



INTRODUCTION

Parker Shipton

STEPARENTS AND GODPARENTS. SOUL BROTHERS and sister cities. Mother country, Mother Goose, Mother Nature, and, never forget, Father Time. Whom do we count as kin, call kin, or try to make into kin? How far can family stretch, and stretch belief? What determines relatedness, and whose authority controls it? And what does all this say about the meaning of kinship, and about human needs? About human capacity both to believe and not believe—and to be able to live with and perpetuate such seeming contradiction?

This volume examines such frontiers of familyhood. Kinship itself, as usually defined by genealogy or marriage, is an old and central topic in anthropology and related fields, often touched upon in specialized studies of other topics. Much less attention, however, has been devoted to the uses humans in different cultures make of kinship concepts and idiom in projected, figurative, or metaphorical and imaginative ways—ways that can *become* real in practice and in their material manifestations.

This book's coverage is not meant to be encyclopedic; rather, it is evocative in that it offers a representative selection of cases, a set of explanations for a pattern of recurring phenomena, and it is provocative as an invitation to a wide field that beckons further inquiry.¹ The book includes some discussion of classic anthropological topics like totemism, as well as godparenthood and ritual co-parenthood—institutions still alive and being adapted all the time. It adds to discussions like the ones anthropologists have long conducted about what constitutes marriage, and whether this term itself needs to be qualified or replaced in order to describe differing variants found in different contexts.² We also acknowledge and consider topics lately receiving more attention like adoption and fosterage. But we reach farther here into what is imagined and created in behavior and language. The book describes strategic measures like temporary marriages of convenience in Iran, and “iron brothers and sisters” in urban China, not yet widely known abroad. We offer firsthand accounts of people seeking connections with possibly related descendants of murdered ancestors, and

discussions of pets, dolls, and other simulacra as ostensible kin. The collection touches too on emergent issues like high-tech reproduction and surrogate parenthood, whose cross-cultural implications are just beginning to be explored in the social sciences and humanities.

Humans love to classify. We do it to ourselves, to one another, and indeed to the rest of life.³ We can hardly communicate without drawing distinctions. But we also love to debate our categories. Nothing, to humans, is more important than classification of people as kin, soulmates, or co-ethnics, as members of in-groups or out-groups of whatever social, religious, or political sort we might imagine. These are matters of love and hate, and of peace and war—but also, just as often, of ambiguity and uncertainty.

Language and verbal imagery combine to enhance and reinforce beliefs, imaginings, and presumptions about kinship. Everyone knows they can take botanical forms. Who has not heard of *seed* being spoken of to represent egg, sperm, or both? Who has never seen a drawing of a family *tree*, with names or faces on roots, branches, or both? But whether male, female, or other contributions count as soil or seed; whether the patriline, matriline, or both get drawn as roots and branches; and whether children born out of wedlock, or adopted, or nurtured by same-sex parents make it onto these diagrams are matters of much cultural variation—and political debate.⁴ Monarchists have long liked to place their rulers atop trees or pyramids in designs, but egalitarians tend to resent those designs. The politics of representation affect science's cultural understandings too, as evolutionists, scientists, and curators of natural history museums in post-Darwin times have gradually learned to stop presumptuously representing humans as the top branches of a genealogical tree and placing apes and other life forms below.⁵

Looking into the twilight between fact and fiction, we sample in this volume the ways humans try to create, emulate, and reconstitute kinship, and the intentions and sentiments involved in what they produce. By examining rites, metaphors, and projections, the book shows how humans in different cultures mold and interpret their experiences. Often, we can infer, we humans do so to fit them into patterns of relationships familiar to us from early childhood experience, a psychological function, but just as often to complement or supplement our biological families' offerings, which can involve more obviously pragmatic ones too. The ingenuity and imagination involved suggest that family, kinship, and a sense of belonging—however defined—are all basic and lifelong human needs, hardly less important than food or shelter.

Now some main points. What is fictive depends on what is deemed real.⁶ But just as important, we contend, is that different societies define “real” kinship to serve similar needs in different ways. If some focus on biology

as a defining criterion—and biological criteria themselves point variously to eggs, semen, genes, blood, or milk—others focus more on nurturing action, adoption, naming, or ritual bonding. Others focus more on the attractions of platonic love or bodily lust; on length or depth of acquaintance; on histories of shared experience; on shared residence, frequent visiting, or commensalism (eating together/sharing food); or on volition and self-identification. Yet others concentrate on one-way or reciprocated transfers of goods or hospitality, or on legal and administrative consent or command. These are just a few of many criteria used for defining kinship or relatedness. Any mix of these can create the sense of being somehow connected (or bonded or tied), merging, or even sharing single identity, if only in imagination—for better, for worse, and often both.

If kinship can be hard to define, or to pin down as fact, its multiple meanings nevertheless stimulate the imagination and give the concepts of family and kinship their rhetorical power. Most people recognize many processes or forms of social linkage in some way, and just about everyone deems some kinds of kinship more real, original, or genuine than others. The plurality of these varied criteria makes fictive or fashioned kinship a tool for unlimited invention, and thus a topic with much variety in it. This, and the fact that some forms of “kinship” can extend indefinitely, make it easy for people to disagree with one another when it comes to deciding what is real and what is fictive—what is more real than what.

This leads to another of our main points: that everyone (or nearly everyone) participates in and depends upon some sort of fictive or fashioned kinship and probably always has. Seen another way, all life is biologically related; but we humans draw our own lines around family, just as we do around species, creating and distinguishing all sorts of markers for making social exceptions and for exclusion.⁷ We often, but not always, use metaphors of kinship and family for speaking of these broader groups, networks, and categories. Indeed, we humans can hardly communicate, in any language, without such semantic recourse.

Kin idiom and likeness serve many psychological and pragmatic needs. Some of these appear to be universal, such as a human need for contact, communication, and belonging. They are useful for establishing trust and cooperation as well as a reassurance of safety and protection. There is also a seamier flipside. This is the evident need for humans to dissociate their cooperative groups from other groups and to lump individuals from these together (as if to heighten their own solidarity or personal sense of individuality within our own groups and categories), and to imagine or to perceive outsiders stereotypically having sinister motives. We find these tendencies discernible just about everywhere anthropologists have studied. But the ways of serving these needs—for instance, to create a sense of belonging—

are more culturally specific. They include measures like recycling ancestral names, imbibing alcohol together in bonding rites, or convening in club-houses. Or, again on the downside, the tendency to assign demeaning nick-names and stereotypes to groups or categories other than our own.

Fictions of familyhood mark and solidify valued friendship and collegueship, business and labor association solidarity, and sacred rites and congregations of worship. The idiom and imagery of shared descent imbue ideas of race, ethnicity, and in at least some cases, nationhood as we reckon in-groups and out-groups (“us” and “them”) of varied types and sizes. People sometimes base their rhetoric of commonality on perceived material sharing or likeness, for instance, in shared blood or milk, or in similar skin color or body form. As mentioned, they often liken genealogies to trees (as in “stock,” which once meant the same as “race”) or family “branch” or other natural forms of growth. Kin-modeled associations draw upon and manipulate emotion, with deep and vital yet still poorly understood neuro-physiological overlaps and psychocultural influences.

As a device for linking or separating humans, kinship idiom has proved powerful. So it has been, for instance, in the movements for gender and racial equality progressing throughout much of the world over the past century. How many of us have not somehow been touched, even moved, by such song lyrics as “We are the world, we are the children”? But kinship ideology can also be divisive and dangerous. So it has been, for instance, in the German National Socialist (Nazi) Party, in the Afrikaner-Broederbond (in Afrikaans, “brotherly union”) in South Africa, or among nationalist factions splitting apart into new nations from the former Yugoslavia—to cite only a few of countless examples.

People in some cultures and societies seem to go to a greater extent than others to concoct or project kin imagery onto a broad scale, or to reify figurative usages. Some indeed turn them into not just human associations but also bricks and mortar (as in college fraternities, the Ursuline Sisters, or the International Brotherhood of Teamsters). Societies with isolated nuclear families, high mobility, and fluid communities attenuating “real” kinship (however perceived and defined) appear to seek and rely upon fictive relatedness more than others do. North Americans appear on the whole to be among those who do so most. But faith traditions spanning wider areas, including Christianity, with God the Father and Mother Mary, and Islam, whose *umma* is explicitly modeled on family, depend on kin imagery in their own ways. Many Muslims reify their understanding of it by variously focusing on blood and milk ties, a topic to which we will return.

By exploring how humans with diverse traditions and living in various parts of the world construe and extend their kin ties and family boundaries, this volume reflects upon our own communities and our evident needs

for belonging and for feelings of continuity over the life course. We might also direct attention to some of the practical applications kin fictions offer. They matter, for instance, in voter education, in company policies about worker movement and hardship allowance, or in strategies for garnering support for military and other patriotic or revolutionary movements. This happens on a smaller scale in the aftermath of violence or environmental disasters as well as in addressing the care and attention needed by elders whose known biological kin and affines have died off or disappeared—the “elder orphans” whose “next of kin” in practical terms must mean persons without natal or affinal ties to them.⁸ These things matter for better or worse—but we hope, in the future, more for better.

This collection covers several topics on several continents. Most of the chapters are somehow historical or judiciously comparative over distance. The notes and bibliography in this introduction touch upon some of the topics untreated in the collection’s chapters, showing readers where best to learn more.

A word on terminology. Anthropologists’ usual phrase for our topic is *fictive kinship*, but in this volume we use this phrase guardedly. We do not insist on a sharp distinction between real and ideal kin for general discussion, but we respect the views of people in some cultures who draw one. As Nicholas Townsend’s chapter aptly points out, even parents called “real” in America, for instance, are deemed to be so because of choices people make among a variety of possible criteria, combining them in different ways; and that is what they do too in kinds they accept as make-believe. In this sense, both “real” and “fictive” kin can be called fabricated. When dropping the quotation marks on “fictive,” in this volume, we ask readers to note that what we call “fictions” are not always only imaginings. They can take all sorts of forms, constructed or contrived, between the material and the make-believe, and even become more or less “real” over time or distance.

Readers might thus find other terms, for instance, *created* or *recognized kin*, *fabricated* or *refashioned family*—or for the processes involved, *modeling*, *extension*, *rebuilding*, *ritual bonding*, *manipulated mutualism*, or *surrogacy*—that may be just as apt for particular subjects or purposes. Just which term best fits which examples of our topics of kinship and fictive kinship, like the usage of other broad umbrella terms such as society, religion, or politics, can lead to endless discussion and debate. A biological father one may call the “real” father will be dismissed by another as the person who abandoned the role to a genuine provider and protector, who thus became the real one. What is considered in one culture an “extended” family is deemed in another to be just ordinary lineage or clan relations, any system of smaller units being thought of conversely as “fragmented” family. Whether too we humans “project” or just “transfer” our notions of kinship from one

cognitive schema to another or whether, indeed, a parallel becomes apparent only in meta-analysis can also vary from case to case. A topic this big and this vital to human affairs requires some flexibility of understanding, whether one wishes to pare it down to narrowly defined specific types for analytical purposes or appreciate its versatility for imaginative and rhetorical ones.

Another qualifier needs mention. We humans use terms having to do with kin or familyhood to encompass general, often vague or nebulous meanings having little or nothing to do with genealogy or marriage.⁹ Think of the etymology of “nation,” in *natio*, literally birth (as in people of one birth or origin). Think of any claim that some A is “familiar” to B, denoting any sort of knowledge, experience, or acquaintance; or that thing X “relates to” thing Y, or is “akin” to it, implying any sort of similarity, overlap, or cause-effect relationship at all. Or the grafting of marital metaphors this way too, as in “affinity” between (say) womb and pot, or penis and spear. Nor is English the only tongue in which this semantic leaping and generalizing occur. A better question would be whether there are some in which this does *not* occur. How do we discern and prove differences of culture, personality, or life phase between believers in such kinship and skeptics about it? Maybe we humans do these in *all* tongues?

We even project kinship into abstractions, when we associate different “relationships” with one another. Take this sentence of Max Weber’s: “Even today it is not rare that political artifacts develop a sense of affinity akin to that of blood relationship” (Weber [1922] 1996: 61). We can call this kind of assertion *meta-kinship*, a form of connection between connections.

The recurrence and seeming ubiquity of these tropes lead to another of our main contentions. This is that our early human experiences in families make kinship both a versatile form of imagery and metaphor and a powerful tool of persuasion. Where we lack a sense of kinship or belonging, we create it or acquiesce to others’ offerings of it. Just how people do so will require many examples. The harder question, *why*, will also take some explaining.

From Family Outward

Family studies on a domestic scale per se has never been a formal subdiscipline of anthropology, but the topic has always been important and has progressed along with the wider study of kinship in lineages, clans, phratries, and moieties, among other larger groupings. Adoption and fosterage—separated analytically by a gray area involving degrees of expected permanency and legality of membership—are old topics, but they have gained prominence over the past half century, not least as a result of the

efforts of anthropologists Jack Goody and Esther Goody.¹⁰ Their studies comparing Africa with other parts of the world have attracted attention to the wide cultural variation in the occurrence and acceptability of these practices and reliance on them, connecting these with other customs to show their arguably functional rationale and thus examining issues of cognitive consistency where possible. Other studies in, for instance, Hawaii, where children have commonly lived for extended periods in fosterage in non-natal families, have expanded our understanding of sensible customs like “classificatory” kinship terminology, so that a child can shift between homes of more than one “mother” (including individuals we would categorize as aunts) without being made to feel like a stranger. Classificatory and other forms of “extended” kinship have called for continuing study as the widened entry of mothers into the workforce outside homes and rising school fees in North America have added new twists to questions of shared family care (or “alloparenting”) and transfers of belonging.¹¹

Concepts of adoption apply not just to children but also to adults. As the baby boomer generation ages, in the United States and elsewhere, those who can afford it hire immigrant workers for in-home care: persons, most often women, whom they often come to refer, sometimes proudly in front of others, as “family.” But then time often belies the claim. These same employers often turn around and abandon these fictive kin, financially if not also communicatively and emotionally, once the elders being cared for die off (Coe 2019, 2021; Amrith and Coe 2022).

The net of interfamilial transfers widens further, if we look beyond humankind. It is not just humans, of course, but also other animals who can move or be moved between families, as every pet-keeper knows. Of course, the study of human descent in relation to animals must include totemism.¹² Marriage customs involving cattle transfers will be a topic of a later chapter. Another custom of “stock associates,” found in parts of Africa south of the Sahara, bears parallels to human fosterage in the long-term entrustment of cattle and other animals between herders, sometimes of different ethnic groups (Shipton 2007: 91–94; Breusers 2014: 81–83). It can even out imbalances in access to resources (say, of human labor time for watching, grazing or watering areas, and milk too), spread gene pools, reduce risks of total herd loss through theft or disease, and not least, cement and prove trusting human friendships. So, in a sense it is the animals who determine which humans are kin, or like kin. Comparisons between human and animal fosterage have yet to be made systematically, but a recent turn to more intensive human-animal studies invites future inquiry along those lines.

Fictive kinship has pragmatic dimensions, long evident in finance, trade, and commerce. For millennia, lenders and borrowers have faced strictures

about interest charges at usurious rates, depending on whether they subscribed to the same religions—that is, in-groups, or in Benjamin Nelson’s term, “tribal brotherhoods.”¹³ Economic oppression can create bonding among the impoverished or dependent.¹⁴

Ritually established bond-friendships between individuals have long been known as “blood brotherhood.” This kind of custom—ritually derived kinship between trusting dyads from mutually suspicious or warring groups, and typically involving an exchange of bodily substance and of vows of loyalty too—has long allowed individuals safe passage and protection in one another’s territories.¹⁵ Rightly or not, ethnographers have commonly described these bonds of loyalty, truly or not, as expected by participants and others to exceed those of biological siblinghood. And it is true that people entering these bonds are emphasizing the positive sides of “siblinghood”—the loyalty, the sharing, the mutual protection—and de-emphasizing the negative ones like sibling rivalry. So, the difference reported in commitment and loyalty may at least sometimes hold true. Africa, where such customs were once common, has seen a waning of customs of bond-friendship since times of colonially imposed interethnic peace (for instance, Pax Britannica in former British colonies) and government-enforced peacekeeping in more recent times. Indeed, in an age of feared pandemics like HIV/AIDS and Covid, it has become positively dangerous to exchange blood or other bodily fluids. But vowing and ritually shared food or drink, and other “traditional” rites (for instance, in western Kenya, smearing the insides of animal’s belly on two agreeing parties to signify oneness), perpetuate the traditions here and there, showing their flexibility, *mutatis mutandis*. Where exactly the semantic distinction between friendship and kinship ought to lie, or how broad the overlap is, is open as ever to debate.¹⁶

Religion is part and parcel of our topic, as already suggested, and as anyone knows who has ever heard phrases like “God the Father” or read works like William Blake’s poem “The Marriage of Heaven and Hell.” More basically, marriage itself—before or unless marked by cohabitation and commensalism or consummated by sexual intercourse and reproduction—might be considered fictive or fabricated kinship, brought about by consent of one or more parties, and by ritual, exchanges of goods, religious pronouncements, legal authorization, or most often a mix of these. Even without formalized religions, findings like woman-woman marriage, long a custom in parts of Nilotic East Africa, contain further elements of fiction (in this case, for perpetuating patrilineages if one woman seems infertile), long anticipating contemporary debates about what sorts of marriage are allowable.¹⁷ If marriage anywhere might contain elements of fiction or imagination, so too may divorce. One conjoins and the other divides the parties involved, and both can transform many aspects of their lives.

Other customs relating to religion fall right within our topic too. Anyone who has spent time around a Christian convent or monastery, or frequently attended a Christian church, will probably have noted the frequent use of kin terms within it (sister, brother, mother superior, padre, and so on), for both living and ostensibly divine beings.¹⁸ In these microcosms, in this way, one can have clear glimpses of a pattern in kin-construction (as construing and creating) much more common in the world, one spread widely by Catholicism, sometimes incorporating preexisting local elements.

This topic of vital importance to the anthropology of South and Central America, and other parts of the world like the Philippines influenced by Iberian and Mediterranean Catholicism, is godparenthood, and the ritual formation and ideally lifelong endurance of symbolic co-parents (in Spanish, *compadrazgo*, from which we can distinguish *comadrazgo* for female co-parents).¹⁹ Notably, this custom seems most prominent among societies with bilateral kinship (traced through two parents, four grandparents, etc.), where unilineal kinship (traced more heavily through one line) would otherwise provide more clearly demarcated larger groups for belonging and social cohesion (that is, with less ambiguity about which side's kin to unite with when it counts). Godparents and ritual co-parents might sometimes overlap with biological or affinal kin, but more often and importantly they complement them.²⁰ They provide extra channels of nurturance, protection, and other potential social support (pragmatic, economic, political, moral, or other) in addition to fostering feelings of trust, responsibility, and often affection, also mutually expanding the social networks and avenues of recourse to include ancillary kin.²¹ For tasks like caring for the images or remains of individual saints, *cofradías* (or ritual brotherhoods or confraternities; in French, *confréries*; in Italian, *confraternite*) play their own part on more than one continent.

In many religions, Abrahamic (Judaic, Christian, Islamic) and others, we can find the use of kin terminology to separate in-groups from out. This kind of usage can augment feelings of solidarity and kinds of practical cooperation that are likely to increase chances of survival and reproduction.²² That is, provided that the in-groups can maintain peaceful enough relations with outsiders to avoid being killed or mutilated by them (even for selfsame reasons, since out-group solidarity can appear to pose its own threat). There's the rub.

Even in smallish utopian communes, in which members renounce their attachments to natal families to bond instead with fellow members in solidarity, the symbolic walls between insiders and outsiders can prove perilous, as when outsiders suspect these communities of planning subversion of outside authority.²³ The case of the Branch Davidians, led by David Koresh in Waco, Texas, exemplifies a rather common, paranoid governmental

response from outside—in this case, in 1993, violently attacking and killing many of its members on the basis of poorly founded rumors and suspicions. Utopian communes only seldom end up this way, but larger-scale social entities relying on kinship idiom and ideology, for solidarity, have experienced catastrophic effects not too different.

Utopian communes of explicitly religious and other sorts, even the many with more peaceful histories, play upon idioms of kinship and comradeship.²⁴ Communal sentiments of kinship, however, have sometimes preempted more intimate family feelings between close genetic kin or spouses, prompting debate about what kinds of kinship are most real, deep, or virtuous.

If the topic of “fictive kinship” is religious, it is political no less, as suggested above. While people in some nations, like the United States, have looked upon the founders of their constitutions or other organizers as “fathers of the nation,” people in empires long expanding and competing on several continents looked commonly upon their own living rulers as fatherly or motherly figures, with paternalist attitudes and influence thus writ large.²⁵ In Africa south of the Sahara, in my experience, the pattern is discernible almost everywhere, though seldom uncontested when it comes to claiming the “father” of a nation or its independence as belonging to one particular ethnic group, to another, or only to the nation as a whole.²⁶ But recently rising doubts about the naturalness and sanctity of nation-states and empires as “imagined communities” has challenged the understandings of nations as kin.²⁷ Nor, on the other hand, is it just fellow nationals who can show a strong sense of kinship. Recent research among migrants from Africa seeking entry into Europe, but blocked by fences they seek with high hopes but slim chances to surmount and pass beyond, shows them forming self-styled “brotherhoods” (with occasional “sisters” too) in their hidden encampments in northern Morocco, as far from marauding police from both sides of the border as they can survive—which sadly not all do.²⁸ They not only communicate between languages and share food and other provisions, but many burn their own identity papers from their many African nations of origin as the soldiers seek to burn their camps.

Not only in civilian political life but also in military life, we humans have a way of creating kin or kin-like ties out of the ground. If we do not form “brothers-in-arms” in basic training, we form or come to feel their presence in foxholes or in ships or subs under fire.²⁹ The shared experience of military comradeship can extend lifelong to intense solidarity and loyalty, as tearful, joyful reunions of soldiers or sailors, even from opposite sides decades later, constantly show. This is just as true of rebel combatants as of statist military members; new studies of former rebels often show their participation in tight networks of solidarity and mutual support.³⁰

In times of tense Jewish-Muslim and Israeli-Palestinian relations, as after warfare's intensification in and around Gaza in 2023 and beyond, both Jewish people as members of the "House of Jacob" (*Beit Yakov*) and thus "Children of Israel" (*Bnei Yisrael*), and Muslims as members of the *umma*, kinship of Muslims worldwide, called themselves together on multiple continents to garner support for their respective sides. Meanwhile, some pacifist groups in public places sought by contrast to bring them together for mutual empathy and negotiation, using the idiom of common kinship extending over both. Kinship idiom, warmaking, and peacemaking were virtually inextricable as their partisans reached over long periods of history, long distances in geography.

Even in academic life, we see fictive kinship, most notably in formally named fraternities and sororities, or the *Doktorvater* adviser role (doctor father, still used sometimes even for a woman) as named in Germany, or the widespread fosterage of students to Qur'an school teachers in Islamic contexts and reputations built on these links.³¹ While former classmates, like former neighbors, needn't call themselves kin, they can often feel like them, as most readers will hardly need be reminded. Ethnographers commonly find themselves taken into families where they do "field" study (a point of pride many reflect in their writings), a phenomenon reflexively studied by Sergei Kan (2001) in Native America and by others elsewhere. But we have also learned that this can make for tough decisions (and threaten sampling methods too) when it comes to involvement in local suspicions, disputes, and conflicts in which they might be expected or seem to take sides.

Something else is continuing to happen. Scholars and urbanites are becoming more aware—if not for the first time—of something already suggested, the mutual needs and bonding of humans and other animals.³² As far as kinship and fictive kinship studies are concerned, we must also remember, in any case, the "mothers" who have long spoken and written about kinship, including human kinship with animals, for centuries in histories, legends, myths, and so on. And women and girls participate in other ways in kinship fictions and fabrications. To this day, women and children as well as men and boys in many societies (but importantly not in all, particularly in many tropical settings) verbally and behaviorally extend family membership to pets, including companion and therapy animals (and sometimes herded or farmed animals too).³³

Much more could be said about this, but I have found this pattern of sentiments and idiom more typical of temperate and circumpolar regions than of tropical ones, where germs reproduce more quickly and where a dog-licked face can thus more easily imperil human health. Custom can be adaptive this way over space as well as over time. Even where human-animal bonds seem most tenuous, though, the affections are often evident

enough—just as where even poor, homeless people spend money to feed birds—to confirm a human need to feel needed.

Preview of Content

Part I: Perceiving, Projecting, and Reimagining Kinship Background

The first chapter of this section, by Parker Shipton, “Kinship in Shifting Perspectives,” traces the history of the social and cultural anthropological study of kinship, especially since the mid-twentieth century, when Lewis Henry Morgan rendered it more systematic than it had ever been. The story picks up French contributions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when some forms of cognition and classification of kinship were still considered primitive. A functionalist period, with French antecedents but also many contributions by British-trained anthropologists from Pacific Islands and from the African interior, is then described. A structuralist period follows, when French anthropologists again take the lead in symbolic analysis, influencing others abroad as well. The story by this time is incorporating elements from all the Americas and elsewhere, including godparenthood and co-parenthood, while studies of adoption and fosterage are also becoming important. Anthropological self-critique then causes a brief hiatus in kinship studies. But in a politicized period from the late twentieth century to the present, feminist scholarship plays increasingly important roles, adding to earlier studies by women of child rearing, expanding studies of adoption and fosterage, and adding new concerns like unisex marriage and hi-tech reproduction. From the subsequent chapter on, we launch into a full-fledged discussion of what some anthropologists have called fictive kinship, as experienced in many cultural settings.

Recurring Tropes. James Fernandez’s chapter, “Genealogy and Other Essential Fictions,” perhaps best approached as a meditation, suggests how the cultivation of genealogy can be persuasive, and he asks why. Beyond providing an ostensible grounding in biology, genealogy helps individuals transcend the finitude of their lives by providing “time binding” and “group binding.” By focusing on genealogical attachments, we can identify ourselves with others past, present, and future. The metaphorical and metonymic devices by which we do this—Fernandez classes them together as “tropes”—include those of the tree, the body (individual or collective), and its blood, which all recur throughout the present volume. The mind may live in the body, but the body also resides in the mind. The two are scarcely separable, and it is hard to think of causes and effects without invoking imagery from bodily reproduction: “It is not only ontogeny that fol-

lows phylogeny but philosophy as well.” Images of tree, body, and blood are practical, not just fanciful or literary devices: they transform problems if not solve them. Forest-dwelling Fang of western equatorial Africa are compared with mountain herders and miners of Asturias in northern Spain to show how practical kin imagery can be in different ways.

In his field research, Fernandez had to manipulate his hosts’ understandings of genealogy (in the one case, deep patrilineages, and in the other, shallow stem families), just to insert himself into daily community life. Here and elsewhere, seminal essentialism, as Fernandez discusses it, is projected into all kinds of social contexts, but it has its limits. Genealogical tropes are useful in classification and argument, but they are dangerous too, as Fernandez notes: they have been invoked for elitist hierarchizing as well as for brotherly love, and in murderous and genocidal campaigns no less than in peaceable pursuits.

Fernandez reminds us that we must not limit our view of relatedness, belonging, or civility to what these tropes delimit for us, and that we must move beyond the complacency of received (and biologically anchored) wisdom and “stock” images to find or create other ideas that may help us get along in more “convivial and consensual” ways in the millennium just beginning: “to open humans out again.” Imagining the frozen isolation of unconnected individuals in space, the extreme of human loneliness, may help us do that. In a more directly practical way, freeing up the flow of adoptions across political barriers—*making* these movements more normal and natural than they might at first seem under a biological light alone—may create the more pervasive and constructive human webs we need.

Another way to think of our topic is as an attempt we humans all make to connect domains of experience, and of ordering, that occur inside and outside our own heads. This is the topic of the chapter by John Terrell, “Only Connect.” A great deal of our thoughts and feelings are built upon other thoughts and feelings in our brains, or connected with them there, but not in the world outside—or vice versa. Roping these together in some sort of realistic way is a constant challenge, as our brain is constantly making changes in what we have perceived, as it does each time we consciously consider a memory. The world outside is challenging and dangerous, Terrell argues, but we pare it down and simplify it in what we make of it and imagine inside our own minds (where those billions of neurons and our hormones are doing their jobs, with their own complexity mostly unknown to us in any detail but often enough, we hope, in concert with one another). Our brains have their own sorting mechanisms and categories to help us navigate our way through our lives, and kinship is one of them. But sometimes the rope between the internal and external worlds frays and breaks. And so, as the chapter here and a title of a recent book by John Terrell and

Gabriel Terrell remind us, we cannot always trust what our brains are telling us (Terrell and Terrell 2020).

Part II: Close Family and Roles Delegated Inside and Out

When Is a Parent Not a Parent? Taking as his topic the kinds of kinship most often called “real,” Nicholas Townsend, in his chapter “Fictive Fatherhood,” takes apart the concept of fatherhood in two settings from two hemispheres, showing how radically conceptions about its basic nature may differ. Fatherhood, he finds, is composed of a basket of elements, for instance, home provision, material or financial support, co-residence, and biological paternity. But what elements are in the basket, and which ones are deemed the defining ones, vary from one cultural context to another. His Californian informants deem the duties of fatherhood properly one man’s job; his rural Botswanan ones prefer to see these spread among several. Whereas Californians may say fatherhood boils down to a biological relationship—a finding consistent with David Schneider’s views of American kinship more generally—rural Botswanans contend that its real essence (or, as he puts it, “criterial condition”) is instead marriage to the mother, which in turn is ultimately, and ideally, defined and legitimated by the payment of bride-wealth, that is, of marriage dues. Since the basket of elements is seldom complete in either the Californian or the Botswanan case, and generally subject to negotiation, there is much room for calling fatherhood fictive in either. As Townsend shows, what may seem fictive in one context is real enough in another, and in both cases fatherhood is a composite of elements purposely assembled.

Townsend follows a British anthropological tradition in laying the emphasis on the social: “fatherhood must be understood, at its core, as a social relationship, and not merely as a cultural elaboration on a biological core.” And again, “fatherhood is part of a social fabric, and the potential contents of the bundle, as well as the criterial elements, are comprehensible in terms of their place in that fabric.” Choosing his words carefully, Townsend distinguishes fabrication from fiction: one is “made up” in the sense of composed from different parts, and the other “made up” in the sense of imagined or derived from something more basic or real. Californians called stepfathers do not deem themselves “real” fathers—however hard they try and however successfully they may prove to be in providing care, etc.—simply because they lack a biological link, a “blood” link, deemed crucial to that status. They might have an easier time claiming, or building up, “real” fatherhood in Botswana, where this has more to do with achievement than with ascription.

Parents cannot always do the mentoring, providing the guidance or instruction, for their offspring that they might wish them to receive. As the

chapter by Robert LeVine, “Sponsoring Careers,” describes, in societies with heavy emphasis placed on lineage, and maybe also clanship as its outgrowth as a form of social organization—and which may also have lineage groups living closely together on nearby lands in a corresponding spatial order—parents may devise novel ways of recruiting such kinds of help, within or outside those kin-based social entities, to advance their children’s causes. But how they recruit them depends on the kinds of social institutions in which they and their society are enmeshed. It also depends on the kinds of framing or cognitive schemas they are accustomed to matching up with other ones as somehow seeming natural or strategically useful. Parenting itself thus takes on different characters and dimensions in different societies. As a career specialist on parent-child relations and their psychological dimensions, LeVine is an ideal author to explore this topic: one on which most experienced parents might deem themselves specialists too, until they compare experiences with those of parents in cultures different from their own.

One kind of relationship always debatable in terms of its “real” or “fictive” nature is adoptive kinship. Adoption is not always easy to explain in terms of the adopter’s (or adopters’) selfish political or economic gain. It may involve work, expense, opportunity cost, and in some contexts, considerable social stigma—concerns of race and class may compound those of the mere act of adopting—yet repay little to the adopters beyond its own satisfactions. In this limited respect at least, adoption of animals as family members can serve some of the same functions as the usually greater commitments of adopting children or even grownups as family members. The perspectives of the adoptees in this process, however, are likely to diverge in more than a few ways.

Part III. Ritual Kinship and Some of Its Variants

Intensifying Friendship. Chun-Yi Sum and Jason Jiansheng Li’s chapter on China, “‘Iron Brothers’ and ‘Dear Customers,’” takes us into modern urban China. In it they explore, compare, and contrast several forms of fictive kinship that the Chinese have used to navigate a dramatically changing social and economic environment over the past century. To older forms studied in rural areas, often used to complement patriliney and patrilocal systems for women’s benefit, and heavily dependent on ritual commitments and obligations, they compare newer forms in cities, some of them more flexible in nature to accommodate, for instance, legal environments of uncertain or unevenly applied regulations, or movement between companies or to adapt to novel situations. They find more flexibility revealed in adapted older and newer added forms of created kinship. Some forms long familiar

include *gan* or “dry” (non-milk-related) relationships of social and ritual support for children; *jiebai* (sworn) brotherhood and sisterhood entered by oath, commensalism, and shared blood drops exchanged in drink; *pinyin* (or Cantonese *nü-tsai uk* or *nü-tsai wu*) girls’ houses for co-residence; and *tongnian* or same-year siblings or age-mates. To older, single-gender forms of fictive kinship, typically forged by dyads or within small groups of just a few members, with expected shows of respect between age levels, have been added several newer forms. Some, for women only, include expanded numbers up to maybe a dozen; and for men, maybe even over a hundred members. Some include a “flattened” form of association, as they put it, with less ritual, less or no exchange of blood as before, and little or no age hierarchy (or in some cases even reverse age hierarchy) expressed within them. Emblematic are the “iron brothers and sisters,” in individually tailored bonds that may even include membership of mixed gender. Sum and Li take care to point out that “iron siblinghood” is formed by young adults, many of them new urban migrants, who do not have the advantages of many agnatic and other kin living all around them as males especially would have in many Chinese villages constituted along traditional patrilineal and patrilocal principles.

All this has a rich history. Chinese communist officials after 1949 attempted to extirpate patrilineal and other kinship ideology they associated with Confucianism. In this they largely failed; in one way and another, patriliney was just too deeply rooted. But according to Sum and Li, kinship as reactivated in Chinese cities like Tianjin, in north China, is perhaps better described as cognatic (i.e., again, bilateral), and many domestic groups are small families or other small groups unlike the larger lineages and “extended” families found in Chinese villages in recent centuries. New forms of fictive kinship have helped people form instrumental alliances in their workplaces. They help them find people to share in marriage and death ceremonies. And they help some to find work, and others to continue what are sometimes semi- or questionably legal money-earning activities where they may need to forge relationships with police or legal authorities to turn a blind eye to these activities or tilt judgments in their favor.

In nonritualized form, without a symbolic bodily binder, fictive kinship in urban China seems less permanent than it once was in the days of blood pacts, and according to Li, ties must be regularly exercised and demonstrated to remain strong. Yet ironically, by virtue of their very vulnerability, the fictive kin ties may be more often and diligently activated than, for instance, “real” sibling ties. Helping a fictive kin in preference to a “real” one, once a matter for shame, seems now to be more often condoned or even lauded. Marketers since the turn of the present century have also promoted a new form of family-like idiom using *Qin*, or “dear,” in slang communica-

tion, regardless of customers' status or community belonging, picking up on young people's attachments to the internet and trends in digital social media.

A few added remarks on the topic. Why blood brotherhood has become less common in China (Sum and Li), Africa (others' and my own observations), and elsewhere cries out for explanation. At least four lines of reasoning present themselves. (1) In at least some settings the change may be a consequence of the rise of state or imperial authority and the reduced need for individual pacts to secure trade ties or emergency security mechanisms. This would not in itself be a wholly satisfactory answer, however, since in many places where the blood pact has declined, particularly in Africa, the state itself has become a major cause of personal and community insecurity. (2) The rise of literacy, and of written, court-enforced contracts may have rendered blood-pact-making superfluous. In many countries, however, including many African ones, written contracts are still hardly more enforceable than orally witnessed or ritually confirmed ones, and access to lawyers and courts remains scarce, time-consuming, and expensive. (3) European- and North American-influenced education may have disparaged practices like the blood pacts as primitive or superstitious, dissuading its practitioners or driving it underground. As yet, no one has assembled evidence for any widespread campaign of this sort. Nor would (4) new consciousness of germs and new epidemics like HIV provide an adequate answer, since in many parts of Africa the blood pact was on the wane well before there was any such major public epidemiological concern focused on blood transfers, and since many areas have continued to show enduring practices of "unsafe sex" after the germ theory has been widely accepted. In sum, the evident decline of blood-pact-making over much of the world remains hard to explain just by any single cause; it may take several of these or other changes compounded for a satisfactory answer.

Making Up Marriage. Shahla Haeri's chapter, "Masquerading Rites of Passage," tying into Charles Lindholm's in its focus on Islam and Muslims, turns its main attention from blood to marriage. Haeri describes a practice little known outside Asia Minor. This is a temporary, nonsexual form of marriage of convenience, enacted expressly to allow or facilitate interaction (for instance, for medical contact) between men and women who, by Iranian Islamic custom, would not ordinarily be allowed to interact in an intimate or informal way. *Sigheh mahramiyyat*, which Haeri translates as "fictive marriage," allows distant kin or virtual strangers to reclassify one another as "spouses" for limited occasions. Doing so allows Iranian Muslims to uphold a tradition of separation (notably *purdah*), with all its implications of virtue and purity. Practitioners of temporary marriage not only follow a cultural proscription but also adapt it to present circumstances

and personal situations, and thus help ensure its longevity in the future, for whatever value it may hold. Obviously, some would object to calling these temporary, expedient unions marriages at all, given that they occur without great ceremony, transfer, or mixing of bodily substance, or exchange of valuables. The practice, and the set of assumptions that goes along with it, thus tests our ideas about what, if anything, marriage boils down to, or what are its minimal conditions. Other contexts in which there is some acknowledged element of pretending, as there is in children's play marriage (is adult marriage never or in no wise play marriage?), green-card or visa marriage, or marriage on stage or screen, test these ideas in other ways.³⁴ Who shall pronounce which marriages are "real" and which are not? And does it take some sort of "unreal" marriage to make "real" marriage real by contrast?

The most durable definitions of marriage, it seems, include not just one but various criteria, of which no one may be strictly necessary. That is, they refer to what Wittgenstein called "family likenesses" or Needham "polythetic classes." What this means is that we are left with the possibility that marriage in one society and marriage in another may have nothing in common. This too is an idea that will disquiet some. But the alternative may be endless disagreement about what is really the key feature of the institution. Recognizing that the terms used in different languages may not refer to precisely the same ideas or practices in the first place—that some may imply bridewealth, others an exchange of vows, yet others a period of cohabitation, for instance—may make a pluralistic definition easier to swallow.

Marriage, as conventionally defined in English, can involve ritual, but it is not the only kind of bond that does. Ritual co-parenthood and "godparenthood" typically begin with a ceremony, which may, but need not always, be deemed a marriage too for some of its participants.

Connecting Coreligionists. Charles Lindholm's chapter, "Patrilineality and Its Alternatives in the Islamic Middle East," provides a broad historical and spiritual framing for kinship writ large while also posing an ethnographic puzzle about the bosom of family. He takes as his subject the *umma*, the siblinghood of believers (or knowers) of which Muslims everywhere say they partake, and asks why Muslims in the "Middle East" look down upon the act of adoption or severely constrain it. Lindholm traces Islamic doctrine and practice on kinship and fictive kinship back to the life and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (not insignificantly, an orphan who eventually took others into his own immediate family). He shows how Muslims putatively substitute brotherhood-in-faith for brotherhood-in-blood, symbolizing the changeover now in the *hijra*, the pilgrimage to Medina.

Lindholm asks why, given all this, Middle Eastern Muslims only rarely adopt children from outside their closest circles of kin—and why such chil-

dren, once adopted, remain kind of second-class citizens in terms of inheritance rights. A powerful patrilineal blood ideology provides a big piece of the answer. But this is not the only “essentialist” vision that Muslims cherish; also important in many Islamic settings is “milk kinship” between those who suckled from the same breast (as of a wet nurse). Quasi-kinship in slavery, fosterage, and other institutions forms a range of kinship in gray shades, invokable or deniable in crises, but in any case, leaned upon by royal and chiefly families.

Turning next to implications for patriarchy, Lindholm asks why the Egyptian “New Kingdom” manifested strikingly different patterns of concern about blood purity, and of female rights and powers, than have been prominent in other “Middle Eastern” societies. Egypt provides, in a sense, the exception that proves the rule. Lindholm’s approach, ecological, political, and cultural, leads him to conclude that in most of the “Middle East,” faith in an idiom of blood inheritance (of virtue, strength, and more), regarded over most of the region as natural, helps hold together a nexus of ideas: of sociopolitical complexity, patriliney, competitive egalitarianism, unstable status, anxiety over female purity, ideology of female inferiority, and rejection of adoption. Lindholm, like Fernandez, shows how the persuasiveness of putative blood bonds, and all they entail, can be challenging to deny.

Part IV: Further Forms of Familyhood

Kinship Molded, Remolded, Institutionalized. If, as Parker Shipton argues in the “Meta-kinship” chapter, all humans, or nearly all, seem to desire or need family of some sort, what do we do when those we deem our “real” families seem not to stretch far enough or fill enough roles to serve our needs? And what does all this say about how individualistic or collectivistic our societies, and our ambition for our places in them, really are? Beyond the more personalized forms of created kinship discussed elsewhere in this volume, like adoption and godparenthood, we also apply the idiom of kinship in many domains of experience beyond the purely personal. These range from how we speak or write of insects (like daddy longlegs), to the material world and its workings (Mother Nature), and to divinity (God the Father, Mother, or Father/Mother). But these are not all merely imaginings. Some of them become food packages, delivery vans, and buildings of bricks and mortar. Some serve both to bind together groups by age or stage of life course, by gender, by school or other formal institution, by gangs and other underground activities, and other ways.

In taking us over a composite American life course in summary, Shipton suggests how many forms these imaginings and material creations can take, and how we often shift from one form to another as we progress through

our lives. He suggests, as we do collectively in this volume, that many of these are forms of kinship we model on other forms most of us deem more real—at least until we become habituated to the forms of meta-kinship we create, when we might come to think of its bonding as real too, if only in different ways. All this gives lie to commonly voiced impressions of American culture as just “individualistic.” Like other humans, though, North Americans do not just take any old type or manifestation of kin or family to use for our modeling. As Shipton shows, we pick and choose, normally preferring those that imply solidarity over those that imply rivalry. Until, that is, we think beyond our “created” kin too, when our imagined kin-making can deepen the practical and emotional responses of alienation from certain others, certain out-groups. And then our kinship imaginings, like our likening of certain “others” as aliens, can become deadly dangerous. In sum, then, our lives are a balancing act between forms of kinship and family we deem more real and less, more practical and less, with some vital interests at stake.

Beyond the Living, Beyond Sentience. While other contributions to this volume concern humans, other humans, and human imaginings, Ellen Schattschneider’s chapter, “Mechanical Automata and Performative Kinship,” concerns dolls and other automata that humans create, acquire, and endow with family-like meanings. These serve as expressions and indicators of the hopes, fears, and ideals that personalities and our cultures hold and share. Schattschneider compares European and Japanese automata, as they appeared on the scene as industrialization took off in these contexts, often giving form to sentiments of sharing and of other means of communication and transference that may have seemed imperiled by capitalist industry and commerce themselves. Schattschneider’s study finds common threads in her way of explaining English and Japanese automata. Both, like others in this collection, show ways that one sort of cultural institution can fulfill needs left unfilled by another.

Human imagination loves to stretch and test its limits, in fiction or dream: seemingly a basic human need (*pace* Abraham Maslow). So it is that we have many stories in which, in the author’s, reader’s, listener’s, or viewer’s mind, automata are made into human kin, or something akin to them. Schattschneider ranges over centuries and millennia of human-thing bonds, a linking in thinking. She treats this not just as a game or fun fantasy but also as a way of expressing and grappling with deep-seated concerns, of the kinds treated in Freudian psychology if not also modern neuroscientific studies of the brain, including our tangles of memories, emotions, and moods.³⁵ She focuses on topics like Pandora’s box, in Hesiod, with its ironic release of pestilence but continuing containment of hope. She notes the construction of belltowers of growing medieval and later European towns

and cities by which their elites sought to impose a kind of order in social, religious, and daily life. She compares this order to that hitherto provided by kinship in more rural settings: a substitute framework of ordering. She traces it further into the miniaturized clocks that became such precious, glittering gifts between intermarrying polities: diplomatic links between potential warring enemies.

In Japan, she finds automata with kin-like connections in traditions of public puppetry, reminding us that these are not all just “Western” notions and fictions, but that they seem able to tantalize the human mind maybe anywhere. We need hardly imagine all the other ways in which our young may be finding kith and kin right inside their new little cell phones and video games. It is hard not to wonder, though, to what extent these will replace the kind that have had not AA batteries and a keyboard or motherboard, but milk, pulse, and breath.

Connecting Ghosts. Mark Auslander’s semi-autobiographical chapter, “Old Worlds from Fragments,” shows how newly available DNA testing of ancestry, with social media connections added, is allowing people who descended from European Jewish victims of the Nazi Holocaust to connect and become acquainted with one another as putative kin, forming expanding circles with a sense of shared loss and virtual community.³⁶ As just about everyone knows (but some other people still fail to acknowledge), the attempted “final solution” to which the Jewish forebears and others were subjected was an attempt at comprehensive genocide. Piecing together new evidence and building on stories of death and survival from about 1933 to 1945, participants in this information quest now also look back on subsequent experiences of forced migration and resettlement as members of a diaspora, reaching beyond the genetic evidence of the new tests and involving their imaginations and present-day gift exchanges too. Auslander’s chapter gives a sense of the strong emotions involved and the cultural work for self-reconstruction after their tragically misguided attempted extermination. Will they achieve their own new sense of a genuine community, with a lasting kind of solidarity? The acquaintances, the mutual trust, and the confidence in the methods build, and the story still continues.

Conclusion

We see in this volume that fictive kinship, while adapting the idiom and some of the expectations from biological kinship, can ironically be used to complement it when the biological form fails to serve personal and social needs. The importance of fictive kin ties for securing economic and political advantages is a recurring theme of the contributions in this volume.

Far from being purely figurative or fanciful (though it can be that), fictive kinship can be an invaluable strategy for finding housing, getting jobs, securing promotions, paying school fees, mobilizing supporters, introducing clients, reprimanding an abusive spouse, protecting a business from police harassment, and otherwise getting by or getting ahead.

Yet to think of fictive kinship in purely instrumental terms would be, as we suggest in these pages, a mistake. Aging parents or grandparents may set up fictive kin ties for their offspring or descendants, even though these may never be able to reciprocate. Some who enter, say, relationships of *compadrazgo*, ritual co-parenthood, may do so just to honor a special friendship and set it apart from more ordinary ones, or to follow custom or expectation. One may never actually call upon one's fictive kin for anything, yet still enjoy and appreciate their being there.

In all, this heightening of bonding sentiments with kin idiom and imagery is a powerful but double-edged sword. It can and does entice our fellow nationals to be recruited as "brothers-in-arms," as depicted in the posters ("Uncle Sam Wants You") or orchestrated in songs ("*Allons enfants de la patrie, / Le jour de gloire est arrivé!*"), and fight for mutual protection or advantage (like ideal Marines, "*semper fidelis*," always loyal). But it also alienates and angers out-groups by the same token, as in the racially discriminating Afrikaner-Broederbond in South Africa, the Ku Klux Klan, or the prisoner-derived Aryan Brotherhood in the contemporary United States, contributing to violent conflicts between perceived categories of persons.

In sum: We humans all depend on "fictive kinship" in one way or another, and often in many ways, shifting in importance throughout our lifetimes. Where we lack closer kin to help us with our life's challenges, we make them up or rope them in ourselves. We sometimes do so with or without other humans' help, turning to pets or dolls if need be. We pick and choose the aspects of family to emphasize, often skewing the picture when extending or projecting it onto bigger groups. But we have many ritual and pragmatic ways of making "fictive" kinship more real than just make-believe, projecting and transforming our early-acquired, long-accustomed patterns of kinship into tangible social relationships and material structures; into acts of adoption, initiation, and marriage; and into sharing, colluding, enslaving, and killing.

And so it is that here, in concluding, we re-enter a level of meta-analysis where the study of kinship and "fictive kinship" itself involves what philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, making famous an older idea, called now the "family resemblance."³⁷ By a family resemblance (or family likeness), he meant a set or category of things in which no single member need have all the attributes that define the type, and in which no single attribute can be found in every member.³⁸ What do the Ursuline Sisters, a soul brother,

the Afrikaner-Broederbond, Father Time, Mother Goose, the Fraternal Order of Freemasons, Mother Nature, the Delta Kappa sorority, and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters have in common (let alone with the motherboard I use to write these words)? Not a lot, I suggest. And yet they could arguably form a kind of fuzzy category, pointing to a human need for cognitive assimilation and also one for belonging, where each named member may have some feature(s) in common with one or more of the others. (If the idea seems hard to grasp, think of a large family with no two total look-alikes, but whose members share a certain composite look by which you can spot any one of these individuals to be a member.)

It is our hope that in plumbing some of the mysteries of the topic in these pages, we will facilitate further discussion and analysis, showing what can be built up on family modeling, but also warning our readers of the many misuses to which their affiliative instincts, instrumentally set into action, may incline them or others more susceptible. Maybe this reading will help others use and understand the human imagination about family and its many forms—from the material to the abstract, from the joking to the dead serious, and from micro to macro—for wiser endeavors and more consistently beneficial ends.

Parker Shipton (PhD, University of Cambridge) is professor of anthropology and African studies, Boston University. Previously he taught at Harvard University. He has conducted research in Kenya, Gambia, and Native North and South America, consulted for several international aid agencies, and served as president of the Association for Africanist Anthropology. His books include *Bitter Money*, *The Nature of Entrustment* (winner, African Studies Association Best Book Prize, 2008), *Mortgaging the Ancestors*, and *Credit Between Cultures*, and his coedited volumes include *Seeking Solutions* and *Land and the Mortgage*. He has edited the series *Peoples of Africa* and the *Blackwell Anthologies in Social and Cultural Anthropology*, and coedited the National Humanities Center's online forum *On the Human*.

Notes

1. This introduction and the volume in its entirety have benefited from thoughtful and generous anonymous peer review, including numerous citations, only some of which we have had space to include.
2. Parkin and Stone's reader (2004) reproduces, chronologically, many of the most important anthropological studies of kinship up to the time of its publication. The present volume's next chapter lists more surveys of anthropology's history on the subject.

3. For anthropological studies on motives, habits, and modes of classification, see Allen (2000), Ellen (2006), and Fernandez (1991); for a bio-anthropological study of its effects, see Moffett (2019). For psycholinguistic studies on it, see Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1999), Fauconnier and Turner (2002), Lakoff (2008).
4. Rival (1998) offers numerous case examples and analyses of botanical metaphors like family trees for human relatedness. Delaney's study of this in Turkey (1991) treats political implications of metaphorizing soil as female and seed as male. Patton-Imani (2020) combines impassioned feminist, racial, and queer politics in *Questioning Family Trees*.
5. Frans De Waal's title *Tree of Life* (2002) conceals his own deeper, more enlightened understanding of animal minds and social life as not so inferior to human.
6. This topic of what is real, how real, or "real" in what way is open to endless discussion, and it is as old as the studies of philosophy and religion. For just a few of many insightful general discussions about what we can believe and disbelieve our own perceptions and ideas as science, myth, or religion—and on the intermediates, straddlings, tradeoffs, and shifts between these—see Malinowski ([1954] 2015), Dundes (1984), Tambiah (1990); and for perspectives beyond anthropology, Grant (1998) and Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1999). In the pages that follow, though, we shall restrict our analysis to the study of perceptions, beliefs, and feelings about kinship and relatedness.
7. Among the most general and systematic studies of this process are Boyer's (2018) and Moffett's (2019). For more specific attention to genealogy, but varied discussions about how it is used as a semantic model in different contexts, a topic overlapping with our own in the present volume, see Carsten (2004), McKinnon and Silverman (2005), Bamford and Leach (2012), McKinnon and Cannell (2013), and in terms of immigration, Peter Li (1977), Catherine Lee (2013).
8. Thanks to coeditor James Ito-Adler for noting the importance of "elder orphan" needs.
9. The term and concept *marriage* is subject to much debate as to what counts or qualifies as such, or whether the many varieties found require more than one such term to identify them. Anthropologists have puzzled and argued for decades over cases like those of the matrilineal Nayar caste in Kerala in South India, where three historic types of rites have emphasized different aspects (involving for instance tying, menstruation, and the beginning of a sexual relationship) (M. Moore 1988). Another case much questioned concerns matrilineal Na (or Mosuo) people in the Sino-Tibetan borderland, for whom "walking marriage," involving intersex contacts overnight with female permission, is deemed to establish different kinds of relationships than domestic relations by day or relationships usually recognized elsewhere as marriage (Hua 2001). Of much broader concern (legal, religious, and other) are recurring disagreements about the legitimacy of polygamy, and recent, high-profile public controversies, and in some regions still alas sanctimony and harsh measures, concerning single-sex or LGBTQ+ ceremonies, homes, and relationships.
10. Samuel Johnson (1775) described in some detail a custom of fosterage then in apparent decline in the western islands of Scotland. See also Cathcart 2006: 81–82, on fosterage as a social bond between social groups in highland Scotland. Jack Goody's (1969) and Esther Goody's (2013) signal comparative studies of adoption and fosterage, respectively, pried open and laid out both topics for further study,

- as in Modell and Hareven (1973), Modell (1994), Raleigh (2017, on transracial cases), Mariner (2019), and M. Nelson (2020).
11. Sarah Hrdy (1999, 2009) presents an evolutionist understanding of “alloparenting” (shared childcare), tempered by respect for cultural change that often outpaces natural selection.
 12. Frazer ([1910] 1968) and Lévi-Strauss (1963) offer two of the most provocative comparative studies of totemism, the putative descent of humans from animals or other nonhuman entities. This concept has something in common with a Darwinian-style concept of evolutionism (as Euro-American intellectual historians too seldom realize) but may depend more on human imagination and orally conveyed lore and less on “natural” or sexual selection.
 13. See B. Nelson (1949) and discussion of interest and usury for in- and out-groups in Shipton (2010: 36–43).
 14. Jenny White (2004) shows how devaluation of women’s labor, and their sharing among themselves, can bond women together as “relatives” in Turkey.
 15. See Evans-Pritchard (1933), Hocart (1935a, 1935b), Firth (1936), Tegnaeus (1952, book-length), Shipton (1997a, 1997b), L. White (1994), Gottlieb (1997), and Carsten (2011, 2013), among many other sources on African, Pacific, and other “blood-brotherhood” or shared-substance “siblinghood” or “bond-friendship.”
 16. Desai and Killick ([2010] 2012) offer comparative cases of friendship, variously overlapping semantically with kinship, in different parts of the world. On such in parts of Africa, see the collection of Guichard, Grätz, and Diallo (2014). Perhaps such overlaps or ambiguities may be found in many languages and maybe just about anywhere.
 17. Made famous by Edward Evans-Pritchard’s descriptions of Nuer (1940, 1951), for whom he showed how it ironically served patrilineal purposes, woman-woman marriage is further analyzed for Nandi in Oboler (1980).
 18. For just some of many studies of “fictive” kinship in religion, see Forbess and Michelutti (2013), especially Michelutti (2013) on divine kinship and politics; and Coad ([1968] 2001) on the “Brethren Movement” from the early 1800s on.
 19. For a few of the many studies on godparenthood and associated ritual co-parent-hood in varied contexts, and a view of how it entered mainstream cultural and social anthropology from the mid-twentieth century, see Paul (1942), Foster (1953, 1969), Anderson (1957), Mintz and Wolf ([1950] 1968), Osborn (1968), Pitt-Rivers (1968), Ingham (1970), Gudeman (1972, 1976), Hart (1977), Greenfield (1980), Nutini and Bell (1980, 1984), and Kikuchi (2001).
 20. Kikuchi (2001: 8) concludes and expands upon his study of ritual kinship in the Philippines (in a bilateral kinship system, which he also calls “ego-oriented”—that is, without strong large kin groups), reflecting on humans more generally: “We cannot live alone because we are social beings. This is the reason why the people of ego-oriented society try to recruit intimate friends whom they are able to trust and protect each other for the social security.”
 21. Projections and conspicuous use of kinship idiom and ideology characterize many large secret or semi-secret associations in the United States and more broadly in the Americas. See W. Moore and M. Tabbert (2011), for a collected history of these in America from several disciplines, and chapter 9 of the present volume.
 22. Atkinson (2023) argues that fictive kinship terminology in religions augments cooperation. He invokes “Hamilton’s rule,” part of the theory of inclusive fitness

- or kin selection (basically that altruism and cooperation among close kin augments their chances for survival and reproduction—the closer, the better). See also Lounsbury 1965 (esp. 143–44) on Bronislaw Malinowski’s and Edmund Leach’s disagreements on kinship terminology and its functions, defending the former’s emphasis on the primacy of genealogy.
23. Rosabeth Kanter’s history (1972) of North American utopian communes offers a balanced account of their pros and cons, with an analysis also of their durations, often not over a generation. See also S. Moore and B. Myerhoff (1975).
 24. Eisenstadt ([1956] 2003) and Moore and Myerhoff (1975) treat questions of communal idiom, ideology, and solidarity—relevant from Plato’s imagined Republic to the present, and from lapsing American Shaker communes to Israeli kibbutzim, and categorically relevant to youth movements worldwide.
 25. Notable here are Elshaintain’s intellectual history (1982) and Holper’s case study (1996) on family usage in political writing and speech. See also Salmon (1998), Thelen and Alber (2017), and Alber et al. (2002). Christopher Johnson et al. (2013) treat blood metaphor as kinship, sometimes politically motivated, since ancient times. Closer to current political practice, in voter persuasion, see Lakoff ([2004] 2021) on the uses of stern-father and nurturing-parent imagery and metaphor in American Republican and Democratic Party politics, respectively. On African political usages, see Schatzberg (2001). On clan-based rule and competition in political history, see Weiner’s provocative if skeptical overview (2013).
 26. Schatzberg (2001) shows the prominence of paternal idiom and imagery in African politics. Indeed, whether many regimes would have survived as long as they have without it is open to serious doubt.
 27. The phrase “imagined communities” comes of course from Benedict Anderson (1983). Influentially too, work by James C. Scott (for instance, 2009) has raised scholarly doubts about the “naturalness” of national loyalty, integrity, and sovereignty.
 28. See Alexander-Nathani (2021, esp. 115–21) for soberingly vivid firsthand recollection of migrant-community “brotherhoods” and their tribulations while kept outside the bounds of two of Europe’s tiny Spanish communities in Africa, Melilla and Ceuta, which are adjacent to northern Morocco. See also Peter Li (1977) on Chinese immigrants’ “fictive kinship” in the United States.
 29. See for instance Lamothe and Moyd (2024).
 30. Vivid examples and analyses of post-violence solidarity enduring for many years among former rebels in Mozambique (here mainly from the subordinated, socialist-leaning Renamo party) appear in Wiegink (2020, esp. chap. 3, “Wartime Kin and Wartime Husbands,” 89–112).
 31. See Cruise O’Brien (1971) and Copans (1989), for instance, for two classic studies on the Senegal-based Mouride Islamic Brotherhood.
 32. Solisti and Tobias (2006) and Shipman (2011) demonstrate this in their different ways, narrative, emotional, and scientific.
 33. James Serpell’s works (1988, 1995, 1996) and Markowitz and Crosby’s tellingly titled book *Property to Family* (2014) treat North American pet-keeping customs and idiom in recent decades. Serpell also summarizes much learning about the longer evolution of the tradition (1995) and wider comparisons, including for instance pet-keeping and human-animal company among foraging (gathering and hunting), farming, and herding people in different parts of the world (1988, 1996).

34. Here one is reminded of some African viewers of American films and television dramas who say they have assumed, when they saw sexual acts carried out, that the couples performing them must be married in fact, since the women's parents or siblings would not knowingly let them do these things, particularly for an audience, if they were not.
35. This is not to deny the extremely complex interconnectedness of parts and regions of the brain barely becoming understood, or the sometimes cyclical flow of stimuli between them as emotions, moods, and feelings translate into decisions and action.
36. On remembrance and relatedness in other contexts, see Carsten (2007).
37. I choose Wittgenstein's phrasing (1958: 87) here because of its obvious relevance to our topic, but he was not the first to think up the idea. One can find it before his time in late nineteenth-century folklore studies (Gomme [1898] 1968: 426–27) and arguably some even earlier biological classification. See Needham (1975) too on "polythetic classification," using the same idea for social and cultural anthropology.
38. A favorite example of Wittgenstein's for a "family likeness" or family resemblance was the idea of a "game." (Think, for instance, of hopscotch, basketball, tiddlywinks, mahjong, checkers, Russian roulette, Game of Thrones, and card solitaire.) This is the sort of loosely linked category I suggest kinship fictions or creations constitute.

References

- Alber, Erdmute, David Warren Sabeen, Simon Teuscher, and Tatjana Thelen, eds. 2022. *The Politics of Making Kinship*. Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books.
- Alexander-Nathani, Isabella. 2021. *Burning at Europe's Borders: An Ethnography on the African Migrant Experience in Morocco*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Allen, Nicholas J. 2000. *Categories and Classifications: Maussian Reflections on the Social*. Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books.
- Amrith, Megha, and Kati Coe. 2022. "Disposable Kin: Shifting Registers of Belonging in Global Care Economies." *American Anthropologist* 124(2): 307–18.
- Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Anderson, Gallatin. 1957. "Il Comparaggio: The Italian Godparenthood Complex." *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 13: 32–53.
- Atkinson, Andrew Ross. 2023. "Could Religions Augment Cooperation by Incorporating Hamilton's Rule through the Use of Fictive Kinship Language?" *Journal of Cognition and Culture* 23(3–4): 265–88.
- Bamford, Sandra, and James Leach, eds. [2009] 2012. *Kinship and Beyond: The Genealogical Model Reconsidered*. Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books.
- Breusers, Mark. 2014. "Friendship and Spiritual Parenthood among the Moose and the Fulbe in Burkina Faso." In *Friendship, Descent and Alliance in Africa*, edited by Martine Guichard, Tilo Grätz, and Youssouf Diallo, 74–96. Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books.
- Boyer, Pascal. 2018. *Minds Make Societies: How Cognition Explains the World Humans Create*. New York: Basic Books.
- Carsten, Janet. 2004. *After Kinship*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- , ed. 2007. *Ghosts of Memory: Essays on Remembrance and Relatedness*. Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- . 2011. "Substance and Relationality: Blood in Contexts." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 40: 19–35.
- , ed. 2013. "Blood Will Out: Essays on Liquid Transfers and Flows." Special issue, *JRAI: Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 19; and separate book publication (Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell).
- Cathcart, Alison. 2006. *Kinship and Clientage: Highland Clanship, 1451-1609*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill.
- Coad, F. Roy. [1968] 2001. *A History of the Brethren Movement: Its Origins, Its World-wide Development and Its Significance for the Present Day*. Vancouver: Regent College Publishing.
- Coe, Cati. 2019. *The New American Servitude: Political Belonging among African Immigrant Home Care Workers*. New York: New York University Press.
- . 2021. *Changes in Care: Aging, Migration, and Social Class in Africa*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Copans, Jean. 1989. *Les Marabouts de l'Arachide: La Confrérie Mouride et les Paysans du Sénégal*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Cruise O'Brien, Donal B. 1971. *The Mourides of Senegal: The Political Organization of an Islamic Brotherhood*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- De Waal, Frans F. M. 2002. *Tree of Life: What Primate Behavior Can Tell Us about Human Social Evolution*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Delaney, Carol. 1991. *The Seed and the Soil: Gender and Cosmology in a Turkish Village Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Desai, Amit, and David Killick, eds. [2010] 2012. *The Ways of Friendship: Anthropological Perspectives*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Dundes, Alan, ed. 1984. *Sacred Narrative: Readings in the Theory of Myth*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Eisenstadt, Shmuel. [1956] 2003. *Generation to Generation*, 3rd edn. New York: Transaction Publishers.
- Ellen, Roy. 2006. *The Categorical Impulse: Essays in the Anthropology of Classifying Behaviour*. Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books.
- Elshtain, Jean Bethke, ed. 1982. *The Family in Political Thought*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Evans-Pritchard, Edward E. 1933. "Zande Blood-Brotherhood." *Africa, Journal of the International Africa Institute* 6: 369–401.
- . 1940. *The Nuer: A Description of the Mode of Livelihood and Political System of a Nilotic People*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- . 1951. *Kinship and Marriage among the Nuer*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Falkenberg, Johannes. 1962. *Kin and Totem: Group Relations of Australian Aborigines in the Port Keats District*. New York: Humanities Press.
- Fauconnier, Gilles, and Mark Turner. 2002. *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities*. New York: Basic Books.
- Fernandez, James. 1991. *Beyond Metaphor: The Theory of Tropes in Anthropology*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Firth, Raymond. 1936. "Bond-Friendship in Tikopia." In *Custom Is King: Essays Presented to R. R. Marrett*, edited by L. H. Dudley-Buxton, 259–69. London: Hutchinson's Scientific and Technical Publications.

- Foster, George M. 1953. "Cofradía and Compadrazgo in Spain and Spanish America." *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 9: 1–28.
- . 1969. "Godparents and Social Networks in Tzintzuntzan." *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 25: 261–78.
- Frazer, James George. [1910] 1968. *Totemism and Exogamy: A Treatise on Early Forms of Superstition and Society*. 4 vols. London: Dawson.
- Gomme, G. Laurence. [1898] 1968. "Ethnological Data in Folklore." In *Peasant Customs and Savage Myths: Selections from the British Folklorists*, edited by Richard M. Dorson, 2:421–31. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Goody, Esther. 2013. *Child Fostering in Africa: New Perspectives on Theory and Practices*. Leiden: Brill.
- Goody, Jack. 1969. "Adoption in Comparative Perspective." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 11(1): 55–78.
- Gottlieb, Alma. 1997. "Blood (Symbolic)." In *The Blackwell Dictionary of Social Anthropology*, edited by Thomas J. Barfield, 41–42. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Greenfield, Sidney. 1980. "Contributions to the Study of Kinship and Compadrazgo in Latin America." *Latin American Research Review* 15(1): 211–18.
- Gudeman, Stephen. 1972. "The Compadrazgo as a Reflection of the Natural and Spiritual Person." *Proceedings of the Royal Anthropological Institute for 1971*: 45–71.
- . 1976. *Relationships, Residence and the Individual: A Rural Panamanian Community*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Guichard, Martine, Tilo Grätz, and Youssouf Diallo, eds. 2014. *Friendship, Descent and Alliance in Africa: Anthropological Perspectives*. Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books.
- Hart, Donn V. 1977. *Compadrazgo: Ritual Kinship in the Philippines*. De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press.
- Hocart, A. M. 1935a. "Blood-Brotherhood." *Man, Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 35(127) (August): 113–15.
- . 1935b. "Covenants." *Man, Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 35(164) (October): 149–51.
- Holper, J. J. 1996. "Kin Term Usage in *The Federalist*: Evolutionary Foundations of Publius's Rhetoric." *Politics and the Life Sciences* 15: 265–72.
- Hrdy, Sarah Blaffer. 1999. *Mother Nature: Maternal Instincts and How They Shape the Human Species*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- . 2009. *Mothers and Others: The Evolutionary Origins of Mutual Understanding*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Hua, Cai. 2001. *A Society without Fathers or Husbands: The Na of China*. New York: Zone Books.
- Ingham, John M. 1970. "The Asymmetrical Implications of Godparenthood in Tlayacapan, Morelos." *Man, Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute (new series)* 5: 281–289.
- Johnson, Christopher, Bernhard Jussen, David Warren Sabeau, and Simon Teuscher, eds. 2013. *Blood and Kinship: Matter for Metaphor from Ancient Rome to the Present*. Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books.
- Kan, Sergei. 2001. *Strangers to Relatives: The Adoption and Naming of Anthropologists in Native North America*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Kanter, Rosabeth Moss. 1972. *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Kikuchi, Yasushi. 2001. "The Social Role of the Filipino Kinship System—Through Theoretical Issues of Cognatic Kinship Form." *Journal of Asia-Pacific Studies* (Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, Waseda University) 3: 1–9. Retrieved 8 January 2024 from <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/144454126.pdf>.
- Lakoff, George. [2004] 2021. *Don't Think of an Elephant: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green.
- . 2008. "The Neural Theory of Metaphor." In *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*, edited by R. W. Gibbs Jr., 17–38. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. 1980. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- . 1999. *Philosophy in the Flesh*. New York: Basic Books.
- Lamothe, Ron, and Michelle Moyd. 2024. "Brotherhood That Binds the Brave: Sudanese Soldiers and the Paradox of Martial Identities in the Age of Empire." In *Making Martial Races: Gender, Warfare, and Society in Africa*, edited by Myles Osborne, 206–34. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Lee, Catherine. 2013. *Fictive Kinship: Family and Nation and the Meaning of Reintegration in American Immigration*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude. [1962] 1963. *Totemism* (Le totémisme aujourd'hui). Translated by Rodney Needham. Boston: Beacon.
- Li, Peter S. 1977. "Fictive Kinship, Conjugal Tie and Kinship among Chinese Immigrants in the United States." *Journal of Comparative and Family Studies* 8(1): 47–63.
- Lounsbury, Floyd G. 1965. "Another View of the Trobriand Kinship Categories." *American Anthropologist* 67(5): 142–85.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw. [1954] 2015. *Magic, Science and Religion*. Eastford, CT: Martino Fine Books.
- Mariner, Kathryn A. 2019. *Contingent Kinship: The Flows and Futures of Adoption in the United States*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Markowits, Andrei S., and Katherine Crosby. 2014. *From Property to Family: American Dog Rescue and the Discourse of Compassion*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- McKinnon, Susan, and Fenella Cannell, eds. 2013. *Vital Relations: Modernity and the Persistent Life of Kinship*. Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press.
- McKinnon, Susan, and Sydel Silverman, eds. 2005. *Complexities: Beyond Nature and Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Michelutti, Lucia. 2013. "Sons of Krishna and Sons of Bolivar: Charismatic Kinship and Leadership across India and Venezuela." In *Divine Kinship and Politics*, guest eds. Alice Forbess and Lucia Michelutti. *FOCAAL* (67): 19–31.
- Mintz, Sidney W., and Eric R. Wolf. [1950] 1968. "An Analysis of Ritual Co-parenthood (*Compadrazgo*)." *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 6: 341–68. Reprinted in *Marriage, Family, and Residence*, edited by Paul Bohannan and John Middleton, 327–54. Garden City, NY: Natural History Press, for American Museum of Natural History, 1968.
- Modell, John, and Tamara K. Hareven. 1973. "Urbanization and the Malleable Household: An Examination of Boarding and Lodging in American Families." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 35: 467–79.
- Modell, Judith S. 1994. *Kinship with Strangers: Adoption and Kinship in American Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Moffett, Mark W. 2019. *The Human Swarm: How Our Societies Arise, Thrive, and Fall*. New York: Basic Books.
- Moore, Melinda A. 1988. "Symbol and Meaning in Nayar Marriage Ritual." *American Ethnologist* 15(2): 254–73.
- Moore, Sally Falk, and Barbara Myerhoff, eds. 1975. *Symbol and Politics in Communal Ideology: Cases and Questions*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Moore, William D., and Mark A. Tabbert, eds. 2011. *Secret Societies in America: Foundational Studies of Fraternalism*. New Orleans, LA: Cornerstone Book Publishers.
- Needham, Rodney. 1975 "Polythetic Classification: Convergence and Consequences." *Man, Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute (new series)* 10(3): 349–69.
- Nelson, Benjamin N. 1949. *The Idea of Usury: From Tribal Brotherhood to Universal Otherhood*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Nelson, Margaret K. 2020. *Like Family: Narratives of Fictive Kinship*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Nutini, Hugo G., and Betty Bell. 1980 (vol. 1), 1984 (vol. 2). *Ritual Kinship: The Structure and Historical Development of the Compadrazgo System in Rural Tlaxcala*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Oboler, Regina Smith. 1980. "Is the Female Husband a Man? Woman/Woman Marriage among the Nandi of Kenya." *Ethnology* 19: 69–88.
- Osborn, Ann. 1968. "Compadrazgo and Patronage: A Colombian Case." *Man, Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute (new series)* 3: 593–608.
- Parkin, Robert, and Linda Stone, eds. 2004. *Kinship and Family: An Anthropological Reader*. Oxford and Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Patton-Imani, Sandra. 2020. *Queering Family Trees: Race, Reproductive Justice, and Lesbian Motherhood*. New York: NYU Press.
- Paul, Benjamin D. 1942. "Ritual Kinship: With Special Reference to Godparenthood in Middle America." PhD diss., University of Chicago. University of Chicago Microfilm Series no. 1, 686.
- Pitt-Rivers, Julian. 1968. "Pseudo-Kinship." *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* 8: 408–13. New York: Macmillan.
- Rival, Laura. 1998. *The Social Life of Trees: Anthropological Perspectives on Tree Symbolism*. Oxford: Berg.
- Salmon, Catherine A. 1998. "The Evocative Nature of Kin Terminology in Political Rhetoric." *Politics and the Life Sciences* 17(1): 51–57.
- Schatzberg, Michael. 2001. *Political Legitimacy in Middle Africa: Father, Family, Food*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Serpell, James. 1988. "Pet-Keeping in Non-Western Societies: Some Popular Misconceptions." In *Animals and People Sharing the World*, edited by Andrew Rowan, 33–52. Hanover, NH and London, UK: University Press of New England, for Tufts University.
- . [1986] 1996. *In the Company of Animals*. Subsequent edition. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- . [1995] 2017. *The Domestic Dog: Its Evolution, Behavior and Interactions with People*, 2nd edn. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Shipman, Pat. 2011. *The Animal Connection: A New Perspective on What Makes Us Human*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Shipton, Parker. 1997a. "Blood Brotherhood." In *Blackwell Dictionary of Social Anthropology*, edited by Thomas J. Barfield, 42. Oxford: Blackwell.

- . 1997b. “Fictive Kinship.” In *Blackwell Dictionary of Social Anthropology*, edited by Thomas J. Barfield, 186–88. Oxford: Blackwell.
- . 2007. *The Nature of Entrustment: Intimacy, Exchange, and the Sacred in Africa*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- . 2010. *Credit between Cultures: Farmers, Financiers, and Misunderstanding*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Solisti, Kate, and Michael Tobias. 2006. *Kinship with Animals*. Updated edition. Tulsa, OK: Council Oak Books.
- Tambiah, Stanley J. 1990. *Magic, Science and Religion and the Scope of Rationality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tegnaeus, Harry. 1952. *Blood Brothers: An Ethno-sociological Study of the Institution of Blood-Brotherhood with Special Reference to Africa*. Stockholm: Ethnographical Museum of Sweden (Statens Etnografiska Museum), New Series, Publication 10.
- Terrell, John Edward, and Gabriel Stowe Terrell. 2020. *Understanding the Human Mind: Why You Shouldn't Trust What Your Brain is Telling You*. London: Routledge.
- Thelen, Tatjana, and Erdmute Alber, eds. 2017. *Reconnecting State and Kinship*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Weber, Max. [1922] 1996. “Ethnic Groups.” In *Theories of Ethnicity: A Classical Reader*, edited by Werner Sollors, 52–66. New York: New York University Press. [Written before 1914. Reprinted from Weber, *Economy and Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press), chap. 5, 385–98.]
- Weiner, Mark S. 2013. *The Rule of the Clan: What an Ancient Form of Social Organization Reveals about the Future of Individual Freedom*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- White, Jenny. 2004. *Money Makes us Relatives: Women's Labor in Urban Turkey*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.
- White, Luise. 1994. “Blood Brotherhood Revisited: Kinship, Relationship and the Body in East and Central Africa.” *Africa (Journal of the International African Institute)* 64(3): 359–72.
- Wiegink, Nikkie. 2020. *Former Guerrillas in Mozambique*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig. 1958. *Preliminary Studies for the 'Philosophical Investigations,' Generally Known as The Blue and Brown Books*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.