

AFTER BIOLOGY
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Abstract

In the context of medical assisted reproduction we can find two aspects of kinship: the more the reproduction is biologized, the more filiation depends on the intentionality. It is possible to define different roles in kinship: conception; gestation; endowing children with "birth-status" identity; and the nurture of children. All of these roles can be exercised by different persons or by the same person, but in medical assisted reproduction another difference is added and another person, the anonymous gamete's donors, who are, so to speak, anonymous genetic "mothers" and "fathers". In this paper, using narratives of women donors and recipients I ask myself about the donor as a new role in kinship, as well as the meaning of an anonymous gift. I ask also about the paradox of gamete's anonymous gift, a "free" gift, but also a gift with an economic compensation, as Spanish law allows it. Where is the debt of the gift? How to imagine an anonymous relation between donors and recipients?

The recipient's point of view

In the recipient's narratives one of the recurrent issues is how to introduce the gamete's gift into the own descent and family genealogy. The gift is anonymous, but it has a special status in the system of exchange and reciprocity. They are alienable objects from the subject who gives (the donor), but they are also inalienable of the giver because they transmit his DNA. They can be imagined as "free gifts" because altruism and humanitarian solidarity is the givers' main motivation – they "give life", isn't it?-, but they can also be imagined as goods distributed by clinics to prospective consumers. Recipient use the language of property in order to transform the gift in the "own child", but the gift change the exclusive meaning of property. The child will have two "mothers", one "genetic" and other "gestational". The "real" mother will be the gestational, changing the meaning of the biogenetic substances of euro-american kinship. It is possible forgetting the gift, because it is not appropriated as part of the genealogy of another person. However, the gift circulates as an extension of the anonymous giver and she is the third person who facilitates descent. Near the commodity and also "free gift", an alienable object, but also an inalienable subject, ova gift is a "hybrid" with different interests and intentionalities.

The donor's point of view

Donors imagine they give parts of their body. However, sharing "ova" or "genes" is not enough to create a descent relationship. The parts of their body, as far as they are anonymized, are not concrete substances of kinship. They are gifts in order to create a new kinship relation, but givers don't know anything about the results of their gift. They contribute to a kinship, which is defined as gestational and related to the intentionality of

recipients. Givers would like to know a bit more about the recipients, the results of their gifts as well also about the physical resemblance of the prospective children. Ova gift rouses ideas of resemblances with imagined children. It is not a kinship relation, but it is part of an imagined kinship with anonymous recipients. It can be expected as an alternative to their maternity and as a way to create an "anonymous" relation with the recipient. This "imagined kinship" with strangers narrated by ova givers is part of the debt of the gift and also a way to transform the passivity of their body, submitted to the clinic protocols to a productive body, into agents of their gifts and subjects of the parts of their body.