AFTERWORD: ADOPTIVE RELATIONS IN THEORIES OF KINSHIP AND MODERNITY

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While much has been written about adoption over the past decades (Carroll 1970; Brady 1976; Modell 1994, 1998; Volkman and Katz 2003; Bowie 2004; Howell 2006), *Relative Power* is unique in the extent to which it places adoption in the context of larger historical and contemporary issues, including colonialism and sovereignty movements; development and social change; migration and global capitalism; and violence, trauma, and sexual abuse. This special issue of *Pacific Studies* provides an opportunity to reflect on the place of adoption not only in the context of historical and contemporary events in Oceania but also in the history of kinship theory in anthropology.[1]

In the comments that follow, I tack back and forth between the unfolding histories of adoption in Oceania and of kinship studies in anthropology and point to some of their past entanglements and contemporary possibilities. I first consider the place of adoption in nineteenth-century narratives of the evolution of civilization and twentieth-century ideas of development, modernization, and progress. A number of papers in this volume prompt reflection upon the ways in which these narrative frameworks (both anthropological and cultural) inform colonial and anticolonial treatments of adoption. They also speak to key tropes in narratives of modernization that concern the relationship between the domains of kinship and economy as well as the entanglements of kinship and private property. Second, in several papers, the specifics of the processes by which children are transferred inspire

a reexamination of the relationship between adoption and larger systems of exchange. Consequently, I query our understanding of what counts as adoption in light of recent developments in kinship studies concerning exchange and differing ideas of relatedness. And, finally, spurred by the papers that explore the relation between adoption and trauma, violence, and sexual abuse, I contemplate both the reasons why such topics have been absent from the history of kinship studies and the range of criteria that we must address in any future comparative research on these important issues.

I. Adoption and the Signs of Modernity

From at least the nineteenth century on, different forms of kinship and marriage have been used to signify stages of development and progress—whether these be in nineteenth-century narratives of evolution or twentieth- and twenty-first-century accounts of development and modernization. Nineteenth-century evolutionary narratives such as Morgan's *Ancient Society* (1974) understood civilization to be marked by four interrelated events that bear on kinship and marriage: (1) the *institution of monogamous marriage* (in contrast to plural marriages and sexual relations outside of marriage), which was seen to be the requirement for (2) the *establishment of paternity* (and the assertion of its importance over maternity), which was associated with (3) the *creation of private property* (in contrast to communal property) and (4) the *establishment of the restricted nuclear family* (in contrast to open and extended family) (McKinnon 2001). These kinship correlates of "civilization" in nineteenth-century narratives continue to shape twentieth- and twenty-first-century understandings of what counts as "developed" or "modern." Consequently, the associated characteristics of kinship and family relations that serve as markers of development, modernity, and progress are those that are exclusive not inclusive; nuclear not extended; bounded not open or flexible; defined and restricted to narrow lines of "being," biology, and blood, not flexible and open networks of "doing," care, and nurturance. The contrasts have delineated what is reckoned as savage as well as civilized, traditional as well as modern, backward as well as developed, and gift economies and so-called kin-based societies as well as capitalist and market-based societies. How then has adoption served as a signifier, and of what, in these narrative frameworks?

Colonial Regimes and Sovereignty Movements

A number of papers in this volume make it clear that the colonial powers—whether these be the Americans in Hawai'i and Guam, the French in New

Caledonia, or the Indonesians in Irian Jaya—actively supported, valorized, and legalized certain forms of family making (nuclear, bounded, biological, and marital) as civilized and modern while they vigorously penalized and stigmatized, if they did not make outright illegal, certain local forms of family making (particularly those that were extended, open, nonbiological, and nonmarital) as backward, if not savage.

Thus, Leslie Butt observes that unwed motherhood and illegitimacy are stigmatized by non-Papuan Indonesians who have recently settled in urban Wamena (as part of the internal colonization of Irian Jaya), whereas the birth of a child (whether the mother is married or not) is celebrated among indigenous Dani in their rural villages. The French educational system in New Caledonia, Christine Salomon and Christine Hamelin report,

> puts forward parenting standards that, in accordance with Western views, implicitly consider that only birth parents can be good parents. The new norms are reinforced by economic measures that encourage couples to keep their children with them and caregivers or foster parents to become adoptive parents or legal guardians. For example, foster or temporary parents cannot receive the family allowances available to birth parents and to legally recognized guardians or adoptive parents. Nor can they receive other social services, such as scholarships (unless they produce evidence of a court-approved transfer of parental rights). (139)

Stigmatization of nonbiological and nonmarital forms of family making is, in this way, backed by economic sanctions that penalize people whose forms of relatedness do not conform to the French colonial standard.

The suppression of certain forms of kinship and marriage as an intimate means of colonial subordination is evident in the papers by Laurel Monnig and Judith Schachter. In the context of debates surrounding decolonization in Guam, the discourse of the American colonial government validates racial, cultural, and linguistic purity and, conversely, stigmatizes *mestizo* relations and the forms of Chamorro *familia*—which are "more expansive and less conceptually rigid than U.S. notions of 'biological' relatedness"—as inauthentic grounds for "political legitimacy" (Monnig, this issue, 183). By contrast, at least some Chamorro supporters of sovereignty highlight these more expansive and flexible forms of family making (symbolized by a form of adoption called *poksai*) and "mixed-race" families (revalued positively as *mestizu*) as the proper grounds for authentic postcolonial political legitimacy (Monnig, this issue, 184).

Similarly, in Hawai'i, Schachter shows how the imposed United States legal system in the nineteenth century sanctioned adoptions that were established through written contract, involved nuclear and (monogamously) marital families, and "as-if-biological" relations as the (civilized) grounds for inheritance of property. In an earlier work (Modell 1998), Schachter reveals how native Hawaiians have struggled, in the context of this legal system, to gain recognition for indigenous forms of family (*ohana*) and fostering (*hanai*) that the courts saw as uncivilized, since they depended on unwritten agreements and stressed care and nurturance over biology, inclusive and extended forms of relatedness over the exclusive relations of the nuclear and (monogamous) marital family, and chiefly held common lands over privately inherited land. In the earlier work as well as the chapter in this volume, she shows how these heretofore suppressed indigenous forms of relatedness reemerge as one of the primary grounds for political legitimacy in the Hawaiian sovereignty movement.

It is evident, then, that in Hawai'i and Guam, if not in New Caledonia or Irian Jaya, it is exactly the forms of relatedness that were stigmatized under colonial rule as backward—including adoption, extended and open families, and mixed-race relations—that become valorized as the sign of new sovereignty and decolonization movements. Indeed, these forms of family making become the intimate means of the restoration of indigenous cultural integrity and sovereignty and serve to affirm an alternative vision of what it means to be "civilized" and modern.

Schachter makes a further point, however, that there is a complexity in the ways in which individuals create kin in the context of this kind of oppositional framework—in Hawai'i, between indigenous "custom" and colonial "law." While indigenous Hawaiian forms of family making and those validated by the colonial-imposed legal system are clearly differentially weighted in the contexts of the sovereignty movement and of the law courts and social services offices, people are nonetheless often able to use both frameworks to weave together the various strands of relatedness that constitute contemporary native Hawaiian families.

Kinship and Economy: Rethinking the Domains

Like particular forms of kinship and marriage, the domain of kinship itself (relative to other social domains, particularly economics) has been central to the narratives of evolution that have animated the colonial enterprise and continue to motivate accounts of development and modernization. On the one hand, in capitalist market-based societies, in contrast to so-called traditional "kin-based societies," it is presumed that kinship is relegated to

the domestic domain, which is separate from and subordinate to the economic domain. W. H. R. Rivers articulated this critical difference in the opening passages of *The History of Melanesian Societies:*

> In civilized culture we are accustomed to distinguish certain definite departments of social life which can to a large extent be kept apart, but among those people we usually speak of as primitive, these departments are inextricably interwoven and interdependent so that it is hopeless to expect to obtain a complete account of any one department without covering the whole field. (1914, 1)

On the other hand, it is thought that the form of family that arose out of the industrial revolution—one that is restricted, bounded, nuclear, if not also biological—is somehow required for development and necessary to the workings of capitalism. Laurence M. Carucci's work in this special issue joins the work of others who argue against these assumptions, pointing both to the nonnecessary relation between the forms of kinship and those of development and capitalism and to the centrality of kinship in the workings of the global capitalist economy.

Recent work on migration has demonstrated that kinship and marriage constitute the structural relations and the means through which migration is accomplished and migrants crisscross national borders (e.g., Schiller and Fouron 1999; Constable 2005). In this special issue, Carucci analyzes how Marshallese migration and participation in the global capitalist order depend upon and are shaped by their large open, flexible family structures—with a range of more and less formal adoptive and fostering relationships. In a similar vein, Aihwa Ong (1999) notes how the extended patriarchal family is at the center of Chinese capitalist overseas expansion, and Sylvia Yanagisako (2002) analyzes the connection between kinship and capital among Italian silk merchants. It would be interesting to track the modalities of Marshallese kinship formations both across time and taking class mobility into account, in order to determine whether they remain open, flexible, and nonrestrictive as migrant groups move up in class status, and, conversely, to understand to what extent adoption might feature in the maintenance of family firms and capitalist networks.

These works suggest that we ought not to be blinded by the stories of modernization that we have been telling ourselves inside and outside of anthropology for the last 150 years and by the assumptions we have made about the role of kinship in modern economies and about the kinds of families required by the capitalist order. Instead we should be tracing the ways in which a wide range of family formations intersect with contemporary economic structures and processes.

Adoptive Relations and Rights over Private Property

In many of the papers in this volume, it is striking how questions regarding the inheritance of private property have become the ultimate arbitrator of what will count as "real" kinship as opposed to social, adoptive, or "fictive" kinship. Contests over inheritance between differently constituted kin (adoptive vs. nonadoptive) are reported, for instance, in Hawaiʻi, the Marshall Islands, and Chuuk state, and they appear to be exacerbated in places like Mota, where Manuel Rauchholz notes there is rapid population growth and cash-cropping that ties up matrilineal land rights in patrilineal tree rights.

It would be easy to assume that such contests arise because people "naturally" wish to transmit property to their "real" biological kin over their social and "fictive" kin (see Bodenhorn 2000 for an account of Iñupiaq assumptions to the contrary). Since at least the nineteenth century, narratives of the rise of civilization and modernization have centered on the development of private property and on the narrowing of kin relations to the nuclear family, such that the channels of transmission of property follow an increasingly restricted line of blood (preferably through male links) (McKinnon 2001). Such narratives articulated precisely what, according to Schachter, colonial judges in Hawaiian courts expressed—that the passage from "savagery" to "civilization" required a clear determination of both the lines of kinship and those of property (this issue, 218).

Historically, in Hawaiʻi, land was not held individually but by chiefs. Americans not only privatized land holdings in the Great Mahele of 1848 but, Schachter tells us, they also attempted legally to mandate marriage, prohibit sexual liaisons, and establish biological procreation as the basis of parenthood. Given the various forms of adoption and the open and fluid nature of Hawaiian family formations, Schachter observes, United States colonial judges struggled to determine on what grounds nonbiological kin relations could be granted rights of inheritance. Ultimately, the only adoptive relations that were recognized as suitable to be granted inheritance rights were those that had been formalized through written legal contract and that constituted the parties to the adoption "as-if-biological" kin within marital families. Of course, in the eyes of the legal system, in the absence of a will to the contrary, this effectively disinherited those who were related through indigenous forms of adoption and family making.

In the end, it was the legal hegemony of *this* set of associations—that "real" kin and rights to inheritance are established through blood relations that follow from monogamous marital relations—that has subordinated other indigenous understandings of the relation between relatedness and property and made them legally vulnerable. Under this formulation,

adoptive relations could entail inheritance only to the extent that they approximated blood relations through legal contract. At least in Hawai'i, if not across Oceania, the vulnerability of adoptees with regard to inheritance has been a precipitate not of indigenous understandings of kinship and property but rather of the colonial imposition of Western understandings.

Given the hegemony of the colonial and Western legal system in the past 100 years, we need to ask a number of questions if we are to untangle the complex histories and contemporary understandings of kinship and property in Oceania and elsewhere. First, how have indigenous peoples understood the relationship between various forms of relatedness and various forms of property? Second, as Schachter has begun to ask in the case of Hawai'i, how have indigenous understandings of the relation between property and kinship intersected with, been subordinated to and transformed by—or become a challenge to—the understandings that have been formalized in colonial and national legal systems? Third, again following Schachter, how do people strategically use both legal and customary ideas about the connection between relatedness and property in their efforts to create enduring families and familial estates?

II. Adoption, Exchange, and Differing Presuppositions of Relation

In several papers in this volume, what is read as adoption appears to emerge as a consequence of bride-wealth or other life-cycle exchanges, or their failure. In light of work that has been done over the past several decades on exchange and affiliation, this apparent blurring suggests that it would be profitable to explore the relation between what we are calling adoption and larger systems of life-cycle exchanges. How do the presuppositions embedded in Western understandings of adoption mesh with those embedded in various cultural understandings of exchange?

Underlying Western understandings of adoption is the assumption that a child naturally "belongs" to individuals, specifically those individuals who are biologically linked to the child through conception and birth. Moreover, the child belongs to any larger kinship group—such as a family, house, lineage, or clan—by virtue of its inherent biological connection to those individuals who engendered it. Beginning from such an assumption, adoption is, in a rough and ready definition, "any customary and optional procedure for taking as one's own a child of other parents" (Carroll 1970, 3; see also Bowie 2004, 5). Adoption is a transfer from individuals who are seen as the biological parents of the child to those who will become the social (and "as-if-biological") parents of the child (Modell 1994); and the child becomes a member of a new social group by reference to its relation to the adopting individuals.

Yet the cases presented by Leslie Butt, Christine Salomon and Christine Hamelin, Thorgeir Kolshus, and Jeanette Dickerson-Putman intimate (although the authors do not necessarily make this point) that another logic of relatedness may be at work. Over the past several decades, analysis of various exchange systems compelled a reconceptualization of the relationship between ideas about person, descent group formation, affiliation, and exchange (e.g., Roy Wagner 1967, 1977; Strathern 1988; McKinnon 1991, 2000). The general assumption underlying kinship studies had previously been that persons and descent groups were defined by birth and biology and that the role of exchange was to establish social relations between them. This shifted with the perception that certain societies seemed to presuppose a prior, diffuse relationality (which may or may not be seen in terms of physiological substance) and that exchange functions not to relate but to differentiate and define individuals and groups. Thus affiliation to groups is accomplished through exchange rather than through birth. Lines of relationality—which often follow maternal links—are the ground against which the workings of bride-wealth exchange, or its absence, assign children to the group of the father or the mother. To what group a child will belong, therefore, is not simply a biological given (following from birth) but rather something to be established through the presence or absence of exchange. What might look like adoption, in the first sense outlined above, involves, in this second sense, a very different understanding of the nature of persons and the means of establishing and changing forms of relatedness.

Thus, in Leslie Butt's account of the Dani in this special issue, what is at stake is not only women's lack of agency and men's control of women's reproductive processes—that is, men wield power to break the biological bond between mothers and their children and transfer authority over children to other individuals, including themselves. There is also a different idea of the grounds of relatedness and of the means for establishing parental claims over children and for attaching children to groups. Butt makes it clear that an "unwed mother" is not simply an unmarried woman; she is a woman for whom bride-wealth has not been paid by her lover or husband. This has consequences not only for her own status (designating her as "unmarried") but also, and especially, for the status of her child—who "belongs" de facto, in the absence of bride-wealth, to the clan of the mother's father (not the child's father). For the Dani, the absence of bride-wealth determines the affiliation of the child and appears to remove social parentage from the biological mother and reassign it to other members of her father's clan—her own parents or siblings, or those who make an effort to "build" up the child through nurturing it. One could call this adoption, in the first sense of the term, since it results in the transference of authority over children from the

birth mother to other individuals in her natal clan. But the adoptive process involved follows a different logic of relatedness. Children do not inherently "belong" to their birth mothers and fathers (and get subsequently transferred to other social parents). Rather they find their place of "belonging" through a process of exchange, or its absence. It is also a process in which the rights of clans supersede those of individuals, and individuals within a clan negotiate who, among them, will establish a sufficiently nurturing relationship with the child to assume the role of parent. That fathers, who strive to build up the membership of their clan, exert their power over their daughters is another story, which is the focus of Butt's work, but my point here is that they do so within a logic of relatedness that hinges on bride-wealth payments as the arbiter of a child's "belonging," not a sense of individual proprietorship based solely on biology and birth. The tensions between young unwed mothers and their parents over the allocation of their children currently hinges precisely on this difference in a moment of historical change in which biologically-based individual proprietorship has emerged as a competing cultural value in relation to exchange-based clan proprietorship.

In New Caledonia, aside from informal adoptions between close relatives and formal adoptions to ensure the continuity of a lineage that lacks a male heir, most of what Salomon and Hamelin classify as "adoption" entails the assignment of children resulting from marriage exchanges (or their absence). Salomon and Hamelin note that, in "reciprocal marital exchanges, when there is no woman available to be given back in marriage, an infant girl can be offered instead" (this issue, 134). Additionally, more than half of those they classify as "adoptees" are born to (highly stigmatized) unwed mothers and "adopted" by their maternal grandfather or uncle. This transfer of the child results from the absence of bride-wealth payments, in which case, a Kanak "child is . . . de facto appropriated by the birth mother's patrilineage, sometimes against her will. . . . the relative chosen by the mother's parents to adopt the child may not be prepared and may also be somewhat reluctant" (this issue, 138). Salomon and Hamelin suggest that these "[c]ontemporary forms of grandparental caregiving and adoption may differ from traditional adoption patterns" (this issue, 138); however, they seem to follow from a logic of bride-wealth exchange that may not be so new—one in which the child "belongs" to the maternal relatives and in which the latter are obligated, whether they so desire or not, to care for the children of daughters for whom bride-wealth has not been paid.

It should also be noted that what ends up being called adoption may be a result of other life-cycle exchanges besides bride-wealth. Thorgeir Kolshus notes, for instance, that in Mota Island, Vanuatu, the parents of a child were those who made the birth payments to the midwife assistant to the birth

mother. Jeanette Dickerson-Putman details how, among the many forms of adoption and fosterage in the Austral Islands of French Polynesia, one form entails the adoption of a first-born grandchild by its paternal grandparents. She observes that "[i]t was a child's filial obligation to 'give' an offspring to their parents if they demanded one to show respect, to reciprocate for past care, and to provide them with assistance in the future" (this issue, 92). Dickerson-Putman suggests that this is considered a relationship of reciprocal exchange rather than simply an extension of the care given to adult children.

Two points are relevant here. First, systems of adoption need to be contextualized within the larger system of life-cycle exchanges within any given society—including not only bride-wealth, but also child-wealth, and birth and death payments. Second, in discussing the forms of adoption and affiliation of children, it is critical to attend to the underlying cultural understandings about person, parentage, and relatedness and to the ways in which these are established without presuming that these are given at birth.

III. Amity and Abuse in Adoptive Relations

In the history of kinship studies, the domain of kinship has often been distinguished from other analytic domains—such as politics and economics—by reference to a core animating sentiment deemed to be inherent and fundamental to the forms of relationship in this domain. For Fortes (1969), if not for all those in the British tradition, this was "amity"; for Schneider (1980, 1984), in the American tradition, this was love and "diffuse enduring solidarity"; and for those in the tradition of sociobiology and evolutionary psychology (e.g., Wilson 1975; Wright 1994), this has been "altruism" and "kin selection." To the extent that such sentiments have been seen as the most fundamental characteristics of kinship (indeed, often presumed to follow naturally from biological/genetic links), it has been difficult to make a space to talk about the actual existence of incest and sexual abuse, about emotional and physical abuse (particularly against women and children), and about plain old ambivalence. Yet, it is important to make a space to analyze the existence of violence, abuse, trauma, and ambivalence in the context of kinship—whether biological or any other kind of kinship—since these forms of violence are at the heart of kinship as much as love and diffuse, enduring solidarity (Gordon 1988; McKinnon 1995; Delaney 1998, 2001; Franklin and McKinnon 2001; Peletz 2001).

Because adoptive relations have been seen as relations of choice which, in the absence of biological bonds, are created solely from the will to care and

nurture, and because they have been part of more open and flexible family structures, they have not often been associated with abuse, violence, and trauma. Yet, the papers by Christine Salomon and Christine Hamelin, Manuel Rauchholz, Thorgeir Kolshus, Leslie Butt, and Jeanette Dickerson-Putman—which explore varying degrees of emotional trauma, violence, and/or sexual abuse associated with adoption—certainly call into question the more positive picture we have had of these nonbiological family formations.

However, in light of this new evidence linking adoption and various forms of trauma, violence, and abuse, it is crucial not to jump automatically to the opposite conclusion that, because adoptions involve nonbiological relations, they are inherently prone to violence and abuse in ways that biological relations are not. First of all, many of the adoptions considered here *do* involve people who are biologically related. Second, my guess would be that it is not adoption *as such* that is the problem, but rather the particular circumstances and practices that surround and give shape to it. We need to undertake a comparative analysis to understand what circumstances and practices create the conditions for various emotional responses to adoption—both positive ones of care, safety, and nurture as well as negative ones of violence, abuse, and trauma. In the process, it is important to clarify the significance of the differences between the various forms of adoption and fosterage we are considering and to analyze carefully the range of psychological as well as political, economic, and cultural issues that are integral to the differential effects of adoption and fosterage on the children and adults involved.

At the outset, then, as we attempt to analyze the nature and impact of adoption within a particular society or make comparisons between societies, it is critical that we do not conflate different forms of child transfer. Numerous forms of relation making go under the term "adoption" and other terms such as "fosterage." Yet, the differences between them are important in terms of understanding their meaning, significance, and consequences for the people and societies involved. This is even more the case when the analyst moves outside a single society and compares adoption cross-culturally. Some of the relevant differences we ought to attend to are outlined below.

The papers in this volume suggest that there are a number of psychological and psychosocial criteria that ought to be taken into account in any comparative analysis. These would include, for instance, the kinship categories involved, the age of adoption, whose needs and rights are being served, whether the adoption is secret or open, and the spatial distance between families. Are the relevant parties strangers or relatives, and are they creating a parental, sibling, or spousal relationship? Is the adoption carried out at birth, during childhood, or in adulthood? Is the adoption undertaken in

response to needs of the adoptee, the birth parents, the adoptive parents, or larger social groups? Do rights in children belong to individuals or extended families, houses, or clans? If secret, how does the adoptee come to learn of the "truth"? Often, both Kolshus and Rauchholz tell us, this seems to occur in the heat of a fight and as a mode of revenge, as someone blurts out the "truth" to a totally unsuspecting child. It does not take much imagination to understand the breach of trust—the "rope torn" (to use the Chuuk phrase) and the sudden upending of the world—that such an event must engender. If the adoption is open, does a child have easy access to both sets of parents, as is often the case in the Austral Islands, or is the child forcibly separated and/or beaten if he or she attempts to return to biological parents, as was noted for Chuuk society? Do birth families and adoptive families live in the same immediate social space, or are they separated by considerable distance? While many of these questions are significant on a purely psychological level, they also articulate in significant ways with the cultural and political economy of the specific societies and their relation to the hegemonies of the postcolonial and global orders.

In exploring the relation between psychological issues and the larger political economy, it is imperative to understand the importance of structures of gender, class, racial, and age hierarchies. How do these contribute to the rates of sexual, emotional, and physical abuse in the population at large relative to the adoptive population? How are unplanned pregnancies and unmarried mothers understood and valued? Are children of unmarried mothers highly stigmatized (as in New Caledonia), or are they accepted and accommodated (as among the Dani or the Austral Islanders)? How are different ideas of property and inheritance linked to different forms of kinship relation such that adoptees' rights of inheritance are ensured or contested?

Looking more broadly, there are a number of economic, political, and cultural issues that must be addressed in any comparative analysis of adoption. Most basically, what is the purpose of adoption? Is it part of a system of open gift exchange or is it a means to secure household labor and service? Is it an expression of nurturance and care of dependents (as in the Marshall Islands) or a means to resolve tensions and disputes between hierarchically ranked siblings (as in Chuuk society)? Is adoption seen as an unwanted burden of an additional child in the context of economic and social privation (as in New Caledonia); or is it seen as a "highly desirable addition" of a child and the means to expand the lineage in a context of high infant mortality (as among the Dani)? How is adoption valued relative to other forms of kin making? Is it a way of constituting chiefly and royal lines (as it was,

historically, in Hawai'i); a means of creating or perpetuating alliances; or a way of producing despised and stigmatized subordinates? Is adoption taking place in the context of social collapse (as it seems to be in New Caledonia) or of population explosion and land scarcity (as recently in Mota Island); or is it a means of cultural revival and retreat from the brink of extinction (as it has been in the Marshall and Austral Islands). Has adoption been stigmatized by the particular cultural understandings that inform ideas of what counts as modernization, development, and civilization that are central to colonial, missionary, and legal efforts in many parts of the world; or has it become a signifier of indigenous understandings and rights in the context of anticolonial and sovereignty movements (as in Hawai'i and Guam)?

It is essential that we undertake a nuanced analysis of the relation between adoption and the manifestations of abuse, violence, and trauma and not automatically presume that (particularly nonbiological) adoptive relations entail higher risks of violence. Rather, we should ask how the incidence of abuse, violence, and trauma increases or decreases when *specific* forms of adoption are carried out *in specific ways, within specific historical contexts, and shaped by specific hierarchies of cultural valuation and power*. Nonbiological and flexible forms of kinship in places like Oceania have historically been devalued, marginalized, and stigmatized by missionary and colonial regimes, as noted above. Our work should seek to understand the subtleties of forms of kin making that do not accord with our own at the same time that we seek to discover the causes of trauma, abuse, and violence that may attend *any* form of relatedness.

Conclusion

It is a sign of the productivity of this special issue that it has generated as many new questions as it has answered. The strength of *Relative Power* is that it has placed issues relating to the transfer of children in the context of the power inequalities that have shaped both the specific relations of gender and kinship in Oceania and the histories of colonization, sovereignty movements, and the forces of contemporary globalization in the Pacific. And, in drawing upon recent innovations in the study of kinship, gender, and culture, the essays in this special issue have shown that the study of child transfer illuminates much not only about the intimate particularities of diverse forms of family making but also about the ways in which these diverse forms have been critical players in the grander narratives and larger realities of colonization, development, globalization, and sovereignty movements. The special issue's strength thus also lies in the ways in which it places adoption squarely

at the center of the entangled histories of anthropological theories of kinship and modernization. It has revealed much about these entanglements and, in the process, compels us to probe further into the knotty issues that have come to light in the process.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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