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## Compensatory Blood-Brotherhood: A Comparative Analysis of Institutionalized Friendship in Two African Societies<sup>1</sup>

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INTRODUCTION: Blood-brotherhood with its accompanying exotic ritual has long caught the imagination of both anthropological and lay observers. Descriptions of the ritual pact from widely separated non-literate societies portray a relationship of recurring similarity.<sup>2</sup> Behavior between blood brothers involves the intimacy, warmth and reciprocity that is customarily associated with "friendship," but — paradoxically — it is also marked by role expectations that are extraordinarily clear-cut, formalized and compelling.

The fact that blood-brotherhood is so strongly institutionalized<sup>3</sup> sets it apart from ordinary friendship and suggests that it plays a particularly crucial role in the functioning of individuals *and/or* social organizations. It is not surprising, then, that hypotheses purporting to explain blood-brotherhood are both psychological and sociological. Psychological hypotheses view the relationship in terms of its functions for the individual by noting the impact of the ritualized friendship on intra-psychic processes. Kardiner suggests that friends, through the process of identification, serve as ego ideals. Erickson notes that they play a part in establishing and defining ego modes, while Sullivan and the learning theorists have focused on the socialization process and noted that friends influence the internalization of values and roles. Sociological hypotheses have viewed blood-brotherhood in terms of its functions for the social system rather than the individual. Three such functions have been noted: the instrumental, the integrative, and the role stabilizing.<sup>4</sup>

Most of the sociological theorists have ignored the fact that ritual brotherhood is a type of friendship and is, therefore, an individual as well as a societal phenomenon. Similarly, most psychological theorists ignore the fact that the behavior patterns of blood-brotherhood are highly formalized and widespread and, therefore, reflect social pressures and shared needs.

There is merit in both positions, of course, and they should be combined. Thus, an hypothesis which satisfactorily explains the phenomena of blood-brotherhood must note: (1) that there may be several types of blood-brotherhood generated by *different* social structures and serving different functions. (2) utilize the concept of modal personality to explain the presence of recurrent, shared personality needs which can be traced to social structure and are met by ritualized friendship as an institutionalized relationship. In short, what is needed is an hypothesis which deals with blood-brotherhood in terms of both personality functions and social functions.

This presupposes a taxonomy of types of social structures and, ideally, a study of ritualized friendship in each

type of society.<sup>5</sup> This is beyond the scope of the present paper, but we would like to examine blood-brotherhood as it is found in one type of kin-oriented society, the tightly structured society.

THE TIGHTLY STRUCTURED SOCIETY: John Embree (1950) in his insightful paper comparing Thai and Japanese social structures first made a distinction between loosely structured societies where "considerable variation of individual behavior is sanctioned" versus tightly structured societies where there is a greater emphasis on "the importance of observing reciprocal rights and duties in different situations . . ." (Embree 1950:182). This dichotomy was given more precise definition by Bryce Ryan and Murray Strauss (1954) who define the loosely structured society in terms of the ego-group relationship and the nature of normative regulation.<sup>6</sup>

There are several dimensions of the tightness-looseness duality which the present writer would like to add to both previous characterizations. They are: (1) the *number* of roles which a society makes available; (2) the *basis* of role allocation; (3) *the kind and degree of sanctions used* to maintain role conformity, and (4) the *consequences* of these three.

Accordingly, I define a "tight"<sup>7</sup> society as one in which there is not a wide range of roles to select from, and where roles are primarily ascribed, rather than achieved. Moreover, there is not much tolerance of individual variation in role performance, and deviance in role performance is regularly met by clear-cut social sanctions. In a loose society, there is a greater range of available roles, and roles are more preponderantly achieved than in a tight society. A greater variation in role performance is allowed, and deviance in role performance is not regularly met with precise sanctions.

Given this definition of tight and loose societies, it is possible to further specify the nature of the duality by evaluating particular features of social organization and kinship systems in terms of their contribution to tightness and looseness (Gibbs, 1960). Here, the concern is with tight societies only and one may simply list (see Chart I) those features which contribute to tightness in one of three ways: (1) through defining normative expectations either by unequivocally allocating roles or by clearly stating norms; (2) by punishing deviance from norms, and (3) by rewarding conformity to norms.

The rationale for including each specific social organizational feature is also noted in another study (Gibbs, 1960), but the kind of reasoning employed can be briefly indicated here.<sup>8</sup> For example, the use of a hierarchial,

ascriptive principle such as primogeniture unequivocally allocates roles; and a feature like preferential marriage clearly states norms and both, therefore, contribute to tightness. Similarly, supernatural sanctions against adultery punish deviance while the presence of elective office based on moral matrimonial behavior can be viewed as rewarding conformity (see Chart I).

CHART 1. Structural and Functional Schema of the Tightly Structured Society\*

Social Function	Features of Social Organization
1. Defines normative expectations (by unequivocally allocating or stating norms) and/or	1. hereditary caste system or class structure
2. punishes deviance from norms	2. hereditary offices
3. rewards conformity to norms	3. formal age grades
	4. congruence of rules of descent and residence
	5. primogeniture, ultimogeniture and other fixed patterns of inheritance and succession
	6. group-centered vs. ego-centered kinship terminology
	7. stress on age criterion in kinship terminology
	8. preferential marriage
	9. sororate and/or levirate
	10. lineage determination of betrothal
	11. rigidly structured sibling behavior
	12. joking and avoidance relationships
	13. severe sanctions against adultery
	14. difficult and rare divorce
	15. ancestor worship
4. tension release	1. sibling rivalry
	2. witchcraft
	3. sorcery
	4. homosexuality
	5. transvestism
	6. psycho-somatic symptoms (including hysteria)
	7. some forms of suicide
	8. association with an anti-social purpose
	9. a strong belief in Fate or similar external causal agent

\* This schema includes the relevant features of social organization of the societies analyzed in the present paper and also includes pertinent features of social organization found in other tightly structured societies. *All* of these features will *not* be found in a single tightly structured society for, while each can be shown to be contributory to tightness of structure, the presence of each and every one is not necessary for structural tightness to result.

A feature of the tight society only tangentially noted in previous discussions is the patterned behavioral consequences of a psychological nature. It is a truism of social science to say that complete institutionalization of behavior within a society is impossible. But, the tight society values this impossible goal highly. In its provision of few role choices, its rigid allocation of roles, and stress on conformity in role performance, it allows little room for the expression of individual differences in biologically given temperament or social temperament.

The result is a high degree of deviance. Following Dollard and Miller, one could say that the frustration which is an inherent part of a tight society leads to aggression, or more precisely, patterned social deviance which is also a part of such a society. This may take many expressions: psychosomatic trends, such as hysteria; degree and form of suicide; nature and degree of other forms of deviance, such as transvestism; and forms of expression of aggression, such as crime, sorcery and witchcraft (see Chart I).

It is not simply the presence of one of these features which marks the tight society, but its incidence, its occurrence in combination with other such features, and that it is often institutionalized as a possible, but somewhat disvalued alternative. In other words, there is what Florence Kluckhohn (1950:383) has aptly termed "variance," as opposed to deviance.

The societally generated strains of a tight society which are manifested in such variant role patterns are a part of the modal personality type or types basic to such a society, and one cannot explain institutionalized expressions of such strain without resort to the modal personality concept. However, as Inkeles and Levinson (1954) have pointed out, "modal personality" should be used ideally to refer to a constellation of psychological or personality traits as they have been delineated on the basis of detailed study of numbers of living individuals of a given culture. For the construction of a modally distributed personality type based on the study of *cultural* institutions rather than individuals, the study of *non-psychological* traits in individuals, or the study of psychological features in only a *few* individuals, an alternative term should be used. I suggest the term *inferred modal personality* and will use it in the following discussion of blood-brotherhood in two African societies.

To test the hypothesis that the tight society produces a type of ritualized friendship with special functions, descriptions of blood-brotherhood and other ethnographic data from Tanala and Azande have been analyzed. These two societies were selected because they have unusually rich reports on blood-brotherhood, although the fullness of the ethnographic reports is not completely comparable in other respects. The analysis follows:

TANALA AND AZANDE AS TIGHTLY STRUCTURED SOCIETIES: 1. The Tanala, comprising several "tribes,"<sup>9</sup> are patrilineal agriculturalists living on the mountainous plateau of Madagascar, who number 200,000 (Murdock 1959:217). Basic ethnographic information on the group was recorded by Linton (1933),<sup>10</sup> and these same data have formed the basis of psycho-cultural interpretation by Kardiner (1939:291-354).

Tanala society is clearly tightly structured. It is characterized by the ascriptive allocation by birth of class roles (Linton 1933:138) and political roles (Linton 1933:147). Family roles, too, are ascriptively filled by birth order—notably in a modified primogeniture for the inheritance of property.<sup>11</sup> Underlying these patterns is a focus on hierarchical relationships which is also mirrored in intra-familial behavior, kinship terms,<sup>12</sup> marriage proscriptions,<sup>13</sup> class structure,<sup>14</sup> and religion.

This hierarchical focus gives the family a patriarchal, authoritarian flavor. The father's control is "absolute" (Kardiner 1939:260) and elaborate etiquette reflects his separate and superior status vis-à-vis his sons and womenfolk. In fact, there is so little leeway permitted in role performance within the family that failure to observe the traditional etiquette is felt to call down supernatural sanctions even when the parent chooses to overlook the child's offense (Linton 1933:295).

Marriage in Tanala is highly regulated. Mate selection is not free, for elder sons are expected to contract preferential marriage, and other marriages are strongly influenced by parental wishes.<sup>15</sup> Once entered into, marriage is strongly binding, for divorce is "infrequent" (Kardiner 1939:260).

Tanala, like other tight societies, is marked by the presence of a relatively limited number of highly standardized roles. In Tanala this is true even of kinship roles because there are few kinship terms and they are widely extended in a strongly classificatory system. Even more significant is the limitation of basic roles in the non-kinship sphere. The normal role for an adult Tanala male is that of rice farmer. However, under the system of primogeniture, the bulk of men, being younger sons, cannot farm in their own right. These younger sons must, therefore, eschew the role for which they have been trained in the family and accept an alternate cultural role.

There are several such alternatives available for younger sons. The blacksmith is the only highly skilled and professional craft role. Variant roles are those of warrior or religious specialist: the *ombiasy* (Linton 1933:199 *seq.*) or the *mpamosavy* (Kardiner 1939:274–275), a type of shaman and sorcerer respectively. Other forms of variant behavior—neurotic seizures (*tromba*), homosexuality or transvestism (Kardiner 1939:265–266, 270–275)—serve as outlets for other younger sons. Neurotic elements implicit in the behavior patterns associated with most of these variant roles lends weight to the interpretation that they have a latent function of dissipating pent-up aggression engendered by the tightness of Tanala society.

Tanala religion is characterized by a heavy focus on the ancestral cult and, when chastizing an erring son, a father may threaten him with possible punishment by ancestral ghosts (or indeed, as an ancestral ghost himself after death). The religious system is, then, a significant element in the punishment of deviations from norms and, thus, important in maintaining the tightness of Tanala society. At the same time, a rationalization for what must be—the fact that an individual's life is so heavily determined by external forces such as birth order—is the belief in fate and a concomitant concern with lucky and unlucky days. This is obviously a mechanism for shunting off societally generated hostility onto an outer, non-human force (Kardiner 1939:270).

It is clear that Tanala exhibits not only the features of social structure which typify the tight society, but also the institutionalized beliefs and roles that such a society offers as a safety valve for the intra-psychic strains its

social institutions generate. However, flexibility and the avoidance of absolute tightness are seen in several features of Tanala society: the election of local chiefs, class exogamy, partial self-determination of betrothal, and lack of strong stress on the sororate and levirate.

What can be said of the modal personality which mediates between the structural and "psychological" features of a tight society? The inferred modal personality Kardiner (1939:291–354) constructs for the Tanala is characterized by a stress on authority and an instrumental, manipulative orientation to other individuals. This is initially established by the incongruence of long breast feeding coupled with early anal training which leads to a pattern of submission to authority marking what Kardiner terms the "psychology of ingratiating" (1939:301, 319). This pattern has the combination of a wish for dominance, on the one hand, and a need for submission on the other, which is the earmark of the authoritarian personality (Adorno *et al.* 1950). Reinforced throughout the life cycle of the Tanala, it generates sibling rivalry which causes brothers to compete for the attention of the father. They seek gifts and favors during his lifetime through ingratiating to him which leads to a tone of manipulative instrumentality in the fraternal relationship. Thus, an eldest son will, "by making loans to his younger brothers, keep them in debt and subjugation" (Linton 1933:142) in order to maintain his power over them.

This inferred modal personality is one which has a need for inter-personal relations which are ordered according to a hierarchical principle and are basically instrumental or manipulative in character.

2. The Azande are a group of 750,000 patrilineal agriculturalists comprising numerous tribes who live in the region of the Nile-Congo divide straddling the Sudan, the Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic.<sup>16</sup>

The Zande<sup>17</sup> have hereditary caste-like groups which are more exclusive than the Tanala classes. There are noble clans—known as the *Avungara*—commoner clans, and slaves.<sup>18</sup> The *Vungara* as the ranking group are sharply set apart by style of life and a special type of male hypergamy.<sup>19</sup> Granted immunity from certain legal sanctions and other privileges, they are ". . . men whose superiority is never challenged and whose commands receive immediate obedience" (Evans-Pritchard 1937:14). This indicates the rigidity of the Zande class system, the degree to which conformity to it is enforced, and hints at the societally generated aggression it instills in commoners.

Political organization takes the form of a hierarchally structured centralized state and political roles, like class roles, are ascriptively allocated by birth. Leadership is in the hands of the *Vungara*, with the top positions closed to commoners. However, lower positions—especially that of headman—are open to them. Extreme deference to political superiors is shown by both *Vungara* (*cf.* Seligman and Seligman, 1932:503) and commoners, although the latter ". . . are so used to authority that they are docile" (Evans-Pritchard 1937:13).

The pattern of submission found in political behavior has its roots in the family which is as patriarchal in flavor as its Tanala counterpart, for it is “. . . characterized by the inferiority of women and authority of elders . . . The Father of a family exercised great control over his sons, who treated him with deep respect” (Evans-Pritchard 1937:16).

This lays the groundwork for sibling rivalry and the psychology of ingratiation which we observed in Tanala. Although the Zande do not have primogeniture, the eldest son is privileged,<sup>20</sup> and even in adulthood is referred to by forms of polite address with deferential overtones (Seligman and Seligman 1932:509). Younger sons compete with each other for their father's good will so that he will use ceremonial spears obtained as bridewealth for their sisters to obtain wives for them (*cf.* Seligman and Seligman 1932:509). This same pattern of ingratiation and instrumentality serves the son in good stead on later occasions. One such occasion is after he has arranged the customary infant betrothal. He must then supplement the transfer of spears with bride service in which he adopts “the stereotyped, subservient attitude of the son-in-law” (Seligman and Seligman 1932: 512). Another such occasion is when he curries favor at court in order to gain an appointment as a headman or deputy while, at the same time, he attaches followers to his homestead by rewarding their ingratiation to him.

The rigidity of Zande marriage is hinted at in the mention of infant betrothal and bride service. It is highly regulated for it is “never based on mutual consent” (Seligman and Seligman 1932:514). Furthermore, once contracted, it is firmly binding because divorce is rare and the practice of both the sororate and levirate mean that even the death of a spouse does not relax the marital bond.

It is apparent that, as a tight society, Zande compares with Tanala because there is ascriptive allocation by birth of class and political roles; and some allocation of family roles by birth order. Close reinforcement of behavioral norms — especially in the socio-political sphere — and an instrumental quality in interpersonal relations also recur.

Farming is the normal role for an adult Zande male. A person who cannot accommodate himself to it has few alternatives because, as a tight society, Zande does not offer a wide variety of standardized cultural roles. Although the literature omits data on this point, it seems that there are no full time craft roles available other than that of blacksmith. Political office as an alternative to farming is closed to all but Vungara and wealthy commoners. The sole variant role available is that of witch doctor. Evans-Pritchard's descriptions of seances conducted by these men suggests that a successful practitioner must have at least mild hysterical tendencies. The role has satisfactions, however, for “(The witch doctor) is . . . a man who commands respect . . . (and) the most important incentives are desire to obtain medicines and display one's self” (Evans-Pritchard 1937:256).

These comments on the satisfactions of being a witch doctor are especially relevant when one notes that the

role is reserved for commoners as it is considered demeaning for a Vungara (or even a commoner of political note). The satisfactions of the witch doctor role are, thus, largely compensatory, suiting those of depressed status by giving them some prestige, power over omnipresent witches, and an opportunity to display behavior usually forbidden (*cf.* Evans-Pritchard 1937:169).

Although it provides very few variant roles, Zande social structure, like that of Tanala, provides several other channels for systematic dissipation of institutionally generated strain.

One such mode which is striking was the presence, until recently, of institutionalized homosexuality in the military and labor cadres (Seligman and Seligman 1932: 506).

Those who have written of Zande religion, especially Evans-Pritchard (1937), have indicated the seemingly small role played by other aspects of religion as compared to magic and witchcraft. The pattern of Zande witchcraft accusations shows that kinsmen and Vungara are exempt. This is because to accuse one's kinsmen implicates one's self and Vungara are too powerful to confront with such thinly veiled enmity. Thus, witchcraft accusations can serve as only a limited way of dissipating societally generated friction.

Sorcery is also present in Zandeland, although it is severely punished when discovered. Thus, it, too, is limited as a tension-dissipating mechanism. However, the Zande belief in fate which takes the form of many types of oracles is, like the parallel belief in Tanala, a palliative for those whose lives are so much determined by birth.

The last outlet for pent-up tension is secret societies for the practice of magic. Membership is made up largely of those with depressed social status in the society — women, commoners and younger sons — working together against authority. The tension alleviating and compensatory functions of these societies needs no elaboration (*cf.* Baxter and Butt 1953:91–93).

It is possible to deduce an inferred modal personality for the Zande, although without further information on child training it is not possible to lay bare its genetic roots.<sup>21</sup> From the published reports it is clear that both major dimensions of the Tanala personality are also found in the Zande modal personality. First, there is submissiveness to authority and a preference for interpersonal relations with a hierarchical, highly regulated cast. The authoritarian pattern of the father-son relationship of Tanala is found in Zande, although the pattern is even stronger in the Vungara-commoner relationship which affects much of the daily intercourse of the average Zande. Secondly, the instrumentality and manipulation which is a consequence of the psychology of ingratiation is also very much present; again, more in socio-political relations than in the family. This instrumental cast to Zande life was observed by Larken who writes “. . . the more they (wives) are, the greater is (a man's) food supply, and the higher his position in the eyes of his fellows, *who are apt to esteem a person in proportion to what they can get out of him*” (Larken 1926:16).<sup>22</sup>

In sum, Zande society, like Tanala society, exhibits the earmarks of a tightly structured society and, also like Tanala, an inferred modal personality whose traits reflect the institutional structure of such a society.

BLOOD-BROTHERHOOD IN TANALA AND AZANDE: Past theoretical discussions of blood-brotherhood have begun with the question of whether or not it is qualitatively different from a real kinship tie. Earlier theorists argued that because all ties in a primitive society are those of blood, any new relationship has to be a simulated kinship relationship. This derived from their belief that non-literate peoples think of kinship physiologically, in terms of common blood (*cf.* Tegnaeus, 1952 and Evans-Pritchard, 1933). More recent writers have focused less on the "blood" and more on the quality of the "brotherhood." Kardiner, analyzing the Tanala material, sees real brotherhood as marked by rivalry and blood-brotherhood as marked by "fidelity," thereby compensating for the strains of real siblinghood. Evans-Pritchard sees real brotherhood as characterized by social obligations, while blood-brotherhood is marked by legal obligations. Both positions are correct as far as they go, but it is more fruitful to analyze blood-brotherhood in terms of its functions.

In both Tanala and Zande, as practically everywhere blood-brotherhood is characterized first by instrumental functions.<sup>23</sup> Blood-brotherhood in Tanala is called *mi-fanagena* and the two men who enter the relationship share property; sometimes wives (if they live a great distance apart); help with each others funerals and so on. Zande blood brothers, called *bakure*, incur similar obligations, although they eschew any relations with each others' wives in favor of an option to engage each others' daughters. This instrumental function is probably not the most crucial one, however, for duties incurred are usually those which may also be performed by kinsmen, affines or other persons who are not blood brothers (*cf.* Cohen 1961:372).

Tanala and Zande blood-brotherhood also serves an integrative function, again, a function of blood-brotherhood in many types of societies. Blood-brothers in Tanala are from different families or, sometimes, different lineages and even from different classes. Among the Zande, they are from different clans, but usually of the same class. In both societies, they are often of different localities. It is clear that the institution of blood-brotherhood forges links between individuals and groups that might not otherwise occur, links that cross-cut pre-existing ones, bind the society closer together and smother inter-group conflicts (*cf.* Eisenstadt 1956:92).

In most societies there are areas in which the behavior to follow is poorly defined or even governed by clashing norms. Eisenstadt has pointed out that, in such a case, an ambiguously or poorly defined duty may be allocated to those who enter a pact of blood-brotherhood.<sup>24</sup> This gives blood-brotherhood as its third function the reduction of role conflict or anomie, in brief, a stabilizing function.

Examining these three functions of blood-brotherhood it is clear that their relative importance varies from soci-

ety to society although it is possible that all three functions might be met in one society. Blood-brotherhood seems to serve instrumental and integrative functions wherever it is found. In fact, the instrumental functions are usually recognized and given explicit mention by native informants themselves. However, this writer holds that the stabilizing function which Eisenstadt notes is significant only in societies which can be demonstrated to be loosely structured.<sup>25</sup>

It may be suggested that a fourth function of blood-brotherhood, is a socio-psychological function, which is characteristic of blood-brotherhood in tightly structured societies. Accordingly, the type of blood-brotherhood found in such societies should be distinguished from other forms which give greatest weight to one of the other functions. To document this let us examine the features of Tanala and Zande blood-brotherhood more analytically.

Cohen (1961:374) is correct in holding that blood-brotherhood in any society will have the flavor of other interpersonal relations in that society. Thus, while blood-brotherhood in Tanala and Zande carries many duties, they are precisely defined and marked by clear-cut sanctions. In Tanala the *ombiasy* who conducts the ceremony of blood-brotherhood recites the obligations and duties which are the conditions of the oaths and the sanctions which will follow their breach, viz.: "May leprosy eat away his fingers and toes" (Linton 1932:309). Zande blood-brotherhood is also backed by supernatural sanctions as well as by secular ones. There, a defaulting blood-brother must face strong public disapproval and censure. Ritual brotherhood in both societies is tightly structured and not easily broken.<sup>26</sup>

Although blood-brotherhood has the flavor of other relationships in a tight society, it is unlike these relationships in several significant ways. Most of the other relationships in such a society are allocated to the individual on the basis of ascriptive criteria such as sex, age and birth order—qualities which are not unique to the individual. They are relationships which are neither sought, nor entered voluntarily.

Blood-brotherhood is, in contrast, a voluntary relationship which is freely entered into by each partner. It is achieved, hence the need for a ceremony to establish the bond. More important is the fact that a blood-brother chooses his partner on the basis of a particularistic quality, one which is unique to him. Blood-brothers choose each other because they like each other. The Tanala characterize the relationship as closer than any natural relationship, for "persons who have taken the oath are considered more closely related than even the children of the same mother . . ." (Linton 1933:307). In Zandeland, it is marked by "deep affection" (Seligman and Seligman 1932:510), affection indicated also by joking, an activity which is not usually tolerated. The nature of blood-brotherhood in both societies is evidently parallel to that reported by Okada for the Nepalese:

"In Nepal the predominant reason for entering into ritual brotherhood is mutual affection between the participants and their desire to strengthen and formalize

the ties of their relationship. Naturally the advantages of mutual aid are not overlooked but, in the main, the emotional reason is primary. Many informants stated simply: "I liked him" when asked why they had taken a *mit* . . ." (Okada 1957:214).

The most outstanding feature of Tanala and Zande blood-brotherhood is, then, that it is affective. Because affectivity does not lend itself as a criterion of role ascription, this form of relationship is voluntary, achieved and particularistic. The primacy of the giving and receiving of emotional support over the performance of instrumental duties is especially clear in the Tanala material.<sup>27</sup> There, blood-brotherhood is often entered into by two parallel cousins who, as kinsmen, are already obligated to aid each other in much the same way as blood-brothers.

While blood-brotherhood in both societies is highly contractual and so ringed around with sanctions as to be virtually irrevocable, it is also *compulsively equal and reciprocal*. The stress on the equality of the relationship begins with the ceremony. In Zandeland the two blood-brothers cut gashes on each other's chests or arms and smear their blood on bits of wood which are exchanged, swallowed and addressed in each others stomachs. Other substances may be used such as two peanuts from the same pod. Here, equality and exact reciprocity are clearly symbolized as they are in the Tanala ceremony which is similar. A listing of duties and sanctions which follow the swallowing of blood in each society's ceremony underscores the focus on these qualities.

The compulsive emphasis on equality in the ritual also marks the ensuing behavior of the partners. Although blood-brothers perform tasks for each other, each task or duty must, in time, be scrupulously repaid. By keeping the balance sheet in order, the partnership is protected from encroaching instrumentality, from the scrambling for self-advantage that marks other relationships.<sup>28</sup> Linton states that he never heard of the Tanala relationship being used for political purposes or personal gain. Although others in the society may be manipulated as means to various ends—a bequest of land, a wife, a headmanship—a blood-brother is not to be so used. (This argument is reinforced by the observation that blood-brotherhood is sheltered from the potentially disturbing effect of unregulated or frequent sexual liaisons.)

The writer proposes that blood-brotherhood in these tightly structured societies be called *compensatory* blood-brotherhood because in its affective focus, voluntary nature, and compulsive reciprocity, it gives expression to personal qualities and needs which are stifled by the social structure.<sup>29</sup> Blood-brotherhood does more than compensate for the rivalry of the sibling bond, as Kardiner has suggested; it compensates for a whole host of socially generated strains in such societies. Most individuals in such a society have ascribed to them a series of roles which may not allow expression of their unique temperament or goals. These are roles in which they are dominated by the wishes and goals of others, and by modal personality mechanisms headed by the dominance-sub-

mission syndrome and the instrumentality of the psychology of ingratiation.

Compensatory blood-brotherhood is a kind of dyadic haven where the individual enters into a symmetrical relationship which is not ascribed to him, in which his goals and wishes are equal to those of the other party and in which he is valued in terms of personal qualities peculiar to him, not in terms of some universalistic criterion.<sup>30</sup> Such an hypothesis rests on the proposition documented earlier, that the tight society produces a latent modal personality need to be valued for one's self.<sup>31</sup>

One merit of this type of hypothesis is that it not only explains the presence of compensatory blood-brotherhood in Tanala and Azande, but also explains the difference between the relationship in the two societies. In Tanala, the primary rivalries are within the kin group, especially between younger brothers. The bond of ritual brotherhood there is most commonly formed between those who are already classificatory brothers, i.e. parallel cousins of different lineages. In Zandeland the major rivalries are between commoners, non-kinsmen of the same social class. There, blood-brotherhood is entered into almost entirely by commoners and it is forbidden to kinsmen who are members of the same clan.<sup>32</sup> The hypothesis is thus further verified by the demonstration that blood-brotherhood is most sought after by those who are most directly in competition and most regulated by the heavy ascription of the tight society.<sup>33</sup>

Previous observers of this type of blood-brotherhood have noted that it is strongly institutionalized and highly valued in the societies in which it is found. The present hypothesis indicates why. In meeting the needs it does, it is functionally crucial and this is demonstrated by the buttressing of the denial of reciprocity and other diffuse sanctions by supernatural and ritual sanctions. Another indicator of high value is the fact that the obligations to the blood-brother may be placed above those to the chief as representative of the state. Thus, a Zande blood-brother seeking to avoid justice is to be supported regardless of the risk or alternative loyalty.

It is clear that blood-brotherhood is but one of several socio-psychological release mechanisms found in tight societies. It can be classed along with the provision of other institutionalized—and variant—roles. However, it differs from these other mechanisms in some significant respects. It is basically a "healthy" relationship, relatively free from neurotic tendencies and probably attracts "normal" individuals rather than those whose role strain is acute. Those individuals have their needs met by the role of shaman, transvestite, homosexual and the like.

It is not novel to suggest that blood-brotherhood as a form of institutionalized friendship has a strain reducing function. Eisenstadt (1956:93) calls the stabilizing or role conflict reducing function "strain reducing," but in his approach, which is almost exclusively sociological, it is not clear that the strain is *not* a strain somehow lodged within the interstices of the social system. By introducing the concept of modal personality as an intervening variable a more accurate picture emerges from the data, for it becomes clear that the strains dissipated by ritualized

friendship are strains systematically generated *within individuals* by the social system in which they participate.

By making sensible the paradoxical juxtaposition of warm comradely bonds and a highly contractual and formal ceremony, this analysis lifts some of the romantic aura which envelops much thinking about blood-brotherhood. To further the task we need to examine ritualized friendship in other types of societies more closely in order to delineate additional sub-types. Finally, to remove the last traces of misplaced exoticism, in future field studies we need to obtain not only much more quantifiable data on exchanges between blood-brothers and their day-to-day behavior but more complete observations on friendship in general. Our long flirtation with Kinship has blinded us to the enticements of Friendship.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> This paper is an outgrowth of a seminar on comparative interpersonal relations conducted at Harvard University by Cora DuBois. I am particularly grateful for the insightful comments of Dr. DuBois. I would like to acknowledge the criticisms and suggestions of the other participants in the seminar. Daniel J. Levinson, Robert S. Merrill, and E. Adamson Hoebel have also read an earlier draft of this paper and offered many stimulating comments and suggestions. This draft was prepared while the writer was the holder of a Faculty Summer Research Appointment in the University of Minnesota Graduate School.

<sup>2</sup> Stimulating general treatments of these relationships and citations of ethnographic reports are found in Eisenstadt (1956) and Cohen (1961). Tegnaeus (1952) offers a very complete compilation of descriptions of blood-brotherhood practices in Africa and draws on Evans-Pritchard (1933) for conceptual statements.

<sup>3</sup> I use the same definition of institutionalization as Eisenstadt: "supported by some of the most important and severe, usually ritual sanctions of the society" (Eisenstadt 1956:90).

<sup>4</sup> *cf.* Evans-Pritchard (1933), Eisenstadt (1956) and Cohen (1961).

<sup>5</sup> *cf.* Cohen (1961:354).

<sup>6</sup> The latter writers, concerned with the *loosely* structured polar type defined it as marked by: (1) the presence of norms which may be met by alternative behavior patterns, all of which are acceptable, (2) the tolerance of behavior which is acknowledged as violating norms, and (3) lack of high valuation of group goals or group organization; and hence, subordination of the individual to the group (Ryan and Strauss 1954). A tightly structured society is not analyzed by these writers, but presumably, they feel that it has the opposite features. The two kinds of societies are not discrete and non-overlapping, but obviously form two poles on a continuum along which empirical societies may be placed.

<sup>7</sup> For brevity I will use the terms "tight society" and "loose society" instead of the more precise and elegant "tightly structured society," etc.

<sup>8</sup> I have also used the same scheme in an analysis of marital stability, "Marital Instability among the Kpelle: Towards a Theory of Epainogamy" (in press: *American Anthropologist*).

<sup>9</sup> The analysis here pertains to the Menabe tribe.

<sup>10</sup> This material is summarized by Linton in a chapter in Kardiner (1939).

<sup>11</sup> The eldest son receives one-half of the residual estate remaining after one-third of his father's property has been given to the deceased man's first (or only) wife.

<sup>12</sup> This is seen in the use of special kinship terms by parents and younger siblings for the oldest child of each sex.

<sup>13</sup> An example is the strong feeling against cross-generational alliances, even in taking plural wives.

<sup>14</sup> There are three classes differentiated more in terms of prestige than economic grounds.

<sup>15</sup> A union must be approved by a couple's parents and by the village council, although a couple may make the initial arrangements themselves.

<sup>16</sup> For clarity I have written the following account in the present tense although the time referred to is the "ethnographic present" of the 1920's at the time both Evans-Pritchard (who has published extensively on the Azande) and the Seligmans conducted their field work among them.

<sup>17</sup> In the remainder of the paper I will, following recent usage, drop the prefix and refer to this group simply as the Zande.

<sup>18</sup> There is also an amorphous group of Abomu conquerers intermediate between Avungara and commoners. They accompanied the Avungara in their conquests of new regions and claimed higher status than those conquered because of their ties at court.

<sup>19</sup> While a Vungara man will often marry a commoner woman who will bear children of Vungara status, a Vungara woman will marry a commoner man only if she can retain the privileges of her rank and the right to take lovers as she chooses.

<sup>20</sup> He receives the bridewealth of one of his sisters from his father and can marry earlier than his younger brothers. This is particularly significant because in Zande society marriage is customarily very late.

<sup>21</sup> We are told that children are nursed until they are three or four, but we have no information on toilet training or other early disciplines.

<sup>22</sup> Italics are mine.

<sup>23</sup> *cf.* note 4 above for the main descriptive analyses of blood-brotherhood.

<sup>24</sup> ". . . the different types of 'ritual kinship' and compadrazgo are usually established between the members of those groups between whom there exists a relatively wide scope of relatively unstructured interaction, or, in other words, they are established in those areas of interaction which may give rise to certain undefined situations and consequent tensions. . . . Moreover, the exact contents of the obligations within these types of relationships seems also . . . to vary according to the nature of the specific sphere of potentially unregulated and undefined situations and interrelations" (Eisenstadt 1956:93).

<sup>25</sup> *Cf.* Eisenstadt (1956:93). Eisenstadt and I would differ in our categorization of Tanala and Zande society. He stresses the looseness of their role behavior, noting, for example, that the relationship between a Zande commoner and a Vungara is not precisely defined. I argue that the commoner knows that he must be deferential and obedient even though each type of command or duty is not specifically laid down in advance, thus leaving the content of the behavior somewhat open. The content ambiguity makes the obedience no less compelling and probably the more chafing.

<sup>26</sup> Cohen stresses these same points in terming blood-brotherhood "inalienable friendship" (1961:352) and noting that it is found particularly in societies which he calls "maximally solidary," i.e., those with an associated world view which "pictures human relationships as permanent, intense and irrevocable" (1961:354).

<sup>27</sup> Eisenstadt (1956), commenting on an earlier version of this paper states that I have held that the blood-brotherhood relationship is "purely 'affective'" (p. 90). I feel that he misunderstood my position which remains the same, but, perhaps, is more clearly stated here. I do not deny that the relationship is instrumental, but feel that this is not its most significant attribute.

<sup>28</sup> Here there is a seemingly marked contrast with the dyadic contract (such as the compadrazgo relationship) of Meso-American communities analyzed by Foster (1961). There, a "functional requirement of the system is that an exactly even balance between the two partners never be struck" even though there is a "long range of equivalence of value, not formally calculated yet somehow weighed . . ." (1961, p. 1185). In Mexico an evening of accounts is avoided because it terminates the relationship. It seems that the blood-brotherhood tie is so strong that balancing the books reinforces and validates the tie. This interpretation is somewhat tenuous, however, because Evans-Pritchard and Linton provide little quantitative material on exchanges be-

tween blood-brothers. One would logically expect blood-brothers to stress long-run equivalence, too, by way of avoiding the instrumental competition of everyday relationships.

<sup>29</sup> This view of the compensatory relationship is analagous to one taken with regard to the Nunivak Eskimo. Speaking of "serious partnerships," Margaret Lantis (1945:250) writes: "Supposedly, too, in the intimacy of such a relationship, one could express oneself freely without fear that every statement would be ridiculed as so often happened in other situations."

<sup>30</sup> As a relationship of institutionalized individuality, this form of blood-brotherhood is a reaction to Durkheim's altruistic situation where the individual is over-integrated into society

<sup>31</sup> Cohen (1961:376) minimizes this element which he terms "emotional support." In the view of this writer it weakens his analysis somewhat.

<sup>32</sup> It is, thus, forbidden to all Vungara who are supposedly members of the same clan and on the basis of this tie thus owe each other the services that blood-brothers render each other.

<sup>33</sup> I feel that this factor is more important in explaining compensatory blood-brotherhood than the fact that the norms regulating the behavior between the relevant categories of individuals may be somewhat ambiguous. (cf. Cohen 1961:372 and Eisenstadt 1956:92-94). In fact, the ambiguity of the norms undoubtedly increases the intensity of the competition and, hence, the need for blood-brotherhood.

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