

WHO'S WHO IN EGO'S GENERATION:  
PROBING THE SEMANTICS OF MALAYO-POLYNESIAN KINSHIP  
CLASSIFICATION

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1. INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

My concern in this paper is with the interpretation of a set of kinship terms attributed to Proto Malayo-Polynesian. Since the languages that comprise the subgroup of Malayo-Polynesian, from which evidence of the protolanguage is derived, are overwhelmingly characterised by a generational structure, my specific focus for the purposes of this paper will be confined to the kinship terms of Ego's generation. My concern does not focus on any single lexeme but rather on the set of lexemes whose semantic interrelations are presumed to constitute a coherent group defining some particular form of social organisation. It is therefore not the lexemes themselves but their possible semantic interrelation and the kind of organisation implied by these lexemes that are at issue.

The question that I want to raise is one of indeterminacy or, at least, of methodological uncertainty: how do we establish the semantics of Proto Malayo-Polynesian (PMP) kinship given the remarkable diversity of the terminological systems that have been developed by different Malayo-Polynesian-speaking populations on the basis of relatively similar sets of terms?

This question can also be viewed from another perspective. Evidence for the inclusion of any particular lexeme in a proposed PMP kinship terminology is derived singly, yet these etyma must make sense collectively to constitute a system of classification. What, therefore, if there were more than one plausible semantic interpretation of exactly the same set of etyma, with each interpretation reflecting a recognisable variant of a Malayo-Polynesian kin classification system? The issue would then become one of determining probable solutions among possible systems.

It may well be possible to arrive at a protolanguage construction for the Malayo-Polynesian kinship terminology, but to do so one must take into account the complexity of the task at hand. For this, there can be no short cuts or simple solutions.

In this paper, I want to look at eight lexemes reconstructed for Ego's generation in the Proto Malayo-Polynesian kinship terminology. To provide some indication of the variety of possibilities for the semantic interpretation of these lexemes, I want to examine the kin terms for Ego's generation in a number of different contemporary Malayo-Polynesian societies, all

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of which share a significant number of reflexes of the PMP set. My examination of these systems is intended to illustrate some of the forms of variation that occur among contemporary Malayo-Polynesian societies. Although a few such systems cannot give an adequate idea of the range of this variation, these examples do provide enough possibilities to allow me to venture two alternative and equally coherent semantic reconstructions for the eight PMP lexemes of Ego's generation. In my conclusion, I point to the features that may most readily transform one alternative to the other. This, in turn, raises the question of the development of the most general features of Malayo-Polynesian kinship classification.

## 2. KINSHIP TERMINOLOGIES AS OBJECTS OF STUDY

From an analytic point of view, it is often difficult to determine what should or should not be considered a 'kinship' term. Kinship is a rich field of social discourse and the terms used in this discourse invariably include alternative forms, terms of politeness, vocatives, as well as 'metaphoric' terms that are not confined exclusively to the field of kinship discourse. Often consideration of such 'metaphoric' terms provide revealing cultural insights.<sup>2</sup>

From the outset, the process of analysis 'frames' its object. By our frame of analysis, we elicit, select, and thereby delimit a field of cultural discourse; and, then, to this field of discourse we direct particular interrogations. The questions we pose are those of coherence, intelligibility, and, in the case of relationship terminologies, the question of possible social function.

Lewis Henry Morgan, who initiated the formal study of relationship terminologies in his massive work, 'Systems of consanguinity and affinity of the human family' (1870), also established the chief conventions and underlying assumptions that continue to shape current analysis. By enshrining as critical a concept of 'descent' and by analytically distinguishing 'consanguinity' from 'affinity', Morgan claimed to have fashioned a scientific framework for the study of kinship. This framework, however, was based on well-established British and European legal categories.<sup>3</sup> As a construct reflecting Western assumptions, this framework has proved particularly intractable for the study of Malayo-Polynesian systems of kinship.

Given his analytical assumptions, Morgan, on the basis of his study of Hawaiian kinship – particularly the terms of Ego's generation – could only arrive at the scandalous conclusion that these terms reflected a prior system of incestuous marriage. For this curious form of supposed social organisation, Morgan coined the term '*punaluan*', and argued that this represented one of the earliest forms of human society.

Although simplistic in its initial formulation, Morgan's research has bequeathed a legacy that continues to set the framework for the study of Malayo-Polynesian kinship and social organisation. The major criterion for the typology of Malayo-Polynesian societies remains

<sup>2</sup> An example of a cultural analysis that derives from asking the question 'what is a kinship term?' can be found in 'Sister's child as plant: metaphors in an idiom of consanguinity' (Fox 1971). The fact that the Rotinese use a noun form (*selek*) of the verb 'to plant' as a term for the 'sister's child' is indicative of a conceptual system that draws connections between humans and plants.

<sup>3</sup> Morgan, who was himself a practising lawyer, was deeply influenced by the work of the great English jurist, William Blackstone, and in particular by two of Blackstone's major treatises, *An essay on collateral consanguinity* (1750) and *A treatise on the law of descents in fee-simple* (1759). Morgan, for example, adapted Blackstone's diagram of collateral consanguinity to represent various 'systems' of consanguinity.

that of 'descent'. Thus there is a concern to distinguish, usually on the basis of kin terminology, those societies with undifferentiated descent ('cognatic descent') from those with a variety of forms of differentiated descent ('patrilineal', 'matrilineal', 'bilineal', 'double unilineal', 'ambilineal', etc.).

Cross-cutting this supposed divide between 'differentiated' and 'undifferentiated' descent, there exists a further concern to relate to one another those parts of the kinship terminology that have been analytically distinguished as either 'consanguine' or 'affine'. Societies with prescribed or directed forms of marriage are seen to be of particular interest in regard to issues of consanguinity and affinity.

I have for some time argued against the pervasive legacy of Morgan's paradigm and its use, in various contexts, to specify early forms of Malayo-Polynesian or Austronesian social organisation (Fox 1980a, 1988a, 1988b). As an alternative to 'descent groups', I have proposed the concept of 'origin structures/groups' which are as commonly found in societies without descent as they are in societies with descent; and I have argued for the importance of 'precedence' (rather than 'hierarchy') as an organising feature in relations among groups and individuals (Fox, forthcoming). I also pointed to the 'house' as a mediating social and ritual structure in Malayo-Polynesian societies (Fox 1980b, forthcoming). As the evidence accumulates on the variety and diversity of Malayo-Polynesian forms of social organisation, it is essential to proceed cautiously in analysing this marvellous complexity. The purpose of this paper is thus to raise a further caution about what we think we may know.

### 3. KINSHIP VARIATION: COMPLETENESS AND DETERMINACY

In the Austronesian-speaking world, no two kinship terminologies are the same. Variation is considerable. This variation has two dimensions. Terminologies may vary in the number of terms that are utilised. Thus some Austronesian societies define a relational universe with more or less ten basic terms while other societies require over forty terms to create their social world. In addition, many terminologies contain alternative forms for the same referent. These alternative forms may, for example, be used to imply intimacy or deference with a particular relationship.

The other dimension of variation in kinship terminologies is in the specifications (or referents) of the terms used by any particular society. Thus with roughly the same number of terms (or even with the same number of related terms), societies can fashion what may appear to be radically different forms of social organisation. Moreover, in many Malayo-Polynesian societies the specification of a kinship term, especially in Ego's generation, depends on the gender of the speaker. Hence men and women may fashion distinctive structures of relationships by using the same terms to refer to different relatives. The specification of certain terms must therefore include the gender of the speaker.

One example is sufficient to illustrate this situation. Various contemporary Malayo-Polynesian-speaking populations have a term *ipar*, or a close cognate of *ipar*, that refers to some category of affine. The referents for this term, however, vary significantly. Thus, for example:

*Ipar* as an affinal category<sup>4</sup>

1. Iban	<i>ipar</i>	: A, same generation, both sexes <sup>5</sup>
2. Sa'dan Toraja	<i>ipa'</i>	: A, same generation, both sexes
3. Manggarai	<i>ipar</i>	: HZ, BW, WBW, HZH
4. Sikka	<i>ipar</i>	: MBD (m.s.), FZS (w.s.)
5. Tagalog	<i>ipag</i>	: WZ, BW (if older)
6. Isneg	<i>ipag</i>	: WZ, BW (m.s.); HB, ZH (w.s.)
7. Tagbanwa	<i>ipag</i>	: WZ, BW (m.s.); HB, ZH, HZ, BW (w.s.)

This kind of situation presents formidable obstacles to any analyst who wishes to reconstruct the protollexemes of a kinship system and, on the basis of these reconstructed lexemes, attempts to deduce forms of social organisation. Variation in the number of terms that can cohere to constitute a relationship system raises the question of 'completeness'; while variation in specifications of kin terms, even among closely related languages, raises a question of 'determinacy of reference'.

These two problems are intimately connected since one would not wish to venture to construct an early form of kinship terminology without some reasonable assurance that the protollexemes one used were indeed complete. In specific terms, there are two questions: (1) When can one be confident of having constructed all the terms of a terminology? and (2) What can one infer from these terms, if this confidence can be established?

## 4. CANDIDATE TERMS FOR EGO'S GENERATION

Based on present knowledge, there would appear to be eight good candidate terms for Proto Malayo-Polynesian kinship in Ego's generation. Whether this list of eight terms constitutes a 'complete' set remains to be established.<sup>6</sup> For the purposes of this paper, the list is sufficient to illustrate the problem of indeterminacy. I list these candidate terms here with the simplest possible general glosses:

## Proto Malayo-Polynesian kinship: Ego's generation

1. <i>*kaka/aka</i>	elder
2. <i>*huaji</i>	younger
3. <i>*laki</i>	male
4. <i>*binay</i>	female
5. <i>*ma-Ruqanay</i>	male relative
6. <i>*betaw</i>	female relative
7. <i>*hipaR</i>	affine
8. <i>*qasawa</i>	spouse

<sup>4</sup> Kinship data on the Iban is from J.D. Freeman (1960); on the Sa'dan Toraja, H. Nooy-Palm (1979); on Sikka, P. Arndt (1933); on the Manggarai, Gordon (1980); and on the Isneg and Tagbanwa, R.E. Elkins and G.F. Hendrickson (1984).

<sup>5</sup> The simple conventions used, in this paper, for these specifications are as follows: P = parent, F = father, M = mother, B = brother, Z = sister, S = son, D = daughter, Sb = Sibling, Sp = spouse, W = wife, H = husband, A = affine, unless further specification is required. Using these basic identifications, a variety of easily recognisable combinations can be constructed: MB = mother's brother, MBD = mother's brother's daughter, WB = wife's brother, ZH = sister's husband, etc. This paper also uses the following additional conventions: e = elder, y = younger; m.s. = man speaking, w.s. = woman speaking.

<sup>6</sup> Other possible candidate terms are *\*baliw*, *\*bunting*, *\*urang* and *\*nara*.

Some of these eight can be considered as related pairs, which is in itself perhaps the most significant feature of this particular set. The first two of these terms (*\*kaka/\*huaji*) encode a notion of relative age (the elder/younger distinction); the second two (*\*laki/\*binay*) encode a notion of gender (the male/female distinction); the third two (*\*ma-Ruqanay/\*betaw*) also appear to encode some gender distinction between related individuals; while the last two terms (*\*hipaR/\*qasawa*), which do not form a pair, encode notions of affinity and marriage. Unlike *\*kaka/\*huaji* which form a reciprocal pair, reflexes of *\*hipaR* in most Austronesian societies are self-reciprocal. Similarly reflexes of *\*qasawa* are often but not always self-reciprocal.<sup>7</sup>

Assuming for the sake of discussion that this represents a reasonable, but not necessarily complete, repertoire of terms for Ego's generation, we may speculate, on the basis of what we know of present Malayo-Polynesian societies, on the possible forms of social organisation this particular repertoire of terms might imply.

To illustrate some of these possibilities, it is instructive to consider the configuration of terms in Ego's generation in a number of different contemporary Malayo-Polynesian societies that retain reflexes of these constructed PMP lexemes. Since there are eight lexemes in the constructed set, my choice of contemporary societies will be confined to societies that retain 50 per cent or more of these lexemes. To illustrate a range of variation, I have chosen societies with languages which, following Blust's classification, belong to the Western (WMP), Central (CMP) and Oceanic (OC) subgroups of Malayo-Polynesian.

## 5. CONTEMPORARY MALAYO-POLYNESIAN VARIATION

The societies I have chosen to illustrate variations in terminologies are: (1) the Iban of Sarawak; (2) the Sa'dan Toraja of south Sulawesi; (3) the Ngada of central Flores; (4) the Rotinese of the Timor area; (5) the Sikka and Ata Tanai Ai of central east Flores and (5) the Fijians of the Lau Islands. In addition to their linguistic diversity, these societies can be taken to represent – according to present social typologies – significantly different forms of Malayo-Polynesian social organisation. After presenting the terms used in Ego's generation for each of these societies, I provide a brief sketch of the social organisation of that society to give some idea of what makes it distinct from the other societies of this particular group.

It is useful to begin with a familiar well-documented society: in this case, the Iban of Sarawak who utilise eight terms in Ego's generation of which five (*aka, adi, laki, bini, ipar*) are reflexes from the PMP set. I list these terms with minimal indicative specifications:

<sup>7</sup> These terms are candidates for Proto Malayo-Polynesian (PMP), not for Proto Austronesian (PAN) kinship. Much more systematic work must be done to make clear possible terminological developments from PAN to PMP. Interestingly the kinship terminologies of different Formosan societies make distinctions and equations that resemble those in other parts of the Austronesian world. Yet the use of lexical resources in these languages, in significant instances, differs systematically from the use of similar resources in Malayo-Polynesian languages: thus, to cite just a few examples, *laqe* (Atayal, Sedeq), *lelake* (Rukai) and *velake* (Torulukane) all refer to 'child' without gender specification; *iva* [possibly from *\*hipaR*] (Puyuma) refers to eSb, eSbSp, SpeSb; while *sava* [possibly from *\*qasawa*] (Ami) refers to ySb without gender specification.

IBAN<sup>8</sup>

1. <i>aka</i>	e [no gender distinction: eB, eZ]
2. <i>adi</i>	y [no gender distinction: yB, yZ]
3. <i>menyadi</i>	Sb
4. <i>petunggal</i>	PSbC ['cousins']
5. <i>laki</i>	H
6. <i>bini</i>	W
7. <i>ipar</i>	A [same generation, both sexes]
8. <i>duai</i>	SpA ['spouse of affine']

The Iban are one of the best documented societies in Southeast Asia and can be considered as a 'classic' case in the ethnographic literature on undifferentiated, bilateral societies. Iban social organisation is based on Ego-oriented bilateral kindred and thus has no system of 'descent' groups; nor have the Iban any rules of directed marriage.

The Iban are, however, much concerned with origins. Particular residential groupings trace their origins through a defined structure within a longhouse. As Sather has noted, each family has its 'source' (*pun bilik*) who is the custodian of the heritable estate including the ritual sacra and ancestral strains of rice (*padi pun*) that provide a critical link between the present and past generations (Sather 1993:70). The continuity of the *bilik* is dependent on residence and may follow either male or female lines. Hence the Iban are a society with 'origin groups' but without a strict system of descent.

The Sa'dan Toraja of south Sulawesi are another 'classic' case in the ethnographic literature. Like the Iban, in Ego's generation the Sa'dan Toraja have five reflexes (*kaka*, *adi*, [*anak*] *muane/muane*, *baine* and *ipa'*) from the PMP set.

SA'DAN TORAJA<sup>9</sup>

1. <i>kaka</i>	e [both sexes] Sb, PSbC
2. <i>adi</i>	y [both sexes] Sb, PSbC
3. <i>sampu</i>	PSbC ['cousins']
4. <i>anak muane</i>	B, FBS, MBS, FZS, MZS ['brother, male cousins']
5. <i>anak dara</i>	Z, FBD, MBD, FZD, MZD ['sister, female cousins']
6. <i>muane</i>	H
7. <i>baine</i>	W
8. <i>ipa'</i>	A [same generation, both sexes] BW, ZH, HB, HZ, WB, WZ
9. <i>sanglalan</i>	HBW, WZH [SpA, opposite sex]

In their kinship terms for Ego's generation, the Sa'dan Toraja appear to be similar to the Iban. The Toraja share with the Iban reflexes (with the same specifications) for four of the PMP set: (1) *kaka*, (2) *adi*, (3) *baine* and (4) *ipa'*. Moreover, Torajan *sampu* specifies the

<sup>8</sup> These specific kinship data come from Freeman (1960). In addition to this set of eight reference terms, the Iban use *wai* (Sp) and *ika* (e affine, eSp of affine) as terms of address.

<sup>9</sup> These kinship data are from Nooy-Palm (1979:28-29). In addition to these terms, Nooy-Palm notes various alternative forms (with similar specifications) including the term, *siulu'* to *loloku*, which is a poetic expression for full brother or sister. Cousins, regardless of sex, can be distinguished as 'first' cousins (*sampu pissan*), 'second' cousins (*sampu penduan*) and 'third' cousins (*sampu pentallun*).

same category of relations as the *petunggal* category among the Iban. *Muane*, however, replaces *laki* and has the general sense of 'male'. Furthermore, unlike the Iban, the Toraja discriminate between male and female siblings and cousins.

Despite these similarities, Sa'dan Toraja social organisation differs considerably from that of the Iban. Sa'dan Toraja social organisation is composed of bilateral groups known as *rapu* that have been variously described as 'ramages' or as bilateral 'descent' groups. These groups are focused on a specific ancestor or ancestors (*puang*) associated with particular houses. Houses are themselves distinguished according to the nobility of their origin. Noble houses are known as *tongkonan* while lesser houses are referred to as the *banua* of a particular group. Individuals may trace links to their father's and mother's *tongkonan* and through these links ritually to other distinguished houses. Based on Waterson (1986), who describes houses in terms of their function as origin sites, I have argued that *rapu* can be considered as 'origin groups' with houses providing the physical structures for their representation of these groups (Fox forthcoming). If, among the Iban, 'origins' are structured in terms of apartments within the longhouse, among the Sa'dan Toraja 'origins' are based on a network of houses.

The islands of eastern Indonesia, particularly those in Nusa Tenggara Timur and the Molucca Islands, have been stereotyped as a region with societies possessing lineages and prescribed marriage systems. Although eastern Indonesia does have such societies that may be described in this way, the region is an area of considerable social variability. Neighbouring societies with closely related languages may differ quite considerably in social organisation. Current typologies tend to cast these differences as significantly different types.

The first case to be considered is that of the Ngadha of central Flores whose social organisation would appear to resemble that of the Sa'dan Toraja. Like the Sa'dan Toraja, the Ngadha have bilateral groups known as *vocé* [woé] that trace their origin to a specific male or female ancestor whose cult is located and identified with a particular ancestral house. The kinship terminology of the Ngadha, however, differs in significant ways from that of the Sa'dan Toraja. The Ngadha utilise only seven terms for Ego's generation, of which four (*kaé*, *cazi*, *veta*, *cipa*) appear to be reflexes of the PMP set.

#### NGADHA<sup>10</sup>

1. <i>kaé</i>	e [same sex: eB (m.s.), eZ (w.s.)]
2. <i>cazi</i>	y [same sex: yB (m.s.), yZ (w.s.)]
3. <i>doca</i>	Sb [same sex: B (m.s.), Z (w.s.)]
4. <i>veta</i>	Z (m.s.)
5. <i>nara</i>	B (w.s.)
6. <i>cipa</i>	WZ, BW
7. <i>cédza</i>	WB, ZH

The critical features of this system that distinguish it from that of the Sa'dan Toraja are that (1) relative age terms are gender specific and are used primarily among members of the same sex; (2) in accord with the gender specific relative age terms, there is a set of opposite

<sup>10</sup> These kinship data come from Arndt (1954) and preserve his somewhat idiosyncratic orthography. Compound terms may be formed from these basic terms. Using *tua*, which is the reference term for senior affine, Spouse's Parent (SpP), other affinal reference terms can be formed: thus, *tua cédza* may be used to refer to wife's male relatives; *tua cipa* may refer to husband's female relatives.



sex terms used among siblings (and parallel cousins); and (3) affinal terms are also gender specific: *cipa* refers to female affines in Ego's generation; *cédza* to male affines.

Recent research in the Ngadha area indicates, however, that Ngadha is far less homogeneous an area than the published account by the missionary anthropologist, Paul Arndt (1954), would indicate. The region appears to form part of a complex chain of dialects extending through much of central Flores. The research by Andrea Molnar on a distinctive population of this 'Ngadha area' who identify themselves as Hoga Sara (of Sara-Sedu) points to the use of a set of terms not unlike those reported by Arndt, but with distinctive specifications (especially for the *cipa/cédza* categories) which are associated with different rules of directed marriage. Rules of marriage – whether symmetric or asymmetric – are associated with particular named 'origin houses' (*sa'o mézé*) and clans (*woe*). No single rule of marriage holds for Sara-Sedu as a whole. This research on the Hoga Sara highlights the importance of houses in establishing origins and the possibilities, particularly for first-born children, of attachments to more than one house, as is the case among the Sa'dan Toraja.<sup>11</sup>

If the Sa'dan Toraja and the Ngadha (or Hoga Sara) provide examples of societies that permit the possibilities of bilateral and even multiple attachments to ancestral houses, such possibilities are simply not allowed among the Rotinese of the Timor area. Attachments are restricted to a single house and clan. The Rotinese terminology for Ego's generation, however, resembles that of the Ngadha.

#### ROTI (TERMANU)

1. <i>ka'a</i>	e [same sex: eB (m.s.), eZ (w.s.)]
2. <i>fadi</i>	y [same sex: yB (m.s.), yZ (w.s.)] <sup>12</sup>
3. <i>tolano</i>	Sb [same sex: B (m.s.), Z (w.s.)]
4. <i>feto</i>	Z (m.s.)
5. <i>nak</i>	B (w.s.)
6. <i>hi'a</i>	HZ, BW (w.s.)
7. <i>kela</i>	WB, ZH (m.s.)
8. <i>saok</i>	Sp
9. <i>touk</i>	H
10. <i>inak</i>	W

As in the case of the Iban and of the Sa'dan Toraja, Rotinese possesses reflexes for five (*ka'a*, *fadi*, *feto*, *hi'a* – metathesis of *\*hipaR* – and *saok*) of the eight PMP forms.<sup>13</sup> Although there is a difference in the referents for *cipa/hi'a*, the first seven of these terms in the Rotinese terminology make virtually the same distinctions that Ngadha's terminology makes.

Differences in social organisation are significant in that the Rotinese possess a more lineal system of named clans and lineages than in Ngadha. Houses conceived as social groups are

<sup>11</sup> Ms Molnar, who did extended fieldwork among the Hoga Sara, is currently completing her PhD thesis in the Department of Anthropology in the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University.

<sup>12</sup> These specifications are a simplification. Elder/younger categories are applied to parallel cousins as well as siblings.

<sup>13</sup> In other relational contexts, Rotinese also distinguish between *mane/feto* (male/female) in a way that might reflect the set of the protoloxemes, *\*ma-Ruqanay/betaw*.



of a lesser order than either clans or lineages. On Roti, there is no system of directed or prescribed marriage.

In all of the considerable literature on prescriptive marriage systems among the Malayo-Polynesians, no one has yet focused, in a systematic fashion, on the different lexical resources used to create these various systems.<sup>14</sup> Hence there exists the assumption that the 'prescription of marriage' that occurs in certain societies is a single structural property that can somehow be attributed to the existence of specific lexical resources. Comparative evidence, however, would suggest the opposite: that prescriptive rules have been 'invented' in different parts of the Austronesian world – and even in near neighbouring societies – using different parts of a related lexicon. From this perspective, 'prescription' is not a thing-in-itself but a possible organisational component of some systems that can be structured in different ways using different linguistic resources.

I propose to illustrate this proposition by reference to three 'prescriptive systems'. The first two of these systems, from Sikka and Tana 'Ai on Flores, are particularly instructive.<sup>15</sup> These two societies are linguistically closely related, each using a distinct dialect of the same language.

Like the Rotinese, both Sikka and Tana 'Ai can be said to reckon their origins lineally. In Sikka, however, this reckoning is through males, whereas in Tana 'Ai it is through women. Both societies share most of the same set of terms for relatives in Ego's generation. The only difference between the two is that Sikka preserves the term, *ipar*, which is not used in Tana 'Ai. Both societies prescribe marriage with a particular category of spouse designated within the same generation but, as is evident from the list of each society's kinship terms, Sikka and Tana 'Ai use different terms for the prescribed spouse. The difference is not simply a matter of lexical addition or substitution but rather a fundamental difference in the way the systems themselves are structured.

In the configuration of terminologies that we have already considered, the reflex of *\*hipaR* has varied in its referents from that of a general category for affine to that of a reciprocal term used between specific female affines. In the Sikka system, there is a further change: *ipar* is used as a reciprocal cross-sex term to designate the prescribed spouse.

#### SIKKA

1. <i>wué</i>	e [same sex: eB (m.s.), eZ (w.s.)]
2. <i>wari</i>	y [same sex: yB (m.s.), yZ (w.s.)]
3. <i>whine</i>	Z, FZD (m.s.)
4. <i>nara</i>	B, MBS (w.s.)
5. <i>ipar</i>	MBD (m.s.), FZS (w.s.)
6. <i>wra</i> <sup>16</sup>	FZD, MBD, HZ, BW (w.s.)
7. <i>kerá</i>	FZS, MBS, WB, ZH (m.s.)

<sup>14</sup> This is a systematic study that I have now begun. Here all I can do is illustrate my argument by reference to three different prescriptive systems.

<sup>15</sup> For documentation on Tana 'Ai, see Lewis (1988); for Sikka, see Fox (1972); Fox and Lewis (1993).

<sup>16</sup> It should be noted that *wra* here is a reflex of one of the candidate terms, *\*urang*, which I have not included in the PMP set. Thus the Sikka case raises questions of both completeness and indeterminacy with which I began this paper. Reflexes of *\*urang* are reasonably common in the kinship systems of the Flores/Moluccas region.

From this vantage point, we may consider the Tana 'Ai terminology. To appreciate the beauty of the Tana 'Ai terminology (and terminologies like it), however, it is important to consider the basis for such systems in other Malayo-Polynesian societies. Thus in Malay or Javanese, the term that normally refers to 'elder sibling' or 'elder brother' (*kaka, kakanda* in Malay; *kakang, kangmas* in Javanese) may also be used as an intimate term of affection or endearment for a 'husband' or 'lover'. Similarly in these languages, the term normally used for 'younger sibling' (*adi, adik, adinda* in Malay or Javanese) can be used for a 'wife' or 'lover'. This particular use of elder/younger which in some sense assimilates loving spouses to the category of intimate cross-siblings occurs in languages that use the elder/younger terms for both sexes as well as those that normally use the elder/younger terms between same sex siblings.

Some societies give systematic expression to this feature of linguistic usage and make it the basis for designating the 'prescribed spouse'. This is precisely what occurs in the Tana 'Ai system. In Tana 'Ai, the elder category, *wué*, is used by a woman to refer to her sister and her parallel cousin but also to refer to her male cross-cousins (MBS, FZS) from among whom she is enjoined to find a husband. Similarly, the younger category, *wari*, is used by a man to refer to his brothers and parallel cousins but also to his female cross-cousins (MBD, FZD) from among whom he must find a wife. Unlike *ipar* which is used reciprocally in Sikka, *wué/wari* are cross-sex reciprocals in Tana 'Ai.

#### TANA 'AI

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| 1. <i>wué</i>     | e [B, FBS, MZS (m.s.)<br>e [Z, FBD, MZD (FZD, MBD) (w.s.)]<br>MBS (w.s.), FZS (w.s.)                   |
| 2. <i>wari</i>    | y [B, FBS, MZS (m.s.)<br>y [Z, FBD, MZD, (FZD, MBD) (w.s.)]<br>MBD (m.s.), FZD (m.s.)<br>WZ, BW (m.s.) |
| 3. <i>winé</i>    | Z, FBD, MZD (m.s.)   |
| 4. <i>nara</i>    | B, FBS, MZS (w.s.)   |
| 5. <i>ura</i>     | HZ, BW, FZD, MBD (w.s.)  |
| 6. <i>kera pu</i> | WB, ZH, FZS, MBS (m.s.)  |

The last system I want to consider in this paper is a prescriptive system that occurs among the Lau islanders of Fiji whose language belongs to the Oceanic subgroup of Malayo-Polynesian languages. It has fewer reflexes of the PMP set that formed the starting point of this paper but the fact that it lacks a reflex of *\*hipaR* and does not use elder/younger categories to define the prescribed spouse means that it uses yet other lexical resources to achieve its own form of prescribed marriage.

This particular Fijian system therefore makes a good contrast with the Sikka and Tana 'Ai systems. Like the Tana 'Ai system, it is elegant in its simplicity. In this case, *wati* is used reciprocally to designate opposite sex marriageable cross-cousins and *tavale* is used reciprocally to designate same sex 'affinal' cross-cousins.

FIJI (LAU ISLANDS)<sup>17</sup>

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1. <i>tuaka</i>              | e [same sex: eB (m.s.), eZ (w.s.)]         |
| 2. <i>taōi</i> <sup>18</sup> | y [same sex: yB (m.s.), yZ (w.s.)]         |
| 3. <i>weka</i>               | Z (m.s.)<br>B (w.s.)                       |
| 4. <i>wati</i>               | H, MBD, FZD (m.s.)<br>W, MBS, FZS (w.s.)   |
| 5. <i>tavale</i>             | MBS, FZS, WB (m.s.)<br>MBD, FZD, HZ (w.s.) |

Hocart's description of this system, which focuses on the island of Lakemba in the Lau Archipelago, is another 'classic' in the anthropological literature. He describes a fluid system of named ancestral clans (*matanggali*) which are ranked as noble or commoner and subdivided into feasting groups known as 'sides of the oven' (*mbati ni lovo*). This clan structure is based on 'origin houses' (*vuvale*; *vu*: 'base', 'origin', 'ancestor', 'god'; *vale*: house).<sup>19</sup> Membership in such houses is determined by adoption as well as by residence rather than by strict rules of descent. The social organisation of Lakemba, especially in its various possibilities of affiliation to houses or origin, resembles that of the Sa'dan Toraja and the Ngadha but with a distinctive system of marriage.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Kinship terminologies by their subtlety, variability and complexity present an interesting arena for the discussion of the semantics of classification. Having considered examples of the different uses of similar terms in Ego's generation in a few Malayo-Polynesian societies, I return to the question of the 'determinacy of specification'. Based on the variability of the examples I have cited, I would like to consider two possible sets of specifications for the eight PMP candidate terms with which I began. Each of these sets forms a coherent configuration. Although there is no necessary coincidence between a terminology and a particular form of social organisation, nonetheless one would tend to consider these two contrastive configurations as likely to reflect different forms of society.

The first of these possible configurations would have the following specifications:

## \*CONFIGURATION I

- |                       |                  |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1. <i>*kaka/aka</i>   | eSb [both sexes] |
| 2. <i>*huaji</i>      | ySb [both sexes] |
| 3. <i>*laki</i>       | H ['male']       |
| 4. <i>*binay</i>      | W ['female']     |
| 5. <i>*ma-Ruqanay</i> | B (w.s.)         |
| 6. <i>*betaw</i>      | Z (m.s.)         |

<sup>17</sup> These kinship data derive from Hocart (1929) and therefore follow his orthography. *Taci* is now the more common spelling for Hocart's *tathi*; a synonymous term for *wati* is *davola*.

<sup>18</sup> The use of *tuaka/taōi* is much more subtle than I indicate here. Thus for example, *taōi* can be used to refer to yB but also to yBC (m.s.). Since these distinctions do not relate to my argument at this stage, I cite only a truncated list of specifications.

<sup>19</sup> It would appear from Hocart's account (1929:17,199) that in the dialect spoken on Lakemba the term *vu* derives from Proto Malayo-Polynesian *\*puqun*: 'tree, trunk, base, source, origin', rather than from *\*t-u(m)pu* (or *\*epu*): 'ancestor, master'.

- |                   |                        |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| 7. <i>*hipaR</i>  | WB, ZH, BW, HZ, HB, WZ |
| 8. <i>*qasawa</i> | Sp                     |

A society with this sort of terminological configuration would tend towards bilaterality and it might even be possible to maintain bilateral groups with this kind of configuration. Such a society would resemble that of the Iban or the Sa'dan Toraja.

The second of these possible configurations would have the following specifications:

**\*CONFIGURATION II**

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1. <i>*kaka/aka</i>   | eB, eFBS, eMZS (m.s.);<br>eZ, eFBD, eMZD (w.s.) |
| 2. <i>*huaji</i>      | yB, yFBS, yMZS (m.s.);<br>eZ, eFBD, eMZD (w.s.) |
| 3. <i>*laki</i>       | H, MBS, FZS (w.s.)                              |
| 4. <i>*binay</i>      | W, MBD, FZD (m.s.)                              |
| 5. <i>*ma-Ruqanay</i> | B, FBS, MZS (w.s.)                              |
| 6. <i>*betaw</i>      | Z, FBD, MZD (m.s.)                              |
| 7. <i>*hipaR</i>      | WB, MBS, FZS (m.s.);<br>HZ, MBD, FZD (w.s.)     |
| 8. <i>*qasawa</i>     | Sp  |

This configuration suggests a degree of lineality and would be consistent with a two-line system of symmetric marriage. It is by no means as elegant as the Fijian system from the Lau Islands but nevertheless makes the same distinction.

It would be possible to continue this exercise and construct other alternative configurations using these same resources. However, the particular configurations that I have constructed pose an intended contrast. Blust (1980b) has proposed a dichotomy between what he states are two opposing hypotheses regarding 'early Austronesian social organisation': the one a "prescriptive alliance hypothesis" and the other a "bilateral hypothesis". In terms of this dichotomy, Blust has marshalled evidence and arguments in favour of the "prescriptive alliance hypothesis".

I question the usefulness of Blust's typological categorisation of Austronesian societies exclusively on the basis of 'descent'; I am also sceptical of some of his chief arguments; and I remain unconvinced by certain of the data he has assembled in support of them (Fox 1980a, 1988b). Whereas systems of prescriptive alliance are well attested in eastern Indonesia (Blust's CMP subgroup), the overwhelming majority of the societies of the Philippines, Borneo, Sumatra, Java, Bali and Sulawesi (Blust's WMP subgroup) exhibit a bilaterality that is difficult to reconcile with Blust's view of early Austronesian social organisation. Moreover, having studied various native systems of dual classification, I am wary of the classificatory use of dichotomies and of the sides that can be drawn in terms of them.

From this perspective, the two configurations that I have constructed are pertinent, since the first configuration is clearly bilateral while the second is clearly prescriptive. The essential point to be made is that the introduction of a single feature – determination of referent by gender of speaker – can transform Configuration I into Configuration II. As I have argued in another context, "with virtually the same terminological resources, it is as easy to construct a two-line symmetric terminology as it is to construct a cognatic [ie. bilateral] terminology" (Fox 1988b:40). If this is the case, it may be possible to construct either system for Proto Malayo-Polynesian.

Rather than adopting one side in an uncomfortable oppositional dichotomy, it might be more productive to recast the question: where, at what stage, and to what extent did Malayo-Polynesian languages develop the feature of 'gender of speaker' as a prominent defining feature of relationships in Ego's generation? Whereas generation, gender, age and relative age are fundamental to Malayo-Polynesian kinship terminologies, gender of speaker is a more variable feature. It is often elaborated as a major semantic resource in the creation of systems of directed marriage, but would appear to be less developed in many bilateral systems. Tracing the development of this feature in particular may explicate some of the early history of Malayo-Polynesian social formations. There is much that remains to be sorted out at lower order levels of comparison before we can be confident of higher order reconstructions. Research at both levels needs to go hand in hand.

