

Chapter 4

The system of boy - girl relationships is well defined and regulated amongst Trobrianders (everyone knows everything about everyone.)

- Girls sleep with boys by the age of 13, but only with members from their village.
- EX. A boy from Linda;s village had a girlfriend in Diagila village, he was harassed, and recently the girls harassing him had beat and stabbed him with a knife, due to jealousy

Waiting and Watching

An informant, Bulapapa told Annette about his father who had taken care of him when he was young and now he takes care of his father.

Giving in the village is usually of the caring and generosity aspect, it sometimes implies planning for the future (to receive.)

- Sometimes when one gives a gift it is with the intention of receiving, although one who gives a basket of yams cannot ask for anything in return (only give and wait)
- Sometimes the giver's plans don't go as intended. The givee's thoughts may not be "sweetened" and won't even want to repay the debt. This event occurs amongst closest of Kin.

How one feels about someone else should not be publicly expressed.

- Although this is the case the form and state of one's giving do contain some messages (becoming friends), for example Informat Ruth says if her brother gives her soft, small yams. The yams are not for her keep but instead she would go tell her husband about her brother (how good of a man he is.)

Young Trobrianders get their messages across to the opposite sex not by yams but through the way they present themselves.

- Coconut oil enhanced with magic spell, flowers and herbs they wear and even the way they walk.

Adolescent Sexuality

Youth (ages 7-8) will imitate adult seductive attitudes, by 13 they will begin their search for sexual partners.

- Youth will frequently change partners a "rendezvous" may be arranged away from gardens and the village without further encounters, young people usually do not sleep in their parent's house. They go to a small house not far from their parent's.

Adults will watch the young people to evaluate potential as productive adults

- With certain criteria for each gender(ie. if a girls can make skirts, or how intelligent a young man is of yam cultivation.) The youth have little pressure to attend to adult activities and are free to pursue their own adventures(although they must perform house duties) only when one is married and have children are they obligated to participate in adult activities. Being called small boy or girl until they are 30.

Strategies of seduction amongst young villagers are usually through physical appeal and speech.

- Through body language (ie. if a girl talks to a boy looking him straight in the eye) will mean that she wants him. Or asking to meet up at a location for "a coconut to drink, or to ride one's bike."
- Young women are just as equal to men in the sense of pursuit and refusal of a lover.

Young people frequently attend social events

- Social events such as a basketball game in Losuia, visiting another village, or in the harvest season there are all night village dances, cricket matches and youth will use these events to seek new lovers.
- Even at the events following a person's death those who are not related to the deceased will meet together wearing bright colours.

Physical appearance is an important aspect when "looking."

- Young men and women spend a lot of time on their appearance it is important to look attractive and act in a manner that shows independence. Sometimes Annette would see a beautiful girl, but Bomapota would explain that she is too proud, which is to be avoided as individual arrogance will give them impression of over competitive behaviour. One should be strong without appearing competitive. Instead one's intention is displayed their intensity of rivalry and seduction through magic spells.

There are "regulations" which will assure youth do not accumulate pride.

- Even a compliment must be repaid so that one does not become too proud (ie. at a dance Weteli tied a string around Boiyagwa's arm, resembling her beauty and talent, in return Boiyawa gave something in return for the success of her gift (the attention)). When cricket matches are held the hosting team is always the winner. And the winner of a yam competition will usually make a humble or self - deprecatory statement (ie. "I am a small boy who does not know much about yams.")

Although such things are practised, fights still emerge.

Although a young person's life is full, of freedom, There are still limits set by their parents and peers.

Amongst youth an initial attraction to someone will it mean they will sleep with that person

- Young men will give gifts to the women they wish to pursue a relationship with. Even though the girl accepts the gift she may refuse to sleep with him (giving is not enough.)

Access to magic spells are limited to youth, they must get assistance from adults.

- Spells are usually learnt from older kin, giving them food, tobacco and money in return. If the young person wants all their mentor's spells they must be able to give enough to give for years since spells are shared line by line. Spells are often left due to the death of a mentor, some villagers even complained that a spell was weak because of it being incomplete.

Sharing and buying spells is very normal amongst Trobrianders.

- A husband may share spells to his wife to show his love for her, spells are also bought during Kula voyages. Presently people will write their spells in a book and lock it up in their houses.

Beauty spells are chanted into some sort of substance or object

- Coconut oil, flowers, herbs or feathers. When worn the spells will help to enhance one's beauty. One spell in particular can make even an ugly person attractive this spell is chanted into a pearl.

Beauty spells make someone accumulate erotic feelings through their vision.

- The pearl spell is not property of any youth, but is practised by a women only on her brother's children linking the children to her.

Approaching their mid teens the search for a long term relationship begins.

- Meetings get longer with some seriousness. not only with the intention to find a friend with benefits. At this time simple spells and gifts will not help as much in this stage. Finding a marriage partner or even one willing to enter a long term relationship is very difficult as one will not know what another is thinking.

One will need to step up their spells to control the mind of another

- These spells are the most powerful and only known by few adults who must be paid. Villagers warn that the spell "will destroy the mind," it will cause the person to refuse food or advice of anyone other than the one who cast it. The strong spells are chanted into betel or tobacco (which are common shared goods) since they need to be inhaled or ingested so the words can be taken in by the mind and body.

Sometimes the spell fails to work, spells take a lot of precautions and steps to outcome in preferred results.

- It is believed that one must chant a spell throughout the night or for several days so that the tobacco can absorb the power. But when the spell fails one may look for a new mentor, or the mentor was not paid enough and purposely weakened the spell and its effects.

Attracting lovers is one of the first steps of adulthood

- Entering the world of strategies where being able to influence others without being influenced yourself is learnt. Sexual liaisons also allow youth to experience conflicts adults face with those who are not relatives.

Youth must learn to be cautious yet fearless.

- To achieve one's desires youth must be patient and work hard, but the adolescent world of lovemaking has its dangers.

Systems of Knowledge

- Symbolism - The "messages" of giving, the language and presentation of youth
- Interaction and communication - social events, Adults assisting youth, Interacting itself.

Belief Systems and Practices

- Magic - Spells to enhance beauty
- Rituals - Partially mentioned when we spoke of the duties of youth vs. adults

Moral Beliefs

- Ethics - Accumulation of pride
- Taboos - Not expressing feeling in public
- sexual freedom and independence run counter to jealousy, pride, and emotion of others

Choosing one lover

- When a young women and a man have been consistently seeing each other and only one another it symbolizes the seriousness of their relationship as a cause of the strong love magic
- Trobrianders believe that they find love as a result of love magic
- Females use the excuse that she is going to be spending the night at her 'good friend's' home, meanwhile she's out admiring her lover
- Females enter the house at dark and leave before the villagers awaken because it is important that no one see's the lovers entering or leaving their mistress's home
- An attractive park of love making is to bite off the lover's eyelashes or put scratch marks on their back
- Lovers go through prohibitions such as not being able to eat together
- Confrontations, fights, and arguments may occur within adolescent as a result of the desire to be with the same person
- An example is two girls that view each other as sister named Esther and Ruth got into a public confrontation as result of Esther's involvement with Ruth's 'good friend'
- The confrontation brought great shame to Esther's and Ruth's matrilineal kin
- As young people get older their interest turn into marriage, which causes for the involvement of adults

Looking for a spouse

- When a father sees his son becoming serious about a girl, he analyzes her
- Mark, a Trobriander, wanted to marry Mary but his disapproved by saying that she was lazy and requested for his son to marry someone else
- Mark obeyed his father's commands to not marry Mary, to only make it his deepest regrets in the future
- Through marriage ties the newlyweds allow for their matrilineages to become alliances
- Kumila is a matrilineal clan composed of many matrilineages
- Each person at birth is a member of his or her mother's clan as result of the spirit child (discussed in chapter 3)
- Matrilineages have clan ancestors and there is a total of four clans in the Trobriands; Malasi, Lukuba, Lukwasisga, and Lukulabuta
- Matrilineage is a multi-generational group of relatives related from one group while a clan is a group of people who claim unilineal descent from the same ancestor but cannot specify all the actual links
- Villagers believe the lines on your palm symbolize the clan you belong to
- Clans distinguish who you can marry therefore making marriages in the Trobriands to be a form of exogamous
- Although, exogamous is not a proudly practiced marriage because it is considered incest
- The best type of marriage for any villager, is to marry someone from his/her father's clan
- If a man marries a women in his father's clan, his children will be members of his father's clan and close relation between the child and father's matrilineage and wife's will continue
- It is prohibited for a father/ son to talk about or ask about daughter/sister's sexual lifestyle
- Brothers don't play no role in the decision making in his sister's spouse, brothers usually find out about the marriage after it happens by his mother in private

- After he hears the news, he leaves to the beaches for a day or two for being ashamed of hearing about his sister's lover from his mom
- Fathers are made fun if they find a feeling of attraction towards their daughter
- Incest taboo between a father and daughter is not looked upon a heinous crime in comparison to a sexual relation between a brother and sister
- Mothers control the decision about her daughter's marriage
- She cannot discourage her daughter from having sexual intercourse with the man but she can stop her from announcing her marriage by saying " the boy is too ugly or lazy"

Eating Yams Together

- One day instead of leaving your lover's house before sunrise, the young woman stays in his hamlet
- In the morning the lovers sit together on the verandas (this action symbolizes the intention of the lover's desires to get married)
- Eventually the lovers wait for the bride's mom to bring them cooked yams
- Eating the cooked yams officialise the marriage
- If the woman's kin disapprove of the marriage then the parents of the bride would feel obligated to end the wedding from occurring
- If the bride refuses to end the wedding, then her parents would forcefully remove her from the village
- Sometimes if a girl is determined to marry a certain mistress, she can arrange a meeting with him and then together they would go to the beach and live together for several days (This would force the parents to live and eventually respect their daughter's choice)
- After the eating of yams, the bride's new sister-in-law brings three long skirts and ties it around the bride's waist and then with knife she cuts the fibers until the length of the skirt is just below the knee
- This symbolizes the ending of her adolescent sexual freedom
- Couples then take off their red shell necklace (red necklace symbolizes that a person is single and seeking to find a lover)