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Kinship philosophizing gender

La parenté comme philosophie du genre

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Résumés

English Français

Kingen argues that kinship, and more specifically procreation, constitutes a means of philosophizing about gender and of naturalizing binary systems, dividing people up into two mutually exclusive categories, male and female. This normalisation process is further entrenched by the constitution of gender complementarity that acts to obscure the underlying asymmetries this process involves. An awareness of this process is facilitated by a transition from an ontology envisaging two sexes to one centered on gender unfettered by dualism.

Kingen soutient que la parenté, et plus particulièrement la procréation, constitue un moyen de spéculer sur le genre et de naturaliser des systèmes binaires divisant les humains en deux catégories mutuellement exclusives, masculin et féminin. Ce processus de normalisation est renforcé par l'instauration d'un principe de complémentarité qui masque des asymétries sousjacentes. La prise de conscience de ce processus est facilitée par le passage d'une ontologie des deux sexes à une ontologie centrée sur le genre, non entravée par le dualisme.

Entrées d'index

Mot-clé: genre, catégories binaires, complémentarité, asymétrie **Keyword**: Gender, binary categories, complementarity, asymmetry

Notes de la rédaction

This avatar proceeds from Pietra Peneque

Texte intégral



Afficher l'image

Introduction

In a conference in 1982, Collier and Yanagisako (1987: 32) argued that gender and kinship are mutually constituted. Their concern was to do away with the idea of separate domains (such as the domestic and the public), and to call into question the nature/culture divide, issues that have long since become consensual within social anthropology. However, their dismissal of kinship studies as concerned with "the genealogical grid" (ibid.: 49), as well as their emphasis, inspired by Bourdieu (1977), on individual strategies, paved the way for the upsurge of studies on relatedness, focusing on the performance of kinship rather than on its normalization through kinship terminologies that not only allocate individuals into a set of categories, but also divide them in binary fashion into "males" and "females." Collier and Yanagisako pointed the way to questioning the assumption of "male" and "female" as natural categories (ibid.: 7), a project furthered by authors like Butler (2002), who facilitated the recognition of kinship and gender as being structured to impose heterosexuality as "natural," thus inevitable, with a few notable exceptions such as the category of the hijra in India and two-spirit persons among North American First Peoples. Subsequently, however, studies of kinship and gender have tended to go their separate ways, thereby neglecting how in tandem they can throw light not only on classical questions, but also on contemporary issues, such as debates over abortion rights.

The argument developed in this article, grounded in the idea raised by Collier and Yanagisako regarding the mutual constitution of gender and kinship, seeks to better understand how exactly these categorical and relational dimensions are mutually constituted. In our view, this mutual constitution is mediated by two asymmetries: on the one hand, the unequivocal distinction of generations, and, on the other, the complementarity of relations with the father (F) and mother (M), implying the recognition of same-sex and cross-sex relations as producing identity and difference. I will therefore be reflecting on the issue of procreation within the context of the perception of these two asymmetries in the mutual constitution of kinship and gender.

Despite the fact that the debate in 2018 was not framed in terms of elucidating what kinship is, but rather how it is linked to procreation, the ensuing discussion of the motions presented by the eight avatars somewhat inevitably touched upon the more fundamental question of trying to define kinship itself. Consequently, it is worth stating at the outset that the salutary conclusion of the joint efforts of the avatars pointed to the impossibility of whittling down kinship to a series of predefined elements. To me this

suggested the idea that procreation is a recurring motif indissociable from kinship, more along the lines of a metonymical relationship than a metaphorical one. Pietra mentioned the expression "family likeness," coined by Wittgenstein and reformulated for anthropological use by Needham as "polythetic classification" (1975). These expressions serve to transmit the idea of recurring features that may or may not be present in any specific case concerning empirical data, attitudes, behavior, mental conceptions, and theoretical models. Procreation may thus be understood as one among a set of features providing the basis for the "family resemblance" of what anthropologists call kinship. In this text I try to identify what particular dimension of procreation allows it to occupy this role: by mediating the social production of gender complementarity.

- Lévi-Strauss (1964 and *passim*) demonstrated that mythology provides a way of speculating about existential human dilemmas such as mortality, the origin of illness, cooked food, and agriculture. Some societies have mused about the possibility of parthenogenesis, and many have sought for the origins of men and of women. In order to reflect upon the categorial opposition between men and women (or male and female), one often finds explanations based on the hypothesis of complementarity, such as yin and yang (see Granet 1980 [1934]), but also of domination (see Mathieu 2007). This is unsatisfactory because numerous relational categories, including masters and slaves, are likewise based on the principles of complementarity and domination (see Dumont 1979 [1966]). What is more significant is the way in which terms are complementary. Lévi-Strauss (1956), who has been criticized concerning his analysis of "the exchange of women," affirmed the arbitrariness of the sexual division of labor; it is a contract of mutual dependency, forging complementarity.
- This article argues that, in principle, complementarity is not part of the "natural" order of things, and that domination is not necessarily implicit in the dynamics of kinship. It is in the social production of complementarity, intertwined with historical issues and power relations, that kinship emerges. One thereby moves away from a vision of kinship merely as a way of reflecting on procreation, and rather than imagining kinship as resulting from the interaction between the domain of procreation with other domains, on the contrary, it is a question of showing that it is the very idea of kinship being constituted by other "domains" that is problematic. If one were to imagine different domains being superimposed upon each other, one would nevertheless argue that procreation could be considered as resulting from the interaction of the domain of kinship and another domain, precisely that of cisgender reproduction and heterosexuality as a "way of life" (Fassin 2004; Foucault 1981).
- I contemplate kinship as a history of hetero-cisgender hegemony. Procreation subsequently plays a major role because it is precisely through procreation that kinship is hetero cisgender normalized, and the hegemonical positions of gender are produced as the effects of kinship. Gender is disputed as it has always been. If it has been asserted that kinship is a means of philosophizing about gender, the perspective of kinship as based on procreation would thus be a *hetero-cisgender philosophy of gender* that Monique Wittig (1980) has denominated "the straight mind." I thus strive to bring together gender and kinship in a unified and denaturalizing analysis of sexual difference.

Kinship and gender



Gender is all too often discussed as if unrelated to kinship (see Gregor & Tuzin, 2001). An exception, besides the aforementioned book edited by Collier and Yanagisako, was

Kinship and Gender: An Introduction (2000), by Stone. It could be argued that kinship, and notably terminologies, are a form of philosophizing about gender or, more specifically, a way of elaborating upon sexual difference. Despite extensive discussions in recent decades about the socio-cultural construction of men and women, the elementariness of these categories has not been disposed of M. Strathern (1987: 31, n. 6) remarked that in *the Gender of the Gift* (1988): "no doubt without complete success, I try to avoid taking 'men' and 'women' as ontological givens." In other words, the opposition would not entirely go away.

As far as I am aware, this renowned English anthropologist and Héritier, her equally renowned counterpart in France, make no reference to each other's work. F. Héritier was initially considered a feminist due to her insistence on the differential value of men and women, implying the latter were treated as minors in relation to their male counterparts. However, after an interview in which she declared that no society admits of homosexual kinship,¹ she was criticized by anthropologists and sociologists as essentializing sexual differences. The debate that originated this article having taken place in Paris, someone raised the question of whether my proposal that kinship terminologies involve philosophizing about sexual binarism is different from Héritier's approach to kinship, according to which all kinship systems take as their initial building blocks the existence of "only two sexes" (1981: 16).

Héritier's work bridged the generations of anthropologists who wrote about men and women, and those who switched to discussing gender, constituting an epistemological turning point in the social sciences and beyond them. Despite the fact that Héritier did use the term "gender" in her publications, she seems never to have completely dissociated gender from the basic empirically observable anatomical distinction between male and female (Fortier 2021). Gender issues have evolved at such a pace since the publication of Héritier's best known work, L'exercice de la parenté, that her former student, the anthropologist Priscille Touraille, was recently able to declare that "males and females are not biological realities, but categories" (2016: 343). To a certain extent this question had already been broached by Evans-Pritchard (1992 [1951]) when he described how a Nuer woman could be classified as a man if she did not procreate. She married another woman who bore children in her name, and she would be recorded genealogically as a man. In this case, giving birth is what defines a woman independently of her anatomically assigned gender. The year 2019 witnessed yet another definition of being a woman, this time based on hormone levels. A South African athlete (Caster Semenya) was controversially deemed to be male on the basis of her testosterone levels and not on her anatomy².

At the start of the twenty-first century, Butler (2002) raised the tantalizing question of whether kinship is always heterosexual. Despite her contentious rendering of Lévi-Strauss's alliance theory, her discussion of normatization makes sense, as exemplified by the explosion of debates concerning gender in recent decades. This is currently instantiated by the fundamentalist expression "gender ideology," espoused by Christian churches and disseminated by right-wing politicians, having made the question of gender and the family highly politicized issues. In Pope Francis's words in 2019, gender theory "denies the difference and reciprocity in nature of a man and a woman and envisages a society without sexual differences, thereby eliminating the *anthropological* basis of the family".³ A statement like this can hardly be ignored by social anthropologists. This illustrates why I was surprised by some discussants harking back to the economic and the political "domains" (though others mentioned "structures"), as if economics and politics were not transversal aspects of society. In the modern urban world, an increasing number of couples live together and consider themselves to constitute a family unit without any intention of having children. Besides this, one

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should not overlooked the existence of those who shun kinship units altogether, preferring to go solo (see Klinenberg 2013).

The motions of the eight avatars spanned a vast, indeed dizzying, array of approaches, from discussions concerning phylogenesis and our heritage from our hominid ancestors to the new reproductive technologies (NRTs) and even science fiction. Recent findings from ethology have contributed to decentering humanity's illusion of its specificity in relation to the rest of the animal kingdom. Traditional social collectivities, such as hunters and gatherers (spanning the major part of humanity's existence) and horticulturalists, have evidently gained much food for thought from keen observation of the animal kingdom, and this doubtlessly inspired them to copy certain traits and to reject others, such as Amazonian macaws characterized by lifelong couples (Sick 1984: 296).

Asymmetries as inextricably constituting gender and kinship

During the debate, Pietra Peneque asked whether, without wanting to return to the argument that women are disadvantaged because they give birth (as some feminists claimed in the 1970s), my motion implies hierarchy in a Dumontian sense. This could be complemented by a question from Touraille (2016: 342-343): "Is gender defined by hierarchical relations, or should it be understood as the (original) means invented by the human species to create and above all to maintain hierarchical relations?" I consider it more appropriate to speak of asymmetry than hierarchy. Godelier (1989: 162) once argued that in many societies men experience the lack of women's capacity to create life. This sounds naïve in the light of sexual asymmetry, a question that anthropologists have long ignored, preferring the misnomer "egalitarian societies," especially in relation to hunters and gatherers. Godelier himself states (*ibid*.) that, according to the Baruya of New Guinea, it was the women who invented flutes but may no longer see or play them, and that in their mythology the social order implies the subordination of women to male domination. In a similar manner, myths in the North-West Amazon explain why women must not see the flutes played by men. Romu Kumu, the female creator,

stole the Yurupary instruments from the port and played them at dawn when her brothers were too lazy to get up and bathe. While she had them, men were like women – they menstruated and worked manioc. The men pursued her, retrieved the Yurupary, and punished her by making her menstruate – that is the origin of female menstruation. (Hugh-Jones 1979: 137)

A text that is not explicitly about the relation between the two sexes (written before the term gender came on the scene), but that is useful for dealing with the question of sexual asymmetry is Hertz's essay "The Pre-eminence of the Right Hand: A Study in Religious Polarity" (1909). Hertz recognizes the existence of organic asymmetry, in that the two hands resemble each other but are unequal. He goes on to say that instead of education trying to undo it, it reinforces it, creating a hierarchical structure. Hertz (*Ibid*.: 107) notes that the plasticity of the organism allows strength and weakness to be developed into opposite hands. Hertz is dealing with the opposition between the sacred and the profane, noting that women and children are generally associated with the latter versus adult men (*Ibid*.: 90). On the basis of the slight asymmetry between the two hands, societies have disembarked on a journey of elaboration of dualistic opposition. As summed up by Hertz (*Ibid*.: 97): "Right and left extend beyond the limits of our body to embrace the universe." Despite the lack of research on the issue, the repression of left

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handedness has been noted in various Amazonian societies such as the Marubo (Pano) and the Mēbêngôkre (Jê) (personal communication, Nelly Marubo and V. Lea), and this serves as a metaphor for "natural" binary categories being imbued with asymmetry.

Human sexual dimorphism (Lea 2010), fueled by the average testosterone levels in men, tends to give them more potential for developing muscular strength. The tendency for men to be taller than women in any particular society has been the object of research by Touraille (2013 and *passim*), who mentions that nutritional practices may contribute to this (an issue previously mentioned by Héritier in relation to rural France). Among the Mēbêngôkre, the women depend largely on their own household for the availability of food, whereas the men in the men's house are constantly regaled with food from their close relatives in the entire village, sharing whatever they receive with the rest of their age grade, entailing a proportionately greater availability of food to them (personal communication, V. Lea). Further research is necessary concerning Touraille's polemical findings.

Dumont, a student of Hertz, considered the family as exemplifying a hierarchical structure, a totality, the internal elements of which are interdependent and thus subordinated to the order of the whole. He states that the more equal the two sexes are made, the more the unity between them (the couple or the family) will be destroyed (Dumont 1979 [1966]: 240). Dumont points to marriage and the division of labor as examples of hierarchy (1971: 76). It is tempting to wonder whether this could be linked to the phenomenon of domestic violence and femicide practiced by men who cannot accept and feel threatened by contemporary challenges to patriarchalism.

Dumont uses Tocqueville to exemplify a notion that originated around the eighteenth century, that equality implies similarity (Dumont 1979 [1966]: 30). Dumont related his own theory of hierarchy as reversible encompassment to an affirmation by Tocqueville concerning North American democracy, that women are inferior socially, but morally and intellectually equal (*ibid.*: 31). Dumont's most famous example of this type is of course the question of Eve being made out of one of Adam's ribs, and thus the idea of mankind encompassing both sexes. This is comparable to the masculine form being used as the unmarked or neutral form in languages like French, with male personal pronouns encompassing both men and women.

Hertz (1970 [1909]: 92) stated that the sexual division of labor prevents mixing and confusion, an idea that could help us to understand the anxious reaction of many people to all that is outside of a neat dualistic opposition with clearly defined frontiers, such as LGBTQI+ categories. Héritier (1996:198-199) mentioned the drowning of hermaphrodites in ancient Rome and Greece, making evident that this fear of ambiguity pre-dates the modern era. Lévi-Strauss's notion of dualism in perpetual disequilibrium (1991) can be seen in a certain sense as taking up where Hertz and Dumont left off.

Until the advent of the NRTs, pregnancy was the preserve of women; in 2016 a transgender man gave birth to a child in the USA, causing much furore in the media. The case of Thomas Beatie in the United States, as analyzed by Fortier (2014), shows that it is possible to be a man, and besides being the husband of his wife and father of his children also keep and even use "feminine" reproductive functions, as well as the ovaries of his body. Beatie carried and gave birth to three children between 2008 and 2010, thanks to a sperm donation and a temporary suspension of testosterone. Beatie used his own uterine function instead of his wife's, who had undergone a hysterectomy. This new situation provoked deep reactions in the media, because Beatie had just given reality to the figure of "the pregnant man," which has been previously confined to the limbo of the imagination, even if it had already been present in popular representations, tales, and myths. One newspaper article stated: "When daddy is also the mommy," which shows the difficult dissociation between the paternal role and becoming a father

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by having used biological reproductive functions traditionally characterizing motherhood. As Fortier (2014) analyzed, in Beatie's case, the uterine function of reproduction can be disconnected from gender identity, even if this function remains gendered; Beatie terms his own reproductive role as having become a surrogate mother.

Based on research on trans-parenting in France and Quebec, Fortier (2017a) intends to analyze the terms used by children to address and name their father who became a woman. Do they still use the term "Daddy," do they swap to "Mommy," or do they coin a third term? Furthermore, do we observe an adequacy or a discrepancy between these vocative terms and the terms of reference? This author observes greater creativity in developing vocative terms that combine "father" and "mother" than terms of reference that are more fixed. If the vocative terms are modified, and if, after the father's transition, the child has "two mummies" and no longer has a "daddy," the terms of reference "father" and "mother" associated with the reality of kinship tend to be used interchangeably.

One participant in the dabate noted that an individual does not come into the world perceiving sexual difference. I am aware of this, but those who philosophize about gender are adults (not babies or children) with clear criteria of sexual distinction – often linked to the phallus – and who set about sexing the body from an early age, as in the case of those classified as intersex, notably in France (Fortier 2017b), who are operated on to assign them a specific sex because they are born with "sexual ambiguities." For me there is not an abstract neutral body; indeed, someone brought up the pertinent point that the whole question of the "body" is still somewhat nebulous. In languages like Mēbêngôkre, there is flesh, bones, components, and, for the lack of a better word, "soul" or "spirit," but not "body" (Lea 2020).

Of particular relevance to me was a discussion during the debate concerning the asymmetrical roles of the genetrix and genitor in relation to their offspring. It was mentioned that in some animal species the genitor is not recognized as such. To understand the absence, or detachability, of the father, and the increasing prevalence of matricentric families worldwide, fresh insight may be gained through comparison with the male's role in procreation among other species and throughout history.

Native theories of conception entail reflection about the distinctive involvement of men and women in procreation besides, in some areas of the world, ancestral spirits. It should not be forgotten that until recently marriage was sufficient to define the mother's husband as the father in the Euro-American world. Radcliffe-Brown (1950: 4) cites both a dictum of Roman law "pater est quem nuptiae demonstrant," and an early English saying, "Whoso boleth my kyne, ewere calf is mine." 4 It has been noted in the literature that the Euro-American view of attributing a 50% (genetic) role to men and to women in procreation is rare in human history. Women may be thought to contribute to the formation of the fetus or be regarded as mere receptacles. Men may be considered to be responsible for conception, providing the seed. In some regions, as is common in Amazonia, the fetus is deemed to be built up gradually from semen (somewhat like a snowball), through repeated intercourse, and can be associated with the possibility of multiple paternity (Beckerman & Valentine 2002). This means that the Euro-American notion of genitor does not necessarily coincide with the Amazonian one; nevertheless, the socio-cultural figures of the genitor and of the pater are recognized in both cases. In Muslim societies, one also finds the importance of sperm in the construction of a child, something that carries over into the period of breastfeeding, as made evident by the institution of milk kinship (Fortier 2001).



Elsewhere, resemblances do not always entail a narrow causal link with local representations concerning bodily substances, nor with the system of filiation. In the patrilineal societies of the Maghreb, the resemblance of a child to its father does not

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necessarily refer to the husband's sperm, despite the fact that it often plays the main role in conception. Likewise, among the Trobrianders of Melanesia, a matrilineal society where resemblance to the father is important, this is not determined by a biological substance. One can hypothesize that the importance of resembling the father that is found in numerous societies is not necessarily linked to biological matters or to the system of filiation, but rather to the question of gender relations, and more precisely to the fear of the illegitimacy of the child related to the fact that the mother has committed adultery, something that remains strong in numerous societies, the search for resemblance being a way to check the good reproductive order of society (Fortier 2009).

Couvade, common in lowland South America, could be argued to consolidate the role of pater, if not of genitor, rather than being linked to the creation of spiritual paternity as Rivière (1974) supposed. Strathern (1995: 319) deconstructed the myth of the Trobriand ignorance of the role of sexual intercourse in procreation, pointing out that although the matrilineal ancestral spirits are responsible for placing the fetus in the womb, the human father is attributed the role of molding the features of the fetus, besides nourishment of the child after birth. Strathern (*ibid.*) notes (citing A. Weiner) that in the Trobriands the procreative role is assigned to the brother-sister dyad rather than to the mother and father. This is reminiscent of the brother-sister dyad among the Amazonian Jê peoples, first described by Melatti (1976), where the genitor/s produce the fetus, but it is the cross-sex siblings of the parents who transmit names to their same-sex brother's child or sister's child (i.e. from MB to ZS and from FZ to BD). These two examples demonstrate that procreation, in the construction of personhood, can extend outwards from the parents.

The Crockers have described the ceremonial sexual relations, including multiple sexual partners, that once characterized most Northern Jê peoples (Crocker & Crocker 1994). Inadvertently, this conceals male infertility while optimizing female fertility, though this is denied in accordance with the fact that a single sexual relation is considered insufficient to produce a fetus. The Crockers also note that the advent of private property has enhanced jealousy. Men may be relatively interchangeable when they are evaluated in terms of their hunting skills and ability to fell trees for planting gardens, but this changes when wage labor comes on the scene, and not all men have access to money. One must be cautious in defining property as this does not entail merely land and livestock. Personal names and heritable prerogatives may be sources of immaterial wealth and prestige; they are simultaneously a connection to the ancestors and mythological origins (Lea 2012).

When referring to men and women, one should not lose sight of the marked asymmetry in their input concerning procreation and parenting. From a contemporary biological perspective, a single ejaculation may sum up paternity, and a man may not even be aware that he has engendered a child. This is the reason why I disagree with other avatars who proposed extending the term procreation to cover the period necessary to rear a child to adulthood. Another problem with extending the meaning of procreation is that in recent years homosexual and single parents are gradually being recognized as capable of parenting a child, independently of giving birth to it or not, so if the notion of procreation is stretched to cover fertilization, pregnancy, giving birth, and bringing up a child, it risks becoming overladen with meaning. Psychoanalysis recognizes that while a child requires parenting, this role may be competently performed by someone other than the mother or the father.

DNA tests sometimes result in technology producing a biologizing definition of paternity with bizarre effects, leading the social father (or pater) to relinquish the role of father, consolidated over the course of years, delegating "paternity" to the genetic father, who may not even know the offspring in question. As noted by Comparator in

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the debate, biology can be considered a cosmology. Strathern (1999: 74) gave an example from California, in 1993, where a man alleged that he was no longer the father of his children, aged 9 and 5, after DNA testing. This tendency that arose in Western countries has gradually internationalized along with the medical definition of the strict time limit for pregnancy, delivering a blow to social filiation, which until then had been considered to be intangible, increasing the vulnerability of the most fragile categories of people in the Muslim societies studied by Fortier (2011), namely women accused of adultery and children accused of being illegitimate.

On kinship performativity

One must beware of naturalizing the existence of nuclear families. The Na in China provide an interesting example of the possibility of the non-recognition of paternity (Hua 2000). Women may reside with their brothers throughout their lives without their visiting sexual partners being considered husbands or fathers. The onset of the AIDS epidemic led to children being brought up in many cases by grandparents or other relatives. Industrialization in China has also entailed children remaining in rural areas with their grandparents while the parents live and work in distant cities. Internationally, migrants and refugees are increasingly separated from parents, children, and other relatives.

Adoption mimics consanguineal kinship, and friendship often has recourse to metaphors of kinship. In modern reconstituted families, the stepmother, stepfather, and stepchildren are ideally treated like consanguineal relatives, though stories abound of evil stepmothers and sexually predatory stepfathers. Nurture may be deemed to forge relations of kinship, but this is by no means universal. Convents and monasteries also have non-procreative relations of kinship, with members referring to each other as "sister" or "brother"; in such cases, metaphorical kinship relations resemble distant classificatory sibling relations.

There was widespread agreement by the avatars concerning the fact that due to the immaturity of the human infant at birth, both mentally and physically, resulting in protracted dependence on adults exceeding that of any other species, procreation is not limited to gestation and birth. Various avatars and debaters proposed redefining procreation to extend throughout the period necessary to produce a person mature enough to be autonomous, in terms of being able to fend for him/herself. One should not forget Strathern's (1988: 91) caveat that independence is a specifically Euro-American value, and that among peoples like the Hageners of New Guinea maturity is measured by a person's recognition of mutual interdependence.

Discussions by evolutionary biologists are difficult for social anthropologists to verify, an instance being the "grandmother hypothesis," suggesting that women live beyond the menopause, unlike all other mammals bar a species of whale, as this may have adaptive value, allowing them to contribute to the well-being of their grandchildren. It is questionable whether this is relevant for understanding contemporary humanity, but it is of interest in that it stretches the idea of procreation even further than that demanded during the debate, this time embracing the grandmother.

On incest prohibition



The notion of incest has a wide range of applicability and, like kinship, cannot be reduced to a one-dimensional definition. In sociocentric structures of relationality, such

as moieties, clans, and lineages, incest may involve both alliance between groups, and marriage at the individual level. In ego-centered calculations, incest prohibitions involve a much narrower range of people. Incest can also be formulated as incompatibility of relational positions, without reference to procreation, as in the case of Woody Allen's marriage to his adoptive daughter, analyzed by Héritier (1997). Incest via sexual relations is doubtless a universal theme, as established by psychoanalysis.

Héritier (1997) made a novel contribution to the understanding of the incest prohibition, suggesting that it constitutes a reflection on the symbolism of identity and difference, something disconnected from procreation. Of special interest is her formulation of what she refers to as "incest of the second type," considering "the incest prohibition as a problem of the circulation of bodily fluids from one body to another ... the bringing into contact of identical humors" (Héritier 1997: 11). She exemplifies what she refers to as "homosexual incest" as when a Nuer brother would be considered incestuous if he had sexual relations with his brother's wife while the brother was alive, but he may be expected to marry her once she is widowed (the levirate). What is at stake is an incestuous relation between brothers by means of a shared sexual partner, something without any direct relation to procreation. A cross-sex example given by Héritier (Héritier 1997: 13), from the ancient Hittites, is when incest is invoked if a man has sexual relations with his father's wife, who is not his mother. As the father has sexual relations with both wives, the son is brought into contact with the substance of his mother and of his father by the partner shared with the latter.

While it appears at first glance that assisted reproductive technologies have dissociated procreation from sexuality, Fortier's research (2005) shows that this view is mistaken since these new techniques have in no way removed the sexual dimension inherent in procreation (see also Strathern 1995). Although these reproductive techniques do indeed dispense with sexual intercourse, the physical dimension of sexuality related to the circulation of bodily substances is far from having disappeared from these new modes of reproduction. Furthermore, sexuality is not actually confined to a physical level involving the meeting of bodies or even the meeting of bodily substances but to a psychological level. Attempts to distinguish assisted reproductive technologies from sexuality appear to be misguided given that sexuality in all its dimensions, including the physical dimension of the circulation of bodily substances as well as the psychological dimension of fantasy, are far from having been removed from new methods of reproduction, even if they do indeed dispense with sexual intercourse, because sexuality cannot be reduced to the sexual act. Consequently, although these new methods of procreation are no longer based on sexual intercourse, the sexual dimension is all the more present in these new reproductive techniques when they have recourse to a third-party donor, raising the issues of adultery and incest.

The NRTs raise novel issues for research, such as the repercussions concerning the incest taboo that result from the anonymity of sperm donors. According to the documentation of one particular case, examples abound of doctors who have used their own sperm to impregnate their patients without the latter being aware of it.⁶ In the case referred to, the doctor has now been revealed to have generated over 50 children with his own sperm, various of whom live in close geographical proximity. This came to light due to the current popularization of DNA tests, some of which put their clients in contact with their nearest genetic relatives. As in other examples of the apparent innovation of the NRTs, fathering such a large number of children is not infrequent in societies practicing polygamy. Sperm donation requires reflecting on the incest taboo concerning a multiplicity of half siblings, and may stimulate a new boom in DNA tests, no longer merely to confirm biological paternity but also to monitor the genetic proximity of potential spouses.

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The NRTs also demonstrate that there may be logical relations between terms that extrapolate or complexify the question of procreation, as when a surrogate mother is not considered to be the "real' mother," or when a lesbian mother's connection to her children is via her relationship with her partner – the genetrix of the children. The fact that incest is not necessarily associated directly with sexual relations draws attention to the absence of sexuality from the questions addressed to the avatars. Comparator asked me: "isn't it kinship that is appended to sexuality?" I am in total agreement; however, sexuality slips through the categorizing net whereas kinship is instrumental in sorting individuals into categories with clearly defined frontiers.

During the debate, because marriage was discussed in the context of procreation, sexuality outside marriage was not given attention. In relation to contemporary Amazonia, Gregor (1977 and passim) made a detailed analysis of extra-conjugal relations among the Mehinaku, an Arawak-speaking people in Central Brazil. An interesting account of marriage versus sexuality in ancient Greece was provided by Vernant (1974: 60), citing the Athenian politician and orator Demosthenes: "The state of marriage consists, he affirmed, in procreating children for oneself ...," adding that: "we have courtesans for pleasure; concubines for everyday care...; wives in order to have legitimate children and as faithful guardians of matters concerning the House."

On kinship terminologies

It is clear from Hominidae's and Paratio's motions, and from the discussions that took place during the debate, that basic kinship relationships existed during the course of evolution prior to the development of articulate language, as is attested to by their existence in the rest of the animal kingdom today.

From my perspective, kinship terminologies are relational structures that provide a grid of basic categories of sociality. As systems of algebraic logic, they have relative autonomy in relation to the performance of kinship. It is important to stress this point because they are also autonomous concerning their link to procreation. What is indispensable is the internal coherence of a terminology, in the sense that, for example, if ego calls alter "mother," then alter must reciprocate, calling ego "son/daughter/child."

Héritier (1981) advanced the findings of Lévi-Strauss by demonstrating that new possibilities of understanding marital alliance (and the combination of elementary and semi-complex systems) become available when one takes the specificity of female ego into account, instead of supposing that male ego is all that is necessary as an encompassing category. This showed the irreducibility of binary gender calculations in order to fully appreciate the complexity of such systems.

Paratio focused on the importance of recursivity for deciding which kin terms to use, rather than genealogical calculations. Nevertheless, Parkin's suggestion (1996) still seems relevant when he affirmed that one may use either genealogy or category according to different circumstances.

A latent circularity is involved when we ask whether all vernacular kinship terminologies contain terms that can be interpreted by an ontology of procreation and sex. In order to isolate "kinship terms," we should have criteria separating them from other words of native vocabularies; but if such criteria involve the presence of notions of "procreation," the proposed question answers itself – for every vernacular term which qualifies as a "kinship term" will by definition have a "procreational" semantic component.

Supposedly *all* theoretical models that describe and compare kinship terminologies contain terms that *may* be interpreted as referring to "sameness" (same-sex siblingship)

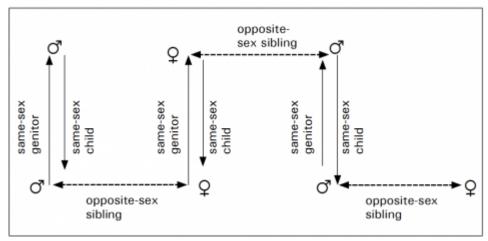
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and to generational opposition (same-sex genitor-child), as well as to opposite sexes. And this – together with relative age hierarchy – goes a long way towards describing and classifying most of the ethnology.

The possibility of interpreting such languages in terms of relations of "sameness" and "difference" among "siblings" and "genitor-child" relations is highly suggestive, invoking a version of a "kinship molecule" (a modified version of Lévi-Strauss's atom of kinship) containing an articulation of genitor-child and siblingship relations, as well as of sameness and difference in both relations.



Representation of genealogical relations as generation and sex changes

In the diagram above, labelled arrows stand for relations, and there is no distinguished "ego" (any vertex can be the starting point of a chain of terms). Same-sex genitor arrows can be read in the opposite sense as representing a same-sex child relation. This formulation allows for the modelling of *all* terminological relations as compositions of just two relations: "same-sex genitor-child" (vertically oriented arrows) and "opposite-sex siblingship" (dashed double-headed arrows). All relations have inverses.

This representation applies properly to "classificatory systems" where "same-sex sibling" has the role of an identity, suggesting a model in which "procreation" (same-sex or opposite-sex) and "identity" (same-sex or opposite-sex) have a dominant role. These procreation-and-sex ontologies are part of native metaphysics that accompany their formal terminological calculi.

An idealized, abstract depiction of Amazonian Dravidian kinship systems exemplifies how gender categories could be characterized as straitjackets. They divide the world into males and females without any possibility of a third category of people, such as can be found in parts of North America, India, and elsewhere. They are ideally endogamous, with cross-cousin marriage, or marriage to a child of the cross-sex sibling of one's parents (depending on how one characterizes this). Consequently, one's parallel cousins are siblings and one's cross-sex cousins are either prospective spouses or siblings-in-law. The parallel-sex siblings of one's parents are classificatory parents, and the cross-sex siblings of one's parents are prospective parents-in-law. The system is self-replicating, churning out both consanguineal relatives and affines in perpetuity.

Many indigenous societies in South America (and probably in North America too), who traditionally equate siblings and parallel cousins, are gradually adopting the "Eskimo" (or Euro-American) calculation of cousins, in accordance with the hegemonic national kinship terminology. This is noteworthy in terms of the question whether some kinship systems are more procreation-centered than others, in the sense that "descriptive terminologies" could be considered to be more procreative than

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"classificatory terminologies," because they narrow down the categories of "mother" and "father" to the mater and pater. Classificatory terminologies, rather than proliferating the "mother" and "father" categories, could be considered to reduce the semantic load of procreation by extending these categories, not only to the same-sex siblings of each parent, but also to numerous other people with whom there is no hint of procreative overtones. Concomitantly, with this gradual switch of terminological calculations, Amerindians, with the encouragement of Christian missionaries, are attributing increasing importance to the nuclear family at the expense of extended families.

On the diversity of kinship systems

One could argue for an analogy between the diversity of human phonemes and that of kinship terminological systems, one limited by the speech organs, and the other by contriving a logic that must inevitably take procreation into account in producing relationality. As the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) makes evident, any particular human language chooses only a limited selection of all possible speech sounds documented throughout the world.

It seems necessary to acknowledge that we do not yet have fully satisfactory answers concerning the question of the diversity of kinship systems, either in time or in space. Amazonia has been significant in terms of debunking ecological determinism (see Descola 1986), with Dravidian and Crow-Omaha terminologies having been produced in similar environments, besides Australian-type systems, such as that of the Cashinahua.

Lévi-Strauss (1967 [1947]) remains relevant concerning the use of matrimonial alliances to engender collectivities and networks of relationships (in the jargon of today, as opposed to society and/or culture). It is important to remember that in Lévi-Straussian terms it makes no difference whether men exchange women or vice versa, as in the case of the Měbêngôkre (Kayapó) in Central Brazil (Lea 2012), and the Guna in Panama (Madi Dias 2017, 2018). Here there arises a question of scale: though perfectly applicable for reflecting upon exchange systems, Lévi-Strauss's perspective does not aim to account for personal experience, or for "uxorilocality as a drama" present in Guna mythology, lived out in Gunayala in the ritual of the abduction of the fiancé, and from then on in the sociology of daily exchanges.

Rosa (2015) argues that in the advent of homoaffective relations among the Amazonian Ticuna there remains a preoccupation with moiety exogamy when choosing a partner, due not to any concern about procreation but to avoid anger and retribution from the spirit world. In other words, even when homoaffective relationships materialize, they continue to abide by moiety exogamy, as if constituting an opposite-sex couple. I propose here to speak of "modulations of kinship" that may occur at the level of personal experience (Madi Dias 2018). Among the Guna, dissidence in relation to the social project of masculinity is expressed through a creative usage of the initial binary terms: male and female. Gender dualism is thereby unstable, evoking once more Lévi-Strauss's idea of dualism being in perpetual disequilibrium.

A perspective that takes individual experience into consideration, as provoking an imbalance in the definition of gender and of kinship, will finally allow us to complexify the problem of the universality of procreation as entailing a question of scale. This is because, from the end of the twentieth century onwards, gender has increasingly become a question of individual experience and personal autonomy, whereby a joint reflection concerning both kinship and gender invites us to consider bodies and lives that are not engaged in heterosexual cisgendered reproduction. Beyond the grand theories of culture and symbolic exchange, it thus becomes necessary to reflect upon

personal experience "outside the world" (Dumont 1983) of procreation. If we remain on the level of experience, we can even affirm that procreation is not universal in so far as it does not represent the horizon of all lives, and concerns neither all relational modes nor uses of the body. While rules do exist, it is always possible to disobey them, as Lévi-Strauss (1967 [1947]) himself remarked. What is invariable is rather the possibility of *modulation* in the dynamics of social reproduction.

Final considerations concerning procreation, kinship, and gender

Categories and behavior concerning sexualities have opened up new perspectives, not only concerning the latter, but also concerning kinship and gender more widely (Perlongher 1987; Rago 1990). During the debate, marriage was described as a place of intimacy, but relations between a prostitute and his/her client may also involve intimacy. One should not forget that marriage is also the setting for domestic violence and femicide. Descola (1993) described the violence of Achuar husbands cuckolded by their wives. According to him (1986: 219), a man who lacks a woman upon whom he can depend (mother, wife, sister, or daughter) has no alternative but suicide. A man without a woman lacks alimentary autonomy, contrary to a woman, who can provide for herself by catching frogs, larvae, and so on. Women are less dependent on their husbands than vice versa. This echoes Lévi-Strauss's (1967 [1947]) famous example of the wretched Bororo bachelor. Friedl (1975: 59) came up with the provocative hypothesis that it is usually the men who go off to war because men's lives are more expendable than women's, precisely because of the length of time required of women by pregnancy and breastfeeding.

Anthropology could gain novel insights from a closer relation with psychoanalysis. Freud (1949 [1905]) conceived of infantile sexuality as characterized by the potential for polymorphous perversity, including incestuous and bisexual drives (or pulsions) that tend gradually to be transformed into adult cisgender heterosexuality, bringing sexuality into line with hegemonic socio-cultural norms. People who do not subscribe to binary heterosexual categories have inspired anthropologists to denaturalize the automaticity of male and female complementarity. The *hijra* in South Asia may be considered to constitute a third gender, something recognized by the Supreme Court of India in 2014. There are analogies with the *omeggids* among the Guna of Panama (Madi Dias 2015, forthcoming). Roscoe (1998) describes the prevalence among North American First Peoples of those referred to nowadays as "two spirit": people assigned male at birth who perform tasks generally associated with women, and who may dress as women while assuming a differential status. They seem not infrequently to have been considered akin to a third gender, rather than as homo- or transsexual.

Among the Nahua in Mexico, Maciel (2018) has described how men who marry and procreate may also engage in sexual relations with men without this being considered socially relevant, whereas men who have sexual relations with other men and who fail to marry are stigmatized as *siuatamatik* (resembling a woman). A close analogy was provided during the debate by the *khanith/xanith* in Oman and some parts of the Arabian Peninsula, described as a third gender category by Wikan, cited by Corinne Fortier (2019). In the words of the latter:



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[A]fter puberty they should marry and have children ... From that moment onwards they become men, they are categorized as men. But if they do not play this manly role, they remain xanith, that is to say – a third gender. Thus, one does

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in fact see that the question of reproduction is essential for defining gender because without procreation they continue to partake of a third gender.

This is somewhat reminiscent of Foucault's (1984) description of ancient Greece and Rome, where men engaged in sexual relations with male adolescents without any pejorative connotation.

In a well-known text, Radcliffe-Brown (1950) emphasized the tendency for same-sex siblings and parallel cousins to be viewed as equivalent to each other, and thus interchangeable. The ubiquity in the indigenous Americas of parallel cousins being classed as siblings, and of cross-sex siblings being placed at the threshold of matrimonial alliance (as in Dravidianate Amazonia), attests to the pervasiveness of same-sex people being interpreted as the paradigm of identicalness, and concomitantly of opposite-sex siblings as synonymous with distinctiveness, opening up the way to affinability. It is therefore argued that kinship cannot be fully understood without recourse to gender and vice versa.

Kinship systems have recourse to gender (in the same-sex or cross-sex form) as a general operator of identity and difference, constituting asymmetrical social relations rationalized as forms of complementarity. At the same time, categorizations of gender are becoming increasingly nuanced, irreducible either to dualism or to recognition of the existence of a third sex; how far this will impact the socio-cultural significance of kinship remains to be seen. In sum, kinship cannot be analyzed independently of gender, while gender in turn extrapolates kinship. Both are inextricably entangled.

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Notes

- 1 "Aucune société n'admet de parente homosexuelle", La Croix, novembre 1998, Françoise Héritier Interview by Marianne Gomez, p. 16.
- 2 Caster Semenya, "Caster Semenya: I Have High Testosterone, So What? Video", The Guardian, August 14, 2019. Online: https://www.theguardian.com/sport/video/2019/aug/14/ihave-high-testosterone-so-what-says-caster-semenya-video (accessed 30/9/2020).
- 3 Inés San Martín, "Vatican Issues Document on Challenges of 'Gender Ideology' to Catholic Education", Crux Taking the Catholic Pulse, June 10, 2019. Online: https://cruxnow.com /vatican/2019/06/10/vatican-issues-document-on-challenges-of-gender-ideology-to-catholiceducation/(accessed 16/9/2019).
- 4 This first expression could be translated loosely as "the father is indicated by marriage," and the second expression as "Whoever impregnates my kin, every offspring (calf) is mine."
 - 5 Online: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grandmother_hypothesis (accessed 25/9/19).
- 6 "A Decades-Old Doctor's Secret Leads to New Fertility-Fraud Law", The Atlantic, May 7, Online: https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2019/05/cline-fertility-fraudlaw/588877/ (accessed 19/9/19).
- 7 Vernant's original text in Greek is omitted, indicated by ellipsis. The author affirms that there is no valid definition of a concubine, so the main opposition concerns the courtesan and the wife.

Table des illustrations



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