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WHY SCHNEIDERIAN KINSHIP STUDIES HAVE IT ALL WRONG

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ADOPTIVE KINSHIP[1]

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Followers of David Schneider regularly claim that kinship in one or another community is not based upon native procreative notions. This claim has been shown to be wrong in several cases. But early childhood adoption might be thought to pose a special challenge to these correctives, because, unlike kinship notions established later in life, it draws upon the decided tendency of the very young to attach themselves to adult caretakers regardless of the presence or absence of a procreative connexion. Analysis of three well-known ethnographic cases suggests, however, that even here native ideas concerning procreation are semantically primary.

> *Differences between 'true' relatives and those who are not may get especially blurred when discussing adoption*
>
> Bock and Rao 2000:13

Introduction

In his concluding remarks to one of the many recent collections celebrating David Schneider's influence on kinship scholarship in anthropology, Peter Schweitzer (2000:214) refers to "the 'outdated' nature of pre-Schneiderian kinship studies." There are at least two possible interpretations of this remark. One – the one which I think Schweitzer has in mind—is that Schneider's writings—especially his A Critique of the Study of Kinship (Schneider 1984)—have had a revolutionary impact on kinship studies comparable, for example, to that of Copernicus in astronomy , Darwin in biology, and Einstein in physics, even, according to others (e.g. Faubion 2001; Feinberg and Otten-heimer 2001; Schachter 2008:19) to such apocalyptic thinkers as St. Paul and Karl Marx. The other interpretation is the one I myself hold, viz. that Schneider's ideas just fit current social and intellectual fashions. Most of the rest of this essay is a substantiation of this renegade interpretation.

I start by explicating what I believe to be a model held widely by cultural anthropologists, one which is empirically unsustainable on the basis of present knowledge. This model, I must note immediately, is so pervasive that those who hold to it are mostly un-

able to proceed without it, and when it is called into question the response is either baf-flement or studied ignorance or name-calling—this last masked as "deconstruction." Querying the model is, so to say, is to begin a much-deserved deconstruction of the "de-constructionists," who, I shall show, are getting away with intellectual murder.

The Communal Society

The idea of a community which is truly *communal* , i.e., which is lacking in internal divi-sions, is a long-held paradigm, both in anthropology and the wider society. Lewis Henry Morgan, the Founding Father of kinship studies—indeed, of our entire discipline in this country (Shapiro 2012:394)—imagined "a community of husbands and wives" (Morgan 1877:49) Once Upon a Time in human "prehistory." Morgan was a disciplined scholar—disciplined enough to realize that this fanciful concoction nowhere existed at the time he wrote —, but, he believed, its former occurrence was indicated by certain customs he got wind of from his numerous ethnographic correspondents and especially by certain pat-terns of kin classification. We shall see shortly that he misinterpreted these patterns. The thing to note now is that, at almost the very moment Morgan was writing his classic analyses there were several attempts to establish *communes* not too far from where he resided. Indeed, we now know from research into his private papers that he was personal-ly aware of these projects, though it is not yet clear what influence they had on his thought (Feeley-Harnik 1999:220). In any case, what they had in common was an attempt to minimize—even to do away with altogether—the human tendency for heterosexual pair-bonding, and the equally human tendency for *both* a woman *and* a man to provide preferential treatment to their common offspring. We now have a substantial literature on these projects (e.g., Brumann 2000; Kanter 1972; Klaw 1993), from which it is quite clear that these tendencies have their own tendencies—especially to *resist* these collec-tivizing efforts. And the same defiance has been in evidence from subsequent attempts at collectivizing intimate sociality, e.g., the *kibbutz* movement in Israel (Spiro 1975) and in the early years of the former Soviet Union (Figes 2007:179-186).

This last effort was in turn indirectly inspired by Morgan—more directly, by Friederich Engels' cooption of his ideas in *The Origin of the Family Private Property and the State* (Engels 1972[1884]) —, which to this day remains a crucial part of the Marxist canon. Engels turned Morgan's scheme of "a natural as well as necessary sequence of progress" (Morgan 1877:3) upside down, so to say. Whereas the latter had posited a pro-gressive movement *away from* "the community of husbands and wives" and, gradually, towards the individuating pair-bond, Engels envisioned a primitivist return to what had been called "the undivided commune" (Fison and Howitt 1880:150)[2] after an apocalyptic struggle between individualists and communists—with the latter, of course, triumphant. Yet Schneiderians have given this antediluvian nonsense a pride of place that it comes nowhere near meriting (e.g. Carsten 2004:58; Collier *et al.* 1992; Sachs 1974), and in the process they have engendered ethnographic and comparative research that is founded less on empirical evidence and more on wishful thinking, masqueraded as "the natives' point of view."

The Relevance of Kinship Terminologies to Current Kinship Debates

There is much talk in recent literature on the subject of "a return of kinship studies." But what has decidedly *not* returned is the study of kinship terminologies.[3] Instead, practitioners of the self-proclaimed "new kinship studies" rely on general ideas of kinship, presumably as locally construed, especially on such post-conception notions as naming, commensality, ritual "re-birth," and other acts nowadays lumped together as *performative.* Accordingly, they acknowledge the allegedly seminal influence of Schneider, particularly his Morgan Centennial Essay (Schneider 1972), his slender volume on American kinship (Schneider 1968) and, most of all, his *Critique* of previous kinship studies (Schneider 1984), wherein he suggests that these earlier efforts were culture-bound: they *assumed* that non-Western forms of kinship were based on procreative notions because Western ones are. But elsewhere, according to him, and especially in the Third and Fourth Worlds, performative criteria are more important in reckoning kinship. Hence the very notion of kinship, as traditionally employed by anthropologists, is to be questioned, or, as one says these days, "deconstructed."

This is unobjectionable as a caution against parochialism, but in the "new kinship studies," for which it serves as an intellectual charter, it has hardened into a dogma, immune to question, except by those declared excommunicate and anathema—or, in this instance, henchmen for an Oppressor Class. Schneider's analysis of his American data has been subjected to withering criticism, especially from Scheffler (1976)[4] and I have proffered critiques of some of the efforts he inspired in others (Shapiro 2008, 2009a, 2010, 2011a, 2011b, 2012). Scheffler's re-analysis has been completely ignored by Schneider's admirers, and mine have fared only a little better: Marshall Sahlins, perched upon his endowed Bishop's Chair at the university founded by John D. Rockefeller, renders me as an "arch-conservative" (Sahlins 2012), but only two brave souls have actually done rational battle with me (Alés 2009; Watts 2009).

I need to be more specific about what I have tried to do. In previous essays I have highlighted the unsustainable commitment of the advocates of the "new kinship studies" to The Communal Society model, and their hostility to "the traditional Western family," traditional Western notions of gender, and the ideas of Western science—all things which they regularly label, in fine "deconstructionist" fashion, "hegemonic." Moreover, I have suggested that in the course of such moral posturing they fail to pose (let alone answer) the question as to whether or not such non-procreative kinship notions are *modeled on* procreative ones. Thus earlier I referred to Lewis Henry Morgan as the Founding Father of kinship studies. It must be obvious to anyone reading this that, in so doing, I am *likening* Morgan to *my real father* and kinship studies to his children—his *brainchildren,* it is worth noting. In other words, the relationship between me and *my real father* provides *a model* for my representation of Morgan. It should be added that the prefix *brain-* before *children* in the foregoing example instances what linguists call *a lexical marker*, usually indicative of lesser or *nonfocal* or *derived* semantic status. *Real* in this same example is also a lexical marker, but I am disinclined to use it in reference to my father—the Real McCoy, so to say, the Genuine Article. When I mention my father it is obvious to everyone, I think, that I am *not* talking about (say) a Catholic priest, or somebody's *godfather,*

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or George Washington, the Father of My Country. The key point is simplicity itself: *When two people become kin, by either procreative or performative means, they* ipso facto *become members of reciprocal kin classes, and these classes have a semantic structure.* By failing to attend to this structure, performative kinship scholars fail as well to achieve the grandest of their grand claims—seriously to get at "the natives' point of view."

Before I present some examples of this failure, I need to make a caveat. I believe that *my father* figured in my procreation, but I prefer not to dwell on this belief, for I find it somewhat unseemly—all the more so because it involves also the woman I called *my mother.* Which is to say that some facts in my possession I am loathe to talk about: it is *as if* they don't exist. I return soon to this *subjunctive* character of some ethnographic data. Now I would note that what I prefer to recall about *my father* is the affection and advice he gave me as a boy, the model of masculinity he provided for me, and, less fondly, the punishment he meted out when I misbehaved. I suspect that an individual adopted in early childhood has similar memories about his/her *adoptive father*—so much so that he/she is inclined to drop the modifier *adoptive* when speaking of and especially *to* him. But he/she is more likely to use it when talking to a friend, or to an ethnographer, to distinguish such a man from his/her *real father.* In one sense this is a special case of *not* calling attention to nonfocal status in ongoing social life: a panhandler who addresses you as "brother" or "sister" is highly unlikely to prefix such a form of address with words like "metaphorical" or "phony," for this would lessen his/her moral claim on your resources. But adoption, especially in early childhood, might seem to pose a genuine challenge to someone, like myself, who argues for the focal status of close procreative kin, for it draws on the human tendency to *attach* to others profoundly when young, regardless of genealogical considerations.[5] So let me turn to some well-known ethnographic cases in which adoption, among other factors, creates kinship.

Malays

Morgan (1877:402) referred to the Malay system of kin classification as "the most archaic yet discovered" —this despite the fact that he had data that countered his communal interpretation of the system, which he ignored. Thus for example he tells us in *Systems* that the 'uncle' term is *not* the 'father' term *simpliciter,* which such an interpretation would require, but rather the 'father' term to which the lexical marker *sudara* is attached (Morgan 1871:451). More than a century later Wilder (1982:93) translated this marker as "sibling" "[i]n the narrow sense," with the wider significance of "relative, kin." Other relatively recent treatments of Malay kin classification, most notably Banks (1974), make it plain that the system makes much the same distinctions that English does and take Morgan to task for not seeing this. Personally, I am prepared to forgive Morgan these errors: after all, mistakes aside, his monumental treatise *did* pioneer an entire discipline, and he had not the benefit of more than a century of inquiry into kinship semantics. The same, however, cannot be said of Janet Carsten, whose claim that, in the Malay village in which her fieldwork was carried out, there is "undivided kinship" (Carsten 1995a:115) — read "communal kinship" —, and this has given her first place among David Schneider's admirers. My own view of her scholarship is very considerably less laudatory, but since I

have elsewhere (Shapiro 2011b) made a sustained case against it,[6] I shall confine myself here mostly to a critique of what she had to say about adoption in her field locale.

What I find most striking about Carsten's considerable corpus is her almost complete neglect of Malay kin classification; indeed, there is *nothing* in this corpus even *remotely* resembling a systematic analysis of the subject. Moreover, what little information she provides she often contradicts. Thus she tells us that "foster kin … are undifferentiated from conception kin" (Carsten 1991:433), but later in the very same article we learn that an adopted child is referred to as a 'raised child' or a 'lifted child'—i.e. by a lexically marked form of the 'child' term (Carsten 1991:440), apparently comparable to English *foster child* and *adopted child* (Modell 1994:4-5).[7] We learn, too, that the marker is often omitted, presumably because it implies a lesser degree of emotional commitment (Carsten 1991:440). But Carsten apparently takes this tactical elision to mean that in some sense no real distinction is made, yet this is very far indeed from the case.

In the same vein, McKinley (1983:384) notes that adoptive siblings are said to be 'siblings by transfer,' in contrast to biological siblings, who are 'siblings of the womb.' Wilder (1982:54-55) reports as much, adding that, from the parental perspective, only the latter are said to be one's 'true' children, and that adoptive relationships may be marked by a suffix meaning 'synthetic.' The implications, of course, are that only biological relationships are construed as 'real,' or 'true,' and that they provide a *model* for those created by adoption. Hence Wilder (ibid.) proffers the additional glosses 'surrogate' and 'imitation' for this suffix. Related to this is Banks' report that an adoptive father can be said to be only *'like a real father'* but not the Real McCoy (Banks 1983:136; emphasis added). Similarly, Djamour (1959:23), writing of Malays in Singapore, tells us that adoptive relationships are sometimes designated by a consanguineal term *followed by* a free morphemic marker (see also Wilder 1982:96). Banks (1983:143) notes that a class of terms designated by a label which is obviously cognate to one of the 'adoption' markers is "said to originate in the consanguineal domain." Quite contrary to Carsten, a procreative model is so pervasive in Malay thought that even "children nursed by the same woman are known as … 'milk siblings'" (McKinley 1983:355; see also Peletz 1988:56)—i.e., they are not, in local parlance, 'real' siblings.

Carsten (1991:432) tells us that "[t]he rights of parents to their own children have priority over any other claim," and that it is only after a couple has "three or four children" that the claims of potential adopters are considered—and, even then, only if they are close kin. Even so, parents say they are embarrassed to give a child away" (Carsten 1991:432)—so much so that even residence with their own parents, the child's grandparents, is said to be "not fixed" (Carsten 1997:248), as if the only appropriate abode for small children is that of their biological parents. Kerlogue (2007:58) echoes this, repeating what is apparently a rhetorical question posed by her informants, "What Malay would give up their [sic] child?"

But this is not all. Banks (1983:64) notes that in cases of adoption "in which the child knows the identity of its biological parents, the child will always have an interest in their mutual relationship that transcends possible inheritance of property from them, for their behavior and reputation reflect upon the child's own." The latter will visit them oc-

casionally and exhibit any gifts from them proudly. By contrast, children born out of wedlock, subject to local stigma, may be assigned to adoptive parents. In such cases they "should not be told who their biological parents are … because they will entertain self-doubts after being told. They may think that they are doomed to repeat the sin … of their biological parents. They may also try to vindicate their biological parents by searching for them" (Banks 1983:64). And elsewhere Banks (1972:1259) tells us that:

> [c]hildren who suddenly find that they have been raised by other than their biological parents are said to be likely to become distant and search for them, leaving their social kinsmen behind. Fathers and mothers are expected to want to 'look after their seed,' and the phrase implies also that they will want to care for and raise their natural offspring.

There is a remarkable similarity here to what we know about the yearnings of adopted children closer to home (Lifton 1979:73-100; Modell 1994:143-68).

This notion of repeating the sins of parents suggests a sense of mystical linkage between parents and children. The suggestion is supported by the magical qualities associated with those anatomical parts that link mother and child. McKinley (1983:371) enumerates the relevant points:

> First, divination is carried out with the umbilical cord of the firstborn child to determine how many will eventually complete the group initiated by this child. Second, the placenta is ritually buried and is personified as the mystical elder sibling of the baby. In spirit form this …'older sister placenta' or 'older brother placenta' is believed to interact with its human younger sibling. It is also though to return to be able to return to the uterus where it can supervise the development of successive younger siblings. Third, there is the custom of saving the dried navel scabs of babies … [T]his is done to protect the … health of the child ….

All of these materials—the umbilicus, the placenta, and the navel scabs—are liminal with respect to the mother/child dyad and therefore, *pace* Douglas (1966), can be expected to endowed with ritual value that links the two parties (see also Peletz 1988:50-51). Also pertinent here is Banks' report of "ritual exorcisms of evil bodily 'humors' … which affected all … blood kin" (1972:1264), as well as his remark that "Malays … speak frequently about the influence of 'bad seed'" (p. 1258).

This last, apparently, comes from both parents, though Carsten says little about the male contribution and, in general, downplays the role of men in Malay life (Shapiro 2011:142). Laderman (1996:71), however, is more forthcoming. Consider this remarkable statement:

> [B]efore conception takes place in the mother's womb, the father has been pregnant for forty days. Indeed, people remember *ex post facto* male food cravings preceding the wife's pregnancy. The baby begins life not as a creation within the mother's belly, but in a more elevated sphere: his father's brain. (See also Laderman 1983:75)[8]

Less spectacular is Banks' report (1972:1258) that "there is a moral injunction that men should care for and love their children … A man has special responsibilities for his own children that he does not have for the children of others."

All of this, it would seem, goes against Carsten's own summary of the situation, for she says that Malay adoption is not to be regarded as "an exemplar of the primacy of [procreative] kinship, as suggested by the classic anthropological accounts. Adoptive kin-

ship … does not simply serve as an arena in which 'fictive' kinship can be distinguished from a backdrop of 'real'—that is, [procreatively] based ties and hence reinforce the latter's primacy" (Carsten 2004:140-41). My own conclusion here is that, quite to the contrary, adoptive kinship among Malays is indeed founded upon a "backdrop" of procreative kinship, from whose semantic and normative primacy it derives its significance.[9]

All this being so, I see absolutely no reason to employ Carsten's term "relatedness," which unfortunately has gained currency among Schneiderians. What we are dealing with here as elsewhere is *kinship,* relatively pure and relatively simple.

Hawaii

Hawaiian kinship also holds an important place in Morgan's *Systems,* where he argues that the terminology is "more simple … than any other form which obtains in the several families of mankind. Its simplicity is caused by the adoption of the primary relationships as the basis of the system, and by bringing collateral [kin] within one or the other of these relationships" (Morgan 1871:453). He also noted the custom of *pinalúa,* whereby, "two or more brothers, with their wives, or two or more sisters, with their husbands, were inclined to possess each other in common " (ibid.), thus creating "*communal families,* with communism in living … " (ibid:457; emphasis in original). Later, he would coin the expression "the punaluan family" to refer to this "community of husbands and wives" as a general "stage" in his scheme of progress (Morgan 1877:424 *et seq.*).

Future scholarship would prove Morgan wrong on Hawaiian kinship and marriage. Thus Handy and Pukui (1972) and Kenn (1939) have called attention to native expressions that separate close procreative kin from others of their respective kin classes, as well as idioms of substance-sharing and permanence among these kin and native emphasis on genealogies (for details see Shapiro 2015a:6-7). This last is especially strong among the nobility (Luomala 1987:5, 18), who seem to have regarded it as an antithesis to—and hence a model for—human sacrifice (Valeri 1985:113-19), no longer practiced The same antithesis, of course, can be found in the Judaeo-Christian tradition and elsewhere (Jay 1992).

As for *pinalúa,* the term refers to the relationship between present and former paramours of *individual* men and women, to co-wives in polygynous unions (Luomala 1987:26, 36), and to "an honorary spouse"—a sort of formal friend of the opposite sex with whom one does *not* engage in coitus (Luomala 1987:35). It may also apply to genuinely plural unions with some degree of shared childcare (but see Forster 1960:96 *et seq.*). However, there is no evidence that it ever constituted more than a minority of Hawaiian domestic arrangements (Forster 1960; Handy and Pukui 1972:56 *et seq.*).

In view of these considerations, it is remarkable that a relatively recent article on Hawaiian adoption by John Terrell and Judith Modell – now Judith Schachter – (Terrell and Modell 1994)—resurrects the specter of Morgan and, derived, the Marxist indictment of the nuclear family.[10] Its "critique" of Western notions of adoption is especially pointed:

> [M]any people in our society think of adoption as a second-best way of becoming a family … The… ties binding an adoptive family are looked on as weaker than "natural" ties of blood. And adoption is seen as difficult and risky. (Terrell and Modell 1994:155)

The quotes around "natural" are meant to imply that "ties of blood" are important only to Westerners (see note 9). In fact they are important to Hawaiians as well. The vast majority of Hawaiian adopters are close kin of the natal parents (Forster 1960:97; Howard *et al.* 1970:24, 32; Kenn 1939:47; Luomala 1987:16; Modell 1995:206, 208, 213). Even so, a child nurtured by someone other than his/her natal parents is *not* said to be, in native parlance, the adopter's 'true' child—and expression reserved for one's actual offspring —, and an adoptive parent is said to be only acting 'like a parent,' i.e. he/she is *likened to* a parent but is not regarded as the Real McCoy (Handy and Pukui 1972:65, 68; Luomala 1987:18, 25) – much as I might *liken* George Washington to *my father.* Correspondingly, lexical markers of nonfocality also apply to him/her, as well as to adoptive siblings (Handy and Pukui 1972:71; Howard *et al.* 1970:24, 43; Kenn (1939:46). Finally, Hawaiian adoption in no wise entails a forfeiting of the ties between children and their actual parents, who retain the right to retrieve the child (Handy and Pukui 1972:72; Howard *et al.* 1970:26, 32 *et seq.,* 38, 45; Kenn 1939:47; Luomala 1987:16, 28; Modell 1995:213).

But this is not all. Handy and Pukui (1972:71) tell us that an adopted child is describable by an expression they translate as 'reared to serve the true children of the family.' This not only underscores the nonfocal nature of their kin classification—they are not 'true' children of the family —, but, as well, it suggests that they have a lower behavioral status than 'true children.' When a more loving attitude is directed towards the adopted child, the adopting parent is said to be a 'parent making child his own,' another indication of nonfocal status (Handy and Pukui 1972:71). In most instances of this sort the child remains with his/her natal parents (ibid.). Kenn (1939:47) reports that if an adopted child is not a "blood relative," he/she is singled out by a special term suggesting liminal incorporation into the household. Hawaiian folklore, according to Luomala (1987), is replete with tales of adopted children, especially boys, seeking out their actual fathers. In one of these, the actual mother remarries and attempts to persuade her son that her present husband is his father, but the boy is unconvinced, whereupon the mother tells him "You have no father" (ibid:10)—as if the 'father' term *simpliciter* was only loosely applicable to a stepfather. This conclusion is supported by what we now know about the semantics of Hawaiian kin classification, wherein the position of step-parents is lexically marked (Handy and Pukui 1972:68 *et seq.;* Luomala 1987:18). Moreover, only a man's actual children, Luomala (1987:10) adds, may sit on his lap—this apparently a ritual statement of paternal nurture.[11]

It is well worth pointing out here that among the scholars mentioned in this section, Kenn, Luomala, and Pukui are native Hawaiians, who can be presumed to be especially familiar with the Hawaiian language, including its kinship semantics and their moral/tactical employment. In other cases as well, native scholars have shown, usually unwittingly, the very drastic limitations of Schneiderian kinship studies (Shapiro 2015a). Such studies, in their moralizing mode, claim to represent, as one says these days, hereto-

fore silenced "voices." It would considerably closer to the truth to say that Third and Fourth World peoples have been *mis*represented by the Schneiderians, cast, so to say, as "extras" in collectivist melodramas in which performative scholars themselves play the starring roles.[12]

Inuit

In his recent attempt at a general statement on human kinship, Sahlins (2013:9) rates the Inuit populations as "the world champions of postnatal kinship," and it is plain that these peoples have figured very significantly in the development of the performative position (e.g. Bodenhorn 2000; Fienup-Riordan 2001; Nuttall 1992).[13] Since the ethnographic literature pertinent here is enormous, I shall focus on a single especially well-studied case, i.e. the Belcher Islanders, adjacent to huge Baffin Island, northeastern Canada, whose sociality has been extensively studied by Lee Guemple. I begin with what appears to be his most recent statement, which was published—and I think this is important—four years after the appearance of Schneider's *Critique* (Guemple 1988). Here he maintains that in the Belcher Islands:

> individuals are free of the kinds of rigidity which kinship as a network of genealogical connections implies. … Indeed, "kinship" relationships, do not exist … This detachment from family ties … permit[s] a relatively easy flow of personnel between households … through adoption … [C]hildren are not fundamentally viewed as belonging to a particular family …. (Guemple 1988:149)

Now this remarkable argument is nothing if not Schneiderian. It is also entirely inconsistent with what Guemple has written earlier about the Belcher Islanders. Thus he tells us that, although kin relationships in the Belcher Islands can indeed be established performatively, when this is done genealogical connections are fabricated retrospectively. His words:

> [Belcher Islanders] state all social relatedness in the idiom of kinship, but very often trace their kinship connections *backwards*. That is, having established a useful working relationship couched in the language of kinship, they then attempt to revamp, and in some cases, construct putative genealogical connections in order to legitimize the linkage … [I]t is often impossible to tell whether the kinship connection is genealogical in origin, and so to decide which relationship is antecedent and which consequent. (Guemple 1972b:61; emphasis in original)

Which is to say, if Belcher Islanders are indeed devoid of "kinship as a network of genealogical ties," as Guemple's more recent statement implies, one wonders why they bother to tamper with genealogies when idiomizing performative relationships. In the same vein, since "every Island dwelling Eskimo ought to be related as a kinsman of some magnitude," "the reckoner [may] invoke a rule … which equates spouses as siblings" and applies the same term to Alter as his/her spouse does (Guemple 1972:72; see also Guemple 1966:135-36, 163). Another locally posited extension rule involves personal names:

> Islanders see all holders of a name as occupying the same "position" in the kinship network … It is possible … to address and refer to the namesake of a relative by the term [used] for that relative. The relative of a namesake may also be denoted by same kinship

term as that used for the namesake. (Guemple 1972b:63; see also Guemple 1966:156-57)[14]

It is well worth noting here that an individual's name is not normally the same as that of either parent (Guemple 1965:324). Guemple (1994:110-14) tells us that parents are construed to generate a child's *body,* and that, in Belcher Island theory, this is something apart from its *soul* (see also Searles 2008:242). Although he nowhere makes this plain, what seems to be involved is a notion similar to Christian god parenthood: those who are responsible for an individual's *carnal* existence cannot also be held to generate his/her soul (Shapiro 1988).[15]

Adoption occurs frequently: Guemple (1972b:67) tells us that about 25 per cent of all Belcher Island children have been adopted. But the most frequent adopters (73 per cent) are "persons who are connected to the original parents by ties of kinship" (Guemple 1972b:68). This report is ambiguous, since, as we have seen, "ties of kinship" among these people can be established performatively. But as Guemple also notes, three-quarters of *these* adoptions involve "persons who were related to [natal] parents as primary or secondary consanguineal relatives" (Guemple 1972b:68; see also Guemple 1966:106, 1977:200, 1979:37-39). Moreover, even with less closely related people, "it is doubtful that any parent … would be willing to give [a child] to a total stranger with whom no meaningful social connection had been established. Islanders deny this possibility themselves" (1972b:69).

Natal parents who are parties to an adoption remain in contact with the child. Here is Guemple on the matter

> The relationships between [natal] parents and children are generally maintained as nearly as possible in [their previous] fashion. Parents visit the child often and will spend a great deal of time in the household of the adopter to insure that everything necessary has been done to see to the child's welfare and happiness. They generally bring presents to the child on these occasions … The child as it matures retains a residual right in the parents for aid should the need arise; and at maturity it may not marry its own natal siblings …. (1972b:69; see also Guemple 1977: 200)

An adopted child is addressed and referred to by the adopting parents, at least initially, by the 'son' or 'daughter' term with a lexical marker which Guemple (1977:200) translates as 'potential' and 'attached,' suggesting that it is something less than the Real McCoy. This marker is reciprocal, and it applies as well to siblings by adoption (Guemple 1966:107, 113, 118, 135; see also Guemple 1979:5-7, 1986:10).

Finally, an orphaned child can be referred to by an expression which Guemple (1979:47) translates as 'one who has no relatives.' Of course this is not literally the case: the child may have siblings and will almost certainly have other genealogical or performative kin. What the expression suggests is that Belcher Islanders construe the parent/child tie as the *quintessential* kinship tie, and in this they are hardly alone. No performative rendition can account for this fact.

Indeed, in the very same more recent article with which I began this section, Guemple (1988:136) notes a conceptual separation in Belcher Island thought between the nuclear family and the wider community. His words once more:

A pregnant woman observes a taboo which restricts her diet and limits her activity in prescribed ways … This is said to be done in order that the child may be born well formed. The natal parents and others in the household also talk to the *in utero* child …, in order to establish rapport with it. These 'conversations' are said to make it feel welcome … so that it will want to live and also to 'love' … members of the household. These activities are carried out discretely within the household. The pregnancy is never discussed outside the household, and no comments will be made about it by other community members, even if they know that the woman is pregnant. After parturition no visitors will come specifically to visit the mother or the child until it has been named; and its arrival is not the subject of comment throughout the community during that time. (Guemple 1988:136)

Note once again the phenomenon of *subjunctivity:* people outside the nuclear family may *know* about the pregnancy, but they do *not* talk about it, much as I am disinclined to talk about—indeed, to *think* about—the sexual activity of my parents.

All this being so, I find it difficult to account for Guemple's apparent move to a stricter Schneiderian position. Unlike the other scholars critiqued here, his writings show a decided concern with an ethno-linguistic analysis of native kinship notions, most of which, alas, are beyond the scope of the present essay. Suffice it to say, in this connection, that they all point to the focal status of close procreative kin (see Guemple 1966:129-30, 1979:7). I can only guess that he has, like so many less gifted people in this and other areas of life, fallen victim to trendiness.[16]

Concluding Remarks

In a sense my analysis is anything but new. It draws on a large number of articles that appeared long before Schneider wrote (e.g., Freire-Marreco 1914; Lowie 1912; Speck and Schaeffer 1942: Spoehr 1942; Walker 1914). All had in common serious attention to the semantic structure of kinship terminologies, something virtually entirely lacking in David Schneider's most recent followers. I would even argue, *contra* Schneider, that this earlier scholarship did *not* take for granted the procreative basis of kinship in the communities they studied because it fit their preconceived notions *but because they regularly discovered it,* primarily by careful linguistic analysis of the local system of kin classification. Here is a summary of the matter, now aged nearly eight decades:

> …[I]it is important to remember, as bearing upon the status of the family, that in many primitive tribes the terms used for the immediate members of the family are either distinguished from same terms in their extended sense by the addition of some particle, or terms corresponding to 'own' are used … Family is family, whatever the system of relationship …. (Goldenweiser 1937: 301)

By contrast, it is not entirely facetious to say that, especially for more recent Schneiderians, semantic analysis has to do with somebody named Samantha seeing her analyst. The decline of interest in kinship terminologies set in well before Schneider's *Critique*. But it has allowed his admirers to make utterly unsupportable claims about getting at "the natives' point of view," and to lambast "pre-Schneiderian" kinship studies for

imposing exogenous perspectives. The shoe, really, is on the other foot. Moreover, and related, Schneider's admirers have evidenced a remarkable inability to see the largely *subjunctive* character of ethnographic data. For them, them the fact that Malays engage in rhetorical flourishes suggestive of "undivided kinship" *really* means that the village is in fact a commune; the high incidence of adoption in Hawaii and among the Inuit *really* means that nuclear family ties are unimportant; and, perhaps most importantly, that people apparently everywhere ignore lexical markers of nonfocality in kin classification in ongoing social life *really* means that such markers are absent from their languages. It is, it seems to me, apt in this connection, to point out that what Morgan and many others have called *"classificatory" kinship is itself a subjunctive phenomenon:* a Malay uncle is terminologically *like* a Malay father—an "as-if" father, just as his/her godfather is an "as-if" father to a Roman Catholic or Orthodox Christian.[17]

The idea that the primacy of procreative kinship is a Western perversion of the "essentially" communal nature of human kinship dies hard among people who seem unable to wean themselves from the ancient fantasies of Marx and Engels, who conflate women's freedom with the hatred of men and heterosexual pair-bonding in "radical" feminism (Patai 1998), and who are involved in, or at least know about, what are now called "alternate family forms." But it really needs to be abandoned. Unless or until this happens, kinship studies will continue the process of joining Afrocentrism, Goddess Theory, and other quackeries that have been pushed onto the academy since the late 1960s.

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[1] Throughout this essay I draw freely on my contribution to a Festschrift for Hal Scheffler, currently being considered for publication (Shapiro n.d.). I am indebted to Kris Lehman, Tom Parides, and Dwight Read for comments and encouragement on earlier versions of the present effort, first publicly presented, in somewhat different form, at the Meetings of the American Anthropological Association in Denver in 2015.

[2] Fison and Howitt were inspired by Morgan. There was extensive correspondence between Morgan and Fison (Gardner 2008; Stern 1930).

[3] This is best exemplified by the place given to kinship terminologies in extant introductory texts on kinship. Fox's well-known introduction, reproduced several times since 1967 without any serious modification, employs the superficial typology generally associated with Murdock (1947, 1949) and fails utterly to grapple with the question of focality (Fox 1967). The same is true of the latest edition of Stone's text (Stone 2010), in which the topic is relegated to an Appendix. Two of the three earlier editions do not deal with it at all. Strathern and Stewart (2011) also have it in an Appendix, though they *do* address the focality question with reference to the Melpa of Highland New Guinea, apparently drawing on Strathern (1980). Parkin's text (Parkin 1997) devotes a full chapter to kinship terminologies and gives some attention to focality, but it suffers from defects which I have detailed elsewhere (Shapiro 1995). Holy's introduction (Holy 1996) avoids such terminologies altogether, though it states, quite correctly, that performative kinship criteria "are parasitic upon" procreative ones (Holy 1996:167). Godelier's alleged summary (2011) of what we now know about human kinship is not only *not* comprehensive but, far

worse, is entrapped in established typologies which it parades as discoveries (Shapiro 2015b), a fault it shares with the other volumes noted here. Sahlins' recent effort (Sahlins 2013) mistakes focality for a Western concoction, is in fact more of an act of genuflection to the performative position, and is riddled with analytical and empirical errors (Shapiro 2013).

[4] I have dealt at greater length elsewhere with the defects in Schneider's analysis (Shapiro n.d.), and I intend a more comprehensive critique in a future publication.

[5] One can assert without any real evidence, as Scheper-Hughes (1992:410) and others have done, that mother/child attachment is a fiction created by "male maternal bonding theorists," presumably part of a Vast Right-Wing Conspiracy whose goal is to keep women in the nursery (and the bedroom) or, more accurately, to restore them to these places. The evidence against such arguments is overwhelming, but this is hardly the place to present it. Father/child attachment has been widely documented ethnographically (e.g., Hewlett 1992; Mackey 1985; Munroe and Munroe 1992).

[6] Since my critique of Carsten appeared I have delved a bit deeper into the literature on Malay sociality. Kerlogue (2007) supports Carsten's misanalysis and makes much the same errors of omission and commission, including lack of systematic treatment of Malay kin classification. Grijns (1980), by contrast, goes into considerable detail on kin terms among Malays living in the area around Jakarta in Indonesia, and he reaches much the same conclusions as I do. I employ in the text of the present essay materials from Carol Laderman that I did not consider in my initial analysis.

[7] I am not concerned here with the distinction made by some scholars (e.g., Berman 2014; Brady 1976; Goody 1969) between *adoption* and *fosterage.* Although the distinction is lexically made in many cases, it seems to me that there is sufficient fluidity in ongoing social life not to insist on it. See e.g. Carroll (1970) on the semantic complexity and deniability of child transfer on one Polynesian island.

[8] Such a location of the ontogenically or ontologically primary source of being in the head of the father and not the loins of the mother has a large number of parallels elsewhere. Thus as a boy growing up in a working-class section of Brooklyn I was sometimes told by an older man "I knew you when you were just a gleam in your father's eye." A Piaroa man in the Venezuelan rainforests may refer to his child as 'my thought' (Overing 1985:167). In Aboriginal Australia the father is supposed to 'find' the spirit of his fetal child in a dream *subsequent to* (not, as was previously thought, *prior to*) conception (Shapiro 2014:29-30). *Et cetera.* The conflation of ontogenic (or historical) and ontological primacy is of course widespread in human thought (Conkey 1991; Eliade 1959; Sproul 1979:11-29).

[9] Note here Carsten's enclosure of the word "real" and "fictive" in quotes, as if the distinction were only in the heads of some anthropologists. This is a regular rhetorical tactic in the performative literature, where modifiers like "secondary," "pseudo-," and even "spiritual" are held to be both ethnocentric and derisive. Thus e.g. Weston (1995:99)

holds that gay families are "just as real" as their heterosexual counterparts—as if anyone would question this. What is at stake, of course, is not their reality but their *focality,* and it is abundantly clear from her data that her informants employed heterosexual models in developing their ideas about gay families (Shapiro 2010).

[10] Terrell and Modell are not alone in the claim that Hawaiian adoption is a counter to the importance of close procreative kinship. See also Sahlins (1976:48 *et seq.*) and McKinnon (2005:112 *et seq.*).

[11] For other examples of the importance of procreative kinship in Hawaii, see Shapiro (2015a:6-7).

[12] See in this connection a more recent effort by Modell – now Judith Schachter (2008)—which alleges that emphasis on the nuclear family as the basis of kinship throughout Oceania is part of the imperialist/colonialist enterprise. In the course of this indictment she unwittingly affirms the central thesis of this essay: "For theorists of kinship, if adoption entered the picture, it was an exception to the rule [i.e. to the emphasis on procreative kinship]: the creation of social parenthood affirmed the importance of genealogical connections by replicating the ties of birth" (Schachter 2008:18). Schachter's essay contains a number of analytical and empirical errors, as well as many rhetorical overstatements, but this is not the place for an extended rebuttal. The same applies to Bowie (2004) and Weismantel (1995), the latter cited more often in the performative literature than anyone save Carsten and, of course, Schneider.

[13] Unlike the Malays and the Hawaiians, Inuit peoples do not figure importantly in Morgan's scheme. But consider the following remarks by Guemple (1986:18):

> In the folklore of Euro-North American society Inuit occupy a special place because they represent for Western man an "exemplary primitive" … [O]ne contributing factor in their reputation as arch-primitives was their assumed "primitive" attitude toward sexuality. The popular imagination was captivated with the idea that Inuit were not content … to have sexual relations, but accepted it as appropriate to have sexual relations outside of marriage and even sanctioned group sex in institutions such as spouse-exchange … [T]he popular imagination has continued to cling to the idea that Inuit … share sexual favors communally ….

That Inuit spouse-exchange in fact falls considerably short of a "community of husbands and wives" has been shown by several scholars (e.g., Burch 1975:106-11; Guemple 1972b:59-62; Hennigh 1970). But the idea of such a "community" dies hard, even among anthropologists: consider the entirely unfounded argument by Beckerman and Valentine (2002) that it exists in Amazonia (Shapiro 2009).

[14] It bears emphasis that these are *native* extension rules. The extension rules adduced by Scheffler (e.g., 1972) have often been considered to be of his own manufacture, though he has taken some pains, as in the source cited, to address the issue. In any case, as Read (n.d.) has shown, native extension rules are quite common, though mediated by kin-term

relationships rather than genealogy *simpliciter.* There is thus no warrant whatsoever for a cavalier dismissal of them as exogenous creations.

[15] Inuit naming has become a major inspiration for performative scholars (e.g., Fienup-Riordan 2001; Guemple 1994; Nuttall 1994), who have, for reasons noted in the text of this essay, regularly misinterpreted its significance. The body:spirit::parents:name-provider distinction I advocate here is in fact too simple, but it will do for present purposes. I hope to provide a fuller treatment elsewhere.

[16] It pains me to say this, because on the whole I have great respect for Guemple's scholarship, as well as a reasonably friendly personal relationship with him. I am especially indebted to him for supplying me, absent specific request on my part, with copies of a large number of his writings, some of which are as yet unpublished. One of these (Guemple 1972a) is an early exemplification of the performativist position, so it may well be that my conclusion in the text that he assumed it only recently is mistaken.

[17] This point really needs emphasis. I intend to pursue it in a future publication.

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