

# Chronotopic Formulations and Kinship Behaviors in Social History

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## ABSTRACT

*Reflexive models of kinship behavior permit social persons to establish kin relations, real or imagined, both with persons they meet and with persons altogether elsewhere, and at varying degrees of spatial and temporal remove in social history. Such chronotopic formulations of social relations enable persons and groups to co-locate themselves and kin-like others in place and time, and through these formulations, to participate in collective social projects in the times and places in which they happen to be living, whether through practices that maintain an established social order or through practices that attempt to alter it or their place within it. Based on examples from the accompanying articles, I provide a comparative discussion and commentary on the many varied and fascinating issues raised in this special collection on “kinship chronotopes.” [Keywords: Kinship, chronotopes, religious practices, affinal avoidance, national belonging]*

What do young Korean sopranos who sing in church choirs have in common with elderly Japanese gentlemen living alone? What do Indian Muslims who mourn distant tragedies share with Amazonian Indians who avoid the names of their own children? What do white Kenyans seeking autochthonous belonging in Kenya share with Mauritians seeking authentic roots elsewhere?

The accompanying articles show that in all of these cases, and others, participants in social practices around the world routinely invoke the idiom of kinship to perform or construe interpersonal behaviors, whether their own or of those they meet or try to imagine. In doing so, they inhabit kin-like relationships with persons or groups that are sometimes nearby in time and place (such as their interlocutors), and sometimes quite far (such as the dead, or the unborn). The social-semiotic practices through which people inhabit these relations are kinship behaviors whose participants rely on chronotopic formulations of place, time, and personhood (Agha 2007a) in order to become recognizable to each other as social beings of specific kinds, whether as persons already belonging to, or as persons hoping to avoid, group-specific historical trajectories in relation to others.

### **Kinship Behaviors**

I use the term *kinship behavior* (Agha 2007b) to describe perceivable behaviors that are phenomenally disparate in kind, but are semiotically unified by the presence of kinship terms, whether 1) in the practices through which they are performed, or 2) in the practices through which they are construed. In the first type of case, kinship behaviors consist of speech behaviors in which kinship terms readily occur as utterance segments. In the second type of case, the behaviors in question may be of *any* perceivable kind; they count as kinship behaviors only insofar as—and as long as—they are construed or typified society-internally through an idiom of kinship. In all cases, the significance of perceivable behavior as kinship behavior is formulated through cultural models of conduct, and is recoverable only by those acquainted with these models. Like the accompanying articles show, it takes a semiotically informed ethnography to make the model and what it construes intelligible to others—a feat that requires attention *both* to the metasigns (or metasemiotic practices) that formulate the construal *and* the object-signs (or interpersonal behaviors) that are construed through them. To lose sight of one or other is to lose sight

of the reflexive models that make these practices intelligible to those whose practices they are.

In kinship behaviors of the first kind—where kin terms occur as utterance-segments—the social-indexical significance of such behaviors is not recoverable from the lexical denotation of the kin terms that happen to be used or avoided in some instance (multiple forms of address and reference are always available as alternatives in any social interaction), but is readily apparent from metasemiotic discourses that specify which kin terms are appropriately used by whom in relation to which others. When Korean Christians avoid asymmetric patterns of traditional kin term usage in favor of a simplified symmetric pattern in Church settings, they formulate themselves as “Christian brothers and sisters” before God, and Korea as an emerging “global center of Christianity” (Harkness, this issue). This self-formulation is evident in their narratives of ethno-national and spiritual progress within Korea (which differentiate them from other Koreans), and of the cosmographic progress of Christianity within world history (which differentiates them from non-Christians), thus giving a distinctive formulation to their own place in community, nation and history.

In kinship behaviors of the second kind—which are phenomenally diverse, and in which no kin terms need occur—the fact that kinship relations of some specific kind are even at issue is only intelligible to those acquainted with discourses that metasemiotically typify such behaviors through an idiom of kinship. When Wauja speakers in Brazil avoid affinal kin terms in favor of their addressee’s personal names (Ball, this issue), no kin terms occur in their speech; the act is recognizable as kinship behavior only if the non-occurrence of a kin term in a position of expectable utterance is typified culture internally as an act of affinal avoidance and consanguineal intimacy. When Japanese elders are seen to die alone in urban locales (Nozawa, this issue), the specter of *kodokushi*, or “solitary death,” is seen as pertaining to kinship only by someone aware that the spirits of the dead require propitiation by family members in order to traverse the transmigration of souls. When present-day Shi’ites in Bombay lament the death of Muhammad’s kin in Iraq centuries ago (Eisenlohr, this issue), the fact that many Shi’ites self-identify as Sayyids (or genealogical descendants of Muhammad) formulates the religious ritual as an observance that links them to their own deceased kin.

Before we turn to these cases, however, it is necessary to see that Bakhtin’s discussion of “chronotopes” provides a visionary glimpse of

a set of semiotic possibilities that require substantial rethinking before Bakhtin's insights can inform any type of ethnographic study.

### **Chronotopic Formulations**

Bakhtin's (1987) account of "chronotopes" concerns characters in novels, not living, breathing persons in social history. It shows that time-space delineations of conduct are sketched in novelistic depictions, but not how such sketches pertain to the affairs of persons in society, or how they are produced or sustained in social history.

In actual social life, chronotopic formulations are routinely produced through semiotic activities, but need not survive the event of their production. Since every utterance entails a chronotopic formulation of its referents through person, place, and time deixis, most chronotopic formulations are singular, unique, and evanescent, and are supplanted by each subsequent utterance. On the other hand, chronotopic formulations are also disseminated through intersubjectively ratified metasemiotic practices and recycled into group-centric interpersonal routines (Agha 2007a), where they enable specific forms of social life. The articles in this collection describe cases where socially regular chronotopic formulations of time, place, and personhood inform the interpersonal conduct of specific social groups, and mobilize their members into cohesive value projects and group-centric aspirational trajectories. How many "chronotopes" do they need to create well-lit aspirational homes? How are such "chronotopes" produced? To whom do they matter? How do we know?

These are ethnographic questions that never troubled Bakhtin because ethnography was not what he was trying to do. The time and place where the noun "chronotope" was born were quite different. Bakhtin observes that, whereas Kant supposes Newtonian space and time to be universal forms of human intuition, historical genres of even the European novel differ in how they depict the spatial and temporal organization of characters' experiences within the novel's own plot (1981:85). Bakhtin studies genres of novelistic prose in order to formulate a critique of Kant's epistemology, a critique that his term "chronotope" is coined to name. By contrast, and instead of examining script-artifacts like novels, the accompanying articles study the semiotic activities of living, breathing people in specific zones of social interaction—in schools and pilgrimages in Mauritius, in religious processions in Bombay, in church choirs in Korea, in farms and estates in

Kenya, and in social welfare projects in Japan—where persons produce formulations of Selves and Others that sustain specific value projects in efforts to remake the very social worlds in which they believe themselves to be living.

If we wish to understand such practices and projects ethnographically, all talk of countable and pluralizable “chronotopes” obscures the forms of discursive semiosis through which our ethnographic object is made and remade before our eyes. Rather than speaking of “chronotopes,” it becomes necessary instead to examine the activities through which *chronotopic formulations* are produced by historically situated social actors in particular times and places as they pursue social projects that may succeed or fail. The production of chronotopic formulations, in my sense, invariably has an event structure: it is a happening in space and time; it has a participation framework; and it is produced through forms of discursive semiosis that typify perceivable behaviors—including speech behaviors—as emblematic of specific social kinds of persons. Such typifications locate criterial behaviors, and those whose behaviors these are, in particular times and places, zoning them off from each other, assigning them specific fates and fortunes, pasts and futures, prospects and horizons. The ones who produce such typifications—who may or may not exhibit such personae through their own behaviors, who may or may not belong to the chronotopes they formulate—invariably have stakes in what they are doing; and the formulations they produce are eminently defeasible, susceptible to tropic manipulations (and counter-formulations) by others, thus yielding, through the work of many, an intelligible order of social history populated by readable persons, including those encountered by anthropologists.

### **Metasemiotic Discourses**

If we take kinship behaviors as objects of empirical interest, it is readily apparent that the range of perceivable activities that are construed as kinship behaviors, and thus come to count as object-signs of kin-relation under these construals, is sufficiently varied and open-ended that these object-signs are not, by themselves, of any interest. What matters is the relationship between the metasigns and object-signs through which some perceivable behavior comes to be formulated (and understood) as kinship behavior, the conditions under which these formulations arise, and the social practices they enable or displace.

In the cases discussed in this collection, perceivable behaviors of varied kinds—patterns of land use and domestic employment in Kenya, of cohabitation and solitary death in Japan, the use (or non-use) of Hindi versus Creole in Mauritius, of kin terms versus proper names in Brazil, and of traditional versus new forms of address in Korea—are treated as emblematic of relations with nearby or distant kin, whether by the actors in question or by others. The issue of their chronotopic formulation arises when such emblems are zoned off from each other in specific ways: those whose behaviors these are now appear to inhabit specific times and places within sociocultural imaginaries—involving citizenship in Kenya, immigrant authenticity in Mauritius, ethno-national and spiritual vanguards in Korea, inter-clan relations in Brazil, inter-generational relations in Japan, and so on—and these discursively formulated locales and periods, whether deictically near or far, whether modalized as past or future, whether actual or conjectural, now become zoned off as settings in which questions of the belonging or non-belonging of specific social kinds acquire stakes for those who display criterial behaviors in their own conduct, and for those who contrast with them because they don't.

For Kenyans (McIntosh, this issue), claims to kinship or kin-like relations mediate claims of belonging to the nation-state in its post-colonial phase. When national belonging is linked to *jus sanguinis* (the right of blood), a genealogical idiom anchors a person to a political present through an ancestral past. For white Kenyans, however, it is the wrong past: their ancestors were European colonials. Yet, it wasn't always the wrong past. It is only after Kenyan Independence in 1963 that European settlers and their descendants effectively become alter egos to a newly imagined national polity (a group against which the post-Independence nation-state contrastively defines citizens native to itself), and thus acquire new chronotopically zoned identities even as they continue to live in the same place. But what about the place itself? Although their ancestors gave them bloodlines on Kenyan soil, it's the wrong kind of soil. The soil of an independent state is not the same as the soil of a colony, and you can't tell the difference by taking soil samples. Its attributes are formulated not by metasemiotic discourses like chemistry, but by discursive frameworks like the Kenyan Constitution and International Law, which specify what its legally zoned and spatially discontinuous boundaries happen to be (the soil beneath foreign consulates is not part of Kenyan soil, for instance, though surrounded by it), and what entitlements its residents (as

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social categories) happen to have; who is anchored to Kenyan soil and in what manner through a National Identity Card (not everyone can claim autochthonous origins when renewing one); and who is entitled to hold Kenyan soil as inalienable property (by what criteria, and for how long). When their sociopolitical status is chronotopically reformulated through post-Independence discourses, white Kenyans face new anxieties and produce new counter-discourses in response.

Since white Kenyans lack indigenous African bloodlines as a group, their indigeneity can only be established through discourses that reformulate their links to Kenyan soil and nation by reformulating the characteristics of those who give them these links. They produce two kinds of kinship narratives—one involving their own white ancestors, the other involving their domestic servants—in attempts to reformulate their connection to present-day Kenya. Their white ancestors link them to their present-day estates through inheritance, but also link them to settler colonialism through descent, which makes their entitlement to land precarious in post-independence Kenya. Can their ancestors (and hence they themselves) be linked differently or more effectively to Kenyan soil? The first type of narrative emphasizes the fact that their ancestors not only mixed their own labor with Kenyan soil through agriculture (and, through this Lockean form of incorporation, came to own it as their property), but also “developed” modern agricultural practices and infrastructures, making these available to the nation as a whole. The second narrative emphasizes fictive kinship connections between white Africans and their own domestic servants, who do happen to have suitably African bloodlines. Can the servants that they (and their ancestors) have historically employed be linked more intimately to themselves? When white Kenyans formulate their servants as metaphorically their “family members,” they emphasize the degree of closeness they feel with them and the forms of financial support they now give and have given them over generational time, which suggests a longstanding connection between Lockean employers and African bloodlines—or so the formulation runs from the standpoint of white Kenyans. Yet, these narratives remain precarious. They are not usually ratified by their domestic servants, who point out the ways in which closeness with employers is also curtailed through forms of distance, as through practices like eating separately while living in the same house, or through proscriptions on romantic relations and marriage.

### Chronotopic Zoning Through Infrastructure

For Mauritian Hindus (Eisenlohr, this issue), the theme of ancestral roots focuses on religious identity through Indian descent, not on matters of citizenship. The State recognizes and encourages links between Mauritian citizens and their “ancestral cultures.” The link is encouraged and maintained by a complex state-sponsored infrastructure, which, on the one hand, involves schooling protocols that promote Hindi as the “ancestral” language of Creole-speaking Hindus (whose actual ancestors spoke Bhojpuri, however) and, on the other, involves a civil infrastructure of roads and utilities that enable the annual Shivratri pilgrimage, at which 400,000 pilgrims gather together each year, to perform and listen to devotional *bhajan* songs in Hindi (amidst other activities), thereby availing of the indexical connection between Hindi and ancestral culture (promoted by schooling), and between religious observance and authentic roots (experienced through ritual and song)—a series of practices that enables them to recuperate ancestral ties with places, times, and people elsewhere without having to leave Mauritian soil.

Although the religious practices of Shi'ite Muslims in Bombay (also discussed by Eisenlohr) do not in general require any specialized technologies, their form and significance is transformed when they are linked to forms of media dissemination. Shi'ite religious practices traditionally unfold through religious processions (*julus*), devotional gatherings (*majlis*) and poetic recitations of lament genres like *marsiya* and *noha*, which reach a special intensity on the tenth day of Muharram, the date of Hussain's martyrdom. In these calendrically anchored and collectively performed rituals, the co-presence of lamenters and the ceremonial intensity and elaboration of their laments enable present-day lamenters to feel directly linked to long-deceased martyrs. Due to contemporary innovations in media technology, however, these laments can now be experienced through audio and video CDs, or through MP3 players and the Internet, all of which enable access to lament performances by anyone, anywhere, and at any time. These technologies of electronic recording and transmission decouple the performance and its listeners from collectively performed and calendrically anchored rituals. Under these conditions, the fidelity of the recorded version to *in vivo* performance itself becomes salient to spatio-temporally dispersed listeners as the thread that links them to authentic performance. When the technology falters (in the form of blurred pixels, scratched disks, electricity failures), the simulated experience of being



present at the ritual (and of being linked directly to martyrs through lament) tends also to break down. Since many Shi'ite Muslims formulate a fictive genealogy to the prophet's family and its martyred members, the breakdown is also a momentary break in their experience of a seemingly direct link to their own ancestral lineage.

In the Japanese case discussed by Nozawa, the behavior construed as kinship behavior is linked to chronotopes of death and, in particular, to the prospect of *kodokushi*, or "solitary death." In a context of rapid urban migration, where population density and urban solitude appear to increase hand in hand, the strange case of a man dying in Tokyo amidst his family members (with whom he resided) 30 years before his mummified body is discovered yields a moral panic about the absence of personal contact among family members and urban co-residents throughout modern Japan.

Since everyone ages and dies, public discourses about *kodokushi* become matters of widespread concern and take a variety of institutional and infrastructural forms. Government projects of *kodokushi* prevention, social welfare efforts to reach out to the elderly, bank programs which offer savings accounts to senior citizens, and others, all attempt in varying ways to provide specialized goods and services to a specific social category, the elderly—which, in an aging population, is a social category to which everyone expects eventually to belong (though not everyone expects a solitary death). And yet features of modern life—where patterns of job mobility and urban migration tend to relocate people to places at some remove from family and natal residence—make questions of isolation and relatedness particularly salient and haunting features of life (and death) in contemporary Japan.

This anxiety is also taken up in more abstract discourses of rights and obligations, where people are viewed as tied to each other through so-called "*-en*" relations of various kinds: through *ketsu-en* (relations of blood; kinship); through *sha-en* (corporate affiliations); through *chi-en* (relations from land/habitation); or, when all these are absent, through *mu-en* (no relation). When these formulations of relatedness employ specific metasemiotic terms—such as the above expressions, which are formed by a word-stem (*ketsu-/sha-/chi-*) plus suffix (*-en*)—the word-stem denotes a specific scenario of interpersonal encounter (kinship, corporation, habitation), where a particular framework of rights and obligations can be imagined as apposite. But when the term *en* is decoupled from any word-stem, and treated as an independent nominal, its non-specificity appears to imply abstract

“relatedness-as-such,” which leads to questions about what that is. Here lies anxiety. Whereas the noun stem in stem+suffix forms (like ketsu-en, sha-en, chi-en) anchors social relations to specific interpersonal routines (of family, of organization, of neighborhood life), the stranded nominal en, understood as “relatedness-as-such,” does not delimit any specific behaviors that can readily be linked to obligations and entitlements of some determinate kind. Until these are found, anxiety about en (relatedness) and fear of mu-en (no relation) walk hand in hand across this mediatized landscape, separated by a word-stem that just says “no!”

Nozawa observes that these issues have not yet found a solution. The chronotopic imaginaries associated with kodokushi and with attempts to ameliorate it appear at this time to be efforts to imagine new forms of sociality that don’t yet exist. The transition from traditionally grounded ketsu-en kinship to other types of en has not been made effectively as yet, since the institutional arrangements that would ground such new forms of sociality have not yet emerged. The case discussed by Nozawa therefore provides a useful contrast to the others discussed in this collection, simply because it highlights the fact that chronotopic imaginaries often have a proleptic form, and may exist as social facts long before the phenomena they describe, or seek to bring about, themselves happen to exist as objects of experience in social life.

### **The “Which-When-Whom” Aspect of Speech Behavior**

When kinship behavior consists of utterances containing kin terms, its interpersonal significance cannot be inferred by attending only to features of current utterances, including any kin terms that may occur in them. Many distinct kin terms (and other role designators) are always available as terms of address or reference in any interpersonal encounter. Using the wrong term is socially perilous. But what’s the right term? Any kin terms that do occur as segmentable forms in speech behavior acquire stereotypical indexical values from socially regular typifications of appropriate use (or non-use) under given contextual conditions, to which speakers are socialized across a life course.

The great peculiarity of speech behavior is that the presence of denotatively contentful segments (especially “words”) in a current utterance distracts from more widespread metasemiotic discourses that make their social indexicality construable in any utterance. To know the which-when-whom

characteristics of denotational segments (e.g., *which* term to use or avoid, *when* to do so, in speaking to *whom*) is to know what speakers and hearers know in treating them as social indexicals. For any given speech repertoire (such as a repertoire of kin terms) many distinct norms of use and non-use routinely co-exist within any language community, differentiating specific social domains of users (those acquainted with specific indexical norms) from each other. The positionality of the norm is frequently conceptualized as the positionality of those *for whom* it is a norm.

In his discussion of Korean Christian practices, Nicholas Harkness calls attention to two competing norms of metaphoric kinship behavior (i.e., the use of kin terms for known genealogical non-kin) that are extant in Korea today: a newer one promoted by the Protestant Church, and the older Confucian one. Metaphoric kinship is pervasive in Korean society in general, as in normalized tropes where *grandmother* and *grandfather* are used to address strangers who are senior citizens. The Church promotes a distinctive pattern of metaphoric kinship through the use of sibling terms, which builds upon, by partly departing from, more widely accepted patterns of metaphoric sibling address. Whereas traditional terms for older brother (*oppa/hyong*) and older sister (*onni/nuna*) differentiate both addressee and speaker gender, and their nonreciprocal usage (where older interlocutors respond with proper names rather than kin terms) differentiates the relative age of interlocutors, the Church's own emblematic terms (*hyongje* [brother] and *chamae* [sister]) neutralize distinctions of speaker gender, and are normatively deployed in a pattern of symmetric exchange that effaces distinctions of relative age. The Church-specific address practices thus index less specific (gender neutral) speaker personae and less hierarchical interpersonal relations than does everyday speech. By using these patterns, members of the Church are understood as inhabiting egalitarian sibling relations as children before God in the family of the Church.

By promoting new kinship tropes, the Church seeks to differentiate itself and its members from Korean society in general. How far does it get? The Church's usages remain restricted to certain participation frameworks. They are readily used by pastors to address congregations collectively, but they are used for individuals only if they are strangers (i.e., when an addressee's generic Christian identity is all that can be taken for granted). By contrast, when individual members of a congregation are personally acquainted with each other, they particularize themselves against generic Christian personae, whether by using everyday kin terms (and

honorifics) or by using status-differentiating titles, including titles specific to the Church itself, such as those denoting task-specific roles in Church activities (like *söngüi pujang* [choir robe manager]) or titles conferred by the Church on the basis of high rank within the Church's own bureaucracy (like *chipsa* [deacon], *changno* [elder]). Even if the Church promotes new address practices (involving egalitarian siblinghood, and titles peculiar to itself) which differentiate it from the rest of Korean society, its own members find themselves episodically conforming to society-wide hierarchical norms in the course of inhabiting egalitarian Christian selves.

The Church's attempts to change in-group protocols of address and deference are also attempts to intervene within and re-imagine the social order of Korean society as a whole. Even though changes in tropic kin term usage involve a small lexical set, these changes are taken up into metasemiotic discourses that link them and their users to narratives of ethnonational and spiritual progress, which formulate modern egalitarian Christians as more spiritually advanced than other Koreans, and which formulate Korea as whole, through the practices of its Christians, as a vanguard of the spread of Christianity in human history. And so, even if the newer set of modern-egalitarian relations are only experienced episodically by members of the Church, these episodic moments are saturated in images of modernity and spiritual progress that Korean Christians are able to experience as chronotopically configured features of themselves.

I noted earlier that when kinship behavior consists of speech behavior, its interpersonal significance cannot be inferred by attending solely to features of current utterance; it derives from metasemiotic frameworks for performing and construing such utterances. Christopher Ball (this issue) considers a case where the speech behaviors that count as kinship behaviors contain no kin terms as utterance segments. It involves behaviors involving proper names, some of which are significant when they are actually uttered, while others become significant when they are properly avoided.

Speakers of the Wauja language in Brazil inherit names from consanguineal grandparents in public rituals, and their use of such names in utterances indexes consanguineal relations within lines of descent. But names associated with affines are normatively avoided. The fact that such avoidance is going on cannot be detected by attending solely to the utterances that count as kinship behaviors. It requires attention to native commentary on such utterances. And, as Ball shows, norms of affinal avoidance can be reconstructed by analyzing the relationship between these commentaries

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(qua metasigns) and the utterances-interactions (qua object-signs) that they evaluate and typify.

Behavior that conforms to these norms makes manifest the speaker's relation to affines. The more ubiquitous and recurrent such avoidance is, the wider the network of affinal relations made manifest through it. A person can avoid an affine's name when addressing him. Or, a parent addressing a child can avoid the name given him by a spouse's parents. And when the child's mother and father use different names for the same child, as they routinely do, the contrast between their behaviors locates each of them, and their child, in distinct networks of kin relation, making these networks presentationally manifest in each here-and-now of utterance. And since these practices recur over many encounters that involve many families who are variously related to each other, the activity of consistently invoking identifiably distinct spheres of kin relation indexically recapitulates a much larger social order, which extends to a past and a future in social history, and does so one participation framework at a time from each here and now of current interaction.

As relational terms, affinal names are passed down through chains of descent, and thus index ancestral lineages through time, but lineages are also recalibrated through events of performative nomination. When a new name is conferred in a baptismal ritual, an older name is cast off. Since the ritual involves both re-nomination and de-nomination, it socially repositions the name bearer in a new line of tropic consanguineal descent, confers upon him associations that the name has acquired in previous lifetimes, and locates the current name bearer in a new affinal network: everyone who was affine to previous bearers of the name is now affine to the new name bearer as well. Such transformations alter privileges of social intimacy and distance, resituating the name bearer by canceling older entitlements and obligations, while creating new ones.

Both Harkness and Ball focus on speech behaviors that count as kinship behaviors. But each of them also points to non-discursive kinship behaviors in the societies they investigate. Among Koreans, the contrast between particularized kin relations (within the family) and generic Christian relations (among Church members) is marked not only by differences in speech behaviors among the living but by differences in the organization of burial mounds (see Harkness 2014:149): Confucian burial mounds differentiate and track genealogical family relations among the dead; Christian practices bring the dead from different families together

into a single mound, unifying them as members of a (fictive) Church family before God. In the Wauja practices discussed by Ball, the avoidance of affines consists not only of name avoidance but also of routines for moving through the village (as a geographic space) in order to avoid physical encounters with affines. Chronotopic formulations of affinity thus include spatialized trajectories of movement through the village, which happen to be temporalized trajectories too: the name bearer not only practices affinal avoidance through verbal and kinesthetic behaviors, but also avoids places where affines reside or are typically present, and potentially avoids any place *when* an affine is present in it. Places phase in and out of chronotopes of affinal avoidance; some are persistently avoided by a given name bearer, others only occasionally; and when a place cannot be avoided due to practical necessities, the name bearer has to perform elaborate verbal and kinesic routines of respectful avoidance towards affines who happen to be present in it at that time.

We might conclude by observing that, in any society, kinship behaviors are saturated in locale-specific metasemiotic formulations of what to do (and not to do) in order to belong (or not belong) to the kinship (or kin-like) community in question. Since they involve locale-specific models of conduct, they are only intelligible to those acquainted with these models. Since the behaviors they model include discursive and non-discursive conduct, kinship behaviors include a much larger class of forms of conduct than is sometimes realized. Since these models construe the conduct of persons, they invariably link the persons whose behaviors these are to persons in other times and places. Such chronotopic formulations of conduct have nothing intrinsically to do with kinship, but organize kinship relations, just as they organize other types of social relations. They project possibilities of action and interaction of various kinds, potentially opening up some options while foreclosing others. In describing a range of cases, the accompanying articles open up the possibility of studying social relations of diverse kinds in many times and places. And the ethnographic care with which they attend to their materials invites us to exercise similar care with our own, lest the reflexive organization of human conduct mislead or misplace our efforts in untimely ways. ■

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**Foreign Language Translations: (PLACEHOLDER ONLY)**

Linguistic Atonement: Penitence and Privilege in White Kenyan Language Ideologies

[Keywords: Language ideology, Kiswahili, colonialism, whiteness, white Africans, white privilege, East Africa]

语言学的赎罪：肯尼亚白人语言意识形态中的悔罪与特权

[关键词：语言意识形态，斯瓦希里语，殖民主义，白人性，非洲白人，白人特权，东非]

Expição Linguística: Penitência e Privilégio nas Ideologias da Linguagem do Quênia Branco

[Palavras-chave: Ideologias da linguagem, Kiswahili, colonialism, alvura, africanos brancos, privilégio branco, África Oriental]

Лингвистическое искупление: покаяние и привилегия в белых кенийских идиологиях

[Ключевые слова: лингвистическая идеология, кисуахили, колониализм, белезна, белые африканцы, восточная Африка]

الغفران اللغوي: الندم والإمتياز في أيديولوجيات اللغة الكينية البيضاء

الكلمات الدالة: أيديولوجيات اللغة، اللغة السواحيلية، الإستعمار، البياض، الأفارقة البيض، الامتياز للبيض، شرق أفريقيا

