Petite pola, повторно*

Вариетете на полот ќе ги тестираат медицинските вредности и општествените норми

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The Five Sexes, Revisited*

The Varieties of Sex Will Test Medical Values and Social Norms

As Cheryl Chase stepped to the front of the packed meeting room in the Sheraton Boston Hotel, nervous coughs made the tension audible. Chase, an activist for intersexual rights, had been invited to address the May 2000 meeting of the Lawson Wilkins Pediatric Endocrine Society (LWPES), the largest organization in the United States for specialists in children's hormones. Her talk would be the grand finale to four-hour symposium on the treatment of genital ambiguity in newborns, of both male and female anatomy, or genitals that appear to differ from the chromosomal sex. The topic was hardly a novel one to the assembled physicians.

Yet Chase's appearance before the group was remarkable. Three and a half years earlier, the American Academy of Pediatrics had refused her request for a chance to presedent the patient's viewpoint on the treatment of genital ambiguity, dismissing Chase and her supporters as "zealots." About two dozen intersex people had responded

"fanatics". About two dozen intersex activists spoke at an early 1960s conference on intersex, organized by the Intersex Society of North America (ISNA) and the World Health Organization. "Hermafrodites Target Kiddee Docs."

It had done my 1960s street-activist heart good. In the short run, I said to Chase at the time, the picketing would make people angry. But eventually, I assured her, the doors then closed would open. Now, as Chase began to address the physicians at their own convention, the prediction was coming true. Her talk, titled "Sexual Ambiguity: The Patient-Centered Approach," was a measured critique of the near-universal practice of performing immediate, "corrective" surgery on thousands of infants born each year with ambiguous genitalia. Chase herself lives with the consequences of such surgery. Yet her audience, the very endocrinologist and surgeons Chase was accusing of reacting with "surgery and shame," received her with respect. Even more remarkably, many of the speakers who preceded her at the session had already spoken of the need to scrap current practices in favor of treatments more centered on psychological counseling.

What led to such a dramatic reversal of fortune? Certainly, Chase's talk at the LWPES symposium was a vindication of her persistence in seeking attention for her cause. But her invitation to speak was also a watershed in the evolving discussion about how to treat children with ambiguous genitalia. And that discussion, in turn, in the tip of a biocultural iceberg — the gender iceberg — that continues to rock both medicine and our culture at large.
Chase made her first national appearance in 1993, in these very pages, announcing the formation of ISNA in a letter responding to an essay I had written for The Sciences, titled “The Five Sexes” [March/April 1993]. In that article I argued that the two-sex system embedded in our society is not adequate to encompass the full spectrum of human sexuality. In its place, I suggested a five-sex system. In addition to males and females, I included “herms” (named after true hermaphrodites, people born with both testes and an ovary); “merms” (male pseudohermaphrodites, who are born with testes and some aspect of female genitalia); and “ferms” (female pseudohermaphrodites, who have ovaries combined with some aspect of male genitalia).

I had intended to be provocative, but I had also written with tongue firmly in cheek. So I was surprised by the extent of the controversy the article unleashed. Right-wing Christians were outraged, and connected my idea of five sexes with the United Nations-sponsored Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in September 1995. At the same time, the article delighted others who felt constrained by the current sex and gender system.

Clearly, I had struck a nerve. The fact that so many people get riled up by my proposal to revamp our sex and gender system suggested that change – as well as resistance to it – might be in the offing. Indeed, a lot has changed since 1993, and I like to think that my article was an important stimulus. As if from nowhere, intersexuels are materializing before our very eyes. Like Chase, many have become political organizers, who lobby physicians and politicians to change current treatment practices. But more gener-
ally, though perhaps no less provocatively, the boundaries separating masculine and feminine seem harder than ever to define.

Some find the changes under way deeply disturbing. Others find them liberating.

Who is an intersexual — and how many intersexuals are there? The concept of intersexuality is rooted in the very ideas of male and female. In the idealized, Platonic, biological world, human beings are divided into two kinds: a perfectly dimorphic species. Males have an X and a Y chromosome, testes, a penis and all of the appropriate internal plumbing for delivering urine and semen to the outside world. They also have well-known secondary sexual characteristics, including a muscular build and facial hair. Women have two X chromosomes, ovaries, all of the internal plumbing to transport urine and ova to the outside world, a system to support pregnancy and fetal development, as well as a variety of recognizable secondary sexual characteristics.

That idealized story papers over many obvious caveats: some women have facial hair, some men have none; some women speak with deep voices, some men veritably squeak. Less well known is the fact that, on close inspection, absolute dimorphism disintegrates even at the level of basic biology. Chromosomes, hormones, the internal sex structures, the gonads and the external genitalia all vary more than most people realize. Those born outside of the Platonic dimorphic mold are called intersexuals.
In "The Five Sexes" I reported an estimate by a psychologist expert in the treatment of intersexuality, suggesting that some 4 percent of all live births are intersexual. Then, together with a group of Brown University undergraduates, I set out to conduct the first systematic assessment of the available data on intersexual birthrates. We scoured the medical literature for estimates of the frequency of various categories of intersexuality, from additional chromosomes to mixes gonads, hormones and genitalia. For some conditions we could find only anecdotal evidence; for most, however, numbers exist. On the basis of that evidence, we calculated that for every 1,000 children born, seventeen are intersexual in some form. That number - 1.7 percent - is a ballpark estimate, not a precise count, though we believe it is more accurate than the 4 percent I reported.

Our figure represent all chromosomal, anatomical and hormonal exceptions to the dimorphic ideal; the number of intersexes who might, potentially, be subject to surgery as infants are smaller - probably between one in 1000 and one in 2000 live births. Furthermore, because some populations possess the relevant genes at high frequency, the intersexual birthrate is not uniform throughout the world.

Consider, for instance, the gene for congenital adrenal hyperplasia (CAH). When the CAH gene is inherited from both parents, it leads to a baby with masculinized external genitalia who possesses two X chromosomes and the internal reproductive organs of the potentially fertile woman. The frequency of the gene varies widely around
Intersexuality has always been to some extent a matter of definition. And in the past century physicians have been the ones who defined children as intersexual – and provided the remedies. When only the chromosomes are unusual, but the external genitalia and gonads clearly indicate either a male or a female, physicians do not advocate intervention. Indeed, it is not clear what kind of intervention could be advocated in such cases. But the story is quite different when infants are born with mixed genitalia, or with external genitals that seem at odds with the baby’s gonads.

More clinics now specializing in the treatment of intersex babies rely on case-management principles developed in the 1950s by the psychologist John Money and the psychiatriest Joan G. Hampson and John L. Hampson, all of John Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. Many believed that gender identity is completely malleable for about eighteen months after birth. Thus, he argued, when a treatment team is presented with an infant who has ambiguous genitalia, the team could make a gender assignment solely on the basis of what made the best surgical sense. The physician could then simply encourage the parents to raise the child according to the surgically assigned gender. Following this course, most physicians maintained, would eliminate psychological distress for both the patient and the parents. Indeed, treatment teams were never to use such words as “intersex” or “hermaphrodite”; instead, they were to tell parents that nature intended the baby to be the boy or the girl that the physi-
Navistina, timovite za tretmans nikogash ne koriste takvi zborovi kako „interseks“ ili „hermafrodit“; namesto toa, time im kajuva na roditelite deka prirodata imala namera biebo da bide momche ili devojche, toko shto biepe opredeleno od lekarite. So xirurshkiot zaflat, lekarite samo ja dovruva namerata na prirodata.

Iako Moni i Hemsponov objaviat detalni studii na slucaj za deca so intereseko, za koji velja deka dobro se prilagodile kon nivnoto rodovo oprodenluvanje, Moni smetaše da te deka eden posoben slucaj ja dokazal negovata teoriia. Toa biepe eden dramatichen primer, dotoleku povoke shto toka voopsho nemaše intereseko; ednata momche od parov identichni blyzina gto zagubili svojot penis kako rezultat na nesreka pri obruzuvanje. Moni preporoqa da „Jon“ (shto sto stana pozнат во podosenejna studii na slucaj) da bide xirurshki predobravan vo „Joan“ i odelqan kako devojche. So vreme, Joan pochna da sakafustani i da si pravi frizuri. Moni gordo objavi deka polovoto oprodenluvanje bilo uspesno.

No, kako shto neodamna e pridobeleno od Joan Kolapinto (John Colapinto), vo negovata kniga Kako shto devojki i deci. Joan - sega poznam kako vozrasno moshko se ime Dejvid Rajmer - na kraj gto otrfolili svojeto jedensko oprodenluvanje. Durki i bez funkcionali sky penis i testeski (koi shto bile otstreneti kako del od oprodenluvaneto) Joan/Joan povara maskulinizirahnlo lechenje, i se venchane so vlada so deca (koji gi postoi).

Otkaoko cestoshoit zakluchok na prikazatata za Joan/Joan stana poznam, se javija i drugi individii koji bie oprodenljeni kako moshki ili jedenski neposredno po rafoanje a koi podocna gti otrfolile cians had determined it was though sugery, the physicians were merely completing nature's intention.

Although Money and the Hampsons published detailed case studies of intersex children who they said had adjusted well to their gender assignments. Money thought one sac in particular proved his history. It was a dрамatic example, inasmuch as it did not involve intersexuality at all; one of a pair of identical twin boys lost his penis as a result of a circumcision accident. Money recommended that "John" (as he came to be known in a later case study) be surgically turned into "Joan" and raised as a girl. In time, Joan grew to love wearing dresses and having her hair done. Money proudly proclaimed the sex reassignment a success.

But as recently chronicled by John Colapinto, in his book As Nature Made Him, Joan - now known to be an adult male named David Reimer - eventually rejected his female assignment. Even without a functioning penis and testes (which had been removed as part of the reassignment) John/Joan sought masculinizing medication, and married a woman with children (whom he adopted).

Since the full conclusion to the John/Joan story came to light, other individuals who were reassigned as males or females shortly after birth but who later rejected their early assignments have come forward. So, too, have cases
in which the reassignment has worked - at least into the subject's mid-twenties. But even then the aftermath of the surgery can be problematic. Genital surgery often leaves scars that reduce sexual activity. Chase herself had a complete clitoridectomy, a procedure that is less frequently performed on intersexual today. But the newer surgeries, which reduce the size of the clitoral shaft, still greatly reduce sensitivity.

The revelation of cases of failed reassignment and the emergence of intersex activism have led an increasing number of pediatric endocrinologists, urologist and psychologists to reexamine the wisdom of early genital surgery. For example, in a talk that preceded Chase’s at the LWPES meeting, the medical ethicist Laurence B. McCullough of the Center for Medical Ethics and Health Policy at Baylor College of Medicine in Huston, Texas, introduced an ethical framework for the treatment of children with ambiguous genitalia. Because sex phenotype (the manifestation of genetically and embryologically determined sexual characteristics) and gender presentation (the sex role projected by the individual in society) are highly variable, McCullough argues, the various forms of intersexuality should be defined as normal. All of them fall within the statistically expected variability of sex and gender. Furthermore, though certain disease states may accompany some forms of intersexuality, and may require medical intervention, intersexual conditions are not themselves diseases.
McCullough also contends that in the process of assigning gender, physicians should minimize what he calls irreversible assignments: taking steps such as the surgical removal or modification of gonads or genitalia that the patient may one day want to have reversed. Finally, McCullough urges physicians to abandon their practice of treating the birth of a child with genital ambiguity as a medical or social emergency. Instead, they should take the time to perform a thorough medical workup and should disclose everything to the parents, including the uncertainties about the final outcome. The treatment mantra, in other words, should be therapy, not surgery.

I believe a new treatment for intersex infants, similar to the one outlined by McCullough, is close at hand. Treatment should combine some basic medical and ethical principles with a practical but less drastic approach to the birth of a mixes-sex child. As a first step, surgery on infants should be performed only to save the child’s life or the substantially improve the child’s physical well-being. Physicians may assign a sex – male of female – to an intersex infant on the basis of the probability that the child’s particular condition will lead to the formation of a particular gender identity. At the same time, though, practitioners ought to be humble enough to recognize that as the child grows, he or she may reject the assignment – and they should be wise enough to listen to what the child has to say. Most important, parents should have access to the full range of information and options available to them.
Sex assignments made shortly after birth are only the beginning of a long journey. Consider, for instance, the life of Max Beck: Born intersexual, Max was surgically assigned as a female and consistently raised as such. Had her medical team followed her into her early twenties, they would have deemed her assignment a success because she was married to a man. (It should be noted that success in gender assignment has traditionally been defined as living in that gender as a heterosexual.) Within a few years, however, Beck had come out as a butch lesbian; now in her mid-thirties, Beck has become a man and married his lesbian partner, who (through the miracles of modern reproductive technology) recently gave birth to a girl.

Transsexuals, people who have an emotional gender at odds with their physical sex, once described themselves in terms of demographic absolutes — males trapped in female bodies, or vice versa. As such, they sought psychological relief through surgery. Although many still do, some so-called transgendered people today are content to inhabit a more ambiguous zone. A male-to-female transsexual, for instance, may come out as a lesbian. Jane, born a physiological male, is now in her late thirties and living with her wife, whom she married when her name was still John. Jane takes hormones to feminize herself, but they have not yet interfered with her ability to engage in intercourse as a man. In her mind, Jane as a lesbian relationship with her wife, through she views their intimate moments as a cross between lesbian and heterosexual sex.
It might seem natural to regard intersexual and transgendered people as living midway between the poles of male and female. But male and female, masculine and feminine, cannot be parsed as some kind of continuum. Rather, sex and gender are best conceptualized as points in a multidimensional space. For some time, experts on gender developments have distinguished between sex at the genetic level and at the cellular level (sex-specific gene expression, X and Y chromosomes); at the hormonal level (in the fetus, during childhood and after puberty); and at the anatomical level (genitals and secondary sexual characteristics). Gender identity presumably emerges from all of those corporeal aspects via some poorly understood interaction with environment and experience. What has become increasingly clear is that one can find levels of masculinity and femininity in almost every possible permutation. A chromosomal, hormonal and genital male (or female) may emerge with a female (or male) gender identity. Or a chromosomal female with male fetal hormones and masculinized genitalia — but with female pubertal hormones — may develop a female gender identity.
mafrodit" and "женски псевдохермафродит" указува дека единствено таканареченит вистински хермафродит е автентична мешавина на мъжко и женско. Другите, без оглед на това колку се збрукачки нивните телесни делови, се всушност прикривени мъжки или женски. Со оглед на това што вистинските хермафродити се ретки - веројатно един на 100000 - еден таков систем на класификација ја поддржува идејата дека луѓето се апсолутно диморфен вид.

Vo мугрите на дванест и првото столетие, кога варијабилноста на родот се чини толку видлива, тешко е да се зачува една таква позиција. Исто така, старинот медицински консенсус тuka почува да се распаѓа. Минатата есен педијатарот уролог Јан А. Аронсон од Медицинскиот универзитет на Јужна Каролина во Чарлстон организираше "таск форс" на Северна Америка за интересексуалност (NATFI) да ги приспее клиничките реакции на гениталната двосмисленост кај бебињата. Клучните медицински здруженија, како што е Американската академија на педијатрите, го поддржува NATFI. Специјалистите по хирургија, ендокринологија, психологија, етика, психијатрија, генетика и јавно здравје, како и групите што застапуваат интерсекс пациенти, стапија во редовите на NATFI.

Една од целите на NATFI е востановување на нова полов номенклатура. Еден предлог што е на разгледување го заменува тековниот систем со емоционално неутрална терминоложија која ги нанаса развојните процеси наместо однапред смислените родови категории. На пример, интересекс од типот I се развива од аномалски вириллизацијски влијанија; интересекс од типот II исходува од некаков прекин на вирилизацијата; а кaj интересекс од тип III самите гонади може да не се развили онако како што се очекувало.

At the dawn of twenty-first century, when the variability of gender seems so visible, such a position is hard to maintain. And here, too, the old medical consensus has begun to crumble. Last fall the pediatric urologist Ian A. Aaronson of the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston organized the North American Task Force on Intersexuality (NATFI) to review the clinical responses to genital ambiguity to infants. Key medical associations, such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, have endorsed NATFI. Specialist in surgery, endocrinology, psychology, ethics, psychiatry, genetics and public health, as well as intersex patient-advocate groups, have joined its ranks.

One of the goals of NATFI is to establish a new sex nomenclature. One proposal under consideration replaces the current system with emotionally neutral terminology that emphasizes developmental processes rather than preconceived gender categories. For example, Type I intersexes develop out of anomalous virilizing influences; Type II results from some interruption of virization; and in Type III intersexes the gonads themselves may not have developed in the expected fashion.
What is clear is that since 1993, modern society has moved beyond five sexes to a recognition that gender variation is normal and, for some people, an arena for playful exploration. Discussing my “five sexes” proposal in her book Lessons from the Intersexes, the psychologist Suzanne J. Kessler of the State University of New York at Purchase drives this point with great effect:

The limitation with Fausto-Sterling’s proposal is that...[it] still gives genitals...primary signifying status and ignores the fact that in the everyday world gender attributions are made without access to genital inspection...What has primacy in everyday life is the gender that is performed, regardless of the flesh’s configuration under the clothes.

I now agree with Kessler’s assessment. It would be better for the intersexuals and their supporters to turn everyone’s focus away from genitals. Instead, as she suggests, one should acknowledge that people come in an even wider assortment of sexual identities and characteristics than mere genitals can distinguish. Some women may have “large clitorises or fused labia,” whereas some men may have “small penises of misshapen scota,” as Kessler puts it, “phenotypes with no particular clinical or identity meaning.”

As clearheaded as Kessler’s program is — and despite the progress made in the 1990s — our society is still far from that ideal. The intersexual or transgendered person who projects a social gender — what Kessler calls “cultural genitals” — that conflicts with his or her physical genitals still may die for the transgression. Hence legal protection for people whose cultural and physical genitals do not match...
прекрасшокот. Затоа е потребна правна защита на луѓето чии културни и физички генитални не се сознаааат за време на тековната транзиција кон родово поразнолик свет. Еден лесен изчекор би било да се елиминира категоријата на „род” од службените документи, како што се возвични дозволи и пасошите. Секако дека би биле поприкладни некои повидливи особини (како што се висината, градбата, и бојата на очите) и некои помалку видливи (относности на прстите и генетските профили).

Многу подалекусежна агенда е претставена во Интернационалниот документ за родови права, усвоен во 1995 година на четвртата годишна Международна конференција за трансродово право и политики за вработување, во Хјустон, Тексас. Документот набројува десет „родови права”, вклучувајќи го правото да се дефинира сопствениот род, правото да се смени физичкиот род ако некој така одбере и правото секој да се венча со кого ќе посака. Правните основи за такви права се раздиснуваат по судовите во моментов и, од најнеодамна, со восстановувањето, во државата Вермонт, на легални домашни партнерства од ист пол.

Никој не можеше да превиди такви промени во 1993 година. А ами пружа задоволство идејата дека и јас одиграв некаква улога, колку и да е мала, во редуцирањето на притисокот — од медицинската заедница како и од поширокото општество — да се сведе различието на човекови полови на два дијаметрално спротивни табора.

Понекогаш луѓето ми суперират, не малку ужаснати, дека се залагам за пастелен свет во кој андрогинијата владее, а мажите и жените здоволно исти. Меѓутова, во мојата визија јаките бои коегистираат со пастелните. Надвор постојат и ќе продолжат да постојат is needed during the current transition to a more gender-diverse world. One easy step would be to eliminate the category of “gender” from official documents, such as driver’s licenses and passports. Surely attributes both more visible (such as height, build and eye color) and less visible (fingerprints and genetic profiles) would be more expedient.

A more far-ranging agenda is presented in the International Bill of Gender Rights, adopted in 1995 at the forth annual International Conference on Transgender law and Employment Policy in Houston, Texas. It lists ten “gender rights,” including the right to define one’s own gender, the right to charge one’s physical gender if one so chooses and the right to marry whomsoever one wishes. The legal bases for such rights are being hammered out in the courts as I write and, most recently, through the establishment, in the state of Vermont, of legal same-sex domestic partnership.

No one could have foreseen such changes in 1993. And the idea that I played some role, however small, in reducing the pressure — from the medical community as well as from society at large — to flatten the diversity of human sexes into two diametrically opposed camps give me pleasure.

Sometimes people suggest to me, with not a little horror, that I am arguing for a pastel world in which androgyny reigns and men and women are boringly the same. In my vision, however, strong colors coexist with pastels. There are and will continue to be highly masculine people out
изразито мажествени лице; само што некои од нив се женит. А некои од најженствените лица што ги знам се случува да се мажи.

Превод од англиски јазик: Жарко Трајаноски

there; it’s just that some of them are women. And some of the most feminine people I know happen to be men.