

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON

GENDER & WORK

READINGS AND
INTERPRETATIONS

edited by

Jacqueline
Goodman

Global Perspectives on Gender and Work

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EDITED BY JACQUELINE GOODMAN

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Dividing the Labor: Marie and Michel Bastien, Native Montagnais-Naskapi of Northwest River, Labrador (photo by Richard Leacock, 1951)

Part I

ORIGINS OF THE GENDERED DIVISION OF LABOR

Men and women around the globe are segregated into different employment sectors and jobs. In the less-developed economies of Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, North Africa, and parts of Latin America and the Caribbean, women perform the majority of agricultural labor, while men predominate in industrial work. Women in these developing economies constitute 60–90 percent of the labor force in fresh produce and garment manufacture, as well as the majority in export processing zones. Women also remain globally concentrated in social and personal services, while men dominate the better-paid financial, business, and real estate services. Although 1.2 billion women and 1.8 billion men participated in the global labor force in 2007, women continue to perform the vast majority of household labor and family care (International Labor Organization 2004). When did such global divisions of labor between men and women emerge? Are they due to innate gendered traits (nature), or are there other explanations (variations on nurture) that might provide a more compelling answer?

The readings in Part I address the nature/nurture debate on three levels. They examine: 1) the basic notion of biological determinism of gender (nature); 2) the social construction of gender (nurture); and 3) the ways in which production relations give rise to varied social relations of gender. Research that investigates innate sex differences abounds, with conclusions that continue to evolve over time as new scientific findings emerge. In the nineteenth century, biologists believed that women's brains were too small for intellectual activities but large enough for household duties. In the 1960s sociobiologists argued that natural selection predisposed women to capacities for nurture and monogamy, while men were selected for leadership, aggression, and polygamy. More recent research suggests that women have a stronger connection between the two sides of the brain (a larger corpus callosum), hypothesizing that this might explain "women's intuition," as well as their greater ability to express emotions verbally compared to men. This research suggests that men have fewer such connections but excel in spatial tests, such as rotating three-dimensional objects in their minds, rendering them superior in map reading and other spatial skills. The implications of such research

findings for social policy are limitless. If men have less ability to verbally express emotions, should they be prohibited from practicing psychiatry, social work, or health care? Similarly, if women lack ability in spatial visualization, should they be denied work as air traffic controllers, bus drivers, or architects?

Anne Fausto-Sterling addresses the pitfalls of biological determinism of sex differences in “The Problem with Sex/Gender and Nature/Nurture.” She suggests we must stop searching for the ultimate biological causes of behavior, because they are not the Holy Grail we are seeking. “Neither naked sex nor naked culture exists” writes Fausto-Sterling. Both nature and nurture interact with each other at every stage of life’s development, leading to ever-evolving organisms. “Instead of asking how anatomy limits function . . . ask how function shapes anatomy. To claim a biological difference is not to claim immutability” (Fausto-Sterling 2003, 125). Fausto-Sterling advocates a Developmental Systems approach, which denies there are two distinct sets of processes in development: one guided by genes and hormones, while another is guided by the environment. Instead, she argues that development is a “process of emergence” comprised of many influences, which cannot be reduced to a single cause. One example she provides is the very ability to see. In order for a completely functional set of eye-brain connections to be established in the newborn infant, light must be present after birth. Thus, “genetic activity . . . guides development by responding to external signals reaching specific cells at specific times” (Fausto-Sterling 2003, 128). In sum, Fausto-Sterling argues we must seek multiple influences in the development of gender differences, particularly important when formulating both research investigations and social policy.

Judith Lorber, in “‘Night to His Day’: The Social Construction of Gender,” takes a different approach to the nature/nurture debate and argues that gender is a socially constructed concept. It is not biology that determines our destiny, she argues, but culture. Quoting Simone de Beauvoir, Lorber writes, “One is not born, but rather becomes a woman. . . . [C]ivilization produces this creature . . . which is described as feminine.” Humans learn how to be men and women; they are not born that way. In China, from the tenth to the twentieth century, girls’ feet were bound into deformed, three-inch stumps to become “feminine.” In many Islamic societies girls undergo genital mutilation to render them culturally acceptable as potential marriage partners, and in the United States girls diet sometimes to their death or might undergo breast enlargement surgery to reach that “feminine” ideal. Similarly, American boys are taught to lift weights, act aggressively, and sometimes engage in violence to defend their socially constructed ideal of masculinity and honor.

Lorber illustrates these social constructions with the example of transsexual James Morris, a former mountain climber, soldier, and foreign correspondent, who held a high status as a male with these attributes in American society. When James became Jan Morris, the female travel writer, his status in society declined dramatically. Men treated her as a subordinate, and s/he began to learn helplessness. S/he found that men preferred women who were less verbal, less focused on themselves, and s/he complied. The same individual lost her previous social and economic status in the gender switch from man to woman. Lorber argues that gender is simply a way of structuring social life and becomes a major component in the construction of a society’s stratification system.

In those societies where men are ranked higher, regardless of their actual contributions, their work and behaviors are more highly valued and rewarded. The gendered division of labor, according to Lorber, emerges from the needs of the social order for a reliable method of food production, and for the reproduction of the next generation. The ways in which these needs are met by each society remains a social construction.

Luigi Guiso et al. illustrate the conclusions of both Lorber and Fausto-Sterling in their article, "Culture, Gender, and Math," where they demonstrate that long-held beliefs about male genetic superiority over females in math is, in fact, inaccurate. In using data from more than two hundred seventy-six thousand fifteen-year-olds who took the international standardized tests in math, reading, science, and problem solving in over forty countries in 2003 (Programme for International Student Assessment), the authors found that the so-called gender gap in math is correlated with gendered access to education and other opportunities. Although globally boys outperform girls in math, the authors found that in countries that are deemed "gender equal" societies, such as Sweden, Iceland, and Norway, girls scored as well as or better than boys on math tests. The gender equality ratio was measured by World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index (GGI), which reflects economic, political, and social well-being for females around the world. In Turkey, where the GGI indicates very low gender equality, boys do much better than girls on the math scores. While girls outperform boys in reading ability tests around the globe, both their reading and math scores show marked increase in those countries with a higher GGI index. These findings shed clear light on the biologically based explanation in rejecting nature as a determinant of gender differences, in favor of nurture.

Anthropologist Eleanor Leacock examines the possible origins of the gender division of labor, never assuming it is linked to innate biological differences. Instead, she suggests in "Montagnais Women and the Jesuit Program for Colonization" that it is connected to transformations in relations of production. She studied the Montagnais Naskapi hunter-gatherers of the Labrador Peninsula in the mid-twentieth century, along with studying seventeenth-century French Jesuit diaries, to conclude, as Frederick Engels maintained in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, that production relations ultimately give rise to a specific set of social relations, between the sexes and otherwise.

The seventeenth-century diaries written by French missionaries attempting to "civilize the Montagnais" provide a window through which to view the economic and social life of the seventeenth-century Montagnais. French Jesuits recorded that both male and female Montagnais Naskapi contributed equitably to the subsistence needs of the entire band. Women gathered the daily subsistence requirements of fruits and vegetables and hunted small game, while men hunted large game, on a more infrequent basis, all distributed throughout the entire band. There was no private ownership of goods or hierarchical authority over others, and leadership was based on outstanding oral ability, not power, according to Jesuit Le Jeune. Leacock argues that comparable contributions to subsistence production resulted in egalitarian gender relations, values that troubled the Jesuits, who wrote of the ways they attempted to undermine the traditional gender values by instructing men to invoke their authority over women and children.

It was only when the Jesuits wanted furs and drew the Montagnais into the fur trade that the hunter-gatherers became less communal in their pursuits and the equitable division of labor between the sexes was weakened. Leacock suggests that once males became involved in the individual activity of fur trapping and trading, where someone else controlled production and the distribution of goods, the basis for inequality between individuals and genders emerged.

Subscribing to Engels' analysis, Leacock surmised that as men were recruited for this specialized economic activity, they gained unequal access to goods, and in the possible interest of passing on their wealth to heirs, the nuclear family emerged as the economic unit, separate from the larger band. While Montagnais men trapped furs, they could no longer hunt or fish, and they became dependent on trade. Women became increasingly excluded from the public sphere of access to resources, as they had to "care for" their husband and children, and were relegated to the private sphere of family. This transformation in production relations rendered women more economically dependent on males and, consequently, subordinate. The Montagnais' gendered division of labor began simply as an egalitarian way to organize the social order, according to Leacock, but was transformed into gender inequality as production relations metamorphosed into specialized, individual male economic activity, to the exclusion of women.

Heidi Hartmann also examines the origin of sexual division of labor and similarly relies on ethnographic data to make her argument in "Capitalism, Patriarchy, and Job Segregation by Sex" that the sexual division of labor may in fact be historically universal. She infers from the anthropological data that egalitarianism might have prevailed in our pre-state past because women and men sustained equal participation in the production and distribution of goods. However, this division of labor between men and women may in fact be the ultimate cause of inequality between men and women as well. Hartmann argues that economic interdependence between men and women in tribal societies was undermined by the rise of state societies, as the state sought to control the tribal resource base: land and labor power. Kings and lords of the state might have accomplished this by utilizing the traditional sexual division of labor, and the male tendency for greater power due to men's role in military ventures, to impose male authority over women and children. This would have bypassed traditional, tribal collective group rights. In return for relinquishing their labor and land, men might have been rewarded with empowerment in the nuclear family.

Hartmann suggests that patriarchy was solidified prior to the emergence of capitalism in the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries. Such male dominance was carried forward into the capitalist organization of industry as production was removed from the home and men became less dependent on women's production contributions. But the emergence of capitalism also threatened patriarchal control, as it brought women and children into the labor force, altering the nuclear family, the basis of male power over women. Male workers in the wage labor system, she argues, sought to maintain the sexual division of labor, since male dominance was primarily sustained through job segregation by sex in the capitalist economy. It enforced lower wages for women, which kept women dependent on men, and encouraged them to marry and perform domestic duties for husbands, while men benefited from both higher wages and

the domestic division of labor. Women's unpaid domestic labor in turn weakened women's position in the labor market and sustained the unequal, gendered division of labor. In conclusion, the authors in Part I debunk biological determinism as the origin of the gendered division of labor. Instead they explore its causes and subsequent transformation into gendered inequality through an examination of comparative and ethnographic evidence, which reveals an intersection of economic, social, and political forces.

CHAPTER 1

The Problem with Sex/Gender and Nature/Nurture

Anne Fausto-Sterling

For a good century and a half, scientists, social scientists and politicians have appealed to biological difference to explain social inequality between men and women, people of African descent and Caucasians, members of different economic classes and people of different religions. In turn, a wide variety of scholars writing over a long period of time have critiqued these scientific claims (Russett 1989; Fausto-Sterling 2000). In the mid-1980s, I drew a composite picture gleaned from the writings of contemporary biological and social scientists: these writers claimed that women are naturally better mothers, while men are genetically predisposed to be aggressive, hasty and fickle. They may rape to pass on their genes. Women's lack of aggressive drive and native ability ensures that they will always earn less, thus guaranteeing equal pay discriminates against men (Fausto-Sterling 1992).

At the time, I critically examined the underlying scientific evidence, demonstrating its procedural and interpretive weaknesses. I also suggested that instead of setting nature against nurture we reject the search for root causes and substitute a more complex analysis in which an individual's capacities emerge from a web of mutual interactions between the biological being and the social environment. Although I had the right idea, the moment was not right to express it in terms that might unify biological scientists, sociologists, developmental psychologists, and feminists. I believe that now that moment of unification is upon us.

In the 1970s, feminist social scientists proposed a theory that created two categories: *sex*, the supposed biological essence that underlay gender and *gender* the social overlay that produced two different categories of being—men and women, through an ill-defined process of socialization. This theoretical approach had many virtues. It permitted the examination of differential treatment of boys and girls in school and men and women in the workplace. It opened the door to a virtual growth industry of cultural analysis examining the construction of gender ideology in the media and on the streets. But it also had a big drawback. Leaving “sex” in the realm of scientifically verifiable fact left feminism vulnerable to a new tide of biological difference. Indeed, that new tide is very much with us (see for example: Udry 2000; Wizemann and Pardue 2001).

For some, sex encroaches deep into the territory of social difference, while for others it is a minimal entity. If there is something that we could call “naked sex” (Kraus 2000)—that which is left when all gender is stripped away—we have to argue about for how much of gender difference it can account. If we leave naked sex to biologists and biologically oriented social scientists, we will find that the territory allotted to it is growing apace while the explanatory power of socially produced gender shrinks in proportion. In the sex versus gender model, biological sex is opposed to social sex. Nature is opposed to culture, the body becomes the recipient of culture, and gender becomes the content of culture. Worst of all, for those interested in social change, naked sex is often—albeit incorrectly—seen as immutable, while gender, is often, albeit incorrectly, seen as malleable. To the extent that the sex/gender analysis of social difference reinforces our view of the material body as a natural given, our feminist debate influences the structure of other struggles. Indeed, the biological debates about race and about sex have intersected and mutually constructed one another for a good two centuries (Russett 1989).

In *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality* (Fausto-Sterling 2000), I detail several examples of how the biology-culture debate about the body plays out. Let me briefly pick one of these—an alleged sex difference in the structure of a part of the brain called the corpus callosum. Scientists have argued about whether or not there is a sex difference in the corpus callosum for more than 100 years. Some think that the (real) difference might explain sex/gender variation in verbal and spatial ability and that the knowledge of such difference should be used to shape educational policy. Others believe there is no difference. I use this scientific debate to think about how social arguments sustain scientific disputes, concluding that we will not resolve the *science* at issue until we have reached some form of consensus over the *social policy* at hand.

While the above insight is important, however, I want here to emphasize a different aspect of the problem. Suppose, hypothetically, someone proved beyond a doubt that a sex difference in the corpus callosum was clearly linked to verbal and spatial abilities. Would that mean that feminists adhering to the sex/gender distinction would have to agree that educators need to treat boys and girls differently when they teach maths and English? Would that force us to accept the argument that we cannot expect there to be more women engineers than the 9.2 per cent employed in the US workforce in 1977? At its worst, too strict an adherence to the sex/gender dualism puts us in just such a position. At its best, it leaves feminists in a position of constant defensiveness, with all of our energy focused on refuting or mitigating the latest findings of sex differences produced by biomedical researchers. Psychologist Susan Oyama refers to this as hauling “phenomena back and forth across the biological border” (Oyama 2000, 190). I, for one, am tired of being in this position, and this weariness has pushed me—and other theorists—to think differently about biology, culture, sex, and gender (see, for example, Birke 2003; Annandale 2003). In making new theory, we reclaim a defining position in the social debate about gender and we can direct our creativity towards breaking new pathways rather than fighting off the dogs that nip constantly at our heels.

I find especially helpful a set of approaches that I have gathered under the flag of Developmental Systems Theory, or DST for short. From the point of view of DST, neither naked sex nor naked culture exist. Findings of so-called biological difference

do not imply a claim of immutability or inevitability. Consider once again the corpus callosum. Some scientists believe that this brain structure differs in men and women; others that it differs in left- and right-handers and yet others believe that it differs in gay and straight men (where it is really a stand-in for a gendered account of homosexuality). Elsewhere I write about the uncertain nature of these conclusions (Fausto-Sterling 1992; Fausto-Sterling 2000), but here I want to think about what it might mean if these claims were scientifically uncontested. In bringing a DST approach to the claim of brain differences in adult men and women, the assertion of difference becomes a starting point. The interesting question is how the differences developed in the first place. For example, this possible difference in the adult corpus callosum is not present in the brains of small children. A DST researcher will want to design experiments to test hypotheses about how different experience leads to a divergence in brain development. Instead of asking how anatomy limits function, one asks how function shapes anatomy. To claim a biological difference is not to claim immutability.

New research questions become apparent when we turn matters around in this way. What childhood experiences and behaviours contribute to the developing anatomy of the brain? Are there particular developmental periods when a child's brain is more or less responsive to functional stimuli? How do nerve cells translate externally generated information into specific growth patterns and neural circuits? Answering these latter questions will require the skills of molecular biologists and cell biologists as well as psychologists, sociologists and cultural theorists. DST will not put basic biologists out of business, but will set their research in a different intellectual framework.

Just as a claim of biological difference does not imply immutability, a claim of socially induced difference does not necessarily imply malleability. For example, if differential social experience produces differences in brain anatomy and thus in brain function, later experiences would then be interpreted and integrated by a differently functioning brain. Change to a pre-differentiated state would be improbable. Many people consider it extremely difficult to change from being hetero- to homosexual or vice versa. But the fact that a particular form of sexual desire is hard to change does not mean that it hasn't been socially caused.

How, more specifically, can DST help to form a new research agenda which depends upon the mutual construction of sex and gender? Psychologists Esther Thelen and Linda Smith list some of the basic goals of developmental systems theory (Thelen and Smith 1994). The first is to understand the origins of novelty. Thelen and Smith discuss behavioural novelty—starting to crawl and then to walk for example, but I would like to use DST to elucidate the emergence by the age of two-and-a-half of gender differences in play and the ability to categorize self and others by gender. Infants are not born with these behaviours. Rather, the behaviours emerge during the first two to three years of life. We have a sketchy idea of the timing of such emergence but little in the way of coherent theory to explain our observations (Ruble and Martin 1998).

A second goal of DST is to reconcile global regularities with local variability. In the case of gender, this means understanding the emergence of general features recognizable as something we call gender, while at the same time incorporating into our story the enormous within-group variability.

A third goal of systems theory is to integrate developmental data at many levels of explanation. Consider Judith Butler's controversial and frequently misunderstood assertion that "gender ought not to be construed as a stable identity . . . rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a *stylized repetition of acts*" (Butler 1990, 140; emphasis in the original). Butler was not thinking specifically about physiological mechanisms by which the body might materially incorporate gender. Nevertheless, a systems approach to the body insists that relatively stable states of being emerge from a process of repetitive trial and error. Thus Butler's notion of repeated performance, designed to describe gender development at the psychoanalytic level, could become a starting point to design studies aimed at understanding the material basis of gender. "Material basis" is here understood as a set of physiological and social expressions which emerge as individuals learn about social gender, practice it, and make it their own. That brain anatomy might itself develop in particular ways in response to such practice and repetition seems likely to me, but is a hypothesis that requires specification and testing.

Such an application of DST to Butler's ideas of performance also provide an answer to Pheng Cheah's critique of Butler (Cheah 1996). Cheah argues that Butler's account of gender development is philosophically wanting because it only applies to humans, a fact that leaves human gender critically unconnected to the rest of biology. Most biologists, however (myself included) view human biology—including sex/gender development—as falling along a continuum. DST can provide accounts of how gender materializes in the body that will work for all animals, not just humans. Granted there are some big discussions about consciousness and intentionality in non-human primates that must be held along the way. But stretching claims such as Butler's about repetitive performance to develop a systems account of the biological materialization of gender in humans, will open the door to understanding biological development more broadly, and confront untenable claims that human materiality differs fundamentally from that of other animals.

A fourth goal of developmental systems theory is to provide a biologically plausible yet non-determinist account of the development of behaviour. As Thelen and Smith write, "the boundaries between what is innate and what is acquired become so blurred as to be at the very least uninteresting compared to the powerful questions of developmental process" (Thelen and Smith 1994). A fifth goal is to understand how local processes, that is, what happens in a particular family or to a particular child or a particular random experience, can lead to global outcomes. For example, most children learn to walk. But the individual paths they take to that accomplishment can vary quite a lot.

A final goal for DST is to establish a theoretical basis for generating and interpreting empirical research that breaks out of the idea of adding up so much nature and so much nurture to create a final outcome. This means learning how to apply statistical systems that do not partition variance. (For critiques of the Analysis of Variance approach to the study of human difference see: Wahlsten 1990.)

Psychologists have most successfully applied DST to phenomena that have little to do with gender. Studying such applications, however, can help us to construct a research agenda aimed at explicating the emergence of gender in early childhood and its subsequent development throughout the life cycle. Consider how Thelen and her

colleagues investigate the question of how we learn to walk. In the 1940s and 1950s, psychologists described the stages of learning to walk—up on all fours, crawling, standing, walking holding on, etc. They reasoned that each new stage directly reflected changes in the brain. But how can the millions of neurons, the wide variety of muscle contraction patterns, and the complex patterns of neuronal activity, ever result in a highly specific movement such as putting one leg in front of another? During development, individuals go through periods of instability as they incorporate new tasks—be they motor, cognitive or emotional. In an infant, seemingly random motor activity, for instance, eventually emerges into new and fairly stable forms of movement, first crawling, then walking.

A recent example illustrates why developmental systems theory has begun to replace more rigid accounts of stages of neuromuscular development. In 1992 pediatricians recommended that to minimize the danger of sudden infant death, infants be placed on their back (supine) or side to sleep rather than on their bellies (prone). Since the recommendation and a public education campaign, the percentage of US infants sleeping in the prone position has decreased from 70 per cent to 27 per cent. With that change has come another—a dramatic shift in the age at which infants reach motor milestones such as pulling to stand up, crawling, creeping and rolling from a prone to supine position (Davis *et al.* 1998). The observation that sleep position affects the timing of motor development makes perfect sense to a systems theorist, since neuromuscular development is an *effect* of use and experience. That both supine and prone sleepers learn to walk at about the same time may reflect the fact that by one year of age they have all developed the strength needed to sustain independent walking. But supine and prone sleepers don't attain that strength in exactly the same way or according to the same time schedule.

As long as the basic conditions—the force of gravity, the firmness of the ground, neuromuscular responses (indeed these are all part of the system of walking), remain stable, the ability to walk remains stable as well. But the stability is what DST theorists call “softly assembled.” Walking, for example, is a flexible ability. We don't use exactly the same neuromuscular responses when walking on different substrates, yet we walk. Walking can take on different strides—ambling, strolling, fast-walking. It can adjust to an injury in a knee joint, etc. Softly assembled states can dissolve into new periods of instability and new types of stability can emerge from these seemingly chaotic events—learning to walk again following muscle atrophy or traumatic injury would be one such example.

Consider as another example, the development of the retina and the ability to see. The axons of nerve cells from the retina of each eye connect to a part of the brain known as the lateral geniculate nucleus. Some of the retinal axons from the right eye connect to the lateral geniculate nucleus of the left hemisphere while others connect to the right hemisphere, while the opposite is true for axons from the left eye. Within the lateral geniculate nucleus, axons from the two eyes terminate in separate alternating layers. There is also an additional level of organization in these projections called ocular dominance columns. Initially, neither the layering of these lateral geniculate nucleus axons from left to right nor the dominance columns are present, but via an active process of axon retraction and elaboration, eventually the adult connections emerge.

These events do not occur seamlessly in response to some internal logic of genes acting spontaneously inside cells. Rather, visual experience plays a key role. The firing of certain neurons strengthens their connections. Neuroscientists say “cells that fire together wire together, those that don’t won’t.” The fact that light, entering the eye after birth is necessary for a completely functional set of eye-brain connections explains why it is so important to remove congenital cataracts no later than six months after birth (Le Grand *et al.* 2001).

In the development of vision, key features of developmental systems theory emerge. First, specific connections are not *programmed* by some genetic blueprint. Genetic activity, rather, guides development by responding to external signals reaching specific cells at specific times. Early in development these signals come from other cells while at a later time signals include spontaneous electrical activity generated by developing nervous tissue and, still later, light entering through the newborn and infant eye. A functional system emerges from a context-bound system in which seemingly random activity—that is spontaneous nerve firings and visual input—evolve into more highly structured form and function. Often these connections must happen during a critical window of development. One general point to be made is that different kinds of connections have different degrees of plasticity. Some critical windows reside only in one stage of the life cycle because that is the only time when (so far as we currently know) the entire system is constructed in a particular way. In some cases an end state can be produced by more than one initial starting point while in others only one initial starting point can produce an end state. Other systems, though, may be open to change more than once in a life cycle or may even be continuously modifiable during the life cycle. Thus a key notion of developmental systems theory is that there are periods of relative stability and other moments of great instability. During unstable moments important changes can occur which in turn resolve into new and stable form and function. An important future task for biologists and social scientists, working together, is to apply these concepts to gender formation during the life cycle.

How might DST apply to the analysis of sex and gender? Consider the uproar over biologist Simon LeVay’s 1991 article reporting differences in the microanatomy of both male and female brains and in the brains of gay and straight men (LeVay 1991). The initial response from many of us was to point out the technical shortcomings of the study, but in a recent study some of these have been overcome. Neuroanatomist William Byne could not replicate the gay/straight differences that LeVay reported. But as had LeVay, Byne found measurable differences between men’s and women’s hypothalamuses (Byne *et al.* 2001). Given that his is the third independent report of this anatomical brain difference, I think we would be hard-pressed to deny the finding. But accepting the difference need not push us into a bio-determinist corner. Instead, we need to insist that scientists ask developmental and functional questions about the difference. Most importantly, we need to hammer home the point that differences found in adults arise during development.

This insistence opens the door for a theory and practice of what contemporary theorists call embodiment. Recall the DST concept of softly-assembled states. Although relatively stable, such states can dissolve into chaotic periods out of which new types of stability can emerge. Consider the conflict between the idea that homosexuality is inborn versus the thought that it is somehow learned after birth. Sometimes this

argument resolves into a debate about whether the trait is unchangeable or whether it can be altered by force of will. There is bad thinking on both sides of this argument. For many homosexuals, same-sex attraction is a stable state of desire. If we think of that stability as being softly assembled, however, it becomes less surprising that it can sometimes become destabilized and after a period of disarray, some new quasi-stable form of desire can emerge.

Recent work on the nature of memory in rats can help us conceptualize my argument. Consider rats that have been fear-conditioned to associate a tone with an electric shock. At first, the conditioned response is unstable. It requires about six hours and some protein synthesis to consolidate. The memory associating a tone with shock, however, can be pushed out of what I will call its softly assembled state by preventing more protein synthesis at the time that memory is again evoked by playing the tone (Nader 2000). The conclusion from this experiment is that when a memory is drawn upon and then stored again, new memory proteins are made. In these experiments, memories become destabilized and open to revision for a brief period before a new period of stability begins.

The concept that memory can be revised during episodes of retrieval can be useful in thinking about homosexuality. Consider the statement by a gay person that they always remember being different. Perhaps they remember liking dolls instead of trucks (or for lesbians, liking trucks instead of dolls). If, during the evocation of memory, it is possible to edit and incorporate contemporary information, then memory itself becomes part of a system that produces the sexual preference or gender identity. The memories are perfectly real, but they become progressively adjusted, presumably throughout childhood and into adulthood, to take into account new experiences and newly available information. Surely it is possible for social and neuroscientists to collaborate in applying the study of memory processing and revision to the acquisition of gender identity and sexual orientation. Such applications have the potential to provide a dynamic account of embodiment rather than the less plausible view that some people are born with a homosexual homunculus which merely unfolds over a lifetime.

In light of my discussion of DST I propose a new research agenda for the study of sex and gender differences. First, we need to think more about individual differences than group averages. This means studying individual development and accepting the idea that there are many different individual paths to a global outcome. Feminist social theory contains rich work on the emergence of sex and gender differences, much of which examines mid- and late child development or adulthood. But we know little about the early emergence of difference. And it's the early emergence of difference that is often used as evidence for a biological cause for difference.

We can, however, say a few things about early development. At seven months, on average, infants respond differently to male and female voices. By nine months, they can tell the sexes apart largely on the basis of hair length. But other contributions to an infant's ability to discriminate sexes such as height and smell have not been well studied. Children can differentially label the sexes by about thirty months but they are better at labelling adults than they are at labelling other children. Children take quite a while before they use genitalia as clues to sex and before they are able to do this they rely heavily on hair cues. In the United States small children believe that figures with

blond curly hair are female. Adolescents, but not younger children, use dynamic clues, such as running or sitting to identify gender (Ruble and Martin 1998).

The racial specificity of such findings make future, culturally specific studies imperative. Most studies of early development of gender perception have been done on white middle-class children in America and the entire question of constructing culturally neutral accounts of gender difference continues to vex feminist theory. Indeed, a central component of a feminist social science research agenda must be to examine the early development of gender constructs and behaviours in different cultures and in different socio-economic groups and within different ethnic and racially-defined communities. If we develop process-based theories of human development rather than relying on averages and statistical norms, we will have fewer problems including human variation in our accounts of gender development.

After children learn to identify gender they then develop a separate concept—that gender is constant and stable. At first children don't necessarily believe that "once a girl always a girl." It takes a while for young children to develop the notion that, first, genitalia provide a reliable way of distinguishing between boys and girls and second that one of the implications of knowing about genital difference is that gender is fixed. The ages at which these two ideas develop—although certainly older than three years—have yet to be clearly resolved.

By about two-and-a-half years of age (white, middle-class American) children begin to show knowledge of gender stereotypes, about objects (dresses versus trousers, trucks versus flowers) and activities (active playing, passive playing, playing in the home-making corner, throwing a ball, playing with trucks). Although they know about these gendered stereotypes, social scientists have yet to assess which ones children learn first. I offer the above, abbreviated description of the development of gender awareness in children not as an account of how gender emerges, but rather as an invitation. I ask developmental systems theorists who have produced fascinating but non-gendered accounts of motor and cognitive development to use DST to think about gender. Similarly, I request social scientists who study gender to break away from the traditional biological, psychoanalytic, cognitive social learning or gender schema approaches. Instead, I encourage them to look at the trajectory that I've sketched above, fill in important gaps, and begin to use developmental systems theory to understand the process by which gender emerges at very young ages. How does it stabilize? What might contribute to its destabilization, and how does it restabilize and change during the process of an entire life cycle?

At the same time I invite feminist theorists in the humanities to revisit the social sciences with a new developmental systems theory vision. This is the impulse of the current vogue of the term embodiment among feminist theorists. Embodiment suggests a process by which we *acquire* a body rather than a passive unfolding of some preformed blueprint. Beginning to understand that the world works via systems will enable us to specify more clearly the links between culture and the body and to understand how nature and nurture, sex and gender are indivisible concepts. Finally, the political fallout from these ideas remains to be addressed. We—and here I mean feminist political theorists—need to think harder about how engaging with the world of sex and gender from a DST point of view will affect our strategies for social change.

CHAPTER 2

“Night to His Day”

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER

Judith Lorber

Talking about gender for most people is the equivalent of fish talking about water. Gender is so much the routine ground of everyday activities that questioning its taken-for-granted assumptions and presuppositions is like thinking about whether the sun will come up.¹ Gender is so pervasive that in our society we assume it is bred into our genes. Most people find it hard to believe that gender is constantly created and re-created out of human interaction, out of social life, and is the texture and order of that social life. Yet gender, like culture, is a human production that depends on everyone constantly “doing gender” (West and Zimmerman 1987).

And everyone “does gender” without thinking about it. Today, on the subway, I saw a well-dressed man with a year-old child in a stroller. Yesterday, on a bus, I saw a man with a tiny baby in a carrier on his chest. Seeing men taking care of small children in public is increasingly common—at least in New York City. But both men were quite obviously stared at—and smiled at, approvingly. Everyone was doing gender—the men who were changing the role of fathers and the other passengers, who were applauding them silently. But there was more gendering going on that probably fewer people noticed. The baby was wearing a white crocheted cap and white clothes. You couldn’t tell if it was a boy or a girl. The child in the stroller was wearing a dark blue T-shirt and dark print pants. As they started to leave the train, the father put a Yankee baseball cap on the child’s head. Ah, a boy, I thought. Then I noticed the gleam of tiny earrings in the child’s ears, and as they got off, I saw the little flowered sneakers and lace-trimmed socks. Not a boy after all. Gender done.

Gender is such a familiar part of daily life that it usually takes a deliberate disruption of our expectations of how women and men are supposed to act to pay attention to how it is produced. Gender signs and signals are so ubiquitous that we usually fail to note them—unless they are missing or ambiguous. Then we are uncomfortable until we have successfully placed the other person in a gender status; otherwise, we feel socially dislocated. In our society, in addition to man and woman, the status can be *transvestite* (a person who dresses in opposite-gender clothes) and *transsexual* (a person who has had sex-change surgery). Transvestites and transsexuals carefully construct

their gender status by dressing, speaking, walking, gesturing in the ways prescribed for women or men—whichever they want to be taken for—and so does any “normal” person.

For the individual, gender construction starts with assignment to a sex category on the basis of what the genitalia look like at birth.² Then babies are dressed or adorned in a way that displays the category because parents don’t want to be constantly asked whether their baby is a girl or a boy. A sex category becomes a gender status through naming, dress, and the use of other gender markers. Once a child’s gender is evident, others treat those in one gender differently from those in the other, and the children respond to the different treatment by feeling different and behaving differently. As soon as they can talk, they start to refer to themselves as members of their gender. Sex doesn’t come into play again until puberty, but by that time, sexual feelings and desires and practices have been shaped by gendered norms and expectations. Adolescent boys and girls approach and avoid each other in an elaborately scripted and gendered mating dance. Parenting is gendered, with different expectations for mothers and for fathers, and people of different genders work at different kinds of jobs. The work adults do as mothers and fathers and as low-level workers and high-level bosses shapes women’s and men’s life experiences, and these experiences produce different feelings, consciousness, relationships, skills—ways of being that we call feminine or masculine.³ All of these processes constitute the social construction of gender.

Gendered roles change—today fathers are taking care of little children, girls and boys are wearing unisex clothing and getting the same education, women and men are working at the same jobs. Although many traditional social groups are quite strict about maintaining gender differences, in other social groups they seem to be blurring. Then why the one-year-old’s earrings? Why is it still so important to mark a child as a girl or a boy, to make sure she is not taken for a boy or he for a girl? What would happen if they were? They would, quite literally, have changed places in their social world.

To explain why gendering is done from birth, constantly and by everyone, we have to look not only at the way individuals experience gender but at gender as a social institution. As a social institution, gender is one of the major ways that human beings organize their lives. Human society depends on a predictable division of labor, a designated allocation of scarce goods, assigned responsibility for children and others who cannot care for themselves, common values and their systematic transmission to new members, legitimate leadership, music, art, stories, games, and other symbolic productions. One way of choosing people for the different tasks of society is on the basis of their talents, motivations, and competence—their demonstrated achievements. The other way is on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity—*ascribed membership in a category of people*. Although societies vary in the extent to which they use one or the other of these ways of allocating people to work and to carry out other responsibilities, every society uses gender and age grades. Every society classifies people as “girl and boy children,” “girls and boys ready to be married,” and “fully adult women and men,” constructs similarities among them and differences between them, and assigns them to different roles and responsibilities. Personality characteristics, feelings, motivations, and ambitions flow from these different life experiences so that the members

of these different groups become different kinds of people. The process of gendering and its outcome are legitimated by religion, law, science, and the society's entire set of values.

In order to understand gender as a social institution, it is important to distinguish human action from animal behavior. Animals feed themselves and their young until their young can feed themselves. Humans have to produce not only food but shelter and clothing. They also, if the group is going to continue as a social group, have to teach the children how their particular group does these tasks. In the process, humans reproduce gender, family, kinship, and a division of labor—social institutions that do not exist among animals. Primate social groups have been referred to as families, and their mating patterns as monogamy, adultery, and harems. Primate behavior has been used to prove the universality of sex differences—as built into our evolutionary inheritance (Haraway 1978). But animals' sex differences are not at all the same as humans' gender differences; animals' bonding is not kinship; animals' mating is not ordered by marriage; and animals' dominance hierarchies are not the equivalent of human stratification systems. Animals group on sex and age, relational categories that are physiologically, not socially, different. Humans create gender and age-group categories that are socially, and not necessarily physiologically, different.⁴

For animals, physiological maturity means being able to impregnate or conceive; its markers are coming into heat (estrus) and sexual attraction. For humans, puberty means being available for marriage; it is marked by rites that demonstrate this marital eligibility. Although the onset of physiological puberty is signaled by secondary sex characteristics (menstruation, breast development, sperm ejaculation, pubic and underarm hair), the onset of social adulthood is ritualized by the coming-out party or desert walkabout or bar mitzvah or graduation from college or first successful hunt or dreaming or inheritance of property. Humans have rituals that mark the passage from childhood into puberty and puberty into full adult status, as well as for marriage, childbirth, and death; animals do not (van Gennep 1960). To the extent that infants and the dead are differentiated by whether they are male or female, there are different birth rituals for girls and boys, and different funeral rituals for men and women (Biersack 1984, 132–33). Rituals of puberty, marriage, and becoming a parent are gendered, creating a “woman,” a “man,” a “bride,” a “groom,” a “mother,” a “father.” Animals have no equivalents for these statuses.

Among animals, siblings mate and so do parents and children; humans have incest taboos and rules that encourage or forbid mating between members of different kin groups (Lévi-Strauss 1956, [1949] 1969). Any animal of the same species may feed another's young (or may not, depending on the species). Humans designate responsibility for particular children by kinship; humans frequently limit responsibility for children to the members of their kinship group or make them into members of their kinship group with adoption rituals.

Animals have dominance hierarchies based on size or on successful threat gestures and signals. These hierarchies are usually sexed, and in some species, moving to the top of the hierarchy physically changes the sex (Austad 1986). Humans have stratification patterns based on control of surplus food, ownership of property, legitimate demands on others' work and sexual services, enforced determinations of who marries whom,

and approved use of violence. If a woman replaces a man at the top of a stratification hierarchy, her social status may be that of a man, but her sex does not change.

Mating, feeding, and nurturant behavior in animals is determined by instinct and imitative learning and ordered by physiological sex and age (Lancaster 1974). In humans, these behaviors are taught and symbolically reinforced and ordered by socially constructed gender and age grades. Social gender and age statuses sometimes ignore or override physiological sex and age completely. Male and female animals (unless they physiologically change) are not interchangeable; infant animals cannot take the place of adult animals. Human females can become husbands and fathers, and human males can become wives and mothers, without sex-change surgery (Blackwood 1984). Human infants can reign as kings or queens.

Western society's values legitimate gendering by claiming that it all comes from physiology—female and male procreative differences. But gender and sex are not equivalent, and gender as a social construction does not flow automatically from genitalia and reproductive organs, the main physiological differences of females and males. In the construction of ascribed social statuses, physiological differences such as sex, stage of development, color of skin, and size are crude markers. They are not the source of the social statuses of gender, age grade, and race. *Social statuses* are carefully constructed through prescribed processes of teaching, learning, emulation, and enforcement. Whatever genes, hormones, and biological evolution contribute to human social institutions is materially as well as qualitatively transformed by social practices. Every social institution has a material base, but culture and social practices transform that base into something with qualitatively different patterns and constraints. The economy is much more than producing food and goods and distributing them to eaters and users; family and kinship are not the equivalent of having sex and procreating; morals and religions cannot be equated with the fears and ecstasies of the brain; language goes far beyond the sounds produced by tongue and larynx. No one eats “money” or “credit”; the concepts of “god” and “angels” are the subjects of theological disquisitions; not only words but objects, such as their flag, “speak” to the citizens of a country.

Similarly, gender cannot be equated with biological and physiological differences between human females and males. The building blocks of gender are *socially constructed statuses*. Western societies have only two genders, “man” and “woman.” Some societies have three genders—men, women, and *berdaches* or *hijras* or *xaniths*. Berdaches, hijras, and xaniths are biological males who behave, dress, work, and are treated in most respects as social women; they are therefore not men, nor are they female women; they are, in our language, “male women.”⁵ There are African and American Indian societies that have a gender status called *manly hearted women*—biological females who work, marry, and parent as men; their social status is “female men” (Amadiume 1987; Blackwood 1984). They do not have to behave or dress as men to have the social responsibilities and prerogatives of husbands and fathers; what makes them men is enough wealth to buy a wife.

Modern Western societies' *transsexuals* and *transvestites* are the nearest equivalent of these crossover genders, but they are not institutionalized as third genders (Bolin 1987). Transsexuals are biological males and females who have sex-change operations

to alter their genitalia. They do so in order to bring their physical anatomy in congruence with the way they want to live and with their own sense of gender identity. They do not become a third gender; they change genders. Transvestites are males who live as women and females who live as men but do not intend to have sex-change surgery. Their dress, appearance, and mannerisms fall within the range of what is expected from members of the opposite gender, so that they “pass.” They also change genders, sometimes temporarily, some for most of their lives. Transvestite women have fought in wars as men soldiers as recently as the nineteenth century; some married women, and others went back to being women and married men once the war was over.⁶ Some were discovered when their wounds were treated; others not until they died. In order to work as a jazz musician, a man’s occupation, Billy Tipton, a woman, lived most of her life as a man. She died recently at seventy-four, leaving a wife and three adopted sons for whom she was husband and father, and musicians with whom she had played and traveled, for whom she was “one of the boys” (*New York Times* 1989).⁷ There have been many other such occurrences of women passing as men to do more prestigious or lucrative men’s work (Matthaei 1982, 192–93).⁸

Genders, therefore, are not attached to a biological sub-stratum. Gender boundaries are breachable, and individual and socially organized shifts from one gender to another call attention to “cultural, social, or aesthetic dissonances” (Garber 1992, 16). These odd or deviant or third genders show us what we ordinarily take for granted—that people have to learn to be women and men. Men who cross-dress for performances or for pleasure often learn from women’s magazines how to “do femininity” convincingly (41–51). Because transvestism is direct evidence of how gender is constructed, Marjorie Garber claims it has “extraordinary power . . . to disrupt, expose, and challenge, putting in question the very notion of the ‘original’ and of stable identity” (16).

Gender Bending

It is difficult to see how gender is constructed because we take it for granted that it’s all biology, or hormones, or human nature. The differences between women and men seem to be self-evident, and we think they would occur no matter what society did. But in actuality, human females and males are physiologically more similar in appearance than are the two sexes of many species of animals and are more alike than different in traits and behavior (Epstein 1988). Without the deliberate use of gendered clothing, hairstyles, jewelry, and cosmetics, women and men would look far more alike.⁹ Even societies that do not cover women’s breasts have gender-identifying clothing, scarification, jewelry, and hairstyles.

The ease with which many transvestite women pass as men and transvestite men as women is corroborated by the common gender misidentification in Westernized societies of people in jeans, T-shirts, and sneakers. Men with long hair may be addressed as “miss,” and women with short hair are often taken for men unless they offset the potential ambiguity with deliberate gender markers (Devor 1987, 1989). Jan Morris, in *Conundrum*, an autobiographical account of events just before and just

after a sex-change operation, described how easy it was to shift back and forth from being a man to being a woman when testing how it would feel to change gender status. During this time, Morris still had a penis and wore more or less unisex clothing; the context alone made the man and the woman:

Sometimes the arena of my ambivalence was uncomfortably small. At the Travellers' Club, for example, I was obviously known as a man of sorts—women were only allowed on the premises at all during a few hours of the day, and even then were hidden away as far as possible in lesser rooms or alcoves. But I had another club, only a few hundred yards away, where I was known only as a woman, and often I went directly from one to the other, imperceptibly changing roles on the way—"Cheerio, sir," the porter would say at one club, and "Hello, madam," the porter would greet me at the other. (1975, 132)

Gender shifts are actually a common phenomenon in public roles as well. Queen Elizabeth II of England bore children, but when she went to Saudi Arabia on a state visit, she was considered an honorary man so that she could confer and dine with the men who were heads of a state that forbids unrelated men and women to have face-to-unveiled-face contact. In contemporary Egypt, lower-class women who run restaurants or shops dress in men's clothing and engage in unfeminine aggressive behavior, and middle-class educated women of professional or managerial status can take positions of authority (Rugh 1986, 131). In these situations, there is an important status change: These women are treated by the others in the situation as if they are men. From their own point of view, they are still women. From the social perspective, however, they are men.¹⁰

In many cultures, gender bending is prevalent in theater or dance—the Japanese kabuki are men actors who play both women and men; in Shakespeare's theater company, there were no actresses—Juliet and Lady Macbeth were played by boys. Shakespeare's comedies are full of witty comments on gender shifts. Women characters frequently masquerade as young men, and other women characters fall in love with them; the boys playing these masquerading women, meanwhile, are acting out pining for the love of men characters.¹¹ In *As You Like It*, when Rosalind justifies her protective crossdressing, Shakespeare also comments on manliness:

Were it not better,
Because that I am more than common tall,
That I did suit me all points like a man:
A gallant curtle-axe upon my thigh,
A boar-spear in my hand, and in my heart
Lie there what hidden women's fear there will,
We'll have a swashing and martial outside,
As many other mannish cowards have
That do outface it with their semblances.

(I, i, 115–22)

Shakespeare's audience could appreciate the double subtext: Rosalind, a woman character, was a boy dressed in girl's clothing who then dressed as a boy; like bravery, masculinity and femininity can be put on and taken off with changes of costume and role (Howard 1988, 435).¹²

M Butterfly is a modern play of gender ambiguities, which David Hwang (1989) based on a real person. Shi Peipu, a male Chinese opera singer who sang women's roles, was a spy as a man and the lover as a woman of a Frenchman, Gallimard, a diplomat (Bernstein 1986). The relationship lasted twenty years, and Shi Peipu even pretended to be the mother of a child by Gallimard. "She" also pretended to be too shy to undress completely. As "Butterfly," Shi Peipu portrayed a fantasy Oriental woman who made the lover a "real man" (Kondo 1990b). In Gallimard's words, the fantasy was "of slender women in chong sams and kimonos who die for the love of unworthy foreign devils. Who are born and raised to be perfect women. Who take whatever punishment we give them, and bounce back, strengthened by love, unconditionally" (Hwang 1989, 91). When the fantasy woman betrayed him by turning out to be the more powerful "real man," Gallimard assumed the role of Butterfly and, dressed in a geisha's robes, killed himself: "because 'man' and 'woman' are oppositionally defined terms, reversals . . . are possible" (Kondo 1990b, 18).¹³

But despite the ease with which gender boundaries can be traversed in work, in social relationships, and in cultural productions, gender statuses remain. Transvestites and transsexuals do not challenge the social construction of gender. Their goal is to be feminine women and masculine men (Kando 1973). Those who do not want to change their anatomy but do want to change their gender behavior fare less well in establishing their social identity. The women Holly Devor called "gender blenders" wore their hair short, dressed in unisex pants, shirts, and comfortable shoes, and did not wear jewelry or makeup. They described their everyday dress as women's clothing: One said, "I wore jeans all the time, but I didn't wear men's clothes" (Devor 1989, 100). Their gender identity was women, but because they refused to "do femininity," they were constantly taken for men (1987; 1989, 107–42). Devor said of them: "The most common area of complaint was with public washrooms. They repeatedly spoke of the humiliation of being challenged or ejected from women's washrooms. Similarly, they found public change rooms to be dangerous territory and the buying of undergarments to be a difficult feat to accomplish" (1987, 29). In an ultimate ironic twist, some of these women said "they would feel like transvestites if they were to wear dresses, and two women said that they had been called transvestites when they had done so" (31). They resolved the ambiguity of their gender status by identifying as women in private and passing as men in public to avoid harassment on the street, to get men's jobs, and, if they were lesbians, to make it easier to display affection publicly with their lovers (Devor 1989, 107–42). Sometimes they even used men's bathrooms. When they had gender-neutral names, like Leslie, they could avoid the bureaucratic hassles that arose when they had to present their passports or other proof of identity, but because most had names associated with women, their appearance and their cards of identity were not conventionally congruent, and their gender status was in

constant jeopardy.¹⁴ When they could, they found it easier to pass as men than to try to change the stereotyped notions of what women should look like.

Paradoxically, then, bending gender rules and passing between genders does not erode but rather preserves gender boundaries. In societies with only two genders, the gender dichotomy is not disturbed by transvestites, because others feel that a transvestite is only transitorily ambiguous—is “really a man or woman underneath.” After sex-change surgery, transsexuals end up in a conventional gender status—a “man” or a “woman” with the appropriate genitals (Eichler 1989). When women dress as men for business reasons, they are indicating that in that situation, they want to be treated the way men are treated; when they dress as women, they want to be treated as women:

By their male dress, female entrepreneurs signal their desire to suspend the expectations of accepted feminine conduct without losing respect and reputation. By wearing what is “unattractive” they signify that they are not intending to display their physical charms while engaging in public activity. Their loud, aggressive banter contrasts with the modest demeanor that attracts men. . . . Overt signalling of a suspension of the rules preserves normal conduct from eroding expectations. (Rugh 1986, 131)

For Individuals, Gender Means Sameness

Although the possible combinations of genitalia, body shapes, clothing, mannerisms, sexuality, and roles could produce infinite varieties in human beings, the social institution of gender depends on the production and maintenance of a limited number of gender statuses and of making the members of these statuses similar to each other. Individuals are born sexed but not gendered, and they have to be taught to be masculine or feminine.¹⁵ As Simone de Beauvoir said: “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman . . . ; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature . . . which is described as feminine” (1953, 267).

Children learn to walk, talk, and gesture the way their social group says girls and boys should. Ray Birdwhistell, in his analysis of body motion as human communication, calls these learned gender displays *tertiary sex characteristics* and argues that they are needed to distinguish genders because humans are a weakly dimorphic species—their only sex markers are genitalia (1970, 39–46). Clothing, paradoxically, often hides the sex but displays the gender.

In early childhood, humans develop gendered personality structures and sexual orientations through their interactions with parents of the same and opposite gender. As adolescents, they conduct their sexual behavior according to gendered scripts. Schools, parents, peers, and the mass media guide young people into gendered work and family roles. As adults, they take on a gendered social status in their society’s stratification system. Gender is thus both ascribed and achieved (West and Zimmerman 1987).

The achievement of gender was most dramatically revealed in a case of an accidental transsexual—a baby boy whose penis was destroyed in the course of a botched

circumcision when he was seven months old (Money and Ehrhardt 1972, 118–23). The child's sex category was changed to "female," and a vagina was surgically constructed when the child was seventeen months old. The parents were advised that they could successfully raise the child, one of identical twins, as a girl. Physicians assured them that the child was too young to have formed a gender identity. Children's sense of which gender they belong to usually develops around the age of three, at the time that they start to group objects and recognize that the people around them also fit into categories—big, little; pink-skinned, brown-skinned; boys, girls. Three has also been the age when children's appearance is ritually gendered, usually by cutting a boy's hair or dressing him in distinctively masculine clothing. In Victorian times, English boys wore dresses up to the age of three, when they were put into short pants (Garber 1992, 1–2).

The parents of the accidental transsexual bent over backward to feminize the child—and succeeded. Frilly dresses, hair ribbons, and jewelry created a pride in looks, neatness, and "daintiness." More significant, the child's dominance was also feminized:

The girl had many tomboyish traits, such as abundant physical energy, a high level of activity, stubbornness, and being often the dominant one in a girls' group. Her mother tried to modify her tomboyishness: "I teach her to be more polite and quiet. I always wanted those virtues. I never did manage, but I'm going to try to manage them to—my daughter—to be more quiet and lady-like." From the beginning the girl had been the dominant twin. By the age of three, her dominance over her brother was, as her mother described it, that of a mother hen. The boy in turn took up for his sister, if anyone threatened her. (Money and Ehrhardt 1972, 122)

[. . .]

Many cultures go beyond clothing, gestures, and demeanor in gendering children. They inscribe gender directly into bodies. In traditional Chinese society, mothers bound their daughters' feet into three-inch stumps to enhance their sexual attractiveness. Jewish fathers circumcise their infant sons to show their covenant with God. Women in African societies remove the clitoris of prepubescent girls, scrape their labia, and make the lips grow together to preserve their chastity and ensure their marriageability. In Western societies, women augment their breast size with silicone and reconstruct their faces with cosmetic surgery to conform to cultural ideals of feminine beauty. Hanna Papanek (1990) notes that these practices reinforce the sense of superiority or inferiority in the adults who carry them out as well as in the children on whom they are done: The genitals of Jewish fathers and sons are physical and psychological evidence of their common dominant religious and familial status; the genitals of African mothers and daughters are physical and psychological evidence of their joint subordination.¹⁶

[. . .]

For human beings there is no essential femaleness or maleness, femininity or masculinity, womanhood or manhood, but once gender is ascribed, the social order constructs and holds individuals to strongly gendered norms and expectations. Individuals

may vary on many of the components of gender and may shift genders temporarily or permanently, but they must fit into the limited number of gender statuses their society recognizes. In the process, they re-create their society's version of women and men: "If we do gender appropriately, we simultaneously sustain, reproduce, and render legitimate the institutional arrangements. . . . If we fail to do gender appropriately, we as individuals—not the institutional arrangements—may be called to account (for our character, motives, and predispositions)" (West and Zimmerman 1987, 146).

The gendered practices of everyday life reproduce a society's view of how women and men should act (Bourdieu [1980] 1990). Gendered social arrangements are justified by religion and cultural productions and backed by law, but the most powerful means of sustaining the moral hegemony of the dominant gender ideology is that the process is made invisible; any possible alternatives are virtually unthinkable.¹⁷ (Foucault 1972; Gramsci 1971)

For Society, Gender Means Difference

The pervasiveness of gender as a way of structuring social life demands that gender statuses be clearly differentiated. Varied talents, sexual preferences, identities, personalities, interests, and ways of interacting fragment the individual's bodily and social experiences. Nonetheless, these are organized in Western cultures into two and only two socially and legally recognized gender statuses, "man" and "woman."¹⁸ In the social construction of gender, it does not matter what men and actually do; it does not even matter if they do exactly the same thing. The social institution of gender insists only that what they do is *perceived* as different.

If men and women are doing the same tasks, they are usually spatially segregated to maintain gender separation, and often the tasks are given different job titles as well, such as executive secretary and administrative assistant (Reskin 1988). If the differences between women and men begin to blur, society's "sameness taboo" goes into action (Rubin 1975, 178). At a rock and roll dance at West Point in 1976, the year women were admitted to the prestigious military academy for the first time, the school's administrators "were reportedly perturbed by the sight of mirror-image couples dancing in short hair and dress gray trousers," and a rule was established that women cadets could dance at these events only if they wore skirts (Barkalow and Raab 1990, 53).¹⁹ Women recruits in the U.S. Marine Corps are required to wear makeup—at a minimum, lipstick and eye shadow—and they have to take classes in makeup, hair care, poise, and etiquette. This feminization is part of a deliberate policy of making them clearly distinguishable from men Marines. Christine Williams quotes a twenty-five-year-old woman drill instructor as saying: "A lot of the recruits who come here don't wear makeup; they're tomboyish or athletic. A lot of them have the preconceived idea that going into the military means they can still be a tomboy. They don't realize that you are a *Woman* Marine" (1989, 76–77).²⁰

[. . .]

Gender Ranking

Most societies rank genders according to prestige and power and construct them to be unequal, so that moving from one to another also means moving up or down the social scale. Among some North American Indian cultures, the hierarchy was male men, male women, female men, female women. Women produced significant durable goods (basketry, textiles, pottery, decorated leather goods), which could be traded. Women also controlled what they produced and any profit or wealth they earned. Since women's occupational realm could lead to prosperity and prestige, it was fair game for young men—but only if they became women in gender status. Similarly, women in other societies who amassed a great deal of wealth were allowed to become men—"manly hearts." According to Harriet Whitehead (1981):

Both reactions reveal an unwillingness or inability to distinguish the sources of prestige—wealth, skill, personal efficacy (among other things)—from masculinity. Rather there is the innuendo that if a person performing female tasks can attain excellence, prosperity, or social power, it must be because that person is, at some level, a man. . . . A woman who could succeed at doing the things men did was honored as a man would be. . . . What seems to have been more disturbing to the culture—which means, for all intents and purposes, to the men—was the possibility that women, within their own department, might be onto a good thing. It was into this unsettling breach that the berdache institution was hurled. In their social aspect, women were complimented by the berdache's imitation. In their anatomic aspect, they were subtly insulted by his vaunted superiority. (108)

In American society, men-to-women transsexuals tend to earn less after surgery if they change occupations; women-to-men transsexuals tend to increase their income (Bolin 1988, 153–60; Brody 1979). Men who go into women's fields, like nursing, have less prestige than women who go into men's fields, like physics. Janice Raymond, a radical feminist, feels that transsexual men-to-women have advantages over female women because they were not socialized to be subordinate or oppressed throughout life. She says:

We know that we are women who are born with female chromosomes and anatomy, and that whether or not we were socialized to be so-called normal women, patriarchy has treated and will treat us like women. Transsexuals have not had this same history. No man can have the history of being born and located in this culture as a woman. He can have the history of *wishing* to be a woman and of *acting* like a woman, but this gender experience is that of a transsexual, not of a woman. Surgery may confer the artifacts of outward and inward female organs but it cannot confer the history of being born a woman in this society. (1979, 114)

[. . .]

For one transsexual man-to-woman, however, the experience of living as a woman changed his/her whole personality. As James, Morris had been a soldier,

foreign correspondent, and mountain climber; as Jan, Morris is a successful travel writer. But socially, James was far superior to Jan, and so Jan developed the “learned helplessness” that is supposed to characterize women in Western society:

We are told that the social gap between the sexes is narrowing, but I can only report that having, in the second half of the twentieth century, experienced life in both roles, there seems to me no aspect of existence, no moment of the day, no contact, no arrangement, no response, which is not different for men and for women. The very tone of voice in which I was now addressed, the very posture of the person next in the queue, the very feel in the air when I entered a room or sat at a restaurant table, constantly emphasized my change of status.

And if other’s responses shifted, so did my own. The more I was treated as woman, the more woman I became. I adapted willy-nilly. If I was assumed to be incompetent at reversing cars, or opening bottles, oddly incompetent I found myself becoming. If a case was thought too heavy for me, inexplicably I found it so myself. . . . Women treated me with a frankness which, while it was one of the happiest discoveries of my metamorphosis, did imply membership of a camp, a faction, or at least a school of thought; so I found myself gravitating always towards the female, whether in sharing a railway compartment or supporting a political cause. Men treated me more and more as junior, . . . and so, addressed every day of my life as an inferior, involuntarily, month by month I accepted the condition. I discovered that even now men prefer women to be less informed, less able, less talkative, and certainly less self-centered than they are themselves; so I generally obliged them. (1975, 165–66)²¹

Components of Gender

By now, it should be clear that gender is not a unitary essence but has many components as a social institution and as an individual status.²²

As a social institution, gender is composed of:

Gender statuses, the socially recognized genders in a society and the norms and expectations for their enactment behaviorally, gesturally, linguistically, emotionally, and physically. How gender statuses are evaluated depends on historical development in any particular society.

Gendered division of labor, the assignment of productive and domestic work to members of different gender statuses. The work assigned to those of different gender statuses strengthens the society’s evaluation of those statuses—the higher the status, the more prestigious and valued the work and the greater its rewards.

Gendered kinship, the family rights and responsibilities for each gender status. Kinship statuses reflect and reinforce the prestige and power differences of the different genders.

Gendered sexual scripts, the normative patterns of sexual desire and sexual behavior, as prescribed for the different gender statuses. Members of the dominant gender have more sexual prerogatives; members of a subordinate gender may be sexually exploited.

Gendered personalities, the combinations of traits patterned by gender norms of how members of different gender statuses are supposed to feel and behave. Social expectations of others in face-to-face interaction constantly bolster these norms.

Gendered social control, the formal and informal approval and reward of conforming behavior and the stigmatization, social isolation, punishment, and medical treatment of nonconforming behavior.

Gender ideology, the justification of gender statuses, particularly, their differential evaluation. The dominant ideology tends to suppress criticism by making these evaluations seem natural.

Gender imagery, the cultural representations of gender and embodiment of gender in symbolic language and artistic productions that reproduce and legitimate gender statuses. Culture is one of the main supports of the dominant gender ideology.

For an individual, gender is composed of:

Sex category to which the infant is assigned at birth based on appearance of genitalia. With prenatal testing and sex-typing, categorization is prenatal. Sex category may be changed later through surgery or reinspection of ambiguous genitalia.

Gender identity, the individual's sense of gendered self as a worker and family member.

Gendered marital and procreative status, fulfillment or nonfulfillment of allowed or disallowed mating, impregnation, childbearing, kinship roles.

Gendered sexual orientation, socially and individually patterned sexual desires, feelings, practices, and identification.

Gendered personality, internalized patterns of socially normative emotions as organized by family structure and parenting.

Gendered processes, the social practices of learning, being taught, picking up cues, enacting behavior already learned to be gender-appropriate (or inappropriate, if rebelling, testing), developing a gender identity, "doing gender" as a member of a gender status in relationships with gendered others, acting deferent or dominant.

Gender beliefs, incorporation of or resistance to gender ideology.

Gender display, presentation of self as a certain kind of gendered person through dress, cosmetics, adornments, and permanent and reversible body markers.

For an individual, all the social components are supposed to be consistent and congruent with perceived physiology. The actual combination of genes and genitalia, prenatal, adolescent, and adult hormonal input, and procreative capacity may or may not be congruous with each other and with sex category assignment, gender identity, gendered sexual orientation and procreative status, gender display, personality, and work and family roles. At any one time, an individual's identity is a combination of the major ascribed statuses of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, and social class, and the individual's achieved statuses, such as education level, occupation or profession, marital status, parenthood, prestige, authority, and wealth. The ascribed statuses substantially limit or create opportunities for individual achievements and also diminish or enhance the luster of those achievements.

Gender as Process, Stratification, and Structure

A social institution, gender is a process of creating distinguishable social statuses for the assignment of rights and responsibilities. As part of a stratification system that ranks these statuses unequally, gender is a major building block in the social structures built on these unequal statuses.

As a *process*, gender creates the social differences that define “woman” and “man.” In social interaction throughout their lives, individuals learn what is expected, see what is expected, act and react in expected ways, and thus simultaneously construct and maintain the gender order: “The very injunction to be a given gender takes place through discursive routes: to be a good mother, to be a heterosexually desirable object, to be a fit worker, in sum, to signify a multiplicity of guarantees in response to a variety of different demands all at once” (Butler 1990, 145). Members of a social group neither make up gender as they go along nor exactly replicate in rote fashion what was done before. In almost every encounter, human beings produce gender, behaving in the ways they learned were appropriate for their gender status, or resisting or rebelling against these norms. Resistance and rebellion have altered gender norms, but so far they have rarely eroded the statuses.

Gendered patterns of interaction acquire additional layers of gendered sexuality, parenting, and work behaviors in childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Gendered norms and expectations are enforced through informal sanctions of gender-inappropriate behavior by peers and by formal punishment or threat of punishment by those in authority should behavior deviate too far from socially imposed standards for women and men.

Everyday gendered interactions build gender into the family, the work process, and other organizations and institutions, which in turn reinforce gender expectations for individuals.²³ Because gender is a process, there is room not only for modification and variation by individuals and small groups but also for institutionalized change (Scott 1988, 7).

As part of a *stratification* system, gender ranks men above women of the same race and class. Women and men could be different but equal. In practice, the process of creating difference depends to a great extent on differential evaluation. As Nancy Jay (1981) says: “That which is defined, separated out, isolated from all else is A and pure. Not-A is necessarily impure, a random catchall, to which nothing is external except A and the principle of order that separates it from Not-A” (45). From the individual’s point of view, whichever gender is A, the other is Not-A; gender boundaries tell the individual who is like him or her, and all the rest are unlike. From society’s point of view, however, one gender is usually the touchstone, the normal, the dominant, and the other is different, deviant, and subordinate. In Western society, “man” is A, “wo-man” is Not-A. (Consider what a society would be like where woman was A and man Not-A.)

The further dichotomization by race and class constructs the gradations of a heterogeneous society’s stratification scheme. Thus, in the United States, white is A, African American is Not-A; middle class is A, working class is Not-A, and “African-American women occupy a position whereby the inferior half of a series of these dichotomies con-

verge” (Collins 1990, 70). The dominant categories are the hegemonic ideals, taken so for granted as the way things should be that white is not ordinarily thought of as a race, middle class as a class, or men as a gender. The characteristics of these categories define the Other as that which lacks the valuable qualities the dominants exhibit.

In a gender-stratified society, what men do is usually valued more highly than what women do because men do it, even when their activities are very similar or the same. In different regions of southern India, for example, harvesting rice is men’s work, shared work, or women’s work: “Wherever a task is done by women it is considered easy, and where it is done by [men] it is considered difficult” (Mencher 1988, 104). A gathering and hunting society’s survival usually depends on the nuts, grubs, and small animals brought in by the women’s foraging trips, but when the men’s hunt is successful, it is the occasion for a celebration. Conversely, because they are the superior group, white men do not have to do the “dirty work,” such as housework; the most inferior group does it, usually poor women of color (Palmer 1989).

Freudian psychoanalytic theory claims that boys must reject their mothers and deny the feminine in themselves in order to become men: “For boys the major goal is the achievement of personal masculine identification with their father and sense of secure masculine self, achieved through superego formation and disparagement of women” (Chodorow 1978, 165). Masculinity may be the outcome of boys’ intrapsychic struggles to separate their identity from that of their mothers, but the proofs of masculinity are culturally shaped and usually ritualistic and symbolic (Gilmore 1990).

The Marxist feminist explanation for gender inequality is that by demeaning women’s abilities and keeping them from learning valuable technological skills, bosses preserve them as a cheap and exploitable reserve army of labor. Unionized men who could be easily replaced by women collude in this process because it allows them to monopolize the better paid, more interesting, and more autonomous jobs: “Two factors emerge as helping men maintain their separation from women and their control of technological occupations. One is the active gendering of jobs and people. The second is the continual creation of sub-divisions in the work processes, and levels in work hierarchies, into which men can move in order to keep their distance from women” (Cockburn 1985, 13).

Societies vary in the extent of the inequality in social status of their women and men members, but where there is inequality, the status “woman” (and its attendant behavior and role allocations) is usually held in lesser esteem than the status “man.” Since gender is also intertwined with a society’s other constructed statuses of differential evaluation—race, religion, occupation, class, country of origin, and so on—men and women members of the favored groups command more power, more prestige, and more property than the members of the disfavored groups. Within many social groups, however, men are advantaged over women. The more economic resources, such as education and job opportunities, are available to a group, the more they tend to be monopolized by men. In poorer groups that have few resources (such as working-class African Americans in the United States), women and men are more nearly equal, and the women may even outstrip the men in education and occupational status (Almquist 1987).

As a *structure*, gender divides work in the home and in economic production, legitimates those in authority, and organizes sexuality and emotional life (Connell 1987, 91–142). As primary parents, women significantly influence children’s psychological development and emotional attachments, in the process reproducing gender. Emergent sexuality is shaped by heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, and sadomasochistic patterns that are gendered—different for girls and boys, and for women and men—so that sexual statuses reflect gender statuses.

When gender is a major component of structured inequality, the devalued genders have less power, prestige, and economic rewards than the valued genders. In countries that discourage gender discrimination, many major roles are still gendered; women still do most of the domestic labor and child rearing, even while doing full-time paid work; women and men are segregated on the job and each does work considered “appropriate”; women’s work is usually paid less than men’s work. Men dominate the positions of authority and leadership in government, the military, and the law; cultural productions, religions, and sports reflect men’s interests.

In societies that create the greatest gender difference, as Saudi Arabia, women are kept out of sight behind walls or veils, have no civil rights, and often create a cultural and emotional world of their own (Bernard 1981). But even in societies with less rigid gender boundaries, women and men spend much of their time with people of their own gender because of the way work and family are organized. This spatial separation of women and men reinforces gendered differentness, identity, and ways of thinking and behaving (Coser 1986).

Gender inequality—the devaluation of “women” and the social domination of “men”—has social functions and a social history. It is not the result of sex, procreation, physiology, anatomy, hormones, or genetic predispositions. It is produced and maintained by identifiable social processes and built into the general social structure and individual identities deliberately and purposefully. The social order as we know it in Western societies is organized around racial ethnic, class, and gender inequality. I contend, therefore, that the continuing purpose of gender as a modern social institution is to construct women as a group to be the subordinates of men as a group. The life of everyone placed in the status “woman” is “night to his day—that has forever been the fantasy. Black to his white. Shut out of his system’s space, she is the repressed that ensures the system’s functioning” (Cixous and Clement [1975] 1986, 67).

The Paradox of Human Nature

To say that sex, sexuality, and gender are all socially constructed is not to minimize their social power. These categorical imperatives govern our lives in the most profound and pervasive ways, through the social experiences and social practices of what Dorothy Smith calls the “everyday/everynight world” (1990, 31–57). The paradox of human nature is that it is *always* a manifestation of cultural meanings, social relationships, and power politics; “not biology, but culture, becomes destiny” (Butler 1990, 8). Gendered people emerge not from physiology or sexual orientation but from the exigencies of the social order, mostly, from the need for a reliable division of the work

of food production and the social (not physical) reproduction of new members. The moral imperatives of religion and cultural representations guard the boundary lines among genders and ensure that what is demanded, what is permitted, and what is tabooed for the people in each gender is well known and followed by most (Davies 1982). Political power, control of scarce resources, and, if necessary, violence uphold the gendered social order in the face of resistance and rebellion. Most people, however, voluntarily go along with their society's prescriptions for those of their gender status, because the norms and expectations get built into their sense of worth and identity as a certain kind of human being, and because they believe their society's way is the natural way. These beliefs emerge from the imagery that pervades the way we think, the way we see and hear and speak, the way we fantasize, and the way we feel.

There is no core or bedrock human nature below these endlessly looping processes of the social production of sex and gender, self and other, identity and psyche, each of which is a "complex cultural construction" (Butler 1990, 36). *For humans, the social is the natural*. Therefore, "in its feminist senses, gender cannot mean simply the cultural appropriation of biological sexual difference. Sexual difference is itself a fundamental—and scientifically contested—construction. Both 'sex' and 'gender' are woven of multiple, asymmetrical strands of difference, charged with multifaceted dramatic narratives of domination and struggle" (Haraway 1990, 40).

Notes

1. Gender is, in Erving Goffman's words, an aspect of *Felicity's Condition*: "any arrangement which leads us to judge an individual's . . . acts not to be a manifestation of strangeness. Behind Felicity's Condition is our sense of what it is to be sane" (1983, 27). Also see Bem 1993; Frye 1983, 17–40; Goffman 1977.

2. In cases of ambiguity in countries with modern medicine, surgery is usually performed to make the genitalia more clearly male or female.

3. See J. Butler 1990 for an analysis of how doing gender *is* gender identity.

4. Douglas 1973; MacCormack 1980; Ortner 1974; Ortner and Whitehead 1981; Yanagisako and Collier 1987. On the social construction of childhood, see Ariès 1962; Zelizer 1985.

5. On the hijras of India, see Nanda 1990; on the xaniths of Oman, Wikan 1982, 168–86; on the American Indian berdaches, W. L. Williams 1986. Other societies that have similar institutionalized third-gender men are the Koniag of Alaska, the Tanala of Madagascar, the Mesakin of Nuba, and the Chukchee of Siberia (Wikan 1982, 170).

6. Durova 1989; Freeman and Bond 1992; Wheelwright 1989.

7. Gender segregation of work in popular music still has not changed very much, according to Groce and Cooper 1989, despite considerable androgyny in some very popular figures. See Garber 1992 on the androgyny. She discusses Tipton on pp. 67–70.

8. In the nineteenth century, not only did these women get men's wages, but they also "had male privileges and could do all manner of things other women could not: open a bank account, write checks, own property, go anywhere unaccompanied, vote in elections" (Faderman 1991, 44).

9. When unisex clothing and men wearing long hair came into vogue in the United States in the mid-1960s, beards and mustaches for men also came into style again as gender identifications.

10. For other accounts of women being treated as men in Islamic countries, as well as accounts of women and men cross-dressing in these countries, see Garber 1992, 304–52.

11. Dollimore 1986; Garber 1992, 32–40; Greenblatt 1987, 66–93; Howard 1988. For Renaissance accounts of sexual relations with women and men of ambiguous sex, see Laqueur 1990, 134–39. For modern accounts of women passing as men that other women find sexually attractive, see Devor 1989, 136–37; Wheelwright 1989, 53–59.

12. Females who passed as men soldiers had to “do masculinity,” not just dress in a uniform (Wheelwright, 1989, 50–78). On the triple entendres and gender resonances of Rosalind-type characters, see Garber 1992, 71–77.

13. Also see Garber 1992, 234–66.

14. Bolin describes how many documents have to be changed by transsexuals to provide a legitimizing “paper trail” (1988, 145–47). Note that only members of the same social group know which names are women’s and which men’s in their culture, but many documents list “sex.”

15. For an account of how a potential man-to-woman transsexual learned to be feminine, see Garfinkel 1967, 116–85, 285–88. For a gloss on this account that points out how, throughout his encounters with Agnes, Garfinkel failed to see how he himself was constructing his own masculinity, see Rogers 1992.

16. Paige and Paige (1981, 147–49) argue that circumcision ceremonies indicate a father’s loyalty to his lineage elders—“visible public evidence that the head of a family unit of their lineage is willing to trust others with his and his family’s most valuable political asset, his son’s penis” (147). On female circumcision, see El Dareer 1982; Lightfoot-Klein 1989; van der Kwaak 1992; Walker 1992. There is a form of female circumcision that removes only the prepuce of the clitoris and is similar to male circumcision, but most forms of female circumcision are far more extensive, mutilating, and spiritually and psychologically shocking than the usual form of male circumcision. However, among the Australian aborigines, boys’ penises are slit and kept open, so that they urinate and bleed the way women do (Bettelheim 1962, 165–206).

17. The concepts of moral hegemony, the effects of everyday activities (praxis) on thought and personality, and the necessity of consciousness of these processes before political change can occur are all based on Marx’s analysis of class relations.

18. Other societies recognize more than two categories, but usually no more than three or four (Jacobs and Roberts 1989).

19. Carol Barkalow’s book has a photograph of eleven first-year West Pointers in a math class, who are dressed in regulation pants, shirts, and sweaters, with short haircuts. The caption challenges the reader to locate the only woman in the room.

20. The taboo on males and females looking alike reflects the U.S. military’s homophobia (Bérubé 1989). If you can’t tell those with a penis from those with a vagina, how are you going to determine whether their sexual interest is heterosexual or homosexual unless you watch them having sexual relations?

21. See Bolin 1988, 149–50, for transsexual men-to-women’s discovery of the dangers of rape and sexual harassment. Devor’s “gender blenders” went in the opposite direction. Because they found that it was an advantage to be taken for men, they did not deliberately cross-dress, but they did not feminize themselves either (1989, 126–40).

22. See West and Zimmerman 1987 for a similar set of gender components.

23. On the “logic of practice,” or how the experience of gender is embedded in the norms of everyday interaction and the structure of formal organizations, see Acker 1990; Bourdieu [1980] 1990; Connell 1987; Smith 1987.

CHAPTER 3

Culture, Gender, and Math

Luigi Guiso, Ferdinando Monte, Paola Sapienza, Luigi Zingales

The existence,¹ degree,² and origin^{3,4} of a gender gap (difference between girls' and boys' scores) in mathematics are highly debated. Biologically based explanations for the gap rely on evidence that men perform better in spatial tests, whereas women do better in verbal recall ones.^{1,5,6} However, the performance differences are small, and their link with math test performance is tenuous.⁷ By contrast, social conditioning and gender-biased environments can have very large effects on test performance.⁸

To assess the relative importance of biological and cultural explanations, we studied gender differences in test performance across countries.⁹ Cultural inequalities range widely across countries,¹⁰ whereas results from cognitive tests do not.⁶ We used data from the 2003 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) that reports on 276,165 15-year old students from 40 countries who took identical tests in mathematics and reading.^{11,12} The tests were designed by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to be free of cultural biases. They are sufficiently challenging that only 0.6% of the U.S. students tested perform at the 99th percentile of the world distribution.

Girls' math scores average 10.5 lower than those of boys (2% less than the mean average score for boys), but the results vary by country (see figure 3.1): in Turkey, -22.6, whereas, in Iceland, 14.5. A similar variation exists in the proportion of girls over boys who score above 95%, or 99% of the country-level distribution.¹³

The gender gap is reversed in reading. On average, girls have reading scores that are 32.7 higher than those of boys (6.6% higher than the mean average score for boys), in Turkey, 25.1 higher and in Iceland, 61.0 higher (figure 3.1). The effect is even stronger in the right tail of the distribution. In spite of the difference in levels, the gender gap in reading exhibits a variation across countries similar to the gender gap in math. Where girls enjoy the strongest advantage in reading with respect to boys, they exhibit the smallest disadvantage (sometimes even an advantage) in math. The correlation between the average gender gaps in mathematics and reading across countries is 0.59.¹⁴

To explore the cultural inputs to these results, we classified countries according to several measures of gender equality. 1) The World Economic Forum's Gender Gap

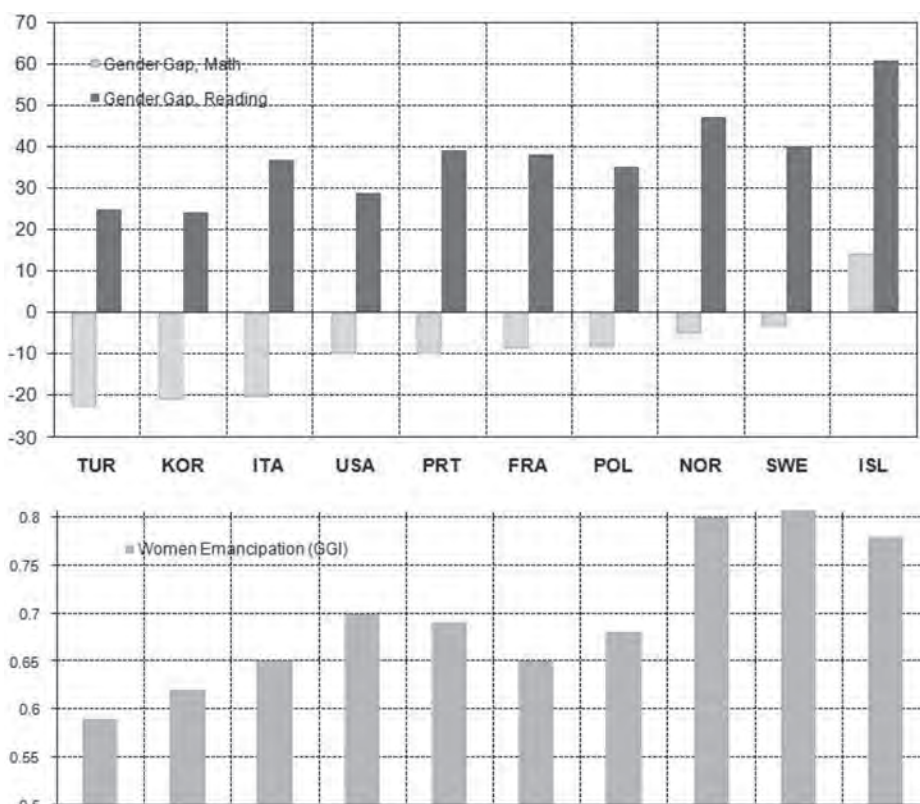


Figure 3.1. Math and Reading Gender Gaps.

Note: In more gender-equal cultures, the math gender gap disappears and the reading gender gap becomes larger. (**Top**) Gender gaps in mathematics (light) and reading (dark) are calculated as the difference between the average girls' score and the average boys' score. A subset of countries is shown here (see SOM for complete data set and calculations). In many countries, on average, girls perform more poorly than boys in mathematics. In all countries, girls perform better than boys in reading. The gender gap in mathematics and reading correlates with country measures of gender status within the culture, one of which measures is the GGI (**bottom**). Larger values of GGI point to a better average position of women in society. Besides USA, the countries are abbreviated as their first three letters, except for PRT, Portugal, and ISL, Iceland.

Index (GGI)¹⁰ reflects economic and political opportunities, education, and well-being for women (see figure 3.1). 2) From the World Values Surveys (WVSs),¹⁵ we constructed an index of cultural attitudes toward women based on the average level of disagreement to such statements as: "When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women." 3) The rate of female economic activity reflects the percentage of women age 15 and older who supply, or are available to supply, labor for the production of goods and services. 4) The political empowerment index computed by the World Economic Forum⁸ measures women's political participation, which is less dependent on math skills than labor force participation. These four measures are highly correlated.¹⁶

We find a positive correlation between gender equality and gender gap in mathematics. If Turkey, a low gender-equality country (GGI=0.59), were characterized

by the degree of gender equality manifested in Sweden (GGI=0.81), our statistical model suggests that the mean score performance in mathematics of girls relative to boys would increase by 23 points, which would eliminate the Turkish gender gap in math (See table 3.1). In more gender-equal countries, such as Norway and Sweden, the math gender gap disappears. Similar results are obtained when we use the other indicators of women's roles in society. These results are true not only at the mean level, but also in the tail of the distribution.¹⁷ In Iceland, the ratio of girls to boys who score above the 99th percentile of the country distribution in math scores is 1.17.

There are many unobserved reasons why countries may differ in a way that affects the math gender gap. Without appropriate controls, we run the risk of capturing a spurious correlation between the unobserved factors and our measures of gender equality. We reran our regression at the student level, inserting a dummy variable for each country, to control for unobserved heterogeneity.¹⁸ The interaction between gender and GGI index remains statistically significant at the 1% confidence level in a two-tailed *t* test, which suggests that the correlation between gender equality and girls' math scores is not driven by unobserved heterogeneity. This interaction between gender gap and GGI remains significant even when we insert an interaction between gender and log of GDP per capita, which suggests that the improvement in math scores is not just related to economic development, but to the improvement of the role of women in society.

To investigate whether the disappearance of math gender gap in some countries translates into an overall improvement of girls or is simply limited to mathematics scores, we correlated reading performance differences with measures of women's equality (table 3.1). In countries where women are more emancipated, girls' comparative advantage in reading widens. Comparing Turkey (GGI=0.59) and Sweden (GGI=0.81), we see an increase in the mean score performance of girls relative to boys in reading by 18 points, which almost doubles Turkey's reading gap in favor of girls.

To verify that these results are not driven by biological differences across countries, we analyzed whether they persist in populations that have a similar or identical evolutionary history. To assess history, we used a genetic distance measure^{19,20} based on the frequency of each allele across DNA polymorphisms.

According to this measure, there are 13 European countries with genetic distance equal to zero and 26 European countries with genetic distance less than 100.²¹ When we restrict the regression of the table (above) to either one of these two groups, our findings are substantially unchanged.²²

These results suggest that the gender gap in math, although it historically favors boys, disappears in more gender-equal societies. The same cannot be said for how boys score in mathematics compared with how boys score in readings. Boys' scores are always higher in mathematics than in reading, and although the difference between boys' math and boys' reading scores varies across countries, it is not correlated with the GGI index or with any of the other three measures of gender equality.²³ Hence, in countries with a higher GGI index, girls close the gender gap by becoming better in both math and reading, not by closing the math gap alone. The gender gap in reading,

Table 3.1. Differences in Test Scores Correlated with Indicators of Gender Inequality

	LHS: Gender Gap Test Score, Math	LHS: Gender Gap in Test Score, Reading
Women Emancipation (GGI)	105.49*** (26.92)	83.56*** (30.43)
AVG. WVS indicators	13.21* (7.06)	16.39* (8.46)
Female economic activity rate	0.45*** (0.14)	0.34** (0.15)
Gross tertiary enrollment, female/male ratio	8.74* (4.65)	13.61*** (4.57)
Log GDP per capita, 2003	-6.56*** (2.40)	-2.23 (2.71)
Constant	1.09 (2.26)	0.52 (2.71)
	-57.16** (23.27)	-16.09 (27.90)
Observations	37	37
R-squared	0.32	0.20
	0.15	0.14
	39	39
	0.23	0.12
	0.10	0.21
	38	38
	0.10	0.21

Culture affects the gap. More gender-equal cultures are associated with reducing the negative gap in math and further enlarging the positive gap in reading in favor of women. Test scores are positively correlated with indicators of gender equality in society (GGI, WVSs, see text). Economic conditions are accounted for by per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The correlation persists among high achievers on both tests. The constant is where the regression line intercepts the y axis, representing the amount the dependent y (gender gap) will be when all the independent variables are set to 0. LHS, left-hand side variable in the least-squares regression analysis. *P<0.05; **P<0.01.

which favors girls and is apparent in all countries, thus expands in more gender-equal societies. Similarly, although the gender gaps in all math subfields decrease in societies with more gender equality, the difference between the gender gap in geometry (where the boys' advantage relative to the girls' is the biggest) and arithmetic (where the boys' advantage relative to the girls' is the smallest) does not.²⁴

This evidence suggests that intra-gender performance differences in reading versus mathematics and in arithmetic versus geometry are not eliminated in a more gender-equal culture. By contrast, girls' underperformance in math relative to boys is eliminated in more gender-equal cultures. In more gender-equal societies, girls perform as well as boys in mathematics and much better than them in reading. These findings shed some light on recent trends in girls' educational achievements in the United States, where the math gender gap has been closing over time.(2)

Notes

1. L. V. Hedges, A. Nowell, *Science* 269 (1995): 41.
2. C. Goldin, L. F. Katz, I. Kuziemko. *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 20, 133 (2006).
3. C. P. Benbow, J. C. Stanley, *Science* 210 (1980): 1262.
4. "The Science of Gender and Science: Pinker vs. Spelke, a Debate." *Edge* 160 (May 10, 2005). www.edge.org/documents/archive/edge160.html#d.
5. S. Baron-Cohen, *The Essential Difference: Men, Women, and the Extreme Male Brain*. London: Allen Lane, 2003.
6. D. Kimura, *Sex and Cognition*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999.
7. E. S. Spelke. *American Psychologist* 60 (2005): 950.
8. D. Halpem, J. Wai, A. Saw. Pp. 48–72 in *Gender Differences in Mathematics* edited by A. M. Gallagher and J. C. Kaufman. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
9. Materials and methods are available as supporting material on *Science Online*.
10. R. Hausmann, L. D. Tyson, S. Zahidi. *The Global Gender Gap Report*. Geneva, Switzerland: World Economic Forum, 2006.
11. OECD, Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), 2nd Assessment (OECD, Paris, 2003).
12. PISA includes originally 41 countries; we drop Liechtenstein because it contains only 165 observations, which makes problematic any calculation of the tail of the distribution. All other countries have at least 639 observations.
13. Supporting online material www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/320/5880/1164/DC1 Figure S2A.
14. *Ibid.* Figure S4.
15. R. Inglehart et al., "World Values, Surveys and European Values Surveys, 1981–1984, 1990–1993, and 1995–1997" (Computer files; Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research, Ann Arbor, MI, 2000), distributed by ICPSR.
16. Supporting online material, Table S2.
17. *Ibid.* Table S3.
18. *Ibid.* Table S4.
19. This measure was originally computed at the population level by L. L. Cavalli-Sforza, P. Menozzi, A. Piazza. *The History and Geography of Human Genes*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996.

20. This measure has been mapped on modern countries by E. Spolaore, R. Wacziarg, "The Diffusion of Development." Centre for Economic Policy Research Discussion Paper 5630. London: CEPR, 2006.

21. Supporting online material, Table S5.

22. Ibid. Table S6.

23. Ibid. Table S7A.

24. Ibid. Table S7B.

CHAPTER 4

Montagnais Women and the Jesuit Program for Colonization¹

Eleanor Leacock

During the sixteenth century, the St. Lawrence valley was the scene of French and English competition for furs, especially for beaver which was used in the manufacture of hats. Sporadic trade of furs between native peoples and European fishermen was old, possibly preceding Columbus's first voyage; for when Cartier sailed up the St. Lawrence in 1534, the people he met were familiar with European vessels, products, and interest in furs. By midcentury, ships were coming to the area for the sole purpose of trading, and during the latter part of the century several companies competed unsuccessfully for a monopoly of the trade.

In 1559, a permanent French trading post was established at Tadoussac, downriver from Quebec, chosen by Champlain to be the headquarters of New France and founded in 1608. Three Rivers, further up the St. Lawrence, was established in 1617. Champlain was welcomed by the Algonkins and Montagnais.² They saw in him an ally in their warfare with the Iroquois, who, armed with weapons obtained from the Dutch, were raiding north and west for furs. Champlain's main interest was in gaining access to the interior trade through making alliances with Huron and Algonkin middlemen. He agreed to join the Algonkins and Montagnais in a retaliatory expedition against the Iroquois and was led, in the process, to the "discovery" of Lake Champlain. His way west, however, was persistently blocked by friendly noncooperation on the part of both Algonkins and Hurons. They were not eager to relinquish a middleman status that yielded a steady supply of iron tools, utensils (especially copper kettles), clothing, grain, and dried fruit.

Meanwhile, the number of trading vessels sailing up the St. Lawrence increased. Champlain wrote in 1611 that the Indians waited until several arrived before bringing out their furs, so that competition for them would push up their price. An average annual harvest of 15,000 to 20,000 beaver in the first years of the seventeenth century rose to 80,000 by 1670. By that time, the Iroquois had defeated and virtually annihilated the Hurons, the French were about to cede Canada to the English, and the English "company of adventurers" was opening up another route to the west with its post, Rupert's House, on Hudson's Bay. As the interest in furs pushed west, the

northern and eastern parts of the Labrador Peninsula remained relatively distant from its influence. Not until the nineteenth century did the Hudson's Bay Company begin setting up posts in the Labrador interior.

Several missionaries accompanied Champlain on his first trips, but missionizing did not begin in earnest until 1632, when Quebec, temporarily occupied by the English, had been regained by the French. The traders were interested in the Indians as a source of furs. By contrast the mission, under the able leadership of the Jesuit Paul Le Jeune was committed to converting them to Christianity, resocializing them, and transforming them into settled farmers, citizens of New France. The Jesuits first worked intensively with the Montagnais-Naskapi, but soon began to pin their hopes on the populous, agricultural Hurons. When the Iroquois decimation of the Hurons dashed these hopes, some Jesuits remained to work with their Montagnais converts, but the main missionizing drive was over.

What was the status of Montagnais-Naskapi women in the early seventeenth century when the French were establishing a foothold in the upper St. Lawrence valley? As is often the case, a look through accounts written at the time yields contrasting judgments. One may read that "women have great power. . . . A man may promise you something and if he does not keep his promise, he thinks he is sufficiently excused when he tells you that his wife did not wish him to do it" (Thwaites 1906, 5:179). Or one may read that women were virtual slaves.

The women . . . besides the onerous role of bearing and rearing the children, also transport the game from the place where it has fallen; they are the hewers of wood and drawers of water; they make and repair the household utensils; they prepare food; they skin the game and prepare the hides like fullers; they sew garments; they catch fish and gather shellfish for food; often they even hunt; they make the canoes, that is skiffs of marvelous rapidity, out of bark;³ they set up the tents wherever and whenever they stop for the night—in short, the men concern themselves with nothing but the more laborious hunting and the waging of war. . . . Their wives are regarded and treated as slaves. (2:77)

Fortunately, the ethnohistorical record for the Montagnais-Naskapi is full enough so that contradictions between two statements such as these can be resolved. The view that the hard work of native American women made them slaves was commonly expressed by European observers who did not know personally the people about whom they were writing. The statement about female authority, however, was written by a man who knew the Montagnais-Naskapi well and recognized that women controlled their own work and made decisions accordingly. Paul Le Jeune, superior of the Jesuit mission at Quebec, had spent a winter in a Montagnais lodge in order to learn the language and understand the culture of the people he was supposed to convert and "civilize." He commented on the ease of relations between husbands and wives in Montagnais society, and explained that it followed from "the order which they maintain in their occupations," whereby "the women know what they are to do, and the men also; and one never meddles with the work of the other" (5:133). "Men leave the arrangement of the household to the women, without interfering with them; they cut

and decide and give away as they please without making the husband angry. I have never seen my host ask a giddy young woman that he had with him what became of the provisions, although they were disappearing very fast" (6:233).

Le Jeune sought to change this state of affairs, and he reported to his superiors in Paris on his progress in "civilizing" the Montagnais-Naskapi through what became a fourfold program. First, he saw permanent settlement and the institution of formally recognized chiefly authority as basic. "Alas!" he wrote, "If someone could stop the wanderings of the Savages, and give authority to one of them to rule the others, we would see them converted and civilized in a short time" (12:169). Second, Le Jeune stressed the necessity of introducing the principle of punishment into Montagnais social relations. Third, central to Le Jeune's program was education of Montagnais-Naskapi children. "How necessary it is to educate the children of the Savages," he stated. "We shall have them at last if they see that we do not send them to France" (5:137).

If we had a good building in Kebec, we would get more children through the very same means by which we despair of getting them. We have always thought that the excessive love the Savages bear their children would prevent our obtaining them. It will be through this very means that they will become our pupils; for, by having a few settled ones, who will attract and retain the others, the parents, who do not know what it is to refuse their children, will let them come without opposition. And, as they will be permitted during the first few years to have a great deal of liberty, they will become so accustomed to our food and our clothes, that they will have a horror of the Savages and their filth. (9:103)

As the quotation suggests, Montagnais-Naskapi culture posed a stumbling block for the Jesuits, in that the Montagnais did not practice corporeal punishment of children. Le Jeune complained, "The Savages prevent their instruction; they will not tolerate the chastisement of their children, whatever they may do, they permit only a simple reprimand" (5:197). Le Jeune's solution was to propose removing the children from their communities for schooling: "The reason why I would not like to take the children of one locality in that locality itself, but rather in some other place, is because these Barbarians cannot bear to have their children punished, even scolded, not being able to refuse anything to a crying child. They carry this to such an extent that upon the slightest pretext they would take them away from us, before they were educated" (6:153–55).

Fourth, essential to Le Jeune's entire program was the introduction of European family structure, with male authority, female fidelity, and the elimination of the right to divorce. Lecturing a man on the subject, Le Jeune said the man "was the master and that in France women do not rule their husbands" (5:179). The independence of Montagnais women posed continual problems for the Jesuits. Le Jeune decided that:

. . . it is absolutely necessary to teach the girls as well as the boys, and that we shall do nothing or very little, unless some good household has the care of this sex; for the boys that we shall have reared in the knowledge of God, when they marry Savage girls or women accustomed to wandering in the

woods will, as their husbands, be compelled to follow them and thus fall back into barbarism or to leave them, another evil full of danger. (5:145)

Le Jeune's account of his problems, successes, and failures in introducing hierarchical principles into the ordering of interpersonal relations among the Montagnais-Naskapi affords a clear record of the personal autonomy that was central to the structure and ethics of their society—an autonomy that applied as fully to women as to men.

Montagnais-Naskapi Economy and Decision Making

The Montagnais-Naskapi lived by hunting and trapping wild game—caribou, moose, beaver, bear, hare, porcupine and water fowl—by fishing, and by gathering wild berries and other vegetable foods. Like foraging peoples everywhere, they followed a regular pattern of seasonal movement according to the provenience of the foods on which they depended. The Montagnais with whom Le Jeune worked summered on the shores of the St. Lawrence River, where groups of several hundred people gathered to fish, socialize, and make and repair canoes, snowshoes, and other equipment. In the fall, groups of some 35 to 75 people separated out to ascend one or another of the rivers that emptied into the St. Lawrence. During the winter hunting season, these bands might split up into smaller groups in order to spread out over a wide area in search of game. However, they kept in touch with each other so that if some were short of food, they could turn to others for help (Leacock 1969).

The smallest working unit was the group that lived together in a large conical lodge—some ten to twenty people, or, in Western terms, several nuclear families. In early times, as later, residential choices were probably flexible, and people moved about in accord both with personal likes and dislikes and with the need for keeping a reasonable balance in the working group between women and men and young and old. Upon marriage, however, a man ideally moved into his wife's lodge group (Thwaites 1906, 31:169). Accordingly, mentions of a Montagnais man's family might include the man's wife's sister, or a son-in-law, or a father-in-law (6:125, 9:33, 14:143–45). Yet three brothers and their wives shared the lodge in which Le Jeune lived. Le Jeune is silent about the relationships among the wives who, judging from hunting-group compositions in recent times, could easily have been sisters or parallel cousins.⁴ In any case, Le Jeune's diary shows that the arrangement was not permanent.

Ethnographic evidence as well as the *Jesuit Relations* indicates that decisions about movements were made by the adult members of whatever group was involved. There is no question about women's importance in making such decisions. In fact, one recorder stated that "the choice of plans, of undertakings, of journeys, of winterings, lies in nearly every instance in the hands of the housewife" (68:93). Individuals might be chosen as spokespersons to mediate with the French, but such "chiefs" held no formal authority within the group. Le Jeune noted that "the Savages cannot endure in the least

those who seem desirous of assuming superiority over the others; they place all virtue in a certain gentleness or apathy” (16:165).

They imagine that they ought by right of birth, to enjoy the liberty of wild ass colts, rendering no homage to anyone whomsoever, except when they like. They have reproached me a hundred times because we fear our Captains, while they laugh at and make sport of theirs. All the authority of their chief is in his tongue’s end; for he is powerful insofar as he is eloquent; and, even if he kills himself talking and haranguing, he will not be obeyed unless he pleases the Savages. (6:243)

Le Jeune was honest enough to state what he saw as the positive side of Montagnais egalitarianism:

As they have neither political organization, nor office, nor dignities, nor any authority, for they only obey their Chief through good will toward him, therefore they never kill each other to acquire these honors. Also, as they are contented with a mere living, not one of them gives himself to the Devil to acquire wealth. (6:231)

In his final judgement, however, Le Jeune remained bound by his culture and his missionizing commitment: “I would not dare assert that I have seen one act of real moral virtue in a Savage. They have nothing but their own pleasure and satisfaction in view” (6:239–41).

The Jesuit Program For Changing Montagnais Marriage

As indicated above, Le Jeune’s original assumption—that he could win the Montagnais to Christianity through converting the men—changed when he learned how far Montagnais family structure was from that of the French. He realized that he would have to give special attention to women as well as men if he was to eliminate the Montagnais’ unquestioned acceptance of divorce at the desire of either partner, of polygyny, and of sexual freedom after marriage.

“The young people do not think that they can persevere in the state of matrimony with a bad wife or a bad husband,” Le Jeune wrote. “They wish to be free and to be able to divorce the consort if they do not love each other” (16:41). And several years later: “The inconstancy of marriages and the facility with which they divorce each other, are a great obstacle to the Faith of Jesus Christ. We do not dare baptize the young people because experience teaches us that the custom of abandoning a disagreeable wife or husband has a strong hold on them” (22:229).

Polygamy was another right that women as well as men took for granted: “Since I have been preaching among them that a man should not have more than one wife, I have not been well received by the women; for, since they are more numerous than the

men, if a man can only marry one of them, the others will have to suffer. Therefore this doctrine is not according to their liking” (12:165). And as for the full acceptance of sexual freedom for both women and men, no citation can be more telling of the gulf between French and Montagnais society than Le Jeune’s rendition of a Montagnais rebuff.

I told him that it was not honorable for a woman to love any one else except her husband, and that this evil being among them, he himself was not sure that his son, who was there present, was his son. He replied, “Thou hast no sense. You French people love only your own children; but we all love all the children of our tribe.” I began to laugh, seeing that he philosophized in horse and mule fashion. (6:255)

Converts to Christianity wrestled with the dilemmas posed by the French faith. A recently married young man wished to be faithful to his wife, but felt himself “inclined toward infidelity.” Deeply disturbed by his criminal wish, he entreated to be imprisoned or publicly flogged. When his request was refused, “He slips into a room near the Chapel and, with a rope that he finds, he beats himself so hard all over the body that the noise reaches the ears of the Father, who runs in and forbids so severe a penance” (22:67). The adoption of severe punitiveness both towards the self and others was reported by Le Jeune.

The most zealous Christians met during the winter, unknown to us, in order to confer together upon the means of keeping themselves in the faith. One of them, in making an address, said that he thought more highly of prayers than of life, and that he would rather die than give them up. Another said that he wished he might be punished and chastised in case he forfeited the word he had given to God. A third claimed that he who should fall into any error must be put into prison and made to fast for four days without eating or drinking. The acts of justice that they see from time to time exercised on delinquents give them these ideas. (20:143)

Upon hearing the news, the fathers informed the converts that “they proceeded with too much severity; that mildness had more power over souls than force.” The zealots argued, however, that the first among them who committed a fault, “however inconsiderable, should suffer imprisonment and fasting.” This so frightened “the weak,” Le Jeune continued, that “the report spread among the unbelievers that the Christian Savages had chains and bonds all ready to bind the refractory.” Le Jeune concluded, “Some pagans told us they were risking the ruin of everything and that the Savages would kill one another. All this consoled us much, for we took pleasure in seeing the union of the Christians; it is much easier to temper fervor than it is to kindle it” (20:143).

Women and children alike suffered punishment at the hands of the converts. “A young Christian, getting into a passion, beat his wife, who had insolently provoked him,” Le Jeune wrote. The man then repented of his sin and went to the chapel to pray to God for mercy. Le Jeune had the couple brought to him. “They were properly reprimanded,” he reported, “especially the woman, who was more guilty than her husband” (18:155). As for the children,

. . . they are all in an incredible state of satisfaction at having embraced the Faith. “We punish the disobedient” said they. A young girl who would not go to the nets, where her father sent her, was two days without food as a punishment for her disobedience. Two boys, who came late to prayers in the morning were punished by having a handful of hot cinders thrown upon their heads with threats of greater chastisement in case the offenses were repeated. (18:171)

Several Christians even had a drunken, young, pagan relative thrown into prison—in Le Jeune’s view, “an act fit to astonish all those who know the customs of the Savages, who cannot endure that any one should touch their kinsmen; but God has more power than nature” (20:153).

In 1640, eight years after Le Jeune’s arrival in New France and the setting up of a Jesuit mission, the governor called together a group of influential Montagnais men, and “having recommended to the Christians constance in their marriages—he gave them to understand that it would be well if they should elect some chiefs to govern them” (18:99). Accordingly, the Montagnais sought advice from the Jesuits, who supervised the election of three captains. The men then “resolved to call together the women, to urge them to be instructed and to receive holy Baptism.” The women were used to holding councils of their own to deal with matters of concern to them and reported surprise at being lectured to by the men.

Yesterday the men summoned us to a council, but the first time that women have ever entered one; but they treated us so rudely that we were greatly astonished. “It is you women,” they said to us, “who keep the Demons among us; you do not urge to be baptized . . . when you pass before the cross you never salute it, you wish to be independent. Now know that you will obey your husbands and you young people know that you will obey your parents, and our captains and if any fail to do so, we will give them nothing to eat.” (18:107)

Women’s responses ranged from zealous compliance to rebelliousness. An incident illustrating compliance with a husband’s wishes, and suggesting the internalization of guilt, occurred when a Christian woman joined some “games or public recreation” of which her husband did not approve.

Having returned, her husband said to her, “If I were not a Christian, I would tell you that, if you did not care for me you should seek another husband to whom you would render more obedience; but having promised God not to leave you until death, I cannot speak to you thus, although you have offended me.” This poor woman asked his forgiveness, without delay, and on the following morning came to see the Father who had baptized her, and said to him, “My Father, I have offended God, I have not obeyed my husband; my heart is sad; I greatly desire to make my confession of this.” (18:35)

Other women continued to have lovers, to solicit married men to take a second wife, and to defy or leave their husbands. One convert complained, “My wife is always

angry; I fear that the Demons she keeps in my cabin are perverting the good that I received in holy Baptism.” Le Jeune wrote of this man,

Another time his wife aimed a knife at his thigh, and he, evading the blow, had only his robe injured, in which this Megera made a great slash. Thereupon he came to us; meeting some Savages on the way, he began to laugh. “See,” said he, “the anger of her who considers me her servant; she thought she would be able to irritate me, but I have more power over myself than to fall into passion at the anger of a woman.”

Le Jeune added, “It is strange what Enemies the Savages are of anger, and how this sin shocks them,” and continued,

I know not what this simple man has done to win her over to God. “If thou wilt believe,” he said to her, “I will love thee above all things; I will wait upon thee in all thy needs, I will even perform the little duties that the women do, I will go for water and wood; I will love thee more than myself.” He pinched his arm and said to her, “Dost thou see this flesh? I do not love it; it is God whom I love, and those who believe in him. If thou are not willing to obey him thou must go away from me; for I cannot love those who do not love God.”

His wife derided him: “Dost thou not see that we are all dying since they told us to pray to God? Where are thy relatives? Where are mine? The most of them are dead. It is no longer a time to believe.” (20:195–97)

Another particularly revealing incident offers an important comment on Montagnais ethics, and indicates the growing distance between the missionized Montagnais, with their acceptance of corporeal punishment, and the unconverted. A Jesuit called some “chief men” together and, after commending them on putting a stop to “the disorderly conduct that occasionally occurred among them,” expressed astonishment at their permitting a young baptized woman to live apart from her husband. The captain responsible for her replied that “he had tried all sorts of means to make her return to her duty and that his trouble had been in vain; that he would, nevertheless, make another effort.” The Jesuit Father counseled him to consult his people and decide upon what was to be done for such disobedience. “They all decided upon harsh measures. ‘Good advice,’ they said, ‘has not brought her to her senses; a prison will do so.’ Two Captains were ordered to take her to Kebec and . . . have her put in a dungeon.” The woman fled, but they caught her and tied her to take her by canoe to Kebec. At this

some Pagan young men, observing this violence, of which the Savages have a horror, and which is more remote from their customs than Heaven is from Earth, made use of threats, declaring that they would kill any one who laid a hand on the woman. But the Captain and his people, who were Christians, boldly replied that there was nothing that they would not do or endure, in order to secure obedience to God. Such resolution silenced the infidels.

To avoid being imprisoned, the woman “humbly begged to be taken back to Saint Joseph, promising thence forward she would be more obedient.” Le Jeune stated,

Such acts of justice cause no surprise in France, because it is usual there to proceed in that manner. But, among these peoples . . . where everyone considers himself from birth, as free as the wild animals that roam in their great forest . . . it is a marvel, or rather a miracle, to see a peremptory command obeyed, or any act of severity or justice performed.

Some Savages, having heard that in France, malefactors are put to death, have often reproached us, saying that we were cruel—that we killed our own countrymen; that we had no sense. They asked us whether the relatives of those who were condemned to death did not seek vengeance. The Infidels still have the same ideas; but Christians are learning, more and more, the importance of exercising Justice. (22:81–85)

Shortly afterwards, another act of violence towards a woman again threatened to provoke conflict between Christian and “pagan” Montagnais, and again called for commendation on the part of the recorder (in this instance not Le Jeune, but Bartholemy Vimont). The Christian relatives of a young woman agreed in family council to beat her for speaking to a suitor against her parents’ wishes: “We are taught that God loves obedience. We see the French practicing it; they have such a regard for that virtue that, if any one of them fail in it, he is punished. Parents chastise their own children, and masters their servants.

One of the relatives beat the girl and lectured other girls who had gathered: “This is the first punishment by beating that we have inflicted upon anyone of our Nation. We are resolved to continue it, if any one among us should be disobedient.” Vimont commented:

During the previous year the new Christians had a Savage put in prison. This year they have done more, for this last punishment seems to me very severe to be the first. Those who know the freedom and independence of these peoples, and the horror they have of restraint or bondage, will say that a slight touch of Heaven and a little grace are stronger and more powerful than the cannons and arms of kings and monarchs, which could not subdue them.

The angry suitor appealed to his father, who threatened the Christian Indians. They defended their action, saying that his son had not been affronted and that he should be satisfied with the girl’s punishment. At this, Governor Montmagny had the suitor called in and, through an interpreter, warned the young man to be careful, saying he would consider any attack on the Christian Indians to be a personal attack upon him (22:115–27).

Long-Range Impact of the Jesuit Program

One must ask how fairly the *Jesuit Relations* can be used to evaluate the success of the Jesuit program for conversion and resocialization of the Montagnais-Naskapi. After all, the Jesuit fathers were, in effect, soliciting continued support for their work, and they spent many pages describing the piety of their converts. Furthermore, they drew

heavily on second-hand reports from adherents to the mission who doubtless presented themselves in a favorable light when repeating conversations and describing incidents. However, as seen by quotations above, both Jesuits and converts reported fully and convincingly on the views and actions of the unconverted. There is no reason to doubt the evidence the *Relations* offer of the conflicting ideologies that caused profound social disruption for the group as a whole and deep psychological turmoil for those individuals, both women and men, who made an often agonizing decision to give up traditional beliefs and practices and adhere to new codes of conduct and commitment. Therefore, although they do not reveal the actual extent of conversion that took place among the Montagnais-Naskapi during the seventeenth century, the *Jesuit Relations* document in detail what is more significant: the nature of responses to the Jesuit program, ranging from zealous dedication, through formal conversion, that might well involve backsliding, to indifference, and finally, to active hostility.

With respect to female-male relations, premarital chastity, male courtship, monogamy, and marital fidelity became accepted as ideal behavioral norms by dedicated converts. In 1639, Le Jeune wrote of the “evil custom” whereby a man who was courting a woman would go to her to make love at night, and he advised the girls to refer their suitors to the Jesuits (16:61). Several years later Vimont reported that an old woman, “touched by the fear of God,” gave the names of young unmarried lovers, who protested that such “suits of marriage” were “customary among them.” The young people were lectured by their elders to “declare your affections to your parents; take their advice and that of the Father. . . . Make your visits by day and not by night; the faith and the prayer forbid this custom (24:139). Some people, Vimont reported, had already adopted a new form of courtship, whereby a suitor would send a girl a bark painting of a young couple “holding each other by the hand, in the position that they assume in Church when they get married.” A girl who was rejecting her suitor would send the drawing back (22:71).

In keeping with the reciprocity of Montagnais-Naskapi female-male relations, converted men accepted the same standards as were enjoined on women. Le Jeune wrote that he had heard on good authority “that some shameless women, who have approached some men at night and solicited them to do evil in secret, received for answer only these words: ‘I believe in God, I pray to him every day; he forbids such actions, I cannot commit them’” (16:61). Nor would a “worthy captain” take a second wife, even when solicited by the woman herself, but answered, “You come too late, I have given my word to God I cannot gainsay it. I will obey him; I have said to him, ‘I will obey thee’ and I will do it” (16:145).

The influence, direct and indirect, of formulating such ideals as these was enhanced by the Jesuit work with children. Le Jeune wrote,

We have done so much for these poor unbelievers that they have given us some of their daughters, which seems to me an act of God. . . . These little girls are dressed in the French fashion; they care no more for the Savages than if they did not belong to their Nation. Nevertheless, in order to wean them from their native customs, and to give them an opportunity of learning the French language, virtue and manners, that they may afterwards

assist their countrywomen, we have decided to send two or three to France, to have them kept and taught in the house of hospital nuns. . . . Oh if we could only send a certain one who is to remain in the house of which I have spoken. . . . The child has nothing savage about her except her appearance and color; her sweetness, her docility, her modesty, her obedience, would cause her to pass for a wellborn French girl, fully susceptible of education.

Le Jeune followed this entry with a reference to his wish for a building in Quebec, where three classes could be lodged, “the first of little French children, of whom there will be perhaps twenty or thirty Pupils; the second, of Hurons; the third, of Montagnes” (9:103).

For their part, the Montagnais expressed resentment that their presentation of children to the French was not reciprocated. A “captain” complained “One does not see anything else but little Savages in the houses of the French; there are little boys there and little girls—what more do you want? . . . You are continually asking for our children, and you do not give yours; I do not know any family among us which keeps a Frenchman with it” (9:233).

The contrast between the Montagnais attitude towards sharing children and that of the French was expressed by Le Jeune’s statement that “they think they are doing you some great favor in giving you their children to instruct, feed and dress” (5:197). Perhaps no incident in the *Relations* more poignantly reveals the cultural distance to be spanned by Montagnais converts than that in which a French drummer boy hit a Montagnais with his drumstick, drawing blood. The Montagnais onlookers took offense, saying, “Behold, one of thy people has wounded one of ours; thou knowest our custom well; give us presents for this wound.” The French interpreter countered, “Thou knowest our custom; when any of our number does wrong, we punish him. This child has wounded one of your people; he shall be whipped at once in thy presence.” When the Montagnais saw the French were in earnest about whipping the boy,

they began to pray for his pardon, alleging he was only a child, that he had no mind, that he did not know what he was doing; but as our people were nevertheless going to punish him, one of the Savages stripped himself entirely, threw his blanket over the child and cried out to him who was going to do the whipping; “Strike me if thou wilt, but thou shalt not strike him,” And thus the little one escaped. (5:219)

This incident took place in 1633. How was it possible that scarcely ten years later, adults could be beating, withholding food from, and even, if the report is accurate, doing such things as throwing hot ashes on children and youths? Above, I have referred to the punitiveness toward the self and others that accompanied the often tormented attempt on the part of converts to reject a familiar set of values and replace it with another. This psychological response is familiar. To say this, however, merely presses the next question: Why did some Montagnais feel so strongly impelled to make this attempt? The answer is that the Jesuits and their teachings arrived in New France a full century after the economic basis for unquestioned cooperation, reciprocity, and respect for individual autonomy began to be undercut by the trading of furs

for European goods. On the basis of new economic ties, some Montagnais-Naskapi were interested in attaching themselves to the mission station and the new European settlement, thereby availing themselves of the resources these offered. By the same token, some were prepared to accept the beliefs and ritual practices of the newcomers, and to adopt—or attempt to adopt—new standards of conduct.

Elsewhere, I have documented the process whereby the stockpiling of furs for future return, to be acquired when the trading ships arrived, contradicted the principle of total sharing based on subsistence hunting, fishing, and gathering (Leacock 1954). The process has subsequently been well described for the Canadian sub-Arctic generally, and it has been pointed out that parallel processes are involved when a horticultural people becomes involved in exchange relations with a market economy (Murphy and Steward 1955).

At the same time that the fur trade was undercutting the foundation for Montagnais-Naskapi values and interpersonal ethics, the terrible scourge of epidemic disease, the escalation (or introduction) of warfare, and the delusion of relief from anxiety offered by alcohol were also undermining Montagnais-Naskapi self-assurance. Alfred Goldsworthy Bailey (1969) has described the effects of these developments in a review of the conflict between European and eastern Algonkian cultures during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Fear of disease, particularly smallpox which raged in the decade after the priests' arrival, was only equaled by fear of the Iroquois. The prolonged and intricate torture of Iroquois prisoners, into which women entered with even more zeal than men, was a grim expression of profound fearfulness and anger. Alcohol, which temporarily elated the spirits, led to fights around the European settlement; in 1664 there is reference to a case of rape committed under its influence (48:227).

This is not to say, however, that Montagnais-Naskapi society as a whole was thoroughly disrupted. The violence that occurred around the European settlement contrasts not only with the friendliness, gaiety, and lack of quarreling that Le Jeune described during the winter he spent in the interior in 1633–34, but also with the general cooperativeness and good will—albeit laced with raucous banter and teasing—that characterized Montagnais-Naskapi life in later centuries in the rest of the Labrador Peninsula. Quebec was, after all, a gateway to the North American interior, and fur-trading posts and mission stations pushed ever westward. The nonracist policy of building a French colony in part with resocialized Indians was abandoned and replaced by a hardening color line. In time, all Montagnais-Naskapi became Catholic, but without the close supervision of the Jesuits, they retained established religious practices and added Catholic sacraments and prayer. During the summer of 1951, the “shaking-tent rite,” in which a religious practitioner converses with the gods, both gaining useful information and entertaining an audience in the process, was still being practiced in eastern Labrador.

The pace of change in most of the Labrador Peninsula was slow, as Indians living far from centers of early settlement and trade gradually became drawn into a fur-trapping economy. In the summer of 1950, I was able to document the final stages of transition in southeastern Labrador, at a time when the next major change was about to transform life for French and English fishermen and fur-trappers as well as

Montagnais-Naskapi hunter-trappers; a railroad was being built into a huge iron mine deep in the north-central part of the peninsula. When I was there, conditions in the north woods were still such that the traditional Montagnais-Naskapi ethic of cooperativeness, tolerance, and nonpunitiveness remained strong.

What about the relations between women and men? As in seventeenth century accounts, one can still find contrasting judgements. Burgesse (1944) has written that:

labour is fairly equitably divided between the sexes under the economic system of the Montagnais. Each sex has its own particular duties but, within certain limits, the divisions between the types of work performed are not rigid. A man would not consider it beneath his dignity to assist his wife in what are ordinarily considered duties peculiar to the woman. Also, women are often enough to be seen performing tasks which are usually done by men. On being questioned in regard to this aspect of their economics, the Montagnais invariably reply that, since marriage is a union of co-equal partners for mutual benefit, it is the duty of the husband to assist his wife in the performance of her labors. Similarly, it is the duty of the wife to aid the husband. . . .

The Montagnais woman is far from being a drudge. Instead she is a respected member of the tribe whose worth is well appreciated and whose advice and counsel is listened to and, more often than not, accepted and acted upon by her husband. (4-7)

Earlier, and by contrast, Turner had written:

The sexes have their special labors. Women perform the drudgery and bring home the food slain by their husbands, fetching wood and water, tanning the skins, and making them into clothing. The labor of erecting the tents and hauling the sleds when on their journey during the winter falls upon them, and, in fact, they perform the greater part of the manual labor. They are considered inferior to men, and in their social life they soon show the effects of the hardships they undergo. (1894:271)

One could take these statements at face value as reflecting differences between two Montagnais-Naskapi bands, for the first statement refers to the southerly Lake St. John people and the second to the Ungava people of the north. However, the continuation of Turner's account reveals realities of Ungava life that contradict his formal statement.

An amusing incident occurred within a stone's throw of Fort Chimo. An Indian had his clothes stripped from him by his enraged wife. She then took the tent from the poles, leaving him naked. She took their property to the canoe, which she paddled several miles upstream. He followed along the bank until she relented, whereupon their former relations were resumed, as though nothing had disturbed the harmony of their life. The man was so severely plagued by his comrades that for many days he scarcely showed his head out of the tent (Ibid.).