

other ways of conceiving gender/sexualities

first, I want to underscore the point that not only are identity categories oversimplified, individual identities are not necessarily stable — may not plot on graph as single dot

this is why anthropologists like Weston talk about the *uses* of gender, gender-typed qualities: men and women make use of both femininity and masculinity

does it make sense to speak in similar way about sexuality? uses of sexuality, sexuality-typed qualities?

readings for today:

different articulations between categories of gender and of sexuality

### **Gilbert Herdt**

well-known anthropologist, studied Sambia in Highlands of Papua New Guinea in 1970s, with return trips throughout the 1980s; now heads Human Sexuality Program, San Francisco State U.

his work addresses

- 1) the role of ritual in gender/sexuality
- 2) the multiple ways gender/sexuality can be interrelated
- 3) distinction b/w sexual acts and “orientations” (as identity)

according to Herdt, the Sambia can be said to have a sex/gender system — strong binary oppositions between male and female, accompanied by a strict gender division of labor — but they do not *not* have an equivalent sexuality/gender system

instead, **male sexuality and female sexuality not equivalent categories**

female = natural and heterosexual (orientation, acts)

male = cultural and sequentially bisexual (first homosexual, then heterosexual)

first, notable that they regard females as more naturally “complete” — less in need of ritual elaboration (seemingly different from European traditions)

why?

“ritualized male homosexuality” — secret rites, hidden from women (they don’t know)

if blood makes femaleness, semen makes maleness and must be ingested,  
culturally acquired through initiation rituals

### FILM CLIP

for all he narrates rituals as “men making men” or “masculinizing men” there’s quite a bit of feminine imagery!

indeed, sex-segregated initiation rites and male homosocial/homosexual events are infused with feminine elements — gender isn't absolute difference in ideology here

semen = mother's milk ("when the semen falls into my mouth, I think it's the milk of women" — easily identified as *homosexual* experience?)  
penis = flute; breast = flute  
flute is animated by female spirit [male body is vessel; again, seeming inversion]

and the **ritualized insemination necessary to make "real" men prepared to survive heterosexual encounters with women for procreation!**

ritual embodies contradiction (ideology is never seamless)

ultimately, what's ritualized here is *male prestige*, rather than sexual orientation or essential gender differentiation

Annick Prieur's *Mema's House*

let's get a handle on the terminology:

joto = (passive) homosexual, prefers men exclusively and usually passive role  
jota = feminine passive homosexuals ("queens")  
vestida = jota who consistently dresses as woman

core of these definition is preferring passive role, in keeping with feminine presentation — ideological link b/w *position* and *appearance*

femininity in man suggests wants to be penetrated  
masculinity suggests wants to penetrate

mayate = masculine men who penetrate jotas + also have sex with women  
(external label — they would simply call themselves 'men'; acts ≠ identity)  
tortilla = mayate sometimes takes passive position with men, sometimes active  
bisexual = tortilla = internacional = alternating active/passive roles

[implicit — if take active role with men, then will also have sex with women]

buga = term used by homosexuals who designate men they think only have sex with women; only penetrating role; also used to describe manly men, macho

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