

Cambridge University Press

0521656273 - Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship - Edited by Janet Carsten

Frontmatter/Prelims

[More information](#)

---

*Cultures of Relatedness*

## New Approaches to the Study of Kinship

Our understanding of what makes a person a relative has been transformed by radical changes in marriage arrangements and gender relations, and by new reproductive technologies. We can no longer take it for granted that our most fundamental social relationships are grounded in 'biology' or 'nature'. These developments have prompted anthropologists to take a fresh look at idioms of relatedness in other societies, and to review the ways in which relationships are symbolised and interpreted in our own society. Defamiliarising some classic cases, challenging the established analytic categories of anthropology, the contributors to this innovative book focus on the boundary between the 'biological' and the 'social', and bring into question the received wisdom at the heart of the study of kinship.

JANET CARSTEN is Senior Lecturer in Social Anthropology at the University of Edinburgh. She is the author of *The Heat of the Hearth* (1977) and co-editor of *About the House*, published by Cambridge University Press in 1995.

Cambridge University Press

0521656273 - Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship - Edited by Janet Carsten

Frontmatter/Prelims

[More information](#)

# Cultures of Relatedness

*New Approaches to the Study of Kinship*

---

*Edited by*

Janet Carsten

*University of Edinburgh*



**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press

0521656273 - Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship - Edited by

Janet Carsten

Frontmatter/Prelims

[More information](#)

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK <http://www.cup.cam.ac.uk>

40 West 20th Street, New York NY 10011-4211, USA <http://www.cup.org>

10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia

© Cambridge University Press 2000

This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2000

Typeset in Plantin 10/12 pt [CE]

*A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress cataloguing in publication data*

Cultures of relatedness: new approaches to the study of kinship / edited by Janet Carsten.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 0 521 65193 X (hardback). – ISBN 0 521 65627 3 (paperback)

1. Kinship Congresses. I. Carsten, Janet.

GN487.C85 2000

306.83 – dc21 99–15844 CIP

ISBN 0 521 65193 X hardback

ISBN 0 521 65627 3 paperback

Transferred to digital printing 2003

Cambridge University Press

0521656273 - Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship - Edited by Janet Carsten

Frontmatter/Prelims

[More information](#)

## Contents

---

<i>List of illustrations</i>	<i>page</i> vi
<i>List of contributors</i>	vii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
1 Introduction: cultures of relatedness JANET CARSTEN	1
2 Chinese patriliney and the cycles of <i>yang</i> and <i>laiwang</i> CHARLES STAFFORD	37
3 Identity and substance: the broadening bases of relatedness among the Nuer of southern Sudan SHARON ELAINE HUTCHINSON	55
4 Sentiment and substance in North Indian forms of relatedness HELEN LAMBERT	73
5 Kindreds and descent groups: new perspectives from Madagascar RITA ASTUTI	90
6 How Karembola men become mothers KAREN MIDDLETON	104
7 ‘He used to be my relative’: exploring the bases of relatedness among Iñupiat of northern Alaska BARBARA BODENHORN	128
8 Including our own JEANETTE EDWARDS AND MARILYN STRATHERN	149
9 Figures of relations: reconnecting kinship studies and museum collections MARY BOUQUET	167
<i>Bibliography</i>	191
<i>Index</i>	208

Cambridge University Press

0521656273 - Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship - Edited by Janet Carsten

Frontmatter/Prelims

[More information](#)

## Illustrations

---

- |   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |          |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | The Bedamini dancer. <i>Photo</i> : Annette Sletnes. Reproduced by kind permission of the Oslo University Ethnographic Museum                                                                                                                                          | page 171 |
| 2 | Sid Askrig's family. Reproduced by kind permission of the author. First published in N. Rapport, <i>Diverse World Views in an English Village</i> (Edinburgh University Press, 1993)                                                                                   | 173      |
| 3 | Plan of the Royal Frederiks University, Christiania, around the mid nineteenth century. The library is on the left; the museums occupy the central building, Domus Media; and the lecture theatres are on the right-hand side. <i>Source</i> : Oslo University Library | 176      |
| 4 | Latour's variable geometry for the ontology of mediators. <i>Source</i> : B. Latour, <i>We Have Never Been Modern</i> , trans. C. Porter (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), p. 86. Reproduced with permission                                                       | 181      |
| 5 | Fourteen wax heads in glass boxes on the central staircase of the Ethnographic Museum in Oslo. <i>Photo</i> : Ann Christine Eek. Oslo University Ethnographic Museum                                                                                                   | 183      |

Cambridge University Press

0521656273 - Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship - Edited by Janet Carsten

Frontmatter/Prelims

[More information](#)

---

## Contributors

---

RITA ASTUTI is Lecturer in Anthropology at the London School of Economics. She is the author of *Peoples of the Sea: Identity and Descent among the Vezo of Madagascar* (1995). She is currently carrying out research on infant cognition in Madagascar.

BARBARA BODENHORN is College Lecturer in Social Sciences at Pembroke College, Cambridge, and is affiliated with the Social Anthropology Department at the University of Cambridge. She has published on kinship, gender, economic relations, and literacy with reference to northern Alaska.

MARY BOUQUET has held research and teaching posts at the universities of Exeter, Lisbon, Amsterdam, and Oslo; and she has made exhibitions at the Museu de Etnologia (Lisbon), the Nationaal Natuurhistorisch Museum (Leiden), and the Etnografiske Museum (University of Oslo). Her publications include *Reclaiming English Kinship* (1993) and *Sans og samling/Bringing It All Back Home . . . to the Oslo University Ethnographic Museum* (1996). She currently teaches cultural anthropology and museology at Utrecht University and is writing on family photography and exhibitionary practice.

JANET CARSTEN is Senior Lecturer in Social Anthropology at the University of Edinburgh. She has carried out fieldwork in Malaysia. Her research interests include kinship, gender, the house, and migration. She co-edited *About the House: Lévi-Strauss and Beyond* (1995) with Stephen Hugh-Jones and is the author of *The Heat of the Hearth: The Process of Kinship in a Malay Fishing Community* (1997).

JEANETTE EDWARDS is Lecturer in the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology at the University of Keele. She has conducted fieldwork in north-west England. Her research interests are in kinship, community, reproductive technologies, and social identity. She co-authored *Technologies of Procreation* (1993), and her mono-

Cambridge University Press

0521656273 - Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship - Edited by Janet Carsten

Frontmatter/Prelims

[More information](#)viii *List of contributors*

graph on kinship and community in north-west England is currently in press.

SHARON ELAINE HUTCHINSON is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. She has conducted extensive fieldwork in the southern Sudan. Her research interests are in social and cultural change, political economy, ritual and religion, and gender. Her monograph *Nuer Dilemmas: Coping with Money, War, and the State* (1996) was awarded the Amaury Talbot Prize for African anthropology.

HELEN LAMBERT is Senior Lecturer in Medical Anthropology at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, London University. She has conducted extensive fieldwork in Rajasthan, North India, and in Britain. Her research interests include popular Hinduism and therapeutics, sexual health, and the social construction of medicine. She is the author of a number of articles on these topics.

KAREN MIDDLETON has conducted fieldwork among the Karembola of Madagascar. She is the author of several articles on the peoples of southern Madagascar and is the editor of *Ancestors, Power, and History in Madagascar* (1999).

CHARLES STAFFORD is Lecturer in Anthropology at the London School of Economics. His fieldwork has been conducted in south-eastern Taiwan and north-eastern mainland China, and his research interests include childhood, education, popular religion, kinship, and historical consciousness. He is the author of *The Roads of Chinese Childhood* (1995) and is currently completing a monograph on Chinese processes of ‘separation’ and ‘reunion’.

MARILYN STRATHERN is William Wyse Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Cambridge. Her interests are divided between Melanesian (*Women in Between*, 1972) and British (*Kinship at the Core*, 1981) ethnography. *The Gender of the Gift* (1988) is a critique of anthropological theories of society and gender relations as they have been applied to Melanesia, while *After Nature* (1992) comments on the cultural revolution at home. A monograph on the comparative method is called *Partial Connections* (1991). Her most recent publications include the co-authored *Technologies of Procreation* (1993) and the edited volume *Shifting Contexts: Transformations in Anthropological Knowledge* (1995).

Cambridge University Press

0521656273 - Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship - Edited by Janet Carsten

Frontmatter/Prelims

[More information](#)

---

## Acknowledgements

---

The chapters in this volume were all originally presented in October 1996 as a panel which formed part of a 'Boundaries and Identities' conference held to celebrate fifty years of Social Anthropology at the University of Edinburgh. I am grateful to Tony Cohen for providing the space and the occasion, furnishing administrative support, and giving his warm encouragement then and since.

The introduction was written during the tenure of a Nuffield Foundation Social Science Research Fellowship. I am grateful to the Nuffield Foundation, and also to my colleagues in the Department of Social Anthropology at Edinburgh for providing the opportunity for a period of writing and research.

Various people have given me help in the sometimes bumpy process of seeing this book into print. I owe a particular debt to Marilyn Strathern and to Sarah Franklin for giving me detailed comments on an earlier draft of the introduction, and for their encouragement and advice when it was most needed. I am also grateful to Jessica Kuper for her support, and to the anonymous reviewers for Cambridge University Press for their comments.

Jonathan Spencer not only persuaded me to jettison an earlier version of the introduction, he has also been characteristically generous with his ideas, his critical comments, and his support at every stage. Needless to say, I lay claim to the remaining lapses in the editing and introduction.