

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