
“With a Fine-Toothed Comb”: Nicole-Claude Mathieu and the Work of French Feminist Materialist Anthropology

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Abstract: French anthropologist, Nicole-Claude Mathieu (1937–2014), devoted her career to theorising the institution of marriage; the relations between material conditions and “consent”; and the cross-cultural coexistence of gender diversity and subordination of women. This article traces Mathieu’s thinking to her theoretical ties to Claude Lévi-Strauss and Simone de Beauvoir. I read Mathieu’s anthropology as part of the long tradition of engaged anthropology and as continuing to offer analytical tools for critical feminist public anthropology. This reading contrasts with views that there are “waves” and opposing “generations” in feminist scholarship.

Keywords: feminism, public anthropology, marriage, consent, history of anthropology

Résumé : L’anthropologue française, Nicole-Claude Mathieu (1937–2014), a dévoué sa carrière à théoriser les institutions de mariage, les relations entre les conditions matérielles d’échange et celles de consentement, ainsi que la coexistence interculturelle de la diversité des genres et la subordination des femmes. Cet article retrace la pensée de Mathieu et ses liens théoriques à Claude Lévi-Strauss et Simone de Beauvoir. J’aborde l’anthropologie de Mathieu comme faisant partie d’une longue tradition d’anthropologie appliquée qui offre toujours des outils analytiques pour l’anthropologie féministe, publique et critique. Ma lecture contraste avec les idées de vagues et générations opposées dans les études féministes.

Mots-clés : féminisme, anthropologie publique, mariage, consentement, histoire de l’anthropologie

Elles disent ... que chaque mot doit être passé au crible.
—Monique Wittig, *Les Guérillères*

Anthropology is an original mode of knowing rather than a source of particular types of knowledge.
—Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Scope of Anthropology*

In the spring of 1948, Simone de Beauvoir visited Claude Lévi-Strauss (1949) in his Paris home to read the manuscript of *Les Structures élémentaires de la parenté* and study his theory of marriage as the exchange of women. The theory, de Beauvoir (1949; Mathieu 2014c:109–110) later said, “confirmed my idea of woman as other” – the argument she was then developing in *Le deuxième sexe* (de Beauvoir 2011). *Les Structures élémentaires* and *Le deuxième sexe* were both published the following year in the spring of 1949.

Nicole-Claude Mathieu carried on the theoretical conversation between de Beauvoir and Lévi-Strauss in her lifelong career as an unflagging voice for a feminist anthropology in France. Mathieu died of cancer in Paris on March 9, 2014. She was a member of Lévi-Strauss’s Laboratoire d’anthropologie sociale at the Collège de France in the 1970s and 1980s and managed the editorial office of the journal, *L’Homme*, during the years Lévi-Strauss was its editor. During the same period, she was a member of the Paris collective, *Questions féministes (Qf)*, that established the journal, *Questions féministes*. This interdisciplinary group of scholar activists included Simone de Beauvoir, Christine Delphy, Colette Guillaumin, Monique Wittig, Monique Plaza, and, later, Italian anthropologist Paola Tabet. The *Qf* collective, following de Beauvoir, started with a materialist analysis of the “situation of women” and the institution of marriage. Rejecting ideas of “female difference” and the “nature” of women that were at the heart of psychoanalytic theory, *Qf* developed a feminist analysis distinct from *l’écriture féminine*, the psychoanalytic literary theory of Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva that

became known as “French feminism” in North America (Delphy 2000).

The materialist feminism of the *Qf* collective was also distinct from the materialism of Anglo-American feminist Marxist anthropologists who studied the mobilisation of gender in capital accumulation and capitalist expansion (Fernandez-Kelly 1983; Luxton 1980; Nash and Safa 1976; Young et al. 1981). For French feminist materialists, sex, gender, and sexuality were the primary objects of analysis, not capitalism. French materialist feminists argued that “women’s” labour was appropriated through non-capitalist processes, and they focused on marriage as a specific economic relation that constructed the social categories “men” and “women.” Rape, unequal pay, female infanticide, and feminicide, they said, were not explained by Marxist categories or in relation to capitalism. They analysed sex/gender as a set of political/power relations (*les rapports sociaux de sexe*); the appropriation of women’s labour and bodies; and, following de Beauvoir, women’s consciousness (*conscience*) as being grounded in their “situation” and inherent in the body (Kruks 2012). Through the concept *sexe social*, they underlined that gender and sex were social and defined in relation to heterosexuality. Their analysis, which was unique in the 1970s and 1980s and rarely cited in Anglo-American anthropology, has circulated more widely among Latin American and Eastern European scholars (Curiel and Falquet 2005; Ferreira 2014; Leonard and Adkins 2005).¹

Mathieu was one of the most important theorists of French feminist materialism (Curiel and Falquet 2005) and a beloved mentor and friend to younger feminist scholars and activists. For 15 years (1983–86 and 1991–2003), she taught a seminar entitled *Anthropologie et sociologie des sexes* at the *École des hautes études en sciences sociales* (EHESS), where she was known as a powerful theoretician and a generous and passionate teacher. She trained the generation of social science activist scholars who populate the field of feminist studies in Paris today (Falquet 2011, 2014; Handman 2015).

Nicole-Claude Mathieu was born in 1937 and grew up in the war-ravaged northeastern province of Champagne, raised by her paternal grandmother, who was a factory worker and labour organiser, and her grandfather, a man haunted by experiences in the First World War. Mathieu (2014a:7–8) traced her lifelong questioning of gender to her childhood in a non-nuclear household and said that she learned the materiality of the body through a childhood illness. She dedicated her book, *L’anatomie politique*, to her grandmother, Alice Cartier (Mathieu 1991a).

As a scholar, Mathieu was concerned with how anthropologists think and write about sex and gender. As an activist, she was concerned with how social movements mobilise concepts of sex and gender. Her objects of analysis, then, were twofold: the construction of anthropological knowledge and the gender logics of movements for social transformation. Anthropology, she said, should be held to the standards of Émile Durkheim’s “science” (Debaene 2014); social movement thinking will, in addition, be evaluated for its vision of a world without oppression – “another world.”² Mathieu (1985:172) defined feminism as “analysis made by women (that is, from minority experience) of the mechanisms of the oppression of women as a group or class by men as a group or class, in diverse societies, with the will to act for its abolition.”

Mathieu was not appointed as *maître de conférence* at the EHESS until 1990. According to her colleague Marie-Elisabeth Handman (2015), Mathieu was considered “more an activist than a scientist” in France and endured much “sarcasm” from male colleagues and “did not receive the recognition she deserved until late in her career.” Mathieu’s reciprocal sarcastic analyses of theories of “*la domination masculine*” affirmed her place on the edges of French anthropology (Bourdieu 1998; Godelier 1986; Mathieu 1991d, 1999). Lévi-Strauss’s successor at the *Collège de France*, Françoise Héritier, developed the concept of “*la valence différentielle des sexes*” (sexual difference) and maintained that “sexual asymmetry” was at the base of all kinship systems. Mathieu, in contrast, opened up “cracks” and biases in binary structuralist models and made visible the multiplicity of subject positions. Mathieu also insisted on introducing a gender critique to post-colonial debates in French anthropology during the 1980s. Her colleagues who maintained a relativist stance in defence of “traditional cultures” dismissed her critiques as “western feminist ethnocentrism.”³ Only recently has Mathieu’s writing begun to be recognised by scholars in France beyond her activist feminist circle. One male reviewer expressed embarrassment and unease that her important collection of essays, *L’anatomie politique*, published in 1991, had met with a silence “between acquiescence and denial” (Berger 1993; cf. Pereira 2012).

Mathieu read the anthropological canon “with a fine-toothed comb,” examining how the race, sex/gender, and class structures of “anthropologists’ own societies” intervene in the production of anthropological models. In this article, I reflect upon Mathieu’s contribution by profiling three of her key texts: her 1985 essay *Quand céder n’est pas consentir*, her 1989 essay *Identité sexuelle/sexuéel/de sexe?*, and her last major project, the 2007 book *Une*

maison sans fille est une maison morte, a comparative study of marriage and gendered subjectivities in matrilineal societies. These works pose the questions that preoccupied her throughout her life: (1) what are the relations between material conditions and conscience and, specifically, what is the meaning of consent; (2) what is the relationship between biological sex and “social sex” (the term Mathieu preferred to gender); and (3) what is marriage?

Structure and Conscience: The Consent of the Dominated

[T]he strongest force is not the violence of the dominant but the consent of the dominated to their domination.

—Maurice Godelier, “La part idéale du réel”

“Yes means Yes”

—poster campaign in Concordia University tunnels

In *La production des Grands Hommes: Pouvoir et domination masculine chez les Baruya de Nouvelle Guinée*, Maurice Godelier (1986) argues that in patrilocal, patrilineal Baruyan society women “share” the ideology of male domination and “consent” to their domination. Nicole-Claude Mathieu (1991d) responded in an essay titled “Quand céder n’est pas consentir,” asking: what is the meaning of consent and to what exactly does a woman consent – to domination?

Baruya women, Godelier had explained, are excluded from owning land, from using certain tools and weapons, from making salt (a tradable commodity), and from owning and using sacred objects. Men exchange women in marriage, and violence against women, Godelier states, is systemic:

At the heart of Baruyan thought and symbolic practice lies a formidable barrage of conceptual (*idéal*) and ideological violence aimed at women ... physical forms of violence, humiliation, insults, and other kinds of psychological violence, and social violence as well ... *However, these various kinds of violence break out on relatively rare occasions* in the life of a woman, such as marital quarrels or male initiations, or in forced marriage.... *Conceptual violence, on the other hand, lies permanently* at the heart of the Baruya’s entire social organisation, in every aspect of their practice ... what makes it so efficient is that, as the ideas arise, they are self-legitimizing.... Such violence ... is part of the very “order” of things. For men’s greatest strength lies not in the exercise of violence but in women’s consent to their domination; *and this consent can only exist if both sexes share the same conceptions*, which here legitimize male domination. [1986:148]

Godelier describes “constant everyday gestures that serve both to signify male domination and to produce and reproduce the submission of women” – the way a Baruya woman squats as she moves about her home, averts her eyes when talking to a man, stands aside to let a man pass on the path, or serves food to men first. According to Godelier:

Thoughts become gestures and deeds: ideas become bodily reflexes ... all these acts of everyday life contain within them a kernel of ideological and symbolic violence that is permanently at work upon the individual, upon all individuals, acting upon their consciousness.... Thus *the power of ideas* is distinguished from all those visible acts of direct, physical, psychological, and social violence that men perform on a woman (or women) from time to time.... *The force of ideas lies in their being shared*, in the belief and confidence in the truth of their proposed interpretations of the world. [1986:65]

However, for Mathieu, it is not ideas but, rather, material practices imposed on women in childhood that become bodily reflexes. In her essay, “Quand céder,” she writes:

It is the *orders* (to “serve”) that *mediate ideology*. It is the training itself that a woman may later “connect” (and poorly, in contradiction) with certain fractions of the ideology of the dominant sex.... First, a girl is made to serve her father, her brothers or even her future husband. Later, she will state: “men ought to be served.” A statement. A forced statement is not consent. One cannot easily make the passage between the sociological fact that the ideas of the dominant class are the dominant ideas and the psychological explanation that these ideas *govern the consciousness of the dominated*. Above all, one ought not to slide (*glisser*) from the psychology of the oppressor to that of the oppressed. I do not think it is [ideas] ... but [rather] the *invasion* of their bodies and of their consciousness by the intervention, by the constant and constraining physical and mental presence of men, that makes women cede.... Physical violence and *material and mental constraints* fill the corners of consciousness. If beatings or rape are not necessary [or necessary only “from time to time”] this is not because women “consent.” And it matters *less*, and not more than the violence and physical and mental constraints, that women “share” or not the representations legitimating masculine power.... What the idea of consent implies is a vision of politics in the classical sense, the model of the contract – which assumes or pretends that partners are equal. [Mathieu 1991d:211–213]

Mathieu shifts the standpoint: “The word ‘domination’ places attention on relatively static aspects: of ‘position above’, like that of a mountain that dominates [a landscape]; of ‘authority’; of ‘greatest importance’” (223). For Mathieu, the position of the dominated is not a static position of lesser importance or lesser prominence; rather, it is a position that is produced and enforced. Mathieu moves the terms of reference from “male domination” to “women’s oppression.” “Oppression,” she writes, “implies and insists on the idea of violence, of surplus, of suffocation – on that which is not at all static” (223).

To argue that men and women share representations that legitimate male power, Godelier describes a puberty rite in which lactating Baruya women give their milk to now marriageable menstruating women to drink. According to Godelier, this practice “anticipates” conjugal intercourse when, as Baruya men say, a husband’s sperm “gives his wife milk and fine breasts . . . to nurture his child.” Godelier does not record Baruya women’s explanations of this practice. Nonetheless, he concludes:

The fact that each sex enjoys the possibility of interpreting *the same ideas* in its own *distinct way* provides an outlet for the tensions and conflicts that inevitably arise when one part of society (in this case, one sex) is dominant over the other. So what we have here is not really a female countermodel, or set of ideas distinct from the official, arguing in favor of a different society in which this oppression would be banished; it is a *different (partially opposed but only partly) manner of shedding light on the same ideas and experiencing the same practice*. [Godelier 1986:57–58]

Mathieu (1991d:202) objects: “If there is a ‘distinct’ interpretation there are not the ‘same representations’ . . . if there is a ‘different manner of shedding light on’, there are not the ‘same ideas.’” And she asks: “Theoretically, can information be ‘the same’ if lived experience is not the same? . . . When one is excluded from an activity and thus doesn’t *practice* it, does one ‘know’ it?” Since women do not share the same material conditions, experience, or knowledge as men – as Godelier (1986:148) himself tells us – can they “share the same conceptions”? Following the terms of Godelier’s own argument, can they consent to domination?⁴ Mathieu (1991d:210) argues that, because Godelier does not take women’s consciousness as an object to investigate (instead, he accepts what Baruya men say about Baruya women), women’s consciousness appears as “simply reflecting function” in his analysis.

At the time Mathieu read Godelier’s *La production des Grands Hommes*, she was preparing a comprehen-

sive review of cross-cultural anthropological research on women for the UN Organization for Education, Science and Culture. In this report, she describes how, across the globe, women work longer hours than men; have fewer hours of rest and leisure; have lower caloric intake; higher rates of malnutrition; lower ages at marriage; and lower levels of education, income, and access to technology (Mathieu 1991b). Arranged marriages, excision, forced reproduction, rape, and violence are not rare. Further, Mathieu argues, material constraints such as early marriage, forced reproduction, malnutrition, and the mental fatigue of continuous responsibility for children and the elderly fix limitations on women’s consciousness. She critiques then-current anthropological models of gender complementarity that presume that women accept or consent to such conditions and rarely consider how material constraints invade women’s consciousness, affecting their capacities for mental and physical resistance. In the UN report, Mathieu challenges ethnographic claims that women share ideologies of male domination, and she questions the validity of models of gender symmetry that do not take into account the relations between structure and consciousness.

In “Quand céder,” Mathieu (1991d:217) elaborates: “Oppressor and oppressed are not equal subjects with identical consciousnesses. They are united but they are not equal.” They are united in their opposed positions in a structural relation of power:

It is not the same thing, *in response to a violence suffered*, to refer to an idea (for example, the idea that men are “more important”, women are “inferior”) *to explain* that violence (“I made the mistake of not staying in my place which is the place of my dignity and value as a woman”), as to use the same idea *to exercise* violence (“She better know her place. If she doesn’t, she affects my dignity and honour as a man”). Ideas and representations may efficiently resolve the problem of the legitimacy of power but these cannot be simply projected into the consciousness of the oppressed. . . . It is not the “recognition” by the oppressed of the legitimacy of the power and “good deeds” and “services” of the dominant that, “in addition to the violence,” maintain the situation of domination but, rather, the constrained and mediated consciousness and the *ignorance* where the oppressed are kept that constitute, along with material constraints, *the violence*, the principal force of domination. [217]

Subjectivities are dynamic, historically produced, and subject to change. Control of information and opportunity, she states, produced subjects who would not resist. To speak of consent, Mathieu writes, would suppose:

an already full, free consciousness of the subject and at least knowledge of *the terms of the contract*, if not of all the consequences (but women, as I have tried to show, are not in knowledge of all of the terms). “*Consent to domination*” would imply full and complete knowledge of the situation and acceptance of the consequences, including the *destructive* consequences, of the contract ... one might as well say that the oppressed oppress themselves... The word consent applied to the dominated annuls almost all responsibility on the part of the oppressor. Since the oppressed consents, there is nothing truly immoral in the comportment of the “dominant.” [223–224]

Consent, Mathieu points out, requires a *prise de conscience* that does not suppress the idea of domination: “To be able to say of a dominated subject that s/he consents to domination, it is necessary that this subject is already revealed to itself as a *subject in this relation of domination*, that s/he has identified this relation” (218). Mathieu then asks: “If the oppressed ‘consent’ to their domination, why is it that women’s consciousness of oppression leads not to acceptance and consent but to feminist scholarly analyses of oppression and activist consciousness-raising?” (220).

Invaded Consciousness: Shame as Consent

No human society could be this “schizophrenic.”
—Derek Freeman, Margaret Mead and Samoa

The year after Godelier’s *La production des Grands Hommes*, Derek Freeman (1983) published *Margaret Mead and Samoa*, his critique of Mead’s portrait of Samoan adolescent sexuality. Freeman charged that Mead ignored the prevalence of rape in Samoa and failed to explain the contradiction that girls also claim virginity at marriage. “No human society could be this ‘schizophrenic,’” he charged. In “Quand céder,” Mathieu responds to Freeman:

For Freeman who is not schizophrenic, the facts are simple, clear and definite: on the one hand, the masculine culture in Samoa is obsessed with rape and young men attempt it as much as possible in order to prove their virility. On the other hand, the cult of virginity for girls is very strong. Therefore, *there could not be a norm* of receptivity for the young girl to young men and there could not be sexual “promiscuity” among young people, except rape, which he describes. But if Freeman reflected a little on western cultures of which he is a member – and especially if he was a woman – he would know that it is exactly these *schizophrenic norms* that are *imposed on women*. What girl/woman having ceded to men’s “advances” – which are “normal” – is not sooner or

later treated as a *putain*. Not to cede is a norm and *at the same time* to cede is a norm. [1991d:144]⁵

What Freeman fails to recognise, Mathieu writes, is that women in patriarchal societies live with the consequences of cultural confluences of male honour and sexual prowess:

A high value is placed on woman’s “honour” – or, rather, her brothers’ and father’s – at the same time, rape [“sex as theft”; cf. Ortner 1981] is also a cultural value. These values are not seen as contradictory at the sociological level. But, for women, they are lived in a contradictory way at the psychological level – a permanent state of contradiction being precisely a factor in producing the alienation of women that leads to situations where women may “cede but not consent.” Freeman sees that rape and virginity are linked in Samoa not only structurally but even in the form rape takes – surreptitiously during the sleep of the young girl... But he does not see that rape and sexual “advances” in all circumstances in which the boy wishes the girl to “cede” are part and parcel of the same set of values. This is lived oppression, not a sociological contradiction. [Mathieu 1991d:145]

Mathieu agrees that Mead may have underestimated structural violence against women in Samoa in the 1920s. For no matter how “liberated” she may have been – Freeman had described the 23-year-old Mead, undertaking her first fieldwork, as “a liberated young American woman” – Mead would also likely have underestimated the rates of violence against women in her own society. Rape was not then a subject of public discourse, and statistics on rape in the United States were not generally available. Mathieu writes: “In the dialogue between Mead and the young Samoan girls, beyond an encounter between a ‘liberated’ ethnologist and ‘lying’ informants, I see the encounter as one between two structurally homologous alienations” (145). Young Samoan women’s silence about rape was due not only to an imposed modesty about “sexual questions” but also to the shame imposed on the victim of rape. Freeman himself had cited clear examples of this factor. For her part, Mead was perhaps “liberated” in the sense that Freeman seems to mean – that is to say, “she could talk about sexual questions” – but she was not liberated in the sense that she did not have knowledge of the daily reality of rape in many societies, including her own – knowledge that, as Freeman notes, men’s groups possess and transmit. In any event, Mead clearly noted the existence of contradictory norms imposed on girls (virginity/receptivity) that Freeman, from his dominant position in his own society, did not recognise.

Mathieu (1991d:171) scoured the anthropological literature but found that few ethnographers had taken women's consciousness – the “structuration of self” by women – as an object of investigation.⁶ She rejects the models that were then in circulation in anthropology, such as “honour and shame” (Ardener 1975; Mathieu 1973; Peristiany 1965; Piña-Cabral 1986), that assumed women's “acceptance” (of their situation), “adhesion to the ideology,” or “sharing dominant ideas.” At the same time, she critiqued what she saw as an Anglo-American emphasis on excavating women's “hidden power” (Rogers 1975), which, she said, produced women as “*trop-sujets*” with “too much” agency. Rare and circumscribed instances of “power” or authority that women might hold in patrilineal societies – for example, as mothers of sons or as post-menopausal elders – were, she said, given disproportionate ethnographic weight and treated as being symmetrical, with political and economic power held by men creating a “false symmetry of consciousness.” For Mathieu (1991d:186), claims of complementarity and symmetry amounted to “basically, a little autonomy here, a little oppression there, *ça peut aller*.”

Instead, Mathieu draws on the models of coloniser-colonised psychologies of Aimé Césaire and Albert Memmi to argue the multiplicity of women's consciousness in patrilineal societies (the majority of the world's societies). She proposes the concept of “invaded” consciousness as a third perspective: “In this essay, I tried instead to describe the limitations of knowledge and the fragmented consciousness to which women are subject, the hiatuses and contradictions between acts and the material conditions that are imposed on women, the interpretive codes that are presented to them and their lived subjective identity” (Mathieu 1991a:11):

Among the dominated – due precisely to the mechanisms of oppression – knowledge is fragmented and contradictory. As a result, there are many types of dominated consciousness. For the oppressed, an objective class position does not give a single form of consciousness. . . . There is a coherent, structured and given field of consciousness for the dominant that is secure against the least threat to their power whereas, on the part of the dominated, there are diverse, more or less unstructured modalities of fragmentation, contradiction, adaptation or refusal – modalities which seem particularly difficult for the dominant to apprehend. [Mathieu 1991d:140–141]

Writing before such breakthrough ethnographies as *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline* (Ong 1987) and *Death without Weeping* (Scheper-Hughes 1992), Mathieu proposes a third way between false

consciousness and agency-and-resistance. And she identifies the central challenge of feminist ethnography: how to write gaps in knowledge, partial perspectives, silences, and ellipses.

The challenge continues. In *Daughters of Parvati*, her recent book on women and madness in contemporary India, Sarah Pinto (2014) writes about women on the edges of marriage: divorced, divorcing, coming out of broken relationships, or in relations their families disapprove of. One case that Pinto presents is of an 18-year-old woman she calls Lata, whose rape by a family house guest when she was 12 was never acknowledged. She chooses to run away with, and marry, a household servant more than two decades her senior and to live in a polyandrous relationship with him and another man, who is also much older than she. Her parents, who had chosen another husband for her, reject Lata's marriage choice and seek out doctors to declare her mentally ill. Pinto writes of the difficulty of locating power in situations of moral complexity that produce “impossible subjects” such as Lata, whose narrative of “compromised female agency” – full of elliptical language, silence, contradiction, and obscurity – has no beginning and no end. Leslie Robertson and Dara Culhane (2005) in *In Plain Sight* describe similar challenges in writing the “difficult knowledge” and non-linear time of the narratives of women living in Downtown Eastside Vancouver who circle through abuse, illness, addiction, or disability and tell of the loss of their children, of their mothers, of their jobs, and of their homes.

Ethnographers such as Pinto, Robertson, and Culhane continue the work for which Mathieu advocated – the work of writing women's multiple subjectivities not as negotiation, acceptance, contestation, or resistance but, rather, as dynamic everyday worlds of necessary creativity and resourcefulness – the work of writing stories waiting to be told, of worlds as yet unheard from.

Taxonomies of Gender Identities and Taboos

[A] taboo against the sameness of men and women, a taboo dividing the sexes into two mutually exclusive categories, a taboo which exacerbates the biological differences between the sexes and thereby *creates* gender . . . [the sexual division of labour is] a taboo against sexual arrangements other than those containing at least one man and one woman, thereby enjoining heterosexual marriage.
—G. Rubin, *The Traffic in Women*⁷

At the time she was writing “Quand céder n'est pas consentir,” Mathieu was also revising a paper entitled “The Conceptualization of Sex in Social Science Practice and

in Women's Movement Theories," which she had presented at the 10th World Congress of Sociology in Mexico in 1982. In this paper, Mathieu applied anthropology's cross-cultural comparative method to develop a taxonomy of "modes of conceptualizing the relationship between biological sex and social sex" to challenge naturalist assumptions of "sex roles" that were then prevailing in the discipline. The paper later published as "Identité sexuelle/sexuée/de sexe?: Trois modes de conceptualisation du rapport entre sexe et genre" theorised links between the oppression of women and the repression of homosexuality (Mathieu 1991c). It was translated into English in 1996 and into Spanish in 2005. The Spanish translators, Ochy Curiel and Jules Falquet, explain why they chose this essay from Mathieu's oeuvre:

This is a magisterial work that is based not only on western and non-western examples but also on analyzing the logics of different sub-groups including different groups of homosexuals and different currents within feminism. This text is important because it acts as a counterweight to the tendency of work in gender and transgender theory to universalize and absolutize ... and claim to have finally found the route out of patriarchal, heterosexual systems. [Curiel and Falquet 2005:13–14]

In "Identité sexuelle/sexuée/de sexe?" Mathieu fearlessly sorts the cross-cultural data and conceives of a classification scheme of three "modes" revolving on two axes: the conceptualisation of sex (what relation is established between the biological and the social) and the categorisation of the sexes. "The concept of sex," Mathieu (1991c:228) writes, "involves the mental organisation of ideas (representations, myths, utopias, etc: *'thought' sex*) and practices (social relations between sexes: *'acted' sex*) which are often contradictory. Whether the contradictions are emphasised or hidden, certain logics are set in place."

Mode 1, sexual identity (*identité sexuelle*), is based on an individualistic consciousness of sex that aligns personal psychosocial traits with biological traits. Mathieu termed this naturalist perspective a "sexualist logic," in which there are two sexes – gender bipartition fits sex bipartition – and "a woman" is simply someone of the female sex. Heterosexuality is normalised, and homosexuality is judged to be anomalous. Mathieu (1991c: 237–238) includes in Mode 1 transsexuals who undergo sex modification; *hijras* who assume the heterosexual and social roles of wives and prostitutes; and the Inuit "third sex."⁸

Mode 2 is a collective sexed identity (*identité sexuée*) based on a sex group consciousness of a predetermined division of the category sex into two social sex categories

("men" and "women"). People do not only situate themselves individually in relation to biological sex, but personal identity is also linked to consciousness of membership in one of the two social sex groups. Mathieu (1991c:240) calls this a "hetero-social logic" – "the tendency to anatomize the political" – that maintains difference. Mathieu's examples of Mode 2 include "cultural feminists" (who celebrate "women's culture" and women's "difference") and the social heterosexuality of Native American two-spirits who adopt the tasks, dress, and compartments of the opposite sex but do not undergo sex modification.⁹

Mode 3 is the "politicization of the anatomy" in the production of what Mathieu calls a sex-class identity (*identité de sexe*). Mode 3 is an identity of resistance; it puts forward the dynamics of oppression. The logic of Mode 3 is the recognition of the social differentiation of the sexes as an active process of the construction of sexual difference, achieved primarily through controls on sexuality and fertility and the institution of marriage. In Mode 3, social sex is not the symbolic marker of a natural difference but, rather, is the operative of the power of one sex over the other. Women as a class are ideologically defined by their anatomic sex (just as men as a class are defined by theirs). The conflation of biological and social sex is seen not as being "necessary to social reproduction" but, rather, as masking the material exploitation of women and repressing homosexuality (cf. Rubin 1975). "Woman" is no longer conceived as femaleness translated into individual femininity (Mode 1) or as producing "women's culture" (Mode 2). Instead, "woman" is a category of "constructed femaleness." Mathieu's examples include radical feminists, some strains in men's movements and same-sex couples that reject the masculine–feminine bipartitions of Modes 1 and 2.

Mathieu (1991c:257) cites Lévi-Strauss's 1956 essay "The Family" as an early statement of Mode 3 and "the politicization of the anatomy." In this essay, Lévi-Strauss describes the sexual division of labour as the "artificial" creation of mutual social and economic dependence between the sexes "permitting" marriage and the family. He writes: "[W]hen it is stated that one sex must perform certain tasks, this also means that the other sex is forbidden to do them. In that light, the sexual division of labor is nothing else than a device to institute a reciprocal state of dependency between the sexes ... compelling them thereby to perpetuate themselves and to found a family" (Lévi-Strauss 1956:275–277).

As an activist scholar, Mathieu was working for a world beyond gender and without hierarchy (cf. Rubin 2011:280). However, across the cross-cultural diversity she found, there remained "at the bottom" a sex/gender category "woman" for whom heterosexual marriage and

reproduction are proscribed and for whom subjectivities are circumscribed. To ensure that biological and social reproduction take place, she argued, this social category is produced through continual processes of domestication and situated in social, economic, and political relations of domination (Tabet 1984).

Decades later, long after Mathieu's classification of "sexual, sexed and sex-class" identities, ethnographers continue to find new naturalisations of the sexual division of labour and new incarnations of the social category "woman" as a subordinated subject position. Examples of recent studies include the globalisation and racialisation of domestic work (Parreñas 2001); the "stratification" of mothering (Colen 1995); the construction of low-wage "flexible" factory jobs as extensions of "women's work in the home," requiring "nimble fingers" and "docile bodies" (Ong 1987); the emergence of "new feminine identities" to perform "professionalism" that masks women's under-remunerated labour in high-tech industries (Freeman 2000); "professions of love" of Filipina bar hostesses in Japan (Faier 2007); the marriage strategies of poor rural Brazilian women who establish material relationships with gringo tourists (Carrier-Moisan 2013); the "disposability" of hundreds of murdered migrant women along the Mexico-US border (Fregoso and Bejarano 2010); and the "rapability" of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada (Smith 2005).

Marriage

The female reader, who may be shocked to see womankind treated as a commodity submitted to transactions between male operators, can easily find comfort in the assurance that the rules of the game would remain unchanged should it be decided to consider the men as being exchanged by women's groups. As a matter of fact, some very few societies, of a highly developed matrilineal type, have to a limited extent attempted to express things that way.

—Claude Lévi-Strauss, "The Family"

On November 6, 2012, Chen Wei-Yi, a thirty-year-old Taiwanese woman, married herself in an elaborate Taipei wedding ceremony in the wake of an online publicity campaign that attracted thousands of comments about the pressure on single women to marry before age thirty.

—D. Davis and S. Friedman, *Wives, Husbands and Lovers: Marriage and Sexuality in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Urban China*

The curriculum [Ontario's new sex education curriculum] has a bizarre omission that baffles even the most open-minded and modern parent. When discussing sex, it never once mentions marriage or love. This is absurd.

—*Globe and Mail*, editorial, May 9, 2015

Mathieu's (1991c) taxonomy of gender identity led her to her last major study, to which I now turn: the cross-

cultural, comparative re-examination of marriage and subject formation in matrilineal/uxorilocal societies in her 2007 book, *Une maison sans fille est une maison morte: La personne et le genre en sociétés matrilinéaires et/ou uxori-locales*. In this book, she compiles and analyses ethnographic studies by 15 international scholars working in China, India, North and South America, and Indonesia.

A debate in 2000–01 in the journal *L'Homme* had re-inscribed the opposition between French structuralist anthropology that treats "sexual asymmetry" as universal and Anglo-American feminist anthropology's claims of "women's power."¹⁰ In *Une maison sans fille*, Mathieu attempts to reconcile what she calls "a feminist imbroglio that had become reduced to cultural difference" between a "too-optimistic" Anglo-American anthropology that, through its emphasis on "female forms of power and agency," risks collaboration with "masculinist logic that renders sexual injustice invisible" and a "too-pessimistic" French anthropology that, in maintaining *la valence différentielle des sexes* as universal (Héritier 2000), minimises the political possibilities for women (Gestin 2007:453–454). In *Une maison sans fille*, Mathieu warns that, at a time of "weakening if not stagnation" of the feminist movement, the imagination of alternative feminist futures and of worlds without oppression is thwarted if scholars remain at this impasse. A goal of *Une maison sans fille*, she said, is "to reduce the divergences, by reconciling or refuting them, in an effort to create a scientific unity ... to benefit women" (454). It can be no surprise that the imbroglio revolves around marriage, the single institution that continues to define women's status and value in most sectors of most societies in most parts of the world and that remains the most effective form of governance of sexuality and intimate lives (Friedman 2006; Rubin 2011).

In his postface to the debate in *L'Homme*, Lévi-Strauss (2000) maintains that marriage exchange "is indifferent to" whether it is women or men who are exchanged. A few years later, in *The Metamorphoses of Kinship*, Godelier elaborated that, although there are societies where women exchange men and societies where families exchange "mutual gifts of their sons and daughters," the rules are not the same – "even if the basic rule is always that of exchange." "In all events," Godelier underlines,

Lévi-Strauss posits male domination as the condition for the emergence of human kinship systems, and one that has continued to be so down to the present day. Male domination is a transhistoric, ontological fact that Lévi-Strauss links to the emergence of the human capacity for speech and symbolic thought. [Godelier 2011:125]

For Lévi-Strauss, matrilineal/uxorilocal social structures are “more complicated,” but they are not exceptions. And differences between the sexes are structural positions in relations of symmetry and asymmetry, not political relations of domination and oppression. He highlights the authority (*la priorité masculine*) that men as fathers, brothers, and/or uncles hold in matrilineal societies, and he identifies the measures – such as men’s houses and village moieties’ adoptions of in-marrying men – that integrate men and reinforce male solidarity. He sees the strengthening of male same-sex institutions and practices as necessary in contexts where women as a group have forms of structural power and publicly recognised social value. Without these “equalising” measures, he explains, men would “otherwise be objects of scorn and contempt as those who are here [only] because of marriage” (Mathieu 2014c:118). He does not show a parallel interest in the predicament of in-marrying women in patrilineal societies betraying “an inability to detach from patriarchal values,” which thereby infuse structuralist models of kinship with ethnocentric and androcentric prescriptions of heterosexual procreative marriage and household structures (119).

Anthropologists have conducted extensive research on matrilineal societies (Blackwood 2005; Cole 1991), but Mathieu’s *Une maison sans fille* is the first cross-cultural comparison of matrilineal/uxorilocal societies since Alice Schlegel’s (1972) *Male Dominance and Female Autonomy: Domestic Authority in Matrilineal Societies*. Mathieu’s objective is to examine gendered subjectivities. She organises the comparative analysis around themes of household structure and work, gendered space, religion and politics, consciousness, ideas of the body and personhood, and social change.

Une maison sans fille starts with the question: what is “marriage”? Mathieu wants to know if the “game,” as Lévi-Strauss put it, is the same when it is women who exchange men. Marriage, Mathieu reminds us, may take a diversity of forms, but, at its base, it engages decisions about who lives with whom; who children belong to; who inherits names, titles, and property; and how the work of social reproduction will be carried out. Whether an arrangement between individuals or a contract between corporate groups, marriage concerns access to economic, political, and cultural resources and produces comportments and subjectivities. By treating marriage as a set of transactions between kinship groups, Lévi-Strauss removed from analytical view the political and economic transactions also taking place. Nor was he concerned with “the social construction of value” or the management of reproduction and sexuality in marriage (de Beauvoir 1949; Rubin 1975; Tabet 1984).

Mathieu’s comparative analysis speaks to current research on the meaning of marriage and its persistence and malleability as an institution for distributing material resources through gendered role expectations. As Rubin (2011:31) writes in her recent analysis of same-sex marriage debates, “Marriage is a conduit for an extraordinary range of redistributive benefits, citizenship rights, and social privileges.” And as Davis and Friedman (2014:4, 28) summarise in their comparative study of marriage in contemporary East Asia amid changing market conditions, state regulations, and the transnationalisation of marriage, “Marriage is a complex institution, embedded within a larger system of gendered and family kinship relationships that in turn are embedded within a socially specific economy and polity.... It is simultaneously an intimate private bond and a social, public institution.”

For each of the ethnographic studies presented in *Une maison sans fille*, Mathieu asks, what is the meaning of marriage exchange? In her discussion of the chapter by Pi-chen Liu (2007) on Kavalan uxorilocal hunter–fisher–horticulturalists in Taiwan, Mathieu explains that concepts of self and personhood are “canalised” in sex groups (*identité sexuée*). Marriage is understood as the exchange of men by two matri-uxorilocal households. Kavalan women own land and houses and control food distribution. Women-led shamanic societies control community relations with the mother goddess, who is the source of life, carried through menstrual blood, a “gift” to young girls from the goddess. Girls are vessels for the collective identity of the matrilineage. Male blood, however, is infertile, and Kavalan boys are viewed as being analogous to wild deer until puberty when, through the ritual killing of a stag, they are domesticated for marriage. Males reach adult status through marriage, uxorilocal residence, and the transfer of their labour from their natal home to their marital households. Kavalan males, therefore, are dependent on women and marriage for their transformation into adults.

Mathieu considers Amazonian Huaorani hunter–gatherer horticulturalists, presented in a chapter by Laura Rival (2007), to be an example of a society where marriage is neither the exchange of women nor the exchange of men but, rather, part of a broader pattern of reciprocity between men and women. Relations between husband and wife are understood as cooperative and egalitarian. Women are associated with the body, plants, and renewable life; men are associated with the spirit, animals, predation, and death. Through the *couvade*, as his wife is giving birth to the infant body, a Huaorani man gives birth to the infant’s spirit.

What forms of conscience do women have in matrilineal-uxorilocal societies? Mathieu finds that women as mothers of daughters have a social value and structural importance in the continuity of the group that together define a sense of both individual autonomy and collective identity among women. In patrilineal and patrilocal societies (where a woman marries into the group and may have had to leave her natal village), becoming a mother may be primarily an individual experience. It may improve her status, especially if she gives birth to a son, or it may lead to abuse or abandonment if she does not reproduce. By contrast, in matrilineal societies, becoming a mother brings an *identité sexuée*, a collective identity that is metaphysical and reinforced by uxorilocality – the spatial permanence of residential units of mothers, sisters, and daughters. Uxorilocality gives public visibility to women as a collective group and produces a “sex-group consciousness” (*conscience de groupe sexuée*) among women that moderates the circulation of male-dominant discourses and practices. Further, the matrilineal house is more than a domestic space; it is also a site of religious and political activities. The chapter by Alice Schlegel (2007) on the Hopi of the southwestern United States, for example, describes the matrilineal house as the political unit that manages land and resources and curates ceremonial objects and knowledge. There are no exclusively domestic spaces, and women are not identified and do not define themselves exclusively in terms of heterosexual procreative marriage roles.

The female body, in matrilineal societies, is often celebrated as the source of life and is not seen as being dangerous and polluting, as is often the case in patrilineal, patrilocal societies. In her discussion of the chapter by Maureen Trudelle Schwarz (2007) on Navaho pastoralists of the southwestern United States, Mathieu writes that a woman is not only the source of life because she gives birth and perpetuates the lineage but also the source of the regeneration of life in the primordial cosmic sense. Material parts of the body, especially the placenta and umbilical cord, carry life. The placenta incorporates the matrilineage and is buried near the matrilineal house along with the umbilical cord, ensuring allegiance to the matrilineage – a tie that is stronger than marriage. Marriage is a precarious institution that frequently dissolves, and, when it does, a man will return to his natal matrilineal house. Throughout life, individuals retain a special relationship with the burial place of their umbilical cord for it is the heart and the material site of the self. Even after years of happy marriage, near the end of their lives, men may choose to return to their natal households to be buried near their umbilical cord. In

the chapter on the Muduvar of south India, Martine Gestin (2007) describes the matrilineage as an infinite, collective feminine self that each woman carries in her belly. When a woman gives birth to a daughter, her daughter is born “already a mother”; her granddaughter is already in her daughter’s belly; her great-granddaughter is already in her granddaughter’s belly, and so on. It is a permanent, transcendent cycle of daughters becoming mothers and mothers giving birth to daughters (cf. Ramberg 2014).

Une maison sans fille presents a diversity of concepts of self, personhood, and the body in matrilineal societies that complicate generalisation. However, like Lévi-Strauss, Mathieu (2007) reminds ethnographers not to overlook or understate the practices and patterns of behaviour that men as a sex group elaborate in matrilineal societies to retain autonomy and exercise authority. In matrilineal societies, as in patrilineal societies, men have more spaces of liberty, greater mobility, and more leisure than women. Bilocality (residence in the houses of both their wives and their mothers), polygyny, spatial mobility, and men’s houses and networks are resources men hold that ensure them greater autonomy than women. And boys learn their freedom early. Childhood is more carefree for boys than for girls, who begin at an early age to learn domestic tasks. In addition, in matrilineal societies, girls also learn moral prescriptions they must heed since their future responsibility to the lineage entails motherhood and marriage, bringing a man into the household to do certain kinds of labour. Often, it is the young woman who makes the proposal of marriage, and the responsibility of bringing a productive man into the matrilineage can create anxiety for women. Men know that when they marry, they are expected to leave their natal homes to work for the households of their mothers-in-law, and they may not be in a hurry to marry. They may stall or reject a woman’s proposal; some may refuse to ever leave their natal homes. Thus, men’s reticence to marry is something women must also manage. After marriage, tensions that may arise may be resolved by the husband returning to his natal household, leaving the woman, as noted above, with the responsibility of caring for the children and finding another man to work for the matrilineal household. Thus, the ease of divorce may present a problem for women.

Finally, Mathieu (2007) urges continuing attention to the gendered differences in the impact of colonialism, missionisation, deterritorialisation, migration, and globalisation. She notes, for example, the case of the matrilineal Amazonian Shipibo-Conibo described in the chapter by Morin and Saladin d’Anglure (2007). They

describe the historical practice of male initiation through ritual duels that involved scarification with a scalpel, as complementing female puberty excision ceremonies – known as “making the person.” Under changing socio-political conditions, female excision appears to have persisted after male scarification was discontinued.

Mathieu’s contribution in *Une maison sans fille* is her cross-cultural implementation of a theoretical strategy that situates marriage as one exchange among other exchanges that members themselves value and the analysis of marriage as an assemblage of resources, values, and subjectivities. The ethnographic cases in *Une maison sans fille* suggest that matrilineality and uxori-locality do contain political assets for women and that, in some societies, “inequality” between the sexes may be “quasi-non-existent.” However, matrilineal-uxorilocal social structures in no way predetermine that women’s situations will, in fact, be better than elsewhere. And practices and institutions that ensure men leisure, autonomy, and same-sex solidarity appear widespread, if not universal. In each instance, Mathieu (2007) explains, a contextual analysis of structure and consciousness inside and outside of marriage exchange must be undertaken.

Mathieu’s return to matrilineal kinship aligns with the long-standing feminist critique of the erasure – through anthropological models – of a multiplicity of kin-making practices and relationships of care (Rubin 1975; Stack 1974). In her recent ethnography of goddess marriage in south India, *Given to the Goddess*, Lucinda Ramberg (2014) describes the “both-and” gendered personhood of the 30,000 *devadasis* who are both women married to the goddess and sons who inherit land and maximise the resources of the natal family. Ramberg highlights the materiality of kin-making and defines a person as “the *form* that relationships take” (164). Ramberg points to how the discipline’s continuing use of kinship diagrams, “where every position is always already gendered,” re-entrenches the normalisation of heterosexuality and procreative marriage and renders invisible – ontologically impossible – the everyday worlds, relationships, and subjectivities of many whose lives do not conform to anthropological models and who are often socially stigmatised and economically penalised in state projects of family formation and normalisation (192).

The continuing vitality of kinship as a theoretical frame is evident in the abundance of recent ethnographies of emergent kin-making practices of reciprocity, obligation, care, and abandonment, a few examples of which include, alongside Ramberg’s study of *devadasi* kin ties, women “on the edges of marriage” in India’s

mental health system (Pinto 2014); “difficult mothering” on the streets of Downtown Eastside Vancouver (Robertson and Culhane 2005) and in the contexts of HIV/AIDS (Downe 2011); *dui pnua* female friendships and extended postmarital natal residence in Southeastern China (Friedman 2006); and the “staying married” practices of transnational conjugal relations across the Taiwan strait (Shen 2014).

Conclusion

I have chosen three texts from Mathieu’s oeuvre to illustrate the central motif that guided her work as an activist anthropologist throughout her life: to expose the construction of normative discourses – of consent, of gender identity, and of marriage – as the reproduction of structures of hierarchy and exclusion. Mathieu’s concerns are matters of enduring concern for feminist activists and critical anthropologists. Even a cursory look at recent public debates in Canada alone indicates that the issues – unequal pay, rape, and femicide – that brought French feminist materialists together in the *Qf* collective in the early 1970s have not gone away. On average, Canadian women are paid 20 percent less than Canadian men for equivalent work. Increasing numbers of women are raising children alone and in economic precarity. Same-sex marriage, parenting, and transgender childhoods are subjects of frequent public scrutiny. Violence against women is a feature of all sectors of Canadian society. In elite contexts, such as universities and professional workplaces, such as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the Canadian military, recent investigations have uncovered systemic sexual harassment and coercion. Misogyny finds new expression on social media, recently exemplified by the Facebook page of Dalhousie University’s dentistry students’ Gentlemen’s Club. Aboriginal girls and women live amid high levels of poverty, overcrowded housing, and violence. Across Canada, more than 1,100 Aboriginal women have gone missing or been murdered or mutilated in recent years. In many cases, only weak or late efforts have been made to find bodies or to charge perpetrators. Amid the apparent diversity and increasing opportunity in the lives of women, there remain, as Mathieu argues, the workings of deeply gendered structures of power.

Mathieu employs a classical cross-cultural comparative method both to recognise multiplicity and to find patterns. With a fine-toothed comb, she examines how androcentric and ethnocentric norms of “anthropologists’ own societies” are imported into anthropologists’ theoretical models, and she exposes assumptions and biases in the models and arguments of social movement activists. She seeks to bring to light difference and simi-

larity. She examines systems of hierarchy that are operative within particular cultural contexts, and she identifies the production of “structurally homologous alienations” across cultural differences (Mathieu 1991d:145).

I have read Mathieu’s feminist materialist anthropology as contributing analytical tools and methods for critical feminist public anthropology in the 21st century (Phillips et al. 2013; Robertson and Culhane 2005; Whitaker and Downe 2011) and as continuous with anthropology’s historical founding as an engaged social science. My reading of Mathieu’s work contrasts with views that there are “waves” in feminism and rejects popular constructions of opposing “generations” in feminist scholarship. Instead, I see continuity. I see the continuing importance of practising a “tactical humanism” (Abu-Lughod 1991), as Mathieu does, to identify structures of power – behind surfaces of diversity – that disadvantage women and sexual subalterns and to develop a politics of co-resistance that can, at the same time, be built on multiplicity and difference. The principal question at the heart of Mathieu’s work remains challenging: How can the structures of intimate life be renovated in ways that bring forward generosity and reciprocity in relations with others – human and other than human? Mathieu’s rigorous intellect, her politics of care, and her wit offer good company to anthropologists and activists on the journey.

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Notes

1 Mathieu reads and cites Anglo-American scholars, but she is rarely cited by them. Only three of her essays have been translated into English. Mathieu received an honorary doctorate from Laval University in 1991, recognising her contributions to feminist studies.

- 2 “Another world” is a world without economic inequality and gender oppression, envisioned by 21st-century feminist anti-globalisation activists (Phillips et al. 2013).
- 3 In response to the discipline’s denunciation of colonialism and the call for “engagement” to defend “traditional cultures” and minorities, Mathieu (1991d:132–140) asks:

Which minorities do these “engaged” ethnologists defend? ... Even in the case of a society where ethnologists acknowledged the “domination” of men over women ... it is the society, the culture “as a whole,” that is to be safeguarded, protected or “liberated” in the name of non-interference in the interior workings of societies.... To anthropologists who rightly raise questions about anthropology’s colonial past, I can only reply that I would know not to “defend” any society, culture, ideology (even of a “minority” as defined from a certain point of view) of which the survival, “progress,” “modernisation” or expansion would depend on the oppression of women or would lead to it.... Instead of interrogating or even footnoting internal dynamics of power within the “traditional” and minority cultures they defend, anthropologists accuse “feminist” anthropologists and western “feminists” of ethnocentrism, imperialism and even of racism.... One could ask who is more “ethnocentric”? “Feminists” who want to diversify the study of the oppression of women (that they know from inside) in other social structures? Or those who hold to a “neutrality” that – in their writing and often their attitude in the field – only duplicates the power of men over women, here and elsewhere. Ethnocentrism and androcentrism make, then, a good couple.

At an international feminist conference in New York in 1990, Mathieu (2014a:134; cf. Mohanty 1991) also found herself a minority among feminists who maintain a cultural relativist position on female genital mutilation.

- 4 Characteristic of Mathieu’s writing is that, alongside her critique of Godelier’s analysis of male domination in Baruyan society, she juxtaposes examples from “anthropologists’ own societies,” such as legal arguments made in defence of men charged with rape or domestic violence. One example is a court case of a man who, to be certain of his wife’s sexual fidelity, required her to sleep in a locked trunk at the foot of their bed. The husband’s lawyer argued that the woman consented because she went into the trunk without resistance each night. Another was the case of a gang rape in a moving van on the streets of Paris. The men’s defence lawyer argued that the woman had consented “because she did not run away until the van was stopped at the 13th red traffic light” (Mathieu 1991d:149).
- 5 The stigma of *putain* serves to delegitimise women who exercise economic or sexual autonomy. Like Gail Pheterson (1996) (whose book *The Prostitution Prism* Mathieu translated in 2001 as *Le Prisme de la prostitution*), Mathieu sees the rights of all women as “indissolubly” linked to the rights of prostitutes. Mathieu was a devoted activist for prostitutes’ rights and worked for the creation in 2005 of l’Avec nos aînées, an association for aging prostitutes in Paris (Handman 2015).

- 6 Mathieu did find Sarah Levine's (1982) study of Gusi women's dreams. In this Kenyan society, women marry into their husbands' village; fertility rates are among the highest in the world; women do all agricultural and domestic work; the birth of a son ties a woman to her marriage (her status is tied to her son's) and keeps her working on her husband's farm (in trust for her son); a husband may refuse to pay bridewealth to her family or wait until she has given birth to several sons; and, thus, women may incur hostility from their natal families, who have not been "paid" for the loss of her labour and fertility. Although physical violence from men is rare, women's dreams express intense feelings of suffering, rejection, loss, shame, and fear. Mathieu explains these feelings as the "invasion of women's consciousness" – not by physical violence but, rather, by structural factors of social marginality, economic dependence, and overwork. In addition to physical fatigue and malnutrition, Mathieu writes, psychological states of shame and fear delimit women's consciousness and the conditions under which women may be said to consent to domination.
- 7 Like Mathieu, Rubin was unveiling the assumptions of patriarchy, male domination, and gender binaries in anthropological theory that predetermine the analysis of the situations of women and sexual subalterns. Reading *Les Structures élémentaires* against the grain, Rubin (1975:159) argues, one can find in Lévi-Strauss's theory of kinship and marriage "conceptual tools with which one can build descriptions of the part of social life that is the locus of the oppression of women, of sexual minorities, and of certain aspects of human personality within individuals." Originally published in 1975, Rubin's essay continues to be widely taught, cited, circulated, and translated. Mathieu (2014a) translated "The Traffic in Women" in 1999 as "L'économie politique du sexe: Transactions sur les femmes et systèmes de sexe/genre" and discussed its continuing importance in an interview with Catherine Quiminal.
- 8 The "third sex" among the Inuit comprises individuals who at birth are given the name of a person of the opposite sex whom they are thought to reincarnate and who are raised with the skills and comportments associated with the sex of their namesakes (Saladin d'Anglure 1986). A baby might also be raised as the opposite sex if, for example, a male baby is born to a family that already has several sons but no daughters (the male baby might then be raised as a daughter) and the reverse. Mathieu classifies the Inuit third sex in Mode 1 because, at puberty, girls who have been raised as boys take on female gender roles in preparation for reproductive work as wives and mothers. Saladin d'Anglure, however, maintains that such individuals retain a non-dualistic gender identity throughout life, even as they may perform adult social roles as wives and mothers (see also Handman 2015). He points to other boundary-crossing work that third genders also perform as shaman intermediaries with the non-human world, as healers, or as handlers of bodies at birth and death. For Mathieu, these intermediate or androgynous possibilities for individuals do not negate the fact that there remains a social category "women" linked to a biological sex, female, that is socialised for reproduction, heterosexual marriage, and economic dependence or partnership with the social category "men." As Mathieu (1991c:265–266) explains,

"Saladin's concern is to find a reconciling third sex. Mine is to reveal the avatars (transformations) of sex oppression beneath what appear to be 'third' sexes."

- 9 In Mathieu's (1991c:249) view, unlike Inuit third-gender individuals who "reconvert" at puberty to social roles consistent with biology, two-spirits who adopt transvestism and social roles of the opposite sex at puberty maintain these throughout their adult lives, "often marrying or having sexual relations with individuals of the same sex but opposite gender – it must be said *because* of the opposite gender."
- 10 Chantal Collard's (2000) contribution "Femmes échangées, femmes échangistes" to the 2000–01 debate in *L'Homme* was published in 1981 as "Échangés, échangistes" in the Canadian journal *Culture* (Collard 1981). Collard had submitted the article first to *L'Homme* in 1980, but it was rejected, and she had then published it in the inaugural issue of *Culture* (personal communication, May 2012).

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