



Chapter Seven

Genderland

PARENTS, FASTEN YOUR SEAT BELTS. If what you've learned so far about sex education horrifies you, and you believe it can't get any worse, I caution you: it can and it does.

Remember *Alice in Wonderland*? How Alice followed the White Rabbit into Wonderland, and each new adventure was more impossible than the last? A cat that vanishes into thin air, leaving only its smile behind. A tea party that never ends, because time has stopped. A queen making loony decrees, such as, "Sentence first—verdict afterwards."¹

Well, welcome to Genderland, where the madness of sex education reaches a peak, and everything you know is turned on its head.

If you're like most people, you assume someone with a Y chromosome and affiliated genitals is male, and the rest of us, with two X chromosomes, are female. You are certain that girls become women and boys become men. Can anything be more obvious than that? But for sex educators, this is a thorny subject requiring pages of clarification.

There's more to male or female than DNA and anatomy, they explain to kids. There's also gender.

Sex, gender—is there a difference? You bet, and you need to know what it is. Ditto for distinguishing a cross dresser from a transsexual, and knowing why our “bipolar gender system”² is flawed.

Genderland is a dumbfounding departure from reality. Here, male and female are arbitrary identities based on feelings, not biology. Here it's normal for, say, your adolescent son to wonder what he is—a boy, a girl, or neither? That's right, in Genderland the idea that he must be one or the other is an arbitrary, oppressive paradigm—another noxious “ism,” like racism. Citizens of Genderland reject that model—some insist they're male *and* female, others claim they're neither. Hence words such as “ze” (another option aside from “he” and “she”), and “hir” (an alternative to the oppressive “his” and “her”).

Have I already lost you? It's okay. Trust me, I've been there.

What's the difference, you wonder, between *sexual* identity and *gender* identity? The former refers to the sort of person you're attracted to. The latter refers to whether you experience yourself as male or female (more on what that means later). Sex ed dogma claims the two are unrelated; in other words, gender identity does not necessarily determine sexual identity.

Yes, Genderland sure is a peculiar place. I discovered it on websites and in books recommended to teens. With each visit, I feel like Alice lost in Wonderland—confused and disoriented. My jaw drops, my eyes open wide. *What the heck is this?* I keep asking, as I inspect what experts teach our kids.

Every parent needs to visit Genderland, ahead of his child, and carefully observe the landscape. Many will feel, as Alice did, like they've fallen down a black hole and landed in a truly bewildering place.

We Are All Hermaphrodites

We owe it all to psychologist John Money, who in 1955 introduced the concept that humans develop an internal sense of maleness or

femaleness, separate from chromosomes and anatomy.³ Infants are born gender-neutral, he claimed, without a predisposition to think, feel, or behave in a masculine or feminine manner. “[M]en impregnate,” Money wrote, “women menstruate, ovulate, gestate, and lactate.”⁴ All other distinctions are due to socialization.

According to Money’s scheme, while Baby Jill has two X chromosomes, she has the potential to feel like a man. Little Jack has a penis, but if he’s dressed in pink, given Barbies, surgery, and estrogen, he’ll do fine as Jacquelyn. Jack and Jill’s gender identity will depend on messages they receive in the first years of life from family, friends, school, religion, and media. Money taught that until two and a half to three years of age, gender remains vulnerable to environmental influence. After that, the feeling is fixed.

You should not be surprised to discover that, like Alfred Kinsey, John Money had some—well—unconventional views. This is not a 1960s version of Dr. Phil we’re talking about. For one thing, like the good Dr. Kinsey, John Money believed sex between adults and children could be beneficial.⁵ He was a proponent of adult–child love,⁶ even incest.⁷ For another, Money crusaded against traditional morality, arguing that ancient taboos were destructive.

Kinsey and Money appear to have been kindred souls in another way: from John Money’s writings about childhood and abuse at the hands of his father, we see evidence of deep emotional wounds and (you guessed it) gender issues.

“I suffered from the guilt of being male,” he wrote. “I wore the mark of man’s vile sexuality. . . . I wondered if the world might really be a better place for women if not only farm animals but human males also were gelded (neutered) at birth.”⁸ That’s troubling, isn’t it, coming from someone who ended up advising parents to have their sons castrated?

Money was fascinated by hermaphroditism⁹—a rare medical disorder in which a baby is born with both male and female reproductive organs. And he dedicated his life to proving to the world that psychologically, we are all hermaphrodites.

For real hermaphrodites, and their parents, the condition is not some ideal psychological state, but a serious dilemma. Boy or girl? That's the first of many urgent questions that follow the birth of these unfortunate children. Blue blanket or pink? What about a name, and what should parents tell family and friends? Money's Ph.D. thesis, completed in 1952, was on this medical condition and its treatment. Afterward, he pioneered the work in "sex assignment"—the complex decision of whether to raise a particular hermaphrodite as male or female. He established the country's first clinic for hermaphrodites' surgeries at Johns Hopkins University. Money's clinic later became the first in the United States to provide sex-change surgery for adults.

Money didn't confine himself to deciding the sex of hermaphrodites. Bruce Reimer, Money's most famous patient, was born a full-fledged boy, with an identical twin named Brian. In a ghastly medical accident when he was eight months old, Bruce's penis was destroyed. Bruce's parents heard Money holding forth on TV about how all it took was a little estrogen, a few Barbie dolls, and some surgery to make a boy into a girl, and they turned to him in their desperation over their son's plight. At twenty-two months of age, Bruce was castrated, renamed Brenda, and dressed in frilly clothes. He would be raised alongside his twin, who would be given trucks and GI Joes instead of Barbies, as the perfect test case for Money to prove to the world that nurture, not nature, determines gender identity.

The twins' story became a landmark case, widely cited as proof that the sense of male or female is learned, not inborn. Money's theories were accepted and taught as dogma; because of them, parents all over the world facing similar circumstances—due to trauma or a medical condition—were advised to castrate their sons and raise them as girls.¹⁰

Fast forward to 1996. Dr. Money had not seen or heard from the twins for about twenty years; nevertheless, he republished *Man & Woman, Boy & Girl*, in which he described the experiment as a complete success.

But a year later, “Brenda” came forward and revealed that “she” was now David,¹¹ a janitor in a slaughterhouse, married and father to three adopted children.

The public learned that the whole thing was a hoax,¹² and a fiasco ensued. Contrary to Money’s published results, far from accepting the gender reassignment, David had fought against it tooth and nail from the very beginning—refusing to play with dolls, preferring wrestling over cooking, and even urinating standing up whenever possible. She was teased relentlessly for the boyish way she moved, spoke, walked, and gestured. Kids called her “cavewoman.” In second grade she wanted to be a garbage man, and in eighth, an auto mechanic.¹³

In short, Bruce/Brenda/David endured years of agony, exacerbated by the “therapy” Money put him and his twin brother through. During their yearly visits,¹⁴ Money firmly, loudly, and angrily told the children to take off their clothes, look at each other’s genitalia, and act out sexual intercourse.¹⁵

After years of this nightmare—not only for Brenda but for the whole family¹⁶—Brenda’s psychiatrist urged her parents to reveal the truth: Brenda was male. Despite Money’s warning never to do so, they gave in.

The twins were 14 when “Brenda” was told that she’d been born a boy. His reaction? “I was *relieved*. Suddenly it all made sense why I felt the way I did. I wasn’t some sort of weirdo. I wasn’t *crazy*.”¹⁷

And how did Dr. Money respond? He didn’t. The esteemed professor simply stopped mentioning and writing about the case.¹⁸

So while the pretense ended, the misery did not. The damage had been done. Both David and his twin eventually were lost to suicide.

Apparently, David’s story—and the doubts it raises about Money’s gender theory—hasn’t penetrated the hearts and minds of today’s sex educators; they remain loyal to that theory. In the same matter-of-fact way your daughter is taught multiplication or geography, she’s told a

girl's preference for pink, her interest in dolls, and her tendency to empathize are due to cultural messages she's received about how a girl is supposed to feel, think, look, and behave.

Advocates for Youth: Gender is the collection of behaviors, dress, attitudes, etc., culturally assigned to people according to their biological sex.¹⁹

Scarleteen: Gender is a man-made set of concepts and ideas about how men and women are supposed to look, act, relate, and interrelate, based on their sex.²⁰ What our mind is like—the way we think, what we think about, what we like, what skills we have—really is not, so far as data has shown us so far—about our gender or biological sex, period.²¹

Planned Parenthood: All people are “gendered beings” by virtue of the fact that we are socialized into a heavily gendered culture. . . .²² Cultures teach what it means to be a man or a woman.²³

What cultures teach about gender, your daughter learns early on, is wrong and harmful. Most cultures endorse “gender stereotypes” and expect everyone to fit them. Like racial and ethnic stereotypes, she learns, gender stereotypes are unsubstantiated and destructive. They prevent people from being who they really are.

According to gURL.com, society expects females to be “emotional, delicate, domestic, nurturing, creative, introspective, materialistic (sic), patient, moody, concerned with looks, not assertive, catty.”²⁴

If she fails to meet these expectations, your daughter learns, the consequences can be grave. Chances are she'll be scorned and called names: dyke, butch, or tomboy. She might be assaulted and raped. She could even be murdered. That's what happened to Brandon Teena, a woman who chose to live as a man.²⁵ If your daughter wants to know more about gender, instructs gURL.com, she should check out Brandon's story in the film *Boys Don't Cry*.

“Sex Education for the Real World”

When it comes to my gender, I:

- ☐ Was assigned female sex at birth and also identify myself as female.
- ☐ Was assigned male sex at birth and also identify myself as male.
- ☐ Was assigned female sex at birth and identify myself as male or transgender.
- ☐ Was assigned male sex at birth and identify myself as female or transgender.
- ☐ Was assigned female sex at birth and identify myself as genderqueer, questioning or something else.
- ☐ Was assigned male sex at birth and identify myself as genderqueer, questioning or something else.
- ☐ Am intersex and identify myself as female.
- ☐ Am intersex and identify myself as male.
- ☐ Am intersex and identify myself as intersex.
- ☐ Am intersex and identify myself as genderqueer, transgender or something else.

VOTE

Poll on scarleteen.com

Outdated

In the 1960s Money’s theory of infant gender neutrality may have been plausible, given what was known at that time, but in this century it is not. Fifty years ago, the predominant view was that the Y chromosome²⁶ carried little important information; aside from the genes for male genitalia, it was considered a “genetic wasteland.” If males and females essentially had the same genetic endowment, went the thinking of that time, differences between them must be due to society’s messages and expectations.

That was before the biotechnology revolution. Now we can scrutinize DNA and carefully map out each twist and turn. Today we know the Y chromosome is teeming with units of DNA that are unique to males.²⁷ There are distinct male and female blueprints created from the moment of conception.

“The striking quantity and diversity of sex-related influences on brain function indicate that the still widespread assumption that sex influences are negligible cannot be justified, and probably retards progress in our field,”²⁸ reports Dr. Larry Cahill from the University of California, Irvine’s Center for the Neurobiology of Learning and Memory. “There has been a renewed emphasis on the direct actions of the X and Y chromosomes in bringing about sex differences,” state a team of neuroscientists at the Isis Fund for Sex Differences Research; “Cutting-edge discoveries are revolutionizing our concepts of what makes a male or female brain.”²⁹

Consider a boy’s preference for rough play with other boys, and for vehicles and building toys. According to Money—currently echoed by SIECUS, Planned Parenthood, Heather, and the rest—these result from messages received from his environment, starting with the blue blanket. *You are a boy. Boys like blue, they are active and physical, they love construction, trains, cars.* So when a boy picks a Thomas the tank engine instead of a Barbie, they claim, he’s conforming, albeit unknowingly, to those expectations.

Rubbish, says neurobiology.³⁰ He goes for the truck primarily because of his boy-brain. The toy provides an opportunity for movement, something he’s predisposed to enjoy. Sure, it’s socially reinforced, but his masculine brain circuits precede any cultural messages. For similar reasons, he’s partial to competition and rough-and-tumble play, but unlikely to be drawn to babies. He’ll have a stronger sex drive, and be less likely than a girl to change his sexual preferences during his lifetime. To explain these differences, and others, neuroscience leads us away from social cues like blue blankets. His boy-brain existed long before birth, due to a very different sort of message.

It comes from a gene that instructs the testicles to produce and secrete testosterone.³¹ Unless directed otherwise, the prenatal brain grows in a female direction. If testosterone is released during critical periods of development, that changes. The hormone travels through the blood, targeting cells whose surfaces have matching receptors. Like a key in a lock, when a hormone molecule fits a surface receptor, a “door” opens, allowing entry. The hormone makes a b-line for the control center. In the nucleus it instructs the DNA: turn these activities on, and those off.

Think of each cell as a factory. A hormone breaks through security, finds the foreman, and directs him to change the work orders. Make hats instead of shoes, it demands. The machines grind to a stop and change course. When the order comes from the top, everyone complies.

Testosterone inhibits the development of a feminine brain, with larger centers for communication and emotional memory, and establishes a masculine course—more brain space devoted to centers for action, aggression, and sex drive.³²

The cascade of hormonal effects are global and permanent. Although some manifestations will not be seen for years, such as the changes that come with puberty, the boy-brain trajectory is set at eight weeks, when the gene directs the testes: get to work!³³

Not eight weeks after birth; eight weeks after *conception*—seven months before the pink or blue blanket. That’s right, a fetus has a boy-brain or girl-brain before some women are even aware they’re pregnant—when the unborn baby is the size of a kidney bean.

The research supporting that fact is voluminous, but to SIECUS and all the rest of them, it doesn’t exist. *Gender is man-made*, they still insist in 2009; *cultures teach what it means to be a man or a woman*. Are they stuck in a time warp like the March Hare—at a tea party where clocks stand still? Instead of force-feeding kids 1960s ideology, modern sex ed curricula should describe studies done in *this* century—on infants in their first day of life, on Japanese kindergarteners, and on juvenile monkeys.

These studies indicate that genetics and pre-natal hormones predispose boys and girls to have—among other things—specific toy preferences, play styles and activities, and peer relationships.³⁴ Simply put, science in the twenty-first century supports the stereotypes SIECUS, Planned Parenthood, and other sex educators are telling kids to reject.

What Crayons Can Tell Us

Let's discuss babies first, then their blankets. Abundant research indicates that sex differences in social behaviors—girls' and women's increased sensitivity to emotional nuance, for example—are related to early brain development. At one day of age, presumably before the child has received any messages about conforming to a gender stereotype, boys look longer at a mobile, while girls show a stronger interest in the face.³⁵ At one year, girls are drawn to a video of a face moving; boys to a video of cars moving.³⁶ And at both one and two years of age, girls make more eye contact with their mothers than boys. Remarkably, the amount of contact is inversely correlated with the prenatal level of testosterone. The higher the testosterone level was before birth, the lower the amount of eye contact.³⁷

Now what about those blankets? gURL.com considers them part of “gendering,” a message for the baby about social expectations based on identity. Color preference, they insist, is a result of socialization.³⁸

*The color pink is mainly associated with females, says gURL.com. If a boy painted his room pink, people might think it was a little weird.*³⁹

But those people would be right; it is weird to find a boy who prefers pink, and not only because of what others might think. How do I know? I read about it in the medical journal *Hormones and Behavior*.

Researchers in Japan examined the drawings of 252 kindergarteners.⁴⁰ They found significant differences between the drawings of girls and boys. Among them: boys drew a moving object twenty times more

than girls. Girls included a flower or butterfly seven times more than boys. Then they examined the crayons each child had used over the course of six months, measuring how much of each color remained. Overall, girls decidedly preferred pink and flesh colors. Boys used two colors more than girls: grey and blue.

Okay, you're thinking, but girls are supposed to like flowers, butterflies, and pink; boys are dressed in blue and expected to enjoy things that move. These preferences aren't innate, they were learned.

To control for that, the researchers analyzed the drawings of a third group—eight girls with congenital adrenal hyperplasia. CAH is a genetic disorder in which the fetal brain was flooded with high levels of male hormones. Girls with CAH may have an enlarged clitoris; they may even be identified at birth as males. They are treated medically and surgically, and raised female. In the nature/nurture debate, these girls are intriguing, because nature signaled “you're a boy” to the fetus, but nurture has been saying “you're a girl” since birth.

Clearly, the people over at gURL.com aren't reading *Hormones and Behavior*. Otherwise they'd know the astonishing results: CAH girls drew cars and buses, not butterflies. And the cars and buses were blue, not pink.

Gender is *culturally* assigned? I don't think so. And neither can any person who follows neuroscience in this century.

In a radio interview in 2000,⁴¹ David Reimer laid bare the horrors of the years spent as Brenda. “I was betrayed by the medical profession . . . they put my life on the line so that they could hold onto their theories.” David has since been lost to suicide, but the betrayal continues. Other lives are on the line, but hard science is scorned, and phony theories canonized.

The educators who have enshrined Money's gender theory and now foist it on our youth need to understand that John Money's preoccupation with hermaphrodites and sexual reassignment was related to his own inner struggles. His belief in gender plasticity was wishful thinking. Gender identity is separate from anatomy and chromosomes? It's

based on feelings, learned from experiences? Baloney. In what's probably just the tip of the iceberg, twenty-first century science indicates that the tendencies to typical boy or girl behaviors—yes, gender stereotypes—are innate. We're not psychological hermaphrodites at birth, potentially masculine or feminine—we are wired for one or the other in the womb.

Different Worlds

“Step on to any playground anywhere on the planet and you will see boys and girls playing in different worlds. They differ in what they are doing, with whom they are doing it, and how they are doing it.”

So begins a chapter in a 2008 book by an international group of experts, *Sex Differences in the Brain: From Genes to Behavior*.⁴² We learn here that “across cultures, girls more than boys are interested in and engage with dolls and doll accessories, arts and crafts, kitchen toys, fashion, and make-up, whereas boys more than girls are interested in and engage with transportation toys, electronics, blocks (especially complex building sets), and sports.”⁴³ These preferences are pervasive and consistent.⁴⁴ They begin to emerge at nine months,⁴⁵ and are stable by eighteen months.

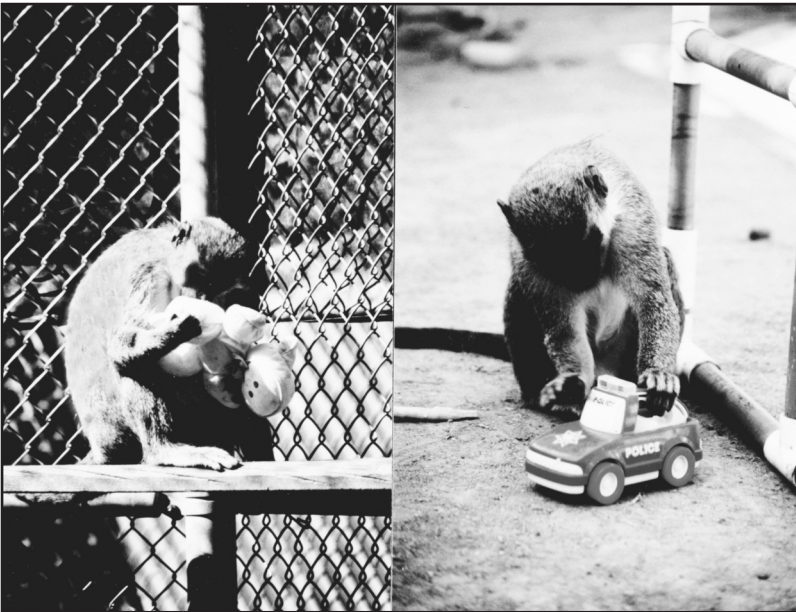
Yet we're suppose to believe that when a two-year-old girl passes up the set of Hot Wheels, choosing the Dora the Explorer doll instead, it is because of cultural expectations—because she has learned girls play with dolls, not cars? This is what gender theory would have us believe, and what your child learns, but it's unlikely. You see, at that age, she doesn't know she's a girl. That awareness comes later.⁴⁶

Until at least two and a half years of age, children are unable to consistently label themselves—or discriminate between—male and female. That's a year or more *after* showing a preference for the doll or the truck. How can children choose particular toys based on what's expected of them as a girl or boy, before grasping the *concept* of girl or boy?

That's a problem for those who argue that kids are socialized to prefer one toy or activity over the other. A more likely explanation, consistent with data collected in the past two decades, is that preferences relate to the toy's use or function. Prenatal hormones wire a girl's brain to be interested in nurturing, and a boy's to enjoy motion. Children then choose the doll or the car for the opportunities they provide for the respective activity.⁴⁷

In support of this theory, girls with CAH show increased preference for male playmates and toys typically preferred by boys.⁴⁸

Studies conducted on young male and female monkeys produce similar results. Juvenile male monkeys, both rhesus and vervet, prefer playing with balls and vehicles. Female monkeys like dolls and pots.⁴⁹ ... *Pots?* Researchers suggest the female monkeys' increased interest in them was due to their red color. The faces of infant vervets are reddish-pink, so the color may act as a cue signaling an opportunity



The female monkey chose a doll while the male chose a truck.

for nurturance. Are animals oppressed by gender stereotypes too? The author of one study, a psychologist, notes: "They are not subject to advertising. They are not subject to parental encouragement, they are not subject to peer chastisement."⁵⁰

Over the Edge

I wish this were the end of the story, but the principles of Genderland have gone far beyond Money's pseudoscience—we *are born gender-neutral; cultures teach what it means to be a man or a woman*. That's old. Like an angry adolescent testing limits, pushing the envelope harder each day, the agendas have become increasingly radical. But how radical can you get, how far from the truth can you move, before falling over the edge and losing touch with reality?

In step with Money, sex ed curricula define gender as separate from biology. They take his theory a step further, however. When gender and biology don't "align"—you've got boy genitals but feel like a girl, or the opposite—they say that's normal. "Being transgender is as normal as being alive," kids are told by Advocates for Youth.⁵¹ "It's not uncommon for a person to identify strongly with the other gender," says Planned Parenthood's teen site. "Many people, including teens, have non-traditional feelings about gender roles and sexual identities and that is normal, too."⁵²

Let's say the experts are right, and it's "normal" for a boy to insist he's a girl. It's a "variant" that he loathes his genitals and wears dresses. What about other cases of "misaligned" identity? Are they "variants" as well?

Consider a rare condition called Body Integrity Identity Disorder. Its victims, according to a recent *Newsweek* article,⁵³ have "an overwhelming desire to amputate one or more healthy limbs or become paraplegic. . . . They describe a persistent, tortuous chasm between their mind's image of their own body, and the physical body they

inhabit.” Only after they’re disabled—by self-inflicted mutilation, or with the help of an underground surgeon—do they feel complete.

The similarity of their condition to that of transgenders is apparent. The “amputee wannabees” also suffer with a “misaligned identity.” What causes this strange affliction? Some speculate it’s due to an abnormality of the area of the brain involved in constructing a coherent body image.⁵⁴

These people need our understanding, support, and help. Should that include extreme measures, like amputation of a healthy limb, or sex reassignment surgery? I’m not sure.

I am sure however, that a boy who persistently and intensely feels he’s a girl, like someone distressed about having two healthy legs, has an illness. The goal should be to help him find relief. Normalizing transgenderism—called Gender Identity Disorder by mental health professionals—is, again, based on an ideology that wishes to blur the distinctions between male and female. Having this disorder is not “as normal as being alive,” as Advocates for Youth want young people to believe.

I wonder, do those who teach our kids that being male and female is subjective and changeable apply that approach to other aspects of identity? Does the individual who yearns for his legs to be severed represent a “normal variant”? It seems a fair question to pose.

The Gender Binary

As extreme as it may be, even the idea of transgenderism is nevertheless consistent with the premise that there are two, and only two, possible identities, male or female. It’s blue or pink, Jack or Jill, one box marked “M,” another marked “F.”

But in Genderland this model, the gender binary, is considered false and oppressive. It stands in the way of the right to what’s called gender expression. Instead, authorities say, male and female are on a

continuum, with many genders in between. There are endless shades between blue and pink, and a whole bunch of boxes on the application. At different times in life, kids learn, you may feel male, female, both, or neither. And that's just fine.

As Heather Corinna says on scarleteen:

Like most aspects of identity, as you continue into and through your adult life you'll likely find that your personal gender identity... changes and grows, and becomes more clear (and more murky!) with time and life experience. Likely, you'll find that the older you get... you realize that gender isn't anything close to binary, but like most things, is a wide, diverse spectrum, a varied, veritable genderpalooza.⁵⁵

Let's examine this one point at a time.

1. As you go thru life, says Heather, your gender identity changes and grows.

Now where did *that* come from? Not from John Money: he taught that gender identity ("I am a boy") is fixed by age three. Not from child development experts: they explain that gender identity is followed about a year later with gender stability ("I will grow up to be a man"), and by age seven at most, by the more sophisticated idea of gender permanence ("I cannot become a girl, even if I wear a dress and lipstick"). As one authoritative psychiatry textbook explains, "Children know that nobody can change gender... [a boy] knows that he will always be a boy until he becomes a man."⁵⁶ And not from the eminent psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers who authored the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. As mentioned above, according to the current edition, a child with a strong and persistent gender dysphoria—the desire to be, or insistence one is, the other sex—is given the diagnosis Gender Identity Disorder.⁵⁷ It's seen as an emotional disorder.

No matter. Heather rejects these conventions, in company with SIECUS⁵⁸ and Planned Parenthood.⁵⁹ “Our gender identity may shift and evolve over time,” says Planned Parenthood. “It may change over the course of your lifetime,” agrees SIECUS. And Advocates for Youth adds: “People can realize their . . . gender identity at any point during their lives.”⁶⁰

Gender identity, Heather states with authority, *changes and grows, sometimes it's clear, sometimes murky.*

What do they mean? That while your daughter insists “I’m a girl” at age five, she might also insist “I’m a boy” at fifteen? And you have no reason for concern? Isn’t identity by definition a stable sense of self? Stable—you know, as in, stays the same?

This is absurd. It’s one thing to propose that boys climb trees because of social expectations; that’s a somewhat plausible theory, even though current science has disproved it. It’s altogether another to state that often boys yearn persistently to *be* girls—not to play dress-up or help in the kitchen, but to *be* a girl. To have breasts, periods, the whole shebang. And to assert this is nothing to worry about.

The “experts” want teens to think that there’s nothing unusual about all this; to the contrary, it’s another struggle for freedom and basic personal rights. It’s about being yourself, free from arbitrary, unnecessary restrictions. Society dictates strict gender roles, kids are reminded, and some people are dissatisfied with that.⁶¹ The gender expressions⁶² of these individuals “vary from common social expectations;”⁶³ they don’t conform to social norms and want to “redefine traditional notions.”⁶⁴ They’re no different from you or me, it seems, except for feeling uncomfortable with the sex they were “assigned” at birth—as if the “assignment” was a hit or miss process—and this is in reference to genetically, developmentally, and endocrinologically normal children.

To be dissatisfied with society’s expectations . . . to fight against norms and restrictions . . . to join with others in the struggle for freedom and rights . . . do you see why young people, especially troubled ones, might be drawn in to gender-bending?

This has real-life consequences. “Luke” Woodward arrived at Brown University a “masculine-appearing lesbian,” with no plans to change his sex. It was not until a trip to Cuba, he reports—where people were shocked to discover he was female—that he began to wonder: Am I a woman? Returning to the United States, he met several transsexuals, and realized there were other options. The summer before his senior year she/he underwent a double mastectomy. No testosterone for Luke yet—he can’t afford it. And what about more surgery—as Luke puts it, “down there”? He hasn’t decided.⁶⁵

In my experience as a campus counselor, I know of students like Luke, undergoing dangerous hormone treatments and irreversible surgeries⁶⁶ after being introduced to the notion of fluid gender on campus or elsewhere. But kids hear about these far-out ideas long before college.

*I hate being a girl, a thirteen year old calling herself “abnormal” tells Heather. Is there something wrong with me wanting to be a boy?*⁶⁷

Heather replies: *There’s nothing patently abnormal or wrong about being uncomfortable with your own sex or your gender. . . . Gender dysphoria is especially common at the age you’re at right now . . . It’s really typical to feel this way . . .*

Just a moment, Heather. That’s not true. If you’re going to use technical terms, use them correctly. Gender dysphoria, defined as “a persistent aversion toward some or all of those physical characteristics or social roles that connote one’s own biological sex,”⁶⁸ isn’t just some pesky matter teens must tolerate, like oily skin or annoying siblings. We’re not speaking here of, for example, a girl envying boys because they have more athletic opportunities, or don’t need to diet or shave their legs. Gender dysphoria is a girl’s yearning for a double mastectomy. It’s wanting testosterone injections to lower her voice and allow

her to grow a mustache. Gender dysphoria is a disturbance in a child's view of herself. And it's not "really typical"⁶⁹ at *any* age.⁷⁰

Heather is in no position to counsel thirteen year old "abnormal" about her gender identity—a complex matter that can involve genetic and medical disorders, as well as psychosocial factors. While Heather touches on these in her reply, she's clearly in over her head; the gist of her advice rests on Genderland ideology—it's all about what feels right to you.

What's most important isn't having a gender identity that "matches" your biological sex, or one which everyone else thinks is best, but having one that feels best to YOU and most authentic for you.

2. As you get older, it's likely you'll realize that gender isn't anything close to binary...

Now that's interesting. In a binary, there are only two possibilities. On or off. Positive or negative. Left or right. Yet Heather's saying gender isn't binary? We're not either male or female?

Nope. That's another falsehood foisted on us by society, says Heather. Like the incorrect assumption that everyone who "menstruates, ovulates, gestates, and lactates" feels like a woman. This view is restrictive, intolerant, and must be challenged.

Reject the binary, kids are told. Gender is "a wide, diverse spectrum."⁷¹

Says SIECUS: People "have an internal sense that they are female, male, or a variation of these."⁷²

Gender Isn't Just Either/Or, claims a brochure⁷³ students might find in the nurse's office.

"The truth is . . . Not everyone looks or feels like one sex or the other," Advocates for Youth says. "Traditionally, gender has meant either 'male' or 'female' . . . However, there is really a range of genders, including male and female, but also including genderqueer⁷⁴ or gender ambiguous, butch (man or woman), femme (man or woman),

transgender . . . and many others.”⁷⁵ And according to gURL.com, the spectrum of gender includes transgender, transsexual, transvestite, and pangender, the latter signifying *people who do not identify with the term male or female. The person may feel they are a mix of either genders, genderless or another gender altogether.*⁷⁶

Did you get that? “A mix of either genders, genderless or another gender altogether.” This is what I mean when I say these people are going over the edge. Some people do suffer from a disorder in gender identity; they deserve understanding, compassion, and treatment. But this goes beyond Roberta becoming Robert. *Another gender altogether* is about becoming someone that’s neither Roberta nor Robert.

As gURL.com states on the hazards of the gender binary:

When we place people into very strict categories . . . it makes it hard for people to truly be themselves. And by placing people into categories of “this” vs. “that,” it doesn’t leave much wiggle room. And when a lot of people do not fit into either or more than one . . . that can be lonely. It can be isolating. And, as in the Brandon Teena case, it can result in harmful incidents.

A summary of today’s lesson on being male or female: your identity is based on how you feel; those feelings may shift and evolve; there are more than two genders; assuming otherwise is oppressive and sometimes dangerous.

How Many Genders Are There?

If anyone is *another gender altogether*, it’s Kate Bornstein. When teens go online with questions about being a boy or a girl, they’re referred not to *The Female Brain* (2006), not to *As Nature Made Him* (2000), the book about David Reimer, but to Bornstein’s *My Gender*

*Workbook*⁷⁷ (1998). In fact, Heather recommended the book to “abnormal,” the troubled thirteen year old.

You might also want to hop over to your local bookstore or library and check out some books on gender identity. . . . Kate Bornstein's My Gender Workbook is one I'd very enthusiastically recommend.

With such a rave review, how could I resist? I hopped over to Amazon, and bought the book. That's how *My Gender Workbook* became our final adventure in Genderland.

Like the Cheshire Cat who vanishes and reappears—as a floating head, or just a grin hanging in the air—Kate Bornstein has had many incarnations.

Read carefully, because this is tricky. Kate (formerly Al) was born male and raised as a boy. In adulthood, he “became a woman” for a few years, then “stopped being a woman and settled into being neither.” His (her?) lover, Catherine, decided to “become a man,” David. Kate and David stayed together as a “heterosexual couple.” Their relationship ended when David found “his gay male side.”⁷⁸

Kate asks, “What a whacky world, huh?”

Given Kate's extraordinary journey, it's not surprising that the subtitle of her (his?) 300-page manifesto is, *How to Become a Real Man, a Real Woman, the Real You, or Something Else Entirely*. Now firmly established in her identity as *something else entirely*, Kate hopes to “dismantle the ‘gender system’ on the planet as we know it.”⁷⁹

On the front line of her attack are pronouns. She, he, his, and her don't work: they support the gender binary. The English language needs gender-neutral pronouns. Instead of “he” and “she,” we have “ze” (pronounced zee). In place of “his” and “her” there's “hir” (pronounced here).

Please take this seriously. The culture your child is in certainly does, especially the campus culture, where students who identify as

neither male nor female contribute to campus diversity. Gender neutral housing and bathrooms are available on a growing number of campuses. The health clinic at Wesleyan University no longer requires students to check off M or F; instead they are asked to “describe [their] gender identity history.” Applications to Harvard’s business school allow prospective students to identify themselves as one of three genders.⁸⁰ Smith, an all women’s college since the nineteenth century, now has some male alumni—they enrolled as women and graduated as men. Accordingly, students on that campus voted to eliminate female pronouns from the student constitution.⁸¹ Pronouns such as “she” and “her” were replaced with the phrase “the student.”⁸² At four campuses of the University of California,⁸³ hormones and surgical sex re-assignment are covered by student insurance plans.⁸⁴ The education at Sarah Lawrence includes the Gender F—k Symposium—“a week long series of programming to challenge gender assumptions, roles and stereotypes.”⁸⁵ And at the University of Massachusetts, the assumption that everyone is either male or female constitutes “transphobia.”⁸⁶

The sooner you grasp this, the better: there’s nothing radical about gender bending at our colleges and universities. To the contrary, Kate Bornstein’s speaking calendar is packed with college events: Brown, Emory, SUNY, Yale, Northeastern, University of Minnesota,⁸⁷ and University of South Florida. Her signature lecture is called “On Men, Women, and the Rest of Us.”

What’s Kate’s message to young people? In addition to the need for new pronouns, they learn that the gender system has a “deathgrip” on them, and that identifying as a boy or girl “is neither natural nor essential.”⁸⁸

I think we create our identities . . . with a similar purpose that a crab excretes the substance that eventually hardens into a shell, its armor. It’s safe having an identity, it’s secure. It’s safe having a gender. But there’s a price for safety and security

within some hard shell. We can't grow any more. Our identities become so hard and so restrictive that we can no longer stretch and explore, we can't find new ways of experiencing the world, new ways to delight ourselves . . . We're frozen in that shell.⁸⁹

Do you see how enticing this argument is to “abnormal” and other troubled souls? I can't think of a better way to recruit kids. Who wants to live in a shell, unable to grow, stretch, and explore? Sounds like living with parents, doesn't it? Unlike Mom and Dad, Kate understands being suffocated by stupid rules and restrictions.

Stupid rules—like having to do homework or mow the grass. *Stupid restrictions*—like imposing the gender binary.

I know I'm not a man . . . and I've come to the conclusion that I'm probably not a woman, either. . . The trouble is, we're living in a world that insists we be one or the other.⁹⁰

You see, it's the world's fault. Kate is a victim. The crime? All cultures, legal systems, and major world religions assume people are either male or female, making her an outsider. “This has made her life, “sad and frightening,” and made her feel “alone,” as one of her friends put it.⁹¹ It's certainly not too much to demand they all change, right now, to accommodate her.

This is upside-down. These two individuals, “Abnormal” and Kate, are unsure who they are. Abnormal, thirteen years old, concludes: something's wrong with me, I need help. That's healthy. Kate, sixty years old, concludes, everyone is to blame *except* me; she embarks on creating a world to suit her needs, a world that denies biological truths. That's a departure from reality. And the authorities, the eminent organizations with government funding, send the girl to Kate, saying, she's the one to help you through this.

Don't say I didn't warn you: Genderland is bewildering.

I want to be clear: my grievance is not with Kate Bornstein. She is free to be a “gender outlaw,” as she calls herself, and spread her way-out beliefs—although I believe she’d be more effective if she cleaned up her language. My outrage is directed at the sex ed oligarchy for directing naïve, vulnerable kids to her preposterous, debased philosophy.

Kate is right: it is a wacky world. It’s wacky for adolescents, who need stability, order, and limits, to be led into anarchy. It’s wacky for kids striving to determine their identity to be schooled in an anti-identity philosophy. Adolescents yearn to consolidate their identity; Kate seeks to unravel it. They wish to stabilize their sense of self; “she” hopes to undermine it. Their goal is to solve the mystery of “Who am I?” and progress to adulthood; “she,” well into middle age, is still wondering:

The sadness that comes from being a freak is compounded by the fact that as gender outlaws . . . We leave one identity behind, and take up another . . . we change identities over and over again, searching for “the one that’s going to work,” or “the real me.” . . . For nearly fifty years, I’ve been acquiring identities and abandoning them . . . I think it’s identity itself I want to quit now.

Celebrate Who You Are?

There’s another issue to consider, that of intellectual honesty. If there’s one overarching rule of Genderland, it’s this: don’t let anyone tell you who you are. Especially not your parents. It’s your right, kids are told, to make that decision. Celebrate who you are, whether the world likes it or not.

Sounds great, until you look closer. There’s one group without that right. They know who they are—they’re *certain*—but it doesn’t matter.

Take, for example, the hypothetical case of Roberta. She feels trapped in the wrong body. Her sex and gender are not aligned. She wants bilateral mastectomies, testosterone shots, and other irreversible procedures for relief of her distress. Educators have compassion for Roberta's plight. Chromosomes don't matter, they say, it's Roberta's *sense of herself* that counts. She is to be called Robert, and her right to self-determination is respected. Even if she's only thirteen.

Now remember Hector, from the Circle of Men? He's attracted to members of the same sex, but it doesn't feel right. It's not who he really is. He chooses to struggle against the attraction, and work toward what feels genuine.

But Hector is told he's in denial. *You're just refusing to accept who you really are*, he is told. *You must recognize your true identity, and stop trying to change the unchangeable. Trust us, we know.* This is the proper response, say educators, even if Hector is forty years old.

Is this a bad dream? Will we wake up, like Alice did from her afternoon nap, and realize Genderland was just a curious, made-up adventure?

I'm afraid not. It's more likely we'll wake up and see Barbara Walters fawning over Thomas Beatie, the "man" having a second child. Or maybe not. Maybe we got used to seeing "him" the first time around. Is it still a big deal?

I think it is. Because Thomas's image—the goatee, the flat chest, and pregnant belly, looks us in the eye and declares: Hi there. You thought I was an impossibility, didn't you? Well, say good-bye to what you held as true. My existence creates a new reality.

Why do the sex education gurus choose to teach that "reality," based on John Money, over the hard science of sex differences: newborns who prefer looking at a face instead of a mobile; monkeys who play with trucks and red pots?

They cling to Money for the same reason they cling to Kinsey: they like his thinking—that society places undue restrictions on our freedom of sexual expression. This has come to mean the freedom to be

male, female, or—as Kate would say—something else entirely. If that's the case, well, then anything goes. And that's a recipe for physical and emotional disaster for our kids.

At least one leading expert recognizes this, and has the courage to say so. Dr. Paul McHugh took over as chief psychiatrist at Johns Hopkins in 1975, remaining in that position for over twenty years. After initiating a study of men who had undergone sex reassignment, Dr. McHugh shut down Money's clinic, concluding that "sexual identity is mostly built into our constitution by the genes we inherit and the embryogenesis we undergo." Dr. McHugh writes: "We psychiatrists . . . would do better to concentrate on trying to fix their minds and not their genitalia."⁹²

Science has confirmed that judgment. But so blindly devoted are these sex educators to radical beliefs, so zealous are they about "sexual freedom," that instead of heeding authorities such as McHugh, they embrace the ideals of people like "gender outlaw" Kate/Al, sending vulnerable teens to absorb her—or is it hir?—wacky convictions.

Even the Mad Hatter would be scratching his head.