

DIVINE ADOPTION

*Audhild L. Kennedy
Hovedfag UiO*

In the end, it is clear that not only what we mean by terms such as substance and biology is much richer and more diverse than we thought but also that what counts as the substantial-coding of kinship has undergone significant historical transformation. As understandings of the "substances of kinship" change—from the Bible's transubstantiation of divinity through Abraham's seed, to Morgan's transubstantiated kinship across rivers of water and blood, to modern biology's definition of human nature and kinship in terms of genetic codes—so too is the capacity to make and unmake kinship out of them transformed. (Franklin & McKinnon 2001:11)

Introduction

In this article I intend to show how substance and code for conduct (Schneider 1984), in this text referred to as code, can be seen as inseparable categories in kinning in the adoption of an unrelated child from an agency in Delhi, India.

The Indian adoption practice has, in the past 10 to 15 years, taken a completely new form, namely that of adopting an unrelated child from an adoption agency. Traditionally, adoption was conducted within the extended family or the caste group. However, the practice of adopting from an agency challenges common Indian notions around kinship and personhood, and thus the cultural understanding of who or what a person is. This is so because the unrelated child and its substance must be incorporated in the family, while the act of adoption must appear as meaningful to the adoptive parents. Nonetheless, I would like to show how Indian perceptions around destiny (or fate), person, substance and essence enable the adoptive parents to incorporate the unrelated adopted child as their own biological substance through nurture and family life. This process, however, goes through many stages over the course of several years. I have found that this process of kinning is possible due to the inseparability of substance and code, and will illustrate that these two categories actually are one with empirical examples from Palna, an adoption agency in Delhi.

This article attempts to demonstrate the inseparability of substance and code, by virtue of the concept "substance-code", in adoption from an agency. This is done in light of data taken from the adoption practice in Delhi at Palna, an NGO¹ which works in the field of adoption. In the first half of this article I in-

tend to introduce some important concepts in adoption and present five empirical examples, and hence give an account of the Indian notion of kinship and personhood. The second half will explore anthropological theory regarding substance and code in kinship studies.

Kinning, substance and essence

Through a process of kinning . . . a transubstantiation of the children's essence, adoptive parents enrol their adopted children into a kinned trajectory that overlaps their own. Issues pertaining to time and place become central in this process; and it is a process which, in most cases, is fraught with tensions, ambiguities, ambivalences and contradictions, not least because the parents are faced with a dilemma of incorporating the child into their own kin group at the same time as they must acknowledge the existence of unknown biological relatives. (Howell 2003:2)

Like Howell, I define kinning as the adoptive parents' transubstantiation of a child's essence, which, at the same time, coincides, with that of the adoptive parents (ibid). An important aspect of kinning in unrelated adoption in Delhi is the Indian notions around personhood, relatedness and substance, and furthermore which implications these notions have on the process of the adoption of an unrelated child. Nevertheless, before defining substance as well as essence it is important to emphasise that at the core of my argument is not what substance is *per se*, but rather what substance does when it comes to the process of kinning in the adoption from an agency. Substance is "good to think with" and a good illustration of the flexibility of the relations between persons, but the flexibility of the term is also its strength since it implies an ability to transform and invoke those involved in the relation or interaction.

To again return to the dictionary definitions . . . it is notable that the meanings of substance, although they include corporeal matter and the consistency of a fluid, do not specify malleability, transformability, or relationality as inherent properties of substance. Yet these properties have been important aspects of the analytical work achieved by substance in the non-Western examples I have cited. (Carsten 2001)

Substance is "good to think with" because of its flexibility as an analytical term which partly is due to

¹Non-Governmental Organisation.

its several meanings in English (Carsten 2001), which is similar to the focus of Janet Carsten. She underlines the "focus on how substance has been employed in the analysis of kinship, rather than on what it means within any one particular culture" (Carsten 2001:30). Hence, the questions: What does substance do to Indian adoptive parents? Furthermore, how is it possible for Indian adoptive families to acquire common essence?

The adoption of an unrelated child is an action that has consequences for the adoptive parents' as well as the adoptee's substance. Substance describes one's personhood and one's essence. Essence is something shared with kin through both nature and nurture. Hence, to be a person in the Indian meaning of the concept one has to be a member of a family and a kin group, that is to partake in the essence of a group of persons, in other words one's kin. Moreover, essence is the decisive factor regarding personhood and membership to a family or kin group, since essence determines a person's qualities and properties. Social substance may be a marker for socio-economic differences, classificatory kinship etc, and may be communicated as food taboos or notions around destiny. Biological substance signifies common biogenetic ancestry or blood and refers to biological or natural kinship. However, social and biological substance must not be perceived as two separate categories, since the two often go together to a certain degree. Common essence through nature may signify shared biological substance like genes or blood, whereas common essence through nurture may suggest shared substance socially and culturally, perceived as joint destiny (or fate), place of origin, ancestral property, commensality, celebration of rituals and religious festivals etc. When it comes to adoption from an agency essence is shared in the process of kinning and is superior to a person's engagement in different sorts of substance. Food is one such substance, because food and food taboos or prescriptions may describe a person's essence.

One of my informants illustrated the notion of substance in relation to personhood in the following way: "Who I am is determined mostly from my family name. When I meet a person for the first time, he is not interested in my qualities, like my university degree, rather he wants to know my family name and where my family is from. That is who I am". Thus, in order to establish a person's essence it is crucial to know that person's background, more specifically which family that person belongs to and ancestral place of origin.

Recent kinship studies attempt to "encourage an investigation not just of blood as 'biogenetic substance' but also of the relationship between substance and code, and the degree to which these domains are clearly distinguishable and separate—in other words, there is a need to interrogate closely the combinatory power of substance and code, which according to Schneider, was at the heart of the category of blood relative"

²A rickshaw is a three-wheeled passenger vehicle based on either a bicycle or a motor scooter. The driver is referred to as a rickshaw walla. Walla is the Hindi word for vendor.

(Carsten 2001). Hence, recent kinship studies have taken a new direction, and a step away from the opposition between the biological and the social, yet this dichotomy is at the very heart of this new direction. "The analysis of kinship, in its mid-twentieth-century forms, tended to separate and dichotomise the biological and social domains, nature and nurture, substance and code" (Carsten 2001).

Notions about a person's background

First I want to describe some meetings with potential adoptive parents, which in different degrees may be understood in terms of Marriott's transubstantiation (Marriott 1976). Behind the concept of transubstantiation is the notion that actors are not separated from actions, "what goes on *between* actors are the same connected processes of mixing and separation that go on *within* actors" (Marriott 1976:109).

When an unrelated child is adopted, the agency emphasises the impact of the nurture given by the adoptive parents on the child's person. This is one of many attempts to escape the important issue of the adopted child's background, and hence the child's alien substance. Mrs Bhatti, the general secretary of Palna, addressed the issue of the adopted child's background for me:

"I do not want you to write about the child's background, because we do not know anything about the child. The child's parents can come from any social class, but that we do not know, and we do not speculate. In particular, I do not want you to say that the children come from a poor background. In your thesis I do not want you to use the term 'poor' at all in relation to the children."

The child's background is a very important issue both for the adoption agency and the adopting family. And it seems one might rightly assume that this view is due to the Indian notion of substance. Therefore, a possible understanding of Mrs Bhatti's statement is that to the extent one actually says something about the child's background, hence its substance, one at the same time also establishes something transubstantial about the child.

After this conversation with Mrs Bhatti I asked one of the social workers, Sonika, what concerned prospective adoptive parents most regarding the child's background. Sonika told me that many prospective adoptive parents were concerned about adopting a child whose parents might be rickshaw wallas² or servants. Such a statement must be seen in terms of personhood, which is created by essence and substance but also through

nurture over time. Implicit in nurture is the sharing of substances. The substance that is transferred between actors or persons in interaction does something to the persons. A person transferring substance to another person does not lose her substance; rather the substance involved, that is the donor, the recipient, and the "gift", does something to the interaction and the recipient (Marriott 1976). In adoption substance will be transported between the adoptive parents and the adopted child, where the adoptive parents are both donor and recipient. Hence, it makes sense for the adoption agency and the couples wishing to adopt to focus on other aspects of the adoption than the child's alien substance; rather the focus takes the form of a predestined bond between the members of the family, in particular the child and the parents.

Another way the adoption agency addresses the issue of the child's unknown substance and is by giving the child a background. Hence, the adoption agency claims that the child's background starts on the child's first day in the institution. The agency gives the child an identity, that is a name and a date of birth. Thus, the adoption agency takes a step away from the more common notion of personhood where a person's substance is due to her kin group or caste, and the agency promotes therefore a less conventional approach to the background of the institutionalised child. Even though the agency chooses an untraditional approach to the issue of a child's alien substance, it will by no means overlook the importance of that issue to the prospective adoptive parents or any others involved. Hence, when adoptive parents ask about the details around the child's birth or arrival at the agency, the agency will give the adoptive parents all the information it has on the child.

Blood versus nurture

Mary³ and I enter the living room; present are the couple and the husband's mother. The husband's father, they tell us, will join us later. A maid serves us chai, biscuits and pakoras. Mary asks the couple about their education and family. The couple have an arranged marriage and have been married for about ten years without conceiving. They have undergone several infertility treatments without success and have finally decided to adopt. The decision was partly taken because some friends of the family had recently adopted from Palna.

When the wife talks about how they decided to adopt, Mary mentions destiny as an important factor. Due to destiny the couple cannot conceive—neither naturally nor with the help of technology. Just as destiny is involved in the couple's infertil-

ity, destiny was at work when their friends adopted from Palna.

However, the conversation takes a turn when the couple tells us that the husband's father is not present because he does not want the couple to adopt. It is not because he does not want any grandchildren, there is nothing he desires more. The couple tells Mary that he prays to God every day to give them a child. He has also had several rituals performed so that the couple can have their own biological child.

The wife elaborates on her father-in-law's point of view: "When our friends adopted from Palna, they came to visit and asked my father-in-law for his blessing. My father-in-law saw the baby and blessed our friends and their baby, but he also said: 'I am very happy for you and that you have adopted and I am delighted that you ask for my blessing. But I will continue to pray for my son and his wife so that they can have their own natural child. I will not die until they have their own child'".

This conversation between Mary and the family confused me at first. Eventually, I realised that the husband's father was concerned about the risks involved in adopting an unrelated child, due to the child's alien substance or personhood. Moreover, he was worried about who the child might be: What is the child's substance? Who are the natural parents? What sort of family and caste do they belong to? The husband's father had doubts about the child's background because he thinks poor qualities are transmitted to the child by biological kinship. The child's parents might have "bad genes" (be criminals, of the servant caste etc), qualities which will be transferred to the child.

Mary and the family also discussed whether important personal qualities are transferred through the genes or are the outcome of the child's upbringing. The family said that they did not quite know what to think about either idea. Mary on the other hand had no doubts. By referring to her long experience (of 18 years) in the field of adoption she set them straight. Mary told the family that what is important in adoption is the love and care the child is given by the adoptive parents. In other words, it is the child's upbringing that matters: not genes or nature, but nurture and the parents.

However, it is important to investigate the concept of nurture. Nurture must be seen as an important substance in Indian ideas of kinning, in particular the nurture given the child by his or her family, whether adopted or not. The adoption agency will place nurture over blood as an essential substance in kinning. Hence, kinning in adoption is very much concerned with the making of nurture to a substance similar in quality to that of blood. Nevertheless, nurture is a substance which will be shared after the adopted child is brought

³Mary is the social worker and adoption officer at Palna. She has worked at Palna for more than 15 years.

from the institution to the family home and is cared for by the family as a natural born child through love and care.⁴

Born of my heart

When the social worker places a child with its adoptive parents, the placement is an outcome of a matching of the child and adoptive parents. Hence, the social worker looks at the parents' profile and preferences (for a child) in order to compare with the children available in the institution and hence find a suitable child. Nevertheless, there is a divine property and an image of mystery attached to the matching of a child with its adoptive parents. Such an image is encouraged partly by the social workers' silence regarding how they match a child with its adoptive parents, and partly by their frequent references to divine forces and destiny or fate.

Next I wish to present a home study visit on which I accompanied Ameena,⁵ one of the social workers. The adoptive parent is a single woman,⁶ Ragavati.

Ragavati asks Ameena about how the social workers match a child and parents. Ragavati: "I find it so fascinating the way you match a child with the adoptive parents, it's like you social workers are playing gods. What is your secret? What do you do? What is your approach in finding the right child? What do you look for in order to get a good match between parents and child?"

Although she seems a bit reluctant to answer Ragavati's questions, Ameena tilts her head and says it is important to have enough information about the prospective adoptive parents and the child. She adds that it is essential to meet the prospective adoptive parents at home; this is why the home study visit has to take place.

Ragavati turns to me and says: "Ameena is my guardian angel, she is the one who will find my daughter, my Gia. I know Ameena will find her and give me the sign". She continues: "The day I registered at Palna I met a family there, the parents and their child. I was convinced that the child was their biological child, but Ameena told me that they had adopted the child from the agency. I could not believe it. The child looked so much like the parents that it was impossible to see that the child was adopted".

⁴Later in my field study the idea of blood was never explicitly mentioned, though it was communicated otherwise as questions about where a child came from, if the agency knew anything about the birth mother and whether it was possible to have the correct time and date of birth so that the prospective adoptive parents could have a horoscope made for the child. Horoscopes are commonly made when a child is born in order for the parents to have a fair idea about the child's personality. Later this horoscope will also be useful in arranging the child's future marriage. The horoscope is often the deciding factor as to whether a man and a woman are a suitable match.

⁵Ameena is a social worker connected to Palna. She is a woman in her mid-twenties and is from a wealthy, landowning, Muslim family.

⁶According to HAMA 1956 single parents can adopt a child of the same sex only.

I tilt my head and ask about Gia. Who is Gia? What is she to Ragavati?

Ragavati: "Gia is my daughter. I have given her the name Gia. The word Gia is related to the word Jain, and it means from the heart, by the heart or created by the heart. And that is exactly what my daughter is. She is from my heart. One day I decided that I needed to pray in order to establish whether or not I should adopt. I could not start the adoption process before I had prayed and meditated over the act of adoption. During the prayer I became aware that I should adopt a child, and that the child is Gia, my daughter. Gia is born from another woman's uterus, but she is born from my heart. That is why she is Gia. When I see the child chosen for me by Ameena, I will be given a sign, and I will know that the child is Gia".

In the example above Ragavati emphasises that Gia is from the heart, or more precisely that Gia is born of her heart. Hence, it is possible to interpret Ragavati's statement as meaning that she and Gia have common essence.

Destiny as an explanatory model, giving unrelated adoption a meaning, was commonly applied to the situation of the prospective adoptive parents, both by the agency and the families of the childless couples. To childless couples and their families destiny makes sense and is "good to think with" when they approach an adoption agency. On one occasion I accompanied Mary on a home study visit which revealed to what extent destiny actually is a valid explanatory model for childless couples.

Mary, the social worker; Cesta, a young wife; Anju, Cesta's mother-in-law; Cesta's sister-in-law (the wife of another son of the house) and I are talking over a cup of chai. Anju tells us about Cesta's destiny. "A woman in our neighbourhood takes in stray dogs. One by one she takes the dogs home, feeds them and takes care of them. But one by one the dogs die. It is not in her destiny to have dogs. It is the same with Cesta. Cesta and four other women had IVF treatment at the same time. All of the other four women conceived and gave birth to their babies, but not Cesta. Why did Cesta not conceive? It is not in her destiny

to have her own natural child. Cesta has to adopt, that is Cesta's destiny".

Both Ragavati's and Anju's ideas about destiny can best be seen in relation to Marriott's concept of substance-code (Marriott 1976). According to Marriott, substantial transactions do something to the recipient. In this light Ragavati's idea of destiny becomes a cultural elaboration of substance, since destiny expresses a shared essence between the adoptive parent and child. In Anju's statement about destiny one may detect the essence of Cesta. Cesta is infertile because she has to adopt, hence her biological child is the adopted child.

Code and substance in kinship

Schneider uses the concepts of substance and code in order to describe American kinship. Substance is defined as shared blood or shared biogenetic substance, whereas code is defined as "a pattern for how interpersonal relations should proceed" (Schneider 1984:26). Code is a pattern of behaviour, which, in American kinship, may occur alone or in combination with substance. Thus, substance and code in American kinship are categories that are found separately or in combination (Schneider 1984).⁷

Schneider attempts to organise kinship systematically, in other words to conceptualise kinship as a system of symbols and meanings or a cultural system (Schneider 1984). By this, Schneider does not attempt to describe kinship, and hence takes a step away from the functional approach to kinship. More importantly, *American Kinship* greatly influenced anthropological study in India regarding kinship and personhood.

Scholars of anthropology have discussed whether code and substance are inseparable categories both in Indian and American kinship (Béteille 1990). Moreover, code and substance are considered important elements in understanding systems of kinship and transactions in an Indian context (Béteille 1990, Inden & Nicholas 1977, Marriott 1976). Some find that code and substance are inseparable categories (Inden & Nicholas 1977), whereas others question how this may be possible (Béteille 1990). Béteille refers to Mayer's ethnography from central India in the 1950s where Mayer describes how classificatory kinship ties, on the one hand, may cut across caste membership, but, on the other, not the sphere of commensality and food transactions (Mayer 1960). Thus, Béteille asks how this is possible if code and substance are inseparable. Unfortunately Béteille does not venture further, but leaves the question open (Béteille 1990).

In the article "The end of the body" Parry puts forward a dualistic model of the body and the person, contrary to Marriott and others (Parry 1989, Marriott

1976, Inden & Nicholas 1977). The anthropological kinship model applied in India by these anthropologists⁸ follows the same lines as that of Schneider's: substance and code.⁹ Marriott utilises the same terms but sees these as inseparable in an Indian context. Present in Indian thought is systematic monism, which does not distinguish between code and substance (Marriott 1976). Therefore, Marriott combines code and substance in order to understand notions of personhood and social interactions, hence the concept "substance-code" (Marriott 1976). Of the Indian perception of personhood Marriott claims: "Actions enjoined by these embodied codes are thought of as transforming the substances in which they are embodied" (Marriott 1976).

According to Parry the Indian conception of the person (that is the body, and to an extent substance) is clearly dualistic. "The soul is immortal and is reborn; the body particles a person shares with his kinsmen endure in their bodies. The person is never entirely new when born, never entirely gone when dead. Both his body and soul extend into past and future persons" (Parry 1989:505). Hence, Parry shows how an Indian thinks of the person both in terms of the soul and the body, and therefore emphasises the dualistic aspects of Indian thought.

Carsten, like Parry, finds "systematic monism" too rigid when she considers substance in transactions between persons. If code and substance are inseparable, all actions will alter substance, therefore interpersonal interaction or transactions will invoke the physical and moral aspects of everybody and everything involved, that is the qualities of the substance of the persons (actors; receiver and donor) and the gift involved in the interaction or transaction (Carsten 2001, 2004). "Gift giving not only transmits these qualities of the person from donor to recipient but also the physical aspects of gifts. In other words, there is no radical disjunction between physical and moral properties of persons, or between body and soul" (Carsten 2001:35).

However, neither of these anthropologists discusses the issue of adoption. Béteille is clever and states: "I shall avoid the obvious trap of adoption". (Béteille 1990:497). With this he assumes, to some extent quite rightly, that adoption, traditionally, was only acceptable within the caste group, due to the idea that alien substances might pose a danger to certain groups. The transaction of any kind of substance from outside the caste group was in many instances considered unfortunate, in particular for the higher castes. Nonetheless, the adoption practice has changed a lot since the 1980s. Hence, one might be able to discover new aspects of the complexity of the Indian notions of substance, personhood and kinship by studying the adoption practice today.

Therefore, I think that by studying the practice

⁷Furthermore, Schneider describes American kinship as "constructed of elements from two major orders, the *order of nature* and the *order of law*. Relatives in *nature* share heredity. Relatives in *law* are bound only by law or custom, by the code for conduct, by the pattern for behaviour" (Schneider 1984:27).

⁸These anthropologists were of the Chicago school.

⁹As well as including the order of nature and the order of law.

of adopting an unrelated child, one will discover that the inseparability of code and substance is not easily dismissed in Indian kinship. Moreover, the idea of substance is still predominant in adoption in India today, particularly regarding adoption from an agency. However, ideas concerning substance and what Marriott calls "substance-code" are communicated merely as understatements and are manifested in the dialogue between the prospective adoptive parents and the adoption agency, moreover the social worker. The question thus surfaces: May destiny be considered (biogenetic) substance in terms of "substance-code"?

Adoption from an agency is referred to as a part of the adoptive parents' and child's destiny. Is this so because code and substance might be perceived as inseparable categories with reference to the parent-child relation? Code describes what sort of relation the child and the couple are to establish. Is destiny, then, an incentive for the growth of common substance between the adoptee and adoptive parents since, in order to have code, substance must be present? Nevertheless, one may rightly question how code and substance are inseparable categories when an unrelated child is adopted. However, the kinship process or kinning in adoption from an agency is more comprehensible when substance and code are understood as inseparable categories.

The Indian person: An individual or a dividual?

The consequences of adopting an unrelated child must be seen in the light of a family setting where persons partake in the same substances simply because of commensalities and cohabitation. At the same time, the adoptive parents and the adopted child will not share common substance, since the child is adopted from an agency (however, the family will have common essence due to joint destiny). Thus, it is fruitful to draw on Marriott's work, in particular the article "Hindu Transactions: Diversity without Dualism" where he, inspired by Schneider, discusses "substance-code", that is transactions of substance between different castes in an Indian context. In this article Marriott examines how the concept of personhood is influenced by various transactions, particularly that of food as a transporter of substance. Indian perceptions of personhood make it futile to distinguish between the actor and the action *per se*. One simply does not exist by virtue of being an individual, but a dividual, since persons are divisible. Furthermore, because of existence persons are influenced by various material influences (Marriott 1976).

They must also give out from themselves particles of their own coded substances—essences, residues or other active influences—that may then reproduce in others something of the nature of the persons in whom they have originated. Persons engage in

transfers of bodily substance-code through parentage, through marriage and other interpersonal contacts. (Marriott 1976:111)

Commensality and food taboos in intercaste relations are an expression for and a transporter of substance. Since persons are by nature dividuals, it is therefore in transfers of coded substance not a matter of whether each actor loses or receives alien substance, but what substance *does* to each actor, in particular to the recipient. Thus, since persons are divisible, essence is expressed in everyday interaction and substance execution.

Even with the critique of Parry and Carsten on Marriott in mind, it seems that one cannot completely escape the idea that transactions do something to the actor. This is particularly so in the light of the adoption of an unrelated child in Delhi. When a childless couple adopts from an agency the action involves a close and continuous contact with an alien and potentially dangerous substance. How perceptions of substance are expressed in adoption may be revealed in how the social worker and the adoptive parents discuss the adoptee's personhood and incorporation into the family; in such discussions a reference to destiny, nature, nurture and hereditary dispositions is often made.

An important question is: Is a dualistic model of the Indian notions of the person truer than Marriott's monism (Marriott 1976, Parry 1989)? Furthermore, how is this expressed in the adoption of an unrelated child? Is Carsten correct in stating: "Parry proposes an opposition to this view which suggests that monism and dualism are present in the West and India, and that to miss this point is also to miss the role of monist ideas as an ideological buttress to caste ranking in India" (Carsten 2001)?

The property of transformability of substance is an important aspect in unrelated adoption in Delhi. On the one hand, substance determines one's personhood and facilitates the kinning process, since substance is considered to be shared through both nature and nurture. On the other hand, substance threatens to change the essence of persons' personhood and the interaction with other persons. This twofold property of substance causes a strong emphasis on nurture in terms of kinning in adoption, because a transaction of substance takes place when a couple adopts a child from an agency. To the potential adoptive parents the adopted child is of an alien (or unknown) and possibly dangerous substance. In many ways it seems that "my informants inhabit a markedly dualistic universe" (Parry 1989:511), since they refer to nature and nurture, the soul (destiny) and the body (substance). However, Parry's dualism does not explain the importance of the child's background (substance) nor the use of destiny as an explanatory model for adoption.

Concluding remarks

A possible conclusion is that both the adoptive parents and the social workers have an idea about the properties of alien substances, however the child has also a potential common essence with the adoptive parents. Marriott's substance-code is important in order to understand adoptive parent's kinning of the adoptee, since there are no cultural elaborations of the transubstantiation in adopting from an agency. Nonetheless, destiny is such an elaboration, as it the statement "born of my heart". Destiny has a dual resonance in many Indians' minds. Therefore destiny, on the one hand, relates to a reality, but on the other, destiny also *creates* a reality. Hence, destiny may be perceived as the adoptive parents' and child's common substance. If substance is not directly referred to in the adoptions. Nevertheless, there is an idea that the adoptee is of an alien substance which is transferable to the adoptive parents, but this is not stated directly. This idea about the potential danger of alien substances is communicated through the transaction of food, gifts, services etc; hence a parallel to adoption is drawn.

As mentioned, David Schneider claims that blood is an important substance in American kinship (Schneider 1984). Similarly, ideas about kinship and personhood in Delhi revolve around blood or nature. In other words, biology is an important part of kinship and personhood. Interestingly, nature alone does not explain the idea of substance, the image of nurture is also an important part of it. Therefore, nature alone does not constitute the notion of kinship or family, as do nature and nurture combined.

In adoption essence makes sense because of the reference to destiny. However, the importance of the danger alien substances pose to adoptive parents, and how the adoptive parents emphasise the idea of substance, is the decisive factor in whether childless couples adopt or not.

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