

TOLAI KINSHIP CONCEPTS:  
CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN KUANUA AND TOK PISIN TERMINOLOGY

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1. INTRODUCTION

Although the subject of kinship and marriage has long been the special concern of anthropologists, researchers from other disciplinary backgrounds who wish to understand the workings of a people's culture find study of their kinship system to be central to the undertaking. For purposes of cultural analysis and comparison, the existence of some association between a people's kinship concepts, the terms they use for various kin and the resulting system of kin classification seems to be generally accepted. The nature of that association – what might be paraphrased as the sociological significance of kinship terminology – is, however, a matter on which authorities are deeply divided, leading one contributor to remark in the late 1970s, 'During the last 20 years, the study of kinship terminology has been one of the most contentious and provocative fields of anthropological inquiry' (Tuzin 1977:101).

One aspect of kinship terminology that has so far received little attention is the correspondence between terms in different languages spoken by the same people. Papua New Guinea, where many groups speak Tok Pisin, the major lingua franca, as well as their own vernacular, presents a fertile field for analysis of such correspondence. Do the relationships connoted by a term in the vernacular coincide with those connoted by the corresponding Tok Pisin term, and, if not, what are the similarities and differences? So far there has been no published treatment of these questions (Dr Tom Dutton 1985, personal communication), and the object of this paper is to address them from data collected by the author in the course of research among the Tolai people of Papua New Guinea. The analysis of change in Tolai land tenure in which I was then engaged raised the necessity for detailed analysis of their kinship system,<sup>1</sup> but coincidentally it presented the opportunity to compare their usage of kinship terminology in two languages – their own vernacular and Tok Pisin. Presentation of the findings may contribute to the debate on the sociological significance of kinship terminology in two main ways:

- (i) by demonstrating the degree of correspondence between the kinship terminology in each language; and
- (ii) by enabling comparison of the Tolai usage of Tok Pisin kinship terminology with that of other Melanesian peoples.

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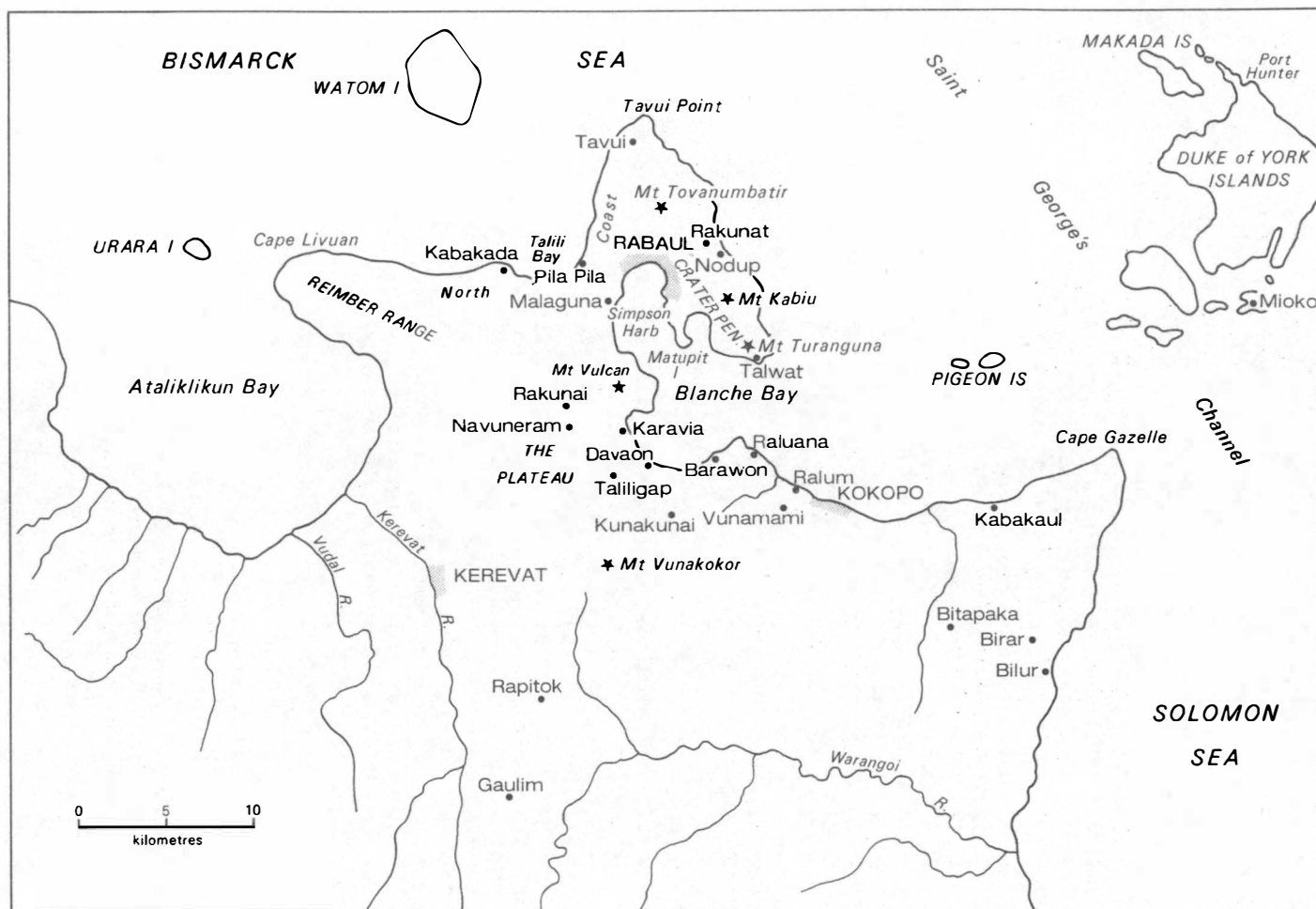
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The Tolai territory (see Map) lies at the north-eastern corner of the Gazelle Peninsula of New Britain. Throughout the colonial era they were one of the most prominent peoples of Melanesia, attracting the interest of commentators from varied backgrounds and disciplines whence a rich ethnographic literature has developed. About 70,000 of their present population of some 90,000 live in the many small villages scattered across their territory, while the remainder reside away from the village, mainly for employment reasons in the cities, towns and Government stations throughout Papua New Guinea. Although permanent European settlement in the area only began in 1875, by the early 1900s almost half the Tolai's land had been acquired for plantation development. The rich volcanic soils and equatorial lowland climate attracted a commercial interest in the area which exposed the Tolai to forces of change more intense and enduring than these experienced by almost all other peoples of Papua New Guinea.

Yet, despite the transformation of their environment over the last century, the integrity of Tolai culture has survived largely intact. In adapting to change the pattern has been for Western social, economic, political and religious institutions to be incorporated into their way of life by supplementing – not supplanting – the corresponding Tolai institutions. In the realm of social structure, the division of the population into two exogamous matrilines is still strictly observed for marriage purposes, and matrilineages (*vunatarai*) remain the central units in Tolai society, in the face of systematic promotion of the patriarchal nuclear family over the period since European contact. Within a general theme of cultural continuity the Tolai kinship system stands out for its comparative immunity to the forces of change.

With records of the Tolai language dating from the earliest European settlement in the area, it is today 'one of the best known languages of Papua New Guinea' (Mosel 1984:12). The Tolai themselves now use the name 'Kuanua' for their language – a practice I have adopted, although several other names have been used in its literature, and linguists tend to favour 'Tolai' nowadays (Mosel 1984:4). An Austronesian language, it 'belongs genetically to the languages of Southern New Ireland' (Mosel 1984:4), whence Tolai regard themselves as having migrated in the distant past. Tolai also had a major influence on the development of Tok Pisin (see Mosel 1980), and the high proportion of Kuanua words in the non-European Tok Pisin lexicon is attributable to the extensive Tolai use of the language during its formative development.

A combination of factors, therefore, makes the Tolai a particularly interesting case for study of their kinship terminology.<sup>2</sup> As a matrilineal society, the Tolai belong to a fairly exclusive set worldwide, whose kinship systems are commonly regarded as incompatible with 'modernisation'. In their state of development the Tolai are one of the most advanced peoples of Melanesia, so to the extent that their kinship terminology continues to observe principles of matrilineality they challenge doubts over the viability of such systems. Because Tolai exerted a formative influence on the early development of Tok Pisin, their usage of the language affords the opportunity for reliable examination of how a people express their kinship concepts in relationship terminology borrowed from elsewhere. And the Tolai's lengthy standardised usage of the Tok Pisin kinship terminology enables comparison with the more recent usage being established by Melanesians with different kinship systems, for example, patrilineal societies. Although I offer some conclusions on these matters, my main aim in presenting my findings on Tolai kinship terminology is to afford others the opportunity to assess their sociological significance.



Map: North-eastern Gazelle Peninsula

## 2. METHODS AND CONVENTIONS

The following findings on Tolai usage of kinship and affinal terminology are based on information collected in a variety of ways, reflecting different stages of my research into Tolai land tenure. During fieldwork at Rakunat village in the early 1980s I was tracing the changing pattern of land tenure in the village. The kinship data collected at this stage, therefore, concerned actual relationships between individuals whose names were mentioned in association with particular parcels of land. The interviews were conducted in Tok Pisin, and from genealogies I was able to identify the precise relationship between the named individuals denoted by a Tok Pisin term on each occasion of its use. Clearly this was a sporadic method of collecting data, although as most terms were used frequently a pattern of usage emerged.

The occasional need to introduce a Kuanua relationship term indicated that informants found Tok Pisin inadequate to cover the full range of relationships recognised by the Tolai. Furthermore, it seemed reasonable to expect that the Tok Pisin terms would not be sufficiently precise in their meaning to reveal significant distinctions in Tolai relationships. To understand the intricacies of Tolai land tenure I had to gain a working knowledge of the Kuanua relationship terminology. In this enterprise I was greatly assisted by a list of Kuanua kinship and affinity terms compiled in 1977 by Dr Peter Sack of the Australian National University, in collaboration with Mr Jacob Simet, a Tolai anthropologist. Sack had drawn on published sources, in both English and German, to produce a list of terms with the range of their meanings offered by the authorities, and these he supplemented with the meanings given by Simet. The list was, of course, compiled in the abstract, without reliance on genealogical data to support its contents.

From my fieldwork data and the Sack-Simet list I worked up a provisional classification system for Tolai kinship and affinity terminology, in both Kuanua and Tok Pisin. In 1983 and 1984 I had the opportunity to verify this classification by establishing the range of a person's actual relatives embraced by each term in both languages — in the case of a male Ego by interview with Simet, and in the case of a female Ego by interview with a Tolai woman, Mrs Relly Manning, for both of whom I held the relevant genealogical data. Diagrams 1 and 2 show the Kuanua terms used by Tolai for all the core relationships when the person speaking is a male and a female respectively, and Diagrams 3 and 4 show the Tok Pisin usage in the same circumstances. The symbols used follow standard anthropological practice, a male being indicated by the phallic triangle and a female by the circle, and relationship to Ego being indicated by the following abbreviations:

M = mother	W = wife
F = father	H = husband
Z = sister	D = daughter
B = brother	S = son

so that, for example, the combination ZDS means Ego's sister's daughter's son. Order of generation is indicated by degree of ascent or descent from Ego's generation,  $G^{+1}$  being one generation up and  $G^{-1}$  being one generation down from Ego, and so on.

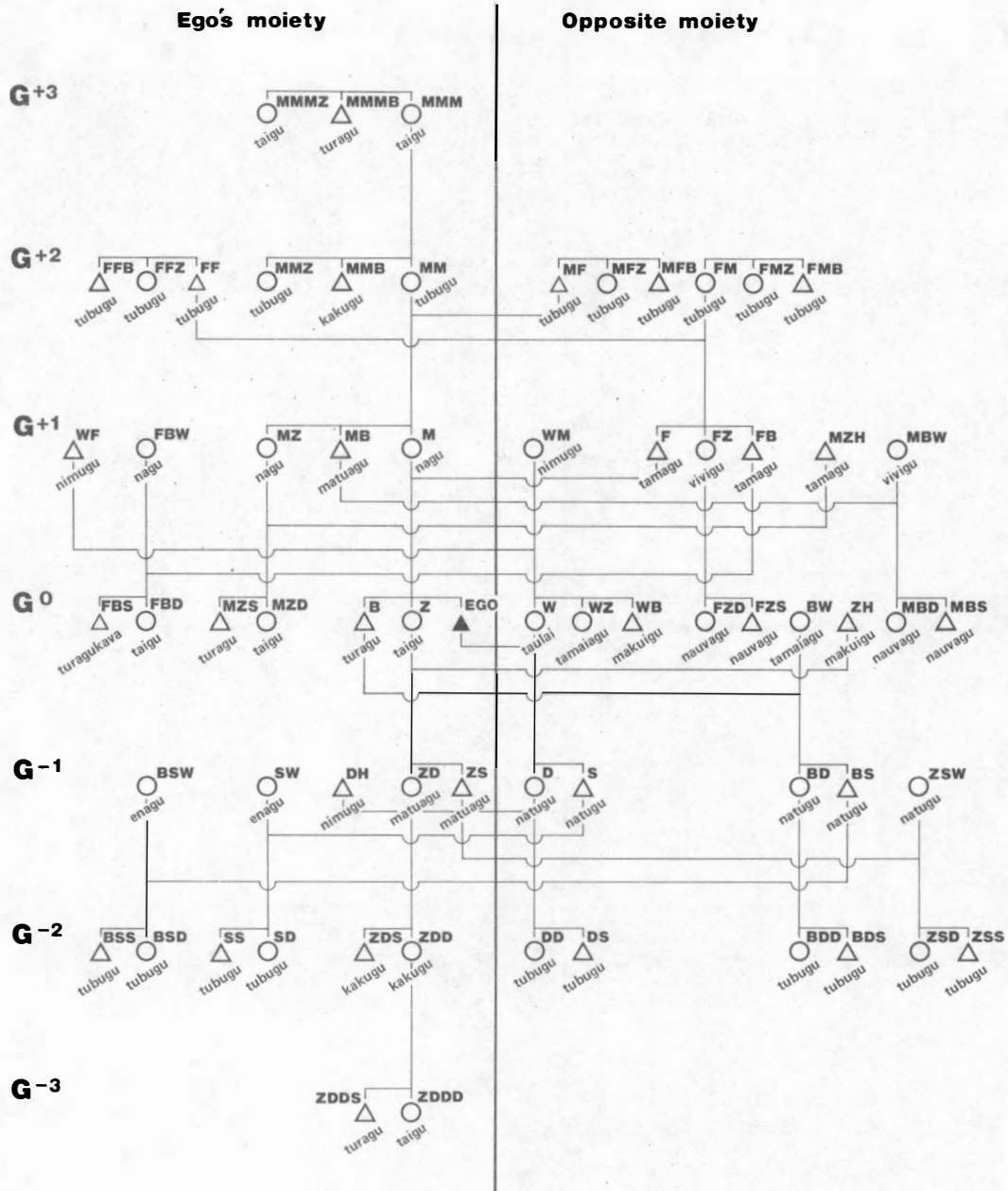


Diagram 1: Core relationships (Kuanua): male Ego

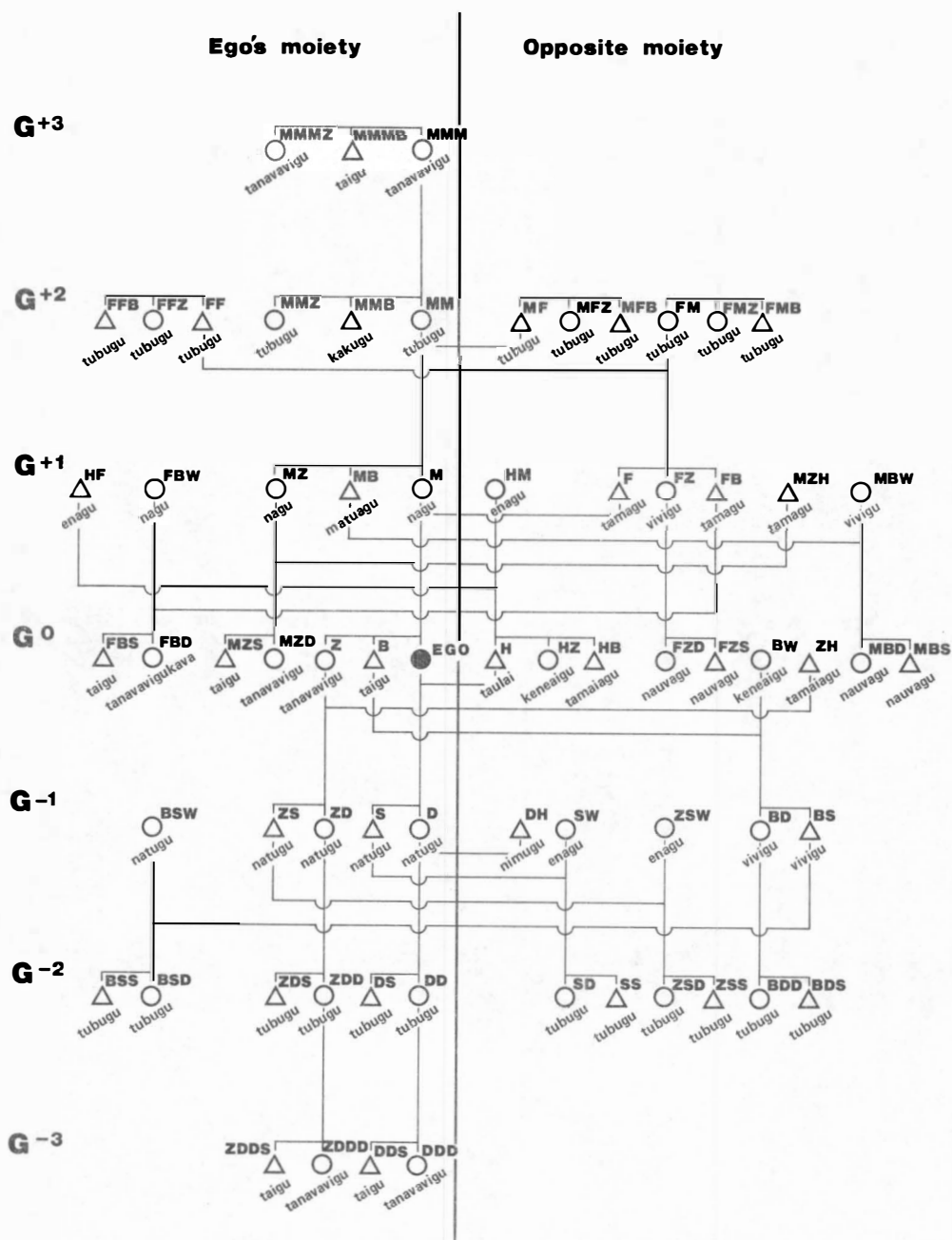


Diagram 2: Core relationships (Kuanua): female Ego

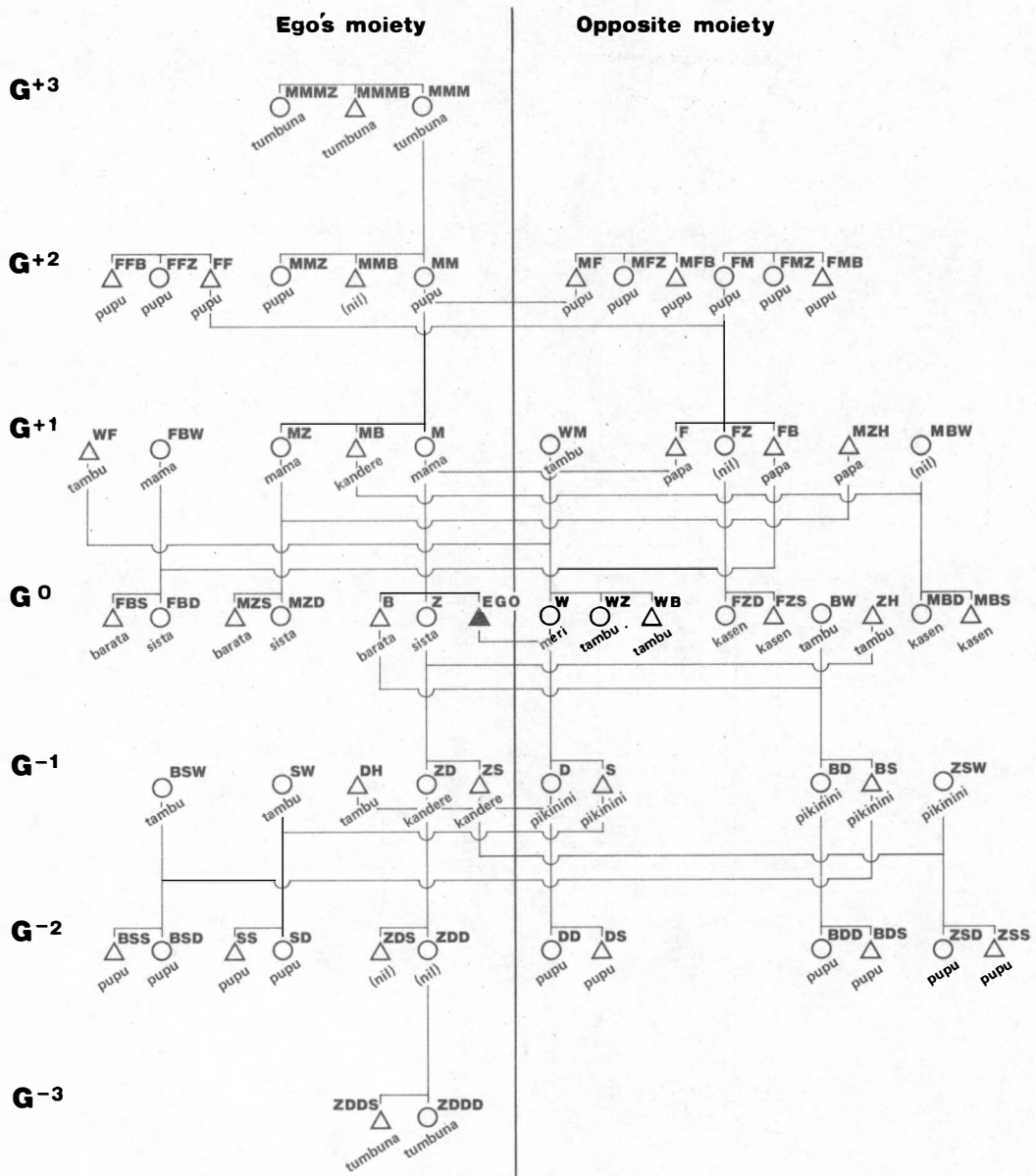


Diagram 3: Core relationships (Tok Pisin): male Ego

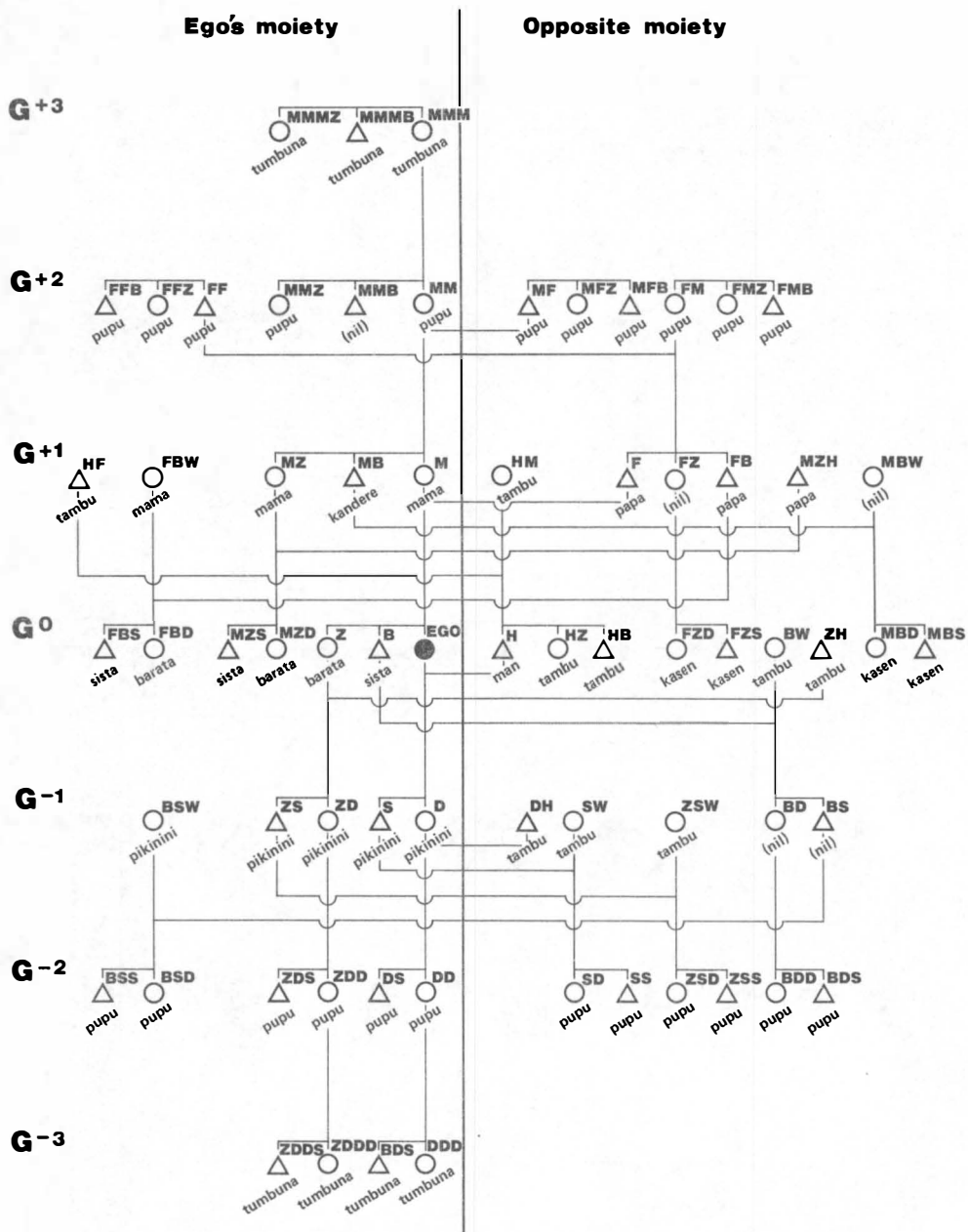


Diagram 4: Core relationships (Tok Pisin): female Ego



Something must be said on the form of Tolai relationship terminology. In Kuanua, kinship terms enter the grammatical construction of possessive noun phrases, where, as with other languages of Melanesia, a differentiation is made between alienable and inalienable possessive phrases (see generally Mosel 1984: 30-51). The Kuanua possessive constructions, Mosel says, follow a continuum of possession between that which is most inherent and involuntary (i.e. the inalienable possessive constructions) and that possession which requires action to be established (i.e. the alienable possessive constructions) (Mosel 1984: 46-47). Possession is most inherent in kinship (Mosel 1984:46-47), so the kinship terms can only be used in a possessive construction, or, if this is not appropriate, then in a 'derelationised' construction (Mosel 1984:40). For example, the Kuanua noun *tura-* denotes the relationship brother/brother. Used in a possessive construction the noun is combined with its pronoun suffix to form the possessive noun phrase – for example, *turagu*, i.e. *my brother* (male speaking). If used not in a possessive but in a predicative construction, the noun must be combined with the derelational suffix *-na* – thus in this example *bar turana (are) brothers*, where the plural marker *bar* indicates that at least two people are in the designated relationship (Mosel 1984:40). For present purposes in the diagrams and text I have adopted the possessive construction using the first person singular pronoun suffix *-gu*, i.e. *my*. The only exception to this practice is the term for spouse (*taulai*), which, following Mosel's analysis, involves a relationship which is not inherent, and is therefore expressed in an alienable possessive construction (Mosel 1984:34-35) – i.e. without the need for a suffix pronoun.<sup>3</sup> The Tok Pisin relationship terminology presents no such complications, there being no distinction between alienable and inalienable constructions.

A final point on method is the matter of local variation. While it seems reasonable to expect that, given the relative cultural homogeneity of the Tolai and the fact that Tok Pisin is an introduced and less precise lingua franca, Tolai usage of the Tok Pisin relationship terms would have uniform meanings, this may not be a wholly reliable assumption in the case of the Kuanua terms. A number of different Kuanua dialects are recognised (see Mosel 1984:9), and published sources offer divergent meanings for some of the Kuanua kinship and affinity terms. Both my Tolai informants belong to villages on the Crater Peninsula (Simet from Matupit and Manning from Baai), and their usage may not have precisely the same application in other areas of the Tolai territory.

### 3. THE FINDINGS

The accompanying table summarises the findings from the data, working from the Kuanua terms grouped in accordance with what I have styled their 'primary sense' and listed with general reference to the degree of proximity of the relationship – kinship terms first, followed by the affinity terms. To elaborate on the meaning of the terms, their usage and the correspondence between Kuanua and Tok Pisin terminology, I will employ the English relationship terms which denote the primary sense of the Kuanua terms, and follow the same order as in the table on page 300.

#### SIBLING

The Kuanua term for a sibling of the opposite sex is *taigu*, and, for a sibling of the same sex, *turagu* for males, and *tanavavigu* for females. The same terms are used, according to the same sex referents, for parallel cousins, with

Table 1: Tolai kinship and affinal terminology:  
primary and classificatory meanings

Kuanua	TP corresp.	Primary sense	Classificatory sense
turagu taigu tanavavigu	barata sista barata	sibling	same-moiety member at $G^0$
nauvagu	kasen	cross-cousin	opposite-moiety member at $G^0$
nagu tamagu	mama papa	mother father	same-moiety female at $G^{+1}$ opposite-moiety male at $G^{+1}$
natugu	pikinini	child	opposite-moiety member at $G^{-1}$ (male speaking) same-moiety member at $G^{-1}$ (female speaking)
matuagu	kandere	(i) maternal uncle (ii) sister's child (male speaking)	(i) same-moiety male at $G^{+1}$ (ii) same-moiety member at $G^{-1}$ (male speaking)
vivigu	(no term)	(i) paternal aunt (ii) brother's child (female speaking)	(i) opposite-moiety female at $G^{+1}$ (ii) opposite-moiety member at $G^{-1}$ (female speaking)
tubugu	pupu (tubuna)	(i) grandparent (ii) grandchild	(i) opposite-moiety member at $G^{+2}$ same-moiety female at $G^{+2}$ (ii) opposite-moiety member at $G^{-2}$ same-moiety member at $G^{-2}$ (female speaking)
kakugu	(no term)	(i) maternal granduncle (ii) sister's daughter's child (male speaking)	(i) same-moiety male at $G^{+2}$ (ii) same-moiety member at $G^{-2}$ (male speaking)
tulai	meri man	(i) wife (male speaking) (ii) husband (female speaking)	(nil)
nimugu	tambu	(i) parent-in-law (male speaking) (ii) daughter's husband	(i) (his) wife's classificatory parent (ii) classificatory daughter's husband
enagu	tambu	(i) parent-in-law (female speaking) (ii) son's wife	(i) (her) husband's classificatory parent (ii) classificatory son's wife
makuigu tamaigu keneaigu	tambu tambu tambu	sibling-in-law	classificatory sibling's spouse spouse's classificatory sibling classificatory sibling's spouse's classificatory sibling

the refinement that in the case of patrilineal parallel cousins of the same sex the suffix -kava is added. The word kava, as a verb, means *to give birth to*, and the explanation for its usage in the present context is to be found in the Tolai notion that individuals are 'given birth to by', and are therefore 'children of', their father's vunatarai. This appears to conflict with matrilineal ideology, but not so, in terms of social structure, for individuals are members, not children, of their own vunatarai. Patrilineal parallel cousins are, therefore, in common children of their father's vunatarai. The suffix -kava is not used in the case of patrilineal parallel cousins of the opposite sex by reason of a prevailing observance, explained by Simet as follows:<sup>4</sup>

The suffix -kava indicates a 'jovial' relationship between two people. The relationship between a male Ego and his FBS is more free than that with his B or his MZS, which is a 'serious' relationship. A male's relationship with his FBD is also 'serious', because she is a female. The term taigukava is not used, because the relationship is 'serious', not 'jovial'. The same applies to the reciprocal relationship between a female Ego and her FBS.

(1983, personal communication)

Whereas three Kuanua terms are used for siblings, only two are available in Tok Pisin — barata for a sibling of the same sex, and sista<sup>5</sup> for a sibling of the opposite sex. Thus barata corresponds to the terms turagu and tanavavigu, while sista corresponds to taigu. Despite their long exposure to European influence, evidence of a shift in meaning of the Tok Pisin sibling terms to that of their English analogues (where only the sex of Alter — the object of the term — is indicated) is almost entirely lacking in Tolai village usage<sup>6</sup> — a demonstration of the centrality and durability of kinship concepts. A final point which may be made here, although it applies not just to sibling terms, is that while Kuanua kinship terms in their primary sense cover relationships only within the range from two generations above to two generations below Ego's generation, they are systematically extended to relationships at higher and lower orders of generation. Thus a term used for a relationship at G<sup>0</sup> (for example, a sibling term) is again employed at G<sup>+3</sup> and G<sup>-3</sup> (as appears from Diagrams 1 and 2), and a term for Ego's relationship with kin at G<sup>+1</sup> is also used at G<sup>+4</sup>, and so on.

## CROSS-COUSIN

The Kuanua term for a cross-cousin is nauvagu. The term is used by an Ego of either sex in relation to an Alter of either sex, and applies for both matrilineal and patrilineal cross-cousins. In Simet's terms, the relationship between cross-cousins is 'very serious', and he contrasted the position of a male Ego with respect to his FBS and with his FZS (1983, personal communication). The former, he said, is 'more relaxed', whereas the latter is 'very tense' (1983, personal communication), and more so is this the case with cross-cousins of opposite sexes, where an incest taboo prohibits marriage.<sup>7</sup> Simet made the further point in explaining the tension between male cross-cousins that there is a potential conflict over entitlement to land: 'Your FZS', he said, 'is in opposition to you, because he stands to gain from your F.' (1983, personal communication). The corresponding Tok Pisin term for a cross-cousin is kasen, a clear borrowing from English, but, unlike its English analogue, not extending to parallel cousins, for whom, as already remarked, the sibling terms are used.

There is disagreement on whether cross-cousins observe avoidance behaviour towards each other. The above comments by Simet would suggest they did, and, at least so far as opposite-sex cross-cousins are concerned, there is in support Meier's remark that 'the law of conduct forbids anything resembling company-keeping between persons of opposite sex and moiety previous to marriage' (1938: 28). But the same author has also claimed that there is 'a kind of "blood-relationship" between cross-cousins' (1939:116, fn 85), and that cross-cousins, 'having a "common meeting place" [i.e. the home of the linking male at G<sup>+1</sup> - the F to one cross-cousin and the MB to the other] and frequently or regularly eating and associating together, are thus like blood relations or real brothers and sisters and so called such' (1939:116-117, fn 87). The usage of sibling terms for cross-cousins, recorded by Meier at Rakunai on the inland plateau, was not confirmed by my Tolai informants from the Crater Peninsula, although Simet acknowledged a similarity between siblings and cross-cousins of opposite sexes so far as incest taboos are concerned (1983, personal communication). Finally on the question of avoidance, Bradley claims from her experience at Pila Pila that 'joking behaviour [is] allowed, and even expected, between nauvana (cross-cousins) of either sex' (1982:239, fn 4).

#### PARENT

The Kuanua term for mother is *nagu* and for father *tamagu*. The terms are used by an Ego of either sex. *Nagu* also includes maternal aunt (MZ) and paternal uncle's wife (FBW), and *tamagu* includes paternal uncle (FB) and maternal aunt's husband (MZH). The corresponding Tok Pisin terms are *mama* and *papa*, with the same extended meanings.

#### CHILD

The Kuanua term for child is *natugu*, used by an Ego of either sex. The term is also used by a male Ego for his brother's children (BS and BD), and by a female Ego for her sister's children (ZS and ZD). The corresponding Tok Pisin term is *pikinini*, with the same extended meanings in the same circumstances.

#### MATERNAL UNCLE/SISTER'S CHILD (MALE SPEAKING)

Of the terms dealt with so far, those for sibling and cross-cousin are fully self-reciprocal - i.e. the term used by an Ego for an Alter is identical to the term used by that Alter for that Ego, in both the primary and extended senses of the term. The remaining kinship terms share this feature of self-reciprocity, but the factor of generation difference is now added. The Kuanua term used for maternal uncle (MB) by an Ego of either sex is *matuagu*, and, reciprocally, the term is used by a male Ego for his sister's children of either sex (ZS and ZD). The corresponding Tok Pisin term is *kandere*.

#### PATERNAL AUNT/BROTHER'S CHILD (FEMALE SPEAKING)

The Kuanua term used for paternal aunt (FZ) by an Ego of either sex is *vivigu*, and, reciprocally, the term is used by a female Ego for her brother's children of either sex (BS and BD). My informants could offer no corresponding Tok Pisin term. *Vivigu* is also extended to apply to Ego's maternal uncle's wife (MBW) (who would, reciprocally, use the term for her husband's sister's children - HZS and HZD). It may be noted here that, though Simet agreed that the term *matuagu* could be employed for Ego's paternal aunt's husband (FZH), the

relationship with that person is 'not very important', whereas, because Ego's maternal uncle (MB) occupies a position of central importance in Tolai social organisation, the term used for his wife (MBW) has a practical significance in day-to-day affairs (1983, personal communication).

#### GRANDPARENT/GRANDCHILD

The Kuanua term used by an Ego of either sex for a grandparent of either sex (MM, MF, FM and FF) is tubugu, and, reciprocally, the term is used by an Ego of either sex for a grandchild of either sex (DD, DS, SD and SS). The corresponding Tok Pisin term is pupu (sometimes pronounced bubu), or tubuna – a reflection of the Kuanua term in its derelationised construction (see above) – which is also used for more remote ancestors or descendants, either individually or collectively. Tubugu is extended to apply to all siblings of grandparents and, reciprocally, all grandchildren of siblings, with an important exception in the case of Ego's maternal granduncle (MMB) and the reciprocal relationship, to which the special term dealt with next applies.

#### MATERNAL GRANDUNCLE/SISTER'S DAUGHTER'S CHILD (MALE SPEAKING)

The Kuanua term used by an Ego of either sex for maternal granduncle (MMB) is kakugu, and, reciprocally, the term is used by a male Ego for his sister's daughter's children of either sex (ZDS and ZDD). There is no corresponding Tok Pisin term to designate this relationship.

#### SPOUSE

The Kuanua term for a spouse is taulai, and it is used by an Ego of either sex. This first of the affinal relationship terms has no extended meaning. As mentioned above, unlike all the other relationship terms taulai is expressed in alienable possessive constructions, without the need for a suffix pronoun. The Tok Pisin terms for spouse are borrowings from English, and incorporate the corresponding sex referents. Thus a male Ego uses the term meri (*Mary*, i.e. *woman*) for his wife, and a female Ego uses the term man for her husband.

#### SIBLING-IN-LAW

As with the sibling terms, the Kuanua terms for siblings-in-law follow strict sex referents. The term for sibling-in-law of the opposite sex is tamaigu, and, for a sibling-in-law of the same sex, makuigu for males, and keneaigu for females. The sibling-in-law terms are also self-reciprocal, so that the term used by an Ego for an Alter (for example, tamaigu, used by a male Ego for his WZ) is identical to the term used by that Alter for that Ego (in the example, Alter's ZH). The corresponding Tok Pisin term is tambu, used without any sex referents. Apart from the actual spouses, the term tambu is used for all in-law relations. In both Kuanua and Tok Pisin it means *forbidden*, and its use incorporates precepts of avoidance behaviour observed between in-law relations.

#### PARENT-IN-LAW (MALE SPEAKING)/DAUGHTER'S HUSBAND

The Kuanua term used by a male Ego for his parent-in-law (WF and WM) is nimugu, and, reciprocally, the term is used by an Ego of either sex for their daughter's husband. The corresponding Tok Pisin term is tambu.

## PARENT-IN-LAW (FEMALE SPEAKING)/SON'S WIFE

The Kuanua term used by a female Ego for her parents-in-law (HF and HM) is enagu, and, reciprocally, the term is used by an Ego of either sex for their son's wife. The corresponding Tok Pisin term is tambu.

Tolai make the claim that they are all related. From the preceding treatment it is clear that Tolai kinship terms have an extended meaning beyond what I have styled their 'primary sense', but even these extensions do not do justice to the range of relationships embraced by Tolai kinship ideology. The full range to which the terms could be extended first became apparent to me in the usage of Tok Pisin terms during fieldwork. Not only were the terms being used to embrace extended kin, but I found that they were also being used to denote persons with whom no biological connection existed at all. These indications prompted the attempt to identify the necessary and sufficient conditions by which each kinship term was classified — the 'classificatory sense' of each term — with the result shown in the final column of the table on page 300. For each kinship term, the defining features are a combination of relative moiety (same/opposite) and order of generation from Ego, with the refinement for some of the terms that the sex of Ego or Alter is an additional defining feature. Using the three components of moiety, generation and sex referents it is possible to represent kinship terminology in matrix form as in Diagram 5, from which it is apparent that a kinship term is available for all combinations of these three referents. Indeed, all Tolai are 'related' to each other.

Not only is a kinship term available for all combinations of moiety, generation and sex referents, but in almost all cases only one term is available. The single exception is the term kakugu, denoting the relationship maternal granduncle/sister's daughter's child (male speaking), which overlaps partially with the term tubugu (see Diagram 5). The explanation for this is that the same referents cover FF (and FFB) as cover MMB (i.e. same moiety,  $G^{+2}$ , male Alter), and, reciprocally, the same referents cover SS and SD (and BSS and BSD) as cover ZDS and ZDD (i.e. same moiety,  $G^{-2}$ , male Ego), and whereas the term for the former relationship (grandparent/grandchild) is tubugu, there is a special term, kakugu, for the latter relationship. This differentiation recognises the central position of the maternal uncle (MB) in Tolai social organisation, and correspondingly of the mother's maternal uncle (MMB).

The terminology for affinal relations is confined to actual relationships arising from marriage, and while extensions of meaning were mentioned in the treatment of the terms, their classificatory dimensions are limited by the link with an actual affinal relation. Using the same basic matrix combining the three components of moiety, generation and sex referents the affinal terminology may be represented as shown in Diagram 6. Again, a minor overlap appears, for at Ego's generation the same referents cover W as cover WZ (i.e. opposite moiety,  $G^0$ , male Ego-female Alter), and, reciprocally, the same referents cover H as cover HB (i.e. opposite moiety,  $G^0$ , female Ego-male Alter).

Gen.		Moiety		Same		Opposite	
		Alter	m.	f.	m.	f.	
+2	<b>Ego</b> m.	kakugu / tubugu (- ) / (pupu)	tubugu (pupu)	tubugu (pupu)	tubugu (pupu)	tubugu (pupu)	
	f.	kakugu / tubugu (- ) / (pupu)	tubugu (pupu)	tubugu (pupu)	tubugu (pupu)	tubugu (pupu)	
+1	m.	matuagu (kandere)	nagu (mama)	tamagu (papa)	vivigu (- )		
	f.	matuagu (kandere)	nagu (mama)	tamagu (papa)	vivigu (- )		
0	m.	turagu (barata)	taigu (sista)	nauvagu (kasen)	nauvagu (kasen)		
	f.	taigu (sista)	tanavavigu (barata)	nauvagu (kasen)	nauvagu (kasen)		
-1	m.	matuagu (kandere)	matuagu (kandere)	natugu (pikinini)	natugu (pikinini)		
	f.	natugu (pikinini)	natugu (pikinini)	vivigu (- )	vivigu (- )		
-2	m.	kakugu / tubugu (- ) / (pupu)	kakugu / tubugu (- ) / (pupu)	tubugu (pupu)	tubugu (pupu)		
	f.	tubugu (pupu)	tubugu (pupu)	tubugu (pupu)	tubugu (pupu)		

Diagram 5: Kinship terminology matrix

Gen.		Moiety		Same		Opposite	
		Alter	m.	f.	m.	f.	
+2	Ego						
	m.						
+1	m.		nimugu (tambu)				nimugu (tambu)
	f.		enagu (tambu)				enagu (tambu)
0	m.					makuigu (tambu)	taulai / meri / tamaigu (tambu)
	f.					taulai / (man) / tamaigu (tambu)	keneaigu (tambu)
-1	m.		nimugu (tambu)	enagu (tambu)			
	f.					nimugu (tambu)	enagu (tambu)
-2	m.						
	f.						

Diagram 6: Affinal terminology matrix



#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

By Murdock's classic system for classification of kinship terminology published in 1949 the Tolai, on the basis of their cross-cousin terminology, belong to the Iroquois type, but under Scheffler's clarification in 1971 of the distinction in Melanesia between Iroquois- and Dravidian-type systems Tolai fit more closely to the latter. I mentioned the basic disagreement among authorities over the sociological significance which can be drawn from kinship terminology, and the debate over interpretations of Dravidian-type terminologies still continues (see, for example, Dumont 1983). Despite the negative conclusions of such authorities as Needham (1971) and Scheffler (1971, 1972), the foregoing findings suggest that some correlations can be drawn between the structure of Tolai kinship terminology and their social organisation.

In the first place, the fundamental importance of the moiety dichotomy in Tolai society is clearly reflected in their kinship terminology. Moiety affiliation is the crucial determinant in kinship classification; because a Tolai's involvement in social, ceremonial and supernatural life hinges on classificatory relationships, the moiety division may be regarded as the critical factor in Tolai social organisation. Tolai kinship terminology is of the bifurcate merging type, in which F and FB are called by one classificatory term, and M and MZ by another, while MB and FZ are denoted by distinct terms (see Murdock 1949:141). This feature serves to distinguish between children's close kin in their own and in the opposite moiety. Siblings are merged with parallel cousins, who are from the same moiety, but cross-cousins, who are from opposite moieties, are designated by a different term (*nauvagu*). At the level of the parent's generation the centrality of moiety affiliation is further evident — in a child's own moiety the female kin at  $G^{+1}$  are all mothers and the male kin are all mother's brothers (*matuagu*), while in the opposite moiety the male kin at  $G^{+1}$  are all fathers and the female kin are all father's sisters (*vivigu*). For all its centrality, however, it would be mistaken to conclude that the moiety division represents an actual cleavage in Tolai society: the range of a person's relationships is the same either side of the moiety division, and indeed in the case of the term *tubugu* (grandparent/grandchild), it is used for relationships in either moiety without discrimination (see Diagram 5).

Self-reciprocity was seen to be a feature of all Tolai relationship terms, with the single exception of the terms for parent and child.<sup>8</sup> For the Tolai, then, in most cases it is the relationship which is important, rather than an individual's relative position in the relationship. To the extent that ordination between generations and sexes exists in Tolai society, therefore, it is a product of factors external to kinship terminology (i.e. the authority structure, valorisation of women, etc.). A differentiation on the basis of sex is, however, indicated by the special treatment in the terminology of the mother's brother. Although at  $G^{+1}$  a corresponding special term is used for the father's sister, at  $G^{+2}$  there is no differentiation between female kin (who are all merged under *tubugu*) which would correspond to the differentiation between a mother's mother's brother (*kakugu*) and the other male kin (merged as *tubugu*).

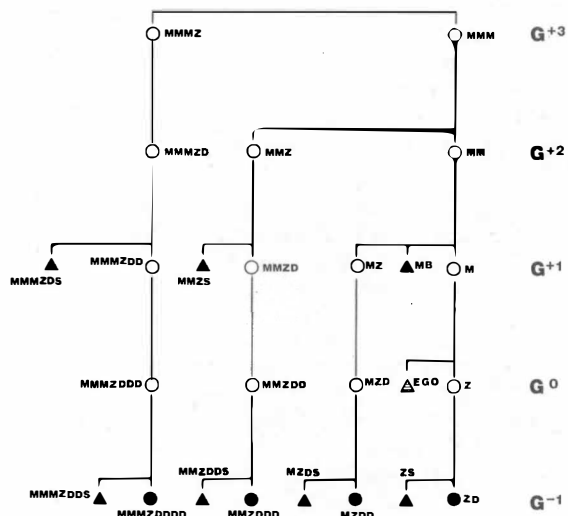
From birth a Tolai's moiety affiliation, *vunatarai* membership, status with respect to *vunatarai* of the same and opposite moiety, and kinship and potential affinal relations necessarily follow. Despite systematic promotion of the patriarchal nuclear family by organs of both church and state over the last century, the Tolai descent system remains unequivocally matrilineal, with no hint of any concession to patrilineality in modern Tolai usage of their kinship

terminology. The manner of Tolai adoption of Tok Pisin kinship terminology provides further evidence of the centrality of kinship concepts. The findings summarised in Diagrams 5 and 6 show that Tok Pisin terms for kinship and affinity correspond to the Kuanua terms in accordance with the combined referents of moiety, generation and sex. Not surprisingly, the Tok Pisin terms are not capable of the precision necessary to reveal distinctions made in Tolai relationships in all cases, and some terms (for example, *barata*) must do 'double duty', but on no occasion is there conflict between the Tok Pisin and the Kuanua usage. Where a Tolai relationship of day-to-day importance required recognition, as was the case for the maternal uncle/sister's child (male speaking) relationship (*matuagu*), a term was adopted and given this specialised meaning (*kandere*<sup>3</sup>). Where other distinct Tolai relationships (for example, *vivigu*, *kakugu*) were not of major practical importance, no need was felt for special terms in Tok Pisin. The consistency of correspondence between the terminology in the two languages and the relationships connoted is an impressive demonstration of the cultural constraints inherent in kinship terminology.

Finally, although I claim no special knowledge of the usage of Tok Pisin relationship terminology by other Melanesian peoples, some brief remarks based on my findings of the Tolai usage may assist a comparison with usage elsewhere. Some combinations found in other areas are not used by Tolai, one being use of the prefixes *bik-* and *smol-* with sibling terms to indicate relative age (i.e. *older* and *younger*). Such absence in Tolai usage is reflected by a similar disregard for ordination in the Kuanua terminology – unless, of course, in either language the circumstances require such specificity. Nor is the usage *smolpapa* and *smolmama* found among the Tolai, but here a difference in descent systems may be relevant. Just as the Tolai usage of Tok Pisin kinship terminology reflects their matrilineal descent system within a dual organisation into moieties, so also would I expect that the terms might signify quite different relationships in their usage by a patrilineal society, with or without moieties. While Mihalic's definition of *smolpapa* as *paternal uncle* (1971:179) might be unobjectionable in either a matrilineal or a patrilineal society, I suspect his definition of *smolmama* as *paternal aunt* (1971:179) reveals a patrilineal (or bilineal) bias in his information, for no matrilineal society would regard the father's sister as a *mama* (*mother*) of any description.

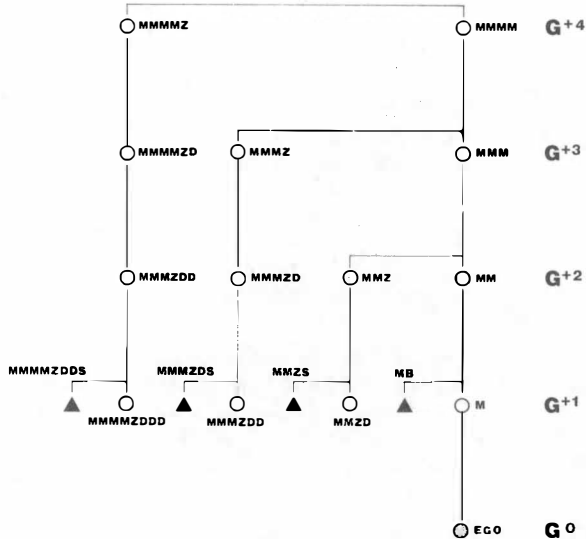
The term *kasen barata*, although not used by the Tolai, raises a separate issue, in my view. Extension of meanings of the sibling terms seems to be a general phenomenon in Melanesia, as non-Melanesians seeking details of relationships soon learn. Possibly in consequence of insistence by officials on a distinction between biological and extended kinship, the practice has grown of distinguishing between *barata* (and, presumably, *susa*) and *kasen barata* (*kasen susa*). Alternatively, the distinction being drawn may be between parallel cousins (merged under the sibling terms) and cross-cousins, which may well be an important distinction in patrilineal societies as well as in matrilineal societies such as the Tolai. My findings show that Tolai confine the term *kasen* to cross-cousins, and I feel they would regard *kasen barata* as a conceptual contradiction.

The last term deserving special treatment is *kandere*, used by the Tolai to designate the maternal uncle/sister's child (male speaking) relationship. In matrilineal societies the mother's brother plays a prominent role, being to a child the most important male member of its lineage. As with other kinship terms *kandere* has an extended meaning, and in Diagram 7 I have indicated the biological kin that a Tolai male would designate by the term, while Diagram 8



▲/● = kandere

Diagram 7: Usage of kandere for biological kin: male Ego



▲ = kandere

Diagram 8: Usage of kandere for biological kin: female Ego

shows its usage by a female Ego. The differential usage is explained by the fact that only males use the term for members of the next inferior generation, but, reciprocally, the term is used by both sexes for male members at a generation higher. For all its latitude of meaning the limits on its extension are equally clear, and indicate that Mihalic's definition 'any relative from the mother's side of the family: be it uncle, cousin, nephew, niece, or aunt' (1971:105) is quite unsuited to the Tolai usage, and, I would expect, to that of other matrilineal societies.

There is, in my experience, a feeling common among non-Melanesians that the Tok Pisin kinship terminology is imprecise, or at least that Melanesians use the terms imprecisely. Evidence of the Tolai usage refutes this impression. True, and not unnaturally, the Tolai usage shows that the Tok Pisin terminology is not sufficiently precise to reveal all distinctions made in Tolai relationships, nor does it cover these relationships comprehensively. But the range of Tok Pisin terms is adequate to cover the relationships most important to a Tolai in day-to-day life, and they are used in both their primary and their classificatory senses in a way which corresponds consistently with the usage of Kuanua terms for Tolai relationships, when those relationships are reduced to their defining features. Just as the Tolai have applied the Tok Pisin kinship terminology to connote their own kinship concepts, so also would I expect that other societies with different kinship concepts might use the terms with connotations different from the Tolai. Notions of imprecision arise mainly from the failure to relate differences in usage between societies to differences in their social organisation. Clarification of this connection will allow not only more accurate definitions of Tok Pisin kinship terms than are available at present, but also the comparative analysis which may help to throw light on the sociological significance of kinship terminology.

## NOTES

1. The research is written up in my doctoral dissertation 'Changing land tenure in Melanesia: the Tolai experience' (Fingleton 1985). For assistance in preparing this article I am grateful especially to my two Tolai advisers, Mr Jacob Simet and Mrs Relly Manning, and to Dr Peter Sack for letting me use his lists of kinship terms. I am also grateful to Professor Ann Chowning and Professor Andrew Strathern for their comments on an earlier working paper upon which this article is based, and to Dr Ulrike Mosel for her assistance with grammatical aspects of Tolai kinship terminology. Dr Tom Dutton encouraged me to contribute the article, and gave helpful advice during its preparation.
2. Surprisingly little systematic analysis is available, in English at least, to assist the untrained outsider to come to terms with the complexities of Tolai relationships. The best information is to be found in a series of articles by the Catholic priest Meier on Tolai adoption (1929), illegitimacy (1938) and orphanhood (1939), and a paper by the Methodist minister Trevitt (1940).
3. Mosel claims that terms for the other relationships formed by marriage are also expressed in alienable possessive constructions (1984:34). On her analysis they seem to be a hybrid form - they are established by marriage, but are inherent upon the marriage. I have heard the other affinity terms expressed in either alienable or inalienable possessive constructions, and have used the latter form here for consistency.

4. I understood Simet, whose terms I have adopted here, to use 'jovial' and 'serious' in contrasting degrees of sociability, and 'relaxed' and 'tense' in contrasting the potentiality for conflict of interest.
5. The alternate Tok Pisin term *susa*, more commonly used elsewhere in Melanesia, is known, but not usually employed by Tolai today.
6. Most of my informants were middle-aged or older. Young Tolai children at school find the English sibling terms highly confusing (Simet 1984: personal communication). No doubt over time they come to appreciate the English terms, and in particular circumstances (for example, away from the village, talking to Europeans) they use the Tok Pisin analogues with their English meanings. I have, however, known even highly-educated Tolai, speaking in English, to slip back to the same-sex/opposite-sex signification for the English sibling terms.
7. But see the following comments on avoidance behaviour.
8. A further, minor, exception is the Tok Pisin terms for spouse, which are non-reciprocal.
9. The derivation of this term is uncertain. Mihalic ascribes it to the English 'kindred' (1971:105), but Dr Tom Dutton inclines to the English 'country', seeing a connection with the term *kantriman* used in Bislama and Queensland Kanaka English (1985, personal communication).

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