

## Queer theory and biology: Should 'relatedness' be defined only by blood and genes?

Biological taxonomy, the study and sorting of how different organisms are related to one another, has for centuries incorporated novelty into its codified systems. During the age of exploration through the Victorian era, strange new zoological and botanical specimens brought back to Europe on ships were pigeonholed using morphology—how they looked—into existing taxonomies. But by the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, an organism's morphology no longer defined what it was, as new technologies began classifying organisms on the basis of how similar their proteins and nucleic acids (DNA and RNA) were to one another....

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Perhaps biology itself is a folk category that anthropologists assume when thinking about relatedness. [E]ven when kinship is based entirely on a legal institution like adoption, the tie between two people is always modeled on the assumption that people are “normally” related because they share biological substance like blood or genes. But why must this be so?

This is a question that has most recently been explored by [feminist anthropologists](#) and [queer theorists](#), who want to clarify how queer people forge families that are not necessarily based on straight models of siblingship or parentage.

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [What Synthetic Biology Has in Common With Queer Theory](#)**