

Race, Ethnicity and Nation

Biosocial Society Series

General Editor: **Catherine Panter-Brick**, Professor of Anthropology,
University of Durham

Volume 1

Race, Ethnicity and Nation

Perspectives from Kinship and Genetics

Edited by Peter Wade

Race, Ethnicity and Nation

Perspectives from Kinship and Genetics

Edited by Peter Wade



Berghahn Books
New York • Oxford

First published in 2007 by
Berghahn Books
www.berghahnbooks.com

©2007 Peter Wade

All rights reserved. Except for the quotation of short passages for the purposes of criticism and review, no part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system now known or to be invented, without written permission of the publisher.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library
Printed in the United States on acid-free paper

ISBN 978-1-84545-355-8 hardback

Contents

Preface and Acknowledgements	vii
1. Race, Ethnicity and Nation: Perspectives from Kinship and Genetics Peter Wade	1
2. Race, Genetics and Inheritance: Reflections upon the Birth of ‘Black’ Twins to a ‘White’ IVF Mother Katharine Tyler	33
3. Race, Biology and Culture in Contemporary Norway: Identity and Belonging in Adoption, Donor Gametes and Immigration Signe Howell and Marit Melhuus	53
4. ‘I want her to learn her language and maintain her culture’: Transnational Adoptive Families’ Views of ‘Cultural Origins’ Diana Marre	73
5. Racialization, Genes and the Reinventions of Nation in Europe Ben Campbell	95
6. Kinship Language and the Dynamics of Race: The Basque Case Enric Porqueres i Gené	125
7. The Transmission of Ethnicity: Family and State – A Lithuanian Perspective Darius Daukšas	145
8. Media Storylines of Culturally Hybrid Persons and Nation Ben Campbell	169
Notes on Contributors	187
Glossary	191
Index	197

Preface and Acknowledgements

This book explores what is happening, in different European contexts, to ideas about race, ethnicity and nation in the light of the way scientific and medical knowledge of – and practices around – genetics and biotechnology have spread into the wider public sphere. Concepts of race, ethnicity and nation all involve in complex ways ideas about human relatedness, with special emphasis on a relatedness through kinship and the connections forged through sexual reproduction. Genetic science and biotechnology now open up avenues that allow people to think in new ways about how people are biologically connected to each other and to ancestors through genetic links (perhaps ones that were unknown or invisible before); biotechnology has created new ways of sexual reproduction (through assisted reproductive technologies, based on sperm and egg donation) which also create complex connections between people (for example, the connection between sperm donor and the child created with his sperm). Taking the term at its broadest, ‘biotechnology’ encompasses the bureaucratic technologies of assisted reproduction that have emerged to allow transnational adoption, a practice that has also created new modes of relatedness and kinship connection. This book looks at the way ideas about race, ethnicity and nation intersect with, shape and are shaped by this genetic science and biotechnology. The focus is on Europe and the approach is mainly anthropological, but the issues and the case studies will be of interest to anyone concerned with the central themes of the book.

The research presented in this volume comes out of an EU-funded project ‘Public Understanding of Genetics: a Cross-cultural and Ethnographic Study of the “New Genetics” and Social Identity’ (Contract QLG7-CT-2001-01668), which was directed by my colleague Dr Jeanette Edwards (University of Manchester). The project began in 2004 and seven teams, based in France, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Norway, Spain and the U.K., worked over three years on a set of projects that represented their particular ongoing research interests; at the same time, all addressed questions of the meanings surrounding belonging, personhood and relationality, with particular emphasis on changing understandings of biological and genetic relations (see <http://www.socialsciences.man.ac.uk/pug/index.htm>).

One sub-project within 'PUG', as it came to be known, was titled 'Race, Ethnicity, Nation and Genetics in Europe', directed by myself, which aimed to synthesize material from different research teams that touched on these issues. Another sub-project, under the title 'Public Understanding of Race and Genetics', was specifically designed to focus on issues of race. It was undertaken by Katharine Tyler as a full-time postdoctoral research associate and, over two years, involved extensive fieldwork in the city of Leicester followed by a period of analysis and writing. Katharine was then scheduled to work on the synthetic sub-project, but moved to a new job. Her place was taken by Ben Campbell, who was already a researcher within PUG (directing a sub-project on genetically modified foods), and over the final year of the project, he worked on two themes, comparing the governance of gametes and immigrants, and reviewing media productions around genetics and race/ethnicity/nation.

The papers in this volume derive from the work of researchers in France, Lithuania, Norway, Spain and the U.K., but also from the bi-annual PUG workshops, in which all seven teams of researchers presented findings and discussed analytic perspectives.

PUG was a long and many-stranded journey, undertaken mainly by anthropologists, but also by specialists in communication studies, bioethics, history and law. I would like to express my thanks to all PUG participants, and particularly to all the authors in this volume for their ideas, enthusiasm and hard work. The PUG director, Jeanette Edwards, is due a special vote of thanks for managing to keep the entire network moving and inspiring us all with her passion for the topic. I also want to thank Katharine and Ben, who worked with me most closely on questions of race, ethnicity and nation.

One product of this work was a short pamphlet for public dissemination, called *PUG, Race and Ethnicity in Europe*. This is available in English, French, Spanish, Catalan and Lithuanian versions from the PUG website at <http://www.socialsciences.man.ac.uk/pug/pamphlets.htm>.

Peter Wade
October 2006

1

Race, Ethnicity and Nation

Perspectives from Kinship and Genetics

Peter Wade

Introduction

In this chapter, I want to approach the well-known imbrications of concepts of race, ethnicity and the nation from the point of view of what might be seen, in a European (and perhaps more widely 'Western') context, as the key discourse of human relatedness through corporeal substance and nature – that is, kinship. The researchers in this volume focus primarily on kinship as a privileged, but still rather little-explored, way of grasping dimensions of race, ethnicity and nationality and this chapter sets out the broad theoretical context for that focus. The empirical focus of the research in this volume is European and, while I discuss the European material in depth, my perspective is more general and, referring to other contexts, seeks to tease out general intersections between race, ethnicity, nation, kinship and genetics.

Kinship is seen, in a European (and Western) context, as grounded on nature. More accurately, as Strathern argues, it is, or rather was, seen as a hybrid, connecting the two domains of nature and culture, 'a symbolic construction that took after the natural facts on which society imagined itself to be based' (Strathern 1992: 198). It has been widely argued that ideas about kinship, human relatedness, nature and indeed life itself, have recently been transformed by the destabilization of concepts of nature which have robbed 'the natural facts' of their apparent self-evidence and their taken-for-granted grounding function. New forms of genetic technology and knowledge about genetics have been seen as vital contributors here, but they are not the only factors at work: technological interventions of various kinds into the world of 'nature' – such as organ transplants (including the possibility of cross-species transplants) and the advance of cyborg nature-culture hybrids – the increasing evidence of the influence of human activity on global climate, and other practices such as the growth in transnational adoptions have all worked to destabilize ideas of what is 'natural' about bodies, families and the environment (Braun and Castree 1998; Brodwin 2000; Castree and Braun 2001; Cronon 1995; Franklin 2000, 2003;

Franklin and McKinnon 2001b; Haraway 1991, 1997; Rabinow 1992; Strathern 1992). The question then arises of how changing ideas of kinship, human relatedness and the domain of nature, which may or may not explicitly involve genetic idioms, relate to imaginaries and practices around race, ethnicity and nation.

This question has, in recent years, typically been tackled with specific reference to genetics, or rather genomics, that is, with reference to the recent advances in knowledge about and manipulation of DNA. Theories about the relation between genomics and race, ethnicity and nationality are linked to more general ideas about the impact of genomics on social life, ideas that often refer to the growing 'geneticization' of social life. I believe that a broader canvas may be helpful, encompassing ideas about nature, rather than just genetics, and using kinship as a way into issues of race, ethnicity and nationality, without limiting the analysis to recent mediations of kinship by genomic technologies and knowledge – which is not, of course, to exclude these important mediations.

To begin with, however, let us look at some of the current analyses of the influence of genomics on race, ethnicity and nationality. This will give a flavour of the debates and issues at stake. I will then look more broadly at kinship in relation to race, ethnicity and nation, which will also bring gender and sex into the discussion.

Race, Ethnicity, Nationality and Genomics

Much of the current material relates to race and to a lesser extent ethnicity (where this is seen to involve some conception of shared descent) and even less to nationality. But we can get a sense of the debates by looking at discussions about race.

The impact of genomics on race studies has generated a good deal of controversy, particularly in the U.S.A. The key question has been the old chestnut of whether 'race' has any biological reality. Gilroy (2000: 15) holds out hope that 'the meaning of racial difference is being reconstructed by the impact of the DNA revolution and of the technological developments that have energized it', although he recognizes that 'genomics may send out the signal to reify "race" as code and information' (2000: 37) and that it will take some work to produce a 'postracial' version of what it means to be human. Foster and Sharp capture the ambivalent results of genomics in a world before that work has been done:

It was hoped by some that the sequencing of the human genome would undermine the view that racial and ethnic classifications have biological significance. This position was based on the prospect that by showing that there are numerous genetic similarities across all social classifications and no genetic features that are entirely unique to any particular racial or ethnic population, genomics would provide definitive evidence that race and ethnicity are social, not biological, classifications. Ironically, the sequencing of the human genome has instead renewed and strengthened interest in biological differences between racial and ethnic populations, as genetic variants associated with disease susceptibility, environmental response, and

drug metabolism are identified, and frequencies of these variants in different populations reported. (Foster and Sharp 2002: 844–45, references removed)

Even though it is said that, genetically, all humans are 99.9 per cent alike, there is 'a great deal of controversy brewing over that 0.1 percent' (*Financial Times*, 2–3 November 2002). Many physical anthropologists and other scholars deny that human genetic variation can usefully be divided up in ways that correlate to something called race or ethnicity. Numerous studies indicate that if genetic variance is studied in relation to racial categories – which are usually defined in terms of geographic origin and/or commonsensically in order to generate samples for genetic analysis – race accounts for 10 per cent or less of such variance and that variation within 'races' is often greater than between them (Brown and Armelagos 2001).

Despite this, some scholars argue that genomic research into human diversity seems inevitably to lead to the resurrection of ideas of race as a biological reality and to a new form of eugenic thinking (for some examples, see Condit, Parrott and Harris 2002: 373–74). Brodwin argues that 'rapid advances in sequencing and analysing the human genome have strengthened essentialist thinking about identity in American society and elsewhere' (2002: 323–24); his examples are all drawn from the domains of racial and ethnic identities. Nelkin and Lindee (1995b: 398) also argue that there is recently greater willingness among 'race theorists' to talk in terms of genetic differences. Some scholars have alleged that the Human Genome Diversity Project (HGDP), which was started in 1991 in order to map global genetic diversity, smuggled racial assumptions into the underlying premise of isolated breeding populations, which were tacitly defined by social (ethnic, racial) identities for sampling purposes, thus effectively conflating social with genetic categories (Gannett 2001; Marks 2001; Reardon 2001; Santos 2002).¹ These arguments focus to some extent on discourses and practices among scientists, but they go beyond a narrow conception of the scientific community, because they all involve the way scientific knowledge pervades life outside that community.

A good example is that of susceptibility to disease and drug metabolism – controversies over which predate the genomic era.² Some researchers argue that 'race' is a good predictor for certain diseases and also for the effectiveness of certain drugs. For example, some studies in the new field of pharmacogenomics have claimed to show that certain heart drugs are more effective for 'blacks' (in the U.S.A.) than for whites, while others are better for whites. In dismay, Duster (2003b) says 'ethnic drugs' may soon be for sale. Some contest these findings and argue overall that '[genetic] variation is continuous [across the globe] and discordant with race, systematic variation according to continent is very limited, and there is no evidence that the units of interest for medical genetics correspond to what we call race' (Cooper, Kaufman and Ward 2003). Race may continue to be a relevant variable, but for social reasons: racialized patterns of discrimination and inequality may affect health. Others reply that 'racial and ethnic groups do differ from each other genetically' due to geographically structured patterns of mating and reproduction, and these differences have 'biologic implications', including susceptibility to disease (Burchard et al. 2003).³ Today, the jury is clearly still out on the relationship between

susceptibility to disease and genetic variation of a 'racial' kind, but the point is clear: genomic advances can open the way to reinforcing ideas about race as a biological reality, both among scientists and in other spheres of life.

These arguments resonate strongly with the idea that social life as a whole is undergoing a process of geneticization and that there is an increase in popular ideas of genetic determinism. This is despite the fact that geneticists and molecular biologists do not generally see genes as strongly determinist, except in very specific instances (Keller 1995: 26–27). Many commentators on the popular discourses of genetics observe a recent shift towards genetic determinism (Condit 1999a, 1999b: 6, 166). There has, according to Nelkin and Lindee (1995a), been a move towards a popular 'genetic essentialism' which 'reduces the self to a molecular entity, equating human beings, in all their social, historical, and moral complexity, with their genes' (cited in Condit 1999b: 6). They trace this in relation to gender as well as race (Nelkin and Lindee 1995b). Van Dijck (1998: 126) says that popular images of genes as determinants have a tenacious hold. Haraway (1997: 142–48) talks of recent 'gene fetishism', linking it to genetic essentialism, and Rapp (1999: 215) notes the increase of an ideology of 'geneticization' in popular consciousness that links 'individual attributes and social problems as if they could be effectively reshaped or eliminated only in the realm of biomedicine now reduced to genetic diagnosis'. Lippman (1991: 19) also refers to geneticization as 'an ongoing process by which differences between individuals are reduced to their DNA codes'. Finkler (2001: 235, 47) argues that 'genetic inheritance increasingly becomes the prevailing causal explanation of affliction and human behaviour in general' and that there is widespread popular acceptance of this in the U.S.A. because medical models of genetic inheritance and determinism (of disease) fit very neatly with 'cultural conceptualizations of the biogenetic foundations of kinship'.

Against this prevailing view, I think it is important to distinguish between geneticization and genetic essentialism or determinism. The growing public profile of the gene as an icon is not necessarily the same as a growing belief in the determinism of genes: this is an open question which needs to be researched. Condit (1999a, 1999b) argues at some length that the U.S. public (university students, mixed focus groups), while speaking about genes and genetics, do not by any means produce deterministic accounts, but rather see images such as the 'genetic blueprint' as an outline or plan that might come to fruition in different ways and that does not determine final outcomes. When talking about race and genetics, 'the opinions and knowledge of the lay audience parallels much of what the mass media and the scientific establishment say about genetics' – that is, that genes are not simple determinants (Condit, Parrott and Harris 2002: 385).

This debate centres on the question of whether or not the genetic revolution creates more essentialism or not, be it in thinking about disease, bodies, families, gender or race and ethnicity. My view is that the jury is out on this question. Although it is common to speak in terms of growing genetic determinism and essentialism – usually seen as a trait of lay audiences or the popular classes, but not always confined to them – there is also evidence that things are not so simple. Brodwin, for example,

while arguing for 'strengthened essentialist thinking about identity in American society', also notes that the knowledge generated by the use of genetic ancestry tests is subject to complex social and cultural mediations: 'Setting the record straight about who is related to whom is contested right from the start, and for good reason. Adding genetic evidence does not make things any easy; it might even make things harder' (2002: 325). His own examples illustrate clearly that a straightforward shift towards greater essentialism is not easy to deduce. He describes how, via a study of Y-chromosome markers, some of the Lemba of South Africa were possibly genetically linked to Semitic peoples. This reinforced their own firm belief in their Jewishness, but Brodwin rightly says that this might not confirm their Jewishness for other Jews (e.g., Israelis) who might have other ways of tracing Jewish ancestry. It is a matter of judgement what this genetic evidence adds up to. Also, did the genetic evidence strengthen an essentialist identity, or essentialize a nonessentialist one? There is no obvious means of telling without more extensive research.

I think it is possible to open out this debate by expanding the focus away from a tight concentration on genetics and, specifically, the impact of genomic research. My aim here is to explore more broadly the intersections of ideas about kinship, nature, race, ethnicity and nation. I think this will show that there is a good deal of complexity and ambiguity in the way people think about different kinds of connections – natural, genetic, cultural – and that there is no straightforward shift towards either geneticization or genetic determinism in discourses about race, ethnicity and nation.

Kinship, Nature, Race, Ethnicity and Nationality

In this section, I will trace how the overlapping and mutually informing domains of race, ethnicity and nation intersect with ideas about kinship; gender also inevitably enters the frame in a kinship model understood as founded on sexual reproduction between two genders. In what follows, I will refer mainly to race and will purposely blur a distinction between race and ethnicity, for reasons which I hope will become clear below.

It has long been observed that ideologies of race and nation reinforce each other. Gilroy (1987: 23) noted that the sense of national crisis in postwar Britain was often '*lived* through a sense of "race"'. A sense of nationality, and threats to that nationality, were linked strongly to discourses that saw racialized immigrants (but not white immigrants) as a problem; Britishness, and even more so Englishness, was defined as white by default. Balibar has argued that 'racism is not an "expression" of nationalism ... but [is] always indispensable to its constitution' (Balibar 1991b: 54). He traces the intertwining of the two ideologies to the moment when nation-states tried to create their own 'people' as not just a political, but also an ethnic and/or racial entity, that is, as a body of people related by a common history, origin and culture. According to Balibar, racism and nationalism both depend on a balance between inclusion (of proper citizens and people who share the proper origins) and exclusion (of people outside those categories). Racism can become a 'super-nationalism' that plays on the

existing themes of roots in ideas about national culture and evokes themes of genealogical roots and purity of blood, often expressed in aesthetic ideals of the body (for example, as nonblack).

Race and nation need not invoke ideas of purity. In Latin America, it has been widely recognized that nationalism has often been built on the idea of racial and cultural mixture or *mestizaje*: nations were often seen as founded, for better or for worse, on the amalgamation of African, indigenous American and European 'blood' and cultures. In practice, the apparent democracy of such a vision was belied by ideologies and practices of whitening that belittled the contributions of African and indigenous populations, saw these peoples as backward and destined to disappear in a modernizing nation, discriminated against them, and tried to keep out nonwhite immigrants, while encouraging the immigration of people from Europe (Appelbaum, Macpherson and Roseblatt 2003; Smith 1997; Wade 1997).

Foucault arrived at the intimate relationship between racism and nationalism in his analysis of sexuality in Europe. He traced a gradual shift in emphasis from a premodern 'symbolics of blood' to an 'analytics of sexuality'. In the former, power was of a sovereign kind, in which a king or queen had power of life or death over his or her subjects, a power that was enacted physically upon the subject's body, for example in the form of public torture and killing. Sovereigns could seize things, time and bodies and dispose of them as they saw fit. In the modern era, power became 'bio-power' and the art of government became that of administering the life force of populations, including that of the individuals who composed them, so as to create growth and vigour. This regulation of life included a concern with collective and individual sexual behaviour, as this was seen to play a key role in the life of the population: 'sex is the means of access both to the life of the body and the life of the species' (Foucault 1998: 146). Ideas about blood did not disappear, however, and continued to 'haunt the administration of sexuality' (ibid.: 149). Ideas about vigour, well-being and appropriate sexual morality and behaviour were intertwined with notions of the purity of blood and racial difference. Nation-states were the entities that administered the life force of their populations and ideas about national heritage, culture and history were infused with notions of blood and genealogy. The objects of exclusion could be both those seen as internal enemies – such as Jews and homosexuals (Mosse 1985) – and external colonial subjects (Stoler 1995).

The concern with the regulation of life force and bodies within the national population gives a strong clue as to why ideas about blood and its origins and character might have such an intimate relationship with nationalism: the reproduction of the nation's population involved the endless mixing of the blood of individuals; the character of the individual and his/her body was seen to be affected by whatever was inherited in the blood. This perspective also indicates why ideologies of race, ethnicity and nation have a powerfully gendered dimension, as the life of the race, ethnos or nation was vitally linked to reproductive sexual relations between men and women. As Stoler (1995) and Mosse (1985) show, concepts of appropriate sexual behaviour and morality were an important part of calculations about who was a 'proper' member of the nation and the white racial category. What

was deemed appropriate was usually very different for men and women, with the latter often charged with maintaining the purity of the race, nation or ethnic group and bound by stricter codes of morality than those applied to men (Smith 1997).

The interpenetration of ideas of race, ethnicity and nation with those of sex and gender at once raises the issue of the role of kinship more broadly as an idiom of human relatedness. In Western models of kinship, at least, sex and gender are seen as basic to the generation of kinship relatedness. Nationalism has been linked to kinship by various authors (Alonso 1994; Anderson 1991; Schneider 1969). Schneider saw parallels between U.S. kinship and ideas about the U.S. nation. Just as in kinship there were relatives by natural connection (of blood) and relatives by law (marriage) – and this difference reflected a deeper symbolic distinction between nature and law (or culture) – so in ideologies of nationalism, citizenship was assigned by birth or by legal process (often called ‘naturalization’). Schneider saw a structural parallel between nationalism and kinship (and religion) at a symbolic level and both involved the same ‘diffuse enduring solidarity’. Anderson has also argued that nationalism should be understood ‘as if it belonged with “kinship”’ rather than with political ideologies such as liberalism (1991: 5).

Alonso observes that in nationalism, ‘place, property and heritage’ are fused into ‘a sovereign patrimony’. The identity between ‘people, heritage, territory and state’ is often expressed in botanical, arborescent images, principally tree-like images of genealogy, which are part of ‘a register of nature tropes’. The idea of the genealogical tree combines botanical metaphors of national space with ‘tropes of shared bodily substance’: ‘the substantialization of nations and states through tropes of blood and kinship, although noted frequently, is rarely analyzed fully’ (Alonso 1994: 383–84). Kinship tropes, she argues, can underwrite ideas of national solidarity and can also substantialize hierarchical social relations, including ones between state and people. Such tropes depend upon and reiterate naturalized constructions of gender and sexuality. Ethnic categories (which, Alonso says, cannot be distinguished sharply from racial ones) can also be substantialized by the same tropes of kinship and descent as nationalism. Ethnic ‘cultural stuff’ can be ‘semanticized by a tropology of blood, color and descent’ (1994: 396). Links between ethnicity and kinship have been noted by others as well (Keyes 1976; Williams 1989). These authors have detected common ideas of relatedness and genealogy running through kinship, ethnicity and nationalism as ways of categorizing, and including and excluding, people on the basis of ideas about shared substance (e.g., ‘blood’), origins, history and culture (which may also be understood as a quasi-substance).

Fewer authors have linked kinship to race. Haraway (1997: 309, n. 1) notes in passing that ‘Race, nature, gender, sex, and kinship must be thought together’. Williams (1995) makes a more detailed argument about the common ground between ideologies of race, nation, kinship and Hindu caste, seeing them all as involving distinctions made in terms of an imagined sameness or unity of human substance (e.g., blood). These distinctions serve to create categories of relatedness which define access to shared material and symbolic resources. Thompson (2005) also discusses race and kinship in the context of assisted conception (see below). In

my view, kinship is vital to grasping race because a key aspect of the discourse of race is ideas about inheritances, whether 'natural' or 'cultural', for which a key medium of transmission is the family. Assignations to a given racial category or identity are ultimately grounded on reckonings of kinship, even if these are so obvious as to be tacit – i.e., in the case of a person who seems unproblematically 'black' or 'white', the unspoken assumption is that his/her parents are likewise black or white. When someone's racial identity seems more problematic, the first recourse for 'solving the problem' is to enquire into family connections, to place the person in a web of racialized kinship. The standard question here is, 'Where are you from?', an apparently territorial or national enquiry. But the question probes deeper and conflates nation, race and kinship, because an equally standard answer is, 'Well, I'm from here, but my parents are from such-and-such a place [which is what explains my appearance].'

A simple illustration of the connection between kinship and race is the common Latin American saying, '*¿Y tu abuela dónde está?*' (And where is your grandmother?). This is a trope produced to question someone's racial origins, implying black (or perhaps indigenous) ancestry, especially if s/he is claiming, through word or deed, to be nonblack or nonindigenous. The saying evokes a history, common enough in contexts of Latin American race mixture, of black women having sex with lighter-coloured men, perhaps in an informal union, giving rise to children who may follow the same route, resulting in grandchildren light enough to no longer be classified as black, who may 'forget' their ancestry, their own grandmothers. The grandchildren are lighter and, symbolically and/or materially, they are wealthier and more 'modern' and urban, as blackness in Latin America is generally associated with poor, 'underdeveloped' regions and populations, while whitening is connected symbolically and structurally with upward social mobility. The poor, black, rural ancestors have been left in the genealogical and historical past, while the grandchildren move forward to participate in the modernizing nation. But, says the trope, the links of kinship cannot be severed so easily: grandmothers pass on substance and, perhaps particularly in African diaspora contexts, nurturance and love. The grandmother is carried within her descendants' own bodies, inside and on the visible surface, and she cannot be made to vanish.

The Destabilization of Nature

Recently, a number of scholars have created the possibility for a greater dialogue between kinship and race, ethnicity and nation by focusing on the idea of nature and the transformations that it is said to have undergone in recent decades. If 'nature' has been destabilized, what is the impact of this on ideas about race, ethnicity and nation?

Nature is, in varied ways, used as a ground for ideas about kinship, race, ethnicity, nation, gender, sex and kinship: all these domains tend to use *naturalizations* in the broadest sense (which may not necessarily be limited to notions of genetics), that is, they make reference to a realm called nature or seen as natural in order to provide a context and basis for their claims and categories (Yanagisako

and Delaney 1995). Feminist scholarship and work in kinship studies and science studies have led the way in problematizing 'nature' and seeing it as changing and unstable (Carsten 2000c; Cronon 1995; Franklin, Lury and Stacey 2000; Franklin and McKinnon 2001b; Haraway 1991; 1997; Jardine, Secord and Spary 1996; Jordanova 1986; Moore, Kosek and Pandian 2003b; Rabinow 1992; Strathern 1992; Wade 2002). Franklin and McKinnon (2001a) trace how the 'facts of nature' on which kinship appeared to be based, and which have been used to ground categories such as gender, sex, race and the family, have been steadily subjected to critique since the 1950s, revealing nature to be shifting and contestable. This approach is rather different from that of Moore, Kosek and Pandian (2003a: 25), who subscribe to the classic idea that 'elaborations of a racial nature root identity and difference in the unchanging material of bounded bodies. In the annals of social science, to "naturalize" is to assign such stable and intrinsic essences to people, relations and things'. Recent work on nature and kinship undermines the idea that nature today acts only and necessarily to stabilize essences and evoke bodies as unchanging.

A key figure in this process has been Strathern, who argues that during the 'modern(ist)' epoch of English, and more broadly Western, society (roughly 1860–1960) 'nature itself composed an autonomous domain ... It created its own context, and did so because it worked as a kind of grounding conceptualization for knowledge, for understanding the intrinsic character ("nature") of anything. ... Although it could be made into a metaphor or seen to be the object of human activity, it also had the status of a prior fact, a condition for existence' (Strathern 1992: 194). The idea of nature grounded both the notion of the individual, seen as an intrinsically unique product of the endlessly proliferating diversity created by sexual reproduction; and the notion of society, seen as the natural product of individuals entering into relation with each other. The idea of nature was the context for the plurality of the modern world: individuals were plural (there were many unique individuals) and they built on the facts of nature to create plural institutions (different ways of organizing the basics of human life). An appreciation of plurality meant an explicit awareness of context dependence: things had to be seen in context and they could be seen in relation to different contexts; any one figure could be connected to different grounds and located in different sets of relations. The ultimate grounding context of nature eventually succumbed to this self-awareness about the relational character of context. It became clear that nature itself was context dependent. Nature has not disappeared by any means – on the contrary, natural relations 'acquire a new priority' (Strathern 1992: 53) – but '*its grounding function has*. It no longer provides a model or analogy for the very idea of context' (ibid.: 195). This is partly because technological interventions into nature undermine its status as a self-evident context: assisted conception, the genetic modification of organisms, cloning and so on are frequently cited as aspects of the technology that has destabilized the idea of nature. The consequence is that 'Nature as a ground for the meaning of cultural practices can no longer be taken for granted if Nature itself is regarded as having to be protected and promoted' (ibid.: 177). In this transformation, Strathern argues, nature becomes part of the world of consumer

choice, one more product among which consumers can exercise their obligatory right to choose. I would argue that before Strathern's 'modernist' epoch, concepts of human nature in Western thought generally gave it a slightly more plastic, performative character; people's behaviour could shape their natures and, in very long-standing and pervasive ideas about the inheritance of acquired characteristics, such altered natures could even be passed on to the next generation (Wade 2002: ch. 3). I would also argue that, even during Strathern's modernist epoch, there is some evidence to indicate that human nature was not always seen as quite as autonomous and fixed as she makes out; that previous, 'premodernist' ideas about human nature did not vanish altogether under the weight of an ever more authoritative scientific consensus about the basics of evolution, genetics and human biology (Wade 2002: ch. 4). But the overall point that nature has, in the last few decades, become a less stable construct than it was remains important and valid.

The question now arises of the ways in which the destabilization of the concept of nature, especially through the impact of new genetic technologies, has affected the interweaving of race, ethnicity, nationality and kinship. We seem to be presented with two main alternatives, which are prefigured in my earlier discussion of race and genomics. On the one hand, the social world is supposed to be going through a process of biologization – and, as I showed above, of geneticization in particular – in which knowledge about biology and genetics provides ways of regrounding social processes on a particular biological domain, seen as quite deterministic. On the other hand, the whole concept of nature seems to be fragmenting and losing its grounding function. In fact, the two alternatives are not opposed. The 'exaggerated attention to biological idiom' in which 'genetic relations have come to stand for the naturalness of biological kinship' (Strathern 1992: 52–53) and the fact that 'nature becomes biology becomes genetics' (Franklin 2000: 190) are themselves due to the destabilization of the self-evidence of nature. The reaction is to refocus on nature and examine, or reimagine, its workings, using, as a key tool, the very genetic entities and processes that unsettled it in the first place. The question remains, however, of what the consequences of this refocusing are. Are there new and more deterministic ways of thinking about race, ethnicity and nationality, in their intersection with kinship? Or are more flexible ways of imagining and acting on these concepts introduced? Or do both things happen at the same time, amounting to an increase in the options for thinking about race, ethnicity, nationality and kinship, without a clear tendency in any one direction? In this respect, we may well be faced both with ways in which, 'boundaries – of nations, cultures, species, races, persons, bodies, cells – have been breached' and ways in which 'such ruptures become occasions to reestablish and reinforce familiar normative categories' (Franklin and McKinnon 2001a: 21).

My view is that the latter open-ended scenario is the most convincing at present and that a broad view taken from the angle of kinship studies can help us avoid overdetermined answers to these questions. The destabilization of nature highlights the different possible meanings of nature and the variety of modes of naturalization and this, in turn, opens up kinship studies in various ways that connect them usefully to studies of race, ethnicity and nationality. First, it implies that 'the meaning of

kinship can be understood only by reading *across* different cultural domains': 'cultural understandings of kinship are shaped by – and, in turn, contribute to the shaping of – the political dynamics of national and transnational identities, the economic movements of labour and capital, the cosmologies of religion, the cultural hierarchies of race, gender and species taxonomies, and the epistemologies of science, medicine and technology' (Franklin and McKinnon 2001a: 9). Ideas of 'substance' that might link and differentiate people, and that might link people to other domains such as land, animals, spirits and the environment, likewise implicate kinship in many other areas of human ideas, including ideas about race, ethnicity and nation. Second, although kinship has always been seen as a link between nature and culture, a cultural elaboration of the 'facts of nature', the destabilization of nature draws our attention to the contingency of both nature and culture as categories and the way the traffic between them helps constitute their mutually defining but often ambiguous and shifting boundaries. Carsten (2000a: 3) argues that research on non-Western kinship indicates that 'the boundaries between the biological and the social which ... have been so crucial in the study of kinship are in many cases distinctly blurred, if they are visible at all'. Her own work on adoption in Britain also leads her to conclude that the 'overwhelming impression is that this distinction [between 'biological' and 'social'] is rather more muddled than any simple model would lead us to expect'. She says that we cannot perceive 'a very sharp or consistent distinction between what "travels in the blood" and what is absorbed from the environment' (Carsten 2000b: 693).

The Traffic between Nature and Culture

The preceding section indicates that kinship studies promise interesting avenues into areas such as race, ethnicity and nationality and poses the question of what 'nature' might mean in those areas. In what follows, rather than assuming that genetics and changing ideas about nature are simply leading to the naturalization of thinking about race, ethnicity and nation into ever more deterministic modes, I explore how ideas about persons, identity and belonging traffic back and forth between the apparently separate domains called nature and culture, unsettling their boundaries, overlapping their radii of action.

Blood, Soil and Genealogy

In my discussion so far, I have not made a clear distinction between race and ethnicity as analytic terms. It is generally held in social science that there are important differences between tracing relatedness through common history and culture (usually glossed as 'ethnicity') and through common genealogical origins and 'blood' (usually associated with 'race'). One important difference is the classic distinction between assigning citizenship by *jus soli*, by place of birth, or by *jus sanguinis*, by genealogical connection. This appears to be a well-known distinction between nature (race) and culture (ethnicity), but it has become increasingly clear that these categories are not stable, that they are historically constructed and

codependent, and that analysis cannot take them for granted. Discourses of race involve all kinds of 'cultural' idioms, while those of ethnicity frequently invoke notions of origins and genealogy. In practice, soil and blood are often interlinked through a common notion of origin (Linke 1999), especially when it is by virtue of long rootedness in the soil and the culture of the people of the soil that 'true' identity is measured. In practice, too, 'most states, in order to cope with the practical complexities [of assigning citizenship], operate with a combination of the two modes [of *jus soli* and *jus sanguinis*]' (Heater 1999: 80).

Porqueres, in this volume and elsewhere, has argued that discourses of Basque nationalism have moved from open references to blood and biology in the early decades of the twentieth century, in the context of racial science, to references to soil, territory and language. This is the classic shift towards 'cultural racism' that many have seen as characteristic of large areas of the post-Second World War world, with the apparent disappearance of openly biological idioms of race (Balibar 1991a; Goldberg 1993: 73; Stolcke 1995). However, Porqueres argues that there is a good deal of continuity in these changing Basque discourses: 'Despite the formal consolidation of a kind of "right of land and language" [in the definition of who is Basque], the persistence of images of the family in naming the nation and of associated definitions based on the blood of the Basque people, takes us back to apparently bygone conceptions' (Porqueres i Gené 2001: 534, my translation). This is partly because the soil is seen to be a constitutive and substantializing context for the growth of persons. Porqueres states that 'the opposition between blood and soil, so dear to anthropologists and politicians, deserves ... to be problematized' (Porqueres i Gené 2002: 60, my translation). 'Blood and soil, far from being opposed, appear as variants of a single theme, that of the presence of the ancestors in the definition of the nation. Land thus becomes a mediator between those who existed in the past and those who currently live on it' (ibid.: 58). The work people do on the land is a moment in the constitution of them as subject and of the land as the object of their labour: 'each mutually modifies the other with a cumulative effect which is inscribed in the succession of the generations' (ibid.: 61). Porqueres also traces some of the links between blood and land to Christian thought, which associates soil and flesh. In short, as Wieviorka notes, cultural racism still generally depends on a tacit reference to 'nature, biology, genetic heritage or blood' (1997: 142): Porqueres's work gives an important demonstration of how that occurs. There is a traffic between ideas of nature and culture here which, while nature becomes less self-evident – it becomes less and less acceptable to make explicit reference to blood as a defining criterion of ethnonational membership – also seems to naturalize culture via ideas about soil and history. The distinction between nature and culture becomes blurred, but the effects of this are ambivalent. On the one hand, seemingly determinist idioms of Basqueness persist in tacit notions of blood and genealogy and in ideas about soil and the growth of persons. On the other hand, Porqueres also shows that Basqueness has recently opened up to include people of mixed Basque–Spanish descent (Porqueres i Gené, this volume).

In Lithuania, soil and blood form competing criteria in questions of citizenship. In his contribution to this volume, Daukšas focuses on debates in the press, 1988–91, about identity among Lithuanian Poles and among Lithuanian émigrés.

He shows that discourse in the press about the former centred on origins, territory and cultural authenticity (language, surnames and religious practice). For the emigrés, questions of territory assumed much less significance, as they wished to maintain a Lithuanian identity despite being outside the territory of the nation-state. Instead, the idea of descent – absent from press debates about Lithuanian Poles – assumed greater importance, within a discourse of blood and kinship. The Lithuanian Law of Citizenship (1991), which replaced the 1989 law of the Soviet era, was amended in 2003 to ratify the emigrés' claim to citizenship by including as citizens people who self-identified as Lithuanian and whose parents or grandparents were Lithuanian. In the official English translation of the law, this was glossed as being of 'Lithuanian descent', rather than the previous usage of 'Lithuanian origin'. In Lithuanian, the text remained the same (*lietuvių kilmės asmuo*), as the words embraced the meaning of place of origin and genealogical linkage (as indeed the word 'origin' is capable of doing in English). In practice, however, 'descent' was proven to the Interior Ministry's Immigration Department in a number of ways: a woman whose parents seemed to be German was allowed Lithuanian citizenship when one grandparent's Soviet-era passport was found to have 'Lithuanian' entered under the Soviet category of 'nationality' – itself a status defined by descent in the Soviet system (Daukšas 2004). The influence of the Soviet system seems to have been significant. Although in public debates about citizenship in the press, descent seemed unimportant in defining the citizenship of Lithuanian Poles, in everyday life in Lithuanian Polish communities ethnic identity was considered to be something defined by parentage: a key criterion was what was written in the passport and this was defined by what was written in a person's father's passport (Daukšas, this volume). In Lithuania, then, there seems to have been a constant movement back and forth between ideas of soil and blood, with ideas of family origin mediating between these notions.

The Construction of Relatedness: Genealogy, Adoption and ARTs

If, in studying kinship and race, ethnicity and nation, we have to be alive to the traffic between nature and culture as categories, this also leads us to be open-minded about how relatedness is constructed in all these domains. Sex between men and women is 'naturally' an important part of the reproduction of relatedness – at least in Western kinship models which are centred on this type of reproduction – but kinship, even in Western models, involves more than heterosexual sex and it is important to see that the relatedness that is seen to underlie ethnicity, race and nationality may be formed by other means than sexual reproduction. This may seem too obvious, in the sense that the imagined relatedness of co-ethnics or co-nationals – if not that of co-racials – seems to derive primarily from common histories and cultures and to refer only secondarily to the blood relatedness of sexual reproduction, for example through the kinship idioms of fraternity, paternity and maternity. However, kinship studies indicate that, of course, some types of relatedness do not derive directly from sexual reproduction (e.g., in-law relations), but also that, to take the apparently radically different example of the Trukese of Micronesia, 'blood can