the persons of each of these subcategories on the interpersonal level of address (Malinowski 1929: 501). The first are called kakaveyola, or spirit kin, while the second are called veyola, or "true kin" (Malinowski 1929: 501, 514). Persons in both subcategories share a tie of spirit, but those in the second subcategory share a blood tie in addition.

We can gain a clearer understanding of what the general category of "tabooed persons" means, by focusing on how spirit kin are differentiated from "true kin".

The relationship of a man to his "sister of spirit" is a diffuse but enduring one. It is based on the belief that both the man and the woman are the descendants of a totemic clan ancestress. It is also based on the belief that both persons are the product of mothers who were impregnated by spirits of deceased members of the same clan. Spirits achieve their reincarnation in the persons of the man and the woman.

A "brother and sister of spirit" therefore, recognize them-

selves as being spiritually related to each other. Males and females who are spirit kin can associate and fraternize with each other in a way which men and women who are "true kin" cannot. This is because a man doesn't have any special claims over a "spirit sister", nor is he the "head" of her household, (as her "own" brother is supposed to be). In addition, a "brother and sister" related through spirit need not strictly avoid each other in any situations, particularly sexual ones.

Even though a much more casual relationship may exist between a "brother and sister of spirit" than, say, others who are "brother and sister" of "true kin", sexual relations are still prohibited between them. Prohibitions are sanctioned by legal doctrine, and supernatural sanctions, as defined by the "exogamous taboos", just as they are for brother/sister, and mother/son, relationships, for example. But the horror and shame which attaches to sexual relationships between spirit kin is not the same as that which is based on shared "flesh and blood". Such relations, according to one informant, "we are not ashamed of" (Malinowski 1929: 533). In fact, a certain risque flavor is associated with them, it is said, at least in casual sexual liaisons. Still, marriage is strongly forbidden.

The question now arises: Why are sexual relationships and marriages formally banned, but sexual relationships between spirit kin are not regarded with shame and horror? In order to fully understand this question, we have to return to define what clansmen do, and do not share in common. Following this, it will be best to examine what is supposed to occur when "exogamous taboos" are broken. This will give us more insight into the distinction between spirit kin, and "true kin".

I have already said that clansmen share a spirit tie. They are the result of impregnations by spirits who belonged to their clans. But now a complication arises. According to Malinowski, the children of women are always the result of impregnation by spirits who "belong to the same clan and subclan as the spirit child itself" (1929: 172). Thus, those who share a spirit tie

must also, it seems, share a blood tie. The fact of the matter seems to be that the child spirit, which becomes the foetus, is a reincarnated member of the subclan, and the clan. Subclan members do share this specific spirit tie, which those of other subclans could not share in. But the helping spirit, who is crucial in the impregnation process, seems to be variably defined belonging to the clan of either the spirit of the father or mother of the women. So this spirit is a clan spirit, or at least it provides such a linkage.

The difference in attitude which I drew attention to in matters of the breach of "exogamous taboos", may in part be explained by the different ideas which are held about spirits in the Trobriands. Those who are "true kin" share a tie of blood and spirit which are derived from the same source: the reincarnated spirit child of a deceased subclansmen. Those who are clansmen, share a tie of spirit which is more diffuse in the sense that it is a "helping" spirit, but not the actual impregnating spirit of a woman, itself. Therefore, women of one's subclan, and women of one's clan, are both described as being one's "sister of spirit". But each women holds a different kind of spirit tie in respect to oneself. In the case of a subclan "sister" who is a "true kinswoman", the same sort of horror and shame which attaches to the relationships based upon "same flesh and blood", i.e., as for example with an "own" sister, are identified with a subclan "sister". This is because the spiritual tie identifies the parties to a tabooed relationship as being related through blood, in addition to a more generalized clan spirit. The relationships which breach the "exogamous taboos" are formally wrong, between spirit kin, in the same sense as those between subclansmen. But they are much less "horrible" because they do not involve a blood tie.

In order to underscore the supernatural character of the shame and horror of "tabooed relationships", it is useful to briefly examine the supernatural sanctions which are believed

befall the violating parties.

Upon being discovered parties to a sexual relationship which violates "exogamous taboos", people would not only be very ashamed, perhaps to the point of committing suicide (lo'u), but they would also be stricken with a fatal disease,

A swelling of the belly heralds the oncoming of this retributive ailment. Soon the skin becomes white, and then breaks out into small sores which grow gradually bigger, while the man fades away in a wasting sickness. (Malinowski 1929: 504)

The point to be made about the symbolism of the "disease" is twofold. First, the person develops a swollen belly. This links the intercourse between the "tabooed persons", with the onset of pregnancy. Sexual intercourse may, we can conjecture, create an impregnation by a spirit in both parties. But the second point is that the swollen belly does not produce a new child--a new subclansmen--but it kills the afflicted parties. In other words, the breaking of "exogamous taboos" is flirting with one's death, and more generally, the "death" of one's subclan, and more diffusely, one's clan.

Up to this point, I have been focusing on how people are defined as "tabooed persons", and how this affects the nature of their relationships. Two subcategories of "tabooed" relationships have been found to exist. One is comprised of "true kin" who share a specific spirit tie. This tie is the result of impregnation by reincarnated spirits of the subclan. This subcategory is thus denoted by a spirit link of blood between persons. The other subcategory, spirit kin, is comprised of persons who do not share a spirit tie of blood. Such persons are identified members of the same clan, but not the same subclan. I would like to further define the nature of spirit kin at this juncture.

In order to examine the features which define a person as a spirit kinsmen, it will be useful to contrast how people distinguish the category of spirit kin, or "tabooed persons",

with that of "eligible persons".

The distinction between the categories of "eligible person" and "tabooed person", is a culturally pervasive, and recognized distinction in Trobriand culture. (Malinowski 1929: 536). In Malinowski's work, this distinction is most often translated in terms of clan "sister" (lutuga), versus "paternal cross-cousin" (tabugu). However, I believe that such a translation is at best narrow, and at worst, a misleading gloss on what may be a much wider set of meanings which define these two terms. After all, these two categories essentially lump all of those belonging to the clan of a man together, against all persons outside the clan. The categories are thus relative, since the ascription of persons in one or the other category depends on ego's viewpoint, i.e., his membership in a clan. All those in his clan are "tabooed persons" to him. All those in other clans are "eligible persons".

Having said that such a categorical distinction exists, I am confronted with some "exceptions". The "exceptions" are present in the fact that (mother's father), and mother's mother, and all of sister's daughter's children, are classified as "eligible persons", since they are called tabu (see chart 1). Each of these categories of persons share both ties of "true kinship", based upon 'blood', and a spirit tie of blood. The persons of these generations with whom a man can claim blood ties, belong to either the +2, or -2 generations.

It might be said that these categories of persons who comprise the "eligible persons" in a man's social world, are rather remote, and inconsequential sexual or marriage possibilities. Nonetheless, the anomaly remains, from a genealogical viewpoint. However, we may be able to gain some insight into the cultural meaning of these "exceptions" to what has been established as the defining features of the category of spirit kin, if we concentrate on how "eligibility" is defined. By "eligibility", I mean the dynamic of characteristics which would

arise from a man's cultural experience to generate such a category.

At the clan level, when persons are differentiated as either sharing a diffuse spirit tie, or not, the process of how a man or woman becomes a clan member may help us to understand the category of "eligibility", as opposed to the category of "tabooed persons". A man, for example, is born of the union of a couple who belong to different clans. The difference is important, since the active participation of the helping spirit, can be either that of the father or the mother, of the pregnant woman; the spirit, in other words, can be a member of one or two clans, as I have said. This helping spirit plays a role in the development of impregnation in the woman. In the same manner, the actual paternal or maternal grandparents also play a part in the development and social maturation of the child. What results, is that a boy comes to establish ties, of differing sorts, with two cohabitation groups outside of that of his mother and her husband's.

In the process of development, several things occur in a child's social world, in the first years of life. First his mother customarily goes to live in her parents house, or the house of her maternal uncle. She then begins to observe some special sexual, and food taboo's. For example, she cannot share food, or eat with her husband. He, in turn, watches over her, and keeps her from thinking of sex. After birth, the child spends its first year in the house where it was born. When the child is to be weaned, approximately two years after birth, it is taken from its mother, and it sleeps with either its father or its paternal grandmother. (Malinowski 1929: 20-21).

What emerges from this rather brief discussion, is that a child is from the first intimately involved with the persons of at least three households or cohabitation groups: his parents' household, and that of his paternal grandparents or maternal uncle, or both, and his maternal grandparents' household. In

the remainder of the child's life, he maintains ties with all of these cohabitation groups. In the case of his mother and her husband's household, he is tied by flesh and blood to his mother, and an affine to his father. In the case of his grandparents, he shares a tie of "true kin" and spirit with his maternal grandparents, and a tie of spirit with his paternal grandparents, in the sense that one of the spirits of these persons may have "helped along" his own birth.

The term "eligible persons" identifies together those persons who are neither direct blood ancestors (lineals of +1, or -1 generations), nor members of his or her parents cohabitation groups, either as father, mother, daughter, son, brother, or sister. "Eligible" persons form a category with whom one is ritually linked at birth, marriage, pregnancy, and death. Such persons are said to either be the best, or the preferred, sexual and marriage partners. The locus of such best marriages is that of the father's sister's daughter, in the case of a male ego (Malinowski 1929: 534-5). She, along with other women, are called "eligible women". A question which logically follows from this discussion, is why should the father's sister's daughter be a preferred "eligible woman", as opposed to others? Discussion of this question occurs in the next section dealing with the symbol of 'land'.

In sum, I have tried to point out that the symbol 'spirit' connects persons in ways which differentiate them as kin from non-kin. Persons who share a tie of spirit comprise a category of "tabooed persons". "Exogamous taboos" prohibit sexual and marital relationships between the persons of this category. The category of "tabooed persons" exists in opposition to the category of "eligible persons".

The category of "tabooed persons", can be further divided into the subcategories, "spirit kin", and "true kin". Spirit kin share a diffuse but enduring mystical relationship which defines them as members of the same clan but not as members of

lesser scale groups based on blood relations. "True kin" are persons who share a spirit tie of blood, based on the belief of reincarnation of a dead "true kinsmen". Within this category, persons belong to subclans, lineages, and cohabitation groups.

Those who share a tie of spirit are united in a clan unit as "tabooed persons", as distinguished from all other persons of other clans who are "eligible persons". A Trobriander is mystically, and socially, related to cohabitation groups other than that of his mother and her husband, which consequently relates him to persons of other clans. But spirit ties do not in themselves allow for easy recognition of fellow clansmen, or those of other clans. A person's network of contacts with others like his paternal grandparents, is what establishes the meaning of "eligible persons", versus "tabooed persons", for him. And such networks are better understood in the context of land relationships, which are taken up in the following section.

### III. The symbol 'land'

Land is an integrating symbol in Trobriand culture. As a symbol, 'land', and the produce of land, expresses relationships between persons, and groups, distinguishing kin from non-kin.

The ownership rights, and tenure rights of land, are inherited through the line of one's mother. The magic which is mythically derived from the "charter" of ownership of the land, is also inherited and transmitted through mother's brother to sister's son. The actual lands which one holds eternal rights over are derived in respect to a blood and flesh relationship which Trobrianders acknowledge between a mother and her children. Consequently, a man is closely identified with the lands of his mother's lineage, and subclan, of which he is born a member (Malinowski 1929: 7, 1965: 201-7).

The joint tenure of plots of land, and the produce of such



lands, attaches to a man's lineage. As a rule, the male members of a lineage, and their families, reside together on this land in relatively permanent living compounds. These compounds, called "own village" (Malinowski 1935: 3-12), include households of a man and his wife and her children, a man's brothers and their families, his maternal uncle or uncles and their families, and other close maternal relatives. These persons are "true kin" in the closest genealogical sense of being common descendants of a mother or set of mothers, or grandmother, as the case may be (Malinowski 1965: 345).

Men and their families, are recruited to these living compounds because men, as a rule, take up residence with their maternal uncles, or other male "true kin" who are lineage members. This generally occurs following a man's marriage.

The actual ownership of lands is held in common by subclan groups. Lineages are clustered together, in some places, into "villages", and "village clusters", such as Omarakana (Powell 1960: 121-4). Men hold rights to garden subclan lands, and the produce of such lands, by being members of the subclan by birth. All those who are "true kin" thus form an owning unit in respect to land. This category of kin do not necessarily reside together however, because the plots of a subclan's lands are dispersed throughout territories. People may reside on land belonging to subclans which are not contiguous, as a result.

The distribution and use of garden lands occur once a year at a "garden council" (o'kayaku) (Malinowski 1965: 88, Powell 1960: 132). The "chief" of a subclan, who, as I have said before is the eldest male of the senior lineage of the subclan, holds the power to allocate rights of tenure to land in this council.

The various kinds of magic which are used in respect to a subclan's lands, rain magic, sunshine magic, and gardening

magic, in particular, are held by certain individual males of the subclan. The "chief", and the "garden magician" (tolikwabila) within a subclan are believed to hold the supernaturally most potent, as well as the widest range, of magical powers. A man can gain such magical powers by purchasing them (pokala) from his maternal uncle, or elder brother, as the case may be.

A man holds an obligation, by virtue of a blood tie, to transmit his magic to one of his maternal nephews, or possibly a younger brother, upon receiving a purchase gift. According to Malinowski:

If a maternal uncle is to give up in his life time a garden, or to teach and hand over a system of magic, he has to be paid for that. As a rule several payments, and very substantial ones, have to be given him, and he gradually relinquishes his rights, giving the garden land, bit by bit, teaching the magic in installments. After the final payment, the title of ownership is definitely handed over to the younger man (1961: 185).

This "title of ownership" is called "master of the fields" or "master of the soil" (Malinowski 1965: 345-6), and Malinowski elsewhere says that "The formal title of ownership in the communal territory of a subclan is nominally vested in the head of the subclan", who is called by this term. These terms may be glossed therefore, as either "chief" or "garden magician", although it is possible that one man could hold both positions.

Ownership of magic is thus related to ownership of lands. Transmission of magic insures that subclan lands will remain in the hands of bone fide "true kin", since the magic of lands is supposedly necessary for their fertility, and tenure. If those who can inherit such magic is controlled, as it is thru this process of "purchases of younger brother or nephew from maternal uncle" (pokala), the discreteness of subclan property can be maintained. It is in this sense that rights of ownership of lands and magic unites a man, his brothers, maternal uncle or uncles, and his mother's brothers sons, as kin. It is also in this light, that an uncle might favor a "real nephew"

over a bastard.

There are two reasons why a maternal uncle would choose to pick "real nephew" over a bastard, in transmitting rights to land, and magical knowledge and offices. The first reason has to do with the supernatural potency of magic. The second has to do with the relationship between a boy and his mother's husband.

Land is considered to be fertile only if the proper magic is performed over it, and the crops planted on it. Spirits take an active role in helping to produce good crops, and at almost every stage of planting and the harvest, these beings' are invoked to aid in fertility. In fact, the annual New Year's ceremonies of the milamala, the return of the spirits to the Trobriands, celebrates the role which spirits hold in belief and ritual. If a man is a bastard, he is not of unknown parentage, for he of course would hold a "mother", either as his "own", or as a foster mother. What he, and others cannot be certain of, is his spiritual heritage. Of which clan, and subclan, was the helping spirit, and of whose parents, the boy's mother, or father, did it derive? This is an important question, which it would seem, could never be answered by a bastard. The role of a mother's husband would make it a frivolous question; but lacking this man, it becomes essential in matters pertaining to supernatural affiliation. If a man's spiritual heritage is not "pure", in the sense of having had a helping spirit, people may believe that his powers would not be validated in the magical realm, if he became a magician.

The second reason a bastard might not be chosen to inherit, has to do with what a boy is "given" by his father. A boy receives many favors from his father. He helps his father garden his land, and pay his father's "harvest gifts", as a consequence. He, in addition, also pays small "harvest gifts" to his mother and father. In some ways, it is easy to see why fathers are often said to transmit to their wife's sons that

which should only be given to their maternal nephews. A father and son are linked by the nature of gardening activities, harvesting a good crop, performing magic together, and the payment of "harvest gifts". If a boy is given magic by his father, people may believe him to be specially endowed or well suited to be a "garden magician" for example, for he might have the advantage of holding the magic of two subclans, instead of that of just his own. A bastard who lacks a father, or mother's husband, is in no such position to receive this supposedly illicit magical knowledge. In other ways, as I have previously demonstrated in the discussions of 'blood', and 'spirit', the bastard is at a disadvantage in not possessing a father to "mould" him in the right way, and give him the advantage of increased options resulting from holding ties with more than just one cohabitation group.

"Harvest gifts" are important in linking together people as kin or affines. The normative meaning of "harvest gifts" is that part of a "real taytu" crop a man gives to his sister's husband and his family (Malinowski 1965: '91, 189). "Harvest gifts" are grown on urigubu plots of land. They are given in public ceremonies when they are lodged in a man's yam house. (Malinowski 1965: 473-5) A great deal of value is attached to this produce. In many respects, a man's adult status is based upon receiving and giving such yam "gifts". The obligations as such are negative, since a man never receives yams in return from his brother-in-law, to whom he is paying, but only those brother-in-laws of his wife.

Thus relationships between a man, his blood kin and his wife are established through produce. One of the most important ways in which such relationships are symbolized is through the giving of yams following marriage, and the continued giving of yams, year after year.

The produce of "harvest gifts" legitimizes the marriage of a man and woman. After a couple have spent the night together in the man's father's house, and they have publicly

eaten together of food provided by both their families, they are married. A "contract" has been established between the "true kin" of the woman, and her new husband (Malinowski 1965: 199-200). Just as the man and woman initially legitimize their marriage by the act of sleeping together, and eating in public, so will they and the offspring of the woman eat together the "harvest gifts" of the woman's brother in the "own village" of the husband, their residence (Malinowski 1965: 36).

"Harvest gifts", which legitimize marriages, are comprised of the produce of subclan lands in which a woman holds rights. A woman's husband holds no actual rights, either of ownership, or tenure, in her subclan lands. But her husband annually receives a "harvest gift" because he is the husband of the payer's sister. As long as a man and woman cohabit together as husband and wife, the husband will receive such gifts. At the death of a wife, or in the case of divorce, such "gifts" as a rule should stop. In fact, all formal bonds of any kind are severed when a couple are no longer married (Powell 1969: 178).

"Harvest gifts" are produced on subclan garden lands by a man, and his maternal nephews and sons. Because a man has a concern to have legitimate heirs, that is "real nephews, as I have demonstrated, he gardens as much produce as he can to legitimize, and thus provide for his sister's family. Again, the maternal uncle's concern to have "real nephews" illustrates how kin are distinguished from non-kin, or "undesirable kin" (my own term), in the sphere of land relations.

A "real nephew" is a legitimate heir of his maternal uncle because his uncle has paid yam "gifts" to his parents. It is the act of a maternal uncle paying harvest produce year after year, in a regulated and enduring manner, which legalizes the status of his nephew(s). Such gifts are an obligation of a man to his sister and her husband, for they stem from the fact of the "contract" of marriage.

In a sense therefore, "harvest produce" serves as a means of defining the persons who comprise a cohabitation group, and a cohabitation unit. A man initially pays a set of "bridewealth" gifts, which in part are repaid to him at the time of marriage, and in part are repaid through the regular "harvest gifts". He pays his wife for her sexual services, by performing services for her children. The children, in turn, help their mother's husband to garden his lands, and in the case of boys, to help him in paying and transferring his "harvest gifts". The father's acts serve to "mould" the children. And a bastard is "unfortunate" because a man has no legal obligation to pay harvest produce to his sister and her bastard, though he may simply provide her with yams or vegetable food. In fact, a man cannot, by definition, pay "harvest gifts" to an unwed mother and her child, since such "gifts" are paid to her in respect of not being a sister or mother, so much as in her role as being another man's wife.

A payment of harvest produce thus symbolizes the blood ties between a man, his sister, and her children. A man and his sister and her children are created of the same flesh and blood. They form a cohabitation unit. In addition, a man is only related through land to his sister, and her children, not to his wife or her offspring. Therefore, in a metaphoric way, a mother produces offspring by feeding them of her milk and blood, while her brother produces heirs by "feeding" them with the provision of yams from their own lands. The process of a woman feeding her children of her milk and blood, is the "same" as the process of the woman's brother providing food through yearly "harvest gifts"; this yam "gift" forms the food supply of the cohabitation group. The children are continuously fed yams produced from their own subclan lands, by their maternal uncle, and his sons and nephews.

Though the "harvest gifts" which a boy pays derive from two sources--the lands of his maternal uncle, and those of his father--the "gifts" which he gives as an adult are only produced on the lands of his subclan. This double aspect of land tenure expresses some of the nature of the relationship between a man, and his father. A boy has enduring rights and obligations to his father, and vice versa (Malinowski 1965: 202). This was established in the sphere of shared spirit, since a man may be "helped along" by the spirit of his father's parent. It was also established in the relationship which a boy may hold to his father's kin, as well as the general area of mutual interest which a boy and his father have in gardening and magic. But despite these shared interests and ties, in all cases of conflict which might arise in obligation owed towards either his father, or his maternal uncle, his uncle should hold the priority of consideration. There are several meanings which this norm holds.

A boy is first and last tied to his maternal uncle over his father because they share rights of land tenure, and common reciprocal obligations in gardening. These rights are the result of a blood tie existing between the two men and other men in the same lineage, and subclan. The subclan has a necessary obligation to aid each of its male members in gardening urigubu plots in order to pay "harvest gifts", which further links all men of the same subclan. And a common spirit tie of blood, along with magic which is transmitted from maternal uncle to maternal nephew further identifies the men as sharing a set of "magical understandings".

Nonetheless, a man is linked to his father, and his father's subclan, in the ways outlined above, and in another way according to Trobriand tradition. A man is said to prefer his father's sister's daughter in marriage, as I have already said. The question, in the sphere of land relations,

remains, why should such a marriage preference be held?

The meaning of the norm of preferred patrilateral cross cousin marriage is not that it creates new kinds of relationships, but that it renews old, or rather enduring ones. Payment of "harvest gifts", and transfer and inheritance of land rights and magic, serves to bind the members of one subclan with those of another. The marriages which exist between two subclans rest upon a base of neither shared blood or spirit, since the parties involved are "eligible persons". It is true that a mystical tie exists between the grandparents of both of a man's parents, by virtue of the helping spirit which aided in his mother's impregnation, but this is rather vague. What is more specific, in the realm of the network of a man's social relationships, is the fact that he may draw upon the resources of two subclans (of two separate clans) by marrying his father's sister's daughter. He remains in the village of his father, taking advantage of the rights of land use, and magical knowledge, which he has established through his father, and his maternal uncle. This is, in effect, what the Kwoynama and Tabalu subclans have done in the "village cluster" of Omarakana. An institutionalized bilateral cross-cousin marriage exchange has been established between some members of each of the subclans. (Leach 1958: 139). As a consequence, the members of one of these subclans traditionally stands as either affines or "eligible persons" in respect to segments of the other. We may posit that such an institutionalized relation has eliminated many of the uncertainties of the transmission of land and magic from generation to generation in the marriages between the two subclans.

In sum, I have illustrated that rights of ownership and tenure of land link persons together in cohabitation groups, lineages, and subclans. The produce of land serves to symbolize the relationships between the members of the cohab-



itation unit. It legitimizes the status of the marriage of a woman, the status of the children, and especially a boy as a "real nephew" as opposed to a bastard, and it legitimizes the status of a sister's brother in several ways. The sister's brother gains "legitimate heirs", and aids in transmitting land rights and ownership, along with the magic of subclan lands, by having "real nephews" who are "true kin". And all of the men of a subclan hold some vested interests, such as having fertile garden lands, effective magic, and "healthy children" (being well fed); these things stem from having legitimate marriages for the sisters of men, which in turn produces "legitimate children". The most effective marriages, in this regard, and those which renew enduring ties between two subclans who are comprised of "eligible persons", and affines, in respect to one another, are those between a man and his patrilineal cross cousin.

#### IV. Conclusion

There are many ways of defining kinship. In this paper, I have been concerned to describe how three pervasive symbols of Trobriand culture relate persons as kin. 'Blood', 'land', and 'spirit', have multifarious meanings in the everyday life of Trobrianders. I claim that an adequate cultural construct of the meanings of these symbols tells us a great deal about the definition of persons, and groups of persons, in Trobriand culture.

The features which define persons, and groups, as kin from non-kin, are in large major established by the norms stemming from ties of 'blood', 'spirit', and 'land and its produce. Some of the most interesting facts of Trobriand culture have been meaningfully defined in symbolic terms, facts which hold our interest because they inform of how Trobrianders themselves distinguish certain persons as kinsmen. Such facts, like the role of the father in the conjugal-natal