A comparative survey of contributions

Audrey Butt Colson

I have extracted from our contributors' papers some of their principal topics and arguments in order to discuss them briefly at a comparative and general level. It is clearly impossible to cover all the many excellent sets of data, ideas and analyses, discoverable in each paper in the font of knowledge which each uniquely represents. I have had to be highly selective and my aim has been to try and show where, it seems to me, a few of the most important advances are being made on the theme of political organization and its nature. Finally, I indicate where more ethnography, further comparison and new lines of enquiry in Carib studies might take us, now and during the next few years.

Ethnicity, language and society

The first paper, by Simone Dreyfus, has very direct relevance to the problems already outlined regarding the existence of a unique Carib identity, and effectively she takes up the argument where Basso left it in 1977. Considering the links between ethnic identity, linguistic affiliation and political organization in Caribbean Island society of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, she refers to the fact that these so-called Island Caribs spoke an Arawak language as their mother tongue, although adult men utilized many Carib words and there was a men's speech employed on certain occasions. Even at the time of discovery, when political and linguistic frontiers coincided in the North of the Caribbean, in the South, language and political and ethnic units were not so congruent. However, by the 18th century, when conquest and destruction by the colonial powers had been completed in the islands, the Kalinago, although speaking a different language, went from there to join the Kaliña (Kariña) of the mainland, whilst to the North the indigenous frontier, which had previously been clear-cut, also became one "of common resort and cooperation" (pp. 46-47). She demonstrates that in her research area at least, "linguistic boundaries were never political limits, although they could have provided people with a feeling of ethnic identity" (pp. 51-52).

In concluding that linguistic unity and political unity are not always coterminous she refers (see Basso 1977: 19) to the fact that although ecological factors have been pointed out as explaining unity and diversity, historical factors may be found to do so too, for "the 'general social and cultural units that often encompass local groups of different language affiliation' referred to by Basso are, in fact, political units and we have to consider, what she denied, that they do share a common history" (Dreyfus p. 54). Her paper emphasizes the importance of trying to ascertain the kind of grouping that we are dealing with in any one instance, whether a linguistic one, an ethnic unity or an alliance, or whether it is one resulting from the merging of two or more distinct ethnic groups, during the course of recent and recoverable history at least. In the latter case, it may be important to know the constituent groups and their derivations if their present synthesis is to be fully comprehended.

Several subsequent papers also refer to this problem of identity. Usually denoted as a remote unitary Carib-speaking group, the Waiwai living in the Essequibo-Mapuera region of the Guyana-Brazil border clearly constitute a "merged" system since, as Mentore points out (p. 200, note 1), the group we refer to by this name is made up of at least eleven components. Some, like the Mawayana, spoke an Arawak language; another, the remnant Taruma who closely intermarried with Waiwai in the 1920s, spoke a language as yet unidentified, but considered to be neither Carib nor Arawak (Butt Colson and Morton 1982). The Kuikuru have also, in the recent past, merged with at least ten different tribal communities, some of these being non-Carib refugees from other depopulated groups (Dole pp. 319, 328).

The dynamics governing the processes of such syntheses, involving groups drastically reduced through epidemics and who may be refugees from conflict with other populations, have yet to be studied. Two main methods of initial grafting emerge in the reports to date. One is modelled on a potential affinal category and this, we suspect, must have been used by the Kariña during their most warlike period. It is signalled by the fact that the designation *peito* (or *poito*) was applied to those groups which the Kariña warred against and raided as their enemies, but it is also, among many Carib speakers today, used to refer to the category of servant, helper, assistant, and has specific application to the sister's son, who is a potential son-in-law. (See Dreyfus p. 51 and Urbina p. 189. Rivière discusses the Trio term *pito* in Basso 1977: 40.) Given a prevalence of bilateral, cross cousin marriage (real and classificatory) and the bride service which the nephew/son-in-law is expected to accord his uncle/father-in-law, we can readily appreciate the implications of this usage. A young, captured male would be brought up not only as an assistant (in the European terminology of the time, a slave) of his captor, but might be expected to marry a daughter of the latter. This would therefore be a case for arguing that Caribs did, sometimes, marry their enemies (see Henley p. 180). However, another method, perhaps more suited to peaceful times but achieving the same ends, is suggested by the widespread practice of adoption as a sibling, reported for the Waiwai (Morton p. 234) as occurring between unrelated co-residents, and suggested also by Dole (p. 328) who asserts that the Kuikuru extend consanguineal

terms of address to all members of a community and that among the Kuikuru and Kalapalo sibling terms are attributed to eligible mates who live in the same group. The manipulation of sibling terms and their associated sentiments exists among the Venezuelan Pemon in their relationships with young "criollo" men, for instead of using the customary male cross cousin/brother-in-law term of address for strangers of the same sex and equivalent generation, Pemon have recently tended to change to the fraternal idiom. The reason they have given is that the sister, instead of being a potential spouse or sexual partner, implicit in the use of cross cousin terminology, is thereby placed firmly in a sororal, strictly non-marriageable category. Nevertheless, the usage is a legal fiction which can conveniently be rephrased as the need arises. The use of sibling terms also harmonizes with Christian mission teaching on attitudes towards non-kin.

Several contributors have found that linguistic criteria for denoting structural relations have to be handled with considerable caution, if not scepticism. Not only is there a great deal more research required on Carib languages as such, but there is need to note the manipulation of the factor of language as an indigenous classificatory device and mechanism for expressing nearness and unity or distance and diversity. Thus, both Butt Colson (p. 101) and Henley (pp. 158-159) found difficulties in determining what scientifically might be designated a dialect and what might be regarded as constituting a separate language between Carib groups. The solution to this kind of problem is dependent on objective criteria which have yet to be conventionally established by linguists. However, Butt Colson also documents indigenous attitudes to forms of speech and their connections with structural factors, and even with values expressing temporary states of interrelationships, among groups of Pemon and Kapon. These kinds of manipulations within and between the larger Carib unities are perhaps more widespread than hitherto realized and have caused an ethnographic confusion.

The hypothesis of the existence of a specific Carib type of ethnic and political identity seems very unlikely to be proved, for the several fundamental reasons we have just commented on. Nevertheless, it is, we maintain, a logical and worthwhile topic for comparative research and one on which we can still take a stand provisionally, for apart from the comparison of synchronic systems it also leads us into studies which seek to explain the processes of transformation of social systems, as not just the product of different physical, ecological settings but also of a series of historical changes, in which language affiliation enters as just one, albeit a very important, factor.

Dreyfus' paper also shows the value of a particular methodology, for it is a model demonstration of the wealth of ethnographic data which can be extracted from historical documents. These documents, as she states (p. 41), are precious material through which we can make our present-day studies richer with the aid of time depth. Research into a range of these by her and her colleagues, shows how ethno-historical studies of past Caribbean-Guianese political organization transform our view of contemporary systems, even to the degree of initiating a radical rethinking of their nature, and we anticipate that these pioneering examples will encourage others increasingly to exploit a hitherto largely neglected anthropological

resource in conjunction with, and to augment, classical anthropological field research methodology. In this present collection of papers it should be noted that Henley has also used documentary sources to excellent effect.

The macro-levels of Carib political organization

In her discussion of the political organization of the Kalinago of the Caribbean Islands, Dreyfus refers to the problem of unity and diversity and situations in which diverstity itself provides the unity achieved. This introduces the most important theme in the two following papers, by María Eugenia Villalón and Audrey Butt Colson, which is that Carib groups may not have been historically, nor are they always today, as fragmented as they may appear to be or as they have been depicted. Both papers urge a recognition and study of the wider levels of integration in Carib societies.

Stimulated by a research strategy already tried out in the North-west Amazon by Jackson (n.d., and 1976), Villalón argues that concepts developed in the field of regional analysis can be productively adapted to the study of structurally simple societies such as the Carib. She asserts that although authors have sometimes referred in passing to the existence of wider unities, they have otherwise ignored them and "have focused on the atomism, minimality and discrete character which characterize the formal structural aspects of these societies. Repeatedly, the Carib family, household and village have been described as units operating with a high degree of independence, a feature matched at the territorial level to a pattern of dispersed settlements and low inter-village interaction" (p. 57). This neglect of the higher levels of social integration has led to an exaggeration of the degree of involution of Carib societies and to an unwarranted narrowing of their boundaries. Villalón takes E'ñapa (Panare) regional social fields of interaction as a specific example. A "regional field" she finds to be articulated through interlocking relationships or networks, conceived as ramifying chains of dyadic relationships involving specific fields of activity, and she argues that E'ñapa settlements are not entirely self-sufficient unities, but parts of webs of mutual dependence within regional social fields (p. 63). Of four different kinds of networks identified, those of trade, shamanic services exchange, ceremonial cooperation and marriage, she concentrates on the latter, showing in the case she documents that a network organization operated throughout a region of about 700 km^2 the interacting settlements being separated from each other by an average linear distance of 15 km (p. 67). Although there is a preference for local endogamous marriage, E'ñapa men move into their parents-in-law settlements in accordance with the practice of uxorilocality and may marry outside their local group. Thus, of twenty-three extant marriages of the descendants of the E'ñapa leader Uñey? all were exogamous except one. With three exceptions, all these marriages initially involved movement of males between settlements (*patan*) and had effectively redistributed Uñey?'s descendants among five different settlements (pp. 64-67). Villalón characterizes E'ñapa marriages as "... a series of dyadic exchanges between *patan*, structuring a network of alliance relationships which in conjunction articulate a regional system."

As a consequence, a circulation of people takes place through local groups as well as through families, and differential rates of interaction between settlements are thereby recognized. She concludes (p. 70) that "E'ñapa marital exchanges are neither discrete nor entirely familial affairs. They are transactions which affect the composition of social units at different levels of integration and which generate movement of people across the boundaries of recognized social units. To the extent that marriages create or perpetuate alliances this movement becomes a permanent process... It is to be expected that in a kin-based, simple society such as that of the E'ñapa, comprised of dispersed, mobile and interdependent local groups, marriage exchanges will constitute the institution most responsible for the organization of the regional system." Marriage thus helps to make and maintain a web of systematic, supra-community ties, contributing to the perpetuation of the interacting units and their populations.

Utilizing naming systems as an entrée, Audrey Butt Colson investigates the larger, spatial components of Kapon and Pemon structures, identifying three major levels. These include the unique ethnic grouping, a people, defined via the use of an autodenomination held in common and supported by the concept of a common language, culture and kin unity. Within the ethnic unity is a system of regional grouping, the units of which were first referred to in the literature as nations but in recent times have been called tribes, in which a system of mutual nicknaming is operative. Finally there is the river group system, with its subdivisions, whereby the several component local groups are referred to by using the name of a river with a group plural suffix. She also finds that the Kapon and Pemon possess a kin-based organization with preferential bilateral cross cousin marriage (including real and classificatory cross cousins) and uxorilocal post-marital residence (of varying periods of time, but often for life) forming a system of networks. Tight cores of cognatic kin in the local settlements within the river areas are linked to each other and, to a lesser degree, to those in more distant areas of the region and beyond, in a web of personal interrelationships, supported by trade networks, ceremonial and ritual interchanges and feasting. However, she additionally notes that the reciprocity and unity which these interactions imply, may also be negated, or at least manipulated, to express opprobrium and distance. Thus, trading may end in fighting, myths relating overall common origins may be contradicted by myths of distinct origins, accusations of malpractice and sorcery may operate, whilst raiding and warfare took place in the past between neighbouring sectors of a variety of named units. Despite an overall linguistic unity, dialect differences are used to negate possibilities of real communication or at least to poke fun at other, conceivably different, people.

For demographic reasons alone, it is unlikely that such macro-levels exist any longer in the smaller Carib groups. Nevertheless, the possibility of their past existence at least is worth investigation using oral tradition and historical records. There is also the similar problem of identification of the boundaries with neighbouring ethnic unities. As Henley remarks (p. 158), although Guiana has appeared to be occupied by a mosaic of small groups, each clearly distinguishable from the rest, an increase in ethnographic knowledge has shown that these groups,

previously treated as independent, are not only in regular social and economic contact with one another, but even share a common language and are interlinked by marriage alliances —"whatever they might say to outsiders when the latter first arrive." Utilizing criteria among which a unique, overarching autodenomination is most important, Butt Colson proposes that the Arekuna, Kamarakoto, Taurepan and Makushi (Makuxi) tribes, all referring to themselves as *Pemon*, should be treated as interlocking segments of an overall ethnic unity and that the Akawaio and Patamona should be similarly regarded as two parts of a Kapon ethnic grouping. Moreover, the interchanges between the various segments of these two peoples show that both together form a wider system of interaction, and this system might conveniently be referred to as the circum-Roraima group of Caribs. Even this unity is not isolated on its circumferences, as their sporadic dealings with the easternmost Ye'kuana show, as well as considerable intermarriage between Makuxi and the Arawak-speaking Wapishana to the South-west. Thus, just as macro-levels of Carib structure have to be taken into consideration if the micro-levels, where village leaders and shamans operate and where kinship nuclei are located, are to be understood, so also the tracing of these wider unities reveals the basic structure of the interactions of Carib and non-Carib groupings and their sets of relationships over very extensive geographical areas.

In classifying these structured interactions, linked to geographical space and conceptualized as discrete, Butt Colson has used the designation "segmentary system" (pp. 119-120). This takes account of the fact that the political organization at the macro-level of these societies is an acephalous one, residing primarily in the alignment of groups. A principle of complementary opposition of segments exists, accompanied by the operation of a principle of structural relativity at different levels, sometimes with mediation between segments by persons of influence, ritual or ceremonial in status, such as shamans and prophets. Although less formalized than the well-known African kinds of segmentation, owing in great measure to the absence of any corporate descent groups with their strongly marked boundaries, she finds (pp. 118-119), as Thomas had already noted for the Pemon (1973: 99-109), that "the kindred has a spatial component" and kinship cores and networks provide a loosely defined set of interrelations linked to discrete territorial segments. Urbina's paper with its excellent account of Arekuna Pemon networks of overlapping cognatic kindred (pp. 194-196) shows how the local kinship organization ties in with these more diffuse and wider unities.

The characterization of a society without lineages as a "segmentary system" was, not unexpectedly, strongly criticized during the course of the symposium discussion at Manchester as being likely to mislead others into thinking in terms of African segmentary lineage societies. In her revised paper Butt Colson has suggested the designation "segmentary, cognatic system" (p. 120). This is one problematic definition arising from the papers devoted to Carib macro-levels. Another is an agreed application of the designation "region" or "regional," for it is noteworthy that the very unsatisfactory and value-loaded designation of "tribe" is now rapidly dropping out of circulation in South American anthropology. The use of the terms neighbourhood, local group and network also requires care. If true

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comparisons are to be made and comparative studies are to yield accurate and useful results, it is necessary to make exact definitions and establish correct and agreed correspondences. Notably, we need to agree on the crucial terms of reference.

Reviewing the three main papers which relate to Carib macro-levels we can reject, as Dreyfus does most explicitly (p. 52), the definition of a Carib political entity by reference to the state or to rulers, in accordance with the type of authority which maintains social order, or as being congruent with a type of descent system. All our contributors are in agreement on this. However, we can make a constructive advance on this rejection by associating the several, basic propositions which each author contributes from her specific, individual approach and distinct field of study. Thus we have Dreyfus' Caribbean Island polity as having at its base "the dynamic relation that holds between unity and diversity" and "where diversity itself provides the unity achieved" (p. 40). From Villalón we have the proposition of regional fields articulated through interlocking relationships or networks (p. 63), and from Butt Colson the designation of a "segmentary, cognatic system" (p. 120). To these we may add the predominant theme in Joanna Overing's paper, which addresses the principle of social life common to all such societies. This is, that underlying difference is a metaphysical and ordering principle; that difference is associated with danger and that society can exist "only insofar as there is contact and proper mixing among entities and forces that are different from one another" (p. 333). The elementary structures of reciprocity, mediating differences and similarities, to which she refers, apply not only to marriage, personal interrelationships and the political field at the micro-levels, but also to the macro-levels of social integration and differentiation. We can assert therefore, that in such societies as those of the Carib and their neighbours, segmentation along the lines of regional fields of interaction and their overlapping cognatic kin networks provide both unity and diversity, which are expressed both as similarities and as dangerous differences. Tending to form complementary oppositions, they are mediated by structures of reciprocity and ritual interchange. (See Villalón, pp. 63-64, referring to the E'ñapa *panakong* relationship and to cooperating shamans, providing "networks of ceremonial cooperation.") On this theoretical base we have open to us, as Villalón perceives (p. 70), new possibilities for a re-interpretation of the nature and functioning of Carib societies in general, including also their similarly constituted neighbours.

Carib kinship as a kin-integration system

The papers by Karl Schwerin and Paul Henley review Carib kinship structures at the widest comparative levels and serve to introduce our other kinship orientated papers which focus on particular groups. Both have the merit of isolating and discussing a number of important theoretical problems relating to Carib kinship and marriage and, notably, consider the kin-affine relationship and its close tie-in with a system of kinship categories.

Taking us through his earlier struggles to find a suitable theoretical model for the interpretation of Karinya kinship (pp. 125-128) Schwerin argues that an

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uncritical adoption of the classic explanatory models forged in other parts of the world has bedevilled much of Lowland South American kinship theory. The concept of corporate descent groups from African anthropological literature and, latterly, the alliance system with a strict interchange between dualities culled principally from South-east Asia, are cases in point. Several of our other authors have also explicity rejected these systems, or detailed the inadequacies of the two-section system model with respect to their own data. We have therefore reached the point where Lowland South American systems of kinship and marriage are beginning to be treated as distinctive ones in their own right.[1]

Schwerin addresses himself to the problem of the nature of these systems and his paper constitutes a vigorous search for a common set of Carib principles of kinship organization. Although he considers that the Dravidian system might provide a starting point (pp. 128-129), the model he takes is Overing Kaplan's kin-affine system, developed among the Piaroa (Overing Kaplan 1972; 1975.) Instead of two groups exchanging wives, this is a structure where, quoting Kaplan, "the model is that of a group which maintains itself through time as a consanguinal unit by restricting exchange to within itself" (p. 132), and whereby alliance is generalized. Schwerin extrapolates 17 basic features as being characteristic of Piaroa kinship (pp. 129-134), and first he compares these diagnostic principles against his own research findings among the Karinya (pp. 134-139) before applying them to the published ethnography on other Carib speakers (pp. 139-146). He finds (Table 1) a very high degree of correspondence existing between all Carib groups, including the Karinya, despite their many centuries of direct contact with Europeans, although he also considers that in a number of respects the Xingú and Western Caribs do not seem congruent with the Guayana (Guiana) Caribs.

Despite the many similarities between the Caribs and Piaroa, his comparison reveals that the alliance principle seems to be relatively weak among Caribs and this leads him to query the central importance of affinity in the Carib kinship system, which, he maintains, does not depend upon an effective opposition between kin and affines or on relationships built upon ties of alliance. Rather, local endogamy is preferred which automatically results in exchange and alliance being kept within the local group, so that the object seems to be "to integrate as tightly as possible a small group of related individuals without imposing complex formal rules of organization" (pp. 151-152). Since both kin relations and group integration are important, Schwerin proposes to play down affinity, replacing Overing's designation of the system as a "kin-affine" one with that of a "kin-integration system" (pp. 146-152). He concludes by noting that this particular type of kinship system only works in small groups, and if the local group expands much beyond 100 members then the system begins to break down. This might, he considers, be an explanation for the classic pattern of continual fissioning among Tropical Forest groups, or an adaptive response to a pre-existent pattern of factionalism and division. Rivière (pp. 353-354) refers to this factionalism when considering the Carib leader's

[1] Schwerin acknowledges the value of the American Anthropological Association meeting in New Orleans, 1973, and its symposium "Marriage practices in Lowland South America" as being an important event in this process.

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control over people and the limitation on size of settlement, arguing that as more peripheral and distantly related people are included in his settlement the leader's position weakens and fission follows. An alternative, under suitable social and ecological conditions, might be the emergence of status distinctions and organization by classes resulting in a chiefdom society (Schwerin p. 147 and note 9).

Paul Henley observes (p. 156) that among the E'ñepa and Ye'kuana as in all Guianese Carib societies, the systems of kinship and marriage "are regulated by a rule which constrains an individual to marry someone who falls into a kinship category which includes his bilateral cross cousins, genealogically defined" and he further notes (p. 160) that in all the Carib societies he has surveyed, their kinship terminologies "conform, to a greater or lesser degree, to a common formal ideal-type of terminology known by various different labels in the literature, including 'Dravidian,' 'Dakota-Iroquois,' 'bifurcate-merging,' 'two-line,' 'symmetric' etc." Although some authors have noted a low incidence of actual cross cousin marriage in their societies (e.g. Schwerin, p. 127, for the Karinya and Dole, p. 321, for the Kuikuru), nevertheless his statement as broadly phrased, still stands, and certainly the assumption of a system of bilateral cross cousin marriage, with its associated terminology, is confirmed as a basic one among Caribs and their neighbours.

However, Henley also shows that the practice of two kinds of intergeneration, or cross-generation, marriage also occurs. These are adjacent, or proximate, generation marriage, as between mother's brother and sister's daughter or, more rarely, brother's son with father's sister, and alternate generation marriage, between a grandparent and grandchild. He summarizes (pp. 170-175) the results of a survey of intergeneration marriage in the Guianas, incorporating terminological evidence culled from early records, notably referring to groups now extinct, and although these marriages generally have a small statistical incidence within any particular Carib society today he nevertheless finds them to be widespread. Their very existence has been frequently masked through investigators tending to explain away the attendant kin terminology as being anomalous, or variants, and the marriages as due to personal idiosyncrasy, being "wrong" and even incestuous. In part, this also arises from the fact that intergeneration marriages often receive only grudging recognition within the societies practising them and may be regarded suspiciously, as Thomas (1973: 159-163) has so well described for the Pemon.

Henley treats in detail the conflation of categories and the changes in kinship terminology resulting from the practice of both bilateral cross cousin marriage and intergeneration marriages within the same social system (pp. 165-168, 170; Figs. 1 and 2). As a result, I think it can be safely assumed that those who have read his paper will never again refer to any of their kinship terminology as anomalous, wrong or inexplicable, without a very careful prior consideration of the possibility that it may be due to a shifting of categories consequent on a form of intergeneration marriage. Although there is already available some excellent data, Rivière on the Trio (1966a; 1966b; 1969a); Thomas on the Pemon (1973; 1979; 1982); Arvelo-Jiménez on the Ye'kuana (1971); Henley on the E'ñepa (1982), further research should shed light on how such marriages are regarded, why they are contracted, how they affect relationships and how they interact with the cross

cousin category. Since it seems that "most Carib-speaking peoples of the Guianas either once did or still do practise some form of institutionalized intergenerational marriage" (Henley p. 175), it is clear that our search for the principles underlying Carib (and similar) kinship structures will have to take into account the additional logic and practices which cut across the genealogical generations and which, moreover, further complicate the kin-affine relationship.[2] Henley argues (p. 163) that these intergeneration marriages are "superimposed" on a basic system of bilateral cross cousin marriage, that is they are later developments, but it might equally be argued that they are an integral potential of that system, always realizable in certain social circumstances and in accordance with certain concepts, values and social aims.

Reviewing explanations of intergeneration marriage (pp. 176-181) takes Henley into some of the most fundamental problems of Carib society, which centre on the nature of endogamy and the in-law relationship. As regards the former, he notes (pp. 157-158): "Even today, most Carib peoples express, as one of the most cherished of their ideals, a concern for the self-sufficiency and autonomy of their communities" and one expression of this is a strong preference that many show for both genealogical and geographical endogamy. They believe that their own community is better and concomitantly they show fear and suspicion of outsiders. He rehearses the arguments that intergeneration marriages are strategies enabling men to stay at home, working for their natal family, without need to perform specific bride service in the role of an inferior son-in-law in a potentially dangerous out-group. However, he queries whether these reasons provide a sufficient explanation and suggests finally, that reference must be made to the complex of social and economic relations and that an understanding of the set of relations of reproduction requires some reference to the set of relations of production (pp. 180-181). Concerning these relationships, and why endogamy in preferred, our other contributors have a great deal to say which is noteworthy.

The description and analysis by Luis Urbina of the Arekuna (Pemon) system of social relations appertaining to the local group and his demonstration of the integration of these within the wider network of relationships, illustrate and develop in a specific context many of the themes of the previous papers. His paper complements Butt Colson's treatment of Kapon and Pemon structures and is very relevant to Villalón's regional network analysis. It further develops Henley's useful differentiation between geographical and genealogical endogamy and discussion of the association of a basic cross cousin marriage system with intergeneration marriage. It well illustrates Schwerin's kin-integration system (pp. 194, 197). Finally, this paper also adds an ecological dimension not treated by the other contributors but which assists in explaining certain demographic, spatial and conceptual factors which can be argued to be of considerable underlying importance in regions of scattered resources.

Urbina defines the Arekuna domestic unit as the nuclear family which includes

[2] Apart from the Tupi speakers of the Atlantic coast of Brazil, we can add as examples of non-Carib groups practising intergeneration marriages, the Warao of the Orinoco Delta and the Lacandon Maya of Mexico. Clearly, it is a widespread form.

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in its cyclical phases daughters' husbands and their children (see p. 185). There is a "strong tendency" towards matri-uxorilocality, beginning with the couple living in the house of the wife's parents, later in a separate dwelling nearby and with independence likely to be achieved only on the marriage of the first daughter or after the death of the headman. In this situation Urbina (p. 189) identifies the crucial factor as being the circulation-exchange of men, which he categorizes as "the most important social event in the relations between units which are economically almost self-sufficient, but socially dependent on other units not only for the maintenance of the developmental cycle but for the reproduction of a bigger unit."[3]

He refers to this larger unit as the extended family, constituted by several domestic units joined by multiple social links defined in kinship categories. Marriage creates networks of social relationships among different domestic groups which are thereby cognatically linked to each other, either within the same settlement or in other settlements within the neighbourhood or even beyond it, so that just one extended family may spread into several settlements. It is this which determines the pattern of inter-settlement contacts at any one time.

In maintaining social relationships which derive from matrimonial alliances and are characterized by the overlapping of kindreds, the Pemon system of kinship allows the reproduction of a network based not on corporate groups but on temporary and changing units with their interacting developmental cycles. These units are constituted by members of the extended bilateral family sharing common residential places and common areas of cultivable land and performing together all the activities of the labour process. "Whereas the domestic units provide a spatial framework for the maintenance of basic economic and social relationships, the kindreds provide an ideological framework for maintaining the social network which contributes to its reproduction. The Pemon kindred is constituted by a cluster of cognatic relatives linked to a particular Ego. In this sense the kindred is ego-centered and hence cannot be regarded as a corporate group" (p. 194). The Pemon local group represents an area of intense, mutual overlap of the personal kindreds of the members of its domestic units and, utilizing Goodenough's terminology, Urbina refers to this complex and dense area as a kindred "node." We can here compare the reference of Butt Colson (p. 103) to a kin "core" and of Thomas (1973: 122) to a "cognatic core."

Central to his argument is his assertion (p. 189) that the external relationships of the domestic unit are determined by the two parameters of "proximity" and "social distance"; the first refers to spatial distance —people in the settlement, neighbourhood and beyond; the second is determined by participation in networks of social relationships derived from marriage exchanges between domestic units. He notes that both parameters are usually put together by Pemon in establishing relationships external to the domestic unit. Pemon like to establish marriage

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[3] As Henley has noted (p. 157) there is a fundamental division of labour between the sexes. An adult man and an adult woman can together fulfill the majority of day-to-day subsistence tasks, so that "nuclear families enjoy a high degree of autonomy in the sphere of production, even if their products are normally consumed collectively within the settlement group." See Henley (1982) for a detailed consideration of this theme in connection with the E'ñepa.

alliances locally and if a man fails in his first option, of encountering a spouse in the marriageable category of cross cousin in the same settlement or neighbourhood, then he has two other choices: either to marry intergenerationally (e.g., sister's daughter marriage) or marry someone with no known genealogical links, creating thereby a whole set of fictitious kin in accordance with his wife's own ego-centred set of kin relations. In common with other Guiana peoples, Pemon believe that distant strangers are likely to be disagreeable if not dangerous, and as the object is to maintain cooperative working relationships then the choice of marriages within one's own domestic unit is most likely, thereby strengthening it, for the moment at least, at the expense of alliance with distant kin or strangers. A demographic factor thus enters into sister's daughter marriage, (discussed by Rivière 1969a: 279-282), and this also seems to bear out Schwerin's argument (p. 152) concerning the kin-integration system.

Urbina pinpoints the importance of daughters in a strong matri-uxorilocal situation and concomitantly that of the son-in-law in the reproduction of the domestic unity. He singles out as the most crucial relationship within the domestic unit that established between wife's father and daughter's husband, referring to it as "the basis of the economic and social configuration" (p. 188). Whilst the headman lives he constitutes a common link in the relationships between his sons-in-law. The Pemon brother-in-law relationship is "strongly cooperative," but when the headman dies the domestic unit splits into its component parts, and as the cycles of its component nuclear families begin again the extended family is thereby reintegrated.

The domestic units which comprise the Pemon extended family are normally dispersed, the socio-spatial system being characterized by small, scattered settlements organized in a neighbourhood. This, as Urbina observes, is an efficient way of solving problems of ecology and distribution of resources in an impoverished highland savanna environment (p. 198). A concomitant of these factors of ecology and demography is a high degree of settlement isolation and autonomy and a strong preference for local endogamy. However, what appears to us to be an exceptional degree of endogamy may not appear to be so to the Pemon, either genealogically or geographically. Should this be the case, then Henley's reference (p. 180) to the Guiana Caribs regarding the outside as remarkably close in may, in the Pemon case at least, be rephrased, in that what we regard as the inside is for them in their small-scale, scattered units, remarkably far out.

Urbina's paper also has very considerable bearing on arguments which stress the atomism and formlessness of Carib society, (for example, Overing p. 332; Rivière pp. 356-357; Schwerin p. 150). The cyclical phases of the domestic unit (nuclear family and daughter's husband and children) and the effects of these phases on the cluster of such units which make up the joint family, explain much of the apparent anarchy. When a village forms through the alliance of several extended families, the changes in and between these over time will lead to periodic realignments and even ultimate dispersion. Effectively, demographic fluctuations and changing relationships within and between networks, set up recurrent cycles. It is possible that intergeneration marriage is explicable when related to certain

phases in these cycles of expansion and contraction and the courses of disbandment and reconstitution. As a result of Urbina's work therefore, we think that future research will not only have to take careful account of the many interrelating factors which are involved in a full explanation of the nature of the several kinds of social units of Carib society, but will also have to include a close study of their cyclical courses and the mutual interactions of these. Such studies will necessarily be diachronic, for an understanding of the dynamics of structure and organization requires an extension of investigation well beyond a simple annual cycle of events.

Production and reproduction in Carib organization: the affinal relationship and uxorilocality

Uxorilocality, whereby a son-in-law spends a post-marital residence period in close association with his wife's parents and family unit working for them and with them is, as Dreyfus points out (p. 51), not a feature unique to Carib society and has to be treated not as an isolated element but as part of a social system. Two complementary papers provide detailed accounts and analyses of this residence requirement and of the nature of the relationship between father-in-law and son-in-law among the Waiwai. Both of them lend support to Urbina's denotation (p. 188) of this relationship among the Pemon as crucial and basic to the economic and social configuration.

Focussing on the Waiwai economic system, George Mentore refers specifically to cassava (bitter manioc) production and reviews the essential core structure of relationships involved. Considering the formation and role of work teams, he emphasizes the importance of a basic division of labour by sex and examines the articulation of the Waiwai economy with residence and the kin group. Informal, but close blood ties (mother, daughter and sister), are shown as uniting the women of the household who have the task of converting garden produce into food and drink. This is contrasted with the formal, affinal relationship and its specific obligations amongst men (wife's father - daughter's husband: wife's bother - sister's husband), in their complementary task of converting forest into garden land which the female work group will cultivate. He finds the core relationship governing the structure of the male work group to be that of in-laws. Just as Urbina finds the circulation-exchange of men among the Pemon domestic groups to be crucial in the formation of social relationships, so also Mentore, for the Waiwai, finds that "the dominant binding tie across households" is the affinal relationship from which emerges the importance of the residence group through marriage, which creates the alliance that the co-residency stipulation consolidates (pp. 208, 210). Uxorilocal bride service is therefore an in-built, formal social obligation of giving labour and general economic assistance —a social commitment between affines being thereby continuously expressed.

Mentore's paper highlights two different, interdependent patterns, one involving a male work force with the affinal link being dominant, and the other the female work force with its close core of female consanguines. The further implications of this with respect to women's relationships will be discussed in

relation to Adams' paper. It also well illustrates Overing's thesis by pinpointing the nature of "the cogent principle of reciprocity, expressed by the medium of labour exchange" (p. 199), for he notes that the pertinent issue is not the material reward received according to the amount of labour invested, but the accumulation and exchange of labour through in-law formal duties and obligations (p. 220), since Waiwai men may invest more labour than is necessary for mere subsistence because there are in-law obligations to fulfill and reciprocity exists. However, he points out that any relationship of symmetry or asymmetry is essentially transient, giving labour being indicative of kinship relations and a guarantee of receiving it back later. In this giving and taking, new obligations are created so that parity is never achieved and asymmetry is not perpetuated in any one sector (p. 219). As Urbina shows (Fig. 4), a cycle is in action, for the obligated son-in-law has the expectation of himself becoming a recipient father-in-law in due course.[4]

John Morton presents an acute analysis of extant Waiwai literature with direct reference to the interrelationships between production and reproduction. Focussing on ritual, especially the initiation rites of young Waiwai women as an educative and disciplinary procedure, he proposes that female initiation may be seen, ultimately, as confirming the elders in their control of the productive labour of their junior kinswomen, serving to fix them in the domestic realm in their natal homes and as determining the direction of their sexual energies. This leads to the dependence of the inferior, young affine on the household of a wife-giver, for sons-in-law are lured into the household labour force through the attractions (their sexuality and their labour) exercised by young initiated women. Morton thus demonstrates how ideology and ritual relate to and interrelate economic, social and political forms and practices, for in his elucidation of the articulation of ritual and its underlying value system with the Waiwai polity and kinship structure, female initiation is seen as formally connected and complementary to an ideology serving the interests of those wielding power in the community. Power in such a system resides in the hands of the elders who, through control over their younger kinswomen, also control through them their sons-in-law and brothers-in-law who, in an uxorilocal situation, are required to give reciprocal labour in bride service. "In other words, the productive power of women is translatable into social and political power over men through the extension of bride service obligations" (p. 253). This conforms with Rivière's definition (p. 351) of political economy in Guiana as being the management of scarce human resources.

Mentore notes (p. 219) that farm produce is exchanged only "in the interwoven fabric of social exchange." This is facilitated when surplus cassava production is converted into alcoholic beverages under the direction of the older, experienced members of the female work team, the gardens which have been cut by the male work force (directed by the male heads) providing the harvests. Consumed informally, commensality nevertheless assists in the integration of the family units comprising a settlement (see Henley 1982: 82-86). Consumed at ceremonial dance feasts, in the company of visiting outsiders, it serves to attract more dependent

[4] To my knowledge, Maybury-Lewis was the first to draw attention to this cycle in a South American society through his publication on the Akwẽ Shavante (1967: 331, Fig. 6).

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sons-in-law and to cement alliances, so further enhancing the political power of the successful leader-manager of the larger settlement unit (see Dreyfus, pp. 43-44). Consequently, it may be seen that in Carib societies, (as has also been well documented for the Piaroa by Overing Kaplan 1975), power in this form of political system depends on the manipulation of affinal relationships which, Morton states (p. 236), both create and sustain leadership.

A number of important topics thus emerges and these point to a need for further documentation in a comparative approach. The crucial nature of the relationships between wife's father (and mother) and daughter's husband, in a post-marital, uxorilocal situation with the associated factor of both genealogical and geographical endogamy, requires precise ethnographic documentation. This is especially the case since the degree, type and duration of service performed by sons-in-law and the degree of integration expected of them has been noted as variable both within and between Carib societies, as several of our papers document.[5]

If as is suggested by Morton, female initiation makes a transformational link between reproduction and production, between fertility and productivity, the question arises as to the structural role of male initiation and the nature of its complementarity. This in turn draws us to a consideration of male initiation among the Wayana and E'ñepa, since both these societies are unusual among Caribs in periodically conducting mass, public, male initiation ceremonies, (though it is possible that the Waiwai once did: Morton p. 245). Detailed documentation and comparative analyses are urgently needed because both societies are likely to cease practising such ritual in the near future owing to the inroads of the national societies in which they are embedded.[6]

In relating, as Henley suggests (p. 180), the set of relations of production (the economic system) to the set of relations of reproduction (kinship and marriage, including intergeneration marriage and degree of endogamy) the two Waiwai papers very clearly show the vital role of the marriage alliance. In this they bear out the essence of the analysis which Overing has presented from the point of view of the neighbouring Piaroa. Marriage is so central to the economy and the continuity of the power structure within these small groups that such alliances cannot, in the traditional society, be left to chance (Rivière p. 357). Mentore's remarks (p. 210) on the need for reliability in such relationships are very pertinent, for since so many interests are at stake a careful control must be exercised.

In the uxorilocal situation sons must be replaced by sons-in-law if the domestic unit and its economy are to survive, and there must be sufficient women to entice young men into the labour force. In these small units, which characterize Carib groups and their neighbours, the immobilizing of women in their natal homes and the attraction of men from outside may sometimes become inoperable, and it may be necessary to arrange for endogamous, maybe intergeneration marriage, to tide

[5] Thomas has published some excellent, detailed data on Pemon post-marital residence (1973: 110-165; 1982: Chap. 3).

[6] Henley has already published material on E'ñepa male initiation and is in the process of extending and deepening this (1982: 143-152). Hurault (1968: Chap. 6) has published on Wayana initiation.

over a demographic situation in which not only total numbers but also sex ratios present a problem —especially any shortage of marriageable females. Although therefore, Morton depicts a society in which the group keeps its women and allows men to circulate, he also notes that there are circumstances in which the group has to maximize its human resources so that the productive cell keeps its men as well as its women. If virilocal residence cannot be arranged and raiding, when affinal obligations and reciprocity are dispensed with, is impractical, then male mobility may be countered by extreme endogamy via sister's daughter marriage, or alternate generation marriages, until an expansion of ties can occur via outgoing men.[7] We can perceive two major problems in the endeavours of the Carib polity in keeping an equilibrium. Increase in size, as Rivière has stressed (pp. 353-354), incurs an increase in problems of control and ultimately leads to fission; undersize creates difficulty in maintaining a continuous, viable unity as regards social and political relationships, especially when group security in threatened.

From the point of view of a prospective son-in-law and his natal family, it is better to marry a close kinswoman than to run the risk of alliance with a stranger (Morton, p. 249), for endogamy avoids trouble. However, Morton refers to the extreme endogamy of proximate generation marriage as a short-term solution and, as Overing perceives, the reciprocity from another unit which a more distant affinal alliance induces may be structurally necessary. A continuous tension exists in Guiana societies, between contraction of the group through endogamy and the expansion required to restore demographic interdependence, and as Morton argues cogently (pp. 246-247) internal and external are perceived to be very closely associated, (see Henley, p. 180), so that the point where inside and outside meet seems to fluctuate according to the changing fortunes of the units involved. This assertion will again be taken up in the discussion of Dole's paper (p. 31).

Social change and Carib organization

If Dreyfus is right in asserting the insufficiency of synchronic analysis, then studies of historical and recent social change and transformation induced by national societies (whether directly or indirectly) should also serve to highlight some of the most vital structures of indigenous systems, if only via the confusion resulting from their incipient dissolution. Although the topic is potentially an enormous, all-embracing one, our three papers which concentrate on change, when taken together, refer to its wide variety of repercussions and also, in several crucial fields, achieve depth of analysis.

The paper by H. Dieter Heinen on the Ye'kuana of the Upper Erebato basin has grown out of an evaluation of the "Empresa Indígena Tujumoto", a cooperative which was set up in 1975 which has tried to articulate the economic activities of this indigenous group with the Venezuelan regional economy in such a way that control of the processes and change remains with the Ye'kuana themselves. Heinen presents an outline of Ye'kuana traditional production and residence units and

[7] Both Henley (pp. 164-168) and Morton (pp. 245-247) discuss the internal logic in expanding the possibilities of marriage within these categories.

discusses political leadership and its strategies (pp. 265-271), before going on to consider major aspects in the recent history of change in relation to these.

His analysis centres on the crucial role of the traditional wife's father-daughter's husband relationship in the organization of the extended household group, which is an uxorilocal unity consisting of a senior couple, their daughters, daughter's husbands and children, but excludes married sons who have entered other households. The cooperative seems not to have represented a threat to the extended household, having been assimilated without major problems. The word *tujuumoto* refers to a work team, which is one unit for production in a series of units which range from a couple to a whole community (pp. 265, 293-294), so that this new form of economic organization is not so innovative as might be assumed. The national education system on the other hand, has had serious effects on indigenous values, leading to a tendency for young Ye'kuana to choose their own spouses according to national custom (marriage with anyone beyond the category of first cousin). The disruptive effects of the introduction of paid employment has been noted by anthropologists in a number of studies, and similarly Heinen has found that "those who dispose of money," that is, government employees who are economically independent of their community by reason of their salaries, are also more independent of the traditional leadership of village elders and able to undermine the authority of fathers-in-law. The threat to this relationship appears to lead to a serious weakening in the organization of the extended household, with the young people becoming less responsive to the traditional leadership. More individualism has resulted in a change in the nature of leadership, which consequently has become more centralized under pressure of this internal shift combined with the demands of national government.

Since the leader of a Ye'kuana village is ultimately given authority by the elders, who are at the same time heads of extended families and fathers-in-law who command sons-in-law, it can be appreciated that any change in the latter relationship must trigger off a whole set of repercussions within the total political organization. Heinen's stress on the importance of the relationship between father-in-law and son-in-law coincides with the findings of Urbina for the Arekuna Pemon and with Mentore and Morton for the Waiwai, but it also highlights the crucial place of this affinal relationship by additionally showing how its disruption undermines both family unities and the personal authority on which political leadership is based, so inaugurating in situations of change a drastic shift in the overall power system.

The female unity and continuity

The Barama River Caribs, like those Karinya to their West, have been exposed to centuries of outside influences. This contact culminated in the late 19th century in the invasion of the Barama River valley by gold miners, bringing disease and demographic, economic and cultural upheavals which reached extreme proportions in the 1930s, when John Gillin was carrying out his well-known study of this Carib group. Restudying them in the 1960s Kathleen Adams was faced with a greatly

reduced (some 550 people), disrupted society, but one which nevertheless, seemed to be geared for survival despite periodic fragmentation and movement.

Her analysis centres on the case of John Miller, an outstandingly successful leader who had maintained a settlement of 47 people (near a quarter of the Barama Carib population) up to the time of his death in the 1950s. Miller's achievement conforms with an aspect of leadership which Heinen also stresses for the Ye'kuana, that of personal ascendancy due to a forceful personality (Heinen p. 269), encapsulated in Miller's reputation as being the best hunter, possessing strength, cunning and shaman's knowledge. Similarly, a strong set of social relations underpinned these charismatic qualities and it is the structure of these which Adams examines. Whereas Heinen and our other contributors found the asymmetric wife's father - daughter's husband relationship to be the crucial one, she discovers that Miller, having no marriageable daughters and no real brothers in his settlement, founded his ascendancy on the brother-in-law (sister's husband and wife's brother) relationship. Effectively, his following related to him through closely linked females, his wives, their sisters and his own sisters (pp. 301-303), so that his success can be seen as due ultimately to his holding together several sets of sisters and, via them, their husbands and other men coming into the settlement to marry.

Adams asserts that "women may serve as passive links between men who are political actors" (p. 303) and in this respect she also coincides with Morton's proposition concerning the position of women in Waiwai social organization with its stress on their high value bringing about a core relationship, the Waiwai case he argues principally referring to the interrelationship of wife's father and daughter's husband. However, she considers that women have a more positive role as well, and she looks at women's political participation in the Miller case history and investigates what sisters gained in supporting his leadership. This analysis takes her into fundamental aspects of Carib structure which have hitherto been neglected and which, in our opinion, are very well worth stressing.

Like Urbina for the Pemon (pp. 185-188) she notes the cycle of change of household status which a male Carib undergoes through the custom of post-marital uxorilocality, until he himself may become a father-in-law and in a position to command service. From one point of view therefore, "Women are given and women are kept as men conduct politics among themselves" (p. 300), an "image of women's inconsequence" (p. 301) being enhanced through researchers having ignored direct kin relationships among women in a highly interrelated population.[8] From another point of view however, "women remain in a mainstream of generational continuity by long-term relations to their mothers and their daughters" whilst men form and dissolve relations in each generation (see Rivière,

[8] This is a product of the Western European, and derived, kinship systems which have, for formal purposes, stressed the male descent line at the expense of the female one. Thus one of the problems of genealogical research using English church records of baptisms is that the mother's maiden name is never mentioned. Consequently, if a marriage record is not also available there may be no means of knowing her kin derivation. In the highly interrelated village populations of previous centuries, a knowledge of connections through the female line is as necessary as among the Barama River Caribs for any study of the composition of the local groups.

p. 356, discussing the ephemeral nature of Carib political relationships). Her realization of the structural importance of a basic local continuity which women and their children maintain, puts a different focus on male kinship. Contrary to Gillin's analysis, Adams points out, the "building block" of Carib society is not the fraternal relationship, but the sororal one, whilst the mother and daughter relationship is structurally more fundamental than that of father and son. These female ties are basic, whether the men in the household and settlement are primarily sons-in-law or brothers-in-law, (although a combination of fraternal and sororal relationships occur locally if a man should achieve endogamous residence in his natal unit). Miller was successful in perceiving the utility of the strength of a variety of female relationships, including a widow's attraction back to her sister's compound and the fact that widowers, who go wherever they can obtain another wife, could be enticed in through the disposition of unattached females. Against his success can be set the fact that a nearby rival was unable to be independent of Miller and relocate his settlement, because such a move threatened the ties among the sibling groups of his sisters and his wife's sisters and he could not separate them (p. 302).

Adams thus finds that women and their children are a basic unit of vital importance in the fluctuations of Carib dispersion and relocations and in conditions of social change, for "Sisters and mothers and mother's sisters represent sources of assistance and refuge. Under these circumstances, women neither give nor take relatives. Sisters as kin-keepers care for parents and husbands, and as mothers they produce relatives, i.e. children." In these roles they "gain a measure of social determination as their interests converge with those of men, whose political careers are based on the management of population size" (p. 304). In the Carib tale which Adams recounts (pp. 304-305) Noah is a woman, for "Carib society regenerates itself again and again. And in this process, women, especially sisters, and the sibling sets they reproduce are a basis on which political relations among men can be elaborated" (p. 304).

The complementarity of the sexes in the division of labour and the economic sphere is particularly well described by Mentore who, as already noted, finds two interdependent patterns, one involving a male work force with formal affinal links dominant (both wife's father-daughter's husband and wife's brother-sister's husband) and the other, the female work force, dependent on the informal cooperation in the household of mother and daughter and of sisters, who form a close core of female blood kin. Concomitantly, whilst the affinal relationship is the dominant binding tie across households because men move, within the household the consanguineal ties of women form the long-term integration. It is this continuity and solidarity characterizing female relationships, promoted by men's post-marital uxorilocal residence, which seem to have led some researchers to conclude that they might be dealing with kinship of matrilineal character. (See Schwerin, p. 126 and Heinen, p. 277. Morton, p. 234, notes that Meggers and Evans made this deduction for the Waiwai.) Because a woman stays at home she is the axis for the formation and continuity of the local group (Morton p. 256). Among the Waiwai Morton found that uxorilocality and the affinal relationships between men induce the tie between sisters and mothers and daughters, whilst Adams for the

Barama River Caribs concludes that "Men's relations which are formed and dissolved in each generation conform to and promote this continuity among women" (p. 300). The one part of the system is thus the structural concomitant of the other, so that we can propose that although political power in Guiana depends on the manipulation of the affinal link (as Overing Kaplan 1975 shows for the Piaroa), the existence of a local group of close, consanguineally related women is very important indeed as the stable, reproducing factor in the political process. It is to Adams we owe a clear exposition of this other half of the structure, so that we are presented with a view of the total unity in the logic of Carib kinship and of the full political significance of a balanced system, sufficiently flexible to reproduce itself in conditions of flux and change.

Gertrude Dole describes the Xingú indigenous peoples as having experienced a 300-year period of demographic disturbance through warfare, depopulation and consequent merging of tribal groups, to the degree that, by 1954, only 700 people remained in the region and the Kuikuru had retained their settlement size only by absorbing remnants drawn from 10 different populations, some Carib and some Arawak speakers. Consequently, the difficulties in interpreting data from a long-assailed people in many ways parallel those of Adams and Schwerin, and we cannot but agree with her assertion that "it seems unproductive to deny the relevance of social change" when considering the problems of consistency and integration in Kuikuru society (p. 327).

Her aim is first to establish the nature of present-day Kuikuru society from observation and then to compare and contrast it with other Carib groups, the neighbouring Kalapalo researched by Ellen Basso and the Guiana Caribs. To stimulate such comparisons she concentrates her themes on leadership, economic organization, residence, marriage and kinship organization (pp. 310-319), but notes the discrepancies between the social reality, with its range of variants and individual choices, and the stated norm or ideal frequently expressed by informants. The result is a gallant and provocative interpretation of a complex and difficult set of data, not the least of its merits being the airing of a number of crucial problems of interpretation of the kind which must be confronted in any study of social transformation —or suspected transformation.

Some of the effects of demographic disturbance and consequent merging of populations are demonstrable and even quantifiable. For example, Dole calculates that about 75% of Kuikuru marriages are now locally endogamous, i.e. taking place within the community. This is a high incidence given the facts of depopulation, but explicable through the process of absorption of refugees which has resulted in potential spouses being brought into the Kuikuru community. In this sense, as she cogently argues (pp. 320-321), the assertion that serious depopulation leads to increasing exogamy is a misleading one, since it does not take account of coalescence and tribal mergers which maintain the size of those communities which do survive, and allow for internal marriage.

Another range of her data, that involving the interpretation of the relationship between Kuikuru ideals versus their general practice, is much more difficult to assess. Thus, the Kuikuru express the ideal of a patrifocal if not patrilineal

structure, with patrilineal succession to leadership and patrilocal residence. However, she finds that leadership circulates among several patrilines, that lineal succession is usually delayed (p. 311) and moreover, that personal qualities are vital adjuncts —as Adams (pp. 300-301, 306) and Heinen (p. 269) noted for the Barama River Caribs and the Ye'kuana respectively. Similarly, although there is the expectation of forming patrilocal, extended family residence groups, few such groups actually occur. Post-marital, uxorilocal, extended family residence is usual. Depending on economic and social circumstances, the period may vary from a few days, years or even indefinitely, with the result that a variety of residence groups is formed. The ideal of ultimate patrilocality thus contrasts with the reality of an irregular, unstable pattern as regards settlement and focal relatives and with a tendency towards uxori-patrilocality (p. 314).

However, it might be argued that such an ideal is an inherent part of traditional culture. Dreyfus defines for us the circumstances of Kalinago patrilocal residence involving outstanding leaders (pp. 43-44) and the same phenomenon also occurs today in the case of established Akawaio leaders who may marry a wife whose family is located in a distant village. Adams argues that extended fraternal groups develop in certain circumstances of population stability and when groups of brothers marry their cross cousins (p. 304). Although neither cross cousin marriage nor stability characterize the Kuikuru they have, through absorption, kept their settlement size (p. 320) and have been able to practise local endogamy, so it may be asserted that circumstances are favourable for limited patrilines to develop among them. A third possibility cannot be discounted. This is the existence of a paternal and fraternal idiom, in Guiana Carib mythology at least, which seems to present an inversion of the social reality. For example, there is the fraternal relationship of the twin heroes, elder and younger brother who, during their search for their sun father, performed marvellous deeds of transformation which created the present order in nature and society. This sharply contrasts with the affinal reality towards the end of their adventures when they live apart for a time and, as their fortunes diverge, they engage in formal feasting between their settlements.[9] The ideal of the Kuikuru may thus be of the same order as that expressed in the Shavante (Gê) cosmology, that "heaven is a place where there are no affines" Maybury-Lewis 1967: 291-292), and that of the Piaroa in which identity and safety are identified with the asocial existence of the after world (Overing p. 333).

Dole's exposition of Kuikuru kinship is a particularly interesting one, highlighting as it does, the problem of variants. Some of her variants at least are found in other Carib systems! Although a special cross cousin terminology exists among the Kuikuru, actual cross cousin marriage is rare and tends to be bypassed through the designation of cross cousins by the same terms as used for siblings and parallel cousins (p. 327). Referring to the Kuikuru tendency to marry into adjacent generations (p. 322) she notes the fact that female cross cousins are often classed with sisters (including parallel cousins) and may allow marriage to occur with their daughters. Father's sister's daughter, mother's brother's daughter, father's sister's

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[9] For example, see Armellada (1964: 58-64) for a Pemon account of this episode.

daughter's daughter and mother's brother's daughter's daughter are thus all placed in the same marriageable category. This also occurs among the Pemon. In a strict cross cousin marriage system, father's sister's daughter's daughter and mother's brother's daughter's daughter would fall into the category of Ego's daughter. The Pemon cross cousin term is thus used when referring to the "affinal cousin," and they use the sibling term for father's sister's daughter and mother's brother's daughter when they are older than male Ego, when marriage is not contemplated. Moreover, as Urbina notes (p. 188), an older sister is often put into the category of mother, being a "little mother." Among the Akawaio she is often addressed as mother's sister. Heinen's observation (p. 277) that Ye'kuana use sibling terms for cross cousin as a sign of respect and sometimes as a sign that the individual in question has been eliminated as a possible spouse, is also relevant here. When Dole (p. 322) reports the statement that "today men want to marry other relatives, including mother's 'sister'" then this may similarly be another possibility in the cross generation (Henley's intergenerational) marriage system, in which the father's sister's daughter of cross cousin reckoning is classified as Ego's mother in the sister's daughter, patrilateral marriage reckoning (see Henley p. 165). Given the interplay between the operation of a cross cousin marriage system and an intergeneration one, a very careful assessment is necessary before it can be said with certainty whether an apparent loss of distinction between cross and parallel cousins in Kuikuru practice is truly variant and innovative, as for example, seems to be the case in the choices being made by Ye'kuana youth which undermine the crucial father-in-law and son-in-law relationship (Heinen, pp. 280, 294). Alternatively, they may have been choosing between two kinds of marriages, integrated in a single traditional kinship order and ideology even though one may be regarded as less than ideal. It can also be asked what, if any, are the effects of the merging of remnant populations and of the incoming national customs on these indigenous alternatives?

The proposition made by Anderson, whom Dole quotes (p. 327), that cultures in the process of change can be identified by the occurrence of variant practices and that the degree of cultural integration can be measured by the incidence of "lesser and greater numbers of variant behaviors," is extremely difficult to apply. First we have to find our variants! Despite long histories of turbulance, as in the case of the Xingú, this is a very difficult exercise. It is notably so in flexible, cognatic systems, with their blurred boundaries which encourage manipulation by individuals and where, moreover, syncretisms of all types and degrees may be developing, creating uncertainty as to what is indigenous and what is due to a process of adoption and adaptation[10] and whether there has truly been a structural transformation.

The shifting fields of theory which we have commented on as characteristic of South American kinship studies until recently, have not been much help to Dole in her analysis of the difficult topics which she pinpoints. Indeed, she rejects the ideal of the two-section cross cousin alliance model as not compatible with her

[10] This is a problem, for example in assessing the impact of Christian teaching on indigenous conceptual and ritual systems, as in the case of the syncretic religious cults of Hallelujah, Chochiman and others in the Guiana Highlands.

ethnography, itemizing (p. 325) seven features of difference. In this rejection, she joins other contributors in their specific fields of research and similarly sees Kuikuru kinship as cognatic (p. 315). However, she makes her own positive, and in our opinion most valuable, addition to the theoretical basis for interpretation of the kinship of Carib societies and their similar neighbours in her discussion of the full implications of a cognatic system, the overlap which she sees as part of the category of marriageable cross cousins and the problem of a kin-affine distinction in it. Rejecting the existence of opposition of kin and affines as finite, mutually exclusive categories, she finds that affinibility is determined on the basis of a variable concept of social distance, measured in part by supposed or stipulated genealogical links but also to some extent by interpersonal relations, place of residence and tribal affiliation. She points out (p. 324), that: "Because cousins are included in the personal kindred and are also eligible as mates, they can be seen as a type of consanguineal kin that are at the same time potential affines, in the same way as cousins were recognized as both kin and legitimate mates in many Stratified Segmented societies and in 19th-century England and America."[11] She continues by noting that between the two poles of consanguinity and affinity there is a series of situations where an individual can modify his relationship to another according to residence, factional alignment and individual desire and (p. 325, quoting Monod-Becquelin): "One can be a little, more, or less in a consanguineal relation (or affinal)." This vagueness which characterizes cognatic societies such as the Kuikuru, contrasts with the stricter boundaries of lineal structures in which people are classed corporately, as members of specific and distinct kin groups. For, "...cognatic societies that have no prescriptive marriage rules but only prohibited genealogical categories may class cross-relatives as both kin and potential affines."[12] Choice in this system, with its flexibility and variation in an Ego-centred network of relationships, lies in the decision on whether to make affinity operative or not. "In these societies a consanguine becomes an affine only as a result of marriage. Affinity is then a *de facto* category dependent upon marriage" and so, Dole suggests, it might be analytically useful to recognize a class of "consanguineal affines," that is, kin with whom marriage is permitted (p. 325). The fuller implications of this creative contribution to current arguments on the definition of blood kin and affines as distinct categories, will be discussed in the text.

[11] In England, marriage between first cousins, especially those with the same surname (i.e. marriage between the offspring of two brothers), has been regarded with some mistrust, expressed via the fear of possible lunacy or mental disorders in future offspring and the querying, like the Pemon with respect to intergeneration marriage, of the "rightness" of the marriage. It may be further noted that young, opposite sex cousins in England frequently indulge in joking and flirting relationships with sexual connotations of an overt nature. Compare Heinen (p. 277) where he refers to an opposite cross cousin term signifying the category most propitious for a marriage alliance and used in a joking relationship among the Ye'kuana as if to explore the possibilities of just such an alliance.

[12] Similarly Morton (p. 246) argues the ambiguous nature of sister's daughter and of father's sister among Waiwai; that as well as being kinswomen they have latent affinal specifications. See also Henley pp. 163-164. Motives for the extension of sibling terms are referred to on pp. 10-11. It should be noted that under the operation of cross cousin marriage, cross cousin terms can never, properly, be extended to siblings.

A comparative view of the "political economy" of Caribs and their neighbours

Our two final papers discuss basic aspects of the organization of Caribs and their neighbours, focussing on the theme of political economy. Joanna Overing, considering these societies in general, contends that they have no political economy in that there is no-one, no social group, or category possessing coercive control over the labour and its products of another. Instead, there exists reciprocity in relationships which allows for production and reproduction and which inhibits the development of institutionalized power over people and over scarce resources.

She rejects dual organization (as represented in a two-section or alliance system whereby society is integrated by alliance and reciprocity between two groups), not considering it a suitable model for explaining Guianese societies (pp. 332-333). She contrasts these with the Bororo and Gê societies of Central Brazil and those of the North-west Amazon, in which the understanding of social life within a cosmological scheme is seen visually in village lay-out, and in which also social structures involving moieties and kin group segmentation exist and are portrayed through ritual enactments. Such complex spatial figurations are non-existent in Guiana where, she argues (p. 332), social groups are characteristically "atomistic, dispersed and highly fluid in form." Nevertheless, she maintains, this contrast in structure and organization "merely reflects the various ways in which a similar philosophy of social life can be acted out through 'elementary structures of reciprocity' " (p. 333). It is to this philosophy of social existence and its incorporation of a particular understanding of the nature of political power and control over the forces of culture, or of scarce resources of the world,that she addresses her paper, and in this context it is worth noting Schwerin's reference (p. 125) to Lévi-Strauss' assertion that cognatic ("undifferentiated") systems have nothing to do with elementary structures because they lack a fixed rule of descent.

Overing asserts (p. 342) that the jural relationship in Piaroa society is with in-laws and that political relationships are acted out in the idiom of affinity. She describes the in-law relationship as one in which there is a coming together and interaction of unlike entities and forces which are potentially highly dangerous to one another: "since in-laws are strangers who may eat you or steal from you. The danger intrinsic to the in-law relationship can only be averted through proper reciprocity" (pp. 341-342). The Piaroa view, expressed graphically in myth, equates society and its possibility with affinity, for both represent the coming together of unlike forces and the resulting unity annuls the dangers associated with initial difference. From these concepts Overing derives her unitary principle of society, which entails the enactment of "elementary structures of reciprocity." In Guianese societies this obtains through a principle of exchange, in which emphasis is not so much on the attainment of a particular group formation as on the achievement of proper relationships among beings belonging to categories which are viewed as significantly different but necessary to each other for society to exist. This political philosophy says (p. 346) that "no man, no group, can have sole ownership over the forces of culture, or a set of them, that would entail as well a control over their products." "Reciprocity itself can thus be equally viewed as a particular mode of

self-perpetuation, not of groups —which might entail the coercive control of both people and scarce resources— but of relationships, a perpetuation that counteracts the development of such control," so that "society itself becomes a logic for maintaining a balance" (p. 346).

Thus in Guiana elementary structures of reciprocity, although not operated in the form of a descent or dual organization system, integrate a society in which, "The traditional local group usually dwells together within a large communal house as an endogamous cognatic kinship group. Membership in the house is normally based upon a principle of affinity, and an adult should be married into the house, have affines within it, to join it." This appears as a fluid and amorphous group since cultural and social categories become blurred through endogamous marriage. This structure she has classified as an "alliance-based kinship group," being "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" (p. 332). In contrast, the Bororo and Gê speakers avert differentiation and hierarchy through elaborate ritual transactions between moieties, and in these societies it is at this level of interchange and reciprocity that identity and differences in culture become blurred.

Overing's postulation of a philosophy of social life being acted out through elementary structures of reciprocity underpins several predominant themes which emerge in our papers. I have already referred to it in relation to the papers on macro-levels of structure (pp. 12-15), in which the conception of underlying differences is the basic ordering principle of group formation, providing an environment of danger and distrust in which group interactions are played out in a combination of alliance forming and reciprocity on the one hand and disjunction and hostility on the other. Segmentary systems operate on just this basis, without the integration of a hierarchy of authority of the nation state kind. Her reference to the Piaroa classification of relationships with others on a continuum which moves from danger to safety and from differences to identity (p. 343), conforms closely with Urbina's discussion of Pemon concepts of proximity and distance (pp. 189, 194, 197 and Fig. 10). Mentore has documented the importance of reciprocity in the in-law relationship for production and Morton demonstrates its crucial nature in reproduction and the ritual dimension which exerts control over it. Certainly Overing's argument is central to the proposal that sister's daughter marriage reflects a fundamental dichotomy between inside and outside already noted in the literature (p. 20), and graphically expressed in Pemon and Kapon myth when the trauma of a man's marriage into a stranger group is frequently expressed as a human marrying an animal, or as one species marrying another with a different and dangerous life style. (See Armellada 1964: 145-147, 148-150, 163-166.) As Henley has remarked (p. 179) the distinction between the security of the inside and the danger of the outside world in the thought of the Guianese Caribs seems "to have an apparently endless echo at all levels of their society and culture." Nevertheless, the endogamous local marriage reduces the problem and it is characteristic of many Carib societies that they marry close in, often via real cross cousin marriage, or the alternative intergeneration marriages. Schwerin's suggestion (p. 152), that

Overing's "kin-affine system" be converted to a "kin-integration system," is explicable in these terms. The philosophy of reciprocity, depicted in Piaroa myth as having been established through the union of opposing dangerous forces in an affinal relationship, is not the primary one amongst circum-Roraima Caribs. As I have noted (p. 29), the culture heroes, twin brothers and ancestral to man, were the initial, complementary transformers. Only later do they separate, take spouses in different locations and begin the formal exchange which is depicted through the roles of guests and hosts in dance feasts and prestations of food. It appears therefore, that these Caribs hold the concept of an initial golden age of fraternal collaboration (although not without its own frictions), which is followed by the hard realities of the affinal situation with its formal, competitive interchanges, whereas the Piaroa begin with a deadly struggle between forces of good and evil which are tamed only via the contraction of the affinal relationship with its reciprocity. Nevertheless, although the order of events seems different, the dangers of important sectors of social life are recognized in both societies as residing in the affinal relationship.

A detailed comparative investigation of origin myths and conceptions relating to the nature of society could profitably be undertaken. Meanwhile, Overing's consideration of elementary structures of reciprocity and their expression as a philosophy of power, containing as it does the idea of proper and improper reciprocities controlling the distributions of power over resources and consequent political power over groups, merits careful attention. Ultimately, it is a proposition which seeks to explain the maintenance of an equalitarianism and individualism, which have been denoted as essentially characteristic of the Caribs and their neighbours and which is very strongly argued in our final paper.

Peter Rivière, in a polished, closely argued paper, considers political economy to refer to the ways in which the production and distribution of wealth are organized, and to be concerned with the management and control of scarce resources (p. 350). From this basis he argues that a political economy *does* exist in Guiana, although "elusive and unformalized." It is concerned with the management of people, not of goods. Natural resources are normally perceived as plentiful enough to provide for traditional needs, but people are seen as in short supply-for exploiting them and there is a relative scarcity of safe, familiar people in comparison with dangerous strangers. The management of the human resource is therefore basic and he emphasizes that the direct control and strategy of a successful leader is aimed at providing wealth for himself and his followers by attracting retainers and incorporating people in his community. That is, in Adam's words (p. 302), the leader builds up "an independent estate in people."

Women are especially important in this process, since they are the ones who produce a surplus of food and drink which men give away during reciprocal feasting, thereby attaining political importance (see Morton pp. 257-258). The control over women and the use of marriage strategies for the incorporation and retention of people is therefore basic and is achieved through a preference for settlement endogamy and uxorilocal residence. These are strategies whereby both sons and daughters may be retained or an incoming son-in-law replaces an out-

going son as men circulate. A number of very interesting points for discussion arises from this basic proposition and from Rivière's amplification of it.

First, we note a contradiction between Overing and Rivière as to whether Guianese societies have, or have not, a political economy. However, this contradiction appears to be more one of definition than of ultimate interpretation of the nature of society. Both agree that there is no political economy of goods; Overing specifically states (p. 341) that land and water and their products are not seen as owned by man and in Piaroa society "such control is not a part of the scope of political power." However, as we have noted, she also stresses the inhibition of a development of coercive power over people as well as over scarce resources, through the lack of institutionalized mechanisms for exercise of compulsion in a system in which structures of reciprocity exist, are supported ideologically in myth, and are expressed in the affinal relationship. Rivière, on the other hand, stresses that in this kind of system there is the need to deal directly with human resources (instead of exercising control over vital goods) and it is this control which constitutes a political economy. But he notes modifying factors, due to lack of organizing structures which seriously inhibit the degree and duration of control. "There are limits to which a leader can build up the size of his settlement," for village leaders in this region have no coercive power and little authority beyond individual skill in the management of social relationships. As control over people exists in the context of family and kinship, it gets weaker as the periphery of the local community is reached and kinship becomes extended, with consequent increase of disputes and difficulty in resolving them. Add problems in food supply due to ecological factors and overall instability will result in fission of the more distantly related (pp. 353-354).

Both authors thus stress the importance of the relationship between wife's father and daughter's husband in Guiana, Overing describing it as a jural one and Rivière regarding it as presenting the leader with a vital resource —his only one! However, he also states that settlement endogamy and uxorilocality "only occur as a statistical trend" (p. 354) and "the leader's control is never assured, and the variation in settlement composition is the outcome of innumerable individual negotiations" (p. 355). Moreover, this political, asymmetrical relationship is confined in time; it is temporary only, lapsing on the death of the father-in-law and with no succeeding mechanism for keeping brothers-in-law together. There are no social groups which survive the lifetime of single individuals and the very existence of the settlement is "tied to that of its founder and leader whose network of relationships constitutes it" (p. 355). Overing concludes that Guiana social structures are atomistic, with "a subtle philosophy of individualism that is extreme on any scale by which it can be measured," in which controls are the responsibility of the individual (Overing pp. 334, 341). Rivière, in maintaining that "the only political resources are individual relationships" concludes that: "Society is no more than an aggregate of personal relationships, and accordingly societal and individual relationships remain at the same order of complexity. It is for this reason that these societies appear highly individualistic" (pp. 356-357). Both authors compare these characteristics with other Lowland South American structures, in which continuity

is achieved through social formations such as age-sets, moieties and lineages, which Guiana societies lack.

Despite these cogent arguments, not all our contributors agree that Guiana societies are quite so formless and individualistic. Several assert that it is not the dyadic relationships which are over-riding, but the institutionalized categories into which these fall and which create a society which is more than a simple aggregate of personal relationships (e.g. Schwerin, pp. 128, 151). As Patrick Menget remarked during our symposium discussion, since individuals can quite easily be reclassified it is the relationships between categories which are important. Heinen's finding that social change affects sets of dyadic relationships, such as that between wife's father -daughter's husband, and initiates a series of repercussions at different levels of structure, also shows interdependencies of an essential kind. It can be further argued that a neglect of the higher levels of social organization (a neglect which our first three papers attempt to rectify) has led to an exaggeration of the lack of structural continuities (Villalón pp. 57-60; Butt Colson pp. 73-74). Where regional fields of interlocking relationships create networks which persist over time and where kinship nodes, or cores, (e.g. Urbina, pp. 119-122) form at points of maximum interconnection in social and geographical space, then these must possess significance and value for political organization of groups.

Also of direct relevance here is an appreciation of the various named roles and statuses in Carib societies and of their interrelationships where they coexist. Heinen refers to two in particular for the Ye'kuana (p. 266): the head of the extended household, the old father-in-law, denoted by a term which means "he who has people, sons-in-law," and the headman of a group of extended families, denoted as "he who is responsible for people, he who directs people." Kapon and Pemon groups make a similar distinction, between the owner of the house (traditionally an extended or joint family unit) and the settlement leader who is director-manager, a manipulator (*epuri*, literally, *epu*, handle or prop; *-ri*, possessive suffix). The shaman's roles provide another set of constraints and opportunities, for although Overing asserts that the Piaroa shamans do not have the duty of controlling the social behaviour of individuals in society (p. 341), among the Kapon, Pemon and the Kuikuru at least, shaman pronouncements in seances refer to the conduct of individuals and families, with the threat of continuing ill-health or food shortage providing sanctions on bad, anti-social, dangerous or unfortunate behaviour. (See Dole 1972; Butt 1965-1966.) Then too, there is the role of the thinker-dreamer,[13] the philosopher and possessor of wisdom, whose ritual relationship with the life-giving and energy sources of the universe endows him, at a regional level and even beyond, with a moral authority which sometimes draws together hundreds of people from across the boundaries of local groups. Where syncretic cults have formed, for example among the Pemon, these have sometimes led to the foundation of large, religious centres sporadically occupied. Overing, and also Rivière (pp. 353-354), whilst recognizing that ritual competence is important to Piaroa structure, (the latter suggesting that Piaroa stress on ritual competence in

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[13] See Barandiarán (1979: 71, 136) for the mythical portrayal of this role among the Ye'kuana.

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the preparation of food seems to demonstrate an incipient move from a political economy of people to one of goods), have underestimated its undoubted importance in Carib societies.[14] This is understandable in that research which has been carried out on this topic has scarcely begun to appear in print and a great deal more has yet to be done. The overall lesson for us is that care must be taken not to conflate out of existence, different levels of structure, nor named roles and statuses, with respect to Carib organization in general.

Finally, in our consideration of individualism and society, we should take note of Heinen's pertinent observation (p. 270), that there is a confusion between social facts and institutions on the one hand and individual strategies on the other. "By and large people conform to the behavioral rules of their societies and are not nearly as deviant as they are made out to be. What is underestimated... is the amount of freedom left to individual strategies by behavioral constraints and social rules." These misunderstandings he attributes to limited experience which researchers have of such rules.

Whilst agreeing with Rivière (p. 354) that competition for wealth in the form of ritual is arguably another way of building up and retaining a following, not fundamentally different from the direct competition for people that a settlement leader operates, I nevertheless have reservations concerning the ultimate value of his definition of a Carib political economy. The existence of a Guiana Amerindian political economy concerned with the management of people, not of goods, does not in itself differentiate this kind of society from hierarchical systems, such as the Inca State for example, in which control was exercised directly over the labour time of people (including artisans and professionals) for the production of goods and services.[15] Such a system of direct control of labour is characteristic of the so-called "archaic civilizations" and is one of the major distinctions between them and the modern nation state with its stress on direct control of goods. The crucial fact which we face is that of a particular form of political and economic *descentralization* and any definition must take this fact into account.

Overing's postulation of the non-existence of a political economy, since no-one, no social group or category possesses coercive power over the labour and its products of another, whilst indicating the lack of institutionalized hierarchy in a structure governed by elementary reciprocity, perhaps requires further clarification. There certainly exist kinship categories among Caribs which have formal duties attached to them. Most notable is the case of sons-in-law in relation to their parents-in-law. As Mentore found among the Waiwai (p. 210): "Once a son has left his natal household for marriage, he has no fixed responsibilities toward his father, nor a father any formal tie with his son. Also, there are no rigid institutional commitments between brothers. In fact, most formal duties are passed on to the

[14] For example, ritual mediation occurs among the Pemon through shaman contact with the spirit masters and mistresses of the natural species and resources, and also through the traditional songs and dances led by settlement leaders.

[15] See Murra (1956, 1967). Goody (1971) also argues that in West African kingdoms, as opposed to acephalous lineage systems such as that of the Ibo, since nothing could be made out of "landlordism" the control of people's labour was used to provide the means for maintaining kings, chiefs and administration in hierarchical organizations.

relationship between in-laws." Our contributors refer to this as an asymmetrical relationship with hierarchical implications, existing between wife's father and daughter's husband, but equally they document the fact of its temporary nature. As Urbina notes, for the Pemon, it is part of a recurring cycle of status changes within the domestic unit, in which individual males pass from subordinate, service-providing status to themselves eventually becoming dominant fathers-in-law. From the individual's point of view asymmetry is essentially transient. Its duration and degree of intensity is often negotiable but in any case is resolved by the passage of time according to the household cycle. A permanent class of dependants never forms, as Rivière rightly notes, and Dreyfus remarks (p. 51) that asymmetry never occurs between two groups, and that because it does not extend beyond the local group or the extended family it is not created in the social network. Social unities are nevertheless affected by continuing repetitive transformations of status, the dynamic element being the circulation of men which reproduces the extended family through incorporation of new members but which also causes ultimate fissioning (Urbina, pp. 185, 188-189). These processes, by affecting the joint family units also affect the larger unities of villages and local groups. Thus, among the Pemon and Kapon, periodic cycles reach points at which a process of renewal occurs, often signalled by removal to another settlement site and changes in the composition and power structure of the associated families.

It is perhaps ironic that our studies should stress the extreme atomism and individualistic character of these traditional societies at a time when an even greater individualism is occurring, for Heinen remarks (pp. 280, 294-295) that the free choice in marriage being exercised by the younger generation is now undermining the in-law relationship to the detriment of the traditional economy, the extended family and, ultimately, the institution of leadership among the Ye'kuana. But, we may note, this even more excessive individualism leads to structural compensation as the forces of the national administration move in to replace the failing authority of the Carib father-in-law and group leadership, so destroying traditional restraints and instituting new ones. In these circumstances, the crucial change for the individual is a replacement of son-in-law education and apprenticeship by the national education system, the constraints (as well as the rewards) of paid employment, and ultimate subordination through the imposition of an hierarchically ordered, authoritative state system.

The discussion of political economy, of its nature and of its existence even, by Overing and Rivière, is a stimulating conclusion to our set of papers. In my opinion they are important, if incomplete, statements which represent an invaluable stage in a debate uniting many creative ideas and much vital ethnography and analysis. This debate, on the essential nature of political organization amongst Caribs and their neighbours, both past and present, will surely continue for a considerable time into the future.