Spiritual Kinship and Globalization

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This special issue of *Religious Studies and Theology* centers on spiritual kinship and globalization. Such a topic may appear unlikely for such a journal. What is the meaning of "spiritual kinship", and how does it compare to ordinary kinship? What does spiritual kinship have to do with "globalization"? And why is the conjunction of these terms important for religious studies and theology?

Ordinary conceptions of kinship

To begin with "ordinary" kinship: For more than a century, this concept has been pursued most assiduously, and most theoretically, by social and cultural anthropologists, under two main headings: consanguine relations, by blood (descent theory), and affine relations, by marriage (alliance theory). Beginning as comparative cultural analysis by 19th century pioneers (such as Morgan 1871), kinship theory became a constant for anthropological analysis across functionalist, structuralist, symbolic, cognitive, Marxist, and other paradigms (Radcliffe-Brown 1941; Evans-Pritchard 1951; Lévi-Strauss 1969; Pitt-Rivers 1973).

Meanwhile (whether as cause or result of its ubiquity) kinship theory developed a sophisticated analytic formalism replete with standardized neologistic terminology, forbiddingly complex diagrams, and algebraic manipulations–the "hard science" of social anthropology, holding promise for rigorous, empirical, comparative social study, and the discernment of nomothetic propositions (e.g. Murdock 1949). By 1967 Fox could rightly declare that "kinship is to anthropology what logic is to philosophy" (Fox 1967:10), i.e. rigorous, central, essential.

Naively, kinship seems to entail the study of biological relationships. But early on anthropologists realized that what they were studying was not biological *per se*, but rather a social construction whose relation (if any) to biology could not be ascertained *a priori*. A distinction was drawn, for instance, between pater/mater (social parents) and genitor/genetrix (biological parents); later, the latter pair was also recognized as a social construction (of biological parentage), and the pair of pairs theoretically augmented with a third (the actual genetic parents) (Barnes 1961:297).[1] Though biology might be viewed locally as defining "natural" (pre-social) relations, the task of the socio-cultural anthropologist is to show how the "natural" is always a social construction; for human

beings, there is no pre-social world. But if kinship is not defined by biology, then what is their general relation?

One possible answer was to emphasize that kinship is completely independent of biology. Rodney Needham in particular argued that "Biology is one matter and descent is quite another, of a different order." (Needham 1960:97) Similarly, Claude Levi-Strauss stated "A kinship system does not exist in the objective ties of descent or consanguinity between individuals: It exists only in human consciousness..." (Lévi-Strauss 1963:50) But a total divorce between kinship and biology threatened to render kinship irrelevant. If kinship relations have nothing to do with biology, then how could anthropologists differentiate kinship relations from any other sort of durable social relation? (Holý 1996:168)

Ernest Gellner had already argued that they could not. Adopting a meta-anthropological perspective, he analyzed kinship as an anthropological folk-concept. Hypothetically, he observed an anthropologist observing a social relation locally termed *blip*, then asked: "Under what conditions will this anthropologist classify *blip* as a kinship relation?" Gellner answered that the anthropologist classifies *blip* under the kinship rubric precisely when he or she believes that *blip* overlaps (at least partially) with one or more physical kinship relations, as the anthropologist understands them, concluding "this is not primarily a discovery about societies, but rather about the anthropologist's use of terms" (Gellner 1960:188). By means of this *Gedanken-experiment*, he exposed the category of kinship as anthropological ethnoscience.

This charge could possibly be avoided, or at least deflected, by defining kinship in terms of *local* ideas about biological relations–"emic" understandings of the process and relational significance of procreation, pregnancy, parturition, nurturing, etc. Collectively, such ideas could be said to constitute one component of a biological ideology. Kinship relations are those social relations that the culture bearer views as biologically grounded (according to that ideology), even if such a view reflects a misconception of human biology as understood by Western science. Here, definition both of kinship relations and of biology are referred to the local, rather than to the anthropological, frame of reference.

Agreeing that "robbed of its grounding in biology, kinship is nothing" (Schneider 1984:112), David Schneider went further in his critique, doubting the universal importance and distinctiveness of the very concept of "biological relation", arguing that its centrality in anthropology as a "metacultural" category simply reflects its centrality in the European society which spawned anthropological theory. This claim nearly precludes

kinship studies except as an ethnocentric endeavor: "the very notion of kinship, like that of economics, religion, or politics, is essentially undefined and vacuous: it is an analytical construct which seems to have little justification even as an analytical construct." (Schneider 1984:184-185) Following Schneider's devastating critique the following decade saw a sharp decline in the subdiscipline of kinship studies.

That critique coincided with a more general self-critique in cultural anthropology, part of the crisis of representation which reoriented the discipline away from "bird's eye" comparative science in search of law, to become a more situated hermeneutics in search of meaning (Geertz 1973:5), a "jeweler's eye" for social criticism (Marcus and Fischer 1986; Marcus 1999), featuring a reflexive understanding of "writing culture" (Clifford and Marcus 1986). With this self-critique, anthropology's former objective objects of study–idealized, homeostatic, self-contained, well-bounded "cultures"–gradually yielded to a messier, borderless, conflictual world, criss-crossed by global currents, subjective, and constantly in flux.

Schneider's critique had exposed the dangers of any approach to kinship which, in attempting to treat kinship as a quasi-autonomous cross-culturally comparable system, underestimated the importance of its situatedness, its incomparable character as embedded in local discourse and practice. But even after "kinship" as an autonomous analytical category fell into disrepute, kinship studies never really died out. Even if the significance of "biological relation" cannot be postulated as a universal, it is too widespread–and too deeply felt–to be ignored. The power of social relationships often derives from their affective character. Processes of human biology charge associated relationships with an affect unmatched in most other kinds of social relationship.

Thus, the study of kinship as culturally contextualized, socially situated and used–ethnographies of marriage, family, child-rearing, adoption, sexuality–continued, though often scattered under other rubrics, and particularly influenced by feminist and political economy approaches (Lamphere 2001:21). In the 1990s explicit interest in kinship along these new lines resurged, manifested in a variety of theoretical and ethnographic articles (Shimizu 1991; Zeitlyn 1993; Weismantel 1995; Parkes 2001) as well as reviews, monographs, and themed-issues (Peletz 1995; Holý 1996; Stone 2000; Homme 2000; Stone 2001).

In accord with the hermeneutic, critical, global, and reflexive turns in anthropology, recent kinship studies tend to situate kinship in its social and cultural context, attending to history, global political and economic forces, and individual practice, embracing process and conflict, and

producing idiographic rather than nomothetic claims. There has been a sharp turn away from presupposing the cross-cultural validity of formal analysis, and an increased openness and sensitivity towards exploring kinship's local cognate concepts, whose particular logic needs to be worked out historically and ethnographically, through a broad spectrum of disciplinary perspectives. This openness and sensitivity, in turn, makes it impossible to refuse consideration of social structures metaphorically linked to those concepts, such as so-called "pseudo-kinship", including the spiritual kind.

Metaphorical conceptions of kinship

Pseudo-kinship

Pseudo-kinship is an anthropological term designating social relations locally named using kinship terms, but also locally recognized to fall outside the literal scope of kinship relations (however these may be locally constructed in relation to local concepts of biological relation). Such kinship is "pseudo" in that the metaphorical quality of the kinship terms used to describe its relations is locally and openly acknowledged.

However, as kinship, conceptions of biological relation, and definitions of metaphor are social constructions, subjectively understood, no precise, objective criteria are ever available to differentiate "real" ("ordinary") and "pseudo" kinship. Even if the boundary between "literal" and "metaphorical" uses of kinship terminology can be sharply drawn by social agents (a condition which cannot be presumed), close relations between ordinary and pseudo-kinship are likely to obtain, not least due to shared terminology. Thus, "ordinary" and "pseudo" kinship cannot be profitably studied in isolation; they should be considered together. But opening the door to pseudo-kinship entails inclusion of potentially far different, more variable, assortments of human relations which, though metaphorically related to biological ones, may be grounded in non-biological ideologies.

The standard typology of pseudo-kinship, due to Pitt-Rivers (Pitt-Rivers 1968), differentiates three subtypes (without denying possible overlaps between them): (1) the figurative use of kin terms, which may also indicate a special status; (2) the attribution (rather than ascription) of ordinary kin status, often called "fictive kinship"; and (3) institutionalized relationships resembling kinship, which are therefore named using kin terms, yet which are recognized as being entirely distinct.

Both (1) and (2) are metaphorical extensions of ordinary kinship, ultimately grounded by reference to biological ideology. In (1) use of kin

terms is merely an expression of attitude, not corresponding to any social institution, and not implying real kin status even as a fiction. Thus in many societies children respectfully address parents' friends as "uncle" or "aunt". Such uses are metaphoric, but nevertheless assimilated to biological relations, hence grounded in biological ideology. Likewise, in (2) kinship terms are metaphors supporting relations lacking independent ideological support; here the kin term is recognized as apt if fictional–the norms governing the way a fictive father treats his fictive son draw upon norms of ordinary fatherhood, because it is only the ideology of ordinary kinship that allows the fictive relation to exist. Again, such uses are grounded in an ideology of biological relation (e.g. in Japan Ishino 1953; Norbeck and Befu 1958).

In (3) the use of kin terms provides a more distant metaphorical characterization of institutionalized social relations supported by non-biological ideologies quasi-independent of biological ones.[2] Here, while the metaphoric use of ordinary kinship terms may be functional or strategic, the existence of the relation does not depend only upon biological ideology. But the use of these metaphors is often more than merely convenient, because such relations (as we shall see) typically exhibit complex interactions (symbiotic, parasitic, dominant, subordinate, competitive) with ordinary kinship ones. In parallel, there is a complex relationship between the ideologies (e.g. religious, and biological) underpinning two kinds of institutionalized social bonds. These relationships are played out in practice, and discursively via shared metaphors of kinship.

Because institutionalized relations of type (3) are not produced by the biological processes which help define ordinary kinship relations, they are frequently marked by institutionalized rituals, into which, unsurprisingly, the metaphors of kinship are also extended (and which are, also unsurprisingly, replete with symbols related to biological processes – death, rebirth, and the like). For this reason, perhaps, Pitt-Rivers names the third class "ritual kinship", though the name is not always apt (a well-defined ritual being inessential to the definition). It is this class which contains our "spiritual kinship".

It is tautological yet apt at this point to underscore the fact that human beings construct social constructions, which therefore appear (to the analyst at least) as more flexible than those structures presented by the physical world. Ordinary kinship is a construction grounded in ideologies of biological relationship, which ideologies are (somewhat) constrained by the biological processes to which they are related. The realm of pseudo-kinship, only metaphorically related to those ideologies, is potentially more

diverse, *a fortiori* for pseudo-kinship grounded upon quasi-independent ideologies. We thus expect great diversity in the subspecies of spiritual kinship.

Spiritual kinship

Spiritual kinship can be defined as that sub-class of type (3) pseudo-kinship that comprises social relations described (or named, or invoked) using the discourse of ordinary kinship terminology, but grounded in a religious (metaphysical) ideology, which is quasi-independent of biological ideology, and therefore supports a quasi-independent set of social institutions.[3] This is not to say that biological ideology and ordinary kinship do not come to bear upon spiritual kinship relations, but that spiritual kinship possesses a degree of independence the fictive kinds lack (which is why they are regarded as "fictive").

The notion of spiritual kinship is here introduced as an analytic term, deployed within the metalanguage of religious studies discourses, and its cross-cultural applicability cannot be presumed. However it may accurately apply to particular social relations in particular societies or religious traditions, including vertical relations metaphorized as parenthood, horizontal relations metaphorized as siblinghood, larger structures metaphorized as families, lineages, genealogies, and so forth. Indeed such applications are widespread.

Thus, for instance, Christian discourse features several varieties of spiritual fatherhood (God the Father; priest as Father; Fathers of the Church; godfather), and spiritual motherhood (Mother Mary, Mother Superior; Mother Church; nun as mother; godmother). Master-disciple relations in Hinduism (*guru-sishya*), Sufism (*shaykh-murid*), and Buddhism (*ācārya-śrāmaṇera*) are all commonly metaphorized as father-child relations, generating extended lineage structures (see articles by Regula Qureshi and Charles Prebish). As saints, Sufi masters continue to maintain spiritual parent relations, though no longer alive in an earthly sense. Likewise, ritually established godparent-godchild relations (transformations of Catholic godparenthood), and *Orisha*-worshipper relations (metaphorized as parenthood or marriage) both figure centrally in Santería (see Mary Ann Clark's article). By metaphorical logic, spiritual "children" of the same "parent" are typically understood to be "brethren".[4] Unconstrained by biological considerations, such spiritual relations can be more dynamic and complex than parallel ordinary kinship ones.[5]

These examples also illustrate how spiritual kinship, enabling the metaphysical, broadens not only the range of possible relationships, but also of the kinds of entities which can be related. Metaphysical entities may be

diffusely non-localized, or (at the other extreme) located at immobile geographical sites (e.g. saints' tombs, shrines), implying fixed points, sacred places in the spiritual genealogy.

As for Pitt-Rivers' third pseudo-kinship type more generally, ritual is often important to the construction and maintenance of spiritual kinship relationships. In all the above examples, relations are ritually created–or at least ritually maintained. The emotional power of ritual (especially its performative dimensions–music, movement, image, fragrance) is often critical for charging spiritual kinship relations with affect, thus legitimizing their metaphorical connections to ordinary kinship, by which they are further emotionally empowered.

Biological processes and relations, individually experienced, constitute an incomparable source of affect, exploited by broader social ideologies (political, economic, religious) to energize and incarnate abstract symbols via metaphoric transfer.[6] Drawing upon affect-laden metaphors of natural biological relationship (e.g. "fatherhood", "motherhood"), religious ideology channels emotional immediacy to formal belief, in particular to belief in the primacy and naturalness of key spiritual-social relationships. As Carol Delaney correctly observes (for both religious and political ideology), "…because family and kinship relationships are felt to be natural, the imagery of the family used in other contexts helps to naturalize them as well." (Delaney 1995:177) At the same time, the religious ideology thereby also extends desired control over the biological world and its "passions". There is here an empowering irony: carnal flesh-and-blood systems of biological kinship marshaled to energize relations which by definition transcend the material world, and hence risk becoming impalpable. At the same time, biological ideology is "sanctified" by contact with the "higher" structures officially sanctioned by society.[7]

Such a model appears typical of symbolic-functionalist paradigms positing a homeostatic social system. However it would be erroneous to *assume* that biological and religious ideologies are wedded in a harmonious whole. Certainly a relatively symbiotic relation may exist (the traditional holistic "world view" of older anthropologies) in which case the distinction may be largely analytic (as, for instance, in the congruence between spiritual and ordinary kinship in Yoruban tradition; see Clark's article), but under many conditions (especially notable in new religious movements, but perhaps always), one observes a clash of spiritual and ordinary kinship (e.g. religious marriage restrictions, including celibacy requirements), an opposition entailing recognizable schismogenetic differentiation of distinct ideologies. Thus a kinship relation may simultaneously *be* a spiritual relation

(as in the sacrament of marriage), be *challenged* by a parallel one (e.g. ordinary parenthood by godparenthood), or be *opposed* entirely (e.g. by religious ideals of "legitimate" procreation, or celibacy). Indeed one may hypothesize that the clash between institutions of social relations is both the inevitable sign and strategy of deeper ideological conflicts. Challenging ordinary kinship is a (necessary?) means by which the hegemonic social and political ideologies associated with ordinary kinship can be challenged or even broken.[8]

My intention is thus not to champion functionalism, but merely to highlight the sources of interactions between religious and biological ideologies, which may also become adversarial at the semiotic level. Indeed conflict may be the *sine qua non* of their conscious differentiation and emergence as distinct ideologies. Discursively, that conflict unfolds within the shared semiotic space of kinship.

The spiritual kinship relation which has attracted the lion's share of scholarly attention, among historians as well as anthropologists, is godparenthood, known in Spanish-speaking Catholic areas as *compadrazgo*.[9]

Compadrazgo (and its cognates) is a form of ritual sponsorship (often formalized at baptism), entailing a triadic relation between ordinary kinship parents, child, and godparents, including spiritual kinship relations of co-parenthood (between parents and godparents) and godparenthood (between godparents and godchild). Co-parent relations can establish alliances as close as marriage, binding participants for life and validated as kinship by replicating its taboos (e.g. on incest between godchildren) (Coy 1974; Gudeman 1971). Historical studies indicate a long-standing connection to the Church (Lynch 1998; Lynch 1985; Baschet 1993; Dinn 1990; Herman 1997; Verdon 1988). The institution is currently widespread in predominantly Catholic societies and enclaves, e.g. Spain (Pitt-Rivers 1976), Latin America (Deshon 1963; Osborn 1968; Sayres 1956; van Den Berghe and van Den Berghe 1966), Italy (Donofrio 1991), the Philippines (Hart 1977), and Sri Lanka (Stirrat 1975). Structurally similar (if distinct) institutions exist in the Orthodox Churches (Aschenbrenner 1975; Boulay 1984; Chock 1974; Hammel 1968; Pitt-Rivers 1976), and parallels have been noted in other religious traditions, e.g. Islam in Turkey (Magnarella and Turkdogan 1973), spirit guides in Australia (Shapiro 1988), and elsewhere (Bloch and Guggenheim 1981:381).

Godparenthood provides a useful illustration of discord between spiritual and ordinary kinship, resulting from tension between distinct relational ideologies (biological, and religious). The ideological significance of *compadrazgo* is understood to represent the denial of carnality (physiological sex and birth) associated with original sin, in favor of a

spiritual rebirth and relations wholly constructed and controlled by the Church (Pitt-Rivers 1976:318; Bloch and Guggenheim 1981; Baschet 1993:741).[10] Such ritual co-parentship often entails marriage restrictions and thus impinges upon ordinary kinship as well (Donofrio 1991; Boulay 1984; Lynch 1998).

Despite this scholarly emphasis upon *compadrazgo*, contrastive forms of spiritual kinship do exist. The most socially salient of these are spiritual families and lineages.

Extended spiritual families gather a religious community–perhaps all adherents–together under the parenthood of a spiritual authority (typically founder, teacher, or metaphysical power), often in opposition to (or at least transcending) extant ordinary kinship structures. Thus the Buddhist *sangha* (spiritual community) is the basis for Buddha's spiritual family, as signaled by tropes such as *kulaputra* (son of a good family) for a *bodhisattva*, or *fo-tzu* (son of the Buddha) for the Chinese monastic initiate (see Prebish's article). Likewise, Santería practice centers on spiritual families (see Clark's); Sufis often view their orders (*tariqas*) as families comprised of *ikhwan* (brethren) under a father-like saint or shaykh; and the Islamic *Umma* (literally "nation") is the community of faith (transcending nationalisms and tribal lineages of ordinary kinship), conceived (following Qur'an 49:10) as a universal brotherhood under God and His Prophet.

One may define a dyadic kinship relation as generative when it may be repeatedly applied to an individual, so as to generate locally significant kinship structure. (Thus "father of" generates the patriline; "sibling of" generates the descendents of two parents.) While *compadrazgo* relations are typically not generative,[11] other types of vertical (intergenerational) dyads may generate spiritual lineages, in which ego has spiritual ascendants, descendents, and siblings.

Such lineages are typically rooted in charismatic founder-figures, often definitively established by initial followers. Subsequently particular "nodes" in the genealogical "tree" may be differentiated, anchoring branch lineages, similar to the segmentary structure Evans-Pritchard observed for ordinary kinship among the Nuer (Evans-Pritchard 1951). Nodal branching conditions include charisma, as well as other differentiating factors, such as migration, language, and culture. (Thus Muinuddin Chishti is renowned as the founder of the Chishtiyya order in India, though he was not the founder of the order; see Qureshi's article.) When such "segmentation" is in principal rejected by the mainline, the latter may regard the branch as a distinct movement, sect, or even heresy, and the branch may or may not concur (see Steven Kent's article). Ordination lineages are

common in Buddhism; see Prebish's article (also Evers 1967). Unlike ordinary kinship, one need not ever have *physical* contact with one's spiritual ascendant (who need not even ever have been a "person" in the biological sense); direct relations with long-dead saints are common in Sufism, for instance.

When do spiritual kinship relations become generative? One may hypothesize two necessary (but not necessarily sufficient) conditions: (1) that spirituality (teachings, knowledge, wisdom, traditions, blessing, healing, power) is potentially embodied, located *in* a (holy) person *qua* person, and not only in sacred texts, institutions, and associated offices; (2) that this embodied spirituality can be (at least partially) transmitted from master to disciple through close spiritual relations (e.g., via face-to-face interaction, teaching, physical contact, rituals, dreams, substance sharing, etc.). These close relations (however conceived) may then become spiritual kinship relations, metaphorically linked to ordinary kinship. Such spiritual kinship is typically generative, since one's spiritual ascendant is then not merely a godfather (*a la padrinazgo*), but rather the very source of one's spirituality; the lineage is now perceived as a conduit along which spiritual value can flow from its originary sources. Spiritual lineages, transmitting powerful religious authority, are typical of mystical and discipular traditions, in which honorific titles (shaykh, guru, etc.) signal embodied spirituality. One of the best examples is Sufism's initiatic chain (*silsila*), transmitting the "holy power" of *baraka* (Trimingham 1971; Schmitz 2000).

Normatively, such lineages are often simply unilineal, since religious ideology typically demands fidelity to one and only one spiritual parent. In practice, relations are much more complex than ordinary kinship–disciples may initiate themselves into multiple lines (but with different and shifting degrees of commitment), as a strategy of spiritual development, to consolidate spiritual standing, or to shift allegiances. Such disciples, as "children" of multiple lineages, may implicitly define "affinal" alliances between parent lineages.[12] This phenomenon may also occur under conditions of globalization, considered below.

Spiritual kinship relations draw upon metaphors of ordinary kinship in order to transfer "natural" meanings constantly attributed to ordinary kinship relations–closeness, loyalty, permanence, powerful affect– to relations grounded primarily in religious ideology. In this way, the norms of ordinary kinship are applied to spiritual kinship; thus one *ought* permanently to respect, trust, and love one's spiritual parent or brother.

But spiritual kinship relations may also be conditioned by competing norms established by the religious ideology itself. These are key,

since if the reproduction of ordinary kinship relations takes place through the agency of biological processes (whose ideological representation grounds and helps shape those relations), spiritual kinship is primarily reproduced through the ritual practice of ideology alone. Where, then, is the religious source for norms of spiritual kinship?

Frequently that source may be found in an originary model of idealized spiritual kinship, located in religious history or mythology. Often this model is derived from the spiritual or ordinary kinship relations developed by a founder figure. Such model relations subsequently function as a normative *paradigm*, instantiated again and again in the practice and reproduction of subsequent spiritual kinship relations. At the same time, in traditions featuring lineal spiritual kinship, that model is simultaneously a source *syntagm*, an incipient spiritual kinship "sentence", syntactically situated at the apex of the spiritual genealogy. The religious adherent is thus doubly connected by the originary model into a spiritual genealogy: paradigmatically to a spiritual parent, and syntagmatically to the origin itself.   Conversely, his position within the spiritual genealogy doubly connects the adherent to the model.

The most fundamental such model is certainly the relation of God to mankind, characterized as spiritual fatherhood or spiritual motherhood. Thus Baschet views the Christian church's belittling of blood ties as a consequence of the "Pater Noster" (Baschet 1993:739). The Christian tradition also provides, in the virgin birth of Christ through the Holy Spirit, a more elaborate originary model for subsequent spiritual kinship (Donofrio 1991). In the Muslim world, several originary models can be enumerated, including the parental status of Muhammad, whom several *hadiths* require the Muslim to love above his own father;[13] relations within the *Ahl al-Bayt* (the Prophet Muhammad's family) (Hoffman-Ladd 1992) as the "holy family" for Sufi and Shiite traditions (particularly the relation between Muhammad and his cousin 'Ali), extending syntagmatically to lineages of *ashraf* (van Arendonk and W.A. Graham 1960) and Sufi *silsilas*; and the ideal of the *Ansar* ("helpers") of Medina, who fraternally adopted Meccan immigrants after the Hijra (Lings 1983:128). Likewise, the Buddha's status as highest "spiritual friend" (*kalyāṇamitra*) serves as archetypal model for subsequent spiritual kinship in Buddhist traditions (see Prebish's article).

Spiritual kinship admits of a further generalization. It is not only individuals, but also whole religious traditions–now considered as social entities–which may be connected by spiritual kinship relations. Sometimes these traditions are lineages. Thus the 19th century Sudanese Idrisiyya Sufi tradition spawned several derivative lineages, each anchored by one of

Ahmad ibn Idris's disciples (O'Fahey 1990). Other times, adherents speak more generally of their tradition being "in the spiritual lineage of" an earlier tradition, or as subsuming a newer one. Such spiritual kinship claims may be important strategies for legitimization, and hence are often contested, by either "parent" or "child" tradition. Such "legitimacy" is closely tied to that of ordinary kinship, in that it centers on the conditions for spiritually-sanctified reproduction. Kent's article thoroughly explores the various possibilities concerning spiritual kinship amongst religious traditions, and concomitant issues of legitimation, for new religions.

Spiritual kinship and globalization

What happens to relations of spiritual kinship as a religious tradition globalizes?

The metaphysical character of spiritual kinship simultaneously restricts and extends the range of social relations it can encompass. Ungrounded in biological ideology, such relations may be all the more dependent upon regular social practice. In traditional settings, links with the spiritual lineage are frequently developed and maintained via face to face social interaction and personal visits to sacred sites–hence constrained by physical and temporal proximity. But spiritual kinship relations are supported too by concurrent metaphysical practices (often via dreams, visions, or trance states) free of such constraints. In times of social dislocation, the metaphysical aspect of spiritual relationships perforce comes to the fore, perhaps supplemented by mediated relations via writing, and (more recently) multimedia and electronic communications. Though it may also entail significant changes in the concept and practice of spiritual kinship, this relaxation of space-time constraints is particularly expedient during globalization.

Besides being neologistic (Merriam Webster dates it to 1944), "globalize" is rather vague, literally denoting merely the process of becoming global. More specifically, as used in academic disciplines, the term implies increasingly rapid and widespread flows of people, culture, information, money, commodities, or services, resulting in various forms (economic, cultural, social) of global interaction, interconnection, and integration. Globalization may imply hegemony (globalization of dominant formations, e.g. when used to denote "Westernization"), resistance, diaspora, and migration (most convergently, from the developing to the "immigrant" societies of the developed world). It may produce homogenization, or heterogenization.

Perhaps because it is a neologism, globalization is often assumed to be novel. Certainly its academic vogue is recent. Yet, arguably, globalization

is nothing new. For millennia, the world has seen large-scale interactions of all types. Within and between ancient and medieval empires–Chinese, Egyptian, Roman, Indian, Islamic–long distance migration, trade, and cultural exchanges were common. Today, driven by new technology and post-industrial capitalism, globalization has vastly accelerated.

Historians, sociologists, economists, and media theorists have for some time treated various aspects of globalization; all deny the traditional anthropological notion of bounded, homogeneous cultures. "Before European hegemony" (13th – 16th centuries), Janet Abu-Lughod discerned a vast world system, encompassing a heterogeneity of polities from Europe to China (Abu-Lughod 1989). Immanuel Wallerstein has analyzed the rise of the modern Euro-centric world system in the 16th century (see Wallerstein 1974:390-1). In the 1960s, media theorist Marshal McLuhan first envisioned the contemporary "global village", a world community forcibly united by the electronic mass media (McLuhan 1964).

The fact of "world religions" criss-crossing political, economic, and social boundaries has always required religious studies scholars to consider globalization. Recently a number of monographs have addressed this topic explicitly (e.g. Beyer 1994; Coleman 2000; Meuleman 2002). Anthropology, formerly centered on a localized, bounded, holistic concept of "culture", including an integrated, homogeneous complex of coterminous representational spheres (especially language and worldview), associated with interlocked political, religious, economic, and kinship institutions (Schneider 1984:181) has only belatedly acknowledged globalization. Much recent work drops the sanctity of the cultural boundary, admitting that all such boundaries are now highly artificial. Global culture rather comprises overlapping, disjunctive "landscapes"–to use Appadurai's metaphor (Appadurai 1990:6-7)–of people, media, technology, economy, and ideology. At the individual level, cultural belonging comprises a profusion of (sometimes conflicting) identities–religious, regional, economic, political, national, diasporic (Clifford 1994)–rather than unitary membership in a unified "culture".

Though not separated by a sharp historical boundary, the contrast between "pre-modern" and "contemporary" globalization is very stark. Globalization in the pre-modern period was relatively slow, carried by mobile people (travelers, merchants, missionaries, refugees); such flows typically had time to adapt and root in new environments, producing relatively continuous changes. Thus, gradually, Yoruba religion diffused throughout West Africa; Buddhism throughout Asia; and Sufism throughout both. Such globalization might well induce changes in spiritual

kinship, both as a concept, and as a set of actualized social structures. But moving slowly from one cultural or linguistic region to another, spiritual kinship could adjust to pre-existing concepts and practices. Thus world-wide differences in *compadrazgo* may be understood as resulting from its gradual accommodation into heterogeneous Christian milieux, e.g. the contrast between Spanish *compadrazgo* and Balkan *kumstvo* (Pitt-Rivers 1976:333). Crossing linguistic, cultural, and political boundaries, spiritual lineages might segment, resulting in the development of variant regional kinship concepts and practices. Over the course of hundreds of years, Buddhist lineages, originating in India, developed distinctive lineage traditions in other regions; Sufi orders too frequently set down local roots with the migration of an important teacher, e.g. Muinuddin Chishti to India (see Prebish and Qureshi articles).

Contemporary globalization, by contrast, features the rapid transport of goods and people, independent of the instantaneous transfers of information (including money), featuring the unprecedented power of broadcast media–all powered by (and supporting) radical technological developments. Today, the extent and rate of information flows is–for the first time in history–not strictly proportional to their cost. All this has resulted in large-scale non-linear systemic instabilities. Contemporary globalization is thus truly global, discontinuous, disjunctive, erratic; everything has its Warholian "fifteen minutes of fame". On the other hand, in conjunction with pressures of Western capitalism and military might, contemporary globalization has induced historically unparalleled levels of interdependency and (therefore) convergence among political and economic systems.

As a clear polarization between global wealth and power (in the West) and its lack (in the "developing" world) has emerged, migration has increasingly flowed from the latter to the former, producing singular levels of multiculturalism, including new concentrations of adherents to non-Western religious traditions in immigrant societies such as the US and Canada. Spiritual alienation, resulting from materialism and displacement, has also created a ready market for "non-Western" religious traditions to cross ethnic divides in these societies via conversion.

In immigrant societies, the old "cultural coherence" model of classic anthropology is particularly irrelevant, replaced by complexly intersecting, non-geographic, dynamic, dispersed networks of community (familial, ethnic, religious, generational, religious, class); conversely, individual identity is fragmented, layered, kaleidoscopic, representing multiple kinds, modes, and degrees of "belonging" rather than encapsulated

in a "culture" label. Culture is further deterritorialized through mobility. As a consequence, social and cultural life has largely lost its former sense of rootedness in the land, becoming instead "rhizomic" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). With the rise of electronic mediation, important social relations and communities become virtual. Mobility and intermarriage mean that intergenerational cultural continuity is less assured than ever before.

Central to the four essays of this issue is globalization in North America, the dominant first world immigrant society, and quintessential product and producer of globalization, exemplifying *par excellence* the collapse of cultural coherence. This is not to affirm a center-periphery model with North America at the "center", because contemporary global flows are too complex to allow such a simplification. It is simply to affirm that immigrant societies of the developed world are an interesting place to observe spiritual kinship and globalization.

Under conditions of globalization, spiritual kinship can no longer presume physical proximity, cultural homogeneity, or stability. As migrant religious communities adapt to new social conditions, they encounter new biological and religious ideologies, and new structures of ordinary and spiritual kinship. Stretched across geographic space, deprived of face-to-face channels of communication, but augmented by virtual ones, wrenched out of traditional environments and plunged into unfamiliar ones, the concepts, practices, and structures of spiritual kinship are necessarily transformed.

What happens to spiritual kinship as a religious tradition globalizes? The following six headings, while not intended to be either exclusive or exhaustive, cover a number of the most important issues raised by the papers in this volume.

(1) What happens when spiritual kinship is rapidly plunged into a new social context?

With contemporary globalization, spiritual kinship systems that had developed gradually in relation to a particular social environment are suddenly immersed (sometimes forcibly) into radically contrastive, heterogeneous, and mutable environments. Typically (and often for the first time), the migrant spiritual family will find itself a minority, juxtaposed with diverse concepts and practices of ordinary and spiritual kinship (see Clark's article), including genealogically related branches (see Prebish's article). Migration may dramatically affect spiritual kinship by altering demographics of the migrant spiritual family due to legal and practical constraints on immigration. Political-economic and social structures that had formerly supported spiritual kinship and its ritual maintenance may now be absent (and Qureshi's article provides an excellent example of the

consequences). Issues of identity and self-representation come to the fore; adaptation is essential to survival, while continuity must be maintained.

(2) What happens as spiritual families and lineages acculturate?

Typically, adaptation necessarily entails some degree of acculturation. Conversion and intermarriage accelerate that process. In the globalized environment, diminished face-to-face interactions necessarily induce changes in the concept or practice of spiritual kinship, or its decline. With acculturation, spiritual kinship can no longer rely upon parallel ordinary kinship structures which may have served as normative models and symbiotic supports prior to globalization. Contrasting concepts and practices of both ordinary and spiritual kinship, newly juxtaposed, offer new opportunities and dangers to the spiritual kinship system. In extreme circumstances, new forms of spiritual kinship may replace ordinary kinship. Clark's article provides a fascinating instance of syncretic kinship structures in Cuba: dominant-culture spiritual kinship (Spanish-Catholic *compadrazgo*) is adopted and transformed within Afro-Cuban Santería to compensate for the slave-trade obliteration of ordinary kinship structures. However, with globalization to new social environments in North America inhospitable to *compadrazgo* and its associated norms, the balance is disrupted once again.

(3) What happens when spiritual kinship relations can no longer presume physical proximity?

Spiritual kinship must adapt to the diminishing of face-to-face interaction and the rise of mediated (especially broadcast, one-to-many) communication, due to global migration and social mobility. Lost are proximate relations to spiritual kinship's fixed points—tombs, shrines, and other sacred sites. This situation may challenge spiritual kinship, threatening continuity, or transform it. Spiritual relations may become less personal, more broadly charismatic and metaphysical, extending scope and reach. At a distance, holy persons and shrines may take on a more idealized metaphysical character. Thus mediated by technology and metaphysics, spiritual kinship may shift from localized vertical structures to broader horizontal ones. Or the tradition may become more limited than ever before, existing only within the reduced scope of physical proximity. There may be perceived an inherent compatibility between virtual media relations and virtual metaphysical relations, both transcending ordinary time and space. Or they may be regarded as antithetical, inasmuch as mediation is unconducive to spiritual connection, and spiritual kinship may decline. All the articles touch on these issues.

(4) What happens when spiritual kinship crosses ethnic and linguistic boundaries in its new environment?

One of the typical effects of acculturation is to separate reproduction in spiritual and ordinary kinship; the latter no longer provides an automatic source of new adherents, threatening to depopulate the spiritual family. This trend is also ameliorated in modern immigrant societies, featuring rapid dissemination of mediated information, and a spiritual vacuum produced by social dislocations and materialism. Thus there is often a ready market of potential converts of contrasting cultural backgrounds. Spiritual families and lineages, formerly supported by shared culture (and language) as a matter of historical happenstance, are now faced with a tricky dilemma: whether or not to exchange cultural homogeneity for an increase in membership?

The dilemma in effect counterpoises historical continuity against claims of universality (and contemporary survival). To integrate culturally heterogeneous converts may weaken spiritual kinship, particularly when they move into leadership roles, as ultimately they must. Integration requires the development of more generalized forms of spiritual kinship less dependent upon ordinary kinship bonds, which may expose a *de facto* reliance on culture, and may devitalize links connecting the contemporary religious movement to its past and homeland. Yet to refuse to allow spiritual kinship to cross ethnic and linguistic boundaries is to renounce universal truth and value in favor of a more parochial cultural heritage, and possibly to allow the spiritual family to dwindle. The difference between acceptance and rejection of parallel convert-movements may depend on the degree to which the spiritual kinship tradition has already adapted to diversity, as well as the degree to which convert-movements have diverged from the original tradition.

Prebish's article provides a rich field within which to explore these issues, providing contrasting cases of comparatively conversion-open and closed Buddhism in America, and pointing to succession problems when converts take on central genealogical positions of leadership. Kent's article, contrasting Sikh and Hindu immigration in the US and their totally divergent attitudes towards convert-based offshoots (3HO, and Hare Krisna), is likewise most illuminating.

(5) What happens to the spiritual lineage as it is globally stretched from the homeland?

Beyond conversion issues, a tension arises between continuity and adaptation. Successful adaptation to globalization typically requires that strong lineal connections be maintained, while accommodating potentially contradictory developments at the globalizing frontier. Thus the spiritual

lineage may serve as the globalizing tradition's lifeline, or as its noose. With increased emphasis on identity and self-presentation, the homeland, with its sacred sites and ancestral figures, may take on a hypersacralized character, particularly when globalization causes the homeland itself to be threatened. In such cases, the spiritual lineage is strengthened, though perhaps simultaneously idealized and spiritualized, since its linkages cannot typically be supported by face-to-face relations, and adaptation may be complicated by the need to support such lineages. Prebish's article underscores the key role of spiritual lineages within the Tibetan Buddhist diaspora as an instance.

On the other hand, acculturation and conversion may also weaken spiritual linkages to the homeland, stretching them to the breaking point, especially when priorities, agendas, and leadership diverge, producing newly competitive forms of spiritual kinship on the globalizing frontier. But restructuring spiritual kinship occurs at possible great cost: the globalizing portion of the lineage may no longer be generally recognized as legitimately positioned within the lineage at all (as in the case of some trans-Islamic Sufi orders). A possible compromise is to "short circuit" the spiritual lineage, reconnecting the globalizing tradition directly to perceived paradigmatic (mythic) sources of spiritual kinship, thereby enabling greater ideological flexibility by reneging allegiance to more recent religious history. Reformist Islamist groups (*salafiyya*) have frequently taken this approach, focusing on direct spiritual kinship to an idealized distant past – the *salaf al-salih* ("pious ancestors", the first three generations of the early Islamic community).

Another eventuality of globalization is lineal ramification, commonly accompanying localized adaptation, and the development of different kinds and networks of face-to-face social relations in multiple locations; articles by Prebish and Qureshi both speak to this issue. In the North American case, a paucity of masters, combined with the power of mass media, may also cause spiritual kinship to undergo a process of horizontalization, gathering a broad spectrum of adherents under a single spiritual parent figure.

This latter phenomenon may also imply lineal convergence. In immigrant societies the unprecedented proximity of diverse branches of what is recognized to constitute a single spiritual genealogy offers a new opportunity–or imperative–to reunify, as a strategy for adaptation and proof of the tradition's universal value. Spiritual kinship plays an important role, since it is often easier to create social than doctrinal unity. Prebish's article concludes with the observation that organizations such as the American Buddhist Congress, seeking to represent all Buddhist lines, may

promote consciousness of a single, yet dharmically diverse, Buddhist spiritual family.

(6) How does a new spiritual line legitimate itself?

Adaptation cannot succeed without legitimation. The irony here is that legitimation typically requires connections to established traditions, which may limit the ability of the globalizing front to adapt, not least by rejecting its claimed connections. Change jeopardizes legitimation; its lack jeopardizes adaptation. This dilemma poses a particularly acute problem for new spiritual families and lineages, for which the twin necessities of novelty and legitimation naturally work at cross purposes. Here too convergence may also play a role. Kent's article perspicaciously discusses a number of relevant cases, including Scientology and the Unification Church, both of which attempt to legitimate themselves by invoking a wide range of older traditions as their spiritual ascendants.

* * *

This issue of *Religious Studies and Theology* was conceived in part as a forum for the presentation of research on spiritual kinship and globalization. The following four articles contribute decisively to the study of spiritual kinship. However they are not offered as constituting the final word on this subject, not even for the religious traditions about which they speak. They are presented as much to raise questions about the dynamics of spiritual kinship in a globalizing world as to answer them. Collectively, they highlight the breadth, diversity, and complexity of the spiritual kinship phenomenon. It is to be hoped that these articles, and this issue as a whole, may serve to stimulate further areal, comparative, and theoretical work on spiritual kinship within religious studies, as informed by anthropology, globalization theory, and other related disciplines. The ubiquity of kinship discourse within religious discourse, combined with the interdiscursive power of kinship as a "master metaphor" linking multiple domains of human organization, action, and experience, suggests that spiritual kinship constitutes an important area for future research.

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Endnotes

[1]Barnes himself recognized that the cultural construction of biological motherhood, and genetic motherhood, could scarcely differ, but the logical possibility remains (and is perhaps instantiated by surrogate motherhood).

[2]By "quasi-independent" I mean only to underscore the impossibility of the autonomy of any ideology (whether biological, political, economic, religious, or whatever) relative to other ideologies in the same society.

[3]It is testimony to the tremendous metaphorical power of ordinary kinship terms that they are frequently invoked for political discourse and ideology as well. Thus the land is a "fatherland" (*patria*) or "motherland"; the "nation" is metaphorically linked to birth (from L. *nasci*, to be born); its founders are fathers, and its citizens are brothers. The conceptual similarities between kinship, nationality, and religion were perhaps first noted by David Schneider (Schneider 1969). Kinship thus appears as a "master metaphor" penetrating multiple social fields. For an astute analysis of the role of kinship metaphors in Turkish nationalist discourse, see Delaney (Delaney 1995); Qureshi's article in this issue insightfully illustrates the deep connections between social relations in the political-economic, and religious fields.

[4]As these examples illustrate, gender biases may likewise transfer from one domain of kinship terminology to another, though not without interesting twists; see especially Clark's article.

[5]For instance, in Santería multiple rituals produce multiple kinship links of various strengths and characters, which may or may not abrogate one another. See Clark's article.

[6]Suitably generalized, this analysis may help to explain kinship's apparent "master metaphor" status across multiple social fields.

[7]Victor Turner perspicaciously noted symbolic power as frequently deriving from a polarization of meaning, in which ideological referents at one end are consolidated with physiological referents at the other. Cultural ideology becomes strengthened through saturation with visceral physiological emotion, while the physiological is ennobled by contact with higher social values. The symbol thus effects a semantic interchange between its two poles. In essence, these polarized ritual symbols represent the conduit by which gross organic life energy is sublimated into the creation and maintenance of larger social systems which, in turn, are necessary to sustain the basic biological process (Turner 1974:55; Turner 1967:28-30).

[8]Such a perspective is clearly evident in feminist and gay rights movements of our time; it may also be necessary for new religious movements. The early Islamic Umma ("community of faith", negating traditional Arab tribal-political divisions) is a case in point.

[9]More properly, the word *compadrazgo* (sometimes *compadrinazgo*) denotes co-parenthood, while *padrinazgo* denotes godparenthood.

[10]Political (patriarchal) ideology is involved as well. Bloch and Guggenheim argue that *compadrazgo* is a means by which male social authority is empowered and legitimized through the spiritual creation of the legitimate social individual. The religious authorities declare physical birth (associated with women) impure. The individual requires a pure and holy ritual rebirth to spiritual parents (via baptism), whose performance is controlled by those authorities. Their reproductive power is thus vindicated even as their domination is concealed as spiritually sanctified creativity. (Bloch and Guggenheim 1981)

[11]I.e. the chain of "godfathers" is not a significant kinship structure. However transfer of *padrinazgo* to Santeria has resulted in a generative godparent relation; see Clark's article.

[12]Thus the Egyptian Bayyumiyya Sufi order gathers Khalwatiyya, Naqshabandiyya, Ahmadiyya, and Shadhiliyya traditions via the multiple affiliations of its 18th century founder saint, Sidi 'Ali al-Bayyumi (Frishkopf 1999:353), though Ahmadiyya connections are dominant.

[13]Al-Bukhari, *Volume 1, Book 2, Number 13:* Narrated Abu Huraira: Allah's Apostle said, "By Him in Whose Hands my life is, none of you will have faith till he loves me more than his father and his children."