



© Gender Matters

The gender question ?

A teaching resource for secondary science
developed by Gender Matters and
Gender Identity Research & Education Society



© Gender Matters

The first thing we ask about a new-born baby "Is it a boy or a girl?"

Why is this?

Isn't 'it' cute!

Consider how difficult it can be to talk to, or about, a baby without knowing if it is a boy or a girl...

We might want to say:

- Isn't she beautiful
- Doesn't he look like his dad!
- What's his name?
- How old is she?



Do we treat babies differently depending on whether they are a boy or a girl? Can you think of examples of how people do this?

Although there is a lot of overlap, socially we expect women to behave in feminine ways and men to behave in masculine ways. The ways we expect men and women to behave are called **gender roles and gender expressions**.

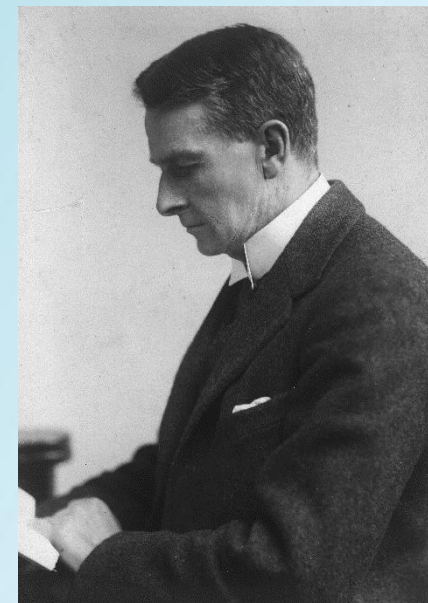
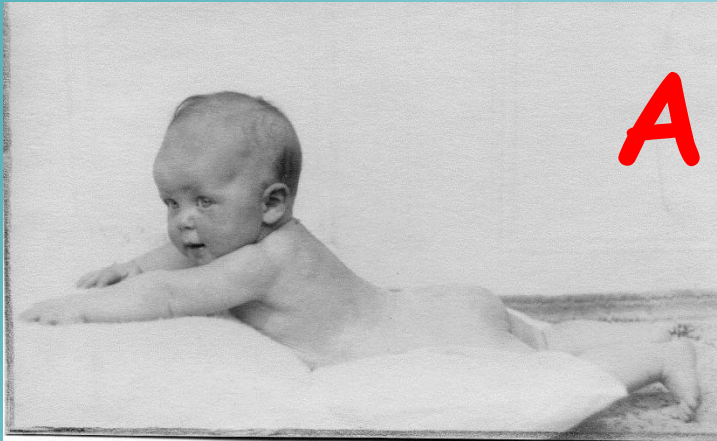
Different cultures may have different expectations of men and women, but they still make a distinction.

Sometimes people have a prejudiced view of how men or women should behave, based on a very rigid view of gender roles, called **gender stereotypes**. E.g. Men can't multi-task, women can't read maps.

Boy Or Girl?



© Gender Matters



Typical Gender Identity Development

- Usually a baby having male external sex characteristics will identify as a boy, and will grow to adulthood comfortably identifying himself as a man.
- Similarly, a baby having female external sex characteristics will identify as a girl and will grow up comfortably identifying herself as a woman.
- This is sometimes referred to as being cisgender

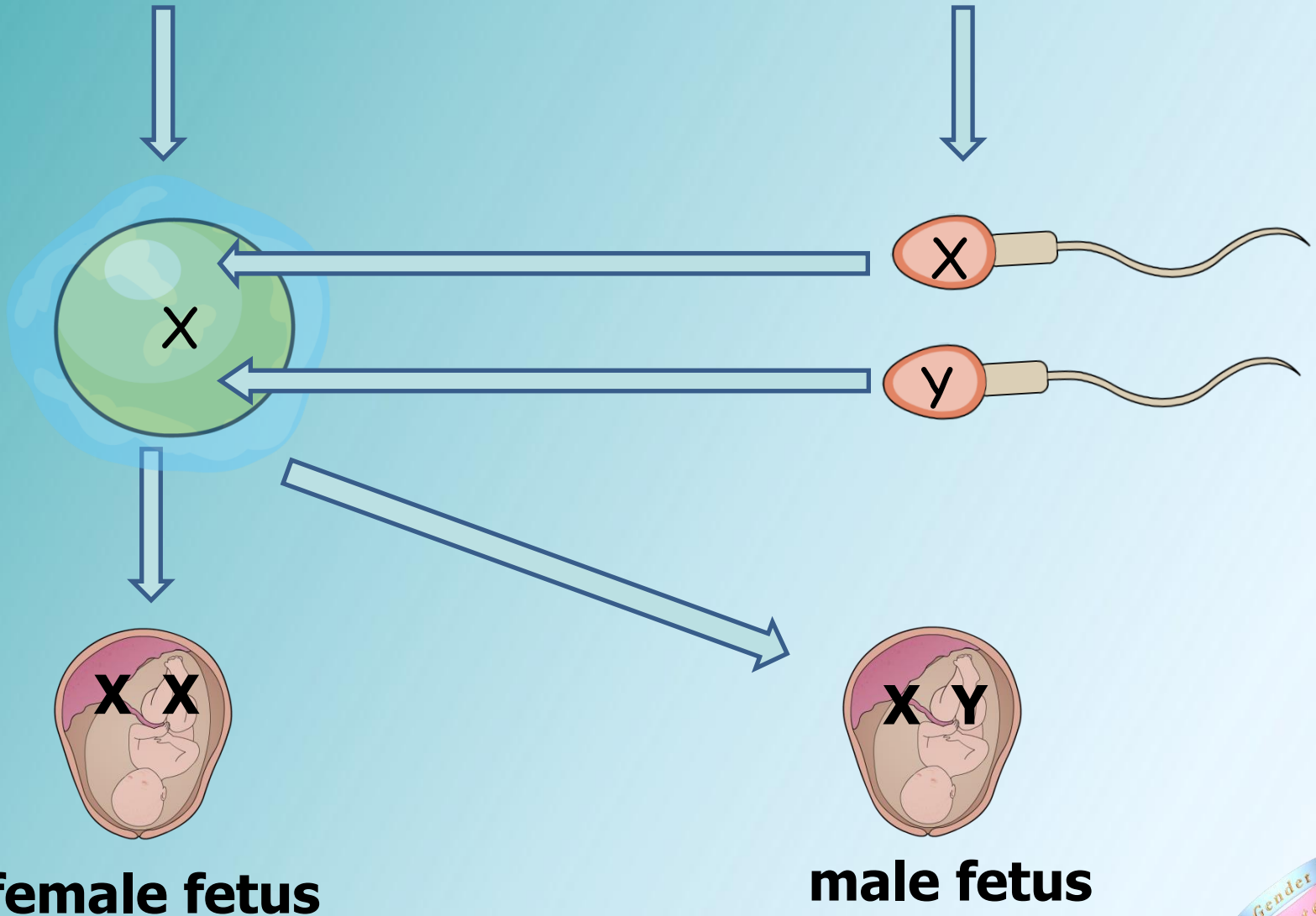


Mother

X chromosomes

Father

X or Y



Internal features

External features

Internal features

Male brain

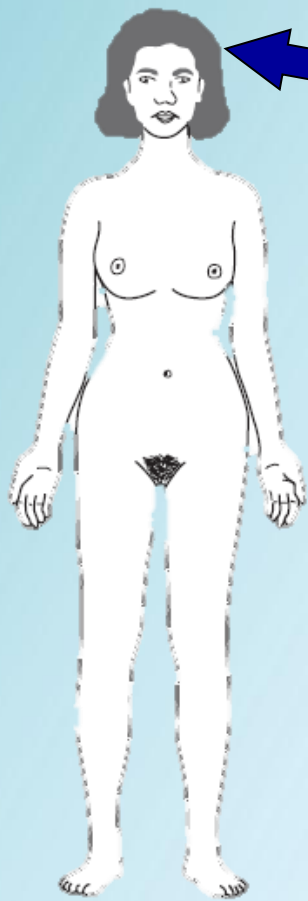
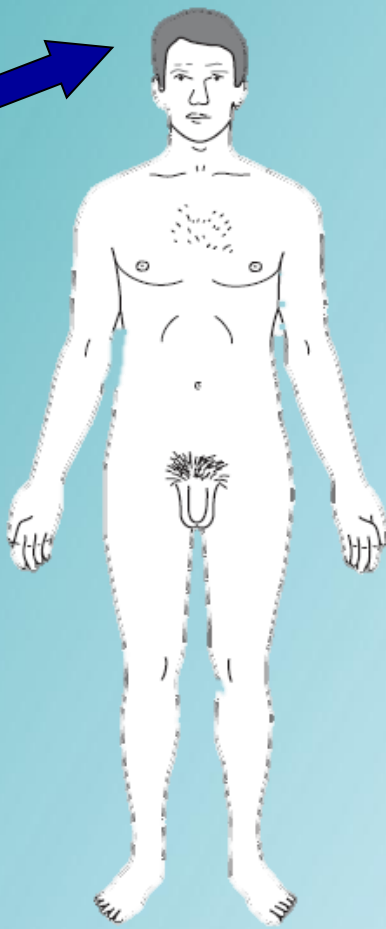
Female brain

Male gonads:
testes

Female gonads:
ovaries

Male hormones,
e.g. **testosterone**

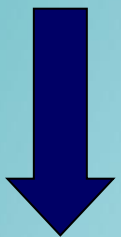
Female hormones,
e.g. **oestrogen**



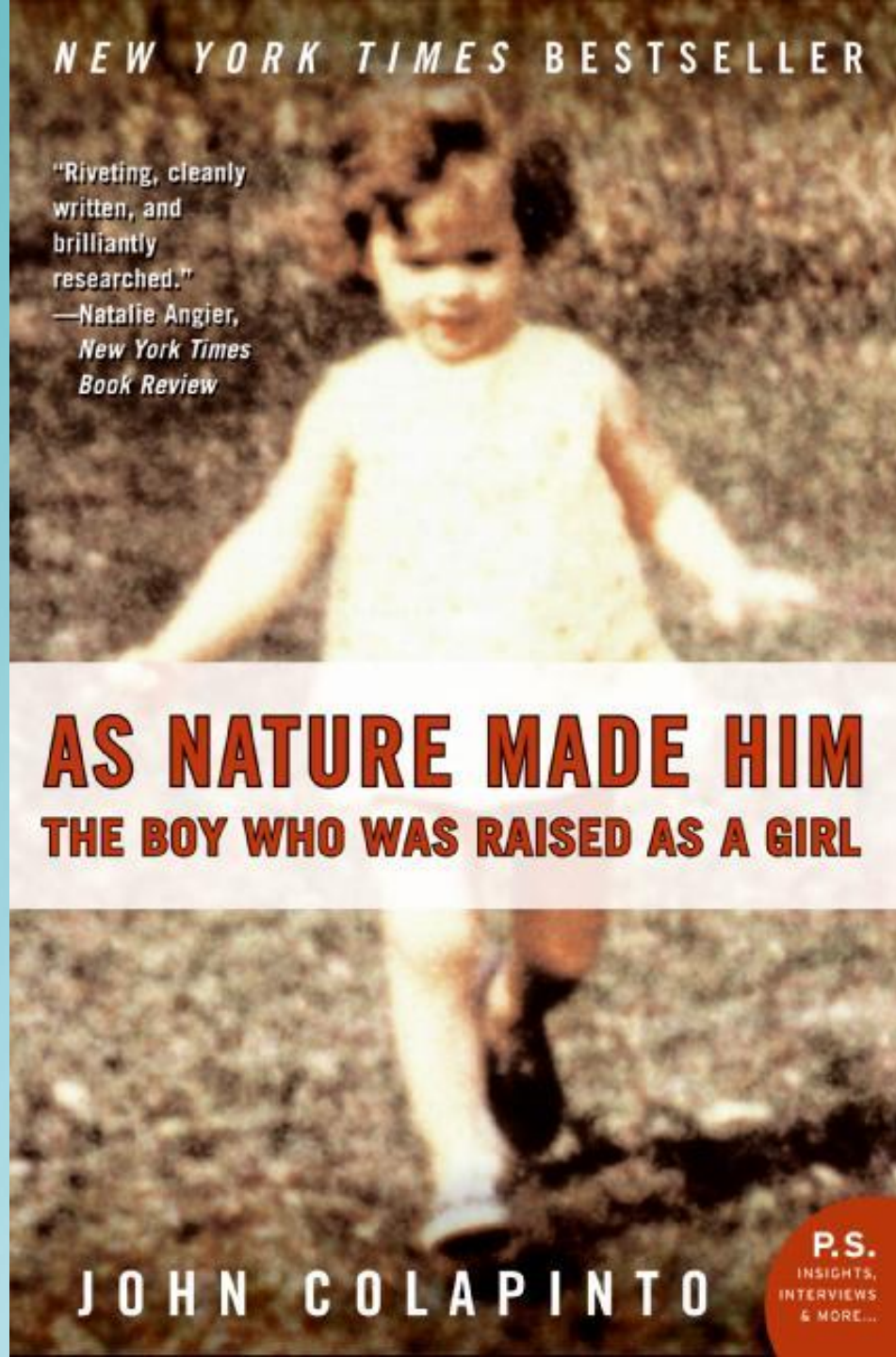
JOHN



JOAN



JOHN



So, just to reinforce the point, it's the brain that tells you whether you are a boy or a girl



The brains of trans people are 'hard-wired' slightly differently from the majority of the population. These differences have been found in a number of studies on the brains of trans people, compared with the brains of non-trans people.

Gender Identity Development

But what happens when the brain, and therefore the gender identity, does not 'match up' with sex appearance?



When this happens it is known as gender variance or gender nonconformity. When it causes discomfort and stress, doctors refer to it as gender dysphoria

Lili Elbe was assigned male at birth and raised as a boy

She 'transitioned', in the 1930s, in other words:



- she 'affirmed' her gender identity, by changing her gender role (social role)
- this process may be helped by taking:
 - feminising hormones, and possibly,
 - having surgery

Caroline Cossey – Tula – trans woman or woman of trans history

Model and 'Bond girl' -
1970s

Unusual chromosomes

XXXY, XXY, XYY, XXY,
XXYYYY, mosaicism etc.

But most of those assigned
male at birth who identify
as girls/women

have typical XY
chromosomes





We used to think that there were more trans women than trans men, but now the numbers are becoming more equal.

Non-binary or gender queer

- Many people do not identify at one end of the gender spectrum or the other, and may be:
 - Somewhere in between
 - A bit of both
- They may describe themselves in many different ways: pan gender, poly gender, bi-gender, neutrois;
- Some people feel they are just human beings without any gender identification and describe themselves as non-gender.

Transition and treatment

- Hormones:
 - Trans women may take female hormones (oestrogen) that make the body look more feminine; they grow breasts; skin softens;
 - Trans men may take testosterone which makes them look more masculine; they grow beards, have male-pattern baldness; voice deepens;
- Transition of the social role means changing the name, living at home and at work, and in leisure pursuits, in the gender role that matches the gender identity, not the sex assigned at birth.

Surgery

- Not everyone who changes gender role wants to have surgery;
- The first surgery that trans men have is chest reconstruction – that is, taking the breast tissue away and making the chest look like a man's chest;
- Trans women may have implants to make their breasts bigger if the hormones have not already made them big enough;
- Trans women often have their genitalia refashioned to give them female appearance; trans men may also have genital surgery;
- It is rude to ask if a person has had surgery



Gender identity is not the same thing as sexual orientation

- Trans men and trans women, like anyone else, may be:
- gay (men who are attracted to men);
- lesbian (women who are attracted to women);
- bisexual (men and women who are attracted to both men and women);
- heterosexual (attracted to people of the opposite sex) or
- asexual (not attracted to either men or women).

Ordinary people – ordinary lives



These two people have both transitioned. They are married. Their daughter is in the middle; her father, on the left of the picture, is her biological mother. Her step-mother is on the right.

Treatment in puberty

A few young people who feel extremely unhappy with the mismatch between the way they look and the way they identify as boys or girls, have treatment to stop their puberty for a few years.

This gives them time to make up their minds whether they will be more comfortable living as men, or as women, or maybe somewhere in between.

Identical male twins



Safe,
reversible;
diagnostic
phase

Nicole (on left) has been on GnRHa for 3 years to suppress her male puberty; estradiol for one year. Without that medication she would have looked like her identical twin brother: 4" taller, facial hair, Adam's apple → voice dropped

How many trans people are there?

- Currently living in the UK, there are about 26,000 people who have sought medical help.
- The underlying trans and non-binary population seems to be at least 1% of the total population.
- The specialised clinics where trans and non-binary people can access treatment are unable to keep up with the growing numbers of people seeking treatment. They are rising by at least 20% per annum, and in the child and adolescent service, the rise is 50% per annum.

Equality and Human Rights

- The Equality Act 2010 made 'gender reassignment' a 'protected characteristic':
- Trans people must not suffer discrimination, harassment or victimisation
- Employers and service providers, schools, colleges and universities must make sure that trans people have equal opportunities, and are socially included.
- The Human Rights Act 1998 entitles us all to fair, respectful treatment, and to dignity and privacy.

Gender Recognition Act, 2004

- The Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC), can be used to obtain a new birth certificate
- People who have a GRC have a new legal gender status 'for all purposes'
- It is not necessary to have had any medical treatment to be granted a GRC, but you do have to show that you have lived continuously in your new role for two years, and intend to continue in that role.
- Must be 18 y.o.

Gender variant children & young people

Because being trans is something people are born with, children and teenagers with this condition have a difficult time

They may want to dress differently and behave differently, but sometimes they are afraid that if they show this, they will be bullied and teased at school.

So, often they hide their true feelings

Inclusion

- Bullying, teasing and being unkind to people because they are a bit different, is a bad thing to do.
- We should always welcome, support and celebrate the differences between individuals. It makes our school, and our society a safer, happier place for everyone.

THE END

NATURE LOVES
VARIETY

Society needs to love it
too

